

The ultimate double standard validating Iranian nuclear sovereignty

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — When history writes the epitaph of the nonproliferation regime, July 22, 2026, may serve as its final chapter.

That Wednesday, United States Energy Secretary Chris Wright sat beneath American and Saudi flags in Washington to sign a 30-year civilian nuclear cooperation agreement.

Barely a day later, the entire charade collapsed. Donald Trump, reportedly furious at the rollout, took to social media to declare the deal “totally subject” to Riyadh joining the Abraham Accords. The White House scrambled, the Saudis were blindsided, and a frantic backtrack began. ▶ Page 5

Tehran, Seoul discuss roadmap for cultural, tourism cooperation at UNESCO meeting

TEHRAN - Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri and South Korea’s Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Choi Hwi-young agreed on Friday to pursue closer cooperation in cultural heritage, tourism, handicrafts and creative industries during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 48th session of UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee in Busan.

The two ministers discussed expanding bilateral cooperation through a comprehensive framework covering cultural heritage, tourism, handicrafts, digital museums, smart tourism, creative industries and new technologies, IRAN reported. ▶ Page 6

Iran showcases active health diplomacy at BRICS ministerial meeting

TEHRAN — Attending the 16th BRICS Health Ministerial Meeting, being held in Chandigarh, India, from July 21 to 25, the Iranian delegation has so far actively participated in drafting a declaration and putting forward technical and legal proposals to strengthen health cooperation among BRICS member states.

Iran’s position fundamentally prioritized the pursuit of consensus while safeguarding national interests, preserving the authority of regulatory bodies, expanding production and research capacities, ensuring equitable access to medicines, vaccines, and health technologies, and fostering cooperation in traditional medicine and mental health, IRNA reported.

The Iranian delegation emphasized that BRICS cooperation must advance beyond declarations and develop into joint. ▶ Page 7



Trump attends transfer of U.S. soldiers killed in the Middle East, July 22, 2026, Dover Air Force Base, Delaware

Reaping the Whirlwind: \$100 Oil and Ruined US Bases Shatter Trump’s Iran Strategy

*Iranian armed forces launch fresh retaliatory strikes against US regional bases, leveling key infrastructure as Washington remains accused of concealing its true battlefield casualties*

TEHRAN — Iranian armed forces press ahead with sweeping retaliatory operations against American bases and strategic military assets across the West Asia region as the US continues its unprovoked acts of aggression against the Islamic Republic.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced the execution of new attacks against US targets in Kuwait and Bahrain under the 27th wave of Operation Nasr 2. Deploying advanced heavy attack drones against the US-run Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, Iranian forces destroyed a large ammunition depot in a sequence of powerful explosions. The IRGC confirmed that six large accommodation hangars used by US personnel at the base were completely destroyed, three others sustained heavy damage, and numerous US troops were killed or wounded.

The IRGC asserted that Washington has systematically concealed the true scale of

its battlefield losses throughout the five-month war. Pointing to the daily evacuation of injured American personnel by medical aircraft to a US military hospital in Germany, the statement called on American news outlets to investigate the actual casualty figures, equipment losses, and war costs that have been hidden from the US public.

In a separate statement, the IRGC confirmed the completion of an earlier operation against an Amazon data center in Bahrain, describing the site as a key intelligence facility supporting the US military. The remaining building at the site was leveled during the latest wave of attacks, following initial cruise missile strikes launched in response to a US attack on Iran’s under-construction civilian Dar Khoein nuclear facility. Furthermore,

IRGC forces targeted three storage hangars containing ammunition and equipment at the US-run Camp Udairi in Kuwait, setting them ablaze and destroying them, while simultaneously striking and significantly damaging the control tower of the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain.

These latest developments unfold as the US military has conducted air raids across Iran for two weeks, striking civilian infrastructure including bridges and water desalination plants. These illegal acts of aggression have killed more than 50 people and injured over 600 others inside Iran. The renewed onslaught began after Washington abandoned its commitments under the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, which was meant to end hostilities following the US-Israeli war on Iran launched on February 28. The US accepted a ceasefire 39 days after the war due to Iran’s effective retaliatory operations and operational control over the Strait of Hormuz. ▶ Page 3

Is Trump’s reckless aggression against Iran pushing global economy toward a catastrophic collapse?

TEHRAN- As the United States under Donald Trump has once again unleashed military strikes against Iran and reinstated what the US president calls a “naval blockade” in the Strait of Hormuz, the World Bank has issued a stark warning that the escalating hostilities could slash global economic growth to a mere 1.3 percent in 2026—down from 2.9 percent last year—while reigniting inflation and driving interest rates perilously higher. ▶ Page 4

Omani delegation visits Tehran for Strait of Hormuz navigation talks

TEHRAN - An Omani diplomatic delegation arrived in Tehran on Friday for high-level consultations on regulating commercial vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, according to a report by Iran’s official news agency, IRNA.

The diplomatic mission coincided with a telephone consultation between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, who reviewed regional developments, maritime navigation safety, and commercial shipping protocols in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. ▶ Page 3

Iran defends legitimate right to self-defense, urges UNSC to halt US aggression

TEHRAN — Addressing an open debate of the United Nations Security Council, Iran’s diplomatic mission reaffirmed that all military measures taken by the Islamic Republic are strictly defensive, necessary, and fully aligned with international law in response to continuous American acts of aggression.

Speaking at the session, Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran’s deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, highlighted Washington’s systematic breaches of international obligations and warned that Iran will continue exercising its inherent right to self-defense to safeguard its sovereign territory, national security, and civilian population.

Darzi stated that Iranian missile and drone strikes against US-operated military installations across the region over the past two weeks were launched as a direct response to unprovoked American strikes against Iranian territory. ▶ Page 2



Araghchi’s mission to Kyrgyzstan puts Iran’s regional strategy in focus

TEHRAN — Against the backdrop of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s (SCO) 25th anniversary, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi traveled to Kyrgyzstan this week to participate in the Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, where regional security, economic cooperation and the future direction of Eurasian diplomacy dominated the agenda.

Hosted under Kyrgyzstan’s rotating chairmanship, the ministerial gathering brought together foreign ministers from the SCO’s member states in the lakeside resort city of Cholpon-Ata. ▶ Page 2



Iran, Iraq deepen strategic partnership

TEHRAN – Iran and Iraq moved to elevate their strategic partnership during Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Faleh Al-Zaidi’s first official visit to Tehran, signing a series of cooperation agreements while reaffirming their commitment to expanding economic integration, political coordination and regional cooperation.

Al-Zaidi arrived in Tehran on Thursday at the head of a high-level delegation at the invitation of the Iranian government. He was welcomed at the airport by Iran’s Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, Ali Madanizadeh—a protocol decision widely viewed as highlighting the visit’s strong economic focus. ▶ Page 2

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Ensuring national cohesion boosts the country's bargaining power globally

Javad Emam, spokesperson for the Reform Front, told Etemad newspaper—while discussing the country's current circumstances and the need to strengthen national unity and social cohesion in confronting the United States— that recent days have once again placed the region and the world amid rapid and complex developments. In such conditions, what can guarantee the country's security, stability, and authority more than anything else is not political or media commotion, but rather the preservation of national unity and the reinforcement of social cohesion. He added that in the face of external pressures and threats, including the hostile policies of the United States and “bloodthirsty Israel,” the country's foremost need is maintaining internal solidarity. Undoubtedly, national power is not formed solely on the foreign-policy stage; it originates from within society. The stronger this internal capital becomes, the greater the country's bargaining power in the international arena, enabling it to navigate political, economic, and security challenges at lower cost.

**Shargh: A green light for enrichment in Riyadh**

Shargh analyzed the imminent comprehensive US–Saudi civilian nuclear agreement. According to Shargh, this civilian nuclear pact helps place Washington–Riyadh relations back on a more stable trajectory. The agreement is designed to deepen the strategic bond between the two capitals, especially as the ongoing war with Iran has imposed additional strain on bilateral ties. Saudi officials have sought such an agreement partly as a deterrent against Iran. During the current year's war with Iran, Riyadh relied on the United States to supply interceptor missiles for air defense against Iranian projectiles. Nevertheless, Saudi officials remain concerned that US policies in the Middle East—including its partnership with Israel—may increase risks for Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states. For this reason, Saudi diplomats have pursued talks with Iran—two countries that restored diplomatic relations in 2023 through Chinese mediation.

**Farhikhtegan: Surprises from two weeks of clashes**

Farhikhtegan highlighted the strengthening of Iran's attacks over the past two weeks. According to the paper, several upgrades in Iran's operations have emerged—constituting a major and disappointing setback for the enemy. These attacks showed increased

accuracy due to the use of new missiles or upgraded systems. The rate of penetration through enemy air defenses rose. Real-time intelligence was visible in strikes on missile launchers in Kuwait. Most importantly, supply routes were blocked. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz prevented the transfer of large volumes of equipment by sea to the Persian Gulf. After the war, the Fujairah route in the UAE—used to bypass Hormuz and supply Persian Gulf bases—was shut down. Then Oman's Duqm port was targeted. Now, with Iran striking Aqaba port in western Jordan—linked to the Red Sea—another major supply route has been hit. In parallel, Yemen is preparing to increase insecurity along Red Sea maritime routes.

**Javan: Iraqi Kurdistan—long-standing base of the Zionist regime and a regional threat**

Javan, discussing the IRGC's attack on Iraqi Kurdistan, wrote that after the start of the second phase of the war, the IRGC—while fighting on the American-Israeli front—launched a new wave of strikes on Iraqi Kurdistan, the base of separatist armed groups and a hub of Israeli activity. These operations are not limited to securing Iran's internal borders; they constitute a broader effort to counter Israeli presence and activity along Iran's western frontier. The proximity of separatist Kurdish groups and Israeli operatives has turned the region into a center of instability. Any negligence, the paper argues, would impose high costs on national and regional security. Iran's actions send a clear message: Iran's security is a red line, and no power can cross it.

**Arman-e-Melli: Iran's step-by-step strategy**

Arman-e-Melli assessed Iran's strategy against the American-Israeli adversary, writing that based on published information, the United States has suffered heavy blows at its regional bases—especially in Jordan and Kuwait—reflecting Iran's defined strategy. Tehran has emphasized this “step-by-step” model not only in the current round of tensions but also during the Ramadan war and even earlier, in the 12-day conflict. This means Iran has tried to respond to damage and attacks in a way that allows it to steer the confrontation according to its own design, while ensuring that its counter-response—whether against the US or Israel—is calibrated so the adversary cannot excessively amplify the impact of its own actions.

This is precisely the logic of the escalation-ladder model.

## Iran defends legitimate right to self-defense, urges UNSC to halt US aggression



From page 1 ► He emphasized that under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, Iran maintains the absolute legal authority to defend its sovereignty and vital national interests against external aggression. He noted that questioning Iran's defensive retaliations is invalid while foreign forces continue using regional positions to strike civilian and military infrastructure inside Iran.

In his statement, the Iranian diplomat detailed how Tehran consistently prioritized dialogue and diplomatic channels, pointing to negotiations initiated in 2025 in good faith despite Washington's history of violating the 2015 nuclear agreement (JCPOA) and UN Security Council Resolution 2231. He criticized the United States for twice “betraying

diplomacy” by launching military offensives while negotiations remained active, specifically referencing the June 2025 aggression and subsequent operations since February 2026, which targeted vital civilian infrastructure, national assets, and senior military leaders.

Highlighting regional peace efforts, the envoy noted that Pakistani-mediated talks produced the Islamabad memorandum of understanding (MoU) on June 17, establishing a structured framework for de-escalation, mutual respect for territorial integrity, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. While Iran faithfully implemented all commitments under the accord, Washington routinely violated the agreement through daily strikes, maritime blockades, and attempts to impose a parallel naval regime in the Strait of Hormuz.

Darzi urged the UN Security Council to abandon its silence and discharge its legal responsibilities under the UN Charter by enacting immediate measures to stop ongoing US aggression. He stressed that failure to hold Washington accountable severely threatens regional stability, maritime navigation in the Persian Gulf, and the overall credibility of international law.

# Iran, Iraq deepen strategic partnership

From page 1 ► The reception by Iran's economy minister, rather than a senior security or diplomatic official, underscored the visit's primary objective. Contrary to speculation in some media outlets that the Iraqi premier was carrying a message from Washington to Tehran, the visit centered overwhelmingly on expanding bilateral economic cooperation. The signing of multiple agreements during the trip further reinforced that assessment.

Nevertheless, the economic agenda formed only one pillar of the visit. Talks between senior officials also covered regional developments, bilateral political relations and security cooperation, reflecting the increasingly comprehensive nature of the Tehran-Baghdad partnership.

President Masoud Pezeshkian formally welcomed Al-Zaidi at Tehran's Saadabad Cultural-Historical Complex, where the two leaders held private talks followed by a meeting between their respective high-level delegations.

During the discussions, the two sides reaffirmed the deep historical, cultural and religious ties binding the neighboring countries and described those longstanding connections as the foundation for expanding strategic cooperation across multiple sectors.

Pezeshkian and Al-Zaidi stressed the importance of accelerating the implementation of existing bilateral agreements while



calling for greater coordination in political affairs, trade, investment, energy, transportation, transit and regional diplomacy. They agreed that opening new avenues of cooperation represents a strategic necessity capable of promoting stability, security and economic prosperity for both countries and the wider region.

Al-Zaidi's visit also included meetings with senior Iranian officials beyond the executive branch, underscoring the multidimensional nature of bilateral relations.

During talks with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, both sides emphasized that stronger cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad could contribute significantly to addressing regional challenges and reinforcing stability across the Islamic world.

Qalibaf thanked the Iraqi government and people for hosting funeral ceremonies for the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in several Iraqi cities and expressed appreciation for Iraq's preparations to host millions of Iranian pilgrims during the upcoming Arbāeen pilgrimage.

He also described Israel as a common threat facing Muslim nations, saying closer strategic coordination between Iran and Iraq would help preserve unity within the Islamic world.

For his part, Al-Zaidi described Iran and Iraq as “strategic partners with a shared destiny,” saying participation by Iraqi officials and citizens in the funeral ceremonies reflected a sense of religious and historical responsibility rather than political symbolism.

The Iraqi prime minister also

met Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, who reaffirmed that Iran's relations with neighboring countries are based on friendship, cooperation and mutual respect.

Ejei called for expanding judicial and legal cooperation between Tehran and Baghdad, including implementing existing agreements, strengthening legal exchanges, sharing anti-corruption expertise and enhancing cooperation on extradition and judicial affairs.

While emphasizing that Iran harbors no hostility toward its neighbors, the judiciary chief also reiterated Tehran's position that it reserves the right to respond to military attacks launched from territories hosting foreign forces.

Al-Zaidi welcomed closer judicial cooperation and discussed broader bilateral and regional issues during the meeting.

The Iraqi prime minister's first official visit to Tehran highlighted the steady expansion of Iran-Iraq relations beyond their traditional political and security dimensions. While economic cooperation emerged as the centerpiece of the visit, the extensive discussions on regional diplomacy, parliamentary coordination, judicial cooperation and strategic affairs reflected the two governments' shared determination to build a broader, long-term partnership spanning virtually every major area of bilateral engagement.

## Araghchi's mission to Kyrgyzstan puts Iran's regional strategy in focus

From page 1 ► designated the organization's Tourism and Cultural Capital for 2025–2026. The meeting served as one of the most important diplomatic events ahead of the upcoming SCO leaders' summit and coincided with celebrations marking a quarter-century since the bloc's establishment.

Araghchi arrived in Bishkek before traveling to Cholpon-Ata, where he joined his counterparts in discussions aimed at strengthening cooperation in security, trade, regional connectivity, cultural exchanges and sustainable development. According to the official agenda, ministers also reviewed draft documents for the forthcoming SCO summit and explored ways to improve the organization's institutional effectiveness.

In his address to the ministerial session, Araghchi presented Iran's positions on major regional and international developments while calling for a stronger commitment to multilateralism and international law. He argued that the SCO should move beyond its traditional political and security role toward a broader partnership encompassing economic integration, technological cooperation and sustainable development.

A central theme of the Iranian foreign minister's speech was the need for collective opposition to unilateral military actions. Araghchi warned that any country participating in or assisting aggression against Iran would bear international responsibility and reiterated that Tehran reserves the right to defend itself under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. He also emphasized that Iran's long-standing foreign policy remains rooted in diplomacy, dialogue, regional cooperation and good-neighborly relations.

### Bilateral meetings

Beyond the plenary meeting, Araghchi conducted an intensive round of bilateral diplomacy, holding talks with several key regional partners. Meetings were held with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Pakistani Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Jeenbek Kulubaev Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov. The discussions focused on expanding bilateral cooperation, strengthening political and economic ties, and coordinating positions on regional and international developments.

The meeting with Lavrov underscored Tehran and Moscow's continued coordination on regional issues, while discussions with Pakistan highlighted the importance both neighbors attach to regional stability and expanding bilateral relations. Talks with Belarus focused on accelerating the implementation of cooperation agreements covering the 2026–2030 period. They emphasized the need to accelerate the implementation of the agreements already signed and discussed the latest regional and international developments.

The meetings with China and Uzbekistan



reflected Iran's efforts to deepen engagement with Central Asian and Eurasian partners through the SCO framework.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the conference, Araghchi said his consultations demonstrated broad convergence among SCO members on major international issues. According to the Iranian foreign minister, member states shared concerns over unilateral military actions and supported efforts to uphold international law and multilateral cooperation. He described the discussions as evidence of growing consensus among participating countries regarding regional security challenges.

The minister also highlighted Iran's strategic geographic position linking Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia and international waters, saying the country is prepared to play a greater role in regional transportation, energy security, trade corridors and economic development. He argued that deeper connectivity within the SCO could strengthen resilience across the Eurasian region while promoting sustainable growth.

**SCO: An organization against western hegemony**

After the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization concluded its meeting, the Iranian Foreign Minister told reporters: The body is a forward-looking organization comprising many of the major countries in our region that seek to counter the unilateral policies of the United States, Western countries, and Western-led institutions that attempt to impose hegemonic approaches on international relations.

“Today's discussions were largely focused on confronting the unilateral policies pursued by the United States and the West. This was also the central theme of my address, in which I linked these policies to the recent act of aggression carried out against my country by the United States,” he added.

“Our consultations with Russia and China are going on. We regularly engage with our Chinese and Russian friends whenever the opportunity arises. Today's meetings provided

an excellent opportunity to hold detailed discussions with Foreign Ministers Wang Yi and Sergey Lavrov on a wide range of issues,” the Iranian top diplomat highlighted.

“Naturally, as Pakistan has been serving as a mediator, there have been discussions regarding various initiatives and proposals. However, the issue between Iran and the United States is not the absence of mediation; rather, it is the approach adopted by the United States.”

“Iran has shown that it will not succumb to American bullying and will not surrender to force, pressure, or threats in any way,” Araghchi added.

“We are neither intimidated by threats nor willing to yield to pressure. Iran does not respond to the language of force, coercion or intimidation. Our foreign policy is grounded in clear and unwavering principles, and we will remain committed to them. Protecting the Iranian people and safeguarding Iran's national interests in the Strait of Hormuz are among our fundamental priorities, and we will continue to pursue them,” Araghchi said.

He added, “As long as the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Iranian people are not fully realized, Iran will remain steadfast in pursuing its chosen course.”

The ministerial meeting concluded with the signing of 25 documents adopted under nine separate decisions, covering a broad range of political, economic, security and institutional issues. The agreements will help shape preparations for the upcoming SCO summit and provide a framework for expanding cooperation among member states as the organization enters its next phase of development.

For Iran, Araghchi's visit represented more than participation in a routine diplomatic gathering. It provided an opportunity to reinforce Tehran's engagement with one of Eurasia's most influential regional organizations, strengthen bilateral relations with key partners and advance its vision of a more integrated, multipolar regional order built on economic cooperation, mutual respect and multilateral diplomacy.

# Reaping the whirlwind: \$100 oil and ruined US bases shatter Trump’s Iran strategy

From Page 1 ▶ Denouncing escalating US strikes that recently targeted the Shalam-cheh border crossing with Iraq—resulting in the injury and martyrdom of pilgrims traveling to attend mourning processions for Imam Hussein (AS)—the IRGC highlighted that many US officers have abandoned their primary bases out of fear and are currently directing operations from civilian quarters inside regional cities. Issuing a direct warning to local populations, the IRGC stated: “Since, if such crimes continue, our course of action will be retribution against the criminals, and because many officers and personnel of the invading US military have abandoned their bases out of fear of the fire of the Islamic fighters and are directing their operations from buildings inside cities, we warn all people in countries hosting US forces to immediately move at least 500 meters away from locations being used as the concealed accommodation of American military personnel so that they remain safe.”

In a parallel campaign, Iran’s Army targeted major US bases in Bahrain and Jordan under Operation Saeqe (Lightning) in response to deadly American aerial assaults. The Army’s Public Relations Department confirmed that the 24th phase of the operation utilized Arash kamikaze drones against fuel storage facilities, large equipment warehouses, sheds, and accommodation quarters housing US military personnel at Shaikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain. Iranian drones also struck aircraft shelters, maintenance hangars, and accommodation quarters at Jordan’s al-Azraq Air Base. Reaffirming its defensive stance, the Army asserted: “Any action against the legitimate and lawful interests of the Iranian nation and the sacred Islamic Republic establishment will also jeopardize the security and economic interests of other countries in the region.”

In the 25th phase of Operation Saeqe, the Army deployed Arash destruction drones



to strike equipment depots at Camp Udairi, troop locations at Camp Doha, and positions at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait. Emphasizing that its series of drone and missile operations will continue to intensify, the Army added: “The threats of the narcissistic US president only further strengthen the resolve and determination of the nation and the armed forces in confronting the aggressors.”

The tactical realities on the ground demonstrate that the United States completely failed to achieve its strategic objectives during the opening 39 days of war from February 8 to April 7. Far from neutralizing Iran’s defense apparatus, Washington’s persistent aggression has dragged the American military into a ruinous war of attrition. Recent congressional testimony and economic evaluations highlight that the official Pentagon direct operational war costs have mounted to \$37.5 billion, while broader independent fact-checks and comprehensive economic analy-

ses—accounting for base destructions, rapid munition depletion, energy surges, and spill-over economic damage—place total cumulative costs well past \$100 billion and climbing towards \$150 billion for the US economy.

Furthermore, with global crude oil prices breaching the \$100 per barrel mark—a direct fallout of Iran maintaining firm control over the Strait of Hormuz and Yemen’s Ansarul-lah forces maintaining control over the Bab al-Mandab Strait—the domestic economic strain on Western economies is intensifying rapidly. By continuing to order strikes on civilian infrastructure and ignoring military realities, President Donald Trump is further sinking the United States into an unwinnable conflict, leaving the American public to absorb the staggering financial, economic, and strategic consequences of an unprovoked war.

## Omani delegation visits Tehran for Strait of Hormuz navigation talks

TEHRAN - An Omani diplomatic delegation arrived in Tehran on Friday for high-level consultations on regulating commercial vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, according to a report by Iran’s official news agency, IRNA.

The diplomatic mission coincided with a telephone consultation between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, who reviewed regional developments, maritime navigation safety, and commercial shipping protocols in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. Both ministers discussed regional cooperation strategies aimed at preventing further escalation while supporting peace, stability, and navigation security.

The discussions were held in the context of the defensive and



proportionate counter-responses delivered by Iran’s Armed Forces against aggressive military actions by the United States. As the two littoral states bordering the Strait of Hormuz, Iran and Oman hold a central geographic role in overseeing one of the world’s most critical maritime energy corridors.

Iranian officials have reiterated that the management and protection of the waterway remain the exclusive domain of local Persian Gulf states. Iran has underscored that long-term regional security can be sustained through regional dialogue without foreign interference, asserting that foreign military

presence, particularly that of the United States, continues to serve as the primary source of instability and shipping disruption in local waters.

Historically, Oman has maintained a neutral foreign policy, often serving as a crucial diplomatic bridge between Iran and Western nations during periods of heightened regional tensions. Handling roughly twenty percent of the world’s petroleum consumption daily, the narrow Strait of Hormuz has long faced geopolitical friction and military standoffs. Sustained diplomatic dialogue between Tehran and Muscat remains vital to preventing unintended military miscalculations, preserving global energy market stability, and securing commercial shipping routes.

## Iran seeks reset with EU, expanding partnerships across Asia

TEHRAN - Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for rebuilding relations with Germany, expanding cooperation with Ireland and deepening strategic ties with Sri Lanka, as he received the credentials of the three countries’ newly appointed ambassadors in Tehran in a series of separate meetings on Wednesday.

The meetings underscored Tehran’s broader diplomatic strategy of strengthening bilateral partnerships while reaffirming its commitment to dialogue, mutual respect and constructive international engagement.

Receiving Germany’s new ambassador, Axel Dittmann, President Pezeshkian acknowledged the more than century-long history of diplomatic and economic relations between Tehran and Berlin but said bilateral ties had deteriorated significantly in recent years.

He stressed that restoring relations would require a fundamental shift in Germany’s approach and sustained efforts to rebuild mutual trust.

Pezeshkian cited several measures that have strained bilateral relations, including the closure of the Islamic Center of Hamburg, restrictions imposed on Iranian consular services and sanctions targeting Iranian banks.

He also criticized Berlin’s position regarding recent military attacks against Iran, describing them as violations of international law and humanitarian principles. The president questioned ‘the international community’s silence’ over attacks on civilian infrastructure, including schools and medical facilities, arguing that technological progress should serve humanity rather than become an instrument of political pressure.

Despite the differences, Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran’s commitment to diplomacy and constructive dialogue, saying Tehran remains prepared to resolve disputes through political and legal channels.

For his part, Ambassador Dittmann described the longstanding relationship between Germany and Iran as historically significant and pledged to promote honest and responsible dialogue between the two countries. He said his mission would focus on confidence-building measures and practical solutions aimed at gradually improving bilateral relations.

In a separate meeting, President Pezeshkian received Ireland’s new ambassador, Aidan Cronin, highlighting ‘common positions’ between Tehran and Dublin on major international issues as a solid foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation.

He said shared opposition to occupation and double standards in international affairs provides an opportunity to deepen political engagement within a framework of mutual respect and shared interests.

Addressing regional developments, Pezeshkian criticized US and Israeli actions against Iran, describing attacks on civilian infrastructure as clear violations of international law and humanitarian norms.



He also accused some governments of applying double standards on human rights by remaining silent over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza while failing to condemn attacks on civilian targets in Iran.

The Iranian president reiterated Tehran’s interest in expanding constructive engagement with the European Union and suggested Ireland could play a constructive role in facilitating dialogue and reducing misunderstandings between Iran and Europe.

Ambassador Cronin emphasized the positive history of relations between the two countries and said there was considerable potential for expanding cooperation.

He reaffirmed Ireland’s opposition to military attacks against Iran, describing them as inconsistent with international law, and said civilian casualties, particularly the tragedy at Minab School, had deeply affected both the Irish public and government.

The ambassador also reaffirmed Dublin’s commitment to international humanitarian law and its continued opposition to violence against Palestinians.

Meeting Sri Lanka’s new ambassador, Fazeeha Azmi, President Pezeshkian emphasized the longstanding friendship between Tehran and Colombo and expressed Iran’s readiness to broaden cooperation across a wide range of sectors.

He identified trade, investment, energy, agriculture, technology and economic cooperation as priority areas, while calling for the activation of the two countries’ Joint Economic Commission to develop a practical roadmap for future collaboration and ensure implementation of existing agreements.

Pezeshkian also thanked the Sri Lankan government for its humanitarian assistance in facilitating the repatriation of the remains of Iranian martyrs following ‘the illegal US attack on an Iranian naval vessel,’ calling the gesture a reflection of the close friendship between the two nations.

Ambassador Azmi conveyed greetings from Sri Lanka’s leadership and noted that the two countries will mark the 66th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2027.

She also expressed appreciation for Iran’s longstanding support for Sri Lanka in international organizations, particularly regarding issues related to national sovereignty, and reaffirmed Colombo’s commitment to further expanding bilateral cooperation and coordination on the international stage.

## Iran urges regional Arab states to publicly reject US claims of co-sponsoring military aggression

“If this claim by the American official is not true, the mentioned governments should officially and transparently reject it,” Baghaei asserted.

He emphasized that allowing foreign militaries to use regional territory, airspace, or logistical bases to stage attacks against Iran constitutes a direct act of aggression. He noted that such support violates basic principles of good-neighborliness and international law, explicitly citing Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and UN General Assembly Resolution 3314.

The diplomatic ultimatum comes against the backdrop of the broader conflict that erupted on February 28, 2026, when joint US and Israeli military forces initiated a massive bombing campaign against targets across Iran. The initial offensive targeted key military command centers, air defense facilities, coastal surveillance networks, civilians infrastructure and residential areas. The attack marked a major escalation in regional hostilities, resulting in widespread civilian and military casualties, as well as significant destruction of Iranian infrastructure. In response, Iranian armed forces invoked their

inherent right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, executing waves of retaliatory drone and ballistic missile strikes against US military bases and assets operating across the Persian Gulf region. As fighting intensified, US forces imposed naval blockades on Iranian ports, prompting Tehran to enforce a total operational blockade along the strategic Strait of Hormuz—effectively halting vital energy transport channels until foreign aggression and military interference in the region cease entirely.

Further in his remarks, Baghaei maintained that Iran retains the absolute right under international law to target any military installation, staging area, or logistical asset utilized to launch or facilitate operations against the Iranian nation.

He rejected Western criticism of Iranian retaliatory strikes on US bases in the region, concluding that defensive operations—including security measures along strategic maritime routes—will continue until foreign aggression stops and stability is restored by regional nations without external intervention.

## LATEST NEWS

### ■ Iran, Egypt FM’s hold phone talks on regional developments

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation on Friday evening with his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelatty, to discuss the latest regional developments, the escalating tensions between Iran and the United States, and efforts to promote peace, stability and security across West Asia.

The two foreign ministers exchanged views on the evolving regional situation and explored ways to help reduce tensions and advance regional stability through diplomacy and dialogue.

### ■ Iran calls on BRICS to condemn US aggression

Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni urged BRICS member states to adopt a “clear and decisive” stance against US aggression, saying a united position would strengthen international law and global security. Speaking at the BRICS disaster management ministers’ meeting in New Delhi, Momeni said recent attacks on Iran violated the UN Charter and targeted civilian infrastructure. He also called for expanded BRICS cooperation on disaster risk reduction, proposing joint training, technical exchanges and coordinated emergency response to enhance resilience and protect critical infrastructure.

### ■ Iran urges Europe to champion diplomacy, not aggression

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi urged European countries to uphold international law and lead diplomatic efforts rather than support military aggression. Writing on X after meeting with 25 European ambassadors and chargés d’affaires, Gharibabadi said countries that provide territory or military bases for attacks become complicit in aggression. He called on Europe to condemn recent US military actions against Iran, warning that such conflicts undermine regional and global stability and yield no strategic gains.

### ■ Ayatollah Arafī arrives in Najaf bearing Iran’s message of appreciation to Iraqis

Ayatollah Alireza Arafī, a member of Iran’s Guardian Council and head of the country’s Islamic seminaries, arrived in the holy city of Najaf on an official visit to pay pilgrimage to the sacred shrines and deliver the Islamic Republic of Iran’s message of appreciation to the Iraqi people, senior Shiite religious authorities, and Iraqi institutions.

The message conveys Iran’s gratitude for their participation and support during the funeral ceremonies of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

### ■ UN chief warns situation in West Asia getting out of control

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Thursday that an “alarming disregard for international law” is driving worsening crises across the West Asia region.

“The situation is getting out of control,” he said. “It is teetering on the edge of the unimaginable.”

According to Al Jazeera, Guterres called for navigational rights around the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb to be fully restored, stressing “diplomacy is the only way forward.”

### ■ US embassy in Israel warns Americans to expect flight disruptions

The US Embassy in Israel has advised American citizens to prepare for possible flight cancellations and travel disruptions due to escalating tensions in the Middle East.

### ■ Ynet: Iran Leader funeral, was a display of national strength

Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported that millions of people attended the funeral procession of Iran’s late Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, describing the event as a powerful display of Iran’s strength. The newspaper said the massive turnout delivered a symbolic message to the United States and reflected what it described as the enduring influence of Iran’s Islamic Revolution.

## Tehran, Baghdad deepen ties with 4 new agreements amid push for regional security

TEHRAN- High-ranking officials of Iran and Iraq signed four cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries in order to elevate the level of relations.

During the official visit of Ali Falihi al-Zaidi, the Prime Minister of Iraq, and the high-ranking delegation to Tehran, high-ranking officials, in the presence of the heads of the two countries, signed four cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding between the two countries.

The agreement on road transport of goods, the memorandum of understanding for the construction of the Khosravi - Khanaqin - Baghdad railway, the memorandum of understanding on sister-city relations between Tehran and Baghdad, and the memorandum of understanding on public administration, education, and human resources were the four cooperation documents signed among the high-ranking officials of the country and in the presence of the President of Iran and the Prime Minister of Iraq.

Ali Falihi al-Zaydi, the Prime Minister of Iraq, at the head of a high-level delegation, arrived in Tehran on Thursday, July 23. According to a report by IRNA on Thursday, al-Zaydi arrived in Tehran on an official visit at the invitation of Masoud Pezeshkian, the President of Iran.

Upon his arrival in Tehran, he was welcomed at the airport by Seyyed Ali Madanizadeh, the Minister of Economy and head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee.

The Prime Minister of Iraq had previously stated regarding the trip to Tehran that he would discuss common issues and ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation in meetings with high-ranking Iranian officials.

According to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), al-Zaydi wrote on his page on the X platform: 'Today I am going to Tehran on an official visit and will meet with high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran to discuss important bilateral issues, joint cooperation, consult on regional issues, and strive to strengthen regional security and stability.'

He said: 'Iraq and Iran have historical, civilizational ties, shared borders, and common interests, and these commonalities mean that the relations between the two countries are based on cooperation, dialogue, and mutual respect, and serve to strengthen the growth and prosperity of both countries and support regional and global security and stability.'

Iraqi Ambassador to Iran Yasser Abdulzahra Al-Hajjaj has reaffirmed Baghdad's commitment to strengthening ties with Tehran, describing the relationship between the two neighboring countries as one rooted in centuries of shared history, civilization and cultural affinity, while emphasizing that Iraq's foreign policy is based on balanced regional engagement, dialogue and mutual respect.

In an article published by the Iraqi News Agency (INA) ahead of Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's planned visit to Tehran, Al-Hajjaj said it was a privilege to represent Iraq in a country with which it shares deep historical, geographical, cultural and religious bonds.

"As I begin my mission as Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Islamic Republic of Iran, I am honored to represent my country in a nation whose relationship with Iraq is founded on history and geography, as well as profound human, cultural and religious ties," he wrote.

The ambassador said Iraq views its regional neighborhood as a strategic depth and an essential partner in building a more prosperous future, arguing that regional stability can only be achieved through cooperation, dialogue and confidence-building among neighboring states.

"Experience has shown that lasting regional stability can only be realized through cooperation, dialogue and mutual trust, while sustainable economic development remains the strongest foundation for long-term peace and security," he said.

Al-Hajjaj noted that Iraq-Iran relations



have expanded considerably in recent years across political, economic, cultural and social fields, driven by strong people-to-people ties and a shared historical legacy.

He said bilateral relations now possess significant potential to enter a more advanced phase centered on expanding economic partnerships, encouraging investment, increasing trade, and enhancing cooperation in transportation, connectivity and energy projects in ways that serve the mutual interests of both countries.

The Iraqi diplomat stressed that Baghdad remains committed to pursuing a balanced foreign policy grounded in national interests, openness toward all countries and the avoidance of regional polarization.

According to Al-Hajjaj, Iraq believes dialogue remains the most effective means of resolving disputes, while regional cooperation provides the strongest guarantee for lasting peace and stability.

He added that Iraq possesses considerable soft power derived from its ancient civilization, historical ties and extensive cultural, religious and social connections with neighboring countries, positioning Baghdad to play a constructive role in promoting regional understanding and stability.

The ambassador described relations with Iran as one of Iraq's foremost foreign policy priorities because of their political, economic and social importance.

Al-Hajjaj also highlighted the significance of Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's forthcoming visit to Tehran, saying the trip reflects Baghdad's determination to deepen bilateral relations, broaden strategic partnerships and strengthen coordination on issues of shared concern.

"The visit also reaffirms Iraq's continued commitment to dialogue, constructive engagement and confidence-building as the guiding principles of its regional diplomacy," he wrote.

The ambassador said Iraq has strengthened its regional and international standing in recent years by consolidating state institutions, maintaining a balanced foreign policy and leveraging regional and international partnerships to promote development and stability, making the country a credible regional actor capable of building bridges among different parties.

He emphasized that Iraq-Iran relations extend well beyond official diplomatic engagement and are sustained by enduring bonds between the peoples of the two countries.

According to Al-Hajjaj, those ties have been reflected in numerous humanitarian and cultural occasions, including the broad participation of Iraqis in funeral ceremonies held in Iraq for the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which 'demonstrated respect, appreciation and the depth of popular connections between the two nations.'

The ambassador also cited the annual Arbäeen pilgrimage as one of the clearest manifestations of Iraq-Iran relations, saying the event embodies the values of fraternity, solidarity, mutual assistance and shared civilizational heritage.

"The future of Iraq-Iran relations should be built upon maximizing our shared strengths, expanding economic and cultural cooperation, and deepening political dialogue in a manner that serves the interests of both peoples while contributing to regional peace and stability," Al-Hajjaj concluded.

"Good neighborliness is not merely a principle of foreign policy; it is a strategic choice for building a more stable and prosperous future for the entire region."

# Is Trump's reckless aggression against Iran pushing global economy toward a catastrophic collapse?

TEHRAN- As the United States under Donald Trump has once again unleashed military strikes against Iran and reinstated what the US president calls a "naval blockade" in the Strait of Hormuz, the World Bank has issued a stark warning that the escalating hostilities could slash global economic growth to a mere 1.3 percent in 2026—down from 2.9 percent last year—while reigniting inflation and driving interest rates perilously higher.

The World Bank's chief economist, Indermit Gill, who retires at the end of August, revealed in an interview with Reuters that the institution had modeled three scenarios in its June economic forecast given the high uncertainty surrounding the war in West Asia. The worst-case scenario—hostilities lasting six months or more—has already come dangerously close to materializing, largely thanks to Trump's belligerent policies. Under that scenario, global headline inflation would reach a crippling 4.5 percent.

### Trump's naval blockade and collapse of diplomacy

The current crisis did not emerge from a vacuum. It is the direct consequence of the Trump administration's reckless decision to abandon the "Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding" on July 7, 2026, following unsubstantiated claims of an attack on vessels transiting south of the Strait of Hormuz. Trump, in his characteristic bombast, not only resumed aggressive military strikes against Iran but also boasted about reinstating a naval blockade—an act that international law experts have condemned as a violation of



maritime freedoms. Speaking on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Ankara, Trump cynically declared that "there is no longer any agreement with Iran and the ceasefire had ended," effectively shredding whatever fragile diplomatic channels remained.

The consequences have been immediate and devastating. Iran has responded defensively by targeting US bases that launched the initial attacks, and global attention has once again fixated on the Strait of Hormuz as the epicenter of a new conflict. Shipping traffic remains disrupted, and Trump's unilateral aggression has thus triggered a cascade of instability across the entire West Asian region, jeopardizing not just regional security but the global economy.

### A slow-moving train wreck for the world's poorest

Gill has described the unfolding crisis as a "slow-moving train wreck," and his assessment is chilling. Poor countries that have still not recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic will face even more severe food insecurity

ty, while nations with heavy debt burdens will be crushed by rising borrowing costs as interest rates climb. "My own sense of it is, maybe we are a few months away from that," Gill warned, noting that as soon as inflation accelerates, heavily indebted countries could face grave problems meeting their debt service payments within just months.

The data paints a grim picture. The World Bank's June forecast showed that 40 percent of low- and middle-income countries—32 nations in total—are either already in debt distress or at high risk of falling into it. If interest rates rise, that number could increase rapidly. The average debt-to-GDP ratio for emerging and developing economies reached approximately 74 percent in 2025, up from 50-55 percent before the pandemic. For low-income countries, that ratio has skyrocketed from 40 percent to 67 percent.

Trump's actions are not merely reckless; they are morally indefensible. While the world's three largest economies—the US, China, and India—have re-

mained relatively insulated from the war's impact due to their resources, developing countries are bearing the brunt of a crisis they did not create. Gill noted that some countries "have no choice but to benefit from debt relief," but even those that avoid default will see their long-term growth prospects diminished as they drain resources from education, health, and other vital sectors.

The irony is bitter. Trump claims to be protecting American interests, yet his aggression has inflicted profound suffering on the most vulnerable nations. Signs of strain are already emerging, with cash-strapped countries asking the IMF for augmented loans and Pakistan reportedly seeking a \$10 billion stabilization facility from the United States. Trump's macho posturing has done nothing to secure America's position—it has only destabilized the global economy and condemned millions to hunger and poverty.

Gill offered a sliver of hope, noting that developing countries could benefit from artificial intelligence and the productivity gains it promises. "AI can be a huge gain" for poorer nations, he said, and could help restore growth to levels unseen in decades. But that potential remains distant—probably not achievable within this decade. In the meantime, Trump's reckless adventure in West Asia threatens to undo years of progress and push the world toward an economic catastrophe that will be measured not just in percentage points, but in human lives.

## Iran's first geothermal power plant connected to national electricity grid

TEHRAN- The Minister of Energy said: The Meshgin-Shahr geothermal power plant in Ardebil, with a capacity of five megawatts and an investment of 10 million euros, has been connected to the national electricity grid and has entered the cycle of electrical energy generation.

Abbas Aliabadi, stating that this project is being built as a pilot on a geothermal energy reservoir with a production capacity of about 250 megawatts by the Thermal Power Generation Holding Company, added: The implementation of this project has enabled our country to acquire the knowledge of exploration, design, execution, and operation of geothermal resources.

The Minister of Energy, pointing to the

preparation of the final synchronization stages of this project amid the country's wartime conditions, stated: For the exploration and extraction of the mentioned geothermal resources, several wells have been drilled to a depth of about three thousand meters with a production capacity of 30 megawatts, of which five megawatts have been brought online in the first phase.

Stating that in the process of implementing this project, we are seeking to develop geothermal energy as a clean and sustainable energy source and boost the region's economy through attracting tourists, he continued: In the next steps of this project, we are striving to expand the capacity of the Meshgin-Shahr power plant and its existing wells, and then develop the entire explored

reservoir in this region and develop geothermal power plants in other parts of the country.

Aliabadi noted: Expanding the use of renewable geothermal energy for electricity generation, acquiring the technology and knowledge of operating geothermal resources, localizing the technical know-how for the sustainable operation of geothermal reservoirs, and reducing dependence on fossil resources are among the objectives of launching this project.

Iran's first geothermal power plant is being built by the Thermal Power Generation Holding Company, 25 kilometers south of Meshgin-Shahr city, in northwestern Ardebil province.

## Financing system, investment, digital infrastructure exhibit; a platform to develop intl. interactions

TEHRAN- The Deputy for International Business Development of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, while referring to the holding of the Policy Council meeting of the 18th International Exhibition of Financial System, Investment and Digital Infrastructure, announced negotiations for the participation of national wealth funds and national development funds of neighboring countries, BRICS members, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in this exhibition.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Amir Roshanbakhsh, on the sidelines of the Policy Council meeting of the 18th International Exhibition of Financial System, Investment and Digital Infrastructure, referring to the holding of this meeting with the presence of representatives from bodies and institutions related to the country's financial system, said: This meeting was held with the presence of representatives from the Ministry

of Economic Affairs and Finance, the Central Insurance Company, the Central Bank, the Association of Private Banks, the Assembly of State Banks, the Securities and Exchange Organization, and other related bodies, and its main goal was policy-making, planning, and coordination for holding this event as magnificently as possible.

Stating that the 18th edition of this exhibition will be held with a significant level of participation from specialized bodies and institutions, he added: This event has not been held with such a level and volume of participation in previous editions, and we hope that with the cooperation and support of all relevant bodies, we will witness the holding of the largest specialized event in this field.

This official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, referring to the programs planned for the 18th Exhibition of Financial System, Investment and Digital Infrastructure, stated: Efforts have been made to plan a

series of specialized and diverse events during the exhibition, and each day we will witness the holding of several important events, including the unveiling of new products and services in the fields of banking, capital supply, and investment.

According to Roshanbakhsh; Holding specialized meetings with an international approach and with the presence of foreign activists and corresponding entities is also on the agenda, which can pave the way for the development of international cooperation and interactions in areas related to the financial system and investment.

The Deputy for International Business Development of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, emphasizing the importance of planning for the active presence of international financial institutions in this event, said: Negotiations and dialogues with members of national wealth funds and national development funds of neighboring countries, as well as member countries of

BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, are on the agenda to provide the ground for the active presence and participation of these entities in the exhibition.

Roshanbakhsh continued, referring to the axes examined at the Policy Council meeting, added: In this meeting, the most important issues and topics of concern to the country in the current circumstances in the fields of stock exchange, banking, insurance, and financing were discussed and exchanged, and the existing capacities and priorities for holding this event as effectively as possible were examined.

He concluded by emphasizing the necessity of cooperation and synergy for holding this event as best as possible, saying: Utilizing all existing capacities will provide the ground for holding the 18th International Exhibition of Financial System, Investment and Digital Infrastructure more magnificently and effectively.

# The ultimate double standard validating Iranian nuclear sovereignty

From page 1 ▶ Barely a day later, the entire charade collapsed. Donald Trump, reportedly furious at the rollout, took to social media to declare the deal “totally subject” to Riyadh joining the Abraham Accords. The White House scrambled, the Saudis were blindsided, and a frantic backtrack began.

This episode showed administrative incompetence, but it was also the naked truth of American foreign policy laid bare, revealing a system where nuclear safeguards are traded for corporate cash and geopolitical subservience.

## Commercial greed and the death of ‘the gold standard’

The original sin of this pact was the decision to treat the most sensitive technology on earth as a commercial commodity.

The agreement reportedly opens a pathway to domestic uranium enrichment after “a joint feasibility study,” while deliberately bypassing the International Atomic Energy Agency Additional Protocol.

By waiving the intrusive inspection regime that would allow snap visits to undeclared sites, Washington is handing a proliferation fuse to a kingdom whose de facto ruler has openly vowed to “build a bomb if Iran ever does.”

The deal locks Saudi energy infrastructure into American supply chains for decades, securing multi-billion dollar contracts for firms such as Westinghouse.

To achieve this, the Trump administration willingly sacrificed the 2009 Emirati “gold standard,” which strictly prohibited domestic enrichment.

The United Arab Emirates will inevitably demand equal treatment under its most favored nation clause, triggering a cascade of proliferation demands from



Egypt and beyond, especially with Israel's nuclear arsenal remaining entirely uninspected and unsanctioned.

Washington is manufacturing a regional nuclear race simply to inflate the balance sheets of its domestic arms and energy dealers.

## Normalization as an imperial extortion tactic

Trump's chaotic demand that the deal hinge on Saudi accession to the Abraham Accords exposes the utter bankruptcy of the normalization project.

The Biden administration originally tried to bundle nuclear cooperation with Israeli ties, a gambit that collapsed in 2023 following the Palestinian Resistance's October 7 operation and Israel's genocidal campaign against Gaza.

Trump initially decoupled the nuclear file for business expediency, only to frantically reinsert the condition after Israeli officials expressed outrage over granting Riyadh atomic infrastructure without securing a diplomatic victory for Zionism.

This reveals normalization for what it truly is: a geopolitical protection racket run by Washington and Tel Aviv.

Saudi Arabia is being issued a

naked ultimatum. The kingdom must accept total subordination to the American-Israeli axis and formally recognize an occupying power devastating Gaza and other parts of the region, or forfeit its nuclear ambitions.

## Planting American targets on Arabian soil

Saudi Arabia's new nuclear reactors are supposed to be constructed in the middle of a region pushed to the brink by U.S.-Israeli aggression.

Yemen's Ansarallah have already declared a naval blockade and launched kinetic attacks on Saudi oil tankers transiting the Red Sea, directly responding to Saudi aggression and the broader American-Israeli war on the Resistance.

When a nation embeds United States-built enrichment infrastructure on its territory during an active regional war, it is planting enormous, strategically critical American targets on its own soil.

The Resistance Front has proved it possesses the precision missile and drone capabilities required to bypass Saudi Arabia's air defenses.

By hosting these facilities, Riyadh is accepting perpetual vulnerability as the price of ad-

mission to a Western club that demands complete obedience.

## The ultimate vindication of Iranian sovereignty

Nowhere is the imperial double standard more sadistic than in the simultaneous American war on Iran.

Washington justifies its illegal military strikes on Iranian soil by claiming that domestic enrichment creates an unacceptable breakout threat.

Yet that exact capability is now being offered to Riyadh. If enrichment is a sovereign right for a monarchy that bankrolled regional instability and openly threatens weaponization, then it has always been a sovereign right for the Islamic Republic.

Tehran has argued for decades that the nuclear nonproliferation regime is a political weapon designed to preserve Western hegemony.

The Saudi agreement provides the undeniable proof. The warplanes attempting to terrorize Iran are defending a system where only compliant vassal states are permitted to advance.

Additionally, Washington's historical amnesia is staggering. The United States once built a research reactor for the Pahlavi regime, assuming the monarchy would remain a permanent American anchor, only to see the 1979 Revolution transform that infrastructure into a pillar of an independent state.

Washington has proven that rules are arbitrary, alliances are volatile, and genuine sovereignty is the only defense against imperial coercion.

Iran's absolute insistence on technological self-reliance, its refusal to bow to discriminatory inspections, and its commitment to a credible defensive deterrent have been completely validated.

## Saudi Arabia confirms Yemeni attack on two oil tankers



Yemen's Ansarallah movement attacked two Saudi Arabian oil tankers in a military operation, the movement said in a statement on Thursday, and a Saudi news agency later

confirmed one of the two vessels was ablaze after an assault while sailing in the Red Sea, according to Reuters.

The Saudi Arabian state news agency SPA, citing an official source at the General Transport Authority, said an attack caused a fire on the bow of the tanker Encelia but all crew members were safe. SPA did not say who had targeted the vessel.

In the statement, Ansarallah said they attacked two tankers, the Encelia and Layla, saying the vessels had violated a naval blockade imposed on Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea. Ansarallah said they targeted the tankers with a number of ballistic and cruise missiles as well as drones.

## Four Palestinians killed in occupied West Bank

Israeli settlers and troops killed four Palestinians during an attack on a village in the occupied West Bank on Friday, during which a soldier and a settler were also shot dead.

According to eyewitnesses, a group of armed settlers stormed homes and farmland on the outskirts of Tel, southwest of Nablus, early in the morning.

Residents gathered to repel the attack, Mahmoud al-Hindi, a resident of the village, told Middle East Eye.

The confrontation escalated into physical clashes between unarmed Palestinians on one side and rifle-wielding settlers and Israeli soldiers on the other.

Israeli troops and settlement guards then opened fire on a group of Palestinians, ac-



cording to Hindi.

The Palestinian health ministry said four men were killed and four others wounded, most of them shot in the upper body. Three of the wounded are in a critical condition.

## Sadiq Khan says if Israeli PM visits London he would lobby government to enforce ICC arrest warrant



Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, has said that Benjamin Netanyahu is the perpetrator of genocide in Gaza, and that he would lobby the UK government to arrest the Israeli premier if he ever visited.

Earlier this week, Zohran Mamdani, New York's mayor, said that Netanyahu was a war criminal and that the federal US government should arrest him on behalf of the International Criminal Court during a planned trip to America later this year.

The London mayor was asked on Thursday by Channel 4 News if he would “follow suit”.

“Well, I have different powers to the mayor of New York,” Khan said. “But I do believe a genocide is being committed in Gaza. I think Netanyahu is responsible.”

He added: “And as a perpetrator of genocide, I think he's broken the law. And I think justice needs to happen, and that means him being brought to book.”

Khan was asked if that meant he would lobby the UK government, led by new Prime Minister Andy Burnham, to enforce the ICC's arrest warrant.

“Well the good news is, and this is very good news, Netanyahu is not coming to London. Because if he did, he would feel the full weight of public opinion if he came.

“If there is any evidence of him coming to London, I'll be lobbying the prime minister to make sure the law is enforced.”

When finally asked if Netanyahu was welcome in London, Khan concluded: “People who commit genocide are not welcome in London.”

## House passes \$1.15tn defense bill embedding Israel's war machine inside America

The US House of Representatives has passed a \$1.15 trillion defense policy bill which would embed military support for Israel more deeply within Pentagon research, weapons procurement, technology sharing and the American defense-industrial base.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the 2027 fiscal year passed by 216 votes to 212. Six Democrats joined 209 Republicans and one independent in supporting the legislation, while seven Republicans vot-

ed against it alongside 205 Democrats. Three representatives did not vote.

At the center of the controversy is section 219, titled the “United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative”.

The provision requires the US secretary of war to appoint an executive agent responsible for synchronizing, expanding and accelerating military technology cooperation between the US and Israel.

## 80,000 flee raging wildfires in France and Spain

Large forest fires burned out of control in southwestern France and central Spain on Friday, prompting authorities to evacuate an estimated 80,000 people from their homes. Some even fled by boat when flames swept through the touristic Cap Ferret peninsula on France's Atlantic coast.

Some 100 square kilometers (38 square miles) have been consumed by the blaze that has raged since Wednesday near Cap Ferret. Located just 60 kilometers (37 miles) from Bordeaux, the peninsula normally offers stun-

ning landscapes and sandy beaches as well as oyster-farming villages and upmarket resorts.

More than 60,000 residents in France escaped the area, and both France and Spain have asked fellow European Union members for help.

“It's quite impressive and even frightening,” said Laurent Moretti, a resident in the town of Arès. “An evacuation on this scale has never happened before. All we really hope is that the firefighters can quickly get it under control.”

## China's PLA at 99: A pillar of global peace and true multilateralism

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — As the international landscape navigates an era defined by profound geopolitical volatility, rising instability, and unilateral overreach, the imperative for steady, constructive statecraft has never been more urgent. Against this backdrop of global flux, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) stands out as a foundational pillar—not only for China's sovereign defense but as a highly capable anchor for international peace, alignment, and a robust multilateral architecture.

Marking its 99th anniversary on August 1, 2026, the PLA's historical journey reflects an evolution from a revolutionary force to a modern, top-tier military dedicated to the ideals of shared security and global de-

velopment. This strategic orientation was vividly underscored during a high-profile commemorative reception hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Tehran on Tuesday ahead of the upcoming 99th anniversary of the PLA. The event drew senior Iranian officials, defense attachés, and the international diplomatic corps to celebrate a legacy of military diplomacy built on partnership rather than confrontation.

Addressing the guests, the Chinese Ambassador to Iran, Cong Peiwu, highlighted the PLA's global contribution: “The Chinese military will resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security, and development interests, and make even greater contributions to world peace and development.”

Ambassador Cong further



Diplomats and military attachés pose for a group photo at a PLA anniversary reception in Tehran on Tuesday, July 21.

detailed the PLA's operational record: “China has dispatched more than 50,000 peacekeepers to 29 United Nations missions. The PLA Navy has deployed 48 escort task forces to the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia, where more than half of the ves-

sels escorted have been foreign commercial ships.” He added that these efforts demonstrate the image of the Chinese military as “a mighty force, a civilized force, and a force for peace.”

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

## Neither victory nor peace: The futility of America's imperial wars

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – U.S. military superiority and ever-rising defense spending have not prevented Washington from repeating its wartime failures, making a victory against Iran highly unlikely.

Yesterday it was Venezuela. Next week it could be Cuba or Greenland, or who knows where the next U.S. war will erupt? That is aside from the continuing U.S. bombing campaign in Somalia, which has already been carried out 75 times since the start of this year alone and is barely noticed by the American mainstream media.

And who knows what else to expect in an increasingly bizarre world from a president who repeatedly promised throughout his election campaign that he would never start a war?

Recently, the Secretary of War, an office that could hardly be more candid in the age of the man who needs no introduction, Pete Hegseth, warned that: “What happens with the future of Cuba is in the hands of the President of the United States and the leadership of Cuba. No

matter what, the Department of War is going to be prepared and postured for any possible contingency.”

Historian of American culture and author, Tom Engelhardt, notes that any contingency is imaginable except, of course, victory, which has effectively disappeared from the American vocabulary since the end of the Second World War, or, for that matter, peace.

What could go wrong in a world that now boasts, astonishingly, its first trillionaire, Elon Musk, who is sometimes Donald Trump's ally? Senator Elizabeth Warren summed it up plainly: “People feel like the system is rigged against them. And here's the painful part. They're right. The system is rigged.”

Engelhardt asks what could go wrong on such a manipulated planet? Certainly nothing that Trump or Musk seems capable of imagining.

What could go wrong in a world where no American president appears to recognize that the United States simply does not win wars, no matter how powerful it becomes or how

enormous the Pentagon's ever-expanding budget grows? That budget could soon reach \$1.5 trillion a year if Trump has his way.

Ironically, it is still described in Congress as “defense” spending.

### Imperial wars

Trump remains at war, or perhaps simply in chaos, with Iran, a country roughly 10,000 kilometers from Washington, D.C., yet somehow portrayed as vital to American power on this planet.

Iran has once again closed the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 25 percent of the world's oil and 20 percent of its natural gas normally pass, while Trump has threatened to seize control of the strait himself.

Engelhardt argues that the grim, indeed terrifying, logic behind what Trump is doing has become unmistakably clear, or at least should be to anyone with even a basic understanding of the history of the American empire since its victory in the Second World War in 1945.

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

## Kapogianni: we made history, but personal interests stood in our way

TEHRAN – Former Iran women's national basketball team head coach Eleni Kapogianni has opened up about her memorable yet challenging spell in charge, revealing that personal agendas within Iranian basketball ultimately convinced her to walk away despite the team's historic progress.

Now leading Chinese club Henan while also serving as head coach of the Lebanon women's national team, the Greek tactician reflected on her time in Iran in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

**What progress did Iran make under your leadership?**

**Eleni Kapogianni:** First of all, I have to say that coaching the Iranian women's national team was a truly unique and unforgettable experience. I genuinely enjoyed my time there, and I believe we made significant progress during my tenure.

We put in an enormous amount of organized work on the court. It wasn't easy because my first task was to evaluate the players' basketball background, experience and overall level before adapting my coaching philosophy to fit their needs.

In many cases, I had to simplify my system to make sure everyone understood the fundamentals before gradually introducing more advanced concepts. We focused heavily on physical conditioning because international tournaments require teams to play back-to-back games. I wanted every player to be physically prepared, recover quickly and maintain a high level of performance throughout the competition.

At the same time, I emphasized basketball fundamentals because I felt that many of the players lacked a strong technical foundation. Developing those basic skills was essential before we could move to a higher level.

Just as important was building team chemistry. Basketball is not only about tactics—it's about creating trust, unity and a collective identity. Every coach has a different way of building that bond, and for me it was one of the key priorities.

The players lacked international experience and basketball knowledge, which made the job challenging, but what impressed me most was their willingness to learn. They were eager to improve, worked hard every day and fully committed themselves to building something special. Of course, there was always room for improvement, but at that stage I believe we helped the team reach its full potential.

For me, the greatest achievement wasn't just improving our basketball. It was building confidence. I wanted the players to believe in themselves, believe in their teammates and believe in our vision. Confidence is the foundation of every successful team.

I tried to inspire them to dream bigger, to understand that once you achieve one goal, you have earned the right to aim even higher. The culture and sporting environment in Iran are very different from those in Europe, but the players embraced the challenge.

**Why did you decide to leave Iran despite being admired and respected?**

That's a very good question. To be honest, while I was in Iran, I worked with all my heart. I gave everything I had—my passion, my knowledge, my ideas and all my energy—to help the team and the players grow. One thing I'm especially proud of is that, during my tenure, the national team players received bonus payments for the first time. Before that, they had never received any financial rewards. I truly did everything I could, and I can honestly say I leave with a clear conscience because I know I did a good job.

As you mentioned, I was respected and appreciated by many people in Iran. However, as time went on, I realized something that is difficult to say, but it is my truth. There were people in influential positions within the federation, among some journalists and even within the team who were not genuinely interested in the development of Iranian basketball. Instead, they were more concerned about promoting themselves and putting their own names in the spotlight.

Those people made my job extremely difficult. Eventually, I reached a point where I felt that all the effort, I was putting in was no longer worth

it because I wasn't happy anymore. I also believe that many people within the federation viewed our defeat to Chinese Taipei in the FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division B final as a failure. Personally, I completely disagree. In my opinion, at that stage there was simply no realistic way to beat Chinese Taipei. They were a much stronger and more experienced team.

What I do know is where we started and where we finished. When I took over, Iran was ranked 86th in the world. By the end of my tenure, we had climbed to 44th in the FIBA World Rankings, overtaking several European national teams that had traditionally been stronger than Iran. That achievement speaks for itself.

I am proud of what we accomplished together, and I have no regrets about the work we did. In the end, I decided it was the right time to move on because I was no longer enjoying the environment. I'm a professional coach, but I'm also a human being. I knew new opportunities would come, and they did.

**What are your thoughts on the future of Iran's women's basketball team?**

Iranian women's basketball has potential, but there are several key areas that must improve if the national team is to continue progressing.

First of all, I have to acknowledge Mr. Javad Davari, the president of the Basketball Federation. As far as I know, he is the first federation president who has genuinely tried to support the women's program, and that deserves recognition. However, much more needs to be done if Iranian women's basketball is to reach the next level.

The development has to begin with the domestic clubs because that's where national team players are produced. There needs to be greater financial investment, better coaching and a stronger overall structure.

Coaching is one of the most important areas. Many of the women's coaches need more education and opportunities to develop professionally. If necessary, experienced male coaches should also be allowed to work on the bench to help raise the standard. The ultimate goal should always be improving the quality of coaching.

Another priority is attracting stronger foreign players and coaches. I know it's not easy to bring high-level foreigners to Iran, but the federation and clubs should continue trying. Quality foreign professionals raise the standard of the league, make domestic players more competitive and accelerate the overall development of basketball.

I also believe there needs to be a change in mindset. Players, coaches and clubs all need to become more professional in the way they approach the game. That kind of cultural change doesn't happen overnight—it takes time, education and patience. It's all about how players are developed from a young age. They need to be taught not only basketball skills but also professionalism, discipline and responsibility. Players have rights, but they also have obligations, and understanding that balance is essential.

Most importantly, Iran needs a clear long-term development plan. There should be a structured pathway that guides young players from the grassroots level all the way to the top division and eventually the national team.

**What message would you like to leave for the Iran women's players?**

I want to thank every player for everything we shared during our time together. I truly enjoyed working with them. Although the final period wasn't as enjoyable for me because I felt some of them were influenced by others, I still look back on our journey with great affection. To me, they were like my daughters. We became a family, and together we worked tirelessly to achieve something special. Most importantly, they made history. They accomplished things that had never been achieved before in Iranian women's basketball, and they deserve full credit for those successes.

My message to them is simple: stay humble. If you achieve one goal and want to reach even greater heights, never believe you've reached your peak. Success is only the beginning. There is always another level to reach, another challenge to overcome and another opportunity to improve. Keep working hard every single day. Learn something new in every practice, continue developing as players and never stop believing in yourselves.

Most importantly, never allow obstacles to discourage you—whether they come from society, the federation, your club or even the culture around you. Every successful athlete faces challenges. The key is to stay focused, keep fighting and never give up on your dreams.

That is the message I want to leave with them.

# Tehran, Seoul discuss roadmap for cultural, tourism cooperation at UNESCO meeting

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri and South Korea's Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Choi Hwi-young agreed on Friday to pursue closer cooperation in cultural heritage, tourism, handicrafts and creative industries during a meeting held on the sidelines of the 48th session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee in Busan.

The two ministers discussed expanding bilateral cooperation through a comprehensive framework covering cultural heritage, tourism, handicrafts, digital museums, smart tourism, creative industries and new technologies, IRAN reported.

Salehi-Amiri said South Korea's hosting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee reflected its role in cultural heritage protection and cultural management.

He also expressed hope that Iran's nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Alamut would be inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List during the committee's current session, becoming the country's 30th World Heritage site.

The Iranian minister said Iran had identified more than one million historical sites, with more than 43,000 registered nationally, alongside dozens of UNESCO World Heritage properties and 58 sites on UNESCO's Tentative List.

Salehi-Amiri added that the Islamic Republic sought to develop a joint roadmap with South Korea to strengthen cooperation in cultural heritage preservation, tourism, handicrafts, digital technologies, electronic archives and smart tourism.

He said Iran also wanted to ex-



pand cooperation in creative industries and benefit from South Korea's experience in fields including cinema, music, animation, video games, digital content production and artificial intelligence.

Salehi-Amiri then underlined that the recent military attacks by the United States and Israeli regime had caused damage to a number of Iran's historical sites, adding that Iran would continue conservation and restoration efforts by relying on its scientific and technical capabilities.

On tourism, he said recent regional developments had temporarily affected Iran's tourism sector but expressed confidence that the industry would resume its growth. He then invited South Korean citizens to visit Iran and called for greater people-to-people exchanges.

Salehi-Amiri also invited Choi to visit Tehran and proposed

signing a comprehensive memorandum of understanding covering cultural heritage, tourism, handicrafts and broader cultural cooperation. He also invited South Korea to participate in Tehran's international tourism exhibition and said Iran was ready to take part in specialized exhibitions in South Korea.

Choi, for his part, welcomed the Iranian proposals and said the two countries should deepen cooperation in culture, tourism, handicrafts, creative industries and people-to-people exchanges.

He said Iran and South Korea had long possessed the foundations for cultural cooperation and that further planning could strengthen bilateral ties.

Choi described Iran's civilization and history as part of humanity's shared heritage and said protecting historical and cultural sites was a common re-

sponsibility of the international community.

He also expressed regret over damage sustained by some Iranian historical sites during the recent conflict and said he hoped conservation, restoration and public presentation of the sites would continue as stability returned, IRNA reported.

Choi added that joint handicraft exhibitions, cultural programs and artistic events could strengthen bilateral cultural relations and added that Seoul was ready to expand cooperation in tourism, sports and cultural exchanges.

He also thanked the Iranian delegation for visiting South Korea and called for continued dialogue between the two governments and practical follow-up on the proposals discussed during the meeting.

## Iran says six border crossings ready for Arbaeen pilgrim traffic

TEHRAN – Iran has completed preparations at six main border crossings with Iraq for the upcoming annual Arbaeen pilgrimage, introducing upgraded cooling systems, expanded passenger facilities and redesigned transport services to improve the movement of millions of pilgrims, a senior road transport official said on Friday.

Ali Khanqaei, deputy head of the Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, said planning for the Arbaeen border crossings had begun at the start of the year, with authorities seeking to address shortcomings identified during previous pilgrimages. The six crossings serving Arbaeen pilgrims are Mehran, Shalamcheh, Chazabeh, Khosravi, Tamarchin and Bashmaq.

"We have tried to eliminate the shortcomings of previous years and prepare the border terminals so that pilgrims can cross with the fewest possible difficulties,"

Khanqaei told the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA).

He said cooling systems at all border terminals had been upgraded and emergency power generators installed to ensure uninterrupted services in the event of electricity outages.

Authorities have also installed misting systems, expanded shaded areas and covered pedestrian routes to provide more comfortable conditions for pilgrims travelling during the summer heat, he said.

Khanqaei said temporary and permanent restroom facilities had been built or renovated at the terminals, while prayer halls had been expanded. Additional restrooms and prayer facilities have also been established along major travel corridors to improve access for elderly pilgrims and people with reduced mobility.

Mehran, through which about half of all Arbaeen pilgrims are expected to travel, has received



particular attention, Khanqaei said. "All pedestrian corridors at Mehran are now equipped with permanent or temporary shade structures, powerful ventilation fans have been installed along walking routes, and passenger halls have been fitted with industrial cooling systems."

Khanqaei then urged pilgrims to plan their journeys in advance and spread their return trips over several days to reduce congestion at border crossings. He

added that round-trip bus tickets are available on many routes to facilitate travel planning.

In Shia Islam, Arbaeen (also spelled Arba'in) marks 40 days after Ashura, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S.), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the third Shia Imam. Each year, millions of pilgrims travel to the Iraqi holy city of Karbala, many on foot, to commemorate the occasion.

## Three cool escapes near Tehran for an affordable family day trip

TEHRAN – As summer temperatures rise in Tehran, many residents look for short, affordable getaways that offer cooler weather without the cost of an overnight stay. Within less than two hours of the capital, several destinations provide fresh mountain air, natural scenery and opportunities for hiking, picnicking and family outings.

Here are three popular day-trip destinations near Tehran.

### Afjeh: A green village in Lavasan

Situated about 30 kilometers northeast of Tehran, the village of Afjeh is one of the closest mountain retreats to the capital. Surrounded by fruit orchards and traditional garden lanes, the village enjoys a cooler climate than Tehran during the summer months.

Its best-known attraction is Dasht-e Havij (Carrot Plain), a broad mountain meadow that attracts hikers and nature lovers, particularly in late spring and early summer. Visitors can also explore the Paschoik Waterfall and sev-

eral hiking trails in the surrounding Alborz Mountains. Comfortable walking shoes and sufficient drinking water are recommended for the trip.

### Tang-e Vashi: A refreshing summer adventure

Located near Firuzkuh, Tang-e Vashi (Vashi Canyon) is one of the most visited natural attractions around Tehran. The route takes visitors through a narrow rocky canyon where they walk along a shallow stream before reaching a waterfall at the end of the trail.

The flowing water and shaded canyon create a cool environment, making the site a popular destination during the hottest months of the year. The area also features a Qajar-era rock relief carved into the canyon wall, adding historical interest to the natural landscape.

Because parts of the route require walking through water, suitable footwear is essential, and visitors are advised to begin their trip

early in the morning.

### Barg-e Jahan: Orchards and mountain scenery

Barg-e Jahan, one of the oldest villages in the Lavasanat region, lies about 40 kilometers from Tehran in Shemiranat county. The village is known for its cool summers and has long served as a recreational destination for Tehran residents.

A river flowing through the village, mountain views and extensive orchards of walnuts, apples, cherries, sour cherries, plums and apricots make Barg-e Jahan an ideal setting for family picnics and leisurely walks. Although parts of its historic fabric have deteriorated in recent years, its natural surroundings remain its main attraction.

The best time to visit is from mid-spring through late summer, when the orchards are green and the flowing water creates a pleasant outdoor environment.

# Iran showcases active health diplomacy at BRICS ministerial meeting

TEHRAN – Attending the 16th BRICS Health Ministerial Meeting, being held in Chandigarh, India, from July 21 to 25, the Iranian delegation has so far actively participated in drafting a declaration and putting forward technical and legal proposals to strengthen health cooperation among BRICS member states.

Iran's position fundamentally prioritized the pursuit of consensus while safeguarding national interests, preserving the authority of regulatory bodies, expanding production and research capacities, ensuring equitable access to medicines, vaccines, and health technologies, and fostering cooperation in traditional medicine and mental health, IRNA reported.

The Iranian delegation emphasized that BRICS cooperation must advance beyond declarations and develop into joint, actionable initiatives yielding measurable outcomes; they also underscored that access to health products and technologies should not be hindered by obstacles that disrupt supply chains, technology transfer, joint production, or patients' timely access to care.

Elaborating on the health achievements of the country during crises, Ali Jafarian, the senior advisor to the health minister, put forward three key priorities for the development of the 'BRICS Action Plan'.

The first proposal highlighted strengthening joint preparedness, which includes developing early warning systems, emergency response networks, combating antimicrobial resistance and environmental threats, while respecting national sovereignty.

Developing pharmaceutical innovations was the second proposal, entailing a shift from one-way technology transfer toward collaborative research, local manufacturing, and resilient supply chains.

The third suggestion focused on enhancing regulatory cooperation. Announcing Iran's readiness to participate in BRICS GxP initiatives, the official highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and reducing duplication of efforts to accelerate access to safe, high-quality medicines.

He went on to say that despite intense pressures caused by the recent illegal US-Israeli attacks against the country, particularly hospitals, health staff, and the pharmaceutical supply chain, the provision of essential health services in Iran never came to a halt, defining the true resilience. For instance, in just one noteworthy initiative in Tehran during the 40-day wartime crisis in March, 15 complex liver transplant surgeries were successfully performed, IRNA quoted Jafarian as saying.

Iran is willing to expand cooperation in different fields including tuberculosis research, new vaccines, and advanced diagnostics, he added.

Referring to Persian and complementary medicine, Jafarian said the country has taken great steps to integrate these services into the national health system, and it welcomes the establishment of a BRICS expert working group on traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine.

He also underlined the necessity of digital transformation in healthcare grounded in the equitable and intelligent use of artificial intelligence. Highlighting the immense potential of BRICS member states, he said BRICS can transform solidarity into tangible action.



The official also proposed health cooperation mechanisms to present at least one joint pilot project, one operational protocol, and one measurable outcome by the next meeting, to help mark a turning point in BRICS transition from declarations to practical implementation and sustainable health security.

Regarding regulatory cooperation, Iran supported information exchange, capacity building, reliance on credible assessments, and the reduction of duplicative processes. However, it explicitly stated that such cooperation must not lead to the automatic recognition of licenses or the undermining of national decision-making authority.

**The Iranian delegation emphasized that BRICS cooperation must advance beyond declarations and develop into joint, actionable initiatives.**

Focusing on tuberculosis, Mohammad-Mehdi Nasehi, head of the Iranian Health Insurance Organization, highlighted the implementation of joint operational studies and programs, the continuity of services for migrants and vulnerable populations, and the strengthening of cross-border cooperation.

Furthermore, the proposal by Mohammad-Reza Shalbafan, an official with the health ministry, regarding the inclusion of psychosocial support during crises, particularly for children and adolescents, was accepted by the consensus of the members.

Iran also supported the development of the BRICS vaccine research and development center, cooperation in nuclear medicine, and the radiopharmaceutical supply chain, provided that such cooperation is voluntary, based on scientific evidence, and aligned with the countries' national laws and priorities.

The meeting to establish an Expert Working Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM) was held on the very first day of the 16th meeting.

Thanks to the efforts of Arman Zargar, international advisor to the health ministry's traditional medicine office, the historical and cultural significance of traditional medicines in safeguarding the cultural heritage and identity of nations was recognized, and Iran supported the establishment of a working group of experts in traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine.

Highlighting the country's rich

health heritage, Zargar stated that Persian medicine, far from being merely a traditional practice, is a scientific, regulated, and evidence-based discipline that has been successfully institutionalized and integrated into the national health system.

Moreover, the official outlined Iran's strategic achievements in the development of traditional medicine across five key areas: expanding higher education through specialized academic majors at postgraduate levels; advancing research and technology through scientific innovation and the preservation of cultural heritage; establishing a standardization and regulatory framework for natural medicines; integrating traditional medicine into clinical services and primary healthcare; and achieving health equity through comprehensive insurance coverage to ensure citizens' equitable access to the full range of quality health services.

On the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Health Ministerial Meeting, Zargar held a meeting with Monalisa Dash, the director general of the international relations office at the Indian Ministry of Ayush.

The two sides also discussed avenues for the enhancement of cooperation between the two countries on a bilateral basis as well as within the BRICS framework through conducting research and educational projects, exchanging students and professors, and joint research grants, highlighting the need to develop a roadmap to help implement the reached agreements in traditional medicine in line with existing memoranda of understanding.

The 16th BRICS Health Ministerial Meeting is bringing together BRICS nations to deepen cooperation, exchange best practices, and shape the future of resilient, innovative, and sustainable healthcare.

It serves as a great opportunity to strengthen ties with BRICS member states and explore the potential to expand cooperation, particularly in pharmaceutical raw materials, health technologies, and medical equipment, IRNA quoted Ali Jafarian, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

The Iranian delegation represents different health sectors including Persian medicine, mental health, communicable diseases, and international affairs.

The delegation is scheduled to hold meetings with its counterparts from member states, such as India, Russia, and China.

Given the illegal sanctions imposed on the country, Iran intends to leverage BRICS member states' capacity to facilitate access to essential healthcare supplies.

Chandigarh is hosting the BRICS health ministerial meeting and the BRICS meeting on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM), the Times of India reported.

The five-day program, from July 21 to 25, is being held under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

A major highlight will be the high-level 'Health Without Borders' conference, featuring 26 technical sessions involving ministers, policymakers, public health experts and researchers from participating countries.

Traditional, complementary and integrative medicine is being held at the center of the Chandigarh deliberations. The Ministry of Ayush is leading discussions on integrating traditional medicine into mainstream healthcare and strengthening international cooperation through evidence-based practices.

Participating countries are expected to finalize the Terms of Reference for a BRICS expert working group on TCIM, paving the way for collaboration in research, clinical validation, digital knowledge-sharing, regulatory harmonization, and protection of traditional medical knowledge.

**Boosting health ties with BRICS counterparts**

In May, Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi explored avenues to expand cooperation with his counterparts from BRICS member states in different fields of the health sector.

Zafarqandi held several meetings on the sidelines of the 79th World Health Assembly (WHA), which was held from May 18 to June 23 in Geneva, Switzerland, IRNA reported.

Holding a meeting with the Indian Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Jagat Prakash Nadda, Zafarqandi highlighted the role of India in the pharmaceutical industry and emphasized the need for the enhancement of ties in the field of health.

For his part, Prakash Nadda expounded on India's capacity in the health sector and announced the country's readiness to maintain and promote cooperation with Iran.

The two sides agreed to form a joint committee to follow up on the development of academic, medical, and pharmaceutical ties.

Also, Zafarqandi held meetings with his Russian, Brazilian, Chinese, South African, Egyptian, and Ethiopian counterparts, elaborating on the impacts of the US-Israeli war on the country's civilian and health infrastructures, while discussing ways to enhance collaboration among the BRICS member states in the health sector.

## Tehran, Islamabad explore ways to boost scientific cooperation

TEHRAN – Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, have explored the potential to expand scientific and academic collaborations.

The officials met on Thursday, on the sidelines of the 6th Meeting of Science Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Islamabad, IRNA reported.

The discussions focused on strengthening ties by granting reciprocal scholarships, exchanging postgraduate students and researchers, and collaborating to address shared challenges such as climate change.

Iranian official lauded Pakistan's support for the country during the recent US-Israeli war. Referring to the religious, cultural, historical, and geographical commonalities between the two countries, Simaei-Sarraf expressed hope that this visit would mark the beginning of a significant phase in expanding academic interactions and ties between Iran and Pakistan.

The official expounded on the capacities and capabilities of Iranian universities, research centers, and science and technology parks, as well.

For his part, Maqbool Siddiqui emphasized brotherhood between the two nations. "Now that the recent critical situation has further strengthened ties between Pakistan and Iran, we should deepen cooperation in different sectors," he added.

**'Islamabad is committed to developing sci-tech diplomacy with Tehran'**

Meeting Iranian delegation on Tuesday, Maqbool Siddiqui highlighted the significance of bilateral ties between Iran and Pakistan, noting that Islamabad is committed to boosting scientific and technological diplomacy with Tehran.

Their discussions primarily focused on enhancing cooperation in teacher education, curriculum development, digital education, artificial intelligence, educational technology, technical and vocational education, joint research initiatives, and exchanging professors and students.

They also expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of current Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Pakistani and Iranian higher education institutions, including the National University of Modern Languages (NUML). They also encouraged similar collaborations among other universities and research organizations.

Promoting joint research projects, conducting academic conferences, developing innovation partnerships, and granting scholarship opportunities to strengthen academic ties and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise were among other discussed issues.

Siddiqui highlighted that Pakistan is committed to implementing decisions made on educa-



tion during the joint commission with Iran, and transferring the shared vision of both countries into meaningful practical outcomes.

He noted that longstanding brotherly relations between Iran and Pakistan act as a key factor for sustained institutional interaction in addressing shared educational challenges and enhancing scientific development.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf said that expanding cooperation between the higher education and scientific institutions of the two countries would further deepen relations and contribute to regional development through innovation, research, and academic collaboration.

The two sides agreed to maintain close coordination between their respective ministries and scientific-technological institutions, and to explore new avenues of cooperation aimed at strengthening public ties, enhancing academic collaboration, and fostering sustainable development through education, science, and research.

The science minister attended the Board of Trustees (BoT) meeting of the ECO Science Foundation at the 6th ECO ministerial meeting.

The event brought together ministers, eminent scientists and senior officials from ECO Member States for deliberations on advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation as well as for mobilizing resources for transformative regional projects aimed at addressing the shared developmental challenges of the ECO region.

The 6th BoT Meeting addressed a comprehensive agenda, encompassing project progress, financial oversight, and organizational restructuring. The Board conducted a detailed review of implementation of the previous BoT Meeting's decisions and gave its approval to the work plan for the upcoming year, reinforcing the institute's operational continuity.

The election of the next president of the ECO Science Foundation was also on the agenda. The foundation is currently headed by Komeil Tayyebi from Iran.

As part of his three-day visit, Simaei-Sarraf held a meeting with Pakistan's minister of science and technology and the chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), visit several leading universities in Islamabad, tour the ECO Science Foundation, and held discussions with professors of the Persian language.

## FAO lays groundwork for livestock production in northwest Iran

TEHRAN – A delegation from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), led by the FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Farrukh Toirov, conducted a four-day field mission to Ardabil, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan and Kordestan provinces from 12 to 15 July 2026 to support sustainable livestock development.

Held under the project "Empowering Local Communities to Conserve and Develop Endangered Indigenous Livestock Gene Pool in the Northwest of Iran," the mission brought together national and provincial stakeholders to assess field conditions and collect information that will contribute to the project's final workplan.

Northwest Iran (the Islamic Republic of) is home to several valuable indigenous livestock breeds, including the Bactrian camel, Sarabi cattle, Mahabadi goat, and Markhoz goat. These breeds represent an important component of the country's agricultural biodiversity and provide livelihoods, cultural identity, and resilience for rural and pastoral communities.

During the mission, the delegation visited the livestock production areas in Ardabil, Sarab (East Azarbaijan Province), Mahabad (West Azarbaijan Province) and Dehghan (Kordestan Province), where they met with local authorities, technical experts, livestock producers and other stakeholders to discuss the status of livestock production

systems, indigenous breeds and community priorities.

The consultations provided an opportunity to validate and refine the project's planned interventions while gathering additional technical information to support evidence-based implementation. Discussions also focused on identifying opportunities and potential challenges that should be reflected in the project's operational planning.

"Field engagement is essential to ensure that project activities respond to the realities and priorities of livestock producers and locals," said FAO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Through close collaboration with our national and provincial partners, we can design interventions that are practical, locally relevant and capable of delivering sustainable benefits for rural communities."

The project invests in the rehabilitation of grazing areas, strengthens milk and mohair processing facilities, and provides extensive training and capacity-development opportunities for livestock keepers, technical experts, and policymakers. In parallel, efforts will be made to enhance value chains and create new market opportunities for products derived from indigenous livestock breeds, helping improve incomes and economic resilience in rural areas.

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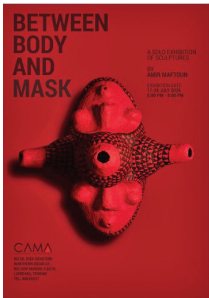
GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who imagines himself to be all-knowing will surely suffer on account of his ignorance.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:11 Evening: 19:35 Dawn: 3:28 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:08 (tomorrow)

## What’s in Tehran art galleries



### Sculpture

\* A collection of sculptures by Amir Maftoun is currently on view in an exhibition at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery.

The exhibition named “Between Body and Mask” will be running until July 28 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.



\* Negah Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Farzaneh Mehri.

The exhibit entitled “Silent Witnesses” will be running until August 9 at the gallery that can be found at 64 Ghaffari St., Jam St., Motahhari Ave.



### Painting

\* Sohrab Gallery is hanging a collection of paintings by Alireza Espahbod in an exhibition.

Titles “A Restless Soul”, the exhibit will run until August 3 at the gallery located at 142 Somayyeh St.



\* An exhibition of paintings by Shabnam Shabani is underway at E1 Gallery.

The exhibit named “Disasters” will run until July 31 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebheh St., off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.



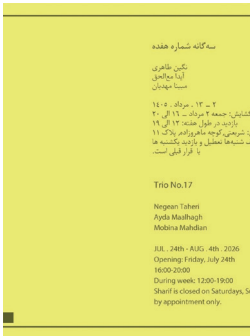
\* Saba Hashemi is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

The exhibit named “Fracture” will run until August 4 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



\* Paintings by Mohaddeseh Eivazkhani are on display in an exhibition at Asr Gallery.

The exhibit entitled “The Last Glance at the Final Light” will run until August 3 at the gallery located at 18 Delaviz St. off North Mirzaye Shirazi St.



\* Sharif Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Negin Taheri, Mobina Mahdian and Aida Ma'alhaq.

The exhibit entitled “Trio No. 17” will be running until August 4 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.

\* Niloufar Rahnam is putting her latest paintings on view in an exhibition at Bavan Gallery.

The exhibit will run until August 17 at the gallery located at 7 Abdo off Larezstan St. off Motahhari Ave.



\* Shirin Gallery 2 is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Shadi Talaei.

The exhibit entitled “Unfinished Flowers” runs until August 11 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

# Veteran Baluchi musician Shir Mohammad Espandar dies at 98

TEHRAN- Shir Mohammad Espandar, the legendary Baluchi donali player whose lifelong dedication helped preserve one of Iran's oldest regional musical traditions, passed away on Wednesday night. He was 98.

A towering figure in Iranian folk music, Espandar spent decades introducing the music of Sistan and Baluchestan to audiences both at home and abroad, becoming widely recognized as the country's foremost master of the rare double-flute instrument known as the donali.

Born in Bampur, southeastern Iran, he traveled to neighboring Pakistan as a teenager to study traditional music before returning to Iran in 1958. Over the following decades, he devoted himself to safeguarding Baluchi musical heritage, performing across the country and mentoring younger generations of musicians.

His distinctive style, which requires exceptional breath control and coordination, was a hallmark of his sound.

Following the news of his passing, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian offered condolences to Espandar's family, the country's artistic community, the people of Sistan and Baluchestan, and admirers of Iranian culture.



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## Mohsen Gharaei’s “Falling House” to premiere at 83rd Venice International Film Festival



TEHRAN- The latest feature film by Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Gharaei, “Falling House,” will have its world premiere in the Horizons section of the Venice International Film Festival,

set to be held from September 2 to 12.

“Falling House” marks Gharaei’s follow up to “Blockage,” a 2017 drama that portrayed con-

temporary Iranian society and won best film at Busan before going on to play at Rotterdam and Munich, Honaronline reported.

The film follows a modest family on the outskirts of Tehran who faces the imminent destruction of their home as part of a vast redevelopment project. While Rashid, the father and a prison guard, is being accused of corruption, he discovers that his eldest daughter, Ensi, is secretly planning to leave Iran. As the bulldozers draw ever closer, the tensions within the household begin to rise.

Written by Gharaei and Amir Mohammad Abdi, “Falling House” stars Laleh Marzban, Rima Raminfar, Farhad Aslani and Elena Khakbaz.

The film is scored by critically acclaimed composer Max Richter (“Hamnet”), editing by Evelyn Rack (“Sound of Falling”) and Emad Khodabakhsh, and sound design by Oscar-nominated Ansgar Frerich (“Of Fathers and Sons”).

“Falling House” is produced by Milad Khosravi and for Seven Springs Pictures, Oscar-winning producer Odessa Rae for RaeFilm Studios (“The Voice of Hind Ra-

jab”), and Daya Fernández, Am-aury Nolasco and Alois Rubenbauer for 3SIX9 Studios.

Basis Berlin Filmproduktion (“Of Fathers and Sons”) and Zentropa Germany (“King’s Land”) are co-producing, with Oscar-nominated producer Jon Kilik (“Babel,” “The Hunger Games”) serving as executive producer.

“The film carries a warning we have felt growing for years,” said Khosravi, adding that the idea for the film “was conceived long ago, yet today the film feels painfully prophetic, reflecting the suffering of ordinary people who now face the fear and uncertainty brought by the ongoing war,” he continued.

CAA Media Finance is handling US rights, while Paradise City Sales represents international sales on “Falling House.”

Jeanne Loriotti, sales executive at Paradise City Sales, said “Mohsen Gharaei has crafted a compelling, plot-driven story that combines a true sense of urgency with remarkably rich and layered characters.” She said the company was “struck by the film’s mounting tension, its emotional depth, and its remarkable performances, particularly from the female cast.”

## Homa Theater to stage comedy play by Christopher Durang

TEHRAN – Homa Theater in Tehran will host “Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike,” a comedy play written by Christopher Durang, from next week for a month.

Ali Firouzi has directed the 75-minute play that has Ali Afshar, Shiva Shohadaei, Fereshteh Rafiei, Majid Ezzati, Fatemeh Youssefzadeh, and Hiva Zamani in the cast.

The story revolves around the relationships of three middle-aged single siblings, two of whom live together (Vanya and Sonia), and takes place during a visit by the third, Masha, who supports them. They discuss their lives and loves, argue, and Masha threatens to sell the house.

This riotous comedy blends sibling drama with Chekhovian absurdity. When movie star Masha returns to her childhood home with her friend Spike, she upends the quiet lives of her quirky brother Vanya and adopted sister Sonia. Chaos ensues in this whip-smart, laugh-out-loud play about family dysfunction, middle-aged angst, and the unexpected joys of life.

It is a comedic masterpiece filled with eccentric characters, unexpected romances, and hilarious twists – all while paying hom-



age to the works of Chekhov.

Some of the show's elements were derived from works of Anton Chekhov, including several character names and sibling relationships, the play's setting in a country house (in Bucks County, Pennsylvania) with a vestigial cherry orchard, the performance

of an “avant-garde” play by one of the main characters, and the themes of old vs. new generations, real vs. assumed identities, the challenges of a woman growing older after successes in a career that seems to be ending, the hope and carelessness of youth, intrafamilial rivalries, and the possible loss of an ancestral home.

Critics praised the original play that premiered in New Jersey in 2012, as a humorous adaptation of Chekhov themes that doesn't require familiarity with Chekhov. The original Broadway production proved to be a commercial success, recouping its \$2.75 million investment in under four months. In 2013, it won the Tony Award for Best Play and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, among other awards.

Christopher Durang (1949 – 2024) was an American playwright known for works of outrageous and often absurd comedy. His work was especially popular in the 1980s, though his career seemed to get a second wind in the late 1990s.

The play will begin its performance on July 29 at Homa Theater, located at Ziba Dead-End, Nofel Loshato St., Hafez St.