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‘Extremist’ Israeli legislation draws storm of outrage

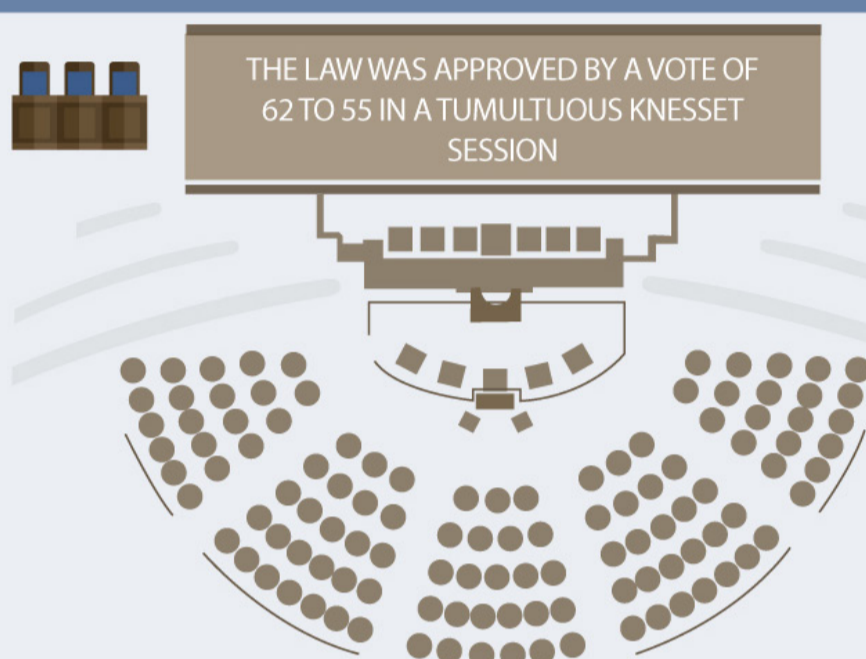
JERUSALEM - The Knesset (Israel’s parliament) on Thursday approved a controversial “national law”, which Arab assembly members have blasted as “anti-democratic” and “extremist” in nature. The law was approved -- in both its second and third readings -- by a vote of 62 to 55 in a tumultuous Knesset session in which Arab lawmakers slammed what they described as “Israeli racism against the Arab minority”. According to Israeli daily Haaretz, the law “officially defines Israel as the ‘national homeland of the Jewish people’.” It further states that a “united Jerusalem” is the capital of Israel and that Hebrew is the country’s official language, stripping Arabic of its earlier designation as an official language but recognizing its “special status”. The legislation’s most controversial article, however, which would have paved the way for the creation of “Jewish-only” communities in Israel, was removed from the draft before the vote. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hailed the legislation, describing its adoption by the Knesset as a “defining moment for Zionism and Israel”. “One hundred and twenty-two years after [Zionist leader Theodore] Herzl articulated his vision, we have, with... [MORE DETAILS](#)

Turkey slams Israel’s ‘Jewish nation-state’ law

ANKARA - Turkey on Thursday slammed a new Jewish nation-state law passed by Israel’s Knesset, saying it “disregards” norms of universal law. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said: “The Jewish nation-state law passed by the Israeli parliament today disregards norms of universal law and ignores the rights of Palestinians.” The statement came after Israel’s Knesset on Thursday passed a law which declares the country to be “the nation-state... [MORE DETAILS](#)

‘EXTREMIST’ ISRAELI LEGISLATION DRAWS OUTRAGE

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Possible outcomes of the law:

- It may create two different classes of citizenship
- It could make Arabs, who account for more than 20 percent of Israel’s population, second-class citizens

MOST CONTENTIOUS ARTICLES OF THE LEGISLATION:

Hebrew is the country’s official language, stripping Arabic of its earlier designation as an official language but recognizing its ‘special status’

Israel is defined as the ‘national homeland of the Jewish people’

Jewish religious law can be used as a legal reference

Jewish religious days will be counted as national holidays

Only Jews will have the right to self-determination in Israel

All Jews in the world will have the right to ‘return’ to Israel

A ‘united Jerusalem’ will be Israel’s capital

450 undocumented migrants held across Turkey

Anadolu Agency Photo

EDIRNE/ CANAKKALE/ VAN - A total of 450 undocumented migrants were held across Turkey on Thursday, according to security sources. In the northwestern province of Edirne, 102 migrants were rounded up in Yenikadin, Orhaniye, Bosnakoy and Meric districts, said the coast guard sources, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on speaking to the media. The migrants were from Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Pakistan. In the northwestern port city of Canakkale, 39 in a sinking rubber boat were rescued by the Turkish coast guards. Separately, 302 undocumented migrants -- including Afghan, Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals -- were rounded up in Ipekyolu district of eastern Van province after they attempted to illegally enter Turkey, the sources said. Turkey has been... [MORE DETAILS](#)

Anadolu Agency Photo

Decisive battle in Punjab to decide next PM

By Aamir Latif

LAHORE - Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, has become a battleground for two mainstream political parties in the upcoming general election. Lahore, the provincial capital and second largest city, is witness to it. Life-size posters and banners line thoroughfares. Parties are holding corner meetings and door-to-door campaigns. Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz (PML-N), of the three-time premier Nawaz Sharif, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by the former cricket hero Imran Khan, are flexing their muscles for the July 25 poll. Punjab with its 120 million people -- 60 percent of the country’s total population -- has the highest number of seats in the National Assembly. Usually a party which wins Punjab, forms the government for the next five years. The province... [MORE DETAILS](#)

Court remands Turkish televangelist pending trial

ISTANBUL - Controversial Turkish televangelist Adnan Oktar was remanded pending trial by an Istanbul court early Thursday. The court remanded Oktar along with 168 others for allegedly committing numerous crimes, according to the judicial sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to restrictions on talking to media. Oktar was arrested in the early hours of July 10 as police searched

for those with suspected links to his cult-like organization. His group has been accused of crimes including establishing a criminal organization, child sexual abuse, sexual intercourse with a minor, kidnapping, violating tax law and violating the anti-terrorism law. Oktar owns a TV channel called A9, from where he broadcasts a show on religious and social issues surrounded by women... [MORE DETAILS](#)