



Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

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India

Indian FM delivers Modi's message to Raisi

Tehran Times, July 8, 2021

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaishankar made a stopover in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon and held a meeting with Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. Jaishankar visited Tehran to present Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's written message to Iranian President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi. Zarif and Jaishankar discussed developments in Afghanistan and exchanged views about the nuclear talks in Vienna aimed to revive the Iran nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA.

On the issue of Afghanistan, both sides emphasized that intra-Afghan talks are the only way to solve the current crisis. Jaishankar also thanked Zarif for hosting Taliban and Afghanistan government's delegations for peace talks. In another part of his stopover to Iran, Jaishankar handed Prime Minister Modi's message to President-elect Raisi. This is a first time that a foreign official delivers a confidential message to an Iranian president-elect before his swearing-in as president.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462901/Indian-FM-delivers-Modi-s-message-to-Raisi>

China

Reports that China is building new intercontinental ballistic missile silos 'concerning', says US

South China Morning Post, July 02, 2021

The United States expressed concern on Thursday over a report that China is building more than 100 new silos for intercontinental ballistic missiles. The Washington Post, citing a study of commercial satellite images by a California-based group, reported on Thursday that the silos were being built in a desert near the northwestern city of Yumen. The James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey said the 119 construction sites in Gansu province were similar to existing Chinese launch

facilities for nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles. US State Department spokesman Ned Price was asked about the report on Thursday.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3139519/reports-china-building-new-intercontinental>

Is China building a vast network of nuclear missile silos?

Liu Zhen and Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, July 02, 2021

Mainland military analysts pour cold water on a recent Washington Post report that said satellite images suggest new facilities were being built in the desert. Nuclear hawks favour more sea-based weapons and point out that the most advanced land-based ICBM can be launched from a mobile platform. Chinese military observers have dismissed US media reports that China is building a network of nuclear missile silos in its northwestern desert, saying that they would be too vulnerable to attack and the technology involved is obsolete.

A report published by The Washington Post on Thursday said 119 construction sites that resembled existing launch facilities for nuclear-armed ballistic missiles were being built near the city of Yumen

in Gansu province. The report was based on a study of commercial satellite images by the California-based James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation Studies and fuelled speculation that China is seeking to expand its nuclear capabilities.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3139667/china-building-vast-network-nuclear-missile-silos>

China's nuclear deterrence buildup cannot be tied down by the US: Global Times editorial

Global Times, July 03, 2021

The US has the strategic ambition to subdue China. Once a military confrontation between China and the US over the Taiwan question breaks out, if China has enough nuclear capacity to deter the US, that will serve as the foundation of China's national will.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202107/1227692.shtml>

China launches five new satellites

Xinhua, July 03, 2021

China sent five satellites into planned orbits from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province on Saturday. The satellite Jilin-1 01B, Xingshidai-10 and three Jilin-1 Gaofen 03D satellites were launched by a Long March-2D rocket at 10:51 a.m. (Beijing Time). This was the 376th flight mission of the Long March rocket series, the launch center said.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-07/03/c_1310041178.htm

China reveals secret programme of unmanned drone submarines dating back to 1990s

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, July 09, 2021

Drone submarine test-fired in Taiwan Strait without human input, declassified details suggest Testing showed it could detect a mock craft, use artificial intelligence to identify its origin, and hit it with a torpedo. A research team in China has unveiled an underwater drone that can recognise, follow and attack an enemy submarine without human instruction. The secret project, funded by the military, was partially declassified last week with the publication of a paper that gave a rare glimpse into a field test of the unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), seemingly in the Taiwan Strait, more than a decade ago.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3140220/china-reveals-secret-programme-unmanned-drone-submarines-dating>

USA

US, Chinese envoys for N. Korea hold phone talks: State Dept.

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 7, 2021

Sung Kim, Special US representative for North Korea, held phone talks with his Chinese counterpart on Tuesday, the State Department said. The call between Kim and China's Liu Xiaoming apparently marks the first of its kind since Kim was named the special envoy in May. "I can confirm that a call took place," a department spokesperson told Yonhap News Agency without elaborating.

Department spokesman Ned Price later highlighted an important role China can play in addressing the North Korean nuclear issue. "The DPRK's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, these are not challenges that we can take on alone," he said at a press briefing, adding the problems require the US to work with its allies but also China. "China ... has a role to play as well, and obviously has influence with the regime, with the DPRK regime," he said. ""But I wouldn't want to further characterize the call today."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210707000108&ACE_SEARCH=1

China could soon have latest nuclear weapons, says US diplomat

DW, July 08, 2021

Beijing might soon obtain "exotic nukes" such as underwater drones and nuclear powered missiles, according to the US ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Robert Wood. Modern nuclear weapons like this one in Russia could soon be developed in China. China is "looking at" developing advanced nuclear weapons system that, according to a US diplomat specialized in disarmament, could disrupt "global strategic stability." Ambassador Robert Wood, US envoy to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva said "exotic nukes" like underwater drones and missiles that run on nuclear power could soon be part of the Chinese arsenal. Wood also said satellite images showing China building 119 new silos in the north west of the country similar to those which house its current nuclear weapons were "of great concern."

<https://www.dw.com/en/china-could-soon-have-latest-nuclear-weapons-says-us-diplomat/a-58210816>

Top nuclear envoys of S. Korea, US hold phone talks

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 8, 2021

South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Noh Kyu-duk, spoke by phone with his US counterpart, Sung Kim, on Thursday and discussed efforts to advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, the foreign ministry said. During the phone call, Noh and Kim discussed how to work together to swiftly implement agreements reached between President Moon Jae-in and US President Joe Biden at their May 21 summit and to make substantive progress in efforts to realize complete denuclearization on the peninsula, the ministry said.

Their talks came after North Korea rejected a US offer to hold talks "anywhere, anytime without preconditions. Kim extended the offer during a trip to Seoul last month, but Pyongyang turned it down, saying it is "not considering even the possibility of any contact with the US"

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210708000731&ACE_SEARCH=1

Nuclear talks likely to resume after Raisi takes over: Bloomberg

Tehran Times, July 13, 2021

Nuclear talks in Vienna between world powers and Iran aren't likely to resume until after the Islamic Republic installs its new president next month, all but eliminating the chances of an early resurrection of their accord struck six years ago and a jump in Iranian oil exports. A seventh round of negotiations in Vienna is expected to convene around mid-August, according to two officials familiar with the

schedule, who asked not to be identified in line with diplomatic rules, Bloomberg reported. A third European attache, who also requested to remain unidentified, said Iran was only expected to resume talks once Ebrahim Raisi has been sworn in as president early next month.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463102/Nuclear-talks-likely-to-resume-after-Raisi-takes-over-Bloomberg>

Europe

NATO has no answer for Russia's now deployed hypersonic missiles: analyst

Tehran Times, July 5, 2021

A geopolitical analyst says that NATO has no answer for Russia's hypersonic missiles which can nullify NATO air capability. "The problem is that NATO has no answer for Russia's now deployed hypersonic missiles which, for all intents and purposes, nullifies NATO air capability in not only Eastern Europe but also in the whole of the Mediterranean," Tom Luongo tells the Tehran Times. Noting that "in the near term, they (Europeans) wanted Nordstream 2 completed and some guarantees from Putin that gas would also still flow through Ukraine," Luongo argues that hawks within NATO and U.S. neoconservatives try to destabilize Russia's neighbors. "The hawks within NATO and U.S. neoconservatives, like Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, and personally in charge of U.S. policy in Eastern Europe still believe they can destabilize Russia's neighbors like Belarus, Armenia and Georgia to keep Russia distracted and get Putin to back down in the Middle East (West Asia)."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462759/NATO-has-no-answer-for-Russia-s-now-deployed-hypersonic-missiles>

Germany, Spain and Sweden: 'End nuclear weapons testing'

DW, July 05, 2021

Germany is joining 15 other countries for a nuclear disarmament conference aiming to build momentum after a US-Russia summit renewed hopes for more arms control between the two nuclear powers. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said ahead of a nuclear arms control conference on Monday that the threat of a nuclear arms race grows "where tension and mistrust predominate." "More than ever, we need steps that encourage trust through verifiable agreements created between nuclear-weapons states," Maas said before departing to Madrid for a meeting of the Stockholm Initiative, which brings together 16 countries advocating global nuclear arms reduction.

The conference follows last month's summit in Geneva between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin pledged to start talks on arms control. A statement after the summit said the US and Russia "seek to lay the groundwork for future arms control and risk reduction measures." "We need to build on this with clear steps by nuclear weapons states to fulfill their responsibility and obligations on disarmament," Maas said, adding that the Geneva summit shows how progress is possible.

<https://www.dw.com/en/germany-spain-and-sweden-end-nuclear-weapons-testing/a-58158956>

France, China, Germany call on JCPOA parties to "seize opportunity"

Tehran Times, July 5, 2021

After a three-way video call on Monday, leaders of France, China, and Germany called on all parties involved in the Iran nuclear talks to seize a window of opportunity for an agreement. A French presidency source broke the story to the Reuters on Monday. The source said that French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Chinese President Xi Jinping had spoken for more than an hour. On a similar note, Al Jazeera quoted an EU high-rank official saying nuclear file faces complications, but in the end, an agreement is possible.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462803/France-China-Germany-call-on-JCPOA-parties-to-seize-opportunity>

‘NATO chief’s remarks misguided, irresponsible spinning of facts’

Tehran Times, July 14, 2021

Iran’s diplomatic mission to the European Union on Monday vehemently responded to recent remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg regarding Iran’s dealing with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the nuclear safeguards. The diplomatic mission, based in Brussels, capital of the European Union, made the remarks after Stoltenberg addressed Iran’s nuclear agreement and cooperation with the IAEA following a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in Brussels.

“The NATO Secretary-General has reportedly ‘restressed Allies’ continued calls on Iran to uphold and fully implement all its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency,” the Iranian mission said in a press release posted on its Twitter account. It added that utterance of such remarks by the NATO chief would require the “moral high ground,” emphasizing that standing next to a man whose respective regime is neither a member of the NPT, nor any other international disarmament instrument of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), does not help Stoltenberg in terms of the credibility of what he states. "Such remarks are either misguided or a grossly irresponsible spinning of facts, not to mention highly irrelevant," the mission added, according to Press TV.

It reiterated Iran's full compliance with the NPT and its complete implementation of Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). According to the press release, making such statements while standing next to the representative of a regime that "flouts international humanitarian law and violates the fundamental human rights of the people on the one hand, and has made a mockery of non-proliferation and disarmament mechanisms on the other hand, is only an indescribably sad irony." The Iranian mission concluded by calling on the NATO secretary general to "practice what he preaches specifically as regards this 'ally' and invite it to accede to the NPT," while refraining from such misguided calls on Iran.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463127/NATO-chief-s-remarks-misguided-irresponsible-spinning-of-facts>

Russia

Russia nuclear negotiator: U.S. must stop hitting 3 birds with 1 stone

Tehran Times, July 5, 2021

In a tweet posted on July 5, the Russian ambassador to international organizations in Vienna said some parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) want to “hit 3 birds with 1 stone.” “In the

context of #ViennaTalks some analysts and officials advocate for addressing new topics such as regional security and missiles. An attempt to hit 3 birds with 1 stone. Unrealistic and counterproductive. The agreed goal of the talks is just to restore the original #JCPOA,” Mikhail Ulyanov said. He had earlier stated that technical understandings between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency have not been officially extended yet.

“Under the circumstances it is important to ensure that video cameras at nuclear sites continue to work and video records are preserved. This will allow to avoid problems in future,” he tweeted on July 3. On the same note, he said that continued contacts and dialogue between Iran and the IAEA are of paramount importance, “especially at this stage when we can expect full restoration of JCPOA and sanctions lifting soon.”

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462801/Russia-nuclear-negotiator-U-S-must-stop-hitting-3-birds-with>

West Asia

Terrorists in Syria planning to stage false flag chemical attack

Tehran Times, July 3, 2021

The Russian military says it has obtained intelligence that Hayet Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorists, an umbrella organization of different Takfiri terrorist groups are planning to stage another false flag chemical attack in the North Eastern province of Idlib with the aim of blaming the Syrian government. Part of the HTS is the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front militants, who have changed their name multiple times yet maintain the same extremist ideology as al-Qaeda.

The terrorists are working together alongside the so-called white helmets group, the propaganda arm for the terrorists that portrays itself in the Western media as a humanitarian organization while the group’s atrocities have been widely documented. The Russian Center for the reconciliation of warring parties in Syria says terrorists have delivered about 10 barrels of toxic substances to an area near the village of Hiram. Since the war on Syria broke out in 2011, the government has been blamed for a number of alleged chemical attacks, some of which have led Western powers to use alleged incidents to launch military strikes against Syria. This is despite the fact that, according to the UN nuclear watchdog, Damascus had handed over its entire remaining stockpile of chemical arms in 2014.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462715/Terrorists-in-Syria-planning-to-stage-false-flag-chemical-attack>

Government confirms sabotage act at Karaj

Tehran Times, July 6, 2021

At his weekly press briefing on Tuesday, government spokesman Ali Rabiei confirmed that there was an act of sabotage at one of the building owned by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in Karaj, however he refuted claims of significant equipment and human damage. "Slight damage to the roof of one of the sheds, which is being repaired and replaced," Rabiei stated. He added the aerial photo published by some media outlets of the damage to the site is in fact an image that is being taken after the roof was removed for repair, and “the interpretations made in the media are not accurate.”

The spokesman went on to say that Iran has proven that after each sabotage act, its capabilities have been increasing. Officials stated on June 23 that due to precautions, the parcel bomb was intercepted

before it caused any damage to the building. In April 2021, a sabotage attack took place in part of the power grid of the Ahmadi Roshan nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz. Israel was blamed as the chief culprit for the act. It was after this sabotage act that Iran decided to increase the level of its nuclear enrichment to more than 60 percent.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462849/Government-confirms-sabotage-act-at-Karaj>

Iran

Iran pulls the plug on IAEA cameras

Tehran Times, July 3, 2021

In what appeared to be a bid to accelerate the process of reviving the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran has decided to cut off the UN nuclear watchdog's access to images and video footages taken by cameras installed inside Iranian nuclear facilities. CNN broke the news on Sunday, quoting a senior Iranian official, who told the American broadcaster that Iran plans to prevent inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog reviewing video footage of some nuclear sites until there is an agreement to salvage the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

“If the talks succeed Iran will surely show the tapes to the IAEA,” the official said. “Sharing the tapes depends on the way that the negotiations will proceed. The key to the question is the agreement. If they agree on something that will open the door for cooperation and better understanding including in the area of transparency.” Iran has no intention of destroying the surveillance footage at the nuclear sites as long as the talks in Vienna are continuing, according to the official who added that Tehran has decided to keep the footage hidden from the IAEA right now because they are allowing the diplomacy to proceed.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462713/Iran-pulls-the-plug-on-IAEA-cameras>

Iranian diplomat: Iran's foreign policy will not change

Tehran Times, July 3, 2021

In an interview with IRNA news agency published on Saturday, Iranian Ambassador to Croatia Parviz Esmaeili said that the foreign policy framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran will remain unchanged. He also said that Iran has had fewer coronavirus casualties compared to the rest of the world. Esmaeili said that President-elect Ebrahim Raisi has a high level of political experience, a history of important national management, and is aware of the demands of the people as well as international relations.

“As for domestic policy, he said he would pay more attention to the livelihoods of the sections of society most affected by the U.S. sanctions, such as workers, retirees and fixed income groups,” he said. The diplomat went on to explain about the possible foreign relations in Raisi's future administration, saying, “I must first say that determining the principles of foreign policy in Iran is the responsibility of the Leader according to the constitution, and governments are the executors of it. Therefore, the framework of our foreign relations will not change.” The ambassador to Zagreb said that Raisi announced during the election campaigns that he supports the negotiations with the parties to the JCPOA.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462722/Iranian-diplomat-Iran-s-foreign-policy-will-not-change>

China's Wang calls on U.S. to rejoin JCPOA

Tehran Times, July 3, 2021

China's foreign minister has underlined the need for the United States to make an earlier decision to return to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. Wang Yi said it is most critical for the U.S. to make an earlier decision to rejoin the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, according to the Japan Times. Wang was speaking at the World Peace Forum organized by Tsinghua University and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, a government-run policy group.

The top Chinese diplomat described the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA as the root cause for the current situation around the tattered pact. "The U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the JCPOA and its maximum pressure on Iran are the root causes of the current Iranian nuclear crisis," said Wang. "As the saying goes, he who tied the bow should untie it."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462708/China-s-Wang-calls-on-U-S-to-rejoin-JCPOA>

Researcher predicts U.S. will recognize Iran as regional power

Tehran Times, July 4, 2021

A senior research fellow at the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore says that Iran is going to be a regional power that is likely to be recognized by the U.S. "In any case, Iran seems to be fast attaining a regional power status that is likely to be recognized by all other countries including the United States," Asif Shuja tells the Tehran Times. "It is in the best interest of all if Iran is facilitated to attain that deserved status without charting the nuclear course," Shuja adds.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462738/Researcher-predicts-U-S-will-recognize-Iran-as-regional-power>

Iran's nuclear measures in line with UN Security Council resolution, MP says

Tehran Times, July 5, 2021

Speaking with the ICANA website on Monday, a member of the National Security and Foreign Policy and Committee of the parliament said that every nuclear step that Iran is doing is in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231. Abolfazl Amouei stated that one of the main reasons for the incomplete implementation of the resolution is the illegal behavior of the United States in refusing to lift the Trump era sanctions on Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to adhere to the provisions of the resolution and regulates its actions within the framework of paragraphs 26 and 36 of the UN Security Council and within the framework accepted in the Vienna talks between Iran and the P4+1 group until the U.S. returns to the agreement. Amouei added, "The United States has so far shown that it is unwilling to abandon its maximum pressure policy components." "The policy of maximum pressure on Iran, although considered a failed policy for all American elites, but its components, such as sanctions, belong to the United States, and therefore, by adhering to Resolution 2231, we have shown that the other side has not fulfilled its obligations and they do not adhere (to them)," the parliamentarian said.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462799/Iran-s-nuclear-measures-in-line-with-UN-Security-Council-resolution>

Iran insists 'tough decisions' needed to revive JCPOA as Vienna talks stumble

Tehran Times, July 6, 2021

Iran has once again underlined the need for the negotiating parties in Vienna, particularly the United States, to make difficult decisions regarding the revival of a 2015 nuclear deal. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reiterated a previous call by Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Seyed Abbas Araqchi, for tough decisions concerning the Vienna nuclear talks, which aim to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In a briefing statement on Tuesday, Khatibzadeh said, "The progress made in the Vienna talks is a fact acknowledged by all parties to the talks, although there are still important issues that largely need to be decided by the other parties, especially the United States. In fact, the finalization of the agreement to revive the JCPOA depends on the political will of the other parties to make tough decisions on their part." He added, "The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran seeks to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible and to lift the cruel sanctions against the Iranian people. However, we do not set any deadline for reaching an agreement that serves the interests of the Iranian people and negotiations will continue until a desirable agreement for Iran is reached. As has been said many times, we are not in a hurry to reach an agreement, but we will not allow the negotiations to become draining and protracted."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462835/Iran-insists-tough-decisions-needed-to-revive-JCPOA-as-Vienna>

Iran warns UN nuclear agency over enrichment plans

DW, July 06, 2021

The IAEA has said that Iran plans to step up enrichment of uranium metal in breach of the 2015 nuclear accord Tehran agreed with world powers. The US has called the announcement "provocative." Talks broke off in Vienna late last month as negotiators try to revive the deal struck in 2015. Iran told the UN's nuclear watchdog on Tuesday that it plans to produce uranium metal enriched to up to 20% purity for reactor fuel in a move that the US branded "provocative."

Such a development would put Tehran in further breach of a 2015 nuclear accord negotiated under the Barack Obama administration. The deal bans all work on uranium metal since it can be used to make the core of a nuclear bomb. It committed Iran to sourcing such material from abroad rather than producing it domestically. "We have made clear that such provocative steps would not and will not provide Iran with any leverage in negotiations," US State Department spokesman Ned Price said. "We continue to urge Iran to stop this brinkmanship."

<https://www.dw.com/en/iran-warns-un-nuclear-agency-over-enrichment-plans/a-58181744>

Iran to produce uranium metal for Tehran research reactor soon

Tehran Times, July 7, 2021

Iran's ambassador to the Vienna-based international organizations announced on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic will soon produce enriched uranium metal for the Tehran research reactor. Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran had earlier informed the United Nations nuclear watchdog's International Atomic Energy Agency of the move. The uranium silicide plate is enriched to 20 percent purity. "Research and development regarding this issue with natural uranium began about three months ago. In the new process, a new fuel plate will be produced using 20 percent enriched uranium," Gharibabadi told reporters.

“This measure, which will significantly improve the quality and quantity of radiopharmaceutical production, will make the Islamic Republic of Iran one of the leading countries in the field of nuclear technology,” the Iranian diplomat added, according to Press TV. Gharibabadi said the IAEA had been informed of Iran’s move nine days earlier and the relevant operations had begun right afterwards. Gharibabadi described the silicide plate as a modern type of nuclear fuel whose technology is only available to a handful of countries.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462859/Iran-to-produce-uranium-metal-for-Tehran-research-reactor-soon>

India embraces Iran's invitation for Raisi oath-taking ceremony

Tehran Times, July 9, 2021

India has accepted Iran's invitation to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President-elect Raisi. The invitation was offered at a meeting between Raisi and Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday when the latter was on a brief stopover in Tehran en route to Russia. The Indian foreign minister was the first foreign official to meet Raisi, even though he has not assumed the office yet. At the meeting, Jaishankar conveyed a personal message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President-elect Raisi.

Some sources say Modi invited the Iranian president-elect to pay a visit to India once the both countries witnessed any improvement in controlling the COVID-19 situation. “Thank President-elect Ebrahim Raisi for his gracious welcome. Handed over a personal message from PM Modi. Appreciate his warm sentiments for India. Deeply value his strong commitment to strengthen our bilateral ties and expand cooperation on regional and global issues,” Jaishankar tweeted. India is among the countries that has so far been invited to attend the swearing-in ceremony. “Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, who is in Iran to deliver a written congratulatory message from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iranian President-elect Ayatollah Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday afternoon,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a tweet.

Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi also said on Thursday that shortly after the visit of the country’s top diplomat to Iran to meet Raisi and Zarif to convey the personal message from the Indian prime minister, Jaishankar met his Russian counterpart on Wednesday to discuss some issues that are in the interests of both countries. Zarif and Jaishankar exchanged views on several issues including efforts to deepen ties, extend cooperation in Chabahar Port. They also held talks on the rapidly evolving developments in Afghanistan. “In addition to bilateral issues of mutual interest, the latest developments in the region, and the situation in Afghanistan, the prospects for the Vienna talks on the JCPOA, were on the agenda of talks,” the Iranian Foreign Ministry added.

The senior Indian diplomat reiterated his country’s interests in West Asia, stressing the efforts to ensure peace, security and stability in the region. “The two sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. They also discussed the evolving situation in Afghanistan and expressed concerns over the deteriorating security there. Both sides also discussed joint connectivity initiatives in the region including the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and Chabahar Port,” said the Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462930/India-embraces-Iran-s-invitation-for-Raisi-oath-taking-ceremony>

Production of advanced uranium fuel is for peaceful purposes: Iran

Tehran Times, July 9, 2021

Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh has reacted to a statement by the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany about Iran's decision to produce silicide fuel using 20-percent enriched uranium, saying the fuel was produced for peaceful purposes. Khatibzadeh noted that Iran's decision to produce silicide fuel plates using 20% enriched uranium is for peaceful purposes, and it will only be used in the Tehran research reactor, according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry on Wednesday.

The spokesman said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been informed about Iran's decision in accordance with the procedures. In a major announcement on Tuesday, Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency Kazem Gharibabadi said Iran will soon produce a highly sophisticated nuclear fuel called uranium silicide fuel. The ambassador said in a statement that Iran has informed the IAEA of its intention to produce uranium silicide fuel pellet for the Tehran research reactor nine days ago and has immediately made arrangements in that regard.

Silicide fuel is an advanced type of nuclear fuel whose technology is only available to a handful of countries. According to Gharibabadi, Iran has started R&D activities using natural uranium to produce sophisticated fuel over the past three months. "In the new process, one new fuel pellet is to be produced from 20% enriched uranium," the Iranian diplomat said, adding, "This measure, slated to significantly improve the quality and quantity of producing radiopharmaceuticals, will turn the Islamic Republic of Iran into a pioneering country in terms of nuclear technology."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462936/Production-of-advanced-uranium-fuel-is-for-peaceful-purposes>

East Asia

Japan

Japan top diplomat to visit Iran

Tehran Times, July 7, 2021

Japan's Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu plans to visit Tehran as early as mid-August to meet senior officials of Iran's new government, Japanese media reported. Toshimitsu will likely visit Iran after Ebrahim Raisi takes over as president from the incumbent, Hassan Rouhani, in early August, according to Japanese broadcaster NHK. In meetings with Iran's new foreign minister and other figures in Raisi's government, Toshimitsu is expected to urge them to play a constructive role in the effort to ease tensions and bring stability to the region.

He is also expected to convey Japan's willingness to strengthen its traditional friendship with Iran. Toshimitsu and Iranian officials will likely discuss indirect talks between Iran and the United States over the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Japanese foreign minister also plans to visit Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Qatar.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462888/Japan-top-diplomat-to-visit-Iran>

South Korea

S. Korea to offer sea radiation level via website

Yonhap
Korea Herald, July 4, 2021

South Korea's oceans ministry said Sunday it plans to launch a new platform to provide the latest information on the radiation level in local seas to the public amid growing safety concerns over Tokyo's planned release of contaminated water. "We plan to minimize the public's concerns over the safety of our waters and seafood, and bolster monitoring on the radiation level of the ocean," the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries said in a statement. In April, the Japanese government said it will release radioactive water stored in tanks at the wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant into the sea, possibly starting in 2023.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210704000080&ACE_SEARCH=1

Vice FM calls for continued intl. support for peninsula peace efforts

Yonhap
Korea Herald, July 6, 2021

Second Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong-moon called for continued international support for South Korea's efforts for lasting peace on the divided Korean Peninsula during a global forum on nuclear disarmament, the foreign ministry said Tuesday. Choi made the call at the virtual Ministerial Meeting of the Stockholm Initiative for Nuclear Disarmament, a multilateral forum on nuclear arms control issues, Monday amid Seoul's efforts to revive nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang.

"Choi explained the government's efforts to advance the peace process on the peninsula for denuclearization and the establishment of lasting peace on the peninsula and asked the international community to continue its support," the ministry said in a press release. Choi also reiterated the need to strengthen the international nuclear nonproliferation regime to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world, and Seoul's intention to contribute to that endeavor. The virtual session brought together 16 non-nuclear countries to discuss ways to further promote nuclear disarmament ahead of the review conference for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, marking the 50th anniversary of the treaty's entry into force.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210706000140&ACE_SEARCH=1

Nuclear energy essential for Korea's decarbonization goal: FKI

Kim Byung-wook
Korea Herald, July 6, 2021

South Korea needs nuclear energy to achieve its decarbonization goal and go in tandem with the global low-carbon drive, as the country has conditions unfavorable to rely mainly on renewables, the Federation of Korean Industries said Tuesday. In a statement, the nation's major business lobbying group cited the World Economic Forum's energy transition index -- which benchmarks 115 economies on the current performance of their energy systems across various aspects -- to highlight Korea's slow pace of decarbonization.

Korea scored 60.8, ranking 29th among 31 advanced countries, whose average score was 68.4. Korea took 45th place of all 115 nations, who scored 59.4 in average. "Due to mountainous terrain and high population density, Korea lacks large chunks of land to roll out renewables. As the amount of electricity generated by renewables hinges on weather conditions, cross-country electricity trade is essential for the stable power supply, which isn't the case for Korea," an FKI official said.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210706000817&ACE_SEARCH=1

Korean researcher joins IAEA team to monitor Japan's planned release of Fukushima water

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 9, 2021

The UN nuclear watchdog has formed a team of experts, including a South Korean researcher, to monitor Japan's planned discharge of treated water from its crippled Fukushima nuclear power plant, the government said Friday. Kim Hong-suk, a nuclear expert from the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety (KINS), joined the team that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) formed Thursday, it said, noting his participation will help ensure the safety of the planned water release. The team is known to comprise experts from 11 countries, including the United States, France and China.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210709000341&ACE_SEARCH=1

S. Korean, Czech foreign ministers discuss cooperation in nuclear

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 9, 2021

Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong spoke by phone with his Czech counterpart on Friday and discussed bilateral issues, including ways to boost cooperation in the nuclear power plant business, his office said. In the phone talks with Jakub Kulhanek, Chung stressed that South Korea is the best partner for the Czech Republic's new nuclear power plant project under way in the southern region of Dukovany, citing the technologies and price competitiveness proven through various projects Korean companies have carried out overseas.

Kulhanek responded that his country is well aware of South Korea's outstanding capability in the field. In the talks, the two ministers hoped for bilateral people-to-people exchanges and tourism to resume as soon as the COVID-19 situation stabilizes. Kulhanek also said that he hopes to see more South Korean investment in his country in future industries, such as the electric vehicle battery sector, the ministry said.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210709000844&ACE_SEARCH=1

Watchdog conditionally approves new nuclear plant's operation

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 9, 2021

The watchdog's review looked into an array of safety issues, including the plant's passive autocatalytic recombiner (PAR), which is designed to prevent hydrogen explosions by reducing hydrogen concentration levels from the reactor's containment building during natural disasters. South Korea has required the system to strengthen safety after multiple hydrogen explosions during Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in 2011.

The Shin-Hanul plant's PAR system received intense scrutiny after environmental groups claimed that its effectiveness had been overstated. Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Corp., which built the plant, has argued that there is no problem with the system. Commission members also requested more measures against potential terrorist attacks or aircraft crashes during the review. The government plans to reduce nuclear energy to account for 23.9 percent of the country's total power generation by 2030 from around

30 percent last year. It targets to raise the proportion of renewable sources to 20 percent from 6.6 percent over the same period.

According to the KHNP, 16 of the country's 24 nuclear power plants are currently operational, with seven undergoing maintenance. The Shin-Kori No. 4 has halted operations since late May after a fire incident. South Korea is expected to have 28 nuclear reactors by 2022, considering those already under construction, but the number will gradually drop to 14 by 2038 as aging plants shut down.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210709000853&ACE_SEARCH=1

South Korea, U.S. hold talks over releasing Iran's frozen assets

Tehran Times, July 10, 2021

Senior economy officials from South Korea and the United States have held talks to discuss cooperation in various areas including releasing Iran's frozen oil money in Korean banks. South Korean Finance Minister Hong Nam-ki and the U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen held a meeting in Venice, Italy, on Friday on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit to discuss the mentioned issue, according to the South Korean Economy and Finance Ministry.

As reported, South Korea has proposed to use a Swiss channel for transferring Iranian money to be used for purchasing basic goods and medicine and the U.S. has agreed to cooperate in resolving the issue. Some seven billion dollars of Iranian oil revenues have been frozen in two South Korean banks since September 2019, when Washington's sanctions waiver for South Korea's imports of Iranian oil expired. The two sides now appear to be moving toward a solution for the thorny issue after a few rounds of failed negotiations in January, in which both countries proposed a number of solutions none of which broke the deadlock over the issue.

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462952/South-Korea-U-S-hold-talks-over-releasing-Iran-s-frozen-assets>

S. Korea to export nuclear reactor tech to Bangladesh

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 15, 2021

South Korea's science ministry said Thursday the country's nuclear research institute has won a deal worth \$3.88 million to export nuclear reactor technology to Bangladesh. The Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute has signed a deal with the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission to deliver digital instrumentation and control systems for the South Asian country's research nuclear reactor by January 2023, according to the Ministry of Science and ICT.

The South Korean nuclear institute will provide and install the digital systems, which are responsible for monitoring and controlling the nuclear reactor and safely halting its operations should there be any problems. The 3-megawatt Bangladesh Training and Research Reactor, which became operational in 1986, is undergoing modifications to update its aging analog systems. The latest deal marks the sixth research-based nuclear technology export for South Korea since it won a deal to build a research nuclear reactor in Jordan in 2009.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210715000803&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea

NK leader vows to elevate relations with China to new strategic point

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 1, 2021

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un vowed to elevate relations with China to a new strategic point as he sent a congratulatory message to Chinese President Xi Jinping to mark the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, state media said Thursday. In an apparent reference to the deepening Sino-US rivalry, Kim also said in the message that "hostile forces" are engaged in "vicious slander and all-round pressure" upon China, but they can "never check the on-going advance of the Chinese people," according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"Despite the complicated international situation, the two parties and the two countries, with firm faith in the justice of the socialist and communist cause, accelerate their advance toward a brighter future, tiding over difficulties and ordeals by dint of their militant friendship and bonds of kinship," Kim was quoted as saying by the KCNA.

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210701000201&ACE_SEARCH=1

North Korea, China vow cooperation in the face of 'hostile forces'

DW, July 11, 2021

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed to strengthen mutual cooperation on the anniversary of their treaty of friendship. They emphasized unity in the face of "hostile forces." Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) shakes hands with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in 2019. China and North Korea signed a friendship treaty in 1961. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed to strengthen their ties and cooperation on the anniversary of their treaty of friendship.

North Korean news agency KCNA reported Sunday that Kim and Xi pledged mutual cooperation in their relationship. Xi pledged to strengthen their ties by "steadily leading the relations of friendship and cooperation between the two countries to a new stage." "Despite the unprecedentedly complicated international situation in recent years the comradely trust and militant friendship between the DPRK and China get stronger day by day," Kim said in a statement. He emphasized the need for cooperation, "now that the hostile forces become more desperate in their challenge and obstructive moves," in a possible reference to the US.

<https://www.dw.com/en/north-korea-china-vow-cooperation-in-the-face-of-hostile-forces/a-58228199>

NK propaganda outlet denies Pyongyang's hacking of S. Korean think tank

Yonhap

Korea Herald, July 12, 2021

A North Korean propaganda outlet on Monday denied allegations Pyongyang was behind the recent hacking attacks on South Korea's nuclear power think tank and an aircraft manufacturer, denouncing such claims as an "act of provocation" that seeks to disgrace the regime. On Thursday, South Korea's spy agency reported to parliament that the Atomic Energy Research Institute was believed to have been exposed to North Korean hacking attacks for 12 days, though no major data was leaked, according to lawmakers.

"If they were hacked due to their carelessness and poor technology, they should look for the cause internally," Uriminzokkiri, one of the North's propaganda websites, said in a commentary. Denouncing South Korean conservatives for raising such suspicions, the propaganda outlet called such allegations the "height of stupidity" and a "cliched method" to escalate tensions between the two Koreas, adding that such an "act of provocation cannot be overlooked."

http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210712000877&ACE_SEARCH=1

Op-ed

Iran-China deal mostly carries geostrategic importance: Pakistani expert

International

Tehran Times, July 11, 2021

Director of China Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad says that the Iran-China partnership has geostrategic implications for the region. "The deal reflects China's intention to play an enhanced role across the region that has been a strategic preoccupation of the United States for decades," Talat Shabbir tells the Tehran Times. "It is widely believed that the deal between Iran and China carries more geostrategic importance than having geo-economic implications."

Many predict the 25-year deal between Tehran and Beijing to enable both sides to advance their policies across the region through mutual cooperation. "The China-Iran agreement will enable Iran to focus on economic revival as it deals with the impact of crippling U.S. sanctions," Shabbir argues. "The deal could deepen China's influence in the Middle East (West Asia) and undercut the U.S. efforts to keep Iran isolated."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/462986/Iran-China-deal-mostly-carries-geostrategic-importance-Pakistani>

S. Arabia always has appetite to harm Iran: Bahraini researcher

Tehran Times, July 13, 2021

A Bahraini political analyst says Saudi Arabia has unsatiable desire to undermine Iran's power and stability. "Do not forget that Saudi Arabia always has an appetite and a desire to harm Iran whenever it finds an opportunity," Abbas Bu Safwan tells the Tehran Times. "Whenever a hardline president who deals tough with Iran is elected in America, Saudi Arabia is the first to welcome," Bu Safwan adds. According to the Bahraini writer, Saudi Arabia is afraid of the Islamic model in Iran, and this is questioning American Islam in the region. "Saudi Arabia is under pressure because of Iranian democracy, as there are elections and freedoms in Iran, and this is what embarrasses the unilateral authoritarian regime in the (Persian) Gulf."

<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/463060/S-Arabia-always-has-appetite-to-harm-Iran-Bahraini-researcher>

World/Misc

Iran will not return to nuclear talks before new government is formed in Tehran

Karen DeYoung

Washington Post, July 14, 2021

Iran has indicated that it will not return to talks aimed at a U.S. return to the 2015 nuclear deal until after a new government headed by President-elect Ebrahim Raisi takes office next month, U.S. officials said Wednesday. The United States and its European partners had been awaiting word from Iran on when it was prepared to hold a seventh round of negotiations in Vienna. Talks began in April among signatories of the agreement, with Britain, France and Germany serving as U.S. go-betweens with Iran, which has refused direct contact with the Americans.

Russia and China also are signatories of the deal, which President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from in 2018. In recent weeks, U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive issue, have voiced impatience with the pace of the negotiations, saying they could not go on “indefinitely.” Among their concerns has been the steady Iranian expansion of its nuclear program beyond the agreement’s confines, all of which, Iran said, could be reversed once the United States agreed to lift the harsh Trump-imposed sanctions that have crippled its economy.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/iran-will-not-return-to-nuclear-talks-before-new-government-is-formed-in-tehran/2021/07/14/d5de1c60-e4e3-11eb-a41e-c8442c213fa8_story.html

The U.S. says it can answer cyberattacks with nuclear weapons. That’s lunacy

Scott D. Sagan and Allen S. Weiner

Washington Post, July 9, 2021

Over the July 4 weekend, the Russian-based cybercriminal organization REvil claimed credit for hacking into as many as 1,500 companies in what has been called the largest ransomware attack to date. In May, another cybercriminal group, DarkSide, also apparently located mainly in Russia, shut down most of the operations of Colonial Pipeline, which supplies nearly half the diesel, gasoline and other fuels used on the East Coast — setting off a round of panic buying that ended only when the company handed over a ransom.

These incidents were bad enough. But imagine a much worse cyberattack, one that not only disabled pipelines but turned off the power at hundreds of U.S. hospitals, wreaked havoc on air-traffic-control systems and shut down the electrical grid in major cities in the dead of winter. The grisly cost might be counted not just in lost dollars but in the deaths of many thousands of people. Under current U.S. nuclear doctrine, developed during the Trump administration, the president would be given the military option to launch nuclear weapons at Russia, China or North Korea if that country was determined to be behind such an attack.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/07/09/cyberattack-ransomware-nuclear-war/>

Contribute Articles

Indian Pugwash Society welcomes research articles from students, researchers and faculties on Space, Missile, nuclear technology, WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, export controls and other related issues. Articles should be crisply written and should address contemporary debates in the policy arena. Manuscripts submitted for the consideration of the Indian Pugwash Society should be original contributions and should not have been submitted for consideration anywhere else. For further assistance, please contact us at: indianpugwashsociety@gmail.com

The Indian Pugwash Society aims to promote the study, discussion, and knowledge of and to stimulate general interest in, and to diffuse knowledge in regards to problems relating on WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, space security, export controls, nuclear technology and other related issues. This newsletter is part of the project "Emerging Nuclear Order in Asia: Implications for India" sanctioned to us by Department of Atomic Energy-Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (DAE-BRNS).

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