

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran rejects report over talks with China, Russia on missile fuel

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani categorically dismissed a recent report by Politico magazine that China and Russia are in advanced secret talks with Iran to replenish the Islamic Republic's supply of a key chemical compound used to propel ballistic missiles. Tehran has held concurrent negotiations with officials and government-controlled entities from both countries, including the state-owned Russian chemical maker FKP Anozit, to acquire large amounts of ammonium perchlorate, the main ingredient in solid propellants used to power missiles, the American website quoted diplomats familiar with the issue.

Kanani said such reports are aimed at prolongation of the Ukraine war. He added that such fabricated news reports seek to deviate the world public opinion away from the Western military supplies being sent to Ukraine, and intend to further prolong the war in the Eastern European country in pursuit of their strategic goals.

Quds Day, a great achievement

Imam Khomeini's seminal initiative and the enlightening positions of the Islamic Republic vis-à-vis Israel have constituted a fundamental counter-strategy to the machinations of the West and the Israelis. Quds Day also symbolizes the struggle against occupation and aggression, infanticide and discrimination.

The annual observance of Quds Day and the myriad marches taking place in Islamic nations represent a formidable source of bolstering the Palestinian people and their resistance factions, imbuing them with a renewed sense of confidence and conviction to persist in their struggle. Such displays of solidarity bear witness to the unshakable conviction that oppression and aggression shall ultimately prove fleeting.

As it stands, Israel presently faces a state of unparalleled instability, beset by both internal and external pressure that portend its eventual demise. Such pressure is poised to culminate in a crushing collapse for the Israeli regime.

Afghanistan's neighbors stress establishment of inclusive gov't in country

The fourth ministerial meeting of countries neighboring Afghanistan on Thursday, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, emphasized the need to develop

a joint action mechanism to provide humanitarian aid to the Afghan people and restore the country's economy. "During the forum, the

parties discussed the existing conditions in Afghanistan, the implementation of the main demands of the world community by the current authorities of

Afghanistan, such as the creation of an inclusive government, the opportunity for Afghan women to work and receive an education, and ensuring the rights of national minorities," a statement by the Uzbekistan Foreign Ministry read, Anadolu Agency reported.

The statement said that the foreign ministers of Uzbekistan (that chaired the meeting) as well as China, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, underlined the importance of "strengthening the measures of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan in the fight against international terrorism, the production and smuggling of drugs."

It also said they noted the importance of promoting the potential of Afghanistan as a "key factor" in interregional connectivity between Central and South Asia.

"In this context, the parties spoke in favor of the implementation of infrastructure and socio-economic projects in the territory of Afghanistan, with the participation of neighboring states, which will contribute not only to the creation of new jobs but also to a more active integration of Afghanistan into regional economic processes," the statement further noted. On Pakistan's initiative, the Neighboring Countries of Afghanistan mechanism was established in 2021, with a view to evolving a regional approach to the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan hosted the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Neighboring Countries on Sept. 8, 2021, and participated in the second meeting held in Iran in November 2021, and the third meeting held in Tunxi, China, in March 2022.

Iran calls for intl. probe into US-funded biological laboratories in Ukraine

Iran Foreign Ministry's spokesman Nasser Kanani
IRNA

The spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry called for an international investigation into reports of US-funded biological laboratories in Ukraine and elsewhere

across the world. "The published news about US military biological laboratories in Ukraine and some other countries of the world is deeply worrying. Such activities are in contradiction to the international obligations of the United States, especially the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and

pose a threat to humanity," Nasser Kanani wrote in a post published on his Tweeter page on Thursday, Press TV reported.

He added, "The matter requires an impartial international investigation."

A Russian parliamentary commission investigating Washington's military-related biological activities at laboratories across Ukraine concluded on Wednesday that Washington is developing a "universal" genetically-altered bioweapon comparable to that of a "nuclear winter."

The commission added in its 207-page report that the probe into the manufacturing of the highly-damaging bioweapon was based on findings made public by Russia's Radiation, Chemical and Biological

Defense Troops over the past year.

"The United States aims to develop a universal genetically engineered biological weapon capable of infecting not only people but animals as well as agricultural crops. Its use involves, among other things, the goal of inflicting large-scale and irreparable economic damage on the enemy," the commission said.

"The covert and targeted use of such a weapon in anticipation of a positive inevitable direct military confrontation could create a significant advantage for US forces over the adversary, even against those who possess other types of weapons of mass destruction," it said.

"The possession of such highly effective biological weapons creates,

in the view of the US military, the real prerequisites to change the nature of contemporary armed conflicts," it added.

Soon after Russia launched its military operation in Ukraine in February 2022, Russian Ambassador to the UN Vassily Nebenzia stated that secret American labs in Ukraine had been engaged in biological warfare. The US and Ukraine, however, denied the charges.

In October last year, Russia asked the UN Security Council to establish a commission to investigate its claims that Washington and Kiev were violating the convention prohibiting the use of biological weapons as a result of alleged activities being carried out at biological laboratories in Ukraine.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

**Flash floods kill at least three people in Iran**

National Desk

Heavy rains have triggered flash flooding in 14 provinces of Iran, killing at least three people.

The fatalities were reported in the provinces of Qazvin, Ilam and West Azarbaijan. Floods have also displaced at least 450 people who have been sheltered by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, according to the organization. The Iranian Red Crescent Society has provided the people with emergency relief items, including tents and food. Floods have also



destroyed several houses in villages in the western province of Lorestan. Rescue operations are underway to help people in the affected areas. Iran's meteorological department

has warned of seasonal rains in many areas across the country, including in the capital, Tehran. Last year, 62 people were killed after massive floods hit different parts of the country.