

## Pezeshkian Wraps Up Much-Anticipated China Trip

Talks with world leaders and the shifting global landscape dominate president's visit



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian leaving Beijing for Tehran on September 3, 2025

### Parliament to back NPT withdrawal following snapback

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian lawmaker has said Parliament will fully support any decision by the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) to withdraw from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in response to the reactivation of the snap-back sanctions mechanism.

Esmail Kowsari, a member of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, and a member of the IRGC told reporters that while the final decision rests with the SNSC, the legislature stands ready to endorse and implement the country's broader strategic choices. ▶ Page 2

### Iran highlights culture, art as pillars of peace at Bali's CHANDI 2025

TEHRAN — Hojatollah Ayoubi, senior advisor to Iran's cultural heritage minister and head of international affairs at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, joined the "CHANDI 2025" in Bali, calling culture and art strategic assets for peace and dialogue among nations.

Ayoubi arrived in Bali on Sept. 1 and was welcomed by Indonesian officials before taking part in the summit, which runs from Sept. 3 to 5. Organized by Indonesia's Ministry of Culture, the event brings together ministers, policymakers, artists, and creative industry leaders under the theme of culture as a foundation for peace, resilience, and sustainable development. ▶ Page 6

### War scars and peace dreams: Why the Caribbean and Latin America seek to remain a war-free zone

By Casey O. Jerson (BSc.)

CASTRIES – When Liu Yuanuan shared her grandfather's story in CGTN's World War II: Remembered, Reimagined, Retold, she spoke of wounds that outlived the battlefield. Her grandfather, a soldier in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, carried memories of hiding in trees, eating bark to survive, and never seeing his parents in Shandong again. The trauma extended beyond 1945, woven into family stories and even shaping the choices of new generations.

His story resonates far beyond East Asia. In the Caribbean and Latin America, similar memories echo: foreign interventions, proxy conflicts, and the shadow of Cold War violence. Nations across the region understand that war rarely ends when the guns fall silent. Its legacy lingers in fractured families, migration, political instability, and generational scars.

### Venezuela stands unyielding against US aggression: Sovereignty is non-negotiable

By Kleybergel González  
Venezuelan journalist from FuserNews

CARACAS – In recent weeks, the United States has intensified its policy of maximum military pressure against the government and people of Venezuela by sending eight warships and a nuclear submarine to Caribbean waters near the Venezuelan coast. This action violates the Declarations of Tlatelolco and CELAC, which declare the Caribbean waters and the Latin American region as zones free of nuclear weapons and armed conflicts, respectively.

This action is being promoted by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, a political figure associated with the Miami anti-communist lobby and linked to drug trafficking since the beginning of his political career.

The stated justification for the deployment is the alleged fight against drug trafficking, despite the fact that the United States is the world's leading consumer of drugs.

### Recognition is not enough: Gaza faces rising death toll

By Staff writer

TEHRAN – Israel's war on the Gaza Strip continues unabated, with more Palestinians falling victim to a nearly two-year-long offensive. On Tuesday alone, over 100 Palestinians, including journalists, were killed as homes, neighborhoods, and shelters were struck.

Since the start of Israel's brutal war in October 2023, more than 63,700 people—including nearly 19,000 children—have been killed and over 161,000 wounded across Gaza.

Gaza's Health Ministry reported on Tuesday that six people, including a child, died from "famine and malnutrition" in the past 24 hours, bringing

the total number of hunger-related wartime deaths in Gaza to 367, including 131 children. The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities further highlighted the toll on children, reporting that about 40,500 have suffered new war-related injuries during the conflict, leaving more than half disabled, according to Al Jazeera.

### Yemen targets Israeli General Staff

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni Armed Forces carried out five precision military operations using drones and cruise missiles against Israeli targets.

The Yemeni Armed Forces announced that they had launched five specialized military operations targeting the Israeli

military's General Staff building in Tel Aviv, the Hadera power station, Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, Ashdod Port, and the ship MSC ABY in the northern Red Sea. These attacks were conducted using a number of drones and a cruise missile.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed

Forces, stated that the Air Force conducted four drone operations using Samad-4 drones.

The first targeted the General Staff building in Tel Aviv, while the remaining three struck the Hadera power station, Ben Gurion Airport, and Ashdod Port. He confirmed that all targets were successfully hit.



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## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Sobh-e-No: Three against three

In a note, Sobh-e-No analyzed the letter by the Foreign Ministers of Iran, Russia, and China to the UN Secretary-General and President of the UN Security Council and said: Iran, China, and Russia emphasized that as long as the effects of the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA are not addressed, there is no possibility of applying the dispute resolution mechanism against Iran. The European troika sent a letter to the members of the UN Security Council on Thursday announcing that they have invoked the “snapback mechanism” process to return UN sanctions against Iran (that have been lifted under the JCPOA); while the Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized that the snapback mechanism has no legal legitimacy and will result in a decisive response from Tehran. Many experts believe that the recent decision of the three European countries members to the JCPOA in such circumstances shows that they, along with the U.S., are seeking to exploit the psychological atmosphere caused by the snapback. According to the experts, the activation of UN sanctions in the framework of the so-called snapback process will not have a greater effect than unilateral US sanctions.

## Siasat-e-Rooz: Powerful missile capability is the Iranians' desire

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the desire of the Iranian people for advanced missile capability. It wrote: Military power and authority are a great advantage for the people of any country, especially when that country is exposed to various threats. Missiles also boost the morale of the people because a sense of pride and power is formed among the people of the society, and they see how these missiles rain down on the enemy and force them to accept defeat and a ceasefire. The missiles of the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces have become a nightmare for the enemies because they have tasted them and know that if they make another mistake and make another wrong decision, new and devastating missiles will be waiting for them. The Iranian nuclear issue, as everyone knows, is an excuse for the West to announce one of its conditions for dismantling Iran's missiles. In fact, the West wants the disarmament of Islamic Iran, and if such a desire is realized, the will not hesitate for a moment to launch military attack on our country.

## Hamshahri: Non-dollar settlement mechanisms and an opportunity for Iran

In an analysis, Hamshahri discussed Iran's participation at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Chia and the op-

portunities that lie ahead with membership in the organization. The paper said: One of these opportunities is the use of non-dollar settlement mechanisms. Iran already has limited experience in bilateral agreements and alternative financial messaging systems; the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can formalize these routes through multilateral agreements, but it needs a ready-made banking network and currency swap agreements. Focusing on small and beautiful projects, getting loans in Yuan for local projects, and implementing educational programs can bring immediate benefits; but in the event of the return of UN sanctions (as the European trio has written a letter to the UN Security Council to invoke the snapback mechanism), Iran needs political guarantees from key SCO players China and Russia, who are willing to accept the risk of confrontation with the United States. Iran has real potential to economically exploit the promises of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, especially in the fields of energy and infrastructure.

## Jam-e-Jam: A turning point for peace and progress

Jam-e Jam analyzed the benefits of Iran's membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization which held its summit at the levels of heads of state in Tianjin, China, on August 31-September 1. It said: One of the most outstanding achievements of the summit was its final statement, which, with the full consensus of the members, strongly condemned the attacks by Israel and the United States on Iran. It also explicitly highlighted the incompetence of the Western parties, especially the United States, France, Germany, and Britain, for activating the snapback mechanism, calling it an illegal and unilateral tool to exert pressure on Iran. In contrast, the SCO members expressed their full support for our country's right to get access to peaceful nuclear energy. The second day of the Shanghai Summit, centered on the statement condemning the attacks on Iran, the speeches of Pezeshkian on multipolar world, and the signing of twenty cooperation documents. These are recognized as a turning point in the history of the organization. This event not only strengthened the solidarity among the members in the face of threats, but also paved the way for deeper economic cooperation. Side meetings also helped advance shared goals, focusing on bilateral issues. The SCO, as a symbol of peace and progress, is shaping a more just future, where the voices of all members are heard and external pressures cannot hinder their development.

## Iran urges Europe to adopt 'credible' stance on Israel



Britain's Keir Starmer, front center, hosting a European leaders' summit on March 2, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iran has called on European nations to adopt a “credible, responsible, and law-abiding” approach to international affairs if they wish to be seen as contributors to global peace. The demand was made by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei in a social media post on Tuesday.

Baghaei pointed to recent comments from European Parliament member Michael McNamara, which he said rightly exposed Israel's war crimes and genocide in Gaza, its repression in the West Bank, and its criminal act of aggression against Iran. The spokesperson stated that this is the reality the E3—Britain, Germany, and France—must acknowledge.

“This is what E3/EU need to heed if they want

to be regarded as credible, responsible, and law-abiding actors capable of contributing to world peace,” the Iranian diplomat further said in his post.

In a recent address to the European Parliament, Michael McNamara stated that Israel's actions in Gaza have escalated from “defensive” operations to outright war crimes. He also characterized Israel's June strike on Iran as an unlawful and unprovoked act of aggression, contending that its true purpose was to undermine the nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States that were underway at the time.

European leaders have maintained full support for Israel in the past two years despite massive domestic dissent.

## Parliament to back NPT withdrawal following snapback

From page 1 ▶ “The decision on leaving the NPT lies with the Supreme National Security Council,” Kowsari said. “But if such a decision is taken, Parliament will certainly support it and act in harmony with the nation's overall policies.”

The lawmaker recalled that the United States unilaterally abandoned the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) when then-President Donald Trump left the deal during his first term. “That act meant the U.S. no longer recognized the agreement, rendering it void,” Kowsari said.

“The Europeans also failed to honor their commitments, and once again violated their obligations. Now they want to put themselves above the law and take further measures — but this is just an excuse, especially after their defeat in the 12-day war.”

Kowsari noted that the snapback mechanism would involve the reimposition of sanctions and restrictions on shipping and exports.

“But all of these steps have already been taken against us before and led nowhere,” he added.

He emphasized that discussions on a possible NPT withdrawal would take place within the SNSC, with the participation of the Parliament Speaker and the head of Parliament's National Security Committee. “Once consensus is reached, Parliament will undoubtedly provide full support,” he stressed.

Reflecting on the past decade,



Kowsari said the JCPOA had become meaningless because Iran fully complied with its obligations while the U.S. and Europe repeatedly failed to do the same. “Instead of lifting sanctions, they only increased them,” he said.

“So if there is to be any legal review, the foundation of the issue has collapsed, and mechanisms like snapback have no legitimacy.”

The lawmaker also issued a warning to Western governments. “If the other side wants to act through force, we also know how to resist.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has never started a war or violated agreements — it is they who consistently act unlawfully, trying to achieve their sinister goals through coercion, military power, and bombardment.

## After two years of regional inaction, Qalibaf calls on Muslim states stop Israel's Gaza genocide

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf on Wednesday called on Muslim countries to unite in condemning Israel's ongoing war on Gaza and to take concrete action to halt the Zionist regime's “killing machine.”

“Muslims must stand together, with one voice and without hesitation, to denounce the genocide in Gaza,” Qalibaf said in an open session of parliament. “Governments in the Muslim world must follow their people's lead and adopt practical steps to stop Israel's crimes.”

Qalibaf's remarks coincided with Unity Week, which marks the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He said the occasion should remind Muslims of the Prophet's mission to establish a community based on faith, rationality, and compassion. “Unity is not a political tactic, but a religious and strategic necessity,” he stressed. “Today, its clearest expression must be seen in the struggle against the Zionist regime, which is the greatest evil of our time.”

The call for unity came as fresh controversy erupted over reports of a postwar blueprint for Gaza prepared during the Trump administration.

According to The Washington Post, a 38-

page proposal titled the Gaza Reconstitution, Economic Acceleration and Transformation (GREAT) Trust envisioned removing Gaza's more than two million residents and converting the war-ravaged enclave into a hub for luxury resorts and high-tech industries.

The plan, drawn up with input from Israeli businessmen and U.S. consultants, outlined options for “voluntary” departures abroad or confinement to so-called secure zones within Gaza during a decade-long rebuilding phase.

## Apart from Iran, Yemen, and the Hezbollah in Lebanon, other regional countries have so far refrained from taking action against Israel

Incentives for leaving included cash payments, temporary housing, food support, and digital land “tokens” redeemable for apartments in new “AI-powered smart cities.”

The U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly spoken of Gaza as prime real estate

## Iranian lawmakers pledge full support for missile and defense industry expansion

TEHRAN – The Iranian Parliament has issued a statement reaffirming its strong support for the country's missile and defense industries, calling for the full allocation of resources and funding to strengthen national defense capabilities.

The statement, signed by the majority of lawmakers and read during Wednesday's open session of the Parliament, highlights the strategic importance of Iran's defense achievements in the face of regional and global security challenges.

“Today, Iran's defensive power is renowned. Iran's friends take pride in this power, and Iran's enemies fear it,” the MPs quoted Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei as saying.

Lawmakers emphasized that

the accomplishments of Iran's defense industry reflect the nation's determination, indigenous scientific and industrial capabilities, and commitment to national security.

These achievements, they noted, allow Iran to respond effectively to regional threats and demonstrate the limitations of adversarial powers.

During recent conflicts with the Zionist regime, Iran's armed forces successfully penetrated the multi-layered, advanced defense systems of the enemy, which were supported by the United States and other Western governments.

Iranian missiles destroyed key military objectives, underscoring the effectiveness and resilience of domestic defense technologies.

The statement paid tribute to



the commanders and personnel who have sacrificed for the nation, while also recognizing the contributions of engineers and experts within the defense industry.

Parliamentarians underscored the importance of continuing

from the JCPOA, Europe should be held accountable — but instead, it has chosen to activate snapback.”

Jahangiri said the measure was aimed more at undermining morale than exerting real pressure. “The snapback mechanism is more of a psychological tool than a genuine threat.

The enemy wants to target the spirit of our people through noise and propaganda, but experience has shown that the Iranian nation has bravely resisted sanctions and hardships.”

He also called for vigilance in the information sphere. “In this psychological war, we must adopt smart media strategies,” he stressed. “The media must not allow anyone to take a line that undermines national unity.”

for a “Riviera of the Middle East,” a vision shared by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Critics say the plan amounts to the continuation of Israel's long-running policy of dispossession, stripping Palestinians of their homeland and treating Gaza's ruins as an investment opportunity.

Since October 2023, Israel's war on Gaza has killed more than 63,000 Palestinians — mostly women and children — and displaced hundreds of thousands. Nearly half a million people face catastrophic hunger, while U.N. estimates say 90 percent of homes have been destroyed. International legal experts have described the campaign as collective punishment and a form of genocide.

For many, the plan recalls the Nakba of 1948 and the displacement of 1967, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes. Resistance groups in Gaza argue that only steadfast struggle can safeguard Palestinian existence against what they describe as projects of erasure disguised as reconstruction.

Apart from Iran, Yemen, and the Hezbollah in Lebanon, other countries in the region have so far refrained from taking practical action to stop Israel.

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



# Pezeshkian wraps up much-anticipated China trip

*Talks with world leaders and the shifting global landscape dominate president's visit*

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian wrapped up a four-day visit to China on Wednesday, heading back to Tehran after attending a military parade in Beijing that marked 80 years since the end of World War II.

Pezeshkian's first stop in China was the northern port city of Tianjin, where he attended the 25th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State, the largest gathering of the bloc to date. The Iranian president delivered a speech there, addressing the "unfair" global order led by the West and highlighting the need to create a new one through collaboration among the Global South.

A much-anticipated meeting between the presidents of Iran and China took place the next day. Pezeshkian told Xi Jinping that Iran was ready to work with China "under any circumstances" to elevate relations to their highest level, stressing that Beijing could count on Tehran as a "strong and determined friend and ally."

Xi reciprocated, stating he sees Tehran as a "strategic partner" with a "forward-looking approach." Both sides agreed that more needed to be done to implement the 25-year co-operation plan signed in 2020.

Analysts in Iran had hoped that the president's visit, during which he was accompanied by his foreign minister, economy minister, and defense minister, would lead to new military and financial deals. This appears to be the case, as



*Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his daughter were greeted by Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife in Beijing ahead of a military parade*

upon arriving in Tehran, Pezeshkian stated that "important," "strategic," and "vital" decisions had been made following his discussions with Xi.

"Additionally, discussions on security and defense equipment were held with the support of the defense minister, who was present during this trip, and necessary follow-ups will be carried out in this regard," Pezeshkian declared.

It is believed that Iran is looking to buy air defense systems and fighter jets from China, although there is no official confirmation on what it seeks to purchase.

While Iranians have mostly focused on what the trip could bring about for Iran, the rest of the world has mainly been discussing how the SCO summit and the close interaction between India's Modi and

Xi demonstrate that the split President Trump opened up between Washington and New Delhi is much larger than expected.

Trump's former security advisor told American media that Trump has "shredded decades of effort" to pull India away from the Russian and Chinese orbit with his tariff policies.

Furthermore, Modi's presence at the recent SCO meeting, along with other developments, is viewed as a sign that the new global order Pezeshkian has called for is approaching, or may already be in place. "The new international order everyone has been talking about for years has almost arrived," said economic and trade analyst Majid Shakeri.

The expert said several factors point to this consolidation: the

exclusion of Arab states from the Wednesday parade after their embrace of Trump during his West Asia tour earlier this year, the Siberian Power Pipeline agreement signed between Russia and China this week, and Beijing's announcement of its intention to establish an artificial intelligence cooperation center with the rest of the SCO.

"A crucial piece of the puzzle that is still incomplete and unclear is India's balancing act between China and America," Shakeri explained.

Pezeshkian's visit to China also included significant interactions with other world leaders. While there appeared to be no interaction with the Indian Prime Minister, Pezeshkian spent four hours in discussion with Russia's Vladimir Putin and a shorter amount of time speaking with Pakistan's Shehbaz Sharif, whose country's relationship with Iran is growing closer by the day.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey was filmed holding onto Pezeshkian's hand while walking alongside him in a hall. The Iranian president expressed anticipation for Erdogan's visit to Tehran.

Despite recent tensions between Iran and Turkey regarding South Caucasus transportation plans and the situation in Syria, both nations appear in favor of maintaining their friendly relations.

Tajikistan's Emomali Rahmon was also affectionate with Pezeshkian. The two countries share a significant part of their history and culture and view each other fondly.

## Europe, Iran, and the loss of diplomatic autonomy

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – In an exclusive interview with The Guardian, Esmail Baqaei, spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry, offered a blunt assessment of current tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear program and the role Europe has chosen to play in this context.

Far from being a simple diplomatic exchange, his remarks reveal a deeper crisis that goes beyond nuclear negotiations and calls into question the very notion of a sovereign, autonomous European foreign policy.

**A Europe that has lost its diplomatic independence**

Baqaei did not hesitate to denounce what he called the total subordination of European powers to U.S. control. He harshly criticized France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, accusing them of acting as the spearhead of U.S. and Israeli policy in the region, following "Trump's orders" and adopting roles that, in his words, verge on the irresponsible and the servile. The "snapback" mechanism activated by these countries to reimpose sanctions on Iran—at Washington's behest and under its supervision—is, in itself, the clearest proof of this loss of autonomy.

This European alignment has not only eroded its credibility on the international stage but has also triggered a profound crisis of trust between Iran and European institutions. Baqaei stressed that while Europe seeks to position itself as a neutral interlocutor, it has sacrificed all genuine independence in order to validate an agenda that is not its own. The Iranian spokesperson condemned the imposition of preconditions by European powers that obstruct any real diplomatic progress. Making Iran's unilateral renunciation of uranium enrichment beyond certain levels a prerequisite—without respecting its sovereign right to such activity for peaceful purposes—is not a gesture of dialogue but an ultimatum.

Baqaei noted that Iran remains open to negotiation and could even reduce enrichment levels to those stipulated in the original 2015 agreement if genuine commitments were guaranteed by all parties. Never-

theless, Europe's insistence on upholding U.S.-dictated positions and sanctions turns dialogue into a mere pantomime—a diplomatic theater devoid of both will and space for real negotiation.

In his statements, Baqaei also highlighted how instruments that should serve as guardians of international legality, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), have become politicized tools used to undermine Iranian sovereignty. He accused the IAEA of leaking Iran's confidential information to Israel, thereby enabling military attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities—an action that violates the basic principles of sovereignty and non-intervention enshrined in international law.

This selective and political use of international law demonstrates a hegemonic approach cloaked in legalistic rhetoric but which, in reality, applies different standards depending on the political and military weight of the actors involved. The Iranian spokesperson's critique, therefore, goes beyond Europe's subjugation to Washington: it also denounces an international legal system captured by the strategic logic of the major powers.

**The weight of U.S. command and Europe's subordination**

The analysis reflected in the interview points to a phenomenon that goes beyond the Iranian conflict: Europe's strategic decline as an independent actor. The decisions and pressures on display reveal that Europe has abandoned the task of building a foreign policy rooted in its own interests and values, instead embracing a passive interdependence dictated by Washington's will.

Europe's role has been reduced to conducting subsidiary diplomacy, in which external orders prevail over the regional and global interests it ought to defend. This dynamic not only diminishes Europe's room for maneuver but also alienates key actors such as Iran, who see in these attitudes the abandonment of the multilateral promise and a submission to foreign agendas.

Beyond the spokesperson's words, we see across multiple fronts clear



*European leaders met with President Donald Trump in the White House on August 18, 2025*

evidence of a Europe that has diluted its strategic ambitions. In recent years, despite recurring speeches on the need for autonomy from the United States and despite Washington's growing hostility toward its allies, the European Union has repeatedly yielded to American political and military pressure in key areas such as defense, energy policy, and diplomacy.

This surrender is evident in concrete decisions such as the massive purchase of U.S. weaponry—including programs like the F-35—and the unreserved acceptance of foreign policies designed in Washington, where Europe appears not as a protagonist but as a secondary collaborator.

The Iranian case has laid bare how the EU has prioritized alignment with the United States to such an extent that the defense of its own strategic and economic interests has been relegated to the background. This dynamic, reflected in Baqaei's interview, is no accident but part of a broader pattern in which Europe has transformed from an independent actor into a diplomatic extension of the White House. Europe's abandonment of autonomy also weakens the international credibility of multilateralism as a tool for resolving conflicts. The EU's inability to mediate in the Iranian nuclear dispute with an independent and credible voice affects global perceptions of Europe's true willingness to build a fairer world order.

The multilateral system, supposedly based on norms guaranteeing

the sovereign equality of states, is compromised when one of its key actors operates in a subordinated and instrumental manner. By bending to external policies, Europe risks being perceived not as part of the solution but as part of the problem—further delaying the essential rebuilding of international trust.

Regaining strategic autonomy is not merely a political imperative for Europe but a matter of geopolitical survival. Its inexplicable and prolonged dependence on the United States reduces the European Union to a secondary role, weakens its influence, and jeopardizes its ability to defend its own interests and respond effectively to complex global conflicts. So long as Europe remains in this state of subordination, it will be condemned to replicate foreign agendas, losing the trust of crucial interlocutors and hindering the reconstruction of a fair international order. The recovery of a truly independent foreign policy—one capable of mediating with legitimacy and building sustainable solutions—thus emerges not just as an option but as an unavoidable strategic necessity.

Europe must make a fundamental change: leave behind dependence and the role of follower to embrace the challenge of designing and leading a diplomacy with its own vision. Only then can it move from being a mere spectator of the Iranian conflict and other major global dilemmas to becoming a driving force for dialogue, stability, and mutual respect—building a future in which its decisions are not dictated from abroad but forged from within.

## Undefeated & Unstoppable: Iran's golden generation dominates world stage

TEHRAN – The Iranian U21 men's national volleyball team have once again cemented their status as a global powerhouse, securing a historic third consecutive World Championship title with an undefeated run at the 2025 FIVB tournament in Jiangmen, China.

This victory isn't just a win; it's a powerful statement of a new golden generation's emergence, one that is poised to carry the legacy of Iranian volleyball to even greater heights.

Their path to glory was a testament to their resilience and unwavering spirit. Having defeated formidable opponents like Poland, Argentina, and the U.S., the team faced a familiar foe in the final: Italy.

Despite a slow start, dropping the first set 15-25, the Iranian squad showed their mental fortitude, staging a spectacular comeback to win the next three sets (25-18, 25-22, 25-14). This victory marks the third time Iran have defeated Italy in a U21 World Championship final, cementing their dominance over the European giants at this level.

The individual performances were as remarkable as the team's collective effort. Matin Hosseini, the team's star opposite hitter, was rightfully named the tournament's Most Valuable Player (MVP) after a stellar campaign that culminated in a match-high 18 points in the final. He was joined in the "Dream Team" by setter Emran Kook Jili, middle blocker Taha Behboudnia, and libero Morteza Tabatabaei, underscoring the team's incredible depth and balance across all positions.

Head coach Gholamreza Momeni Moghaddam, the architect of this victory, reflected on the team's hard work and dedication.

"I thank God for enabling us to become champions among 24 teams without a single loss," he said.

Momeni Moghaddam also highlighted the team's tactical flexibility, which proved crucial in the final.

"We had a specific plan for every match, and in the final, we used both of our plans," he explained. "I believe Italy did not anticipate this change in plan and we were able to defeat their excellent team."

This championship is more than just a trophy; it's a promise for the future of Iranian volleyball. With these young players already demonstrating world-class skills and unshakeable confidence, they are the ideal foundation for the senior national team.

Their success signals a bright future, one where Iran is not just a contender but a true global force, capable of competing for championships on the biggest stages.

## Iran U21 volleyball makes splash on world stage: Afshardoust:

TEHRAN – Volleyball expert Mahmoud Afshardoust lauded the Iranian team for winning the title at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship 2025, saying the team have the potential to shine in the future.

The Iranian team won the title for the second consecutive time, finishing with nine straight victories in the championship held in China.

Previously, in Bahrain, the team claimed the title with a 3-2 win over Italy; this year they defended the title more decisively with a 3-1 victory over Italy in the final.

"To win world gold for the second consecutive time is a very auspicious achievement, and the entire Iranian volleyball family is joyful. The team's progress throughout the tournament reflects five months of continuous training and well-designed practice," Afshardoust said in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

"Our team performed well across all aspects: serving, receiving, attacking, and especially blocking. Four Iranian players were selected for

the Dream Team, which indicates how strong we are. Furthermore, the tournament's best player was an Iranian. Our players showed high solidarity both on the court and on the bench," he concluded.

## Iran start 2026 AFC U23 Asian Cup qualification on high

TEHRAN – Iran earned a 3-0 win over Hong Kong in their AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers Group I match on Wednesday.

In the match held at the Al Nahyan Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, Mehdi Jafari opened the scoring for Iran in the 70th minute and Amirmohammad Razzaghinia three minutes later.

With three minutes remaining, Kasra Taheri scored Iran's third goal and he also was on target in the added time.

Iran will meet Guam and the UAE on Sept. 6 and 9, respectively.

The 44 teams were divided into eleven groups of four teams. In each group, teams played each other once at a centralized venue.

The eleven group winners and the four best runners-up will qualify for the final tournament in Saudi Arabia.

## Payam Heydari to officiate Melbourne City vs Sanfrece Hiroshima

TEHRAN – Iranian referee Payam Heydari has been chosen to officiate the match between Melbourne City and Sanfrece Hiroshima.

The match is slated for September 16 at the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium on Matchday 1 of the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Elite.

Heydari will be assisted by his countrymen Farhad Farhadpour and Ali Ahmadi.

The fourth official will be Kuwaiti.

## Taremi to wear No. 56 in Olympiacos

TEHRAN – Iranian international forward Mehdi Taremi will wear No. 56 shirt in Olympiacos.

The 33-year-old striker joined the Greek side from Inter Milan on September 31.

Taremi made 43 appearances for Inter, scoring three goals and providing nine assists. From 2020 to 2024, he wore the Porto shirt, making 182 appearances, scoring 91 goals and providing 56 assists, winning one Championship, two Super Cups, three Cups and one League Cup.

In the 2020-2021 season, he made his Champions League debut and his extraordinary goal against Chelsea was named the best of that campaign in Europe's premier club competition.

In his homeland, he also played for Shahin Bushehr, Iranjavan and Persepolis. He has made 95 appearances for the Iranian national team (56 goals) and has participated in two World Cups (2018, 2022).

## Esteghlal on verge of finalizing Aboubakar's deal

TEHRAN – Iranian club Esteghlal are reportedly on the verge of finalizing an official deal with Cameroonian international striker Vincent Aboubakar.

Esteghlal aim to strengthen their squad during the summer transfer window, foot-africa.com reported.

Last season, Aboubakar scored seven goals for Hatayspor and provided two assists in 25 matches.

The international Cameroonian forward had been also linked with a move to Esteghlal's archrival Persepolis.

Aboubakar has played for the French club Lorient and Portuguese side Porto.



## South Korea, Iran discuss ways to boost bilateral ties

TEHRAN- In a meeting between Kim Junpyo, Ambassador of South Korea to Iran, and Hamid Qanbari, the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy, the two sides discussed ways to strengthen bilateral relations, the South Korean Embassy in Tehran reported.

As the Ambassador had previously stated: "Iran's position, as a political and economic power in the West Asia, is very special. Having a domestic market with a population of 87 million, benefiting from a vast land area, the existence of abundant natural resources, and its strategic geographical location, which is a bridge between Asia, Europe, and Africa, are the reasons for Iran's importance."



## SPGC undergoes major upgrades, overhaul to ensure stable winter supply

TEHRAN – The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) is carrying out major maintenance, equipment upgrades, and staff training at its South Pars Gas Complex (SPGC) to ensure stable gas production during the cold season.

Mohammadreza Jolaei, coordinator and production oversight manager at the NIGC, said on Tuesday that the South Pars refineries are implementing a structured technical plan.

Key measures include detailed technical inspections, unit performance optimization, equipment enhancement, and workforce training, he stated.

"These steps ensure the stability and efficiency of production processes under the challenging conditions of winter," Jolaei said, highlighting the importance of reliable gas output during the cold months.

## NICICO posts 38% rise in sales in 5 months on year

TEHRAN – Iran's National Iranian Copper Industries Company (NICICO) reported sales of 79 trillion rials (\$158 million) in the first five months of 2025, marking a 38 percent increase compared with the same period last year.

According to IRIB, the company achieved 19 trillion rials (about \$38 million) in sales in Mordad (July–August), capturing the largest share of the domestic market at 18 trillion ri-

als (\$36 million), while exports accounted for 16 percent of total sales.

Copper cathodes played a central role, representing 64 percent of domestic sales and 56 percent of total sales over the five-month period.

During this time, NICICO sold 61,000 tons of cathodes, a 40 percent increase compared with the same period in 2024.

## TEDPIX gains 46,000 points on Wednesday



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 46,379 points to 2.523 million on Wednesday, which is the fifth day of the Iranian calendar week.

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

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

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

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

He recalled that in certain circumstances, the most important concern of stock exchanges in the world is to preserve shareholder assets, and stated: "During the days of war, shareholders were concerned about preserving their capital, and for this reason, stock trading was suspended; the next stage was liquidity because companies wanted to

pay their employees."

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

On July 7, the TSE head said that Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization is rolling out a revamped stabilization package aimed at improving liquidity and investor confidence following recent market volatility.

Mahamoud Goudarzi said a series of coordination meetings between regulators, stakeholders, and capital market institutions have paved the way for a gradual market recovery. The updated plan includes continued direct support for listed stocks, enhanced fund and portfolio management, the use of derivatives such as put options and futures, and regulatory reforms.

"This package is part of our efforts to shift the market from volatility toward a phase of equilibrium and ultimately growth," Goudarzi told IRNA, adding that in recent sessions, the market showed signs of stabilization after a turbulent 12-day period marked by geopolitical tensions.

Goudarzi explained that the market's priorities have evolved from asset protection during the crisis to enhancing liquidity last week, and now to reinforcing price stability.

"Over the past four days, consistent engagement among regulators, market operators, and experts has laid the groundwork for restoring balance and improving tradability," he said. "If this trend continues, the market will soon be positioned to enter a phase of sustainable recovery."

# Nearly 200 idle mines revived in 4 months

TEHRAN – Implementation of Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry's idle mines revival, activation, and development program has led to the restoration of 196 mines in the first four months of the current Iranian year.

According to the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), from the beginning of Farvardin (March 21) to the end of Tir (July 22), 196 mines were revived, activated, or developed, representing an 18.8 percent increase compared with the same period last year.

In the first four months of last year, the plan had restored, activated, or developed 165 small-scale mines. Over the full 12 months of the



previous year, a total of 594 mines were revived, activated, or expanded, with 96 investment packages imple-

mented during that period.

The revival, activation, and development program is managed by

the Iranian Minerals Production and Supply Company, a subsidiary of IMIDRO. The initiative aims to reactivate small mines, boost employment, increase mineral production, address challenges in small-scale mining, and ultimately advance Iran's resistance economy. It also seeks to optimize the use of scientific and operational capacities, financial resources, data, and human capital.

Launched in 2019, the program is considered a resistance economy initiative designed to promote mineral processing and productivity. In collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade, IMIDRO, and major mining and mineral companies, it has restored or developed nearly 2,000 mines to date.

## China-Iran ties strengthened as SCO 2025 summit delivers historic outcomes

TEHRAN – The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has achieved a series of historic milestones, with China-Iran relations emerging resiliently after navigating challenges over time. These achievements reflect a steadfast commitment to principled approaches and pragmatic policies, Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu said in a statement exclusively published by IRNA.

The 2025 SCO Summit, held in Tianjin, China, concluded successfully in recent days, producing substantial outcomes and earning international recognition, including from Iran, Cong Peiwu said.

According to the diplomat, the Tianjin Summit was the most prominent in the organization's history and its most productive in terms of high-quality development planning, highlighting the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, shared interests, equality, consultation, respect for civilizational diversity, and commitment to joint



development.

"In today's turbulent and rapidly changing world, the role of the SCO in maintaining peace, stability, and promoting development and prosperity has become increasingly prominent. Leaders at the summit unanimously agreed on the

continued promotion of the Shanghai Spirit, emphasized strengthening strategic coordination, affirmed the need to safeguard the achievements of victory in World War II, and supported the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter. They also opposed unilateral power grabs and protectionism, stressing the need to improve global governance structures while upholding fairness and justice in international affairs."

The Tianjin Declaration explicitly condemned military aggression against Iran and reaffirmed the legitimate rights of all countries, including Iran, to peaceful nuclear energy. SCO leaders also endorsed a ten-year development strategy, a move expected to advance the organization into a new phase of high-quality growth marked by greater unity, intensified cooperation, increased dynamism, and more tangible outcomes, representing a milestone in SCO history.

## Russia, fifth top source of Iran's non-oil imports in 4 months

TEHRAN- Russia was the fifth top source of non-oil products for Iran during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21–July 22), according to Foroud Asgari the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, Iran imported non-oil commodities valued at \$1.3 billion from Russia in the past Iranian calendar year 1403, which ended on March 20, 2025.

He said that Russia was Iran's seventh top source of non-oil imports in the past year.

In late April, Iran and Russia signed the MOU of their 18th joint economic committee meeting at the end of the meeting in Moscow.

In a press conference after the mentioned meeting, Iranian oil minister explained the most important achievements of the meeting, and said: "The agreements reached have outlined the framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries, and the Ministry of Oil will seriously pursue the practical implementation of these agreements."

He said that the meeting was held with the participation of specialized committees in the fields of trade, economy, finance, banking, transportation, customs, industry, mining, energy, health, agriculture, tourism, and technology, and the final memorandum of understanding of this meeting was signed by both sides.

Thanking the Russian side for hosting, he stated: "The decisions of the past months within the framework of specialized committees and the documents signed at this meeting have provided a suitable platform for the development of bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the new international conditions."

Referring to the areas of focus for both parties, the minister of oil stated: "Developing cooperation in the upstream oil and gas sector and pursuing memorandums of understanding with Gazprom, establishing a gas hub in Iran, gas trade, cooperation in the petrochemical value chain, and oil product swaps were among the key issues discussed at the meeting"

Paknejad referred to strategic cooperation in the field of nuclear

energy and said that joint projects in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy were also among the agreed issues.

He added that the activation of the North-South International Corridor, with emphasis on completing the Rasht-Astara railway as the missing link of this transit route, has been put on the agenda.

The official also emphasized the expansion of banking cooperation and said: "Creating sustainable banking platforms to facilitate trade and investment, harmonizing standards with the aim of developing bilateral trade, strengthening trade centers, and developing cooperation in the fields of agriculture, health, and customs were among other topics discussed at the summit."

According to the Iranian Oil Ministry, Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, told Iranian delegates at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting in Moscow that relations between the two countries are expanding and entering what he described as a "golden era" of cooperation.

He said Tehran and Moscow are determined to deepen bilateral ties across several sectors, including the International North–South Transit Corridor (INSTC), transit projects, and gas transfers. He stressed the need to strengthen trade and complete joint initiatives to enhance Iran's international standing and security.

Jalali highlighted the recent approval of the Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty by Russia's Federation Council and State Duma, noting that both countries need each other in different areas. "We must take concrete steps based on a clear understanding of these mutual needs," he said.

He added that Russia is actively seeking new routes for exports beyond the Black Sea and has allocated \$10 billion to develop the INSTC—a clear sign of its commitment to activating northern transit routes. According to Jalali, around 3.7 million tons of cargo moved through this corridor in 2022, increasing to approximately 33 million tons in 2023.

Referring to a statement by President Vladimir Putin that opening new transit routes is a strategic imperative beyond cost-benefit considerations, Jalali said Russia is

determined to operationalize the INSTC—and Iran should seize the opportunity.

He explained that the corridor includes three branches, of which the eastern route is already operational. In 2023, 600,000 tons of cargo were transported via this route, rising to 1.8 million tons in 2024, just shy of the two-million-ton target. For early 2025, the goal is three million tons, while the route's total capacity is 15 million tons.

Jalali emphasized that while the INSTC is a strategic necessity for Russia, it is a valuable opportunity for Iran. "With trial operations already underway, and once the route is connected to Europe, Iran could emerge as the world's second Suez Canal—or even its most vital transit route," he said. "Completing the corridor through Iranian territory will also enhance our national security on the global stage."

Also, Ali Mohammad Mousavi, Deputy Oil Minister for International and Commercial Affairs, described the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee as a clear reflection of both governments' political will to expand collaboration and achieve shared success.

He noted that the Iranian delegation's strong presence at the Moscow summit signals Tehran's serious commitment to strengthening ties, especially after the signing and ratification of the strategic partnership agreement.

Mousavi referenced coordination meetings held in Tehran with Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and said that during his recent talks in Moscow with his Russian counterpart, both sides reached consensus on key issues and emphasized the importance of positive outcomes from the commission.

"This committee is an important platform to record achievements and negotiate year-round," Mousavi said. "Iran and Russia must remain strategic partners, and this joint body symbolizes our shared determination to expand cooperation."

Expert-level talks at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting began on April 23, at Russia's Energy Agency in Moscow. On April 24, delegations prepared multiple cooperation documents for signature by Minister Paknejad and Russian Energy Min-

ister Sergey Tsivilev.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the visit to Moscow, Paknejad met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak on Thursday evening.

The meeting was also attended by Ambassador Jalali, Russian Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov, and senior members of both countries' economic teams. The two sides discussed implementation of the long-term strategic treaty, as well as joint energy, transport, and trade projects.

Paknejad noted that the treaty, signed by the presidents of both nations, has already been approved by both chambers of Russia's parliament and is currently under review by Iran's parliament.

He described the agreement as a foundation for more constructive engagement and said it adds significant weight to bilateral economic cooperation. "There is vast potential for collaboration between Iran and Russia, and we have only activated a small part of it," he said.

Paknejad stressed that the 18th joint commission meeting in Moscow is crucial for opening new pathways of cooperation. "This summit is a chance to overcome challenges and implement structural reforms so our ties can reach a level that both sides desire."

Deputy Prime Minister Novak, for his part, said that Iran and Russia's economic exchanges are on a strong upward trajectory, particularly in infrastructure projects related to energy and transport.

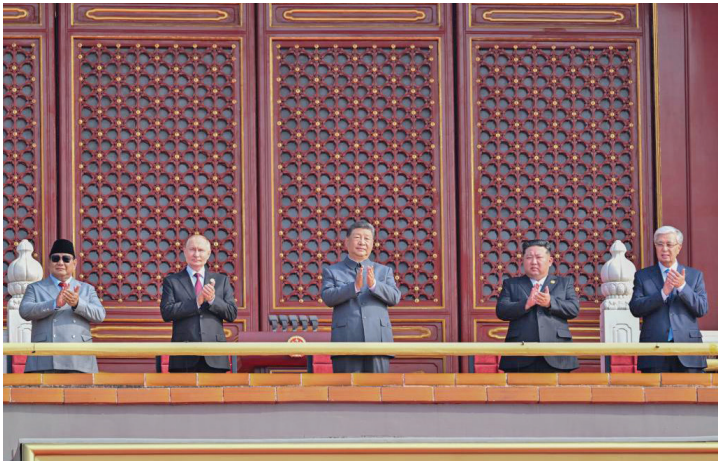
He noted that trade between the two countries grew by approximately 13 percent in 2024, signaling strong momentum. "This demonstrates the high potential of Iran-Russia trade, and we aim to further accelerate this growth," he said.

In mid-May, Iran and Russia officially launched the second phase of a card payment network integration project, enabling Russian tourists and businesspeople to make purchases at retail outlets across Iran using the Russian "Mir Pay" application.

The project to link Iran's "Shetab" card network with Russia's "Mir" system has been designed in three phases, each aimed at enhancing cross-border financial services between the two countries.



# China holds massive V-Day parade, President Xi hails ‘unstoppable’ national rejuvenation



China held a massive military parade in central Beijing on Wednesday to mark the 80th anniversary of its victory in World War II, pledging the country's commitment to peaceful development in a world still fraught with turbulence and uncertainties, Xinhua reported.

Towering structures shaped like the Great Wall, crowned with giant numerals "1945" and "2025," stood in Tian'anmen Square, symbolizing the Chinese nation's courage and solidarity in resisting foreign aggression.

Wearing a dark grey, high-collar suit, President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, oversaw the parade and reviewed the troops.

Standing beside Xi on Tian'anmen Rostrum were Russian Pres-

ident Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un, the top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, along with more than 20 other foreign leaders, some of whom attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in the city of Tianjin earlier this week.

Representatives of people who had supported China's resistance endeavors, or their family members -- from countries such as Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada -- were invited to the event.

This was the second time since 2015 that China has held a military parade to mark the hard-won victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.

The commemorative event began at 9 a.m. with an 80-gun



salute, followed by a solemn flag-raising ceremony, and a chorus of the national anthem.

Helicopters flew over the square carrying banners that read "Justice Prevails," "Peace Prevails," and "The People Prevail."

The high-morale, well-equipped soldiers marched along the Chang'an (Eternal Peace) Avenue in tight, powerful formations, their faces lit with confidence and pride. Columns of new tanks, artillery and other military equipment rumbled through the square.

Xi delivered a speech before the parade. Highlighting the significance of the victory 80 years ago, Xi said it marks China's first complete victory against foreign aggression in modern times.

Xi noted that the Chinese people made a major contribution to the salvation of human civilization and

the defense of world peace with immense sacrifice in the war. He called on nations to "eliminate the root cause of war and prevent historical tragedies from recurring."

In his speech, Xi demanded that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) provide strategic support for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. He urged the PLA to build itself into world-class forces and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. "The rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is unstoppable," Xi added.

The 70-minute military parade demonstrated the transformation of the armed forces from a "mill-et-and-rifle" army to a modern military. It was attended by more than 10,000 soldiers, over 100 aircraft and hundreds of ground armaments, organized under a war-time command system.

## US claims it struck drug-carrying vessel that left Venezuela

President Donald Trump claimed Tuesday the U.S. has carried out a strike in the southern Caribbean against a drug-carrying vessel that departed from Venezuela and was operated by the Tren de Aragua gang, AP reported.

Trump said in a social media posting that 11 people were killed in the rare U.S. military operation in the Americas, a dramatic escalation in the Republican administration's effort to stem the flow of narcotics from Latin America. Trump also posted a short video clip of a small vessel appearing to explode in flames.

The operation came after the U.S. announced plans last month to boost its mar-

itime force in the waters off Venezuela to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels.

President Nicolás Maduro's government has responded by deploying troops along Venezuela's coast and border with neighboring Colombia, as well as by urging Venezuelans to enlist in a civilian militia.

Maduro has insisted that the U.S. is building a false drug-trafficking narrative to try to force him out of office.

He told reporters on Monday he "would constitutionally declare a republic in arms" if his country were attacked by U.S. forces deployed to the Caribbean.

## Venezuela stands unyielding against US aggression: Sovereignty is non-negotiable

From page 1 ▶ In reality, however, the aim is to pressure the Bolivarian government of Venezuela to achieve what they call a "change of political regime" in our country.

For the past 25 years, Venezuela's foreign policy has championed anti-imperialism and advocated for the self-determination and sovereignty of peoples—two principles that are at odds with the objectives of the White House.

The truth is that this latest aggression adds to Washington's long-standing attempts to overthrow the Bolivarian Revolution, efforts in which they have repeatedly failed.

The Venezuelan response to this new threat has been to prepare to defend the country's sovereignty under any scenario, including war.

According to figures provided by President Maduro this past Monday, 8.2 million combatants are enrolled in the Bolivarian Militia, a volunteer corps associated with the Armed Forces.

We Venezuelans are a peaceful, peace-loving people, yet we bear on our shoulders the heroic legacy of Simón Bolívar and his liberating armies, who crossed mountains, rivers,



and valleys to liberate half the continent. Therefore, our sovereignty and territorial integrity are non-negotiable and must always be respected.

## War scars and peace dreams: Why the Caribbean and Latin America seek to remain a war-free zone

From page 1 ▶ **The context of U.S.-Venezuela tensions**  
Recent tensions between the United States and Venezuela have once again stirred unease. Threats of sanctions, diplomatic stand-offs, and veiled military posturing reopen fears of a past the region has fought hard to leave behind.

In August 2025, Washington deployed naval warships, submarines, and thousands of personnel to the Southern Caribbean, framing the move as a counter-narcotics mission.

Caracas, however, denounced it as a cover for regime change. President Nicolas Maduro responded by mobilizing millions of militia members and reinforcing troops along the Colombian border.

For the Caribbean — geographically close and politically vulnerable — such maneuvers stir deep anxiety.

The region has no appetite for becoming a staging ground in great-power rivalries. Latin America, too, has long carried the weight of interventions that often left deeper divisions rather than solutions.

The memory of war — whether in China, Europe, or Latin America — teaches that its cost is not measured only in battlefields, but in generations of trauma.

For small island nations and larger Latin states alike, war promises devastation without guarantee of recovery.

### The peace imperative

This is why regional organizations such as CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and CARICOM (Caribbean Community) emphasize keeping the region a zone of peace.

It is not a lofty diplomatic phrase but a collective survival instinct.

Just as Yuanyuan's grandfather's waistband — sewn by his mother — became a

symbol of loss and longing, the Caribbean's fragile economies, cultural identities, and migratory ties are threads that could easily be torn by external conflict.

To allow the escalation of U.S.-Venezuela disputes into militarization would be to invite generational wounds the region may never fully heal from.

**Lessons from History**  
World War II survivors taught us that trauma can shape the destinies of those not yet born. In Latin America, the memories of Guatemala's civil war, Chile's coup years, Grenada's invasion, and countless covert operations still echo in present politics. These scars are reminders that the region's peace is both hard-won and fragile.

**Toward a future without war**  
The Caribbean and Latin America's call to remain a war-free zone is not naïve idealism. It is a sober acknowledgment of history's harsh lessons: that conflict leaves wounds that humor cannot disguise, and that recovery takes far longer than war itself.

The region seeks dialogue, mediation, and cooperation over confrontation.

It seeks to build futures shaped not by inherited trauma, but by resilience, culture, and connection.

As Yuanyuan's story reminds us, the choices we make today — to heal, to connect, to bridge divides — are imprinted with the memories of those who came before us.

For the Caribbean and Latin America, choosing peace is not simply about avoiding war; it is about refusing to inherit new scars, and instead lighting the way for generations who deserve to live free of the shadows of conflict.

*Casey Jerson is an independent journalist and member of St. Lucia China Friendship Association*

## Recognition is not enough: Gaza faces rising death toll

From page 1 ▶ Despite the escalating humanitarian crisis, the international community has largely failed to take meaningful action to halt Israel's offensive. Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Tuesday described Europe's response to Israel's war on Gaza as a "failure." In an interview with The Guardian, Sánchez criticized Europe and the West for applying double standards in their responses to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. "The roots of these wars are completely different, but at the end of the day, the world is looking at the EU and western society and asking: 'Why are you applying double standards when it comes to Ukraine and Gaza?'" he said.

Sánchez added, "What we're witnessing in Gaza is perhaps one of the darkest episodes of international relations in the 21st century. Spain has been very vocal within the EU and the international community about this."

The ongoing conflict has also sparked growing protests worldwide, particularly in Europe, putting public pressure on governments to take a stand. Several European countries have announced plans to recognize Palestine as a state. Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot declared on Monday that Belgium will recognize the State of Palestine at the United Nations General Assembly later this month. "Palestine will be recognized by Belgium at the UN session!

And firm sanctions will be imposed against the Israeli government," Prévot wrote on X.

Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom have also announced plans to recognize Palestine this month, albeit with conditions. As of April 2025, some 147 countries—representing 75 percent of UN members—had already recognized Palestinian statehood.

While these recognition efforts are welcome, experts warn that without concrete actions to hold Israel accountable for its operations in Gaza, such measures risk remaining symbolic and potentially distract from the international community's inaction in the face of ongoing atrocities.

## Will the government drag Lebanon toward anarchy on Friday?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—Lebanon will open a new stage in the conflict over the Resistance's weapons next week despite Israel's clear rejection of US envoy Thomas Barrack's proposal, which originally aimed to impose security and military control, not just political control, over Lebanon.

It should be noted that the unstable regional situation forced the election of President Joseph Aoun and the appointment of Nawaf

Salam to form a government at the beginning of this year. Subsequently, the Israeli enemy—under the auspices of Washington, Riyadh, and their mercenaries in Lebanon—tried and continues to attempt to obstruct the Resistance's recovery.

Before the approval of Barrack's proposal, Hezbollah preferred to avoid threatening language in its statements and was not willing to enter into any conflict with any

Lebanese faction.

When Hezbollah agreed to many government decisions to avoid clashing with the President of the Republic or the Prime Minister, the Israeli occupying entity assumed there was a basis for besieging the Resistance and forcing it to make military concessions, just as it had made concessions on political issues.

However, matters have reached a stage where Hezbollah has been

forced to adopt a very clear discourse, as demonstrated by Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem, when he affirmed that the Resistance will not surrender its weapons and is even prepared, if necessary, for a "Kar-bala-like battle."

For his part, Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri warned against blindly responding to the decision to undermine the Resistance.

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

## Yemen targets Israeli General Staff

From page 1 ▶ In addition, the Air Force and Missile Unit carried out a joint operation against the ship "MSC ABY" vessel for violating the ban on entering ports in occupied Palestine and for its ties to the Israeli regime. The ship was struck directly using two drones and a cruise missile.

The Yemeni Armed Forces affirmed that these operations are part of their continued support for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, aimed at ending the aggression and lifting the

blockade. Officials emphasized that the attacks are a response to the "Zionist enemy's acts of genocide and starvation against civilians."

Following the announcement from Sanaa, air raid sirens sounded again in Tel Aviv and its surrounding areas. The Israeli military said it has detected another missile launch from Yemen. Israeli media reported that the airspace over Ben Gurion Airport has been closed following the launch.

According to military experts, the Yemeni response to the assassination of the Prime Minister and ministers in Sanaa has not occurred yet. The calculations for the response to this operation are different and will most likely be carried out at a deterrent level.

On Monday, Yemeni forces announced they struck the Israeli oil tanker SCARLET RAY in the northern Red Sea with a ballistic missile.

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

## American morality descending into the abyss with a heavy price to pay

By Professor Hossein Askari

PORTLAND - Recall the horrors of the indigenous people of South Africa. In 1652 Dutch settlers along with German and French Huguenot followers established what later became the Boer Republic—a horrific land where the native black population was subjugated under a system of racial segregation, commonly referred to as apartheid. The world largely turned a blind eye to the suffering of the natives for centuries, eventually Western conscience was slowly awakened through the imposition of econom-

ic sanctions in the 1960s. However, international pressures did not initially bite in large part because of U.S. reluctance to take a moral stand, thereby favoring short-term economic interests over humanity. Still the world did not stand still.

In 1974 South Africa was suspended from participating in the United Nations General Assembly, by a vote of 91 to 22. South Africa had no voice or vote in the UN until it was readmitted in 1994 at the end of the apartheid regime and a transition to non-racial democracy. While the stand at the UN was one

pillar of the turnaround in this abhorrent episode of human history, the other was a change of heart in the United States to forego short-run economic gains in favor of a longer view and a moral stand for decency and humanity with pressure from the U.S. Congress and its adoption of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1988.

Today in 2025, the world is facing a much more horrific savagery in Palestine—the expropriation of land belonging to Palestinians from the early 1900s, systematic apartheid that has been more horrific

than what prevailed in South Africa, thousands of Palestinians incarcerated with little or no justification, and after the attack of October 7, indiscriminate bombing of hospitals, schools and homes, the destruction of most buildings, mass starvation using famine as a weapon of war resulting in at least 65,000 casualties that can be seen above ground (thousands more likely buried under the rubble) with the majority of the dead women and children.

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



## Iran-Uzbekistan tourist exchange, a successful model for regional cooperation

TEHRAN-- Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan Yusufjon Usmanov called Iran a valuable cultural partner for his country and said that the exchange of religious and cultural tourists will not only strengthen relations between Iran and Uzbekistan, but will also be a successful model for regional cooperation.

Speaking on the sidelines of CHANDI Summit 2025 at the Bali Beach Convention in Indonesia, he said that promoting cultural and tourism cooperation boosts mutual ties between Iran and Uzbekistan. It can also be an effective model for regional collaborations, he added.

"I hope that Iran will become more prosperous day by day and shine as one of the best countries in the world."

Expressing his pleasure at attending this event, he emphasized the necessity of developing cultural and tourism cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan.

Pointing to the civilizational and cultural commonalities of both nations, he said that Iran and Uzbekistan boast rich history and numerous cultural commonalities.

The existence of diverse tourist and religious sites in both countries is a valuable potential that can attract millions of tourists for cultural and spiritual experiences, he added.

Stating that meetings such as "CHANDI" provide new opportunities for regional co-



operation, he added: "These gatherings are a strategic platform for exchanging experiences, introducing common capacities and developing religious and cultural tourism. Without a doubt, such cooperation will further strengthen the relations between the two countries."

The International Summit "CHANDI 2025" is being held at the initiative of the Indonesian Ministry of Culture and is attended by world leaders, ministers, policymakers and activists from the cultural and creative industries.

This event is designed to strengthen cultural dialogue, develop multilateral cooperation and promote innovative approaches in the field of culture and arts, and once again highlights the fundamental importance of culture as a pillar of peace, social resilience and sustainable development in the contemporary world.

## Historical site identified in Alborz province



TEHRAN—Caretaker of Alborz Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, Nader Zeinali, announced the discovery of a historical site in the village of Khosrowabad, Nazarabad county, on Wednesday.

The discovery was made following public reports of suspicious excavations in the area, ISNA reported.

He said: "Our conservation unit officers were dispatched to the site immediately after receiving the report and, in initial investigations, were able to identify a historical and ancient site with a height of approximately one and a half meters and a radius of 200 meters. The presence of broken historical pottery in the area confirms the initial evidence of this discovery."

Zeinali added: "Immediately after the identification, the necessary orders were issued to conduct more detailed technical and ex-

pert investigations so that we can obtain valuable information about the historical and cultural background of this area. Protecting the province's cultural heritage and preventing any damage to it is one of our top priorities."

Alborz province is one of the 31 provinces of Iran. Its capital is the city of Karaj, which lies 10 km west of Tehran, at the foothills of the Alborz mountains. Alborz is Iran's smallest province in area.

It is surrounded by Mazandaran, Tehran, Markazi, and Qazvin provinces. Its name is driven by the Alborz Mountains. A significant part of the mountains is located in the northern part of the province.

Historical resources and documents, as well as archeological studies, indicate that Alborz has a rich culture dating back to pre-historic times.

# Iran highlights culture, art as pillars of peace at Bali's CHANDI 2025

TEHRAN — Hojatollah Ayoubi, senior advisor to Iran's cultural heritage minister and head of international affairs at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, joined the "CHANDI 2025" in Bali, calling culture and art strategic assets for peace and dialogue among nations.

Ayoubi arrived in Bali on Sept. 1 and was welcomed by Indonesian officials before taking part in the summit, which runs from Sept. 3 to 5. Organized by Indonesia's Ministry of Culture, the event brings together ministers, policymakers, artists, and creative industry leaders under the theme of culture as a foundation for peace, resilience, and sustainable development.

The CHANDI event—an acronym for Culture, Heritage, Arts, Narratives, Diplomacy, and Innovation—features cultural showcases, including wayang puppetry, keris exhibitions, and regional performances. Organizers say the event seeks to highlight Indonesia's cultural "mega-diversity" and create new platforms for international cooperation. Agreements on cultural tourism were signed with the United Kingdom and Jordan, focusing on shared heritage preservation, film collaborations, and tourism exchanges.

In bilateral talks, Ayoubi met with Venezuela's deputy culture



minister, who reaffirmed support for Iran in international forums. Ayoubi said Tehran is determined to expand cultural and artistic cooperation with Venezuela to present both countries' heritage globally.

In a meeting with Indonesia's Minister of Culture Fadli Zon, Ayoubi said the uniqueness of Eastern civilizations lies in their culture and art, and congratulated Indonesia on its 80th independence anniversary. Zon highlighted historic ties between Iran and Southeast Asia and noted the influence of Persian

literature, proposing joint projects such as literary translations, cultural festivals, and UNESCO nominations for traditions like Nowruz and Ramadan iftar.

Addressing a ministerial session, Ayoubi said UNESCO's decades of work had not prevented wars and violence. "Science and education alone are not sufficient; culture and art must be brought to the forefront as remedies for humanity's wounds," he said. He cited Iranian cinema and calligraphy as examples of cultural tools for strengthening dialogue and pro-

posed joint film productions and festivals.

Ayoubi also urged governments to ease visa barriers and promote cultural tourism to enable direct exchanges among intellectuals and cultural leaders. "Those who know each other are less likely to wage war," he said.

Iran's participation in the summit, alongside senior cultural officials and international partners, reflects its commitment to cultural diplomacy and efforts to showcase the country's historical, artistic, and touristic capacities.

## Commemorative stamp unveiled to mark Khorramabad's UNESCO World Heritage inscription

KHORRAMABAD — In a landmark celebration of Iran's deep prehistory, a commemorative stamp honoring the Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley has officially been unveiled at Falak-ol-Aflak Castle.

The ceremony, attended by more than 3,000 people last Friday, brought together citizens, cultural leaders, and senior government officials to mark the UNESCO World Heritage inscription of one of Iran's most significant Paleolithic landscapes.

Hosted by Ata Hasanpour, Director General of Lorestan's provincial directorate of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, the event combined a ceremony with a cultural performance. Traditional Lori music was performed on saz, dohol, and soma, followed by a vocal piece from acclaimed Lor musician Bardia Mehravar. His composition—honoring the prehistoric caves of Khorramabad and evoking the Baradostian culture—was hailed as the first time Iran's Paleolithic heritage has entered the realm of popular music, drawing an emotional response from the audience.

Key addresses were delivered by Dr. Ata Hasanpour, Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, and Saeed Shahrokhi, Governor-General of Lorestan province. The officials praised the decades-long scholarly and community efforts that led to the UNESCO inscription and formally recognized those most closely involved.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to leading contributors: Hasanpour (nomination dossier lead), Mohammad Hassan Talebian (technical and scientific supervisor), Sonia Shi-

drang (corresponding scientific author), Jebrael Nokandeh (Director General, National Museum of Iran), and Fereidoun Biglari (Deputy for Cultural Affairs, National Museum of Iran), among others. In a further tribute, the Khorramabad Municipality awarded honorary citizenship to Shidrang and Talebian for their critical roles in securing the inscription.

The commemorative stamp was jointly unveiled by Minister Salehi-Amiri and Governor-General Shahrokhi. Produced through collaboration between the Lorestan Provincial Directorate of Cultural Heritage and the Iranian Post Company, the initiative represents the culmination of decades of archaeological work aimed at securing international recognition for the region's Paleolithic legacy.

The stamp design underscores the archaeological richness of the Khorramabad Valley, presenting six images: a scene from the 2025 Ghamari Cave excavations, the rock shelters at Gilvaran and Gar Arjeneh, a view of Kaldar Cave, and an artistic reconstruction of Upper Paleolithic hunters at Yafteh Cave. Together, these visuals narrate the story of Iran's earliest human communities.

"This issuance marks a significant change in how Iran's national narrative is presented," said Fereidoun Biglari, who proposed the idea for the stamp. "From the late Qajar period until recently, stamps celebrating Iran's archaeological heritage focused almost exclusively on historic and Islamic periods."

He noted that the turning point came in 2019, when the National Museum of Iran released its first two Paleolithic-themed stamps: one

featuring a Neanderthal tooth from Wezmeh Cave, and another depicting shell and tooth ornaments from Yafteh Cave. "Those stamps marked the first step in bringing Iran's deep prehistory into the national imagination," Biglari explained.

"The new Khorramabad stamp continues that pioneering tradition," he added. "It ensures that the story of our earliest ancestors is not confined to academic circles but shared with the public. It is a celebration of scientific achievement and a recognition that Iran's Paleolithic past is part of our collective cultural identity."

The Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley, inscribed during the 47th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Paris in July, include five caves and one rock shelter. The area preserves evidence of human occupation dating back 63,000 years, with archaeological remains from the Middle to Upper Palaeolithic periods.

The sites reveal Mousterian and Baradostian cultures and provide insights into early human migration from Africa to Eurasia. Finds such as symbolic objects and sophisticated stone tools highlight the cognitive and technological development of Homo sapiens in the Zagros Mountains.

Among the most significant sites is Yafteh Cave, which contains some of the region's earliest evidence of symbolic behavior, while Ghamari Cave preserves traces of Neanderthal occupation followed by Chalcolithic pastoral communities.

## Tax exemptions to encourage tourism investment in Iran's Free Zones

TEHRAN-- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts with the aim of developing the tourism industry, protecting cultural heritage, and strengthening handicrafts in free zones, based on which investors will be granted tax exemptions.

According to IRNA, during a ceremony for signing this MoU, which was held in the presence of the Secretary of the High Council of Free Zones Reza Masroui, Tourism Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said that free zones can turn into the one of the major tourism hubs of Iran and even the world.

The realization of this goal requires the formation of co-ordination, convergence, and joint cooperation, he added.

He said the three main axes of cooperation between the two bodies are as follows: first, utilizing national and international capacities and membership of free zones in official tourism organizations, second, introducing Iran's attractions on a global level through the production of multilingual content and its publication in international media, airlines, and high-profile networks, and third, developing tourism investment packages with special incentives such as tax exemptions, the possibility of importing

equipment and vehicles required by hotels, and the creation of coastal and marine facilities.

The minister continued that based on the reports, Kish Free Zone currently has 50 active hotels. It has also 50 hotel projects which are under construction, he added.


The capacity can turn Kish Island into the third tourism destination of Iran after Tehran and Mashhad, he said, adding that designing travel chains and combined tours between cities and free zones can play a key role in introducing Iran to foreign tourists.

He also announced plans to hold an international conference on investment in free zones and emphasized that this event will be a good opportunity to present investment packages to domestic and foreign investors.

Meanwhile, Reza Masroui said that although free zones were initially formed with a commercial and industrial approach, today tourism has become the main priority in many of them and Iran has valuable capacities in this field.

Pointing to the new policies in investment sector and removing restrictions in free zones, he said: "In the past, some of the attractions of investing in free zones had faded, but currently, with the development of the free zones development document and the amendment of the law, we are restoring these advantages."

Second Announcement



Iran Alumina

ONE STAGE TENDER INTERNATIONAL CALL

FOR PURCHASE OF 1000 MT CRYOLITE

TENDER No.: j/28

DATE: 31<sup>th</sup>/Aug /2025

**1.Subject: Iran Alumina Company (IAC)** intends to purchase high quality Cryolite, in amount of **1000 MT** for using in its Primary Aluminum Reduction Smelter Plant through one stage Tender according to following conditions as mentioned in the relevant Tender documents .:

**2. Bid Bond Guarantee: 170,264 US Dollar/or 121,089,253,680 Rials**

**3.Tender proposal.:** Since the tendering is to be done in one stage ,thus the eligible Bidders should follow and regard the Tender instructions and present and submit all of required justified documents and the mentioned Tender envelopes in one package together.

**4.Closing Date.:** The eligible Bidders should submit their Bids/proposal to the central administration office as mentioned below and also in the Tender documents before 16:00 pm ,local time , on the day **04<sup>th</sup> October ,2025 .**

**5. Opening Date.:** **09<sup>th</sup> October , 2025.**

**6. Contact information.:** For more details and receiving the relevant Tender documents , the Bidders can refer to the following contact information.

**Add.:**1- Km 7 of Sankhast Road, city of Jajarm, Northern Khorasan Province, IRAN, P. O. Box:1135-94415 legal and contractual Affairs .

2-Tehran,Somayeh Street,After Mofateh Intersections,No 100, Postal Code : 1581875711

**Tel .:** 0098-58-32605312-32605353 **Fax:** 0098-58-32272487 **website:** [www.iranalumina.ir](http://www.iranalumina.ir) **E-mail:** [info@iranalumina.ir](mailto:info@iranalumina.ir)

**IRAN ALUMINA CO** [en.iranalumina.ir](http://en.iranalumina.ir)





In an exclusive with Tehran Times, Iran’s women’s Canoe Polo players Elaheh, Mahdieh, and Anahita talk about their rollercoaster journey in championship

SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

7



The Iranian women's canoe polo national team players Elahe Pourabadian (left), Mahdieh Shabani (center), and Anahita Mahtarpour (right) attended an interview with Tehran Times.

By Masoud Hossein&Farrokh Hesabi

**TEHRAN –** About 30 years after canoe polo was introduced to Iran sports society, the Iranian women have stolen the show in the sport. After winning several medals in Asia, Team Melli made history in the 2024 World Canoe Polo Championship by finishing fourth.

Iran, captained by Elahe Pourabadian, have a long way to go since countries like Germany and New Zealand, are the world's powerhouses in the sport.

Despite their poor performance in the 2025 World Games in Chengdu, Iran's women's canoe polo team are determined to shine once again in the World Canoe Polo Championship.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Pourabadian, Mahdieh Shabani and Anahita Mahtarpour expressed their concerns about the team's future.

First of all, explain more about canoe polo as a non-Olympic sport. As you know, the Iranian people love football and wrestling and have recently shown interest in volleyball and basketball but canoe polo is an unknown sport for most of them.

**Pourabadian:** You are right. Canoe polo was brought to Iran 1986 after Japan gifted us a canoe polo kayak. Since then, the Iranian women's and men's team play the excited sport. I have to say the women's team have been more successful in the sport. But, most of Iranian people lack of knowledge about canoe polo. Another obstacle is the equipment of canoe polo are expensive and it is a reason the athlete would rather play another sport.

**Shabani:** We have one more problem. The Iranian players in national team are training in Tehran's Azadi Lake, while the sport can be played in swimming pool. As you know, Azadi Lake is located outskirt of Tehran and it takes time to reach out the training. I think there is the possibility we train in a swimming pool in the city. But the players are forced to travel to Azadi to participate in the training and I think it's boring.

**Mahtarpour:** Canoe polo has a lot to say in the future. We need support more to show how capable we are. When we participate in a competition, so many ask us "are you allowed to play in your country?". It's so weird for them to see the Iranian women compete in a sports competition. One day, someone asked me are you wearing hijab at your home? (smiles).

**Do women's canoe polo have a good talent pipeline right now, and can we be optimistic about their future?**

**Mahtarpour:** Right now, three provinces Tehran, Alborz, and Mazandaran, are doing a good job of nurturing talent for this sport. Other provinces are also working, but they haven't yet presented a team that can compete at a high level nationally.

**You said Germany and New Zealand are the powerful teams in the sport. What factors con-**

tribute to the success of these teams?

**Shabani:** The first reason is their long history in the sport. We started canoe polo about 30 years ago, but the sport originated in 1970. That history gives them a significant advantage. Another factor is infrastructure; European countries have more training pitches due to geographic circumstances.

**Mahtarpour:** Another reason for their strength relates to their league. Our league consists of seven teams and there are top three teams in the league always. They have a really good league, which is the strongest league in the world. So, every player wants to play in this league. They have all the best national team players from all European countries joining this well-paid league, which makes the league so excellent.

**Pourabadian:** As a player who has played in the league for about two decades, I have to say Iran need more competitive league if we want to win medal in the world championship. Our league just lasts two weeks and it cannot help the players. I think we need more friendly matches with the other teams. Our domestic league, despite having seven teams, ends very quickly. In the past, the league season was longer, and players were always at their peak fitness.

**If you were the head of the federation, what would be your solution to this problem?**

**Pourabadian:** The number of teams isn't the problem, as long as the teams are at a level where they can create good competition, not get beaten by 20 goals against the top teams. All the teams should be competitive and challenge each other. Right now, our league is completely predictable regarding which teams will finish first, second, or third, and that's not good at all.

We did fail to meet expectations in China, but the reality is that we have a long road ahead and need time

**Shabani:** Canoe polo needs a minimum of two overseas competitions per year. Until we can participate in various events, we can't compete against big rivals. Other teams participate in different competitions and improve their level. They test their athletes' condition in various competitions, but we only rely on training camps.

**Mahtarpour:** Progress in canoe polo comes from playing and gaining experience against different teams. In addition to a domestic league and various tournaments, we also need international competitions.

**How is the situation in other kayaking sports compared to canoe polo, for example, rowing?**

**Pourabadian:** Rowing is in a better situation because its federation has separated. Other disciplines are also doing well, but since canoe polo isn't an Olympic sport, its situation is a bit more complex.

Iran failed to meet expectations in the 2025

World Games in China. What was the reason?

**Pourabadian:** First of all, I have to say we are honored to participate in the World Games for the first time. We had planned to compete in at least one preparatory tournament before the Games, but the country's circumstances and a 12-day conflict with Israel prevented us from doing so. Just 10 months ago, we reached the third-place match at the 2024 World Championship and finished fourth. Our motivation for the World Games was high, but we must accept our preparatory was not enough for the Games.

**Mahtarpour:** Absolutely right. We failed to live up to the expectations in China, but the reality is that we have a long road ahead and need time. Canoe polo is a young sport in our country, and we will shine in the future, undoubtedly. To play against the great teams in the world requires experience, and it requires more and more warm-up matches.

**Shabani:** We could not play as we did in the 2024 ICF World Championships but in the next edition which will be held next year in Duisburg, we are a more experienced team and it will be a good opportunity for us to show the world We Are Here. I remember in the 2024 ICF World Championships, when we were playing the Netherlands in the third-place match, all women teams on the stands were cheering us.

**We've heard the lack of sponsorship in canoe polo. Do you find this issue concerning?**

**Pourabadian:** The federation and the Ministry of Sport are doing their best to support this

sport, but we expect more support, especially from sponsors who have the ability to help. We are ready to be dispatched to the Asian Championships in Malaysia and hope to be sent to these competitions without any problems.

**What's your overall assessment of the level of Iranian women's canoe polo, and has there been any progress in recent years?**

**Shabani:** Overall, I'd say the athletes in this sport have made good progress. I'm not just talking about myself, but all my teammates. I haven't been in this sport for many years, but I think we are still not getting the recognition we deserve for the effort we put in. The nature of this sport is that we must participate in various international tournaments.

Canoe polo has a lot of potential for the future. We need more support to show how capable we are

**Mahtarpour:** Apart from the World Games, the younger players haven't had the chance to go to the Asian Championships, but our captain, Pourabadian, has won nine Asian medals and competed in various international events. Athletes who have dedicated so many years of their lives to this sport should receive more attention. However, the recent World Games was a turning

point for women's canoe polo, as it brought visibility to our sport and we received great support in all aspects.

**Do you also think about coaching?**

**Pourabadian:** I'm a player on the national team, but I coach the Tehran team in domestic competitions. Honestly, I don't have much interest in coaching the national team (smiles) because it has a lot of stress, and it's very difficult for me. The stress the coach outside the water experiences is something the athlete in the water never does.

**Tell us about the World Games in Chengdu. How was it game by game?**

**Shabani:** The first match against China was easy, and we won decisively. China were the hosts and participated in the Games without going through the qualifiers, which is why their level was lower.

**Mahtarpour:** The next match was against New Zealand. We had previously lost to New Zealand 7-2 at the World Championships, so we had experience playing against them, and as I said, experience can be very useful. This time, we played much better for that reason and could have even won, but unfortunately, we lost 3-2.

**Pourabadian:** The next match was against Germany, a team we hadn't played against in a long time. The last time Iran played against Germany was at the 2014 World Championships in France, and I'm the only one left from that team with experience of playing against Germany. But Germany's generation has changed, and we didn't get a good result against them. We also had no prior experience playing against Italy and lost. If we had more experience in those two matches, we might have gotten better results. We had also analyzed our opponents well, but analysis alone is not enough; playing in international matches is what truly prepares the team.

**Which teams are Iran's serious rivals in the Asian Championships?**

**Pourabadian:** Singapore and Chinese Taipei are the favorites in Asia. After they failed to get a spot for the World Games, and that spot went to Iran, they immediately started rebuilding their teams and participated in three or four European tournaments. This means they are determined to come and win the Asian Championships.

**Mahtarpour:** Iran is definitely one of the top contenders for a medal, but we can't predict the color of our medal. The Iranian women's team has always been either in the final or has at least won a bronze medal.

**Do Iran need a foreign coach, and how is the level of coaching in Iran?**

**Mahtarpour:** A foreign coach would certainly help the progress of Iranian canoe polo. Coaches who come from top teams and have a good record of winning international titles.

**Shabani:** Iranian coaches are at a good level, but a knowledgeable coach from abroad could undoubtedly elevate the level of Iranian canoe polo.

**Pourabadian:** I'm not saying the level of Iranian canoe polo isn't high; on the contrary, in the women's section, we have a lot to say, but with the use of modern knowledge and top coaches, we could be among the top three teams in the world.







SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 18:53 Dawn: 4:08 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:36 (tomorrow)

## Tehran Symphony Orchestra to stage “October 1904” concert at Vahdat Hall

TEHRAN – Tehran Symphony Orchestra (TSO), conducted by Nasir Heydarian will stage the concert “October 1904” at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on September 11 and 12.

At the concert, the orchestra will perform pieces by the Austro-Bohemian Romantic composer Gustav Mahler, Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and German composer and pianist Robert Schumann, Honaronline reported.

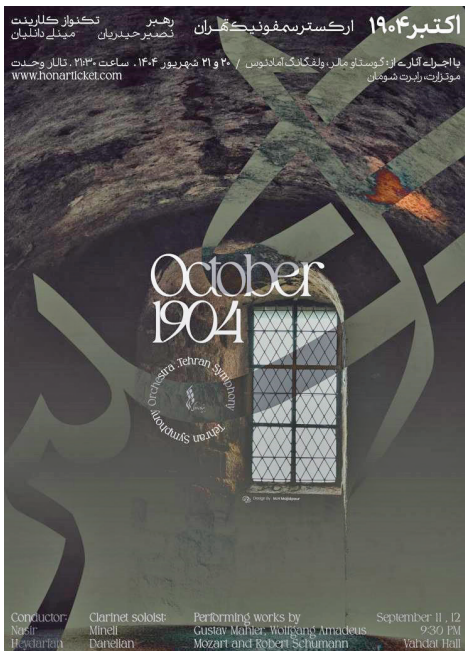
The repertoire will include “Symphony No. 5” by Mahler, “Clarinet Concerto in A major” by Mozart, and “Spring Symphony” by Schumann.

Mahler wrote his “Symphony No. 5” between 1901 and 1902. However, the piece premiered in October 1904, which is why the name “October 1904” was chosen for the upcoming symphony orchestra concert.

Born in Tehran, Nasir Heydarian studied orchestral conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in Austria. He has an extensive career, having collaborated as a conductor with the Graz Opera, Basel Symphony Orchestra, Zurich Opera, Bonn Opera, Beethoven Hall Orchestra in Bonn, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Venezuela Youth Orchestra, World Youth Orchestra, and many other ensembles.

Heydarian previously worked as a trombonist with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. He was selected as the conductor of the TSO in August 2022.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1933, is Iran’s oldest and largest symphony



orchestra. It was founded as the Municipality Symphony Orchestra by Gholamhossein Minbashian, before entering its modern form under Parviz Mahmoud in 1946.

In the years that followed, conductors such as Rubik (Ruben) Gregorian, Morteza Hannaneh, Haymo Taeuber, Heshmat Sanjari, Farhad Meshkat, and Fereydoun Nasserri took over as the conductors of the orchestra.

Performing pieces by acclaimed Iranian and international composers, the TSO held more than 20 concerts last year at Vahdat Hall.

## Cartoon of Day



Hope!!

Cartoonist: Morad Kotkot from Jordan

# Iranian projects shine in 2025 Aga Khan Award for Architecture



This combination photo shows the Majara Complex and Community Redevelopment on Hormuz Island (L), and Jahad Metro Plaza in central Tehran.

TEHRAN – Two innovative projects from Iran have been named winners of the 2025 Aga Khan Award for Architecture, one of the world’s most distinguished prizes in the field.

On Tuesday, the Majara Complex and Community Redevelopment on Hormuz Island, designed by ZAV Architects, and Jahad Metro Plaza in Tehran, designed by KA Architecture Studio, were selected among seven projects worldwide to receive the prestigious recognition.

The Majara Complex forms part of the “Presence in Hormuz” initiative, an ambitious cultural and social development program aimed at reviving the island’s struggling economy through eco-tourism and community-driven design, bringing together cultural development and local employment through earth-based dome construction that recalls the island’s colorful landscapes.

The project combines visitor accommodation with artist residencies, restaurants, workshops, a library, and prayer spaces, while earlier interventions such as the Rong Cultural Center and Ozar mobile cinema have provided venues for cultural exchange. Beyond its architectural achievement, the project has created much-needed employment, transformed the landscape into a living symbol of resilience, and offered a framework for tourism and social engagement in a region long marked by economic precarity.

The second Iranian winner, Jahad Metro Plaza in central Teh-

ran, redefines a central urban intersection in the capital, transforming a metro entrance into a vibrant pedestrian hub through a vaulted structure inspired by Iranian brickwork traditions.

The vaulted structures, built in only seven months using modular steel-mesh frameworks and handmade local bricks, recall Iran’s rich tradition of geometric brickwork while remaining cost-effective and durable. The space provides shade and light-filled gathering areas, enabling social activities, performances, and rest. By incorporating spaces for street vendors, the project integrates informal commerce into the city’s public realm, turning the plaza into a vibrant urban hub that reflects Tehran’s evolving identity.

Alongside the Iranian achievements, projects from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Pakistan, and Palestine also received recognition. Together, the seven winners will share the \$1 million prize, one of the most significant awards in the field of architecture.

In Bangladesh, Marina Tabasum Architects won recognition for Khudi Bari or Little House, an affordable and adaptable housing solution for char communities threatened by recurring floods and river erosion. Built from bamboo, steel connectors, and corrugated tin, the modular houses can be assembled in three days and dismantled in hours.

From China, architect Zhang Pengju was honored for the West Wusutu Village Community Center in Inner Mongolia. Trans-

forming the ruins of a former Buddhist temple, the project created a dynamic cultural hub built largely from salvaged bricks. With its off-centered courtyard, roof terraces, and flexible spaces for mahjong, pottery, and cultural events, the center has not only revitalized village life but also sparked local economic growth through tourism, guesthouses, and restaurants.

In Egypt, the award went to the Revitalization of Historic Esna by Takween Integrated Community Development. Once at risk of destruction, Esna’s layered urban heritage – from Graeco-Roman remains to Islamic and Ottoman structures – has been safeguarded through a process of urban acupuncture.

Pakistan was represented through Vision Pakistan, designed by Mohammad Saifullah Siddiqui in Islamabad. The vocational training facility provides literacy, tailoring, and life skills to non-literate young men, offering classrooms, exhibition halls, shops, and prayer spaces. Built with modest means but careful detailing, the building now trains 40–50 students annually and serves as a model for sustainable, community-based education.

In Palestine, AAU Anastas was awarded for the Wonder Cabinet in Bethlehem, a cultural and educational hub dedicated to preserving Palestinian craft traditions. With its bold concrete frame and transparent façades, the building emphasizes process over form, housing workshops, artist studios, a radio station, and performance spaces. Local

artisans played a central role in shaping the details, ensuring that the building not only serves as a venue for contemporary arts but also sustains livelihoods and reinforces cultural presence in the West Bank.

The 16th Award Cycle (2023–2025) of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture was announced after extensive site reviews earlier this year, with the jury highlighting the winners as examples of architecture’s power to foster resilience, pluralism, and optimism in a time of global uncertainty. The award ceremony will be held on September 15 at the Toktogul Satylganov Kyrgyz National Philharmonic in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Beyond architects, the Aga Khan Award also acknowledges the municipalities, clients, engineers, and artisans who contributed to each project. In addition, the book “Optimism and Architecture,” edited by Lesley Lokko, will be released later this year, presenting the awarded and shortlisted projects while situating them in broader global debates on tradition, innovation, and inclusivity in architecture.

Established in 1977 by the late His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the Award was created to recognize and encourage projects that respond not only to social and economic needs but also to cultural aspirations. Over 16 cycles, it has honored 136 projects and documented nearly 10,000 building initiatives worldwide, offering a rich record of how architecture can serve humanity across diverse contexts.

## Textile Gaza maps bear pain of war for artist exiled in Paris

For decades, Maha Al Daya was known in Gaza as a master embroiderer of traditional dresses, a vibrant tribute to Palestinian identity brought out at times of celebration.

But after fleeing the Gaza war, Al Daya, 49, traded dresses for painted rubble and embroidered maps documenting the enclave’s destruction. Gone are the flower motifs. Now, her work depicts ruins and displacement, The National reported.

“Something changed inside me,” Al Daya said. “I now only work on the pain and suffering I saw in Gaza.”

The geography of Gaza carries deep emotional weight for Al Daya, as the maps reproduce leaflets thrown from Israeli planes telling Gazans to leave certain zones. The image of those fluttering papers falling from the sky remains seared in her mind.

In Paris, where Al Daya has lived since January, she carries one of those leaflets taped to the back of her phone. When she met The National in her office, she wore a white T-shirt embroidered with “All eyes on Rafah”.

“It’s the first time that my art is political,” she said. Her embroidery has even likely made it to the Elysee Palace. During a meeting in April at the Arab World Institute with French President Emmanuel Macron alongside other Palestinian figures residing in Par-

is, she handed him one of her maps of Gaza.

The red stitches conveyed its destruction. The black contour represented the sadness that now fills the enclave. She also gave him an embroidery on which she had stitched the words: “Where do we go now?”.

“It’s what all Gazans ask all the time,” she said. “Because there is nowhere for us to go.”

More than 63,630 Gazans have been killed in Israel’s offensive since October 2023. After 23 months of war, which has caused mass starvation in the enclave, Israel now intends to occupy Gaza city, a decision that has caused an international outcry. In this context, France opened its doors to 24 Gazan artists and their families, including Al Daya, via a state-run program named Pause.

It supports artists and researchers from war-torn countries and gives them a year-long residency and a work contract at a prestigious institution. Al Daya’s one-year placement, which is renewable, is hosted jointly by Sciences Po Paris and the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination.

“I do not feel like a stranger in this city, but I have a longing for my home and my city, Gaza, its sea and its streets,” she said.

When the conflict in Gaza started, the family fled their house with just a few items,

thinking they would be back in days. Al Daya’s artwork, including dresses she had been working on for a fashion show, was left behind.

“We thought we’d be back in two days. The longest war had lasted 50 days in the past,” she said, referring to what Israel named Operation Protective Edge in 2014. But the house they sheltered in, in Khan Younis, was struck twice by missiles, injuring its inhabitants.

The family escaped unharmed but fled again to a tent encampment in Al Mawasi, an area in the south of Gaza where most of the enclave’s population of two million is now living. There, they had to adapt to a life of squalor and overcrowding.

“What you see on TV doesn’t begin to convey what life is like in Gaza. If I’d stayed, I would have died. I don’t know how people continue to bear it,” she said. “I still have nightmares from that period.”

Her time in Al Mawasi was one of the hardest times in her whole life. But even then, she tried to embellish it with art. Using charcoal, she drew embroidery patterns on the tents.

On the tents, Al Daya also drew cacti – a symbol of steadfastness and pride, she said. At home, she had kept a cactus on her balcony, where she grew flowers.