

Iran Suggests Ratifying Deeper Nuclear Inspections in Return for US Sanctions Relief

TEHRAN - The Iranian foreign minister has said he offered Washington to provide the UN nuclear watchdog with immediate expanded access to all parts of the Iranian nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of US sanctions.

Speaking to reporters in New York on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tehran had reached out to Washington with a "substantial" offer that would see it agree to robust nuclear inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) four years ahead of schedule.

Such in-depth inspections are envisioned by the Additional Protocol to the 2015



nuclear deal, a supplementary agreement Iran was supposed to ratify in 2023. The protocol guarantees the IAEA "expanded rights of access

to information and locations," thus providing "additional tools for verification" of the state's compliance with the deal.

Specifically, it allows the watchdog to "obtain a much fuller picture" of the state's nuclear programs, stockpiles, plans and trade. The verification of the protocol by the Iranian parliament, the Majlis, should have coincided with the US lifting all sanctions against Tehran - which is unlikely to happen after the US withdrew from the agreement last May. In spite of Washington's demarche, Iran has kept its end of the bargain, and has observed the Additional Protocol, albeit without ratifying it.

Zarif dismissed the notion that the offer was more of a symbolic nature. It's not about photo ops. We are ... (More on P4)...(14)

Ukraine's President Says He Backs Prisoner Swap with Russia

KIEV, Ukraine - Ukraine's president on Friday outlined the details of an impending prisoner swap with Russia, saying that Kiev is willing to release a jailed Russian journalist in exchange for a Ukrainian film director. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's statement comes at the end of the week of shuttle diplomacy, with the Russian and Ukrainian human rights ombudswomen holding talks both in Moscow and in Kiev. The flurry of

activity around imprisoned Russians and Ukrainians follows last week's first telephone call between Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin. A major prisoner swap would give a major boost to Zelenskyy's party in Sunday's early parliamentary election. The Ukrainian government has been fighting with Russia-backed separatists in the country's east since 2014, after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean ... (More on P4)...(19)

TEHRAN - Iran has denied President Donald Trump's claim that a US Navy ship had "destroyed" an Iranian drone. Mr Trump said on Thursday that the drone had flown to within 1,000 yards of the USS Boxer and had ignored "multiple calls to stand down" in the latest episode to stir tensions in the Gulf. It was the first US military engagement with Iran following a series of increasingly serious incidents.

Iran Claims US Shot Down Its Own Drone by Mistake

"We have not lost any drone in the Strait of Hormuz nor anywhere else. I am worried that USS Boxer has shot down their own UAS [Unmanned Aerial System] by mistake!" Abbas Araqchi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, responded in a tweet this morning. Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, an Iranian armed forces spokesman, added: "Despite Trump's baseless and delusional claims, all of (Iran's) drones... have safely returned to their



bases. "There have been no reports of a confrontation with the American USS Boxer" naval vessel, he added, quoted by Tasnim news agency. Mr Trump announced that the USS Boxer, an ... (More on P4)...(15)

Biggest Mafia Bust in Ontario, Canada, Nets 15 Arrests, \$33 Million Worth of Homes and Cars



A Mafia bust - believed to be the biggest in the Canadian province of Ontario - has resulted in 15 arrests and the

seizure of homes and sports cars worth \$33 million. "Project Sindicato" targeted the Figliomeni

crime family which has links to Italy's notorious 'Ndrangheta Mafia clan in Italy, York Regional Police announced Thursday. "(The Figliomeni crime family) has benefitted from generations of crime to live a glamorous and indulgent lifestyle at the expense of law-abiding citizens," Police Chief Eric Jolliffe said, according to the Toronto Sun. "We have dismantled the financial structure of this organized crime organization both here and in Italy."

The investigation led to separate arrests of 12 individuals in Calabria, Italy, according to CTV News. Those arrests were announced Wednesday by Italian State Police. York Police launched the investigation 18 months ago in response to a spike in shootings and arsons in Vaughan, a city north of Toronto, CTV reported. Those arrested were accused of operating nearly a dozen illegal backroom gambling dens ... (More on P4)...(16)

Turkish Jets Strike Kurdish Rebels after Diplomat's Death

ANKARA, Turkey - Turkey launched airstrikes against Kurdish rebel targets in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, after the killing of a Turkish diplomat there, state-run media quoted Turkey's defense minister as saying on Friday. Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Turkish jets on Thursday hit the Qandil mountains region in northern Iraq, where the leadership of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, is reported to be

based. A Defense Ministry statement said airstrikes were also conducted Friday against alleged PKK targets in Iraq's Karajak region. Akar said the offensive was launched after an employee of the Turkish Consulate in the city of Irbil was killed along with an Iraqi national in a gun attack at a Turkish-owned restaurant in the city on Wednesday. The diplomat has been identified as Osman Kose. There was no immediate ... (More on P4)...(20)

Cyprus Detains 12 Israelis for 8 Days over Alleged Rape

PARALIMNI, Cyprus - A Cyprus court has ordered 12 Israelis vacationing on the east Mediterranean island nation to remain in police custody for eight days after a 19-year-old British woman alleged that she was raped. Judge Tonia Nicolaou removed reporters from the hearing Thursday because some of the suspects were minors. Israeli Embassy official Yossef Wurmbrand said the suspects' ages ranged from 15½ to 18½ and that the embassy is monitoring the case closely and stands ready to provide support to the suspects and their families. (AP)

As Iran-U.S. Tensions Rise, Hezbollah Readies for War with Israel

BEIRUT - The tranquil winding roads of Lebanon's mountainous interior are far from the tense waters of the Persian Gulf where President Donald Trump says America came within 10 minutes of war with Iran a few weeks ago. And where, he said on Thursday, the U.S. shot down an Iranian drone. But if fighting ever does begin, these hills and valleys near the border with Israel will quickly be on the front lines. And according to Hezbollah commanders, that moment could be coming soon. When Trump talked of war, he meant a shooting war in the conventional sense. But for Iran and its allies, it's Trump's economic war with its suffocating sanctions that is bringing the region to the brink of armed conflict. The targets of Trump's weaponized dollar increasingly see resorting to military engagements as the only response left. (The Daily Beast)

U.S., China Trade Negotiators Talk for Second Time Since Truce

WASHINGTON - Terms of Trade is a daily newsletter that untangles a world embroiled in trade wars. Sign up here.

U.S. and Chinese senior officials spoke by phone this week, the second call since the late June summit at which the two sides agreed to a truce in their ongoing trade conflict. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and U.S. Treasury Steven Mnuchin spoke to the Chinese side earlier, a USTR spokesman said. China's Commerce Ministry said Vice Premier Liu He and Commerce Minister Zhong



Shan were among those on the call. There were no details released from both sides on what was discussed. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Geng Shuang declined to comment on whether the two sides will next meet in Beijing at a regular briefing on Friday. Talks between the two

sides collapsed in May and there's been little public progress since Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping agreed to a truce when they met in Japan last month. There are still deep differences between the two nations, with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross ... (More on P4)...(17)

Germany's Merkel Criticizes Trump Comments on Congresswomen

BERLIN - German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday criticized U.S. President Donald Trump's comments about Democratic lawmakers of color, saying they run counter to what she considers "the strength of America" and expressing solidarity with the women. Merkel was asked at her annual summer news conference whether there she still sees a basis of common values with Trump after he said the congresswomen should "go back" to

their own countries if they don't like America. All of the congresswomen are Americans, and three of them were born in the United States. "People of very different nationalities have contributed to the strength of the American people, so these are ... comments that very much run counter to this firm impression that I have," said Merkel. "This is something that contradicts the strength of America." Pressed later ... (More on P4)...(18)

Neighbor News

'Ehsaas' Strategy to Play Vital Role in Equalizing the Benefits: PASSD

ISLAMABAD - 'Ehsaas Strategy' to be announced very soon by the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division would play a very vital role in equalizing the benefits. According to the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division the forthcoming Ehsaas strategy would make organizations involved in delivery of welfare, effective and responsive to the needs of those who they are meant to serve, and to

ensure rule-based control on the use of public resources. Talking to APP, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division Dr Sania Nishtar Friday said, "We were focusing to empower Ehsaas Governance Policy for which to get notice about how the institutions work properly with their respective rules and laws and scrutinize where any disadvantage occurs." (Monitoring Desk)

Russia Says Interested in Joining Iran-EU Trade Mechanism

TEHRAN - Russia has officially declared that it wants to have a role in the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (Instex), a special mechanism launched since earlier this year to facilitate trade between Iran and the European Union at the time of increased US economic pressure on Tehran. "Russia is interested in close co-ordination with the European Union on Instex," the Russian foreign ministry told the Financial Times on Thursday, adding, "The more countries and continents involved, the more effective will the mechanism be as a whole."

The statement comes as Iran and the EU still differ on how to use Instex to offset the impacts of a series of tough US sanctions imposed on Tehran since Washington

withdrew from a major international agreement on Tehran's nuclear program last year. Iran believes that major EU powers Britain, France and Germany have not done enough as part of the payment channel to restore trade and business ties. Tehran says Instex should either be funded through Iran's oil sales or that there should be abundant credits, through various parties willing to trade with Iran, to keep business smooth and running between the two sides. Authorities in Russia, a party to the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major international powers, echoed similar concerns, saying Instex should not be limited to the EU and others should also play a role. (Press TV)

Malaysian Chamber of Commerce Talks Future Co-Op Plans with Uzbekistan

TASHKENT - Malaysian Malacca Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry will act as the platform or linking bridge for entrepreneurs from both Uzbekistan and Malaysia, a source from the chamber told Trend in an interview. Recently, Trend reported that Malaysian business delegation led by Vice President of Malacca Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI) Yew Geok Hui visited Uzbekistan to establish cooperation.

"Through delegation trip as such, we hope to act as a platform for entrepreneurs of both nations to be able to collaborate in networking and stimulate economic, investment and trade developments. We hope to create mutual benefits for entrepreneurs of both nations, where they can have their business cooperation further on," said the source. "Through cooperation, both nations can share the information in modern building technology and agricultural and together enhance their technology in the future," said the source. "We tend to provide Uzbekistan with FDI and investment and also export the products of Uzbekistan, importing them to Malaysia and even to other countries after processed. We are most interested in exporting the cherries, apricots, peaches, grapes, etc." (Trend)

CIS Forum on Health Cooperation Starts in Turkmenistan

ASHGABAT - A two-day meeting of the Council for Health Cooperation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) began its work in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat on July 19, Trend reports referring to the CIS Executive Committee. Participants of the event discuss implementation of the decisions of the highest bodies of the CIS adopted in the field of health care, particularly on the prevention and treatment of diabetes and the prevention of the spread of tuberculosis. In addition, the results of the activities of the working group on the issues of medical and sanitary-epidemiolog-

ical support of civil aviation flights will be summed up. Furthermore, a discussion will be held on the activities of the Association of Directors of the Centers and Institutes of Oncology and X-ray Radiology of the CIS and Eurasia (ADIOR of the CIS and EA), as well as on the use of monitoring of tobacco usage as one of the strategic tools for protecting the youth from an addiction to smoking and the harmful effects of tobacco. Particular attention will be paid to the prospects for the integration of national e-health systems and the draft model law "On organ donation" for the CIS states. (Trend)