

NEWS IN BRIEF

Borrell:
De-escalation,
cooperation
with IAEA
crucial

International Desk

The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Wednesday tweeted about his phone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the "importance of continuing dialogue on JCPOA," saying "de-escalation on nuclear programme & cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remains crucial". Borrell welcomed the ongoing cooperation and negotiations between Tehran and the IAEA and assessed the continuation of that cooperation as useful and positive. Borrell said, "The JCPOA and maintaining its structure, as well as the continuation of constructive negotiations, on the one hand, and the process of normalizing relations between Tehran and Riyadh, on the other hand, are important for the EU."

Iranian rapper's death sentence commuted to imprisonment



● TASNIM

IFP – Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi, who was arrested for "provoking violence" during anti-government protests in Iran last year, first received a death sentence, but the ruling was later commuted to imprisonment. Tasnim news agency said in a report on Wednesday that Salehi's sentence has been commuted because of his "active cooperation" with authorities. The report did not say where it had received the news from, or how long Salehi's prison sentence was.

None solely owns Arash gas field: Ex-deputy

International Desk

Mehdi Hosseini, a former Iranian deputy oil minister, said Wednesday no country can legally claim exclusive ownership of the Arash gas field since no demarcation has been done for it. In recent statements, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia claimed joint sovereignty over the Persian Gulf gas field, excluding Iran.

Thirty historical artifacts returned to Iran in past two years

National Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism reported that 30 historical artifacts have been returned to Iran since the incumbent government took office two years ago. Ezzatollah Zarghami on Wednesday cited the return of the rock relief of an Achaemenid soldier as an example of the achievement, according to Fars news agency. Expressing dissatisfaction with the current efforts at restoring historical buildings, he said that a special new office in the ministry will be dedicated to overseeing the efforts and issuing expert warnings to the institutions that are putting the buildings to use. "The law mandates that any institution that uses historical buildings must financially support the restoration of those build-

ings," he underlined. The minister also announced that 850,000 foreign tourists have visited Iran since the beginning of the current Iranian year (which started on March 21), 550,000 of whom arrived in Iran in the month to June 21. He stressed that despite attempts made by some European countries like France to prevent tourists from traveling to Iran, the visits have increased. "The fact that France is currently falling into utter chaos and dealing with widespread arson and looting proves that Macron should have been careful of what he was wishing for," Zarghami pointed out. However, he maintained that the Achilles' heel of the country's development is its diffused leadership in many of its important national missions such as facilitating tourism. "The inefficient manage-

ment of this sector, which has haunted us for years, does not allow plans to conclude," he said, adding that, fortunately, the ministry has proposed various solutions including the establishment of a council of provincial governors that will have the last word in many issues of tourism, which was eagerly received by the government and adopted in Iran's Seventh National Development Plan. Earlier, the minister also said that Iran is planning a visa waiver program for 50 countries unilaterally. Zarghami then expressed his belief that a collective alliance should be formed to cancel visas with a large number of countries. Referring to the rumored plan to tax social media influencers, Zarghami concluded his remarks by denying any knowledge of such a plan.

The photo shows the petroglyph (statue) of a Sassanid soldier, discovered in England about seven years ago, which was returned to Iran in June 2023.
● IRAN PRESS



Two goals on ...



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (R) shakes hand with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev before holding bilateral talks in Baku, Azerbaijan, on June 5, 2023.
● mfa.gov.ir

The country opposes the dominance of one or more Western powers over international relations. Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization also serves to bolster the multilateral approach. It is expected

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that the Iranian foreign minister's speech at the NAM meeting will receive a positive reception from its member states. A special NAM committee has been set up to address the Palestinian issue. Considering the ongoing challenges in the Middle East, including Israeli aggres-

sion against Palestinians and the persistence of settlement policies opposed by the international community, these discussions hold significance. However, in the context of bilateral relations during the trip to Azerbaijan, it is important to point out to the recent misunderstandings between Tehran and Baku. The visit of Iran's foreign minister and the subsequent discussions with Azerbaijani authorities are expected to play a crucial role in resolving these misunderstandings and paving the way for improved relations between the two neighbors. On the sidelines of the NAM gathering, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan held a meeting with Amir-Abdollahian, and reports suggest that Baku

has shown a positive inclination toward enhancing relations and resorting to diplomatic means for resolving disputes, a stance that Iran also appreciates. I firmly believe that officials from both countries should engage in direct diplomatic dialogue, as relying on other channels such as the media is unlikely to contribute to rapprochement. The anticipated meeting between Aliyev and his Iranian counterpart President Ebrahim Raeisi in the future instills hope that the meeting will emphasize commonalities. Given the numerous shared interests between the two nations, they have the potential to advance their relations by addressing and resolving their misunderstandings.

Media reports have highlighted that, during the meeting between the Iranian foreign minister and the president of Azerbaijan, discussions also touched upon the North-South Corridor and the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway. Although Iran recently signed a contract with Russia build of this route, with plans to commence construction in March, Iran welcomes Azerbaijan's participation in this project. It is hoped that a trilateral meeting involving Tehran, Baku, and Moscow regarding the construction of the Rasht-Astara railroad will take place soon. The acceleration of this project and its subsequent opening would bring benefits to all countries in the region.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



'Iran-IAEA ties based on NPT, safeguards'

The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) has rejected claims that the organization has breached the law concerning its cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, saying the relationship is restricted to the safeguards agreement and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). "Our relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are based on the safeguards agreement and the NPT. No more, no less," Mohammad Eslami told a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Press TV wrote.

He also dismissed accusations that the AEOI has violated a 2020 anti-sanction law in its March deal with the IAEA on bilateral engagements. The law, or the Strategic Action Plan to Counter Sanctions, was approved by the Iranian parliament in December 2020 in a bid to counter illegal sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and its Western allies. It requires the Iranian administration to restrict the IAEA inspections and accelerate the development of the country's nuclear program beyond the limits set under

the 2015 US-abandoned nuclear deal. Iran has repeatedly voiced its readiness to resolve differences with the IAEA within a framework of constructive and mutual interaction and technical cooperation. On Tuesday, Eslami announced that Iran has for the first time manufactured a nuclear reactor simulator, applauding the feat as a monumental achievement in the field of high tech. The simulator is designed to manage the control chamber temperature and has a thermal capacity of 100 megawatts.