

The sealed watermelon of the Mecca Agreement

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — Three leaders signed a promise inside Al-Safa Palace on Friday: an armed attack on Saudi Arabia, Turkey or Pakistan will be treated as an attack on all three. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan compared the clause to NATO's Article 5.

The full text stays sealed, unread outside the rooms where it was drafted. Persian has a phrase for exactly this situation: a watermelon still in its rind, "Hendevaneh-ye dar basteh."

Nobody can tell you if it is sweet until somebody cuts it open. In a region where the sliced watermelon, red, black, white and green, has doubled as a flag once banned outright. ▶ **Page 5**

Yemeni forces attack Saudi Aramco oil facility

By staff writer

TEHRAN – The Yemeni Armed Forces have announced that they targeted a Saudi oil refinery in response to the violation of Yemeni airspace.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesman for the Yemeni military, said: "Thanks to God, the Yemeni Armed Forces succeeded in targeting the Aramco refinery in Jizan with a drone, and the strike was accurate."

Saree explained that the attack came "in response to the Saudi enemy violating the airspace of the provinces of Saada and Hajjah with its drones." ▶ **Page 5**

The war united the nation in defending Iran

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON – Relying on divisions within Iran to bring about a coup against the system is merely an illusion. The war against Iran united the people's position more than ever. Before the war, the vertical division was based on the impact of the sanctions on the economic situation, which potentially led to great inflation.

There were also differences over how some people viewed the identity of the system, particularly the issue of freedoms and what is raised in the West about Iran on this matter. Iran is also the target of soft and propaganda warfare, which may have an impact on the Iranian domestic situation.

However, the barbaric manner in which the war began, with the killing of the Supreme Leader and the targeting of the first and second-tier leadership, made the Iranian nation, across all its groups, sects and nationalities, feel that Iran itself was the target. This united the nation around defending Iran. ▶ **Page 5**

Iran highlights culture as key to peace at BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting

TEHRAN- Iranian Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affairs Mohsen Javadi has stressed the pivotal role of culture in promoting peace, stability and closer ties among nations, saying it can serve as a common language for addressing global challenges.

Javadi made the remarks while representing the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 11th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting, which was held in Bhopal, India, on Saturday.

Addressing the meeting, Javadi expressed appreciation to the Indian government for hosting the event and said culture and art provide an important means for nations to learn about and understand one another.

"In today's world, if we are seeking peace, tranquility and solutions to economic and political problems, culture can be the only common and effective language among nations," he said. ▶ **Page 8**



Shahin 2 and its 16 Iranian crew members are missing in the Gulf of Oman for over three months.

16 Iranian Fishermen Missing For 3+ Months; US Helicopter Last Seen Overhead

"Off the southeastern coast of Iran, the last voyage of the Shahin 2 began from the Konarak fishing port on May 5, 2026. The destination was open waters and the fishing grounds in the Sea of Oman — a journey that began like dozens of others but never ended with a return home..."

By Akram Hosseini Shabestari

TEHRAN- A warm wind blows from the coast of Konarak toward the sea, but at the city's fishing port, the familiar excitement of returning fishing boats has disappeared. More than three months have passed since the day the fishing vessel Shahin 2, carrying 17 fishermen, disappeared in waters near Oman. The incident remains without a clear explanation, leaving dozens of women, men and children waiting for news of their loved ones.

Konarak, in southeastern Iran along the coast of the Sea of Oman, is a city whose economy and daily life are closely tied to the sea. For many families in the region, fishing is not merely a job; it is a family tradition and their only means of making a living. Many men go to sea with their fathers from childhood and, years later, continue

the same path to provide for their own wives and children.

One of these families is that of Hamid Baluch, the captain of the Shahin 2. His brother, Sajed, told the Tehran Times about a man who spent almost his entire life at sea. He said: "My father started fishing when he was about 11 years old, and my brother Hamid had loved the sea since he was a child. He studied only until the fourth grade of elementary school, but he devoted his entire life to fishing. He worked in this profession for nearly 30 to 35 years and was also the captain of a fishing boat for around 15 to 20 years."

Captain Hamid and the other crew members of the Shahin 2 had been unable to go to sea for fishing and earn an income during the height of the US attacks, and at the first opportunity after several months, they set out for open waters.

Pezeshkian meets Leader as he marks second anniversary in office

TEHRAN — President Masoud Pezeshkian has held a detailed meeting with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, as he begins his third year in office.

During the discussions, they addressed people's livelihood needs, the conditions and prospects of the US-Israeli aggression, military developments, and ways to secure resources and manage rial, foreign currency and energy expenditures, as well as economic engagement with foreign countries. ▶ **Page 2**

IRGC: US has accepted defeat in Iran war as Hormuz becomes 'Geography of Battle'

TEHRAN— The United States has been forced to abandon its original objectives in the war against Iran and has effectively accepted defeat, Iranian Revolution Guard Corps spokesman Brig. Gen. Hossein Mohebbi said Sunday, describing the Strait of Hormuz as a new "geography of battle" that Tehran will continue to hold until Washington accepts Iran's conditions.

"The recent war was the only war in which America, without achieving anything, has accepted its defeat," Mohebbi said, arguing that the United States had been compelled to rapidly scale back the objectives it had initially set for the conflict. ▶ **Page 2**

New roadmap developed for Iran-Pakistan logistics cooperation

TEHRAN- The Vice-Chairman of the Transportation, Transit, and Logistics Committee of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, while outlining the achievements of the Iranian economic delegation's trip to Pakistan, stated that a new roadmap for Iran-Pakistan logistics cooperation was developed during this visit, with the expansion of transit and trade placed at the center of negotiations.

According to a report by IRNA from the Iran Chamber, Masoud Polmeh added: "During the three-day meetings of the delegation dispatched by the Iran Chamber to Pakistan, numerous negotiations were held with Pakistan's Ministers of Transport and Railways. One of the most important achievements of this trip was the drafting of an agreement in the logistics sector, based on which the status of stranded containers at Karachi Port was resolved." ▶ **Page 4**

NamiRa: Iranian-developed manually curated microRNA database on cancers

TEHRAN – Iranian researchers at Royan Institute, in collaboration with researchers from Germany's University of Duisburg-Essen, have developed namiRa (meaning "immortal" in Persian), a comprehensive and specialized database that serves as a valuable scientific infrastructure that facilitates the identification of novel cancer biomarkers, accelerates the discovery of therapeutic targets, and supports the design of future cancer research.

NamiRa is constructed by systematically curating and integrating data from nearly 10,000 scientific publications. By consolidating experimentally validated information on cancer-associated microRNAs (miRNAs), it has emerged as one of the world's most comprehensive resources for investigating the roles of miRNAs ▶ **Page 7**



© ISNA/Erfan Khoshkhotro

Araghchi: Iran will neither forgive nor forget assassination of Leader

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran would neither forgive nor forget the assassination of the country's Leader, vowing that Tehran would continue to stand firm in defense of its independence and national dignity despite mounting pressure.

"The assassination of the Leader is something we will neither forgive nor forget," Araghchi said in a post on X, underscoring the depth of Iran's response to an attack targeting the country's highest authority.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Sunday, Araghchi also ruled out any immediate resumption of negotiations with the United States, saying Washington must first end violations of the Islamabad memorandum of understanding and make amends for those violations. ▶ **Page 2**

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A new order in West Asia

Kayhan, in a commentary, has pointed out when the war will end. The reality is that the Islamic Republic of Iran has shown it can close the Strait of Hormuz in a way that even the world's strongest army has been unable to reopen this vital waterway to ships. But Iran's sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz is not achieved merely by closing it. Now is the time to show that we can open the Strait of Hormuz only for vessels that have not co-operated with the United States and Israel and that comply with the order desired by Iran, and to guarantee their safe passage until they exit the conflict zone. Completing Iran's sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz is the basis of the new regional order in West Asia. As long as this order is not established in West Asia, the war has not ended. The United States will not accept this order through negotiation, understanding, or signing a few pieces of paper, and of course Iran also does not need negotiation or agreement to exercise its sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz and implement the new regional order.

Etemad: Iran, the architect of the new Hormuz order

Etemad, aiming to examine the dimensions of the Iran-US agreement and developments in the Persian Gulf, spoke with Gholamreza Karimi, an international affairs expert. Karimi considers this agreement, from a geopolitical perspective, an unprecedented turning point, because now Washington has practically accepted a plan in which Iran's dominant role over the entrance to the world's most important energy corridor is recognized. America's strategic deadlock, reduced missile stockpiles, energy-market sensitivity to continuation of the war, and the vulnerability of allies such as Saudi Arabia are all factors that have pushed the US toward accepting the realities and trying to restore the flow of oil to the market. For this reason, Israel and hardline factions in the US are worried about this agreement, because it can turn into a lasting pressure lever for Iran.

Sobh-e-No: Efforts to stabilize the new route

Sobh-e-No reviewed details of Iran-Oman negotiations over the Strait of Hormuz. In the ongoing talks between Iran and Oman, Iran is determined to replace the middle route with the pre-war pattern so that the deterrent role of the Strait is preserved for the country. The main reason for Iran's insistence on placing the entry route within its own waters is security considerations arising from recent regional tensions and wars. Exclusive control of the entry route

within Iranian waters practically obstructs the entry of military equipment and warships into the Strait and gives Iran strategic superiority. The Iran-Oman agreement complements the Islamabad memorandum, because even if an agreement with Oman is reached, the Strait of Hormuz will not automatically reopen. If the US does not adhere to the Iran-Oman agreement and returns to the southern route, then the southern route becomes a legitimate target for Iranian military action.

Iran: Hormuz, the path back to the memorandum

The Iran newspaper analyzed the alignment between Tehran-Muscat consultations and revival of the Iran-US understanding. Tehran-Muscat consultations on the mechanism of passage through the Strait of Hormuz can become one of the key links in efforts to revive the Iran-US understanding, because any reduction of tension in this strategic waterway can remove part of the obstacles that have hindered the return of Tehran and Washington to the framework of the understanding. The importance of this issue increases when Tehran-Muscat talks coincide with diplomatic efforts to contain regional tensions. Observers believe any agreement between Iran and Oman on creating a temporary corridor and then reaching a fixed route can provide grounds for redefining security arrangements in Hormuz and ultimately create conditions necessary for resuming the Iran-US understanding.

Arman-e-Melli: The Mecca pact and Iran-US relations

In negotiations with Oman, Iran seeks indirectly to ensure that the goal the Americans have for reopening the Strait of Hormuz is achieved through Iran's own management and in coordination with Oman. Although these talks are indirect, the Americans say they are participating in the negotiations. But this fulfills Trump and the US administration's aim of being able to announce that the Strait of Hormuz was reopened through diplomacy and by Iran's own hand. Meanwhile, a pact has also been formed among Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan. These countries have very close ties with the US and its policies. They can pressure the US to soften its positions so that negotiations and understanding can proceed; thus, they can also be good intermediaries. Although the Mecca Pact among Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan is a defensive pact, one can see traces of potential connection with negotiations and understanding between Iran and the US.

IRGC: US has accepted defeat in Iran war as Hormuz becomes 'Geography of Battle'

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"The recent war was the only war in which America, without achieving anything, has accepted its defeat," Mohebbi said, arguing that the United States had been compelled to rapidly scale back the objectives it had initially set for the conflict.

He said Washington had moved from pursuing broader military and political goals to concentrating primarily on securing the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which has remained largely closed to commercial shipping amid the conflict.

"The enemy has been forced to rapidly retreat from all the objectives it had imagined and set for itself, and is now on a trajectory of declining aims," Mohebbi said.

"This strategy will continue until the enemy accepts all our conditions," he said.

His assessment echoes arguments

made by a few prominent American analysts, although the interpretation of the war remains deeply contested in the United States.

In a May analysis published by the Brookings Institution, American scholars Robert Kagan, Michael O'Hanlon and Melanie Sisson argued that the United States was in a worse position after the war than it had been before the conflict began. They pointed specifically to Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil passes, as a source of significant leverage for Tehran.

Kagan went further in a discussion of the analysis, saying that a US defeat was "not only possible but likely."

American political scientist John Mearsheimer has been even more explicit. In a July assessment, he said the United States had already lost the war, arguing that Washington's earlier strategic bombing campaign and subsequent naval blockade had failed to achieve their objectives. Mearsheimer also described the June memorandum of understanding between the two sides as evidence that Washington had been compelled to accept an unfavorable outcome.

Pezeshkian meets Leader as he marks second anniversary in office

From page 1 ► The meeting follows the March 8 decision by the Assembly of Experts to elect Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei as the Leader of the Islamic Republic. The Assembly is an 88-member constitutionally mandated clerical body elected by popular vote to select and oversee the Leader.

The election followed the martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on the opening day of the joint US-Israeli war, which began on February 28.

President Pezeshkian, who initially met the new Leader in early May after his election, characterized the two-and-a-half-hour meeting as having taken place in a warm, collaborative, and constructive atmosphere. Reflecting on the encounter, the president emphasized the Leader's ethical, managerial, and personal qualities, noting that his respectful and open approach established a solid foundation of mutual trust, empathy, and direct dialogue.

In a televised address this week marking the second anniversary of his inauguration, President Pezeshkian reiterated his impressions of the May meeting, describing Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei as a highly patient and reasonable leader. "I spoke openly about all current issues so he could fully grasp the situation, and he responded with exceptional kindness, understanding, and respect," he said.

Araghchi: Iran will neither forgive nor forget assassination of Leader

The foreign minister said intermediaries were continuing efforts to find a way to revive negotiations but stressed that Tehran currently sees no basis for returning to talks.

"There is no possibility of resuming negotiations until the United States stops violating the memorandum of understanding and compensates for its violations," Araghchi said.

Turning to Iran's discussions with Oman, Iran's top diplomat said the talks were focused on establishing a new maritime route through the Strait of Hormuz. He said the negotiations had reached their final stage, with specialists working on routes that would replace the previous navigation arrangements.

The minister reiterated that any agreement with Oman on a new maritime route should not be interpreted as a decision to reopen the strategic waterway.

"Of course, this does not mean the opening of the Strait of Hormuz," Araghchi said, adding that reopening the waterway would depend on several conditions.



President Pezeshkian was sworn into office at the Iranian Parliament on July 30, 2024, following an election triggered by the tragic helicopter crash that claimed the life of his predecessor, Ebrahim Raisi. His first two years in office have been defined by two major military conflicts launched against Iran by Israel and the United States since mid-2025.

In June 2025, Israel initiated a war against Iran, which was subsequently joined by the United States targeting Iranian nuclear installations. The 12-day conflict saw airstrikes hit both military assets and civilian residential infrastructure. Iran's decisive military responses, targeting

Israeli facilities and a strategic US airbase in Qatar, ultimately compelled Washington and Tel Aviv to halt their operations.

This conflict was repeated on February 28 of this year, when the US and Israel launched a 39-day war that resulted in civilian casualties, including the martyrdom of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran on the first day. The opening day of the conflict also saw 168 individuals, primarily schoolchildren, killed by a US Tomahawk cruise missile strike in the southern city of Minab. Iran's subsequent retaliatory strikes against regional targets forced US President Donald Trump to announce a unilateral ceasefire on April 8.

While a memorandum of understanding was signed between Trump and Pezeshkian in June, US strikes against Iranian civilian infrastructure continued.

While US and Israeli media outlets have acknowledged that Iran emerged as the strategic victor of these operations, Washington and Tel Aviv have launched media campaigns alleging internal divisions within Tehran's political and military command. President Pezeshkian has strongly dismissed these assertions, reaffirming that his administration remains completely aligned with the country's military leadership.



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei previously said Tehran was not engaged in negotiations with Washington and that the only ongoing discussions were bilateral talks with Oman on ensuring safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Baqaei described the talks as an effort by the two littoral states to establish a temporary arrangement for safe maritime passage. An ICGC spokesman, General Hossein Mohebbi, separately said the reopening of the strategic waterway was "completely independent" of the Iran-Oman negotiations and would depend on Washington accepting Iran's conditions.

Inside the USS Abraham Lincoln: Exhaustion, breakdown, and the cost of US power

TEHRAN - Reports from family members of sailors and Marines aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln point to a crisis far deeper than routine maintenance problems. Allegations of food shortages, broken plumbing, moldy quarters, supply bottlenecks, and collapsing morale reveal the hidden burden behind Washington's prolonged military confrontation with Iran. Nearly 5,000 service members have spent nine months deployed, including a record-setting 208 continuous days at sea, while supporting combat operations, airstrikes, and blockade enforcement in West Asia. Although official statements insist the ship remains fully capable, the reality described by those closest to the crew suggests a force under severe strain.

What makes this episode significant is not simply the hardship itself, but what it reveals about the character of American power projection. US strategy in the region has long relied on aircraft carriers as floating

symbols of deterrence, dominance, and political resolve. In theory, these deployments are meant to demonstrate endurance and control. In practice, the reported conditions aboard the Lincoln suggest that this model of constant coercive presence imposes serious material and human costs that official rhetoric struggles to conceal.

Aircraft carriers are among the most complex and demanding military environments in the world. They require an extraordinary degree of coordination, maintenance discipline, and human performance. Under normal conditions, the margin for error is already narrow. Under conditions of exhaustion, poor sanitation, inadequate nutrition, and prolonged separation from home, that margin narrows further. A crew operating under such pressure may still carry out its orders, but it does so at rising operational risk. Fatigue, degraded morale, and neglected infrastructure are not secondary concerns; they are factors

that directly affect readiness, safety, and effectiveness.

The broader context matters as well. The Abraham Lincoln is not the first US carrier in recent months to face reports of deteriorating living conditions during an extended regional deployment. That pattern suggests a deeper structural issue within the US naval posture itself. When carriers are used continuously to sustain open-ended military pressure, maintenance cycles are disrupted, logistics chains are stretched, and crews absorb the cumulative burden of policy decisions made far above them. The result is not a clean display of strength, but a slower process of institutional wear.

This is where the story becomes politically and strategically revealing. Washington often frames its military pressure on Iran as a demonstration of credibility and resolve. Yet credibility is not measured only by the ability to place warships in contested waters. It also depends

on the ability to sustain operations without degrading the force from within. A policy built on constant deployment and brinkmanship can end up exposing vulnerability rather than dominance, especially when the visible symbols of American power begin to show signs of exhaustion below deck.

The conditions reported aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln therefore offer more than a story of poor morale or shipboard neglect. They point to the contradiction at the heart of prolonged US militarization in the region: the more Washington depends on coercive force as a substitute for political resolution, the more it risks eroding the very foundation of that force. The burden of escalation does not remain abstract. It settles into the daily lives of sailors and Marines, into strained logistics, and into the slow wearing down of the machinery of power itself.

16 Iranian fishermen missing for 3+ months; US helicopter last seen overhead

“Off the southeastern coast of Iran, the last voyage of the Shahin 2 began from the Konarak fishing port on May 5, 2026. The destination was open waters and the fishing grounds in the Sea of Oman — a journey that began like dozens of others but never ended with a return home...”



From Page 1 ► Sajed stressed: “All of the people aboard the vessel were fishermen. There were 16 Iranians from Konarak and one Pakistani national on this trip. They had gone to sea solely to work and provide for their families.”

The last voyage of the Shahin 2 began from the Konarak fishing port on May 5, 2026. The destination was open waters and the fishing grounds in the Sea of Oman — a journey that began like dozens of others but never ended with a return home.

The brother of Hamid Baluch, the captain of the Shahin 2, told the Tehran Times that Hamid had devoted his entire life to fishing.

The 17 people aboard the Shahin 2 were: Hamid Baluch, Mehran Ranjbar, Esmail Bakra, Hamed Dehani, Jassem Dehani, Mehrzad Dehani, Adel Razmi, Khaled Razmi, Farid Razmi, Mohammad Razmi, Abdullah Rouhafza, Eghbal Gangzari, Mehran Baluch, Reza Peyrayesh, Mohammad Raeisi, Morabakhsh Nohani, and one Pakistani crew member whose name has not been publicly identified.

Hamid’s brother said: “The last news we received came at around 12:30 or 1 a.m. on May 7, when there was still radio contact with the Shahin. We were told that the vessel had been about 80 nautical miles from the Omani coast the previous night and that a helicopter had last been seen flying over it. After that, contact with the vessel was lost, and all the boats were dispersed.”

He stressed that after the sighting of the US helicopter, the fishing vessels in the area moved in different directions to distance themselves from the area, breaking contact with one another. According to the families, this marked the beginning of the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the Shahin 2 and its crew.

But what troubles the families most is not merely the disappearance of a fishing boat; it is the prolonged uncertainty that has continued for more than three months. They say they still do not know what happened to their loved ones, and their only demand is that the truth be established.

This is not the wait of just one family. It is the wait of dozens of children, wives, mothers and fathers who look toward the sea every day for news of their loved ones.

His brother, speaking in a voice that at times trembles with grief, said: “His youngest child is only three years old. He still does not understand the meaning of this prolonged absence and asks about his father every day. The hardest moment for the family is answering that innocent question from a child: When is my father coming back?”

He said that when the boat was at sea, waiting was normal for the families because everyone knew that fishing trips lasted for weeks.

But now the waiting has taken on a different meaning — a mixture of anxiety, uncertainty and a hope that becomes harder to sustain with each passing day.

The fishermen’s families say the men were not involved in politics or military conflicts. Their only concern was to return home safely and provide for their families.

Now, their only demand is that the truth about the fate of these 17 fishermen be established — whatever that truth may be. For the families, ending this prolonged uncertainty is more important than anything else.

They say a hostile helicopter was last seen over the vessel and want to know what hap-

pened. Were the fishermen detained? Or did something else happen to them?

How did the last hours before the disappearance of the Shahin 2 unfold? The answer to this question lies in the accounts of fishermen who were in the same waters that night and remember the last radio communications with the vessel.

The last contact: The night the Shahin 2 went silent

The most important part of the families’ account concerns the final hours before the disappearance of the Shahin 2 — hours during which, according to fishermen in the area, everything changed within a short period of time.

Hamid Baluch’s brother says that, based on information they received from other fishing vessels, the last communications with the Shahin 2 took place in the early hours of May 7, 2026, when the vessel was approximately 80 nautical miles from the Omani coast.

He said: “The last information we received was that a helicopter had been seen flying over the vessel. After that, contact with the Shahin 2 was lost, and we received no further information about its crew. Since we were surrounded, along this route it was not possible for a helicopter from any country other than the United States or the Arab countries to be flying there. That same night, tensions between Iran and the United States had flared up again. Now 90 days have passed, and we still have no clue about the fishermen’s whereabouts.”

To clarify the details of that night, I also spoke with Captain Nasir Beybak, a fisherman who was in the same area and whose two relatives, including his cousin Mehran and Captain Hamid Baluch, were among the crew members of the missing vessel.

He recalled: “We were also fishing in the same area. Our boat was about five to six nautical miles from the Shahin 2. On the first night, we were close to each other, but on the second night, we moved a little farther apart.”

Beybak said the last radio contact with the Shahin 2 took place at around 11:30 p.m. to midnight.

“We were informed over the radio that a helicopter was above the vessel. It took no more than three or four minutes before contact was cut off.”

After some time, the same helicopter approached their vessel and remained there until around 2 a.m.

According to the eyewitness, the helicopter circled their vessel several times and ordered them in English to change course.

He said: “The helicopter circled our boat several times. By firing flares and issuing orders in English, it told us to change our course and turn back. To avoid any confrontation, we changed our course. After the helicopter left us, it went back toward the Shahin 2.”

“The helicopter remained in our area for about an hour. Then it went toward Captain Moslem’s vessel and Captain Mohsen’s vessel before returning to the Shahin 2. A few minutes later, no matter how hard we tried to contact that vessel by radio, we received no response.”

Beybak continued: “We can see all the boats on our radar by their names, and we saw that the communication with the Shahin 2 had completely stopped. The names of vessels

are also displayed on the radar systems of other countries and on the helicopter’s radar. Countries such as Oman can therefore determine the presence of a vessel through these systems.”

According to him, from that moment onward, the vessel’s communication system was no longer active, and there was no indication of its location.

Beybak continued: “After daylight, the other vessels found each other again, but the Shahin 2 was no longer among them. We tried repeatedly to contact it by radio, but received no response, and we obtained no information about its fate. The American helicopter prevented us from going toward the Shahin 2 and drove us away.”

Hamid’s brother also said that the families realized from the first hours that something unusual had happened.

“At first, we hoped it might have been a technical problem or a temporary loss of communication. But as time passed, our concern grew. Today, more than three months have passed since that night, and we still have no definitive information about the fate of our loved ones.”

The families emphasize that their goal is not to accuse any party. They simply want to know what happened to the Shahin 2 and its 17 crew members after the last contact and the loss of communication.

For them, every day that passes without an answer is a continuation of that long night — a night that began with a radio call and has continued with a silence that has yet to be broken.

Waiting, debt and homes whose breadwinners never returned

For the families of the missing fishermen, the crisis is not limited to the lack of information about their loved ones.

More than three months after the disappearance of the Shahin 2, many of these families are also struggling with financial hardship and heavy debts, because in many cases the missing men were the sole breadwinners.

More than three months after 17 fishermen disappeared near Oman, Konarak families remain devastated, waiting for answers about their loved ones.

His brother, speaking in a voice that at times trembles with grief, said: “His youngest child is only three years old. He still does not understand the meaning of this prolonged absence and asks about his father every day. The hardest moment for the family is answering that innocent question from a child: When is my father coming back?”

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Beybak continued: “After daylight, the other vessels found each other again, but the Shahin 2 was no longer among them. We tried repeatedly to contact it by radio, but received no response, and we obtained no information about its fate. The American helicopter prevented us from going toward the Shahin 2 and drove us away.”

Hamid’s brother also said that the families realized from the first hours that something unusual had happened.

“At first, we hoped it might have been a technical problem or a temporary loss of communication. But as time passed, our concern grew. Today, more than three months have passed since that night, and we still have no definitive information about the fate of our loved ones.”

The families emphasize that their goal is not to accuse any party. They simply want to know what happened to the Shahin 2 and its 17 crew members after the last contact and the loss of communication.

For them, every day that passes without an answer is a continuation of that long night — a night that began with a radio call and has continued with a silence that has yet to be broken.

Waiting, debt and homes whose breadwinners never returned

For the families of the missing fishermen, the crisis is not limited to the lack of information about their loved ones.

More than three months after the disappearance of the Shahin 2, many of these families are also struggling with financial hardship and heavy debts, because in many cases the missing men were the sole breadwinners.

working. But now there is no income left, and we still have no information about the fate of our loved ones. The pressure is growing every day.”

Hamid’s brother said: “We have given up everything. We only want to know what happened to them. If there is news, if something has happened, the families have the right to know the truth. This waiting has become harder than the incident itself.”

He believes that alongside efforts to determine the fate of the fishermen, attention must also be paid to the economic situation of their families — families that are now facing financial hardship and heavy debts in addition to the pain of uncertainty.

The search without answers: From embassies to the Red Cross

More than three months into the ordeal, what have the families done to find answers about the fate of their loved ones, and where have their efforts led?

This question can be answered through the families’ persistent efforts to pursue every possible lead.

From the first days after contact with the Shahin 2 was lost, the families of the missing fishermen tried every possible channel to find information about their loved ones.

They say they have approached various institutions, written letters, spoken with officials and requested assistance from international organizations, but have yet to receive a clear answer.

Hamid Baluch’s brother said: “It does not matter to us where the answer comes from. We only want to know what happened to our loved ones. If they are alive, the families should be informed of their condition, and if an incident has occurred, the truth should be told to us.”

He explained that the families had pursued the matter through Iranian embassies in regional countries, including the Iranian missions in Oman and Pakistan, but said that these efforts had so far produced no clear result.

He also said that the families had corresponded with the International Committee of the Red Cross. They had hoped that the organization could obtain information about the fishermen’s fate through humanitarian mechanisms, but at the time of this interview, no definitive response had been received.

Hamid’s brother then referred to another incident involving an Iranian fishing vessel during the war.

He said that in that case, too, families initially had no precise information about the fishermen’s condition, but later it became known that some of the survivors were being held in Oman.

According to him, the families learned that the fishermen were alive through a phone call from one of them.

He said: “The Omani embassy had not provided any information about those fishermen. By God’s grace, a means of communication became available while they were being transferred between two camps, and they were able to contact their families. Meanwhile, the investor of that vessel had contacted the embassy several times but had received no result.”

Referring to that experience, he said: “That is why we have not lost hope. Until definitive information arrives, the families hope that their loved ones are alive.”

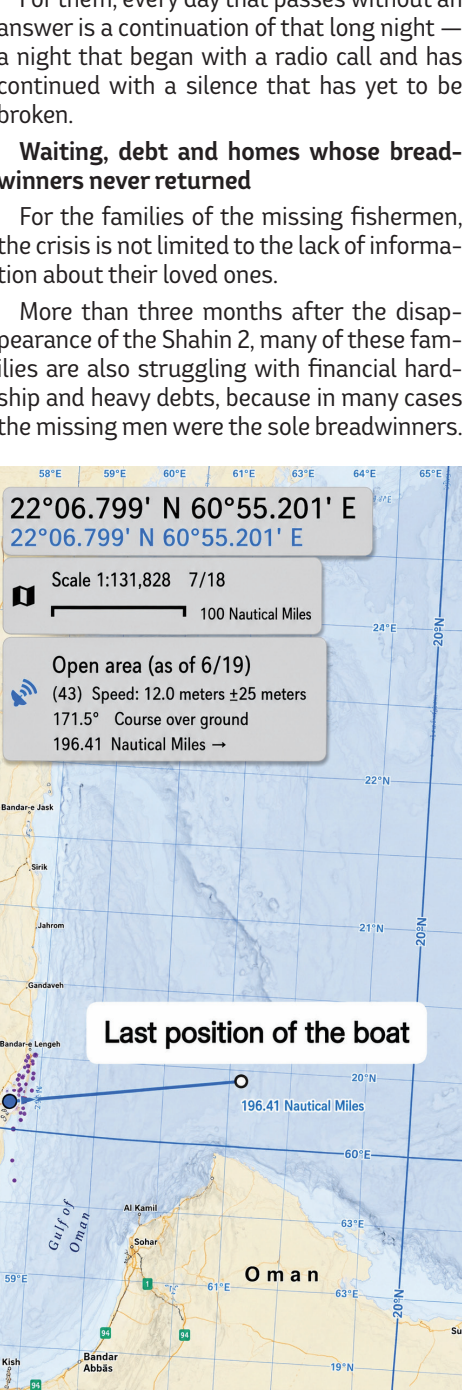
At the same time, the prolonged uncertainty and lack of official information have placed enormous psychological pressure on the families.

He said: “Every day, a new rumor emerges. Families are living between hope and despair. But what they want is not a rumor; they simply want the truth.”

Alongside their official efforts, the families have also sought to use the media to keep the case alive.

Hamid’s brother said: “We asked journalists to make our voices heard. If this issue remains confined to one city or one province, it may eventually be forgotten. But if the media continue to follow it, perhaps the path toward the truth will become easier.”

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



Hamid Baluch’s brother said: “Fishing is not a stable job. Every time the boat goes to sea, it takes about 40 to 50 days to return. Families depend on this income, and their lives revolve around these trips.”

Referring to his own family’s financial situation, he added: “The boat was the result of about 40 years of our father’s hard work and effort. We have been left with heavy debts for building, equipping and continuing to operate it. Today, we owe around 30 billion tomans to the market. This happened to us during the war, and alongside this financial pressure, we still do not know what happened to our loved ones.”

According to him, if the incident had not occurred, the family had hoped to gradually repay its debts through continued fishing and income from the sea voyages.

But now all their plans for the future have come to a standstill.

Sajed Baluch said: “If conditions had been normal, we could have continued our lives by

South Pars to be prepared before cold season

TEHRAN- Simultaneously with the continued production on South Pars platforms, reconstruction operations at the damaged refineries are underway with accelerated speed, aimed at restoring lost capacity and preparing the country's gas network for the cold season.

According to IRNA, damage to part of the South Pars refinery facilities during the recent attacks by the United States and the Zionist regime on our country's soil removed a portion of gas production capacity from the circuit. This issue, along with the existing imbalance in the gas sector, has doubled the necessity of quickly restoring the lost capacities. According to Mohammad Jafar Qaempanah, the Executive Deputy of the President, enemy attacks on oil industry infrastructure during the third imposed war removed 230 million cubic meters from the country's gas production capacity. According to the planning, efforts by oil industry specialists are expected to restore 100 million cubic meters of this capacity to the production cycle in the coming months.

Mohsen Paknejad, the Minister of Oil, also emphasized the necessity of compensating for the lost capacity and announced that all efforts will be employed to restore the major part of the limitations created in gas production before the start of the cold season.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Oil's goal is not merely the physical reconstruction of facilities, but the restoration of production capacity in the shortest possible time. To this end, the National Iranian Oil Company, the National Iranian Gas Company, Pars Oil and Gas Company, contractors, and domestic manufacturers in various sectors of engineering, equipment supply, execution, and commissioning are involved in this process.

Hamid Bovard, the Managing Director of the National Iranian Oil Company, also emphasized during his recent visit to the damaged South Pars refineries the necessity of accelerating reconstruction operations and returning these refineries to full operation to ensure the continued sustainable production of the country's gas.

Return of 3 trains of phase 14 within 10 days

The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company, explaining the latest status of reconstruction operations, announced that after the attacks, all technical, engineering, and executive capacities were mobilized for debris removal, securing the site, damage assessment, and initiating reconstruction in the shortest possible time.

Touraj Dehghani reported the return of three trains of the Phase 14 refinery to the production cycle within 10 days and stated that the safe debris removal operations for the 3rd and 5th refineries were also completed in less than two months.

According to him, the revival of the last sweetening train of the Phase 14 refinery is also proceeding according to schedule, and the defined executive activities at the damaged refineries are being pursued with compliance to technical, engineering, and safety requirements.

Entry of National Gas Company into the reconstruction of damaged refineries

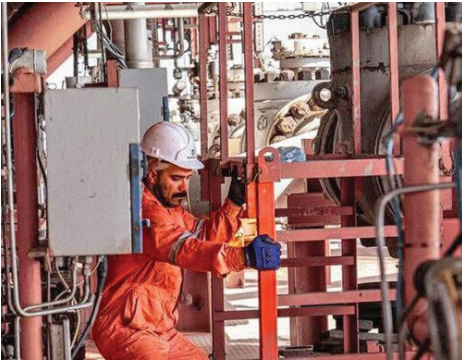
Alongside the National Iranian Oil Company and Pars Oil and Gas Company, the National Iranian Gas Company has, for the first time, taken responsibility for the reconstruction of two damaged gas refineries.

Saeed Tavakoli, the CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company, reported serious follow-up on reconstruction programs and the commissioning of damaged units within the scheduled time.

Additionally, a special supervisory working group for the reconstruction projects of damaged refineries has been formed with the presence of senior managers and officials of the gas industry. Establishing coordination among executive sectors, removing obstacles, providing the groundwork for early commissioning of operational units, and swiftly conveying executive challenges have been cited as the most important tasks of this group.

Moghaddam Biglarian, the head of this working group, referring to the approaching cold season, stated that implementing early production plans at the damaged refineries is among the main priorities of the gas industry.

According to him, the gas tension caused by the attacks affected 11 provinces of the country and more than three million household and commercial subscribers. Therefore, executive bodies have been tasked with eliminating existing obstacles and following up the project implementation process with maximum speed



and precision, in full coordination.

Implementation of reconstruction of 4th and 5th phases refinery

Continuing the process of reconstructing damaged facilities, the agreement for the reconstruction project of the South Pars Phase 4 and 5 refinery was signed between Pars Oil and Gas Company and a consortium of domestic contractors, and the project entered the implementation phase.

The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company, referring to the completion of debris removal and securing of the damaged refineries, appreciated the efforts of the contractors and specialists participating in these operations and stated that the reconstruction strategies and programs, after approval by the board of directors of the National Iranian Oil Company, have entered the implementation phase.

Continuation of production simultaneously with reconstruction

The recent visit of the CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company to Bushehr province and the Asaluyeh and Kangan regions presented a picture of the continued activity of the oil industry alongside reconstruction operations.

During this trip, the CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company visited the refineries of Phases 9 and 10, Phases 4 and 5, and Phase 14, and was briefed on the latest status of safety operations, debris removal, and reconstruction.

The Phase 14 refinery, which was damaged during the 12-day war, is now one of the main axes of reconstruction operations, and the reconstruction of one of its sweetening trains is being carried out relying on the technical and engineering capacities of the oil industry.

Reports presented during this visit show that alongside the reconstruction of damaged facilities, production on South Pars gas platforms, major platform overhauls, and development activities are also continuing.

Bord considered the continuation of these activities to be the result of coherent management and the efforts of oil industry employees, and emphasized that this industry, in critical conditions, has simultaneously been responsible for protecting national facilities and assets, as well as continuing production and ensuring the country's energy supply.

South Pars getting ready for winter

Given that the full compensation of the lost refinery capacity requires time, the readiness of South Pars production platforms to maintain sustainable production during the cold season has gained particular importance.

The technical, operational, and managerial capacities of the oil industry are now being employed to increase the reliability of facilities, reconstruct damaged capacities, and prepare offshore platforms for winter.

What is happening in South Pars is not merely the reconstruction of a few damaged facilities; a set of simultaneous operations for maintaining production, restoring refinery capacity, preparing offshore platforms, strengthening operational infrastructure, and implementing development projects is underway.

In the meantime, the experience of reconstructing the Phase 14 refinery and returning its three trains to the production cycle within 10 days, the completion of debris removal and securing of the 3rd and 5th refineries, and the commencement of the reconstruction operations for the Phase 4 and 5 refinery are part of a process aimed at reducing the time for returning production capacity and preparing the country's gas network for the cold season.

Now, relying on the capabilities of its specialists, contractors, and domestic manufacturers, and by mobilizing its technical and managerial capacities, the oil industry is simultaneously pursuing three missions: maintaining production, reconstructing damaged facilities, and preparing for winter—missions whose outcomes could play a significant role in ensuring the stability of the country's energy supply in the coming months.

New roadmap developed for Iran-Pakistan logistics cooperation

From Page 1 ► Stating that according to the Pakistani side, the number of these containers exceeds 12,000 units, he continued: "Based on the agreements reached, it was decided that with a minimum of positive documentation required in the maritime transport process for amending documents, the necessary changes for transshipment or transit transfer of containers would be facilitated. Also, the issue of auctioning or declaring these containers as abandoned was completely ruled out."

The Secretary of the Shipping and Related Services Association of the Iran Chamber clarified: "The Pakistani side agreed to reduce, as much as possible, the warehousing costs for stranded containers at Karachi Port. It was also decided that a portion of the demurrage costs related to Pakistani shipping companies would be adjusted, and the Pakistani government would provide the necessary cooperation in this regard."

He said: "The set of agree-



ments reached has created a positive outlook for the faster transfer of halted goods to the country and can resolve some of the problems faced by economic activists."

Polmeh, referring to other programs of this trip, added: "The Iranian delegation members held separate meetings with six Pakistani ministers responsible for various economic sectors. There were also meetings with chambers of commerce and economic federations of Pakistan, where various issues of cooperation

between the two countries were examined."

Stating that one of the important issues raised was the facilitation of movement and transport between the two countries, he noted: "In this regard, it was agreed that Pakistan's active borders would operate on a 24-hour basis, which can have a significant impact on transport, transit, and customs service exchanges between the two countries."

The Vice-Chairman of the

Iran, Uzbekistan discuss removing barriers to bilateral trade

TEHRAN- Samad Hassanzadeh, the head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, spoke at a meeting with the Uzbek ambassador in Tehran about the importance of facilitating and expediting the transit of Iranian goods through Uzbekistan.

He stated: "One of the serious requests from the Uzbek side is the visa waiver and facilitation of travel between the two countries, especially for Iranian traders."

The Uzbek ambassador in Tehran visited the Iran Chamber to plan for holding an Iran-Uzbekistan business conference and to examine ways to expand bilateral relations to the level of \$2 billion. He met with the head and vice-head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture.

At the beginning of the meeting, Samad Hassanzadeh, the head of the Iran Chamber, expressed gratitude for Uzbekistan's support and for sending medical and pharmaceutical packages to Iran during the period of the Ramadan War. He said: "The people and government of Iran will not forget this action."

He continued: "Currently, the volume of relations between Iran and Uzbekistan is not acceptable, and we must work together to increase exchanges between the two countries."

Hassanzadeh referred to the memorandum of understanding for strengthening comprehensive cooperation between Iran and Uzbekistan until 2027 and raising the volume of trade to \$2 billion. He added: "Challenges have arisen due to the 12- and 40-day wars and the naval blockade of Iran. In this regard, we request that Uzbekistan take action to facilitate road transport and accelerate the transit route for Iranian goods through Uzbekistan."

The head of the Iran Chamber emphasized: "At the 17th Joint Iran-Uzbekistan Commission and the business conference, emphasis was placed on facilitating the issuance of visas for Iranian economic activists. It should be noted that the issuance of visas by Iran has been unilaterally abolished for the people of Uzbekistan. We hope that this process will also be implemented by the Uzbek government so that

Iranian economic activists can travel to Uzbekistan with greater ease."

He pointed to Iran's capacities in the field of technical and engineering services and added: "The establishment of a joint investment fund between Iran and Uzbekistan has previously been agreed upon by both sides. On the other hand, economic activists from the two countries are currently negotiating 29 joint projects in the fields of technical and engineering services, water, and sewage. Given Iran's capabilities in these areas, we seek the necessary cooperation and support in establishing this fund. Iran is fully prepared in this regard."

Hassanzadeh stressed: "In the mining sector, technical and engineering services, agricultural machinery, building materials, and more, we are ready for greater cooperation. Also, in Iran, there are good capacities in the field of power plant equipment, supply of renewable energy infrastructure, petrochemical products, and more for developing cooperation, and we only need management and planning."

The head of the Iran Chamber also proposed the construction of textile factories, steel mills, and greenhouses within the framework of joint investment with the Uzbek side.

Possibility of Iran-Uzbekistan cooperation in hydroponic greenhouse production

Following this, Hossein Pir-Moazzen, the Vice-Head of the Iran Chamber, pointed to the possibility of joint cooperation in the agricultural sector between Iran and Uzbekistan. Speaking about the construction of greenhouses and offshore farming, and the agreements made in this regard between Iran and Uzbekistan, he said: "The two countries have made progress in the field of seed production and hydroponic greenhouse equipment, and specific seeds are being produced in both countries. In line with these productions, it is possible to enter into cooperation in the exchange of seeds, fertilizers, and necessary equipment."

Request to reduce transit tariffs for Uzbek trucks passing through Iran

Subsequently, Fariddin Nasriyev, the Uzbek ambassador in Tehran, spoke about the impor-

Transportation, Transit, and Logistics Committee of the Iran Chamber of Commerce stated: "Reducing the documentation and formalities required for the movement of trucks across the borders of the two countries, as well as some financial mechanisms needed for developing trade and transport cooperation, were also addressed in these negotiations, the details of which will be announced by the responsible authorities."

He added: "Other issues were also raised in the economic sectors; for example, in the mining sector, areas for cooperation in exploration and exploitation were examined. Negotiations were also held regarding energy supply, crude oil, and gas."

Polmeh said: "In the agricultural sector, areas for developing cooperation between the two countries were also examined, and the issue of supplying and importing some products needed by Iran, including Pakistani rice, was on the agenda of the negotiations."

tance of resolving disputes based on international principles while preserving the interests of countries. He then discussed Uzbekistan's economic conditions and the strengthening of trade relations with target countries.

According to him, reaching \$2 billion in trade is a target set between Iran and Uzbekistan, and we must plan to achieve it. In this regard, holding a business conference in Iran is one of the requests that can be effective for familiarizing economic activists of the two countries.

Nasriyev pointed to the importance of face-to-face meetings between economic activists of the two countries and added: "Cooperation and transport facilities between the two sides have been discussed. We are interested in having facilities in Bandar Abbas. Of course, there are some misunderstandings in this area between the two countries that need to be resolved. Last year, the number of Uzbek transit trucks passing through Iran was less than the number of Iranian trucks passing through Uzbekistan, because Iran's tariffs are high. Therefore, we request that these tariffs be reduced."

The Uzbek ambassador in Tehran declared readiness regarding the purchase of oil and its derivatives from Iran. He then spoke about agricultural issues and the possibility of exporting fibers, cotton yarn, and fabric to Iran.

He spoke about the export of textile products from Uzbekistan to other countries and said: "Many world-renowned brands in the fabric and textile sector have established factories in Uzbekistan and are carrying out extensive activities."

Regarding the production of agricultural products such as vegetables, fruits, and fresh produce, Nasriyev said: "Considering the harvest season, Iran and Uzbekistan are not competitors but rather complement each other."

The Uzbek ambassador in Tehran informed of the readiness of the Uzbek government to grant land in free trade zones to Iranian economic activists.

Supply chain sustainability depends on alternative corridors development

TEHRAN- The Director General of the Readiness and Support Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, while emphasizing the shift in international trade priorities following geopolitical developments and global crises, stated that the continuity and sustainability of goods transit routes under any circumstances is one of the main requirements of international trade.

According to the Public Relations Department of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Seyed Ali Emami, referring to recent developments in the global economy and trade, said: "In the past, the main focus of countries was on increasing competitiveness and enhancing the ability of goods to be present in international markets. However, the occurrence of crises such as the coronavirus pandemic and international wars has changed the priorities and ap-

proaches of global trade."

This official at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, emphasizing that the competitiveness of a commodity in the target market is not sufficient, clarified: "Ensuring the movement of goods and cargo under any circumstances—in other words, sustainable transfer to the destination market—has become a priority. Therefore, the global economy has been moving towards creating and strengthening alternative routes, corridors, and diverse transport networks."

According to Emami, in the event of a disruption in one of the transport routes, especially maritime routes, the possibility of using alternative land and road routes must be available so that the flow of goods transfer does not stop and products reach target markets on time.

The Director General of the Readiness and Support Office of

the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, referring to the high share of maritime transport in the movement of goods in global trade, stated: "A significant portion of cargo transfer in international trade is done via sea, and land and road routes account for a smaller share. However, recent developments have shown that the development of alternative routes and strengthening transport corridors can play an important role in increasing supply chain resilience and trade sustainability."

He emphasized the necessity of reducing road transport costs and creating the necessary incentives to increase the use of these routes, and said: "We are currently in the stage of testing and examining various routes, and efforts are being made to provide the groundwork for alternative routes to become more active by creating facilities and adopting necessary

measures."

Emami also referred to the country's export performance and stated: "The country's exports in this sector have experienced significant growth, although we have faced declines in the area of transit and goods outflow, which requires examination and adoption of appropriate solutions to remove obstacles and strengthen this sector."

In conclusion, the Director General of the Readiness and Support Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran considered the development of transport infrastructure, diversification of goods transfer routes, and strengthening of alternative corridors as fundamental requirements for ensuring the continuity of foreign trade and increasing the resilience of the country's supply chain in the changing conditions of the global economy.

The sealed watermelon of the Mecca Agreement

From page 1 ► Nobody can tell you if it is sweet until somebody cuts it open. In a region where the sliced watermelon, red, black, white and green, has doubled as a flag once banned outright, that metaphor carries more than uncertainty. It points toward the one cause that could unite these three capitals and other capitals, and it is not the clause they just signed.

An overdue admission

Riyadh built its security for decades around one idea: Washington's protection was worth every base and every concession. February 28 broke that idea in public.

Bases advertised as pillars of stability instead became coordinates on Iran's target list, illustrating Tehran's stated doctrine that self-defense requires striking the sources and facilitators of aggression.

That is the quiet admission inside the Mecca pact: American protection has a ceiling, and Riyadh may have just measured it the hard way.

The Islamic Republic has consistently argued that foreign militaries do not secure this region; they endanger it, and that lasting security must come from the people who live here.

Watching Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan act on a version of that argument, even a partial one, deserves an honest welcome.

Iran has no interest in seeing three Muslim-majority states fail at reducing their dependence on Washington. It shares a history, a faith and a neighborhood with all three, and Tehran's hand stays open to Riyadh, Ankara and Islamabad.

The trouble with wanting it both ways

Goodwill is not blank credit. Whatever these three govern-



ments are building, every old arrangement stays in place too.

Turkey still sits inside NATO, an alliance with its Article 5.

Saudi Arabia still hosts American forces. Nine days before the Mecca ceremony, Washington signed a civilian nuclear deal with Riyadh, then declared a day later it would only take effect once Saudi Arabia joined the "Abraham Accords."

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said he will not normalize with Israel without a genuine path to Palestinian statehood. Hold that line, because an Islamic defense architecture cannot share an address with a diplomatic bridge to an illicit, bloodthirsty genocidal regime.

You cannot have your cake and eat it too.

Condemning that genocide in speeches while leaving the door open for future recognition may appear as delay dressed up as patience.

Or in the case of another signatory of the pact that has had formal diplomatic relations with the regime since 1949, delivering fiery denunciations while leaving a deliberate door open through reduced diplomatic representa-

tion and quiet back-channel engagement cannot remain hidden from the Islamic world.

A pact sealed in Islam's holiest city should demand more: zero presence for the genocidal occupying regime across the Islamic world.

History keeps grading these choices

Riyadh has run similar experiments before. Its 2015 war on Yemen that supposedly included various pacts and coalitions was projected to be brief. It dragged on for years against a poorer nation and left Saudi refineries exposed to the strikes this pact is meant to deter.

Sunday morning, around 48 hours after the ink dried, Ansarullah drones hit an Aramco refinery in Jizan, one of the latest strikes since the Yemeni armed forces declared a Red Sea blockade last month.

As of writing this, neither Turkey nor Pakistan have sent soldiers, an honest preview of a pact with no joint command, no shared radar picture, nothing that makes its central promise automatic rather than negotiable.

The medium term looks just as

crowded. Pakistan's army watches India and a restive Afghan border more closely than the Red Sea.

Turkey still has troops committed in Syria, a standoff with Kurdish forces, bases stretching to countries such as Somalia, and proximity to Israeli jets over Syrian skies.

Stack Turkey's NATO membership on top of its new Mecca commitment, and the region has layered a second supposed alliance atop a first without agreeing on what triggers either.

Europe ran that experiment in 1914: reasonable-sounding treaties, signed for reasonable-sounding reasons, supposedly turned one assassination into a bloody four-year catastrophe because nobody had settled what an attack meant.

Overcomplicating regional security has failed before. It will fail again if the real work becomes juggling many separate obligations instead of naming the one actor that keeps setting this region on fire.

None of this is complicated. The occupying geocidal regime in Tel Aviv, financed and shielded by Washington, remains the engine of instability here, from Gaza to Beirut to the Red Sea. A security architecture that cannot say so plainly is decoration.

Mecca's symbolism demands more than a signature; it demands the unity the watermelon has carried for years, the same red, black, white and green Palestinians raised when their own flag was outlawed.

That fruit does not stay sealed forever. The one signed on Friday still does. Iran's formula has not changed: security for all, or security for none. Everything else is arithmetic.

Yemeni forces attack Saudi Aramco oil facility



From page 1 ► Earlier, the Saudi Ministry of Energy announced that the industrial security firefighting teams of Saudi Aramco had extinguished a fire that broke out in the early hours of Sunday at one of the company's refinery facilities in Jizan, with no injuries reported.

In a separate statement, the Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) announced, "In response to the continued Saudi enemy mobilization of its forces and its reinforcement with weapons and equipment ... the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a large-scale and qualitative military operation targeting Saudi enemy mobilizations and weapons depots in the Al-Mokha area."

The statement underlined, "The strikes were precise and resulted in widespread destruction of the equipment and weapons, with dozens killed and wounded, including Saudis." It added, "The operation was carried out using a large number of ballistic missiles and UAVs."

Last month, the YAF announced the collapse of the 2022 truce with Saudi Arabia and imposed a naval blockade on Riyadh, following a broad popular mandate expressed by Yemenis during the massive Friday demonstrations in the capital Sanaa and several provinces.

These developments came after Saudi Arabia targeted Sanaa International Airport in an attempt to prevent an Iranian aircraft from landing. The plane was carrying the Yemeni delegation that had taken part in the funeral of the martyred Leader of Iran's Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, as well as Yemeni patients, wounded people, and those stranded abroad.

As a result of the aggression, the aircraft instead landed at Hodeidah Airport, prompting a response from the YAF, which targeted Abha Airport in Saudi Arabia.

Following this, the YAF targeted numerous oil tankers that violated Yemen's maritime ban and forced others to change course, in addition to targeting Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia in response to attacks on Yemen and its sovereignty.

In parallel, the YAF engaged in fierce clashes with Saudi-backed forces in Yemen, resulting in the deaths of dozens of them.

A Yemeni source told regional media that the government in Sanaa is imposing a new equation inside Yemeni territory, one that

"will become firmly established on a daily basis."

The source revealed that the new equation is that "any military presence or movement by Saudi forces toward Yemen, or in the opposite direction, will be directly targeted."

The source also pointed out that Yemen's objective behind this equation is to settle the battle on the ground, cut off the forces affiliated with Saudi Arabia, and prevent them from moving between the provinces.

Two days earlier, the YAF announced that they had carried out a large-scale and qualitative military operation targeting mobilizations belonging to the "Saudi enemy" in the Yemeni areas of Al-Ruwaik, Al-Abr, and Al-Thaniyah, as well as other camps belonging to the First and Third Emergency Divisions, resulting in the killing and wounding of hundreds of militants.

Yahya Saree said the operation was carried out using a large number of ballistic missiles and drones, after the YAF detected major Saudi military mobilizations that were in their final stages and "aimed at escalating against the free Yemeni provinces and forcing them to abandon their position on ending the blockade."

This comes as the Yemeni ban on Saudi maritime shipping in the Red Sea is entering its third week, after the leader of Yemen's revolution, Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, announced late last month that the equation of "blockade for blockade" would be established.

It appears that this equation will continue, and may even escalate, as long as Saudi Arabia persists in its blockade of Yemen and refuses to implement the humanitarian obligations set out in the roadmap, which Riyadh agreed to under Omani mediation in 2023.

Developments on the ground confirm the Sanaa government's success in preventing Saudi oil tankers and commercial vessels from passing through the area of operations in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab, and the Gulf of Aden.

This restriction carries serious consequences that drain the Saudi economy and force Saudi maritime shipping to take lengthy and costly alternative routes, amid a decline in Riyadh's oil exports and commercial imports, as well as shipping companies' compliance with the restrictions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

The war united the nation in defending Iran

From page 1 ► When claims are now being made about the existence of certain infiltrations, this is something neither the Iranian leadership nor Iran's governing institutions deny. The infiltration is broad and well-established. For decades, American, Israeli, and Western intelligence agencies have been forming and establishing cells of their own.

These cells expanded and developed into networks that became widespread institutions capable of carrying out attacks during assassinations or periods of unrest. This is what they attempted and carried out during protests over living conditions, turning demonstrations across large parts of the country into violent movements led by these intelligence-linked cells.

This is not division, it is infiltration. And no matter how extensive infiltration may be, it cannot take control of a country like Iran,

which has strong institutions dedicated to protecting the revolution and the state. Nor can it encompass a broad segment of the population because people, driven by their sense of national loyalty, do not respond to such efforts and instead resist them.

Nevertheless, the infiltrations do exist and may have contributed to the assassinations of nuclear scientists and state leaders, as well as to obtaining information about the whereabouts of these leaders. It cannot be ruled out that these infiltrations extend from the lower levels all the way to the top.

But they remain, ultimately, at an individual level rather than a collective level capable of bringing about political change or a coup. And no one should expect government factions, whether conservative or reformist, to join such an effort.

Israel rejects Gaza peace plan as Netanyahu, facing elections, digs in for continued war

Gazans now feel more uncertain as nobody talks about Justice for Palestinians

As Netanyahu demands 'genuine' Hamas disarmament before considering pull-out from Gaza, a look at what happens next.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected United States President Donald Trump's 15-point plan for Gaza, saying that Israeli forces will not withdraw until Hamas is "genuinely disarmed."

"Israel rejects the 15-point document," he said at a cabinet meeting, stressing that Hamas must give up all of its weapons before any pull-back.

Trump late last month announced a breakthrough in the US-led ceasefire framework, saying that Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza had accepted a phased plan under which they would surrender their weapons to a new Palestinian governing body, and Israel would begin pulling out troops in tandem with disarmament.

Netanyahu, under pressure from his right-wing base ahead of elections, has seemingly hardened his stance after days of mounting criticism of the plan.

So, what is Trump's 15-point plan, and why has Israel rejected it?

What is Trump's 15-point plan?

On July 30, the US-led Board of Peace proposed a 15-point roadmap for Gaza, detailing a phased, conditional framework for disarmament and reconstruction in the war-torn coastal enclave.

The plan mandates that Hamas disarm in exchange for a full Israeli military withdrawal and the transition of governance to an

independent Palestinian National Committee, supported by an international security force.

The Board of Peace, created by Trump in October with him serving as its lifetime chair, is led by the US government. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2803 designates it the body responsible for overseeing the Gaza peace plan.

Trump said the agreement would be implemented in stages, with Israeli forces withdrawing as the disarmament process advances.

Despite the framework, significant challenges remain, as Hamas hinges its compliance on an end to Israel's genocidal actions.

A member of Hamas's negotiating delegation last month told Al Jazeera that the group's implementation of the agreement will be dependent on Israel fulfilling its commitments.

However, the Board of Peace earlier this week said an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza will only take place after the disarmament of Hamas is complete.

Israel has killed more than 73,300 Palestinians in Gaza since its genocidal war began in October 2023. And since agreeing to a US-mediated "ceasefire" with Hamas in October 2025, it has continued to carry out strikes on Gaza, killing more than 1,200 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

What did Netanyahu say while rejecting the deal?

The Israeli army "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas



is genuinely disarmed and will continue to thwart threats against our forces and our citizens," the Israeli prime minister said.

Netanyahu added that Israel was engaging with Washington over its concerns about the plan.

"They have ideas; some of them are acceptable to us, and some are not, and we know how to stand our ground on these matters," he said.

The Israeli leader, who is expected to face a tough national election in October this year, with successive surveys showing he is on course to lose, said that Hamas must give up all of its weapons.

"We are talking about real disarmament, not fictitious disarmament," Netanyahu said.

Al Jazeera's Nour Odeh, reporting from the occupied West Bank, said discussions around the 15-point plan, including Hamas's disarmament and Israel's potential withdrawal, "are extremely controversial for the [Netanya-

hu-led] right-wing government".

"It seems that Netanyahu, so close to elections, has hit the reset button, saying that none of that will happen under his watch," she said.

"This is extremely problematic for the Board of Peace and the mediators who have been working for months now to try to find a way to carry out the disarmament of Hamas and have Israel commit to a phased withdrawal from Gaza."

How have Palestinians reacted?

Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, reporting from Gaza City, said most people in the war-battered coastal enclave "expected" Israel to reject the proposal.

"The only concern that people have right now is that this is translating into greater uncertainty," he reported, adding that the plan "was meant to provide more structure and a framework".

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran basketball team discover fate at 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN - Iran's men's national basketball team have discovered their opponents in the group stage of the basketball tournament at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya.

Following the group-stage draw, Iran were placed in Group B alongside Jordan, Chinese Taipei and Qatar. The Iranian team will face the three Asian sides in the opening phase as they look to secure a place in the knockout rounds.

Iran are currently holding a training camp at the Mashhoun Sports Hall as preparations for the tournament continue. The coaching staff are focusing on tactical work and building the team ahead of the Asian Games, while the final squad for the competition is expected to be officially announced in the coming days.

The tournament represents an important opportunity for Iran's basketball team to compete against some of the strongest sides in Asia. Jordan will provide a significant test in the group, while Chinese Taipei and Qatar will also be looking to challenge for qualification from Group B.

With the competition approaching, Iran will be aiming to use the remaining preparation period to develop greater cohesion and establish a clear tactical identity. The final squad selection will also be closely watched, with the coaching staff expected to balance experience and emerging talent.

The basketball tournament at the Nagoya Asian Games will take place from Sept. 10 to 20, and Iran's basketball team will be among the first Iranian representatives to begin their campaign at the Asian Games.

Tractor appoint Javad Nekounam as new head coach

TEHRAN - Tractor football club have announced the departure of head coach Mohammad Rabiei and the appointment of Javad Nekounam as his replacement.

In a brief statement, the club said the decision was made by the board following a meeting between club CEO Hojat Karimi and Rabiei. Both parties agreed to terminate their working relationship.

“Following an assessment of the team's current situation, the club's board decided to make a change to the coaching staff. After reaching an agreement with Mohammad Rabiei, the two sides ended their contract by mutual consent,” Tractor said in an official statement.

The club subsequently confirmed that former Iran international Javad Nekounam has been appointed as the new head coach of the first team.

Nekounam is one of the most experienced coaches in Iranian football. The former Iran captain has previously managed several clubs, including Esteghlal, Foolad Khuzestan, Nassaji Mazandaran and Khooneh Be Khooneh.

During his coaching career, Nekounam has won two major titles and is now set to take charge of Tractor as the club look to strengthen their position and achieve their ambitions in Iranian football.

The appointment marks a new chapter for Tractor following Rabiei's departure, with Nekounam now tasked with guiding the team in the new season of the Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) and delivering results on the Asian stage.

Iran's women's football team remain in limbo

TEHRAN - Iran's women's national football team are facing an uncertain period ahead of the next FIFA international window, with the future of head coach Marzieh Jafari still unresolved.

Jafari's contract with the national team expired following the AFC Women's Asian Cup, which was held in Australia earlier this year. De-

spite the end of her contract, the Football Federation of Iran is reportedly interested in continuing its cooperation with the coach. However, no agreement has yet been reached to officially extend her contract.

The uncertainty comes at a crucial time for Iran, with the next FIFA window scheduled to begin on Sept. 21. The federation is working to arrange two friendly matches during the international break, with Russia, Belarus, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan among the potential opponents. However, none of those fixtures have been finalized yet.

More importantly, the national team do not currently have a confirmed head coach for those matches.

Jafari faces an additional complication because she is also in charge of Khatoon Bam at club level. Last season, the federation allowed her to work simultaneously with the club and the national team, largely because of the importance of the Asian Cup. It remains unclear whether the same arrangement will be approved for the new season.

That decision could determine whether Jafari continues as Iran's head coach or whether the federation will have to search for a replacement.

The timing is particularly concerning. After the Asian Cup, Iran's women's national team entered a lengthy period without significant official or friendly matches. Another delay in appointing the head coach could further disrupt preparations and make it difficult to build a clear plan for the upcoming international fixtures.

The federation therefore faces an important decision. If Jafari remains the preferred option, her club commitments must be resolved quickly. If the two sides cannot agree on an extension, a new coach needs to be appointed without further delay.

With the September FIFA window approaching, Iran's women's national team are not only waiting for opponents—they are still waiting to know who will be leading them from the sidelines.

Pouraliganji to leave Persepolis

TEHRAN - Experienced Iranian defender Mor-teza Pouraliganji is reportedly close to securing a move abroad after attracting interest from several Persian Gulf Pro League clubs and Iraqi side Al-Talaba.

According to reports, Pouraliganji has received offers from a number of domestic clubs, but none have been enough to convince the veteran center-back to remain in Iran. Following his agreement with Persepolis to leave the club, the 34-year-old is now prioritizing a move overseas.

Negotiations with an unnamed foreign club are understood to be at an advanced stage, with a final agreement potentially set to be reached as early as today. If the deal is completed, Pouraliganji will once again continue his career outside the Iranian top flight.

One of the main factors behind his decision is believed to be his desire to experience a different football environment and stay away from the controversies that often surround domestic football in Iran. The defender is also reportedly hoping that a move abroad will provide improved professional and financial conditions as he enters the next stage of his career.

Pouraliganji endured a difficult campaign last season. His return from injury affected his performances, and he was unable to consistently reproduce the level that had made him one of Iran's most reliable defenders.

The experienced center-back is now hoping for a fresh start and a full return to form in the upcoming season.

Pouraliganji has represented Iran at international level and has previously played abroad, giving him valuable experience outside the Persian Gulf Pro League. A return to foreign football would therefore represent another chapter in an international career that has already taken him beyond Iran's domestic competition.

The identity of his next club is expected to become clearer soon, with negotiations reportedly entering their final stages. If completed, the move would see Pouraliganji begin the new season away from the Iranian top flight as he looks to rebuild his form and extend his career at the highest possible level.

Moj Bafi, an ancient weaving tradition in heart of Zagros mountain range

TEHRAN - Deeply rooted in the traditional life of nomadic and rural communities in western Iran, Moj Bafi is a distinctive hand-weaving tradition that reflects the region's pastoral economy, indigenous textile knowledge and artistic heritage.

Produced primarily from hand-spun wool, Moj textiles are known for their bold geometric patterns, vivid colors and traditional weaving techniques passed down through generations.

Moj, sometimes referred to as Jajim, is a woolen handwoven textile characterized by large checks and geometric motifs. Its warp and weft are traditionally made entirely from hand-spun wool obtained from sheep raised by nomadic and rural communities. The textile is woven on a simple traditional loom known as Chahar Verdi, making it a craft closely associated with the self-sufficient lifestyle of communities across the Zagros region.

According to Farzad Sharifi, director general of Ilam Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, Moj Bafi is among the authentic handicrafts of the Kurdish regions of western Iran and has long accompanied the daily lives of nomadic and village communities.

The traditional palette of Moj includes dark blue, blue, yellow and red. The combination of these colors with geometric patterns gives the textiles a distinctive visual character while reflecting the aesthetic preferences of western Iranian weaving traditions.

From household necessity to handicraft

Historically, Moj weaving was



closely connected to household life rather than being regarded solely as an artistic occupation. In largely self-sufficient nomadic and rural families, producing bedding wraps was an important activity during periods of leisure and gradually developed into a traditional home-based craft.

The availability of wool was one of the main reasons the craft could flourish in pastoral communities. Sheep provided the primary raw material, while the weaving loom itself was relatively simple and could be operated within the household.

Although weaving can take place throughout the year, production traditionally becomes more intensive from late spring through the beginning of winter. The complexity of a textile directly affects the time and effort required to produce it.

Two principal types of products are traditionally made by

Moj weavers. The first is the sajadeh, or prayer rug, generally measuring about 100 by 150 centimeters. The second is the Moj bedding wrap, which is often produced to order.

A traditional bedding wrap consists of four woven sections, each generally two meters long. The width of each section ranges from approximately 45 to 75 centimeters, depending largely on the thickness of the yarn used.

A measure of skill in every shuttle

One of the distinctive characteristics of Moj Bafi is the relationship between the complexity of its patterns and the number of shuttles used during weaving.

Among traditional weavers, the quality and craftsmanship of a Moj textile are assessed partly by the number of shuttles employed simultaneously. Each color used in a pattern requires a separate shuttle, while points at

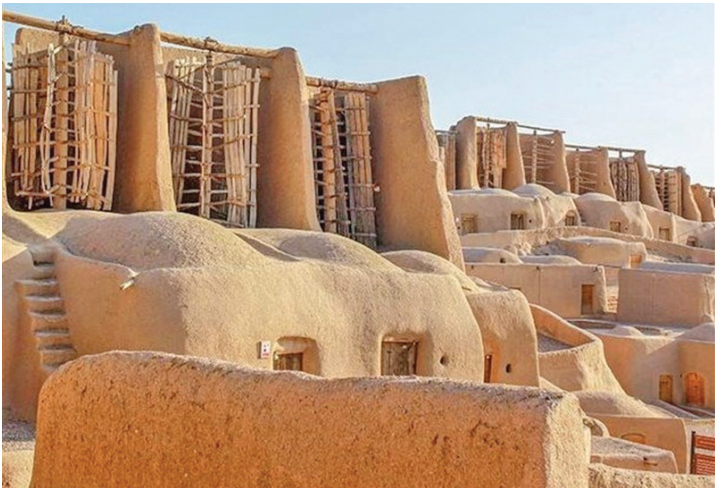
which different colors intersect can also increase the number of shuttles involved.

As a result, textiles featuring a greater number of colors and more intricate motifs generally require greater precision, time and effort. The number of shuttles therefore serves not only as a technical feature of the weaving process but also as an informal measure of the skill, complexity and value of the finished work.

For the communities that have preserved it, Moj is more than a woven fabric. It is a record of traditional skills and rural life, transformed thread by thread into a textile that continues to connect the cultural heritage of the Zagros with contemporary audiences.

Spanning Iran, northern Iraq, and southeastern Turkey, the Zagros mountain range has a total length of 1,600 km.

Sistan-Baluchestan advances UNESCO bid for historic Asbads



TEHRAN - Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan is stepping up efforts to secure UNESCO World Heritage status for its historic Asbads, with officials planning a dedicated task force to strengthen the nomination dossier and highlight the province's rich historical and cultural heritage.

Mohammad-Hassan Talebian, head of Iran's Asbad World Heri-

tage nomination dossier, said the registration could help highlight Sistan-Baluchestan's historical, social and cultural potential while contributing to tourism development and a more sustainable local economy.

Talebian made the remarks on Saturday, during a meeting with the deputy governor-general for political and social affairs of Sis-

tan-Baluchestan province, ILNA reported.

He said the Asbad nomination is among the country's two-stage World Heritage dossiers and that the remaining studies and required measures should be carried out in accordance with UNESCO World Heritage procedures and within the available timeframe.

“World Heritage dossiers can serve as catalysts for cultural development,” Talebian said, adding that they can contribute to heritage protection, greater community participation, the creation of new tourism destinations, improved security and the development of sustainable local economies.

He also stressed the international exposure created by World Heritage inscription, saying information about a site becomes available to global audiences in different languages, providing an opportunity to introduce less-

Isfahan-Istanbul flights resume as city seeks wider air connectivity

TEHRAN - The resumption of direct flights between Isfahan and Istanbul could pave the way for expanding the Iranian city's international air corridors and boosting tourism, according to a provincial tourism official.

Davoud Abian, deputy head of tourism at the Isfahan Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, made the remarks on Aug. 8 during a visit to Shahid Beheshti International Airport in Isfahan, coinciding with the resumption of direct flights to Istanbul.

The number of flights operated by Meraj Airlines on the route has increased from one to three per week, Abian said, adding that the development could serve as a starting point for establishing new air links with destinations including “Oman, Baghdad and Najaf”.

“We are negotiating and communicating with various airlines for this purpose, and several memoranda of understanding are also being signed.”

“Tourism infrastructure is one of the key pri-

orities in Isfahan,” Abian said, stressing that the province's diverse tourism attractions require effective access to international markets.

He said efforts in recent months had focused on strengthening Isfahan's tourism diplomacy internationally, with greater attention being given to the province's potential in film tourism and medical tourism.

Abian said expanding tourism capacity could not be fully achieved without improving access routes to the province. During a period when flights were suspended because of the war, efforts were made to strengthen rail infrastructure for tourist arrivals, but with conditions improving, the development of air corridors has gained greater importance, he said.

“Isfahan has suitable infrastructure for air corridors, but we face limitations in terms of airlines operating routes that can turn this potential into reality,” Abian said, adding that strengthening airline services and expanding flight routes were among the province's essen-

tial tourism needs.

The official also highlighted medical tourism as one of the key areas requiring improved air connectivity. Although Isfahan has suitable infrastructure for medical tourism, there are currently no direct flights from some of the major target markets. Oman, for example, is considered an important market, but there is no direct Muscat-Isfahan service, making stronger air links a priority, he said.

Isfahan has long been a major center of Iranian cultural heritage. The city flourished particularly from the 9th to the 18th centuries and became the capital of Safavid Iran under Shah Abbas I in the late 16th century.

Often associated with the Persian saying “Isfahan nesf-e-jahan” (“Isfahan is half the world”), the city is renowned for its historic mosques, bazaars, gardens, bridges and other architectural monuments.

Wildfires across protected areas drop by 88% year on year

TEHRAN – A total of 1,645 hectares of land within the country's protected environmental areas were affected by wildfires since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 21) and July 6, marking an 88% decrease compared with the same period last year.

The risk of wildfires in the country's four categories of protected areas—particularly across the western Zagros region—typically increases during the summer as rising temperatures reduce humidity and dry out vegetation, ISNA quoted Manouchehr Fallahi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), as saying on Friday.

In the previous year, the provinces of Kermanshah (5,419 hectares), Fars (3,368 hectares), Lorestan (3,112 hectares), and Khuzestan (1,003 hectares) recorded the largest areas affected by wildfires in protected zones. These provinces accounted for 40.7%, 25.3%, 23.4%, and 7.5% of all wildfire incidents, respectively, he explained.

So far this year, Fars, with 1,382 hectares, has recorded the largest area affected by wildfires, followed by Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad with 190 hectares, Kermanshah with 51 hectares, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari with 21 hectares. As a result, 84% of all wildfire-affected land in protected areas this year has been in Fars Province, followed by 11.5% in Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, 3.1% in Kermanshah, and 1.3% in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari.

Five-year monitoring plan

The DOE has developed a five-year monitoring plan to prevent the catastrophic wildfires, exacerbated by the drought, in four main types of areas, including national parks, wildlife refuges, protected areas, and national nature monuments, IRNA reported.

The initiative aims at preventing and promoting preparedness against wildfires, involves ongoing specialized training. Benefiting from the participation of local communities and the capacities of nongovernmental organizations will contribute to lowering damage and increasing resilience in Hyrcanian forests, Hadi Kiadaliri, an official with the DOE, said in January.

The official made the remarks in a meeting, focusing on 'fire management in Hyrcanian forests', with the provincial managers of DOE in Mazandaran, Golestan, Gilan, and Semnan provinces in attendance.

The participants discussed developing institutional capacities and effective prevention strategies, while elaborating on executive and educational dimensions as well as participatory approaches.

The Hyrcanian forests contain the most significant natural habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the perspective of science or conservation.

Preservation of natural habitats

To strengthen the preservation of natural habitats and protected areas, the DOE has taken



different measures, such as inaugurating a national committee for the smart protection of the environment, revising protected areas management, combating drought impacts, and developing fire extinguishing infrastructure.

The national committee for smart protection of the environment consists of university professors and experts. It has so far held four sessions discussing plans for the smart protection of Golestan National Park, Tandooreh National Park, a protected area located northeast of Iran, the DOE monitoring center, and ecological drought, IRNA quoted Vahid Kheirabadi, an official with the DOE, as saying in May.

The inauguration of a knowledge-based 'satellite fire observations system (known as Sahn System) in the past Iranian year 1404 (March 2025 – March 2026) was one of the main achievements of the department, the official added.

Satellite data provided by the system has enhanced fire detection and monitoring, and made it possible to prepare specialized reports for areas under management.

The DOE has recently launched the Bushehr fire station, and has kicked off the construction of two new fire stations in Bemo National Park and the Miankaleh peninsula, Kheirabadi further noted.

Moreover, the department has developed a national drought and ecological monitoring system, which is planned to be unveiled in the near future.

To combat drought, some 150 billion rials (about 87,000 dollars) have been allocated to sensitive ecosystems. The fund will be spent on repairing springs, canals, water troughs, and reservoirs, as well as the purchase of modern equipment for storing water and transporting it to provinces affected by drought.

The official went on to say that over the past Iranian year, the DOE revised and prepared management plans in numerous areas, and

the revised plans are being implemented in 30 key regions.

Smart environmental protection systems

Environmental challenges have turned into crises. The rate of environmental damage, the population growth, the surge in natural hazards such as climate change, drought, sand and dust storms, and floods have made the use of smart and innovative technologies a necessity to save the planet.

The protected areas under the DOE's supervision now account for 12 per cent (19.8 million hectares) of the country's land area. To preserve these areas, the DOE has developed smart, specialized protection plans, IRNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying in January.

Referring to frequent wildfires in the country's forests, the official said the plans include holding specialized training courses on extinguishing wildfires in cooperation with local communities.

To make environmental protection smarter, the DOE has signed a memorandum of understanding with a knowledge-based company. Accordingly, the DOE will be equipped with a system that provides early warnings before a fire outbreak, the official added.

Since most protected areas are impassable and inaccessible, the DOE aims to install cameras and sensors to detect heat and fire sources early, Zohrabi noted.

The official went on to say that the pilot plan to utilize modern technologies in environmental conservation dates back to the Iranian year 1397 (March 2018-2019) in Golestan National Park. However, the plan was not implemented due to some problems.

Presently, the DOE focuses on knowledge-based and participatory biodiversity conservation approaches. Besides innovative technologies, local communities play a critical role in protecting the environment, the official stressed.

bases that primarily provide basic expression profiles or miRNA-target information, namiRa integrates multiple layers of experimentally validated evidence, including miRNA expression patterns, detection methodologies, functional characterization derived from both in vitro and in vivo studies, validated target genes, and interactive visualization of miRNA regulatory networks. This integrated framework provides researchers with a comprehensive understanding of the roles of miRNAs in cancer initiation, progression, and metastasis, while also facilitating comparative analyses across different cancer types.

By transforming dispersed experimental findings into a unified, high-quality reference resource, the database also advances data-driven biomedical research and promotes the application of emerging computational technologies in precision medicine.

The study describing namiRa has been published in the international peer-reviewed journal Computers in Biology and Medicine (Elsevier), a leading journal in the fields of computational medicine and biomedical informatics.

roles, detection methods, validated target genes, and regulatory networks across a broad spectrum of human cancers.

To construct the database, the research team performed a systematic literature review followed by meticulous manual curation of 9,983 eligible scientific publications. This effort enabled the extraction, classification, and integration of experimentally validated data describing the associations between 1,095 human miRNAs and 33 distinct human cancer types. As a result, namiRa has become one of the most comprehensive specialized resources currently available for investigating miRNA-cancer relationships.

Unlike many existing data-

namiRa
The Comprehensive Database of
MicroRNA in Cancer
www.namira-db.com

tal roles in a wide range of biological processes, including cell proliferation, differentiation, migration, survival, and apoptosis. Aberrant miRNA expression and function have been implicated in the initiation and progression of numerous human malignancies, making these molecules one of the principal focuses of contemporary cancer research and precision oncology.

In this collaborative project, Dr. Sharif Moradi and colleagues at the Royan Institute, together with researchers from the University of Duisburg-Essen, developed namiRa, a manually curated database that provides researchers with integrated, structured, and experimentally validated information on miRNA expression profiles, functional

expression profiles, functional

Welfare Organization, UNFPA underline shared commitment to strengthening local communities

TEHRAN – State Welfare Organization and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) have highlighted their shared commitment to strengthening local communities through participatory and community-driven models.

In July, State Welfare Organization and UNFPA jointly organized and hosted an International Hybrid Webinar on Community-Based Models, titled 'Strengthening Local Communities and Social Participation through Community-based Models'.

The high-level event was organized on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the establishment of the State Welfare Organization. It brought together national leaders, UN officials, international experts across Asia, and national civil society actors to exchange technical expertise, explore innovative social solutions, and showcase successful community-level intervention models. The discussions were in line with the State Welfare Organization flagship initiative, "Salam Mahaleh", which has been piloted successfully in more than 2,760 communities and neighborhoods across Iran, UNFPA website announced in a press release on July 20.

The event was officially launched by the speech of the head of State Welfare Organization, Seyed Javad Hosseini, emphasizing on the transformative strategic shifts the organization undertook, aimed at promoting welfare and improving quality of life.

Ms. Maysaa Al-Gharibawi, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Iran, who is also the head of the World Food Program (WFP) in the country, highlighted the critical role of neighborhood-centered initiatives like Iran's "SALAM" (SALAM Mahalleh) in enhancing social resilience and community support and in ensuring that no one is left behind.

'Salam Mahalleh' is a participatory, empowerment-focused national program designed to improve citizens' quality of life, support vulnerable groups, and strengthen social participation and social capital across Iran.

By combining government capacity, volunteer service providers, NGOs, and active resident participation, the plan reduces bureaucracy, revives neighbourhood identity, and creates opportunities for local progress. It aligns with the fourteenth government's policies on social justice, public participation, and neighbourhood-based governance. Piloted in Tehran's District 4 – with 20 schools plus one school per province in its first phase – it has since expanded nationwide.

The initiative aims to improve citizens' quality of life and social resilience, empower vulnerable groups and increase self-reliance, promote social vitality and enhance social capital, expand social participation and civic engagement, and grow social-health and welfare services, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Building a local network linking facilitators, volunteers, and government bodies, empowering the elderly through cultural, sports, artistic, and dialogue-based programs, identifying and guiding adolescent talent (ages 13-18) in academics, careers, and entrepreneurship, delivering rehabilitation, screening, and psychological counseling to all target groups, encouraging active public/volunteer participation and local organizing, and strengthening participatory decision-making and neighborhood governance are among the other goals.

Addressing Iran's evolving demographic landscape, Mr. Keita Ohashi, UNFPA Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, commended the Iranian Government and States Welfare Organization for their proactive efforts and made the following key points:

Demographic Shift: Iran's population is reaching approximately 93 million, with around 70 percent in the working-age alongside a rapidly growing older population.

Intergenerational Solidarity: Establishing a resilient society requires platforms where different generations can share experiences and support one another.

UNFPA Support: UNFPA recently supported a comprehensive training package for standard, formal elderly care and continues to promote novel social resilience frameworks, including Time Banking initiatives.

"At UNFPA, we believe every individual deserves a life of dignity throughout their en-

tire life cycle," emphasized Mr. Ohashi. "Local communities in Iran play a pivotal role in promoting active, empowered aging and reducing vulnerabilities."

Complementing this perspective, Dr. John Jabbour, the World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Iran, reaffirmed social participation as a core determinant of health.

The webinar featured insightful sessions from technical international high-level experts and across South-East Asia. UNFPA Regional Vision on Active Aging:

Dr. Abhijit Visaria, Population Dynamics Technical Adviser at the UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (APRO), outlined UNFPA's strategic framework for healthy aging and social inclusion.

Dr. Rintaro Mori, Mayor of Takarazuka, Japan, shared insights from Japan's community centers (Kominkan) and neighborhood councils.

Prof. Chen Gong, Director of the Institute of Gerontology and the Institute of Population Research at Peking University, presented on the topic 'Time Banking: A Powerful Tool for Sustainable Community Engagement and Empowerment.'

Dr. Paul Ong, Deputy CEO and Chief Strategy Officer at the Tsao Foundation, Singapore, highlighted strategies to address non-medical determinants of aging.

Mr. Quyen Tran, Senior Adviser to the Vietnam Association for Healthy Aging, detailed Vietnam's nationwide network of Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs.

Services to the elderly

The Welfare Organization is planning to train consultants on aging or aging life care professionals. It has launched community-based rehabilitation (CBR) projects in less privileged and remote areas where access to welfare services is limited. Social workers receive a 20-hour training to start their jobs as facilitators in these centers. The project has so far covered 95 percent of the rural areas, and is planned to cover 30 percent of urban areas, as well.

According to Hosseini, the Welfare Organization has validated some 300 elderly day-care centers in cooperation with the national standard organization, and it is planning to establish new elderly service centers such as the elderly villages and elderly social health towns, behzisti.ir reported.

Prevention of disability in old age, home rehabilitation, home care services, and livelihood assistance for the elderly with severe disabilities are among other programs of the organization. The financial assistance has increased by 80 percent for nursing and 100 percent for home visit services.

The Welfare Organization has started to implement a forty-day training program for old people to improve their quality of life.

The program includes 240 different educational subjects such as health, life skills, arts, communication skills, digital and entrepreneurship, music, sports, games, and other leisure activities.

It was planned to be implemented as a pilot program in Tehran. Each individual registers to participate in the program for forty days within the three-month duration.

Participants are divided into two groups to attend the sessions either on odd or even days, with educational programs provided daily in two different parts. The first 15 minutes is dedicated to physical workout, the next 45 minutes focus on specialized training, and 90 minutes is allocated to recreational programs. During the educational courses, each person receives detailed training essential for self-care and improving their quality of life. Last year, over 200 older people received training.

So far, 19 cities in the country have taken necessary measures to develop age-friendly communities. These cities are located in different provinces, including Tehran, Gilan, Yazd, Isfahan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Lorestan, Hamedan, Khuzestan, and Bushehr.

Age-friendly communities are places where age is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities, and services support and enable older people to have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well.



AUGUST 10, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Keep yourself far from envy; because it eats up and takes away good actions, like a fire eats up and burn woods.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:10 Evening: 19:19 Dawn: 3:46 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:20 (tomorrow)

Mobarak Puppet Theater Festival opens with works dedicated to Gaza journalists, Minab children

TEHRAN- The 21st Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival officially opened in Tehran on Friday, bringing together artists and puppetry enthusiasts for an event highlighting the power of puppetry to address contemporary social and humanitarian issues.

The opening ceremony was held at the Cinematheque of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts (TMOCA) with festival director Poupak Azimpour Tabrizi highlighting the event's four-decade history and the challenging circumstances surrounding this year's edition.

Azimpour said she was honored to lead the festival, which has a 42-year history, while noting that circumstances had changed significantly since she initially accepted the responsibility.

She also highlighted the festival's collaboration with the internationally renowned Bread and Puppet Theater and its founder, Peter Schumann, who created two puppet film-theater works specifically for the festival.

The two works were produced in response to the war in Gaza and were dedicated to the martyred children of Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab, southern Iran, as well as journalists killed in Gaza. The films were screened during the opening ceremony.

John T. Bell, a longtime member of the Bread and Puppet Theater, also addressed the ceremony online, discussing the history and artistic approach of the group and Schumann's work.

Bell, a puppeteer and professor of theater history who has worked with Bread and Puppet since 1974, described the group as one of the most innovative puppet theater companies of the 20th and 21st centuries.

He said Schumann's approach to puppetry reflects contemporary life while also drawing inspiration from ancient puppet traditions, including figures such as Iran's traditional puppet character Mobarak.

Bell noted that Schumann's artistic per-



spective was also influenced by his family's experience of displacement and war during World War II, adding that themes of bombing, exile and death have found their way into his artistic works.

He also explained the significance of bread in Schumann's artistic philosophy. Bread has traditionally been distributed to audiences at the end of Bread and Puppet performances, reflecting the belief that art, like bread, should be affordable and accessible to everyone.

According to Bell, Schumann has emphasized that art should not be treated merely as a commercial product. Rather, he has compared art to food that, although it cannot literally be eaten, can spiritually nourish its audience.

The opening ceremony concluded with the unveiling of the official poster of the 21st Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival, designed by Iranian artist Farzad Adibi.

The 21st edition of the Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival is set to take place in Tehran in October, continuing the festival's tradition of promoting puppet theater as a platform for artistic innovation and international cultural exchange.

Since its inception in 1989, the Tehran-Mobarak Festival has established itself as a prestigious cultural gathering in Iran, attracting puppet theater troupes from around the world. The festival not only showcases international talent but also promotes the rich tradition of puppet theater.

Iran highlights culture as key to peace at BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting

From Page 1 ► The Iranian official also held meetings with culture ministers and representatives of BRICS member states on the sidelines of the gathering, exchanging views on ways to expand cultural and artistic co-operation and strengthen interaction among the participating countries.

Javadi was officially received by Indian Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who welcomed the Iranian deputy minister by presenting him with a turquoise-colored shawl. The traditional gesture is regarded in India as a symbol of appreciation and respect for distinguished guests and senior dignitaries.

Iran's participation in the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the expansion of cultural and artistic exchanges among BRICS members and underscore the role of cultural diplomacy in fostering greater understanding and cooperation among nations.

The two-day meeting was held on August 8 and 9 under the theme "Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability" as part of India's BRICS activities. The gathering



Iranian Deputy Culture Minister for Cultural Affairs Mohsen Javadi (R) and Indian Culture and Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat shake hands during the 11th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting in Bhopal, India, on August 8, 2026.

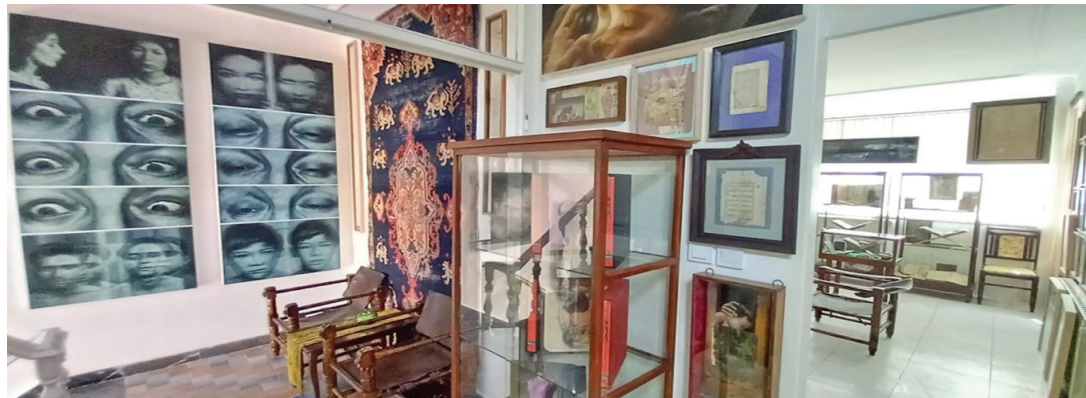
brought together culture ministers and senior officials from the member states to discuss ways of advancing cultural co-

operation within the group.

The 18th BRICS Summit is scheduled to be held in New Delhi in September, where leaders of

the member states are expected to discuss a broad range of issues concerning cooperation among the group's members.

Mani Haghighi's documentary to premiere at 64th New York Film Festival



A view of Nasser Bakhshi's museum-archive in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province.

TEHRAN – The New York Film Festival (NYFF) has announced the 32-film main slate for its 64th edition, anchored by four world premieres, including the new documentary feature from Iranian filmmaker Mani Haghighi.

Titled "I Deserve a Lover Whose Every Rise Sets Fiery Dooms Raging Across the Skies," this lively, stimulating documentary profiles Nasser Bakhshi, a painter, conceptual artist, collector, and curator, whose monumental archive creates a record of collective memory.

A production of 2026, the 76-minute film the film depicts Bakhshi, alongside his wife Roghayeh Najdi, whose surrealist paintings complement his work by commenting on the place of women in Iranian society.

In the documentary, Haghighi comes up with a distinct visual language, one that feels in dialogue with filmmakers from Bergman to Parajanov.

Born in 1982, Tabriz, Nasser Bakhshi is a self-taught artist who lives far from the hustle and bustle of the Capital of Tehran, in the wonderful land of Azarbaijan.

Situated in the northwestern city of Tabriz, Bakhshi's museum-archive speaks to the need for individual stories to paint the larger picture. His collecting process is an artistic act.

Bakhshi's artistic practice revolves around images related to time, space, and existence. He primarily works with large-scale paintings and painting found objects to express his concerns and fears. Bakhshi's style is characterized by communal imagery that alludes to the turbulences and apprehensions of a nation in a state of flux.

His first verified exhibition was "Mapping Within: An Alternative

Guide to Tehran and Beyond" at The Mine in Dubai in 2015, and the most recent exhibition was "The Observer and Archive of Memory" at Bavan Gallery in Tehran in 2025.

He is most frequently exhibited in Iran, but also had exhibitions in Belgium, United Arab Emirates, and elsewhere. Bakhshi has held at least six solo shows and 11 group shows over the last 10 years.

Bakhshi has also been in no less than two art fairs but in no biennials. A notable show was "Dust" at Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw in 2015. Other notable exhibitions were at Frieze London in London and Dastan Gallery in Tehran.

Among contemporary Iranian filmmakers, Mani Haghighi, 57, stands out for his refusal to conform to easy categorization or genre.

A filmmaker, writer, producer, and actor, Haghighi was educated in Iran and, from the age of 15, Appleby College in Canada. He took a BA in philosophy at McGill University in Montréal, where he directed plays including Pinter's "Betrayal" and Shakespeare's "Macbeth". He then followed postgraduate studies at Guelph and Trent universities.

Haghighi moved back to Iran in 2001 and worked for several years in advertising, shooting television commercials, educational films and documentaries. His first feature film, "Abadan" (2002). It was the first Iranian independent feature film to be shot with a digital camera. The film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2002.

The comedy "Men at Work" (2006), based on a story idea by Abbas Kiarostami, premiered at

the Forum section of the Berlin Film Festival and went on to win several international prizes, including the Asian Film Award for its screenplay.

In 2006, Haghighi and Asghar Farhadi wrote "Fireworks Wednesday," a domestic social-realist drama that dealt with issues of class and alienation in contemporary Tehran. The film, directed by Farhadi, premiered at the competition section of the Locarno film festival and was awarded the best screenplay prize at the Three Continents Film Festival in Nantes. It won the Golden Hugo Award at the Chicago Film Festival.

"Canaan" (2007), Haghighi's second writing collaboration with Farhadi, was based on "Post and Beam," a short story by the Nobel prize-winning Canadian author Alice Munro. It marked a departure for Haghighi away from absurdist dark comedy toward a more straightforward narrative of domestic conflict. The film won the audience prize in the international section of Tehran's Fajr Film Festival.

"Modest Reception" (2012), his fourth feature film, was written in collaboration with the theater director Amir Reza Koohestani. Marking a return to Haghighi's preoccupation with absurdism, the film tells the story of two urbanites (played by Haghighi himself and Taraneh Alidoosti) who drive around an unidentified, mountainous and war-torn region, handing out bags of cash to poor villagers in return for increasingly sadistic demands. The film premiered at the Forum section of the Berlin Film Festival and won the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) prize.

"A Dragon Arrives!" was shot on location in the Valley of Stars

on Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf. The film screened in the competition section of the Berlin Film Festival in 2016.

In 2016, Haghighi made "50 Kilos of Sour Cherries," a popular romantic comedy that became, in the year of its release, the third-highest grossing film in the history of Iranian cinema.

In 2018, Haghighi made "Pig," a black comedy about the misadventures of a black-listed film director who is falsely accused of the serial murder of his colleagues. It premiered in competition at the Berlin Film Festival and subsequently won l'Amphore d'Or for Best Film from Festival International du Film Grolandais, Toulouse.

In September 2022, his latest film "Subtraction" premiered in the Platform section of the Toronto International Film Festival. This new film, a coproduction between France and Iran, deals with a married couple that seem to have found their doppelgängers.

Between 2007 and 2016, Haghighi produced and directed two documentaries about the Iranian filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui. The shorter film "Hamoun's Fans" (2008) dealt with the phenomenal success of Mehrjui's classic cult film "Hamoun" (1989). Haghighi published an open call to everyone who considered themselves a fan of the film to write him a one-page explanation of their reasons for loving it. From the hundreds of responses, he chose five people to tell their stories.

The second film, "Mehrjui: The 40 Year Report" (2015), is an exploration of Mehrjui's entire oeuvre through detailed interviews with Mehrjui himself, as well as his collaborators and critics. The film won the Best Documentary Film Director Award from the Fajr Film Festival.

Presented by Film at Lincoln Center in partnership with Rolex, the New York Film Festival is an annual celebration of the most significant international films of the season. NYFF has played a pivotal role in shaping film culture since its inception in 1963 and continues its enduring tradition of introducing audiences to bold and remarkable works from celebrated filmmakers as well as fresh new talent. The 64th edition will take place from September 25 through October 12.

Cartoon of Day



Donald's Decorating Tips & Tricks
Cartoonist: Daniel Boris from the US