



A Kurdish woman visits the graves of her relatives who were killed in Saddam Hussein's 1988 gas attack on the Iraqi town of Halabja in an effort to stop the advances of the Iranian forces.
● AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Leader asks intelligence bodies to increase cooperation



MEHR - In a message to the joint meeting of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and the IRGC Intelligence Organization on Thursday, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution stressed the need for cooperation between the two institutions at all levels. "If they want to fight for God, their jihad is to implement this understanding in all ranks. Today, although there is serious understanding at the top of these two institutions, the real effort is to implement this cooperation and understanding at all levels," said Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

U.S. House moves to make Iran sanctions permanent



IFP - The U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee has unanimously passed a bipartisan bill to make the 1996 sanctions against Tehran permanent, sending it to the full House floor for a vote. Tehran says Washington does not seem to have the necessary political will for continuing the negotiations in Vienna to revive the nuclear deal, urging the United States to drop its addiction to sanctions.

Iran has mastered complex defense technologies: IRGC commander

IRNA - Commander of IRGC Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said that Iran has mastered all advanced technologies in the defense industry. General Hajizadeh added that the range of the domestically produced Fatih missile, a hypersonic ballistic missile unveiled earlier this month by the IRGC Aerospace Force, can be increased to 2,000km, from its current range of 1,400km.

Two Dutch firms on trial for aiding Saddam's chemical attacks

A court in The Hague says it will deliver a verdict in August after five Iranian nationals sued two Dutch firms for supplying chemical weapon components to Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq during the 1980s. Iranian victims of chemical weapons, used by the regime of the Western-backed Iraqi dictator during the 1980s war on

Iran, say the two firms Melchemie (now known as Otjiaha) and Forafina Beleggingen (formerly known as KBS Holland) supplied Iraq with chemicals between 1982 and 1984 and were aware that their substances were being used to manufacture mustard gas, Press TV reported. Meanwhile, the firms deny the allegations, claiming

the chemicals were intended for agricultural pesticide use, according to the Dutch daily de Volkskrant. Billionaire Hans Melchers, the former owner of Melchemie, was summoned to appear in The Hague court on June 22. Melchers is accused of directly participating in the supply of 1,850 tons of thionyl chloride, a raw

material for mustard gas, to Iraq during the war. He denies the accusations, but his then company was sentenced in 1987 with a fine and a conditional closure for "intentionally" circumventing a ban imposed by the Dutch government to prevent the export of materials that could be used for manufacturing weapons to Iraq.

KBS Holland also faces a lawsuit for supplying Iraq with TDG, another component used in the production of mustard gas. The five claimants suffered lasting injuries from mustard gas attacks during the war. They endure respiratory issues and disability due to damage to their lungs, eyes, and skin. "These people's lives were

destroyed," the victims' attorney Liesbeth Zegveld said, adding "These Dutch companies share a part of the responsibility for that." During the 1980-88 war, the Iraqi army continuously employed chemical weapons against Iranian combatants and civilians, leaving tens of thousands dead on the spot and many more suffering for years to come.

MP: Iran's diplomatic flurry dwarfed JCPOA revival talks

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

An Iranian lawmaker said the government's policy to expand ties with neighbors and other countries around the world has considerably improved Iran's economic situation and played down the significance of talks on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal. "The development of ties with different countries has positively affected Iran's status. Considering such a situation, Iran does not need to attach significance to the JCPOA revival talks," Ahmad-Hossein Fallahi told Iran Daily in an exclusive interview. He added that Iran continues negotiations on the restoration of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but will not link the country's fate to the talks. "Iran has decided not to close the door to negotiations with the West. But it will never cross its principles and red lines," Fallahi said. The JCPOA was reached between Iran and the major world powers in 2015. But, former US President

Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew his country from the agreement in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions against Iran. Diplomatic efforts to revive the deal have not yielded results over what Tehran calls Washington's failure to make political decisions and provide guarantees that it will not exit the accord again. Fallahi said Iran's cooperation with the IAEA and talks with the West does not mean that the Islamic Republic will back down from its demands. He said Western countries are willing to continue nuclear talks with Iran amid Tehran's efforts to forge close relations with regional and trans-regional blocs. The MP said Iran's approach toward BRICS has benefited the country and worked to the detriment of the West. BRICS consists of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The significance of this group and its leading role in the world economy has caused sever-

al countries including Iran to show their tendency to join the trade and economic organization. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian attended the BRICS foreign ministers' summit in South Africa earlier this month. He held several meetings with participating nations' top diplomats. Amir-Abdollahian said the BRICS members have welcomed Iran's potential accession to the powerful bloc. Fallahi explained how Iran's joining of blocs such as BRICS can help the country wean its economy off the greenback. "Currently, parts of our talks with the West pertain to connecting to SWIFT to be able to have access to US dollars. But, BRICS de-dollarization initiatives will drive the US dollar out of the market and obviate the need for connecting to SWIFT," he said. He added that countries that have ditched the US dollar in their financial transactions do not need SWIFT and have been able



to improve their economic situation. The Belgium-based Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Communications (SWIFT) has imposed severe restrictions on Iran's access to the global financial system due to US sanctions and pressure. Further in his remarks, Fallahi touched upon the recent détente between Iran and Saudi Arabia. "I think Saudis have realized that the US does not have a lot of clout in the region anymore. Hence, they have decided to cooperate with Iran," he said. Fallahi said Iran will co-

operate with Saudi Arabia as long as the Kingdom respects mutual interests and values. The two Persian Gulf countries have been promoting their ties since they signed a Chinese-brokered rapprochement deal in March. Tehran and Riyadh cut ties in 2016 following Saudi Arabia's execution of a prominent Shia Muslim cleric. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud traveled to Iran last week and held talks with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and President Ebrahim Raeisi.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran slams UN rights report as biased

Iran's permanent ambassador to the United Nations Office in Geneva slammed a "biased" report by the world body on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic, saying it is based on anti-Iran media propaganda. Ali Bahraini made the remarks on Wednesday in an address to the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, during which UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada al-Nashif presented the secretary general's latest report on Iran, according to Mehr news agency. Covering the period from August 2022 to April 2023,

the report alleged that there is "a worsening human rights landscape in Iran coupled with the chronic lack of meaningful and effective avenues for the population to voice grievances or indeed to seek remedies". Bahraini rejected the report as "politically motivated, biased, and unfair," arguing that it "did not contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights". He also dismissed the claim about Iran's "limited" implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms, saying such accusations "highlighted the biased and one-sided opin-

ions of the report". "Iran was committed to promoting and protecting human rights and interacted and cooperated with the United Nations human rights mechanisms," the envoy asserted. He further criticized the report for turning a blind eye to the illegal sanctions imposed on the Iranian nation. "The unilateral measures enacted on Iran impacted all areas of the Iranian people's lives. The imposition of these measures against the Iranian nation was a crime against humanity, which was neglected by the report," Bahraini said.