

Pezeshkian Seeks Assurances in Armenia, Will Hit Belarus Next



President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Yerevan at the official invitation of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on August 18, 2025. He was welcomed by Armenia's deputy prime minister and deputy foreign minister

Efforts to activate ‘snapback’ are illegal and illogical: Iran foreign ministry

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has rejected European efforts to activate the JCPOA snapback mechanism, calling the move both illegal and illogical.

Speaking in the weekly press conference on Monday, the Spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry Esmaeil Baghaei emphasized that the three European countries involved failed to meet their obligations under the nuclear deal and warned that such actions represent a non-constructive approach serving Israeli interests rather than promoting dialogue on Iran's nuclear program.

The snapback mechanism, a provision within the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), allows for the swift reinstatement of UN sanctions if Iran is deemed “non-compliant” with the nuclear deal.

Tehran considers this mechanism illegal, particularly after the 12-Day War in June, during which the UK, France, and Germany (the E3) aligned with the Israeli regime and the U.S. in their targeting of Iran's nuclear, military, and civilian sites. ▶ Page 3

Tehran, Islamabad set \$3b target for agricultural trade

TEHRAN – Iran and Pakistan signed a joint statement pledging to expand cooperation in agriculture, trade and food security, with officials setting a goal to boost bilateral agricultural trade to \$3.0 billion within two years.

Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleh said current exchanges stand at around \$1.4 billion, but the two countries have complementary strengths that can be used to secure each other's needs across different seasons.

He noted that Iran will expand exports of dairy products, nuts, fruits and vegetables to Pakistan, while Islamabad will supply a portion of Iran's corn and rice demand and provide at least 60 percent of its meat imports under the new plan.

Nouri said the two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in research on climate change and food security, and to set up a joint agricultural committee that will meet every six months to monitor progress and resolve bottlenecks.

“The construction sector may drive the economy, but agriculture drives food security,” he said, stressing that regional collaboration is key in adapting to global changes. ▶ Page 4

Businesses close as Israel’s economy drops 3.5% after war with Iran

TEHRAN – A new report shows Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's much-bally-hooded decision to drag Israel into a direct war with Iran cost the regime the partial or total shutdown of countless businesses, as well as dents in consumer spending, export, and investment.

Israel's GDP shrank by 3.5% due to the war with Iran, marking the first three-month decline since the regime's economy plunged 20.8% in the last quarter of 2023, when it began an all-out war against Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria, according to the Times of Israel.

The online newspaper quoted an analyst as saying that it is unclear whether Israel can recover from the losses.

Israel also lost a lot of money using expensive air defense missiles against Iranian projectiles that penetrated the occupied territories and left large swathes of Israeli cities in ruins. Hebrew media previously reported that at least 35,000 buildings were damaged in the aftermath of the Iranian attacks. Residents claim Israeli authorities have largely failed to compensate for these losses, initiate repairs, or provide sufficient shelter for the thousands now homeless. ▶ Page 2

Gaza genocide: Over 62,000 killed, 263 die of starvation

By staff writer

TEHRAN — An increasing number of Palestinians are dying as a result of Israel's blockade and relentless attacks on the Gaza Strip, even as international pressure grows to end the nearly two-year conflict.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza reported on Monday that 60 people were killed and over 340 injured in the past 24 hours alone due to ongoing Israeli attacks. The ministry added since Israel launched war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, the overall death toll has risen to 62,004, with more than 156,000 people wounded.

Palestinian medical sources say over 260 Palestinians—including more than 110 children—have died in Gaza as a result of a man-made famine and starvation campaign. Israel's tightened blockade has pushed the enclave to the brink of widespread starvation.

Will Chapter VII be imposed on southern Lebanon?

By Sondoss Al-Asaad

BEIRUT — The U.S. envoys Thomas Barrack and Morgan Ortagus have arrived in Beirut once again to intensify pressure on the top Lebanese officials and put national peace at risk.

An informed source affirmed to Tehran Times that Washington and Tel Aviv have agreed to renew UNIFIL's mandate in southern Lebanon at the end of this month for a final one-year term.

The source notes that the renewal decision will carry an escalatory and highly charged tone as UNIFIL will be granted new powers under strict conditions similar to those granted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows it to disarm the Resistance by force by conducting raids, arresting citizens; setting up checkpoints, etc.

Following the liberation of the south in 2000, the Security Council renewed UNIFIL's mandate for only six months, reducing its strength from approximately 11,000 troops to approximately 2,000, before reinforcing it following Israel's aggression of Lebanon on July 2006.

Yemen targets Ben Gurion Airport

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni forces announced on Sunday a military operation targeting the Israeli regime's Ben Gurion Airport in solidarity with Gaza.

In a statement, Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces, confirming the strike, emphasized that Yemeni operations in support of the Palestinian people in Gaza will continue until the genocide ends and the blockade is lifted.

The Israeli military confirmed the launch of a missile from Yemen toward Tel Aviv, triggering air raid sirens in central areas and temporary closure of Ben Gurion Airport's airspace.

Saree declared the top-tier operation came “in support of the oppressed Palestinian people and their dear fighters, and in response to the crimes of genocide and starvation committed by the Zionist enemy against our brothers in the Gaza Strip, and in retaliation for the Israeli aggression against our country.” ▶ Page 5

Tehran confirms 2025 launch of Zafar and Paya satellites aboard Russian Soyuz

TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Space Agency has announced that the country's Earth-observation satellites Zafar and Paya will be launched into orbit aboard Russia's Soyuz rocket in the fall of 2025, following delays caused by foreign partners.

Hassan Salarieh, head of the Iranian Space Agency, said on Monday the satellites—designed to provide color and black-and-white imaging services—were originally set for launch in 2024, but the schedule was pushed back after the foreign launcher was not ready. He noted that the final launch date will depend on the provider's timetable, as other international payloads are set to be deployed on the same mission. ▶ Page 3



Iran unveils 1st domestically built advanced class-F gas turbine

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday unveiled its first domestically produced advanced class-F gas turbine, a milestone the government said will boost the country's power generation capabilities.

The turbine, named MGT-75, was designed and manufactured by MAPNA Group's turbine engineering and manufacturing arm (TUGA).

The unit is equipped with modern technologies including a 3D axial compressor, single-crystal and directionally solidified blades, advanced cooling systems and thermal barrier coatings, giving it efficiency levels comparable to international peers. ▶ Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

China and Russia oppose invoking snapback mechanism

In an article, Vatan-e-Emrooz addressed China and Russia's opposition to Europe's move to activate the snapback mechanism against Iran and wrote: The opposition of China and Russia, as two permanent members of the UN Security Council, has created a significant political capacity against Europe's move. These two countries have not only aligned themselves with Iran politically and diplomatically, but have also put forward strong legal arguments against Europe. The coordinated response of China and Russia indicates the formation of a powerful political-legal front against this European move. China has condemned this move as a diplomatic mistake that will lead to an escalation of tensions, and has explicitly called it illegal and questioned Europe's legitimacy for such a move. This alignment, which is rooted in the two countries' shared strategic interests with Iran against Western pressure, gives Tehran significant diplomatic weight and puts Europe in a difficult position. The presence of two permanent members of the Security Council on this front poses a serious challenge to any unilateral action by Europe in terms of international legitimacy.

Farhikhtegan: Trump-Putin and its impact on powerful Eastern countries

In an analysis, Farhikhtegan discussed the August 15 meeting between the U.S. and Russian presidents in Alaska, noting: If the United States succeeds in ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it will intensify pressure on both Iran and China. Two possible scenarios are envisioned: first, Washington could exert heavy pressure on Iran, resolve the "Iran file," and then pivot toward China. Alternatively, it could move directly against China. In the short term, U.S. confrontation with Iran would increase pressure on the Islamic Republic, but given the region's complexities, Washington would soon encounter the depth of its challenges with Tehran. Thus, although Zionist actors want the United States to remain heavily focused on the region, Washington may find the costs of confrontation excessive, prompting it to seek an exit strategy. The U.S.'s primary objectives are to sow division among Eastern powers, apply pressure, and contain them gradually and separately. This ambition is recognized, and the Eastern powers continue cooperating to prevent the implementation of America's policy.

Sobh-e-No: Lessons of Alaska meeting

Sobh-e-No wrote about the connection between Iran and the Alaska summit. It wrote: The key issue regarding this meeting is its rel-

evance to Iran—its lessons, potential benefits, and possible costs. During the Ukraine war, a Europe weakened in the face of Moscow sought a scapegoat by magnifying the military cooperation between Iran and Russia, thereby increasing pressure on Tehran.

This ranged from provoking the 2022 riots and joining U.S. sanctions against Iran to aligning with Israel and Washington in military actions, and even threatening to trigger the snapback mechanism—each move fitting into this broader context. However, recent developments in the South Caucasus and the 12-day war have shown that Russia, for now, does not intend to play a leading role.

Its entire focus remains on Ukraine, leaving Iran without a true friend or strategic partner in this struggle, forcing it to safeguard its own interests independently. There is also the risk that Moscow could use the "Iran card" to gain further concessions in the Ukraine conflict. Following the Alaska meeting, former U.S. President Trump once again hinted at the possibility of attacking Iran. These events suggest that the Alaska meeting holds multiple diplomatic lessons for Iran.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Why are Iran and US closer to negotiations than war?

In a commentary, Arman-e-Emrooz argues there are indications that the United States and Iran are taking steps toward negotiations rather than heading for a military confrontation. It wrote: Given the current circumstances, analyses coupled with plenty of evidence show the likelihood of a diplomatic breakthrough between the two countries. Even despite many obstacles, the chances of dialogue are far greater than breakout of a military conflict. There are many reasons that have made diplomacy an inevitable option.

The powerful countries, especially the European trio, have repeatedly shown that they are ready to mediate to revive the nuclear agreement or form a new understanding. Pressure from powerful countries have forced the United States to avoid military action that could put its allies in a bind.

On the other hand, Iran is facing deep economic problems. This situation is pushing the Iranian government towards negotiations to ease the sanctions pressure.

The fact that Iran and the U.S. are aware of the catastrophic consequences of war, like a light in the darkness, illuminates the path of diplomacy. This path is smoother than war, which leads to a dead end.

1.2 million undocumented Afghan nationals left Iran in past year, declares interior minister



TEHRAN – Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has announced that more than 1.2 million Afghan nationals—mostly undocumented migrants—have left Iran over the past year, with the highest number of departures recorded at the eastern borders of Khorasan Razavi province.

He said the government is now preparing for the gradual repatriation of around two million more undocumented Afghans who entered the country illegally.

Speaking during a visit to Mashhad on Monday, Momeni underlined that Iran distinguishes between registered residents and those without legal documents.

"Currently, more than six million Afghan nationals are living in Iran. Our priority is to reg-

ulate the presence of undocumented migrants.

The return process will be carried out with full respect for human dignity and the honor of our Afghan neighbors," he said.

The minister explained that the Interior Ministry has placed border control and migrant regulation among its top priorities.

"The highest number of departures nationwide occurs through Khorasan Razavi borders. Just last year, over 1.2 million people crossed this route, and more than 70 percent of them were identified and registered," he said.

Momeni added that effective border management requires both national mobilization and international cooperation. "Migration is a global issue, not just Iran's. We are drawing on the experiences of other countries to improve our policies," he noted.

He also emphasized that his visit to Mashhad included reviewing conditions for pilgrims.

"The Ministry of Interior has programs to ensure affordable, safe, and smooth travel for pilgrims to the holy city, so they can have a secure and fulfilling pilgrimage," he said.

Momeni concluded by stressing that all relevant institutions will play a role in achieving these goals. "We are confident that through national cooperation, we will manage the presence of undocumented migrants responsibly while continuing to provide security and services to pilgrims," he said.

Businesses close as Israel's economy drops 3.5% after war with Iran

From page 1 ► While the full extent of the damage Israel incurred during the 12-day war is unclear to international audiences, France 24 recently reported that the Israeli regime has hidden the targeting of several important sites by Iran. Among these are Camp Moshe Dayan, a major IDF administration camp in Tel Aviv that houses intelligence and command units, and Israel's Defense Ministry. Hebrew media reported damage to nearby buildings when the attacks took place, but concealed the fact that these two important sites had been hit.

Israel began airstrikes against Iran's nuclear, civilian, and military infrastructure on June 13, and later got the United States to come out of the shadows and directly hit three Iranian nuclear sites.

However, analysts assess that Israel failed to achieve most of its objectives which included dismantling Iran's military capabilities following the assassination of top Iranian generals early in the war, inciting popular unrest against the Iranian government, and completely destroying Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Iran swiftly replaced the assassinated military officials on the first day of the war, with the



Photo shows aftermath of an Iranian attack in Tel Aviv

new commanders immediately launching a retaliatory operation that went on to contain 22 waves of missile and drone attacks. The Iranian population rallied behind the government, presenting a unified front against Israel. Last but not least, despite significant damage to its nuclear sites, Iran maintains that it will continue its nuclear program and resume uranium enrichment in the future.

The war came to a halt on June 24, after Iran agreed to a proposal by Israel and Washington. No official ceasefire deal was signed between the two warring sides.

Despite the war backfiring on Israel, Iran's military and political

officials predict Netanyahu will try to attack Iran again in the future.

Iran refrained from deploying its more advanced missiles and drones, but the damage was still significant

Major General Seyyed Rahim Safavi, a senior adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, stressed on Monday that Iran is effectively in a state of war, with

Why China can no longer remain 'neutral' in West Asia

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – On the contemporary West Asian chessboard, China is emerging as an increasingly decisive actor. Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—one of the largest geo-economic projects of the 21st century—requires solid anchors in a strategic region where energy routes, trade corridors, and some of the world's most protracted conflicts intersect.

Yet Beijing faces a dilemma: how can it guarantee stability and continuity in a region marked by deep rivalries without abandoning its traditional role as a "neutral" actor? The time for postponement has passed. The very structure of the international system forces choices, and in West Asia that choice boils down to Iran.

The thesis of this analysis is straightforward: if China wants to secure its Eurasian economic project, only a firm alignment with Iran can achieve this. The alternative—a "weak" balancing act with Israel or its allies—jeopardizes not only the BRI in the region, but also Beijing's ability to project itself as a stabilizing power in the Global South.

The Belt and Road as global architecture

China conceives of the BRI as an infrastructure of multipolar integration. Its core objectives are threefold:

Energy: securing stable supplies from the Persian Gulf and Central Asia to East Asia.

Connectivity: establishing land and maritime corridors linking Eurasia with Africa.

Economic diplomacy: consolidating a global environment less dependent on the dollar and Western financial hegemony.

West Asia, given its geography and energy resources, is central to all three pillars. No overland route to Europe or maritime corridor to Africa can bypass its straits and ports. For this reason, Beijing cannot treat the region as a mere transit zone—it must be viewed as a nucleus requiring lasting stability.

China and Iran: Strategic affinity

Iran offers China what no other regional power can provide simultaneously:

Energy depth: vast oil and gas reserves capable of sustaining

Chinese growth for decades.

Central location: a crossroads between Central Asia, West Asia, and the Indian Ocean, ideal for articulating both land and maritime corridors.

Political autonomy: unlike Saudi Arabia or the UAE, Iran is not a U.S. protectorate, giving Beijing more strategic room for maneuver.

Political convergence: like China, Iran promotes a multipolar order and questions Western hegemony.

This alignment does not need to be ideological; it is structural. Both powers benefit from weakening dependence on the transatlantic order and consolidating alternative networks.

In 2021, China signed a 25-year strategic cooperation agreement with Tehran, covering multi-billion-dollar investments in infrastructure, transport, and energy.

Yet Beijing is believed to have remained cautious, reluctant to commit fully. That hesitation is becoming increasingly untenable.

Israel a Structural Risk for the BRI

Israeli expansionism is a factor of instability that directly threatens China's regional interests. Israel is neither a neutral nor a predictable partner:

Colonial-expansionist dimension: since 1948, and especially after 1967, Israel has projected beyond its borders, fueling an endemic conflict.

Regional spillover effect: every offensive in Gaza, every operation in Lebanon or Syria, multiplies tensions around Iran and its allied Resistance movements.

Asymmetry with Washington: Israel functions as a strategic appendage of the United States, acting as a vector for the American agenda in the region.

For China, which seeks stable trade corridors, Israel represents at best a permanent risk factor—and at worst a catalyst of instability capable of derailing billion-dollar investments.

Israeli territorial expansion—its ambitions in Gaza, the West Bank, and beyond—must not be seen as a purely "local" issue. Every step in that direction drags the wider region toward insecurity. For the BRI, this amounts to a systemic threat: land routes crossing Iran and Iraq toward the Mediterra-



nean, or maritime routes reliant on Persian Gulf stability, become vulnerable with every surge in Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Clash of logics: Colonialism vs. connectivity

From another prism, China's dilemma can be described as the clash of two incompatible logics. On one side is the Israeli-expansionist logic: permanent war, military control, and the fragmentation of neighbors. On the other is China's BRI logic: connectivity, interdependence, and the predictability of trade corridors.

Israeli expansion relies on instability to survive—fragmenting Palestine, weakening Syria, pressuring Lebanon, encircling Iran. Chinese expansion, by contrast, requires stability: secure pipelines, functioning ports, uninterrupted railways.

These two models cannot coexist in the same geopolitical space. China's entry into the region forces a choice: submit to a regional order of walls and violence, or build one of routes and horizontal linkages.

If Israel represents permanent destabilization, Iran functions as a pivot of resistance and containment. Not because Tehran is free from internal tensions or military projection, but because its structural role is to block Israeli and U.S. expansion.

For China, the consequences are direct:

Security of land corridors: the route connecting Xinjiang with Turkey and the Mediterranean inevitably passes through Iran. If this section succumbs to instability induced by Tel Aviv or Washington, the entire BRI architecture falters.

Energy balance: without Iran as counterweight, Saudi Arabia and the UAE—still aligned with Washington—retain leverage to

the situation capable of collapsing at any moment.

"I prefer to say that a new war may be ahead, and perhaps afterward, no further war will occur," the former head of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) told reporters. Safavi added its necessary for Iran to remain vigilant, because peace with Israel and Washington can only be reached through force.

IRGC's Deputy Commander Brigadier General Ali Fadavi, also said during a Monday event that Iran is ready to respond to any new aggression by Israel and the U.S., which "entered the war with full power," but in the end, suffered immensely due to grave "miscalculations".

It is believed that Tehran exercised restraint during the war, refraining from deploying its more advanced missiles and drones. This suggests that a future conflict with Iran would likely be more destructive and deadly for Israel.

An Iranian military official previously stated that Iran has spent decades preparing the equipment necessary to sustain a war for at least two consecutive years. Israel had used up 75% of its air defense missiles by the end of the 12-day war in June.

pressure Beijing through supply or pricing.

Projection toward the Indian Ocean: Iran provides direct access to ports like Chabahar and to corridors toward Pakistan, India, and beyond.

Thus, Chinese alignment with Iran is not sentimental or ideological – it is a survival strategy for the BRI.

The Mirage of Israeli Pragmatism

Some Chinese experts argue that Israel could be a valuable technological and economic partner for the BRI, citing cooperation in agriculture, water, and digital innovation.

But this reasoning confuses tactical collaboration with strategic alliance. Israel can offer advanced technologies, but never political stability. Its dependence on Washington and its expansionist logic make it an unreliable partner for a multi-century initiative like the BRI. What is at stake is not access to an agricultural patent, but the consistency of energy corridors that will fuel China through the 21st century.

Another key element is perception in the Global South. China presents itself as an alternative to Western order, but its credibility depends on its stance toward Palestine and Israel. For most Arab and Muslim societies, Israel embodies a colonial project perpetuating injustice. Ambiguity from Beijing toward Tel Aviv would undermine its legitimacy as leader of the Global South.

By contrast, Iran is seen as a state resisting hegemony and colonial expansion. Supporting Tehran would not only secure routes and energy, but also strengthen China's image as a political-moral reference for a multipolar and just order.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian seeks assurances in Armenia, will hit Belarus next

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian began a two-nation tour on Monday, visiting Armenia first to discuss pressing regional issues, including a recent U.S.-brokered deal with Azerbaijan that analysts warn could lead to the presence of American forces near Iran's northern borders and block the country's access to central Asia.

Pezeshkian was received by a number of high-ranking Armenian officials upon his arrival in Yerevan. He then participated in a meeting with Armenia's Iranologists, where he spoke about the deep and historical ties between the two countries and encouraged the researchers to further deepen their knowledge of Iranian history, culture, and people.

"The peoples of Iran and Armenia have never witnessed anything but goodwill, kindness, and friendship from one another. You can help make these ties even better," the president told the room of scholars.

Before leaving Tehran, Pezeshkian addressed cameras while flanked by some of his ministers. He said his stay in Armenia will involve the signing of important bilateral cooperation deals.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (center) during a meeting with Armenian Iranologists in Yerevan on August 18, 2025

"During this visit, important memoranda of understanding and agreements will be signed, opening new horizons for preparing the appropriate economic and social ground in the country, which will be beneficial to the progress and advancement of our dear nation," he stated.

Iran shares a small land border with Armenia, which has become the focal point of Yerevan-Baku tensions in the past couple of years. Azerbaijan seeks to connect its mainland to its exclave bordering Iran and Armenia via a new corridor. Iran states that while it doesn't oppose transit

routes in the region, obstruction of its connection to Armenia is a red line. A recent U.S.-brokered peace deal signed in the White House between Yerevan and Baku has further fueled Iranian concerns, as the deal grants the U.S. exclusive rights to develop a route through the Armenian province bordering Iran. Despite the non-binding nature of the deal, which requires approval from the Armenian parliament for implementation, Tehran has already voiced strong opposition to potential U.S. ownership of the transit route. Since the deal's signing, multiple phone calls have taken place between

top Iranian and Armenian officials, with Armenia pledging to consider Iran's concerns in any new developments in the South Caucasus.

While delivering remarks in Tehran, Pezeshkian voiced concerns about U.S. companies operating in the region, citing past instances where such firms engaged in unexpected and unwelcome actions under the cover of business activities. "Given these concerns, we will hold serious talks on the challenges posed by this issue," he added.

The Iranian president will travel to Belarus after wrapping up his Armenia visit. Pezeshkian highlighted the growing relations between the two nations in economic, cultural, scientific, and social spheres. He said he expects further collaboration in technology transfer, agriculture, industry, and social initiatives.

"Belarus has consistently supported Iran in international forums, including by condemning Israeli attacks on our country and the aggression in Gaza," he noted. The president added that Iran possesses significant potential for cooperation with like-minded nations on strategic matters.

Tehran confirms 2025 launch of Zafar and Paya satellites aboard Russian Soyuz

From Page 1 ▶ Salarieh confirmed that Iran is also keeping the option of a domestic launch under review, depending on technical assessments and the final timeline announced by the launch provider.

On infrastructure, Salarieh reported that the first phase of the Chabahar Space Center is nearing completion. The facility, designed for solid-fuel launch vehicles, includes administrative offices, telemetry and command centers, hangars, a launch pad, and supporting infrastructure such as power and roads. Construction began in 2023 and is expected to finish in 2025, with the base scheduled to become operational the same year.

"The timing of the first test launch depends on the readiness

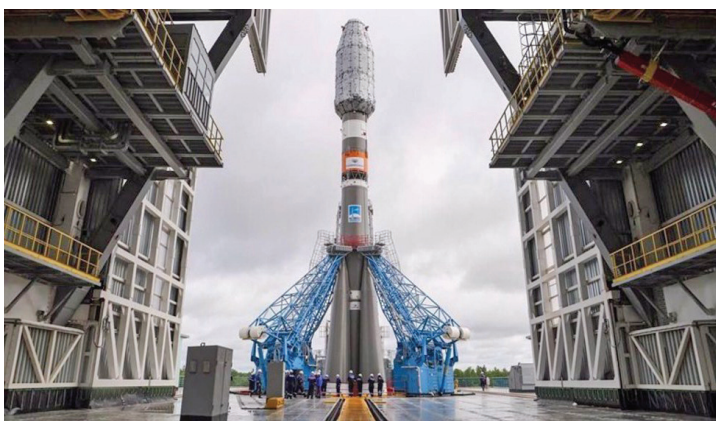
of both the launch vehicle and the satellite," he said. "Once all necessary tests are completed, the exact date will be announced."

He added that groundbreaking for the second phase of the project—dedicated to medium-class liquid-fuel launch vehicles—will take place this year.

Salarieh also said that another Nahid-2, a communications satellite, is slated for launch this year using Iran's domestically developed Simorgh rocket.

On July 25, Iran successfully launched the domestically built research and telecommunication satellite Nahid-2 into a 500 km orbit aboard a Soyuz-2 rocket from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrom.

The Nahid-2 satellite is a tele-



The Russian Soyuz rocket is seen at the Russian space launch facility Vostochny Cosmodrome.

communications microsatellite designed for telecommunication missions in low Earth orbit (LEO), generally defined as an altitude between 160 and 2,000 kilometers.

The Soyuz-2 rocket, a reliable workhorse of the Russian space program, carried Nahid-2 alongside other payloads, reflecting growing Russo-Iranian space collaboration.

Efforts to activate 'snapback' are illegal and illogical: Iran foreign ministry



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei speaks at his weekly press briefing in Tehran on August 18, 2025.

From Page 1 ▶ Iran challenged the legal validity of the UN Security Council's snapback mechanism for reinstating sanctions and declaring the 2015 nuclear deal effectively defunct.

Regarding ongoing negotiations with European countries, he added: "Talks continue, but no date has been set for further discussions."

Iran denies rumors of foreign embassy closures in Tehran

Baghaei dismissed reports that foreign embassies in Tehran were closing, stating: "None of the embassies reported as closed are actually closed."

He clarified that while some consular activities were reduced following the war, all embassies

remain fully operational.

'Attacks on civilian infrastructure in Palestine, Yemen constitute war crimes'

Baghaei condemned ongoing violence in the region: "The genocide in Palestine continues, and Gazans still face hunger. The international community has spoken against the forced displacement of Gaza's population, yet the Zionist regime, backed by the U.S., continues its crimes. Last Saturday, this regime also targeted civilian areas in Yemen, which we strongly condemn. Attacks on civilian infrastructure constitute war crimes."

The Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza said on Monday the overall death toll since October 7, 2023 has risen to 62,004,

with 156,230 people wounded. Since March 18, 2025, when Israel broke the most recent ceasefire, at least 10,460 have been killed and 44,189 injured.

Commenting on the Abraham Accords, Baghaei warned: "The expansionist ambitions of the Zionist regime are clearer than ever. Netanyahu's plan for a 'Greater Israel' shows a regime with no limits. Its genocidal designs and threats toward Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia endanger regional security. If neighboring countries are not vigilant, they will face endless wars."

Regarding European recognition of Palestine, he warned: "Recognition should not be a form of deception. European countries must uphold commitments seriously. True recognition requires establishing a government in Palestine through a referendum including all residents—Muslims, Christians, and Jews."

'Foreign intervention is not tolerated by Iran'

On the South Caucasus, Baghaei stressed Iran's sensitivity to foreign intervention. "We have explicitly conveyed concerns about the presence and meddling of extraregional actors. Any partnerships with the U.S. will operate within Armenian jurisdiction, respecting national sovereignty and borders. Unblocking and creating

communication routes—including the railway linking Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan via southern Armenia—must not infringe on international borders or Armenia's sovereignty." He added: "We are closely monitoring developments and will convey concerns to regional countries when necessary."

Addressing NATO forces entering via the Ararat border, Baghaei stated: "Extraregional military presence—including U.S. and NATO forces—destabilizes the region. Iran monitors developments closely and will safeguard its borders."

'Iran's relations with IAEA will continue'

Baghaei clarified Iran's ongoing cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): "Relations with the IAEA continue. The agency's deputy visited Tehran last week to discuss a new cooperation protocol. Our representative in Vienna maintains direct contact."

Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi announced last week that Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency have agreed to continue consultations following talks in Tehran, marking a potential thaw in relations after cooperation was suspended in June.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

2025 World Games a valuable experience: Pourabdian

TEHRAN – Iran's women's canoe polo captain, Elahe Pourabdian, is not satisfied with seventh place at the Chengdu World Games, but says that competing in the event was a valuable experience for the team.

Iran competed in the Games for the first time and has a long road ahead to reach the sport's elite.

"We finished seventh, and I must say that participating in the World Games for the first time was extremely exciting for us. We competed against seven of the world's top teams, and the level of competition was as high as the Olympics. All the teams we faced have attended every edition of the Games and have won titles," Pourabdian told Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

"Competing at this level was astonishing for all of us, and although we return home empty-handed, we gained a tremendously valuable experience. I must admit that seventh place isn't satisfying for us, especially since we didn't expect a medal given the strength of the opponents. We hoped to finish fourth or fifth," she added.

Pourabdian noted that the country's wartime conditions forced them to miss training camps and that they hadn't participated in any tournaments since finishing fourth 10 months ago, while other teams took part in four or five events.

"Some teams even held simulated World Games experiences in training camps, but Iran could not compete in any tournaments and trained in Tehran. Nevertheless, it was a valuable experience. I've been active in this sport for 16 years and have never seen such a high level of competition.

"We played against the world's canoe polo giants in this tournament and returned home with a wealth of experience. We lost to Germany and New Zealand, who were both finalists. The Netherlands and Italy are also contending for bronze at the Games. In other words, all the teams we narrowly lost to ended up finishing first to fourth," Pourabdian concluded.

Jelveh signs for Busan OK Savings Bank OKman

TEHRAN – Iran international middle blocker Mahdi Jelveh joined South Korean team Busan OK Savings Bank OKman.

The 24-year-old player was a member of Greek side Olympiacos last season.

Jelveh started his playing career in Paykan Tehran in 2017 and has also played for Saipa, Foolad and Sepehr Sadra.

Ansan OK Okman are the South Korean professional volleyball team founded in 2013. They are based in Ansan and are the member of the Korea Volleyball Federation (KOVO).

Their home arena is Sangnoksu Gymnasium in Ansan.

Sepahan complete signing of Enzo Crivelli

TEHRAN – French forward Enzo Vito Gabriel Crivelli joined Iran's Sepahan football club on Sunday.

Crivelli, 30, played Swiss club Servette last season.

He started his playing career in 2013 in Bordeaux and has also played in Bastia, Angers, ?stanbul Ba?ak?ehir, Kaen, and Saint-Étienne.

Crivelli has also represented the France U20 and U21 football teams.

Sepahan parted ways with French forward Wissam Ben Yedder at the end of last season and completed the signing of Crivelli.

Sepahan are strengthening for the 2025/26 AFC Champions League Two, where the Iranian side are drawn in Group C along with Al Hussein

of Jordan, Indian Mohun Bagan Super Giant, and Turkmenistan's Ahal.

Australia win FIBA Asia Cup for third time in row

TEHRAN – Australia became the second team in FIBA Asia Cup history to win three consecutive championships.

The 90-89 win against China went down to the wire at King Abdullah Sports City in Jeddah with Team Dragon missing a go ahead shot as time expired.

Xavier Cooks starred in the Final and received TLC Game MVP honors with 30 points, 9 rebounds.

Jaylin Galloway was instrumental with two crucial three pointers in a tense last quarter. Earlier in the day, Iran defeated New Zealand 79-73 to win the bronze medal.

Iran's Vahedi in FIBA Asia Cup 2025 All-Star Five

TEHRAN – Iran basketball team points guard Sina Vahedi has been selected among 2025 FIBA Asia Cup 2025 All-Star Five

Australia's Jaylin Galloway capped off a brilliant FIBA Asia Cup run by being named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Galloway headlined the All-Star Five, which also featured his teammate Jack McVeigh, the towering frontcourt tandem of Hu Jinqui and Wang Junjie of China, and Vahedi of Iran.

Australia defeated China 90-89 to become the second team in FIBA Asia Cup history to win three consecutive championships.

Earlier in the day, Iran beat New Zealand 79-73 to win the bronze medal.

Iran U21 volleyball team defeat France: friendly

TEHRAN – Iran's U21 volleyball team defeated France 3-1 (25-22, 25-21, 22-25, 15-11) in a friendly match on Sunday.

The match served as part of preparation for the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship.

Iran will also play Brazil in the coming days.

Iran are drawn into Pool B alongside Poland, Canada, South Korea, Kazakhstan, and Puerto Rico.

Gholamreza Momeni Moghaddam's boys will open the campaign on August 21 with a match against Kazakhstan.

The 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship, which marks the 23rd edition of the tournament, will be held in Jiangmen, China, from August 21 to 31.

2025 Asian Shooting Championship: Iran win two bronzes

TEHRAN – Amir Joharikhou of Iran took a bronze medal at the 16th Asian Shooting Championship on Monday.

Joharikhou came third in the 10m Air Pistol Men Final with a score of 216.8 points.

China's Kai Hu claimed the gold medal with 241.6 points and the silver medal went to Korean Suhyeon Hong with 239.0 points.

The Iranian trio of Joharikhou, Javad Foroughi and Vahid Golkhandan won a bronze medal at the 10m Air Pistol Team with 1733 points.

China topped the podium with 1744, while the Indian team won silver with a combined score of 1735.

The 2025 Asian Shooting Championships is being held at Shymkent Shooting Plaza, Shymkent, Kazakhstan from Aug. 16 to 30.

Iran unveils 1st domestically built advanced class-F gas turbine

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday unveiled its first domestically produced advanced class-F gas turbine, a milestone the government said will boost the country's power generation capabilities.

The turbine, named MGT-75, was designed and manufactured by MAPNA Group's turbine engineering and manufacturing arm (TUGA). The unit is equipped with modern technologies including a 3D axial compressor, single-crystal and directionally solidified blades, advanced cooling systems and thermal barrier coatings, giving it efficiency levels comparable to international peers.

The class-F turbine has a capacity of 222 megawatts and features a Can-annular combustion system that reduces environmental emissions and allows operation with a mix of natural gas and hydrogen.

Officials said the new turbine could help address Iran's chronic energy imbalance while supporting the expansion of renewable power.

They hailed the achievement as a symbol of the country's industrial maturity and reliance on domestic expertise, positioning Iran to enhance its competitiveness in the energy sector.

SATBA issues call for solar power projects backed by NDF

TEHRAN – Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) on Sunday invited qualified companies to apply for the construction of solar power plants with financing from the National Development Fund (NDF).

According to SATBA, applicants holding contracts to build solar facilities with a capacity of at least three megawatts can register their requests on the SANA platform between August 17 and August 22, 2025.

The call is part of a broader plan to build 7,000 megawatts of solar power capacity under a decision by the Supreme Economic Council earlier this month.

Officials said the program aims to accelerate investment in renewable energy and strengthen Iran's power generation mix with the backing of the sovereign wealth fund.

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

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

The investment will prioritize solar systems that feed electricity directly into local distribution networks, particularly small-scale rooftop units installed by households or private entities. These decentralized systems are expected to enhance grid stability and reduce pressure on traditional power plants.

The financing structure allocates 80 percent of the required capital to the NDF and 20 percent to private-sector participants. Each investor can apply for up to 1,000 megawatts of capacity, with returns for the sovereign wealth fund set at an annual rate of eight percent in hard currency.

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

To encourage private participation, the Energy Ministry—through its Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization—will guarantee the purchase of unsold surplus electricity at up to 70 percent of the average green energy price on the Iran Energy Exchange. This guarantee will be facilitated through “future electricity bonds,” a new financial tool introduced to boost renewable



project bankability.

The announcement comes as Iran accelerates efforts to expand renewable energy production amid rising domestic demand and the long-term need to diversify away from fossil fuels. Officials say the country aims to install 10,000 megawatts of renewable capacity in the near future, with rooftop solar playing a key role in meeting both environmental and grid resilience goals.

Last week, SATBA announced that electricity generation from solar power plants rose by 71 percent in the first four months of the Iranian year starting March 20, compared to the same period last year.

SATBA Head Mohsen Tarztabal said solar output increased from 357 million kilowatt-hours to 610 million kilowatt-hours, while wind power generation rose from 413 million kilowatt-hours to 432 million kilowatt-hours.

Iran's installed renewable capacity has reached 1,868 megawatts, up from 1,232 megawatts in late July last year, with 636 megawatts of new plants added over the past year. Renewables now account for 1.9 percent of the country's total power generation.

Tarztabal said the first phase of a 7,000-megawatt renewable energy development program, mostly solar, has been planned and finalized, aimed at reducing the country's power deficit.

He added that the share of renewables in Iran's power mix will exceed 5 percent by year-end, describing the country as “a vast construction site” for clean energy projects, with the effects of what he called a “major revolution” in the sector expected to emerge in the coming weeks.

In recent months, SATBA has signed multiple agreements with domestic and foreign investors to accelerate renewable capacity expansion, including utility-scale solar farms in desert regions and hybrid systems combining solar with battery storage. The government has also rolled out new feed-in tariffs to attract private-sector participation.

ciency.”

Emphasizing the importance of this project, he said: “Overhaul is an important opportunity to rebuild and upgrade equipment and ensure the safe and sustainable operation of process units. Relying on the knowledge and experience of domestic engineers and specialists in complex oil and gas industry projects is not only a big step towards self-sufficiency and technological independence, but also plays a key role in realizing a resilient economy and localizing strategic technologies.”

Tehran, Islamabad set \$3b target for agricultural trade

From Page 1 ▶ Rana Tanveer Hussain, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Industries and Production and National Food Security and Research, described the Tehran meeting as “fruitful,” highlighting agreements on boosting agricultural trade, scientific collaboration and joint efforts to address climate change.

He said increasing imports and exports between the two neighbors would be more economical than relying on distant suppliers such as Brazil, particularly in rice and livestock.

Officials emphasized that trade would involve both the public and private sectors, with mechanisms such as barter and tailored trade facilities under discussion.

They said the initiative not only aimed at ensuring mutual food security but could also contribute to regional stability.

The Iran-Pakistan Business Conference opened in Islamabad on August 3 with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian in attendance, alongside a high-ranking delegation. The event was hosted by Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Upon his arrival at the conference venue, Pezeshkian was welcomed by Senator Dar. The gathering brought together numerous business leaders, officials from chambers of commerce, and representatives of major Pakistani investment firms.

In his opening remarks, Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan welcomed the finalization of a draft Free Trade Agreement between the two countries and said both sides are committed to resolving tariff-related issues and enhancing border infrastructure.

He announced that the next session of the Iran-Pakistan Joint Economic Commission will be held in Tehran next month and highlighted the activation of the Pishin-Mand border market as a joint commitment aimed at boosting bilateral trade. He also revealed plans to open a new border crossing at Chadgi-Kouhak.

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Atabak, also addressed the conference, expressing appreciation for Pakistan's support of Iran during Israel's recent 12-day offensive, which he said had deeply resonated with the Iranian public.

Atabak noted that while trade volumes between the two countries had increased last year, implementation of current agreements will require expansion of land terminals, improvement of rail connectivity, and enhanced port cooperation.

Senator Dar emphasized the close ties between Iran and Pakistan under the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and invited Iranian investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan, citing broad economic reforms and the creation of a special investment facilitation council.

Referring to his recent talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Dar said both coun-



tries are determined to strengthen cooperation in customs and border infrastructure development.

Iran and Pakistan have been striving to expand economic cooperation despite longstanding infrastructure bottlenecks and geopolitical challenges. Both nations are part of the ECO bloc and share strategic interests in regional trade connectivity, especially through initiatives like the Pishin-Mand border market and the INSTC corridor.

In the same day, Reza Masrou, Secretary of Iranian Free Trade, Industrial and Special Economic Zones High Council, who had also traveled to Pakistan, said Iran and Pakistan are exploring joint agricultural ventures and transport corridor integration as part of efforts to boost bilateral trade, including plans for cross-border rice cultivation and connecting Pakistan's China-backed economic corridor to Iran.

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

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

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

“These ideas reflect our neighborhood-focused policy, and the potential to unlock joint production and significantly expand trade,” Masrou said, emphasizing the shared cultural and historical ties between the two countries.

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

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

Karbalaei Esmaeli shared the figures ahead of President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Islamabad on August 3, his first bilateral foreign trip since Israel's 12-day

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

“Trade between Tehran and Islamabad is on an upward trajectory,” Karbalaei Esmaeli said in an interview with IRNA. He noted that bilateral trade increased by 13.6 percent in the Iranian year 1403 (March 2024–March 2025) compared to the previous year, reaching a total of \$3.129 billion.

Iran exported around \$2.423 billion worth of goods to Pakistan during the period, while imports from Pakistan stood at \$706 million. The bulk of Iran's exports included petroleum products, powdered milk, and dates, while major imports from Pakistan were rice, oilseeds, and various meat products.

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

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

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

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

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

The seminar, titled “Iran-Pakistan Relations: Trade Outlook and Strengthening Connectivity,” was held on March 1 with the participation of the Iranian Embassy and hosted by the Institute of Strategic

Studies Islamabad (ISSI).

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

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

They underscored the \$10 billion trade target and key energy projects as crucial steps toward strengthening bilateral relations.

Acknowledging the challenges hindering smooth trade between the two nations stemming from administrative complexities, logistical barriers, and regional and global developments speakers emphasized that structured engagement, fostering trust, and mutual respect form the foundation for a resilient and adaptable partnership between Tehran and Islamabad.

Pakistani experts highlighted the importance of enhancing border security, building mutual trust, and advancing projects such as linking the Gwadar and Chabahar ports and collaborating on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to unlock greater trade potential.

Addressing the seminar, Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam stated that trade and connectivity are two fundamental pillars of both global and domestic economies, significantly influencing each other. Reliable and secure transportation, he noted, is a facilitator of sustainable trade, making investment in transit corridors both essential and highly beneficial for investors.

In today's rapidly evolving landscape, the international community faces two new concepts: tariff wars and corridor wars, both targeting key economic pillars, he said. “Tariff wars, aimed at disrupting supply chains and obstructing trade among Global South nations, threaten international trade and the livelihoods of millions. Meanwhile, corridor wars through the creation of competing routes, destructive rivalries, economic terrorism, insecurity, and instability are designed to sustain unilateralism and hinder sustainable development goals.”

Amiri Moghadam highlighted the strategic geographic position of Iran and Pakistan, which play a vital role in connecting the vast networks of Asian and European countries. He stressed that developing transportation infrastructure and strengthening bilateral connectivity would facilitate broader regional interactions.

“With their transit capacities, diverse production sectors, and complementary economies, Iran and Pakistan can enhance their bilateral supply chains as well as those with other countries,” he added. Iran serves as the gateway to Eurasia and the Caucasus, while Pakistan is the entry point to South and Southeast Asia. This unique positioning distinguishes the two countries from their other neighbors.”

Intl. building, construction industry exhibition opens in Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran on Monday opened the 25th International Exhibition of Building and Construction Industry (Iran CONFAIR 2025), the country's largest trade fair for the construction sector, with officials highlighting the industry's export potential and central role in the economy.

The four-day event was inaugurated by Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and Bahman Abdollahi, head of the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, at Tehran's permanent international fairground.

All exhibition space has been filled, covering 47,000 square meters, including 42,000 square meters outdoors for heavy machinery and equipment. For the first time, special halls were

dedicated to start-ups and new firms.

Companies and visitors from Singapore, Italy, Germany, Turkey and China are attending this year's exhibition, providing what organizers described as opportunities to expand trade and technical cooperation.

Abdollahi said the construction sector is a “driving force” in Iran's economy due to its links with more than 130 other industries. He noted that Iran ranks as the world's fourth-largest exporter of tiles and ceramics and has an annual export capacity of more than one million tons of steel structures, potentially generating \$2.5 billion a year.

He added that Iran's overall capacity for ex-

porting technical and engineering services exceeds \$40 billion annually, of which \$15 billion relates to construction. However, he said actual exports in 2022 and 2023 were only around \$2 billion in this field.

Despite sluggish growth in the housing sector in recent years, Abdollahi said Iran has both supply and demand potential to reach annual production of one million housing units.

Organizers said the exhibition, hosted by the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, offers a platform to showcase domestic capabilities, strengthen non-oil exports and promote innovation in building technologies. They described it as one of the region's largest and most specialized construction fairs.

Overhaul of South Pars first refinery begins

TEHRAN- The manager of the first refinery of the South Pars Gas Complex announced the start of major repairs to the refinery with the technical and support teams fully prepared.

Ali Ahmadi announced that this project will continue in the next 21 days with careful planning and coordination between the complex headquarters and the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), stating: “This measure aims to maintain the stability of gas production in the cold season, optimize resource consumption, and increase production effi-

Gaza genocide: Over 62,000 killed, 263 die of starvation under siege

From page 1 ► In late May, amid growing international criticism, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) — an aid initiative backed by the United States and Israel — was launched. However, the Palestinian Health Ministry reports that nearly 2,000 people have been killed attempting to access aid since GHF sites were established, with Israeli forces opening fire on Palestinians seeking food.

Amnesty International condemned Israel on Monday for “carrying out a deliberate campaign of starvation in the occupied Gaza Strip.” The rights group stated:

“It is the intended outcome of plans and policies that Israel has designed and implemented, over the past 22 months, to deliberately inflict on Palestinians in Gaza conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction — which is part and parcel of Israel’s



ongoing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza.”

Despite the mounting casualties, Israel continues its military campaign, seeking to seize Gaza City. Israeli media reported that Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir announced plans to “evacuate” residents within two months ahead of an expanded mili-

tary operation. Reports indicate Israel is in discussions with countries including Indonesia, Somaliland, Uganda, South Sudan, and Libya about taking in displaced Palestinians—a move critics say echoes the ethnic cleansing of the 1948 Nakba.

The escalation has sparked global protests. On Sunday, hundreds

of thousands of Israelis staged strikes and demonstrations calling for an end to the war, warning that continued attacks on Gaza City could endanger the lives of captives held there. Similar protests have erupted in cities worldwide, demanding an end to Israel’s military operations and the starvation of Palestinians in Gaza.

As the world witnesses Gaza’s suffering, the international community must hold Israel accountable for its policies that deliberately target Palestinians. The ongoing blockade, attacks on civilians, and use of starvation as a weapon are not mere collateral damage—they are calculated measures of oppression and ethnic cleansing. Justice for Gaza requires ending the occupation, lifting the siege, and defending the fundamental human rights of Palestinians before more lives are lost.

Yemen targets Ben Gurion Airport



From page 1 ► The military spokesman pointed out, “The missile force of the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a qualitative military operation targeting Lod Airport (Ben Gurion Airport) in the occupied area of Jaffa (Tel Aviv) with a hypersonic ballistic missile of Palestine-2.

The operation achieved its goal successfully, by the grace of God, causing millions of the Zionist settlers to rush to shelters and leading to the suspension of airport operations.”

“What has been happening in Gaza for nearly two years is clear evidence of the enemy’s disregard for the blood of our brothers in Palestine, and its contempt for the blood of Arabs and Muslims.

The unprecedented crime of genocide has not ceased, and the siege and starvation continue before the eyes and ears of the whole world. So how long will the nations, their peoples, and their states continue in this silence and abandonment?

Have the lives of the children and women in Gaza become so cheap in the eyes of every-

one? How long will this crime, this injustice, and this aggression continue?” Saree asked.

The Yemeni military reiterated that its operations in solidarity with Gaza would only stop once the U.S.-backed Israeli genocide ends.

The latest missile launch occurred less than 24 hours after Israeli warplanes bombed the power station in Hezyaz, Sanhan District, south of the Yemeni capital, Sanaa..

The Israeli regime officially claimed responsibility for the strike. A military spokesperson stated that the attack targeted energy infrastructure in the area.

The strike, which disabled the power station, sparked a fire that was later contained by civil defense teams and workers. Restoration efforts began shortly afterward, according to Mohammad Moftah, Deputy Prime Minister of the Sanaa-based government.

During his visit to assess the damage, Moftah assured that the station would soon return to full operation.

Ali Hussein Alaya, Director of the Hezyaz power station, condemned the repeated targeting of the facility, affirming that such actions would not deter their commitment to serving the people and public institutions.

Also commenting on the aggression, Hazem al-Asad, a member of the Political Bureau of Ansarallah, said, “A bankrupt enemy only targets civilian infrastructure,” highlighting the regime’s continued assault on public services.

Military experts said Yemen’s swift retaliation came as no surprise, describing the Israeli attack as a clear sign of the regime’s failure and growing desperation.

Iraqi FM warns PMU, Lebanese Hezbollah cannot be disarmed by force

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein stated on August 18 that efforts to pass a new law in the parliament to regulate the status of the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) are coming at the wrong time, while at the same time emphasizing the government’s inability to disarm the resistance factions by force.

“The timing of introducing the Popular Mobilization Forces law was wrong, and I was the only minister who expressed this within the cabinet before the draft law was sent to parliament, especially in light of the tense regional and international situation,” Hussein said in an interview on Iraqi TV, the Cradle reported.

The new law would update an existing law regulating the PMU, transforming it into a fully independent security institution directly under the prime minister and bypassing the Defense and Interior Ministries.

The PMU was created in 2014 to recruit volunteers to fight against ISIS, which had just taken over Mosul, Iraq’s second-largest city, with covert support from the US and Peshmerga forces loyal to Iraqi Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani.

Hussein, who also serves as deputy prime minister, compared the issue of the PMU in Iraq to that of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The US is also pressuring the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah, which has resisted the Israeli occupation regime for years.

“Hezbollah’s weapons in Lebanon cannot be disarmed except through dialogue, and the Iraqis cannot disarm the Popular Mobilization Forces by force.

Centralization of decision-making is the problem in Syria, and decentralization may be the solution.”

UN military force needed to halt Israel’s assault on Gaza, tribunal says

A group of leading academics, legal experts and human rights advocates have called for the creation of a UN-mandated international military force to stop Israel’s 22-month-long war on the besieged Gaza Strip.

In a statement on Monday, Richard Falk, the president of the Gaza Tribunal Project and a former UN special rapporteur, called on the international community to implement the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, Middle East Eye reported.

“Law has failed, because it has not been enforced,” Falk said at a press conference in Istanbul as he urged the international community to use R2P as a framework for intervention. He noted that the lack of enforcement had left Palestinians unprotected despite clear evidence of mass atrocities.

R2P is an international legal principle designed to prevent atrocities like genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. It emerged in the 1990s following global inaction during the genocides in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Adopted unanimously by world leaders at the 2005 UN World Summit, R2P is enshrined in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the Summit Outcome Document. It has been invoked in over 95 UN Security Council resolutions.

These resolutions have addressed numerous crises, including conflicts in the Central African Republic, Libya, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Its most clear use was in Libya in 2011 to oust long-time leader Muammar Gaddafi following the Arab Spring uprisings.

In its statement, the Tribunal specifically called on the UN General Assembly to invoke the Uniting for Peace Resolution (377(V)) to authorize a multinational armed protection force for Gaza.

This force, the statement said, should remain in Gaza until Israel withdraws, the blockade is lifted, humanitarian aid flows freely and Palestinians are guaranteed internationally supervised elections.

The resolution, adopted in 1950, allows the UN General Assembly to take action when the Security Council is deadlocked, especially due to a veto by a permanent member.

It empowers the Assembly to hold emergency special sessions and recommend collective measures, including economic sanctions and the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Though not legally binding, it has been used in major crises like the Suez Crisis and the Ukraine conflict to bypass Security Council paralysis.

Speaking at the press conference, Falk said that it was welcoming to see some of Israel’s main partners, essentially European countries, announce plans to recognize Palestinian statehood, but he said it was distressing that they were reluctant to take substantial measures against Israel, such as imposing sanctions.

Will Chapter VII be imposed on southern Lebanon?

From page 1 ► If the renewal is decided by the end of next month, the expansion of UNIFIL’s powers, particularly freedom of movement without coordination with the Lebanese Army, will become a reality, according to the source.

At a time when the manifestations of U.S.-Saudi tutelage over the south are intensifying, the Israeli occupation forces continue their daily attacks. These attacks, which have become routine, don’t elicit any reaction from Nawaf Salam’s government or the committee supervising the implementation of Resolution 1701.

Since Italian General Diodato Abagnara assumed the UNIFIL command, its leadership has been almost completely absent from the field. This absence, or deliberate omission, does not apply to all components of the international force. The French contingent appears to be remarkably active, without coordination with the Lebanese Army.

Members of the French contingent conduct incursions into valleys and forests in various areas south of the Litani almost daily without any army escort, raising questions about the nature of its mission and the limits of its powers.

Last week, the French Chargé d’Affaires in

Beirut, Bruno Pereira da Silva, met with Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji to discuss the extension of UNIFIL mandate.

The Ceasefire Supervision Committee also held an emergency meeting (the first since June 26) in light of the Lebanese government’s decision to disarm the Resistance and the suspicious explosion in Wadi Zebqin, which claimed the lives of six Lebanese Army soldiers.

During the meeting, the Lebanese Army did not receive any serious answers regarding its requests to strengthen its presence at the southern border posts.

The Israeli army delegation spoke in an arrogant tone, refusing to discuss the issue of its withdrawal from the occupied and buffer zones or allowing the Lebanese army to be deployed on the border.

Reportedly, the enemy’s delegation stated that Tel Aviv “is not obligated to listen to any Lebanese demands until the Lebanese Army completes its plan to disarm Hezbollah.”

In light of this Israeli intransigence, the Lebanese Army is under increasing pressure from the Supervision Committee, which only assigns it the task of dismantling Hezbollah’s facilities.

The informed source told Tehran Times that there has been no official announcement so far regarding the arrival date of UNIFIL, which has consistently sent a technical delegation to assess the mission before each renewal.

During meeting, the committee’s vice chair, French General Valentin Cellier, reiterated the French unit’s commitment to submitting a report explaining the actions of its personnel in Zebqine before handing it over to the Lebanese Army.

The informed source says Washington and the UNIFIL leadership have often criticized Paris for its independent conduct of operations from the Naqoura command.

Meanwhile, the martyrdom of six Lebanese soldiers on August 10 has increased the people’s resentment toward UNIFIL, whose soldiers deliberately push Lebanese army personnel into dangerous missions.

Obviously, renewing the UNIFIL mandate cannot be separated from the field and political developments witnessed in Lebanon since the Salam government’s approval of US envoy Thomas Barrack’s plan to hand over Hezbollah’s weapons to the state within a specific timetable.

Islamabad confronts the blueprint of ‘Greater Israel’

By Muhammad Akmal Khan

ISLAMABAD – They live under skies without safety, beneath roofs that can vanish in a single airstrike. They hold papers that carry their names but grant no freedom. They exist without a homeland to anchor them. For Palestinians, the idea of permanence feels like an illusion. Every sunrise brings the fear that what little they have could vanish, and every night is shadowed by the uncertainty of displacement.

In this fragile landscape, Israel’s far-right Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich, has given the go-ahead for over 3,000 housing units in the long-stalled E1 settlement project, a stretch of occupied land designed to connect Jerusalem to the illegal Ma’ale Adumim settlement. Smotrich claims the plan “buries the idea of a Palestinian state” and calls it “Zionism at its best.”

For Palestinians, it is another wound cut into their homeland, the concrete face of a so-called “Greater Israel” that the Palestinian Foreign Ministry describes as an act of genocide, displacement and annexation. International observers warn that E1 would split the West Bank in two, destroying any hope of a contiguous state connecting East Jerusalem to Bethlehem and Ramallah.

From Islamabad, the reply came like steel striking stone. In a statement this August, Pakistan’s Foreign Office strongly condemned and rejected the Israeli occupying power’s designs. The statement was direct: “Such moves,” it said, “constitute a flagrant violation of international law” and show “complete contempt for all international efforts aimed at achiev-

ing lasting peace and stability in the region.” It urged the world to reject such provocative notions not with careful words, but with decisive action, before they harden into unchangeable facts on the ground.

This clarity of voice is not born from recent outrage alone. It is rooted in the very foundations of Pakistan’s foreign policy.

In December 1947, before Pakistan had completed its first year of independence, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah condemned the UN plan to partition Palestine as “unjust and cruel.”

Speaking to the BBC’s Robert Stimson, he declared that “the Muslims of the Sub-Continent had been compelled to condemn the unjust and cruel decision of the United Nations concerning the partition of Palestine, pledging continued support to the Arab cause in Palestine in every way that was possible.” For Jinnah, Palestine was not a distant conflict; it was a test of the Muslim world’s conscience.

That test has returned, dressed in the language of urban development but carrying the same design Jinnah warned against: dispossession repackaged as progress. Pakistan’s stance has been steady for decades. It backs a two-state solution on the pre-June 1967 borders, with Al-Quds, Al-Sharif as the capital of a free Palestine, and the right of return for all Palestinians driven from their homes. For Islamabad, there is no room for half measures — no handshake, no normalisation — until these rights are secured in full and justice is done.

The E1 settlement plan is not a

minor zoning dispute. It is a deliberate lever to break the territorial backbone of any future Palestinian state.

It is why the United Nations, the European Union, and human rights organizations have all warned of irreversible consequences. It is also why Pakistan, whether at the UN or within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, has stood among the clearest voices in opposition.

Even as some Arab states normalized ties under the Abraham Accords, Pakistan stood apart. This was not out of stubbornness but out of fidelity to principle. The logic is clear.

Just as no settlement in Kashmir can be imposed without the will of its people, no peace in Palestine can be imposed that leaves its people without a state. Justice, not convenience, must shape the terms.

The statement printed on every Pakistani passport — “This passport is valid for all countries of the world except Israel” — is not merely a diplomatic clarification, but a written pledge. These words are part of every Pakistani citizen’s travel document and serve as an open declaration that Pakistan and its people stand firmly with the Palestinian cause for freedom.

It is a symbolic yet powerful stance, reflecting that Pakistan, in its national identity, foreign policy, and public sentiment, remains aligned with Palestine and opposed to Israeli occupation.

On the world stage, Pakistan has stood behind resolutions declaring Israeli settlements illegal, backed UN Security Council Resolution 2334, and called for

Millennium festival planned for minaret of Semnan Jame' Mosque

TEHRAN—Semnan governor gave news of planning for holding the millennium festival of the minaret of the Jame' Mosque of Semnan concurrent with Semnan Day.

Addressing the reporters of the city on Sunday, Mehdi Samimian said that this is the first time that a celebration will be held under the name of Semnan Day, ISNA reported.

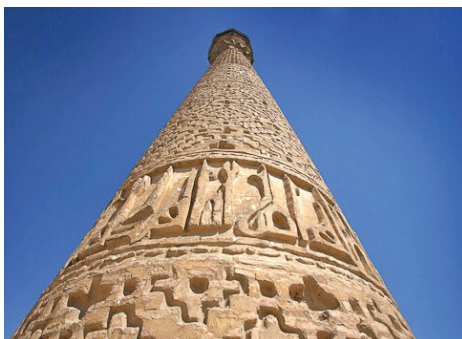
He called the minaret as one of the most important symbols of Semnan, adding that over 85 percent of the city's historical monuments pertain to Safavid and Qajar eras. But Semnan Jame' Mosque and its magnificent minaret are works of the Seljuk period and are 1027 years old.

Saying that National Semnan Day will be held in national level, he added: "We seek to hold a luxurious program worthy of the name and history of this city. Of course, it is expected that all institutions will have the necessary cooperation with us in this regard."

Samimian evaluated and clarified that the basic solution to Semnan's water shortage is inter-basin transfer. The water resources necessary to quench the thirst of Semnan city and province must be achieved through inter-basin transfer, whether through the Caspian Sea or the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, he added.

Pointing to the efforts of the provincial officials for completing the Finesk Dam project in Semnan, he said that implementation of the project can help supply water for the provincial cities.

On necessity of proper water management, he said: "This year, with the management of consumption and the public cooperation, we have not had any water shortages in Semnan so far fortunately. However, a solution must



be found to fundamentally solve the problem of water shortage."

In another part, while praising the media's cooperation with the city officials, Samimian said that this year, for the first time, a meeting of city journalists was held with the governor's focus and the cooperation of some agencies, which is worthy of appreciation. He added that Semnan has 119 official media.

In 2022, Iran selected Semnan to represent the country at a union of Silk Road cities based on an initiative launched by China to promote tourism along the ancient route that once linked Asia to the Western world.

The ancient Silk Road has existed for thousands of years, passing through empires, kingdoms, reigns, and societies throughout history. At certain times in its long history, traders could travel freely along these routes, whereas at others, travel was difficult or dangerous.

According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages, and material goods into societies across Europe, Asia, and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

Football match held between Iran, Tajikistan to boost tourism

TEHRAN-Deputy head of Tehran Tourism Department gave news of holding a football match between Iranian art stars and Tajik art stars with the aim of attracting tourists.

The match took place on Sunday, August 17, at the Pas Stadium in Tehran. This friendly match ended with a high-scoring 8-4 victory in favor of the Iranian artists' team.

Reza Hemmati said the match was an opportunity for cultural and artistic exchange between the two countries with common historical roots, indicating a bright horizon for tourism cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan, Mehr news agency reported.

Managers of tourism companies from both countries were also present at the ceremony to closely examine the process of interactions and possible cooperation in the tourism industry.

Hemmati pointed out the role of sports and art in the development of tourism and stated that sports and art are powerful tools for attracting tourists and promoting cultural interactions. Such competitions not



only provide entertainment and excitement, but also help develop urban and international tourism, he added.

He emphasized that Iran and Tajikistan, with their historical, cultural and linguistic similarities, can introduce their tourism capacities to the world more widely through artistic and sports cooperation. "We hope that this competition will be just the beginning for sustainable and long-term interactions between the two countries."

Iran police seize 11 ancient Parthian coins in Khorramabad

TEHRAN – Iranian police have seized 11 historical coins believed to date back to the Parthian era in Khorramabad, the capital of western Lorestan province.

The coins were discovered during a search of a private residence, according to the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit of Lorestan.

One person was arrested and handed over to the judiciary after the recovery of 11 Parthian-era coins, ISNA news agency reported on Monday, citing police officials.

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power centered in ancient Iran from 247 BCE to 224 CE. Its name derives from its founder, Arsaces I, who led the Parthi tribe in conquering Parthia, a northeastern region of Iran.

Under Mithridates I (r. c. 171-132 BC), the empire significantly expanded, seizing Media



and Mesopotamia from the Seleucids. At its zenith, the Parthian Empire extended from the northern Euphrates River (modern central-eastern Turkey) to present-day Afghanistan and western Pakistan. Positioned along the Silk Road, the empire thrived as a hub for trade and commerce, connecting the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean to the Han dynasty in China.

Study of ancient rock-carved structures launched in Kermanshah

TEHRAN – A project to study, document, and conduct laboratory research on ancient rock-carved structures in Kermanshah province has begun, an archaeologist who leads the project said on Monday.

The first phase of the project is being carried out by the Kermanshah Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, with approval from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, archaeologist Azar Jannatimehr added.

Jannatimehr, head of the archaeology team, said this is the first comprehensive study in Iran to scientifically examine the rock-carved structures using advanced microscopic methods and microfossil analysis.

"These rock structures, previously known among illegal diggers as 'Joughan' and mistakenly believed to indicate hidden treasures, are now being examined with a scientific approach based on microscopic and microfossil analysis," Jannatimehr said.

The archaeologist added that the structures vary in shape and size and, based on field evidence, served different purposes, including subsistence activities such as preparing and processing food, as well as ritual and symbolic functions.

Jannatimehr said the new ap-



proach opens "a new horizon" for understanding, protecting, and managing cultural heritage and helps prevent damage caused by unauthorized excavations.

She added that laboratory-based methods allow researchers to gain clearer insights into these cultural remains and the lives of past communities, while also offering new perspectives on the cultural and technical processes behind their creation.

Rock art in Iran includes archaeological petroglyphs, or carving in rock; pictographs, or painting on rock; and rock reliefs. Large numbers of prehistoric rock art, more than 50,000, have been discovered in Iran. The largest rock art panel in Iran, located near Golpayegan spans 12 meters and features more than 100 petroglyphs.

Kermanshah, situated in western Iran, is a region celebrated for its profound historical and cultural significance. Set against the backdrop of the Zagros Mountains, Kermanshah has been an important center of civilization since ancient times.

The province boasts remarkable archaeological treasures, including the monumental rock reliefs of Taq-e Bostan and the ancient inscriptions at Bisotun, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Echoes of the Past: Stucco plaque of Sasanian lady



The pictured Sassanid-era stucco plaque set within a central square depicts the bust of a smiling woman—likely a Sasanian princess, suggested by her ornate adornments. Unearthed at Tepe Hessar in Damghan, modern-day Semnan province, it dates to the late 6th or early 7th century CE.

A diadem or ribbon encircles the neatly dressed hair, while three strings of apparently globular beads form a necklace with a lozenge-shaped pendant extending from a square center bead. A flowing ribbon is at either side of the head. A frame with floral pattern encloses the center panel. This stucco plaque

was discovered from the hypostyle hall of the Sasanian Palace of Tepe Hessar, Damghan during excavations by the University Museum and the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in 1931-2 under the supervision of Erich F. Schmidt. Tepe Hissar is located three kilometers southeast of Damghan and on the southern edge of the Alborz Mountains, and the Sassanid Palace is located about two hundred meters to the southwest of the main complex of the site.

The discovery context and the diversity of decorative stucco fragments—recovered from the walls, dadoes, portals, roof, vaults, and the massive stucco columns, along with remnants of painted wall facings and polychrome murals—demonstrate that the hypostyle hall was the most elaborately adorned section of the palace. These stucco decorations featured intricate motifs, including boars, a woman's bust, stags and does, vegetal designs, and a figure of probable heraldic significance, composed of Sasanian iconographic ele-

ments alongside other symbolic representations. As seen in other palaces of this period, plaster was employed extensively for both cladding and embellishment. The stucco ornaments were predominantly mold-made, typically in square or circular forms, and occasionally in merlon shapes, before being affixed to the walls. The combined use of stucco reliefs and painted murals constitutes a defining feature of Sasanian architecture, appearing not only in palatial interiors but also in ritual, religious, and private structures. The widespread use of architectural ornamentation is evident throughout the cultural expanse of the Sasanian period, from Central Asia to Mesopotamia. A significant part of this artistic style and tradition of ornamentation in the Central Asian region can be seen in sites such as Panjakent. The tradition of using wall decorations in Panjakent, like Persia and Mesopotamia, has been seen in public buildings (places of worship) and in the private homes of city residents.

Kermanshah province holds handicraft exhibitions during Arbäeen

TEHRAN—Head of Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department announced sales of 70 billion rials (\$77,777) at the province's handicraft exhibitions during Arbäeen, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, marking the end of a 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE. Each year, millions of Shia Muslims from around the globe undertake this pilgrimage to Karbala, walking hundreds of kilometers as an expression of their faith and devotion.

Dariush Farmani said on Monday that the temporary handicraft exhibitions were launched along the Arbäeen pilgrimage route, Miras-e Arya (CHTN) reported.

This sale was from a total of 120 handicraft and souvenir stalls set up in the cities of Sonqor, Kangavar, Sahneh, Harsin, Kermanshah, Islamabad, Dalahu and Sarpol-e Zahab, he pointed out.

He clarified that the largest

sales were related to the jewelry, giveh, leather, metal tools and potteries.

Farmani stated that this year, the reception of handicraft exhibitions was very impressive, and pilgrims visited these exhibitions on their return from their pilgrimage to the holy shrines.

The handicraft and souvenir exhibitions were held in eight locations in Kermanshah province along the route of Arbäeen pilgrims by Kermanshah Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department this year, he added.

Due to the rich history of handicrafts in Kermanshah, the cities of Harsin in the field of kilim weaving, Dalahu in the tambourine craft, and Nodeseh in the production of traditional footwear of giveh, along with the village of Fash in Kangavar as a national village for traditional instrument making, have been registered as national cities and villages.

Iranian handicrafts boast a rich history, deeply embedded in



the country's cultural and artistic heritage. From intricate Persian carpets and porcelains to decorative pottery, metalwork, and textile arts, Iranian crafts are renowned worldwide for their artistry and intricate designs. Each province carries its own distinct styles, materials, and techniques, reflecting the cultural and environmental diversity.

Kermanshah, formerly Bakhtaran, the capital of Kermanshah province, was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sasanian dynasty. Con-

quered by the Arabs in 640, the town was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin). Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501-1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797-1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Over 30 countries to attend 10th Science, Technology Exchange Program

TEHRAN – Participants from more than 30 countries will attend the 10th Science and Technology Exchange Program (STEP), which is scheduled to be held on September 7 at Tehran's Amirkabir University of Technology.

Organized by the Mustafa Science and Technology Foundation, the event will be held as part of the sixth Mustafa Prize week. It will serve as a platform for scientists and technology experts, universities, and research centers, as well as policymakers from Islamic countries to share knowledge, experiences, and latest advancements to further enhance synergy, IRNA reported.

The 10th STEP will focus on two main domains, namely 'Cutting-Edge Engineering' and 'Tomorrow's Medicine'.

Cutting-Edge Engineering encompasses a wide range of emerging technologies and interdisciplinary approaches that transcend traditional engineering boundaries to provide creative solutions to address challenges.

From artificial intelligence and machine learning, advanced robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced materials and nanotechnology, to clean energy systems and sustainable engineering, all fall under the purview of Cutting-Edge Engineering.

Mastery and development of these technologies are paramount for the Organization of Islamic countries, signifying enhanced productivity, creation of modern industries, reduction in technological dependency, optimal resource management, and effective confrontation of challenges such as climate change and food security. Investment and collaboration



in this arena can precipitate a scientific and industrial leap for these nations, elevating their position in the global knowledge-based economy.

Tomorrow's Medicine represents a new paradigm in medical sciences that is advancing towards more precise diagnostics, personalized therapeutics, and intelligent preventive strategies. Genomics and personalized medicine, cell therapy and tissue engineering, regenerative medicine, the development of smart pharmaceuticals, the application of artificial intelligence in analyzing medical data and disease diagnosis, and telemedicine are among the key components of Tomorrow's Medicine.

Considering the healthcare system challenges in many Islamic countries, including the prevalence of non-communicable diseases, aging population, and the need for equitable access to quality services, investment and knowledge exchange are of substantial importance. This novel approach can lead to significant improvements in health indicators, reduced treatment costs, and increased life expectancy within

Islamic societies.

Mustafa Prize week

The sixth Mustafa Prize week is scheduled to be held from September 6 to 10 in Tehran.

The Prize will be awarded in the three categories of Information and Communication Science and Technology, Life and Medical Science and Technology, and Basic and Engineering Sciences.

The opening ceremony will include a new addition to the Mustafa Prize week, granting medals to young researchers under the age of forty for the first time to honor the achievements of young scientists in the Islamic world. The winners will receive 10,000 dollars, as well, IRNA reported.

The week will host several other programs, such as a student competition titled 'Noor (light)', which is planned to be held on September 6.

Mustafa Prize science cafes are another part of the programs that will run throughout the week and focus mainly on the achievements of laureates in 2025.

The award is presented in two

categories: Mustafa Prize laureates living in the country and Mustafa Prize laureates from Islamic countries, individuals or groups, who are citizens of the 57 Islamic countries, with no restrictions on age, gender, or religion.

The 5th Mustafa Prize was held in the city of Isfahan in September 2023.

The prize included the Mustafa Medal, the Prize Certificate, and a special cash gift that is funded by the endowment of science and technology. So far, more than 400 benefactors from different countries, as members of the Khadem Al-Mustafa community, have supported this scientific-cultural movement.

The Mustafa Prize was established in 2012 as a biennial award by approval of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, with the first edition held in 2015. Since then, ceremonies have taken place in Tehran (2015, 2017, 2019, 2021) and Isfahan (2023).

Over the past decade, the Mustafa Prize has recognized and honored 19 distinguished scientists from countries such as Singapore, Jordan, Turkey, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Pakistan, Morocco, and Egypt.

The award is named after the Holy Prophet of Islam, who put great emphasis on learning, and whose title, Mustafa (one of many), means 'the Chosen One.'

The Mustafa Science and Technology Foundation has provided the opportunity for the development of scientific and technological cooperation by establishing a network of nearly 6,500 science and technology experts from 50 countries and interacting with 910 prestigious international centers.

DOE official highlights role of science in species conservation

TEHRAN – Utilizing the science and capabilities of experts is essential for species conservation as it plays a key role in addressing the critical situation of endangered species, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE) has said.

Iran is home to a wide array of animal and plant species thanks to the country's geographical location, climatic diversity, and huge water resources in the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Oman Sea. However, over the past few years, many of these valuable species, such as the Persian lion and the Mazandaran tiger, have died out due to various threats. If nothing is done, species on the track of extinction, like the Persian cheetah, the Persian Zebra, the yellow deer, and the Baluchistan black bear, will disappear, as well, IRNA quoted Hamid Zoharbi as saying.

Thanks to specialized committees established to make technical decisions, the measures taken over the past year have been greatly effective in protecting species such as great bustard, yellow deer, and black bear, Zoharbi noted.

These committees employ experts' scientific methods to develop effective approaches for animal preservation. They follow up on made decisions to make sure these plans are implemented, he further noted.

The official went on to highlight the role of foresight in species conservation, saying that the lack of foresight regarding sustainable financial resources has led to many challenges.

Preserving endangered species

In May, President Masoud Pezeshkian issued an order, obligating the Department of Environment (DOE) to develop a strategic plan to preserve endangered species in the country.

According to the latest report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), some 154 species of Iranian vertebrates are critically endangered of extinction.

"The country needs a comprehensive and operational plan in the field of the environment that covers different environmental sectors. It must include goals, assumptions, operational measures, financial resources, and results," IRNA quoted the president as saying.

Iran is a rich country in terms of biodiversity, with about 37,500 animal species and more than 8,000 plant species. In addition, it is home to 579 bird species, 214 mammal species, 284 reptile species, 23 amphibian species, 309 freshwater fish species, and 763 marine fish species in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Caspian Sea.

Also, some 35,283 species of invertebrates have been identified in the country, out of which more than 32,600 species are arthropods. Over 94 percent of the country's animal species diversity belongs to invertebrates and less than 6 percent to vertebrates. Insects, with at least 26,800 species, account for more than 70 percent of the country's total species.

The Asiatic cheetah and the ostrich, whose numbers in nature have dropped to less than 25, are among the critically endangered species. Moreover, there are 5 species of Caspian sturgeon, unique in the world, that are disappearing from the Caspian waters.

According to experts, species extinction is a natural phenomenon, but the speed at which they are disappearing is concerning. Unfortunately, the current rate of extinction has accelerated in the present era due to human activities; it will have serious consequences for ecosystems and the well-being of the planet.

Referring to the country's biodiversity, Zoharbi stated, "Sadly, the unsustainable exploitation of biological resources has affected and disrupted ecosystems in several areas."

The official made the remarks on the occasion of World Biodiversity Day, celebrated annually on May 22.

The DOE is in charge of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The convention's three main objectives include conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable use of natural resources, and equal sharing of biodiversity benefits, he said.

The realization of these goals requires local communities' participation. Environmental protection needs to be sustainable, and it has to consider social and economic factors in planning, the official noted.

Iran honors WHO representative at end of mission



Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi (R) presents a gift to WHO Representative in Iran Jaffar Hussain in an undated photo.

TEHRAN – In a farewell ceremony held on Wednesday, August 14, in Tehran, the ministry of health appreciated Jaffar Hussain, the World Health Organization representative, for his efforts and contributions to the development of the country's health sector.

Hussain was reassigned as the WHO Representative and Head of Mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran on April 1, 2021.

Prior to this assignment, Dr. Hussain was Chef de Cabinet at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean from 1 July 2019 until 31 March 2021.

Throughout these years, he had an active participation in different health sectors and took valuable steps to manage health crises.

Iranian officials lauded Hussain's assistance, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting that the official played a key role in fostering the goals of the health system by promoting effective cooperation and adopting a responsible approach.

Hussain, for his part, said he was proud to have served the country.

"Once retired, I would like to return to Iran with my family and live here," the health min-

istry's website quoted Hussain as saying.

On August 2, Hussain lauded Iranian health experts and officials, as well as people, in addressing hepatitis B and C, underlining that the country's determination in eliminating hepatitis is praiseworthy.

Viral hepatitis is still one of the leading causes of death worldwide, although it is preventable and curable. Highlighting the significance of raising public awareness, renewing commitment, and accelerating measures in fighting hepatitis, the official said eliminating hepatitis requires collective measures and broad participation, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day, which is observed annually on July 28.

Referring to Iran's remarkable accomplishments in managing hepatitis B through vaccination, Hussain elaborated on existing challenges, particularly among vulnerable groups, in the case of hepatitis C.

"We need to focus on health quality and programs such as peer support, harm reduction services, and the expansion of tests and treatments," Hussain said.

Some 800,000 more Afghan refugees to be expelled by March 2026

TEHRAN – Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni has said some 800,000 more undocumented Afghan refugees will be sent back to their home country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2026).

According to the latest report, more than 1.2 million illegal Afghan refugees have been deported since the beginning of the current Iranian year.

Over 70 percent of the refugees have been sent back voluntarily, the official added.

Most of the unauthorized refugees have left the country through the borders in Khorasan Razavi province, Momeni said.

The official once more underlined that Iran is not an anti-immigrant country, as it is hosting six million foreign nationals.

In July, Momeni highlighted that, "We are only deporting the two million Afghans who are illegally residing in Iran. These are honorable people who have contributed to the country's production. Based on regulations, unauthorized refugees must leave the country. If they wish to live here, they have to follow legal procedures."

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

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

The official went on to say that the presence of illegal migrants in any country poses many challenges, and in critical situations, they will be the main suspects. Their presence negatively impacts the economy, social, and security sectors.

Services provided to refugees at borders

The ministry of health has expounded on a

wide range of services being offered to refugees, particularly in eastern South Khorasan, northeastern Khorasan Razavi, and southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan provinces.

The services include the establishment of health camps, the screening of communicable diseases, and the provision of safe water and sanitation, the health ministry's website reported.

The health ministry has established permanent and temporary camps to do screening, and provide medical services such as injections, serum therapy, as well as treating acute patients.

Extensive screening of communicable diseases and epidemic risk management, like syndromic screening for 14 contagious diseases, ongoing water and food sampling, and disinfection of drinking water, are among other measures adopted by the ministry.

Improving infrastructures, access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, as well as environmental hygiene like proper management of infectious waste in camps are other parts of the health ministry efforts to ensure the prevention of communicable diseases, and monitoring the environment to prevent the transmission of diseases such as Malaria, Chloral (El Tor), and other similar diseases are some other services offered to refugees.

The health ministry has done its best to manage referrals, with an average of more than 5,000 individuals receiving health services at busy times. It has also enhanced camps' capacities in terms of human resources, equipment, temporary beds, coordination, and logistical support for the immediate provision of medicine, disinfectants, personal protective equipment, and other essential items.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran finds herbal medicines effective in COVID-19 treatment

Two herbal drugs that are effective in healing the symptoms of COVID-19 have been permitted to be produced domestically.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved four domestically produced herbal medicine effective in the treatment of COVID-19 and has issued a production license for two of them.

The first herbal medicine in this collection is an oral spray containing six herbal essential oils, and according to the results of a clinical trial presented, if used, it helps to improve the pulmonary complications of coronavirus, including shortness of breath, cough, and arterial oxygenation.

The second drug is a syrup containing the extract of two herbs, which according to the clinical trial evidence provided if used, helps to improve the symptoms of fatigue and anorexia in patients with coronavirus.

تولید دو داروی گیاهی موثر در درمان کرونا در ایران

سازمان غذا و دارو ی ایران چهار فرآورده طبیعی تولید داخل با اجزای گیاهی برای بهبود علائم کووید ۱۹ را تایید کرده و مجوز تولید را برای دو مورد آنها صادر کرده است.

اولین داروی گیاهی از این مجموعه یک اسپری دهانی حاوی ۶ اسانس گیاهی است و با توجه به نتایج کارآزمایی بالینی ارائه شده در صورت مصرف به بهبود عوارض ریوی کووید ۱۹ شامل تنگی نفس، سرفه و اکسیژن رسانی شریانی کمک می کند.

داروی دوم یک شربت حاوی عصاره دو گیاه است که با توجه به مدارک کارآزمایی بالینی ارائه شده، در صورت مصرف به بهبود علائم خستگی و بی اشتها بی در بیماران مبتلا به کووید ۱۹ کمک می کند.



AUGUST 19, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul.
To fight the evil within yourself.*
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:08 Evening: 19:08 Dawn: 3:57 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:27 (tomorrow)

Persian edition of Woolf's "The Waves" republished

TEHRAN- The 12th edition of the Persian translation of English novelist Virginia Woolf's 1931 novel "The Waves" has recently been published.

Ofoq Publications in Tehran is the publisher of the book translated by Mehdi Ghabrai.

"The Waves", stands as a landmark in modernist literature, a daring experiment in form and content that continues to captivate and challenge readers. Critically acclaimed as Woolf's most experimental work, the novel eschews traditional narrative structure in favor of a unique and often enigmatic approach.

Instead of a linear progression of events, "The Waves" unfolds through a series of interconnected soliloquies spoken by six characters: Bernard, Susan, Rhoda, Neville, Jinny, and Louis. These characters, each with their distinct perspectives and inner lives, are the focal points of the narrative, yet their voices frequently interweave and overlap, blurring the lines between individual consciousness and collective experience.

A crucial element of the novel's structure is the interwoven nature of these soliloquies with nine brief, third-person interludes. These interludes depict a coastal scene, meticulously documenting the ebb and flow of the day from sunrise to sunset. These meticulously observed moments of nature serve as a backdrop against which the characters' inner lives unfold. The cyclical progression of light and shadow mirrors the cyclical nature of human experience, highlighting the constant interplay between the external world and the internal world of the characters.

Woolf's innovative approach to narrative is not merely a stylistic choice; it is a deliberate exploration of the complexities of consciousness. The characters' soliloquies are not straightforward accounts of their thoughts and feelings, but rather fragmented and often ambiguous expressions of their inner lives. They grapple



with questions of identity, belonging, and the nature of selfhood. Woolf masterfully captures the fluidity and instability of consciousness, illustrating how individual experiences are shaped by both internal reflections and external stimuli.

Through these fragmented voices, Woolf explores the relationship between individuality and community. While each character is distinct and possesses a unique voice, their experiences are not isolated. They are interconnected through their shared environment and their shared human experience. The characters' soliloquies reveal their individual struggles with self-discovery, their anxieties about the future, and their hopes for connection. The novel's structure, therefore, is not merely a stylistic device; it is a reflection of the multifaceted nature of human experience, where individual consciousness and collective existence are inextricably linked.

A seventh character, Percival, is mentioned in the soliloquies, but he remains largely unseen, unheard. His presence is felt, but his voice is never directly presented. This enigmatic element further underscores the novel's focus on the interiority of the characters and the complexities of human interaction.

In "The Waves", Virginia Woolf pushes the boundaries of the novelistic form, offering a profound meditation on the human condition. Through her experimental approach, she invites readers to confront the fluidity of consciousness, the interconnectedness of experience, and the enduring quest for self-understanding. The novel's enduring power lies in its ability to evoke a sense of profound intimacy with the characters and their struggles, while simultaneously prompting reflection on the nature of human existence itself.

First international award for Iranian animation "Juliet & the King" from PSIAF

TEHRAN – The Iranian animated feature film "Juliet & the King" written, directed, and produced by Ashkan Rahgozar won its first international award at the 2025 Palm Springs International Animation Festival (PSIAF) in the U.S.

The 90-minute 2D family animation was announced the winner of the Streamtacular award at the closing ceremony on August 15, IRNA reported.

In the animation, Nasser-al-Din Shah, the Iranian king, gets an invitation to visit France. He loves Europe and he always takes the chance to visit there. While visiting a Romeo-Juliet play in Paris, the actress catches his eye. He falls in love with her so deeply that he asks her to perform the same play in Tehran, so he can impress her and win her heart.

Julie, the actress, decides to take this chance. With the help of her friend Jamal, she goes to perform in Iran, anticipating progress in her career. But she suddenly finds herself among jealous court ladies, and the center of the king's attention.

"Juliet & the King" is Rahgozar's second animated feature pro-



duced in Hoorakhsh Studios after the mythic fantasy "The Last Fiction" (2018),

Blending a traditional Disney-style fairy tale with

19th-century Iran as its backdrop, the result is a compelling examination of cultural contrast. Set in the latter half of that century, this story offers Rahgozar's interpretation of how Persian soci-

ety once viewed the world. While times have certainly evolved, the themes explored remain relevant and thought-provoking.

The Palm Springs International Animation Festival is a world-renowned event celebrating the best in animation from across the globe. Dedicated to showcasing artistic excellence and innovation, PSIAF brings together filmmakers, artists, and animation enthusiasts to experience groundbreaking storytelling through animated films of all styles and techniques. From traditional hand-drawn animation to cutting-edge CGI, PSIAF highlights the creative power of animation as an art form.

Beyond screenings, PSIAF also provides a platform for industry recognition and emerging talent through prestigious film awards. The festival honors outstanding achievements in animation, offering a space where new voices in the industry can gain visibility alongside acclaimed filmmakers. PSIAF is where animation excellence is celebrated.

New mural in Tehran unveiled, commemorating Iran Army's sacrifices in 12-day war



TEHRAN-The newest mural at Valiasr Square in central Tehran was unveiled on Saturday, commemorating the sacrifice of 57 martyrs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army who lost their lives during the recent 12-day conflict initiated by the Zionist regime against Iranian territory.

The mural, titled "Army Sacrifices for the Nation," was created by the Owj Arts and Media Organization. Designed by artist Ali Khalaj, the artwork pays tribute to the fallen members of the Artesh, the Iranian Army, highlighting their bravery and dedication, IRNA reported.

The mural serves as a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by Iran's military personnel in defending the nation and aims to honor the martyrs' memory

and reinforce the resilience and unity of the Iranian people in the face of external threats.

Inscribed on the mural are the names of 57 martyrs from the Iranian Army, accompanied by a caption stating: "The martyrs proved with their blood that the Army is sacrificed for the nation," the report added.

Located in Valiasr Square, the mural typically reflects national events and anniversaries, promoting themes such as Iranian-Islamic lifestyle and resistance against arrogance through artistic media.

Early Friday morning, June 13, a series of terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Zionist regime targeted Tehran and several other Iranian cities. This assault involved missile and drone strikes

aimed at key military installations, scientific centers, and civilian areas, resulting in casualties among military commanders, scientists, and innocent civilians alike.

In response to the savage Zionist attack, the Islamic Republic of Iran launched Operation True Promise 3 on Friday night, unleashing a barrage of missiles against the occupied territories, targeting military bases, infrastructure, and strategic sites. The operation aimed to weaken Israel's military capabilities and demonstrate Iran's resolve in defending its sovereignty. The escalation led to a highly destructive phase of the conflict, with both sides engaging in intense exchanges of fire.

The Israeli attacks targeted areas within Iran that were not military installations, resulting in the tragic loss of innocent civilian lives including women and children. The incident has sparked outrage not only within Iran but also among international observers.

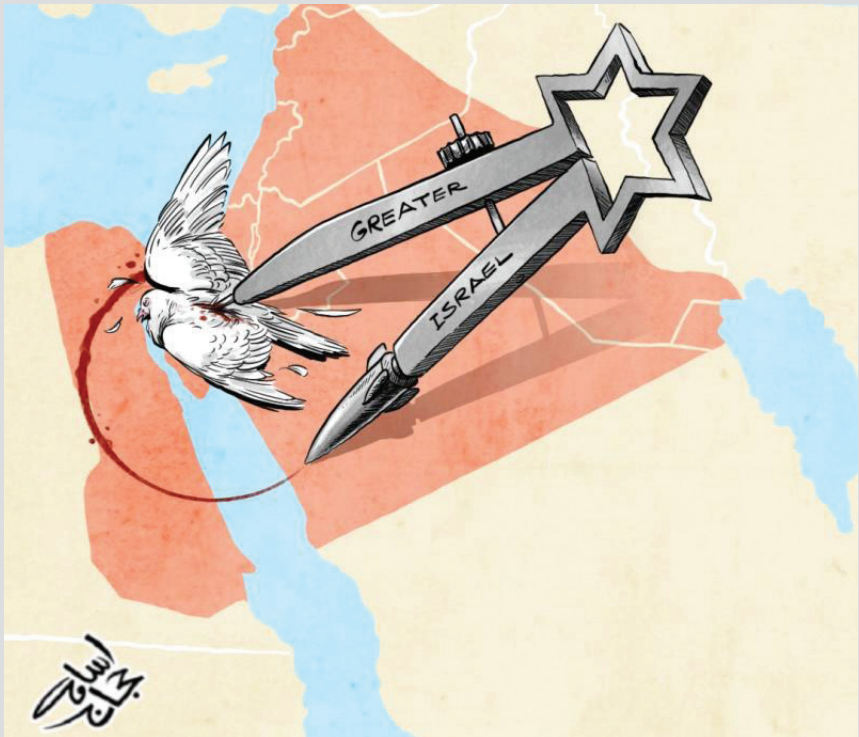
Throughout the twelve days of hostilities, the fighting caused widespread destruction. Reports indicated that at least one-third of Tel Aviv was heavily damaged

or destroyed by Iranian strikes. Tehran and other Iranian cities also suffered significant damage, underscoring the severity of the conflict. Civilian casualties and infrastructure damage increased the humanitarian toll and heightened regional instability.

International reactions to the conflict were significant. U.S. President Donald Trump reportedly demanded the evacuation of Tehran and threatened to take lethal action against Iran's leadership, further complicating diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation. The international community closely watched the escalation, with many nations urging restraint and calling for peace talks to prevent further loss of life.

In the aftermath of the war, Iran has embarked on various initiatives to commemorate the conflict and honor those affected. Cultural and artistic events, including exhibitions, festivals, and literary gatherings, have been organized to remember the martyrs and celebrate Iran's resilience in the face of adversity. These efforts aim to foster national unity and reflect on the sacrifices made during the twelve days of intense fighting.

Cartoon of Day



Borders in Blood

Cartoonist: Osama Hajjaj from Jordan

Iranian Artists Forum to screen "The Hobbit" trilogy final instalment

TEHRAN – The 2014 epic fantasy adventure film "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies" directed by Peter Jackson will be screened at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Thursday.

The screening is set for 6 p.m. at the Nasserli Hall of the IAF. The 165-minute movie will be shown with Persian subtitles, Honaronline reported.

Based on the 1937 novel "The Hobbit" by J. R. R. Tolkien, it is the sequel to 2013's "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" as well as the final instalment in "The Hobbit" trilogy, acting as a prequel to Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy (2001-2003).

The film's story concludes the adventure of the titular hobbit Bilbo Baggins and Thorin Oakenshield's company of dwarves, who take possession of the treasure within the Lonely Mountain as factions of dwarves, elves, and men clash over it, while the orc Azog the Defiler and his forces make their move upon them.

The film stars Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage, Evangeline Lilly, Luke Evans, Lee Pace, Benedict Cumberbatch, Ken Stott, and Aidan Turner. The ensemble

cast also features Cate Blanchett, Ian Holm, Christopher Lee, Hugo Weaving, and Orlando Bloom. It was Holm and Lee's final live-action roles and final film released during their respective lifetimes, although they would both provide voice performances in subsequent works.

"The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies" received mixed reviews from critics and grossed \$962.2 million worldwide, making it the second-highest-grossing film of 2014. It received numerous accolades, including being nominated for Best Sound Editing at the 87th Academy Awards.

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. Be-

tween 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.