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In Figures
BRITISH counterterrorism police were investigating yesterday after two people were left in critical condition, exposed to an unknown substance a few miles from where a former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned with a nerve agent. The Wiltshire Police force declared a "major incident" after a man and a woman in their 40s were hospitalised after being found unconscious at a residential building in Amesbury.

Egypt for forging special relationship with UAE

Ashraf Sadek

PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi yesterday conferred with a delegation of senior government officials from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who were in Cairo to participate in the Egypt Government Excellence Conference 2018, Presidency Spokesman Ambassador Bassam Radi said.

Welcoming the visit by UAE government officials, President Sisi lauded the genuine fraternity that binds Egypt and the Emirates, adding that ties between the two friendly countries represented a model of successful joint Arab action in confronting the threats facing the region, the president's spokesman said.

During the meeting, President Sisi emphasised that Arab countries should work together to enhance the performance and work of their respective governments, Ambassador Radi said.

The president stressed the importance of adopting innovative ways and creative methods for developing the performance of Arab governments,

which should focus on human capacity building in order to encounter the rising challenges facing the Arab World, Ambassador Radi said.

He said that the Arab governments had a role to undertake in the adoption of initiatives that would encourage the talented administrators to be more creative in developing the performance of their respective governments.

President Sisi said that creativity and innovation were the driving force for achieving comprehensive development in the Arab World, the presidency spokesman said.

President Sisi highlighted the importance of exchanging experience between Egypt and UAE with the aim of building a model of administration that can be applied across the Arab World, Ambassador Radi said.

President Sisi indicated that Egypt had launched an economic reform programme, which included plans for developing the state's administrative apparatus in order to offer high-quality government services to the citizens

and improve their living standards, Ambassador Radi said.

He said that these plans aimed at modernising government work in order to build an efficient and effective administration system that provided high-quality government services to the citizens and achieve Egypt's strategic sustainable development goals.

The UAE team members, led by Mohammad Abdullah al-Gergawi, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and the Future, expressed their country keenness on activating a strategic partnership with Egypt in all domains.

The team members, who praised Egypt's pivotal role in preserving regional security and stability, were in Cairo to attend the conference to provide a comprehensive framework for the transfer of the UAE's successful government experience to Egypt.

The two-day conference was the first step in implementing a memorandum of understanding for developing government performance, signed by Egypt's Ministry of Planning, Follow-up and



PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi during his meeting yesterday with a delegation of senior UAE officials, who were in Cairo to participate in the Egypt Government Excellence Conference 2018.

Administrative Reform and the UAE Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and the Future during the World Government Summit in Dubai last February.

The conference aimed to forge a strong strategic government partnership between the UAE and Egypt, step up co-operation and strengthen the

long-standing and deeply-rooted relations between the two brotherly countries in various fields.

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ARMY ROLE PRAISED: The Chief of the Staff, Lieutenant General Mohamed Farid, yesterday witnessed a series of early morning training activity by the Armed Forces special forces. Following the drills, Lt Gen Farid gave a brief speech during which he praised the officers' fighting skills and outstanding training. He also saluted the army forces for their outstanding role combatting terrorism and maintaining the nation's security and the safety of its citizens. Lt Gen Farid praised the high capabilities and efficiency of the officers and soldiers and their efforts to reach the highest levels of preparedness for any combat mission. He called upon them to keep maintaining their notable physical and mental fitness and preparedness as well as upholding the noble and lofty military values which have for long distinguished the Egyptian Armed Forces. Yesterday's visit came within the framework of Lt Gen Farid's keenness on following up the training and qualification programmes for military personnel.

FM in anti-terrorism talks with Germany

EGYPTIAN Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukri and his German counterpart Heiko Maas reviewed Egypt's anti-terrorism efforts, illegal migration, democratic transformation, human rights as well as the developments of Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam file, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid said yesterday.

The two foreign ministers met in Berlin on Tuesday. During the meeting, Foreign Minister Shoukri said that Egypt supported development programmes in the Nile Basin countries. It believes that the River Nile should be a reason for co-operation and achieving joint gains for all Nile Basin countries, Abu Zeid said.

Shoukri said that Egypt was only demanding that its water security was not harmed as the Egyptian people depended on the River Nile as their only source of water, the spokesman said.

The Egyptian foreign minister also congratulated his German counterpart during the meeting on taking office and invited him to visit Egypt.

FM Shoukri also congratulated his German counterpart on winning the non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the years 2019-2020. He expressed his appreciation of the relations between the two countries.

The Egyptian foreign minister also said that he is looking forward to a quality leap in various fields of co-operation. He also highlighted a host of steps that have recently been taken



FM Sameh Shoukri (L) during his meeting with Volker Kauder, the majority leader in Germany's Bundestag, yesterday.

for boosting bilateral relations, the spokesman said.

These steps include, at the foremost, the introduction of an additional protocol to legalise the conditions of German institutions operating in Egypt and putting into effect the establishment of an office for each of the German development bank KfW and the German international co-operation agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Cairo.

The foreign minister said that he is looking forward to resuming the holding of a joint committee under the chairmanship of the foreign ministers of both countries which is the main institutional framework for bilateral relations.

FM Shoukri also called on the German side to cancel the ban by German airlines on flights to Sinai in

the light of the stable security conditions in South Sinai and the strengthening of security measures at all Egyptian airports. The ban was issued in August 2017 and was extended until June 28, 2018.

The German foreign minister said that Egypt was a special partner for Germany, praising the ongoing economic developments which Germany was closely following. He said that German companies were keen on increasing their investments in Egypt, pointing out that he was looking forward to visiting Egypt soon.

During a breakfast meeting yesterday with Norbert Röttgen, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the German Bundestag, Shoukri also called for encouragement to German companies to invest in Egypt.

Shoukri said the volume of German investments in Egypt was not commensurate with the deeply-rooted ties between the two countries as well as the economic leverage of Germany as the largest European economy.

Shoukri called for intensifying consultations with Germany on regional and international issues as Germany won a non-permanent seat at UNSC in 2019-2020.

Shoukri briefed Röttgen on regional conditions as well as Egypt's economic and social development plan, Ahmed Abu Zeid said.

Shoukri also apprised the German official on the measures adopted by Egypt within the framework of the economic reform programme to encourage foreign direct investments, especially enacting new investment-friendly legislation.

He also reviewed counter-terrorism efforts, citing the operation in Sinai.

Röttgen expressed deep appreciation of Egypt's historical role, considering Egypt as the cornerstone of regional stability.

Röttgen asked Shoukri to expound Egypt's vision on the Libyan and Syrian crises as well as the Palestinian-Israeli peace process.

Shoukri said Egypt's vision focuses on the importance of seeking political solutions to the Syrian and Libyan crises through getting the feuding parties to sit at the negotiating table away from what he termed "negative" foreign interference.

Israel plans to demolish West Bank village

KHAN AL-AHMAR, West Bank (News Wires) - Palestinian protests broke out yesterday at a Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank facing Israeli demolition in what rights groups have condemned as a bid to expand Jewish settlement.

Israel moved three bulldozers to the village, Khan al-Ahmar, earlier in the day though demolition had yet to begin, after the military left a land confiscation notice there on Tuesday.

Around 180 Bedouin, raising sheep and goats, live in tin and wood shacks in Khan al-Ahmar. It is situated between a major Israeli settlement, Maale Adumim near Jerusalem, and a smaller one to the northeast, Kfar Adumim.

Khan al-Ahmar was built without Israeli permits, which Palestinians say are impossible to obtain. Israel has long sought to clear Bedouin from the area between the two settlements, and the Supreme Court approved the demolition in May.

Removing the Bedouin, human rights groups say, would create a bigger settlement pocket near Jerusalem and make it more difficult for Palestinians to achieve territorial contiguity in the West Bank, a territory they seek along with the Gaza Strip for a future state.

At Khan al-Ahmar, several dozen Palestinians scuffled with Israeli police, who punched several of the men they dragged away.



ISRAELI policemen reacting during a scuffle with Palestinians in the Bedouin village of al-Khan al-Ahmar near Jericho in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

Arabs slam European Parl't resolutions on human rights

THE Arab Parliament yesterday condemned and rejected the systematic issuing of flawed resolutions by the European Parliament (EP) on the human rights conditions in the Arab world; and the comments it makes on the court rulings in a number of Arab countries, including Egypt.

The Arab Parliament referred in this regard to the EP's objection to the death penalty being applied in Egypt and to its resolution concerning human rights in Bahrain, that urged the Bahraini authorities to release all the convicted detainees.

In a resolution issued yesterday at the end of the fifth session of the second term of the second legislative

season, held at the Arab League (AL) premises, the Arab Parliament stressed that the EP resolutions ran counter to the principles of good neighbourliness, state sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

It further asserted the keenness of the Arab countries on respecting human rights and the dignity and freedom of citizens, as well as their economic, social and political rights.

It also rejected the interference of the EP in the internal affairs of the Arab countries and criticised the way the EP deals with sensitive files that are related to the security and stability of the Arab world, while relying on misleading sources and false information.