

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**West responsible for refugee crisis: FM spox**



**PRESS TV** – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani rebuked the West for evading responsibility for the current refugee crisis, saying the U.S. and Europe are to blame as their "wrong policies" triggered a migration wave. Kan'ani made the remarks via Twitter on Tuesday, after an overcrowded fishing trawler carrying as many as 750 migrants, including around 100 children, sank in the Mediterranean Sea. The boat was traveling from Libya to Italy, when it capsized off the coast of Greece on Wednesday. So far, only 104 survivors have been found and 81 bodies recovered, while more than 500 people are still missing.

**Iran has joined 33 int'l maritime conventions: PMO**



**TASNIM** – The Islamic Republic of Iran has thus far joined 33 international maritime conventions, the chief executive of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) said on Tuesday. Ali Akbar Safaei made the remarks in his message on the occasion of World Maritime Day (WMD). "With their powerful and strong presence in sea and ocean and guiding regional and ocean-going commercial ships, sailors have an undeniable contribution in providing food and protecting the economic and military security of a country. These industrious sailors spare no effort to fulfill their duties in very difficult conditions even during international crises," he wrote.

**SalamAir to launch direct flights to Shiraz**

**TASNIM** – SalamAir announced bi-weekly direct flights from Sohar Airport in the Sultanate of Oman to Shiraz Airport in Iran as of July 5, 2023. SalamAir is a low-cost airline in Oman, headquartered and based at the Muscat International Airport.

# U.S. fears independent Iran, Venezuela: *Raeisi*



● IRNA

## International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi said Washington doesn't want countries like Iran and Venezuela to achieve independence in production, exports, and trade, and everything else including its strategic, double-standard use of human rights is "a front".

In an interview with the

Venezuelan TeleSUR television network during his five-day Latin America tour earlier this month, Raeisi noted that Washington is furious at Caracas and Tehran because the former doesn't relinquish its oil freely, and the latter insists on achieving independence and opposing tyranny.

"Former U.S. president

Donald Trump exposed Washington's greed a while back when he admitted that Washington wanted to 'take over' Venezuela and its oil, further criticizing the incumbent U.S. government for giving money to Caracas in exchange for its oil," he highlighted. "That is Washington's attitude. That is Washington without filter, showing it-

self for what it truly is and admitting to its pillaging goals in foreign affairs." To this end, Raeisi pointed out, Washington uses sanctions as a weapon to attack nations that either want to be independent or stand up to its pillaging exploits. "It looks as if sanctions are imposed on governments, but their weight, in fact, falls on the people," the Iranian president reaffirmed, concluding that one way to neutralize sanctions is for independent and sanctioned countries to cement their ties. Noting that Venezuela was in a corner, Raeisi asserted, "We did whatever we could at the time to help, and we are still standing beside the people and government of Venezuela". He maintained that after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iranians embraced the same ideals of independence, freedom, and justice that the Latin American nations embraced when they fought for and gained their independence. Raeisi said that Washington's rule of thumb that every country that doesn't oblige to its demands is to be called the embodiment of evil, adding: "But if we

look around the world today, we can clearly see who killed thousands in Iraq and Afghanistan, and who was responsible for the disability of 35,000 Afghan kids." "I ask them: Don't you believe in democracy? Then why don't you respect the wishes of the people of Venezuela and other Latin American countries and the results of their elections? Why don't you let all the Palestinians — whether they be Muslims, Jews, or Christians — freely vote for their government and end this 70-year-old oppression?" Stressing that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always insisted that every nation including Afghanistan, Yemen, Cuba, and Venezuela must be allowed to decide its own fate, the president lambasted the United States for allowing themselves to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries and violating fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. Stating that the dominance of tyrannical powers is on the decline, President Raeisi asserted his belief that the world order will transform in favor of independent countries.

## French police prevent MKO from holding rally



● XINHUA

**International Desk** France has banned an upcoming rally of the anti-Iran Mujahedeen Khalq Organization (MKO) over security concerns, according to a letter sent to the organizers and seen by Reuters. The ban comes as Western powers seek to defuse tensions with Iran and a few weeks after Tehran released several Europeans from prison including two French

nationals. French President Emmanuel Macron held a 90-minute call with Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi on June 10. France 24 has reported that the MKO was reported to have been furious by the Paris police's de facto ban on the rally, claiming that it was the result of "pressure" on France by the Iranian government. The MKO intended to stage a rally after the release of an Iranian diplomat falsely convicted of masterminding a plot to bomb the group in 2018. Mujahedeen Khalq has held frequent rallies in the French capital over the years, often attended by high-profile former U.S., European, and Arab officials critical of the Islamic Republic. The MKO terrorist organization has assassinated more than 15,000 Iranian authorities and civilians in its campaign since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

## Qatar's emir: Doha ...

He went on to describe Iran as an important country in the region which holds a special position, calling for the development of economic relations between the two countries, Press TV reported. Sheikh Tamim further stated that economic relations between Doha and Tehran are improving. However, he said, the two countries have not reached their goals yet and they need to make efforts to elevate their cooperation to the desired level. Amir-Abdollahian, for his part, hailed the effective role of Doha in resolving regional prob-

lems in recent years. He also called for expanding the political and economic relations between Tehran and Doha, describing the upcoming meeting of the two countries' joint economic commission as "a favorable opportunity" for accelerating economic and trade cooperation. Regional peace and stability, as well as the developments in Afghanistan and Palestine, were among other issues discussed in the meeting. Amir-Abdollahian left Tehran for Qatar's capital late Monday to discuss bilateral relations as well as major regional and international

developments with high-ranking Qatari officials. The Iranian foreign minister left Doha for Oman's capital city of Muscat following his talks in Qatar. Since its inauguration, President Raeisi's administration has been diligently pursuing a good-neighborliness policy to cement ties with the nations in the region. During Raeisi's visit to Doha in February 2022, Iran and Qatar signed 14 memoranda of understanding in the fields of aviation, trade, shipping, media, cancellation of visa requirements, electricity, standards, education and culture.

## Iran delegation holds separate meetings on Astana talks

Ali Asghar Khaji, a senior aide to the Iranian foreign minister, separately met with deputy foreign ministers of Turkey, Syria, and Russia on the sidelines of the latest round of Astana talks on the Syrian conflict, which is also focused on restoring ties between Damascus and Ankara. Deputy foreign ministers from Turkey, Russia, and Iran, as the guarantor states, came together for the 20th round of Astana talks in the eponymous Kazakh city on Tuesday morning to discuss ways

to resolve the Syrian conflict, according to IRNA. Representatives of the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and militant groups opposed to it are also participating in the talks, which are expected to continue on Wednesday as well. On the sidelines of the quadrilateral meeting, the Iranian delegation, led by Khaji, exchanged views with the Turkish delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Burak Akçapar, on the latest developments between Syr-

ia and Turkey. They agreed that negotiations between Ankara and Damascus must continue until their relations return back to normal. Both sides also underscored the importance of respecting national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Syria. The Iranian delegation also held discussions with the Syrian delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Ayman Susan. Separately, Khaji and his accompanying delegation met with the Russian del-



● AA

egation headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov. The two sides discussed the latest developments in the region and ways to resolve dif-

ferences between Damascus and Ankara. They also emphasized respecting Syria's sovereignty and the need to fight terrorism.