

Jordan announces uranium production

Sat, 2022-05-14 21:27

AMMAN: The Jordanian Uranium Mining Company announced that its extraction plant had produced 20 kilos of yellowcake from 160 tons of uranium ore. Mohammad Shunnaq, general manager of the state-owned JUMCO, said the factory would produce tens of kilograms of yellowcake from processing hundreds of tons of ore over the next few months.

He said Jordan had large uranium reserves and that its central area alone, about 80 km south of Amman, was home to around 42,000 metric tons of uranium oxide.

According to the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, Jordan has estimated conventional uranium reserves of 140,000 tons.



Shunnaq told Arab News that the extraction of uranium ore deposits, especially in the central region, was easily mined and cost-effective as they were less than 5 meters underground. He described the yellowcake as being of “excellent quality” with an average concentration of 150 ppm (parts per million).

Asked whether Jordan intended to produce large quantities of uranium oxide for commercial purposes, Shunnaq replied: “Yes, that is possible. We will first embark on a large-scale treatment of thousands of tons of uranium ores, conduct feasibility studies, and then evaluate the commercial aspect of such operations.”

The locally produced yellowcake will be used as fuel for the country’s nuclear power reactors.

He said the uranium exploration and extraction operations in the center, called the Central Jordan Uranium Project, were integral to the national nuclear program. It also covered the Nuclear Power Plant Project and the Nuclear Reactor Project for Research and Training.



The Jordanian Uranium Mining Company (JUMCO)

“It is a complementary project, completely for peaceful purposes, aiming to produce electricity and desalinate seawater. All uranium operations in Jordan are well-coordinated with the International Atomic Energy Agency.”

When asked if Jordan would carry out enrichment processing on the uranium yellowcake, he replied: “Jordan will send the yellowcake it produces abroad for the enrichment and then use it to fuel its nuclear reactors.”

In 2015, Jordan signed an agreement with Russia’s Rosatom to build a \$10 billion nuclear power plant with a capacity of 2,000 megawatts. The agreement was aimed at constructing a two-unit power plant at Amra in the north by 2022.

But in May 2018, Jordan announced a plan for a small modular nuclear reactor with Russia, replacing the \$10 billion plant deal signed in 2015 between the JAEC and Rosatom.

With Jordan’s nuclear power plant facing criticism, from environmentalists and lawmakers who have slammed the slow progress in advancing the project, JAEC chairman Khaled Toukan said the commission had achieved “a lot so far despite the small budget.”

Toukan said Jordan was the only Arab country in the Levant region with a nuclear reactor with a capacity of 5 megawatts, stressing that it was a research reactor built with Jordanian expertise in the field.

He added that the focus in 2030 would be on small nuclear reactors for generating electricity, water desalination, and industrial purposes.



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Iran to enrich uranium to 20% even after deal: Nuclear chief 'Our uranium is key to achieving energy transformation': Saudi minister

[Silent Taiz protest denounces deadly strikes by Houthis](#)

Author:

Sat, 2022-05-14 21:20

AL-MUKALLA: The Yemeni villagers stood in silence, but the words on their placards spoke volumes.

"On TV, we see a truce, but on the ground, we see blood, body parts and siege," read a poster carried by two veiled women and a child.

The unequivocal message was delivered by families in the southwestern Yemeni city of Taiz who held a silent vigil on Saturday to denounce the Houthi shelling of their homes and demand the militia lift its eight-year siege of the center.

Carrying posters that condemned the Houthi attacks, men, women and children

from the residential village of Al-Sailah stood in a line outside their homes to draw attention to deadly militia strikes that have killed and wounded many people, including a child.

"We appeal to the world to act to stop the killing of civilians by the Houthis in Taiz," read another poster.

During the vigil, a Houthi shell exploded near the gathering, Maher Al-Abessi, a local journalist, told Arab News by telephone.

"Shrapnel from the shell fell near us. Luckily, no one was hurt," he said.

The vigil came less than a day after a mortar shell fired by the Houthis ripped through a house in Al-Sailah, killing a 5-year-old child and fatally wounding his parents.

Shelling and other strikes by the Houthis on the besieged city have sparked outrage across Yemen at a time when the UN Yemen envoy is pressuring Yemeni parties to uphold a two-month ceasefire.

"Since the truce was announced, Houthi missiles have intensified and their crimes against civilians in Taiz have multiplied," Mohammed Al-Omada, head of the Yemeni Network for Rights and Freedoms, tweeted.

Sharing an image of the dead child, Hamza Al-Jubaihi, a Yemeni activist who was once abducted and held in a Houthi prison, denounced the militia killing of civilians in Taiz and their violations of the truce.

"This innocent child was killed by the Houthis less than two hours ago with a terrorist shell, and his father and mother were wounded next to him in Taiz. This is the Houthi truce," he said on Twitter.

Under the UN-brokered truce that came into effect on April 2, warring factions were expected to halt hostilities across Yemen, resume flights from Sanaa airport, and allow fuel ships to enter Hodeidah port, while a joint committee would convene to discuss opening roads in Taiz and the other cities.

The Yemeni government said that the Houthis are unwilling to lift their siege of Taiz and have failed to name their representatives on the committee.

On Thursday, the Yemeni government said it would allow passengers with Houthi-issued passports to fly from Sanaa airport, removing a barrier that obstructed the resumption of commercial flights from the Houthi-held Sanaa.

At the same time, a gathering of Yemeni NGOs that document war crimes said in a joint report that the Iran-backed Houthis had raided, blown up and destroyed 12,038 houses in 17 Yemeni provinces from July 2014 to December 2020, and are responsible for displacing hundreds of families living in the properties.

During this period, the Houthis blew up 853 homes, damaged or ruined 462 more and seized 243 houses as they sought to settle scores with people who

allegedly opposed their military expansion across the country.

The Yemeni Coalition to Monitor Human Rights Violations, also known as Rasd Coalition, said that armed Houthis killed 566 civilians, including 51 children and 64 women, and wounded 740 more, including 97 children and 130 women, while raiding houses.

The raids violated religious and tribal norms that forbid terrorizing children and women or displacing them from their homes, the coalition report said.

At the end of the report, it named 29 Houthi leaders responsible for raiding houses, based on interviews with their victims, and demanded the militia stop the attacks and compensate families who had lost their homes.

Mutahar Al-Badhiji, the coalition's executive director, called on human rights groups and journalists to work together to expose violations by the Houthis and pressure the militia to stop the attacks and release abducted civilians.

"There should be human rights and media campaigns directed at the militia to stop these practices and release the civilians who were kidnapped from their homes," Al-Badhiji told Arab News.



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Lebanon to deploy 75,000 troops on eve of crucial poll

Author:

Fri, 2022-05-13 23:12

BEIRUT: More than 75,000 troops and security personnel will be deployed at polling stations and key sites around Lebanon from late on Saturday on the eve of crucial parliamentary elections in the country.

Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi announced the large-scale deployment after meeting with military commanders overseeing security arrangements for Sunday's poll.

More than 3.6 million people are expected to cast their votes in 15 electoral districts around Lebanon, according to interior ministry estimates.

Friday was the final day of campaigning for the candidates' electoral machines, with party leaders and the political forces supporting electoral lists seeking to convince hesitant voters to take part in the elections.

Mawlawi said that security chiefs will work with generator owners to ensure electoral stations have power on polling day.

The election is expected to redraw Lebanon's political map after years of political and social upheaval, with a new president and the approval of a recovery plan to rescue the country from its severe economic crisis.

Electoral messaging reached a peak before a moratorium on campaigning entered into force from midnight on Friday until the ballot boxes are sealed late on Sunday.

Amid persistent calls for an election boycott, religious leaders used their Friday sermons to urge Lebanese people to exercise their right to vote.

Gebran Bassil, leader of the Free Patriotic Movement and the main ally of Hezbollah, said in his live appearances and on social media that "voting for the Lebanese Forces lists equals voting for Israel and its regional allies."

The Lebanese Forces candidates and leaders said that "whoever votes for the Free Patriotic Movement is, in fact, voting for Hezbollah."

Electoral expert Walid Fakhreddin told Arab News that voter turnout will be a major factor in the election.

"There's a desire for change in people that was somehow positively received by the Lebanese Forces, the Phalanges Party, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal Movement," he said.

Fakhreddin said the elections "have a high number of disruptive elements, and the Friday sermons were an attempt to change the stance of boycotters."

However, he added that "people make up their minds in the last 15 minutes and we have to expect some tactical voting."

Former prime minister Fouad Siniora, who is sponsoring an electoral campaign in Beirut and candidates in other regions, warned that the outlook for Lebanon would be "harsh and bitter" without serious reforms starting with the parliament.

"This compels every Lebanese to contribute positively to changing the situation, and building a strong state with its exclusively legitimate and official institutions and agencies," he said.

"It also compels them to steer clear from drowning in the vortex of personal considerations and sectarianism, and to focus on the interests of Lebanon and its citizens."

Siniora said that electoral lists he had partnered with in many regions had been targeted by a distortion campaign intended to discredit and divert the attention of Lebanese from the fundamental issues facing the country.

"We want Lebanon to preserve its Arab identity, and remain free and independent," he said.

"We don't want to keep repeating statements intended to blind us from the catastrophic project that would put Lebanon under the Iranian domination through Hezbollah and its weapons."

Siniora believes that "we are running under a poisoned electoral law. However, participating heavily in the polls will counter the fall of Lebanon resulting from the domination of Hezbollah and its allied sectarian parties on the state, its departments, institutions and agencies."

In parallel with the election preparations, Maj-Gen. Abbas Ibrahim, director general of the General Directorate of General Security, inaugurated a new GSS center at the Syrian border point of Mutrabe.

The new crossing will mean the closure of 18 illegal border points used by Lebanese living in Syria to enter Lebanon, he said.

Ibrahim said that 25 Lebanese towns overlapping Syria and home to 10,000 people will also benefit from a more direct link.



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UN urges crisis-hit Lebanon to 'change course' Sunni preachers in 'vote to save Lebanon' plea

[Egypt to be among first to issue new climate targets ahead of UN summit](#)

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Fri, 2022-05-13 23:02

DUBAI: Egypt plans to issue a new national target to cut its greenhouse gas emissions within weeks, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said on Friday. The country prepares to take the lead on global climate negotiations as host of a UN summit in November.

Last year, countries agreed at the COP26 UN summit in Glasgow to revisit and strengthen their 2030 climate targets in time for the COP27 meeting to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

But so far virtually no country has submitted an enhanced target since

Glasgow, according to David Waskow, a director of the non-profit World Resources Institute, who tracks the talks.

Egypt could be among the first. Shoukry, who also serves as COP27 president, called on all countries to submit their new targets, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and urged stronger action to stop climate change.

“Egypt will be declaring its revised NDCs, hopefully within a matter of weeks,” he said.

“I hope others will pay attention to what we will demonstrate in terms of ambition and commitment when our revised NDCs are issued.”

Waskow said that Egypt has lagged other countries in submitting climate targets. Egypt submitted its most recent NDC in 2017 and failed to submit a new one by a deadline last year for COP26.

But depending what the new target says, it could still be helpful in driving others to act, Waskow said.

“It is helpful for (Egypt) to get the ball rolling and to, we hope, set an important marker for what countries do need to do,” Waskow said.

Shoukry spoke alongside Great Britain’s Alok Sharma, president of COP26, at the conclusion of two days of meetings among ministers from more than 40 countries, held to discuss progress toward meeting climate commitments.

Sharma said that last year’s Glasgow climate deal was a “fragile win.” He said countries must now follow through on their commitments for there to be any hope of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the threshold beyond which climate change will become significantly worse.



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Egypt, World Bank hold talks over COP27 Sharm El-Sheikh hotels begin green practices ahead of COP27

[President Biden, King Abdullah II discuss West Bank violence during meeting](#)

Author:

Fri, 2022-05-13 21:07

LONDON: US President Joe Biden and King Abdullah II of Jordan on Friday discussed ways to “urgently address” a rise in violence in Israel and the West Bank.

The region has been in the grip of a wave of deadly unrest since late March, with Israeli security forces and Palestinians clashing regularly.

“The leaders consulted on recent events in the region and discussed urgent mechanisms to stem violence, calm rhetoric and reduce tensions,” the White House said in a statement.

Tensions remain high with a wave of attacks that have killed at least 18 people since March 22. A total of 31 Palestinians and three Israeli Arabs have died during the same period, according to tallies.

The two leaders reaffirmed the close and enduring nature of the friendship between the US and Jordan, according to a White House readout.

“Jordan is a critical ally and force for stability in the Middle East, and the President confirmed unwavering US support for Jordan and His Majesty’s leadership,” it added.

During the talks, Biden affirmed his strong support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and cited the need to preserve the historic status quo at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount.

The President also recognized Jordan’s crucial role as the custodian of Muslim holy places in Jerusalem.

The leaders discussed the political and economic benefits of further regional

integration in infrastructure, energy, water, and climate projects, with Jordan a critical hub for such cooperation and investment.



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Israel resumes raids in West Bank area where journalist was killed