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SCIENTIFIC SOVEREIGNTY

Irradiation Center Opens in Rasht as Iran Vows Unstoppable Progress

The new facility in Rasht will use gamma irradiation to improve food safety, control agricultural pests, extend the shelf life of produce and reduce post-harvest losses.



Head of the Atomic Energy Organization Muhammad Eslami attends the inauguration ceremony of the Northern Nuclear Irradiation Center in Gilan Province in Rasht on Thursday.

TEHRAN -- **Nuclear chief Muhammad Eslami said Iran's development of nuclear technology is unstoppable, as Tehran opened a new irradiation processing centre in the northern province of Gilan on Thursday, highlighting the civilian applications of its nuclear program.**

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Rasht, Eslami said the completion of the facility's first phase represents another step in Iran's development of advanced technologies, despite efforts by foreign powers to restrict the country's scientific progress.

"With the grace of Almighty God, the first phase of this complex has been completed, and this achievement is part of the country's path toward growth and excellence in advanced technologies," he said.

Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said Iran's enemies oppose its access to advanced technologies because scientific capabilities brought national strength and authority.

He said efforts to restrict countries' access to such technologies have a long history, including through U.S. legislation and policies dating back decades.

"The enemies have problems with the Islamic Republic of Iran because entering the field of advanced technologies and acquiring scientific capabilities brings strength and authority to the country, and they do not want these capabilities to be at the disposal of the Iranian nation," Eslami said.

He also rejected allegations that Iran was seeking to develop nuclear weapons, describing them as politically motivated claims intended to obstruct the country's scientific development.

"When the other side has no logic or substantiated evidence, it resorts to fabricating cases and making allegations, such as claiming that Iran is seeking to build nuclear weapons, in an attempt to halt the country's progress," he said.

Eslami added that information and documents released in recent years have exposed efforts to create an atmosphere of suspicion around Iran's nuclear activities.

The new facility, located in the Lakan area of Rasht, is designed to use gamma irradiation systems and electromagnetic wave technology to process agricultural products, control pests, extend shelf life and reduce food waste.

Its first phase has an annual processing capacity of 10,000 tonnes, with infrastructure allowing expansion to more than 20,000 tonnes, according to Iranian reports.

Th e center is initially focused on rice processing and pest control, with plans to extend irradiation services to other agricultural products, including peanuts, tea and medicinal plants.

The facility operates under the AEOI's Radiation Application Development Company and is intended to support food safety, agricultural productivity and export capacity.

The opening is particularly significant for Gilan, which produces around 3.6 million tonnes of agricultural products annually, including rice and tea.

Iran has repeatedly maintained that its nuclear program serves peaceful purposes and that the country has the right to develop nuclear technology for civilian applications under international regulations.

'Precooked Recipe for War': Iran Rejects Role in Deadly Kuwait Drone Strike

TEHRAN -- **Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has described a deadly drone incident in Kuwait as a "precooked recipe for war", categorically rejecting Tehran's involvement and offering a joint investigation with Kuwait and Italy to establish who was behind the attack.**

The incident, which killed two Italian technicians working at a military air-defense facility, has triggered competing accounts of responsibility and renewed concerns over attempts to widen the war, with Tehran warning against the use of unverified allegations to pave the way for further military escalation.

"The incident is suspicious and looks like a precooked recipe for war," Araghchi wrote in a post on X on Thursday. "We stand ready to cooperate with Kuwait and Italy to determine the cause of the incident."

The Iranian foreign minister said he had conveyed his condolences over the deaths during separate telephone conversations with his Italian counterpart, Antonio Tajani, and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

During his conversation with Tajani, Araghchi categorically rejected claims that the drone had been launched by Iranian armed forces or originated from Iranian territory, describing allegations of Iranian responsibility as baseless. He also offered Tehran's cooperation in a joint investigation to determine the origin of the incident and identify those responsible.

Tajani confirmed that Araghchi had expressed readiness to participate in a joint investigative commission.

The two Italian nationals were technicians employed by Rheinmetall Italia, the Italian subsidiary of German defense company Rheinmetall. They were reportedly carrying out maintenance work on detection antennas for the Skyguard air-defense system used by Kuwait's armed forces when the facility was hit on Thursday.

Kuwait's defense ministry said its armed forces had detected and intercepted several hostile drones in the country's airspace. Falling debris caused injuries and material damage at a vital military facility. The two Italian technicians subsequently died from their injuries, while a Kuwaiti army captain and a Pakistani national were also wounded.

In a separate statement, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, senior spokesperson for Iran's Armed Forces, categorically denied that Iranian forces had conducted any military or offensive operation in the region.

"No military or offensive operation has been carried out by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region," he said.

Paris 'Circus' Flaunts Pahlavi Symbols Under Pretext of Defending Women Rights

TEHRAN -- **Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has condemned France for using the pretext of defending Iranian women's rights to host an anti-Iran gathering, where the elements were allowed to promote symbols and agendas associated with the former Pahlavi regime.**

In a post on X on Thursday, Araghchi described the event, organized by the French foreign ministry and attended by French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, as a "circus."

"A circus in front of @jnbarrot, organized by his own ministry," he said.

He rebuked Barrot over Paris's contradictory stance on freedom of expression, urging the French government to address restrictions on Iranians living in France before lecturing the Islamic Republic on their rights.

"Mr. Barrot should perhaps focus on ensuring freedom of expression for Iranians in France before lecturing us about the rights of Iranians in Iran," Araghchi wrote.

Barrot had claimed in a post on X on Wednesday that Iranian voices must not be silenced, declaring that France stood alongside Iranian women and men aspiring to justice, freedom and dignity.

The gathering, held under the pretext of marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, was presented as a platform for the so-called defense of Iranian women's rights.

Videos circulated on social media showed individuals in the audience disrupting discussions and displaying the lion-and-sun flag associated with the Pahlavi monarchy, which was overthrown by Iranians in 1979.

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Tehran Warns South Korea Over Persian Gulf Presence Despite Seoul's Assurances

TEHRAN -- **Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has warned South Korea against any foreign military presence in the Persian Gulf, as Seoul moves to expand the operational area of its naval forces closer to the Strait of Hormuz despite Tehran's objections.**

During a telephone conversation on Thursday with his South Korean counterpart Cho Hyun, Araghchi said the deployment of foreign forces would not contribute to regional security but would instead heighten tensions and widen the scope of the ongoing conflict.

Araghchi also outlined Iran's diplomatic initiatives to preserve regional peace and stability, stressing Tehran's positions on the requirements and framework for ending the conflict.

Cho, for his part, assured Araghchi that South Korea has no intention of intervening in or participating in the war and has no plans to deploy troops to the region. He also expressed hope for a peaceful resolution to the war.

The diplomatic exchange comes as Seoul prepares to expand the operational area of its Cheonghae naval unit from the Gulf of Aden to waters south of Oman, near the Strait of Hormuz, a move that has raised concerns in Tehran about the potential involvement of additional foreign military forces in the region.

South Korea's National Assembly is reviewing a government proposal to broaden the unit's operational area. The revised deployment plan was approved by the parliamentary defense committee on November 25, following earlier approval by President Lee Jae-myung's cabinet.

The Cheonghae unit, which has operated in the Gulf of Aden since 2009 as part of anti-piracy operations, is expected to receive additional capabilities, including maritime patrol aircraft and mine-clearing support.

President Lee has maintained that the expanded mission will not involve South Korea in the war, stressing that the Strait of Hormuz and its adjacent waters will remain outside the unit's designated operational area. Seoul says the mission is intended to protect South Korean nationals, commercial vessels and maritime trade.

However, the expansion has drawn criticism from opposition groups and civil society figures in South Korea, who have raised concerns about the possibility of the country becoming involved in the U.S.-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

Iran has previously warned Seoul against participating in the aggression in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, saying such involvement would amount to direct support for the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran and could have serious consequences for South Korean forces.

South Korea is heavily dependent on energy imports from West Asia. Government data show that around 70% of its crude oil imports came from the region in 2025, with most shipments passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Holy Qur'an

One who has atoned for his sins will not be debarred from salvation and one who thanks Allah for the Blessings and Bounties will not be denied the increase in them.

Amir al-Momeneen Ali (AS)

PRAYER TIMINGS

Noon (Zohr)	11:52
Evening(Maghreb)	17:12
Dawn(Fajr)" Tomorrow"	06:52
Sunrise "Tomorrow"	05:24

Minab Schoolkids Fell Victim to 'Two Dirty Bombs': Envoy to Germany

BERLIN (Dispatches) -- **Iran's ambassador to Germany, Majid Nili Ahmadabadi, says 168 students and school staff martyred in a strike on a school in southern Iran fell victim to "two dirty bombs" — American and Israeli weapons and the silence of those claiming to defend human rights.**

In a message marking World Children's Day, Nili Ahmadabadi condemned the February 28 attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab, Hormozgan province, describing the silence of international human rights advocates as a second form of wrongdoing.

"I believe the children of Minab fell victim to two dirty bombs: the American and Zionist bombs, and the dirty bomb of the silence of certain claimants of human rights who closed their eyes to this obvious crime," he said.

The ambassador called for those responsible to be held accountable, saying they "must certainly answer before justice".

Iranian officials say 168 students and members of the school's staff were martyred when missiles struck the school on February 28, the first day of the U.S.-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

The attack has prompted widespread condemnation in Iran and calls for an investigation into the circumstances of the strike. Washington has not formally accepted responsibility and has not published the findings of its internal investigations.

Nili Ahmadabadi also referred to a report by international charity Save the Children, which estimated that around 589 million children lived in conflict zones in 2025.

He described the figure as a shocking record and a warning to the conscience of humanity, expressing concern that 2026 could prove even more catastrophic for children living in conflict areas.

The ambassador's remarks come amid a separate controversy over Western media reports concerning Iran's alleged plans to use unconventional weapons.

CNN reported on November 17, citing unnamed U.S. officials, that American intelligence indicated Iran was developing plans to potentially detonate a radiological "dirty bomb" or use a chemical weapon in Washington, DC.

The report provided no publicly verifiable evidence of such plans, and the officials cited did not say Tehran intended to carry out an attack.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the report as "Iraq War-style propaganda", rejecting the allegations as part of a campaign of disinformation against Iran.