

Russian President Vladimir Putin will self-isolate after coronavirus cases were detected in his inner circle, the Kremlin said in a statement on Tuesday, AFP reported.

Hezbollah's secretary-general said the third and fourth fuel-laden vessels are expected to head out of Iran towards Lebanon in the future, saying his group seeks for a part of Lebanon's fuel needs to be met using Iranian imports.

"Paperwork has been done for the dispatch of the third gasoline-laden ship from Iran. The fourth ship will bear diesel and will be sent over subsequently," Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said during a speech on Monday night, according to Press TV.

Referring to Lebanon's new government that was formed recently at the direction of President Michel Aoun following endless indecision, he said the government would decide on any fuel shipments that could follow that.

Nasrallah, however, asserted, "We want part of Lebanon's fuel to be provided from Iranian imports."

The movement announced a decision to start importing fuel from the Islamic Republic last month amid crippling economic conditions, caused partly by the United States' sanctions that have been targeting Lebanon over Hezbollah's legitimate involvement in the country's political and military sectors.

He said some used to speculate that the promise for shipment of fuel from Iran simply served propagandist media purposes. "It, however, became finally clear that such remarks are

## Nasrallah: Lebanon set to receive more fuel shipments from Iran



Hezbollah's Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah speaks through a screen in this screengrab taken from Al-Manar TV footage on September 13, 2021.

false," he said.

Those same people were hopeful for the Israeli regime to target the vessels, the Hezbollah chief said.

"[Their speculations] were prov-

en wrong. Israel is in a tight spot and the deterrence equation is there" to dissuade it from taking any such action.

By deterrence power, Nasrallah was referring to his move-

ment's vast arsenal of missiles, including precision ones, that the group has vowed not to hesitate to deploy to defend the country against the regime.

Meanwhile, Nasrallah said the

fact that the movement was distributing the fuel at a lower price that its purchase and imports have cost proved that it has not been cooperating with the fuel shipment "for commercial purposes".

"We're not after conducting business here," he noted.

The fuel deliveries were going to help Lebanon lower fuel prices countrywide, Nasrallah noted, saying the country was soon to announce moderate prices.

The Hezbollah chief expressed his and his movement's gratitude to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and other senior Iranian authorities for helping the shipments become a reality.

Separately, Nasrallah thanked Lebanese authorities for helping get the country a government after successive interim ruling patterns did not last out to resolve the country's woes.

The current administration's priority has to lie in preventing the country from disintegrating, enabling deployment of reforms, and fixing the problems that have come in the way of the people's livelihood.

## Afghanistan under neo-Taliban rule

Here are the latest developments in Afghanistan following the second takeover of the country by the Taliban militant group on August 15:

'Credible evidence' of Taliban reprisal killings: UN human rights chief

The UN human rights chief says her office has received credible allegations of reprisal killings by the Taliban of former Afghan security forces, as well as instances in which officials in the previous government and their relatives were arbitrarily detained and later turned up dead.

Michelle Bachelet, speaking to the Human Rights Council, warned of a "new and perilous phase" for Afghanistan as she criticised the Taliban for a disconnect between their words and actions, the Irish Examiner reported.

She cited "multiple" allegations of Taliban house-to-house searches looking for officials from the previous government and "people who cooperated with U.S. security forces and companies".



SALVATORE DI NOLFI/AP  
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet

Afghanistan's Shia leaders demanding representation in gov't

Leaders of Afghanistan's Shia community have demanded that their representatives be included in the country's new government that has been formed by the Taliban to make the regime inclusive reflecting the pluralistic nature of Afghan society.

Shia representatives met Afghanistan's former President Hamid Karzai, who is a member of a coordinating council, for the peaceful transfer of power. It was Karzai's second meeting with the Shias in recent days, The Economic Times reported on Tuesday.



KARIM JAAFAR/AP

Taliban deny their Deputy PM Mullah Baradar is dead

The Taliban denied that one of their top leaders has been killed in a shootout with rivals, following rumours about internal splits in the movement nearly a month after its lightning victory over the Western-backed government in Kabul.

Sulail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, said Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, former head of the Taliban political office who was named deputy prime minister last week, issued a voice message rejecting claims he had been killed or injured in a clash, Reuters reported.



AFP  
Taliban's Deputy PM Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar

Donors pledge \$1.1 billion for Afghanistan

Donors pledged more than a billion dollars to help Afghanistan, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday as poverty and hunger have spiralled in the country since the Taliban took power and foreign aid has dried up, raising the spectre of a mass exodus, Reuters reported.

Guterres said it was impossible to say how much of the money had been promised in response to an emergency U.N. appeal for \$606 million to meet the most pressing needs of a country in crisis.

After decades of war and suffering, Afghans are facing "perhaps their most perilous hour," he said in his opening remarks to a donor conference in Geneva.



MAXIM SHEMETOV/AP  
UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

Taliban probing bank accounts linked to Afghan ex-officials

The Taliban are investigating the accounts of former high-ranking Afghan government members to check for ill-gotten gains, officials said Tuesday.

The investigation may lead to the freezing of assets and accounts of former civil servants, ministers and lawmakers, an official at Da Afghanistan Bank told AFP, asking not to be named.



AP

Thousands protest against Taliban in Kandahar over evictions

Thousands of Afghans protested against the Taliban in the southern city of Kandahar on Tuesday, according to a former government official and local television footage, after residents were asked to vacate a residential army colony, Reuters reported.

Protesters gathered in front of the governor's house in Kandahar after around 3,000 families were asked to leave the colony, according to the former government official who witnessed the crowds.

The affected area is predominantly occupied by the families of retired army generals and other members of the Afghan security forces.



AFP  
Local residents take part in a protest march against a reported announcement by the Taliban, asking them to evict their homes built on state-owned land in Kandahar on September 14, 2021.

## Nearly 1,400 Palestinians in Israeli prisons to hold hunger strike

About 1,400 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons are to go on a hunger strike in protest at their detention conditions since a jailbreak last week, the Palestinian Authority said on Tuesday.

Tensions have been running high since six inmates staged a dramatic escape from a high-security jail in northern Israel on September 6, via a tunnel dug under a sink. Four of them have since been recaptured, according to AFP.

Hundreds of their fellow inmates were transferred to other jails and personal items confiscated in searches carried out by guards, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club.

He said 1,380 prisoners — of more than 4,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails — will begin the hunger strike on Friday, to be joined by other inmates next week.

"The situation is very bad in the prisons; that's why they're going on a hunger strike," Qadri Abu Bakr, head of the Palestinian Authority's commission for prisoners, told AFP.

A Palestinian prisoners' advocacy group issued an ultimatum for Israel to quit repressive measures against inmates in the wake of an escape by the inmates from the Israeli prison.

Addressing a pro-prisoner sit-in outside the Red Cross headquarters in Gaza City on Monday, Ibrahim Mansour, a senior official from the Palestinian Captive Movement, said Palestinian people and factions would take massive steps if the Israeli violations persisted against the inmates.

Mansour gave the Israel Prison Service (IPS) until September 17 to revoke the punitive measures against those languishing behind bars in the Israeli jail, adding, "The prisoners would start an open-ended battle as of Friday if Israeli jailers did not respond to their demand."

## Norway vote winners start coalition talks with climate focus

Norway's centre-left opposition parties started coalition talks on Tuesday to try to form a majority government after winning a decisive parliamentary election victory, with climate change expected to be central in discussions.

Labour leader Jonas Gahr Støre must address voters' concerns over global warming and a widening wealth gap, while ensuring any transition away from oil production — and the jobs it creates — is gradual, Reuters reported.

Støre's goal is to convince both the rural-based Centre Party and the mostly urban Socialist Left to join him, which would give his cabinet 89 seats, four more than what is needed for a majority in the 169-seat assembly.

"I believe it's worth attempting to form a majority government," Støre told reporters after votes were counted late on Monday.

Norway's left-wing opposition won Monday's general election after a campaign dominated by questions about the future of the key oil industry in Western Europe's largest producer.

The left-wing unseated a centre-right coalition headed by Conservative Prime Minister Erna Solberg since 2013, according to AFP.

"We waited, we hoped, and we have worked so hard, and now we can finally say it: We did it!" Støre, in all likelihood the next prime minister, told cheering supporters after Solberg conceded defeat.

The five left-wing opposition parties were projected to win 100 of the 169 seats in parliament.

"Norway has sent a clear signal: the election shows that the Norwegian people want a fairer society," said the 61-year-old mil-



REUTERS  
Norwegian Labour Party leader Jonas Gahr Støre answers questions from reporters outside his home in Oslo, Norway, on September 14, 2021.

lionaire who campaigned against social inequalities.

The five countries in the Nordic region — a bastion of social democracy — will thus all be governed by left-wing governments soon.

"The Conservative government's work is finished for this time around," Solberg told supporters.

The Greens had said they would only support a left-wing government if it vowed an immediate end to oil exploration in Norway, an ultimatum Støre had rejected.

Støre has like the Conservatives, called for a gradual transition away from the oil economy.

The August "code red for humanity" report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) put the issue at the top of the agenda for the election campaign and forced the country to reflect on the oil that has made it immensely rich.

The report energised those who want to get rid of oil, both on the left and, to a lesser extent, the right.

The oil sector accounts for 14 percent of Norway's gross domestic product, as well as 40 percent of its exports and 160,000 direct jobs.



AFP

## China races to squash new COVID-19 cluster among schoolchildren

Southern Chinese cities closed schools and ordered testing for millions on Tuesday in a race to curb a new COVID-19 outbreak which has sparked concerns over infections among unvaccinated schoolchildren.

Putian, a city of 3.2 million in coastal Fujian Province, ordered testing of all residents on Tuesday after Delta variant cases linked to a returnee from Singapore ballooned into a province-wide outbreak of more than 100 people, AFP reported.

China has now been hit by multiple outbreaks of the highly contagious Delta variant after initially vanquishing the first wave of the coronavirus last year.

The Fujian cluster is the biggest rebound in weeks and comes after the country declared the COVID outbreak spurred by the Delta under control, in a test of China's "zero case" approach to the pandemic.

China reported 59 new domestically transmitted cases on Tuesday, up from 22 the day before, all in Fujian Province.

Authorities said the cluster's sus-

pected patient zero was a man who had recently returned from Singapore and developed symptoms after completing a 14-day quarantine and initially testing negative for the virus.

The man's 12-year-old son and a classmate were among the first patients detected in the cluster last week, shortly after the new school term began.

The variant then raced through classrooms, infecting more than 36 children including 8 kindergartners, city authorities said Tuesday, in the first major school-linked spread the country has seen since the start of the pandemic.

China has administered more than two billion doses of its coronavirus vaccines as of Sunday, according to the official Xinhua news agency, enough to fully vaccinate around 70 percent of its population.

But most young children remain unvaccinated, sparking fear that the latest Fujian outbreak could hit the most vulnerable people in the country disproportionately.