



## Europe must 'pay price' to save nuke deal

### Says Iranian FM

AGENCIES

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said yesterday that Europe had not yet shown it was willing to "pay the price" of defying Washington in order to save the nuclear deal.

Zarif said European governments had put forward proposals to maintain oil and banking ties with Iran after the second phase of US sanctions return in November.

But he told Iran's Young Journalist Club website that these measures were more "a statement of their position than practical measures".

"Although they have moved forward, we believe that Europe is not yet ready to pay the price (of truly defying the US)," Zarif said.

US President Donald Trump pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May, and began re-imposing sanctions earlier this month that block other countries from trading with Iran, reported AFP.

Europe has vowed to keep providing Iran with the economic benefits it received from the nuclear deal, but many of its bigger companies have already pulled out of the country for fear of US penalties.

The Iranian minister also said yesterday that a new Iran Action Group in the US State Department aimed to overthrow the Islamic Republic, but would fail, reported Reuters.

Zarif tweeted: "65 years ago today, the US overthrew the popularly elected democratic government of Dr. Mossadegh, restoring the dictatorship & subjugating Iranians for the next 25 years. Now an 'Action Group' dreams of doing the same through pressure, misinformation & demagoguery. Never again."



## THE HAJJ in numbers

The hajj pilgrimage, which started at Islam's holiest sites in Saudi Arabia yesterday, is one of the world's largest annual gatherings. Here are some figures illustrating its scale:

More than two million pilgrims are taking part this year, according to official figures, compared to 1.86 million in 2016 and just 24,000 in 1941.

Some 18,000 civil defence employees, among tens of thousands of security personnel, are helping safeguard pilgrims, officials say. Additionally, thousands of security cameras have been set up along the pilgrimage route.

Twenty-five hospitals backed by 180 ambulances and more than 30,000 health practitioners have been mobilised to provide emergency services to pilgrims, according to the hajj ministry.

Tens of thousands of air-conditioned tents have been set up to house pilgrims.

Around 14,000 international and domestic flights have so far transported pilgrims, according to official figures. Around 21,000 buses have also been used.

Around 16,000 telecommunication towers and 3,000 WiFi access points have been set up to serve pilgrims, the hajj ministry says.

Eight million copies of the holy Quran and their translations as well as other religious books will be handed out to pilgrims, official figures show.

Saudi Arabia hopes to welcome 30 million pilgrims annually in the kingdom by 2030. Muslims also flock to the country for the umra pilgrimage, which can be performed at any time of the year.

Around 54 million pilgrims have attended the hajj over the past 25 years, according to official figures.

PHOTO: AFP

# Can Imran live up to his lofty rhetoric?

Aside from myriad of crises, Pak PM has to find a solution to curb sky high expectations

REUTERS, Islamabad

From creating 10 million jobs to building an Islamic welfare state and restoring Pakistan's tattered image abroad, new premier Imran Khan is facing a problem of his own making: runaway expectations raised by his lofty rhetoric.

A cricket legend and firebrand nationalist who is hero-worshipped by supporters, Khan swept to power in last month's election on a populist platform vowing to root out corruption among a venal elite and lift people out of poverty.

But he inherits control of a volatile nation facing mounting problems at home and abroad, including a looming economic crisis and a fracture with historic ally the United States over Pakistan's alleged links to militants. Ties are also fraught with neighbours Afghanistan and nuclear-armed rival India.

Opponents in parliament talk of forming a grand coalition against Khan, dubbing him a "puppet" and accusing him of entering into a Faustian Pact with the powerful military, which has a history of ousting prime ministers and clashing with civilian governments over control of foreign policy.

Khan denies all accusations that the military covertly helped him win the election.

Whether Khan can become the first Pakistani prime minister to complete a full five-year term in office will depend on his relationship with influential generals, analysts say.



lysts say.

If his ideas on foreign policy differ from theirs, analysts say Khan would suffer a similar fate to other civilian leaders who have failed to see out their term.

Forced to rely on smaller parties for a razor-thin majority in parliament, and with the opposition controlling the Senate, Khan's coalition government could struggle to push through legislation without major compromises. An increasingly assertive judiciary could also hold it back.

Yet the mood in the country is one of unbridled optimism, especially among Khan's young supporters, who believe he can build a corruption-free and prosperous "New

Pakistan" for the country's 208 million people.

"His biggest challenge is managing expectations among his followers and voters because he's almost promised them the moon," said Raza Ahmad Rumi, the editor of Pakistan's Daily Times newspaper.

During Independence Day celebrations this week, when flag-waving Pakistanis flooded the streets of Islamabad, many voiced confidence that Khan would deliver on promises to build world class hospitals and improve education in a nation where the illiteracy rate hovers above 40 percent.

"I have moved my daughter (from a private) to a government school, because we are confident that Pakistan is going to



PHOTO: AFP

This photo shows flooded area in the north part of Kochi, in the Indian state of Kerala. Rescuers waded into submerged villages in southern India yesterday in a desperate search for survivors cut off for days by floods that have already killed more than 370 people. Photo was taken on Saturday.

## No hajj for Qataris this yr

### Says Doha amid diplomatic row with Saudi

AFP, Doha

Qatar yesterday said its citizens were unable to take part in the annual hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia as the two countries remain bitterly locked in a diplomatic dispute.

"There is no chance this year for Qatari citizens and residents to travel for hajj," a government official told AFP.

"Registration of pilgrims from the State of Qatar remains closed and residents of Qatar cannot be granted visas as there are no diplomatic missions," added the official.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia have been locked in a political feud for more than a year, with Riyadh banning all flights to and from Doha and severing diplomatic and trade ties with its neighbour.

Saudi authorities have said Qatari pilgrims were welcome at the hajj and last week denied it was blocking them from travelling to the kingdom's holy sites.

The Qatari official said the border closure and the lack of diplomatic missions and direct flights between the two countries effectively meant that no Qataris could undertake the pilgrimage.

The row over hajj is the latest frontline in a highly fractious 14-month long diplomatic dispute between the two states.

Qatar has been isolated since June 2017, accused by Saudi Arabia and its allies of supporting terrorism and being too close to Riyadh's archrival, Iran -- charges Doha denies.

Sanctions imposed by Riyadh as part of the dispute stop Qataris from travelling to Saudi Arabia.

However, an exception was made for hajj, according to official Saudi statements.

## 'McCarthyism at its worst'

Trump lashes out at Russia probe over media reports

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump yesterday angrily denounced the federal probe of Russia's 2016 election meddling as "McCarthyism at its WORST!" insisting he had authorised his White House counsel to testify to bring the matter to a close.

Trump's Twitter storm was set off by a front-page report in the New York Times that said White House counsel Don McGahn had provided Special Counsel Robert Mueller with an unusually detailed account of Trump's thinking during key episodes under investigation.

Trump -- who had already addressed the issue late Saturday -- stepped up his attacks on the story and the probe in a series of angry morning tweets, slamming The New York Times for implying that McGahn had turned on him.

"I have nothing to hide ... and have demanded transparency so that this Rigged and Disgusting Witch Hunt can come to a close."

"So many lives have been ruined over nothing - McCarthyism at its WORST!"

Mueller is investigating whether the president sought to obstruct justice as well as whether his cam-

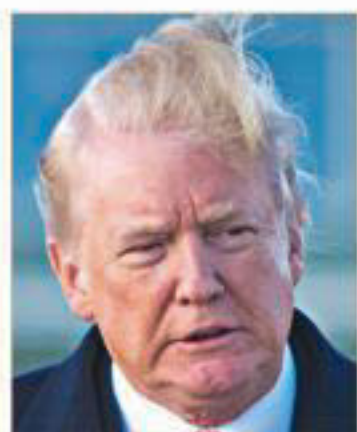
paign colluded with Russia's covert effort to sway the 2016 presidential election in Trump's favor.

In more than 30 hours of testimony over the past nine months, the Times said McGahn laid out for investigators Trump's fury over the probe and the ways in which he asked McGahn to respond to it.

Among the episodes he testified to were Trump's firing of former FBI director James Comey, and his obsession with putting a loyalist in charge of the probe, according to the Times. It noted that McGahn played a key role in stopping Trump from firing Mueller, who was made special counsel after Comey's firing.

Trump called the story a "Fake piece" and seemed particularly incensed at the suggestion that McGahn was a "RAT" like John Dean, the former White House counsel who testified against president Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal.

McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of subversion or treason without proper regard for evidence. McCarthyism is named after the American politician Joseph McCarthy, who in the 1950s accused many Americans of being Communists.



Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl and Russian President Vladimir Putin dance during her wedding in Gamlitz, Styria, Austria. Putin attended the wedding on Saturday on his way to Germany where he met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel to discuss conflicts in Syria and Ukraine as well as energy issues.

PHOTO: REUTERS, AFP

## Israel shuts Gaza's only crossing

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel yesterday closed its only crossing for people with the Gaza Strip except for humanitarian cases after weekend border clashes, the latest tightening of its blockade on the Palestinian enclave despite truce efforts.

The move could prevent Gazans from travelling via the crossing for this week's Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which runs from Monday night until Thursday night, but Israeli officials did not say how long the closure would last.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton yesterday arrived in Israel for talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a time of shared concerns over Syria, Iran and the Gaza Strip.

Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman said in a statement the closure was due to "violent incidents on the border last Friday".

Border protests and clashes on Friday saw two Palestinians killed by Israeli gunfire.

## 'We are in a mess'

Kofi Annan lashed out at state of global leadership before death

AFP, Paris

Former UN chief Kofi Annan, who died on Saturday, lashed out at the state of global leadership in an exclusive interview with AFP last year, urging more cooperation to deal with terrorism, migration and climate change.

"Honestly speaking, we are in a mess," the Nobel peace laureate said on December 12 ahead of a major climate conference in Paris.

"In the past when we went through this sort of crisis, you had leaders who had the courage and the vision to want to take action, to understand that they needed to work with others."

Speaking two years to the day after the Paris climate deal was agreed -- and following President Donald Trump's announcement that the United States would leave the pact -- Annan remembered "the enthusiasm, the excitement and the energy that was brought to bear" in 2015.

"When you walk away from a conference like this, you expect people to go away fully determined to implement, to continue and move," he said.

"But that hasn't happened, I think. We've slackened a bit... We haven't followed through."

"We must also remember that only promises that are kept are promises which matter."

"Today, leaders are going in the wrong direction," Annan said. "Leaders are withdrawing."

## NEWSIN brief

### PTI man elected as Punjab CM

DAWN ONLINE

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's (PTI) Usman Buzdar was elected chief minister Punjab yesterday with the support of 186 MPs, compared to the 159 backing PML-N's Hamza Shabbaz Sharif. PPP lawmakers did not cast their votes in the election. Buzdar's nomination had turned controversial when reports surfaced that he had allegedly been involved in a murder case in 1998.

### Fresh tremor rocks Indonesia's Lombok

AFP, Mataram

A strong 6.3-magnitude earthquake rocked the Indonesian island of Lombok yesterday, triggering landslides, damaging buildings and sending people fleeing just two weeks after a tremor killed more than 480 people there. There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries. The August 5 quake left more than 350,000 displaced.

### Afghanistan declares provisional ceasefire

AFP, Kabul

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani declared a provisional ceasefire with the Taliban in a televised broadcast yesterday following a recent surge in conflict, but said the truce would hold only if the insurgents reciprocated. "I once again announce a ceasefire from tomorrow until the prophet's birthday provided that the Taliban reciprocate," said Ghani, referring to the Prophet Mohammed's birthday which is celebrated on November 21 in Afghanistan.