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Hekmatyar claims political parties already in talks with Taliban

Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hizb-e-Islami, says that Afghan political parties have already started negotiations with the Taliban, and that initial agreements have been made. In an interview with Ariana News, Hekmatyar stated that government's negotiating team is not "comprehensive" and government is consulting with Afghan political parties on issues around the process. He said that there is no consensus between government and the political parties on the Afghan peace process. "Government does not have a political consensus, they have not reached an agreement with the leading political parties; therefore, it made the parties start direct talks with the Taliban and the Taliban is also ready to sit with the parties around the negotiating table," Hekmatyar said. ... **P2**

U.S., UK urge intra-Afghan talks 'without delay'



Meanwhile, the UK Embassy in Kabul in a statement on Tuesday condemned the continuing violence and targeted attacks and called for intra-Afghan talks to begin without further delay.

"There is an historic opportunity to bring an end to the conflict through a negotiated settlement with the Taliban," the statement said. "To realise this, the violence must stop, the targeted killing of civilians must stop and all parties must demonstrate their commitment to a negotiated solution and to peace by agreeing to the start of intra-Afghan negotiations without further delay."

"We commend the bravery of Afghanistan's people, her leaders, defence and security forces, civil society leaders, activists and citizens. They face dangers in conducting their daily lives and defending and upholding the values and principles of the Republic in the search for peace. We remain your partners in the fight against terrorism and the search for a peaceful future for all Afghanistan's citizens," the statement said.



U.S. House Democrats demand Pompeo, Esper provide witnesses for Afghan hearing

Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives on Monday called on Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper to provide witnesses for a hearing on Afghanistan policy, and threatened to issue subpoenas if their departments did not comply. In letters to the pair, Democrats on the House Oversight and Reform Committee's subcommittee on national security said the State Department and Pentagon have ignored for more than a year invitations to send witnesses or responded "with delay, obfuscation and excuses" for not providing them. They said they would subpoena witnesses for a Sept. 9 hearing if the departments failed to confirm their participation by Wednesday. "The subcommittee will have no other choice but to receive testimony through compulsory process," they wrote. ... **P3**

The United States and the United Kingdom have called for intra-Afghan peace talks to begin 'without delay'. U.S. national security adviser Robert O'Brien has said that he had a phone call with Afghan President

Ashraf Ghani on Monday to discuss the need for intra-Afghan talks to start without delay. During the call, he also reiterated U.S. support for a sovereign, democratic, and unified Afghanistan that never again

serves as a source of international terrorism. The U.S. stands with the Afghan security forces who have made tremendous sacrifices for the Afghan people, O'Brien said on Twitter.

Islamic Development Bank President Meets with Afghan Ambassador

President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group Dr. Bandar Hajjar held a virtual meeting on Monday with German Consul General in Jeddah Holger Ziegeler. The meeting discussed prospects for cooperation between the IsDB and the German Corporation for International Cooperation in the fields of joint financing for projects in member states, scholarships, joining the Lives and Livelihoods Fund and exchanging expertise. On the other hand, Dr. Hajjar ... **P2**



Pakistan, Afghanistan Meets on APAPPS

Acting Foreign Minister Hanif Atmar held a meeting with at least 40 high-ranking Pakistani delegation on Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity.

While the Pakistani delegation was led by Sohail Mahmood Deputy Foreign Minister of the country, Afghan Deputy Minister Mirwaair Nab lead the Kabul team, as both parties tackled not only bilateral cooperation but also multilateral mechanism. Atmar urged the need for maintaining the Durand Line open, including construction of 'arbitrary' facilities and crossings between the nations.

The Afghan team also included views on regional connectivity, trade and transport development, extension of the



Hairatan-Kabul-Peshawar and Hairatan-Herat-Kandahar-Quetta railway lines. "The Pakistan side reiterated that the peace and reconciliation process offered a unique opportunity to address the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland with dignity and honor," Pakistani Foreign Office stated. "A time-bound,

well-resourced roadmap was important in this regard." The meeting is reported to assess the commitments of the previous meeting of the Action Plan, which was held in Pakistan last year, focusing on five separate areas of politics and diplomacy, defense, security, economy and refugees. The previous review session was held in June 2019.

Hekmatyar...

“An initial agreement has been reached even on the location of the negotiations. The Taliban also knows that the system is not honest and they are wasting time,” he said.

Meanwhile, Hekmatyar believes that government is following a hostile policy, and urged government to change its approach to the Taliban.

The Hizb-e-Islami leader said: “I think reaching peace with the current system is impossible. If anyone wants the system and the security forces to be sustainable, and not to face Dr. Najibullah’s fate: they must enter into peace negotiations honestly.”

Najibullah was the president of Afghanistan from 1987 until his resignation in April 1992, shortly after which the mujahideen took over Kabul. After a failed attempt to flee to India, Najibullah remained in Kabul living in the United Nations headquarters until his death at the hands of the Taliban after their capture of the city.

Hekmatyar also stated that government “should not look for an alternative ally to pursue the Afghan war.”

In addition, Hekmatyar claimed that the Afghan government has no authority to make the decision in terms of the peace process, saying that the “US is a decision-maker in the process.”

The Afghan government has not yet commented on Hekmatyar’s remarks.

Islamic Development...

has held a virtual meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Ahmad Mojadidy. The two sides discussed the Bank’s projects in the field of health, agriculture and infrastructure in Afghanistan, which the bank has financed to date with an amount of USD162 million.

By Shariq Farooqi

How to improve Afghanistan’s devastated maternal healthcare system amid COVID-19 and the peace process

Maternal health is a window into the widespread socioeconomic fault lines of Afghanistan. The US invasion and subsequent conflict there has undermined maternal health, limited the accessibility and quality of maternal healthcare, and created serious generational trauma in the form of undesired pregnancies and mental health disorders. Decades of foreign intervention and civil war have destroyed healthcare infrastructure, while the lingering neocolonial patriarchal society and Taliban fear tactics have limited access to necessary sexual health education.

Developing a sustainable maternal healthcare system is an integral step to achieving transformative justice for Afghan women and for the development of Afghanistan’s social institutions amid the ongoing peace process. A multisectoral approach is required to sustain responsible governmental, international, and regional coordination to create educational programs centered around the sexual and reproductive health of women and to initiate systemic action to reverse the ability of male-centric structures to withhold reproductive healthcare.

Healthcare infrastructure Afghanistan suffers from the absence of government institutions supporting healthcare, which is felt especially hard in maternal healthcare. The Afghan region of Badakhshan recorded the highest maternal mortality ratio in history in 2001. The nexus between maternal health, mental health, and non-communicable diseases goes unnoticed in the Ministry of Public Health’s Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), leading pregnant Afghan women to suffer high rates of postpartum depression and infections.

The overdependence on international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) also contributes to Afghanistan’s faltering healthcare infrastructure. INGO funding can often be short-term and ephemeral, and when it disappears, it often leaves behind a healthcare system with no other form of financial support and exacerbates the incoordination of women’s healthcare at the provincial and national level. In the long term, service delivery should not depend on INGOs but rather the Ministry of Public Health and domestic partners. While INGOs have

been the main source of immediate healthcare relief in the form of service delivery, this temporary relief cannot sustain poor government healthcare services and the development of local services has been severely stunted. While one cannot downplay the importance of NGO emergency relief, structural change for Afghanistan will only materialize once the government invests more in its own healthcare framework and reduces its dependency on emergency INGO service delivery.

Hospitals and clinics outside of Kabul are given even less resources and aid. Deficiencies in antenatal care (ANC), delivery assistance by skilled birth attendants (SBA), and utilization of postnatal care (PNC) have led to maternal health coverage blackouts within the outermost provinces. Afghanistan’s lack of accessibility and quality of care jeopardizes the safety of labor procedures for pregnant women as well as access to STD screening and abortion capacity, which is the backbone of women’s rights in the Global South.

Policy recommendations for healthcare infrastructure: In order to catalyze true transformative justice in Afghanistan, the Afghan government ought to implement a multisectoral approach with women at the forefront to improve the social determinants of health. Namely, this must include cross-coordination between the Ministry of Public Health and higher education, which is imperative to prioritizing maternal health educational resources and preparing hospitals for the unique challenges women face. The development of a sustainable healthcare infrastructure is critical to reduce dependence on INGOs and is only attainable with the subsidization of costs and substantial investment from the international community. This investment should be in the form of a consistent monitoring and evaluation system that has the technological capacity to link all local NGOs, healthcare providers, and facilities. As such, even if INGO relief dwindles, there will be an internationally-supported domestic network in place ensuring a consistent flow of patient care. This is only possible via investment in Afghan NGOs as well as in Afghanistan’s actual healthcare system.

After two decades of armed conflict, Afghanistan’s

medical infrastructure and healthcare workers have been caught in the crossfire. As such, the United States and its allies have a responsibility to invest in organizations supporting local infrastructure that would tangibly improve Afghan lives. The Community Midwifery Education Initiative (CMEI) is an example of a localized program that needs investment to train local women to become midwives and provide comprehensive maternal healthcare. Investing in local infrastructure ensures long-term wellness for women and overall development of Afghan social institutions. In addition, Central and South Asian actors—namely Pakistan—may be more effective in supporting Afghanistan’s local talent within its own healthcare system. Pakistan’s efforts to facilitate Afghanistan’s stabilization could perhaps include capacity building programs administered by Pakistani maternal medical professionals, helping to harness women’s empowerment.

Sexual education and empowerment

Limited access to sexual education has for decades disproportionately impacted women’s wellness at the cost of their safety. True transformative justice for Afghan women cannot come without sexual and reproductive health literacy for all Afghans. With the exception of abortion, there is no formal legislation outlawing the use of birth control, including contraceptives. Contraceptive availability and usage, however, varies by province depending on the family planning educational programs available. Typically, male mullahs in the rural and more conservative provinces tend to oppose the implementation of family planning and sexual literacy programs, making women there even more vulnerable. Scarce sexual education has impeded awareness around contraceptives and family planning, which directly hinders improved birth spacing and seeking out a skilled birth attendant to postpone pregnancies with premature pelvic development and reducing the perils associated with high parity pregnancies.

Policy recommendations for sexual education: Afghan men and women are entitled to sexual and reproductive health resources, as they have a right to protect their bodies and empower themselves in the spirit of restorative justice and reclaiming their sexual rights. Streamlined access to sexual ... **P3**

By N.V. Subramanian

The horror returns: U.S. troops’ Afghan departure

Every political actor, from the Taliban to the United States of America, is in trouble in Afghanistan, whose descent into hell begins with the April 2021 U.S. troops’ withdrawal. The U.S.’s February peace deal with the Taliban merely prolongs the agony of a Kabul government with an attrited military steadily losing territory to the Taliban and its proxies, which control 20 per cent of the mountainous landlocked state and contest another 50 per cent with U.S.-led occupation forces.

Should the U.S. leave behind a 5,000-man counter-terrorism force as debated or even delay the pull-out going against the campaign promises of the presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, it could provoke a defection of Taliban hard-liners to the Islamic State-Khorasan, upsetting the fragile balance of power in Afghanistan. The IS-K and its mother organization, the Islamic

State of Iraq and the Levant, want a caliphate everywhere where Muslims are settled while the Taliban’s ambitions are restricted to Afghanistan. Between the IS-K and the Taliban, states with Afghan interests — the U.S, China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, the Arab nations, India — consider the Taliban less odious.

Nevertheless, the Taliban’s problem is that they cannot abjure violence because of the IS-K threat: regular bloodletting also keeps the pressure on Kabul and the U.S. Since the peace deal is threatened by proven Taliban violence, this is outsourced, ironically, to the IS-K, which masterminded a recent Jalalabad jail-break to the benefit of mostly Taliban inmates. The anti-India, pro-Pakistan, semi-autonomous Taliban outfit headed by Sirajuddin Haqqani tasks the IS-K for the proxy violence on behalf of the Taliban.

Significantly, separate U.S.-Kabul and Taliban military operations ahead of the peace deal had depleted the IS-K’s power without eliminating it. The IS-K is biding time for the Taliban to mess up. Preparing for the U.S. pull-out in 2021, state actors with Afghan interests are aligning relations. The bloc comprising Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan seems to be ahead. Problems with both Pakistan and China leave India out of this. Pakistan’s deep ties with the Taliban, especially the Haqqani Taliban with its history of violence against Indian assets in Afghanistan, cannot be ignored. It is hard to forgive the Taliban for its role in the IC-814 hijacking. Security agencies have working relations with the Taliban but they are not political. Iran helped out with the Taliban, but the ties have soured over Kashmir, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and so on. Preoccupied... **P3**

Cabinet approves mother’s name inclusion in national ID cards



The Cabinet’s legislations committee has approved the draft of National Statistics and Information Department about inclusion of mother’s name in National Identity Cards. The council of ministers also approved the Road Transport Regulation Law, Telecommunication Services Products and Water Regulation Law. A statement from the Presidential Palace said the Cabinet met under the leadership of second vice president Sarwar Danish on Monday at his office. According to the statement, a number of civil society activists presented a draft of the National Statistics and Information Department to the Cabinet legislation Committee for amending the law. The participants expressed their views about the draft and later it was approved.

The draft law on road transport regulation was also approved by the Legislation Committee at the meeting and the Ministry of Justice was tasked to include views and suggestions by the authorities concerned and institutions in the draft law before presenting it to the next meeting of the cabinet. The meeting participants exchanged their views on how to collect telecommunication services revenue, law enforcement authority, and real-time system and later approved the draft amendment by the cabinet. It added the meeting also discussed the draft road transport law and the draft land law. Second Vice President Sarwar Danish termed the role of the private sector in road transport as crucial and views of the sector should be taken into account in this draft law.

Afghanistan to Implement TAPI Project in Early 2021

On August 31, Mohammad Haroon Chakhansuri, Acting Minister for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum; Mahmoud Karzai, Acting Minister for Urban Development and Borders; Mohammad Murad Amanov, Director of TAPI pipeline project LTD signed a tripartite memorandum over the matter. TAPI project is one of the prime economics projects for in the region, which plays an important role in economic development of Afghanistan, Chakhansuri said.

Significant progresses have been made in recent years.

Some technicalities, minesweeping and ground surveys were among the tasks carried for the implementation of the project, he exclaimed.

"A memorandum will be signed to acquire lands based on the route of TAPI project and the plan of action will soon take its practical phase," Chakhansuri said.

Mahmoud Karzai said there is a major economic importance of this Project

to Afghanistan, and with the signing of this memorandum, Ministry of Urban development and housing will work on the land acquisitions.

Meanwhile, Amanov said the construction of the project will begin in the early months of 2021 upon the completion of land acquisitions.

The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline project is launched in January 2016, which includes a 1,814-kilometer gas pipeline intended to pass through Afghanistan,

Pakistan and India - with at least 816 kilometers of the pipeline passing through Afghanistan.

The pipeline will pass through Herat, Farah, Nimroz, Helmand and Kandahar provinces in Afghanistan.

TAPI pipeline is planned to be constructed alongside the Kandahar-Herat Highway in western Afghanistan, and then via Quetta and Multan in Pakistan, making a final pass through Indian town of Fazilka, close to Pakistan's Border.

Exchange Rates

76.7	\$	76.8
90.3	€	90.4
100.4	£	100.5
457	Rp.	458
20.6	دولاره	20.7
1030	₹	1040

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The horror returns...

with racism and the Covid-19 crises in an election year, the U.S. has nothing of substance to offer to New Delhi. India's predicament may be somewhat worse but it is not isolated. While grudgingly accepting the Taliban insurgency, the U.S. cannot countenance the global terrorism of the IS-K or the Taliban's ally, al-Qaida, in Afghanistan. Russia, China and Iran want the U.S. out of Afghanistan but share its terrorism fears without knowing what to do. And while Pakistan may see the Taliban in power as vindication of its efforts and sacrifices and an opportunity to get even with India, a relapse of violence and terrorism to the advantage of the IS-K or al-Qaida could spark existential problems. The IS-K, after all, is constituted in the main of Pakistan Taliban veterans persecuted by the Pakistan army. Afghanistan is a country of rivalrous tribes and warlords that even Islam and xenophobia cannot unite and insulate from neighbourhood interference and terrorism and spur nation-building. With all its faults, the American occupation brought hopes of change and modernization and an escape for Afghan women from medievalism. The nightmare returns.

U.S. House...

The State and Defense departments did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The United States and the Taliban signed a Feb. 29 accord for a "conditions-based" pullout of all U.S. forces by May 2021, with the level dropping to 8,600 by this June. It also called for intra-Afghan peace talks that have been delayed by wrangling between the Taliban and Kabul.

The Democrats noted that President Donald Trump recently said he planned to cut U.S. troops to no more than 4,000 by the Nov. 3 U.S. election, and they expressed concern the reduction is politically motivated.

They cited U.S. military and U.N. reports that said the Taliban have not severed links with al Qaeda as the Feb. 29 accord required. They also noted that the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Army General Kenneth McKenzie, said on June 10 that conditions for a full U.S. withdrawal had not been met.

Meanwhile, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Menendez, said in a statement that he expected the State Department to brief Congress on recent Taliban attacks on U.S. forces that constituted a "clear violation" of the Feb. 29 accord.

How to improve...

education and female presence in obstetrics and gynecology are essential for improving family planning and reproductive health services. An estimated thirty three percent of maternal deaths could be prevented annually if women had assured access to contraceptives and maternal health resources. As women gain access to educational resources, they readily seek out necessary prenatal care to prevent obstetric emergencies that typically harm maternal health. Female health professionals are ideal facilitators of trust in sexual education, urging investment in community midwifery centers, especially those in the outermost provinces of Afghanistan. Access to family planning and reproductive health services is critical to improve and uplift the lives of hundreds of thousands of Afghan women and children. Neocolonial derived patriarchy and Taliban fear tactics

Complicit in sustaining an imperialist system inherited from the colonial British, the Soviet Union, and the United States, Afghan men have derived power from family honor codes, which allows them to dominate political positions, tribal councils known as Jirgas, and family units. Husbands in particular often restrict women from attaining maternal care from a proper healthcare facility. In addition, Afghan women are traditionally prevented from visiting healthcare facilities if there are no female staff, especially in cases related to fertility and reproductive health. The status of a woman's right to maternal healthcare is thus not only limited by availability and affordability, but also by social norms and whether treatments are sensitive to cultural and religious beliefs. These very codes perpetuate practices of early marriage, honor killings, and bride kidnappings, enforcing gender violence and structural injustice for women throughout their lives.

While the state of maternal health was already crippled under the Taliban emirate's mangled understanding of women's rights in Islamic and ethnic contexts, the US invasion escalated violence and enshrined male-dominated power structures, heightening women's apprehension to seek reproductive care. Despite the Taliban's consistent record of

egregious attacks on healthcare workers and facilities, the introduction of US and NATO troops has led to an uptick in violent confrontations with the Taliban, now engendering hostility towards any healthcare facility associated with externally supported medical care. Concurrently, the United States victimized the archetype of the Afghan woman to justify sustained bombing campaigns which disproportionately killed and injured more women. Despite increased humanitarian aid from the United States, the uptick in violence has caused INGO-operated maternity wards to close their doors out of concern for hospital staff safety, further restricting healthcare access for women.

At the outset of the US intervention in Afghanistan, coverage rates for reproductive, maternal, and child care improved. Twenty-one of the thirty-four provinces witnessed twenty-percent increases in the percentage of women cared for by a skilled birth attendant from pre-US intervention levels. Yet, these gains remain unequally distributed, particularly for the more remote and poor provinces controlled by the Taliban. Moreover, experts in maternal mortality assert that the enormous declines in maternal mortality after the US-led invasion reported by USAID are improbable. As such, even with US intervention, maternal care outreach endures serious threats in Taliban controlled and contested regions with reproductive empowerment out of reach for women living in these areas.

Despite some maternal health indicators improving under US humanitarian aid, the highly patriarchal set of systems and ideologies brought on by the United States in an attempt to stabilize the country produced an unhealthy dichotomy between modernists and religious-based traditionalists, in addition to enabling existing local attitudes about gender and power. After the US and NATO-sponsored Bonn agreement to initiate Afghanistan's rebuilding, Pashtun women, especially in Northern Afghanistan, suffered from the trauma of sexual violence at the hands of tribal warlords empowered by the fall of the Taliban. Although the United States boasted its defeat of the Taliban's formal gender repressive policies, it fails to acknowledge the

gender apartheid it nurtured as it empowered the pre-existing gender attitudes of warlords to co-opt political processes and introduced the narrative of a sexually empowered woman being incompatible with Afghan and Islamic traditions.

Policy recommendations for patriarchal norms: Male leadership can no longer stand in the way of sexual empowerment and literacy for women and should abdicate more roles in government and local institutions to women. A significant step in this process would be the complete overhaul of the healthcare system to be geared toward women's health initiatives, led by revolutionary women and organizations like RAWA, as active participants rather than a western token. In order to circumvent reproductive coercion and backlash from jirgas, shuras—committees that largely influence community-wide health initiatives—can and must advocate for the participation of midwives to disseminate preventative health information. Although contraceptive use may need to be normalized, men must re-evaluate their role in sex and, as beneficiaries of a global power-structure in which women are objectified and violated by male sexual ego, transform their perceptions of the sexual rights of women. As such, co-educational programs are critical for men and women to unlearn the fallacies surrounding women's health and family planning. In order to target the complicity of men, educational programs must tap into radical social revolution, forcing them to reconsider the harms they have unintentionally or intentionally caused to women's hygiene, sexual health, and wellness.

A severely under-supported foundation for adequate maternal care calls for more international and domestic investment and greater emphasis on sexual education. At the same time, informal and formal patriarchal structures need to be demolished to neutralize the threats women face in every aspect of their existence, including their right to healthcare. In order to attain equality for every Afghan citizen, it is imperative that Afghan women are centered at every conversation to defuse a system riddled with male ego.

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Lavrov says Russia ready to aid inter-Syrian dialogue during talks with opposition

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has discussed Syrian regulation with members of the Syrian opposition, reaffirming Russia's readiness to aid inter-Syrian dialogue, the Russian Foreign Ministry informed on Monday. The ministry stated that Lavrov had discussed the issues of Syrian regulation, namely, the reaching of inter-Syrian agreements based on Resolution 2254 of the UN Security Council, with co-chair of the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Council Ilham Ahmed and leader of the Popular Front for Change and Liberation Qadri Jamil. "Sergey Lavrov has reaffirmed Russia's readiness to continue aiding

the promotion of inclusive constructive inter-Syrian dialogue in the interest of the soonest recovery and reinforcement of Syria's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, the formation of conditions for harmonious co-existence and development of all ethnic and religious parts of the Syrian society," the message says.

Members of the Syrian opposition have informed the Russian top diplomat about the memorandum of understanding between the Syrian Democratic Council and the People's Will party signed on the outcomes of the talks in Moscow.



A look at the world

EU welcomes Qatar law reforms serving migrant workers

The European Union welcomed Qatar's labor reforms on the employment of foreign workers.

"Once these reforms enter into force, Qatar will become the first country in the Gulf region to dismantle the kefala ("sponsorship") system governing the employment of migrant workers, which gives employers excessive control over them," Peter Stano, the bloc's lead spokesperson on foreign affairs wrote in a statement on Tuesday.

The UN's International Labour Organization announced Sunday that Qatar had "effectively dismantled" the long-criticized employment scheme which obliged



migrant workers to ask for their employer's permission to change jobs.

Together with these reforms, Qatar also introduced a non-discriminatory minimum wage, granting equal pay for non-citizens, as well as allowances for food and housing in case it is not provided by the employer. The law on the minimum wage will enter into force six months after the publication in the country's official gazette.

"The EU strongly supports these labor legislation reform efforts," the statement added.

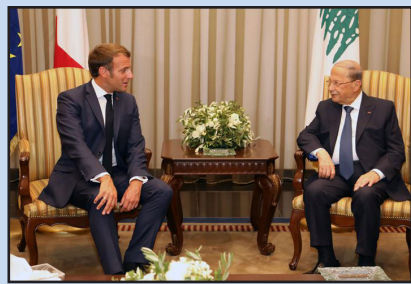
However, The European Union's unemployment rate rose to 7.2% in July, up by 0.5 percentage points year-on-year, the bloc's statistical office reported on Tuesday. The figure was also higher than 7.1% in the previous month, Eurostat said in a press release.

The eurozone unemployment rate was 7.9%, up from 7.7% in June 2020 and 7.5% in July 2019.

The eurozone/euro area or EA19 represents member states that use the single currency -- euro -- while the EU27 includes all member countries of the bloc.

It said 15.18 million men and women in the EU28, including 12.8 million in the euro area, were unemployed as of July.

Macron warns Lebanese leaders of sanctions if reforms are not swift



French President Emmanuel Macron met his Lebanese counterpart Michel Aoun at Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport on Monday upon his arrival for a three-day official visit. In a press statement, Macron pointed out that he returned to Beirut to verify developments regarding the humanitarian aid that followed the deadly explosion at Beirut port on Aug. 4. "The second reason for my visit is the centenary of Greater Lebanon and conducting an assessment of the general situation, and I saw that the process has begun with the appointment of a prime minister," he said.

Macron will hold talks with senior government officials in light of the country's political transition.

"I want to ensure that the government that is formed will save Lebanon and launch anti-corruption reforms, energy reform and reconstruction," he said.

On Aug. 9, Paris hosted a donors' conference via video link to solicit emergency international humanitarian aid for Lebanon after the blast, during which Macron pledged to deliver aid directly to the Lebanese people. Aoun on Monday invited Mustapha Adib, a diplomat, to form the new government.

Adib secured 90 votes out of 120 in parliamentary consultations to claim the post. The voting was held at the presidential palace in Baabda, Beirut.

On Sept. 1, Lebanon celebrates the centenary of the founding of Greater Lebanon, which was declared in 1920 after border demarcation among the countries that were under Ottoman rule, including Syria and the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate.

French President Emmanuel Macron has warned Lebanese politicians they risk sanctions if they fail to set the nation on a new course within three months, stepping up pressure for reforms in a country collapsing under the weight of an economic crisis. Macron will also meet with former prime minister Saad Hariri and iconic Lebanese singer Fairouz.

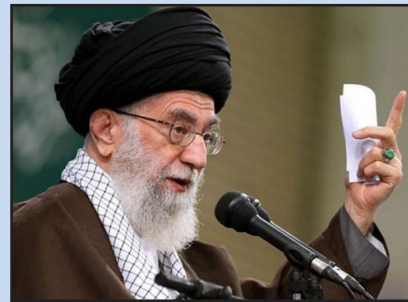
Macron visited Lebanon on Aug. 6, two days after the Beirut port blast.

Iran's Khamenei says UAE 'betrayed' Muslim world with Israel deal

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said that UAE has betrayed the Muslim World by establishing ties with the Zionist regime.

The UAE betrayed the Muslim World, Arab nations, regional countries, and Palestine, said the Leader, adding that of course this betrayal will not be perpetual but this shameful act will be remembered in their history. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks in a video conference meeting with the 34th National Conference of Senior Education Ministry Heads.

They created a foothold for Zionists in the region and forgot the issue of Palestine,



which is an issue of occupation, and normalized ties with the Israeli regime, he added.

While the Palestinian nation is under mounting pressure from different sides, UAE is cooperating with Israelis and evil US officials who act against Islam, Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"We hope that Emiratis would soon wake up and compensate for their action."

Elsewhere, pointing to the West insistence on infiltrating in the education system of other countries and imposing the Western lifestyle through documents such as 2030, the Leader noted, "Today, the social philosophy of the West has failed and its corrupt examples can be clearly seen from Hollywood to Pentagon."

"The enemy seeks to do what it cannot perform through military action. Through infiltration and methods such as the 2030 document, they seek to grow humans that would think like the Westerners, implement their plans, and prepare the ground for looting the nations."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei appreciated the Iranian nation for observing health protocols in the first 10 days of Muharram, noting that these measures have marked this year as a phenomenon in the history of the country.



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