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USD	01	GBP	01	INR	1000	PKR	1000	EUR	01	IRR	1000	AED	01
AFN	79.60	AFN	108.95	AFN	1094	AFN	498	AFN	93.84	AFN	0.37	AFN	21.22

Tunisia's president has sacked the prime minister and suspended parliament, after violent mass protests nationwide on Sunday.

Anger over the government's handling of a massive recent spike in Covid cases has added to general unrest over the nation's economic and social turmoil.

President Kais Saied, who was elected in 2019, announced he was taking over.

His supporters erupted in celebration, but opponents in parliament immediately accused him of staging a coup.

Mr Saied, an independent, has had a long-standing feud with the man he has removed, PM Hichem Mechichi. Mr Mechichi has the backing of the largest party in parliament, Ennahda.

Tunisia's revolution in 2011 is often held up as the sole success of the Arab Spring revolts across the region, but it has not led to stability economically or politically.

The recent coronavirus surge has fuelled long-standing public frustration. The health minister was sacked last week after a bungled vaccination campaign.

Statesman or dictator?

On Sunday thousands of people across Tunisia demonstrated against the PM and Ennahda, the moderate Islamist ruling party.

Security forces in the capital, Tunis, blocked off parliament and streets around the central Avenue Bourguiba. Protesters stormed Ennahda offices, smashing computers and setting fire to its local headquarters in the south-western city of Touzeur.

One protester in Tunis, Lamia Meftahi, told Reuters news agency that this was "the happiest moment since the revolution".

Another in the town of Gafsa told Agence France-Presse the president had "shown himself to be a true statesman", but a second resident there said: "These fools are celebrating the birth of a new dictator."

The unrest continued into the early hours of Monday, as the speaker of parliament, Rached Ghannouchi, who leads Ennahda, tried to get into the legislature in Tunis.

He was blocked by those who supported Mr Saied's move, and responded with a sit-down protest with his own loyalists. The two sides threw stones at each other.

Later on Monday, Al Jazeera TV, which has been viewed as sympathetic to Ennahda, said security forces had raided its offices in Tunis, unplugging all equipment and telling staff to leave.

On Sunday, in a televised address, Mr Saied said: "We have taken these decisions... until social peace returns to Tunisia and until we save the state."

He later joined the celebrating crowds in Tunis.

President Saied also vowed to respond to further violence with military force.

"I warn any who think of resorting to weapons… and whoever shoots a bullet, the armed forces will respond with bullets," he said.

To many, it feels like fresh hope after a year of chaotic governance - to others a move that is constitutionally questionable, with potentially destabilising ramifications and far-reaching consequences.

The events are largely linked to an acute power struggle between the presidency, the PM and the speaker of parliament.

Was this a power grab by the president or a temporary move to get the country back on track? And will his political opponents mobilise their own support on the streets? If so, to what end?

Key to how all this plays out will be how quickly a new prime minister is appointed - and a new plan communicated on moving forward.

In Tunisia, both the president and parliament are elected by popular vote.

Under the constitution, the president oversees only the military and foreign affairs, but Mr Saied has long been in conflict with Mr Mechichi.

Mr Saied has said he will now govern alongside a new PM, with the parliament suspended for 30 days.

media captionYoung Tunisians have been protesting as they strive to live in and shape the post-revolution dream.

The president cited Article 80 of the constitution for his actions, saying it allowed him to suspend parliament if it was in "imminent danger".

But the opposition disputes this, and Tunisia's legal and political framework is unclear. The 2014 constitution calls for a special court to be set up to decide disagreements like this, but it has not been established.

As the largest party in parliament, Ennahda has the right to nominate the PM. It denounced the president's move.

Speaker Ghannouchi accused Mr Saied of mounting "a coup against the revolution and constitution" and called on the Tunisian people to defend them both.

Two other parties, Heart of Tunisia and Karama, echoed the coup accusations.

Ennahda denounced attacks on its offices, blaming "criminal gangs" who were trying to "seed chaos and destruction".

Covid flare-up

Coronavirus-related deaths reached a record for the country last week, passing 300 in one 24-hour period. Tunisia has one of the highest per capita death rates in the world.

Vaccinations have been slow: only 7% of the 11.7 million population are fully vaccinated.

The government attempted to speed up vaccination by opening it to all over-18s during the Eid al-Adha holiday. However, the effort descended into chaos, with stampedes, shortages of supplies, and incidents of violence.

The PM sacked the health minister - an ally of the president - prompting Mr Saied to instruct the military to take over management of the coronavirus crisis.

But Covid is only one factor in the unrest. Tunisia has had nine governments since the 2011 revolution, many of them short-lived or fractured.

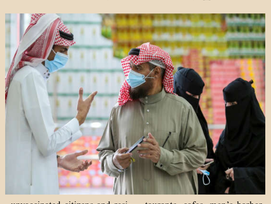
Deep-rooted problems of unemployment and crumbling state infrastructure that were behind the uprising have never been resolved.

Tunisia now has budget deficits and debt repayment issues that could require a new loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

But that could hurt Tunisians with the loss of state jobs and reduced subsidies on goods.

bbc

Saudi Arabia bans unvaccinated people from govt facilities, events, public transport



Saudi Arabia will be banning unvaccinated people from entering government facilities, attending events, and using public transport starting from August 1 as a coronavirus countermeasure, the Kingdom's Ministry of Interior announced on Sunday.

Anyone who has not been vaccinated against the coronavirus will be prohibited from entering governmental and private facilities, whether they are employed there or are only visiting to complete a service.

All economic, commercial, cultural, recreational, and sports activities will be limited to citizens and residents who received any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines, according to the interior ministry. Currently, the Kingdom has approved the Moderna, Pfizer-BioNtech, and the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

Governmental and private educational facilities must also ban entry for anyone who has not received the vaccine despite being eligible to receive the dose, the ministry added.

Last week, Saudi Arabia announced it would be banning all unvaccinated citizens and residents from entering public establishments, such as malls and restaurants, starting from August 1.

Anyone who has not been inoculated against the coronavirus will not be allowed to enter malls, shopping centers, retail stores, and markets, according to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Citizens and residents will also need to show proof of vaccine to be allowed entry into restaurants, cafes, men's barbershops, beauty salons, wedding and party halls.

All citizens will be required to have received two doses of a coronavirus vaccine before traveling outside the Kingdom, starting from August 9.

The entry ban for unvaccinated people is in line with the Kingdom's efforts to ensure that all those living in the country receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

The interior ministry urged the public to continue to adhere to precautionary measures even if they have been vaccinated.

As of Saturday, more than 24 million doses of a coronavirus vaccine have been administered across Saudi Arabia, according to the Ministry of Health.

Over 587 inoculation centers have been set up across the country to ensure all citizens and residents have access to a facility nearby, the ministry said.

People can also receive a vaccine for free at multiple pharmacies around Saudi Arabia.

More than 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to people between the ages of 12 and 18 so far, the ministry added.

According to the health ministry, Saudi Arabia is ranked among the best countries in the world when it comes to vaccinations and coverage rates as more than half of the population in the Kingdom has been inoculated with at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine.

alarabiya

Flooded London hospitals ask patients to stay away

Two east London hospitals have asked patients to stay away after their emergency departments were hit by flooding on Sunday.

Whipps Cross is without power and evacuating 100 inpatients and Newham hospital is asking patients to use other A&Es for urgent care.

Ambulances are being redirected after torrential caused severe flooding in homes, roads and stations.

London Fire Brigade says it has taken more than 1,000 flooding-related calls.

It rescued people trapped in cars and is helping those with flooded basements and collapsed ceilings.

A spokesperson for Barts Health NHS Trust which runs both Newham and Whipps Cross hospitals, said: "Patients are asked to attend alternative hospitals where they can. A major incident has been called across the Trust."

Many of the capital's roads closed due to the flooding, including the Blackwall Tunnel, the A12 and parts of the North Circular.

Stepney Green station remains closed although eight other Tube and London Overground stations have reopened.

A yellow thunderstorm warning remains in place for parts of south-east England.

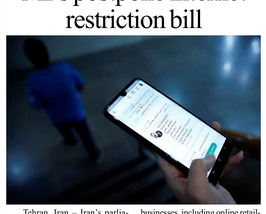
St James's Park in London saw 41.6mm (1.6in) of rain on Sunday, making it the wettest part of the country.

Residents on a street in Woodford, in east London, grabbed buckets, brooms and wooden boards to prevent rising rainwater from flooding their homes.

Restaurant manager Mariya Peeva said her neighbour's bedroom was flooded and that her son helped others to protect their homes from the flooding.

Ms Peeva, 46, told the PA news agency: "My son went to buy some food from the local shop - by the time he came back the whole street and the pavement were already flooded and the water was coming into our front door."

Under pressure, Iranian MPs postpone internet restriction bill



Tehran, Iran – Iran's parliament has suspended its review of a highly controversial bill that a minister, citizens and businesses say will only lead to more internet restrictions in the country.

The bill, first proposed three years ago, is titled "Protecting Users in Cyberspace and Organising Social Media" but critics say it is aimed at introducing more controls in a country where most prominent global services are already banned.

An online petition calling for the legislation to be scrapped has already garnered close to half a million signatures.

Minister of Information and Communications Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi denounced the bill in letters to parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and President-elect Ebrahim Raisi that surfaced on Sunday.

The outgoing minister said the bill will limit users' free access to information, weaken the government's role in cyberspace decision-making, and make the ministry practically obsolete.

Raisi, who will be sworn in as Iran's eighth president next month, has previously discussed his support for a "layered" internet access system based on a variety of criteria, including profession. The long-gestating legislation may still be given the go-ahead by the parliament with a number of lawmakers backing it.

However, for it to become law, it will still need to be approved by the Guardian Council, a hard-line constitutional vetting body.

In a joint statement on Monday, 47 of Iran's largest digital businesses, including online retailers, video on-demand streaming services and ISPs, expressed their concerns.

"We stress that this bill will certainly not benefit Iranian internet businesses and its designers must know that its damages to local businesses will far outweigh its benefits," they wrote.

The Tehran ICT Guild and the Iranian E-Commerce Association also condemned the bill in separate statements.

What's in the bill?

A controversial article of the bill – dealing with foreign service providers – could mean mass filtering of remaining services that have yet to be blocked.

It says local and foreign service providers must follow Iran's rules.

To do so, they must register in Iran and have a representative who could be held accountable if something Iranian regulators see as unfavourable takes place on their platforms.

Milad Monshipour, CEO and co-founder of Tap30, one of Iran's largest ride-hailing services, said in a tweet on Sunday the implications could be catastrophic.

"This bill can not only restrict people's access to global services like those of Google and Instagram, but it can also veer the digital industry towards destruction through creating new unclear permits and redundant regulations in addition to removing data ownership rights," he said.

In addition, the legislation wants to identify users and what services they employ, although it remains unclear why and how this is to be implemented.