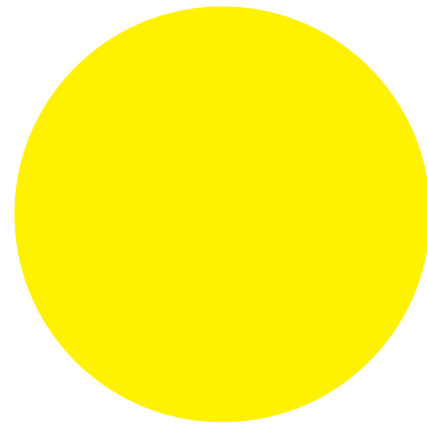




Ten foreigners arrested over Shiraz terrorist attack

2 >



Iran Daily

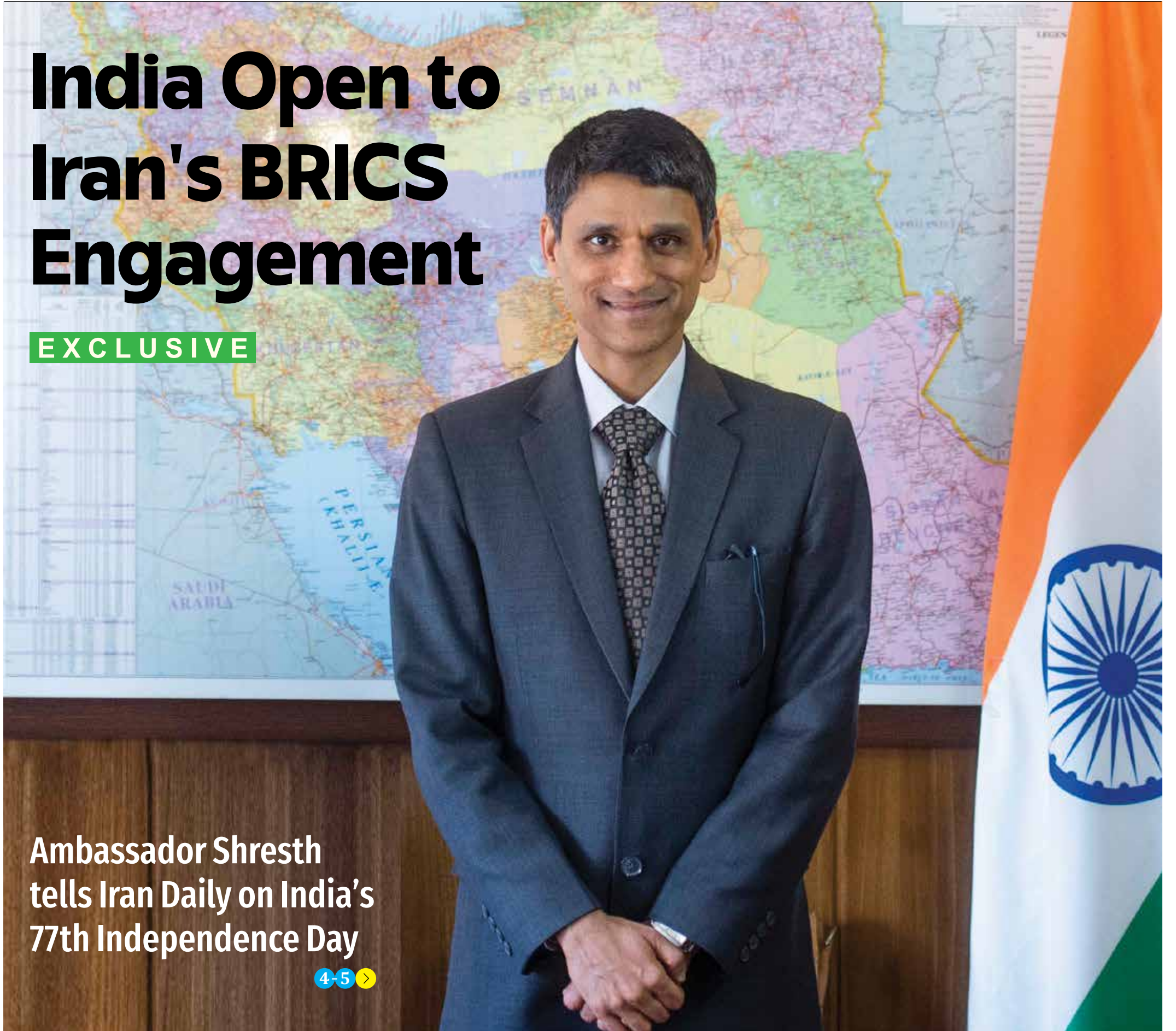


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Vol. 7363 • Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023 • Mordad 24, 1402 • Muharram 28, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

India Open to Iran's BRICS Engagement

EXCLUSIVE



Ambassador Shresth tells Iran Daily on India's 77th Independence Day

4-5 >



Cultural commonalities, basis for development of Iran-India ties

3 >



Iranian prodigy Khateri sets sights on 2028 Olympic glory

6 >



Iranian books on display at Karbala Int'l Book Fair

8 >

FM: Iran never left negotiations over nuclear deal revival

National Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said on Monday that Tehran has never left the negotiation table, saying that his country is committed to resolving the nuclear dispute with world powers through diplomacy.

"We have always wanted the return of all parties to full compliance of the 2015 nuclear deal," Amir-Abdollahian told reporters in a televised news conference on Monday. He said that Iran has been negotiating and exchanging indirect messages with the US for months about the revival of the nuclear

agreement, stressing that Tehran has never considered a temporary agreement on its nuclear program. The deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reached in 2015 between Iran and world powers, including the United States. It enabled limited sanction relief for the Islamic Republic, which, in turn, volunteered to change some aspects of its nuclear work. The US, however, left the agreement in 2018 under former president Donald Trump, returning all the sanctions that the deal had lifted.

Page 2 >

Minister: Imbalance in energy production, consumption can be compensated

National Desk

Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji said that a large part of the imbalance in energy production and consumption can be compensated by optimizing energy consumption in the country. Despite the increase in oil and gas production in Iran, optimization of energy consumption should also be done in the country, Owji said at the 2nd Iran Energy Efficiency Conference (IREEC) in Tehran on Monday. Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who also participated in the conference, said that the growth of energy production in the country is about 1.5%, while the



MEHRAN RIAZI/SHANA

growth of consumption is about 5%. He said that the current imbalance is causing a crisis in the country. Referring to the country's huge wealth in oil and gas, Qalibaf emphasized that there is a possibility of saving 65% of energy in the country.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran-made
Ababil missile
unveiled in
Russia

MEHR – The homegrown “Ababil” ballistic missile was showcased for the first time at Iran’s booth at Russia’s Army-2023 in Moscow.

The missile, which looks similar to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Aerospace Force’s Zahir missile, has a range of 86 kilometers.

It is 3.7 meters long and weighs 240 kg with a 45 kg warhead. An optical seeker for ground and sea can also be installed on the missile.

The international military-technical forum Army-2023 opened on August 14 at the Patriot Congress and Exhibition Center in Moscow. About 1,500 prominent Russian companies of the military-industrial complex presented their products, and 85 foreign companies and organizations from seven countries also participated in the forum.

Sudan
paramilitary
accused of
war crimes

AP – In a rare televised speech Monday, the head of Sudan’s military accused the rival paramilitary force of committing war crimes as all-out civil war threatens to engulf the northeast African country.

The military head Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan accused the Rapid Support Forces and its head, Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo of committing violations under the falsehood of promising to restore democracy.

Israel 'must
not agree'
to Saudi
uranium
enrichment

PRESS TV – Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid said the regime can under no circumstances agree to a uranium enrichment program by Saudi Arabia, as Riyadh’s enrichment activities may spark “a nuclear arms race” in the region.

The former Israeli prime minister’s remarks came on Sunday, amid reports of a potential US-brokered normalization deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia that enables the latter to develop a nuclear program.

Ten foreigners
arrested over
Shiraz terrorist attack

The photo shows a suspect who was captured by security guards of Shah Cheragh Shrine in the wake of a terrorist attack on the Shia shrine in Shiraz, Iran, on August 13, 2023.
● **FARS**

National Desk

In the wake of the Sunday evening armed terrorist attack on a Shia shrine in Iran’s southern city of Shiraz, 10 suspects were arrested by local authorities, all of whom were citizens of other countries.

The Chief Justice of Iran’s Fars Province, Kazem Mousavi, told Tasnim news agency that while all suspects are being interrogated, the main suspect, who was captured by the shrine’s staff and security personnel shortly after shots were fired on civilians, is a Tajikistani national.

As a result of the shooting spree at Shah Cheragh Shrine, at least one person was killed and nine others were injured, the conditions of two of whom have been reported as critical. The Daesh terrorist group has claimed responsibility for the deadly assault.

Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz was the scene of a similar attack by armed terrorists on October 26, 2022.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi urged the Ministry of Intelligence and other agencies responsible for the country’s intelligence, security, law enforcement, and justice to quickly and accurately identify the hands behind this heinous crime and bring them to justice.

“The enemies of dear Iran, desperate and unable to confront the strong will of the great nation of Iran, showed their ugly face by committing another bloody crime,” Raeisi maintained in an official statement.

While global condemnations continue to pour in over the terrorist attack on Sunday, Tehran has censured international organizations and so-called rights advocates for remaining silent.

Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi on Monday said that “silence promotes such terrorist acts,” Press TV reported.

The Russian Embassy in Tehran strongly denounced the terror attack in a Monday statement, reaffirming its readiness to further increase cooperation with Iran in the fight against terrorism.

Iraqi Shia cleric and head of the National Wisdom Movement, Ammar Hakim, also censured the criminal act by the Daesh-linked terrorists.

Azerbaijan accuses Armenia
of troop build-up on border

Azerbaijan accused Armenia on Monday of building up troops along the border between the two countries to carry out military acts of provocation, a claim dismissed by Yerevan as disinformation.

Tensions between the two sides have escalated in recent days, after Armenia accused Azerbaijan of blockading Armenians living in the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh and urged the UN to intervene, AFP reported.

“In recent days there has been a large concentration of weapons, military equipment and personnel along the state border in order to carry out another military adventure,” Baku’s Foreign Ministry said. It said Yerevan had

also built up military infrastructure within Nagorno-Karabakh, where Russian peacekeepers have been based since 2020, and accused Armenia of undermining peace efforts by appealing to the UN.

“Azerbaijan reserves the right to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity by all legitimate means provided for by the UN Charter and other universal instruments of international law,” it said.

Yerevan denied that it had amassed weapons and troops near the border or in Nagorno-Karabakh and said Azerbaijan’s statement did “not correspond to reality”. The Caucasus neighbours have been locked in a dispute over Na-

gorno-Karabakh – internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan – since the 1980s and fought two wars over the territory.

For months, Yerevan has accused Baku of blocking traffic through the Lachin corridor – a short, mountainous road linking Armenia to Armenian-populated settlements in the territory.

The two countries have been unable to reach a lasting peace settlement despite mediation efforts by the EU, US and Russia.

Armenia and international aid groups have warned that the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is dire and deteriorating, with shortages of food, medicines and energy.

Russia pounds Odesa
with missiles, drones

Russia launched three waves of drones and missiles against the southern Ukraine port city of Odesa, officials said Monday, though the Ukrainian air force said it intercepted all the airborne weapons fired during the night-

time attacks. Falling debris from 15 drones and eight missiles interceptions damaged a residential building, a supermarket and a dormitory of an educational facility in the city, Odesa Gov. Oleh Kiper said, AP

reported. Two employees of the supermarket were hospitalized, Kiper said. Video showed a huge blaze at the store during the night and, the next day, the large building’s charred and mangled wreckage.

FM: Iran never ...

Negotiations to revive the agreement started in April 2021. The talks have, however, stalled amid Washington’s refusal to offer guarantees that it would not ditch the deal again.

Iran’s frozen assets

Regarding a recent agreement reached between Tehran and Washington over Iran’s frozen assets in South Korea, Amir-Abdollahian said the released funds are being transferred to a European bank, and then they will be sent to a bank in one of the countries in the Middle East region.

He noted that the funds would be used for purchases of non-sanctioned goods – a move that the Iranian top diplomat described as hostile.

Iran and the US have reached a prisoner swap deal that would see the release of prisoners from both sides and includes the release of \$6 billion worth of Iran’s assets that have been frozen in South Korea for years.

Arash gas field

During the Monday press conference, the Iranian foreign minister also pointed to the long-running dispute over the Arash or Al-Dorra gas field between Iran, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf, saying that Iran and Kuwait have held two rounds of negotiations on the issue.

It is definitely important to determine the boundaries through technical negotiations, he added.

Amir-Abdollahian noted that the three countries must pursue this issue through diplomacy.

The territorial dispute over the strategically important maritime gas field, which dates to the 1960s, has escalated again in recent weeks, with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia repeating their claims.

Kuwaiti Oil Minister Saad al-Barrak recently reiterated the country’s new position over the dispute and called on Iran to validate its claim to the field by demarcating its maritime borders first.



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian
● **TASNIM**

‘August 14’ is day of Pakistanis’
true desire for freedom

By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily’s correspondent in Pakistan

Ali Vardi Khan, the grandfather of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, conducted a regular war with the British in 1754 and defeated them. Calcutta’s Diamond Harbor and Fort William were the center of the British. Ali Vardi Khan attacked Fort William and drove the British away. And it can be called an armed war of independence. After Ali Vardi Khan, his grandson became the ruler and felt the threat that the British were slowly dominating his country and it was necessary to expel them from the country, but the British made a conspiracy and killed him in Murshidabad.

There is a description of the battle of Plassey in 1757 and the battle of Buxar in 1764. This battle also ended in the defeat of the Indians, after which the British completely dominated Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi writes that Fateh Ali Khan Tipu Sultan tried to persuade the kings, maharajas and nawabs

of India to go to war with the British.

And throughout his life, he was engaged in fierce fighting with the British. It was almost like all the plans of the British would fail and they would be completely expelled, but the British brought South India princes on board, and finally, this king, on May 4, 1799, died in the battle of Saringapatnam. He preferred death over British slavery and captivity.

In the war of independence of 1857, the people of India rebelled against the British army, regardless of religion and nation. The old king of India, Bahadur Shah Zafar, thought it better to surrender to the British than to wage jihad on the battlefield, but he was exiled and had to see the severed heads of the son. In 1884, the Muslims of India began to participate in the freedom struggle alongside the Hindus, but they soon realized that the Hindu majority was dreaming of ruling over the Muslims in the event of the success of the struggle against the British.

In such circumstances, Muslim leaders established the India Mus-

lim League to protect the Muslims from the slavery of the Hindus after the liberation of the British and declared independence for the Muslim-majority region under the two-nation theory. It was done in order to provide protection to the Muslims in the Hindu-majority areas.

Pakistan became independent on August 14, 1947, but not a year had passed since the establishment of Pakistan, when the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah died. The military establishment of Pakistan surrendered in East Pakistan in 1971 and formed Bangladesh, the politicians of Pakistan succeeded in creating a unified constitution in 1973 and tried to create a door to martial law, but then in 1979, General Zia-ul-Haq again imposed martial law and dismantled the constitution of Pakistan.

Today, Pakistan is going through the most difficult times, the economy is in ruins, political forces are scattered and the people are waiting for a visionary leader like Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to achieve true freedom.

Cultural commonalities, basis for development of Iran-India ties

Iranica Desk

Iran and India, as two countries with rich and ancient cultures and civilizations, have had close and friendly relations throughout history. They share a large number of commonal-

ities in various fields including language, art, culture, traditions, customs and behavioral and moral characteristics. This has helped the two countries maintain and expand bilateral relations. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of independent India, wrote in his

book "The Discovery of India": Among the many peoples and races who have come in contact with and influenced India's life and culture, the oldest and most persistent have been the Iranians. The long-standing bilateral relations existed between the Persian and Indian

people even before the arrival of the Aryans in the Iranian Plateau. The objects discovered during excavations carried out by archeologists in the two countries show that there has been a strong relationship between Indians and Iranians since ancient times.

Artifacts found in Sialk Hill of Kashan in 1930 indicate that this ancient city was the crossroads of the two civilizations. But with the rise of Islam and the development of this religion in the Indian subcontinent, the cultural connection between Iran and India became stronger.



Taj Mahal
indotoursadventures.com

Architecture

The Taj Mahal, an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the right bank of the Yamuna River in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India, is one of the world famous monuments of India, drawing a huge number of tourists from all over the world every year. The immense mausoleum was built by order of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife. Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage. Shah Jahan himself was later buried there. As it is clear, the name of this building is Persian, and it was built based on a mixture of Iranian, Indian and Islamic architectural styles. Ahmad Lahori and his brother Hamid were the Iranian architects who constructed the Taj Mahal. According to UNESCO, the

uniqueness of Taj Mahal lies in some truly remarkable innovations carried out by the horticulture planners and architects. One such planning is the placing of a tomb at one end of the quadripartite garden rather than in the exact center, which added

rich depth and perspective to the distant view of the monument. Moreover, thanks to its specific pattern, intelligent design and long history, the Persian garden has long attracted the attention of many garden designers from across the world. The available evidence indicates that Muslim Iranian artists played an important

and influential role in garden building in Kashmir. Based on historical sources, it seems that these gardens followed a similar pattern of Persian gardens, with terraces arranged around a central water channel, lined with fountains and planted with a variety of flowers and trees that grew in abundance within the valley.



Shalimar Bagh, a Persian garden, in Jammu and Kashmir, India
cpreecnvis.nic.in



Nowruz celebration in India
india-tours.com



Nowruz celebration in India
yjc.ir

Culture

Indian culture is one of the oldest in the world; despite facing many vicissitudes, it has managed to maintain its glory throughout history. With an interesting combination of various elements including the arts, handicrafts, music, food, etc., the Indian culture has drawn the attention of many Iranian tourists. Since India is a country to which countless Iranians immigrated throughout history, not only did the Persian language develop there, but

the Iranian culture has found its way to the everyday lives of many Indians. For example, Nowruz (Iranian New Year) is among the Persian celebrations held in India. Each state of India enjoys the celebration of Nowruz for different reasons and associated beliefs, and this festival is comprised of various cultural and religious values. Most popularly celebrated in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the Persian New Year is also known as Pateti.

Language and literature

Since the time of the Ghaznavids, with the conquest of India by Mahmud of Ghaznavi (998-1030 CE), relations between the two countries began to expand. Since then, Persian has become one of the important languages of the Indian subcontinent. The migration of Iranians to India gained more momentum from the 14th century CE and the influence of Persian culture and language on India reached its peak during the Timurid period (1370-1507 CE). With the rise of the Safavids to power in Iran, a flood of Iranian poets and scholars began to migrate to the Indian subcontinent to the extent that the Persian language and culture in this land became more prevalent and pop-

ular than in Isfahan, the capital of the Safavid dynasty. For centuries, Persian was a court language in India. During this period, the natives of India also showed interest in learning Persian. As a result, this language found its way to every kind of written and spoken means of communication. Many Iranian texts and books have been translated into Gujarati, Telugu and Punjabi languages. There are many stone carvings and plasters of Persian inscriptions in India. There are also many hand-written books, mostly from the time of Humayun (1508-1556 CE), a Mughal emperor. Humayun lost Mughal territories to Sher Shah Suri (the founder of the Sur Empire in India), but regained

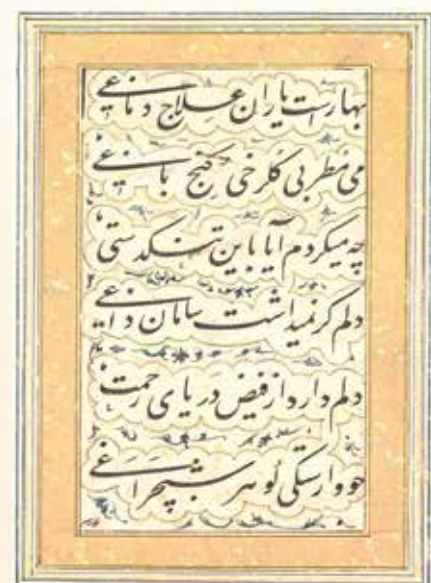
them 15 years later with the Safavids' aid. Humayun's return from Persia was accompanied by a large number of noblemen who influenced the art, architecture, language and literature of India. The kings of Adil Shahi dynasty, who ruled the Deccan region of southern India from 1489 to 1686 CE, were among the main supporters of poetry and poets. They had deep cultural relations with Iran, and this caused a large number of Persian poets, scholars and writers to gather in their capital. Thanks to the support provided by these rulers and the desirable climate of the region, a large number of people migrated from Iran to this region. Perhaps it was easier for some to go to Deccan in-



A Persian language class in India
scroll.in

stead of Delhi. Today in India, there are thousands of rare books written in Persian, which is proof of the longevity of this language in India. Indo-Persian began its decline in the 1830s, when the British East

India Company stopped using it as an official language. In general, Persian reigned as an administrative language in the Indian subcontinent for several centuries until the era of British colonization.



A Persian poem produced in the Deccan, in 17th century
wikipedia.org

India's ambassador to Iran discusses bilateral relations on India's 77th Independence Day:

India Open to Iran's BRICS Engagement

By Ali Amiri
Staff writer

As India commemorates its 77th Independence Day, we had the opportunity to sit down with India's ambassador to Iran, Rudra Gaurav Shresth, to discuss

the country's progress since gaining independence from the United Kingdom, and its long-standing relationship with Iran, a country that has been "a much older friend" for India, than the length of the existence of some of the world powers today. Ambassador Shresth offered valuable insights into the bonds binding the two countries. From politics and investment to tourism and cinema, we explored the issues that could be considered common interests of the two nations.

Ambassador Shresth has been at the helm of the Indian Embassy in Tehran for almost three months, and this is his first interview with an Iranian media outlet. A genial character and a knowledgeable career diplomat, he sincerely believes in the significance of the age-old ties between India and Iran, and the necessity of bolstering them.

The ambassador emphasizes Indians' "keen desire to show our independence every day," and reckons the friendship between the two nations - which some powerful countries oppose - as a way for India to showcase and exercise its independence. Thus, he notes that any expression of friendship between Iran and India is "for us an expression of India's independence on the world stage."



Sajjad Safari/Iran Daily

IRAN DAILY: How does post-Independence India differ from the colonial era?

SHRESTH: When India achieved its independence in 1947, it was a starkly poor and underdeveloped country. It had very limited capacity to ensure the food-security, health, education, and economic well-being of its approximately 340 million citizens. In contrast, today India has the capacity to feed, educate and treat all its people, despite the fact that our population has grown by more than four times to 1.4 billion people.

In the colonial era, there was a systematic effort to destroy India's industrial base, and to make it a supplier of raw materials for colonial industries. Today, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India' and 'Make for the world', India's manufacturing sector is a leading global destination for Foreign Direct Investments, and our exports are also increasing at a very fast pace.

Newly independent India was largely illiterate, with higher education reserved only for the elite sections. Today, India produces 1.5 million new engineers every year. We have successfully sent spaceships to the moon and Mars. We are a nuclear power. Our Information Technology sector alone is larger than the

entire economies of many other countries. Talented Indians can be found in the top ranks of most major Fortune-500 companies, especially in areas of cutting edge technologies.

But more than all these economic and technological achievements, the most important difference between pre and post independence India is that today India is the world's largest democracy. Independent India's destiny is shaped by its own people, not by rulers sitting in some other country. And that is why all Indians take equal pride in their country's rising profile and stature, despite the fact that we have hundreds of languages and almost all major world religions are represented among the Indian population.

What key expectations does the Indian Government have from Iran in order to cement political and economic ties? Which areas of cooperation between India and Iran have been overlooked or not received adequate attention? Does your Government view Iran as a viable long-term energy supplier?

India and Iran share an excellent relationship at the level of political leadership. Our populations have also had tremendous

respect and affection for each other, over many Centuries. It is notable that there are no points of bilateral friction or misunderstanding between us, which is quite rare between large and important countries located close to each other. Our leadership maintains regular contact with each other, and these meetings are always cordial and friendly, where both sides enjoy recalling our cultural, linguistic, and literary commonalities with great pleasure.

Both our countries have created an elaborate architecture of dialogue forums and cooperation mechanisms in various specific sectors, and many of our specialised agencies, such as our Central Banks, our Plant Protection bureaus, our Narcotics Control organisations, our security agencies, etc. maintain regular contacts with each other.

We also collaborate well in international and multilateral forums. India welcomed Iran's recent entry into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, while India was chairing this regional body. While our political, diplomatic, security and institutional relations are excellent, it is true that our economic ties, and our people-to-people exchanges remain below potential at present. Both countries are determined to correct this, and this remains a regular point of discussion between

us.

Our traditional business and trade links have remained somewhat concentrated in only a few commodities - with energy exports from Iran playing a dominant role in these exchanges. This is natural, because Iran is a close and friendly neighbour with abundant energy resources, and hence an obvious supplier for meeting India's growing energy needs. However, because of the traditional dominance of energy products in our bilateral trade, we have perhaps given less attention to other possible goods and commodities.

There is plenty of scope to diversify our trade basket. We need to raise greater awareness among our businesses about the competitive advantages of each other's products. Both countries are working together to create such awareness. Recently, the Trade Promotion Organisation of Iran organised a useful event which saw good participation from Indian industry also. We need to organise more such events, and focus on newer products and sectors, where we have good capacities but where our present trade volumes are limited. Our efforts are already bearing fruit - as per the latest data released by the Iran Government, our bilateral trade increased by 47% in the Iranian Calendar year 1401, to reach almost 5 billion US

Dollars.

It must be admitted that in recent years our economic links have also been impacted by external geo-political factors such as sanctions and banking restrictions. While both countries have tried to find solutions to these constraints, they do continue to affect our trade potential. We hope for an eventual easing of these extraneous factors, so that both countries can realise the full potential of our trade and investment exchanges.

Increasing people-to-people contacts, especially between our younger generations, is important for preserving the warmth and cordiality of the India-Iran friendship. That is why we are focused on increasing contact and collaboration in the fields of education, sports and culture, so that our youth get an opportunity to get to meet and appreciate each other directly, rather than knowing each other through the eyes of others. Our Embassy is in regular contact with relevant Iranian educational, cultural and sporting organisations, to boost such exchanges. We are receiving excellent and enthusiastic





cooperation from the Iran side in these efforts.

What concrete plans can be implemented to boost tourism between Iran and India? Are there any specific plans in motion?

Both India and Iran possess a rich and ancient cultural heritage, iconic historical sites, breathtaking natural beauty, a variety of climatic zones, and a rich tradition of hospitality. Moreover, the cultural richness of both countries draws upon a shared heritage, which is reflected in the similarities between our languages, cuisine, music and architecture.

Throughout history, our people have travelled to each other's countries - whether as merchants, students, holy men, healers, or pilgrims. There is certainly tremendous scope to encourage greater tourist flows between us today also. In particular, there is tremendous potential for Iran to attract more Indian tourists. Given India's massive population, the number of Indian tourists travelling to Iran is quite small. This is partly because of lack of information. It will be good if Iran could better advertise its incredible tourist attractions in India.

Both countries have been discussing measures to increase tourist flows. An MOU on Tourism cooperation is under negotiation. Some of the constraints that stand in the way of increasing tourist traffic are the limited air-connectivity between both countries, and problems related to payments and banking links. Despite these constraints, however, there is quite a lot of scope to increase tourism in both directions, and both countries are determined to work together for this.

As the largest film producer globally, India holds a prominent position in the cinematic world. The Iranian film industry has also garnered praise for its highly acclaimed films, winning trophies at international festivals including the Academy Awards. Given these achievements, is there potential for cooperation between India and Iran in the realm of cinema?

It is true that both our people are passionate about cinema. As you mentioned, the subtle realism of Iranian films has won accolades all over the world, including in India. Iranian films often win awards in Indian Film Festivals, such as the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), the International Children's Film Festival of India, etc. Iranian film directors have also been invited to act as judges or as part of the jury selection boards of Indian film fes-

tivals. This is an acknowledgment of their fine cinematic sensibility. Similarly, Bollywood movies and artistes have also been popular in Iran for a very long time. I am still quite new in Iran, but many Iranians I have met have spoken to me about 'Sholay', and said that it is one of their favourite films. Many of them even remember the iconic songs from that classic movie!

Given this mutual interest and enjoyment for each other's cinema, there is certainly scope to increase our cooperation in this artistic realm. In recent years, we did have collaborations in some movies. But a lot more can be done, and we would be happy to facilitate contacts between our film-makers. As the world's largest movie-making country, India has a top-rated institute to teach acting, direction, and various technical aspects related to producing films. We would be happy to welcome more Iranian students in this institute.

Many foreign countries have started offering facilities in their tourist sites for shooting scenes and songs of Bollywood movies. When Indian audiences see these sites on screen, it often leads to significant increase in tourist flows from India. Iran could also consider this innovative way of advertising its own exquisite tourist treasures in India. This would also provide opportunities to our film-makers to meet and get to know each other.

What is India's stance on Iran's possible membership of BRICS?

The Foreign Ministry of Iran had recently organised a useful Conference on possibilities of cooperation between Iran and BRICS, in which I had the privilege to take part. I had explained India's stance on this issue quite clearly during the conference. India welcomes Iran's engagement with BRICS. As far as formal expansion of the BRICS group is concerned, the BRICS member countries are conducting internal discussions on the criteria, modalities and procedures for this. India has an open and positive approach on the issue, and is contributing constructively to these internal discussions. As per BRICS traditions, the final decisions on these issues will be taken on the basis of consensus.

What are the reasons behind the slower-than-expected progress in India's efforts to develop Iran's Chabahar port?

India and Iran both share an ambitious vision of regional connectivity centred on the Chabahar port. For India, the Chabahar port is an optimally located node for accessing Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Caucasus and Eurasian markets. Therefore, India is ful-

ly committed to realising this connectivity vision. That is why we have proposed inclusion of Chabahar into the broader International North South Transport Corridor. I had myself travelled to Chabahar immediately after presenting my Credentials to His Excellency the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to underline the importance that India attaches to this project.

To fully integrate Chabahar into the regional connectivity grid requires investment in developing and operating the port, developing an industrial zone around the port, and connecting the port to the hinterland. This larger enterprise is something that is being largely undertaken by Iran on its own, and for which the relevant Iranian authorities have drawn up a long-term plan. It is understandable that the present geopolitical environment poses constraints for developing some of the facilities. In the longer-run, we hope that these difficulties will be resolved and the required work can be accelerated.

India's own direct involvement in Chabahar is, at present, limited to the actual operation of some of the port facilities. This has already been going on for several years now. The Indian entity responsible for operating these facilities has brought in significant equipment into the port, despite the fact that both sides are still negotiating a long-term contract for India's involvement. Recently, there has also been an encouraging increase in the traffic in the port, despite many constraints.

India has made its own efforts to popularise Chabahar port in the region. For instance, earlier this year, India organised the first India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar in Mumbai, where Iran participated as a special guest. In 2021 and 2022 also, we had celebrated 'Chabahar Day' in India, to highlight the connectivity potential of this port. Even while chairing the SCO Summit in July this year, Prime Minister Modi emphasised the importance of Chabahar.

Sometimes, certain vested interests try to spread propaganda questioning India's commitment towards Chabahar port. These interests perhaps do not wish to see Iran and India collaborate on a strategic regional initiative. I would like to once again reiterate that India fully supports the vision of Chabahar as a strategically important connectivity hub in the region. Realising this vision needs joint efforts by all relevant stakeholders. The most important requirement is to develop the necessary infrastructure facilities and the industrial eco-system around Chabahar and to connect it to the hinterland. We fully support the efforts of the relevant Iranian authorities towards this end.

Persian Performs as the Umbilical Cord for Bilateral Cultural Relations of India and Iran



Sajjad Safari/Iran Daily

By Balram Shukla

Director, Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center, Embassy of India, Tehran

The New Education Policy (NEP-2020) of India has included Persian as one of its native classical language and not as a foreign one. This very attitude of Indian government towards Persian language is very significant. It clearly means that Persian in India is considered essential for safeguarding national heritage of language, literature and culture, just like other classical languages including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Odia and Kannada etc.

With inclusion in NEP Persian will be widely available at school level as option for students, possibly as online modules, through experiential and innovative approaches, to ensure that this languages and literature stay alive and vibrant.

The positive results of this inclusion can be seen in Indian Universities. Now in India, in Common University Test (CUT) any student throughout the country can apply for studying Persian in Universities even without prior degree of Persian. As a consequence only in Delhi University the seats for Persian have increased from 25 to 174. Inclusion as a classical language is also a matter of pride for any language. Many awards (e.g. Certificate of Honour and Maharshi Badrayan Vyasa Samman) are conferred by the president of India to the scholars of various age groups who work hard and excel in Persian. It is because Persian has been recognised as a classical language.

Persian has the capacity to bind Indian and Iranian cultures for its linguistic peculiarities and historical placement. This language belongs to a group called Indo-European language family. Most of Indian languages belong to the same group. Its morphological structure is very much similar to that of most Indic languages. This is why in India Persian is never considered as a foreign language. The cognate nature of Persian with Indic languages and historical fact that it has been a court language for 700 years in India; make Persian essential for India. Many Indic languages are replete with Persian vocabulary and people use them without any hesitation or considering them heterogeneous.

Persian literature has casted great effect on Indian literature especially on that of Urdu literature. Many in our young generation in order to know the first hand knowledge of Urdu turn towards Persian. If India and Iran have stayed connected for millennia uninterruptedly, Persian had played great role in it. Persian with other Indic languages forms the umbilical cord for bilateral cultural relations.

Hafiz, Sa'adi, Maulana, Khayyam and other classical poets and their literary mas-

terpieces are as popular in India as Iran. The poetic sensitivities which have been described by these poets are never felt as foreign by Indians. They enrich and extend Indian thought system hugely.

Having said that one should be aware of this fact that India has its own tradition of Persian language and literature. It should be noted that India is the richest country in Persian manuscripts. Many poets in India have special place, who are not so popular in Iran. For instance Ghalib and Bedil are extensively read and appreciated in India. About the printing of Iranian works, it would be interesting to note that almost all Persian classics were first published in India and afterwards in Iran. Munshi Naval Kishore Press in Lucknow and other printing presses in Calcutta, Agra and Kanpur were forerunners in publishing Persian books. Many reprints of their lithographed books catered the need of Persian lovers for several decades. Even today in India we find our own editions of Persian classics. To some extent, Iranian editions are also used by the students and Professors at the University level.

Key areas of cooperation in the cultural field

One memorandum of understanding in 2014 has been signed between ICCR and Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and tourism organisation to recognise the historical contacts and common cultural heritage between Republic of Indian and Islamic Republic of Iran with the aim of further strengthening the friendly relations and mutual understanding between the two countries.

Following this MOU several Days of Indian Culture and Days of Iranian Culture in India have been successfully organised, and many more are in loop.

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (svcc), Embassy of India, Tehran with collaboration of various cultural institutions in Iran has been organising programs which highlight the millennium old relation of India and Iran. A monthly lecture series has been institutionalised for this cause.

We have planned various cultural and literary programs with premier institutions in Iran. To name some of them is - Farhangestan e Zaban o Adab, Farhangestan e Honar, Golestan Palace, IRCHT, National Library, IRIB etc.

India and Iran have a lot to share with each other in many aspects. We see that Iranians are generously influenced by Indian Movies, Indian Songs, Indian literature, Indian cuisine and many more other dimensions of India. It is the affinity of ethnicity and geography that had made us so much fascinated to each other for several millennia.

Sinner closes in on top five after Toronto triumph



● FRANK GUNN/AP

AFP – Italy's Jannik Sinner moved up to a career-high ATP ranking of sixth on Monday after capturing his first Masters trophy in Toronto.

Sinner, 21, won the Toronto title 6-4, 6-1 in the final against Australian Alex de Minaur, who moves up six places to 12th.

Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, 20, the reigning Wimbledon and US Open champion, holds the number one ranking ahead of Serb Novak Djokovic and Russian Daniil Medvedev.

Denmark's Holger Rune moves up to fifth with Norway's Casper Ruud slipping two places to seventh.

Iranian prodigy Khateri sets sights on 2028 Olympic glory



← Ahoura Khateri celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the freestyle 45kg gold at the Wrestling U17 World Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, on August 6, 2023.
● UWW

Mbappe back in training, likely to stay at PSG



● GETTY IMAGES

BBC – Paris St-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has returned to first-team training and is likely to stay at the French champions this summer.

The France forward, 24, had not been training with the first-team squad and was left out of PSG's 0-0 season opener with Lorient on Saturday.

He has been in a contract stand-off amid a desire to join Real Madrid but could now extend his contract at PSG.

PSG said Mbappe was reinstated after "very constructive and positive" talks. The France captain watched the game on Saturday from the stands.

Mbappe has one year left on his current deal and has so far refused to sign a new contract.

PSG chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi has been adamant he would not let the striker leave for nothing and it is thought some kind of agreement is likely that will see Mbappe sign the one-year extension to his present deal as originally envisaged.

That would run to 2025 and allow PSG to sell Mbappe to Real next summer.

"Following very constructive and positive discussions between Paris St-Germain and Kylian Mbappe before the PSG - Lorient game, the player has been reinstated into the first team training squad this morning," PSG said on Sunday.

Sport Desk

Newly-crowned world under-17 champion Ahoura Khateri says he is already aiming at a glorious Olympic campaign in five-years' time.

Khateri was part of the Iranian squad that bagged six medals, including double golds, to claim the freestyle crown at the Wrestling U17 World Championships in Istanbul last week.

Having missed out on a podium finish in the previous two editions of the freestyle event, Iran topped the table with 156 points – 30

clear of last year's champion USA – and Khateri played an integral part in the country's title-winning run.

The 16-year old powered past wrestlers from Moldova, Russia – representing the Individual Neutral Athletes team – and the United States before storming to a 11-0 victory over Armenia's Gor Buniatyan with 41 seconds left on the clock in the final showdown of the 45kg contests. Khateri believes his toughest challenge came in the last-four bout against American Ignacio Villaseñor,

which the Iranian won 5-2. "The bout against the American wrestler was the hardest one for me and I had to give it my all to beat him. He kept attacking and I really had a tough time breathing in the closing stages. Thank God the coaches' tactics helped me come out victorious at the end," the Iranian prodigy told ISNA.

The gold medal in Istanbul was a second major medal in 2023 for Khateri after he cruised to the Asian under-17 triumph in June without conceding a single point.

However, sky is the limit for the young gun, who considers American wrestling legend Johan Smith and fellow Iranian Hassan Rahimi – a five-time Olympic and world medalist – as his role models in the sport.

"I'll be eligible to take part in the cadets' competitions next year and I will be looking forward to repeating the success in the World Championships. I will then go all out for the world juniors and seniors golds, though my ultimate goal will be to walk away with the gold medal at the 2028 Olympic Games,"

Khateri said, who lives in the northern Iranian city of Sari in Mazandaran Province – the wrestling hub in the country.

"My father, who was also my first coach, and my mother have supported me all the way throughout my life and career and I hope I can repay them with an Olympic gold," added the Iranian.

Khateri was joined by Sina Khalili (65kg) – also a reigning Asian champion – in winning the top prize in Istanbul, while Sajjad Pirdayeh (60kg), and Abolfazl Hosseini (70kg) had to

settle for the silver medals of their respective weight classes.

Tohid Nouri (92kg) and Sam Sayyar (48kg), meanwhile, left the event with two consolation bronzes. "Iran had finished fourth last year [in Rome] but all the efforts made by the wrestlers and coaches paid off this year. We trained so hard for six months and I have to thank [head coach] Behnam Ehsanpour and other members of the coaching staff for helping us reach our physical and mental peak for the tournament," said Khateri.

Mancini resignation ends 'significant chapter' in Italy's history

REUTERS – Italy coach Roberto Mancini has resigned, ending a five-year spell in which they became European champions but missed out on the World Cup, the football federation (FIGC) said on Sunday. Mancini took charge of the four-time World Cup winners in 2018 after they failed to qualify for that year's global tournament in Russia, having previously not missed the finals of football's showpiece event since 1958.

The 58-year-old coach said resigning was a "personal choice".

"I thank all my players and fans who have accompanied me in these five years," Mancini wrote on Instagram.

"I will always carry the extraordinary victory of the 2020 European Championship in my heart. It has been an honour."

Following the retirements of veterans Andrea Barzagli, Daniele De Rossi

and captain Gianluigi Buffon, Mancini guided an Italy side in transition to success at the European Championship in 2021.

His team also went on a run of 37 games without defeat between October 2018 and October 2021 – a record in men's international soccer.

Italy performed well at the Nations League under Mancini, finishing third in the 2020-21 and 2022-23 editions.

Significant page

"A significant chapter in the history of the Azzurri, which began in May 2018 and ended with the 2023 Nations League Finals, comes to an end," the FIGC said in a statement.

"In between, the victory at Euro 2020, a triumph conquered by a group in which all the individuals were able to become a team."

However, Mancini was unable to take Italy back to the World Cup, with the

team again failing to qualify for last year's tournament in Qatar following a stunning 1-0 loss at home to North Macedonia in a playoff tie.

Following that failed World Cup qualifying campaign, Mancini came under intense pressure in the Italian media to resign but received backing from the national federation president to continue in the role.

"I thank President Gabriele Gravina for the trust, along with all the members of the FIGC," Mancini added.

His resignation comes just days after the former international forward was given responsibility for Italy's Under-21 and Under-20 teams in a bid to integrate the same styles and systems of play across age groups.

Italy are next in action in September, when they take on North Macedonia and Ukraine in Euro 2024 qualifying matches.

The Italians are third in Group C with three points from two games behind England on 12 from four and Ukraine with six from three. North Macedonia have three points from three matches.

"Taking into account the important and upcoming commitments for the UEFA Euro 2024 qualifiers... the FIGC will announce the name of the new national coach in the next few days," the federation said. Italian media reported that Antonio Conte and Napoli's Serie A winning manager Luciano Spalletti, who left the club in the close season, are potential candidates to take over.

Conte previously managed Italy from 2014 to 2016, guiding them to the Euro 2016 quarter-finals where they were beaten by Germany on penalties.



AFP

Supporting small enterprises on agenda: Industry minister

Economy Desk

The Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade has prioritized the policy of supporting small enterprises, announced Minister of Industry Abbas Ali-Abadi on Monday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a ceremony to inaugurate 20 industrial, infrastructural, and development projects, the minister said small industries do not require a large capital, as they can contribute to the country's economic development and job creation, IRNA reported.

The ceremony was also attended by the caretaker of the Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO), Farshad Moqimi.

The projects include nine infrastructure projects, with a total investment of about \$3.82 million, seven industrial projects, with an investment of over \$37.8 million, and the reactivation of four idle industrial units, with an investment of over \$18.9 million.

The inauguration of the projects has created direct job opportunities for 723 people.



Iran to produce 1m mobile phones by March



Iranian companies in the Payam Special Economic Zone will produce one million smartphones and feature phones by the end of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024), announced Akbar Qanbarpour, the CEO of Payam Special Economic Zone.

Qanbarpour announced on Monday that launching a digital economy hub is among the goals of the economic zone, reported IRNA.

He noted that producing smart and feature phones is a project aimed at turning the zone into a hub for

the digital economy. Qanbarpour also announced that 13 private firms have requested to launch their production in the special zone.

The Payam Special Economic Zone is located in Alborz Province, west of Tehran.

40% rise in domestic wheat purchases



Iran reported a major surge in its guaranteed purchase of wheat from domestic farmers in the harvest season that began in April.

Alireza Mohajer, an Iranian deputy agriculture minister, said on Monday that the purchase of wheat

from domestic farmers reached over 9.5 million metric tons, up 40% compared to April-August last year, IRNA reported.

"Although we faced drought this year and last year, the guaranteed purchase of wheat has increased by 40% compared

to the previous year," he said.

The official further explained that this year's wheat purchases had increased by 111%, or five million tons, compared to that of two years ago, when the Raeisi administration took office.

Trade in local currencies proposed for BRICS states

Economy Desk

Deputy Chief of Mission at the Russian Embassy in India, Roman Babushkin, said he had suggested a paradigm shift towards trade with national currencies in the BRICS group. The proposal will possibly

possibly affect the BRICS dynamics, as it will increase financial independence among the member countries of this economic bloc, according to IRNA.

The Russian diplomat gave a speech at a ceremony organized by the India Foundation in Del-

hi on the recent BRICS meeting and emphasized the steps taken by BRICS members to trade in their national currencies.

He highlighted that the development may not only align with the alternating world order, but also create greater independence from the

US dollar in financial exchanges.

As an integral part of the multipolar paradigm, BRICS has a significant impact on the global economy as it includes more than a third of the world's GDP as well as a population of about three billion.



MP: Iran could save over \$100b in energy sector

A member of Iran's Parliament on Monday said the country has the opportunity to save more than \$100 billion – equaling the value of 3.5 million barrels of crude oil – in the energy sector.

Malek Shariati Niasar, who made the remarks in the opening ceremony of Iran Energy Efficiency Conference (IREEC), added the country's energy intensity is not appropriate, regretting that the index should have been reduced 50 per-



cent from the beginning of the 5th Economic Development Plan to the end of the 6th Economic Development

Plan, Shana reported. "It will be a big step even if we optimize energy by just 25 percent," the lawmaker

said. The Member of Parliament's Energy Committee said 1.7 percent of the figure could be saved in Iran's gas sector – one-sixth of the global figure on average.

He added 18 billion cubic meters (bcm) of flare gas are burnt in Iran per annum, which is equal to \$5 billion worth of energy waste, while the country's gas exports amount to some \$17 billion.

The power plants' average

optimization stands at 39 percent, Shariati Niasar said, adding that the figure in Iran's 16 gas-fired power plants is less than 25 percent, and estimated at 40 percent in the country's seven combined cycle power plants.

Given Iran's geopolitical situation, the country could turn into an energy hub, noted the MP, warning, however, that the opportunity will be missed if energy is not optimized.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Italy PM Meloni takes 'full responsibility' for bank tax



REUTERS – Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Monday took "full responsibility" for last week's shock decision to impose a one-off bank tax that has been blamed for causing lasting damage to her government's credibility with financial markets.

In comments to Italian newspapers Corriere della Sera, la Repubblica and La Stampa, Meloni said the 40% levy had no punitive intent.

"I would do it again. Because I believe that the right things must be done... This is a decision that I took (on my own)", she was quoted as saying by la Repubblica.

Russia's ruble hits 17-month low



CNN – The ruble hit a 17-month low against the dollar on Monday, as the Russian currency slid past 100 against the dollar, its lowest level since March 23, 2022.

The ruble has shed around 30 percent of its value against the dollar since the beginning of the year, as the country imports more and exports less.

Data from the Moscow Exchange showed the ruble trading at 101.01 to the dollar at 11:33 am (0833 GMT). Russia's central bank said it will meet today to discuss the key interest rate.

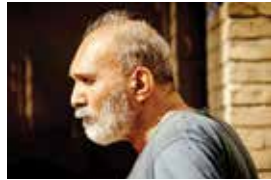
India's July trade gap widens



BLOOMBERG – India's trade deficit widened last month as exports and imports stayed weak on slowing demand.

The gap between exports and imports was at \$20.67 billion in July, the Trade Ministry said on Monday. The reading is lower than a deficit of \$20.9 billion seen by economists in a Bloomberg survey but is well above a \$20.13 billion gap in June.

Iran's 'The Fifty Thousand' awarded at Tunisia film festival



Iranian Director Hamed Karivand's emotionally charged short film, 'The Fifty Thousand,' has achieved accolades once again, this time by winning the prestigious Special Jury Prize at the Cinétoile International Short Film Festival held in Tunisia.

Set against the backdrop of a bustling city, 'The Fifty Thousand' tells the heart-rending tale of a young boy navigating the complexities of life while living in a modest dwelling with his father. The film's narrative beautifully captures his journey through various challenges, portraying the resilience and courage he displays along the way.

The remarkable cast of the film has played a pivotal role in bringing this poignant story to life. Farzin Rahmanpour, portraying the young boy with depth and sensitivity, delivers a performance that resonates with audiences. Accompanying him are seasoned actors like Mohammad Kianian, Elaheh Jaami, Mehdi Parhizkar, and Amirhossein Qalandari, all of whom contribute their compelling performances to enriching the film's emotional depth.

Iranian musician Esmaeili-Matin dies at 88



IRNA – The world of Iranian music mourns the loss of Mohammad-Ali Esmaeili-Matin, a *tonbak* (Iranian goblet drum) player, whose rhythm and artistry resonated with audiences for decades. On August 13, the music community bid farewell to this iconic figure, who had also been a distinguished member of the Veteran Artists Institute. Seyyed Abbas Azimi, the CEO of the institute, confirmed the passing of the maestro.

Esmaeili's musical odyssey took a significant turn in 1951, when he was introduced to the acclaimed Hossein Tehrani, an encounter that would shape his artistic trajectory. This encounter was facilitated by his uncles, Morteza and Mostafa, marking a pivotal moment that ignited his artistic flame.

Esmaeili-Matin's mastery of the *tonbak* was deeply influenced by the style of the legendary Hossein Tehrani, a testament to his commitment to preserving and perpetuating the essence of traditional Iranian music.

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Vol. 7363 ● Tuesday, Aug. 15, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

Iranian books on display at Karbala Int'l Book Fair

Arts & Culture Desk

The 9th Karbala International Book Fair has transformed into a vibrant hub of literary exchange, with the Iranian Book and Literature House leading the charge by presenting over 330 titles from 30 publishers within Iran's dynamic publishing industry. This spirited participation has brought together a kaleidoscope of literary treasures, all available in Arabic, for the discerning readers at the event.

With a focus on promoting cultural exchange and fostering literary connections, these offerings span across multiple genres, reflecting the rich tapestry of human experience and knowledge.

As reported by IRNA, this assortment includes captivating volumes within the realm of Sacred Defense literature, shedding light on the intricacies of Iran's historical journey. Additionally, visitors have the opportunity to explore selected works by the Iranian Leader Seyyed Ali Khamenei, delving into the insightful perspectives that have shaped Iran's course on the global stage.

The Iranian publishing industry's contribution extends to works designed to captivate the minds of the youngest readers. Children and adolescents are offered a chance to embark on imaginative adventures, broadening their horizons through the magic of storytelling.

The expanse of topics also encompasses Iranian studies, inviting readers to deepen their understanding of the nation's culture, history, and socio-political landscape. With such a comprehensive collection, the Iranian Book and Literature House's presence has undoubtedly enriched the cultural tapestry of the event.

Spanning an impressive 1,300 square meters and hosting 68 booths, the 9th Karbala International Book Fair provides an encompassing platform for literary exploration. This year's fair brings together an impressive lineup of participants, hailing from countries such as Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, to name a few. These



nations have independently joined the fair, collectively offering an astonishing total of 26,000 book titles for ea-

ger readers to discover and enjoy. The book fair kicked off its literary festivities on August

12 and will continue to captivate book enthusiasts and cultural aficionados until August 21.

World's highest-altitude cultural museum to open in China

Located in Yading village, Southwest China's Sichuan Province, the Shambhala Cultural Museum is set to become the world's highest-altitude cultural museum. Expected to open its doors to the public by late September, it will stand as a "landmark" for the area, Wang Guiqian, the project manager of China Construction Eighth Engineering Division (CCEED), told the Global Times.

The main structure of the museum was capped on Friday. Set at an altitude of approximately 3,900 meters, the museum is poised to surpass the Xizang Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum in Southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region by 150 meters to become the world's highest cultural museum once com-

pleted, according to Wang, ecns.cn reported.

Designed to mimic the shape of the Shankha (conch shell), one of the eight auspicious symbols of Tibetan Buddhism, the museum integrates with the surrounding landscape. On one side, it extends from the ground, harmonizing with the mountains and forests. On the other side, a pool of water reflects the grandeur of the snow-covered peaks.

"Given that museum is located in Daocheng county in the Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the choice of the Shankha design is culturally significant, as the Shankha symbolizes blessings and beauty in Tibetan culture," Yuan Hao, Party secretary of CCEED's Yading Village Project, told

the Global Times. Construction on the museum commenced on April 25 and is scheduled to be completed in a mere 150 days. Comprising three floors, the museum will stand at a total height of 17.4 meters with a total floor space of approximately 2,995 square meters.

The construction team has confronted many challenges during this limited time, according to Yuan. For example, it is operating at high altitudes, so rigorous health checks, daily health monitoring, and ample altitude sickness medication for workers are quite essential. Besides this, the museum is located in the national-level Yading Nature Reserve, so forest fire prevention is of paramount importance in safety management.

Stringent fire source management and on-site protective measures need to be strictly enforced during construction.

As of August 4, a total of 83 cultural artifacts have been designated for the museum, with 58 already gathered

and 25 in the process of being collected, according to an article published on August 6 by the Daocheng Cultural Broadcasting Television and Tourism Bureau. As part of broader efforts to preserve and restore Yading village, the Sham-

bhala Cultural Museum is a pivotal element. The entire project encompasses the restoration of traditional Tibetan-style buildings and village layout adjustments, infrastructure upgrades, and landscape rehabilitation and enhancement.



● GLOBAL TIMES

Legal drama results in environmental catastrophe for Tehran

Social Desk

A few days ago, on August 12, at 6 in the morning, special units from Darband 122 Precinct arrived at Tehran's Koohpayeh Park – located in Zafaraniyeh neighborhood in northern Tehran – with mini loaders and proceeded to cut down 50 trees without prior coordination with the District 1 Municipality.

The district deputy mayor was present at the scene in an attempt to prevent the tree cutting but was arrested by the police to enforce the court's decision.

The preservation of Koohpayeh Park has been a longstanding concern for



● armanmeli.ir

Tehran Municipality's District 1. The park was initially an abandoned piece of land which had trees planted on it. Eventually, in 2010, it was transformed into a public park.

However, over these years, no concrete legal measures were taken to align its functionality with relevant laws and regulations. Had such actions been implemented earlier, today's situation

could have been different, and this environmental catastrophe could have been averted.

Nevertheless, the owner of the land now seeks either its return or compensation equivalent to its current value of around \$40,000 based on a legal ruling obtained. As negotiations appear not to be underway, the owner decided to reclaim the land through legal means.

Regarding the process of destroying the park, District 1 Mayor Mehdi Sabbagh explained that they had repeatedly delayed executing the final order through lobbying efforts. However, this time around, execution took place unbeknownst to them

and came as a complete surprise. Sabbagh said that since 2020, there has been an ongoing judicial case concerning Koohpayeh Park's land. The first verdict was issued that same year and revisions were made in 2021, and, finally, orders were sent for execution based on these verdicts.

The head of Tehran Islamic Council's safety committee emphasized that cutting down trees in the region is against the law and called for accountability regarding the judge's decision. Mehdi Babaie referred to the incident, questioning the legality of this decision, saying, "Even if it was just-

ified by tree relocation, why was it carried out during the summer season and using excavators and mini loaders?" Babaie further asserted that, in his view, this decision goes against legal regulations and the judiciary should take responsibility for its basis.

When asked about the owner's intentions for the land, Sabbagh explained that they plan to construct a residential building. However, he mentioned that they have also proposed changing the land's designation to a green space to the Article Five Commission. They hope their request will be granted and implemented.