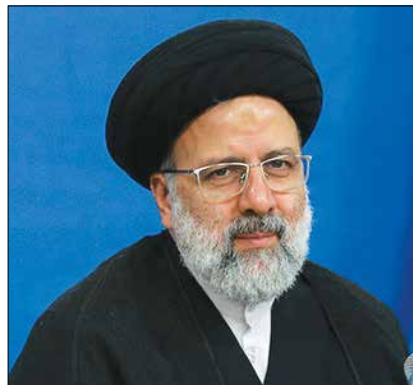


## Iranian president due in Qatar tomorrow

Iran's President Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi will travel to Doha on Monday for talks with senior Qatari officials.



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Accompanied by a delegation of senior officials, including ministers of foreign affairs, oil, and cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, the president will visit the Persian Gulf Arab country at the official invitation of Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

During the two-day trip, negotiations will be held between the two countries' officials and a number of agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) will be signed, Tasnim News Agency reported.

Raesi will also attend and address the Sixth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Doha on Tuesday.

On the sidelines of the summit, he is expected to hold talks with leaders of the participating countries.

The visit will be Raesi's fourth foreign trip since taking office in August last year. The president has so far visited Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Russia.

Earlier on Friday, Iranian and Qatari foreign ministers held a meeting on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference in Germany.

During the meeting, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani discussed bilateral ties and regional issues, Mehr News Agency reported.

Iran's foreign minister elaborated on Iran's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and the necessity of helping Afghan people in order to weather the current difficult situation.

Both officials also talked about regional issues, developments in the Persian Gulf region and the latest status of negotiations in Vienna over Iran's nuclear program.

Referring to the upcoming visit of the Iranian president to Doha, the Qatari official expressed hope that the visit will strengthen the ties between the two countries.

He also touched upon the programs planned for the visit and said Doha stands ready to look to this trip as the basis for further upgrading of mutual relations.

The top Qatari diplomat also welcomed breakthroughs in the Vienna talks and said the outcome of these negotiations is vital for the region.

## FM: Iran seeks removal of all sanctions inconsistent with JCPOA

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He stressed that as for Iran, the Islamic Republic has already put its active initiatives on the negotiating table, noting, "We are very close to a good and accessible agreement."

It is, however, the Western sides that have to submit their initiative and show real flexibility, the Iranian foreign minister said, emphasizing, "It is they who, through their approach toward Iran's initiatives, will determine if the talks come to fruition within of a few days, or a few weeks."

### 'Completion close'

In a Saturday tweet, Russia's ambassador to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, said the "successful completion of the talks on the JCPOA" is close.

He made the remark in reaction to a Twitter post by Philippe Errera, the director general for political and security affairs at France's Foreign Ministry, who had said negotiating teams of the E3 group of France, Britain and Germany will stay in the Austrian capital.

"E3 remain in Vienna as well! Our teams with clear mandate and full authority. Let's focus on real issues," Errera's tweet reads.

Ulyanov added that although the heads of the E3 delegations will leave Vienna for a few days, the other members of their delegations will remain in the Austrian capital and continue the talks, "which is encouraging".

"Great! The Heads of E3 delegations need to leave Vienna for a couple of days. But their teams will be available in Austrian capital for further negotiations! This is encouraging! We are close to successful completion of the talks on #JCPOA."

In another post on his Twitter page, Errera said, "The goal shared with our partners is for the US to rejoin the JCPOA, lift sanctions and Iran to comply with its nuclear commitments under the agreement." He added, "With our E3 partners Russia & China, we remain fully determined & mobilized to see a return to the agreement while there is still time."

The United States left the JCPOA in 2018 and began to implement what it called the "maximum pressure" campaign of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, depriving the country of the economic benefits of the agreement, including the removal of sanctions, for which Iran had agreed to certain caps on its nuclear activities.

In the meantime, the other parties to the deal, in particular France, Britain and Germany, only paid lip service to safeguarding Iran's economic dividends as promised under the JCPOA, prompting Iran - after an entire year of "strategic patience" - to reduce its nuclear obligations in a legal move under the deal.

The Vienna talks began last April on the assumption that the U.S., under President Joe Biden's administration, is willing to repeal the so-called maximum pressure policy pursued by former president Donald Trump.

Tehran says it will not settle for anything less than the removal of all U.S. sanctions in a verifiable manner. It also wants guarantees that Washington would not abandon the agreement again.

## Iranian FM discusses ties, int'l issues with foreign officials in Germany

### Iran warns of Afghan refugee crisis, Yemen disaster

The Iranian foreign minister, who is in Germany to attend the 58th Munich Security Conference (MSC), seized the opportunity to hold talks with his counterparts and other officials from international bodies to discuss bilateral ties and regional and international issues.

During the meetings, he discussed Iran nuclear talks in Vienna, crises in the Middle East region, bilateral ties and economic relations with the officials from other countries.

In a meeting with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on the sidelines of the conference, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian warned of the burden of a new wave of refugees from Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover of the Central Asian country and also stated that the ongoing Yemen crisis has reached a critical point that requires concerted international efforts.

The Iranian foreign minister stressed the need for the continuation of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan, with the involvement of all ethno-political groups in order to effectively address the lingering problems in the country, according to Press TV.

He pointed to the continuing influx of refugees from Afghanistan, warning that the trend could result in the spread of terrorism as well as illicit drug production and trafficking, which would subsequently undermine regional and international stability and security.

The top Iranian diplomat also called for greater assistance by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to Afghanistan's neighboring states, including Iran.

Afghanistan has been in the grip of a major humanitarian disaster, worsened by the freezing of assets worth billions of dollars by the United States and its allies.

Since last August, international aid, which financed nearly 80 percent of the



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (R) holds talks with Belgium's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sophie Wilmes on the sidelines of the 58th Munich Security Conference in Germany on February 19, 2022.

war-ravaged country's budget, has been suspended and nearly \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to Afghanistan's central bank have been frozen by Washington, contributing to the pitiable plight of millions of Afghans.

This is while unemployment has skyrocketed in the country and civil servants' salaries have not been paid for months, as banks are out of cash and the government is grappling with a dearth of funds.

Amid the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, hunger now threatens 23 million Afghans, or 55 percent of the total population, according to the UN.

### Yemen conflict

Amir-Abdollahian also pointed to the

ongoing Yemen conflict, saying the crisis has reached a "critical point".

"Efforts should be increased in order to reach a political solution to the [Yemen] conflict and prevent the deterioration of the humanitarian catastrophe there," he added.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies, backed by the United States and European powers, launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former Yemeni president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi back to power and crushing the Ansarullah resistance movement.

The war has left hundreds of thousands of Yemenis dead and displaced millions more. It has also destroyed Yemen's infrastructure and spread famine and infec-

tious diseases there.

For his part, Guterres appreciated Iran's efforts regarding the plight of Afghan refugees and stressed the need for increased global support and assistance to Iran in this regard.

The UN chief noted that the international community needs to support and assist the Afghan economy and prevent a financial crisis and economic collapse in the country, as it will lead to dire consequences for regional and international stability and security.

Guterres also warned of the continuation of the humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen and stated that all involved parties and the international community must join forces in order to work out a political solution to the crisis in the Arab country.

The ongoing crises in Afghanistan and Yemen were among the issues which were discussed in a separate meeting between Amir-Abdollahian and his Dutch counterpart Wopke Hoekstra in Germany, according to IRNA.

The Iranian top diplomat also held several meetings with his counterparts from other countries on the sidelines of the international event.

He met German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on Friday night and discussed some issues of mutual interest. Amir-Abdollahian announced Iran's readiness to hold a joint commission between the two countries as soon as possible. He also stressed Iran's readiness for expansion of economic, political, cultural, scientific, technical relations.

The Iranian foreign minister who had a busy day, also held separate talks with his counterparts from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Qatar, Iraq, India, Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Austria and Armenia.

Bilateral relations, economic ties, regional issues and Iran nuclear talks were among the issues discussed during the meetings.

## Berri voices Lebanon's support for Iran-Saudi dialogue

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri said Beirut supports negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Berri expressed hope that the negotiations would produce positive results in the interests of both nations, and also in the interests of Arab and Muslim countries, as well as people of the region, Iran Press reported.

Speaking at the opening session of the Arabic Parliamentary Union in Cairo, Berri also thanked Iraq for mediating talks between Tehran and Riyadh.

Iraq has hosted direct talks between Iranian and Saudi delegations with the aim of reviving relations between the two countries.

The negotiations were launched under Iran's

former President Hassan Rouhani, who was replaced in August by Seyyed Ebrahim Raesi.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic relations with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian protesters, enraged by the Saudi execution of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, stormed its embassy in Tehran.

For years, the kingdom pursued a confrontational foreign policy toward the Islamic Republic, but it recently appeared to have changed track.

The two Middle East heavyweights have held four rounds of talks since April.

Last year, Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud expressed hope that Riyadh's direct dialogue with Tehran would lead to confidence building.

Head of Iran's Pasteur Institute said that the institute is equipped with the latest methods and devices for detecting coronavirus mutations.

Alireza Biglari said on Saturday "the tools that we dreamed of having since the disease outbreak now exist and we are forerunner of diagnosis due to our reliance on indigenous knowledge".

Biglari made the remarks while describing the status quo of the COVID pandemic in Iran at a press conference on Saturday, according to Iran Press.

"We had a lot of challenges at the beginning of the pandemic in Iran, but the country's strategy was to make the best use of the available tests, so we often provided the available test capacity to hospitals with patients entering hospitals with respiratory symptoms on priority."

He highlighted that before detecting the first cases in the country, diagnostic procedures were set up in Iran, and three laboratories were able to diagnose the cases.

"In the early days of the pandemic, when the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended that we use three

## Iran uses latest methods to detect coronavirus mutations



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genes to check for disease, we used one gene because we believed it was enough to identify and diagnose the disease. Iran

endorsed this strategy for diagnosing the disease with a single gene and recommended it to other countries," Biglari

said.

He stressed that coronavirus diagnosis is now performed in 500 laboratories across the country while having the national laboratory network was a dream.

In recent days, Iran has been facing a rise in the number of COVID cases and deaths.

According to the Health Ministry, 191 people died from COVID-19 in 24 hours. The ministry put the total death toll at 134,798.

The ministry also reported 12,058 new positive cases, bringing the total number to 6,925,485.

It said that 4,011 patients are in intensive care units.

According to the latest analysis, 337 cities in the country are classified as red - the highest rating on its coronavirus risk scale.

So far, 62,037,154 people have received the first dose of the COVID vaccine, 55,042,390 have received the second dose, 22,068,114 have received the booster shot, and the total number of vaccines injected in the country reached 139,147,658 doses.



Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri

AZIZ TAHER/REUTERS