MOSCOW: The ruling United Russia party appears on course to retain its majority in Russia's parliament, with opinion polls showing it set to suffer their second electoral blow in two years. United Russia lost 14 percent of its vote last year in the Russian presidential election, but its share of the vote is expected to increase this year, though not enough to win a parliamentary majority.

BERLIN: Voting in the German capital started at 8 a.m. (0600 GMT) and some 2.5 million people are eligible to decide who should represent them in Germany's 16 states. It will be the first parliamentary election since 2011, when allegations of ballot rigging cost it two seats against the party's capital.

BELGRADE, SERBIA: The polarizing party is set to suffer their second electoral blow in two years. United Russia, led by Prime Minister Dimitry Medvedev, has 286 of 490 seats in the country's parliament, and 40 percent of the seats in the 16 states. Moscow's interior ministry has warned of fraud, with some opinion polls showing Medvedev's United Russia is on track to win with a majority of 40 percent of the vote.

VATICAN: Pope Francis speaks to faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square on the occasion of the Anglican noon prayer yesterday. —AP

BELGRADE, SERBIA: A political scientist is on course to win central Serbia for pride march yesterday — AP

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2016

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa’s anti- government protests have triggered financial intervention measures by Pravin Gordhan and his deputy Mcebisi Jonas as part of an investiga- tion into whether President Jacob Zuma was influenced by the wealthy Gupta family in making government procurement decisions. The Sunday times newspaper has alleged the 7.2 billion rand ($500 million) in grants will go to benefit the Gupta family.

The paper said Public Protector Thuli Madonsela had written to Zuma warn- ing him of his investigation into whether he breached the executive code of con- duct. Madonsela has already investigated Gordhan, his predecessor Nhlanhla Nene and deputy finance minister Jonas and will interview at least 20 top offic- ials and members of Zuma’s cabinet, the paper said. ‘‘Put the reason we suppos- edly嫦因为 they should be- seen and heard as part of the influence of the Gupta family in decision- making orders from an authorised institution’’ (Mandela).

Presidency spokesman Bongani Madikizela confirmed to the paper that Zuma had received the letter from Madonsela and said that it was ‘‘being processed’’. Madikizela said in January he would investigate ‘‘specifically whether or not the government of South Africa has specifically the president unquestionably allowed to interfere in the appointment of officials on the basis of the influence of the Gupta family’’.

The scandal surrounding the Gupta family is said to have grown older seven years after Jonas said the Guptas had offered him his job, an allegation that he did not call for Zuma to resign. Zuma has denied saying, only the president appointed ministers, in line with the constitution. Gupta’s businesses have a political agenda against him, he said.

Gupta, who moved to South Africa from apartheid fall in 1994, ran businesses ranging from uranium mining to computer technology. Gordon, whose family was born in the post-Apartheid period, is said to have been caught up in the net, possibly a political or some other reason.

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin casts his ballot at a polling station during parlia- mentary elections yesterday. —AP

VATICAN: Pope Francis speaks to faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square on the occasion of the Anglican noon prayer yesterday. —AP

BELGRADE, SERBIA: A political scientist is on course to win central Serbia for pride march yesterday — AP

PARIS: Officials say former French President Jacques Chirac has been hospi- talized following a fall at his home. The government said that Chirac, 89, who served two terms as president, attended a gathering on Friday afternoon and didn’t feel well. Chirac is in a state of delirium.

Jean-Yves Le Gallou, a spokesman for Paris police, said that the elderly man suffered a fall at his home in the 14th arrondissement of Paris. He said that he was taken to a hospital in a nearby neighbourhood.

The office of the president said that Chirac’s condition is stable and that he will beinee monitored in hospital.

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South Africa’s corruption watchdog interviews finance ministers in Zuma

NEW YORK: Special envoy of the UN anti-corruption chief has interviewed finance ministers from around the world. The UN anti-corruption chief, which was created in 2014, has interviewed finance ministers from around the world. The UN anti-corruption chief, which was created in 2014, has interviewed finance ministers from around the world. The UN anti-corruption chief, which was created in 2014, has interviewed finance ministers from around the world.

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MOSCOW: The United Russia party is expected to keep its dominance over Russian lower house in elections. The ruling party is expected to win in the general election.

The election of the Duma, or lower house of parliament, is part of the general election for the State Duma, which is set to take place in the second half of the year. The Duma is the lower house, which makes the law of the land and is responsible for passing laws, and is elected by popular vote.

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