

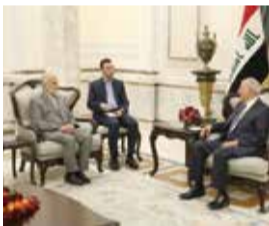
NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran FM to visit
three Persian
Gulf states

● FARS

ISNA - Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will travel to Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait on Tuesday.

The importance of this trip goes beyond bilateral relations and will address important issues between Iran and the United States, as Muscat and Doha now play a mediating role in reducing tensions, exchanging prisoners, and nuclear negotiations.

Baghdad
links Tehran
with Arab
states: *Official*

International Desk

Lauding Baghdad's positive role in bringing Tehran and Riyadh closer together, the president of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations said that Iraq is the channel through which Tehran makes contact with Arab states.

In a meeting with Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid on Monday, Kamal Kharrazi stressed that the Islamic Republic supports the establishment of security and stability in Iraq.

Navy chief
in Pakistan
to enhance
maritime
cooperation

● MEHR

IFP - Commander of the Iranian Navy Rear Admiral Shahram Irani arrived in the Pakistani capital Islamabad on a three-day visit. The visit by the Iranian admiral is aimed at the expansion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of maritime security and training, as well as the exchange of delegations with Pakistan.

Flash floods behind Tehran
recent water shortage

Iran's Energy Ministry released a video that shows how flash floods that happened earlier this month near the capital Tehran washed down tons of rocks into the downstream of the city's main reservoir, an incident that led to days of water shortage in the city.

The video released on Sunday showed layers of rocks piling up on the downstream of the Amir Kabir Dam, a large water reservoir located nearly 60 kilometers to the west of Tehran, and blocking its outlet in less than 20 minutes, according to Press TV.

Experts say more than 1.6 million cubic meters of rock and earth were washed down the dam's downstream, causing a massive blockage between the dam and water treatment facilities that supply water to Tehran. Energy Ministry officials said the incident was a first in the history of Amir Kabir Dam, also known as Karaj dam, a reservoir built more than 60 years ago to ensure water supply to Tehran.

The incident caused nearly a week of water shortage in Tehran and in the nearby metropolitan city



Workers struggle to clear the huge pile of rocks that slid downstream and caused a blockage between Amir Kabir Dam and water treatment facilities. ● FARS

of Karaj.

Authorities said the operation to clear the rocks and earth blocking the dam's downstream was a very complicated one and took more than six days. They added that it took three more days to restore full supply of water to households and businesses in Tehran on June 16.

NW still struggles
with flash floods

Severe floods are reported to have continued in Garmy and Bileh Savar districts in northwestern Ardebil Province on Monday, leaving several people killed or missing and damaging roads and homes. As a result of the hail-storm, heavy rain, and subsequent flash floods,

the roofs of private homes in Bileh Savar and Jafarabad were damaged and many trees were uprooted, said Bileh Savar County Governor Sahab-Ali Asqari. The governor said that heavy rain followed by floods and strong wind caused damage to as many as 200 private homes in villages in Bileh Savar

County, Mehr news agency reported.

Also, 150 vehicles suffered major damages including shattered glass.

Asqari added that water and electricity have been restored to some of those affected villages, noting that various governmental bodies and armed forces have joined the rescue and relief efforts.

Raeisi's possible visit ...

Over the past four months, as the restoration of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh grew more serious, Arab countries have notably shifted their attitudes toward Iran, demonstrating a clear interest in deepening their relations with Tehran. Naturally, this development has raised concerns among Israel and its Western allies.

Furthermore, an additional cause for their apprehension lies in the potential collaboration between Iran and Saudi Arabia in addressing the Palestinian issue, which poses a threat to Israel's political

influence and propaganda efforts.

Another source of worry pertains to economic and energy matters. Iran holds the largest reserves of natural gas, while Saudi Arabia is the leading oil producer. Consequently, Tehran and Riyadh could potentially play a joint role in the energy sector in the near future, the outcomes of which remain unclear for Western countries.

In contrast, regional media predominantly portrayed the Saudi foreign minister's visit in a positive light, recognizing the thaw between Tehran and Riyadh as beneficial for

regional security and economic advancement.

Farhan delivered an official invitation from the Saudi king to Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi to visit the kingdom. Does this invitation signify a push toward strengthening relations?

In the realm of international affairs, embassy activities are considered customary, and having an embassy alone does not necessarily reflect the quality of relations between two nations. However, the Saudi invitation demonstrates Riyadh's keenness to enhance re-

lations with Tehran and address remaining challenges between the two countries. Raeisi's possible visit to Saudi Arabia would undoubtedly bring about significant security, political and economic developments for both nations and the wider Middle East.

Do you believe that Tehran-Riyadh relations will remain confined to security and politics, or do you foresee a gradual expansion into economic cooperation? Typically, economic cooperation and the identification of shared economic interests can bolster the

political and security ties between nations. However, it is through diplomatic relations that the essential groundwork for establishing economic cooperation is laid. Given the absence of political relations and certain misunderstandings, Iran and Saudi Arabia were compelled to initiate the restoration of their ties from a security perspective and subsequently proceed to the political phase. Thus, until diplomatic relations are established and both countries have embassies in place, the natural progression into the economic phase of cooperation cannot occur.

Notably, the statements made by the foreign ministers of both countries in Tehran emphasized the significance of economic and trade relations. Fundamentally, one of the primary reasons behind Saudi Arabia's shift in approach toward Iran is a transition from a security and military-focused approach to a political and economic one. Therefore, it is highly probable that the reestablishment of political relations will pave the way for economic cooperation, particularly considering the substantial potential that exists for both Iran and Saudi Arabia.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Radioactive pollution of Aras River
up in the air

National Desk

While an Iranian newspaper confirmed the rumor that the Aras River is contaminated with radioactive substances, a provincial official ruled out the possibility that Armenia's nuclear power plant is leaking into the river. Payam-e Ma newspaper claims that its independent investigations have detected signs of radioactive pollution as well as high levels of magnesium, lead, arsenic, and more than 50 other pollutants in a water sample

taken from a part of the river adjacent to the Khoda Afarin Dam and Mughan plain. The report speculates with confidence that nuclear sewage from Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant in Armenia has been dumped into the river without administering the necessary treatment, leading to a rise in the number of diagnosed stomach cancers in Iranians living down the river. However, the East Azarbaijan Province's deputy governor for political and social affairs dismisses the report. "The introduction of radio-

active materials from Armenia's Metsamor plant to the Aras River is virtually impossible because of how far away the plant is from that area," Torab Mohammadi said, adding that the plant is considered to be safe in that regard and there have been no reports of any leakage from it. "But the sewage of an Armenian copper factory can be easily seen to be dumped into the river, which diminished after we objected, but the factory keeps contaminating the river secretly at night."