

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran progress
'eye-catching':
Pakistan

● president.gov.pk

IRNA – President of Pakistan Arif Alvi underscored that the development of Iran despite sanctions is eye-catching and a source of happiness.

The Pakistani president made the remarks in a ceremony for receiving the credentials of the new Iranian Ambassador to Islamabad Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Thursday, emphasizing the importance of relations between the two neighboring countries. Amiri Moghaddam mentioned his plans for expanding ties between Tehran and Islamabad, particularly the improvement of economic and trade cooperation.

NATO
allegations
rejected

● IRNA

TASNIM – Iran has categorically rejected allegations it is providing drones to Russia, raised this time by NATO, urging member states of the military alliance to refrain from leveling such accusations.

Iran's Embassy in Brussels said in a statement on Thursday that Tehran maintains a neutral position in the Ukraine conflict and remains fully committed to the principles of the UN Charter and international law, which includes respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries.

Terrorist
behind SE
riots nabbed

PRESS TV – The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps intelligence forces arrested a member of the so-called Jaish ul-Adl terrorist group responsible for instigating violent riots and acts of violence in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan late last September.

The Salman Base of the IRGC said in a statement that rogue elements, terrorists, separatists and agents of foreign spy agencies incited crowds during last year's September 30 unrest in Zahedan, and played a role in disrupting unity and security in the southeastern part of the country.

Africa tour primarily aimed at Iran's
'strategic depth' boost: **Raeisi**

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi speaks to reporters at Mehrabad Airport, Tehran, Iran, on July 14, 2023, upon return from his three-nation tour of Africa.

● president.ir

National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said the first objective of the African trip was to boost the Islamic Republic of Iran's "strategic depth."

Raeisi made the remarks at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport early on Friday upon return from his African tour, which took him to

Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Seeing the anti-colonialism spirit, faith and courage of the Iranian people following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, African nations were drawn to this revolution and the system that came out of it, Raeisi said. The president stressed the need to promote ties with African nations, describing

the continent as the land of opportunities where its potential should not be overlooked, Press TV reported.

"We value our ties with the African Continent, just as we do with the countries of Asia and other regions, and we should not overlook this continent which is full of opportunities," he said.

'Record' 12 MoUs
inked

Raeisi wrapped up his three-nation African tour with a visit to Zimbabwe where the two sides signed 12 memoranda of understanding to strengthen bilateral ties.

Raeisi met Thursday with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who urged nations targeted by Western sanctions to band together.

The two presidents signed a "record" 12 agreements on topics ranging from energy to telecommunications, Mnangagwa said. These will help Zimbabwe access innovation and technology from Iran and envisage the creation of a tractor factory to support agricultural mechanization, he added. The two countries also signed cooperation agreements for energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications as well as research, science and technology projects.

He said on Friday that his three-nation tour of Africa was also aimed at strengthening economic and trade relations with those countries and entering new markets with knowledge-based

products made by Iranian experts.

The Iranian president mentioned the provision of raw materials as another goal of his African tour, saying that the issue of extra-territorial cultivation was also among the discussed subjects.

According to Raeisi, agreements have been made for barter deals with African countries, where Iran would receive basic goods in return for supplying petrochemical products.

Scientific and technological exchanges were another topic discussed during the trip, he said, adding, "Offices were accordingly established in all the three countries to take an effective step in facilitating and strengthening our communication and cooperation in this area."

Pointing to "good meetings" with entrepreneurs and businessmen who expressed their readiness to expand business ties between Iran and Africa, Raeisi said ways to overcome existing challenges were also explored.

A total of 21 documents on cooperation in different areas were signed during the three-state tour to Africa.

Lavrov: Currently unrealistic to expect new agreement
on Iran deal

Expectations of any additional agreements to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program are unrealistic under current circumstances, with little more than a year to go until the 2024 US presidential elections, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters on Thursday, TASS reported.

"I doubt it would be very realistic to expect this [revival of the JCPOA - TASS] with a new administration potentially coming to power in the United States in a year's time," he said. "Who knows whether that ad-

ministration will be Democratic or Republican? And nobody can guarantee that this new administration would refrain from using the trick of withdrawing from the agreement again," he added.

According to the top Russian diplomat, the JCPOA was simply killed by the US, which, "despite all requirements under the UN Charter, refused to implement the resolution, adopted by the consensus," which finalized this agreement. "When the new administration of [US President Joseph] Biden came to power, they said they were ready to restore the

program ..., but instead of making a decision to fully revive the resolution and the JCPOA itself, they have been bargaining ... for something extra from Tehran," Lavrov lamented. Informal consultations taking place "on the quiet," have been held between Iranian and US officials on how to restore dialogue by means of "unblocking the illegally frozen Iranian assets abroad in exchange for resolving the fate of certain American nationals who face criminal charges in Iran," Lavrov explained. "We would only welcome a scenario wherein this relationship could be normal-

ized, but, as I said, that has little to do with the JCPOA," he said.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany struck a nuclear deal with Iran in 2015 to address the crisis over its nuclear program. Then-US president Donald Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018, while incumbent President Biden has repeatedly signaled his willingness to bring the US back into the deal.

The US, UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany have been in talks with Iran in Vienna since April 2021, seeking to restore



● REUTERS

the JCPOA in its original form. In November 2022, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Grossi said the

latest round of talks with Iranian officials ended in the Austrian capital without achieving any specific results.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran expects Russia ...

The statement "affirmed... support for all peaceful efforts,

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including the initiative of the United Arab Emirates and its endeavors to reach a peaceful solution to the issue of the three islands... through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice."

Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, the commander-in-chief of Iran's Army, also said in response to the statement that Iran is very sensitive to claims made about its three islands in the Persian Gulf, to which the United Arab Emirates

lays claims. At an event with military commanders, Major General Mousavi said, "We are sensitive about every iota of our soil, and we will not for a moment neglect the protection of the Islamic Republic of Iran's borders and interests, from the northernmost to the southernmost points of its sacred land."

A senior adviser to the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution also said it was naive of Russia to fall into the trap of the PGCC regarding the three islands, which are an integral part of Iran.

Ali Akbar Velayati further cited the historical records that

confirm Iran's sovereignty over the islands, saying the Russians fell into the same trap that the Chinese did several months ago.

Velayati claimed that the Russians think they will have profitable economic ties with the Emirates if they support such irrelevant claims.

Earlier on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that issuing such statements is against friendly relations between Iran and its neighbors. The Russian Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov was then summoned to Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday and informed about Iran's protest over the content of the statement.