

# Ecuador Vote Recount Confirms Moreno as Next President



*Ecuadorean leftist Lenin Moreno celebrates after the country's electoral council said he won Sunday's presidential election, at his party headquarters in Quito, Ecuador.*

QUITO (Reuters) - A recount of more than 1.2 million votes in Ecuador late Tuesday confirmed leftist candidate Lenin Moreno the winner of presidential elections, the country's electoral council said.

In the recount, Moreno, 64, obtained 51.16 percent of valid

votes with Lasso at 48.84 percent - 1,594 votes more for Moreno than in the original April 2 count.

The OPEC country's new president is to be inaugurated on May 24.

Both Moreno and Guillermo Lasso, a 61-year-old former

banker, had called for a recount after the original results.

Lasso had declared himself the winner and denounced the official figures as a mockery of the Ecuadorean people.

Moreno's party said he had won by a larger margin than the original tally showed.

## Tense Crowd Meets Tusk Who Testifies in Polish Investigation



*Donald Tusk, the President of the European Council walks with supporters as he arrives at the prosecutor office in Warsaw, Poland.*

WARSAW (AP) — Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, was met at Warsaw's main train station Wednesday by hundreds of people — both supporters and angry opponents — as he arrived to testify in an investigation.

The mood at the train station was tense, with supporters of the former Polish prime minister carrying EU and national flags and chanting "Donald, we are with you!" while opponents hurled accusations of crimes and of hurting Poland's interests. One detractor held up a large mock-up photo depicting him in striped prison garb.

Tusk is only a witness in the current case — an investigation by military prosecutors into alleged secret illegal contacts between Polish and Russian intelligence officials at a time when he was still prime minister.

However, many see his questioning as part of a larger attempt by Poland's nationalist government to discredit a political foe by linking him to scandals and perhaps imprison him eventually.

Tusk has also been accused by

the Defense Minister Antoni Macierewicz of treason in another matter, the handling of the aftermath of the 2010 plane crash in Smolensk, Russia, that killed Polish President Lech Kaczynski.

Prosecutors have not revealed details of the alleged illegal contacts, but they are investigating whether the heads of the intelligence had neglected their obligation to seek Tusk's approval for cooperating with foreign intelligence.

Polish media reports say the deal was aimed at allowing Polish investigators working on the Smolensk crash to operate on Russian soil.

Poland's current ruling party, Law and Justice, is led by the late president's twin brother, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, a nationalist politician who is a long-term political rival of Tusk's.

Kaczynski drove the failed effort last month to block Tusk from getting a second term as head of the European Council. Only Poland opposed Tusk's re-election, with 27 other EU members supporting another term for him.

## British Parliament Backs May's Plan for Snap Election



*Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May addressing the House of Commons in central London.*

LONDON (Reuters) - Prime Minister Theresa May won parliament's backing for an early election on Wednesday, a vote she said would strengthen her hand in divorce talks with the European Union and help heal divisions in Britain.

May surprised allies and opponents on Tuesday when she announced her plan to bring forward an election that was not due until 2020, saying she needed to avoid a clash of priorities in the sensitive final stages of the two-year Brexit talks.

After addressing a rowdy session of the House of Commons, May won the support of 522 lawmakers in the 650-seat parliament for an election on June 8, an easy victory for the prime minister who could see her majority increase by at least 100 seats in the poll.

The former interior minister, who became prime minister without an

election when her predecessor David Cameron quit after last year's referendum vote for Brexit, enjoys a runaway lead over the main opposition Labour Party in opinion polls.

She has also played up the strength of the British economy, which has so far defied predictions of a slowdown - a key campaign theme that her Conservative Party will use to try to undermine Labour in the election.

A victory would give May a powerful mandate extending until 2022, long enough to cover the Brexit negotiations plus a possible transition period into new trading arrangements with the EU - a prospect that has strengthened the pound.

The Sun, Britain's top-selling newspaper, splashed the headline "Blue Murder" - a reference to the Conservatives' colour branding and the prospect of Labour losing dozens of seats.

## News in Brief

NEW DELHI (AFP) - A bus has swerved off a mountain road and plunged into a deep ravine in a Himalayan region of northern India, killing at least 44 people, an official said Wednesday.

The bus with 56 passengers on board plunged into a river in northern Himachal Pradesh state around 115 kilometres (70 miles) from the capital Shimla.

India has some of the world's deadliest roads with more than 150,000 fatalities annually due to poor roads, badly maintained vehicles and reckless driving.

\*\*\*\*\*

MOSCOW (Dispatches) — The Russian counterintelligence agency, the FSB, says its agents have killed two men suspected of planning to carry out terror attacks in Russia.

The FSB said Wednesday the men, both from Central Asia, were killed in a shootout when they resisted arrest.

The agency says the suspects were in contact with recruiters from international terrorist organizations, had shown an interest in making bombs and expressed a readiness to carry out attacks in Russia.

\*\*\*\*\*

DAKAR (AP) — Investigators have confirmed another 17 mass graves in central Congo, bringing the number to 40 discovered since clashes between soldiers and a local militia intensified in August, the United Nations human rights office said Wednesday, adding that Congolese soldiers reportedly killed at least 114 people, including 41 children.

The recent violence in once-calm Central Kasai province has included the killing of an American and a Swedish investigator for the U.N. last month, alarming the international community.

U.N. human rights chief Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein warned Wednesday that if Congo's government doesn't investigate the violence effectively, he'll urge that the International Criminal Court or another outside entity do it.

\*\*\*\*\*

WELLINGTON (Dispatches) — New Zealand announced Wednesday that it is introducing tougher requirements for skilled overseas workers as it tries to control immigration numbers that have reached an all-time high.

The changes come a day after Australia said it would scrap a temporary visa for skilled overseas workers and after U.S. President Donald Trump signed an order he said should help American workers whose jobs are threatened by skilled immigrants.

New Zealand's Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse said in a speech that the government was unapologetic that industries relying on overseas workers are finding it harder to recruit people from abroad.

## India Ruling Party Leaders Face Trial in 1992 Mosque Attack



*FILE - Indian opposition leader and President of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) L.K. Advani, second right, senior BJP leaders Uma Bharti, right, Kalyan Singh, second left, and Murli Manohar Joshi wave to people during a public rally in Rae Bareilly, in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.*

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's top court on Wednesday ordered four senior leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to stand trial over a 1992 attack on an ancient mosque that sparked Hindu-Muslim violence that killed thousands.

A lower court had earlier dropped conspiracy charges against the four in a case that has languished in India's sluggish legal system for almost 25 years.

Hindu groups say the 16th century Babri Mosque was built after a temple dedi-

cated to the Hindu god King Ram was destroyed by Muslim invaders. Hindu fundamentalists with pickaxes and crowbars razed the structure to the ground in December 1992.

The attack on the mosque in Ayodhya, 350 miles (550 kilometers) east of New Delhi, sparked the largest explosion of Hindu-Muslim violence in the country in decades, leaving 2,000 people dead. Thousands more died in later violence caused by disputes over the site.

Hindu hard-liners, includ-

ing BJP members, say they want to build a new temple to Ram on the site.

The four party leaders are accused of making inflammatory speeches that incited thousands of their followers who had camped out in Ayodhya ahead of the attack on the mosque.

The four — L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti and Kalyan Singh — have said that the mosque's demolition was a spontaneous eruption by angry Hindu activists. Advani, now 89, has served as India's home minister and deputy prime minister. He also served as president of the BJP. Joshi and Bharti are both federal lawmakers, and Bharti is also member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet.

The court said that the trial will hold in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state capital.

A separate case is already underway involving 20 people accused of the actual demolition of the mosque.

The Supreme Court has said that both trials should be combined and a final verdict reached within two years.