

Yemen to get more COVID-19 vaccines by end of month – health ministry

Author:

Sun, 2021-07-18 20:02

ADEN: Yemen expects to get a second batch of COVID-19 shots by the end of this month through the COVAX global vaccine-sharing scheme, the health ministry said on Sunday.

Yemen is expecting to get 151,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine, out of an eventual total of 504,000, a spokesperson said.

The desperately poor country, whose health infrastructure has been devastated by six years of war, received 360,000 doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine in March through COVAX.

Another batch of AstraZeneca shots is expected via COVAX in August, according to the health ministry of the Saudi-backed internationally-recognized government.

So far vaccination campaigns have only begun in parts of Yemen controlled by the internationally-recognized government.

A small number of vaccines, 10,000 doses, were transferred to north Yemen, which is controlled by the Iranian-aligned Houthi movement, but they have not yet been administered.

Yemen's emergency coronavirus committee registered four confirmed cases and no deaths on Sunday. It has recorded 6,981 coronavirus infections and 1,368 deaths in total so far, though the true figure is widely thought to be much higher as the war has restricted COVID-19 testing and reporting.

Houthi authorities, who control the capital Sanaa and most major urban areas, have provided few figures.



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Yemen on alert as currency hits new record lows
Second batch of Yemenis stranded in India due to pandemic arrive in Aden

[Magnitude 5.6 earthquake recorded in Iraq's Basra – Iraqi news agency](#)

Sun, 2021-07-18 19:06

LONDON: A magnitude earthquake struck the Iranian southern city of Bushehr on Sunday, 250 kilometers from the Iraqi border, the Iraqi General Authority for Meteorology and Seismic Monitoring announced.

The authority said the tremor recorded 5.6 on the Richter scale, and was felt by residents in Basra, Iraqi News Agency reported.

"We call on citizens to take caution, stay away from rumors and false news,

and to abide by the seismic authority's instructions commandments," it added. The quake struck at a depth of 11 kilometers, with the epicenter near the town of Khesht, at around 7 PM (1430 GMT). Several weaker aftershocks followed, according to Iran's seismological center.

The United States Geological Survey put the initial tremor at 5.4-magnitude. There were no reports of casualties or damage, about two hours after the quake.

Rescue and survey teams were sent to the area and hospitals put on alert, Fars province's head of crisis management Rahim Azadi told state television. Iran sits astride the boundaries of several major tectonic plates and experiences frequent seismic activity.

In 2003, a 6.6-magnitude quake in the southeast levelled the ancient mud-brick city of Bam and killed at least 31,000 people.

Iran's deadliest was a 7.4-magnitude quake in 1990 that killed 40,000 people in the north, injured 300,000 and left half a million homeless.

(With AFP)



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Crises will not stop expats visiting Lebanon

Sun, 2021-07-18 00:30

BEIRUT: The endless crises that Lebanon has faced for more than a year have not deterred expatriates from visiting their home country in large numbers, Middle East Airlines officials have told Arab News.

According to the statistics of Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, the number of passengers who came to Lebanon on July 1 exceeded 15,000, including 13,606 Lebanese expatriates. A record number of 20,000 returning expatriates was registered by the end of this week.

Nisrine, who came back from Germany with her children for a summer vacation, said: "People look tired, nobody laughs, everybody is nervous and tense, they start to complain the moment they see you; no electricity nor gasoline, and life is too expensive."

Loris, a Lebanese woman whose daughter is getting married, said that her relatives coming from Sweden and Canada for the wedding were surprised by the overcrowded coffee shops and restaurants in Broummana, Jounieh, Byblos and Batroun, while darkness prevails in Beirut. The Lebanese capital was hit by a massive explosion last year.

Pierre Ashkar, president of the Association of Hotel Owners in Lebanon, said: "The political and security situation does not seem to make expatriates leave the country after the prime minister-designate Saad Hariri resigned ... They have always been successful in finding solutions."

Ashkar estimated the number of Iraqis who came to Lebanon during June at about 30,000. He said: "These people are fleeing from the security situation in their country, which is far worse than that of Lebanon."

FASTFACTS

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- **A record number of 20,000 returning expatriates was registered by the end of this week.**

He said: "As for the Lebanese expatriates if they face a blocked road, they can go to other roads which they know. And if there is tension in the capital, they can go to guesthouses in Ras Baalbek and other remote villages."

Ashkar said: "The explosion of the Port of Beirut last year resulted in the closing of (many) luxurious hotels ... (This situation) reflects the huge economic blow to the capital."

“Prices in Lebanon are much cheaper for expatriates or tourists than for Lebanese people who earn their income in Lebanese pounds. However, the huge increase in the exchange rate of the US dollar in the black market is causing problems for the owners of tourist venues.” The US dollar exchange rate in the black market has passed 22,000 Lebanese pounds for \$1.

Most Lebanese people find the price of a meal in a restaurant extravagant. Yet you have to book ahead to reserve a table in restaurants and wedding halls in hotels are fully reserved throughout the summer.

May, a Lebanese lady living in Canada, returned to Lebanon for the summer and did not find the country cheap. She said: “I cannot cope with the increase in the exchange rate of the dollar.”

She said: “How can I spend money while my parents’ pension is worth nothing ... My daughter could not go to the dentist because there are no antibiotics, and I did not bring medicines with me from Canada.”



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Arab League chief backs Libya polls Egypt seeks global push in Ethiopian dam talks

[Arab League chief backs Libya polls](#)

Sun, 2021-07-18 00:20

CAIRO: Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit has reiterated the organization's full support for the Libyan government in leading the current transitional phase and preparing for elections on Dec. 24. He stressed his full commitment to supporting the Libyans in bringing the country to safety after a prolonged period of turmoil. He held talks on Friday with Libyan Prime Minister Abdel Hamid Dbeibeh on the sidelines of his visit to New York to participate in a UN Security Council meeting on the country. The two men discussed the situation in Libya and relations with the Arab League. It was agreed that the secretary-general would visit at the earliest opportunity. Aboul Gheit said earlier that the league adhered to the implementation of the political roadmap in Libya leading to elections being held on time. He warned that not holding elections on the date agreed upon by all parties "may once again push the country into a dark tunnel of differences and political fragmentation, which no party desires." He emphasized that holding the presidential and legislative polls on Dec. 24 represented "a watershed on the path to saving Libya and preserving it as a sovereign united state."



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UN envoy: 'Spoilers' are trying to obstruct Libyan elections
Groups blocking Libyan elections reminded of sanctions threat

Iranian deputy foreign minister says Vienna talks must await Iran's new administration

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1626549405714395100

Sat, 2021-07-17 22:22

CAIRO: Iran's chief nuclear negotiator said on Saturday that the next round of talks in Vienna must wait until the new Iranian administration takes office in early August.

"We're in a transition period as a democratic transfer of power is underway in our capital. Vienna talks must thus obviously await our new administration," Abbas Araqchi said on Twitter.

Indirect US-Iranian talks on reviving the 2015 deal have been on hold since the last round ended on June 20 and Iran has made clear it is not ready to resume before President-elect Ebrahim Raisi takes over.

In his tweet, Araqchi also said the United States and Britain need to stop linking the exchange of prisoners with the nuclear deal.

"Ten prisoners on all sides may be released tomorrow if US&UK fulfil their part of a deal," he said.

Iran, which is holding a handful of Iranian-Americans, has been accused by rights activists of arresting dual nationals to try to extract a concession from other countries. Iran has dismissed the charge.

Iran said earlier this week that it was holding talks on securing the release of Iranian prisoners in American jails and other countries over violations of US sanctions.

In May, Washington denied a report by Iranian state television that the countries had reached a prisoner swap deal in exchange for the release of \$7 billion in frozen Iranian oil funds under US sanctions in other countries. The hiatus in nuclear talks, which US and European officials attribute to hard-line Raisi's election, has raised questions about next steps if the talks hit a dead end. The US State Department has acknowledged it may need to rethink its stance.



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Iran says upcoming round of Vienna talks could be the last Iran's hard bargaining tactics raise the stakes at Vienna nuclear negotiations