

Syrian Defense Minister, Iran's Security Chief Meet

TEHRAN -- Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian said here Sunday a strong Syria will benefit the region's security and stability. In a meeting with Syrian Defense Minister Ali Mahmoud Abbas, Ahmadian said the expansion of mutual relations will serve the interests of both sides and all the regional nations. Ahmadian hailed great achievements made by the resistance front in combating Israel during its genocidal war against the Palestinian people in Gaza and said more should be done to support it. He also commended the resistance of the Syrian government and nation

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Kayhan

International

Hezbollah Strikes Israeli Spy Equipment, Gathering of Troops

BEIURT (Dispatches) – Hezbollah fighters targeted espionage equipment and a gathering of Israeli soldiers stationed at a military outpost close to the southern Lebanese border on Sunday. Lebanon's Al-Manar television said Hezbollah carried out an operation on Sunday afternoon against the Al-Asi military base, and fired a salvo of rockets at the site. Spying equipment stationed in the base was destroyed as a result. Earlier in the day, Hezbollah fighters had struck a gathering of Israeli soldiers facing the Lebanese area of al-Wazzani, causing injuries among the troops. Israeli airstrikes and artillery shelling, meanwhile,

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Viewpoint

How Did They Become White?

Points to Ponder on Auspicious Nowrouz

By: Seyyed Ali Shahbaz

*“Ya Moqallab al-qoloub wa'l-Absaar;
“Ya Modabber al-layl wa'n-nahaar;
“Ya Mohawwel al-howl wa'l-ahwaal;
“Hawwil halana ila ahsan il-haal.”*

“O Rotator of hearts and eyes.

“O Regulator of the day and night,

“O Transformer of state and situations

“Turn our state into the best of conditions.”

On Wednesday, March 20 (Ramadhan 9 this year), at exactly 06:36:26 Iran time, on the occurrence of the Spring or Vernal Equinox, the above-mentioned supplication to God Almighty will echo throughout the length and breadth of the Islamic Republic and beyond its geographical and political boundaries, as Iranian as well as the people of several regional countries usher in the calendar year 1403 solar hijri, with prayers for peace, progress, prosperity, and, of course, the reappearance of the Redeemer of mankind, Imam Mahdi (AS).

Nowrouz is indeed the New Day, which Iranians have celebrated since time immemorial and spread its message all over the Persianate world, stretching from the Balkans in Europe to the Indo-Pakistan Subcontinent.

It marks the resurgence of spring in the northern hemisphere when trees begin to adorn fresh green attire after the dreary cold and freezing snows of the months of winter. The new leaves that sprout indicate the philosophy of Resurrection in Islam, and how God refreshes life after death.

“It is Allah Who sends the winds and these (winds) raise a cloud; then We drive it toward a dead land and with it revive the earth after its death. Likewise will be the resurrection [of the dead].” (Holy Qur'an 35:9)

Although, Nowrouz is deeply embedded in Iranian culture and traditions as a result of the mythology lore accumulated over the centuries since Cyrus the Great adopted the festival of spring from the astronomically advanced Babylonians, and is celebrated to this day wherever Persian culture was dominant – from India and China in the east to Egypt and the Balkans in the west – it has its roots in Islamic teachings that enlighten us with facts about the creation of the world and mankind, with emphasis on firm adherence to the message of monotheism entrusted by the Lord Most High to Prophets and Imams.

A famous hadith narrated from Imam Musa al-Kazem (AS), the 7th Infallible Heir of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), says in this regard:

“In Nowrouz Allah made a covenant with His servants to worship Him and not to allow any partner for Him; to follow his messengers and obey their rulings. This day is the first day that the wind of fertility blew and flowers appeared on the earth... It is day when Abraham (AS) broke the idols; the day Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) raised (Imam) Ali (AS) on his shoulders to destroy the idols the Quraish had placed atop the (symbolic) House of God, the Ka'ba.”

Similar hadith abound in several Islamic texts, in the works of both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. Earlier, when a group of people had asked the Prophet of Islam's 6th Infallible Heir, Imam Ja'far as-Sadeq (AS), about the significance of Nowrouz that the Iranians have diligently preserved, he said:

“The sun attained its brightness, the wind started to blow, the Ark of Prophet Noah (AS) stopped at Mount Joudi and was saved from drowning; Prophet Abraham (AS) broke the idols of his community; Archangel Gabriel brought the first revelation to our Prophet (Muhammad - SAWA); the Prophet lifted Imam Ali (AS) on his shoulders to enable him to topple the idols from atop the Ka'ba; and (years later) the Prophet proclaimed Imam Ali (AS) as his (divinely-designated) vicegerent at Ghadir-e-Khom (on 18th Zilhijja 10 AH by the command of Almighty Allah).”

Another famous saying from the 6th Imam reads:

“Today is the day on which God made a pact with His servants to pray to Him not to follow polytheism but to follow the Prophets and the Ahl al-Bayt. On this day the last Imam, the Awaited Mahdi (AS) is expected to reappear...”

Thus, in view of these and other hadith, coupled with the significance of the Wilaya (Divinely-decreed authority) of Imam Ali (AS) and his Immaculate Heirs, Islamic prayer books contain valuable information on Nowrouz that recommend fasting, thanksgiving, charity, and ritual prayers on this day that usually falls on March 21 and this year has occurred on 20th March this year since February had one extra day, because of 2024 being a Leap Year.

Iran and Iranian Muslims deserve high praise for having preserved the celebration of Nowrouz as New Year Day, which was precisely fixed by such great astronomers as Abu Rayhan Berouni and Omar Khayyam Naishapuri, who based it (like the lunar hijri calendar) on the auspicious migration of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) from Mecca to Medina and made it more precise than the Roman calendar in use by the West and unfortunately imposed on the rest of the world.

Of course, the lunar hijri Arabic calendar is indispensable for the Muslim Ummah for observance of religious events including the fasting month of Ramadhan, the mourning months of Muharram and Safar, and the month of Zilhijja, in which the annual Hajj is performed.

However, in order to keep a proper track of the seasonal cycles, the harvests, and maintenance of administrative records, shouldn't the Muslim Ummah adopt the solar hijri calendar in use in Iran, instead of following the Christian Gregorian calendar that is based on a non-event (the alleged crucifixion of Prophet Jesus)?

Indeed, excellent points to ponder during the New Year holidays, especially in view of the famous prophecy (according to some narrations) that when the Lord of the Age, Prophet Muhammad's (SAWA) 12th and Last Infallible Heir, Imam Mahdi (AS), will reappear – along with Prophet Jesus as his Lieutenant in the global government of peace, prosperity, and justice – it will be the Spring Equinox (Nowrouz).

**President Raisi:
Government Committed
to Developing Digital
Economy, AI**



**Choopan Crowned
Champion
of 2024 Arnold
Classic UK**



**UNRWA:
Palestinians in
Gaza 'on Verge
of Famine'**



Iranian Companies Sign \$13 Billion of Oil Deals



Representative of Iranian companies take part in a group photo with Vice President Muhammad Mokhber, Minister of Petroleum Javad Owji and NIOC Managing Director Mohsen Khojastehmehr in Tehran on Sunday.

TEHRAN -- Iran unveiled a series of projects to raise its oil production in collaboration with domestic companies, the country's second initiative in days to leverage local resources to develop its energy sector.

Iranian companies were granted \$13 billion in contracts on Sunday to boost output from six oil fields by as much as 350,000 barrels a day, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported.

The flagship projects include the development of the giant

Azadegan field, which has an estimated 32 billion barrels of oil reserves, and Azar, both of which are shared with Iraq along Iran's western and southwestern borders.

Iran's pivot toward domestic firms gained momentum in 2018, when multinational companies largely left the country's energy market in the wake of former U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Tehran nuclear deal and re-imposition of sanctions.

The shift gathered pace after Ebrahim Raisi became Iran's president in 2021. Raisi advocates for reducing reliance on foreign entities and promoting self-reliance.

IRNA described the new agreements as the country's biggest oil deals in a decade. In 2022, a consortium of local companies and banks was assigned to develop Azadegan with necessary investments estimated at \$7 billion.

Last week, Iran said it awarded \$20 billion in contracts to domes-

tic firms in a race with Qatar to ramp up production from the offshore South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf.

It was described the most strategic project in the history of Iran's oil and gas industry and its long-sought empowerment of domestic entities, under which 90 trillion cubic feet of gas and two billion barrels of gas condensates will be available for use.

Officials say the massive projects create an opportunity to kickstart economic prosperity and employment in the face of sanctions. They also allow Iranian producers and companies to proactively engage in the economic growth and industrial development of the country and neutralize the sanctions.

Inattention to domestic companies in various sectors in the past and overreliance on foreign expertise and knowhow stunted their growth and expansion, but the accruing exponential losses cascaded on the country which found itself in the lurch for the execution of major projects as foreign firms withdrew in the face of sanctions.

This is while the Iranian companies had always proven their mettle through shouldering grave responsibilities in the most difficult times from eight years of the war on Iran in the 1980s to unfair

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Russia-China-Iran Solidarity Against Common Adversaries

TEHRAN -- In a significant display of military cooperation, China, Iran, and Russia have recently concluded their joint naval drills in the Gulf of Oman, signaling a strengthened tripartite alliance amidst evolving global geopolitical dynamics.

The exercises, which focused on maritime security operations including the rescue of hijacked merchant ships, saw the participation of Chinese and Iranian special operations teams alongside the People's Liberation Army's guided-missile destroyer, highlighting a deepening military collaboration among the three nations.

The joint naval drills were meticulously organized to demonstrate the combined naval capabilities of China, Iran, and Russia, encompassing a wide range of activities from search and rescue operations to combat maneuvers.

Featuring advanced missile systems and new warships, the exercises sent a clear message to the West and regional players about

the trio's readiness to safeguard their interests and assert their influence in critical maritime corridors.

Analysts regard this tri-nation exercise as a strategic move to forge a military coalition capable of counterbalancing Western naval dominance, especially in the face of increasing tensions within the Persian Gulf region and broader international waters.

The collaboration among China, Iran, and Russia within the realm of military exercises underscores a mutual desire to enhance maritime security while also challenging the existing global power structures.

By combining their naval and aviation forces in these drills, the three countries are not only showcasing their military prowess but are also fostering a sense of solidarity against perceived common threats.

The Gulf of Oman, being a vital waterway for global oil shipments, emerges as a strategic choice

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Netanyahu Vows to Launch Rafah Invasion Despite Warnings

GAZA STRIP (Dispatches) – Zionist prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Sunday to send ground forces into Gaza's southern Rafah city despite international fears for the fate of Palestinian civilians sheltering there.

The right-wing premier stressed that “no amount of international pressure will stop us from realizing all the goals of the war”.

“To do this, we will also operate in Rafah,” he told a cabinet meeting, before he was set to meet visiting German Chancellor Olaf Scholz for talks on the war he is waging on Gaza since October 7.

UN World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus urged the Zionist regime “in the name of humanity” not to launch a Rafah invasion, warning that “this humanitarian catastrophe must not be allowed to worsen”.

As tensions have risen with Washington, Netanyahu also criticized the U.S. Senate leader for urging the occupying regime

to hold new elections, calling the comments “totally inappropriate.”

Netanyahu leads a coalition of extremist parties. His failure to bring home the captives taken by Hamas fighting during their operation has led to mounting protests within the occupying territories as well as domestic calls for early elections.

International envoys were planning to meet in Qatar soon to revive stalled talks for a ceasefire deal.

A Hamas proposal calls for an Israeli withdrawal from “all cities and populated areas” in Gaza during a six-week truce and for more humanitarian aid, according to an official from the Palestinian group.

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Nowruz Notice

Kayhan Int'l wishes the best for its readers in the new Persian year. Our next issue will be published on Tuesday, April 2, 2024.