



Trump shows no surrender in first post-election rally

## COVID sends hunger rising in America; kids bear the brunt



MANAMA: Turki Al-Faisal bin Abduliziz Al-Saud, chairman of King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, listens to Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi addressing via videoconference the Manama Dialogue security conference yesterday. — AFP

# Saudi, Israeli officials spar at conference

## Prince Turki describes Israel as 'Western colonizing power'

MANAMA: An influential Saudi prince launched a bitter attack on Israel at a regional conference yesterday, drawing retorts from the Jewish state's foreign minister who addressed the gathering virtually. The row erupted months after the UAE and Bahrain broke decades of Arab consensus by normalizing ties with Israel, a move condemned as a "stab in the back" by Palestinians.

Prince Turki Al-Faisal, a Saudi former intelligence chief who is said to be close to the country's top leadership, reiterated strong support for the Palestinian cause in a fiery presentation to the Manama Dialogue security forum. In unusually blunt language, he accused Israel of depicting itself as a "small, existentially threatened country, surrounded by bloodthirsty killers who want to eradicate her from existence". "And yet they profess that they want to be friends with Saudi Arabia," he said.

He described the Jewish state as a "Western colonizing power" and outlined a history of forcible eviction of Palestinians and destroyed villages. Palestinians were held "in concentration camps under the flimsiest of security accusations - young and old, women and men, who are rotting there

without recourse to justice," he said. He said the Israeli authorities are "demolishing homes as they wish, and they assassinate whomever they want".

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi addressed the meeting by videoconference shortly afterwards, expressing his "regret" over the com-

ments, which come after years of covertly warming relations between the two Mideast powers. "The false accusations of the Saudi representative at the Manama Conference do not reflect the facts or the spirit & changes the region is undergoing," he said

in a tweet. "I rejected his remarks & emphasised that the 'blame game' era is over. We are at the dawn of a new era. An era of peace."

Prince Turki, who said his comments reflected his personal view, voiced skepticism over the US-brokered Abraham Accords, to which Washington has been urging the kingdom to sign up. "You cannot treat an open wound with palliatives and painkillers. The Abraham Accords are not divine writ," he said.

### 'Two clear camps'

The agreements between the two Gulf states and Israel have undermined the Saudi-sponsored 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, which maintained that Arab states would not establish relations with the Jewish state until it made peace with the Palestinians - a position Riyadh has reiterated in recent months. However, Ashkenazi said the agreements were an opportunity for the Palestinians and offer a "window to solve this conflict".

"The Abraham accords do not come at the expense of the Palestinians. Quite the opposite, they are an opportunity that should not be missed,"

he said, urging them to return to peace talks which were frozen in 2014. Despite Prince Turki's blunt rhetoric, mutual concern over Iran has gradually brought Israel and Gulf nations closer, and Riyadh itself has quietly been building relations with the Jewish state for several years.

Reports last month that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had held secret talks in Saudi Arabia fuelled speculation that a normalization accord with the Gulf's top power could be in the making. Riyadh, however, denied that the meeting had occurred. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan told AFP on Saturday that the kingdom's position remained resolute.

"We've been quite clear that in order for us to proceed with normalization we will need to see a settlement of the Palestinian dispute and the formation of a viable state of Palestine along the lines envisioned in the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative," he said in an interview in Manama. Asked whether that effectively ruled out the establishment of ties with Israel any time soon, he said he was "optimistic that there is a path towards a resolution between the Palestinians and Israelis". — AFP

“ The Abraham Accords are not divine writ ”

## Allies 'on board' for resolution of Gulf crisis: Saudi Arabia

MANAMA: A resolution of the Gulf diplomatic crisis is in sight, with all nations involved "on board" and final agreement expected soon, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said Saturday. In an interview with AFP conducted in Bahrain, the top Saudi diplomat also insisted that Gulf states must be fully consulted if the incoming US administration revives a nuclear deal with Iran.

"The only way towards reaching an agreement that is sustainable is through such consultation," he said on a sidelines of a security conference in Manama. Until recently the three-year Gulf dispute-pitting a group of regional nations against Qatar had appeared intractable, but Prince Faisal said that a breakthrough was imminent. "We are in full coordination with our partners in this process and the prospects that we see are very positive towards a final agreement," he told said, adding that "the eventual resolution will involve all parties concerned".

"What we envision is a resolution that covers all aspects and is satisfactory to all parties involved," he said when asked whether the dispute was headed for a full settlement. It would happen "soon", he said. Saudi Arabia led its allies the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to cut ties with Qatar in June 2017, saying it was too close to Iran and funding radical Islamist movements-



MANAMA: Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud addresses the Manama Dialogue security conference on Saturday. — AFP

charges Doha staunchly denies. They subsequently forced out Qataris residing in their countries, closed their airspace to Qatari aircraft and sealed their borders and ports, separating some mixed-nationality families.

Analysts have said any breakthrough would likely only extend to ties between Riyadh and Doha, excluding the UAE which has been the most vocal critic of Qatar since the crisis began. UAE envoy to Washington Yousef Al Otaiba said earlier this month he didn't think the dispute would be resolved any time soon, and that it's "not on anyone's priority list". Prince Faisal indicated, however, that a much broader thaw is being negotiated. "We are in full coordination with our partners, and everyone is on board for the process as it stands," the minister said, when

asked if the UAE was in agreement.

After snapping ties, the regional quartet issued a list of 13 demands for Qatar, including shutting down its broadcaster Al Jazeera and downgrading relations with Turkey. But the blockade designed to choke Qatar and force it to align with Gulf interests has only made Doha more self-sufficient and pushed it closer to Iran and Turkey, observers say. It has also hurt Saudi strategic interests. Asked whether Saudi Arabia would drop or slim the list of demands, Prince Faisal said: "The best I can say right now, not to prejudice the ongoing discussions, is that the resolution will be satisfactory to all." On Friday there was a chorus of optimistic comments from Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, who all said progress had been made towards ending the crisis. — AFP

## CONDOLENCES

It is with great sorrow and sadness that we inform you



**Mr. Roashan Aravindakshan**  
(Corporate Sales- Al-Rashed International Aviation Co.)  
has left for the  
Heavenly Abode on 05/12/2020.

We pray that all of us find the strength to push through the grief. Our prayers and heartfelt condolences go out with the grieving family.

The Owners and Management of



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