

# Israel FM tells Blinken of 'serious reservations' on Iran

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ROME: Israel has serious reservations about the Iran nuclear deal being put together in Vienna, new foreign minister Yair Lapid told his American counterpart, as he pledged to fix "the mistakes made" between the two countries over the past few years.

In their first face-to-face meeting since Israel's new government was sworn in two weeks ago, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Lapid said they would also discuss Israel's normalization accords with Gulf Arab states. Blinken said he would also be raising the issue of humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

Blinken said the US supports Israel's normalization accords, but they cannot be a substitute for engaging in issues between Israelis and Palestinians. Iran and the United States have been holding indirect talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers that imposed restrictions on Tehran's nuclear activities in exchange for lifting international sanctions.

"Israel has some serious reservations about the Iran nuclear deal that is being put together in Vienna. We believe the way to discuss those disagreements is through direct...conversations, not in press conferences," Lapid said in his brief remarks before the meeting in Rome began. He also said Israel will be working to improve ties with Washington.

"In the past few years, mistakes were made. Israel's bipartisan standing was hurt and we will fix those mistakes together," he added.



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US, France warn Iran that time running out to revive nuclear deal

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## [Iran refuses to give nuclear site images to IAEA](#)

Author:

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DUBAI: The speaker of Iran's parliament said on Sunday Tehran will never hand over images from inside of some Iranian nuclear sites to the UN nuclear watchdog as a monitoring agreement with the agency had expired, Iranian state

media reported.

“The agreement has expired ... any of the information recorded will never be given to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the data and images will remain in the possession of Iran,” said Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf.

The announcement could further complicate talks between Iran and six major powers on reviving a 2015 nuclear deal. Three years ago then US President Donald Trump withdrew from the pact and reimposed crippling sanctions on Tehran; Iran reacted by violating many of the deal’s restrictions on its nuclear program.

A spokesman for parliament’s National Security and Foreign Affairs Committee warned that “Iran will also turn off the IAEA cameras if the United States fails to remove all sanctions,” the state-run Tehran Times newspaper’s website reported.

The IAEA and Tehran struck the three-month monitoring agreement in February to cushion the blow of Iran reducing its cooperation with the agency, and it allowed monitoring of some activities that would otherwise have been axed to continue.

Under that agreement, which on May 24 was extended by a month, data continues to be collected in a black-box-type arrangement, with the IAEA only able to access it at a later date.

On Friday, the IAEA demanded an immediate reply from Iran on whether it would extend the monitoring agreement, prompting an Iranian envoy to respond that Tehran was under no obligation to provide an answer.

Iran said on Wednesday the country’s Supreme National Security Council would decide whether to renew the monitoring agreement only after it expires.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday that any failure by Tehran to extend the monitoring agreement would be a “serious concern” for broader negotiations.

Parties involved in the talks on reviving the deal, which began in April in Vienna, have said there are major issues still to be resolved before the nuclear deal can be reinstated.



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## [Yemen's president travels to US for routine medical checks](#)

Author:

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Sat, 2021-06-26 23:01

RIYADH: Yemen's president left for the United States on Saturday to undergo periodic medical examinations, state news agency SABA reported.

President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi has lived in Riyadh since the Iranian-backed Houthi militia captured the Yemeni capital Sanaa in 2015.





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## [Egypt works on national poverty indicator](#)

Author:

Sat, 2021-06-26 20:01

CAIRO: A national indicator of multidimensional poverty should be formulated that reflects the Egyptian situation, based on realistic data and accurate indicators, according to Egypt's deputy minister of planning and economic development Ahmed Kamali.

He was speaking during a remote technical session attended by the working group of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA),

represented by Khaled Abu Ismail, and representatives from UNICEF and Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics to discuss the formulation of the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) in Egypt.

Kamali praised the cooperation between international bodies and efforts made over recent months to eradicate poverty.

The ESCWA team gave a presentation on how to use the MPI Assist Tool (MAT) to present the results in a simplified manner to decision-makers, which would also facilitate the process of measuring the MPI for countries.

This session marked the conclusion of a number of meetings and workshops that started during November 2020 between the Egyptian Ministry of Planning and Economic Development's task force, ESCWA, and the Oxford University's Poverty and Development Initiative Humanity's task force.

The meetings discussed ways to measure the MPI in Egypt and the factors affecting the formulation of this indicator, as well as relying on it in formulating policies related to combating poverty.



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# Former Egypt MP held over looted relics

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Sat, 2021-06-26 19:33

CAIRO: A former Egyptian MP said to be the ringleader of an international smuggling gang is facing charges of excavating and trafficking antiquities following his arrest by security agencies.

Alaa Hassanein, a flamboyant former member of President Hosni Mubarak's now-dissolved National Democratic Party, was among 18 people arrested on Thursday on charges of illegal excavation and smuggling of 201 Pharaonic, Greek and Roman artefacts, the Interior Ministry revealed.

Hassanein has appeared in local media previously claiming to have dabbled in black magic and exorcisms, according to AFP.

Investigations revealed that he personally led a gang that excavated and trafficked antiquities, the ministry said.

A five-minute video accompanying the ministry's statement listed the looted relics, including "two wooden tablets engraved with hieroglyphics, 36 statues of various lengths, 52 copper coins believed to be from the Greek and Roman periods, and three black basalt plates."

Three bronze statues, a clown statue, and three surgical needles dating back to the Islamic era were also found.

Hassanein and 17 others were remanded in custody for four days pending investigations.

The prosecution in southern Cairo called for a committee from the Supreme Council of Antiquities to examine the seized pieces.

Smuggling antiquities in Egypt carries a life sentence and hefty fines.

On Wednesday, Egypt's public prosecutor said in a statement that Cairo recovered about 115 stolen artefacts in Paris after a two-year joint operation with French judicial authorities.

The statement did not reveal the full contents of the trove, but an accompanying 15-minute video showed Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities chief Mostafa Waziri explaining that some of the artefacts date back to "the ancient Egyptian civilization."

Cairo has announced several major new archaeological discoveries in recent years, hoping to revive a key tourism sector.





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