



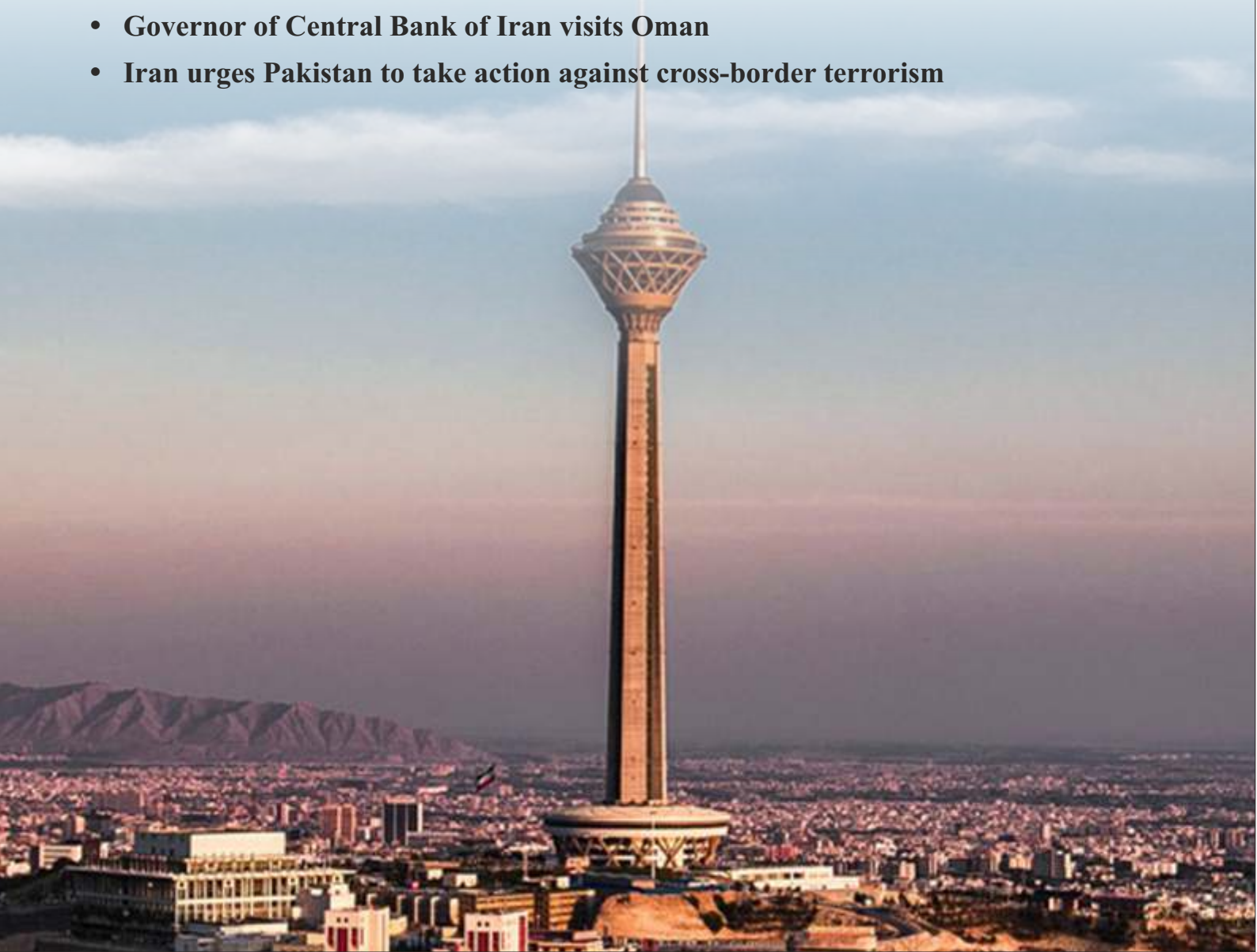
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Iran

Digest

December 2023

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President Raisi visits Moscow

On 7 December, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visited Moscow with the agenda of “addressing sensitive [regional concerns](#) and fostering broader bilateral relations.” In his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Raisi called for an immediate stop to the Israeli “genocide and crimes against humanity” in the besieged Gaza Strip. Raisi said, “What is afflicting humanity today is unilateralism and the unjust global system, and its manifestation can be seen in Gaza.” Putin said Iran-Russia bilateral ties were at its best level and expanding, with bilateral trade increasing by 20 per cent reaching [USD 5 billion](#). Putin received Raisi a day after one-day tour of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, where he discussed Gaza and Ukraine and efforts by Russia and OPEC to boost oil prices. On 25 December, on the side-lines of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting in St Petersburg, Minister of Mine and Trade of the Islamic Republic of Iran Abbas Aliabadi signed the [free trade agreement](#) between the Eurasian Economic Union and its member states. Earlier on 4 December, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian paid a working visit to participate in the 12th meeting of the foreign ministers of the five [Caspian Sea’s littoral countries](#) in Moscow. At the meeting, Abdollahian emphasised the strategic importance of the [Caspian region as a connective nexus](#) between the northern-southern and eastern-western corridors. Stressing joint-responsibility of littoral countries in establishing security and unanimity in decisions regarding Caspian Sea issues, he proposed the institutionalisation of collaborations in the Caspian Sea and suggested establishing a secretariat or organisation to manage and oversee collaborative efforts.

Foreign Minister Abdollahian hosts Taliban’s foreign minister for talks in Tehran

On 24 December, Iran’s Foreign Minister [Abdollahian](#) in a meeting with Taliban’s foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi emphasized the need for bilateral cooperation in solving the existing issues on border, water among others. Muttaqi was in Tehran to participate in “High Level Political Consultation on the Palestine Issue” organised by Iran’s Foreign Ministry. Muttaqi for his part raised various issues in bilateral relations and emphasized the necessity of continuing interactions between the two countries in all fields, including water, border, trade, and cooperation in judicial and consular affairs, especially the situation and problems of [Afghan prisoners and refugees](#) in Iran. Earlier on 18 December, Iranian Army Ground Force Commander, Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari, said that the country’s missile, drone and artillery units have [lined up along the north-eastern border](#) with Afghanistan to give a timely response to enemies’ possible threats. Heidari stated that the Ground Force is designing and implementing a plan focusing on points where it needs more troops.

Iranian Navy receives new cruise missiles and advanced helicopters

On 24 December, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani announced that a range of new [home-grown weapons and equipment](#), including strategic cruise missile systems and helicopters suitable for electronic warfare were commissioned into service at a coastal naval base in southern Iran. The arms and equipment include the ‘Talayieh’ strategic

cruise missile system with a range of over 1,000 kms and ability to change course during flight, the Nasir cruise missile system with a range of over 100 kms and mounted over various naval destroyers, the Navy's first electronic warfare helicopter and the first intelligence gathering chopper, surface-to-surface missile systems, the 'Sanjar' smart loitering and suicide drone carried by the Jamaran destroyer, a multipurpose drone system used for electronic warfare, a diver detection system, and the 'Sirvan' tug boat used in ports and anchorages. On the same day, the US accused Iran of a [drone attack on chemical tanker](#) Chem Pluto in the Indian Ocean, 200 nautical miles (370 km) south-west of the city of Veraval in the Indian state of Gujarat. The vessel was heading from Saudi Arabia to India, and was linked to Israel.

Governor of Central Bank of Iran visits Oman

On 11 December, the governor of the [Central Bank of Iran](#), Mohammadreza Farzin travelled to Oman aiming to develop monetary and banking cooperation between the two countries. He was accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari. He held talks with Oman's Minister of Finance Sultan bin Salim Al Habsi, Ferzin, where the two sides noted a 41 percent trade volume growth in the first eight months of the current year and emphasised the importance of strengthening monetary ties between the countries by using their [national currencies](#) in commercial transactions rather than the dollar. Farzin also met with Governor of the Central Bank of Oman Sayyid Taimur bin Asa'ad bin Tariq Al Said to discuss expansion of monetary, financial, and

banking interactions. On 6 December, at the 20th Iran-Oman Joint Economic Cooperation Commission meeting in Tehran, the head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mehdi Zeyghami stated that Iran and Oman will start negotiations for signing a [Preferential Trade Agreement](#).

Iran urges Pakistan to take action against cross-border terrorism

On 15 December, eleven Iranian policemen were killed and six others were wounded in a terrorist attack on a police station in Rask County, located in the south-eastern province of Sistan and Baluchistan. Jaish-ul-Adl, an extremist Salafist terror group claimed responsibility for the attack. A day later, Iran's [Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi](#) while on a visit to Rask argued that grouplets responsible for attacks are supported by Israel. Vahidi stated "We expect our neighbour (Pakistan) to carry out more intensified control over the joint border as it has become clear that the terrorist groups come from the other side of the border." Iran's Police Chief Brigadier General Ahmad Reza Radan, while visiting Rask on 20 December, noted that Iran reserves the [right to respond](#) to terrorism in any territory. Abdollahian, in a phone call with Pakistani caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani highlighted the necessity to enhance bilateral cooperation to stop such "terrorist acts" and ensure security along the common border. He also called on Pakistan to [designate Jaish-ul-Adl](#) as a terrorist group. In Sistan-Baluchistan province bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan, similar attacks on police forces and border guards have occurred previously, including in July 2023 when four policemen were killed while on patrol.