

NEWS IN BRIEF

Raeisi marks
Journalist's
Day

president.ir – Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi expressed appreciation for the efforts of journalists in portraying the progress and measures taken in the country on Monday, on the occasion of the national Journalist's Day – August 8. During his visit to the IRIB headquarters, Raeisi described the role of the media as very effective and important.

Tehran
rebukes
British claims
against IRGC

PRESS TV – Iran has chided British Home Secretary Suella Braverman for leveling accusations against the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), saying the UK is in no place to make such "baseless" claims against the anti-terror force.

"The UK is not in a position to make accusations against the IRGC, with the UK's dark history in West Asia, which has caused deep instability in the region, as well as its role in covert and overt support of terrorism," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said at a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday. The remarks came after a source close to Braverman alleged that the threat from the IRGC was now the biggest security risk facing Britain.

Denmark's
envoy
summoned

TASNIM – Danish ambassador to Tehran Jasper Vahr was summoned by Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in protest at the desecration of the Holy Qur'an in the Scandinavian country.

"This morning, Denmark's ambassador to Tehran was summoned... to the Foreign Ministry to protest against the repeated acts of desecration of the Holy Quran," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said at a press conference on Monday.

"He has been asked to immediately convey Iran's protest to his government," Kanaani said, adding that Iran expects Denmark to take responsible measures that would prevent the recurrence of such sacrilegious acts.

NATO provoked Ukraine war: **FM**

Tokyo echoes West's baseless claim



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (c) answers questions at a press conference in Tokyo, Japan, on Monday, August 7, 2023.
● mfa.gov.ir

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian highlighted the country's efforts towards a political settlement to the Ukraine crisis, blaming the conflict on the US-led NATO military alliance and its provocations.

"We consider NATO and its provocations among the root causes of the war and crisis. We continue our efforts to stop the war and make the parties focus on a political solution," he said on Monday at a press conference in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, according to Press TV.

In February 2022, Russia launched what it called a "Special Military Operation" in Ukraine partly to prevent NATO's eastward expansion after warning that the military alliance was following an "aggressive line" against Moscow.

Since then, Western countries have been fueling

the flames of the war with their unchecked delivery of weapons to Ukraine.

They, however, accuse Iran of providing Russia with military equipment including drones for use in Ukraine, an allegation categorically rejected by Tehran.

During a meeting with Amir-Abdollahian in Tokyo on Monday, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi urged Iran not to provide Russia with weapons for its war against Ukraine, echoing a claim which was once again denied by the Iranian foreign minister as "completely wrong and incorrect."

Amir-Abdollahian said that Tehran's defense cooperation with Moscow has never involved the use of Iranian drones or weapons in the Ukraine war, as Russia itself is one of the world's biggest arms producers and exporters.

Hayashi also called on Iran to take "constructive responses" to the war, with the two agreeing to contin-

ue "close communication" over issues affecting the Middle East, Japan's Foreign Ministry said, according to the Japan Times.

The Iranian foreign minister also expressed Iran's objection to the arming of any party to the Ukraine war, saying the flow of American and Western weapons to the former Soviet country will stoke insecurity and instability there and cause further deaths and destruction.

The Ukrainian side shunned a meeting with an Iranian military delegation in Warsaw, Poland, and it provided no acceptable documents in a later meeting in Oman, Amir-Abdollahian added. Later on Monday, Amir-Abdollahian also met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

Japan holds this year's presidency of the Group of Seven nations, which have maintained economic sanctions on Russia. Tokyo aims to leverage its traditional friendship with Tehran to help end the war.

Among 36 strongest
naval forces,
Iran Navy ranks 19

National Desk

Iran ranks 19th in the world's annual strongest naval forces list, with a score of 50.3.

According to the World Directory of Modern Military Warships (2023) list, Iran's Navy has surpassed Canada, Brazil, Australia, Greece, the Netherlands, Ukraine, and Belgium, securing the 19th position globally. The Navy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has earned a score of 50.3, based on its 66 active units up until November 2022.

This includes 25 submarines, seven frigates, three corvettes, 12 offshore patrol vessels, and 10 amphibious assault ships. Notably, Iran does not possess aircraft carriers, destroyers, or cruiser warships within its naval fleet. In this classification, the average age of Iran's warships has also been announced as 32.6 years. The ranking takes into account various factors, such as the total number of naval vessels and submarines, as well as vessel age, logistical support,

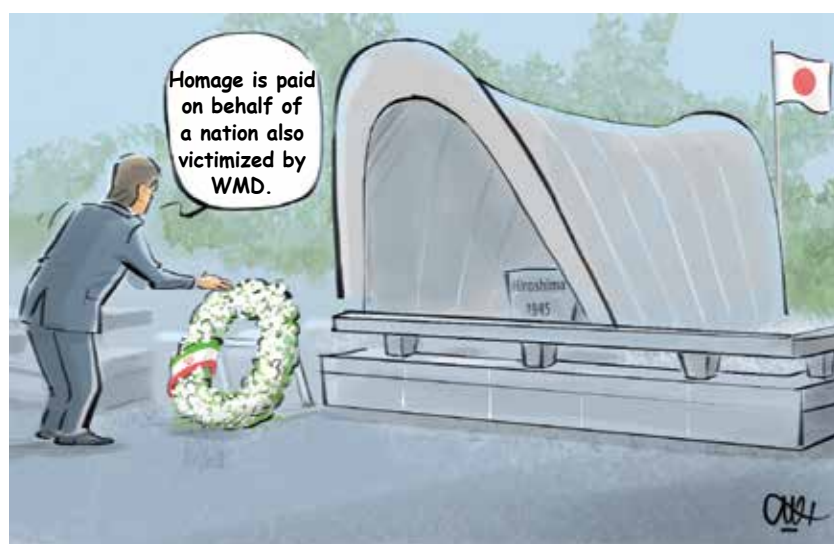
offensive and defensive capabilities.

This ranking primarily focuses on larger naval vessels, excluding smaller ships, patrol boats, and historical ceremonial vessels. Additionally, it assesses the balance within each country's naval forces, considering the diversity of assets and their concentration in specific regions.

The ranking distinguishes between different classes of combat ships, encompassing smaller vessels, frigates, destroyers, and larger cruisers. Each naval force is assigned a "Real Value Ranking" to facilitate comparison among them. As of the 2023 ranking, the top 20 naval forces in the world are as follows: the United States, China, Russia, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, India, France, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Italy, Taiwan, Egypt, North Korea, Algeria, Bangladesh, Spain, Germany, Iran, and Australia.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

Pakistan shelves
Iran gas pipeline project: **Report**

International Desk

Pakistan has temporarily shelved the multi-billion-dollar gas pipeline project to import cheap energy from Iran, apparently under pressure from the US, which has imposed sanctions against the country over its nuclear program, according to a media report on Monday.

The development came as Pakistan struggles to put its cash-strapped economy in order, with the help of the International Monetary Fund, which agreed to provide \$3 billion in loan, moneycontrol.com reported.

This is while the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said Tehran and Islamabad agreed to strengthen multifaceted cooperation, especially in the commercial and economic sector.

In her weekly briefing on Monday, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch referred to Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's constructive visit to her country, saying significant alignments between the two sides covered a broad range of matters, including regional communications and combating Islamophobia, leading to an agreement to strengthen their multifaceted collaboration in trade, economy, energy, culture, and the arts, IRNA reported. Last week during his three-day visit, Amir-Abdollahian emphasized the need for the completion of the project, saying it would definitely serve the national interests of the two countries. The pipeline project was initially conceived as an India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, but later India left it and it became a bilateral project between Pakistan and Iran.

The Dawn reported that Pakistan had issued a notice of "Force Majeure and Excusing Event" to Iran to suspend its contractual obligation on completion of the multi-billion-dollar Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project because of external factors outside Islamabad's control.

Pakistan has expressed its inability to pursue the project as long as US sanctions on Iran remain in place, or Washington tacitly green-lights Islamabad to go ahead with the project that has been in cold storage for almost a decade despite acute energy shortages in the South Asian nation of 240 million people, the paper reported.

"Pakistan has issued a Force Majeure

and Excusing Event notice to Iran under the Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA), which resultantly suspends Pakistan's obligations under the GSPA," according to a written testimony Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik has given to the National Assembly. In a policy statement placed on the floor of the lower house of Parliament, the minister also put on record that Iran disputed the notice of force majeure and excusing event.

The statement came in response to questions from lawmaker Muhammad Jamalud-Din from Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Party, who wanted to know if the government of Pakistan had a target completion date for the cross-border energy project, and whether fines were due in case of delays and if other regional nations were enhancing trade relations despite UN sanctions.

"The Iran Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project is stalled due to international sanctions on Iran," said Malik, clarifying the project activities will begin once sanctions on Iran are removed and there is no threat that State Owned Entities would be hit by sanctions. At the same time, the petroleum minister also conceded that Pakistan's notice of force majeure and excusing event and Iran disputing its validity could only be finally settled through international arbitration, should Iran take this matter to arbitration.

As a consequence, "the exact amount of penalty, if any, is subject to the outcome of the arbitration to be determined by the arbitrators," he said. Tehran has completed its side of the 1,150-kilometer pipeline. Pakistan had committed to completing its side of the project by January 2015. However, in February 2014, then Pakistani petroleum minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told Parliament that the Iran-Pakistan project was "off the table" due to international sanctions.

Officials said Pakistan had requested Washington earlier this year for a way out to help overcome energy shortages but had not yet received any response.

The Iranian pipeline was aimed to supply 750m cubic feet per day of gas, although it was vehemently opposed publicly and diplomatically by US authorities, particularly when Pakistan and Iran signed framework agreements and GSPA in 2009 and 2010, respectively.