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Amir's \$3bn support lauded by Pakistan PM

During a telephone call, Imran Khan expressed gratitude to H H the Amir for his directives to support Pakistan's economy with \$3bn in deposits and investments, adding that this directive and H H Amir's recent visit reflect the deep relations and ties between both countries and peoples.

QNA DOHA

Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani yesterday received a telephone call from Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Imran Khan.

During the call, Imran Khan expressed gratitude to H H the Amir for his directives to support Pakistan's economy with \$3bn in deposits and investments, adding that this directive and H H the Amir's recent visit to

Pakistan reflect the deep relations and ties between both countries and peoples.

For his part, H H the Amir expressed thanks and appreciation for the warm hospitality accorded to him during his visit to Pakistan.

In a related development, Pakistani media reacted positively with the announcement that H H the Amir issued directives to support the Asian country's economy with \$3bn worth of deposits and direct investments. ➔P2

Deputy Amir meets Ambassador of Australia



Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani with Ambassador of Australia, Dr Axel Wabenhörst, who called on the Deputy Amir to greet him on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country, at Amiri Diwan, yesterday. H H the Deputy Amir granted the outgoing Ambassador the Decoration of Al Wajbah in recognition of his role in enhancing bilateral relations, wishing him success in future assignments. The Deputy Amir also met with Ambassadors of the People's Republic of China, Li Chen, and the Republic of Burkina Faso, Adama Compaore. ➔P2

Qatar urges UN Rights Council to end coercive measures by siege nations

QNA/GENEVA

The State of Qatar stressed the importance of the role of the Human Rights Council and of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in working to end the discriminatory unilateral coercive measures imposed on Qatar by a number of States in the region and to hold those responsible accountable.

This came in the speech of the State of Qatar delivered yesterday by Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Ali Khalafan Al Mansouri, under the second item of the general discussion on the updated statement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at its forty-first session.

He said that this month marks two years of discriminatory unilateral coercive measures caused by a blockade imposed on Qatar by a number of countries in the region. ➔P3

PM meets World Islamic Economic Forum Chairman



Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani met yesterday with the Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum, Tun Musa Hitam, and his accompanying delegation. They reviewed cooperation and means to boost them especially those related to Islamic economy. They also discussed topics of mutual interest.

HMC's services on par with world's best, JCI report says

THE PENINSULA DOHA

The Joint Commission International (JCI) said in its accreditation report that the health services of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) general hospitals are on par with the world's best hospitals.

HMC announced the accreditation of 13 of its facilities and services by the Joint Commission International (JCI), including the re-accreditation of three of its general hospitals - Al Khor Hospital, The Cuban Hospital, and Al Wakra Hospital, recently.

As part of the re-accreditation, a team of JCI surveyors evaluated a number of areas ranging from patient satisfaction,

to performance improvements and efficiency, and an official has revealed the survey report findings indicate HMC's general hospitals are on par with the world's best hospitals.

In 2016, HMC made history becoming the first healthcare organization in the world to have all its hospitals qualified under the JCI Academic Medical Center accreditation program.

Since this time HMC's general hospitals have undergone considerable growth, both in terms of the number of patients treated and the services offered.

Al Khor Hospital's Chief Executive Officer, Mohammed Al Jusaïman said amidst expanding patient needs, HMC's general hospitals have continued

to make quality of care and patient safety top priorities.

"In 2018 we cared for over 350,000 patients across our emergency department, various outpatient departments, and day care, radiology, and dialysis units. In spite of increased patient numbers, we've continued to implement key improvement initiatives that are making a real difference to the quality of care we provide," said Al Jusaïman, who is also Deputy Chief of HMC's General Hospitals Group.

Al Jusaïman said that one improvement initiative recently introduced led to the establishment of two new clinics which have reduced patient wait times and improved patient experience. ➔P3

QA wins four APEX Passenger Choice Awards

THE PENINSULA DOHA

Qatar Airways announced yesterday that it has won four out of six 2019 Airline Passenger Experience Association's (APEX) Passenger Choice Awards, an all-time record for a single airline in a year. Qatar Airways was named 'Best Overall Carrier in the Middle East', 'Best Cabin Service in the Middle East', 'Best Food & Beverage in the Middle East', and 'Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East', at a ceremony that took place in Istanbul, Turkey.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, Akbar Al Baker, said: "We are thrilled to have swept four out of the six APEX Passenger Choice awards in the Middle East category, and we extend our sincere thanks to our many loyal passengers who have voted for us. To have been recognised for excellence across so many key categories is a tremendous achievement for Qatar Airways, and is proof of the great heights to which

we have soared during the past year. This accomplishment sets a new benchmark for the airline going forward, and we renew our commitment to continuing to innovate to offer our passengers the very finest experience when they fly."

APEX Chief Executive Officer, Joe Leader, said: "With more than a million verified passenger votes counted for the 2019 Official Airline Ratings and Passenger Choice Awards, Qatar Airways received an overwhelmingly positive response by passengers around the globe. In addition to being a 2019 APEX Five Star Global Airline, Qatar Airways earned the 2019 Passenger Choice Award for the 'Best Airline in the Middle East'. That is an amazing accomplishment in one of the most competitive regions in the world. Qatar also achieved a record number of Passenger Choice Awards by also winning the 2019 Middle East Awards for 'Best Cabin Service', 'Best Food & Beverage', and 'Best Seat Comfort'. The innovation and level of care that

Qatar Airways has invested into constantly improving passenger experience has resonated strongly in the airline's success and is a positive leadership influence on our industry."

The APEX Passenger Choice Awards are based on passenger feedback gathered through APEX's partnership with TripIt and Concur, the world's highest-rated travel-organising app. Using a five-star scale, more than one million flights are rated by passengers across nearly 500 airlines from around the world from July 1, 2017 - June 31, 2018. Passengers rate their overall flight experience from one to five stars. On the same screen, passengers are also given the opportunity to provide anonymous ratings in five sub-categories: seat comfort, cabin service, food and beverage, entertainment, and Wi-Fi. The single-screen rating allows airline passengers to easily rate their flight in less than 15 seconds. The Passenger Choice Awards are independently certified by a professional external auditing company hired by APEX. ➔P2

Qatar Chamber reviews criteria to increase private schools fees

QNA DOHA

The Education Committee of Qatar Chamber reviewed a number of topics related to the private sector, including the capacity of private schools, the development of a reference framework for determining the criteria for increasing tuition fees, the absence of mechanisms to control the relationship between private schools and teachers, in addition to the high costs of licensing and its renewal.

This came at the fourth meeting of the Education Committee during the current year, which was chaired by First Vice-Chairman of Qatar Chamber and Chairman of the Committee, Mohamed

bin Ahmed bin Towar Al Kuwari. During the meeting, several other issues were discussed, including the issuance of the Private Schools Law and its executive regulations without consultation with representatives of the private sector, the high costs of licensing, the shortening of licenses for educational establishments and the lack of adequate school buildings.

He stressed the role played by government agencies in improving and facilitating the business environment in front of the private sector and business owners, especially in the educational sector, as one of the most important economic sectors. He pointed out that the presence of the

Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the meeting emphasises the Ministry's interest and seriousness in addressing all issues of private education, which opens a new page of cooperation between the Chamber represented by the education committee and the Ministry of Education. ➔P2



Included with today's edition is a special supplement

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR	03.16 AM		
SHOROOK	04.45 AM		
ZUHR	11.37 AM	MAGHRIB	06.30 PM
ASR	02.59 PM	ISHA	08.00 PM

WEATHER TODAY



35°C | **41°C**
Minimum | Maximum

Misty at first at North area's. Hot daytime with slight dust at some places and some clouds.

HIGH TIDE 22:24-00:00 LOW TIDE 06:32-16:25

Courtesy: Qatar Meteorology Department

Al Jazeera signs pact with IDMC

THE PENINSULA / DOHA

Al Jazeera Media Network signed yesterday a new partnership agreement with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) to raise the voices of the millions of people displaced within their countries' borders due to conflict, violence and disasters.

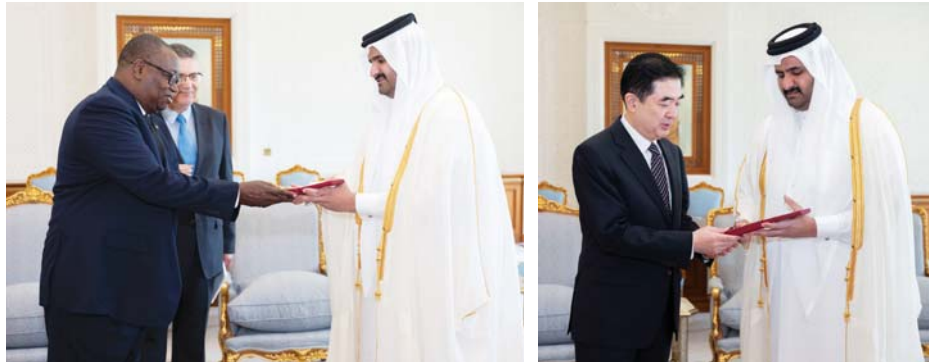
This partnership aims to increase journalists' awareness and coverage of issue of internal displacement in the media and to tell the stories of the women, men and children displaced or at risk of becoming displaced in the future and to shine light on the humanitarian and development challenges of this global phenomenon.

Qatar Chamber reviews criteria to increase private schools fees

FROM PAGE 1

The Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Omar Abdul Aziz Al Namaa, stressed the ministry's keenness to maintain continuous communication with the chamber, meet representatives of the private educational sector and members of the committee. Al Namaa also suggested a monthly meeting to be held between members of the committee and the ministry to come up with proposals and ideas that will contribute to the formulation of the ministry's general policies.

Deputy Amir honours outgoing envoys of Burkina Faso, China



Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani with the outgoing ambassadors of the Republic of Burkina Faso, Adama Compaore (left), and People's Republic of China, Li Chen, at his Amiri Diwan office yesterday. H H the Deputy Amir granted the outgoing ambassadors the Decoration of Al Wajbah in recognition of their role in enhancing bilateral relations, wishing them success in their future assignments and further progress and prosperity for relations between the two countries. For their part, the ambassadors expressed thanks and appreciation to H H the Deputy Amir and to the State's officials for the cooperation they received during their term of office.

Dreama opens accommodation for orphans

SANAULLAH ATAULLAH
THE PENINSULA

The Orphan Care Center, 'Dreama', has inaugurated a new accommodation comprising facilities of international standard ensuring complete comfort, privacy and security of orphans at Al Khisa area.

The new accommodation includes buildings for boys and girls, a villa for children, a villa for academic guidance and educational services, activity building, a recreation building, a restaurant and the administrative building. Moreover, some areas are assigned for practicing sports and other various games for children in an appropriate and pleasant environment for living.

The new facility is completely separated from the administrative buildings, with the purpose of availing further privacy, stability and securing a family-like atmosphere.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Amal bint Abdullah Al Manai, Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Foundation for Social Work; Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser, Executive Manager of the Orphan Care Center 'Dreama'; and the representatives of supporting companies and organisations.

"The inauguration of this accommodation comes within the context of our quest for the realisation of the Foundation's vision toward supporting the civil societies' organizations operating under the Foundation's umbrella," said Amal bint Abdullah Al Manai, CEO of Qatar Foundation for Social Works told the media persons on the sidelines of the ceremony.

She further confirmed the Foundation's concern for developing and supporting such affliating social firms to practice their role in serving the target segment of the



Amal bint Abdullah Al Manai, Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Foundation for Social Work, opens the new centre of Dreama. PIC: SALIM MATRAMKOT/THE PENINSULA

society. "This new accommodation will help achieving the moral, social, educational, and health care to Dreama Center community, in addition to securing their privacy and psychological stability," said Al Manai.

She said that the inauguration of this new building reflects our concern for applying the global standards

of human and child rights, on top of which comes the provision of the best services that oriented to realizing family cohesion in the State of Qatar".

Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Mesnad, Executive Director of the Orphan Care Center 'Dreama', said that Qatar, has gone during a relatively short period a long way ahead towards applying and

embodying all the international standards relevant to observing and protecting human rights. Ali Al Fadhala, Senior Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Insurance Group expressed his satisfaction for the company's keenness towards providing continuous support to the community efforts.

Qatar Airways wins four awards



Qatar Airways officials with Airline Passenger Experience Association's Passenger Choice Awards at a ceremony in Istanbul, Turkey.



H E Sheikha Alya bint Ahmed Al Thani (centre), Permanent Representative of Qatar to UN; ICSS INSIGHT CEO, Massimiliano Montanari, and Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, at the event.

UNOCT and ICSS sign pact

QNA
NEW YORK

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the International Centre on Sport Security (ICSS) through ICSS INSIGHT, signed an agreement yesterday, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

This new agreement will foster cooperation around matters related to preventing and countering terrorism, particularly with regard to the protection of vulnerable targets in the context of major sporting events.

The agreement aims at promoting the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and enhancing public-private partnerships in preparation, and during, major sporting events and other international sporting competitions.

As a result, UNOCT and ICSS, which is a global, non-for-profit organization based in Doha, will convene international and regional events, develop

tools, guidelines and capacity-building programmes to enhance the security of major sporting events and promote sports and its values to prevent terrorism and violent extremism. "We are pleased to launch a new initiative that will contribute to better support Member States in addressing both areas and we are grateful to have ICSS as an important partner of this endeavour," Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism said at the signing.

H E Sheikha Alya bint Ahmed Al Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations was present at the signing ceremony and welcomed this important partnership. "The State of Qatar assigns high priority to sports as a means for peace and development," she said.

ICSS INSIGHT CEO, Massimiliano Montanari, said: "Protecting major sporting events means protecting all the socio-economic opportunities these events can generate."

Amir's \$3bn support lauded by Pakistan PM

FROM PAGE 1

News media outlets in Pakistan reported that the move will support the growing bilateral ties, following the historic visit carried out by H H the Amir. Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Information and Broadcasting, Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, thanked the Amir and the cabinet for the support, Radio Pakistan reported. She said that this amount will help Pakistan overcome its economic challenges, adding that Prime Minister Imran Khan's announcement to grant visa on arrival for Qatari citizens will

develop tourism sector in Pakistan. She also hailed Qatar's lifting of the ban on Pakistani rice, saying it was good news for rice exporters and the economy of the country.

Express Tribune said that the Qatari announcement came three days before Pakistan was scheduled to make about \$700m in repayments to its international creditors, which was going to hit its already low reserves. The paper noted that the visit of H H the Amir to Pakistan concluded with no mention of the \$3bn aid package in the official handout. The paper also highlighted that Qatar and Pakistan had also signed

three memoranda of understanding (MoU). They touched a wide range of fields that included trade, investment, and tourism.

Dunya News TV channel meanwhile quoted Awan as saying that the investments will create new business opportunities in Pakistan, and will also strengthen the investment initiative of the government. She added that the announcement was proof of international leaders confidence in the current government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan. She also said this was a first step to further boost bilateral ties between Qatar and Pakistan.

Ashghal opens new interchange on Al Khor Road

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

The Public Works Authority (Ashghal) opened yesterday a new interchange on Al Khor Road, as part of Al Khor Expressway upgrade Project in record time and four months before the contractual date. The new interchange

is located at exit No. 32, three kilometres to the north of the recently opened interchange at the intersection of Al Khor Road with Al Majd Road.

The interchange includes a bridge with two lanes in each direction, primarily serves road users of Al Khor Road, Al Shamal and Al Majd Roads coming from Doha and Al Khor and

allowing direct connectivity to several public and sports facilities since it delivers direct access to Lusail Sports Complex, Lusail International Circuit, Lusail Shooting Club and Lusail Reserves. Ashghal has recently fully opened the 33-kilometre-long main carriageway of Al Khor Road last April, one year ahead of schedule.

OFFICIAL NEWS

Amir sends congratulations to Mozambique President

Doha: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Mozambique, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, on the anniversary of his country's Independence Day. The Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdulah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, also sent a cable of congratulations to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique, Carlos Agostinho do Rosario. QNA

Amir congratulates President of Slovenia

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Borut Pahor, on the occasion of his country's Statehood Day. The Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdulah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, also sent a cable of congratulations to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Marjan Sarec. QNA

Amir greets President of Croatia

DOHA: Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Amir H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Thani sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to the President of the Republic of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, on the occasion of her country's Statehood Day. The Prime Minister and Interior Minister, H E Sheikh Abdulah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, also sent a cable of congratulations to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Andrej Plenkovic. QNA

Qatar condemns attack in northern Iraq

Doha: The State of Qatar expressed strong condemnation and denunciation of the attack on a village in the northern Iraq province of Kirkuk, which resulted in deaths. In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated the State of Qatar's firm stance rejecting violence and terrorism regardless of the motives and causes. The statement expressed the State of Qatar's condolences to the families of victims as well as to the government and people of Iraq. QNA

IJSO team lauds Qatar's readiness to host Olympiad

QNA
DOHA

The Minister of Education and Higher Education, H E Dr. Mohammed Abdul Wahed Ali Al Hammadi, met yesterday with the President of the International Junior Science Olympiad (IJSO), Prof. Paresh Joshi, and his accompanying delegation, currently visiting the country. The meeting reviewed the Ministry's preparations to host the 16th International Junior Science Olympiad, which will be held in the State of Qatar in December.

In statements following the meeting, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Fawzia Abdulaziz Al Khater said that the final report issued by the IJSO team, headed by Prof. Paresh Joshi, was reassuring and emphasised the readiness and

good preparations for Qatar's hosting of this important scientific event, making the tournament, which is the first in the Arab world, distinguished by all standards in many ways, including the development of systems of testing, correction, voting, and other logistical matters. Prof. Paresh Joshi said that the organisation's delegation held many meetings with the organising committee of the IJSO Qatar 2019, and found remarkable progress in the planning and implementation aspects of the events that have been well planned, stressing that the 16th edition in Qatar will be a well planned and excellent event.

Assistant Undersecretary for Higher Education Affairs Dr. Khalid Al Ali, who is chairman of the scientific committee of the International Junior Science



The Minister of Education and Higher Education, H E Dr. Mohammed Abdul Wahed Ali Al Hammadi, with the President of the International Junior Science Olympiad, Prof. Paresh Joshi.

Olympiad, said that many meetings were held between the scientific and organising committees of Qatar Olympiad and representatives of the

organisation to discuss the measures and preparations, in addition to field visits, which were conducted to the facilities where the contests will take

place. Qatar will host the 16th International Junior Science Olympiad from December 3 to 12 as the first Arab country to host the event.

Qatar Media Corporation CEO meets Ethiopian official



The Chief Executive Officer of Qatar Media Corporation, H E Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al Thani, met with the Director-General of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority Dr. Getachew Dinku, currently visiting the country. The meeting reviewed various areas of cooperation in the media field between the two sides and ways of promoting them. The meeting was attended by Ambassador of Ethiopia to Qatar, Samia Zekaria.

Al Muraikhi meets ambassadors



Amir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani received yesterday a written message from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, pertaining to bilateral relations and the means to enhance them. The message was received by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, H E Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, during a meeting with the Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Askar Shokymbayev. The Minister also met with Ambassador of Tunisia to Qatar Salah Al Salmi, on the occasion of the end of his tenure in the country, Ambassador of the French Republic, Frank Geely, and Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan, Sohibzoda Khisrav Sohib.

Qatar asks UN Rights Council to end coercive measures by siege nations

FROM PAGE 1

The Permanent Representative of Qatar to the UN Office in Geneva, Ali Khalaf Al Mansouri, added that the human rights violations of families, students and citizens continue, affecting their right to education, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, and ownership among other rights.

The ambassador reiterated that Qatar condemned the incitement of violence against people based on religion, stressing the responsibility of the Council and all governments in standing strong against the hate speech against immigrants, foreigners and minorities, especially Muslims. He also regretted that the High Commissioner did not address the violations and

crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. He called on the international community to shoulder its responsibility in protecting the Palestinian people and to restore their legitimate rights. Al Mansouri pointed out that the military escalation by the Syrian regime's forces and their supporters in Idlib in targeting of civilian facilities, is evidence that the Syrian regime believes only in the military option. Al Mansouri stressed that the perpetrators of those violations must be held to account. He also said that Qatar condemned the attacks on civilians in Libya, especially the recent military attacks on the city of Tripoli, warning of the danger of sliding into chaos.

HMC's services on par with world's best: JCI report

FROM PAGE 1

The establishment of a post-discharge clinic to provide follow-up care for discharged patients and a pre-operative clinic to assess patients before surgery have both improved patient satisfaction and reduced wait times from up to eight weeks for the pre-operative clinic and up to ten weeks for the post-discharge clinic to just one week.

"We are delighted to have once again achieved JCI accreditation. Since our last surveyor visit in 2016, we have expanded the quality and range of services we deliver to our patients. We've opened a new Admissions and Discharge Lounge to improve our patient's care experience and we speed up the admission and discharge process," said Dr Sabah Al Kadhi, Al Wakra Hospital's Medical Director.

The Cuban Hospital was also acknowledged for its expansion of services which include a laser

eye surgery clinic, dental specialty services, bariatric and cosmetic services, and a 24-hour translation service.

Officially opened in January 2012 as a joint project between the governments of Qatar and Cuba, The Cuban Hospital provides medical and surgical services across more than 25 specialties to patients in Dukhan, Zekreet, Shahaniya, Umm Bab, and the surrounding areas. It also supports the public health system as a whole, caring for patients from Doha.

Since its last JCI accreditation visit in 2016, the hospital has seen a sharp rise in the number of patients being seen, recording over 85,727 outpatient visits and 6,756 inpatient visits in 2018, compared to 63,358 outpatient visits and 4,700 inpatient visits in 2016. The hospital has also experienced a 35 percent growth in the number of surgical procedures it performed since 2016. Dr Angel Mario Felipe Garmendia, The Cuban Hospital's

Medical Director, said while the expansion of new services have been important and are noteworthy, the introduction of patient safety and prevention programs were a major focus of the JCI inspector's recent visit.

"Qatar Early Warning System, a scoring system that helps clinical staff recognize deteriorating patients before they become very sick. This program has been instrumental in diagnosing and treating patients who need intervention to prevent their condition from worsening.

The program has had a real impact on patient care by acting as a safety net, identifying clinical deterioration in a patient's condition and prompting specific action. Our VTE (venous thromboembolism) prevention program has also been instrumental in improving patient care and health outcomes by preventing potentially life-threatening blood clots," said Dr Garmendia.



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-  Music and the arts will be celebrated in our school, giving every child the opportunity to embrace their creativity and develop their confidence.
-  Part of International Schools Partnership, a global family of 40 schools, which includes Park House English School, one of Doha's oldest and most respected schools.

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*Opening August 2019 subject to final MOEHE approval

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Transport Minister meets ACAO chief



Minister of Transport and Communications H E Jassim bin Saif Al Sulaiti met yesterday with the Director General of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization, Eng. Abdennabi Manar. The meeting reviewed Qatar-ACAO relations in the field of civil aviation and means of further enhancing them. Qatar's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Chairman, H E Abdullah bin Nasser Turki Al Subaey, also attended the meeting.

Acclaimed Filipino singers' concert tomorrow

RAYNALD C RIVERA
THE PENINSULA

The Philippines' concert King Martin Nievera and Asia's night-tingle Lani Misalucha, two internationally acclaimed Filipino singers, are both keen to perform in Qatar at their show at Aspire Ladies Sports Hall tomorrow. Qatar is the first stop of the duo's three-nation concert tour in the region dubbed "World Alliance Serendubbed" the OFWs Middle East Tour 2019.

"We will be serenading the people who are the least serened, the hardworking overseas Filipino workers who are all over the world and make sure they feel important because they truly are the heroes of our country. I think after this concert we will be less proud as singers but more proud as Filipinos because we will all be united that night," Nievera said at a press meet yesterday at Radisson Blu Hotel Doha.

With a career spanning over

three decades, Nievera has released dozens of best-selling albums, starred in movies, featured in television shows and garnered awards. "To the 250,000+ strong Filipinos here in Qatar, we would love to see you all and thank you so much for what you do here in Qatar and for what you do, not only for your families back home but also all of us in the Philippines. I really do hope and pray that all of you here are doing well, healthy and strong," said Misalucha on her message to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Qatar.

Known for her extraordinary ability to sing across genres such as pop, rock, jazz, soul, RnB and operatic arias, Misalucha is the first Asian to headline a main showroom in Las Vegas and has worked with many local and international artists including Nievera.

The show is organised by Star Media Production, Doha City Event Management and the Global Police Community

Relations (PCR) - programme of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in which Nievera and Misalucha have been appointed ambassadors.

General Rhodel Sermonia, Global PCR Director, said the programme launched nearly a year ago aims to be inclusive forging stronger relations with Filipinos abroad and partnerships with other agencies to promote Philippine tourism and investment.

"We want to tell our kababayans that PNP is not just protecting and serving the Filipino people in the Philippines but worldwide. We want them to know we are protecting their loved ones in the Philippines because we want them to work with peace of mind while away from their loved ones," stressed Sermonia. Sermonia said Nievera and Misalucha were chosen as ambassadors "because they are world class performers who can reach out to more Filipinos in any part of the world."



FROM LEFT: General Rhodel Sermonia, Director of Global Police Community Relations; Filipino singers Lani Misalucha and Martin Nievera; and Victor Magnines, CEO of DC Events Management Company, during a press conference held at the Radisson Blue Hotel Doha yesterday. PIC: BAHAR AMIN / THE PENINSULA

QF-funded technology aims to enhance cybersecurity globally

FAZEENA SALEEM
THE PENINSULA

A homegrown technology funded by Qatar Foundation (QF) has given Qatar the potential to play a leading role in the global fight against cybercrime.

Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) — part of Qatar Foundation Research, Development, and Innovation (QF RDI) — has supported the Qatari company Application Design for Global Solutions (ADGS), co-founded by Hassan Al Ansari, Christophe Billiotet, and a team of engineers directed by an Argentinian expert, Nahuel Gonzalez, to develop STROKK, a software that adds an extra layer of cybersecurity. The software uses behavioural biometrics to combat cyber threats.

ADGS has also been named as the first beneficiary of QF RDI's 'Innovation Coupon', a fund designed to benefit companies that have the capacity and technical knowledge to develop their product or service, but require more support to resolve a specific technical or business challenge. Based on behavioural biometrics, such as human-centric technology that analyses how people type on a computer keyboard, rather than just what they type, the innovation aims to combat data breaches that pose a threat to users of digital tools such as smartphones, tablets, and computers across the globe.

The technology has already been deployed within Qatar in sectors where the risks, and repercussions, of cyber threats are considered to be high, such as the financial sector. STROKK has been adopted by international banks, and perhaps even more importantly, is being tested by some military and defence intelligence services in Europe and South America for potential use.

It was also recently showcased in Kuwait at the third edition of the MENA Dojo, a unique regional accelerator programme — organised jointly by QSTP and global venture capital firm 500 Startups. Kuwait was the first country to buy copies of STROKK software from ADGS.

Although the idea for the software came to Al Ansari, Billiotet, and Gonzalez four years ago, they needed financial support to develop it into a product that would achieve their goal of



Hassan Al Ansari



Christophe Billiotet

Based on behavioural biometrics, such as human-centric technology that analyses how people type on a computer keyboard, rather than just what they type, the innovation aims to combat data breaches that pose a threat to users of digital tools such as smartphones, tablets, and computers across the globe.

enhancing global data security.

Having heard about QSTP and its role in supporting tech entrepreneurs to transform their ideas into reality, Billiotet and Al Ansari approached the QF member with a detailed proposal that reflected their product's purpose.

"From encouraging our idea, to supporting us to the point where we could market our software both in Qatar and abroad, QSTP's and QF's role in the development of the product was crucial," Billiotet said. "It's only because of the funding we have received through Qatar Foundation that we were able to develop it in a way that allows it to be launched globally, to countries such as Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq and Argentina."

"You can have the best idea in the world, but without time, money and resources, it will remain an idea. Thanks to QF, our algorithms have placed Qatar ahead of countries such as Germany and the US, in improving behavioural biometrics for cyber-security."

According to Al Ansari, ADGS is already a serious actor in Qatar's high-tech export sector. "With almost 10 percent of Qatar's high-tech exports, ADGS is already contributing to achieving the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030," said Al Ansari.

He said QF was elevating Qatar's capacity and impact in the field of technology development,

just as it has done in education and health.

In a global context, STROKK's development is quite timely: a 2018 study by IBM revealed that, worldwide, the average cost of a data breach is over \$3m, with the US and the Middle East being the most affected areas. An estimate of 4 billion passwords are stolen every year, and 83% of the data breaches come from hacked passwords.

"The concerns for privacy and security are perennial issues that companies involved in producing smart devices have to deal with. At the moment, you have solutions based on biometrics, such as fingerprint or facial recognition. When these biometrics are being compromised, so is the identity of the user, for biometrics cannot be replaced. And, the consequences can be devastating," said Billiotet. "Behavioural biometrics address the limitations of biometrics. Just as your signature is unique to you, so is the way you type on a keyboard. STROKK is a software that learns the way you type and clearly recognises you from anyone else."

It adds a security layer to any system. In any language. It even makes stolen passwords useless to hackers by knowing how you type. The advantage is that behaviour, unlike biometrics, can be consciously changed by the user to eliminate any prospective risks," he added.

QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY
INVITATION TO TENDER

QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER COLLECTION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-354888	General Maintenance Works at Qafco Residential Area and Doha Offices	500/- (Non-refundable)	1,000,000/- (One Million QAR Only)	26.06.19 27.06.19 30.06.19 01.07.19 02.07.19 03.07.19 04.07.19	05.08.19

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures are specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Tender Documents may be collected between 0930 – 1130 hours and 1230 – 1400 hours on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (non-refundable), from the QAFCO Housing Section, relocated to Training Center Building (near Al Barunah Club) at Messiaed Residential Area, Tel: 44760093 / 44770330.
- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company's following Account at any QNB branch:
 - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
 - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
 - IBAN : **QAS1QNBA000000000013025828058**
 - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company's name and Tender number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and produces it during tender collection as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender number and bidder's name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also bring a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from his company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the local point for this tender, while collecting the Tender Document.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Housing Section, between 0930 – 1130 hours and 1230 – 1400 hours, of any working day of the Company, onbefore the "Tender Closing Date".

AJ+ Español wins World Digital Media Award

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

Verificado 2018, the collaborative initiative co-founded by AJ+ Español to verify content during the 2018 Mexican elections, won the 2019 World Digital Media Award in the category of Best Innovation to Engage Young Audiences. "Verificado is a living example of how far AJ+ can go in life and innovation: this is our first-ever journalistic initiative of this size and scope. It has become a multi-awarded project and a reference within the journalism community from Latin America to India. Congratulations to all the AJ+ Español and Verificado teams," said Diana Khatib, Managing Director of AJ+ Channels.

During its 119 days of operation and with its 90 partner organisations, Verificado 2018 successfully engaged young people between 18 and 34 years old, who represented 65% of the initiative's fans and 52% of registered interactions on Facebook. These were mainly first time or one-time voters. Overall, the initiative's Twitter and Facebook accounts racked up more than 200,000 followers in each platform.

"We are thrilled with the fact that the initiative, born in Doha, keeps being recognised by the industry for its impact within young audiences and its collaborative nature. Without the room for experimentation that we have at AJ+, we couldn't have done this," said Diana Larrea, Senior Strategist at AJ+ and creator and co-founder of Verificado 2018.

The World Digital Media Awards Ceremony took place on June 2, during WAN-IFRA's 71st World News Media Conference, in Glasgow, Scotland. After winning the LATAM Digital Award, Verificado 2018



AJ+ officials with the award.

became a global finalist at the World Digital Media Awards, competing against the winners of the same category in other Digital Awards' regional editions, namely Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America and South Asia. Verificado 2018 beat regional winners from the United States, India and South Africa.

This is the third award won by Verificado 2018. In addition to the World Digital Media Award, the initiative has been honoured with a LATAM Digital Award and an Online Journalism Award, from the Online News Association (ONA). It was also a finalist at the Premio GAB, of the Gabriel García Márquez Foundation, one of the most prestigious awards in the Spanish-speaking world.

Ministry of Education to start receiving scholarship applications

QNA/DOHA

The Scholarship Department of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has announced that it will start receiving application for scholarships for academic year 2019-20 on June 30 at <https://scholarship.edu.qa> for bachelor's degree and technical diplomas in general and sub-specialities that serve development orientations of the state. The submission of the application for scholarships for academic year 2019-20 will begin on June 30 at <https://scholarship.edu.qa> for bachelor's degree and technical diplomas in general and sub-specialities.

The department has allocated Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday each week to discuss with the public all aspects of the scholarship and to answer their questions and queries, from 8am to 1pm. Director of Admissions and Registration at the Department of Scholarships Saleh Al Mufbah said that this year's specialisations include medicine, education, agriculture, livestock, fisheries, policy, planning, statistics, veterinary medicine, science, laboratories, standardisation, law, languages, translation, engineering, politics, international relations and computer and information sciences.

CMU students meet Rwanda President, discuss education

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Students from three of Carnegie Mellon University's global campuses, including CMU in Qatar, met with the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, to discuss their passion for education and technology.

The students were participating in Project Rwanda, a community service initiative that brings together CMU students from Qatar, US and Rwanda. Andrew Edward, a junior in the Information Systems Program at the Qatar campus, sent a tweet to President Kagame to tell him about the team's enthusiasm for education in Rwanda. To the team's surprise, the president reached out and invited the group to speak with him.

The students were participating in Project Rwanda, a community service initiative that brings together CMU students from Qatar, US and Rwanda.

"Meeting with President Kagame was an incredible moment for Project Rwanda," said Edward. "When we sent the tweet, we didn't expect this great response."

"We really felt he wanted to listen to our ideas and experiences and help in making these ideas impactful for education in Rwanda." Project Rwanda aims to enhance the educational experience of Rwandan youth through technology. Each year, a group of Carnegie Mellon students from

Qatar and the main campus in Pittsburgh team up with students from the African campus. Together, they work with Rwandan students and teachers to explore ways to teach and learn with technology.

Carnegie Mellon University has a distinct approach to education, emphasising collaboration, technology and bringing together different disciplines to innovate and solve problems.

Carnegie Mellon Qatar opened its doors in 2004, and offers undergraduate programs in biological sciences, business administration, computational biology, computer science and information systems. CMU-Q students are globally-minded, with more than half travelling for study, service or personal development during their undergraduate years.



Carnegie Mellon University students pose for a group photo with the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame.

QIC supports Dreama in building new orphanage

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

As part of its commitment towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Senior Deputy Group President & CEO of QIC Group, Ali S Al Fadala inaugurated the newly established orphan accommodation for Dreama.

Last year, QIC Group collaborated with Dreama to provide sponsorship for quality housing refurbishment for orphans.

QIC Group has been engaging in many CSR collaborations that make significant developments in the fields of human and social development. Evolving with the trends that underpin the changing CSR landscape in Qatar, QIC Group has been involved in various activities that contribute to the advancement of the society, including cultural, social and human values that create scalable impact.

Today, CSR is considered an



Amal bint Abdullah Al Manal (left), CEO of Qatar Foundation for Social Work, honouring Senior Deputy Group President & CEO of QIC Group, Ali S Al Fadala, during the inauguration ceremony.

integral pillar for achieving sustainable development, not only in business, but also in the society it operates in. In fact, QIC Group firmly believes that engaging with the society through various CSR

initiatives is a two-way process. First is when the organisation benefits from a business perspective and second, when the company gives back to the community in a variety of ways, developing strong

relationships and building trust.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Ali S Al Fadala said: "We take pride in being a part of this coveted ceremony. It highlights QIC Group's long-standing commitment, values and vision as a trusted and ethical partner for the community. In fact, it is a clear testament to our significant role in the development of Qatar's social fabric and in achieving our goals towards sustainability."

He said that QIC ensured that the core values of the business and operating principles align with its objectives for CSR. "In effect, being socially conscious has allowed us to respond, engage and solve common concerns of society along with cooperation of our customers, business partners and affiliates. With this strategic collaboration with Dreama, we pledge to continue to create resilient communities which inherently would create a stable society and a sustainable Nation for our future generation."

Disney adds magic to Summer in Qatar with Toy Story 4 premiere

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

A Disney Activation at Doha Festival City is set to enhance the Toy Story experience for fans. The highly anticipated Toy Story 4 is now showing in cinemas across the country, and from June 28 to July 20.

Doha Festival City will be home to a Disney activation with exciting games and photos with movie characters.

Children aged 4 and up can enjoy a Toy Story 4 themed activity area with interactive games designed by Disney.

In addition to a 3-D photo with the full cast of characters, children can play games on interactive digital screens, do a number of art & craft activities and test their Toy Story knowledge with quizzes. The activity timings are between

3 to 9pm on weekdays and between 4 to 10pm on weekends.

The fourth and final instalment of the animated classic comes 9 years after the last movie in the franchise, and features Toy Story veterans Tom Hanks and Tim Allen as Woody and Buzz Lightyear, as well as Keanu Reeves, Tony Hale, Christina Hendricks and Timothy Dalton.

Summer in Qatar is a nationwide program that celebrates the country's family entertainment, retail, travel and hospitality offerings.

Qatar National Tourism Council (QNTC) has announced a number of entertainment shows, meet & greets with popular characters and new attractions that will be open to the public from June 4 till August 16.

VCUarts Qatar Interior Design professors get CIDA merit award

THE PENINSULA/DOHA

Three professors from the Interior Design programme at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) in Education City have received a merit award from the US Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) for their entry, "Meta Studio."

Professors Johan Granberg, Mohammad Suleiman and Haihem El Hammali were given the award at a ceremony at the Interior Design Educators Council conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. This is the second CIDA award that the department has won, with the previous project titled: "Exploring Space through the Lens—Production Design."

The award recognises and celebrates outstanding practices that

advance the cause of excellence in interior design education. CIDA is an independent, non-profit, accrediting organisation responsible for setting standards and evaluating degree-granting interior design programmes. There are 179 CIDA-accredited programmes in the US, Canada, Qatar, and the UAE.

The basis for Meta Studio was: "How do we turn good students into good designers?" With that in mind, the professors decided that Meta Studio would combine three Interior Design classes (Design Studio, Materials, and Graphics) into one interconnected unit with a number of aims. The aims included breaking educational silos, encouraging students to synthesise increased complexity; balancing their schedules; utilising, coordinating and

activating all the "good forces," of the university; and creating a cohesive and holistic learning environment based on design practice. "We plotted out all the projects that we were going to cover and we correlated them with the themes of the week that we were going to have during the entire semester, so in a sense it was more project driven," said Assistant Professor Suleiman.

The schedule and matrix were designed to provide a flexible and collaborative structure. The schedule was kept "live" and evolved throughout the semester. This provided opportunities for real-time calibration, flexibility, and adaptability to address learning deficiencies. It also helped manage a coordinated and synchronised sequencing of deadlines, breathing space for students.



Texas A&M at Qatar students build car for race

Texas A&M University at Qatar mechanical engineering students Ahmad Jamal Al Kuwari, Alaa Abdalla and Ali Al Ashar built and raced a car at the SAE Supermileage event, in Michigan earlier this month. The SAE Supermileage programme is an engineering design competition for students that provides an opportunity to enhance their engineering design and project management skills by applying what they've learned in the classroom. The design goal was to develop and construct a single-person, fuel-efficient vehicle. The vehicle was fully inspected in a series of tests to ensure it complied with competition rules and passed.

NEW GRADUATE PROGRAM: MASTER OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN HEALTH MANAGEMENT



This two-year program focuses on preparing students for professional roles in the design and management of information systems and services to support Qatar's healthcare sector. It develops students' technical and managerial skills to organize and implement information-based health care systems. Graduates will acquire the knowledge of technological infrastructure needed to collect, process, share medical data and health records, and deploy healthcare solutions including quality of services, privacy, and security aspects, which are important to the evolution of the healthcare industry in Qatar and across the world.

To apply: admissions.hbku.edu.qa

cse.hbku.edu.qa

جامعة حمد بن خليفة
HAMAD BIN ABDULLAH UNIVERSITY
كلية العلوم والهندسة
College of Science & Engineering

Iran vows to ditch more nuclear curbs

AFP
TEHRAN

Iran said yesterday it will further free itself from the 2015 nuclear deal in defiance of new American sanctions as US President Donald Trump warned the Islamic republic of "overwhelming" retaliation for any attacks.

Tensions between Iran and the US have spiralled since last year when Trump withdrew the United States from the deal under which Tehran was to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

The two arch-rivals have been locked in an escalating war of words since Iran shot down a US surveillance drone in what it said was its own airspace, a claim the US vehemently denies.

On Monday, Washington stepped up pressure by blacklisting Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and top

Iran foreign minister accuses Bolton of plotting for war

AGENCIES/TEHRAN

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif accused US National Security Adviser John Bolton of plotting for war against Iran in a tweet yesterday.

"Wanna know why those with proven record of detesting diplomacy are suddenly interested in talks? Just read @AmbJohnBolton's 2017 recipe for destroying the JCPOA," Zarif wrote, adding a link to a 2017 article written by Bolton in the

National Review. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, is the landmark 2015 nuclear deal Iran signed with world powers.

"Iran never left the negotiation table...B. Team dragged the US out, while plotting for war," Zarif added. Zarif has in the past said that a "B-team" including Bolton, an ardent Iran hawk, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, could goad Trump into a conflict with Tehran. Meanwhile, Iran warned that new US sanctions targeting its

supreme leader and other top officials meant "closing the doors of diplomacy" between Tehran and Washington amid heightened tensions, even as President Hassan Rouhani derided the White House as being "afflicted by mental retardation."

"The useless sanctioning of Islamic Revolution Supreme Leader (Khamenei) and the commander of Iranian diplomacy means closing the doors of diplomacy by the US' desperate administration," Foreign Ministry spokesman tweeted.

A top security official said Iran would "resolutely" abandon more commitments under the nuclear deal on July 7.

military chiefs, saying it would also sanction Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif later in the week. Tehran was defiant

yesterday, saying the new US sanctions against Iran showed Washington was "lying" about an offer of talks.

Gazans on strike to protest US conference on Mideast peace

AP
GAZA CITY

Palestinians in Gaza are on general strike, with stores and public institutions shuttering in protest of the Trump administration's conference in Bahrain, which focuses on the economic portion of the White House's plan for Mideast peace.

Gaza's Hamas rulers have called for mass protests across the coastal enclave today, the second day of the gathering. A black-and-white banner declaring a strike replaced the usually illuminated billboard over Gaza City's central Omar Al Mukhtar street.

Residents of the

impoverished territory, where unemployment exceeds 50%, voiced opposition to the \$50bn Palestinian investment and infrastructure proposal, which does not deal with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank or blockade of Gaza. Physician Said Jadba says: "We don't need money. We are hungry for bread. We are hungry for dignity."

Palestinians burned effigies of President Trump and marched a donkey pasted over with images of Gulf royals in the West Bank on Tuesday, as the US prepares to open its conference in Bahrain, which focuses on the economic portion of the White House's long-awaited plan for Mideast peace.

At this week's conference, the Trump administration hopes to draw pledges from business leaders and wealthy Gulf states to fund its economic plan, which calls for \$50m of investment and infrastructure projects in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring Arab countries with large populations of Palestinian refugees.

"Palestine is not for sale!" protesters chanted as they filled the streets of major West Bank cities. "From Bahrain to Saudi Arabia we are not tempted by your millions!"

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Jordan and various Gulf states have sent finance officials to the workshop.



United Nations special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard (left), who issued a report of the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, greets Khashoggi's fiancée and Turkish writer Hatice Cengiz at the UN Human Rights Council headquarters in Geneva, yesterday.

Fiancee of slain Saudi journalist Khashoggi urges UN action

AP
GENEVA

The fiancée of slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi took her campaign for justice in his killing to the United Nations' top human rights body yesterday and urged the UN to take "the next step" following a key investigator's finding that Saudi Arabia bears responsibility.

Hatice Cengiz, a Turkish citizen, told a Human Rights Council event in Geneva about her grief over Khashoggi's October 2 slaying at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul when he went there to pick up a document for their marriage.

Cengiz said the possibility her fiancée might not really be

dead haunts her because his body hasn't been found, compounding her loss with "an unbelievably different kind of trauma."

She appeared at a 90-minute council "side event" organised by Canada and hosted by advocacy group No Peace Without Justice. Cengiz provided one of several testimonials on the theme "Silencing Dissent."

Most of the speakers criticized alleged rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Diplomats from Western nations and regional countries like Turkey and Qatar were in the audience.

In her testimony on Khashoggi's killing, Cengiz cited many of independent UN expert

Agnes Callamard's findings, which were released last week in a 101-page report.

Callamard, a fellow "Silencing Dissent" panelist, laid out an excruciatingly detailed account of *The Washington Post* columnist's alleged final moments at the consulate. She said more investigation was warranted of Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman's possible role in Khashoggi's killing.

Speaking through a translator, Cengiz said the report needed to be acted upon and noted the crown prince may one day be Saudi Arabia's head of state. "The report points to the fact that important Saudi officials, big officials, may have been involved," she said.

Ethiopia pays tribute to slain military chief

REUTERS
ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopia held a memorial yesterday for the army chief of staff slain with four other senior officials in weekend attacks that posed the biggest threat yet to the prime minister's reforms.

Abiy Ahmed, who survived a grenade attack at a rally in his honour last year, sat in the front row at the memorial and wiped tears from his eyes with a white handkerchief. Abiy took power 15 months ago and has won widespread international praise for kickstarting political and economic reforms. But his shake-up of the military and intelligence services has earned him powerful enemies at home. His government is also struggling to contain discontent from Ethiopia's myriad ethnic groups fighting the federal

government and each other for greater influence and resources.

The foiled plot to seize control of the northern Amhara region and the assassinations in the national capital Addis Ababa underscored the threat of spiralling violence in Africa's second-most populous nation.

In addition to the killing of the chief of staff in the capital, Amhara state president Ambachew Mekonnen and an adviser were killed in the region's main city Bahir Dar.

The attacks were led by Amhara's head of state security General Assemen Tsigie, who had been openly recruiting fighters for ethnic militias in a state that has become a flashpoint for violence. Assemen, the alleged coup plotter, was shot on Monday near Bahir Dar, according to the prime minister's office.

Egypt detains prominent oppn leader

REUTERS/CAIRO

Egypt detained a leading opposition figure and allies yesterday on charges of plotting to bring down the government, but opposition groups said the arrests aimed to stymie their preparations for parliamentary elections next year.

Ziad Elailamy, a prominent member of the Social Democratic Party and the Civil Democratic Movement, was held along with at least three others, the interior ministry said in a statement.

Elailamy, who was also a leading member of the 2011 protests that ousted long-time ruler Hosni Mubarak, was arrested minutes after leaving a friend's house in Cairo's Maadi district around 2.20 am, eyewitnesses said.

STATE OF QATAR
Aspire Zone
ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING

SN	Tender No.	Subject	Tender Bond	Tender Fees	Closing Date	Submission Type	Place of Collection & Submission
1.	SP/C/1637/19	DESIGN AND BUILD OF THE MAG AND BAG GATE FOR AL KHOR STADIUM AT AL KHOR	QR 300,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee
2.	SP/C/619A/19	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR FFA 2022 REQUIREMENT MODIFICATIONS IN: KHALIFA STADIUM - PACKAGE 1A (BUILDING AND FIT OUT FOR VIP ENTRY LOUNGE), PACKAGE 1B (FIT OUT FOR VIP LOUNGE) & PACKAGE 7 (LOOSE FURNITURE)	QR 150,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee
3.	SP/C/619B/19	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR FFA 2022 REQUIREMENT MODIFICATIONS IN: KHALIFA STADIUM - PACKAGE 3 (EXTERNAL WORKS, FINISHES AND LANDSCAPE FOR EAST SIDE & EXTERNAL SIGNAGE)	QR 300,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee
4.	SP/C/619C/19	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR FFA 2022 REQUIREMENT MODIFICATIONS IN: KHALIFA STADIUM - PACKAGE 3A (REPLACEMENT OF SPECTATOR SEATS/ ACCESSIBLE SPECTATOR PROVISIONS/ INTRUSION FENCE/ NEW CONNECTING STAIRS FOR HOSPITALITY), PACKAGE 3B (UPGRADE TO BOWL WITH TEMPORARY OVERLAY WORKS FOR MEDIA TRIBUNE) & PACKAGE 4 (UPGRADE TO ICT & CCTV AND INTERNAL SIGNAGE)	QR 200,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee
5.	SP/C/619D/19	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR FFA 2022 REQUIREMENT MODIFICATIONS IN: KHALIFA STADIUM - PACKAGE 3 (STADIUM SEATS)	QR 100,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee
6.	SP/C/619E/19	CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE WORKS FOR FFA 2022 REQUIREMENT MODIFICATIONS IN: KHALIFA STADIUM - PACKAGE 9 (STRUCTURAL STRENGTHENING OF BASEMENT SLAB)	QR 100,000	QR 500	28 July 2019	2 Envelope (Technical + Financial)	Aspire Zone General Tender Committee

1. Tender document for the above Project is available for collection from 26th June 2019 (Wednesday) as mentioned in the above table from Aspire Zone Foundation General Tender Committee office. Issn: 09-90AM to 12-00PM (Tel No. 44136733 / 44136727) located at Aspire Zone Foundation Headquarters, Mehaljia Doha upon presentation of a formal letter of authorization on company letterhead, fully signed and stamped, copy of the Commercial Registration, copy of the ID, and a stamped receipt for the non-refundable documentation fee (as mentioned above) which should be paid to Qatar National Bank, Account No. 0013-043967-001, Account Name: ASPIRE ZONE LOGISTICS, Branch Name: Corporate Branch, IBAN No. QA380NBA00000000013043967001. Swift Code: QNBQAQA. Please find a location map in the following link: <https://goo.gl/maspsv1X5v1fmm>

2. Submission of Tenders shall follow the TWO-ENVELOPE bidding system i.e. The Technical offer shall be submitted in a sealed envelope and the Commercial offer in another sealed envelope.

3. Tenders should be accompanied with a Tender Bond as stated above and in accordance with the specimen form attached with the tender document issued as a Bank Guarantee from one of the local Banks registered in Qatar valid for 120 days from the date of opening of tenders. The successful tenderer will be required to submit a Performance bond of 10% of the Contract Sum, which will remain valid until the end of the maintenance period (400 days)

4. Aspire Zone has the right to split the award of the tender

5. The Closing time will be at 12:00 Noon, on the closing date mentioned above, any offer arriving thereafter will not be considered.

6. Tenders are to be submitted in triplicate (1 Original + 2 Copies) in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Chairman of Aspire Zone Foundation General Tender Committee as endorsed in Arabic and English and deposited in the Tender Box of Aspire Zone Foundation General Tender Committee

India expects US waiver on S-400 deal with Russia

IANS
NEW DELHI

India expects the US administration to grant a waiver from sanctions to its procurement of five S-400 missile defence systems from Russia over which a threat of sanctions is looming large.

India is of the firm view that the waiver can be granted by the US government as it meets the requirements prescribed in the American legislation on sanctions.

"It is an issue (with the US). There has been some discussion in private with the US government," diplomatic sources said here yesterday, just ahead of the visit of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo here for talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in the first high-level contact with the Modi government during its second term.

India decided to buy the five S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems from Russia in September 2018 at an estimated cost of \$5.43bn.

India is buying five S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems from Russia at an estimated cost of \$5.43bn, but the US wants India to cancel the deal with Russia, falling which sanctions could be imposed.

The US wants India to cancel the deal with Russia, falling which sanctions could be imposed.

The sources noted that the US has some concerns, which they have articulated.

However, India has "long-standing defence relations" with Russia, which "we can't wish away", the sources asserted. They said the deal was under discussion for a long time before it was signed in 2018.

The US is well aware of the reasons and the Indian government has explained the rationale behind the deal, the



Demonstrators shouting slogans as they hold placards during a protest against US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit to India, in New Delhi, yesterday.

sources said. With regard to sanctions, the sources said, the American legislation is clear about the conditions under which a waiver can be granted by the US administration.

India is confident that it meets those requirements, the sources said, adding the US administration can give a waiver, legally. Commenting on the overall relationship between India and the US, the sources said that sometimes the ties face "collateral damage because of Russia

and Iran. But there is enough resilience in the Indo-US relationship, they added.

On Pompeo's visit, the sources said that India is not looking at it from the aspect of deliverables.

The visit is to establish early connection and to know each other, they said, adding the trip is useful for input on what the two sides are going to do in future.

"We are looking beyond the MoUs in the relationship (with

the US). We mostly want to see what happens inside the room, rather than what happens outside the room, in terms of MoUs," the sources underlined.

Acknowledging that "issues" are there, they said the "broad trajectory" of the relationship, however, remains very strong.

They referred to the recent speech by Pompeo where he talked about convergence.

There has been a lot of progress in the five years and more, the sources said.

Who imposed emergency and ignored others' contributions, asks Modi

IANS
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday took a veiled swipe at the Congress, saying there are some people who believe that only a few contributed to the progress of the country while flaying it for imposing Emergency in 1975.

In his reply to the debate in the Lok Sabha on the Motion of Thanks to President Ram Nath Kovind's address to Parliament, Modi said: "There are some people who feel only a few names contributed to national progress. They only want to hear those few names and ignore the others."

"But we think differently, we feel each and every citizen has worked for India's progress." Attacking the opposition party further, Modi said: "Did those in power from 2004 to 2014 ever talk about the good work of Atalji (former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee)? Did they ever speak about the good work of (former Prime Minister PV) Narasimha Raoji?"

In this Lok Sabha debate, the same people did not even speak of Manmohan Singhji. "A few people were constantly asking during the debate — 'Who did it? Who did it?' I want to ask them — today is 25th June. Who imposed the Emergency? Who trampled over the spirit of the Constitution, gagged the media and bullied the judiciary? We cannot forget those dark days."

Accusing the opposition of losing its connect with people, he said: "You have gone so up in the air that you cannot see the ground, you have lost your roots."

Police arrest 11 for torturing Muslim man to death

AFP
NEW DELHI

Indian police arrested 11 people yesterday over the killing of a Muslim man who was tortured and forced to chant Hindu slogans in the latest mob violence to shock the nation.

Two police officers have also been suspended over the handling of the lynching of Tabrez Ansari, captured on a video that went viral on Indian social

media. The 24-year-old is seen in the video crying and pleading as a mob in Jharkhand state forces him to chant "Jai Sri Ram" — hail Lord Ram — a slogan widely used by Hindu hardliners.

Ansari had been accused by villagers of carrying out a burglary. He was tied to a pole and beaten for up to 12 hours before police first detained him in Seraikela, and then took him to hospital — where he died on

Saturday. "We have arrested 11 people. Two police have also been suspended because they failed to inform seniors about the case and tried to manage it at their level," Seraikela police chief Karthik S said.

Media reports said Ansari's wife has accused police of deliberately taking him to jail first — instead of a hospital — despite the critical injuries he suffered.

News of the death emerged as the Indian government

rejected a US State Department report that said religious violence against minorities has spiked under the right-wing Hindu Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The US religious freedom report said there had been growing numbers of attacks by groups claiming to protect cows — considered sacred by Hindus — on Muslims and low-caste Dalits since 2014 when Modi came to power.

Opponents in India have also

accused the government of not doing enough to stop lynchings.

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi condemned the killing however, and said the government would not let a "destructive agenda" dominate India's development efforts.

"People who are involved in such incidents have only one motive — to spoil the positive atmosphere created by the government," he said.

J&K news publisher arrested in 1993 case

REUTERS
SRINAGAR

Police arrested the publisher of one of the most widely read newspapers in Indian Kashmir in a midnight raid over a decades-old case, the police and his brother said yesterday, highlighting the difficulties facing media in the region.

Ghulam Jeelani Qadri, 62, a journalist and the publisher of the Urdu-language newspaper Daily Afaa, was arrested at his home in Srinagar, half an hour before midnight on Monday. "It is harassment," his brother, Mohammad Morfat Qadri, said. "Why is a 1993 arrest warrant



Journalist and publisher Ghulam Jeelani Qadri (centre, front) leaves after a court granted him bail, in Srinagar yesterday.

executed today? And why against him only?" Qadri was released on bail after a court appearance yesterday. The case dates from 1990, when Qadri was one of nine journalists to publish a statement by a militant group fighting against Indian rule in Kashmir.

An arrest warrant for Qadri was issued in 1993, but it was never served. Qadri had visited the police station involved in the arrest multiple times since the warrant was issued, most recently in 2017 to apply for a passport, his brother added.

SC rejects Congress plea against RS by-polls

IANS
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court yesterday dismissed a plea by the Gujarat Congress challenging the Election Commission's (EC) decision to conduct separate by-polls for two Rajya Sabha seats which fell vacant after BJP leaders Amit Shah and Smriti Irani were elected to the Lok Sabha.

A vacation bench comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and BR Gavai observed that after the notice was issued by the poll body, the court cannot intervene, and under such circumstances, the only option available is to move the election petition before the High Court concerned.

The top court said that casual vacancies which arise due to the resignation of the members will be treated separately, and for

regular vacancies the polls were to be held simultaneously.

Vivek Tankha, senior advocate, representing petitioner Pareshbhai Dhanani, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, submitted before the court that the matter at hand is a constitutional matter. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, representing the poll body, objected to the writ petition.

The court noted that contesting an election is a statutory right and not a fundamental right. In his plea, Dhanani opposed the EC decision to conduct separate by-polls for the two Rajya Sabha seats. Filed through advocate Varun K Chopra, the petition sought an early hearing on the matter as the elections for the two seats were scheduled for July 5. In the 182-member Gujarat Assembly,

the BJP has 100 MLAs, Congress 71 while seven seats are vacant.

"Separate elections for the two Rajya Sabha seats in Gujarat would upset the scheme of proportional representation as mandated under the Representation of People's Act (RPA), 1951," said the petition.

It also contended that the representatives of each state in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) shall be picked by the elected members from the Legislative Assembly of the state "in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote". The petition said the basic principle, both under the Constitution and the RPA, was that the elections be held together so that the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote can be applied.



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EDITORIAL

Ensuring energy security

Qatar notched an important milestone in the global petrochemicals market on Monday, when H E Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO of Qatar Petroleum (QP) announced QP's decision to develop a new Petrochemicals Complex in Ras Laffan Industrial City.

The Complex will have an ethane cracker with a capacity of 1.9 million tonnes of ethylene per annum. It will also include two high-density polyethylene derivative units, which will rise Qatar's current Polyethylene production capacity by 82 percent by 2025. The global ethane market is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 6.14 percent. In the global ethane market, Asia-Pacific held the largest market share in 2018 and is expected to grow at a fastest rate. North America accounted for the second largest market share. The Middle East & Africa market and Latin America markets are expected to show increasing growth going forward.

Growing polyethylene demand across various industrial verticals is largely driving the global ethane market. Increasing use of ethanol as a biofuel is also contributing significantly to the growth of the product market. With the new project coming on line, Qatar will be grabbing a significant share from the global market.

Industry commentators love to claim the consumption rate of petrochemicals products in Middle East is much smaller. For example, market analysts at Mc Kinsey & Company, point out that in 2014 polymers consumption was 10 million tonnes in the Middle East, compared to 35 million in the US and 118 million in China. As a result, the majority of chemicals produced in the Middle East needs to be exported.

In addition, many export destinations are already becoming more self-sufficient, making competition with local producers much tougher. From 2020, China is expected to produce 90 percent of its petrochemical products self-sufficiently (up from 65 percent today). Another concern shared by market analysts is that in the Middle East, operational costs for a cracker are 35-40 percent higher than in China and 5-10 percent higher than in the USA, mostly due to higher personnel and other fixed costs. The Middle East region has also had lower equipment efficiency due to shutdowns, underutilisation and some lost debottlenecking opportunities.

To cope with these challenges and maintain the growth pace going forward, Middle East petrochemical players should focus on several development areas. Specifically, they should achieve functional excellence, increase synergies with refinery; and make strategic decisions around entering the downstream sector. We are confident that QP's visionary leadership is well capable of addressing these market challenges.

H E Al Kaabi's another major Monday announcement, that Barzan Project will be operational by this year-end, is a shot in the arm for Qatar's domestic energy sector. The much-awaited project will provide natural gas to complement the current and future infrastructural developments, such as power plants, desalination plants, as the country prepares itself to host the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Arab peace plan was a redline that neither Kushner nor anyone else could redraft. Any peace plan that disregards the Palestinian legitimacy is doomed to failure.

Nabil Abu Rudeinah
Palestinian Authority Spokesman

How to make the G-20 matter more effective



MOHAMED A. EL-ERIAN
BLOOMBERG

This week's G-20 summit in Japan will showcase both what's best and most frustrating about this once-promising construct for coordinating global policy. A simple institutional fix could address many of the problems. All that's required is some bold leadership on the multilateral stage.

Founded in 1999 to include 19 countries and the European Union, the G-20 was the result of frustration with the effectiveness of existing multilateral institutions and the realization that smaller entities such as the G-7 had become insufficiently representative. It included systemically important countries and other influencers which together accounted for two-thirds of the world's population, some 90% of its annual production and over three-quarters of its trade.

Purposely designed to be agile and effective, its presidency was to rotate annually among the membership. It was, for the same reasons, denied a permanent secretariat. Instead, the task of following up on the group's decisions and crafting a strategic arc was left to a rotating grouping of three presidencies (current, past and future).

The G-20's potential to reach timely, collective solutions to tough global problems was illustrated most vividly in 2009. Under the insightful presidency of U.K. Prime Minister Gordon Brown, it spearheaded dramatic global actions that helped the world avoid what would have been a devastating multi-year depression.

Yet many observers and participants would agree that the G-20 has fallen short of its promise overall. Most notably, the group has repeatedly struggled to act as an effective catalyst for solving long-term challenges facing the global economy. Its meetings have proliferated to include a wider group of officials and topics that extend well beyond what was initially viewed as its core mission. Meanwhile, the intimacy of its gathering, once viewed as a powerful differentiator, has been



Getting future G-20 summits to focus productively on both, tactical and strategic, is much less of an engineering problem than a political one. The faster that's addressed, the greater the chance of the G-20 being more effective in supporting robust, inclusive growth and genuine global financial stability.



Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga during the inspection of INTEX Osaka, the G20 leaders summit meeting venue, in Osaka, Japan.

undermined by a growing list of invitees, including permanent guests, and a proliferation of parallel groupings and gatherings.

This is not to say that the G-20 has been a failure. Year after year, it has provided a useful forum for officials to meet bilaterally outside the intense media glare and the sky-high expectations that tend to accompany state visits. It also provides a good opportunity to deal with urgent issues that, more often than not, pop up in today's more fluid and unpredictable global economy.

This year's gathering in Japan is a good example. It is providing the forum for a meeting between the US and Chinese leaders to discuss bilateral trade issues that have cast a cloud over global growth. The growing tension in the Middle East, including the US desire for more coordinated pressure on Iran, is also likely to be a topic of discussion. And then there are the thematic issues identified by the Japanese presidency.

But, what is likely to again be missing is a sense of collective meaningful progress on longstanding issues that threaten global growth and financial stability. Indeed, we need only go back and look at the lack of sufficient follow-through on the themes that other member countries embraced during their presidency, including those where attempts were made to specify metrics to be monitored.

Part of this failure is, I believe, due to the G-20 lacking a permanent secretary. According to several officials involved in the formation of the G-20, the hope was that the grouping could thereby maintain an agile and responsive structure that would avoid capture by a large bureaucracy, endless mission creep and ever-deepening principal-agent problems. It also reflected late 1990s frustration with the International Monetary Fund, which was viewed by some as having mishandled the Asian crisis, and the fear of fragmentation highlighted by Asia's (ultimately unsuccessful) efforts

to set up a regional Asian Monetary Fund.

Yet some of what the founders wished to avoid has transpired anyway. Successive national presidencies have found it easier to add topics than to remove those they've inherited, and they have been excessively open to inviting guests and creating new parallel structures. In addition, the lasting impact of the G-20's work has been hindered by insufficient follow-through, as well as operational priorities that change too rapidly from year to year as the presidency rotates.

The addition of a small secretariat (3-4 people) would help address these issues without creating a big bureaucracy that would gain a momentum of its own. With preferential access to the analytical resources of existing large multilaterals, something that G-20 members can easily ensure given their commanding role in global economic governance, it could provide the multi-year strategic air cover that the G-20 urgently needs, while allowing for much better operational monitoring and follow-up. Being less bound by diplomatic niceties, it could also better resist the proliferation of attendees and topics.

For all this to work, however, a currently more inward-oriented US would need to take a leadership role, especially as neither China nor Europe are in a position to do so on their own. The need will again be demonstrated in Japan this week, when a focus on tactical issues is unlikely to be accompanied by sufficient progress on the strategic challenges facing the global economy and the financial system.

Getting future G-20 summits to focus productively on both, tactical and strategic, is much less of an engineering problem than a political one. The faster that's addressed, the greater the chance of the G-20 being more effective in supporting robust, inclusive growth and genuine global financial stability.

Don't give hackers what they want

BLOOMBERG

Hackers are taking cities hostage, and some cities are paying ransom to the criminals. That needs to change.

Ransomware attacks on municipalities are on the rise. Last year, it was Atlanta, which spent \$2.6 million to recover rather than pay the demanded \$51,000. Before that, it was suburbs of Dallas and of Birmingham, Alabama, and localities in North Carolina and New Mexico. Last month, hackers crippled Baltimore, which is still working to restore its systems without paying the \$100,000 or so the hackers demand. And then there are places that decide to pay, such as the Florida town that decided to fork over a whopping \$600,000 to the bad guys last week, desperate to depolarize its computer systems and restore essential services to its residents. The numbers may seem to make

the case for giving hackers what they want. But that's the point of ransomware: It is designed to convince victims that complying is cheaper and easier than the alternative. The argument for refusing to put taxpayer money into malicious actors' coffers is stronger. Morally, taxpayer money should not be used to reward criminal enterprises. Practically, if cities collectively stop providing that reward, hackers may pack up their keyboards. Every dollar - or, more accurately, every bitcoin - that cities turn over to cybercriminals encourages them to continue attacking, and it also gives them the resources to do so more effectively and more often.

There is a way to break the cycle: pass a federal law barring ransomware payments. Along with such a prohibition, funds should be devoted to helping cities and states become more secure in the first place, focusing especially on the need to have backups

of critical data. Then the Department of Homeland Security could set up a digital ghostbusters task force to help municipalities come back online after an attack. Those that had implemented adequate defenses could get aid from the feds in footing the bill. Those who surrender to hackers would face fines sufficiently larger than the ransom.

Those facing punishment might protest that resisting the criminals is too costly in money, time offline and information lost forever. But the money is an investment in preventing more attacks across the country, and it takes substantial time, too, to pay a ransom and reboot an entire government. As for the information, the threat of losing it should be an incentive to governments to get moving on backup systems. An anti-ransom law would be a dramatic step, but it's the route to a dramatically positive result.



Govt gets data of 152,000 Pakistanis abroad

INTERNEWS
ISLAMABAD

Pakistani tax authorities have obtained data about 152,000 Pakistani nationals from OECD mechanism who live abroad but own bank accounts and properties after earning money here and now they can avail themselves of amnesty scheme to written undeclared income/assets.

Pakistan has obtained data from the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and efforts are underway to share exchange of data from 10 more countries. But tax experts pointed out that the FBR

Pakistan has obtained data from the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and efforts are underway to share exchange of data from 10 more countries.

possessed data of these accounts from last one year since September/October 2018 but nothing substantial was done in such cases so question arises why they would prefer to come into tax net

now when knew that the FBR remained unable to move against them.

When contacted the top FBR officials said that the Benami law was not operationalised at time of last scheme but now rules were in place and the long arm of law would move against those who own Benami bank accounts or assets on the name of others.

But one former official who had worked in FBR explained that the tax machinery had issued clarification on the occasion of last amnesty scheme that the Benami accounts and assets were allowed to be declared so there was nothing new.

When asked FBR Chairman

Shahbaz Zaidi, he said that the FBR would allow opportunity to rectify wrong information if displayed on FBR website through Tax Profiling System about any individual.

However, other top official sources said that people were availing this ongoing scheme but there were some caveats linked to this scheme as the government made it mandatory to deposit cash into bank accounts for availing this amnesty scheme.

Earlier, in the last scheme there was no such restriction so people used to exploit the facility and misused to pay their future liabilities. The government claims that they were aiming to promote documentation instead

of raising tax revenues through this ongoing tax amnesty scheme. The FBR and SBP also decided that they would remain open on coming weekend on Saturday and Sunday in order to facilitate those who would avail this scheme.

In the last tax amnesty scheme introduced during the PML-N led regime, total 5929 foreign declarations had whitened Rs1040bn and paid tax amount of Rs47bn out of total collected taxes of Rs124bn.

"I think that the people are liable to pay taxes have already availed amnesty last time so less people left so there are no expectations for any matching response for this ongoing

scheme," said one tax expert who had dealt with the tax issues in last 30 years. One person in LTU Islamabad showed intention to deposit Rs700m into tax by availing tax scheme. The sources said that so far the FBR received Rs2.6bn through ongoing tax amnesty scheme.

Another FBR official said that Pakistanis living abroad would only avail the amnesty scheme if they would find themselves comfortable before tax authorities of foreign jurisdictions.

If anything declared here resulted into creating difficulties outside Pakistan the non-resident Pakistanis would not prefer to come into such scheme at any cost.

Pakistan proposes plan at UN to address faith-based hatred

INTERNEWS
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has proposed a six-point plan to address the new manifestations of racism and faith-based hatred especially Islamophobia at the United Nations Headquarters organised by Pakistan along with Turkey, the Holy See and the UN.

The plan was proposed by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Maleeha Lodhi at a session titled "Countering terrorism and other acts of violence based on religion or belief" in the wake of the launch last week by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of his strategy and action plan against hate speech. Other speakers also

called for effective steps to counter the challenge posed by the growing phenomenon of faith-based hatred and violence so as to promote peaceful, inclusive and just societies around the world. "A particularly alarming development is the rise of Islamophobia which represents the recent manifestation of the age-old hatred that spawned anti-Semitism, racism, apartheid and many other forms of discrimination," the ambassador said in her speech.

She added, Prime Minister Imran Khan had repeatedly called for urgent action to counter Islamophobia at various forums. "We encourage the UN and other relevant organisations to address this issue."



EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan signed

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini (right), poses with Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi after signing the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan in Brussels, yesterday.

Pakistan's role imperative for peace: Nato

INTERNEWS / ISLAMABAD

The Secretary-General of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Jens Stoltenberg, has said Pakistan's positive role is imperative for regional peace and stability.

During his meeting with Foreign Minister Mahkdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Brussels, he appreciated Pakistan's crucial role in Afghan peace process. He hoped Nato want to work with Pakistan on bilateral understanding. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said there are similarities in its work vogue for regional peace.

7 dead in Sindh coach-collision

INTERNEWS
ISLAMABAD

A speeding passenger coach rammed into a car in Pakistan's southern Sindh province yesterday, leaving seven people killed and 15 others injured, local media reported.

According to the reports, the crash happened when the speeding van coming from the opposite direction hit the car on the Indus Highway near Nummara area in Shikarpur, a district in Sindh.

Following the incident, rescuers, police and local people rushed to the site and shifted the bodies and injured to the Civil Hospital in the district for treatment, where several of the wounded were said to be in critical condition.

Police said that five members of a same family, including three women, were among the killed people, adding that an investigation had been launched into the accident.

Sri Lankans charged over illegal trade of baby elephants

AFP / COLOMBO

A senior Sri Lankan conservation official was among eight people charged yesterday in a landmark case over the capture and sale to the wealthy of dozens of baby elephants as status symbols.

Wildlife experts say about 40 calves may have been stolen from their herds during a 10-year period and sold for around \$125,000 each.

The deputy director of the wildlife conservation department, Upali Pathmasiri, and seven others were charged with 33 counts of capturing and possessing baby elephants in 2014-15, state attorney Nishara Jayaratne said. It is the "first ever elephant trafficking case in our legal history," Jayaratne said. If convicted they face up to 20 years in jail. The practice stopped when the current government came to power in 2015 and launched a crackdown.

Taliban condemned for threats to media in Afghanistan

REUTERS
KABUL

The United States and Afghanistan yesterday denounced a Taliban warning that Afghan media will be targeted unless they stop broadcasting what the group called "anti-Taliban statements".

Radio stations, TV channels and other media organisations had one week to stop transmitting "anti-Taliban advertisements", the group's military commission said in a statement on Monday. "Those who continue doing so will be recognised by the group as military targets who are helping the Western-backed

government of Afghanistan," it said, adding "reporters and staff members will not remain safe".

President Ashraf Ghani's office condemned the threats by the insurgent group, which has previously targeted reporters and employees of media organisations. "Freedom of expression and attacks on media

organisations is in contradiction to human and Islamic values," Ghani's office said in a statement.

The warning comes as Taliban leaders prepare for a seventh round of peace talks with US officials aimed at finding a political settlement to end the 18-year-old war in Afghanistan. The next round of talks is

scheduled to begin on June 29 in Doha. John Bass, the US ambassador to Afghanistan, said the Taliban should stop threatening Afghan journalists. "More violence against journalists or civilians will not bring security and opportunity to Afghanistan, nor will it help Taliban reach political objectives," Bass said.



Cooling down

A zookeeper sprays water on an elephant in an enclosure at Zoological Garden during hot and humid weather in Karachi, Pakistan, yesterday.

Suspected Rohingya traffickers dead in Bangladesh clashes

REUTERS / COX'S BAZAR

Bangladesh police killed three people suspected of trying to smuggle 15 Rohingya Muslim refugees to Malaysia in a clash yesterday near the South Asian nation's main refugee camp, an official said, the second such incident in as many months.

Nearly 900,000 Rohingya who fled a military-led crackdown in neighbouring Buddhist-dominated Myanmar in 2017 live in Kutupalong, the world's largest refugee camp, and other temporary settlements in Bangladesh's beach town of Cox's Bazar. "On sensing the presence of our team, they fired

on police, and police also responded," said Proddip Kumar Das, a police official in the nearby town of Teknaf.

The men attempting to smuggle the refugees, who included some girls, were shot and died on the way to hospital, Das added. The refugees were rescued and sent to two different camps after initial questioning. The clash, around 30km from Kutupalong, followed a tip-off to police, Das said, adding that they had retrieved three locally-made guns and 15 rounds of ammunition.

The men were themselves Rohingya known to be human traffickers living in the area.

UN fears Myanmar human rights abuses in Internet shutdown

AFP / YANGON

An Internet blackout in parts of Myanmar could be cover for "gross human rights violations" in an area where a brutal army crackdown has already forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to flee, a UN rights investigator said.

The military is locked in battle with the Arakan Army (AA), insurgents fighting for more autonomy for the region's ethnic Rakhine Buddhists.

On Friday the government took the unprecedented step of ordering mobile phone operators to shut down all Internet

data across at least eight townships in Rakhine and one in neighbouring Chin states.

"I fear for all civilians there," said UN Special Rapporteur to Myanmar Yanghee Lee, calling for the immediate lifting of restrictions. The military's "clearance operations" can be a cover for committing gross human rights violations against the civilian population," she said, referencing alleged mass atrocities committed against Rohingya Muslims in 2017.

The decree was made under the Telecommunications Law, hitting all mobile operators for an unspecified period.

Sri Lanka police overturn local council ban on Muslims

AFP
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's police yesterday stepped in to prevent a local council from banning Muslim traders from a weekly fair in another backlash from the devastating Easter attacks blamed on extremists.

The local government body had ordered minority Muslims not to participate in the farmer's market in the town of Dankotuwa, 47km north of the capital. "We got a court order against the Wennappuwa

Pradeshiya Saba (council) because we can't allow this Islamophobia," a local Police Superintendent K A B Kumara-pell said.

He said the local council chairman representing a political party affiliated to former president Mahinda Rajapakse ordered Muslims to stay away, saying their presence could trigger violence in the region.

The region has a high concentration of Christians who suffered the most in the April 21 suicide bombings that targeted three churches and three hotels.

At least 258 people were killed and nearly 500 wounded in the attacks. However, police said there was no basis for yesterday's action by the council when communal tensions had eased and the region was returning to normality after several days of anti-Muslim riots last month.

"We have asked courts to take action against the council chairman for causing tension between communities," Kumara-pell said. Sri Lanka has been under a state of emergency since the Easter Sunday suicide bombings.

Five Chinese charged over Cambodia building collapse

AFP
SIHANOUKVILLE, CAMBODIA

Seven people, including five Chinese nationals, have been charged with manslaughter or as accomplices to manslaughter in connection with a building collapse in Cambodia that killed 28 people and sparked anger over shoddy construction regulations.

The collapse of a seven-storey, under-construction Chinese building in the resort town of Sihanoukville on Saturday is the deadliest industrial accident in recent memory in Cambodia.

A close Beijing ally, Cambodia has seen an influx of

investments from Chinese developers, including in the booming gambling hub of Sihanoukville.

But the building frenzy has raised concerns about sub-standard safety regulations in a country where most construction workers are informal day-labourers.

Chinese building owner Cheng Kun was yesterday charged with involuntary manslaughter, causing bodily harm and causing destruction of property, according to a court warrant.

Three other Chinese citizens — contractor Deng Xin Gui, site manager Xie Ya Ping and engineer Gao Yu — were accused as accomplices on all three

A regional governor has resigned and a top disaster management official has been fired over the collapse which killed at least 26 people.

offences.

"Now they are in jail provisionally," Lim Bun Heng, a court spokesman in Preah Sihanouk province, said.

Another Chinese citizen, a Vietnamese man and a Cambodian landowner have also been charged as accomplices to manslaughter but remain on the run.

According to Cambodian law, all seven could face a three-year maximum sentence for manslaughter.

Cambodian authorities have launched an investigation into the fatal accident, which Prime Minister Hun Sen has blamed on "carelessness".

Reprimandations have been swift, with Preah Sihanouk's governor Yun Min resigning Monday over managerial errors.

Another top disaster management official has been fired for not being "quick enough to respond", said Hun Sen, warning others "to be more responsible".

There are an estimated 200,000 construction workers

in Cambodia, mostly unskilled, reliant on day wages and not protected by union rules, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

At least 26 people were injured in the building collapse, which prompted a desperate, days-long search for survivors in the mound of rubble.

On Monday afternoon, two people were pulled from the wreckage alive — bruised and weak but spared of serious injuries — more than two days after the building went down.

Sihanoukville was once a sleepy fishing town turned backpacker-favourite, but today is a hotspot for throngs of Chinese tourists.

UK demands probe into HK police action

AFP
LONDON

Britain urged Hong Kong yesterday to conduct an independent investigation into clashes between police and protesters, and suspended export licences for crowd control equipment.

"We remain very concerned with the situation in Hong Kong," Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt told MPs in parliament's lower House of Commons.

"I today urge the Hong Kong SAR government to establish a robust, independent investigation into the violent scenes that we saw.

"The outcome of that investigation will inform our assessment of future export licence applications to the Hong Kong police. "And we will not issue any further export licences for crowd control equipment to Hong Kong unless we are satisfied that concerns raised on human rights and fundamental freedoms have been thoroughly addressed." A Foreign Office source said there were currently no live licences for these kinds of exports, but there would now be no new ones until conditions were met.

The last UK export licence for tear gas hand grenades and tear gas cartridges for Hong Kong police to use in training was issued in July 2018, the ministry said earlier this month.

The last export licence for rubber bullets was in July 2015 while an open licence for riot shields was rejected in April 2019.

Austria court approves US extradition for Firtash

AFP
VIENNA

Austria's Supreme Court yesterday approved the extradition of Ukrainian oligarch Dmytro Firtash to the US, the latest twist in a long-running saga which has become a headache for Vienna.

Firtash, one of Ukraine's richest men, is wanted in the US on charges that he paid bribes to officials in India to secure titanium mining licences in 2006. The 54-year-old denies all wrongdoing and accuses the US of pursuing politically motivated charges against him because of his links to Moscow.

The Austrian government will now have to take the final decision in the case.

The court rejected a request by the procurator general's office to block the extradition and upheld a 2017 ruling from a Vienna appeals court which found there was sufficient proof of a case to answer against Firtash. Firtash was arrested in Vienna in 2014 on a US warrant. He had to pay bail of €125m and has since not been able to leave the country.

Firtash's case will now go to Clemens Jabloner, justice minister in Austria's interim technocratic government.

Belt & Road News considers setting up HQ in Doha

THE PENINSULA
DOHA

Belt and Road News Network (BRN), an emerging international media organisation which is the world's first and only news network dedicated to China's massive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (also known as Silk Road Initiative) offering news, views and analysis on BRI and its 150-member countries, announced yesterday of considering Middle East for their headquarters that will create 3,500 jobs in the region.

"Our mission is to be completely unbiased. We're loyal to neither nations nor its leaders but only to truth. With responsive reporting and their analysis, ascertaining the truth from every angle and source. While fake news continues to be checked and blocked, there are still countless assertions that go unchecked. We endure to fill in the gap. We are committed to being fully transparent with how we report our stories. BRN is proud to be the leader in providing dedicated news, views and analysis on BRI; we are an organisation to be recognised globally for its authority, integrity and accuracy" said Dawood Khan, BRN Chairman.

"The total investment for the project will reach \$500m to be financed partly by debt and shareholder's equity. Allowing us to tap into lucrative and opportunistic investment in this spectrum of media, positioning us to achieve its full potential."

"We are currently studying Middle East in general and Qatar in particular for its policies towards media networks and their support in this sector. If found favourable, we can consider setting up our headquarters in Doha, as Qatar was amongst the first ones to support BRI and signed several agreements and MoUs that supported the initiative," Khan said.

BRN will disseminate its news through various spectrums including wire services, 24-hour English language news and documentary television channel, independent Arabic and French news channels, 24-hour English digital radio, a multilingual language newspaper and magazine in English, French and Arabic providing comprehensive coverage of BRI and its projects accurately and in a timely manner. Over 152 countries and international organisations have joined the initiative, which has already witnessed investments of over \$1.6 trillion.



Korean War anniversary

South Korean soldiers salute during a ceremony marking the 69th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War in Seoul yesterday. The 1950-53 Korean War ended in an armistice with no peace treaty.

Trump to meet Xi, Putin at G20 in Japan

AFP
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump will meet an array of world leaders on the sidelines of G20 summit in Japan, including China's Xi Jinping and Russia's Vladimir Putin, a US official has said.

Also on the list are Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Turkish President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

The meeting with the Chinese president — which is highly anticipated as the two sides try to reach a deal on trade — is expected to take place on Saturday, the second day of the summit, in Osaka.

After the Group of 20 summit, the Republican

President will head to Seoul. When asked if Trump was planning a visit to the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) on the border of North and South Korea, the official neither confirmed nor denied.

The official did however say there were "no plans" for Trump to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his trip to Asia. Trump and Kim have so far met twice.

Russia jails Polish citizen for 14 years on spying charges

AFP
MOSCOW

Russia yesterday sentenced a Polish citizen to 14 years in prison camps on spying charges, Moscow's FSB security service said.

Marian Radzajewski tried to bring military information that included "state secrets" from Russia to Poland, the FSB said in a statement.

He also tried to obtain "secret components of Russian S-300 air defence systems", it said.

The FSB said he was arrested "while attempting to complete the transaction".

"The investigation confirmed that Marian Radzajewski acted in the interests of a Polish organisation that is a leading supplier of (Poland's) national armed and special forces," the statement said.

He was sentenced at a closed trial in Moscow.

His lawyer, cited by the Interfax news agency, said he "did not agree with the terms of the charges" and intended to appeal the decision.

According to Interfax, Marian Radzajewski was born in 1977 and was the director of a transport company in Bialystok, a city in northeastern Poland.

Schools closed in Malaysia due to toxic fumes

AFP
KUALA LUMPUR

Scores of people have fallen ill and hundreds of schools have been closed in Malaysia due to toxic fumes believed to have come from a chemical factory, authorities said yesterday.

It was the second serious incident involving poisonous gas in Pasir Gudang district, in southern Johor state, in three months after thousands of people became sick in March when waste was dumped in a river and emitted noxious fumes.

Residents first noticed the fumes wafting across the industrial area late last week and many people, including schoolchildren, started vomiting and developing breathing difficulties.

Johor Chief Minister

Sahrudin Jamal said 75 people had so far been sent to hospital for treatment, according to official news agency Bernama.

Authorities have now ordered the closure of all 475 educational institutions in the area until tomorrow, including three institutes of higher education, 111 public schools, 14 private schools and 347 kindergartens.

The latest incident is not believed to be linked to the first. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad vowed to act against those responsible.

"It seems like there are factories that are not very concerned about safety," he said.

"We have to identify those responsible for causing the pollution and take stern action against them." Residents expressed anger over the latest toxic leak.



Emergency personnel wearing protective suits check the air quality in Pasir Gudang, Malaysia, yesterday.

It was not clear what had caused the latest incident. Sahrudin said authorities were investigating 30 chemical

factories in the area. After the March incident, three men were arrested and charged over dumping waste.

Papua New Guinea demands end to Australia refugee contract

AFP
PORT MORESBY

Australia must end or completely rework a controversial multi-million dollar contract to manage refugees stuck in tropical island camps, Papua New Guinea's prime minister demanded yesterday.

"I will ask the Australian government to stop this contract forthwith," James Marape told parliament, saying the

arrangement should be "reviewed to the fullest, or we ask for this contract to be terminated".

Marape said the Paladin Group's contract to manage facilities on Manus Island holding around 500 refugees and asylum seekers turned away by Australia must include local companies.

The contract, worth over Aus\$400m over the last two years, has been the subject of deep controversy.

From 2012 to 2017 Australia ran detention facilities on Manus under a headline policy of turning back anyone trying to arrive in the country by sea — including refugees fleeing war and unrest as far afield as Sudan and Iranian Kurdistan.

But after the PNG Supreme Court ruled the arrangement unconstitutional, Australia handed the camps over to local authorities, with daily management of security and other

operations given to Paladin, a little-known private company, under a contract issued without any competitive tender.

The 500 men still on Manus have been in the island camps for at least five years.

In recent weeks the camps have seen a rash of suicide attempts as refugees and asylum seekers try to draw international attention to their plight.

The Paladin contract — which reportedly does not

include food or medical care — has been backed by Australian Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton — who has advocated for an extension.

Marape seemed to shoot down that possibility, at least without significant revisions.

"We don't intend for foreign contractors to operate here in business like security. These are businesses that local companies can participate in," he told a regular session of question time.

Council of Europe readmits Russia; Ukraine walks out

AFP STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Ukraine yesterday expressed anger at its Western partners after lawmakers at the Council of Europe agreed to allow Russian representatives back following a five year absence prompted by Moscow's annexation of Crimea.

Russian delegates had been stripped of their voting rights in the 47-country European rights body in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine.

Russia's absence from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) — whose members are MPs drawn from parliaments of Council of Europe member states — had raised questions about its future membership of the rights body.

The decision by lawmakers — taken in a vote in the early hours yesterday — effectively represented the first crack in the international sanctions that were imposed on Moscow after the Crimean annexation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was "disappointed", recalling how he had discussed the issue with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela

Kiev insists there should be no international concessions to Moscow until it hands back Crimea and ends support for separatists in Ukraine's east.

Merkel on his visits to Paris and Berlin last week.

"It's a pity that our European partners did not listen to us," Zelensky said, adding he had told the EU's two most powerful figures that Russia should only return to the assembly when it had fulfilled its demands.

In the vote, one hundred and eighteen members of the Strasbourg-based PACE agreed that Russia could present a delegation, with 62 against.

Kiev insists there should be no international concessions to Moscow until it hands back Crimea and ends support for separatists in Ukraine's east.

The Ukrainian delegates walked out of the assembly's session.

Delegation chief Volodymyr Arieiev said Ukraine decided "to suspend its participation in the work of PACE except issues

related to stripping the Russian delegation of its rights".

He wrote on Facebook that the delegation asked the Ukrainian parliament to "urgently" consider the country's membership of the assembly.

The move paves the way for Russia to participate in the election of a new secretary general of the Council of Europe today to replace Norway's Thorbjørn Jagland.

The Council of Europe, which is separate from the European Union, has no binding powers but brings together 47 European states to make recommendations on rights and democracy.

Its key institution is the European Court of Human Rights, to which citizens in member states can appeal if they feel their rights have been infringed.

Russia had responded to the loss of voting rights by boycotting the assembly and has since 2017 refused to pay its 33-million-euro share of the annual budget of the Council of Europe.

It had even threatened to quit the body altogether if it was not allowed to take part in today's election, a move that would have prevented Russian citizens from being able to appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.



Activists hold placard as they shout slogans in front of the German embassy in Kiev, yesterday. Protesters demonstrated outside embassies of the countries that voted for Russia's return to Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Kremlin hails return to Europe body

AFP MOSCOW

The Kremlin hailed yesterday Russia's return to the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly as "victory of common sense", after Moscow was stripped of its voting rights over the annexation of Crimea.

A decision to allow Russia to return is a deeply controversial issue and divided the European

continent's foremost human rights body. Kremlin critics say that Russia's comeback is the first crack in international sanctions imposed on Moscow after it annexed Crimea in 2014.

"This is a very positive event," Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"PACE cannot fully operate without Russia's participation," Peskov added, praising the

"victory of common sense" in Strasbourg.

Earlier yesterday, the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly (PACE) agreed to allow Russian representatives to return, to prevent Russia crashing out of the top rights body. But Ukraine and the Baltic countries say the move sends the wrong signal to the world, adding Moscow did nothing to deserve the lifting of sanctions.

Ship's captain threatens to bring stranded migrants to Italy

AFP ROME

The captain of the Sea-Watch 3 charity rescue vessel threatened yesterday to enter Italian waters illegally to bring 42 migrants to shore after 13 days in limbo at sea.

"I will enter Italian waters and bring them to safety on Lampedusa," Carola Rackete said in an interview with La Repubblica daily, in reference to the island off Italy's southern tip.

Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini has banned the Dutch-flagged vessel from approaching under a "closed ports" policy, which has seen migrants repeatedly left in limbo at sea.

Rackete said she was waiting for a decision from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg, on a request by the German NGO Sea-Watch for it to impose "interim measures" on Italy.

The ECHR could ask Italy to adopt urgent measures to resolve the standoff, to "prevent serious and irremediable violations of human rights".

Salvini said yesterday the charity vessel could "stay there until Christmas and New Year" but would never be allowed in.

Of the 53 migrants initially rescued by the Sea-Watch 3 off Libya on June 12, Italy took in 11 vulnerable people.

"That's enough! Whatever Strasbourg tells us, with great serenity we will maintain our position."

"Imagine if a country like Italy — the second-largest industrial power in Europe — let an NGO dictate immigration rules," he said. On Lampedusa, where Salvini's far-right League won 45 percent in May's European elections, a priest has camped in the street to demand those onboard — including three minors — be allowed to disembark. Dozens of German cities have said they are ready to welcome them.

In January, 32 migrants rescued by the vessel were stranded on board for 18 days before they were allowed to disembark in Malta thanks to a distribution deal made between several European countries.

Next British PM to be announced on July 23

AFP LONDON

The winner of the contest to replace Theresa May as leader of Britain's ruling Conservatives and prime minister will be announced on July 23, the ruling party said yesterday.

Former foreign minister Boris Johnson is the favourite in the race, battling Britain's current top diplomat, Jeremy Hunt.

The two candidates were chosen from a field of 10 by the Conservative party's 313 MPs, and are now seeking to woo an estimated 160,000 party members who will make the final choice.

Postal ballots will be sent out between July 6 and 8, and the deadline for returning them has been set at 5:00pm on July 22.

"The announcement of the



Boris Johnson, a leadership candidate for Britain's Conservative Party, poses for a selfie in Oxshott, Surrey, Britain, yesterday.

next leader of the Conservative party will be made on Tuesday, 23 July. This process has been agreed with both candidates," the statement said.

Once a successor is confirmed, May would be expected to visit Queen Elizabeth II to formally tender her resignation as premier.

Her replacement would then make his own visit to Buckingham Palace to be confirmed in office.

The Conservatives do not have a majority in parliament's lower House of Commons, but govern through an alliance with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

May announced her resignation last month after failing to get her Brexit deal through parliament, faced with opposition from both Conservative MPs and the DUP.

It is possible that the main opposition Labour party calls an immediate vote of confidence in the new prime minister, to force them to prove they have the support to govern. This would have to happen by July 25 when parliament breaks for its summer holiday, or wait until MPs return on September 3.

Dutch probe outage of emergency phone line

AFP THE HAGUE

The Netherlands yesterday investigated the source of a massive telephone network breakdown that disabled the country's emergency numbers.

The disruption late Monday started with the KPN national network and then spread to linked providers across the country, lasting for four hours before it was fixed.

Police, firefighters and

ambulance workers took to the streets so they could be contacted if necessary and the government issued alternatives to the 112 emergency hotline on social media.

Justice and Security Minister Ferd Grapperhaus summoned KPN's management yesterday to explain the breakdown and ensure that it will "not happen again." Grapperhaus tweeted that they must "carefully figure out how this malfunction could have arisen".

The Dutch national counter-terrorism coordinator will also be involved in the meeting, local media said.

Hacking was however not believed to be the cause of the breakdown, senior KPN official Joost Farwerck told the Nieuwsuur programme on Monday evening. Dutch media reported yesterday that KPN's chief executive Maximo Ibarra was going to step down, but said it was due to family matters and was not connected to the breakdown.

In legal first, court faults France over air pollution

AFP MONTREUIL, FRANCE

A court yesterday found the French state had failed to take sufficient steps to limit air pollution around Paris, a legal first in the country hailed by environmental campaigners as a victory for victims of dirty air.

The case at the administrative court in Montreuil outside Paris was brought by a mother and daughter who argued their health had been harmed by the air in a notoriously congested area of the city. But the court also said it did not find any direct link between the pair's health problems and failures of the state, throwing out their demand for damages.

Backed by NGOs, the complaint was the first brought by individuals against the French state over health problems caused by air pollution.

"The state committed a fault by taking insufficient measures concerning the quality of air," the court said in a statement.

It said that between 2012 and 2016, the state had failed to take sufficient measures to bring concentrations of certain polluting gases below allowed limits.

"For victims of pollution, this is a first," the plaintiffs' lawyer Francois Lafforgue said. "From now, the state will have to take effective measures in the fight

Klitschko rescued at sea after yacht fire off Spain

AP LISBON, PORTUGAL

Former heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko said his boat trip off Spain with family and friends was cut short after a fire broke out on board. The 43-year-old Ukrainian said in a tweet yesterday the group was evacuated from the motor yacht in the Mediterranean Sea on Sunday night. Spain's Maritime Rescue Service confirmed it responded to an emergency call, though a spokeswoman declined to provide the identities of those involved because of privacy rules. The spokeswoman said the yacht carrying nine people reported a fire in its engine room and was drifting 10 miles southwest of Port Adriano. Nobody was hurt.



Fire at Spanish chemical plant

A cloud of smoke is seen during a fire in a chemical factory in San Roque, near Algeciras, Spain, yesterday. Emergency services said the fire was under control by yesterday afternoon.

Emergency services said the fire was under control by yesterday afternoon.

White House threatens to veto border aid bill

AP
WASHINGTON

The White House is threatening to veto a \$4.5bn House bill aimed at improving the treatment of migrant families detained after crossing the US southern border, saying the measure would hamstring the administration's border security efforts and raising fresh questions about the legislation's fate.

The warning came as Hispanic and liberal Democrats press House leaders to add provisions to the legislation strengthening protections for migrant children, changes that might make the measure even less palatable to President Donald Trump. Though revisions are possible, House leaders are still hoping for approval.

The Senate planned to vote this week on similar legislation that has bipartisan backing, but many House Democrats say the Senate version's provisions aimed at helping migrant children are not strong enough. House Democrats seeking changes met with Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

"Right now, the goal is really to stop — one death is just too much," said Rep. Adriano Espaillat, D-NY, as he left the meeting.

Many children detained entering the US from Mexico have been held under harsh conditions, and Customs and Border Protection Chief Operating Officer John Sanders said last week that children have died after being in the agency's care, adding that Border Patrol stations are holding 15,000 people — more than triple their maximum capacity of 4,000.

Congress plans to leave Washington in a few days for a week-long July 4 recess. While

In a letter, White House officials said: "Because this bill does not provide adequate funding to meet the current crisis, and because it contains partisan provisions designed to hamstring the Administration's border enforcement efforts, the Administration opposes its passage."

lawmakers don't want to depart without acting on the legislation for fear of being accused of not responding to humanitarian problems at the border, it seems unlikely that Congress would have time to send a House-Senate compromise to Trump by week's end.

In a letter yesterday threatening the veto, White House officials told lawmakers they objected that the House package lacked money for beds the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency needs to let it detain more migrants. Officials also complained in the letter that the bill had no money to toughen border security, including funds for building Trump's proposed border wall.

"Because this bill does not provide adequate funding to meet the current crisis, and because it

contains partisan provisions designed to hamstring the Administration's border enforcement efforts, the Administration opposes its passage," the letter said.

Several Democrats said some language they were seeking could end up in separate legislation. Several said changes might include provisions aimed at ensuring that detained children are treated humanely.

Much of the legislation's money would help care for migrants at a time when federal officials say their agencies have been overwhelmed by the influx of migrants and are running out of funds.

The back-and-forth on the spending measure came as Congress' top Democrats criticised Trump for threatening coast-to-coast deportations of migrants



Members of Mexico's National Guard patrolling the border between Mexico and the US, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, yesterday.

'Mexico not to detain migrants at border'

AFP
MEXICO CITY

Mexico's president said yesterday that the 15,000 troops his government has deployed to the US border do not have orders to stop migrants from crossing, and vowed to investigate a contro-

versial detention last week.

"No such order has been issued, and we are going to review that case, so that it doesn't happen again, because that's not our job," leftist President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said at a press conference.

He made the comment after

a journalist's images of heavily armed National Guardsmen forcibly detaining two women and a young girl at the edge of the Rio Grande river triggered backlash in Mexico, whose government faces pressure from US President Donald Trump to slow the northward flow of Central American migrants.

Democrats slam Trump's mass deportation plan

AP
WASHINGTON

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called President Donald Trump's threatened coast-to-coast deportations of migrants "outside the circle of civilised human behaviour," while the Senate's top Democrat labelled the warning "the very definition of callousness" in remarks that underscored the gap between the two sides over immigration.

The two leaders spoke after

a weekend tweet in which Trump said he would give Congress two weeks to solve "the Asylum and Loopholes problems" along the border with Mexico. "If not, Deportations start!" he tweeted.

The president had earlier warned that there would soon be a nationwide sweep aimed at "millions" of people living illegally in the US, including families. The sweeps were supposed to begin on Sunday, but Trump said he postponed them.

Pelosi, D-Calif, said the threatened raids were "appalling." "It is outside the circle of civilised human behaviour, just kicking down doors, splitting up families and the rest of that in addition to the injustices that are happening at the border."

That was a reference to detentions — often in harsh conditions — of people caught entering the country, including children.

She also said that in a Friday

phone call to Trump in which she asked him to call off the raids, she told him, "You are scaring the children of America, not just in those families but their neighbours and their communities."

On the Senate floor, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-NY, described Trump's "chilling, nasty, obnoxious threats" and said the president "seems far more comfortable terrorising immigrant families" than addressing immigration problems.

"I mean, my God, to threaten

separating children from their parents as a bargaining chip? That's the very definition of callousness," Schumer said.

It is not clear exactly what Trump, who has started his 2020 re-election bid, means regarding asylum and loophole changes. He's long been trying to restrict the numbers of people being allowed to enter the US after claiming asylum and impose other restrictions, a path he's followed since he began his quest for president years ago.

House probes Trump's overhaul of security clearance process

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

A US congressional committee demanded documents from the Trump administration relating to its overhaul of the background check process that determines who can handle America's secret information.

The House of Representatives Oversight Committee sent a letter to Mark Esper, the acting

defence secretary, requesting documents and communications by July 8 relating to the ongoing overhaul, which some US officials have said is disorganised and behind schedule.

The committee sent a separate letter demanding similar documents from the head of the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which is transferring its background check responsibilities to the Pentagon

under the Trump administration's plan. The committee also requested a briefing on the status of the project, which President Donald Trump outlined in an April 24 executive order.

"Troubling reports have emerged that the transfer may not be on track," the committee's letter said, saying there is "concern" that it may not occur by the September 30 deadline given in Trump's order.

Security clearance background checks are a routine requirement for people hoping to be hired by the federal government and for contractors, as well as current employees.

Over the years, OPM has accumulated a backlog of more than 400,000 uncompleted clearance investigations, with some taking more than a year to finish, congressional experts said.

OPM, under Trump's order,

is supposed to begin the transfer of 3,300 agency employees and 6,000 OPM contractors to the Defense Department by June 24.

It was reported on June 19 that the transfer of contractors to the Pentagon faced steep challenges. The House Oversight Committee is already investigating whether some staffers in Trump's White House received high-level security clearances over the objections of career officials.

Melania's spokeswoman appointed as US Press Secretary

BLOOMBERG/WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump picked long-time aide Stephanie Grisham to serve as the next White House press secretary and communications director.

Since the early days of the administration, Grisham served as a fierce and loyal spokeswoman for the president's wife, Melania Trump, who announced the appointment yesterday on Twitter. Grisham replaces Sarah Huckabee Sanders as press secretary and Bill Shine, who left the communications director job in March.

As the White House heads into re-election mode, Grisham will inherit an office in flux, with a number of staffing vacancies that need to be filled. In taking over the dual role, she will become Trump's sixth communications director and third press secretary.

Grisham is one of the few remaining staffers who has been with Trump since the early days of the campaign, when she was a traveling press aide.

"I can think of no better person to serve the Administration & our country," Melania Trump wrote on Twitter.



Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko (centre), Nasa astronaut Anne McClain (right) and David Saint-Jacques of the Canadian Space Agency rest in chairs shortly after landing in a remote area outside the town of Dzhezkazgan (Zhezkazgan), in Kazakhstan, yesterday.

Space Station crew return to earth

AFP
DZHEKAZKAGAN

The first crew to blast off to the International Space Station following a launch accident that deepened doubts over Russia's space programme returned to earth yesterday.

Nasa astronaut Anne McClain, veteran cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko of Roscosmos, and Canadian Space Agency record-holder David Saint-Jacques touched down on the steppes of Kazakhstan at 0247 GMT, Nasa said.

The trio's launch on December 3 last year was the first after a Soyuz rocket carrying Russia's Aleksey Ovchinnikov and American astronaut Nick Hague failed in October just minutes after blast-off, forcing the pair to make an emergency landing.

They escaped unharmed but the failed launch was the first such incident in Russia's post-Soviet history and a new setback for the country's once proud space industry.

McClain, Kononenko and Saint-Jacques were optimistic

ahead of their successful launch and remained upbeat throughout their time aboard the orbital lab which is seen as a rare example of cooperation between Russia and the West.

"A beautiful night pass over Africa on my last night on @Space_Station," tweeted McClain, who completed two spacewalks during her virgin mission to the ISS.

Fellow first-time flyer Saint-Jacques broke the record for the longest single spaceflight by a Canadian astronaut, previously held by Robert Thirsk.

US woman may face life sentence over IS links

REUTERS
NEW YORK

A US woman charged with working as an IS militant group's recruiter under the code name "Umm Nutella," who agreed to cooperate with the prosecutors but then divulged her deal to extremists while out on bail, could be sentenced to life in prison.

Sinmyah Amera Caesar, who has used that pseudonym, has pleaded guilty to two federal charges for her efforts to aid IS group and other extremist groups, according to papers filed in federal court in Brooklyn.

"The defendant's conduct is deeply troubling," US Attorney Richard Donoghue said in court

papers.

Donoghue laid out a cloak-and-dagger saga that began with Caesar's arrest 2-1/2 years ago as he asked a judge to deny bail in a letter unsealed on Monday and dated February 6.

Caesar was taken into custody in November 2016 at Kennedy International Airport as she tried to leave the United States. She confessed to using Facebook and other platforms to connect people with IS members who would help them travel to territory controlled by the group. Donoghue said, "She pleaded guilty to related charges in February 2017 under a cooperation agreement and was released on bail in April 2018."

Maduro could yet fall: Former spy chief

AFP
WASHINGTON

Former Venezuela's intelligence chief, Cristopher Figuera, who fled the country after backing a failed uprising against President Nicolas Maduro in April, has said the regime could still fall.

"I'm proud of what I did," he said in an interview. "For now, the regime has gotten ahead of us. But that can quickly change."

The highest-profile defector against the Maduro regime, Figuera was sacked after supporting the April 30 uprising by opposition leader Juan Guaido and spent two months in hiding in Colombia before his arrival in the United States on Monday, according to *Washington Post*.

The former head of security for late president Hugo Chavez, Figuera said that members of Maduro's family and his

government were engaged in money laundering and corruption, and alleged that Hezbollah cells were allowed to operate in Venezuela and raise funds.

"I quickly realised that Maduro is the head of a criminal enterprise, with his own family involved," he said, accusing the president's son, Nicolas Maduro Guerra, of running an illicit scheme involving the sale of gold at high prices to central bank.