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# Iran

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## President Raisi attends CICA summit in Kazakhstan

President Ebrahim Raisi participated in the sixth meeting of the head of States of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Astana. In [his address](#) at the forum, Raisi supported Kazakhstan's proposal for transforming the CICA multi-national forum into an international organisation. While blaming the United States for creating unrest in Iran, Raisi noted that "convergence and security in Asia are not in interest of hegemonic countries, any attempts to destabilise independent nations has goals and consequences beyond national geography. He noted that "new Asia in the emerging world needs cooperation to design an endogenous model for independent countries to deal with security, economic, media and cyber challenges... creating a common financial system and using regional currencies, designing norms and rules for fighting terrorism, and also strengthening media cooperation". On Afghanistan, highlighting Iran's assistance to Afghan refugees in Iran, President Raisi emphasised that "overcoming the vicious cycle of insecurity and instability requires serious determination and taking practical steps through political dialogues, the goal of which is to form an inclusive government with the participation of all ethnic and religious groups in the country and to implement international commitments, especially bilateral commitments with neighbours".

## IRGC conducts military exercise in north-western provinces bordering Azerbaijan

On 17 October amid ongoing popular protests in Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) carried out military drills codenamed '[Mighty Iran](#)' in

provinces of Ardabil and East Azerbaijan adjoining Iran's border with Azerbaijan. The top IRGC leadership, including the commander-in-chief General Hossein Salami was present in the exercise, which mobilised several units of Ground Force of the IRGC. Just like the extensive IRGC military exercise near Iran's border with Azerbaijan last year, these drills were aimed at showing Iran's deterrence posture against potential border change by Azerbaijan and also a message to Israel, which has a burgeoning defence partnership with Baku. Notably, during the drills, the IRGC for the first time installed a PMP floating bridge and crossed the Aras River that marks the border with Azerbaijan. A week before the drills, on the side-lines of the CICA summit in Astana, Iran's President Raisi had a meeting with his Azeri counterpart Ilham Aliyev, where he reiterated that "from Iran's point of view any change in the historical and geopolitical borders of the region and any change in the transit status of Iran and Armenia are rejected." While referring to the [Prague summit](#) between Armenian and Azeri leaders facilitated by European Council President Charles Michael and French President Emanuel Macron, where Armenia agreed to facilitate a civilian European Union mission along its border with Azerbaijan, Raisi rejected 'any [European military presence](#) under any guise in the region.' The stated goal of the EU mission is mission is to build confidence between the two countries and, through its reports, to contribute to the border commissions.

## ISIS takes responsibility for terrorist attack on Shah Cherag holy shrine in Shiraz

On 26 October, the Shah Cherag shrine in Shiraz was hit by a shooting attack leaving 15 pilgrims dead. The attack was later claimed by ISIS. Following the attack which came amid ongoing protests in the

country, Major General [Mohammed Bagheri](#), the chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces warned that “rioters should know that protecting calm, as well as lives and property of the Iranian people is a red line for the country’s armed forces.” Days later, [President Raisi](#), during a cabinet session appreciated the massive presence of the Iranians in the funeral processions held in Shiraz and other cities and noted that Shiraz attack was part of the enemy’s objectives in fomenting unrest and disturbance in the lives of people through strife, sedition and terror. IRGC chief Major General [Hossein Salami](#), speaking at a funeral ceremony blamed the US, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Israel for unrest in Iran. Salami blamed Saudi Arabia-funded media, such as London-based Iran International, for provoking unrest, saying “you cannot create anxiety for the Iranian nation and yourself live in calm”. Addressing the protesters, he said that “My advice to rioting students is: Return to the nation, don’t play into the hands of enemies.”

### **Foreign Minister Abdollahian denies selling drones to Russia for use in Ukraine conflict**

Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein [Amir-Abdollahian](#) in a telephone conversation with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba on 29 October denied claims that Iran has provided Russia with drones for use in the Ukraine conflict. Abdollahian noted that Iran has undergone an eight-year imposed war and is consequently opposed to conflicts in Ukraine, Yemen, etc.” “Acknowledging Iran’s defence cooperation with Russia in the past, he underscored that Iran’s policy toward the war in Ukraine is to respect the territorial integrity of both countries, not to send weapons to the warring parties.” On 14 October, Ukraine in a [letter to the UN Security Council](#) alleged that Iran had transferred Mohajer and Shahed-series

UAVs to Russia in late August. In its letter, Ukraine argued that the transfers violate resolution 2231, which prohibits member states from acquiring certain materials set out in an annex to the letter dated 16 July 2015 (S/2015/546) from Iran, unless the acquisitions are approved by the Council on a case-by-case basis. Subsequently, Abdollahian had expressed willingness to examine these claims through [technical talks with Ukraine](#) in the presence of military specialists from the two countries without the need for any third party.

### **Iran hosts ministerial summit on transit cooperation with five Central Asian countries**

On 9 October, Iran’s Transport and Urban Development Minister Rostam Qasemi hosted the first [ministerial summit on transit cooperation](#) between Iran and five Central Asian countries – Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Azerbaijan and Russia. At the end of the two day meeting, participants signed a [‘joint statement for enhanced transit’](#). The most important agreements include targeting 20 million tons of transit across these regional countries, establishing a follow up committee of deputy ministers, simplification of visa procedures for drivers, reduction of relevant transit costs and possible removal of traffic permit, and setting joint tariffs for container rail transport. The countries also exchanged views on the development of missing infrastructures within their national territories. Qasemi informed that contracts for two such missing links in Iran, namely rail projects namely Rashat-Astara and Chabahar-Zahedan, will be finalised in the coming months. According to Qasemi, the summit, which seeks to activate multimodal transit east of the Caspian Sea, will be held every six months.