

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Deputy FM:
Iran's assets
in Iraq being
unblocked in
phases**

MEHR – The unblocking of Iranian funds in Iraq has commenced and is currently in progress, announced Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani.

Bagheri Kani revealed that following an agreement with the US regarding the release of frozen Iranian funds in South Korea, the matter of Iranian funds held in Iraq was also raised. The release process began three weeks ago, and is expected to gather momentum. He also expressed optimism that discussions on sanctions relief would be pursued more seriously.

**Qatari PM
hopes Iran-US
deal leads
to nuclear
dialogue**

REUTERS– Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said on Friday he hopes a recent prisoner exchange agreement his country facilitated between Iran and the United States leads to a wider dialogue on Iran's nuclear program.

"With Iran, we became a key mediator with the US in the prisoner swap agreement, which we hope will lead to a wider dialogue on the nuclear deal," he said.

**Denmark to
ban Qur'an
burnings**

● GETTY IMAGES

DW – Denmark's government has said it will ban the burning of holy texts, including the Qur'an. Denmark's Justice Minister Peter Hummelgaard said on Friday that the Scandinavian country would ban the burning of Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. The government has rejected objections put forward by some Danish opposition parties saying such a prohibition would infringe on free speech.

Iranian Army holds electronic warfare drill

A massive joint electronic warfare drill of various army units was held on Friday as domestically designed and manufactured equipment has boosted the country's prowess in electronic warfare.

Codenamed Separ-e Hafezan-e Velayat 1402 (Shield of Velayat's Guardians 1402), the drill aims to assess the performance and effectiveness of various fixed, mobile, ground-based and airborne electronic warfare systems, Press TV reported.

Units of the Iranian Army's Ground Force, Air Force, Navy and Air Defense participated in the war game that was held in the central areas of the country.

According to Friday's statement by the army, various tactics and operations have been successfully carried out during the drill, including identifying radio and data link communications, execution of group attack operations by micro aerial vehicles (MAVs) against defined targets, electronic operations to protect radars, and ground-based electronic operations to disrupt and deceive enemy radar systems.

Deputy Chief of Iran's Army for Coordination, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, said



on Thursday that the drill featured different types of indigenous electronic warfare systems, such as radars, drones, cyber and aerospace systems, manned and unmanned fighter jets, micro aerial vehicles, and fixed, mobile, land- and air-based systems. He said that electronic war-

fare is a vital aspect of modern and future wars and that the Iranian Army has focused on developing its human and technological resources in this

field over the past years. The army deputy chief said that the Iranian Army has achieved significant progress and achievements in design-

ing and manufacturing its own electronic warfare equipment, using its specialized knowledge, technical know-how and internal capabilities.

● IRIBNEWS

Trump released from Georgia jail on \$200k bond

Former US president Donald Trump was released on \$200,000 bond and returned to the airport for the trip back to New Jersey. According to jail records, Trump was freed on bond after undergoing the booking procedure at the Fulton County jail in Atlanta, republicworld.com reported.

The former US president was arrested and booked at the Fulton County jail on Thursday night in connection with the Georgia election subversion case.

He was in jail for roughly 20 minutes. His quick 20-minute booking resulted in a historic first: A mug shot of a former US president. Authorities issued a booking photo of Trump, dressed in a navy suit and crimson tie, aggressively scowling at the cameraman, with his eyebrows furrowed as he gazed into the lens.

He was unrepentant following his brief jail visit, insisting that he "did nothing wrong" and calling the case charging him of tampering with election results a "travesty of justice."

Trump's fourth surrender to authorities this year has grown

into a familiar election-season routine, belying the rare spectacle of a former president, and present candidate, being arrested on criminal charges. But, unlike the other three surrenders, his trip to Atlanta took place at nighttime and required him to attend a troubled jail instead of a courtroom. It happened not in a liberal stronghold like New York or Washington, but in the heart of a battleground state viewed as crucial to the 2024 presidential election, AP reported.

According to a person acquainted with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the procedures, unlike in other cities where he was not required to appear for a mug picture, a booking picture of him was taken.

His jail visit generated a stunning split-screen graphic during a 2024 Republican primary race in which he remains the front-runner, arriving one day after a debate in Milwaukee in which eight of his key contenders attempted to capitalise on the former president's absence by standing out from the pack.



Former US president Donald Trump is shown in a police booking mugshot released by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, after a Grand Jury brought back indictments against him and 18 of his allies in their attempt to overturn the state's 2020 election results in Atlanta, Georgia, US, on August 24, 2023. ● Fulton County Sheriff's Office/REUTERS

Kremlin calls accusations it killed Wagner boss 'absolute lie'

The Kremlin said that Western suggestions Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin had been killed on its orders were an "absolute lie".

Russia's aviation authority has said that Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, was on board a private jet which crashed on Wednesday evening northwest of Moscow with no survivors, Reuters reported.

However, the Kremlin has declined to definitively confirm his death, citing the need to wait for test results. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to the families of those killed in the crash on Thursday and spoke of Prigozhin in the past tense, breaking his silence after the incident which occurred exactly two months to the day after Prigozhin led a failed mutiny against army chiefs.

Putin cited "preliminary information" as indicating that Prigozhin and his top associates in the Wagner mercenary group had all been killed and, while praising Prigozhin, said he had also made some "serious mistakes."

Western politicians and commentators have suggested, without presenting evidence, that Putin ordered Prigozhin to be killed in order to punish him for launching the June 23-34 mutiny against the army's leadership which also represented the biggest challenge to Putin's own rule since he came to power in 1999.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the accusation and

many others like it were false.

"There is now a great deal of speculation surrounding this plane crash and the tragic deaths of the plane's passengers, including Yevgeny Prigozhin. Of course, in the West, all this speculation is presented from a well-known angle," Peskov told reporters.

"All of this is an absolute lie, and here, when covering this issue, it is necessary to base yourself on facts. There are not many facts yet. They need to be established in the course of investigative actions," he said.

Speaking after Wagner vowed revenge over the death of its leader, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky denied Ukrainian involvement in the reported death of the Wagner boss in the plane crash near Moscow. Zelensky denied that his nation was responsible adding that "everyone is aware of who is involved."

**Diplomatic norms
disregarded**

Earlier on Friday, Russian Depu-

ty Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov had scolded US President Joe Biden for expressing his lack of surprise that Prigozhin had been killed in a plane crash, accusing Biden of disregarding diplomatic norms.

Russian investigators have opened a probe into what happened, but have not yet said what they suspect caused the plane to suddenly fall from the sky northwest of Moscow.

Nor have they officially confirmed the identities of the 10 bodies recovered from the wreckage.

British military intelligence said on Friday there was not yet definitive proof that Prigozhin had been onboard but that it was "highly likely" he was dead.

The Pentagon has said its own initial assessment is that Prigozhin was killed.

Russia's Baza news outlet, which has good sources among law enforcement agencies, has reported that investigators are focusing on a theory that one or two bombs may have been planted on board the plane.



Wreckage of the plane that crashed near the town of Kuzhenkino, Russia. ● AFP