

# Jordan's wheat stock is sufficient for 15 months, official claims

Tue, 2022-03-01 17:59

AMMAN: Jordan's wheat stock is sufficient for 15 months, according to officials, amid concerns of supply cut-offs and price hikes as a result of the ongoing war between key wheat exporters Russia and Ukraine.

Anwar Ajarmeh, chairman of the Jordan's General Company for Silos and Supply, said the kingdom's storage of imported wheat is "comfortable" and could supply the local market for 15 months.

In remarks to local media on Tuesday, Ajarmeh said the country's storage of barley could also meet the local market needs for 11 months.

He explained that the country has a wheat stock of 1.388 million tons, of which 858,000 tons are stored in the company's silos and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply's pits.

He said that Jordan imports some 95 percent of wheat consumed, adding that the kingdom is "required to look for alternatives to be prepared for a prolonged Russian-Ukrainian war and an accompanying congestion in global supply chains."

Emphasizing that the Russia-Ukraine war has no impact on Jordan's immediate wheat imports, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply said that 90 percent of Jordan's annual imports of wheat are from Romania.

Yanal Barmawi, the ministry's spokesperson, said there were no imports of wheat during 2021 or 2022 from Russia due to export taxes levied by Russian authorities on wheat, barley and corn.

Barmawi added that Jordan did not import any wheat or barley from Ukraine during the first two months of 2022, adding that wheat imports from Ukraine in 2021 did not exceed 10 percent.

He said that Jordan imports barley from Australia, France, Germany, Romania and Argentina.

"The kingdom's stock of wheat is sufficient for a period of 15 months," he reiterated.

Russia and Ukraine together account for nearly one-quarter of the global wheat exports.

The two warring countries are also key suppliers of barley, sunflower seed oil and corn, among other products, with Ukraine alone making up almost half of exports of sunflower oil.

Nael Kabariti, chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, said Jordan only

imported wheat from Ukraine twice over the past two years and “only in small amounts,” adding that the country’s supply of wheat comes from non-Ukrainian sources.

Kabariti said Jordan imports sunflower oil and corn from Ukraine but can resort to other producers in case of any disruption, including Malaysia and Indonesia.

He added that Jordanian traders have accumulated experience in addressing disruption in global supply chains, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have learned a good lesson during the pandemic. Everywhere in the world, there was a shortage in supply except in Jordan.

“It happened before during the Chernobyl disaster (in 1986) when Jordanian traders succeeded in securing alternative suppliers when Jordan had banned imports from Ukraine,” he said.

Asked whether the war in Ukraine would have an impact on prices in Jordan, Kabariti said: “There will be no direct impact on prices of basic food items in the local market because we deal with other suppliers. But of course, there would be an indirect impact in case of an increase in international shipping prices.”

He added that there is “no need to panic and there are solutions in place in case of any disruption in global supply chains.”



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Ukrainian crisis hits Jordanian students, importsEgypt issues wheat tender as Ukraine war threatens supply

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## [UN experts urge Iran to abandon mass internet censorship plan](#)

Author:

Tue, 2022-03-01 18:06

LONDON: Two UN experts have called on Iran to “abandon its efforts to enact a new law that would effectively isolate the country from the global internet.”

In a joint statement, Javaid Rehman, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, and Irene Khan, special rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, warned that Parliament could soon ratify the Regulatory System for Online Services Bill.

More commonly referred to as the User Protection Bill, it grants Tehran and the military “extensive control over infrastructure that connects Iran to the global internet.”

If enacted, the legislation would force technology companies to “follow state guidelines” or be subject to bandwidth throttling and blocking. It would have a raft of implications for the rights of global companies and Iranian citizens.

The bill would likely block any remaining websites and platforms run by foreign companies still operating in Iran, require people to use IDs to access the internet, and criminalize the distribution and sale of virtual private networks, according to the UN experts.

“This bill represents a worrying step towards the consolidation of a digital wall in Iran,” they said. “It will further restrict information in an environment where the freedom of expression and other fundamental rights are already heavily curtailed.

“It also interferes with the right of individuals to participate in cultural life and have access to cultural resources.”

Internet shutdowns have long been used by Tehran as a tool to hide human

rights abuses, especially at times of unrest.

In 2019, during some of the largest ever anti-regime protests seen since the 1979 revolution, the internet was shut down to hide the deaths of at least 324 people at the hands of security forces, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

“Shutdowns and disruption of internet services have since continued, particularly in connection with protests,” said the UN.

The User Protection Bill would further enhance Iran’s ability to disconnect its population from the outside world during times of crisis.

The UN experts said the bill would not only restrict information but also hamper business operations and adversely impact sectors reliant on information technology, including science, education and medicine.

“It is beyond dispute today that economic and social development of societies rest on access to information and an enabling environment for the exchange of ideas and cultural resources,” they added. “We call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to re-consider this bill.”



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Iran Internet disrupted by cyber attackersCPJ slams Iran's 'outrageous' media censorship

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## Yemen army destroys 2 Houthi explosive boats in Red Sea

Sun, 2022-02-27 18:55

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen's army destroyed two explosives-laden boats launched by the Iran-backed Houthi militia at a target near the country's northwestern region on the Red Sea.

Yemen's Defense Ministry said that coastguards from the army's Fifth Region destroyed the two boats while sailing from the country's territorial waters to international waters in the Red Sea near the coastline of the northern province of Hajjah.

The Arab coalition and Yemen's army have repeatedly accused the Houthis of threatening international navigation and trade in the Red Sea, by launching explosive-laden boats and planting naval mines to target commercial ships.

The coalition have warned that the Houthis have refitted Yemeni ports on the Red Sea, including Hodeidah port, creating explosive boat and drone factories and smuggling imports of advanced weaponry from Iran.

The foiled Houthi attacks came on Sunday as the militia launched the deadly shelling of densely populated neighborhoods in the southern city of Taiz.

Col. Abdul Basit Al-Baher, a Yemeni military officer in Taiz, told Arab News on Sunday that the Houthis, stationed on the outskirts of Taiz, fired mortar rounds and Katyusha rockets at the Al-Arabeen and Ousefarh neighborhoods in the city's downtown, wounding several civilians and destroying at least one house.

Yemen's official news agency reported on Sunday that a woman and her two children were wounded when a shell fired by the Houthis ripped through their home in Taiz's Maqbanah district.

On Saturday night, the Houthis launched a counterattack on government troop positions around a military base northwest of Taiz.

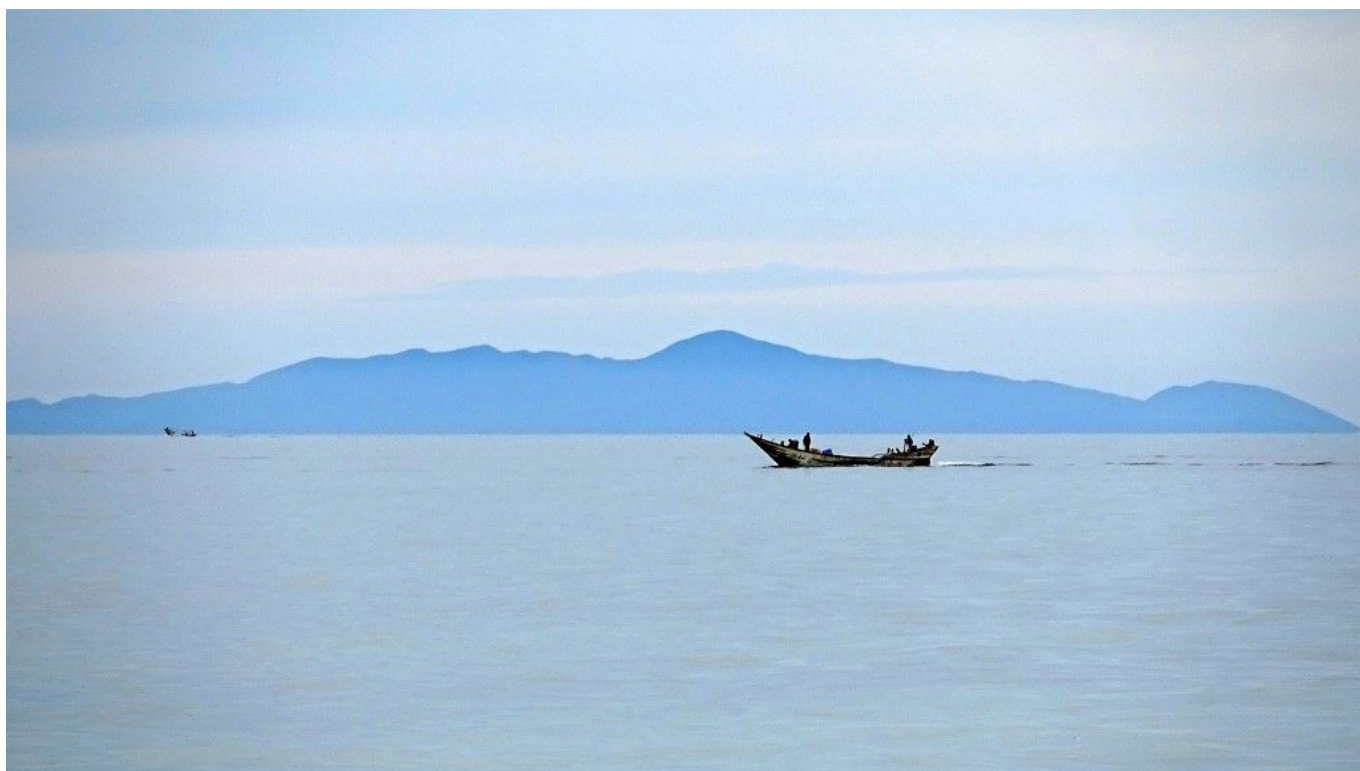
Al-Baher said that the militia attacked government forces near an air defense base outside Taiz with the aim of seizing control of strategic hilly locations that overlook the base.

The Houthis failed to achieve their goal and were forced to retreat after facing stiff resistance from government troops.

Separately, Yemen's Information Minister Muammar Al-Eryani strongly condemned the Houthi looting and seizure of properties owned by opponents in areas under their control, warning traders and the public against buying those properties.

"We warn businessmen and the general public in Sanaa, and areas under the control of the terrorist Houthi militia, not to become involved in the sale and purchase of looted assets, as they are null and void procedures," the minister said on Twitter.

For the past seven years, the Houthis have confiscated assets belonging to Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, former and current ministers, military and security officials, human rights activists and journalists who opposed the movement in Sanaa and other areas.



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# Government spokesman: Energy price rises due to Russia-Ukraine crisis will benefit Egypt

Sun, 2022-02-27 18:12

CAIRO: Ambassador Nader Saad, a spokesman for the Egyptian government, said that the rise in energy prices due to the Russian-Ukrainian crisis may benefit Egypt, adding that "it is possible to export the largest amount of natural gas we have."

He continued, during television statements to ON TV yesterday evening, that "it is possible to benefit from the price difference and the hard currency," explaining that "this would be distinguished economic thinking to export the largest amount of natural gas that exists in Egypt after taking into account the needs of factories and the use of alternative energy.

"A meeting was held with the governor of the Central Bank to check on the availability of hard currency necessary to secure our needs of strategic goods, especially since the hard currency that was coming through Russian-Ukrainian tourism was affected," Saad said.

He pointed out that the Central Bank and the government are working together in these difficult circumstances to secure Egyptian needs, adding: "We hope that the crisis will not extend for a long time so that we do not put too much pressure on the budget."

Egypt is looking to consolidate its position as a gas producer for Europe, as it is working on a joint agreement with Cyprus and Greece to export gas, linking Greek and Cypriot fields with Egyptian liquefaction stations, to be a gateway for Egyptian gas to Europe.

According to a statement by the Egyptian Cabinet in mid-February, liquefied natural gas exports witnessed significant growth, reaching 6.5 million tons in 2021, compared to 1.5 million tons in 2020.

Egypt and Israel are also studying the construction of an offshore gas pipeline to the Damietta facility, and the Idku liquefaction facility in Egypt, to help export to Europe. Cairo is also working with Lebanon and Jordan on the Arab Gas Pipeline project to solve the Lebanese energy crisis, as it is expected to pump about 1.5 million cubic meters to Lebanon, according to statements by Egyptian Petroleum Minister Tarek El-Molla.

Saad confirmed the formation of a crisis room to follow up on the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and its impact on Egyptian interests, explaining that it is primarily following "the situation of Egyptians in Ukraine, led by students, then wheat and how to secure our wheat needs in light of these circumstances.

"The third aspect is international oil prices and their effects on the

Egyptian budget. We hope to bring back the Egyptian students in Ukraine today,” he said.

“The eastern, southern and central regions are currently the most dangerous, and the Egyptian Embassy in Kiev instructs people to stay home because the roads have become unsafe. The Egyptians in the west of the country have it relatively easier,” he added.

Nabila Makram, minister of state for immigration and Egyptians abroad, said the government “is now studying sending Egyptian planes to evacuate students who have fled to Ukraine’s neighboring countries.

“There are 22 students who crossed to Poland, while 100 arrived in Romania and there are 1,000 students waiting to arrive in Bucharest,” she said, adding that “there is coordination between state agencies regarding the Egyptian community in Ukraine, and security precautions and the safety of citizens are taken into account.”



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Arab League to meet over Ukraine war Arab students stranded in Ukraine desperate to go home



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# [Egyptian minister blames Ethiopia's intransigence for lack of progress in dam negotiations](#)

Author:

Sun, 2022-02-27 17:35

CAIRO: Dr. Mohamed Abdel-Aty, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation, has said that the Renaissance Dam negotiations are currently frozen "due to Ethiopian intransigence."

Ethiopia announced a few days ago that Prime Minister Abi Ahmed had inaugurated the first phase of electricity generation from the dam.

Egypt said that Ethiopia's decision to unilaterally start operating the Renaissance Dam is a violation of the 2015 Declaration of Principles.

Abdel-Aty said his country is keen to reach a "fair and binding legal agreement on the rules for filling and operating the dam" stressing the state's readiness to deal with all scenarios related to the Ethiopian dam crisis.

"The Ethiopian dam is large, and there must be a binding agreement, exchange of data, and cooperation with the Ethiopian side to achieve a win-win situation for all, not unilateral action," he said.

The minister said that all state agencies are working in this file, each in its own right, and the Ministry of Irrigation is only concerned with the technical part with regard to the Ethiopian dam, noting that the ministry provides for water needs by making use of every drop of water.

The Egyptian state has taken the necessary measures to rationalise water consumption, he said, and to diversify production sources to avoid any crises.

Abdel-Aty said that Egypt is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world and is 97 per cent dependent on the waters of the River Nile. "The increase in population represents a major challenge to water resources, and it is expected that the total population in Egypt will reach more than 175 million people in 2050, which represents great pressure on water resources." The population today is about 100 million people.

Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia have been negotiating since 2011 to reach an agreement on filling and operating the dam, but long rounds of negotiations between the three countries have not yet produced an agreement.



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