

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq extradites seven Iranian prisoners

International Desk

Iraq extradited seven Iranian prisoners who spent some time in jail in Basra, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Thursday.

"Through the follow-up of the Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Basra and the Iranian Embassy in Iraq, as well as the cooperation and assistance of the judicial authorities of Iraq, seven Iranian citizens who were arrested and imprisoned in Basra for a few months were released and are returning to the country," the statement read.

Dozens of forex market racketeers arrested



ECOIRAN

National Desk

Iran's Ministry of Intelligence dismantled 23 groups of racketeers and a number of organized networks that were involved in the disruption of the foreign exchange market.

In a statement issued late Thursday, the ministry said that "71 racketeers involved in foreign exchange market's disruptions were identified and arrested."

The statement went on to note that the agents of these networks were engaged "in creating abnormal price fluctuations and wasting Iran's foreign exchange reserves by carrying out various illegal and criminal activities in the provinces of Kurdistan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Khorasan Razavi, Alborz, Mazandaran, Ilam, and Kerman."

"The Ministry of Intelligence, while monitoring the country's economic atmosphere and foreign exchange market, decisively deals with the criminals and racketeers affecting the currency and economic fluctuations of the country," the statement concluded.

FM spox: Resistance Front stronger, more united

IRNA - Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that the Resistance Front is more united and stronger than before. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always firmly supported the Palestinian Cause as the most strategic issue of the Muslim world, Kanaani tweeted on Friday.

Iran, Syria condemn Israeli aggression on Golan Heights



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (l) shaking hands with his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, Syria on May 3, 2023. ● SYRIAN PRESIDENCY

International Desk

In a joint statement issued on Friday, presidents of Iran and Syria condemned the Israeli aggressions on Golan, criticizing the United

States for recognizing the annexation of the Golan Heights, "which is a gross violation of the principles of the United Nations." They strongly condemned the aggression of the Israeli

regime on the Syrian Arab Republic and considered it a destabilizing factor in the region. The two sides also emphasized that Syria reserves the legitimate right to respond to those aggres-

sions in an appropriate way. The two sides condemned the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights by the occupying Israeli regime, as well as the regime's decision to annex the Golan Heights, which is in contradiction with the principles of international law; the legal status of the Syrian Golan is considered to be occupied lands.

They also strongly condemned the U.S. government's decision to recognize the annexation of the Golan Heights, which is a gross violation of the principles of the United Nations.

Elsewhere in the joint statement, the two presidents held in-depth talks that focused on ways to expand and strengthen mutual ties based on brotherly and strategic relations between the two states, as well as the latest developments in the region and the world.

The two sides also stressed the need to respect the national sovereignty, independence, and preservation of the territorial integrity of

the two countries, according to the purposes and principles laid in the United Nations Charter.

They emphasized the significance of boosting mutual ties via the continuation of political, economic, and consular cooperation and other fields of cooperation, as well as the continuation of the exchange of high-ranking delegations between the two countries.

The two sides also expressed their readiness and willingness to take any action to develop commercial-economic ties between the two countries through existing mechanisms such as the Joint High Commission. They also stressed the existing bilateral cooperation in the field of reconstruction of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Voicing their satisfaction with the joint cooperation in fighting terrorism and extremism, the two sides emphasized the continuation of joint cooperation for the total annihilation of all terrorist groups.

Latest case of active diplomacy ...

Following the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 and the appointment of ambassadors after nearly 30 years, former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi made a historic first visit to Iran since the Iranian Revolution to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement summit on August 30, 2012, where Egypt handed over the rotating presidency to Iran. Iran's then-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also visited Egypt in February 2013, making him the first Iranian president to travel to Egypt since the Iranian Revolution.

Yet, ties were cut again in 2015, when Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi stated that Egypt has no relations with Iran on the Egyptian Extra News channel.

Later, regional countries put forward initiatives to mend Tehran-Cairo relations. In December 2022, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that Iraq has put forward a proposal for holding talks between Tehran and Cairo at political and security levels to restore relations between the two countries.

The senior diplomat made the remarks in an interview with Iran's Mizan news agency. Amir-Abdollahian said the proposal was made by Iraqi Prime Minister al-Sudani, whom he met on the sidelines of a regional conference held in the Jordanian capital of Amman. The foreign minister said he welcomed the Iraqi prime minister's idea, adding that actions will be taken by al-Sudani in the upcoming weeks in order to facilitate such talks.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, a European diplomat familiar with Middle East affairs said: "In general, we can assume that the Iran-Saudi reconciliation process — which did not come overnight, but, as is known, was the result of different series of talks — has prepared the ground for a more ambitious regional normalization, in which the relationship between Tehran and Cairo assume a strong relevance."

"I believe the two processes are unrelated but behind the scenes, the overall regional scenario (i.e. the dynamics concerning Syria, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf in general) has been prepared for a more ambitious agenda. Many obstacles in the dialogue with Cairo have already been overcome during last years, and the



ILLUSTRATION BY FARS

Iraqi mediation can eventually contribute, giving it the final push to get to the finish line," the diplomat added.

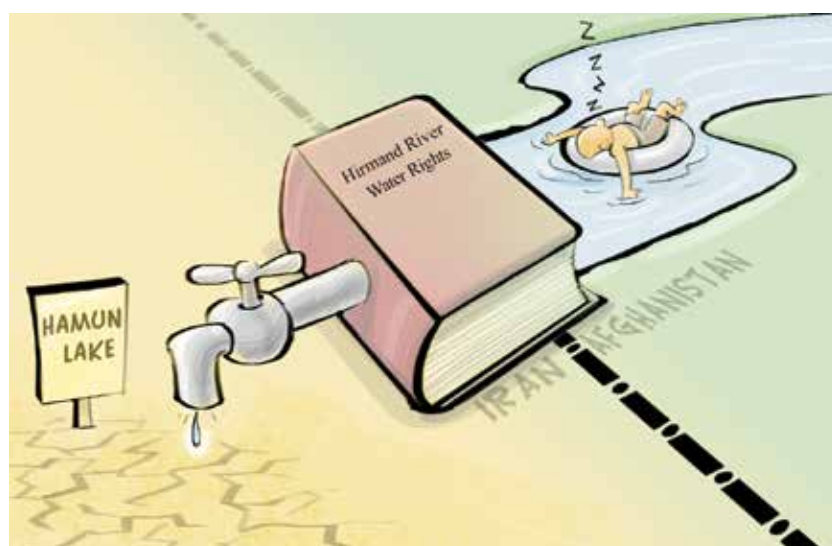
The diplomat seemed to believe that "in case the talks will get to the finish line, many problems in the region will be solved." Yet, the diplomat remained skeptical of the sustainability of the normalization process.

"However, it would be naive to believe that this

will be the end of the story as there are many spoilers ready to sabotage the process, as has been the case many times in the past. The overall normalization process would be sustainable only if the parties engage each other in keeping the process alive. It will not be easy. For sure, progress in the nuclear talks would eventually give a big boost to the process," the diplomat concluded.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



U.S. still seeks diplomatic solution in JCPOA talks: Washington

International Desk

U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan claimed on Friday that Washington still seeks a diplomatic solution in nuclear talks with Tehran. Sullivan said Thursday that he will travel to Saudi Arabia on Saturday for talks with Saudi officials and will also meet with his counterparts from the United Arab Emirates and India during his visit, various media outlets reported on Friday.

Sullivan is expected to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, AP reported, citing a person familiar with the travel plans.

"This weekend I will be in Saudi Arabia for meetings with its leadership," Sullivan said at an event organized by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a U.S.-based think tank.

According to Reuters, Sullivan said the United States still seeks a diplomatic solution to Iran's

nuclear program and lamented Trump's decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal.

"Yes, we will take the necessary action to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon," Sullivan said.

He reiterated the U.S. position towards Iran's nuclear program, saying that Washington will take the necessary action to prevent Iran from what he claimed, "acquiring a nuclear weapon."