



Iraqis in the holy shrine city of Najaf launch rice paper hot air balloons in Saturday to show solidarity with the ongoing anti-government protests across the country. — AFP

## Turkish military plane evacuates injured Somalia bomb victims

**MOGADISHU:** A Turkish military plane yesterday evacuated 16 gravely wounded victims of a devastating bombing that killed 79 people and overwhelmed local health services, in the latest attack on a city dogged by insecurity. The aircraft also brought doctors to help treat the some 125 people injured in Saturday's blast, which happened when a vehicle packed with explosives detonated at a busy security checkpoint.

"The rescue mission continues since yesterday when the blast occurred and after long and diligent efforts, we have managed to evacuate 16 of the wounded people to Turkey for further medical treatment," Mogadishu mayor Omar Mohamed Mohamad told reporters at the airport. No group has claimed the bloody attack, however President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo has blamed Islamist group Al-Shabaab, which regularly carries out car bombings and other attacks on the capital, in their decade-long bid to topple the internationally-backed government.

Saturday's bombing was the deadliest since truck exploded in 2017 near a fuel tanker, creating a fireball that killed over 500 people. Farmaajo pinned the attack on the "terrorist organization Al-Shabaab" in a televised message and slammed it as an attempt to "intimidate and terrorize the Somali public and to massacre them at every opportunity available".

At least 16 of those killed were students from the capital's private Banadir University, who had been

travelling on a bus when the car bomb detonated at a busy intersection southwest of the Somali capital. The director of the private Aamin Ambulance service, Abdulkadir Abdurahman Haji, told AFP around 125 people were injured, a number which has overwhelmed health services in the capital.

Somali police chief Abdi Hassan Mohamed said Saturday that 79 had died, but the toll could increase. "There are still rescue operations going on to assist those who have been massacred by the terrorists while going about their business," Somalia's Information Minister Mohamed Abdi Heyr told journalists. "We have received this morning doctors and medicine sent by the Turkish government and we are working to separate people seriously wounded from others in order to send them outside the country and the rest will be treated by the doctors," he added.

The minister said about 24 doctors specializing in trauma had arrived from Turkey - a key ally of Somalia. Somalia's Security Minister Mohamed Abukar Islow who held a press conference alongside the mayor at the airport said some of the doctors from Turkey would stay to treat people in the country. "There are doctors from Turkey some of them went back with the plane but others will remain here preferably to treat people here; our Qatari brothers will also send another plane which will evacuate some more people who are seriously wounded as well," he said.

"cutting", denoting a blow to the neck and head.

"The lathi is a legacy of the British colonial rule," said Syed Ali Kazim, an assistant professor of history at Aligarh Muslim University. "There is clear historical evidence that (freedom fighter) Lala Lajpat Rai died because of the lathi blows on his head during a protest against the British," he told AFP. The British left in 1947 but the lathi stayed in use, and not only for the security forces.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the militaristic parent organization of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, uses lathis in its early morning drills. Last week, long-lines of white-shirted RSS members marched through the streets of Hyderabad beating drums, riding horses - and holding aloft their long sticks. "Lathis are not regular sticks. The cane is soaked, dried and then oil is applied to it - it goes through a treatment process to make it a deadly weapon," said Suresh from PUCL. "They also put iron or steel at the tip which tears the flesh. It can maim and kill." — AFP

uct (GDP) in 16 years.

The protesters also want justice for those activists who have been murdered, many shot dead in the streets or outside their homes. Dozens have also reported being abducted to a rural area near Baghdad for several hours or days before being abandoned by the roadside. The United Nations has accused "militias" of waging a sweeping campaign of threats, kidnappings and murders of demonstrators. The state-run Human Rights Commission says it has still not heard from 56 missing activists. — AFP

no knowledge he was a member of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz. MP Abdullah Fahhad, who attended the meeting, also confirmed that Kaabi was received as a researcher and nothing else.

Jarallah told Iran's ambassador that the meeting took place without permission from relevant Kuwaiti authorities, KUNA reported, adding that competent officials have "begun taking necessary legal measures" over the "disappointing" affair, which was undertaken in a "private" capacity. Iran and Kuwait have had relatively good relations in recent years despite tensions between the Islamic republic and other Gulf Arab states. Kuwait greatly reduced its diplomatic presence in Tehran in 2016 after Saudi Arabia completely severed relations with Iran, but it kept a charge d'affaires and two officials.

Dozens of ambulances carried wounded people from various hospitals in the city to the Turkish-run Recep Tayyip Erdogan Hospital from where they were taken to the airport. Abdulkadir Moalim, a Mogadishu resident, said his family was feeling desperate because his cousin had sustained serious head wounds in the blast. "The problem with the blast is that even if you escape death, you can sustain life-threatening injuries like my cousin, who has injuries in the head and medical doctors here could

not treat him inside the country," he said. "Thank God, he will be taken to Turkey now and we are expecting that with time he gets well."

Two Turkish citizens were killed in the blast and according to medical sources, another two who were wounded will be among those airlifted home. Since 2015, there have been 13 attacks in Somalia with death tolls above 20. Eleven of these have been in Mogadishu, according to a tally of AFP figures. All of them involved car bombs. —AFP

## Kuwait ends successful...

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Kuwait contributed to work on issues pertaining to Arab countries, as tasks requiring permanent coordination at different levels with Arab missions in New York, he added. Regarding the opinion of Arabs on the performance of Kuwait in the council, he said: "I think there is satisfaction and praise for the role of Kuwait and its continuous coordination and work in a transparent manner with all members of Arab countries."

Otaibi noted this was a very useful experience in the history of Kuwaiti diplomacy, because Kuwait is a small country that does not have a hidden agenda in any of the topics of the Security Council and "the issues that concern us are primarily those of Arab countries". He pointed out that the foundations and principles of Kuwaiti foreign policy are the same as stipulated in the UN Charter and are based on non-interference in internal affairs of countries, resolving disputes by peaceful means and respecting the sovereignty of states.

He added that Kuwait succeeded with Sweden in adopting the first two resolutions in 2018 calling for a ceasefire in all regions of Syria and allowing unimpeded access of humanitarian aid and demanding respect for the obligations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and not targeting civilians or civil facilities and infrastructure.

"In December 2018, we managed with Sweden to issue a decision to renew the mechanism for the entry of humanitarian aid through crossing points specified by the decision with Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, a mechanism that contributed to saving the lives of millions of Syrians who depend on this aid that comes through the border crossings," Otaibi said.

On the Palestinian issue, Otaibi stressed that it is the first Arab case, and there are stable Arab positions, starting from the issue and at different levels such as the Arab League Ministerial Council or at the level of the summit and Kuwait. He affirmed that there is complete coordination with the Palestinians, and the draft resolution to secure international protection for the Palestinian people was in coordination with the Palestinian delegation that put forward the idea of protecting Palestinians from the Israeli occupation forces.

Regarding the Yemeni crisis, Otaibi said: "The history of Kuwait's mediation and its attempt to resolve the Yemeni differences is very old. There were previous mediations and our relations with Yemen are historical. When the current crisis erupted with the Houthi coup

against the legitimate government, Kuwait had principled positions and joined the coalition to restore legitimacy and mediation efforts before we entered the council in 2016."

He noted that during the recent Stockholm negotiations, Kuwait facilitated the process of transferring Houthi negotiators from Sanaa to Stockholm and through membership in the council, Kuwait supported the UN efforts, implemented relevant Security Council resolutions, and always confirms in all its statements that a military solution in Yemen must be resolved peacefully by negotiations.

On the relationship of the Security Council with the League of Arab States, Otaibi said: "We have been keen to improve this relationship according to agreements to be signed between the two organizations in the field of maintaining international peace and security." Regarding Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons in Iraq, he affirmed Iraq has not fulfilled all its obligations, adding that the Iraqi authorities are fully cooperating with the UN organizations in resolving this case.

On the Rohingya minority issue, Otaibi said Kuwait succeeded in organizing a visit to Bangladesh and Myanmar with the aim of highlighting the plight of Rohingya refugees living in miserable conditions. During the visit, Kuwait tried - in coordination with Britain and Peru - to push for an organized plan to return the Rohingya to their Rakhine home state.

"I had meetings with His Highness the Amir during my visit to Kuwait," said Otaibi, adding, "He always praises the performance of the delegation". "During these short meetings, there were directives that we cherish and take seriously and we implement from the standpoint of our national issues or our Arab issues sometimes and there were direct directions as these things facilitated our work," indicated Otaibi.

Meanwhile, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany at the UN headquarters in New York Jurgen Schulz affirmed that he and his colleagues were pleased with Kuwait's performance during its tenure at the UNSC, saying that along with the Belgian delegation, Kuwait and Germany managed to coordinate on issues connected with the Syrian humanitarian crisis. Working with peers from Kuwait, Germany and other members had benefited from the Gulf nation's experience in handling the Syrian humanitarian file, he added.

Middle East Affairs official at the Belgium Mission to the UN, Second Secretary Florinda Baleci, told KUNA that working with Kuwait within the frame of the Syrian humanitarian file was excellent. The Kuwaiti delegation demonstrated merit, efficiency and high professionalism that contributed to achieving what was presented in this file on alleviating the human suffering of the Syrian people, she affirmed. — KUNA

this represents a direct accusation against the Kuwaiti people too.

Another opposition MP Mohammad Al-Barrak had vowed to grill the prime minister for including Aseeri in the Cabinet, but two days ago he said he had decided to delay any action against the premier to give him sufficient time to approve a general amnesty. Damkhi also said the minister violated her oath by falsely accusing MPs of spreading lies and rumors, although what MPs spoke about was fully mentioned on the minister's Twitter account. MPs Abdullah Fahhad, Riyadh Al-Adasani and Mohammad Hayef declared their backing of the grilling.

## Lathi: Indian cops' colonial...

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a horrible weapon," Suresh told AFP. "Nothing legitimizes its brutal use."

Many believe the lathi originated as a martial arts accessory in South Asia. It was also used by feudal landlords against poor peasants, emerging as a symbol of unquestioned power and authority. In India, the weapon began to inspire fear and awe when the British used it unsparingly to disrupt protest marches that defined the non-violent independence movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. The British even came up with lathi guidelines that included commands such as "jabbing", which meant hitting people in the gut, and

## Iraq protesters lock down oil...

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Those demands include an end to a system that doles out state jobs according to ethnicity and religion, and a stop to the endemic corruption estimated to have swallowed up twice Iraq's gross domestic prod-

## Kuwait says it respects Iran's...

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But MP Saleh Ashour said on his Twitter account yesterday that National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem had received a dissident from Iran's Ahwaz region without knowing he was a member of an opposition group in Iran. Ashour added that he contacted the speaker, who confirmed to him that he received Hakim Al-Kaabi as a doctorate researcher who has done research on Kuwait's democracy and that he had

## Damkhi files to grill Aseeri...

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Damkhi said the minister should not escape accountability by deleting the tweets soon after she was selected as a minister in the Cabinet for the first time. The lawmaker was particularly infuriated over a statement by Aseeri in which she described criticism by MPs as rumors aimed at their electoral bases, adding