

## QATAR DIPLOMATIC ROW

## Saudi-led bloc won't shrink list of demands

AFP, Dubai

The foreign ministers of four Arab states boycotting Qatar said yesterday they would make no compromises in their demand that Doha change its policies, as a political crisis that has split the Gulf approaches its third month.

Regional kingpin Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt broke ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing the emirate of fostering Islamist extremist groups and of ties to Saudi arch-rival Iran. Qatar has denied the allegations.

The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, who met in the Bahraini capital yesterday, said they were open to talks with Qatar on condition it "stops its support and financing of terrorism".

"We reiterate the importance of Qatar's compliance with the 13 demands outlined in the four states," said a joint statement released yesterday.

The Saudi-led bloc in June issued the list of demands for the lifting of sanctions, including the termination of regional news giant Al-Jazeera, the downgrading of ties to Iran and the closure of foreign military bases in the country.

The four Arab states have recalled their ambassadors from Doha, ordered all Qataris to return home and banned Qatar from using their airspace.

Qatar accuses the bloc of imposing a "blockade" on the tiny emirate and has rejected the demands as a violation of its sovereignty.

Qatar has also accused Saudi Arabia of restricting Qatari pilgrimage to Makkah, the site of the annual Muslim Hajj pilgrimage that falls next month.



Russian Navy frigates fire missiles during Russia's Navy Day celebration in Sevastopol in Crimea yesterday. President Vladimir Putin oversaw a pomp-filled display of Russia's naval might as the Kremlin paraded its sea power from the Baltic Sea to the shores of Syria.

PHOTO: AFP

## China has done 'nothing'

Says Trump after North Korea claims all of US in strike range after another successful ICBM test

AGENCE

US President Donald Trump warned Saturday that he would ban China to "do nothing" on North Korea, after the hermit state launched an intercontinental ballistic missile it boasted could reach the United States.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un boasted of his country's ability to strike any target in the US after the ICBM test that weapons experts said could even bring New York into range – in a major challenge to Trump.

Under Kim's leadership, North Korea has accelerated its drive towards a credible nuclear strike capability in defiance of international condemnation and multiple sets of UN sanctions.

In his critique of Beijing, which came in two tweets, Trump blamed the missile test of \$300 billion last year – which included a nuclear test – on North Korea, after South Korea indicated it was speeding the deployment of a US missile defense system that has infuriated China, reported AFP.

"I am very disappointed in China. Our foolish past leaders have allowed them to make hundreds of billions of dollars a year in trade, yet they did NOTHING for us with North Korea," just like that," Trump wrote.

"We will no longer allow this to continue. China could

easily solve this problem!"

North Korea said yesterday it had been forced to develop long-range missiles and nuclear weapons because of hostility by "American imperialists beasts" looking for another chance to invade the country, reported Reuters.

"In case the US fails to come to its own senses and continues to resort to military adventure and 'tough sanctions', the DPRK will respond with its resolve act in a statement,"

Meanwhile, US flew two supersonic B-1B bombers over the Korean peninsula in a show of force yesterday after Pyongyang's recent tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), the US and South Korean Air Forces said.

The B-1B flight was in direct response to the missile test and the previous July 3 launch of the "Hwasong-14" rocket, the US and South Korean air force said the flight was conducted early yesterday.

The bombers took off from a US air base in Guam, and were joined by Japanese and South Korean fighter jets during the exercise, according to the statement.

"North Korea remains the most urgent threat to regional stability," Pacific Air Forces commander General Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy said in the statement.

US FLIES BOMBERS OVER KOREAN PENINSULA  
N KOREA WARNS 'RESOLUTE ACT OF JUSTICE' FOR MORE US SANCTIONS



## 'Is everyone else in Pak honest?': Nawaz Sharif

PRI, Islamabad

Nawaz Sharif, still smarting from the shock disqualification by the Supreme Court for dishonesty, wants to know if everyone else in Pakistan was "Sadiq and Ameen" or honest and righteous.

The apex court on Friday disqualified 67-year-old Sharif for dishonesty and ruled that corruption cases be filed against him and his children over the Panama Papers scandal, forcing him to resign from premiership.

The court's ruling stated that Sharif had been dishonest in accepting his earnings from a Dubai-based company of his son in his nomination papers during the 2013 general election.

Addressing leaders of his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Saturday, Sharif said, "You should be proud that your leader doesn't have a stain of corruption on him."

"I am proud that I have not been declared ineligible over charges of corruption," he said at the PML-N's parliamentary meeting that approved his brother and Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif as his successor.

The former premier claimed he did not receive any kickbacks or commissions and never compromised on principles.

"When I never took a salary, what would I declare," he said, referring to the Supreme Court judgment that led to his ouster.

"When you take something, there's a problem; when you don't, there's a problem," he observed.

His successor

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"When you take something, there's a problem; when you don't, there's a problem," he observed.

"Is it only my family that should be held accountable? Is everyone else in this country Sadiq (honest) and Ameen (righteous)?" he asked.

"My conscience is clear," he asserted. "If I had done something wrong, or took something from this country that was not mine, I would have felt the guilt myself," he said.

Meanwhile, Rehman Malik, former interior minister and a senior member of the Pakistan Peoples Party, has commented that the phrases Sadiq and Ameen are part of Pakistan's Constitution under Article 62 and 63, applicable on public officers and it explains the criterion of "qualifications for a member of Majlis-i-Shoora (parliament)".



REUTERS, Islamabad

## MASSIVE MILITARY PARAD

China's Xi calls for building elite forces

REUTERS, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping told the military yesterday to transform itself into an elite force, as he oversaw a parade with flybys of advanced jets and a mass rally of troops to mark 90 years since the founding of the People's Liberation Army.

China's armed forces, the world's largest, are in the midst of an ambitious modernisation programme, which includes investing in new equipment, such as stealth fighters and aircraft carriers, as well as cuts to manpower.

Xi presided over the large-scale military parade at the remote Zhuohu training base in China's northern Inner Mongolia region, where he inspected troops from the back of a jeep, an event carried live on state television.

Travelling down a long strip lined with tanks, missile launchers and other military vehicles, Xi, wearing military fatigues and a field cap, greeted thousands of troops.

Xi, who oversees the PLA in his role as head of the powerful Central Military Commission, repeatedly shouted, "Hello! Come on! Come on! Come on!" as he rode past.

The troops bellowed back, "Serve the people!" "Follow the Party!" "Fight to win!" and "Forge exemplary conduct!"

Tanks, vehicle-mounted nuclear-capable missiles and other equipment rolled by, as military aircraft flew above, including H-6K bombers.

## NEWS IN brief

British govt divided over EU immigration

AFP, London

The British government appeared divided yesterday over Brexit, with International Trade Secretary Liam Fox clashing with finance minister Philip Hammond over free movement of labour once the approach," it said.

The latest incident came after a US Navy ship fired warning shots at a Guards boat in similar circumstances on Tuesday, with each side blaming the other.

REUTERS, Beijing



People wait in line next to an image of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez before voting during the Constituent Assembly election in Caracas, Venezuela, yesterday. Deadly violence erupted around the controversial site, with a candidate to the all-powerful assembly being elected shot dead in his home and troops firing weapons to clear protesters in Caracas.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Not going anywhere, not dying: Mugabe

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's 93-year-old President Robert Mugabe, declaring "I am not dying," said Saturday to brush aside growing concerns about his health after his wife urged him to name a successor.

Mugabe's medical team, fuelling questions about his health, has last visit was early this month for what was described as a "routine medical check-up".

"There is the issue that the president is going. I am not going. That the president is dying. I am not dying," Mugabe told thousands of supporters at a rally in his home town of Chinhoyi.

His remarks came after his wife Grace urged him to name a successor in a bid to end the factionalism threatening to tear the ruling ZANU-PF party apart.

"I thank God for having lived to this day. I thank God for the good life. I have an ailment here and there (but) my organs... my heart and liver are very firm. Recently doctors were actually surprised by the strength of my bones," Mugabe said.

He said he had followed a strict exercise routine from the year he was imprisoned during the fight against colonial rule in the 1970s.

Mugabe, who spoke for more than an hour at the rally, now walks with difficulty and sometimes does off during meetings.

Authorities said as many as 200 migrants have been crammed into the trailer found in Texas.

At least five people were killed and ten wounded in Somalia's capital Mogadishu yesterday when a car bomb detonated on a road in the security ministry said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the bomb

Israel soldier's killing verdict upheld

AP, Jerusalem

Israeli media are reporting that a military court has upheld the 18-month sentence of a soldier convicted of fatally shooting a Palestinian attacker who lay wounded on the ground.

Media report that the court yesterday found no reason to accept Elor Azaria's appeal and overturn the sentencing handed down after his conviction on a manslaughter charge.

Azaria's trial deeply divided Israel. The verdict marked a victory for military commanders seeking to preserve its vaunted code of ethics, while prominent hard-line politicians called him a hero who was being persecuted.

## The T-shirt that's getting people arrested in Turkey

CNN ONLINE

More than 20 people have been detained by Turkish security forces for wearing a white T-shirt with the word "HERO" written on it in black letters.

In mid-July, chaotic broke out in a courtroom in southwest Turkey when Gokhan Guelu -- a former soldier accused of his connection to an assassination attempt on President Tayyip Erdogan during the 2016 failed military coup -- turned up to a court hearing wearing one of the T-shirts, prompting the session to be adjourned.

Guelu is also accused of belonging to what the Turkish government refers to as the Fethullah Gulen Terrorist Organization (FETO). Gulen, the religious Muslim cleric accused by Turkey of hatching the military coup attempt, has said that his supporters could have been involved in the coup attempt.

The day following Guelu's court appearance, pro-Erdogan supporters gathered outside the courthouse where they hung another white T-shirt embroidered with the word "TRAITOR" on it from a noose.

The T-shirts were originally sold by a Turkish clothing store ubiquitous in shopping centers throughout the country. The brand has since halted sales of the T-

but has always denied any direct connection. An investigation into Guelu -- and his choice of courtroom clothing -- was soon launched.

Guelu's sister sent him the T-shirt while he was in jail awaiting trial and prison authorities allowed Guelu to wear it to the hearing, according to news media Anadolu.

The prosecutor's office is now investigating Guelu's sister and the government agencies responsible for running the prison where Guelu is incarcerated, according to Anadolu.

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## TENSIONS WITH

Iran rules out halt to missile programme

AFP, Tehran

A defiant Iran vowed on Saturday to press ahead with its missile programme and conduct more US strikes, as tensions rise after the West hardened its tone against the Islamic republic.

In the latest incident, Tehran and Washington accused each other's naval forces of provocative manoeuvres in the Gulf that culminated in a US helicopter firing warning flares.

The US Navy said it had reacted to unresponsive vessels belonging to the Revolutionary Guards closing in on American ships at high speed, a charge denied by Iran which described the American move as unprovoked.

At 4 pm (1130 GMT) on Friday, the supercarrier USS Nimitz and its accompanying ships, while being monitored by the Guards' frigates, flew a helicopter near the Resolat oil and gas platform and approached the force's ships, the Iranian paramilitary force said.

"The Americans in a provocative and unprofessional move, sent a warning message to the frigates and fired flares," it said. The Guards "ignored the unconventional move by the US ships and continued their mission".

The US Navy said its ships were on a routine patrol when an American helicopter "observed several Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps naval vessels approaching US naval forces at a high rate of speed".

"US naval forces attempted to establish communication, with no response from the Iranian vessels. Shortly thereafter, at a safe distance, the US helicopter deployed flares, after which the Iranian vessels halted their approach," it said.

The latest incident came after a US Navy ship fired warning shots at a Guards boat in similar circumstances on Tuesday, with each side blaming the other.

REUTERS, Beijing

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The Philipine mayor killed in drug raid

AFP, Manila

A Philipine mayor accused of involvement in narcotics trafficking was shot dead along with 14 other people in a police raid yesterday. President Duterte has singled out local officials, police as part of a crackdown that has made him popular with many but has been condemned by human rights groups.

Two dead in German nightclub shooting

AFP, Konsens

A German opened fire at a packed nightclub in southern Germany early yesterday, killing one and wounding four before being shot by police, authorities said, in an

Five dead, 10 injured in Somaliland blast

AFP, Mogadishu

At least five people were killed and ten wounded in Somalia's capital Mogadishu yesterday when a car bomb detonated on a road in the security ministry said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the bomb