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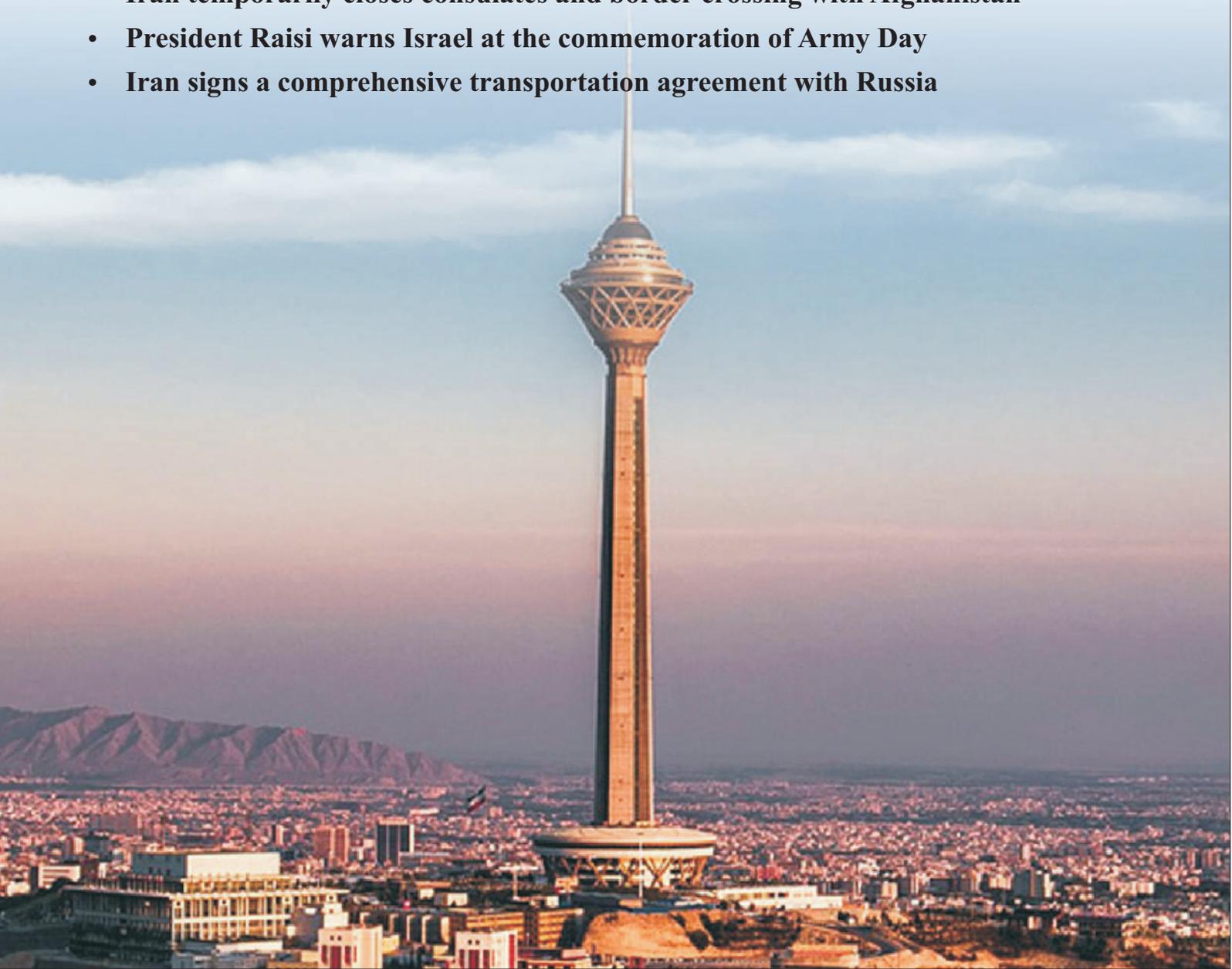
मनोहर परिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Digest

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Iranian and Saudi security officials hold fifth round of dialogue in Baghdad

On 27 April, Iraq hosted fifth round of talks between senior security officials from Iran and Saudi Arabia. According to spokesperson of Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talks between Saudi delegation led by Intelligence chief Khalid Al-Humaidan and Iranian team headed by Saeed Iravani, Deputy Secretary of Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), were held in a ‘[positive, understanding atmosphere](#),’ raising hopes for resuming their bilateral ties. The dialogue came after seven months hiatus since October 2021 parliamentary elections in Iraq and a long-drawn process of government formation. Earlier, on 15 April, Iraqi Foreign Minister [Fuad Hussein](#) visited Iran and in a joint press meet with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had expressed that the next round of talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia will be held soon. A day before the talks, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson [Saeed Khatibzadeh](#) noted that “Iran-Saudi talks are helping to reduce tensions in the region.” At the same time, suggesting a policy of no change in Iran’s relations with Lebanon and Yemen, he argued that a principle of Iran’s foreign policy is that “we do not include any third country in our bilateral relations.”

China’s Defence Minister visits Iran

On 27 April, Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe visited Iran and met President Ebrahim Raisi. During the meeting, Raisi underlined Iran’s policy of developing [long-term strategic relations](#) with China in various fields, saying “we pursue these strategic relations regardless of international developments and based on mutual political trust, and the successful implementation of the 25-year comprehensive cooperation

program is a priority in this regard.” These remarks come amidst the growing apprehensions that Iran may rebalance its relations with China with the imminent revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). For his part, Wei said that Chinese and Iranian presidents have exchanged telephone calls and letters since last year, leading to new progress in building the [comprehensive strategic partnership](#) between the two countries. Further, he stated that “his visit to Iran, which came against the backdrop of current turbulent international situation, reflected the importance of the China-Iran relations, their firm mutual support and joint progress.” Wei also had separate meetings with Chief of Staff of Iranian Armed Forces, IRGC Commander [Mohammed Bagheri](#), and Defence Minister Reza Ashtiani exchanging views on the regional and international security situations, Iran’s nuclear issue and the situation in Ukraine. The two sides also reached consensus on expanding [high-level strategic communication](#), deepening military exchanges and conducting joint exercises and personnel training.

Iran temporarily closes consulates and border crossing with Afghanistan

On 12 April, following violent protests at Iran’s Consulate in Herat in Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry of Iran summoned [Taliban Chargé d'affaires](#) to register a formal protest and suspended all consular services in the country. The head of South Asia Department at Iran’s Foreign Ministry, [Rasoul Mousavi](#), stated that consular services will resume once Afghanistan ensures their safety. The violent demonstration at Iranian consulates in Kabul and Herat emerged after unverified videos on social media showed Iranian border guards and mobs assaulting Afghan refugees. Earlier on 4 April, Iran’s [Deputy Minister for Security Affairs](#),

Sayyed Majid Mir-Ahmadi, had dismissed as bogus a video clip about a massive influx of Afghan refugees to the borders of Iran. Mir-Ahmadi said that the clip is made at Jaleq and Kalgan on Pakistani territory and added that “now more than one thousand people come to the borders every day, but the illegal entry of these citizens is prevented.” On 27 April, after Iran temporarily closed [Dogharoon-Islam Qala](#) border connecting Herat with Iran’s Mashhad, [Ahmad Vahidi](#), Minister of Interior and an IRGC commander, rejected claims of border clashes stating that “no clashes erupted between Iranian forces and Taliban; what happened was only a misunderstanding.” The Taliban thought that some border areas should be under their control, Vahidi said, adding that Iranian border guards could justify that the Taliban are wrong. Similar skirmishes were reported in [December 2021](#), when Taliban captured several Iranian border checkpoints and later withdrew following an agreement between the two sides.

President Raisi warns Israel at the commemoration of Army Day

On 18 April, President Raisi, speaking at the commemoration of the [Army Day](#) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, warned Israel of military action for ‘tiniest move’ against Iran. Emphasising that Iran will never start a war, but will face any aggression with decisive response, Raisi noted that “the Zionist regime that is seeking to normalise relations with some regional countries must know that the slightest move it makes will not be hidden from the sharp eyes and intelligence of the Armed Forces and intelligent forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” On 24 April, Qatar’s *Al Jazeera* quoted an unnamed Iranian source as saying that “Tehran had sent to Israel, through a European country, photos and maps of [Israeli nuclear weapons stores](#).” “Most of the pictures are terrestrial and not

satellites,” the report mentioned, suggesting that other forms of intelligence gathering rather than surveillance drones have been involved. On 30 April, [Esmail Qaani](#), the Commander of the Quds Force of the IRGC, while addressing public rally on Quds day – marked on the last Friday of Ramadan since 1979 revolution in Iran – hailed successful flights by two Iranian drones over Israel a few months ago, which he argued Tel Aviv has attempted to keep hidden. In March 2022, amidst an escalating drone war between Iran and Israel, the latter claimed that it used [F-35 fighter jets](#) to Iranian drones before they entered Israeli airspace.

Iran signs a comprehensive transportation agreement with Russia

On 29 April, Rostam Ghasemi, Minister of Transport of Iran visited Moscow and signed a comprehensive agreement to expand [transportation cooperation](#) with Russia. Ghasemi was following up on the agreements reached during President Raisi’s visit to Moscow in January 2022, during which Moscow finalised US\$ 5 billion credit line for the completion of three power plants and two rail projects Rasht-Astara and Incheh Borun-Garmsar , which are related to the International North South Transportation Corridor. Expressing hope that the two sides would collaborate in Rasht-Astara, which is important for integrating railways of Azerbaijan, Russia and Iran, Ghasemi said that “the north-south railway corridor could be the basis for expanding cooperation between Russia, Iran, Central Asia and the Caucasus. In another unrelated development Ghasemi, who is an IRGC brigadier general, has appointed a serving commander at IRGC’s Aerospace Force Second Brigadier General Shamseddin Farzadipour as the CEO of country’s flag carrier [Iran Air](#).