

Iran-Russia cooperation agreement fully laid out: *Envoy*



Russia's Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov
● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

International Desk
Russia's Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov said on Wednesday that the process of a new comprehensive cooperation agreement between Iran and Russia has been completed.

In an interview with ISNA, Dedov said that two agreements on the establishment of the two countries' cultural centers as well as an agreement on cooperation on data security, which had been earlier approved by Iran's Parliament, were announced by Iran's Acting President Mohammad Mokhbar for implementation on Sunday.

"So, we can say that the process of the comprehensive cooperation agreement between Iran and Russia has been completed," he said.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also said on Wednesday that Moscow was working on what she called a big treaty with Iran. Her comment appeared to be a reference to the comprehensive bilateral cooperation agreement that is being negotiated between Tehran and Moscow.

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko also said on Tuesday that Moscow expects to sign a new agreement on comprehensive cooperation with Iran "in the very near future." "We expect that this agreement will be signed in the very near future, since work on the text is already close to completion. All the necessary wording has been found." On June 11, Russia underlined that Tehran and Moscow are continuing work on the comprehensive cooperation agreement after Russian media reported suspension of the joint deal.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that work on a comprehensive agreement between Russia and Iran continues but the schedule may somewhat change due to the snap presidential election in Iran. Russia and Iran signed a 20-year strategic agreement in 2001 that was automatically extended in 2020 for five years, according to Russia's TASS state news agency reports. Both sides also agreed in 2020 to work on a new pact that would replace the old document. The 2001 pact called, among others, for cooperation in security, energy projects, including the peaceful use of nuclear energy and the construction of nuclear power plants, industry and technology, according to its text published on the Kremlin's website.

US troops exit necessary for Syria's stability: *Iran*

Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani said the full and unconditional exit of US troops from Syria is necessary for the Arab country's stability, arguing that the forces continue to support terrorist groups instead of fighting terrorism. "Full, immediate, and unconditional withdrawal of US forces from Syria is essential for the peace and stability of Syria," Iravani said at a UN Security Council meeting on "The situation in the Middle East: (Syria)" in New York on Tuesday, Press TV reported. "Instead of combatting terrorism, they continue supporting UN-designated terrorist groups such as Al-Nusrah Front (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) as well as looting the oil and wealth of the Syrian people," he added. Iravani noted that Syrians continue to suffer from humanitarian crises, aggression, foreign occupation, and terrorism. "Through unlawful occupation, inhumane sanctions, politicizing the return of refugees and IDPs, and preventing international support for Syria's reconstruction, certain Western countries are responsible for the prolongation of the conflict as they attempt to impose their own will on the Syrian people," the senior Iranian diplomat stated. "Such attempts are unlawful and immoral and serve only to prolong the crisis and worsen the suffering endured by the Syrian people," he added. He went on to urge the international community not to leave the Syrian people alone in their struggle against terrorism, foreign occupation, and the economic terrorism caused by unlawful sanctions. The US military has for long stationed its forces and equipment in north-eastern Syria, with the Pentagon claiming that the deployment is aimed at preventing the oilfields in the area from falling into the hands of Daesh terrorists.

Canada, Saudi Arabia bar presidential vote on own soil

Over 500 journalists will cover Iran's election

National Desk
Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said on Wednesday that Canada and Saudi Arabia have not permitted Iran to set up absentee voter sites for its June 28 presidential election. Vahidi told reporters on Wednesday that a large number of Iranian pilgrims are now in Saudi Arabia but the Arab country has not accepted Iran's request to hold election in the country. According to Iran's Election Headquarters, about 47,000 Iranians have traveled to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj pilgrimage.

The United States, which like Canada has no diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic, has permitted Iran to set up 30 absentee voter sites on its soil. The Iranian interior minister added that Iranians living abroad will be able to cast their votes in 344 polling stations set up in other countries. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani also said that the ministry would use all its capacities to hold the 14th presidential election abroad. He said that all Iranian embassies and consulates abroad are in full preparation for holding elections.



Iran's Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi talks with reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting in Tehran on June 26, 2024.
● ASGHAR KHAMSEH/IRNA

Head of Foreign Media at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Alireza Shiravi has said that over 500 journalists from based in 31 countries will cover Iran's 14th presidential election on Friday.

Erdogan accuses West of backing Israeli 'plans to spread war'

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday accused Western powers of backing what he said were Israeli plans to attack Lebanon and "spread war" throughout the region. "Israel is now setting its sights on Lebanon and we see that Western powers behind the scenes are patting Israel on the back and even supporting them," he told lawmakers from his ruling AKP party, according to AFP. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to spread the war to the region will lead to a great disaster," he said. "It is ... pathetic that states that talk about freedom, human rights and justice are captives of a mentally-ill person like Netanyahu." His remarks came as concern soared over escalating threats and ongoing cross-border exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Lebanon's Hezbollah, fueling fears it could descend into fully-fledged war.

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Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran braces for ...

Mostafa Pourmohammadi, the sole clergyman running for president, has raised unique challenges during televised debates. Despite his conservative inclinations, his stances and platform lean more toward reformists, sparking contention with his conservative counterparts. As the election unfolds, Iran's familiar political divide between reformists and conservatives has taken center stage. Key points of contention include the lifting of sanctions, addressing economic woes, and addressing demands about social net-

works, internet freedom, and civil liberties. Voter turnout has been a concern in recent Iranian elections. Both the parliamentary elections in March and the previous presidential election saw turnout rates fall short of 50%. In both instances, conservatives emerged victorious amidst low turnout. With the election nearing its conclusion, Pezeshkian and his key supporters, including former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Hassan Rouhani, former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and ex-communications minister Mohammad Javad Azari

Jahromi, have zeroed in on rallying undecided voters and persuading those who do not intend to show up to cast their ballots. On the final day of electioneering, the leading candidates—Pezeshkian, Jalili, and Qalibaf—embarked on a whirlwind tour of various cities, drawing enthusiastic crowds at their respective campaign rallies. Despite the unexpected circumstances following the death of president Raisi in an air accident last month, the electoral process has maintained a respectable standard, fostering increased public engagement. All legally recognized politi-

cal factions have fielded their candidates, contributing to the competitive environment. The unpredictability of the results, even in the final hours before the election, underscores the significance of this national event. As the country stands on the cusp of change, Iranians will determine whether to maintain the status quo with minor adjustments or chart a new course for the executive branch over the next four years. Should no candidate secure over 50% of the votes, a runoff will take place a week later, featuring the two top contenders, as stipulated by law.