

## US concern for regional security 'ironic': Iran

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman has lambasted as "blatant hypocrisy" Washington's professed concern about West Asia's security given its unflinching support for Israel's genocidal war in the besieged Gaza Strip. Nasser Kanaani made the remarks in a statement on Wednesday in response to recent comments by US national security adviser Jake Sullivan, who said Washington is in talks with other countries about the formation of a task force in the Red Sea to protect maritime security in the region, Press TV reported.

The Yemeni Armed Forces have attacked and seized a number of Israeli-owned vessels and Israeli-affiliated tankers off the country's coasts in the Red Sea, in reprisal for the regime's US-backed war against Palestinians in Gaza.

"Contrary to US officials' claims, the military presence of that country in the region's lands and waters has never been a source of security, and the US government, with its illegal plots and interventions, has pursued the security and illegitimate interests of the Zionist regime at the cost of destabilizing regional countries and violating the rights of the Palestinian nation," Kanaani said.

He stressed that the responsibility of providing security in West Asia lies with the regional countries, and can only be achieved through collective cooperation of regional countries, without foreign intervention.

In another statement on Wednesday, Kanaani dismissed as "unacceptable" some paragraphs of the final communiqué of the 44th meeting of the heads of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Doha, Qatar, concerning the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The council's leaders reiterated previous claims that the three Iranian islands of Greater and Lesser Tunbs, and Abu Musa belong to the United Arab Emirates, supporting the UAE's sovereignty rights over the three Persian Gulf islands.

# Iran puts into orbit bio-space capsule aboard indigenous launcher

Iran has successfully put into orbit its bio-space capsule with the domestically-built Salman launcher.

The 500-kilogram capsule, developed by the Aerospace Research Institute of Iran, affiliated to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, was launched to an altitude of 130 kilometers from the Earth's surface on Wednesday, Press TV reported.

The launch is a step to send humans into space, in line with the Iranian government's plan to revive various sectors of the space industry and consolidate bio-space knowledge.

It was a test for space technologies in the areas of launch, recovery and speed control systems, as well as impact shields, capsule aerodynamic design, and the systems related to control and monitoring of biological conditions.

The Salman launcher is manufactured by the Aerospace Industries

Organization, a subsidiary of the Iranian Defense Ministry. It is capable of launching bio-capsules weighing 500 kilograms.

Spokesman for the Aerospace Research Institute Hossein Dalirian said several bio-capsules systems were tested for the first time, and that the launcher, which was the first version, "performed very well" at its first launch.

He said the Salman launcher achieved great success and carried the 500-kilogram capsule in very good condition.

"This capsule is the result of relying on domestic power and the efforts of space industry experts in the Ministry of Defense."

Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has managed to take giant strides in its civilian space program.

Iran sent its first bio-capsule containing living creatures into space in February 2010, using a Kavosh-

gar (Explorer) carrier.

Speaking to Fars news agency, Iran's Telecoms Minister Issa Zarepour said Tehran will soon conduct suborbital tests of the new generation of bio-capsules, hoping that they will bring the country closer to its space goals. The capsule launched on Wednesday "is about half a ton and has the ability to carry a human, and its suborbital tests are underway," he added.

"It should be taken into account that we are still five to six years away from reaching the point where we can send humans into space."

Zarepour also noted that the Islamic Republic is trying to revitalize works in the field of launching biological capsules after a 10-year hiatus.

Iran is among the top 10 countries leading the space industry, and among the seven leading the bio-space industry.



● IRNA

## GCC claim on Arash gas field rejected



● IRNA

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani denounced the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) statement regarding Iran's Arash gas field, calling it "unacceptable" and rejected it.

The statement considers the ownership of the joint Arash gas field belongs to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Leaders of the member countries claimed that only these two countries have the right to use the gas field resources, mfa.gov.ir reported.

The council called on Tehran to resolve the issue through direct negotiations with the UAE, or through international courts.

Kanaani added that the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistent-

ly adhered to its commitments to international laws, within the framework of rights and obligations, and continues its constructive cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, based on the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. The spokesman added, based on bilateral negotiations with the Kuwaiti government and our negotiation history, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently emphasized friendly and constructive cooperation in the energy sector, including in the Arash region.

Referring to the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at strengthening relations with neighbors, within the framework of good

neighborliness, mutual respect, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, Kanaani underscored our country's commitment to achieving a stable, secure, and prosperous region through cooperation with neighbors and rejecting foreign interventions.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia announced in early 2022 that they had reached an agreement to jointly produce one billion cubic feet (28.3 million cubic meters) per day of natural gas, and 84,000 barrels per day of condensates from the Arash gas field, also known as Durra.

That caused Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji to post a tweet at the time to say that Iran will soon install a drilling jacket at Arash field to resume development operations that had been halted in 2001, after Kuwait threatened to lodge a complaint against Iran in international courts.

The maritime border demarcation dispute between Iran and Kuwait dates back to more than 60 years ago.

Some estimates suggest more than 70 percent of the resources of the disputed gas field, which is believed to contain up to 60 trillion cubic feet (1.7 trillion cubic meters) of gas, lie in waters claimed by Iran.

## Boosting Iran-Oman economic ties crucial: VP

National Desk

Iran's First Vice President has considered industrial and mining collaborations, especially the establishment of industrial estates, as crucial to enhancing relations with Oman.

In a meeting with Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Development, Mohammad Mokhber said that resolving banking and financial issues, easing licensing procedures, and facilitating the movement of trade delegations would create opportunities for investment and trade between the two countries, ISNA reported.

Emphasizing the strong deter-

mination of Iran and Oman's senior officials to deepen economic and trade ties, Mokhber highlighted the need for a swift roadmap for economic cooperation between Tehran and Muscat.

The Omani minister, in turn, stressed the importance of exploring new avenues and solutions for expanding Iran-Oman trade and economic relations. He also commended the positive measures taken in the past two years, including using national currencies in transactions, addressing customs issues, joint commercial projects, industrial and mining investments, and collaboration in the energy sector and shared gas fields.



● ISNA

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Gazans living in 'utter, deepening horror': UN

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are living in "utter, deepening horror", the UN human rights chief said Wednesday, as he pleaded for an immediate cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

Volker Turk said there was a high risk of atrocity crimes being committed in such "catastrophic" humanitarian circumstances. "Civilians in Gaza continue to be relentlessly bombarded by Israel and collectively punished - suffering death, siege, destruction and deprivation of the most essential human needs such as food, water, lifesaving medical supplies and other essentials on a massive scale," he told a press conference. "Palestinians in Gaza are living in utter, deepening horror."

He said 1.9 million of the Palestinian enclave's 2.2 million people had been displaced and were being pushed into "ever-diminishing and extremely overcrowded places in southern Gaza, in

unsanitary and unhealthy conditions." "The catastrophic situation we see unfolding in the Gaza Strip was entirely foreseeable and preventable.

### Atrocity crimes

"In these circumstances, there is a heightened risk of atrocity crimes," the United Nations high commissioner for human rights said.

"As an immediate step, I call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and the release of all hostages," he said, adding: "you need to come back to your senses". Nearly 16,250 people have been killed in Israeli attacks in Gaza, most of them women and children. About 900 people in Gaza were killed in Israeli airstrikes between Friday when a truce ended and Monday.

Israeli troops fought fierce battles with Hamas fighters in southern Gaza on Wednesday after reaching the heart of the city of Khan Younis, forcing Pal-

estinian civilians to seek refuge elsewhere as the number of safe areas decreases.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas and free 138 captives still held after scores were released during a short-lived truce.

### Dehumanizing statements

Turk said he was gravely concerned by "dehumanizing and inciteful statements" made by current and former Israeli officials, as well as Hamas figures. "History has shown us where this kind of language can lead," he said.

Turk said the human rights crisis in the occupied West Bank was also "extremely alarming", calling for Israeli authorities to take immediate steps to end "widespread impunity" for violations. "The only way to end the accumulative sufferings is ending the occupation and achieving the two-state solution," he said.