

Hardliners reject president's nominee

Iran lashes out at new US push on arms embargo

TEHRAN, Iran, Aug 12, (AP): Iran's president and foreign minister lashed out on Wednesday at a revised proposal by the US that would extend a UN arms embargo on Iran indefinitely, the latest in the Trump administration's maximum pressure policy against Iran. The US on Tuesday circulated the revised draft at the UN, seeking to gain more support in the 15-member Security Council where veto-wielding Russia and China have voiced strong opposition. The revised draft, which eliminated some provisions from the earlier version that diplomats said went beyond

the extension of the arms embargo, may be put to a vote as early as Friday. Still, with Russia and China sharply critical of the US effort to indefinitely extend the arms embargo, the two will likely use their veto powers even if the draft got the minimum nine "yes" votes in the council, which appears unlikely. The US push to make the arms embargo permanent follows President Donald Trump's 2018 withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal between major world powers and Tehran, aimed at preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Tehran has

repeatedly insisted it does not seek to produce a nuclear bomb. The nuclear deal, endorsed by the Security Council, includes a provision lifting the arms embargo on Iran on Oct. 18. Rouhani lambasted the revised draft, saying its "initiators will be responsible for the consequences" if the Security Council adopts the new resolution. He did not elaborate on what steps Iran could take. Zarif said the US draft was a "very illegal resolution, and in fact it uses the Security Council mechanisms to de-

stroy the Security Council. " "I'm confident that this resolution will be rejected too," Zarif said. The United Nations banned Iran from buying major foreign weapon systems in 2010 amid tensions over its nuclear program. That blocked Iran from replacing its aging military equipment, much of which had been purchased by the shah before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. An earlier embargo targeted Iranian arms exports. In a separate development Wednesday, Iranian hard-liners in parliament voted against Rouhani's nominee for

trade minister in the first showdown between the rival camps since the house resumed work in May despite the struggles to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Lawmakers rejected Hossein Modares Khiabani's nomination for minister of trade and industries. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said the vote was 140-104 against the nominee. There were 254 lawmakers at the session and 10 abstained. The parliament has 290 seats. The vote marked the first serious confrontation between the newly

elect house, dominated by conservatives and the bloc of supporters of the relatively moderate Rouhani. Under the law, Rouhani must introduce new nominees to his Cabinet in the next three months. Rouhani in May dismissed the trade and industry minister at the time, Reza Rahmani, as Iran faced an unprecedented economic downturn amid intense pressure from the United States after Trump pulled America out of the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions on the country. Khiabani, 52, had since been the acting trade minister.

Week after deadly blast, Beirut pauses to remember the dead

Thousands march near devastated port

BEIRUT, Aug 12, (AP): The shattered city of Beirut on Tuesday marked a week since the catastrophic explosion that killed at least 171 people, injured thousands and plunged Lebanon into a deeper political crisis.

Thousands of people marched near the devastated port, remembering those who died in the most destructive single blast to hit the country.

They observed a minute of silence at 6:08 p.m. local time, the moment on Aug. 4 that thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in the city's port where it had been stored for more than six years, apparently with the knowledge of top political and security officials.

At that moment Tuesday, church bells tolled and mosque loudspeakers recited a call to prayer. Hundreds marched through the streets of the hard-hit neighborhood of Gemayze carrying portraits of the dead before a candlelight vigil after dusk near the port.

"He knew," read a poster bearing President Michel Aoun's picture. Aoun, in office since 2016, said Friday he was first told of the dangerous stockpile nearly three weeks ago and immediately ordered mili-

tary and security agencies to do "what was needed." But he suggested his responsibility ended there, saying he had no authority over the port.

"I'm very furious, I'm enraged, I'm angry, I'm sad. I'm hopeless," said Anthony Semaan, in his 20s, who said he came to pay respects to the victims. Like others, he said the government's resignation makes no difference.

"First of all, there are questions that need to be answered. And second, there are other rats that need to be brought down first, and when they are brought down then maybe we can start thinking about the future," he added.

Young people carried placards, each one printed with the names of one dead in a red and a green cedar, Lebanon's national symbol, and sat on stairs in the Gemayze district, facing the port. Elsewhere in the city, burials of the dead continued.

Explosion

The explosion has fueled outrage against top political leaders and security agencies, and led to the resignation of the government on Monday. In the wake of the disaster, documents have come to light that show that top Lebanese officials knew about the existence of the stockpile in the heart of Beirut near residential areas, and did nothing about it.

Aoun pledged "to all Lebanese who are in pain that I will not be silent and will not rest until the facts are revealed." He tweeted that referring the case to the Supreme Judicial Council is only the first step.

It still wasn't clear what caused the fire in a port warehouse that triggered the explosion of the chemicals, which created a shock wave so powerful it was felt as far away as the island of Cyprus, more than 200 kilometers (180 miles) across the Mediterranean.

Charged

"From one minute to the next, the world changed for people in Beirut," said Basma Tabaja, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross's delegation in Lebanon.

Outgoing Health Minister Hamad Hassan said the blast killed at least 171 people, with between 30 and 40 still missing. Of the injured, 1,500 needed special treatment while 120 remain in intensive care, he said.

The explosion damaged thousands of apartments and offices in the capital and came amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis facing the country since late last year.

UN food agency head David Beasley, who said a day earlier he is "very, very concerned" Lebanon could run out of bread in about two

and a half weeks, told The Associated Press that the World Food Program was looking at all options to make certain there is no interruptions in the food supply.

"We're looking at the port of Tripoli. We're looking at all other options, trucking food in, as well as shipping food in, flying food in, whatever it takes," Beasley said. "Obviously, we want to get the port operating as quickly as possible because that's the cheapest way to feed the most people."

Meanwhile, efforts to form a new government got underway a day after Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned. His government, which was supported by the militant group Hezbollah and its allies, unraveled after the deadly blast, with three ministers announcing they were quitting.

His government was formed after his predecessor, Saad Hariri, stepped down in October in response to anti-government demonstrations over endemic corruption. It took months of bickering among the leadership factions before they settled on Diab.

Lebanese have demanded an independent Cabinet not backed by any of the political parties they blame for the mess they are in. Many are also calling for an independent investigation into the port explosion, saying they had zero trust in a local probe.



People watch on a giant screen the moment of the massive explosion, as they gather in honor of the victims at the scene of the last week's explosion that killed many and devastated the city, in Beirut, Lebanon, Aug 11. (AP)

News in Brief

RIYADH: The Saudi Ministry of Health on Tuesday confirmed 34 additional deaths and 1,521 more cases of the novel Coronavirus, known as Covid-19.

The latest figures bring the kingdom's total number of fatalities and infections with the deadly virus to 3,233 and 291,468 respectively, the ministry said in a press statement.

A total of 1,640 more patients were cured of the respiratory illness over the over 24 hours, raising the overall count of recoveries to 255,118 since the outbreak of the virus in the kingdom, it added. (KUNA)

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) reported on Tuesday that 282 people were tested positive for (COVID-19), rising the total to 63,000 cases.

The ministry, in a statement carried by the UAE's official news agency (WAM), said that recovered cases reached 195 pushing the total number of confirmed cases to 56,961.

No deaths were registered in the past 24 hours, which keeps the death toll unchanged at 358. (KUNA)

MANAMA: The Bahraini Ministry of Health said on Tuesday that 386 more people tested positive for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) over the last 24 hours.

The fresh virus infections in Bahrain encompass 153 expatriate workers and cases of close contacts, the ministry said in a twitter release.

The ministry also confirmed three more fatalities due to the infectious respiratory illness, bringing the Gulf kingdom's death toll to 165 so far.

In addition, 242 additional patients were cured of the deadly bug, taking the kingdom's overall count of recoveries to 41,209, it added. (KUNA)

DOHA: The Qatari Health Ministry declared on Tuesday that it recorded 384 more coronavirus infections and 331 recoveries.

Infected cases went up to reach 113,646 cases, whereas recovered cases climbed up to 110,324 cases, the ministry said in a statement. (KUNA)

RABAT: Morocco said on Tuesday that 17 fatalities due to coronavirus and 1,132 new infections were registered in the past 24 hours.

This brings the tally to 35,195 and the death toll to 533, the health ministry said. (KUNA)

RAMALLAH: Palestinian Health Minister May Al-Kaila said on Tuesday that coronavirus took the lives of three people and more than 476 others tested positive for the virus.

Al-Kaila also stated in a press statement that death cases rose up to 113 cases, while infections tally went up to 19,597 cases.

Recovered cases also went up to 57 percent by recording 345 cases during the past 24 hours, she added.

TUNIS: Tunisia's Health Ministry on Tuesday reported 21 new coronavirus (COVID-19) infections over the past 24 hours, taking the total to 1,783.

Up to 976 medical tests were conducted over the last 24 hours, the ministry added in a statement. Some 414 infected cases are still

receiving treatment, it noted. (KUNA)

CAIRO: Egypt's coronavirus cases rose by 168 as deaths increased by 24, health authorities said on Tuesday.

The case tally now reaches 95,834 and the death toll is at 5,059, Health ministry Spokesman Khaled Mujahed said.

Meanwhile, recorded recoveries have reached 54,888. (KUNA)

TEHRAN: Iranian health authorities on Wednesday confirmed 188 additional fatalities and 2,510 more cases of the novel Coronavirus, known as Covid-19.

The fresh figures bring Iran's death toll and overall infections with the viral illness up to 18,988 and 333,699 respectively, the Iranian Health Ministry's Spokeswoman Sima Sadat said in a press statement.

In addition, a total of 290,244 patients have been cured of the globally spreading virus so far, the spokeswoman pointed out. (KUNA)

ANKARA: Turkey on Tuesday confirmed 1,183 more cases of COVID-19, raising the tally to 243,180.

"There has been a 32 percent decrease in hospitalization for the last three days," Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said, citing the ministry's data.

However, he added that the number of seriously ill people, which is one of the important indicators of the process, continues to increase.

The country also confirmed 1,185 more recoveries from the novel coronavirus, pushing the total to 226,155, he added.

The death toll rose to 5,873 after 15 more people died over the last 24 hours.

Health care professionals conducted 61,716 tests to diagnose the disease over the past day, taking the tally to over 5.38 million. (KUNA)

ADEN: Yemen on Tuesday recorded five coronavirus cases and five deaths resulting from the virus.

The case tally has grown to 1,831 as the death toll has risen to 523, according to internationally recognized government figures. The total number of recoveries, on the other hand, is 919. (KUNA)

MUSCAT: Omani Ministry of Health stated on Tuesday that the total number of coronavirus infections in the country rose to 82,050.

The death toll due to the virus went up to 533, while more than 76,720 cases recovered, Oman News Agency quoted a press release of the ministry.

GAZA: Israeli occupation army said it attacked positions in Gaza Strip Wednesday in retaliation of what it said was attacks by incendiary balloons from the enclave.

"Warplanes, helicopters and Israeli army tanks attacked a number of targets of Hamas in Gaza Strip," the army said in a statement.

It said the forces targeted a "military compound," underground facilities and monitoring centers run by Hamas in retaliation of firing of balloon bombs from Gaza against Israeli areas.

The army held Hamas responsible for what was happening inside Gaza and attacks against the Israelis. Hamas did not react. (KUNA)

Hyundai Motor Company today shipped the first 10 units of the Hyundai XCIENT Fuel Cell, the world's first mass-produced fuel cell heavy-duty truck, to Switzerland. The company plans to ship a total of 50 XCIENT Fuel Cells to Switzerland this year, with handover to commercial fleet customers starting in September. Hyundai plans to roll out a total of 1,600 XCIENT Fuel Cell trucks by 2025, reflecting the company's environmental commitment and technological prowess as it works toward reducing carbon emissions through zero-emission solutions.

"XCIENT Fuel Cell is a present-day reality, not as a mere future drawing board project. By putting this groundbreaking vehicle on the road now, Hyundai marks a significant milestone in the history of commercial vehicles and the development of hydrogen society," said In Cheol Lee, Executive Vice President and Head of Commercial Vehicle Division at Hyundai Motor. "Building a comprehensive hydrogen ecosystem, where critical transportation needs are met by vehicles like XCIENT Fuel Cell, will lead to a paradigm shift that removes automobile emissions from the environmental equation." "Having introduced the world's first mass-produced fuel-cell electric passenger vehicle, the ix35, and the second-generation fuel cell electric vehicle, the NEXO, Hyundai is now leveraging decades of experience, world-leading fuel-cell technology, and mass-production capability to advance hydrogen in the commercial vehicle sector with the XCIENT Fuel Cell," he added.

XCIENT Fuel Cell

XCIENT is powered by a 190-kW hydrogen fuel cell system with dual 95-kW fuel cell stacks. Seven large hydrogen tanks offer a combined storage capacity of around 32.09 kg of hydrogen. The driving range per charge for XCIENT Fuel Cell is about 400km*, which was developed with an optimal balance between the specific requirements from the potential commercial fleet customers and the charging infrastructure in Switzerland. Refueling time for each truck takes approximately 8-20 minutes.

World's First Fuel Cell Heavy-Duty Truck, Hyundai XCIENT Fuel Cell, Heads to Europe for Commercial Use



Fuel cell technology is particularly well-suited to commercial shipping and logistics due to long ranges and short refueling times. The dual-mounted fuel cell system provides enough energy to drive the heavy-duty trucks up and down the mountainous terrain in the region.

Hyundai Motor is developing a long-distance tractor unit capable of traveling 1,000 kilometers on a single charge equipped with an enhanced fuel cell system with high durability and power, aimed at global markets including North America and Europe.

Green Hydrogen Ecosystem

In 2019, Hyundai Motor Company formed Hyundai Hydrogen Mobility (HHM), a joint venture with Swiss company H2 Energy, which will lease the trucks to commercial truck operators on a pay-per-use basis, meaning there is no initial investment for the commercial fleet customers. Hyundai chose Switzerland as the starting point for its business venture for various reasons. One of the reasons is the Swiss LSWA road tax on commercial vehicles, which does not apply for zero-emission trucks. That nearly equalizes the hauling costs per kilometer of the fuel cell truck compared to a regular diesel truck. Hyundai's business case involves using

purely clean hydrogen generated from hydropower. To truly reduce carbon emissions, all of the trucks need to run on only green hydrogen. Switzerland is the country with one of the highest shares of hydropower globally, and can therefore deliver sufficient green energy for the production of hydrogen. Once the project is underway in Switzerland, Hyundai plans to expand it to other European countries as well.

Hyundai Hydrogen Leadership

As Hyundai looks to the future, zero-emissions mobility will play a significant role in the company's strategy. In addition to the XCIENT Fuel Cell trucks, Hyundai is also the manufacturer of NEXO, its second-generation hydrogen-powered SUV. By 2025, the company aims to sell 670,000 electric vehicles annually, including 110,000 FCEVs.

In December 2018, Hyundai Motor Group announced its long-term roadmap, "Fuel Cell Vision 2030", and reaffirmed its commitment to accelerate the development of a hydrogen society by leveraging its global leadership in fuel cell technologies. As part of this plan, Hyundai Motor Group aims to secure a 700,000-unit-a-year capacity of fuel cell systems for automobiles as well as vessels, rail cars, drones and power generators by 2030 •