

Pezeshkian warns of US efforts to sow division, calls for national unity

TEHRAN— Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has warned that the United States is seeking to exploit economic pressures and social difficulties to deepen divisions inside Iran, stressing that national unity and solidarity are essential to confronting 'Washington's bullying and pressure campaign.'

Speaking at a meeting in Tehran on Monday, Pezeshkian condemned crimes committed by the United States and the Israeli regime against the Iranian people, arguing that the same actors that claim to defend human rights have used their military capabilities and advanced technologies against civilians.

He particularly referred to the killing of children and other civilians, as well as the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, during the recent conflict. ▶ Page 3

Iran rejects foreign interference, and warns against US unilateralism

TEHRAN- Iran has rejected allegations of involvement in Yemen's decision-making and a recent attack on Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline, while reiterating that regional security arrangements should be shaped by the countries of the region rather than outside powers.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei, speaking at his weekly press conference in Tehran on Monday, said Yemenis independently determine their country's policies and stressed that Iran has no role in decisions taken by Yemen's Ansarullah movement. He also called for equal maritime security for all countries, arguing that those who attack regional states cannot simultaneously claim to be guardians of maritime security. ▶ Page 2

CBI governor meets Turkish, Tunisian counterparts at Islamic Banks Summit

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran met and held talks with the Governors of the Central Banks of Turkey and Tunisia on the sidelines of the summit of Central Bank Governors of Islamic countries.

According to IRNA, citing the Central Bank, Abdolnaser Hemmati, the Governor of the Central Bank, who has traveled to Turkey to participate in the summit of Central Bank Governors of Islamic countries, held meetings with his counterparts on the sidelines of the summit.

In these meetings, emphasis was placed on expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation among Islamic countries. ▶ Page 4

How Xi Jinping positioned BRICS against Western sanctions, power politics

TEHRAN — Speaking at the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered an unyielding critique of Western hegemony, positioning the expanded alliance as a primary shield for the Global South.

Commemorating 20 years of BRICS cooperation, Xi called on sovereign nations to actively oppose coercive power politics, resist economic sanctions, and build a genuinely multipolar world order.

I. Confronting U.S.-Israeli aggression in West Asia

Xi addressed the severe escalation across West Asia, pointing directly to the heavy toll inflicted on regional populations by the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran. ▶ Page 5



IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi, delivers his statement at the opening of the IAEA 70th General Conference. IAEA, Vienna, Austria. 14 September 2026

Grossi's Toxic Legacy: Greenlighting Aggression, Smearing Iran

In a brazen violation of diplomatic norms, Austria barred Iran's nuclear chief from IAEA summit due to US pressure

Grossi has reduced the UN's watchdog into a Western instrument, leveraging his office to legitimize aggression against Iran's inalienable rights and sovereign nuclear facilities

TEHRAN — The head of the UN nuclear watchdog has once again seized the international stage to smear Iran and advance a hostile agenda dictated by the US, turning an ostensibly technical body into a political instrument of Western coercion.

Addressing the 70th regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on Monday, Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi used his platform to deliver an alarmist, distorted narrative regarding Tehran's nuclear activities, conveniently glossing over the blatant military aggression waged by the United

States and Israel against Iranian territory.

Grossi sought to depict the disruption of technical cooperation as an arbitrary move by Tehran rather than the natural, security-mandated consequence of unprovoked foreign military attacks against sovereign, safeguarded facilities.

"The situation regarding the Agency's oversight of Iran's nuclear programme deteriorated in 2026. There were renewed attacks on that country at the end of February. We had to withdraw our inspectors

and apart from an inspection of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in June, we have not conducted any in-field verification activities in Iran for more than six months," Grossi said.

By framing the halt in inspections without holding the aggressors accountable for striking peaceful nuclear infrastructure, he brazenly inverted the roles of victim and perpetrator. "It is well over a year since the Agency lost continuity of knowledge in relation to the previously declared inventories of LEU and HEU enriched up to 60% U-235 at the declared nuclear facilities affected by the attacks of June 2025." ▶ Page 3



Exhibition of winning works of 11th Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest opens at Art Bureau

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN — The exhibition of the winning works from the 11th Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest opened on Monday at the Iran Photographers House Gallery at the Art Bureau in Tehran.

The exhibition is a joint effort of the Rossiya Segodnya media group, Mehr Media Group, and the Iran Photographers House.

At the beginning of the opening ceremony, the video message of Alexander Shtol, executive director of the contest, ▶ Page 8

Regional Hormuz talks postponed, Iran-Oman understanding finalized

TEHRAN — A high-level ministerial summit between Iran and Arab states of the Persian Gulf scheduled to convene in Oman to negotiate arrangements for safe commercial navigation through the Strait of Hormuz has been postponed to a later date.

The postponement of the regional talks—which had been slated for Monday—came at the specific request of Saudi Arabia, even as Tehran and Muscat announced the formal finalization of their bilateral understanding over maritime routes governing the world's most critical energy transit artery. ▶ Page 2

IRGC shoots down advanced MQ-1 drone over Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Monday that its aerospace units successfully tracked and brought down another sophisticated MQ-1 unmanned aerial vehicle over the strategic waters of the Strait of Hormuz.

In a press release issued by the IRGC Public Relations Office, military officials confirmed that the hostile aircraft was engaged and neutralized using a cutting-edge indigenous surface-to-air defense network operated by the IRGC Aerospace Force.

The engagement was coordinated entirely within the Islamic Republic's unified integrated air defense grid.

"The advanced MQ-1 drone was intercepted and destroyed over the skies of the Strait of Hormuz," the statement said. ▶ Page 3

Nine years after Saudi Ritz-Carlton purge, Rami Naimi remains trapped

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's "modernization agenda" has drawn international attention, but a Financial Times investigation into the 2017 Ritz-Carlton purge raises serious questions about how the kingdom treated some detainees during that period.

The investigation, published in FT Weekend Magazine on September 12, details how the anti-corruption campaign became, according to detainees and their families, a system of detention and financial pressure.

The harrowing case of Rami Naimi offers a rare window into that system. Naimi has spent nine years trapped, enduring repeated detentions, secret trials, and continuously coerced financial settlements, according to the report. ▶ Page 5

9/11 Families United chair calls out Trump over Saudi cover-up, Iran war narrative

TEHRAN — The 25th anniversary of September 11 stripped away any lingering illusion of political unity in Washington. At Ground Zero, families of the victims directly confronted the American political establishment over its quarter-century shielding of Saudi Arabia.

Hours earlier at the Pentagon, President Donald Trump and "War" Secretary Pete Hegseth tried to refashion the memory of 2001 into a propaganda vehicle for the war against Iran.

Terry Strada stood before an audience that included every living former president and Vice President JD Vance.

Her husband, Tom, died in the North Tower. As chair of 9/11 Families United, her focus was not on vague memorial platitudes, but on specific state complicity. ▶ Page 5

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Transformations in Yemen: An earthquake in regional calculations

Ettelaat, in an analytical piece, examined the recent developments in Yemen. It wrote: What has been unfolding in Yemen in recent days goes far beyond a simple military shift between Ansarullah and Saudi-backed forces. Yemen is no longer merely an internal issue or even a regional conflict. Ansarullah's consolidation at the mouth of the Bab al-Mandeb strait — combined with developments surrounding the Strait of Hormuz — places two of the world's most sensitive communication and energy chokepoints into a single strategic equation. Hormuz in the east and Bab al-Mandeb in the west are two vital arteries of the global economy, and any serious disruption in either route could produce consequences far beyond the region itself. Therefore, what is emerging is a transformation in the geometry of regional deterrence. The two straits have now become interconnected in such a way that, if US attacks continue and the conflict expands, they could place the global economy's lifelines under severe pressure. This is the earthquake that Yemen's developments have triggered in regional calculations.

Hamshahri: Wrong signals are forbidden

Hamshahri, in its commentary, pointed to what it described as US desperation in the face of Iran. Some reports and rumors — claiming that Pakistani officials contacted Iran's foreign minister requesting de-escalation in Yemen and the Persian Gulf and a return to negotiations — caused oil prices to fall by four to five dollars. The response to hostility and blockade is reciprocal action, not negotiation or conciliation. This is the major lesson of the past year, especially the last few months. Now, the initiative on the battlefield lies with the resistance front. This leverage and authority must not be weakened by hesitation. Trump is desperate. Whenever he has imagined that the other side is hesitant, he has acted brutally. Now is the time for offensive action and sending a message of strength. Our political and diplomatic managers must not hesitate even for a moment in amplifying the message of

battlefield deterrence.

Javan: Iran finds its path

Javan evaluated decades of US policy and Iran's response. Washington had long hoped that cutting Iran off from Western financial networks would paralyze its foreign trade. But the reality is more complex. Iranian oil still finds its way to global markets, and foreign trade — though more costly and risk-prone — has not stopped. In response to sanctions, Tehran has gradually shifted part of its trade flows away from dollar-based channels toward parallel networks: alternative financial messaging systems, settlements in local currencies, barter arrangements, informal remittance systems, shadow fleets, and land-based corridors. This development should be seen neither as a cost-free victory for Iran nor as a complete failure of sanctions. What has occurred resembles structural adaptation: an economy that has lost direct access to Western financial infrastructure has built alternative systems or connected itself to existing networks in Russia, China, Central Asia, and the Middle East to sustain trade.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: From the pit of the Strait of Hormuz to the abyss of Bab al-Mandeb

Vatan-e-Emrooz analyzed the crisis triggered by the halt of Saudi oil flows through the East-West pipeline after a drone attack. Saudi oil is largely produced and processed in the eastern part of the country. Its main export markets are in East Asia and other parts of the world. Under normal conditions, part of this oil travels through the Persian Gulf. If that route is disrupted, the East-West pipeline can carry oil to the Red Sea coast, from where it can reach global markets. But the Red Sea itself ends at Bab al-Mandeb — a chokepoint at its southern entrance. Thus, if the Strait of Hormuz faces problems and Bab al-Mandeb also becomes unsafe, transporting oil from eastern Saudi Arabia to the west does not necessarily mean it will reach buyers. Oil may arrive on land in Yanbu, but tankers must still traverse the Red Sea and reach their final markets. This is the missing link that multiplies the significance of recent events.

Iran says it is no longer afraid of confronting US or Israel

TEHRAN- Iranian Executive Vice President Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah says Iran is no longer afraid of confronting a superpower such as the United States or a nuclear-armed power such as Israel, attributing the country's confidence to the military doctrine of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution and Iran's growing defense capabilities.

Speaking on Monday at a meeting with deputy officials of the Secretariat and chief executives of Iran's free trade zones, Ghaempanah said Iran's ability to withstand pressure from major military powers was the result of a combination of strategic leadership, advances in defense technology and the resilience of the Iranian people.

"We are no longer afraid of fighting a superpower like the United States or a nuclear power like Israel. We owe this to the Leader's clear doctrine," he said.

Ghaempanah said the enemy had sought to undermine Iran's civilization but had failed to achieve that objective.

"No one imagined that Iran could stand against two nuclear powers in the world," he said, attributing the Iranian nation's victory primarily to the "clear military doctrine" of the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the scientific capabilities developed by Iran's defense researchers.

He said Iranian defense scientists had succeeded in developing some of the world's most advanced weapons, highlighting the role of military personnel, engineers and those involved in operating missile and drone systems.

"We should kiss the hands of all the fighters, engineers and those who operated the launchers, sent the drones into action and fired missiles at the enemy," Ghaempanah said.

Strength is rooted in national resilience

Ghaempanah identified the perseverance of the Iranian people as the third major factor behind 'the country's ability to withstand the conflict.' "The Iranian nation stood firm and persevered. Iranians stood by their homeland and their identity," he said.

At the same time, the executive vice president stressed that Iran does not seek war and does not pursue confrontation for its own sake. "No war is good, and Iran is not war-mongering," he said. "We are in a defensive position, and we know very well how to defend Iran, our identity, our history and our territorial integrity."

He argued that although war itself was undesirable, the determination demonstrated during wartime could also contribute to a country's development and resilience, citing countries that had advanced through perseverance in difficult circumstances.

Stronger economic ties with neighbors

Turning to economic challenges, Ghaempanah said Iran was operating under severe resource constraints and a "full-scale economic war," making it essential to mobilize all available national capacities for development.

He called for greater economic cooperation between Iran's border regions and neighboring countries, emphasizing the role of free trade zones in expanding cross-border economic relations.

Ghaempanah urged free trade zones to coordinate more closely with local authorities in the provincials and institutions in charge to strengthen economic ties with neighboring states and make more effective use of the opportunities available in border regions.

Regional Hormuz talks postponed, Iran-Oman understanding finalized

From page 1 ► Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told reporters at his weekly press conference on Monday that the gathering of foreign ministers was canceled following Riyadh's intervention.

"The understanding between Iran and Oman, as two littoral states, has been finalized. In consultation with Oman, we will decide on the next step, including how to announce or register the understanding," he added.

Baghaei noted that the Iran-Oman understanding regarding the security of maritime routes was the result of weeks of negotiations between the two countries.

The spokesperson made clear that Iran does not make decisions on "highly sensitive and complicated" security-related issues based on a single factor, stressing that Tehran should not call its own rational and forward-looking actions into question because of the ill-advised actions or broken commitments of others.

Baghaei described the planned assembly in Oman as an "opportunity" created by Tehran and Muscat, saying regional countries were expected to recognize and make use of it. He reiterated that Iran has consistently made efforts to help resolve regional issues and has demonstrated that commitment in practice.

"We well know that the continuation of war in the region among Muslim countries has only one winner, and that winner is no one other than the Zionist regime (Israel), which seeks to prolong tensions and insecurity among Muslim countries in our region," the Iranian spokesperson pointed out.

Confirming the shift in schedule, Mohammad Alibek, Director General of the Persian Gulf Department at Iran's Foreign Ministry, said on Sunday that the



meeting of foreign ministers from Persian Gulf littoral states, originally scheduled for Monday in Oman, has been postponed to a later date following a joint decision by Iran and Oman, at the request of certain regional countries, stressing that Tehran remains fully committed to the process of constructive regional dialogue.

In Muscat, official state media similarly announced the delay. "It has been decided to postpone to a later date the regional meeting that was to be held on Monday in Salalah, in order to create conditions conducive to a constructive dialogue," the Oman News Agency reported on Sunday.

Underlining Oman's persistent diplomatic push, Omani Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi said on X that "we remain determined to promote dialogue that contributes to stability and lasting cooperation in our region."

The Strait of Hormuz constitutes an indispensable choke point for the international economy, with roughly one-fifth of global oil demand flowing across its narrow waters. Iran has maintained heightened restrictions on navigation since the start of the US-Israeli mil-

itary aggression against the country on February 28, citing acute national security concerns and the imperative to safeguard its territorial sovereignty.

Prior to the postponement, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi had reaffirmed that any full normalization of transit through the corridor remains inextricably tied to broader geopolitical dynamics—specifically Washington's compliance with its pledged obligations. Clarifying the scope of the diplomatic track, Araqchi stated firmly in an interview with Al Araby Al Jadeed that preliminary bilateral understandings forged with Oman do not equate to an unconditional opening of the choke point.

"It in no way means the re-opening of the Strait of Hormuz," Araqchi underlined, emphasizing that a resumption of normal commercial transit hinges entirely on Washington honoring the 14-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed on June 17 through Pakistani mediation.

Araqchi revealed that Tehran had prepared a comprehensive technical package for the littoral delegations, noting: "We will provide the details of the under-

standing reached with Muscat, as well as maritime maps delineating the proposed new shipping corridors, to the participating littoral delegations."

Before the postponement, the Iranian Foreign Ministry emphasized that the Oman assembly was intended to "promote better understanding among the countries of the region and help strengthen shared regional security."

The diplomatic deadlock across the waterway remains rooted in Washington's chronic failure to adhere to bilateral and multilateral understandings. Under the Pakistani-mediated 14-point MoU, the United States had committed to concrete de-escalatory steps, including lifting the naval blockade imposed on Iranian ports, halting offensive operations, and clearing impediments to Iranian commercial navigation.

Instead of fulfilling its written pledges, Washington breached the agreement, maintaining its aggressive naval cordon and sustaining hostile actions against Iran's civilian and industrial maritime infrastructure. In response, the Islamic Republic maintained its legitimate strategic curbs on the chokepoint until the hostile parties honor their commitments in full.

Under international maritime law, Iran and Oman exercise sovereign jurisdiction over their territorial waters and contiguous zones within the Strait of Hormuz. Despite the postponement requested by Riyadh and others, Tehran and Muscat have signaled that their finalized bilateral understanding lays the groundwork for an indigenous, cooperative maritime architecture—one that rejects destabilizing foreign military armadas and counters the illusion that relying on Washington's security umbrella can bring genuine stability to the Persian Gulf.

Iran rejects foreign interference, and warns against US unilateralism

From page 1 ►

Yemenis make their own decisions

Baqaei said developments in Yemen should be viewed against the backdrop of years of attacks and an "unjust siege" imposed on the country. He maintained that Ansarullah is an independent actor that makes decisions according to its own interests.

He also pointed to repeated US and Israeli attacks on Yemen and said the Yemeni people's position on the Palestinian issue demonstrated their independent outlook and concern for the wider Muslim community.

At the same time, the Iranian spokesman warned that some actors were seeking to exploit divisions among Muslim countries to deepen regional disputes. He argued that maritime security and freedom of navigation must be guaranteed for all states rather than selectively invoked by outside powers.

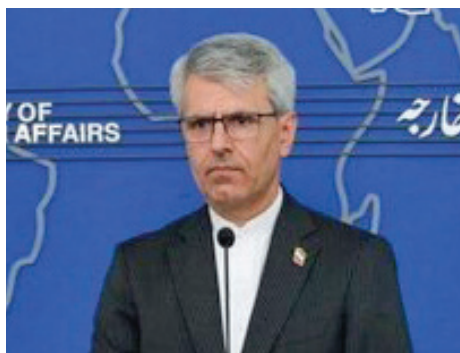
Baqaei separately categorically rejected US allegations that Iran was involved in a recent attack launched from Iraqi territory against Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline. He described the allegations as unfounded and said Washington was seeking to aggravate divisions among regional countries at a time of heightened tensions.

He again stressed that Iran has no role in decisions taken by Ansarullah, adding that Yemen's recent developments should be understood in the context of years of conflict, blockade and repeated US and Israeli strikes.

Tehran and Muscat finalize understanding on maritime routes

The Iranian spokesman also disclosed that Iran and Oman have finalized an understanding concerning maritime routes in the Strait of Hormuz, while consultations continue over how the arrangement will be formally announced.

Baqaei said a planned meeting of regional foreign ministers in Oman was canceled at Saudi Arabia's request. The meeting had been intended to provide an opportunity for Iran and Oman to present their under-



standing of maritime routes and discuss the rights and sovereignty of coastal states.

He emphasized that the Iran-Oman initiative was designed to create an opportunity for regional countries to discuss the establishment of a secure regional environment without intervention by outside actors. He rejected suggestions that Tehran's approach was driven by short-term fluctuations in oil prices, stressing that foreign-policy and national-security decisions cannot be reduced to a single economic factor.

According to Baqaei, the agreement between the two coastal states has now been finalized. Tehran and Muscat will consult on the next steps, including how the understanding should be announced or registered.

He also criticized US claims concerning maritime security, referring to a recent attack on an Iranian vessel near Hengam Island that killed Iranian national Jamshid Rajabi and wounded several others, including two Pakistani nationals working aboard the vessel. Baqaei argued that such incidents contradicted Washington's stated concerns about maritime safety.

Iran's nuclear policy remains unchanged

Baqaei also rejected speculation that Iran has altered its nuclear doctrine or is considering withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

He said Iran's nuclear policy remains clear and argued that discussion of nuclear deterrence is a natural consequence of repeated

attacks and acts of sabotage against Iranian nuclear facilities. He questioned why countries should be surprised by such discussions when the NPT's objectives of preventing proliferation and advancing disarmament have not been fully achieved.

The spokesman said Iran's nuclear facilities had been subjected to dozens of acts of sabotage despite operating under International Atomic Energy Agency supervision, while Tehran had continued to meet its safeguards obligations. Against this backdrop, he said discussions by Iranian lawmakers and other officials about deterrence should not be considered unusual.

Baqaei also linked the issue to security in the Strait of Hormuz, saying that matters concerning Iran and Oman primarily concern the two coastal states. He argued that insecurity in the strategic waterway is a consequence of US actions in the region.

US must end sanctions and intervention

Addressing Iran-US relations, Baqaei said Washington must end 'illegal and interventionist measures' against the Islamic Republic.

He said Iran and the United States had reached an understanding on June 17 at the highest level but Washington violated the agreement 21 days later and resumed or intensified 'unlawful and aggressive actions,' including a naval blockade and economic warfare.

According to Baqaei, the steps required from Washington are straightforward: halt its interventionist measures, compensate for 'crimes committed against Iran,' and end sanctions and economic warfare. He warned that if the United States continued its actions, Iran would maintain the measures it considers necessary in response.

Ties with Turkey and China

Baqaei said Iran's relationship with Turkey extends well beyond Ankara's role in facilitating communications between Tehran and Washington. He described the two neighboring countries as partners with broad common interests and longstanding ties.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Grossi’s toxic legacy: Greenlighting aggression, smearing Iran

In a brazen violation of diplomatic norms, Austria barred Iran’s nuclear chief from IAEA summit due to US pressure

From Page 1 ▶ Rather than condemning the catastrophic precedent of Washington and Tel Aviv bombing sites under full IAEA safeguards, Grossi predictably weaponized the aftermath of those very airstrikes to manufacture an artificial crisis and heighten international hysteria against Tehran.

Grossi noted, “The Agency’s lack of information about this nuclear material and access to facilities to verify it is a matter of serious proliferation concern and needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency.”

In an obvious bid to amplify Western talking points and lend unwarranted international legitimacy to coercive measures against Iran’s peaceful civilian nuclear infrastructure, the director general went on to issue sweeping warnings about the erosion of the global non-proliferation framework.

He said, “I warned last year that the global nuclear non-proliferation regime was coming under strain from more than one angle. Discussions about whether to acquire nuclear weapons continue to surface even in countries in good standing with their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.”

Grossi’s complicity exposed

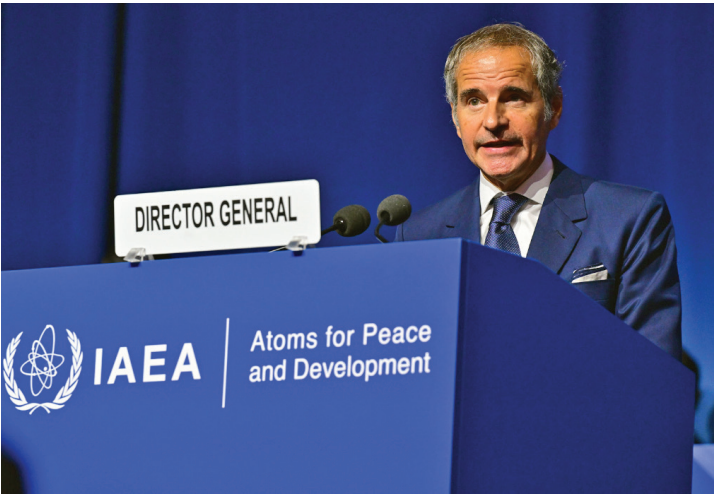
Grossi’s inflammatory rhetoric in Vienna is not an isolated incident, but part of a systematic, long-standing pattern of subservience to Western geopolitical designs.

Crucially, just one day before the outbreak of the 12-day war in June 2025—in which Israel and the US launched aggressive military strikes against Iran—the IAEA Board of Governors adopted a confrontational, anti-Iran resolution. Grossi’s politically biased reporting and calculated timing served as the catalyst, directly laying the political and diplomatic groundwork for the US-Israeli war of aggression on Iran.

By systematically echoing Washington’s demands, refusing to condemn the bombing of safeguarded nuclear sites, and presenting routine technical matters as acute international threats, Grossi has effectively acted as an accomplice to US-Israeli crimes against the Iranian nation. Analysts widely view Grossi’s desperate drive to appease the White House and European powers as a calculated maneuver to secure Western backing for his personal political ambitions, specifically his campaign to succeed António Guterres as the next United Nations Secretary-General.

US dictates visa ban to silence Iran

Grossi’s diatribe coincided with an overt, orchestrated Western



maneuver to silence Iran’s voice at the Vienna gathering. Mohammad Eslami, the Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), was barred from attending the IAEA General Conference after the host country, Austria, capitulated to direct pressure from the Trump administration.

US officials made no effort to conceal their heavy-handed meddling in the affairs of an international body. US Energy Secretary Chris Wright told reporters in Vienna that Washington had actively opposed the participation of the Iranian delegation.

“He’s a sanctioned individual and we don’t want sanctioned individuals evading their sanctions. He asked for a waiver of the sanctions and it was denied,” Wright said.

Echoing this obstructionist stance, Preston Wells Griffith, the US ambassador to the UN in Vienna, confirmed that Austria’s exemption request was blocked after Washington lodged an objection with the committee.

“While we are focused on a diplomatic solution to the challenges posed by Iran’s nuclear program, we could not allow a UN-designated official to travel ... without any meaningful cooperation on nuclear safeguards,” he said.

Eslami had been formally scheduled to address the global gathering to expose Western double standards and clarify Iran’s legal positions before Austria bowed to Washington’s diktat and denied him entry.

Iran condemns host-country violation

The brazen violation of diplomatic norms sparked immediate outrage in Tehran. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmael Baghaei said in his weekly press briefing on Monday that Austria’s move to deny a visa to Eslami for a trip to Vienna was “completely unjustified,” stressing that the Austrian government should have issued entry visas to the Iranian delegation.

He confirmed that Iran’s Foreign

Ministry had summoned Austria’s chargé d’affaires to formally convey the Islamic Republic’s strong protest over the decision to the European country.

“They are seeking to prevent Iran’s voice from reaching the world. Austria’s claim that it took this action under US pressure does not absolve the host government of responsibility,” the Iranian spokesperson emphasized.

In Vienna, Reza Najafi, Iran’s ambassador and permanent representative to international organizations, mounted a fierce legal defense against the discriminatory move.

Najafi said preventing the head of the Iranian delegation from attending the conference violated the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in Article IV, Paragraph C of the IAEA Statute. He said the principle guarantees equal rights for all members and their enjoyment of the benefits of membership.

The envoy said the move also undermined Iran’s right to participate in the General Conference through a representative of its own choosing and weakened the privileges required for representatives to perform their duties under the IAEA Statute and the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the IAEA.

Equal representation and participation are treaty-based membership rights that “cannot and must not be undermined,” he said.

Najafi further described the action as a violation of Austria’s obligations as host country under the IAEA Headquarters Agreement between Austria and the Agency.

He said the agreement requires Austria to take all necessary measures to facilitate the entry of representatives of member states into Austrian territory and issue their visas as promptly as possible. The obligation, he stressed, is binding and unconditional for representatives holding valid credentials.

Najafi warned that preventing the head of a delegation from attending

the agency’s highest policy-making body undermined the conference itself, stressing that anything short of corrective action would set a dangerous precedent for all IAEA members.

The unlawful maneuver by Vienna and Washington drew sharp condemnation from other international delegations. The Russian ambassador to the UN in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, said Austria had “grossly violated” its obligations as host nation of the IAEA.

Western nations had “unleashed a genuine campaign of visa-related abuses to settle scores with countries they deem to be undesirable,” he said.

Manufactured crises and failed coercion

The theatrical confrontation in Vienna unfolds as the Western bloc rapidly escalates its campaign of maximum pressure. Earlier this month, the UN atomic watchdog’s board adopted a resolution reporting Iran to the UN Security Council for the first time in 20 years because of its failure to cooperate, citing a long-running investigation into uranium traces detected by inspectors at undeclared sites. The hostile resolution was tabled by the UK, France, Germany, and the US.

This dangerous move followed the reckless decision last year by France, Britain, and Germany (the E3) to trigger the so-called snap-back mechanism, an unlawful push designed to automatically reinstate expired United Nations sanctions against Iran over its peaceful nuclear program.

In response to the criminal aggression of June 2025, when the US struck Iran’s nuclear sites during the 12-day war, Iran hasn’t given IAEA inspectors access to the affected sites. Tehran maintains that an international agency cannot expect routine access while turning a blind eye to illegal foreign strikes on the very infrastructure it is supposed to safeguard.

The IAEA has also been unable to verify the status of a stockpile of highly-enriched uranium since the June bombing. According to the IAEA, Iran maintains a stockpile of 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60% purity.

Despite relentless Western sanctions, sabotage, and Grossi’s overt collusion with imperialist powers, Tehran has reaffirmed that it will neither surrender its sovereign technological achievements nor bow to foreign dictates, underscoring that the Agency’s subservience to Western capitals has fatally compromised its standing as an impartial global watchdog.

Pezeshkian warns of US efforts to sow division, calls for national unity



From Page 1 ▶ Pezeshkian said Iran’s ability to withstand external pressure ultimately depended on maintaining cohesion at home.

“If we have empathy and synergy in the country and can preserve unity and cohesion, we will never bow to America,” he said.

The president argued that Washington was pursuing a strategy aimed not only at exerting pressure on Iran but also at creating social divisions and weakening cohesion from inside.

“America has closed the routes and is seeking to create divisions in the country,” he said, referring to the restrictions and pressures imposed on Iran.

Iran will not yield to US pressure

Pezeshkian said the United States and the Israeli regime had made extensive use of military tools and technology in the region, accusing them of establishing a “terrorist state” and carrying out targeted killings.

He also criticized the treatment of Palestinians in Gaza, questioning the labeling of civilians there as terrorists while many lacked access to basic necessities such as food and water.

His remarks came as Tehran continues to emphasize national resilience and regional cooperation in response to mounting external pressure. Iranian officials have repeatedly argued that economic and military pressure has reinforced the need for greater domestic cohesion and closer ties with neighboring and friendly countries.

Pezeshkian also highlighted Iran’s efforts to expand relations with its neighbors, saying

regional cooperation could help countries address their shared challenges and reduce the impact of external restrictions.

“If we join hands, we can address the issues and concerns,” he said.

Iran expands regional economic links through land routes

The president said Iran’s interaction with friendly and neighboring countries had increased through land routes despite restrictions affecting maritime routes.

Pezeshkian’s remarks underline Tehran’s broader emphasis on strengthening economic and political links with neighboring states as part of its strategy for navigating external pressure.

Iran has increasingly sought to use its geographic position, extensive land borders and regional trade links to maintain commercial connectivity and diversify economic partnerships. In this context, cooperation with neighboring countries remains a central component of Tehran’s economic diplomacy.

Pezeshkian’s call for greater regional cooperation also reflects Iran’s stated preference for regional mechanisms to address security and economic challenges, rather than relying on arrangements shaped by extra-regional powers.

For Tehran, the message is twofold: maintaining internal unity is viewed as essential to resisting external pressure, while stronger ties with neighboring countries are seen as a means of preserving economic connectivity and strengthening regional resilience.

IRGC shoots down advanced MQ-1 drone over Strait of Hormuz



From Page 1 ▶ The incident marks the second high-profile aerial interception in the waterway in recent days. Last week, the Iranian Army’s air defense units similarly targeted and eliminated an American MQ-1 drone in southeastern airspace after detecting and tracking its flight path across the Hormuz corridor.

As the Strait of Hormuz turns into a focal theater of escalating tensions and hostile Washington-led operations targeting Iran, Tehran has steadily reinforced its sovereignty and maritime oversight across regional waterways.

Throughout the past decade, Iranian armed forces have intercepted, neutralized, or seized a series of advanced US aerial and naval platforms, ranging from the radar-evading RQ-170 Sentinel and MQ-9 Reaper drones to specialized unmanned surface vessels and underwater submersibles deployed in the Persian Gulf.

The successful recovery and reverse-engi-

neering of such seized assets have significantly boosted the Islamic Republic’s self-reliant defense industry, accelerating indigenous unmanned aviation and robotic naval technologies.

Independent assessments underscore the mounting toll on US unmanned aviation. According to figures reported by Bloomberg, Iranian defenses have downed over two dozen MQ-9 Reapers since the outbreak of the US-backed Israeli military aggression across the region, wiping out nearly a fifth of the Pentagon’s pre-war fleet. With each unit valued at roughly 30 million, total equipment losses have approached the one billion threshold.

Citing congressional testimony, Bloomberg and defense analysis outlet The War Zone report that the US Air Force’s active Reaper fleet has dwindled to approximately 135 airframes—falling markedly short of its mandatory operational baseline of 189.

LATEST NEWS

■ **Sunni cleric Yousef Gorgij killed in Zahedan attack**

Yousof Gorgij, a prominent Sunni cleric known for promoting Shia-Sunni unity, was killed by unidentified attackers outside his home in Zahedan, the capital of Iran’s southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province, on Monday afternoon.

The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces said terrorist groups had targeted Gorgij after suffering a series of setbacks and the dismantling of several terrorist cells in the province. It said the attack was intended to undermine Shia-Sunni unity, describing Gorgij as a respected and influential religious figure in the region.

■ **Putin: West was wrong to expect Iran to fall apart**

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the West had mistakenly expected Iran to fall apart amid internal challenges, particularly following the military conflict.

Speaking on a television program, Putin said Iran was seeking to preserve domestic stability and that Iranian society was becoming increasingly cohesive. He cited the “Jaanam Fadayee Iran” (“I Sacrifice My Life for Iran”) campaign, saying five million people

had registered within its first week and more than 10 million had since signed up, declaring their readiness to sacrifice their lives for Iran. Putin said the development was indicative of the country’s growing social cohesion.

■ **PGSA warns against serving violating vessels**

Iran’s Persian Gulf Strait Affairs Authority (PGSA) warned insurers, protection and indemnity insurance clubs, and classification societies against providing services to vessels listed as violating its regulations governing maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

The PGSA said the list of violating vessels has been updated and urged relevant entities to refrain from providing services to the listed vessels.

“The list of violating vessels at pgsa.ir/non-compliance-list/ has been updated,” the authority said in a message on Monday.

“Insurance companies, P&I clubs and classification societies are warned to refrain from providing services to these vessels in order to avoid the consequences arising from relations with them,” it added.

■ **Iran sanctions 77 vessels over violations in Strait of Hormuz**

Iran has placed 77 vessels on its blacklist or

sanctions list over violations in the Strait of Hormuz, according to a report by the Persian Gulf Waterway Institute. Under the reported measure, any vessel or entity cooperating with ships on the blacklist would also be subject to sanctions.

■ **Iranian envoy: US, Israeli military actions behind region’s economic tensions**

Ali Bahraini, Iran’s ambassador and permanent representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, said the roots of the region’s economic tensions lay in US and Israeli military aggression.

He said the economic consequences of regional tensions in trade, energy and food markets were a direct result of aggressive actions against Iran.

Bahraini also warned that unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions and related restrictions, undermine development prospects and make targeted economies more vulnerable to external shocks.

He called on the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to give due consideration to the cumulative impact of such measures on the development and economic resilience of developing countries.

Salman field creates \$1.2b revenue in 2 years



TEHRAN- The project to maintain oil production, collect associated gases, and develop gas transmission infrastructure at the shared Salman Field is underway.

According to Mehr News Agency, citing the National Iranian Oil Company, the shared Salman Field is located in the Lavan area. Due to its advanced age, it is in the second half of its reservoir life, and for years oil production from this field has not occurred naturally. To maintain and continue production, gas lift to the wells is essential.

According to the design, the high-pressure gas needed for injection was supposed to be supplied by turbo-compressors installed on the platform (Solar Mars 90). However, due to the foreign type and model and the old age of this equipment, as well as problems caused by sanctions, the supply of parts and their repair, gas lift has faced serious limitations. Therefore, inevitably, and in order to prevent a decline in oil production from the shared Salman oil field, high-pressure gas from the Salman gas field has been used in recent years for gas lift and to enable oil production from this shared field.

On this basis, from Iranian year 1385 (began on March 21, 2016) to the end of Mordad 1405 (October 20, 2026) by injecting gas from the Salman gas field into its oil field, more than \$21.5 billion has been earned by the country from oil production at this field, which has a much higher added value compared with the gas of this field. Also, in the two years since the 14th administration began, revenue equivalent to \$1.2 billion has been obtained for the country from this field.

On the other hand, given the importance of maintaining oil production from a shared field, using the available high-pressure gas for injection into the wells of this field has been a rational, economic, and conservation-oriented solution for continued production. In the Salman Field, water injection into the reservoir is also very important in addition to gas lift. Fortunately, with the installation and commissioning of a turbo-generator, after a long time, water injection by the main injection pumps, in addition to the current booster pumps, will become possible.

However, with the efforts of headquarters units and the support of the National Iranian Oil Company, important measures for collecting Salman's associated gases have begun, and a draft contract with one of the domestic petrochemical companies has been prepared and will be signed soon. Under this contract, while modernizing the equipment needed for the gas lift process of the Salman oil platform, the field's associated gases will gradually be collected. In addition, with the credit adjustment, the supply and purchase of the needed turbines is currently being pursued simultaneously and is in its final stages.

Completion of drilling 55 oil and gas wells in

Tehran hosting international auto show

TEHRAN - The 7th Tehran International Auto Show is running at Shahr-e Aftab exhibition center during September 14-17.

According to IRNA, the CEO of Shahr-e Aftab Exhibition Company said on Sunday: This exhibition is one of the most visited exhibitions in the country and has opened in this exhibition complex.

Mohammad Mehdi Salari added: If this exhibition were held at the Tehran Permanent International Fairground, Tehran would face heavy traffic, and Shahr-e Aftab, with all its capacity and facilities, will be a good host for organizers of various exhibitions.

Also, the CEO of Ideh Tejarat Hermes Company, as the organizer of this exhibition, said: At this exhibition, we will host 35 automotive groups, and alongside introducing compa-

first half of year

Also, the 30-inch Salman gas pipeline to Siri Island, about 150 kilometers long, is ready for operation and there is no problem along this route. In addition, a plan to construct a new pipeline has been defined. Due to the special specifications and characteristics of the pipes required for this project and the impossibility of producing these pipes domestically, the entire requirement of 52,000 tons has been ordered from China. So far, about 20,000 tons, equivalent to 30 percent of the project's needs, has been produced. The first cargo weighing 3,800 tons and the second cargo weighing 4,239 tons, totaling 8,039 tons, have entered the country and are with the contractor at the Mahshahr yard. Also, 10,655 tons of pipe is being cleared from Imam Khomeini Port customs, and 1,525 tons is ready for loading from a Chinese port to Iran.

The 32-inch gas transmission pipeline from Siri Island to Assaluyeh, approximately 315 kilometers long, was also built with the aim of transferring 500 million cubic feet per day of sour gas from the Salman Field to the Fourth Refinery of Assaluyeh. After numerous problems in dewatering, cleaning, and drying the line, pre-commissioning and commissioning operations were successfully carried out in 1395, and operation of the line began. However, this pipeline suffered a complete rupture near Siri Island on 26 Mordad 1402. After the stages of preparing the scope of work, securing funding, and tendering, repair and recommissioning operations were assigned to the contractor from 10 Shahrivar 1403.

During project execution, the contractor prepared from Esfand 1404 to conduct ROV Survey operations and identify the condition of the pigs at the damage site. However, with the start of the imposed Ramadan war on 9 Esfand 1404, the offshore and onshore activities of this project were halted. In Ordibehesht of the current year, the diving vessel "Diana" was dispatched, and the pigs and temporary spools were recovered from the seabed. But given the great depth and complexity of the damage site, installing the repair spool requires saturation diving and a foreign team. Due to risks arising from security conditions, the possibility of emergency situations, and disruptions of communications and GPS, it has not yet been possible to deploy this team.

According to the current plan, if there is no renewed leakage and conditions are provided for saturation diving operations, it is expected that this pipeline will be ready for commissioning and gas injection within about the next 6 months.

Therefore, activities in the Salman Field have not only not stopped, but the Iranian Offshore Oil Company is simultaneously pursuing the maintenance of oil production, the collection of associated gases, and the completion of the gas transmission infrastructure of this field.

nies' products and achievements, we seek to increase consumers' awareness and demands.

Mehdi Asadi added: This exhibition has been planned for the first time with an area of more than 22,000 square meters and four test-drive spaces in the southern part of the exhibition, and visitors can test some of the cars present up close.

He stated: The presence of international car companies, especially from China, is impressive at this exhibition, and we predict that it will be well received.

According to Asadi, the social campaign "No to Accidents" will also continue this year in the form of a series of specialized podcasts.

CBI governor meets Turkish, Tunisian counterparts at Islamic Banks Summit

TEHRAN- The Governor of the Central Bank of Iran met and held talks with the Governors of the Central Banks of Turkey and Tunisia on the sidelines of the summit of Central Bank Governors of Islamic countries.

According to IRNA, citing the Central Bank, Abdolnaser Hemmati, the Governor of the Central Bank, who has traveled to Turkey to participate in the summit of Central Bank Governors of Islamic countries, held meetings with his counterparts on the sidelines of the summit.

In these meetings, emphasis was placed on expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation among Islamic countries.

Also, strengthening monetary and banking interactions among



these countries was another topic raised in the meeting of the Governor of the Central Bank.

Hemmati left Tehran for Istanbul, on Sunday, to attend the meeting of central bank governors

of Islamic countries.

The CBI governor departed Tehran for Istanbul, at the head of a high-ranking delegation to participate in the meeting of central bank governors of Islamic countries.

Mehran Free Zone moving toward forming a joint economic hub with Iraq

TEHRAN- The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization announced that negotiations for forming a joint free zone between Mehran and Iraq's Zurbatiyah have accelerated, and given the Iraqi side's welcome, the plan could lead to the formation of a joint economic hub on both sides of the border and a leap in trade in western Iran. At the same time, the process of importing and registering free-zone vehicles is on the verge of being finalized.

Mehdi Ra'yati said on Sunday in a video interview with IRNA's news studio: After its approval in 1400 (2021), the Mehran Free Zone Organization faced delays in starting operations due to changes in governments and the failure to provide the necessary conditions for forming a board of directors and organizational structure; however, its official activity began last Bahman (February).

He added: After the start of activities, the organization's structure took shape, deputies and directorates were established, and a set of legal and executive measures was placed on the agenda to activate the free zone's capacities.

He continued: Today, the Mehran Free Zone has passed the stage of organizational establishment and has entered the stage of implementing economic, infrastructure, production, and commercial programs.

He stated: One of the first tasks after the organization's establishment was activating the process of company registration and issuing economic activity permits, and this process is now underway in the Mehran Free Zone.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization added: The registration process for 470 production, service, and mostly commercial companies in the Mehran Free Zone is underway, and this welcome reflects economic actors' hope in the legal capacities and border location of this zone.

Ra'yati said that the process of issuing permits for economic activities has also been defined and activated in the organization, and economic actors can pursue their activities through the legal path of the free zone.

He continued: The transfer of official deeds for the free zone area to the organization's name has also been carried out with the cooperation of the National Organization for Registration of Deeds and Properties, and this measure is an important infrastructure for stabilizing economic activities and investment in the zone.

Mehran customs entered operational phase

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization announced that the establishment of the free zone's customs has been completed and the customs code for this zone has been issued by the Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He added: In the field of foreign trade, negotiations with Iraq's customs have also been pursued, and recently, in a meeting with the Director-General of that country's customs, the issues and problems raised by Iranian traders were examined.

Ra'yati continued: The Iraqi side has introduced a representative to follow up on issues and resolve customs and trade problems, and this matter will be seriously pursued in the coming days.

He emphasized: Organizing the border and creating the infrastructure needed for economic activity are among the organization's priorities, and we are trying to make the trade process in the region easier and faster.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization added: Activation of the free zone's customs, issuance of permits, and stabilization of deeds have provided the necessary ground for

During this trip, in addition to attending and actively participating in the official meeting of central bank governors of Islamic countries, the governor of the central bank has intensive plans on his agenda for bilateral meetings with officials of the member countries of the meeting.

The main focus of these consultations has been announced as deepening and developing bilateral banking and trade cooperation, as well as creating and defining new mechanisms to facilitate trade exchanges between the parties.

The trip is expected to be an effective step toward reducing financial restrictions and strengthening Iran's economic relations with Islamic countries.

Ra'yati said: Attracting investors for infrastructure projects is among the organization's serious programs, and we are trying to pursue the implementation of plans with greater speed.

He also announced that nearly 17 percent of the Mehran Free Zone area has agricultural use, and this capacity, along with processing industries, can become one of the axes of economic activity in the zone.

He added: The program to promote modern cultivation patterns in the region has begun, and we are trying, given Mehran's access to domestic and foreign markets, to develop the production of agricultural products and processing industries.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization emphasized that in this field, the agricultural capacities of Mehran and Ilam must be used, and the ground must be provided for producers to supply their products to the market with greater added value.

He continued: Developing ecotourism and agritourism is also among the organization's other programs, and to implement this program, we are cooperating with the province's Directorate-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

Ra'yati said: A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the province's Directorate-General of Cultural Heritage to facilitate and develop tourism services, and introducing Ilam's attractions to pilgrims and travelers is included in this program.

He added: Ilam has valuable natural and tourism capacities, and the heavy traffic through the Mehran border is an opportunity to introduce these capacities to Iraqi travelers and tourists.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization added: The goal is for part of the border traffic to turn into longer stays by travelers and a boost to tourism services in the province.

Referring to the newly established nature of the Mehran Free Zone Organization, Ra'eiti said that one cannot expect an organization that has passed about six months since the start of its establishment and operational activity to solve all the accumulated problems of past years in this short period.

He continued: Despite financial resource constraints and the short time of activity, the measures taken in the fields of company registration, customs, deeds, permit issuance, vehicles, infrastructure, production, agriculture, tourism, and border diplomacy show that the organization has entered a new stage of activity and leap.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization continued: The organization's management team and board of directors have experience working in free zones and, with a forward-looking approach, are trying to pursue Mehran's development path with greater speed.

He emphasized that the support of the people, economic actors, traders, producers, and entrepreneurs is essential for realizing the free zone's programs.

Ra'yati said: The Mehran Free Zone is still at the beginning of the road, but legal capacities, its border location, the welcome of economic actors, and cooperation among different bodies can pave the way for transformation in this region.

The CEO of the Mehran Free Zone Organization stated that Mehran's outlook is bright, and we hope that with the set of works underway, in the near future we will witness the formation of a sustainable economic flow on both sides of the border and Mehran's transformation into one of the important axes of trade and an economic hub of Iran and Iraq.

How Xi Jinping positioned BRICS against Western sanctions, power politics

From page 1 ▶ He rejected the assumption that Western military force can dictate regional outcomes. Reaffirming Beijing's four-point proposal for peace in West Asia, Xi called for an immediate, comprehensive ceasefire and an end to all hostilities.

Lasting stability, he emphasized, requires dismantling external security dominance and constructing a new regional security architecture based on sovereign equality, non-interference, and mutual trust.

Xi stressed that resolving the Palestinian question through an independent state remains the non-negotiable core of West Asian tranquility.

II. Dismantling economic sanctions and tech isolation

Turning to international economic relations, Xi took direct aim at Washington's reliance on tech blockades and trade pressure.

He explicitly denounced strat-



egies like "small yard, high fences" and illegal unilateral sanctions unauthorized by the UN Security Council, warning that such measures only divide the international community.

Xi argued that Western containment strategies will fail to slow the industrial expansion of developing states.

He urged BRICS members to build technological sovereignty through open-source artificial

intelligence systems, joint industrial platforms, and secure supply chains designed to bypass Western leverage.

III. Overhauling global governance and international law

Xi repudiated the doctrine that "might makes right," demanding a return to international law anchored in the United Nations Charter.

He urged BRICS members to

reject Western double standards and defend the multilateral trading system against tariff abuse and protectionist bullying.

Xi asserted that global rules must be collectively established by all nations rather than dictated by imperial powers.

IV. Strategic realignment under China's chairship

Looking ahead, China will assume the BRICS chairship next year to host the nineteenth summit, ushering in what Xi characterized as a third decade of high-quality cooperation.

Beijing plans to expand Global South representation in frontier domains, including cyberspace, outer space, and deep-sea exploration.

Xi's address reflects a growing strategic alignment between China and regional forces resisting Western domination, offering a concrete model for sovereign development and collective security.



future. Essentially, Britain is not trying to separate Israel from the settlement project; it is trying to preserve the possibility of keeping the two separate to protect its ally.

And this is not a moral shift. It is a shift in the very concept of security. For decades, the West asked: How do we protect Israel? The question now beginning to assert itself is different: How does the West protect Israel's future from the isolationist path it is taking?

Occupation and settlements are no longer two issues within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; they have become part of the equation of regional stability, as well as part of the costs the West bears in managing West Asia.

This is why the Palestinian issue has begun to move beyond the framework of the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict" in Western calculations and into considerations of regional stability and European security and political interests.

This is what makes the British position more than simply a disagreement with the Netanyahu government.

If the West believes that Netanyahu is the problem, then Israeli elections will test that assumption. Because Israelis will not be voting only on the name of their next prime minister.

They will be voting, directly or indirectly, on the direction of the regime.

Do they want to rebuild the regime's security based on a settlement that can bring the conflict to an end? Or do they want to continue along a path that sees control over Palestinian land as part of an identity project?

This makes the next election important to the West as much as it is to the Israelis. If the government changes and the direction changes with it, the West can say that the problem was the leadership.

But if the election reproduces the same forces and the same path, it will become increasingly difficult for the West to continue reducing the problem to Netanyahu.

At that point, the election will shift from being a test of the gov-

ernment to a test of the direction of the regime itself.

And here Britain returns to Balfour.

In 1917, Britain illegally supported the establishment of a "home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, while stipulating that the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population should not be harmed.

More than three decades later, it recognized the Zionist regime. Today, it finds itself facing a historical paradox: the state that helped open the way for the Zionist project now finds itself compelled to draw boundaries around one of the trajectories that developed within it.

But the issue is not that Britain regrets the creation of a Zionist regime. That would be an oversimplification of history.

More accurately, the West may be beginning to reconsider the trajectory that has allowed it to redefine the Zionist project.

The regime whose security the West has supported, and whose survival it has long regarded as part of its strategic interests, is not necessarily the same regime that settlements and annexation policies pursued indefinitely may produce.

The regime the West wants to protect is, in its public rhetoric, to live alongside a Palestinian state.

But the Israel taking shape on the ground may be moving toward a different definition: a regime expanding the territory under its control without expanding the boundaries of its international recognition.

If settlements remain a policy, it can be changed by changing the government.

But if it becomes part of the definition of the regime, changing it means redefining the regime itself.

And this is the paradox confronting Britain and the West today: the question is no longer simply how to protect this regime from its enemies, but how to protect its future from a path that could leave it with greater isolation, and farther from the settlement the West says it wants for it.

From Balfour to Miliband, Britain now finds itself asking: Which Israel does the West want to protect?

Nine years after Saudi Ritz-Carlton purge, Rami Naimi remains trapped

From page 1 ▶

'Gilded prison'

The nightmare began in November 2017. Naimi, the son of former Saudi oil minister Ali al-Naimi, was intercepted at Dubai airport.

Emirati security forces transferred him to Abu Dhabi police headquarters. He was then rendered to Riyadh aboard a private jet.

Authorities locked him inside the Ritz-Carlton hotel, converting the world-famous luxury venue into what the FT describes as a "gilded prison."

Naimi told his wife, Mira Lozi, that captors removed the doors from guest rooms. Guards moved blindfolded prisoners to a "dedicated torture area" inside the hotel gym. He was waterboarded, electrocuted, and beaten.

Interrogators targeted him to access his father's immense fortune. They falsely claimed the older man was suffering torture in an adjacent room. They offered Naimi a "5 per cent" cut if he surrendered the family funds.

After 85 days of abuse, Naimi broke. He was forced to place his fingerprints on a document pledging to pay the kingdom's rulers roughly \$1.3 billion, a sum later reduced to \$266 million, the report says.

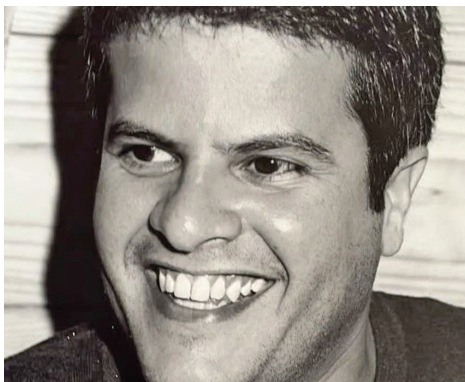
The illusion of release and secret captivity

Authorities "freed" him in January 2018. This supposed freedom was entirely illusory.

Officials fitted him with an ankle tag, restricted his movements to his father's house in Dhahran, and banned him from leaving the country. State handlers called constantly to demand money he did not possess, according to the report.

In September 2022, the state seized him again. For 18 months, Naimi vanished into a secret facility run by the "anti-corruption agency" Nazaha.

Guards subjected him to constant artificial light and the deliberate banging of metal pipes. He spoke to no one but his captors. Naimi lat-



er described the terrifying isolation to his wife, stating he was treated "like a caged animal."

'They've stripped us of everything'

By July 2024, authorities relocated him to the maximum-security al-Ha'ir prison. He was briefly released in March 2025, returning home severely underweight, hypervigilant, and dependent on high doses of antidepressants, his family says.

The kingdom then initiated closed criminal proceedings. Prosecutors cited a 2010 contract involving Saudi Aramco to levy conflict-of-interest charges, while also prosecuting him for failing to pay the coerced Ritz-Carlton settlement.

A judge convicted Naimi in November 2025, handing down a six-year prison sentence. The Saudi Supreme Court rejected his final appeal in May 2026, according to the investigation.

According to his family, the extortion never stopped. In early July 2026, Nazaha officials reportedly demanded a fresh \$26 million payment to keep him out of prison.

The psychological toll on his family remains devastating.

"They took 10 years of his life, they took 10 years of my kids' lives," Lozi said. "They've stripped us of everything, money and life and years that are irreplaceable."

Naimi now awaits another hearing regarding allegations of "following hostile social media accounts."

9/11 Families United chair calls out Trump over Saudi cover-up, Iran war narrative



From page 1 ▶ "For 25 years, administration after administration, including leaders in front of us here today, chose to protect the Saudis instead of standing with the 9/11 families," Strada said.

She said that successive White Houses have withheld evidence, vetoed legislation, and broken promises to survivors.

Turning toward Vance, she demanded action: "Stand with the families. Stand with the survivors. Stand with Americans."

Strada also called on Trump to "tell the Saudis to stop lying" and to acknowledge their role in funding and assisting the hijackers.

The timing gives her words legal teeth. In August 2025, U.S. District Judge George B. Daniels rejected Saudi Arabia's attempt to throw out a massive civil lawsuit brought by victims' families.

Daniels ruled that plaintiffs presented credible evidence showing Saudi government officials provided material support to al-Qaeda operatives in California prior to the attack.

Fifteen of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals. Zero were Iranian.

Yet across the Potomac, the administration presented a rewritten history. At the Pentagon, where 184 people died in 2001, Hegseth falsely claimed Iran "cheered on 9/11" and argued that

six months of U.S. air strikes against Tehran were a direct continuation of post-9/11 counterterrorism.

Trump echoed the posture, declaring that U.S. forces were fighting in West Asia to ensure Iran never acquires nuclear weapons under the banner of "never forget."

The factual gap is glaring. Al-Qaeda, a Sunni extremist organization, viewed Shia Iran as a mortal enemy.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei addressed Hegseth's claims directly on X, noting that not a single Iranian participated in the 2001 attacks.

Baqaei pointed out that the actual perpetrators were armed, organized, or cultivated by past American policy choices.

He called the administration's attempt to drape a six-month-old offensive in 9/11 symbolism "utterly absurd," attaching a meme to mock what Tehran views as an incoherent strategy.

Returning from Ireland over the weekend, Trump offered only a vague promise when pressed by reporters on whether he would declassify remaining files on Saudi Arabia, saying he would "look at it."

For families who have fought through two decades of federal court battles, vague promises carry no weight.

From Balfour to Miliband: Has the West begun redefining Israel?

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – It is difficult to treat British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband's remarks about "ethnic cleansing" in parts of the occupied West Bank as simply another diplomatic position toward Israel.

Miliband tried to draw a clear line when announcing sanctions on the regime's settlements: Israel is not Netanyahu's government; settlements in the West Bank are not Israeli; and punishing settlements does not mean punishing the regime. At the same time, he reaffirmed Britain's continued commitment to the regime's security and prosperity.

But this seemingly clear distinction in British discourse simply doesn't align with reality.

Netanyahu's government came to power through elections, and the settler terrorist movements that participate in it are not alien to Israeli society.

The fact, which cannot be ignored, is that the right wing pushing for permanent control over Palestinian territories has become a central pillar of the regime's government and politics.

And this is where Britain faces a problem it cannot easily overcome:

If the regime's government is elected, and its policies have a social and electoral base, to what extent can the government be separated from the regime? The question is not about Netanyahu alone.

Netanyahu may leave, but what if the direction he brought remains? What if the prime minister changes while the political and social forces that view settlements and annexation as part of their identity remain in place? This is highly likely.

Then the problem will no longer be about one person. It will be about a policy.

This leads to the deeper question: Are settlements and settler terrorism a policy adopted by a government, or has it become one of the paths through which the regime itself struggles to define itself to the international community?

Illegal settlements have been expanding on Palestinian land before Netanyahu took office. The sharp rise in acts of settler terrorism under a terrorist government has grabbed Western media attention.

Within the regime, everyone who arrived after the Nakba is a settler. Nevertheless, within the regime now, there is a camp that wants a Jewish land within borders that can be defined and secured, and sees continued control over Palestinians as a threat to its political and international future.

On the other side, there is a camp that sees the West Bank not as occupied territory that can be negotiated over, but part of Zionist

land that must remain under the regime's control, no matter what the consequences.

This is not a dispute over one illegal settlement here or one outpost there. It is a dispute over the future protection of the Zionist regime.

The problem is not that the Israeli government is doing something that Israel does not want. The problem is that a part of Israel itself wants something increasingly difficult for Western voters to accept following the Gaza genocide.

Breaking international law on a daily basis with impunity appears to have its limits with the regime's European allies, whose voter base is demanding action.

This is why the attempt to separate the regime from illegal settlements becomes more difficult as the settlement project becomes more deeply embedded in Zionist ideology.

The settler is Israeli. The occupying forces protecting the settlements are Israeli. The parties calling for their expansion enter the Knesset with Israeli votes. And the government providing them with political support and protection is the Israeli government.

Legally, the West can say that the regime is one thing and the settlements are another.

Politically, however, the dividing line becomes increasingly blurred as the settlement project becomes part of the regime's politics.

The issue is not the number of settler homes that will be built, but the number of Western journalists filming terrorism in the West Bank and sending these reports back home.

Britain considers this a direct threat to this so-called democracy, which is closely allied with, and a threat to, its two-state solution dream.

In other words, the West has begun to view settlements not as a consequence of the conflict, but as a tool for reshaping its outcome.

Settlements have become more than a policy on the ground; they have turned into a policy for shaping the future.

And so the conflict moves from the question: Where are the illegal settlers building? To a larger question: Where does the regime end?

This is where British policy begins to collide with a deeper transformation within Israel.

Britain does not want to sever its relationship, nor does it want to withdraw its recognition of it, nor is it saying that it is targeting Israeli society.

It wants something more complicated: to preserve the regime it recognizes without accepting the trajectory that could redefine its

Iran learn volleyball fixtures for 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – The schedule for Iran’s men’s national volleyball team at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, has been announced, with Roberto Piazza’s side set to open their campaign against Kyrgyzstan.

The men’s volleyball tournament at the 2026 Asian Games will be held from Sept. 26 to October 2, with 16 teams competing for the gold medal.

Iran have been drawn in Group B alongside Indonesia, Thailand and Kyrgyzstan and will begin their campaign against Kyrgyzstan on Sept. 27.

Piazza’s squad will then face Thailand before completing the preliminary round against Indonesia in the following days.

Group Stage Draw

Group A: Japan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan

Group B: Iran, Indonesia, Thailand, Kyrgyzstan

Group C: Qatar, India, Vietnam, Hong Kong

Group D: South Korea, China, Chinese Taipei, Philippines

The top two teams from each group will advance to the knockout stage and compete for places from first to eighth. The remaining eight teams will enter the classification phase, where they will battle for positions ninth through 16th.

Iran to face Kyrgyzstan at 2026 CAFA U17 Women’s C’ship opener

TEHRAN – Iran will start the 2026 CAFA U17 Women’s Championship with a match against Kyrgyzstan on Tuesday.

The Persian girls will also meet Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on Thursday and Saturday, respectively.

The competition will be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from Sept. 15 to 19.

The championship will serve to develop young football players, prepare them for regional and global competitions, as well as showcase the best young talents in Central Asia.

Central Asia has talented clubs and passionate football fans, but when it comes to regional club competitions, CAFA remains one of the least active confederations in Asia.

Piazza praises Iran volleyball spirit

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s national volleyball team finished runners-up at the 23rd AVC Men’s Volleyball Championship but Italian head coach Roberto Piazza praised his players for continuing to fight until the final point.

Iran lost to hosts Japan 3-0 (25–21, 26–24, 25–23) in the final match on Sunday and failed to book their place at the 2028 Olympic Games.

“I think the most important thing is that we never gave up,” Piazza said. “From the beginning, we were in the game. We lost the first set because of our own mistakes, not because Japan played an incredible volleyball. We also had an important role in the first set and contributed to the result ourselves.”

Piazza stressed that the defeat should be viewed as a team result rather than the responsibility of individual players.

“It doesn’t matter who made the mistake. I don’t want to blame anyone because we play as a team,” he added. “In the end, we were able to fight until the finish.”

“We were ahead in the second set, and in the third set we were leading 6-2,” Piazza explained. “But once again, at the crucial moment, when you need to find a special ball, Japan found it and we couldn’t.”

The Italian coach highlighted Piazza’s ability to deliver in decisive moments, particularly when star player Yuki Ishikawa was serving.

“For me, this is the important conclusion,” Piazza said. “In the second set, when Yuki Ishikawa was in the service zone, they found a special ball. But the real question is whether only Ishikawa was

special, or whether we could have done something better.”

The silver medal nevertheless marked a strong campaign for Iran, and Piazza said he was proud of the squad’s overall performance throughout the tournament.

“I am proud of my boys. I am really proud of all of them,” he said.

“In volleyball, you have to show your ability every day and on every ball,” he said. “That is why I am very proud of my players.”

The tournament also provided valuable lessons for Iran as the team continue to develop under Piazza. The coach believes his players are beginning to understand what is required tactically, even if they are not yet able to execute those plans consistently.

“This is part of the special conditions of volleyball, and it is something we have to learn,” Piazza said. “First of all, we have to focus on ourselves, not on the opponent.”

“Overall, we became more consistent, and my feeling is that the boys have started to understand what they need to do, even though they cannot always execute it. But the first step is knowing exactly what you have to do. Sooner or later, you will reach the goal. We came very close.”

Piazza nevertheless ended his message by thanking Iranian supporters for their backing throughout the competition.

“I want to thank the people of Iran for their support,” he said.

2026 Asian Games: Iran basketball to play Bahrain in QFs

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s national basketball team will face Bahrain in the quarterfinals of the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, with a place in the last four at stake.

The quarterfinal matchups have been confirmed, and Iran will need to overcome a tough Bahrain side to book their place in the semifinals.

Bahrain advanced to the knockout stage as runners-up in their group, finishing behind China. The Persian Gulf side will pose a serious challenge to Iran, particularly with the presence of their stand-out player, JaKarr Sampson.

Sampson has added significant quality and experience to Bahrain’s lineup and is expected to be one of the key threats for Iran. His presence on both ends of the floor, particularly in the paint, could prove decisive in the elimination game.

Iran will need to contain Bahrain’s inside game while maintaining its own offensive efficiency if it is to secure a place among the tournament’s top four.

The other quarterfinal matchups are:

Jordan vs. South Korea

China vs. Saudi Arabia

Chinese Taipei vs. Japan

Iran will take on Bahrain on Wednesday, with the winners advancing to the Asian Games semifinals.

Golmohammadi set to stay at Duhok

TEHRAN – Reports suggesting that Yahya Golmohammadi could leave Duhok SC are completely unfounded, with the Iranian head coach expected to remain in charge of the Iraqi club.

Duhok suffered their first defeat of the season on Tuesday night, losing 3-2 away to Al-Karkh despite creating several good chances to score.

Golmohammadi’s side appeared to be in control for much of the match and were still ahead until the 65th minute. However, repeated defensive errors and lapses from the goalkeeper allowed Al-Karkh to turn the game around and claim all three points.

The disappointing result was followed by reports on social media and in local media outlets suggesting that Duhok could end their cooperation with Golmohammadi.

However, those reports have no basis in reality, and there is currently no indication that the club intends to part ways with the Iranian coach.

Golmohammadi is therefore expected to continue his work with Duhok as the team looks to bounce back from its first defeat of the campaign and maintain its strong start to the season.

56 cities, 35 villages on Iran’s national list for handicraft hubs

TEHRAN – Iran has so far registered 56 cities and 35 villages as national handicrafts centers, with 18 locations added to the list over the past two years, a tourism ministry official said.

The registrations aim to identify and promote Iran’s distinctive handicrafts capacities, protect traditional arts in local communities and strengthen specialized production hubs, Narges Rajaei, director general of handicrafts education and promotion at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said on Sunday.

Over the past two years, nine cities have been added to the national list, including: Meymand in Fars province, recognized for glassmaking; Rayen in Kerman province, recognized for knife-making; Izeh and Shadegan in Khuzestan province, recognized for kilim weaving and mat weaving, respectively; and Bafroiye in Yazd province, recognized for traditional wool spinning.

International recognition and support

The historical city of Yazd was registered last year as a World Craft City for traditional jewelry, Rajaei said, adding that Na’in’s aba-weaving in Isfahan province had received international geographical indication registration through the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a United Nations specialized agency.

Over the past two years, 1,269 national authenticity seals were awarded to handicrafts artists to support the production of original, creative and high-quality works, she said.

Other measures included sending eight artists to international promotional exhibitions in India, participating in an international festival in Uzbekistan and holding a specialized Iranian handicrafts exhibition in Samarkand.

Iran orders all 31 provinces to hold national tourism events

TEHRAN – Iran’s tourism ministry has called on all 31 provinces to organize national tourism events and exhibitions during the second half of the current Iranian calendar year, as part of efforts to promote domestic travel and support the industry amid continuing challenges, Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said.

Salehi-Amiri made the announcement on Saturday at a meeting attended by his deputy for tourism, Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpei, provincial directors general and tourism officials from across the country.

Salehi-Amiri said tourism had a significant role in strengthening national vitality and remained an important part of Iranian households’ lifestyles.

“Tourism Week is a valuable opportunity to showcase Iran’s strength and dynamism in tourism,” he said, calling on all prov-



Employment and financial assistance

The handicrafts sector added 180,303 workers over the two-year period, Rajaei said.

The ministry issued 175 licenses for handicrafts houses and 94 licenses for private-sector facilities. It also established 81 government handicrafts houses in 28 provinces, with an investment of more than 835 billion rials.

A total of 107,962 activity permits were issued to facilitate work by handicrafts artists and producers, while 2,551 temporary handicrafts markets were established, she said.

Rajaei also reported the payment of financial assistance to handicrafts producers and practitioners.

Other measures included holding the eighth national authenticity seal program in all 31 provinces of the country, issuing 1,269 certificates, securing inter-

national geographical indication registration for aba-weaving, lifting the export ban on backgammon boards and allowing imports of raw semi-precious stones to supply production workshops.

The ministry also facilitated the repatriation of export earnings based on the amount of raw materials used, organized training workshops through digital sales platforms with 430 handicrafts producers, and supported the launch of 185 sellers and 94 facilitators on those platforms.

Insurance coverage was extended to 5,123 handicrafts workers, while 5 trillion toman in support for handicrafts home-based businesses was allocated for around 15,000 projects, Rajaei said.

According to the ministry, Iran has revived 66 handicraft disciplines that were at risk of disappearing over the past five years through support measures

aimed at preserving traditional knowledge and skills.

Among the traditional crafts revived in 2025 were Givah-making in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, traditional blacksmithing in North Khorasan, plaited mat weaving in Sistan-Baluchestan, traditional Turkmen footwear production in Golestan, Orosi window-making in Lorestan, and traditional dyeing techniques in Hamedan.

More than 623,000 artisans are currently active in Iran’s handicrafts sector. Of that total, 508,000 are women and 115,000 are men.

Textile-based crafts account for the largest number of practitioners, with about 158,000 artisans, followed by woodcrafts and wickerwork with approximately 144,000 and 142,000 practitioners respectively, according to data compiled by the ministry.



inces to host national events.

Under plans adopted by the ministry, all provinces will hold specialized tourism exhibitions during the second half of the year, he said. The initiative is intended to send a positive message about the vitality and development of Iran’s tourism industry.

The minister also said the

government would support the sector and work with economic institutions to strengthen the foundations for its growth.

Mohseni-Bandpei described tourism as a major contributor to development, foreign-exchange earnings, employment and the promotion of Iran’s cultural and religious heritage.

Iran ranks 10th with 30 UNESCO World Heritage sites



TEHRAN – Iran ranks 10th worldwide with 30 properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list, according to the UN cultural body, placing the country among the world’s leading holders of internationally recognized cultural and natural heritage.

Italy leads the global ranking with 62 World Heritage properties, followed by China with 61, France with 56, Germany with 55 and Spain with 50. India, with 45 properties, ranks sixth, while Mexico has 36, the highest total among countries outside Europe

and East Asia ahead of the other countries in the ranking.

Iran’s total comprises 28 cultural and two natural properties. Its heritage portfolio spans ancient archaeological sites, historic cities, religious and architectural monuments, traditional landscapes and natural ecosystems.

Among Iran’s best-known World Heritage properties are Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire; Pasargadae, the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire; Naqsh-e Rostam (Imam Square); and Golestan Palace. Iran’s natural properties include

the Hyrcanian Forests and the Lut Desert.

The country’s recent additions include the Prehistoric Sites of the Khorramabad Valley, inscribed in 2025, and Alamut Castle and Related Fortifications, listed in 2026, according to UNESCO’s Iran country profile.

For Iran, its 30 World Heritage properties represent not only important destinations for cultural and nature-based tourism but also physical evidence of the country’s long history and its contribution to the shared heritage of humanity.

Iran censures US deliberate destruction of development at Human Rights Council

TEHRAN –The Secretary-General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO has severely criticized the deliberate destruction of development by the US through adopting coercive sanctions and launching military aggressions against the country.

"Forty years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, its promise remains unfulfilled for millions. The question is no longer whether development is a human right, but why some states are still allowed to systematically deprive other people of that right," IRNA quoted Hassan Fartousi as saying while addressing the 63rd session of the Human Rights Council, being held from September 7 to October 7.

Recognizing the right to development becomes meaningful only when the international community can offer effective and actionable solutions to the obstacles that practically prevent nations from accessing the resources, opportunities, and infrastructure necessary for development, the official added.

"For decades, the United States has subjected the Iranian people to extensive unilateral coercive measures, obstructing access to financial resources, technology, medicine, and essential goods, and deliberately constraining our development. Today, the same United States has added military aggression to the economic coercion.

The impact of these illegal measures is not limited to economic indicators; it also affects health, education, infrastructure, and human capital, he added.

"When hospitals are attacked, when schools are destroyed, when children are killed in their classrooms, we are not merely witnessing casualties of war. We are witnessing the deliberate destruction of development itself. A school destroyed in seconds represents years of trauma for the students and challenges in education. A hospital struck means not only a damaged building, but the destruction of health, human capital, and future generations," Fartousi further noted.

The official went on to say that "Forty years after the declaration, commemoration is not enough. Those who destroy development through unlawful coercion and military aggression must be held accountable. Hereby, as the Secretary General of the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO in Iran, the right to de-



velopment must be a right for all people, especially the people who are living in the developing countries."

The 63rd session of the Human Rights Council biennial panel discussion on the right to development was held under the theme 'Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development'.

For decades, the United States has subjected the Iranian people to extensive unilateral coercive measures, obstructing access to financial resources, technology, medicine, and essential goods.

The panel aimed to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (DRTD), and to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to the effective realization of the right to development as an inalienable human right for all; take stock of the achievements, obstacles and challenges encountered over the past four decades in the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Develop-

ment at the national, regional and international levels, including lessons learned; and identify elements towards a road map for the concrete operationalization of the right to development including through adoption of the draft International Covenant on the Right to Development.

It also aimed to explore the contribution of the right to development framework to the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and beyond, including by proposing principles, policy recommendations and institutional pathways; and to catalyse a forward-looking dialogue on the future of the right to development as it enters its fifth decade.

In July, Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, described two separate U.S.-led military campaigns against Iran—one in June 2025 and another between February and April 2026—as "unjustified and unwarranted wars of aggression" that violated international law. He said more than 4,800 civilians, including women and children, were killed in the attacks, with the deaths of schoolgirls in Minab standing as a particularly "horrific" example.

"The Security Council's failure to discharge its responsibilities has reinforced impunity and emboldened further unlawful acts," Iravani said. "The United States and the Israeli regime bear full responsibility for all the consequences of these wars of aggression and must be held fully accountable."

Economic, social support for women-headed families to be strengthened

TEHRAN – There are currently around 26 million households in the country, more than 20 million of them in urban areas and approximately six million in rural areas. According to the latest statistics, women head more than 12 percent of these households. Plans are underway to boost support for women-headed households.

Data from the National Organization for Civil Registration shows that between 6.5 million and seven million households are women-headed. The statistics cover women whose husbands have died or become disabled and who have legally assumed responsibility for their families, according to Parvin Dad-Andish, the head of the Ministry of Interior's department for women and family.

"The growing number of women-headed households highlights the need for greater attention to these families and stronger economic and social support for them. In these households, women shoulder not only family responsibilities but also the burden of providing for their families and managing their daily affairs," she added.

A program implemented in 16 provinces identified nearly 10,000 women-headed households that had not previously received support from welfare organizations. Under the initiative, the women's skills and capabilities were assessed and categorized, leading to the development of a two-year program to provide training and self-employment assistance. The program has produced tangible results, including the provision of work equipment and the establishment of home-based businesses.

"We have begun cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology to provide information technology training for girls from women-headed households. Our goal is to help the children of these families achieve independence as well," the official said.



Women in management

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

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

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

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

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

and justice.

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

Women's economic, social empowerment

Addressing the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference, held in Bangkok in 2024, Behrouz-Azar stated that the current administration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

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

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

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has

stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

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

In July 2025, Behrouz-Azar said women comprise 56 percent of academic communities in the country, holding over 60 percent of the staff working with schools, and 63 percent of university students.

One of the main objectives of the current administration is to benefit from both men's and women's capacities to ensure the country's progress, IRNA quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

For the first time in the current administration, over 15 women have been elected to work in women-related sectors, four women hold top managerial positions in the cabinet, and for the first time, after 46 years, a woman has been elected as the government spokesperson, the official noted.

Women's economic empowerment is also one of the key priorities of the current administration. Currently, over 70 percent of home businesses are owned by women, and the administration is supporting them with loans.

Iranian woman shines at BRICS Startup Contest 2026

TEHRAN – Iranian female entrepreneur Azam Karami has secured first place in the Energy, Infrastructure and Mobility category of the BRICS Women's Startup Contest 2026.

Led by the BRICS Women's Business Alliance (BRICS WBA), the contest aimed at empowering and accelerating women-led startups across BRICS nations.

The event was held from September 9 to 11 in New Delhi, India, with over 506 projects from BRICS member countries competing in six areas: "Health and Wellness," "Agriculture and Food Security," "Education," "Energy and Infrastructure," "Trade and Digital Transformation," and "Sustainable Development." Ultimately, only 18 projects reached the final stage.

Titled 'Smart Monitoring of Railway Track and Bridge Errors Using Drones and Artificial Intelligence,' her project was developed with the aim of increasing safety, reducing maintenance costs, and improving productivity in transportation infrastructure management.

Karami is a faculty member at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. In the BRICS Women's Startups Contest 2024, she received the award in the nomination 'Artificial Intelligence' for her project titled 'Automatic Fault Detection in Power Transmission Lines'.

The 2026 edition of Women's Startup Contest continued to spotlight innovative, high-impact women-led enterprises, fostering cross-border economic integration, collaboration, and knowledge exchange within the BRICS ecosystem. The initiative provided a dynamic platform for visibility, networking, and business expansion, enabling women entrepreneurs to scale their ventures and engage with investors, industry leaders, and policymakers across BRICS countries.

Fostering sustainable development, promoting economic inclusion, strengthening integration among BRICS markets, supporting innovation in key sectors, building entrepreneurial resilience, highlighting women-led solutions for global challenges, enhancing collaboration between BRICS nations, raising awareness of sustainable business practices, promoting technological adoption and digital transformation, and strengthening local economies through global connections are among the key objectives of the contest.

Iran outlines policies on women, family at BRICS WWG

In July, Narjes Abolqasemi, an official with the Vice-Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, elaborated on the country's macro-level policies on women and family at the BRICS Working Women Group (WWG) held in Kerala, India, on July 6-7.

The empowerment of women requires a transition from sporadic measures to strate-



gic and sustainable policies; in Iran, women's entrepreneurship and economic development serve as driving forces for strengthening national resilience and the family foundation. Therefore, the policies are designed and implemented with a family-centered approach, IRNA quoted Abolqasemi as saying.

She also highlighted the importance of the four priority areas of the meeting, which included promoting women's participation in governance and leadership, advancing digital and financial inclusion, strengthening women's entrepreneurship and skill development, and enhancing the role of women in climate action, food security and nutrition.

Referring to the country's experience in expanding the women entrepreneurship ecosystem, she said Iran focuses on establishing support models for women-led innovative businesses, developing modern skills, and benefiting from the potential of the digital economy.

Iran's participation in the WWG meeting provided a great opportunity to share indigenous experiences, expand joint efforts, and develop new initiatives to achieve economic justice and sustainable development among BRICS member states, Abolqasemi noted.

Underscoring the significance of fostering specialized collaboration among BRICS member states, the official announced Iran's readiness to utilize its scientific, policy, and executive capabilities to assume an effective role in the design of innovative models for women's economic empowerment and expanding multilateral cooperation within the BRICS framework.

The WWG Meeting was held under the theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," which reflects a people-centric and humanity-first approach to global cooperation.

It brought together senior government officials from BRICS member countries in the two-day event to discuss key issues related to women's empowerment, women-led development and enhanced cooperation across shared priorities.

Biosphere reserve management regulations under final review

TEHRAN – The judicial and legal committee of the cabinet of ministers is conducting a final review of the executive regulations for biosphere reserves, which will establish the framework for managing the country's biosphere reserves.

Once approved by the Cabinet, the regulations will establish the specific management framework for the country's biosphere reserves, IRNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the Department of Environment, as saying.

The regulations constitute the country's first comprehensive framework specifically dedicated to biosphere reserve management. They aim to establish clear management mechanisms, enhance coordination among relevant agencies, and strengthen local community participation, he added.

They also enable the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization to establish biosphere reserves, which would contribute to the development of the country's biodiversity conservation capacities, the official noted.

Referring to the differences between biosphere reserves and protected areas, Zohrabi said that the former seeks to strike a balance between biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use, as well as promote the

socio-economic development of local communities and research activities.

Moreover, it will pave the way for the integrated management of biosphere reserves, the utilization of indigenous knowledge from rural and nomadic communities, and the attraction of targeted investments.

The official went on to say that the implementation of the law will strengthen Iran's position within the global network of biosphere reserves, and contribute to achieving the goals of the Hangzhou Strategic Action Plan.

Biosphere reserves are territories of outstanding ecological value where people and nature grow harmoniously alongside each other, conserving biological and cultural diversity, advancing sustainable development, and connecting communities across a global network.

Iran, with 14 biosphere reserves, has always been among pioneering member states in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

According to the head of the DOE, Shima Ansari, biosphere reserves cover less than four percent of our national territory, which is not enough, so we are committed to expanding the network by the establishment of four more biosphere reserves.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:00 Evening: 18:30 Dawn: 4:23 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:47 (tomorrow)

“The Painter of the Wounded Land” exhibition opens in Tehran, honoring Sliman Mansour’s Palestinian legacy

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The painting exhibition “The Painter of the Wounded Land,” featuring works by renowned Palestinian artist Sliman Mansour, opened at the Aali Gallery of Tehran’s Art Bureau on Sunday, showcasing an artist whose work has become closely associated with the history, identity and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The exhibition is being held in tribute to Mansour, who passed away in August at the age of 79. It presents his artistic legacy through works that reflect his longstanding engagement with Palestinian land, culture and people.

The opening ceremony was attended by Nasser Abu Sharif, representative of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad movement in Tehran; Mohammad Zaroui Nasrabad, director of the Nam Cultural and Artistic Institute; Mohsen Momeni-Sharif, Kamyar Sadeqi, Hossein Ayni-Bakhsh, Saber Sheikh Rezai and Hossein Esmati, among others, who visited the exhibited works.

Born in 1947 in Birzeit near Ramallah, Mansour emerged as one of the leading figures of contemporary Palestinian art. Since the 1970s, he developed a distinctive visual language rooted in Palestinian landscapes, rural life and cultural traditions, while addressing themes of displacement, resistance, memory and attachment to homeland.

The exhibition statement describes Mansour as a narrator of both the pains and hopes of Palestine, noting that painting became his way of telling the story of his land and people from an early age.

It says his works did not merely seek to portray suffering and displacement, but also emphasized “hope, steadfastness, growth, and resistance.”

The statement also highlights the im-

portance of Palestinian cultural symbols in Mansour’s paintings, including the keffiyeh, abaya, embroidered clothing, olive trees, oranges, rural landscapes and the colors of the Palestinian flag.

Mansour’s artistic practice was particularly shaped by the circumstances of Palestinian life. During the First Intifada, he was among the artists associated with the New Vision group, which encouraged Palestinian artists to reject Israeli-produced art materials and make use of locally available and natural materials.

Mud, straw, wood, leather, henna and natural pigments consequently became part of Mansour’s artistic vocabulary.

During the opening ceremony, art researcher and the curator of the event Mohammadreza Vahidzadeh highlighted the significance of Mansour’s use of mud, recalling that the artist would place mud on his canvases, only to see it crack and deteriorate over time.

The process initially upset Mansour, Vahidzadeh said, but he later realized that the deterioration and cracks could themselves reflect the experience of the Palestinian people.

“He came to understand how much this deterioration and cracking was intertwined with the nature and fate of the Palestinian people,” Vahidzadeh said, adding that the process could therefore become a way of portraying their condition.

Vahidzadeh also emphasized Mansour’s lasting position in Palestinian contemporary art, saying that despite sanctions, the use of poor-quality materials, works that never returned to his home and a turbulent life, his paintings have remained influential and helped shape the visual identity of contemporary Palestinians.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Cartoon of Day



Trumpism Running Out of Steam?

Cartoonist: Tjeerd Royaards from the Netherlands

Exhibition of winning works of 11th Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest opens at Art Bureau

From Page 1 ▶ was shown to the audience. “This year, our competition attracted over two thousand entries from 40 countries. The exhibition in Tehran features 30 photographs made by young reporters from Russia, Indonesia, China, Egypt, Brazil, Bahrain, and other countries,” he said.

“Stenin contest assist in discovering young talents and allows them to take their first but quite confident steps in the world of photography,” he added. “It shows us how amazing, unique, and at the same time fragile the world is. It also helps us to understand that despite of being different people who live in different parts of the globe we are concerned about similar issues, touched by similar moments, delighted by similar events, and inspired by similar stories. Therefore, I do believe that Stenin Contest unites us: from Brazil to China, from Serbia to South Africa.”

“It provides us with a chance to strengthen ties with our close partners and good friends, such as the Mehr Media Group, which once again helped us to bring the best photos of the contest to the heart of one of the most ancient countries in the world, the capital of a country that cause respect and admiration in the world – Tehran – and display them at the magnificent Howzeh Honari Complex (Art Bureau),” he noted.

Shtol concluded his remarks saying, “I would also like to invite Iranian photographers to participate in next year’s competition, where I will be pleased to present the award in person.”

It has been agreed that the Iran Photographers House will serve as the secretariat of the contest in Iran. This will create greater opportunities for Iranian photographers to participate in the event.

The opening ceremony also featured speeches by Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati, the CEO of Mehr Media Group; Mohammadreza Norouzpour, Deputy Minister of Media and Advertising of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; Vladislav Egorov, Press Attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Tehran; and Seyyed Amir Javid, the deputy director of the Art Bureau.

“Our shared understanding of aesthetics in the world is quite remarkable. We may encounter very different forms of beauty through our diverse experiences and cultural backgrounds, but what is interesting is that composition, subject selection, and even the principles used in judging photographs often reflect a shared global aesthetic,” Rahmati said.

“I am pleased that photographers from other countries have participated in this competition and have received awards for works addressing subjects such as Gaza and the Arbreen pilgrimage,” he added.



Also speaking at the event, Norouzpour said: “We live in a world in which the US, over the years and under various pretexts, has waged wars against different nations, including our own country, Iran. But it is important to understand that such wars are not first launched on the battlefield, they begin in the realm of narratives.”

“The principal arena in which aggression is prepared and initiated around the world is often the image itself. First, the image of a nation is distorted and its people are dehumanized through the way they are represented. Once a negative image of that nation has been established in public opinion, its people are portrayed as deserving destruction and annihilation. Only then does the physical attack follow,” he noted.

“If war begins before guns, tanks, and aircraft are deployed—if it begins within the frame of the camera—then one of the best ways to defend ourselves is to begin within that frame. We need to equip and empower ourselves in the same arena and confront those narratives through the very medium of photography,” he underlined.

“If an image is used to portray people in a distorted or degrading way, we must use the camera to restore their dignity and humanity and to neutralize that tactic,” Norouzpour asserted.

“Every photographer has a professional and international responsibility to portray the truth as it is and to ensure that their images are not placed in the service of the brutal militarism of hostile states. Photographers should not allow framing and visual representation to be used as tools for dehumanization or as preparation for attacks, killings, and aggression,” he stated.

He finished his speech by addressing the photographers and said: “The value you create lies precisely in preserving moments that many hostile states in the world have sought to

erase from collective memory.”

In a short speech, Egorov, from the Russian Embassy in Tehran, said: “These photographers have tried to become the voices of people whose voices cannot otherwise be heard.”

“The cooperation of the Mehr Media Group in organizing this exhibition is an important opportunity to promote courage, professionalism, and social responsibility in the field of photography. It can also provide an important platform for cultural dialogue between Iran and Russia and serve as an inspiration for young photographers,” he added.

For his part, Javid referred to Mehr News Agency as a key player in the field of press photography among the news agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been home to some of the finest examples of professional photography in the country.

“My proposal is that the Mehr Media Group and the Iran Photographers House operate as the permanent secretariat of this contest in the Islamic world. This would certainly be a valuable development and would contribute to raising the profile and quality of the festival,” he proposed.

“In this way, renowned and distinguished judges from Iran and other parts of the Islamic world could also be invited to join the festival’s jury. This would undoubtedly lead to both higher-quality submissions and a stronger, more diverse judging process,” he added.

“I hope that, around this time next year, if no major developments in the world prevent us from doing so, we will be able to hold the exhibition simultaneously in Tehran, Beirut, Baghdad, Sanaa, Islamabad, and one or two other major and important cities in the Islamic world,” he stated.

“Photography is the fastest, most precise, and most enduring form of documentary storytelling in the world. There is simply no other medium that

can match photography in the speed, precision, and lasting power with which it records and communicates an event,” Javid noted.

“I hope that the Mehr Media Group, as one of the largest media groups in the Islamic Republic of Iran, will also be able to establish and maintain offices in key and strategically important locations around the world. This would allow us to present our own narrative of global developments and events to people around the world,” he concluded.

The Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest is an annual event in the field of photojournalism, held with the aim of discovering young talent, supporting professional standards in photojournalism, and promoting the benchmarks of documentary photography in Russia and worldwide.

The works in this exhibition comprise a collection of visual narratives by young photographers regarding contemporary global events and issues; images that, in the form of photojournalism and documentary photography, have captured social and human developments, crises, the environment, daily life, and other realities of today’s world.

Andrey Stenin (1980 - 2014) started his career as a text reporting journalist for Rossiyskaya Gazeta in 2003. In 2008, he turned to photojournalism and from 2009 on, worked as a photo reporter for RIA Novosti. He was an experienced military photojournalist who had worked in Egypt, Syria, Libya, the Gaza Strip, and elsewhere.

He disappeared while covering the War in Donbas. He was confirmed dead on September 3, 2014, having died on August 6, according to the Investigative Committee of Russia. Stenin was awarded Russia’s Order of Courage posthumously.

The exhibition of the winning works of the contest will be open to the public until September 21 at the Art Bureau.

Six Iranian films win at Accolade Global Film Competition

TEHRAN – Six films from Iran have received the Award of Recognition for the August edition of the Accolade Global Film Competition.

Short films “The Left Leader” by Afshin Eisaei, “Between Us” by Amirreza Kasaei, and “Trunq” by Khalil Morshedloo, the feature documentary “A Beginning for the Final Songs of a River” by Meysam Oghbaei as well as “Code 133” by Omid Barzegar and “The Maze” by Yeganeh Yaghoubi were among the recipients of the August Recognition Award, ILNA reported.

Based in California, Accolade is the original, top-tier, internationally respected global virtual online competition – recognizing film,



A scene from “Code 133” by Omid Barzegar

TV, and media professionals who demonstrate exceptional achievement in craft and storytelling since 2003.

Accolade is unique and the industry leader of virtual film competitions. Attracting both powerhouse companies as well as talented new filmmakers, it is an unparalleled, truly international awards competition, not a traditional film festival – which allows filmmakers from around the world to enter their films in this prestigious competition.

Established in 2003, Accolade gives talented directors, producers, actors, creative teams the positive exposure they deserve. It discovers and honors the achievements of filmmakers who produce high quality projects. The Accolade promotes award winners through press releases to over 100,000 filmmakers and industry contacts.