

# Yemen government seizes control of new areas in Al-Bayda province

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ALEXANDRIA: Government troops and local tribesmen on Sunday liberated several villages and hilly locations in the central province of Al-Bayda during the second day of a military offensive to push Iran-backed Houthis from the area, government and military officials said.

Yemen's Information Minister Mu'amar Al-Eryani said that government troops scored "major victories" in Al-Bayda after liberating mountains, villages and other military locations, mainly in the Humaiqan area in Al-Zaher district, west of Al-Bayda, adding that loyalists cut off supply lines to pockets of Houthis in Al-Zaher, Al-Jamajem and Al-Nasefa and government forces were still fighting their way into new areas.

"We commend the great role of the tribal leaders and tribesmen and all the honorable people who supported the heroes of the national army and the popular resistance in the major military operation (in the province)," the Yemeni minister said, noting that dozens of rebel fighters were killed or captured and loyalists seized armed vehicles, trucks and ammunition abandoned by the fleeing Houthis.

On Saturday, Yemen's army started a new offensive to liberate Al-Bayda from the Houthis and relieve pressure on the government forces battling the Houthis in the neighboring Marib province.

State and local media broadcast videos showing what appeared to be government troops on armed vehicles rolling into liberated areas for the first time since 2015 when the Houthis seized control of most of the province districts.

If advances continued on the same scale, local army commanders and analysts said, government troops might be able to liberate Al-Bayda city, the province's capital, and push further into opening new fronts in the neighboring Tamar and Ibb provinces.



For six years, Yemen government troops have been trying to seize control of new areas in Al-Bayda province, but failed to make advances due to stiff resistance from the Houthis.

For the Yemeni forces to keep up the momentum of the offensive, the Yemeni army should mount similar assaults on the Houthis in Hodeidah, Taiz and Abyan to distract their forces, Yasser Al-Yafae, an Aden-based political analyst, told Arab News.

“There are great military successes for the first time since 2015. For this military offensive to succeed, the legitimate government should simultaneously activate other fronts in Taiz, the Western Coast and other area areas,” he said, warning that if the Houthis were allowed to recapture the liberated areas in Al-Bayda they would kill, displace and blow up houses

of tribal leaders who aided government troops. Meanwhile, at least two soldiers were killed and more than 20 more wounded when an explosion ripped through a mosque at a military base during the afternoon prayer in the southern province of Abyan, a local journalist told Arab News on Sunday. Dozens of soldiers from the 5th Infantry Brigade were inside the base's mosque when a large explosion, apparently caused by a ballistic missile or explosive-rigged drone fired by the Houthis, killed soldiers and partially destroyed the building. "Four soldiers were critically wounded. All of the targeted soldiers are from Abyan," said the journalist, who preferred not to be identified.





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## Lebanon medicine importers warn foreign drugs running out

Author:

AFP

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Sun, 2021-07-04 11:32

BEIRUT: Lebanon's medicine importers Sunday said they had run out of hundreds of essential drugs and warned of further shortages if the cash-strapped central bank did not unblock funds.

Lebanese are grappling with a raft of shortages, from petrol to medication, as the caretaker government discusses lifting subsidies it can no longer afford amid what the World Bank says is one of the world's worst financial crises since the 1850s.

The local currency has lost more than 90 percent of its value on the black market, but the central bank had been providing importers with dollars at the much more favorable official rate to cover a large part of the cost of imported drugs.

Medicine "imports have almost completely ground to a halt over the past month," the association of pharmaceuticals importers said in a statement. The syndicate said the central bank has not released the promised dollars to pay suppliers abroad, who are owed more than \$600 million in accumulated dues since December, and importers cannot obtain new lines of credit.

"Importing companies' stocks of hundreds of medicines to treat chronic and incurable diseases have run out," it warned.

"And hundreds more will run out through July if we cannot resume imports as soon as possible."

Syndicate head Karim Gebara told AFP some drugs to treat cardiac diseases, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and multiple sclerosis were already out of stock.

If nothing is done, "the situation will be catastrophic by the end of July," depriving "hundreds of thousands of patients" of their medication, he warned.

On Thursday, President Michel Aoun said he, outgoing ministers and the central bank chief had agreed to "continue subsidising medication and medical supplies" selected by the health ministry according to priority.

The government resigned after a deadly port explosion on August 4 last year, but a deeply divided political class has failed since to agree on a new cabinet to lift the nation out of crisis.



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## [Suez Canal says deal reached to free seized vessel](#)

Author:

Reuters

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Sun, 2021-07-04 11:12

CAIRO: The Suez Canal Authority on Sunday said it has reached an agreement to settle a financial dispute with the owners of a hulking container ship that blocked the crucial waterway for nearly a week earlier this year.

The authority did not reveal details on the settlement deal with the Shoeni Kisen Kaisha Ltd., the Japanese owner of the Ever Given. It said the deal

will be singed in a ceremony in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia on Wednesday. The vessel would be also freed Wednesday, it said.

The head of Egypt's Suez Canal Authority, Lt. Gen. Osama Rabie, said last month the parties had agreed on a compensation amount. But he said it would not be made public as they had signed a non-disclosure agreement until the signing of the final contract.

The vessel had run aground in the single-lane stretch of the canal on March 23 before it was extracted six days later after a massive salvage effort by a flotilla of tugboats.

Since it was freed, the Panama-flagged, Japanese-owned vessel, which carries cargo between Asia and Europe, has been ordered by authorities to remain in a holding lake mid-canal, along with most of its crew, as the two sides negotiated a settlement.

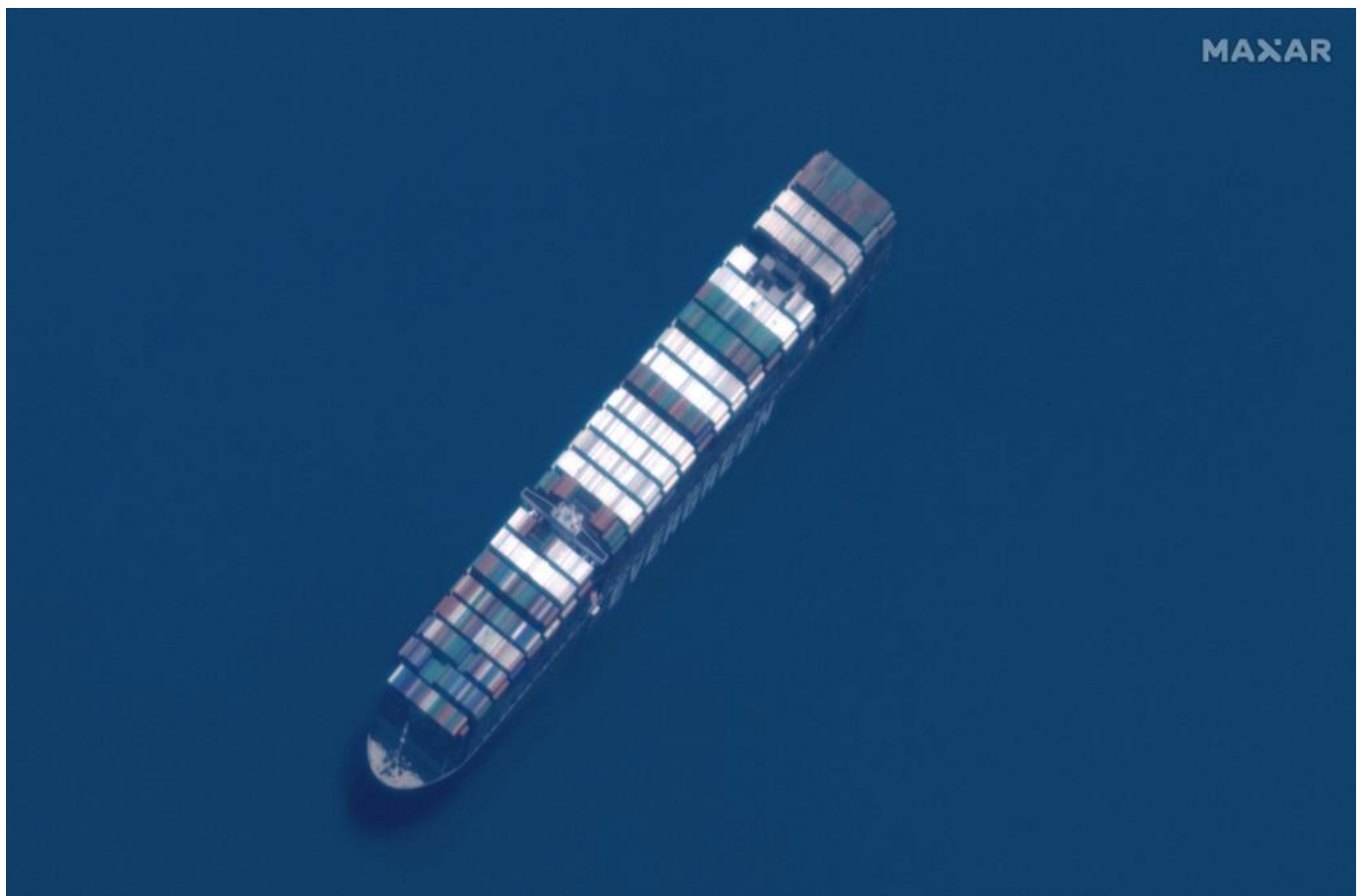
The disagreement had centered on the compensation amount the Suez Canal Authority is claiming for the salvage of the vessel.

The money would cover the salvage operation, costs of stalled canal traffic, and lost transit fees for the week the Ever Given blocked the canal.

At first, the Suez Canal Authority demanded \$916 million in compensation, which was later lowered to \$550 million.

The two sides have traded blame for the vessel's grounding, with bad weather, poor decisions on the part of canal authorities, and human and technical error all being thrown out as possible factors.

The six-day blockage disrupted global shipping. Hundreds of ships waited in place for the canal to be unblocked, while some ships were forced to take the much longer route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip, requiring additional fuel and other costs.



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Suez Canal Authority showing 'full flexibility' in Ever Given compensation talks  
Egypt plans rethink on claim against Ever Given

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## [UAE approves Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use](#)

Author:

Reuters

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1625396870852650000

Sun, 2021-07-04 09:49

DUBAI: The UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP) on Sunday announced the approval of the emergency registration of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine.

The health ministry said in a statement on state news agency WAM on Sunday that the UAE has reported the spread of the Beta, Delta and Alpha variants in the country of some 9.2 million people.

The ministry also announced on Sunday that it recorded 1,599 new coronavirus cases, bringing the total number of recorded cases in the UAE to 639,476. Three new deaths have been reported due to COVID-19 complications, bringing the total number of deaths in the country to 1,834.

Around 73.8 percent of the UAE's population has received one vaccine dose while 63.7 percent are fully vaccinated, the health ministry said in a Twitter post on Saturday.



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Emiratis barred from traveling to 14 countries included in UAE's no-entry list

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## [Four dead as Cyprus forest fire rages](#)

Author:

Reuters

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1625383809972293000

Sun, 2021-07-04 07:24

NICOSIA: Four people were found dead as a huge fire raged for a second day in Cyprus, razing tracts of forest in a blaze one official called the worst on record.

The blaze, fanned by strong winds, affected at least 10 communities over an area of 50 square kilometers (19 square miles) in the foothills of the Troodos mountain range, an area of pine forest and densely vegetated shrubland.

The victims, thought to be Egyptian nationals, were found dead close to the community of Odou, a mountainous community north of the cities of Limassol

and Larnaca.

"All indications point to it being the four persons who were missing since yesterday," Interior Minister Nicos Nouris said.

The EU's executive, the European Commission, said fire-fighting planes had departed from Greece to battle the fire and Italy was also planning to deploy aerial firefighters.

The EU's emergency Copernicus satellite was also activated to provide damage assessment maps of the affected areas, the Commission said in a statement.

"It is the worst forest fire in the history of Cyprus," Forestries Department Director Charalambos Alexandrou told Cyprus's Omega TV.

Attempts were being made to prevent the blaze from crossing the mountains and stop it before reaching Machairas, a pine forestland and one of the highest peaks in Cyprus.

The cause of the fire, which started around midday on Saturday, was unclear. Cyprus experiences high temperatures in the summer months, with temperatures in recent days exceeding 40 Celsius (104 Fahrenheit). Police said they were questioning a 67-year old person in connection with the blaze.



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