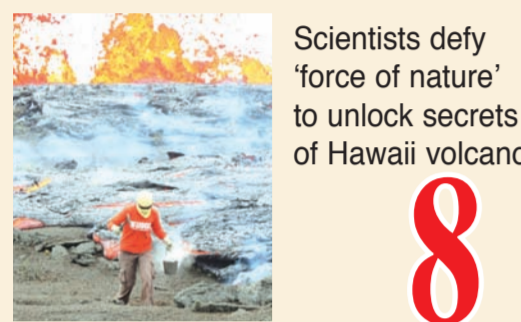


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President Sisi condoles with Japanese PM over victims of floods

PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi yesterday expressed his own and the Egyptian people's sincere condolences over the victims of rains and floods that have hit Japan.

The Egyptian leader expressed these condolences in the course of a telephone call he received from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday, the Spokesman for the Presidency, Ambassador Bassam Radi, said.

In the telephone conversation, the two leaders discussed ways of boosting bilateral relations, Spokesman Radi said, adding that the Japanese prime minister hailed the relations with Egypt as friendly and deeply-rooted and stressed his country's keenness on enhancing co-operation between the two countries in all fields.

In addition, President Sisi and Prime Minister Abe reviewed a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest and agreed to continue coordination and consultation between both countries during the coming period.

Probe still under way in MS804 crash

THE Public Prosecution emphasised yesterday that it is still investigating the May 2016 crash of EgyptAir flight MS804 while en route from Paris's Charles de Gaulle Airport to Cairo.

A statement issued by the Prosecutor General's office yesterday stressed the inaccuracy of reports by some news websites suggesting that a cockpit fire caused the aircraft's crash, the Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported.

The statement characterised such suggestions as baseless particularly since the relevant investigations are still under way, the news agency added.

The General Prosecution made it clear in its statement that the Forensic Medicine Authority's report establishes that traces of explosive substances were found on victims' remains and on some of the metal, plastic and solid materials of the aircraft's wreckage parts that were found stuck to the victims' remains collected from the site of the crash, MENA added.

Egypt welcomes Addis-Asmara move to end dispute

EGYPT has welcomed the signing of an agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia to end their dispute and expressed hope that that development would open a new chapter in relations between the two countries in the interest of security and stability in the region.

The agreement was signed following the historical visit that Ethiopian Prime Minister Dr Abiy Ahmed paid to the Eritrean capital Asmara recently.

In a statement released by the Foreign Ministry yesterday, Egypt hailed that visit and its conclusions as an asset for security and stability in the region as well as for the realisation of the aspirations of the Ethiopian and Eritrean peoples for peace and development following long years of discord and instability.

Egypt also expressed hope that that agreement would establish a model for putting an end to all disputes and conflicts in Africa.

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President Sisi urges overall development of oil and gas sector, with special emphasis on human resources, attracting investments

PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi has given directives for the overall development of the petroleum sector with special emphasis on the sector's human resources and the provision of the atmosphere deemed necessary for the attraction of investments in oil and gas exploration activities.

The president's directives came during his meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Dr Moustafa Madbouli, the Assistant to the President for National and Strategic Projects, Sherif Ismail, Petroleum Minister Tarek el-Mulla, Planning Minister Dr Hala el-Saeed, Finance Minister Mohamed Maeet and the head of the Administrative Control Authority, Mohamed Erfan.

In these directives, President Sisi placed emphasis on the importance of raising the efficiency of petroleum sector staff, developing their skills and optimally benefiting from the capabilities of the sector's cadres and expertise, the Spokesman for the Presidency, Ambassador Bassam Radi, said in a statement following the meeting.

The president stressed in this context the importance of applying a modernised system for the management of human resources and the creation of such a work environment that motivates workers and encourages innovativeness, Spokesman Radi said.

President Sisi also called for the adoption of whichever measures deemed necessary for ensuring the availability of such an atmosphere that would be conducive to the attraction of more investments in search and exploration activities, thereby contributing to the expansion of oil



PRESIDENT Abdel Fattah El Sisi during his meeting yesterday with Prime Minister Dr Moustafa Madbouli, the Assistant to the President for National and Strategic Projects, Sherif Ismail, Petroleum Minister Tarek el-Mulla, Planning Minister Dr Hala el-Saeed, Finance Minister Mohamed Maeet and the head of the Administrative Control Authority, Mohamed Erfan.

and gas exploration areas and turning Egypt into a regional hub for the trade and exchange of oil and gas, Spokesman Radi said.

Action and measures to this effect, President Sisi said, would also contribute to pushing forward the country's current comprehensive development plan.

The government plan to upgrade the petroleum sector was put for consideration in the discussions, Spokesman Radi said, adding that that plan aims at comprehensively modernising the activities of the oil and gas sector with a view to optimising the sector's contribution to

the developmental process especially through promoting more efficient functioning, attracting more investments, developing the skills of human cadres and improving their performance.

For his part, Petroleum Minister el-Mulla outlined to President Sisi the stages of the upgrading and modernisation plan for the petroleum sector and its technical, commercial and political aspects.

The petroleum minister also highlighted programmes and projects now under way within the framework of the plan, which includes the intensification of exploration operations in co-

operation with giant global companies in addition to the implementation of human development programmes.

Minister el-Mulla also said that the petroleum sector's upgrading plan would lead to raising the production rates, reducing production costs and increasing the added value of oil products. The plan, he added, would also contribute to boosting the country's economic growth, reducing financial deficit, increasing revenues, improving the capability to compete internationally and ensuring the sustainability of the energy sources' capacity to meet local demand.



Italian president praises distinguished role by Azhar, Egyptian Coptic Church in facing extremism

ITALIAN President Sergio Mattarella has expressed his appreciation for efforts exerted by the Egyptian state and the distinguished role played by the Coptic Church and al-Azhar in facing extremist thought. The Italian president's statements came during his meeting with Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the Holy See of St. Mark, in Rome yesterday.

During the meeting, President Mattarella asserted the depth of the Egyptian-Italian historical relations and the keenness of the two governments and peoples on developing such relations, the Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported in a dispatch from Rome.

For his part, Pope Tawadros II reviewed sacrifices made by the

Armed Forces in facing terrorism in Sinai in parallel with the battle for economic development and the ongoing drive to implement a comprehensive plan for the development of the Egyptian citizen, the news agency said in its report.

Noting that President Abdel Fattah El Sisi has since assuming his responsibilities been asserting that he is the president of all Egyptians, Pope Tawadros II lauded President Sisi's keenness on joining his fellow citizens in celebrating at the Coptic Church, the news agency reported. Pope Tawadros II also praised the Egyptian state's role in undertaking restoration works for churches which were targeted by attacks from the Muslim Brotherhood terrorist group in the wake of the June 30 Revolution, MENA added.

China's VP lauds success of Egypt in realising stability

CHINESE Vice-President Wang Qishan has underscored Egypt's success in the realisation of stability and emphasised his country's keenness on supporting the efforts now under way to achieve development in Egypt.

The Chinese vice-president expressed this position during a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukri who is now visiting Beijing for talks with senior Chinese officials and to take part in the work of the Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Co-operation Forum that starts today, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ahmed Abu Zeid said.

At the start of the meeting with China's Vice-President Qishan, Minister Shoukri praised the development of bilateral and historical relations between Egypt and China, making special reference in this regard to the elevation of such relations to the level of comprehensive strategic partnership.

The foreign minister also asserted Egypt's appreciation of such special relations, citing the four visits that President Abdel Fattah El Sisi has paid to China at invitations from the Chinese president, Spokesman Abu Zeid said.

During the meeting, Chinese Vice President Qishan expressed congratulations to Egypt for having successfully held the presidential elections and to President Sisi for having won the elections, Spokesman Abu Zeid said in a statement.

The Chinese vice president also expressed appreciation for Egypt's position as it was one of the first countries to declare diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China.

Also yesterday, FM Shoukri asserted in a speech to a symposium on Egypt's foreign policies in the Middle East that undermining state institutions creates a political and social vacuum and provides space for sectarian and terrorist militias.

The symposium was held at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and saw heavy attendance by intellectuals, politicians and foreign ambassadors in Beijing.

Abu Zeid said that the foreign minister's speech included a review of the main challenges facing the Middle East region, the principles that govern Egypt's foreign policy towards the region and the means of achieving a comprehensive partnership with Egypt.