

TEHRAN – Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Sunday voiced his government's readiness to give a boost to relations with the Muslim and neighboring countries, as well as other friendly states.

Iran's relations with target countries have witnessed a significant rise in less than two years, the president said. He, however, noted that given the existing potentials, these relations are expected to even grow more than the current level.

Kayhan International



TEHRAN -- Iranian legislators on Sunday approved a measure banning individuals with permanent residency or citizenship of another country from running for parliament.

The new measure will be added as the 12th provision of Article 30 in the Election Law. Based on the new provision, Iranian nationals holding permanent residency in another country, as well those who possess or have acquired citizenship of another country will not be eligible for parliamentary seats.

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Fattahpour Wins Bronze at Asian Canoe Slalom Championships



Report: Zionists Worried About Syria's Return to Arab League



Hezbollah Holds Major Drills in Southern Lebanon

BEIRUT (Dispatches) – Hezbollah on Sunday launched large-scale military exercises in southern Lebanon, showcasing its strength ahead of the 23rd anniversary of the country's liberation from the Israeli occupation.

The drills, which were held at a resistance camp near the village of Mleeta, included several exercises simulating Hezbollah attacks on Israeli outposts in any future battle.

Local, regional and international reporters were invited to cover the drill.

During the military exercise, Hezbollah displayed its combat capabilities, while its fighters paraded on all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles.

The resistance fighters successfully captured an enemy military vehicle, demonstrating their tactical prowess. They also showed valiant military skills using both light and heavy weapons, while simulating an attack on an Israeli settlement to capture the regime's soldiers.

Several drones were also deployed and explosive-laden UAVs targeted potential Israeli targets in the drill venue.

Earlier, Hezbollah had announced in a statement that it would hold a major exercise in Lebanon on Sunday with the participation of tanks, missile units and infantry, adding there was going to be a ground exercise,

simulating the containment of an Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Hezbollah's media officer Muhammad Afif said the drill would be covered by many media outlets around the world, and some of its stages would be conducted "with live ammunition."

The drill is a simple example of the real capabilities of Hezbollah, he said, adding it sends a clear message to the Zionist regime that the resistance is ready to prevent the enemy's aggression and defend Lebanon.

Chief of Hezbollah's Executive Council Sayyid Hashim Safiuddin said the resistance's full preparedness was shown to deal with any aggression, stressing that the weapons will remain in the hands of the resistance fighters until complete victory is achieved.

Lebanon marks the Resistance and Liberation Day on May 25 each year. In May 2000, the Zionist regime was forced by Hezbollah to withdraw its troops from Lebanon, ending nearly two decades of occupation of the country's south.

Hezbollah was established following the 1982 Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon.

Since then, the movement has grown into a powerful military force, dealing repeated blows to the Israeli military, including during a 33-day war in July 2006.

Naval Mission Puts Iran on Map of World Powers



Chief of Staff Major General Muhammad Bagheri and Navy commander Real Admiral Shahram Irani attend a homecoming ceremony along with other officials and foreign military attaches in Bandar Abbas on Sunday.

TEHRAN -- Iran on Sunday welcomed back a Navy flotilla comprising Moudge-class frigate Dena and Makran forward base ship after a round-the-world cruise.

At a ceremony held in the southern coastal city of Bandar Abbas, the crew members of the Iranian Navy's 86th flotilla were received by top Iranian army officials, including chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces Major General Muhammad Bagheri.

The two-ship surface group, ac-

ording to Iranian media, broke the record for the distance covered by an Iranian flotilla in international waters and came amid tensions with the U.S.

Speaking at Sunday's ceremony, Gen. Bagheri hailed the flotilla's voyage as an "outstanding achievement" and said it exemplified Iran's maritime prowess.

He said the voyage came amid unprecedented sanctions on Iran by Washington.

In February, the U.S. Treasury said in a statement that two Ira-

nian vessels, the IRIS MAKRAN and the frigate IRIS DENA, had been identified "as property in which the government of Iran has an interest."

"The forward base ship IRIS MAKRAN (MAKRAN), an oil tanker that was repurposed for naval operations and maintains UAV launch capabilities, is currently conducting an international voyage. The naval frigate IRIS DENA (DENA) is accompanying the MAKRAN on this voyage," it said at the time.

The two-ship flotilla embarked on the round-the-world journey on September 20 last year from Bandar Abbas and sailed across the Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean.

In late January, the Iranian Navy flotilla was reported to have arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"Our forces sailed through a dangerous route. Through faith, devotion and patriotism, our forces pulled off such an achievement," Gen. Bagheri said, stressing that dignity can only be preserved through the path of power.

Navy commander Real Admiral Shahram Irani said the naval forces onboard Dena and Makran showed up on the high seas to declare that the Islamic Republic is impervious to isolation and sanctions, and it continues to tread the path of sustainable development through the promotion of interactions with world nations.

Irani also said that Iranian marines pulled off a scientific, political and cultural achievement.

He said the mission confirmed that the U.S.-led liberal world order has been replaced by a multipolar world order, with new alliances being formed and emerging powers beginning to display their might.

"Iran, with the discourse of resistance and mottos of peace and friendship, is passing through this transition period and properly placing itself in the new order.

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Protests Hit Occupied Palestine for 20th Week

TEL AVIV (Dispatches) -- Tens of thousands have joined protests across Occupied Palestine, now entering their 20th week, against prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contested plans to give himself powers without accountability.

The planned overhaul, which would give the regime control over naming judges to the supreme court and let parliament override many rulings, was paused after opponents organized some of the biggest street protests ever seen in the occupied territories.

Critics say it will remove vital checks and balances and hand unchecked power to the regime.

A sea of protesters crammed a central highway in Tel Aviv. Protesters chanted, "Israel is almost a dictatorship," as a banner reading "stop them" was held up by the crowd.

"It scares me that we are still a few hours away at any given moment from turning to a dictatorship," Sagi Mizrahi, a 40-year-old computer programmer told

Reuters in Tel Aviv. "I'm here because of the judicial system and the laws that are still sitting on the table, it's just scary."

Protests seemed to have been invigorated with Hebrew media estimating some 90,000-100,000 in attendance.

"Gradually, myself my kids and my grandkids are losing the hope to live here and to have a normal life like every person deserves," Hava Golan, 65 year-old biology professor said.

Netanyahu's cabinet is filled with "convicted terrorists", according to former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert.

On Sunday morning, Itamar Ben Gvir, the occupying regime's far-right security minister, declared "we're in charge here" as he and a group of Jewish extremists entered Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The visit to the site will be seen as a provocative move by Palestinians and comes just days after thousands of Jewish extremists marched through occupied East Al-Quds on the annual "flag

march" demonstration.

"We're in charge here," Ben Gvir said in a statement after visiting the holy site.

According to Haaretz, Ben Gvir did not coordinate the visit with the Jordanian Waqf, the body that nominally oversees the site.

Al-Aqsa Mosque is an Islamic site where unsolicited visits, prayers and rituals by non-Muslims are forbidden, according to decades-long international agreements.

Zionist groups, in coordination with authorities, have long violated the delicate arrangement and facilitated raids of the site and performed prayers and religious rituals.

Hamas, the Palestinian movement that administers the Gaza Strip, strongly criticized Sunday's visit by the Israeli extremist leader.

The group wrote on Telegram that the occupying regime of Israel would "bear responsibility for the barbaric incursions of its

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Three Killed in Third U.S. Mass Shooting This Weekend

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (Dispatches) — Three people were killed and two more were wounded in a shooting at a Missouri nightclub early Sunday, marking one of at least three mass shootings in the U.S. this weekend.

The killings at the Klymax Lounge in Kansas City, Missouri, and a separate shooting in Birmingham, Alabama, helped bring the number of mass shootings in the U.S. so far this year to about 230, data from the Gun Violence Archive shows.

In the Alabama shooting, which happened about the same time as the slayings in Kansas City, four people were wounded outside a bar.

The shooting in Birmingham came after yet another separate shooting in that city on Friday victimized four people at a birthday party, including one who was killed.

The bloodshed comes as the U.S. remains on track to have its deadliest year in terms of mass shootings in recent memory.

The Gun Violence Archive defines a mass shooting as one in which four victims are killed or wounded, and the great number of such cases in the country has led to persistent but unheeded calls for Congress to enact meaningful gun control.

According to police, one of those shot to death there on Sunday was found outside the club. Another was found dead inside the club, and the third died after being brought to a hospital.

One of the two people wounded was in critical condition.

In Alabama on Friday, one person died and three others were injured when someone began shooting at them at a birthday celebration in front of an apartment, Birmingham police said in a statement.

One woman who was injured was not struck by any bullets but was counted as a victim because she was hurt during the attack.

On Sunday, less than an hour before the Kansas City shooting,

another shooting outside a bar in Birmingham wounded four people in what was described as "an exchange of gunfire".

The U.S. is seeing on average more than one mass killing weekly.

The incidents have spanned the country, from Chicago to Mississippi and Tennessee to Texas. They have occurred at shopping malls, schools and parties and in countless neighborhoods.

They have also sparked a bout of soul-searching in a country where scores of millions of guns are in public hands and there is little political prospect of meaningful gun control of the type common in many other countries.

Mass shootings have attracted the most attention in the U.S. and overseas. No other industrialized country outside war and conflict zones experiences such habitual gun violence in civic life.

In Texas, gun laws were repeatedly loosened after mass shootings.

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