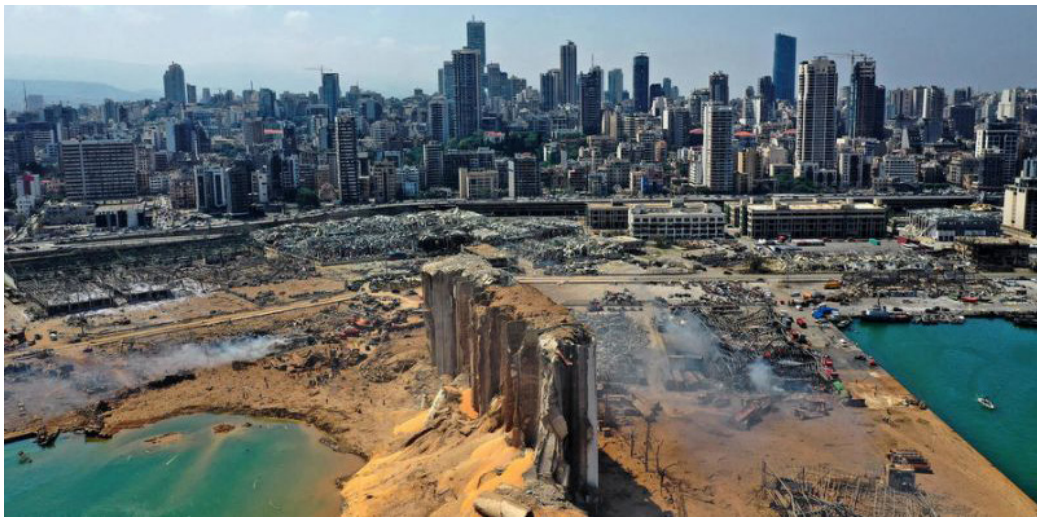


Beirut blast wiped out Lebanon's grain silos

Lebanon has less than a month's grain reserves after blast



The explosion was the most powerful to rip through Beirut, a city torn apart by civil war three decades ago.

● **Lebanon is trying to transfer 25,000 tonnes of flour to port in Tripoli**

France 24/Yahoo

Lebanon's main grain silo at Beirut port was destroyed in a blast, leaving the nation with less than a month's reserves of the grain but still with enough flour to avoid a crisis, the economy minister said yesterday.

Raoul Nehme told Reuters a day after Tuesday's devastating explosion that Lebanon needed reserves for at least three months to ensure food security and was looking at other storage areas.

The explosion was the most powerful to rip through Beirut, a city torn apart by civil war three decades ago. The economy was already in meltdown before the blast, slowing grain imports as the nation struggled to find hard currency for purchases.

"There is no bread or flour crisis," the minister said. "We have enough inventory and boats on their way to cover the needs of Lebanon on the long term."

He said grain reserves in Lebanon's remaining silos stood at "a bit less than a month" but

said the destroyed silos had only held 15,000 tonnes of the grain at the time, much less than capacity which one official put at 120,000 tonnes.

Beirut's port district was a mangled wreck, disabling the main entry point for imports to feed a nation of more than 6 million people.

Ahmed Tamer, the director of Tripoli port, Lebanon's second biggest facility, said his port did not have grain storage but cargoes could be taken to warehouses 2 km (about one mile) away.

"I want to reassure all Lebanese that we can receive the vessels," he said.

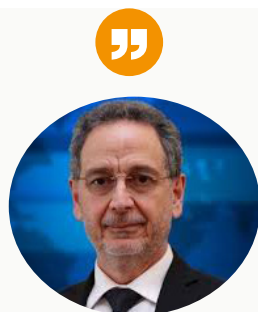
Alongside Tripoli, the ports of Saida, Selaata and Jiyeh were also equipped to handle grain, the economy minister said.

But former Deputy Prime Minister Ghassan Hasbani said other ports did not have the same capabilities.

Hani Bohsali, head of the importers' syndicate said: "We fear there will be a huge supply chain problem, unless there is an international consensus to save us."

Reserves of flour were sufficient to cover market needs for a month and a half and there were four ships carrying 28,000 tonnes of wheat heading to Lebanon, Ahmed Hattit, the head of the wheat importers union, told Al-Akhar newspaper.

15,000
tonnes of grains were destroyed in the blast



There is no bread or flour crisis. We have enough inventory and boats on their way to cover the needs of Lebanon on the long term

RAOUL NEHME
ECONOMY MINISTER

Lebanon is trying to transfer immediately four vessels carrying 25,000 tonnes of flour to the port in Tripoli, one official told LBCI news channel.

Chemical linked to Beirut blast caused past explosions in Texas, Toulouse

France 24/Yahoo news

Ammonium nitrate, which Lebanese authorities have said caused the devastating Beirut blast, is an odorless crystalline substance commonly used as a fertilizer that has been the cause of numerous industrial explosions over the decades.

These include notably at a Texas fertilizer plant in 2013 that killed 15 and was ruled deliberate, and another at a chemical plant in Toulouse, France in 2001 that killed 31 people but was accidental.

When combined with fuel oils, ammonium nitrate creates a potent explosive widely used in the construction industry, but also by insurgent groups such as the Taliban for improvised explosives.

However, under normal stor-



When combined with fuel oils, ammonium nitrate creates a potent explosive widely used in the construction industry

age conditions and without very high heat, it is difficult to ignite ammonium nitrate, Jimmie Oxley, a chemistry professor at the University of Rhode Island, said.

"If you look at the video (of the Beirut explosion), you saw the black smoke, you saw the red smoke -- that was an incom-

plete reaction," she said. "I am assuming that there was a small explosion that instigated the reaction of the ammonium nitrate -- whether that small explosion was an accident or something on purpose I haven't heard yet."

That's because ammonium nitrate is an oxidizer -- it intensifies combustion and allows other substances to ignite more readily, but is not itself very combustible.

For these reasons, there are generally very strict rules about where it can be stored: for example, it must be kept away from fuels and sources of heat.

In fact, many countries in the European Union require calcium carbonate to be added to ammonium nitrate to create calcium ammonium nitrate, which is safer.

Ayodhya temple construction begins



Modi

Agencies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday launched the construction of a temple in Ayodhya following a Supreme Court ruling last year allowing a separate "prominent" five-acre piece of land to build a mosque.

The apex court granted permission for a temple to be built on the site in Ayodhya saying their ruling was conditional on the "maintenance of peace and order and tranquility".

"The whole country is thrilled, the wait of centuries is ending," Modi said in a speech, after taking off a white mask that he wore as a novel coronavirus precaution during the ceremony held yesterday.

Many Muslims in Ayodhya welcomed the construction of the temple in the hope that it would end years of acrimony with Hindus and help bring economic growth.

Security was tight in Ayodhya, 687 km (427 miles) southeast of the capital, New Delhi, as the sound of prayers filled its streets as devotees and monks thronged its ancient temples in celebration.

Event organisers gathered soil from more than 2,000 holy places and water from more than 100 rivers for use in prayers at the launch of building work.

A Ram devotee from Tamil Nadu state donated two bricks, one of gold the other of silver.

News in brief

Belgian meat plant quarantines 225 staff

◆ One of Belgium's biggest meat processing plants has sent 225 staff home to quarantine Wednesday after a cluster of coronavirus cases was discovered, the firm and the local mayor said. Abattoirs

and meat-packing plants have become infection hotspots in other countries as the world deals with the epidemic and the big Westvlees facility in Staden, in northwest Belgium is now under close watch.

◆ Tropical storm Isaias left at least five people dead as it pounded the US eastern seaboard with driving winds and heavy rain, leaving millions without power, before moving across Canada yesterday. Isaias was downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone late Tuesday as it streaked across the border into south-eastern Canada after wreaking havoc across several US states.

At least five dead in US as downgraded Isaias reaches Canada



Trump rejects Obama's call to boost voting

◆ US President Donald Trump yesterday flatly rejected the need for direct action to address racism in the United States, dismissing

his predecessor's call for sweeping steps to boost civil and voting rights ahead of the Nov. 3 election. The Republican president, in an interview on Fox News, criticized President Barack Obama's speech last week, in which the Democrat urged Americans to protect democracy and outlined a list of needed reforms such as making election day a national holiday, expanding early voting and increasing polling sites. "There is an attack on our democratic freedoms and we should treat it as such," Obama said in a eulogy for the late U.S. Representative John Lewis, a Black civil rights icon.

Doctors say Turkish COVID-19 outbreak worse than reported

◆ Doctors in Turkey's coronavirus hotspots say hospitals are filling up with more cases than are reflected in the official nationwide count, which resurged above 1,000 this week. Intensive care units (ICUs) and emergency rooms in hospitals set aside for COVID-19 patients are at capacity in the capital Ankara and the southeastern city of Gaziantep, medics associations from those regions said this week.

◆ The alleged 1MDB mastermind and other suspects in the scandal



1MDB scandal fugitives hiding in China: Malaysian police

are believed to be hiding out in China, Malaysia's police chief said on Wednesday (Aug 5), urging authorities there to help hunt down the fugitives. Billions of dollars were stolen from sovereign wealth fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad and bankrolled a global spending spree, with looted cash used to buy everything from pricey art to real estate.



◆ Almost 3,000 people were evacuated Tuesday night, some by boat, from homes and camping sites near Marseille in southern France as forest fires tore through 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of vegetation. About 1,800 firefighters battled blazes fanned by strong winds overnight.

Global

Covid-19 Cases:

18,840,614

Deaths

707,267

Recovered:

12,027,492

New cases

+147,083

New deaths

+3,879

Middle East

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	New deaths	Total Deaths
1 USA	4,939,355	+623	160,913
2 Brazil	2,817,473	+230	96,326
3 India	1,960,865	+919	40,739
4 Russia	866,627	+139	14,490
5 South Africa	521,318		8,884
6 Mexico	449,961	+857	48,869
7 Peru	439,890		20,007
8 Chile	364,723	+47	9,792
9 Spain	352,847	+1	28,499
10 Colombia	334,979		11,315
11 Iran	317,483	+185	17,802
12 UK	307,184	+65	46,364
13 Saudi Arabia	282,824	+36	3,020
14 Pakistan	281,136	+15	6,014

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	94,752		4,912		45,569	44,271	41	924
Saudi Arabia	282,824	+1,389	3,020	+36	245,314	34,490	1,991	8,112
UAE	61,606	+254	353	+2	55,385	5,868		6,222
Kuwait	69,425	+651	468	+3	60,906	8,051	128	16,235
Oman	79,159		421		61,421	17,317	187	15,468
Qatar	111,805	+267	178	+1	108,539	3,088	75	39,819