

Cooperation in BRICS, SCO gives momentum to Iran-Russia ties: *Veep*

International Desk

First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Monday that Iran-Russia cooperation through international organizations such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) could give "greater momentum" to relations between Tehran and Moscow.

Aref made the remarks during a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Moscow.

Heading a high-level Iranian delegation, the senior official arrived in the Russian capital on Monday to take part in the 24th meeting of SCO prime ministers and hold talks with other participants on the sidelines of the event.

The organization comprises Iran, Russia, Belarus, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Referring to the membership and cooperation of Tehran and Moscow in regional and international organizations such as BRICS, the SCO, and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), Aref said, "These organizations possess extraordinary capacities, and cooperation between the two countries within this framework can give greater momentum to bilateral relations." He pointed to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed between the two countries, saying that, "This document serves as a guide for advancing bilateral relations to the highest level."

Back in January, Iranian and Russian presidents signed the long-awaited strategic partnership agreement to further expand cooperation.

The 20-year agreement covers economic, transportation, energy, health, tourism and agricultural areas, in addition to



Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin (r.) greets Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref before a meeting in Moscow, Russia, on November 17, 2025.
● fvpresident.ir

Tehran-Moscow cooperation to deal with common challenges, reduce the consequences of natural disasters, combat organized crimes, fight terrorism, and make joint investments. Aref also called for the removal of barriers facing the implementation of the agreements reached between the two sides during the Joint Economic Commission earlier this year.

The Russian official, for his part, said that Moscow seeks to strengthen relations with Tehran based on principles of good neighborliness.

Referring to the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the EEU, he said the implemen-



tation of the deal created opportunities to expand trade.

Mishustin further described the North-South Transport Corridor as a strategic route for the Eurasia region.

Iran ranks second globally in cord blood stem-cell banking

Iran has secured the world's second-highest ranking in cord blood stem-cell storage despite sweeping sanctions and infrastructure constraints, the CEO of the Royan Stem Cell Technology Co. (RSCTC) said on Monday.

Morteza Zarrabi told a press briefing in the northwestern city of Qazvin that the Royan cord-blood bank had boosted its global standing based on the volume of stored samples and the scope of its international commercial activities, an achievement made "in the face of severe sanctions" against Iran, IRNA reported.

He said Iran was among the three leading Middle Eastern countries in the field, alongside the UAE and Saudi Arabia, adding that the country "had the upper hand" on many indicators.

Zarrabi highlighted key infrastructure gains,



including the domestic manufacture of six liquid-nitrogen storage tanks, which ensured national self-sufficiency in preserving stem cells. He added that the strategic solution "steal starch" used for stem-cell separation had also been localized with the help of knowledge-based firms, eliminating dependence on imports.

"Over the past decade, Iran has chalked up 20 major advances in regenerative medicine, including establishing stem-cell banks, storing umbilical cord tissue,

dental pulp and amniotic membrane, performing therapeutic transplants, conducting trials for autism, arthritis and MS, and launching the country's first birth-product refinery," he said.

The RSCTC is a semi-state knowledge-based firm founded in 2005 and headquartered in Tehran, with 41 active branches nationwide. It is affiliated with the Royan Institute and specializes in collecting, processing and storing umbilical cord stem cells from newborns.

"Stem-cell applications for treating severe con-

ditions — including blood cancers, thalassemia, immune deficiencies, childhood cerebral palsy, cardiac disease, arthritis and congenital anemia — are rapidly expanding," Zarrabi said. He added the RSCTC had stored 250,000 private cord-blood samples and held 5,100 public samples, which would play a crucial role in patient treatment.

"So far, 40 hematology patients and 60 neurological patients have been treated with cord-blood stem cells, with successful outcomes reported."

Looking ahead to the company's third decade, Zarrabi said the center aimed to pursue targeted use of stem cells and expand international connectivity so that personalized genetic analysis using gene-editing techniques could be brought into routine practice.

FM urges IAEA to maintain neutrality amid West's anti-Iran efforts



Abbas Araghchi



Sergei Lavrov

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Monday called on the UN nuclear agency to uphold its technical mandate, avoid political approaches, and resist pressure from the US and its European allies as they were expected to introduce a resolution against the Islamic Republic.

During a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, Araghchi said Iran had always pursued a "constructive and responsible" approach in its engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The phone call came ahead of an IAEA Board of Governors meeting, where the US and the European troika — Britain, France, and Germany — plan to put forward a resolution to criticize Iran over its "lack of cooperation" with the agency.

The upcoming meeting is scheduled to take place from November 19 to 21 in Vienna. Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi warned

on Sunday that Iran would do a "fundamental review" of its engagement with the UN nuclear watchdog if the 35-member Board of Governors adopted a new resolution.

"These countries, instead of being held accountable for their silence and inaction regarding the US and Israeli attacks on Iran [in June], now want to impose further pressure on Iran," Gharibabadi said, adding the reason was that they failed to achieve what they sought through the snapback mechanism.

He expressed hope that the Western countries would "act rationally" and drop their bid at the IAEA meeting.

Following the June attacks by Israel and the United States on Iranian nuclear sites, Iran suspended its cooperation with the UN watchdog as per a law passed by Parliament. Tensions escalated as Iranian officials said the IAEA had effectively provided cover for the strikes by declaring the country in violation of its non-proliferation obligations shortly before the bombardment and then failing to condemn the aggression.

Rainfall causes floods in parts of Iran

Rainfall caused floods in parts of western Iran on Monday, after months of drought led to the worst water crisis in decades and pushed authorities to begin cloud seeding over the weekend.

The country's meteorological organization issued a warning for flooding in six western provinces for Monday and said that 18 out of Iran's 31 provinces were expected to receive rain.

Rainfall levels across Iran are 85% below average, depleting reservoirs and causing taps to run dry including in parts of the capital, Tehran. Illegal well drilling and inefficient agricultural practices have contributed to the crisis, which authorities say has also been intensified by climate change.

Prolonged and extreme dry condi-



tions increase the risk of flash floods as droughts decrease the soil's ability to absorb water.

Iranian media shared videos of mild floods occurring in some towns of western provinces such as Ilam and Kurdistan.

On Saturday, Iran carried out its first cloud seeding this year above the watershed of Lake Urmia, in Iran's northwest and further north from the areas where flooding was reported, according to the Young

Journalists Club (YJC).

Cloud-seeding is a process in which chemicals are released into clouds to increase rainfall in an environment where water scarcity is a concern.

However, the technique can only be applied when environmental conditions improve and can only be used as a stopgap solution.

"In addition to cloud seeding's heavy cost, the amount of rainfall it produces is nowhere near what is needed to solve our water crisis," Sahar Tajbakhsh, head of Iran's Meteorological Organization, told state TV on Sunday.

YJC's report added that conditions are not yet present for cloud seeding in Tehran, which officials said may soon be uninhabitable if the drought gripping the country continues.



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