

‘First man’ to open Venice Film Festival
Oscar-winning director Damien Chazelles space race drama “First Man” will open the 75th annual Venice International Film Festival on August 29.
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Chinese President Jinping in UAE

Gulf News | Abu Dhabi

President Xi Jinping of the People’s Republic of China arrived here yesterday on a three-day state visit to the UAE accompanied by First Lady Peng Liyuan.

Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, received the distinguished guests and his accompanying delegation at the Presidential Flight. Upon his arrival, President Xi Jinping was accorded an official reception ceremony including the playing of the national anthem of China and a 21-gun salute.

Saudi signs deal for five warships

AFP | Riyadh

Saudi Arabia’s state-owned defence company has forged a deal with Spanish shipbuilder Navantia for a joint venture to build five warships, state media said yesterday.

The agreement with Saudi Arabian Military Industries for the design and construction of five Avante 2200 corvettes warships will start this autumn, with the last unit to be delivered by 2022, the official Saudi Press Agency reported. The agreement appears part of a framework agreed in April during Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s visit to Spain for Navantia to provide warships to the Gulf state for around two billion euros (\$2.3 billion).



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Israel adopts controversial Jewish nation-state law

AFP | Jerusalem

Israel’s parliament yesterday adopted a law defining the country as the nation state of the Jewish people, provoking fears it could lead to blatant discrimination against Arab citizens.

Arab lawmakers and Palestinians called the law “racist” and said it legalised “apartheid” following a tumultuous debate in parliament.

Others said it neglects to spec-

ify equality and Israel’s democratic character, implying that the country’s Jewish nature comes first.

The legislation, adopted by 62 votes to 55, makes Hebrew the country’s national language and defines the establishment of Jewish communities as being in the national interest.

Arabic, previously considered an official language, was granted only special status.

The law, passed in the early

hours of Thursday, speaks of Israel as the historic homeland of the Jews and says they have a “unique” right to self-determination there, according to copies of the final text quoted by Israeli media.

However, a deeply controversial clause that had been seen as more specifically legalising the establishment of Jewish-only communities was changed after it drew criticism, including from Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

The legislation becomes part of the country’s basic laws, which serve as a de facto constitution.

“It is our state, the Jewish state, but in recent years some have tried to question that as well as the principles of our existence and our rights,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after the vote on the legislation, backed by his right-wing government.

He called its approval a “decisive moment” in Israeli history.

‘Death of democracy’

A range of opposition politicians denounced the vote. The head of the mainly Arab Joint List alliance Ayman Odeh called it “the death of our democracy”.

Arab parliament members who called the legislation “racist” ripped up copies of the bill in the chamber of the Knesset, Israel’s parliament, after it was passed.

Emergency rule ends in Turkey

● The opposition, however, fears the Emergency rule will be replaced by even more repressive legislative measures

AFP | Istanbul

Turkey’s state of emergency which was imposed after the failed 2016 coup came to an end yesterday, but the opposition fears it will be replaced by even more repressive legislative measures.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared the state of emergency on July 20, 2016, five days after warplanes bombed Ankara and bloody clashes broke out in Istanbul in a doomed putsch bid that claimed 249 lives.

The measure, which normally lasts three months but was extended seven times, ended at 1:00 am yesterday (2200 GMT



80,000 people were detained and about double that number sacked from jobs during the Emergency period

Wednesday), the state-run Anadolu news agency said, after the government decided not to ask that it be extended for an eighth time. The state of emergency saw the detention of some 80,000 people and about double that number sacked from jobs in public institutions. The biggest

purge of Turkey’s modern history has targeted not just alleged supporters of Fethullah Gulen, the US-based preacher blamed for the coup, but also Kurdish activists and leftists.

The former leaders of the opposition pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) -- Fi-

gen Yuksekdog and Selahattin Demirtas -- are still languishing in jail following their arrest in November 2016 on charges of links to Kurdish militants.

Different name

During last month’s presidential election campaign, which he

With this bill, the state of emergency will not be extended for three months, but for 3 years. They make it look like they are lifting but in fact they are continuing it

OZGUR OZEL, HEAD, CHP PARLIAMENTARY FACTION

won, Erdogan pledged that the state of emergency would end.

But the opposition has been angered by the government’s submission of new legislation to parliament that apparently seeks to formalise some of the harshest aspects of the emergency.

The bill, dubbed “anti-terror” legislation by pro-government media, will be discussed at commission level on Thursday and then in plenary session on Monday.

A STEP BACKWARD

Facebook to remove bogus posts inciting violence

AFP | Menlo Park, US

Facebook has built on its campaign to prevent the platform from being used to spread dangerous misinformation, saying it will remove bogus posts likely to spark violence.

The new tactic being spread through the global social network was tested in Sri Lanka, which was recently rocked by inter-religious conflict over false information posted on the



world’s leading online social network. “There are certain forms of misinformation that have contributed to physical harm, and we are making a policy change which will enable us to take that type of content down,” a Facebook spokesman said after a briefing on the policy at its campus in Silicon Valley.

“We will be begin implementing the policy during the coming months.” For example, Facebook may remove inaccurate or mis-

leading content, such as doctored photos, created or shared to stir up to ignite volatile situations in the real world.

The social network said it is partnering with local organisations and authorities adept at identifying when posts are false and likely to prompt violence.

Misinformation removed in Sri Lanka under the new policy included content falsely contending that Muslims were poisoning food given or sold to Bud-

dists, according to Facebook.

Hate speech and threats deemed credible are violations of Facebook rules, and are removed. The new policy takes another step back, eliminating content that may not be explicitly violent but which seems likely to encourage such behavior. Facebook has been lambasted for allowing rumours or blatantly false information to circulate that may have contributed to violence.