

# Iran's technical team to partake in 4th round of US talks: *FM spox*

## International Desk

Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesman said on Saturday that a technical team will accompany Iran's delegation in the fourth round of nuclear talks with the United States in Oman today, which was originally scheduled for May 3 in Rome. Esmaeil Baqaei made the remarks after a CNN report said that the Sunday talks will only be high-level, suggesting that the two sides would discuss a broader framework for moving forward. A source familiar told CNN that the technical team, which negotiates on more granular aspects of a deal like sanctions relief, is not expected to attend. On Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced that the fourth round of the talks will be held on Sunday. It was scheduled to be held on May 3 but was postponed for "logistical and technical reasons." The top Iranian negotiator emphasized that the Tehran-Washington talks are progressing. "Naturally, the more progress we make,

the more consultations and reviews will be required," he said, adding, "The delegations need more time to examine the issues raised."

"But it is important that we are moving forward in a way that will gradually lead us into the details," he explained.

Mediated by Oman, Iran and the US have held three rounds of talks in the Omani capital of Muscat and Italian capital of Rome on April 12, 19, and 26 with the aim of reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions on Tehran. The previous rounds of talks ended with notes of optimism, with the two sides saying the atmosphere was friendly despite the countries' four decades of enmity.

## Uranium enrichment

Ahead of the Sunday talks, the US negotiator Steve Witkoff, who had initially suggested flexibility on Tehran maintaining low-level enrichment of uranium for civilian purposes, in an interview published Friday, gave his clearest message that the US administration

would oppose any enrichment.

"An enrichment program can never exist in the state of Iran ever again. That's our red line. No enrichment," he told right-wing Breitbart News.

"That means dismantlement, it means no weaponization, and it means that Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan – those are their three enrichment facilities – have to be dismantled," he said.

"We're inviting Iran to be a member of the league of nations," he said. "We're saying to Iran: 'You can be a better nation. We can do business with you. We can have strategic relationships with you. But you can't be a provocateur,'" he said.

Witkoff said Iran has told the US it does not want a nuclear weapon – a position Tehran has long maintained.

He warned that if Sunday's talks with Iran are not productive, "then they won't continue and we'll have to take a different route."

## Iran's redlines

Iran has repeatedly said it must be allowed



This photo released on Nov. 5, 2019, by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran shows centrifuge machines in the Natanz uranium enrichment facility in central Iran.

to enrich uranium, that it's non-negotiable. "Iran has every right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle," Araghchi wrote on X a week ago.

Trump in his first term withdrew from a nuclear agreement with Tehran negotiated by former president Barack Obama that allowed Iran to enrich uranium.

## Leader urges global resistance against Israeli-US crimes in Gaza

Ayatollah Khamenei prioritizes domestic goods over foreign products

## National Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei urged the Muslim world not to allow the issue of Palestine to sink into oblivion, emphasizing the need to confront the Israeli regime's ongoing genocide in the blockaded Gaza Strip. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks during a meeting with a large group of workers from across the country in the capital Tehran on Saturday. "The biased policies that are being implemented in the world today against nations are aimed at making issues related to Palestine forgotten; Muslim nations should not allow this; they should not allow it to happen," the Leader said. "Through various rumors, different kinds of statements, and by bringing up new, irrelevant, and meaningless issues, they try to distract minds from the issue of Palestine. Minds must not be diverted from the issue of Palestine." Pointing to the all-out Western support for Israel in its atrocities in Gaza, Ayatollah Khamenei called on the international community to rise and confront the occupying regime and its sympathizers. The leader also emphasized that the US and its allies, such as Britain, are complicit in the Israeli regime's oppression of the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, and, despite public statements that may appear critical, these nations actively support Israel. Since October 2023, the Israeli regime has launched a devastating war on the Gaza

Strip. The Israeli attacks have so far killed nearly 52,000 Palestinians and injured nearly 120,000 others. Most of the victims have been women and children.

## Supporting domestic products

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader pointed to the government's support for the domestic products. He said that the consumption of domestic products is as an important support for the country's workers and investors.

However, he said that buying foreign products is actually helping foreign workers and investors.

Criticizing a recent decision by the government to lift a five-year ban on imports of goods that have domestic counterparts, Ayatollah Khamenei called the decision an easy choice but detriment to the country and the working-class community.

"Even if a domestic product is not of good quality, try to improve its quality" he said. According to a Wednesday report by the ISNA news agency, the Iranian Presidency's Legal Department said in a letter addressed to the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade (MIMT) that the ministry will be able to place orders for foreign-made consumer goods and consumer durables that have domestically-produced versions.

The letter, dated April 30, said that a ban on imports of such products that had been enacted in 2019 to support domestic manufacturers has expired, adding that the MIMT would still be allowed to regulate imports by imposing tariffs on certain goods.

## India, Pakistan agree to cease-fire after weeks of escalation



● AFP

India and Pakistan agreed to a full and immediate cease-fire after a fourth day of strikes and counter-strikes against each other's military installations. Pakistan's foreign minister said both countries had agreed to a cease-fire "with immediate effect" and India's Foreign Ministry said it would start at 5 p.m. Indian time (1130 GMT), Reuters reported.

"After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE. Congratulations to both

Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence," US President Donald Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

The sudden announcement came on a day when fears spiked that the countries' nuclear arsenals might come into play as Pakistan's military said a top military and civilian body overseeing its nuclear weapons would meet.

But Pakistan's defense minister later said no such meeting was scheduled.

At the same time, officials from both sides showed willingness to take a step back following the day's exchanges, as the combined civilian death toll on the two sides rose to 66.

"Pakistan and India have agreed to a cease-fire with immediate effect," Pakistani Foreign minister Ishaq Dar posted on X. "Pakistan has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity!"

India's Foreign Ministry said that the head of Pakistan's military operations

called his Indian counterpart on Saturday afternoon and it was agreed that both sides would stop all firing.

The two heads will speak to each other again on May 12, the ministry added.

The fighting began on Wednesday when India carried out strikes on what it said was "terrorist infrastructure" in Pakistani Kashmir and Pakistan, two weeks after 26 people were killed in an attack on Hindu tourists in Indian Kashmir.

Pakistan denied India's accusations that it was involved in the tourist attack. Since Wednesday, the two countries have exchanged cross-border fire and shelling, and sent drones and missiles into each other's airspace.

The countries have been locked in a dispute over Kashmir since 1947. Hindu-majority India and Islamic Pakistan both claim Kashmir in full but rule it in part.

They have gone to war three times since, including twice over Kashmir, and clashed several times.

## Tehran, Riyadh discuss latest developments in Iran-US nuclear talks

## International Desk

The Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers discussed bilateral relations as well as regional and international developments during a visit by Iran's top diplomat to Riyadh on Saturday.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, upon arriving in Jeddah on Saturday. His visit to Saudi Arabia is part of Tehran's ongoing policy of strengthening ties with neighboring countries.

The top Iranian negotiator updated his

Saudi counterpart on the latest developments regarding the Tehran-Washington indirect talks.

Speaking in an interview on Friday, Araghchi said his visit to Saudi Arabia would be in line with consultations between the two countries about regional issues and indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States. He added that since the beginning of the talks in April, Iran has been in constant contact with regional countries to inform them about the process.

"The sustainability of any potential agreement largely depends on the considerations and concerns of the regional

countries regarding the nuclear issue and their common interests with the Islamic Republic," the Iranian foreign minister emphasized.

Mediated by Oman, Iran and the US have held three rounds of talks in the Omani capital of Muscat and the Italian capital of Rome on April 12, 19, and 26, with the aim of reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear program and the removal of sanctions on Tehran. The Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers expressed the two countries' determination to promote their common goal of expanding mutual relations in all fields.

## Iran felicitates Pope Leo XIV as new Catholic leader



## International Desk

Iranian officials congratulated Pope Leo XIV on his election, stressing Tehran's willingness to expand relations with the Vatican.

Mahmoud Alavi, the special assistant to the Iranian president and chairman of the Council for Ethnic, Religious, and

Sectarian Affairs in a message to Pope Leo XIV on Saturday called his election an important event that is a turning point for millions of Catholics around the world.

He said that the election of Pope Leo XIV as the new leader of the world's Catholics reminds the importance of the role of religion in promoting peace, justice, and coexistence in the world.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also in a message on Friday extended his congratulations to the newly elected Pope Leo XIV, expressing hope that the new papacy will strengthen the role of religious values in promoting justice, peace, and dialogue in an increasingly troubled world.

"At a time when the world is plagued as rarely before by injustice and cruelty, poverty and inequality, and war and bloodshed, the global attention to the

election of a new pope reflects a shared hope for religion and religious teachings to safeguard lofty moral and human values and to prevent the dominance of moral vices over humanity," he wrote.

Pope Leo XIV, who was elected on Thursday, is the first American to lead the Catholic Church in its 2,000-year history. "We pray for the soul of Pope Francis," Araghchi added, referring to the late pontiff, "And we are confident that your election as the leader of the Catholic faithful will be an important opportunity to promote spirituality, ethics, justice, and human dignity; to enhance tolerance among religions, ethnicities, and nations; and to protect peace and tranquility."

Reaffirming Iran's longstanding approach to promoting ethical values and human rights based on religious teachings, Araghchi emphasized Tehran's willingness to bolster ties with the Vatican.

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