

## TURMOIL IN MIDDLE EAST

## Saudi-Israel covert ties under focus

AFP, RIYADH

The UAE's decision to normalise ties with Israel could propel Saudi Arabia to deepen its furtive relations with the Jewish state as Riyadh seeks to entice investments to fund an ambitious economic transformation, analysts say.

The United Arab Emirates on Thursday became the first Gulf state to normalise relations with Israel, in a historic US-brokered accord that raised the prospect of similar deals with other Arab states.

Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's biggest economy, has maintained a conspicuous silence over the deal, but local officials have hinted that Riyadh is unlikely to immediately follow in the footsteps of its principle regional ally.

However, "the UAE-Israeli normalisation lends itself to expanding the realm of indirect Saudi-Israeli relations," said Aziz Alghashian, a lecturer at Essex University specialising in the kingdom's policy towards Israel.

"I think Saudi-Israeli interactions will increase via the UAE."

Home to Islam's holiest sites, Saudi Arabia would face sensitive political calculations before a formal recognition of the Jewish state. Like the UAE's move, such a step would be seen by Palestinians and their supporters as a betrayal of their cause.

But the kingdom has already cultivated covert ties with Israel in recent years, a shift spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. A shared animosity towards Iran, along with Saudi attempts to attract foreign investment to fund Prince Mohammed's ambitious Vision 2030 economic diversification plan, appear to be pushing the kingdom closer to Israel than ever.



People attend an opposition demonstration to protest against presidential election results in Minsk, Belarus yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Al Shabaab attack on Mogadishu hotel kills 16

At least 16 people were killed in an attack on Sunday by the Islamist group al Shabaab on a seaside hotel in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, according to government spokesman Ismail Mukhtar Omar. The toll includes 11 victims and five assailants, Omar said in a Tweet late on Sunday. "Security forces lost one, 18 people were injured," Omar said. Militants stormed the high-end Elite Hotel in Lido beach, detonated a car bomb and then opened fire with assault rifles, the latest attack by al Shabaab, which has been battling the country's central government since 2008. The hotel is owned by Abdullahi Mohamed Nor, a lawmaker and former finance minister, and is frequented by government officials and members of the Somali diaspora.

## Deaf Palestinian shot by Israeli forces at checkpoint



Israeli security guards have shot and wounded a deaf Palestinian who was not able to hear the orders to stop at an occupied West Bank checkpoint. Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said yesterday the 60-year-old man was walking in an area of the Qalandiya Crossing north of Jerusalem where only vehicles are permitted. Rosenfeld said security guards ordered the man to stop but he continued to "approach them suspiciously". They then shot him in the legs. Rosenfeld said it was only then that the guards discovered the man did not respond because he "cannot hear or communicate". The incident comes less than three months after Israeli police shot and killed a 32-year-old Palestinian with severe autism.

## Pranab's condition remains critical

The health condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continued to remain critical yesterday morning, said the Army Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi adding that his vital and clinical parameters are stable. According to the Army Hospital, Mukherjee is on ventilatory support and is being closely monitored. "The condition of Hon'ble Shri Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical. His vital and clinical parameters are stable. He is on ventilatory support and is being closely monitored," the hospital in Delhi Cantt said in a statement. Abhijit Mukherjee, son of Pranab Mukherjee, who underwent brain surgery, had on Sunday informed that the medical condition of the former president is stable.

SOURCE: REUTERS, ALJAZEERA

## 'I'm not a saint'

Lukashenko offers to hand over power after referendum; opposition leader calls on security forces to switch sides

REUTERS, MINSK

Alexander Lukashenko, the leader of Belarus, said yesterday he would be willing to hand over power after a referendum, in an apparent bid to pacify mass protests and strikes that pose the biggest challenge to his 26 years in office.

He made the offer, which he insisted would not be delivered on while he was under pressure from protesters, after exiled opposition politician Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya said she was willing to lead the country.

In a sign of Lukashenko's growing vulnerability, he faced heckling and chants of "step down" during a speech to workers at one of the large state-run industrial plants that are the pride of his Soviet-style economic model and core support base.

Russia has told Lukashenko it is



## BELARUS PROTESTS

ready to provide military help to Belarus in the event of an external threat. Lukashenko faces the threat of European Union sanctions after a bloody crackdown on protests following what demonstrators say was his rigged re-election victory last week. He denies losing, citing official results that gave him just over 80% of

the vote.

Lukashenko told workers there would be no new presidential election, something the opposition wants, until he was killed.

He also offered to change the constitution, an apparent concession that seems unlikely to satisfy protesters.

"We'll put the changes to a referendum, and I'll hand over my constitutional powers," Lukashenko said, in remarks quoted by the official Belta news agency.

"Yes, I'm not a saint. You know my harsh side. I'm not eternal. But if you drag down the first president you'll drag down neighbouring countries."

Speaking in a video address from Lithuania, opposition politician Tsikhanouskaya urged security forces to switch sides, saying they would be forgiven if they did so now.

## India restores 4G data service in parts of J&amp;K

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

Authorities in Indian-administered Kashmir have ordered the restoration of high-speed 4G internet services in two of the disputed Himalayan region's 20 districts on a "trial basis" from Sunday night, more than a year after they were suspended.

"The high-speed mobile data services in the districts of Ganderbal and Udhampur shall be restored forthwith, on a trial basis," a government statement said on Sunday, adding that internet speed would continue to be restricted in other districts.

Udhampur, in Hindu-majority Jammu region, and Gerderbal, in Muslim-dominated Kashmir Valley, have a combined population of 850,000 out of the disputed region's total population of about 12 million.

The "trial" will last until September 8, and high-speed internet will be available on postpaid mobile phones only, according to the government order.

"I will update my phones. This is the first thing I intend to do once it is restored," Sheikh Anees, a journalist based in Ganderbal, told Anadolu news agency.

The internet had been cut off since last August, when India revoked the semi-autonomous status of Kashmir, divided it into two federally ruled territories and imposed a complete lockdown and communications blackout.

Kashmir was without internet for 213 days - the longest shutdown in a democracy - until it was restored on March 4.



An aerial view taken in Mauritius yesterday, shows the MV Wakashio bulk carrier, belonging to a Japanese company but Panamanian-registered, that had run aground and broke into two parts near Blue Bay Marine Park. France is sending more experts to Mauritius to help decide the fate of MV Wakashio leaking oil into pristine waters off the coast of the Indian Ocean island.

PHOTO: AFP

## Afghan talks uncertain

Prisoner release stalls after opposition from foreign govts

AFP, Kabul

Afghan authorities and the Taliban have hit an impasse over the planned release of hundreds of insurgents after opposition from some foreign governments, officials said yesterday, apparently stalling peace talks.

The negotiations were expected to begin within days after prominent Afghans met in Kabul on August 9 and approved the release of 400 Taliban prisoners -- including many involved in deadly attacks -- removing a crucial precondition to talks.

While Afghan authorities freed 80 Taliban prisoners on Thursday, there have been no further releases since then.

"There is no plan to release any prisoner today also," an official with the country's National Security



Council told AFP yesterday.

The delay has "something to do with some countries' concerns about some people in the list," Ghulam Farooq Majroh, a member of the Afghan negotiating team, told AFP.

Another NSC official said some "international partners have reservations" about releasing the prisoners.

The NSC officials and Majroh did not identify the countries, but Paris and Canberra have objected to the release of several insurgents accused of killing French and Australian nationals and soldiers.

Bettina Goislard, a French employee of the UN's refugee agency, was murdered by two Taliban militants in 2003, and a former Afghan soldier killed five French troops and injured 13 others in 2012 in Kapisa province.

France is "firmly opposed to the liberation of individuals sentenced for crimes against French nationals, especially soldiers and humanitarian workers," the foreign ministry said Saturday.

"We have consequently asked Afghan authorities not to proceed with the liberation of these terrorists."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Office of the Jail Super  
Sunamganj District Jail  
www.prison.sunamganj.gov.bd

Memo No. 58.04.9000.159.04.043.2020- Date: 17-08-2020

### e-Tender Notice

This is to notify all concerned that the following tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal.

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Name of goods	Publishing date & time	Closing date & time
01	484056	Supply of Unnotamaner Mashur Dal Mota to Sunamganj District Jail for the period of October/2020 to September/2021	16-Aug-2020 15:21	02-Sept-2020 12:00
02	484297	Supply of Unnotamaner Cholar Dal to Sunamganj District Jail for the period of October/2020 to September/2021	16-Aug-2020 15:05	02-Sept-2020 12:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 10:30 on 2nd September 2020.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocurement.gov.bd)).

Md. Abul Kalam Azad  
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GD-1276

## Landslide toll in Nepal hits

19

AFP, KATHMANDU

The death toll from a landslide in Nepal has risen to 19 after eight more bodies were pulled out from a mud-covered village in north-central Nepal, police said yesterday. Dozens of villagers in the remote hillside region of Sindhupalchowk district were buried under mud and stone after heavy rains caused a landslide early Friday.

Rescuers dug out 11 bodies on Friday and have been searching for survivors. Helicopters were being used to reach the isolated site after the landslide blocked roads. Nineteen people remain missing but hopes that anyone had survived the landslide were fading, authorities said.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh  
Department of Agricultural Extension  
Development and Expansion of Bio-Rational Based  
Integrated Pest Management Technologies of  
Vegetables, Fruits and Betel Leaf Project (DAE Part)  
Room No. 303, Rear Building, Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215  
[bpmpdb@gmail.com](mailto:bpmpdb@gmail.com)

Memo No. 12.02.0000.922.07.003.18.13 Date: 17.08.2020

### e-Tender Notice No. 08/2020-21

#### Open Tendering Method (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocurement.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following packages:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Procurement title	Last selling (date & time)	Closing & opening (date & time)
01	483724	EGP/BPMP/Demo-014/A	Supply of sex pheromone trap & lure (fruit fly of cucurbits & fruit, BSFB, Spodoptera litura).	9.9.2020 3.00pm	10.9.2020 2.00pm
02	483901	EGP/BPMP/Demo-014/B	Supply of attract & kill type trap for fruit fly of cucurbits & fruits.	9.9.2020 3.00pm	10.9.2020 4.00pm
03	483976	EGP/BPMP/Demo-014/C	Supply of bio-pesticides (SNPV, spinosad, abamectin, azadirachtin, Trichoderma spp.decoprima).	8.9.2020 3.00pm	9.9.2020 2.30pm
04	483988	EGP/BPMP/Demo-014/D	Supply of biocontrol agent (bracon hibitor)	8.9.2020 3.00pm	9.9.2020 1.00pm
05	483992	EGP/BPMP/Demo-014/E	Supply of Soil Recharge (Metarhizium anisopliae, Trichoderma harzianum, Beauveria bassiana, Trichoderma viride)	8.9.2020 3.00pm	9.9.2020 4.00pm

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GD-1277

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