

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq hustles to honor security pledge

International Desk

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein reassured Iran on Tuesday that Baghdad remains committed to and has taken steps to honor its security agreement with Tehran regarding the expulsion of anti-Iran terrorist groups from its semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

In one such effort, Iraq's National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji discussed the implementation of the security deal in a meeting with the interior minister of the Iraqi Kurdistan region Rebar Ahmed Khalid Barzani. The two sides stressed the need to pursue the orders of the prime minister of Iraq and eliminate Iran's security concerns.

Swedish national broke law: Judiciary spox

IRNA - Iran's Judiciary Spokesman Masoud Setayeshi confirmed that the Swedish citizen who works for the European Union has been arrested for committing crimes on Iranian territory, and his case will soon be sent to court.

Johan Floderus, who works for the European External Action Service, was reportedly arrested on espionage charges in April 2022, while on a private trip to Iran. Setayeshi also announced that a French woman and man were arrested on espionage charges.

Raeisi: Tehran will spend \$6b 'wherever we need'

US to release five Iranian prisoners



In an interview aired on September 12, 2023, Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (R) speaks with NBC News' Lester Holt in Tehran, Iran. **NBC NEWS**

International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi said his government will decide how it will spend \$6 billion in previously frozen funds due to be released in a prisoner exchange agreement with the United States, stressing that the money will be spent "wherever we need it".

In an exclusive interview with NBC News' Lester Holt in Tehran aired on Tuesday, Raeisi suggested that the Americans held in Iran would be coming home soon, saying that the US-Iran prisoner exchange deal would be completed in "due time" and that the

American detainees were in "very healthy" condition.

Under the arrangement, Tehran will be granted access to the roughly \$6 billion in Iranian oil revenues that were blocked in South Korean banks because of US sanctions. But US officials say Qatar's central bank will oversee the funds and Iran will only be permitted to use the money for humanitarian purposes in accordance with US sanctions.

However, when asked if the money would be used for other purposes apart from humanitarian needs, Raeisi emphasized, "Humanitarian means whatever

the Iranian people need. So, this money will be budgeted for those needs, and the needs of the Iranian people will be decided and determined by the Iranian government."

Five Iranian prisoners to be freed

The incumbent US administration has cleared the way for the implementation of the deal by issuing a blanket waiver for international banks to transfer \$6 billion in frozen Iranian money from South Korea to Qatar without fear of US sanctions. In addition, as part of the deal, the administration has agreed to release five Iranian citizens

held in the United States. Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed off on the sanctions waivers late last week, a month after US and Iranian officials said an agreement in principle was in place. Congress was not informed of the waiver decision until Monday, according to the notification, which was obtained by The Associated Press. The outlines of the deal had been previously announced and the waiver was expected. But the notification marked the first time the administration said it was releasing five Iranian prisoners as part of the deal. The prisoners have not been named.

The waiver drew criticism of President Joe Biden from Republicans and others who say the deal will boost the Iranian economy. Former President Donald Trump on Monday criticized President Joe Biden for striking the deal, calling for the Republicans to invoke the 25th Amendment, according to The Messenger. The 25th Amendment establishes procedures for replacing the president or vice president in the event of death, removal, or incapacitation. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said the waivers were a sign the administration was secretly pursuing a broader deal

with Iran to include more than the release of the detainees.

The waiver means that European, Middle Eastern, and Asian banks will not run afoul of US sanctions in converting the money frozen in South Korea and transferring it to Qatar's central bank, where it will be held for Iran to use for the purchase of humanitarian goods.

Iran's Ambassador to Doha Hamidreza Dehghani-Podeh announced that the implementation of the prisoner swap with the United States and the release of Iranian assets is in its final stages, Mehr news agency wrote.

Mexico, Iran joined hands will raise bilateral trade: Ambassador

By Sadeq Dehqan & Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writers

Mexico and Iran should join hands to boost bilateral trade, said United Mexican States Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran Guillermo Alejandro Puente Ordorica adding that the main obstacle in the development of economic cooperation between the two countries is the imposed sanctions on Tehran. Talking to Iran Daily, the envoy noted that another factor that has left a negative impact on the amount of economic exchanges between all countries, including Iran and Mexico, is the COVID pandemic, which has been over for about two years, but eco-

conomic exchanges have not returned to the previous level. "Tehran and Mexico City can cooperate in many areas including tourism, oil and oil products, health, and auto parts to increase the amount of commercial exchanges," Puente stated.

Referring to the sanctions, the ambassador of Mexico said his country's stance regarding the sanctions against Tehran is completely clear. "Sanctions should be legal and based on the international law, as all countries should be treated fairly and in an equivalent way."

Diplomatic amity

Puente pointed to the establishment of constructive discourses between Iran

and his country, and said the Tehran-Mexico City relations should be expanded in numerous fields.

Regarding the history of relations between the two countries, he noted that there are both old and new relations between Iran and Mexico.

"The old relations are due to the fact that it has started in the late 19th century. On the other hand, the relations between the two countries are considered new because this year marks the 59th official anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries," the top diplomat explained.

Two countries can cooperate with each other in many fields, including cultural fields, science and research and technology, Puente said adding that in his opinion, Iran has capabilities in various sectors that Mexico can take help from Iran to operate in the sectors, and on the other hand, Mexico enjoys its own potentials that Iranians can benefit from.

"Currently, the two countries are supporting each other in candidacy in various international bodies

and institutions. As a result, it can be said that the will of cooperation between the two countries is established, but we must explore more to find ways of cooperation in other fields."

More planning on agenda

In the near future, a joint meeting will be held at the level of the ministries of foreign affairs in Tehran, the envoy announced noting that such a joint meeting has been held in the past and this time it will be hosted by Tehran, although the exact time has not been determined yet.

Establishing an inter-parliamentary dialogue between Iran and Mexico is another issue that efforts have been made recently, the envoy said adding that in this regard, about two months ago four Mexican MPs of the Iran-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Group visited Iran to discuss with their Iranian counterparts. On the other hand, a parliamentary delegation from Iran is scheduled to travel to Mexico in October. Establishing such diplo-

matic and political ties and visits indicates the political will of both sides to bring the two countries closer to each other, Puente stated. Pointing to the similarities between the capitals of the two countries, the envoy explained: Mexico City and Tehran are structurally very similar to each other; In general, both are considered megacities and according to this, their problems are indeed common to each other. "Mexico City enjoys valuable experiences in the field of fighting air pollution, how to equip public transportation, urban waste management, as well as the issue of earthquakes, as these experiences are also beneficial for Tehran." Regarding the earthquake in Mexico City, many measures have been taken that can be shared with the city hall officials of Tehran, as we know that many people in Tehran are concerned about the earthquake and its consequences, the ambassador said. In the mentioned fields, there has been no cooperation between the two countries so far, Puente noted adding that "As the

ambassador of Mexico, I am interested in launching such cooperation so that the people and governments of the two countries can benefit from its results."

