

NEWS IN BRIEF

PM:
Malaysia, Iran
to set up joint
commissions



BERNAMA – Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Tehran and Kuala Lumpur have agreed to set up two joint committees – Joint Commission Meeting and Joint Economic Commission – to explore all possibilities of cooperation between the two countries. Ibrahim made the comments on Wednesday after his phone conversation with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who held a meeting with Malaysian Foreign Minister Zambry Abdul Kadir in Tehran on Tuesday.

**Iran's defense
doctrine
based on
'deterrence'**



IRNA – Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said on Wednesday that Iran's defense doctrine is based on deterrence. Addressing a group of foreign military attachés in Tehran, Ashtiani said that Iran adheres to all human and moral principles respected by the world and takes military action only against aggression and occupation.

**Iran to pursue
release of
journalist in
Afghanistan**



TASNIM – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani underlined the ministry's determined efforts to secure the release of a Tasnim news agency photographer detained by the Taliban. Mohammad Hossein Velayati, who had legally entered Afghanistan through an air border and had spent ten days in Kabul, was apprehended without a clear explanation upon his return at Kabul Airport on Sunday.

Iran, India drop arbitration clause for Chabahar port



Iran's Chabahar Port
IRNA

India and Iran have agreed not to seek commercial foreign arbitration for disputes between users and operators at Chabahar Port, paving the way for the two sides to sign a long-term deal for the development of the strategic port, two persons aware of the development said. They said a team from India's Ministry of Port and Shipping is expected to visit Iran in

September to try and reach an agreement over the rules of engagement and mode of arbitration. This would be followed up with the two countries reaching a formal agreement for long-term operation of the port located in South-east Iran, with an unhindered sea route to India's West coast, *livemint.com* reported. "We have agreed that dis-

putes at Chabahar will not go for commercial arbitration in foreign courts but take investment arbitration or other any other mode of dispute settlement. This would prevent Iran from having to amend its Constitution," one of the persons quoted above said. Under Iran's Constitution, an arbitration cannot be referred to a foreign court. It would require a constitutional amend-

ment, which would have been difficult and would have delayed a long-term contract. Currently, India and Iran sign one-year contracts for development and running the terminal at Chabahar Port. However, New Delhi has been pushing Tehran to sign a longer-term agreement as it seeks more certainty for investment and development plans for the port. A long-term contract

may be for a period of 10 years with provisions for automatic renewal. Negotiations on long-term contract had been held up due to disagreements over the arbitration clause. Both sides have now agreed to pursue arbitration under rules framed by the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) which is favored by India over those framed by the International Chambers of

Commerce (ICC). The positive development comes at a time when China has been showing growing interest in investments in ports and other coastal infrastructure in Iran, and the Iranian side has been pressing New Delhi to step up development of Shahid Beheshti terminal, which is operated by the state-run India Ports Global Limited (IPGL).

Qatar: Iran-US ...

"The process of releasing billions of dollars from the assets of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which were illegally seized in South Korea by the United States for several years, has begun," Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

"Iran has received the necessary assurances regarding America's commitment to its obligations in this matter," it added. The deal has drawn criticism from some Republican politicians, with some of them expressing concern about it. Three top House Republicans sent a letter to the Biden administration this week expressing "deep



Qatar's Foreign Ministry
spokesman Majed al-Ansari

concern" about what they call potential threats to the US national security from an alleged agreement being kept under wraps between the US and Iran. The Monday letter – signed by House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul, House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, and House Republican Conference Chairwoman

Elise Stefanik – criticizes the deal as dangerous for releasing \$6 billion in frozen funds to Iran for the freeing of five American prisoners. The letter also accuses the administration of reaching a secret nuclear understanding with Tehran in the agreement.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran-Saudi diplomatic shift

From enmity to cooperation

By Javad
Mohammad Ali
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OPINION

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's recent visit to Saudi Arabia, the first such trip by an Iranian foreign minister to the Arab nation in nearly eight years, marked a milestone in the tumultuous relationship between the two neighbors. The top diplomat's visit culminated in a meeting with Mohammed bin Salman, the influential crown prince and de facto ruler of the oil-rich kingdom, which held the promise of fully restoring ties and ending open hostilities that had plagued the two regional powerhouses for the past seven years.

A similar occasion occurred just a month ago, when Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan paid a visit to Tehran where he held talks with Ebrahim Raisi, the first such meeting between a Saudi FM and an Iranian president in fifteen years.

Such overtures might seem astonishing, given the backdrop of the past seven years, when the two neighbors found themselves entangled in a web of animosity, each launching even outright attacks on the other. But against all odds, both sides opted for burying the hatchet and rekindling their relationship. The diplomatic shift was manifest in these meetings, as well as the invitations extended to the leaders of both countries to visit each other's capitals. In fact, Farhan gave an invitation to

Raisi to fly to Riyadh, while Amir-Abdollahian reciprocated by inviting Bin Salman to grace Tehran with his presence.

This departure from enmity to friendship symbolizes resilience in settling past disputes and embracing a new chapter. It also highlights Iran's capacity to tackle tough challenges in international relations. Adaptability and the ability to reshape their course are essential traits for any government or nation and Iran's venture into this sphere was crucial to bolster its standing and address pressing issues.

The historical ebb and flow of Iran-Saudi relations, replete with ruptures and rapprochements, testifies to the intrinsic nature of their connection. Despite periods of detachment, they inevitably found their way back to the negotiating table. This pattern highlights a fundamental truth: when countries opt for confrontation, a clear-cut victory remains elusive and competition might inflict damage; but cooperation stands as the most lucrative avenue, yielding mutual benefits.

Contemplating the ripple effects of the Iran-Saudi rapport reveals a broader picture. Beyond the two nations, it extends to the entire region and resonates across the global arena. The realms of oil markets, counter-terrorism, cooperation with eastern powers, and maritime security all beckon for joint efforts between Tehran and Riyadh. And in the midst of

turmoil in places like Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, lies the potential for Iran and Saudi Arabia to synergize their measures for shared accomplishments.

One notable area for collaboration arises from Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, an ambitious blueprint for the nation's future championed by Bin Salman. The initiative envisions a diversification of Saudi Arabia's incomes, liberating the kingdom from the clutches of oil dependency. Monumental projects like the Neom city are set to receive enormous investments amounting to \$500 billion. This presents a golden opportunity for Iran to participate in various sectors, sending skilled labor and engaging its enterprises.

To fully understand the emergent Saudi Arabia needs to discard outdated stereotypes. Its new economic approach hinges on disentangling itself from dependence on oil revenues and nurturing ties with a spectrum of global and regional powers, while pursuing an independent path from the United States. Recognizing this paradigm shift can unlock fresh avenues for mutually beneficial cooperation in economic, political, and security domains. Iran and Saudi Arabia now stand at a crossroads. The opportunity to rewrite their narrative is within their grasp; a narrative that acknowledges shared interests, bridges divisions, and charts a course toward a future of regional prosperity and stability.