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Iran

Digest

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IRGC Navy conducts drills on Persian Gulf islands disputed with the UAE

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) conducted a drill on the Persian Gulf islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb – disputed with the United Arab Emirates – on 2 August. An IRGC statement noted that the purpose of the naval war game, named after late IRGC General ‘[Eshaq Dara](#)’, is to “display the IRGC Navy’s might as well as combat and defence preparedness in protecting the Persian Gulf security and the Iranian islands”. IRGC Navy deployed its various units, including the combat, naval, missile, drone, rapid reaction, electronic warfare and airborne units, which were backed by the IRGC Aerospace Force, exercise a range of military tactics in the war game. It also deployed the [Fath-360 short-range ballistic missile](#), the Qadir cruise missile, and ‘Hojaji Special Unit’ vessels equipped with projectiles that can travel up to 600 km (373 miles). Notably, the IRGC Navy’s demonstration of new capabilities to ensure the security of Abu Musa and the other Iranian islands comes a month after Iran Foreign Ministry had summoned the Russian envoy to protest over the Russia-GCC statement calling for ‘peaceful resolution’ of three islands disputed with the UAE.

President Raisi attends the BRICS+ Summit in South Africa

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi welcomed South African President Cyril Ramaphosa’s announcement of the BRICS expansion by admitting Iran, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, the UAE and Saudi Arabia as full members. [President Raisi](#) called approval of Iran’s membership a ‘historical development’, and stated that “strategic cooperation between Iran and BRICS members in the fields of transit, energy, and trade, will support the BRICS global agenda. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the successful

efforts of BRICS in the path of de-dollarisation of economic relations between members, the use of national currencies, as well as the strengthening of BRICS mechanisms for payment and financial settlement.” On the side-lines of the summit, [Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#) and President Raisi had a bilateral meeting, where they reiterated their commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation including to realise the full potential of Chabahar port as a connectivity hub.

Iranian and Syrian Foreign Ministers exchange visits

On 1 August, President Raisi at a meeting with a ministerial delegation led by Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal al-Mekdad, and comprising minister for Economy and Foreign Trade, and Communications and Technology, stressed the importance of “complete implementation” of the agreements reached in the economic and trade areas. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said that Syrian-Turkish ties, Israeli attacks against Syria, and the “illegal presence” of US troops in Syria would be among the topics that would be discussed during Mekdad’s visit to Tehran. In a joint press conference with Mekdad, Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian stressed the “need for the American military forces to [leave Syria immediately](#),” and called on the EU to reconsider its approach that has “impeded the return of displaced Syrians to their homeland.” Abodollahian later met with Mekdad in Damascus on 31 August, where he emphasised the importance of regular consultation, and continued cooperation between Iran and Syria in the fight against terrorism. He argued that the [recent surge in acts of terror](#) in parts of Syria shows that some sides do not want the situation in Syria to improve nor do they want Damascus to benefit from the positive situation in the region. In his meeting with Syrian Prime

Minister Hussein Arnous, Abdollahian reaffirmed Tehran's determination to expand relations with Syria under a long-term cooperation deal signed between the two countries in May 2023.

Malaysian Foreign Minister visits Iran

Foreign Minister of Malaysia, [Zambry bin Abdul Kadir](#), accompanied by an entourage of businessmen and economists, visited Iran at the official invitation his Iranian counterpart. In a joint press conference, Abdollahian said Iran and Malaysia have made new agreements on the exchange of prisoners. He also warned Sweden and Denmark to stop their anti-Islamic moves in order to prevent terrorism and extremism from spreading, and noted that Islamic countries are currently looking into the possible boycott of Danish and Swedish products. President Raisi, in his meeting with Abdul Kadir noted that creating a [long-term framework](#) for strategic collaboration between Iran and Malaysia will "open up new horizons" in the two countries' relations. Abdul Kadir also met with the head of the Iran-Malaysia Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, where they discussed the upcoming meeting of the Joint Commission and future economic collaborations, especially among small and medium enterprises.

Taliban rejects Iranian technical team's request to visit Kajaki dam reservoir

On 13 August, Iran's Ambassador to Kabul Hassan Kazemi Qomi noted that Iranian technical delegation have visited [Deh Ravod hydrometric station](#) on the upstream of the Kajaki dam on the Helmand River, for the first time amid ongoing efforts by Tehran to settle a water dispute with Afghanistan. However, Taliban denied Iranian team's request to visit [Kajaki Dam reservoir](#). The delegation also comprised of the Director General of cross-border Rivers

of the Ministry of Energy, the head of Sistan and Baluchistan Regional Water Authority, and the deputy governor-general of the province. The two sides agreed that [technical committee meetings](#) would decide how to observe Iran's water rights. Taliban in an official statement noted that Iranian delegation, following observations and measurements of water flow "assessed the current water year to be far less than normal particularly due to the severe droughts caused by global phenomenon of climate change", and cited that "that in case of rainfall and availability of favourable conditions" it will ensure water rights of residents of Nimroz in Afghanistan and Sistan of Iran.

Iran and the United States reach a prisoner-swap agreement

Iran and the United States have reached an agreement under which Iran will release five American prisoners in exchange for the release of a number of Iranians held in the U.S. and access to around US\$6 billion in Iranian oil revenues in South Korea. The agreement came after indirect exchange of messages between Iran and the US mediated by Oman and Qatar had been in progress for months. As a first step in the arrangement, Iran has [released five American-Iranian](#) citizens from prison and now they are either under house arrest or in a hotel. On 12 August, Governor of the Central Bank of Iran Mohammad Reza Farzin announced that all [Iranian funds frozen in Korea](#) had been unblocked and would be used for non-sanctioned goods. The US Secretary of State [Antony Blinken](#) stated that the funds would be in "restricted accounts" that can be accessed only for "humanitarian purposes". Rejecting possibility of an informal or interim agreement on the nuclear issue, Iranian Foreign Minister Abdollahian stated that "We have never been after an interim or [little-for-little agreement](#)."