

Iran: No obstacle to Tehran-Washington economic cooperation

'Tehran in contact with JCPOA signatories'

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said that there has been no obstacle to economic cooperation between Iran and the US, blaming Washington for the lack of such cooperation.

During his weekly press conference on Monday, Baqaei said it is the US itself that, through complex legislation, has deprived its own citizens of investment in Iran.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian earlier said that Tehran has no objection to American investors doing business in Iran.

The Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has also pointed to the issue in an article published by the Washington Post, saying that Iran is not opposed to Americans' investment in Iran.

"There is a serious misconception that needs to be cleared up. Many in Washington portray Iran as a closed country from an economic point of view. The truth is that we are open to welcoming businesses from around the world. It is the US administrations and congressional impediments, not Iran, that have

kept American enterprises away from the trillion-dollar opportunity that access to our economy represents," Araghchi said.

"Indeed, when the United States agreed to license the sale of passenger aircraft as a part of the JCPOA (2015 nuclear agreement), Iran immediately negotiated a contract with Boeing to buy 80 planes. To say that the scope for trade and investment in Iran is unparalleled is an understatement," Iran's top diplomat added.

Since Saturday, Tehran and Washington have begun new negotiations to resolve a longstanding dispute over Iran's nuclear program, which if successful, the two countries could see a boost in their economic cooperation. The first round of the talks were held in Oman's capital, Muscat. The two countries described the negotiations as "positive and constructive" and agreed to resume the negotiations on Saturday.

Rome to host 2nd round of talks

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said on Monday that the second round of nuclear talks will be held in Rome. "We received a request from the inter-

ested parties and from Oman, which is playing the role of mediator, and we have given a positive response," Tajani was quoted by ANSA as saying at the world Expo exhibition in the Japanese city of Osaka.

US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that he expected to make a decision on Iran very quickly.

Trump, who has threatened military action if no deal is reached on Iran's nuclear program, told reporters aboard Air Force One that he met with advisers on Iran and expected a quick decision.

"We'll be making a decision on Iran very quickly," he said.

Foreign Ministry's spokesman also confirmed that Iran continued to engage with the other signatories of the 2015 nuclear deal from which the US withdrew in 2018.

"From a legal standpoint, the JCPOA (2015 nuclear agreement) is a living and existing agreement," he said, adding that Tehran remained committed to consultations within its framework.

Araghchi to visit Russia

He announced that Araghchi is scheduled to visit Russia later this week in a



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei speaks during his weekly press conference in Tehran on April 14, 2025.

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trip that was planned in advance, but would also include discussions related to US-Iran talks.

In parallel, Iran has continued its European consultations, including during a recent visit by senior diplomat Majid Takht-Ravanchi to Europe, the official stated.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on Monday welcomed talks but

insisted Europe would be "vigilant" its security concerns were taken into account.

"We very much welcome this step, but we will be vigilant with our British and German friends and partners to ensure that any negotiations that may be undertaken are consistent with our security interests," Barrot said at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Luxembourg.

IAEA chief due in Tehran on Wednesday

Grossi: Diplomatic solutions 'urgently needed' on Iran nuclear issue

International Desk

The head of the UN nuclear watchdog, Rafael Grossi, will arrive in Tehran on Wednesday for discussions with senior Iranian officials ahead of new round of talks between Iran and the United States.

During his visit, Grossi is set to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), IRNA reported on Monday, citing Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

"The trip falls within the framework of ongoing interaction and cooperation between the two sides," he added.

Grossi also in a post on X acknowledged that he will travel to Tehran this week to discuss cooperation on the country's nuclear program, saying that diplomatic solutions were "urgently needed".

"Continued engagement and cooperation with the Agency is essential at a time when diplomatic solutions are urgently needed," Grossi said.



Rafael Grossi
AP

Back in March, Gharibabadi and Grossi held a meeting at the IAEA headquarters in Vienna where they discussed the Iran-IAEA cooperation, the resolution of two outstanding issues, the security of nuclear facilities, the latest developments surrounding the nuclear issue, and the lifting of sanctions on Iran.

Currently, Iran and the IAEA are in a dispute triggered by the agency's claims of "uranium traces" found at "undeclared nuclear sites" in Iran.

Iran has categorically rejected the accusations regarding undeclared nuclear activities or materials. Tehran maintains it is prepared to cooperate with the IAEA to settle disputes.

Algeria orders expulsion of French officials amid rocky relations

Algeria on Monday ordered a dozen French officials to leave the country within 48 hours, increasing diplomatic tension between the two countries.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot asserted on Monday that the order is linked to the recent arrest of three Algerian nationals suspected of kidnapping a high-profile critic of the Algerian government in Paris last year, Al Jazeera reported.

Barrot asked the Algerian authorities to "abandon these expulsion measures", saying if they persisted with their decision, France would have no choice but to "respond immediately".

A diplomatic source told the AFP news agency that the 12 included some members of the French Ministry of the Interior.

Last week, French prosecutors indicted three Algerians, including a consular official, on suspicion of involvement in the kidnapping of Amir Boukhors.

The men, who were placed in pre-trial detention, are also being

prosecuted for "terrorist" conspiracy.

An opponent of the Algerian government, the social media influencer has more than one million followers on TikTok under the name of "Amir DZ".

Boukhors, who was granted asylum by France in 2023, was taken in a Paris suburb in April last year and released the following day, according to his lawyer.

Algiers is demanding he return to face trial, having issued nine international arrest warrants against him on accusations of fraud and terror offenses.

The diplomatic spat threatens to upend recent efforts to normalize strained relations between France and its former North African colony, including a visit to Algeria by Barrot a week ago.

Last July, French President Emmanuel Macron angered Algeria by recognizing a plan for the autonomy of the Western Sahara region under Moroccan sovereignty. Tensions mounted further last month when an Algerian court



AFP

sentenced French-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal to five years in jail for undermining national unity, prompting a call for his freedom from Macron.

Just last week, following talks with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Barrot had declared that ties were back to normal.

The French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs said on Monday that should Algiers follow through with its order, it would be the first expulsion of French diplomats since Algeria gained independence in 1962.

Talks could be ...

Chief negotiator Araghchi is one of the most consummate diplomats in the Foreign Ministry, having seen through the lengthy JCPOA talks and served in various governments. I believe he can steer the process with prudence.

Iranian lawmakers are standing firmly behind the negotiators, fully aware that the table is more than a place for talks—it is a battleground. Iran is going toe-to-toe not just with the US, but also with European powers like France, the UK, and Germany, who are now pushing for the snapback of sanctions on Iran. Most international actors seem to be steering clear of muddying the waters, recognizing that both Iran and the US are key global players.

Iran, in particular, holds massive sway in the Middle East, and if a war were to break out in the region, the fallout would hit home for many. Even Europe has come to see that the stakes of these negotiations extend far beyond Tehran or Washington and the outcome can either strengthen or threaten the interests of all countries.

Iran offers a lucrative, untapped market—with 85 million people and vast geography—and European firms have their eyes on it. A successful deal would rev up business and investment, especially for economies still reeling from the Ukraine conflict. No wonder European countries are not in the mood to rock the boat and sabotage the talks. This could very well turn out to be

a win-win negotiation, but only if the US refrains from turning it into political theater. Washington must avoid a repeat of its failed North Korea spectacle, where Trump's flashy photos with Kim Jong-un led nowhere.

Iran has entered these talks in good faith, and its negotiators enjoy full domestic support. No matter the outcome, the negotiations will certainly benefit Iran. Either the US is genuinely at the table and the cruel sanctions start to lift, jumpstarting the economy, or the talks turn out to be another propaganda show and fall flat, driving home once again the trust gap and reinforcing Iran's case of distrusting US intentions. Either way, Tehran has shown it is ready to talk—but not to sell out.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

