

NEWS IN BRIEF

US dollar to be removed from regional tourism exchanges



MEHR – The governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that the dollar will be removed from tourism exchanges between the countries of the region.

Currently, Iran's trade transactions with other countries are generally carried out in the euro, dirham, yuan, ruble, rupee, and dinar currencies, CBI Governor Mohammadreza Farzin said on Saturday.

Tourism and non-commercial transactions are made with the dominant currencies of the euro and the US dollar. He further added that removing the US dollar from non-commercial and tourist transactions occurred for the first time in the country during the Arbæen March this year.

Iran attends first SCO official meet

MEHR – Following the approval of Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a delegation from the country participated in the 40th session of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Council of the organization in Astana on Friday.

The participants appreciated the efforts of regional countries in combating terrorism and extremism, and paid tribute to the victims, forces, and military commanders including the martyred General Qassem Soleimani.

UN, Iran rally forces against sandstorms

International Desk

Countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia must work together to combat sand and dust storms made increasingly severe by climate change, the United Nations and Iran said Saturday. "Cooperation is key. I urge you to use your time in Tehran to build partnerships, increase cooperation, and commit to practical action," UN chief Antonio Guterres said in a video broadcast to representatives of around 50 states and 15 organizations, according to AFP.

Opening the International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, Iran's President Ebrahim Raeisi called on countries in the region to create "a fund" to pursue common solutions.

Raeisi expressed dissatisfaction that developed countries favor industrial development and the development of their military tools, which is "cruelty to humanity and the environment".

He further said that the implementation of UN resolutions on environmental issues must be guaranteed in some way, IRNA wrote.

Environmental preservation must not be influenced by

political issues, he noted because, otherwise, it would not bear any fruit.

Not stopping at agreements

Also speaking at the first International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran on Saturday, the head of Iran's Department of the Environment said the incumbent Iranian government will not stop at signing agreements on combating sand and dust storms, and will take action in this regard.

Ali Salajegheh noted that July 12 was named last year as the International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms upon Iran's proposal, IRNA reported.

"Considering that we saw 55 countries directly exposed [to sand and dust storms (SDS)], we invited all of them [to participate in this meeting], and today, their representatives are present," said Salajegheh during his opening remarks at the summit.

"Based on the latest data, it has been determined that Turkmenistan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran are more



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (c), flanked by his Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (2nd-R) and Head of Iran's Department of Environment Ali Salajegheh, attends the first International Conference on Combating Sand and Dust Storms in Tehran, Iran, on September 9, 2023.

president.ir

exposed to [SDS] than other countries," he said, expressing hope that the final statement of the meeting would lead the way forward.

He also criticized the United Nations for allowing the "cruel sanctions" imposed unilaterally by the United States against Iran to damage cooperation with Iran on SDS and called on the UN to fulfill its responsibilities in protecting the environment and combatting SDS.

More cooperation needed

According to meteorologists, sand and dust storms are expected to increase in countries most vulnerable to climate change.

"About two billion tons of dust enters the atmosphere each year, affecting more than 350 million people," Food and Agriculture Organization Assistant Director-General AbdulHakim Elwaer told the meeting.

The people most affected are

"farmers and those whose income depends directly on natural resources," he said.

Iran, co-organizer of the two-day gathering, is one country where such storms are increasingly numerous, particularly in the southeast desert region of Sistan and Baluchestan, where rare wetlands are drying up at an alarming rate. This has caused diplomatic tensions with neighboring Afghanistan, which Tehran accuses of considerably reducing the

volume of water in the Helmand (Hirmand) River, which flows through both countries. To its west, Iran is also cooperating with neighboring Iraq to combat the effects of sand and dust storms.

"Fortunately, we have reached some very good operational stages with Iraq," Ali Salajegheh said at the conference.

He added that "ground and field operations" were due to start in six provinces in both countries.

Raeisi to Pashinyan: Any geographic change in region a red line



Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi (R) shakes the hand of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

primeminister.am

International Desk

Assuring Armenia of Iran's opposition to any alteration to regional boundaries, President Ebrahim Raeisi said Iran is prepared to play "an effective role" as a "powerful neighbor" to prevent regional clashes or geopolitical changes.

After being briefed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan about the latest developments in the Caucasus, Raeisi reaffirmed Iran's support for the territorial integrity of all regional states, according to Tasnim news agency.

In particular, reference was made to the deepening humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh as a result of the blocking of the Lachin Corridor; the accumulation of Azerbaijani troops around Nagorno-Karabakh, the tendencies of increasing tension on the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border, the Prime Minister's Office said in a readout. The Iranian president stated, "We believe that regional issues need to be resolved through dialogue among regional countries. We are seriously opposed to foreign countries gaining

a foothold in the Caucasus region."

The president also expressed Iran's readiness to contribute to the settlement of disputes via diplomatic negotiations.

He further hailed the growing economic cooperation between Tehran and Yerevan, saying Iran is prepared to broaden economic and trade ties with Armenia and expedite the implementation of bilateral agreements.

For his part, Pashinyan praised Iran for its effective and constructive role in establishing, maintaining,

and strengthening regional peace, stability, and security.

He expressed his willingness to hold urgent discussions with the president of Azerbaijan, aimed at reducing tensions, the readout said.

Pashinyan also expressed appreciation for Iran's stances on the Caucasus and briefed the Iranian president on the economic cooperation between the two neighbors and efforts to speed up the implementation of bilateral deals concluded during his visit to Tehran in November 2022.

Military to improve long-range missiles

New models of Fattah missiles underway

National Desk

Iran is pursuing the enhancement of its 2,000-km-range missiles, according to a senior official from the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

"Today, we are pursuing to improve the quality and capabilities of our missiles within the range of 2,000 kilometers, like the recently-unveiled "Fattah" hypersonic missile," IRGC's Deputy Commander for Operations Abbas Nilforoushan said in an interview with Tasnim news agency.

The IRGC's Aerospace Force in June unveiled the Fattah

hypersonic missile, which boasts an impressive range of 1,400 kilometers, attains speeds of Mach 13-15, and possesses the ability to penetrate and neutralize anti-missile defenses. "The Fattah missile is notable for its high speed, reaching Mach 13-15, and its maneuverable warhead, which allows it to adjust its trajectory towards the target," Nilforoushan said.

Iran has long defined a 2,000-kilometer range as a benchmark for its missiles. The official emphasized that Iran has the technological capability to increase missile range, but such advancements are deter-

mined based on operational doctrines and threats. As of now, the directive is set at a 2,000-kilometer range.

The commander explained that the country categorizes its missile systems into three speed classes: subsonic (below the speed of sound), supersonic (with speeds ranging from 1.2 to 5 Mach), and hypersonic (exceeding 5 Mach). It is clear that the Fattah missile and potential future models are designed to counter the Israeli anti-missile systems, which Iran possesses detailed knowledge of their capabilities, Nilforoushan said.

"Certainly, the Fattah mis-

sile and the forthcoming models under development are poised to impose substantial financial burdens on the Israeli regime," he added.

The official emphasized that the existing missile defense systems of the Israeli regime are ill-equipped to counter this new threat, despite their claims of having hypersonic defense capabilities.

Iranian military experts and engineers have in recent years made remarkable breakthroughs in manufacturing a broad range of indigenous equipment, making the Armed Forces self-sufficient. Iranian offi-

cials have made clear that the country will not hesitate to strengthen its military capabilities, including its missile power, which are entirely meant for defense.

Iran's deadline to Iraq

Elsewhere in his interview with Tasnim, Nilforoushan talked about Iran's potential response if Iraq fails to fulfill its commitments to address the presence of separatist groups in the Kurdistan Region, saying his country expects cooperation from its brotherly country.

"We expect brotherhood from our brothers in the Kurdistan Region. Shelter-



TASNIM

ing terrorists in the region, who have become a source of operations against our country, is neither in line with the logic of brotherhood, nor the principles of good neighborliness," the commander said.

"After several rounds of negotiations, Iran finally signed an agreement with both the central Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Region, which has a set timeframe ending on September 19. Iran re-

mains committed to every aspect of the agreement, adhering strictly to its terms without deviation. The expectation is that the other party would similarly abide by the terms of the agreement, just as the Islamic Republic of Iran has upheld its commitments. Failure to do so would result in a return to the previous state of affairs, and Iran is compelled to safeguard the interests of its nation," he concluded.