

NEWS IN BRIEF

Baku seeking to resolve differences with Tehran: *Hajiyev*

REPORT NEWS AGENCY – Head of Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy Department of the Presidential Administration Hikmat Hajiyev said Iran is a neighboring country and Azerbaijan's policy is to maintain stable and mutually beneficial relations with all neighbors. "There was a certain misunderstanding and miscommunication between Iran and Azerbaijan. But through some diplomatic channels we are trying to resolve that and we are also receiving positive signals from the Iranian side," Hajiyev said in an interview with the Israeli i24NEWS TV.

"We are also engaged diplomatically with our Iranian counterparts to turn that page and establish a much more favorable atmosphere for cooperation for our wider region and bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran," Hajiyev added.

The relations became strained in January when Azerbaijan's Embassy in Tehran came under attack. Azerbaijan termed the attack a "terrorist" incident, although a probe has shown that the attacker had been motivated by "personal and family-related problems." Tehran has slammed Baku for its partnership with the Israeli regime towards the establishment of a united front against the Islamic Republic.

Iran after joint action with KSA to tackle sand storms

TASNIM – Iran is pursuing collaborative efforts with Saudi Arabia to address the issue of sand and dust storms originating from Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter Desert, as stated by the head of the Iranian Department of the Environment, Ali Salajegheh.

Salajegheh revealed that the Empty Quarter, situated in the south of Saudi Arabia, is responsible for approximately one-third of the sand and dust storms that enter Iran through its southwestern borders, affecting vast regions of the country during dry seasons. He conveyed during an interview with ILNA, "Based on recent bilateral discussions, it has been agreed to undertake joint initiatives to combat the sources of sand and dust in this desert."

Major railway project launched in eastern Iran



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (2nd L) orders start of construction of a major railway project in Birjand, South Khorasan Province, on September 6, 2023. **FARS**

Construction works have started for a major railway project in Iran's arid eastern regions upon an order by Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi. The project that started on Wednesday will connect the

cities of Nehbandan to Yunesi in Iran's province of South Khorasan with a railway that stretches nearly 400 kilometers in the arid deserts along Iran's border with Afghanistan, according to Press TV. Raeisi said in a speech in the

provincial capital of Birjand that the railway will play a major role in the economic empowering of the region, adding that the government had earmarked all the financial and technical resources needed for the completion of

the project.

The Nehbandan-Yunesi rail link passes through Birjand and several major cities in South Khorasan and is part of a 910-kilometer railway corridor between Zahedan, in southeast, and Mashhad in

northeast Iran. Head of the Iranian transportation ministry's local department in Birjand said that the government will use oil barter financing mechanisms to fund the project.

Mir Mohammad Moudi said that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had approved a government request to use 1,800 trillion rials (\$360 million) worth of oil barter financing resources to fund the railway project in the region. Iran has an ambitious plan to link its only ocean port of Chabahar on the Sea of Oman via railways to landlocked countries in Central Asia. The project would significantly boost Iran's cargo transit capacity via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

Construction is already underway for a railway connection between Chabahar and Zahedan with a first part of the link due to be opened until the end of the calendar year to March.

Iran attracted \$6.7b in investment during EXPO event: *Official*

Iran's chief economic diplomat said foreign companies and governments committed to some \$6.7 billion worth of investment in Iran during an investment opportunity exhibition that was held in early May in Tehran.

Mehdi Safari, who leads economic diplomacy department of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, said on Thursday that Iran seeks to break new records in foreign investment attraction and even go beyond the milestone figures recorded during the Iran EXPO 2023 event that was held on May 7-10, Press TV reported. Safari said Iran has an ambitious vision to diversify its economy away from crude oil revenues, including by expanding the transportation infrastructure in the country to significantly increase



its cargo transit revenues.

He said a target has been set to increase the volume of cargo transit via Iran to 90 million metric tons (mt) per year, including some 60 million mt in East-West transit, adding that the country expects that could generate up to \$100 billion in transit fees each year.

The senior diplomat said Iran has been trying to expand its fleet operating in shipping routes in

the Caspian Sea to help increase the flow of cargo on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) that passes through the Iranian territory.

Safari added that Iran's efforts to expand routes along the INSTC will focus on the completion of the Rasht-Astara railway, a major project kicked off earlier this year with Russian investment, although he insisted efforts will not only be limited to that project.

Iran rejects Japanese-Arab statement about Persian Gulf islands

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry in a statement denounced a joint statement from the ministerial meeting of Arab-Japan Political Dialogue about three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf, saying that the islands are an eternal part of Iranian territory. The Foreign Ministry's spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that their statement about the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb lacks any political or legal value, and is in violation of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs of countries and respect for their territorial integrity. The third session of the ministerial meeting of the Arab-Japan Political Dialogue was held in the Egyptian capital of Cairo on September 5, 2023. Regarding the three Irani-

an islands in the Persian Gulf, the ministers attending the event called for efforts "to reach a peaceful solution through bilateral negotiations as per the provisions of international law and the UN Charter." The three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. The islands fell under British control in 1921, but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored. The statement by the Arab



countries also claimed that the Arash gas field in the Persian Gulf is exclusively owned by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and they alone have the right to its natural resources.

Nasser Kanaani has earlier said Iran will not tolerate a violation of the nation's rights over the gas field. He has stressed that the country has always adhered to "the path of dialogue and consensus" about the operation of the oil and gas fields shared with its neighbors.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran will 'do its utmost' to put MKO members on trial

Iran's top human rights official said the Islamic Republic will take all necessary measures to put on trial the members of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MKO) terrorist group.

Kazem Gharibabadi, secretary of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, made the remarks in an interview with the Arabic-language Al-Alam television news network. Gharibabadi said that the MKO terrorist group, like other terror outfits, is based in Western countries

and enjoys full support of certain Western states.

"We believe that Westerners draw on these groups as a tool in order to reach their foreign policy objectives. These terrorist groups lack the capacity to play a supporting role for the foreign policy of the West and the United States as their advocates," the top Iranian official said.

He said the MKO terrorists must be accountable for their criminal actions, noting that they have martyred more than 17,000 in-

nocent people in different parts of Iran.

Gharibabadi also pointed to the decision by Branch 1 of Tehran's Criminal Court to bring to trial 104 MKO members, including the ringleader of the terror cult Maryam Rajavi, stating that the deadline for them to introduce defense lawyers to the court expired a few days ago. The top Iranian rights official said the decision to openly hold the trial of the MKO members for their terrorist actions depends on the court itself.