

Ukraine Faces Lose-Lose Choice

Ukraine peace push exposes transatlantic fault lines



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and US President Donald Trump stand for a family photo with other European leaders not seen in the White House in Washington, DC, on August 18, 2025.

Iran's military strength has increased since 12-day war: IRGC

TEHRAN – The deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has declared that Iran's military preparedness is now significantly higher than it was two months ago, when the war with Israel began.

Brigadier General Ali Fadavi said on Monday that enhancing Iran's defense capability has been a constant mission for the IRGC since its establishment, never subject to interruption. He noted that this ongoing effort becomes most visible in times of conflict, citing the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, the Syrian conflict, and most recently the 12-day confrontation with Israel. ▶ Page 2

Economy minister outlines new financing plans to curb inflation, support production

TEHRAN – Iran's Economy Minister said the government is preparing revisions to the 2025 budget law to reduce the deficit, expand supply chain financing, and steer large enterprises toward the capital market in a bid to ease inflationary pressures and boost liquidity for the private sector.

Speaking at the 131st meeting of the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council, Seyed Ali Madanizadeh said Iran has long struggled with budget shortfalls. Under the approved 2025 budget, the government must issue bonds worth 80 quadrillion rials (\$160 billion), reflecting the scale of the deficit. ▶ Page 4

Roundtable: Lebanon will be a prey if Hezbollah is disarmed

TEHRAN – The Mehr Media Group hosted an international meeting titled "Hezbollah Disarmament and the Future of Lebanon" on Tuesday, uniting prominent regional experts to discuss escalating foreign-backed pressures to disarm Hezbollah and the profound implications for Lebanon's sovereignty.

The media group, one of Iran's leading news organizations, comprises the country's foremost international daily newspaper, the Tehran Times, and the Mehr News Agency.

Held amid intensified U.S. and Israeli efforts to weaken the Resistance, the event underscored Hezbollah's indispensable role in safeguarding Lebanon and confronting foreign aggression.

Since the November 2024 ceasefire, which ended a 14-month war with Israel, Hezbollah has been the target of persistent calls to disarm. The conflict — ignited by Tel Aviv's escalating aggression against Gaza and Lebanon, alongside Hezbollah's principled and unwavering solidarity with Palestine following Hamas's October 2023 operation — witnessed Israel's devastating airstrikes and the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah.

Positions by Larijani, Qassem, and al-Houthi abort Washington's threats to Lebanon

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT— Beirut's transformation into an airstrip for international diplomatic flights reflects an escalation in the regional and international tensions.

Iranian Supreme National Security Council chief Ali Larijani visited Beirut from August 13 to 14. Just days later, on August 17, U.S. envoys Thomas Barrack and Morgan Ortagus arrived in Lebanon. Saudi envoy Yazid bin Farhan is also expected to visit Beirut in the near future.

It is noteworthy that Barrack's visit was primarily intended to inform Lebanese officials that Morgan Ortagus would be taking over responsibility for the Lebanon portfolio.

An informed source confirmed to the Tehran Times that the positions expressed by Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem, Larijani, and Yemeni Ansar Allah movement leader Sayyed Abdulmalik al-Houthi have undermined Washington's calculations.

Hamas accepts proposed deal for ceasefire

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hamas and other Palestinian resistance factions have announced their approval of a ceasefire proposal presented by mediators.

Senior Palestinian officials have told regional media that the proposal includes several key provisions. It stipulates a withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces to a depth of 1,000 meters in northern and eastern parts of the Gaza Strip, excluding the areas of Shujaia and Beit Lahia in northern Gaza.

In exchange for the release of ten living Israeli captives, 140 Palestinian prisoners serving life sentences and 60 others sentenced to more than 15 years would be freed. Additionally, 1,500 Palestinian detainees from the Gaza Strip would be released.

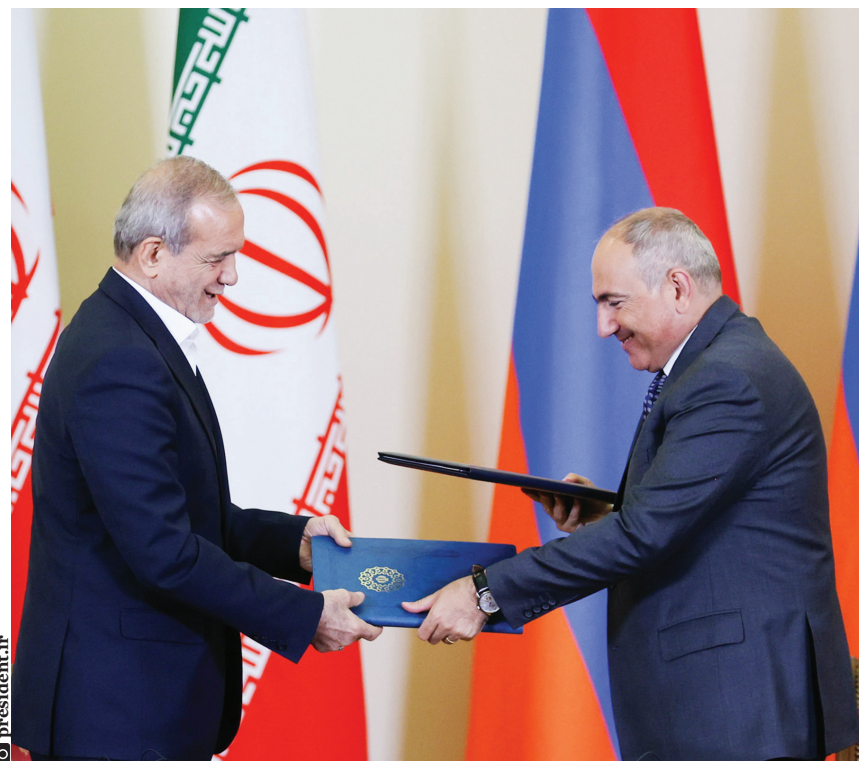
The proposal also includes adjustments to the redeployment maps in the north and east. Humanitarian aid would begin flowing into Gaza immediately once the agreement takes effect. The aid, delivered in large, coordinated shipments, would be provided under the framework of the January 19, 2025 agreement.

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Iran, Armenia sign cooperation documents in different areas

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran, accompanied by a delegation of his cabinet members, visited Armenia to strengthen bilateral relations across transport, infrastructure, and trade sectors. During the visit, Pezeshkian met with top Armenian officials to discuss strategic cooperation, particularly in transit corridors, regional connectivity, and economic partnerships.

During this trip, in order to enhance the level of relations, high-ranking officials of the both countries signed a joint statement and 10 memorandums of understanding and cooperation documents in the political, social, cultural, tourism, industrial, educational, road and urban development, art, and health fields in the presence of President Pezeshkian and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. ▶ Page 4



South Caucasus route takes center stage in Iran-Armenia talks as two sides plan strategic pact

TEHRAN – Iran and Armenia have signed a series of cooperation agreements aimed at deepening their political, economic, and cultural ties, with both sides agreeing to finalize a comprehensive strategic cooperation document in the near future.

The agreements were finalized on Tuesday during President Masoud Pezeshkian's official visit to Yerevan. ▶ Page 3



An unjustifiable coup

By Mahmoud Zekavat

TEHRAN – Simplified, popular narratives often make history shallow, sterile, and politically charged. These oversimplifications wrap around historical events and figures, preventing a clear understanding and often twisting the truth with clichés.

Iran's contemporary history is full of such myths. One could argue that these popular misconceptions play a larger role in shaping the story of modern Iran than the actual events themselves. This is especially true for the movement to nationalize Iran's oil and the infamous coup of August 19, 1953 (28th of Mordad). ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Increasing power through economic development

Arman-e-Melli discussed the Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska in an interview with international relations analyst Fereydoun Majlesi. Majlesi noted that both Putin and Trump seek stability in Iran, albeit from two very different perspectives. Should this be achieved, it would benefit not only Iran, Russia, and the United States, but also the wider region. At present, all countries in the region are grappling with heightened tensions. If such meetings lead to the lifting of sanctions and Iran's reintegration into international trade, the advantages would be considerable. In pursuit of its national interests, Iran could adopt a flexible and constructive stance, moving firmly along the path of economic development. Economic growth, in turn, would naturally foster progress in other areas. Majlesi emphasized that any nation should maximize its economic strength as the foundation for enhancing military capability. He also highlighted the country's pressing need for investment—whether domestic or foreign. Given current conditions, the foremost requirement for attracting foreign investment is peace and security, as even the smallest sign of escalating tension could drive investors away.

Shargh: Security in the South Caucasus is Iran's red line

In a note, Shargh discussed Mr. Pezeshkian's important visit to Armenia and said: Iran, as a major player in the region and neighbor to the South Caucasus, emphasizes that the stability and security in the region is the red line of the country' in terms national and security interests. Therefore, Tehran, while welcoming peace agreements and regional diplomatic efforts, explicitly prevents any trans-regional moves that would complicate the situation. The Iranian President's visit to Armenia is not only a symbol of the historical and cultural ties between the two nations, but also an opportunity to expand cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, energy, and transportation. A closer look at recent developments and diplomatic talks between Iran and Armenia shows that Tehran is playing an active and intelligent role in shaping the South Caucasus's future. Iran is well aware that security in the region is directly linked to its security, and by establishing strategic cooperation with Yerevan, it will not only remove potential obstacles but also pave the way for sustainable and peaceful development in the South Caucasus.

Jam-e-Jam: Proposed scenarios for deepening ties

Jam-e-Jam analyzes proposals to deepen ties between Iran and Armenia.

It wrote: Based on the history of Iran-Arme-

nia relations, the current situation, and regional and international trends, several scenarios can be proposed to deepen relations between the two countries.

One of these proposals is to develop economic and infrastructure cooperation. Completing the North-South Corridor as quickly as possible through investment in the Iran-Armenia-Georgia route, building and launching infrastructure projects to meet the country's basic fuel needs, and economic connectivity are among the most significant economic projects that can be pursued between the two countries.

Another proposal is strategic and security cooperation; forming a joint security working group to monitor developments in the Caucasus, especially the Zangezur Corridor; holding annual joint military maneuvers with the presence of Iran and Armenia; strengthening intelligence cooperation to counter the influence of the United States and some other regional and trans-regional countries. These measures can increase Iran's deterrence power and maintain regional stability.

Iran: Transparency of legal protocols and intensification of Iran's role

In an article, the Iran newspaper reviewed Pezeshkian's trip to Armenia and wrote: The emerging developments in the South Caucasus, especially the recent agreement between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan and the direct role of the United States in it, are a turning point in the geopolitical relations of the region.

In the new environment, Iran must change its position of mere opposition to Western projects to a policy of demanding transparent laws and protocols. It must inform regional and trans-regional parties of its red lines and be ready to respond decisively to any change, like misusing transit routes for military purposes or intelligence activities.

This new approach presents Iran as a defender of legal stability and transparency in the region and, in addition to creating the possibility of bargaining, increases the scope of Iran's presence in regional dialogues.

The formal demand for implementation protocols for the new routes, operational review of border and customs control methods, and assurances that sensitive goods do not pass through these routes should be proposed and pursued both in bilateral consultations with Armenia and in regional multilateral interactions. This policy opens up many ways for gaining further concessions in exchange for the implementation of this project.

Iran holds third hearing in lawsuit over US role in 1953 coup



TEHRAN – On Tuesday, a third hearing was conducted in a lawsuit where 400,000 Iranian nationals are claiming compensation from the United States for its involvement in the 1953 coup. Per the Judiciary, the session took place in Branch 55 of Tehran's International Civil Court and was attended by a number of legal specialists.

In opening the proceedings, the judge stated that the lawsuit pits more than 400,000 Iranian plaintiffs against the U.S. government. "The plaintiffs are seeking material, moral, and punitive damages for actions related to the 1953 coup," he stated.

The judge elaborated that the court had been presented with a multitude of petitions from across the country's provinces requesting reparations for incurred damages. "This being the

third hearing, the court would now determine if additional investigation or legal procedures are required," he declared at the biggining of the court session.

The judge also referenced Iranian law, affirming the court's jurisdiction to adjudicate the claims. He emphasized that the United States has consistently breached Iran's legal immunity in its own domestic courts. "Therefore, we are equally entitled to reciprocal legal measures" and possess the "jurisdiction to review claims brought by Iranian plaintiffs against the U.S. government," the judge explained.

During the hearing, attorney Aboutaleb Ayaz contended that America's engagement in Iran was from the beginning intended to achieve complete political control. He noted that Washington did not just engineer the overthrow of the then-democratically elected government but also worked with Israel's Mossad to create the infamous SAVAK intelligence agency to crush opposition.

"The coup and the re-installation of a U.S.-backed government ushered in an era of unmatched authoritarian rule in Iran," Ayaz added.

The 1953 coup, which was backed by the CIA and Britain's MI6, resulted in the overthrow of the democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and re-inforced the Pahlavi monarchy. The Pahlavi Shah was eventually toppled during the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

From page 1 ► "We have been blessed with the opportunity to strengthen our power and capabilities continuously, and the people see the results of this in practice," Fadavi said. "In the 12-day war, when the entire world joined forces to confront Iran and even expected to defeat us, God decreed otherwise—and they were the ones who suffered defeat."

He went on to stress that Iran's readiness has grown considerably in the weeks since hostilities began.

"We are proud to say that, with God's will, our preparedness today is far greater than it was two months ago when the war started," Fadavi declared.

On June 13, Israel launched a wave of airstrikes against Iran's military, nuclear, and security infrastructure.

The war lasted 12 days and left at least 1,065 Iranians dead—mostly civilians, along with senior commanders and nuclear scientists.

The United States openly backed the Zionist regime from the outset and directly entered the war on June 22 by striking three nuclear sites that Israel had already targeted.

Iran responded with Operation True Promise III, launching 22 waves of coordinated missile and drone attacks that devastated Israeli military, intelligence, security, and economic sites across the occupied territories.

Analysts point out that while Iran inflicted serious damage, it deliberately refrained from deploying its most advanced and destructive weaponry.

The June 24 ceasefire, which Iran says was initiated at the request of both Washington and Tel

From page 1 ► Ervand Abrahamian's book, 'The Oil Crisis in Iran: From Nationalism to Coup,' which draws on key American documents declassified in 2017, sheds new light on the Pahlavi era.

It fundamentally challenges the accepted wisdom about the oil nationalization movement and the coup, and offers a dramatically improved understanding of this pivotal moment in Iran's history.

A coordinated campaign: The press and the CIA against Mosaddegh

Abrahamian's work uses new documents declassified by the U.S. government in 2017 to correct weaknesses in the existing history of the oil crisis. He carefully compares the official reports from U.S. and British agencies with the media narrative being pushed at the time, particularly in the American press.

His analysis reveals a direct link. For instance, a series of attacks on Mosaddegh in the Wall Street Journal were essentially verbatim reports prepared by CIA director Allen Dulles and his team. The unflattering and often ridiculous image of Mosaddegh promoted by the media was heavily shaped by directives from American security agencies.

The documents confirm the CIA drafted a detailed propaganda playbook against Mosaddegh. Its key tactics included bolstering the Shah's image, financially coaxing and guiding newspapers, bribing influential figures, sowing discord among Mosaddegh's supporters, and spreading rumors linking him to the Soviet-backed Tudeh Party.

Other planned operations involved distributing fake leaflets attributed to the Tudeh Party that attacked Islam and called for the clergy's destruction, and building connections between army commanders and tribal leaders.

While earlier research by Iranian scholars had noted these were part of a British propaganda effort, the new documents provide concrete proof.

Abrahamian also highlights a

IRGC says its military strength has increased since 12-day war



The multi-warhead Kheibar-class ballistic missile Ghadr-H.

Aviv, is described by Iranian officials as only a "temporary pause."

The war exposed the unsustainable economics of the U.S.-Israeli defense strategy.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the U.S. military fired over 150 THAAD interceptors during the conflict—each costing \$12.7 million—consuming almost 25% of its global stockpile. Navy destroyers launched 80 SM-3 missiles at up to \$25 million apiece, while Israel expended hundreds of Arrow-3, David's Sling, and Iron Dome interceptors.

A report by the Washington-based Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA) highlighted the disparity: U.S. forces launched 30 Patriot missiles—worth \$111 million in

total—to intercept just 14 Iranian missiles aimed at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

Replenishing these stockpiles will be a major challenge. Lockheed Martin produces only about 100 THAAD interceptors annually, meaning that restoring depleted reserves could take between three and eight years.

While Israeli officials initially boasted of a 90–95% interception rate, post-war assessments suggest the actual success rate was considerably lower.

Satellite radar imagery released weeks after the ceasefire confirmed that Iranian missiles hit at least five military sites in Israel.

According to JINSA, of the 574

Iranian projectiles launched, 57 struck populated areas while 316 landed in uninhabited zones. Among the most significant penetrations was a missile strike near the Israeli military headquarters in Tel Aviv, which caused widespread damage and panic.

Even more consequential was Iran's precision strike on the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot on June 15.

Although widely portrayed as a civilian research center, the Institute plays a central role in Israel's military-industrial complex and covert nuclear program.

The attack inflicted extensive destruction and wiped out vital research, revealing a deep vulnerability at the heart of Israel's strategic infrastructure.

An unjustifiable coup A re-examination of the 1953 coup in Iran



meeting on July 29, 1952, between U.S. Ambassador Loy Henderson and British diplomat George Middleton in Tehran. They concluded that removing Mosaddegh would require a military coup, which needed the buy-in of Tehran's military commander and must be done in the Shah's name—though the Shah himself was terrified of being publicly associated with the plot.

The CIA station even suggested persuading the Shah to publicly criticize Britain to boost his popularity and initially pretend to support Mosaddegh. The Shah himself told Henderson that without the ambassador's actions, the monarchy would have already fallen.

The myth of a communist threat

A major section of the book is dedicated to dismantling the long-held belief that a powerful Tudeh Party and the threat of a communist takeover justified foreign intervention.

The standard argument has always been that the U.S. and U.K. were convinced to orchestrate the coup to stop Iran from falling into the Soviet sphere of influence. Abrahamian's evidence, however, shows this "communist threat" was largely a fabrication by American intelligence.

In reality, the Tudeh Party at the time posed no serious threat to the U.S., the Shah, or even to religious forces. What truly motivated the British and Americans was business: protecting the interests of oil companies.

They were also terrified that Iran's successful nationalization

would set a precedent, inspiring other countries (like Egypt with the Suez Canal) to do the same.

The real danger they perceived was the disruption of the global economic order and the potential for Iran's instability to spread across the region.

While they successfully sold the public on the idea of a communist menace, the declassified files show that U.S. officials knew there was no significant Soviet activity in the oil dispute and no real threat from the Tudeh Party.

The "Red Scare" was a convenient narrative to disguise their true motive: preserving corporate interests and the international status quo.

This manufactured fear of communism went on to become a permanent feature of Iran's political landscape, with the Pahlavi state later genuinely believing the very myth it had helped to create.

The staged US-UK rift Mosaddegh came to believe

Another critical section of the book covers the political battles in Iran's parliament, showing how the U.S. manipulated legislators to isolate Mosaddegh. It also details a crucial deception: Mosaddegh's belief in a genuine policy split between the U.S. and Britain.

Abrahamian shows that the very public disputes between American and British diplomats like Henry Grady and Reader Bullard were essentially a "fake fight." While Grady criticized the British in public, he privately opposed Iran's oil nationalization just as much as they

did. This staged disagreement was meant to mislead, and it worked. Many, including Mosaddegh, were duped into thinking the Western powers were divided, when in fact they were completely united in their goal to stop nationalization.

The book also disproves the idea that U.S. Democrats opposed the coup, showing their administration was fully involved. In a fascinating detail, the documents reveal that one Associated Press reporter in Tehran was actually a CIA operative.

The false notion of the clergy's role in Mosaddegh's fall

In the final section, Abrahamian explicitly rejects claims that the clergy played a significant role in toppling Mosaddegh.

He argues that historians like Darioush Bayandor promote this idea primarily to use Mosaddegh's popularity as a weapon against the Islamic Republic, retroactively projecting current conflicts onto the past.

The historical record doesn't support this view. When CIA operative Donald Wilber tried to recruit clerics to oppose the Tudeh Party, he was met with a wall of silence from the leading Shi'a authority, Ayatollah Borujerdi. Key clerics on Ayatollah Kashani's list in Tabriz were actually pro-Mosaddegh. Furthermore, prominent religious figures like Mahmoud Taleghani, Reza Zanjani, and even Morteza Pasandideh (Imam Khomeini's brother) were all supporters of the Prime Minister.

The only major cleric who sided with the coup was Ayatollah Behbahani, who was widely seen as a "court cleric" rather than an independent religious leader. Finally, Abrahamian argues the coup wasn't caused by economic collapse.

On the contrary, he presents evidence that Iran's economy was stabilizing, and suggests the coup was launched precisely because Mosaddegh's policies were starting to succeed, proving nationalization could work.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

South Caucasus route takes center stage in Iran-Armenia talks as two sides plan strategic pact

From Page 1 ▶ where he met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Both sides hailed their shared history and emphasized the importance of preserving the region's stability amid growing geopolitical tensions.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also confirmed that both sides agreed to finalize a comprehensive strategic cooperation document in the near future, cementing the framework for long-term collaboration.

He said after the meetings that Armenia had given explicit assurances that no threat to Iran would ever originate from its territory.

“The negotiations were serious and wide-ranging,” he told reporters. “We discussed extensive cooperation in trade, investment, technical and engineering projects, as well as cultural cooperation, which is especially meaningful given our shared heritage.”

On the issue of transit routes and the recent discussions held in Washington, Araghchi said the Armenian side provided detailed explanations and stressed that it is fully aware of Iran's red lines.

“Armenia will never allow its soil to be used to threaten Iran,” he said.

A border of friendship and cultural exchange: Pezeshkian

Speaking at a joint press conference with Pashinyan, Iranian President Pezeshkian described Armenia as a vital neighbor of the Islamic Republic of Iran, underlining the depth of ties forged over centuries.

“History testifies to the closeness of our peoples,” he said. “The Armenian community has long been present across Iran, particularly in border regions, and our shared cultural and civilizational heritage reflects the enduring friendship between the two nations.”

Pezeshkian characterized the



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan after a signing ceremony in Yerevan on August 19, 2025.

Iran-Armenia frontier not as a dividing line but as a bridge of unity.

“Our borders have, throughout the years, been frontiers of friendship and a link between our peoples, and they will remain so,” he said. Quoting the Persian poet Hafez, the president likened the spirit of the Aras River region to a flow of poetry, music, and hospitality across both sides of the border.

Iran expresses firm support for Armenia's territorial integrity

Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran has consistently defended Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling this position a permanent and unchanging policy of the Islamic Republic.

“We oppose any resort to force or threat of force in the region,” he declared. “Politics and governance in the Caucasus must remain Caucasian.”

The president cautioned against attempts to outsource regional solutions to outside powers, stressing that the involvement of extra-regional actors only complicates an already sensitive situation.

He also underlined the need for Iran's concerns to be addressed regarding recent regional developments, including the memorandum

signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the United States.

In meetings with senior Armenian officials, Pezeshkian emphasized that Tehran regards the continuation of warm relations with Yerevan as a serious policy priority.

He announced Iran's readiness to accelerate the finalization of a long-term strategic cooperation plan between the two countries.

“Our relations with Armenia are expanding in every field, from trade to cultural exchange,” Pezeshkian said. “But there is a need for more frequent consultations to remove obstacles and ensure the implementation of agreed projects.”

The president stressed that the deep historical, cultural, and civilizational ties between Iran and Armenia provide a strong foundation for further strengthening cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit.

During the visit, Iran and Armenia signed ten cooperation documents covering a broad spectrum of fields, including politics, culture, tourism, industry, education, transport and construction, healthcare, and the arts.

In addition, the two leaders signed a joint statement of the visit, reaffirming their mutual commitment

to closer ties and long-term strategic partnership.

Pashinyan: Iran's concerns on corridor will be respected

Prime Minister Pashinyan welcomed Pezeshkian's visit, describing Iran as a crucial partner and pledging that Yerevan remains committed to preserving its historic friendship with Tehran. He said Iran and Armenia possess diverse and complementary capacities that should be harnessed for the benefit of both nations.

Pashinyan underlined that Armenia's border with Iran holds “strategic importance,” adding:

“Cooperation with Iran, under the principle of good neighborliness and the strengthening of friendly ties, carries strategic significance for Armenia. Without doubt, Iran's concerns will be fully respected in the construction of any new corridor.”

The Armenian leader also announced that his country is ready to sign a long-term strategic partnership agreement with Tehran.

Following his talks with Pashinyan, Pezeshkian wrote on his X account that Tehran's concerns about third-party forces near its shared border with Armenia must be fully addressed.

“In my meeting with the Armenian prime minister, I stressed that the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to safeguard Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity while maintaining friendly relations between our countries,” he wrote. “Our concerns regarding the presence of third-party forces near our common borders must be fully resolved.”

Pezeshkian's visit comes at a time of heightened geopolitical activity in the South Caucasus, with international powers showing increasing interest in shaping the region's future. Tehran has repeatedly warned against such interference, insisting that regional disputes must be resolved within the Caucasus itself.



Iran's Pezeshkian speaks at an economic forum in Yerevan

Armenian-Iranian friendship, mutual recognition, and historical continuity.” He added that the community also plays a significant role in Armenia's social and cultural life, linking the two nations not only through history but also through shared traditions and exchanges.

Novikov said Armenians have consistently perceived Iran as a friendly nation, particularly since Armenia's independence, noting: “This feeling of friendship, historically and geographically formed and strengthened, is above any other circumstance. Armenia would like to see the strengthening of ties with Iran in as many areas as possible, more opportunities for mutual visits, and a deeper understanding of each other.”

President Pezeshkian's visit to Yerevan reaffirmed not only the resilience of Iran-Armenia relations in the face of outside pressures but also their potential for growth in political, economic, and cultural spheres. The trip demonstrated that neighborhood ties remain a foundation for mutual trust and cooperation, while also paving the way for enhanced regional stability. As both governments look to deepen engagement, the visit underscored that Iran and Armenia see each other not just as neighbors, but as strategic partners in preserving peace and fostering prosperity in the Caucasus.

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engineering firm MAPNA, which oversees numerous advanced national projects.

U.S. sanctions have prohibited Iran from acquiring foreign technology and parts, yet the country has sustained its aviation operations. It has even begun offering maintenance to international carriers; last year, reports indicated that Russia's Aeroflot sent a Western-made aircraft to Iran for repairs. Furthermore, by late 2024, Iranian aviation officials declared they had mastered the technology required to produce spare parts for Boeing and Airbus jet engines.

Iran announces first domestic overhaul of BK-117 helicopter engine

TEHRAN – Despite international sanctions limiting its access to aviation components, Iran's domestic experts have successfully performed a full engine overhaul on a BK 117 helicopter.

Hossein Pourfarzaneh, the head of Iran's civil aviation authority, announced this achievement on Monday, describing it as an unprecedented domestic feat resulting from years of intensive and complex effort.

According to Pourfarzaneh, this initiative was launched after nations housing the original helicopter manufacturers declined to cooperate

and even seized engines Iran had sent for maintenance. He emphasized the critical economic importance of this self-sufficiency, stating that a local capacity to repair and produce engine spare parts is vital for the country's aviation sector, as engines constitute a major portion of an aircraft's value. His comments were reported by the official IRNA news agency.

The BK 117, a medium-sized, twin-engine helicopter primarily used for emergency medical services, is a collaborative product of Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Airbus Helicopters. The overhaul project was executed by the Iranian

Bronze feels like gold: Iran's Basketball renaissance

TEHRAN – While Iran basketball team boast a history of three Asian championships, those victories belong to a golden generation before the inclusion of formidable Oceanic teams like Australia and New Zealand in the competition.

Team Melli triumphed over New Zealand with a 79-73 victory in the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 bronze medal match, held in Saudi Arabia.

Following a noticeable dip in form, including an absence from the top ranks in the 2022 Asia Cup and the Hangzhou Asian Games, this bronze medal signals a promising return to prominence under their Greek head coach Sotirios Manolopoulos.

Iran displayed impressive form throughout the tournament, sweeping their group stage matches against Japan, Syria, and Guam, followed by a thrilling comeback against Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals. Their only defeat came against a powerful Australian squad in the semifinals.

Despite the heavy loss to Australia and the absence of the star player Mohammad Amini due to injury, the Iranian players showcased exceptional performance against New Zealand, securing a well-deserved victory. This bronze medal signifies Iran's re-emergence as a force in Asian basketball. Notably, considering Australia as a non-Asian team, Iran remained undefeated against other Asian contenders in the tournament.

The Iranian Basketball Federation's project with the Greek coach appears to be yielding positive results, with his focus on integrating young talents progressing well. The next target for the national team could be the Nagoya Asian Games, where the absence of Australia and New Zealand presents a prime opportunity for Iran's new generation to compete for a gold medal.

This bronze medal injects fresh vitality into Iranian basketball. This success reflects a noticeable shift towards a new generation of players, a transformation credited to the risk-taking approach of coach Sotirios Manolopoulos, who remained committed to the team despite off-court challenges during the preparation phase.

While bronze might not equal gold, for Iranian basketball, which has endured recent setbacks and the retirement of veteran players, this achievement holds immense value. Securing third place in Asia, especially with the participation of Australia, is a positive sign and a foundation for future progress. The fighting spirit, teamwork, and tactical execution displayed in the victory against New Zealand, following a tough loss, were commendable.

The tournament also highlighted the emergence of talented young players. Manolopoulos' decision to provide opportunities to less experienced athletes in a major event proved successful, with players like Sina Vahedi, Mohammad Amini, Mobin Sheikhi, and Seyedmehdi Jafari showcasing their potential. Sina Vahedi's impressive performances earned him a spot in the FIBA Asia Cup All-Star Five.

Coach Manolopoulos expressed immense pride in his players' resilience, particularly their ability to bounce back after a heavy defeat. He praised the leadership of veterans Arsalan Kazemi and Arman Zangeneh, emphasizing their crucial role in guiding the younger players. Captain Kazemi echoed this sentiment, stating that the unexpected bronze medal felt more valuable than gold, highlighting the team's perseverance against expectations. Sina Vahedi also acknowledged the coaching staff and his teammates for their hard work and dedication.

Moussa Djenepo on Esteghlal's radar

TEHRAN – Malian winger Moussa Djenepo has reportedly reached an agreement with Iranian football club Esteghlal.

The 27-year-old player is expected to join Esteghlal on a two-year deal.

He played for Turkish side Antalyaspor last season.

Djenepo has represented Mali national foot-

ball team 36 times and scored three goals.

He started his playing career in Belgium side Standard Liège and has also played in Southampton.

Sepahan complete signing of Ivan Sanchez Aguayo

TEHRAN – Sepahan football team completed the signing of Ivan Sanchez Aguayo.

The 32-year-old winger has penned a two-year deal with the Iranian team for undisclosed fee.

Sanchez was a member of Spanish side Valladolid in the last three seasons.

He started his playing career in Jaén in 2010 and has also played in Atlético Madrid B, Albacete, Elche, and Birmingham City.

Sepahan will play Malavan in their 2025/26 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) opening match on Tuesday.

Iran, Jordan judo federations sign MoU

TEHRAN – Iran and Jordan Judo Federations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for mutual cooperation.

The ceremony took place in the Jordan's capital, Amman, with the presence of the presidents of the two federations.

Iran judo chief Arash Miresmaeili was welcomed by head of Jordan judo federation Sultan Al-Awamleh in the meeting.

The two west Asian countries agreed on organizing joint training camps, dispatching coaches and referees for experience exchange, hosting friendly competitions, conducting workshops and joint training courses, as well as developing grassroots judo.

The signing of this memorandum not only strengthens the relations between the two federations but also represents a valuable opportunity to enhance the technical level of judo-kas, expand regional sporting connections, and foster a spirit of friendship and mutual respect among nations.

Ex-Iran captain Dejagah named Lusail assistant coach

TEHRAN – Lusail Sports Club announced the appointment of former Iranian international Ashkan Dejagah as assistant coach of the First Team ahead of the 2025–26 season.

A veteran of top European leagues and major international tournaments, Dejagah brings championship-winning experience and a strong footballing pedigree.

His leadership, and winning mentality are expected to add great value to our coaching team, the club announced.

“Ashkan is a top professional with a deep understanding of the game. We're excited to have someone of his caliber join the Lusail family, and we're confident he'll be an excellent addition to our project. We warmly welcome Ashkan Dejagah to Lusail SC and look forward to the season ahead with optimism and ambition,” Lusail sporting director Alan Karimi said.

Dejagah represented Germany at youth levels between 2001 and 2009, going on to win the 2009 UEFA European Under-21 Football Championship. He played for the Iranian national team since 2011, helping them qualify for the 2014 World Cup, 2015 Asian Cup and the 2018 FIFA World Cup, although he did not play in the last.

In 2015, Dejagah was voted by fans on Navad as Iran's best ever left midfielder.

Dejagah made his professional debut for Hertha BSC in the 2004–05 Bundesliga season. In 2007, he joined VfL Wolfsburg, winning the Bundesliga in the 2008–09 season. In 2012, he joined Premier League side Fulham on a €2.5 million three-year deal.

Solar power plants opened in Qazvin with 6MW capacity

TEHRAN – Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi inaugurated two solar power plants with a combined capacity of 6.0 megawatts in Qazvin on Tuesday during a visit to the province, marking the first step in the government's "Abad Iran" development campaign.

According to state media, the projects were launched in Abyek county, Qazvin province, with an investment of around 18 trillion rials (\$36 million).

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 pro-



duction 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 Tarzatabab 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.

Tarzatabab 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.

Energy officials have repeatedly said that boosting renewables is central to easing summer blackouts, which have plagued industrial and residential users in recent years. Alongside solar and wind projects, Iran is pursuing geothermal and biomass initiatives, though these remain at early stages compared to its solar ambitions.

Iran's climate and geography offer high potential for renewable generation, with vast areas of high solar irradiance and strong seasonal winds in the north and southeast. The latest figures underscore a rapid acceleration in clean power development after years of slower growth.

While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

Among the mining sector's different products, sponge iron is an outstanding example, as the production of this item is rising more and more in the country.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has stated that one of the most important reasons for the increase in sponge iron production in Iran is the establishment of new sponge iron plants, adding that in recent years, with its new strategy and with the participation of the private sector, the organization has been able to launch several projects to produce sponge iron.

Iran, Armenia sign cooperation documents in different areas

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran, accompanied by a delegation of his cabinet members, visited Armenia to strengthen bilateral relations across transport, infrastructure, and trade sectors. During the visit, Pezeshkian met with top Armenian officials to discuss strategic cooperation, particularly in transit corridors, regional connectivity, and economic partnerships.

During this trip, in order to enhance the level of relations, high-ranking officials of the both countries signed a joint statement and 10 memorandums of understanding and cooperation documents in the political, social, cultural, tourism, industrial, educational, road and urban development, art, and health fields in the presence of President Pezeshkian and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Developing transit corridors

On the sidelines of the visit, Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Davit Hovhannisyan held a key meeting to advance transportation infrastructure, enhance logistic networks, and resolve transit disputes.

In this meeting, Sadegh highlighted the strategic importance of north-south and Persian Gulf-Black Sea corridors and urged improvements in Armenian road, rail, and logistics systems to facilitate the transfer of goods.

He also called for a revision of the roughly \$330 disparity in tariffs between the two countries and stressed that new transit routes should avoid geopolitical disruptions.

Sadegh described the reopening of the Jolfa-Yerevan-Georgia rail link as a major step in boosting regional transit and characterized President Pezeshkian's visit as a turning point in Tehran-Yerevan transport and logistics relations.

Hovhannisyan thanked Iran for its support, particularly following the 2024 earthquake, praised Iranian contractors' performance, announced a tender for a new segment of the north-south route, and confirmed the forma-



tion of a joint working group to address tariff discrepancies for Iranian vehicles.

Targeting \$3.0 billion of trade

In the economic arena, Iranian Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Seyed Mohammad Atabak met with Armenian Minister of Economy Gevorg Papoyan and announced a target to increase bilateral trade to \$3.0 billion.

Both ministers proposed establishing a joint working group, including their deputies, to expedite agreements and facilitate commerce in industrial and trade sectors, highlighting the broader aim of deepening Iran-Armenia economic cooperation.

Establishing joint committee to ease border, customs issues

In another meeting, Mohammad Reza Bahraman, deputy head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), met with the deputy head of Armenia's State Revenue Committee to propose the creation of a joint four-party committee, including Iran and Armenia's chambers of commerce and customs authorities.

The committee aims to resolve issues related to certificates of origin and other border and customs matters while fostering private-sector cooperation.

Bahraman emphasized that transparent border procedures benefit both Iranian traders and their Armenian counterparts.

He invited the Armenian delegation to visit Iran for joint events to further explore investment opportunities and strengthen relations.

In parallel, Hamid Asgari, ICCIMA's international deputy, noted that Iran expects to leverage

"green corridor" mechanisms, particularly for perishable goods, and stressed the importance of digitalizing customs processes to accelerate information flow and certificates of origin issuance.

Armenia's State Revenue Committee deputy, Rafael Gorkian, confirmed that Armenia has increased investment in border infrastructure, including awarding a contract for a new border road to an Iranian company. He emphasized that illegal crossings will be strictly prevented and expressed hope that these measures will enhance bilateral economic cooperation.

In mid-July, Iran's ambassador to Yerevan said that bilateral trade between Iran and Armenia has reached nearly \$1.0 billion, reflecting deepening economic ties between the two neighbors.

Speaking to Armenian state television, Ambassador Mehdi Sobhani said trade volume between the two countries has grown steadily and is now approaching the \$1.0 billion mark.

Data from Armenia's official statistics agency, Armstat, shows that bilateral trade reached \$737.4 million in 2024, a 6.5 percent increase compared with 2023. Trade in the first five months of 2025 totaled \$278.7 million, up four percent year-on-year.

Earlier this year, Sobhani said Tehran aims to boost annual trade with Yerevan to \$1.0 billion by 2025, a goal that now appears within reach.

The ambassador also highlighted growing tourism flows between the two countries.

"In the first 11 months of last year, around 276,000 Arme-

nian citizens visited Iran, while 176,000 Iranian tourists traveled to Armenia during the same period," he said, calling the trend a "natural process" amid expanding ties.

In the first 11 months of 2024, the number of Iranian visitors to Armenia rose 20 percent compared with 2023, according to the Armenian Tourism Committee. Iranians accounted for eight percent of Armenia's 691,900 tourist arrivals in the first five months of this year — the third-largest group after visitors from Russia (37 percent) and Georgia (15 percent).

Iran and Armenia have been strengthening energy, transport, and trade cooperation in recent years, with joint infrastructure projects including a nearly complete electricity transmission line and expanded border crossings. The two sides have also committed to removing obstacles to deeper integration, especially in light of Armenia's strategic shift toward alternative trade routes following tensions with Azerbaijan.

Also, in mid-April, Armenia's ambassador to Iran Grigor Hovhannisyan called for expanded bilateral cooperation to raise trade volume between Tehran and Yerevan to \$3.0 billion, stressing that current economic ties fall short of the two nations' strong political relations.

According to Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Hovhannisyan made the remarks during a meeting with the chamber's president, saying Armenia places high priority on ties with Iran and is eager to strengthen cooperation across economic, political, and cultural spheres.

"We face no restrictions in deepening our relations. To reach our initial goal of \$1.0 billion in trade and eventually hit the three billion mark, we need joint efforts, especially between the chambers of commerce of both countries," the ambassador said.

He emphasized the need to facilitate trade delegations and promote investment opportunities in Armenia, adding that the Armenian embassy is ready to assist Iranian investors in exploring the market.

Economy minister outlines new financing plans to curb inflation, support production

TEHRAN – Iran's Economy Minister said the government is preparing revisions to the 2025 budget law to reduce the deficit, expand supply chain financing, and steer large enterprises toward the capital market in a bid to ease inflationary pressures and boost liquidity for the private sector.

Speaking at the 131st meeting of the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council, Seyed Ali Madanizadeh said Iran has long struggled with budget shortfalls. Under the approved 2025 budget, the government must issue bonds worth 80 quadrillion rials (\$160 billion), reflecting the scale of the deficit.

He said revenue and spending shocks this year have further deepened the gap.

Madanizadeh warned that when banks divert liquidity to buy government bonds, funds that should go to private borrowers are absorbed into state spending. This, he said, leads to higher lending rates and weaker access to credit for businesses, while also pushing up inflation as banks rely more on central bank financing.

Budget revision to ease pressure

Calling the deficit the root of inflationary

pressures, Madanizadeh said the government is working with parliament to cut non-essential expenditures. Reducing reliance on bond sales, he added, will free up space for private sector financing and help bring down interest rates.

Supply chain financing expansion

The minister said the government plans to expand supply chain financing, where credit is injected at the beginning or end of the chain rather than into each production unit.

This reduces liquidity needs and, when linked to the capital market, lowers inflationary effects.

He said tools such as "GAM" bonds will be scaled up for this purpose.

Large firms to tap capital market

Madanizadeh said large enterprises, given their financial transparency and stock market presence, will be encouraged to issue corporate bonds at lower rates, easing pressure on banks.

This, he noted, will allow smaller firms, which lack access to cheap bond issuance, to obtain financing from the banking system.

TCCIMA to showcase private sector at Iran transport, logistics fair

TEHRAN – The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA), together with several provincial private sector associations, will take part in the sixth Iran Inter-

national Transport, Logistics and Related Industries Exhibition, scheduled for August 28–31 at Tehran's International Permanent Fairgrounds.

Organizers said the chamber will

set up a dedicated pavilion to provide services to its members and promote private sector engagement.

The exhibition will bring together domestic and international

players in road, sea, rail, air and urban transport, aiming to strengthen logistics services for Iran's economy, expand cooperation, and showcase the latest capabilities and achievements in the sector.

Sponge iron export up 30% in 4 months on year

TEHRAN- Export of Iran's sponge iron rose 30 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

As previously announced by the Iranian Steel Producers Association, Iran's export of sponge iron increased 11 percent in value, and 12 percent in volume in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), as compared to the previous year.

As ISPA announced, Iran exported sponge iron valued at \$401 million in 1403, while the figure was \$361 million in 1402.

Direct reduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron, is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

Ukraine faces lose-lose choice

Ukraine peace push exposes transatlantic fault lines

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - Three days after giving Russian President Vladimir Putin a warm, high-profile welcome in Alaska, President Donald Trump met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other European leaders at the White House on Monday.

Among those attending were French President Emmanuel Macron, Finnish President Alexander Stubb, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Prime Minister Gorgia Meloni, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

They projected a sense of unity and seemed aligned on potential steps to curb the fighting between Ukraine and Russia, but their diplomatic efforts fell short of ending the conflict.

Much of the meeting focused on the security guarantees that the United States and European nations could provide Ukraine if Zelensky agreed to a deal to end the fighting. Certain differences became apparent, such as Merz's call for a ceasefire before further negotiations with Russia—a suggestion that was gently rebuffed by Trump.

All participants seemed aligned on the plan to arrange direct talks between Zelensky and Putin. Trump also spoke with Putin to explore the



possibility of a direct meeting between the two leaders.

Yuri Ushakov, a foreign policy aide to Putin, said the Russian and American leaders had agreed to designate senior negotiators to conduct direct talks between Russia and Ukraine, but he did not indicate whether Putin himself would take part. Although Putin has not explicitly rejected a meeting with Zelensky, he has emphasized that he does not regard the Ukrainian president as legitimate or his equal.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the United States and other Western allies have provided significant military support to Ukraine and imposed sanctions on Russia to pressure Putin to end the war. These measures, however, have so far failed to achieve their objectives. Frustrated by the limited

impact of sanctions and pressure, the parties are now attempting to pursue an end to the war through dialogue.

Meaningful security guarantees for Ukraine, as they have demanded, would likely require European troops on the ground—an option Russia is highly unlikely to accept.

The issue of what territory Kyiv might need to cede in a peace deal also remained unclear after the Monday talks. Ukraine faces a difficult dilemma: refusing to cede land could prolong the war, while agreeing to give up territory might be seen as surrendering to Russia's demands; a classic lose-lose situation. This predicament reflects both Ukraine's trust in the West and Western interference in Ukraine's affairs, including plans to eventually incorporate Ukraine into NATO.

Afifeh Abedi, a researcher and foreign policy expert, told the Tehran Times that the US under Trump has taken a step back from direct involvement in the conflict, a shift that has significant implications for Europe. She noted that “since Trump took office, the United States has maintained a significant distance from developments in the war in Ukraine; a stance that became even more apparent after meeting with Putin in Alaska.”

Abedi said this change highlights that Europe can no longer rely on the US to escalate conflicts or increase pressure on Russia. The White House meetings with multiple European leaders underscored, in her view, “the structural weakness and dependence of Brussels on Washington in the areas of security and crisis management in Ukraine.” She described the gathering as a clear effort by European leaders to prevent a widening strategic gap across the Atlantic.

Looking ahead, Abedi emphasized the uncertainty surrounding Europe's next moves. “If European leaders take a pragmatic approach and agree to negotiations with Moscow, a path to peace and reduced tensions could emerge.” But she warned that if Europe continues to insist on a military solution, the situation could become increasingly complex and high-risk.



From page 1 ▶ This humanitarian assistance package would include fuel, water, electricity, hospital and bakery rehabilitation, and debris removal equipment. The United Nations, its agencies, the Red Crescent, and other international organizations operating in Gaza would be responsible for receiving and distributing the aid.

The Rafah crossing in southern Gaza would be opened in both directions, in line with a previous agreement. Sources have also revealed that for every deceased Israeli captive returned, the bodies of ten Palestinians would be released.

Furthermore, the proposal calls for the release of all Palestinian women and children held in Israeli prisons.

Separately, Reuters quoted an unnamed Egyptian official who said the latest ceasefire propos-

Hamas accepts proposed deal for ceasefire

al includes a 60-day pause in military operations, along with a prisoner exchange that would see Palestinian detainees released in return for half of the Israeli captives.

Hebrew Channel 13 stated that Israel has officially received Hamas's response from the mediators.

The Yedioth Ahronoth reported, “In the end, Netanyahu will have to explain to his ministers and the public why he is pursuing a partial agreement that is not much different from what was on the table less than a month ago.”

The report suggests that Netanyahu has been pursuing a ceasefire agreement, even as he plans to occupy Gaza City in the north.

“There is no need for illusions. It was not the Israeli threat of seizing Gaza that changed Hamas's stance.

What exactly are we threatening with? Destroying buildings? Mass expulsion of residents who refuse to evacuate voluntarily? Soldiers forcibly moving the elderly, children, or pregnant women? Or simply more deaths?” Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

Domestic pressure on Netanyahu's government has intensified due to mass street protests, a growing number of Israeli army casualties

caused by resistance movements, and the continued failure to retrieve captives from the Gaza Strip despite the prolonged genocidal war.

Internationally, the Israeli regime has become increasingly isolated, even among its traditional allies, as harrowing images of mass starvation continue to emerge from Gaza.

Yedioth Ahronoth asked: “What now? If Israel says ‘no’ to the deal – it will fall into the trap Hamas has set. If mere talk about controlling Gaza City already leads to growing calls for sanctions, then an actual military entry into Gaza will cause a much more severe collapse.”

The paper went on to say, “It should always be remembered: there is always room to sink lower.

If entering Gaza, with all the scenes of atrocities, destruction, devastation, and deaths, is expected to drag Israel into collapse, then entering Gaza after Hamas says ‘yes’ to the Witkoff plan and Israel says ‘no’ will lead to an even greater collapse. Once again, it becomes clear that Hamas's strategy is far more clever than that of Israel.”

The mediators who presented the proposal to Hamas are Egypt and Qatar, while the ceasefire framework was developed in coordination with the United States.

Positions by Larijani, Qassem, and al-Houthi abort Washington's threats to Lebanon

From page 1 ▶ These vocal positions were discussed during Barack's meetings with President Joseph Aoun, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

This is in addition to Lebanese Army Commander Rodolphe Heikal, who was asked about his assessment of the measures the military establishment might take to disarm the Shiite Hezbollah, commonly known as the Resistance.

General Heikal's response was that the army would not take any action that might harm peace in

Lebanon.

This was considered a decisive response by the Lebanese Army to American pressure to compel the army to implement everything ordered by the government.

Tehran Times' source believes this prompted Lebanese officials to demand that Washington ensure that any step by Nawaf Salam's government would be accompanied by a corresponding step by the Israeli occupation entity, especially after the cabinet voted to disarm Hezbollah within a deadline no later than the beginning of next year.

Barrack did not miss any opportunity to deceive the Lebanese, claiming that the issue of the Resistance's weapons was a local affair, in addition to his allegation that the step to disarm the Resistance “is in the interest of the Shiites.”

The source further believes that Aoun and Salam's positions reflect a serious fear of political and popular repercussions of the decision to disarm the Resistance.

Aoun and Salam had evidently assumed that the Shiite community would acquiesce, but were taken aback by their readiness to defend

their weapons—even if it meant engaging in a “Karbala-like battle”—amid concerns that, should the government fail, the Israeli adversary might take matters into its own hands.

Reportedly, the Nawaf Salam government emphasized the need to support the Lebanese Army, which lacks the necessary capabilities or to carry out the mission alone, as well as the need to renew UNIFIL's mandate in the south.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ukrainian child has a different right to life than a brown-eyed Palestinian child.

And Mr. Netanyahu, if you care about others, please let water and food into Gaza. We Iranians have more drinking water than you Israelis who live by stealing water resources from neighboring countries. We Iranians have a proverb that says that if a bald man could cure someone else's baldness, he would first cure his own. No more show will deceive the people of the world, especially after these massacres in the Middle East.

Roundtable: Lebanon will be a prey if Hezbollah is disarmed



Speakers at the roundtable are united in portraying Hezbollah's weapons as both a national and regional deterrent whose removal would destabilize Lebanon and embolden its adversaries.

From page 1 ▶ Despite the sacrifices endured, Hezbollah remains a vital shield and deterrence against Israel's ongoing ceasefire violations, including repeated airstrikes and the continued occupation of southern Lebanese territories.

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia have exerted mounting political and economic pressure on Lebanon, conditioning reconstruction aid on disarmament.

In line with these demands, Lebanon's cabinet approved a U.S.-backed plan on August 5 to restrict arms to state forces. Hezbollah's Secretary General, Sheikh Naim Qassem, firmly rejected this dictate, vowing to preserve the movement's arsenal as an essential means of defending Lebanon and countering Israeli aggression.

Mohammadreza Moradi, chief editor of the international desk at Mehr News Agency, warned at the roundtable meeting that the disarmament plan threatens Lebanon's stability, paraphrasing Qassem's vow to “fight like Karbala” against it. He stressed that Hezbollah's weapons are essential to resist Israeli occupation.

Ali Ahmad, a Lebanese political researcher, criticized the current government's alignment with U.S. interests, stating, “The government believes Resistance must end while occupation persists.”

He noted that Hezbollah prevented further Israeli incursions during the September-October war, adding that the group is open to strategic dialogue but will not disarm while Israel's aggression continues.

Ahmad Dastmalchian, former Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, framed the issue as part of a broader regional struggle, saying, “Hezbollah's weapons are a matter of honor, rooted among the people.”

India and China signal diplomatic thaw as Wang Yi meets Modi

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's two-day visit to New Delhi has underscored a renewed commitment by both Beijing and New Delhi to place their relationship on a constructive path.

Meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, Wang conveyed a personal message and invitation from President Xi Jinping for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Tianjin.

“Since my meeting with President Xi in Kazan last year, India-China relations have made steady progress guided by respect for each other's interests and sensitivities,” Modi said in a statement on X.

He added, “I look forward to our next meeting in Tianjin on the sidelines of the SCO Summit. Stable, predictable, constructive ties between India and China will contribute significantly to regional as well as global peace and prosperity.”

Wang's engagements in Delhi began on Monday with talks alongside External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, covering bilateral, regional, and global issues ranging from trade to river data sharing. Both sides emphasized the need to address security concerns, with the Indian statement noting, “Minister Wang Yi concurred that countering terrorism should be given the highest priority.”

Earlier, Wang told reporters that India and China should view each other as “partners” rather than “adversaries or threats,” adding that relations were on a “positive trend” towards cooperation.

His meeting with National Security Advisor

He argued that U.S., Israeli, and Arab reactionary efforts to disarm Hezbollah are a strategic miscalculation that could destabilize the region.

Ahmad al-Shami, an expert from Yemen's Al-Masirah TV, emphasized Hezbollah's historical victories, stating, “These weapons stopped the enemy in 2000 and 2006.” He called Hezbollah's arsenal “the honor of the nation,” warning that disarmament would enable Israel's regional ambitions.

Mohammad Khawajoui, the Tehran-based director of the Lebanon Studies at the Middle East Strategic Research Center, described disarmament as a U.S.-orchestrated attempt to destroy resistance, noting, “Disarming Hezbollah now would be a fatal blow.” He highlighted concerns among Lebanon's Shia community that the plan targets their security, given their proximity to Israel.

Zainb Farhat, an expert at Lebanon's Naba TV, called the disarmament decision “purely American,” citing U.S. envoy Tom Barrack's threats to turn Lebanon into “another Syria.” She warned of potential civil disobedience or cabinet resignations if the plan proceeds, though Hezbollah opposes internal conflict.

Mohammad Ali Hasannia, an expert on Arab world issues, traced Hezbollah's rise to the 1980s Israeli invasions and the influence of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

He argued that disarming Hezbollah would embolden U.S. and Israeli efforts to target resistance movements in Iraq next, noting, “The Lebanese army, trained only with light U.S. weapons, cannot handle Hezbollah's arsenal.”

Speakers were united in rejecting the disarmament push, portraying Hezbollah's weapons as both a national and regional deterrence whose removal would destabilize Lebanon and embolden its adversaries.

Ajit Doval focused on de-escalation measures and boundary affairs, with Wang remarking, “We are happy to share that stability has now been restored at the borders. The setbacks that we faced in the last few years were not in our interest.”

This diplomatic thaw follows incremental steps since last year to reduce tensions along the disputed Himalayan border, including agreed patrolling protocols and the resumption of religious pilgrimages into Tibet. India has restarted visas for Chinese tourists, and discussions are underway to reopen border trade routes.

The revival in bilateral warmth also comes against the backdrop of Washington's unilateral tariff measures and sanctions that have unsettled global trade flows.

Earlier this month, U.S. President Donald Trump — after warning of possible secondary sanctions over India's continued purchases of discounted Russian oil — sharply increased duties on Indian goods, drawing criticism in Delhi as “unfair and unjustified” and prompting Beijing to denounce Washington's “coercion and pressure” amid its own defense of energy trade with Moscow.

Both Asian powers have expressed support for a multipolar global order, with Jaishankar stating, “We seek a fair, balanced and multi-polar world order, including a multipolar Asia.”

Modi's planned visit to China for the SCO Summit on August 31 will be his first since 2018, potentially marking a turning point in the trajectory of India-China relations.

A word to the unrivalled philanthropists of our time: Melania and Netanyahu

By Habib Ahmadzadeh

TEHRAN - When I was a teenager, I read Bleak House by Charles Dickens. In that story, there was a woman who thought about children in Africa but never looked at her own children and did not meet their needs.

Melania, the first lady of the United States, gave a letter to her husband Trump to give to Putin. The letter said that Mr. Putin, killing children is wrong and they should live in peace. And you can stop this killing just by moving your pen on paper.

And Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, sent a message to the people of Iran that the Israeli government is saddened by the shortage of water in Iran and his government is ready to solve the shortage and rush to help the Iranian people.

Now, dear Melania, before you give the letter to Putin, please advise your husband Trump, the closest person in the world to you, to stop complicity with Netanyahu in the ongoing slaughter of over 30,000 children in the Palestinian Gaza Strip. Unless you believe that a blue-eyed

Azerbaijan Airlines to resume Tehran flights, launch new Tabriz route in September

TEHRAN – Azerbaijan Airlines (AZAL) is set to expand its services to Iran by resuming flights to Tehran and launching a new route to Tabriz in September, aimed at improving connectivity between the two neighboring countries.

The flag carrier announced that from Sept. 1, 2025, it will restart its Baku–Tehran flights, operating four times a week on Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Two days later, on Sept. 3, it will begin a new Baku–Tabriz service, with flights on Wednesdays and Sundays.

The move is set to be part of its strategy to strengthen its regional network and support tourism and trade flows between Azerbaijan and Iran.

“The reintroduction of the Baku–Tehran schedule and the launch of the Baku–Tabriz route will provide travelers with more opportunities to discover the cultural and historical heritage of both countries,” the airline said in a statement.



Tehran, Iran's capital, is a major gateway for business and cultural tourism, with attractions including the Golestan Palace, the National Museum and traditional bazaars. The new Tabriz route will connect Azerbaijani travelers to the historic city in northwestern Iran, while offering Iranians easier access to Baku's modern skyline and UNESCO-listed landmarks.

The additional flights are expected to boost visitor numbers, strengthen cultural ties, and encourage cross-border trade.

Cultural heritage bell to be rung in schools

TEHRAN—Deputy Cultural Heritage Minister Ali Darabi said that the cultural heritage bell will be rung in schools across Iran as of September 23 of this year so that the new generation can connect with the country's historical identity, Mehr news agency reported.

Addressing the specialized meeting regarding the railway sector on Tuesday, he added, “It is essential that these meetings be held continuously in all eight provinces connected to the national railway. Holding special programs at established bases, with the presence of students, can expand public awareness of this heritage.”

Iran has a rich culture with a deep historical background, which is the responsibility of every Iranian, in addition to government organizations and institutions, to preserve this culture and heritage. This heritage has been passed down from generation to generation, and everyone from children to adults should be diligent in preserving this precious treasure. Children, as narrators of the coming years, need to become more familiar with

their own identity and their ancestors, so introducing them to cultural heritage is an important and valuable step towards familiarizing them with the ancient heritage of the country.

Since education is one of the main pillars of sustainable cultural development, it is necessary to identify ways to educate children and intelligently use the appropriate way to establish a deep connection between children and history so that they can educate collaborators for the country's precious heritage.

Cultural heritage is the achievement of ancestors that build the identity of society. In order to institutionalize the culture of protecting this precious heritage, children will have a greater share because they are the assets of the future. By educating children in this field, people related to them can also participate in implementing this important matter. By introducing this precious heritage and its existential value to children, loyal guardians can be trained to preserve these achievements.

Trans-Iranian Railway among top 5 registered by UNESCO

TEHRAN—Only five railways are on the UNESCO list, which are from Austria, India, Switzerland, Italy, and Iran, said Vahidali Qardashi, head of the World Heritage Site of the Trans-Iranian Railway.

Speaking at the special gathering attended by Deputy Cultural Heritage Minister Ali Darabi, a senior official of the Cultural Heritage Ministry Farhad Azizi and managers and assistants of cultural heritage departments of eight provinces connected to the national railway on Tuesday, he said that Trans-Iranian Railway was the first North-South Corridor in the region that connected Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, IRNA reported.

During the gathering, the technical, cultural and tourism capacities of the 1394-kilometer-long railway was studied. This route, passing through eight sub-climates and four major climates, has created an unparalleled masterpiece of engineering, architecture, art, and cultural interaction. The construction of more than 251 large bridges, 4,000 small bridges, 245 tunnels, and 90 stations on this route, including the Veresk Bridge, the three golden lines, and the largest metal bridge over the Karun River in Ahvaz, is a manifestation of Iranian engineering power in the 20th century. The total length of the tunnels on this route reaches 83 kilometers, including the Gaduk and Chahar Abdiz tunnels; works that were considered technical and architectural masterpieces of the world in their time.

Qardashi said that it is the first railway registered from West Asia. The engineering masterpiece is a symbol of Iranian management during the history.

“One of the unique features of Iran's rail-

way is that it passes through four different climates. passengers on a rail trip can experience significant differences in temperature and climate, a blessing that few countries in the world enjoy.”

He emphasized that this railway is not only a transportation route, but also a unique example of an engineering system that has created remarkable transformations in natural and human environments by crossing mountains, plains and rivers. This route shows how engineering can overcome geographical limitations while creating new opportunities for the development of local communities and cultural ties, he pointed out.

Also, Farhad Azizi, a senior official of the Cultural Heritage Ministry, said that for any global project, the key to success and proper utilization of the potential of these projects is to have a proportionate and effective plan and facilitate the participation of all stakeholders, especially local people and communities.

“Today, we have a unique capacity and a reputable and global brand. We must hold these meetings in form of practical and interactive workshops and provide the necessary platforms for introducing the outstanding global values of the works. The program of the National and World Heritage Sites is not limited to introducing the works, but is designed with the aim of laying the groundwork for the maximum role of all institutions, sympathizers and investors so that comprehensive participation leads to strengthening the infrastructure and sustainable exploitation of this world heritage and Iran's railways become a powerful tourism and economic axis.”

Shiraz emerges as key health tourism hub

TEHRAN – Shiraz, one of Iran's main cultural and tourism destinations, has become a leading center for regional medical tourism, local and national officials said.

The city offers advanced healthcare facilities, specialist medical teams, and integrated medical tourism services that attract visitors from neighboring countries as well as across Iran, according to Mohsen Ziaei, who serves as the tourism chief of Fars province.

Authorities have launched a centralized health tourism system in Shiraz, the provincial capital, to provide international patients with access to licensed hospitals, travel service offices, and professional tour guides. The platform also allows patients to file complaints about medical or travel services, which will be handled through a legal oversight mechanism, Ziaei said.

“This system will play a vital role in ensuring transparency and efficiency in the medical tourism industry,” Ziaei told reporters, adding that strict monitoring would help guarantee high standards of care.

Oman has shown interest in expanding cooperation with Shiraz in health tourism, with



Omani officials emphasizing the importance of building closer bilateral ties to encourage patients to seek treatment in the Iranian city. The move reflects growing recognition of Shiraz's medical capabilities among regional countries.

The expansion in Shiraz aligns with Iran's broader strategy to boost health tourism nationwide. Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpei said the government has launched an integrated health tourism system in Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, and Fars provinces, with plans to expand to the rest of the country.

Archaeological survey launched to protect Surt in northern Iran

TEHRAN – A team of archaeologists has begun a survey to determine the boundaries and propose a protective buffer zone for the ancient site of Surt in Mazandaran province, northern Iran, officials said on Monday.

The project will be supported by the provincial department for cultural heritage, and it has been authorized by Iran's Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, CHTN reported.

The excavation team is led by Saman Sourtiji, assistant professor and faculty member at the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, with the participation of local archaeologists, the Islamic Council, and the village administration of Orost, and the management of the Surt natural springs (better known as Badab-e Surt by the locals) tourism complex.

Preliminary studies show that the site lies along a major historical route linking the ancient settlement of Qusheh (“City of a Hun-

dred Gates”) to the Gorgan plain, containing evidence of successive settlements, Sourtiji said.

Surt is known for its travertine stepped springs with red, cream, and yellow hues, which were inscribed on Iran's national natural heritage list as the country's second registered natural site. Surface finds now indicate that the area was also a significant settlement from the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age through the Iron Age, continuing into the 9th and 10th centuries AH (15th–16th centuries CE).

According to Sourtiji, the site covers more than 300 hectares and includes ancient settlement areas and cemeteries. It is bordered by Mount Surt in the north, the colorful travertine springs in the south, and rangelands and foothills to the east and west.

He said the natural features of Surt also make it unique. The springs include a large saline pool of about 500 square meters, smaller slightly acidic and carbonated springs, and

another toxic to livestock, alongside an upstream freshwater spring that sustained ancient habitation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the archaeologist warned that the site faces serious threats from illegal excavations, road construction, and tourism-related development. Implementing this probing program to define the site's boundaries and propose a legal buffer zone is a necessary step for sustainable protection of this cultural and natural heritage, he said.

The findings will also help clarify the historical significance of the area, paving the way for broader excavations, improved management, and stronger preservation efforts, the archaeologist added.

Sourtiji also called for stronger institutional support to safeguard Surt as a “treasure of Iran's history and nature” and to prepare it for potential nomination to the UNESCO World Heritage list.

High potential for creating global collection of Malayer carpets



TEHRAN—Malayer in Hamedan province, has been the cradle of Iranian art and creativity in carpet weaving since the olden times.

It is not only one of the largest hand-woven carpet production hubs but also has a special status in the history of the Iranian carpet industry with its unique diversity in patterns, colors, and weaving styles.

Carpet weaving is not simply a profession or industry but also a portion of the cultural and social identity of people of this land; a heritage which has survived in small rural workshops and old houses and has been passed down from generation to generation, ISNA reported.

Every region of Malayer has its own identity: From the elegance of Shahribaab and Jozan to the geometric-nomadic originality of Mishan and the enduring patterns of Musa Khan and Hosseinabad. This unique diversity has turned Malayer into a living museum of Iranian carpets; the place where a foreign customer can observe various authentic Iranian designs

and patterns side by side in just one trip.

Malayer's color palette, from lacquer and turquoise to olive and cream, combined with the durability of Turkish knots and the use of cotton warp and weft, has created carpets that are both beautiful and artistically elegant, as well as strong and durable.

Many ancient patterns like Mishan rugs are currently kept at the world's reliable museums and palaces. The fame of the art of Malayari weavers has spread throughout the world.

But the importance of Malayer carpets is not limited to their artistic aspect; this art industry plays a decisive role in the regional economy and the country's non-oil exports. The markets of Europe, West Asia, East Asia, and even the United States have been customers of Malayer carpets for years, but they struggle with obstacles such as the lack of a single brand, sanctions, and the lack of standard raw materials.

Hamidreza Forouzanahsan, head of Hamadan Hand-Woven Carpet Production and Exporters Association, stated that Malayer is not just a carpet weaving center, but also a cluster of independent centers with diverse design identities. Malayer is the first city in Iran that has the highest number of weavers, diverse colors and patterns, he added.

He said each of the local carpeting weaving centers is active in forms of household or rural

workshops. Overall, the number of weavers has decreased compared to the past, and there are about hundreds of active weavers in the villages and city of Malayer, but this number is much lower than in the 1980s and 1990s, he pointed out.

Mishan pattern is one of the oldest carpet patterns of Malayer with diverse designs like geometric, floral, special fish and slime-betta combination. Many older samples of Mishan rugs are kept at world's museums and palaces.

Stating that the thread count of Mishan carpets ranges from medium to very high (depending on the period and order), he added that Mishan carpets are woven in both single and double piles, depending on the style and time of weaving, and the target market for Mishan carpet designs is collectors, museums, and special orders from Europe and America if restrictions are lifted.

Forouzanahsan said that the UAE is mainly a buyer of Malayer carpets as an export center. Germany, China, Italy, and the United States also want Malayer carpets, he added.

According to him, the unique variety of designs and colors of Malayer rugs has the potential to create a global collection of Malayer rugs.

He stated that Malayer can be present in large exhibitions titled 'Malayer Pavilion', in which each of the designs of Jozan, Mishan,

€6 billion visioned for medical tourism revenues

Last September, Mohammad-Reza Vaez-Mahdavi, Chairman of Iran's Scientific Association of Health Economy, announced that the Islamic Republic has the potential to generate €6 billion annually from medical tourism with proper planning. He also highlighted visions to become a healthcare hub for West Asia in the coming years, which includes plans to export €1 billion worth of vaccines and medical equipment annually.

Available data suggests that Iran's current annual exports of medicine amount to €200 million. According to a report released by the Iranian Health Ministry in August 2023, Iran received about one million medical tourists annually, with foreign patients seeking treatments across various specialties. “Every year, one million foreign patients are treated in Iran,” the report stated, underlining the country's growing influence in the global health sector.

Neighboring countries, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Armenia, and Tajikistan constitute Iran's main source of medical tourism.

‘World Humanitarian Day, an opportunity to showcase solidarity among nations’

TEHRAN – The World Humanitarian Day is a symbol of solidarity, altruism, and sacrifice among nations, an opportunity to pay more attention to the role of humanitarian organizations in alleviating human suffering, according to the director of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

“It is a day to honor aid workers and volunteers. It is also a reminder of the shared responsibility of all nations in the face of humanitarian crises. Any humanitarian movement will serve as a bridge to promote peace and solidarity across the world,” Mojnaws quoted Razieh Alishvandi as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing a gathering held on Monday on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day, which is celebrated annually on August 19.

Elaborating on the services offered by the IRCS, Alishvandi said, “The efforts of the Iranian Red Crescent Society are not limited to relief services. It plays a significant role in humanitarian diplomacy in the region and the globe. Constructive interactions with other national societies, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the global Red Cross are part of the society’s achievements.”

The official went on to high-



light that the IRCS has always been at the forefront of humanitarian relief efforts. “From active presence/ participation in (addressing) natural disasters in the region to providing aid to the oppressed people of Gaza and Lebanon, the Iranian Red Crescent Society has always strived to keep the flag of humanity flying high in the international arena,” Alishvandi further noted.

IFRC honors IRCS aid workers martyred in 12-day war

Underscoring the theme of #ActforHumanity, the IFRC, in a press release on August 18, has expounded on the IRCS rescue workers’ efforts, courage, and sacrifice during the 12-day war imposed by Israel on Iran in June.

On a conflict-torn night in Tehran, Morteza Zakeri, head of a

relief and rescue team, was dispatched to a residential building struck by airstrikes. He arrived to find devastation – collapsed homes, shattered glass, and streets filled with terrified women and children.

“There was no time to pause,” he says. “We began clearing debris immediately. The screams of trapped families pushed us to move faster, despite the constant risk of further collapse.”

Yet in the middle of fear and rubble, Zakeri found pride in the courage of his team. “It’s not just duty anymore,” he says. “It’s love. We stand by our people until the very end.”

On World Humanitarian Day 2025 (19 August), we unite with humanitarians around the world under the banner #ActforHu-

manity to honour the courage of people like Morteza who rush toward danger to save lives – often at great personal risk.

We also join with others in pledging to further heighten our resolve to ensure humanitarian workers and emergency responders are respected and protected as they carry out their life-saving duties.

Since the beginning of 2024, a total of 50 Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and workers have been killed in the line of duty. 18 of those deaths occurred in 2025. Each one of them stood under the protective emblems of the Red Cross, Red Crescent, or Red Crystal – which under international humanitarian law means they must be respected, protected, and never become a target.

This includes five people from the Iranian Red Crescent Society – namely Mojtaba Maleki, Amir Hassan Jamshidpour, Mehdi Zartaji Saray, Yaser Zivari, and Seyyed Ali Akbar Mir Mohammadi – whose volunteers and staff responded with extraordinary bravery during a deadly escalation of violence in June 2025.

Some of them made the ultimate sacrifice. Others survived, but carry with them the scars, stories, and spirit of what it means to be a humanitarian.

National youth population award slated for November

TEHRAN – The first national youth population award is scheduled to be held on November 15 to underscore the crucial role of neighborhoods and mosques in removing childbearing barriers and addressing family problems in cities.

Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi, the secretary of the National Population Headquarters, invited all the related groups to attend the event.

The official went on to say that the performance of the related organizations will be assessed based on two main criteria, including their legal and internal duties.

Legal duties include those outlined in the youth population law, such as the health ministry’s measures in promoting natural childbirth, providing health and nutrition packages, or the measures taken by the ministries of welfare and education.

Internal duties focus on how the organization has supported its staff in marriage, childbearing, parental leave, or teleworking, she explained.

A part of the festival will be dedicated to choosing the best ideas, photos, and movies that are presented, focusing on families and childbearing, Vahid-Dastjerdi said.

Youth population law

Enacting the youth population law has stabilized the total fertility rate, slightly increasing the general fertility index over the past two years. After experiencing seven years of decline by about 20 percent, the fertility rate is now stabilized at around 1.6.

The total fertility rate has experienced a sharp decline since the Iranian calendar year 1394 (2015-2016), as the number of births reached 1.057 million in 1402 (2023-2024) from 1.570 million in 1394. However, since the

Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 2022–March 2023), the downward trend in fertility came to a halt.

However, it has intensified concerns over the decreasing trend in population growth in the coming years, and the probability of turning Iran into one of the oldest countries in the world, IRIB quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the Civil Registration Organization, as saying.

“At best, Iran’s population with a total fertility rate of 2.5 will reach 102,890,000 by the next seven years,” Mahmoudi said.

An important factor contributing to lower birth rates in the country is the cost of living. Indeed, due to the high inflation rate and the expensive real estate sector, many families are choosing to have a smaller family size. The current one-child trend is prevalent in many young Iranian families, many of whom also have to support their aging parents.

Due to the financial constraints, late marriage is another new trend. Delayed marriage, along with extended intervals between childbirth, is another factor.

Many incentives have been introduced to encourage childbearing by the Iran Welfare Organization and the Ministry of Health.

First, health care and medical benefits that are offered to childbearing mothers include:

Free or subsidized prenatal care. Public healthcare centers provide free or low-cost check-ups, lab tests, ultrasounds, and supplements (like folic acid and iron);

Insurance coverage: Most health insurance plans cover the majority of pregnancy-related expenses, including delivery (normal and cesarean)

Significant strides have been made in infertility treatment. Today, 100 percent of infertility treatment costs are covered by health insurance, and Iran has emerged as a regional leader in this field. Under certain programs, especially for low-income families, a monthly allowance is provided for children; and

Maternal health programs: Government health centers offer maternal training and support (breastfeeding, infant care, etc.).

Secondly, maternity leave and workplace rights:

Maternity leave: Women are entitled to 9 months (270 days) of paid maternity leave, fully covered by social security.

Job security: Iranian labor law ensures a woman’s right to return to her job after maternity leave, and

Reduced working hours: In some sectors, pregnant women may receive reduced working hours or lighter duties.

Despite offered incentives to encourage childbearing in line with the youth population law, the desired growth in the youth population has not been accomplished yet. It is one of the most important challenges facing the country.

According to the latest census, the number of aged citizens in the country is growing by 3.62 percent, which is five times faster than the total population growth rate, which is 1.24 percent. For the time being, elderly women account for 52.3 percent of the total population, outnumbering men (47.7 percent).

The aging of individuals signifies increased life expectancy. However, population aging demonstrates a shift in the distribution of a country’s population towards older ages which is not a favorable indicator.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Rainfall increases Lake Urmia level

Recent rainfall has increased the level of Lake Urmia to 1,271 meters, a step closer to its ecological level of 1,274 meters.

The lake is expected to reach its ecological level within 10 years by completing the restoration plans which started four years ago.

Farhad Sarkhosh, head of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program’s office in West Azarbaijan province, said that the Lake’s level is now 58 cm higher than it was last year.

According to the latest monitoring, the lake’s water volume is estimated at more than 3.6 billion cubic meters.

He added that the lake surface area has reached 2,883 square kilometers, adding that the figure is increased by 538 square kilometers compared to the same period last year.

افزایش سطح تراز دریاچه ارومیه بر اثر بارش

بارش های اخیر تراز فعلی دریاچه ارومیه را به یک هزار و ۲۷۱ متر و ۳۸ سانتی متر رسانده است که در حال رسیدن به تراز اکولوژیک یک هزار و ۲۷۴ متر است.

به گزارش ایرنا، فرهاد سرخوش رییس دفتر استانی ستاد احیای دریاچه ارومیه گفت سطح دریاچه ارومیه اکنون ۵۸ سانتی متر بیشتر از زمان مشابه سال گذشته است. طبق آخرین پایش صورت گرفته حجم آب این دریاچه بیش از سه میلیارد و ۶۷۰ میلیون مترمکعب برآورد شده است. وی با بیان اینکه وسعت دریاچه ارومیه در حال حاضر به بیش از ۲ هزار و ۸۸۳ کیلومتر مربع رسیده، اضافه کرد: وسعت این دریاچه نیز نسبت به سال گذشته ۵۳۸ کیلومتر مربع افزایش دارد.

Education, AI crucial to address non-communicable diseases: health minister

TEHRAN – Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has emphasized the importance of artificial intelligence (AI), telemedicine, and mobile health in managing non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Developing a smart healthcare system and increasing public awareness through preventive education and the promotion of health literacy are the key points in the future of the healthcare system, IRNA quoted Zafarqandi as saying. The adoption of modern technologies is unavoidable, so these tools can be employed to reduce costs and facilitate access to services, he added.

The official made the remarks while addressing the first session of the national committee for the prevention and control of NCD on Tuesday.

People’s health is not limited to medical treatment; health literacy and education play a significant role in improving the health of the society, as well, he noted.

Highlighting the importance of education and self-care, Zafarqandi said that raising public awareness of the primary symptoms of diseases will lead to early detection, which in turn will lower treatment costs and improve the success rate.

The official also stressed the need for the development of national, operational programs that are implementable in each province, as well as holding workshops for the implementation of screening programs for hypertension, diabetes, and blood lipids.

NCDs in Iran account for 82 percent of all deaths. Over the past 20 years, deaths caused by NCDs have risen by 14.5 percent.

Cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, and mental health diseases are the five main categories of NCDs.

Early screening of non-communicable diseases and control of risk factors are the two ways to deal with the diseases.

MOU signed for using AI in medical treatment

In January, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and Tehran University of Medical Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding to use artificial intelligence for medical treatment purposes.

The agreement which was inked on January 11 aims to promote the targeted support of the knowledge-based ecosystem in the field of health with a focus on omics and genomics stud-



ies, cell therapy in endocrinology and metabolism, person-centered medicine with artificial intelligence tools for prevention, prediction, diagnosis, and treatment, and finally innovation in the commercialization of products and services, ISNA reported.

Statistics have shown noticeable cost savings, about 40 percent, using artificial intelligence in health care in advanced countries. In some specific cases, like breast or lung cancers, artificial intelligence can lower healthcare costs by 80 percent. Hence, a knowledge-based economy should aim to utilize AI to save healthcare costs, IRIB quoted Mostafa Qanei, the secretary of the Biology Development Headquarters, as saying.

National health literacy movement

In 2024, the national health literacy movement started to be implemented in 10 provinces of the country in line with the theme of the second day of the national health week, an official with the health ministry’s Persian medicine office said.

“It’s a specialized program that aims to promote health and a healthy lifestyle and will involve multilateral interaction between the ministries of health and education,” IRNA quoted Hossein Rezaei-zadeh as saying.

The initiative would start at schools, targeting teachers, students (from first to sixth grade), and their parents.

Using graphic techniques and educational principles tailored for children, the program seeks to convey simple, practical messages about healthy lifestyles in the form of stories.

Health literacy and skills for maintaining a healthy lifestyle are among the most important elements for fostering health and wellbeing within families and society.

Knowledge-based companies to attend Arablab



Self-sufficiency in medicine, medical equipment is a priority

The issue of medicine and medical equipment production and self-sufficiency in these areas is one of the government’s priorities, Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has said.

Medicine and medical equipment are two important areas related to people’s health, he said, adding: “We are trying to reach self-sufficiency for the supply of medicine and medical equipment,” IRNA reported

On January 13, the head of Iran’s Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said that medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually.

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, IRNA quoted Abdolreza Yaqoubzadeh as saying.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment, such as anesthesia machines and other equipment, are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, he added.

Yaqoubzadeh went on to say that the country’s need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported.

Some 600 medical equipment companies are active in the country, producing around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market.

Medical equipment manufacturers in the country produce and supply over 10,000 types of medical equipment to domestic and foreign markets. Now, various pieces of laboratory equipment are manufactured at prices much lower than the same foreign products.



AUGUST 20, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Hearts of people are like wild beasts. They attach themselves to those who love and train them.
Imam Ali (AS)

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

Palestinian artists win awards at Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Stories of Palestinian resistance and life under Israeli military occupation have won awards at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

Palestinian artists Alaa Shehada and Sami Abu Wardeh were among the winners recognized for their solo productions at one of the world's largest arts festivals, The National reported.

Actor and writer Shehada won the Fringe First award, organized by Scottish newspaper The Scotsman, for his solo show "The Horse of Jenin". Comedian Abu Wardeh received the Heart Award for "Palestine: Peace de Resistance" as part of the Besties – awards run by Scottish arts publications and theater partners.

Both shows are being staged at the Pleasance Dome, with the festival to end on August 25.

In "The Horse of Jenin," Shehada traces the story of a horse sculpture once found in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin. The structure, built in 2003 using wreckage from an Israeli attack a year earlier, was a symbol of resistance for Palestinians, before Israeli forces used a bulldozer to remove it in 2023.

Throughout the 70-minute set, Shehada weaves in personal stories, humor, and tragedy to reflect on what became of the remains of the horse and the loss of his childhood friend Ahmed in the West Bank.

In its review, The Scotsman praised Shehada's exuberant performance while hailing the show as "a terrific tale of Palestinian life, laughter, and tragedy under unimaginable pressure".

Shehada welcomed the award on Instagram, saying the show's theme has never been more ur-

gent. "The show tells a story that has always mattered, and never more so," he said. "As the genocide in Gaza and the West Bank continues, and the occupation of Palestine persists, we must keep amplifying Palestinian voices, preserving culture and advocating for justice, freedom and an end to the violence."

The critical acclaim, bolstered by the award, has led to additional performances being scheduled during the festival, including extra shows on August 22 and 23.

Irish-Palestinian comedian Sami Abu Wardeh also received an accolade for "Palestine: Peace de Resistance," a stand-up show weaving character sketches and physical theater as it examines whether comedy is a viable form of resistance. Inspired by his life as a Palestinian born in exile, the show merges barbed political satire with absurdist elements such as hand puppetry and outlandish caricatures.

In awarding the Heart Award at the Besties, Louis Cammell, deputy editor of Fest magazine, which co-runs the award, described the show as "passionate, epic, and very funny".

Abu Wardeh took to social media to announce his victory. "Winner! Bestie Award for Heart. Thank you to everyone who made this possible."

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe traditionally takes place every August across the Scottish capital and features more than 3,000 productions.

At least 62,000 Palestinians have been killed and over 156,000 injured in Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Monday.

Iran mourns passing of Master Mahmoud Farshchian: legendary artist laid to rest

TEHRAN- On Monday, the funeral procession of Master Mahmoud Farshchian, the celebrated Iranian miniaturist and painter, was held in Isfahan, drawing a vast crowd of mourners from across Iran.

The ceremony took place at the prestigious Fine Arts Institute of Isfahan, a place closely linked to the artist's early career and life-long passion for art, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Prominent cultural figures, government officials, and ordinary citizens came together to honor a man whose pioneering work in Persian miniature and traditional Islamic art had left an indelible mark on Iran's cultural landscape, the report added.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi stated: "Farshchian was an artist who reflected Iranian and Islamic wisdom in his works; his art was for and with the people, not solely for a select group."

He emphasized that Master Farshchian's talent and genius were evident from a young age, adding: "Jalal al-Din Homaei, in the early years, called him 'The Sage' and 'The Lasting Legacy of Great Iranian Artists'; a description that reveals his deep understanding of the artist's esteemed position."

He also described another characteristic of Farshchian's art as being 'sacred and spiritual,' stating: "He had a profound connection with the realm of truth and the divine; therefore, his motifs and works are aligned with human instinct and resonate deeply within hearts."

"Mahmoud Farshchian was more than just an artist; he was a cultural ambassador, a visionary whose work transcended borders and resonated with hearts worldwide," he added.

Expressing condolences to the family of Master Farshchian and the Iranian nation, he emphasized: "He was not only a great artist but also a noble human being, whose lofty character surpassed his works and left a lasting legacy of Iranian culture and



art for the world."

He highlighted Farshchian's unique blend of traditional Persian aesthetics with contemporary influences, praising his ability to capture the essence of Iranian landscapes and emotions in his vibrant canvases. The minister also announced a national tribute to the artist, promising to establish a permanent exhibition space dedicated to his work at the National Museum of Iran.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, former Foreign Minister also addressed this ceremony, highlighted the noble character and artistry of Master Mahmoud Farshchian: "He was a gem of Iranian and world art, and his love for Iran and humanity flows through all his works."

Recalling some of his memories from numerous meetings with Master Farshchian in New York and Tehran, he added: "When the museum of Master Farshchian was inaugurated at the Saadabad Palace, the presence of Iran's top art masters and scholars at that event reflected the high and noble standing of the master."

He also emphasized Master

Farshchian's special reverence for the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and his role in introducing Iranian culture and art to the world: "Master Farshchian was not only a great artist but also an exemplary human being. His love for Iran and humanity was intertwined with and beautified his art, and all these qualities are evident in the unparalleled works of this prominent artist of our nation."

"Master Farshchian's presence in the world of art was an inspiration to everyone. With the farewell of this luminous gem, the city of Isfahan, Iran, and indeed the world of art have lost one of their most valuable individuals," he added.

For his part, Mehdi Jamelinejad, Governor of Isfahan, also stated: "Creative young generations must stand alongside great masters of art so that experience and knowledge are properly transferred. This bond will shape a bright future for the art of Isfahan and the country."

He emphasized the importance of the role of creative youth alongside masters, adding: "This connection has not yet been established enough and needs to be strengthened."

Other speakers, including prominent art critics and collectors, shared personal anecdotes and praising Farshchian's dedication to his craft. They highlighted his role in shaping modern Iranian art, his mentorship of younger artists, and his tireless efforts to promote Iranian art internationally.

Following the farewell ceremony and funeral procession for Master Farshchian, condolence messages from the President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Custodian of the Astan Quds Razavi, which had previously been issued on the occasion of the master's passing, were read aloud.

The body of Master Mahmoud Farshchian, which arrived in Isfahan on Monday morning, was laid to rest at the Saib Tabrizi Tomb Garden, the resting place of the Persian poet.

The renowned artist, who passed away on August 8th at the age of 96 due to pneumonia in a hospital in New Jersey, United States, had requested in his will to be buried in his birthplace and at the Saib Tabrizi Tomb.

Shahram Mokri's new film "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" to premiere at Busan International Film Festival

TEHRAN – The latest film by the renowned Iranian filmmaker Shahram Mokri titled "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" will have its world premiere at the 30th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), set to be held in South Korea, from September 17 to 26.

Selected for the Vision-Asia section, Mokri's fifth feature film is a joint production of Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates and deals with three people's destinies that intertwine through apparently unrelated events, ISNA reported.

A director is remaking a classic Iranian film in Tajikistan. The studio armorer is worried that the gun they intend to use is not a prop gun, and fears the consequences. A young woman arrives at the location insisting that she be given an audition. At the same time, in another part of town, Sara, recently recovered from a car crash, suddenly realizes that her accident was all part of a conspiracy. These people's destinies inevitably intertwine.

The cast of the 139-minute movie includes Babak Karimi, Hasti Mohammadi, Kibriyo Dilyobova, and Bezhana Davlatyeva, among others.

According to Negar Eskanderfar, the producer of the film, "We have also planned to release it in Iran, simultaneously

with foreign festivals".

Eskanderfar, who also produced Mokri's previous film "Careless Crime," described "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" as a continuation of Mokri's filmmaking process. "This film is a complex story of the fates of three people whose life events seem, on the surface, unrelated".

"I believe that this is the best film Shahram Mokri has made in his cinematic career, and more importantly, Mokri himself believes in this and considers this film his best one," she added.

Shahram Mokri, 47, won the Venice Film Festival's Horizons Award in 2013 for Creative Content for his second feature film "Fish & Cat".

In 2018, his third film "Invasion" was screened at the 68th Berlin Film Festival and was nominated for the Teddy Award.

He also won a silver Hugo medal at the Chicago Film Festival in the main section and the Venice Critics' Best Screenplay Award for his fourth film "Careless Crime".

Mokri is a founding member of the ISFA Cinema House Short Film Association. He has also served on the association's board of directors for three terms. In 2003, he was selected as the best young man in the country in the field of art by the Nation-



A scene from "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" by Shahram Mokri

al Youth Organization. He was nominated for the 2013 Asia Pacific Screen Award for Achievement in Directing for "Fish & Cat".

All his films have met with great success, with both film critics and the public. Mokri has also sat on several International Film Festival juries, including the 2021 Orizzonti jury at the 78th Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica, Venice, the 57th Chicago International Film Festival, and the 75th Locarno International Film Festival, 2022.

Dedicated to discovering and showcasing exceptional Korean and Asian films, Busan International Film Festival brings exceptional films to global audiences while solidifying Busan's identity as a mecca for film and visual culture in Asia.

Widely regarded as Asia's acclaimed film festival, the BIFF plays a pivotal role in shaping the region's cinematic landscape and has risen to stand proudly alongside renowned film festivals worldwide.

Cartoon of Day



Sadism at the Wall

Cartoonist: Vitor Ferreira from Portugal