

## MIDEAST



Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, (right), meets with visiting Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif in Baghdad, Iraq, Sunday, July 19. (AP)

# Tehran-Baghdad ties won't be shaken: Zarif

Court halts death sentence

**BAGHDAD, July 20, (AP):** Iran's foreign minister on Sunday stressed that Iran-Iraq relations would not be "shaken" ahead of the Iraqi prime minister's planned visit this week to Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional rival.

Several hours after Mohammad Javad Zarif landed in Baghdad, three mortars struck near the U.S. Embassy in the heavily fortified Green Zone without causing any losses, according to two security officials. The Green Zone is the seat of Iraq's government and home to many foreign embassies. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Zarif's visit to Iraq was the first since the American assassination of top Iranian Gen. Qasim Soleimani outside Baghdad's international airport in January. The drone strike catapulted Iraq to the brink of a U.S.-Iran proxy war that could have destabilized the Middle East.

The visit also came as the Iraqi government tussles with Iran-backed militia groups, some of which have become increasingly difficult to control in the absence of Soleimani and senior Iranian militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who was also killed in the strike. In late June, Iraq raided the headquarters of the Iran-backed group Kataib Hezbollah over a spate of rocket and mortar attacks targeting the US installations in Iraq. Most of the fighters were later released.

Facing near-weekly rocket attacks, the US Embassy recently installed C-RAM defense systems. It was unclear if the system was operational during the attack Sunday afternoon. The daytime attack was unusual; most have occurred after nightfall. The U.S. has blamed Kataib Hezbollah for previous attacks.

Upon his arrival, Zarif paid a visit to the site where Soleimani was killed, saying "Iran-Iraq relations will not be shaken" despite the general's death, which Zarif called "a major loss" in the fight against the Islamic State group. Soleimani led Iran's expeditionary Quds Force and was the architect of its regional military activities.

The Iranian minister met with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, a day before the premier was set to fly to Riyadh, then to Tehran on Tuesday.

"Iraq seeks to assert its balanced and positive role in making peace and progress in the region," al-Kadhimi tweeted during the meeting with Zarif.

Al-Kadhimi's advisors said his visit to Riyadh seeks to open new avenues for economic cooperation, while also enhancing Iraq's potential to be a regional mediator. But here, al-Kadhimi walks a fine line.

Both the US and Saudi Arabia accept Iraq playing the role of intermediary, said Hisham Daoud, the premier's advisor. "The Gulf and the Americans want Iraq to have its sovereignty, and to them this means distance from Iran."

Iraq, meanwhile, "wants Iraq to be a messenger, but this will not be acceptable to Iraq and to al-Kadhimi," he said.

Iraq's Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said he and Zarif "stressed that we want balanced relations with all neighboring countries, based on Iraqi interests, mutual interests and non-interference in internal affairs."

"We stressed the necessity of keeping the region and Iraq out from international tensions and protecting Iraqi sovereignty," Hussein told reporters after their meeting.

The two diplomats discussed trade, as border points were recently

reopened and fortified with additional security forces in line with reform plans devised by Iraq's government. Talks encompassed energy and investment, with Iraq relying heavily on Iranian gas and electricity imports to meet power demands.

"Iran has good relations with Iraq on the energy level and will continue to," said Zarif. "There are many agreements with Iraq that will be activated."

Meanwhile, Iran suspended the execution of three young men who participated in a November protest after the country's Supreme Court decided to review their case, state TV reported on Sunday.

An appeals court had upheld their death sentence over leading riots, committing robbery and sending video of their activities to foreign media. But lawyers for the three expressed hope that a new review of the case would lead to a "nullification" of the death sentence.

If the Supreme Court agrees, Iranian law allows those convicted to appeal again even after an appeals court has upheld the original verdict.

The death sentence identifies the three as Amir Hossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamijidi. Their case has prompted an outcry in the country and a popular hashtag for stopping the implementation of their death sentence topped Iran's Twitter trends and had been retweeted more than 4 million times.

Protests swept across the country last November fueled by anger over the country's anemic economy. Amnesty International reported that at least 300 people were killed in the unrest, many shot dead by security forces, and thousands were detained.

The demonstrations showed the widespread economic discontent gripping Iran since May 2018, when President Donald Trump imposed crushing sanctions after unilaterally withdrawing the United States from the nuclear deal that Tehran struck with world powers. That decision led to Iran beginning to break limits of the deal, as well as a series of attacks across the Mideast that America has blamed on Tehran.

In another development, Iran has sent the black box from the Ukrainian passenger jet that its armed forces mistakenly shot down in January to France for reading, an Iranian semi-official news agency said Saturday.

Iran accidentally shot down the Boeing 737-800, killing all 176 people aboard, after mistaking it for an incoming missile.

Iranian armed forces had been bracing for a counterattack after launching missiles at US bases in Iraq in response to the killing of its top commander, Gen Qasim Soleimani, in a US strike earlier in January.

ILNA's report quotes Mohsen Baharvand, an aide to Iran's foreign minister, as saying the downed jet's black box was transported to Paris on Friday, accompanied by Iranian civil aviation and judicial officials.

Baharvand also said the black box will be read in Paris on Monday.

Iran has been in intense negotiations with Ukraine, Canada and other nations that had citizens aboard the downed plane, and who have demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.

Iran initially blamed the crash on technical problems and only acknowledged shooting down the plane days later.

The report did not elaborate on why Iran sent the black box to France. Boeing is an American company and Iranian experts needed a converter to recover data from the box, but the US opposed providing it to Iran.

President Donald Trump re-imposed sweeping sanctions on Iran after withdrawing the US from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers over two years ago.

## In Brief

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia reported on Sunday 39 additional COVID-19 deaths, along with 2,504 new cases.

Saudi Ministry of Health said in a daily report that the death toll increased to 2,486 deaths and the overall infections were 250,920 cases.

Recovery cases amounted to 197,735 after recording 3,517 people. (KUNA)

**DOHA:** Coronavirus took the lives of three people in Qatar Sunday, while 340 more tested positive.

Deaths climbed up to 157 cases, meanwhile the infections tally moved up to 106,648 cases, Qatari Ministry of Health stated.

It also reported that recovery cases were counted 354 reaching 103,377. (KUNA)

**MANAMA:** Bahrain's Ministry of Health recorded on Sunday one COVID-19 death, adding up the death toll to 125, in addition to 531 infections.

The ministry said in a statement that the death was a non-citizen person.

Recovered cases amounted to 31,765 cases after registering 577, with 4,114 active cases. (KUNA)

**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi Ministry of Health declared on Sunday recording 90 new deaths and 2,310 new infection cases with the novel coronavirus.

Toll of contaminations with the germ climbed to 92,530 in addition to total deaths at 3,781, the ministry said in a statement.

It said total count of recoveries amounted to 60,528. (KUNA)

**CAIRO:** Egypt on Sunday reported 603 new COVID-19 infections and 51 fatalities.

In a statement, the health ministry's spokesman Dr. Khaled Mejjid said that 512 people recovered from the virus, bringing the total of recoveries to 28,380.

He also pointed out that the virus death toll reached 4,302 and the infections surged to 87,775. (KUNA)

**RAMALLAH:** The Palestinian Ministry of Health announced Sunday that three people succumbed to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), taking to 65 the death toll in Palestine.

The three fatalities were located in the West Bank governorate of Al-Khalil (Hebron), according to a statement from the ministry.

The infections went up by 465 to 10,052 over the last 24 hours, it added. (KUNA)

**RABAT:** The Moroccan Ministry of Health on Sunday announced that 221 new people were infected with the novel coronavirus cases and four patients succumbed to it in the last 24 hours.

The total infections and fatalities hit 17,236 and 273 respectively, Hind al-Zein, head of the ministry's epidemiology department, said in the daily news briefing.

The number of recoveries rose to 14,921, including 301 ones during the last 24 hours, she noted.

The ratio of patients recovered from the virus rose to about 86.6 percent, she indicated. (KUNA)

**ADEN:** Yemen's higher committee against the novel coronavirus has recorded 25 new infections with Covid-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the caseload to 1,606.

Hadhratam had been the hardest hit governorate with 23 cases being confirmed in a single day, the committee said in a press release Sunday evening.

Two more fatalities from the illness took the country's death toll to 445, while recoveries went up by 11 to 712, it added. (KUNA)

## Bid to retake city of Sirte

# Egypt to vote on troops to Libya

**CAIRO, July 20, (AP):** Egypt's parliament is to vote Monday to authorize the president to deploy troops to neighboring Libya if Turkey-backed forces there, allied with the UN-supported government in Tripoli, move to retake the strategic coastal city of Sirte.

An Egyptian intervention would further destabilize oil-rich Libya, and put two US allies – Turkey and Egypt – in possible direct confrontation.

The vote was initially scheduled for Sunday but was moved to Monday in a closed session, according to lawmaker Mustafa Bakry. The House of Representatives, packed with supporters of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, is highly likely to vote in favor of sending troops to Libya.

Libya was plunged into chaos when a NATO-backed uprising in 2011 toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi who was later killed. The country is now split between a government in the east, allied with military commander Khalifa Hifter, and one in Tripoli, in the west, supported by the United Nations.

The conflict has escalated into a

regional proxy war fueled by foreign powers pouring weapons and mercenaries into the country.

Egypt has been backing the east-based Libyan forces in the conflict while Turkey backs the forces in the capital, Tripoli, in the west. Egypt's president warned in June that any attack on Sirte or the inland Jufra air would prompt Cairo to intervene militarily, allegedly to protect its western border with Libya.

Along with Egypt, Hifter is also backed by the United Arab Emirates and Russia, while the in addition to Turkey, the Tripoli forces are aided by Qatar and Italy. The US has grown increasingly concerned about Moscow's growing influence in Libya, where hundreds of Russian mercenaries have backed an attempt by Hifter's forces to capture Tripoli.

Egypt's state-run al-Ahram daily reported on Sunday that the vote in Parliament was intended to mandate el-Sissi to "intervene militarily in Libya to help defend the western neighbor against Turkish aggression."

Last week, el-Sissi hosted dozens of tribal leaders loyal to Hifter in Cairo, where he repeated that Egypt will "not stand idly by in the face of moves that pose a direct threat to security."

Libya's east-based parliament also urged el-Sissi to send troops.

Hifter's forces launched an offensive to take Tripoli from the UN-supported government in April last year but their campaign – which had stalemated after reaching the outskirts of the Libyan capital – suffered a blow last month when the Tripoli-allied forces, with Turkish support, pushed them back and gained the upper hand in the fighting.

The Tripoli forces retook the capital's airport, all main entrance and exit points to the city and a string of key towns in the region. They pushed on eastward, vowing to also retake Sirte, which Hifter took earlier this year.

Capturing the city, Gadhafi's birthplace, would open the door for the Turkish-backed forces to advance even farther eastward and potentially take vital oil installations, terminals and fields now under Hifter's control.

Bank also announces winners of the weekly Al Danah draws for the period between 3 May and 21 June

## Gulf Bank Announces Second Al Danah Quarterly Draw Winner of KD 250,000 Prize

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Gulf Bank held Al Danah's second quarterly draw on the 16th of July 2020, announcing Mr. Hamad Abdullah Asabb Al Awadh as the lucky winner of the KD250,000 cash prize. On the same day, Gulf Bank also conducted its weekly Al Danah draws for the period between May 3-31, announcing a total of 25 weekly winners who will receive KD 1,000 cash prizes each.

Gulf Bank also held a total of four weekly Al Danah draws on the 19th of July 2020. The three weekly draws for June 7, June 14 and June 21 were held, in addition to the July 19th weekly draw; thereby announcing a total of 20 winners who took home a KD1000 cash prize each.

### The winners for the week of 26 – 30 April 2020 are:

- ANOUD ABDULAZIZ MAHDI ALSAFFAR
- JAWAHER ABDULRASOUL ABDULREDA MAARAFY
- OHOUD ABBAS SOAAN ALENEZI
- FAWZYA OSHBAN ALSHAMMARI
- RAJA MOHAMMED ALDHEFERI

### The winners for the week of 3 - 7 May 2020 are:

- RASOOL MARJAN HAJI HALIM
- LAILA MOHAMAMD IBRAHIM ABDULLA
- NADIA ALI MOHAMMED MUBARAK
- AMAL AHMED HUSSAIN ALROOMI
- SARA TEKROUT

### The winners for the week of 10 - 14 May 2020 are:

- MAHMOUD AHMED EISSA ALRADWAN
- ASMAA KHALED ABDULGHAFOR TIFOUNI
- AWATEF MOHAMMED AWADHA
- FARHAN NOUMAN HOWAEIL ALAZMI
- SHAYMAA DEKHEIL OQAL

### The winners for the week of 17 - 21 May 2020 are:

- RIBAL KHALED ALAHMADEYAH
- AHMED HASAN YOUSEF DEYAB
- MAJEDA MAHMOUD AHMED ALI SHAHEEN
- GURMIT KAUR CHADHA SINGH BASSAN
- SILVANA SALEM DAOU

### The winners for the week of 24 – 28 May 2020 are:

- SARAH MOHAMMAD JASSIM MAARAFI MINOR
- MALEEHAH JASEM MOHAMMED ALSHAMALY
- HAMED RASHED AQEELALAQEEL
- HANI MOHAMMED ALI ALSALEH
- AHMAD SALEM AHMAD ALBARJAS

### The winners for the week of 31 May - 4 June 2020 are:

- FAWZIYAH ALI ABDULLAH ALZANKWI
- ABDULMOHSEN HAIDER SADEQ ABULHASAN
- KHALEDA AHMED HUSAIN ALANSARY
- ADEL ABDULRASOUL ABDULRAHMAN ALAWADI
- KAREEM MANDANI HUSSAIN HASAN

### The winners for the week of 7 - 11 June 2020 are:

- NEZAR ALZOGHBI

- RONALD LOUIS MIRANDA
- HOSAIN BARAKAT MOHAMAD ALZOABY
- BADER NASSER ALI ALHOUTI
- MAHMOUD HAMMAD

### The winners for the week of 14 - 18 June 2020 are:

- YASMIN MOHAMMAD ABDELHAMID FARAS
- FATIMA ABDULKAREEM MOHAMMED ALSAQER
- IBRAHIM HABEEB ABDULLAH SHUKRALLAH
- ALI MOHAMMAD SHABAN SULAIMAN
- HASHEM SADEQ MAHMOUD MOHAMMAD

### The winners for the week of 12 - 16 July 2020 are:

- EBTESAM YOUSEF HAIDAR MOHAMMAD
- FARES YAHYA MOHAMMED ALRUBIAN
- REEMA ANWAR MAHMOUD AWADH (MINOR)
- ABDULLAH MAZIAD HAMOUD ALRAWEE
- ADEL ABDOU KHLLOUF

Al Danah is now offering its biggest prize yet, with an annual draw prize of KD 1,500,000. The annual draw will be held on 14 January 2021, and the last chance to deposit into an Al Danah account to participate is 30 September 2020.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Furthermore, loyal Al Danah customers are rewarded with loyalty chances. Loyalty chances are the total chances accumulated from the previous year, which are added to the customer's chances the following year. Therefore, the total chances earned by Al Danah customers in 2019, have been added to their 2020 chances, and the same process will take place in 2021, and so on. Terms and conditions apply.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD200 at any given time, a KD2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2020 quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.

Customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's branches, transfer online, place queries through the official Gulf Bank WhatsApp service on 65805805 or call the customer contact center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can visit the website to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.