

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Health

Minister:  
Eighth wave of  
COVID to last  
for another  
10 days

TASNIM

## National Desk

Following a surge in the number of deaths due to COVID-19, Iran's Health Minister Behram Einollahi said on Sunday that the eighth wave of the coronavirus will last for at least another 10 days.

During the past month, the death rate due to COVID-19 in Iran has increased significantly compared to recent months.

Saeed Karimi, the deputy director of the Iranian Ministry of Health, said earlier that a "subvariant of the Omicron variant" has become the main cause of the surge in coronavirus patients.

Thirty-nine patients passed away in the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of casualties to 145,652 people.

Nine hundred and forty new patients were diagnosed, 497 of which were hospitalized.

Eight hundred and eighteen patients across the country are now hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

Iranian envoy  
calls for  
paying heed  
to Israeli  
crimes

IRNA

## Political Desk

Iran's former ambassador to Damascus and newly-appointed envoy to Armenia says those who claim to be the flag-bearers of human rights should open their eyes and watch the crimes committed by the occupying Israeli regime against the Palestinian people.

Mehdi Sobhani told the Al-Ahed news website that the time was ripe for the so-called flag-bearers of human rights to open their eyes and see the crimes of the occupying regime against worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The Israeli regime is facing social and internal crises, so it wants to export its own woes to territories outside the usurped lands, Sobhani said, noting that the response by the Palestinian brothers indicates the vitality of the resistant nation of Palestine.

Iran's Shamkhani: South Caucasus conflicts  
must be resolved through dialogue

## Political Desk

Armen Grigorian, Secretary of Armenia's National Security Council, who arrived in Tehran on Sunday, met with Admiral Ali Shamkhani, the special representative of Iran's Leader and the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

The two discussed bilateral and regional issues.

During the meeting, Admiral Shamkhani referred to the historical relations between the two countries and the cultural links between the two nations of Iran and Armenia, saying, "Stability in the political and economic relations of the two countries is one of the important features of the friendly relations between Tehran and Yerevan." Iran's top security official considered the development of cooperation and interaction with neighbors

as one of the unchangeable principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and one of the important priorities of President Ebrahim Raisi's administration, noting, "Good neighborliness and joint efforts to resolve regional challenges through peaceful methods is Iran's recommendation to all sides."

Considering the positive horizon of economic interactions between Tehran and Yerevan, Shamkhani called the increase of joint trade exchanges to the amount of three billion dollars an achievable goal, saying, "Iran and Armenia are located in the North-South transit corridor, which will provide a clear prospect for deepening trade relations between the two countries."

Iran's top security official stated that tension and conflict in the South Cau-

casus region is not in the interest of any country, stating, "Any change in the geographical status quo of the South Caucasus region is an escalating action in the direction of the enemies' desire for the security and stability of the region."

He noted that harsh approaches to end regional problems should be replaced by continuous dialogue and interaction.

Pointing out that the South Caucasus region is going through a sensitive predicament, Shamkhani expressed hope that the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia can manage and resolve tensions with restraint and tact.

For his part, Grigoryan referred to the long-standing relations between Tehran and Yerevan and called on the government and nation of Armenia to develop and deepen comprehensive co-



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operation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and listed the priorities of his country in the field of foreign policy. The Secretary of Armenia's National Security Council stated, "The Islamic Republic of Iran plays an important role in the development of relations between the countries of the South Caucasus and ensuring the security of

the region." Praising the very effective role of Iran in establishing peace and stability in the region and congratulating the recent agreement between Tehran and Riyadh, Grigoryan said, "The only way to end regional crises and prevent tension and conflict is dialogue and interaction between countries."

Armenia's top security official mentioned the electricity transmission projects between the two countries and gas swap between Armenia and Turkmenistan as important issues in relations between Tehran and Yerevan, and emphasized accelerating the implementation of economic projects between the two countries.

## What Iran-KSA thaw in ties means for region



Saeed Azimi

Staff writer

## EXCLUSIVE

The accord between these two major Muslim nations will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for the region, with the potential to shift the balance of power and diminish Washington's influence in the Middle East. The agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia will have significant repercussions on the wider region, with countries and peoples throughout the Middle East benefiting from this momentous event.

The accord has been warmly welcomed by actors throughout the region including Türkiye, Egypt, Bahrain, and other Arab countries as well as factions of the resistance front such as Lebanon's Hezbollah, Yemen's Ansarullah, and Palestinian groups.

## New chapter in ties

The renewal of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia does not signify

the resolution of all fundamental differences or the termination of differences in their approaches or postures on particular subjects or cases. It envisions mutual benefits. Under the agreement, each country endeavors to attain and safeguard its national interests to the fullest extent possible. The accord marks a significant achievement in regional diplomacy and paves the way for further cooperation in various domains of shared interest. In addition to the economic benefits, the agreement will have a positive impact on regional security and stability, which is vital for the entire region. The engagement of regional actors in resolving regional issues and disputes, without any foreign interference, is a key principle of Iran's foreign policy.

## Economic benefits

The accord with Saudi

Arabia is a positive and constructive measure that will greatly benefit Iran's economic situation and contribute to its overall improvement. While the agreement may have been delayed and incurred significant costs over the years, it promises to be highly efficacious. The fact that Iran has reached an agreement with its Saudi neighbor is a critical first step in helping Iran foster cordial ties with other Arab nations, facilitate greater influence in the economic sphere, and ultimately ease the suffocating impact of sanctions. Investors are less likely to invest in a tumultuous international environment, and in order to make a significant investment, the investor must evaluate the foreseeable future (spanning at least the next 10 to 15 years) in a favorable state. When the atmosphere is placid and conducive to stable relations, investors will

undoubtedly be more inclined to invest. The presence of investors in a country can, in turn, play a pivotal role in boosting employment, reducing poverty, and bolstering the overall health of the economy. Iran and Saudi Arabia can leverage their unique capabilities to create a complementary dynamic that prioritizes the interests of their respective governments and the broader community of nations in the region. By reducing tensions and improving relations, they can foster a more conducive environment for investment and attract investors. Such efforts will undoubtedly bear fruit and help build a brighter future for all.

## Role of dialogue

The complexities of the issues facing the Middle East are readily apparent, given the extended period of foreign intervention. Therefore, by resorting

to political dialogue and diplomatic methods, Iran and other regional nations can effectively preclude the possibility of creating further tension and deny ill-wishers any opportunity to foment unrest and instability in the region. It is also worth noting that China's engagement in regional issues through projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative can contribute to regional development and security.

The accord sets a positive precedent for resolving conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy and serves as a model for other regional conflicts that require a similar approach. Ultimately, the accord between Iran and Saudi Arabia demonstrates the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in resolving conflicts and fostering cooperation not only between these two countries but also for the wider region and the world.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi

Cartoonist



## Iran seeks stability in Caucasus region

Tehran seeks to maintain the security and stability of the Caucasus region.

If the regional countries respect each other's territorial integrities, differences between them can be resolved through diplomacy. The dispute between Baku and Yerevan can be also resolved if both countries respect territorial integrity and do not decide to change the geographical borders of the region.

Iran has always emphasized that strengthening Tehran's relations with Baku or bolstering ties with Yerevan is

in no way against another country and is line with Tehran's good neighborliness policy.

Therefore, the visit of the Armenian official to Tehran should not be considered as a move against Azerbaijan, which has recently leveled accusations at Iran, but it should be seen as efforts by Tehran to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and strengthen stability and security in the region. Iran prefers diplomacy and dialogue between Baku and Yerevan on the dispute over the region. Misunderstandings between Baku

and Tehran can also be resolved through dialogue. Azerbaijan's decision to suspend the activities of its embassy in Tehran is not a right move and it would be better for Azerbaijan to resume its activities as soon as possible. Because in the absence of ambassadors, direct contacts and communications will decrease and there would be room for further misunderstanding between the two neighbors and it would also reduce the opportunity for the settlement of differences between the two countries.