

[GCC calls Egypt main pillar for security of Arab region](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-02-07 21:02

CAIRO: The GCC considers Egypt a main pillar for national security in the Arab region, the council's secretary said Sunday.

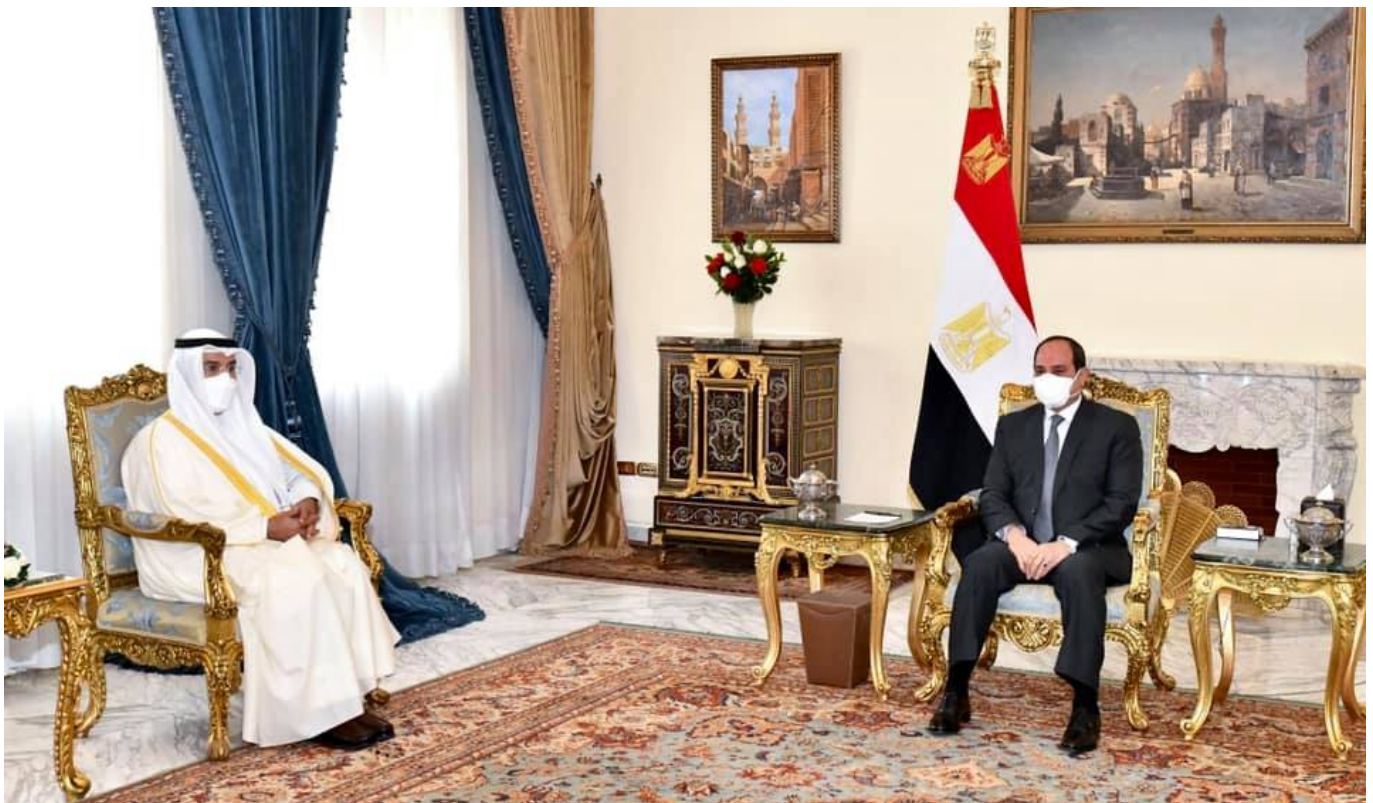
GCC Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf met President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi and hailed his role in protecting Arab national security and defending all causes of the Arab nation, according to Presidential Spokesman Bassam Rady.

Al-Hajraf said the stability of Gulf states are connected to the security of Egypt, and the opposite is true, he added in statements quoted by the state-run news agency MENA.

Al-Hajraf also met Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the ministry's headquarters in Cairo.

The secretary general described ties with Egypt as "historic with firm roots," as he mentioned the GCC support for the Egyptian government in battling terrorism.

Al-Hajraf has recently visited Iraq and Jordan where he discussed cooperation priorities in both countries with their prime ministers.



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Egypt frees Jazeera journalist after Qatar thaw
Head of Libyan parliament arrives in Cairo following invitation from Egyptian president

Biden tells Iran 'we will not lift sanctions'

Sun, 2021-02-07 18:23

LONDON: Joe Biden has said Iran must cut its uranium enrichment before any return to talks over the regime's nuclear program.

The US president said he would not ease any of the tough sanctions imposed by Donald Trump after he withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal, while Iran is not sticking to its commitments.

Iran has repeatedly breached the deal in recent months even amid suggestions that Biden would attempt to revive the agreement between Iran and world powers.

The deal reduced sanctions on Iran in return for curbing its nuclear development, which many fear is intended to build an atomic weapon.

Biden was asked in a CBS interview to be aired on Sunday whether he would halt sanctions in a bid to bring Iran back to negotiations.

"No," the new president said, in a clear one-word response. He then nodded when asked if Iran would have to stop enriching uranium first.

With Iran resuming its enrichment of uranium, we asked Pres. Biden if the U.S. will lift sanctions first in order to get Iran back to the negotiating table on a nuclear deal.

“No,” Pres. Biden says, affirming that Iran will have to stop its enrichment program first pic.twitter.com/OPszf15Q1o

– Norah O’Donnell (@NorahODonnell) [February 7, 2021](#)

Iran said last month that it was now enriching uranium to a purity of 20 percent – far above the 3.67percent level set by the deal. Biden’s administration has said it has to work urgently to stop Iran developing a nuclear weapon.



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Blinken discusses Iran with UK, French, German ministers
Belgian court sentences Iranian diplomat to 20 years in jail for Paris bomb plot

[Children return to classrooms in Jordan after a year away](#)

Author:

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Sun, 2021-02-07 15:06

AMMAN: Almost 774,000 students went back to school in Jordan on Sunday, in the first return to classrooms since a nationwide shutdown imposed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic last year.

The in-class learning on Sunday saw attendance by 773,812 kindergarten, first graders and general secondary (Tawjihi) students from public and private schools and those run by UNRWA. This is to be followed by second graders the following day and third graders on Feb. 9, as per the safe return to school guidebook prepared by the education and health ministries.

Tenth and 11 graders will resume in-person education on Feb. 21, while grades four to nine will return to school on March 7, according to the guidebook.

Jordan's Education Minister Tayseer Nuaimi told government-owned Al-Mamlakah TV: "Sunday went smooth and safe," adding that health monitors were observing schools' commitment to health standards.

According to the guidebook, each school will have a health monitor to observe adherence to safety measures, which also require that schools maintain a two-meter distance between each student. Schools incapable of meeting these requirements must maintain a mix of distance and in-class learning.

"The epidemic situation is changing worldwide and it is not time yet to relax our guard," the minister said.

The guidebook stipulates that no medicine shall be given to a student suspected of infection but a parent or guardian will be contacted to have the child tested at an accredited lab or public hospital. Those testing positive must undergo home quarantine for 10 days in case they are asymptomatic or 13 days if they develop symptoms, and those who are in contact with them must also be tested.

"I am really happy to see my children receiving in-class education again," Tahani Salman, a mother of four, said.

Salman said that she had no health concerns about her children attending in-class education "as long as there are strict health procedures in place."

Nadine El Saket, a mother of two, said: "No matter what, in-class learning is a lot better than online learning."

"School, not home, is students' best place," El Saket said. "Teacher-student interaction and outdoor activities are more useful to students than computers (online learning)."

The availability of COVID-19 vaccines has removed many health concerns, Mohammad Abdulqader, a father of three, said.

"I am happy to see my children going back to their schools after nearly a year. I want them to wake up early, go to their classes, do their homework and sleep early as during the old days. I am seriously not concerned that much with the availability of the vaccines," Abdulqader said.

Jordan recently eased coronavirus containment measures, lifting the Friday curfew and reopening sectors that had been closed since March last year, after the kingdom witnessing an improvement in the epidemic situation. The country has also embarked on a nationwide vaccination program.

Calls for the return of in-class education have been mounting in Jordan with parents, activists and NGOs expressing dissatisfaction with online education.

The National Campaign for the Return to Schools had called on the government to take a “decisive and immediate decision” to reopen schools and nurseries.

The campaign also urged the government to allow parents to choose between in-class education and distance learning, which has been the education model since the outbreak of the pandemic.

They also demanded that online learning platforms be kept for students who did not want to return to schools but were serious about continuing their education online.

Save the Children Jordan said that the closure of nurseries and schools had been a “challenge to all children, especially the younger ones, in light of the importance of early education to ensure children improve their capabilities, release their energies and boost their mental growth.”

The relief organization said that early education contributed to children’s social and emotional development, and preserved their physical health, making remote education “a hindrance.”

Addressing the Lower House ahead of a vote of confidence in early January, Prime Minister Bisher Al-Khasawneh announced the gradual return of students to schools starting this coming second semester in accordance with safety protocols.

King Abdullah directed the government to reopen schools and various sectors in a systematic manner that safeguarded public health and the national economy.







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Jordan recovers bodies of 3 swept away in flash flood
Gyms reopen in Jordan as pandemic ebbs, but new variants pose risks

[UAE temporarily provides COVID-19 vaccines only to elderly, people with chronic disease](#)

Sun, 2021-02-07 07:39

DUBAI: The UAE is to dedicate all coronavirus vaccination centers to the elderly and people with chronic diseases for up to six weeks as numbers of infections in the country continue to climb.

The health ministry said people in other categories may still get vaccinated after prior appointment with centers across the country, state news agency WAM reported on Sunday.

The UAE plans to inoculate half the population by April, with priority going to the more vulnerable groups. The whole population should be vaccinated by the end of the year.

Department of Health dedicates all Covid-19 vaccination centres in Abu Dhabi and other emirates to all citizens and residents who are senior citizens, people with chronic diseases, and People of Determination for six weeks starting 7 Feb.

pic.twitter.com/EUlz06oizj

– مكتب أبوظبي الإعلامي (@admediaoffice) [February 7, 2021](#)

More than 4.3 million people have already been vaccinated in the Emirates, with 112,521 people receiving the jab in the 24 hours leading up to Sunday's announcement.

As cases grow, Dubai has announced a series of new precautions and Abu Dhabi followed suit on Sunday with new measures introduced with immediate effect to try and stop the spread.

The Abu Dhabi Emergency, Crisis and Disasters Committee said it has "capped operating capacity of commercial, economic and tourism activities."

Abu Dhabi Emergency, Crisis and Disasters Committee has capped

operating capacity of commercial, economic and tourism activities, effective 7 February, to bolster precautionary measures implemented to curb the spread of Covid-19. pic.twitter.com/0dhEaNceDd

– مكتب أبوظبي الإعلامي (@admediaoffice) [February 7, 2021](#)

Cinemas were closed and shopping malls reduced to 40 percent capacity. Gyms, private beaches and swimming pools are only allowed half the amount of people compared to normal.

Restaurants, coffee shops, hotels, public beaches and parks were reduced to 60 percent and taxis and buses to 45 percent and 75 percent, respectively. The committee also said gatherings and parties would be prohibited, except for weddings, which would be limited to 10 people, and funerals and mournings, limited to 20 people.

Community Development Authority and Dubai Health Authority launch home vaccination drive for senior citizens in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Prevention. [#Dubai #UAE @CDA_Dubai @DHA_Dubai @mohapuae pic.twitter.com/lCfC75zTCG](#)

– Dubai Media Office (@DXBMediaOffice) [February 7, 2021](#)

On Saturday, Abu Dhabi reduced attendance at the workplace in government and semi-government institutions to 30 percent.

In Dubai, a home vaccination drive for senior citizens was launched while Dubai Police encourage members of the public to report any violations of coronavirus measures. The force has already received around 1,000 reports in one week.

Several people were fined 50,000 dirhams (\$13,613) after a private yacht party. The license was revoked for one month from the boat's operators. The Emirates has suffered 921 deaths. Some 3,093 new cases and seven deaths were recorded Sunday.

Elsewhere in the Gulf, Kuwait reported 962 new cases of COVID-19 and two deaths.

تعلن [#وزارة_الصحة](#) عن تأكيد إصابة 962 حالة جديدة، وتسجيل 445 حالة شفاء، و 2 حالة وفاة جديدة بـ [#فيروس_كورونا_المستجد](#) COVID-19 ، ليصبح إجمالي عدد الحالات 170,998 حالة pic.twitter.com/VqBuZq1Cro

– وزارة الصحة - الكويت (@KUWAIT_MOH) [February 7, 2021](#)

Oman's health ministry confirmed 633 new cases and two additional deaths.

[#Statement](#) No. 283

February 7, 2021 pic.twitter.com/090Dwp92NC

– عُمان – وزارة الصحة – (@OmaniMOH) [February 7, 2021](https://twitter.com/OmaniMOH/status/1358123456789)



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COVID-19 infections in Saudi Arabia increase nearly four-fold during last month COVID-19 travel ban forces Netanyahu to postpone UAE, Bahrain visits

UN special envoy Martin Griffiths visits Tehran for talks on Yemen

Sun, 2021-02-07 10:12

DUBAI: The United Nations special envoy to Yemen began a two-day visit to Iran for the first on Sunday to meet with senior Iranian officials to discuss the on-going conflict.

Martin Griffiths will meet with Minister of Foreign Affairs Javad Zarif as part of the diplomatic efforts to reach a political solution in Yemen that has seen instability since 2011.

Griffiths' priorities during the meetings will focus on reaching a ceasefire in all parts of Yemen, enforcing urgent humanitarian measures and the resumption of the political process, the [UN said in a press release](#).

Iran agreed to the visit after several discussions between both sides, a source close to the UN office in Amman told Arab News. The capital of Jordan was announced in 2017 as the headquarters of the office of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen.

Griffiths' spokeswoman, Ismini Palla, told Reuters the visit had been planned for some time, adding it comes at a time when he is trying to bring together more diplomatic, regional and international support to his efforts to end the war.

Last month [UN experts accused Iranian](#) entities and individuals of supplying the Houthis with weapons. The annual report by sanctions monitors stated: "There is a growing body of evidence that shows that individuals or entities within Iran are engaged in sending weapons and weapons components to the Houthis."

"The Iranian regime and its proxy have continued to demonstrate their fierce and ruthless strategy through acts of terror," Iranian-American political scientist, [Majid Rafizadeh said](#).

Griffiths visit to Tehran also comes just days after US President Joe Biden announced the appointment of Timothy Lenderking as his special envoy for Yemen in a bid to step up American diplomacy "to end the war in Yemen."

"The appointment of a US Special Envoy, coupled with attention the Biden Administration has dedicated to the Yemen file in the first 30 days, prompted Griffiths to resume efforts to revive consultations with regional and local actors," Yemen and Gulf analyst Ibrahim Jalal told Arab News.

Jalal, who is a non-resident scholar at The Middle East Institute, also believes the envoy's visit to Iran marks "a continuation of his efforts to engage influential regional actors."

Meanwhile, several [European ambassadors to Yemen visited the southern port of](#)

[Aden](#), the interim capital of the country, on Saturday as officials reported that the Houthis were raising obstacles during the prisoner swap talks in Amman.

Yemen's foreign minister, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, discussed with the ambassadors the Riyadh Agreement, Houthi resistance to repairing the Safer tanker, the government's efforts to restore services in the liberated provinces and the government willingness to reach a "real, comprehensive and lasting" peace in Yemen.



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