

Need for active ...

Iran's foreign policy under new gov't

Page 1 > Now more than ever, Iran needs to continue sincere and constructive dialogue and cooperation to achieve a common understanding of regional opportunities and challenges to enhance mutual cooperation while recognizing the obstacles to these goals.

There are extensive commonalities between Iran and the regional countries and Tehran believes shared strengths outweigh real, fabricated, or externally imposed points of divergence. Tehran have moved beyond Iranian-Arab dialogues and entered into regional discussions, and now stand at the stage of regional cooperation. The new Iranian government's foreign ministry must pursue this project on four levels:

1. Bilateral relations: At this level, efforts should focus on restoring ties to a suitable path by reopening embassies and consulates, increasing diplomatic visits, developing economic relations, and boosting tourism.

2. Strengthening regional bonds: By improving bilateral relations, a more favorable environment for regional cooperation and consultation can be created. Political solutions for West Asian crises, such as those in Syria and Yemen, and the need for a strong region to address emerging challenges are principal areas for consensus among regional players.

3. Setting up a regional institution: Iran should work for the establishment of a dialogue forum and eventually a regional organization capable of addressing regional issues at a higher level, providing solutions, and ensuring enforcement.

4. Collective security formation through regional decisions: A collective resolve is required to counter threats like instability, insecurity, terrorism, and Western alliances' inclination to spread weapons of mass destruction in West Asia, ensuring the region does not become a haven for terrorists.

Japan ready to help Iran smarten postal services: *Minister*

Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsuge Yoshifumi announced his country's readiness to cooperate with Iran on smartening postal services.

The minister who visited the Islamic Republic of Iran as a special envoy of Prime Minister Kishida Fumio to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30, added that Iranians were the first ones to establish the first post office to courier parcels, reported ISNA.

During his visit to the Postal Sorting Office of Tehran which was accompanied Japan's Ambassador to Iran Tamaki Tsukada, the minister was briefed on the operational units, equipment and postal processes of the office.

He hailed the cultural commonality and good relations between the two countries and said: "We are ready to help Iran's post in the path of



smartening by transferring experience as well as developing

equipment and facilities. In order to develop the ties be-

tween the two countries, the Iran National Post Company has

proposed to print a joint stamp of Iran and Japan.

Iran-Brazil business forum convenes in Tehran



The Iran-Brazil business forum convened in Tehran to discuss broadening of ties between businesspersons of the two sides. The forum was attended by senior officials from the two sides including Samad Hassanzadeh, the head

of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture and Brazilian Vice President Geraldo Alckmin, according to otaghiraonline.ir.

Speaking at the event, Hassanzadeh said the capacities of Iran's econo-

my in the fields of medical, energy, petrochemical, mining, food and agricultural industries, and technical and engineering services could be used to develop cooperation with Brazil.

"Iran is interested in developing economic relations with friendly and neighboring countries, and the government is trying to enable the country's economic operators to benefit from such connection and economic relations," he noted. Speaking for his part, Alckmin stated that he has a mission from the President of Brazil to take the necessary measures to strengthen the relations between the two countries as much as possible.

Guaranteed wheat purchases near 10m tons: *GTC*

Iran's domestic purchases of wheat is reaching 10 million metric tons (mt) this year amid better government supports for farmers that has helped the country cut back on imports of basic goods and commodities. The Government Trading Corporation of Iran (GTC) said that domestic wheat purchases had reached a total of 9.849 million mt since the start of harvesting season in April, Press TV reported.

GTC's CEO Saeid Raad said the purchases had increased by some 17% compared to the similar period last year. Raad said the value of wheat purchased from domestic farmers this year had reached a total of 1,735 trillion rials (2.9 billion), adding that the government had spent some 470 trillion rials more on wheat purchases compared to the harvesting season in 2023.

Prospect of Iran's water diplomacy

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EXCLUSIVE

In his last business trip in 2024, Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi went to East Azarbaijan Province to inaugurate the Qiz-Qalasi Dam and operating the Khoda-Afarin Dam (both on the Aras River and shared with the Republic of Azerbaijan); as the said dams were inaugurated by him and his Azerbaijani counterpart. The event took place 19 years after opening the Doosti Dam (on the Hari-Rud River which is shared with Turkmenistan) by president Khatami and then President of Turkmenistan. In other words, the Qiz-Qalasi and Khoda-Afarin dams are the second concrete manifestation of the importance of water diplomacy for Iran at the highest executive level along with Tehran's effort to use the common waters issue as an opportunity to expand cooperation and water-based regionalism.

In the field of transboundary waters, the issues facing Iran, including water diplomacy and the water dispute, are mainly related to the transboundary basins

of Aras, Hari-Rud and Hirmand (Helmand). This country has common interests with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan in the field of common water resources. Because all three of these countries are located at the downstream of the basins. For this reason, this opportunity has been used favorably through water diplomacy and the conclusion of an agreement for the construction and operation of the joint dams of Aras, Khoda-Afarin, Qiz-Qalasi and Mil-Moghan with the Republic of Azerbaijan and Doosti Dam with Turkmenistan. But the noteworthy point here is that Iran's water interests are less proportional to the upstream countries of Turkey (on the Aras) and Afghanistan (on the Hari-Rud and Hirmand), and strengthening water diplomacy is needed in this regard.

Due to the fact that the Soviet Union, as one of the top two world powers in its era, also been common on the Aras and Hari-Rud basins, basically no agreement has been made so far to share the water rights in the mentioned basins; Unlike the Hirmand basin, which is common between Iran and Afghanistan, and both countries

have reached an agreement on the sharing of water rights in 1953. In fact, the Soviet Union, as the undisputed hegemon of the region in its common basins, which had common water interests with Iran (both were in the downstream position), started to conclude water agreements with Iran in line with water diplomacy, which was mostly without participation and disregard for the interests of upstream countries with lower power.

However, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the formation of a greater balance in the power of the countries in the region, the upstream countries of Turkey and Afghanistan are trying to make more use of their water rights, and due to the lack of water agreements with the downstream countries as a legacy of the bipolar world, some water disputes are emerging in the region. In fact, sometimes there is a belief among some elites and officials of the upstream countries in the region that undisputed Soviet power and hegemony and Iran's abundant oil revenues in the 1970s gave these countries an increasing and hegemonic power in the region,

and this led to construction of joint dams in the downstream parts of the common basins without the participation and permission of weaker upstream countries.

In this regard, although the ruling governments of Afghanistan emphasize the implementation of the 1973 Hirmand Treaty with Iran; as the history of the last half century after the signing of the treaty shows, it is not unlikely that Kabul will continue to strengthen its national interests by increasing the cultivated area and producing hydroelectric power in upstream parts of the Hirmand basin or bargaining for alternative concessions by diverting the Hirmand water from the Hamun Lake to the Gowd-e Zereh Depression. It seems that there is a need to tie the water interests of Iran with Turkey and Afghanistan through water diplomacy in such a way that the upstream countries welcome the implementation of existing or future treaties on transboundary waters and do not consider them imposed.

According to the above, it seems that the issue of water disputes of Iran with Turkey and Afghanistan cannot be easily resolved

and there is a need for more and continuous attention and effort in this field of foreign policy. In this regard, one of the main slogans and promises of the 14th government and President Pezeshkian is the development of foreign policy. To the extent that some influential figures in Iran's foreign policy are key pillars of the new government. In fact, according to the debates and election campaigns, the 14th government believes that strengthening the foreign policy in the current situation has great importance for the country and will even affect the improvement of the domestic policy. In the field of transboundary waters, the sustainable provision of Iran's water rights from transboundary waters through successful water diplomacy has an impact on the water, food and livelihood security of citizens living in the border provinces and relevant internal policies.

The Department of Water Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established as the main custodian in the field of pursuing Iran's water diplomacy with its neighbors during the era of President Rouhani and with the support of the then Deputy

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abbas Araghchi. Considering that there have been speculations about the election of Araghchi as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the 14th government, and considering his interest and expertise in the issue of transboundary waters and the increasing aggravation of the water crisis in the region, the issue of common water resources can reach the top of foreign policy issues in the new government.

Paying more attention to the issue of transboundary water diplomacy as an increasingly important part of foreign policy, in addition to its positive effects on the country, will also turn the existing water disputes with some neighboring countries into the axis of convergence in the region. Improving the level of the Water Diplomacy Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, cooperation of this department with institutions with similar goals in other ministries and the private sector, and supporting the ideas and participation of relevant experts in this direction can be registered as part of the positive and practical steps of the 14th government in the field of transboundary waters.