

Weekly Update

1. Official: Iran in Talks With 21 Countries for Launching Joint Free Zones

Hojatollah Abdulmoliki, advisor to the President of Iran and secretary of the Supreme Council for Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones in Iran, said that negotiations are currently underway with 21 countries on the creation of the joint free zone. Agreement has already been reached with five countries including Syria and Iraq.

Source: [kayhan.ir](https://kayhan.ir/en/news/125369/official-iran-in-talks-with-21-countries-for-launching-joint-free-zones)

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2. Taliban Announces Readiness to Begin Work on Afghan Portion of TAPI Gas Pipeline Project

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project

- transit - Lapis lazuli corridor and MTC "North-South"
- increasing bilateral trade turnover
- cooperation to stimulate economic growth
- TAPI gas pipeline, TAP power lines and other infrastructure projects

Source: [pipeline-journal.net](https://www.pipeline-journal.net/news/taliban-announces-readiness-begin-work-afghan-portion-tapi-gas-pipeline-project)

<https://www.pipeline-journal.net/news/taliban-announces-readiness-begin-work-afghan-portion-tapi-gas-pipeline-project>

3. Iran Unveils AIP Version Of Fateh-Class Submarine At DIMDEX 2024

At the international naval exhibition DIMDEX-2024 in Doha (Qatar), the Iranian Ministry of Defense, among other things, demonstrated a model of a modernized Fateh-class submarine with an air-independent power plant (VNEU). Speaking to Naval News, an Iranian representative said that these submarines were developed by the Iranian Malik Ashtar University of Technology and their integration on the first Fateh-class submarines is expected to take place within a year.

Source: [Naval news](https://www.navalnews.com/event-news/dimdex-2024/2024/03/iran-unveils-aip-version-of-fateh-class-submarine-at-dimdex-2024/)

<https://www.navalnews.com/event-news/dimdex-2024/2024/03/iran-unveils-aip-version-of-fateh-class-submarine-at-dimdex-2024/>

4. Saudi Arabia condemns attempts to undermine UNRWA after Western nations cut off funding

Saudi Arabia reiterated its strong opposition to any efforts to weaken the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the Palestinian Territories.

*Source: **newarab***

<https://www.newarab.com/news/riyadh-condemns-attempt-undermine-unrwa-promises-funding>

5. Cuba Rejects Extension of US Executive Order against Venezuela

Following the extension of an executive order by the President of the United States stating that "Venezuela is considered a serious threat to the national security of the United States", the Venezuelan government condemned the action.

*Source: **Cuban News Agency***

<http://www.cubanews.acn.cu/world/23851-cuba-rejects-extension-of-us-executive-order-against-venezuela>

6. Swedish historical missions

For the first time since the country joined NATO, a Swedish military aircraft flew near Russia's borders, reports Itamilradar, the portal for monitoring military aircraft flights. As the portal notes, the aircraft carry various equipment that can intercept and analyze messages and other electronic signals.

*Source: **Itamilradar***

<https://www.itamilradar.com/2024/03/08/swedish-historical-missions/>

7. Czech Republic backtracks on finding cash to buy 800,000 shells for Ukraine

President of the Czech Republic: Our forces are ready to enter Ukraine. Many important events are expected in May which will be of great importance. Hostilities will soon begin to escalate.

*Source: **Politico***

<https://www.politico.eu/article/czech-republic-backtracks-on-finding-cash-to-buy-800000-shells-for-ukraine/>

8. TDP seals Andhra Pradesh deal with BJP, rejoins NDA ahead of Lok Sabha polls

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has finalized its alliance with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), ending uncertainties ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha and Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections.

*Source: **Hindustan Times***

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/tdp-seals-andhra-deal-with-bjp-rejoins-nda-101710008201746.html>

9. India deports first group of Myanmar nationals for alleged illegal entry

India has begun the deportation of refugees from Myanmar who were seeking asylum following the 2021 military coup. Thousands of refugees are fleeing to Indian states sharing ethnic and family ties with Myanmar. The influx has raised concerns in New Delhi over the possibility of communal tensions spreading across India.

*Source: **Jurist***

<https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/03/india-deports-first-group-of-myanmar-nationals-for-a-lleged-illegal-entry/>

10. Asif Zardari sworn in as 14th president of Pakistan

Asif Ali Zardari won the presidency again. PPP leader and ruling coalition's candidate for the post of head of state Asif Ali Zardari has won the Pakistani presidential election by securing 411 electoral votes, while PTI-backed candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai got only 181 votes.

*Source: **Dawn***

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1820560/asif-zardari-sworn-in-as-14th-president-of-pakistan>