

UAE Investment in Indian-Administered Kashmir 'Complete Betrayal'



Indian troops are seen at the site of a gunfight in downtown Srinagar, Kashmir.

DUBAI (Middle East Eye) – News of the Emirati property company Emaar investing in Indian-administered Kashmir has been branded a “complete betrayal” by activists and Kashmiris in the region and abroad.

Many believe Kashmir is set to meet a fate similar to Palestine’s, with some Arab and Islamic countries withdrawing their support for the Muslim population’s cause in order to build better economic and diplomatic relations with India.

In March, Emaar’s chief executive in India revealed plans to build a shopping mall and an

office complex in Srinagar, capital of the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir region. Amit Jain said that the investment worth \$60m would generate around 7,000 to 8,000 jobs.

Speaking on behalf of the Indian government, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the announcement marked a “historic day” for Kashmir and that “business leaders from the UAE have been invited to invest in J&K and become ‘partners’”.

The Kashmir region is divided between areas administered by India, Pakistan and China and has been fought over since the

partition of India by the British Empire in 1947.

The Indian government stands accused of thousands of human rights violations and extrajudicial killings in the region, with allegations of brutally suppressing a decades-long freedom struggle by Kashmiris.

Kashmiri rights campaigner Ershad Mehmood, executive director at the Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms, based in Islamabad, told Middle East Eye: “I am in absolute shock. This is a complete betrayal of the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir and their

struggle.

“They shouldn’t have done this. This completely strengthens India’s stance, it recognizes Kashmir as Indian territory and completely whitewashes our struggle,” he said. “The UAE has just sent a message to the people of Kashmir that it doesn’t care about their rights and aspirations.”

Another campaigner, Altaf Hussain, who manages the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, said that “the message India is trying to convey to the Kashmiris is that nobody is with you - even the UAE is investing with us. They want to project this as a negative impact on the Kashmiri struggle”.

Hussain emphasized that there was no peace in Jammu and Kashmir and that India “has on its hands a long list of human rights violations”.

Indian human rights violations in Kashmir have made international investment highly controversial.

Just after Emaar’s announcement last month, UN Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor appealed to the Indian authorities to stop the latest attacks on human rights activists in Jammu and Kashmir.

India is also in violation of UN resolutions on holding an independence plebiscite in the region and the withdrawal of 600,000 Indian soldiers currently based in Jammu and Kashmir.

Gaza UNRWA Staff Strike, Pledge Additional Measures

GAZA (MEMO) – The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)’s Gaza staff on Sunday carried out a complete strike that paralyzed all institutions, pledging to take additional measures if the agency did not meet their demands.

Health clinics closed, some 50,000 school students did not go to their schools and rubbish piled up in the streets.

The strike was preceded by a

go slow action carried out last month, and this full-day strike was carried out because there had been no progress with UNRWA.

UNRWA claims it has been suffering from a very large budget deficit, the Gaza UNRWA staff union said, due to donation shortages.

Amir al-Mis-hal, head of UNRWA’s Arab employees, stressed that the comprehensive

strike is an extension of the industrial action started in November when the staff union proposed a package of demands and were given an assurance that they would be met by the start of this year.

Mis-hal said that several issues were resolved, including the appointment of 200 teachers this month and 250 more at the beginning of next year.

However, there are many outstanding issues between the staff union and UNRWA’s administration, including the contracts of 60 sanitation workers under the age of 60 who have been working for 12 years without rights.

Mis-hal said that UNRWA’s High Commissioner has agreed to add \$8 million to the budget, but the current Regional Director has not yet fulfilled the agreement.

Taliban Ban Restaurant Gardens for Families, Women

KABUL (AP) – The Taliban have banned families and women from restaurants with gardens or green spaces in Afghanistan’s northwestern Herat province, an official said Monday.

The moves followed complaints from religious scholars and members of the public about mixing of genders in such places, he said.

It was the latest in a slew of restrictions imposed by the Taliban since they took power in August 2021. They have shut girls out of classrooms beyond sixth grade and women from universities, most types of employment,

including jobs at the United Nations. They are also banned from public spaces such as parks and gyms.

Authorities say the curbs are in place because of gender mixing or because women allegedly are not wearing the hijab, or Islamic headscarf, correctly.

The outdoor dining ban only applies to establishments in Herat, where such premises remain open to men. Baz Mohammad Nazir, a deputy official from the Ministry of Vice and Virtue’s directorate in Herat, denied media reports that all restaurants were off limits to

families and women, dismissing them as propaganda.

It applied only to restaurants with green areas, such as a park, where men and women could meet, he said. “After repeated complaints from scholars and ordinary people, we set limits and closed these restaurants.”

He also denied reports that sales of DVDs of foreign films, TV shows and music are banned in the province, saying that business owners were advised against selling this material because it contradicted Islamic values.

Shopkeepers who did not follow

through on the advice eventually saw their shops closed, Nazir added. He also denied local media reports that Internet cafes have shut down in Herat, but said that gaming arcades were now off-limits to children because of unsuitable content. Some games insulted the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure in the Great Mosque at Makkah toward which Muslims turn when praying, and other Islamic symbols.

“Internet cafes, where students learn and use for their studies, are necessary and we have allowed them,” Nazir said.

human sewage? We are not talking about a family or 100 or 1,000, but millions, as well as drinking water, electricity, and other things we do.”

Sisi’s words come at a time when Egyptians are caught in a spiral of rising prices and shortages of essential goods due to the significant loss of value in the Egyptian pound. At present, Egypt’s economy is under the burden of debt and budget deficit, forcing the state to sell its assets.

Spying...

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breadth of topics covered by the documents, but they do not rule out pro-Russian actors. More theories could develop as the investigation progresses, they said.

Ukraine said its president and top security officials met on Friday to discuss ways to prevent leaks.

The White House has declined to discuss publicly who might be responsible for the breach, and has referred all questions about the leak to the Pentagon. The Pentagon said that over the weekend, U.S. officials spoke with allies and had notified the relevant congressional committee about the leak.

“I’m deeply troubled by the possible extent and nature of the information exposed and expect to be fully briefed in the days to come,” said Representative Jason Crow, a former Army Ranger who sits on the U.S. House of Representatives intelligence and foreign relations committees.

The leaks have already drawn responses from some foreign governments.

In a statement on Sunday, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office labeled as “mendacious and without any foundation whatsoever” a document asserting that the Mossad, one of the country’s intelligence agencies, encouraged recent protests against Netanyahu’s plan to tighten controls on the judiciary.

A South Korean presidential official said on Sunday the country was aware of reports about the leaked documents and planned to discuss “issues raised” with Washington.

One of the documents gave details of internal discussions among senior South Korean officials about U.S. pressure on Seoul to supply weapons to Ukraine, and its policy of not doing so.

One of the documents marked “Top Secret” purportedly detailed how Russian private military contractors met with Turkish “contacts” to buy weapons from Ankara.

Some of the most sensitive information is purportedly related to Ukraine’s military capabilities and shortcomings.

It is not uncommon for the United States and other countries to spy on their allies. But public disclosures of such spying are uncomfortable for those allies, who need to explain to their populations how they will respond.

“It is going to take some time to rebuild trust with our allies,” the second U.S. defense official interviewed by Reuters said.

Five...

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Dawson Springs as a boy and has talked emotionally about his father’s hometown.

This year’s 15 mass shootings is the most during the first 100 days of a calendar year since 2009, when 16 incidents had occurred by April 10, according to a mass killings database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

Going back to 2006, the first year for which data has been compiled, the years with the most mass killings were 2019 and 2022, with 45 and 42 mass killings recorded during the entire calendar year. The pace in 2009 slowed later in the year, with 32 mass killings recorded that year.

Zionist...

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Iran’s army chief has already dismissed Israel’s military threats, saying the regime is unable to take an Iranian response to any hostile act that it may carry out given the political tensions it faces inside the occupied territories and its sense of insecurity in the broader region.

Addressing a meeting with senior army commanders on December 22 last year, Mousavi said Iran is closely and

constantly monitoring all the enemy’s moves, and that the Armed Forces are fully ready to counter any threat at once.

“We will give a crushing response to any place from which an attack might originate against the security of the Islamic Republic and its interests or help is provided to the Zionist regime,” the top general added.

Iranian...

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has emphasized that the only solution is a political one with the presence of all Yemeni sides to decide the fate of the country and the formation of a government in line with the interests of the Yemeni nation,” he said.

Kanaani also said Israel has not desisted from its atrocities in the region, warning that the occupying regime will spare no efforts to pursue its criminal acts against Palestine and other regional countries as it seeks to channel off its crises.

“Despite grappling with dense internal crises and tensions ... and a wide political and social divide in the occupied territories, the Zionist regime is still trying to spread the crisis from within ... to the Palestinian lands and other adjacent areas,” he said.

Iran...

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according to the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, which is based in nearby Bahrain.

The nuclear-powered submarine is being deployed in support of the U.S. Fifth Fleet, also based in Bahrain, to “ensure regional maritime security and stability,” Commander Tim Hawkins, spokesman for the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, claimed on Saturday.

Hawkins declined to provide further details on the mission or its timing, or to specify whether the submarine was headed to the Persian Gulf. It’s extremely rare for the U.S. military to publicize movements of its nuclear submarine fleet.

The U.S. submarine’s arrival coincided with the firing of six rockets from Syria toward the Zionist-held Golan Heights.

Iran’s envoy to the UN, Amir Saeid Irvani, earlier warned that the Islamic Republic will take “decisive measures” to protect its forces and interests in Syria against any threats posed by the United States or others.

Tensions...

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people on both sides during a six-week conflict. The war ended with a Russian-brokered deal that saw Yerevan cede swathes of the Azerbaijani territory that it had been occupying for decades.

Shamkhani said the Caucasus region is going through a sensitive period, expressing hope that Azerbaijan and Armenia would be able to overcome the existing tensions through self-restraint and prudence.

He mentioned development of cooperation and interaction with neighbors as an unchanging principle of Iran’s foreign policy and a priority for the sitting Iranian administration.

“Good-neighborly relations and a joint endeavor for the settlement of the regional challenges through peaceful means are among the Islamic Republic’s most important pieces of advice to all parties,” Shamkhani asserted.

For his part, Armenia’s top security official said Iran played an “important role” in the development of relations among South Caucasus countries and also in protecting the regional security.

Grigoryan lauded Iran’s “very effective” role in realization of regional peace and stability, emphasizing that dialogue and interaction among the countries constitute the only way of resolving existing regional crises and preventing further tension and conflicts.

Sisi’s ‘Unfinished Dream’ Receives Widespread Ridicule

CAIRO (MEMO) – Social media platforms were dominated by the widespread mockery of the Egyptian president, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, discussing his “unfinished dream.”

Addressing a child during an open dialogue with the residents of the Asmarat district, Sisi said, “I used to walk around and see difficult areas, and I was an ordinary person just like you. If I could reach it, I would do it, and it was a dream, and God willed it.”

He added, “My dream has not ended, and I hope to see all Egyptians in the best condition,” noting that his dream is on the right track if Egyptians are in the best condition.

Sisi continued, “We are working on the first phase of ‘Decent Life’; we hope to finish it, and there are two more phases. We are talking about 60 million people whose lives we want to improve,” directing his speech to one of the citizens, saying, “Do you know what it means when a person’s home has in-