

# Iran to breach uranium enrichment cap

Tehran set to go beyond the 3.67% limit set under the 2015 nuclear deal; says it is open to diplomacy

REUTERS  
DUBAI

Iran announced on Sunday it will shortly boost its uranium enrichment above a cap set by a 2015 nuclear deal, a major breach likely to draw a tougher reaction from President Donald Trump who has pressured Tehran to renegotiate the pact.

In a sign of heightening tensions, France, Germany and Britain — all parties to the deal — expressed concerns over Tehran's decision.

In a live news conference, senior Iranian officials said Tehran would keep reducing its commitments every 60 days, unless European signatories of the pact protect it from the U.S. sanctions imposed by President Trump.

"We are fully prepared to enrich uranium at any level and with any amount," said Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation. "In a few hours the technical process will come to an end and the enrichment beyond

3.67% will begin," he said, referring to the limit set in the 2015 agreement.

## Decision condemned

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned Tehran's decision as a "violation" of the pact.

Iran has broken the terms of the deal and must immediately stop and reverse its activities, a spokesman for the deal, Iran's Foreign Office said on Sunday. "While the U.K. remains fully committed to the deal, Iran must immediately stop and reverse all activities inconsistent with its obligations," said the spokesman.

A German Foreign Ministry spokesman gave a similar response.

Iran did leave some room for negotiations. All measures taken by Iran to scale back its commitments to the nuclear deal were "reversible" if the European signatories of the pact fulfilled their obligations, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted on Sunday.



**Stern warning:** (From left) Atomic Energy Organisation spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, government spokesman Ali Rabieji and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. •AFP

The Iran nuclear deal dispute resolution mechanism will not be triggered for now, said a source at Mr. Macron's Elysee office. The French government is giving itself until July 15 to try to get all parties talking again.

## UN resolutions

Under that so-called snapback, if a series of steps designed to resolve differences fails, sanctions in all previous UN resolutions would be re-imposed.

Inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog who are in Iran will report back once they have checked that Tehran has enriched uranium to a higher level of purity than that allowed under its nuclear deal, the agency said.

Under the pact, Iran can enrich uranium to 3.67% fissile material, well below the 20% it was reaching before the deal and the roughly 90% suitable for a nuclear weapon. Mr. Kamalvandi said Iran would enrich urani-

um for use in fuelling its Bushehr power plant, to the level of 5%.

Long-tense relations between Tehran and Washington deteriorated in May 2018 when Mr. Trump withdrew from the deal, and reimposed sanctions — saying the agreement did not go far enough, and did not address Iran's missile programme or its policies in West Asia. Tehran says its missile programme is defensive.

Iran has expressed frustration over what it says is the failure of parties to the agreement to salvage the pact — signed along with Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — by protecting Iran's economic interests from U.S. sanctions. "European countries have failed to uphold their commitments and they are also responsible," Mr. Abbas Araqchi, Iran's senior nuclear negotiator, told the news conference in Tehran. "The doors of diplomacy are open but what matters are new initiatives which are required."

# Taliban bomb kills 14 as group holds peace talks in Qatar

Afghan President Ghani questions intent of the insurgents

REUTERS  
KABUL

A Taliban attack on a government security compound in central Afghanistan on Sunday killed at least 14 people and wounded more than 180, including scores of children, hours before a meeting in Qatar aimed at preparing the ground for peace talks.

Taliban fighters detonated a car bomb in Ghazni city near an office of Afghanistan's main intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), during Sunday morning's rush hour, officials said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility, saying in a statement that dozens of NDS officers were killed or wounded.

The attack took place as Taliban officials and a selected group of Afghan activists and civil society figures prepared to meet in Doha, casting a pall over talks intended



Taliban negotiator Abbas Stanikzai arriving for the intra-Afghan summit. •AFP

to open the way for full peace negotiations in the future. "It is unfathomable to endanger children in this way and I strongly condemn this attack," U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, said in a tweet.

At least 60 children who were attending classes in a private school situated near the blast site were among the 180 people wounded.

The Taliban, who have repeatedly refused to negotiate with the Western-backed government of Af-

ghan President Ashraf Ghani, agreed to join the intra-Afghan summit on the condition that those there would attend in a personal capacity.

About 60 high-profile Afghan figures and activists were in Doha to meet the Taliban officials during the two-day conference, a meeting arranged by German and Qatari officials with the support of U.S. negotiators.

Mr. Ghani condemned the bombing, and questioned the Taliban's real intent.

"They stain their hands with the blood of innocent people in Afghanistan every day. They should know that it is not possible to gain privileges in peace talks by targeting civilians, especially children," he said in a statement.

The intra-Afghan talks follow the start of a seventh round of peace talks between U.S. and Taliban negotiators in Doha last week.

# Clashes in Hong Kong after mass rally

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
HONG KONG

Fresh political violence broke out in Hong Kong on Sunday night as riot police baton-charged anti-government protesters seeking to keep the pressure up on the city's pro-Beijing leaders, after a mass rally outside a train station linking the finance hub to mainland China.

Hong Kong has been rocked by a month of huge marches against a law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China.

Sunday's clashes came hours after the first demonstration since young,



Protesters marching to the West Kowloon Express Rail Link Station. •REUTERS

masked protesters stormed Parliament last Monday, plunging the city into an unprecedented crisis. The extradition bill has been suspended following the

backlash. But that has done little to quell public anger, which has evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms.

Earlier on Sunday, tens of thousands of people snaked through streets in the harbour-front district of Tsim Sha Tsui, an area popular with Chinese tourists, ending their march at a high-speed train terminus that connects to the mainland. The march was billed as an opportunity to explain to mainlanders in the city what their protest movement is about given the massive censorship in Beijing. It passed without incident.

"We want to show tourists... what is happening in Hong Kong and we hope they can take this concept back to China," said Eddison Ng, an 18-year-old demonstrator.

Hong Kongers speak Cantonese but protesters used Bluetooth to send leaflets in Mandarin — the predominant language on the mainland — to nearby phones, hoping to spread the word. "Why are there still so many people coming out to protest now?" one man said in Mandarin through a loudspeaker. "Because the Hong Kong government didn't listen to our demands."

# 'Trump govt. is uniquely dysfunctional'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Britain's Ambassador in the United States has described President Donald Trump and his administration as "inept" and "uniquely dysfunctional", according to leaked diplomatic memos published by the *Mail* on Sunday.

Ambassador Kim Darroch reportedly said Mr. Trump's presidency could "crash and burn" and "end in disgrace", in the cache of secret cables and briefing notes sent back to Britain seen by the newspaper.

"We don't really believe this administration is going



Donald Trump

to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept," Mr. Darroch allegedly wrote in one dispatch.

The paper said the most damning comments by Mr.

Trump, who was received by Queen Elizabeth II during a state visit to Britain just last month, as "insecure" and "incompetent".

A memo sent following the controversial visit said the President and his team had been "dazzled" by the visit but warned Britain might not remain "flavour of the month" because "this is still the land of America First". He reportedly wrote that the "vicious infighting and chaos" inside the White House — widely reported in the U.S. but dismissed by Mr. Trump as "fake news" — was "mostly true".

Mr. Darroch is one of Britain's most experienced diplomats whose posting in Washington D.C. began in January, 2016, prior to Mr. Trump winning the presidency.

The *Mail* on Sunday said the memos, likely leaked by someone within Britain's sprawling civil service, cover a period beginning in 2017.

In one of the most recent reported dispatches filed on June 22, Mr. Darroch criticised Mr. Trump's fraught foreign policy on Iran, which has prompted fears in global capitals of a military conflict, as "incoherent" and "chaotic".

## IN BRIEF



### Imran Khan to visit Russia to attend EEF

ISLAMABAD  
Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will travel to Russia in September to attend the Eastern Economic Forum, sources said. Mr. Khan has accepted Russian President Vladimir Putin's invitation, which was extended last month. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the chief guest at the EEF. •PTI

### Regret comments about segregationists: Biden

SUMNER, S.C.  
Former Vice-President Joe Biden on Saturday apologised for recent comments about working with segregationist Senators in his early days in the U.S. Senate, saying he understands now his remarks could have been offensive to some. "I regret it, and I'm sorry for any of the pain of misconception that caused anybody." •AP

# Hardline Sri Lankan monk calls for Sinhalese govt.

'Leave fight against extremism to us'

REUTERS  
KANDY

Sri Lanka's most powerful Buddhist nationalist group rallied its hardline base on Sunday, saying they must aim to take democratic control of Parliament to protect the community, amid heightened sectarian strains after the Easter attacks by Islamist bombers.

The influential chief of the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, addressing hundreds of monks and followers in Kandy, called on Sri Lanka's 10,000 Buddhist temples to help win votes for candidates from the Sinhala Buddhist majority. "We the clergies should aim to create a Sinhala government. We will create a Parliament that will be accountable for the country, a Parliament that will protect Sinhalese," said Gnanasara.

He also said the politi-



Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara

cians should leave the fight against Islamist extremism to the monks. "We can talk to them face to face in villages and create the Muslim culture as we want without going for extremism. It's our responsibility because this is a Sinhalese country. We are the historical owners of this country," he said.

Police lined the streets of Kandy and the army was on standby as the monks held their first big assembly since the attacks. Several worried Muslim traders shut their establishments for fear of violence.

# Pakistan judge denies being blackmailed

REUTERS  
LAHORE

A Pakistani judge on Sunday denied being blackmailed into convicting ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for graft last year after the main Opposition party showed secretly taped video that appeared to show him saying he was threatened over the case.

Mr. Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party had presented the video at a news conference on Saturday. In the video, judge Arshad Malik, a senior judge on the accountability court, is seen telling a man that unidentified individuals had confronted him with compromising video footage to pressure him into convicting Mr. Sharif.

Mr. Malik, in a statement on Sunday, said that his comments in the video were pieced together and presented out of context.

# 'Greek conservatives on track for landslide win'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ATHENS

Greece's conservative New Democracy party is on course for a crushing victory against leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Sunday's general election and will return to power after more than four years in the Opposition, exit polls showed on Sunday.

A combined survey by Greece's main TV stations showed New Democracy, headed by Kyriakos Mitsotakis, son of a former Prime Minister, leading Mr. Tsipras's Syriza party by an average of 40% percent to 28.5%. "The result has been determined... but we'll be back," outgoing Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos told state TV ERT.



New Democracy party leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis. •REUTERS

If these results are confirmed, the 51-year-old Harvard graduate and former McKinsey consultant Mitsotakis will have a majority of up to 167 lawmakers in the 300-seat Parliament.

Mr. Tsipras's party will have up to 82 seats, the polls showed. The final number will depend on how smaller parties fare. They need at least 3% of the vote to enter Parliament.

# U.K. court refuses to deport couple to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON

Even as liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya was granted permission to appeal against his extradition order in the U.K. High Court, India suffered another setback as its extradition request in a murder case was turned down recently by a court here.

On July 2, Chief Magistrate Emma Arbuthnot of Westminster Magistrates' Court handed down her judgment in a case involving an Indian-origin British citizen Arti Dhir and husband Kaval Rajjada, wanted in India for the murder of their adopted 11-year-old boy Gopal and his brother-in-law.

Judge Arbuthnot, incidentally the same judge who had found a prima facie

case against Mr. Mallya in her ruling in favour of extradition, "discharged" the couple on human rights grounds under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. "In the light of my finding that Ms. Dhir and Mr. Rajjada if extradited will be subject to an irreducible sentence, I find there are substantial grounds for believing that they would face a real risk of being subjected to treatment, a lack of review of a life sentence, which would be inhuman and degrading," she notes in her ruling.

The judge did find that "there is a circumstantial prima facie case that Ms. Dhir and Mr. Rajjada acting together and with others committed the offences".