

Lebanon's biggest Christian party says won't back Hariri

Lebanon's largest Christian political party said it would not back the nomination of former Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri to lead a government

● Hariri could still secure a parliamentary majority if Hezbollah and Amal endorse him for premier

Reuters | Beirut



Saad al-Hariri gives a speech during an event (file photo)

Lebanon's largest Christian political party said yesterday it would not back the nomination of former Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri to lead a government to tackle a deep economic crisis, further complicating efforts to agree a new premier.

Hariri, who quit as prime minister last October in the face of nationwide protests, has said he is ready to lead a government to implement reforms proposed by France as a way to unlock badly needed international aid.

But Hariri, Lebanon's most prominent Sunni Muslim politician, has failed to win backing from the two main Christian parties — the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Lebanese

Forces. Parliamentary consultations to name a new prime minister were due to be held last Thursday, but President Michel Aoun postponed the discussions after receiving requests for a delay from some parliamentary blocs.

The FPM, which is led by Aoun's son-in-law Gebran Bassil, said it could not back a political figure such as Hariri because French President Emmanuel Macron's proposal had called for a reformist government made up of and led by

"specialists." As a result, the party's political council "decided unanimously not to nominate... Hariri to lead the government," a statement said, adding that Aoun's week-long postponement would not lead the party to reconsider its position.

Hariri could still secure a parliamentary majority if the powerful Shiite group Hezbollah and its ally Amal endorse him for premier.

But the absence of support from either of the main Chris-



The absence of support from either of the main Christian blocs would hand him at best a fragile mandate to tackle Lebanon's crisis

tian blocs would hand him at best a fragile mandate to tackle Lebanon's gravest crisis since the 1975-1990 civil war.

The country has plunged into financial turmoil and the value of the Lebanese pound has collapsed. COVID-19 and a huge explosion at Beirut's port two months ago have compounded the crisis and pushed many Lebanese into poverty.

Hariri, who has served twice as prime minister, resigned two weeks after huge protests erupted exactly a year ago.

News in brief

Tanzania says Kilimanjaro blaze contained



(36.7 square miles) without causing any fatalities on the mountain, which rises 5,895 metres (19,300 feet) above sea level, TANAPA revealed.

◆ An inferno on the slopes of Africa's highest mountain Kilimanjaro was almost under control yesterday, six days after it broke out, authorities said.

"Basically the fire is contained and tourism activities are going on, considering that they were not affected by the inferno," Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) spokesperson Pascal Shelute said. The fire started last Sunday and spread over some 95 square kilometres

Pope Francis accepted the resignation of the bishop of the Polish diocese of Kalisz who has been accused of shielding priests known to have sexually abused children.

A Vatican statement said Bishop Edward Janiak had handed in his resignation and that the pope had appointed Archbishop Grzegorz Rys of the city of Lodz to run the Kalisz diocese until a new bishop is appointed. Last May, Church leaders in Poland referred Janiak to the Vatican for judgement after a film by brothers Tomasz and Marek Sekielski purported to show that Janiak failed to take action against priests who were known to have abused children.

Polish bishop caught up in abuse negligence case resigns



Woman arrested after bodies of three children found at Vienna property



◆ Austrian police are investigating the deaths of three young girls, including a baby, at a property in Vienna. A 31-year-old woman called the police at 5.20 a.m. (0320 GMT) yesterday saying she had killed her children and wanted to kill herself, Vienna police said. Officers went to an apartment in the city's Donaustadt district where they arrested a woman who had self-inflicted injuries.

An International Criminal Court delegation is to visit Sudan to discuss the cases of ousted president Omar al-Bashir and other former officials, the government said.

The delegation, led by prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, will discuss "cooperation" with Sudan over the wanted men, the government said in a statement. The court said Bensouda and a delegation would be in Khartoum for a few days, for the court's first visit since Bashir was ousted.



ICC delegation to visit Sudan to discuss case against Bashir

Biden edges Trump in TV ratings for dueling town halls

Reuters | Washington

Former Vice President Joe Biden won a TV ratings battle with President Donald Trump as the two held competing town halls with voters just weeks ahead of the Nov. 3 election, according to Nielsen ratings data.



Joe Biden

Biden averaged 15.1 million viewers during Thursday night's 90-minute discussion on Walt Disney Co's ABC broadcast network. Trump pulled in 13.5 million for his 60-minute event across Comcast Corp's broadcaster NBC and the company's MSNBC and CNBC cable channels.

For the one-hour period that both Trump and Biden were on the air, Biden averaged 14.3 million to Trump's 13.5 million.

The primetime town halls were scheduled after cancellation of a debate that had been set for the same time. Trump pulled out of the debate after it was changed to a virtual format.

Tens of thousands of Thais protest in defiance of ban

AFP | Bangkok

Tens of thousands of Thai pro-democracy protesters rallied across Bangkok yesterday, defying an emergency decree banning gatherings for a third consecutive day to demand the resignation of the prime minister and reform of the powerful monarchy.

Police had used water cannon against peaceful demonstrators on Friday but protesters said they were not cowed by the escalation in tactics.

"I'm concerned for my safety but if I don't come out, I have no future," said business student Min, 18, equipped with a helmet and gas mask as she arrived in Bangkok's northern Lat Phrao district yesterday, one of several protest venues across the city.

Flooding a massive intersection, protesters raised a three-finger salute adopted from the dystopian "Hunger Games" films as passing vehicles honked in support and flashed a thumbs-up at the mostly black-clad protesters.

French police arrest nine after teacher beheaded in street

Reuters | Paris

French police have arrested nine people after a suspected extremist beheaded a school teacher on the street of a Paris suburb on Friday, police sources said.

Investigators were trying to establish whether the attacker, who was shot dead by police, had acted alone or had accomplices. French media reported that he was an 18-year-old of Chechen origin.

His victim, a history teacher, had earlier this month shown his pupils cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a civics class on freedom of expression.

President Emmanuel Macron called the incident a "terrorist attack."



Police officers secure the area near the scene of a stabbing attack

Four relatives of the attacker, including a minor, were detained in the immediate hours after the attack in the middle-class suburb of Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, the police sources said.

Five more were detained overnight, among them two parents of pupils at the College du Bois d'Aulne where the teacher was employed.

Muslim leaders condemned the killing, which many public figures perceived as an attack on the essence of French statehood and its values of secularism, freedom of worship and freedom of expression.

Tareq Oubrou, the imam of a Bordeaux mosque, denied the killing marked a clash of civilizations.



It is not a civilization that kills an innocent person, it is barbarity. Every day that passes without incident we give thanks

TAREQ OUBROU

THE IMAM OF A BORDEAUX MOSQUE

Global

Covid-19 Cases:

39,879,260

Deaths

1,113,107

Recovered:

29,820,782

New cases

+312,970

New deaths

+4,478

Middle East

Countries worst affected

Country	Total cases	New cases	Total Deaths	New deaths
1 USA	8,334,269	+45,991	224,240	+596
2 India	7,492,727	+62,092	114,064	+1,032
3 Brazil	5,205,686	+4,116	153,358	+129
4 Russia	1,384,235	+14,922	24,002	+279
5 Spain	982,723		33,775	
6 Argentina	965,609		25,723	
7 Colombia	945,354		28,616	
8 France	867,197	+32,427	33,392	+89
9 Peru	862,417		33,648	+33
10 Mexico	841,661	+6,751	85,704	+419
11 UK	705,428	+16,171	43,579	+150
12 South Africa	702,131	+1,928	18,408	+38
13 Iran	526,490	+4,103	30,123	+253
14 Chile	490,003	+1,813	13,588	+59

Figures as of closing

Country	Total cases	new cases	Total deaths	New Deaths	Total recovered	Active cases	Serious, Critical	Tot cases/1m pop
Egypt	105,159		6,099		98,089	971	41	1,022
Saudi Arabia	341,854	+359	5,165	+21	328,165	8,524	829	9,775
UAE	114,387	+1,538	459	+4	106,354	7,574		11,525
Kuwait	115,483	+739	694	+4	107,108	7,681	139	26,926
Oman	108,296		1,071		94,229	12,996	216	21,054
Qatar	129,227	+235	223	+1	126,218	2,786	52	46,024