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11th Hour

Interception of planes by Qatar condemned

Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday condemned the interception of UAE civil planes bound for Manama by Qatari fighter jets, according to a statement by the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority. "This action constitutes a threat to the safety of civil aviation and in violation of the international laws and conventions," a source at the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, taking into consideration the flights were regular, scheduled, with well-known route and met the approvals and internationally recognized necessary permits.



P
02

UN alarmed
as US cuts
Palestine aid



P
04

'Unjustified
escalation'



His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa admiring a painting after receiving Labour and Social Development Minister Jamil bin Mohammed Ali Humaidan and ministry employees at Safriya Palace yesterday. HM the King praised the efforts of the ministry in promoting national development, thanking the minister and the ministry staff for their remarkable efforts to provide job opportunities for citizens as well as train and groom the national work force. The minister paid tributes to HM the King for his support to the ministry.

\$2b Saudi aid for Yemen

Riyadh

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia ordered a deposit of \$2 billion to be paid into Yemen's central bank yesterday to shore up the weak Yemeni currency, the Saudi government said.

The move was made a day after the Yemeni prime minister issued a public plea for funds to prop up the rial and help stave off hunger in the war-torn country.

"It's not a loan, it's a deposit and the legitimate Yemeni government will not have to pay it back," a source close to the Saudi government said.

Its currency, the rial, has lost more than half its value against the U.S. dollar and soaring prices have put some basic commodities out of reach for many Yemenis.

Aid workers on the ground told Reuters they expected the rial to rebound due to the Saudi cash injection.

"It is a strategic move to further damage the North," said one aid worker. It remains to

been seen if civil servants in the South will be paid, which would increase the gap with the North, he said.

Based in the southern port city of Aden, Yemen's Central Bank has struggled to pay public sector salaries on which many Yemenis depend amid dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

The conflict has unleashed a humanitarian and economic crisis on the impoverished country. A deadly cholera epidemic erupted last year, and the United Nations has said that Yemen could face one of the deadliest famines of modern times.

"Saving the rial means saving Yemenis from inevitable hunger," Prime Minister Ahmed bin Daghr said yesterday. -Reuters



King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud