



## International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi was welcomed by Kenyan President William Ruto in Nairobi on Wednesday as he began a three-country tour of Africa that will also take him to Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Raeisi was honored with a 21 gun-salute after he arrived at Kenya's State House in Nairobi. Then both presidents co-chaired bilateral talks between delegations from both sides after they held a private meeting.

Raeisi and Ruto then oversaw a signing of several agreements reached between the two countries.

### 'Turning point' in relations

After the ceremony, the Iranian president described his trip as a "turning point" in bilateral relations, noting that it can create a good market for Iranian products in Kenya and East Africa.

"Just as Iran cooperates with countries in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, Kenya has relations with East African states. The relationship between the two countries will provide the ground for such contacts," he added.

Raeisi insisted that both countries are aiming to materialize a 10-fold surge in their economic cooperation.

"We do not see any obstacles in the development of relations and this can help expand [our] ties."

### Ready for more cooperation

President Raeisi voiced Iran's readiness to cooperate with Kenya in the fields of petrochemicals, agriculture, science, technology, medicine and medical equipment, as well as the fishery industry and the fight against narcotics. Kenya's president, for his part, described Iran as "a critical strategic partner for Kenya," and said the two governments had signed five MoUs (memoranda of understanding) focusing on areas including information technology, investment promotion and fisheries. He noted that Kenya's arms are open to Iranian investors and businessmen. Ruto also told reporters that Raeisi had also shared plans for Iran to set up a plant in the port city of Mombasa "to manufacture an indigenous Iranian vehicle that has now been given the Kiswahili name, 'Kifaru', meaning rhino."

### Iran's House of Innovation and Technology

During his visit, the Iranian president also visited Iran's House of Innovation and Technology in Nairobi, as one of the leading centers in the development of the export of knowledge-based products. During his visit, Iran showcased two domestically-manufactured agricultural and mapping drones for possible trade and export to the African country. Raeisi's trip to Africa is the first by an Iranian president in more than a decade. The trip, which was due to begin on Tuesday, was delayed by a day to finalize memoranda of understanding. The last Iranian president to visit Africa was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2013. Iran had stepped up its diplomatic efforts to expand relations with developing countries after then-US president Donald Trump ditched a nuclear pact in 2018 and re-imposed sanctions. In June, Raeisi visited Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua, where he signed numerous agreements in different fields with those countries.

## East Africa opens arms to Iran

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Kuwait  
extradites  
11 Iranian  
prisoners**

IRNA – Eleven Iranian prisoners have been extradited from Kuwait and handed over to the Iranian judicial authorities late on Tuesday as part of an extradition treaty with the Arab country. Iran and Kuwait have also agreed, as part of a joint consular committee held recently between the two neighboring countries, to cooperate on judicial issues.

**Iran media  
report on  
Malley elicits  
US reaction**

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses seminary students in Tehran on Wednesday, July 12, 2023. [leader.ir](http://leader.ir)

**International Desk**

A report published by the Iranian newspaper Tehran Times, which claimed Robert Malley's security clearance suspension started on April 21, was met with the reaction of US politicians. US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said that he cannot confirm Malley was asked to go on leave on April 21. Senator Josh Hawley criticized the US government for not being forthcoming and allowing an Iranian newspaper to access and publish the information. "I feel like I've been lied to. They (the administration) lie to us all the time on various issues including Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and China. It's a pattern in this administration," he added.

**US shifted  
from direct to  
proxy attacks:  
IRGC chief**

PRESS TV – The chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) hailed Iran's formidable defensive power, noting that the US is resorting to waging proxy attacks on Iran since they are well aware that direct military action would spell a "major suicide". Major General Hossein Salami underlined that even though Iran is currently among the world's top five powers in manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles, Iran's deterrent power is not limited to just missiles and drones.

**Liberal democrat  
powers are neither:  
Leader**

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the country is in confrontation with a "lying front" that brands itself as a "liberal democracy", though it's neither liberal nor democrat.

Addressing seminary students in Tehran on Wednesday, the Leader said Iran is in the midst of a "civilizational and global" fight with "lying" arrogant powers hiding behind the labels of liberalism and democracy, Press TV reported.

He emphasized that this front, which opposes the Iranian nation, stands against the pursuit of freedom, independent thinking, and any form of democracy not subservient to global arrogance.

Ayatollah Khamenei questioned the sincerity of those Western countries that claim to be liberal while having a history of colonization. He highlight-

ed the example of India, which was colonized for over a hundred years, resulting in the exploitation of its resources and the impoverishment of its people. "If you're liberal, why did you colonize [countries]? ... What kind of a liberal you are, what a kind of freedom-seeker you are, and what kind of a free-thinker you are when you colonize a multi-million nation like India for over a hundred years and keep it under your control?"

The Leader further maintained the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and criticized the West's tendency to colonize nations and exploit their resources.

"The Ukrainian people are left to be killed since the interests of the Western companies that produce and sell arms lie in prolonging the war in Ukraine," he said.

Ayatollah Khamenei also questioned the arrogant Western powers' support



for democracy, saying their claim is not genuine and real.

"They're not even democrats. They lie as they impose governments [on nations] in some places.

They're not after democracy and they're one hundred percent opposed to a democracy that is not serving them," he said.

Stressing that the West is now more vulnerable than

ever, Ayatollah Khamenei said the US is now in confrontation with its own people and other nations and embodies many acts of evil including racism and cruelty.

**Russian envoy summoned over isles****Iran never stands on ceremony with anyone****International Desk  
PERSPECTIVE**

A final statement of the sixth joint meeting between the foreign ministers of the member countries of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Russia sparked widespread reactions from Iran, sending a strong message that Iran never stands on ceremony with anyone over its territorial integrity and that any encroachment upon its land is considered a violation of its red lines.

One section of the joint statement, issued by the Russian foreign minister and his Arab counterparts, expressed support for the United Arab Emirates' endeavors to find a peaceful resolution to the dispute concerning the three islands of Lesser Tunb, Greater Tunb, and Abu Musa. The suggested approaches to resolving the issue included bilateral dialogue or seeking intervention from the International Court of Justice, based on international law and the principles outlined in the United Nations Charter. Nevertheless, this specific segment of the statement drew swift and critical reactions within Iran. Both the general public on social media platforms and the media outlets, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and lawmakers came

out against it. The underlying theme in these critical responses was a reminder that historical records establish the three islands as an inseparable part of Iran's territory.

The inclusion of Russia's signature on the contentious statement carries significant implications. While the UAE and the council's member states have persistently advocated for their non-historical claims, Russia's unexpected support, which counters Iran's national interests, demands attention. Simultaneously, the political ties between Tehran and Moscow have reached an unprecedented level, fostering extensive collaboration across various realms, including politics, economy, and security. The intricate nature of Tehran-Moscow relations may have led to suspicions, both domestically and internationally, that the Iranian government would refrain from expressing a specific critical reaction toward Moscow's alignment with positions detrimental to Iran.

However, reality turned out to be different. Yesterday morning, the Russian ambassador in Tehran was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where Iran effectively conveyed its objections to the contents of the aforementioned statement.



During a meeting with the Russian ambassador, Alireza Enayati, an assistant minister and the director general of the Persian Gulf at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underscored the enduring ownership of the three Iranian islands as integral parts of Iranian territory. Enayati demanded that Russia rectify its stance on this matter. In response, the Russian ambassador in Tehran assured Enayati of his country's commitment to upholding Iran's territorial integrity and pledged to promptly relay the issue to Moscow for further consideration.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian conveyed a critical reaction to the same matter through a tweet, affirming that Iran "does not stand on ceremony with any party over its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity". Iranian government spokesman Ali Bahadori also

tweeted that the Islamic Republic would not compromise with anyone over its national interests and sovereignty.

Several members of the Iranian Parliament also denounced the joint statement through interviews with media and on their personal social media accounts. Among them, Vahid Jalalzadeh, the head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, took to Twitter and wrote, "To our friends in Russia, we have a clear stance on the unsubstantiated and threadbare claims of the Emiratis regarding the Iranian islands. However, Moscow's stance against Iran is detrimental to the bilateral relationship. Iran's support for Moscow is conditional." Nezamoddin Mousavi, the spokesperson for the Parliament's Presiding Board, added his voice to the discussion, asserting, "Lesser Tunb, Greater Tunb, and

Abu Musa islands are integral and everlasting parts of Iran's territory. It is crucial for all governments, including the Russian government, to understand that the Iranian government and its people have no disputes concerning these three islands. They will not tolerate any insinuations or unwarranted claims."

In a previous incident where the Chinese government had joined the members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in a similar statement, the Chinese ambassador in Tehran was also summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Iran officially registered its protest with the Chinese government. Iran has consistently emphasized its commitment to good neighborly relations and the promotion of regional cooperation among neighboring countries. In line with this approach, Iran recently achieved a diplomatic breakthrough by normalizing its relations with Saudi Arabia after a seven-year hiatus, following multiple rounds of talks. Concurrently, Iran has deepened its collaborations with Russia and China, both of which share Iran's support for multilateralism and opposition to unilateral dominance within the international system. However, these partnerships are

firmly rooted in the principle of respecting territorial integrity.

Throughout its extensive history, the Iranian people have remained vigilant against any encroachment or infringement upon their land. This sentiment holds true even in the past four decades. A prime example of Iranian patriotism was demonstrated during the eight-year defense against the aggression of the former Iraqi regime.

Hence, it is essential to dispel any misconceptions that the regional de-escalation process initiated by Iran, the normalization of relations with Saudi Arabia, or the positive relationships fostered with Russia and China indicate a renouncement of Iran's territorial integrity or a departure from countering anti-Iranian claims.

Responding to the joint statement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson stated, "These islands unequivocally belong to Iran, and such statements run counter to the friendly relations between Iran and its neighboring countries." Moreover, Nasser Kanaani reiterated that "Iran, while emphasizing the continuation of a policy of good neighborliness and mutual respect, views the development and stability of the region as a shared responsibility among regional nations."

# N Korea fires its first ICBM in three months after warning US

North Korea test-fired its first intercontinental ballistic missile in three months on Wednesday, days after it threatened "shocking" consequences to protest what it called provocative United States reconnaissance activity near its territory.

Some experts say North Korea likely launched its developmental, road-mobile Hwasong-18 ICBM, a type of solid-fuel weapon that is harder to detect and intercept than its liquid-fuel ICBMs. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un previously called the Hwasong-18 the most powerful weapon of his nuclear forces, AP reported.

The missile, fired from North Korea's capital region around 10 a.m., flew about 1,000 kilometers at a maximum altitude of 6,000 kilometers before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, according to South Korean and Japanese assessments. They said the missile was launched at a high angle in what observers say was an apparent attempt to avoid neighboring countries.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said the missile flew for 74 minutes – the longest flight time recorded by any

weapon launched by North Korea.

South Korea's military called the launch "a grave provocation" and urged North Korea to refrain from additional launches. Matsuno denounced North Korea's repeated missile launches as "threats to the peace and safety of Japan, the region and international society."

In a trilateral phone call, the chief nuclear envoys of South Korea, Japan and the US agreed to sternly deal with North Korean provocations and boost their coordination to promote a stronger international response to the North's nuclear and missile programs, according to Seoul's Foreign Ministry.

The launch came while South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida were attending the NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. In an emergency meeting of South Korea's security council convened by video in Lithuania, Yoon warned North Korea would face more powerful international sanctions due to its illicit weapons programs.

The North's ICBM test in April was the first launch of the Hwasong-18. After that launch, Kim said the



missile would enhance the North's counterattack capabilities.

Earlier this week, North Korea released a series of statements accusing the US of flying a military spy plane close to its soil.

The North's ICBM test in April was the first launch of the Hwasong-18. After that launch, Kim said the

shocking incident" as she said that the US spy plane flew over the North's eastern exclusive economic zone eight times earlier in the day.

The US and South Korea dismissed the North's accusations and urged it to refrain from any acts or rhetoric that raised animosities.

UN Security Council resolutions ban North Korea from engaging in any launches using ballistic technologies. But China and Russia, both permanent members of the council, blocked the US and others' attempts to toughen UN sanctions on North Korea over its recent ballistic missile tests.

## Abbas vows to rebuild Jenin after deadly Israeli raid



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas recites a prayer as he lays a wreath of flowers by the graves of Palestinians killed in recent Israeli military raids on the Jenin camp, on July 12, 2023. **● ZAIN JAAFAR / AFP**

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas vowed Wednesday to rebuild the Jenin refugee camp during a rare visit that came a week after a deadly Israeli raid left much of it destroyed.

Abbas described the camp as an "icon of struggle" during his first visit in over a decade to the camp in the northern West Bank city, AFP reported.

Twelve Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed last week in the two-day raid on Jenin, the largest in years by Israeli forces.

The raid on the camp, which Israel views as a "terrorism hub", employed hundreds of troops as well as drone strikes and army bulldozers that tore up streets and damaged scores of houses.

cluding deputy chairman Mahmoud Aloul, had visited the camp soon after the raid.

On Wednesday, Abbas expressed determination to back Jenin's reconstruction and security.

He described the camp as an "icon of steadfastness and struggle", in a short address as crowds of supporters cheered.

"We have come to say that we are one authority, one state, one law," he said, warning against anyone who "tamper with the unity and security of our people". He further vowed to oversee the reconstruction of the camp and the city to restore it "to what it was or even better".

As he concluded his visit, Abbas laid a wreath on the graves of Palestinians who lost their lives in recent Israeli raids.

A number of Arab coun-

tries have announced aid for the camp after last week's offensive.

The Jenin camp was established in 1953 to house some of those among the 760,000 Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes in 1948, the Nakba, or catastrophe, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homes following the creation of Israel.

Over time, the camp's original tents have been replaced by concrete, and it now resembles something closer to a neighbourhood.

The camp, which houses some 18,000 people, was also a hotbed of activity during the second "intifada" or uprising of the early 2000s.

Abbas, 87, last visited Jenin in 2012 but had not toured the camp at the time.

## China lashes back at NATO criticism, warns it will protect its rights

Beijing lashed back at NATO's accusation that China challenges the bloc's interests and security, and opposed any attempt by the military alliance to expand its footprint into the Asia-Pacific region.

In a strongly worded communique issued midway into a two-day summit in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius on Tuesday, NATO said the People's Republic of China (PRC) challenged its interests, security and values with its "ambitions and coercive policies," Reuters reported.

"The PRC employs a broad range of political, economic, and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up," NATO heads of state said in their communique.

"The PRC's malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target Allies and harm Alliance security." The Chinese mission to the European said in a statement on Tuesday the China-related content of the communique disregarded basic facts, distorted China's position and policies, and deliberately discredited China.

"We firmly oppose and reject this," it said.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at the summit that while China was not a NATO "adversary", it was increasingly challenging the rules-based international order with its "coercive behaviour." "China is increasingly challenging the rules-based international order, refusing to condemn Russia's war against Ukraine, threatening Taiwan, and carrying out a substantial military build-up," he said.

In the communique, NATO said China sought to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains, and that Beijing also used its economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and enhance its influence.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency hit back, saying in a report that the wars and conflicts involving NATO states suggest the bloc is a "grave challenge" to global peace and stability.

"Despite all the chaos and conflict already inflicted, NATO is spreading its tentacles to the Asia-Pacific region with an express aim of containing China."



**● THOMAS PETER/REUTERS**

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Sudan conflict displaces around 3.1m:

UN



AP – A raging conflict in Sudan has driven around 3.1 million people from their homes, including more than 700,000 who fled to neighboring countries, the UN said Wednesday, amid growing concerns that the country is sliding into a "full-scale civil war."

Sudan has plunged into chaos since mid-April when monthslong tensions between the military and its rival, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, exploded into open fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere across the northeastern African nation.

#### Turkey, Greece say to repair ties after year of tension

REUTERS – Greece and Turkey agreed on Wednesday to resume talks and confidence-building measures as they hailed a new "positive climate" in ties after more than a year of tensions between the historic foes.

The two NATO allies have been at odds for decades over a range of issues including where their continental shelves start and end, energy resources, overflights of the Aegean Sea, and ethnically split Cyprus.

#### 'Explosive traces found on yacht in Nord Stream inquiry'



REUTERS – Germany found traces of subsea explosives in samples taken from a yacht that it suspects "may have been used to transport the explosives" to blow up the Nord Stream gas pipelines, it told the UN Security Council in a letter with Sweden and Denmark. A series of unexplained explosions hit the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines connecting Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea last September in the exclusive economic zones of Germany, Sweden and Denmark.

# Yazd Province, the green desert of Iran



Shirkouh Mountain  
IRNA

## Iranica Desk

The central province of Yazd is associated with a dry climate and burning heat, but this is not the whole story.

A land with various climates, Yazd Province draws a large number of visitors every year. This is because at a distance of less than 20 kilometers from the provincial capital city of Yazd, you will reach the green gardens of Taft, and by traveling a few kilometers towards Shirkouh Mountain, you will get into a completely different weather. It is a surprising phenomenon that cannot easily be ignored, according to IRNA. The difference in temperature of various cities in Yazd Province, which sometimes reaches 15°C, has led to the creation of amazing resorts in this

region.

Due to the drought that hit the region as well as the implementation of mining projects and the production of steel and iron, the resorts are no longer as green as in the past; nevertheless, they still serve as refreshing places for the locals to escape from the summer heat.

The most important geographical feature of the province is Shirkouh Mountain, with an elevation of 4,075 meters. At a very short distance, both hot and cold temperatures can be experienced there.

As one of the highest mountains of central Iran, Shirkouh lies in the southwest of Yazd Province.

Qanat, known also as *kariz*, is the main source of fresh water supply in the province. For instance,

Zarch Qanat, dating back 3,000 years, with the length of 100km, provides water to a large number of agricultural fields.

The starting point of this qanat is in Fahraj village, northeast of Yazd. The qanat runs at a depth of 30-40m beneath the city of Yazd. Then it reaches Zarch, where the water is used for irrigation in the lower lands of the city of Yazd. Moreover, sunlight is found in abundance across Yazd Province.

### Taft

Taft, located among mountains, is a city with a pleasant climate. The abundance of pomegranate gardens has helped create beautiful landscapes in and around the city.

### Sadri Garden

Sadri Garden, dating back 400 years, hosts the tall-

est wind catchers of Taft. The amazing architecture of the two monuments built in the middle of the garden dazzle the eyes. About 40 years ago, the garden was renovated.

A lovely pool, with an area of 500 square meters, renders it like a true Persian garden. But here is the best part, inside this pool there are more than 75 fountains that fill the space with the soothing sound of water purring. At the end of the garden, you can also find a watermill.

### Cham village

Cham village, with pleasant weather and rural houses with simple and beautiful architecture, is known as a main settlement of the Zoroastrian people.

A 3,000-year old cypress tree and a Zoroastrian fire temple are among the

most visited sites of the village. The fire temple, in which various Zoroastrian rituals are held, is of historical significance.

### Other attractions

Darreh Gahan Waterfall, which is 20 meters tall, is in the southwest of Taft, in a valley located at the foot of Shirkouh Mountain. The seasonal waterfall is supplied from gradual melting of snow from the top of the mountain. Pahlavan Baadi Castle, another tourist attraction of the region, is located on top of a big rock, which was the shelter of a person after whom it is named.

Dehbala village, with a roaring river and greenery, and Tezerjan village located next to Shirkouh Mountain are among the other tourist magnets of the area.



Cham village  
wikipedia.org



An overview of Taft  
IRNA



Sadri Garden  
IRNA

## Khorasan in ancient Iran

The Greek historian, Herodotus includes the Parthians, Choresmians, Soghdians, and Arians (Αρειοί) in one satrapy; in all the cuneiform inscriptions, however, Parthia, ancient land corresponding roughly to the modern region of Khorasan in northeastern Iran, is listed separately from Choresmia, Soghdia, and Areia. The satrap of Parthia, at the beginning of Darius's reign, was his father Gushtasp, who in 518 BCE had to quell an uprising of the Parthians and Hyrcanians. In Achaemenid times the region did not have much importance; the Persian kings, during their tours of the country, strove to pass through Parthia (Khorasan) as quickly as possible, because the region was too poor to sustain their large retinues. As a result of this poverty and

the necessity of defending themselves against incursions by nomads, the Parthians remained faithful to the simple, soldierlike way of life of the eastern Iranians, and after the fall of the Achaemenids proved to be the solid element that succeeded in rebuilding a strong Iranian state and repelling even Roman expansion.

A natural border between Turkestan and the southern part of the Caspian basin is constituted by the mountains of the Greater and Lesser Balkhan, Kuren-Dagh, Kopet-Dagh, and those of Khorasan, which form today the border between Russia and Persia.

Nothing can match the gloomy spectacle of these sterile heights of gray limestone, watered only by few springs and deprived of any vegetation except



Plains and mountains of Parthia (Khorasan)  
researchgate.net

sparse juniper. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, the oases along the northern slope of these mountains were inhabited by Iranians; their location left them exposed to especially frequent incursions by Turkish nomads, so that in

the end they came under the latter's domination. From that time onward the area received the Turkish name Atek, or more exactly Etek (Itak, "edge, hem, foot of a mountain"). Among the towns of this region, those most often

mentioned in the Middle Ages were Nisa and Ablward. The former is located not far from modern 'Ashqabad, whereas the latter still exists as a modest settlement 110 versts from 'Ashqabad. In the district of Nisa was

the ribat of Farawa (Afrawa), some four days' journey from Nisa; it was built in the ninth century by the Tahirid 'Abdullah, and consisted of three interconnected fortifications. From there a direct road led across the steppe to the town of Gurganj (near modern Kunya-Urgench, in the northern part of the khanate of Khiwa). Mentioned in the district of Ablward is the town of Mihna or Mayhana. A settlement of the same name still exists to the south of the railroad on the border between Russia and Persia; it is noteworthy as the birthplace as well as the place of last repose of the well-known Sufi Abu Sa'id Mayhani (eleventh century).

From Ablward, a direct road led to Marv. As has already been pointed out, Etek was on account of

its geographical position subjected to inroads by Central Asian nomads; moreover, the region was always the object of ambitions for conquest by the nearest Central Asian rulers, namely, the sovereigns of Khwarazm. Already in Herodotus' book, there is a report, so far not satisfactorily explained, about a valley surrounded by five mountains with mountain passes; a river that flowed through this valley had originally belonged to the Choresmians, and was located between the possessions of the Choresmians, Hyrcanians, Parthians, Sarangians, and Tamanians. This report shows that even in remote times, prior to the formation of the Achaemenid Empire, the rule of the Choresmians extended to the mountainous regions to the south of the steppe.

# Ataei to stay on as Iran volleyball head coach

## Sports Desk

Behrouz Ataei will continue as the head coach of Iran national team despite a poor run at the ongoing Volleyball Nations League, said Mohammadreza Davarzani, the chairman of the sport's governing body in the country.

Iran ended up third from bottom in the 16-team table of the preliminary round – the lowest finish for the Asian powerhouse in the history of the competition – failing to book a place in the VNL Finals.

Sunday's five-set defeat against Cuba was a 10th loss in 12 outings for Ataei's men, who only managed to come out on top against China (3-1) and Germany (3-0).

An under-par campaign saw Iran being beaten in straight sets by Japan, Slovenia, Italy, USA, and France, while leaving the court with the minimum point in five-set losses to Poland, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Argentina in the buildup to Sunday's setback.

While some volleyball veterans and pundits have questioned Ataei's decision-makings in this year's event, the Iranian might

feel unlucky not to have a full-strength squad at his disposal throughout the three weeks.

Integral outside hitter and team captain Milad Ebadipour missed the tournament for family reasons, while prolific opposite Amin Esmailnejad and first-choice setter Mohammad-Taher Vadi – as well as Ataei himself – did not make the trip to Anaheim, California, for Week 3 after being denied US entry visas.

Asked in a televised interview if the federation is considering a change on the Iranian bench, Davarzani said: "I don't think it's a proper time for a change. There's no doubt the Iranian fans are not satisfied with the results but that doesn't necessarily mean the head coach is the only one to blame for that."

Davarzani still did not rule out making additions to Ataei's technical staff, saying: "We will be looking to bring in a world-class assistant to bolster the coaching team. That's the same model adopted by Japan."

The head of the federation, however, insisted that Ataei will have the final word on who will join his staff.



● FIVB

When Ataei – Iran's U21 coach during the 2019 world title-winning campaign – replaced Russian Vladimir Alekno after the Tokyo Olympics, he became the first domestic coach for the national team for more than a decade. The Iranian led the country

to the crown at the Asian Championships in 2021, before his young, new-look side made it to the VNL quarterfinals last year, only to suffer a 3-2 defeat against European powerhouse Poland.

Ataei then guided his team to the last 16 in the 2022 World

Championships before being knocked out by Brazil.

Major international events will come thick and fast in the coming months for Ataei and his men, who will host the Asian Championships in Urmia – starting August 19 – before heading to Hangzhou, China, for

September's Asian Games.

The hectic schedule will conclude with a visit to Rio de Janeiro in late September, where Iran will take on Germany, Ukraine, Qatar, the Czech Republic, Italy, Brazil, and Cuba in the Paris Olympic qualification event.

## Iranian Qolizadeh seals Polish record move to Lech Poznan



## Sports Desk

Iranian international winger Ali Qolizadeh joined Lech Poznan on a three-year deal worth €1.80 million – a record fee in the Poland Ekstraklasa league.

Qolizadeh, 27, spent four years in the Belgian Jupiler Pro League, where he scored 23 goals while

Iranian Ali Qolizadeh poses with the Lech Poznan shirt after signing a three-year contract with the club in Poznan, Poland, on July 11, 2023.

● lechpoznan.pl

registering 26 assists in 143 appearances for RSC Charleroi – either side of a loan spell at Turkish club Kasimpasa.

"I'm thrilled to be here and will fight for the team's success," the Iranian winger told the Polish club's official website after completing his medical on Tuesday.

"He is a top-notch player with a wealth of experience under his belt," Tomasz Rzasa, the sporting director at Lech Poznan, said of the club's new signing.

"He has remarkable skills and is capable of dribbling past the opposition in

small spaces. He can also move behind the defenders and find his teammates with pinpoint passes," Rzasa added.

An ex-Saipa player in the Iranian top-flight, Qolizadeh has also bagged six goals in 30 international caps and was part of Carlos Queiroz's team during last year's World Cup in Qatar.

Eight-time winner Lech Poznan finished third in the Polish league last season – 14 points behind champion Raków Częstochowa and five behind second-place Legia Warsaw – to secure a place in next season's UEFA Europa Conference League.

## Djokovic relieved to survive Rublev dogfight in Wimbledon

REUTERS – Novak Djokovic's celebration after finishing off Andrey Rublev in a high-octane Wimbledon quarter-final said it all on Tuesday.

The scoreline may look comfortable enough after the 36-year-old fought back from losing the first set to win 4-6 6-1 6-4 6-3 – his 33rd successive victory at Wimbledon.

But the seven-time champion knew he had been in a battle against the inspired seventh seed.

"I think today he played terrific tennis," Djokovic said of an opponent he thrashed en route to winning the Australian Open at the start of the year.

"He was putting a lot of pressure, playing very quick, standing close to the line and trying to push me back. It was like a dogfight, to be honest.

"Some points in the match were so long and exhausting. Those games at the end of the third set where basically the match was decided. I felt huge relief when I won the third set." Djokovic had looked in control but the 10th game of the second set, spanning 15 minutes and including some spellbinding rallies, saw him save three break points and need five set points before finally sealing the set.

Another feisty encounter

will be in store on Friday when Djokovic, bidding for a record-equalling eighth Wimbledon title and fifth in a row, faces Italian eighth seed Jannik Sinner.

Like Rublev, Sinner will go after the 36-year-old Djokovic with his aggressive game and the Serbian will need no reminding that he trailed Sinner by two sets in last year's quarter-finals before reeling him in.

"He (Sinner) likes to play on grass. He likes to play on quick surfaces because he likes to be aggressive and take control of the point," said Djokovic. "From both forehand and backhand,

he's smashing the ball really, really hard.

"He's a very complete player. Now he's first time in the semis of Wimbledon. I'm looking forward to that challenge. I'm sure that he's going to be very, very motivated to win.

"On the other hand, I am, too."

Novak Djokovic celebrates winning the third set during his Wimbledon last-eight victory over Andrey Rublev in London, Britain, on July 11, 2023.

● ANDREW COULDRIDGE/REUTERS



## Fury to face MMA star Ngannou



● thefrontierpost.com

BBC – Heavyweight world champion Tyson Fury will face MMA fighter Francis Ngannou on 28 October in Saudi Arabia.

Former UFC heavyweight champion Ngannou, 36, has no professional record in boxing.

Team Fury say the fight is not an exhibition and will "take place under the official rules of professional boxing, with three judges ringside adopting the 10-point must system".

Fury will not be defending his WBC title in the Riyadh bout.

"This guy is supposed to be the hardest puncher in the world, but let's see how he reacts when he gets hit by the Big GK," Fury said, referring to his 'Gypsy King' nickname.

Ngannou said it was a dream come true to box Fury.

"I've been waiting to meet Tyson in the ring for the past three years," he said.

"All I will say to Tyson for now is he better dance in that ring because if I touch him, he's going to sleep."

The WBC said it would not be involved in the fight but had granted Fury "special permission" to compete in a non-title bout as he has no pending mandatory challenger in place.

Fury has gone with a left-field option after failing to agree terms with Oleksandr Usyk over an undisputed fight earlier this year.

Fury's co-promoter Frank Warren also suggested that fight is unlikely to happen in 2023 after Usyk signed with Saudi Arabia's Skill Challenge Promotions.

"They're saying that will be in February next year," Warren said of Team Usyk. "If everyone were to sit around waiting for them we'd have a problem. We're not sitting about, we're getting on with it."

Ukrainian Usyk is set to defend his titles against his WBA mandatory challenger Daniel Dubois in August and had hoped to fight Fury in December.

Fury has faced criticism for failing to reach terms with Usyk and his choice of opponent, but Warren said the 34-year-old was not avoiding any fighter.

"For anyone to talk about Tyson ducking anyone is absolutely beyond ridiculous," Warren said.

"Because he's the best heavyweight of his generation. None of them, and I represent interim champions and those fighting for world titles... Tyson is the best of his generation at this moment in time."

Ngannou held ambitions of being a boxer early in his career before focusing his full attention on MMA.

"This is my opportunity to make that dream come true and cement my position as the baddest man on the planet," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**27% of jobs at high risk from AI revolution**

REUTERS - More than a quarter of jobs in the OECD rely on skills that could be easily automated in the coming artificial intelligence revolution, and workers fear they could lose their jobs to AI, the OECD said.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a 38-member bloc, spanning mostly wealthy nations but also some emerging economies like Mexico and Estonia.

There is little evidence the emergence of AI is having a significant impact on jobs so far, but that may be because the revolution is in its early stages, the OECD said.

**China signals deeper reforms in power sector**

CCTV - China will double down on power system reforms and shift its focus to reducing carbon emissions, a Communist Party policymaking body said, without giving further details.

The party's commission for deepening reform, an agency responsible for accelerating priority reforms for the leadership, outlined broad proposals for opening up the economy, including the latest effort to improve the country's power networks and oil and natural gas markets.

**Dollar drops to two-month low**

AFP - The dollar sank to a new two-month low on Wednesday after data showed the rise in U.S. consumer prices eased in June, suggesting that the Federal Reserve may have to raise interest rates just one more time this year. The dollar index dropped as low as 101.04, the lowest in two months, after the data, and was last down 0.4% at 101.27.

# Use of local currencies on SCO agenda: Iranian official



SPUTNIK

**Economy Desk**

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) aims to increase the use of local currencies in trade among its member states, an Iranian official said on Wednesday. Kaveh Daliri, the director general of East Asia and the Pacific at Iran's Trade

Development Organization, said the utilization of national currencies had become an "important economic focus" of the SCO. "Until about three years ago, only 0.5% of the commercial transactions were conducted using currencies other than the US dollar. However, this

has now reached approximately 5%, becoming increasingly prevalent in many countries worldwide," Daliri added, according to Mehr news agency. He noted that the SCO was established with security objectives but it has now expanded its scope to cover

economic, commercial, banking, scientific, technological, and even cultural aspects. Regarding the global attitude toward the SCO, Daliri highlighted the overwhelmingly positive response from nations. "It is anticipated that these favorable perspectives will

continue to improve, as numerous countries have expressed willingness to join the organization," he added. Daliri further explained that Iran's recent accession to the SCO was a strategic move based on its anticipation of the new world order.



IRNA

**Economy Desk**

Officials from Iran and Japan emphasized expanding

cooperation in the fields of roads and urban development. The introduction ceremony

## Iran, Japan eye collaboration on roads, urban development

ny of the new head of the Economic Division of the Japanese Embassy to Iran, Shimukuda Takeshi, was held with the participation of Alireza Barakateyn, the adviser to the caretaker of Iranian Roads, Housing and Urban Development Research Center, IRNA reported. Regarding the longstanding history of cooperation

between the two countries in line with the development of national documents, consultations were made within the framework of a comprehensive program for the transfer of technical know-how with a focus on the seismic design of steel structures. In this expert-level session, it was agreed that

the two sides would enhance their cooperation in all fields, especially in roads, housing and urban development. Other topics discussed at the ceremony were ways to transfer Japan's experiences as an earthquake-prone country, and a technology transfer program between the two countries.

## IMF predicts inflation rate in Iran will shrink



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects that inflation rate in Iran, which had been announced to be 49% in 2022, will be 42% and 30% in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

According to the international monetary body, Iran's economy will experience a two-percent growth in 2023 and 2024 after, witnessing a 2.5 percent growth in 2022, showing negligible growth compared to the world's economic growth average, Middle East countries and new emerging economies of the region, reported Tasnim news agency. But the prediction of high economic growth of countries, including India and China, as the two largest consumers of energy and oil in the world can be positive signs for the oil and energy export perspective, and Iran's total trade with these countries, in particular, following the promotion of Iran's relations with the aforementioned countries within the framework of regional trade agreements, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Customs Union.

## Khaf-Herat Railway becomes operational

The first train along the Khaf-Herat Railway entered Rozanak Station after Iran and Afghanistan's agreement in December 2022 to repair the damages incurred to Rozanak Station in order to resume the operation of the Khaf-Herat Railway.

After repairing the damages incurred to Khaf-Herat Railway in the Rozanak Station, the first train enters this station in Herat, so the operation of Khaf-Herat Railway was launched, reported Tasnim news agency.

Moreover, during a formal visit of Iranian transport officials to Afghanistan, the two countries negotiated cooperation in the completion of the Afghanistan railway as well as the operation of existing lines.

The Khaf-Herat Railway was inaugurated in December 2020 during a formal ceremony attended by former Iranian president Hassan Rouhani and former Afghanistan president Ashraf Ghani.

Afterwards, the third section of Khaf-Herat Railway, from Shamtig



IRNA

to Rozanak, was delivered to the Afghanistan Railroad Administration. However, later on some damages were incurred to parts of the routes and to the Rozanak Station, which halted the transit operation.

Resuming transit through the Khaf-Herat Railway is one of the priorities of infrastructural projects for both countries, as the rail route facilitates freight transit and passenger transport. Further, the railway provides Afghanistan with access to the high seas

and the neighboring countries. The cross-border Khaf-Herat Railway Project is about 225 kilometers long, linking eastern Iran to western Afghanistan. The first two sections, covering a total length of 78km, extend from the city of Khaf to the border in Khorasan Razavi Province in Iran. Sections three and four together measure 147km long and stretch from the border at Shamtig to Rozanak before heading to Herat.

# Dust storms burden Iran \$2 billion annually



## Social Desk

The Secretary of the National Headquarters for Policy and Management of the Dust Phenomenon of the Department of the Environment, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi Birgani, underscored the escalating cost of dust damage, which he said amounts to more than \$2 billion annually, affecting six provinces.

Tahmasebi made the re-

marks during a meeting held on the International Day for Combating Sand and Dust Storms, themed "Sand and dust storms: Warning for everyone," at the research institute of Iran's Meteorological Organization, according to ISNA. The event was organized in response to the severe dust effects experienced in Iran last spring, which led to the formation of numerous committees, bilateral

agreements with neighboring countries, and a summit on bilateral cooperation for a better future. The outcomes included Tehran's statement, a regional joint fund to combat dust, a regional working group, and the establishment of a dust convention. Tahmasebi also revealed plans for an international conference on dust management, scheduled for September, 2023, with

invitations extended to 54 countries and 19 international organizations. The proposal for the conference was made during a meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. The DoE official highlighted the multifaceted impact of dust on Iran, with approximately 270 active high-intensity centers identified in 21 countries. He noted that sub-regional measures are underway to

address indoor dust centers. He further praised the significant strides made in understanding and mitigating the effects and damages of dust, with numerous publications on the subject. He emphasized the need for awareness about the consequences of dust, particularly its impact on agriculture. Domestic dust centers, he said, cause \$50 million of damage to agri-

culture, and also especially beekeeping. Mehdi Rahnama, the head of the meteorological research institute, noted that dust is not a new phenomenon and that its impact will likely increase due to climate change. He highlighted the importance of cooperation with the National Dust Headquarters of the DoE in identifying domestic and foreign dust centers and their effects

on Iran. He also mentioned a project carried out in collaboration with the National Dust Headquarters of Kharazmi University, which resulted in an action plan in the field of sand and dust storms. Rahnama stressed that all projects are based on field and operational measures in the DoE and Natural Resources Organization and are not merely meeting-oriented.

## Little girl with big ambitions:

# 'I wish to become a world champion'



By Mahdiah Ghazvinian  
Staff writer

Mahdiah Nikjoo, a young girl with a calm and pleasant demeanor, began her taekwondo journey at the tender age of four. Under the watchful eye of her father and coach in the Hakimiyeh neighborhood of Tehran, she quickly excelled. By the age of eight, she had outperformed her peers in the Iranian Taekwondo Federation exam, becoming the youngest participant to receive a black belt. This achievement marked her as the youngest female taekwondo practitioner in

the country to do so, an impressive record in its own right. Mahdiah, born in 2014, is a shy, quiet, and beaming girl. When she first entered the editorial office of Iran Daily, she looked around in awe. As she sat down for the interview, she offered small smiles and kept her head down, indicating her shyness. The interview seemed to be a bit challenging for her, so we turned to her parents instead. We asked her father, Hossein Nikjoo, why he chose taekwondo for his daughter. He explained that he was once a professional athlete in this martial art, but had to leave due to a medical is-

sue. However, he always dreamed of enrolling his child in the sport. From the moment Mahdiah was born, he had an ambitious plan for her. He started taking her to the gym at the age of four, with the goal of her earning a black belt by the age of eight. Mahdiah's mother, carrying a strong sense of motherly love with her, shared that while it was initially challenging to

get her daughter to the gym and through training sessions, Mahdiah now loves the sport. She even trains at home on days when she doesn't have gym sessions. The young athlete is determined to become a champion in the national competition scheduled for next summer. Despite her young age, Mahdiah faced the challenges of attending classes and performing rigorous exercises. With her father's encouragement, she successfully earned her red belt in taekwondo at the age of seven. This achievement was even more remarkable considering the clubs were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making sports training more difficult than ever. Hossein recalls the early days of the pandemic when his daughter practiced at home and sometimes in the neighborhood park. When the club reopened, training resumed under emergency conditions, with athletes required to train with masks. This was par-

ticularly challenging for the children, who had to exert more effort while wearing masks. Interestingly, at the age of four, Mahdiah had not yet started school and had not learned to read and write in her native language of Farsi, and yet, she had to learn Korean, the language of taekwondo. Her father wrote the Korean words she needed to learn on the wall of her room so she could practice daily. When asked about her aspirations, the shy and quiet girl looks at her father and says, "I wish to become a world champion." We turned to her father and asked, "Are you ready for this journey? Don't you worry about your daughter getting hurt?" He firmly answers, "No, in recent years, girls' interest in martial arts has increased. However, some families consider this sport violent and unsuitable for girls." Her father went on to inform us that although martial arts are based on the principles of self-defense, respect, and the defense

of peace and friendship, some people may have misconceptions. A martial arts student always begins with defensive moves, not with attacking ones. At each stage of taekwondo, the student learns important values such as discipline, respect, humility, patience, tolerance, endurance, and an indomitable spirit. "Furthermore, among combat sports, taekwondo is the only discipline accepted in the Olympics. It provides comprehensive protective equipment from head to toe, and currently, blows are controlled with sensors placed on the athletes' helmets and clothing." "There is no need to worry," he said with a smile of confidence on his lips.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi began a three-day visit to East African on July 12, 2023 which took him to Kenya and later to Uganda and Zimbabwe. During the tour, Raeisi would sign a number of deals on various cultural, economic and tourism fields among others.

● License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
 ● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453  
 ● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684  
 ● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5  
 ● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com  
 ● Website: www.irandaily.ir  
 newspaper.irandaily.ir  
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 Iran Cultural & Press Institute  
 ● Email:  
 ● Printing House:

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of Shahid Mottahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran

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612607571900044 > irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol. 7338 ● Thursday, July 13, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages



President Raeisi and his Kenyan counterpart attend a press conference after signing MoUs in Nairobi, Kenya.



The Iranian president is officially welcomed in the Kenyan Presidential Palace.



Raeisi (L) meets with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni upon arriving in Kampala on July 12, 2023.

# Iran's diplomatic engagement with East Africa



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi pays tribute to the late leader of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, at his mausoleum in Nairobi, Kenya, on July 12, 2023.



The Iranian president (L) is officially welcomed by his Ugandan counterpart in Kampala.



Foreign ministers of Iran and Kenya shake hands after signing MoUs.



High-ranking delegations headed by Raeisi (C-R) and Ruto (C-L) engage in direct, comprehensive negotiations.



Local and international reporters scramble to cover the latest news of the joint press conference in Nairobi, Kenya.



President Raeisi visits Iran's House of Innovation and Technology on Maalim Juma Road, in Nairobi, Kenya.



President Raeisi is seen off during a ceremony while leaving Nairobi for Kampala, Uganda, on July 12, 2023.