

WORLD
world

Exxon Mobil pulls foreign staff from Iraq

Reuters | Dubai/Basra

Exxon Mobil has evacuated all of its foreign staff from Iraq's West Qurna 1 oilfield and is flying them out to Dubai, three sources said yesterday.

Production at the oilfield was not affected by the evacuation and work is continuing normally, overseen by Iraqi engineers, Iraqi oil officials said.

"Production is managed by Iraqi engineers anyway, the foreigners are advisers. We have a closed circuit television link with them (foreign staff) and can communicate with them whenever we need," said an official at Iraq's South Oil Company.

Staff were evacuated in several phases late on Friday and early on Saturday, either straight to Dubai or to the main camp



West Qurna oil field is seen in this aerial view, near the city of Basra, 550 kilometres southeast of Baghdad.



Last night 28 employees were evacuated to the airport and the rest were sent to the camp. This morning they were evacuated to the airport and no (foreign) staff remain in the field

A PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANY OFFICIAL

housing foreign oil company employees in Basra province.

Those in the camp were en route to the airport on Saturday morning, the three sources - an employee at a security company

contracted by Exxon, an Iraqi oil official, and a staff member of a foreign oil company - said.

"Last night 28 employees were evacuated to the airport and the rest were sent to the camp. This morning they were evacuated to the airport and no (foreign) staff remain in the field," said a private security company official who oversaw the evacuation.

Days of sabre rattling between Washington and Tehran have heightened tensions in the region amid concerns about a potential US-Iran conflict.

The United States on Wednesday pulled non-emergency staff members from its embassy in the Iraqi capital Baghdad out of apparent concern about perceived threats from neighbouring Iran, to which Iraqi Shia militias are allied.

Bangladesh stops 84 Rohingyas from perilous sea journey

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Bangladesh authorities prevented 84 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar from attempting a perilous boat journey to Malaysia, officials said Saturday.

Police in Pekua said 67 Rohingya Muslims from Kutupalong -- the largest refugee settlement in the world -- were stopped as they waited to board a fishing trawler.

They included 31 women and 15 children.

On Saint Martin's, a small Bangladesh island in the Bay of Bengal, the country's coast guard stopped 17 other Rohingyas and five Bangladeshi

traffickers before they could board a rickety fishing boat.

Fayezul Islam Mondol, the regional coast guard commander, said they were acting on a tip off.

About 740,000 Muslim minority Rohingyas have fled Myanmar for Bangladesh since a brutal military crackdown began in August 2017.

They joined another 300,000 Rohingyas already living in overcrowded camps in the Cox's Bazar area following previous bouts of violence.

Thousands of refugees attempt to flee the camps each year in pursuit of better opportunities in countries such as Malaysia and Thailand.

US approves missile sales to S.Korea, Japan

Washington, United States

The United States said Friday it had approved more than \$600 million in sales of air defense missiles to South Korea and Japan as tensions return with North Korea.

The State Department said it had approved 94 SM-2 missiles used by ships against air threats, along with 12 guidance systems for a total cost of \$313.9 million. It separately gave the green light to sell 160 anti-air AMRAAM missiles and related guidance equipment to Japan for \$317 million.

Ex-CIA agent gets 20 years in jail

Washington, United States

An ex-CIA officer was sentenced to 20 years in prison Friday for spying for China in a case called part of an "alarming trend" in the US intelligence community.

Kevin Mallory, 62, was convicted under the Espionage Act for selling classified US "defense information" to a Chinese intelligence agent for \$25,000 during trips to Shanghai in March and April 2017.

"Your object is to gain information, and my object is to be paid," he told the Chinese agent in a May 5, 2017 message.

The fluent Mandarin speaker had served in the US army, then as a special agent for the security service of the State Department, before becoming a covert case officer for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mallory is one of several US officials with high-level security clearances arrested and



Kevin Mallory

classified information to the Chinese.

In April, a former diplomat, Candace Marie Claiborne, pleaded guilty to lying to investigators about money she received from Chinese intelligence agents in exchange for US documents. And in the most significant case, on May 1, former CIA officer Jerry Chun Shing Lee pleaded guilty to spying for China.

Lee, 54, faces a possible life sentence. Arrested in January 2018, he was suspected of having provided Beijing the information it needed to bring down a CIA network of informants in China between 2010 and 2012.

"This case is one in an alarming trend of former US intelligence officers being targeted by China and betraying their country and colleagues," Assistant Attorney General John Demers said of the Mallory case.

Hero dog saves buried baby



Ping Pong, the disabled Thai dog that rescued a baby boy buried by his 15-year-old mother. (Courtesy of Thai television)

Bangkok, Thailand

An attentive dog in northeastern Thailand is being hailed as a hero after finding and saving an infant allegedly buried in a field by his teenage mother, police said Saturday.

The newborn was lying under a layer of dirt near a farm in the Chumpuang district of Nakhon Ratchasima province but was found the same day -- May 15 -- by a curious canine named Ping Pong.

The dog dug around the area and began barking, alerting

his owner a cattle herder, who went to the site.

"I don't think it was long after his mother buried him before the dog found him," case officer Panuvat Udkam said.

He added that the boy was healthy, was recovering in hospital, and was so young he had not been named yet.

The teenage mother was charged with attempted murder and abandonment of children.

Officer Panuvat said the suspect was 15 years old and had tried to dispose of the child be-

cause she was afraid her parents would get angry.

"So after she delivered the baby by herself she buried it," he said.

Local media coverage hailed the achievement and social media users praised Ping Pong's good deed.

A dog is the "best friend" of human beings, a Facebook user commented on the page of media outlet Khaosod English.



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