



U.S. President Donald Trump (C) takes part in a groundbreaking with Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker (L) and Foxconn Chairman Terry Gou during a visit to Foxconn's new site in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin, U.S.—REUTERS

## UK defends decision to refuse right to live, work in Britain for Indian professionals

LONDON, JUNE 29/--/The UK government has defended its controversial decision to deny residency rights to hundreds of highly skilled professionals, including Indians, who made legally acceptable amendments to their tax records, claiming the applicants caught up in the visa row are guilty of misconduct.

Following a long-drawn campaign by the Highly Skilled Migrants Group, the UK Home Office had opened a review into Tier 1 (General) visa cases involving teachers, doctors, lawyers and engineers from countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh being refused indefinite leave to remain (ILR) under a national security clause.

At the conclusion of the first phase of the review, UK minister for immigration Caroline Nokes reported in a letter to the House of Commons' influential Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) that her department's decision to refuse applications under Paragraph 322(5) of the UK's immigration rules due to a

discrepancy in reported earnings had been "correct". The letter, however, also acknowledged that the review had thrown up 38 cases of Home Office refusals being overturned and allowed on appeal.

"Although the earnings issues were considered on appeal, the majority were overturned solely on human rights grounds rather than because of decision-making errors relating to earnings," Nokes said.

The Highly Skilled Migrants Group expressed shock at the minister's attempt to downplay this figure, where applicants won their appeals in at least 38 instances figure expected to go up once the review into the remaining 1,671 cases is completed in the next few weeks.

"It just proves our point about Paragraph 322(5) being used disproportionately," said Aditi Bhardwaj, coordinator of the group, which has been lobbying ministers through major protests outside the UK Parliament since early this year.

"The very fact that these appeals

are being allowed on human rights grounds should hopefully prevent the future disproportionate use of this clause and prevent applicants having to challenge Home Office decisions in court," Bhardwaj said.

"It does show they (Home Office) were making mistakes. This should tell them that at the very least not to refuse people where there are serious human rights grounds, such as family ties in the UK and young children involved," Bhardwaj said. Nokes confirms in her letter to HASC that the outstanding Tier 1 (General) visa decisions remain on hold pending the outcome of the review, holding out hope for the protesters that Paragraph 322(5) may be used in a "fairer" manner in future Home Office decisions for these applicants. The UK Home Office said it had so far reviewed 281 of these visa applications made by post and concluded that in 249 cases applicants had amended their tax record by more than 10,000 pounds and in many of the remaining cases, the differences were "substantial".

## Paris attacks suspect Abdeslam justifies 2015 killings

PARIS, JUNE 29/--/The suspected sole surviving gunman from 2015 attacks in Paris has come close to admitting his role in the carnage in a rare statement to investigators in which he justified the killings, reports said today.

Salah Abdeslam, in custody in France over the November 2015 attacks that left 130 people dead, has refused to cooperate with French judges ever since his arrest five months after the atrocities. But yesterday he

recorded a statement in which he parroted the propaganda of Islamist extremist groups such as Islamic State, which claimed responsibility for the attacks on the Bataclan concert hall, a sports stadium and bars in the French capital.

"We don't attack you because you eat pork, you drink wine or you listen to music, but Muslims defend themselves against those people who attack us," Abdeslam said, according to

the RTL and France Inter radio stations. They quoted a lawyer, Jean Reinhart, who is representing the victims of the attacks and has access to the case files.

"Put your anger to one side and think about it a few minutes," Abdeslam said in comments addressed to the dead and injured. "You are suffering from the mistakes made by your leaders."

In April, a Belgian court sentenced Abdeslam, a French national of Moroccan origin, to 20 years in prison over a gun battle with police in his hometown of Brussels where he was arrested in March 2016.

At the opening of his trial, Abdeslam defied his judges, claiming to place his "trust in Allah and that is all". Abdeslam was a pot-smoking delinquent in the crime-ridden district of Molenbeek in Brussels until he became radicalised by Islamic State propaganda around his 25th birthday in 2014, investigators believe.

## Trump pursuing meeting with Putin to determine if Russia willing to improve ties: WH

WASHINGTON, JUNE 29/--/US President Donald Trump is pursuing a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to determine whether Moscow is willing to make progress in bilateral relationship, the White House has said.

Trump and Putin will meet on July 16 in Finnish capital Helsinki to mend bilateral relations and discuss a range of national security issues, the White House and the Kremlin had announced yesterday.

The announcement followed a meeting between President Putin and US National Security Adviser John Bolton, who was in Moscow this week to lay the groundwork for the summit.

"We're looking forward to it. If we could all get along it would be great. The world has to start getting along," Trump told reporters travelling with him in Wisconsin yesterday.

His spokesperson asserted that Trump is meeting Putin because he believes that this is in national interest.

July 16 Helsinki meeting would be the first US-Russia summit under the Trump Administration.

From the beginning of his presidential campaign, Trump has insisted that he wants to have a better relationship with Russia and that it is good for the US and the world.

However, he has been facing backlash from the Opposition Democrats and the think-tank community who believe that Russia under Putin interfered in the 2016 presidential election. Moscow has denied the allegations.

Democratic Senator Jack Reed, Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee, said the proposed meeting should concern all Americans that Trump is eager to stage a summit with Putin right on the heels of a critical NATO meeting in Brussels.

"This decision to cozy up to Vladimir Putin right now is ill-advised, ill-conceived, and if past summits are any indication, President Trump will be ill-prepared," he said.

Instead of focusing on rebuilding NATO alliance unity after his disastrous performance at the G-7 summit, President Trump seems more interested in another photo-op with an authoritarian ruler seeking to harm America's and the West's interests," Reed said.

Former Secretary of State John Kerry told Aspen Ideas conference that in principle, he favoured Trump meeting with Putin.

Trump, she said, hopes that the meeting can help reduce tensions and lead to constructive engagement that improves peace and security around the world. The

EU leaders seal migration deal after marathon talks

BRUSSELS, JUNE 29/--/EU leaders clinched a hard-won migration deal during all-night talks today that Italy's headline new premier said meant his country was "no longer alone" in shouldering the responsibility for migrants.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, who heads a month-old anti-immigration government, had vetoed joint conclusions for the entire agenda of the summit in Brussels until his demands were finally met before dawn. Italy has turned away a series of migrant boats in recent weeks, sparking a fresh political row three years after the bloc faced its biggest ever migration crisis. "Today Italy is no longer alone. We are satisfied," Conte, a former law professor who until recently was a virtual political unknown, told reporters following nine hours of talks described as "virtuous".

The 28 leaders agreed to consider setting up a "disembarkation platform" outside the bloc, most likely in north Africa, in a bid to discourage migrants boarding EU-bound smuggler boats.

Member countries could also set up migrant processing centres - but only on a voluntary basis - to determine whether they returned home as economic migrants or admitted as refugees in willing states.

The leaders also offered a concession to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who faces a rebellion from within her own coalition government, with moves to determine whether they returned home as economic migrants or admitted as refugees in willing states.

Merkel welcomed the deal, but acknowledged the hard work needed with some hard choices left over. "I am optimistic after today that we can now really continue to work, although we have a lot to do, even bridging the different views," Merkel said.

She had earlier warned that "migration could end up determining Europe's destiny" if it failed to reach an agreement.

The summit conclusions called on member countries to take "all necessary" steps to stop migrants initially arriving in countries such as Italy and Greece from moving on to Germany.

## Iraq executes 13 death row jihadists to avenge killings

BAGHDAD, JUNE 29/--/Iraq said today executed 13 death row jihadists after Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi vowed a forceful retaliation to calm public anger over the Islamic State group's murder of abducted civilians.

While Iraqis have grown accustomed to the atrocities committed by IS, the killing of the eight civilians shocked the nation and doused hopes the jihadists had been defeated.

For the first time, the authorities released photographs of the hangings, which came after Abadi yesterday ordered the "immediate" executions of hundreds of convicted jihadists.

The justice ministry said today that the 13 convicts put to death at a prison in southern Iraq had participated in armed operations with terrorist groups, in kidnappings, bombings and murders of civilians." v Abadi's office had earlier announced the execution of 12 convicts whose appeals were exhausted.

More than 300 people, including around 100 foreign women, have been condemned to death in Iraq and hundreds of others to life imprisonment for membership of IS, a judicial source said in April.

Abadi, who has faced charges of failing to respond in force to IS, ordered "the immediate punishment of terrorists condemned to death" whose appeals have been exhausted, his office said.

A photograph released by the justice ministry showed a group of blindfolded and handcuffed men sitting on the floor waiting to be executed.

Another showed several convicts being hanged at the prison in Nasiriyah.

Abadi vowed to avenge the deaths of the eight

civilians held captive by IS, a day after their bodies were found along a highway north of Baghdad.

"Our security and military forces will take forceful revenge against these terrorist cells," he told senior military officials and ministers. "We promise that we will kill or arrest those who committed this crime," he added.

Six of the abducted - civilians working in the logistics department of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force that helped defeat the jihadists - had appeared in an IS video released on Saturday with badly bruised faces.

IS had threatened to execute their captives unless Baghdad released Sunni Muslim women held in its prisons.

Iraq declared victory over IS in December after expelling the jihadists from all major towns and cities in a vast offensive.

# KIDS CORNER

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Have you ever wondered what a million dollars looks like?!

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### WordWheel

No. 307

Insert the missing letter to complete an eight-letter word reading clockwise or anticlockwise. Solution No. 306: OPINIONS

### 5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

No. 208

S	C	A	T	S
A	L	L	O	W
N	I	T	R	E
E	M	O	T	E
R	E	S	E	T

OUR SOLUTION TO PUZZLE 207 (Other combinations may be possible.)

Reference: C.O.D. 1995

### Cornered

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"... then peaks around the first of August."

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### WORD-BUILDER

208

G	N	I
A	R	

How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or ones beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

TODAY'S GOALS:  
Good - 9 Excellent - 11 Amazing - 14

SOLUTION 207: air, ail, aril, fail, fair, far, fir, flair, frail, lair, liar, lira, rail, ria, rial

Reference: C.O.D. 1995