

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raeisi: World turns its eyes on Iran due to its stability



IRNA – President Ebrahim Raeisi said on Tuesday that Iran's stability and strength in various fields has caused the countries in the world to turn their eyes on Iran.

"When they see that Iran is still powerful despite the sanctions and has something to say in various industries, they show eagerness to expand relations with our country," Raeisi said in a press conference in the city of Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province.

US to deploy F-35s to Persian Gulf



US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has ordered F-35 and F-16 fighter jets deployed to the Middle East, as well as the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, despite Iran's warning.

"In response to a number of recent alarming events in the Strait of Hormuz, the Secretary of Defense has ordered the deployment of the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, F-35 fighters and F-16 fighters to the US Central Command Area of Responsibility to defend US interests and safeguard freedom of navigation in the region," Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh said Monday, CNN reported. In response, Iran's Foreign Ministry warned the US to refrain from any "provocative" moves in the region, especially close to the country's borders, according to IRNA.

Heat index hits 66°C at Iran's southern airport

An Iranian airport hit a sweltering "feels like" temperature of 66 degrees Celsius as heat and high humidity combined. The Persian Gulf International Airport in Asaluyeh, on the country's southern coastline, hit a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius on Sunday. But Weatherzone reported the "heat index," which measures air temperature and humidity combined, flocked the outdoors as feeling like a whopping 66.7°C.

Iran: Russian explanations over islands 'insufficient'

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said that explanations provided to Tehran by Russia about a recent joint statement by Moscow and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council on three Iranian islands claimed by the UAE were not sufficient.

Amir-Abdollahian said the Islamic Republic will never tolerate any interference when it comes to its territorial integrity amid recent claims about the three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

"After the Russian ambassador was summoned by the [Iranian] Foreign Ministry, we received certain explanations from Russian officials, but we do not consider them to be sufficient and we do not tolerate the repetition of such an approach by Russia or any other side in issues pertaining to Iran's territorial integrity," Amir-Abdollahian said while addressing a joint press conference with his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Albusaidi in Tehran



Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (R) speaks during a joint press conference with Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi in Tehran on July 17, 2023. **ALI-SHARIFZADEH/IRNA**

on Monday. Amir-Abdollahian said Tehran would never pull any punches with any party over the country's national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. He made the remarks in reaction to a joint statement issued last week by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Russia that challenged Iran's sov-

ereignty over the three islands. In their statement, the ministers said the issue should be settled through bilateral negotiations or the International Court of Justice, in accordance with the rules of international law and the United Nations Charter.

On Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Russia's ambassador to

Tehran, Alexey Dedov, and voiced the Islamic Republic's objection to the joint statement.

The three Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater and Lesser Tunbs have historically been part of Iran, proof of which can be found and corroborated by countless historical, legal, and geographical documents in Iran and other

parts of the world. However, the United Arab Emirates has repeatedly laid claim to the islands. The islands fell under British control in 1921 but on November 30, 1971, a day after British forces left the region and just two days before the UAE was to become an official federation, Iran's sovereignty over the islands was restored.

Iran should tap into wealth of its neighbors

International Desk

EXCLUSIVE

High-ranking delegations from Japan and Turkey are currently being hosted by three Persian Gulf countries — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida initiated his four-day tour of the Persian Gulf region, commencing with Saudi Arabia, followed by the UAE, and concluding in Qatar. The primary purpose of his visit to these oil-rich Arab nations is to secure the necessary energy resources.

Conversely, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are aiming to diminish their reliance on oil and diversify their economies, taking into account the global trend of decarbonization and the

projected future decline in oil prices. As such, they seek Japan's expertise and capabilities in this direction. Accompanying the prime minister on this trip are CEOs from prominent Japanese companies in the trade and industrial sectors. During his first stop in Saudi Arabia, Kishida has already signed 26 contracts and memorandums of understanding related to economic ventures.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has recently begun a new term in office, is looking to secure investments from affluent Arab countries to address Turkey's economic crisis. Before embarking on a three-day journey to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, Erdogan expressed optimism that this visit would attract substantial investments to Turkey. He

has said that over the past 20 years, such investments have amounted to approximately \$22 billion, and the aim is to explore avenues to increase this figure further. According to Reuters, two senior Turkish officials have revealed that Ankara anticipates substantial financial gains resulting from Erdogan's visit to the Persian Gulf nations. It is projected that the initial impact of the visit will lead to approximately \$10 billion in direct investments within Turkey. Looking further ahead, Turkey expects the combined investments from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar to reach \$30 billion, primarily directed toward its defense, energy, and infrastructure sectors.

Prior to this, China and Russia have already taken measures to bolster eco-

economic ties with the Arab Persian Gulf nations. Moreover, some European and American countries have had longstanding and extensive cooperation with these nations. This global interest and engagement with the affluent Persian Gulf countries underscore the tremendous potential this region holds for any nation seeking fruitful economic partnerships. Last year, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman made a significant announcement regarding the establishment of five special investment companies in five Arab countries by Saudi Arabia's "Public Investment Fund." These companies are set to inject a substantial sum of \$24 billion into Iraq, Sudan, Jordan, Bahrain, and Oman. Similarly, the UAE and Qatar also possess consider-

able financial resources for investments in foreign nations.

However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has faced challenges in fully leveraging the region's potential due to severed diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia, leading to reduced relations with some Arab countries aligned with the latter, and compounded by the impact of US sanctions. Tehran, like Ankara, is in dire need of enhancing economic cooperation and tapping into the capacities of its neighboring Arab nations to overcome its ongoing economic crises. Moreover, given the cultural and historical commonalities shared with these countries, Iran stands to benefit further from closer collaboration.

Thanks to the regional de-escalation process, some misunderstandings have either been resolved or are being addressed. Tehran now must seize the

opportunity to embrace the diverse capacities of its prosperous neighbors. This process of de-escalation should not be limited to security and politics alone; the government must prioritize defining cooperative efforts and large-scale economic projects with these Arab countries.

Simultaneously, it is crucial for Iran to engage in dialogue with Western nations to reach mutual understanding and seek the removal of sanctions, which will open doors for greater economic cooperation with its Arab neighbors.

Iran cannot afford to lag behind in the fierce global competition for influence in the Middle East, particularly when it comes to developing economic ties with neighboring Arab countries. The paramount goal of Iran's diplomatic apparatus should be to shift the focus from political to economic relations and create conducive conditions



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Doha parties to ...

The TV network reported that the Qatari minister presented a joint paper by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the US that included a clear plan aimed at reaching a Lebanese dialogue under the ceiling of the Lebanese parliament and with international and regional sponsorship. MTV also revealed that al-Khulaifi "will soon visit Tehran and meet with officials there to put them in the picture of the results and discussion of the five-party meeting". "While our five countries

underscored our commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, we noted with concern that nearly nine months after the end of President Michel Aoun's term, Lebanon's political leaders have yet to elect a successor. We discussed concrete options with respect to implementing measures against those who are blocking progress on this front," the representatives added.

The five countries also urged Lebanon to form a broad and inclusive coalition to implement es-

essential economic reforms, particularly those recommended by the International Monetary Fund, expressing their willingness to help Beirut on this path. They also underscored the desperate need for judicial reform and implementation of the rule of law, especially in regard to the 2020 Port of Beirut explosion investigation.

The conferees agreed to exchange information as well as follow up on and enhance the outcome of the visits of French envoy Jean-Yves Le Drian to Lebanon and the region's countries, in coordination with the visits of the Qatari envoys.