



KARACHI: A Pakistani man prays near a table set with food before breaking his fast on a street in Karachi yesterday. — AFP

## IRAN INKS DEAL TO BUY 100 BOEING PLANES

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Boeing has fallen behind the race to restock Iran because as an American company it has to obtain the greenlight from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control before completing any contracts with Iran. It has requested final authorization for the sale, according to Abedzadeh. He said the contract's reported value of \$17 billion (15 billion euros) was not final and that more details will be provided after further negotiations. Boeing confirmed on Wednesday that it was in talks with Iranian airlines interested in buying its passenger planes.

"We have been engaged in discussions with Iranian airlines approved by the (US government) about potential purchases of Boeing commercial passenger airplanes and services," the company said in an email to AFP. In February, the American company was granted approval from the US government to explore resuming sales to Iran after sanctions were partially lifted in January. Iran and the US broke diplomatic ties in 1980 following

a hostage crisis at the American embassy in Tehran. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of modern Iran, dubbed the US the "Great Satan" and his successor supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has kept Tehran on a stridently anti-American path. Despite allowing nuclear negotiations with Washington, Khamenei has repeatedly warned of American and Western "infiltration" in the post-sanctions era.

Although the nuclear deal lifted most economic sanctions, the US and the European Union have kept up some measures due to Tehran's support for groups such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, as well as its ballistic missile program. This means major international banks, particularly in Europe, are still reluctant to do business with Iran for fear of punitive US measures. Iran in January reached a memorandum of understanding with European aircraft manufacturer Airbus for the purchase of 118 planes. That agreement is also still pending permission from the US Treasury, since more than 10 percent of Airbus components are of American origin. — AFP

## TRUMP: US SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER...

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Trump also reiterated his support for more scrutiny of mosques, saying that could resemble a controversial New York City surveillance program that has been shut down. "If you go to France right now, they're doing it in France. In fact, in some instances they're closing down mosques." Police in France closed some mosques shortly after gunmen aligned with Islamic State militants killed 130 people in Paris in a series of attacks on Nov 13.

The Orlando gunman, Omar Mateen, expressed support for Islamic State, but officials believe he was "self-radicalized". Trump has drawn criticism from many in his Republican Party for calling for a temporary ban on

Muslims entering the United States. He also has called for a suspension of immigration from countries with "a proven history of terrorism". Hillary Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee, has said the comments show Trump is unfit to be president.

House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan endorsed Trump but has said a Muslim ban is not in U.S. interests. In excerpts of an NBC interview released on Friday, Ryan said Republicans weighing whether to vote for Trump should follow their "conscience." Trump brushed off the criticism yesterday and said he would put up his own money for his campaign if needed. "It would be nice if the Republicans stuck together," Trump said in an ABC interview. "I can win, one way or another." — Agencies

## ASSEMBLY PASSES BUDGETS OF EIGHT NEW GOVT...

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Minister of Information and Youth Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said the suspension of Kuwaiti sports was orchestrated by some Kuwaiti sports officials whom he did not name. He said the government has tried hard to convince the international sports governing authorities that the Kuwaiti government does not interfere in sports and on the contrary it provides generous aid to all federations and clubs. He said that the existing situation in the Kuwaiti sports cannot continue, especially that those who are leading the country's sports are the ones who filed the complaint against Kuwait.

He said the legislation will provide the solution to the problems of Kuwaiti sports and will lead to privatization, adding that those who want to control clubs should pay from their pockets to establish such clubs. The minister said that the government should have the right to monitor how its millions of dinars in aid are spent.

MPs also voted to approve the budgets of Public Manpower Authority, Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Public Authority for the Handicapped, Public Compensation Claims Authority, Environment Public Authority, the Fire Department, Kuwait University and Public Authority for Civil Information.

During the debate, a large number of MPs strongly

criticized the long delay in the project of the new government university in Shadadiya area and blamed the administration for the delay.

MP Jamal Al-Omar said there is no justification for the delay of the vital project which has already taken eight years and is likely to miss its new date next year. He said many fires have erupted in the construction site of the university and warned that the recently-signed airport expansion project could experience the same fate since they have the same contractor.

MP Yousef Al-Zalzalah said implementation in the new university is just above 40 percent and wondered what causes the delay when funds are available. He said the delay is forcing the government to pay an additional KD 50 million per year for internal scholarships.

Education and Higher Education Minister Bader Al-Issa said the delays were caused by the large number of variation in orders, adding that the project should be referred to the ministry of public works because the university does not have the technical staff to oversee the project. The minister said that the number of scholarships has not changed and is 6,000 for overseas and 4,000 locally. MP Faisal Al-Duwaisan said there is a political reason behind the delay as the government does not want thousands of students to gather in one campus and be a focal point for political unrest like in other countries.

## EGYPT, QATAR CLASH OVER MORSI-ERA...

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Cairo also accuses the Doha-based Al-Jazeera network of bias in favor of the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups. Saturday's verdicts, which can be appealed, have further enflamed tensions between the two countries. In a statement on Qatar's state news agency late Saturday, the Foreign Ministry said the verdicts lacked a "proper sense of justice" and did not help in consolidating ties between the two countries.

"The verdict is unfounded, goes against truth and contains misleading claims," said Ahmed Al-Rumaihi, who heads the information office at the Foreign Ministry. He said the charge of espionage involving Qatar is both "surprising and unacceptable." Egypt's Foreign Ministry fired back, saying the country's judiciary was independent and professional. Spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid also said it was not surprising to see such comments from a government that had "devoted resources and efforts over the past years to mobilize its media mouthpieces to be hostile to the people of Egypt and its state and institutions."

The case involved a total of 11 defendants, of whom sev-

en, including Morsi, are in custody. Morsi, the top defendant, and two of his aides were sentenced to 25 years in prison for membership in the Brotherhood but were acquitted of espionage, a capital offense. Morsi and his secretary, Amin el-Sirafy, each received an additional 15-year sentence for leaking official documents. El-Sirafy's daughter, Karima, was also sentenced to 15 years on the same charge.

Egypt's first freely elected leader, Morsi has already been sentenced to death. That death sentence and another two-life and 20 years in prison - are under appeal. Former Al-Jazeera news producer Alaa Omar Mohammed and former director of news Ibrahim Mohammed Hilal were sentenced to death in absentia along with Asmaa Al-Khateib, who worked for Rasd, a media network widely suspected of links to the Brotherhood. Others sentenced to death include a documentary producer, an EgyptAir employee and an academic. The verdicts drew widespread criticism from rights groups, including Amnesty International, which described the outcome as "appalling." Al-Jazeera condemned the verdicts, saying they were part of a "ruthless" campaign against freedom of expression, and called on the international community to show solidarity with the journalists. — AP

## GRATITUDE: A LESSON OF HOLY RAMADAN

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Gratitude is one of the lessons of Ramadan. The Quran says, "[God desires] that you complete the number [of days required to fast], and that you extol God for His having guided you aright, and that you render your thanks [unto Him]." (285) Since gratitude is one of the goals of fasting, this Ramadan and always, follow the example of Maryam, mother of Jesus, by acknowledging the source

of all your blessings. So great is our Lord, that he appreciates our appreciation, saying, "If you give thanks, I will surely give you more..." (14:7)

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