



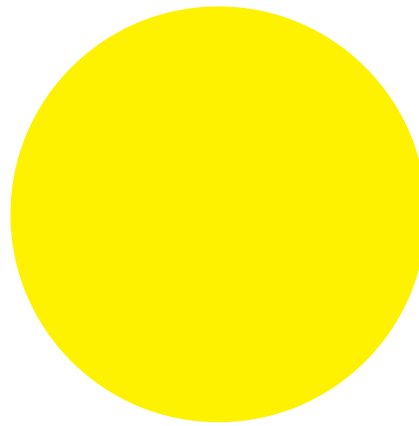
EXCLUSIVE

Refugees are going to be an extremely large problem in the future [6-7](#) >



EXCLUSIVE

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Middle East on Path to Peace, Stability

[2](#) >



Women in traditional clothes circle around a bonfire in a village near Ahar County, northwestern Iran, on March 14, 2023 to celebrate Chaharshanbe Suri – an ancient Persian festival that marks the last Tuesday night in the Iranian calendar year.

● ISNA

IRGC obtains AI-powered unmanned vessels

Political Desk

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy has developed unmanned military vessels that use artificial intelligence (AI) for combat operations, a commander said. IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri announced at a televised program on Monday night that his forces have obtained unmanned vessels equipped with arti-

cial intelligence. He noted that the AI-powered watercraft can be controlled for mass attacks together with several other unmanned vessels. The commander also warned the neighboring countries that have allowed the Israeli regime to establish a foothold in the region that any harm to Iran will draw a retaliatory response. The general further provided information on the

missile capabilities of the IRGC Navy's vessels and speedboats, noting that the "Tareq" boats can launch missiles with a range of 180 kilometers while moving at a speed of 60 knots. He also noted that the 'Mahdavi' logistical combat warship has been furnished with cruise missiles with a range of 300 to 750 kilometers, saying the vessel also carries five helicopters, suicide drones with a range of 1,300 kilometers,



● TASNIM

and 'Sepehr-7' drones that have a flight endurance of eight hours and a range of 200 kilometers.

Iran-Pakistan trade could top \$20b in five years: MP

The trade between Iran and Pakistan stood at \$1.2 billion the past Iranian year, which ended on March 20, 2022, announced a member of the Iran-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, adding the figure is expected to hit \$2 billion in the current Iranian year.



● IRAN DAILY

In an interview with Iran Daily, Malek Fazli pointed to the capacities of commercial and economic cooperation between the two countries and said if a serious decision is made to develop economic cooperation, the current figure of commercial exchanges would hit \$10 billion within two to three years, and \$20 billion and even more in a five-year period.

Criticizing that the trade between Iran and Pakistan have not grown significantly so far, he said, "There has been no serious will to develop sustainable trade between the two states."

"I visited Karachi to participate in a trade exhibition, where Iranian products were highly welcomed by Pakistanis and sold in a short period of time. This indicates the success of our products in the Pakistani market."

The only thing that can guarantee security between the two countries is the formation of common economic interests, the MP said. Fazli said Pakistan has had desirable relations with Iran throughout history and since it gained independence in 1947, there has always been a warm and friendly relationship between the two countries.

[Page 8](#) >

Beijing-brokered Tehran-Riyadh detente proof of China's growing Mideast status

Abas Aslani
Political analyst

While over the past months, all eyes were fixed on Baghdad for reports of the latest developments in the rapprochement talks between Tehran and Riyadh, Beijing turned out to be the venue from which news of a detente between Iran and Saudi Arabia and the reopening of the embassies emerged, which is indicative of China's growing status in the Middle East and vice versa.

Grounds for reconstruction of Iran-Saudi ties

The relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have gone through many ups and downs since the victory of the former's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Although the relationship saw some improvements in brief periods on the back of efforts aimed at de-escalation, due to the two political systems' conflicting natures, the U.S. negative role would always have its adverse impact, recreating the tension and crisis in Tehran-Riyadh relations. However, the ongoing transformation in the world order and its geopolitical outcomes for the Middle East pushed Iran and Saudi Arabia toward resolving their differences in an effort to improve the status quo in the bilateral ties and the Middle East. The rapprochement was achieved in view of a number of facts:

[Page 3](#) >



Nowruz symbolizes fertility and rejuvenation [4](#) >



Iran's economy hit 5.3% in autumn: CBI [8](#) >



Complete collection of Iranian radif published [12](#) >

Iraq seeks fiscal stability with 3-year budget

Iraq's prime minister said his government had finalized a three-year budget for the oil-dependent economy traditionally plagued by budgetary delays. The bill, sent to parliament for approval, will include financial aid to 600,000 families in a bid to "lower the poverty rate", Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said. Iraq last year went without a budget because of political paralysis. Sudani said he hopes the three-year fiscal framework will provide more certainty. "We will end the process that disrupts all development and construction efforts, as ministries are usually



● AFP

paralyzed before the end of the fiscal year," waiting for a new budget's approval, a statement from his office said. The 2023-2025 spending plan would see \$36.5 billion in annual infrastructure investment, including the creation of a "special fund to support the poorest provinces", Sudani said.

[Page 9](#) >

China warns AUKUS sub deal on 'path of error and danger'

China warned on Tuesday that Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States were treading a "path of error and danger" after they unveiled a nuclear-powered submarines deal. The trilateral alliance, known as AUKUS, "completely disregard the concerns of the international communities and are walking further and further down the path of error and danger," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said. Australia announced on Monday it would buy up to five US nuclear-powered submarines, then build a new model with US and

British technology under an ambitious plan to bulk up Western muscle across the Asia-Pacific in the face of a rising China. Wang accused the three Western allies of inciting an arms race, saying the security deal was "a typical case of Cold War mentality". The sale of submarines "constitutes a severe nuclear proliferation risk, and violates the aims ... of the Non-Proliferation Treaty," he said. Russia also said on Tuesday that the joint plan raised questions about nuclear proliferation, demanding "special transparency".