

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran, Cairo
progressing
toward détente

International Desk

An Egyptian diplomat revealed that, recently, a round of talks took place between Egypt and Iran, during which the two sides agreed to hold a series of exploratory meetings regarding issues that concern their decision-makers. The diplomat, who spoke to Al-Araby Al-Jadeed on condition of anonymity, explained that a joint committee has been formed to restore relations, stating that Egypt is "moving ahead with caution, given Iran's international ties and regional role". The same diplomat pointed out that the Egyptian and Iranian sides "definitely made, during various talks that took place under Iraqi and Omani mediation, great strides toward bringing their views closer together".

Persian
Gulf trio
islands Iran's
'forever'

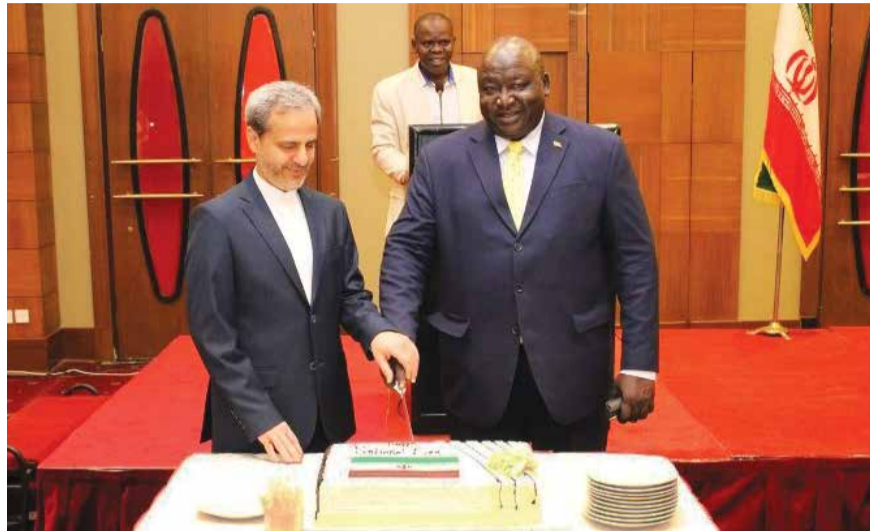
Abu Musa island
● ISNA

TASNIM - The spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry refuted the contents of a joint statement from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Russia about Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb, and the Lesser Tunb, describing the islands as an eternal part of Iran's territory. In their statement on Monday, the ministers said the issue should be settled through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter.

US intel:
Iran not
developing
nukes

AP - A US intelligence assessment says Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons at the moment but has ramped up nuclear activities. The assessment from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released Monday corresponds with previous US assessments about Iran's nuclear program, although many in Congress and elsewhere have been skeptical of those.

Envoy: Uganda's independent policy fosters cooperation



The Iranian Ambassador to Kampala Majid Saffar (r) and Uganda's former state minister for Foreign Affairs Henry Oryem Okello cut a cake together to mark the 44th anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution in Kampala, Uganda, on February 11, 2023.
● icro.ir

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Iranian ambassador in Uganda recognized the independent policy of the African country — which has assumed the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

this year — as a favorable framework that fosters collaboration between the two countries. On the eve of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi's visit to three East African countries including Uganda, Majid Saffar shed light on Uganda's political

and trade standing as well as the potential areas of cooperation between the two states.

In an interview with ISNA, Saffar emphasized that despite pressures from certain Western countries, Uganda has maintained an independent stance in international and regional arenas and strived to advance its own policies in the face of external interference. He viewed this as a promising opportunity to foster robust collaboration between Iran and Uganda during the latter's tenure as the head of the NAM.

The Iranian ambassador in Uganda revealed that several memorandums of understanding and joint cooperation documents will be signed during President Raeisi's upcoming visit to Uganda, further strengthening the partnership between the two na-

tions.

Regarding economic prospects, Saffar underscored Uganda's abundant natural resources, mines, and underground reserves. He further highlighted Uganda's favorable climatic conditions, which have enabled the country to develop a thriving agricultural sector and enticed Iran to seek to expand agricultural cooperation.

The ambassador noted that trade volume between Iran and Uganda remains relatively low, amounting to \$2.2 million in 2021, according to official statistics. Iran mostly imports tea, coffee, and sometimes tropical fruits and exports manufactured goods, industrial equipment, and petrochemical and petroleum products. The Iranian diplomat also emphasized the two countries' potential for exchanging tourists.

Uganda's remarkable natural resources, wildlife, vast lakes, the riverside of the Nile, and other captivating attractions provide an ideal foundation for Iranian tourists to explore the East African nation. Likewise, Iran's seemingly unending beauty offers a plethora of options for Ugandan tourists who wish to visit. To facilitate such exchanges, he added, mutual promotion and awareness are essential. However, Saffar acknowledged two significant obstacles to expanding bilateral cooperation: Uganda's lack of access to international waters and limited public familiarity between the citizens of both countries. He expressed hope that through government planning and the shared commitment of officials, existing barriers can be mitigated.

Africa; land of opportunities ...

After the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the limited "Africa approach" of the former monarchical regime, which had established relations with only a few African countries in line with the interests of the Western camp, was totally transformed. In that period, the Islamic Republic of Iran devoted special attention to establishing relations with other African nations thanks to its freedom-seeking and anti-imperialistic nature. Moreover, ancient cultural and historical relations between Iran and Africa and religious commonalities between our peoples, especially with the eastern and southern parts of Africa, provided a solid foundation for the improvement of political, economic, and trade relations with the continent. As a result of such transformation, the Islamic Republic of Iran extensively boosted its

Page 1 >

relations with most African countries in various political, economic, and cultural fields. It should be noted that even though this continent is historically facing numerous problems such as poverty and deprivation as the result of the rivalry between the East and the West, Africa enjoys untapped potential and unparalleled opportunities in political, economic, and cultural sectors. Such potential is so enormous that Africa is described in the global political literature as the "land of opportunities" due to its high economic potential and immense natural and talented human resources. Aware of such significance, the incumbent government of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the development and deepening of all-out relations with African countries as an important foreign policy priority. In view of such a policy, the Ministry of For-

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Aware of such significance, the incumbent government of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the development and deepening of all-out relations with African countries as an important foreign policy priority. In view of such a policy, the Ministry of For-

ign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran has seriously and strongly placed on its agenda the further enhancement of relations in various economic, trade, political, and international areas with Africa in line with mutual interests. The Iranian government is therefore trying to concentrate on joint economic capacities existing between Iran and Africa and utilize them to further cement trade links in addition to political ties. In this respect, in 2022 alone, four joint economic commissions were held with African countries, 83 political, trade, and cultural delegations were exchanged, and close to 50 memoranda of cooperation and agreements were signed by the two sides.

His Excellency President Raeisi is embarking on his Africa tour upon the official invitation of his counterparts in Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The purpose of this visit is to strengthen

bonds with friends and aligned countries, diversify Iran's export destinations, and create more grounds for political and commercial cooperation.

President Raeisi's Africa tour marks the first visit by an Iranian president in 11 years. This visit naturally aims to establish closer interaction with African countries and make various aspects of mutual relations more operational. If this occurs successfully — which I am sure it will — Iran's contribution to and participation in Africa's growing economy will expand exponentially. The transfer of Iran's indigenous technology and science to Africa constitutes one of the priorities of cooperation during President Raeisi's tour.

In general, the present strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards Africa is based on deepening economic relations on the basis of South-South cooperation. Fortunately, last year, multiple increase was

registered in Iran's commercial transactions with Africa as the result of the successful economic diplomacy of the incumbent Iranian government.

At the present time, the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy is geared towards stronger interaction with Africa, and we are therefore trying to expand balanced and inclusive relations with African countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always proved that it has been a reliable partner and will remain such for African nations. In order to continue and strengthen this approach, we have founded our foreign policy strategy on long-term cooperation with Africa and stretched our hands of fraternity and cooperation to all African nations. It is hoped that in light of President Raeisi's Africa tour, grounds are paved for further enjoyment and expansion of cooperation between Iran and Africa, especially in trade and economy. President Raeisi's next African destination in the near future will be South Africa.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Tehran hints at goodwill to resolve gas field row

International Desk

Iran says it always observes the principles of good neighborliness and mutual interests in exploiting shared hydrocarbon reservoirs, as the controversy surrounding the Arash joint oil and gas field with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait erupted anew. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani on Tuesday reacted to the latest claims by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait over their "exclusive rights" to Arash strategic maritime gas field, known as Al-Dor-

ra in the two Arab countries, in the resource-rich Persian Gulf, Press TV reported.

In response to such claims, Kanaani said senior directors of the Iranian and Kuwaiti foreign ministries held their latest round of "legal and technical" negotiations in Tehran on March 13 about the demarcation of the disputed area. Zhang Jianwei, the Chinese ambassador to Kuwait, also commented on the dispute, urging all sides to engage in negotiations and friendly consultations, ac-



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani
● IRNA

ording to ISNA. The ambassador stressed that China has not yet been asked to mediate talks in this regard and reiterated Beijing's respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries in the region.