

Abu Dhabi stem cell center develops 'promising' new COVID-19 treatment

Fri, 2020-05-01 17:43

LONDON: An aerosol treatment for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) developed by a team of doctors and researchers in the UAE had shown "promising" results, the Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported on Friday.

The treatment was given to 73 patients suffering with COVID-19 in the UAE and all of them went on to make a complete recovery.

The Emirati Ministry of Economy said on Friday it had granted a patent to the Abu Dhabi Stem Cell Center (ADSCC) to develop the treatment further through the use of stem cells.

BREAKING: A UAE research institute has developed a breakthrough treatment for COVID-19 which could be a game-changer in the global fight against the virus. 1/5

– هند مانع العتيبة Hend Al Otaiba (@hend_mana) [May 1, 2020](#)

According to WAM, stem cells are extracted from the patient's blood and then reintroduced in an "activated" state to the lungs through inhalation after being nebulized into a fine mist.

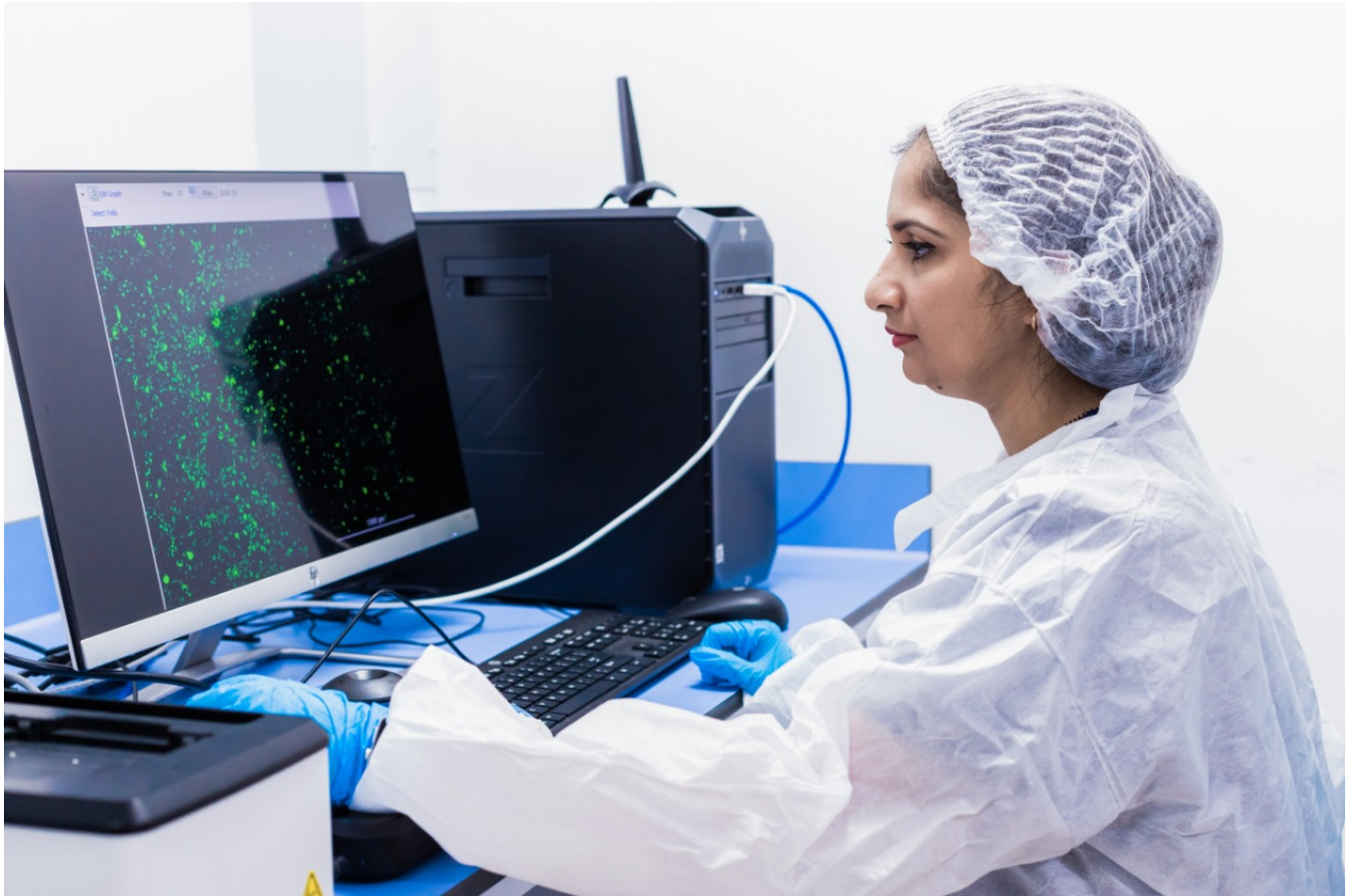
ADSCC researchers said the mist had a therapeutic effect, helping to regenerate lung cells and alter the response of the immune system to stop it from overreacting to the COVID-19 infection and causing more damage to healthy cells.

The treatment has undergone and successfully passed the first stage of clinical trials with further tests to demonstrate its effectiveness being carried out over the next two weeks.

The new treatment was provided to patients in conjunction with standard treatment protocols for COVID-19 and will continue to be used as an aid to these methods not as a substitute for them, the report added.

On Friday, the UAE had 13,038 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 111 deaths and 2,543 recoveries.





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Potential UK coronavirus vaccine producer eyes making a million doses a month
UN urges world to quickly scale up medicines, vaccines

[Iran denies US claim it's helping Venezuela oil sector](#)

Author:

AFP

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1588338327335667900

Fri, 2020-05-01 13:01

TEHRAN: Iran on Friday rejected US claims it is helping Venezuela to rebuild its oil industry, saying the accusations are designed to increase pressure

and disrupt the two countries' trade ties.

Elliott Abrams, the envoy leading US efforts to topple Venezuela's leftist leader Nicolas Maduro, has alleged that the cash-strapped country is paying Iran in gold to restore the troubled sector.

US President Donald Trump's administration has imposed unilateral sanctions aimed at ending oil exports from Iran and Venezuela, both major crude producers.

Iran's foreign ministry in a statement called Abrams' claims "baseless," without directly addressing accusations that the Islamic republic is being paid in gold.

It accused Washington of trying to increase "pressure on Venezuela's government and disrupt trade between Iran and Venezuela."

It said US policies against Venezuela including "economic sanctions, military threats and a recent transition council" had failed.

Washington was now "trying to create obstacles in Venezuela's plan to rebuild its refineries and produce oil products such as petrol, which is in short supply due to cruel US sanctions."

Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves but analysts say that the sector operates below capacity.

The country's economy has been collapsing, with millions fleeing as they lack basic goods.

Iran has also taken a hit from US sanctions after Trump pulled out of a nuclear accord and reimposed them in 2018.

Maduro has withstood more than a year of US-led efforts to remove him and retains the support of the military.

Iran has repeatedly expressed support for Maduro against opposition leader Juan Guaido, who is recognized by some 60 nations as interim president due to reports of irregularities in Maduro's 2018 re-election.



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Man accused of Iran death plot in Denmark goes on trial Iranian couple, influencers sentenced to 16 years in prison

[**Egypt army says 10 soldiers killed or injured in North Sinai blast**](#)

Author:

AFP

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1588335883335498200

Thu, 2020-04-30 22:15

CAIRO: Egypt's army said on Thursday that 10 soldiers were either killed or wounded in a blast targeting an armored vehicle in the restive northern Sinai.

The attack occurred south the city of Bir Al-Abed in the troubled North Sinai

region, the epicenter of a long-running extremist insurgency spearheaded by a local affiliate of the Daesh group.

Army spokesman Tamer Al-Rifai said the 10 casualties included an officer but did not provide details on the number of those killed or wounded.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, which occurred during the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi extended his condolences to the victims on Twitter.

Security forces have for years been battling to contain the insurgency in the turbulent North Sinai which intensified following the military's 2013 ouster of Islamist President Muhammad Mursi.

Scores of soldiers and police were killed in militant attacks especially in the turbulent region over the years.

In February 2018, Egyptian security forces launched a nationwide, large-scale operation against militants, mainly focused on the North Sinai region.

More than 845 suspected militants have been killed in the region along with more than 60 security personnel, according to army figures.



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Egypt's 'corona coexistence' plan to begin after Eid holidays
Egypt reviews COVID-19 plan

Syria says Israeli helicopters strike targets in southern Syria

Author:

Reuters

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1588334498855389700

Fri, 2020-05-01 11:30

AMMAN: Israeli helicopters fired several rockets from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights on targets inside southern Syria, Syrian state media reported on Friday, in what intelligence sources say is part of an increase in strikes against Iran-backed militias.

Opposition sources in the area said several militia posts near Quneitra were targeted in the attack, which reports said caused only material damage.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army.

Bases and convoys run by Lebanon's Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia, which has a strong presence in the Syrian Golan Heights, have been hit by Israel in recent years.

A regional intelligence source said Israel was stepping up raids in Syria at a time when world attention and the region, including Syria, were distracted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Separately, the Syrian army said on Friday a series of blasts at an ammunition depot east of Homs had led to casualties but was not caused by an attack as earlier announced.

However, the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the blasts were caused by Israeli strikes targeting a military base on the Homs-Palmyra road run by Hezbollah.

Two weeks ago, an Israeli drone attack targeted a car carrying forces from Hezbollah in southern Syria along the border with Lebanon without causing casualties.

A few days later, Israel struck central Syria near the ancient city of Palmyra, in what regional intelligence sources said were Iranian-backed outposts and a command center.

Israel has acknowledged in recent years it has conducted many raids inside Syria since the start of the civil war in 2011.

After Syria announced last Monday it had intercepted airstrikes by Israel near the capital Damascus, Israeli defense minister Naftali Bennett told Israeli media that Israel would step up its campaign against Iran in Syria. "We have moved from blocking Iran's entrenchment in Syria to forcing it out of there, and we will not stop," Bennett said in a statement.

"We will not allow more strategic threats to grow just across our borders without taking action, We will continue to take the fight to the enemy's territory," Bennett said.

The Syrian army said Monday's strikes had killed three Syrian civilians and injured several others from shrapnel that hit their homes.

Israel says Iran's military presence in Syria, where its militias are

fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar al Assad's forces, is a strategic threat and claims Tehran seeks a permanent presence along its northern borders.

The threat of direct confrontation between arch-enemies Israel and Iran has long simmered in Syria.

Assad has said Iranian forces are welcome to stay in Syria after years of military victories in which Iran and Russia have played a key role in bringing back most of the country under his control.



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Israeli strikes near Syria capital kill 3 civilians
Syrian government ends school early for over 4 million students

[US Congress members urge restoration of aid to Palestinians](#)

Thu, 2020-04-30 19:44

CHICAGO: Fifty-nine Democratic members of Congress have written to Kelly Craft, US ambassador to the UN, urging the Trump administration to restore

humanitarian assistance to Palestinians amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funds would support 3,300 health-care workers staffing 144 UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) clinics described as being on “the frontlines in combating” coronavirus.

“As you know, the pandemic has now reached the Gaza Strip, with cases beginning to inexorably rise in a place with few resources to combat the outbreak,” read the letter.

“Coupled with the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, the pandemic now poses an unprecedented global health emergency,” it added.

“It is important that we empower these public health officials, who are deliberately putting themselves in harm’s way for the common good, by providing them the resources they need to address the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The letter called for funding to “support the six facilities comprising the East Jerusalem Hospital Network, as well as US NGOs engaged in health work.”

Starting in 2018, President Donald Trump began suspending all US funding to the Palestinians and agencies that support Palestinian refugees, including UNRWA and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), in an effort to pressure Palestinian leaders to embrace his efforts to impose a peace deal favorable to Israel.

US cuts have included \$300 million from UNRWA, pushing it into financial crisis, and \$200 million through USAID that primarily supports health-care services.

UNRWA is working closely with host authorities and the World Health Organization with triage care and protocols in place to identify patients with respiratory symptoms among the Palestinians.

The Trump cuts impacting USAID have undermined health services, including for hospitals and programs to identify breast cancer among Palestinian women.



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UNRWA seeking more funds from Gulf, Europe after US cuts Gaza resumes coronavirus testing amid shortages