

September 2016

Politics:

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei [condemned](#) Saudi Arabia for preventing Iranian pilgrims from undertaking the Hajj pilgrimage in 2016. Saudi Arabia banned Iranians from attending the ceremony this year after a diplomatic row over the 2015 Hajj disaster.

Iran and Britain [upgraded](#) diplomatic relations to Ambassador Status for the first time in five years. The UK embassy in Tehran was closed following an attack by students in 2011.

The head of Iran's Haji and Pilgrimage Organization Saeed Ohadi [accused](#) Saudi Arabia of being uncooperative in relation to compensating the victims of the 2015 Hajj disaster.

203 Iranian parliamentarians [signed](#) a petition in support of Bahraini anti-government demonstrations.

Ayatollah Khamenei [met](#) with commanders and officials at Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya air defence base. Khamenei declared that Iran's air defences should be ready and willing to confront enemy attacks.

The Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Ali Larijani [said](#) that Iran has not granted Russia access to military bases.

The Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan [told](#) worshippers before Friday prayers in Tehran that the US's interventionist policies had failed in the Middle East.

Unconfirmed reports emerged that Ayatollah Khamenei has [blocked](#) former-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from entering the 2017 presidential race.

International Relations:

President Hassan Rouhani [travelled](#) to New York to participate in the 71th annual session of the UN General Assembly.

Iran [denied](#) Saudi claims that the Islamic Republic has sent arms to Yemen.

The chief spokesman for Iran's armed forces [declared](#) that the US navy had fabricated claims of harassment by Iranian boats in Persian Gulf.

President Rouhani [attended](#) the opening ceremony of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit to hand over the body's three-year rotating presidency to Venezuela.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif [met](#) with his Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Venezuela to discuss regional development and further cooperation.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to the Iranian Supreme Leader, [met](#) with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien in Tehran. Velayati said that Iran is willing to assist the UN in resolving the Middle East humanitarian crisis.

The Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Hassan Danaeifar [spoke](#) with the former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Baghdad. Danaeifar said that Iran is ready to expand security cooperation with the Iraqi government against ISIS.

The Chairman of the Iranian Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy Alaeddin Boroujerdi [met](#) with the Japanese Foreign Minister Kentaro Sonoura in Tehran. Boroujerdi said that the US and its regional allies had made a big mistake by providing financial and military assistance to extremists.

Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) with the Omani Interior Minister Hamoud bin Faisal Al Busaidi in Tehran to sign a historic agreement on the formal demarcation of the two countries' maritime boundaries.

The Russian deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov made a one-day [trip](#) to Tehran to discuss the ongoing implementation of the nuclear deal with Iranian officials.

The Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani [met](#) with Foreign Minister Zarif and the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani in Tehran to discuss the two countries' security, as well as strengthening bilateral relations.

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Foreign Minister Zarif [met](#) the president of French National Assembly Claude Bartolone in Tehran. Zarif said that Iran is ready to cooperate with European countries on the Syrian crisis and the fight against terrorism.

An Iranian delegation including Foreign Minister Zarif [travelled](#) to Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, Brazil, Cuba and Nicaragua to discuss the expansion of international ties.

Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Zarif, [attended](#) the funeral of President Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan.

The Speaker of the Malaysian parliament Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia [met](#) with the Iranian parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani in Tehran. The two Speakers discussed the impact that regional crises are having on Muslim countries.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu made a [short visit](#) to Tehran on August 20 to discuss the Syrian crisis with Foreign Minister Zarif. A senior Iranian official later said that there is potential for the two countries' positions on Syria to converge in the future.

The Iraqi parliamentary speaker Salim al-Jabouri [visited](#) Iran to meet with Iranian officials, including President Rouhani. The two parties discussed military cooperation against ISIS.

President Rouhani [met](#) with the OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo in Tehran. Rouhani underlined that low oil prices and market instability was 'detrimental to member countries.'

Economics:

Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri and the Algerian Minister of Energy Noureddine Bouterfa [held](#) a meeting in Tehran. They discussed enhancing bilateral finance and banking relations.

Conservative newspapers [debated](#) the high incomes of some Iranian officials and called for greater transparency on the issue.

Iran has [exported](#) more than US\$3.5 billion worth of petrochemicals over the past five months.

Iran's decision to [join](#) the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was criticised by Iranian conservatives. The final decision has been referred to the Supreme Leader.

Iran [expressed](#) its support for the first draft of a future Iran-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement proposed by Pakistani Officials. Iran submitted a number of amendments for Pakistan's consideration.

British Airways [resumed](#) direct flights to Tehran.

Iran broke its [Japanese oil export record](#) and is now exporting 257,000 barrels of oil per day.

Norway and Iran [signed](#) three memoranda of understanding worth EUR\$1 billion in relation to export credit.

The Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi [met](#) with the Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini in Helsinki. The two ministers discussed further economic cooperation and bilateral investment opportunities.

Conservative newspapers [revealed](#) that two Iranian banks had refused to provide services to a conglomerate linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). Kayhan accused the Rouhani administration of 'self-sanctioning.'

NEW MESF IRAN PUBLICATIONS:

Shahram Akbarzadeh (September 17) "Is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad about to make a political comeback?" **The National** Available at: <http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/is-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-about-to-make-a-political-comeback>

Shahram Akbarzadeh (Interview, September 19) "West recognizing convergence of interests with Iran in combatting terror: Professor" **Tehran Times** Available at: bit.ly/2cDMEGZ

