

NEWS IN BRIEF

US renews
waiver for
Iraq to buy
Iranian
electricity

The United States has granted Iraq another four-month sanctions waiver to purchase Iranian electricity, a State Department spokesperson said.

The United States has issued regular waivers since 2018 so that Iraq can meet its short-term energy needs without running afoul of US sanctions, Al-Monitor reported.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein discussed his country's reliance on US waivers for Iranian energy imports in meetings with Treasury Department officials in Washington last week.

The 120-day waiver, which was renewed on July 11, comes as Iraqis suffer from power outages that are especially common in the sweltering summer months when temperatures exceed 50 degrees Celsius (120 Fahrenheit) and the demand for air conditioning puts additional strain on the country's dilapidated electricity grid.

Last weekend, protests over the power shortages erupted in the central Iraqi cities of Diwaniyah and Najaf.

Vietnamese
leader Nguyen
Phu Trong
dies at 80

The general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party Nguyen Phu Trong, considered the country's top leader, died on Friday aged 80, his party said.

In a statement, it said Trong - who had led the party since 2011 - passed away on Friday "due to old age and serious illness" at a military hospital in Hanoi, AFP wrote.

The announcement came a day after the party announced Trong would hand the reins of power to the country's president and former public security minister To Lam.

The party said Trong would be focusing on treatment for an undisclosed medical condition, the first time it had referenced longstanding speculation about the ageing leader's health.

Trong is the first party general secretary to die in office since the death in 1986 of Le Duan, a brother-in-arms of Ho Chi Minh. He is also the first leader to have held three consecutive mandates at the head of the party, after the liberalisation of the economy in 1986.

AEOI chief: Iran acts according to safeguards, NPT

Iran's position in dealing with the International Atomic Energy Agency is according to safeguards and NPT, spokesperson of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of Iran's Parliament quoted President of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Mohammad Eslami as saying. Regarding the "Strategic Action Plan to Lift Sanctions and Protect Iranian Nation's Interests", which was approved in the 11th parliament, he said that this law helped the Atomic Energy Organization to move more strongly, Ebrahim Rezaei told IRNA on Friday. Bushehr nuclear power plant is among top in the power plant association and has saved 104 million barrels of oil, he noted. Referring to the report of the head of the Atomic Energy Organization about the development of radiation systems, he said that these systems are used in the fields of agriculture, food, medicine and radiopharmaceutical industries, and they have had a successful effect so far.



Yemen Drone Strike 'Unprecedented' Success



International Desk

A drone launched by Yemen's Houthis struck Tel Aviv on Friday, causing one death and at least 10 injuries in the first deadly attack on Israel by the resistance group, whose spokesperson deemed it "a successful operation". The aerial strike rumbled through the center of the city near the US Embassy, causing shrapnel to rain down and spreading shards of glass over a large radius. The US State Department said there was no damage to the embassy or any of its staff members. Claiming responsibility for the attack in a statement on X platform, Houthi spokesperson Yahya Sare'e said they "have a bank of targets" in Israel, including "sensitive military and security targets". They "will continue... to strike those targets in response to the enemy's massacres and daily crimes against our people in the Gaza Strip," he said. The spokesman called Tel Aviv a primary target "within the range of our weapons". Sare'e said the strike was carried out using a new drone called "Yafa", which he said was capable of bypassing interception systems and undetectable by radars. "The operation has achieved its goals successfully," he said.

Confirming that the drone is from Yemen, the Israeli military said it was investigating what went wrong. Chief spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said the drone was detected by air defenses, but an "error" occurred and "there was no interception."

"We are investigating the entire chain," he said. Another military official blamed "human error." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing. Israel's air defense system has intercepted thousands of projectiles throughout the war, including Hamas rocket fire from Gaza. But officials warn they are not 100% effective, and the systems appear to have struggled against small and hard-to-detect attack drones. Israel's Defence Minister Yoav Gallant met military commanders to review air defences and said Israel had to be ready for all scenarios. "We must be prepared for defensive and offensive actions," he said, according to a statement from his office.

Strike attracts praise

The Houthis' unprecedented strike received praise from resistance groups in the region, with top Houthi official Mohamed Ali al-Houthi stating that the "first operation" to

strike Tel Aviv represented a "qualitative shift" in the group's anti-Israel campaign.

The leader of the resistance movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, expressed that it is "a great honor and blessing to be confronting America directly."

Hezam al-Asad, a member of the movement's politburo, called the strike "unprecedented".

In an interview with Al Mayadeen, he said the attack marked a "new phase" of operations against Israel which would increase in the coming period.

Mohsen Rezaei, a former Iranian military commander expressed his greetings to the Houthis on his account on X platform, stating: "The Yafa's landing in Tel Aviv marks the beginning of the story".

'Stop genocide in Gaza'

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, another Houthi politburo member, said attacks would only stop if a Gaza ceasefire was reached. "Our demand is fair: stop the genocide in Gaza, lift the siege on its residents, and we will stop our military operations," he said on X, sharing footage of the aftermath of the drone strike. The regime's bloody nine-month onslaught on Gaza has so far killed 38,848 Palestinians, mostly women and children, leaving 89,459 others injured. The Houthis have previously claimed attacks targeting the southern Israeli resort of Eilat and port cities of Ashdod and Haifa, but Friday's strike is the first operation claimed by the group against Tel Aviv.

AP, AFP, and Reuters contributed to the story.

Software bug causes worldwide IT chaos

'Robust Iranian systems not affected'

Airlines, banks, TV channels and other business across the globe were scrambling Friday to deal with one of the biggest IT crashes in recent years, caused by an update to an antivirus program. Aviation officials in the United States briefly grounded all planes, while airlines elsewhere cancelled or delayed flights, as systems running Microsoft Windows crashed, AFP reported.

Microsoft said the issue began at 1900 GMT on Thursday, affecting users of its Azure cloud platform running cybersecurity software CrowdStrike Falcon.

"We recommend customers that are able to, to restore from a backup from before this time," the US software giant said in a technical update on its website. CrowdStrike CEO George Kurtz said in a post on several social media platforms that a fix had been rolled out for the problem, describing it as a "defect found in a single content update for Windows hosts". Experts suggested applying the fix would not be straightforward. And the global nature of the failure prompted some commentators to question the reliance on a single provider for such a variety of services.

Shares in CrowdStrike slumped by 20 percent in pre-market trading. From Amsterdam to Zurich, Singapore to Hong Kong, airport operators flagged technical issues that were disrupting their services. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said in a notice to airlines early on Friday that all flights



"regardless of destination" were to be grounded.

Turkish Airlines said it had cancelled 84 flights and other airlines reported booking systems had crashed.

Reports from both the Netherlands and Britain suggested health services may have been affected by the disruption, meaning the impact could eventually be even wider. Media companies were also struggling, with Britain's Sky News saying the glitch had ended its morning news broadcasts and Australia's ABC similarly reporting a major "outage". Banks in Kenya and Ukraine reported difficulties with some digital services, supermarkets in Australia had issues with payments, mobile phone carriers were disrupted and customer services in a number of companies went down.

Robust Iranian system

Iran's Supreme Council of Cyberspace (SCC) said in a statement on Friday that the country does not use Microsoft services due to sanctions as domesticized systems have been replaced from a long time ago, and so far, we have not had any reports of service outages. The SCC was monitoring



Passengers wait to board a flight to Sicily at Gatwick Airport in London on July 19, 2024.

● BBC

from the early hours of the global outage in Microsoft services to have a detailed assessment of disruptions to manage the situation, but no halt in providing services to people has been reported so far.

"Iran was banned from receiving these services years ago due to Western sanctions, and with the initiatives of Iranian elites, local alternative services have been designed which are now operational," read the statement. Iran's capabilities in the field of providing domestic cloud services enables the country to export such services, as the ground is paved to transfer experience or export products in this field.

Meanwhile, Saeid Chalandari, the CEO of the Imam Khomeini Airport City said that the flights of the airport were carried out on Friday without any problem. In order to reduce dependences, the IKAC has been using domestically-developed software to check-in passengers, the official noted.