

March 2017

Politics:

In Tehran, President Rouhani addressed ambassadors and foreign envoys at a ceremony marking the 38th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. He [stressed](#) that Iran's military development is only for the country's self-defence and reiterated that Iran had not interfered in the domestic affairs of other countries.

Iran's Minister of Intelligence Seyyed Mahmoud Alavi announced that eight people were [arrested](#) for attempting to carry out terrorist attacks during celebrations for the Islamic Revolution's 38th anniversary. The eight individuals were later found to have links to the Islamic State.

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani [announced](#) that Russia will continue to use Iranian airspace to carry out anti-terror operations in Syria.

In solidarity with Palestinians, Tehran held the sixth international conference on the [support](#) of the Palestinian Intifada.

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi [received](#) a vote of confidence from lawmakers after attending an impeachment session at parliament. Akhoundi was charged over a number of issues including a train accident that killed 45 people in November last year.

Massive [protests](#) took place in Iran's Khuzestan province against water and power shortages that have left 11 cities in the region suffering from an environmental crisis.

In response to US President Donald Trump's travel ban, Iranian lawmakers [approved](#) legislation that called upon the government to provide almost US\$61.7 million to attract investment by Iranian nationals living in America.

Iranian lawmakers [rejected](#) a proposed article for the early retirement of Iranian women. The article was then deleted from the government's sixth development program.

Second Deputy of the Parliament of Iran Ali Motahari wrote a letter to Ayatollah Jannati chairman of the Assembly of Experts [calling](#) for the release of Green Movement leaders Mirhossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karubi and Zahra Rahnvard who are currently under house arrest.

President Rouhani [met](#) with the head of Iran's reformist coalition Abdolvahed Mousavi Lari. The two discussed political, economic and social issues.

Iranian law makers have [approved](#) a bill that grants fathers three days parental leave.

International Relations:

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei met with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven. They stressed the need to [improve](#) cooperation between the two countries.

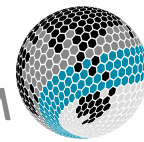
President Rouhani met with Moldovan President Igor Dodon in Tehran. They are set to [enhance](#) cooperation in the fields of energy, agriculture, banking, tourism and transportation.

Swedish Prime Minister Lofven and President Rouhani met in Tehran. Delegations from Iran and Sweden [signed](#) five cooperation documents regarding family, women's affairs, education, technology, road construction, communication and information technology.

Iran [summoned](#) the Turkish ambassador to Iran over Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks against the Islamic Republic and its role in Syria and Iraq.

In Tehran, Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn met with President Rouhani and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. They welcomed the [expansion](#) of cooperation between Iran and Luxembourg in areas such as banking, economics and insurance sectors.

Foreign Minister Zarif [attended](#) a Security Conference in Munich and suggested establishing a forum to [increase](#) cooperation between the Persian Gulf States.



President Rouhani [met](#) with Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said in Oman. On the same tour, Rouhani [travelled](#) to Kuwait and met with Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber Al Sabahand. At both meetings, the Persian Gulf leaders discussed improving mutual relations and regional developments.

In Iran, special envoy of China on Syrian affairs Xie Xiaoyan met with Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari in Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They [discussed](#) political solutions to the Syrian conflict and ceasefire measures.

Iran and Saudi Arabia held negotiations regarding this year's Hajj pilgrimage. Iran [declared](#) it would send pilgrims if Saudi Arabia accepted its conditions regarding security and the payment of compensation to the Iranian families of those killed during the 2015 pilgrimage.

Iranian President Rouhani attended the 13th Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) [summit](#) in Pakistan. Iran and Pakistan are set to [expand](#) cooperation.

During the summit, Rouhani met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to discuss expanding relations in the fields of transportation, energy and banking, while stressing the [importance](#) of enhanced Turkish-Iranian relations in the fight against international terrorism.

In Tehran, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev met with Supreme Leader Khamenei. Khamenei [stressed](#) the importance of enhancing mutual ties between the countries.

Economics:

In Tehran, President Rouhani met with Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Darmin Nasution. They [discussed](#) expanding cooperation.

A rail link between Iran and Azerbaijan was [launched](#). The first train crossed the Azerbaijan border into Iran's northern city of Astara.

France advocated the normalization of banking relations with Iran to [enhance](#) economic relations between the two countries.

The American Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) [announced](#) that under special circumstances, American citizens can open bank accounts in Iran.

Iran and Indonesia [signed](#) a banking cooperation agreement to help facilitate trade between the two countries.

New Zealand Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy and Iranian Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojjati signed an agreement to [resume](#) economic trade.

A Luxembourg court [rejected](#) a US bid to freeze US\$1.5 billion of Iranian assets.

The Prime Ministers of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) [agreed](#) to build a free trade zone with Iran.

Foreign Minister Zarif attended an Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meeting. Zarif [reiterated](#) that the coastal states of the Indian Ocean can benefit from Iran's maritime transportation facilities.

Russia presented a [proposal](#) to Iran detailing plans to renovate the Ilyushin Il-114 regional planes.

Iran's steel export to Europe has [increased](#) significantly over the last three years. Iran is now the third biggest exporter to Europe after China and India.

NEW MESF IRAN PUBLICATIONS

**'Iran's Rouhani may be given a second chance',
Shahram Akbarzadeh**

This article examines Iran's political environment in the lead up to the May 2017 parliamentary election.

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