



Raeisi due in Turkmenistan Saturday for ECO Summit



Iran's minister, Pakistan ambassador agree to boost cultural ties

## EU voices 'resolute commitment' to JCPOA implementation

International Desk

The European Union's ambassador to the International Organizations in Vienna on Wednesday voiced the bloc's "resolute commitment" to the full implementation of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

"The EU reiterates its resolute commitment to and continued support for the full and effective implementation of the JCPOA and is determined to continue working with the international community to preserve this agreement," Stephan Klement told a meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), using the official name of the multilateral nuclear deal.

Klement, in a statement, added that the EU wants all countries to support the implementation of the JCPOA in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 that was adopted in 2015 to endorse the nuclear pact.

He expressed the EU's support for "the intensive diplomatic efforts" to revive the JCPOA and welcomed the resumption of talks in Vienna on November 29 between Iran and the remaining parties to the deal - France, Britain, Germany, Russia, and China - to revive the accord by bringing the US back to compliance three years after its pullout.

Klement said the EU acknowledges the issues connected to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and its reimposition of sanctions on Iran.

He hoped for "a timely conclusion of the negotiations" in Vienna that will be coordinated by the EU.

## Foreign combat forces to leave Iraq in 15 days: Military



A senior Iraqi military official said Wednesday all foreign combat forces will leave Iraq within 15 days.

Major General Tahsin al-Khafaji, the spokesman for the Joint Operations Command which oversees an array of Iraqi forces waging war against the Daesh terror group, told the Iraqi News Agency most foreign combat forces have already departed the country.

"Only advisers and those working in the field of intelligence or reconnaissance, as well as training and advice, remained," Khafaji said.

He pointed out that "the rest of the foreign forces are small in number, and they will all leave within 15 days, except for those whose mission has turned to advise, provide information and support the Iraqi security forces".

The spokesman noted the file to end the foreign presence runs according to the planned schedule, and there are no base designated for them except for their presence in Ain al-Asad base.

Back in July, US President Joe Biden and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi declared that the US mission in Iraq will transition from combat to "advisory" role by the end of the year.

The agreement, which has effectively given a mere new name to the US military presence in Iraq, has enraged Iraqi resistance groups, which have played a significant role in defeating the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq in 2017.

Iraqi resistance groups have persistently demanded the withdrawal of all American forces from the Arab country over their destabilizing activities.

The demand is in line with a law adopted by the parliament in January 2020 in the aftermath of the US military's assassination of two key commanders of the fight against Daesh, namely Iranian Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Iraq's Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in Baghdad on January 3 of that year.



## Leader: Endeavor, wisdom, reliance on God solutions to all problems

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## Contradictory US behavior major obstacle to Vienna talks: Iran

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said the United States' "contradictory behavior," characterized by a purported desire to return to the 2015 nuclear deal and all the while expanding sanctions against Iran, is a major obstacle to the Vienna talks aimed at putting the accord back on track.

In a telephone conversation with his Swiss counterpart Ignazio Cassis on Tuesday, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran was "ready and serious to reach a good and immediate agreement" in the talks that would start in Vienna next week, "but at the same time it is distrustful of US behavior".

"On the one hand, the US pretends to be interested in returning to the JCPOA, but on the other, it has imposed sanctions on Iranian individuals and companies in two stages over the past few weeks. America's contradictory behavior is one of the main obstacles to the negotiations," he added, referring to nuclear deal by its official name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Press TV reported.

The top Iranian diplomat also emphasized that the Islamic Republic would judge the US based on its behavior.

Envoys from Iran and the P4+1 group of countries - Britain, France, Russia, and China plus Germany - are expected to hold the seventh round of discussions on November 29.

Former US president Donald Trump left the JCPOA in May 2018 and reimposed the anti-Iran sanctions that the deal had lifted. He also placed additional sanctions on Iran under other pretexts not related to the nuclear case as part of his "maximum pressure" campaign.

The US administration of President Joe Biden has said it is willing to rejoin the deal, but it has shown an



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overriding propensity for maintaining some of the sanctions as a tool of pressure.

Tehran insists that all sanctions must first be removed in a verifiable manner before it reverses its remedial measures.

### Ties on right track

Amir-Abdollahian said that Tehran-Bern relations were on the right track and that a recent visit by Switzerland's President of the National Council Andreas Aebi to Iran marked a turning point in bilateral parliamentary ties.

Referring to the efforts underway to resolve problems on the way of the activities of Swiss companies in

Iran, he stressed the need to boost relations between the two countries in various sectors, including science, education, agriculture, transportation, health and banking.

The Swiss foreign minister, for his part, pointed to the importance of relations with Iran and explained the status of a trade channel between the two states.

The two chief diplomats also discussed the crisis in Afghanistan.

Amir-Abdollahian said Iran continued to encourage the ruling administration in Afghanistan to form an inclusive government, expressing concern over the humanitarian situation in the South Asian country amid the winter season.

His Swiss counterpart also announced his country's readiness to cooperate in the transfer of aid to Afghanistan through Iran.

Bern agrees with Tehran on the need to form an inclusive government in Afghanistan, he said, praising Tehran for attempting to find a diplomatic solution to the Afghan crisis as well as hosting refugees.

## China, Russia furious over Biden's 'divisive' democracy summit

China and Russia reacted furiously on Wednesday to US President Joe Biden's planned democracy summit, which will exclude them, with Beijing angered over an invitation for Taiwan and Moscow branding it divisive.

The inclusion of Taiwan, and not China, led to an angry rebuke from Beijing, which said it "firmly opposes" the invitation to "the so-called Summit for Democracy", AFP reported.

"US actions only go to show democracy is just a cover and a tool for it to advance its geopolitical objectives, oppress other countries, divide the world and serve its own interests," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told reporters in Beijing, according to Reuters.

Beijing considers self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory to be retaken one day, by force if necessary.

Around 110 countries have been invited to the virtual summit, in-

cluding the United States' major Western allies but also Iraq, India and Pakistan.

But Russia said the guest list, released on Tuesday on the State Department website, showed that



REUTERS

the United States "prefers to create new dividing lines, to divide countries into those that - in their opinion - are good, and those that are bad."

"More and more countries prefer to decide themselves how to live," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry

Peskov told reporters, adding that Washington is "trying to privatize the term democracy".

"That can't do so and should not do so," he said.

Taiwan said the gathering would be a rare opportunity to burnish its credentials on the world stage.

Only 15 countries officially recognize Taipei over Beijing, although many nations maintain de facto diplomatic relations with the island.

The US does not recognize Taiwan as an independent country but maintains it as a crucial regional ally and opposes any change to its status by force.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said it would be represented at the summit by its de facto US ambassador, Bi-khim Hsiao, and Digital Minister Audrey Tang.

The long-advertised meeting will take place online on December 9 and 10 ahead of an in-person meeting at its second edition next year.

## Court orders Bahrain to pay damages to Iran for 'political expropriation'

Bahrain was ordered by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague to pay over 200 million euros in damages plus costs to two Iranian banks for the unlawful expropriation of their banking venture in Manama in an act of "political retribution".

Iran's largest lenders Bank Melli and Bank Saderat had sued Bahrain before the international arbitration court in the Netherlands for confiscating nearly \$1.3 billion worth of Iranian funds.

The funds belonged to Future Bank established as a joint venture between Bahrain's Ahli United Bank and the two Iranian lenders in 2004 when Bahraini leaders were seeking to mend strained relations with Iran, Press TV wrote on Wednesday.

In January 2016, however, the Central Bank of Bahrain said it was taking steps to close down Future Bank after Manama cut diplomatic ties with Tehran, following in the footsteps of Saudi Arabia.

In July this year, Bahrain's top court upheld a money-laundering verdict against Future Bank, the Central Bank of Iran and other Iranian banks. The ruling, issued in April 2018, included jail terms of up to 10 years for Future Bank officials and confiscation of funds.

Iranian officials rejected the allegations, asserting that Future Bank was a victim of an international political conflict, instigated by Persian Gulf Arab neighbors and other countries seeking to isolate Iran.

"There is no evidence, nor was there even an allegation, including in the ongoing arbitration, of corruption, let alone of a 'multibillion-dollar corruption scheme,'" a joint statement issued by Bank Melli and Bank Saderat said at the time, referring to Bahrain's characterization of the case.



Both denied any improper conduct in the handling of financial transfers, asserting that Future Bank promptly responded to all concerns expressed by the host country, "without further complaint from Bahrain," according to the statement.

"Nor is there, or has Bahrain ever put forward, any evidence of Future Bank having financed any money-laundering, terrorism, nuclear activities, or having allowed companies to operate as fronts for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps," the banks said.

The statement described the Iranian institutions as "collateral victims of an entirely political decision, taken in the context of tensions and efforts by some Arab countries, led by Saudi Arabia, to isolate Iran".

"It is in this context that Bahrain targeted not just these banks but all Iranian interests on its territory," the statement said.

In a written summation to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, the Arab kingdom had asserted that "Bahrain has never faced violations of this magnitude".

The international tribunal, however, decided this week that the Iranian institutions had been the target of "political retribution" and ordered Bahrain to pay over 200 million euros in damages plus costs to the banks, London-based Global Arbitration Review, a magazine dedicated to commercial arbitration, reported.

Former Central Bank of Iran governor Abdolnaser Hemmati confirmed the news on Wednesday, hailing it as a victory for the country.

"A legal victory: With the many years of effort we have had, an international arbitration tribunal has condemned the Bahraini government, which had expropriated Bank Melli and Bank Saderat of their venture in Future Bank of Bahrain with a political motivation and violation of international laws, to paying more than 200 million euros in damages and arbitration costs," he tweeted.

The accusations emerged from an intensive investigation that began after Bahraini regulators formally closed Future Bank in 2015. The closure prompted Future Bank's two Iranian shareholders to file a complaint in The Hague accusing Bahrain of improperly shutting down the bank and demanding the return of frozen assets.

In response, Bahrain submitted hundreds of pages that tried to paint a portrait of a financial institution operating mainly with "the aim of concealment," the documents stated.

Bahrain's case was supported by US officials who said the "findings" were troubling at a time when Future Bank was under intense scrutiny by American and Bahraini government agencies.

As part of its sanctions regime, the US accused Bank Melli and Bank Saderat of helping finance Iran's nuclear program and what it says is a terrorism network, in reference to resistance groups such as Lebanon's Hezbollah.