

Thousands of Israelis protest outside Netanyahu's residence

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JERUSALEM: Thousands of Israelis demonstrated outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence in central Jerusalem late Saturday, demanding he resign over his trial on corruption charges and what is widely seen as his mishandling of the coronavirus pandemic.

With Israel reporting record levels of new coronavirus cases each day, the country appears to be headed toward a nationwide lockdown this week ahead of the Jewish New Year.

Saturday's demonstration came a day after Israel announced an agreement to establish diplomatic relations with Bahrain, the second Arab country to normalize ties with Israel in under a month and just the fourth overall. But the surprise announcement had little effect on the thousands of demonstrators, who have been gathering outside Netanyahu's residence every Saturday throughout the summer. Protests against Netanyahu over his corruption trial have expanded to include demonstrations against his handling of the health crisis and the resulting economic pain.

Late Saturday, police detained several protesters.

Israel earned praise last spring for its early handling of the virus crisis, moving quickly to seal the country's borders and appearing to bring an outbreak under control.

But Netanyahu has come under criticism for reopening the economy too quickly in May. Since then, new cases have soared, the government has been blamed for mismanaging the resurgence and unemployment has soared to double digit levels. Many struggling workers and business owners fear another closure will be devastating. Many of the demonstrators are unemployed.

Last week Netanyahu announced overnight curfews on some 40 cities and towns hit hard by the coronavirus, but backed away from reported recommendations for full lockdowns after an uproar by politically powerful religious politicians.

Netanyahu has been charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes for his role in a series of scandals involving gifts and alleged favors exchanged with wealthy associates.

He denies any wrongdoing and accuses police, prosecutors and the media of conspiring to oust him. He has dismissed the protesters as "leftists" and "anarchists."



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[UN steps up COVID-19 measures at Syrian refugee camps in Jordan](#)

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Reuters

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Sat, 2020-09-12 20:09

AMMAN: The UN refugee agency is stepping up efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 among tens of thousands of Syrians in camps in Jordan after the first cases were confirmed last week, the head of the agency in the country said on Saturday.

The UNHCR confirmed three cases in the country's largest camp for Syrian refugees, Zaatari, near the border with Syria, and two cases in a smaller camp, Azraq.

The infections in the two camps that house a total of around 120,000 refugees were the first confirmed cases since the pandemic was first reported in the kingdom last March.

"The developments this week have obviously been a worrying situation for all, but especially for refugees living in the camps. Crowded spaces and cramped living conditions make social distancing difficult," said Dominik Bartsch, the UNHCR representative in Jordan.

The refugees who tested positive for COVID-19 have been sent to an isolation area set up by the Jordanian government near the Dead Sea while families of those in contact with them have been quarantined inside the camp, the UN agency added.

Jordan's health ministry is, meanwhile, conducting thousands of tests, restricting movement in and out of the camps and training medical staff, Bartsch said.

The infections in the camps come at a time when COVID-19 cases been rising sharply in the country as a whole, since the start of the month.

Jordan is a major host country for Syrian refugees who have fled an almost decade-long civil war in their homeland. There are about 655,000 UN-registered Syrian refugees in the kingdom.



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[Egypt denies exporting electricity to Europe at subsidized prices](#)

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Sat, 2020-09-12 22:32

CAIRO: Egypt has denied reports that it is exporting electricity to European countries at a subsidized price, lower than the local price.

The Ministry of Electricity and Renewable Energy said the reports, which appeared on some websites and social media platforms, were completely untrue. There is no electrical connection between Egypt and any European country to date.

It said in a statement that electricity exports were a result of the country's huge energy reserves – from gas and renewable sources – that contributed to increasing national income and making Egypt an appealing market for investment in the energy field.

Studies for an electrical interconnection project between Egypt, Cyprus and Greece are being completed, which will be conducted through submarine cables of 500 kilovolts. In a DC system, the line capacities will exceed more than 2,000 megawatts.

The project will help connect Egypt with Europe's electrical grid and turn it into an energy center and electricity supplier to the European continent.

Ayman Suleiman, CEO of Egypt's Sovereign Fund, denied reports in Turkish and Qatari media about the country's intention to export electricity to Europe at a price of 2.5 cents per kilowatt, which is less than the selling price to the Egyptian consumer.

In a statement to MBC Egypt, Suleiman said that recent statements regarding the country's export of its surplus production of electricity were "half-facts."

He added that the price mentioned in those statements referred to the competitive production that Egypt had reached after years of investing in projects to generate electricity from solar energy, such as the Benban project in Aswan.



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[Egypt to launch two satellites](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-09-12 22:31

CAIRO: Egypt is planning to launch two satellites in cooperation with China in 2021 and 2022.

One of the satellites will have high-resolution imaging capability, Mohamed El-Qosi, CEO of the Egyptian Space Agency, said.

“China has provided Egypt with two grants, one for building a satellite collection center, and another for manufacturing a large joint satellite between the two countries. This is a result of strong political relations between Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and Chinese President Xi

Jinping,” he said in a statement.

The project has been planned since September last year.

“We have completed the first phase of the project, after which we will manufacture a satellite in Egypt and China at the satellite collection center, and the launch will be in September 2022,” El-Qosi added.

Egypt is involved in another project to manufacture a satellite with a German company, in which the Egyptian Space Agency has a 45 percent stake. The project has so far produced an educational satellite with more than one university within the Universities Moon Project, which will launch in July 2021.

El-Qosi also revealed new details about an African space project, which aims to monitor climate change on the continent and boost community development.

He said that five countries are taking part in the project, including Uganda, Nigeria and Sudan. Egypt planned to host three space and satellite specialists, but the pandemic delayed the project.

“We will return again to the African Development Moon project after conditions get better,” El-Qosi said.

Egypt is looking to boost its space industry through several construction projects, he added.

“We have started the construction process at the Space Agency headquarters, just as there are major foreign countries seeking cooperation with Egypt in the field of space because they see it as the gateway to Africa, including the European and French space agencies. They requested help in attracting African countries to cooperate with them by establishing an African alliance in the field of space,” El-Qosi said.



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[Yemen will not normalize ties with Israel without Palestinian state](#)

Sat, 2020-09-12 22:15

AL-MUKALLA, Yemen: Yemen's foreign minister said his country will not normalize relations with Israel until the Palestinians get their own sovereign state with Jerusalem as its capital, as envisaged under the Saudi-proposed Arab Peace Initiative.

Yemen "will always stand by" the Palestinian people "until they achieve their inalienable rights," Mohammed Al-Hadrami tweeted shortly after Bahrain agreed to sign a peace deal with Israel.

His comments echoed those he made last month after the UAE and Israel announced the normalization of ties.

Clashes

Fighting subsided on Saturday in the northern Yemeni province of Jouf, a day after the army and allied tribesmen captured two Houthi field commanders and seized a command and communications room, army spokesman Rabia Al-Qurashi told Arab News.

Meanwhile, the Defense Ministry announced on Saturday the killing of 35 Houthis, including four high-ranking field commanders, just outside Houthi-held Sanaa after army troops and coalition warplanes targeted their locations.

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The ministry said loyalists seized a military vehicle and destroyed three others during fighting with Houthis in the areas of Al-Jafra, Al-Saleb and Najeb Al-Ateq.

Coalition warplanes on Saturday launched airstrikes on various military locations in Sanaa, residents told Arab News.

Displacement

Ongoing Houthi military operations in the provinces of Marib, Jouf and Al-Bayda have displaced 2,945 families, the government said.

It added that thousands of families have crossed into the city of Marib – which has enjoyed peace and security since early 2015 – fleeing heavy battles and Houthi incursions into their home cities and villages.

The new arrivals are in desperate need of shelter, food, drinking water and medication, the government said.

Local and international aid and right groups have warned that the Houthi military assault outside the city of Marib will exacerbate Yemen's humanitarian crisis and displace thousands more people.



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