

# Iran increases low enriched uranium production fourfold

Mon, 2019-05-20 18:25

LONDON: Iran has increased by fourfold the production of low enriched uranium, an official in Natanz nuclear facility told Tasnim news agency on Monday, a week after Iran officially stopped some commitments under an international nuclear accord.

Under the agreement, Tehran was allowed to produce low-enriched uranium with a 300kg limit. Tehran could ship the excess amounts out of the country for storage or sale.

Iran said this month the cap no longer applies as it scaled down commitments in reaction to US unilateral withdrawal from the deal.

It was not clear how far Iran's stock of low-enriched uranium was from the 300-kg limit. Under the deal Iran can enrich uranium at 3.67 percent, far below the 90 percent of weapons grade. It is also well below the 20 percent level to which Iran enriched uranium before the deal.



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Iran urges China, Russia 'concrete action' to save nuclear deal

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# What we know about bomb blast near Egypt's pyramids

Author:

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CAIRO: Just a month before the African Cup of Nations, Egypt was hit by a bomb blast that undermined efforts to burnish its image as a bulwark of stability after years of turmoil.

The attack on Sunday near the famed pyramids of Giza is another setback to the North African country's efforts to revive its key tourism industry after years of turmoil.

A roadside bomb explosion hit a tourist bus driving on a road close to a lavish new museum under construction overlooking the Giza plateau.

The blast shattered many of the bus' windows, injuring several of its passengers as well as those of a nearby car.

At least 17 people were wounded in the explosion including foreigners. South Africa's foreign ministry said three of its nationals were hospitalized.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

A day later, Egypt announced that its security forces had killed 12 suspected militants in police raids near Cairo.

The interior ministry said the militants belonged to the Hasm movement which is believed to be a splinter faction of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood group.

Hasm has previously claimed responsibility for attacks targeting security personnel and high-profile figures in Egypt including judges.

"The pyramids area is known to be a bastion for the Muslim Brotherhood. Groups like Hasm and Lewaa Al-Thawra (believed to be affiliates of the Brotherhood) have previously claimed responsibility for attacks in this area," said political science professor Mostafa Kamel Al-Sayed.

Hassan Nafaa, another political science professor at Cairo University, said the authorities' announcement about the killing of militants was meant to give a semblance of order.



The roadside bomb went off as the bus was being driven in Giza, also causing injuries to Egyptians in a nearby car, medical and security sources said. (AFP)

"The security establishment wants to prove it's effective and successful... by announcing it killed 12 members of the Hasm movement to give the impression it is behind the attack," he said.

The ministry's statement did not directly link the raids to the bus attack. Egypt's tourism sector has been hit by a string of previous attacks, most recently in December when three Vietnamese nationals and an Egyptian tour guide were killed in an explosion.

Back then, a home-made explosive device struck their bus which was also driving near the site of the pyramids.

It followed a lull in attacks since the 2017 stabbing of two women on a beach in the seaside resort of Hurghada.

The heaviest blow to Egypt's tourism sector was in October 2015 when a bomb attack claimed by Daesh downed a Russian airliner shortly after take off from the resort city of Sharm El-Sheikh, killing 224 people on board.

Sunday's attack follows signs of a recovery in the long-suffering tourism industry.

Egypt is set to host the African Cup of Nations from June 21 to July 19 which it sees as an opportunity to show that the country is safe and able to handle an influx of tourists.

Tourism has been reeling from turmoil since the 2011 overthrow of longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak in a popular uprising.

In 2010, Egypt welcomed a record 14.7 million tourists.

But by 2016 that figure had plunged by nearly two-thirds, to 5.3 million .

The following year witnessed a rebound with arrivals reaching 8.3 million, according to the official statistics agency.

Earlier this month, Tourism Minister Rania Al-Mashat said the key industry accounts for about a fifth of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Despite the high stakes, some believe Sunday's attack is unlikely to have a significant impact on tourism.

"It is a minor incident and it has become common that similar occurrences take place in other areas around the world," said Sayed.



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12 suspected extremists killed in Egypt raids: ministry Blast hits tourist bus near Egypt's Giza pyramids; 17 injured

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## Arab League sends out invites to Arab states to attend summit called by King Salman

Mon, 2019-05-20 14:58

RIYADH: The Arab League has sent out invitations to Arab leaders to hold an emergency Arab summit, called by Saudi Arabia's King Salman, to be held in Makkah on May 30 to discuss the attacks on commercial ships.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun confirmed that he received an invitation from the king to attend the Islamic Summit Conference's fourteenth session to be held in Makkah to discuss the situation in the region.

"I am very confident that the participation of your Excellency will have a great impact on the success of this summit and its results, and look forward to welcoming your Excellency to your second country, Saudi Arabia. And contribute to raising them and will," the invitation read.

President Aoun consulted on King Salman's invitation with Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who will lead the Lebanese delegation to the summit in Makkah.

Two oil pump stations were attacked earlier this week in Saudi Arabia by the Iran-backed Houthi militia, just days after four commercial ships were sabotaged off the coast of the UAE.

The league's council will discuss the ramifications of the attacks on regional and international peace, as well as the stability of the oil markets.





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King Salman to convene summit of Gulf and Arab statesArab League sends out invites to Arab states to attend summit called by King Salman

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## [Russia says Syrian government forces has halted fire in Idlib](#)

Author:

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Sun, 2019-05-19 23:00

DAMASCUS: Syrian government forces have unilaterally ceased fire in the

northern Idlib province, the last major opposition stronghold, Russia said on Sunday, while opposition activists reported continued shelling and airstrikes.

Fighting erupted in Idlib late last month, effectively shattering a cease-fire negotiated by Russia and Turkey that had been in place since September. Russia has firmly backed Syria's Bashar Assad regime in the eight-year civil war, while Turkey has supported the opposition.

In a brief statement on Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry's Center for Reconciliation of the Warring Sides in Syria said regime forces had ceased fire as of midnight. It described the move as unilateral, but did not give details.

The pro-government Syrian Central Military Media said regime forces responded to shelling by militants on Sunday on the edge of Idlib. It gave no further details.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitoring group, reported an airstrike on the town of Khan Sheikhoun, saying it inflicted casualties.

The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense also reported shelling near the town of Jisr Al-Shughour without reporting any casualties.

Syrian government forces intensified their attacks as of April 30 on Idlib. The area is home to some 3 million people, many of whom are internally displaced. The last round of violence also displaced some 180,000 in opposition-held areas.



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# If Tehran 'wants to fight' it will be 'official end of Iran': Trump

Sun, 2019-05-19 23:35

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump tweeted on Sunday that if Tehran "wants to fight," it will be the "official end of Iran."

If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran.  
Never threaten the United States again!

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [May 19, 2019](#)

Trump's stern warning added Iran should "never threaten the United States again."

His tweet comes as tensions continue to rise in the Middle East as the US and Iran come to blows over the Iranian regime's activities, which the Trump administration see as a direct threat to US interests in the region.

Iran's foreign minister downplayed the prospect of a new war in the region on Saturday, saying Tehran opposed it and no party was under the "illusion" the Islamic republic could be confronted.

"We are certain... there will not be a war since neither we want a war nor does anyone have the illusion they can confront Iran in the region," Mohammad Javad Zarif told state-run IRNA at the end of a visit to China.

Iran-US relations hit a new low last year after US Trump pulled out of a 2015 nuclear deal and reimposed unilateral sanctions on Tehran.

*(With agencies)*





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Trump awaiting Iranian response on direct talks Saudi oil tankers sabotaged off UAE coast as Trump warns Iran of 'suffering greatly' if Tehran attacks