

IRGC Chief vows decisive action against threats

## Hell Awaits Aggressors



## Iran presses UN for stronger global response to Israeli actions

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## Passenger shipping line between Chabahar and Muscat launched

TEHRAN – A direct passenger shipping route between Chabahar, Iran, and Muscat, Oman, has been launched, officials announced on Monday.

Reza Masroor, secretary of the Iranian Free Zones High Council, said the maritime tourism line began operating following the directives of President Masoud Pezeshkian during his visit to Chabahar last year.

“One of the key priorities emphasized by the president during that trip was the establishment of a direct passenger shipping line between Chabahar and Muscat,” Masroor said. ▶ Page 6

## Evidence of systematic torture of Palestinians is horrific

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The discovery of 135 mutilated Palestinian bodies returned to Gaza has shed light on a disturbing pattern of torture within the Israeli occupation regime's prison system.

This is especially evident at the regime's Sde Teiman military facility in the Negev desert, as reported by several news outlets, including the Guardian, and documented by other organizations.

The bodies, identified through Hebrew-language tags as having been held at Sde Teiman, show unmistakable signs of torture and execution. Gaza's health ministry confirmed that many bore evidence of blindfolding, handcuffing, and point-blank gunfire.

According to Dr. Munir al-Bursh, “The document tags inside the body bags are written in Hebrew and clearly indicate that the remains were held at Sde Teiman.”

## The animalistic behavior of US envoy towards Lebanon intensifies

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—In a dangerous escalation that highlights American intimidation against Lebanon, U.S. envoy to Syria Thomas Barrack has unleashed a series of inflammatory statements through his X account, threatening Lebanon with civil war and Israeli aggression if it refuses to normalize relations with Israel under the so-called Abraham Accords.

Barrack's remarks are not isolated slips of the tongue. They form part of a systematic pattern of coercion and blackmail that reflect the deeply entrenched arrogance of Washington's diplomacy towards sovereign nations.

Barrack's message to Lebanon was chillingly clear: submit to Washington's will and normalize with Tel Aviv or face chaos, collapse, and destruction.

This tone of political thuggery exposes what lies beneath the rhetoric of “peace” and “stability” the U.S. so often parades: a neocolonial project aimed at subjugation, not coexistence.

## Beyond the battlefield: How Gaza conflict drives Israelis abroad

By Shahab Sarmadi

TEHRAN – Israel is facing an unprecedented wave of emigration linked to the ongoing war in Gaza and deepening political unrest at home. A new report by the Knesset Research and Information Center shows that more than 125,000 Israeli citizens moved abroad between early 2022 and mid-2024 — the largest loss of human capital in Israel's history over such a short period.

The data have been presented to the Knesset's Immigration and Absorption Committee, painting a picture of an entity under growing internal strain. The report attributes the surge in departures to multiple factors, including Israel's prolonged military campaign in Gaza, political polarization surrounding the government's judicial overhaul, and a general sense of insecurity and disillusionment among citizens.

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## Shafiabad village: a gateway to UNESCO-listed Lut Desert

TEHRAN – Shafiabad village, located in the famed Shahdad district of Kerman province, southern Iran, stands as a remarkable example of harmonious coexistence between human settlement and a harsh desert environment.

Strategically positioned along the historic Silk Road and adjacent to the globally recognized Shahdad Kalouts -- one of the world's most extraordinary desert landscapes -- Shafiabad offers a unique blend of cultural, historical, and natural significance.

The village, along Kandelous in northern Iran and Soheili in south of the country, was named a Best Tourism Village by the UN Tourism on October 17.

At the heart of the village lies the Shafiabad Fortress, dating back to the 19th-century Qajar era. Built using traditional mud-brick techniques, the fortress features strong defensive walls. ▶ Page 6

## Iran win title of 2025 IBSA Asia-Pacific Goalball Championships

TEHRAN – Iran defeated China 4-2 to win the 2025 IBSA Asia-Pacific Goalball Championships on Tuesday.

Team Melli defeated Saudi Arabia 6-4, Australia 5-1, Thailand 5-1, Iraq 8-3, and Thailand 3-2 on their way to the final.

Iran have won the title for the third time.

In the men's bronze medal match, Thailand edged past Australia 5-4 in a nail-biting encounter that went down to the wire, earning the Southeast Asian nation a well-deserved podium finish.

Iran and China booked their place at the 2026 World Championships in China.

The championship, organized by the Pakistan Blind Sports Federation, featured 17 teams from 11 countries, including Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Iraq, and Uzbekistan, New Zealand and South Korea.

The 10-day competition was held at the Sports Complex Liaquat Gymnasium in Islamabad, Pakistan from Oct. 16 to 21.

**Exclusive Interview**

Expressing the unseen: Ibrahim Nasrallah's insights on Palestinian stories, culture



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## Tehran holds 29th National Export Day celebration

TEHRAN- Iran's 29th National Export Day celebration was held at the Tehran Summit Conference Hall with the presence of President Masoud Pezeshkian, Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mining, and Agriculture Samad Hasanzadeh, Chairman of Industry and Mining Committee of the Parliament Reza Alizadeh, and a group of managers and traders.

Addressing the ceremony, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) Head Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi referred to the three main strategies of the TPO in the field of exports, and stated: “Facilitating and removing export barriers, developing free trade, and promoting an export-oriented approach are the three important strategies of the organization.” ▶ Page 4





## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## The importance of China and Russia's confrontation with the West

Sobh-e-No examined the significance of China and Russia's stance against the West, noting that both countries are fully aware of the political and economic costs of supporting Iran. Nevertheless, Beijing and Moscow chose to openly defy Western pressure by signing a joint letter. This move carries weight on multiple levels. Politically, China and Russia signaled their refusal to remain subordinate to the Western-dominated framework of international policymaking. Their action reflects a broader effort to promote a multipolar world order. Legally, the letter represents full endorsement of Iran's interpretation regarding the automatic expiration of UN Security Council Resolution 2231. Strategically, it sends a clear message to Washington that any attempt to reinstate sanctions through the Security Council will be met with a veto from both Russia and China. In this joint statement, China and Russia not only defended Iran's position but also challenged the credibility of the Security Council itself. They argued that continued Western maneuvering within the Council undermines the legitimacy of the entire UN system.

### Resalat: Europe is caught in its own trap

In a recent note, Resalat addressed the legal and strategic deadlock facing the United States and the European troika. The impasse has led to confusion in their approach to Iran, stemming from three key developments: the formal collapse of the JCPOA, the expiration of Resolution 2231, and the refusal of China and Russia to support the reactivation of the snapback sanctions. Legal experts argue that this convergence of factors has created a volatile and unpredictable situation for the West, disrupting the scenario envisioned by the U.S., Germany, France, and the UK. From the standpoint of international law, any effort to reimpose sanctions through the Security Council would require a new resolution; an outcome rendered virtually impossible by the positions of Russia and China. Europe, having contributed to the current dynamic, now finds itself ensnared in a trap of its own making.

### Ettelaat: News manipulation to put pressure on Iran

Ettelaat examined the publication of a news that an Iranian oil tanker had been hit in the Gulf of Aden by an American submarine and wrote: Just one day after the announcement of the expiration of Resolution 2231 and an official statement by Iran, China and Russia that they don't not recognize the European troika's action (in invoking the snapback sanctions) , foreign media outlets, including the Qatari Al Jazeera network, claimed that the Iranian oil

tanker had been targeted, which was denied by Iranian media. The media coverage of this report strengthened the speculation that the West, and especially the Americans, are seeking to keep alive the psychological effect of the activation of the snapback sanctions against Iran and to insinuate that the conditions are going to become more difficult for Iran. The reality is that Iran is no stranger to these pressures and threats. Threatening Iran cannot meet the West's plan to weaken Iran; and on the other hand, any actions will lead to a tougher and more complex response from Iran.

### Hamshahri: Why is America looking for a proxy force?

Hamshahri addressed Donald Trump's interview with Fox News on October 20 that the Zionist regime of Israel is a US "proxy". The newspaper wrote: Although the Zionists are trying hard to pass off the Palestinian land as their own country, the admission by Western officials indicates that Israel is not actually a country, but a proxy actor for Western governments. It is as if the Zionists are the agents of Western countries in the Middle East. Over the past few decades, it seems that American hegemony in the region has been declining. The decline of American hegemony in the region is one of the reasons that has led Washington to count on Israel's actions in the region to secure American interests. With the decline of American hegemony in the Middle East, its rival powers such as China and Russia have filled the power gap. Given the turbulent situation in the Middle East, American elites have adopted the policy of strengthening Israel in different ways. From Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal to Biden's unconditional support for Israel in the Gaza war, it is clear that American foreign policy is completely subordinate to the interests of its proxy, Israel.

### Dony-e Eghtesad: Policy of subsidized gasoline and challenges

Dony-e Eghtesad wrote: The policy of gasoline price subsidies has been one of the challenges facing Iran's economy in recent years. This subsidy paid by keeping the gasoline price unchanged over the years, has resulted in the poorest people receiving the least benefit from it. Instead, high-consumption users are reaping the most benefit from it. Furthermore, paying this subsidy places a heavy financial burden on the government, which ultimately shows itself as a budget deficit and increased inflation, with the poor people bearing the cost of this inflation. Economics professor Mousa Ghaninejad says there is no alternative other than reforming the gasoline price in the long run.

## Iran presses UN for stronger global response to Israeli actions

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According to Iran's Foreign Ministry, Araghchi emphasized the international community's responsibility to stop Israel's continued violations of the Gaza ceasefire and to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to the enclave's residents.

Addressing the situation in Yemen, Araghchi condemned Israeli attacks on the country and reaffirmed Iran's readiness to work with the United Nations to promote stability in Yemen and strengthen regional security.

Guterres, in turn, praised Iran's diplomatic efforts to support peace and stability in the region and underscored the importance of ongoing consultations to restore calm in Yemen and beyond.

Since the Gaza ceasefire took effect on October 10, at least 97 Palestinians have reportedly been killed and 230 injured, with total casualties from the conflict since October 2023 reaching more than 68,000 deaths and over 170,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Government Media Office.

Senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya reaffirmed the group's commitment to fully implement all terms of the Sharm el-Sheikh-brokered ceasefire, including the handover of remaining Israeli captives and the administration of Gaza to a Palestinian authority. He expressed confidence in the guarantees provided by mediators and friendly nations, amid concerns that Israel may renege on the agreement.

Reports from The New York Times indicate that several former Trump administration officials, including Vice President J.D. Vance, regional envoy Steve Witkoff, and advisor Jared Kushner, have voiced concern that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might abandon the deal, warning that the situation is "very delicate." Trump himself reportedly dismissed Israeli claims of Hamas violations.

Observers note that Israel has previously violated similar agreements, including early-stage armistices and prisoner exchanges, while continuing aggressive military operations that have disproportionately impacted Palestinian civilians.

The conflict has also been compounded by Israeli airstrikes in Yemen, actions widely condemned as breaches of international law and the UN Charter.

# Tehran, Baku reaffirm commitment to regional stability and cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran and Azerbaijan have reaffirmed their commitment to deepen political, economic, and cultural cooperation and to remove remaining obstacles to stronger bilateral relations.

During a meeting in Tehran on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held extensive talks with Khalaf Khalafov, special assistant to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. The discussions focused on ongoing collaboration, regional stability in the South Caucasus, and prospects for future cooperation across strategic sectors.

Araghchi emphasized Tehran's determination to advance relations with Baku based on mutual respect, good neighborliness, and shared regional interests. "Iran's policy is to develop and expand comprehensive relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan and to remove any obstacles in this process," he said, noting that geographic proximity, cultural ties, and common interests form a natural foundation for lasting friendship.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) meets with Khalaf Khalafov, special assistant to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, in Tehran on October 20, 2025.

Addressing the wider regional context, Araghchi reiterated Iran's stance that peace and stability in the South Caucasus are essential for all nations in the area. He underscored Tehran's respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, rejected any external attempts to alter regional borders, and stressed that diplomacy remains the only path to resolving disputes.

The meeting comes more than two months after a U.S.-brokered agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which prompted Tehran to issue warnings about potential foreign intervention in the region. While welcoming efforts toward regional peace, Araghchi highlighted Iran's cautious approach, stating that Tehran closely monitors developments to guard

against unnecessary external interference. He expressed hope that the agreement would open a new chapter of stability and cooperation in the South Caucasus.

In a related development, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, also met with Khalafov. Their talks covered a wide range of issues, including cooperation among the Caspian Sea littoral states, regional peace initiatives, and coordination within the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Gharibabadi emphasized the untapped potential for expanding bilateral relations across multiple sectors. "These capacities, combined with the deep religious and cultural bonds between our nations and the commitment of senior leaders, represent a valuable asset that should be fully leveraged to achieve shared goals," he said.

## Europe must resist U.S. unilateralism: Iranian MP on the sideline of IPU assembly



TEHRAN – Iranian parliamentary official has called on European countries to resist unilateralism and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to expanding diplomatic and economic ties with Serbia and Oman during the 151st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva.

Vice Speaker Hamidreza Haji Babaei met with Din Jerlik, Vice Speaker of the Serbian Parliament, stressing the importance of constructive

decisions on the sidelines of IPU assembly. He highlighted the upcoming visit of the Serbian Parliament Speaker to Tehran and said the historic relationship between Iran and Serbia provides a strong foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation.

Haji Babaei also criticized European countries for following U.S. policies in the wake of the JCPOA. "The United States withdrew from the agreement, but three European countries raised the issue of the snapback

mechanism. The time for UN Security Council Resolution 2231 has passed, making this discussion meaningless," he said. He added, "It is not befitting for European countries to become unquestioning followers of the United States."

The vice speaker reaffirmed Iran's support for national sovereignty and independence, urging the European Union to uphold legality and ethics in international affairs. He noted that lawlessness serves no country and warned that undermining the UN's foundational principles threatens global stability. Haji Babaei specifically criticized violations of international norms, including Israel and U.S. actions undermining efforts to fight terrorism and protect children.

Serbian Vice Speaker Jerlik highlighted the longstanding diplomatic ties between Iran and Serbia, dating back to 1889. He welcomed Iran's participation in the 2027 Expo in Serbia and praised Iranian recognition of Serbian cultural works in the National Library of Iran. Jerlik also

called for expanded collaboration in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, tourism, sports, and banking, emphasizing the potential for stronger parliamentary cooperation.

On the sidelines of the IPU assembly, Haji Babaei also met with Khalid bin Hilal bin Nasser Al Maawali, Speaker of the Omani Parliament. The two leaders discussed the historically close and strategically significant ties between Iran and Oman, emphasizing growing economic relations. Haji Babaei expressed hope for continued cooperation, noting that the 12-day war initiated by Israel and the U.S. underscored the regional threat posed by Israel beyond Gaza and Iran.

Speaker Al Maawali praised Iran's historical support for Oman and expressed concern over ongoing developments in Palestine. He noted that even after the ceasefire, Gaza continued to be bombed, describing the humanitarian situation as catastrophic.

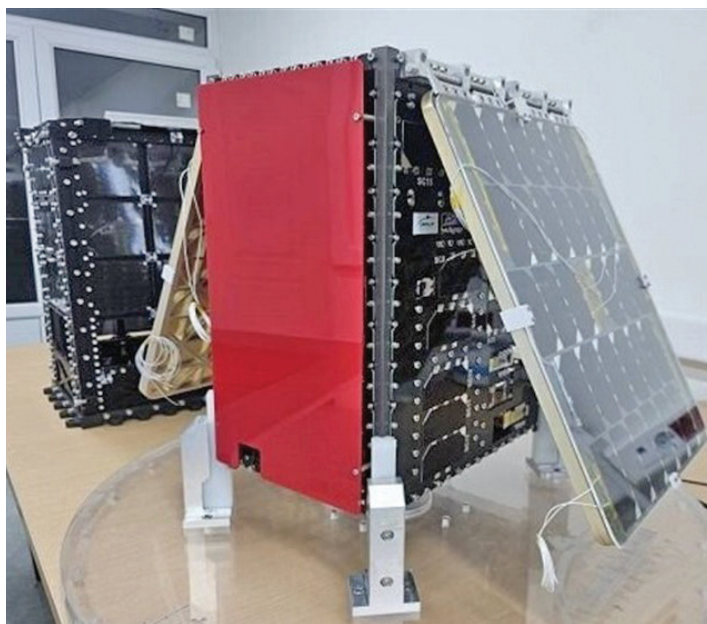
## Kowsar 1.5: Iran's advanced dual-role satellite nears launch

TEHRAN – Iran is set to launch Kowsar 1.5, an upgraded version of its Kowsar 1 satellite, combining Earth imaging and Internet of Things (IoT) telecommunications capabilities in a single platform, according to the developer.

The launch, part of a national dual-mission program, is expected before the end of the Persian calendar year.

Kowsar 1.5 addresses technical limitations experienced by its predecessor, including restricted ground communication and limited observation windows, while building on lessons learned from earlier satellites Kowsar and Hodhod. These prior missions helped establish Iran's private-sector capacity for satellite design and launch and paved the way for a new generation of multipurpose space assets.

"The new satellite will operate through two distinct optical perspectives: one for Earth imaging and the other for IoT communications," said Dr. Hossein Shahrebi, CEO of Omid Faza, designer of the satellite.



"This approach allows us to maximize operational efficiency while leveraging lessons from previous missions."

Kowsar 1.5 is categorized as an In-Orbit Demonstration (IOD) mission. IODs are designed to showcase a satellite's technical capabilities in orbit, similar to a minimum viable product (MVP) in terrestrial industries. Shahrebi

emphasized that early-stage missions are expected to reveal technical challenges, which are then used to refine subsequent designs.

The project also introduces a novel economic model to support Iran's private space sector. In collaboration with the Iranian Space Agency and the Vice-Presidency for Science

and Technology, Omid Faza participates in a pre-purchase guarantee program, under which the agency commits to acquiring satellite data in advance. This arrangement provides financial stability for private companies and encourages investment in high-risk space technologies.

"This initiative creates a viable market for knowledge-based companies," Shahrebi said. "Without government support, private investment in space would be economically unfeasible. At the same time, the missions carry high technical risk due to the innovative nature of the technologies involved."

Kowsar 1.5 represents a significant step in Iran's evolving space program, signaling both technological advancement and deeper private-sector involvement in satellite development. It is expected to serve as a bridge between earlier experimental satellites and the next generation of operational spacecraft, advancing Iran's goal of independent, multipurpose space capabilities.



# IRGC Chief vows decisive action against threats Hell awaits aggressors

TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Commander-in-Chief, Major General Mohammad Pakpour, has declared that the country is fully prepared to deliver a decisive response to any future acts of aggression, warning, "We will unleash hell upon the enemy."

The announcement came during a meeting in Tehran with Iraq's National Security Advisor, Qasim al-Araji, and his delegation. The two sides discussed regional security, bilateral cooperation, and ongoing efforts to implement Iran-Iraq security agreements.

Al-Araji conveyed greetings from Iraq's President and Prime Minister to Major General Pakpour and reaffirmed Baghdad's commitment to preventing Iraqi territory from being used against Iran. "The security of Iran is the security of Iraq," he said, stressing that any misuse of Iraqi soil for hostile activities would be firmly rejected. He also announced the creation of a joint committee to monitor the implementation of bilateral security agreements and prevent illegal activities along the border.

Addressing recent developments in Gaza, al-Araji expressed skepticism over Israel's commitment to the ceasefire, warning that violations were likely. He stressed that regional unity is essential for maintaining peace and stability. "During the 12-day Israeli war against Iran, the enemy expected the Iranian people to rise against their government, but the nation demonstrated its steadfast adherence to the principles of the Revolution through national cohesion," he said.

Pakpour welcomed the Iraqi delegation and described the meeting as particularly significant given Iraq's current political and security context. He warned that regional adversaries aim to weaken domestic unity in neighboring countries. "During the 12-day war, Israel sought to disrupt Iran's national cohesion by targeting commanders and inciting unrest, but the Supreme Leader's guidance and the vigilance of the Iranian people thwarted these plots," Pakpour said.

Highlighting Iran's military capabilities, the IRGC chief said, "The enemy assumed our missile power would diminish in the early days, but we acted decisively and destroyed our targets with precision." He reiterated Iran's readiness to respond forcefully to any future aggression, declaring, "We will unleash hell upon

the enemy."

Pakpour also commended Iraq's efforts to control opposition groups during the conflict and called for full implementation of security agreements, including establishing a field committee to monitor border areas. He stressed that such groups pose a threat to both nations and must be managed through joint cooperation.

Al-Araji reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to preventing any threats against Iran from Iraqi soil. "During the 12-day war, we did not allow opposition groups to operate, and we will continue to prevent such activities decisively in the future," he said.

The meeting concluded with both sides emphasizing the importance of strengthening security cooperation and operationalizing bilateral agreements, with Iraqi officials reaffirming their political and moral commitments to Iran.

## Pezeshkian hails 'exceptional' level of Iran-Iraq relations

In a meeting on Tuesday with Qasim al-Araji, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian described relations between Iran and Iraq as "exceptional," calling for deeper cooperation across political, economic, and security fields.

Pezeshkian said that expanding Tehran-Baghdad ties would not only strengthen bilateral relations but also foster unity among Islamic nations.

"Whenever solidarity prevails among Muslim countries, the conspiracies of the U.S. and the Zionist regime will fail," he said.

The president highlighted the Iran-Iraq railway project as a key priority, urging Baghdad to expedite its implementation. He said the link would enhance trade, tourism, and cultural exchange while connecting regional economies and promoting stability.

"Completing this project will boost cross-border commerce and help establish joint free zones that bring prosperity to the region," Pezeshkian added.

Al-Araji reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to the bilateral security agreement, emphasizing that "the security of Iran and Iraq is inseparable." He said Baghdad is determined to ensure that its borders remain among the safest in the region and to prevent any threats against Iran.

Calling the rail project a strategic initiative, he said it would further

political and economic convergence between the two nations.

Also attending the meeting, Rebar Ahmed, Interior Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, expressed support for Iran's stability and pledged to uphold the security pact. "We have already taken practical steps to implement it," he noted.

## Iraq not to allow territory, airspace to be used against Iran: top Iraqi official

Iraq's National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji reaffirmed that Baghdad will not permit its territory or airspace to be used for any hostile action against Iran, stressing that Iraq views Iran's security as inseparable from its own.

Al-Araji made the remarks during a meeting with Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, in Tehran on Monday. He emphasized that Iraq opposes the use of sanctions as a political weapon and supports resolving disputes through diplomacy and dialogue. "Every country has the right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy, and any disagreement, including Iran's nuclear issue, must be settled through talks, not coercion," he said.

Larijani, for his part, said Iran's National Security Council would review any future request by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for negotiations, following the European trio's attempt to trigger the snapback mechanism and reinstate UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal.

He criticized the UK, Germany, and France for what he called an "unlawful act," asserting that their move nullified Iran's cooperation agreement with the IAEA signed in Cairo last month. "If the agency makes a request, it will be reviewed by the council's secretariat," Larijani said, reiterating that the snapback process undermines the diplomatic framework of the JCPOA.

Larijani also condemned the U.S. and Israel for misusing Iraqi territory during their recent aggression against Iran, thanking Baghdad for its firm stance during the 12-day conflict. He described al-Araji's visit as an important step toward deepening security coordination and regional stability.

## Iran, Iraq urge global action to end Israel's genocide in Gaza

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Iraq's National Security

Advisor have called on the international community to take urgent action to stop Israel's genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Araji, heading a senior Iraqi security delegation, met with Araghchi in Tehran on Monday evening for talks on strengthening bilateral cooperation and discussing the situations in Gaza and Lebanon.

Both sides voiced deep concern over Israel's repeated violations of the Gaza ceasefire and urged the world to ensure an end to the atrocities and the unhindered flow of humanitarian aid.

Araghchi praised the depth of Iran-Iraq relations across various sectors and emphasized the importance of continued coordination and enhanced border security cooperation.

Al-Araji briefed the Iranian foreign minister on progress in implementing the bilateral security pact, reaffirming Baghdad's firm commitment to the agreement. He commended the unity and steadfastness of the Iranian people and stressed that Iraq would not permit its territory to be used for hostile acts against Iran.

The two officials also underscored the need for joint action among Muslim nations to confront Israel's aggression and expansionist policies.

Israel's war on Gaza has so far claimed more than 68,100 lives and left over 170,000 injured since October 2023. Although a ceasefire took effect on October 10, it has been repeatedly breached by Israeli airstrikes, with nearly 100 Palestinians killed and 230 wounded since the truce began, according to Gaza's authorities.

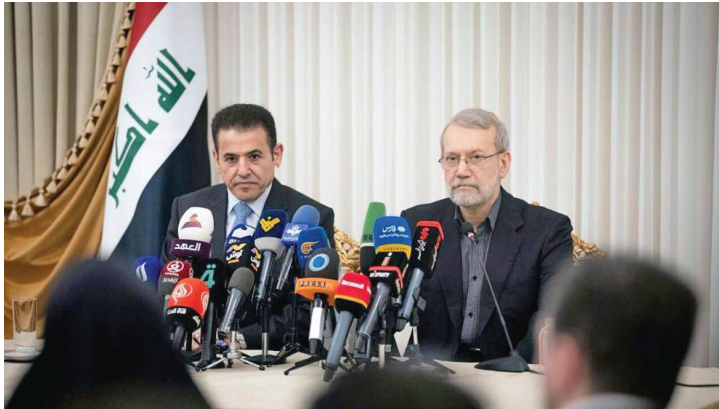
On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked act of aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

Earlier, Iraq's National Security Advisor also visited Iran's Parliament and met with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf for talks, highlighting the broader diplomatic and political engagement between Tehran and Baghdad alongside ongoing security cooperation.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) and Iraq's National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji (L) meet in the Iranian capital of Tehran on October 21, 2025.



Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani (R) and Iraq's National Security Advisor Qasim al-Araji attend a press conference in the Iranian capital of Tehran on October 20, 2025.

## Iran among world's top missile powers, says commander

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian military commander has highlighted the country's domestic missile industry, describing it as one of the world's leading programs.

"These capabilities have given Iran's defense power a strategic edge," said Brigadier General Reza Talaei Nik, spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Defense and Logistics of the Armed Forces, during a memorial service for the late General Alireza Afshar.

He added that the experience Iran has gained in missile development could serve as a model for circumventing sanctions in other sectors as well. "During the 12-day Israeli-imposed war, the enemy suffered a heavy blow from Iran's missile defense power," he explained.

Despite more than 40 years of international sanctions, Brig. Gen. Talaei Nik said Iran has successfully overcome these restrictions and achieved advanced missile capabilities.

Speaking at the same ceremony, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, deputy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), highlighted the significant setbacks suffered by Israel during its recent military aggression. "The defeat disappointed Tel Aviv, and in an attempt to mitigate the impact, the United States entered the conflict," he said.

On June 13, Israel launched what Iran describes as a blatant and unprovoked attack, triggering a 12-day war that reportedly claimed at least 1,064 lives, including military com-

manders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The United States reportedly joined the conflict by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites, an act Iran condemns as a grave violation of international law.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest U.S. military installation in West Asia.

The IRGC launched a meticulously calculated series of missile and drone strikes over twelve days, reportedly conducted in 22 operational waves, which Iran says dismantled key Israeli military, intelligence, and technological infrastructure. These strikes, the Iranian commanders claim, forced a halt to hostilities.

Faced with the unprecedented destruction, Israel has imposed tight censorship, restricting foreign journalists, limiting satellite imagery, and pressuring social media platforms to suppress content showing Israeli losses.

Among the targets struck by Iran were several high-profile military and intelligence installations, including Israel's Kirya headquarters—often referred to as the country's "Pentagon"—as well as major airbases, intelligence training centers, and command-and-control facilities housing advanced technology such as U.S.-made F-35 stealth fighters.

Iran has repeatedly stated that it will deliver a decisive response to any military aggression or any action threatening its national security.

## SPORTS

## Iran defeat India at Tri-Nation Women's International Friendlies

TEHRAN – Iran's women's football team defeated India 2-0 at the Tri-Nation Women's Friendlies on Tuesday.

Sara Didar was on target for Iran in 64th and 74th minutes at the at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, in Shillong.

Now, all eyes turn to Friday, when Iran face Nepal in what promises to be a fiery clash.

Team Melli have participated in the tournament as part of preparation for the 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup.

Iran have been drawn in Group A alongside host Australia, South Korea, and the Philippines. The competition will be held in Australia from March 1–21, 2026.

## Sepahan edge Ahal at 2025/26 ACL Two

TEHRAN – Sepahan had to work hard to defeat Ahal FC 1-0 in their AFC Champions League Two 2025/26 Group C tie on Tuesday.

Moharram Navidkia's side endured a frustrating match which they dominated but had to wait till late to find the winner through Kaveh Rezaei.

Sepahan started strongly with Aref Hajedi sending a header in the ninth minute just wide with Ahal custodian Kakageldi Berdiyev rooted to his spot.

The Iran Pro League side kept Ahal pinned in their own half with Arya Shafidoust next to test Berdiyev, exchanging passes with Majid Aliyari to open space in the box only to see his shot turned away.

A combination of poor finishing and the woodwork denied Sepahan the chance to take a lead into the break, Amin Hazbavi scooping a shot wide before Arash Rezavand's glancing header bounced off the bar in the 37th minute.

Four minutes into the restart, Sepahan carved out their best opening yet, Alves clipping a great pass behind Ahal's defence for Omid Norafkan to run onto but Berdiyev was quickly out of his box to block the shot.

Profligacy in front of goal continued to haunt Sepahan with Rezavand twice blasting over from good shooting positions inside the box as the Ahal centre-back pairing of Bagtyyar Gurgenov and Oraz Orazov manfully protected their goal.

Sepahan's persistent pressure finally paid off eight minutes from the end of regulation time with Berdiyev parrying a point-blank header from Enzo Crivelli but Rezaei was on hand to blast home the rebound to seal the points.

## Tractor's Regi Lushkja proud for winning against Sharjah

TEHRAN – Regi Lushkja was proud to have played a sterling role in Tractor's stunning 5-0 win against Sharjah in the AFC Champions League Elite 2025-26 tie on Monday.

The Albanian midfielder struck twice inside the opening 11 minutes to lay the foundation as the Iran side secured its first win following two consecutive draws while UAE's Sharjah lost its unbeaten record.

"I'm very happy that we won today," said Lushkja. "I want to thank all my teammates and the coach for giving me the opportunity to play.

"I'm really happy for the team because without everyone, we couldn't have won this game. We played against a very good team and I'm just very happy to get the win here."

## Girls' handball team victorious over Uzbekistan: 2025 AYG

TEHRAN – Iran's girls' handball team defeated Uzbekistan 27-24 at the 2025 Asian Youth Games (AYG) on Tuesday.

Iran had defeated China 30-25 in their opening match on Monday.

Iran will play Kazakhstan on Friday in their third match.

The 3rd Asian Youth Games is taking place in Bahrain from Oct. 22 to 31.

The Games serve as qualifiers for the 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Dakar.

Iran has sent 236 athletes to the Games.

## No one should forget about Tractor: Dragan Skocic

TEHRAN – Tractor head coach Dragan Skocic was delighted and praised his players for executing the game plan to perfection.

Tractor defeated Sharjah 5-0 in the AFC Champions League Elite 2025-26 tie on Monday.

"It's a great moment for my players, for everyone in the club, and for the staff. I think we played a great game – everything we planned to do, we did," said Skocic. "We limited the opponents' attacks even though they have quality players up front and we managed to create problems for them.

"I'm really happy for my team. They truly deserve this. In some games this season we've been unlucky but this time, we showed our quality and proved that no one should forget about us in this competition."

## Osmar Loss close to Persepolis job

TEHRAN – Brazilian coach Osmar Loss has been shortlisted to lead Iran's Persepolis.

Thai League 1 powerhouse Buriram United parted ways with Loss, just months after the Brazilian guided the club to one of the most successful seasons in their history.

Now, Persepolis, who have parted ways with their general manager Reza Darvish, are going to hire the Brazilian coach.

Osmar Loss has previously managed Persepolis in 2024. During his brief spell in Tehran, Loss steered Persepolis to the Persian Gulf Pro League title.

Persepolis, headed by Vahid Hashemian, currently sit 10th in the league.

## Milojevic takes responsibility for loss against Tractor

TEHRAN – Head coach Milos Milojevic took responsibility for Sharjah's defeat against Iran's Tractor.

The Emiratis side lost to Tractor 5-0 Monday night in the AFC Champions League Elite 2025-26 tie.

"Unfortunately, the result could have been even worse. We started very poorly in every aspect. They were more organised and looked more like a team. Honestly, they deserved to win against us," said Milojevic.

"This is not about bad luck – it's a disaster for Sharjah and for football in the Emirates. It's unacceptable. Of course, I feel very bad about it. I take full responsibility for this defeat. I was the one who chose the players and decided how we would play. I can't blame anyone else."

Sharjah will look to redeem itself against Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad Club on November 4 while Tractor will aim for a second win when it faces Iraq's Al Shorta a day earlier.



## Chabahar port to boost storage capacity by 50% through new development projects

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Managing Director of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), Saeed Rasouli, said on Tuesday that ongoing development and construction projects in Chabahar have pushed total public and private investment in the port to over 240 trillion rials (around \$480 million), paving the way for a 50 percent increase in the storage capacity of essential goods.

Rasouli, who toured Shahid Beheshti Port's infrastructure projects along with PMO board members, described Chabahar as "a massive construction site" where extensive investments are being made in port infrastructure, logistics, warehousing, and transport facilities.

He noted that once the new mechanized silos and covered warehouses come online within a year, the port's capacity to store essential goods will grow by about 50 percent — a development he said would play a crucial role in strengthening Iran's food security and supporting the country's supply network.

Rasouli highlighted the strategic importance of Chabahar as Iran's only oceanic port, emphasizing its growing role in regional maritime trade and transit. He said the railway connection between Chabahar and Zahedan is progressing at a promising pace, and upon completion, it will integrate the port into Iran's national rail network, significantly boosting the country's position in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

The connection, he added, will expand Iran's transit capacity, facilitate exports and



imports, and reinforce the country's standing as a key logistics hub between Central Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Europe.

Rasouli expressed appreciation for the efforts of private investors, engineers, and PMO staff in Chabahar, voicing optimism that continued cooperation and government support will transform the port into one of Iran's main economic development hubs.

He said his visit to Chabahar aligns with the ministry's broader strategy of monitoring progress across national ports, enabling on-site decision-making and faster execution of key maritime projects.

Chabahar hosts two major ports — Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari — which play vital roles in Iran's import and export operations. Shahid Beheshti Port covers 240 hectares with 16 hectares of loading areas and 30,000 square meters of warehouses, while Shahid Kalantari Port includes 35,000 square meters of loading areas, 30,000 square meters of warehouses, and 14,500 square meters of container yards.

## TEDPIX loses 4,300 points on Tuesday

TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), dropped 4,395 points to 3.052 million on Tuesday, which is the fourth 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).

The Iranian government has intensified efforts to stabilize and strengthen the capital market through coordinated policymaking and regular consultations between top economic officials.

Mohammadreza Dashti Ardakani, deputy for legal and parliamentary affairs at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, said on October 17 that the ministry holds weekly meetings centered on the capital market, with participation from the head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) and senior deputies.

"The government's economic team is fully committed to supporting small shareholders, which remains one of our top priorities," Dashti Ardakani said on the sidelines of the ministry's second coordination council of deputies, advisers, and parliamentary liaisons, held at the Securities and Exchange Organization headquarters.

He added that both short-term and long-term programs are being developed to en-

sure the market's sustainable growth.

"The economic team continuously monitors capital market trends. Protecting the interests of investors, especially retail shareholders, is a permanent agenda item in these sessions," he said.

Dashti Ardakani emphasized that the Economy Minister closely follows market developments and that the ministry is working intensively to steer the stock market back toward stability and growth.

He also highlighted the full coordination between key state institutions to strengthen the capital market, noting that the Supreme Council of the Stock Exchange and the Ministry of Economy are jointly implementing several supportive measures.

"Fortunately, the government, parliament, and other branches share a unified view on enhancing the role of the capital market, and positive outcomes have already emerged," he said.

The deputy minister expressed appreciation for the round-the-clock efforts of market managers, adding that the current state of the Tehran Stock Exchange is viewed as satisfactory.

"A vibrant stock market has a direct impact on public optimism and satisfaction," he said. "All institutions must work together to boost investor confidence and reinforce the capital market as a key pillar of the national economy."

## Iran attends main FATF meeting in Paris after 6-year hiatus

TEHRAN – Iran's representative has attended the main meeting of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in Paris for the first time in six years, following an official invitation from the global anti-money laundering body.

According to the Financial Intelligence Center, Hadi Khani, Deputy Minister of Economy and Secretary of the Supreme Council for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing, participated in the FATF session held at the organization's headquarters in Paris.

During the meeting, Iran's delegation is expected to present progress on its action plan, focusing on the ratification and implementation of the Palermo Convention, which addresses transnational organized crime.



The session also aims to review Iran's recent legislative and institutional measures, while setting the stage for future meetings between Iranian officials and FATF representatives to clarify pending issues and respond to member inquiries.

# Strategic dialogue: South Korean envoy, Tehran Times discuss deepening bilateral understanding



South Korean Ambassador to Iran Mr. Kim Junpyo (R), Cultural Attaché, Mr. Kim Jongoh (L) Mehr Media Group CEO Dr. Mohammad-Mahdi Rahmati (C)

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- In a significant diplomatic and cultural overture, the headquarters of Iran's leading English-language daily, the Tehran Times, hosted a high-level delegation from the South Korean Embassy, led by His Excellency Ambassador Kim Junpyo, on Sunday, October 19.

The visit, which marks a pivotal moment in media-diplomacy relations, saw Ambassador Kim and his delegation, including Cultural Attaché, Mr. Kim Jongoh and Deputy Head of Mission Ms. Eunkyung Park, engage in extensive and constructive talks with senior officials of the Mehr Media Group. The meeting was attended by the Group's CEO, Dr. Mohammad-Mahdi Rahmati, and the Editor-in-Chief of the Tehran Times, Mr. Mohammad Sarfi.

The core of the discussions revolved around forging a new chapter of mutual media cooper-

ation, with a unified vision to amplify cultural and diplomatic understanding between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Korea. The dialogue highlighted the potent role of media as a bridge between nations and civilizations.

Dr. Rahmati, extending a warm welcome to the delegation, expressed profound appreciation for the South Korean Embassy's unwavering commitment to its mission in Iran. This gratitude was anchored in three principal observations:

\* The embassy's steadfast presence in Tehran during recent challenging periods, a diplomatic resolve that has been widely noted and respected within Iranian society.

\* Its dynamic and engaging cultural programs, which have successfully resonated with the younger generation of Iranians, fostering a vibrant cross-cul-



Mehr Media Group CEO Dr. Mohammad-Mahdi Rahmati presents the trophy to Mr. Ambassador

tural dialogue.

\* The exceptional public diplomacy of Ambassador Kim himself, whose heartfelt renditions of classic Iranian songs have transcended formal relations, creating a profound people-to-people connection and endearing him to the Iranian public.

Reflecting on his tenure, Ambassador Kim shared insightful perspectives gleaned from his travels across various Iranian provinces, voicing a deep and genuine admiration for the nation's rich cultural heritage and warm hospitality. Both sides notably emphasized the remarkable cultural commonalities shared by Iran and South Korea and unanimously reaffirmed their dedication to leveraging these shared values to fortify bilateral ties.

The visit generated palpable excitement among the Tehran Times editorial team. The newspaper's reporters and staff were visibly energized by the presence of the Ambassador, whose pop-

ularity in Iran, bolstered by his embassy's outreach and his own artistic talents, made the occasion particularly memorable.

In a gesture symbolizing the historic stature of the Tehran Times, the Ambassador was presented with a distinguished gift: a trophy featuring the front page of the newspaper's very first edition, immortalized on a metal sheet—a testament to the publication's enduring legacy.

**Looking forward: An exclusive insight**

Building upon the positive momentum of this landmark visit, the Tehran Times is proud to announce an upcoming exclusive interview with His Excellency Ambassador Kim Junpyo. The interview, to be published in the coming days, will delve deeper into his perspectives on Iran-Korea relations, his cultural experiences, and the future path of bilateral cooperation.

## Tehran holds 29th National Export Day celebration

TEHRAN- Iran's 29th National Export Day celebration was held at the Tehran Summit Conference Hall with the presence of President Masoud Pezeshkian, Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mining, and Agriculture Samad Hasanzadeh, Chairman of Industry and Mining Committee of the Parliament Reza Alizadeh, and a group of managers and traders.

Addressing the ceremony, Head of Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) Head Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi referred to the three main strategies of the TPO in the field of exports, and stated: "Facilitating and removing export barriers, developing free trade, and promoting an export-oriented approach are the three important strategies of the organization."

He also mentioned that the revival of the Supreme Export Council and the Barter Committee is an action to boost exports.

By welcoming the president and attendees, the TPO head stated: "We have used today as an occasion to remind everyone that the development of non-oil exports is the most principal factor for the country's econom-

ic development, and exporters are the key agents for connecting to global markets."

He emphasized the support for exporters' activities, and said: "Last year, an unprecedented record of \$58 billion in exports with a 15.6-percent growth was registered by traders", and continued: "Although at the beginning of this year, due to price problems of steel and petrochemical products and the 12-day war, we witnessed negative growth in exports, we managed to reach \$26 billion by the end of the first half (September 22), similar to previous export levels, and we hope to register positive export growth by the end of the year."

He expressed hope that "With the mechanisms implemented in the TPO, the increase in export incentives, and the creation of a positive atmosphere in the field of foreign trade, we will witness positive growth in non-oil exports in the coming months."

The deputy minister of industry, mining, and trade, further referred to the three strategies of facilitating and removing export barriers, developing free trade, and promoting an export-oriented approach as among the most important programs of the TPO, and stated: "The Supreme Export Council and the Barter Committee have been revived to boost

non-oil exports, and we have also revitalized border markets and border trade."

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran added: "We have also organized trade cards, resolved temporary entry problems in cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Association (IRICA), and the trade regulations have been uploaded on the Comprehensive Trade System."

Dehghan Dehnavi, referring to the beginning of the use of cryptocurrencies in trade, added: "Nine export terminals have been launched in the country. Furthermore, we have revived the role of Export Management Companies for small exporters, and we are pursuing free and preferential trade agreements with neighboring countries and the Eurasia region, Africa, etc., to facilitate and boost exports."

It is worth mentioning that during the 29th National Export Day ceremony, 46 exporters were appreciated in the categories of medal-winning exporter, outstanding exporter, national exemplary exporter, and commendable exporter. These individuals were selected from among 500 exporters registered on the Exporter Evaluation System of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran.

## Value of Iran's e-commerce transactions hit \$65b in H1

TEHRAN – The total value of e-commerce transactions in Iran reached 32.63 quadrillion rials (around \$65 billion) during the first six months of the current Iranian year (March 21–September 22), marking a 52 percent increase compared with 21.24 quadrillion rials (\$42 billion) in the same period last year, according to Hamid Toufighi, acting head of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade's E-Commerce Development Center.

Toufighi said the total number of transactions stood at 2.5 billion, up 14 percent year on year, while the average value per transaction reached about 13.15 million rials (\$26), showing a 36 percent increase from the pre-

vious year.

He added that Iran's e-commerce value has grown steadily over the past four years, reaching 12.37 quadrillion rials in 2021 (around \$24.7 billion), 18.36 quadrillion rials in 2022 (around \$36.7 billion), and 31.88 quadrillion rials (around \$63.8 billion) in 2023, before jumping to 55 quadrillion rials (about \$110 billion) last year.

Toufighi also provided data on the Government Electronic Procurement System (known as SETAD), noting that the total value of transactions on the platform reached 13.57 quadrillion rials (\$27 billion) last year, a 21 percent rise from the year before. In the first

half of this year, transactions on SETAD were valued at 9.90 quadrillion rials (\$19.8 billion), showing an 80 percent increase compared with the same period last year.

He emphasized that achieving full digital transformation in commerce requires modernization of structures, updated regulations, and strengthened institutional capacities.

This year's agenda, he said, focuses on expanding smart systems, harnessing big data for policymaking, and advancing digital governance frameworks to support continued growth in Iran's e-commerce sector.



# The animalistic behavior of US envoy towards Lebanon intensifies

From page 1 ▶ In one of his earlier interviews with Sky News Arabia, Barrack cynically declared, “There is no such thing as peace. There is one party that wants to control and subjugate others.”

This blunt confession unmask the essence of American foreign policy, a philosophy of dominance cloaked in the language of diplomacy.

His latest threats merely reaffirm that Washington's vision for Lebanon is not one of partnership but of total obedience to the American-Israeli axis.

Even more alarming, Barrack's statements effectively undermine the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, casting doubt on Washington's commitment to any negotiated settlement.

By linking the truce's continuation to Hezbollah's disarmament, the U.S. envoy is weaponizing diplomacy itself, transforming peace initiatives into instruments of blackmail. His language has long transcended diplomatic decorum; it has become a direct declaration of economic, political, and military coercion.

According to Barrack's logic, the Abraham Accords are the new compass of American strategy in the region. Washington views any refusal to normalize with Israel as a defiance of its Middle East-



ern blueprint, a challenge to be crushed rather than understood.

Lebanon, therefore, is being positioned as a testing ground for this imperial experiment: a nation coerced through hunger, sanctions, and threats of war until it capitulates.

This is not the first time Barrack has adopted the tone of a colonial overseer. Since his appointment, he has issued at least four explicit threats.

He once proposed annexing Lebanon to Syria as part of a “regional settlement.” Later, he dismissed the concept of peace entirely, boasting of a plan for control rather than reconciliation.

On another occasion, he hinted at arming the Lebanese army to fight its “internal opponents”—a barely

veiled reference to the Resistance. His latest and most dangerous provocation—warning of civil war if Lebanon does not normalize with Israel—completes a pattern of sustained aggression.

The ultimate goal of this rhetoric is clear: to impose submission. Yet, Barrack and his superiors seem oblivious to Lebanon's long history of defiance. The Lebanese have faced Israeli occupation, internal strife, and economic siege, but refused to kneel down.

Since 1982, the logic of resistance has been the only force capable of preserving the country's sovereignty and dignity.

Internally, the Lebanese government's response remains lukewarm, shackled by an economic crisis largely engineered by the

same powers now preaching “reform”.

The Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, supposedly established to ensure stability, has turned into a platform to impose new Israeli conditions without any reciprocal obligations, such as withdrawal from occupied lands or the return of displaced civilians.

Besides, the so-called “step-by-step” policy has failed miserably, as Israel has never sought peace. Israel seeks violent expansionism, full domination, and the erasure of any resistance.

Washington, as the principal sponsor of this charade, bears full responsibility for perpetuating Israeli aggression and sabotaging genuine peace.

Barrack's economic threats, too, are hypocritical. Crisis in Lebanon did not begin yesterday. It was orchestrated in 2019 through Washington's financial blockade and punitive sanctions, which crippled its economy and blocked potential relief from Iranian energy and reconstruction offers.

Meanwhile, Lebanon stands at a crossroads: to yield to the humiliating logic of normalization or to uphold its dignity and independence. The choice, however, is not merely political—it is existential!

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

## The Guardian exclusive: CIA plays key role in US strikes in the Caribbean



The Central Intelligence Agency is providing the bulk of the intelligence used to carry out the controversial lethal air strikes by the Trump administration against small, fast-going boats in the Caribbean Sea suspected of carrying drugs from Venezuela, according to three sources familiar with the operations, the Guardian reported.

Experts say the agency's central role means much of the evidence used to select which alleged smugglers to kill on the open sea will almost certainly remain secret.

The agency's central role in the boat strikes has not previously been disclosed. Donald Trump confirmed last Wednesday that he had authorized covert CIA action in Venezuela, but

not what the agency would be doing.

The sources say the CIA is providing real-time intelligence collected by satellites and signal intercepts to detect which boats it believes are loaded with drugs, tracking their routes and making the recommendations about which vessels should be hit by missiles.

Since early September, nearly 30 people have been killed in the strikes on vessels in the Caribbean that the Trump administration claims are aimed at dismantling drug trafficking networks. On Monday, Colombia recalled its ambassador to the US amid a furious war of words between the Colombian President Gustavo Petro, and Trump over deadly US strikes on boats in the Caribbean.

## EU under fire for halting Israel sanctions

The EU has been criticized for pausing sanctions against Israel in response to Donald Trump's peacemaking efforts in the Middle East, as the fragile ceasefire came under threat.

After meeting EU foreign ministers on Monday, the European foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, announced a pause on efforts to suspend preferential trade with Israel and sanctions against people responsible for fueling the conflict on both sides, the Guardian reported.

The context had changed since the measures were proposed last month, Kallas said. Noting “divergent views”, she said ministers had agreed: “We don't move with the measures now, but we don't take them off the table either because the situation is fragile.”

Two people who worked for the EU in senior roles, speaking separately, criticized the decision not to move forward with sanctions.

Sven Kühn von Burgsdorff, a former EU representative to the Palestinian territories, told the Guardian that Kallas missed “the point” on legal accountability. “Sanctions are not just a measure to induce or coerce a third party to change or adjust its behavior. Restrictive measures are part of the tools the EU has given itself to react to breaches of both European and international law,” he said.

The EU concluded in June that Israel had breached human rights obligations under their association agreement, which governs

trade and cooperation between the two sides. Lawyers say the EU is also obliged to ensure policy is compliant with a non-binding opinion from international court of justice in 2024 requiring Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territories as soon as possible.

Burgsdorff co-organized a statement signed by 414 former senior diplomats and officials last week urging robust EU action “against spoilers and extremists on both sides” whose actions jeopardized “the establishment of a future Palestinian state”.

The statement welcomed the Trump plan, but noted that the question of Palestinian self-determination was only “vaguely addressed”.

Nathalie Tocci, a former adviser to two EU foreign policy high representatives, said it would be the worst possible outcome for the bloc to ditch sanctions.

“That is the last thing that we should be doing, because this is exactly the moment when you need to keep the pressure on. Because we all know that it's certainly not a foregone conclusion that this plan will be implemented,” Tocci told the Guardian, referring to the first phase of Trump's plan, which has been marred by violence, prompting a diplomatic scramble to shore up the agreement.

“I fear that ... European governments and institutions, will be ... reverting back to the sort of old, familiar patterns,” she added.

## Sarkozy behind bars: France's elite reels as former president jailed

Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, sentenced to five years in prison for criminal conspiracy in connection with illicit Libyan financing of his 2007 campaign, was incarcerated at Paris's La Santé prison on October 21, Mediapart reported.

President Emmanuel Macron and Interior Minister Gérard Darmanin moved quickly to show support for the disgraced former leader, while corporate heavyweights such as Accor and Lagardère extended discreet backing.

French television networks, meanwhile, largely downplayed the gravity of the scandal, exposing the unease of a political and business elite scrambling to preserve privileges increasingly threatened by judicial scrutiny.

Sarkozy, who had long insisted that he should

be treated “neither better nor worse than any citizen,” now confronts the reality of his third conviction.

The Paris judicial tribunal's ruling last Thursday on the 2007 campaign's illicit Libyan funds brought a decade-long saga to a close, with immediate detention ordered despite pending appeals.

The incarceration underscores the contradictions of France's justice system: a former head of state now shares the overcrowded cells of an institution he once criticized.

As Sarkozy begins his term in isolation, the questions extend beyond his personal downfall: will this serve as a deterrent to future corruption or fuel accusations of judicial overreach?

## Evidence of systematic torture of Palestinians is horrific

From page 1 ▶ Sde Teiman has become synonymous with cruelty. The facility, described by Israeli whistleblowers and human rights investigators as a site of “systematic torture and killings,” operates as both a detention center and a holding ground for bodies brought from Gaza.

Prisoners there, including wounded civilians kidnapped by Israeli occupation forces from Gaza's hospitals, were shackled to beds, blindfolded, and forced to wear diapers. Testimonies from released detainees paint a grim picture of humiliation and pain.

Palestinian journalist Shadi Abu Seido recounted being forced to remove his clothes for ten hours, kept handcuffed and blindfolded for months, and witnessing the deaths and psychological collapse of fellow inmates.

“They brought dogs that urinated on us,” he said. “When I asked why I had been arrested, they answered: ‘You will die hundreds of times.’”

The physical condition of the returned bodies speaks to the brutality of their captivity.

Doctors in Khan Younis documented crushed limbs, ligature marks, and signs of execution-style gunshots. “These findings clearly indicate that the Israeli occupation carried out acts of murder, summary executions, and sys-

tematic torture,” medical officials concluded.

One body, identified as 34-year-old Mahmoud Ismail Shabat, had rope marks around the neck and legs mangled by tank tracks. His family said this is evidence of extreme violence that is “unimaginable.”

In contrast, Israeli captives released from Gaza during recent ceasefires appeared in relatively stable physical condition, despite the unprecedented siege and bombardment.

The stark difference underscores a grim paradox: while the occupation regime accuses Hamas of inhumanity, it continues to torture, maim, and kill Palestinians under its custody, without consequence.

Organizations and prominent international human rights organizations have long warned of these abuses. Activist Naji Abbas described the evidence as “horrifying – yet, sadly, not surprising,” adding that the deaths and mutilations “corroborate what we have documented over the past two years about systematic torture in Israeli detention facilities.”

Rights groups have called for an independent international investigation, arguing that “the unprecedented number of Palestinians who have died in Israeli custody leaves no doubt”

about the scale of the violations.

Yet despite the mounting evidence, global reaction remains muted. The Israeli occupation army has claimed internal probes, but such inquiries have historically never served anything close to accountability and have been redeclared by UN experts for allowing torture to expand.

The regime's prison system has been accused of vastly escalating the torture of Palestinian inmates illegally held behind bars since the terrorist cabinet of Benjamin Netanyahu came to power. Its security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, stands accused of widely expanding the torture campaign of Palestinians.

The United Nations has reported at least 75 Palestinian deaths in Israeli occupation prisons since October 2023, but no sanctions, no international tribunal, no concrete action, or any punitive measures have followed.

The bodies returned from Sde Teiman stand as grim evidence of an ongoing campaign of impunity. As one bereaved mother asked, “Where is the world?” The question hangs unanswered, an indictment of a global order that condemns torture in words, but tolerates it in silence when the victims are Palestinian.

## Beyond the battlefield: How Gaza conflict drives Israelis abroad

From page 1 ▶  
**A “tsunami” of departures**

Committee chairman MK Gilad Kariv described the trend as “not a wave of emigration, but a tsunami,” warning that the government lacks any coherent strategy to address the outflow.

According to the report, 59,400 Israelis left in 2022, followed by an all-time high of 82,800 in 2023. Between January and August 2024, nearly 50,000 more citizens emigrated. The net migration balance — citizens leaving without plans to return minus those who came back — fell by 125,200 in just over two years.

For comparison, the average annual number of long-term emigrants between 2009 and 2021 was approximately 40,500, underscoring the scale of the recent exodus.

### War and disillusionment

Sociologists and migration researchers say the motives behind emigration have shifted dramatically. While Israelis in the past often left for better career opportunities, today's departures are increasingly linked to war fatigue, fear, and political despair.

“The war in Gaza and the politi-

cal chaos have made many Israelis question their future in this country,” said Professor Lilach Lev Ari of Oranim College. “People feel unsafe, morally conflicted, and uncertain about what lies ahead.”

The war has also exacted a devastating toll on Palestinians. Since October 2023, Israeli attacks have killed more than 68,000 people in Gaza, according to local health authorities. Despite the ceasefire deal announced on October 10, 2025, Israel has continued to carry out strikes across the enclave, drawing international criticism for violating the agreement and worsening the humanitarian catastrophe.

### Brain drain and declining returns

Attorney Danny Zaken from Israel's National Insurance Institute noted a sharp rise in formal residency cancellations — from around 2,500 per year before 2021 to 8,400 in 2024. “These are not temporary moves,” he said. “They represent people cutting ties with the country altogether — academics, doctors, engineers. The brain drain is real.”

Meanwhile, the number of returning Israelis continues to fall. Only 12,100 citizens came back during the first eight months of 2024, down from 29,600 in 2022.



Kariv urged the government to create incentives for citizens abroad to return and to monitor the growing loss of skilled professionals to universities and companies overseas.

### Immigration fails to offset losses

Israel continues to receive new immigrants, but the inflow has not compensated for the exodus. Israel welcomed 74,000 new citizens in 2022, 46,000 in 2023, and about 24,000 by August 2024 — a steep decline year over year.

Immigration from Western countries increased slightly in 2025, driven by concerns over antisemitism abroad and support for Zionism after October 7, 2023, but experts say the overall immigra-

tion rate remains low compared to a decade ago.

“We are not a ministry for preventing emigration,” said Eric Michaelson, director of Aliyah at the Immigration and Absorption Ministry. “Our mandate is to assist new immigrants and returning residents, not to stop Israelis from leaving.”

Analysts say the rising emigration rate reflects a deeper crisis — one that extends beyond military and political failures. Israel's ongoing assault on Gaza has not achieved its declared objective of defeating Hamas, but it has intensified global condemnation, strained the economy, and fractured Israeli society.

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



## 19th-century film reels recovered at Tehran UNESCO site to be exhibited after restoration

TEHRAN – Thirty-one film reels from Iran’s Qajar era recently uncovered at the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran are undergoing preparation and decoding before being put on public display, palace officials said on Monday.

Afarin Emami, director of the Golestan Palace World Heritage complex, said the films were identified during a periodic inventory of the palace archives. “During the latest protective and informational organization, Seyyed Reza Rezaei Amin discovered that some of the 189 raw films from the Qajar period contain visual content,” Emami said.

Following this finding, a re-examination confirmed that 31 reels, 28 of 35mm and three of 16mm, contain visual material, Emami added.

While specialists have not yet conducted a detailed analysis of the films’ content, an initial review suggests some may contain images from the Qajar period, potentially adding new historical information, Emami said. “However, the precise content and titles have not yet been thoroughly studied.”

Emami noted that plans are underway for a meeting with the General Directorate of Museums to decide on the experts and institutions, such as the National Film Center or reputable centers, that will assist in decoding the films. “We aim to use available domestic capacities for extracting the content,” he said.

Regarding public access, Emami said that once the films are fully analyzed, they will be presented in a formal unveiling event at Golestan Palace, inviting experts, researchers, and the public. A suitable platform for releasing the films, coordinated with other related



bodies, will be arranged.

The timeline for the expert review process has yet to be determined.

Years ago, 38 reels from the Qajar period were identified in the palace’s album house. These were sent to the French National Centre of Cinema (CNC) in France during the late Professor Shahryar Adl’s tenure, resulting in the extraction of 59 minutes of footage. Moreover, another 22 reels were found in 2010, Emami said.

Films restored and extracted under Professor Adl’s direction and sent to Germany have since been returned to Iran and are now stored under standard conditions at the Golestan Palace archive.

Emami explained that researchers requesting access to these archival films have been provided with digital copies on compact discs during past viewings held at the palace.

Golestan Palace, located in central Tehran, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its historic palaces, museums, and extensive archives from the Qajar dynasty era.

## Traces of stone artifacts in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari date back to Paleolithic era

TEHRAN — The oldest artifacts identified in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province include stone tools and artifacts from the Upper Paleolithic and early Neolithic periods.

These artifacts were found and studied in ancient caves in the cities of Shahr-e Kord, Ardal, and Lordegan, and are about 10,000 to 11,000 years old, Miras-e Arya (CHTN) wrote.

Mass graves, stone staircases, stone inscriptions, lion-inspired statues (known as Shir-e Sangi), and stone caravanserais are among the stone monuments of the Elymaean (Elymais) and Sasanian periods that are currently protected as ancient monuments.

The relatively intact lion statues in the cemeteries of Farsan, Koohrang, Ardal, and Kiar counties are actually a legacy that has remained among the Bakhtiari people since the Qajar era.

The lion statue tells the story of the likeness of the courage and bravery of the Ilkhan, warriors, horsemen, khans, sheriffs, chiefs, and elders of the Bakhtiari tribes to the lions.

For this reason, upon the death of one of these elders, a lion statue was made by local stonemasons and installed on the graves of these elders, and shapes such as swords, rifles, and horses were engraved on the body of the lion statues, along with the deceased’s details.

In fact, lion statues on the graves of warriors and those killed in wars are a reminder of the men who adorned the turbulent history of their people in a mythical form in their name and are buried in the heart of the earth.

Carving and stone carving tools were the same traditional and primitive tools that were used centuries ago. Various types of chisels, heavy and semi-heavy hammers, steel pens with diamond edges, which are handmade according to the type of application.

Due to the lack of consumption of stone products in the region by the general public, the production of stone artifacts is limited to taking orders in a small number of rural and nomadic areas.

To produce stone artifacts in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, after transporting the required stone to the workshop, its initial shape and anatomy are first designed, and then its shapes and limbs are completed using a pen and hammer. Most of the designs and shapes in stone carving and the construction of stone volumes are geometric and abstract.

One of the rituals in the culture of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari people, especially the Bakhtiari, has been to place a lion statue on the graves of the enduring, famous, great figures of the tribe.

The lion statue is a symbol of courage, bravery, and outstanding qualities and characteristics such as artistry in hunting, shooting, war, and individual horsemanship.

Islamic lion statues are seen in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari and Khuzestan provinces and the surrounding areas, and Hafshejan in Shahr-e Kord County has been the most important center for making lion statues from the beginning to the present, and is mostly used by brave people of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari tribe.

The oldest lion statue found in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province is related to Abdolhamid bin Ibrahim Hafshejani” in 1013 AH (435 years ago), dating back to the Safavid period, and there are certainly older Islamic examples in this area.

Mohammad Bagheri Hafshejani, one of the stone carving and carving artists from Hafshejan, Shahr-e Kord County, believes that, nowadays, stone and carving products in handicrafts are no longer a priority for people. He emphasized that due to recent price increases and the decline in people’s purchasing power, orders for stone handicraft products have decreased significantly.

He noted that among the types of stone and carving products, stone carving, mortar, tombstone, and flour mill (hand-made millstone) currently have more fans.

Director General of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department Alireza Jeylan said that sone carving, a remnant of the Stone Age, is one of the indigenous disciplines of this province, whose history dates back to many centuries.

He emphasized that this art and craft has been used since ancient times to make all the necessary artifacts and tools, including millstones, flour mills, gutters, mortars, and lion statues.

He added that but unfortunately, for various reasons, most stone artifacts have not been widely used by people and are only used and consumed in limited ways in nomadic areas and remote villages.

He considered the lion statue one of the most important and popular handicrafts in the field of sculpting and stone carving in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, adding that lion statues are a symbol of courage and bravery.

# Shafiabad village: a gateway to UNESCO-listed Lut Desert

TEHRAN – Shafiabad village, located in the famed Shahdad district of Kerman province, southern Iran, stands as a remarkable example of harmonious coexistence between human settlement and a harsh desert environment.

Strategically positioned along the historic Silk Road and adjacent to the globally recognized Shahdad Kalouts -- one of the world’s most extraordinary desert landscapes -- Shafiabad offers a unique blend of cultural, historical, and natural significance.

The village, along Kandelous in northern Iran and Soheili in south of the country, was named a Best Tourism Village by the UN Tourism on October 17.

At the heart of the village lies the Shafiabad Fortress, dating back to the 19th-century Qajar era. Built using traditional mud-brick techniques, the fortress features strong defensive walls, corner watchtowers, and a complex internal layout that demonstrates adaptive architectural responses to desert conditions.

Nearby is the Shafiabad Caravanserai, an authentic example of Persian caravanserai architecture.



Historically, it served merchants and travelers along the Silk Road. Its central courtyard and carefully designed chambers reflect Shafiabad’s important role in regional trade and cultural exchange.

Shafiabad’s location enhances its significance as a gateway to the Shahdad Kalouts --vast yardang formations shaped by wind and erosion over thousands of years. These unique geological features lie within the Lut Desert, a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site since 2016. The village thus represents a critical cultural-natural interface, showcasing human adaptation to one of the harshest climates on Earth.

Historically reliant on agriculture and livestock, Shafiabad’s local community is increasingly embracing sustainable tourism. The establishment of eco-lodges and promotion of cultural festivals, such as the inaugural Garlic Festival held at the Shafiabad Fortress in April 2025, highlight community-led efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage and foster rural development.

In addition, the village maintains a high degree of architectural and spatial integrity. Restoration work respects traditional construction methods, ensuring the village’s historical authenticity. The surrounding desert landscapes remain largely

undisturbed, preserving the cultural context and visual harmony between the village and its natural environment.

The Best Tourism Villages initiative not only recognizes the remarkable achievements of these villages but also highlights the transformative power of tourism

“Tourism is a vital tool for inclusion, empowering rural communities to protect and value their rich cultural heritage while driving sustainable development,” said UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. “The Best Tourism Villages initiative not only recognizes the remarkable achievements of these villages but also highlights the transformative power of tourism. By leveraging their unique assets, these communities can foster economic growth, promote local traditions, and enhance the quality of life for their residents. We celebrate the villages that have embraced tourism as a pathway to empowerment and community well-being, demonstrating that sustainable practices can lead to a brighter future for all.”

## Passenger shipping line between Chabahar and Muscat launched

From Page 1 ► highlighted the economic benefits of the route, noting that travel costs on this maritime line are significantly lower than alternative air travel options from Chabahar. He predicted strong demand from tourists.

The official said developing maritime tourism is a main priority for the Chabahar Free

Zone Organization, which has several ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting Chabahar’s strategic coastal location.

Masroor also mentioned plans to expand similar maritime routes between a number of Iranian islands, aiming to boost regional tourism and foster greater regional cooperation.



## Yazd train journeys booming



TEHRAN – Yazd province, which has always been known as the jewel of the desert and the heart of traditional Iranian architecture, the historical fabric of its center shines on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and its windcatchers and adobe houses whisper stories of centuries of trade and civilization, is currently on the verge of a major leap in the field of tourism and rail transportation.

Yazd’s strategic location at the crossroads of the country’s north-south and east-west transportation routes has long played a key role in the movement of goods and passengers, and today, paying attention to rail transportation infrastructure has become a national priority to maximize the use of this capacity.

Cultural tourism is the axis of

Yazd’s sustainable development, and given the increasing volume of domestic and foreign visitors, ensuring travel security and comfort is an undeniable necessity.

From increasing the efficiency of existing lines to attracting huge private investments for launching new trains and tourism, all indicate a serious determination to transform Yazd into one of the most active rail axes across the country.

By stopping passing trains at intermediate stations and expanding the ticket sales network, it is expected that a new chapter will open in the boom in rail travel and the expansion of tourism routes in Yazd province.

Director General of Yazd Railways Seyyed Reza Sadat-Hosseini said that with the realization of the plans and the addition of the

new trains to the rail network, Yazd tourism route will expand.

He announced that Shiraz-Mashhad train will stop at Mehriz Station from October 23, and stated that with the implementation of this plan, the people of the province will be able to purchase tickets from within the province without visiting the neighboring provinces and go directly on pilgrimage and sightseeing trips from Mehriz-Mashhad and Mehriz-Shiraz routes and vice versa.

He also announced the entry of the private sector into the Yazd rail transportation sector and the launch of new tourist trains by the end of current Iranian year.

Sadat-Hosseini noted that given the high demand of Yazd people to travel to the holy Mashhad and Shiraz, the necessary coordination was made with the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways so that the Shiraz-Mashhad train will stop at Mehriz station and vice versa from October 23.

He added that the pre-sale of tickets for this train has started from September 23 and passengers can purchase their tickets from the Mehriz station through railway sales systems.

The official continued that with the implementation of this plan, Yazd citizens no longer need to go to the neighboring cities and provinces to board this train. It is currently possible to purchase tickets and board from Mehriz,

he added.

Referring to the features of Mehriz Railways Station, he said that this station is located 10 kilometers from Mehriz city and 35 kilometers from the center of Yazd province, and is in very favorable conditions in terms of infrastructure, accessibility, and geographical location.

According to him, Shiraz-Mashhad train and vice versa stop at this station, in addition to Mehriz, will also cover the cities of Yazd, Ardakan, Meybod, Bafq, and Behabad.

Sadat-Hosseini stated that Yazd is one of the main axes of the rail network due to its location on the south-north route of the country, and the stopping of the Shiraz-Mashhad train in Mehriz will further highlight the province’s role in the national rail transport network.

He added that this measure will facilitate inter-provincial travel and increase Yazd’s share in passenger transportation.

He stated that the current share of rail transport in the country is about 10 to 12 percent, while in developed countries this amount reaches 60 to 80 percent.

Sadat-Hosseini announced the launch of the province’s second tourist train in November 1404, adding that five other tourist trains will also be activated on different routes by the end of current Iranian year.

## UNESCO-listed Uraman to host meeting on stone architecture



TEHRAN-- A specialized meeting on the topic of ‘Siah-Chador and Stone Architecture in the Kordestan’s Uraman’ will be held in Tehran with presence of South Korean architectural historian Namsub Choi.

According to Miras-e Arya (CHTN), the specialized meeting will include Mohammad Ebrahim Zarei, the head of the Cultural Heritage Ministry’s Research Institute, and Pouya Talebnia, the head of Kordestan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department,

as speakers, and Nader Karimian Sardashti is the secretary of the meeting.

The gathering will be held at Cultural Heritage Ministry’s Research Institute on Saturday.

This program aims to examine the role of Siah-Chador (nomadic black tent) and the stone architecture in the cultural identity and architectural heritage of Uraman region in Kordestan province and exchange views with domestic and foreign experts.



# FAO to help Iran make agriculture resilient to climate change

TEHRAN – A new Regional Technical Cooperation Project developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will support Iran to make its agriculture resilient to changing climatic conditions while safeguarding food and nutrition security for future generations.

Launched in cooperation with the government, it aims to strengthen national and regional capacities for climate-resilient agriculture.

The project, which also spans Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Mongolia, seeks to promote sustainable intensification of quinoa, millets, and soybeans, crops known for their drought tolerance and nutritional value, FAO website announced in a press release on October 21.

The project was formally introduced at the National Inception Workshop held in Tehran on Tuesday, bringing together around 40 participants representing the government



and private sectors, research institutions, civil society organizations, specialized associations, farmers, and food and feed industries, along with representatives from FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the FAO Iran Representation.

The workshop formed three product-based groups of stakeholders to discuss the project's background, objectives, expected outcomes, and implementation strategy, as well

as to prioritize activities and finalize the country work plan based on national needs and feedback from participants.

Iran faces water scarcity and recurrent droughts that have increasingly strained its agricultural systems. With agriculture accounting for nearly 80 percent of total water withdrawals, the sector is vulnerable to climate change impacts such as reduced rainfall, higher tempera-

tures, and accelerated evaporation rates.

In response, the FAO regional project provides a framework for countries to address water and climate challenges through agronomic innovations, technology transfer, institutional strengthening, and awareness-raising on the nutritional and environmental benefits of climate-resilient crops.

In the country, the project will scale up drought-tolerant crops such as quinoa, millets, and soybeans, Promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS), and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to improve productivity and sustainability, build national capacity in climate-resilient farming systems and water-efficient practices and foster partnerships between research institutions, farmers, and private sector actors to ensure long-term adoption and scaling of results

## Tehran, Baghdad hold talks on Hour al-Azim wetland

TEHRAN – Iranian and Iraqi officials have discussed the challenges facing Hour al-Azim wetland, located on the border of the two countries, particularly drought and spontaneous combustion.

During a meeting held in Iraq, Iranian officials from the Department of Environment highlighted the provision of the wetland's water rights by Iraq, the lack of which has so far dried up the wetland, leading to spontaneous combustion, releasing a large amount of air pollution and smoke, adversely affecting cities in Khuzestan province, doe.ir reported.

They also emphasized the significance of managing resources and water consumption in Tigris River to be able to supply the wetland's water rights, and prevent the intensification of fire in the Iraqi part of the Hour al-Azim wetland, and stop pollutants migration towards Khuzestan province.

Iraqi officials representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs elaborated on the amount of water in the reservoirs of dams built across Tigris River, and the severe drought in the region, pledging to secure the water

rights next year.

The two sides also discussed utilizing firefighting aircraft and helicopters to distinguish fire and manage the wetland.

Boosting scientific cooperation to address common environmental challenges was among the other issues discussed in the meeting.

**Iran prioritizes co-op with Iraq to mitigate SDSs**

As sand and dust storms (SDSs) hotspots in Iraq severely affect western and south-western regions, the administration underscores co-operating with Baghdad to address the problem.

On September 15, 2024, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, in a meeting with the head of the Department of Environment, Shina Ansari, highlighted that one of the main axes of cooperation with Iraq will focus on conducting joint environmental activities as well as following up on previous agreements made in this regard, IRNA reported.

A report published by four Iranian researchers suggests that the main sources of sand and dust storms af-

fecting Iran are emerging from Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

Titled 'Dust in Western Iran: the emergence of new sources in response to shrinking water bodies', the report written by Azar Beyravanvand, Ghasem Azizi, Omid Alizadeh, and Ali Darvishi Boloorani was published by Nature on September 27, 2023.

"The most influential sources affecting Western Iran are located on the shore and northwest of Lake Tharthar, Hour-al-Azim Marsh, the shore of Razzaza, Habbaniyah Lakes, and West Hammar Marsh, which contributed to 110, 79, 59, 56, and 51 dusty days, respectively."

Indeed, the peak dust activity in Western Iran was during the period 2008–2012 in response to the substantial shrinkage of the main water bodies in Iraq.

The main sources of dust influencing Western Iran are located in northern and eastern Saudi Arabia in spring, Deir ez-Zur in Syria's Aleppo and Raqqa in summer, and Syria's Homs and Al-Hasakah in winter and spring.

Western Iran here refers to the

western half of Iran, which encompasses northwest, west, and south-west Iran. To identify dust events in western Iran during the period 2000–2016, meteorological data from 33 synoptic stations were obtained from the Meteorological Organization of Iran.

About 1133.5 km2 of regions in West Asia with permanent surface water in 1984 completely dried up in 2015 and acted as potential sources of dust.

Decreased precipitation in West Asia from autumn 2007 to 2012 and the occurrence of severe droughts have also contributed to the shrinkage of lakes and wetlands, as well as the reduced agricultural productivity in West Asia, all of which contributed to the intensification of dust activity in Western Iran in recent decades.

According to the results, the main sources of dust that influence Western Iran are located in Iraq. Decreases in the surface water of lakes in Iraq have led to the emergence of some new sources of dust, which contributed to a substantial increase in dust activity in western Iran in recent years.

## 118 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 118 earthquakes were recorded across the country in a week from October 11 to 17, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 109 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; nine earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4; and no earthquake with a magnitude over 4 have occurred in the country, Fars news agency reported.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi and Yazd, each with 15, experienced the highest number of earthquakes, followed by South

Khorasan, with 11 earthquakes.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 3.9 on the Richter scale, which occurred on October 13 in South Khorasan province.

During the same period, no earthquakes were recorded in Tehran, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Alborz, Ilam, Zanjan, Kordestan, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Markazi provinces.

A total of 6,272 earthquakes were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2024 – March 2025), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Out of registered earthquakes, 150 were more than 4 on the Richter scale; at least five earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 4.5 occurred monthly in the country.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world's earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Existing vaccines are effective against mutated coronavirus: expert

The COVID-19 vaccines, which have been so far produced in the world are also effective on the mutated virus, so people who receive the vaccines will be protected against the new virus strain, Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said.

What raised concerns about the newly-produced vaccine was the ineffectiveness against the mutated virus, which fortunately studies show, the mutation of the virus and the chromosomal alteration are not enough to change its general nature, he explained.

According to Mardani, all British and European passengers are tested at the airport for a quick and PCR test.

## واکسن کرونا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند

مسعود مردانی عضو ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا می گوید واکسن تولید و تایید شده در دنیا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند و افرادی که واکسن تایید شده را بزنند علیه این ویروس هم مصونیت پیدا می کنند.

مردانی روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: آنچه نگران آن هستیم این است که واکسن تولید شده برای کووید۱۹ در دنیا نسبت به ویروس جهش یافته بی اثر باشد که خوشبختانه بررسی ها نشان می دهد، جهش ویروس و تغییر کروموزومی ویروس به قدری نیست که ماهیت کلی آن تغییر کند.

به گفته او، از همه مسافران انگلیس و اروپا در فرودگاه تست سریع و از موارد مشکوک تست دقیق تر «پی سی آر» گرفته و بررسی می شود.

## Seventh nationwide screening campaign launched for prevalent cancers in women

TEHRAN - The seventh nationwide screening campaign for prevalent cancers in women has been launched in line with marking October, the Global Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

To this end, a press conference was held on Monday, October 13, hosted by the Iranian National Cancer Institute (INCO) at the place of the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research (ACECR) in Tehran.

The event was attended by Dr. Zahra Sheikh, Vice President of Research and Technology at ACECR, Dr. Ramin Sarrafi Foroushani, President of the ACECR Iranian National Cancer Institute, and Dr. Asieh Olfat-Bakhsh, Deputy of Research and Education of INCO.

For her part, Olfat-Bakhsh announced the opening of the nationwide awareness campaign in October, adding that free breast examination services for women will be offered in Districts 2, 3, 4, 16, and 19 in Tehran through collaboration between the ACECR, the Iranian National Cancer Institute, and Tehran Municipality.

"According to the most recent data released by the international GLOBOCAN database (2023), approximately 15,700 Iranian women were diagnosed with breast cancer. Given the female population in that time (42 million), the incidence rate of breast cancer in Iran is estimated at 35 to 37 cases per 100,000 women," Olfat-Bakhsh said, highlighting the latest global breast cancer statistics.

"These figures are derived from reliable international data sources and may vary slightly across reports depending on predictive models or estimation methods."

**Provinces with Higher Breast Cancer Incidence**

Elsewhere in her remarks, Olfat-Bakhsh referred to the geographical distribution of breast cancer in Iran, saying: "According to studies published over the past two years, provinces such as Tehran, Alborz, Qom, Yazd, Isfahan, Gilan, and Mazandaran fall into the group with high breast cancer incidence, marked in red on statistical maps — meaning more than 30 cases per 100,000 women."

She added that in contrast, provinces such as Ilam, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Khuzestan show lower incidence rates. "These differences can be attributed to urban and industrial lifestyles, lower fertility rates, delayed first pregnancies, and lower physical activity in more industrialized regions," she explained.

**Lifestyle Factors and Breast Cancer Risk**

Olfat-Bakhsh emphasized that the primary factor driving the higher incidence of breast cancer in industrial provinces is lifestyle. "Dietary habits, physical inactivity, higher maternal age at first childbirth, and smaller family sizes are among the major contribut-



ing factors," she said.

She also noted that in some less-developed provinces, lower reported rates may be due to underreporting, as cultural barriers or limited access to healthcare centers prevent some patients from seeking medical consultation.

**Air Pollution: A Yet Unproven Risk Factor**

Commenting on the possible link between air pollution and breast cancer, Olfat-Bakhsh said: "Environmental factors certainly play a role in cancer development, but so far, no direct scientific study has established a definitive link between air pollution and breast cancer. Therefore, only factors confirmed by large-scale, evidence-based studies can be regarded as proven risk contributors."

**Implementation of Nationwide Awareness Campaign in October**

Regarding the organization's activities during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), Olfat-Bakhsh said: "For several years, the ACECR Motamed Cancer Institute (MCI) has organized a nationwide awareness campaign every October, focusing on awareness, early detection, and lifestyle modification. The primary goal of this campaign is to empower women with knowledge about prevention methods, early diagnosis, and healthy living practices."

**Training Midwives Nationwide for Breast Cancer Prevention and Screening**

In line with the expansion of this nationwide campaign, an educational webinar for midwives across the country was held this year, which attracted around 400 participants, Olfat-Bakhsh added. "The training covered key topics such as the nature of breast cancer, diagnostic and screening methods, and education for prevention related to women's health."

Emphasizing the importance of continuous education and public awareness, she added: "Awareness is the first step toward prevention. The more women know about gynecological diseases and breast cancer, the greater the chance for early detection and successful treatment."

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



## Pezeshkian honors top university students

President Masoud Pezeshkian attended a ceremony on Monday to honor top university students and Olympiad medal winners of the country.

By winning 12 gold medals in the past Iranian calendar year that ended on March 20, Iran ranked third in the world for gaining gold medals in international Olympiads.





OCTOBER 22, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Failures are often the results of timidity and fears;  
disappointments are the results of bashfulness; hours of  
leisure pass away like summer-clouds, therefore, do not  
waste opportunity of doing good.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:11:49 Evening: 17:38 Dawn: 4:54 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:18 (tomorrow)

## “The Voice of Hind Rajab” crowned as winner of 52nd Film Fest Gent

Marking the end of its 52nd edition, Film Fest Gent crowned its awardees during a ceremony on 18 October 18 in Gent, Belgium, where the official jury, awarded the Grand Prix for Best Film to Tunisian filmmaker Kaouthar Ben Hania's call to humanity, “The Voice of Hind Rajab”.

The winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Venice, where the movie had its world premiere, the movie blends real emergency call recordings with staged scenes, to reconstruct the final moments of six-year-old Palestinian Hind Rajab, trapped in a car in Gaza and surrounded by Israeli fire while speaking to the Palestinian Red Crescent, Cineuropa reported.

In late January 2024, workers at the Palestine Red Crescent Society receive an emergency call from a young girl in Gaza. As the tragic events of the day unfold, they race to save her, all the while following the strictures of a complex protocol. Ben Hania's film is an urgent and compassionate portrait of an avoidable tragedy, featuring the filmmaker's characteristic blend of documentary and fiction.

The Arabic-language film, Tunisia's Oscar entry, tells the story of six-year-old Palestinian girl Hind Rajab, who was killed by Israeli forces last year. She and her family were fleeing Gaza City when their vehicle was shelled, also killing Rajab's uncle, aunt, and three cousins. Rajab and another cousin initially survived the attack and contacted the Palestine Red Crescent Society by phone from their car seeking aid. But the car was

later found with Rajab and the paramedics who had come to help her all dead.

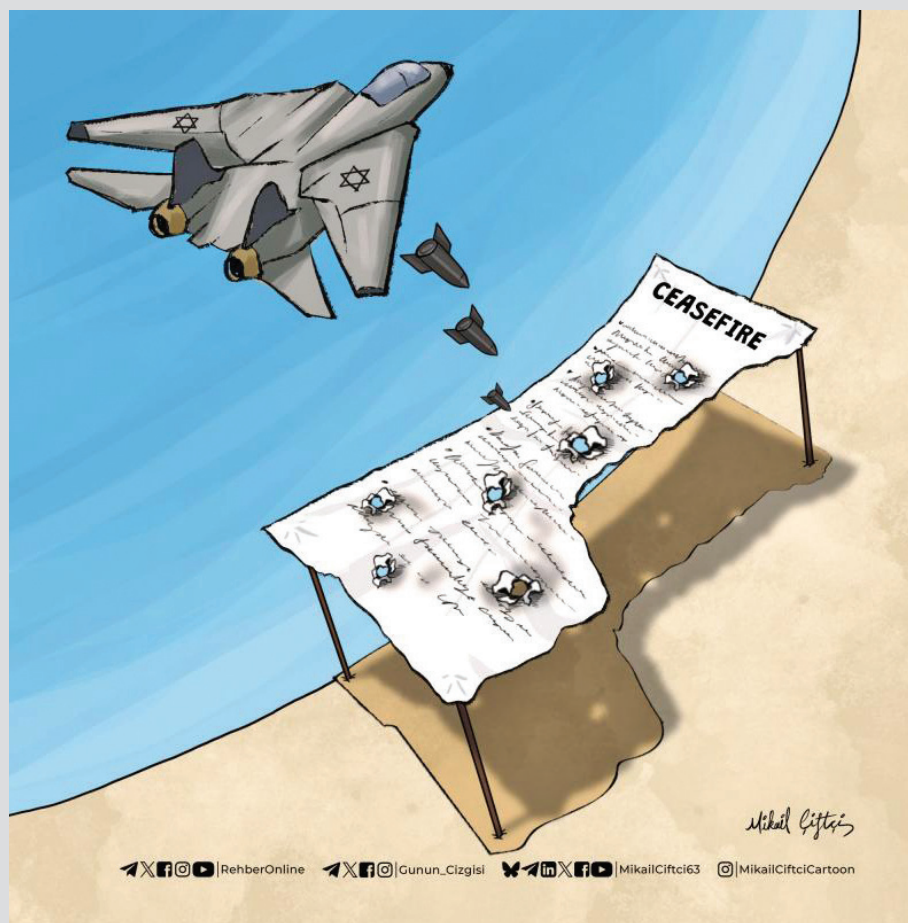
Keeping violence off-screen, the film draws its devastating power from sound, silence, and the unbearable tension of waiting. In its unflinching confrontation with systemic failure, “The Voice of Hind Rajab” locks its characters (and possibly its audiences too) as implicated subjects of extreme violence. As such, the film contemplates questions of responsibility and the limitations of compassion without action. As Ben Hania states: “I cannot accept a world in which a child cries for help and no one comes.”

“Some stories are silenced. This film creates a space for a voice to be heard. The real voice of a little girl. A quiet voice that grows into a loud cry for humanity. Through a powerful cinematic construction, blending fiction and reality with precision and empathy, the film transforms this cry into an act of resistance - preserving a memory that should never be forgotten,” the jury members of Film Fest Gent stated:

The movie receives a €20,000 distribution grant and a media campaign worth €30,000, including €12,500 for promotion in De Morgen, and will be released in Belgian cinemas by Cinéart on November 19.

“The Voice of Hind Rajab” also won an award at the 41st Warsaw Film Festival, held from October 10 to 19, by audiences participating in the annual Audience Poll. In the Feature Films category, it received the highest number of votes.

## Cartoon of Day



Ceasefire Violation

Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

# Expressing the unseen: Ibrahim Nasrallah's insights on Palestinian stories, culture

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- In a significant cultural event in Tehran on Monday, the Persian translation of Ibrahim Nasrallah's acclaimed literary works was unveiled during a ceremony dedicated to the resistance and Palestine, drawing renewed attention to the profound contributions of this Palestinian writer.

Published by Amir Kabir Publications in Tehran, the Persian editions of “The Eye of Bethlehem,” “Shadows of the Keys,” and “A Tank Under the Christmas Tree” were unveiled, emphasizing the enduring struggles and sacrifices of the Palestinian people and the resilience of their resistance forces.

Nasrallah, renowned for his poetic voice and narrative depth, stands as a towering figure in contemporary Arabic literature. His works, which traverse themes of resistance, identity, and history, have resonated across the Arab world and beyond. The unveiling of his translated works in Tehran offers a timely opportunity to explore his creative journey, the origins of his celebrated “Bells Trilogy,” and his enduring commitment to portraying Palestinian resilience and multicultural identity.

Following the unveiling, the Tehran Times conducted an exclusive interview with Nasrallah, during which he reflected on the origins of his “Bells Trilogy,” a set of interconnected novels inspired by the steadfastness of Beit Sahour during the First Intifada. Nasrallah revealed that the idea originated in 1990, amidst the resistance against Zionist occupation. The resilience of Beit Sahour's Christian community, in particular, served as a catalyst for his portrayal of Palestinian Christian perseverance—a theme he considers vital to understanding the broader Palestinian struggle. The trilogy, comprising “Shadows of the Keys,” “The Eye of Bethlehem,” and “A Tank Under the Christmas Tree,” is conceived as a tribute to Palestinian Christians and their cultural and resistance contributions.

What distinguishes Nasrallah's work is its emphasis on the multifaceted nature of Palestinian iden-



tity and resistance. He emphasized that his trilogy aims to shed light on an often-overlooked aspect of the Palestinian narrative—the Christian dimension—and to challenge the simplistic portrayals of Palestinian resistance as solely Muslim. “My work seeks to demonstrate that Palestine is a multi-faith nation,” he explained. “The struggle is shared, and our cultural fabric is enriched by this diversity.”

“A large group of Palestinian Christian writers have played a vital role in spreading Palestinian culture and bringing it to the world—among them Emile Habibi, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, and undoubtedly Edward Said, as well as many others who have truly made a great contribution,” he said and added: “Therefore, this trilogy is in fact a tribute to all of them, and to the continuous struggle of Palestinian Christians from the beginning until today.”

He further noted, “The beauty and importance of this trilogy also lie in the fact that it was written by a Muslim author who honors and takes pride in this Christian role.”

Addressing the broader implications of his writings, Nasrallah stressed that his literary goal is to foster understanding and solidarity. “The message I wish to convey

is that Palestinian culture and resistance are collective efforts that transcend religious boundaries,” he said. “The world needs to see the diversity within Palestine and recognize the unity that underpins our resilience.”

As the Persian translation of Nasrallah's works gains recognition in Iran, his message of resilience and multicultural coexistence resonates strongly in the region. His literary journey, marked by a firm stance against oppression and a deep appreciation for cultural diversity, continues to inspire readers across borders. Nasrallah's voice remains a vital testament to the enduring spirit of Palestine and its people, echoing beyond geographical and cultural divides, fostering empathy and understanding in an increasingly complex world.

Nasrallah's own life story—marked by displacement, cultural activism, and artistic expression—continues to influence his voice. His childhood in a refugee camp, his experiences as a journalist, and his dedication to chronicling Palestinian history through ambitious projects, such as his eight-volume series on modern Palestinian history, imbue his work with authenticity and urgency. His novel “Time of

White Horses” (2007), which traces three generations of a Palestinian family through periods of occupation and upheaval, exemplifies his mastery in blending personal narrative with collective history.

Born in 1954 in Amman to Palestinian parents displaced during the Nakba of 1948, Ibrahim Nasrallah's life is deeply intertwined with the Palestinian refugee experience. Growing up amidst the hardships of life in Al-Wehdat refugee camp, Nasrallah's early years were marked by a keen awareness of displacement and cultural survival. His educational journey through UNRWA schools and the UNRWA Teacher Training College laid the foundation for a prolific literary career that now spans over four decades.

As a poet, novelist, and photographer, Nasrallah has published numerous works—seventeen poetry collections, two volumes for children, and sixteen novels—that have been translated into several languages including English, Italian, Danish, and Turkish. His literary pursuits have earned him international recognition, including the prestigious International Prize for Arabic Fiction for his novel “The Second Dog War” and the Jerusalem Award for Culture and Creativity.

## Iranian documentary “Cutting Through Rocks” wins two awards at Warsaw Film Festival

TEHRAN – The Iranian documentary “Cutting Through Rocks” by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni won two awards from the 41st Warsaw Film Festival, held in Poland from October 10 to 19.

The Polish festival presented its NETPAC Award to the documentary, honoring its powerful testimony to the unbreakable perseverance of a woman standing up in an oppressive atmosphere.

The Audience Award in the FREE SPIRIT section of the festival also went to “Cutting Through Rocks,” ISNA reported.

The documentary tells the story of Sara Shahverdi, the first elected councilwoman of her village, who aims to break long-held patriarchal traditions by training teenage girls to ride motorcycles and stopping child marriages. When accusations arise questioning Sara's intentions to empower the girls, her identity is put in turmoil.

A joint production of Iran, Germany, the U.S., Qatar, the Netherlands, Chile, and Canada, the 95-minute movie was the winner of the World Cinema Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the World Cinema Documentary Competition of the Sundance Film Festival in the U.S., and the Gryphon Award at the 55th Giffoni Film Festival in Italy earlier this year.

In “Cutting Through Rocks,” the directors deliver a deeply intimate and quietly defiant portrait of resistance and resilience. Their debut feature documentary follows Sara Shahverdi as she attempts to em-

power young women to imagine a future of freedom, education, and autonomy.

At the heart of the film lies Shahverdi herself—a remarkable, trailblazing figure who drives a car through dusty village roads, teaches teenage girls how to ride motorbikes, and campaigns against the still-prevalent practice of child marriage. The camera, handheld and unvarnished, stays close to her, never interfering but always alert to the emotional and political weight of her daily struggles. It's this raw, observational approach that lends the film its quiet power and cumulative tension.

Sara's charisma and sheer willpower drive the narrative forward. As she pushes girls to stay in school, dream of careers in medicine, teaching, or engineering, and take control of their lives, her vision becomes a glimmer of hope in an otherwise suffocating social landscape. Yet her journey is far from smooth. Suspicion and resentment surround her. When allegations surface questioning her intentions with the young girls she mentors, Sara's own identity is scrutinized and eventually attacked.

The score, used sparingly and with subtlety, enhances rather than overwhelms the emotional arc. The cinematography, rough-edged and organic, resists beautification, echoing the rawness of the terrain and the social tensions that run through it. “Cutting Through Rocks” begins with quiet observation, but builds into an emotional



crescendo, culminating in a series of painful defeats and existential questions.

The film does not offer closure or easy hope, and therein lies its honesty. This is not a tale of triumphant change, but one of necessary resistance in the face of insurmountable odds. Ultimately, the documentary stands as both a testament to individual courage and a sobering wake-up call.

Established in 1985, the Warsaw Film Festival joined in 2009 the elite group of events recognized by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations as an

international film festival.

For over 40 years, the Warsaw Film Festival has been promoting cinema that brings people together, inspires thought, and leaves a lasting impression. It is a space of creative freedom, dialogue, and films that tackle important issues — a place where stories that truly matter come together.

During the previous editions, two films from Iran won the Warsaw Grand Prix, the festival's top award. Asghar Farhadi's “The Beautiful City” grabbed the award in 2004 and “Malaria” by Parviz Shabbazi won it in 2016.