

Diplomatic Switch?

Oslo could take over Muscat's role in Iran nuclear talks



Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Kravik met with Abbas Araghchi in Tehran on July 5, 2025.

Crushing response awaits Iran's enemies: top commander

TEHRAN – Iran's top military commander has warned that any future act of aggression against Iran would be met with a "decisive and crushing" response, unlike any seen before.

Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, made the remarks on Thursday during a ceremony marking the 40th day since the martyrdom of several senior Iranian military commanders in what Tehran calls the unprovoked Israeli-US aggression of June.

He lauded the country's combat readiness and defense strength, declaring that the Islamic Republic possesses "complete deterrence" against any enemy threat.

"The deterrence power of the Islamic Republic is complete, and as the Leader of the Islamic Revolution has said, the Iranian nation is fully prepared both for negotiations and for defense," Mousavi stated.

Mousavi said the killing of Iranian commanders, scientists, students, and athletes in last month's attack had only strengthened national unity and amplified the spirit of resilience.

"The enemies fail to understand that if any aggressor sets foot on this soil, Iranians—regardless of creed or belief—will stand united against them," he asserted. ▶ Page 3

Netanyahu's Gaza plan sparks widespread backlash

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Strong opposition has emerged within the Israeli regime against a cabinet decision to invade and occupy Gaza City.

Despite warnings by senior Israeli military officials and politicians, the regime's security cabinet on Thursday, August 7, approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to occupy Gaza City.

The cabinet meeting was marked by a heated exchange between the Chief of Staff, Eyal Zamir, and the Security Minister, Itamar Ben Gvir. Zamir warned of the complex nature of the plan, its consequences, and the heightened risks to the lives of Israeli captives.

According to Hebrew media, Ben Gvir fired back sharply: "Stop talking to the media and learn from the police how to follow political directives," referring to the occupation army's obligation to carry out the political leadership's decisions without hesitation.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich echoed this stance, insisting on the need for "complete victory" and rejecting any "temporary deal". ▶ Page 5

A look at Iran's achievements in COP15

TEHRAN – Attending the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Iranian delegation achieved notable accomplishments, reinforcing the country's international position in the environmental sector, particularly in wetland conservation.

COP15 to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was held from July 23 to 31 in Victoria Falls City, Zimbabwe. It was held under the theme "Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future." COP15 adopted a new strategic plan for 2025-2034, the Convention's fifth action plan.

Being appointed to represent the South and West Asia region on the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee was the most significant achievement of the country.

It will contribute to strengthening the country's regional role in environmental decision-making.

The committee includes representatives from 18 countries selected from different geographical regions of the world, the host country of the upcoming Convention meeting, as well as partner international organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Wetlands International. ▶ Page 7

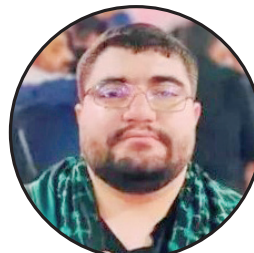
Blood-inked pens

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – August 8 marks Journalist's Day in Iran, a solemn tribute to those who spilled blood for truth. Rooted in the 1998 martyrdom of Mahmoud Saremi—an Iranian reporter killed by alongside eight Iranian diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan—this day now mourns a new generation of media martyrs.

During the Israeli regime's 12-day aggression in June, Iran's media landscape was scarred by the loss of twelve journalists and media workers, part of the over 1065 Iranians whom Israel killed. These were not incidental casualties; targeted strikes turned newsrooms into graveyards.

For decades, Israel has transformed censorship into a killing



Israel killed 12 journalists during its war against Iran. Here is a short glimpse into the lives of four of them

strategy, assassinating journalists from Gaza's Walaa Al-Jaabari to Iran's Nima Rajabpour. These killings reflect a sustained campaign to erase resistance narratives and stifle voices that expose the regime's aggression—a pattern spanning generations.

The Israeli regime's war on journalists is no secret. In 2022, Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian Al Jazeera correspondent, was gunned down in Jenin. Since October 2023, over 120 journalists have perished in Gaza, with strikes in 2025 claiming lives like that of Wafa al-Udaini, a young

reporter killed in an airstrike on her home, as documented by Al Mayadeen. From the West Bank to southern Lebanon, media workers remain targets—because they carry what the regime fears most: the unvarnished truth.

Coinciding with Journalist's Day, we at the Tehran Times offer this special feature, weaving the stories of four Iranian media martyrs—Ali Tahmasbi, Fate-meh Salehi, Mohammad-Moein Nazari, and Masoumeh Azimi—through intimate conversations with their families.

The quiet revolutionary: Ali Tahmasebi's unfinished cup of tea

Ali Tahmasebi, 25, was beneath rubble for three days before rescue teams found his shattered body. His brother Mohammad's voice trembles as he speaks of him: "His eyes were gone. His legs were crushed. His hands burned. We never knew his missions—he'd only say, 'I do simple work.'" ▶ Page 2

IRISL rises to 16th in global container shipping rankings

TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) has climbed three spots to become the world's 16th largest container shipping line, according to the latest ranking by Alphaliner.

The upgrade, achieved in just a few months, reflects a marked improvement in operational capacity and fleet expansion. Key factors behind the rise include higher TEU capacity, fleet optimization, the development of regional and international logistics corridors — particularly via Chabahar — and the implementation of domestic ship repair and modernization programs that have boosted efficiency despite sanctions.

IRISL could break into the global top 15 if this growth trend continues. ▶ Page 4



©Fereza Vancova

Voices of the voiceless: Slovaks call for justice against Israel's starvation and atrocities in Gaza

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Amid escalating violence and a deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the world watches as over 61,000 Palestinians have been killed and 152,000 wounded since Israel launched its devastating military campaign in October 2023.

With the ongoing Israeli blockade causing severe starvation—resulting in the tragic deaths of approximately 200 Palestinians from hunger alone—the conflict has ignited a wave of global outrage. ▶ Page 5

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – August 8 marks Journalist's Day in Iran, a solemn tribute to those who spilled blood for truth. Rooted in the 1998 martyrdom of Mahmoud Saremi—an Iranian reporter killed by alongside eight Iranian diplomats in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan—this day now mourns a new generation of media martyrs.

During the Israeli regime's 12-day aggression in June, Iran's media landscape was scarred by the loss of twelve journalists and media workers, part of the over 1065 Iranians whom Israel killed. These were not incidental casualties; targeted strikes turned newsrooms into graveyards.

For decades, Israel has transformed censorship into a killing strategy, assassinating journalists from Gaza's Walaa Al-Jaabari to Iran's Nima Rajabpour. These killings reflect a sustained campaign to erase resistance narratives and stifle voices that expose the regime's aggression—a pattern spanning generations.

The Israeli regime's war on journalists is no secret. In 2022, Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian Al Jazeera correspondent, was gunned down in Jenin. Since October 2023, over 120 journalists have perished in Gaza, with strikes in 2025 claiming lives like that of Wafa al-Udaini, a young reporter killed in an airstrike on her home, as documented by Al Mayadeen. From the West Bank to southern Lebanon, media workers remain targets—because they carry what the regime fears most: the unvarnished truth.

Coinciding with Journalist's Day, we at the TehranTimes offer this special feature, weaving the stories of four Iranian media martyrs—Ali Tahmasbi, Fatemeh Salehi, Mohammad-Moein Nazari, and Masoumeh Azimi—through intimate conversations with their families.

The quiet revolutionary: Ali Tahmasebi's unfinished cup of tea



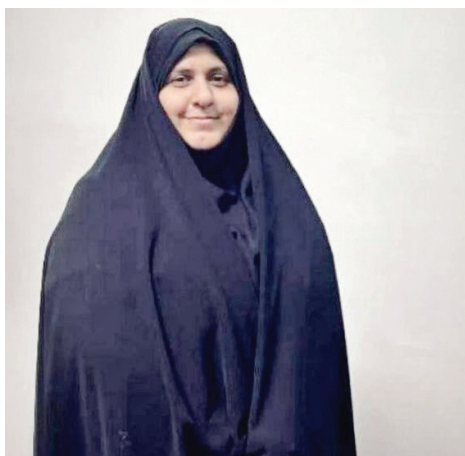
Ali Tahmasebi, 25, was beneath rubble for three days before rescue teams found his shattered body. His brother Mohammad's voice trembles as he speaks of him: "His eyes were gone. His legs were crushed. His hands burned. We never knew his missions—he'd only say, 'I do simple work.'"

Born in Tehran Province's Qiamdasht neighborhood, Ali was a man of action, not words. He funneled his earnings from working in Basij News Agency into charity, often telling his mother, "God will return it, don't worry."

During Fatemiyyah ceremonies (days in which Shia Muslims mourn the martyrdom of the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH), he insisted the first cup of tea be served to the sick or needy—a ritual cut short on the day he was to become an honorary worker of Imam Reza's shrine.

His loyalty to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was absolute. "Ali repeated like a mantra: 'The Leader speaks the truth. That's the path we follow,'" Mohammad recalls. In a final message to Iran's youth, the family implores: "Do not let martyrs' blood be trampled. Stand by the Leader."

The educator of truth: Fatemah Salehi's library of Resistance



When Israeli missiles struck the IRGC's Imam Hassan Mojtaba Base in Alborz, Fatemah Salehi—a 40-year-old professor, journalist, and director of the Savojnama news platform—was compiling evidence of Israeli war crimes. Her brother Sajjad describes her as "a woman whose faith was her armor."

Salehi's home library held nearly 1,000 volumes on religion, politics, and media, her brother says. By day, she taught university courses; by night, she flooded social media with analyses of the Israeli regime's atrocities. "During the war, she worked past midnight," Sajjad says. "She believed the media was the frontline against lies."

Her legacy transcends martyrdom. Whether



through social media tributes or op-eds, those who knew her—including her students—honor how she exposed truths that not even Israeli bombs could silence.

The quiet hero: Moein Nazari's legacy



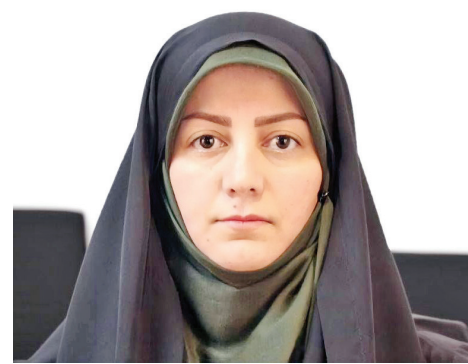
Three days before his death, Moein Nazari called his brother Amin: "The Revolution endures through the blood of martyrs." The 34-year-old who worked at the Basij News Agency was crushed under debris during a strike on Tehran's Basij command center.

Nazari's life mirrored his words. He cleared debts before his death, though his family later discovered he'd quietly funded struggling colleagues.

"He'd say, 'Revolution isn't a slogan—it's sacrifice,'" Amin shares. Nazari's will requested burial beside his uncle, a 2016 martyr against ISIS in Syria—uniting two generations in a cemetery of love and sacrifice.

His family is filled with a sense of both pride and sorrow. "We're proud to offer this martyr to the Islamic Revolution," Amin declares, highlighting their unwavering support for their cause. However, their grief and anger are also clear as they stand resolute in their call for justice, adding: "This vile Zionist regime must end."

The studio sentinel: Masoumeh Azimi's unbroken commitment



On June 26, as the Israeli regime bombed IRIB's headquarters, Masoumeh Azimi refused evacuation. Her husband, Mohammad, a police

officer, recounts: "She stayed knowing martyrdom loomed. As Imam Khomeini said, 'Kill us—we rise more awakened.'"

The garb of martyrdom doesn't fit just anyone. She stood firm, the voice of truth." He sees the war as a clash not just with the Tel Aviv regime, but with the whole NATO aggressors.

Azimi, 47, was among those targeted in a strike the regime's military cynically dubbed "precision-guided." Footage showed anchor Sahar Emami ducking glass shards as the studio exploded. "What you hear is the aggressor attacking truth," Emami declared moments before the ultimate blast.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi later honored IRIB martyrs at a press conference: "They thought bombing IRIB would mute Iran. Instead, our roars grew louder." For Mohammad, his wife's legacy is immortal. "We had no children, but she was Iran's daughter."

Two other journalists were martyred during the Israeli attack on IRIB. Nima Rajabpour, a news editor, was pronounced martyred in a hospital after sustaining serious injuries during the attack. Third employee to attain martyrdom in the assault was Engineer Javadpour, who worked in the IT department of IRIB and was present in the IRIB news building at the time of the strikes. Several journalists present in the building at the time also sustained injuries.

Iran, Egypt call for Islamic unity to end Gaza genocide and Israeli attacks on Lebanon

TEHRAN – Iran and Egypt have called for coordinated action by Islamic nations to end Israel's "genocide" in Gaza and escalating assaults on Lebanon, warning of worsening humanitarian and security crises across the region.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelaty, held a phone conversation late Thursday to discuss mounting regional emergencies and the urgent need for a joint response.

According to a statement by Iran's Foreign Ministry on Friday, the ministers condemned the "cruel siege" of Gaza and warned against Israel's plans to intensify military operations and fully occupy the enclave. They stressed that Islamic nations have a responsibility to act decisively, halt the bloodshed, and ensure the immediate delivery of humanitarian aid.

The talks came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced plans to "prepare to take control of Gaza City" — a move the United Nations has described as "deeply alarming." Gaza has endured relentless bombardment and blockade since October 2023, leaving more than 61,000 Palestinians dead. Israel's restrictions on food and aid have created a man-made famine in which at least 197 people, including children, have died of starvation.

Turning to Lebanon, Araghchi and Abdelatty underscored the need for internal uni-



ty and warned against measures that could trigger domestic conflict. They called on Israel to withdraw fully from occupied areas in southern Lebanon and to cease ongoing attacks in violation of the ceasefire.

Tensions in Lebanon have been heightened by US-Israeli pressure for Hezbollah's disarmament — a demand rejected by the group's leadership. While Lebanon's cabinet has backed the principle of placing all weapons under state control, it has avoided setting a timetable. Hezbollah deputy chief Mahmoud Komati denounced the move as a "march in humiliation," vowing no disarmament while Israeli aggression continues.

The cabinet's decision sparked protests in Beirut, underscoring public resistance to external pressure amid continued Israeli strikes, including one in eastern Lebanon on Thursday that killed six people.

Blood-inked pens

Israel killed 12 journalists during its war against Iran. Here is a short glimpse into the lives of four of them

Tehran demands emergency OIC meeting as Gaza faces famine, mass deaths

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has called for an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address the unprecedented "humanitarian catastrophe" in the Gaza Strip.

In letters to OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, Araghchi urged the convening of an extraordinary session in response to the "rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation" in the besieged Palestinian territory.

"The appalling situation in Gaza has become one of the gravest crises confronting the Islamic Ummah and the international community," he said. "This is not merely a humanitarian emergency — it is the systematic destruction of a besieged civilian population. The scope and intensity of the crimes demand immediate and coordinated action."

The appeal comes as Gaza faces extreme famine, with international agencies reporting catastrophic hunger levels. At least 193 people — including 96

children — have died of starvation in recent months, while aid convoys remain blocked or heavily restricted by the Israeli regime. More than 1,500 Palestinians have reportedly been killed while attempting to access food.

Araghchi warned that credible humanitarian and media reports leave "no other word" to describe the crisis but "genocide." He also accused Israel of pursuing a "strategic intent" to permanently occupy Gaza, citing military actions, political statements, and demographic measures aimed at erasing the enclave's territorial and political identity.

"Senior officials of the Zionist regime have openly declared plans to eliminate Gaza as a political entity," he said. "This is part of a calculated design to dismantle Palestinian sovereignty through permanent occupation, forced displacement, and demographic manipulation."

The Iranian foreign minister called for the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers to meet urgently in Jeddah to coordinate humanitarian relief, assess the



An injured boy lies on the ground in al-Shifa hospital. While doctors are still doing surgery, blockades, bombing, and starvation have all but dried up life-saving blood supply [Photo by Al Jazeera].

legal and political ramifications of Israel's actions, and adopt a unified response.

"The meeting must agree on concrete diplomatic, legal, and economic steps to halt the aggression, hold the perpetrators accountable, and reaffirm the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, sovereignty, and return," Araghchi stressed.

Israel launched its US-backed war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm by the Palestinian Resistance movement Hamas, which was carried out in retaliation for decades of Israeli occupation and violence. The ongoing Israeli assault has so far killed at least 61,158 Palestinians, the vast majority women and children.

Diplomatic switch?

Oslo could take over Muscat’s role in Iran nuclear talks

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The Tehran Times understands Norway is a likely candidate to mediate potential talks between Iran and the United States after a U.S.-Israeli bombardment campaign on Iranian soil derailed the earlier Oman-mediated negotiations in April and June.

Sources familiar with the matter have told the Tehran Times that both Iran and the U.S. are willing to kickstart new negotiations. While the previous talks focused solely on Iran’s nuclear program, Tehran insists that compensation for war damages will be an integral part of any future discussions. Sources added that new, indirect negotiations, with the mediator acting as go-between, could begin as early as this month.

The previous Iran-U.S. talks were slated to resume for a sixth round just days before Israel launched airstrikes targeting Iran’s nuclear, military, and civilian infrastructure on June 13. The ensuing 12-day bombing campaign killed at least 1065 Iranians, mainly civilians, including senior military officials and nuclear scientists. The U.S. entered the war directly on June 22, deploying B2 bombers to strike three nuclear sites previously hit by Israel.

Iran’s retaliation involved a large-scale missile and drone assault on the occupied territories, as well as a missile attack on Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, Washington’s most important military base in West Asia. The war came to a halt on June 24 following a ceasefire proposal by Israel, which found it increasingly difficult to fend off the Iranian attacks and manage their aftermath.

According to Western media reports, Israel and the U.S. were running low on air-defense missiles by the end of the war. Furthermore, Hebrew media reports indicate that at least 31,000 build-



Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi speaks to his Omani counterpart during the 3RD round of indirect talks with the US

ings and 4,000 vehicles in Israel were destroyed or heavily damaged by Iranian projectiles, and the Israeli regime is struggling to provide shelter and compensation to the affected population. Details are scarce, as Israeli authorities have imposed strict censorship on international media since the early stages of the conflict.

Rising opposition inside Iran

Norway’s Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Kravik visited Tehran this week to meet with Iran’s top diplomat, Abbas Araghchi. The official readout from Iran’s foreign ministry made no mention of Norwegian mediation in potential new U.S. discussions, but the unannounced visit has largely been linked to the matter. Norway was among the few Western countries to join the 120 nations that unequivocally condemned Israel’s war against Iran, and it has traditionally enjoyed good relations with the West Asian nation.

Should it be officially confirmed, Iranian diplomats would be entering new talks with the United States amid rising domestic opposition to such engagement. Since before the war, distrust of diplomatic engagement with

Washington has grown within Iran. Conservative political factions as well as a portion of the population believe previous talks served as a cover-up for U.S.-Israeli attacks against Iran.

Saeed Jalili, a prominent conservative figure, is among the most vocal opponents of renewed diplomacy with Washington. The former nuclear negotiator expressed his opposition on X this week, comparing calls for negotiations to the biblical “Golden Calf” idol worship.

In various interviews, Araghchi and his colleagues have stated that any new talks are contingent on a U.S. guarantee against military action during the diplomatic process. Despite this condition, both Araghchi and military officials within Iran believe that the country must remain vigilant and prepared to defend itself at any time, according to information reported by the Tehran Times.

Recent developments support this assessment. The formation of a new Defense Council, coupled with the rapid repair and strengthening of Iranian defense systems, suggests Iran believes renewed conflict is a distinct pos-

sibility. Iranian intelligence forces have also been in full swing to apprehend individuals who aided Israel’s offensive in June.

Is an agreement even possible?

The U.S.-Israeli attacks severely damaged Iran’s nuclear facilities, but the country says it is adamant about resuming its nuclear activities, which it has been negotiating with the West since 2003.

In 2015, years of diplomatic and technical efforts culminated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed between Iran and the P5+1 nations (the U.S., UK, France, China, Russia, and Germany). The deal imposed caps on Iran’s nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of sanctions. Three years after its signing, however, the agreement became essentially defunct after Washington, under President Donald Trump, withdrew and re-imposed sanctions against Iran. Trump, who believed the JCPOA was “weak,” then began the so-called “maximum pressure campaign,” a series of secondary sanctions that, although harming Iran economically, did not manage to force it to cede its nuclear capabilities. Iran tried to revive the JCPOA during the Biden administration without any success.

Throughout all negotiations, including the recent ones under Trump, Tehran has consistently maintained that that any agreement must allow it to enrich uranium for civilian purposes. This position is unlikely to change in future talks. Analysts believe the two countries will only be able to strike a new deal if Washington pursues a win-win solution, one that ensures Iran cannot develop nuclear weapons while respecting its right to enrich uranium to the grades required for non-military applications.

Crushing response awaits Iran’s enemies: top commander

From Page 1 ► On June 13, Israel launched a large-scale strike on Iran, triggering a 12-day war that claimed at least 1,064 lives. The United States joined the conflict by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites, a move Tehran condemned as a grave violation of international law.

In retaliation, Iran’s armed forces struck strategic targets across the occupied Palestinian territories as well as the al-Undead air base in Qatar, the largest American military installation in West Asia. By June 24, Iran’s

counterstrikes had forced a halt to this illegal aggression.

Mousavi accused Israel of seeking to drag Iran into chaos and conflict, describing the “child-killing Zionist regime” as a collapsing power.

“This regime is like a brakeless vehicle, hurtling toward destruction,” he said, warning US and Western leaders not to sacrifice their nations’ futures to protect Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He stressed that Iranians “will never forget the wounds of America’s betrayals and crimes,” adding that future generations will continue to demand justice for the nation’s suffering.

The general reaffirmed Iran’s message of peace and stability for the region, pledging to work toward lasting security through regional cooperation while preventing Israel from advancing its “expansionist” agenda through division and sedition.

Iran and Pakistan: Between neighborhood and strategic alliance

Xavier Villar

Madrid – The August 2025 visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Islamabad marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of the complex relationship between Iran and Pakistan.

Beyond mere geographic proximity, a new chapter is unfolding in which both states seek to consolidate a strategic axis that integrates security, economic development, and regional presence in an increasingly competitive and fragmented geopolitical landscape. This article aims to unpack the bilateral relationship between the two countries, as well as the challenges that lie ahead—both on a bilateral and regional level.

Historical roots: A relationship shaped by cooperation and complexity

To understand the present dynamics of Iran-Pakistan relations, it is essential to revisit their shared history—a history that combines moments of cooperation, tension, and coexistence within a shifting and often volatile geopolitical context. Iran was one of the first countries to

recognize Pakistan’s independence in 1947, a gesture that laid the foundation for an officially cordial relationship that has persisted—with ups and downs—over time.

In the 1960s, for instance, Iran supported Pakistan in its con-

The shared border between Pakistan’s Balochistan province and Iran’s Sistan and Baluchestan has long been a volatile region, affected by insurgent movements and illicit trafficking. These challenges have required both countries to grapple with similar issues—from internal security to the containment of extremism—though their responses have varied depending on national contexts and priorities.

A particularly complex episode occurred during the Afghan civil war in the 1990s, when Iran and Pakistan supported opposing factions: Iran backed the Northern Alliance while Pakistan supported the Taliban. This phase highlighted deep strategic differences but did not sever diplomatic and commercial ties, which continued to function despite tensions.

Cultural and identity-based dimensions have served as an-

chors in this relationship. Islamic communities in both countries, historical ties, and cultural proximity provide a framework that enables gestures of solidarity even in difficult times. This cultural foundation, coupled with economic and strategic realities, points to a multifaceted relationship that privileges coexistence over confrontation.

Security and border stability: A structural challenge

The nearly 900-kilometer-long border between Iran and Pakistan has traditionally been a space of vulnerability and challenge. Terrorist groups operating in Balochistan, such as Jaish al-Adl and the Balochistan Liberation Army, represent a persistent threat that transcends national boundaries and has shaped the bilateral agenda for decades. During the recent visit, both governments emphasized the urgency of strengthening security and intelligence cooperation, recognizing that managing these terrorist forces and the associated violence is central to regional stability.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Iran defeat Japan in Group B thriller

TEHRAN – Team Melli deliver decisive late punch to hand Akatsuki Japan first defeat in the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup 2025 underway in Jeddah.

Iran finished with a furious flourish, holding Japan scoreless in the final three minutes to claim a 78-70 victory in a tense Group B clash at the King Abdullah Sports City.

Mohammad Amini powered the win with 24 points, 8 rebounds, 3 steals and 2 blocks, wreaking havoc at both ends in the decisive fourth quarter. Sina Vahedi provided the perimeter spark, drilling four triples on his way to 22 points, including the go-ahead basket that triggered Iran’s closing run.

Japan had looked poised to take the game before the momentum turned sharply. Joshua Hawkinson posted a massive double-double of 20 points and 17 rebounds, while Keisei Tominaga lit up the scoreboard with 22 points and five triples (all in the first half) before fouling out late.

The win moves Iran to 2-0, firmly in the mix to top Group B, while Japan drop to 1-1 ahead of their next assignment against Guam.

Iran will face Syria with momentum on their side on Sunday.

Iran learn fate at AFC U17 Asian Cup 2026

TEHRAN – The 38 teams hoping to see action at the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 learnt their respective qualifying routes on Thursday.

The Official Draw at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia saw the teams divided into seven groups — three of six teams each and four of five.

All group winners will progress to the 21st edition of the Finals, where they will join the nine AFC representatives from the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025 who have automatically qualified, namely Qatar, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Korea Republic, DPR Korea, Japan, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates and Indonesia.

The Qualifiers will be contested in a single round-robin centralized league format from November 22 to 30, 2025.

The Finals will be contested on May 7 to 24, 2026.

Draw Result

Group A: China (H), Bangladesh, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Timor-Leste, Sri Lanka

Group B: Yemen, Laos, Kyrgyzstan (H), Cambodia, Guam, Pakistan

Group C: Vietnam (H), Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Northern Mariana Islands, Macau

Group D: Iran, India (H), Palestine, Chinese Taipei, Lebanon

Group E: Australia, Iraq, Philippines, Jordan (H), Bhutan

Group F: Thailand (H), Kuwait, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Maldives

Group G: Oman, Afghanistan, Myanmar (H), Syria, Nepal

Female karate athlete Bahmanyar wins gold at World Games

TEHRAN – Iranian female karate athlete Sara Bahmanyar claimed a gold medal in the women’s kumite 50 kg of the 2025 World Games on Friday.

Bahmanyar defeated Algerian Cylia Ouikene 4-3 in the semifinals and then emerged victorious over Kazakhstan’s Moldir Zhangbyrbay in the final match.

She had defeated Canadian Yamina Lahyanssa, Erminia Peretto of Italy and Croatian Ema Sgardelli in Pool A.

The bronze medal went to Sgardelli.

The 12th edition of The World Games take

place from Aug. 7-17 in Chengdu, China.

Sara Bahmanyar and Ali Gharahgozlou carried Iran’s flag in the opening ceremony of the Games.

Sepahan complete signing of Ricardo Alves

TEHRAN – Portuguese winger Ricardo Alves joined Iran’s Sepahan football club on Thursday.

The 32-year-old player has penned a two-year deal for an undisclosed fee with Sepahan.

He was a member of Tractor last season and helped the Tabriz based club win 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL).

Sepahan, headed by Moharram Navidkia, are scheduled to face Qatari side Al Duhail on Aug. 12 at the Khalifa International Stadium in Al Rayyan in 2025/26 AFC Champions League Elite play-off.

Rising star Saeid Saharkhizan joins Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Iranian young forward Saeid Saharkhizan joined Esteghlal football club on Friday.

The 22-year-old moved to Orenburg from Gol Gohar last season and scored seven goals in 28 appearances for the Russian side.

He has signed a three-year deal with Esteghlal.

Sepahan and Persepolis had also shown interest in signing the player.

Ricardo Sá Pinto’s Esteghlal will compete in the 2025/26 AFC Champions League Two.

Former Iran boxer Delavari dies

TEHRAN – Jasem Delavari, former Iran national team boxer, died on Thursday.

He died at the age of 39 after a long battle with cancer.

Delavari was an amateur boxer, who competed in the Super Heavyweight (+91 kg) division at the 2006 Asian Games winning the bronze medal.

At the 2007 World Amateur Boxing Championships in Chicago he lost to Michael Hunter during their round-of-16 bout.

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

Iran defeat Guam at AFC U20 Women’s Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran made it two wins out of two after defeating Guam 2-0 in Group F of the AFC U20 Women’s Asian Cup Thailand 2026 Qualifiers on Friday.

Iran went into the tie in a better position, having opened their campaign with a 3-0 win over Malaysia while Guam – defeated 5-0 by Japan – needed victory to stay in the running.

However, the Central Asian side were quicker to get into stride and went ahead in the 15th minute through Maryam Dini, with the forward netting her third goal of the campaign.

To their credit, Guam showed more resilience compared to their tie against Japan and managed to keep Iran at bay for the remainder of the half.

Iran, however, kept knocking on the door and finally found their second in the 60th minute through Parnia Rahmani.

Up next for Iran are Japan on Sunday, with the tie to likely decide the group winners.

IRISL rises to 16th in global container shipping rankings

TEHRAN – Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) has climbed three spots to become the world's 16th largest container shipping line, according to the latest ranking by Alphaliner.

The upgrade, achieved in just a few months, reflects a marked improvement in operational capacity and fleet expansion.

Key factors behind the rise include higher TEU capacity, fleet optimization, the development of regional and international logistics corridors — particularly via Chabahar — and the implementation of domestic ship repair and modernization programs that have boosted efficiency despite sanctions.

IRISL could break into the global top 15 if this growth trend continues.

Established in 1967, IRISL is Iran's state-owned national shipping company, operating a fleet of container vessels, bulk carriers and multi-purpose ships.

The company plays a key role in the country's trade, facilitating the transport of goods to and from Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America.

Despite decades of sanctions, IRISL has maintained its presence in global shipping networks, often adjusting routes and leveraging regional partnerships to sustain operations.

The shipping line also serves as a strategic pillar for Iran's trade policy, supporting the INSTC and enhancing the country's maritime connectivity through ports like Bandar Abbas and Chabahar.

In recent years, IRISL has invested in upgrading its fleet and expanding its logistics services, positioning itself as a competitive player in regional and transoceanic trade.

In the latest rankings, MSC remained at the top, followed by Maersk, CMA CGM, COSCO and Hapag-Lloyd in second to fifth place.

South Pars boosts sustainable output with advanced technologies

TEHRAN – South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) has adopted advanced technologies at its refineries to enhance efficiency, cut emissions and improve product quality, marking a significant step toward sustainable production and environmental protection, the company's managing director said.

According to Shana, Gholam-Abbas Hosseini stressed the importance of modern technology in Iran's gas sector, saying the deployment of high-tech equipment and innovative solutions in South Pars refineries has brought a fundamental transformation in achieving sustainable output.

"These technologies have not only significantly improved process efficiency but also reduced environmental pollutants and enhanced product quality," Hosseini said, adding that they have played a key role in ensuring national energy security and strengthening the regional economy.

He noted that the continuous efforts of technical and engineering teams to optimize operations in full compliance with environmental considerations demonstrate the com-

plex's commitment to social responsibility and sustainable development.

Located in Assaluyeh and Kangan on the Persian Gulf coast, the South Pars Gas Complex is one of the world's largest gas processing facilities. It comprises more than a dozen refineries that process gas from the South Pars field — part of the giant offshore reservoir shared with Qatar.

The complex produces over 600 million cubic meters of sweet gas per day, along with significant volumes of gas condensate, sulfur, propane, butane and ethane, which serve as vital feedstock for Iran's petrochemical sector.

South Pars accounts for a major share of Iran's natural gas output and plays a critical role in supplying fuel for domestic consumption, electricity generation and industrial use.

In recent years, the complex has also launched flare gas recovery projects aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions, further underscoring its role as a leader in clean technology within the oil and gas industry.

Liquefied propane, Iran's 2nd top major exported non-oil product in 4 months

TEHRAN- As announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), liquefied propane was the second major non-oil products Iran exported in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–July 22).

Foroud Asgari mentioned natural gas, liquefied propane, methanol, liquefied butane, and petroleum bitumen as the top five non-oil export items during the four-month period.

China, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Oman were the main destinations for Iranian exports, the official stated.

Iran exported \$16.55 billion worth of non-oil goods in the first four months of the current Iranian year, according to the IRICA head.

Between March 20 and July 22, Iran exported 48.81 million tons of non-oil goods,

marking a 1.46 percent increase in volume compared to the same period last year. However, the export value declined by 5.51 percent year-on-year.

Petrochemical products remained Iran's largest export category, with 17.4 million tons shipped abroad, worth \$6.89 billion. The segment saw an 8.30 percent drop in volume and a 10.22 percent decline in value.

Overall, Iran's non-oil trade during the four-month period totaled 61.02 million tons valued at \$34.17 billion.

Imports accounted for 12.21 million tons, worth \$17.63 billion—a 3.23 percent decrease in volume and a 14.20 percent decline in value from the year before.

Key imported goods included raw gold, corn for animal feed, rice, sunflower seed oil, and soybeans. The top import sources were the UAE, China, Turkey, India, Germany, Russia, and the Netherlands.

Under the new regulation, residents of Khuzestan province can now import one passenger car with an engine capacity below 2500 cc without the need for statistical registration, simply by providing their national ID number.

He added that the customs duty for vehicles imported to the Arvand free zone has been set at 10 percent of the car's customs value, offering significantly improved conditions compared to previous arrangements.

'Iran offers landlocked ECO states access to intl. trade routes via multimodal transport'

TEHRAN – Iran is ready to provide facilities for landlocked member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) to develop multimodal transport links, Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh stated.

Speaking at a meeting of ECO landlocked countries in Turkmenistan, Sadegh praised the initiative as a step toward closer integration between coastal and landlocked members.

She said the event's outcomes could boost transit and trade across the ECO region, which has seven landlocked members.

Sadegh highlighted that strengthening transport and transit connections between landlocked and coastal ECO countries is a priority under the Izmir Treaty, the organization's founding document.

She recalled that the 13th ECO transport ministers' meeting, held in Tehran earlier this year, approved measures focused on such connectivity, including linking landlocked members to maritime routes.



Iran, she said, is well-positioned to play a constructive role, given its strategic location at the crossroads of north-south and east-west transport corridors, 250,000 km of roads, 15,000 km of railway, 16 commercial ports in the north and south, and access to the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

She cited the recent launch of an ECO freight train connecting Turkey, Iran and Turkmenistan — part of the Almaty-Tashkent-Ashgabat-Tehran-Istanbul corridor — as a milestone in linking

landlocked ECO states to global markets. Sadegh proposed that the ECO Secretariat hold regular technical and commercial meetings to ensure consistent freight services on ECO corridors.

As part of Iranian initiatives, she noted the drafting of the "ECO Gate" document, aimed at granting landlocked members access to open seas with special port and maritime concessions from coastal members.

She urged the ECO Secretariat and the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least De-

veloped Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to help implement the plan swiftly.

Sadegh also said Iran is ready to provide logistical cooperation for ECO landlocked states through its Chabahar, Shahid Rajaei and other ports.

She emphasized multimodal transport as a key to deeper cooperation, pointing to Iran's proposed "ECO Multimodal Transport Implementation Guidelines," now awaiting finalization at the first meeting of the ECO Coordinating Council's multimodal transport committee.

She added that agreements under the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway and the UNESCAP Dry Ports Agreement — to which almost all ECO members are signatories — offer further opportunities for connecting landlocked members to international markets. In Iran, she noted, Asian Highway routes link northern borders with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan to northern ports and onward to southern ports, enabling direct access to open seas.

Unlocking Makran's potential through synergy of expertise, private sector, government



By Ali Naghavi

TEHRAN- The Makran region, with its strategic expanse along the coast of the Oman Sea, is one of Iran's key areas in regional economic and geopolitical dynamics.

Not only does it serve as a gateway to international waters and trade routes to South and East Asia, but it also holds immense potential for sustainable development, attracting investment, and enhancing Iran's export capabilities in technical and engineering services.

However, realizing this potential goes beyond mere infrastructure investment—it requires an integrated approach.

This approach must be built on the synergy of three fundamental pillars: the expertise of the technical and engineering sector, the capacities of the national private sector institutions, and the policymaking and support of the government and governance.

When these three pillars operate in harmony, the development process not only acceler-

ates but also optimizes national and regional benefits.

In recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a new, coherent approach to Makran, where the private sector's role has been redefined beyond mere contracting to that of a strategic development partner.

This shift in perspective emphasizes the active participation of Iranian companies in the design, investment, and operation of projects, elevating them from mere executors to key decision-makers.

Iran's technical and engineering sector, with its skilled workforce, extensive experience in national and international projects, and technological capabilities, can serve as a cornerstone for developing Makran's infrastructure. However, this potential becomes truly effective when aligned with the institutional capacities of the private sector, particularly its national institutions.

These institutions, as representatives of the private sector, facilitate interaction with the government and policymakers, providing a platform to articulate needs and formulate strategic policies.

On the other hand, the government and governance can create a conducive environment for sustainable investment and project management through smart legal frameworks and policies.

The synergy between expertise, the private sector, and government can transform Makran from a mere development project into a regional logistics, industrial, and services hub, strengthening Iran's position in the glob-

al value chain.

Makran is more than just a geographical region—it symbolizes Iran's capability in managing large-scale projects, attracting investment, and implementing innovative collaboration models across different sectors.

Moving beyond traditional approaches and embracing genuine, interest-based partnerships will be the key to success in this endeavor.

To realize this vision, three critical actions are essential: Developing a long-term roadmap for Makran's development with the active participation of the private sector and policymakers, establishing financial and legal mechanisms to support the presence of Iranian companies in regional projects, leveraging economic diplomacy to expand international cooperation and integrate Makran into global trade corridors.

Now more than ever, it is imperative for Iran's private sector to be at the heart of major developmental decision-making and, with a transnational outlook, pave new paths for Makran's prosperity and the country's economic advancement.

This journey is the result of persistent efforts and the convergence of technical and engineering elites, national private sector institutions, and government—one that can shape a bright and sustainable future for the region and the nation.

Ali Naghavi is the chairman of Technical-Engineering Services Committee of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)

Overhaul of SP fifth refinery completed

TEHRAN - The overhaul of the fifth refinery of Iran's South Pars gas field has been successfully completed, the manager of the refinery announced.

Kambiz Sefati said that the major overhaul of the fifth refinery at the South Pars Gas Complex was successfully completed without any incidents, thanks to the round-the-clock efforts of the staff and strict adherence to safety standards.

He noted the accident-free completion of the major overhaul at the fifth refinery of the South Pars Gas Complex, adding: "This remarkable achievement reflects the deep commitment of the refinery's personnel to upholding the highest safety and operational standards."

The manager of the fifth refinery at the South Pars Gas Complex stated that "the issuance of over 5,700 work permits during the maintenance period reflects the extensive scope of activities and our strict adherence to safety procedures in authorizing necessary operations."

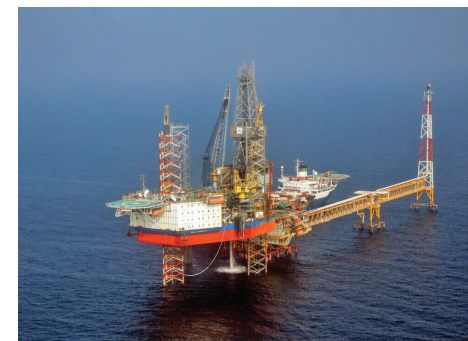
He added: "Thanks to the round-the-clock efforts of all colleagues, particularly the HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment) team, we successfully navigated this critical period without a single incident."

Emphasizing the key factors behind this achievement, the manager of the fifth refinery at the South Pars Gas Complex said: "Conducting high-quality safety training for specialized maintenance personnel, holding briefing sessions to learn from past incidents in the oil industry, enforcing 24/7 monitoring at the site entrance to prevent unauthorized items, and continuous verification of all issued permits—especially hot work permits by the HSE team—were among our key measures."

Safati noted that "this major maintenance overhaul was meticulously planned and executed to ensure the refinery's full readiness for safe and stable production during the winter season."

He emphasized: "In this regard, we leveraged the expertise of specialized maintenance teams and utilized the products and technical knowledge of Iranian knowledge-based companies."

Expressing gratitude for the relentless efforts of operational and support teams in maintaining maximum safety and efficiency, he described this achievement as "the result of solidarity and synergy among all personnel, reflecting the paramount importance of safety at this refinery."



South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf water, is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Statistical registration of car imports removed in Arvand free zone

TEHRAN – Mustafa Mousavi, head of the Khorramshahr Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, announced the removal of statistical registration for passenger car imports in the Arvand free zone, a move aimed at boosting the local economy and tourism development in the region.

Speaking to Iran Chamber Online, Mousavi said the decision was finalized following persistent efforts by the Khorramshahr chamber over recent months.

Popular protests in Lebanon against submitting to American-Israeli dictates

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — There has been a wave of protests in various regions of Lebanon against a decision by the Nawaf Salam government to impose an “arms ban” on the Hezbollah resistance movement.

The decision came despite the continued Israeli strikes on Lebanon and occupation of certain points in the country’s south. The decision shows the Salam government is carrying out American-Israeli orders in full compliance.

The angry and frustrated protesters chanted slogans against the government, the United States, and Israel, and against the government’s decision. The protestors considered the approval a violation of the national defence doctrine.

Hezbollah confirmed that the ratification is “a major sin of depriving Lebanon of its weapon

of resistance against the Israeli enemy and that it will interact with it as if it does not exist.”

For its part, the Amal Movement demanded a retraction and “correcting the course of events.”

Tensions rose in the country, especially after the Shiite ministers withdrew from the second cabinet session, not just because prime minister refused to hold discussion and a vote on the issue, but because his performance was no longer acceptable. He acted as if he were the US administration’s envoy to Lebanon.

Salam insisted on involving the army in a confrontation with Hezbollah after he was tasked with “developing an implementation plan to be presented to the cabinet before the 31st of this month for discussion and approval”

Salam ignored the views of a key component of the country’s political elite. He even did not

take into account any observations by his ministers, overlooking Hezbollah and the Amal Movement’s demands that the government correct its course and return to Lebanese solidarity.

It is worth noting that the Shiite alliance, Hezbollah and the Amal Movement, participated in the session at the insistence of Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, who considered “the current situation as very sensitive that must be dealt with positively” and that “full time must be given for discussion and negotiation.”

Nevertheless, Salam and the enemies of the resistance acted with the language of a victor and tried to pass the order of the US envoy, Thomas Barrack, as quickly as possible.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Voices of the voiceless: Slovaks call for justice against Israel’s starvation and atrocities in Gaza

From page 1 ▶ Yet, many Western governments remain silent or complicit, failing to take meaningful action to halt what UN experts and rights groups describe as ethnic cleansing and genocide.

In Slovakia, public dissent has grown increasingly visible. On Thursday, the capital Bratislava witnessed the powerful “March of Empty Pots,” a protest aimed at drawing international attention to the deliberate starvation imposed on Gaza by Israel.

Among the demonstrators was Lucia Hubinska, a university lecturer, activist, commentator, and publicist, who spoke candidly about the protest and the political climate in Slovakia, as well as the broader implications of Western complicity in the Gaza crisis in an Interview with the Tehran Times. She sheds light on the growing solidarity movement, the stark failures of political leadership, and the moral imperatives that demand action.

This is an excerpt from the interview.

Could you share details about the protest location and the route of the march?

The protest was held in Bratislava. It started in front of the National Parliament, then we marched to the House of the European Commission, followed by the Presidential Palace, and finally through the Old Town.

Can you explain the purpose behind organizing The March of Empty Pots protest and what message you hoped to convey?

The protest was called The March of Empty Pots — a stark and haunting image that speaks not only to the famine engulfing Gaza but also to the hunger and human suffering in Yemen, Sudan, and beyond. Each empty pot carried through the streets was a reminder that famine is never an accident — it is the product of political choices, blockades, and war.

We are painfully aware of what is unfolding in Gaza: ethnic cleansing, genocide, and deliberate starvation used as a weapon against an entire population. How can we, in good conscience, allow this to happen before our eyes?

Yet our government has not once condemned Israel’s actions. Instead, they continue to shake hands with Israeli leaders, sign trade deals, and even sell them arms. This is not neutrality but complicity, and it makes us part of the machinery enabling these crimes. We say: not in our name.



How have protests in Slovakia reflected public response to the recent conflict in Gaza?

This was not the first protest — in fact, it was the third March of Empty Pots in just the past three weeks. Earlier in January, there was also a demonstration in Bratislava, along with several others before that in solidarity with Gaza. More recently, the group Unified for Peace organized a march opposing the EU’s plan to increase military spending to 5% of GDP — a move that stands in stark contrast to urgent social needs at home and humanitarian crises abroad.

Awareness of these issues is slowly growing, but in my view, we are still far from exerting the kind of pressure needed to compel our government to act. Empty Pots alone will not change policy — they must be accompanied by sustained public mobilization. We need more protests, more grassroots initiatives, more solidarity, and yes, more righteous public anger.

Has the Slovak government condemned Israel’s actions in Gaza or taken any measures regarding the conflict? Additionally, how do politicians perceive the situation in Gaza?

Unfortunately, “no”. The politicians and government have not expressed any condemnation. On the contrary, it is staggering that, in the face of one of the worst atrocities unfolding today, there are still those who deny the undeniable ongoing genocide and deliberate starvation in Gaza. Among them are politicians, religious leaders, commentators,

and academics who, instead of acknowledging well-documented crimes, flood the public sphere with grotesque falsehoods.

Some claim, for example, that the now-iconic photograph of a starving child in his mother’s arms was a “hoax,” repeating Israeli propaganda that the boy’s condition was due to a genetic illness and that Israel compassionately sent him to Italy for treatment. In reality, Israel obstructed his evacuation; only the efforts of doctors, volunteers, and independent journalists got him out. Four-year-old Osama al-Raqab weighed just nine kilos — a skeletal shadow of a once-healthy child — the result of months without food or medicine.

Others push the equally obscene claim that Gaza’s famine is nothing but “ Hamas propaganda ” — lies sometimes echoed even by religious institutions, which have gone so far as to publicly endorse Israeli military actions. When faith-based organizations blur the line between promoting religion and promoting the politics of a state engaged in apartheid and war crimes, they damage themselves and fuel prejudice.

The playbook is always the same: anyone who points to famine or genocide — from the UN, UNICEF, and the Red Cross to Médecins Sans Frontières and even Israel’s own leading human rights groups — is smeared as a “ Hamas supporter .” Meanwhile, famine deepens, entire neighborhoods are reduced to rubble, and children are shot in the head or chest with impunity.

Some European governments are

beginning to act: Slovenia and the Netherlands have sanctioned Israeli ministers, and Slovenia has banned all arms trade with Israel. In countries like Slovakia, however, leaders block even symbolic measures, clinging to silence and complicity.

Religious justifications are especially dangerous. Modern Israel is not the “ biblical promise ” but a political project built on occupation, apartheid, and bloodshed. No scripture commands the slaughter of children or the starvation of entire communities. If we close our eyes to this, how can we claim to act in the name of faith? This is nothing but fanaticism.

Israel’s security cabinet has approved a plan to take control of Gaza City and extend “security control” over the Palestinian territory. What are the beliefs among leaders in Slovakia about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s warmongering in Gaza?

Netanyahu’s push to occupy Gaza is not about security — it’s about controlling the crime scene.

Zionist authorities are intent on erasing evidence because they know that if the world’s eyes gain full and unrestricted access, Gaza will be revealed as a vast landscape of atrocities—a truth that would irreparably damage Israel’s moral standing.

Western governments support this agenda not simply out of complicity but as active collaborators in every crime committed. Losing control of Gaza would not only expose Israel but could also deal a fatal blow to Western imperial dominance.

Here in Slovakia, our leaders echo the sentiment that, as a small country, we cannot meaningfully challenge the Western order. Membership in the EU and NATO is presented as a constraint that leaves little room for true independence. Yet there is a deep public desire for genuine sovereignty—even neutrality. Experience shows, however, that within our current alliances, such aspirations are difficult to realize.

But national courage is not measured by size. Slovenia, a nation half our size, has demonstrated the political will to take bold, principled action on the global stage. This is not about capacity—it is about resolve. Perhaps it is time to break free from the assumptions that have constrained us for too long and use this moment to redefine our position in the world based on our own interests, values, and moral responsibilities.

Netanyahu’s Gaza plan sparks widespread backlash

From page 1 ▶ Meanwhile, opposition leader Yair Lapid condemned the cabinet’s decision, calling it a “disaster that will lead to more disasters.”

He argued that, contrary to the military’s position, “Ben Gvir and Smotrich dragged Netanyahu into a long-term operation that could result in the deaths of hostages and many soldiers.”

Lapid also warned that the move would cost Israeli taxpayers tens of billions of shekels and lead to a diplomatic collapse.

The Israeli political-security cabinet voted in favor of Netanyahu’s proposal, which includes preparing Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) to “take control” of Gaza City in the northern part of the Strip.

The plan is based on five promises:

- The disarming of Hamas
- The return of all the captives
- The demilitarization of the Gaza Strip
- Israeli security control in the Gaza Strip
- The establishment of an alternative civil administration that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority

According to the regime’s Channel 12, an Israeli official stated “the goal is to evacuate all residents of Gaza City to camps in the central and southern parts of the Strip, and other areas.”

The official added that the planned operation would involve a full military siege and the IOF’s complete control over the city.

These steps are part of the regime’s broader strategy to achieve what it calls the “defeat of Hamas”. Northern Gaza has faced similar invasions and blockades over the past 22 months to eliminate the Palestinian resistance but ultimately failed.

Netanyahu’s office issued a statement outlining the plan, but it left many questions unanswered? such as the timeline or the number of IOF troops involved amid reports the regime’s soldiers are “exhausted”.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz noted that the statement avoided using the word “occupation,” which carries legal implications regarding the treatment of civilians and the prohibition on forced relocation. Instead, it used

the more ambiguous term “control”.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residents, who had been forcibly relocated during the genocide, are believed to be living in makeshift camps inside Gaza City. They returned to the north following a six-week ceasefire, which the Israeli regime broke on 18 March, 2025.

A group representing friends and family members of the remaining Israeli captives in Gaza accused the Israeli government of sentencing “the living hostages to death and the fallen hostages to disappearance.”

In a statement, it said: “The cabinet decision to launch the process of occupying the [Gaza] Strip is an official declaration of the abandonment of the hostages, while completely ignoring the repeated warnings by the military echelon and the clear desire of most of the public in Israel.”

Hebrew newspaper Maariv reported organizations like Hamas “do not surrender. Such a thing does not exist. It’s not on their agenda; Hamas has never and will never surrender.”

It added, “You cannot defeat a movement with a popular base at the press of a button.”

Also, the Hebrew newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth stated, “The decision by the political-security cabinet in favor of occupying Gaza — despite opposition from Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir — was met with discontent from the opposition. Leaders of parties outside the coalition launched consecutive attacks on Netanyahu, warning of endangering the hostages and Israeli soldiers.”

Hamas described the Israeli regime’s plan to occupy Gaza City as a “new war crime”, warning the operation would cost it “dearly”.

“The Zionist cabinet’s approval of plans to occupy Gaza City and evacuate its residents constitutes a new war crime that the occupation army intends to commit against the city. We warn the criminal occupation that this criminal adventure will cost it dearly and will not be an easy journey.”

Hamas also warned the occupation would amount to “sacrificing” the hostages still being held in the Palestinian territory.

The group said that the “decision to occupy Gaza confirmed” that Netanyahu and his government “do not care about the fate of their captives”.

Punishing civilians in Gaza has not yielded strategic success for Israel: professor

TEHRAN - A political science professor explains why “Israel has not come close to fulfilling its stated aim of eliminating Hamas” despite two years of war in the Gaza Strip and killing “five to ten percent of” its 2.2 million population.

Robert A. Pape, director of the University of Chicago Project on Security and Threats, says despite mammoth destructive enterprise” Hamas still has significant appeal among Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

“It may be diminished as a military force, but it can replenish its depleted ranks with new recruits—indeed, by some accounts, it has managed to bring in over 10,000 new fighters since the war began,” Professor Pape wrote in Foreign Affairs on August 7.

Following is an excerpt of the article titled “The Unparalleled Devastation of Gaza”:

After nearly 700 days of war, the death toll in Gaza has risen to extraordinary levels. Amid heavy bombardment that has turned the territory into a wasteland of rubble and stringent blockades that have led to mass hunger and even starvation, over 61,000 Palestinians have died and over 145,000 have been seriously wounded.

But the true number of the war’s casualties may far outstrip those figures, which do not include the thousands of bodies that remain under the rubble, the large number of dead that could not arrive at morgues, and the excess deaths from the destruction of infrastructure and the ensuing disease, famine, and lack of medical care. In February, the medical journal The Lancet published an extensive analysis based on a wide variety of sources (including obituaries) and estimated that the official death toll underreported the direct war deaths in Gaza by at least 41 percent and perhaps by as much as 107 percent, while not accounting

at all for nontrauma-related deaths resulting from the impact of Israeli military operations on Gaza’s health services, food and water supplies, and sanitation.

In sum, the authors of the study suggested that Israel’s campaign has caused at least an additional 26,000 Palestinian deaths and perhaps as many as over 120,000 additional deaths, with the true death toll possibly upward of 186,000. Taking that into account, as of late July 2025, Israel’s war in Gaza has led to the deaths of between five to ten percent of the prewar population of about 2.2 million. This represents an unprecedented slaughter. Israel’s campaign in Gaza is the most lethal case of a Western democracy using the punishment of civilians as a tactic of war.

Leaders and scholars have long assumed that democracy offered a solution to the worst pathologies of authoritarian states, especially the willingness of a government to subject populations to coercion, cruelty, and violence. Indeed, the United States and other Western democracies, including Israel, have insisted that democracy is crucial for the promotion of fundamental human rights, individual prosperity, and a more peaceful world. For Israel, a country that has long touted its democratic bona fides, to violate core democratic norms in such dramatic fashion cheapens the value of democratic government itself.

Israel’s defenders may insist that civilian deaths are inevitable in a conflict against a burrowed-in enemy. But it has been clear from Israeli actions—including the targeting of children by snipers, the relentless bombing of civilian infrastructure and residences, and the blockade and starvation of the civilian population—as well as the rhetoric of numerous Israeli officials that Israel’s war is not simply against Hamas but aimed at all the residents of Gaza.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))



The Slovak activist: Our politicians shake hands with Israeli leaders, sign trade deals, and even sell them arms. We say: not in our name.



Lucia Hubinska: National courage is not measured in size. I believe even as a small country we can take on big challenges

32273041-058

UNICEF provides Iran with PCV, Pentavalent vaccines for children

TEHRAN – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in co-operation with the Ministry of Health, has delivered two shipments of vaccines, including the Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) and the Pentavalent vaccine, to immunize approximately 1.5 million children across the country against deadly diseases.

The latest batch of PCV vaccines—200,250 vials—arrived in Iran on July 30, 2025. This follows an earlier shipment in April that included PCV and the Rotavirus vaccine, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on August 6.

These efforts were made possible with support from the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI Alliance), a global organization that helps improve access to vaccines in low- and middle-income countries.

On August 3, another major shipment landed: 465,000 doses of the Pentavalent vaccine.

The PCV vaccine was added to Iran's national immunization schedule in 2024. It protects young children from dangerous illnesses like pneumonia, meningitis, and blood infections—diseases caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. Pneumonia remains one of the top killers of children under five worldwide, so getting this vaccine to infants is a life-saving



step.

The Pentavalent vaccine offers protection against five serious diseases in one shot: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, hepatitis B, and Hib. It's usually given to babies in their first year, as part of their regular vaccination schedule.

UNICEF is also working hard to make sure these vaccines stay effective from the moment they arrive in the country to when they're given to each child.

That means supporting cold chain systems—like walk-in refrigerators and specially-equipped delivery trucks—to keep vaccines at the right temperature. UNICEF also trains health workers and provides technical support to make sure vaccines are handled safely and according to international standards.

And another shipment of the

Rotavirus vaccine is expected soon, expanding protection even further for children across Iran.

With every delivery, UNICEF is helping make sure every child in Iran has a fair chance at a healthy start in life.

In March 2024, UNICEF supported the delivery of 564,000 doses of PCV for the prevention of pneumococcal-related infections and deaths among children in Iran.

The consignment was the first shipment of PCV to the country, using Iran's financial resources left over from the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines, and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, through UNICEF procurement services.

The shipment arrived from India and landed at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on March 17.

National immunization program

In May, the health ministry started distributing domestically made pentavalent vaccines across the country.

“So far, about 800,000 units of the vaccine have been developed, and this number is expected to reach 1.2 million units in the next 2 to 3 days,” IRNA quoted Mehdi Pir-salehi, head of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as saying on May 5.

The pentavalent vaccine was integrated into the national vaccination programme in November 2014. According to the national vaccination program, each child must receive the pentavalent vaccine 3 times at intervals of 2 months. The first is usually at the end of the second month of life.

The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in the country in February 2024 after being missed from the immunization schedule for a decade.

According to the deputy health minister, Alireza Raeisi, children can get free pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccinations in all medical centers across the country.

Pneumococcal vaccine can be injected when babies are 2, 4, and 12 months old; babies can get three doses of rotavirus vaccine at the 2nd, 4th, and 6th months of life. The vaccine is administered by putting drops in the child's mouth.

SOCIETY

AUGUST 9, 2025

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

A look at Iran's achievements in COP15

TEHRAN – Attending the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Iranian delegation achieved notable accomplishments, reinforcing the country's international position in the environmental sector, particularly in wetland conservation.

COP15 to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was held from July 23 to 31 in Victoria Falls City, Zimbabwe. It was held under the theme “Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future.” COP15 adopted a new strategic plan for 2025-2034, the Convention's fifth action plan.

Being appointed to represent the South and West Asia region on the Ramsar Convention Standing Committee was the most significant achievement of the country.

It will contribute to strengthening the country's regional role in environmental decision-making.

The committee includes representatives from 18 countries selected from different geographical regions of the world, the host country of the upcoming Convention meeting, as well as partner international organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Wetlands International.

Iran will play a key role in intersessional decision-making, monitoring the performance of the Ramsar Secretariat, managing financial resources, and developing draft resolutions for future meetings.

Iran was elected as the Vice-Chair for the COP15 by the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands. More importantly, the country will serve as the Co-Chair of the Strategic Plan Working Group for 2025-2034, playing a key role in shaping the future of the Ramsar Convention.

The Strategic Plan Working Group is responsible for drafting the new Strategic Plan, which will outline the key goals, targets, and actions for the Ramsar Convention over the next decade.

Recognizing successful activities and measures of the Ramsar Regional Center for West and Central Asia, based in Iran, the Ramsar Convention Secretariat renewed the center's mandate for three more years, reaffirming its support for the center.

On the first day of COP15 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the three Iranian cities, including Babol in northern Mazandaran province, Kiasahr in northern Gilan province, and Gandoman in southwestern Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, received wetland city accreditation certificates.

The country has also become a member of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC). The committee plays a key role in evaluating and recommending cities for accreditation as Wetland Cities.

Moreover, Iman Ebrahimi, the founder and CEO of AvayeBoom Bird Conservation Association, the first bird conservation NGO in central Iran, received the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award for Young Wetland Champions.

The achievement was announced at the 64th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention, which was held from January 20 to 24, at Secretariat headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.



zerland. The Award for Young Wetland Champions was established to acknowledge and celebrate exemplary efforts of an individual or group of young people aged between 18 and 30 years for their contributions to the conservation, wise use, and restoration of wetlands.

On the sidelines of the event, the Iranian delegation, led by Ahmad-Reza Lahijan-zadeh, deputy for Marine and Wetlands at the Department of Environment, held a meeting with Musonda Mumba, the Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands.

During the meeting, the officials discussed the significance of preserving wetlands, particularly Hamoun, a transboundary wetland on the Iran-Afghan border, and Hour al-Azim wetland, an important wetland on the border of Iran and Iraq, which has been affected by recent fires and the 12-day imposed war by Israel on Iran.

The official also held meetings with delegations from Zimbabwe, Oman, and China.

Evelyn Ndlovu, Minister of Environment, Climate, and Wildlife of Zimbabwe, in a meeting with Lahijan-zadeh, called for the promotion of joint efforts between the two countries.

Highlighting Zimbabwe's extensive experiences in wildlife conservation, Ndlovu, who is also COP15 President, proposed to develop collaborative efforts on water

management and the preservation of the Asiatic cheetah through sharing scientific and practical expertise.

For his part, Lahijan-zadeh welcomed the proposal on behalf of the DOE, while elaborating on the country's environmental measures.

The two officials agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and put it on the top agenda of the two organizations, subsequently.

In separate meetings with Omani and Chinese delegations, the officials discussed oil pollution, ship ballast water discharge, mangrove forest restoration, wetland monitoring, biodiversity conservation, and green investment. They also agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to boost cooperation in dealing with the mentioned issues.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. This intergovernmental treaty provides the framework for international cooperation on wetland conservation. The convention officially came into force in 1975.

Since then, many countries have become Contracting Parties to the convention. Saudi Arabia is the 173rd one.

Iran was elected as the Vice-Chair for the COP15 by the Standing Committee of the Convention on Wetlands.

Iran's startup ecosystem flourishing despite sanctions

TEHRAN – Despite unilateral sanctions, Iran's startup ecosystem has successfully thrived since the 2010s, with the country being home to more than 6,000 startups across diverse sectors, ranging from financial services to agricultural technology.

In the shadow of sanctions and economic headwinds, Iran is building one of West Asia's most structured national innovation ecosystems, banking on a science- and technology-led economy to drive long-term resilience and self-reliance, Press TV reported.

At the heart of this ecosystem are Iran's knowledge-based companies aimed at reducing the country's reliance on oil and imported technology. With over 4,500 officially registered, these entities function as strategic policy tools.

They aim to close the persistent divide between Iran's impressive academic output—ranked among the world's top 15 in scientific publications—and real-world commercial innovation.

These companies focus on critical and strategic technologies, from pharmaceuticals and nanotechnology to aerospace and information and communication technology (ICT), often developing indigenous alternatives to foreign tech.

Iran's Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology has led this shift by providing fi-

nancial, legal, and research support to build a local tech economy. Over the past decade, it has introduced policies like tax breaks, venture capital, IP protection, and export support to help entrepreneurs grow.

The country hosts more than 45 Science and Technology Parks, 600 Innovation and Growth Centers, and numerous Innovation Factories—dynamic hubs where startups, investors, accelerators, and R&D labs come together to fuel innovation and growth.

The Pardis Technology Park, east of Tehran, is the crown jewel, billing itself as the “Silicon Valley of the Islamic World.” These parks offer infrastructure, legal support, and preferential taxation for high-tech firms, often co-located with universities.

The flagship Azadi Innovation Factory in Tehran is already the largest of its kind in West Asia.

These facilities aim to solve one of Iran's fundamental challenges: commercializing academic research. While Iran ranks among the top 15 countries globally in scientific publications, turning that output into market-ready products has historically been a weak link.

Capital remains a major bottleneck; although Iran's domestic venture capital sector is expanding, international funding is still largely inaccessible. To address this gap, the

government-backed Innovation and Prosperity Fund has become the country's leading source of risk investment.

A small number of emerging private venture capital (VC) funds have begun backing early-stage startups, particularly in financial technology innovations, online commerce, and sustainable clean energy solutions, although overall deal volumes remain relatively modest.

Limitations in financial infrastructure, particularly Iran's lack of access to the global banking communication network SWIFT, significantly restrict Iranian startups from expanding regionally or internationally.

One of the most valuable assets in Iran's innovation push is its STEM talent pool. Each year, thousands of engineers and scientists graduate from top universities. To retain them, the state has ramped up support through bodies like the National Elites Foundation and the Scientific Elites Federation, offering housing, grants, and research stipends.

To overcome infrastructure challenges, the Strategic Technologies Laboratory Network enables researchers and startups to share access to advanced lab equipment—an essential resource in a sanctions-affected economy where importing sophisticated machinery is frequently restricted.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iranian knowledge-based firms in Iraqi medical exhibition

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies will attend an exhibition of medical, laboratory, pharmaceutical, and dental equipment in Baghdad, Iraq.

The third edition of the four-day exhibition will be held from September 10 to 13, ISNA reported.

On the sidelines of this exhibition, a pavilion of Iranian knowledge-based companies will be set up with the support of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, and these companies will be able to present their products and capabilities.

حضور شرکتهای دانش‌بنیان ایرانی در نمایشگاه پزشکی عراق

با حمایت صندوق نوآوری و شکوفایی، پاپیون اختصاصی شرکت‌های دانش‌بنیان ایرانی در نمایشگاه چهار روزه تجهیزات پزشکی، آزمایشگاهی، دارویی و دندانپزشکی بغداد برپا خواهد شد. به گزارش ایسنا، سومین نمایشگاه چهار روزه تجهیزات پزشکی، آزمایشگاهی، دارویی و دندانپزشکی بغداد از روز ۱۰ تا ۱۳ شهریور ماه ۱۴۰۱ برگزار می‌شود.

در حاشیه این نمایشگاه، پاپیون شرکت‌های دانش‌بنیان ایرانی با حمایت صندوق نوآوری و شکوفایی برپا می‌شود و این شرکت‌ها با حضور در این نمایشگاه می‌توانند محصولات و توانمندی‌های خود در حوزه‌های مرتبط را ارائه دهند.



Arbaeen pilgrims on way to Karbala

People from all walks of life are on the way to Karbala, Iraq, to commemorate Arbaeen – the end of a 40-day mourning period for the martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS).

This year, Arbaeen falls on August 14. Along the way, locals provide free food, drinks, lodging, and medical services, showcasing remarkable generosity and solidarity.

TEHRAN TIMES



www.tehrantimes.com

Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



Tehrantimes79

No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.o. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

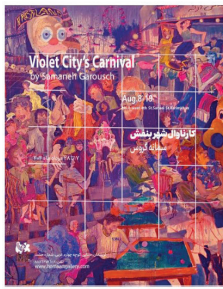
AUGUST 9, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One can purchase the world with contentment and live in happiness with benevolence.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times ➤ Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:23 Dawn: 3:42 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:17 (tomorrow)

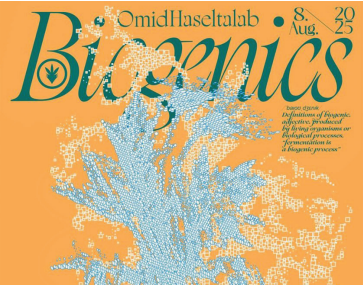
What’s in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* A collection of paintings by Samaneh Garousi is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named “Violet City’s Carnival” will be running until August 19 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* A collection of calligraphy works by Omid Haseltalab is on view in an exhibition at Adapa Gallery.

Titled “Biogenics”, the exhibition will run until August 29 at the gallery located at No. 5, Sumesara Alley, Sazesh St., Vali-e Asr Square.



* Ev Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Navid Nedai.

The exhibit named “Body and Placelessness” will be running until August 22 at the gallery located at 5 Arabi Alley, North Kheradmand St.



* An exhibition of paintings by Nastaran Kamali is currently on view in an exhibition at Dena Gallery.

The exhibition will run until August 22 at the gallery that can be found at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



* Tehran’s CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Sepideh Sabet.

The exhibit titled “Near but Far” will be running until August 13 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pas-daran St.



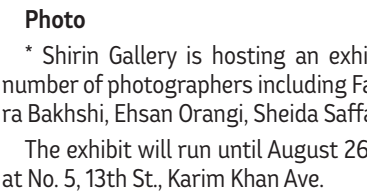
* Paintings by Mahboubeh Fat’hi are currently on view in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibit named “Paddy Field” will continue until August 26 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



* A collection of paintings by Zahra Norouzi is on view in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit named “The Televisions” will run until August 18 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



Photo

* Shirin Gallery is hosting an exhibition of photos by a number of photographers including Fatemeh Ebrahimi, Zahra Bakhshi, Ehsan Orangi, Sheida Saffari and Mohsen Rezaei.

The exhibit will run until August 26 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



Photo

* Photos by Shaqayeq Saeidi are on display in an exhibition at Sheidai Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “She Is the Sound of the Solitary” will continue until August 22 at the gallery located at 149 Bahar Shiraz Square near Hafte Tir Square.

Iran’s nominee for IBBY iRead award revealed

TEHRAN- The Children’s Book Council of Iran has revealed the country’s candidate for the 2026 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award.

Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi, an Iranian advocate for reading and a researcher in children’s literature, has been nominated for this esteemed honor, IRNA reported on Friday.

The IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award is presented at the IBBY Congress, which will be held from July 5 to 9, 2026 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Seyyedabadi is a writer, reading promoter, and researcher in children’s and young adult literature.

Throughout his more than 35 years of work, in any position and with any title, he has always pursued reading as a social action and activity. He has strived to promote libraries as safe havens and voluntary reading as a means of resilience and resistance, especially in challenging social conditions.

The first book by Seyyedabadi for children was published in 1996. In the following years, he regularly focused on writing for children and young adults, and today about 70 books have been published by him. Some of his books are about theoretical topics in children’s and young adult literature.

He transformed his individual activities in promoting reading into institutional and group activities about 20 years ago, which led to the establishment of some reading promotion institutions in Iran.

He also implemented ambitious projects that had a significant im-

pact on the expansion of reading throughout Iran.

In 2014, he started innovative initiatives to promote reading throughout Iran, which resulted in the formation of large-scale reading promotion movements involving non-governmental and civil institutions, government agencies, and public institutions in cities and villages across Iran.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, these initiatives became one of the effective networks connecting children, young adults, and book promoters.

These activities engaged 180 cities and 1,400 villages in Iran, leading to the establishment of over 17,000 reading clubs in cities and villages, and 40,000 reading clubs in preschools throughout Iran.

The Children’s Book Council

of Iran has previously nominated Seyyedabadi for the 2024 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award.

The IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award has been established by the Shenzhen iRead Foundation and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) to encourage a real commitment to the cause of reading promotion in the hope of spreading this dedication to others around the globe.

The IBBY-iRead Award jury selects two winners every year. The two winners each receive 200,000 RMB Yuan and, in addition, 150,000 RMB Yuan is given to a non-profit children’s reading promotion project of their choice.

Swedish-Dutch author Marit Törnqvist and Chinese educator Zhu Yongxin won the 2020 IB-

BY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award.

The two winners of the 2024 IBBY-iRead Outstanding Reading Promoter Award were Basarat Kazim from Pakistan, nominated by IBBY Pakistan, and Irene Vasco from Colombia, nominated by IBBY Canada.

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award is given biennially to one group or institution whose outstanding activities are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion programs for children and young people.

The Award was established in 1986 and is sponsored by the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

The prize of \$10,000 and a diploma are presented to the winning project at the biennial IBBY Congress.

IAF shows Peter Jackson’s “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug”

TEHRAN – Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran screened “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug,” a 2013 epic fantasy adventure film directed by Peter Jackson, on Friday.

Screened at the Nasseri Hall of the IAF, the 180-minute film was shown with Persian subtitles, Mehr reported.

The movie is based on the 1937 novel “The Hobbit” by J. R. R. Tolkien and a sequel to 2012’s “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.” It is the second instalment in The Hobbit trilogy, acting as a prequel to Jackson’s “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy.

The film follows the titular character Bilbo Baggins as he continues to accompany Thorin Oakenshield and his fellow dwarves on a quest to reclaim the Lonely Mountain from the dragon Smaug. Pursuing them are the vengeful orcs Azog the Defiler and his son Bolg, while Gandalf the Grey investigates the return of a long-forgotten evil force in the ruins of Dol Guldur.

The ensemble cast includes Ian McKellen, Martin Freeman, Richard Armitage, Benedict Cumberbatch, Evangeline Lilly, Lee Pace, Luke Evans, Ken Stott, James Nesbitt, and Orlando Bloom.

John R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) was an English writer and philologist, known for his high fantasy

works “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings.”

After Tolkien’s death, his son Christopher published a series of works based on his father’s extensive notes and unpublished manuscripts, including “The Silmarillion.” These, together with “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings,” form a connected body of tales, poems, fictional histories, invented languages, and literary essays about a fantasy world called Arda and, within it, Middle-earth. Between 1951 and 1955, Tolkien applied the term legendarium to the larger part of these writings.

While many other authors had published works of fantasy before Tolkien, the tremendous success of “The Hobbit” and “The Lord of the Rings” ignited a profound interest in the fantasy genre and ultimately precipitated an avalanche of new fantasy books and authors.

As a result, he has been popularly identified as the “father” of modern fantasy literature and is widely regarded as one of the most influential authors of all time.

Peter Jackson, 63, is a New Zealand filmmaker. He is best known as the director, writer, and producer of the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy (2001–2003) and the “Hobbit” trilogy (2012–2014). He is

the fourth-highest-grossing film director of all-time, with his films having made over \$6.5 billion worldwide.

Jackson has been awarded three Academy Awards for “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” (2003), including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Adapted Screenplay. His other awards include three BAFTAs, a Golden Globe, two Primetime Emmy Awards, and four Saturn Awards, among others.

John Steinbeck’s collection of short fiction published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of “The Long Valley,” a collection of short fiction by John Steinbeck, has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Veteran Iranian translator Asadollah Amraei has translated the book and Ofoq Publishing House has published it in 192 pages, Honaron-line reported.

Most of the stories appeared originally in literary periodicals, and were first collected by Viking Press in 1938.

Ranked among Steinbeck’s “finest and best-known” fiction, these are among the most frequently anthologized of Steinbeck’s stories, widely read by university undergraduates and high school students.

Among the stories, “The Murder” and “The Promise” were selected for the O. Henry Prize anthology for short fiction in 1934 and 1938, respectively.

This volume of stories collected with the encouragement of his longtime editor Pascal Covici serves as a wonderful introduction to the work of Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck.

Set in the beautiful Salinas Valley of California, where simple people farm the land and struggle to find a place for themselves in the world, these stories reflect Steinbeck’s characteristic interests: the tensions between town and country, laborers and owners, past and present. Included here are the O. Henry Prize-winning story “The Murder”; “The Chrysanthemums,” perhaps Steinbeck’s most challenging story, both personally and artistically; “Flight,” “The Snake,” “The White Quail,” and the classic tales of “The Red Pony.”

John Steinbeck (1902-1968) was an American writer. He won the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature “for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as they do sympathetic humor and keen social perception”. He has been called “a giant of American letters”.

During his writing career, he authored 33 books, with one book coauthored alongside Edward Ricketts, including 16 novels, six non-fiction books, and two collections of short stories. He is widely known for the comic novels “Tortilla Flat” (1935) and “Cannery Row” (1945), the multigeneration epic “East of Eden” (1952), and the novellas “The Red Pony” (1933) and “Of Mice and Men” (1937). The Pulitzer Prize-winning “The Grapes of Wrath” (1939) is considered Steinbeck’s masterpiece and part of the American literary canon.

Much of Steinbeck’s work employs settings in his native central California, particularly in the Salinas Valley and the California Coast Ranges region. His works frequently explored the themes of fate and injustice, especially as applied to downtrodden or everyman protagonists.