

[UK, Israel to work together to stop Iran gaining nuclear weapons](#)

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Britain and Israel will “work night and day” in preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power, the foreign ministers of the two countries wrote in a joint article.

“The clock is ticking, which heightens the need for close cooperation with our partners and friends to thwart Tehran’s ambitions,” the UK’s Liz Truss and her Israeli counterpart Yair Lapid wrote in the Telegraph newspaper on Sunday.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said earlier in the day that his country was “very worried” that world powers will remove sanctions on Iran in exchange for insufficient caps on its nuclear program, as negotiators convene in Vienna on Monday in a last-ditch effort to salvage a nuclear deal.

Meanwhile, Israel and Britain will sign a 10-year agreement on Monday to work closely on areas such as cybersecurity, technology, trade and defense, according to the Telegraph.

The foreign ministers added in the article that Israel will officially become Britain’s “tier one” cyber partner, in a bid to improve its cyber defenses as countries around the world face increased threats.



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[Iranian riot police patrol city's dry river after water protests](#)

Author:

Mon, 2021-11-29 01:34

TEHRAN: Iranian riot police on Sunday patrolled a dried-out riverbed in the central city of Isfahan where protests against a water shortage led to violent clashes two days earlier.

Drought and water diversions have been blamed for drying up the Zayandeh-Rood waterway that runs from the Zagros mountains and through the city known for its iconic river bridges.

Water protests since Nov. 9 have drawn at times thousands of demonstrators to the city, where a large rally on Friday escalated into clashes in which 67 people were arrested.

Calm has returned and it held on Sunday, a local photographer said by phone from Isfahan, the country's third-largest city 340 km south of Tehran.

"In the morning, the city was calm and traffic was normal," the photographer said.

"I saw riot police patrolling the riverbed between the historic bridges, but their numbers were lower than on Saturday."

The protesters blame the authorities for diverting water to neighboring Yazd province, which is also desperately short of water.

Authorities Saturday announced 67 arrests of the "main perpetrators and troublemakers" in the rally that had drawn "2,000 to 3,000 rioters."

The arrests were made by the police, intelligence services and the Revolutionary Guards.

BACKGROUND

Water protests since Nov. 9 have drawn at times thousands of demonstrators to the city, where a large rally on Friday escalated into clashes in which 67 people were arrested.

Police had on Friday fired tear gas at the protesters, who threw stones, smashed the windows of an ambulance and set a police motorbike ablaze, according to the Fars news agency.

Nourodin Soltanian, a spokesman for Isfahan University Hospital, said a number of protesters were wounded, including "two in serious condition."

Isfahan police chief Mohammed-Reza Mirheidari called the protesters “opportunists and counter-revolutionaries,” and the ultraconservative newspaper Kayhan accused “mercenary thugs” of being behind the “riots.” US State Department spokesman Ned Price said Washington was “deeply concerned about the violent crackdown against peaceful protesters.” He added on Twitter that “the people of Iran have a right to voice their frustrations and hold their government accountable.” The Kayhan daily meanwhile also linked Friday’s protests to the scheduled resumption of nuclear talks on Monday in Vienna between Iran and a group of major powers. Friday’s events “testify to the infiltration of a US fifth column, in the run-up to the Vienna talks, to provoke a riot and push for (new) US sanctions” against Iran, it said. The Zayandeh-Rood river that runs through Isfahan has been dry since 2000, except for a few brief periods. Iran has endured repeated droughts over the past decade, but also regular floods, a phenomenon that can intensify when torrential rains fall on sun-baked earth. Scientists say climate change amplifies droughts and that their intensity and frequency in turn threaten food security.



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Iranian riot police deployed after 67 arrested in Isfahan Protesters, police clash in central Iran after rally over water shortages

Low expectations on nuclear talks as Iran creates facts on the ground

Author:

Reuters

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Sun, 2021-11-28 23:27

PARIS: World powers and Iran return to Vienna on Monday in a last ditch effort to salvage the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but few expect a breakthrough as Tehran's atomic activities rumble on in an apparent bid to gain leverage against the West.

The US will also send a delegation, headed by Washington's Special Envoy for Iran Rob Malley, to participate in the talks indirectly.

Israel worries Iran will secure sanctions relief in renewed nuclear negotiations with world powers, but will not sufficiently roll back projects with bomb making potential, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said.

"Israel is very worried about the readiness to remove the sanctions and to allow a flow of billions (of dollars) to Iran in exchange for unsatisfactory restrictions in the nuclear realm," Bennett told his Cabinet in televised remarks.

"This is the message that we are relaying in every manner, whether to the Americans or to the other countries negotiating with Iran."

Few expect a breakthrough in the talks as Iran's uranium enrichment activities have escalated in an apparent bid to gain leverage.

Diplomats say time is running low to resurrect the JCPOA, known as the Iran nuclear deal, which former US President Donald Trump abandoned in 2018, angering Iran and dismaying the other world powers involved.

Six rounds of indirect talks were held between April and June.

The latest round begins after a hiatus triggered by the election of new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Tehran's negotiating team has set out demands that US and European diplomats consider unrealistic.

Two European diplomats said it seemed Iran was simply playing for time to accumulate more material and know-how.

Western diplomats say they will head to Monday's talks on the premise that they resume where they left off in June, and have warned that if Iran continues with its maximalist positions and fails to restore its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, then they will review their options.

Iran's top negotiator and foreign minister both repeated on Friday that the full lifting of sanctions would be the only thing on the table in Vienna.

"If this is the position that Iran continues to hold on Monday, then I don't see a negotiated solution," said one European diplomat.

Iran has pressed ahead with its uranium enrichment program and the IAEA says its inspectors have been treated roughly and refused access to re-install

monitoring cameras at a site it deems essential to reviving the deal. "They are doing enough technically so they can change their basic relationship with the West to be able to have a more equal dialogue in the future," said a Western diplomat involved in the talks. Several diplomats said Iran was now between four to six weeks away from the "breakout time" it needs to amass enough fissile material for a single nuclear weapon, although they cautioned it was still about two years from being able to weaponize it. Should the talks collapse, the likelihood is the US and its allies will initially confront Iran at the IAEA next month by calling for an emergency meeting.



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US options when Iran nuclear deal talks resume Iranian, Chinese and Russian diplomats meet ahead of nuclear talks

[**Egypt authorizes Pfizer's COVID-19**](#)

[vaccine for 12 to 15 year-olds](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-11-28 23:10

CAIRO: Egypt authorized on Sunday Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 12-15, the cabinet said in a statement.

The step effectively lowers the minimum age of eligibility to receive the two-shot vaccine in Egypt, which was 15 years old previously.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly directed the government to take all precautionary measures against the new COVID-19 variant Omicron, noting the decision to halt all direct flights with South Africa.

His comments came during a meeting of a medical group to combat coronavirus, the state news agency (MENA) reported.

Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, higher education and acting health minister, reviewed a report on the current local and international epidemical situation and the developments of the new variant, adding that the report confirmed there are no Omicron cases detected in Egypt till now.

He said that about 45.2 million vaccine doses had been administered, with 15.6 million people having received both doses.

On Friday, Egypt suspended direct flights to and from South Africa due to concerns about a new variant of the COVID-19 virus.

(With Reuters)



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Egypt's tourism investments to grow 64% to over half a billion dollars:
Minister Oman, UAE, Kuwait and Egypt ban travelers from southern African states over COVID variant

[At least 200 Houthis killed in fighting, airstrikes in Marib, Jouf](#)

Sun, 2021-11-28 19:32

AL-MUKALLA: At least 200 Houthis were killed in heavy fighting with government forces and in airstrikes by Arab coalition warplanes during the past 24 hours in the Yemeni provinces of Marib and Jouf, as the militia pushed into Marib to seize control of strategic terrain, coalition and local military figures said on Sunday.

One official told Arab News that at least 100 Houthis were killed when the militia launched a string of attacks on government forces in Thana, west of Marib city, on Saturday, in a bid to break the government's lines and reach Al-Balaq Al-Qibili Mountain to high ground over parts of the city.

"All waves of the Houthis failed to advance or capture an inch in Thana. Many Houthis were killed when our forces and the (Arab) coalition's warplanes wiped out those waves," the official said, adding that most of the Houthi fatalities were caused by "precise" airstrikes.

The Houthis have recently focused attacks on areas west of Marib after failing to make territorial gains in Juba, Um Raesh and Al-Amud, south of Marib.

In September, the Houthis pushed into districts such as Abedia, Rahabah and Hareb after making rapid gains in neighboring Al-Bayda province.

The Houthis once again were drawn into a military stalemate in Juba after facing stiff resistance from army troops and local tribes. Hundreds were killed in heavy fighting during the past week, and the militia was forced into decreasing attacks due to high losses, the official said.

The Arab coalition on Sunday announced that it had killed 110 Houthis in 15 airstrikes that destroyed nine Houthi military targets in Marib and Jouf during the past 24 hours.

The coalition has intensified raids against the Houthis across Yemen, hitting ballistic missile depots, drone workshops and ammunition stores in Sanaa and dozens of military vehicles and fighters heading to various battlefields.

Based on the coalition's daily updates on its airstrikes, hundreds of Houthis have been killed and dozens of vehicles destroyed in Marib and other flashpoints in Yemen this month.

The heavy aerial bombardments of Houthi targets have shored up government troops on the ground, allowing them to repulse Houthi attacks and make territorial gains.



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Russia's role essential in bringing peace to Yemen: UN envoyArab coalition says 60 Houthis killed in strikes on Marib