Local focus, Global vision

# The Peninsula






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## Amir honours Japanese Ambassador with Decoration of Al Wajbah



Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met at the Amiri Diwan yesterday morning with the Ambassador of Japan to the State of Qatar, Seiichi Otsuka, who called on H H the Amir to greet him on the occasion of the end of his term in the country. H H the Amir granted the Ambassador the Decoration of Al Wajbah in recognition of his role in enhancing relations between Qatar and his country wishing him success in his future tasks and further progress and development for the relations. The Ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to H H the Amir and the officials in the State for their cooperation which contributed to the success of his work in the country.

## Amir sends message to Amir of Kuwait

QNA
DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has sent a written message to the Amir of the State of Kuwait, H H Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, pertaining to the brotherly relations between the two countries, ways to develop them and issues of common concern.

H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Personal Representative of H H the Amir handed over the message when H H the Amir of Kuwait met him yesterday morning at Dar Salwa.

At the outset of the meeting, H H the Amir's Personal Representative conveyed the greetings of H H the Amir to H H the Amir of Kuwait as well as his wishes of good health for him and further progress and prosperity for the fraternal Kuwaiti people.

For his part, H H the Amir of Kuwait entrusted H H the Amir's Personal Representative with his greetings to H H the Amir and his wishes for him of continued success and for the Qatari people further development and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Marzouq Al Ghanim and the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Khaled Al Hamad Al Sabah.



H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Personal Representative of H H the Amir, with the Amir of the State of Kuwait, H H Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, yesterday.

## Assistant to Chief of Amiri Diwan appointed

QNA/DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani issued yesterday the Amiri Decision No. 31 of 2019, appointing H E Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali Al Thani as Assistant to Chief of the Amiri Diwan. The decision is effective starting from the date of issue and is to be published in the Official Gazette.

## Overcoming obstacles facing students a priority: Official

QNA
DOHA

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education stressed that overcoming obstacles and difficulties facing students and paying attention to the demands of parents is the priority for the Ministry.

This came during the visit of the Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs, Fawzia Abdulaziz Al Khater, to the Headquarters of the Admission and Registration Committee in Al Ahnaf bin Qais Preparatory School for Boys, and Abu Hanifa Model School for Boys, to respond to inquiries of parents, as part of the ministry's endeavours to overcome obstacles in all services provided.

Some parents talked about the main challenges and difficulties they face in registering and transferring their children, and Al Khater noted that students will be accepted to the nearest geographical area, in addition to providing transportation and overcome difficulties for parents in this regard.

During her visit to the department of further support at Al Ahnaf bin Qais Preparatory School, she stressed the importance of providing all the requirements and needs of the department in the belief of the ministry that the education of this group of students is a priority.

The Head of Admissions and Registration Department, Warda Mohamed Al Aqeel, explained that the registration and transfer of students is done through the school administrations, pointing out that in case of any problem in this regard, a paper application form is used, which is sent by the school to the department in the ministry.

Al Aqeel called on parents to visit the schools concerned with the registration and the transfer of their children in the two centers, after the Ministry provided them with a sufficient number of staff to support parents and respond to their inquiries, and not to carry out registration or transfer of students.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education on August 21 opened registration and transfer of s tudents in public schools for the academic year 2019/2020, for all educational levels. ➔P2

## QP books full LNG regasification capacity of terminal in Belgium

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Affiliates of Qatar Petroleum and the Belgian independent natural gas transport company Fluxys Belgium signed a long-term agreement for LNG unloading services at the Zeebrugge LNG Terminal.

Under the agreement, Qatar Terminal Limited (QTL), a subsidiary of Qatar Petroleum, will subscribe to the full capacity at the terminal from the expiry of the existing long-term unloading contracts and up to 2044, said a statement.

The transaction follows a competitive evaluation process as well as the approval of the Belgian regulators.

QTL is already a party to an existing agreement under which approximately 50 percent of the terminal's capacity is utilised for delivery of Qatari LNG into Belgium under long-term LNG agreements.

The agreement was signed during a ceremony held in Brussels yesterday by Minister of State for Energy Affairs, the President & CEO of Qatar Petroleum H E Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi and Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO of Fluxys Belgium Pascal De Buck in the presence of Belgian Federal Minister of Energy, Environment & Sustainable Development Marie Christine Marghem.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, H E Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi said: "We are delighted to sign this landmark agreement today to extend and expand our existing long-term partnership with Fluxys Belgium for decades to come.

"We believe this arrangement will further support our customers in Belgium and Europe in general, by providing access to reliable LNG supplies from Qatar and allowing our customers to maximize the utilisation of such supplies." ➔P2




## Qatar sends more relief goods for Sudan flood victims

QNA
DOHA

Upon the directives of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the second flight of the State of Qatar's airlift has taken off yesterday morning to support brothers in the Republic of Sudan, who have been affected by floods since early August.

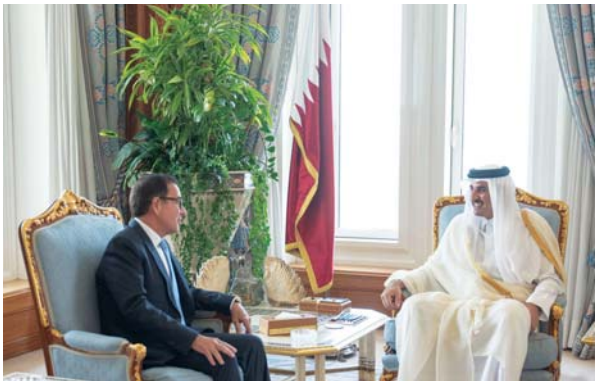
The plane, which belongs to the Amiri Air Force, is carrying 60 tonnes of various relief items, bringing the total aid to 120 tonnes, as part of an emergency grant allocated by the Qatar Fund for Development worth $5m.

The trip is accompanied by the Qatari Search and Rescue team of Lekhwiya.

The Standing Committee for Rescue and Relief Works and Humanitarian Aids for Afflicted Areas in Brotherly and Friendly Countries headed by Lekhwiya was responsible for preparing the relief materials and coordinating with the concerned authorities to deliver them to the responsible authorities in the Republic of Sudan.

# Amir meets Ambassadors of Panama and El Salvador





QNA
DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met with the Ambassador of Panama to Qatar, Oreste del Rio Sandoval, who called on H H the Amir to greet him on the occasion of the end of his term in the country, at the Amiri Diwan yesterday morning.

H H the Amir granted the Ambassador the Decoration of Al Wajbah in recognition of his role in enhancing relations wishing him success in his future tasks and further progress and development for the relations. The Ambassador expressed his thanks and appreciation to H H the Amir and the officials for their cooperation which contributed to the success of his work in the country.

H H the Amir also met with the Ambassador of El Salvador to Qatar, Alfredo Arturo Samayoa, who called on H H the Amir to greet him on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country, at the Amiri Diwan yesterday morning. H H the Amir wished the Ambassador success in his future missions and the relations between the two countries further progress and development. The Ambassador expressed thanks and appreciation to

H H the Amir and officials for the cooperation he received during his tenure, which contributed to the success of his work.

# QP books full LNG regasification capacity of terminal in Belgium

FROM PAGE 1

H E the Minister Al Kaabi concluded his remarks by saying, "Qatar Petroleum has long invested in and anchored LNG receiving terminal capacity in Europe, a key gas market, as part of our supply destination portfolio diversification strategy. We continue to be committed to supporting the EU's energy policies and providing reliable energy supplies into Europe. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the concerned Belgian authorities for their support, and we thank Fluxys for their valuable partnership over the years. I am confident that the successful 'Open Season' process, this new capacity and the revised tariff arrangements will, in no doubt, enhance the position of Zeebrugge amongst the most commercially competitive terminals in Europe."

Also speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister Marie Christine Marghem, said, "I am glad that our two countries have been able to develop a close and successful cooperation in this matter. Qatar is the only gas producing country with long-term contracts for imports of LNG into North West Europe." On his part, De Buck said, "Today is a milestone for Fluxys Belgium. This agreement further extends our long-standing cooperation with our Qatari partners, secures long-term activity at the Zeebrugge terminal and further strengthens the facility's position as a versatile LNG gateway into Europe offering customers optimum destination flexibility." The ceremony was attended by Qatar's Ambassador in Brussels, Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Khulaifi, as well as senior executives from Qatar Petroleum.



Minister of State for Energy Affairs, H E Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, and the Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO of Fluxys Belgium, Pascal De Buck, in the presence of Belgian Federal Minister of Energy, Environment & Sustainable Development, Marie Christine Marghem, and other officials during the signing of a long-term agreement for LNG unloading services at the Zeebrugge LNG Terminal.

# Chairman of SJC attends opening ceremony of Turkey's Judicial Year

QNA
ANKARA

The State of Qatar participated in the opening ceremony of the judicial year of the Turkish courts, which was held yesterday at the presidential palace complex in Ankara in the presence of President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) and President of the Court of Cassation, H E Dr. Hassan bin Lahdan Al Mohannadi, represented the State of Qatar at the ceremony.

The ceremony was also attended by a number of senior Turkish officials, among them Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Mustafa Sentop, President of the Council of State Zerrin Gungr, President of the Constitutional Court Zuhtu Arslan, Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gul, and politicians, presidents of Turkish courts and tribunals, as well as representatives of a number of friendly countries.

The presence of H E the President of the SJC comes in the framework of the distinguished relations between the two brotherly countries in various fields, including the judicial field.

Judicial relations between Qatar and Turkey are growing steadily. In April, a delegation from the training center for public prosecutors at the Turkish Ministry of Justice paid a five-day official visit to Doha, during which they held several meetings with officials of the Courts of Appeal and Discrimination. The delegation discussed the academic activities and the work system in the field of the judiciary in Qatar and ways of exchanging expertise, especially in the areas of training and ways to use technology in justice management systems.

Also, Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) and President of the Court of Cassation H E Dr Hassan bin Lahdan Al Mohannadi met with a number of senior officials of the Turkish judiciary, including President of Court of Cassation of Turkey Ismail Rustu Cirit and President of the Judiciary of Istanbul Courts, on the sidelines of the first meeting of the heads of the Supreme Courts of the Member States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference held in Istanbul, Turkey last December.

The Qatari-Turkish relations have gained momentum since 2014 following the signing of the establishment of a High Strategic Committee between the two countries to enhance cooperation between the two sides in many fields.

## OFFICIAL NEWS

### Amir sends congratulations to President of Vietnam

**DOHA:** Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Dr. Nguyen Phu Trong, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, also sent a cable of congratulations to Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. QNA

### Overcoming obstacles facing students a priority: Official

FROM PAGE 1

Registration will continue until September 5, while registration and electronic transfer is scheduled during the period from September eight to 19 through the electronic registration link (http://tasjeel.edu.gov.qa). The Ministry called on all parties to pay attention to students, and to exert utmost efforts required to start a successful school year, expressing its aspiration to a successful academic generation to keep pace with the developments and requirements, which requires that all stakeholders in the educational process, including parents play their role in encouraging their children and motivating them.

# Doha to host international conference on causes of extremism

QNA
DOHA

Doha will host an international conference on studying the causes of extremism on Saturday and Sunday. It is organised by the Social & Economic Survey Research Institute at Qatar University (SESRI). It will gather international experts, scientists and decision-makers from a number of countries around the world. The conference's agenda includes five sessions, which are going to be on the role of evidence-based policy in combating extremism, assessing risk factors for this phenomenon, ways to control and combat it, processes of extremism and flexibility, with new approaches to measuring extremism and intolerance. The organisers said that the conference is the first-of-its-kind in the Middle East and is part of Qatar's ongoing efforts to strengthen the fight against terrorism in bilateral and multilateral forums.

# HMC testing technology to alert cars about approaching ambulances

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Hamad Medical Corporation's (HMC) Ambulance Service has begun a three-month pilot phase for a new international FM radio over-broadcast system which will allow its ambulance crews to alert surrounding drivers of their approach.

The system, the first-of-its-kind in the region, is a more advanced version of a system tested by the Ambulance Service in recent years. The internationally used software enables ambulance crews to send a message to cars up to 300 meters ahead.

When activated by the ambulance driver or crew member, the system overrides the FM radio channel playing inside cars within the signal vicinity and relays the message 'Warning, ambulance approaching. Give way.' Depending on the registered language of the FM radio channel being broadcast in each vehicle, the warning system will play the message in either Arabic or English. "In a medical emergency, it is vital that our paramedic teams can get to the scene of the emergency as quickly as possible," said Thomas Reimann, Executive Director of Healthcare Coordination and Support Services at HMC's Ambulance Service.

"For the past eight years we have met, and exceeded, the response time targets set by the National Health Strategy 2011-2016 and we are continuously working to further improve the speed and manner in which we respond to calls. The new warning system will help our ambulances navigate through heavy traffic by alerting drivers clearly and concisely about their approach, giving drivers additional time to make way," added Reimann.

The Ambulance Service has consistently promoted its 'Know the 5 to Save a Life' awareness campaign, which is designed to educate members of the community on the correct action to take when calling an ambulance. The new warning technology supports one of the campaign's key messages, asking drivers to 'give way to ambulances'.

"Through a wide range of efforts, including awareness campaigns and community engagement activities at schools and public events, the Ambulance Service has formed a strong relationship with the public. The public is very supportive and understanding of our role and the need to give way to ambulances on the road," said Rashid Andaila, Senior Manager of Communication Technologies at HMC's Ambulance Service. "Drivers can hear our ambulance sirens and see their flashing lights up to 50 meters away, but the new warning system will enable us to give warning to drivers much further ahead," he added.

## Shura Council to attend forum on sustainable development

QNA/DOHA

The Shura Council will participate in the third World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development, set to be held in Bali, Indonesia, tomorrow and on Thursday, under the theme "Combating Inequality through Social and Financial Inclusion".

The Shura Council will be represented by H E Khalifa bin Ali Al Hitmi, Member of the Council. The meeting will discuss the goals of sustainable development, climate change, ending violence and sustainable peace, inclusive inclusion and promoting inclusive and equitable development.

## Shura Council to participate in meeting of APA committee

QNA/DOHA

The Shura Council will participate in the meeting of Standing Committee of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) on Budget and Planning due to begin today and will conclude on September five in Baghdad.

The delegation of the Shura Council is headed by Member of the Council Ibrahim bin Khalifa Al Nasr. The meeting will discuss enhancing the efficiency and organisational capacity of the APA to achieve its goals and objectives set forth in its charter. This is done to emphasize the importance of the participation of all Member Parliaments in sharing the financial needs of the Assembly and to ensure the principles of transparency, accountability and effective management of resources with regard to expenditure and budgeting the Assembly.

## FM meets Gambian counterpart

QNA
DOHA

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H E Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, met yesterday with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Gambia, Mamadou Tangara, during his current visit to the country. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral cooperation relations, as well as issues of common concern.

## PM meets outgoing Ambassador of Japan



Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, met yesterday morning with the Ambassador of Japan to the State of Qatar, Seiichi Otsuka, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country. During the meeting, H E the Prime Minister wished the Japanese Ambassador success in his future assignments and the relations between the two countries further progress and prosperity.

## FM sends message to WTO official

QNA/GENEVA

The Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Roberto Azevedo, has received a written message from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, H E Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, pertaining to the relations between Qatar and WTO and ways of supporting and developing them. The message was delivered by the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations in Geneva, H E Ali Khalfan Al Mansouri, during a meeting with the WTO Director-General at the Organization's headquarters in Geneva. During the meeting, they reviewed relations between Qatar and the World Trade Organization, as well as issues of common interest.

## Qatar Ports see active vessel movement




## Significant decrease in traffic accidents in July

QNA
DOHA

The Planning and Statistics Authority has released the 67th issue of 'Qatar Monthly Statistics' bulletin, which showed a significant decrease in the total number of traffic accidents in July, despite the increase in the number of vehicles registered during the month.

Data showed that, a total of 462 traffic cases were recorded during July 2019, showing a monthly decrease of 20.9 percent. The total number of registered new vehicles during July 2019 has reached 5, 161. The figure showed a monthly increase of 25.8 percent and an annual increase of 11.7 percent.

One of the most notable variables in this issue is the increase in total new driver licenses at a monthly rate of 34.1 percent vs. a 25.8 percent monthly increase in all new registered vehicles (from June 2019).

Light injuries are accounted for the vast majority of traffic accidents during the same month, with 87 percent, followed by severe injuries by 11 percent. However, 7 deaths were recorded, equivalent to only 2 percent of total traffic accidents.

The demographic statistics showed that the total population of Qatar has increased from 2.45 million during July 2018 to 2.48 million at end of July 2019, an annual increase of 1.0 percent.

Total electricity consumption during July 2019 was 5198.3 GWh attaining a monthly increase of 5.9 percent and an annual rise of 24.7 percent.


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# Culture Minister: Human coexistence promotes diversity, multiculturalism



The Minister of Culture and Sports, H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali during the regional conference on cultural diversity at National Museum of Qatar, yesterday. PIC: BAHER AMIN / THE PENINSULA

SIDI MOHAMED
THE PENINSULA

The Minister of Culture and Sports, H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, said that the common human coexistence does not mean similarity in identity but means diversity and multiculturalism because the progress of humanity was and will be conditional on it.

"The search for the common human ground has become inevitable but that all the people have their own identity that distinguishes them and the common human coexistence does not mean similarity in identity but means diversity, because the progress of humanity was and will be conditional on it," H E the Minister said.

Addressing the regional conference on cultural diversity, which was launched yesterday at National Museum of Qatar with the participation of senior officials and representatives of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) countries, the Minister affirmed that the culture is considered a bridge for communication, understanding and progress.

"At a time when the world has become a small global village and technological development has led to the reduction of distances between everyone, the transmission of culture has become easier compared to before," H E the Minister said.

The two-day conference is being organised by the Ministry of Culture and Sports in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) under the slogan 'Culture: Bridges of Dialogue and Understanding'.

H E the Minister also pointed out in his speech that the fruits of technical progress make us hope to promote dialogue between peoples and their continued openness without ignoring the threat to peoples themselves from the misuse of technologies. "We need to promote the existential dignity of humans, no distinction between man and his brother, whatever the difference in colour, language, culture or economic situation. People who respect the dignity of man will be able to establish communication between them, therefore, cultural dialogue among the peoples of the region will achieve its objectives in creating a real bridge to communicate, when we believe and work to promote human dignity," H E the minister said.

For his part, the General Secretary of ACD, Pornchai Danvivathana, expressed his delight to participate in the event which witnesses the presence of cultural experts and specialists in dialogue among peoples in Asian countries.

He also has appreciated the efforts of the State of Qatar in supporting and promoting intercultural dialogue and highlighting cultural diversity among the peoples of Asia.

# Qatar, Gambia discuss boosting ties



The Minister of Transport and Communications, H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti, held talks with the Gambian Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad, Dr. Mamadou Tangara, yesterday. The two ministers discussed bilateral relations between Qatar and Gambia and means of further enhancing them. They also discussed a number of matters of common interest between the two sisterly countries.

# S'hail 2019 opens today; over 140 firms to participate

**Some of the largest and most prominent companies specialised in hunting weapons and equipment as well as falconry are taking part in the five-day exhibition happening at Katara Hall and Wisdom Square.**

RAYNALD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA

The third edition of Katara International Hunting and Falcon Exhibition (S'hail 2019), which kicks off today at Katara Cultural Village, has gathered more than 140 local and international companies from 20 countries, organisers announced yesterday.

Some of the largest and most prominent companies specialised in hunting weapons and equipment as well as falconry are taking part in the five-day exhibition happening at Katara Hall and Wisdom Square.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, Dr. Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, General Manager of Katara, stressed that the third edition of the annual event is the most distinguished at every level in terms of organisation, diversity, quality and innovation as well as participation and the scope of cultural, artistic and entertainment elements.

One of the biggest specialised heritage exhibitions organised by Katara every year, S'hail 2019 features daily auctions of the best types of falcons, parallel events and activities, competitions and food.

This edition of the exhibition will also see the participation of ministries, government institutions and official bodies such as the Ministry of Municipality and Environment represented by the Department of Environmental Protection, Natural Reserves, and Wildlife.

Al Sulaiti expressed his gratitude to the Social and Sports Support Fund "Da'am" for its continuous support to S'hail as this big event plays a significant role in preserving national heritage and cultural values, as well as providing a great opportunity for falconers, hunters, traders, visitors from around the world and the public to explore the field of hunting and falconry making it an ideal forum for exchange of knowledge and experience as well as promotion of products and business.

For his part, Abdul Rahman Abdul Latif Al Mannai, Executive Director of the Social and Sports Support Fund, said S'hail has set a milestone in the regional map of exhibitions related to hunting and falcons, noting that the massive international participation expanding year after year reflects S'hail's success and importance.

While pointing out the close link between S'hail and Da'am, Al Mannai stressed that the Fund gives top priority to all activities and initiatives aimed at preserving customs and cultural heritage.

The launch of S'hail 2019 follows the success of Katara's participation in the international arena to promote the exhibition. Recently, it took part in British-based "The Game Fair" as part of the comprehensive marketing plan by S'hail's organizing committee to reach the largest number of entities and companies specialized in falconry and hunting equipment.

The exhibition is open from 9am to 10pm from today until Saturday.




Dr. Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti (right), General Manager of Katara, and Abdul Rahman Abdul Latif Al Mannai, Executive Director of the Social and Sports Support Fund, during the press conference at Katara, yesterday.

# Attorney-General meets White House official



The Attorney-General, H E Dr. Ali bin Fetais Al Marri, met here with the Director of Counterterrorism at the White House National Security Council, Joe Franciscon, yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed a number of issues of common concern and ways of strengthening cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

# Ashghal opens entrance to Umm Salal Ali from Al Majd Road

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) announced that it has recently opened an entrance to Umm Salal Ali directly from Al Majd Road, 900 metres west of Al Mazrouah Interchange, to improve traffic movement in Al Sakhama, Umm Ebairiya, and Umm Al Amad as well as to facilitate access to Umm Salal Ali.

Eng. Ali Ibrahim Ashkanani, Head of Northern Areas Section at the Road Projects Department at Ashghal, said that a two-kilometre road directly connected to Al Majd Road was constructed to provide a main entrance to Umm Salal Ali area which significantly contributes in reducing the travel time to it and in decreasing traffic congestion created in Al Sakahama Interchange and Umm Al Amad Bridge after full opening of Al Majd Road.

He said that additionally a new road of reinforced concrete pavement was built to serve the water filling stations of Umm Salal Ali and prevent the circulation of tankers in the area's local roads. He also highlighted that Ashghal has conducted a thorough studying of all the solutions available in response to demands of residents and visitors of Umm Salal Ali area, taking into consideration road safety, to finally provide an independent and direct access to the area west of Al Mazrouah Interchange on Al Majd Road which has facilitated access to Umm Salal Ali and diverted part of its traffic from Al Sakhama Interchange to the newly opened entrance road.

He explained that the new entrance serves an important role as huge number of vehicles commute on the road on a daily basis considering its proximity to vital and densely populated residential areas and its role in facilitating transport to several sports and educational institutions, health, administrative and service facilities and commercial centres as well as its role in improving the traffic movement in surrounding congested areas.

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- Ability to maintain and store the equipment
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# Chinese President receives credentials of Qatar's Ambassador



The President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, with Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Dehaimi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to the People's Republic of China.

QNA
BEIJING

President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping has received the credentials of Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Dehaimi as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Qatar to the People's Republic of China .

The Ambassador conveyed the greetings of Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to the President of the People's Republic of China and his wishes of good health and happiness to the President and continued progress and prosperity to the government and people of China.

For his part, the President of the People's Republic of China entrusted H E the Ambassador to convey his greetings to H H the Amir, wishing further prosperity and progress to the Qatari people, and to the Ambassador success in his new duties to work on promoting and strengthening the friendly and cooperative relations between the State of Qatar and the People's Republic of China.

President Xi Jinping praised the excellent relations between the two countries in recent years, expressing his personal keenness and the Chinese government to develop and strengthen relations between the two countries in all fields.

# QSTP aims to commercialise research and innovation

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

Taking the country's technology to the next level, Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), aims at commercialising research and innovation. QSTP part Qatar Foundation Research, Development, and Innovation (QF RDI) in the past decade has developed as a hub of technology and innovation. It is home for international technology companies in Qatar, and an incubator of start-up technology businesses.

"At the beginning, we managed to attract big names in three basic pillars including energy and information technology. We managed to build the infrastructure by bringing in big international names. Along the journey, we supported tech-based entrepreneurship ventures in Qatar through incubation, funding, training, mentorship, and connection to the regional and global tech innovation ecosystem," said Hayfa Al Abdulla, Innovation Director, QSTP.

"We have kind of become a hub of innovation recently but focusing more on the startup journey and entrepreneurs in Qatar. Operating across four overarching themes Energy, Environment, Health Sciences, and Information & Communication Technologies – QSTP's programmes and services are designed to support Qatar's drive toward sustainable economic development and diversification," she told *The Peninsula*.

Inaugurated in March 2009 as a part of QF, the purpose of the QSTP is to spur development of Qatar's knowledge economy. It also fosters an open ecosystem for innovation, research and entrepreneurship in the region and beyond.



Hayfa Al Abdulla, Innovation Director, Qatar Science and Technology Park, speaking to *The Peninsula*. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT / THE PENINSULA

Over the ten years, QSTP has marked as Free Zone and Qatar's premier hub for applied research, technology innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship. QSTP fosters a vibrant ecosystem that facilitates the development of new high-tech products and services, supports the commercialisation of market-ready technologies, and offers state-of-the-art offices and facilities specifically designed for tech-based companies.

Located in Qatar Foundation's Education City, QSTP has access to a cluster of leading universities and research centers. Members of QSTP's Free Zone — including international corporations, SMEs, and research institutions —are collectively committed to investing in new technology development programs, creating intellectual property, enhancing technology management skills, and developing innovative new products.

According to Al Abdulla, during a decade of QSTP Innovation programmes have seen more than 1,000 beneficiaries and alumni, 20 Qatari startups have incubated and over fifty companies at the free zone, 20 of which are foreign based. QSTP investments have helped produce and commercialise 31 innovative products introduced to the Qatari market.

"The vision of the country is really to reduce dependence from carbon-based economy to an innovation led knowledge-based economy. Opportunities are developed, and talents are built through startups - all these contribute to the national economy. We hope these startups to become bigger companies in future that contribute to the economy. We not only develop things but also sell products globally. We aim at exporting technology to the world," said Al Abdulla. "We have created an environment that fosters innovation and collaboration by attracting and supporting tenants focused on development of tech-based products and services. So, in future we will look more in commercialising the research and investing in technology," she added.

Arab Innovation Academy, a collaboration between QSTP and European Innovation Academy (EIA), is the first and largest entrepreneurship programme in the region, aimed at equipping entrepreneurs in Qatar, the MENA region, and the global community with the skill-set to build their start-up in just 10 days.

"The accelerated mode of experiential learning introduced participants to cutting-edge methods and tools in entrepreneurship, from team formation and idea creation to pitching to venture capitalists and angel investors. During the competition, participants develop and launched new tech ventures in a real marketplace, with genuine customer feedback. Since 2018, 323 students have participated in this programme," said Al Abdulla.



The Arab Innovation Academy, a collaboration between QSTP and European Innovation Academy (EIA), is the first and largest entrepreneurship programme in the region.



# Qatar–Afghanistan ties reviewed

QNA
KABUL

The Second Vice-President, Sarwar Danesh, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah **(above)** and former president Hamid Karzai **(below)** of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan have met separately with Ambassador of the State of Qatar, Saeed bin Mubarak Al Khayarin.
During the meetings, bilateral relations and issues of common concern were reviewed.





# QFFD to restore old market in Lebanese village of Douma

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) has signed an agreement with Batrouniyat for the restoration of the old market at the Lebanese village of Douma during a ceremony dedicated to the occasion.

The agreement was signed by Mohammed Hassen J Al Jabir, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Lebanon on behalf of Qatar Fund for Development, and Chantal Aoun Bassil, the President on behalf of Batrouniyat.

The renovation works include the rehabilitation of the frontages of the market, the improvement of the project infrastructure, as well as the development of private and public facilities for the project.

The project aims to contribute to support the Lebanese people. It will improve the urban planning of the area and will contribute to the renewal of the economic movement of the region.

**The project aims to contribute to support the Lebanese people. It will improve the urban planning of the area and will contribute to the renewal of the economic movement of the region.**

The market plays a role as an economic weight for the village and the market represents an important heritage and tourism.

Such projects contribute not only to the revival of the economy and tourism, but also contribute to the opening of new job opportunities, thus refreshing the work market and adding to the income of individuals.

During the speech, Ambassador said: "This contribution represents the ongoing commitment of the State of Qatar through the Qatar Fund for Development to support Lebanese people and preserve Lebanon's heritage and tourism, as well as providing assistance in different areas, such as economic, social, cultural, developmental and humanitarian."

And on the other side Chantal Aoun Bassil said: "Here is Qatar again and again helping Lebanon to hold up beautiful and distinctive, we thank the Emir, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Ambassador to Lebanon and Qatar Fund for Development for providing $1m to finish this unique project, which will always hold the name of Qatar on its walls."

"We in Batronas will love Qatar, and the Dominians, Batronas and Lebanese will hold Qatar's permanent gratitude for its good," she added.




Mohammed Hassen J Al Jabir, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Lebanon, on behalf of Qatar Fund for Development; and Chantal Aoun Bassil, the President on behalf of Batrouniyat, exchanging the documents after signing the agreement.

This project complements the role of the Qatar Development Fund, represented by the State of Qatar, in assisting the Arab brothers.

The project is also a continuation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as goal number 8 "promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all." Which is a priority of QFFD.

# Australian envoy visits QNL



Australia's Ambassador to Qatar, Jonathan Muir, gifted the Qatar National Library a volume of the Encyclopaedia of Australian Architecture during his visit recently. The Ambassador said that: "Architecture reflects both the environment and the values of a nation. It also has the ability to shape the direction and values of a society. "I can see this happening here in Qatar, where iconic buildings like the Qatar National Library, the National Museum and Museum of Islamic Art are adding to an already rich social tapestry. I was proud to gift this book to the Qatar National Library to celebrate Australia and Qatar's shared love of iconic architecture." The Ambassador also thanked Executive Director Dr Sohair Wastawy for her hospitality in showing him 'one of the world's great national libraries'.

# Carrefour raises QR1m for EAA, launches Back to School fundraiser campaign

**Laurent Hausknecht, Country Head of Carrefour Qatar, said: "We have committed to helping transform the lives of less fortunate children in our community by offering them access to quality education."**

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

After successfully raising QR1m for Education Above All (EAA), Carrefour in Qatar yesterday launched a new fundraising campaign aimed at increasing access to education for impoverished children across the country.

As such, during the Back-to-School season, from August 28 to September 10, Carrefour will match the amount donated by customers at cash counters, thereby doubling their impact. For example, if a customer donates QR10, Carrefour will donate QR10 as well, with all proceeds going towards EAA.

Laurent Hausknecht, Country Head of Carrefour Qatar, said: "We have committed to helping transform the lives of the less fortunate children in our community by offering them access to quality education. Our previous campaign was a huge success owing to the unwavering support of our loyal customers, and we aim to build on this new initiative so that together we can create great moments for children most in need of them."

Commenting on this occasion, Moza Al Mansouri, Fundraising and Partnerships Specialist of Education Above All (EAA) Foundation, said: "Every contribution to EAA's educational projects and programmes creates tangible impact in the communities that these projects operate and serve. Our main purpose is to assist and provide marginalized and impoverished children with access to quality education."

"We would like to thank the Carrefour team for their support through this campaign in backing our efforts in helping children access opportunity for a better future."



Carrefour will match the amount donated by customers at cash counters during the Back-to-School season, from August 28 to September 10.

# Doha Women Forum to highlight gender balance

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Doha Women Forum returns for yet another session featuring empowering talks by women leaders, entrepreneurs, industry leaders and life coaches.

This year's forum has been modelled on the International Women's Day theme 'Balance for Better', a call-to-action for driving gender balance across the world.

The event is organised by Future 318 (Faisal Al Suwaidi For Events), in partnership with Qatar Businesswomen Association and She's Mercedes as Strategic Partner.

The forum will be held at The Westin Doha Hotel and Spa on September 29 from 8am to 3pm. The event will consist of inspiring talks, group discussions and workshops, as well as an interactive session to facilitate networking.

Doha Women Forum and Future 318 Founder Conchita Ponce said, "We are very pleased to present yet another edition of the Doha Women Forum for women in Qatar. Future 318 prides itself in conceptualising events that benefit the community and Doha Women Forum was developed with that objective.

**Dr. Francesca Re said: "We are very pleased to support the Doha Women Forum, which has become an important platform for discussing some of the challenges that women face today.**

The success of the previous years have proved that the Forum is the voice of the modern women empowering them to bring about change within themselves and their society.

This year, we will focus on the importance of gender parity, and encourage women who are concerned about gender bias in their workplace or society to be a part of the forum to understand how to approach the issue and manage it."

Dr. Francesca Re, in-charge of Qatar Financial Centre Legislation and Compliance at the Employment Standards Office said: "We are very pleased to support the Doha Women Forum, which has become an important platform for discussing some of the challenges that women face today.



Dr. Francesca Re, in-charge of Qatar Financial Centre Legislation and Compliance at the Employment Standards Office

We pride ourselves in creating a healthy, fair and balanced environment for all staff at the Qatar Financial Centre. Gender equality is imperative to building a sustainable future.

Almost 40% of our workforce is female and we are committed to designing additional policies to foster gender balance to attract and retain female talents."

Nasser Bin Khaled Group Chief Operations Officer – Auto, Ihab El Feky said: "We, at Nasser Bin Khaled Automobiles, the authorized general distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Qatar, are honoured to be associated with Doha Women Forum once again after a very successful edition last year.

Acknowledging the role of women in our societies, Mercedes-Benz has created 'She's Mercedes', a platform dedicated to inspiring, connecting and empowering women to unleash their best.

Through this programme, we aim to support women and their inspiration, and appreciate their important role in building our communities and countries.

We are proud to support Doha Women Forum in their endeavour to increase awareness about this significant matter amongst the women in Qatar".

Doha Women Forum 2018 was focussed on the theme of Press for Progress and was attended by hundreds of women and included distinguished speakers from different walks of life.

This year's event is supported by Qatar Chamber, International Chamber of Commerce Qatar, Qatar Financial Center and North Oil Company with the support of the Embassy of the Argentine Republic.

# ICC to stage classical dance programme

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) along with DPS Modern Indian School and Team Noopura will organise a cultural and classical dance programme tomorrow evening at 7:30pm in Ashoka Hall, ICC Premises.

Team Noopura will present classical dance form — Bho Shambho, Varnam and Thillana. Bho Shambho (Ragam: Revathi & Talam: Aadi) is a padam depicting the Tandava Nritta. Varnam (Ragam: Dhanyasi & Talam: Aadi) is the most complex number and the central gem of any Bharathnatyam repertoire.

Varna means colour whose musical composition brings out the structure and scope of the raga in all dimensions. Abhinaya and Nritta are fascinatingly blended to bring out the versatility of the dancers.

A classical dance recital reaches its crescendo with the Thillana (Ragam: Kadanakuduhalam & Talam: Aadi) in which the dancers exhibit their mastery over the dance form with immaculate precision in their footwork.

Students of DPS Modern Indian School will perform a group song, a classical and a semi classical dance sequence.

The group will present a pair of motivational songs that instill in all the feeling of hope and the courage to fight against all obstacles.

Students will then present a semi-classical fusion of popular Indian classical dances, namely, Bharatanatyam, Keralanadanam, Kalari and Contemporary and finally present a rich tradition of North India — Kathak, which is the Hindustani name for one of the eight major forms of Indian classical dance.

The programme is a continuation of the initiative by Indian Cultural Centre along with all ICC Associate Organizations, Indian Schools and Indian Cultural Institutions in Qatar, to have cultural shows on every week at the Ashoka Hall in the ICC Premises.

Such programmes will also provide a suitable platform and opportunities for associate organisations of different states of India to showcase their culture. Admission to these program will be free for all.

# Qatar Airways inaugurates its new office in Amman

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Airways celebrated the launch of its new offices in Amman, Jordan yesterday . The office opening celebration was attended by the Transport Minister of Jordan, Eng. Anmar Khasawneh and Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker.

The ceremony was also attended by several senior officials and VIPs, including Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan, Majd Shweikeh, and the Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship of Jordan, Mothanna Ghairaibeh.

Other notable figures who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony include the Ambassador of Jordan to Qatar Zaid Al Lozi; Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Authority of Jordan Captain Haitham Misto; and interim Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the State of Qatar to Jordan Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Khalifa Al Sada.



Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, (left) with Transport Minister of Jordan, Eng. Anmar Khasawneh (right) and Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan, Majd Shweikeh in Amman.

Eng. Anmar Khasawneh welcomed the opening of Qatar Airways' new offices in Amman, expressing hope that this crucial step will spur a series of Qatari investments in the Kingdom. He further praised the distinguished relations between Jordan and Qatar, underscoring the importance of overcoming all obstacles and challenges impeding meaningful partnerships between the two countries with regards to the transport sector.

**Qatar Airways operates three daily flights from Doha to Amman, using wide-body aircraft including the state-of-the-art Airbus A350.**

During the media roundtable held in Amman yesterday, Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar Al Baker, said: "Jordan is an integral market for Qatar Airways, where we operate three daily flights to Amman using wide-body aircraft, including the state-of-the-art Airbus A350. The opening of our new offices in the Kingdom comes as a response to the growing demand for quality flights, in addition to serving as further confirmation that Qatar Airways has become the airline of choice for discerning travellers from Jordan. We are looking forward to further enhancing our offerings and services in Jordan and are certain that the launch of our new offices will help us achieve our goal." Qatar Airways launched its first flight to Amman in 1994. Since then, Amman has consistently been one of the airline's primary destinations, with 21 weekly flights (three flights per day) from Doha to the Jordanian capital. Meanwhile, more than 400 Jordanians work hard as part of Qatar Airways Group's team to support the group's development and contribute to enhancing its services.

Qatar Airways entered into a codeshare agreement with Royal Jordanian Airlines in 2015, allowing both airlines to reach various additional destinations around the world. The agreement recently expanded to allow passengers to fly to East Asia through Hamad International Airport.

It is worth noting that Qatar Airways participates in several CSR initiatives in Jordan, including its consistent support to the King Hussein Cancer Center and Foundation. Representatives from the airline have visited KHCC on several occasions to distribute gifts to children currently undergoing treatment at the centre.

## MOCI recalls BMW X7 model of 2019

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in cooperation with Al Fardan Automobiles, dealer of BMW in Qatar, has announced the recall of BMW X7 model of 2019 due to incorrect installation of high pressure pumps. The recall campaign comes within the framework of the ministry's continuous efforts to protect consumers and ensure that car dealers follow up on vehicle defects and repairs.

The ministry said that it will coordinate with the dealer to follow up on the maintenance and repair works and will communicate with customers to ensure that the necessary repairs are carried out.

## 'Marhaba' introduces QF university students to Education City

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Foundation (QF) recently hosted a two-day orientation event titled 'Marhaba' for students and alumni of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) and QF's eight partner universities.

The event was held at Multaqa (Education City Student Center), and served as an opportunity to introduce new and returning students to the various centres and facilities housed at Education City, including Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Education City Golf Club, QatarDebate, and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, as well as help to promote a sense of unity.

Freshman Ziyad Hamad, enrolled in Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar's Business Administration course, hopes to become an entrepreneur one day. Explaining why he chose to study at QF, he said: "I am used to Qatar's vibrant community, and I wanted to stay close to my family and friends. Why go abroad when world-class education is available at your doorstep?"

Enjoying Marhaba, he added: "It was a really useful event as not only was it informative, but it was also fun. It will help prepare me for my new academic life."

Amal Hadad, a student at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ), said she chose to attend a QF university so she could remain near her family. Explaining her choice in degree – Electrical and Computer Engineering – Amal said: "I am fascinated by technology, I am good at math and physics, and it's been my dream since I was very small to be an engineer.

"I attended Marhaba today to learn more about Education City and its diverse offerings, as well as meet new people."

Also studying Electrical and Computer Engineering at TAMUQ, Maryam Al Manai explained that she chose to study at QF because Education City houses world-class universities with handpicked degree programs.

"Over the next few years I am looking forward to meeting new people from all over the world. And I'd like to maintain a high GPA," she added.



Students engaged in various activities during the orientation event.

As part of the event, students also participated in a series of fun and educational activities, such as learning about environmentally-friendly alternatives to single-use plastic bags.

## HEC Paris in Qatar to hold public masterclass on best practices in digitalisation

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

HEC Paris will hold a public masterclass at its Doha campus in Tornado Tower to examine the best digitalisation practices from the banking profession and their wider industrial cross-sector applications. The masterclass, titled 'Digitalization: best practices from banking and their application to other industries', will be held on September 11, from 5pm to 7pm. Led by HEC Paris Adjunct Professor, Roger Hallowell, the masterclass will identify best digitalisation practices from banking, which has been at the forefront of technology transformation.

"Banking has been subjected to digitalization to a high degree due to the ease with which monetary transactions can be moved online," said Professor Hallowell. "While most banks seem to be holding their breath and hoping the disruption will be minimal, a few have moved to the front of the pack and developed best practices. The issue is whether other sectors can learn from the banking experience and gain a stronger foothold in their own digital transformation journeys."

Professor Hallowell is the Academic Director of programs for managers and executives in the fields of strategy and business policy as well as leadership, and teaches regularly in the HEC Paris International Executive MBA and the HEC Paris in Qatar Specialized Master's Degree.

# Compass International School Doha team visits Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

As part of their introduction to international teaching and Qatari culture, new members of the teaching team at Compass International School Doha's four campuses, including their new state-of-the-art campus in Al Themaid, were treated to an extensive and in-depth programme at the Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center.

As one of the leading international schools in Qatar, and as part of premium education provider Nord Anglia Education, Compass take their teacher induction seriously.

Compass International School Doha believes that an in-depth understanding of Qatar is essential for their teachers in helping their students excel in Compass' leading academic programmes.

The Director of Quality and Staff Development at the school, Simon Porter, explained: "We are one of the few truly international schools in Qatar; international teachers, international students and international curriculum from Early Years through Secondary.

"It is essential that our team have a fundamental understanding of the environment they are teaching in to fully do justice to our international programmes, whether it's our collaborations with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), The Julliard School or UNICEF.




Compass teaching team during their visit to Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center.

**Compass International School Doha believes that an in-depth understanding of Qatar is essential for their teachers in helping their students excel in Compass' leading academic programmes.**

"We are so grateful to our friends, Abdul-Aziz and Ahmed, at the Sheikh Abdulla Bin Zaid Mahmoud Islamic Cultural Center for their amazing work in educating our team."


QAFCO
QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY

INVITATION TO TENDER

QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

| TENDER NO. | DESCRIPTION OF WORKS | TENDER FEE (QAR) | TENDER BOND (QAR) | TENDER COLLECTION DATES | TENDER CLOSING DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RFQ-354535 | Supply of 3T & 5T Capacity Forklifts with Operator during Qafco Plant Shutdowns on Call Off Basis – Frame Contract for 3 Years + 2 Years Extension Option | 500/- (non-refundable) | 44,500/- (Forty Four Thousand Five Hundred Only) | 03.09.19<br>04.09.19<br>05.09.19<br>08.09.19<br>09.09.19<br>10.09.19<br>11.09.19 | 06.10.19 |

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures are specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Tender Documents may be collected between 0930 – 1130 hours and 1230 – 1400 hours on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable), from the QAFCO Housing Section, relocated to Training Center Building (near Al Banush Club) at Mesaieed Residential Area, Tel. 44760093 / 44770330.
- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)
  - Account Number : 0013-025828-058
  - IBAN : QA51QNBA000000000013025828058
  - Bank Name : QATAR NATIONAL BANK
- The interested Bidders shall mention their companys' name and Tender number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and produces it during tender collection as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also bring a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from his company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender, while collecting the Tender Document.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Housing Section, between 0930 – 1130 hours and 1230 – 1400 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".

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Local focus, Global vision
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# EDITORIAL

## Yet another feather in the cap

*Qatar is fast becoming a favourite destination for visitors and tourists alike. And Hamad International Airport continues to make its mark on redefining the airport experience for its millions of travellers. During the summer peak season, Qatar's aviation hub focused its efforts on making travel as dynamic, interactive and entertaining as possible, having partnered with Qatar National Tourism Council, Qatar Airways, and Qatar Duty Free to deliver the biggest 'Summer in Qatar' programme yet.*

*With the second quarter of 2019 being the busiest period for the airport, HIA effectively demonstrated its ability to not only continue its smooth and seamless airport operations during the peak season in July and August, but also curate entertaining initiatives that has witnessed footfall of more than seven million passengers traveling through the airport and take part in HIA's 'Summer in Qatar' activities. The airport showcased its commitment to celebrating Qatari culture while also catering to the millions of passengers from diverse backgrounds, reinforcing the airport's passenger-centric strategy that puts the passenger at the heart of HIA's operations.*

**HIA showcased its commitment to celebrating Qatari culture while also catering to the millions of passengers from diverse backgrounds, reinforcing the airport's passenger-centric strategy that puts the passenger at the heart of its operations.**

*Hamad International Airport has always been at the forefront in setting the standard for modern day airport experience ever since its launch in May 2014. Stepping up this experience, Qatar's aviation hub launched the second phase of its innovative Smart Airport program recently. HIA has also started the second phase of its terminal expansion plans to accommodate 53 million passengers annually at the airport by 2022. HIA received "Best Airport for Passenger Experience" ranking from AirHelp, the world's leading air passenger rights specialist, for the second consecutive year.*

*Engr. Badr Mohammed Al Meer, Chief Operating Officer at HIA, commenting on the success of HIA's 'Summer in Qatar' programme, said: "We are extremely proud of the efforts and success witnessed during our programme. For many, airports are associated with stress and pressure to be on time, check in, and board the flight. However, HIA continuously strives for efficient and hassle-free travel, particularly through our Smart Airport program. Therefore, we are able to process passengers smoothly and enable an entertaining airport experience like no other. We will continue to put HIA on the map as an airport with passenger experience like none other, while shining a light on Qatar as the preferred tourism destination with world-class experiences."*

*It must be mentioned that this year's 'Summer in Qatar' programme at HIA stems from QNTC's full-fledged tourism campaign that works with local stakeholders to bring an array of exciting new products and activities to provide year-long tourism offerings to communities of all backgrounds, cultures, ages, interests and budgets.*

*HIA looks forward to welcoming a rising number of travellers aboard Qatar's state-of-the-art facility to experience a unique passenger journey into the world of the arts, culture and hospitality.*

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



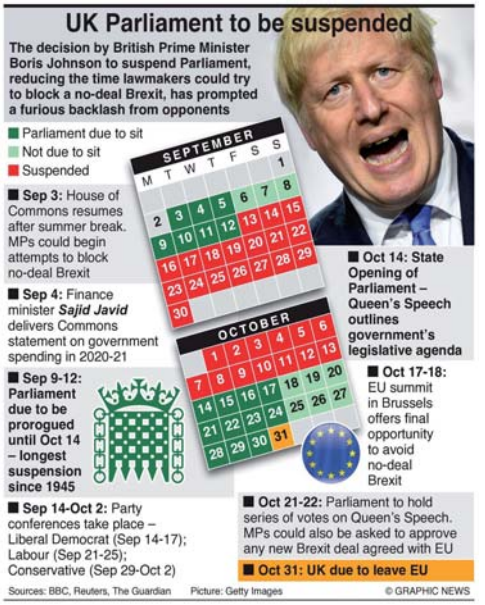
**A strategic development framework has been created, implemented, and I have therefore decided to resign because I believe that I have fulfilled my mission at this stage.**

**Mamuka Bakhtadze**
Georgian Prime Minister

# Johnson's move: Maybe constitutional, but definitely not democratic



NOAH FELDMAN
BLOOMBERG




Critics of Boris Johnson's decision to "prorogue" Parliament by sending its members home for several weeks say it is undemocratic: the Prime Minister is making it much harder for Parliament to influence Brexit, and thus making it more likely that the UK will leave the EU without a deal. Johnson's supporters, however, maintain that there is nothing undemocratic about it, since it helps execute the will of the people as expressed in the 2016 referendum.

Who's right? Is the democratic will of the British people to be found in their Parliament, one of the oldest continuously operating institutions of representative democracy? Or is it to be found in the referendum's Leave vote?

Before trying to answer this question, let's note that it's a different question from whether proroguing Parliament at this particular moment violates the British constitution. Constitutional norms aren't always democratic, even in democracies. (The US Senate and Supreme Court come to mind.) Something can be both undemocratic and constitutional, depending on the details. The question about democracy, in contrast, doesn't require as deep an inquiry (or as British English would have it, enquiry) into specifics.

**Proroguing Parliament may or may not be unconstitutional. But it is certainly undemocratic, since it interferes with the specific democratic institution that has the job of designing and carrying out a plan. That's unfortunate - and it will have consequences for British democracy in the long term.**

The answer to whether proroguing Parliament right now is an undemocratic act depends on whether popular democracy (the kind expressed in the Brexit referendum) trumps representative democracy (the kind exercised by elected members of Parliament).

Some theorists of democracy think that the people's unmediated decision - e.g., the referendum vote - is closer to the will of the people. That was the rationale of the American reformers who instituted referenda in the U.S. during the Progressive era. In their thinking, the people's elected representatives sometimes get in the way of the people's will.(1) The Johnson camp is drawing on these traditions when it maintains that proroguing Parliament will give power back to the public.

But this view gets the nature of democracy wrong. In a system that features both referenda and representative institutions like Parliament, the people's will is expressed equally in an up-down popular vote and in the actions of the representative body. Neither takes priority. And both reflect the fundamental democratic idea that the will of the people should control government action.

The proof that a referendum is not superior to a legislative act lies in the reality that each communicates something very different from the other, while neither can accomplish what the other can.

Unlike the parliamentary act, a referendum can express a snapshot of what the engaged public is thinking about an important question in a given moment. No matter what Parliament might have said about Brexit, only a referendum could capture public opinion in real time. (So do polls, sort of, but a referendum vote asks people to actually make a decision with a real-world impact. This is why democratic systems rely on votes instead surveys.)

A referendum, however, cannot generate a concrete policy plan. Typically, a referendum asks a yes-or-no question. Even if it is a yes-or-no question about the adoption of a specific policy plan, a referendum question cannot adapt or negotiate, and can't evolve according to changing circumstances.

As a matter of democracy, it does not matter that the Brexit referendum did not include plan details. That would not have been appropriate for a referendum. Plan details belong to legislation, and of course the Brexit referendum required legislative action to implement it. That is, the democratic act of voting "Leave" inherently entailed a further democratic act from Parliament. Neither the referendum nor the detailed planning was more innately democratic. Both were part of the democratic process.

It also doesn't matter that public opinion on Brexit may have shifted since the vote, that referenda in the UK are relatively rare, that referenda on issues of international relations are even rarer, or that Parliament has so far failed to work out the details of Brexit. The democratic system makes provision for all of this - as well as for general elections and follow-up referenda, if either of those become politically feasible - and all are equally democratic.

That is why making it harder for Parliament to take further action on a Brexit plan does in fact curtail democracy. At this stage, Parliament is the democratic institution that is charged with giving meaning to the referendum vote.

Proroguing Parliament may or may not be unconstitutional. But it is certainly undemocratic, since it interferes with the specific democratic institution that has the job of designing and carrying out a plan. That's unfortunate - and it will have consequences for British democracy in the long term.

(1) In fact, many of the American framers in the 18th century also understood representative democracy as a check on the popular will. The difference between them and the Progressives was that they thought this was a good thing, since the public can be fickle.

# A promising sign in Italian politics

THE WAHSINGTON POST

Still, the new coalition represents a potentially promising development. It would replace a 14-month-old left-right populist hybrid that had been increasingly dominated by rightist Matteo Salvini, who made a name for himself through relentless attacks on the European Union and a hostile attitude toward the migrants who cross the Mediterranean and toward the nongovernmental groups that help them. Salvini had proved both disruptive in his ostensibly subordinate role as deputy prime minister and increasingly popular. Riding his nationalist rhetoric to a first-place position in opinion polls, the leader of the League party precipitated the current crisis - in the apparent belief that he could win a general election after dissolving his coalition with the more left-leaning populist Five Star Movement. His most recent provocation was his refusal, as Italy's interior minister, to allow a migrant ship carrying children to dock, although he eventually relented and agreed to let 27 minors disembark.

Salvini failed to anticipate that Five Star would pivot to a new parliamentary alliance with its previously hated rivals, the Democrats, the center-left remnants of Italy's postwar political establishment. If the two parties can maintain their truce, their new majority's term could last until 2023, relegating Salvini, his ambitions and his far-right ideology to the sidelines.

That happens only if the new government succeeds, which, in turn, hinges on the ability of the prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, to deliver sound government to a country that has known precious little of that in recent years. Conte served in the previous coalition, as a compromise between the populist factions, and his continuance was Five Star's price for allying with the Democrats. Now elevated from political middleman to protagonist, Conte has already surprised on the upside by delivering a stirring speech in which he rebuked Salvini as "irresponsible." He must follow that up by rejoining European talks on migration policy, which Salvini had snubbed, and by properly managing the country's stagnant economy, starting with a draft budget due in October.

The European Union can make the job easier for Conte by adopting pro-growth reforms to its austere fiscal policies, and by carrying out a more rational and efficient distribution of migrants among EU members. The EU should do both, because a more prosperous Italy, confident it won't have to deal with a migratory flow all by itself, would be an Italy more securely anchored in the EU. Brussels and Rome should urgently seize the chance to work together; they may have the upper hand on Salvini for now, but he remains a potent force in Italian politics, waiting to exploit any mistake by Conte to mount his comeback.

# Biden seen as weak front-runner as 2020 US Democratic race heats up



JAMES OLIPHANT
REUTERS

As summer ends and the race for the 2020 Democratic US presidential nomination shifts into a higher gear, former Vice President Joe Biden's perilous position atop the vast field stands to be tested under even more pressure.

Biden, 76, has consistently maintained a comfortable lead over his rivals. But his campaign has been plagued by doubts over his age, fitness for office and whether, as a moderate, he can be a standard-bearer for a party that has grown increasingly liberal.

Those questions are likely to be magnified in the coming weeks.

Labor Day serves as the traditional marker for the White House race to intensify, with five months to go until the first nominating contest – February in Iowa – in the state-by-state process of picking the party's nominee to challenge Republican President Donald Trump in the November 2020 election.

Democrats enter the next phase of the contest lacking a true consensus candidate, one who can unite a party fractured along ideological and generational lines.

While Biden enjoys widespread name recognition because of his eight years as Barack Obama's vice president and a long Senate career before that, he stands to suffer as voters begin to focus on other candidates, according to strategists.

That may open the door wider for his closest competitors, US Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren – or another rival – to seize momentum.

"Biden is the weakest front-runner in a contested primary in a long time," said Democratic operative Joel Payne, who worked on 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton's campaign and attributed Biden's standing largely to voters' familiarity with him rather than his performance on the campaign trail.

The Democratic field shrank a bit in the past month, with US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand dropping out last week. But 20 contenders continue to vie for the nomination.

Ten Democrats will square off on Sept. 12 at a debate in Houston.

Right now, Democratic strategist Delacey Skinner said, "most people don't even know who most of the candidates are."

Jeff Link, a longtime Democratic strategist in Iowa, likened the primary-season campaign to an American football game and said Labor Day marks the start of second half.

"The only thing that matters is the fourth quarter," Link said.

Biden has weathered fierce attacks from his rivals and his own penchant for misstatements to remain in front. Yet his string of gaffes and episodes of faulty memory have sparked concern over his age and his capacity to battle Trump next year if he is the party's nominee.

Biden is also viewed skeptically among some Democrats who dismiss him as an out-of-touch moderate in a party moving leftward. Even so, "if Biden is able to minimize his vulnerabilities, it's still his race to lose," Payne said.

Beyond Biden, the story of the contest's first few months was the rise of Warren, whose relentless campaign schedule and formidable state-level organization have made her a serious threat to win the nomination.

She particularly has emerged as a rival to Biden in Iowa, a state he desperately needs to win to reinforce his argument that he is the candidate best equipped to take down Trump.

But questions persist about Warren's ambitious liberal agenda – she advocates "big, structural change" – and whether she can attract moderate and black voters, as Biden does.

Skinner said Warren can expand her appeal beyond siphoning liberal voters from Sanders and other candidates on the left.

"She actually is starting to draw moderates. She doesn't feel like a Bernie (Sanders). She doesn't feel like she's out to blow things up," Skinner said. "I see her as someone who can draw supporters from Bernie and from Biden."

All of the top-tier contenders have faced questions about whether they can bring together a deeply divided party and, ultimately, defeat Trump.

Sanders is a self-described "Democratic socialist" who employs the rhetoric of a revolutionary and has seen his support slide as compared to his 2016 presidential bid when he gave Clinton a tough fight for the party's nomination.

US Senator Kamala Harris had what appeared to be a breakout moment in the first Democratic debate in June but has since fallen back in the polls. At times, she has struggled to articulate consistent policy stances.

Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, drew a flurry of press attention early in his campaign, but concerns persist about his lack of national experience. He, too, has had trouble drawing support from African-American voters amid criticism over his handling of race relations and policing in his city.

Joe Zepecki, a Democratic strategist in the general election battleground state of Wisconsin that Trump narrowly won in 2016, said flawed candidates are the norm for this stage of the campaign and eventually the party will coalesce behind a nominee.

"They all have flaws because the process of running for president forces those flaws to the fore," said Zepecki, who worked for Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. "That's how we do this."

While that may be true, the enduring questions surrounding Biden's age and fitness for office may mean Democrats will lack the "safe" choice they have had in the past, whether the candidate has been former Vice President Al Gore in 2000, former US Senator John Kerry in 2004 or Clinton, the former US senator and secretary of state, in 2008 and 2016.

Iowa's Link said the 2020 race remains fluid, and even a lower-tier contender such as US Senator Cory Booker or former US Representative Beto O'Rourke could still make a charge.

The objective for candidates right now, Link said, is to "organize, organize, organize – and get hot at the end."

**Biden, 76, has consistently maintained a comfortable lead over his rivals. But his campaign has been plagued by doubts over his age, fitness for office and whether, as a moderate, he can be a standard-bearer for a party that has grown increasingly liberal.**



Democratic presidential candidate and former US Vice-President, Joe Biden, addresses a crowd at a town hall event at Clinton College.

# It's time social media authenticated its users



K YATISH RAJAWAT
IANS

On August 20, the Supreme Court of India sought the response of the Centre and social media companies to respond on Facebooks plea to shift cases related to linking social media accounts with Aadhaar from various courts across the country to it. In all likelihood, the apex court will hear a matter that affects the very fabric of democracy of this country. This is a good step as finally the judiciary will address an issue that is becoming difficult for the executive to handle.

The government is helpless as all issues related to social media get muddled with concerns on privacy and security. There is a concerted lobby with a trust deficit with anything related to Aadhaar and/or control by the government. While social media users do not think about privacy before sharing information about their children, family and every location detail on social media they worry about privacy while sharing data with the government. When it comes to regulating the identification of users, even the Supreme Court confuses it as a privacy issue. This prevents any clear line of regulations and rules.

It's important to understand why the government wants to link social media accounts to Aadhaar by understanding its objective with a detailed analogy below. The objective is to identify and authenticate real social media users from the fake ones. By authenticating users the misuse of these platforms can be prevented.

Social media platforms have become a medium for misinformation, disinformation, fake news along with information weaponisation. This is tearing down the fabric of democracy by creating and popularising extreme and negative narratives. Information weaponisation can lead to social unrest, and allow terrorist organisations to spread hate and violence.

All this is allowed to happen because social media platforms do not take any responsibility for identifying users on their platform, they do not take responsibility for the content on their platform, and they do not take responsibility for its misuse -- by terrorists, or rogue countries.

They have more than 25,000 data points on every user but they still claim to law enforcement authorities and even to the judiciary that as per their user agreements they cannot the identify their users. Thus, it is not yet clear to what extent is this information safe as the Cambridge Analytica case proved. In the past, there have been plenty of instances where this information has been misused, mainly to influence the electoral outcomes in the US, during the EU referendum in the UK, in the West Indies, in Africa, etc. This can be prevented if users' accounts are authenticated and fake accounts are removed as the responsibility for the content will be established to an individual.

The difference between usage pattern of real and disinformation campaign is crucial to understand as surreptitious activity is not done by real accounts. Removing fake accounts will bring down the total number of users on these platforms, as industry estimates that the number of fakes accounts is high and vary from 20-50 per cent of total user base. Since the social media companies have a user base determined valuation, a fall in user growth will affect their stock price more than a slowdown in revenue growth. This explains the opposition to authenticating users.

Now, that we have established the objective of identification and authentication of users and understood the opposition, let us understand the link to privacy and security with an analogy: the objective is to go from Mumbai to Brisbane. But, flying is not safe especially a long flight to Brisbane.

To fly, identity has to be disclosed to immigration officials, airlines and even the airport's security official. This could be considered as a violation of privacy, but is not. Everybody discloses their identity and authenticates that at several levels. The assumption is that the data will not be misused, it will not be leaked. The assumption is that there are norms for storage, access and usage of such personal data. Distrust is not default mindset for these disclosures. When it comes to Aadhaar linkages with social media, distrust is very high.

The distrust could be with the government or its capabilities to secure data. It could also be with social media platforms. To remove this trust deficit, the Supreme Court can lay down the norms for storage, use and security of the data. Beginning with removing the requirement for storing data that identifies the user. It can be limited to authentication transactions like done for a digital payment. Even for authentication, documents other than Aadhaar can be used, such as a passport or driving license. The important thing is to establish the onus of responsibility for the users' identity with the social media platform.

Perhaps the Supreme Court will create a global precedence, which other countries can follow, by beginning the process of assigning responsibility to social media platforms that is long overdue.

**All this is allowed to happen because social media platforms do not take any responsibility for identifying users on their platform, they do not take responsibility for the content on their platform, and they do not take responsibility for its misuse — by terrorists or rogue countries.**

The Peninsula

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# Russia, Iran blame US policies for tensions

AFP
MOSCOW

Moscow and Tehran yesterday blamed US policies for tensions in the Middle East while Russia said it welcomed French efforts to save the Iran nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif condemned Washington's latest actions in Syria as he visited Moscow for talks with Russia's top diplomat Sergei Lavrov.

At the weekend US forces attacked militant leaders in northwestern Syria, in what a battlefield monitor called a missile strike that left at least 40 dead.

"Together with Russia and Turkey, Iran has ensured relative security and calm in Syria," Zarif told journalists after talks with Lavrov.

"But the United States is creating a new unstable situation east of the Euphrates in Syria including through actions they've undertaken in Idlib."

Moscow has said that the Americans hit the region "without advance notice to Russia or Turkey", threatening a fragile ceasefire in the province of Idlib. Lavrov also accused Washington of seeking to "provoke" Tehran after the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal last year.

"Our American partners are openly seeking to provoke Iran with the support of some of their regional allies," he said.

Lavrov commended France for trying to break the impasse and convince the United States to offer Iran some sort of relief from sanctions it has imposed on the Islamic republic.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right) and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif shaking hands following a meeting in Moscow, yesterday.

**Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused Washington of seeking to "provoke" Tehran after the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal last year. "Our American partners are openly seeking to provoke Iran with the support of some of their regional allies," he said.**

"We are hoping that this useful initiative of the French president will bear fruit," he told reporters. "We wish them luck."

But Zarif warned that Iran would continue to curtail its commitments under the 2015 deal if Europe did not protect Tehran from the US sanctions.

"We would of course take a third step," Zarif said.

Iran has hit back with countermeasures in response to the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, which gave Tehran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

It has been threatening to take a third step in reducing its commitments to the deal after already increasing its uranium enrichment and stockpile.

Russia and Iran are planning to hold joint naval drills in the Indian Ocean, the TASS news agency quoted Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif as saying, *Reuters* reported yesterday. Earlier, Zarif said after talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov that Tehran welcomed a Russian proposal for ensuring security in the Gulf.

# Calm prevails on Lebanon-Israel border a day after brief clash

AP
MAROUN AL RAS, LEBANON

The Lebanon-Israel border was mostly calm with UN peacekeepers patrolling the border yesterday, a day after the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group fired a barrage of anti-tank missiles into Israel in response to an earlier attack, triggering Israeli artillery fire.

The missile attack into Israel on Sunday did not inflict any casualties on the Israeli side. It came after Hezbollah vowed to retaliate for an Israeli airstrike that killed two Hezbollah operatives in Syria and an Israeli drone strike on the group's stronghold south of Beirut in late August.

No one was hurt by the Israeli artillery fire, which lasted about two hours and hit fields near the border village of Maroun Al Ras and the nearby village of Yaroun.

In Maroun Al Ras, residents inspected their tobacco and olive fields early yesterday, some of which were burned by the Israeli fire. Shortly before noon, a foot patrol of UN peacekeepers was seen near the border fence, searching the sides of a road with metal detectors apparently to make sure there are no unexploded shells. A UN helicopter flew overhead while an armored personnel carrier followed the peacekeepers.

Merchant Ahmad Alawiyeh, 45, was in the village with his son and daughter standing in an area overlooking his plot of land close to the fence. He didn't sustain much damage as he hadn't planted tobacco or olive trees like the two adjacent, burnt plots. "This is a victory and pride for us," he said, referring to Hezbollah's attack on Israel. Alawiyeh has been living between his hometown and Beirut since Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000, ending an 18-year occupation.

On the Israeli side of the border, civilian cars were seen from a distance driving through a village. On Sunday, Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi, met with the commander of the UN peacekeeping force, Maj. Gen. Stefano Del Col.

"We will not accept neither attacks on our civilians or soldiers," Kohavi said, adding that the Lebanese government and the UN peacekeepers "must bring Iran and Hezbollah's precision guided missile manufacturing project to its end."

The Israeli army believes that Iran and Hezbollah are racing to establish missile-production factories in Lebanon — a claim that Hezbollah denies.

Maroun Al Ras witnessed some of the most intense battles between Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters during the 34-day war they fought in 2006. Despite their deep hostility, Hezbollah and Israel have largely refrained from direct fighting for the past 13 years.

Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri on Sunday talked with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and also an adviser to French President Emmanuel Macron, urging the international community to calm the situation.

## Damascus hails Hezbollah

AFP/DAMASCUS

The Syrian government yesterday hailed Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah's strike the previous day on an Israeli military vehicle.

Hezbollah, referred to by its supporters as "the resistance", said it had fired anti-tank missiles into northern Israel on Sunday, destroying a military vehicle.

Israel's army said it responded with around 100 artillery shells after Hezbollah fired two or three anti-tank missiles at a battalion headquarters and military ambulance, hitting both.

Yesterday, the Syrian government threw its support behind Hezbollah, whose fighters have since 2013 been fighting on President Bashar Al Assad's side in Syria's civil war.

"The Syrian Arab Republic expresses its pride at the... operation that the Lebanese national resistance carried out against the military patrol of the Zionist occupier," a source at the ministry of foreign affairs told state news agency *Sana*.

"Syria repeats that it stands fully by the Lebanese national resistance and its legitimate right — side by side with the Lebanese army — to work towards preserving the sovereignty of Lebanon," the source said.

Sunday's exchange of fire over the Lebanese-Israeli border comes one week after Hezbollah accused Israel of carrying out a drone attack on its southern Beirut stronghold.

## Oman and Sweden call for dialogue to solve regional issues

QNA/MUSCAT

Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs, Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, discussed yesterday with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallstrom, a number of regional issues.

Omani News Agency reported that the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and ways of enhancing them in various fields. They also discussed a number of regional and international issues of common concern. The two sides stressed the importance of resolving differences through dialogue and diplomatic means in a way that enhances security and stability in the region and the world.

## Iraq suspends US-funded TV

AFP/BAGHDAD

Iraq's media commission yesterday slapped a three-month suspension on the US-funded *Al Hurra TV* for airing a controversial report alleging corruption in the country's powerful Sunni and Shiite religious institutions.

The 12-minute documentary broadcast on Saturday claimed that Sunni and Shiite Muslim authorities were misusing state funds and had suspicious ties to armed factions.

Iraq's Communications and Media Commission said it found the report lacking professionalism, balance, and reliable evidence. It ordered a "suspension of *Al Hurra* Iraq's license for three months and a halt to its activities until it corrects its position" and demanded that it broadcasts a formal apology.

"These steps are tantamount to a final warning to the station, and a tougher punishment will be taken in case this offence is repeated," the statement said.



## Tribute to martyrs

**The head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, Ismail Haniyah (centre) attending the commemoration ceremony for the three policemen who were killed in suicide bomb attacks, in Gaza City yesterday.**

# Israel lifts Gaza fuel restriction

AFP/JERUSALEM

Israel has lifted a restriction on fuel delivered to Gaza for electricity, a defence official said yesterday, a week after cutting the flow by half over a series of violent incidents.

Israeli defence ministry unit COGAT announced on August 26 it was halving the amount of fuel allowed into Gaza from its territory, after three rockets were fired at the Jewish state the day before.

Israel responded with air strikes against the Gaza Strip's ruling Hamas movement. A series of other violent incidents in August preceded that. A further round occurred on August 27, when Gaza militants fired a mortar round across the border and an Israeli aircraft struck a Hamas post in northern Gaza in response. There have not been projectile launches from Gaza since. A defence official said that the fuel restriction had been removed on Sunday. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008 and fears of a fourth remain. Israel maintains a crippling blockade of Gaza it says is necessary to isolate Hamas and keep it from obtaining weapons, but which critics label collective punishment.

Under an informal agreement brokered last year, the Jewish state was expected to ease restrictions in exchange for calm but Hamas has since accused Israel of not fully abiding by the agreement.

Fuel deliveries, which are coordinated with the United Nations and paid for by the State of Qatar, were part of that truce agreement. The Gaza Strip suffers from electricity shortages and the Qatari fuel has boosted public power to around 10 hours a day, up from as little as four.

## Two sick Palestinians face death in Israeli prisons: PLO

ANATOLIA/RAMALLAH

The life of two sick Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons is in danger, the umbrella Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) warned yesterday. Sami Abu Diak, 35, from Silat Al Dahr village in the northern West Bank, is suffering from bowel cancer and is in wheelchair. Bassam Al Sayah is suffering from bone cancer, acute leukemia and hearth problems. "The life of the two detainees is in real danger and could die at any moment," Hassan Abed Rabbo, spokesman for the PLO's Commission for Detainees and ex-Detainees, said. He said Israeli authorities have refused to release the two men despite their critical health condition.

## ICC prosecutor to reconsider decision on Gaza flotilla

ANATOLIA/THE HAGUE

Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court (ICC) decided yesterday that the ICC prosecutor must reconsider decision to start an investigation or not on 2010 Gaza flotilla incident. "Appeals Chamber nevertheless maintained that 'ultimate decision' as to whether or not to initiate an investigation is that of the Prosecutor," ICC said on its Twitter account. The prosecutor must reconsider the decision by December 2, it added. The case began in 2013 when the Indian Ocean nation of Comoros, whose flag Mavi Marmara vessel sailed under, asked an ICC prosecutor to investigate the deadly raid. The ICC prosecutor has previously decided not to investigate the attack repeatedly.

# Saudi-led coalition says unaware prisoners held at Yemen target site

AFP
RIYADH

The Saudi-led military coalition fighting Yemen's Houthi rebels said yesterday it was unaware that prisoners were held at a detention site it targeted with air strikes that killed dozens of people.

The United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have condemned the attack on a former college in the city of Dhamar that the Houthis used to hold their opponents. The coalition's spokesman Turki Al Maliki reiterated its insistence that the Huthis used the building to store drones and air defence systems.

"The (facility) was not on the 'no strike list' of sites in the city of Dhamar," he told a press conference in Riyadh. "Some reports have quoted the ICRC as saying it has gone to the site a number of times. The coalition has never been informed... about the location.

"The Huthis bear full responsibility for making this a location for Yemeni citizens who have been forcibly disappeared."

The ICRC, which rushed to the scene with medical teams and body bags, said that every detainee in the building was killed or injured when the multi-storey facility crumbled, and that the toll could rise as high as 130.

"The facility held around 170 detainees. Forty of those detainees were being treated for injuries; the rest are presumed killed, though no toll has been confirmed," it said in a statement. The ICRC said it had visited the detention centre in the past as part of its regular work as a neutral inspector in war zones.

"Witnessing this massive damage, seeing the bodies lying among the rubble was a real shock. Anger and sadness were natural reactions," Franz Rauchenstein, its head of delegation for Yemen, said in a statement. "People who are not taking active part in combat should not die in such a way," he said after travelling to the attack site. The Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to support the government after the Iran-linked Houthis swept out of their northern stronghold to seize Sanaa and much of Yemen -- the Arab world's poorest nation.

Fighting since then has already claimed tens of thousands of lives and sparked what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Footage showed heavy damage to the building and several bodies lying in the rubble, as bulldozers worked to clear away huge piles of debris.

The UN's humanitarian coordinator in Yemen has called Sunday's air strike "horrific" and said aid groups had been forced to divert critical medical supplies, intended for treating a cholera outbreak, to Dhamar hospitals.

# Looting, violence spread in S Africa's major cities

AP & AFP
JOHANNESBURG

**At least 50 foreign-owned shops were looted and burned early yesterday in the southern Johannesburg suburbs of Malvern and Jeppestown. Police fired rubber bullets at looters as burnt cars were stranded in the roads as violence grew.**

Looting and violence spread across several neighbourhoods in South Africa's major cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg yesterday, after a spate of overnight attacks that appeared to target foreign-owned shops.

At least 50 shops were looted and burned early yesterday in the southern Johannesburg suburbs of Malvern and Jeppestown. Police fired rubber bullets at looters as burnt cars were stranded in the roads as violence grew.

Officials dismissed reports that the ongoing attacks were xenophobic and that foreign-owned shops were targeted in the violence, insisting they were opportunistic crimes.

"Xenophobia is just an excuse that is being used by people to commit criminal acts," Police Minister Bheki Cele told the media. "It is not xenophobia, but pure criminality."

Cele said the government's first priority was to deploy more police officers to the affected areas. Police arrested 41 people for the violence in Johannesburg, while 8 others were arrested in Tembisa township, east of Johannesburg, and one person arrested in the capitol Pretoria, police said.

Yesterday, a pamphlet circulating on social media, encouraged South Africans to chase foreigners out of their communities. The pamphlet, attributed to a group called the Sisonke Peoples Forum, accused foreigners living in South Africa of selling drugs and stealing jobs, both common refrains during the regular flare-ups of violence against foreigners in the greater Johannesburg area in recent years.

Yesterday's violence follows similar incidents in Pretoria last week, in which protest led by taxi drivers saw several foreign-owned shops looted and torched.

Police spokesman for the southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Jay Naicker said in a statement that at least 20 individuals had been arrested "in connection with incidents related to protests within the trucking industry". Eleven trucks on Sunday blocked the road to Richards Bay Harbour, one of the deepest natural harbours in Africa, KZN police said.

In the Western Cape province, several protesters blocked roads with their vehicles, authorities said.

"Several roads had to be closed for traffic from early morning due to trucks blocking the road while others were seen offloading sand on the road," said a statement from the provincial transport minister Bonginkosi Madikizela. Human Rights Watch last week reported that dozens of truck drivers in the country have died in attacks against foreigners since March 2018. The report was released after a recent spate of xenophobic violence fuelled by economic decline and record unemployment in Africa's most industrialised economy.A South African truck owners' association quoted by the HRW reported 75 such incidents since March this year, 15 of which were independently confirmed by the watchdog.



South African looters take items from an alleged foreign-owned shop during a riot in the Johannesburg suburb of Turffontein, yesterday.

Lieutenant-General Khombinkosi Jula, police chief for KZN province, where at least two trucks were torched, said they had intensified patrols along major routes. "We are on high alert for those that are resorting to acts of criminality and claim to be protesting," he said in a statement. South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (SATAWU), which has over 200,000 members, distanced itself from the action. "Whenever there are faceless people calling a strike, there tends to be violence," SATAWU spokeswoman Zanele Sabela said.

Sipho Zungu, chairman of the All Truck Drivers Foundation said that his group had "nothing to do with the strike", but stressed that it was fighting for the employment of South African drivers. "People of South Africa are hungry, they are sitting at home.. while companies in South Africa are employing foreigners... (because) its cheap labour. We are hungry and angry," Zungu said. Labour ministry spokesman Makhosonke Buthelezi last week said that employers "prefer (foreign truck drivers) because they can work long hours at a much cheaper cost, so they tend to exploit them".

Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula said in June that the crisis in the trucking industry was caused by an "oversupply of foreign drivers in the industry", many of whom are undocumented.

# Tunisian candidates start campaigns

REUTERS
TUNIS

Tunisian presidential candidates began campaigning yesterday for the September 15 election against a backdrop of economic troubles and a militant shooting that underlined the challenges facing the only democracy to emerge from the 2011 Arab uprisings.

Among the 24 men and two women running for election are the prime minister, a media magnate detained last month on suspicion of tax fraud and money laundering, and a candidate from a moderate Islamist party that was banned before the revolution.

The presidential election was called early because of the death in July of president Beji Caid Essebsi, the first democratically elected head of state after the popular uprising that overthrew veteran strongman Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali.

The president controls foreign and defence policy, governing alongside a prime minister chosen by parliament who has authority over domestic affairs. Whoever ends up leading the country will face the challenge of a faltering economy and continued efforts to plug a large state deficit and public debt.

Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said last week that Tunisia was still under threat from militant groups including Islamic State four years after two attacks killed dozens of tourists, badly hurting Tunisia's tourism industry.

State television yesterday reported the death of a police chief and three militants in a security operation near the Algerian border.

Meanwhile, unemployment has risen from 12% before the uprising to 15.2% now — rising to 30% in some cities.

Despite his continued detention, businessman Nabil Karoui, who owns the private Nesma television station, was kept on the final list of candidates that the electoral commission announced on Saturday. His political party says the charges are politically motivated.

Several candidates began their campaigns on the stroke of midnight, when the election season officially began, with Chahed meeting hundreds of supporters in the capital's impoverished Kabarya district.Other prominent candidates include former president Moncef Marzouki, former prime minister Mehdi Jomaa and Defence Minister Abdelkarim Zbidi. Abdelfattah Mourou, vice-president of Ennahda party, is the moderate Islamist party's first candidate to become head of state after decades of repression before 2011.

"We want to succeed in order to change the lives of Tunisians for the better and to strengthen the democratic path," Mourou said while sticking up election posters in Tunis.

Supporters of Karoui also began putting up photographs of him, defying the judiciary's decision to arrest him and saying their campaign would begin with a large popular rally in the southern city of Gafsa. The presidential vote, and a parliamentary election on Oct. 6, represent the third found of polls in which Tunisians have been able to vote freely since the 2011 uprising.


The officials visiting the site where a three-storey building under construction collapsed the day before killing 15 people, in Bamako, the capital of Mali, yesterday.

## Building collapses in Mali capital, 15 dead

REUTERS/BAMAKO

Fifteen people were confirmed dead after a day of rescue in the remains of a three-storey building which collapsed in Mali's capital Bamako, an official said yesterday. The residential building, which was under construction but was inhabited, fell down in the early hours of Sunday, and the death toll rose throughout the day as firefighters extracted men, women and children from the rubble.

Twenty-six people survived, Major Baba Cisse, a spokesperson for the minister of security, said on the phone. Most of those sustained injuries, state radio ORTM reported. The government said a lack of respect for construction standards was the likely cause of the collapse. "There are many mistakes... at the root of this tragedy. One cannot construct buildings haphazardly," said security minister General Salif Traore.

## Algeria army chief calls for elections this year

REUTERS/ALGIERS

Algeria's army chief yesterday called for elections later this year to choose a new president after mass protests forced the resignation in April of veteran leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika, state media reported.

State television cited Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaed Saleh as saying the electoral commission "should issue a call on September 15", a move that under Algerian law would come 90 days before the presidential election.

An election had been scheduled for July, but the authorities cancelled it, citing a lack of candidates without naming a new election date.

Protesters had also demanded the elections be postponed until the old ruling elite, including the interim president Abdelkader Bensalah and Prime Minister Noureddine Bedoui, was forced from power.

The army, now the main player in Algerian politics, has repeatedly urged the opposition to cooperate in holding an election as soon as possible.

Algeria's judiciary has meanwhile opened corruption investigations into numerous former senior officials and allies of Bouteflika.


A fuel ship is anchored in the seaport of Benghazi, Libya.

## Benghazi port bustling again despite Libya's divisions

REUTERS/ BENGHAZI, LIBYA

The commercial port in Libya's second city Benghazi is working round-the-clock three years after reopening, attempting to raise revenues for its restoration and expansion.

The port was caught in the crossfire as rival factions battled for control of Benghazi from 2014 in a conflict that left parts of the eastern Libyan city in ruins. It suspended operations as the main gate and some buildings were destroyed and the roads strewn with shells.

Forces led by Khalifa Haftar eventually declared victory in Benghazi in 2017. Repairs and reconstruction have been limited — two out of three damaged tug boats are still out of service.

But the port is now doing brisk business and trucks loaded with cars and containers carrying foodstuffs, motor oils and other goods can be seen streaming out of the main gate near the city centre.

Port manager Yzaid Bozraida said monthly revenues stood at more than seven million Libyan dinars ($4.9m) before the war, though the income had not been used to develop the port.

"We have not got back up to that previous rate yet," Bozraida said. "But every month is better than the previous one, we are seeking to get to more than 7.8m dinars (monthly). We have extended working times to 24 hours."

"All shipping lines have returned. The last one began with just eight containers and its last shipment was already about 400 containers," he added.

Before the war, revenues were deposited with Libya's General Administration of Ports in the western city of Misrata, but the management of Benghazi port is now separate, he said, a situation that reflects the divisions in the country.

Misrata, a coastal city in western Libya with a major port of its own, is a hub of opposition to Haftar's LNA, which since April has been waging a military campaign to try to take control of the capital Tripoli.

Since reopening, Benghazi's port has been receiving more than 400,000 tonnes of grains at 18 docks, twice what the port was receiving before 2014.

## Seven dead as flash floods sweep away tour group in Kenya park

REUTERS/ HELL'S GATE NATIONAL PARK, KENYA

Flash floods killed six family members and their tour guide at Kenya's Hell's Gate National Park, the state-run wildlife authority said yesterday. The incident occurred on Sunday in the Rift Valley, some 100km by road northwest of the capital Nairobi, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) said on its Twitter account. A Kenyan family of 13 had travelled from their homes in Nairobi and the western city of Kisumu for a holiday weekend on the shores of Lake Naivasha, one of the surviving family members said. Although it had begun to drizzle when they decided to visit the national park's gorge for a walk, park guides told them that the area was safe, said Ivraj Singh Hayer, 31. When water began rushing through the gorge, some of Hayer's family members managed to jump to one side while the flooding swept away others, including his wife, nephew, four other relatives and their guides, while other anguished relatives clung to the stone face of the gorge, he said. Two of those killed were children, he added, tears rolling down his cheeks.

## Burkina Faso court jails two generals over 2015 coup

AFP/OUAGADOUGOU

A military court in Burkina Faso yesterday convicted and jailed two generals on charges of masterminding a coup in the fragile Sahel state in 2015. General Gilbert Diendere was convicted on charges of murder and harming state security and handed a 20-year prison term, while General Djibrill Bassole, accused of treason, was ordered jailed for 10 years. The coup, carried out by troops loyal to ousted president Blaise Compaore, was thwarted by public protest but at the cost of 14 lives and nearly 300 wounded.

# India hosts mega UN summit to combat land degradation

IANS
GREATER NOIDA

**The Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification said that the 14th edition hosted by India is the largest COP ever. "More than 7,300 participants have already registered for the event and the list is expected to cross 8,000."**

The 14th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP) will send a clear message through the Delhi Declaration that "we as human beings must be able to reverse the trend and invest massively in land restoration," said Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

"And by restoring the land, we will also be creating millions of green jobs as land restoration is a labour intensive activity," he said in his inaugural address.

At the end of the convention, the Delhi Declaration will be signed among the nations, which will lay the roadmap for the goals to achieved to combat desertification.

Thiaw added that as the issue of land is interlinked to that of climate change and biodiversity, the COP 14 is not just about how to combat desertification, but also about jobs, health, prosperity, security, migration and international cooperation.

He said that this edition hosted by India is the largest COP ever. "More than 7,300 participants have already registered for the event and the list is expected to cross 8,000. Apart from this, a long list of leaders from United Nations, including the UN Deputy Secretary-General will be in attendance," he said.

He added that this edition will also lay the ground for world policies in terms of land restoration by 2050.

"We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of UN convention on desertification. This COP will also lay the ground for the next 25-30 years, where are we going to be by 2050 in terms of land issues," he said.

Thiaw said that this convention is the only global treaty dealing with the issues of land.

"The land feeds people, 99.7 per cent of the food we eat comes from land. It is extremely important to keep feeding the world, we will be close to 10 billion people. The question is how do we continue to feed these people without further depleting our precious resources," he said.

He added that with the current population, 25 percent of the land is already depleted and the rest 75 percent is altered from its earlier form due to the human activities.

He added: "The chief issue is of drought that leads to water scarcity and forest fires, animals are suffering and economies are suffering. So it is extremely important that this conference provides us with the clear guidance to deal with droughts and early warning systems, preparedness and recovery plans."

"The second issue is of the tilled area. With 10 billion people we have ever-increasing demand and finite resources. The world is looking up to us to provide guidance on the fundamental question of are we going to produce more and deplete our resources or are we going to consume differently," he added.



Ibrahim Thiaw (right), Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Prakash Javadekar, India's Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, shake hands after the flag hoisting ceremony during the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 14) in Greater Noida, yesterday.

Scarcity of resources leads to conflicts and competition to have access to lands and water globally. Therefore, land restoration is also a contributor to peace and security in the world.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar said that land degradation is a local problem, hence the solutions have to be found locally but the best practices can be shared globally.

"There is science, technology and international experience that can be shared between the countries that can benefit all the nations that can benefit every country," the minister said in his inaugural address.

"We need not re-invent. But we can share our good or bad experiences, our successes or failures and therefore we can leapfrog to a good start in each country. And therefore this COP is extremely important," he added.

Be it climate change, desertification or biodiversity destruction human action has played a leading role in disturbing the balance of nature.

"If human actions have caused some damage, positive human actions will undo that and we will make world a better place for the future generations. This is the theme around which the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification works," he explained.

Nearly 100 ministers from across the globe are participating in the convention. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the convention on September 9. "There will be a thorough discussion to understand the problem to learn from each other," Javadekar said.

# Ayodhya: SC to hear contempt plea of Muslim parties

IANS
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi yesterday agreed to hear the contempt petition moved by the lawyer of the Muslim parties, Rajeev Dhavan, on the threat he received for appearing for his clients.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal moved the application before the court and the CJI agreed to list the matter.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan had filed a contempt petition last week, claiming to have received a letter from a professor in Chennai by the name of N Shanmugam, threatening him over his appearance for the Muslim parties in the Ayodhya title dispute case.

"The letter was sent C/o. Supreme Court Bar Association and the staff of Supreme Court Bar Association handed over the said letter to the petitioner on August 22, 2019," said the petition.

Dhavan filed the petition through his advocate-on-record Ejaz Maqbool and submitted a letter dated August 23, along with the letter received from Shanmugam for initiating suo moto contempt petition against the professor.

Dhavan said that he had also received a WhatsApp message from one Sanjay Kalal Bajrangi, which he described as an attempt to interfere with the administration of justice by the apex court.

"By sending the letter, the alleged contemnor has committed criminal contempt because he is intimidating a senior advocate who is appearing for a party/parties before the top court and discharging his duties as a senior advocate and he ought not to have sent such a letter and therefore the petitioner is constrained to file the present contempt petition," read the petition.

Dhavan urged the apex court to take suo moto cognizance and initiate contempt proceedings. He said he is not seeking prior permission from the Attorney General of India because he in the earlier round had appeared for Uttar Pradesh in the matters relating to the Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi.

"Also, the petitioner is not approaching the learned Solicitor General of India because he is appearing in the said matters for the state of Uttar Pradesh," Dhavan said in the petition.

Dhavan also said that in view of the facts, circumstances and the nature of the case, it would not be desirable for the petitioner to approach the Attorney or Solicitor General, seeking permission as prescribed by Section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act.

He had filed an application for exemption from seeking permission from both the law officers.

# Court extends CBI custody of Chidambaram till today

IANS
NEW DELHI

A court here yesterday extended, by a day to today, the CBI custody of former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram in the INX Media case.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Central Bureau of Investigation, told the court that they would be seeking one more day of custody. "I am pushing for this because they (Chidambaram's lawyers) are having objections to judicial custody. On the basis of what happened in the Supreme Court at 2pm, I am pushing for only one day CBI remand," Mehta said.

However, his move was objected by Chidambaram's counsels Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Kapil Sibal.

Special CBI Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar then extended Chidambaram's CBI custody in the INX Media case till September 2. Chidambaram, till date, has spent 11 days in CBI custody since his arrest on August 21.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court, after high-decibel arguments betwween Chidambaram's lawyers and the CBI, ordered that Chidambaram remain in CBI custody in the INX Media case and not be sent to the Tihar Jail until the court hears his plea.



India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets with Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the latter's official residence, in Tokyo yesterday.

# India vows to enhance defence ties with Japan

IANS
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on a two-day visit to Japan, yesterday met Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo and said India was committed to enhance defence engagements between the two countries, besides strengthening bilateral arrangements.

Singh also met Japane Defence Minister Takeshi Iwaya on the first day of his visit. He is accompanied by a high-level defence ministry delegation.

"The meeting with the Prime Minister of Japan Mr @AbeShinzo was excellent. India attaches the highest priority to our bilateral relationship with Japan. I conveyed to him India's commitment to further enhance the defence engagements between both the countries," Singh tweeted.

According to a defence ministry official, Singh also discussed abrogation of Article 370 and said talks and cross-border terrorism, originating from Pakistan, couldn't go together.

He also invited Japanese companies to participate in the biennial arms exhibition Defence Expo 2020, scheduled to be held in Lucknow.

"Premier Mr @AbeShinzo's regular interactions with India's Prime Minister, Shri @narendramodi have put the special, strategic and global partnership between India and Japan on to an even higher pedestal," Singh's another tweet read.

# Soldier martyred in shelling along LoC

IANS
NEW DELHI

An Indian soldier was killed along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir following a ceasefire violation by Pakistan, Army sources said yesterday.

The ceasefire violation took place at 1pm on Sunday in the Poonch sector.

The Army identified the deceased soldier as Grenadier Hemraj Jat (23).

An official said Pakistani troops had resorted to shelling of mortars and firing of small arms in which Jat sustained fatal injuries.

Jat belonged to Rajasthan's Alwar district and had been commissioned into the Army in 2017.

"Indian forces retaliated befittingly to the shelling by Pakistan," the official added.

Pakistan has upped the ante at the LoC through repeated ceasefire violations ever since the special category status to Jammu and Kashmir was withdrawn.

In August, there were more than of 275 instances of ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the LoC. More than 220 ceasefire violations were reported from the LoC after August 5 when India abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution.

# SC orders SIT to probe abuse claims against Chinmayanand

IANS
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court yesterday directed the Uttar Pradesh government to set up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the abuse allegations made by a female LLM student against Swami Chinmayanand, who runs the college. It also asked the Allahabad High Court to monitor the matter.

A bench headed by Justice R Banumathi, after interacting with the girl who had gone missing after making the allegations before being traced to Rajasthan, said the girl has expressed grievances and her parents have expressed apprehensions.

"Though we are not forming an opinion on it, but a police officer of Inspector General level should enquire into these grievances," it said.

Additional Solicitor General Vikramjeet Banerjee, appearing for the UP government, said that they were submitting cross-FIRs in the matter. The court replied that the special team constituted will look into both these FIRs.

"We are requesting the Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court to constitute a bench to monitor the investigation. Since the father of the girl has expressed apprehension (regarding their safety), we direct the Chief Secretary to direct the Superintendent of Police concerned to provide police protection to the family," the court said.

The apex court ordered that the SIT will take note of both the FIRs and proceed in accordance with the law — the first FIR was lodged by the girl's father while the other was filed against the girl, charging her with extortion.

The apex court emphasised that it is not expressing any opinion on the correctness of the charges or otherwise.

"We won't monitor anything here anymore. The court is retaining the matter only for the limited purpose, which is to see her education is continued and not disrupted at any stage. We aren't going to pass any further direction on this suo motu matter," said the court scheduling further hearing on the matter tomorrow.

The lawyers, who had filed the petition regarding the safety of the girl insisted on recording her statement under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

# US envoy says deal with Taliban almost final

REUTERS
KABUL

**The US will withdraw 5,000 troops and close five bases in Afghanistan as part of the draft peace accord agreed with the Taliban. In exchange, the Taliban would commit not to allow Afghanistan to be used by militant groups.**



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (centre) meeting with US Special Representative for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad (second in left row), in Kabul, Afghanistan, yesterday.

The United States would withdraw almost 5,000 troops from Afghanistan and close five bases within 135 days under a draft peace accord agreed with the Taliban, the chief US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad said yesterday.

The deal, reached after months of negotiations with representatives from the insurgent movement, must still be approved by US President Donald Trump before it can be signed, Khalilzad said in an interview with Tolo News television.

"In principle, we have got there," he said. "The document is closed."

In exchange for the phased withdrawal, the Taliban would commit not to allow Afghanistan to be used by militant groups such as Al Qaeda or Islamic State to plot attacks on the United States and its allies.

However the distance that must still be covered before peace is achieved was underlined by a large explosion that rocked the Afghan capital Kabul even as Khalilzad's interview was being aired, shaking buildings several kilometres away.

Khalilzad, a veteran Afghan-American diplomat, said the aim of the deal was to end the war and he said it would lead to a reduction in violence but there was no formal ceasefire agreement. It would be up to negotiations among Afghans themselves to agree a settlement, he said.

He declined to say how long the remainder of the roughly 14,000 US troops would remain in Afghanistan after the first stage of the withdrawal although Taliban officials have previously insisted that all foreign forces must leave.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has been briefed on a draft of the accord and will look at details of the deal before giving an opinion, his spokesman said yesterday.

Khalilzad said so-called "intra-Afghan" talks, which might be held in Norway, would aim to reach a broader political settlement and end the fighting between the Taliban and the Western-backed government in Kabul.

However details of any future negotiations remain unclear, with the Taliban so far refusing to deal directly with the government, which it considers an illegitimate "puppet" regime.

Ghani met Khalilzad and will "study and assess" details of the draft, spokesman Sediq Sediqqi told reporters earlier on Monday. "But for us, a meaningful peace or a path to a meaningful peace is the end of violence and direct negotiation with the Taliban," he said.

Presidential elections, scheduled for September 28 in which Ghani is seeking re-election to a second five-year term, were not covered in the agreement, Khalilzad said.

Many Afghan government officials have resented the exclusion of the government from the US-Taliban talks, an issue that was underlined when Ghani was not allowed to keep a text of the draft agreement after it was shown to him.

Khalilzad, who has completed nine rounds of talks with Taliban representatives, is scheduled to hold meetings with a number of Afghan leaders in Kabul this week to build a consensus before the deal is signed.

The peace talks have taken place against a backdrop of relentless violence, even before Monday's blast in Kabul, with the Taliban mounting two large-scale attacks on the major northern cities of Kunduz and Pul-e Khumri at the weekend.

Afghan security forces pushed back Taliban fighters from both cities but a suicide bomber detonated his explosives on Monday in Kunduz, killing at least six policemen and wounding 15, officials and the Taliban said.

Trump has made little secret of his desire to bring the roughly 14,000 troops home from Afghanistan, where American troops have been deployed since a US-led campaign overthrew the Taliban in 2001.

But there are concerns among Afghan officials and US national security aides about a US withdrawal, with fears Afghanistan could be plunged into a new civil war that could herald a return of Taliban rule and allow international militants, including Islamic State, to find a refuge.




Pedestrians look at a 'Kashmir curfew clock' installed near the UN offices in Islamabad, Pakistan, yesterday. Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir has been under security lockdown since August 5, after India scrapped the region's special autonomy.

## India's actions in Kashmir threat to region: Alvi

INTERNEWS
KARACHI

Pakistan President Dr Arif Alvi said yesterday that India's "illegal actions in occupied Kashmir" threatened the overall security situation in the South Asia region.

Speaking at the inaugural brief of naval exercise 'Shamsheer-e-Bahar VII' and 'Tarseel-e-Bahar II' in Karachi, President Alvi alleged that India wanted to sabotage the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar port projects, with its latest actions in Kashmir.

"Pakistan will continue to highlight the atrocities being perpetrated by Indian authorities in occupied Kashmir at every level until the crisis is resolved," Alvi vowed.

The president, who was briefed on Pakistan Navy's war and operational preparedness on the occasion, said the country's defence was in safe hands and that he was proud of the armed forces.

Shamsheer-e-Bahar exercise is a biennial event conducted to analyse ideas that can later be made part of the naval strategy.

Representatives from Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force as well as from the ministries concerned are taking part in the exercise.

## PM Imran: No first move from our side in conflict with India

ANATOLIA
KARACHI

Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday urged the Sikh community to raise voice against India's abrogation of the long-standing autonomy of disputed Jammu and Kashmir region last month sparking an international outcry.

His fresh appeal came at the concluding session of a three-day international Sikh Convention held in Lahore in connection with the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, to be held in November in Pakistan.

Hundreds of Sikhs from Pakistan and other parts of the world, including Europe, Canada and the United States attended the convention organised by Pakistani government, Sardar Ramesh Singh, a leader of local Sikh community said.

In his address aired on local broadcasters, Khan reiterated that his country would not initiate any action, which could trigger a war between the two nuclear neighbours but warned that Islamabad could not tolerate "what's happening in the occupied Kashmir".

"There will be no first move from our side. But at the same time, we cannot tolerate the atrocities in the occupied Kashmir. Not only Muslims, but peace loving people from any religion cannot tolerate this", he went on to say, cautioning that both Pakistan and India were "in danger because of the simmering tensions between the two nuclear countries".

Imran said his country, despite escalating tensions on Kashmir, would go ahead with its plans to open Kartarpur border crossing for Sikh pilgrims ahead of 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak.

The two sides, which otherwise have suspended all other talks, held a meeting of technical experts on the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor last week at the Zero Point — a point at where the Indian and Pakistani sides will be converging.

Kartarpur border connects Pakistan's northeastern Narowal city to India's western Gurdaspur district.

Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara situated in Narowal — some 115km from provincial capital Lahore — is one of the most revered temples for the Sikh community as Baba Guru Nanak spent last 18 years of his life here.

## Sri Lanka to seek handover of ex-central bank chief

AFP/COLOMBO

Sri Lanka will request the extradition of a former central bank chief in relation to a $74m insider trading scam, the attorney-general said yesterday, months after Colombo accused Singapore of sheltering him.

Arjuna Mahendran, a Singapore national of Sri Lankan origin, was accused in 2015 of passing sensitive information to his bond-dealer son-in-law to make millions in undue profits.

Mahendran and his son-in-law are accused of manipulating bond auctions in 2015 and 2016. He fled abroad, failing to appear in court to respond to charges.

## Missing Maldives scribe murdered by militant group

AFP
MALÉ, MALDIVES

A local extremist group linked to Al Qaeda was responsible for the murder of three prominent Maldivians, including a journalist missing for more than five years, an independent commission in the Indian Ocean island republic has found.

The Presidential Commission on Investigation of Murders and Enforced Disappearances said Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, a reporter with the independent Minivan News website, was abducted on August 8, 2014 and murdered at sea.

Husnu Al-Suood, the president of the commission which was recently established by the Maldives government, told reporters in the capital Male on Sunday that the reporter popularly known as Rilwan received death threats from the group operating under the name Bilad-al-Sham on Facebook.

Al-Suood said the group was also responsible for the assassination of a moderate legislator in 2012 and liberal blogger Yameen Rasheed in 2017, and the attempted murder of another liberal blogger in 2012.

## Bomber's remains exhumed after Sri Lanka protests

AP
COLOMBO

The remains of a suicide bomber who attacked a church in eastern Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday were exhumed yesterday after a court order that they be reburied elsewhere following public protests.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekara said the remains were removed from Kalliyankadu cemetery in the presence of a judge, a medical officer and police and were taken to a hospital morgue. They will remain there with police protection until the government provides a new burial site.

Hundreds of people had protested the burial of Mohamed Azar, who attacked Zion Church in Batticaloa town.

## Pakistan allows India consular access to alleged spy

INTERNEWS
ISLAMABAD



Policemen make way for a car carrying Indian diplomats as they arrive at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a meeting with Kulbhushan Jadhav, an alleged Indian spy, in Islamabad, yesterday.

Indian Deputy High Commissioner to Pakistan Gaurav Ahluwalia yesterday met convicted Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav at a sub-jail in Islamabad.

The meeting lasted for one hour, according to official sources in Islamabad.

Ahluwalia had arrived at the Foreign Office in the morning to meet the former Indian Navy officer who was arrested in March 2016 from the province of Balochistan.

Jadhav was accused of espionage activities and sentenced to death by a military court soon after.

Earlier, in a statement issued by the Foreign Office, Pakistan said it would provide detained spy Jadhav consular access in accordance with local laws and international agreements.

This is the first time that the convicted spy, who has been sentenced to death by a military court, was granted consular access in Pakistan.

According to Foreign Office spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal, Jadhav "remains in Pakistan's custody, for espionage, terrorism and sabotage."

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, while speaking to media in the federal capital last week, said Pakistan was obligated to the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) decisions and would, accordingly, provide consular access to Jadhav.

On July 17, the ICJ had dismissed New Delhi's plea for Jadhav's acquittal and release, concluding that India's submission could not be upheld. It had said the Indian spy's conviction and sentence were not to be regarded as a violation of Article 36 of the Vienna Convention.

The ICJ had allowed India consular access to Jadhav and called on Islamabad Pakistan to review and reconsider his conviction and sentence.

# Hong Kong students boycott classes on first day of school

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Thousands of Hong Kong university and school students boycotted class and rallied peacefully for democracy yesterday, the latest acts of defiance in an anti-government movement that has plunged the city into crisis.

The boycott followed a weekend marred by some of the worst violence since unrest escalated more than three months ago, with protesters burning barricades and throwing petrol bombs, and police retaliating with water cannon, tear gas and batons.

Thousands of students gathered on the hilltop campus of Chinese University under leaden skies, taking turns to make speeches from a stage with a black backdrop embossed with "Students in Unity Boycott for our City".

They are seeking greater democracy for the former British colony which returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" formula that guarantees wide-ranging autonomy, including the right to protest and an independent judiciary.

There fear those freedoms are being slowly eroded by Communist Party rulers in Beijing, a charge China denies.

"I come here just to tell others that even after summer holidays end we are not back to our normal life, we should continue to fight for Hong Kong," said one 19-year-old student who asked to be identified as just Chan.

On the first day of the new school year, secondary students were seen singing, chanting and forming human chains, some wearing hard hats and masks. Many primary schools were closed because of a typhoon warning.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang reiterated Beijing's support for Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam.

"China's central government supports chief executive Carrie Lam's leadership... to administer in accordance with the law and supports Hong Kong's police tackling the violence and chaos in accordance with the law to restore order," he told a press briefing.

As for Lam, she said last week she had caused "unforgivable havoc" by igniting the crisis and would quit if she had a choice.

Protesters gathered after dusk fell next to the Hong Kong headquarters of the People's Liberation Army, shining dozens of green lasers at a barracks building. Police used pepper spray to keep nearby crowds back.

The demonstrators showed blue fluorescent powder on their skin and clothes and on the ground which they said they thought had been dropped from a helicopter, perhaps to be used to identify them later.

Secretary for Education Kevin Yeung told reporters that schools were no place for "raising political demands" or trying to pressure the government.

"We would like to keep schools as calm, peaceful and orderly places for students to study," he said.

Students have turned out in significant numbers at recent rallies and were also prominent during the 2014 pro-democracy "Umbrella" movement that foreshadowed the current unrest.

"It's very different from what happened back then. People are more mad now," said Summer, a 20-year-old student who only gave his first name.

Thousands of protesters blocked roads and public transport links to Hong Kong airport on Sunday.

Some then targeted the MTR subway station in nearby Tung Chung, ripping out turnstiles and smashing CCTV cameras, glass panels and lamps with metal poles. Police made several arrests.



Students attend a school boycott rally at the Chinese University of Hong Kong as part of wider protests in Hong Kong, yesterday.

# Japan to set up police unit to help defend disputed islets

REUTERS
TOKYO

Japan is bolstering its defence of a group of East China Sea islets disputed with China and other far-flung isles, with the establishment of a special police unit armed with automatic weapons, the public broadcaster NHK reported yesterday.

The police unit will be based on the southern island of Okinawa, which is 420km east of the disputed outcrops, which are controlled by Japan and known as the Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China.

"Assuming scenarios that include illegal landing by an armed group, highly trained members equipped with submachine guns will be deployed," NHK said on its report. It did not identify its sources.

Japan's military and coast-guard have boosted their postures around the disputed islands but this will be the first time the police have set up a unit in the region to help defend them, NHK said.

No officials were immediately available for comment at the National Police Agency.

The police agency, in a budget request for the year from next April, is asking for 159 additional officers in Okinawa and Fukuoka, another southern prefecture, to boost its capability to respond to situations on remote islands, it said.

Japan's relations with China have long been strained by the island row and the legacy of Japan's World War Two aggression.

In 2012, a group of Chinese activists landed on one of the disputed islets and raised a Chinese flag, to the outrage of Japan.

But the neighbours have sought to improve relations more recently, with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visiting Beijing in October last year when both countries pledged to forge closer ties.

# Australia stopped Sri Lankan boat with 13 asylum seekers: Minister

REUTERS
SYDNEY

Australia's military intercepted a Sri Lankan boat carrying 13 asylum-seekers last month, Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton said yesterday, as Canberra sought to defend the relocation of a Tamil family to a remote detention centre.

Dutton said the vessel — intercepted off the Cocos Islands, a remote Australian territory in the Indian Ocean — was the 13th boat from Sri Lanka attempting to travel to Australia to seek asylum in the past 18 months.

"It is the reason Sri Lanka was the first country I visited after the election, to make sure we can keep these boats stopped," Dutton told the Courier-Mail newspaper. Australia's conservative government was re-elected in May.

"This threat is very real," he said.

# PNG govt cancels Australia migrant camps contract

AFP
PORT MORESBY

Papua New Guinea yesterday took a significant step toward shutting down island refugee camps that have become synonymous with Australia's much-condemned immigration policies.

The Ministry for Immigration and Border Security announced it was ending a contract with an Australian-backed firm running the camps on Manus Island.

The ministry described the end of Paladin Holdings' contact to provide security and other services as "the most significant milestone to date in ending regional processing in Manus Province."

For much of the last two decades, Australia has put migrants heading to the country by boat — including would-be asylum seekers — into offshore detention centres on Manus, Nauru and Christmas islands.

The camps have seen hunger strikes, demonstrations and suicide attempts among detainees. The ministry said the remaining 64 migrants on Manus would be transferred to Port Moresby or found homes overseas.

# Indonesian police ban violent protests in Papua

REUTERS
JAKARTA

Indonesian police have banned violent demonstrations and speeches promoting separatism in the easternmost region of Papua, which had been rocked by protests for two weeks, its security chief and the state news agency said yesterday.

Papua has been racked by the most serious civil unrest in years over perceived racial and ethnic discrimination. Some protesters have also been demanding a referendum on independence, something the government has ruled out.

The Papuan police issued six notices over the weekend, which included the ban on demonstrations and a list of criminal charges that could be brought against violators, chief security minister Wiranto told a news conference.

"Any person or organisation is prohibited from carrying out or spreading separatism in expressing opinions in public and violation of this will result in strict action and law enforcement," state news agency Antara reported, citing the notices.

Police also said in the notices that spreading fake news was a punishable crime, Antara reported.

Police have arrested 41 people in several Papuan cities for damaging public facilities and looting, Wiranto said.

Separately, two students were arrested in Jakarta and charged for treason.

Four Australians who allegedly took part in a pro-independence demonstration in the city of Sorong, West Papua, would be deported, immigration authorities said in a statement.

About 6,000 police and military personnel have been flown in to Papua, national police chief Tito Karnavian said, reinforcing the already heavy military presence in a region that has endured decades of mostly low-level separatist conflict.

"If necessary I will deploy more troops," Karnavian told reporters in televised remarks, adding that he planned to spend most of this week in the region.

Security was being maintained throughout Papua yesterday as police worked with influential people in the region to control the situation, said national police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo.

Television footage showed people cleaning up a partly charred building that protesters torched in the provincial capital of Jayapura.

Antara said four people were killed in Jayapura during protests last week, citing the city's police chief.

At least one soldier and five civilians were killed in the rural town of Deiyai last week, among the deadliest of the latest demonstrations, Papuan police spokesman Ahmad Kamal said.

The authorities and activists have different accounts of what happened in Deiyai.

An Internet blackout across Papua has made verifying information difficult.



Indonesian activists gather in Surabaya yesterday, to promote peace in Indonesia's Papua region.



# Goodwill visit

The Philippine Navy band performs during a welcoming ceremony for South Korean navy destroyer ROKS Munmu the Great as it docks at the port of Manila, yesterday, as part of a three-day goodwill visit to the Philippines.

# Kazakh President moves to allow peaceful protests

AFP
NUR-SULTAN, KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan's president yesterday called for an easing of restrictions on peaceful demonstrations, three months after thousands were detained at opposition protests in the country.

Kazakh citizens currently need to obtain official permission to hold demonstrations, a legal stipulation that rights groups say gives authorities a veto on the constitutional right to free assembly.

Speaking in parliament, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called for improved legislation to allow peaceful rallies. "If (demonstrations are) peaceful actions that are not aimed at breaking the law and breaching the peace, then it is important to make concessions and give permission to hold demonstrations according to the law," he said in the speech, broadcast to the nation on television.

He added that special areas should be allocated for protests that are in city centres.

Tokayev, 66, became president after the shock resignation in March of long-ruling leader Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Polls electing Tokayev after Nazarbayev picked him as his successor also prompted a wave of protests in the country.

# North Korean leader desires stronger ties with Vietnam

QNA
PYONGYANG

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has voiced hope for stronger ties with Vietnam in a message to mark a national holiday of the Southeast Asian country.

Kim expressed "belief that the friendly and cooperative ties between our two parties and countries with a long history and tradition would as ever grow stronger," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

In the message, Kim cited his first state visit to Vietnam in March, which he said provided an "important occasion" in strengthening and developing bilateral ties and friendship, the KCNA said.

In late February, Kim visited Vietnam for his second summit with US President Donald Trump.

# Solomon Islands eyes shift in diplomatic ties to China from Taiwan

REUTERS
SYDNEY

The Solomon Islands, one of Taiwan's few remaining diplomatic allies, has formed a team of ministers to talk to Beijing ahead of a possible switch in ties that could be unveiled as early as this week, the chief of a parliamentary panel said.

The Pacific island nation has recognised self-ruled Taiwan since 1983 but would be a prized chip for China in its bid to peel away the allies of what it considers a wayward province with no right to state-to-state ties, taking their number to 16.

"There's a certain thinking with the current government and executive to switch," Peter Kenilorea, an opposition lawmaker who chairs a foreign relations parliamentary committee, said.

"The amount of money that has already been spent by the government on this is quite telling." A task force charged with evaluating the Taiwan ties returned from a tour of Pacific nations allied to China just before a mid-August visit to Beijing by eight Solomons ministers and the prime minister's private secretary.

"It doesn't take much imagination to work out what the task force will recommend," added Kenilorea, whose panel will review the recommendations.

The task force, set up by new Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare after a general election in April, could present its recommendations as early as this week, parliament schedules show.

The government has said the ministerial group only visited Beijing. Both the task force and panel of ministers were clearly leaning towards Beijing, said a government lawmaker who also did not rule out the possibility of a surprise.

# Johnson threatens election if MPs block Brexit plan

REUTERS
LONDON

**Lawmakers opposed to a no-deal Brexit will seek today to take control of parliamentary time to pass legislation which would force Johnson to seek a three-month delay to Brexit.**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson implicitly warned lawmakers yesterday that he would seek an election if they tied his hands on Brexit, ruling out ever countenancing a further delay to Britain's departure from the European Union.

Johnson's promise to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union on October 31 with or without a divorce deal has propelled the nation towards constitutional crisis and confrontation with the bloc's 27 other members.

With less than 60 days before a possible no-deal exit, an alliance of opposition lawmakers are plotting with rebels in Johnson's ruling Conservative Party to block that and force him to delay Brexit for three months.

But Johnson, who made his name as an EU-bashing journalist in Brussels before entering politics, said he would never do that, after his predecessor Theresa May twice postponed Brexit.

"I want everybody to know there are no circumstances in which I will ask Brussels to delay: we are leaving on 31st October, no ifs or buts," Johnson said in a hastily-organised statement at a lectern outside Number 10 Downing Street.

"We will not accept any attempt to go back on our promises," Johnson added. "I don't want an election. You don't want an election. Let's get on with the people's agenda." Britain's Brexit dilemma is its most consequential political decision since World War Two.

Opponents of a no-deal exit say it would be a disaster for the economy, while Brexit supporters are eager to cut Britain free from what they see as a doomed experiment in integration that has seen Europe fall behind China and the United States.

Johnson, the face of the Vote Leave campaign in the 2016 referendum, said that if lawmakers voted to delay Brexit they would "plainly chop the legs out from under the UK position and make any further negotiation absolutely impossible".

If parliament defeats the government on Brexit, a vote on holding an election will be held on Wednesday with an election date of October 14, according to a senior government source.

The intervention by Johnson was part of the high-stakes political chess game over Brexit ahead of parliament's return from its summer break on Tuesday.

Rebels and opponents of the government say Johnson is betting on an election that he will cast as being forced on him by opponents of Brexit in parliament.

Lawmakers opposed to a no-deal Brexit will seek today to take control of parliamentary time on Wednesday to pass legislation which would force Johnson to seek a three-month delay to Brexit.




Anti-Brexit campaigners and pro-EU protesters gather outside the Cabinet Office in London, yesterday.

More than three years since the United Kingdom voted 52-48% to leave the EU, it is still unclear on what terms, or indeed whether, Brexit will take place.

After Johnson's enforcers warned rebels they would be kicked out of the party if they defied him, speculation mounted he would call for an election just days before an EU summit due on October 17-18.

Under British law, two-thirds of lawmakers must support holding an early election, and Johnson is not certain to get that backing. The United Kingdom has held a variety of extraordinary votes in recent years. In 2014, Scots rejected independence in a referendum; in 2015, then prime minister David Cameron won a surprise majority on a pledge to hold an EU referendum but lost the referendum the following year.

After winning the top job in the chaos following the referendum, May bet on a 2017 snap election but lost her majority. Johnson took over from May in July after she failed three times to get a Brexit deal through parliament.

The default position is that Britain will leave on October 31 without a deal unless a divorce agreement is struck with the bloc and ratified by the British parliament or legislation is passed to delay or revoke the departure notice.

## Ukraine leader plans land reform, large privatisations

REUTERS
KIEV

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy ordered his new government to submit a draft law for land market reform by the start of October and to prepare large-scale privatisations of state companies starting in April next year.

Zelenskiy has pledged to lift a longstanding ban on the sale of farmland, a move that supporters say will unlock enormous opportunities for investment in the agriculture sector of one of the world's largest grain exporters.

It is part of a push to make Ukraine more attractive to investors and tackle entrenched corruption. The country's economy has been propped up by Western aid since the 2014 Maidan protests and the outbreak of a conflict with Russian-backed forces in the eastern Donbass region of Ukraine.

Speaking at a televised meeting alongside his newly appointed Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk, Zelenskiy said he wanted parliament to "adopt a law on the agricultural land market and lift the moratorium on the sale of land by December 1, 2019.

## German minister calls colonial-era deaths in Namibia "genocide"

REUTERS
BERLIN

A German minister has described the slaughter of Herero and Nama tribes people in Namibia more than a century ago as genocide, one of the most senior government members to use the term while compensation claims are under discussion.

On a trip to the southern African nation, Development Minister Gerd Mueller said, "It is our job not to forget but to work through the German colonial history and strengthen the reconciliation process."

"It is in the meantime clear that the crimes and abominations from 1904 to 1908 were what we today describe as genocide," Mueller added.

# Italy seizes rescue vessel, says migrants to disembark

AFP
ROME



Migrants rest after arriving on rescue ship Eleonore at the Italian port of Pozzallo, despite a ban by the Italian authorities, yesterday.

Italian authorities yesterday seized the charity rescue vessel Eleonore, disembarking the around 100 migrants aboard after it entered Italian territorial waters despite a ban.

"Now we are in a safe port," Eleonore's captain Claus-Peter Reisch tweeted, before adding "now our ship is confiscated" and inviting contributions for a new one.

The ship, operated by German charity Lifeline, has been at sea for eight days waiting for a safe port to dock after rescuing over 100 migrants in distress while crossing the Mediterranean.

Another rescue vessel, the Mare Jonio, yesterday said it would disembark its 31 rescued migrants.

"We have just been informed that the Italian coastguard will soon disembark 'for health reasons' the last 31 people on board," Mediterranea Saving Lives, which operates the vessel, tweeted.

"Their odyssey is over and a bit of humanity can be seen on the horizon. Welcome to Europe!" the charity tweeted, with the vessel currently off the coast of Italy's southern island Lampedusa.

Three charity vessels are currently banned from entering Italian territorial waters in accordance with the hardline politics of the outgoing League-Five Star Movement coalition government.

Italy customs officers yesterday seized the Eleonore as part of the legislation.

Captain Reisch said he headed for Italy as "the situation on board is life-threatening" because of heavy rain overnight and stormy seas.

The Mare Jonio rescued 98 people in distress off Libya last week, with 67 vulnerable people disembarked to Italy, including women, children and urgent medical cases, spokesman Luca Faenzi said.

A third vessel, the Alan Kurdi operated by German charity Sea Eye, was yesterday sailing between Malta and Italy after also being banned from Italian waters by outgoing far-right interior minister Matteo Salvini.

Salvini, who is being removed from the government after he tried to bring it down, issued a tough security decree earlier this year which fines rescue vessels a million euros and provides for them to be seized and their captains prosecuted if they enter Italian waters without authorisation.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is in talks to form a new government without Salvini.




German Chancellor Angela Merkel (second right) and CDU party leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (left) pose with the party's top candidates in Saxony and Brandenburg states during a leadership meeting at the CDU headquarters in Berlin, yesterday.

## Merkel's party rules out working with far-right

AP/BERLIN

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right party has ruled out working with a far-right rival that took a quarter of the vote in two regional elections.

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, the leader of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, said yesterday that the outcome in the eastern state of Saxony was a "difficult result." The CDU received 32.1% of the vote, against 27.5% for the far-right Alternative for Germany. The environmentalist Green party stands the strongest chance of partnering with the Union, an option polls suggest would also be most likely at the national level if there were a general election.

Alternative for Germany received its strongest support from men in rural areas. That trend was mirrored in neighbouring Brandenburg state, where it took 23.5%, coming behind the Social Democrats who took 26.2%.

## Lithuania summons Chinese envoy over HK incident

AFP
VILNIUS

Lithuania yesterday summoned China's ambassador over the involvement of embassy staff in an incident at a rally in Vilnius last month backing Hong Kong's pro-democracy protesters.

Embassy staff "were involved in organising unlawful actions" when counter-demonstrators approached the rally, the foreign ministry said.

On August 23, more than a hundred Lithuanians linked hands in the capital's central square, in solidarity with Hong Kong activists holding a similar demonstration on the same day.

Counter-demonstrators waving Chinese flags approached the rally in Vilnius, triggering a disturbance and police later fined two Chinese citizens for disturbing public order. Lithuania's Foreign Minister Linas Linkevicius said yesterday that some Chinese diplomats "were more active than they should be".

"Some diplomats crossed limits, (behaving in ways) that are incompatible with their diplomatic status," the minister said.

"We expressed regret and urged them to make sure that similar actions are not repeated." The Chinese embassy in Vilnius rejected the accusations, insisting that the counter-demonstration was a "spontaneous action" by Chinese citizens who had "no intention to disturb the activities commemorating the 'Baltic Way.'" "The rights of expression of the Chinese citizens in Lithuania should be respected and protected," it said.

# Poland opposes Trump bid for Russia's return to G7

AFP
WARSAW

Poland's president yesterday opposed a proposal by US President Donald Trump to reintegrate Russia into the elite G7 group, insisting that "business as usual" was unacceptable given Moscow's occupation of Ukrainian territory.

"Should we have a business as usual approach towards Russia?... I believe that we cannot under the current circumstances," President Andrzej Duda told reporters at a joint press conference with visiting US Vice President Mike Pence.

The issue of Russia's reintegration into the G7 group of the world's rich nations divided leaders at its summit last week in France, as Trump pushed for Moscow to be allowed back after its 2014 expulsion.

Russia was expelled from what was then the Group of Eight after it annexed Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, a move never recognised by the international community.

But Trump, who will host next year's G7 summit, said he would invite Russia to the event, a move supported by France but criticised by Britain and Germany. Poland is not a G7 member.

Speaking alongside Duda yesterday, Pence struck a different tone, insisting that it was crucial to "remain vigilant" towards Russia.

He accused Moscow of attempting to meddle in elections and use its oil and gas supplies to "divide our alliance", in an apparent reference to the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline set to send Russian gas to Germany. Washington and Warsaw, among others, oppose the pipeline, fearing it will increase Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies which Moscow could then use to exert political pressure.

Poland has long cultivated close ties with the US, which it regards as the primary guarantor of its security within the NATO alliance and as a bulwark against Russia, its Soviet-era master with whom tensions still run high.

Pence also said he had discussed the "importance of judicial independence" with Duda in the wake of a string of controversial judicial reforms pushed through by Poland's right-wing government since taking office in 2015.

The EU has slammed the measures as a threat to the rule of law and ultimately democracy.

Pence also said that Poles travelling to the US would soon be covered by Washington's visa-waiver programme, allowing them unrestricted entry.

"We are literally weeks away from being able to make that a reality," Pence said.

# Georgian Prime Minister announces resignation




REUTERS
TBILISI

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze **(pictured)** announced his resignation yesterday after little more than a year in the job and said the country must not be riven by political divisions that could play into Russia's hands.

Bakhtadze's resignation comes as the ruling Georgian Dream party's popularity has sagged following the brutal dispersal of an anti-Kremlin protest in Tbilisi on June 21.

**The Prime Minister said he was stepping down because he had accomplished what he set out to do in the job.**

Parliamentary elections are due in October next year.

Bakhtadze, 37, a former finance minister who became prime minister in June last year, used a lengthy post on Facebook announcing his resignation to warn against damaging divisions in the country.

"...we must always remember that the only one who will win from the polarisation of Georgian society will be an occupying country," he wrote.

Georgia fought and lost a short war with Russia in 2008, prompting the countries to cut diplomatic ties.

Russia went on to recognise the independence of two breakaway Georgian regions where it now has troops garrisoned.

Ties with Russia are therefore a politically divisive issue and a rally outside parliament this summer when a visiting Russian lawmaker addressed the chamber from the speaker's chair, descended into violent clashes with police.

The opposition, which says the current pro-Western government is too soft on Moscow, said that police used excessive force. The government said police were right to use force as protesters were trying to storm parliament.

Bakhtadze's warning also appeared a nod to divisions over domestic political issues such as media freedom and economic management.

The prime minister said he was stepping down because he had accomplished what he set out to do in the job.

"A strategic development framework has been created, implemented, and I have therefore decided to resign because I believe that I have fulfilled my mission at this stage," Bakhtadze said.

The ruling party is due to nominate a new prime minister today.

## Greece moves migrants from overcrowded camp

AFP
MORIA

Greek officials and UN workers evacuated the first group of what will be hundreds of migrants from the Greek island of Lesbos yesterday, where overcrowding and a crushing heat have made conditions unbearable.

A first group of 635 Afghans at the Moria camp were transferred early yesterday towards the north of Greece, boarding police buses under the supervision of UN refugee agency workers.

"I hope to get out of this quickly," 21-year-old Mohamed Akberi, who arrived at the camp five days earlier, said.

The migrants were taken onto a ship, the Caldera Vista, bound for the port of Thessaloniki on mainland Greece.

Another 700 migrants are to be transferred, following a decision taken by the Greek government at an emergency meeting on Saturday.

The new conservative administration agreed on the emergency transfer of the migrants, prioritising unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable people.

But they also agreed to do away with appeal procedures for asylum seekers to facilitate their swift return to Turkey.

Greece will also step up border patrols with the help of the EU border control agency Frontex.

Journalists could see regular Greek police boat patrols off the north end of the island, where the landings are most frequent.

Tension has grown between the two countries over the steady flow of migrants arriving on the Greek islands in the Aegean, which lie just off the Turkish coast.

Since the EU signed an agreement with Turkey in March 2016, tighter checks have made access to the Greek islands from Turkey more difficult.

But in recent months, nearly a hundred people on average have managed to make the crossing every day.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees said that the island of Lesbos was sheltering nearly 11,000 people at the end of August — four times its capacity.



Refugees and migrants board a ship at the port of Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, yesterday.

More than 3,000 people arrived there in August alone, the agency said.

And last Thursday, 13 boats carrying 540 people, 240 of them children, landed at the island — an unprecedented surge in arrivals that has alarmed the relatively new conservative government.

Migrants at the Moria camp have complained that the hygiene conditions are substandard and that there are no tents for the new arrivals.

In Brussels, the EU's migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos said the Commission was ready to help Greece in any way it could with the transfers.

The EU remains committed to its 2016 agreement with Turkey and is ready to keep working with Ankara, he added.

## Baby girl born to brain-dead mother

REUTERS
PRAGUE

When a helicopter rushed an unconscious Czech woman who had suffered a severe stroke to hospital in April, her chances of survival were slim — and those of the foetus she had carried in her womb for 15 weeks little better.

And yet, on August 15, against all odds, a healthy baby girl was born by caesarean section — weighing 2.13 kg and measuring 42 cm — to her brain-dead mother, setting a new record in the process, Brno's University Hospital said yesterday.

It added that the 117 days that she had been kept alive in the womb — a process fraught with potential complications - were believed to be a record for the longest artificially sustained pregnancy in a brain-dead mother.

The mother, whose identity was not revealed, had been declared brain-dead shortly after reaching the hospital, upon which doctors immediately began the struggle to save her child.

They put the 27-year-old woman on artificial life support to keep the pregnancy going, and even regularly moved her legs to simulate walking to help the child's growth.

After the delivery in the 34th week of gestation, with the husband and other family members present, medical staff disconnected the mother's life support systems and allowed her to die.

"This has really been an extraordinary case when the whole family stood together ... without their support and their interest it would never have finished this way," Pavel Ventruba, head of gynaecology and obstetrics at the hospital, told reporters.

## Giant Trump balloon flies over Copenhagen

BLOOMBERG/COPENHAGEN

A giant Trump balloon hovered above Copenhagen's tourist hotspot yesterday as part of a series of demonstrations planned for the US president's now canceled visit to Denmark.

Thousands of people said on social media they planned to attend a Stop Trump rally at the US embassy planned for later in the day. A pro-Trump parade organised by a group calling itself Danes for Donald Trump attracted less interest on Facebook.

Trump canceled his September 2 to 3 state visit after his attempt to buy Greenland was rebuffed. The controversy even prompted a viral video by a Danish lawmaker schooling Trump on the merits of wind energy.

## Bad weather hampers Norway copter crash probe

AP/OSLO

Authorities in Norway said bad weather is hampering investigators trying to determine the cause of a helicopter crash in a remote Arctic area of the country in which six people were killed.

Kaare Halvorsen of the Norwegian Accident Investigation Board said yesterday that getting there by helicopter "depends on the visibility." There is light to heavy rain in the area.

The Airbus AS350 helicopter, which was transporting five Norwegian youth and a Swedish pilot to and from a nearby music festival, crashed southwest of Alta on Saturday.

The company later grounded its 25-strong fleet out of respect for the relatives of the victims and its staff.

## Czech prosecutors drop charges against PM

BLOOMBERG
PRAGUE

A Prague prosecutor decided against charging Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis in a fraud case, a major step toward clearing the biggest political risk for the billionaire leader.

If unchallenged by the prosecutor's bosses, the move would be a U-turn in the investigation of the legality of a $2m European Union subsidy to one of Babis's former companies more than a decade ago, before he became a politician.

The premier has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing as the four-year probe triggered the biggest anti-government protests since 1989.

The allegations forced Babis into a minority government as most mainstream parties refused to cooperate with him.

The prosecutor supervising the probe, in which the police recommended Babis face trial, has submitted his final decision that shows he's "changed his original legal opinion," his office said in a statement.

The motion will now be reviewed by the chief Prague prosecutor.

While authorities said they won't comment further until the review is over, Prague prosecutor's spokesman, Ales Cimbala, told public television that a formal decision hasn't been issued and the case hasn't been officially shelved "at this point." He didn't answer phone calls seeking comment.

Babis also faces European Commission scrutiny over a potential conflict of interest.

These probes have been the biggest challenge for the second-richest Czech, whose party still leads in opinion polls by a wide margin, helped by a boost in state spending on pensions, public wages and investment.

After he dominated the 2017 elections, Babis formed a minority coalition with the Social Democrats.

The government has ruled with tacit parliamentary backing from the Communist Party.

The prime minister said he hasn't received any official information about the prosecutors' latest steps and repeated that he and his family had been wrongly accused.

Czech largest opposition parties urged the prosecutor to explain his decision,.



The portrait of BWT Arden's French driver Anthoine Hubert is displayed at the entrance of the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Spa, in Belgium.

## Belgium opens probe into F2 race death

AFP/BRUSSELS

Belgian authorities opened a manslaughter inquiry yesterday two days after the death of French racing driver Anthoine Hubert in a Formula Two race.

It is a standard practice in Belgium to launch a probe into "accidental homicide by person unknown" after any fatal road accident, and does not in itself imply criminal charges are likely.

The 22-year-old was killed on Saturday in a crash on the Spa-Francorchamps circuit.

"For the moment, there's nothing to suggest any negligence, but that will be for the experts to determine," said magistrate Gilles de Villers Grand Champs, of the Verviers prosecutor's office.

"From the point where someone had died and the police had made a report, it was necessary for the competent prosecutor to open an objective investigation," the magistrate added.

At the beginning of the second lap of Saturday's race, Hubert was involved in a high-speed collision with US driver Juan Manuel Correa, Frenchman Giuliano Alesi and Japan's Marino Sato.

## Russian courts rule parents can keep kids taken to rally

AFP/MOSCOW

Russian courts yesterday dismissed prosecutors' requests to remove three young Russian children from their parents' care because they took them to opposition rallies.

The prosecutor's office had asked courts to strip Yelena and Pyotr Khomskiy of their parental rights after they took their daughters aged three and three months to an opposition protest on August 3.

The prosecutors had also sought to strip another couple, Olga and Dmitry Prokazov, of their parental rights after they took their one-year-old boy to a similar opposition rally in late July.

Moscow's Nikulinsky and Lefortovo district courts threw out the cases against the families yesterday.

"They are not taking our kids away from us," Pyotr Khomskiy told reporters after a closed-door hearing at Moscow's Nikulinsky district court.

He however said the family had received a formal warning to make them "change our behaviour".

The couple's lawyer Tatyana Sustina said she would contest the warning.

"Essentially, they've been banned from attending rallies with their children," she told reporters, adding that if they go anywhere near an opposition protest in the future they may lose custody of their kids.

Prosecutors had asked for the couple, who have three children, to lose the two they took to the rally.

Also yesterday, the Lefortovo district court ruled that the Prokazovs would keep their baby too.

The couple's lawyer, Maxim Pashkov, said the family also received a formal warning.

"This warning from the court seriously worries me," Pashkov said. "It's a message sent to society — people should not go (to protests) and should sit tight."

In recent weeks tens of thousands of protesters have taken to the streets of Moscow after authorities blocked opposition leader Alexei Navalny's allies from running in elections for the city parliament on Sunday.

# Four bodies found after boat fire in California

AP
OXNARD

The bodies of four people killed by a raging fire that swept through a dive-boat off the Southern California coast were recovered yesterday as authorities said more than two dozen others remained missing and feared dead.

Lt Commander Matthew Kroll said the four bodies had injuries consistent with drowning.

Searchers continued to look for more than two dozen other people who were aboard the vessel Conception, which burned while anchored off Santa Cruz Island.

"Right now they're conducting shoreline searches for any available survivors," Coast Guard Capt Monica Rochester told reporters at a brief news conference at Channel Islands Harbor in Oxnard.

The Coast said the vessel was believed to have carried 38 people, including five crew members who jumped off the boat soon after the fire ignited before dawn.

**Authorities said that more than two dozen others remained missing and feared dead.**

"The crew was actually already awake and on the bridge and they jumped off," Rochester added.

Two suffered minor injuries, said Coast Guard Petty Officer Mark Barney.

According to authorities the crew members were rescued by a good Samaritan vessel called The Grape Escape.

Asked if the crew tried to help others aboard, Rochester said, "I don't have any additional information."

A woman who came to the harbor said, "My son was on that boat." She was led away by a Ventura County firefighter.

Rochester added that the 23 metre commercial scuba diving vessel was anchored in Platt's Harbor, about 18 metres off the northern coast of Santa Cruz Island, when the fire ignited around 3am.

She said the vessel sank in 64 feet of water, adding its bow is still visible above the waterline.

The Conception was on the final day of a Labor Day weekend cruise to the Channel Islands when the fire erupted.

"At 3:15 this morning the Coast Guard overheard a mayday call. The call was garbled, it was not that clear, but we were able to get some information out of it to send vessels on scene," Barney said.

Rochester said that call indicated the boat was already fully ablaze.

The Conception was chartered by Worldwide Diving Adventures, which says on its website that it has been taking divers on such expeditions since the 1970s. It was owned and operated by Truth Aquatics, a respected Santa Barbara-based company founded in 1974.



A 23-metre vessel burns during a rescue operation off Santa Cruz Island, California, yesterday.

Asked if the boat operator has a history of any violations, Rochester said, "The vessel has been in full compliance."

The National Transportation Safety said it is sending a team to investigate.

The Conception had departed at 4 a.m. Saturday with plans to return at 5 p.m. Monday.

Divers sleep in a single room of bunk beds, according to a diagram of the Conception posted on Truth Aquatics' website.

The website says the vessel, launched in 1981, has rafts and life jackets for up to 110 passengers and exits on the port, starboard and bow that provide "easy water entry."

The trip promised multiple opportunities to see colorful coral and a variety of marine life around the Channel Islands off the coast of Southern California.

# US not seeking military intervention in Venezuela: Envoy

ANATOLIA
ANKARA

The US is not seeking a military intervention in Venezuela to solve the ongoing political and economic unrest, said US envoy to the South American nation.

"What we want is not a military intervention by the international community, but rather a peaceful, political and democratic resolution based on Venezuela's constitution," Charge d'Affaires of Venezuela Affairs Unit James Story said.

He said there is "already an intervention" with the presence of Russian, Chinese and Cuban military officers in the country.

"... why, because they want (Venezuelan President Nicolas) Maduro to stay there, because it is they who are receiving the milk without buying the cow, ..." Story said during an interview with Venezuelan newspaper *2001*.

On Wednesday, the US opened an interim diplomatic office, The Venezuela Affairs Unit, to Venezuela based in Colombia to interact with representatives aligned with the opposition leader Juan Guaido who declared himself interim president January 23, sparking a standoff with Maduro that continues to persist.

Venezuela had been rocked by political and social unrest since January 10 when Maduro was sworn in for a second term following a vote which was boycotted by the opposition amid a dire economic crisis.

Nearly 5,000 people leave Venezuela every day because of "instability and uncertainty," and 3 million Venezuelans have already left the country since 2015, according to the UN's refugee agency.

Russia, China and Iran have thrown their weight behind Maduro, as has Turkey.

Spain, Britain, France, Sweden, Germany, Japan and Denmark joined the US, Canada and most Latin American countries in recognizing Guaido as Venezuela's interim leader.

Contacts with Venezuelan opposition delegates have resumed, Maduro said in an interview with the Chinese state-run Xinhua News Agency on Saturday, after withdrawing his delegation from negotiation talks last month due to latest US sanctions.

After imposing sweeping sanctions on Venezuela's state-owned oil firm PDVSA in January, US President Donald Trump issued an executive order earlier this month freezing all assets in the USbelonging to the Venezuelan government in a significant escalation of tensions with Caracas.

"The next few days will bring good news about the dialogue," Maduro added.

Hampered by opposition from the Venezuelan army and popular challenges to his legitimacy, Guaido's delegation took part in Oslo and Barbados initiatives for talks with the government.

Although the Oslo talks in May bore no fruit, the sides have yet to make a clear statement about the content of the Barbados talks held earlier July.

Meanwhile, Venezuela's relations with neighboring Colombia has been undergoing a new phase of deterioration after the former second in command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced the rebel group's rearmament in a video message last week.

Colombia's President Ivan Duque blames Maduro administration for the sudden reappearance of FARC.

# Former New York senator Bill Larkin dead at 91

AP
NEW YORK

Former state Senator Bill Larkin, a World War II veteran who served as a state lawmaker in New York for four decades, died on Saturday. He was 91.

His family announced the death yesterday, calling Larkin a "dedicated public servant, soldier and statesman."

Larkin represented a stretch of the Hudson Valley as an assemblyman from 1979 to 1990 and then as a state senator until his retirement last year.

A Republican, he was known for forging bipartisan friendships in Albany and advancing veterans' causes and health care for infants.

"He lived a storied and authentically American life," Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said in a statement.

William J "Bill" Larkin Jr was born in Troy, New York, and was raised by his aunt and uncle.

He thought he was 18 when, while still in high school, he enlisted in the Army in 1944.

It wasn't until years later that he discovered he was born in 1928, not 1926, as he had always believed.

"I wasn't upset," Larkin recalled last year. "I was in the armed forces. I met with people who cared about our country, and I was very proud."

Larkin served in the Pacific during WWII.

# Bolsonaro's disapproval rating jumps to 38% amid Amazon crisis: Poll

REUTERS
BRASILIA

Brazilians saying that President Jair Bolsonaro **(pictured)** is doing a "bad or terrible" job rose to 38% from 33% previously, as the government's handling of surging fires in the Amazon rainforest divides the country.



The Datafolha polling institute found that 29% say that Bolsonaro is doing a "great or good" job, down from 33% in July, according to the poll published yesterday.

Brazilians who said the Bolsonaro was doing a normal job fell to 30% from 31% previously, within the margin of error.

The poll diverges from the usually equal three-way split between those approving, disapproving and rating normally the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, with his negative numbers gaining an upper hand, said Leonardo Barreto, a partner in Brasilia-based consultancy Capital Politico.

"Very likely, it's the people who were giving the president the benefit of the doubt but are losing patience for some reason," Barreto said.

The three factors likely changing Brazilians' minds are the lack of a major economic recovery, Bolsonaro letting up on his aggressive rhetoric on combating corruption and concerns that his government has lost control over the Amazon, he said.

Datafolha found that 51% of Brazilians thought Bolsonaro had done a bad or terrible job responding to the Amazon fires.

Last month, Brazil's space research agency, INPE, revealed that the highest number of forest fires were tearing through the Amazon rainforest since 2010, sparking international outcry demanding that the country do more to protect the world's largest tropical rainforest.

For the first time, farmers who voted en masse for Bolsonaro in the election might be reconsidering their support because of the failure to stop criminals setting fires in the Amazon and fears that it could hurt global demand for Brazilian agricultural products, Barreto said.

The far-right firebrand engaged in a public war of words with French President Emmanuel Macron, who called for more to be done to combat them as Group of Seven wealthy nations met in France.

The Datafolha institute poll surveyed 2,878 people in 175 towns across Brazil on August 29 and 30 and has a 2% margin of error.

# Gunman dead in Brooklyn shootout

AP
NEW YORK

A masked gunman was killed in a shootout with police who confronted him on a Brooklyn street and pursued him into a backyard early yesterday, police said.

The shootout unleashed dozens of rounds in a yard in the Brownsville neighborhood, police Chief of Department Terence Monahan said. No officers were injured.

The New York Police Department hasn't released the identity of the man, who was shot numerous times in the body, Monahan told reporters.

The encounter began when three uniformed officers on patrol in an unmarked car spotted a man in a mask around Howard and Dumont avenues around 2:30am.

"He had his face covered walking down the street, which is kind of suspicious on a warm evening, so they went to stop him. He immediately ran," Monahan said.

As one officer got out of the car and the others drove around a corner, the man pulled a gun and fired on the car, leaving a bullet hole in the passenger-side front door, Monahan said.

He said the officer on foot fired back, but the man got away.

About a half-hour later, a resident told police that someone was trying to break into a home on Howard Avenue. Uniformed officers entered the yard of the home and were met with gunfire and responded, getting pinned down for a time before backup arrived, Monahan said.

In all, seven officers fired a total of about 65 rounds, the chief said, adding that police were still counting shell casings fired by the gunman.

He was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Police said they found a semi-automatic handgun in the yard, and they have video of the confrontation.

# Hurricane Dorian triggers massive flooding

AP
FREEPORT

Hurricane Dorian unleashed massive flooding across the Bahamas yesterday, pummeling the islands with so much wind and water that authorities urged people to find floatation devices and grab hammers to break out of their attics if necessary.

The fearsome Category 4 storm slowed almost to a standstill as it shredded roofs, hurled cars and forced even rescue crews to take shelter until the onslaught passed.

Officials said they received a "tremendous" number of calls from people in flooded homes. Forecasters warned that Dorian could generate a storm surge as high as 7 metres.

Police Chief Samuel Butler urged people to remain calm and share their GPS coordinates, but he said rescue crews had to wait until weather conditions improved.



Elderly citizens board a bus after a mandatory evacuation order ahead of the arrival of Hurricane Dorian in Kissimmee, Florida, yesterday.

"We simply cannot get to you," he said, which shared reports from callers who said some people were stuck on roofs and in attics.

On nearby Abaco Island, Parliament member Renward Wells said he received reports of casualties but officials had not been able to confirm them.

Meanwhile in the United States, the National Hurricane Center extended watches and warnings across the Florida and Georgia coasts. Forecasters expected Dorian to stay just off shore, but meteorologist Daniel Brown cautioned that "only a small deviation" could draw the storm's dangerous core toward land.

By midday yesterday, the storm's top sustained winds fell slightly to 250 kph. It was crawling along Grand Bahama Island at just 2 kph.

The water reached roofs and the tops of palm trees. One woman filmed water lapping at the stairs of her home's second floor.

On Sunday, Dorian churned over Abaco Island with battering winds and surf and heavy flooding.

# Former Guatemalan first lady arrested

AP
GUATEMALA CITY

**Prosecutors said that Sandra Torres is accused of unregistered electoral financing and illicit association related to the 2015 election and the National Unity of Hope party, of which she was both candidate and general secretary.**




Policemen escort Sandra Torres, a former first lady and presidential candidate of the National Unity of Hope (UNE) political party while arriving at a court after being detained in Guatemala City, yesterday.

Former Guatemalan first lady and presidential runner-up Sandra Torres was arrested yesterday on charges of campaign finance violations, the latest high-profile political figure to face allegations of malfeasance even as a UN anti-graft commission is set to shut down.

Investigators searched Torres' Guatemala City home in the morning and transported her to court, handcuffed, with her face obscured by a scarf, a hood and dark glasses. She told journalists she was the victim of a political vendetta.

Prosecutors said she is accused of unregistered electoral financing and illicit association related to the 2015 election and the National Unity of Hope party, of which she was both candidate and general secretary. According to investigators the party did not properly register some $3.6m in financing for her campaign.

The investigation found that several businesses financed the party through the payment of commissions, diversion of funds and bribes to various public and private institutions.

Torres' vice presidential running mate from 2015, Mario Leal Castillo, is also wanted in the case and is considered a fugitive from justice.

Torres, 63, finished second in both the 2015 and 2019 presidential elections, to Jimmy Morales and Alejandro Giammattei, respectively. Giammattei takes office in January.

"Everything is political, and you should ask Dr. Giammattei why he said he would not rest easy until he put me in prison," Torres said at the court. "Go ask him. It is a political persecution."

The National Unity of Hope party also criticised her arrest: "We reject the disproportionate and unnecessary measure taken against Sandra Torres," it said via Twitter. Party official Eduardo Velásquez said she had previously handed over her passport in assurance that she would not leave the country.

The investigation targeting Torres was presented earlier this year by prosecutors and the UN commission, known as CICIG for its initials in Spanish.

As a presidential candidate, however, Torres enjoyed immunity from criminal prosecution just as elected officials do. That protection ended once Giammattei's election was officially certified last month.

CICIG, which for 12 years has helped press high-profile graft investigations that ensnared many of Guatemala's powerful and wealthy, ceases operations Tuesday after Morales refused to renew its mandate.

The commission had brought cases against the president and some of his family members.

Torres was married to — and later divorced — former President Álvaro Colom, who governed from 2008 to 2012. Colom also ran with National Unity of Hope.

## Parade cancelled after 'destructive devices' found in New Jersey

AP
SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Authorities cancelled a New Jersey Labor Day parade that the governor was supposed to attend yesterday because "destructive devices" were found near the parade route.

Thomas Kaiser, 55, of South Plainfield, was charged with two counts of possession of a destructive device for an unlawful purpose, with additional charges expected, Middlesex County prosecutors and local police said.

Authorities added that a suspicious package containing a destructive device was left at Donovan's Reef club in Sea Bright. That prompted an investigation that led to Kaiser's home, and other devices were found near the residence.

Since the home is located near the start of the South Plainfield Labor Day parade, the event was cancelled "out of an abundance of caution and due to the potential threat to community."

The investigation by county prosecutors and Sea Bright and South Plainfield police also included representatives of the state homeland security office and bomb squad as well as the FBI and various K-9 units.

## 'Gunman fired from job before Texas shooting'

AP
ODESSA

Authorities said the gunman in a West Texas rampage was fired from his job and called both police and the FBI before the mass shooting began.

Odessa Police Chief Michael Gerke said yesterday that 36-year-old Seth Aaron Ator had been fired over the weekend from Journey Oil Field Services, adding that both Ator and the company called 911 after being fired on Saturday but that Ator was gone by the time police showed up.

FBI special agent Christopher Combs says Ator's statements on the FB tip line were "rambling."

Ator was stopped 15 minutes later by a Texas state trooper on an interstate for failing to signal a lane change. Authorities say Ator opened fire on the troopers and fled, shooting at random passers-by and vehicles.

Police gunned down Ator at a movie theater in Odessa to end the chase.

Court records show Ator was arrested in 2001 for a misdemeanor offense that would not have prevented him from legally purchasing firearms in Texas.

Republican Governor Greg Abbott said the criminal history of a man who killed seven people in West Texas this weekend means "we must keep guns out of criminals' hands."

But Abbott, an avid gun rights supporter, has been noncommittal on tightening gun laws in Texas.

## Expedited executions part of White House response to shootings

BLOOMBERG
WASHINGTON

The Justice Department has drafted legislation to expedite the death penalty for those convicted of mass murder and the provision will be included in a larger White House package designed to address recent incidents of gun violence, a top aide to Vice-President Mike Pence said yesterday.

Pence has been directly involved in conversations with Attorney-General William Barr about the death penalty initiative, Marc Short, the vice-president's chief of staff, told reporters traveling with Pence between Poland and Ireland yesterday.

The move comes after a shooting on Saturday in Texas left seven people dead and more than a dozen others wounded, adding urgency to the debate over gun safety.

The shooting came four weeks after 22 people were killed in the Texas city of El Paso, and less than a month after nine were killed by a shooter in Dayton, Ohio.

President Donald Trump has said the White House would seek to work with Congress on new gun laws, including efforts to strengthen the death penalty and so-called "red flag" legislation that would allow courts to order the preemptive removal of firearms from individuals believed to pose a threat to themselves or others.

On Sunday, Trump said his administration would seek "to identify severely disturbed individuals and disrupt their plans before they strike."

"This includes strong measures to keep weapons out of the hands of dangerous and deranged individuals, and substantial reforms to our nation's broken mental health system," Trump said.

But actual progress toward new gun control legislation has proven evasive in the past, with many lawmakers reluctant to run afoul of the National Rifle Association and other powerful gun-rights lobbyists.

And Trump has contradicted himself on what his administration plans to do to combat violence, saying in recent weeks both that he would unveil a proposal drafted by aides and that he was waiting to see what Congress produced on its own.

Former vice-president Joe Biden, the leading Democratic candidate to contest Trump's re-election, said yesterday that he didn't believe the death penalty proposal advocated by Pence would have stopped mass shooters like the one responsible for the El Paso attack.

Pence's proposal was "what you do when you can't get something done that's rational -- you increase the penalty for the irrational," Biden said during a campaign stop in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

In July, Biden released a criminal justice plan that called for abolishing the death penalty.



## Acrobatic stunt

**The crowd watches as people perform during "The Minutes" at the Montreal Cirque Festival, where thirty-two acrobats took over the street for a travelling performance, in Montreal, Quebec.**

## 'Angel Has Fallen' leads weekend Box Office

AFP
LOS ANGELES

Lionsgate's political thriller "Angel Has Fallen" didn't quite soar but managed to stay atop the North American box office on this US holiday weekend, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations reported.

The action-packed film took in an estimated $11.6m for the first three days of Labor Day weekend and $14.5m for the four-day period. That came at the end of a summer that saw movie revenue dip by 2 percent from last year, the Comscore website said.

"Angel," the third film in the franchise, stars Gerard Butler as a Secret Service agent wrongly accused of trying to kill the US president played by Morgan Freeman.

A relatively sedate movie weekend saw little change in the top five films.

In second for a second straight week was Universal's raunchy tween comedy "Good Boys," which took in $9.2m for three days ($11.6m for four days).

In third, up one spot from last weekend, was Disney's updated version of "The Lion King," which pulled in $6.7m ($9.2m) in its seventh week out.

Universal's action film "Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw" also rose a spot from last weekend, taking fourth place at $6.3m ($8.1m).

And slipping from third to fifth, at $5.7m ($7.9m), was Sony's "Overcomer," a Christian-themed movie about a former basketball coach who agrees to train an asthmatic orphan girl for a huge cross-country meet.

# Skating entrepreneur Tom Collins passes away at 88

AP
MINNEAPOLIS

"To call Tom Collins the father of figure skating tours might be hyperbole. Then again ..."Tommy treated everyone like family," Michelle Kwan, the greatest skater of her generation, said yesterday after learning of Collins' death at his home in Minneapolis at age 88.

"I skated for 14 years in his show, and I felt like the daughter he never had.

"Tommy would help any skater. He'd open his wallet to anyone in need. He was very special and we'll miss him dearly."

Kwan and 1988 Olympic champion Brian Boitano spoke on the phone yesterday, sharing both tears and laughs as they recalled their days on "Tommy's Tour," and Collins' role in the lives of so many figure skaters whose careers he helped prolong.

"Tom Collins death marks the end of an era, the golden age of figure skating," Boitano said. "He stood out in the business. He was a man of loyalty, vision, and tremendous generosity."

A former skater in Holiday on Ice, Collins organised an exhibition tour of the United States with world champion skaters in 1969. It was the forerunner of Champions on Ice.

Collins was inducted into the figure skating halls of fame of the United States and Canada — he was born in Canada — and in 2006 sold the US rights to the show.

"We lost our hero, Tom Collins, today," the family said in a statement. "No words can explain how much love and joy he gave us. He shared his fun-loving charismatic personality with everyone he met. He will be dearly missed by all of us, his dear friends and the figure skating community."

Scott Hamilton, the 1984 Olympic champion and himself an entrepreneur in the sport - Hamilton founded Stars on Ice soon after he won the gold medal — called Collins "the greatest impresario of skating."

"There wasn't a champion skater since the 1970s that didn't perform in one of his shows," Hamilton said. "It was at one of his shows in Toledo, Ohio, that I saw championship skating live for the very first time in his World Champions Tour in 1970.

Little did I know I would do my first show with him in 1978, where I bombed and was so embarrassed I left without my $50 honorarium. Every time I was able to speak publicly about Tommy, I would say that he still owes me $50."

In addition to his role in figure skating, Collins also handled merchandising for such musical acts as the Beach Boys, Neil Diamond, John Denver, the Blues Brothers and the Cars.

Last spring, skaters and others involved with Champions on Ice held a reunion in Minneapolis to honor Collins.

"It wasn't just the skaters who showed up but the choreographers, the people who did the lighting, everyone who was part of the shows," Kwan recalled. "They all loved Tommy and he treated all of them so well.

"He would call my dad every two weeks just to talk about things. He made all of us feel like part of his family."

# QRCS promotes health awareness in schools

THE PENINSULA
DOHA



Students getting lesson of social solidarity and responsibility under QRCS's educational program.

As the new academic year 2019-2020 starts, Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) has initiated a new edition of its QRCS School Programme, under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

The purpose of the programme is to support the educational system by capitalising on the capacity of the youth, raising awareness of social solidarity and responsibility, and preparing student leaders who would contribute to school and community protection against disaster and environmental risks.

Over the past few years, the programme made great achievements in terms of the numbers of schools and students registered with it. As reports indicate, the academic year 2016-17 saw 1,200 attendants from 32 schools, compared to 2,300 and 45, respectively, during the following academic year.

In 2018-2019, the programme made remarkable achievements, with 82 schools registered and 8,290 students, teachers, administrative staff, and supervisors attending the program's lectures and drills, which were delivered by a group of well-trained medical trainers and disaster management volunteers from QRCS.

In the new academic year, QRCS is coordinating closely with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to maximise the benefits of the program for both students and society members. The QRCS School Programme is a unique social development scheme that matches the goals and strategy of Qatar National Vision 2030, especially in relation to the human development pillar.

The health programme involves first-aid training and health education on nutrition, hygiene, communicable diseases, home safety, oral health, and other relevant topics. The 'Safe School' risk reduction program seeks to improve community disaster preparedness and effective response; and the 'Social Peace and Integration' programme organises informative lectures to enrich positive values among school students, such as interactive communication, open-mindedness, behavioural discipline, psychological balance, and mutual respect.

# Doha Zoo welcomes rare, endangered guests

THE PENINSULA
DOHA




Doha Zoo welcomed two rare and endangered guests to its fold recently. A night monkey (also known as owl monkey) and black-bearded marmoset Monkey gave birth in the zoo.

The Doha Zoo has witnessed the birth of rare and endangered species such as the night monkey and black-bearded marmoset Monkey recently. The Ministry of Municipality and Environment has designed a special program for breeding, feeding and providing the right environment for them.

As part of efforts to preserve rare animal species and breeds, these species are subject to a special breeding programme by focusing on integrated feeding, as well as temperature and humidity control for the similarity of their natural environment in South America. The Zoo also saw the birth of a Senegalese bush monkey, a ferrite monkey, a sika deer and a Moroccan ram in recent times.

According to Wikipedia, the night monkeys, also known as the owl monkeys or dourocoulis, are the members of the genus Aotus of New World monkeys (monotypic in family Aotidae).

The only nocturnal monkeys, they are native to Panama and much of tropical South America.

Night monkeys constitute one of the few monkey species that are affected by the often deadly human malaria protozoan Plasmodium falciparum, making them useful as non-human primate experimental subjects in malaria research.

The marmosets, also known as zaris, are twenty-two New World monkey species of the genera Callithrix, Cebuella, Callibella and Mico. All four genera are part of the biological family Callitrichidae.

The term marmoset is also used in reference to the Goeldi's marmoset, Callimico goeldii, which is closely related. Most marmosets are about 20 centimetres (8 in) long. Relative to other monkeys, they show some apparently primitive features: they have claws rather than nails, and tactile hairs on their wrists. They lack wisdom teeth, and their brain layout seems to be relatively primitive. Their body temperature is unusually variable, changing by up to 4 °C (7 °F) in a day.

Marmosets are native to South America and have been found in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru. They have also been spotted in Central America and Mexico.

## CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

1 Microwave
4 Oil cartel
8 Give up
12 Suffix with cash
13 Facts and figures
14 Yankee nickname
15 Gun-lobby org.
16 Old radio part
17 Saturn feature
18 Inherit some cash, say
21 Noshed
22 Filch
23 Street-smart
26 Deep hole
27 Group of whales
30 Party cheese
31 Spell-off
32 Jupiter's wife
33 Wanted-poster abbr.
34 Tire filler
35 "Hay-stacks" painter
36 Stir-fry pan
37 Weep
38 Suddenly start serenading, say
45 "Das Kapital" author
46 Lunch hour
47 Vast expanse
48 Sommelier's suggestion
49 Cruise stop
50 Science room
51 Santa's ride
52 Molt
53 Hosp. areas

**DOWN**

1 Galvanizing matter
2 Sleek, in car lingo
3 Baby carriage
4 Strange thing
5 "Common Sense" pamphleteer
6 Coup d' —
7 Heat unit
8 Ersatz chocolate
9 Ireland
10 Finito
11 Jittery
19 Roof overhang
20 Witticism
23 Govt. lender
24 Noah's boat
25 By way of
26 Apiece
27 Bit of wit
28 Small bill
29 Speck
31 Skimpy swimsuits
32 Want-ad listings
34 Fine, at NASA
35 Day-dreamed
36 Like shiny floors
37 Stylish wrap
38 Upscale autos
39 Banister
40 Sea eagle
41 Snack
42 Capital on a fjord
43 Close
44 Yaks

Solution time: 26 mins.

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Yesterday's answer 8-24



## MALL

**Saaho (2D/Telugu)** 2:00pm; **Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 5:00, 8:00 & 11:00pm; **Saaho (2D/Tamil)** 11:30pm
**Saaho (2D/Malayalam)** 2:00pm
**Super Bear (2D/Animation)** 2:00pm;
**The Lion King (2D/Animation)** 3:30 & 5:30pm
**Aladdin (2D/Comedy)** 7:30pm; **The Final Wish (2D/Horror)** 9:45pm; **Trouble (2D/Animation)** 5:15pm
**Angel Has Fallen (2D/Action)** 7:00pm;
**Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 9:15pm
**Porinju Mariyam Jose (2D/Malayalam)** 11:30pm

## LANDMARK

**Trouble (2D/Animation)** 5:15 & 6:30pm
**Saaho (2D/Telugu)** 5:00 & 11:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 2:00 & 8:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Tamil)** 2:15 & 8:15
**Saaho (2D/Malayalam)** 2:00pm
**Super Bear (2D/Animation)** 5:00pm;
**Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 9:00pm
**Angel Has Fallen (2D/Action)** 9:15pm;
**Dora And The Lost City Of Gold (2D/Adventure)** 7:00pm; **Porinju Mariyam Jose (2D/Malayalam)** 11:15pm

## AL KHOR

**Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 11:00am, 5:30 & 12:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Telugu)** 10:30am, 1:45 & 5:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Tamil)** 2:15 & 8:45pm
**Saaho (2D/Malayalam)** 8:15 & 11:30pm
**Trouble (2D/Animation)** 10:30am, 12:30, 2:30 & 4:30pm
**Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 6:30, 8:00 & 11:30pm

## FLIK Mirqab Mall

**After The Wedding (2D/Drama)** 1:00, 3:15 & 5:30pm; **Dora And The Lost City Of Gold (2D/Adventure)** 11:00, 10:00, 12:00, 2:00 & 4:15pm; **Ready Or Not (2D/Horror)** 7:45 & 9:40pm; **Saaho** 8:40 & 9:10pm, **Angel Has Fallen (2D/Action)** 4:00 & 6:20pm;, **The Final Wish (2D/Horror)** 11:35; **47 Meters Down:** 6:15, 7:10, 9:10, 10:50pm & 0:40am; **Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 10:40, 1:10, 3:40, 6:10, 8:40 & 11:10pm; **Once Upon A Time In Hollywood (2D/Comedy)** 3:00 & 6:05pm, **Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw** 11:10 & 1:40pm; **Where'd You Go Bernadette (2D/Comedy)** 10:40am & 12:50pm

## ROYAL PLAZA

**Saaho (2D/Telugu)** 5:00 & 11:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 3:00, 8:15 & 11:15pm
**Saaho (2D/Tamil)** 2:00 & 8:00pm
**Saaho (2D/Malayalam)** 2:15pm
**The Lion King (2D/Animation)** 6:00pm;
**Trouble (2D/Animation)** 5:15pm
**Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 7:00pm
**Mission Mangal. (2D/Comedy)** 11:30pm
**Angel of Mine (2D/Drama)** 9:15pm;

## ROXY

**47 Meters Down: Uncaged (2D/Adventure)** 10:30am, 1:10, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:10 & 11:50pm
**Dora And The Lost City Of Gold (2D/Adventure)** 10:30am, 2:30, 4:40, 8:30 & 12:30pm;
**Angel Has Fallen (2D/Action)** 4:40, 8:00, 10:00 & 11:30pm; **Sesh's Evaru (2D/Telugu)** 10:30am, 1:20, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50, 9:10, 3:30, 6:20pm;
**Knnedy Club (2D/Tamil)** 7:15, 9:00 & 10:40pm; **Khayal Ma'ata (2D/Arabic)** 12:30, 11:10, 11:00, 3:30, 11:10pm & **Ranarangam (2D/Telugu)** 11:00am, 1:40, 4:30, 12:30, 3:20 & 6:10pm; **Ready Or Not (2D/Horror)** 6:00 & 7:10pm
**Sheep And Wolves 2 (2D/Animation)** 4:40, 6:30 & 6:50pm
**The Angry Birds Movie 2** 2:30 & 12:30pm

## ASIAN TOWN

**Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 4:15 & 10:45pm
**Saaho (2D/Telugu)** 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 10:00pm & 1:15am
**Saaho (2D/Tamil)** 12:15, 3:30, 4:15, 6:45, 10:00, 10:45pm, 1:15am & 2:00am
**Saaho (2D/Malayalam)** 1:00pm & 2:00am
**Porinju Mariyam Jose (2D/Malayalam)** 1:00 & 7:30pm

*Note: Programme is subject to change without prior notice.*




Secret Service Agent Mike Banning is framed for the attempted assassination of the President and must evade his own agency and the FBI as he tries to uncover the real threat.

8-24 CRYPTOQUIP

SFDOQX MC FD FKKQXOBI XQFIRBMD CXMN GFKABDO FNMDO RMM NFDL SFBTLKBAQ CKMGQXT: FD FTRQX-XBTA.

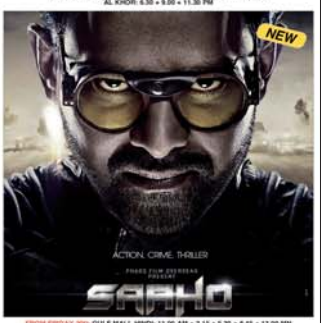
**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** I GUESS ANY AVIAN VARIETY THAT APPEALS TO GOD IN HEAVEN COULD BE CLASSIFIED AS A BIRD OF PRAY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals L

SHOWING AT GULF MALL, VILLAGGIO, CITY CENTRE & AL KHOR
cinecomovies.com




GULF MALL: 11.00 AM + 1.30 + 4.00 + 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM
GULF MALL VIP I: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM
VILLAGIO: 11.15 AM + 1.45 + 4.15 + 6.45 + 9.15 + 11.45 PM
CITY CENTRE: 11.30 AM + 2.00 + 4.30 + 7.00 + 9.30 + 12.00 MN
CITY CENTRE VIP: 10.30 AM + 1.00 + 3.30 + 6.00 + 8.30 + 11.00 PM
AL KHOR: 6.30 + 9.00 + 11.30 PM




FROM FRIDAY 30th GULF MALL HINDI: 11.00 AM + 2.15 + 5.30 + 8.45 + 12.00 MN
GULF MALL TELUGU: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM
GULF MALL TAMIL: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM
GULF MALL MALAYALAM: 10.15 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM
VILLAGIO HINDI: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM
VILLAGIO TELUGU: 10.15 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM
VILLAGIO TAMIL: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM
VILLAGIO MALAYALAM: 12.15 + 3.30 + 6.45 + 10.00 PM
FROM THURSDAY 29th VILLAGIO HINDI IMAX (3D): 2.15 + 8.45 PM
VILLAGIO TELUGU IMAX (3D): 11.00 AM + 5.30 + 12.00 MN
FROM FRIDAY 30th CITY CENTRE HINDI: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 + 8.15 + 11.30 PM
CITY CENTRE TELUGU: 10.45 AM + 2.00 + 5.15 + 8.30 + 11.45 PM
CITY CENTRE TAMIL: 11.00 AM + 2.15 + 5.30 + 8.45 + 12.00 MN
CITY CENTRE MALAYALAM 10.15 AM + 1.30 + 4.45 + 8.00 + 11.15 PM
AL KHOR HINDI: 11.00 AM + 5.30 + 12.00 MN
AL KHOR TAMIL: 2.15 + 8.45 PM
AL KHOR TELUGU: 10.30 AM + 1.45 + 5.00 PM
AL KHOR MALAYALAM: 8.15 + 11.30 PM



## PRAYER TIMINGS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FAJR | 03. 57 AM | | |
| SHOROOK | 05. 15 AM | | |
| ZUHR | 11. 33 AM | MAGHRIB | 05. 53 PM |
| ASR | 03.02 PM | ISHA | 07. 23 PM |

## WEATHER TODAY




**33°C** Minimum | **40°C** Maximum

Misty at some places by early morning becomes hot daytime with some clouds.

HIGH TIDE 06:53 - 18:58 LOW TIDE 02:12 - 14:12

Courtesy: Qatar Meteorology Department



## Today in History

*September 3, 2004*

▲ **The school hostage crisis in Beslan ended tragically when 330 people, over half of them children, died in bomb explosions or fierce gunbattles**

**1969:** North Vietnamese president Ho Chi Minh died

**1994: Russia and China formally ended decades of confrontation and agreed to cease aiming nuclear missiles at each other**

**2009:** Two months after his death pop star Michael Jackson was interred at the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California

**2018: Fire ravaged Brazil's 200 year old National Museum in Rio de Janeiro**

Picture: Newscom © GRAPHIC NEWS

# French ducks in the dock for quacking

AFP/SOUSTONS, FRANCE

Less than two months after the owner of a French rooster was hauled before a court over his rowdy crowing, the owner of a gaggle of geese and ducks is in the dock over their boisterous quacking.

The latest case to ruffle feathers in the French countryside pits a woman rearing around 50 ducks and geese in her back garden in the south-western Landes region — a duck-breeding bastion — against her new-comer neighbours. Dominique Douthe, 67, lives outside the town of Soustons, about 60km north of the Atlantic resort of Biarritz. She said the row began a little over a year ago when the new neighbours moved into a house across the road. With the previous owners, she claimed, "I never had any problem." "And then he (the husband of the plaintiff couple) arrived and my poultry bothers him," she said, with an exasperated air.

The case is one of several that have been cast as an attack on the rights of church bells to ring, cows to moo, and donkeys to bray throughout rural France. The mascot of this battle between urban and rural France is a rooster named Maurice, whose early-morning crowing so annoyed his neighbours on the island of Oleron that they took his owner to court.



French duck-owner Dominique Douthe, accused by a neighbour of noise disturbance, takes care of her ducks and gooses, in Soustons, in the Landes region, southwestern France, yesterday.

A court in the western town of Rochefort is set to issue a ruling in that case on Thursday. Yesterday, a court in the southwestern town of Dax was to hear the complaint against Douthe's cacophonous ducks and geese. The wife of the plaintiff couple, who did not wish to be named, said that when they bought the house next to Douthe's, "there were fewer geese and ducks, making it less noisy."

Since then her husband had approached Douthe three or four times to try find a solution, she said.

He also hired an acoustics expert, who recommended that Douthe move her poultry pen further away from the neighbours' property and build a wall to muffle the sound — recommendations they say went unheeded.

In a region famous for its foie gras — a delicacy made from the livers of ducks and geese — the case has got some locals' backs up. "Numerous homes here have a spot for raising poultry," one woman said indignantly: "We are in the Landes after all!"

A petition in support of "the Hardy ducks," as they have been dubbed after a the name of a nearby lake, has garnered nearly 5,000 signatures. Soustons' Mayor Frederique Charpenel warned in a Facebook post on Friday against vilifying newcomers to the countryside as "being unable to integrate and making us lose our soul."

At the same time, she said, it is "absolutely necessary... to preserve the characteristics of the countryside." A retired farmer who serves as mayor of the village of Gajac in southwest France has proposed a solution to the chorus of complaints against croaking frogs, cooing pigeons and other creature noises. Mayor Bruno Dionis du Sejour has asked the government to inscribe them on France's heritage list, making them eligible for state protection.

# Chinese face-swapping app sparks privacy row after going viral

AFP
SHANGHAI

A Chinese face-swapping app that allows users to convincingly superimpose their own likeness over characters in movies or TV shows has rapidly become one of the country's most downloaded apps, but has triggered a backlash over privacy fears.

Released on Friday, the Zao app went viral as Chinese users pounced on the chance to see themselves act out scenes from well-known movies using "deepfake" technology, which has already prompted concerns elsewhere over potential misuse.

Users provide a series of selfies in which they blink, open their mouth and make other expressions, which the app will then use to realistically morph the person's animated likeness onto movies, TV shows or other content.

But the company was forced to issue a statement on Sunday pledging changes after critics attacked the app's privacy policy which gave it "free, irrevocable, permanent, transferable, and relicenseable" rights to all user-generated content.




Zao's soaring popularity comes amid growing concern over deepfakes -- which are altered by using artificial intelligence to appear genuine.

Critics warn that the technology can be used to create bogus videos to manipulate elections, defame someone, or potentially spark unrest by spreading misinformation on a massive scale.

"We understand the concerns about privacy. We've received the feedback, and will fix the issues that we didn't take into consideration, which will take some time," a statement released by Zao said. Zao is owned by Momo Inc., a Tinder-like Chinese dating service that is listed on the US Nasdaq. The app has since changed its terms to make clear it would not use headshots or videos uploaded by users other than to improve the app.

It also pledged to remove from its servers any content that was uploaded but subsequently deleted by users.

The backlash has not dented the app's popularity, however. As of yesterday afternoon it remained the top free download in China, according to app market data provider App Annie.

Concerns over deepfakes have grown since the 2016 US election campaign which saw wide use of online disinformation, according to US investigations.

In June, Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said the social network was struggling to find ways to deal with deepfake videos, saying they may be "a completely different category" of misinformation from anything faced before.

# *American Skin* hailed at Venice

AFP/VENICE

Controversial US director Nate Parker said yesterday that he hopes his powerful new film about police violence against black men will help save lives.

"American Skin" received an eight-minute standing ovation after it premiered at the Venice film festival, with Spike Lee -- who travelled to Italy to support Parker -- comparing its impact to "scoring a goal to win the World Cup or a home run at the bottom of the ninth in American parlance".

The veteran maker of "Do The Right Thing" and "Malcolm X" had earlier declared that "I haven't been affected by a film like this... in a long, long time."

The movie about a black Iraq war veteran, whose 14-year-old son is killed by police when they stop their car in a wealthy white area, is a blistering indictment of institutional racism.

It culminates in the avenging father taking his son's killer hostage and putting him — and racist police attitudes — on trial after storming his local precinct. Parker said he hopes the film will start a debate within US police forces about the way they deal with black people.

"This experience is happening all too often in America. I hopeful that it can resonate and people will hopefully be moved into action. "Our mantra was take a beat (stop and think) and save a live. We can make a film that inspires not only conversation but real action. If we can save one life... this film will be the most important thing we have ever done," he added.



*American Skin* Director Nate Parker at the 76th Venice Film Festival.

Parker's acclaimed debut 2016 film about a slave revolt, "The Birth of a Nation", was derailed after it emerged that he was accused of raping a fellow student while at university. She later killed herself. Parker's presence added further flames to a row raging at the festival over the inclusion of a new film by Roman Polanski, who has spent decades as a fugitive from US justice for the rape of a 13-year-old girl. Feminists have also deplored the decision to add the director's cut of Argentinian-French director Gasper Noe's controversial 2002 rape shocker "Irreversible" to the line-up.

Before the Venice premiere, Parker admitted that he had been "tone deaf" to sensitivities around the case after he was acquitted. "A lot of people were hurt because of the way I approached things. I apologise to those people," the actor-turned-director told reporters.

"The last three years have been such a searing experience for me. I feel like I have gained so much wisdom from people in my circle." While the Venice audience got behind the film, critics were more lukewarm.

*The Hollywood Reporter* hailed its relevance to the "open wound of the Black Lives Matter movement" while damning it as a "well-intentioned but heavy-handed bid to open a dialogue between law enforcement and African American communities aggrieved by too many unjustified police shootings."

Lee said he hoped the low-budget feature, shot on a "hope and a prayer" in April, will get a wide release in the States. *The Hollywood Reporter* said the jury was still out on that.





The unnamed panda twins during their first veterinary care at the Zoologischer Garten Zoo in Berlin, yesterday. RIGHT: Male giant panda Jiao Qing, who became a father, is pictured in his enclosure at the zoo.

# Berlin zoo celebrates birth of two panda cubs

AP/BERLIN

A zoo in Berlin is celebrating the arrival of two panda cubs, the first time one of the rare mammals has given birth in Germany.

Zoo Berlin said yesterday that mother Meng Meng gave birth to a hand-sized pink cub at 6:54 p.m. Saturday.

According to the zoo, mothering came naturally to the 6-year-old panda: "She placed the tiny creature gently on her belly and began to warm it lovingly with her big paws, warm breath, and the soft fur of her cheeks."

An hour later, its twin was born. Keepers only confirmed last week that Meng Meng was pregnant.

She had mated with 9-year-old partner Jiao Qing in April, and was also artificially inseminated to increase the likelihood of pregnancy.

Meng Meng and Jiao Qing arrived from China in June 2017.

# Comedian Kevin Hart hospitalised after car crash

AFP/WASHINGTON

Comedian and actor Kevin Hart was hospitalised Sunday with major back injuries after his car crashed into a ditch, according to highway authorities. According to the California Highway Patrol report, Hart was riding in his 1970 Plymouth Barracuda -- a powerful vintage car -- with two other people in the wee hours of Sunday on Mulholland Highway in Los Angeles County. The driver, identified as Jared Black, lost control of the car and it rolled into a gully.

Black, 28, and the third passenger, internet fitness model Rebecca Broxterman, were trapped inside. Hart went for help. "Hart and Black sustained major back injuries as a result of this collision and were transported and treated at nearby hospitals," Highway Patrol said in the report.