

President Ebrahim Raisi Extended a Message of Congratulations to Chinese President Xi Jinping and the People of the People's Republic of China on the Occasion of Their National Day on October 1

# IRAN NEWS

Two Iranian Nationals Have Reportedly Been Released From Prison in Karachi, Pakistan, on the Occasion of Unity Week Which Started on Sunday and Have Returned Home

VOL. XXIX, No. 7827 TEHRAN Price 50,000 Rials

www.irannewsdaily.com

MONDAY OCTOBER 2, 2023 - MEHR 10, 1402

## Iran Slams Sweden's Inaction on Repeated Desecration of Holy Qur'an



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran strongly condemned Sweden's inaction to end the recurring desecration of the Holy Qur'an that insults Muslims, urging Stockholm to take "practical measures" to that aim. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kan'ani said on Sunday that the Swedish officials' verbal denunciation and opposition to the sacrilegious acts against the holy Muslim scripture are not enough. "Unfortunately, we still witness the repetition of desecration of Islamic sanctities in contravention of basic principles of human rights," he said. The remarks came one day after Salwan Momika, a Sweden-based Iraqi man, attempted to burn a copy of the Qur'an in the city of Malmo under heavy protection. He had done the blasphemous act for several times in recent months. "Such hatred-inducing acts that insult and violate the rights and values of more than two billion Muslims have taken place amid the passive presence of the Swedish police, whose main responsibility is to maintain security and prevent the abuse of people's rights. Of course, such acts will never be erased from the minds of the world's freedom-seeking people." Police arrested three people, who were trying to prevent the Qur'an burning in Malmo, and escorted Momika out of the scene by 20 vehicles, including 10 armored ones. "The Swedish government is expected to respond responsibly to the most obvious demand of Muslims and monotheists, by seriously adhering to fundamental principles of human rights and trying to promote ethics and peaceful coexistence among religions through practical and effective measures."

## Normalization With Zionist Regime Regressive Move

IRAN NEWS NATIONAL DESK



TEHRAN - President Ebrahim Raisi has denounced the normalization of ties with the Zionist regime as a regressive move that is the will of extra-regional powers. "Seeking to normalize relations with the Zionist regime is an indicator of a reactionary and regressive government," Raisi said while addressing the 37th International Islamic Unity Conference (IIUC - 37th) in Tehran on Sunday. He said the option of "surrender and compromise" to the Zionist regime has been removed from the table, noting that paying attention to the liberation of occupied al-Quds and Palestine is the most important indicator of the unity of the Islamic Ummah. "The way to deal with the enemy is not compromise and surrender, but it is resilience and resistance that force the [regime] to retreat," he said. The Iranian president went on to say that resistance has worked against the enemy and has forced it to retreat and will continue to force it to further retreat. The enemy does not want the Islamic Ummah to be united, Raisi stressed, adding that those who strive in the direction of unity are acting in accordance with Islamic ideals, and those who try to create divisions within the Muslim world are moving in the direction of materializing the enemy's strategy. The participants will convene a meeting with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on October 3, 2023. Elsewhere in his speech, Raisi warned against Takfiri terrorist attacks against mosques and religious centers in regional countries, saying such atrocities, which are committed by the agents of the US and the Zionist regime, necessitate the unity of the Islamic Ummah against the Takfiri movement. He also called on Muslim scholars and thinkers participating in the conference to prepare themselves to play an important role in the new world order. "Muslims and the Islamic world must find themselves in the new order, disrupt the current unjust order, and create a just order in the world," he said, arguing that the Islamic Ummah will play a key role in the new order.

The Iranian president further said the enemy wants to disappoint the Islamic Ummah toward the future by propagating the idea that only everything it wishes will happen, but the Islamic Ummah has disrupted such plots. The IIUC - 37th was kicked off on September 28, coinciding with the 12th of Rabi' al-Awwal, the beginning of Unity week, and will conclude on October 3.

## Iran, Uzbekistan Sign MoU on Cinema Affairs



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Head of Iranian Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs Mohammad Khazaei and director general of Uzbekistan's cinema agency Ferdavus Abdul Khalikov have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on boosting cooperation in the fields related to cinema. The Iran-Uzbekistan agreement on cooperation was signed regarding deep cultural relations based on mutual respect and national interests between the two countries, the public relations office of the Iranian cinema body said on Sunday. The agreement includes exchange of films, participation in film fests in two countries, facilitation of the presence of filmmakers in two countries for making movies, etc., the report added. According to the report, the two countries have agreed to form a committee to pursue the implementation of the MoU and remove the possible obstacles to this end.

## Armed Forces Ready for Full Cooperation With Pakistan in Anti-Terror Fight



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iran's highest-ranking military commander says the country's Armed Forces are ready to improve all-out cooperation with Pakistan in the battle against terrorism. Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri made the statement in a message to Pakistan's Chief of the Army General Asim Munir. Baqeri condemned the "savage, anti-religious and anti-human" terrorist bombings at two mosques in Pakistan's southwestern province of Balochistan on Friday, which killed at least 60 people and injured more than 70 others. He expressed disappointment over the terrorist attack which killed innocent Pakistani people attending a ceremony to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The top Iranian general expressed confidence that the perpetrators behind the crime would be identified, arrested and punished soon with the efforts of the Pakistani armed forces and the security and judicial bodies. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, from which the death toll could climb, with many people seriously injured and others having been trapped beneath the wreckage. In a message to his Pakistani counterpart Arif Alvi on Friday, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi condemned the terrorist bombings in Pakistan, saying Tehran is firmly ready to counter extremism in all its forms. Over the recent years, Tehran and Islamabad have been working towards enhancing relations, not least bilateral economic ties and mutual efforts aimed at combating terrorism in the areas that straddle the border.

## Navy to Take Delivery of New Homegrown Destroyer Soon



TEHRAN (PressTV) - Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani says the force will take delivery of a new domestically-designed and manufactured destroyer in the near future, which is furnished with much more advanced and elaborate systems compared to the military vessels already unveiled. Addressing students at Sharif University of Technology in the capital Tehran during a Saturday ceremony in commemoration of the anniversary of the 1980-88 Iraq-imposed war, Irani highlighted that the homegrown military vessel, dubbed Deylaman, will soon join Iran's naval fleet. He described Deylaman as much more sophisticated than Dena destroyer. Dena is reportedly the fourth Jamaran-class destroyer manufactured by the Defense Ministry's naval industries. The Iranian destroyer is equipped with various defense and offense systems, designed to make long journeys in the oceans, and capable of detecting, tracking, and hitting various aerial, surface, and submarine targets. Dena is also capable of carrying helicopters on its deck. Elsewhere in his remarks on Saturday, Irani stated that the Iranian Navy plans to set up a base in the Antarctica. Iran's southeastern Makran coast is directly connected to the South Pole and the deployment of Iranian servicemen in that region would be of a practical nature, he said. Antarctica is important from several different aspects as it is the best place to control the cruise of ballistic missiles, the high-ranking Iranian commander said. Iran's Navy has in recent years achieved self-sufficiency in manufacturing surface and sub-surface vessels. It has also increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers.

## Iran Foreign Trade tops \$54b in April-September Period



TEHRAN (IRNA) - Iran's foreign trade surpassed \$54 billion during the April-September period, witnessing a 4.84 percent growth compared with the similar period in 2022. Head of the country's Customs Administration Mohammad Rezvanfar has announced. The official made the announcement on Saturday, giving figures about Iran's foreign trade in the six-month period starting in April 2023, which almost corresponds to the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (1402), the Customs Administration reported. The Islamic Republic's foreign trade was nearly at \$54.6 billion in the first half of the current Iranian year, marking a 4.84 percent growth compared with the same period last year, Rezvanfar noted. The foreign trade reached 85.3 million tons in terms of weight in the first six months of 1402, which grew 23.78% compared with the same period last Iranian year, he said. Also, the official added, Iran's foreign transit stood at 7.7 million tons in the first half of the year 1402, showing an 8.24 percent growth when compared with the same period last year.

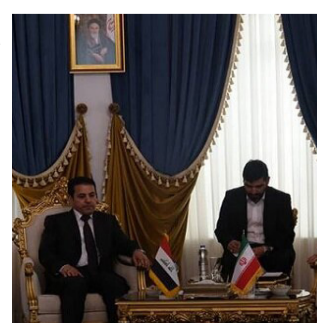
## Iran-Saudi Rapprochement Forges Islamic Unity

TEHRAN (IRNA) - Secretary General of World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WFPST) Hamid Shahriari has said that the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia has helped enhance hope and unity in the Islamic world. The WFPST secretary general made the remarks in the opening ceremony of the 37th International Islamic Unity Conference in the Iranian capital on Sunday morning. Shahriari argued that the rapprochement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia created the most significant transformation to promote collaboration and friendship among the Islamic nations and that it illuminated the hearts of those who promote awakening in the Islamic world because two political and ideological schools of thoughts took effective steps to enhance cooperation. The WFPST chairman expressed gratitude to both the Raisi administration that prioritized regional and neighboring cooperation, and to the Saudi kingdom that shifted from a sectarian approach to a regional collaboration.

## Iran-Iraq Security Agreement Must Be Implemented Strictly

TEHRAN (MNA) - The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) emphasized the strict and complete implementation of the Tehran-Baghdad security agreement. Iraq's National security adviser Qasim al-Araji, who arrived in Tehran on Sunday morning, met and held talks with General Ali-Akbar Ahmadian the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). During this meeting, the two sides discussed and exchanged opinions about bilateral issues and the implementation of the security agreement between Tehran and Baghdad. Appreciating the good cooperation and arrangements of the Iraqi government in holding the Arbaeen pilgrimage, General Ahmadian told al-Araji, "In addition to its important political and cultural aspects and its spiritual blessings, the Arbaeen ceremony has brought closer the two Muslim and Shiite nations of Iran and Iraq." The Tehran-Baghdad security agreement guarantees the security of the borders of the two countries, Ahmadian said, adding that it is also a reasonable and appropriate road map to eliminate the insecure

components in the region. The Iranian top General also emphasized the strict and complete implementation of this agreement. He further spoke about the Iran-Iraq agreement in economic sectors, and added, "There are many capacities for the all-round improvement of the relations between the two countries in different sectors in a potential way." Al-Araji also emphasized the determination of the Iraqi government and the Iraqi National Security Institution to implement the mentioned security agreement. Baghdad welcomes using every opportunity to develop and deepen Tehran-Baghdad relations, he added.



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Website: http://www.irannewsdaily.com  
E-Mail Address: info@irannewsdaily.com  
ISSN 1024-6053 P.O. Box: 15875-8551  
Address: No 13, Pajouhesh St., Golestan II St,

Golestan St. Marzadaran Blvd., Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran  
Distributed by: Cities of Iran Cultural and Artistic Institute  
Managing Director: Fereydoon Taherpour Asl



## Pro-Russian Fico Wins Slovak Election, Needs Allies for Gov't

BRATISLAVA (Dispatches) - Slovakia's leftist former Prime Minister Robert Fico beat his progressive rival in a parliamentary election after campaigning to end military aid to Ukraine, but he will need to win over allies to form the next government, nearly complete results showed on Sunday. With 98% of voting districts reporting in the Saturday election, Fico's SMER-SSD party led with 23.37% of the vote. The liberal Progressive Slovakia (PS) followed with 16.86% and the HLAS (Voice) party, which could become the kingmaker for forming the next government, was third with 15.03%. Former Fico colleague and leftist HLAS leader Peter Pellegrini kept his options open on future coalitions. A government led by Fico and his SMER-SSD party would see NATO member Slovakia joining Hungary in challenging the European Union's consensus on support for Ukraine, just as the bloc looks to maintain unity in opposing Russia's invasion. It would also signal a further shift in the region against political liberalism, which may be reinforced if conservative PiS wins an election in Poland later this month. Fico's party is more nationalist and socially conservative, criticising social liberalism, which it says is imposed from Brussels. The PS is liberal on green policies, LGBT rights, deeper European integration and human rights. "We do want to evaluate everything, so we will wait for the final count," said Robert Kalinak, a SMER-SSD candidate and long-time Fico ally, adding the party would comment on the full results later on Sunday. Exit polls had favoured PS, but the results went Fico's way, opening the prospect he may win a fourth stint as premier after leading governments in 2006-2010 and 2012-2018. The first party across the line was expected to get a mandate from President Zuzana Caputova to lead talks on forming a parliamentary



majority and, if successful, a government. Fico may align with HLAS, which split away from SMER-SSD in 2020, and the nationalist Slovak National Party that won 5.68%. "The distribution of seats confirms HLAS as a party without which any normally functioning government coalition cannot be put together," Pellegrini said as most results were known. "If you ask me if we prefer any combination or coalition, I want to say not at all." PS has advocated maintaining Slovakia's strong backing for Ukraine and would also likely follow a liberal line within the EU on issues such as majority voting to make the bloc more flexible, green policies and LGBT rights. The party's leader, Michal Simecka, speaking when most votes were counted, did not give up hope he could form the next government, depending how possible smaller allies end up. "It remains our aim for Slovakia to have after this election a

stable pro-European government that will care for the rule of law and which begins to solve and invest into areas key for our future," Simecka, a former reporter and Oxford graduate, told supporters. Any coalition that PS could potentially form would likely need HLAS and include more right-wing or socially conservative parties, which would blunt its socially progressive and EU-integration drive. The incoming government in the nation of 5.5 million will take over a ballooning budget deficit forecast to be the highest in the euro zone. Fico has ridden on dissatisfaction with a bickering centre-right coalition, whose government collapsed last year, triggering the election six months early. In campaigning, he stressed concern about a rise in the number of migrants passing through Slovakia to Western Europe. Fico's views reflect traditionally warm sentiments towards Russia among many Slovaks, which have gathered strength on social media since the Ukraine war started. He has also pledged to end military supplies to Ukraine and strive for peace talks - a line close to that of Hungary's leader, Viktor Orban, but rejected by Ukraine and its allies, who say this would only encourage Russia. The far-right Republika party, which was seen as a possible ally for Fico but unacceptable to others, failed to win any seats. Fico was forced to resign in 2018 after mass protests against graft that followed the murder of an investigative journalist. Pellegrini, a SMER-SSD member at the time, took over for him and led the government until 2020, when centre-right parties pledging to weed out graft swept an election. But their government collapsed last year after internal bickering, opening the way to Saturday's early election. Analysts and diplomats have said Fico might tame this rhetoric if he takes power, as he did in the past.

## Pro-China Candidate Mohamed Muizzu Wins Maldives Presidency



MALE (Dispatches) - Pro-China candidate Mohamed Muizzu won Saturday's presidential election in the Maldives, a result set to once again upend the archipelago's relationship with traditional benefactor India. Muizzu, 45, helms a party that presided over an influx of Chinese loans when it last held power in the atoll nation, better known for its luxury beach resorts and celebrity tourists. He won 54.06 percent of the vote in the run-off contest, prompting incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to concede defeat shortly before midnight. "Congratulations to president-elect Muizzu," Solih wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "I also congratulate the people who have shown a peaceful and democratic process." Muizzu made a brief appearance outside his party's campaign headquarters to urge supporters not to celebrate until Sunday morning, when campaign restrictions officially come to an end. Solih, 61, will serve as caretaker president until his successor is inaugurated on November 17. The result upends Solih's efforts to revert the country's diplomatic posture back towards New Delhi since taking office five years ago. Muizzu played a pivotal role in an earlier government's development programme, bankrolled in part by financial largesse from China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. He told a meeting with Chinese Communist Party officials last year that his party's return to office would "script a further chapter of strong ties between our two countries". The Maldives sits in a strategically vital position in the middle of the Indian Ocean, astride one of the world's busiest east-west shipping lanes. Muizzu's mentor, former president Abdulla Yameen, borrowed heavily from China for construction projects and spurned India. Solih was elected in 2018 on the back of discontent with Yameen's increasingly autocratic rule, accusing him of pushing the country into a Chinese debt trap. Yameen's turn towards Beijing had also alarmed New Delhi, which shares concerns with the United States and its allies about China's growing assertiveness in the Indian Ocean. India is a member of the strategic Quad alliance alongside the United States, Australia and Japan. Maldives leader Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, the defeated incumbent in the September 30, 2023 presidential vote, was elected back in 2018 on the back of discontent with a predecessor's increasingly autocratic rule. But Solih's restoration of the Maldives' traditional posture itself proved controversial, with many in the archipelago disapproving of India's outsized political and economic clout. Muizzu has vowed to free Yameen, currently serving an 11-year sentence for corruption on the same prison island where he had jailed many of his political opponents during his tenure. In his brief appearance Saturday, Muizzu urged the outgoing president to use his executive power and transfer Yameen to house arrest. Turnout in Saturday's poll was 85 percent, slightly higher than the first-round vote held earlier this month. Watchdog group Transparency Maldives said there had been some incidents of "electoral violence," without specifying further details. Officials said one voter broke open a plastic ballot box, but the ballots were saved and there was no interruption to the count. Police reported arresting 14 people, mostly for taking photographs of their marked ballot papers and sharing them on social media.

## Kosovo Demands Serbia to Withdraw Troops From Border



BANJSKA (Dispatches) - Kosovo on Saturday demanded that Serbia withdraw its troops from their common border, saying it was ready to protect its territorial integrity. Tensions between the two countries have been high since last Sunday when Kosovo police fought around 30 heavily armed Serbs who stormed the Kosovo village of Banjska and barricaded themselves in a Serbian Orthodox monastery. Three attackers and one police officer were killed. The gunbattle prompted new international concern over stability in Kosovo, which has an ethnic Albanian majority and declared independence from Serbia in 2008 after a guerrilla uprising and a 1999 NATO intervention. "We call on President Vucic and the institutions of Serbia to immediately withdraw all troops from the border with Kosovo," the Kosovo government said in a statement. "The deployment of Serbian troops along the border with Kosovo is the next step by Serbia to threaten the territorial

integrity of our country." Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic told the Financial Times he did not intend to order his forces to cross the border into Kosovo because an escalation of the conflict would harm Belgrade's aspirations to the join the European Union. On Friday the United States said it was monitoring a troubling Serbian military deployment along the Kosovo border that is destabilizing the area. "Kosovo, in coordination with international partners, is more determined than ever to protect its territorial integrity," the Pristina government said. "This deployment also includes the deployment of anti-aircraft systems and heavy artillery." "The Government of the Republic of Kosovo has been in constant contact with the USA and the EU countries regarding this serious threat from Serbia." NATO, which still has 4,500 troops in Kosovo, said on Friday it had "authorized additional forces to address the current situation".

## UK Aims to Offer Military Training Inside Ukraine

LONDON (Dispatches) - Britain's government wants to deploy military instructors to Ukraine, in addition to training Ukrainian armed forces in Britain or other Western countries as at present, British defense minister Grant Shapps said in a newspaper interview. To date, Britain and its allies have avoided a formal military presence in Ukraine to reduce the risk of a direct conflict with Russia. Britain has provided five-week military training courses to around 20,000 Ukrainians over the past year, and intends to train a similar number going forward. In an interview with the Sunday Telegraph newspaper, Shapps said there was scope to offer military training within Ukraine after a discussion on Friday with British military chiefs. "I was talking today about eventually getting the training brought closer and actually into Ukraine as well," he was quoted as saying. "Particularly in the west of the country, I think the opportunity now is to bring more things 'in country'," he added. Shapps added that he hoped British defence companies such as BAE Systems (BAES.L) would proceed with plans to set up arms factories in Ukraine. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday he wants to turn his country's defence industry into a "large military hub" by partnering with Western weapons manufacturers to increase arms supplies for Kyiv's counteroffensive against Russia.

## U.S. Congress Passes Stopgap Bill to Avert Gov't Shutdown

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The U.S. Congress passed a stopgap funding bill late on Saturday with overwhelming Democratic support after Republican Speaker Kevin McCarthy backed down from an earlier demand by his party's hardliners for a partisan bill. The Democratic-majority Senate voted 88-9 to pass the measure to avoid the federal government's fourth partial shutdown in a decade, sending it to President Joe Biden to sign into law before the 12:01 a.m. ET (0401 GMT) deadline. McCarthy abandoned party hardliners' insistence that any bill pass the chamber with only Republican votes, a change that could cause one of his far-right members to try to oust him from his leadership role. The House voted 335-91 to fund the government through Nov. 17, with more Democrats than Republicans supporting it. That move marked a profound shift from earlier in the week,

when a shutdown looked all but inevitable. A shutdown would mean that most of the government's 4 million employees would not get paid - whether they were working or not - and also would shutter a range of federal services, from National Parks to financial regulators. Federal agencies had already drawn up detailed plans that spell out what services would continue, such as airport screening and border patrols, and what must shut down, including scientific research and nutrition aid to 7 million poor mothers. "The American people can breathe a sigh of relief: there will be no government shutdown tonight," Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said after the vote. "Democrats have said from the start that the only solution for avoiding a shutdown is bipartisanship, and we are glad Speaker McCarthy has finally heeded our message." Some 209 Democrats

supported the bill, far more than the 126 Republicans who did so, and Democrats described the result as a win. "Extreme MAGA Republicans have lost, the American people have won," top House Democrat Hakeem Jeffries told reporters ahead of the vote, referring to the "Make America Great Again" slogan used by former President Donald Trump and many hardline Republicans. Democratic Representative Don Beyer said: "I am relieved that Speaker McCarthy folded and finally allowed a bipartisan vote at the 11th hour on legislation to stop Republicans' rush to a disastrous shutdown." McCarthy's shift won the support of top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell, who had backed a similar measure that was moving through the Senate with broad bipartisan support, even though the House version dropped aid for Ukraine. Democratic Senator Michael Bennett held

the bill up for several hours trying to negotiate a deal for further Ukraine aid. "While I would have preferred to pass a bill now with additional assistance for Ukraine, which has bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, it is easier to help Ukraine with the government open than if it were closed," Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen said in a statement. McCarthy dismissed concerns that hardline Republicans could try to oust him as leader. "I want to be the adult in the room, go ahead and try," McCarthy told reporters. "And you know what? If I have to risk my job for standing up for the American public, I will do that." He said that House Republicans would push ahead with plans to pass more funding bills that would cut spending and include other conservative priorities, such as tighter border controls.