

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raeisi
emphasizes
invaluable role
of Iranian
expats

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi has emphasized the invaluable role of Iranians, particularly intellectuals, residing outside the country, referring to them as the "human capital" of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During a special session of the Supreme Council of Iranians Abroad, he urged the media, especially the national outlets, to showcase Iran's advanced capacities, scientific achievements, technological advancements, and its prominent position in the world of science and technology, especially for those Iranians abroad who have limited knowledge about the country's capabilities, president.ir reported.

Iran issues
flood warning
in southern
cities

ILNA – Iran's Meteorological Organization has issued a flood warning in some southern and southeastern cities. The organization has predicted a mass of clouds, heavy showers and strong winds in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormuzgan, Kerman and Fars, from Friday to Monday.

Baku thanks
Tehran for its
constructive
stance

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov has expressed his country's gratitude to Tehran for its constructive stance toward the Nagorno-Karabakh region. During a Thursday phone call with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the top diplomat also discussed the latest status of negotiations between Baku and Yerevan over the disputed region and the Lachin corridor, a vital mountain road that links Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region through Azerbaijan's territory.

Erdogan urges Turkey-Iran
joint effort against Islamophobia

International Desk

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for the expansion of cooperation between Tehran and Ankara in countering terrorism and Islamophobia. The Turkish president made the remarks in a meeting with the new Iranian Ambassador to Ankara Mohammad Hassan Habibollah-zadeh, according to IRNA.

Erdogan said that there are many fields in which both countries can cooperate. He noted that Tehran and Ankara can raise the volume of annual trade to \$30 billion, calling for more efforts by officials to remove barriers in the way expanding trade.

Back in 2018, Iran and Turkey agreed to step up economic cooperation with the aim of reaching the \$30-billion target set for their annual trade.

Iran and Turkey experienced a major rise in their bilateral trade over the Iranian year to March 20, as shipments rose in value terms despite a fall in volume, according to an analysis of trade figures from the Iranian customs office (IRICA).



Iran's new Ambassador to Ankara Mohammad Hassan Habibollah-zadeh (l) presents his credentials to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan during a meeting on July 27, 2023.
● tccb.gov.tr

The analysis published by IRIB News on Sunday showed that trade between Iran and Turkey had reached a total of \$12.7 billion in the last Iranian calendar year, up 19% from the year to March 2022. The report said that Iran-Turkey trade had increased by 115% in terms

of the Iranian currency over the period. That comes as shipments traded between Iran and Turkey fell by nearly 7% in volume terms in the year to late March, a sign that businesses in the two countries had opted for trade of commodities with more added value, said the report.

During the meeting on Thursday, the Turkish president also invited the Iranian president to visit Turkey and expressed his happiness with the imminent visit of the Turkish foreign minister to Tehran. The Iranian ambassador, for his part, said Tehran

and Ankara would continue to exchange views on leading bilateral, regional and international political developments. He also hailed the common stance of Iran, Turkey and a number of Muslim countries vis-à-vis the recent desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden and Denmark.

India, Iran set ...

However, an official of India's Ports Ministry said the contours of the long-term deal will be finalized next month, and an agreement will likely be signed in September. Currently, India and Iran sign one-year contract extensions for developing and running the terminal at Chabahar port. However, India has been urging Tehran to commit to a longer-term pact, providing certainty for investment and development plans for the port designed by India. A long-term contract for 10 years may also provide for automatic renewal. Negotiations on the long-term contract were earlier held up due to disagree-

ments over the arbitration clause in the deal. Iran was earlier uncomfortable with clauses on international arbitration, given constitutional restrictions on taking disputes to foreign courts. Differences of opinion over other clauses, such as a guarantee of minimum traffic sought by Iran, will also be resolved, paving the way for fast-tracking infrastructure development at the port to ensure bringing shipping traffic to this strategic location. In 2016, India committed \$85 million for the development of the port, along with a \$150 million line of credit. As of 2023, India has supplied six gantry cranes to the tune of \$25 million for the development of the port. However,

Iran has voiced dissatisfaction with India's efforts in the past. The country's former ambassador to India, Ali Chegeni, termed the development work on Chabahar "very slow". Chabahar, located in southeastern Iran, was envisioned as a gateway for India to access Central Asian markets. The project's roots date back to 2003, when both nations agreed to its development during then-president Mohammad Khatami's visit to India. However, the initiative faced obstacles due to Western sanctions on Iran. In 2013, India pledged \$100 million to develop the port, but matters progressed after the 2015 nuclear deal was struck between Iran and world powers over its nuclear program.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iranian dried figs ...

Estahban figs are primarily not eaten fresh, contrary to what many people believe. The common misconception is that these figs are harvested from the tree and then dried in factories through a series of processing steps. However, the reality is quite different.

In truth, the figs undergo a natural drying process while still on the tree, and they are only collected once fully dried. Abbas Rezazadeh, the chair of Iran Fig Association, highlights Iran's prominent position as one of the largest producers and exporters of dried figs globally. Speaking to Iran Daily, he said Estahban, specifically, holds the esteemed title of being the capital of Iran's dried fig production, boasting the largest dried fig orchard worldwide.

According to Rezazadeh, a substantial portion of the annual dried fig production, typically ranging from 10,000 to 18,000 tons, is exported. The primary destination for these exports is China, accounting for up to 90 percent of the total, with the remaining portion being sent to the Persian Gulf Arab countries, the European Union nations, Japan, South Korea, Russia and Central Asian nations.



In 2021, approximately 15,000 tons of dried figs were exported from Iran, generating around \$55 million. Rezazadeh discusses the ongoing development of fig orchards in Iran, noting that over the last four years, a significant portion of the country's agricultural lands has been allocated to cultivate fig trees. Considering the approximate five-year period required for these trees to bear fruit, the production of dried figs in Iran is projected to increase by one and a half to two times within the next eight years.

This expansion is not confined to Estahban alone; other cities in Fars Province, including Neyriz, Darab, Jahrom, and Kazeroon, have also witnessed the development of fig orchards. Moreover, the cultivation of Estahban fig cuttings has extended to other provinces such as Ker-

manshah, Hamedan, and East Azarbaijan. Although precise statistics on the total cultivated area of fig orchards across Iran are unavailable, it is evident that a substantial portion is concentrated in Estahban city and Fars Province. The current estimated area of fig orchards in the province stands at around 22,000 hectares, with new orchards covering an additional 5,000 hectares. Apart from Fars Province, western Kermanshah Province also grows a distinct type of fig similar to those found in Turkey. These figs are coarse and have moist texture. They are typically drawn out into thread-like strands before being sold as flour-coated nuts. Additionally, in northern Galugah County, another variety of fig trees and orchards predominantly serves the fresh fruit market.