

FM in Berlin for talks on combatting terrorism, co-operation

2



Flashy Brazil relying on balance at World Cup

4



Merkel's migrant deal faces EU headwinds

5



Pared back Dior ateliers celebrated at Haute Couture show

6



The Egyptian Gazette

ذی اچیشیان جازیت

Established 1880

www.egyptiangazette.net.eg

Board Chairman
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Issue No: 44,722

Wednesday, July 4, 2018

Price: LE4

In Figures

A NEW shipwreck off the Libyan coast has left 63 people missing in the latest disaster to hit migrants seeking to cross the Mediterranean. The group are feared drowned after the inflatable boat they were on sank, a spokesman for Libya's navy General Ayoub Kacem told AFP, citing eyewitness accounts from survivors.

PM Madbouli outlines five-point action plan Gov't focuses on human development, economic growth

Ashraf Sadek

PRIME Minister Dr Moustafa Madbouli yesterday confirmed that the achievement of human and economic development was the main target of his government.

Addressing the House of Deputies, Prime Minister Madbouli said this approach was in implementation of President Abdel Fattah El Sisi's directives to give due attention to building the capacities of Egyptian citizens, through improving the health and education services.

In presenting the government's plan of action over the next four years, Dr Madbouli promised that the government would expedite the completion of public service projects, especially those aimed at improving the health and education sectors.

Prime Minister Madbouli said that his plan of action, called 'Egypt's Launching' was focused on continuing the government's efforts to boost the economy and preserve monetary stability, in keeping with the economic reform and restructuring programmes that were launched two years ago.

The prime minister said that all citizens would enjoy the benefits of the economic reforms in two years' time.

He said that his government would work on providing the credit facilities needed for the various sectors, particularly with regard to the social protec-

tion nets and programmes, since this support helped alleviate the economic burden borne by the neediest segments of society and limited-income citizens.

Prime Minister Madbouli said it was important to pursue the efforts to expand the social protection networks and improve the quality of services provided to citizens.

He told parliament that his government would continue to protect the limited-income strata against the effects of economic reform through closer monitoring of market prices and ensuring the availability of basic goods at affordable prices.

He said that the government would make sure that citizens received a steady supply of essential foods at reasonable and subsidised prices.

The government's plan of action was designed to achieve five basic goals, which were: Protecting national security, improving the standard of living of all Egyptians with special focus on the neediest segments and limited-income citizens, achieving economic growth, enhancing the performance of the government and manpower development, and strengthening Egypt's relations with all countries.

Speaking about the first objective, Prime Minister Madbouli said that the government would work on protecting citizens, securing the country's sea



PRIME Minister Dr Moustafa Madbouli reading his government's plan of action for the next four years at the House of Deputies yesterday.

and land borders, combatting terrorism, promoting human rights, political rights and freedom of expression, and strengthening political parties.

He saluted the police and army personnel who have made great sacrifices for the sake of the nation and their

fellow Egyptians.

The national security component of the government's plan, the prime minister said, was also aimed at achieving water security, protecting Egyptian water interests, preserving and developing the available water resources,

achieving food sufficiency, ensuring the availability of strategic commodities, and achieving self-sufficiency in basic farm products.

In addition, the national security component was aimed at ensuring that Egypt had enough environmentally-

friendly resources of traditional and new energy, while working on discovering new oil and natural gas fields.

The second objective was aimed at improving the standard of living of all Egyptians through offering high quality education, health, transport, housing, road, and sanitation services within the next few months, he added.

With regard to the third objective, Prime Minister Madbouli said that the government would keep on protecting the limited-income strata against the effects of economic reform through ensuring the availability of basic goods at affordable and subsidised prices.

Speaking about the fourth objective, he said that the government would work on achieving an economic growth rate of eight per cent through improving government performance, increasing state revenues, maximising the use of state-owned assets, attracting more investments, encouraging the launching of more small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), increasing exports, and launching more development projects.

With regard to the fifth objective, Prime Minister Madbouli said the government would seek to maintain balanced relations with all the world powers while preserving Egypt's interests and playing a more active role in resolving regional and international disputes through diplomatic means.

Iraq begins recount of votes

KIRKUK (Reuters) - Iraqi authorities began recounting votes yesterday from May's disputed parliamentary election, officials said, a step towards forming a new government after weeks of delays.

Counting started in the ethnically mixed northern oil-producing province of Kirkuk, the election commission said, and at least six other provinces were expected to follow suit in coming days.

Parliament ordered a full recount last month after a government report concluded there were widespread violations.

Japan eases travel warning to Egypt

THE Tokyo government has eased its travel warning about Egypt after an improvement in security conditions in the country, the Japanese Embassy in Cairo said yesterday.

In an official statement, the embassy said new areas have been listed as safe to visit for its nationals after the downgrading of the travel warning.

Prior to the downgrade, Japanese nationals were advised not to visit areas of the country outside Alexandria, Greater Cairo, Hurghada, Luxor, Aswan, and Abu Simbel.

Now they are only advised against travel to North Sinai, the Western

Desert, and the border with Libya. Several countries, including the US, have asked citizens to not travel to Sinai, with the exception of travel to Sharm El-Sheikh by air, the Western Desert, and Egyptian border areas due to terrorism and military campaigns.

The decision followed a resumption of direct EgyptAir flights between Luxor and Tokyo in 2016, in an effort to "revive tourism to [Luxor], which is considered one of the most important touristic destinations in Upper Egypt," according to a statement by the Egyptian national airliner.

Army kills three terrorists, destroys 285 targets in Sinai

THREE highly-dangerous terrorists were eliminated during an exchange of fire with security forces in the course of the Comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018, the Armed Forces said in a communiqué yesterday.

A total of 200 kilogrammes of TNT packs, planted to target forces raiding the operational zones in Northern and Central Sinai, were detected and destroyed by military engineers in the past few days, the communiqué said.

Comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018 was launched on February 9 to target terrorist hideouts and hotspots and to arrest fugitive elements. The operation is carried out by the Armed Forces and civilian Police.

The results of the operation, as

outlined in the Armed Forces' 25th communiqué issued yesterday, also included the destruction of 285 hideouts that were hosting terrorist elements and where a number of explosives, weapons and ammunition were found.

A number of tunnels were also destroyed, the communiqué said, adding that a cache of automatic weapons, ammunition and communication devices were found in the hideouts and tunnels.

Twelve vehicles used by terrorist elements were also seized and destroyed, the communiqué said.

Since the start of the operation, the Armed Forces have been taking all the precautionary measures deemed necessary to protect the lives and properties of the civilians living near the areas, where the

anti-terror operation is taking place.

"The Armed Forces are determined to combat and defeat terrorism, secure vital and strategic state installations and protect Egypt's economic interests in the maritime theatre of operations," the communiqué said.

The Armed Forces have also rounded up more than 59 fugitives, it said, summing up the actions mounted so far by troops of the Second and Third Field Armies with the participation of Police elements in Northern and Central Sinai.

It said that two civilians were killed when an explosive device, planted to ambush troops in Sinai, went off. And a soldier was wounded during clashes with the terrorists.

Sweden reaches World Cup quarters

ST PETERSBURG (Reuters) - A deflected shot from Emil Forsberg gave Sweden a 1-0 victory over Switzerland in a dull World Cup round of 16 match in St Petersburg yesterday, sending the Swedes through to a quarter-final against either Colombia or England.

Switzerland had the lion's share of possession but were toothless in attack, and bowed out in dispiriting fashion after registering four shots on target over 90 minutes, none of which unduly tested Robin Olsen in the Swedish goal.

Boos and whistles rang around the St Petersburg stadium as early as the 25th minute, with both Swedish and Swiss fans alike left irate by the lack of quality and attacking verve on display.



SWEDEN'S Viktor Claesson, left, duelling for the ball with Switzerland's Ricardo Rodriguez during the round of 16 match between Switzerland and Sweden yesterday.

Syrian rebels, Russia in new talks

AMMAN (Reuters) - Syrian rebel negotiators began a new round of talks with Russian officers yesterday over a peace deal in southern Syria under which they would hand over weapons and allow Russian military police to enter rebel-held towns, a rebel spokesman said.

Accompanied by a major Russian aerial bombing campaign, Syrian government forces have marched swift-

ly into insurgent territory in Deraa province over the past two weeks. Spokesman Ibrahim al-Jabawi said the rebels had carried to the negotiating table their "response to a list of Russian demands" that include the handing over of weapons and settling the status of rebels in a deal that ends the fighting.

"Today they are carrying their response to the terms presented by the Russian officers," Jabawi said.

Today's Weather

Cairo	...37	...24
Alexandria	...31	...23
Sharm el-Sheikh	...38	...29
Hurghada	...37	...29
Aswan	...42	...28
Luxor	...41	...26
Suez	...35	...24
Taba	...36	...28
El-Tur	...35	...28
Halayeb	...35	...29