



## From Zahhak to Netanyahu: Iran's Eternal Struggle Against Division

## Iran establishes new defense council to centralize military strategy

TEHRAN – In a move to strengthen national security coordination, Iran's Supreme National Security Council has approved the creation of a new defense council, operating under Article 176 of the Constitution.

The newly established council will be responsible for evaluating defense strategies and enhancing the operational capabilities of Iran's armed forces in a centralized manner. Analysts suggest this could signal a more unified approach to military planning amid escalating tensions with Israel and the United States.

## Thousands of settlers storm al-Aqsa Mosque

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Thousands of Israeli settlers, led by the regime's government minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied al-Quds.

The incursion coincided with the so-called "anniversary of the destruction of the Temple" and featured Talmudic rituals, chanting, and provocative dancing. These are moves widely condemned by Palestinians as dangerous escalations aimed at changing the status quo of the holy site. ▶Page 5

## Tehran, Islamabad ink 12 co-op documents in various fields

TEHRAN- Iran and Pakistan signed 12 documents for cooperation in different areas in Islamabad on Sunday, during the visit of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian to Pakistan.

During his official visit to Pakistan, the president of Iran took a significant step toward strengthening bilateral relations by signing 12 cooperation agreements in various fields, enhancing economic, cultural, and technological ties between the two countries.

In the president's trip, senior officials from both nations held a joint meeting and signed 12 documents to facilitate and deepen bilateral cooperation.

These agreements cover areas



including tourism, agriculture, judicial and legal cooperation, industry, science and technology, transportation and transit, cultural heritage, as well as trade and economy.

The deals establish a framework for knowledge exchange, expanding trade capacities, strengthening people-to-people connections,

and boosting regional cooperation between Iran and Pakistan.

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.

As recently announced by Hamidreza Karbalaee Esmaeili, the deputy for the Indian subcontinent at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Iran enjoys a trade surplus with Pakistan, exporting goods at 3.5 times the volume of its imports from the neighboring country.

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. ▶Page 4

## US standing against global will for Palestinian state

By Bahram Moradi

TEHRAN – U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has shown contempt for the leaders of France, Britain, and Canada for planning to recognize the Palestinian state, calling them "clumsy".

These three countries, which have been sending arms to Israel in its nearly two-year war on Gaza, are realizing, though too late, that Israel sees no limit in its crimes against the Gazans, especially banning the entry of humanitarian aid which has led to famine in the enclave. Moreover, these countries are also under pressure at home for what is going on in Gaza and are worried about the rising isolation of Israel, which they see as their ally in the region. ▶Page 5

## Breaking with Bibi: Democrats' bid to protect Zionism, not Palestinians

By staff writer

TEHRAN — A growing number of US Democrats is openly criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ongoing military campaign in the Gaza Strip — a sign of shifting political winds in Washington.

While calls to end Israel's war on Gaza continue to mount, Democrats are now using their legislative power to challenge the status quo. On Wednesday, a record number of Senate Democrats supported two resolutions introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders aimed at blocking US arms sales to Israel. Although the resolutions were ultimately defeated — with Republicans and other Democrats voting against them — the move marked an unprecedented level of dissent from within a traditionally pro-Israel Congress. ▶Page 5

## Iran Army Chief: 'Missiles and drones ready for action'

TEHRAN – Iran's Army Chief, Major General Amir Hatami, declared the nation's missile and drone capabilities to be "permanent and ready for operations."

Addressing Army Ground Force commanders Sunday, he stressed this readiness endured during hostilities in June, continuing attacks "until the last moment" to compel a ceasefire. Hatami honored martyrs and blamed Western opposition on Iran's faith and progress, vowing accelerated advancement.

Warning against underestimating the enemy, he praised the people's unity and resistance, which delivered a "stinging slap" to enemy plots and forced the Israeli regime to admit its "strategic error."

This follows the Israeli regime's unprovoked aggression against Iran on June 13, prompting Tehran's "True Promise III" act of self-defense.

By June 24, Iran's operations cornered the regime and the U.S. into asking for a ceasefire.



## Arbaeen theater festival celebrates sacred pilgrimage with cultural performances

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The 9th edition of the Arbāeen Pilgrimage International Theater Festival is set to open on Tuesday, featuring a diverse range of theatrical and cultural performances in honor of the sacred pilgrimage, the organizers have announced.

Talented practitioners of religious theater have mobilized for this significant event and after the opening ceremony in Tehran, they will march towards Khuzestan province in southern Iran, Kourosh Zarei, the director of the Art Bureau's Center for Dramatic Arts announced during a press conference held in Tehran on Sunday. ▶Page 8



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## A trip with an important message

In an article, Jam-e-Jam discussed the importance of Pezeshkian's trip to Pakistan. It wrote: The two countries of Iran and Pakistan are co-operating as two neighboring countries. The people and government of Pakistan are intelligent and have a correct understanding of the situation. There is an understanding in Pakistani society that the recent threats to the region were sparked by the Zionist regime with the support of the United States, and just as these threats were not limited to Palestine, they also spread to Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. So if this process is not controlled, it will continue and will encompass the entire region. Tel Aviv's strategy, with a support by the United States, is to turn this occupying regime into the dominant power in the region. Therefore, cooperation between the two countries can be effective in undermining this strategy. The trip is taking place at very important juncture and will have very desirable achievements. What is certain is that the Islamic world is not united. If we work together, no enemy can dominate Islamic countries.

## Siasat-e-Rooz: A challenging drill

Siasat-e-Rooz analyzed the joint military exercise between Armenia and the United States. It wrote: Armenia stated that this drill aims to achieve sustainable security and confront the military movements of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Countries in the region, such as Iran, Russia, and Georgia, have always emphasized that they are ready to mediate between Baku and Yerevan without the interference of foreigners. Experience has shown that external actors do not pursue any goal other than their interests through damaging relations and inciting war. Today, the Zionist regime, Turkey, and England are determined to pave the way for their military influence by creating tension and conflict in the region. Although they claim they want to confront Iran and Russia, the entire region should know that their goal is to undermine all countries in the region to achieve their hegemonic goals. The ultimate solution for the crisis in the Caucasus is to abandon fruitless conflicts and accept regional mediators such as Russia and Iran, who, as regional countries, want stability and sustainable security for all.

## Ettelaat: Door to diplomacy should not be closed

In a commentary, Ettelaat said the door to diplomacy should not be closed and it is essential

to prevent an activation of the snapback mechanism by the European trio of Britain, France and Germany because its possible activation will favor Israel. It said: Europe's interests are not in activating the snapback mechanism, because Europe is psychologically, economically, and politically involved in the war with Russia in Ukraine. Insecurity of the Persian Gulf and the rise in the price of oil and gas will mean hundreds of billions of dollars in Russia's favor and the defeat of Europe. In addition, opening another front against Iran will cause the war with Russia to be removed from the European focus. Therefore, the winner of activating the snapback mechanism will be Russia and Israel, and it is not surprising if Moscow welcomes the activation of the mechanism for its interests. Today, instead of calling the snapback mechanism a "piece of paper" and welcoming it under Article 7 of the UN Charter, it is better to review foreign policy and turn this threat into an opportunity. Israel seeks to be the dominant power in the region, and the United States will not give up this region. We just need to open our eyes and look at the experiences of other countries.

## Iran: An opportunity to be seized

In an analysis the Iran newspaper wrote: The Americans acknowledge the fact that Pakistan can provide them with a deeper understanding of Iran. From this viewpoint, the significance of Dr. Pezeshkian's visit to Pakistan can be analyzed. The visit is meaningful from two points of view: on the one hand, strengthening bilateral relations can prevent emergence of destructive and malicious factors from hurting relations between the two countries, or providing a platform for the influence of destabilizing actors. On the other, Pakistan has the motivation to be proactive and play a role in creating a balance in the relations of global powers.

Given this motivation and its special diplomatic position, especially regarding Iran and the United States, Pakistan can play a role in regional peace and stability. We are now in a special and sensitive period, a period that can provide a golden opportunity to use Pakistan's capacity as a regional mediator or facilitator.

This opportunity must be properly understood and exploited by the country's policymakers and decision-makers before rival actors neutralize it or seize it for their own benefit.

## ‘Starved and bombed’, Iran condemns humanitarian collapse in Gaza



*Palestinian children share a bowl of lentil soup obtained from a food distribution point in Gaza City*

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has issued a sharp rebuke of the international community for their failure to stop Israel's ongoing genocidal war in the Gaza Strip, criticizing Western powers for enabling the destruction through continued military support.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei voiced Tehran's condemnation in a statement posted Saturday on social media platform X. He blasted the inaction of global actors in the face of what he called a systematic campaign of mass starvation and indiscriminate killing launched by Israel since October 2023.

"Palestinians are being starved to death while simultaneously bombed by the most advanced American and German-made weapons," Baghaei wrote, accusing Israel and its Western allies of orchestrating a dual war of hunger and firepower.

He further noted that so-called aid distribution points—established by Israel and the

United States in response to mounting malnutrition—have become "death traps," where over a thousand desperate civilians have reportedly been killed while trying to access food.

"Patients are dying without medicine; food lines are turned into ambush sites," he added, calling the situation a deliberate assault on Gaza's civilian population.

Baghaei said nearly two years of non-stop bombardment have devastated the territory, leaving more than 200,000 people killed or wounded, traumatizing the population, and rendering 90 percent of the Gaza Strip uninhabitable.

"The world must move beyond hollow condemnations," he urged. "Concrete action is needed—beginning with an immediate arms embargo on the Israeli regime and prosecution of its war criminals."

*(See full text at tehrantimes.com)*

## Iran-Pakistan ties rooted in brotherhood and regional vision: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the deep-rooted brotherhood between Iran and Pakistan during his official visit to Islamabad, stating that the relationship goes far beyond mere geographic proximity.

Speaking at a joint press conference alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on Sunday, Pezeshkian highlighted the two countries' shared commitment to regional stability, economic co-operation, and Islamic unity amid ongoing regional challenges.

President Pezeshkian emphasized that regional peace and security are fundamentally interconnected, noting that "calm and stability are essential prerequisites for economic growth and cross-border cooperation." He reaffirmed Iran's commitment to prioritizing ties with its neighbors, adding, "Our relationship with Pakistan is not just based on geography—it is based on brotherhood."

He also expressed deep gratitude to Pakistan for its unwavering support during the recent 12-day war launched by Israel and backed by the United States, describing Islamabad's solidarity as a powerful reflection of the close and brotherly ties between the two nations.

Pezeshkian praised the unified stance adopted by Pakistan's government, parliament, political parties, scholars, and public. "Their position was deeply heartening and a sign of the enduring bond between our peoples," he said.



*Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) walks with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad on August 3, 2025*

On June 13, Israel launched a surprise military assault on Iran that claimed the lives of at least 1,064 individuals, including senior military officials, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The United States joined the offensive by striking three Iranian nuclear facilities—an act Tehran has denounced as a flagrant violation of international law.

In response, Iranian armed forces carried out coordinated retaliatory operations targeting both Israeli and U.S. positions. The campaign successfully brought the hostilities to a halt by June 24.

The two leaders also condemned Israel's ongoing atrocities in Gaza and its broader actions across Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Pezeshkian stressed the need for stronger, more coordinated action among regional and Muslim nations to counter Israel's aggressive

and destabilizing policies.

He stressed the urgent need for unified regional and international action against Israel's ongoing aggressions in Gaza.

"Strengthening cooperation among Islamic countries is key to preventing further attacks by the Israeli regime," Pezeshkian said. "By expanding comprehensive ties between Iran and Pakistan, we can set a successful example for regional collaboration and Muslim unity."

Pezeshkian described Israel's continued attacks as a stark warning to the Islamic world and the global community, underscoring the necessity of a coordinated response to the regime's violations of international law.

Calling for an end to double standards in global diplomacy, the

## Tehran unveils identities of Israeli pilots involved in bombing of Iran



*IRIB broadcast reveals Major Yael Ash of Israel's "Bat" Squadron, participant in the regime's 12-day aggression against Iran*

TEHRAN – On Saturday, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) reported an intelligence breakthrough: Iranian operatives have assembled comprehensive profiles on the Israeli regime's pilots, commanders, and drone operators who were involved in launching the unprovoked June assault against Iran.

The report described the discovery as a decisive penetration of Israel's "Hollywood" façade—a direct challenge to the regime's efforts to

conceal its personnel under blurred masks and code names.

According to IRIB, agents gained access not only to names and unit details but precise residential locations, satellite imagery of homes, and even records of equipment handling—information ordinarily shielded by the Israeli regime's strict security protocols.

"These navigators of death and destruction," as the IRIB broadcast dubbed the F-16 crews, now stand

exposed, their every movement laid bare to Iran's intelligence network.

Among those named was Major Yael Ash, deputy commander of Squadron 119—dubbed the "Bat Squadron"—and her husband, Bar Prince.

The IRIB highlighted Major Ash's lineage as the paternal granddaughter of Major Shimon Ash, a pilot missing since the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Spotlighting her interview with Hebrew-language media, the Iranian report noted that her televised vow to "restore security" to Zionists has been recast: "Now, she herself is no longer safe," insisting the disclosure makes "the entire world unsafe for them."

IRIB explained that once Iranian forces marked the whereabouts of key aircrew, the Israeli regime rushed several to schools and other civilian buildings.

Analysts assert that possessing the pilots' full dossiers—names, bases, roles in prior operations, and patterns of movement—gives

Iranian president urged international institutions—particularly the UN Security Council—to take decisive action against violations of sovereignty, war crimes, and civilian massacres.

President Pezeshkian also thanked the Pakistani leadership for their warm hospitality and extended an invitation to Prime Minister Sharif to visit Tehran in the near future to continue high-level talks.

The Iranian president arrived in Islamabad on Saturday for a two-day official visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Sharif—his first trip to Pakistan since assuming office.

On Sunday, the two countries signed 12 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) covering diverse fields including trade, science and technology, agriculture, tourism, transport and transit, judicial cooperation, cultural heritage, and economic development.

The agreements aim to deepen bilateral ties by facilitating knowledge exchange, expanding commercial capacity, strengthening people-to-people engagement, and enhancing regional cooperation.

Pezeshkian's visit began in Lahore, where he paid tribute to Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet and an influential figure in Iran-Pakistan intellectual relations. He then traveled to Islamabad for meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Sharif.

Tehran a strategic upper hand should the Israeli regime contemplate renewed aggression.

"These revelations are just the beginning," the IRIB report declared, promising further disclosures of classified material in the not-so-distant future.

The 12-Day War began when the Israeli regime breached the UN charter and international law on June 13, striking Iranian facilities and assassinating senior Iranian military officials and scientists. This prompted Iran to launch 22 waves of missile and drone operations in self-defense which targeted military and industrial sites within the occupied territories.

After the halt in fighting on June 24, Iranian officials have voiced deep distrust toward the Israeli regime's ceasefire claims, emphasizing their unreliability. Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi and President Masoud Pezeshkian both affirmed Iran's readiness to respond forcefully to any renewed aggression.

## European 'Snapback' threat lacks legal standing: Iran to UN

TEHRAN – Iran has officially notified the United Nations that any attempt to reimpose UN sanctions through the snapback mechanism would be illegal and devoid of legal standing.

The announcement came after Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi informed parliament that a formal letter—signed by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi—had been sent to the UN Secretary-General and all members of the Security Council, emphasizing Iran's firm rejection of the snapback threat.

The development was disclosed during a session of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, held Sunday, where Gharibabadi briefed lawmakers on his recent diplomatic efforts, including a trilateral meeting with the European

troika (France, Germany, and the UK) in Istanbul and his trip to New York.

According to Committee spokesman Ebrahim Rezaei, Gharibabadi told MPs that the European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal have no legal grounds to invoke the snapback mechanism, as they have failed to fulfill their own commitments under the agreement. He said Iran is closely coordinating with China and Russia on the matter, including through a recent trilateral consultation.

The deputy minister reaffirmed Tehran's adherence to the Iranian Parliament's law requiring suspension of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), calling it binding legislation that the government remains committed to implementing.

*(See full text at tehrantimes.com)*

## IAEA delegation to visit Iran without inspectors, Al Mayadeen reports

TEHRAN – An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) delegation will arrive in Tehran next week to discuss implementing Iran's binding parliamentary law suspending formal cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, Al Mayadeen reported Sunday, citing anonymous sources.

In a pivotal shift, the talks will focus solely on "the political aspect" of the relationship, with inspectors explicitly excluded from the delegation—a condition mandated by Iran's post-attack legislative framework.

The visit follows Iran's suspension of official IAEA cooperation in late June, ratified by the Guardian Council after U.S. and Israeli airstrikes hit civilian nuclear facilities at Natanz, Isfahan, and Fordow.

Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf declared

cooperation impossible until the agency provides "concrete security guarantees" for nuclear sites and condemns the attacks—a step the IAEA has yet to take. Al Mayadeen's sources emphasized that this marks "a new chapter in relations," defined entirely by Tehran's terms.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei has clarified Iran remains committed to its safeguards agreements but is redesigning engagement rules under the new law.

"A new manual is expected to be defined with the UN nuclear watchdog," he stated, demanding the IAEA first rectify its "political and technical oversteps"—particularly its refusal to denounce the June strikes that destroyed critical infrastructure, including Natanz's above-ground enrichment plant and Isfahan's uranium conversion facilities.

*(See full text at tehrantimes.com)*



# From Zahhak to Netanyahu: Iran’s eternal struggle against division

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iran is a nation composed of different groups of people. Persians, Azeris, Gilaks, Mazandarani, Balochis, Turkmens, Kurds, Lors, and Arabs have long lived alongside each other within a geographical expanse that was once far larger than what is known as Iran today.

For millennia, these communities have maintained their unique cultures and languages while using Persian (Farsi) as a common means of communication, connecting regions near and far. In recent decades, rising literacy and deeper social integration have only strengthened these ties and solidified a resilient Iranian identity – one further supported by DNA studies revealing close genetic links among the country's diverse ethnic groups. An Iranian from Sistan and Baluchestan shares more with a Kurd from Kermanshah than either would with outsiders.

That, coupled with all the years Iranians have fought, traded, married and buried their dead under the same sky, is what has sustained Iran for thousands of years and made it the oldest continuously existing nation in history. Throughout the years, whether facing Alexander's armies, Arab caliphates, Mongol hordes, or British oil barons, the unity and loyalty of the Iranian people have prevailed. Today, in 2025, that very unity appears to be a primary target for Iran's adversaries, particularly Israel and the United States.

### The “Greater Israel” requires disintegration of Iran

When Jewish refugees arrived in Palestine during the 1940s to flee the horrors of WWII, Zionist organizations had already been working for some years to establish a Jewish state there, efforts that commenced after the Balfour Declaration in 1917. After the official establishment of Israel and with time, different Zionist factions began to openly advocate for a “Greater Israel”, encompassing all Palestinian lands as well as parts



A 2023 meeting between Netanyahu and the son of the deposed Shah in the occupied territories, illustrating Israel's engagement with treacherous Iranian groups

of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and even Saudi Arabia. While no Israeli official has openly admitted to this ideology, Israel's continued failure to define its borders and its annexation of the West Bank and the Golan Heights in Syria suggest a persistent commitment to the vision of a Greater Israel.

Realizing the vision of a Greater Israel not only necessitates the removal of existing central governments and autonomous regions within these territories but also requires neutralizing any significant regional power capable of opposing Israeli expansion. Consequently, Iran, the most significant non-Palestinian hurdle to realizing this expansionism, must be addressed.

Israel and the United States have used various tactics to harm Iran in the past 46 years. From sanctions to military action, the two have exhausted different means to weaken the central government and wrought chaos within Iran. One notable tactic has involved fueling and spurring separatist sentiments within the country, through propaganda campaigns as well as the funding and arming of separatist groups based near the Iranian borders.

Most recently, during the 12-day Iran-Israel war in June, Israeli media unusually laid bare the re-

gime's core objectives. The Jerusalem Post, for instance, wrote that Washington must forge a regional coalition for Iran's “partition” and encourage “long-term plans for a partitioned or federalized Iran.” This plan aims to separate Azeris, Kurds, and Baluchis from the rest of the Iranian population. But Israel's key focus has always been the Kurds, who are scattered across the region in Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Turkey.

### Where is the origin of the Kurdish people?

“The Kurdish people are among the most authentically Iranian people of Iran,” said Professor Mahmoud Jafari Dehaghi, a renowned scholar of Iranian history and ancient Iranian languages at Tehran University. He explains, “The Kurdish language is a modern Iranian language, classified linguistically as part of the northwestern languages spoken on the Iranian plateau.”

In Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, a foundational epic poem of Persian literature composed over 1,000 years ago, Kurds join an uprising by Kaveh the Blacksmith against Zahhak, the most infamous tyrannical figure in the epic, and help liberate Iran, the professor stated.

“Kurds are a principal population group within Iran,” Professor Dehaghi added. “Historically, they

lived entirely under Iranian sovereignty until after World War I, when colonial powers partitioned some Kurdish-inhabited regions among neighboring countries.”

In its efforts to destabilize Iran, however, Israel is constantly fabricating Kurdish and Iranian history. A recent post on X by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son exemplifies this blatant attempt to sow discord between Kurds and other Iranians.

“The Kurds are the largest stateless people in the world, with a population of around 45 million. They are secular and allies of the West. Their territory is divided and occupied by Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Why haven't France, Spain, Ireland, the UK, Norway, Portugal, Canada, Germany, Malta, and Slovenia recognized Kurdistan?” the son of the war criminal wrote last week.

Ardeshir Pashang, a West Asia scholar and Kurdish affairs specialist (author of “The Kurds in the Iran-Iraq War”) says the Kurdish people have occasionally been used as a tool by Israel. “Let's be clear – Israel's sudden ‘pro-Kurdish’ rhetoric is pure political theater,” he told the Tehran Times. “Israel's 70-year record proves they've never been supporters of the Kurdish people. In fact, at various points, they have dealt blows to Kurdish movements and leaders.”

Pashang mentioned how Mosad operatives were instrumental in the 1999 capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, and how Israel has repeatedly provided Turkey with strategic support for anti-Kurdish operations.

“These latest PR gestures are transparent attempts to destabilize Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq by exploiting Kurdish aspirations. The irony? Most Kurdish factions have historically stood with Palestinians against Israeli occupation. Tel Aviv's sudden ‘concern’ for Kurds is about as credible as a fox offering to guard a chicken coop” the expert concluded.

## Young guns, big dreams: Iran’s risky Asia Cup journey

TEHRAN – The Iran national basketball team are set to compete for the 18th time in the prestigious FIBA Asia Cup, which will be held from Aug. 5 to August 17 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Historically, Iran rank as the third most successful team in the competition's history, boasting three championship titles (2007, 2009, and 2013), one runners-up finish, and one bronze medal – trailing only China and the Philippines in Asia's basketball hierarchy.

Since the tournament's inception in 1960, Iran have participated 17 times, showcasing consistent performances and earning a respected place among Asian basketball elites. China lead with 16 titles, followed by the Philippines with five, while Iran hold a commendable three championships.

This edition marks the first time in nine tournaments that the Iranian team will compete without Hamed Haddadi, the legendary center who has been instrumental in the team's past successes. Under the guidance of Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos, the national team will rely on a younger roster aimed at rebuilding and gaining valuable experience.

The final squad consists of 12 players: Sina Vahedi, Mobin Sheikhi, Mohammad Amini, Navid Rezaeifar, Mohammadmahdi Heydari, Arman Zangeneh, Arsalan Kazemi, Matin Aghajanpour, Mohammadmahdi Rahimi, Hasan Aliakbari, Salar Monji, and Mahdi Jafari.

Iran have been drawn into Group B, facing Japan, Syria, and Guam in the preliminary stage.

Significant absences in the roster include Behnam Yakhchali, one of the team's key guards in recent years, who opted out for personal reasons. This has posed a challenge for coach Manolopoulos, who has struggled to find a reliable point guard replacement.

Also notable is the absence of Piter Girgoorian, a high-performing player, who helped Shahrdari Gorgan secure the Iranian league title last season.

Salar Monji, the team's center, recently returned from hand surgery after a fracture, and his current form remains uncertain.

Overall, the squad's composition clearly signals a strategy focused on youth development, which carries risks given the high-pressure environment and the experience needed to compete with Asia's basketball powerhouses.

As Iran starts this new chapter, the balance between developing young talent and securing immediate success will be crucial. The 2025 FIBA Asia Cup presents an opportunity for the Iranian national team to assert themselves again on the continental stage and lay foundations for the future of basketball in the country.

The group stage schedule for Iran is as follows:

**August 6:** Iran vs. Guam at 18:30 (Iran time)

**August 8:** Iran vs. Japan at 14:40

**August 10:** Iran vs. Syria at 21:30

## Esteghlal reach agreement with Albanian forward Asani

TEHRAN – Iran's Esteghlal football team have reached an agreement with Albanian striker Jasir Fadil Asani.

Asani, meanwhile, has a contract until the end of this year, while Guangju does not seem willing to allow him to leave now without at least 1 million euro. The 30-year-old striker will join Esteghlal on an 18-month deal. Asani has represented the Albania football team 23 times and scored five goals.

He started his professional career with the Macedonian club Vardar.

## Iran come fourth in 2025 FIVB Boys’ U19 World Championship

TEHRAN – Spain defeated Iran 3-2 (23-25, 25-23, 15-25, 25-21, 15-10) in the third-place match of the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U19 World Champi-

onship on Sunday.

César Irache Camacho scored 38 points for Spain, while Mohammadamin Rahimi led Iran with 20 points.

Poland and France will compete in the final later today.

The tournament began on July 24 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and will conclude on Aug. 3. Iran are one of the most successful teams in the history of the competition, having secured two gold medals, three silver, and three bronze medals. Brazil and Russia have claimed six and three gold medals, respectively.

## Aghajanian named Lernayin Artsakh coach

TEHRAN – Former Iran national football team assistant coach Markar Aghajanian was named as new head coach of Armenian football club Lernayin Artsakh.

He replaced Artashes Adamyan in the Armenian First League side.

Aghajanian participated in three World Cups (2014, 2018 and 2022) with Iran national team as Carlos Queiroz assistant.

The 60-year-old coach, who has worked in the Iranian Olympic and youth national teams, has coached the Iranian Oghab, Bargh, Mes and Damash teams during his club career.

## Former Iran football president Mostafavi laid to rest

TEHRAN – Dariush Mostafavi, former president of the Iran Football Federation, was laid to rest on Sunday at Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery in Tehran. He passed away on Friday night at the age of 81 in Tehran due to pancreatic cancer.

Mostafavi was a respected figure in Iranian football, having played for prominent clubs Taj and Persepolis, as well as representing the Iran national football team from 1994 to 1997.

Under his leadership as federation president, Team Melli achieved a historic milestone by qualifying for the 1998 World Cup in France—their first qualification since 1978.

Additionally, Mostafavi served as the general manager of Persepolis in 2008, contributing significantly to Iranian football.

His funeral was attended by several notable figures, including Iran's sports minister Ahmad Donyamali, football federation president Mehdi Taj, Iran and Persepolis legendary figure Ali Parvi, Iran's national football team head coach Amir Ghalenoei, and former national players.

The Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathies to Mostafavi's family, loved ones, and friends during this time of loss.

## Poland crowned 2025 VNL champions

TEHRAN – Poland secured the title of the 2025 Volleyball Nations League (VNL) champions by defeating Italy in straight sets (25-22, 25-19, 25-14) in the final match on Sunday.

Earlier in the day, Brazil claimed the bronze medal by beating Slovenia 3-1 (23-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-19).

Iran, led by head coach Roberto Piazza, finished the tournament in eighth place.

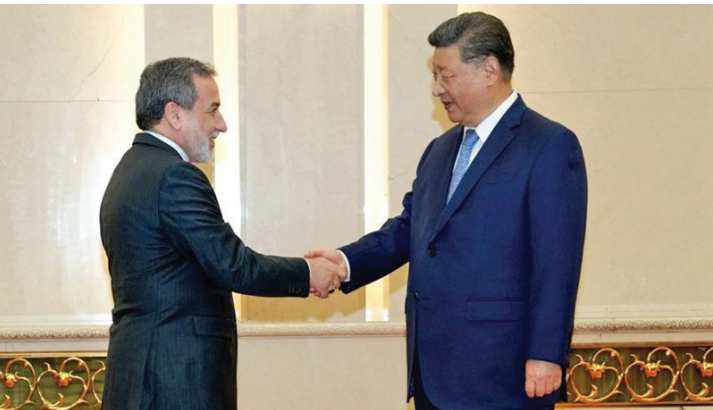
The 2025 VNL was held from June 11 to August 3, with the final match taking place in Ningbo, China.

Historically, Russia and France have each won the VNL title twice in the past seven editions.

The FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League is an annual international volleyball competition contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sports' global governing body. The first tournament took place between May and July 2018, with the final taking place in Lille, France.

Russia won the inaugural edition, defeating France in the final.

## China-Iran relations see new momentums



Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping on July 15, 2025 in Beijing

By Dr. Jin Liangxiang, Senior Fellow, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS)

SHANGHAI – China-Iran relations have seen robust development in terms of high-level engagement, economic cooperation and strategic consultation in the last a couple of years. The region and the world are seeing new dynamics, and the two are seeing new momentums in consolidating Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Firstly, China-Iran mutual political trust has reached at new and higher level. On October 23, 2025, China's President Xi Jinping met with Iran's President Pezeshkian in Kazan Russia on the sideline of BRICS summit. President Xi said that the strategic significance of China-Iran relations has become more prominent as transformations of the world unseen in a century are unfolding at a faster pace. No matter how the international and regional situation evolves, China will unswervingly develop friendly cooperation with Iran.

And President Pezeshkian reciprocated that China is Iran's most important partner for co-operation, and the comprehensive strategic partnership and cooperation in various fields between Iran and China have maintained a sound momentum of development.

The Kazan meeting had pointed out the direction for relations between the two. Both sides had been strongly committed to develop economic relations and to support for the major political and strategic agendas of the other side.

When Iran was aggressed in June 2025, China had expressed its solidarity with Iran categorically in different ways. China's President issued four-point proposal for the immediate resolution of the crisis; China's foreign minister Wang Yi had had two phone calls with Iran's foreign minister Araghchi within 12 days; China, together with Russia and Pakistan, proposed a draft resolution to the UN Security Council calling for an

immediate ceasefire.

Mutual political trust serves to strengthen relations between countries just as Wang Yi said on July 16, 2025 while meeting with Araghchi that China is ready to work with Iran to deepen mutual trust, strengthen cooperation, expand exchanges, and promote the steady and long-term growth of China-Iran relations.

Secondly, national consensus has grown stronger to develop relations with the other on both sides. China and Iran are both great nations with ancient civilizations, which know how to survive in various difficulties and crises in history. This in some way has created a kind of deep-rooted aspiration for independence in our national characters, which suggests that neither of the two has illusions for the hegemonic western power.

However, both China and Iran are countries with diversity. With in both of the two countries, there used to be illusions for so-called Western liberal democracy, which took it for granted that human rights would be protected and humanitarianism would be really concerned. Some even had illusions that non-Western countries like China and Iran could be treated fairly, their legitimate rights could be regarded and national dignity could be respected.

U.S. support for and European countries' silence in Israel's genocide in Palestine, among other issues, had manifested fully the hypocritical nature of the policies of the West. Sanctions and instrumentalization of tariffs, even on the opposite of Western liberalist

approach, proved to be total barbaric robbery.

Neither China nor Iran had been immune to the sanctions of the West; neither of China or Iran had been respected for their sovereignty and territorial integrity. The recent 12-day war was even more telling. Despite the flagrance of the aggression, few Western countries had condemned the aggressors.

## The evolving global order is expected to reshape the dynamics of the relationship between China and Iran

The illusions of the two, though never mainstream, for the West had been shattered all through the previous frustrations though both China and Iran, as two civilizations, will reasonably and expectedly remain inclusive in their respective foreign policies.

The illusions will always remain there, which had more or less affected the consensus building for relations with the other in both China and Iran. As more and more have come back to realities, both China and Iran will be more resolved in developing relations between the two as both of the two will have stronger national consensus on fostering relations with the other side.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com))



## SATBA ramps up solar drive with over 5,000 MW under construction



TEHRAN - Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) has launched the installation of over 5,000 megawatts of solar power capacity at more than 850 sites across the country, as part of its push to expand renewable energy and improve electricity efficiency, the head of the organization said on Saturday.

Mohsen Tarztabalab, who also serves as deputy energy minister, said the projects currently under development are expected to boost the country's installed renewable capacity to at least 7,000 megawatts in the near future.

According to a statement from SATBA, Tarztabalab noted that dozens of new renewable power plants will come online weekly, starting from late August. "Government-run solar projects currently under construction will gradually be connected to the grid," he said.

During a trip to South Khorasan Province, Tarztabalab inaugurated 16 megawatts of new solar capacity across three sites: two 3-megawatt plants in Khusf County and a 10-megawatt facility in Sarbisheh.

These solar farms were financed by private investors under contracts signed with SATBA, including frameworks based on Iran's green energy trading board and Article 12 of the law on removing barriers to production. Built on a combined area of over 25 hectares, the total investment was around 45 trillion rials (approximately \$9.0 million at the unofficial exchange rate of 500,000 rials per dollar).

The solar plants are projected to generate 31 million kilowatt-hours of electricity annually—enough to save 8.4 million cubic meters of natural gas, 6,800 cubic meters of water, and cut carbon dioxide emissions by 17,000 tons per year. The energy produced is also equivalent to saving 53,000 barrels of crude oil.

Tarztabalab said work has also started on an additional 81 megawatts of solar capacity in three other counties across South Khorasan, with plans to add a total of 100 megawatts to the province's renewable portfolio by November and December.

The combined value of the new and upcoming projects is estimated at 250 trillion rials (around \$50 million).

The announcement marks a significant step in Iran's efforts to diversify its energy mix and reduce reliance on fossil fuels amid domestic electricity shortages and environmental pressures.

Iran is on track to expand its renewable energy capacity to 10,000 megawatts by the end of the current Iranian calendar year in March 2026, as part of a nationwide push to close its electricity supply gap and accelerate the energy transition, a senior official has said.

Jafar Mohammadnejad, Deputy for Investment at Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), said the country aims to install 5,500 megawatts of new solar power capacity this year alone.

"This level of capacity can significantly offset the electricity imbalance, especially during peak consumption periods," he said in a live interview with IRIB.

He added that the Ministry of Energy has coordinated with support agencies to accelerate the rollout of low-interest loans for households installing rooftop solar systems.

Unlike large fossil fuel plants, renewable installations are typically built at the point of consumption, reducing transmission losses and minimizing environmental impacts.

"This decentralized model is critical for both energy security and climate goals," Mohammadnejad said.

He noted that Iran has already developed the groundwork to support over 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity, with comprehensive plans in place to reach 30,000 megawatts in the coming years.

The program includes guaranteed power purchase agreements with attractive feed-in tariffs.

Under the scheme, the Energy Ministry will buy excess electricity at a rate of 4,600 to-mans per kilowatt-hour—roughly \$0.09 using an exchange rate of 500,000 rials to the dollar.

A new online platform has also been launched to streamline participation. Over 220 qualified companies have been approved to supply and install solar equipment.

SATBA's goal is to roll out 550,000 solar systems, mostly in residential homes with suitable rooftop or yard space.

In the latest development, electricity on Iran's green energy trading board was priced at around 60,000 rials per kilowatt-hour, reflecting growing market interest in clean power.

Officials have emphasized that solar energy, given Iran's high solar irradiation levels, is poised to play a central role in the country's long-term energy strategy.

Solar plants typically have a standard lifespan of 20 to 25 years, providing both environmental and economic benefits over time.

On July 28, Iran's Supreme Economic Council has approved a \$3.2 billion investment from the National Development Fund (NDF) to support the construction of 7,000 megawatts of solar power capacity, with a focus on rooftop units.

The decision, based on a directive issued by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution allowing the NDF to invest in the energy sector, was announced by Vice President Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, who also heads the Planning and Budget Organization.

The authorization has been formally communicated to the Energy Ministry and the NDF.

The investment will prioritize solar systems that feed electricity directly into local distribution networks, particularly small-scale rooftop units installed by households or private entities.

These decentralized systems are expected to enhance grid stability and reduce pressure on traditional power plants.

The financing structure allocates 80 percent of the required capital to the NDF and 20 percent to private-sector participants.

Each investor can apply for up to 1,000 megawatts of capacity, with returns for the sovereign wealth fund set at an annual rate of eight percent in hard currency.

The NDF will disburse the funds through an intermediary financial institution tasked with managing cash flow, credit oversight, and market operations.

To encourage private participation, the Energy Ministry—through its Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA)—will guarantee the purchase of unsold surplus electricity at up to 70 percent of the average green energy price on the Iran Energy Exchange.

This guarantee will be facilitated through "future electricity bonds," a new financial tool introduced to boost renewable project bankability.

The announcement comes as Iran accelerates efforts to expand renewable energy production amid rising domestic demand and the long-term need to diversify away from fossil fuels.

Officials say the country aims to install 10,000 megawatts of renewable capacity in the near future, with rooftop solar playing a key role in meeting both environmental and grid resilience goals.

# Tehran, Islamabad ink 12 co-op documents in various fields

From Page 1 ▶ "Trade between Tehran and Islamabad is on an upward trajectory," Karbalaie 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. 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 bal-



ance, 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."

Karbalaie Esmaeili stressed that enhancing logistical capabilities, customs cooperation, and transport infrastructure would be critical to sustaining long-term trade growth between the two countries.

## Iran, Iraq push to resolve gas export disputes, outstanding payments

TEHRAN - Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Saturday that Tehran and Baghdad are moving toward settling disputes over gas export volumes and unpaid dues, expressing optimism that both issues would soon be resolved.

Speaking after a meeting with Iraqi Electricity Minister Ziad Ali Fadhil in Tehran, Paknejad told reporters that the two sides reached a consensus on the volume of gas exports to Iraq through the Shalamchah and Naft Shahr border points.

"There were discussions regarding the quantity of gas exports, and fortunately, we reached a mutual understanding," Paknejad said, according to the Oil Ministry's news service, Shana.

He added that "positive and constructive" results were also achieved regarding Iraq's outstanding payments for Iranian gas supplies. "God willing, we will soon witness the settlement of both the export volume and the payment issues," he noted.

Paknejad said the meeting was held in a

positive atmosphere and extended his gratitude to the Iraqi delegation for their hospitality toward Iranian pilgrims, particularly during the annual Arbadeen pilgrimage.

Iraq's electricity minister, for his part, pledged to ensure the best possible conditions for hosting Iranian pilgrims during Arbadeen.

Iran has been a major supplier of natural gas to Iraq under contracts signed since June 2013, delivering gas primarily to power plants in Baghdad and Basra.

However, Iraq's persistent delays in payments—reported to be in the billions of dollars—triggered supply reductions. In December 2020, Iran slashed gas exports dramatically from 50 mcm/d to as low as 5.0 mcm/d due to unpaid debt, causing widespread electricity shortages in Iraq that cut output by thousands of megawatts.

By mid 2022, after months of negotiations, Iraq paid Iran around \$1.6 billion in arrears, and Iran subsequently saw export volumes rise by 25 percent, along with a 90 percent increase in hard-currency receipts.

## Iran, Pakistan mull over joint rice farming, CPEC link via Chabahar

TEHRAN - Iran and Pakistan are exploring joint agricultural ventures and transport corridor integration as part of efforts to boost bilateral trade, including plans for cross-border rice cultivation and connecting Pakistan's China-backed economic corridor to Iran, a senior Iranian official said during a visit to Islamabad.

Reza Masrour, Secretary of Iranian Free Trade, Industrial and

Special Economic Zones High Council, proposed several initiatives in a meeting with Pakistani Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, held on the sidelines of President Masoud Pezeshkian's official trip to Pakistan.

Among the key proposals were joint paddy farming in Pakistan and processing the rice in Iran's Chabahar Free Zone, as a way to address Iran's severe water

shortages while expanding agricultural cooperation.

Masrour also called for multi-entry business visas, the establishment of a joint free zone, and linking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through Iran to Russia and Europe via the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

"These ideas reflect our neigh-

borhood-focused policy, and the potential to unlock joint production and significantly expand trade," Masrour said, emphasizing the shared cultural and historical ties between the two countries.

Pakistan's commerce minister welcomed the proposals and said their implementation could substantially boost the current trade volume, which he estimated at around \$3.0 billion.

## Over 14,000 passenger cars imported in 4 months, up 38% from last year

TEHRAN - Iran imported more than 14,000 passenger vehicles in the first four months of the current Iranian year (starting March 21), marking a sharp increase compared to the same period last year, according to the latest customs data.

Figures released by Iran's Customs Administration show that 14,287 foreign-made cars

were imported and cleared through customs during the four-month period. That represents a 38 percent increase compared to the 10,353 vehicles imported during the same period last year.

The total value of imported cars reached \$313 million, up nearly 50 percent from last year's \$209 million over the same timeframe.

The figures highlight a continued rebound in Iran's auto import sector, which had been severely restricted in past years due to sanctions and foreign currency constraints. The government resumed car imports in 2022 after a multi-year ban, aiming to boost market supply and reduce prices amid chronic domestic production shortfalls.

## Alumina powder output exceeds 74,000 tons in 4 months

TEHRAN - Production of alumina powder in Iran reached 74,425 tons in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), according to the data released by the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Orga-

nization (IMIDRO).

Aluminum oxide, which is commonly called alumina, is an inert, odorless, white amorphous material often used in industrial ceramics.

Alumina is an important ceramic material for industrial ap-

plications. The numerous fields of application range from construction materials, to filling materials, as well as abrasives and catalysts.

In plants and mechanical engineering, alumina ceramics are mainly used for wear and corrosion protection.

The particle size distribution largely determines the application range and the quality of an alumina powder. Reliably identifying the differences in particle size is therefore an essential requirement of the measuring instrument.

## TEDPIX drops 15,862 points on Sunday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 15,862 points to 2.639 million on Sunday, which is the second day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

On July 27, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said that the capital market has entered a phase of stabilizing equilibrium.

"We were able to manage the market after the imposed 12-day war, Hojatollah Seyed noted, adding: "Now the stage of balancing the capital market has ended and we have entered the stage of stabilizing the balance."

"When the imposed war began, we were surprised at the stock market, but we didn't say what to do now, and we finalized our plan at the same day when the first attacks occurred", the official highlighted.

He recalled that in certain circumstances, the most important concern of stock exchanges in the world is to preserve shareholder assets, and stated: "During the days of war, shareholders were concerned about

preserving their capital, and for this reason, stock trading was suspended; the next stage was liquidity because companies wanted to pay their employees."

The SEO head further emphasized that there is no place for the market to be 100 percent green, and that a market with 50 percent green and red is balanced, adding: "In the post-war situation, publishers helped, the Central Bank intervened, and investment funds contributed greatly to the market balance. Now, the fourth stage, which is stabilization, is underway, and we will soon enter the fifth stage of the market, which is the boom stage."



# Chinese Ambassador Cong hails Iran’s SCO contributions, urges ‘true multilateralism’

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Since assuming the rotating presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in July 2024, China has launched a wide array of initiatives aimed at deepening regional cooperation, enhancing multilateralism, and positioning the Eurasian alliance as a rising force in global governance.

As the chair, China has already hosted over 100 events across a range of sectors — including politics, security, economy, energy, education, and innovation — in preparation for the upcoming SCO Summit in Tianjin, which will take place from August 31 to September 1. Anticipated to be the largest in the organization's history, the summit will bring together leaders from more than 20 countries and heads of 10 international organizations.

Founded in 2001, the SCO operates under the principles of the “Shanghai Spirit,” which emphasizes mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and shared development. With 10 full member states — including China, Russia, and Iran — along with observer states and dialogue partners, the SCO has grown into a central platform for regional peace, stability, and economic collaboration.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of a ceremony at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran on Tuesday—marking the 98th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA)—Chinese Ambassador to Iran, Cong Peiwu, praised Iran’s strong participation in SCO events held in China over the past year.

“We have done a lot to promote the SCO agenda. We have designed



The Council of Foreign Ministers of SCO Member States convened in Tianjin, northern China, on July 15, 2025

altogether more than 100 different activities, and among them, dozens of ministerial-level events. And I'm glad Iran has actively participated in a lot of the events,” Ambassador Cong said.

He then outlined three core achievements of the organization under China's leadership. One of the SCO's most important recent achievements is its ability to maintain “sustained development,” the ambassador said. Cong added that this is crucial in helping improve the living standards of people across all member countries.

Next, he emphasized enhanced cooperation in the field of security within the SCO. Citing complex regional and international challenges, he signaled that this kind of collaboration is both timely and essential.

Finally, he highlighted the growing importance of cultural and human connections. “Of course, we are also focusing on the people-to-people exchanges. That also serves as a very important bond connecting the peoples of our different member states.”

Ambassador Cong further emphasized the importance of unity among

developing countries.

“The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, like BRICS, serves as an important platform to practice true multilateralism. If all countries — especially those in the Global South — can become more united, not only in politics but also in the fields of economy, trade, culture, and security, we can forge an even stronger force in practicing true multilateralism and countering unilateralism and power politics.”

Speaking at a press briefing on July 31, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun echoed similar views, detailing the accomplishments made during China's SCO presidency.

“First, cooperation in various sectors has been deepened. China has hosted over 100 events as SCO chair, and nearly half are institutional events, covering multiple areas such as politics, security, military, economy and trade, investment, energy, education, connectivity, technological innovation, green industry, digital economy and people-to-people exchanges,” Guo said.

He added that organizational mechanisms have been improved through collaborative efforts with member states. Guo also noted the SCO's strong commitment to its founding spirit in addressing key global and regional issues: “The SCO has spoken up to uphold justice on major international and regional issues, firmly upheld the multilateral trading system and strongly condemned the abuse of force.”

With final preparations now underway, the upcoming Tianjin summit is expected to mark a turning point in the SCO's trajectory.

“The summit will guide the SCO to enter a new stage of high-quality development featuring more solidarity, coordination, vitality, and contribution, and build a closer SCO community with a shared future,” Guo said.

As China leads the SCO through this critical phase, the organization is poised to take on a more active role in shaping a cooperative and multipolar world, grounded in mutual respect and collective progress.

## Thousands of settlers storm al-Aqsa Mosque

From page 1 ► Ben-Gvir entered the al-Aqsa compound at the head of a large group of settlers. More than 3,000 settlers reportedly participated, entering in successive waves under heavy protection from the Israeli occupation's security forces.

In a video message taken during his illegal visit and published on social media, Ben-Gvir said, “Precisely from here, a message must be sent: to ensure that we conquer all of the Gaza Strip, declare sovereignty over the entire Gaza Strip, take down every Hamas member, and encourage voluntary migration (of Palestinians from Gaza).”

Many performed collective religious rituals, chanted, and danced loudly in different parts of the courtyards around al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest site.

Among those who participated was Knesset member Amit Halevi, known for advocating the division of the holy site, a move seen by Palestinians as a direct threat to their religious and political rights.

At the same time, Israeli regime forces barred Palestinian worshippers from entering the

mosque or even accessing the surrounding Old City through gates near al-Aqsa.

Hours before the mass incursion, Ben-Gvir led a provocative march of settlers through the Old City. Speaking during the march, he made openly defiant remarks, stating: “We are not content with mourning. We are thinking about building the Temple, extending sovereignty, and imposing rule. We have done this in many places, and we will do it in Gaza as well.”

These coordinated incursions were part of a broader campaign organized by so-called “Temple Mount” groups. In recent days, these groups have called for turning August 3 into the “largest day of storming al-Aqsa,” fully backed by the current Israeli government's religious and political agenda.

The al-Quds (Jerusalem) Governorate issued a warning, calling this year's event “the most dangerous threat to al-Aqsa in years.”

Officials stressed that the scale and tone of this year's incursion represent a deliberate attempt to break long-standing religious and legal boundaries governing behavior inside the compound, all with official Israeli backing.

In recent weeks, Ben-Gvir had issued direct orders to Israeli police to allow settlers to sing and dance inside the mosque, a dramatic departure from previous restrictions.

Suggestions that the Israeli regime would alter rules at the al-Aqsa compound have sparked outrage in the Islamic world and ignited deadly violence in the past.

A statement by Hamas said what took place “is a continuation of the ongoing aggression against our Palestinian people, their land, and their holy sites, and a blatant provocation to the feelings of Muslims everywhere through the desecration of the First Qibla and the Third Holiest Sanctuary.”

“The conduct of the extremist Zionist government and its war criminal members — from the continuation of massacres, the war of extermination, and starvation against our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, to killings and terrorism in the West Bank by the occupation army and settler mobs, and systematic violations in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa through incursions, Judaization attempts, and altering the facts on the ground — is nothing but fuel poured onto the fire in the region.” It added.

## US standing against global will for Palestinian state

From page 1 ► Though among the three mentioned countries, Britain and Canada have conditioned recognizing Palestine, the Trump administration still feels unhappy and frustrated.

Rubio has even humiliated the three countries, telling Fox News that “there can be no Palestinian state unless Israel agrees to it”.

Canada and France have been scolded more than Britain. President Donald Trump, who has a covetous eye on Canada and is angry with its prime minister Mark Carney, even threatened to punish Ottawa. “Wow! Canada has just announced that it is backing statehood for Palestine,” Trump wrote on Truth Social. “That will make it very hard for us to make a Trade Deal with them. Oh! Canada!!!”

French President Emmanuel Macron was the first European leader who announced that Paris will recognize the Palestinian state in September and his country along with the Saudi Kingdom chaired a UN General Assembly meeting in late July to push for the

recognition of Palestine in an attempt to end the Gaza war.

Like Trump who vented his anger at Carney, Rubio also called Marcon's decision “reckless”.

“This reckless decision only serves Hamas propaganda and sets back peace. It is a slap in the face to the victims of October 7th,” Rubio wrote on X on July 25.

Contrary to what Rubio claimed, France has said the decision is intended to prevent similar October 7 attacks.

The remarks by Rubio and Trump show that the U.S. does not waver in backing hawks in Israel even it leads to alienating its closest Western friends.

Of the 193 UN member states, approximately 147 currently recognize the State of Palestine. Washington fears that recognition by Canada, France and Britain would prompt the remaining countries to join the campaign and make the United States and Israel look more isolated than ever.

The entire world, except the United States, believes that there

is no alternative other than a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in which Palestinians and Israel live in peace with each other.

In fact, the U.S. is standing against the efforts by the international community to end the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In cooperation with the hawks, or better say war criminals in Israel, the Trump administration is trying to force the remaining Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank to leave their homeland.

The director of Israel's Mossad spy agency visited Washington on July 18 seeking U.S. help in convincing countries to take hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza, two sources with knowledge of issue told Axios at the time. Axios said the spy chief, David Barnea, told White House envoy Steve Witkoff that Israel has been speaking in particular with Ethiopia, Indonesia and Libya.

Contrary to certain claims, it seems the Trump administration is opposed to the creation of a Pal-

estinian state. In June, Washington's ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, said he did not think an independent Palestinian state remained a U.S. foreign policy goal.

The U.S. not only makes no efforts for a Palestinian state it is also complicating the situation. On July 31, the State Department announced sanctions on officials of the Palestinian Authority and Palestine Liberation Organization for trying to “internationalize” their conflict with Israel, including by bringing cases to the International Criminal Court, and “undermining the prospects for peace”.

In addition to seeking to abort efforts to create a Palestinian state, American officials, seeing Palestinians as subordinates, believe that Palestinian even have no right to cry war crimes and crimes against humanity at the hands of Israel before the UN courts.

Even if all countries vote for a Palestinian state the U.S. will kill the move because it must be approved by the UN Security Council, where the United States has a veto right.

## Israel troops shoot Palestinian boy in eye at Gaza aid site

A Palestinian teenager, shot in the eye by Israeli forces while desperately seeking food for his family near a United States and Israeli-backed GHF site in Gaza, is unlikely to regain sight in his left eye, doctors treating him have said, as the population of the besieged and bombarded enclave suffers from forced starvation.

Fifteen-year-old Abdul Rahman Abu Jazar told Al Jazeera that Israeli soldiers kept shooting at him even after he was struck by a bullet, making him think “this was the end” and “death was near”.

Israeli forces have routinely fired on Palestinians trying to get food at GHF-run distribution sites in Gaza, and the United Nations reported this week that more than 1,300 aid seekers have been killed since the group began operating in May.

Gaza's famine and malnutrition crisis has been



worsening by the day, with at least 175 people, including 93 children, now confirmed dead from the man-made starvation of Israel's punishing blockade, according to the territory's Health Ministry.

## Constitutionalizing terrorism in Syria and how!

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — In a hasty attempt to buy time under pressure from the United States, the new Syrian regime intends to hold parliamentary elections next month, whereby the number of seats will be increased from 150 to 210, with at least 20% allocated to women.

This delayed announcement coincides with a series of internal, regional, and international developments regarding Syria, including the massacres in the coastal areas and Suwayda, as well as the faltering negotiations between the new administration and the SDF (the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces).

The parliamentary elections, which are supposed to include all of Syria, come at a time when approximately one-third of the country's north-eastern region (the autonomous administration areas led by the SDF) and the entire Suwayda Governorate in the south are not under the authority of Ahmed al-Sharaa (Abu Muhammad al-Julani), the self-appointed president.

This means that any supposed representation for these regions will be merely symbolic and will not reflect the will of their residents, adding further uncertainty to the country's bleak political picture. It is worth noting that the election date of September was also chosen in an effort to align the elections with US efforts to invite the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham regime to participate in the UN General Assembly meetings.

Over the course of at least 30 months, until a permanent constitution is adopted, the newly formed council is expected to play a key role in

establishing the legislative structure of the new Syrian “state”.

Besides, it will also be able to pass and amend laws, discuss the general budget, and ratify international treaties.

Further, the election will take place after determining the proportion of representation for each governorate based on the 2011 census, that is to say each governorate is assigned a proportional representation of its population (a noticeable focus on female representation has been highlighted).

Observers have numerous questions regarding the SDF, which insists on the principle of decentralization, especially since the upcoming parliament, under the circumstances under which it is being prepared, is considered a pillar of the centralized system of government, with the al-Julani regime controlling it with a heavy hand.

This electoral move will also fall within the context of his ongoing, relentless efforts to consolidate his influence, as it will constitute one of his pretexts for defending the alleged “constitutionality” of his foreign-imposed regime.

Thus, analysts view this move as a continuation of previous measures taken by al-Julani in an attempt to outline the contours of his alleged “state,” including the recent issuance of a report on the coastal massacres.

It is worth noting also that the aforementioned report has been subject to significant criticism due to the conclusion reached by the investigation committee, which exonerated the authorities of any negligence or complicity in these systematic sectarian massacres.

## Breaking with Bibi: Democrats’ bid to protect Zionism, not Palestinians

By staff writer

TEHRAN — A growing number of US Democrats is openly criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ongoing military campaign in the Gaza Strip — a sign of shifting political winds in Washington.

While calls to end Israel's war on Gaza continue to mount, Democrats are now using their legislative power to challenge the status quo. On Wednesday, a record number of Senate Democrats supported two resolutions introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders aimed at blocking US arms sales to Israel. Although the resolutions were ultimately defeated — with Republicans and other Democrats voting against them — the move marked an unprecedented level of dissent from within a traditionally pro-Israel Congress.

It would be naive to believe this shift stems purely from sympathy for Palestinians. Rather, many Democrats see Netanyahu's leadership as a growing liability — one that threatens not only Israel's global standing but also the future of Zionism itself in the eyes of younger and more progressive voters.

Recent polling reflects the shift in public sentiment. A July Gallup poll found that 52% of Americans disapprove of Netanyahu — his worst rating since 1997. Among Democrats, only 9% view him favorably. The poll also revealed a dramatic decline in support for Israel's military actions in Gaza: just 32% of Americans support the war, with support among Democrats plummeting to a mere 8%.

As global outrage over the humanitarian

crisis in Gaza intensifies, the political calculus in Washington is changing. According to CNN, Democratic leaders are increasingly distancing themselves from Netanyahu, known as Bibi, fearing that unwavering support for him could alienate voters ahead of the 2026 midterms and the 2028 presidential race.

“Fearing Zionism could die among Democrats, many party leaders are explicitly breaking with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to try to stop anti-Israel attitudes from becoming a litmus test for next year's midterms and the 2028 presidential primaries,” CNN reported.

This internal reckoning is also taking shape in the House, where a new letter urging US recognition of a Palestinian state is gaining traction. Meanwhile, France has already announced it will recognize a Palestinian state in September. Other Israeli allies— the UK and Canada — are considering similar moves. These actions come as Israel refuses to meet international demands, such as agreeing to a ceasefire in Gaza.

Although Western officials cite the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, their underlying concern appears to be geopolitical: Netanyahu's intransigence is isolating Israel diplomatically and fueling domestic opposition — both in Israel and abroad.

For many Democrats, Netanyahu no longer represents a bulwark for Israel's survival, but a threat to its legitimacy. Their growing opposition signals a dramatic rethinking of US policy toward Israel — one shaped less by unconditional support and more by political risk and strategic necessity.



## Uraman village, stair-stepped heaven in Western Iran



TEHRAN--Uraman Takht village of Kordestan province enjoys the most unique landscapes and touristic attractions, which is recommended as the best vacation destination during Spring and Summer.

One of the most amazing, untouched parts of Iran is Kordestan province.

This mountainous region is located in the west part of the country and with a very delightful climate and unique natural landscapes, which is home to one of the most authentic and original Iranian tribes, Mehr news agency reported.

Having a unique rural stepped texture, architecture, lifestyle, and agriculture, Hawraman is a historical region located in Kordestan province.

While the main part of Hawraman is located in Sanandaj, Marivan, Sarvabad, and Kamaryan cities of Kordestan province, another part of it is located in Halabja province in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The history of this magnificent region dates back to thousands of years ago. Archaeologists have discovered some stone tools in a cave located near the village, which had been made by Neanderthals or early modern humans more than 40 thousand years ago.

Also, recently, a group from UNESCO traveled to the Hawraman region so as to look into the possibility of listing the beautiful historical region as a world heritage site.

Uraman or Huraman or Hawraman Takht, together with a mountainous area of Kordestan province, is called Hawraman region or Uramanat in Persian.

It is a mountain village resembling the tiered Masouleh village in Gilan province but on a much larger scale. For this reason, it has been nicknamed "1,000 Masouleh's".

The villages of the Uramanat rural area enjoy the most famous characteristics that are unparalleled in terms of architecture, lifestyle and agricultural methodology which is integrated with nature by incorporating steep-slope agriculture.

The name of the village proves the long history of Uraman as well. The word Hawraman is a compound noun: "Hawra" that means Ahura and "Man" which means the place, home, or land and Hawraman means the land of Ahuramazda or the place of Ahuramazda. Hawraman in the Kurdish language means the land of sun.

According to the people's belief, Uraman used to be a big city and of great importance in the past, hence it was known as Takht (meaning throne) or the center of the government.

At an altitude of 1450 meters above sea level, the village enjoys mild weather in spring and summer, and cold weather during fall and winter.

Hawraman is a vast and mountainous area of Zagros which includes the entire south of Kordestan province, and Uraman Takht village.

One is astounded and amazed at how the local people living in the area have managed to skillfully construct their homes in the shape of many long and wide stairs within the foothills of the mountain.

These buildings have been built in such a way that the roof of a house is the patio (balcony) of the house built just a few meters above it.

The roof of each house forms the yard of the upper one, and the walls are made without using any mortar, just by artistically putting pieces of stone on top of one another.

The most frequently used materials in the construction of buildings are stone and wood, and the wood is usually from walnut or plane trees.

### Language and culture

The culture of the region is very rich and remarkable. The residents of the village are Sunni Muslims and speak in the Urami or

Hawrami dialect of the Kurdish language.

The dialect is believed to be one of the oldest dialects of the northwestern Iranian language, Zaza-Gorani.

According to a survey carried out in 1996, there were 40,000 speakers of this language in the world.

Just like the people of other villages of Kordestan, residents of Uraman wear local Kurdish clothes, of bright and attractive colors and patterns.

Traditional clothing for women includes either a vest or long-sleeved jacket or long overcoat worn over a gown.

An underdress and puffy pants are worn beneath the gown.

Traditionally women wore Kurdish hats ornamented with valued colored stones, beads, and gold pieces.

Usually, younger women and young girls wear brightly colored dresses adorned with many beads and sequins and the older women wear darker colors and white head-cover.

Hawrami men generally wear a shirt; a vest with an open neck; and baggy trousers fitted at the ankles.

A cotton sash 3–4 m long is folded in half lengthwise and wrapped tightly around the torso on the waist.

Men also wore traditional brown felt jackets with pointed shoulders called Kolabal.

Folk music and folk dance called Halparke are very popular among the locals and Uraman has been the center of Kurdish traditional and folk music.

A special style of singing called Siah Cheshmane--meaning dark eyes--exist between locals which are performed without any instrument and is generally used for storytelling and entertainment.

Among traditional arts and handicrafts of the people are various kinds of felt, cotton shoes, woolen rugs (called Jajim), wooden cutlery, windows, and doors.

Most of Uraman Takht residents are farmers, gardeners, or raisers of livestock; while some of them work in the field of handicrafts.

### Traditional ceremony of Pir-e Shalyar

Thanks to the preservation of its heritage, architecture, and a unique traditional religious ceremony, namely "Pir-e Shalyar", Uraman Takht village is known as one of Iran's most impressive villages.

The Kurdish people celebrate the wedding ceremony of Pir-e Shalyar enthusiastically to express their utmost gratitude to Jamasb's son. It is considered one of the greatest celebrations in Kordestan which has been marked from 950 years ago until today.

Narratives say that Pir-e Shalyar had magical healing qualities and a mojo power to populate the land with livestock and crops in times of trouble.

He is associated with the pre-Islamic, Zoroastrian times.

The legend says that Pir-e Shalyar magically cured 'Shah-Bahar Khatoun' the beloved daughter of the king of Bukhara so that he was rewarded with getting married to the girl.

Participants from neighboring villages and areas usually make their way through the snow to Uraman Takht where festivities and prayers to God continue over a few days.

The ceremony includes sacrificing cattle, playing "daf", all kinds of Kurdish rhythmic movements, serving cheshin (a kind of local soup), vigil, and reading poems and prayers. The celebration is held in three stages, each in a day of three consecutive weeks.

On the morning of the first day, cattle raisers who have decided to sacrifice cattle in the celebration take their cattle to Pir-e Shalyar's Garden.

After slaughtering the cattle, they distribute pieces of meat among people and use some of it for preparing food for the feast: the same way that it was done 950 years ago.

The marriage anniversary of Pir-e Shalyar is an ancient ceremony that promotes brotherhood, unity, and collaboration to solve the inhabitants' problems.

After a long period, this ceremony has undergone minor changes, however, its mythological roots and symbols have survived until today.

# Khorramshahr-Basra passenger service begins for Arbadeen pilgrims

TEHRAN--The Iran Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has officially launched the Khorramshahr-Basra passenger route to facilitate the transport of Arbadeen pilgrims via the Persian Gulf.

Saeed Rasouli, Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development and PMO Managing Director, announced that the first journey to Iraq's port of Basra commenced on Friday, August 1, 2025. Depending on demand, up to four round-trips per day have been planned, news.mrud.ir reported.

The 17-nautical mile route is the shortest maritime corridor for pilgrims heading to the holy shrines in Iraq and was activated to strengthen bilateral ties and improve pilgrimage infrastructure.

Rasouli stated that following high-level meetings with Iraqi counterparts and coordination over recent months, the service has resumed for the second consecutive year.

A private-sector vessel with a 235-passenger capacity and advanced onboard amenities is operating on the route to ensure a safe and comfortable journey.

He added that if passenger demand remains high, services may be extended beyond the Arbadeen season into year-round operation.



tion, while the number of daily voyages could increase during peak pilgrimage periods.

The move aligns with the PMO's broader policy to promote maritime tourism and enhance regional passenger transport links.

Arbadeen, 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.

## Nashtifan's nine windmills restored

TEHRAN—Head of Khaf Cultural Heritage Department gave news of the end of restoration of nine ancient windmills of Nashtifan in Khorasan Razavi province.

According to Miras Arya (CHTN), Mahmoud Ba'aqideh said that following the visit of Head of Khorasan Razavi Cultural Heritage Department to Nashtifan windmills (locally called Asbads) during June of this year, and upon the request of the Islamic Council of the city, it was decided to restore a number of Asbads of Nashtifan, and 2 billion rials (\$2,222) were allocated for this purpose.

He continued that the restoration operations of Asbads started in June and nine Asbads were restored within one month. Lightening, plastering walls, thatching, and restoring the wheel are the most important restoration measures that have been carried out, he added.

Appreciating the cooperation of a number of owners of the windmills and cultural heritage lovers of Nashtifan in restoration of these historical monuments, he said that local community participation plays an important role in the introduction, protection, and maintenance of the his-

torical buildings.

Nashtifan Asbads have been registered on the UNESCO's tentative list under number 6192.

Asbads are one of the masterpieces of architecture and lifestyle of Iranians particularly in east of the country for using the wind power for grinding the cereals.

A collection of ancient Iranian windmills (locally called Asbads) has been inscribed on UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage properties.

Experts believe such primitive yet significant machines bear testimony to the human being's adaption to nature by transforming environmental obstacles into opportunities. Iranian Asbads enjoy a smart technique to grind grains, a technique that goes back to ancient times when the people living in the eastern parts of Iran invent it in an attempt to adapt themselves to nature and transform environmental obstacles into opportunities.

According to the latest official data, a total of 374 Asbads have been identified so far mostly in the eastern wing of the country, but not all of them in faultless conditions.



The development of Asbads took place due to the scarcity of water resources and continuous 120-day winds, which annually sweep through the east and southeast of the Iranian plateau from late May to late September. Wood, mud, and brick were the main construction materials for the two-story windmills.

Britannica says the earliest known references to windmills are to a Persian millwright in 644 CE and windmills in Sistan, Iran, in 915 CE.

According to the UN cultural body, Robert Forbes, a technology historian, stresses the point that the Islamic era windmill

was the invention of Iranian. He writes: "This invention, which was initially an exclusive device for Iran and Afghanistan, turned into an important source of energy all over the Islamic territories in the 12th century, and not only it was used for the grinding of grains and operation of water pumps, but also the chopping of sugarcane and other purposes.

Technically speaking, unlike European windmills, the Iranian design is powered by blades arrayed on a vertical axis in which the wind power is directly translated down without the need for any gears found on the horizontal-axis mills.

## Process of registering intangible cultural heritage works of Kerman starts



TEHRAN—Head of Kerman Cultural Heritage Department announced the formation and completion of the registration file for seven intangible cultural heritage works of the province on the National Heritage List.

Speaking at a press conference on Sunday, Morteza Nikrou added that the dossier of the seven intangible works of the province has been sent to the Council for the Registration of Works of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, ISNA reported.

He said that some of these intangible works include the camel-herding ritual of Aliabad-e

Olya village in Zarand county, and stone-baked bread in Najafabad village of Kuhbanan county.

Registering intangible cultural heritage is an effective step in preserving the cultural identity and transmitting indigenous values to the future generations, he pointed out. This action ensures the continuation of traditional rituals, skills, and knowledge against oblivion and cultural assimilation, he added.

Kerman province, located in southeastern Iran, is known for its rich history and diverse landscapes. With its unique blend of culture, history, and natural

beauty, Kerman province is a captivating destination for travelers.

Being home to seven UNESCO World Heritage sites, eye-catching gardens, and ancient monuments, Kerman city can be considered as a perfect museum illustrating various periods in Iranian history.

Kerman province is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south. It includes the southern part of the central Iranian desert, the Lut Desert.

Kerman province, with an area exceeding 180,000 square kilometers is one of Iran's vastest provinces. It enjoys a variety of climates including warm, semi-dry, extremely dry, moderate, and cold.

Here in Kerman, the inhabitants fight the glowering face of desert difficulties, with patient smiles. Each monument in Kerman indicates some historical dimensions of the people's life. This makes Kerman a standing museum of various periods in Iranian history.

Many different kinds of stone and pottery works that belong to the 5th millennium BC have been dug up from the hills and plains of this land that indicate the antiquity of its civilization.

Kerman is home to myriad historical sites, gardens, and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Vakil Bath, Fath Abad Garden, Shahzadeh Garden, Kaluts of Lut Desert and Bam citadel.

Vakil Bath in Kerman is located in the middle of Vakil Bazaar which was built 170 years ago, during the Qajar period, modeled on Ganjali Khan bath. It is believed that this bath was constructed upon the order of the Kerman ruler during that time according to an inscription inside the Vakil Bath in Kerman. Artistic architects of Kerman used fantastic tile and ceramic works to decorate this place and also amaze the next generations. This historic bath is now a traditional teahouse and is open to tourists.

Shazdeh Garden (Prince Garden) is a green oasis lying in the heart of the desert. Located near Mahan in the province of Kerman, Shazdeh Garden is one of the historical Persian gardens with a rectangular plan.



# Tehran to host 1st Intl. Nanotechnology Olympiad for students

TEHRAN – The first International Nanotechnology Olympiad (INO 2025) for high-school students aged 16-19 will be held in Tehran.

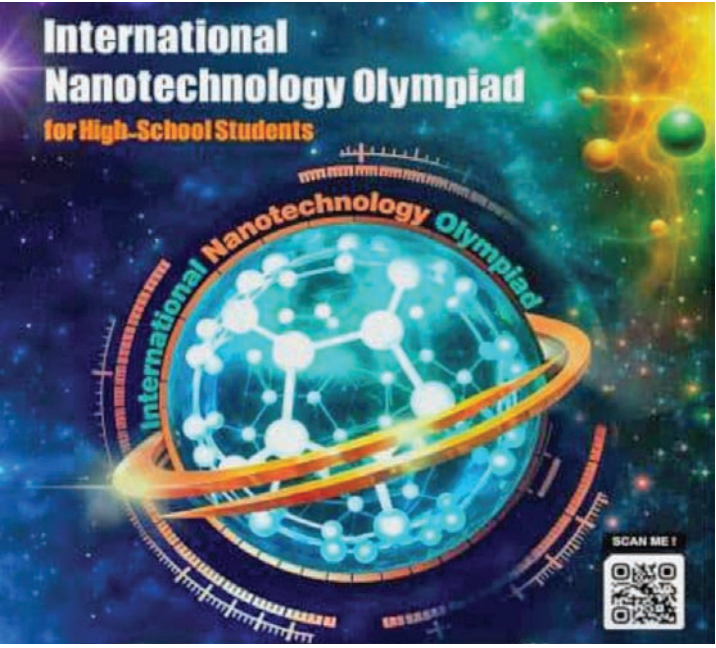
“Students from Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., Venezuela, Germany, Tajikistan, Britain, Bangladesh, Tunisia, and Russia have so far enrolled in the competition,” nanoclub.ir quoted Afshin Rezaei, the secretary of the INO, as saying.

The event is scheduled to be held online on September 28, Rezaei added.

The International Nanotechnology Olympiad presents a unique opportunity for participants to delve into the world of nanotechnology and its potential to address pressing environmental challenges. The competition is structured into two main parts.

The initial phase evaluates participants’ grasp of fundamental concepts in nanotechnology and its environmental applications. To support their preparation, participants can access nine educational films and a comprehensive booklet available on the official website, which cover essential topics and relevant applications. Additionally, they will receive four specialized educational films and a targeted booklet that focuses particularly on nanotechnology’s applications in the environment. This will constitute 70 percent of the overall score.

Idea Generation and Film Submission is the second phase of the competition. In this creative segment, participants are chal-



lenged to devise innovative solutions to global issues that can be tackled through nanotechnology. They must create a short film that effectively conveys their ideas and proposed solutions. This part accounts for the rest 30 percent of the total score.

Overall, the Olympiad emphasizes a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical creativity. By combining rigorous assessment with creative project work, the competition aims to cultivate a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of nanotechnology in addressing global challenges.

Iran’s journey in promoting nanotechnology education began in earnest in the Iranian year 1389

(March 2010-2011), when the Iran Nanotechnology Innovation Council (INIC) launched the first National Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Student Olympiad.

This initiative followed a series of successful nano-education programs held in schools across the country and combined a theoretical exam with a hands-on laboratory project.

Over 16 consecutive years, this national event has attracted 113,667 high school students from across the country.

## Achievements in nanotechnology

Iran’s achievements in nanotechnology are noteworthy. The country’s investment in nanotechnology research and development,

as well as the increase in scientific publications and sales of nanotech products, proves Iran’s rise as a global leader in this field, producing and exporting products to different countries across the world.

Access to domestic resources, competitive prices compared to Western countries, and high production of raw nano-materials, nano-catalysts, and advanced equipment, as well as geographical proximity to target markets in neighboring countries, reduced transportation costs, political and trade relations have made Iran a major manufacturer of nanotechnology products in the region and even some global markets.

Having published a total of 4,615 articles in top 25 percent of journals (Q1 journals) in 2024, Iran is placed among top ten countries in publishing nanotechnology articles, ranking 12 in h-index for nano-articles in the world.

China, the U.S., and India, with 86,924, 14,473, and 11,194 articles, respectively, are the top three countries. Iran is atop England (4,360), Japan (4,022), and Spain (3,830) in the ranking, ISNA reported. The Q1 journal index is used to categorize scientific journals based on their impact; it is most commonly used in databases like Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) and Journal Citation Reports (JCR).

The Journal Citation Report (JCR) Impact Factor 2024 has cited 161 Iranian journals, naming five among the world’s most cited in the nanotechnology sector.

## Red crescent societies approve of IRCS call to address crisis in Gaza

TEHRAN – Red crescent societies of Russia, Norway, Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Qatar have supported the Iranian Red Crescent Society’s call for taking immediate actions to help address the catastrophic human crisis in Gaza.

IRCS head Pirhossin Kolivand wrote a letter to the World Health Organization and red crescent societies on July 26, urgently requesting them to ‘facilitate the delivery of medicines and humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip’, and take immediate steps to advocate for affected people in Gaza.

“With the world witnessing one of the most catastrophic humanitarian crises in the Gaza Strip, it is the moral and humanitarian duty of international institutions to act swiftly to save the lives of defenceless civilians, particularly children, pregnant women, and the sick,” the letter reads.

According to well-documented and official reports by reputable international organizations such as the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the humanitarian situation in Gaza is on the brink of total collapse. The ongoing blockade, destruction of medical infrastructure, and acute shortages of medicine, food, and fuel, as well as blocked aid corridors, have placed millions of innocent lives at serious risk, the official noted.

Addressing his counterparts in red crescent societies, through his letter titled ‘Urgent Call

to Action: Advocate for Immediate Governmental Intervention to Address the Humanitarian Catastrophe in Gaza’, he called on red crescent societies to take immediate steps to advocate for the affected people in Gaza.

“On behalf of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), I am writing to draw your urgent attention to the devastating humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza,” the letter reads.

“According to recent reports and statements from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), WHO, the UNRWA, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the situation on the ground is dire and demands immediate and coordinated humanitarian intervention. The people of Gaza are enduring unimaginable suffering: widespread malnutrition, starvation, and a severe lack of access to food and clean water have left countless children and civilians in critical condition.

The destruction of hospitals and healthcare infrastructure severely compromises the delivery of essential medical services, further exacerbating the crisis. Over 50,000 children have been killed or injured, with thousands more suffering from severe malnutrition.

Since October 2023, WHO has reported over 725 attacks on healthcare facilities. Hospitals such as Kamal Adwan, Indonesia Hospital, Hamad Hospital for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics, and the European Gaza Hospital have suspended medical services due to their proximity to conflict zones, deepening the humanitarian emergency.

## Iranian, Chinese universities ink MOU to expand scientific ties

TEHRAN – Tarbiat Modarres University and Shanghai University have signed a five-year memorandum of understanding to broaden scientific interactions and international cooperation.

The MOU was signed in Tehran on Wednesday, July 29, by Yousef Hojjat, the chancellor of Tarbiat Modarres University, and Liu Chansheng, the president of Shanghai University, IRNA reported.

Accordingly, the two universities will enhance joint efforts through exchanging professors, researchers, and students, conducting collaborative research projects, holding scientific seminars and conferences, as well as sharing academic resources and articles.

### Strategic partnership

Iranian universities are exploring the potential for developing scientific and research collaborations with Chinese and Russian institutions under the strategic partnership with the two countries.

During a meeting held on April 11 in China, Saeed Habiba, the deputy minister of science, research, and technology, and Sheng Jianxue, the secretary-general of the China Scholarship Council, discussed ways for developing scientific cooperation between the universities of the two countries.

The meeting centered around holding joint academic courses, exchanging professors and students, growing government scholarship programs, expanding technological ties, scientific interactions, and sharing expertise.

During the meeting, Habiba elaborated on the academic and scientific potentials and capacities of Iran.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Iranian official also paid a visit to one of the Chinese technology parks to become more familiar with their technological capacities and scientific achievements.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

The document was signed between Iran’s then Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Back in December 2022, Iran and China finalized 16 memoranda of understanding under the framework of the two countries’ strategic 25-year agreement



### Global ranking

The Times Higher Education (THE) has included 34 universities from Iran among the top universities pursuing sustainable development goals (SDGs), up from 33 universities in 2024.

THE ranking evaluated 2,526 universities from 130 countries to produce the overall Impact Ranking for 2025.

Alzahra University, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (ranking 401-600) are placed second.

Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences (AJUMS), Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University (601-800), University of Tehran, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modarres University (801-1000), ranked third.

The 22nd edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR), 2026, has placed nine Iranian universities among the world’s top institutes, unchanged from the 2025 ranking.

University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 322, ranks first among the Iranian universities.

Sharif University of Technology (ranking 375) and Amirkabir University of Technology (456) are placed second and third.

Iran University of Science and Technology (496), Isfahan University of Technology (571), University of Tabriz (578), Shiraz University (701-710), Shahid Beheshti University (741-750), and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (951- 1000) are other top universities included in this year’s ranking.

Among Iranian universities, Shahid Beheshti University has improved its ranking by 100 positions, up from 851-900 in 2025, Mehr news agency reported.

## INSF, SRSF to support joint research projects

TEHRAN – Following the tenth joint call, the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the Silk Road Joint Science Fund (SRSF), in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), will support the implementation of six research projects.

Research projects that boost scientific synergies among institutions, organizations, universities, and experts will be prioritized, IRNA reported.

The grant, amounting to 40 billion rials (some \$44,000) for each research project for at most three years, will be allocated to the following fields.

1. Water science:  
Ecological economics of water consumption  
Agricultural water management  
Sustainable management of natural water resources  
Water treatment, purification, and desalination
2. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Fundamentals and Development:  
Trustworthy AI  
Reinforced deep learning  
Diagnostic models  
Generative AI  
Large language models  
Novel learning algorithms  
Knowledge Representation and Reasoning (KRR)  
New architectures of deep neural networks
- Recent joint efforts

Iran and China will support the implementation of ten research projects by faculty members following the fifth joint call by the INSF and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC).

According to ISNA, the funding for each research project will be allocated to the following fields.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Female Asiatic lion to join male companion

Iran will play host to a female Asiatic lion from Ireland to accompany the recently returned male lion under a population management program aiming at endangered species reproduction by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria, a veterinarian at Eram Zoo has said.

The female lion, born 4 years ago, now is coming back to its motherland after being extinct for 8 decades, YJC quoted Iman Memarian as saying.

The lion has undergone genetic tests under the EAZA supervision, and the results have showed that the animal is completely healthy.

Both will be kept at Tehran Zoological Garden separately for a period, and then will live together.

## شیر ماده ایرانی به جفت نر خود می پیوندد

دامپزشک پارک پردیسان و مدیر باغ وحش ارم از پیوستن شیر ماده ایرانی از ایرلند به جفت نر خود تحت نظر برنامه تکثیر گونه‌های در خطر انقراض خبر داد.

ایمان معماریان در گفتگو با باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان، اظهار کرد: شیرماده ایرانی که در باغ وحش دوبلین ایرلند به دنیا آمده و ۴ ساله است، پس از ۸۰ سال در راه بازگشت به وطن است.

شیر ماده ایرانی از نظر ژنتیک و نبود بیماری چک شده و هیچ گونه مشکلی نداشته، این شیر پس از استانداردسازی مورد تایید اتحادیه باغ وحش‌های اروپا به ایران جابه جا شد.

دو شیر ماده و نر ایرانی مدتی جدا از هم زیست خواهند کرد و به صورت تدریجی این دو گونه به هم معرفی خواهند شد.





AUGUST 4, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Knowledge and wisdom are really the privilege of a faithful Muslim. If you have lost them, get them back even though you may have to get them from the apostates.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:25 Dawn: 3:40 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:15 (tomorrow)

## Arbaeen theater festival celebrates sacred pilgrimage with cultural performances

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN - The 9th edition of the Arbaeen Pilgrimage International Theater Festival is set to open on Tuesday, featuring a diverse range of theatrical and cultural performances in honor of the sacred pilgrimage, the organizers have announced.

Talented practitioners of religious theater have mobilized for this significant event and after the opening ceremony in Tehran, they will march towards Khuzestan province in southern Iran, Kourosh Zarei, the director of the Art Bureau's Center for Dramatic Arts announced during a press conference held in Tehran on Sunday.

The theatrical groups will depart from Shalamcheh border on Tuesday and head to Iraq, with performances scheduled to commence from Thursday this week.

The event will be held on the Arbaeen pilgrimage route as well as the city of Samarra.

"This year, we plan to hold performances at some campgrounds affiliated with the Endowments and Charity Affairs Organization in Samarra," he added.

This international festival is held annually as a cultural vow by ritual theater artists without any form of payment or compensation. Over the course of eight days, it will showcase various genres and forms of performance art along the Arbaeen pilgrimage route leading to Karbala, welcoming Iranian audiences as well as pilgrims from Arab countries.

Performances will include tazieh (Iranian passion play), in Persian and Arabic, street theater, Naqqali (Iranian dramatic story-telling), as well as anthem

and poetry reading.

Seyed Mostafa Motorchi, secretary of the festival, noted that all activities are dedicated voluntary offerings with zero costs involved.

This year's program includes ten tazieh performances in Persian and Arabic, three street plays in both languages depicting the 12-day war of Iran and Israel, and stories celebrating Iranian heroism and martyrdom, he explained.

A notable addition this year is a puppet show specially designed for children and teenagers, reflecting the event's inclusive spirit, he added.

Performers are required to speak Arabic fluently; most are from Khuzestan, known for their street theater expertise, he said.

Iraqi groups have expressed enthusiasm and are expected to join in future years, expanding the event's reach. In addition to Persian and Arabic, there are plans to incorporate Urdu performances for future editions.

The event aims to set a cultural trend, with Iraqi groups also adopting similar approaches, making the initiative more widespread across the region.

Performances are held across nine locations, with each group performing near their residence or close to each other at designated sites. The performances are scheduled close to sunset to avoid the heat.

Provincial networks will produce dedicated programming aligned with the participating groups, ensuring broad visibility and engagement, Motorchi concluded.

# Melbourne International Film Festival to host four films by Iranian directors

TEHRAN – Four films by Iranian filmmakers has been selected by the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) to attend its 73rd edition, set to take place from August 7 to 24 in Melbourne, Australia.

"Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk" by Sepideh Farsi, "Cutting Through Rocks," by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni, "Woman and Child" by Saeed Roustaei, and "Razeh Del" by Maryam Tafakory are the Iranian movies to be shown at the event, ISNA reported.

The documentary "Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk" is about life in Gaza during the ongoing Israeli military actions.

The 112-minute France/Palestine film is the Iranian filmmaker's response to the ongoing massacre of Palestinians. Farsi thinks that a miracle happened when she met Fatima Hassouna. She became her eyes in Gaza, where she resisted while documenting the war, and Farsi became a link between her and the world, from her "Gaza prison," as she named it.

They maintained this line of life for almost a year. The bits of sound and pixels that they exchanged became the film. The killing of Fatima on April 16, due to an Israeli raid on her house, changes its meaning forever.

The Iranian documentary "Cutting Through Rocks" tells the story of Sara Shahverdi, the first elected councilwoman of her village, who aims to break long-held patriarchal traditions by training teenage girls to ride motorcycles and stopping child marriages. When accusations arise questioning Sara's intentions to empower the girls, her identity is put in turmoil.

A joint production of Iran, Germany, the U.S., Qatar, the Netherlands, Chile, and Canada, the 95-minute movie was the winner of the World Cinema Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the World Cinema Documentary Competition of the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.



A scene from "Woman and Child" by Saeed Roustaei

In "Cutting Through Rocks," the directors deliver a deeply intimate and quietly defiant portrait of resistance and resilience. Their debut feature documentary follows Sara Shahverdi, the first elected councilwoman in a rural Iranian village, as she attempts to dismantle deeply rooted patriarchal structures and empower young women to imagine a future of freedom, education, and autonomy.

At the heart of the film lies Shahverdi herself—a remarkable, trailblazing figure who drives a car through dusty village roads, teaches teenage girls how to ride motorbikes, and campaigns against the still-prevalent practice of child marriage. The camera, handheld and unvarnished, stays close to her, never interfering but always alert to the emotional and political weight of her daily struggles. It's this raw, observational approach that lends the film its quiet power and cumulative tension.

Sara's charisma and sheer willpower drive the narrative forward. As she pushes girls to stay in school, dream of careers in medicine, teaching, or engineering, and take control of their lives, her vision becomes a glimmer of

hope in an otherwise suffocating social landscape. Yet her journey is far from smooth. Suspicion and resentment surround her. When allegations surface questioning her intentions with the young girls she mentors, Sara's own identity is scrutinized and eventually attacked.

Roustaei's fourth feature film "Woman and Child" is described as a contemporary family drama of revenge and forgiveness. The film stars Parinaz Izadyar as a single mother who balances nursing work with raising her children. As she plans her wedding to Hamid, her son's school expulsion becomes the least of her worries when an unexpected tragedy forces her to fight for what's right.

Payman Maadi, Hassan Pourshirazi, Soha Niasi, Fereshteh Sadre Orafaei, Maziar Seyedi, and Sahar Goldoust are also in the cast.

The short film "Razeh Del" is a joint production of Iran, Italy, and the UK. The 2024 film, 27 minutes, is about two girls who sent a letter to the first-ever women's newspaper in Iran, titled "Zan," in 1998. While they waited to get published, they considered making an impossible film. Using ci-

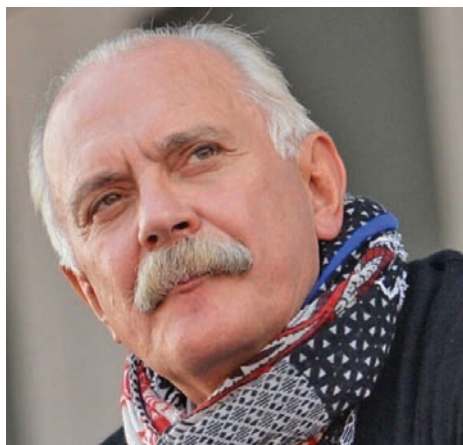
tations and image intervention, "Razeh Del" journeys through parallel histories of war on images of women.

MIFF's 73-year history significantly contributes to Melbourne's standing as a cultural city. With its ongoing commitment to the collective festival experience being open to all, MIFF has contributed to community and connectedness in Melbourne. Audiences come to MIFF for its bold, diverse, and adventurous programming. There is delight in the shared cinema experience and in seeking to discover something new about the self or the world.

The 2025 program comprises films that will hone the audiences' mind to the urgent matters of the world, and others that will take them far from any semblance of reality.

Across the 250-plus features and short films, there are stories from all corners of the globe. The program holds up a mirror to our world. MIFF is committed to being a safe and welcoming place for everyone including the audiences, visiting guests, filmmakers, staff, and volunteers, with an expansive program to suit all cinema-loving tastes.

## Russian filmmaker Mikhalkov condemns Israeli attack on Iran, calls for cinema unity against global dominance



TEHRAN - In a statement issued through the Public Relations Department of the Cinema Organization of Iran (COI) on Sunday, Nikita Mikhalkov, the acclaimed Russian filmmaker, condemned the Israeli regime's atrocities during the 12-day war against Iranian soil.

Addressing Iranian filmmakers, the Oscar-winning artist and director expressed his solidarity, saying: "Dear friends, colleagues, Iranian filmmakers! First and foremost, I want to express my deep respect for you, for Iranian cinema—this great cinema—and for Iran's rich and majestic culture.

I extend my heartfelt condolences as you face a brutal and unjustified aggression by Is-

rael aimed at subjugating the Iranian nation, Iranian culture, and Iran as a whole. In my view, such ambitions are impossible and should never come to fruition.

Once again, I invite you to join us at the Eurasia Cinema Academy, organized by us, to stand against Hollywood's dominance, which I believe destroys all human values and traditions. We must unite. I await you with a pure heart and open arms, through your films, your presence on the festival red carpet, and the Diamond Butterfly Award of the Eurasia Cinema Academy."

Mikhailov is renowned for his 1994 film "Burnt by the Sun," which won the Cannes Grand Prix and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

## Da Theater Hall staging Bertolt Brecht's "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich"

TEHRAN – Da Theater Hall in Tehran is hosting Bertolt Brecht's "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich" on its stage.

Directed by Alireza Akhavan, the one-hour play has Sanaz Aghaei, Bahador Bastanagh, Saeed Parsa, Farshid Pourimani, Maral Jamalpanah, Mohammad Soltani, Nazanin Alimardani, Hamed Faal, Yasna Fallah, Hosna Fallah, Arman Karimkhani, Negar Niknami, and Saeed Yaghoubi in the cast.

Also known as "The Private Life of the Master Race," it is one of Brecht's most famous plays and the first of his openly anti-Nazi works.

The play consists of a series of playlets, portraying National Socialist Germany of the 1930s as a land of poverty, violence,

fear, and pretense. Nazi antisemitism is depicted in several of the sketches, including "the Physicist," "Judicial Process," and "the Jewish Wife".

It was followed by many more plays that were openly anti-Nazi and attempted a Marxist analysis. They were written while Brecht was in exile in Denmark and were inspired by a visit to Moscow, where he experienced the growing significance of the anti-Nazi movement there.

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht (1898-1956), known as Bertolt Brecht, was a German theater practitioner, playwright, and poet, whose epic theater departed from the conventions of theatrical illusion and developed the drama as a social and ideological forum for leftist causes.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Brecht fled his home country, initially to Scandinavia. During World War II, he moved to Southern California where he established himself as a screenwriter.

Brecht began writing "Fear and Misery of the Third Reich" in 1933, when he fled Germany for Denmark. Outraged by the rise of the Nazi dictatorship in his homeland and all too aware of the character of Hitler's regime, he set out to create a work that portrayed the fear, repression, and violence of life in Nazi Germany.

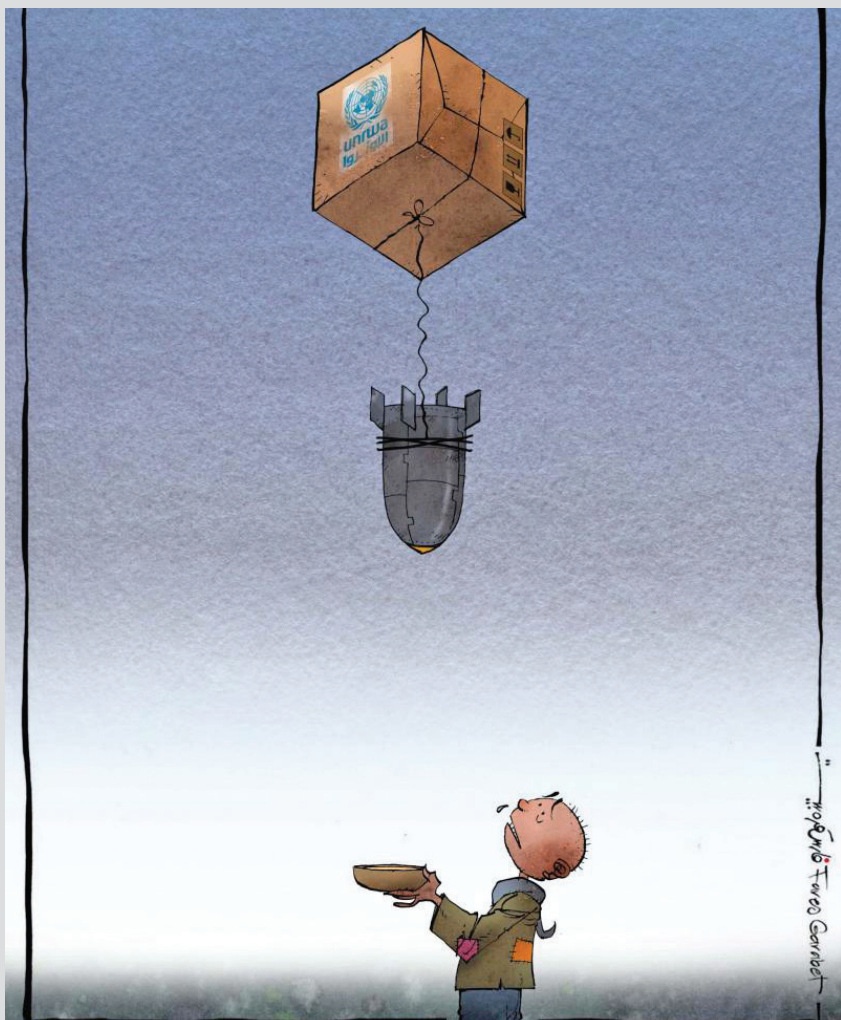
Consisting of 27 dramatic sketches (which Brecht believed could be performed individually or together), the work documents the lives of everyday men and women and the misery they



experienced under the Third Reich.

Da Theater Hall will stage the play through August 15. It is located at No. 5, the first dead-end, Khark Street, Enqelab Street.

## Cartoon of Day



Gaza

Cartoonist: Fares Garabet from Germany