

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia-Saudi
Arabia rail
transit begins
via Iran

Economy Desk

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railway Mi'ad Salehi on Sunday announced the transit of a Russian cargo to Saudi Arabia via the Iran transport corridor for the first time. A container transit train, including 36 containers, entered the country at the Inchehborun rail border, Salehi said, according to Tasnim news agency. The official added that the cargo transit train was dispatched to Bandar Abbas after fulfilling customs formalities to be transferred from there to the Saudi Arabian port city of Jeddah.

Qatar's role
in release of
Iran's assets
commended

TASNIM - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said he appreciated Qatar for its role in the release of Iranian assets blocked in foreign countries. In a telephone conversation with his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on Saturday, he lauded the Qatari government's positive role and its high-ranking officials' constructive efforts in regional and international developments.

Hirmand
water rights

In a telephone conversation with Taliban's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi on Saturday, the Iranian foreign minister reasserted Iran's right to sharing water from the Hirmand (Helmand) River in Afghanistan. Amir-Abdollahian said that the Iranian technical delegations' visits to the water reserves in the neighboring country will lead to more transparency regarding the issue. He called for the continuation of close consultations between the two countries.

Iran unveils Cesium-137
radionuclide as new nuclear feat

AEOI: Enrichment continues based on strategic framework law

National Desk

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) unveiled a homegrown Cesium-137 radionuclide during a ceremony on Sunday, as the nuclear chief also announced that the nuclear enrichment continues based on the strategic framework law. The material, which is used for multiple medical and industrial purposes, was unveiled during an exhibition in Tehran on Sunday, in the presence of the head of the AEOI, Mohammad Eslami, Press TV reported.

Asked about reports regarding Tehran slowing down its enrichment, Eslami said that Iran's enrichment of uranium continues based on a framework established by the country's Parliament. In 2020, the Iranian Parliament passed a law requiring the government to take measures such as stepping up uranium enrichment beyond the limit set under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal if other parties did not fully comply with the deal. "Our nuclear enrichment

continues based on the strategic framework law," Eslami said, referring to a related legislation, Reuters reported. Under the nuclear agreement, Iran could only enrich uranium to 3.67%.

Cooperation with AEA

Eslami further announced that Iran keeps cooperating with the IAEA within the framework of the safeguards agreement and that four disputed sites have been reduced to two.

Iran and the IAEA are in a dispute triggered by the agency's Israeli-influenced accusations, which were leveled against Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities. The IAEA insisted on investigating what it claims to be "undeclared nuclear sites" in Iran. Eslami said that the negotiations aimed at resolving the dispute are advancing in the framework of the general policies of the Islamic Republic establishment.

"One of our urgent needs is nuclear diplomacy, especially with regional states,"



he said. "We hope to have sustainable nuclear cooperation with different countries."

Addressing the ceremony, Eslami also said that in addition to the nuclear fuel cycle, Iran is capable of designing, constructing, and maintaining nuclear reactors, noting that the country's nuclear industry has a direct role in people's lives.

The Iranian nuclear chief

also hailed the production of Cesium-137 radionuclide as an invaluable nuclear achievement that eliminates the country's reliance on other countries for the import of the substance.

The material used to be imported. Radionuclides (or radioisotopes) are radioactive atomic variations of elements. They are mostly produced by exposing suitable target materials to the

neutron flux in a nuclear reactor for an appropriate time.

With a half-life of 30 years, Cesium-137 radionuclide does not exist naturally and is mainly found in used nuclear fuel and radioactive waste.

It is used in radiation devices, brachytherapy, radiotherapy, calibration springs, and various types of industrial gauges.

The material is also re-



Iran unveils domestically-produced Cesium-137 radionuclide during an exhibition in Tehran on August 27, 2023.

● TASNIM

quired for radiating blood products, cosmetics, food, and other products. He said that the material can be used in industrial instrumentation systems, oil and gas fields, and other sectors.

Phase 11 of South Pars reaches gas production stage

Economic Desk

South Pars' Phase 11, the sole undeveloped section of the shared South Pars gas field, has reached the gas production phase, benefiting from governmental support and domestic resources. The

national project is to be officially launched today in Asaluyeh, in southern Iran, in the presence of President Ebrahim Raeisi.

Gas produced in Phase 11 will be transported from its offshore location in the Persian Gulf to the on-

shore processing facilities of Phase 12. Upon refinement, it will be injected into the national gas network, Tasnim news agency reported.

Announcing the inauguration of the project, Governor of Bushehr Province Ahmad Mohammadiza-

deh highlighted other operational projects in the Asaluyeh region, in the presence of the president and Minister of Oil Javad Owji.

The governor of Bushehr mentioned that Phase 11 of South Pars will be operational after two decades.

He said that with the start of Phase 11 of South Pars, the initial daily gas production of this phase will be 15 million cubic meters, increasing to 56 million cubic meters in subsequent phases.

Mohammadizadeh considered the production

of 50,000 barrels of gas condensate and 750 metric tons of sulfur per day as other features of Phase 11.

"With the inauguration of Phase 11 of South Pars, the chapter of the phases of this gas field will be closed," he concluded.

Concerns about Japan's action: Skepticism remains on
Fukushima water despite report of no detectable radioactivity

A view of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant after it started releasing treated radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean, seen from the nearby Ukeda fishing port in Namie town, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, Aug. 25, 2023.

● TOM BATEMAN/REUTERS

International Desk

Japan's move to release treated radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant raises alarm as concerns grow over the potential ramifications of this action. This comes even as the Japanese environment ministry stated no detectable radioactivity in seawater near the plant.

Despite objections both domestically and internationally, Japan com-

menced the process on Thursday, prompting protests at home and from neighboring countries, including China, which banned aquatic product imports from Japan.

Although the Japanese environment ministry reported no detectable radioactivity in seawater near the plant on Sunday, skepticism remains, as the water contains only tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen, according to Japan and scientific organizations.

On Sunday, days after authorities began discharging into the sea treated water used to cool damaged reactors, the ministry said that tests of seawater near the nuclear power plant have not detected any radioactivity, Reuters reported.

Japan and scientific organizations say the water is safe after being filtered

to remove most radioactive elements except for tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen.

Because tritium is difficult to separate from water, the Fukushima water is diluted until tritium levels fall below regulatory limits.

The ministry's tests of samples from 11 points near the plant showed concentrations of tritium below the lower limit of detection - 7 to 8 becquerels of tritium per litre, the ministry said, adding that it "would have no adverse impact on human health and the environment".

Monitoring would be carried out "with a high level of objectivity, transparency, and reliability" to prevent adverse impacts on Japan's reputation. Environment Minister Akihiro Nishimura said in a statement. The ministry would pub-

lish test results every week for the next three months at least, an official said.

Japan's fisheries agency said tests of fish from near the plant did not show any abnormalities. Its test on Saturday found no detectable levels of tritium.

Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power said on Friday seawater near the plant contained less than 10 becquerels of tritium per litre, below its self-imposed limit of 700 becquerels and far below the World Health Organization's limit of 10,000 becquerels for drinking water. Tepco said on Sunday it had not detected any significant change. Fukushima prefecture also published tests from nine locations near the plant that showed tritium below limits. Tepco is storing about

1.3m tonnes of the contaminated water, enough to fill 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools, in tanks on the site.

The release of the first 7,800 cubic metres, equivalent to about three Olympic pools, will take about 17 days. It is estimated it will take about 30 years to release it all.

Japanese offices have received a barrage of telephone calls, apparently from China, complaining about the water release, the foreign ministry said, adding that it had asked the Chinese embassy in Japan to call on the public in China to remain calm. Also on Saturday, protesters gathered in the capital of South Korea to demand that the government take steps to avoid what they fear is a looming disaster from Japan's release of water from the nuclear power plant.