

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Lula: Iran  
'important  
partner'

## NATIONAL DESK

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva underlined the crucial role of Iran as a significant trade partner for his country, emphasizing the importance of maintaining this commercial partnership in the years ahead.

"For the first time, I met with Ebrahim Raeisi, the president of Iran, one of the countries that will join the BRICS as of 2024," Lula wrote in a post published on his X (formerly known as Twitter) page, after a summit of the bloc in Johannesburg. "Iran was the largest importer of Brazilian products in the Middle East in 2022, having imported almost \$4.3 billion worth of commodities, and should continue to be an important commercial partner for Brazil in the coming years."

Minibus  
plunge  
kills 10 in  
E Azarbaijan

IRNA – A minibus carrying mountaineers in north-western Iran plunged into a ravine on Friday, killing 10 people and injuring eight others.

The accident occurred near the city of Varzaqan, East Azarbaijan Province, said the provincial emergency services spokesman Vahid Shadinia.

The minibus was heading towards a tourist village in the mountainous region when it overturned for an undetermined reason and fell into the ravine, Shadinia added.

"If the seat belts had been buckled, the number of victims would have been lower," the official said.

Photographer  
released  
from Taliban  
custody

PRESS TV – An Iranian photojournalist recently taken into custody by the Taliban-run government in Afghanistan has been released and handed over to officials at the Iranian Embassy in Kabul.

Taliban deputy spokesman Bilal Karimi confirmed on Saturday the release of Mohammad Hossein Velayati, who works for the Tehran-based Tasnim news agency.

## Defense Ministry spokesman:

Huge demand for  
Iranian drones in Europe

## National desk

The Iranian Defense Ministry spokesman has highlighted the increasing demand for Iran-made advanced unmanned aerial vehicles, revealing a strong interest from numerous countries in procuring these drones.

"We have received numerous requests from various countries, notably from Western and European countries. However, these parties have expressed a preference to keep their identities confidential," Reza Talaie-Nik told Tasnim news agency.

Offering insight into the defense industries' achievements exhibition, he explained, "While our permanent export exhibition showcases a range of products, certain achievements are deliberately omitted from the display due to certain considerations."

On Wednesday, military attachés from 37 countries visited Iran's Defense Industries Exhibition, organized to mark Iranian Defense Industry Day – August 22.

Emphasizing the ministry's cautious approach, the spokesman underscored, "We are open to exporting drones from our designated portfolio, provided that there are no political or security constraints with the recipient country."

"And we must be confident that



IRNA

our drones won't be used inappropriately. Considering the capacity for drone production and fulfilling domestic needs, we are prepared to export drones that are included in our export portfolio," he added. Addressing the topic of foreign weaponry procurement, Talaie-Nik emphasized:

"While prioritizing domestic capabilities remains paramount for meeting our Armed Forces' needs, there are instances where external procurement is necessary to complement our domestic armaments. Especially in the field of aerial combat, historically, the Ministry of Defense has included

this consideration in its foreign procurement plan. Some initiatives have reached their final stages, but the process of foreign arms procurement contracts tends to be lengthy."

When asked about the arrival of specific aircraft, Talaie-Nik clarified, "As agreements progress to

the final operational phase, the necessary information will be shared with the people of Iran. Given security concerns, no country is willing to disclose information about these processes before their completion. I can assure you that no process has been canceled or disrupted."

## UN welcomes Iran's...

The initiative to create such a forum was proposed after a recent Chinese-brokered détente between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which was welcomed by the regional countries amid a positive atmosphere, which has been created after the thaw in relations between Tehran and Riyadh.

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian spelled out the details of Iran's plan during a recent trip to Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE. The plan has been welcomed by the countries in the region – an issue that would also make it easier for the UN to host the meeting.

This initiative is in line with the general policy of Iran's current government, which pays special attention to the development of relations with its neighbors and emphasizes a balanced foreign policy. As a result of this policy, we have seen that improvement of Iran's relationship with its neighbors has gained momentum over the past two years, and the poor relations has now turned into friendship and coop-

eration among these countries. Before this, the previous Iranian government had put forward an initiative called Hormuz Peace Endeavour (HOPE) for cooperation on the region's security and peace, which was not welcomed by the countries of the region. This is because the previous government paid all its attention to development of its relations with Western countries and paid no heed to relations with regional countries.

So, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf came to a conclusion that the HOPE initiative is just a tactic employed by Iran to buy time.

However, after the current government took office in Iran, the same countries warmly opened their arms to Iran and grabbed Iran's outstretched hands. Therefore, the de-escalation in the region and the improvement of Iran's relations with its neighbors is a great achievement for Iran's current government, which has completed work that had been left incomplete over the last four decades, that is ensuring the security of the region

by the countries of the region. Since its establishment, the Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued the policy of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the West Asian region. Tehran has defined the issue of the security of the Persian Gulf and the important Strait of Hormuz in the framework of a "nation-based" security and believes that the countries of the region can themselves guarantee the security of this important region without the presence of foreigners.

Iran believes that the presence of foreigners not only brings insecurity, but creates crisis in the region.

The events that have occurred in the region in the last four decades and the various crises and wars with huge costs imposed on the regional countries, have proved that Iran's opposition with the presence of foreigners is correct. And now for the first time, the southern countries of the Persian Gulf have realized that foreign forces cannot bring them security. The Persian Gulf countries have



significant capacities that can improve their position in the world through cooperation. These countries are energy producers and 40% of the world's energy passes through the Strait of Hormuz. The cooperation of these countries and the definition of common programs between them will surely promote their role in international political and economic organizations. These countries are a bridge between East and West as well as North and South, and through better relations they will have better economic, political and

security positions in the world. The Dialogue and Cooperation Forum of the Persian Gulf countries can be a suitable platform for the development of cooperation between the eight Persian Gulf countries and generate more economic, political and security benefits for them. Therefore, the meeting of the foreign ministers of Persian Gulf countries in New York is an important event for the future of the region. It also contributes to the new position that Iran has gained in international developments since the Ukraine crisis.

## Iran-Russia military ...

Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari said his force is ready to boost military cooperation with Russia.

Heidari made the remark in a meeting with the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army's

Ground Forces, General Oleg Salyukov, in Moscow on Monday. The Russian commander, for his part, said his country regards Iran as one of the key countries in West Asia and a strategic partner of Moscow. Salyukov added that intensive

political talks are underway between Tehran and Moscow aimed at improving relations.

## No deals canceled

Meanwhile, the spokesman for Iran's Defense Ministry Reza Talaie-Nik said on Saturday that

none of the agreements reached between Tehran and Moscow have been canceled.

Iran has previously reiterated that its military and defense ties with Russia sit in the framework of mutual interests of the two states and are not against any

third country.

Iranian military experts and technicians have in recent years made great progress in developing a broad range of military equipment, making the Armed Forces self-sufficient in the defense sector.