

'Partners in Shaping a Shared Future'

Pezeshkian's visit to Pakistan marks new era of cooperation and unity

► Page 3

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian was received by Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif as he arrived in Islamabad on August 2, 2025.

New Defense Council in works as Iran's officials affirm readiness against Israel: reports

TEHRAN – Tehran is set to activate a new "Supreme Defense Council" as part of significant structural changes within the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), according to reports from Iran's Fars and Tasnim news agencies published Friday and Saturday.

The council, a long-dormant constitutional provision, is expected to play a pivotal role in the formulation of strategic defense policies.

Fars News reported that "informed sources" confirmed the creation of the Defense Council following the finalization of structural changes within the SNSC. ► Page 2

Tehran, Minsk emphasize expansion of agricultural ties

TEHRAN- During a meeting between Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qezeljah and Belarusian Minister of Agriculture Yuri Gorlov,

both sides emphasized the expansion of agricultural cooperation.

In the meeting, the Iranian minister expressed gratitude for Belarus's stance during the Zionist regime's imposed war and highlighted Iran's readiness to deepen bilateral cooperation in mechanization, livestock farming, dairy industries, and joint projects in chemical fertilizer production. ► Page 4

Anti-Israeli protests in Syria

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Protests took place in several parts of Syria, denouncing the Israeli occupation regime and affirming the country's unity. The demonstrations occurred in various regions, including the southwestern province of Daraa and the Damascus countryside.

Protesters denounced the Israeli regime's involvement in Syrian affairs. Demonstrators chanted slogans emphasizing Syrian national identity and rejecting any foreign military or political interference.

The Israeli regime has launched a series of extensive airstrikes across Syria, the latest under the pretext of supporting the Druze community amid internal fighting along sectarian lines.

The regime has also expanded its occupation in the Arab country, which critics argue is an attempt to legitimize its illegal land seizure.

At the same time, large protests erupted in key squares across cities in Sweida province, including Sweida, Salkhad, Shahba, Salim, Qanawat, Mufaqa, Abu Zureiq, and others. ► Page 5

Will Morgan Ortagus return to Beirut?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—As Lebanon awaits the repercussions of the threat by US envoy Thomas Barrack, information has leaked suggesting the end of his mission in Lebanon amid the talk of the possible return of Morgan Ortagus.

Reportedly, the U.S. administration accuses Riyadh, specifically Saudi envoy Yazid bin Farhan, of controlling him.

However, other sources attribute Barrack's removal to pressure from the Lebanese lobby in the United States, which claims that his recent threat to annex Lebanon to the Levant harms the anti-Resistance team, who raise slogans about sovereignty and American guarantees to protect Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Lebanon is on the countdown to the alarming Tuesday government session to discuss the exclusive control of arms by the state so that "the world will not take pity on us," as President Joseph Aoun put it, in a move that constitutes a response to US pressure. ► Page 5

Gaza's cultural heritage: experts warn of systematic erasure of Palestinian memory

TEHRAN – The Gaza Strip, a land steeped in millennia of history, is facing what experts describe as an unprecedented assault on its cultural heritage, with archaeologists warning that the destruction of ancient sites, museums, and archives risks erasing Palestinian historical memory entirely.

Professor Salah Hussein Al-Houdalieh, an archaeologist at Al-Quds University and Secretary General of ICOMOS-Palestine, has sounded the alarm over the devastating impact of Israel's ongoing military campaign, which has now entered its 17th month.

"The Gaza Strip's cultural heritage has endured occupation, looting, and neglect for decades, but what we are witnessing now is systematic obliteration," Al-Houdalieh told. "This is not just collateral damage—it is an ideologically driven assault on Palestinian identity." ► Page 6

Realism, power, and tragedy: Mearsheimer dissects Tel Aviv's dead end

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – John J. Mearsheimer is, without question, the most influential voice in contemporary realist theory in international relations. A professor at the University of Chicago and architect of the so-called "offensive realism" theory, he argues that the international system – lacking any effective supranational authority—pushes states into an inevitable and brutal competition for power. In his view, international politics is not—and cannot be—a realm governed by ideals or abstract norms, but a chessboard where strategic interests, security, and survival determine the actions of state actors. ► Page 3

Art against erasure: witnessing Gaza's unseen pain

By Kurosh Alyani
Iranian cultural critic

TEHRAN- A mother—whether in Norway or Nigeria—switches off the television, refusing the unbearable sight: a grieving mother in Gaza holding her child, starved to death. The image pierces too deep, shattering fragile calm. In that moment, denial shields her heart; the world's pain presses too close. Yet the silence carries its own weight—a quiet witness to sorrow too vast to hold.

In Gaza, catastrophe is not episodic—it is layered, sustained, and simultaneous. Death, hunger, and destruction co-occur in rhythms so dense they numb the global gaze. This saturation of crisis does not amplify outrage; it silences perception. ► Page 8



Witkoff's Gaza visit: A 'photo-op' meant to whitewash US-Israeli 'bloodbaths'

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — The visit of US President Donald Trump's Middle East envoy to Gaza, framed as a humanitarian mission, appears to be a calculated effort to whitewash a humanitarian catastrophe widely seen as fueled by American support for Israel's ongoing war on the enclave.

Steve Witkoff, accompanied by US ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee and Israeli military officials, toured a controversial aid distribution site in Gaza known as the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). It is a US- and Israel-backed initiative launched in late May, ostensibly to provide food packages to Palestinians. ► Page 5

'His path will continue with strength:' Iran vows on Haniyeh's assassination anniversary

TEHRAN – Iran marked the first anniversary of Hamas Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh's assassination with resolute declarations that his path of resistance "will continue with strength," describing his killing as an Israeli crime that only strengthened the resolve to liberate Palestine.

The Islamic Republic's Foreign Ministry, President Masoud Pezeshkian, and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) issued separate statements commemorating Haniyeh, assassinated by the Israeli regime on July 31, 2024, while he was an official guest in Tehran for President Pezeshkian's inauguration ceremony. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

Zangezur Corridor is a tool for geopolitical limitation

In an analysis, Etemad examined the proposed Zangezur Corridor project, highlighting its geopolitical implications. According to reports in Armenian media, Turkey has been seeking access to the so-called Zangezur Corridor for nearly a century. While the Armenian government frames the initiative as a means to unlock economic benefits, the project lacks genuine commercial or economic justification. Its primary function appears to be geopolitical rather than economic. The corridor would reshape the regional order, enabling Turkey and Azerbaijan to assert leadership in the South Caucasus. This shift could marginalize Russia's influence and significantly curtail Iran's strategic presence along its northern borders. For Iran, the consequences could be profound: a disruption in the geopolitical balance, expanded Turkish influence, potential U.S. presence near its borders, and the severing of direct access to Armenia, Georgia, and the Black Sea. Moreover, Iran could become reliant on a transit route through Azerbaijan—one increasingly influenced by Israel—while its role in China's Belt and Road Initiative may be diminished. If control of the corridor is handed over to Baku, Tehran risks losing its leverage over northern trade routes, not only with the South Caucasus, but also with Russia and Europe.

Ressalat: National power in face of Israel's imposed war on Iran

In an article, Ressalat highlighted national unity following Israel's 12-day war against Iran. It wrote: Today, the Islamic Republic is at the peak of its military, political, cultural, social, intelligence, and security power thanks to the resilience of the Iranian nation. This power was unveiled in the imposed war of the United States and the Zionist regime that used all NATO's combat, intelligence, and security capabilities against the Iranian nation. The world today finds itself facing a superpower called Iran, a superpower that has been able to hit Israel's and the United States' vital places with missiles and drones. The Iranian "national power" was able to humiliate the Zionist occupation regime and make it face the ruins in the cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv. What is clear is that the two components of "religion and knowledge" are the driving force of this national power. The West does not want a civilization based on religion and knowledge. Therefore, it believes that the only way to confront the Iranian nation is to attack religious scholars and scientists. A system grounded in both religious principles and scholarly insight exemplifies the strength and effectiveness of Velayat-e Faqih—the rule of the Supreme Jurisprudent—in guiding societal gov-

ernance. This deeply rooted internal structure is resilient and cannot be easily undermined by either domestic or foreign forces.

Farhikhtegan: Best time to quit JCPOA was after Trump's withdrawal

Mohammad Esmaeili, an expert in international law, tells Farhikhtegan that when Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in May 2018, it was the best time for Iran to do so. He said: The best time Iran could have minimized the consequences of the JCPOA was the day Trump withdrew from the JCPOA. Iran should have withdrawn that day. Now we must proceed with caution. Currently, suspending activities with the IAEA is better than withdrawing, because any decision can bring about military dimensions for the Iranian society. Now, deciding to suspend cooperation with the NPT is good, but we can turn this suspension into withdrawal after examining security, political, and defense considerations. Excessive dialogue with the United States also benefits Europe, because Europe wants to be the center of developments related to Iran's nuclear activity. But we must pay attention to the fact that withdrawing from the JCPOA is not bad, but it cannot be a positive obstacle to prevent the activation of the snapback mechanism. The diplomatic apparatus must make the right diplomatic decisions and they must be careful in this regard.

Hamshahri: Why has the West become radical again?

In a commentary, Hamshahri addressed the renewed threat of a military attack on Iran by Trump and Israel. It wrote: Over the past week, the leaders of the Zionist regime and the U.S. have once again intensified their rhetoric towards the Islamic Republic of Iran and spoken of the possibility of a renewed military attack on Iran. These radical positions seem meaningful, especially as Western governments are increasing pressure on Tel Aviv to facilitate humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza and made a promise to recognize the Palestinian state soon under certain conditions. And since the Zionist regime is currently not in a good state due to the urgent demand from the global public to end the famine in the Gaza Strip, the regime is trying to relieve itself from the pressure by renewing the threat of possibility of another aggression against Iran. The next goal is to unsettle public opinion in Iran and prevent the situation from becoming normal in our country. In other words, the Zionists and Americans, with their cyber mercenaries, are trying to put the Iranian nation in a state of "struggle for survival" and not allow issues such as development and progress to find a place in our national prospect as Iranians.

'His path will continue with strength:' Iran vows on Haniyeh's assassination anniversary



Martyred Hamas Leader Haniyeh (center) visiting an exhibition in Tehran's Milad Tower hours before being assassinated

From page 1 ► The Foreign Ministry described him as a "steadfast mujahid" in a statement on Friday, declaring: "The path of Martyr Haniyeh and other martyrs of the Resistance will continue with strength until the liberation of the oppressed Palestinian people from the yoke of the occupiers and the realization of their right to self-determination."

It condemned his killing in Tehran as "a colossal crime and a gross violation of international law, national sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of Iran," asserting it was part of Israel's "evil colonial scheme to eliminate

the Palestinian people."

The Ministry demanded prosecution of the perpetrators and an end to their impunity.

"The terrorist and criminal nature of [the Israeli regime] is more evident to everyone than ever before," the statement continued, asserting that the U.S. and Western states have been "accomplices and partners" through military and political support.

It emphasized Iran's "resolve to decisively exercise its inherent right to self-defense" against Israeli aggression.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

New Defense Council in works as Iran's officials affirm readiness against Israel: reports

From page 1 ► It described the new body as having "strategic missions in the field of the country's defense policies," adding that its structure "will be finalized soon" and represents "part of the new governance arrangement in the field of defense and security."

Tasnim provided further detail on Saturday, citing Article 176 of the Iranian Constitution.

The article explicitly states that the SNSC "shall form subordinate councils, such as a Defense Council and a National Security Council, commensurate with its duties."

Tasnim reported that the structure of the Defense Council itself was approved "a few days ago" based on this constitutional authority.

According to their sources, the President will chair the council, with a military figure likely appointed by the President as its secretary.

Key objectives reportedly include "supporting the comprehensive strengthening of the country's defense capability," "increasing the speed of decision-making in the country's defense sector," and incorporating additional military commanders beyond the Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff (who is already on the SNSC).

Tasnim's report also listed potential members, suggesting the council would include the heads of the three branches of government, two representatives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution within the SNSC, the Minister of Intelligence, the Chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), the Commander-in-Chief of the Army (Artesh), and the Commander of the Central Khatam al-Anbiya Headquarters.

Historically, a Supreme De-



Entrance of Iran's Supreme National Security Council headquarters

fense Council operated during the Iran-Iraq War under Article 110 of the Constitution, with many of its duties later assumed by the post-constitutional revision SNSC under Article 176.

The formation of the Defense Council, as reported, appears designed to streamline high-level defense decision-making within Iran's constitutional framework, reflecting lessons learned from the 12-day U.S.-Israeli war on Iran and a leadership consensus on maintaining the highest levels of military readiness against perceived enduring threats.

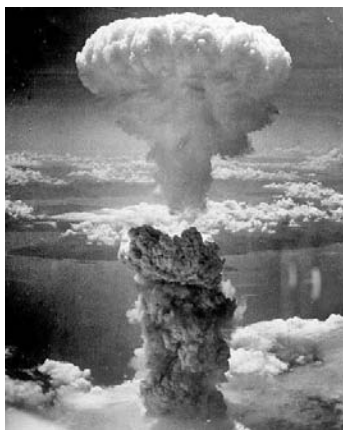
Iran-Israel ceasefire believed to be feeble

The development comes amidst heightened regional tensions and a resolute distrust within Iran's leadership toward the Israeli regime's ceasefire claims, which are widely viewed as deceptive and unreliable.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi has emphasized Iran's defensive posture and preparedness.

"We were not the initiators of war, but we responded to the aggressor with full force," General Mousavi stated, adding a pointed warning: "Since we have complete doubts about the enemy's adherence to its commitments,

Iran and Japan should lead global disarmament movement, says Araghchi



Atomic bomb mushroom clouds over Nagasaki

TEHRAN – As the world prepares to mark 80 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Iran is calling on Japan to join forces in a new push to eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) once and for all.

In a heartfelt op-ed published in Japan's Asahi Shimbun, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi drew parallels between the suffering of the two nations—Japan, the only country to endure nuclear attacks, and Iran, a victim of chemical warfare during the brutal Iran-Iraq War.

"No one understands the horrors of these weapons better than we do," Araghchi wrote. "Japan's cities were erased in an instant. Our people still bear the scars of Saddam's poison gas."

If any nations have the moral authority to demand disarmament, it is us."

The United States dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese

cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945, instantly killing an estimated 140,000 and 74,000 people, respectively. Many more died in the following months and years from radiation sickness, burns, and cancers. Saddam Hussein's regime, backed by Western powers, repeatedly attacked Iranian soldiers and civilians with chemical weapons during its invasion of Iran in the 1980s, using mustard gas and nerve agents. One of the deadliest attacks occurred in Sardasht (1987), where Iraqi warplanes dropped chemical bombs on a residential area, killing 130 civilians and injuring thousands, many with permanent disabilities.

Iran estimates over 100,000 victims of chemical attacks, with survivors still suffering from respiratory diseases, blindness, and cancers today.

Elsewhere in his op-ed, the minister didn't hold back in condemning U.S. President Donald Trump, who recently compared US-Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"To equate our peaceful nuclear sites—monitored by international inspectors—with the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians is not just wrong. It's an insult to the memory of every life lost," Araghchi said.

Araghchi served as Iran's ambassador to Japan from 2008 to 2011 and is believed to maintain close ties with the country's academic and media elites.

Iranian embassy in Denmark denies Western interference allegations



The Iranian embassy in Denmark's capital Copenhagen

TEHRAN – The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Denmark has strongly refuted accusations leveled by a number of Western governments concerning alleged extraterritorial interference targeting dissidents, journalists, and officials.

In a statement released Friday, the embassy described the accusations as "baseless and politically motivated," maintaining that they lack credible evidence.

The response follows a joint statement issued Thursday by Albania, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the U.S. The joint statement alleged that Iranian intelligence agencies are actively engaged in attempts to "kill, kidnap, and harass people in Europe and North America" without providing any evidence.

"These allegations are completely false and lack any credible evidence, and appear to be part of a deliberate attempt to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the embassy stated. It went on to note that Iran adheres to international law, respects national sovereignty, and observes the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The embassy challenged those making the accusations "to provide verifiable evidence rather than relying on baseless speculation."

The statement further expressed concern over the harboring of "terrorist elements" by Western states, noting that some of the countries making the accusations have provided refuge to groups that have planned and exe-

reach, was a key factor compelling the Israeli regime to seek an urgent halt to the fighting through international intermediaries.

'Three-phase preparedness'

Speaking at the 97th meeting of the National Passive Defense Committee on Saturday, General Mousavi elaborated on the Armed Forces' continuous readiness strategy. During a separate event, he outlined a structured approach ensuring constant vigilance.

"The Armed Forces today pursue distinct preparedness programs across three timeframes: short-term, medium-term, and long-term," General Mousavi affirmed.

He stressed the necessity of adopting the same approach for enhancing readiness within the civilian sector, particularly regarding the immunization of critical service infrastructure vital to the public.

The meeting focused on evaluating the performance of executive agencies in the field of passive defense, especially during the recent conflict with the Israeli regime.

Attendees analyzed strengths, weaknesses, and the enemy's threat patterns to devise solutions for enhancing the resilience of essential national infrastructure services.

Key outcomes included the approval of a national directive for public passive defense education, outlining duties for cultural and educational bodies, and the ratification of guidelines governing urban shelters, temporary housing, and emergency accommodation, defining responsibilities for relevant executive agencies.

Committee members emphasized the need for strict adherence to these directives by all responsible entities.

cuted violent attacks against the Iranian people for years.

Specifically, the Iranian Embassy addressed Denmark's judicial record concerning the 'Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz' (ASMLA), a terrorist and separatist group Danish authorities have acknowledged as being involved in orchestrating terrorist operations within Iran, including the 2018 attack on a military parade in Ahvaz.

The Danish prosecutor's office has, thus far, declined to charge members of the ASMLA with terrorist acts committed on Iranian soil, a move the statement characterized as "questionable and an example of selective prosecution."

The statement further mentioned Albania's harboring of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MEK), a terror outfit that is responsible for the deaths of over 24,000 Iranians, and faces allegations of human rights violations against its own members.

"All countries should uphold honesty, responsibility, and avoid double standards when dealing with terrorism," the embassy concluded.

‘Partners in shaping a shared future’

Pezeshkian’s visit to Pakistan marks new era of cooperation and unity



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian meets Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League, in Lahore on August 2, 2025.

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – As Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian commenced his two-day official visit to Pakistan on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described Tehran and Islamabad as “partners in shaping a shared future” in an article published ahead of the trip.

President Pezeshkian’s visit, conducted at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reflects growing momentum in Tehran-Islamabad ties, following a series of high-level exchanges, including the late President Ebrahim Raisi’s landmark visit to Islamabad and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s trip to Tehran.

Honoring Iqbal: a symbolic start in Lahore

Pezeshkian’s arrival in Lahore, where he paid tribute to the philosopher and poet Muhammad Iqbal at his mausoleum, was a symbolic start to the trip.

The gesture underscored Iran’s emphasis on cultural and ideological ties with Pakistan. Iqbal, a revered figure in both countries, represents a bridge between Persian and South Asian Islamic thought.

President Pezeshkian also signed the official memorial book at the tomb, leaving a message of shared historical and civilizational identity.

Nawaz Sharif praises Iran’s resistance, reaffirms brotherhood

In Lahore, President Pezeshkian also held a brief meeting with Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League. Nawaz Sharif used the opportunity to praise Iran’s stance and the Iranian people’s resilience in the face of Israeli aggression.

He said that the Iranian people

ple had not only defended their country but had projected “a renewed and dignified image” of Iran. Describing Iran’s resistance as “a courageous confrontation with global powers,” Nawaz Sharif emphasized that in Pakistan, such steadfastness is seen as a source of honor. He added that his presence at the airport to personally welcome President Pezeshkian was intended to acknowledge this “great resilience.” Stressing fraternal ties, he stated, “Pakistan is not just a neighbor but a brother to the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

President Pezeshkian expressed gratitude for the support shown by the Pakistani people and authorities. Echoing the theme of unity, he stated that if Muslims around the world were united, the Zionist regime would no longer be able to target independent nations one by one. He urged the Muslim world to share scientific, industrial, and agricultural capacities and to form a unified bloc to meet the needs of the Islamic Ummah.

Following the cultural and symbolic engagements in Lahore, Pezeshkian proceeded to Islamabad, where meetings are scheduled with senior Pakistani officials.

Pezeshkian thanks Pakistan for support during US-Israeli aggression

In remarks delivered prior to the visit, Pezeshkian pointed out that Pakistan has consistently condemned Israeli and the U.S. aggression against Iran, including at the parliamentary level, and has expressed readiness to support Iran’s territorial integrity. He praised Pakistan’s principled positions, particularly in light of regional instability and external pressure.

Economically, Pezeshkian em-

phasized that the trip aimed to expand trade and commercial cooperation, setting an ambitious target of increasing bilateral trade to \$10 billion. He highlighted border markets, air and maritime links, and Iran’s interest in integrating into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as areas of opportunity. Pezeshkian underlined the importance of connectivity between Iran and Pakistan and expressed optimism that Iran could link to Europe through the CPEC network.

He also stressed the importance of border security and regional stability, describing them as essential concerns for both countries. He pledged efforts to coordinate closely with Pakistani counterparts to ensure sustain-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd L) along with Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, visits the tomb of the renowned poet Muhammad Iqbal in the Pakistani city of Lahore on August 2, 2025.

able security in the region, and once again reiterated that Islamic unity was key to preventing further regional fragmentation. Pezeshkian concluded by stating that hostile actors were actively working to divide Islamic nations, and that Tehran and Islamabad must work together to reinforce cohesion and solidarity.

‘A strategic bond rooted in history’, Foreign Minister Araghchi hails Iran, Pakistan ties

Ahead of the visit, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi authored an article titled “A Shared Future”, in which he noted Iran-Pakistan relations as a strategic partnership, not just a product of geographic proximity, but one grounded in history, religion, and common purpose.

He wrote that Iran’s foreign policy centers on fostering stable and mutually beneficial ties with neighbors, with Pakistan holding a special place due to the two countries’ deep-rooted historical, cultural, and religious

bonds.

Araghchi emphasized that Iran and Pakistan are sovereign Muslim nations capable of shaping the future of the region, and that their shared values—justice, compassion, and solidarity—guide their common stance on international issues, particularly the Palestinian cause. He highlighted Pakistan’s condemnation of the June 2025 Israeli and U.S. military strikes on Iranian soil, calling the public support shown by the Pakistani people “deeply moving” and unforgettable.

From an economic perspective, Araghchi stressed the complementary strengths of both economies—Iran’s energy resources and Pakistan’s agricultural base—as a foundation

for long-term cooperation. He advocated for practical trade and transit corridors, which could, he argued, yield tangible economic benefits and support the development of a fair, open regional economy.

In the area of security cooperation, Araghchi noted the alignment between Tehran and Islamabad in combating terrorism and extremism, while also calling for institutional mechanisms and long-term planning to turn shared aspirations into action. He pointed to joint work in international organizations such as the UN, OIC, SCO, and D-8, describing these as platforms through which Iran and Pakistan pursue shared goals of connectivity and integration.

In conclusion, Araghchi wrote that unity, mutual respect, and cooperation between the two nations would serve as the basis for lasting peace and shared prosperity.

I believe in a great future: Kapogianni

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s national basketball team, under the guidance of Greek coach Eleni Kapogianni, came close to advancing to Asia’s Division A but narrowly missed out.

Despite falling short in the 2024 Asian Division B final against Chinese Taipei, Kapogianni’s impact on the team has been undeniable.

Over nearly three years, she has helped transform the squad into a confident, competitive force on the continental stage.

In this interview, Kapogianni discusses the team’s journey, challenges faced, and her views on the future of women’s basketball in Iran as her contract comes to an end.

Tehran Times: Congratulations on your team’s inspiring run to the final. Are you satisfied with their overall performance?

–Thank you. Yes, I’m very satisfied. Considering where we started two and a half years ago and where we are now, the progress is remarkable.

Our team made Iran’s women’s basketball a topic of discussion across Asia, and that’s very rewarding as a coach. What was the main reason Iran couldn’t beat Chinese Taipei in the final?

–Chinese Taipei have been a Division A team for years, and even though they dropped to Division B two years ago, they are very athletic and experienced.

Their whole roster is strong. We competed well for the first half, but their pressure exposed our lack of experience and athleticism. Still, I don’t think any other team could have performed better against them than we did.

Many say this generation of Iranian players is bold and ready to create a new chapter. Do you agree? What defines them?

–Absolutely. This is a new era for Iranian women’s basketball. The players have great potential and talent. What they need is proper training, education, and more opportunities to compete internationally.

The federation has helped arrange some games, but more exposure is crucial. Compared to two years ago, the team are more determined and confident that they can achieve great things.

How do you see the future of Iranian women’s basketball?

–I’m optimistic. Within three to five years, Iran could become one of the strongest teams in Asia. But this requires a well-structured plan, quality coaching, and ongoing development programs for young players. It won’t happen overnight, but the foundation is there.

What about your own future coaching in Iran?

–That’s not for me to decide right now. In almost three years here, I’ve felt deeply connected to Iran and honored to represent the country.

I have given my heart to this job and always respected the trust placed in me. My contract has ended, and now we will discuss what comes next. I thank the federation and all Iranians for their support.

Women’s canoe polo ready to shine in Chengdu: Elahe Pourabdian

TEHRAN – Elahe Pourabdian, a player of Iran’s women’s canoe polo team, expressed confidence that they aim to steal the spotlight at the 2025 World Games.

The women’s competition will see New Zealand, Iran, Germany, and China in Group A, while Italy, Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands are in Group B. The Iranian delegation will participate with over 30 athletes across nine different sports.

“Our group includes teams from Germany, New Zealand, and China. Germany and New Zealand are regarded as two of the top powers in women’s canoe polo worldwide, and China, as the hosts nation, will undoubtedly be a formidable opponents.

We’ve been eagerly awaiting an opportuni-

ty like this because every athlete involved in canoe polo dreams of competing at this level,” Pourabdian said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

“We are honored to participate in the World Games for the first time, and we will do our best to excel during the competition.

We had planned to compete in at least one preparatory tournament before the Games, but the country’s circumstances and a 12-day conflict with Israel prevented us from doing so.

Nevertheless, our motivation remains strong. Just 10 months ago, we reached the third-place match at the 2024 World Championship and finished fourth. Our motivation for the World Games is just as high,” she added.

“We want to demonstrate that we belong among the top teams in the world. Although we are currently ranked No. 4 globally, we have already proven our capabilities.

Next year, with the same ranking, we aim to be the top seed in the World Championship. This shows that we are on the right path,” Pourabdian concluded.

Iran qualify for 2025 FIBA U16 Girls Asia Cup – Division B

TEHRAN – Iran secured their spot in the 2025 FIBA U16 Girls Asia Cup – Division B after defeating Lebanon 41-38 in the WABA Qualifiers.

Elina Evini was the top scorer for Iran, tallying 17 points.

The Iranian team had previously lost to Lebanon 47-37 defeated Syria and Jordan on their path to the final.

The competition took place in Beirut, Lebanon.

Tractor goalkeeper Beiranvand banned for four months

TEHRAN – Tractor football team goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand has been suspended for four months due to the illegal termination of his contract.

He left Persepolis last season to join Tractor, and the Iran Football Federation’s appeal committee announced that the contract termination was unjustified.

Additionally, Tractor and Beiranvand are required to pay \$300,000 to Persepolis football club as compensation.

His four-month absence from football will undoubtedly be a significant setback to his future with the Iran national football team.

Iran have previously secured their place in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Iran lose to France in 2025 FIVB Boys’ U19 World Championship semis

TEHRAN – Iran failed to book their place in the 2025 FIVB Boys’ U19 World Championship finals, losing to France 3-1 (14-25, 25-14, 25-22, 25-19) on Saturday.

Earlier in the day, Poland defeated Spain 3-0 to qualify for the final match.

Adel Gholami’s boys will play Spain in bronze medal match, while France face Poland in the final.

Uzbekistan hosts the Championship from 24 July to 3 August in Tashkent, with preparations supported by the FIVB Volleyball Empowerment program through 12 months of coaching support, event equipment, and three knowledge transfer programs.

The World Championship marks an important moment for Uzbekistan volleyball. The Empowerment program provides the foundation for the country’s efforts to develop talent and strengthen its presence in international competition.

Realism, power, and tragedy: Mearsheimer dissects Tel Aviv’s dead end

From Page 1 ▶ This perspective – alongside his harsh self-critique of U.S. foreign policy – has made him a controversial figure, especially due to his sharp questioning of Israel’s role in the region and Washington’s complicity in the Palestinian tragedy. Mearsheimer’s recent interview with Tucker Carlson – along with recent public debates, lectures, and essays—reopens the still-bleeding wound of West Asia and forces an uncomfortable reckoning with the real causes and consequences of regional geopolitics.

Israel: Expansionist strategy, power Logic, and structural failure

For Mearsheimer, Israel’s strategy follows a ruthless logic: maximize power at any cost and neutralize any threat to Tel Aviv’s regional dominance.

According to his diagnosis, the Zionist project rests on four pillars: territorial expansion, the systematic expulsion of Palestinians, the active destabilization of neighboring states, and the securing of unlimited military, political, and diplomatic backing from the United States.

From its inception, Israeli leaders – Mearsheimer explains – have pursued a policy that fuses overwhelming military force with an uncompromising demand for loyalty from Washington. Military campaigns in Gaza, and interventions in Lebanon and Syria, align with the broader goal of consolidating Israeli power by dismantling all forms of organized resistance.

The recent assault on Gaza – bluntly described by Mearsheimer as “genocide” – follows the long-standing premise that only mass violence, or the threat of extermination, can achieve the definitive expulsion of the Palestinian population that continues to resist.

According to the realist, Israel has never sought to kill all Palestinians, but rather to make life so unbearable that they are forced into exile – a gradual policy of “ethnic cleansing” justified through the rhetoric of national security.

West’s unconditional support for Israel has destroyed bridges with potential partners and weakened all prospects for lasting dialogue

This plan, he emphasizes, is always executed under American “protection,” which blocks international condemnation and guarantees Israel’s impunity despite flagrant violations of international law. Washington has thus, in Mearsheimer’s words, abandoned its own national interests in favor of an “Israel First” foreign policy, driven by the powerful pro-Israel lobby.

Regional destabilization as doctrine: Syria, Iran, and the Kurdish mirage

Mearsheimer’s analysis goes beyond the Israel-Palestine binary and delves into the regional scope of Israeli strategy. A key component of this strategy, he argues, has been the systematic erosion of the integrity of neighboring states, especially Syria and Iran. Mearsheimer clearly states that Israel has rarely settled for mere “regime change” in Tehran or Damascus. Its underlying goal – long disguised by arguments of self-defense – has been to promote the Balkanization of its rivals: to fragment Iran and Syria into competing entities incapable of challenging Israeli primacy.

Syria served as a laboratory for this approach: open and covert interventions sowing chaos and turning the country into a patchwork of warring enclaves. In the Iranian case, Tel Aviv’s obsession centers on exploiting ethnic fault lines and supporting separatist movements – such as the “Kurdish project” – to weaken key regional actors and subject them, directly or indirectly, to U.S. influence.

These plans are cloaked in the language of self-defense and counterterrorism, but for Mearsheimer, they embody a broader project of geopolitical reengineering driven by hegemonic ambition rather than genuine survival needs. The paradox is clear: in its pursuit of absolute security, Israel systematically sows the seeds of its own insecurity by perpetuating unresolved conflicts in its immediate environment.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tehran, Minsk emphasize expansion of agricultural ties



TEHRAN- During a meeting between Iranian Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Qezel-jeh and Belarusian Minister of Agriculture Yuri Gorlov,

both sides emphasized the expansion of agricultural cooperation.

In the meeting, the Iranian minister expressed gratitude for Belarus's stance during the Zionist regime's imposed war and highlighted Iran's readiness to deepen bilateral cooperation in mechanization, livestock farming, dairy industries, and joint projects in chemical fertilizer production.

He further stated that Iran is prepared to increase exports of agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, and dried fruits, to Belarus.

During the meeting, Belarus's minister of agriculture, reiterated his country's support for the principled positions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and thanked the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture for its active participation in Belarus's agricultural exhibition held this year in Minsk.

He also expressed satisfaction with the progress of agricultural cooperation between the two countries.

Given the upcoming visit of Iran's president to Minsk, it was agreed that three cooperation documents in the fields of veterinary and livestock quarantine, forestry, and agricultural research would be signed on the sidelines of the trip.

Iran's Trade Center in Minsk was inaugurated in mid-January during a visit by Mohammad Atabak, Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade.

The opening ceremony also featured Mohammad Ali Dehghani-Dehnavi, the deputy minister and head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

As part of the visit, the minister and TPO head held a meeting with Iranian business representatives in Belarus, where proposals were made to facilitate trade between the two countries.

During a meeting held at the place of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on January 22, TCCIMA Head Mojtaba Najafi Arab and Belarusian Ambassador to Iran Dmitry Koltsov discussed avenues for expanding economic and trade relations during a meeting.

The two officials emphasized the importance of the recently finalized free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as a practical tool for advancing bilateral trade.

Koltsov described the agreement as a new gateway for enhancing Iran's trade with the EAEU and underscored the vital role of chambers of commerce in fostering trade.

He highlighted the potential collaboration between the Tehran and Minsk chambers in shaping the future of economic relations between Iran and Belarus, a member of the EAEU.

Najafi Arab acknowledged the current low trade volume between Iran and Belarus but noted the high industrial and economic potential of both nations.

He emphasized the necessity of utilizing existing opportunities to strengthen economic ties.

He stated that the Tehran and Minsk chambers could serve as key platforms for identifying investment opportunities, fostering trade cooperation, and introducing reputable businesses from both countries.

The TCCIMA head also referred to the upcoming Third International Eurasia Trade Exhibition, scheduled for February 21-24, at Tehran's Permanent International Fairground, noting that the Tehran Chamber plans to invite officials and trade delegations from EAEU member countries to this event to initiate dis-

cussions aimed at enhancing private-sector collaboration.

During the meeting, Fereydown Vardinejad, Secretary-General of the TCCIMA, stressed the importance of timely information exchange on economic and investment opportunities.

He expressed the Tehran Chamber's readiness to collaborate with the Minsk Chamber to share investment prospects and connect reliable partners from both sides.

He also proposed establishing a Tehran-Minsk Economic Cooperation Council during the Eurasia trade exhibition to address challenges, explore opportunities, and facilitate private-sector engagement between Iran and Belarus.

Koltsov for his part praised the productive relationship between the Tehran Chamber and the Belarusian Embassy, emphasizing the potential for growth in bilateral trade.

He referred to Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Committee meeting in Minsk, in the previous week, chaired by Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade, where several agreements were signed.

The ambassador highlighted the free trade agreement with the EAEU as an ideal opportunity to increase trade and investment between Iran and member states.

He also emphasized the role of chambers of commerce in implementing the agreement's provisions and reaffirmed the Belarusian Embassy's commitment to constructive collaboration with the Tehran Chamber to strengthen economic ties.

He further noted opportunities for joint investment and production in Belarus as promising areas for expanding economic cooperation.

Hesamodin Hallaj, Deputy for International Affairs at the Tehran Chamber, also attended the meeting.

He reviewed the Tehran Chamber's history of cooperation with the Belarusian Embassy and discussed the upcoming Eurasia trade exhibition, highlighting its significance in fostering economic partnerships.

During a meeting between Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hasanzadeh and Belarusian ambassador to Iran, back in early December 2024, the ICCIMA head stressed the need for enhancing bilateral financial exchanges through joint mechanisms and the use of local currencies.

Hasanzadeh emphasized the significance of joint investments and innovative financial arrangements such as barter trade and local currency usage to reduce reliance on the US dollar.

The trade volume between Iran and Belarus, amounting to approximately \$400 million, does not reflect the true potential of both countries, Hassanzadeh said. He highlighted various sectors, including oil, petrochemicals, energy, advanced technologies, engineering services, machinery, construction materials, transportation equipment, chemicals, steel, food products, agricultural goods, and pharmaceuticals, as areas ripe for enhanced cooperation.

Hasanzadeh noted that Iran has been importing part of its needs for agricultural and livestock inputs from Belarus, expressing a willingness to expand cooperation in these sectors. He invited Belarusian investors to explore joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, livestock, and dairy products, citing Iran's secure environment for investment.

Tourism was also spotlighted, with Hassanzadeh urging measures to facilitate tourist and business visas and establish direct flights between the two nations to promote people-to-people ties.

Ambassador Koltsov echoed the sentiments, noting the strong political ties between the two countries. He outlined plans to expand economic collaboration, including the establishment of a joint trade house in Minsk as part of the two countries' joint economic commission.

Koltsov also mentioned the need to update and implement a previously signed cooperation agreement between the chambers of commerce in Iran and Belarus, expressing optimism about fostering closer ties between the business operators of both nations.

Iran, EAEU to approve free trade roadmap in 2025 as bilateral trade rises

TEHRAN – The Eurasian Economic Commission is preparing to approve a joint roadmap with Iran to implement their newly finalized free trade agreement.

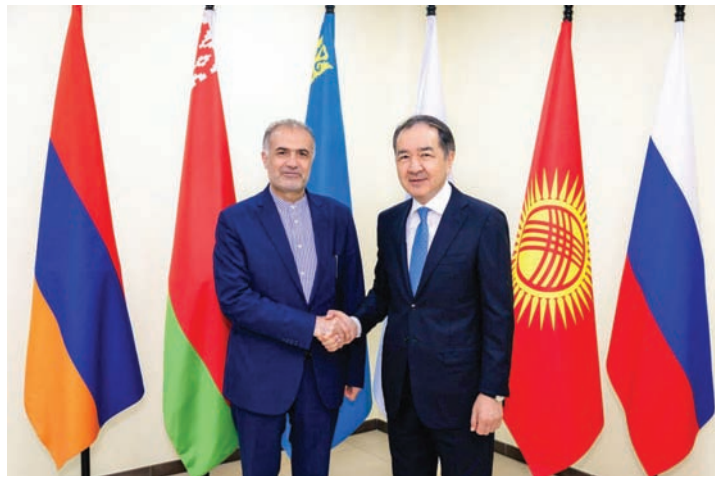
The roadmap will guide cooperation from 2025 through 2028 and is expected to be ratified during the next joint committee meeting in September 2025.

Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission's Executive Board, said the roadmap is crucial for ensuring coordinated progress across all agreed areas of interaction. "The full implementation of the free trade agreement with Iran has elevated our economic and trade relations to a new level," he stated during a meeting with Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali.

According to Sagintayev, bilateral trade between Iran and member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) surged by 14.6 percent in 2024 to reach \$5.9 billion.

He said the agreement has already created strong momentum for increased economic engagement, and the roadmap will further structure this cooperation.

Ambassador Jalali welcomed the agreement's implementation and Iran's new observer status in



Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali (L) and Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Chairman of the Eurasian Economic Commission's Executive Board

the EAEU, saying both reflect a strong mutual will to expand cooperation across sectors. He also thanked the EAEU's leadership for supporting Iran's full integration into the bloc's economic processes.

In a political aside, Jalali addressed Israel's recent attacks on Iran, stating they were aimed at destabilizing the Islamic Republic but had instead led to an unprecedented sense of national unity. "Despite the heavy toll, including the deaths of over 150 women and 200 children, the Iranian people have come out of the

12-day conflict more united than ever," he said.

Sagintayev expressed confidence in Iran's continued progress both domestically and internationally. "The implementation of the free trade agreement paints a bright picture for future trade growth," he said, adding that the EAEU expects trade volume with Iran to double in the near term.

The meeting also marked the formal introduction of Mohammad Javad Izadi and Mohsen Rahimi as Iran's official representatives to the EAEU.

Iran's trade surplus with Pakistan grows as officials call for free trade expansion

TEHRAN – Iran enjoys a trade surplus with Pakistan, exporting goods at 3.5 times the volume of its imports from the neighboring country, according to Hamidreza Karbalaee Esmaeili, Deputy for the Indian Subcontinent at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Karbalaee Esmaeili shared the figures ahead of President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Islamabad on Saturday, his first bilateral foreign trip since Israel's 12-day military campaign against Iran.

The visit, taking place under ongoing regional uncertainty, is seen by analysts as both a symbolic and strategic move tied to post-conflict diplomacy and regional stability.

"Trade between Tehran and Islamabad is on an upward trajectory," Karbalaee Esmaeili said in an interview with IRNA.

He noted that bilateral trade increased by 13.6 percent in the Iranian year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025) compared to the previous year, reaching a total of \$3.129 billion.

Iran exported around \$2.423 billion worth of goods to Pakistan during the period, while imports from Pakistan stood at \$706 million.



TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting the capital market, saying stabilization and development funds will continue operating in the coming weeks to help balance the market.

Hojjatollah Seyyedi made the remarks during a meeting of

The bulk of Iran's exports included petroleum products, powdered milk, and dates, while major imports from Pakistan were rice, oilseeds, and various meat products.

Despite the positive trade balance, figures for the first quarter of the current Iranian year show a decline, reflecting regional instability. Iran's exports to Pakistan from March to June 2025 totaled \$420 million — a 20 percent drop compared to the same period last year — while imports reached \$174 million, down by 4.0 percent.

The TPO official attributed the slowdown to regional conditions but emphasized the need to accelerate efforts to boost trade infrastructure and finalize long-pending trade agreements.

"Free trade between Iran and Pakistan technically began in 2016, but progress has been slow," he said. "We hope upcoming agreements will fulfill this decade-long expectation and unlock significant growth."

Karbalaee Esmaeili stressed that enhancing logistical capabilities, customs cooperation, and transport infrastructure would be critical to sustaining long-term trade growth be-

tween the two countries.

Speakers at a seminar on the future of Iran-Pakistan relations and regional connectivity emphasized the need for constructive dialogue between officials from both countries to navigate administrative and logistical complexities. They stressed that securing mutual benefits and improving the well-being of the Iranian and Pakistani people require strong political will and reciprocal practical measures.

The seminar, titled "Iran-Pakistan Relations: Trade Outlook and Strengthening Connectivity," was held on March 1 with the participation of the Iranian Embassy and hosted by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI).

The event brought together prominent experts from Pakistan's diplomatic, media, economic, and political spheres, along with several foreign diplomats.

Among the keynote speakers were Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam, Pakistan's Ambassador to Tehran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, ISSI Chairman Sohail Mahmood, and former Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Riffat Masood.

SEO chief reaffirms support measures to stabilize stock market

the High Council of the Stock Exchange attended by Economy Minister Seyed Ali Madani-Zadeh, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, Seyyedi stressed the need for relevant government bodies to consider the current conditions and first-quarter performance of listed companies, calling for revisions to some policies to provide more effective support for key industries.

He also urged continued efforts to resolve barriers facing companies and industries on the exchange.

"Supportive policies in the capital market are being pursued seriously," Seyyedi said, noting that in addition to diverse support measures, stabilization and

development funds will remain active to maintain balance in the market.

He added that the effectiveness of such interventions would be maximized only if there were improvements in key economic fundamentals and positive signals from the real economy.

Commenting on the recent performance of the stock market stabilization and development funds, Seyyedi said both entities have operated transparently and in full accordance with approved guidelines.

During the meeting, officials also discussed the status of Justice Shares — a government privatization initiative granting shares to low-income Iranians.

Iran's economy grew 1.4% in early spring, parliamentary report shows

TEHRAN – Iran's economy grew by 1.4 percent in the first two months of the current Iranian year (March 20–May 20, 2025) compared to the same period last year, according to a report published by the Research Center of the Iranian Parliament.

The report, titled Monitoring Iran's Real Economy: Monthly GDP Estimate (June 2025), states that GDP growth excluding oil reached 1.2 percent over the two-month period.

The analysis is based on the latest data from the Central Bank of Iran, which shows that for the full Iranian year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025), GDP grew 3.1 percent including oil and 3 percent without oil.

However, the report notes a sharp deceleration in growth in June (Khordad), estimating a marginal GDP increase of 0.1 percent compared to June 2024. Excluding the oil sector, the economy contracted by 0.2 percent

during that month.

The report concludes that while Iran's economy maintained modest positive growth in the spring quarter overall, momentum weakened in June, particularly in non-oil sectors. The Research Center warned that persistent weakness in agriculture and industry could weigh on broader economic recovery without targeted policy interventions.

Gaza is breaking point of liberal international order

Gaza tragedy entails new theories in global governance

By Fatemeh Kavand

TEHRAN - The ongoing war in Gaza, beyond its tragic humanitarian dimensions, has become a major test for the international order—an order that emerged after World War II based on institutions such as the United Nations, human rights regimes, and liberal principles like the rule of law, global justice, and the responsibility to protect.

However, the catastrophic developments in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 have deeply challenged this order.

The systematic killing of civilians, continuous attacks on civilian infrastructure including hospitals, schools, refugee camps, and holy sites, along with the silence or complicity of Western powers in these crimes, have created a deep rift between the theoretical claims of the liberal order and the realities on the ground.

In this context, Gaza is not merely a besieged territory and victim of Israel's occupation policies—it has become a moral, political, and institutional rupture point for the global liberal order. This order, primarily founded after World War II under U.S. hegemony, was built on principles such as human rights, democracy, free-market economies, multilateralism, and international institutions.

Especially after the Cold War, it was promoted as the dominant model in international relations, with many institutions and regimes established to reinforce it. Yet, the liberal order has consistently been criticized by realists, Marxists, and postcolonial theorists for reproducing Western domination and reinforcing structural inequalities.



Within this framework, the war in Gaza serves as a historical litmus test for the liberal order's fidelity to its declared values. While liberal principles assert that attacks on civilians, bombings of medical infrastructure, blockades, and starvation tactics constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law, in Gaza we see these acts persistently carried out by Israel without serious repercussions—especially from major powers like the United States.

On the contrary, we witness political, financial, and military support from the U.S. and some European governments.

This blatant double standard fundamentally undermines the moral legitimacy of the liberal order.

International institutions have also lost their effectiveness in this crisis.

The United Nations Security

Council, despite efforts by some nations to pass binding resolutions for a ceasefire, has repeatedly failed due to U.S. vetoes.

While the General Assembly has passed symbolic resolutions, it lacks enforcement mechanisms to halt the violence.

The International Criminal Court, under political pressure, has proven incapable of swiftly addressing war crimes.

This institutional failure widens the gap between formal justice and actual justice and erodes public trust in the international legal order.

A particularly alarming aspect of the Gaza crisis is the dysfunction of international institutions like the UN Security Council in curbing this humanitarian catastrophe.

Resolutions are either vetoed, issued with vague and ineffective language, or at best express mere

concern.

If a global order is truly based on rules, human rights, and accountability, how can genocide in Gaza continue for months without the activation of any legal, diplomatic, or even symbolic deterrent tools?

This implementation void not only questions the legitimacy of these institutions but also reveals that the liberal order only functions when it aligns with the interests of great powers.

This is where the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), introduced in the aftermath of the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides in the 1990s, faces a critical challenge. R2P claims that the global community has a duty to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity—even if doing so requires intervening in a state's internal affairs.

Witkoff's Gaza visit: A 'photo-op' meant to whitewash US-Israeli 'bloodbaths'



From page 1 ► While Washington and Tel Aviv portray GHF as a lifeline for civilians, the reality on the ground tells a far darker story. According to United Nations data, Israeli forces have shot and killed nearly 900 Palestinians near GHF distribution points.

In addition, over 500 Gazans have been killed along UN aid convoy routes. Since Israel began its war on Gaza in October 2023, more than 160 Palestinians—over 90 of them children—have died from starvation.

The total Palestinian death toll from the war has now surpassed 60,300, as global outrage intensifies.

Human rights organizations and international legal experts accuse Israel not only of committing genocide but also of deliberately using starvation as a weapon of war.

The United States, widely seen as enabling Israel's campaign, is now pivoting to public relations efforts to deflect attention from its complicity. Witkoff's trip appears to be part of this broader strategy—more about image management than addressing the root causes of Gaza's devastation.

Human Rights Watch has described the GHF-run sites as “death traps” that have become the scenes of regular “bloodbaths.”

Former US State Department official Annette Sheline, who resigned last year in protest of President Joe Biden's Gaza policies, criticized the visit by Witkoff and Huckabee, calling it a “glorified photo-op meant to obscure the reality of a dire humanitarian crisis that America has helped to author.”

A week ago, a retired US special forces officer who worked at GHF centers told the BBC that he witnessed Israeli troops and US contractors shooting at crowds of Palestinians near the sites where he worked.

Lt. Col. Anthony Aguilar, a special forces veteran of the US Army's Green Berets, told the BBC he had never seen such a level of “brutality and use of indiscriminate and unnecessary force against a civilian population—an unarmed, starving population” in his entire career.

Some Gazans who spoke to the BBC also questioned the motives behind Witkoff's visit. “Louay Mahmoud, a resident of Gaza, said: “Steve Witkoff won't see the hunger, only the narrative Israel wants him to see.”

This visit is a hollow media stunt, not a humanitarian mission. He comes with no solutions, only talking points designed to polish the image of an administration complicit in our suffering.”

Amer Khayrat, a father of two from Gaza City, added: “What Gaza needs isn't another envoy with a press team.

We need the siege lifted, the bombing stopped, and the blind American support for this war brought to an end.”

The visit lays bare a grim truth: US foreign policy is not only enabling Israel's destruction of Gaza—it is actively participating in the erasure of an entire people.

Washington's unwavering support for Tel Aviv, despite mounting evidence of war crimes, reveals a deep moral bankruptcy.

What Gaza needs is not manufactured gestures of goodwill from its oppressors, but international accountability and an end to the US-Israeli alliance that continues to fuel its suffering.

pening before my eyes. 'Genocide.'

It's an avalanche word: once you say it, it only gets bigger, like an avalanche. And it brings even more destruction and suffering.”

Asked what he thought when he read the death toll in Gaza, he replied: “I feel bad.”

At least 98 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks in the last 24 hours, with another 1,079 wounded, the Palestinian health ministry is reporting.

Of that figure, 39 were aid seekers.

The latest deaths bring the overall toll of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks in Gaza since October 2023 to 60,430, with 148,722 wounded.

Israeli author David Grossman brands Gaza war a 'genocide'

Prominent writer says it breaks his heart to see mass starvation

Israeli writer David Grossman has proclaimed the assault on the Gaza Strip a “genocide”, adding to a growing chorus of condemnation of the war.

In an interview published on Friday in the Italian daily La Repubblica, Grossman said the bloodshed in Gaza broke his “heart”.

“For years I refused to use the term ‘genocide’. But now I can't help but use it, after what I read in the newspapers, after the images I saw and after talking to people who were there,” he said, Middle East Eye reported.

“I want to speak as someone who has done everything possible to avoid calling Israel a genocidal state - and now, with immense pain and a broken heart, I have to face what is hap-

Hospitals in Gaza have also recorded seven deaths, including a child, as a result of Israeli-imposed starvation in the last 24 hours.

Grossman said that the scenes of starvation and killing in Gaza had particular resonance for him.

“Putting the words ‘Israel’ and ‘famine’ together, doing so based on our history, our supposed sensitivity to the suffering of humanity, the moral responsibility we have always said we have towards every human being, not just the Jews... all of this is devastating,” he said.

Grossman added that he remained “desperately loyal” to the idea of a two-state solution, “mainly because I see no alternative”.

Hamas: No disarmament without independent Palestinian state

Hamas said it will not disarm unless an independent Palestinian state is established with Jerusalem (al-Quds) as its capital.

The resistance group said it was issuing a statement “in response to media reports quoting US envoy Steve Witkoff, claiming [Hamas] has shown willingness to disarm”.

It continued: “We reaffirm that resistance and its arms are a legitimate national and legal right as long as the occupation continues.

“This right is recognized by international laws and norms, and it cannot be relin-

quished except through the full restoration of our national rights - first and foremost, the establishment of an independent, fully sovereign Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.”

Hamas also condemned a visit by Witkoff and Mike Huckabee to an aid distribution center in Gaza on Friday as “nothing more than a premeditated staged show”.

Hamas said the trip was “designed to mislead public opinion, polish the image of the occupation, and provide it with political cover for its starvation campaign and continued systematic killing of defenseless children and civilians in the Gaza Strip”.

Anti-Israeli protests in Syria

From page 1 ► The demonstrations reflected widespread outrage over what protesters called “unprecedented atrocities” carried out by government forces during the recent deadly violence in the region.

Protesters carried banners condemning the authorities in Damascus and called for the withdrawal of government forces from dozens of villages, which they say continue to endure looting and the destruction of infrastructure after most homes were burned.

Demonstrators also demanded the opening of humanitarian corridors and the lifting of military and security blockade imposed on Sweida province.

The protests rejected the government's newly announced investigative committee, stating that “an aggressor has no right to form investigative bodies,” and instead called for an international investigation.

They also demanded the immediate disclosure of the fate of hundreds of missing residents from Sweida.

In addition, demonstrators criticized both official and semi-official Syrian media, accusing them of spreading misinformation and inciting tensions. They called for foreign journalists to be granted access to the province after being barred for several days by state security forces.

‘Engineering massacres’: Humanitarian official condemns Israel’s role in Gaza starvation

A humanitarian official has warned that Israel is “engineering chaos and massacres” in the Gaza Strip by continuing to block aid deliveries and opening fire on starving Palestinians seeking desperately needed food supplies.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Caroline Willemen, Gaza project coordinator for Doctors Without Borders, known by its French initials MSF said food remains “critically scarce” in the besieged enclave despite the increased entry of aid in recent days.

“There is little indication that sufficient aid will arrive consistently,” Willemen told the Doha-based news network. “As a result, every day, people risk their lives in a desperate search for food”.

Condemnation of Israel's starvation policy in Gaza has grown, with a global hunger monitoring system warning on Tuesday that the



“worst-case scenario of famine” was unfolding.

While Israel has authorised a series of aid airdrops in recent days, top United Nations officials have denounced the scheme as expensive and dangerous while urging Israel to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza.

Will Morgan Ortagus return to Beirut?

From page 1 ► Hence, observers seriously warn of the consequences of the dangerous political clash in a country where political conflict is raging and the country is mired in successive crises that loots citizens' pockets and threaten their civil peace.

In parallel, Israel continues to escalate the situation if the government fails to make a decisive decision to disarm the Hezbollah resistance movement within a specific timetable, or if it adopts compromise formulas, which it believes serve Hezbollah.

As of the time of writing, sources within the Hezbollah and Amal Movement confirmed their determination not to disrupt the session's quorum, believing in the necessity of consultation to build upon the necessary outcomes.

The Shia alliance emphasize the impossibility of disarmament before Israel withdraws from the five hills, halts its attacks, releases prisoners, and reconstruction begins.

Reportedly, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, known for his consensual approach, may meet with President Aoun in the coming hours to study a proposal to have the government establish the principle of arms monopoly, not disarmament, and then task the Supreme Defense Council to make coordination with the resistance to continue implementing mea-

sures in this regard.

In this context, MP Mohammad Raad, head of Hezbollah's Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc, met with President Aoun.

Raad emphasized, “It is not possible to respond to what the Americans are demanding in light of Israeli intransigence... Everyone is concerned with confronting these pressures by adopting a unified stance and not giving pretext to those who want to lead the country to ruin.”

The failure of both Washington and Tel Aviv is driving them to hastily pursue final and exclusive settlements—particularly in Lebanon, where opportunities are more plentiful—under the pretext of achieving “arms exclusivity.”

For its part, the French embassy in Lebanon, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Lebanese Army, expressed its readiness to assist it in “completely restricting its control of weapons,” while Britain expressed its support for “the Lebanese Army, the sole legitimate defender of Lebanon.”

These intense efforts carry complex messages: on the one hand, there is necessary pressure to resolve the issue of Hezbollah's weapons, and on the other, there is an explicit recognition that time is not on Israel's side!

Muharram mourning rituals to be performed at Chazabeh border during Arbaeen

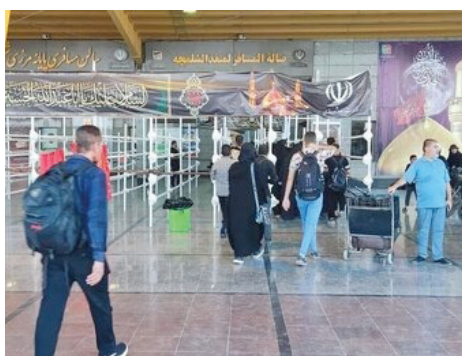
TEHRAN—Deputy head of Khuzestan Cultural Heritage Department gave news of implementing the registered mourning rituals of Muharram in border city of Chazabeh in southwest of Iran.

Tabar Qarib Mombeini said that with the aim of preserving intangible heritage and strengthening the cultural identity, the daily performance of traditional Ashura rituals in the form of ritual groups is on the agenda, IRIB reported.

Referring to the special programs of Khuzestan province in border points for hosting Arbaeen pilgrims, he said that Khuzestan province, as one of the major routes for Arbaeen pilgrims, plays an active role in organizing the infrastructure and providing services, including the establishment of various Mookes (service center with a religious nature where Shia Muslims come together, conduct religious rituals during Arbaeen and can take rest, eat foods and use other services for free) at the Shalamchah and Chazabeh borders. These Mookes include reception processions as well as booths to display the province's authentic handicraft products.

Pointing to the unique place of Ashura culture in indigenous identity of Khuzestan province, he said for the first time and at the initiative of Khuzestan Cultural Heritage Department, a collection of nationally registered Muharram mourning rituals will be presented in the form of group ritual performances at the Chazabeh border. These programs will be performed daily at the zero point of border starting from August 6, with the aim of introducing and preserving the intangible heritage and passing it on to the new generations, he added.

He called Tazieh performance (passion play) in Shush county as an example of these rituals which have been registered on the National In-



tangible Cultural Heritage List and will be performed for pilgrims in Chazabeh border.

All tourism facilities in Khuzestan province have been mobilized to serve Arbaeen pilgrims with maximum capacity, he said.

Qarib Mombeini continued that field monitoring, organizing services, and improving the quality of accommodation sites are among the measures that are being continuously carried out by Khuzestan Cultural Heritage Department so that the huge wave of pilgrims on their way in and out receive services worthy of this spiritual event.

At end, he said Arbaeen is a civilizational chance for introducing cultural capacities of Khuzestan province. "In addition to providing services, we aim to showcase the province's rich spiritual heritage to millions of pilgrims from Iran and other countries."

Arbaeen, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, marks the end of a 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE.

Each year, millions of Shia Muslims from around the globe undertake this pilgrimage to Karbala, walking hundreds of kilometers as an expression of their faith and devotion.

Water shortage a threat to Isfahan's historical houses

TEHRAN--Isfahan, a magnificent city of thousand-year-old architecture, is today on the verge of a crisis that quietly and silently but destructively threatens the life of its historical body: land subsidence, a phenomenon that has become one of the most dangerous challenges facing the city due to the water crisis, excessive extraction of groundwater, and the collapse of the traditional irrigation system.

Visible cracks in some walls of the historical houses, the gradual subsidence of domes, and the threat to the stability of the columns of mosques are just some of the alarm bells that have been sounded for cultural Isfahan.

Mohammad Reza Rezaei, a geologist and hydrogeologist, said in an interview with Mehr news agency: "Land subsidence in Isfahan is the result of the destruction of the natural balance of underground aquifers. When the withdrawal from authorized and unauthorized wells in the Zayandeh-Rood basin exceeds the recharge rate of these aquifers, the pressure within the alluvial layers decreases and soil particles are compressed. This gradual but irreversible process drastically changes the subsurface structures."

Rezaei emphasized that the historical fabric of Isfahan, especially in the areas of Chaharbagh Paein, Jame' Mosque, and the Grand Bazaar, is located exactly on active subsidence belts. This fact poses a serious threat to huge domes, arched structures, adobe and brick walls, and even bridge foundations, he added.

The hydrogeologist also explained technical solutions: "Installing permanent GPS stations in the vicinity of important buildings, conducting radar imaging on a monthly basis, and modeling soil behavior can provide an accurate risk map."

The archaeologist and restorer of historical buildings considered the phenomenon of subsidence a serious threat to each of the city's historical architectural elements, saying: "The hairline cracks that we see today on the walls of historical houses and public buildings are sometimes a precursor to major subsides."

The historical architecture of Isfahan, especially during the Safavid period, was based on traditional materials such as adobe, brick, plaster, and lime mortar; materials that are not very resilient to horizontal displacements or vertical settlements.

Referring to the damage observed in the historical structures of Naghsh-e Jahan Square, he stated: "Buildings such as Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque and the Abbasi Grand Mosque are extremely sensitive to settlement heterogeneity due to their huge domes. If even one of the load-bearing pillars or columns is involved in asymmetrical settlement, the load distribution will be disrupted and the dome will crack or split."

The restorer said that it is essential to develop a comprehensive plan in cooperation with the Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration of Iran (GSI), the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, the Housing Research Center, and scientific institutions to not only accurately document the damaged works, but also design the restoration process with considering the possible landslides.

Because many past restoration plans were carried out without considering the dynamics of the earth and are no longer responsive today, he added.

Once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy, Isfahan remains one of Iran's most prominent tourist destinations. It is renowned for its breathtaking Islamic architecture, including stunning mosques, palaces, and bazaars. Visitors can explore Persian gardens and walk along the city's tree-lined boulevards, soaking in the beauty and history at every turn. The city's architectural marvels, such as Naghsh-e Jahan Square—one of the largest squares in the world—make it a jewel of town planning.

Isfahan is known as "Nesf-e-Jahan," or "half the world," symbolizing its historic significance. The Zayandeh-Rood River, often called the city's "life-giving river," adds to the city's natural beauty, enhancing its allure for tourists.

Isfahan is a treasure trove of architectural wonders and a hub of handicrafts. The city was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons.

Chahar Bagh Boulevard, constructed during the Safavid era, is one of Isfahan's most iconic landmarks. Often compared to Paris's Champs-Élysées, the avenue stretches approximately 6 kilometers, connecting the northern and southern parts of the city, with the historic Hasht Behesht and Chehel Sotoun gardens on its eastern side.

Gaza's cultural heritage: experts warn of systematic erasure of Palestinian memory

From Page 1 ▶ Gaza's strategic location has made it a crossroads of civilizations for over 1.5 million years, hosting ancient Egyptians, Canaanites, Philistines, Byzantines, and Islamic dynasties. A 2019 UNESCO-backed survey documented 354 heritage sites, including the Great Omari Mosque, Anthedon Harbour, and Tell al-Sakan—one of the oldest Bronze Age settlements in the region.

Yet since October 2023, Israeli airstrikes and ground operations have reduced historic landmarks to rubble. Government reports indicate over 61,709 Palestinians killed, with 14,222 still missing under debris, while 111,588 have been injured. Alongside this humanitarian catastrophe, museums, libraries, and archives—safeguarding manuscripts, artifacts, and oral histories—have been destroyed.

"When you bomb a museum or a centuries-old mosque, you are not just destroying stones—you are erasing the roots of a people," Al-Houdalieh said. "This is memoricide."

The targeting of Gaza's heritage fits a grim historical pattern, from the burning of the Library of Alexandria to the destruction of Palmyra and the Bamiyan Buddhas. Al-Hou-



A view of the Great Omari Mosque in Gaza

dalieh notes that such acts are "not accidents of war, but tools of colonial domination."

The United Nations Human Rights Council has accused Israel of genocide and apartheid, while ICOS-MOS-Palestine has expanded the terminology to include culturicide, urbicide, and ecocide—the deliberate annihilation of culture, urban life, and environment.

A pressing question now looms: Should Palestinians rebuild lost heritage, or preserve the ruins as evidence of destruction?

In Ramallah, the Palestinian Authority quickly rebuilt its bombed headquarters, erasing traces of attack." He fears Gaza may face the same dilemma—whether to reconstruct sites like the Omari Mosque or leave their shattered remains as symbols of resistance.

Despite the devastation, Al-Houdalieh insists Palestinian identity cannot be fully erased. Farmers still use Canaanite agricultural terms, while refugees pass down keys to their 1948 homes as symbols of return.

"Our heritage is not just in buildings—it's in our stories, our traditions, our persistence," he said. "But without urgent global intervention, Gaza risks losing the physical evidence of its millennia-old civilization."

As international heritage organizations remain largely silent, archaeologists in Gaza continue documenting the damage—racing against time to salvage what remains of Palestine's memory before it is buried forever.

Radkan Tower: symbol of Iranians' history, culture, science

TEHRAN—Radkan Tower in Chenaran, Khorasan Razavi province, not only represents the architectural art of its era, but also shows the deep connection between science, art, and the daily lives of the people of that time, said the head of Chenaran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department.

In an interview with ISNA, Mohammad Taherian-Muqaddam named the historical Radkan Tower as one of the most important and valuable historical and cultural monuments of Iran, saying that this tower, which was built in the 7th century AH, has always attracted the attention of researchers, tourists, and those interested in Iranian history and culture due to its unique architecture and special features.

Referring to the architectural features of the Radkan Tower, he said that the height of this tower reaches 25 meters and it has a cylindrical body and a conical dome; while the exterior of the tower is designed in a 12-sided shape up to a height of three meters and its top is decorated with 36 cylinders.

He considered this special design a factor in enhancing the visual beauty of the tower and creating a distinctive identity for it and noted that inside the tower, there is an octagonal space that shows the precision and skill of the architects of that era.

Pointing to the architectural decorations of the tower, Taherian-Muqaddam said that the tower includes beautiful brickwork and tile decorations, and there is an inscription in Kufic script on the upper part of the columns. This inscription is known as a relic from the Ilkhanid period and shows the art and taste of the artists of that time, he added.

Taherian-Muqaddam emphasized that Radkan Tower is of special importance, adding that based on historical documents, this tower is known as the work of the famous astronomer and scientist, Hakim Khajeh Nasir al-Din Toosi.

He added that the tower is designed in a way that allows determining the time in the four seasons, leap years, and the beginning of Nowruz. By calculating sunlight and shadow, this tower is a practical tool for determining time and in a way demonstrates the advanced science and knowledge of that era, he pointed out.

Taherian-Muqaddam continued by mentioning the presence

of Radkan Tower on the list of the registered national monuments. "This is a testament to the importance of this building in the history and culture of Iran."

He also spoke about the tourism aspect of Radkan Tower, adding: "This tower welcomes many tourists from inside and outside the country every year, and as a cultural and historical attraction, it not only gives tourists an opportunity to get acquainted with the rich history and culture of Iran, but also contributes to the economic prosperity of Chenaran county."

He stated that tourists boost the local economy by visiting this tower and other historical monuments in the region and provide the basis for tourism development.

Regarding the protection and maintenance of Radkan Tower, he said: "Given that this tower is a valuable historical monument, its protection and maintenance are of great importance."

He announced that the second phase of building the precincts of this historical monument began with the selection of a contractor and the allocation of six billion rials.

He recalled that the first phase of building the precincts of the Radkan Tower was implemented. Strengthening and restoration of its brickwork decorations were carried out with a credit of one billion rials in recent years.

This year, the second phase of building the precincts of Radkan Tower began in August after the approval of its design by the Khorasan Province's Technical Council.

Taherian Moghadam stated that the operations of building precincts of the historical Radkan Tower include foundation, flooring, and brick paving, and the aim is to improve the infrastructure of this historical attraction and attract more tourists.

He continued that these measures are being taken to increase the accessibility and comfort of visitors, as well as to preserve the cultural and historical values of this building. "Paying attention to this



tower and other historical monuments in the region not only helps preserve our history and culture, but can also be a model for future generations."

He also referred to the importance of preserving the rights of the treasury and identifying municipal properties in order to generate income and sustainable development of Chenaran county, and added that by carrying out restoration projects and improving tourism infrastructure, the Radkan Tower will become one of the main tourism destinations in Khorasan Razavi province.

Chenaran county is located 50 kilometers away from the holy city of Mashhad. Radkan Historical Tower, also known as Radkan Citadel, is a prominent historical landmark located in Chenaran county.

The tower is believed to date back to the Ilkhanid era (1256–1353 CE) and served various purposes throughout its history, including as a defensive fortification, a lookout tower, and possibly astronomical center.

Constructed using traditional methods and local materials, the tower features a unique architectural style characterized by its sturdy mud-brick walls, intricate geometric designs, and strategic placement of windows and openings for ventilation and light.

Today, Radkan Historical Tower stands as a symbol of pride for the local community and attracts visitors from far and wide who come to admire its architectural beauty, explore its historical significance, and immerse themselves in the rich heritage of Chenaran county.

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IRCS offers humanitarian assistance to flood-hit Vietnam

TEHRAN – Following deadly flooding and landslides across Vietnam, the head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has announced its readiness to provide necessary humanitarian assistance.

Since July 26, heavy rainfall has been affecting Viet Nam, causing floods and landslides that have resulted in casualties and damage.

“The Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran extends its respectful greetings to you, your colleagues, and the dedicated volunteers of the Vietnam Red Cross Society,” IRCS head Pirhossein Koolivand wrote in a message of condolence and sympathy to his counterpart at the Vietnam Red Cross Society, Bui Thi Hoa.

“With deep sorrow, we have learned of the widespread flooding and landslides in northwest Vietnam—a tragic disaster that has led to the loss of lives, missing persons, and



damage to the country's infrastructure.

On behalf of the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we offer our heartfelt condolences and solidarity to you, the Vietnam Red Cross Society, and especially to the families affected by this tragic event.

In these challenging times, we

stand with you and express our readiness to provide any necessary humanitarian assistance, if needed.

We sincerely wish you and your colleagues continued strength, health, and success in your noble humanitarian efforts.”

Flooding triggered by heavy rain has left at least 14 people dead or missing in Vietnam's northern

province of Dien Bien, state media reported on Aug 1.

Flood water rose quickly on the night of July 31 after hours of heavy rain, inundating houses in low-lying areas and causing flash floods and mudslides in mountainous parts of the province, Tien Phong newspaper reported.

The mountain village of Xa Dung suffered the heaviest casualties, with one dead and six missing, the report said.

Traffic and power lines to several parts of the province have been cut off due to the floods, according to a statement from the provincial People's Committee.

Two children in Hang Pu Xi village have been buried in mudslides, and rescuers have yet to find their bodies, said the statement.

Media reports said ongoing heavy rain in the province is hindering the search for the missing.

UNIDO to foster resilience, environmental responsibility among refugees

TEHRAN – Supported by the Government of the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) seeks to foster environmentally sustainable communities by promoting waste recycling and composting practices, thereby strengthening resilience and environmental stewardship in refugee settlements.

Since 2020, UNIDO has been dedicated to enhancing the resilience and well-being of refugees in Iran through innovative projects aligned with the host government's strategies and Sustainable Development Goals, the UN website announced in a press release on July 27.

Building on this momentum, the ongoing initiative 'Sustainable Waste Management in Semnan Settlement' under the project of “Scaling up Sustainable Settlements for Refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran” aims to empower refugees to become active agents of change.

A notable milestone took place on May 7, 2025, when a comprehensive waste management training focused on home-scale vermicomposting was held at the Semnan refugee settlement.

The training saw the enthusiastic participation of 133 refugees, including 127 women and 6 men, spanning various age groups—34 participants (approximately 16 percent) aged 13-25, 44 participants (around 20 percent) aged 26-35, and 55 participants (about 25 percent) aged 36-58—reflecting broad community engagement across generations.

During the event, refugees learned how to transform organic waste into valuable fertilizer through vermicomposting, promoting sustainable waste disposal and enhancing agricultural productivity at home.

Many expressed eagerness to implement these practices, which contribute significantly to reducing waste, improving food security, and fostering environmental stewardship within their community.

Among the inspiring stories is that of Mojdeh, a 13-year-old girl and the youngest refugee participant in the training. She was eager to learn how to transform organic waste into valuable fertilizer and demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm for environmental practices.

Mojdeh said, “I want to help my community by recycling waste and making our environment cleaner. I believe even young people can make a difference. This project is also giving me the chance to build new skills and connect with others, helping me grow both personally and socially.”

Her interest and dedication exemplify how young community members are taking ownership of sustainability efforts and inspiring others to follow suit. Her enthusiasm highlights the potential of empowering youth as key drivers of positive change in their communities.

The training received strong positive feedback, with approximately 52 percent of participants rating the content as “Very Good” and about 54 percent expressing confidence in the instructor's expertise. Most felt the session met their expectations and appreciated the clarity of delivery.

Overall, the feedback highlighted excellent organization, engaging trainers, and a successful session. This feedback underscores the effectiveness of the program and the community's enthusiasm for sustainable practices. It reflects a community eager to adopt new skills—empowering refugees not only to improve their living conditions but also to become ambassadors of sustainability.

Thanks to initiatives like the waste management training, community members are seeing tangible improvements in their environmental practices and living conditions. UNIDO plans to expand these programs in support of the host country to other settlements in 2025 and beyond.

Building on these efforts, the project is currently implementing renewable energy solutions in the settlements of Semnan and Torbat-e Jam. Specifically, UNIDO is installing two solar power plants, each with a capacity of 200 kWp, to provide clean and reliable electricity to the communities.

These installations aim to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources, lower carbon emissions, and enhance the overall living conditions of both refugees and host communities. By integrating renewable technologies, the project promotes sustainable development, supports energy independence, and contributes to climate resilience in the region.

Authorized refugees won't be deported

Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has said the country is not planning to deport documented and authorized refugees.

“We are only deporting the two million Afghans who are illegally residing in Iran,” he said.

“Iran is not an anti-immigrant country, as it is hosting six million foreign nationals. Since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21), some 800,000 out of the two million undocumented refugees left the country,” ISNA quoted Momeni as saying on July 18.

“These are honorable people who have contributed to the country's production. Based on regulations, unauthorized refugees must leave the country. If they wish to live here, they have to follow legal procedures,” the official further noted.

From March 21 to June 27, a total of 717,658 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan; more than 80 percent of them have left the country voluntarily.

According to the head of the National Organization for Migration, Nader Yar-Ahmadi, there has been no change in the residency and the kind of services provided to documented Afghans residing in the country.

On the contrary, they will benefit from more services as illegal nationals leave the country, IRNA reported.

“The majority of these nationals are employees or students; we normally consider employment as a foundation for residency in our long-term planning,” IRNA quoted Yar-Ahmadi as saying.

Iranian professor granted IEEE PES Roy Billinton Award

TEHRAN – Iranian scientist, Mahmoud Fotuhi-Firuzabad, has received the 2025 Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Power and Energy Society (PES) Roy Billinton Power System Reliability Award.

Fotuhi-Firuzabad was awarded for his contributions to methods, algorithms, and solutions for assessing and enhancing the reliability, resilience, and operational efficiency of electric power delivery systems under uncertainty.

The IEEE PES established the Roy Billinton Power System Reliability Award to honor Professor Roy Billinton, a pioneer in the field, and to recognize individuals with outstanding contributions to power system reliability. The award is presented to individuals who have made exceptional advancements in this field.

The award ceremony took place on July 29, during the IEEE PES General Meeting held in Austin, Texas, the U.S.

Fotuhi-Firuzabad (Fellow, IEEE) received the B.Sc. degree in electrical engineering from the Sharif University of Technology in 1986 and the first M.Sc. degree in electrical engineering from the University of Tehran in 1989.

He earned the second M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees

in electrical engineering from the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canada, in 1993 and 1997, respectively.

He was a Postdoctoral Fellow with the University of Saskatchewan from 1998 to 2002. He is currently a Professor with the Electrical Engineering Department, Sharif University of Technology, where he is a member of the Center of Excellence in Power System Control and Management. He is also a Visiting Professor with Aalto University, Espoo, Finland.

He is the Editor-in-Chief of IEEE Transactions on Smart Grid. His research interests include power system reliability, distributed renewable generation, demand response, and smart grids.

He was the Editor-in-Chief of IEEE Power Engineering Letters, from 2017 to 2022. He was the Chair of the Electrical Engineering Department from 2005–2014 and the President of the Sharif University of Technology from 2014–2021.

Fotuhi-Firuzabad was the recipient of several national and international awards, including the 16th Khwarizmi International Award; World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Award for the Outstanding Inventor, in 2003; Probabilistic Methods Applied to Power Systems

(PMAPS) International Society Merit Award, for contributions in probabilistic methods applied to power systems, in 2016, and 2014 Allameh Tabatabaei Award.

Outstanding Section Award

The IEE organization has designated the IEEE Iran section as the Outstanding Section Award 2025.

As one of the IEEE's most prestigious global honors, this award is granted to the sections that have excelled in educational, technical, research, and social fields, and played an effective role in the development of science and technology, ISNA reported.

The award highlights Iran's resilience, capabilities, talents, and determination to build a brighter future.

The IEEE Outstanding Section Award recognizes IEEE Sections that demonstrate excellence in fulfilling the organization's objectives through their programs and activities.

This award acknowledges the Section's success in organizing technical, professional, and geographic activities for the benefit of its members and in supporting Student Branches, Chapters, and Affinity Groups.

Iran grabs medals at International Olympiad in Informatics

TEHRAN – Iranian students won a gold medal, two silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 37th edition of the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) being held in Sucre, Bolivia.

The event kicked off on July 27 and will wrap up on August 3. A total of 330 contestants from 84 countries participated in this year's event.

Amir-Ali Asgari secured the gold medal, Mani Zare and Hamed Ghafari grabbed silver medals, while Kiarash Rezaei won a bronze medal, ISNA reported.

IOI is one of several international science Olympiads held annually

around the world. Talented high school students from various countries compete in this prestigious algorithmic competition to sharpen their informatics skills—such as problem analysis, design of algorithms and data structures, programming, and testing.

Each participating country selects a team of up to four contestants accompanied by leaders. The team competes individually in two intense competition days, solving complex problems within a limited time, testing their creativity, algorithmic knowledge, and problem-solving skills.

Iran grabbed a gold medal, two

silver medals, and a bronze medal at the 36th International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI), ranking 9th among 96 countries. It was hosted by Egypt.

Recent achievements

Iran won two silver medals and two bronze medals at the Eighth International Economics Olympiad (IEO) 2025, which was held from July 20 to 29, in Baku, Azerbaijan.

This year, 68 countries participated in the IEO. Mohsen Payandeh-Peyman and Abolfazl Modir-Roosta won silver medals, while Parsa Sedaqat and Alireza Ahmadi secured bronze medals, IRNA reported.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Men with obese wives at higher risk of cardiovascular disease

The results of a 16-year study at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran showed that men whose wives were obese or overweight had a higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

Farzad Hadaegh, the lead researcher of the study, said that couples share socioeconomic status, dietary patterns, and other environmental and lifestyle factors, but are genetically unrelated.

The results of this study emphasize the role of environmental factors, especially lifestyle behaviors of family members in the incidence of cardiovascular disease, and this may help to identify early at-risk individuals in the community and family to implement prevention programs, he explained.

خطر ابتلا به بیماری‌های قلبی در مردان با همسران چاق بیشتر است

نتیجه یک پژوهش ۱۶ ساله در دانشگاه علوم پزشکی شهید بهشتی تهران نشان داد خطر ابتلا به بیماری‌های قلبی عروقی در مردانی که همسران آنها چاق یا دارای اضافه وزن بودند، نسبت به مردانی که همسران شان وزن طبیعی داشت، بیشتر است.

فرزاد حدائق، مدیر این تحقیق، می‌گوید: زوجین در موقعیت‌های اقتصادی - اجتماعی، الگوهای غذایی و سایر عوامل محیطی و سبک زندگی مشترک اند، اما از نظر ژنتیکی بی‌ارتباط هستند.

نتایج این مطالعه به نقش عوامل محیطی به ویژه رفتارهای مربوط به سبک زندگی اعضای خانواده در بروز بیماری‌های قلبی عروقی تأکید می‌کند و این موضوع ممکن است به شناسایی زود هنگام افراد در معرض خطر در جامعه و خانواده برای اجرای برنامه‌های پیشگیری کمک موثری کند.



Visually striking salt polygons in northeast Iran

Salt polygons in northeastern Khorasan Razavi province are geometric patterns formed on dried-up lakebeds or salt flats.

With their intricate designs and the way they interact with light and shadow, these polygons are formed due to the process of evaporation and mineral concentration.



AUGUST 3, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world is a snake; its exterior is soft and nice to touch, and its interior contains deadly poison. Stupid and ignorant people are charmed by it but the wise avoid it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:26 Dawn: 3:39 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:15 (tomorrow)

Tehran cultural center to screen “Mothers’ Instinct”

TEHRAN- “Mothers’ Instinct”, a 2024 American film directed by Benoît Delhomme, will be reviewed at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday evening.

Film critic Kurosh Jahed is set to attend a screening of the film followed by a review session.

“Mothers’ Instinct” is a compelling psychological thriller, marking Delhomme’s directorial debut. The film stars Jessica Chastain, Anne Hathaway, Anders Danielsen Lie, and Josh Charles. It is a remake of the 2018 French-language film directed by Olivier Masset-Dépassé, which was itself adapted from Barbara Abel’s 2012 novel “Derrière la haïne” (“Behind the Hatred”).

The narrative explores themes of motherhood, suspicion, grief, and the dark secrets that can simmer beneath an outwardly perfect suburban life.

Set in the 1960s, the story revolves around two neighboring mothers, Alice Bradford and Céline Jennings, who start their relationship with a warm gesture—Alice throws a surprise birthday party for Céline. But their friendship takes a tragic turn when Céline’s young son, Max, is playing on a balcony, trying to hang a birdhouse he made at school, and loses his footing, falling to his death. Alice, who is nearby pruning her garden, notices Max in danger and attempts to warn Céline. Her effort is delayed by her large sunhat, causing her to run around the hedge dividing their yards. By the time she reaches Céline, it’s too

late—the boy has fallen.

This devastating loss leaves Céline shattered and emotionally distant from Alice, although she begins to grow closer to Alice’s son, Theo. During Max’s funeral, Theo notices a toy of his in Max’s coffin and reacts violently. Overcome with grief, Céline leaves town for a month but later returns, and the women reconcile. Their relationship becomes increasingly tense as Alice witnesses Theo playing on the same balcony where Max fell. Haunted by the incident, Alice begins to suspect Céline was testing her maternal instincts—perhaps deliberately pushing her to act quickly in dangerous situations.

The tension escalates when Theo and Céline’s bond deepens, leading to Theo inviting Céline to his birthday party—much to Alice’s concern. After the celebration, tragedy strikes again when Alice’s mother-in-law suddenly collapses and dies of a heart attack. An autopsy reveals she had been taking medication, but tests show no traces of the drug. Suspecting Céline has been replacing her medication with placebos, Alice’s suspicions grow, though concrete evidence remains elusive.

The story reaches its climax as Alice uncovers more disturbing truths, culminating in a tense confrontation with Céline. The film explores how maternal instincts can be manipulated and how grief and suspicion can lead to devastating consequences, culminating in a shocking and chilling finale.

Cartoon of Day



Humanitarian Aid

Cartoonist: Vasco Gargalo from Portugal

Art against erasure: witnessing Gaza’s unseen pain

By Kurosh Alyani

Iranian cultural critic

TEHRAN- A mother—whether in Norway or Nigeria—switches off the television, refusing the unbearable sight: a grieving mother in Gaza holding her child, starved to death. The image pierces too deep, shattering fragile calm. In that moment, denial shields her heart; the world’s pain presses too close. Yet the silence carries its own weight—a quiet witness to sorrow too vast to hold.

In Gaza, catastrophe is not episodic—it is layered, sustained, and simultaneous. Death, hunger, and destruction co-occur in rhythms so dense they numb the global gaze. This saturation of crisis does not amplify outrage; it silences perception. The public, overwhelmed by the relentlessness of pain, retreats into passive despair. Art and language falter before such magnitude, leaving the task not to depict suffering elegantly but to disrupt the anesthetic of distance—to awaken a human response where numbness has settled.

While bombs fall and bodies collapse, structured media silence ensures that the world rarely sees them. Through calculated delay, “neutral” framing, and selective visibility, mainstream outlets transform atrocity into abstraction. This is not ignorance—it is design. Victims are omitted not from lack of footage, but through editorial codes that prioritize comfort over confrontation. Gaza’s erased lives are proof: tragedy can be hidden in plain view. Journalism, once a witness, now acts as a filter—muting screams into background noise, curating absence.

Bodies in Gaza have been distorted—by hunger, fire, and force—into forms unrecognizable to the human eye. Starvation etches bone against skin; explosions erase facial identity; burns turn flesh into abstraction. The result is not merely physical obliteration but aesthetic erasure. These transformations obscure the victim’s humanity, severing their image from the viewer’s capacity to relate. Art cannot “represent” such violence—it must confront it without filter or metaphor. When the body defies recognition, it demands reckoning, not depiction.

Erasure in Gaza is not only physical—it is cognitive, aesthetic, and systemic. Media silence, artistic conventions, display logic, and colonial policy form a synchronized architecture of invisibility. Victims are not silenced by blunt force, but by exclusion from interpretive frames. The language of art fails them; the politics of presentation dismiss them. This coordination does not just omit lives—it warps understanding itself. To speak of Gaza is to confront a web of deletion, where the dominant lens obstructs rather than reveals.

Georgian theater festival honors Iran’s “Confusion”

TEHRAN- The Iranian theater group Amitis received an honorable mention for their production “Confusion” at International Festival of Regional Theaters in Poti, Georgia on Friday.

The festival featured eleven theater companies from France, Romania, Iran, Georgia, and Lithuania.

Written and directed by Mohammad Amin Saadi, “Confusion” has captivated audiences with over 70 performances across Tehran.

The play is a poetic adaptation of French writer Joël Egloff’s novel “L’Etourdissement,” translated into Persian by Asghar Nouri. It



The 2025 World Press Photo of the Year shows nine-year-old Mahmoud Ajjour who was injured during an Israeli attack on Gaza City in March 2024, taken by Samar Abu Elouf for The New York Times newspaper.

In the face of unfiltered brutality, conventional artistic language falls short. Aesthetic tools—form, metaphor, composition—struggle to grasp raw violence without softening or obscuring it. Instead of exposing evil, they stylize it, framing agony within codes meant for gallery walls. This is not abstraction—it is evasion. In Gaza, pain resists beautification. When atrocity refuses metaphor, art must abandon polish and technique to bear witness directly. Beauty cannot translate suffering; it can only defer it. Confrontation requires rupture, not elegance.

Reconstructing the field of vision involves more than restoring the victim’s image. Their absence goes beyond visibility—it inhabits imagination, language, and human relations. Systems of perception have erased the victim not just from sight but from meaning. Revealing violence requires transforming how we perceive, not just presenting wounded bodies. It’s a structural shift that brings truth into focus. The gaze must cut through beauty and recognize what’s been excluded. Representation without this rupture risks repeating the very erasure it seeks to expose.

The spectacle of suffering risks becoming a second violence. When the victim’s pain is transformed into a visual object or consumable tragedy, the audience may feel sympathy, but not solidarity. This aestheticization distances the viewer from responsibility. Emotional reaction replaces ethical response. Instead of engaging with the victim’s condition, we consume it—wrapped in imagery, detached from its cause. Such representation creates comfort in

witnessing, but fails to challenge complicity. To truly ally with the victim, the gaze must refuse entertainment.

The distant and defensive viewer avoids confronting violence—not out of cruelty, but from the vulnerability of witnessing. Global audiences often retreat into denial or detachment, shielding themselves from the discomfort of complicity. The act of seeing becomes threatening, not due to the image’s brutality, but its demand for ethical presence. This evasion reflects a fragile position: a refusal to inhabit the scene with accountability. Reconstructing vision means breaking this shield, facing the rupture, and accepting the cost of proximity.

Erasure in Gaza is not only physical—it is cognitive, aesthetic, and systemic, with media silence, artistic conventions, display logic, and colonial policy forming a synchronized architecture of invisibility.

The language of victims—silence, stutter, broken words—should not be reconstructed by analytical discourse. It must enter the work as it is: fractured, raw, unresolved. These utterances are not metaphors for expression; they are documents of erasure. To refine them is to betray them. The victim’s voice, frag-

mented and wounded, carries truth more potent than polished commentary. Let the rupture speak for itself; it holds the trace of what was denied.

Places of violence in Gaza must not be staged as emotional backdrops. Bread lines, shattered hospitals, ruined homes—these are not sets for dramatic effect but documents of erasure. They must enter the work unframed, as sites where deletion itself has occurred. To aestheticize these spaces is to falsify them; their presence must remain raw, resisting choreography, so the audience encounters absence as fact, not spectacle, and feels its weight unmediated.

Slow death in Gaza is not accidental—it is engineered. Malnutrition and medical deprivation operate as deliberate machinery, producing deaths that are neither natural nor exceptional. Art cannot treat these as tragedies of fate; it must expose their architecture. The task is not narration but revelation: to strip away the disguise of inevitability and show the intent, the policy, the design that turns human life into a scheduled erasure.

The task of art is to resist silence without turning wounds into spectacle. It must draw the victim back from erasure while refusing to display injury so graphically that the viewer retreats. Art must hold its gaze steady—close enough to restore the victim’s place in human relation, yet careful not to convert pain into a barrier. Witness must replace voyeurism; presence must replace the safe distance of pity.

Art must rebuild the fabric of relation out of violence—not through decorative empathy, but by returning the victim to the position of a counterpart rather than an object. The work must dismantle the distance that turns a human into a scene. It is not sentiment that repairs the breach, but the refusal to let a life be only watched. To see is to stand with, not to look at.

The image of the victim must stand as an indictment, not an ornament. A starved body, a burned corpse, cannot be offered for aesthetic judgment or beautified for display. Such images belong not to the realm of taste but to the archive of accusation. They should confront the viewer as evidence—undeniable, unpolished—naming the structure that produced them, so that no gaze can escape the weight of their claim.

From collective death, the work must carve not only testimony but the outline of a human future. It cannot stop at cataloging loss; it must open the possibility of life after violence. This is not the soft promise of hope, but the hard discipline of responsibility—the demand to imagine a world rebuilt, where the dead are not forgotten and the living are bound to answer for them.



explores themes of identity, resilience, and the human condition through a compelling narrative set in a bleak yet poetic world.

The story centers on a young

man working in a slaughterhouse, living amidst monotony and existential fatigue. His reflections reveal a longing for connection, love, and meaning, por-

trayed through quirky characters and humorous scenes that evoke a fairy-tale atmosphere. The play employs innovative techniques such as shadow play, brought to life by cast members Fardin Rahmanpour and Sahar Qasemi.

“Confusion” previously received nominations at the Fajr International Theater Festival in categories including directing, acting, costume design, and makeup, reaffirming its artistic excellence.

The International Festival of Regional Theaters aims to foster cultural exchange and collaboration among theater companies from various countries.