

## German President warns against demonising Russia



**BERLIN, Apr 15:** German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has warned against demonising Russia and said Germany had a particular role to play in maintaining dialogue with Moscow, given its history.

In an interview published on Sunday, Steinmeier, a Social Democrat, voiced concerns that Saturday's air strikes by Western powers had raised the serious risk of a direct confrontation between Russian and U.S. forces in Syria for the first time.

"We are at the next step of escalation in the Russian-American relationship," Steinmeier, who twice served as Germany's foreign minister,

told the Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

The air strikes on Syria - aimed at destroying Syrian chemical weapons facilities - have exacerbated tensions between Moscow and the West, already at a new post-Cold War high after the expulsion of more than 130 Russian diplomats in response to a poison gas attack in Britain that London has blamed on Russia.

Syria denied using chemical weapons against its civilian population. Russia also denied it was behind the poison gas attack on a former Russian double agent and his daughter. Steinmeier said the evidence pointed clearly at Russia's involvement, which was alarming, but added:

"The galloping alienation between Russia and the West must also concern us, with consequences that will go far beyond this case. There is practically no basis of trust any more." Steinmeier urged German politicians to keep the door open to dialogue with Russia, and to avoid portraying Russia and its people as an enemy, even as they maintained pressure on Moscow over its annexation of Crimea and support for rebels in eastern Ukraine.

"Regardless of (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, we cannot declare Russia as a whole, the country and its people, to be an enemy," he said. "Our history speaks against it, and there is too much at stake."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, who has adopted a tougher tone in his comments on Russia than his predecessors, on Saturday called for a new international effort to end the war in Syria, and said Germany would exploit its relationship with Moscow to ensure Russia played a "constructive" role.

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## Demonstrators flood Barcelona in support of jailed leaders

**BARCELONA, Apr 15:** Hundreds of thousands of Catalan independence supporters flooded the streets of Barcelona on Sunday calling for the release of jailed separatist leaders after a supreme court ruling frustrated their latest attempt to elect a regional leader. Around 350,000 demonstrators clogged several main city arteries waving flags and wearing yellow in support of separatist leaders jailed for their role in the region's banned drive to split from Spain last year.

Among the politicians facing charges of rebellion is Jordi Sanchez, the latest candidate put forward by Catalan lawmakers to become leader of the region. Supreme court judge Pablo Llarena refused last week to release him from jail, marking the latest of four unsuccessful attempts to elect a new leader.

If a new leader is not named before the end of May, Catalonia will be forced to call another election.

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## In Syria strikes, US blurs red line for intervention

**WASHINGTON, Apr 15:** With the latest U.S. missile strikes, President Donald Trump appears to have reset America's red line for military intervention in Syria over the use of chemical weapons.

What's unclear is where that red line now stands.

The United States said its strikes were a response to President Bashar al-Assad's chemical weapons attack on April 7 that administration officials say employed chlorine and perhaps even sarin, a more deadly nerve agent.

"A large body of information indicates that the Syrian regime used chemical weapons," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the U.N. Security Council on Saturday.

Sarin had previously appeared to be the threshold for intervention. A sarin attack triggered Trump's decision last year to strike a Syrian air base. A sarin attack in 2013 was also what nearly brought then-President Barack Obama to strike Syria.

Chlorine, in contrast, has been used more widely in Syria's conflict without past



U.S. reprisals, and the chemical itself is far easier to find and weaponize, experts say. That makes degrading it through military strikes far more difficult.

"Every city in the Middle East that has a water purification system probably has some chlorine. It is a common industrial chemical," said Daryl Kimball at the Washington-based Arms Control Association, who favors broad action to deter use of chemical weapons, including chlorine.

As of Saturday, it was unclear whether another chlorine attack would be enough

to trigger more U.S. strikes, or whether the death toll would need to be high enough or whether - as was the case on April 7 - sarin use would also need to be a possibility.

Or perhaps there would need to be a series of violations, as was the case before April 7, prior to any U.S. action.

The Trump administration offered veiled threats on Saturday about future military action and mixed remarks about the degree to which it believed sarin was used by Syria's government, which denies it used chemical weapons.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said he was only certain about intelligence that chlorine gas was used by Assad's forces on April 7 before America's strikes on Syria.

He did not rule out sarin use.

Vice President Mike Pence also said Trump carried out the strikes armed with U.S. intelligence that at "a minimum it was the chemical weapon of chlorine," noting investigators still might prove sarin was used.

A different Trump administration official, briefing reporters, said the United States assessed that sarin was also used in the April 7 attack but suggested that U.S. information on sarin came from analysis of reports from news media and other public sources of information, as opposed to U.S. intelligence.

It was unclear whether Trump thought sarin had been used when he said on Twitter on Wednesday that U.S. missiles "will be coming" and accused Assad of being a "Gas Killing Animal."

REUTERS

## Pakistani soldiers killed in attack at Afghanistan border

**PARACHINAR, Apr 15:** Two Pakistani soldiers were killed in cross-border fire from Afghanistan while working on a fence intended to cover nearly all of the disputed 2,500km border separating the countries, the Pakistani military said on Sunday. Though security has improved in Pakistan's remote areas bordering Afghanistan, sectarian militant attacks, primarily targeting Shi'ite Muslims, still occur.

"Pakistani troops are exercising maximum restraint so as to avoid any Afghan civilian casualties," the Pakistan Army's public relations department said, adding that five soldiers were wounded in the attack. Afghan officials said that Pakistani troops crossed on to Afghan soil, prompting a response by border forces and the local tribal force.

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## Canada's Trudeau set for emergency summit on pipeline crisis

**OTTAWA, Apr 15:** Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will on Sunday try to tackle an escalating dispute over an oil pipeline project that threatens to undermine his political and economic agenda.

Kinder Morgan Canada Ltd (KML) wants to almost triple the capacity of its Trans Mountain pipeline from oil-rich Alberta to the Pacific province of British Columbia, which strongly opposes the idea on environmental grounds.

Trudeau - who says the expansion will benefit the economy and needs to proceed - is due to hold an emergency meeting at 10 am ET (1400 GMT) with the premiers of both provinces.

"This is not about punishing British Columbians, this is not about hurting Canadi-

ans, this is about bringing forward a project in the national interest," he told reporters in Peru late on Saturday before returning to Ottawa.

"We will do it in such a way that doesn't seek to further polarize or raise the temperature in this debate."

Although Trudeau's Liberal government could invoke emergency powers to ensure the project goes ahead, that would most likely anger voters in British Columbia and cost the Liberals support in a federal election in October 2019.

But Trudeau is under increasing pressure from the business community and opposition politicians to take action amid fears the dispute could hit already flagging foreign investment.

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## Bitter rivals' embrace shakes up Kenyan politics



**NAIROBI, Apr 15:** A surprise handshake between President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga has stirred up Kenyan politics as the long-time rivals set their sights on the 2022 elections.

Less than a year since Kenyatta was re-elected to a second and final term in a vote that Odinga called a farce, the two shook hands on March 9 after weeks of secret talks. A warm embrace at a golf tournament followed later.

They said their rapprochement would mean an end to the violence, bitterness and political instability that followed last year's elections.

But observers say the handshake signaled that Kenyatta and Odinga, who is also in the sunset of his political career, want to join forces so they can influence what happens next.

They say that it may show that Kenyatta intends to ditch a deal to appoint William Ruto, who is his deputy presi-

dent but comes from a different ethnic group, as his successor. Kenyatta has said he still backs Ruto.

For Odinga, it shows he feels he has more bargaining power for himself and his Luo ethnic group as Kenyatta's partner.

"Everybody has had to go back to their drawing board and decide how they are going to run in 2022," said Ngunjiri Wambugu, a lawmaker from Kenyatta's Jubilee party, a political alliance between his Kikuyu ethnic group and Ruto's Kalenjin.

"This pact between Kenyatta and Odinga has re-defined the race."

Political victory in a country of 45 million with 44 ethnic groups is usually forged through ethnic alliances. Since independence in 1963, Kikuyu and Kalenjin have dominated government.

REUTERS

## Japan PM Abe's rating falls in media poll amid scandal woes

**TOKYO, Apr 15:** Support for Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, plagued by accusations of cronyism and cover-ups, fell to 26.7 percent in a survey by private broadcaster Nippon TV released on Sunday, the lowest since he took office in December 2012.

Abe's sliding ratings are raising doubts over whether he can win a third three-year term as ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leader in a September vote he needs to win to stay in office or whether he might even resign before the party election. The Prime Minister last week denied again that he had intervened to ensure preferential treatment for educational institution Kake Gakuen, run by his friend Kotaro Kake, to set up a veterinary school. He has also repeatedly denied that he or his wife intervened in a heavily discounted sale of state-owned land to another school operator, Moritomo Gakuen, with ties to his wife.

Another survey released on Sunday by Kyodo news agency put Abe's support at 37 percent, down 5.4 points.

The polls come ahead of Abe's summit this week with U.S. President Trump, where he faces a tough agenda including North Korea's nuclear and missile threat and sticky trade issues. Former cabinet minister Shigeru Ishiba, who has made clear he wants to challenge Abe for the top post, topped the list of politicians that respondents to the Kyodo survey saw as best suited to become the next premier, with 26.6 percent.

Popular young LDP lawmaker Shinjiro Koizumi, son of ex-prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, ranked second with 25.2 percent, followed by Abe in third place with 18.3 percent.

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## Japan and China's Foreign Ministers pledge to pursue improved ties

**TOKYO, Apr 15:** Japanese Foreign Affairs Minister Taro Kono and his Chinese counterpart have pledged to improve ties between their nations and affirmed a commitment to stick with U.N. resolutions aimed at forcing North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons.

Kono met the Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi Wang Yi, in Tokyo on Sunday, having made his own official visit to Beijing earlier this year.

Wang is the first Chinese foreign minister to visit Japan in a bilateral context in the nine years since Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping promised to reset the sometimes fraught relations between Asia's two largest economies.

"Through mutual visits between our two leaders we agreed to pursue wide-reaching cooperation and improved ties," Kono said after Sunday's meeting.

Economic ties between Japan and China are close, led by corporate investment. The neighbours remain at odds, however, over China's growing military presence in the South China Sea, through



which much of the region's sea-borne trade sails, and a dispute over ownership of uninhabited islets in the East China Sea, known as the Senkaku in Tokyo and the Diaoyu in Beijing.

Wang said his visit was in response to Japan's positive attitude towards China.

"Since last year Japan has, in relations with China, displayed a positive message and friendly attitude," he said.

The talks came ahead of a summit between the two Koreas this month and a meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jon Un and U.S. President Donald Trump. The U.S.-North Korea talks are aimed at ending a stand-off over Pyongyang's development of nuclear weap-

ons and ballistic missiles.

"To establish a complete, irreversible and verifiable denuclearisation of North Korea we agreed to continue to fully implement all relevant U.N. resolutions and to work closely together," Kono said.

Wang, who spent eight years in Japan as a diplomat, including three as China's ambassador, is scheduled to hold further talks with Kono and other Japanese Cabinet ministers on Monday.

On Tuesday Japanese Self Defense Force officers will meet counterparts from China's People's Liberation Army at a reception hosted by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation in an effort to build trust between the military rivals.

REUTERS

## Israel to free 200 African migrants awaiting deportation

**JERUSALEM, Apr 15:** Israel will release about 200 jailed African migrants in the absence of a final deal to deport them and thousands more Eritrean and Sudanese men who entered the country illegally, the Interior Ministry said on Sunday.

The government has been trying to finalize an agreement with Uganda to take in the migrants, who came into Israel on foot through the Egyptian border over the past decade.

Most of the 200 men set for release were sent to a desert prison in recent months to await deportation to Uganda.

But with negotiations continuing over a deal with Uganda, Israel's Interior Ministry - which has faced court challenges by rights groups over the detentions - issued a statement on Sunday saying it would begin releasing the migrants.

The Israeli government says the 37,000 migrants in Israel are job seekers and that it has every right to protect its borders. The migrants and rights groups say they are seeking asylum and are fleeing war and persecution.

REUTERS

## US urges regional leaders to isolate Venezuela's Maduro

**LIMA, Apr 15:** The United States urged regional leaders on Saturday to take stronger steps to isolate Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, as it joined a declaration condemning the worsening humanitarian crisis and political repression in the South American nation.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence told the Summit of the Americas in the Peruvian capital that immediate action was needed as Venezuela gears up for presidential elections on May 20 that have been condemned by many regional leaders as a farce to legitimize Maduro's rule.

For the first time, the United States backed a statement by heads of state from the Lima Group of nations - established last year to seek a peaceful end to Venezuela's political turmoil - which called on Maduro to release political prisoners and hold free elections. Despite an economic collapse that has driven an estimated 3 million people to flee his once-prosperous OPEC nation, Maduro is expected to win next month's poll.

REUTERS

**IN THE COURT OF DISTRICT JUDGE, IMPHAL WEST, MANIPUR ORIGINAL (PROBATE) CASE NO. 2 OF 2018.**

Shri Johnson Pebam @ Chinglen aged about 31 years, S/o P. Saratchandra Singh, resident of Kwakeithel Moirang Pural Leikai, P.O. Imphal, P.S. - Singjamel, District - Imphal West, Manipur. Petitioner.

WHEREAS Notice is hereby given under Order V Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 that the Petitioner above named had filed an application before this Hon'ble District Judge, Imphal West, under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 praying for granting of Probate or Letter of Administration in respect of a registered WILL bearing No.: 2658 dated 08/07/2015 executed and registered by the deceased R.K. Ladusana Singh, S/o (Late) R.K. Gopalsana, resident of Kwakeithel Moirang Pural Leikai, Imphal West.

Any person having any interest or claim upon in this application and as to why Petitioner should not be granted Probate or Letter of Administration in respect of the said registered WILL bearing No.: 2658 dated 08/07/2015 executed by (late) R.K. Ladusana Singh, are hereby summoned to appear before this Court either in person or by a pleader on 24/04/2018 at 10:30 A.M.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

GIVEN under my hand and seal of this Court, on this 12th April 2018.

By: Sd/- District & Sessions Court Imphal West  
(Advocate) Tse/332-14,16 Sd/- i/c Sheristadar

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