

SEIZURE OF IRANIAN TANKER

Gibraltar rejects US demand

AFP, Gibraltar

Gibraltar yesterday rejected a US demand to seize an Iranian oil tanker at the centre of a diplomatic dispute as it prepared to leave the British overseas territory after weeks of detention.

Gibraltar's government said it could not seek a court order to detain the supertanker because US sanctions against Iran were not applicable in the European Union.

"The EU sanctions regime against Iran -- which is applicable in Gibraltar -- is much narrower than that applicable in the US," the Gibraltar authorities said in a statement.

A Gibraltar judge had ordered the Grace 1 tanker released on Thursday, weeks after authorities seized the vessel on suspicion of transporting oil to Syria in breach of European sanctions. Iran has repeatedly denied this.

But on Friday the US Justice Department filed a request to detain the ship alleging it was involved in supporting illicit shipments to Syria by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, listed as a terrorist group by Washington.

The seizure triggered a sharp deterioration in relations between Tehran and London. Iran subsequently detained the British-flagged tanker Stena Impero in what was seen as a tit-for-tat move.

The US Justice Department says the Grace 1 -- now renamed the Adrian Darya -- and its oil are subject to forfeiture because of US sanctions violations.

Ties between Tehran and Washington have frayed since US President Donald Trump withdrew last year from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Iran, reimposing crippling unilateral sanctions.



Rescuers work on a site after a building collapsed following heavy monsoon rainfall in the northern hill town of Shimla, yesterday. Inset, Flood-affected residents of a low lying area on the banks of the Ganges river move their belongings to drier ground at Sangam, as the water level of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers rises rapidly during monsoon rains in the region, in Allahabad. The incessant rain lashing Himachal Pradesh have caused the death of at least 18 people in the past 24 hours.

PHOTO: AFP



NEWS IN brief

4 killed in Romania hospital attack

AFP, Bucharest

Four people have died and nine were injured after being attacked by a patient in a psychiatric hospital, Romanian press reports said yesterday. They said a 38-year-old man who had admitted himself to the hospital in Sapoca, northeast of the capital Bucharest, entered a treatment room and attacked other patients with a transfusion stand. Among the nine injured in the attack, two were in a coma, they added.

New wildfire forces evacuations in Spain

AFP, Madrid

Authorities on the Spanish island of Gran Canaria were set to evacuate more residents yesterday as a forest fire broke out just days after another blaze raged in the same area. It was unclear how many people this would involve, but Tejeda has a population of just under 2,000. The blaze comes just five days after firefighters managed to contain a fire in the same area of the Canary Islands archipelago that had sparked the evacuation of hundreds of people.

Libyan rescues more than 300 migrants

AFP, Tripoli

The Libyan navy yesterday said 335 migrants had been rescued and one body recovered in separate operations off the coast, as they tried to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Nine children were among 57 migrants in a wooden boat rescued Saturday about 40 nautical miles from the town of Zuwara, west of Tripoli, navy spokesman General Ayoub Kacem told AFP. He said they were from Ethiopia and Egypt.

India's nuke arsenal under 'fascist, racist' Modi not safe

Says Pak PM, urges world to act; Indian home minister says talks with Pakistan can be held on Pak Occupied Kashmir

INDIAN EXPRESS, DAWN/ANN

Two days after Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hinted that India's "no first use" for nuclear weapons might not be etched in stone, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday expressed concern about the "safety and security of India's nuclear arsenal" under the control of the "fascist, racist Hindu supremacist" Narendra Modi government and urged the international community to take notice.

"The world must also seriously consider the safety and security of India's nuclear arsenal in the control of the fascist, racist Hindu supremacist Modi government. This is an issue that impacts not just the region but the world," Khan tweeted.

The prime minister's remarks come a day after the Pakistani Army claimed that it was possible India could launch an attack to divert global attention from Kashmir, which has once again

become a fresh flashpoint between the two nations since the revocation of J&K's special status earlier this month.

For the second time in a week, Imran Khan once again sought to bring the attention of the global community to the unprecedented communication blackout in Kashmir since August 5, saying the matter "should have sent alarm bells ringing across the world with UN observers being sent there".

"India has been captured, as Germany had been captured by Nazis, by a fascist, racist Hindu supremacist ideology and leadership. This threatens nine million Kashmiris under siege for over two weeks which should have sent alarm bells ringing across the world with UN observers being sent there," he said.

Upping the ante against the RSS, Khan said, "One can simply Google to understand the link between the Nazi ideology and ethnic cleansing and genocide ideology of the RSS-BJP

founding fathers."

"Already four million Indian Muslims face detention camps and cancellation of citizenship. The world must take note as this genie is out of the bottle and the doctrine of hate and genocide, with RSS goons on the rampage, will spread unless the international community acts now to stop it," he said.

The Pakistan PM's remarks came on a day Rajnath Singh made it clear that if bilateral talks between the two countries were to happen, it would be on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

"Some people believe that talks should be held with Pakistan but as long as Pakistan supports terror, there will be no talks. If there will be talks, it will be on PoK," he said.

Last week, Singh had created a flutter when he said that India remained "firmly committed" to the doctrine of "no first use" for nuclear weapons but indicated that this may not be etched in stone.

India devising 4-point plan for long-term calm in J&K: report

NDTV ONLINE

As the unprecedented security lockdown and communications blackout in Jammu and Kashmir is pared down, the Indian government is zeroing-in on its long-term strategy to prevent any fallout from the massive changes made to the state earlier this month. Key political leaders from the state were taken into detention, phone and internet lines snapped and curfew-like restrictions were imposed as the central government on August 5 removed Jammu and Kashmir's decades-old autonomy and decided to split the state into two union territories.

According to sources in the Jammu and Kashmir administration, the plan to prevent a breakout of violent protest involves tactics to handle four specific groups in the state.

The first cluster of people, dubbed "movers and shakers" by government functionaries, "appear harmless, move among the intelligentsia, gather intelligence but are seen inciting violence". This could be a reference to the Hurriyat

or mainstream politicians of Jammu and Kashmir. They will be detained and released as the government sees fit and the policy of house arrests will continue, sources said.

The second section is that of stone-throwers and violent protesters, mostly teenage boys. The government has adopted a strategy of "community bonds" that involves 20 family members and acquaintances signing a bond that they will ensure they do not do it again.

The third category is terrorists. The administration feels that the army will take care of the border and Line of Control across which terrorists are pushed through by Pakistan. The government also plans to review border security in Punjab and Jammu.

The fourth group of people are influencers such as religious leaders. Sources say, the government will identify and monitor religious leaders who are seen inciting violence and fanning unrest. Authorities will deal harshly with any such person and immediately arrest them.



Counter-demonstrators (L) confront alt-right groups during "The End Domestic Terrorism" rally at Tom McCall Waterfront Park on Saturday in Portland, Oregon. No major incidents were reported on Saturday afternoon in Portland (western USA) during a far-right rally and far-left counter-demonstration, raising fears of violent clashes. US President Donald Trump said he was monitoring the event "very closely".

PHOTO: AFP

Flaw in Newton's law!

Twenty years after finding scope for modifying Newton's third law of motion, an Indian scientist has appealed to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for financial assistance to experimentally confirm his research. "The experimental modification of 333-year-old Newton's third law of motion is possible, thus purposely some experiments are needed. The scientists of national and international repute have recommended these experiments and they would cost around Rs 10-12 lakh," scientist Ajay Sharma told media on Saturday. Newton's third law of motion states that action and reaction are always precisely equal in all cases without any exception. Ajay Sharma modified the law after critical analysis of its definition, applications and elastic collisions. Sharma claims that the law does not take into account the significant factor shape of matter's body and it is a very significant limitation of the law. Newton stated that body may be sphere, semi-sphere, umbrella-shaped triangle, long pipe, cone, flat or irregular shape; the action and reaction must be equal. Sharma has initially modified the third law of motion about 20 years ago in 1999 in a research journal, according to which, the reaction may be equal, less or more than action.

'Still a democracy?'



India's Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday slammed the centre over the alleged arrest of party leaders in Jammu and Kashmir, claiming that the ruling BJP was eroding the country's democratic identity through such acts. "On what grounds have Congress leaders in Jammu and Kashmir been arrested? Is it a crime to speak to the media? It's now 15 days since former Chief Ministers who respected and abided by the Constitution of India just like our leaders have been under arrest," she tweeted, adding that even the relatives of the "arrested" leaders -- Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Ghulam Ahmed Mir and party spokesperson Ravinder Sharma -- have not heard from them. "Does the Modi-Shah government believe that India is still a democracy?" Priyanka questioned. The two politicians were allegedly picked up from a press conference on Friday. Her brother and former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had condemned the development on Friday, terming it as yet another "body blow" to democracy after the centre's decision to scrap Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcate it into two distinct union territories on August 5.

SOURCE: NDTV, THE STATESMAN

Israel troops kill three 'armed' Palestinians

The violence at Gaza border comes after 3 rockets fired at southern Israel

AFP, Gaza City

Israel said it opened fire on armed Palestinians on Gaza's border overnight and Hamas's health ministry reported three dead yesterday, the latest in a series of incidents along the tense barrier.

Israel's tank and helicopter fire came after Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired three rockets at Israel late Saturday, the army said, the second such attack in 24 hours.

Two rockets were intercepted by Israel's air defence systems, it said, without specifying what happened to the third. Police reported no casualties in Israel, but said a rocket fragment fell on a house in the southern Israeli town of Sderot.

Hours later, Israel's army said "troops spotted a number of armed suspects adjacent to the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip". It added that an "attack helicopter and a tank fired towards them".

The health ministry in the Palestinian enclave run by Islamist movement Hamas reported three dead and said another Palestinian was hospitalised following the incident north of Beit Lahia.

A series of incidents along the Gaza border has tested a fragile truce between Hamas and Israel in recent days.

Regular protests and clashes erupted along the border of the blockaded Gaza Strip in March 2018. At least 305 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in Gaza or the border area since then.

UK faces food, fuel and drugs shortages in no-deal Brexit

Reveals leaked official documents; more than 100 MPs press UK PM to recall parliament

REUTERS, London

Britain will face shortages of fuel, food and medicine if it leaves the European Union without a transition deal, jamming ports and requiring a hard border in Ireland, official government documents leaked to the Sunday Times show.

The Times said the forecasts compiled by the Cabinet Office set out the most likely aftershocks of a no-deal Brexit rather than the worst case scenarios. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office said it did not comment on leaked documents.

The newspaper said up to 85% of lorries using the main channel crossings "may not be ready" for French customs, meaning disruption at ports would potentially last up to three months before the flow of traffic improves.

The government also believes a hard border between the British province of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member, will be likely as current plans to avoid widespread checks will prove unsustainable, the Times said.

"Compiled this month by the Cabinet Office under the codename Operation Yellowhammer, the dossier offers a rare glimpse into the covert planning being carried out by the government to avert a catastrophic collapse in the nation's infrastructure," the Times reported.

Asked about the Yellowhammer documents, energy minister Kwasi Kwarteng told Sky News: "I think there's a lot of scaremongering around, and a lot of people are playing into 'Project Fear'... We've got

to prepare for no deal."

"We will be fully prepared to leave without a deal on the 31st of October."

A group of more than 100 lawmakers wrote to Johnson calling for an emergency recall of parliament to discuss the situation.

"We face a national emergency, and parliament must now be recalled in August and sit permanently until October 31 so that the voices of the people can be heard, and that there can be proper scrutiny of your government," the letter said.

The prime minister is coming under pressure from politicians across the political spectrum to prevent a disorderly departure, with opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn vowing this week to bring down Johnson's government in early September to delay Brexit.