

Kangaroo Court

Aussie PM expels Iran's envoy over unfounded allegations of "antisemitic" attacks after he angers Israel for plans to recognize Palestine

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Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Director-General of ASIO Mike Burgess speak to the media during a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra, August 26, 2025.

Israel's crimes in Gaza cannot go unpunished: Iran foreign ministry

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei has condemned Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza, noting the killing of five international journalists just a day earlier.

"These crimes must not go unanswered," he said during a press conference on Monday morning, urging international bodies such as the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court to take up the issue.

Baghaei also referred to the emergency summit held in Jeddah on the Palestinian crisis, saying Iran had tabled several proposals that were reflected in the final resolution. Among them was the condemnation of the Zionist prime minister's recent admission of pursuing a "Greater Israel" project, which he said revealed territorial ambitions against neighboring countries. ► Page 2

Top military official tells Pakistan Iran is ready for joint action against terrorism

TEHRAN – Iran's top military leader has affirmed the nation's unwavering resolve to crush terrorism and safeguard the shared borders with Pakistan, following increased terrorist activity along the volatile frontier.

In a Tuesday phone call with Pakistani Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir, Iranian Chief of Staff Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi underscored the urgent need for enhanced security cooperation. ► Page 2

Dancing with danger: Syria's pact with the Israeli devil

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – In the treacherous theater of geopolitics in West Asia, where trust is as thin as rice paper and often folded into a sharp edge, Syria's new leadership under Ahmed al-Sharaa — better known as Abu Muhammad al-Jolani — is edging toward a so-called security agreement with Israel.

On the surface, it is billed as a path to stability: fewer Israeli airstrikes on Damascus, supposed protections for the Druze minority, and perhaps a revival of the dusty 1974 disengagement pact. But peel back the layers, and the deal reeks of opportunism—with Israel eyeing dominance, not peace, and the United States playing the ever-eager cheerleader for Tel Aviv's interests, masquerading as a matchmaker. When you dance with a bear, you're the endangered party, and here Syria risks being mauled, its sovereignty clawed away under U.S. choreography.

Why did Netanyahu praise the Lebanese government's decision?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—The Lebanese government has not yet commented on the commendatory statement issued by the Israeli Prime Minister's Office regarding the decision to disarm the Resistance, which can only be viewed as an expression of a coordinated strategic course planned against Lebanon.

Amid mounting internal pressure on the Resistance and efforts to dismantle its support base, the Israeli statement stands out as particularly unusual. It is an attempt to consolidate what Israel considers the fruit of accumulated efforts, stemming from political and diplomatic pressures exerted by international and regional parties on its behalf after the failure of military force to eradicate the Resistance. The brazen statement of the Israeli regime was evident in its complete disregard for the ongoing occupation and daily violations of Lebanese sovereignty, while categorizing the Resistance as a threat to this alleged sovereignty!

Gaza war and captive crisis push Israel deeper into 'nightmare'

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Escalating protests in Israel against the regime's failed military strategy in Gaza have exposed deep internal divisions.

Protesters calling for an end to the war in Gaza and the return of captives took to the streets across Israel. Some demonstrators torched tires and blocked highways in Tel Aviv, while others rallied outside the homes of senior ministers, including Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, Education Minister Yoav Kisch, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, and Innovation Minister Gila Gamliel.

Israeli media also reported rallies near a US embassy branch in the city.

At a news conference in Tel Aviv, families of captives held in Gaza accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of failing them and demanded an immediate deal for their release.

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No restraint in face of future aggression, says Iran's parliament speaker

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf has warned that the Islamic Republic will not show self-restraint if a new war is waged against the country, vowing that any aggression would trigger a broader response across multiple fronts.

Speaking at a parliamentary session on Tuesday, Qalibaf said Iran's Armed Forces had drawn up "appropriate plans" to deter adversaries and prevent miscalculations. He pointed to the Navy's large-scale military exercises, codenamed Sustainable Power, as proof of Tehran's readiness to send a "clear message" to hostile parties.

"In any potential renewed warfare, Iran will no longer exercise self-restraint," he declared, stressing that any retaliation would extend beyond the battlefield into "other spheres and locations, including economic and political domains." ► Page 2

Isfahan seeks to become a 'tourist city'

TEHRAN — Mohammadreza Akbari, the tourism chief of Isfahan province, has announced plans to transform Isfahan into a "tourist city" through a series of initiatives.

Akbari said a memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Art University of Isfahan to strengthen cooperation in scientific, educational, and research fields as well as the creative economy, CHTN reported.

He added that a meeting was held with university officials to discuss mutual cooperation, planning, policymaking, and strategies aimed at boosting the province's tourism industry.

They sought to achieve mutual cooperation and achieve goals, planning, policymaking, and determining strategies in the province's tourism industry, he added. ► Page 6



National Day of Industry, Mining celebrated with presence of President Pezeshkian

TEHRAN- The National Day of Industry and Mining was celebrated on Tuesday morning (August 26) with the presence of President Masoud Pezeshkian and the introduction of the award winners at the International Conference Hall of IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting).

The selected winners in the industry and mining sectors were honored at this ceremony and awards were presented to them.

More than 2,700 women appointed to managerial positions in a year: VP

TEHRAN – More than 2,700 female managers have been appointed in the country as deputy ministers, director generals, deputy director generals, governors, district governors, and heads of research institutes since the current administration took office last year, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, has said.

"President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration has always highlighted the importance of national unity and empowering women. As a result, for the first time, we have Sunni female governors in the country," IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying. ► Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran gained access to advanced technology in 12-day defense

Kayhan reviewed the downing of Israeli drones in the 12-day war in June and wrote: The downing of advanced Israeli drones is a major achievement for the Iranian armed forces. The remains of the downed drones contain sensitive technologies such as electro-optical sensors, advanced radars, electronic warfare systems, and satellite communications. With a strong history of reverse engineering, Iran can analyze these technologies and use them in the design of its new drones. This could lead to improved accuracy, range, stealth, and combat capabilities of Iranian drones. This success has strengthened Iran's position as a drone power in the region and the world. The ability to shoot down Israeli drones, which are among the most advanced in the world, could increase international customers' trust in the Iranian technology and expand the export market for Iranian drones. This operational experience provides valuable information for upgrading Iran's defense systems, which indirectly helps protect drone infrastructure and strengthen Iran's superiority.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: ICT will suffer if sanctions are returned

Donya-e-Eqtesad discussed the impact of the snapback mechanism on digital economy industry in an interview with Ehsan Chitsaz, the deputy communications minister for international affairs. He said: It should be noted that Iran's ICT industry is at a sensitive point today, because on the one hand, the risk of the activation of the snapback mechanism could isolate this sector more strongly, reduce access to global services, and accelerate migration of human capital. On the other hand, even in the absence of this mechanism, internal challenges such as widespread filtering, internet instability, and unpredictable policies have limited the space for startups and technology companies to operate. Therefore, lifting sanctions and opening up the path to interaction with the global chain could enable Iran's access to new technologies, foreign investment, and international partnerships. The future of Iran's technological industry depends more than anything else on whether the country can overcome both the threat of sanctions and

domestic obstacles, such as filtering in the near future.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Dynamic diplomacy

In a note, Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the dynamic diplomacy of the sitting government. The paper said: The 14th government's dynamic diplomacy allowed it to create new routes for trade and exports by expanding commercial and economic relations with neighbors. By pursuing a balanced foreign policy, the 14th government was able to manage relations with global and regional powers. While some Persian Gulf nations demonstrated inclination toward preserving the U.S. military presence in the region, Iran helped create balance in the region by strengthening ties with China and Russia. This multilateral approach allowed Iran to resist foreign pressure and, at the same time, establish friendly relations with its neighbors. By focusing on regional integration and dynamic diplomacy, the government established Tehran's position as a key power in the Middle East. The restoration of relations with Egypt and Bahrain after years, along with the expansion of cooperation with other countries in the region, indicated the success of the government in promoting peace and stability.

Sobh-e-No: Deterrence through unity

In an article, Sobh-e-No emphasized that the statements of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution once again underscored a strategic truth: unity remains the sole guarantor of Iran's survival and progress. The solidarity and cohesion forged during the 12-day conflict reshaped the American-Zionist adversary's perception of Islamic Iran. The vigilance of the Iranian people successfully disrupted the enemy's plans to confront and destabilize the nation. Foreign powers continue to deploy hybrid warfare—ranging from crippling sanctions to media manipulation and cognitive tactics—in an effort to erode national authority. In this context, any internal discord risks becoming a “strategic black hole” for the country. Today, Iran stands at a historic crossroads: one path champions national strength and comprehensive deterrence, while the other is adorned with appealing rhetoric but lacks substance. The choice is clear—dignity and security lie in intelligent unity and active resistance. Any alternative narrative merely echoes the psychological warfare of hostile forces.

Larijani meets family of senior commander martyred in Israeli attack



TEHRAN – The Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council on Monday paid a visit to the family of Martyr General Mehdi Rabbani at their home, offering condolences and paying tribute to the late commander's service.

General Rabbani was killed on June 13, 2025, during Israeli airstrikes. He was one of the country's most senior military officers and had played a key role in shaping Iran's defense operations.

Rabani had served as Deputy Chief of Operations of the Armed Forces General Staff since 2016. His military career began during the Iran-Iraq War as a member of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), where he quickly rose through the ranks. In the mid-1990s, he was appointed commander of the Najaf Ashraf Base, a post he held until 2001.

He later commanded the Samen al-Aemeh Base from 2001 to 2004, while simultaneously leading the IRGC's 5th Nasr Division and serving as the senior IRGC commander in Khorasan Province.

The Israeli regime's June assault on Iranian territory deliberately targeted senior commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. It also struck the Natanz nuclear facility in Isfahan, an attack that drew broad condemnation as a blatant violation of international law.

Iran retaliated with Operation True Promise III, a large-scale defensive campaign in which its Armed Forces launched hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones against military sites in the occupied territories. The operation continued for 12 days and ultimately forced Israel to seek a ceasefire.

Israel's crimes in Gaza cannot go unpunished: Iran foreign ministry

From page 1 ► Addressing a question on Iran's ties with Moscow, Baghaei underlined that relations with Russia are “comprehensive” and cover multiple areas, including energy. He confirmed that cooperation in natural gas was on the agenda, with details to be pursued by the Oil Ministry.

“Our approach to Russia is not limited to one sector,” he said. “It reflects a broader strategy of regional and international engagement.”

Baghaei also pointed to the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit on August 31 in China, where Iran's president is expected to attend for the first time since joining the body.

‘Snapback sanctions: national interest is our red line’

Much of the briefing focused on Iran's position regarding the so-called snapback mechanism under UN Security Council Resolution 2231. European states, he said, have no legal authority to trigger the return of UN sanctions on Iran.

“We do not underestimate the consequences,” Baghaei noted. “But we have long prepared to counter such abuse.” He said Tehran is coordinating closely with Russia and China, and reviewing Moscow's draft resolution on the issue.

“Our red line is the national interest,” he stressed, adding that negotiations with Europe remain centered on lifting sanctions and safeguarding Iran's rights under the nuclear agreement.

‘Hezbollah disarmament a matter for sovereign Lebanon’

Asked about calls for Hezbollah's disarmament, Baghaei said



the decision rests solely with Lebanon.

“A sovereign country must decide its own path,” he said, adding that living with dignity in a region facing Israeli aggression requires “robust defensive capabilities.”

‘U.S. shows unprecedented double standards on Gaza’

The spokesman harshly criticized Washington's stance on Gaza, accusing it of enabling war crimes while lecturing others about human rights. “International law has never been under such brazen assault,” he said. “The double standards are unprecedented.”

On U.S. conditions for negotiations, Baghaei reiterated that Tehran is not opposed to dialogue but will never accept threats or coercion. “It was not Iran that betrayed diplomacy,” he said, pointing to stalled nuclear talks. “We remain ready when it serves national in-

terests.”

‘Ukraine's actions will meet reciprocal measures’

Baghaei condemned Ukraine's decision to cancel bilateral agreements with Tehran, saying Kyiv had acted on “false claims” about Iranian involvement in the war. “Such unjustifiable actions will be met with reciprocal measures,” he warned.

He also rejected reports in Western media that Iran was prepared to accept “zero enrichment,” calling them fabricated. British sanctions, he added, are “contradictory” to Europe's calls for dialogue and violate international law.

‘IAEA pressure on Iran unprecedented and illegal’

Despite tensions, Baghaei reaffirmed Iran's membership in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and said technical discussions

with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are ongoing. He criticized Western pressure on the Agency to inspect Iranian sites that had come under attack, calling it “unprecedented and illegal.”

He also discussed the “3+3” regional cooperation format with South Caucasus states, describing it as an effective framework for addressing regional issues.

‘Exchanges between Iran and Africa are normal’

Turning to Africa, Baghaei rejected U.S. criticism of South Africa's defense ties with Iran, noting Tehran's historic support for the anti-apartheid struggle.

“Exchanges between sovereign states are normal,” he said. “What is abnormal is Washington's interference.”

‘Peaceful nuclear enrichment remains non-negotiable’

Baghaei concluded by dismissing reports of a U.S.-backed proposal for a regional enrichment consortium, saying Iran treats such ideas with caution. “Under the NPT, our right to peaceful enrichment is non-negotiable,” he said.

Reflecting on the past year, he described it as a “difficult but defining period” for Iran's diplomacy. “The Foreign Ministry stood at the forefront of defending Iran's legitimacy during the 12-day national defense,” he said. “Our policy remains clear: safeguard national interests, resist coercion, and pursue constructive engagement wherever possible.”

Iran in the SCO: Two years on, breaking blockades, busting myths, building cooperation



Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states on July 15 in Tianjin

By Shen Shiwei

BEIJING — Two years after formally joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in July 2023, Iran—the organization's first Middle Eastern member—has found its partnership with the group transformative, both for the nation and for the organization itself.

The process took 13 years to materialize, as in 2010 the SCO introduced a new membership criterion that excluded states under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions. When

UNSC sanctions against Iran were lifted in 2020—following the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and UN Security Council Resolution 2231—this breakthrough transformed long-sought membership into a reality for Iran and a strategic boost for the SCO.

For Iran, joining the SCO as a full member has helped mitigate the effects of years of U.S.-led sanctions. Membership has opened doors for cooperation with other members in politics, security, and technology—most notably in renewable energy. As

2025 marks the SCO's “Year of Sustainable Development,” Iran could leverage China's global leadership in solar and wind power to advance its own green goals. Beyond economics, the SCO strengthens Iran's position by countering U.S. pressure and expanding its regional influence.

The SCO, in turn, benefits from Iran's inclusion. It deepens the organization's footprint in the Middle East, a region critical to global security and stability. By embracing Iran, the SCO reinforces its core “Shanghai Spirit”: mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diverse civilizations, and the pursuit of common development. This aligns with its mission to foster multilateral economic cooperation and address regional security issues, including counterterrorism.

Yet a persistent question remains: Does Iran's membership signal the rise of an anti-U.S. or anti-Western bloc? The answer is no. The SCO is not a military alliance—China, Russia, and other members have repeatedly

emphasized this—and pursuing an anti-Western coalition runs counter to the organization's interests. Instead, Iran's inclusion strengthens the SCO's identity as a platform for sovereign, equal cooperation—a counterweight to hegemony, achieved not through confrontation, but through partnership.

Challenges remain: more members bring greater complexity in coordination and decision-making. Yet the SCO's more than twenty years of experience show that expansion is inevitable. As a platform for upholding international fairness, the SCO is gaining broader global recognition.

Two years on, Iran's SCO journey is less about picking sides and more about building partnerships. For both, the future lies in turning shared interests into tangible progress—proof that multilateralism, when rooted in respect, can overcome even the deepest geopolitical divides.

No restraint in face of future aggression, says Iran's parliament speaker

From page 1 ► Qalibaf praised what he described as the nation's unified response to the Israeli-American assault in June, which was unprovoked and led to the martyrdom of Iranian senior commanders as well as nuclear scientists and many civilians. He said the strong cohesion between the people, the Armed Forces, and the country's political leadership had thwarted enemy designs during the 12-day conflict.

“The people's unwavering support for the military and national authorities dealt the greatest blow to the enemies' plots to disintegrate Iran,” he said, describing the nation as a

“90-million-strong solid core” that mounted a “Sacred Defense.” The phrase deliberately echoed the terminology used to describe Iran's resistance during the eight-year war imposed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the 1980s.

Qalibaf also highlighted the emphasis placed by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on maintaining unity after the conflict. He noted that the Leader had underscored the importance of cohesion not only among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, but also between the state and the Iranian people.

Top military official tells Pakistan Iran is ready for joint action against terrorism

From page 1 ► Mousavi pointedly stated that, “Unfortunately, the movements of terrorist groups on both sides of the border have increased, and we are ready to cooperate to eradicate terrorism in this region and secure the common borders.” This declaration comes on the heels of a brutal terrorist attack that martyred five Iranian police officers in southeastern Iran, further highlighting the pressing need for decisive action.

Field Marshal Munir echoed Iran's concerns, expressing condolences for the fallen officers and emphasizing Pakistan's commitment to transforming

the border into one defined by brotherhood, economic prosperity, and mutual respect. He assured that this vision could be achieved through enhanced collaboration.

Beyond security matters, General Mousavi conveyed heartfelt sympathy to the people of Pakistan facing devastating losses from recent floods, pledging to provide any assistance possible from the Iranian Armed Forces. The floods, a tragic consequence of heavy monsoon rains, have claimed hundreds of lives and displaced countless families.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Kangaroo court

Aussie PM expels Iran's envoy over unfounded allegations of "antisemitic" attacks after he angers Israel for plans to recognize Palestine



The Iranian national flag flies over the Iranian embassy in Canberra on August 26, 2025.

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – When Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese faced cameras in Canberra on Tuesday to announce the expulsion of Iran's ambassador, he looked like a judge delivering a verdict in what English speakers call a kangaroo court.

A kangaroo court is a fake trial that is heavily biased. In such a process, the outcome is decided in advance, evidence that proves the defendant's innocence is ignored, and the accused is not given the proper chance to mount a defense.

Albanese justified his decision by claiming that the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) had concluded Iran was responsible for two "antisemitic attacks" that occurred last year: one targeting a diner in Sydney and the other a synagogue in Melbourne. He said the attacked were "extraordinary and dangerous acts of aggression orchestrated by a foreign nation" to undermine social cohesion in Australia.

Despite making these serious accusations, Albanese presented no supporting evidence. Notably, earlier this year, Australia's federal police said 15 reported antisemitic incidents across the country, which enabled the government to rush through new laws that target pro-Palestinian protests, had been orchestrated by organized crime figures, and not supposed antisemites.

Albanese also alleged that Iran had likely "directed more attacks" and declared his intention to designate Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), the country's most powerful military branch, as a terrorist organization – a move that would further strain the traditionally frictionless ties between Tehran and Canberra.

Are Iranians antisemitic?

The first official Iranian reaction to the expulsion and accompanying accusations came from Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman. Esmail Baghaei, speaking at his weekly press conference,

announced that Iran would take retaliatory steps and dismissed antisemitism as a "Western phenomenon."

"If you look at history, persecution of Jews because of their religion is a matter rooted in Europe; and it is they who must be held accountable for their historical past, which has continued to this day," Baghaei stated.

When contacted by the Tehran Times, the representative of Jewish people in Iran's parliament, Homayoun Sameh Yah Najafabadi, affirmed the spokesman's remarks on antisemitism. "Jews have been living in Iran for at least 2,500 years," he said. "While Jewish populations have been expelled and killed in places like Europe, we have managed to live alongside other Iranians for centuries without being discriminated against for our religious beliefs."

Sameh Yah, a pharmacist, represents the approximately 10,000 Jews who live in Iran. The country's constitution mandates representation for religious minorities, and one seat in the parliament is reserved for a member of the Jewish community.

He said he finds claims that Iran's government has directed antisemitic attacks in a foreign country very hard to believe. "I witness every day how Iran's authorities treat Jews with respect and do their best to ensure our community can practice its religion with comfort. I think the claims made by Australia are ridiculous."

The MP cited specific provisions for Iran's Jewish community as compelling indicators of the respect afforded to the religious minority by Iranian politicians. For instance, Jews have their own designated schools and also have the option to send their children to schools predominantly attended by Muslims. "In some areas of Iran, our schools have very few students," he explained. "But the government still provides the necessary budget to operate them, even if only one student is



A protester raises a portrait of Ayatollah Khamenei across the Sydney Harbour Bridge during a pro-Palestinian rally in Sydney on August 3, 2025.

attending a class in a city where Jews are scarce."

He also described a system that facilitates religious observance for university students. If a Jewish student is accepted to a university in a city without a community, the government helps facilitate a transfer to a city with a larger Jewish population. "We need access to Kosher food and synagogues," Sameh Yah noted. "This is why most Iranian Jews are able to complete their education in Iran. Our doctors, engineers, and artists have all graduated from top Iranian universities."

Regarding their treatment in broader society, Sameh Yah believes conditions have continuously improved over the past century, especially in the past four and half decades. "At the end of the day, Iranian Jews are just Iranian. We are one with Muslims, Christians, and Zoroastrians. No body treats us differently because of our religion."

Australia's links to Mossad

Australia's intelligence and security assessments regarding West Asia are not independent; they are largely sourced from American and Israeli agencies, namely the CIA and Mossad. However, this was not always intended to be the case.

Under Prime Minister Edward Gough Whitlam (1972-1975), Australia sought to chart a more neutral and independent path in the region. His government was critical of Israel's post-1967 occupation, viewing it as an obstacle to peace, and worked to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with Arab nations. However, this independent trajectory was halted before it could fully develop.

In 1975, Mossad informed Australia's security agency, ASIO, that it had uncovered Palestinian assassination plots against Australian figures. Among the alleged targets was Bob Hawke — then-President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and a fervent critic of Whitlam's stance on Israel, who later became Prime

Minister in 1983.

Details of the alleged plot were revealed in Cabinet papers declassified in 2007. Palestinian ambassador Ali Kazak dismissed the claims as Mossad propaganda designed to discredit Palestinians and inflate ASIO's budget. No evidence was ever offered to prove the plots were true. Nonetheless, the incident became a tool for Mossad to distance Canberra from Palestinians and position itself as a crucial security partner for Australia. This dynamic persists, and was recently used by media to dissuade Australia from recognizing a Palestinian state at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly. "What's Mossad ever done for us? Just kept countless Aussies safe," wrote The Australian, before referring to the alleged 1970s plots and Whitlam's "naivety".

The plan to recognize a Palestinian state in September, along with some of the world's largest anti-Israel protests in Australia, has immensely angered Israeli leaders. Last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu labeled Australian PM Albanese a "weak politician who betrayed Israel and abandoned Australia's Jews."

Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, appeared to agree with Netanyahu's assessment—though for entirely different reasons. Responding to Canberra's expulsion of Iran's ambassador, Araghchi wrote on X: "I am not in the habit of joining causes with wanted War Criminals, but Netanyahu is right about one thing: Australia's PM is indeed a 'weak politician'... Iran is paying the price for the Australian people's support for Palestine. Canberra should know better than to attempt to appease a regime led by War Criminals. Doing so will only embolden Netanyahu and his ilk."

During recent anti-Israel protests in Sydney, demonstrators carried posters of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and images of Iranian generals and scientists killed during Israel's war against Iran back in June.

Esteghlal's new signings signal ambitious comeback

TEHRAN – Esteghlal Football Club are gearing up for a bold resurgence in the 2025/26 Persian Gulf Pro League (PGL) following a disappointing ninth-place finish last season. Despite last year's league struggles, the team managed to lift the Hazfi Cup, securing a spot in the AFC Champions League Two, a testament to their potential and resilience.

Determined to rectify last season's shortcomings, Esteghlal's management made decisive moves in the transfer window, assembling a squad capable of contending for the league title. Portuguese head coach Ricardo Sá Pinto, brought in to lead this revival, now has a significantly strengthened roster at his disposal.

One of the standout additions is Jasir Asani, the Albanian international winger, whose transfer to Esteghlal has caught the attention of not only Korean and European media but also the official AFC website. After an impressive tenure at Guangzhou FC in South Korea, where Asani played a pivotal role in pushing his team to the quarter-finals of the 2025 AFC Champions League Elite, scoring nine goals in 10 matches, he now brings his dynamism and goal-scoring prowess to the Iranian giants.

Another key signing is Moussa Djenepo, the talented Malian left winger, alongside French striker Duckens Nazon, formerly of Wolverhampton Wanderers. Defensive reinforcements include Antonio Adán, the former Real Madrid goalkeeper who replaces Hossein Hosseini, as well as promising players such as Aref Aghasi, Rustam Ashurmatov from Uzbekistan, and Saeid Saharkhizan. This array of talent provides Sá Pinto with a versatile and balanced squad, ready to adapt to various tactical formations such as 4-3-3 or 3-5-2.

Esteghlal's season started with a confident 1-0 away victory against defending champions Tractor, setting an optimistic tone. On Tuesday, in Week 2, they face Zob Ahan, a match that will reveal whether Sá Pinto will take the risk of integrating newcomers like Asani and Djenepo into the starting eleven.

The inclusion of Asani and Djenepo is expected to enhance Esteghlal's attacking options significantly. Their speed, dribbling skills, and tactical intelligence add depth and variety to the team's offense, while their defensive contributions through pressing and work rate improve the team's overall balance.

With six foreign players officially registered—Didier Ndong, Rustam Ashurmatov, Duckens Nazon, Jasir Asani, Moussa Djenepo, and Antonio Adán—Esteghlal is close to finalizing their squad. The situation of seventh foreign slot remains uncertain, partly due to the fitness concerns surrounding Uzbek midfielder Jalaeddin Masharipov.

All signs indicate Esteghlal's readiness to make a strong statement this season, combining experienced internationals and tactical flexibility to challenge for the top honors domestically and in Asia. Coach Sá Pinto's focus now lies on forging cohesion and maximizing the squad's physical preparedness to ensure the club's ambitions are realized.

Iran, Tajikistan sign MoU to enhance sports cooperation

TEHRAN — The Minister of Sports and Youth of Iran and the Sports Minister of Tajikistan signed a cooperation agreement to deepen exchanges between the two countries.

The Tajik official, Zulfqor Gulahmadzoda, met with his Iranian counterpart, Ahmad Donyamali, on Monday.

Gulahmadzoda, accompanied by a multi-member delegation of Tajik sports and youth officials, expressed pleasure at the growing engagement with Iran's Ministry of Sports and Youth.

During the talks, Iran expressed interest in leveraging Tajikistan's sports capacities, particularly in judo and boxing, and in sharing youth-related experiences.

The two sides agreed to pursue collaborative programs.

Iran defeat Poland at 2025 FIVB U21 World Championship

TEHRAN – Iran beat Poland 3-1 (25-18, 19-25, 25-17, 25-19) in the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship on Tuesday.

Iran had previously defeated Kazakhstan, Puerto Rico, South Korea, and Canada in Pool B.

In 2023, Iran defeated Italy in a five-set final to capture the title, while Bulgaria secured the bronze over Argentina.

The teams competing in Jiangmen are Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechia, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Morocco, Poland, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the U.S.

They are divided into four pools of six for a round-robin first stage. The top four in each pool progress to the eighthfinals, with winners advancing to the quarterfinals and losers continuing in playoffs for ninth to 16th place.

The bottom two teams in each pool contest classification matches for positions 17th to 24th. All teams will play through to the final day, producing a complete ranking from first to 24th.

2025/26 Kowsar Women Football League to begin on Sept. 12

TEHRAN – The 18th edition of 2025/26 Kowsar Women Football League will begin on Sept. 12.

The draw ceremony of the 2025-26 edition was held on Tuesday and the fixtures of Matchweek 1 was revealed.

Bam Khatoon will meet Kordestan's women, Gol Gohar host Sepahan, Ista Alborz play Persepolis, Isfahan's Tam meet Malavan Bandar Anzali, and Isatin Karan Fars host Palayesh Gas.

Bam Khatoon are the most-decorated team, winning title 11 times out of 17 editions.

The Kowsar Women Football League is a women's football league, run by the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran. At the top of the Iranian football league system, it is the country's primary competition for the sport. It was established in 2007.

Iran's fixtures in 2025 CAFA Nations Cup revealed

TEHRAN – Iran will meet Afghanistan in the 2025 CAFA Nations Cup opening match.

Team Melli will commence the campaign on Aug. 29. The Persians will also meet India and Tajikistan on Sept. 1 and 4, respectively in Group B.

Group A consists of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Oman.

The tournament will begin on Aug. 29 and continue until Sept. 8 in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The 2025 CAFA Nations Cup will be the second edition of the CAFA Nations Cup, the biennial international men's football championship of Central Asia organized by the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA).

Iran are defending champions.

The inaugural edition of the senior men's tournament was initially planned to be hosted by Tashkent in October 2018.

Iranian diplomat says hopes Europe makes 'right decision' on snapback after Geneva talks

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi wrapped up a discussion with political directors of Britain, France, and Germany in Geneva.

The talks, focused on Europe's threats to invoke the so-called snapback (a JCPOA mechanism that would re-instate UN sanctions against Iran) took place on Tuesday. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Majid

Takht-e-Ravanchi was also present during the meeting.

"Dr. Takht Ravanchi and I recently met again with the political directors of the three European countries in Geneva. We shared our perspectives on Resolution 2231," Gharibabadi announced on X. "Iran is committed to diplomacy and finding a mutually beneficial solution for all parties involved. Now is the time for the

three European countries and the United Nations Security Council to make the right decision and allow diplomacy the time and space it requires."

Iran says Europe no longer has the legal and moral right to trigger the snapback, given that it backed US-Israeli attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities back in June. Europe says it may extend the mechanism which expires in October.

Iran will not bow to bullying and arrogance: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has emphasized the resilience and unity of the Iranian people in the face of foreign pressure.

He made the remarks during a speech he made on Monday, saying the recent setbacks of the Zionist regime and the United States in advancing their conspiracies were largely due to the cohesion and determination of

the Iranian public. "Our people are neither 'left' nor 'right,'" he stated. "They are the citizens of this country. Iran does not belong to any single group or faction; it belongs to all its people, with their diverse views and perspectives."

The President reaffirmed that Iran would not yield to bullying or intimidation. "We must work together, set aside our differences, and build the future of Iran collec-

tively," he added.

Referring to the 12-day war with the Zionist regime in June, he praised the public's steadfast support, noting that the people stood united to thwart those who sought to sow division among them.

In a Sunday address, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei emphasized

the need to preserve national unity and reinforce public support for government officials in the aftermath of the latest conflict with Israel and the United States. He cautioned that Iran's adversaries, having failed to bring the nation to its knees through military confrontation, are now turning to strategies aimed at creating internal discord.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Exports to Africa more than double in 4 months



TEHRAN – Iran's exports to Africa rose 2.2 times in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21– July 22), the head of the Africa Office at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) announced.

Mohammadreza Safari said Iran expanded its target markets on the continent from 29 to 34 countries, adding that imports from Africa declined in the same period.

He attributed the surge in exports partly to the Iran-Africa economic cooperation summit, saying the implementation of resolutions by the Africa Headquarters could accelerate the trend.

Safari said Iran's trade strategy with Africa should move toward exporting higher value-added goods, citing recent challenges such as rising energy and transport costs, reduced financial support, and new U.S. tariffs on African exports.

He also highlighted opportunities for Iran in exporting specialized services, technical and vocational training, and technology transfer, which he said could give Iranian firms an edge over Chinese competitors.

As previously announced by the official, Iran's exports to African countries rose 85 percent in the first quarter of the current Iranian year (March 21– June 21) compared to the same period last year, while its trade surplus with the continent surged by 113 percent.

He said the number of African countries importing Iranian goods increased from 27 to 32 in the three-month period.

Safari attributed the sharp increase in trade to the recent Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit, adding that further implementation of decisions made by the Africa Task Force could accelerate the trend.

He also called for a shift in Iran's trade strategy toward Africa, advocating for the

export of high value-added final products and offshore production investment. He said this approach—mirroring China's long-term investment model on the continent—would help Iran adapt to recent global shifts including rising energy and transport costs, reduced financial support, and new U.S. tariffs on African exports.

Back in May, the secretary of the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit said commercial and investment contracts were signed between African traders and Iranian business leaders in four key sectors—mining, agriculture, petrochemicals, and medical equipment—at the conclusion of the third Iran-Africa summit.

Seyed Mehdi Hosseini said African delegations left Iran with substantial results, noting that foreign businesspeople and Iranian economic operators both benefited from the international gathering.

According to Hosseini, the third summit was distinguished by its focus on specialized, results-oriented activity, which led to greater coordination, satisfaction among participants, and significant achievements.

He noted that the summit witnessed several key developments, including the signing of commercial and investment agreements in the mining, agriculture, petrochemical, and medical equipment sectors.

Hosseini explained that unlike the two previous summits, which were general in nature, this edition was structured around four economic sectors: oil and petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and medical equipment. Accordingly, the invited foreign delegations had relevant experience and expertise. This specialization, he said, helped ensure the summit remained outcome-driven.

He added that these four sectors were chosen due to their interrelated nature, with complementary operations and aligned objectives. The structure of the summit helped produce substantial results, the details of which would be disclosed in the coming days.

Hosseini said a major feature of this year's event was the shift away from centralization in Tehran. After initial visits and consultations in the capital, delegations were divided into 15 groups based on their sectoral focus and flown to Isfahan for field visits.

cution experience and investor reluctance to enter value chain projects, saying real private-sector companies willing to take risks were better suited.

He underscored the importance of market studies, noting that specialty products face tougher sales challenges than bulk petrochemicals.

He added that Iran's business environment has not fully adapted to value chain projects, although regulatory changes such as a tiered feedstock discount mechanism have begun to improve conditions for investors.

The official has previously said that completing the value chain and developing complementary industries is going to ensure a balanced and sustained development of the country's petrochemical industry.

"The development of the industry in all sectors must be pursued seriously, and for this purpose, all the people active in the petrochemical industry must pay attention to the development of complementary industries according to the existing capacities in the country," Abbaszadeh stated.

Saying that the provincial development of complementary industries, in addition to job creation, can create more added value, he noted: "The development of downstream industries should be pursued and implemented seriously, and the National Petrochemical Company is ready for any cooperation in this regard."

Emphasizing the existence of suitable capacities for investment in complementary industries, Abbaszadeh said: "The portfolio of petrochemical products can be diversified with the cooperation of holdings and petrochemical companies.

Iran's oil output hits 7.5-year high, NIOC head says

TEHRAN – Iran's crude oil production reached its highest level in seven and a half years at the beginning of September, the head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) said on Tuesday.

Hamid Bovard said the achievement was the result of the tireless efforts of oil industry specialists and workers, in line with the goals of President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration to boost the economy.

He added that the milestone would be remembered as a proud moment for the oil sector and could mark a promising start for the government's future energy plans.

He said that in 2024 the oil industry's management focused on NIOC's structural priorities, with a strategy to maximize recovery from oil and gas resources alongside expanding exports.

The aim, he added, was to raise efficiency and strengthen eco-



nomic growth while securing the country's development outlook.

Iran's crude oil production rose by about 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) in July, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), which reported the country's output reached 3.27 million bpd.

In its latest monthly short-term energy outlook, the IEA said Iran's July output increased from 3.08 million bpd in June, marking

a gain of 190,000 bpd.

The report showed total oil production by the 12 members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) slipped to 28.21 million bpd in July, down 210,000 bpd from June's 28.42 million bpd.

Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad told reporters on July 15 that he would not comment on exact production or export figures,

but insisted Iran's crude output and shipments continue as usual. "The situation in this sector is favorable and without problems," he said.

Separately, the latest OPEC Statistical Bulletin highlighted Iran's strong year-on-year growth. The data showed that in 2024, Iran recorded the highest annual increase in crude output globally, with production up 13 percent compared with 2023.

Iran's average daily crude output rose by 374,000 bpd, climbing from 2.88 million bpd in 2023 to 3.26 million bpd this year, the OPEC bulletin said.

The rise comes as Iran seeks to consolidate its position within OPEC and expand its exports despite ongoing Western sanctions that have limited its access to global markets. Analysts say Tehran has increasingly turned to Asian buyers, including China, to sustain and grow exports.

Iran ready to supply steel products, engineering services to Uzbekistan

TEHRAN – Iran is ready to supply steel products and engineering services to Uzbekistan, the head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) said in a meeting with the head of Uzbekistan's Metallurgy Association.

Mohammad Aghajanlou, who also serves as deputy industry minister, pointed to Iran's experience in building a sponge iron plant in Kazakhstan and said Iranian firms were prepared to export technical and engineering services to Uzbekistan.

He added that IMIDRO and its subsidiaries could export steel chain products, as well as copper and aluminum, while also offering engineering services, IRIB reported.

Aghajanlou said Iran has the capacity to produce 50 million tons of steel annually and export more than 10 million tons using domestic technology.

He noted that Iranian mining and metals companies are ready to supply guaranteed-quality products to Uzbek partners, with logistics and port infrastructure in southern Iran available to support trade.

Gulbakhor Tojimirzaeva, head of Uzbekistan's Metallurgy Association, said Uzbek companies planned to purchase 300,000 tons of Iranian steel by the end of this year, citing Iran's technological expertise in the sector. She said Uzbekistan could also host Iranian-built steel plants, with both sides ready to sign cooperation agreements.

The meeting at IMIDRO headquarters, attended by Iranian mining firms, signaled closer economic ties between Tehran and Tashkent and potential growth in Iran's exports to Central Asia.

In early June, Iran's northern Mazandaran province opened a trade center in Uzbekistan's capital city Tashkent.

The inauguration ceremony of the center, which is located in Food City area in Tashkent, was participated by the Iranian Ambassador to Uzbekistan Mohammad-Ali Eskandari, as well as Abdollah Mohajeri, a board member of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), and Ali Taqipour, the head of the Chamber of Commerce of Sari city, the center of Mazandaran.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Iranian ambassador to Tashkent stated: "The Mazandaran province trade center in Tashkent will help further develop economic and trade relations between Iran and Uzbekistan. The merchants of this province can offer good and quality Iranian goods to the Uzbek market at a cheaper price."

Abdollah Mohajer, for his part, said: "Uzbekistan is an important country for Iran. The opening of this trade center in Tashkent will be beneficial for both countries."

Back in early February, the head of the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber of Commerce had announced the establishment of a permanent sales office for Iranian food industry products in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, while citing FATF-related restrictions as the biggest obstacle to trade between the two countries.

According to the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Mousa Aghaei said that the sales office was launched in cooperation with the

Mazandaran Chamber of Commerce and the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Chamber.

He noted that the initiative would significantly enhance bilateral cooperation.

Aghaei stated that the current \$500 million trade volume between Iran and Uzbekistan is unsatisfactory.

He emphasized that while Uzbek citizens and government officials are eager to collaborate with Iranian businesses, challenges such as FATF-related restrictions, transportation issues, and high tariffs have hindered trade expansion.

During an Iran-Uzbekistan Business Forum, held concurrently with the Iran-Uzbekistan Joint Economic Committee meeting at Tehran's Sa'dabad Palace, in mid-May, the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh, stressed the need to raise bilateral trade to \$1.0 billion and called on Uzbekistan to waive visa requirements for Iranian nationals to facilitate travel and business.

Hassanzadeh described the event as a meaningful step toward strengthening ties, noting that the past year witnessed close and serious cooperation between public and private sectors of both countries.

He highlighted the cultural affinity and historical friendship between the two nations and called for swift implementation of a visa waiver, improved flight connectivity, and reduced airfare.

Referring to Iran's advancements despite sanctions—especially in machinery production, food processing, and construction materials—Hassanzadeh said these achievements present unique opportunities for Uzbekistan.

He emphasized the strategic importance of Iran's geographical location through its North-South and East-West transit corridors and invited Uzbek investors to participate in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) and Makran coastal development projects.

Hassanzadeh also called for expanded cooperation in transport infrastructure and logistics, suggesting the formation of a joint committee to pursue these goals. He highlighted Iran's readiness to export technical and engineering services and collaborate on Uzbekistan's major infrastructure projects.

He further noted that significant progress had been made in talks over a preferential trade agreement between the two countries, expressing hope that the accord would soon be implemented to remove discriminatory tariffs and boost trade.

Finally, Hassanzadeh stressed the importance of removing financial barriers and banking restrictions through stronger collaboration between the private sectors. He encouraged joint investment in industrial ventures and the organization of regular trade missions, exhibitions, and seminars to help realize the full potential of bilateral ties.

Senior officials from Iran and Uzbekistan convened in Tehran for the 16th session of the two countries' Joint Economic Committee, aiming to expand bilateral ties and boost trade to \$2 billion annually.

Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Atabak opened the meeting by acknowledging that the current trade volume

between the two countries falls short of their true potential.

He called for a "fundamental transformation" and proposed drafting a practical roadmap to achieve the \$2.0 billion trade target.

Atabak emphasized the need to enhance transport and transit infrastructure, noting Iran's strategic location as a key corridor connecting Uzbekistan to international waters.

He also stressed the importance of improving banking ties, establishing direct flights, reducing customs tariffs, and developing tools to support economic relations.

Beyond trade, the committee also discussed cooperation in tourism, science, culture, and healthcare.

Atabak pointed to the countries' deep cultural ties and expressed Iran's readiness to play a greater role in tourism, stating that the meeting serves as a platform for comprehensive collaboration.

He voiced hope that operational planning would lead to a "significant leap" in bilateral relations.

In response, Uzbekistan's minister of industry highlighted the favorable conditions for expanding trade between Tehran and Tashkent.

He said the two sides had signed a list of preferential trade goods, calling it a "practical step" toward boosting commercial exchange.

He also announced the official opening of Uzbekistan's Trade House in Tehran, which he said would facilitate trade. The number of joint Iranian-Uzbek companies has grown 2.5 times in the past five years, reaching 261. These companies are active in sectors such as construction, petrochemicals, food, agriculture, and building materials.

The Uzbek minister concluded by reaffirming his country's commitment to broadening economic and trade cooperation with Iran across multiple sectors.

Addressing the same forum, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov announced that Iranian investors operating in Uzbekistan will be exempt from taxes and customs duties, as he highlighted the presence of over 210 joint Iranian-Uzbek factories currently operating in the country.

Aripov emphasized the importance of closer economic cooperation between the two nations, citing strong cultural and historical ties and the evolving global landscape as key drivers for deeper engagement.

He said forums like this help both sides identify investment opportunities and expand areas of cooperation, adding that entrepreneurship and private sector collaboration are vital to advancing shared industrial and technological goals.

Although trade between Iran and Uzbekistan has reached a relatively stable level, Aripov noted that the current \$500 million annual trade volume does not reflect the full potential of bilateral ties. He projected that Uzbekistan's GDP will grow to \$160 billion within five years and pointed to the \$70 billion in foreign investment attracted last year as evidence of a secure investment climate.

Aripov underscored the government's commitment to promoting a free-market economy, enhancing production incentives, and expanding foreign trade.

NPC head flags hurdles to completing value chain

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said that lack of technical know-how, stable feedstock, investment, execution experience, and a suitable business environment are among the main obstacles to completing the petrochemical value chain.

Hassan Abbaszadeh told the third Iranian Petrochemical Value Chain Conference that the seventh five-year development plan emphasizes targeted expansion of value chains.

He said NPC aims to raise the industry's installed capacity from 96.6 million tons to 131 million tons by the end of the plan (2027), while setting quantitative targets for each chain.

The sector produced around 75 million tons in 2024, with sales of 42.3 million tons worth about \$23.8 billion in domestic and export markets, he said.

Utilization of nominal capacity stood at 78 percent, with about 22 million tons idle capacity linked mainly to unstable feedstock supply, representing nearly \$17 billion in sunk investment.

Abbaszadeh stressed the importance of securing sustainable feedstock, particularly in propylene, which accounts for around 70 percent of input for value chain projects. He warned against channeling all propylene into polypropylene production, noting sufficient supply will soon exist and urging diversification into other chains.

He highlighted the need to adopt global technical standards, citing tougher regulations on plastics, and said careful selection of licensed technologies was essential to avoid marketing problems.

Abbaszadeh also pointed to limited exe-

Gaza war and captive crisis push Israel deeper into ‘nightmare’

From page 1 ▶ “Advancing the plan to conquer Gaza while there is an agreement lying on the table for the prime minister’s signature is a stab in the heart of the families and the entire nation,” said Itzik Horn, father of two captives, one of whom is still being held in Gaza.

Einav Zangauker, the mother of an Israeli captive, also accused Netanyahu of not returning the captives because of personal interests.

“We could have ended the war a year ago and brought all the hostages and soldiers home. We could have saved them, but the prime minister has chosen again and again to sacrifice civilians for his rule,” she said.

Yehuda Cohen, father of another captive, said, “More than 80 percent want an end to the war and a hostage deal. All of Israel wants an end to this nightmare ... Today, on day 690, we demand that the Israeli government go to a deal and release all the hostages; you owe them this.”



Hamas launched a surprise military operation in southern Israel on October 7, 2023. More than 1,100 people were killed, and more than 250 were taken captive. The vast majority have been released during ceasefires. Israel has only rescued eight captives alive. Fifty captives remain in Gaza, and around 20 are believed by Israel to be alive.

Israeli protesters argue that the

government’s expanded military operation in Gaza will endanger the lives of the remaining captives. But their calls appear to have fallen on deaf ears.

The Israeli army is preparing to expand its offensive into densely populated areas of northern Gaza. Netanyahu and his allies say the offensive is needed to crush Hamas.

Calls for a ceasefire have also grown worldwide after Israel struck southern Gaza’s main hospital on Monday, killing 20 people, including five journalists. Most of those killed in the attack on Nasser Hospital died after rushing to the scene of the first blast, only to be hit by a second strike. This has sparked shock and outrage among press freedom advocates and Palestinians.

The Israeli army, which launched the war on Gaza after Hamas’ October 7 military operation, has so far killed nearly 63,000 Palestinians in Gaza.

However, the Netanyahu administration has failed to achieve its goal of defeating Hamas and securing the release of the remaining captives through military means.

Netanyahu’s failed military strategy in Gaza is deepening Israel’s domestic and international isolation, with the government facing growing accusations of committing genocide in Gaza.

Why did Netanyahu praise the Lebanese government’s decision?

From page 1 ▶ In the Israeli statement, what is meant by “rebuilding state institutions and the army” is not strengthening the army to become capable of confronting the enemy, but rather to become a policeman working for Israel and its so-called national security.

The Israeli statement did not stop here. It explicitly offered “cooperation with the Lebanese government to disarm Hezbollah and work together for a more secure future,” revealing Israel’s desire to move toward normalization.

Trump therefore quickly proposed a project for an economic zone in Lebanon’s southern borders with the occupied Palestinian territories.

Assuming that the Nawaf Salam government’s decision to disarm Hezbollah will proceed smoothly, Lebanon will find itself losing not only the Resistance’s weapons, but its entire political and cultural entity.

The severity of the pressures exerted on Leb-

anon, both direct and indirect, has the sole objective of completely disarming Hezbollah and stripping Lebanon of its deterrent capability.

This prompted Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem to launch the campaign “We demand that the Lebanese government restore national sovereignty,” urging action on this issue in a week.

In parallel, Hezbollah and the Amal Movement announced the postponement of the protest rally scheduled for Wednesday “to allow for dialogue”.

The Resistance duo explained that postponing the protest comes “out of the national responsibility imposed by the current situation, in response to the wishes of national authorities keen on unity and maintaining stability, and to allow for an in-depth and constructive dialogue on the crucial issues facing our country.”

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council postponed the session to extend UNIFIL’s mandate to



In this photo released by the Lebanese Presidency press office, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, left, meets with U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., center, and U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and Special Envoy to Syria Tom Barrack, right, at the presidential palace in Baabda, in east of Beirut, Lebanon, Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2025. (Lebanese Presidency press office via AP)

an unspecified date. UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric claimed that UNIFIL support for the Lebanese Army is “extremely important.”

Dancing with danger: Syria’s pact with the Israeli devil

From page 1 ▶ The ink isn’t even dry, yet Israeli actions already mock the spirit of the talks. On August 25, Israeli troops fired on unarmed civilians near Beit Jinn while drones struck Quneitra. Bulldozers rolled into strategic heights, preparing what looks like a permanent base. Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani blasted these moves at the OIC, warning of “expansionist and partition plans.”

And let us not overlook the Golan Heights, annexed by Israel in 1981 in defiance of international law. Israel clings to Jabal al-Sheikh (Mount Hermon), an illegally seized summit that looms over Syria like a watchtower. This is not de-escalation; it is consolidation.

From July’s bombing of Damascus to deadly clashes in Suwayda — even as negotiations were underway — Israel’s playbook has been laid bare: turn Syria into a vassal state, splintered like a Balkan puzzle, while advancing whispers of a “Greater Israel.”

Recent reports from Hebrew-language media suggest the proposed deal may include: ceasefires across multiple fronts, ousting alleged Iranian sway, bans on Syria rearming or hosting resistance groups, Druze “humanitarian corridors” granting Israel backdoor access, southern disarmament, and U.S.–Persian Gulf reconstruc-



tion funds — all hinging on Israel’s unchallenged supremacy.

Al-Sharaa admits talks are “advanced” and a deal “likely,” insisting on pre-2024 withdrawals but brushing off partition as mere “pressure.” Yet Tel Aviv’s War Minister, Israel Katz, speaking from the occupied Jabal al-Sheikh in January, vowed that Tel Aviv’s forces would remain in a “security zone” inside southern Syria for an unlimited time, mocking any notion of retreat.

The Syrian leader has signaled openness to “full peace” with Israel — if it “serves Syrian and regional interests.” Media outlets from Arab states in the Persian Gulf eagerly amplified the message, polishing his image. Western outlets have also whitewashed his past as the leader of Al Qaeda in Syria. Even Donald Trump has bizarrely praised him as a “tough guy” with a “very strong past. Fighter.”

But no amount of PR can mask what this project is: a hybrid of

Oslo, Wadi Araba, and the Abraham Accords, where sovereignty is traded for security guarantees. Different names, same result — Israel’s supremacy.

Al-Sharaa insists “we have the Golan under control.” Yet his willingness to negotiate while Israeli aggression has persisted tells another story. As the proverb warns, “you can’t make a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” No amount of diplomatic dressing can disguise a deal that betrays Arab solidarity, abandons the Palestinian cause, and leaves Gaza under siege.

The Druze angle is particularly sly—exploited as pawns to justify incursions, with corridors potentially seeding autonomy under Israeli patronage. Syrians flagged this fear to U.S. mediators, who brushed it off as unintended. But actions speak louder than words: it is an opportunistic division, eroding Syria’s unity.

The U.S. role is equally revealing. Tom Barrack, fresh from meetings

with Netanyahu and his circle, jetted into Damascus with Senator Jeanne Shaheen and Congressman Joe Wilson. His declaration on X that a “united, stable, prosperous Syria requires representation by all, for all” sounded noble—but who defines the “all”? In practice, it means those who fit Israel’s design. Washington’s message to Syria is simple: unity is welcome, but only under Israeli security architecture.

For Israel, the prize is simple: security without accountability, guaranteed by neutering resistance in Palestine, Lebanon, and beyond. For the U.S., it is business as usual: putting Israel first, dictating terms to a battered region. For Syria, however, the cost is catastrophic—trading defiance for servitude, dignity for dependency.

A nation once seen as a bastion of resistance now risks becoming the enforcer of an occupier’s will. That is not peace—it is vassalage. And as the dust settles, one truth endures: “a leopard doesn’t change its spots.” Israel’s aggression will not soften because of a signature. Syria’s rightful place is not as a security subcontractor but as a sovereign nation reclaiming its soil—from Aleppo to the Golan Heights. Anything less is surrender in sheep’s clothing, a decision that generations will regret.



Trump orders removal of Federal Reserve governor

US President Donald Trump said he will immediately remove Federal Reserve official Lisa Cook from her position, in a major escalation in his battle against the US central bank, the BBC reported.

He said there was “sufficient reason” to believe Cook had made false statements on mortgage agreements, and cited constitutional powers which he said allowed him to remove her.

In response, Cook said Trump had no au-

thority to fire her and she would not resign.

It is an unprecedented move for the president to dismiss a member of the central bank’s leadership, and comes as Trump has put increasing pressure on the Fed — especially its chair Jerome Powell — over what he sees as an unwillingness to lower interest rates.

Cook is one of seven members of the Fed’s board of governors, and in this position sits on the 12-member committee which is responsible for setting interest rates in the US.

Which European politicians have resigned over Israel’s war on Gaza?



Since Israel’s war on Gaza began on October 7, 2023, more than a dozen officials across Europe have resigned in protest to their governments’ stance on what many describe as genocide in the besieged enclave.

From lawmakers in Westminster to ministers in Madrid and The Hague, politicians and public figures have stepped down, saying they cannot remain silent over what is happening in Gaza.

Turkey’s Anadolu news agency has compiled a list of these resignations.

Netherlands: Foreign minister and more

The most recent high-profile resignation occurred in the Netherlands last Saturday, when a dispute over sanctions on Israel led to the collapse of part of the ruling coalition.

Caspar Veldkamp resigned as foreign minister after coalition partners blocked his proposals, which included an embargo on goods from illegal Israeli settlements, a ban on weapons purchases from Israel, travel bans on far-right Israeli ministers, and recognition of Palestinian statehood.

The majority of lawmakers backed only one measure, urging Israel to allow journalists and observers into Gaza.

His resignation triggered a domino effect, with the centrist New Social Contract (NSC) withdrawing all its ministers and state secretaries from the caretaker government. The resignations included the acting deputy prime minister, the interior and education ministers, the health minister and four other cabinet members.

“In short, we are done with it,” NSC leader and former acting Deputy Prime Minister Eddy van Hijum told reporters, calling the Israeli government’s actions “diametrically opposed to international treaties.”

Caretaker Prime Minister Dick Schoof expressed “deep regret” over the resignations and described the worsening situation in Gaza as “dramatic.”

He canceled a planned visit to Ukraine to contain the internal backlash, with a diminished government of just 32 seats out of 150 in parliament remaining after the NSC’s withdrawal.

UK: Wave of Labour MPs protest Starmer’s position

In the UK, several MPs quit the frontbench after Labour Party leader Keir Starmer, now prime minister, resisted calls for an immediate ceasefire during his time as opposition leader.

Just over a month after the Gaza war began, Labour MP Imran Hussain resigned from Starmer’s shadow ministerial team, saying he wanted to “strongly advocate for a ceasefire” in Gaza. Hussain, who was shadow minister for the New Deal for Working People, said his stance “substantially” differed from Starmer’s.

A week later, Jess Phillips, MP for Birmingham Yardley, quit her role as shadow domestic abuse and safeguarding minister. She was among 56 Labour MPs, including eight members of the shadow Cabinet, who voted for a Scottish National Party amendment to the King’s Speech calling for a ceasefire.

That same day, Yasmin Qureshi, MP for Bolton South East, also resigned from her post as shadow equalities minister to vote for a ceasefire motion. In her statement, she said she acted “with regret,” but had to “vote with my conscience and on behalf of the thousands of constituents” who urged her to back a ceasefire.

In August 2024, Mark Smith, a senior Foreign Office official based at the British Embassy in Dublin, also resigned in protest over UK arms

sales to Israel. He warned the government “may be complicit in war crimes,” saying he had raised concerns “at every level.”

The backlash also spread beyond Westminster.

In local councils, Shaista Aziz and Amar Latif in Oxford, Amna Abdullatif in Manchester, and Altaf Patel in Blackburn all resigned from the party.

Former senior MP Lynne Jones also quit soon after the war began, while Lubaba Khalid, a Palestinian photographer and Young Labour officer, handed in her resignation, citing Starmer’s remarks on Gaza.

Spain: Podemos ministers abandon coalition government

In Spain, tensions within the coalition deepened after the junior partner Sumar, which included five ministers from the Podemos party, blocked Podemos leader Ione Belarra from speaking during a December 2023 parliamentary debate on Palestine.

Although friction with the coalition had been mounting over other issues, a Podemos source told Spanish outlet Diario Red the move was “the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

Belarra had been one of the fiercest critics of Israel in parliament, accusing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of planning a genocide as early as October 2023.

Instead, Agustin Santos spoke on behalf of Sumar, calling for the government to recognize the State of Palestine, revise any arms agreements with Israel, and for an International Criminal Court investigation. However, he did not use the term “genocide” at that time.

Soon after, all five Podemos lawmakers announced they were leaving the Sumar alliance and the coalition government.

Ireland: Expert resigns from EU rights body

In Ireland, senior human rights lawyer Michael Farrell resigned mid-July from the Council of Europe’s anti-racism body in protest at what he described as its silence on Gaza.

Farrell, who had served for 14 years as Ireland’s representative on the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), said he could no longer serve while the body refused to denounce Israeli attacks.

He said his repeated efforts to raise the issue were suppressed, and when he finally brought a motion before ECRI’s July plenary session, it was defeated as beyond the group’s mandate.

“I felt I could not continue to take part in criticizing states for failing to observe domestic human rights if I could not comment on the appalling attacks in Gaza,” he said.

Belgium: Coalition at risk

Belgium is also on the verge of its own political showdown.

Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot recently warned that the coalition government risks collapse over Israel’s war on Gaza.

“If the government does not take a tougher stance on human rights violations by the Israeli government or recognize Palestine, there is a risk of a major crisis,” he told daily De Standaard.

Prevot confirmed he will table a memo with proposals at Wednesday’s meeting with Prime Minister Bart De Wever.

He also hinted at using political leverage, saying he would not exclude blocking government decisions if the issue remains unresolved.

House of Forough Farrokhzad to turn into museum after restoration

TEHRAN--Mohammad Nazem Razavi, the CEO of Tehran Municipality Cultural Spaces Development Company, announced the approval of the plan to restore the house of the famed poet Forough Farrokhzad, and convert it into a museum.

He told ISNA that after follow-ups and continuous cooperation with the Cultural Heritage Department, initial agreements have been made for the restoration of the Forough Farrokhzad Museum House.

The initial plans have been approved and, after notification, contractors will be deployed and work will continue, he added.

Regarding the project implementation schedule, he explained: "It is planned that the restoration operations will begin soon, and the project implementation period is expected to be about six months."

In response to a question about decorating the interior of the house with Forough's furniture, he added: "Some of the existing works will be followed up and delivered by the poet's friends in relevant associations, but if no new works are found, it will be transformed into a poets' house with the cooperation of



the Islamic Guidance Department and associations active in the field of poetry."

Forough Farrokhzad (1935-1967) is known as a leading poet in the Iranian literary circles.

Her first book of poetry, entitled *Asir* (The Captive) was published in 1955. Then she met the controversial Iranian writer and cinematographer Ebrahim Golestan in 1958.

Farrokhzad made a documentary on a leper's colony in 1962 entitled "The House Is Black". The movie gained international acclaim and won several prizes.

In 1963, UNESCO produced a thirty-minute movie about Farrokhzad. The Italian filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci also came to Iran to produce a fifteen-minute film on her life.

Sarein to become smart tourism city, governor-general says

TEHRAN — Sarein in Ardabil province should be developed into a smart tourism and health tourism city, with accommodation facilities, hotels, and eco-tourism services upgraded to international standards, the provincial governor-general Masoud Emami-Yeganeh said.

Speaking at a ceremony for inaugurating tourism projects in Sarein on Monday to commemorate the Government Week (September 23-29), he said that Ardabil is among the top 10 tourist provinces of the country. He also said that Sarein has unique potential worldwide, IRNA reported.

Emami-Yeganeh emphasized that the sidewalks, spaces targeted by tourists, and routes leading to accommodations and recreational centers must be free of traffic, and Sarein's tourism horizon must be considered with a long-term perspective, and along with increasing construction and hotels, traffic and passenger comfort must also be considered.

"Training tourism services and the presence of experienced human resources in tourist centers are very important, and in addition to provincial credits, we must also benefit from national credits, and we welcome public participation and private investment in this field. Consultations have been held with the CEOs of 11 major banks in the country to finance the province's major projects, and measures are being taken."

Saying that 49 percent of the added value in this province is in the tourism and service economy, and the majority of it is in Sarein, he added that the development of this city requires a national perspective.

He stated that during the 12-day Israeli imposed war, while the capacity and population of the province had increased with the arrival of travelers, the situation was managed well.

Stating that Ardabil province was appreciated by the Ministry of Interior, he continued that there was not the slightest dissatisfaction observed in Sarein during wartime, and the matters of supporting guests also went well.

Pointing to the implementation of several projects in Sarein, he said that Sarein Tourism Complex is under construction with a credit worth 2,000 billion rials (\$2.2 million) and also 24 economic projects are under implementation in the city, some of which have seen physical progress of even above 60 percent.

According to him, three trillion rials (\$3.3 million) have been allocated to these complexes, and the opening of these centers will create employment opportunities for a total of 800 people.

In recent years, communication roads in Sarein have been constructed and organized, and three trillion rials of facilities have been allocated for the city's non-level road intersection.



Ardabil Governor-General Masoud Emami-Yeganeh

Emami-Yeganeh considered it necessary to provide facilities for projects through the operating banks and said that the construction of equipped hotels is necessary for the province. There is no obstacle to the implementation of these projects, and special facilities will be provided to the investors, he added.

Ardabil governor also announced the construction of a water park and the implementation of school construction projects with the help of benefactors.

He added: "During the President's recent visit to Ardabil province, we emphasized the reopening of the border and passenger traffic by land. We have no problem with traffic from Iran, and the neighboring country has announced that if it is reopened, priority will be given to Ardabil province and the Bileh Savar customs."

He noted: "We are also seeking to establish a joint free zone with the Republic of Azerbaijan in the city of Bileh Savar in Moghan in the free trade and industrial zone of Ardabil province, so that this important economic capacity can bear great fruits for the province as soon as possible."

During the visit of Ardabil governor-general to Sarein, 38 development projects and economic plans were inaugurated with a credit and investment of more than 8,360 billion rials.

Sarein, located 25 kilometers west of Ardabil, on the slopes of the 4,811-meter Sabalan Mountain, is known as a tourist destination not only in Ardabil Province but also in Iran and even some countries around the world, with dozens of pools and hot and cold mineral springs, natural baths, beautiful landscapes and views, pleasant weather, gardens, hotels and equipped recreation and accommodation centers, and other attractions.

Over the past years, Sarein has seen substantial improvements in its tourism infrastructure. Several new hotels and suspension bridges have been established, ensuring better services for visitors. Additionally, the creation of a "tourism chain" in Sarein's villages aims to generate income for rural residents and promote the local economy.

Iraq signals readiness to exchange 10 million tourists with Iran

TEHRAN – Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities Ahmed Fakak al-Badrani said on Tuesday that his country welcomes increasing tourist exchanges with Iran to 10 million visitors in a year.

Al-Badrani made the remarks during a meeting in Baghdad with Hormatollah Rafiei, the director of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies. He welcomed a proposal from Iran's private sector to expand cooperation in cultural, historical, and health tourism, in addition to religious travel, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Rafiei said he was in Baghdad to coordinate preparations for an Iranian tourism roadshow scheduled for early October in Baghdad, Karbala and Basra. The event will include business-to-business meetings and



cultural nights showcasing Iran's travel highlights.

According to Rafiei, Iraqi government data show that about 3.5 million Iraqis travel to Iran

annually for pilgrimage and medical purposes. He said plans discussed with Iraqi officials aim to expand that figure to 10 million mutual tourists, with about 5 million visitors to each country.

Isfahan seeks to become a 'tourist city'

From page 1 ► Akbari added: "This plan will be prepared with quantitative and qualitative indicators in tourism products, urban tourism infrastructure and services, attractions and tourism facility centers, transportation, various cultural, artistic, economic, and social dimensions, as well as other influential urban indicators."

He emphasized that the plan is implemented for improving the quality of urban tourism services.

Given that one of the important priorities of the Isfahan Governorate is tourism, the provincial cities can take action on the path of tourism development and earn the title of tourist city

by benefiting from this plan, he said.

During the meeting, discussions were held regarding the preparation of investment packages, investor attraction planning, and the launch of a comprehensive investment opportunities system by Isfahan University of Arts.

The ancient city of Isfahan, which serves as the provincial capital as well, is situated at the crossroads of Iran's north-south and east-west trade routes. It reached its zenith between the 9th and 18th centuries. During the Safavid era, it became Iran's capital under Shah Abbas the Great.

Isfahan was once a cross-



roads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined

boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The Persian proverb "Isfahan nesf-e-jahan ast" (Isfahan is half the world) reflects the city's cultural and historical prominence.

Iran's handicraft exports hit \$223 million last year

TEHRAN – Iran exported \$223 million worth of handicrafts in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), with an additional similar amount exported informally by travelers, a senior cultural heritage official said on Tuesday.

Farzad Ojani, director general of the marketing and commercialization office for handicrafts at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, announced the figures during a joint meeting with economic investors at the ministry headquarters. The meeting was held to review opportunities in the handicrafts sector and discuss ways to expand cooperation between state and private actors.

Ojani said one of the office's main tasks

is training and empowering handicrafters. "Granting national and international seals of excellence [to selected quality handicrafts], registering cities and villages as national and global handicraft hubs, and supporting artists' participation in exhibitions are among our tasks," he told participants, according to Mehr news agency.

He added that around 7,000 handicraft shops operate across Iran, in addition to permanent and temporary bazaars. Online platforms have also become important sales channels, he said.

Ojani noted that Iran leads the world with 299 recognized branches of handicrafts, classified into 18 groups. The country also has 14 cities and three villages registered

globally for handicrafts, placing it among the top countries in the field, he said.

The official highlighted the strengths of Iranian handicrafts, including family-based production, environmentally friendly methods, high added value, and ease of learning. He also stressed that closer cooperation between the public and private sectors would boost exports and introduce Iranian handicrafts to more international markets.

"Handicraft products exported from Iran are well received abroad and have many buyers and supporters. With proper planning and private sector participation, exports can increase significantly," Ojani said.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Ancient City of Damascus

Founded in the 3rd millennium BC, Damascus is one of the oldest cities in the Middle East. In the Middle Ages, it was the center of a flourishing craft industry, specializing in swords and lace. The city has some 125 monuments from different periods of its history – one of the most spectacular is the 8th-century Great Mosque of the Umayyads, built on the site of an Assyrian sanctuary.

According to UNESCO, Damascus is considered to be among the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. Excavations at Tell Ramad on the outskirts of the city have demonstrated that Damascus was inhabited as early as 8,000 to 10,000 BC.

However, it was not documented as an important city until the arrival of the Aramaeans. In the Medieval period, it was the center of a flourishing craft industry, with different areas of the city specializing in particular trades or crafts.

The city exhibits outstanding evidence of the civilizations that created it – Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic. In particular, the Umayyad caliphate created Damascus as its capital,

setting the scene for the city's ongoing development as a living Muslim, Arab city, upon which each succeeding dynasty has left and continues to leave its mark.

In spite of Islam's prevailing influence, traces of earlier cultures particularly the Roman and Byzantine continue to be seen in the city. Thus the city today is based on a Roman plan and maintains the aspect and the orientation of the Greek city, in that all its streets are oriented north-south or east-west and is a key example of urban planning.

The earliest visible physical evidence dates to the Roman period – the extensive remains of the Temple of Jupiter, the remains of various gates, and an impressive section of the Roman city walls. The city was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. However, apart from the incomparable Great

Mosque, built on the site of a Roman temple and overlaying a Christian basilica, there is little visible dating from this important era of the city's history. The present city walls, the Citadel, some mosques, and tombs sur-

vive from the Middle Ages, but the greatest part of the built heritage of the city dates from after the Ottoman conquest of the early 16th century.

(Source: UNESCO)

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Iran ranks first in biotech among Islamic nations: SCImago

TEHRAN – With 1,111 documents in biotechnology, Iran ranked first among Islamic countries in 2024, up from second in 2023, according to the recent report published by SCImago.

The country ranked 11th globally in this category. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt ranked second to fifth with 1,008, 979, 839, and 802 articles, respectively.

The report has also included a ranking based on articles published from 1996 to 2024. Over the 28 years, Iran, with 15,188 articles in biotechnology, ranks first in the region, followed by Turkey (with 10,973 articles) and Egypt (with 7,947 articles). The country ranks 15 globally.

In all subject areas and categories, the country ranks second in the region and 17th worldwide with 75,501 articles published in 2024.

Having published 966,118 articles in all subject areas and categories from 1996 to 2024, Iran ranks second in the region and 19 globally.

Biotechnology plays key role in SDGs

Biotechnology, as one of the highly promising scientific fields, plays a key role in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs), as it holds a 60 percent share of the goals related to life sciences and their applications directly or indirectly.

Sustainable development highlights practical ways to live in a healthier, more sustainable, and just world. Sustainable develop-



ment means creating a balance between economic progress, social welfare, and environmental conservation, in a way that would meet the needs of the present generation while preserving resources for future generations.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 sustainable development goals, which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership, according to the UN website.

They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Biotechnology offers innovative solutions to help address environmental challenges and improve the quality of human life.

Using diagnostic kits for early detection of diseases, environmental pollution, producing non-pesticide pests, and effective, affordable medicines and vaccines to improve public health, purifying contaminated water with the help of bacteria to ensure access to safe water, and making biodegradable packaging, which is eco-friendly, are among the applications of biotechnology for sustainable development.

Achieving sustainable goals is not merely the responsibility of governments or companies; individuals also play a crucial role by making smart choices and changing their habits. In laboratories, these choices include separating biological, chemical, and general waste, utilizing recyclable and compostable laboratory kits and materials, using cellular or biocomputational methods instead of animal experiments, and designing experiments with minimal raw materials and waste generation.

Sustainable development means living smarter, not harder, and taking small steps to make a

brighter future.

Iranian biotech products target 35 countries

Over the past Iranian year (March 2024 – March 2025), biotechnology products were exported to 35 countries worldwide, an increase from 33 countries the previous year.

The pharmaceutical biotechnology industry saves some two billion dollars in foreign currency annually, covering 60 percent of the country's pharmaceutical exports, IRNA quoted Hossein Amirazodi, the secretary general of the association of pharmaceutical biotechnology producers and exporters, as saying.

The official made the remarks addressing the 4th International Conference and Exhibition on Iranian Medical Biotech Products and Related Industries (Iran Bio) being held from February 4 to 6 at the Olympic Hotel in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Currently, the country produces 40 out of 150 pharmaceutical biotechnology products that are manufactured in the world, he said, adding that the achievement has been made over the course of 30 years.

Iran Bio aims to feature the capabilities and potentials of the national biotechnology industries, provide an opportunity for information and technology transfer, increase synergy among researchers, experts, and active members, showcase the latest achievements in biotechnology, and support domestic manufacturers by expanding markets and export opportunities.

Over 250 natural resources projects to be launched during Government Week

TEHRAN – The head of the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization has announced the inauguration of more than 250 natural resources projects on the occasion of the Government Week (August 24-30).

More than 5,847 billion rials (about six million dollars) has been allocated to these projects, ISNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying.

These projects cover various sectors such as watershed management and conservation, seedling production, forests, pastures, and deserts, the official added.

Underlining the crucial role of the country's natural resources and watershed management projects in sustainable land management, biosecurity, and reverse migration, Teymouri said the main objectives of these projects are to reduce soil erosion, control sediment, strengthen groundwater resources, safeguard and enhance the country's vegetation, reduce dust, and increase green space per capita.

Launching forest reserve building and wildlife protection station, equipping existing plant nurseries, completing the construction of fire station, distributing solar water heating systems to reduce firewood consumption, constructing semi-circular bund (a low, semi-circular embankment built on a gentle slope to harvest rainwater, prevent soil erosion) and

earth dams, restoring and improving pastures, as well as conducting flood spreading operations are among other measures of the organization.

Watershed management budget increased by fifteenfold

In June, Teymouri said the national budget bill for watershed management in the current Iranian calendar year (March 2025-March 2026) is fifteenfold the budget for its preceding year.

Implementing watershed and aquifer management projects can lead to rainfall penetration into the land or infiltration, strong vegetation cover, reduced soil erosion, and improved land dynamics, ISNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying.

Referring to the drop in rainfall and the rise in global temperature, which can contribute to sand and dust storms, the official said that although the Ministry of Energy focuses on governance in water resources management, from the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization's perspective, territorial sovereignty needs to be considered.

Natural resources, vegetation, biodiversity, fauna, soil, and even air must be seen as an interconnected whole. If the rate of water evaporation is ignored, decision-making based on the

amount of water remaining cannot be efficient.

Out of some 400 billion cubic meters of annual rainfall, with 280 billion cubic meters evaporating, only 110 to 120 billion cubic meters of manageable water remains. According to the Ministry of Energy, this year the figure has dropped to 66 billion cubic meters, indicating a 20 to 30 percent decrease compared to its preceding year, Teymouri stressed.

If just 10 percent of the water that evaporates is managed through watershed and aquifer management methods, many positive changes will be brought about.

Currently, about 6,500 villages and 450 cities are at risk of flooding. Managing runoff upstream in these areas is one of the duties of the Natural Resources Organization. Totally, about 25 to 28 million hectares of critical lands have been identified in the country that have the capacity to implement watershed management projects. They are at the top of the agenda of the organization's programs, Teymouri said.

According to the seventh national development plan (2023-2027), over the course of 5 years watershed management project is scheduled to cover 20 million hectares of the land in the country, that is, four million hectares each year.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

System to be set up for monitoring, forecasting agricultural drought

A system will be launched to monitor, forecast and report the agricultural lands being hit by drought, Amir Qaderi, an official with Disaster Management Organization has announced.

Over a meeting of a special working group for addressing drought and risks threatening agricultural sector, a plan for establishing a system for monitoring and forecasting agricultural drought in the country was approved and submitted to the Disaster Management Organization for review, he explained.

"Following the study of other countries' experiences and existing global methods, the necessity of establishing a domestic system to recognize the lands prone to agricultural drought was emphasized," he noted.

سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران ایجاد می‌شود

معاون امور بازسازی و بازتوانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور از ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران خبر داد.

به گزارش پایگاه اطلاع رسانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور، امیر قادری روز یکشنبه با اعلام این خبر گفت: طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران طی جلسه‌ای با حضور مدیران و کارشناسان سازمان مدیریت بحران و وزارت جهاد کشاورزی بررسی شد.

وی ادامه داد: پس از بررسی تجارب داخلی و روش‌های موجود جهانی، ضرورت استقرار نمونه بومی پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی مورد تأکید قرار گرفت و با مشارکت مراکز پژوهشی سازمان هواشناسی کشور و پژوهشکده حفاظت خاک و آبخیزداری طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران پیشنهاد شد.

SOCIETY

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Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7

DOE, ICCIMA hold coordination meeting in preparation for COP30

TEHRAN –The head of the Department of Environment, Shina Ansari, and the members of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) have discussed ways to strengthen the country's participation in the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30).

During the meeting, which was held on Monday, Ansari highlighted the private sector's potential for having an active presence in COP30. She also noted that the current administration has entrusted the climate change negotiation committee to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying that the DOE is trying to change it and take responsibility for the committee.

The official proposed signing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to enhance collaborative efforts, particularly joint research projects, between the two organizations.

For his part, Samad Hassanzadeh, the head of ICCIMA, stated that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a vital infrastructure measure, stressing that the private sector had a noticeable capacity for active participation in COP29.

Payam Baqeri, the vice-president of ICCIMA, said the administration needs to support the private sector to help them more effectively attend COP30.

Presenting the country's investment capacities and opportunities at global levels, utilizing technology in content delivering, setting up Iran's pavilion in COP30 for holding negotiations, modernizing the aging fleet and eliminating regulations that are no longer necessary to reduce pollution and optimize the country's economy, establishing a joint permanent committee between DOE and ICCIMA, reaching agreements with international parties to create a voluntary carbon market to connect global markets, making efforts to overcome resistance to international environmental activities were among discussed issues.

Cop30 will be held in Belém, Brazil, from 10 to 21 November 2025.



The COP30 Action Agenda is specifically the program to mobilize non-party stakeholders – such as civil society, businesses, investors, non-government organisations (NGOs), and all levels of government – in coordinated climate action. Its purpose is to accelerate and scale climate action by highlighting solutions that can be repeated and scaled up in different places in a structured manner, allowing transparency in assessing progress and ensuring accountability.

The agenda will be organised around six key areas, reflecting the breadth and urgency of action needed to meet collective commitments under the Paris Agreement and previous COPs: Transitioning Energy, Industry, and Transport; Stewarding Forests, Oceans, and Biodiversity; Transforming Agriculture and Food Systems; Building Resilience for Cities, Infrastructure, and Water; Fostering Human and Social Development; and Cross-cutting Enablers and Accelerators.

COP29 took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, from 11 to 22 November 2024. A key focus of COP29 was on finance, as trillions of dollars are required for countries to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect lives and livelihoods from the worsening impacts of climate change.

Iran used the opportunity of COP 29 to hold international negotiations to defend the rights and interests of the country and raise the issue of the unfair sanctions imposed on the country to pave the way to utilize international environmental funds.

More than 2,700 women appointed to managerial positions in a year: VP

TEHRAN – More than 2,700 female managers have been appointed in the country as deputy ministers, director generals, deputy director generals, governors, district governors, and heads of research institutes since the current administration took office last year, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, the Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs, has said.

"President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration has always highlighted the importance of national unity and empowering women. As a result, for the first time, we have Sunni female governors in the country," IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

The official went on to say that over the past year, efforts were made to identify and address harmful issues to women, including the bill on the elimination of violence against women, the hijab, and women riding motorcycles. Moreover, the vice-presidency for women and family affairs has offered loans and other facilities for childbearing.

"I believe that women's involvement in top management and decision-making positions is their right and a key to the development of the country.

My goal is to increase the share of women in managerial positions in the country based on meritocracy and justice.

I recognize the right of women's political participation, and I will promote the status of women's affairs in the administration," President Masoud Pezeshkian had said during election campaigns.

Women's economic, social empowerment

Addressing the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference, held in Bangkok in 2024, Behrouz-Azar stated that the current adminis-

tration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

"Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings," Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

Referring to Iran's remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields.

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

Addressing a roundtable focusing on 'Advancing women's economic empowerment through employment, decent work, social protection, and entrepreneurship', Fakhral-Sadat Fatemi, an advisor to the deputy vice president for women and family affairs, for her part proposed three ways to advance women's empowerment in different fields, these ways include training, empowering, acquiring skills, and developing opportunities for women's participation, as well as providing legal and executive support, Mehr news agency reported.



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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601
Email: info@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430
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AUGUST 27, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:06 Evening: 18:57 Dawn: 4:05 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:33 (tomorrow)

Adaptation of “Ramses II” to go on stage in Tehran

TEHRAN-A loose adaptation of French writer Sebastien Thiery's play “Ramses II” will go on stage at Tehran's City Theater Complex later this month.

Reza Gouran is the director of the play, which is based on a translation by prominent translator Shahla Haeri.

Sahar Dolatshahi, Saeid Changizian, Hadith Miramini and Ali Shademan are the main members of the cast for the play.

“Ramses II” is a contemporary black comedy that premiered in 2017 at the Théâtre des Bouffes Parisiens. Despite its title referencing the famous Egyptian pharaoh, the play is not a historical drama but rather a satirical and absurd exploration of family dynamics and human psychology.

The story centers around Jean and Elisabeth, who are preparing to welcome their daughter and son-in-law, Benoît and Matthieu, back from a trip to Egypt. However, when Matthieu arrives alone, the couple notices that his wife is missing. Matthieu's strange behavior and his inability to explain her absence immediately raise suspicions and unease.

The plot quickly transforms into a surreal and unsettling experience, blending elements of reality and fantasy. As the family's gathering unfolds, secrets are uncovered, and the seemingly unbreakable family façade begins to crack under the weight of hidden truths. The play uses absurd humor and unexpected twists to challenge perceptions of normalcy and delve into darker themes of fear, secrecy, and obsession.

The title's reference to Ramses II hints at themes of power, immortality, and mystique, which are subtly woven into the narrative's exploration of family secrets and psychological depths. The original cast featured renowned French actors such as François Berléand, Évelyne Buyle, and Éric Elmosnino, contributing to the play's critical and audience acclaim.

“Ramses II” is celebrated for its sharp wit, humor, and ability to evoke both laughter and fear, pushing audiences to confront the thin



line between reality and illusion. Its success lies in its capacity to entertain while provoking thought about the fragile nature of human relationships and the mysteries that can lurk beneath the surface of everyday life.

Sebastien Thiery trained at the Cours Florent and the Conservatoire Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris before appearing in films directed by notable filmmakers like Bertrand Tavernier, Gerard Jugnot, and Alain Chabat, as well as in TV films by Josee Dayan and Laurent Heynemann.

At 30, he began writing for the theater, debuting with “Sans ascenseur,” directed by Jean-Michel Ribes at the Théâtre du Rond-Point in 2005. He often performs in his own works, including “La Fâche,” also at the Rond-Point, and “Dieu habite Düsseldorf” in 2006 at the Théâtre des Mathurins. Thiery has written around 300 episodes for the Canal+ series “Chez maman,” where he also acts, alongside his hidden camera project “La Vie de Sebastien Thiery.”

In 2007, he returned to theater with “Piggy Bank,” which won the Prix Barrière and two Molières in 2009. His play “Who's Mr. Schmitt?” premiered in 2009, directed by José Paul. He continued to work in various theater productions, including “Falling from the trees” in 2012 and “L'Origine du Monde” in 2013. His recent works include “Two Stark Naked Men” in 2014, “Momo” in 2015, “Ramses II” and “Eight Euros An Hour” in 2017, and “Demain la revanche” and “Video Club” in 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Cartoon of Day



Live from Gaza

Cartoonist: Tjeerd Royaards from the Netherlands

Culture minister highlights year of progress in arts, global image enhancement

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- In a press conference held in Tehran on Tuesday, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi highlighted key achievements over the past year.

Marking the first anniversary of his tenure in the realm of culture and arts under the 14th administration, Salehi responded to questions from the press, outlining key achievements and ongoing initiatives.

The minister emphasized the ministry's one-year efforts to rebuild connections with artists and cultural figures.

“Over the past year, we have worked to strengthen our relations with cultural and artistic circles, the core stakeholders of the ministry,” he noted.

A gap has emerged over the past years between authorities and artists, including filmmakers, necessitating a review, he said.

“Over the last year, efforts have been made, and it appears we are on a path of progress, moving toward bridging these gaps. A clear sign of this is the increased participation of artists in the Fajr Film Festival, reflecting a more engaged and active cultural scene.”

Addressing the 12-day war, Salehi expressed pride: “Artists played a significant role in defending Iran and its resistance, demonstrating solidarity. While not solely the result of our initiatives, their patriotic spirit was evident. Since the beginning of the war, we initiated interactive sessions, and thankfully, our artists have been active and committed.”

He further stated, “We have opened channels for dialogue with artists. Although there is still a considerable distance to cover, the journey has begun. The examples I've mentioned prove that, contrary to some beliefs, engaging with artists is fruitful.”

Highlighting regional focus, Salehi said, “Our first priority over the past year was decentralization — paying attention to



provinces and cities beyond the capital. We prioritized programs and human resources in these areas. Several initiatives have been implemented, including the establishment of provincial councils for cinema, which, under the supervision of provincial governors, are expected to be operational nationwide by early October.”

On cultural infrastructure, he noted, “The issue of mobile libraries is being seriously addressed. Provincial book exhibitions, which had been halted, are set to resume. Additionally, 24 libraries, five fine arts colleges, and three cultural complexes have been inaugurated across various provinces.”

Regarding Iran's global image, Salehi emphasized, “Our enemies seek to isolate Iran and portray a distorted image of the country. We must counter these efforts and showcase Iran's true face.”

He announced the launch of the “Damavand” multimedia platform by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, hosting over 9,000 multimedia contents about Iran. He also mentioned the “Talk About Iran” project, inviting influencers with over a million followers to visit Iran and share authentic narratives. To

date, more than 150 individuals have traveled to Iran under this initiative.

Salehi underscored the importance of transparency: “Transparency is a means to prevent corruption and foster better engagement with cultural and artistic stakeholders. It also subjects our planning and implementation to constructive criticism, which I see as a divine blessing.”

Regarding the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, he said that the ministry has conducted major events to familiarize the public with its valuable collection. “I believe this marks a rejuvenation for the museum.”

Salehi also announced the upcoming National Conference on Social Responsibility in Culture and Arts, emphasizing the importance of practical engagement by institutions, and the introduction of a competitive award to recognize leadership in this area.

He revealed plans for a resistance-themed game development project, set to be announced at the end of September.

Regarding foreign media, Salehi said, “A joint committee within the Media Department, in coordination with the Foreign Ministry and security agencies, is work-

ing to facilitate the presence of international journalists in Iran. Accurate reporting abroad is crucial, especially during crises like the recent 12-day conflict, where foreign media presence helped counter enemy propaganda.”

Addressing the possibility of talented expatriate artists returning, Salehi stated, “Post the recent conflict, distinctions have become clearer — patriot and traitor. The national landscape has shifted, and the cultural sphere must reflect this change. We seek to create opportunities for patriotic artists, both inside and outside the country, to reconnect.”

Unity is essential, especially as the threat persists; this is not a ceasefire but a temporary pause, and the conflict could reignite, he said and added: “Our collective approach must be rooted in sacred unity.”

Salehi also commented on supporting Afghan migrants, stating, “Farsi language ties Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. Among Afghan migrants, we have talented individuals. Our common language and literature are shared assets; the Ministry of Culture's programs include Afghan friends, and we are ready to collaborate with them.”

Iran, Scotland joint production to premiere at 30th Busan International Film Festival

TEHRAN – The latest film by the Iranian-British filmmaker Hassan Nazer titled “Without Permission” will have its world premiere in the Official Competition section of the 30th Busan International Film Festival, set to be held in South Korea, from September 17 to 26.

“Without Permission” is a 2025 Iranian-Scottish drama written, directed, and produced by Nazer. Another Iranian director, Behrouz Sebt Rasoul, who is known for “Melody,” Tajikistan's submission in the Best to the 2025 Oscars in the International Feature Film category, plays in the film and the award-winning Iranian cinematographer Ali Mohammad Ghasemi is the director of photography.

The film follows the story of an exiled Iranian filmmaker who, after being denied permission to make his scripted project, turns to children to capture their candid voices and perspectives on love, identity, and freedom.

By filming secretly in hidden locations, the narrative evolves into a reflection on self-expression within a world of limitations.

Hassan Nazer, 45, is a film director, screenwriter, editor, and producer. He moved from his hometown of Garmsar to Tehran and took theater courses under the Iranian director Hamid Samandarian. Moving to Scotland in 2000, he attended the University of Aberdeen where he studied film and visual culture. He also began to build a restaurant business to support his filmmaking and eventually raised enough money to finance his own independent films.

His fourth film, “Utopia” about an Afghan woman as she travels to the UK for artificial insemination, was selected as the Afghan entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 88th Academy Awards and at Golden Globes. The film has won more than 18 awards in national and international film festivals.

Nazer's fifth film “Winners” (2022) was the official UK entry for the 95th Academy Awards (2023) for Best International Feature.

Last week, the festival announced the world premiere of another film by an Iranian director in its upcoming edition. Shahram Mokri's fifth feature film “Black Rabbit, White Rabbit” has been selected for the Vision-Asia section of the festival.

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.

Elizabeth Strout’s “Oh William!” published in Persian

TEHRAN – The Persian translation of the novel “Oh William!” written by the Pulitzer Prize-winning American writer Elizabeth Strout has been released in the bookstores across the country.

Pajand Soleymani has translated the book and Qoqnoos Publishing House has brought it out in 201 pages, Mehr reported.

Originally published in 2021, the novel focusses on a now successful, middle-age writer, Lucy Barton, whose earlier life was at the center of Strout's novels “My Name Is Lucy Barton” (2016) and “Anything Is Possible” (2017).

It deals in particular with her relationship to her ex-husband,

William, with whom she has two adult daughters. While he is now in his third marriage, Lucy has been recently widowed after a happy second marriage.

Lucy is both surprised and not surprised when William asks her to join him on a trip to investigate a recently uncovered family secret—one of those secrets that rearrange everything we think we know about the people closest to us. There are fears and insecurities, simple joys and acts of tenderness, and revelations about affairs and other spouses, parents, and their children. On every page of this exquisite novel, we learn more about the quiet forces

that hold us together—even after we've grown apart.

At the heart of this story is the indomitable voice of Lucy Barton, who offers a profound, lasting reflection on the very nature of existence.

The story of how these findings impact their later lives will be continued in the fourth novel in the series, “Lucy by the Sea” (2022).

The book was a New York Times and IndieBound best seller. It was shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize.

Elizabeth Strout, 69, is an American novelist and author. She is widely known for her works in literary fiction and her descriptive

characterization.

Strout is the author of several novels, including: “Abide with Me,” a national bestseller and BookSense pick, and “Amy and Isabelle,” which won the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction and the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize, and was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award and the Orange Prize in England.

In 2009, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her book “Olive Kitteridge”. Her short stories have been published in a number of magazines, including The New Yorker. She teaches at the Master of Fine Arts program at Queens University of Charlotte.