

Raisi: Zangezur corridor lays groundwork for NATO in Caucasus

International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi maintained that the Zangezur corridor lays the groundwork for NATO's presence in the Caucasus, making it a threat to the national security of the region. Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president's deputy chief of staff for political affairs, tweeted that Raisi once again stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly opposed the opening of the corridor in separate meetings with representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Raisi received Khalaf Khalafov, the representative of the president of Azerbaijan on special assignments, as well as Armen Valerii Grigoryan, the secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia, on Wednesday. Baku has been pushing to

carve out a chunk of land located within Syunik Province of Armenia to open the crossing called Zangezur that would obliterate Iran's border with Armenia. However, based on the principles of territorial integrity upheld by international law, Armenia holds the rightful authority over this passage. Earlier in the day, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri also met with Grigoryan, declaring Iran's readiness to dispatch observers to the Armenia-Azerbaijan borders. Baqeri emphasized that the ongoing tension in the region is not beneficial for Armenia, Azerbaijan, or other regional countries, IRNA reported. He also advocated for resolving these differences and tensions and offered Iran's assistance in this regard, stating that any

enhancement in defense power and military capabilities should not be driven by aggressive intentions. Baqeri underscored that regional peace is in everyone's interest and should be safeguarded by regional countries, warning against the presence of trans-regional forces, as it contradicts regional peace. He also criticized foreign policies that promote disintegration and unrest, urging regional countries to resolve their issues through dialogue. In response to the recent US military drill in Armenia, Baqeri expressed concern that the involvement of new external actors could make matters more complex and unstable in the region. For his part, Grigoryan provided an update on the developments in the Caucasus.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with Khalaf Khalafov, the representative of the president of Azerbaijan, in a meeting in Tehran, on October 4, 2023. [president.ir](#)



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) shakes hands with the Secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia Armen Valerii Grigoryan in a meeting in Tehran, on October 4, 2023. [president.ir](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Others not allowed to damage Iran-Iraq ties: Rashid



National Desk

IRNA – Iraq's President Abdul Latif Rashid said strong relations with Tehran is of great importance for Baghdad.

In an interview with an Iraqi TV network, Rashid underscored that Iraq will not allow other countries to damage relations between Tehran and Baghdad.

He also answered a question about negative impacts of the ongoing tensions between Iran and the US on Iraq, saying that Iraq and Iran share a 1,400-kilometer border, and relations with Iran is important to Baghdad. Rashid added that Baghdad is cooperating with Washington in many fields, especially in science and economy. He said that Iraq is an independent country and its independence is more important than any agreement with countries.

Referring to a recent relocation of anti-Iran groups in Iraq, he said that Iran and Iraq have begun negotiations to further protect the common border.

Army's drones destroy all targets during drill



The spokesman of the Iranian Army's joint exercise said homegrown kamikaze and combat drones have successfully hit all their targets during the maneuver. Brigadier General Alireza Sheikh said on Wednesday that the anti-radar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) Omid detected its target in the drill that is being held in seven border provinces by four divisions of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army.

Also, the Arash zamikaze drone successfully annihilated land and sea targets, he added. Sheikh described the use of smart bombs as one of the main features of the exercise. "During the drill, kamikaze and combat drone systems were able to hit all predicted targets in a pinpointed manner using smart ammunition," he said. The drill saw the mass flight of UAVs from various ground, underground and sea bases to carry out operations which were unprecedented in scope. "The ability of mass flights using artificial intelligence is one of the innovative measures in the Islamic Republic of Iran Army's operation of drones," he said. Meanwhile, in an aerial battle, a drone targeted another with a missile and destroyed it, head of Air Defense Force Brig. Gen. Alireza Sabahifard said.

ISA to launch a bio-space capsule by March 19

National Desk Head of Iran's Space Agency (ISA) Hassan Salarieh revealed plans for the launch of a bio-space capsule by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2024). Salarieh unveiled the initiative during a press conference held at the ISA headquarters on Wednesday, marking World Space Week, according to Tasnim news agency.



"We are making strides in space biology," he emphasized, as he noted a long hiatus in bio-space capsule launches.

Iran previously launched rockets carrying two monkeys into space on separate occasions in 2010 and 2011, in what Iranian officials called "a prelude to sending humans to space". During the press conference, Salarieh highlighted that the ongoing projects of ISA align with Iran's decade-long plan. "In satellite design and production, work on Pars-2 and Pars-3 observation satellites has commenced in collaboration with the Space Research Institute," he stated. Salarieh revealed that the construction of the Pars-2 observation satellite has already started, and the conceptual designs for Pars-3 are complete. "Our nation has achieved higher levels of precision in microsatellite design and production. The Nahid-2 telecommunication satellite serves as a successful example of this qualitative achievement," he added.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



IAEA inspectors expelled over their countries' hostile stances: Nuclear chief

National Desk Iran's nuclear chief said the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), who were expelled from Iran in September, were from three European countries that had repeatedly adopted hostile political stances against Tehran. Mohammad Eslami said that the IAEA has 127 verified inspectors in Iran, and those who were expelled had not visited Iran for several years. Eslami noted that the European countries want Iran to

unilaterally implement all the terms of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal while they do not fulfill any of their obligations. Iran's move, known as "de-designation" of inspectors, is allowed; member states can generally veto inspectors assigned to visit their nuclear facilities under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and each country's safeguards agreement with the agency governing inspections. But the IAEA said Tehran's decision went beyond normal practice. It said Iran

had told the agency that it would bar "several" inspectors, without giving an exact number. Iran defended its move and accused the US, Britain, France and Germany of politicizing the IAEA watchdog. "Unfortunately, despite Iran's positive, constructive and continuous interaction with the agency, the three European countries and the United States abused the (IAEA's) Board of Governors for their own political purposes," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani.

Over 320k Afghan migrants repatriated



IRNA – Iran said that about 328,000 Afghan immigrants who had illegally entered Iran during the past months were repatriated to their country from Razavi Khorasan Province. The province's border guard commander Brigadier General Majid Shoja added that 44,000 Afghans who tried to illegally enter Iran were arrested and were sent back to Afghanistan during the same period. He said that 488,000 people have legally entered the country during the period. Shoja added that 2,600 kilograms of various narcotics were discovered in the first half of the Iranian year. The latest case was recently discovered with 100 kilograms of industrial narcotics.