

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- The number of injured people from a magnitude 5.9 earthquake on Friday has jumped to 520 from more than 300, media reports said Saturday. The updated figure followed the end of rescue operations in more than 80 remote villages Tark county in Iran's Eastern Azarbaijan province. It said 28 were hospitalized and the rest released with minor injuries, adding that the death toll has remained at five people.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) -- Syrian government troops on Saturday retook a village in the country's northeastern province of Hasakah from Turkish military forces and their allied militants following intense clashes. Syria's official news agency SANA reported that heavy skirmishes broke out on Saturday afternoon when the Turkish forces and their mercenaries launched an offensive against the village of Um Shuaifeh near the border with Turkey. The battles involved heavy and medium weapons and Syrian army soldiers finally managed to liberate the village and establish full control over it.

**Viewpoint**

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# Iran to Take Other Steps If Demands Unmet

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran said Saturday it is now enriching uranium to five percent, after a series of steps back from its commitments under the 2015 nuclear accord with major powers. The 2015 deal set a 3.67% limit for uranium enrichment but Iran announced it would no longer respect it after Washington unilaterally abandoned the agreement last year and reimposed crippling sanctions. "Based on our needs and what we have been ordered, we are currently producing five percent," Atomic Energy Organization of Iran spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said at a press conference here. He said Iran has the "capacity to produce five percent, twenty percent, sixty percent, or any percentage" of enriched uranium. The current five percent level exceeds the limit set by the accord but is less than the 20% Iran had previously operated. In its fourth step away from the agreement, Iran resumed enrichment at the Fordow plant south of Tehran on Thursday, with engineers feeding uranium hexafluoride gas (UF6) into the plant's mothballed enrichment centrifuges. Iran was already enriching uranium at another plant in Natanz. Tehran emphasizes the measures it has taken are swiftly reversible if the remaining parties to the deal — Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia — find a way to get around U.S. sanctions. On July 1, Iran said it had increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to beyond a 300-kilogram (661 lb) maximum set by the deal, and a week later, it announced it

had exceeded the enrichment cap. The third move had it firing up advanced centrifuges on September 7 to enrich uranium faster and to higher levels. Kamalvandi also said Saturday Iran is prepared, if necessary, to release footage of an incident with a UN nuclear inspector last week that led to it canceling her accreditation. Kamalvandi said that a check at the entrance gate to the Natanz uranium enrichment plant "triggered the alarm multiple times, showing the inspector was either contaminated with certain materials or had them on her." Kamalvandi said that Iran's report on the incident to the International Atomic Energy Agency had convinced everyone but "the U.S., the Zionist regime and some Persian Gulf countries." "We've announced that, if needed, we will even present the footage of this," he told the news conference, noting that Iran's "bitter experiences" of nuclear sabotage had led to the strict system of checks. The spokesman confirmed that the Fordow facility is now enriching uranium at almost the same levels before the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The rate will increase "gradually" as part of the country's new step away from the 2015 nuclear deal in response to violations by the United States, he said. Kamalvandi said the enrichment capacity after Iran started injecting gas into 1,044 centrifuges in Fordow has risen to some 9,500 separative work units (SWUs), which is 87 percent to 90 percent of the pre-JCPOA levels.

## Army Unveils 'Kian 700' Tank Transporter



The new homemade Kian 700 transporter is unveiled in a ceremony in Tehran, Nov. 9, 2019.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran on Saturday unveiled a new homemade tank transporter named "Kian 700" in a ceremony attended by Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Muhammad Hussein Baqeri. The vehicle enjoys an 800 horse-power engine which can pull up to 200 tonnes, effectively allowing it to carry two 60-tonne tanks on its "Suleiman-3" semi-trailer. "Gradually, the enrichment capacity will increase at Fordow in the coming days," he said. "With the beginning of gas injection into

the centrifuges at Fordow, the enrichment capacity of 8,600 SWUs will go all the way up to 9,500 SWUs and we won't be far off

costs while avoiding dependency on foreign imports. Iran has taken great strides seeking to attain self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and systems in the face of decades-long sanctions and arms embargoes on the country. The country consequently produces a wide variety of advanced weapons systems and equipment based on its own technological capabilities.

Also speaking at the ceremony was chief commander of Iran's Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, who said it was Iran's indigenous Mersad air defense system which shot down an unidentified drone on Friday. The drone was violating Iran's airspace near the port city of Mahshahr in the southwestern province of Khuzestan on the Persian Gulf coast before being shot. Iranian officials have said investigations are ongoing regarding the drone, its mission and its originating country. Mousavi added that the drone, which had a low radar cross section making it difficult to detect, was flying at an extremely low altitude in order to avoid exposure. The Iranian Army commander said that incident demonstrated the capabilities of the Mersad system. Iran's Mersad system, developed by reverse-engineering and upgrading the American MIM-23 Hawk system, represents one of Iran's early attempts at developing indigenous air defense systems. The system can simultaneously engage two targets at a maximum range of 40 kilometers and an altitude of 18 kilometers.

## Houthi Leader's Warning to Saudi Arabia: End Aggression or Face Grave Consequences

SANAA (Dispatches) -- The leader of Yemen's Houthi movement on Saturday warned Saudi Arabia to end its military campaign against the impoverished country or face the grave consequences. "I call on the Saudi regime to stop the aggression and siege, otherwise the risks of continuing the aggression are great and the results will be severe for them," Abdul-Malik al-Houthi said in a speech broadcast live. He said Yemeni forces will continue to develop their military hardware and launch much harsher retaliatory attacks in case the Saudi aggression continues. "Those who are seeking war and blockade and hoping to bring us to our knees are doing a useless job, and nothing but damage and harm awaits them," Houthi said. "The aggressive Saudis must end blockade of Yemen. We understand the level of suffering that Yemeni people are enduring as a result of the blockade," he said as he called on the

Yemeni nation to stay resilient. Houthi then pointed to the ongoing mass protest movements in Lebanon and Iraq, advising nations in the Middle East region to resolve their issues vigilantly. He asked the nations to exercise vigilance in the face of enemy ploys to gain a political and cultural foothold in their respective countries. Elsewhere in his remarks, Houthi stressed that the Yemeni people will not hesitate to deal a stinging blow to the occupying regime of Israel in case it commits the folly of attacking Yemen. "Our people will not hesitate to declare jihad (holy war) against the Israeli enemy, and to launch the most severe strikes against sensitive targets in the occupied territories if the enemy engages in any folly against our people," he said. "We reaffirm our anti-Israel position and that the regime is an occupying one. This is a principled humanitarian, moral and religious commitment."

Houthi finally pointed to the theft of Yemen's national resources by the Saudi-led coalition, saying more than 120 million barrels of crude oil have been looted in southern Yemeni areas occupied by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah. The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 100,000 lives over the past four and a half years. The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

## India Awards Babri Mosque Site to Hindus

NEW DELHI/AYODHYA, India (Reuters) -- India's Supreme Court on Saturday awarded a bitterly contested religious site to Hindus, dealing a defeat to Muslims who also claim the land that has sparked some of the country's bloodiest riots since independence. The ruling in the dispute between Hindu and Muslim groups paves the way for the construction of a Hindu temple on the site in the northern town of Ayodhya, a proposal long supported by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Hindu-nationalist party. Saturday's judgment, which is likely to be viewed as a win for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its backers, was criticized as unfair by a lawyer for the Muslim group involved in the case. However, the group's leader said ultimately it would accept the verdict and called for peace between India's majority Hindus and Muslims, who constitute 14% of its 1.3 billion people.

In 1992, a Hindu mob destroyed the 16th-century Babri Mosque on the site, triggering riots in which about 2,000 people, most of them Muslims, were killed across the country. Court battles over the ownership of the site followed. Jubilant Hindus, who have long campaigned for a temple to be built on the mosque's ruins, cheered and set off fire crackers in Ayodhya after the court decision was announced. Thousands of paramilitary force members and police were deployed in Ayodhya and other sensitive areas across India, but there were no immediate reports of unrest. "Today's Supreme Court decision has given the nation the message that even the most difficult of all problems falls within the ambit of the constitution and within the boundaries of the judicial system," Modi said in a televised address on Saturday evening, calling for "a new India" free of hatred.

He had earlier tweeted that the verdict should not be seen as "a win or loss for anybody." The ruling comes months after his government stripped the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir region of its special status as a state, delivering on an election promise to its largely Hindu support base. Neelanjan Sircar, an assistant professor at Ashoka University near New Delhi, said the verdict would benefit the BJP, which won re-election in May, but a slowing economy would ultimately take center stage for voters. "These things don't work forever ... Ram Temple isn't going to put food on the table," Sircar said. Hindus believe the site is the birthplace of Lord Ram, a physical incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, and say the site was holy for Hindus long before the Muslim Mughals, India's most prominent Islamic rulers, built the Babri mosque there in 1528. (Continued on Page 7)