Beat: News

BREAKING NEWS: URGENT -- World powers reach deal with Iran on nuclear program

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USPA News - World powers have reached a major breakthrough agreement with Iran on Tehran`s disputed nuclear program, officials said on early Sunday, but exact details were not immediately released pending a televised statement from U.S. President Barack Obama. "We have reached an agreement," Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said after he ended talks with the 5+1 group, which includes the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany.

European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton also said an agreement had been reached. The first-stage agreement aimed at capping Tehran`s nuclear program will likely reward Iran with an easing of international economic sanctions, but details were not immediately released. The White House said Obama would deliver a televised statement at 0315 GMT (10:15 p.m. EST Saturday) to discuss the deal. The Wall Street Journal, which provided no source for its information, said the agreement calls for Iran to stop its production of near-weapons grade nuclear fuel -- which is uranium enriched to 20 percent purity -- and for the removal of Tehran`s stockpile of the fissile material, which is estimated to be nearly enough to produce one nuclear bomb. In return, the easing of international economic sanctions will provide between $6 billion and $7 billion in badly needed foreign exchange for Tehran over the next 6 months, the newspaper said. It said the first-stage agreement is for about six months, allowing world powers to negotiate a second phase or a permanent pact. International concerns regarding Iran`s nuclear activities have been increasing for decades, but Iran`s newly-elected president, Hassan Rouhani, is seeking to reduce tensions with the West. The Iranian government has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is for the peaceful purpose of providing energy, but many countries contend Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons and may be close to obtain them.

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