

Iran Daily felicitates its readers on Eid al-Ghadir, a major feast in Shia Islam, on which Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed Imam Ali (PBUH) as his successor. Our next edition will come out on Saturday.

IRAN DAILY



Iranian speaker arrives in Syria to discuss ties

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Rouhani lauds cabinet's committee for easing sanctions' impact



president.ir

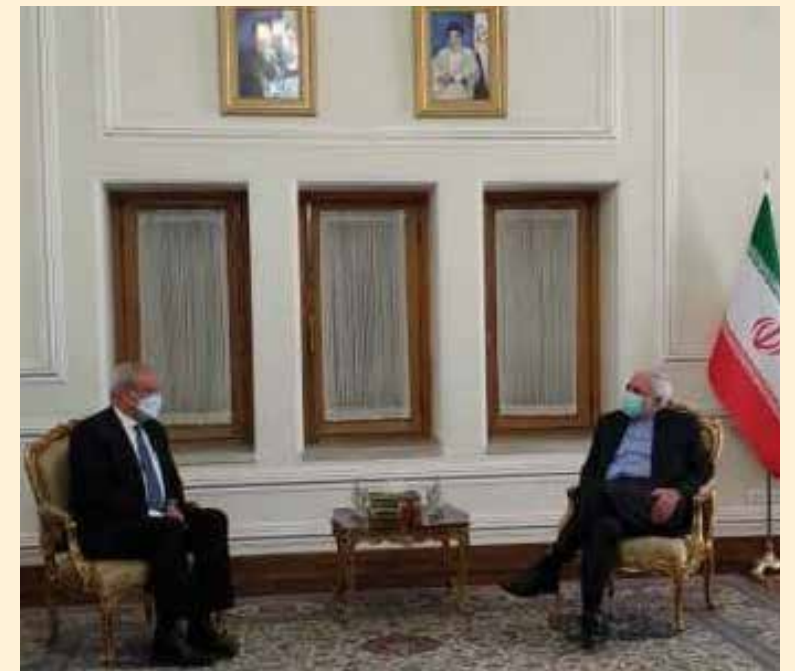
Iranian President Hassan Rouhani hailed the Economic Coordination Board of his administration for its effective role during "hard conditions of sanctions and economic terrorism". Speaking in the last meeting of the Economic Coordination Board in the current administration, Rouhani underlined that the board played the role of a war headquarters during "economic war", referring

to the three years of draconian sanctions imposed by the US against the Iranian nation, IRNA reported. He said that people's livelihood has been at the center of the board's focus, as food security and economic stability play an important role in social and mental security. Although economic and political war factors were in the foreign relations arena, the President

noted, Economic Coordination Board managed to alleviate the economic impacts of this political aggression by timely proper decisions. He went on to say that the board has used the opinions of economists and experts in its decision-making process. The President thanked the board and First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri for his pivotal role in the board.

Zarif hails cooperation with Cuba in vaccine production

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif praised cordial relations with Cuba, which recently saw bilateral cooperation in the fields of biotechnology and genetic engineering, especially the production of vaccines. Zarif met with Dr. Vicente Verez Bencomo, director-general of the Finlay Institute of Vaccines (IFV) which is a Cuban epidemiological research institute, in Tehran on Monday, Press TV wrote. The Cuban scientist provided explanations about the cooperation between the vaccine institutes of the two countries on the production of a COVID-19 vaccine and its unique features. He thanked Zarif and the Iranian Foreign Ministry for working to advance bilateral cooperation swiftly towards developing the joint vaccine.



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Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (R) meets with Dr. Vicente Verez Bencomo, director-general of the Finlay Institute of Vaccines (IFV), which is a Cuban epidemiological research institute.

During the meeting, the Cuban ambassador to Tehran described as very important Zarif's last year visit to Havana at the start of cooperation between the Pasteur Institute of Iran (IPI) and the IFV for the joint production of the COVID-19 vaccine. On Sunday, Verez Bencomo held talks with Iran's Health Minister Saeed Namaki and his deputies. Speaking on the sidelines of the meeting, IPI head Alireza Biglari said that the third phase in the human trial of the joint vaccine is coming to an end in both Iran and Cuba, and that it has proved to be highly effective against variants of the coronavirus. "The results of the clinical trial of the Soberana vaccine in Cuba demonstrate a 91.2-percent effectiveness against the strains in Cuba, South Africa and California, which are among the worst strains of the coronavirus," he added.

Two Koreas restore severed communications in surprise thaw

North and South Korea signaled a surprise thaw in relations on Tuesday, announcing the restoration of cross-border communications that were severed more than a year ago and an agreement between their two leaders to improve ties.

The joint announcement, which coincided with the anniversary of the end of the Korean War, was the first positive development since a series of summits between the North's Kim Jong-un and the South's President Moon Jae-in in 2018 failed to achieve any significant breakthrough, AFP reported. The two sides revealed that Kim and Moon had exchanged a series of letters since April in which they agreed that re-establishing hotlines would be a productive first step in re-booting relations between the two rivals who, despite the end of their 1950-53 conflict, remain technically at war. "The top leaders of the North and the South agreed to make a big stride in recovering the mutual trust and promoting reconciliation by restoring the cut-off inter-Korean communication liaison lines," North Korea's official KCNA news agency reported. Pyongyang unilaterally cut off all official military and political communication links in June last year over ac-



REUTERS

tivists sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border but the two sides said all lines were restored on Tuesday. They exchanged their first phone call since the suspension on Tuesday morning, Seoul's Unification Ministry said, with the Defense Ministry adding that military hotlines were also back to normal operation. Moon's office said that restoring the hotlines was the first step towards improving ties. "The two leaders also agreed to restore mutual trust between the two Koreas as soon as possible and move forward with the relationship again," it added in a statement.

The dovish Moon is credited with brokering the first-ever summit between North Korea and a sitting US president in Singapore in June 2018. But Pyongyang largely cut off contact with Seoul following the collapse of a second summit between Kim and then US president Donald Trump in Hanoi that left nuclear talks at a standstill. Just days after severing the hotlines last year, Pyongyang also blew up an inter-Korean liaison office on its side of the border and warned that it would bolster military presence along the Demilitarized Zone that separates them. Since US President Joe Biden took office, Pyongyang and Washington have adopted a wait-and-see attitude to relations following the diplomatic roller coaster ride under Trump that produced three summits but no agreement. Kim said in June that Pyongyang needed to prepare for both "dialogue and confrontation" with Washington – but with a particular emphasis on the latter. Despite the standstill in talks, Moon has relentlessly stressed the importance of restoring inter-Korean ties, he added.

Iraqi factions renew calls for full pullout after US says will end combat mission

Several resistance groups in Iraq Tuesday welcomed an agreement between Baghdad and Washington that US combat operations in the country will end this year, and renewed demands for a full withdrawal of foreign forces. US President Joe Biden declared on Monday that "we're not going to be, at the end of the year, in a combat mission," as he hosted Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi for White House talks, AFP wrote. Under the agreement, however, US military forces will continue to operate in Iraq in what has been termed as an "advisory role." A joint Iraq-US statement issued after the meeting said the "security" relationship will be focused on "training, advising and intelligence-sharing." The Conquest Alliance, the political wing of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units, said it considered the deal "to be a positive step towards the full sovereignty of Iraq." "We hope that it will materialize on the ground," it added. The Imam Ali Brigades lauded "the end of the foreign presence" and said it "thanked the Iraqi government for keeping its promises," while prominent Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr also welcomed the announcement.



REUTERS
US President Joe Biden (R) meets Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on July 26, 2021.

Sadr praised the agreement, saying: "We are waiting for a complete withdrawal of American troops," Press TV wrote. He hailed the role of Iraqi resistance fighters in speeding up the American pullout in a tweet. "The occupiers finally announced the start of the withdrawal of all their combat forces." "We are waiting, just as you are, for the complete pullout of the occupying forces," he said in an address to resistance groups, while appreciating "efforts aimed at striking this agreement, especially those made by brother Kadhimi." Iraq's Al-Nujaba resistance movement called for a complete pullout of American forces from the country, saying the planned withdrawal under the newly-linked agreement between Baghdad and Washington must include the US Air Force. "We have no confidence whatsoever in Americans, and do not agree to their presence under any circumstances. We fiercely oppose the US military presence, and demand a complete pullout of American forces," Nujaba spokesman Nasr al-Shammari said on Monday night. The US currently has about 2,500 troops in Iraq. It is not known how many troops will stay in the country beyond 2021.

Tunisia's president imposes month-long curfew, bans gatherings

Tunisian President Kais Saied announced a month-long curfew one day after he dismissed the prime minister. Tunisians woke on Tuesday to draconian restrictions including a nationwide curfew from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m., and a ban on gatherings of more than three people in public places. The new restrictions, announced by presidential order, prohibit the movement of people between cities outside times of curfew, except for basic needs or for urgent health reasons, the Guardian wrote. The dismissed prime minister, Hichem Mechichi, said he would hand power to the person chosen by the president, in his first comments since the shock move. "In order to preserve the safety of all Tunisians, I declare that I align myself, as I have always, by the side of our people, and declare that I will not take up any position or responsibility in the state," said Mechichi in a statement on Facebook. Saied, an independent without a party behind him, invoked emergency powers under the Constitution late on Sunday to dismiss Mechichi. He later sacked the justice and defence ministers, and suspended parliament for 30 days. Saied vowed any violent opposition would be met with force. The European Union on Tuesday called



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for a speedy return to political stability in Tunisia. "The European Union is following developments in Tunisia with the greatest attention," the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement. "We call for the restoration of institutional stability as soon as possible, and in particular for the resumption of parliamentary activity, respect for fundamental rights and an abstention from all forms of violence." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke by phone with the Tunisian leader, encouraging him "to adhere to the principles of democracy and human rights that are the basis of governance in Tunisia," State Department spokesman Ned Price said. Blinken also asked that Saied "maintain

open dialogue with all political actors and the Tunisian people". Tunisia's mishandling of the pandemic has served as a lightning rod for longstanding popular discontent with parliamentary politics. Thousands of people defied COVID-19 restrictions and scorching summer temperatures in demonstrations which sparked clashes with security forces in several cities on Sunday, ahead of Saied's announcement. More than 18,000 people in the country of 12 million have died of coronavirus since the pandemic began, overwhelming crumbling public health services and crippling the vital tourism industry. To date, just 7% of the population has been fully vaccinated, while more than 90% of the country's ICU beds are occupied, according to Health Ministry figures. Videos have circulated on social media showing dead bodies left in the middle of wards as morgues struggle to deal with growing deaths. Support for the president's decision was shown as people took the streets and called for the dissolution of parliament. The powerful Tunisian General Labour Union, which played a key role in the 2011 uprising, said the president had acted "in accordance" with the Constitution to "prevent imminent danger and to restore the normal functioning" of the state.