



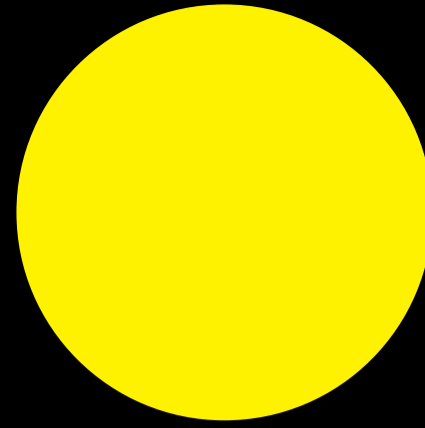
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# Iran Daily



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Iran, along with five other countries, has been given the go-ahead to become a full member of the BRICS group of big emerging economies as the now 11-member bloc seeks to expand its global influence and reshape the world order. BRICS's decision to invite sanction-hit Iran would be a major blow for the United States, which has been trying to politically and economically isolate the Islamic Republic in the world for decades.

## BRICS Welcomes Iran

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Deputy FM:  
Iran's assets  
in Iraq being  
unblocked in  
phases**

**MEHR** – The unblocking of Iranian funds in Iraq has commenced and is currently in progress, announced Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani.

Bagheri Kani revealed that following an agreement with the US regarding the release of frozen Iranian funds in South Korea, the matter of Iranian funds held in Iraq was also raised. The release process began three weeks ago, and is expected to gather momentum. He also expressed optimism that discussions on sanctions relief would be pursued more seriously.

**Qatari PM  
hopes Iran-US  
deal leads  
to nuclear  
dialogue**

**REUTERS**– Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani said on Friday he hopes a recent prisoner exchange agreement his country facilitated between Iran and the United States leads to a wider dialogue on Iran's nuclear program.

"With Iran, we became a key mediator with the US in the prisoner swap agreement, which we hope will lead to a wider dialogue on the nuclear deal," he said.

**Denmark to  
ban Qur'an  
burnings**

● GETTY IMAGES

**DW** – Denmark's government has said it will ban the burning of holy texts, including the Qur'an. Denmark's Justice Minister Peter Hummelgaard said on Friday that the Scandinavian country would ban the burning of Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. The government has rejected objections put forward by some Danish opposition parties saying such a prohibition would infringe on free speech.

# Iranian Army holds electronic warfare drill

A massive joint electronic warfare drill of various army units was held on Friday as domestically designed and manufactured equipment has boosted the country's prowess in electronic warfare.

Codenamed Separ-e Hafezan-e Velayat 1402 (Shield of Velayat's Guardians 1402), the drill aims to assess the performance and effectiveness of various fixed, mobile, ground-based and airborne electronic warfare systems, Press TV reported.

Units of the Iranian Army's Ground Force, Air Force, Navy and Air Defense participated in the war game that was held in the central areas of the country.

According to Friday's statement by the army, various tactics and operations have been successfully carried out during the drill, including identifying radio and data link communications, execution of group attack operations by micro aerial vehicles (MAVs) against defined targets, electronic operations to protect radars, and ground-based electronic operations to disrupt and deceive enemy radar systems.

Deputy Chief of Iran's Army for Coordination, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, said



on Thursday that the drill featured different types of indigenous electronic warfare systems, such as radars, drones, cyber and aerospace systems, manned and unmanned fighter jets, micro aerial vehicles, and fixed, mobile, land- and air-based systems. He said that electronic war-

fare is a vital aspect of modern and future wars and that the Iranian Army has focused on developing its human and technological resources in this

field over the past years. The army deputy chief said that the Iranian Army has achieved significant progress and achievements in design-

ing and manufacturing its own electronic warfare equipment, using its specialized knowledge, technical know-how and internal capabilities.

● IRIBNEWS

## Trump released from Georgia jail on \$200k bond

Former US president Donald Trump was released on \$200,000 bond and returned to the airport for the trip back to New Jersey. According to jail records, Trump was freed on bond after undergoing the booking procedure at the Fulton County jail in Atlanta, republicworld.com reported.

The former US president was arrested and booked at the Fulton County jail on Thursday night in connection with the Georgia election subversion case.

He was in jail for roughly 20 minutes. His quick 20-minute booking resulted in a historic first: A mug shot of a former US president. Authorities issued a booking photo of Trump, dressed in a navy suit and crimson tie, aggressively scowling at the cameraman, with his eyebrows furrowed as he gazed into the lens.

He was unrepentant following his brief jail visit, insisting that he "did nothing wrong" and calling the case charging him of tampering with election results a "travesty of justice."

Trump's fourth surrender to authorities this year has grown

into a familiar election-season routine, belying the rare spectacle of a former president, and present candidate, being arrested on criminal charges. But, unlike the other three surrenders, his trip to Atlanta took place at nighttime and required him to attend a troubled jail instead of a courtroom. It happened not in a liberal stronghold like New York or Washington, but in the heart of a battleground state viewed as crucial to the 2024 presidential election, AP reported.

According to a person acquainted with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the procedures, unlike in other cities where he was not required to appear for a mug picture, a booking picture of him was taken.

His jail visit generated a stunning split-screen graphic during a 2024 Republican primary race in which he remains the front-runner, arriving one day after a debate in Milwaukee in which eight of his key contenders attempted to capitalise on the former president's absence by standing out from the pack.



Former US president Donald Trump is shown in a police booking mugshot released by the Fulton County Sheriff's Office, after a Grand Jury brought back indictments against him and 18 of his allies in their attempt to overturn the state's 2020 election results in Atlanta, Georgia, US, on August 24, 2023.  
● Fulton County Sheriff's Office/REUTERS

## Kremlin calls accusations it killed Wagner boss 'absolute lie'

The Kremlin said that Western suggestions Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin had been killed on its orders were an "absolute lie".

Russia's aviation authority has said that Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, was on board a private jet which crashed on Wednesday evening northwest of Moscow with no survivors, Reuters reported.

However, the Kremlin has declined to definitively confirm his death, citing the need to wait for test results. Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to the families of those killed in the crash on Thursday and spoke of Prigozhin in the past tense, breaking his silence after the incident which occurred exactly two months to the day after Prigozhin led a failed mutiny against army chiefs.

Putin cited "preliminary information" as indicating that Prigozhin and his top associates in the Wagner mercenary group had all been killed and, while praising Prigozhin, said he had also made some "serious mistakes."

Western politicians and commentators have suggested, without presenting evidence, that Putin ordered Prigozhin to be killed in order to punish him for launching the June 23-34 mutiny against the army's leadership which also represented the biggest challenge to Putin's own rule since he came to power in 1999.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the accusation and

many others like it were false.

"There is now a great deal of speculation surrounding this plane crash and the tragic deaths of the plane's passengers, including Yevgeny Prigozhin. Of course, in the West, all this speculation is presented from a well-known angle," Peskov told reporters.

"All of this is an absolute lie, and here, when covering this issue, it is necessary to base yourself on facts. There are not many facts yet. They need to be established in the course of investigative actions," he said.

Speaking after Wagner vowed revenge over the death of its leader, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky denied Ukrainian involvement in the reported death of the Wagner boss in the plane crash near Moscow. Zelensky denied that his nation was responsible adding that "everyone is aware of who is involved."

**Diplomatic norms  
disregarded**

Earlier on Friday, Russian Depu-

ty Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov had scolded US President Joe Biden for expressing his lack of surprise that Prigozhin had been killed in a plane crash, accusing Biden of disregarding diplomatic norms.

Russian investigators have opened a probe into what happened, but have not yet said what they suspect caused the plane to suddenly fall from the sky northwest of Moscow.

Nor have they officially confirmed the identities of the 10 bodies recovered from the wreckage.

British military intelligence said on Friday there was not yet definitive proof that Prigozhin had been onboard but that it was "highly likely" he was dead.

The Pentagon has said its own initial assessment is that Prigozhin was killed.

Russia's Baza news outlet, which has good sources among law enforcement agencies, has reported that investigators are focusing on a theory that one or two bombs may have been planted on board the plane.



Wreckage of the plane that crashed near the town of Kuzhenkino, Russia  
● AFP



At 3600 meters on Mount Gargash, the Iranian National Observatory enjoys favorable seeing conditions.  
PARSA BIGDELI/science.org

Mt. Gargash  
ino.org.ir

# Iran's return to global astronomical community a significant achievement

## Iranica Desk

The establishment of the Iran National Observatory (INO), as one of the largest scientific projects implemented in the country, entered an important stage last year when it recorded the first light image of its 3.4m optical telescope. The fulfillment of this project, which is over 20 years old, caused Iran to return to the global astronomical community after eight centuries. The establishment of INO, as one of the major national astronomical projects, has been a great achievement

for the country. The project, which was launched in the Iranian year to March 2001, received its first funding from the government budget in the year to March 2006. Despite the obstacles created by the sanctions imposed on Iran, this telescope was completely designed and made by domestic experts and only its mirrors were imported from abroad. Head of the Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences Mohammad Javad Larijani said that setting up the INO is one of the most significant scientific projects im-

plemented in the country in recent decades. Following last year's announcement made by Iranian astronomers about the recording of the first light image of INO's 3.4m optical telescope, Science Journal, one of the most prestigious scientific journals of the world, published an article in which it referred to the telescope as a world-class device. It wrote that Iranian scientists and engineers faced major hurdles building the Iranian National Observatory, including sanctions that curtail high-tech imports and visa restric-

tions limiting their travel abroad. INO Project Director Habib Khosroshahi said that none of Iranian universities has so far experienced the implementation of such a great scientific project. "The execution of the project gained more momentum as of 2018, and the total process of the construction, installation and commissioning was carried out in a period of four years," he said. He added that due to the absence of modern and advanced telescopes in neighboring countries, Iran, a country with high

mountain ranges, is a suitable geographical location for professional astronomical observatories. Khosroshahi said that the establishment of INO has provided a huge and unique experience for Iran's science and technology sector, adding that it is an important step taken for the revival of astronomy and cosmology in the country after eight centuries. "Astronomical imagers and spectrometers are expected to be installed on its telescope in the current and coming years," he noted. The world-class, 3.4-meter optical telescope is

suitable for observing and studying a wide range of astronomical and cosmic objects. Gerry Gilmore, an astronomer at the University of Cambridge and chair of INO's international advisory board, said INO's scientific odyssey began two decades ago— and faced long odds. "When they started this project, it was just a dream. No one in Iran had attempted anything on this scale before," he added. Thanks to its geographic location, the INO project is expected to attract international astronomers. The

site selection campaign was concluded by selecting Mt. Gargash, at 3,600m above sea level in central Iran, 110km north of the city of Isfahan. The INO project goes far beyond the design and development of the telescope itself. Its 16m-diameter, 22m-high modern enclosure and dome are also manufactured by the local industry. The INO project progressed faster than expected in the construction phase, thanks to the dedicated and agile management and the hard work of its small but highly motivated staff.

## Persian art in Central and East Europe

With the exception of Poland — its adjective "Polonaise" was and is still associated with a certain type of Persian carpet — the collections of Persian art in Central and East Europe were for a long time relatively neglected, compared to Ottoman material culture, a subject which has attracted a reasonable deal of research interest in both local and international scholarly communities. As an academic discipline, Turkology in both pre-Islamic and Islamic times had already been developed as early as the first half of the 19th century, especially in Austria, owing to its diplomatic links with the Ottoman Empire, and in Hungary, thanks to its once-presumed linguistic tie with the ancient Turks. Arabic was also widely studied in Central and East Europe as a principal tool for the understanding of Islam, and this was closely linked to the translation and interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and other Islamic

religious texts. On the other hand, Persian studies lagged behind in the region, compared with West Europe, and remained a secondary subject that was merely part of Islamic, Middle Eastern or Oriental studies, as well as in some cases part of Indology. Nevertheless, some important achievements in Persian art studies were made as a by-product of Turkish philology, such as *Einführung in die persische Paläographie* (Budapest, 1977) by the Ottoman scholar Lajos Fekete (1891–1969 CE), published posthumously, which remains the standard work in the subject until today. In contrast to the slow emergence of Persian studies in Central Europe, art historians of the region discovered Persian art much earlier than those of West Europe, and Persian art was already included into the discussion of general art history. For example, the first general survey of world architecture, the *Entwurf einer*



Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Isfahan  
tappersia.com

*Historischen Architektur* by the Austrian architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1633–1723 CE) provided examples of the then recently built monuments of Isfahan. This marked the begin-

nings of a tradition of non-western art historians in the region, namely those without formal training in Oriental studies but with openness to look at the history of art from a global perspec-

tive, such as Alois Riegl (1858–1905 CE) and Joseph Strzygowski. It is also interesting to note that, while carpets, textiles and architectural decoration remained focal points of connoisseurship, the first

essay ever written for a journal about the Persian paintings from the Topkapi Saray albums was, rather unexpectedly, published in Hungary in the 1880s by the art historian Jenő Radisics (1956–1917). Poland established a strong academic interest in the art of Persia in the early 20th century, with the growth of a small yet exquisite scholarly community as well as its international reputation, and despite the long interruptions due to the war and communist times, the Polish scholarship of Persian and Islamic art has been, albeit slowly, in the process of recapturing its pre-war spirit. The works of several figures in the region has so far received little international recognition, but the Austrian Joseph von Karabacek (1845–1918 CE), another Austrian Ernst Diez (1878–1961 CE), the Hungarian Nándor Fettich (1900–1971 CE) and the Polish Tadeusz Mankowski (1878–

1956 CE) deserve special attention for their contributions to the development of Persian art studies in Central Europe. In the meantime, the Ukrainian-born Mikhail Rostovtzeff (1870–1952 CE) and others discovered the Irano-Greek archaeological substratum of South Russian art across the Eurasian steppe at the turn of the 20th century. This had strong repercussions in the Persian-oriented scholarly minds of early 20th-century Poland and Hungary — both of which nurture a rich tradition of Sarmatian and Scythian mythology. Persian art does certainly exist in other neighbouring states, although its presence is virtually unknown outside the region. Apart from Slovakia, which, along with its collections, was formerly part of Hungary, the Czech Republic possesses small but interesting collections of Persian art, including the Persian manuscript collection in the National Library.



President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L), President of China Xi Jinping (2nd L), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (C), Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi (2nd R) and Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attend the 2023 BRICS Summit at the Sandton Convention Centre in Johannesburg on August 24, 2023.

PHILL MAGAKOE/AFP

# Iran, five other countries invited to join **BRICS**

## International Desk

The BRICS bloc of developing nations has invited Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Argentina and the United Arab Emirates to join the group in a move aimed at accelerating its push to reshape the world order. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who hosted a three-day BRICS summit in Johannesburg, said on Thursday that the six new candidates will formally become members on Jan. 1, 2024. "BRICS has embarked on a new chapter in its effort to build a world that is fair, a world that is just, a world that is also inclusive and prosperous," Ramaphosa said. "We have consensus on the first phase of this expansion process and other phases will follow." BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, which represent five major world economies in the Global South.

## Iran's accession

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi, who attended the BRICS 15th annual

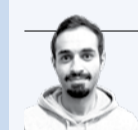
summit in South Africa, said on Friday that Iran's accession to BRICS will boost the country's political clout and economy. Speaking upon his return from South Africa, Raeisi hailed Iran's accession to the organization as "significant". The Iranian president said BRICS and similar organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are against unilateralism and work to promote convergence among nations to boost their level of prosperity. "One of the advantages of membership in BRICS is that it enhances the country's political power because increased interaction with global and regional organizations will contribute to bolstering both the political and economic power of our nation," he said. The president said BRICS plays a big role in global economic and trade cooperation, and contacts with its members can help Iran grow economically.

'Historic' expansion Chinese President Xi Jinping described the group's

enlargement as historic. "It shows the determination of BRICS countries for unity and cooperation with the broader developing countries," he said on Thursday. "The expansion is also a new starting point for BRICS cooperation. It will bring new vigor to the BRICS cooperation mechanism and further strengthen the force for world peace and development." Russia's Vladimir Putin, who attended the summit remotely, said, "BRICS is not competing with anyone. But it's also obvious that this process of the emerging of a new world

order still has fierce opponents." For Argentina, facing dire economic problems, membership represents a potential lifeline to escape from the deepening crisis. Its president, Alberto Fernández, said it represented a "new scenario" for the country. "We open up our possibilities of joining new markets, of consolidating existing markets, of raising incoming investments, of creating jobs and raising imports," Fernandez said. Ethiopia became the only low-income country in the group. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed described it as "a great moment" for

his country. Originally an acronym coined by Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill in 2001, the bloc was founded as an informal four-nation club in 2009, and added South Africa a year later in its only previous expansion. Over 40 countries had expressed interest in joining BRICS, and 23 formally applied to join the club, which already represented a quarter of the global economy and 40 percent of the world's population. Some 50 other heads of state and leaders attended the summit in South Africa, which concluded on Thursday.



By Amir Mollae Mozaffari

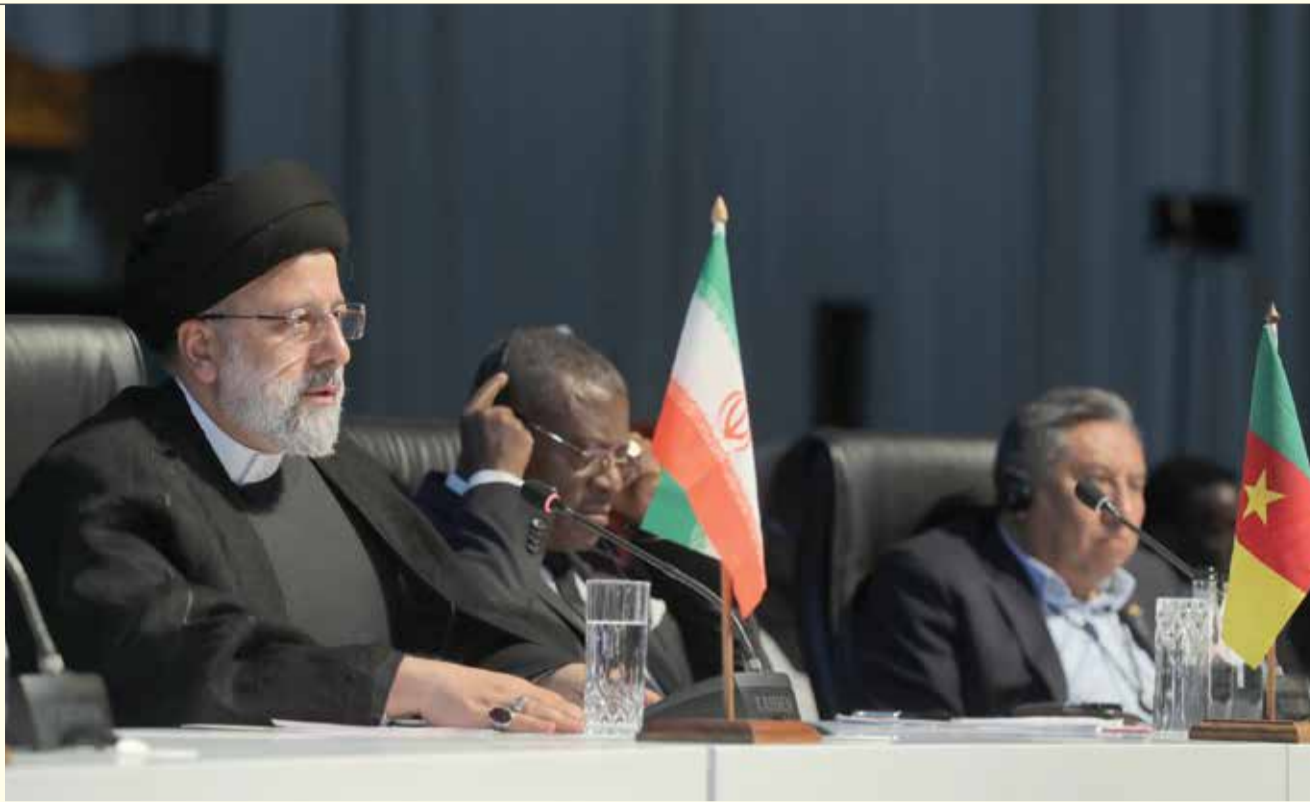
Staff Writer

On Friday, the BRICS bloc of emerging markets announced the approval of Iran and five other states to join the group, which caught the attention of global analysts, who penned their opinions on various websites and news agencies, answering the question in everyone's mind, "Why these six states and not others?"

Jannie Rossouw, professor at the Wits Business School, noted that the primary objective of BRICS was always to create an alliance of all of the world's emerging economies to rival the G7, according to Eyewitness News. Therefore, he added, the strategy must be to get trade among these countries growing.

Rossouw believes the financial aspect of the alliance had generally been "a failure" up until now but said the Chinese and Russians were pushing forward on this front and he expects them to invest in infrastructure projects with the entry of the new members. "The choice of these countries is far from insignificant." International relations analyst, Professor John Stremblau, also noted that China is likely behind the addition of Iran and the United Arab Emirates, a hunch that is shared by geopolitics professor Xavier Aurégan at Université Catholique de Lille, France.

Aurégan told the Brussels Signal news outlet that one can see an attempt by Beijing "to rally governments and populations that have not had the opportunity to be represented in the main multinational institutions [except in the UN]". An Iranian analyst, Ali Behboud-



# BRICS membership to spur Iran's growth



## National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (L) speaks during the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023.  
● president.ir

Iran's membership in BRICS will pave the ground for improving the country's economic growth and exports, Nima Mirzaei, an economic expert said Friday. "BRICS stands as a powerful framework for economic advancement and serves as a huge market. Every nation, upon entering, can foresee positive prospects for its economy, as well as enhanced trade and political relations," Mirzaei told IRNA. He said following the US withdrawal from the 2015

Iran nuclear deal with world powers in 2018, the Islamic Republic was hit by a series of new sanctions that hampered its international interactions. Mirzaei, a capital market analyst, noted, however, that recent government initiatives aimed at fostering political and economic relations with regional countries, particularly southern neighbors, had sparked "waves of renewed optimism". He added that Iran's capacity for interactions and its vision of Eastern economies as emerging markets

could "potentially challenge Western dominance," led by the United States. Mirzaei emphasized the significance of the cooperative efforts under BRICS, labeling it "the most robust platform and market," with the potential to yield positive economic and diplomatic outcomes for every country, and "Iran is no exception". While he acknowledged that short-term leaps in Western interactions were not expected under current sanctions, he highlighted that the situation presented an "unparalleled opportunity" for Iran to engage in new paradigms.

Mirzaei predicted that Iran's economic prospects would improve after joining the ranks of rising economies under BRICS. "Various opportunities arising from Iran's membership in BRICS would undeniably affect the macro-economic issues of the country in a positive way..., help bring down inflation and revalue the national currency." The expert added that Iran's BRICS accession would "significantly bolster exports and help offset US

sanctions," as the extensive markets of fellow BRICS nations could provide a "major path" for the revival of Iranian exports. Mirzaei projected that the new development could "unlock Iran's potential for international investors," eventually leading to renewed foreign investment in the country, which had seen ups and downs since the 1990s. Amir-Ali Abolfat'h, an international affairs expert, also shared his views with ISNA on Friday, saying Iran's membership in BRICS and its alignment

with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were major steps in advancing the country's foreign policy. Farshid Baqerian, another foreign affairs expert, urged the private sector to share responsibilities with the government for Iran's better engagement with BRICS. He suggested that a "BRICS council" be set up in Iran, involving the private sector, to assist the government in addressing possible challenges and shortcomings hindering the country's interactions with the organization.

## World analysts on BRICS expansion

# Iran seeks 'more of the same' in BRICS

ian, however, believes that the previous statement does not hold true for Iran as the regional power has over the years gained the membership of OPEC+, the Economic Cooperation Organization, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to name a few, to emerge from its diplomatic and economic isolation, making the new BRICS membership "more of the same". Writing for the German IntelliNews, Behboudian expects that Iran's new membership will pave the way for further increase in its commercial exchanges with BRICS+ members through ease of bilateral trade tariffs and facilitated customs procedures. "For the sanction-bound Iranian economy, any opportunity to boost trade will be a boon," he said, citing the

country's soaring oil exports to India this year as evidence. Meanwhile, the group recently revealed its plan to move away from the US dollar and settle trades in the national currencies of its member countries — something that Tehran, along with Russia and China, is very keen to see happen, according to Behboudian. He cautiously notes that US sanctions on Iran will be a serious impediment to extending funds from the New Development Bank (NDB) of BRICS for development projects in Iran, especially since both India and China are deeply involved in the development of Iran's southern Chabahar port and would require NDB funding. Aurégan also likes to bring attention to the effort that was made to bring together Shia Iran and

Sunni Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as two African sub-regional powers, Egypt and Ethiopia. "Until recently, the inclusion of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE together in the same economic or political organization would have been unthinkable, as tensions escalated following the collapse of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal and a series of attacks attributed to the country since," AP writers Gerald Imray and Mogomotsi Magome maintained. But as the coronavirus pandemic receded, the UAE became the first to re-engage diplomatically with Iran. In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced that they had reached a détente with Chinese mediation. China has sought closer relations with all three nations,

particularly Iran, from which it has imported oil since the collapse of the nuclear deal. "For Saudi Arabia, the planet's premier exporter of crude oil, being positioned within the same economic framework as China, the foremost oil importer globally, lays the foundation for collaborative energy strategies and economic diversification. The incorporation of Iran offers an avenue for dialogue and economic partnership, potentially fostering stability in a volatile milieu." Instability can still be sown, especially by Iran's two arch-nemeses, the US and Israel. While some observers said Tehran's inclusion risked coloring the bloc with an anti-American hue, others were quick to note that Venezuela, which also has strained relations

with the West, was rejected from becoming a member of the bloc. "China, Russia, and Iran are certainly anti-US. Saudi Arabia is having major differences with the United States on certain issues. However, India, Brazil, and Egypt are not in the China camp. Nor is UAE," Seema Guha concluded on Outlook India. There are differences among many of the member states, and India and China have been locked in a military stand-off in Ladakh since the summer of 2020. Tension between the two Asian giants continues, Guha said. Yet, all BRICS members agree on reforming the existing international system and building alternatives to the current US-dominated economic and political order.



Top officials participating in the 15th BRICS Summit pose for a family photo in Johannesburg, South Africa, on August 24, 2023.  
● president.ir

# AFC Champions League group stage: Iranian clubs drawn against global stars of Saudi Pro League

## Sports Desk

The Iranian football fans will be treated to some mouthwatering contests in the upcoming group stage of the AFC Champions League as the Persian Gulf Pro League clubs are pitted against the Saudi sides and their newly-signed superstars of the sport.

The big story of the ongoing summer transfer window has been the rise of the Saudi Pro League as a favorite destination for some of the big names in the European football, who have been lured by lucrative contracts to follow in the footsteps of Portuguese sensation Cristiano Ronaldo in moving to the Middle East – a major boost for the game in Asia which will see their presence bring more publicity and worldwide attention to the continent's elite clubs competition.

## Group of death

The draw for the ACL group phase took place at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday, where 40 teams were divided into 10 groups across the West and East Zones.

Iranian league and cup champion Persepolis will square off against some familiar foes in the so-called 'group of death' in the West. ACL runners-up in 2018 and 2020, the Tehran Reds are in Group E alongside Saudi side Al Nassr, Qatar Stars League champion Al Duhail, and Istiklol of Tajikistan.

Yahya Golmohammadi's men, whose run of 12 successive domestic wins since



● REUTERS

late March came to an end with a 1-1 draw against Zob Ahan at Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Thursday, will begin their campaign with a home game against Al Nassr on September 19.

However, with the Iranian stadiums yet to be equipped with the video assistant referee (VAR) technology, the Reds and the country's other two teams – Sepahan and Nassaji Mazandaran – may be forced to host their opponents in neutral venues

overseas.

In an interview with AFP after the draw, AFC Secretary-General Windsor John insisted that the VAR system "will be introduced from the group stage."

Persepolis has fond memories of the previous encounter against Al Nassr in the Champions League – a shootout victory in the semifinals in Qatar in the 2020 edition.

Spanish center-back Aymeric Laporte is the latest



● EPA

high-profile footballer to leave the English Premier League for the Saudi top flight, leaving Manchester City for Al Nassr in a deal worth £25m to join Ronaldo and his fellow Portuguese fullback Alex Telles, as well as ex-Bayern Munich striker Sadio Mane and Croatian midfielder Marcelo Brozovic – a UEFA Champions League finalist with Inter in June. The match in Doha's Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium on October 2 will be an eighth

meeting between Al Duhail and Persepolis at the tournament since 2015, with both sides winning three games apiece.

Persepolis will finish the first round of the group fixtures against Istiklol on Oct. 24, in a repeat of the last-16 clash in Dushanbe two years ago, which the Iranian side won 1-0, thanks to a Mehdi Torabi's 90th-minute strike. Iranian league leader Sepahan, which finished behind Persepolis last season, will



● IMAGO

go head-to-head with Iraq's Air Force Club on Sep. 18 in the opening game in Group C, also featuring Saudi champion Al Ittihad and AGMK FC – currently fifth in the Uzbekistan Super League.

Al Ittihad stole the headlines in July when it signed French talisman and reigning Ballon D'Or winner Karim Benzema as a free agent for a reported wage of £172m per year. The Saudi giant also secured

deals for former Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante and Portuguese striker Jota, who bagged 15 goals to help Celtic win a domestic treble last season.

Sepahan will play host to Al Ittihad on Oct. 2 before visiting Olmaliq to take on AGMK three weeks later.

Group D will see Nassaji Mazandaran – the Iranian Hazfi Cup winner in 2022 – face Al Hilal, Indian Super League side Mumbai City FC and Navbahor – runner-up to Pakhtakor in Uzbekistan in the previous campaign.

The 2019 and 2021 ACL champion and last season's runner-up, Al Hilal brought an end to a summer-long transfer saga surrounding Neymar, signing the Brazilian on a two-year £86.3m contract, which will see the 31-year-old be paid £129.4m a year – six times the amount he earned at PSG.

Portuguese international Ruben Neves, Senegalese defender Kalidou Koulibaly, ex-Lazio midfielder Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and his Serbian teammate Aleksandar Mitrovic, as well as Brazilian Malcom, and Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou are Al Hilal's other marquee signings in the summer.

Nassaji's maiden outing in the AFC Champions League history will come away to Mumbai City on Sep. 18, before the home game against Al Hilal on Oct. 3 is followed by a fixture at Navbahor on Oct. 23.

The five group winners in the West Zone will be joined by best three runners-up in the region in progressing to February's round of 16.

## World Athletics Championships:

# Olympic champion Tentoglou wins long jump gold after more late drama

REUTERS – Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece was involved in yet another last-round drama as he won long jump gold at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest when his final leap of 8.52 metres edged him ahead of Jamaica's Wayne Pinnock by two centimetres on Thursday. Tentoglou is no stranger to such things, having won Olympic gold with his final jump in Tokyo after being out of the medals after five rounds.

It went the other way in Eugene last year when he was leading after five, only for Wang Jianan of China to come from nowhere, take gold and demote the Greek to silver.

Tentoglou got Thursday's final off to a flier as he produced a huge season's best 8.50 with his opening jump, only for Pinnock to match it in the second round.

That put Pinnock, who flew to a world-leading 8.54 metres on his opening jump in Wednesday's qualifying and a personal best by 17cm, in the lead on the back of having the best second jump by one centimetre.

In the final round, though, Tentoglou hit the board perfectly to soar ahead and Pinnock was unable to improve on his final attempt.

"This competition may have been the toughest I have taken part in," Tentoglou said. "Last year it was a bad competition for me but this year I had no excuses.

"But I was not comfortable. After my third jump I started to feel my legs cramping. That's why it took so long to get the big jump. I had to test my legs to see that I was fine and then I went for it in the final jump after having felt no pain.

Pinnock was stunned by the turnaround but soon found

the positives after a week he will never forget.

"When he pulled that off I couldn't believe it but then I could, of course, I know what he's capable of," he said.

"I just knew he had it but I just didn't know he would do it, that he would pull it off at that moment.

"But this is still a silver medal. It's really a dream come true. Watching people like Tentoglou gave me the motivation as a youngster to reach the top. And now I'm there, nearly there."

Jamaica's Tajay Gayle snatched bronze with his final leap of 8.27, matching compatriot Carey McLeod but edging him on count-back.

McLeod was lucky to escape injury after slipping on take-off on his third jump, spiraling spectacularly into the air and landing face-first in the pit.



Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece competes in the men's long jump final at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, on August 24, 2023. ● KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

# Restoring Bakhtegan and Parishan wetlands a priority

## Social Desk

The Governor of Fars province emphasized the significance and evident role of restoring Bakhtegan and Parishan wetlands for the well-being of people, making it a top priority.

During the 16th meeting of the Fars Wetland Restoration Headquarters, focusing on reviving Bakhtegan and Parishan wetlands, Mohammad Hadi Imaniyeh expressed concern about the impact of these two dry wetlands on the health of local communities. The drying process generates fine dust that negatively affects people's health, underscoring the need to restore them with utmost care, ISNA reported. Imaniyeh further stressed that environmental organizations, regional water authorities, and agricultural entities hold direct responsibility for restoring these crucial wetlands.

The governor outlined several

proposed measures for restoration efforts in their catchment areas. These include promoting pressure irrigation methods while sealing unauthorized wells. Additionally, encouraging reforms in cultivation patterns and implementing effective watershed management near these wetlands are gaining momentum. Imaniyeh mentioned one specific program aimed at accelerating water transfer from Nargesi dam to alleviate issues faced by Parishan wetland. However, he also emphasized that closure of unauthorized wells along the lagoon's edge is necessary before allowing farmers access to this water resource.

Highlighting concerns over both Bakhtegan and Parishan wetlands' complete drying up, Director General of Fars Environmental Protection acknowledged Governor Imaniyeh's support as well as actions taken by responsible organizations towards their

restoration. He underlined how this dire situation poses significant problems for local communities and neighboring villages.

Pourshirzad revealed that studies indicate a staggering 15-meter drop in water levels at Parishan wetland due to approximately 1,200 wells dug around it – 30 percent being unauthorized – a major factor contributing to its depletion. Moreover, there are around 20,000 wells surrounding Bakhtegan lagoon; again with 30 percent being unauthorized extractions which have resulted in its dryness. The absence of water in these wetlands not only creates a breeding ground for harmful fine dust but also poses a threat to citizens' health. The Director General of Fars Environment further emphasized the impact of Bakhtegan's dry state on seven neighboring cities, leaving them vulnerable to the adverse effects of fine dust.

## Asylum seekers say Bibby Stockholm conditions caused suicide attempt



Thirty-nine asylum seekers who were briefly accommodated on the Home Office's controversial Bibby Stockholm barge in Dorset have said conditions onboard were so bad that one was driven to attempt suicide.

A three-page letter sent to the home secretary, Suelia Braverman, also sets out the asylum seekers' fear and despair at being trapped on the barge and appeals to her to help them in their search for safety and freedom in the UK, according to The Guardian.

They describe the barge as "an unsafe, frightening and isolated place" but said that as law-abiding people they were fearful of not obeying Home Office instructions. The asylum seekers described the barge as "a place of exile" and said the conditions were "small rooms and a terrifying residence".

Some of the asylum seekers have told The Guardian they are too traumatized to return to the barge in Portland.

According to the letter some people fell ill on the barge.

The letter says: "Also in a tragic incident one of the asylum seekers attempted suicide but we acted promptly and prevented this unfortunate event. Considering the ongoing difficulties it's not unexpected that we might face a repeat of such situations in the future."

"Some friends said they even wished they had courage to commit suicide. Our personal belief is that many of these individuals might resort to this foolishness to escape problems in the future."

They said they were the last people to be informed about the legionella bacteria found on the barge and announced by the Home Office on 11 August.

They said their brief stay on the barge had led to a deterioration in their mental health. "Currently we are staying in an old and abandoned hotel. The sense of isolation and loneliness has taken over us and psychological and emotional pressures have increased significantly."

The letter to Braverman concludes with a plea to consider their situation as a priority. "We are individuals who are tired of the challenges that have arisen and no longer have the strength to face them."

## A peek from other side of the fence



By Ali Amiri  
Staff writer

Even though this period is not designed so that the staggers become responsible for the patients, and instead, they are supposed to keep studying while gaining experience, yet some universities of medical sciences lack the staff required to exempt externs from having to standby.

"But we, as externs, had such responsibility. It was both good and bad. It was good because it helped us become confident in engaging with patients, and it was bad because it was highly stressful," Negin recollects.

After passing through this ordeal, medical students must embrace internship. Before that, however, they have to pass a difficult exam, known as pre-internship exam. It comprises of questions regarding their clinical learning – major and minor courses.

During the year and a half internship, medical students have to have 24 hours of standby regularly.

"Sometimes even more. I myself have experienced many standbys up to 72 hours. Once even for 96 hours," she remembers.

It is safe to assume that for many of us, not getting an eight-hour-long shut eye is synonymous with misery. Yet, these brave souls undertake such feats in order to help the sick.

Finally, to seal the deal on their education, students need to write a dissertation.

That is the seven-year-long training that medical students get in order to become general practitioners. Although there might be criticisms regarding some of its aspects, but considering Iran's impressive medical sector, one sees its apparent merits. Still, it would be wise to keep our medical students from burnout during all this. After graduation, young doctors head either to medical university hospitals or health centers scattered across the country, some on them in really disadvantaged areas.

"I started by practicing in a village in Alamut District in Qazvin Province," Negin says, adding, "Because

I thought I would rather go to village and visit more outpatients." But things did not quite match her expectations, since she had to visit many critical patients without proper equipment and staff.

"We were two doctors there with rotating shifts. One of the shifts was from 8 am to 4 pm. Then we rested for a while, and took another shift from 12 am to 8 am."

This working schedule does not sound right for many who have bought into the idea of a daily routine of work, leisure, and sleep. Working like this needs a strong sense of duty and self-sacrifice.

"And I had so many patients in critical conditions. I had a pregnant woman giving birth. I had instances of seizures and heart attacks, you name it," Negin says with a trembling voice.

She believes that it seems everything pushes the graduates towards residency to become specialists, since they endure so much to finally become belittled general practitioners.

"In many countries, family medicine itself is a specialty and is valued greatly," she says.



Although there are doctors, specialists to be accurate, who earn a lot of money and live good lives – whether through honest work or in some cases, shady businesses like tax evasion – general practitioners do not make good money. Not in comparison with many others. In order to join the other class of doctors, they have to embark on another journey, which at best takes four more years of their lives. And that road also takes its toll in terms of long heavy workload and irregular work schedule. "If someone enters the field of

medicine for money, it would take them forever to get there, and it's really hard, especially if there is no genuine interest in medicine and interacting with people," Negin warns the younger individuals whose sole purpose in pursuing medicine is becoming rich.

"If someone does not like all this, and does not wish to study all their life in order to stay updated, would really suffer."

CONCLUDED

## UK retail sales slide



REUTERS – British retail sales fell in August at the fastest rate since March 2021 and most stores are expecting another tough month ahead, an industry survey showed.

The Confederation of British Industry's monthly balance of retail sales, which compares volumes with a year ago, fell to -44 in August from -25 in July. Expectations for the month ahead improved to -21 from -32, but were still deeply negative.

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"Against a backdrop of rising interest rates and weak demand, retailers foresee cuts to investment over the next year, while employment is expected to fall again next month," CBI economist Martin Sartorius said, referring to quarterly data published in the survey this month.

## Drought-hit Panama Canal to restrict access



AFP – The drought-hit Panama Canal will maintain restrictions on the passage of ships for one year, a measure that has already led to a marine traffic jam as boats line up to enter the crucial waterway linking two oceans, the canal's sub-administrator Ilya Espino said.

The canal is facing a shortage of rainwater to transfer ships through a series of locks that function like water elevators, an engineering marvel that moves six percent of the world's maritime commerce between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Espino said that unless heavy rains fall in the next three months, "we are looking at a period of one year" of restricted access.

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



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# Iran to join BRICS bank shareholders: Deputy minister



### Economy Desk

Following Iran's full membership in the BRICS group, the country will join the shareholder members of BRICS bank, announced

Mehdi Safari, the deputy foreign minister for economic affairs on Friday. The president of the New Development Bank of the BRICS group will soon visit our country at the invi-

tation of Iran, said the official, so that we can have a share as a new member of the bank to use its capacities for financing projects, IRNA reported.

Safari noted, "We have favorable relations with BRICS members, as within the framework of BRICS, we can expand trade and economic relations with each other, and the group will improve our trade and financial exchanges."

Iran's joining BRICS will strengthen multilateralism and reinforce Iran's political, economic and commercial power, while weakening unilateralism, the deputy minister said.

"Iran also has advantages for other BRICS countries, including in the science and technology sector, to which the president of Brazil and the prime minister of India referred in their meetings with Ira-

nian President Ebrahim Raeisi."

"Energy and corridors that connect North to South, and East to West, through Iran are important for BRICS member states because Iran plays a decisive role in providing energy security through the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman," he explained.

The New Development Bank of the BRICS group, which was set up in 2015 to give BRICS members a greater say in financing infrastructure than in Western-led institutions like the World Bank, is keen to attract new members to boost its capital base.

Iran's membership in the BRICS group of emerging economies is a significant national, regional and international development, which is important both to Iran and BRICS members, including China

and Russia.

In recent years, there has been a lot of focus on Iran's membership in global political and economic organizations, institutions and groups in order to spur economic growth and provide a ballast in the face of geopolitical and structural changes.

BRICS has gained a special place in Iran's foreign policy due to its increasing importance in the international political economy and geopolitical developments.

BRICS countries have forged increasing cooperation on agriculture and food security. With its diverse agricultural sector, Iran can benefit from the best methods and joint initiatives through technology exchange with the aim of increasing agricultural production and distribution.

## Two more income group added to Iran's new subsidy plan: Official

### Economy Desk

By increasing the number of beneficiary deciles from three to five, 48 million Iranians receive more subsidies under the new plan of Iran's Ministry of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare. Alireza Asgarian, the deputy labor minister for welfare and economic affairs, said that a 1.2 million-rial credit will be granted to Iranians of income deciles one to five, after they purchase two million rials' worth of products of the new subsidy plan, according to mcls.gov.ir. The main goal of implementing the subsidy plan is to ensure people's needs are met, the official said, noting that the more purchases Iranians make, the greater the possibility of identifying and solving the problems of the plan. The main 11 products of milk, cheese, eggs, chicken meat, edible oil, rice, dairy products, beans, pasta, sugar, and frozen beef have been included in the subsidy coverage of the ministry.



## Iran, Venezuela on track to broaden petroleum cooperation

### Economy Desk

Representatives from the Venezuelan state-owned oil and natural gas company (PDVSA) traveled to Iran to start the implementation of the agreement on increasing storage and exports of Venezuela's Jose oil terminal. A contract has been signed during the visit of Iranian President, Ebrahim Raeisi's Venezuelan capital Caracas worth \$46.6 million, according to IRNA. The Venezuelan

delegation comprising nine directors and experts of the state-owned oil company arrived in Tehran on Wednesday evening.

The delegation visited the 10th Refinery of South Pars Gas Complex (Phase 19), Ariasasol Polymer Company, the construction plan of Hengam Petrochemical Complex and Development of Phase 11 of South Pars Gas Field to get familiar with Iranian oil companies' capabilities in developing Petro-projects. The vis-



it coincided with the Kick-Off Meeting plan to increase the storage and export capacity of the Jose oil terminal in Venezuela with the Iranian

senior managers of Petropars Group as the contractor for the implementation of the contract and the finalization of its initial processes.

**First Announcement**

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY  
AHVAZ, IRAN

## TENDER NO.: 08-21-0140018

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	CASING 9-5/8 IN. API 5CT, CRA-110 "VAM TOP" THREAD, 58.4 PPF	1100LE
02	CASING 9-5/8 IN. API 5CT, CRA-110 "VAM TOP" THREAD, 58.4 PPF	1100LE
03	COUPLING, CASING 9-5/8 IN. API 5CT, CRA-110, "VAM TOP"	30 NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir), not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 109,366/21 EURO or 149,170,829,523 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via:  
[www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab](http://www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab)  
**ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P.**  
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