

Israel arrests 4 from pro-Hamas TV station
AFP, Ramallah

Israel's military has arrested four Palestinians in the occupied West Bank from a television station close to Hamas, officials said yesterday, after the defence minister branded the channel a terrorist organisation. The military said the arrests of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) TV journalists were made overnight.

36 women kidnapped by IS in Syria's Sweida
AFP, Beirut

The Islamic State group kidnapped dozens of Druze women and children when it attacked their villages last week in Syria's southern province of Sweida, a monitor said yesterday. More than 250 people were killed on Wednesday when IS carried out a string of suicide attacks in the provincial capital Sweida.

Record suicides of the elderly in Singapore
AFP, Singapore

The number of elderly people committing suicide in Singapore reached a record high last year, a non-government group said yesterday. Samaritans of Singapore said fear of becoming a burden to family, social disconnection, physical impairment are the most common challenges faced by the elderly.

Malaysia drops sedition case against cartoonist
AFP, Kuala Lumpur

A Malaysian political cartoonist said yesterday that nine sedition charges against him had been dropped after the scandal-mired regime that he had frequently lampooned was booted out of power. Zulkifli Anwar Ullhaque was repeatedly targeted under the former government for his cartoons.

Saudi king reassures allies

Backs Palestinian stance on Trump administration's proposal

REUTERS, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia has reassured Arab allies it will not endorse any Middle East peace plan that fails to address Jerusalem's status or refugees' right of return, easing their concerns that the kingdom might back a nascent US deal which aligns with Israel on key issues.

King Salman's private guarantees to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his public defence of long-standing Arab positions in recent months have helped reverse percep-

tions that Saudi Arabia's stance was changing under his powerful young son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, diplomats and analysts said.

This in turn has called into question whether Saudi Arabia, birthplace of Islam and site of its holiest shrines, can rally Arab support for a new push to end the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, with an eye to closing ranks against mutual enemy Iran.

"In Saudi Arabia, the king is the one who decides on this issue now, not the crown prince," said a senior Arab diplomat in Riyadh. "The US mistake was they thought one country could pressure the rest to give in, but it's not about pressure. No Arab leader can concede on Jerusalem or Palestine."

Palestinian officials told Reuters in December that Prince Mohammed, known as MbS, had pressed Abbas to support the US plan despite concerns it offered the Palestinians limited self-government inside disconnected patches of the occupied West Bank, with no right of return for refugees displaced by the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967.

Such a plan would diverge from the Arab Peace Initiative drawn up by Saudi Arabia in 2002 in which Arab nations offered Israel normal ties in return for a statehood deal with the Palestinians and full Israeli withdrawal from territory captured in 1967. Saudi officials have denied any difference between King Salman, who has vocally supported that initiative, and MbS, who has shaken up long-held policies on many issues and told a US magazine in April that Israelis are entitled to live peacefully on their own land - a rare statement for an Arab leader.

The Palestinian ambassador to Riyadh, Basem Al-Agha, told Reuters that King Salman had expressed support for Palestinians in a recent meeting with Abbas, saying: "We will not abandon you ... We accept what you accept and we reject what you reject."

He said that King Salman naming the 2018 Arab League conference "The Jerusalem Summit" and announcing \$200 million in aid for Palestinians were messages that Jerusalem and refugees were back on the table.

The Saudi authorities did not respond to a request for comment on the current status of diplomatic efforts.

A White House official told reporters last week that Trump's envoys were working on the detailed set of proposals to date for the long-awaited peace proposal, which would include what the administration is calling a robust economic plan, though there is thus far no release date.

MIDEAST PEACE PLAN

Riyadh tells Arabs it won't abandon Jerusalem, refugees

There are doubts over rallying support for unpopular US proposal





PHOTO: AFP

Rescue team members give treatment to a climber after walking down from Rinjani Mountain at Sembalun village in Lombok Timur, Indonesia yesterday. Nearly 700 trekkers headed down Mount Rinjani yesterday, a day after a powerful earthquake terrified the climbers as boulders tumbled down the slopes of the volcano.

'Terrible mistake'

British minister calls his Chinese wife Japanese

REUTERS, Beijing

In a slip of the tongue during his maiden trip to China as Britain's new foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt yesterday told his Chinese counterpart that his wife was Japanese, but backtracked quickly.

At the start of talks in Beijing, the capital, Hunt told the government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, that he had a long relationship with China, beginning with a backpacking trip when he was 19.

"My wife is Japanese - my wife is Chinese. That's a terrible mistake to make," Hunt said, to laughter in the room.

"My wife is Chinese, and my children are half-Chinese, and so we have Chinese grandparents who live in Xian and strong family connections in China."

He married his wife Lucia in July 2009 and they have a son and two daughters, according to his website.

Hunt, who took over this month following the resignation of his predecessor Boris Johnson, was visiting Beijing on only his second trip outside Britain since assuming his role as foreign minister.

The rest of his talks with Wang, a former Chinese ambassador to Japan who speaks fluent Japanese, went much better, though.

Hunt later told a news briefing that China had offered Britain talks on a post-Brexit free trade deal.

Zimbabwe votes in first post-Mugabe election

REUTERS, Harare

Zimbabweans yesterday voted in the first election since former president Robert Mugabe was ousted in a de facto coup, with allegations of voter suppression raising fears of a disputed result.

Nelson Chamisa, the main challenger to President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a long-time Mugabe ally, gave no evidence for his claim that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) was impeding voting in urban areas where he enjoys strong support.

"The people's will being negated & undetermined due to these deliberate & unnecessary delays," Chamisa tweeted.

The ZEC was not immediately available to comment. It has denied Chamisa's previous allegations of bias.

A credible election is essential if Zimbabwe is to exit painful sanctions and secure the donor funding needed to stem chronic cash shortages.

Chamisa said his Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) would win if there was no "ballot mischief", making it likely he will challenge the outcome if Mnangagwa prevails, something likely to lead to street protests and possible violence.

While absent from the ballot paper for the first time since independence from Britain in 1980, Mugabe emerged from eight months of obscurity on the eve of the election to announce he would vote for the opposition, surprising former ally Mnangagwa who accused him of striking a deal with Chamisa.

Mugabe, 94, one of the last "Big Men" of African politics, made no comment to reporters as he cast his ballot around lunchtime accompanied by his wife, Grace. A huge crowd gathered outside, some cheering, many booing.

Opinion polls give the 75-year-old former intelligence chief only a slim lead over Chamisa, 40. There will be a runoff on September 8 if no candidate wins more than half the votes.

President Mnangagwa, Chamisa in tight race

Runoff in Sept possible if no candidate wins more than half the votes



Indian activists hold placards as they take part in a protest over the sexual assault of girls at a state-run home in eastern India city, near Bihar Bhawan in New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

POST-POLL PAKISTAN

India intensifies contact with Imran's PTI

TNN, New Delhi

After providing a seal of approval to Pakistan elections, India has intensified contacts with Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the run-up to government formation.

The Indian mission remains in touch with senior PTI leaders who are likely to play an important role in the new government, according to sources.

While the PTI campaign was not completely devoid of anti-India rhetoric, the Indian side understands that this had more to do with the rough and tumble of Pakistan politics than any antipathy for India.

Khan's party too has been appreciative of the fact that the Indian side, contrary to the popular perception in Pakistan that the Narendra Modi government wanted Nawaz Sharif's party to return to power, remained equidistant from all parties.

"They know that the Indian mission was as much in touch with PTI as with PML-N or even with PPP," said a source.

Indian officials have not ruled out the possibility of PM Modi making a congratulatory phone call, like Afghan Prez Ashraf Ghani did Sunday, to Khan in the next few days as a part of the outreach.

India closely followed Ghani's telephonic conversation with Khan in which, as the Afghan president announced on Twitter, both leaders agreed to overcome the past and to lay a new foundation "for a prosperous political, social and economic future" of both countries.

Khan, in his first address to the nation, had also said that his government would like to have better ties with Afghanistan. He had said at the time that peace in Pakistan is contingent to peace in Afghanistan.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASSAM'S NRC

Assam released the second and the final draft of the state's National Register of Citizens (NRC) yesterday. The NRC was published online and available in all the NRC Sewa Kendras (NSK) across the state. Here's all you need to know about it:

WHAT IS NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS AND WHY IS IT BEING UPDATED?

The National Register of Citizens is an exercise which was first carried out in 1951 to enumerate the citizens, their houses and holdings. Over the years, there has been a demand from the indigenous Assamese groups to update the NRC. A pilot project was initiated at two places in 2010. In Barpeta, police action on an anti-NRC protest led to four deaths and the project was shelved. It resumed after Cant order from the Supreme Court.

WHO IS A CITIZEN IN ASSAM?

Post the Assam agitation against 'foreigners', and the subsequent Assam Accord signed in 1985 between the government of India and the All Assam Students Union, the Citizenship Act, 1955, was



amended. All Indian-origin people, including from Bangladesh who entered Assam before January 1, 1966, were deemed as citizens; those who came between January 1, 1966 and March 25 1971 could get citizenship after registering themselves and living for 10 years; and those who entered after March 25, 1971 were to be deported.

HOW IS THE NRC BEING UPDATED?

People had to submit a form quoting legacy code, basically a PNR kind of unique code to establish their family or parental linkage before the cut-off date. Legacy documents include the electoral rolls up to March 25, 1971 and the 1951 NRC. Apart from the legacy documents, one could also furnish 12 other documents.

IS THE VERIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOUR ENTRY INTO NRC?

For Original Inhabitants of Assam, the verification was done less vigorously. However, for the rest, as Prateek Hajela, the state coordinator, says "mere documentary evidence is not the end of it. If there is a contradiction, which is appearing through some other means of verification, that also has to be properly explained".

WHICH CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE FACE EXCLUSION FROM THE UPDATED LIST OF THE NRC?

Those who have been declared foreigners and their descendants will be out of the NRC, those who have been marked as Doubtful voters or suspected illegal immigrants and their descendants, and those whose cases are pending in the foreigners tribunals and their descendants will be kept on hold till their cases are cleared by the foreigners tribunals.

DOES NOT HAVING YOUR NAME MAKE YOU STATELESS OR AN ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT?

No. They can file claims against the decision on a prescribed form. However, there are misgivings for in many instances they will again be submitting the same document which has been rejected in the initial rounds of verification. SOURCE: HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No: 46.02.0000.827.11.001.18.76Date: 30-07-2018

Request for Expressions of Interest

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives/Local Government Division.			
2	Agency	Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)			
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Khulna Division Rural Infrastructure Development Project.			
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not at present.			
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka			
6	Expression of Interest for	Selection of Individual Consultant (National) (Time Based).			
7	EOI Ref No.	46.02.0000.827.11.001.18.76			
8	Date	30-07-18			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
9	Source of Funds	GoB.			
10	Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A.			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
11	Project Code	224038300			
12	Project Name	Khulna Division Rural Infrastructure Development Project.			
13	EOI Closing Date and Time	Date	Time		
		19-08-2018	2:00pm		
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT					
14	Brief Description of Assignment				
	Sl.	Package No.	Designation, Number & Tentative Duration	Qualification and Experience	Scope of Work
	(i)	KDRIDP/SP-02	Design & Supervision Engineer	Minimum B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from any reputed University having at least 20 years of overall experiences, out of which 15 years relevant experience in design and supervision of large PC/RCC Girder Bridges.	a) Assist Project Director in reviewing the structural design of bridges, prepare modification if needed. b) Should be capable to prepare the structural design of infrastructures (especially bridges, particularly PC girder bridges). c) Supervise the construction, improvement and maintenance works of bridges and other structures and provide technical support to the PD if any problem arises during work. (Detail as TOR)
	(ii)	KDRIDP/SP-03	AutoCAD Operator	Minimum Diploma in Civil Engineering from any reputed public institute or B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from any reputed University having at least 5 years of overall experiences, out of which 3 years of relevant experience in performing all type of drawings of bridges through AutoCAD for B.Sc. in Civil Engineering and at least 15 years of overall experiences, out of which 10 years of relevant experience in performing all type of drawings of bridges through AutoCAD for Diploma in Civil Engineering.	Prepare computer aided drawings of bridges and other structures. (Detail as TOR)
CLIENT DETAILS					
15	Name of Official Inviting EOI			Md. Abdus Salam	
16	Designation of Official Inviting EOI			Project Director	
17	Address of Official Inviting EOI			62, West Agargaon (Level-04), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.	
18	Contact details of Official Inviting EOI			Telephone Number : 02-9135191 e-mail: pd.kdrdp@lged.gov.bd	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOI.A complete set of "Request for Application" including Terms of Reference may be obtained from the office of the undersigned.RFA must be delivered to the address below in sealed envelope on or before 2.00pm on August 19, 2018 clearly mention in the name of post.					
			Md. Abdus Salam Project Director Phone: 02-9135191 pd.kdrdp@lged.gov.bd		
GD-1860					