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# Amiri decree allows five-year renewable RP for investors

QNA
DOHA

- **Amendment to law on workers' accommodation in family housing areas.**
- **Cabinet decision on the conditions and regulations for the permanent residency card holders to receive treatment and education in government institutions ratified.**
- **Cabinet Decision determining the conditions and regulation for licensing non-Qatari real estate brokerage firms and offices to practise real estate brokerage ratified.**

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani yesterday issued Decree Law No. (23) of 2019, amending some provisions of Law No. (21) of 2015 regulating the entry and exit of expatriates and their residence.

According to the amendment, the competent authority at the Ministry of Interior may issue entry permits and grant residence permits without sponsor for investors subject to the provisions of the law regulating the investment of non-Qatari capital in economic activity for a period of five years, renewable, and owners and beneficiaries of real estate in accordance with the provisions of the law regulating the non-Qatari ownership and use of real estate for a period of five years shall be automatically renewed for the duration of their ownership or use of real estate, and any other categories determined by a decision of the Cabinet. The decree is effective starting from its date of publication in the official gazette.

H H the Amir also issued Law No. (22) of 2019 amending some provisions of Law No. (15) of 2010 on the prohibition of the accommodation of workers' complexes within the areas of family housing. The law is effective and is to be published in the official gazette.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 27 of 2019 on the conditions and regulations for the permanent residency card holders to receive treatment and education in government institutions within the State.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 28 of 2019 determining the conditions and regulation for licensing non-Qatari real estate brokerage firms and offices to practise real estate brokerage.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 29 of 2019 forming a committee for real estate brokers affairs, its work system and remuneration.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 30 of 2019 determining the duration of the licenses of commercial, industrial and similar general shops and street vendors.

Under the decision, the license period for similar commercial, industrial and general shops and street vendors shall be for a period not less than one year. For commercial, industrial and public shops the license shall not exceed five years and two years for the license of street vendors.

This period shall be renewable for a similar period or periods in accordance with the provisions of Article No. 8 of Law No. 5 of 2015 on commercial, industrial, and similar public shops and street vendors amended by Law No. 6 of 2018.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 26 of 2019 to establish a national committee for women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 31 of 2019 determining the validity in the commercial register.

Under the decision, the validity in the commercial register shall be for a period of not less than one year and not more than five years. ➔P2



## Qatar and UK review bilateral relations

Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani met yesterday with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the State of Qatar, Ajay Sharma. They reviewed cooperation ties between the two countries and ways of promoting them in various fields.

## Karwa secures 2,600 buses for transporting 60,000 students

QNA
DOHA

The Follow-up Committee of the National Traffic Safety reviewed with the representatives of Mowasalat company (Karwa) the plans emanating from the 15 national road safety strategy and the cooperation between the company and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in this regard.

Director of Public Health and Vice-Chairman of the Follow-up Committee, Dr. Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin J Al Thani said that Karwa secured 2,600 buses to transport about 60,000 students in different regions of the country, in addition to its efforts to encourage the use of public transport to reduce traffic congestion and accidents.

A range of projects have also been reviewed, such as the 'Karwa Bus' application, which demonstrates bus routes and is interactively connected with users and control room to monitor the bus traffic and the drivers' performance.

The company's representatives stressed the importance it attaches to qualifying and preparing drivers with a high level of efficiency by enrolling them into a series of programmes and courses to obtain a licence and identify tourist places and important landmarks in Qatar. ➔P3



محمد بن عبدالرحمن
@MBA_AlThani_

"We condemn attacks on vital and civilian facilities, recently in Buqayq. These wars and conflicts must stop and efforts must be united to achieve common collective security in the region."

## Qatar condemns drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The State of Qatar yesterday condemned drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities and called for keeping the region away from conflicts and work together to ensure security of the region.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs H E Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said in a tweet yesterday: "We condemn attacks on vital and civilian facilities, recently in Buqayq. These wars and conflicts must stop and efforts must be united to achieve common collective security in the region."

The Houthis, who are battling a Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, claimed responsibility for the attacks on Saturday on sites run by state-owned Saudi Aramco. The attack on Saudi Arabia triggered the biggest jump in oil prices. ➔P2



## Al Sadd storm into AFC Champions League semis

Al Sadd's players celebrate after defeating Saudi's Al Nassr 3-1 in the second leg of their AFC Champions League quarter-final match played at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha yesterday. The 4-3 aggregate victory secured the Xavi Hernandez-led Qatari football giants a berth in the semi-finals.

## Global football bodies urge satellite providers to end access to beoutQ

QNA/ZURICH

FIFA, the AFC, UEFA, the Bundesliga, LaLiga, Lega Serie A, LFP and the Premier League issued joint statement on the publication of an investigative report into the operations of beoutQ.

The statement said: "As rights holders of globally followed sports events, whose intellectual property rights have been breached on a systematic and widespread basis by the pirate broadcaster known as beoutQ, we have commissioned a leading industry body, MarkMonitor, to conduct research and produce a detailed and independent technical analysis of beoutQ's operations.

"The report confirms without question that beoutQ's pirate broadcasts have been transmitted using satellite infrastructure owned and operated by Arabsat. The contents of the report are today being published in full on the rights holders' websites to provide transparency about the facts of the case and to demonstrate the seriousness with which we, as global rights holders, view this issue."

The statement called on Arabsat and all other satellite providers to stop (and going forward agree to refrain from) providing a platform for piracy, which harms not just legitimate licensees, fans and players but also the sports that it abuses.

Cutting off its access to transmission services would be a major step in the fight to stop beoutQ, the statement said, adding: "We all, individually and collectively, remain committed to bringing an end to international sports piracy."

# Sports summit aims to promote transparency, integrity

SIDI MOHAMED
THE PENINSULA

For the first time in the region, Qatar hosted the Inter-regional Sports Integrity Summit, in the presence of the Minister of Culture and Sports H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, a number of ambassadors accredited to Qatar and a large number of prominent international personalities and decision makers in international sports.

The two-day event, being held at Marsa Malaz Kempinski hotel, discussed many global sports issues related to fighting corruption, bribery and manipulation of sports results, and money laundering. The Summit also provides suggestions and proposals to reduce crime in the sporting world. It calls for cooperation between countries to develop appropriate legislation and laws to achieve integrity and transparency in the sports field.

The Summit is being organised by the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) and Qatar Airways in cooperation with the Sport Integrity Global Alliance (SIGA).

In his opening speech Mohammed Henzab, Chairman and CEO, ICSS Group and Vice-Chairman of SIGA said that hosting such summit for the first time in the Middle East, Asia and Africa was a good decision for sports security and Qatar, adding that the state of Qatar is a pioneer in promoting integrity, transparency and fighting corruption in sport in the region and around the world.

He also explained that sport has become an influential economic, social and cultural force, but at the same time it the sports way became full of corruption, violence, extremism, and many other organised crimes. ➔P3




**TODAY'S FIXTURES (GMT)**

| |
|---|
| Olympique Lyonnais v Zenit (1655) |
| Internazionale v Slavia Praha (1655) |
| Chelsea v Valencia (1900) |
| Ajax v Lille (1900) |
| Benfica v RB Leipzig (1900) |
| Borussia Dortmund v Barcelona (1900) |
| Napoli v Liverpool (1900) |
| Salzburg v Genk (1900) |

# Amiri decree allows five-year renewable RP for investors

FROM PAGE 1

The branches of foreign companies and commercial representation offices shall be valid within the period authorised for the company or office to practice its activities in the State. In all cases, validity or renewal shall be within the company's term.

The decisions are effective starting from their date of publication in the official gazette.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 23 of 2019, on the terms and conditions of the participation of companies and entities established and registered at the Qatar Free Zone Authority and the Qatar Financial Center or with other bodies authorized by law in tenders, auctions, procedures, competitions and direct agreement.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 24 of 2019 to establish a national committee for Qatar's hosting of the Horticultural Expo 2021.

The decisions are effective starting from their date of publication in the official gazette.

H H the Amir ratified Cabinet Decision No. 25 of 2019, amending the organization of some administrative units which comprises the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and assigning their competencies.

H H the Amir issued Law No. (21) of 2019 on extending the concession granted to Qatar Fuel Company (Woqod) for selling, marketing, transporting and distributing gas and petroleum products.

The law provided for the extension of the concession for marketing, selling, transporting and distributing gas and petroleum products with the exception of bitumen to the countrys airports, ports and petrol stations through its distribution, transportation and sales networks granted to Qatar Fuel Company (WOQOD) under Law No. (4) 2003 referenced, for five years.

The law is effective starting from its date of publication in the official gazette.

# PM meets Ambassador of Sri Lanka



Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, met yesterday with the Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to Qatar, Kithsiri Athulathmudali. The meeting reviewed cooperation ties between the two countries and ways of developing them.

## Shura Council to attend seminar in Muscat today

QNA
DOHA

The Shura Council will be participating in a seminar entitled "the role of legislative councils in achieving sustainable development goals" today in Muscat, Oman.

The Shura Council is represented by the members of the council H E Saqr bin Fahad Al Muraikhi, H E Yousef bin Ahmed Al Kuwari, and H E Abdullah bin Khaled Al Nuaimi.

The selection of the theme of the seminar is based on the decision of their Excellencies the presidents of the Shura, representatives, and national councils of the Gulf Cooperation Council States in their 12th regular meeting in Jeddah on 28 March.

## OFFICIAL NEWS

### Amir sends congratulations to President of Mexico

**DOHA:** Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to the President of the United Mexican States, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. QNA

### Amir congratulates President of Nicaragua

**DOHA:** Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani and Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani sent yesterday cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega Saavedra, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. QNA

## Qatar condemns drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities

FROM PAGE 1

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo ruled out Yemeni involvement and accused Iran of leading the attacks.

The US President Trump said that the US was "locked and loaded" for a potential response.

According to a report, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the attack on Saturday was a reciprocal measure by "Yemeni people" to assaults on their country.

# QA announces direct flights to Osaka

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Qatar Airways (QA) yesterday announced services to Osaka, Japan starting from April 6, 2020. The second largest metropolitan area of Japan, Osaka will be the airline's third gateway into the country. Qatar Airways began direct services to Tokyo Narita in 2010 and launched its Tokyo Haneda service in 2014 from Doha's Hamad International Airport (HIA).

The flight will be operated by an Airbus A350-900 aircraft, featuring 36 seats in Business Class and 247 seats in Economy Class. The operation will initially begin with a five times weekly service, increasing to a daily service from June 23, 2020.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We are truly delighted to be bringing our award-winning service to Osaka, adding this highly sought after Japanese destination to our global network. Osaka is a very important destination, and our service to the cosmopolitan city will enable us to provide a seamless journey for our passengers connecting from our extensive network of more than 160 destinations worldwide."

Osaka has been the economic powerhouse of the Kansai Region for many centuries. The Kansai Region is home to many well-known attractions like Arima Onsen — one of the most famous and oldest hot springs and Nara, the former historic capital. Visitors can also admire historical landmarks including UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Himeji Castle.

QA currently operates a modern fleet of more than 250 aircraft via its hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA) to more than 160 destinations worldwide. The airline has recently launched an array of exciting new destinations, namely Rabat, Morocco; Izmir, Turkey; Malta; Davao, Philippines; Lisbon, Portugal; and Mogadishu, Somalia. The airline will add Langkawi, Malaysia and Gaborone, Botswana to its extensive route network in October 2019 and Luanda, Angola in March 2020.

QA was named 'World's Best Airline' by the 2019 World Airline Awards, managed by international air transport rating organisation Skytrax. It was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', 'World's Best Business Class' and 'Best Business Class Seat', in recognition of its ground-breaking Business Class experience, Qsuite. Qatar Airways is the only airline to have been awarded the coveted "Skytrax Airline of the Year" title.

## Al Muraikhi meets official from Madagascar

QNA
DOHA

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, met yesterday with the Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Republic of Madagascar, Ramonjavelo Manambahoaka Valery Fitzgerald, who is currently visiting Doha.

The meeting reviewed bilateral cooperation relations between the two countries in addition to topics of mutual interest.

# Registration opens for Qatar's first 'Patient Experience Forum'

THE PENINSULA
DOHA



Qatar's first Patient Experience Forum will be held in November this year.

Delivered by Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), in partnership with internationally renowned US-based healthcare consultants Planetree International, the conference will focus on the development of a patient-centred approach to care and the importance of involving both patients and their families at every stage of the healthcare journey.

Registration is open for Qatar's first Patient Experience Forum, which will take place on November 16 and 17, 2019 in Doha.

Nasser Al Naimi **(pictured)**, Deputy Chief of Quality, Center for Patient Experience and Staff Engagement and Director of the Hamad Healthcare Quality Institute, said the Forum will provide a platform to address important issues in patient- and family-centred care.

"To ensure the best possible health outcome, it is important not only to have great technology, facilities, and staff but to also have an ongoing dialogue with patients and their families. By partnering with them in this way, we can ensure that the care being delivered is reflective of the patients' needs, wants, and beliefs through a shared decision-making process," said Al Naimi.

Featuring three main tracks: Better Experience, Better Engagement, and Better Culture and Healthy Communities, the conference aims to not only improve understanding of what great patient care is but also to help healthcare providers develop the skills needed to ensure a patient's care experience is overwhelmingly positive.

The Better Experience track focuses on a person-centred model of care ensuring caregivers work in partnership with patients and their families to develop personalised care plans. The Better Engagement track focuses on the importance of two-way communication during the healthcare journey, and the Better Culture and Healthy Communities track focuses on recognizing what is important to a patient and their family and using these learnings to develop care systems that can improve both the patient experience and health outcomes.

The Forum includes plenaries by experts in the patient experience field as well as workshops, break-out sessions, lectures, and poster presentations focusing on the importance of patient-centered care. Healthcare professionals from Qatar and across the region are expected to attend.

# London musical 'Broken Wings' to mark Doha debut in November

RAYNALD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA




Dana Al Fardan (second right), Nadin Naaman (third left) and Bronagh Lagan (right), with other officials and artistes at the "Broken Wings" press conference held at Katara Cultural Village in Doha, yesterday. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT / THE PENINSULA

Broken Wings, a West End musical written by critically acclaimed Qatari musician and composer Dana Al Fardan and Lebanese-British West End star Nadin Naaman, will mark its Doha run from November 7 to 9 at Katara Opera House.

An adaptation of Kahlil Gibran's 1912 autobiographical poetic novel of the same title, Broken Wings marked a sold-out premiere in London's West End in August last year and its international debut in Lebanon in July.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday at Katara Cultural Village, Al Fardan recalled how the musical was born saying that the first thing they "discussed was the need to project our shared Arab heritage on a wider global platform."

"We wanted to focus specifically on the rich universally relevant content in Arab literature and philosophy. Our mission as long as we work together will be to counter common predispositions held towards the Arab world by making accessible to an international audience the depth and beauty of its art," she stressed.

Immigration, gender relations and identity were among the themes engulfing most societies during Gibran's time reflected in his novella Broken Wings and remain relevant today , she said.

Naaman was of the same view saying over a century later, Broken Wings "is a story that highlights importance of his philosophies and messages of tolerance, humanitarianism and equality against the backdrop of a divided modern world. Arguably now, more than ever, a dose of Gibran is needed, to remind us all of the things that unite us, rather than divide us."

He added: "The Middle East has, for many years, received touring productions of many popular Western musicals and plays. But it is now time for The Middle East to create and enjoy its own heritage and culture on the stage. And more importantly, it is time for the rest of the world to enjoy artistic creations from this beautiful and historic region."

Twenty-five cast and crew members from 14 different nationalities will be flying from London to join other cast members in Doha for the show, said Naaman, who plays the lead role in the musical.

Naaman is joined by Hanna Qureshi as Selma and Soophia Foroughi (Spamalot) as Mother and further casting will be announced soon. The musical is directed by Bronagh Lagan, with orchestration by Joe Davison, and produced by Ali Matar.

"Katara is a home of the art in Doha. Our role is to cultivate bright and talented artists in Doha providing a platform for artists to flourish just like Dana Alfardan and to strengthen the quality of the arts and to build bridges through culture showcasing the rich heritage of Qatar to the rest of the world. Broken Wings is a testament to this, and we are very proud to partner with Dana Alfardan in bringing this great masterpiece to Doha, highlighting the message of peace, inclusion and sense of belonging," said Darwish Ahmad Al Shaibani, Director of Marketing and Cultural Affairs at Katara.

Tickets for the musical, which will have matinee and soiree performances, will start selling tomorrow at Virgin Megastores.

# Transport Minister meets Philippine envoy



The Minister of Transport and Communications, H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti, with the Ambassador of the Philippines, Alan L Timbayan, yesterday. H E the Minister also met with the Ambassador of Argentina, Carlos Alberto Hernandez. The two meetings discussed cooperation relations between Qatar and the two friendly countries in the fields of transportation and communications and means of further enhancing them.



The Minister of Culture and Sports, H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, with other officials during SIGA Regional Summit held at Marsa Malaz Kempinski Hotel yesterday. PIC: BAHER AMIN / THE PENINSULA

# MOTC invites participants to 2nd CodeCamp

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The Ministry of Transport and Communications (MOTC) has invited startups, computer programmers, software developers, business analysts and graphic designers, from across Qatar and around the globe, to compete in the second edition of CodeCamp, to be held from October 27- 29, 2019.

As part of the CodeCamp event, participants will compete in a hackathon, where they will be challenged to develop smart solutions for five unique use cases from local enterprises. Teams will get 48 hours beginning on October 27 (before the main event) and ending on the first day of Qatar IT Conference and Exhibition (QITCOM 2019) on October 29, 2019. 50 teams will be finally selected to solve one out of the five challenges presented by enterprises. At the end of CodeCamp and during the final pitch, a panel of judges will select five winning teams, for the respective five challenges.

Registering for the hackathon is entirely free of charge and is open only to existing teams of two to four people and to individuals who will then be able to form teams at the event. Registrations will end on October 15, 2019. The teams will consist of computer programmers, designers, business analysts and software developers composed of university students, startups, and professional coders to compete in developing software solutions to specific case-based challenges relevant to Qatar.

The differentiating factor in this year's QITCOM is that the winners will be incubated under the supervision and support of MOTC to ensure the implementation of the concept with the Use Case owners. Winners will be chosen at the final pitch day on October 30, based on the concept, design, development and presentation; and the awards will include mentoring offers, incubation and projects.

Reem Al Mansoori, Assistant Undersecretary of Digital Society Development Affairs, MOTC, said 'At the fifth edition of Qatar IT Conference and Exhibition, we are committed to promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and learning, as they are integral to building a vibrant ICT sector and a knowledge-based economy. There are incredible opportunities for entrepreneurs and SMEs at the Entrepreneurship Zone where startups will be able to transform their innovative ideas into working prototypes. Activities such as CodeCamp provide a platform for entrepreneurs and SMEs to gain practical experience and the knowledge necessary in creating smart technological solutions for Qatar's smart future."

# Karwa secures 2,600 buses for transporting 60,000 students

FROM PAGE 1

They also stressed on making drivers familiar with the art of dealing with passengers, and others to update their knowledge of traffic laws and legislation in cooperation with the Traffic Department.

Karwa is also cooperating with Doha Metro through the Metro link project.

At the end of the meeting, the Committee underlined the importance of joint and effective work with the ministries and various authorities in the country to achieve the objectives of the national traffic safety strategy, which contributes to reducing traffic accidents, in addition to the need to take some measures related to the Karwa bus stops.

The National Committee for Traffic Safety seeks to reduce road accidents by employing all the potential of the State through educational and qualification programs, to raise the level of traffic awareness of the community, and to strengthen the role of national institutions through the implementation of its objectives towards the achievement of the long-term national vision for traffic safety.

# Sports summit aims to promote transparency and integrity

FROM PAGE 1

For his part, the SIGA Chairman Franco Frattini considered that sport is the identity of peoples, considering that integrity in sport is one of the values that started with the first Olympics in Greece 1891, and must be preserved In order to preserve the identity of future generations.

In his speech, Frattini said that defending integrity in sport and the rule of law is an institutional commitment, and organized crime must be combated in all its forms that seek rapid profit in various sports sectors.

SIGA Chairman Franco Frattini expressed his happiness to organize the second edition of this regional Summit in Doha, especially as Qatar has made great strides in achieving integrity in sports, as well as preparing to host the 2019 World Athletics Championships in a few days.

The Italian parliamentarian, former Italian foreign minister, the famous judge in Europe and member of the Italian sports court, said that SIGA aims through the Doha summit to set certain standards for the sports sectors aimed at law enforcement and ensure impunity in the field of sports corruption cases, as well as crimes related to integrity in sport.

SIGA Chairman said that the integrity of sport does not conflict with independence at all, but complement each other, as sport independence means it is free from corruption.

For his part, the CEO of SIGA Emmanuel Medeiros, praised Qatar's sporting integrity, its sporting governance and the country's sporting revolution in infrastructure in preparation for the FIFA World Cup 2020.

Speaking at the summit, Medeiros said that the State of Qatar and the International Centre for Sport Security, ICSS have made great efforts in the field of sports integrity and fighting sports corruption. He added that Qatar's hosting of the Summit confirms its ability to create all means of success for any international event organized on its soil.

For his part, Bilal Erdogan, President of World Ethnosport Confederation, praised the great role played by Qatar in the field of sports integrity.

Giving brief about the World Ethnosport Confederation, he said it was founded in Istanbul, and currently working to shed light on corruption in sports, match-fixing and gambling, and all allegations that may cause chaos in sport, to find solutions and contribute to maintaining integrity in Sports. Salam Al Shawa, Senior Vice-President of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Qatar Airways, pointed out that the Qatar Airways sponsors a lot of sporting events in order to show Qatar's capabilities in hosting major tournaments, and put them in the ranks of the developed nations in hosting all the various sporting events to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

"We believe in sports either football, tennis, cricket and other sports and sponsor a number of sports events inside and outside Qatar," she added.

Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Nasser Al Thani, Chief business officer at Ooredoo, said that the company's sponsorship and support for the Integrity Summit is part of the company's belief in the importance of sport in communities and the importance of integrity in the sports sector.

He also pointed out that the State of Qatar has become a sporting capital and attracts many international sporting events, mentioning that the sponsoring the summit comes in the framework of social responsibly of the company.

# Green initiative: Kahramaa installs electric car charging stations

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation (Kahramaa), represented by the National Program for Conservation and Energy Efficiency (Tarsheed), has installed eight electric car charging stations free-of-cost to encourage the motorists to adopt electric cars, said a Kahramaa official.

"The project which was launched in February 2018 under the Green Car Initiative is eyeing to help switch up to five percent of total cars into electric ones in Qatar by 2022 in a bid to cut the carbon footprint in a big way and protect the environment," Mohamad Khalid Al Sharshini, Head of Tarsheed Technology Section at Kahramaa, told *The Peninsula.*

Al Sharshini was speaking on the sidelines of a programme organised by Kahramaa at Kahramaa Awareness Park (KAP) yesterday to observe 'International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer' which falls on September 16.

He said that Kahramaa targeted to install over 400 electric car charging stations at car parking areas of government buildings, major shopping complexes, malls, roadsides, stadiums and public parking areas.

"All eight charging stations are functional and they are available at Kahramaa Awarness Park, Kahramaa Headquarters, Marsa Malaz Kempinski, The St. Regis Doha, Al Fardan Towers, Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP) and two stations at headquarters of Mowasalat Karwa," said Al Al Sharshini.

"A photovoltaic (PV) charging station, which is integrated with a solar panel in a very unique way, is installed in Abu Hamour at a Kahramaa site as a prototype and will be spread all over the country," said Al Sharshini adding that some fast charging stations are also being installed to save the time of motorists.



Children gesture during the programme organised by Kahramaa at Kahramaa Awareness Park yesterday to observe 'International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer' which falls on September 16.

The 'Green Car Initiative' was launched by Kahramaa in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Industry, the Ministry of Transport and Communications by signing an agreement to increase the number of electric cars in the country. Kahramaa President Essa bin Hilal Al Kuwari in a statement issued on the occasion of International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer said that Tarsheed by the end of first year of second period helped reduced 3.66 tonnes of carbon emissions.

He said that Kahramaa held several activities and programs to mark the Day which aimed at creating awareness among people about the importance of making efforts to achieve sustainable as per Qatar National Vision 2030.

Kahramaa President said that September 16 marks the anniversary of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and it celebrates the progress in protecting ozone layer and moves to phase out ozone depleting chemicals which are also potent greenhouse gases.

Addressing the program at Kahramma Awareness Park, a Kahramaa official said that Tarsheed helped reduced about 15 million tonnes of carbon footprint since its launch in 2012 till 2018. "We dedicated a section at Kahramma Awareness Park to create awareness about the issue of harmful carbon footprint," the official added. A representative from the Ministry of Municipality and Environment gave presentation about cleanliness and protect the environment. Large number of school students participated the programme.

# QSTP launches cycle eight of flagship accelerator programme

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research, Development, and Innovation (QF RDI), has recently launched cycle eight of its flagship accelerator programme, XLR8, which aims to help aspiring tech entrepreneurs transform ideas into products with the potential to make a commercial impact.

The eighth cycle of the intensive 10-week training and mentorship programme — a key element of QSTP's mission to foster a dynamic tech innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Qatar — welcomes the contestants of season 11 of Stars of Science, Qatar Foundation's popular edutainment reality TV show, as part of this cycle's cohort. Established in 2008, Stars of Science inspires and empowers Arab youth to implement creative solutions to regional problems through science, technology, and innovation. The XLR8 programme features three modules. The first 'Product-Market Fit' module helps participants identify their target market, design an early prototype, and solicit feedback to revise it as needed; while the second 'Customer Traction' module enables entrepreneurs to assess whether the market is large enough to sustain a startup. The third and final module, 'Attracting and Pitching to Investors,' trains entrepreneurs on how to attract early stage investors and additional investment to grow their startups.

# Silatech, WHO and Foreign Ministry to host meeting in NY on shortfall of health workers

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

**The meeting titled 'Investing in Education, Skills and Jobs in the Health Sector', will take place on September 21, 2019 from 15:00 to 16:30 in the South Dining Room, United Nations Office, New York.**

Silatech and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar to host a high-level strategy meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly to accelerate action on the projected global shortfall of 18 million health workers by 2030.

The meeting titled 'Investing in Education, Skills and Jobs in the Health Sector', will take place on September 21, 2019 from 15:00 to 16:30 in the South Dining Room, United Nations Office, New York.

Confirmed speakers are Soltan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qatar; Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, WHO; Madame President Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of Liberia, and WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Health Workforce; Bent Høie, Minister of Health, Norway; Sabah Ismail Al Haidoos, Chief Executive Officer of Silatech; Ambroise Fayolle, Vice-President, European Investment Bank; Muhammad Ali Pate, Global Director, Health, Nutrition and Population/Director, Global Financing Facility for Women.

WHO estimates that 57 countries worldwide have a critical shortage of health workers, equivalent to a global deficit of about 2.4 million doctors, nurses and midwives. Thirty-six of these countries are in sub- Saharan Africa and will need to increase their health workforce by about 140 percent to achieve enough coverage for essential health interventions.

Bridging the 18 million health worker shortfall will also help prevent and contain health catastrophes, like Ebola, Malaria, and Measles that are plaguing the African continent and in turn make positive differences in the health and life expectancy of each country's respective population. The joint meeting between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Qatar, WHO and Silatech will also illustrate the importance of promoting education and skills development in the health sector for youth, particularly women. It will seek to make a valuable contribution to finding international financing strategies to support the investment in education, health and the skills of the populations that will positively impact generations to come.

## Director of Public Security meets Kuwaiti official



The Director of Public Security, H E Staff Major General Saad bin Jassim Al Khulaifi, met yesterday with the Director-General of Fire Department in Kuwait, Lieutenant General Khalid Al Makrad. During the meeting, they discussed a number of issues of common concern and ways of enhancing them.

## Qatar Scout and Girl Guides Association to participate in Arab Regional Conference in Tunis from today

QNA/ DOHA

Qatar Scout and Girl Guides Association will participate in the 22nd Arab Regional Conference for Girl Guides, to be held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from today to September 22.

The conference will discuss a number of topics including the general policy of the Girl Guiding movement in the Arab region, the development of regional strategies and plans that meet the needs and priorities of the guiding organizations and the development and qualification and leaders capacity of women for leadership positions on the Arab scale. The 21st regional conference was held in Doha in September 2016.

Meanwhile, the Association participates with a group of girl guides in the Young Women Forum for Governance currently held in Tunisia.

The Forum aims at building the capacity of young women at different levels and introducing them to governance issues, characteristics, challenges of leadership positions, strategic planning and the ability to work in a multicultural environment.

# Photo exhibition on Shanghai's history opens at Katara

**Chronologically divided into three sections, the exhibition titled "Moments in History, 70 Years of Shanghai" reflects the huge leap China's biggest city has witnessed in various spheres of development in the past seven decades.**

RAYNALD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA



Dr. Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti (right), General Manager of Katara, viewing some of the photos showcased at the opening of "Moments in History, 70 Years of Shanghai" exhibition at Katara Building 47 on Sunday.

Seventy images showcasing pivotal moments in Shanghai's history are on display at a photography exhibition launched on Sunday at Katara Cultural Village in line with the 70th founding anniversary of China.

Chronologically divided into three sections, the exhibition titled "Moments in History, 70 Years of Shanghai" reflects the huge leap China's biggest city has witnessed in various spheres of development in the past seven decades.

The exhibition begins with "Reborn after the war" extending from Shanghai's liberation in 1949 till 1978, a period characterized by many national and world firsts as people worked hard rebuilding their land after the war. It is followed by "Reform and opening up" (1978 to 2012) which was marked by an historic leap and transformation as the city became a window to China's opening up to the outside world.

The exhibition concludes with "Pursuit of excellence" (2012 to 2019), a showcase of Shanghai's drive towards becoming a global city of excellence – an international centre for economic, financial, trade, shipping and scientific innovation.

With its rich visual content and information, the exhibition serves as an invitation to take a fascinating journey into an understanding and appreciation of Shanghai in particular and China in general with everything they have achieved in recent decades.

Presented by the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office, the Chinese Embassy in Doha and Katara, the exhibition was inaugurated by Dr. Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, General Manager of Katara in the presence of Yin Yicui, Director of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress and Zhou Jian, Ambassador of China to Qatar with a number of ambassadors and officials in attendance.

The exhibition's opening event was preceded by the launch of "Silk Road Charms – Shanghai Radio Week in Qatar."

"The exhibition marks 70 years of the renaissance, development and modernity of Shanghai –one of the most famous gateways of China and one of its largest cultural, economic, commercial and financial centers," said Al Sulaiti.

He stressed that Katara's cooperation with the Chinese Embassy in Doha and the Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office reaffirms the strength and depth of bilateral relations between Qatar and China.

Yicui talked about the development Shanghai had witnessed in different fields while she welcomed cooperation between China and Qatar in various areas, which in turn strengthens the relations and openness between the two countries and their peoples.

For his part, the Chinese Ambassador expressed his happiness for their continuous cooperation with Katara reflected in the hosting of this important exhibition, while he lauded the significant role Katara plays in bridging different cultures.

The exhibition is open to the public until October 3 from 10am to 10pm at Katara Building 47.

# DFI to screen 6 award-winning musical films at MIA

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

Fans of musical films are in for a treat as Doha Film Institute (DFI) has announced it will screen six award-winning musical films and two shorts from September 18 to 23 at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) Auditorium.

The film series, which revolves around the theme of 'Rhythm and Flow,' pays tribute to the evolving face of musical cinema with its bold interplay of music, dance and narrative. The films come from around the world and illustrate the lasting impact of musical film as a collaborative art form that interlaces dance and narrative, with the power of musical composition to deliver a unique viewer experience beyond the confines of language and culture.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "Since the advent of sound pictures, musical film has developed as a stand-alone genre within the film industry ranging from musical adaptations to feature-films and modern classics. The unique combination of movement and music define the film-goers' experience and leave audiences with a deeper emotive connection to the characters.

We look forward to introducing audiences to classic and contemporary filmmaking talent that has contributed to a renaissance of musical film over decades. Their artistic vision allows us to reimagine on-screen storytelling through elaborate choreographies and captivating musical scores."

The showcase will kick off on September 18 at 7pm with Summer Interlude (1951), a poignant depiction of isolation and the inescapability of the past by Swedish director, writer, and producer Ingmar Bergman. It will be preceded by the Scandinavian short-film Birds in the Earth (2018), a ballet-based commentary on the Sámi people´s territorial rights.

Damien Chazelle's award-winning global favourite La La Land (2016), which is a contemporary take on classical Hollywood romance, will be screened at 7pm on September 19.

A screening of Lars von Trier's Dancer in the Dark (2000), whose soundtrack was written by Björk, an Icelandic musician who also stars in the film as an immigrant factory worker and single-mother, will follow at 7pm on September 20.

Sidney Lumet's fantastical adaptation of The Wizard of Oz, The Wiz (1978), featuring some of the greatest musicians of its time including Diana Ross and Michael Jackson, will be screened at 7pm on September 21. Screening at 7pm on September 22, The Red Shoes (1948) will whisk viewers into a timeless story of torn passions when a young performer must choose between the man she loves and a budding career as a prima ballerina. The screening will be preceded by Ballet After Dark (2019), a short documentary that tells the story of a woman who used dance therapy to overcome domestic abuse and establish an organization dedicated to helping other trauma survivors.



A still from Damien Chazelle's award-winning film 'La La Land' (2016), which is scheduled for screening on September 19, 7pm, at MIA Auditorium.

Closing the showcase, Lil' Buck: Real Swan (2019), a documentary which follows Memphis-born Charles "Lil Buck" Riley's rise to prominence as one of the most admired street dancers of his generation, will screen at 7pm on September 23.

Tickets are priced QR35. Students and Qatar Museums Culture Pass members can enjoy discounted rates of QR25 per person. Tickets are available at DFI ticket outlet opposite MIA auditorium and at www.dohafilminstitute.com.

We are an International Facility Service Company, urgently looking for **Facility Aids**
Males and Females

*Requirements:*
- Arabs or Arab speakers
- Females with NOC or under Husband's sponsor
- Age 25/40
- 3 years' experience handling and help special needs with different mental disabilities
- All candidates must have NOC and QID

Suitable candidates can send their CV to **recruitment@accionamena.qa**

We are an International Facility Service Company, urgently looking for:

**Rope Access Level 1**

Job Description/Role
- Valid IRATA Level 1 Certificate
- Understanding of IRATA ICOP
- Knowledge of fall arrest, work restraint, safety net systems, air bags and mobile elevating work platforms
- Minimum 1 yr. work experience as IRATA level 1 technician with 1000 rope hours
- Advance rigging, rescue and rope access skills
- Ability to select equipment correctly
- Ability to inspect the equipments
- Ability to maintain and store the equipment
- *Should have NOC and valid QID*

Suitable Candidates can send their CV to **recruitment@accionamena.qa**

We are an International Facility Service Company urgently looking for:
- **CLEANER (FEMALE)**
- **TEA GIRL**
- Cleaner Male
- Tea Boy
- **HEAVY & LIGHT DRIVERS** (with Qatar driving license)
- **HVAC TECHNICIAN** (w/ chiller experience)

*Minimum 2-3 years GCC/Gulf experience in Maintenance & Facility Management field*
*Locally available in Qatar with QID+NOC*
*Must have completed 1 year (in case currently working)*
*Transferable Visa and can join immediately*

Suitable Candidates can send their CV to **recruitment@accionamena.qa**



Jonathan Muir (fifth right), Ambassador of Australia to the State of Qatar, poses for a group photo with the staff of the Australian Embassy and officials of the Hamad Medical Corporation's Blood Donation Center at HMC premises, yesterday.

# Australian Envoy visits HMC, embassy staff donates blood

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The staff at the Australian Embassy visited Hamad Medical Corporation's Blood Donation Center yesterday to donate blood.

Ambassador Jonathan Muir at the occasion said: "I was glad we could help this great cause as a team. I was interested to learn that the Hamad Blood Donation Center was closely modelled on the system we have in Australia, established by the Australian Red Cross."

"I would encourage others to consider making the important decision to give blood. I was privileged to also witness the investment Hamad has made on its new advanced pathology and diagnostic laboratories, which opened in 2018," Ambassador Muir continued.

"I thank Sadika Ismail Al Mahmoudi and her dedicated team at the Donation Center for looking after us during the donation; and also Dr Javed Akter, for the tour of Hamad Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology," the Ambassador added.

## Qatar participates in MENA Innovation Forum in Education

QNA
MUSCAT

The State of Qatar is participating in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Innovation Forum in Education, which is being held in Muscat, Oman.

Qatar's delegation to the forum is headed by Minister of Education and Higher Education H E Dr Mohammed bin Abdul Wahed Ali Al Hammadi.

The forum will discuss ways to keep pace with the accelerated development of technology and innovation in the education sector. It is dedicated to business partnerships and innovations in ICT, with the aim of developing educational infrastructure capable of meeting future requirements based on technological development.

It will bring together ministers of education and higher education, information and communications technology in Arab countries, in addition to a number of universities.

The forum highlights the MENA region's education sector's response to the information revolution and its response to the requirements of the 21st century in terms of curricula and skills imposed by the future reality in light of the rapid technological development and the emergence of artificial intelligence as a feature of the fourth industrial revolution.

It also provides an opportunity to learn about experiences that enhance youth abilities, empower them with entrepreneurial skills, innovation and SME creation, and fulfill the aspirations of youth in the MENA region.

# After climbing Everest, Qatari mountaineer aims to conquer Antarctica's highest peak

IRFAN BUKHARI
THE PENINSULA

Fahad Badar, a Qatari youth who made history in May this year for being the first Arab to reach the Everest and Lhotse peaks during the same expedition, has announced to climb Mount Vinson in Antarctica in December 2019 on the eve of National Day of Qatar.

Addressing a press conference yesterday, the Qatari adventurer and mountaineer announced one of the ultimate adventures on earth to Antarctica to ski the last degree expedition and climb Mount Vinson.

This incredible crossing involves skiing in intervals for 110km across the South Pole, using sleds to haul provisions and to scale one of the coldest mountains on earth. Mount Vinson is the highest peak in Antarctica.

Mount Vinson is the most remote of the Seven Summits, located 1,000 kilometres from the South Pole at 4,897-metre high. Vinson's summit will feel 1,000 meters higher than it actually is because of the thinning of the earth's atmosphere near the poles.

December through to February is considered the Antarctic summer, where Fahad will experience 24 hours of daylight and the average temperature for that time of the year is minus 20 degrees Celsius (temperatures on the summit can drop down to minus 50). Records show approximately 1200 people have summited Mount Vinson since 1966.

Vinson will be Fahad's fourth of the Seven Summits, and he will be leaving to Antarctica on the Qatar National Day (December 18) to make his journey to the centre of the South Pole by the end of December, with a projected summit date during the first week of January 2020.

In May this year, Fahad made history by becoming the first Arab male to double summit both Mount Everest and Lhotse in a single expedition. He is one of just over 30 people in the world to have succeeded this massive accomplishment.

His achievements were commended by Minister of Culture and Sports, H E Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali, who awarded him with a certificate of achievement.

Then in August, he also achieved an incredible feat by scaling two more mountains – Mont Blanc and Matterhorn in the Alps. He is one of only a few Qataris who is pursuing his passion for climbing, which has led him to push himself both physically and mentally further each time.

Fahad Badar said, "It has been a pride and privilege to fly the Qatari flag on the highest peaks of the world. My endeavour has always been to achieve the unprecedented and this has what helped me push myself forward. For me failure is not an option and I am excited for this next expedition to raise the Qatari flag high at Antarctica and inspire many others to follow suit."

Fahad Badar, throughout his career, has worked in the banking sector, where his leadership skills and expertise have seen him rise up the executive ladder. As the Executive General Manager of International Banking at Commercial Bank of Qatar, Fahad is as skilled in the boardroom as he is at scaling a mountain.

Fahad further added, "The world of mountaineering teaches you a lot about life, yet you need to have the necessary technical skills and be well prepared physically to face the risks. I want to thank the team at Aspire that have been assisting with my training, the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Olympic Committee for their continued support of my achievements."




Qatari mountaineer Fahad Badar announcing his next expedition during a press conference in Doha, yesterday.
PIC: ABDUL BASIT / THE PENINSULA

**Mount Vinson will be Fahad's fourth of the Seven Summits. He will embark on the mission on Qatar National Day (December 18) to make his journey to the centre of the South Pole by end December.**



Fahad Badar with Qatar's flag at Everest.

## RACA and DI sign MoU

QNA/DOHA

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) and Regulatory Authority for Charitable Activities (RACA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation and identify the basic conditions and elements for finding a joint mechanism between the two parties in the agreed training areas and related scientific activities.

Director-General of RACA Ibrahim Abdullah Al Duhaimi and Vice-President of Administration and Finance of DI, Dr. Hend Al Mufta signed the MoU at DI headquarters.

The MoU included several areas cooperation, including scientific and knowledge cooperation between the two parties, the exchange of expertise and experts, and the organization of joint events such as research and studies, workshops and conferences of common interest. It also provides for organizing a practical and summer training for several DI students and the provision of vocational training in DI's specialized centers. The MoU states for granting training certificates as well as developing the executive and professional skills and abilities of RACA employees in addition to benefiting from the programs and courses of DI Language Center and library.



Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, General Manager of Cultural Village Foundation — Katara, checks an exhibit during the Zakreet Rocks Exhibition.

# Zakreet Rocks Exhibition begins at Katara

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Zakreet Rocks Exhibition by artist Suhila Al Harip kicked off yesterday at Katara Art Studio Building 19.

General Manager of Cultural Village Foundation — Katara, Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti, said on the occasion that the exhibition was part of Katara's approach in supporting the Qatari artists to present their experience, stressing that the exhibition highlights the importance of Zakreet rocks and their value.

The exhibition includes a series of stones presented by the artist in a beautiful artistic way, in addition to a set of Dolomite stone, which is a part of limestone.

In this context, the artist Suhila Al Harip said that through this exhibition, she wanted to introduce Zakreet rocks in a new way and draw attention to their importance, as these rocks are of high value, and the exhibition is presenting these rocks as accessories, stones and decor wrapped with gold and silver leaves.The exhibition will run until September 22.

مؤسسة قطر
Qatar Foundation

INVITATION TO TENDER

| S. No. | Tender Ref. No. | Description | Tender Fee | Tender Bond | Bid Closing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | QF/2019/PD-SL/27450 | Supply, Installation, Commissioning & Training of Research Equipment (Pyrolysis Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry) for HBKU | QAR 500 | QAR 21,250.00 | 10 October 2019 at 2:00 pm |
| 2 | QF/2019/PD-SL/27615 | SUPPLY OF HORSE AMBULANCE TRUCK FOR AL SHAQAB | QAR 300 | QAR 13,000.00 | 16 October 2019 at 2:00 pm |

- The Tender Document can be obtained against payment of non-refundable tender fee as mentioned above along with Company Authorization letter, copy of valid Commercial Registration (CR) and copy QID of the nominated person collecting the Tender Document. A cash receipt voucher can be obtained from the "Finance Directorate, located at Qatar Foundation HQ Building, First Floor, Room No. 1.116 (open until 01:00 pm) prior to the collection of the Tender Document.
- Complete copy of the company commercial registration with names of the individual partners should be submitted. For companies with corporate partners /owners, the commercial registration of the corporate partners reflecting its individual owners should be submitted together as part of the tender requirement.
- Authorization letter to collect tender document must be issued on company letterhead nominating the person collecting the tender document including two contact details (i.e. name and email address) of the assigned tender focal person.
- The Tender Document can be obtained from the Limited Tender Committee, located at Qatar Foundation, Office No.6, SB1, Ground Floor, QF Education City (Opposite to LAS Building)
- Collection dates: From Wednesday, 18th September to Tuesday, 24th September 2019(except Friday & Saturday)
- Collection time: From 9:00 a.m. until 02:00 p.m.
- Any offer received after the bid closing date & time will not be considered.
- An offer must be valid for 120 days from bid closing date.
- An offer must be accompanied by a bank guarantee (tender bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for 120 days from the bid closing date.
- The original tender bond must be part of the Technical Offer.
- The successful Tenderer shall submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the Bid Value, valid until Ninety (90) days after the Contract Completion Date as per the specimen provided in the tender document.
- Tenderers should submit the Technical Bid and Commercial Bid in two separate wax-sealed envelopes, each marked with the relevant title and number.
- Bids must be submitted to: LIMITED TENDER COMMITTEE, located at Qatar Foundation, Office No.6, SB1, Ground Floor, QF Education City (Opposite to LAS Building), by the date and time stated above.Any tender breaching the conditions stated above will be rejected.

# CNA-Q hosts high level delegation from Qatar Shell

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

College of the North Atlantic-Qatar (CNA-Q) recently played host to a high level delegation from Qatar Shell. The visitors included Rashid Al-Sulaiti, Deputy General Manager – Qatar Shell, Christos Mylonas, GM external & government relations and Hussain Al-Hijji, VP Qatar Research & technology Center.

They toured CNA-Q's state-of-the-art facilities in its Engineering Technology and Industrial Trades program, including an Oil and Gas Processing Pilot Plant, a Materials and Corrosion Laboratory, and a Thermal Laboratory. Mr. Rashid and his colleagues also had several valuable interactions with students.

"We are very pleased to be able to welcome delegates from Shell and showcase our state-of-the-art facility to a world leader in the oil and gas industry," said CNA-Q President Prof. Khalifa Al-Khalifa. "The oil and gas industry is one of our main stakeholders, and CNA-Q is committed to providing the highest quality education and job-ready graduates to the oil and gas sector. We look forward to continuing our productive relationship with Shell in the years to come."

**Since its inception in 2002, CNA-Q has grown to offer more than 30 diploma and certificate programs, graduating thousands of students from full-time programs who have populated the workforce in Qatar or pursued further education.**

Hussain Al-Hijji from Shell said: "I am very impressed with the facilities and the program offered to the students. I'm convinced that this will prepare them for a bright future in our industry."

Rashid Al-Sulaiti added: "I really enjoyed the interaction with the students and as Shell we look forward to continue our collaboration with CNA-Q."

Since its inception in 2002, CNA-Q has grown to offer more than 30 diploma and certificate programs, graduating of thousands students from full-time programs who have populated the workforce in Qatar or pursued further education.

This year marks the 18th year that CNA-Q has been providing experiential technical education in Qatar to support the State's strategic vision to educate, develop and retain young Qataris and transform the state as a knowledge-based economy.



Officials from Qatar Shell meet with sponsored students during a recent visit to CNA-Q.




Officials with the winner of Mitsubishi Pajero.

# IFS announces winners of car raffle draws

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The car raffle draws for Mercedes Benz A200 and Mitsubishi Pajero was conducted by Integral Food Services (IFS), a group owning leading chain of restaurants in Qatar on September 8 at French Olive (Al Sadd) and at Tandoor (Aziziya) respectively.

Nercy Voluntad holding Qatar Id-29060800593 has won the Mitsubishi Pajero and Mrs Swatiben Sheth holder of Qatar Id 27135622890 has won the Mercedes Benz A200 in these draws. Draw was conducted by Ministry of Commerce & Industry with the presence of IFS group management including Managing Director William Aranha, Commercial Director Ganesh Mithra and others.

At this juncture IFS has also announced the continuance of the Scratch & Win Promotion where in ALL ARE WINNERS on the spend of QR 50 in Tandoor, Bombay Chowpatty, Shawarma station, Coffee Time and Dakshin (valid until 7th December 2019) and on the spend of QR150 in The Village, The French Olive, Royal Tandoor and Rolls & Sliders (valid until 7th January 2020) where customers will get a Scratch & Win coupon with assured gifts like Mobiles, Mobile gift vouchers, Gold coins, Al Tawfik Travel vouchers and many more gifts.

IFS group congratulates the winners and thanks all the customers who participated in the promotion to make it a grand success.

# Bangladesh School hosts Science Fair

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Bangladesh School Qatar organised the Annual Science Fair and Arts and Crafts Exhibition-2019 recently. Students of elementary, middle and high school participated in the exhibition. Different innovative ideas and inventions of the students were presented by the concern Forms of the school.

Ambassador of Bangladesh Ashud Ahmed and Chairman of Bangladesh MHM School & College inaugurated the exhibition. Embassy Officials, Director of School, Principal, Vice-Principal, Faculties and Guardians were present during the inauguration ceremony.

The fair obtained high appreciation chairman, director, faculties and visitors who really enjoyed the creativity and craftsmanship of the students. Among the 200 arts and crafts projects and 100 science projects most of them were really praise worthy.

Models of windmills, generators, space ship, models of chemical compounds, and glittering tree, convenient coffee machine, chemistry in daily life were the surprises of science fair.

Some other attractions of the exhibition were carbon capture technology & energy mining, social engineering, solar power car, lemon powered air-conditioner, hydraulic city, Li-Fi, Hydraulic JCB, use of light technology, sugar soda and spirit, transpiration along with artistic arts and crafts projects of elementary students.

The Chairman, the Director of the school as well as the visitors highly commended the creativity of the young scientist and artists of the school and hoped that this sort of exhibition would certainly enhance inquisitiveness and creativity among the students in future.



Ambassador of Bangladesh, Ashud Ahmed, along with the Chairman of Bangladesh MHM School & College, inaugurating the exhibition.

**The fair obtained high appreciation chairman, director, faculties and visitors who really enjoyed the creativity and craftsmanship of the students. Among the 200 arts and crafts projects and 100 science projects most of them were really praise worthy.**

# MME to hold awareness program to mark World Cleaning Day

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

The Ministry of Municipality and Environment, represented by the Public Relations Department will organise today, an awareness program on the occasion of the World Cleaning Day under a theme of 'No Plastic Bags'. The program will be organised in cooperation with Al Rayyan Municipality and Carrefour Management. The World Cleanup Day is a global social action program aimed at combating the global solid waste problem, including the problem of marine debris.

The event will run from 8am to 9pm and will include public awareness of visitors to the complex through the distribution of awareness publications and environmentally friendly bags.

Meanwhile, in August, the General Cleanliness Department carried out various cleaning services and works for all municipalities, resulting in the removal of over 150,000 of various types of waste, including 67,757 tonnes of household waste, 8, 654 tonnes of construction waste, 29,766 tonnes of solid waste, 37, 016 tonnes tree and mixed waste, 7,035 tonnes. A total of 45 violations of the hygiene law were recorded last month.

**The event will run from 8am to 9pm today and will include public awareness for visitors to the complex through the distribution of publications and environmentally-friendly bags.**

The cleaning team of General Cleanliness Department also removed 7,137 wast tires, 52 damaged signboards, 366 dead animals, 36 abandoned cars.The General Monitoring Section of Al Gharafa Office in Al Rayyan Municipality carried out 120 inspection campaigns.

The violation stickers were issued to 48 abandoned cars and portacabins. Two vehicles were also removed for violating the cleaning rules. The municipal inspectors made reconciliation in nine cases after the violations were rectified and three violations were referred to the security agency for taking necessary legal actions.

# Compass International School Doha welcomes students to new Themaid Campus

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Compass International School Doha has welcomed students to its new, state-of-the-art Themaid Campus for the academic year 2019-20. Compass International School Doha's world class teaching team, led by Ann Djedid, Head of Campus Themaid, are delighted to welcome students to their new campus and learning areas.

Students were in awe at the outstanding facilities at Themaid Campus, from the science laboratories and theatre to the 25-metre swimming pool and specialist areas for design technology, dance and music. At Themaid Campus, students from Early Years through to Secondary can discover a world beyond a traditional classroom, with state-of-art learning spaces developed with the latest educational design thinking.

Ann Djedid, Head of Campus Themaid said: "It was wonderful to welcome our students to Themaid Campus. Our students and their families love their new campus and are excited for a year of learning in our world class facilities. We look forward to inspiring our students throughout this academic year and beyond."



Officials and students at the opening of Compass International School Doha –Themaid Campus.

Compass International School Doha is one of Qatar's leading schools providing the very best of British and international curricula for over thirteen years. As part of premium education provider Nord Anglia Education, Compass International School Doha offers children a truly unique international learning experience.

Themaid Campus is currently accepting students from Early Years through to Year 10 for the 2019-20 academic year, offering the English National Curriculum, International Primary Curriculum and IGCSEs. In the coming years the campus will also offer Advanced (A) levels as well as other vocational programmes (BTEC) to give our students the best choice possible for their future.

The main language at Themaid Campus is English, with Arabic classes available for native Arabic speakers and for international students as a foreign language. Themaid Campus, as part of Nord Anglia Education, will have global reach and offer programmes well beyond traditional education. Compass International School Doha educates children for the future, enhancing learning through collaborations with world leading organisations; Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), The Julliard School and Unicef.



The QC aid, which benefited 2,736 people, was provided under the coupon distribution to those in need to help them meet their basic food needs.

# QC distributes food aid in Palestinian camps

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

**This assistance is particularly important in light of the economic crisis that the Palestinian people are going through, especially with the rising prices of foodstuffs and the non-payment of salaries of employees on a regular basis.**

With the generous support from the people in Qatar, Qatar Charity (QC) has distributed food assistance to 456 families facing tough living conditions in many camps of West Bank, Palestine, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development.

The aid, which benefited 2,736 people, was provided under the coupon distribution to those in need to help them meet their basic food needs.

The distribution of these coupons included Jenin camp, Askar camp, and Balata camp in accordance with the name lists provided by the Ministry of Development within the agreed criteria. This assistance is particularly important in light of the economic crisis that the Palestinian people are going through, especially with the rising prices of foodstuffs and the non-payment of salaries of employees on a regular basis.

Recently, Qatar Charity has distributed 2,560 bags with school supplies to students belonging to families suffering from a challenging living and economic situation in Palestine.

The project, which was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education, aims at meeting some of the needs of the beneficiaries and easing the economic burdens on their families.

The distribution took place in the entire West Bank, including Al Quds Al Sharif, in cooperation with schools and centers belonging to ministries participating in the project, in addition to Qatar Charity.

Qatar Charity has been operating in Palestine in general and in the Gaza Strip in particular since the 1990s.

It has two field offices in Ramallah and the Gaza Strip to oversee its projects directly, ensures its quick intervention in times of crisis and cooperate with international, regional and local humanitarian partners to implement major development projects.

During the period from 2008 to 2018, Qatar Charity, with support from the people in Qatar, implemented 1,462 relief and development projects worth QR662m, in cooperation and partnership with international organizations and supporting bodies, benefiting over 8 million people and families.

# Over 3,000 volunteers dedicated to ensure a successful IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

**With thousands of enthusiasts committed to helping deliver the competition, it is the country's biggest-ever sporting volunteering programme with 100 different nationalities making up the team of volunteers.**

Athletes and fans from around the world will arrive in Qatar later this month, receiving a welcome from over 3,000 volunteers, dedicated to ensuring a successful IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019. With thousands of enthusiasts committed to helping deliver the competition, it is the country's biggest ever sporting volunteering programme with 100 different nationalities making up the team of volunteers.

The multilingual team are aged from just 10 through to 70 years old, showing the diverse interest and dedication to supporting the Championships with roles varying from spectator services and ticketing to athlete well-being and medical services.

The medical operation throughout the competition will see professionally trained nursing students offer their support, with the University of Calgary in Qatar committing over 80 personnel, who will observe and support during the ten-day competition which will see a significant medical operation working with federations, athletes, coaches and spectators.

Speaking on the efforts of the volunteering team, Sheikha Asma Al Thani, Director of Marketing and Communications, Local Organising Committee, commented: "Qatar is preparing to welcome hundreds of different nationalities later this month and every effort has been made to give a warm traditional Qatari welcome to those coming to Doha.

"We have a multi-national team of volunteers who can speak many different languages and understand diverse cultures, allowing a comforting experience for athletes, international media and spectators. "Our broadly experienced volunteers have undertaken a number of training workshops giving them new experiences and creating first hand experiences and new opportunities which will benefit every individual in the areas of interest and expertise, as we continue to inspire the next generation throughout Qatar, using the power of sport."

Nursing student Hajar Al Kuwari will dedicate her time to supporting the medical team, adding: "I'm excited to volunteer and proud to be a part of this incredible event. I think this is a good example of how nurses can contribute to Qatari society and to big international events like this that come to our country. It will be a lot of work and some long hours, but my fellow nursing students and I are looking forward to helping and learning as much as possible. We're doing this because we want to help Qatar and to broaden our own education."

Ensuring that the team of volunteers get the best from their experience, as well as being able to share best practice and ideas for further development, the Local Organising Committee has created the Volunteers Centre, alongside Khalifa International Stadium, where the dedicated team can meet up, plan for their days and take part in a whole host of interactive education and entertainment activities.

Volunteers supporting the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 will be on hand to assist with all queries throughout the ten-days of action with tickets still available to see the world's finest athletes compete at Khalifa International Stadium.

Tickets are priced from just QR60 and can easily be bought online via https://iaafworldathleticschamps.com/doha2019/

# QNL to present informative session on diamonds

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

Qatar National Library will present an informative and interactive public lecture, 'A Journey through the World of Diamonds', on September 21. Qatar-based jewellery designer Einas Mohammed will share her passion for these precious stones and the knowledge she has gained through her professional experience.

Participants will learn more about the origin of natural diamonds, beginning with the process of extracting the stones from the ground. In addition, Mohammed will also speak about countries most famous for diamonds, including Russia, the world's leading producer of gem-quality diamonds, Angola, South Africa, Canada and Australia, famous for its yellow diamonds.

The lecture will offer jewellery enthusiasts expert advice on how to add to their collections when buying or selecting high-quality diamonds, and will be followed by an informative discussion with several specialists in the field.

Rana Ahmed Al Ani, Information Services Librarian, said: "We look forward to offering those who attend the opportunity to enrich their knowledge with valuable information about these marvels of nature, as well as to broaden their cultural perspectives. The event is ideal for those who may already be avid fine jewellery collectors as well as anyone seeking to cultivate their general knowledge. The Library is pleased to invite the community to benefit from the informative insights from our knowledgeable speakers."

# Northwestern students spend semester at Qatar campus

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

A group of students from Northwestern University's home campus in the US is spending a semester on its international campus in Qatar, immersing themselves in Middle Eastern culture and learning about the region's people, politics, and history.

The four exchange students — Miguel Aponte, Leslie Bonilla, Martin Herrmann, and Eliza Posner — who share a common interest in exploring the world, travelled 7,000 miles to spend the semester experiencing life as a student in the Middle East at Northwestern University in Qatar. Bonilla, who is majoring in journalism, political science, and Spanish, said "I've known I wanted to come to Qatar since freshman year when I heard about this programme. I figured it's a great way to experience a completely different culture and still not have to interrupt my studies."



The students of NU-Q's home campus in US (from left) Eliza Posner, Leslie Bonilla, Martin Herrmann, and Miguel Aponte, at Northwestern's Qatar campus as part of its Semester in Qatar programme.

"Our Semester in Qatar programme, now in its eighth year, brings exemplary students from Northwestern's US campus to Doha where they get a direct personal experience both in the classroom and in the larger community, which fosters a deeper understanding of Qatar and Middle Eastern traditions and culture more broadly," said Everette E Dennis, Dean and CEO. He said that this year's students have impressive backgrounds coming from communication, journalism, and the liberal arts and both learn from their peers on the Qatar campus while bringing the Evanston experience here.

While at NU-Q, the exchange students will also enroll in the Doha Seminar – an interdisciplinary course that offers an extensive academic view of Qatar and the Gulf, covering family, art, history, culture, consumerism, environmentalism, and foreign affairs. Supplemented by field trips, the program offers a rare opportunity to engage in a personal exchange of ideas with a mix of students, scholars, and leaders from beyond the University.

In addition to taking classes as part of their academic requirements, the four students will also experience the concept of Education City, a knowledge hub where NU-Q is located alongside five other American branch campuses: Georgetown University in Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, Texas A&M University in Qatar, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar.

# IEI-Qatar Chapter organises annual Engineers' Day Theme Seminar

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Institution of Engineers India (IEI) - Qatar Chapter conducted the 52nd Engineers' Day Theme Seminar on 'Engineering for Change' recently at the Oryx Rotana Hotel, Doha.

This annual engineering seminar, organised prior to Engineer's Day celebrations, was well-attended by over 100 member engineers across various disciplines.

This overseas chapter of IEI was established in July 1991 for the benefit of its members residing and practicing the engineering profession in Qatar. Over the last 27 years of operation, this chapter has now become the most active and resourceful overseas chapter of the Institution of Engineers India. Addressing the event, Chairman of IEI Qatar Chapter, Engr. Abdul Sathar, said that Qatar Chapter continues to play an active role in the professional development of its member engineers.

Engr. Vikash Sananda's thought-provoking and enriching talk took the audience through a remarkable journey showcasing the evolution and application of human ingenuity spanning over four million years - from prehistory to the modern age. Engr. Vikash stated that "Humans have always engineered to bring about change, and that change has moved us to engineer and innovate". The Qatar Chapter of IEI will be hosting the Centenary International Engineering Congress on September 26 and 27 at Qatar University in Doha celebrating the 100th year of the IEI headquartered in India.

The theme of the Congress is 'Smart Engineering — State of the Art Technologies in Oil & Gas and Infrastructure Development'.

The celebration shall be the first-ever overseas event of the Institute and is being held in partnership with Qatar University, Qatar Foundation, and College of North Atlantic Qatar. Chairman, Engr. Abdul Sathar also announced that the 52nd Engineers Day celebration would be held on September 27, 2019 and invited all the professional engineers across Qatar.



The Chairman of IEI Qatar Chapter, Engr. Abdul Sathar, presenting mementos to keynote speakers, Engr, Vikash Sananda and Dr. Yagnesh Gohil.

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# EDITORIAL

## Real estate boom

*Qatar's real estate sector is showing signs of strong revival and witnessing a boom. The sector is witnessing a high growth rate, both in terms of value and numbers. The real estate market has witnessed deals valuing more than QR9.5bn during January-May 2019. Moreover, the amendment of the law allowing foreign investors to hold full ownership in Qatar's residential and commercial sectors will give a massive boost to the country's real estate sector.*

*Real estate players, including developers and market strategists, are now strongly betting on the country's vibrant property market. Market experts noted that Qatar is emerging as a core investment target for both regional and international investors. Leading real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield Qatar said that with rental levels and capital values stabilising within Doha, the supply and demand in Qatar's real estate sector will see a rebalancing next year. KPMG in Qatar's 'Real Estate Rental Index', which tracks quarterly changes in the real estate rental market, noted Qatar real estate market will remain tenant-friendly as rentals across the three major asset segments, namely commercial office, residential and retail experience downward price corrections.*

**Real estate players, including developers and market strategists, noted that Qatar is emerging as a core investment target for both regional and international investors.**

*Demand is expected to become more focused on areas such as The Pearl Qatar and Lusail as new supply arrives to the market at affordable rental levels. Lusail City, a flagship project by the Qatari Diar, known as the futuristic green city is now one of the top areas for residential and commercial real estate investment. West Bay and Onaiza are also primed to introduce real estate space into the market.*

*With several hotels, malls and other outlets opening in Qatar, residential, commercial and mixed-use areas are expanding and more properties are now available beyond the limits of Doha. Areas like Al Sakhama, Al Kheesa and Umm Salal in particular have gained a lot of popularity over the past year. Real estate activity in 'emerging municipalities' such as Al Wakrah, Al Khor and Al Rayyan is also increasing, with investors seeing the potential market for these locations. Al Wakra and Al Khor are now turning into fully developed and mature cities and are becoming a top choice for those seeking housing outside Doha.*

*Continued demand for real estate units is still considered by a large segment of investors as a safe haven. The real estate sector, supported by a series of policy-driven decisions, is staging a turnaround with residential properties expected to increase in the years ahead. With the 2022 FIFA World Cup fast approaching, progress can be seen in all aspects of Qatar. This includes new developments across the country.*

*Qatar's real estate market has come a long way since June 2017. The sector is moving ahead with full steam. The average monthly transactions have increased, which shows the strength of real estate sector.*

## QUOTE OF THE DAY



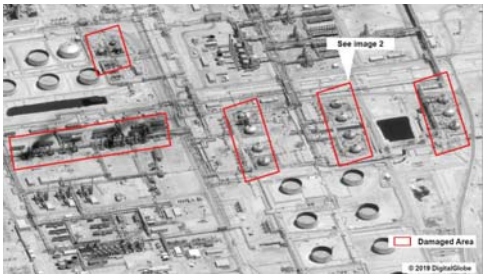
**Up to three million Syrian refugees can return to a planned safe zone in northern Syria if it is extended from Turkey's border to Deir al Zor and Raqqa.**

**Recep Tayyip Erdogan**
Turkish President

# Attack on Saudi oil sites raises risks amid US-Iran tension



JON GAMBRELL & ZEKE MILLER
AP




A satellite image showing damage to oil/gas Saudi Aramco in Abqaiq City, recently.

A weekend drone attack on Saudi Arabia that cut into global energy supplies and halved the kingdom's oil production threatened Sunday to fuel a regional crisis, as the US released new evidence to back up its allegation that Iran was responsible for the assault amid heightened tensions over Tehran's collapsing nuclear deal.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has blamed Iran for the attack Saturday on key Saudi oil infrastructure. On Sunday, senior US officials again said the American government believes there is no doubt Iran was responsible, saying satellite imagery and other intelligence, show the strike was inconsistent with one launched from Yemen, where Iranian-backed Houthi rebels had claimed responsibility.

Iran, meanwhile, called the US claims "maximum lies," while a commander in its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard reiterated its forces could strike US military bases across the Mideast with their arsenal of ballistic missiles.

The US government produced satellite photos showing what officials said were at least 19 points of impact at two Saudi energy facilities, including damage at the heart of the kingdom's crucial oil processing plant at Abqaiq. Officials said the photos show impacts consistent with the attack coming from the direction of Iran or Iraq, rather than from Yemen to the south.

**The US, Western nations, their Gulf Arab allies and UN experts say Iran supplies the Houthis with weapons and drones — a charge that Tehran denies.**

Iraq denied Sunday that its territory was used for an attack on the Kingdom and US officials said a strike from there would be a violation of Iraq's sovereignty. The US officials said additional devices, which apparently didn't reach their targets, were recovered northwest of the facilities and are being jointly analyzed by Saudi and American intelligence. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, did not address whether the drone could have been fired from Yemen, then taken a round-about path, but did not explicitly rule it out.

The attacks and recriminations are increasing already heightened fears of an escalation in the region, after a prominent US senator suggested striking Iranian oil refineries in response to the assault, and Iran warned of the potential of more violence. "Because of the tension and sensitive situation, our region is like a powder keg," said Iranian Brig. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh. "When these contacts come too close, when forces come into contact with one another, it is possible a conflict happens because of a misunderstanding."

Actions on any side could break into the open a twilight war that's been raging just below the surface of the wider Persian Gulf in recent months. Already, there have been mysterious attacks on oil tankers that America blames on Tehran, at least one suspected Israeli strike on Shiite forces in Iraq, and Iran shooting down a US military surveillance drone.

The attack Saturday on Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq plant and its Khurais oil field led to the interruption of an estimated 5.7 million barrels of the kingdom's crude oil production per day, equivalent to more than 5% of the world's daily supply. It remains unclear how King Salman and his assertive son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, will respond to an attack targeting the heart of the Saudi oil industry.

Crude oil futures shot up 9.5% to $60 as trading opened Sunday evening in New York, a dramatic increase.

Saudi Arabia has promised to fill in the cut in production with its reserves, but has not said how long it will take to repair the damage. The Wall Street Journal cited Saudi officials as saying a third of output would be restored on Monday, but a return to full production may take weeks.

In Washington, President Donald Trump said Sunday evening that he had approved the release of US strategic petroleum reserves "if needed" to stabilize energy markets. The president said the final amount of the release, if any, would be "sufficient to keep the markets well-supplied." The announcement followed a National Security Council meeting at the White House that included Pompeo, Vice President Mike Pence and Defense Secretary Mark Esper. Images from the European Commission's Sentinel-2 satellite examined by the AP showed black char marks at the heart of the Abqaiq plant on Sunday, marks not seen over the prior month. Identical marks are visible on the US imagery. The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies in August identified the area with the char marks as the plant's stabilization area. The center said the area includes "storage tanks and processing and compressor trains - which greatly increases the likelihood of a strike successfully disrupting or destroying its operations."

The state-run oil giant Saudi Aramco, which the kingdom hopes to offer a sliver of in a public stock offering, did not respond to a request for comment.

Pompeo directly blamed Iran for the Saudi attack on Twitter late Saturday, and officials worked to provide evidence for his claim the following day.

"Amid all the calls for de-escalation, Iran has now launched an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply," Pompeo wrote. "There is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen."

The US, Western nations, their Gulf Arab allies and UN experts say Iran supplies the Houthis with weapons and drones - a charge that Tehran denies. US officials previously alleged at least one recent drone attack on Saudi Arabia came from Iraq, where Iran backs Shiite militias. Those militias in recent weeks have been targeted themselves by mysterious airstrikes, with at least one believed to have been carried out by Israel.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi on Sunday dismissed Pompeo's remarks as "blind and futile comments." "The Americans adopted the 'maximum pressure' policy against Iran, which, due to its failure, is leaning toward 'maximum lies,'" Mousavi said in a statement.

Separately, Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's office issued a statement on Sunday denying the drone attack came from there. Oil-rich Kuwait also said it would increase security around the country's "vital sites" over the attacks.

Houthi leader Muhammad al-Bukhaiti reiterated his group's claim of responsibility, telling The Associated Press on Sunday it exploited "vulnerabilities" in Saudi air defenses to strike the targets. He did not elaborate.

Iran, meanwhile, kept up its own threats.

# Netanyahu's West Bank annexation plan is reckless

BLOOMBERG

It's easy enough to dismiss Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to annex large parts of the West Bank as a political stunt: After all, the announcement came just a week ahead of Tuesday's general election, with polls suggesting his party would struggle to form a government. But even stunts can have serious consequences - and Netanyahu should know that this gambit will only inflame tensions and undermine the prospects for peace.

The annexation plan is consistent with other attempts by the prime minister to appeal to right-wing voters, including a bill, rejected by the Knesset, to have video cameras monitor polling stations. Critics denounced it as a ploy to intimidate Arab voters. The Anti-Defamation League has called the campaign's anti-Arab messaging "unacceptable and immoral."

Nor is this the first time Netanyahu has used the promise of grabbing chunks of the West Bank as an election tactic. Shortly before the previous vote on April 9, he suggested that, if reelected, he would extend Israeli sovereignty over several Jewish settlements.

Even by these standards, the annexation plan is irresponsible. It can't be glossed over as mere rhetoric, a campaign promise that can quietly be dropped after the election. Just by proposing it, Netanyahu - the leader of the country, not some fringe character - has worsened the already slim chances of a fair peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Unsurprisingly, the plan has met with a chorus of condemnation from Arab states, the United Nations and the European Union. All agree that it is "devastating" to the prospect of a two-state solution.

So far, President Donald Trump's administration has avoided direct comment on Netanyahu's announcement. This is a mistake. The prime minister has said the annexation will take place "in coordination" with the US; specifically, with Jared Kushner's long-promised peace plan. Netanyahu is apparently counting on the Trump administration to back the proposal, just as it affirmed Israel's claims over the Golan Heights and recognized Jerusalem as its capital. He said his "personal relationship with President Trump" would enable him to carry out the annexation.

But as other American allies have discovered, Trump can be an unreliable friend. His interests may not be as closely aligned with Israel's as Netanyahu imagines: The sacking of national security adviser John Bolton, a champion of Israel, should serve as a warning sign. Another is the president's eagerness to negotiate with the regime in Tehran. He may have cooled on the idea after the weekend's attacks on Saudi oil installations - the Trump administration is blaming Iran - but he is apt to change his mind again.

Netanyahu ought to remember that Israel's long-term interest lies in preserving sustained, bipartisan support from the US To ensure this, he must be reasonable, not reckless, in his dealings with the Palestinians.

# India's citizenship question and the never-ending Assam imbroglio



SANJOY HAZARIKA
AL JAZEERA

The controversy, trauma and trouble over the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in India's northeast state of Assam does not seem to go away. The goal of the massive exercise which involved some 50,000 persons, lasting some seven years and costing close to 1.5 billion rupees (about $220 million) was to scour the land for non-Indians, for the most part Bangladeshis who had come over quietly, informally and settled ubiquitously.

Nothing of the sort has happened. Dogged with controversy from the start, the register has been described by politicians, human rights and civil society critics as an exercise targeting Muslims of Bengali origin to disenfranchise and strip them of their rights. There have been sustained public campaigns on this issue by well-meaning individuals and groups who do not understand Assam.

The entire thrust of a 40-year on-again, off-again movement against "illegal migrants" from Bangladesh in Assam state was based on a struggle to assert citizenship rights for "genuine" Indians and seek the detection, deletion (from electoral lists) and deportation of non-citizens to their parent nation, for the most part, Bangladesh.

The problem is that Bangladesh has never acknowledged outmigration to India especially in the northeast where Assam is situated. Independent experts and migration researchers assert that there has been influx over the decades, though the numbers are significantly lower than the four to six million figure the anti-immigrant lobby has brandished. All this in a small landlocked province of about 37 million people of bewildering ethnic diversity in the northeast of India.

The region's unique location makes the situation challenging by itself: It is surrounded by Bangladesh to the south and west, Myanmar to its east, China and Bhutan to the north, with only a sliver of land connecting it to the rest of India.

The concerns are old – going back to British colonial rule, when migration to the then frontier province was encouraged as part of official policy, triggering local fears for their religious, cultural and political identities.

Assam's demography includes Assamese-speaking Hindus and Muslims and a range of colourful indigenous groups which have viewed both the Muslim and Hindu immigrants with suspicion.

The figure of 1.9 million people who are off the list does not satisfy any of the groups which called for such a register to be established. Some of them have threatened to go back to the Supreme Court which oversaw the whole exercise.

**The figure of 1.9 million people who are off the list does not satisfy any of the groups which called for such a register to be established. Some of them have threatened to go back to the Supreme Court which oversaw the whole exercise.**

For the most ardent proponents of the NRC update – the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Asom Gana Parishad and the All Assam Students Union (the last two have led anti-migrant campaigns over the past decades), the final announcement has been particularly embarrassing, not just as a result of the smaller number of people off the list, but because a majority of them are Bengali Hindus who came from Bangladesh.

Some 700,000 are said to be Muslims and the rest are ethnic groups. The angst is that not enough Muslims figure and that the border areas do not show the surge in population they had expected.

At the same time, there have already been reported cases of mistakes in the register, with many who fulfil the citizenship criteria being on the list because of misspelling of names or for other unknown reasons.

Those who are off the list are not foreigners till proven otherwise. The Ministry of External Affairs, in a virtual turnaround for the government but acting under good advice, declared that those off the list would be given official legal assistance to challenge their status.

By doing so, New Delhi has heeded Article 21 of the constitution which guides justice and affirms that no one living in the territory of India can be deprived of life or liberty without due process. The reference is not to any citizen but any person. Citizenship is not the ultimate test; it is humanness.

As a result of the NRC announcement, a three-step process now kicks in, which is far more easily said than done. People who have been excluded have to file an appeal with the foreigners' tribunal (of which there are now 300) which determines based on documentation whether an individual is an Indian or not. If that is unsuccessful, the next step is to go to the state high court. If that does not yield a positive result, people will have to turn to the Supreme Court.

This is a thankless and frightening prospect of prolonged litigation for even the well-to-do, which a large number of those off the NRC are not. How will they sustain their lives and families, not just the litigation?

The tribunals are known to make decisions ex parte when an accused has not turned up (he/she may not have received the notice, may be battling floods for survival, fallen sick or forgotten). There have been accusations that some tribunals decide cases hastily and appear to be prejudiced. Legal competencies need to be developed, not just for the litigants but for those sitting in judgement on them. Many of them are lawyers with barely a decade of experience behind them; others are retired officials.

According to a state official I recently spoke to, the much-feared rush to building and shoving people in detention camps will not to be happening.

What is to be respected is that, despite high decibel levels of different activist and media groups, people have held the peace and disturbances have not taken place.

The three Ds of the Assam movement against "illegal immigration" remain as distant as ever: detection, deletion and deportation. The last is a non-starter, the first two, thanks to the NRC imbroglio, are wrapped up in complex delays. Frustration on one side and stress on the excluded is growing. Neither the state, nor the central government appear to have thought through this entire process.

The fissures are here to stay and could become worse if the Citizenship Amendment Bill, which would give citizenship rights to migrants from certain religious communities (including Hindus and Sikhs but excluding Muslims) and which has been on the backburner for some months, is pushed through. This would heighten the fears of small states about legalising large populations of settlers, changing demographics and deepening fault lines between "locals" and "outsiders".



A file picture of Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, attending a protest march against the final draft of the National Register of Citizens in the northeastern state of Assam, in Kolkata.

# Facebook dating is a call to its roots



MOLLY ROBERTS
THE WASHINGTON POST

It might not seem that way today, between your grandma's inexplicable comments on the page for Applebee's and those extended musings on the sorry state of our politics these days from the high school classmate you never much cared for. But Mark Zuckerberg's first site was Facemash, a "hot or not" girl-ranking haven. And when Facebook itself debuted, thefacebook.com didn't have photo postings or groups or all that much else. It had only profiles, and on those profiles was something that lured in university students across the country: relationship status.

You didn't go on Facebook just to look at who people were – you went here to look at who they were with. And when you wrote on someone's wall, or hit that big blue thumbs-up on one of their pictures, or sent them that consummate indication of interest known as the poke, you were telling them that being with you was an option, too.

So Facebook Dating, which launched for Americans at long last this week, isn't so much a bold foray into the future as it is a trip back to the beginning.

Facebook Dating, according to Facebook, "makes it easier to find love through what you like," which presumably is how people try to find love generally. The difference here is you're not the only one who knows what you like. Facebook knows, too. It knows a lot. The site collects what you click, what you view and much of the rest of what you do so it can serve you the targeted advertisements you're mostly likely to engage with. Now, it will also serve you the eligible singleton you're most likely to go home with. If you disagree, you simply select "not interested."

We're left asking the same thing we wondered just months ago about Facebook's plunge into cryptocurrency: What could go wrong? What couldn't?

If you choose to let Facebook play matchmaker, your profile will be separate from your old-fashioned one on the blue app. That's supposed to help with the privacy problem. So is the company's promise that it's all about the love, baby – your feelings are a powerful sales weapon, certainly, but Facebook won't monetize whatever it learns about you from its dating apparatus – at least for now. Facebook also says it won't display your friends for potential wooing. (Unless, that is, you add them as a "Secret Crush." Then you'll both be notified in the event of mutual fancy.)

Still, Facebook is really putting itself out there. The company has gotten in trouble for vacuuming up too much personal information and then spewing it back out to unsavory third parties – and now it's asking to hold on to information that's even more personal. The company has a famously awful track record on keeping stuff secret, and now it's rolling out a feature with "secret" literally in its name.

But Facebook is going to do it anyway, because it has to.

People in their 20s are starting to delete Facebook; people in their teens hardly know what it is. Facebook is tying itself to the mast of its other properties to secure its own survival – establishing end-to-end encrypted integration with WhatsApp because people want to communicate securely, creating a cryptocurrency because people want to spend money on the Web, building a dating app connected to Instagram.

And yet even as this gamble reflects Facebook's fear of becoming less and less essential, it also recognizes how inexorably it has altered us already. The you matching with boyfriends-to-be on Zuckerberg's latest product isn't you, you. It's Facebook-you, a personality honed over the years you've been wall-writing and thumbs-up tapping and poking and RSVPing "yes" to colleagues' housewarmings.

Facebook began as a way to graft the real world onto an Internet space. Students at Harvard University connected with each other simply because they were other students at Harvard; neighbors with neighbors and cousins with cousins. Now, Facebook is grafting its digital world onto the space we physically occupy. Facebook-you, created with the platform's help in the course of all your time not-so-well spent on the service, will be designated compatible with Facebook-someone-else – and then actual you and actual someone else will go out for a drink.

Facebook Dating is the most obvious, most solid example of a phenomenon that's been around for a while now: Your offline life aids Facebook in building your Internet avatar. But your Internet avatar lets Facebook build your offline life, too.

Data is the new dating. Are you interested?

**We're left asking the same thing we wondered just months ago about Facebook's plunge into cryptocurrency: What could go wrong? What couldn't?**

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# Riyadh probing from where drones were fired: Official

AFP
RIYADH

The weapons used to strike Saudi oil facilities were Iranian-made, the Riyadh-led coalition said yesterday, heightening fears of regional conflict after the US hinted at a military response to the assault.

The weekend strikes on Abqaiq — the world's largest oil processing facility — and the Khurais oil field in eastern Saudi Arabia have roiled global energy markets sending prices spiking yesterday.

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for the strikes but Washington has squarely blamed Iran, with President Donald Trump saying the US is "locked and loaded" to respond. Saudi's energy infrastructure has been hit before, but this strike was of a different order, abruptly halting 5.7 million barrels per day (bpd) or about six percent of the world's oil supply.

The Saudi-led coalition, which is bogged down in a five-year war in neighbouring Yemen, reiterated the assessment that the Houthis were not behind it, pointing the finger at Iran for providing the weapons.

Russia urged "all countries to avoid hasty steps or conclusions that could exacerbate the situation" while the European Union stressed all sides should show "maximum restraint".

China also called on the US and Iran to "exercise restraint... in the absence of a conclusive investigation or verdict."

"All indications are that weapons used in both attacks came from Iran," coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki told reporters in Riyadh, adding they were now probing "from where they were fired".

"This strike didn't come from Yemen territory as the Huthi militia are pretending," Maliki said, adding an investigation had been opened. He labelled the Huthis "a tool in the hands of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the terrorist regime of Iran".

The rebels said they fired 10 drones at the Saudi infrastructure, but the New York Times reported that US officials had satellite images showing the attacks -- possibly with drones and cruise missiles -- had come from the north or northwest.

That indicated they were sourced in the northern Gulf, Iran or Iraq, rather than Yemen.

The assault on the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, which engulfed the facilities in flames, has been condemned by Washington as an "unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply".

Oil prices saw their biggest daily gain since the 1991 Gulf War on Monday after the attacks halved output in the world's top crude exporter, fuelling fresh geopolitical and growth fears.

Europe's benchmark Brent crude surged by 20 percent and US counterpart WTI by 15 percent as commodities trading got underway. Both contracts later came off their peaks, but were still up more than 10 percent on the day by the mid-afternoon in Europe.

## Kremlin warns against hasty conclusions over attacks

REUTERS/MOSCOW

Russia yesterday urged countries in the Middle East and outside the region not to draw "hasty conclusions" on who staged the attacks on Saudi oil facilities. A senior US official said earlier that evidence from the attack, which hit the world's biggest oil-processing facility, indicated Iran was behind it, instead of the Yemeni Houthi group that had claimed responsibility.

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday the United States was "locked and loaded" for a potential response to the attack on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, asked about the U.S. statement, said: "We have a negative attitude towards rising tensions in the region and call for all countries in the region and outside of it to avoid any hasty steps or conclusions which may deepen destabilisation."

In a separate statement on Monday, Russia's foreign ministry said it believed that the exchange of strikes on civilian targets was "a direct consequence of the ongoing sharp military and political crisis in Yemen".

"We believe it is counterproductive to use what happened to increase tensions around Iran in line with the well-known US policy," the foreign ministry said.



FROM LEFT: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin pose for a picture prior to a trilateral meeting on Syria, in Ankara yesterday.

# Putin: Foreign troops should be pulled out from Syria eventually

REUTERS
ANKARA

Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that all foreign troops should be pulled out from Syria eventually, after peace is reached in the country.

Speaking after talks between leaders of Russia, Turkey and Iran in Ankara, Putin also said that from his point of view the deployment of US troops in Syria was illegal. A peace in Syria could be reached only by political and diplomatic efforts, Putin told a joint news conference.

Putin said the list of the Syrian constitutional committee has been fully agreed and added that Russia was ready to support the Syrian army in targeted actions on terrorists in Syria.

Iran's president said that diplomacy, not a military approach, was the only solution to the crisis in Syria, ahead of trilateral talks with his Turkish and Russian counterparts in Ankara aimed at forging a lasting truce in the region.

The leaders of Turkey, Iran and Russia met here to advance peace efforts in Syria's northwest, following attacks by government forces that risk deepening regional turmoil and pushing a new wave of migrants towards Turkey. The summit, bringing together countries whose Syrian allies are combatants in a ruinous eight-year-old war, will focus on the Idlib region, the last remaining territory held by rebels seeking to overthrow President Bashar Al Assad.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani have backed Assad against the rebels. Turkey's Tayyip Erdogan, along with the United States, European and Arab allies, has supported different rebel factions in the conflict.

Speaking after bilateral talks with Erdogan and Putin and ahead of three-way talks, Rouhani said the groundwork for a return to stability in Syria needed to be established. "Diplomacy and not (military) confrontation can secure peace in Syria," Rouhani said, adding that the United States needed to withdraw its troops from north-eastern Syria immediately.

# Netanyahu vows to annex all West Bank settlements

AP/JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed yesterday to annex "all the settlements" in the West Bank, including an enclave deep in the heart of the largest Palestinian city, in a last-ditch move that appeared aimed at shoring up nationalist support the day before a do-over election.

Locked in a razor tight race and with legal woes hanging over him, Netanyahu is fighting for his political survival. In the final weeks of his campaign he has been doling out hard-line promises meant to draw more voters to his Likud party and re-elect him in Tuesday's unprecedented repeat vote.

"I intend to extend sovereignty on all the settlements and the (settlement) blocs," including "sites that have security importance or are important to Israel's heritage," Netanyahu said in an interview with Israeli Army Radio, part of an eleventh-hour media blitz. Asked if that included the hundreds of Jews who live under heavy military guard amid tens of thousands of Palestinians in the volatile city of Hebron, Netanyahu responded "of course."

Israelis head to the polls Tuesday in the second election this year, after Netanyahu failed to cobble together a coalition following April's vote, sparking the dissolution of parliament.

Netanyahu has made a series of ambitious pledges in a bid to whip up support, including a promise to annex the Jordan Valley, an area even moderate Israelis view as strategic but which the Palestinians consider the breadbasket of any future state.

To protest that announcement, the Palestinian Authority held a Cabinet meeting in the Jordan Valley village of Fasayil yesterday, a day after Israel's Cabinet met elsewhere in the valley. "The Jordan Valley is part of Palestinian lands and any settlement or annexation is illegal," Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said at the start of the meeting. "We will sue Israel in international courts for exploiting our land and we will continue our struggle against the occupation on the ground and in international forums."

## Netanyahu, Gantz spur supporters on eve of today's tense vote

AFP/JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his main opponent Benny Gantz sought to galvanise supporters yesterday on the eve of a tense election with the political fate of the country's longest-serving premier in the balance.

The vote today will be Israel's second in five months after Netanyahu suffered one of the biggest defeats of his political career when he failed to form a coalition after April polls.

Opinion polls indicate another tight race that may see ex-defence minister Avigdor Lieberman, Netanyahu's former right-hand man who is now a rival, play a kingmaker role with his campaign to "make Israel normal again."

The slogan is a reference to what the staunch secularist says is the undue influence on politics of Israel's ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties.

Netanyahu has spent recent days seeking to boost turnout among his base, using a combination of warnings he could lose and a flurry of announcements welcomed by right-wing nationalists, key to his re-election campaign.

On Sunday night, he went as far as to cancel his appearance at the final rally for his right-wing Likud party, saying he was instead holding an "emergency consultation", warning the potential of low turnout could lead to his defeat.

For Israelis, it was a familiar tactic that Netanyahu has used repeatedly in the past -- though this time the risk may be greater since voter fatigue could play a role due to the repeat election. He has also hit on his other campaign themes: portraying himself as Israel's essential leader, dismissing his main opponents as "weak" and "left" despite their security credentials, and highlighting Israel's economic growth.



Visitors perform their noon prayers amid the ruins of the former Israeli-run prison of Khiam (Khiyam) on the Lebanese-Israeli border, yesterday. Lebanon has detained Amer Al Fakhoury, a former member of the pro-Israel South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, a Lebanese judicial source said.

## Tribunal charges Hariri suspect for 3 more attacks

AFP/THE HAGUE

A UN-backed court yesterday indicted a Hezbollah suspect accused of murdering ex-Lebanon premier Rafiq Hariri over three other attacks, in the first new case taken on by the tribunal since its creation in 2007.

Salim Ayyash was charged by a pre-trial judge with terrorism and murder over the deadly attacks on politicians in 2004 and 2005, said the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. The 55-year-old is one of four suspected members of the Shiite militant group Hezbollah charged with assassinating billionaire Hariri with a huge bomb in Beirut in 2005. The Sunni former prime minister was allegedly killed because he opposed Syrian control over Lebanon. His death led to the "Cedar Revolution" which forced Damascus to pull out.

Judge Daniel Fransen "lifted today the confidentiality of his decision confirming an indictment against Mr Salim Jamil Ayyash relating to the attacks," said the tribunal based in a suburb just outside The Hague. "The confirmation of this indictment marks the opening of a new case before the STL."

The first attack in Beirut on October 1, 2004, wounded Druze MP and ex-minister Marwan Hamade, as well as another person, and killed his bodyguard. The second attack, also in Beirut, on June 21, 2005, killed ex-leader of the Lebanese Communist Party Georges Hawi, while the third killed one person and injured then defence minister Elias El Murr.

## Arab League: Exert pressure on Israel to oblige international resolutions

QNA/CAIRO

The League of Arab States demanded the international community to pressure Israel and oblige it to comply with international legitimacy resolutions, to stop the ongoing construction and expansion of settlements and to cease its aggressive practices and racist policy against the Palestinian people.

The Arab League's Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories sector stressed, in a statement on the occasion of the Sabra and Shatila camps massacre anniversary, its full support for the Palestinian people's inalienable rights to self-determination.

The statement called upon the international community and all international institutions, led by the United Nations, to assume their responsibilities towards the Palestinian people and to act immediately to stop the daily crimes perpetrated by the Israeli entity.

## Iran seizes oil tanker, detains 11 people aboard

ANATOLIA/TEHRAN

Iranian authorities have detained 11 people aboard an oil tanker seized off the shores of the country's southern Hormozgan province for alleged fuel smuggling, local media reported.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized a ship carrying 250,000 liters of smuggled diesel fuel on Sunday. The vessel was seized in the waters of the Arabian Gulf while reportedly heading to the UAE. The detained people have been referred to the Iranian judiciary.

# Tunisians stunned as outsiders lead vote

AFP & REUTERS
TUNIS

**With two-thirds of the votes counted, Kais Saied and Nabil Karoui are leading 24 other candidates, who included the prime minister, two former prime ministers, a former president and the defence minister, and appear certain to advance to a run-off vote next month.**





Tunisian presidential candidate Kais Saied speaking to the media at his campaign headquarters in the capital Tunis, yesterday. RIGHT: Salwa Smaoui, the wife of jailed candidate Nabil Karoui (background picture), awaits the results in Tunis.

Law professor and political outsider Kais Saied yesterday led Tunisia's presidential polls with two-thirds of the votes counted, the electoral commission said, after the country's second free vote for head of state since the 2011 Arab Spring.

Saied was on 18.9 percent, ahead of imprisoned media magnate Nabil Karoui, who was on 15.5 percent, according to the electoral commission, ISIE.

Prime Minister Youssef Chahed, a presidential hopeful whose popularity has been tarnished by a sluggish economy and the rising cost of living, could well turn out to be the election's biggest loser. ISIE figures showed him in fifth place with 7.4 percent of the vote, trailing both Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party candidate Abdelfattah Mourou and former defence minister Abdelkarim Zbidi.

"The anti-system strategy has won," ISIE member Adil Brinsi told AFP, but added: "It's not finished yet. Mourou could very easily move from third to second place, in front of Karoui."

It represents a sharp rebuke of elected governments that have struggled to improve living standards or end graft after Tunisia's 2011 revolution introduced democracy and inspired the "Arab Spring".

A smiling Saied, receiving journalists at a rented apartment serving as his campaign offices, said voters had "carried out a revolution within a legal framework... They want something new... new political thinking".

It was up to civil society and democracy at the local administrative level to resolve Tunisia's social problems, he said, while defending his own reputation as a conservative. "Tunisia has always been an open country. It's a moderate society. I am open to all modern ideas. We can discuss it," Saied said.

Karoui has for years used his Nessma television station and the charity he founded after his son died to present himself as a champion of the poor and a scourge of government, while his critics describe him as an ambitious, unscrupulous, populist.

He denies all claims of wrongdoing against him, including old tax evasion and money laundering charges which kept him in jail on election day, calling them an undemocratic plot. "We hope that Karoui will keep his promises and keep helping us like he did in recent years (with his charity)," said a woman at Tunis fishmarket, who did not want to be named.

His wealth and massive electoral organisation stand in sharp contrast to Saied, who spent so little on his campaign that Tunisians joke it cost no more than a coffee and packet of cigarettes.

Saied, who speaks in public in formal Arabic as if in a faculty meeting, drives an old car and wants to remain in his humble house if elected rather than move into the luxurious presidential palace at Carthage.

A social conservative who wants to restore the death penalty and rejects equal inheritance for men and women, Saied's main focus is decentralisation in a country where politicians in the capital have traditionally dominated.

In a radio interview on Sunday, Saied described his lead as "like a new revolution," a reference to Tunisia's 2011 uprising that brought in democracy and set off the Arab Spring revolts elsewhere.

"We received the message sent by the Tunisian people," Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said late on Sunday, conceding defeat. An official in Ennahda, seen as Tunisia's main anti-establishment force before it joined successive recent governments, said it would now focus on the October 6 election for parliament, which wields more power than the presidency.

Turnout was 45%, down from 63% in 2014, though foreign election monitors said this was because of increased voter registration, meaning the total number of voters was about the same. Karoui, in a statement read by his wife after exit polls were published, said the result was a message to a political elite that he accuses of using the judicial process to try to silence him.

Tunisia's electoral commission has said he can stay in the race so long as he has not been convicted, though no date is set for a final verdict.

Courts have ruled that he must stay in custody while facing the charges, despite complaints by election monitors that this prejudices his chances. His opponents have said his use of his unlicensed television station should itself disqualify him.

Legal questions over whether he could take the oath of office while in detention, or whether presidential immunity would protect him, are unsettled. A constitutional court to address such issues has not yet been set up.

# Haftar forces carry out air strike on central city, widening front

REUTERS/BENGHAZI

Eastern Libyan forces yesterday mounted an air strike on the central city of Sirte held by the internationally recognised government, an official and residents said, widening a conflict engulfing the capital Tripoli.

Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based Libyan National Army (LNA) force has been trying since April to take Tripoli, which is held by the internationally recognised government, with a ground campaign supported by air strikes. The campaign has displaced more than 120,000 people in Tripoli alone, killed hundreds of civilians, and risks disrupting oil supplies from the country in chaos since the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

There have been LNA-claimed strikes in recent days on Sirte, some 450km by road east of Tripoli, but mainly on the outskirts, residents said. Haftar, who is allied to an eastern parallel administration, might be trying to shift the frontline from Sirte away from Tripoli where he has been unable to breach the city's defences and even lost his main forward base in Gharyan, said Emad Badi, a Libya researcher.

Such a move would also pre-empt attacks on the main LNA supply base in Jufra, a central oasis, which the Tripoli forces have attacked by air, said Badi, a non-resident scholar at the Middle East Institute.

The Sirte strike hit a building near a feedstock plant where the a local force securing Sirte is based, which an LNA official said had been targeted. The Tripoli-based government also said on Facebook that drones operated by the United Arab Emirates had carried out strikes against the positions of a force allied to it.

The UAE has been backing the LNA alongside Egypt, according to UN reports, but neither country has confirmed this. Turkey is backing the Tripoli forces. Mitiga airport, the only working airport in Tripoli, was also targeted in the early hours of Monday, an eastern military source told Reuters. It has been closed for two weeks due to continued air strikes.

Haftar and his backers say they are trying to free the capital from armed groups which they blame for destabilising Libya since the fall of Gaddafi in a Nato-backed uprising.

Haftar's critics accuse him of trying to seize power through a military coup, deepening a conflict between factions based in the east and west of the sprawling North African country.

Sirte, Gaddafi's birth place, was a stronghold for Islamic State militants until Tripoli-forces backed by US airstrikes expelled the group in December 2016. The coastal city lies at the unofficial border of areas of influence of the Tripoli forces in western Libya and the LNA controlling the east.

The LNA suffered a setback when two commanders of an allied force in the town of Tarhouna southeast of Tripoli got killed late on Friday. Tarhouna is the main forward base from where arms and troops arrive from the east after the force lost Gharyan, a town some 70km south of Tripoli, late in June.

# France to press to drop Sudan from US terror blacklist

AFP/KHARTOUM



French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (left), meets Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok in Khartoum, yesterday.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said yesterday that France will press to drop Sudan from the US blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism and to support efforts to reintegrate the country into the international community.

Le Drian was in Khartoum for a one-day visit, the first such trip to Sudan by France's top diplomat in more than a decade.

His visit comes as the northeast African country transitions to civilian rule after decades of authoritarianism.

"We will use our influence to ensure that Sudan is removed from this list," Le Drian said at a joint press conference with his Sudanese counterpart Asma Mohamed Abdalla after the two held talks. "It is the way to ensure that we can consider a new relationship (for Sudan) with financial institutions, everything is obviously linked," he said, asked if France would back efforts to remove Sudan from Washington's blacklist.

Decades of US blacklisting along with a trade embargo imposed on Sudan in 1997 has kept overseas investors away from the country, in turn isolating it from the global economy. Sudan's worsening economic situation was the key trigger for nationwide protests that finally led to the ouster of longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir in April.

Washington lifted the sanctions in October 2017, but kept Sudan in the terrorism list along with North Korea, Iran and Syria.

Washington's measures were imposed for Khartoum's alleged support for Islamist militant groups. Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden resided in Sudan between 1992 and 1996.

Le Drian said the pivotal role played by Sudan's army in the uprising against Bashir would help in removing Sudan from the US blacklist.




## Tribute to Mugabe

A young woman holding a placard reading 'Our hero, our liberator' as villagers queue to view the coffin of late former Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe lying in state at Murombedzi Growth Point, about 100km northwest of Harare, yesterday.

## S Africa apologises to Nigeria after anti-migrant violence

AFP/ABUJA

A South African envoy expressed the country's "sincerest apologies" to Nigeria yesterday, after a wave of anti-migrant attacks swept through Johannesburg and surrounding cities in recent weeks, fuelling diplomatic tensions.

A meeting with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari in the capital Abuja was held to convey President Cyrial Ramaphosa's "sincere apologies about the incident that has recently transpired in South Africa," the special envoy, Jeff Radebe, told reporters.

"The incident does not represent what we stand for," he said, adding that South African police would "leave no stone unturned, that those involved must be brought to book."

In a statement after the meeting Nigeria's presidency said "President Buhari responded to profuse apologies from the South African president, pledging that relationship between the two countries will be solidified."

# Cancer deaths on the rise in Eastern Africa: Researcher

ANATOLIA/ADDIS ABABA

Cancer is killing more people in Eastern Africa than tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/Aids combined, said an Ethiopian-born Canadian physician and researcher yesterday.

Dr Melaku Game, a hematologist, was speaking during an event organized by East Africa's eight-nation trading and security bloc Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The aim of the event was to mobilize resources for the planned establishment of a regional center of excellence on cancer. "Cancer is killing too many people to be ignored," Game, who was involved in the inception of the project told a gathering of scientists, pertinent officials and donors in Addis Ababa.

A decade ago, IGAD had decided to establish a center of excellence for cancer, a project that has not yet taken off due to resource constraints, even though the government has allocated a plot of land for the construction of the center.

"We have faced financial, material and manpower center and we have been soliciting these resources," Mahboub Maalim, IGAD's executive secretary,said.

# If required, I will visit J&K: Chief Justice of India

IANS
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi yesterday said he would personally visit Jammu and Kashmir, if required, after a petitioner said people there were not able to access courts for legal redressal of their grievances.

The top court also wanted the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to give a status report on the legal situation in J&K, where restrictions continue since August 5, even these are being eased gradually.

"If required, I will go and personally check. I will speak to the Chief Justice (of J&K High Court) today," Gogoi said.

He was responding when senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi claimed that there are extreme difficulties in accessing the High Court in J&K.

The advocate was arguing for child rights activists Enakshi Ganguly & Shanta Sinha, who moved the apex court through a petition challenging the alleged "illegal detention" of children in Jammu and Kashmir following abolition of its special status granted under Article 370 and reorganisation of the state.

The court observed that it is a serious concern if people are facing issues to access justice.

"You have made a statement that you cannot move the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Is anybody coming in the way... Not being allowed to access the High Court is a serious concern," said the Chief Justice, replying to the advocate who contended that under the existing restrictions, it was not possible to move the High Court.

**The Supreme Court also wanted the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to give a status report on the legal situation in Jammu and Kashmir, where restrictions continue since August 5, even these are being eased gradually.**

Gogoi also warned the lawyer that if the information placed before the apex court was found to be incorrect, then he would face consequences.

Meanwhile, the central government on Monday told the Supreme Court that Jammu and Kashmir is gradually moving to a stage when no restrictions may be necessary, adding that not a single bullet has been fired and not a single life lost so far after the abrogation of Article 370 that accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

The Centre's reply came after the apex court asked both the Centre as well as the Jammu and Kashmir government to restore normalcy in the erstwhile state as soon as possible. Attorney General K K Venugopal along with Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the court that best possible steps have been taken in the national interest for preventing any loss of life or property, which would otherwise have been inevitable, if the restrictions which have been placed had not been implemented.

"Every move should be made keeping in mind national interest," said the top court.

District Magistrates have issued prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC as per necessity. In addition to this, temporary blocking of various communication channels like Internet and mobile services has been resorted to in order to minimise law and order violations.

"It is to the credit of the government that these measures have succeeded in full, as not a single bullet has been fired till date and there has not been any loss of life on account of any police firing," said Mehta before the court. According to an internal note, in the last few weeks the restrictions have been gradually eased in a phased manner to ensure a smooth return to normalcy for the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Centre's counsel emphasised that the restrictions are only temporary in character, as the fact-sheet mentioned before the court show that step by step and stage by stage there has been a relaxation in the restrictions.



Policemen stand guard outside the residence of Farooq Abdullah, the former chief minister of the Jammu and Kashmir state, in Srinagar yesterday.

## Farooq Abdullah detained under PSA

AP/IANS
NEW DELHI

A Parliament member who is a senior pro-India politician in Jammu and Kashmir was arrested yesterday under a controversial law that allows authorities to imprison someone for up to two years without charge or trial.

Farooq Abdullah, 81, who also was the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, was arrested at his residence in Srinagar. "We have arrested him, and a committee will decide how long the arrest will be," said Muneer Khan, a top police official.

Abdullah is the first pro-India politician who has been arrested under the Public Safety Act, under which rights activists say more than 20,000 Kashmiris have been detained in the last two decades.

Abdullah's residence was declared a subsidiary jail and he was put under house arrest on August 5 when the government stripped Jammu and Kashmir of semi-autonomy and statehood, creating two federal territories.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court yesterday issued a notice to the Centre on MDMK General Secretary Vaiko's habeas corpus petition seeking the release of Abdullah from detention.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi asked the Centre as well as the J&K administration to file their responses on Vaiko's plea and listed the matter for further hearing on September 30.

However, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta opposed the plea saying that Vaiko does not have a locus standi in the matter as he is not a relative of Abdullah.

Vaiko's counsel told the court that there is no information about Abdullah and the provisions in which he has been detained. "We don't know if the constitutional provisions were followed or not", Vaiko's counsel said.

The court asked Mehta whether constitutional provisions were followed or not in the case. He replied that he would have to take instructions on this regard.

Vaiko, a Rajya Sabha member of Parliament, has filed a plea asking the top court to allow Abdullah to attend a conference in Chennai. The conference was organised by Vaiko on September 15. Mehta said the date of the event had already passed.

Vaiko told the court that for several years he has been organising a conference in Chennai on the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C N Annadurai.

## After Pulwama, JeM's target was Delhi-NCR: NIA

IANS
NEW DELHI

Pakistan-based terrorist outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed was planning to carry out 'fidayeen' attacks at several places in India, including Delhi and NCR, similar to the February 14 Pulwama attack in Jammu and Kashmir that left 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel dead, the National Investigation Agency's chargesheet said yesterday.

In its chargesheet filed before a special court here, the NIA named four JeM terrorists who were involved in the Pulwama attack conspiracy.

Those named in the chargesheet include Sajjad Ahmad Khan, 27, Tanveer Ahmed Ganie, 29, Bilal Ahmad Mir, 23, and Muzaffar Ahmad Bhat, 25, all residents of Pulwama.

According to the agency, it filed a case in the matter on March 15 based on certain information regarding criminal conspiracy being hatched by senior JeM commanders to carry out terror attacks in different parts of India including Delhi-NCR.

"Investigation has established that the accused persons are members of proscribed terrorist organisation JeM and they were planning to carry out terrorist attacks and also propagating the activities of the outfit." The agency said slain JeM terrorist Mudassir Ahmad Khan was the mastermind behind this conspiracy and was one of the main conspirators in the Pulwama attack which occurred on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway after a militant rammed his improvised explosive-device laden vehicle into a bus carrying CRPF personnel.

As Mudassir was killed in a shootout with security forces at Pinglish village in Jammu and Kashmir's Tral town on the intervening night of March 9-10, charges against him have abated, the NIA said.

## Two US men held for flying drone over Rashtrapati Bhavan

IANS
NEW DELHI

Intelligence agencies and Delhi Police scrambled into action after they were alerted about a drone flying over the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Prime Minister's Office in the high-security 'no flying zone' in Lutyens' Delhi this weekend.

The incident happened at about 5-6pm on Saturday. Police have arrested two Americans - a father-son duo - in this connection, Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Delhi, Eish Singhal said.

Police have yet to establish the Americans' motive behind the flying drone in such sensitive and high-security zone, despite interrogating both of them till late night on Saturday. "Their motive behind flying the drone is not clear. Investigation is going on," Singhal said.

A Delhi Police officer, on the condition of anonymity, said: "The matter relates to flying a drone in a very sensitive zone. The arrested accused are Americans. Intelligence officials are unlikely to say anything on the issue. As a precautionary measure, we have registered a case at South Avenue police station for record."



## Andhra Pradesh CM consoles boat tragedy survivor

**Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy (right) talks to a survivor after a tour boat capsized in Godavari river, at Rajahmundry Government Hospital in Rajahmundry. Authorities were engaged in a major search and rescue operation yesterday to find 39 people missing after the tragedy.**

## Congress, NCP to contest 125 seats each in Maharashtra polls

IANS
NASHIK

The Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party will contest 125 seats each, while other allies will contest the remaining 38 seats in Maharashtra assembly polls next month, NCP President Sharad Pawar announced here yesterday.

Addressing the media here, he said that the other allies include the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana, the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, the Peasants & Workers Party, the Peoples Republican Party and the Left parties.

Pawar said it will be significant which seat will be contested by which party and the candidates they put up, though there may a swapping of a few seats, even as the NCP will try and give opportunity to fresh faces.

"We are making efforts to have a combined election rallies of all Opposition parties in important cities like Nagpur, Pune, Aurangabad, Nashik. Barely a month is left and the Election Commission is likely to announce the elections scheduled within this week," he said.

The NCP chief's declaration came even as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and Shiv Sena combine have yet to finalise their alliance amid murmurs of discontent in the latter which may be offered a lesser quota by the BJP.

On the spate of defections from the NCP to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-Shiv Sena, Pawar said: "We are not concerned about those who have left the party. Some people feel that they (BJP-Sena) will return to power. However, the public sentiments are against them. We will definitely win." "Some people who have quit the NCP have said that they were threatened with probes by investigating agencies like the ED. I don't want to reveal their names, but this is what they have said," he claimed.

On his remarks concerning Pakistan, the NCP chief said that he said nothing about the neighbouring country, but commented on his experiences with the people of that nation.

"The Chief Minister (Devendra Fadnavis) should get proper information before speaking. I had spoken about my friends, the response given to Indian cricket team, how they cheered everytime they (Indians) scored runs, and such things," Pawar said.

## Peeved Maharashtra farm activist snaps ties with BJP

IANS
NAGPUR

In a significant development, leading farm activist Kishore Tiwari, who recently locked horns with Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari over the stringent penalties under the new Motor Vehicles Act, yesterday snapped ties with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

"We have broken all ties with the BJP. I shall return to my activities for the welfare of the farmers in Maharashtra and other parts of India. If required, we shall cooperate with the Shiv Sena for resolving the suffering farmers' plight," Tiwari said.

Tiwari, who is the President of Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti (VJAS), said that the VJAS was an "associate member" of the BJP-led NDA for the last 10 years, but now they are no longer together.

On the status of his cabinet-rank post of Chairman, Vasantrao Naik Sheti Swavalamban Mission (VNSSM), to which he was appointed in mid-2015, he said that since the tenure of the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena government will end shortly, it is no longer an issue.

The occurrence took place barely five days after Tiwari's explosive interview (given to IANS on September 11), when he warned Gadkari that the stringent MVA penalties "are anti-people and could spur suicides in the country." Tiwari's statements had embarrassed the BJP even as many states in the country are either rejecting or diluting the new MVA penalties.

These include key states like Gujarat from where the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP President Amit Shah hail, and Gadkari's home-state Maharashtra.

# Pakistan to open corridor for Indian Sikh pilgrims on Nov 9

REUTERS
KARTARPUR, PAKISTAN

**The visa-free border crossing from India to Kartarpur in Pakistan is a rare recent example of cooperation between the nuclear powers, who came close to war in February following a militant attack on police in Indian-controlled Kashmir.**

A corridor for Indian Sikh pilgrims travelling to a temple in Pakistan will open in November, in time for one of the religion's most sacred festivals.

The visa-free border crossing from India to Kartarpur, Pakistan will be inaugurated on November 9, just ahead of the 550th birthday of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak on November 12, Pakistani project director Atif Majeed said yesterday.

The project is a rare recent example of cooperation between the nuclear powers, who came close to war in February following a militant attack on police in Indian-controlled Kashmir. India revoked the special status of its portion of the disputed territory last month, inflaming relations once again.

The Sikh minority community in India's northern state of Punjab and elsewhere has long sought easier access to the temple in Kartarpur, a village just over the border in Muslim-majority Pakistan. The temple marks the site where the guru died.

To get there, travellers currently must first secure hard-to-get visas, travel to Lahore or another major Pakistani city and then drive to the village, which is just 4km from the Indian border.

Indian pilgrims will pay Pakistan $20 to use the corridor, which includes roadways, an 800-metre bridge over the Ravi River and an immigration office.

Up to 5,000 Indians will be allowed access daily, with plans to eventually double capacity, Majeed said. Costs of the corridor were not released.

Many Sikhs see Pakistan as the place where their religion began. Its founder, Guru Nanak, was born in 1469 in a small village near the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore.

# Sri Lanka's 'Lotus Tower' declared open for public

AFP/COLOMBO

Sri Lanka yesterday opened a Chinese-backed massive partially built tower plagued by corruption allegations, one of the white elephants started during the former strongman president's regime.

Construction of the so-called "Lotus Tower", believed to be South Asia's tallest free-standing communications tower, began in 2012 under the then-president Mahinda Rajapakse.

But the project faced numerous delays amid funding issues and after one of the two Chinese companies which secured the contract to build the 350-metre (1,155-feet) structure vanished after receiving an advance of two billion rupees ($18m). With the government still needing another three billion rupees to complete the building in the heart of the capital Colombo, President Maithripala Sirisena said he decided to open the tower to the public.

"We still have not completed this project, but we decided to go ahead and open sections of the tower that can be accessed by people," Sirisena said in a nationally televised ceremony.

An observation deck 244 metres high will be open for visitors. A planned revolving restaurant is not yet ready and the facility is also not being used for radio or television transmissions.

Sirisena's government, which came to power after Rajapakse was defeated in January 2015 elections, has struggled to repay loans for white elephant projects taken on by his predecessor.

The president said Sri Lanka had to pay a Chinese bank 10 annual instalments of 2.4bn rupees to service the tower debt. In December 2017, Sri Lanka handed over a deep sea port in the south to a Chinese company after saying it was unable to service a $1.4bn debt from Beijing to build the loss-making harbour. The $1.12bn deal announced in July 2016 allowed a Chinese state company to take over Hambantota port, which straddles the world's busiest east-west shipping route, on a 99-year lease.

The port was one of a string of infrastructure projects in Asia, Africa and Europe being funded under China's Belt and Road Initiative, which critics said is saddling nations with debt.

Sri Lanka is still looking for a partner to manage an international airport built in the same area during Rajapakse's decade in power. The airport has so far not been able to retain a single international airline.



A general view of the lit-up Lotus Tower in Colombo. Sri Lanka yesterday opened a Chinese-backed partially built tower.

# Islamabad to charge dozens of rioters for ransacking Hindu temple

AFP/KARACHI

Pakistani officials want to charge dozens of rioters who ransacked a Hindu temple over the weekend with blasphemy, police said.

The crackdown comes a day after a mob took to the streets in Ghotki — a town around 500km north of Karachi — and vandalised the temple after rumours that a Hindu teacher from the area had insulted Islam.

"We have registered blasphemy cases against over 40 people for ransacking the temple," Jameel Ahmed, the region's police chief said.

Farrukh Ali, a senior superintendent of police in Ghotki, said authorities were conducting raids to arrest the rioters, adding local Islamic clerics were supportive of the action. Police said they had already arrested at least three suspected attackers, while an additional 22 people have been identified after reviewing video footage of the attack. The Hindu teacher accused of blasphemy also surrendered to the police and was moved to an undisclosed location to ensure his safety.

More than 100 people were also charged with blocking highways and destroying property belonging to the area's Hindu community. Rights groups called for swift action following the incident.

"Pakistani authorities must protect #Ghotki's Hindu community and their places of worship," tweeted Amnesty International's South Asia branch.

# Taliban say 'committed' to agreement with US

ANATOLIA/MOSCOW

Taliban is committed to the agreements with the US despite the recent events, on the condition Washington will adhere to its part, the movement's spokesman Mohammad Suhail Shaheen said yesterday.

Last week, US President Donald Trump abruptly cancelled a meeting with the representatives of Taliban and Afghan government, planned in his country retreat Camp David. Trump said the that peace talks with the Taliban are "dead", and that the decision was made in retaliation for a recent attack in Afghanistan's Kabul, which killed a dozen people, including a US service member.

"We are committed to what we have agreed provided the US should show commitment to what they have agreed. Otherwise, the blame for prolongation of the war rests with US," Shaheen said in an interview.

Shaheen's remarks followed the visit of Taliban delegation to the Russian capital Moscow last Friday. Russia previously voiced hope that peace talks between the US and the Taliban are "suspended", and not "dead", since Moscow considers the US-Taliban deal as an "important step" that would pave the way to the national reconciliation and further comprehensive settlement of the Afghan crisis.

# Kashmir: Pakistan refuses backdoor diplomacy with India

INTERNEWS/ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has refused to engage in backdoor diplomacy with India after some powerful countries as well as certain Muslim states sought de-escalation in the brewing tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours over Kashmir. Prime Minister Imran Khan was also requested to tone down his verbal attacks on his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

However, Pakistan has turned down the requests and made it clear that it would only engage with India through quiet or conventional diplomacy after New Delhi was persuaded to meet certain conditions, officials privy to the development said.

These conditions include lifting of the curfew and other restrictions imposed in Indian Kashmir, a day before India stripped the disputed region of its special status on August 5.

When the deputy foreign minister of Saudi Arabia and the foreign minister of UAE travelled together to Islamabad on September 3, they came with a 'message' on behalf of their leadership as well as some other powerful countries urging Pakistan to engage in back-channel diplomacy with India.

Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Adel Al Jubeir and UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Al Nahyan met both Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa during their daylong trip.

They also held a meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and other senior officials. "The discussions were so confidential that only top officials of the foreign ministry were allowed to sit in those meetings," an official said.

According to the official, both the Saudi and UAE diplomats conveyed their willingness to play a role in defusing tensions between Pakistan and India. One of the proposals on the table was to encourage both countries to hold backdoor talks with each other. While the international interlocutors were willing to persuade India to ease some of the restrictions imposed in Kashmir, they requested Pakistan to stop targeting Modi.

Since August 5, Prime Minister Imran has repeatedly targeted the Indian prime minister, questioning his links with Hindu extremist organisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and even equating him with Hitler. Modi, during one of his telephonic conversations with US President Donald Trump, complained about PM Imran's blistering verbal attacks on him.

While those international efforts helped prevented any serious escalation in tensions as also mentioned by President Trump recently, Pakistan refused to agree to any kind of engagement with India.



## Afghan poll preparations

**An employee of the Afganistan's Independent Election Commission (IEC), charges power banks for biometric devices during preparations for the upcoming presidential election at a warehouse in Kabul, yesterday.**

# Sri Lanka's Tamil-majority north shuts down to support rally

AP/JAFFNA, SRI LANKA

Shops were shut in Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil-majority north yesterday in support of a rally demanding an international probe into alleged atrocities during the nation's civil war and an end to reported state-sponsored efforts to change the ethnic balance of the Tamils' traditional homeland.

Hundreds took part in the rally in Jaffna town. Speakers demanded an explanation of civilian disappearances during the 26-year civil war, which ended in 2009. They also demanded the release of people arrested for alleged links to the now-defeated Tamil Tiger rebels and the return of land and homes taken by the military. A proclamation read out at the rally said Tamil people have faced massive challenges since the end of the war, with U.N. efforts to hold the government accountable for the alleged atrocities proving futile.

"The Sinhala-Buddhist state structure of Sri Lanka is not ready to be answerable, therefore there is no option left for us other than an international investigation. The international community must realize this," the Tamil-language proclamation said. The government promised the UN Human Rights Council in 2015 that it would appoint a local tribunal with the participation of international prosecutors and judges to hear cases of alleged abuses, but it still has not done so. It created an Office on Missing Persons but it has not made headway in resolving the cases of those who disappeared.

# 600,000 Rohingya still in Myanmar at 'serious risk of genocide': UN

AFP/YANGON

Rohingya Muslims remaining in Myanmar still face a "serious risk of genocide", UN investigators said yesterday, warning the repatriation of a million already driven from the country by the army remains "impossible".

The fact-finding mission to Myanmar, set up by the Human Rights Council, last year branded the army operations in 2017 as "genocide" and called for the prosecution of top generals, including army chief Min Aung Hlaing.

Around 740,000 Rohingya fled burning villages, bringing accounts of murder, rape and torture over the border to sprawling refugee camps in Bangladesh, where survivors of previous waves of persecution already languished.

But in a damning report, the United Nations team said the 600,000 Rohingya still inside Myanmar's Rakhine state remain in deteriorating and "deplorable" conditions. "Myanmar continues to harbour genocidal intent and the Rohingya remain under serious risk of genocide," the investigators said in their final report on Myanmar, due to be presented today in Geneva.

The country is "denying wrongdoing, destroying evidence, refusing to conduct effective investigations and clearing, razing, confiscating and building on land from which it displaced Rohingya", it said.

Rohingya were living in "inhumane" conditions, the report continued, adding more than 40,000 structures had been destroyed in the 2017 crackdown.

The mission reiterated calls for the UN Security Council to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court (ICC) or to set up a tribunal, like for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

# Taiwan cuts ties with Solomon Islands after China switch

AFP
TAIPEI

**After Solomon Islands's switch to China, there are now only 16 countries left that recognise Taiwan.**

Taiwan severed ties with the Solomon Islands yesterday after learning the Pacific nation was switching diplomatic recognition to China, as Taipei accused Beijing of using "dollar diplomacy" to buy off its few remaining allies.

The switch is a major victory for Beijing just weeks before it celebrates the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

And it leaves Taiwan more isolated than ever with just 16 nations left that recognise it.

Taiwan's foreign minister Joseph Wu said Taipei had learned that the cabinet of Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare had made the decision to recognise Beijing earlier yesterday.

"The government hereby declares the termination of diplomatic relations with the Solomon Islands with immediate effect," Wu said, adding Taiwanese diplomats were being withdrawn from Honiara and that Solomons envoys would be expected to do the same.

"The government of China has once again resorted to dollar diplomacy and false promises of large amounts of foreign assistance to buy off a small number of politicians," Wu added.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen said she felt "strong regret and condemnation" over the decision.

Sogavare, who governs through a coalition after an April election, had been under intense pressure from parliamentary colleagues who saw little benefit in staying with the shrinking band of nations that officially recognise Taipei.

He had publicly said China was seen as more likely to provide significant infrastructure funding to the impoverished nation, where less than 50 percent of the population have access to electricity.

He also said switching to China would give the Solomons greater leverage over traditional regional powers, citing Fiji, which shrugged off sanctions imposed by Australia and New Zealand following a 2006 military coup by boosting relations with China.

Taiwan has been a de facto sovereign nation since the end of a civil war in 1949, but China still views the island as its territory and has vowed to seize it — by force if necessary.

Over the decades, as China's economic and military power has grown, most countries, including the United States and most Western nations, switched recognition to Beijing.

In the last decade only a handful of nations remained loyal to Taiwan, largely in Latin America and the Pacific.

But Beijing stepped up its campaign to diplomatically isolate Taiwan after Tsai's 2016 landslide election because she hails from a party that refuses to recognise the idea that the island is part of "one China".

It has also ramped up military drills and squeezed the island economically.

The small African nation of Sao Tome and Principe was the first to fall, switching recognition to Beijing in late 2016, followed by Burkina Faso and then three Latin American nations: Panama, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic.

Tsai is seeking re-election in January polls which will be dominated by relations with China.

# HK lawmaker urges UN to probe 'police brutality'

AFP
GENEVA

A Hong Kong lawmaker has called on the UN to launch an international investigation into a police crackdown on pro-democracy protests, voicing alarm at escalating "brutality".

"Hong Kong is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis," Tanya Chan told the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, asking it to urgently discuss the situation and to dispatch investigators to probe abuses.

Chan, the founder of Hong Kong's pro-democracy Civic Party, was earlier this year handed a suspended eight-month jail sentence over her role in creating a civil disobedience campaign known as "Occupy Central" in 2013 and the student-led Umbrella Movement that brought parts of the city to a standstill a year later.

She was invited by the non-governmental organisation UN Watch to take its allotted spot and briefly address the council after more than three months of huge, sometimes violent rallies calling for greater democratic freedoms and police accountability. Pointing out that she was speaking as Hong Kong yesterday entered its 100th day of protests, Chan cautioned that "there is no sign that police will exercise restraint".

"This is a result of the lack of democracy in Hong Kong, as the government is not held accountable for its endorsement of police abuse," she said. She urged UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet to "support our appeal for this council to convene an urgent session and to establish a mission of inquiry to ensure the human rights of the people of Hong Kong."

Bachelet has voiced measured concern over violence by all sides in Hong Kong and urged the authorities to conduct a "prompt, independent, impartial investigation" into alleged excessive force by police against protesters.

# N Korea demands security guarantees for nuclear talks

AFP
SEOUL

North Korea has demanded that the United States provide security guarantees as a precondition to resuming deadlocked nuclear talks, dampening hopes for progress at a working-level dialogue expected in the coming weeks.

Negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington have been gridlocked since a second summit between the North's leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump in February ended without a deal.

The pair agreed to restart working-level dialogue during an impromptu meeting at the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas in June, and Pyongyang last week offered to hold those talks in late September, a move the US said was "encouraging".

A senior official from the North's foreign ministry said yesterday that "discussion of denuclearisation may be possible when threats and hurdles endangering our system security and obstructing our development are clearly removed beyond all doubt".

North Korea has always insisted that security guarantees would be necessary as part of any deal — but it has not generally demanded them as a precursor to negotiations. The director-general of the department of US affairs, who was not named, said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency that working-level talks were expected to be held "in a few weeks".

It was up to Washington whether it would prove to be an opportunity or "an occasion to precipitate crisis", he added.

"A proposal that the US put forward at the negotiations may improve the relations and, on the contrary, may add to the hostility towards each other." Pyongyang has also threatened to pull out of talks with Washington and has blasted senior US officials in recent months.

Despite the escalation in tensions, Trump has insisted his relationship with Kim remains unharmed, and the pair have exchanged personal letters in the absence of talks.

The North Korean leader asked Trump to visit Pyongyang in a letter sent last month, South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper reported yesterday, repeating an invitation issued at their last meeting in the DMZ.

At their first summit in Singapore last year, Kim and Trump adopted a vaguely-worded statement on the "complete denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula" but little progress has since been made ever since.



Indonesian Army personnel sprinkle water to extinguish the fire that broke out at a peatland in Tambang district of Indonesia's Riau province, yesterday.

# Indonesia arrests nearly 200 over forest fires

AFP
JAKARTA

Indonesia has arrested nearly 200 people over vast forest fires ripping across the archipelago, police said yesterday, as toxic haze sends air quality levels plummeting and sparks flight cancellations.

Jakarta has deployed thousands of personnel to battle blazes that are turning land into charred landscapes and consuming forests in Sumatra and Borneo islands, where thousands of schools have been shut over health fears.

The fires — usually started by illegal burning to clear land for farming — have unleashed choking haze across Southeast Asia, triggering diplomatic tensions with Indonesia's neighbours.

The authorities said yesterday they had arrested some 185 people suspected of being involved in activities that led to out-of-control fires sweeping the country. "Indonesian Police will enforce the law against anyone who is proven to have carried out forest and land burning, whether it was done intentionally or through negligence," National Police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo said.

"This is a last resort. The most important thing is prevention." Four corporations were also being investigated, he added. Last week, officials sealed off dozens of plantations where smog-belching fires were blazing.

# Two Chinese women die in car crash in west Australia

REUTERS
MELBOURNE

Two Chinese women died in Western Australia after their car hit a bus on Sunday near a popular tourist site about 190 km north of Perth, police officials said.

Their Nissan Xtrail four-wheel drive collided with a bus carrying 34 passengers after they turned on to the Indian Ocean Drive from a road leading to the Pinnacles limestone site in a national park, West Australian police said in a statement.

"The collision caused the Nissan to roll, coming to rest on its roof. The driver of the Nissan Xtrail died at the scene," police said.

The two passengers were transported to Royal Perth Hospital by helicopter.

"One passenger has since died and the other is in a critical but stable condition," police said.

The Chinese consulate in Perth has not responded to a query from Reuters.

The incident follows the deaths of five Chinese tourists in a bus crash in New Zealand earlier this month.



# Over 270 Chinese arrested in the Philippines

**Philippines' capital Regional Commander, Police Major General Guillermo Eleazar gestures during a press conference where three (back, in orange shirts) of the 277 Chinese nationals caught for conducting illegal online operations, were presented to the media in Manila, yesterday. Philippine police have arrested more than 270 Chinese nationals in a raid on a gang wanted over a vast investment fraud that cost victims in China millions of dollars, authorities said.**

# Fijian leader urges Australia to do more on climate change

AP
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA

Fiji's prime minister used a state visit yesterday to urge Australia to take more ambitious actions to slash greenhouse gas emissions, a month after differences on climate change policy created anger and frustration at a forum of Pacific island leaders.

Voreqe Bainimarama, who was Fijian Military Forces commander when he seized power in a 2006 coup, said in a speech at the Australian Defence College that he hoped Fiji and Australia could "find more common ground" on climate change.

"The steady deterioration in the state of the only planet we have means that we all need to be far more ambitious in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing global warming," Bainimarama said.

He said both countries are already suffering the effects of climate change.

Dozens of wildfires are razing Australia's drought-parched east coast in an extraordinarily early and destructive start to the annual fire danger season.

In Fiji, 44 people died and thousands of homes were destroyed in 2016 when Cyclone Winston became the strongest storm to ever make landfall in the southern hemisphere.

Bainimarama met Morrison at Parliament House yesterday for the first time since the Fijian rebuked Morrison for his behaviour at the Pacific Islands Forum at Tuvalu last month.

# Almost 80,000 homes still without power a week after Japan typhoon

AFP
TOKYO

Almost 80,000 homes are still without power a week after a powerful typhoon battered eastern Japan, authorities said yesterday, with sustained heavy rain prompting evacuation orders and hampering recovery efforts.

Typhoon Faxai powered into the Tokyo region in the early hours of Monday last week, packing record winds that brought down power lines, disrupted Rugby World Cup preparations and prompted the government to order tens of thousands of people to leave their homes.

The storm killed two people, with at least three elderly later confirmed dead due to heatstroke as temperatures soared to above 35 degrees Celsius in areas affected by a post-typhoon blackout.

Some 78,700 households were still without power in Chiba, southeast of the capital, Tokyo Electric Co. (TEPCO) spokesman Naoya Kondo said.

"A complete recovery is still unlikely until September 27 as we have difficulties in mountain areas," he added. Some 16,700 households were also without water because several water purification plants had no power, a local official said.

With help from the military, officials were dispatching water tanker trucks to the affected areas. The national weather agency Monday issued new warnings for heavy rain in Chiba, while local authorities issued non-compulsory evacuation orders to 46,300 people due to the risk of landslides.

"A delay in recovery work is expected due to heavy rain," said Kenta Hirano, a disaster management official in Futtsu in Chiba, where more than 1,000 houses were damaged by the typhoon. Local media showed residents in Chiba hurriedly covering broken roofs with blue tarpaulins.

# No breakthrough in Brexit talks as Johnson dodges reporters

AFP
LUXEMBOURG

**British Prime Minister says he would never seek to postpone Brexit, deal or no deal.**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday failed to convince EU leaders he has a serious plan for a Brexit deal, then ducked out of a planned news conference under a chorus of abuse from protesters.

Before setting off for talks in Luxembourg, Johnson had compared himself to comic book giant Hulk, but when anti-Brexit protesters gathered he left Prime Minister Xavier Bettel to field questions solo.

A visibly angry Bettel pointed in bitter amusement at the empty podium in front of the British flag beside him as he warned that Britain had failed to come up with any credible way to revive the Brexit withdrawal deal.

It was time to "stop speaking and act," he told the absent Johnson.

"For me I have just one withdrawal agreement on the table and it's the one from last year," Bettel said. "There are no changes, there are no concrete proposals for the moment on the table and I won't give an agreement to ideas."

After the brief talks with Johnson, Bettel headed to Paris for talks with France's President Emmanuel Macron. He warned that EU leaders will not postpone Brexit beyond October 31 if Britain does not come up with written suggestions soon.

"An extension is only an option it if serves a purpose," he warned.

For his part, once he was safely clear of the small crowd of British residents of Luxembourg who had gathered outside Bettel's office for the noisy protest, Johnson made brief remarks to British broadcasters.

"There was clearly going to be a lot of noise... and I think our points might have been drowned out," he protested, insisting he would never seek to postpone Brexit, deal or no deal.

"What on earth is the point? Staying beyond October 31st is crackers," he said, according to the BBC.

Johnson insisted he had made progress in agreeing to further talks with EU leader Jean-Claude Juncker and negotiator Michel Barnier. "Our friends and partners in the EU are keen to work with us to get a deal," he said.

But Juncker, who had held a working lunch with Johnson, was downbeat.

The president of the European Commission said that once again the UK had failed to come up with a viable alternative to the so-called Irish "backstop" border arrangement.

"President Juncker recalled that it is the UK's responsibility to come forward with legally operational solutions that are compatible with the Withdrawal Agreement," a commission statement said.

Johnson has vowed to take Britain out of the bloc by the scheduled date of October 31, though parliament has ordered him not to do so without striking a deal with Brussels first.

Businesses and opponents of Brexit say leaving without a deal will cause economic chaos as Britain ends its open trade ties to the European Union after 46 years.

Johnson says Britain will not agree to a divorce deal that includes the backstop, a provision that would temporarily keep the UK in the EU customs union to keep the Irish border open. Before the talks, a UK spokesman stressed London's view that progress was being made in talks between officials to try to find a backstop alternative, but this note of optimism finds no echo in European capitals.

Finland's European affairs minister, Tytti Tuppurainen, who was chairing an EU ministerial meeting in Brussels, said: "So far I haven't seen any proposal that would compensate the backstop." The European Parliament will this week vote on a resolution rejecting Johnson's demand that the backstop clause be stripped from the deal.

Johnson insists it has to be removed if he is to bring the agreement back to the House of Commons for approval.

Barnier will address the European Parliament session in Strasbourg tomorrow.



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson walks after a meeting with EU Commission President and officials at the Ministere d'Etat in Luxembourg, yesterday.

# Gibraltar to hold election ahead of Brexit

AFP
MADRID

Gibraltar's chief minister yesterday dissolved parliament and called a general election next month, saying the territory needs "strong leadership" ahead of Britain's scheduled departure from the European Union on October 31.

Speaking to a news conference, Fabian Picardo called for the vote to be held on October 17 to ensure a strong government was in place to tackle the fallout from Brexit.

"Gibraltar will need settled and strong leadership going into Brexit, especially if there is also to be an election in the UK and potentially in Spain thereafter," said Picardo who was elected for a second term in 2015.

Britain's decision to leave the EU has revived controversy over Spain's long-standing claim to the territory, although it will not change the status of Gibraltar, which is also known as "The Rock".

Britain's Boris Johnson has tried to push for a snap election to resolve the political deadlock, and Spain is also struggling with a political crisis which could drag the country to a fourth general election in as many years. During Britain's 2016 referendum on whether to leave the EU, this tiny peninsula of some 30,000 people on Spain's southern tip voted overwhelmingly to remain within the EU.

But six weeks ahead of the deadline, with no divorce deal agreed, Britain looks increasingly likely to crash out without a deal — a scenario which could see Gibraltar particularly badly affected by the imposition of checks at the Spanish border, London admitted last week.

Despite the persistent uncertainty, Picardo insisted Gibraltar was ready "for any type of Brexit, or no Brexit".

"We do not wish to leave the European Union but if we leave, however we may leave, we are ready," he said, calling for the election of a "strong and proven leadership".

# Russian actor jailed for over 3 years over oppn protest

AFP
MOSCOW

A Moscow court yesterday sentenced a 23-year-old actor to three-and-a-half years in prison for violence against police at an opposition protest even though he claimed he was simply a bystander.

Moscow's Tverskoy district court sentenced actor Pavel Ustinov to serve the sentence in a penal colony despite pleas from activists and prominent figures to let him go.

Ustinov denied any guilt, insisting he was a passerby and was not taking part in the protest.

Investigators said Ustinov violated public order during an unauthorised rally on August 3 and put up resistance during his arrest. As a result, a policeman sprained his shoulder.

Prosecutors had asked the court to sentence him to six years in prison.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the Kremlin did not comment on court rulings.

The latest sentencing brought to six the number of people jailed for taking part in a recent wave of anti-government demonstrations.

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Moscow after authorities refused to allow prominent opposition candidates to stand for the city parliament in September 8 elections.

Police detained hundreds of the protesters, and while most were quickly released, some faced serious charges.

In the week ahead of the elections, five were sentenced to jail time ranging from two to four years.

A blogger was sentenced to five years in a penal colony for a tweet calling for attacks on the children of police. The tweet came in response to the crackdown on the protesters.

# Spain not to extradite Venezuela's former spymaster

REUTERS
MADRID

Spain's High Court ruled yesterday that the government should refuse a request from the United States to extradite Venezuela's former military intelligence chief and ordered his release from jail.

Former general Hugo Carvajal was arrested on drug trafficking charges by Spanish police in April at the request of Washington, which says it believes he will share incriminating information about Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro.

"I didn't expect any other outcome. I'm innocent," Carvajal told reporters as he left the prison on the outskirts of Madrid surrounded by his family, including various young children.

"Of course some day I will go back to Venezuela, and for now I will continue fighting for my country, as long as Spain allows me," he said.

Carvajal praised the Spanish justice system and said his imprisonment conditions were nothing to complain about. "I wish there were prisons like that in Venezuela," he said.

The Spanish government has the final say on extraditions, but it tends to follow the court's rulings. Carvajal was an ally of Venezuela's late Socialist leader Hugo Chavez and has turned against Maduro, who succeeded Chavez. He has denied accusations he helped Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels smuggle cocaine to the United States.

During the extradition hearing last week, he said Washington was fabricating the drug charges in order to make him talk, raising doubts about whether he will cooperate in future with the United States.

The court ruled against the extradition despite the state prosecutor's recommendation that the request be satisfied. It will explain its reasoning today.

As well as denouncing Maduro, Carvajal has given his support to opposition leader Juan Guaido, who in January invoked the constitution to assume an interim presidency of Venezuela and was recognised by the United States and others.




A man rows a kayak on a flooded street after torrential rains in Dolores, Spain, yesterday.

# Dutch national missing in Spain's flooded southeast

AFP/MADRID

Rescuers yesterday searched for a Dutch national reported missing in southeastern Spain where torrential rains and flooding have claimed six lives, police said.

The alarm was raised on Sunday afternoon after a member of the public reported seeing "a body sucked into the water in a canal" in Dolores, a town 40km southeast of Alicante.

The person was believed to be a 66-year-old Dutch man, a police spokesman said.

Southeastern Spain has been battered since Thursday by torrential rains, causing huge flooding and chaos on the roads in several provinces, leaving many areas cut off.

Six people have died as a result of the flood and rescuers have evacuated thousands of people from their homes. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez again visited several affected areas yesterday.

# Two Italian officers face trial over 2013 shipwreck

AFP
ROME

Two Italian officers accused of delaying the response to a 2013 shipwreck in which some 260 migrants drowned will stand trial for manslaughter, a court in Italy ruled yesterday.

Dozens of children died after repeated SOS calls were ignored ahead of the October tragedy, which sent a shockwave through Italy.

The country was already reeling from the deaths just a week earlier of 366 migrants who drowned off Lampedusa.

The trial of Leopoldo Manna, head of the Italian coast guard operations room, and Luca Licciardi, the equivalent for the navy, will begin on December 3 in Rome.

The fishing boat had set off from Zouara in Libya under the cover of darkness with nearly 480 people on board.

It was in Malta's search and rescue zone, 118 nautical miles south-west of the Maltese capital Valletta, when it ran into trouble at 12.39pm on Friday October 11, 2013.

Images and recordings from the tragedy were made public in a 2017 documentary.

The migrants — Syrians and Palestinians — could be heard appealing to Italian officials, but they ordered them to call Malta instead.

# French boy, 10, dies 8 years after supermarket burger poisoning

AFP
LILLE, FRANCE

A French boy aged 10, who fell gravely ill in 2011 after consuming a beef burger from supermarket discounter Lidl that was infected with E. coli bacteria, has died of complications stemming from his poisoning, the family's lawyer said.

The boy, Nolan, died on Saturday "as a consequence of his poisoning", the family's lawyer Florence Rault said.

Lidl's French arm said in a tweet yesterday: "We share the pain of Nolan's family and will seek to assure our support during their suffering." Rault said that Nolan had not "ceased to suffer" after consuming the burger in June 2011. A dozen other children were also poisoned from steaks purchased from Lidl at the time, but Nolan suffered by far the most severe effects.

"His limbs became deformed, his bones would break and he had to undergo different kinds of surgeries. He could not eat, swallow, speak or move because he had no more ability to coordinate," she said.

Nolan, who was just under two at the time of the poisoning, was left paralysed and mentally handicapped. He is the only one of the victims to have died.

Suffering from diabetes, he was fed by a tube and had to take medication several times a day with frequent stays in hospital, Rault said. "His body finally gave up... as a result of all the pathologies which only got worse," she said. In February, the manager of Lidl's supplier SEB-Cerf, Guy Lamorlette, 78, was sentenced by a court in the northern town of Douai on appeal to three years in prison, one of which was suspended, for the poisoning. He was also fined €50,000.

The appeals court confirmed a sentence first given to Lamorlette in June 2017 on charges of causing "involuntary injuries due to a deliberate breach of safety operations".

# Spanish centre-right offers way out of political limbo

REUTERS
MADRID

**The conditions offered by Ciudadanos were: The government must pledge not to increase taxes; would apply direct rule again in Catalonia if the regional government rejects an upcoming sentence in a separatist trial; and would shun a pact with Basque nationalists in Navarra.**

The leader of Spain's centre-right Ciudadanos party offered yesterday to break a political deadlock and avoid another election by facilitating Socialist party leader Pedro Sanchez's investiture as premier under various conditions.

But a Socialist party source scoffed at the surprise move by Spain's third largest party as pre-election manoeuvring.

The Socialists won an election in April without enough seats to govern on their own, illustrating how politics in the euro zone's fourth largest economy have fragmented with the emergence of new parties.

Sanchez, 47, is the acting premier, but no major policies are going through parliament for lack of majority and the budget will roll over unless the impasse is resolved.

If the divided parliament does not confirm Sanchez as premier by September 23, there will be another election on November 10 — the fourth in four years — with no guarantee it would be any easier afterwards to put a government together.

Ciudadanos leader Albert Rivera called on conservative People's Party (PP) leader Pablo Casado to join him in offering support for Sanchez on three conditions.

They were that the government must pledge not to increase taxes, would apply direct rule again in Catalonia if the regional government rejects an upcoming sentence in a separatist trial, and would shun a pact with Basque nationalists in Navarra.

"We offer a state solution for Spain: we will unblock the investiture if Sanchez accepts three conditions," Rivera's party tweeted him as saying. PP is Spain's second largest party.

Responding to the proposal, Sanchez avoided specifically agreeing, but said there were no obstacles to his investiture because his policies already coincided with Rivera's requests.

His government would act if Catalan separatists did anything illegal, families' tax burden should be relieved, and there was no pact with Basque nationalists, he told reporters.

"When one listens to Mr Rivera, there is no real obstacle for the People's Party and Ciudadanos to abstain, which is what we've been asking for since April 28," he said, referring to a potential parliamentary vote on his becoming prime minister.

One senior Socialist Party source was blunter, said this was manoeuvering by Rivera ahead of a potential vote. "They are already campaigning," the source said.

Political analyst Pablo Simon Rivera agreed.

"This is to make Sanchez responsible for the repeat (election)," he said

Rivera had previously not shown up to a round of talks Sanchez held with other party leaders.

There was no official reaction from PP, but a source in the party said Casado was willing to talk with Rivera and Sanchez.

Aware of Spaniards' weariness with elections and their leaders' horse-trading, parties are eager to deflect blame if there is a new election. Should there be a new vote, abstention could be a major factor.

Rivera's proposal was a surprise because any chance of a deal over the past months had focused on difficult talks between the Socialists and far-left Unidas Podemos, which both sides said had reached a dead-end.



The opening ceremony of the Center-2019 military exercise, in the southern Orenburg region, in Russia, yesterday.

# Russia starts massive military drills

AFP
MOSCOW

Russia yesterday started the massive military exercises involving 128,000 troops and the militaries of several allies, including India and China.

The Center-2019 drills will last through Saturday in the Urals, Siberia and the Caspian Sea.

They will also include over 20,000 pieces of military equipment and 15 ships, the Russian defence ministry said.

Russian government regularly holds massive exercises, rotating in different regions of the country.

Last year, the East-2018 exercises involved over 300,000 troops, making them the largest in the post-Soviet era.

The purpose of these latest drills is to "work on using groups of armed forces in solving issues of fighting international terrorism and ensure military security in the strategic direction of Central Asia", the ministry said.

The first stage of the two-part drills will focus on issues of fighting terrorism and thwarting an attack from the air. During the second stage, forces will be go on an offensive against a supposed enemy.

Troops from India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are also taking part in the exercise.

"The drills will serve to develop military collaboration and strengthen cooperation between our countries," Deputy Defence Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov said at the opening ceremony.

# Hungary rejects EU's accusation of breaching bloc's values, rule of law

AFP
BRUSSELS

Hungary fiercely rejected accusations from the European Union that it was breaching EU values and the rule of law, in its first hearing before the bloc's European affairs ministers.

"Once again, we are put on pillory for rejecting mass immigration. However, the facts are on our side. We protect Hungary!", the country's justice minister, Judith Varga, said just ahead of the hearing in tweets authenticated by Hungary's diplomatic mission to the EU.

The European Parliament a year ago started formal proceedings against Hungary for alleged breaches of rule of law under its nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orban, accused of trampling media freedoms and weakening the independence of judges.

In theory, the action under Article 7 of the EU treaty could lead to Hungary losing EU voting rights.

But that would require unanimity of the other EU member states — and fellow eastern member Poland, also in the European Parliament's bad books for allegedly eroding rule of law, is seen likely to back Hungary.

Hungary has sought to portray the condemnation as "politically motivated".

"We are proud that by protecting the borders of Europe for centuries we have protected its culture, its heritage, its European way of life. Today we do the same," Vega tweeted.

But other EU states hit back at that defence as misplaced and misleading.

The general picture painted by the European Parliament's report about the respect for fundamental values in Hungary is worrying, France and Germany said in a joint statement read at the hearing.

"The threats to the Rule of Law and fundamental rights in Hungary concern us all," their ministers said.

Frans Timmermans, an EU vice president in charge of rule of law, noted the "very, very strong commitment" to upholding EU values and emphasised that that would be a priority in the new European Commission starting work in November, in which he will have an expanded role.

# Armenia's PM ousts national security chief

REUTERS
YEREVAN

Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said yesterday that he had sacked National Security Service chief Artur Vanetsyan, the first dismissal of a high-ranking official in his cabinet.

Pashinyan told a news conference the decision was based on "bilateral consent".

Pashinyan came to power in a peaceful revolution last year after protests against corruption and cronyism.

Vanetsyan, who became the National Security Service head after last year's revolution, sent Pashinyan a letter, also published in local media, in which he criticised the prime minister's working methods.

Vanetsyan remains head of Armenian Football Federation.

# Russian court upholds sentence for Polish citizen accused of spying

AFP
MOSCOW

Russia's Supreme Court has upheld a 14-year prison sentence for a Polish citizen convicted of spying, the FSB security service said.

A Moscow court in June found Marian Radzajewski guilty of trying to obtain military information that included Russian "state secrets" after a closed trial.

Russia's FSB security service said the Supreme Court had on Thursday ruled the sentence was "legal and justified."

The FSB has said that the Polish citizen tried to obtain "secret components of Russian S-300 air defence systems," adding that Radzajewski was arrested as he was attempting to complete the transaction.

The FSB has accused Radzajewski of acting "in the interests of a Polish organisation that is a leading supplier of (Poland's) national armed forces and special forces."

According to an investigation into his case by Polish magazine Polityka, Radzajewski's transport company could have been involved in bringing components from Russia and Belarus for the Polish army that still uses some Soviet-made equipment.

# French professionals join protest on pension reform

AP
PARIS

Thousands of French professionals, including lawyers and doctors, took to the streets of Paris yesterday in the latest protest against the government's planned pension changes.

The protest saw lawyers, doctors, nurses and others in regulated professions vent their displeasure at the proposed changes that President Emmanuel Macron's government says will simplify France's convoluted pensions system. The government has promised the legal retirement age of 62 won't change, but new conditions may encourage people to work longer.

A large majority of those protesting yesterday were lawyers as the National Bar Council, which initiated the demonstration, claims the proposed changes will double the taxes its members will pay.

Wearing their black robes, they marched in Paris' central streets singing "no, no, no to the Macron reform," some brandishing posters writing "no to the pension tax."

There's growing opposition to the government's proposals, which will see 42 different retirement systems linked to certain jobs, replaced by new arrangements that will mean those becoming of pensionable age operate under the same rules. On Friday, Paris endured the biggest disruption to its public transport since 2007 as unions went on strike.

Pilots and air crew, who are not regulated by the state but have special pension arrangements which allow them to retire early, joined the protest.

Most lawyers across France were on strike and decided not to plead any cases and asked for trials to be postponed.

The demonstration took place as the government is starting a three-month consultation with unions, employers' groups and professional organisations.

The pension changes will be formally presented and debated in parliament next year.




French lawyers holding placards that read, "more expensive pension, precarious justice" during a protest against the pension reform in front of Opera Garnier in Paris, yesterday.

# Worldwide climate protests on Friday get union support

AP/BERLIN

Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to join worldwide demonstrations this week ahead of a UN climate summit in New York, as unions and some businesses lend their support for faster action to fight climate change.

Organisers said that more than 400 rallies are planned in Germany alone for Friday's "global climate strike." Campaigners are also staging protests in Australia, Japan, India, South Africa, most other European countries, the US and Canada.

"This is an important signal," said Antje von Broock, a spokeswoman for a broad alliance comprising some 200 environmental, youth and church groups in Germany, noting that the demonstrations will take place just days before the UN climate summit, where leaders will present their long-term plans for curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

A report released last year by a UN science panel concluded that there's still a chance to meet the 2015 Paris climate accord's goal of keeping global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2100 compared to pre-industrial times. But achieving this would require drastic measures, including ending the use of fossil fuels by mid-century.

# 2020 hopeful Warren wins key endorsement

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

**Elizabeth Warren yesterday proposed a major rewrite of US laws governing lobbying that she said was aimed at restricting corporate influence and rooting out corruption.**

Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren yesterday won the endorsement of the Working Families Party, a progressive group with growing political influence that previously backed US Senator Bernie Sanders during his 2016 White House bid.

The group's endorsement of Warren, a US senator from Massachusetts, reflected its belief that "sitting on the sidelines" during the Democratic nominating contest is not the best way to beat Republican President Donald Trump in November 2020, said Maurice Mitchell, national director of the Working Families Party.

The organisation's thousands of dues-paying members voted to endorse after interviewing five of the 20 Democratic candidates: Warren, Sanders, former US housing chief Julián Castro and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Their backing of Warren comes as opinion polls show her gaining ground against the contest's front-runner, former vice-president Joe Biden, a more moderate candidate.

Warren got nearly 61% of members' votes, while Sanders drew almost 36% support.

Mitchell said progressive voters face a "tough choice" this year but that "Elizabeth Warren is offering an agenda of real structural change."

Warren wrote on Twitter that she was "grateful" for the Working Families Party's endorsement. "Together, we're going to make the big, structural change we need so that government works for all of us — not just the wealthy and well-connected," she said.

The endorsement came ahead of Warren's campaign rally in New York City, an event expected to draw thousands as she delivers a speech on corruption in Washington.

Also yesterday, Warren proposed a major rewrite of US laws governing lobbying that she said was aimed at restricting corporate influence and rooting out corruption. In the detailed plan, Warren proposed barring elected officials and senior government appointees from ever becoming lobbyists.

She would also ban US firms from lobbying on behalf of foreign governments, expand the definition of lobbyists to include anyone paid to influence lawmakers, impose new taxes on excessive lobbying by large companies and restrict the ability of industry officials to "dominate" the regulatory process.

The Center for Responsive Politics said in January that companies and others spent $3.42bn on lobbying in 2018, the highest amount in eight years.

Warren's plan takes aim at Trump, a real estate developer who as president regularly visits his own hotels, resorts and golf clubs. She would require presidents and vice-presidents to place business assets in a blind trust to be sold and require other senior officials to divest assets that could present conflicts.

Trump maintains ownership of his businesses but has ceded day-to-day control to his sons. Last week, Trump, who has refused to release his personal tax returns, said that before November 2020, he would release an "extremely complete" financial report.

She would bar all federal employees from becoming corporate lobbyists for six years after leaving government.

She would also prohibit courts from using sealed settlements to conceal evidence in cases involving public health or safety and allow the public to sue federal agencies to enforce rules.



## NY Yankees' Rivera receives Medal of Freedom

US President Donald Trump presents the Medal of Freedom to former New York Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, yesterday. Mariano Rivera is known as one of the greatest relief pitchers of all time from his career playing for the New York Yankees.

## Trump to raise $15m for re-election in California

BLOOMBERG
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump could bank more than $15m for his re-election effort during a two-day fundraising swing through California later this week.

A lunch in the Bay Area today is expected to generate at least $3m, while a pair of events in the Los Angeles area could bring in $8m and a fundraiser in San Diego could yield $4m, according to a Republican Party official who requested anonymity to discuss the fundraising totals.

The events will benefit a joint fundraising committee shared between the president's re-election campaign and the Republican National Committee.

The haul should help pad Trump's already substantial advantage over his Democratic opponents. The president's campaign committee had more than $56m in cash on hand as of his last fundraising report filed at the end of June.]

Aides said that advantage is why the president can afford to compete in states like New Mexico that Democrats have largely won in recent election years.

## Trump narrows search for top security job to replace Bolton

BLOOMBERG
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has narrowed the search for his next national security adviser to replace John Bolton, who left the White House abruptly last week.

Top candidates include Ricky Waddell, a former national security official in the Trump administration, and Robert C O'Brien, a presidential envoy for hostage affairs, according to people familiar with the matter.

Trump is also considering Keith Kellogg, a national security adviser to Vice-President Mike Pence.

Additionally, Trump dined on Saturday with Richard Grenell, the current US ambassador to Germany.

Grenell told the White House he isn't interested in the job.

He's been discussing a different role on the Trump team.

Trump ousted Bolton last week, saying he "strongly" disagreed with many of his positions. Bolton — known for his hard-line approach to US adversaries, including Iran, North Korea and Venezuela — had also clashed repeatedly with Secretary of State Michael Pompeo.

The president is giving Pompeo a significant voice in choosing who will replace Bolton, according to people with knowledge of the matter. Pompeo has backed O'Brien and Waddell.

# No new measles cases last week in the US

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

Health officials recorded no new cases of measles in the United States last week, marking the first week without new cases of the disease since the start of an outbreak largely linked to parents who declined to vaccinate their children.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday it had recorded 1,241 cases of the highly contagious and sometimes deadly disease in 31 states as of September 12.

The current outbreak of measles is the worst to hit the country since 1992, when 2,126 cases were reported, and threatens to end the nation's measles-free status.

The majority of US measles cases this year have occurred in children who had not received the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine, which confers immunity to the disease.

Federal health officials have attributed the outbreak in large part to a vocal fringe of US parents who refuse to vaccinate their children because they believe that ingredients in them can cause autism.

US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar in an April that the current outbreak is "completely avoidable" and the unfortunate result of some people's choice to deny the proven safety of vaccines.

The weekly increase in the number of cases has tapered down over the last few months, dropping to 7 new cases last week. The report of zero new cases is the latest indication that the outbreak is petering out after dozens of cases were reported per week earlier this year.

The disease was declared eliminated in the US in 2000, meaning there was no continuous transmission of the disease for a year. Still, cases of the virus occur and spread via travelers coming from countries where measles is common.



Fire brigade members attempt to control hot points during a fire, in Amazonas state, in Brazil, yesterday.

## Fires erupt near Amazon tourist town in Brazil

AP
RIO DE JANEIRO

Fires have broken out near a Brazilian town popular among tourists for its beaches on an Amazon river tributary.

Officials in Brazil's Para state said the fires around Alter do Chao started in several areas over the weekend and that firefighters were still working to put them out yesterday.

The state government asked the military for help.

Brazilian state monitors have reported over 121,000 fires throughout the country so far this year, about 50 percent more than in the same period in 2018.

Brazil has temporarily banned most legal fires in the Amazon. Ranchers routinely clear land with fire for crops, livestock and other uses.

The fires have intensified concern about the Amazon region's rainforests, a major absorber of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

# One dead, six injured in propane explosion

AP
FARMINGTON

A powerful propane explosion leveled a recently opened nonprofit centre after crew members arrived to investigate the smell of gas yesterday morning, killing one firefighter and injuring six other people, including fellow firefighters, officials said.

The building had been evacuated after the gas was detected, said Farmington Town Selectman Scott Landry. One firefighter was killed.

The blast injured four other firefighters, including the town's fire chief; one employee of the nonprofit center; and one ambulance worker, officials said. Landry had previously said all six of the injured were firefighters.

The blast around 8:30am was heard for miles and had enough force to blow a vehicle across an intersection. Paper, insulation and building debris rained on the area.

All that was left of the two-story building housing LEAP Inc., which serves people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, was a hole, Landry said.

"It's a war zone. It's just a mess," said Landry, who is also a state representative. "The building is gone."

Kim Hilton, who works in the admissions department at the nearby University of Maine at Farmington, said there were scary moments when the blast occurred. "It felt like someone hit our building with a vehicle."

The ambulance worker was treated and released, state public safety spokesman Steve McCausland said.

The other five were taken to regional trauma centres, including the state's largest hospital, Maine Medical Center in Portland, officials said.

Gov Janet Mills, who is from Farmington and whose office said she knew the firefighter who died, said on Twitter that the state fire marshal's office will investigate.

# Oklahoma prison violence appears gang-related, coordinated

AP
OKLAHOMA CITY

Weekend fights at six Oklahoma prisons that left one inmate dead and more than a dozen others injured were apparently coordinated and the result of race-based gang tension inside the facilities, the head of a prison workers association said.

The first fight erupted on Saturday at the Northeast Oklahoma Correctional Center in Vinita, in the northeast of the state. It was followed Sunday by fights at prisons in Hominy, Sayre, Fort Supply, Lawton and Stringtown, according to the state Department of Corrections.

The prisoner who died was at the medium-security Dick Conner Correctional Center in Hominy, about 145km northeast of Oklahoma City. More than a dozen inmates were taken to hospitals with injuries that aren't considered life-threatening.

"It has to be a coordinated effort," said Bobby Cleveland, director of the Oklahoma Corrections Professionals. "They even had fights at the minimum-security prison," he said.

All of Oklahoma's prisons remained locked down yesterday, with family visitation canceled and inmates mostly confined to their cells.

Prison officials were still investigating what caused the fights, but Cleveland said tension has been brewing for months among race-based gangs inside the state's prisons.

Four inmates were wounded last month after skirmishes erupted at a prison in northwestern Oklahoma, and dozens of inmates were involved in an altercation at a private prison earlier this year in Lawton, in the southwest of the state, that left nine inmates injured.





## Mexico marks 209th anniversary of independence

Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, with the Secretary of Defence, Luis Sandoval, and Secretary of the Navy, Admiral Rafael Ojeda Duran, conducting a troop review during a military parade to celebrate the 209th anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain at Zocalo Square, in Mexico City, yesterday. RIGHT: People enjoying fireworks after the "Cry of Independence" as Mexico marks its Independence Day at the National Palace, in Mexico City.

# 'Arrest of Canadian officer could hurt allies'

REUTERS
OTTAWA

The arrest of a top Canadian police officer on charges of leaking secret information could hurt intelligence operations by allied nations, the head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said yesterday.

Cameron Ortis, a director general with the RCMP's intelligence unit, was charged on Friday under a 2012 security of information law used to prosecute spies.

"We are assessing the impacts of the alleged activities as information becomes available," RCMP Commissioner Brenda Lucki said in a statement. "We are aware of the potential risk to agency operations of our partners in Canada and abroad and we thank them for their continued collaboration."

**In an indication of how serious the case is, the RCMP Commissioner said the "extremely unsettling" allegations "have shaken many people throughout the RCMP".**

Security experts said the case could damage Canada's standing inside the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing network that also groups the US, Australia, New Zealand and Britain.

"Mr. Ortis had access to information the Canadian intelligence community possessed," said Lucki. "He also had access to intelligence coming from our allies both domestically and internationally."

In an indication of how serious the case is, Lucki said the "extremely unsettling" allegations "have shaken many people throughout the RCMP."

The 2012 law was used to prosecute a Canadian naval officer who handed over secrets to Russia for more than four years. Sub-Lieutenant Jeffrey Delisle was jailed for 20 years in 2013 but released on parole in 2018.

Canadian officials told a sentencing hearing in 2013 that allies had threatened to withhold intelligence from Canada unless it tightened security procedures.

Lucki said Ortis — who joined the RCMP in 2007 — had been director general of the RCMP's National Intelligence Coordination Centre with broad access to information. The RCMP did not say to whom the information was leaked.

"This is a obviously a situation that ... the authorities take extremely seriously," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said yesterday in Waterloo, Ontario. "This is something the responsible authorities are engaged with at the highest level, including with our allies."

Ortis has a doctorate in international relations from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in western Canada, where he worked with Professor Paul Evans.

"Nothing in my experience with Cameron would lead me to suspect he would be any way involved in activities that would lead to such charges," Evans said in an email. "Like others who know him well, I was shocked by the news of the arrest of a very fine Canadian."

## Five people shot dead in Mexico club amid I-Day celebrations

REUTERS
MEXICO CITY

Five people were shot dead in a club in the home state of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador a few hours before he was due to lead his first independence day celebrations on Sunday night.

The public security ministry said in a post on Twitter that five people were killed and three were injured when a group of unidentified gunmen opened fire in the club near Villahermosa, the state capital of Tabasco in southeastern Mexico.

The killings were the latest reminder of the chronic security problems faced by Lopez Obrador, a veteran leftist who assumed the presidency in December pledging to bring down soaring levels of violence in Mexico.

Since then, the bloodletting has continued and the 2019 murder tally is on track to surpass last year's record total.

An hour before midnight, Lopez Obrador performed his first 'Grito' (Cry) as leader from the balcony of the Presidential Palace in the center of Mexico City, an event which commemorates the call to arms by rebel priest Miguel Hidalgo on September 16, 1810 at the start of the country's war of independence from Spain.

Addressing a packed Zocalo, the city's main square, Lopez Obrador chose to deliver 20 cries of "viva!" in his salute to independence, among them, "viva la paz!", or "long live peace!"

Mexican media reported that the attack on the club in Tabasco took place at around 8pm local time.

The motive was not immediately clear.

# Venezuela crisis talks are over, says Guaido

REUTERS
CARACAS

Venezuela's opposition said a dialogue mediated by Norway's Foreign Ministry to try to resolve the country's political crisis had ended, six weeks after President Nicolas Maduro's government suspended participation.

The talks, most of which had taken place on the Caribbean island of Barbados, began after opposition leader Juan Guaido led a failed military uprising in April against Maduro, who is accused of human rights violations and has overseen an economic collapse that has prompted millions to flee.

Maduro's representatives walked away from the table in August to protest US President Donald Trump's tightening of sanctions on the OPEC nation. Critics of the dialogue within Venezuela's opposition coalition argued that Maduro was negotiating in bad faith and used the talks to buy time.

"The dictatorial regime of Nicolas Maduro abandoned the negotiation process with false excuses," Guaido's office said in a statement posted on Twitter. "After more than 40 days in which they have refused to continue, we confirm that the Barbados mechanism is finished."

Guaido invoked Venezuela's constitution in January to assume an interim presidency, arguing Maduro's 2018 re-election was illegitimate. But Maduro, who calls Guaido a coup-mongering US puppet, has held on to power despite a deepening economic slowdown and growing international isolation.

Opposition negotiators had said Maduro's representatives were unwilling to discuss the opposition's main priority — holding a new election under free and fair conditions.

In its statement, which it called a message to "the people and the armed forces," Guaido's office thanked Norway for facilitating the process but did not specify the next steps it would take.



Rescuers working at the site where a plane crashed at the Junin neighbourhood in Popayan, southwestern Colombia, yesterday.

# Plane crash in Colombia leaves 7 dead

AFP
BOGOTA

At least seven people were killed and another three injured when a small plane crashed in southwestern Colombia yesterday, a firefighter said.

"Nine people were on board the plane. Seven died, while two are seriously injured," Juan Carlos Ganan, the commander of firefighters in the area, said.

The third person injured was a child on the ground in the area where the plane crashed, Ganan said.

Firefighters were trying to stop fuel leaking from the aircraft, Ganan added.

The plane, which crashed at 2:11pm, was headed from Popayan to Lopez de Micay, both in Cauca department.

The cause of the crash was not known and an investigation was under way, Ganan said.

# California braces for wildfire danger as Santa Ana winds arrive

BLOOMBERG
SACRAMENTO

The Santa Ana winds have returned to California, a signal to the state's residents that the wildfire season has begun in earnest.

The winds are created by high pressure over Nevada's Great Basin as cool weather starts to arrive in the Fall. Low pressure systems in warmer California pull them along, and as they flow through the Sierra Nevadas and other ranges, twisting their way through narrow passes and canyons, they heat up, lose moisture and gain speed.

Once they hit California, their low humidity and high heat can quickly turn the bushy chaparral into an explosive fuel source. It's part of the reason that California accounted for 92% of all insured wildfire losses in the US from 2008 to 2018, according to insurer Munich Re. Colorado was second with 3%.

'The high winds cause the fires to spread incredibly rapidly," according to Mark Bove, a natural catastrophe solutions manager at Munich Re. "In some cases, they have burned at the equivalent of "one football field per minute," driven by the wind."

They also 'cause more severe types of fire behavior," Bove said, spurring 'fire tornadoes or whirls' where the blazes move speedily from the ground to the tree tops.

In 2018, this behaviour helped feed 6,284 fires that destroyed 876,147 acres in the state, while the so-called Camp Fire alone killed 86 people, making it the deadliest wildfire in state history. In response, California has set aside $1bn for fire-prevention, and set up a $21bn insurance fund to pay for future blazes sparked by utility company equipment.

A series of wind-driven fires sparked by PG&E Corp. equipment forced the utility to seek bankruptcy protection in January. The company said it faced liabilities of $30bn from claims tied to the fires that destroyed tens of thousands of structures and killed more than 100 people.

So far this year, wildfires haven't done the level of damage seen in previous years. Through September 8, 3,993 fires have burned about 36,683 in the state, substantially below the 271,740 five-year average, according to the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection.

But much is at stake: Across California, 240,580 homes remain at extreme risk from fires, according to a new study from CoreLogic.

"During the Santa Anas, the hottest temperatures can be right at the ocean," said Eric Boldt, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Los Angeles.

# College of Islamic Studies' Maker-Majlis at HBKU to connect youth with SDGs

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Connecting Qatar's youth with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one of the key themes of the first Maker-Majlis presented by the College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

The four-day event also considers how the global goals are relevant for the Islamic world, while serving Qatar's strategic objectives.

Minister of State, H E Dr. Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kawari, will be giving the opening remarks. Leading academics and experts will attend the event, including guest speakers Dr. Richard Falk, Princeton University; Dr. Azza Karam, Senior Adviser, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); and Dr. Hugo Slim, Head of Policy, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Maker-Majlis: Islam in a Global World will take place from 8am to 9pm between September 22 and 25 at the Minaretein (College of Islamic Studies building), Education City.

Maker-Majlis: Islam in a Global World promises an eclectic mix of exhibitions, high-level talks, and activities by 22 local and international organisations designed to enhance understanding of the challenges addressed by the SDGs.

These include the Comic Zone, which looks at efforts to make the SDGs more accessible to citizens around the world through comics. Finding local solutions for SDG-related problems will also be the theme of the Halaqa Talks. These 10-minute TED-style discussions seek to foster inspirational and innovative thinking among youths.

Participants at Maker-Majlis will be encouraged to engage in an interactive setting with issues tackled by the SDGs during a number of breakout sessions. The week-long Makeathon tasks university students with designing projects based on various SDGs. Meanwhile, the Refugee Experience, organised by the Qatar Red Crescent, showcases registration processes, health checks and other issues associated with refugee zones.

An opportunity to come face-to-face with refugees is offered by Doha Debates in the Portable Inflatable Shared Studio, designed to connect people separated by distance and difference. Participants will also be able to connect with experienced practitioners working with the SDGs during Braindates.

The event will round off with the SDG Awards, which recognise civil society, individuals, private sector leaders, and other individuals who have advanced SDGs on the global stage.

Speaking ahead of the event, Dr. M. Evren Tok, assistant dean of Innovation and Community Advancement and associate professor, CIS, said: "We're naturally excited to be staging an event of this size and scope. Not only does the Maker-Majlis underscore that CIS is an established home for contemporary Islamic studies, it also demonstrates that we are connected to a network of SDG experts that is second-to-none. To this end, we're confident that the event will effectively join the dots between the SDGs, the Islamic world, and Qatari youth."

The College of Islamic Studies regularly hosts public lectures and conferences to promote a deeper understanding of the various aspects of Islam among the wider community.



The Makerspace sought to help participants think about how to meaningfully contribute to Qatar's ongoing transformation into a forward-looking, self-sustaining and knowledge-based economy.

**Maker-Majlis: Islam in a Global World promises an eclectic mix of exhibitions, high-level talks, and activities by 22 local and international organisations designed to enhance understanding of the challenges addressed by the SDGs.**

## CROSSWORD

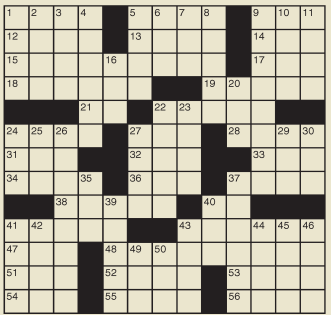
**ACROSS**
1 Greek cheese
5 Sandbox toy
9 Pantheon member
12 Luau strings
13 Rights advocacy org.
14 Poetic tribute
15 Wealthy traveler
17 Republicans
18 Paragons
19 Critic Roger
21 "Hey!"
22 Taxpayer's dread
24 Auction actions
27 TV alien
28 Elevator name
31 Mil. morale booster
32 "Alice" waitress
33 Actress Longoria
34 Asian desert
36 Dorm VIPs
37 Wilma's hubby
38 "The Jetsons" boy
40 Bell or Barker
41 Alaskan city
43 Rx amount
47 Stolen
48 Mail from an admirer
51 Shock partner
52 Spelling or Amos
53 Sicilian spouter
54 Scratch
55 Balkan native
56 D.C. baseball team

**DOWN**
1 Apple variety
2 Scratched (out)
3 Head, to Henri
4 Analyzes
5 Bits of butter
6 Play segment
7 — -de-France
8 Enticed
9 Eager achiever
10 Air freshener target
11 Gov. division
16 "Evil Woman" gp.
20 Life story
22 Relieve
23 Sci-fi fleet
24 Glitch
25 Equal (Pref.)
26 Improve
27 Roundish 'do
29 "— had it!"
30 Melancholy
35 Sort
37 Secure, as a seatbelt
39 Flat floaters
40 "The Simpsons" bartender
41 Counterfeit
42 Corn Belt state
43 554, to Cato
44 "— boy!"
45 Bloke
46 Historic periods
49 "You've got mail" co.
50 Big D.C. lobby

Solution time: 24 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | A | L | M | | A | R | C | | E | B | O | N |
| A | R | E | A | | B | A | A | | N | I | N | O |
| P | I | T | S | T | O | P | S | | R | T | E | S |
| P | A | S | T | E | L | | E | L | A | P | S | E |
| | | | | S | E | T | | Y | O | G | A | |
| B | A | H | | M | S | G | | G | E | R | M | Y |
| O | M | I | T | | H | O | S | | S | T | I | R |
| T | O | T | A | L | | T | R | U | | S | I | S |
| | | S | L | O | P | | U | N | D | | | |
| K | A | H | L | U | A | | P | I | R | A | T | E |
| C | B | O | E | | S | I | T | T | I | G | H | T |
| N | E | W | S | | T | O | E | | F | R | A | T |
| A | S | S | T | | A | N | D | | T | A | R | A |

Yesterday's answer 9-5



## MALL

**The Big Trip (2D/Animation)** 2:15pm; **Pailwaan (2D/Kannada)** 2:00pm; **Gang Leader (2D/Telugu)** 2:30pm; **Love Action Drama (2D/Malayalam)** 3:45 & 11:30pm; **Dream Girl (2D/Hindi)** 6:15 & 9:00pm; **Ittymaani (2D/Malayalam)** 8:45pm; **Chhichhore (2D/Hindi)** 5:30pm; **IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 8:00pm; **The Goldfinch (2D/Drama)** 11:00pm; **The Lion King (2D/Drama)** 5:00 & 7:00pm; **Official Secretes (2D/Drama)** 7:00pm; **Section 375 (2D/Hindi)** 11:30pm.

## LANDMARK

**Pailwaan (2D/Kannada)** 2:30 & 11:00pm;
**Gang Leader (2D/Telugu)** 5:30pm;
**Ittymaani (2D/Malayalam)** 3:00 & 8:30pm;
**The Big Trip (2D/Animation)** 4:45 & 6:30pm;
**Love Action Drama (2D/Malayalam)** 6:00 & 11:30pm
**Sivappu Manjal Pachai (2D/Tamil)** 2:15pm
**IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 8:15pm
**Porinju Mariam Jose (2D/Malayalam)** 8:15 & 11:15pm

## AL KHOR

**Chhichhore (2D/Hindi)** 11:15am, 5:30 & 11:45pm;
**Saaho (2D/Hindi)** 10:30am & 5:45pm;
**Ittymaani (2D/Malayalam)** 12:00, 6:00pm & 12:00am;
**IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 2:15 & 8:30pm;
**Brothers Day (2D/Malayalam)** 3:00, 9:00 & 11:30pm;
**Playmobil The Move (2D/Animation)** 3:30pm;
**Just A Stranger (2D/Tagalog)** 9:00pm

## FLIK Mirqab Mall

**47 Meters Down: Uncaged (2D/Adventure)** 10:20am & 10:30pm; **Aladding** 4:30 & 8:00pm;
**Angel Has Fallen (2D/Action)** 11:00am, 12:10, 1:20, 2:30, 3:40, 4:50, 6:00, 8:20 & 10:40pm
**Dora And The Lost City Of Gold (2D/Adventure)** 10:35am, 12:20, 1:00pm; **IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 10:40am, 1:50, 5:00, 7:10, 8:10, 10:20 & 11:20pm;
**Lion King** 7:00pm; **Love Action Drama** 3:55, 6:50 & 9:45pm; **Official Secrets** 10:10am, 2:10, 4:20, 6:30 & 8:40 **Once Upon A Time In Hollywood (2D/Comedy)** 5:00pm, **Playmobil The Move (2D/Animation)** 11:00am, 12:35, 1:55pm **Section 375 (Hindi)** 5:50 & 11:15pm; **The Angry Birds Movie 2** 10:05am, 12:00noon & 2:35pm; **The Goldfinch** 11:20am, 3:00 & 8:25; **Welad Rizk 2 (2D/Arabic)** 10:50pm & 12:20am

9-5 CRYPTOQUIP

QINY RMVKL BMV RNKK FCMFKC QIM GMYC "HM" MH EMACYIJHP JH N KCPJEKNYJGC NEECAZKB? NHYJ ZMLJCE.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** SPECIAL SWEET POTATOES THAT, WHEN CONSUMED, CAUSE FOLKS TO SPEAK MORE FRANKLY: CANDID YAMS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals C

## ROYAL PLAZA

**The Big Trip (2D/Animation)** 2:30 & 4:30pm;
**IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 8:00pm;
**Love Action Drama (2D/Malayalam)** 6:30 & 9:00pm;
**Dream Girl (2D/Hindi)** 4:30 & 11:30pm;
**Pailwaan (2D/Kannada)** 2:15pm;
**Chhichhore (2D/Hindi)** 7:00pm;
**The Goldfinch (2D/Drama)** 8:15pm;
**Gang Leader (2D/Telugu)** 5:15 & 11:00pm;
**Sivappu Manjal Pachai (2D/Tamil)** 2:00 & 11:15pm;
**Strange But True (2D/Thriller)** 9:30pm;

## ROXY

**Brothers Day (2D/Malayalam)** 1:40, 8:10 & 11:30pm
**Gang Leader (2D/Telugu)** 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:45 & 11:40pm;
**Ittymaani (2D/Malayalam)** 11:00am, 1:00, 5:10, 8:30, 10:30 & 11:40pm;
**IT: Chapter 2 (2D/Horror)** 6:00 & 11:15pm;
**Love Action Drama (2D/Malayalam)** 11:00am, 12:30, 1:45, 3:15, 4:30, 6:10, 7:15, 8:45, 10:00 & 11:30pm;
**Playmobil The Move (2D/Animation)** 10:30am, 12:30, 2:20 & 4:20pm;
**Strange But True (2D/Thriller)** 8:20 & 10:10pm;
**The Big Trip (2D/Animation)** 12:30, 4:30, 6:30 & 8:30pm;
**The Goldfinch (2D/Drama)** 11:00am 1:00, 2:00, 2:10, 4:00, 4:10, 5:00, 7:00, 8:00, 10:30 & 11:00pm

## ASIAN TOWN

**Love Action Drama (2D/Malayalam)** 5:45, 8:30, 9:30 & 11:15pm;
**Ittymaani (2D/Malayalam)** 10:00pm;
**Gang Leader (2D/Telugu)** 7:00pm;
**Dreamgirl (2D/Hindi)** 6:30pm;
**Pailwaan (2D/Kannada)** 6:30 & 9:30pm

*Note: Programme is subject to change without prior notice.*



STRANGE BUT TRUE

**A woman surprises the family of her deceased boyfriend by telling them she's pregnant with his child.**




## PRAYER TIMINGS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| FAJR | 04. 04 AM | | |
| SHOROOK | 05. 20 AM | | |
| ZUHR | 11. 28 AM | MAGHRIB | 05. 38 PM |
| ASR | 02.56 PM | ISHA | 07. 08 PM |

## WEATHER TODAY




**30°C** Minimum | **40°C** Maximum

Misty to foggy at places by early morning becomes hot daytime with slight dust at times and relatively humid by night.

HIGH TIDE 06:00 - 17:47 LOW TIDE 01:18 - 13:06

Courtesy: Qatar Meteorology Department



### Today in History

*September 17, 1976*

▲ **NASA unveiled the first Space Shuttle, named Enterprise after the fictional starship from Star Trek. The launch was witnessed by the cast from the hit TV show**

**1871:** The Mont Cenis Tunnel from France to Italy was the first of the great tunnels through the Alps to be opened

**1931: RCA Victor demonstrated the first long-playing record to rotate at 33-1/3 rpm in New York**

**1939:** The Soviet Red Army invaded eastern Poland, claiming to protect Ukrainian and Belarussian minorities

**1944: British troops parachuted into Arnhem in a doomed allied attempt to capture three Dutch bridges**

Picture: Newscom © GRAPHIC NEWS

# Opposition leader in S Korea shaves head in protest

AFP
SEOUL

South Korea's main opposition party leader shaved his head yesterday to protest against the controversial appointment of a new justice minister despite allegations of corruption against his family.

Law professor Cho Kuk began his duties as the justice minister last Monday as state prosecutors carry out a probe into his daughter's schooling and an investment in a private equity fund suspected of dubious operations.

The appointment infuriated opposition lawmakers and created an even sharper divide in parliament.

Hwang Kyo-ahn — the main opposition Liberty Korea Party leader — said yesterday he would shave his head to urge the resignation of "criminal Cho Kuk".

A stern-looking Hwang arrived outside the presidential Blue House and was shorn of his neatly parted black hair as the South Korean anthem blared in the background.

"I'm here to pledge my determination by shaving my head," Hwang told the crowd. "I will not step back." Hwang served as the justice minister and prime minister under the conservative administration of Park Geun-hye, who was succeeded by Moon after she was impeached over a massive corruption scandal.

South Korean politicians have often resorted to shaving their heads in public to express opposition to government decisions and social issues.

Last week two female lawmakers shaved their heads to protest Cho's appointment. Prosecutors have carried out multiple raids in recent weeks linked to Cho's scandals, and his wife — also a university professor — was indicted for allegedly forging a college award for their daughter.



Main opposition Liberty Korea party leader Hwang Kyo-ahn has his head shaved during a protest outside the presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday.

# Buzz off! Angry bees delay Air India flight

AFP
NEW DELHI

An Air India flight was delayed by several hours after a swarm of bees landed on the cockpit window, attacking ground staff when they tried to remove them, officials said.

The insects landed on the window just before the plane was due to leave the eastern city of Kolkata on Sunday with 136 passengers, including Bangladesh's information minister.

Ground staff tried to shoo the insects off, angering them, and when attempts to use the windscreen wipers failed officials switched to 'plan b' and blasted them off with water.

"Fire tenders were deployed to spray water to dislodge the honey bees and they could be driven away after nearly an hour-long operation," an airport official said. The flight eventually took off more than three and a half hours late.

# Gabon's sole train a lifeline for its people, economy

AFP
FRANCEVILLE, GABON

The sky turns from indigo to ebony as the tropical night falls, and the train patiently thrusts through the jungle towards its destination, still hundreds of kilometres away.

The trek has the hallmarks of one of the world's Great Forgotten Train Journeys — a voyage through 648 kilometres of lush equatorial forest.

The train is the brainchild of Gabon's former president, Omar Bongo, who ruled for 42 years until his death in 2009.

In the 1970s, he dreamed of linking the central African state's resource-rich interior to the Atlantic coast — and he saw it through, despite being rebuffed by the World Bank, which refused to fund it on the grounds that it was not economically viable.

Today, the "Bongo Train", as it is affectionately known, remains the country's sole railway line, linking 23 stations from the coastal capital Libreville to distant Franceville, the country's third most populous city.

"The Transgabonais binds Gabonese society," declares Christian Antchouet Roux, the stationmaster at Franceville.

About 320,000 people take the train every year, a sign of its affordability for the average Gabonese.

Ticket prices depend on the time of year and class — the train has a VIP carriage, as well as first and second classes. Passengers travel only at nighttime but in air-conditioned comfort and the blue and yellow compartments are modern.

One of them is Miyha Koumba, a young student in Libreville who uses it to visit her family at the other end of the line.

"I take the train at least four times a year. I can visit my parents regularly," she said, arriving in Libreville at 7:00am bleary-eyed, having departed Franceville at 5:30 pm the day before.

During the day, the train hauls manganese — a key export after oil — from the interior to the oceanside capital.

Touting the train as a symbol of national unity and modernisation, Bongo doggedly pressed on with the plan, saying: "If we need to have a pact with the Devil, we'll do that."

Fortune smiled on Gabon's leader in 1973 when the oil producing nations raised prices dramatically, filling the country's coffers and enabling him to start construction with the additional help of Western aid, notably from former colonial ruler France.

Bongo flagged off the project — the largest in Africa at the time — on December 30, 1973.

It cost $1.65bn, and millions of trees were felled to cut the swathe through the jungle for the track, which is unelectrified.

In 1986, the last stretch was inaugurated in the presence of then French prime minister Jacques Chirac.

Critics of the project have long pointed to its cost, to its use as a political tool for Bongo, whose partisan stronghold was centred in the region where Franceville is located, and to French involvement.

Its champions view it as a critical piece of infrastructure for Gabon's development. There is a road running parallel to the tracks. But it is riddled with potholes, making the journey much longer, far less comfortable, and dangerous too.

But more than 33 years after the first train started rolling, the line is facing problems.

There have been many derailments on a stretch built on unstable terrain and maintenance has been poor.

Train services have been further compromised by technical problems, while elephants wandering over the tracks have caused delays.

To keep the line going, a massive eight-year revamp was launched in 2015, costing an estimated €330m.

More than half of the total will be financed by France together with, ironically, the World Bank.



A file photo shows Gabonese at the inauguration of second section of Ndjolé-Booué the Trans-Gabon Railway in Gabon on January 18, 1983.

# Booming Bollywood comes home for 'Oscars' 20th edition

AFP
MUMBAI

Mumbai hosts the "Bollywood Oscars" for the first time in India in 20 years this week with the megastars, movers and shakers of a booming Hindi film industry celebrating another bumper year, including in huge markets like China.

With nearly 1,800 titles released in 2018, the South Asian country is the biggest film industry in the world in terms of movies made, its flicks wowing viewers from Australia to Afghanistan to Africa.

The industry grew 12.2 percent in 2018, which included not only Hindi-language — Bollywood — movies, but also titles in regional languages like Tamil and Telugu, according to a report released in March by Ernst & Young and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

The huge South Asian diaspora in North America, Britain and the Gulf region has traditionally been the major overseas market.

Bollywood blockbuster releases in parts of North America and Britain are huge events, with passionate fans often queueing for hours just to catch a glimpse of stars like Shah Rukh Khan.

But Indian films have also been making huge inroads elsewhere — most notably in China.

The black comedy "Andhadhun", for example, nominated for best picture at the glitzy Indian International Film Academy Awards tomorrow, was a huge hit with Chinese viewers, grossing almost $50m.

Aamir Khan, the star of the two top-grossing Indian films in China, has a crazed following there.

Film distributor Akshaye Rathi said that the industry has also seen "great growth" in many European countries and in Canada, New Zealand and Singapore thanks to the South Asian community.

"Now it is just a matter of time before we focus on the wider populations in these countries," Rathi added.

And not forgetting 1.3 billion-strong India itself, where there is massive potential for growth.

According to the Ernst & Young analysis, industry revenues are estimated to swell from 174.5bn rupees ($2.4bn) in 2018 to 236.1bn rupees in 2021.

As the other nominees for best picture at the IIFA — spy thriller "Raazi", swashbuckling epic "Padmaavat", and middle-aged motherhood comedy-drama "Badhaai Ho" — underline, Bollywood has long ago moved on from the cliched all-singing, all-dancing affair.

The industry has also been attracting big, institutional capital and fresh talent, which have helped create greater variety and reaching out to wider, often younger, audiences.

There were fears for the industry when major streaming services arrived in India a few years ago, changing the way many Indians consume films.

But the likes of Netflix and domestic players like Hotstar have instead been a shot in its arm, providing a new medium for releasing films and more money for new productions.

Unlike regular cinematic releases, they are not subject to India's notoriously stuffy censors.

Revenues from the sale of digital rights ballooned nearly 60 percent in 2018, according to the EY-FICCI report, with Amazon Prime and Netflix among the major buyers.




A man walks past a hostel named 'Bollywood' in Mumbai.

# 'The Cars' lead singer Ric Ocasek dies at 75

REUTERS
LOS ANGELES

Ric Ocasek, the idiosyncratic lead singer and chief songwriter of the 1970s and 80s hook-heavy hitmakers The Cars, died on Sunday at his home in Manhattan. He was 75.

Ocasek was pronounced dead at his townhouse after someone called 911 about 4pm EDT (2000 GMT) to report that he was unresponsive, a New York Police Department spokesman said. The cause of death will be determined by the city's coroner.

His representatives could not be reached for comment on Sunday.

"So sad. Such a great writer, singer, player, producer," fellow classic rocker Peter Frampton said on Twitter of Ocasek. "My thoughts are with his family. Rest in peace."

Ocasek, born Richard Theodore Otcasek in Baltimore in 1944, met bass player and future band mate Benjamin Orr after moving to Cleveland for high school. The pair joined with guitarist Elliot Easton, keyboard player Greg Hawkes and drummer David Robinson to form the Cars in mid-1970s Boston. Ocasek was the main songwriter, sang lead vocals on many songs and played rhythm guitar. The band's self-titled debut album, featuring the singles "Just What I Needed," and "Good Times Roll," reached Number 18 on the Billboard album charts and put them on the leading edge of pop rock.

The Cars scored their first top-20 single, "Let's Go," in 1979 and launched a succession of hits throughout the 1980s such as "Shake It Up," always identifiable through Ocasek's distinctive vocals.

The band split up in 1988, and Orr died of pancreatic cancer at age 53 in 2000. The surviving members reunited for a final album, "Move Like This," in 2010.

The band was inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame in 2018. After the final dissolution of the Cars, Ocasek, who often spoke of his dislike for touring, produced dozens of albums, released solo material, wrote poetry and made visual art.