

Iran thwarted US, Israel change attempts: Hezbollah chief



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Trump's Iran war ignites global diesel crisis

TEHRAN—As diesel prices shatter records across three continents, evidence mounts that the Trump administration's military confrontation with Iran and its failure to anticipate the Strait of Hormuz disruption have triggered a supply chain catastrophe that threatens to push the global economy into recession.

According to CNBC, U.S. diesel prices hit an all-time high of \$6.31 per gallon this week, while Reuters reports the average has climbed to \$6.29—a staggering 68 percent increase from a year ago. In Europe, the European Commission's data shows diesel reached €2.159 per liter, the highest since records began in 2005. These aren't abstract numbers; they represent a direct assault on working families. ▶ Page 4

Ed Sheeran faces protests, desolate stage after opening acts walk out over Gaza genocide

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Dozens of demonstrators waving Palestinian flags converged outside Philadelphia's Lincoln Financial Field on Saturday to confront a music industry built on complicity.

Their signs carried blunt demands, telling Ed Sheeran and his promoters that concert revenue must no longer underwrite Israeli crimes.

The rally materialized after American rapper Macklemore was abruptly expelled from Sheeran's North American Loop Tour for performing his protest anthem "Hind's Hall" and declaring his support for Palestinian liberation. ▶ Page 5



Mock-ups of U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are ridiculed during the "313,000 Janfada" drill in Tehran, September 18, 2026.

Iran's Message to Washington: No Retreat, No Surrender, No Return to the Old Order

For Tehran the issue is not simply whether commercial vessels can pass through Hormuz. The dispute also concerns who determines the security architecture, operating conditions and rules governing navigation.

By Mahmoud Mahmoudian Ravi

TEHRAN — Iran has issued a series of increasingly explicit political, military and strategic messages to the United States and its regional partners, warning that any renewed US aggression would trigger sustained attacks on American positions and interests across the region, while making clear that Tehran does not regard military pressure and diplomacy as mutually exclusive.

The latest statements, delivered by senior Iranian military and political officials on Sunday, came amid continued tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, the future of Iran-US negotiations and the country's nuclear policy. Together, they point to an Iranian strategy that seeks to combine military deterrence, control

over the strategic waterway and diplomatic leverage while keeping a range of options open.

Iran warns of "painful" regional response

The Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, the command center responsible for coordinating Iran's military operations, warned the US and regional countries against any further hostile action against the Islamic Republic.

In a statement released Sunday, the headquarters accused the United States of seeking to conceal failures in its cam-

paign against Iran and to manufacture "false gains" from the conflict.

It said that, based on information available to Iranian authorities, the United States had decided to resume action against Iran following a meeting in a European country and with the "green light" of some regional states.

The headquarters issued an unambiguous warning that any US military action against Iran would be met with sustained attacks on American positions and interests throughout the region.

"If the US makes any mistake against the Islamic Republic of Iran, all its positions and interests in the region will be targeted by sustained, effective and painful attacks," the statement said. ▶ Page 3

Intelligence Ministry: Three terrorist operational cells dismantled

TEHRAN — The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence announced on Sunday that its forces have successfully dismantled three operational cells affiliated with "hostile terrorist groups" linked to US and Zionist intelligence services, thwarting planned acts of sabotage and assassination across three provinces.

In a statement, the ministry praised the efforts of the intelligence forces and thanked citizens for their intelligence reports, which were instrumental in identifying and neutralizing the threats before the plots could be executed. ▶ Page 2

China slams 'unilateral' US sanctions law targeting Russia, Iran

TEHRAN — The Chinese Ministry of Commerce has issued a sharp rebuke against Washington's latest legislative maneuvers, condemning the newly enacted US law that seeks to tighten sanctions on Russia and broaden trade restrictions against Iran.

The legislation, signed by President Donald Trump late Friday, has been met with immediate disapproval from Beijing. A spokesperson for China's Commerce Ministry stated on Saturday that China has "consistently opposed" the implementation of unilateral sanctions and the extraterritorial application of secondary sanctions, which critics argue violate the foundational principles of international relations. ▶ Page 3

US imposes unprecedented visa bans, tight restrictions on Iranian delegation ahead of UNGA

TEHRAN — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is set to travel to New York in the coming days to address the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), an annual multilateral diplomatic fixture increasingly overshadowed by Washington's persistent weaponization of its status as the UN host nation.

During the high-level gathering, scheduled from September 22 to 29 at UN Headquarters, President Pezeshkian is slated to deliver a major address outlining the Islamic Republic's principled foreign policy doctrine, regional diplomacy, and firm opposition to unilateralism. Alongside his speech before world leaders, the Iranian president is scheduled to conduct a series of bilateral meetings with heads of state and top international dignitaries on the sidelines of the summit. ▶ Page 2

Over 1,200 war-damaged schools reopen



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Iranian Education Minister Alireza Kazemi visits Allameh Helli 5 School during a ceremony marking the simultaneous reopening of schools damaged in the third imposed war, Sunday, September 20, 2026.

Iran basketball win bronze at 2026 Asian Games



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran is not just retaliating; it has seized the initiative

Kayhan analyzed the mounting pressure on the United States after seven months of war with Iran and argued that Iran now holds the initiative. The paper wrote that as the conflict approaches its seventh month, multidimensional pressure on Washington is rapidly intensifying. The situation has reached a point where the US Secretary of Energy says Iran effectively controls global energy pricing. Meanwhile, the US -drafted anti-Iran resolution at the UN Security Council was vetoed by China and Russia. According to Kayhan, Trump's foolish war has produced no gains; instead, the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandab have effectively fallen under Iran and its allies' control, leaving Washington with little capacity to respond. The era in which Iran merely retaliated against US and Israeli attacks is over. From striking a US aircraft carrier, announcing new restrictions in the Persian Gulf, and enabling Yemeni forces to seize a key choke-point in the Red Sea, to shutting down the vital East-West pipeline, all developments point to Iran's operational initiative. Iran is leveraging its peak pressure capacity to convert military disruption into economic and political leverage.

Iran: Supporting the consolidation of legal norms

The Iran newspaper examined Russia and China's positions at the UN Security Council. According to the paper, Iranian officials welcomed the two countries' stance against the political misuse of the Council. From Tehran's perspective, the key issue is preventing the institutionalization of a trend that could turn political disputes over Iran's nuclear file into binding Security Council mechanisms. This comes at a time when the disputed nuclear dossier has once again become central at the UN. Two parallel tracks are emerging: the IAEA seeks to maintain the scope of its reporting on Iran's nuclear program, while the Security Council faces deep divisions among its permanent members over the future of sanctions mechanisms. The events of last Thursday revealed a deeper disagreement over the Council's jurisdiction, the legal validity of the "Snapback" mechanism, and how the international community should approach Iran's nuclear case. Moscow and Beijing, by using their vetoes, blocked the transformation of a politically motivated interpretation of international law into an enforceable decision.

Etemad: The United States is under pressure

Etemad wrote that the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the fuel crisis in the West have severely disrupted global monetary calculations, energy markets, and international logistics chains. As Washington struggles with severe military attrition

and record-breaking fuel prices at home, Tehran's move to block the strategic artery of Hormuz has effectively handed Iran control over US inflation dynamics. Iranian officials describe this as imposing the "Hormuz risk premium" on the US Federal Reserve's decision-making tools — a point even the Fed Chair has acknowledged, noting the direct impact of crisis centers on tightening policies. The overall trajectory of events shows that the balance of power has moved beyond conventional military confrontation: Iran's strategic decisions in commercial and energy waterways are now challenging the structural stability of Western macroeconomic variables.

Javan: Global straits in turmoil

The world is in turmoil due to a war the United States triggered with its blind attack on Iran. Two of the world's strategic straits are now closed or unstable. Saudi Arabia is reportedly pleading with China, Pakistan, and Oman for a two-week ceasefire. Although the war planners initially envisioned a limited military operation, current indicators suggest the world is entering a fundamentally different phase — one whose consequences extend far beyond the battlefield and may reshape energy markets, regional security, and even US domestic politics. What is unfolding cannot be confined to a military crisis between Iran and the United States. By disrupting energy markets, destabilizing new oil trade routes, increasing economic costs, and generating political pressure in affected countries, the conflict may push the world toward changes far greater than those imagined at the outset. The most important reality, Javan argues, is that wars can be started — but their consequences rarely remain within the boundaries set by those who initiate them.

Khorasan: Elections as the decisive factor

Khorasan analyzed why Trump and Netanyahu have returned to "regime-change rhetoric," arguing that both face potential electoral defeat. The continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz has intensified public dissatisfaction in the United States. In Israel, most polls indicate a likely reduction in Likud's seats in the Knesset, increasing the probability of Netanyahu's defeat. In this context, Khorasan suggests it is not unlikely that Trump and Netanyahu may resort to any measure in the next two months — including attempts to provoke domestic unrest in Iran combined with simultaneous military action — in hopes of manufacturing a "sellable victory" for their voters. The paper concludes that adversaries remain intent on creating instability and unrest.

Iran says it retains initiative in Strait of Hormuz despite US claims

TEHRAN — Iranian Armed Forces spokesperson Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi has rejected recent US claims about operations in the Strait of Hormuz, insisting that Iran continues to hold the initiative in the strategic waterway.

Speaking on Saturday, Shekarchi dismissed as "false" and "ridiculous" a claim by the commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM) that American forces had facilitated the movement of more than one billion barrels of oil through the Strait of Hormuz over the past two months.

The Iranian commander described the US statements as a failed psychological operation rather than an accurate reflection of developments in the waterway.

Shekarchi said the remarks were intended to bolster the morale of the "exhausted and worn-out" US military personnel stationed in the region and to justify the substantial financial and human costs incurred by Washington through its regional military presence.

He further argued that such statements would not alter the reality of the "expulsion"

of the US military from the region.

"The initiative in the Strait of Hormuz remains in the hands of Iran's powerful Armed Forces," Shekarchi said.

His comments came after US Navy Admiral Brad Cooper, the commander of CENTCOM, said in a statement posted on X that US forces had facilitated the transportation of more than one billion barrels of oil through the strategic waterway over the previous two months.

Cooper also claimed US forces had provided protection for more than 2,000 commercial vessels during the period.

According to the CENTCOM commander, the main transit lanes in the Strait of Hormuz had also been cleared of mines, allowing thousands of vessels to pass through the waterway.

The Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, is one of the world's most strategically important maritime chokepoints and a major artery for global energy supplies.

US imposes unprecedented visa bans, tight restrictions on Iranian delegation ahead of UNGA

From page 1 ► However, the diplomatic mission has been deliberately hobbled by an array of hostile measures implemented by the US government. Washington has systematically denied visas to the entire Iranian media delegation accompanying the president.

The blanket denial of press credentials marks a sharp and calculated escalation. While US authorities had already begun tightening the noose last year by granting visas to only three Iranian journalists, previous administrations typically allowed press entourages routine access under UN headquarters agreements. Iranian observers emphasize that Washington's overt obstructionism reflects deep apprehension over the unfiltered projection of Tehran's regional realities and anti-sanctions discourse to the global public, seeking instead to suppress Iranian journalistic coverage of the summit.

The hostile administrative campaign extends well beyond the press ban. While entry vi-



sas were ultimately cleared for President Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and essential members of the core official delegation, Washington has imposed stringent, punitive operational limitations. The Iranian delegation faces severe geographic travel restrictions confining officials strictly to areas in and around the UN precinct, coupled with a series of petty prohibitions on basic commercial transactions and local store memberships.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei strongly censured the hostile maneuvers, dismissing them as "crude propaganda" that lays bare the flawed mindset behind Washington's decades-long coercive campaign.

In a statement posted on his X account on Friday, Baghaei denounced what he termed "theatrical" US restrictions, arguing that the White House behaves as though the international community lacks both memory and

Intelligence Ministry: Three terrorist operational cells dismantled

From page 1 ► According to the ministry's report, the operations were conducted in the provinces of West Azerbaijan, Alborz, and Kerman.

In the northwestern province of West Azerbaijan, intelligence forces successfully neutralized an operative associated with a separatist terrorist group. The individual had been monitoring a security commander in the city of Piranshahr with the intention of carrying out an assassination.

The ministry stated that the operative fell into an intelligence trap set by the West Azerbaijan General Department of Intelligence. He was killed during an armed clash with security forces before he could carry out his "sinister mission."

In Alborz Province, intelligence officers apprehended an individual identified as "Amirali N.," described as a mercenary working on behalf of US-Zionist interests.

Investigations revealed that the suspect was acting under the directives of a monarchist group linked to the Israeli intelligence service. The detainee had reportedly been providing the group with the profiles of targeted individuals and the coordinates of certain IRGC and Basij military facilities.

The ministry's report noted that the suspect had been tasked with a series of sabotage operations, including attacking a local Basij base, abducting individuals, and committing acts of arson. These plots were thwarted through timely intelligence monitoring before any damage could be inflicted.

In the southeastern province of Kerman, intelligence forces identified and arrested a two-member cell affiliated with terrorist groups acting on behalf of Western and Zionist intelligence agencies.

The ministry stated that the cell had been ordered by their handlers to bomb a vital infrastructure facility in the city of Bam.



Furthermore, the members of the cell were preparing to carry out additional armed and terrorist operations within the country when they were detained by the provincial intelligence department.

The ministry emphasized that it continues to monitor the activities of hostile elements and remains committed to ensuring the safety of the Iranian nation and the stability of its infrastructure.

Senior MP: US criminal act in Lamerd and Minab is a modern example of crimes in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

TEHRAN — Iran's Deputy Parliament Speaker Hamid Reza Haji Babaei has lashed out at the United States over its deadly strikes against civilian targets in southern Iran, declaring Washington's strikes on the city of Lamerd and the Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab as direct modern manifestations of the atomic atrocities perpetrated against Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Speaking during an open parliamentary session on Sunday, Haji Babaei reiterated Tehran's resolve to hold the United States legally and politically accountable for blatant violations of international law and international humanitarian statutes.

"The criminal action of the United States in Lamerd and the Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab is a textbook example of modern-day crimes akin to what transpired in Hiroshima and Nagasaki," Haji Babaei said in response to a parliamentary notice raised by Musa Mousavi, the lawmaker representing Lamerd and Mohr.

"This is the exact same course of savagery, merely updated with modern technology and weapon systems. It demonstrates that the US continues to expand its repertoire of war crimes and brutality against sovereign nations while brazenly trampling basic human values," the deputy speaker emphasized.

During his address on the Majlis floor, Musa Mousavi detailed the horrific dimensions of the

strike on Lamerd, characterizing it as an indisputable war crime aimed deliberately at maximizing human suffering.

According to Mousavi, four precision-guided ballistic missiles—identified as Precision Strike Missiles (PrSM)—were fired into Lamerd, tearing through two residential neighborhoods and a public indoor sports arena.

Mousavi explained that the munitions deployed in Lamerd were designed specifically for wide-area lethality rather than standard structural demolition. Instead of detonating upon ground impact, the warheads exploded roughly 40 meters in the air, releasing an indiscriminate hail of 180,000 tungsten fragments per missile over a 360-degree radius.

"In total, 720,000 tungsten pellets were rained down on Lamerd. In a city of 30,000 people, this amounts to an average of 24 lethal projectiles for every single resident," Mousavi noted, presenting photographs of perforated walls, doors, and residential infrastructure pockmarked with hundreds of shrapnel holes.

The lawmaker underscored that several factors prevented a significantly larger catastrophe beyond the recorded toll of 21 martyrs and 60 injured: the attack struck near the evening Iftar when families were indoors, the residential zones were less congested, and a neighboring school complex was empty at that hour.

Mousavi slammed the provocative rhetoric from US military commanders who praised the deployment of these weapons to "put pressure on the Iranian populace," while highlighting how arms contractors such as Lockheed Martin subsequently saw inflated multibillion-dollar procurement contracts.

Echoing the directives of the Leader—who instructed the Iranian Judiciary to vigorously pursue legal cases against the United States over the carnage in Lamerd and Minab—Mousavi called on Iranian diplomats to turn these strikes into an international indictment against Washington across multilateral bodies.

The attacks on Lamerd and Minab represent some of the most devastating strikes on civilian infrastructure in southern Iran, sparking worldwide outrage and international scrutiny over Washington's unlawful targeting methodologies.

The Tragedy of Shajareh Tayyebah

Located in the eastern coastal plain of Hormozgan Province near the Strait of Hormuz, Minab is an ancient agricultural and trade hub, home to roughly 75,000 residents.

On February 28, the civilian population of Minab suffered one of the deadliest single mass-casualty attacks when a US cruise missile pulverized the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School during morning classes. The strike brought down the

critical judgment.

"It treats the world as if it were Pluribus: a hive in which minds are expected to switch off, eyes lock onto Washington's lips, and its narrative is swallowed whole," Baghaei remarked.

The spokesman drew a sharp contrast between the devastating humanitarian toll of Washington's sweeping economic warfare and the superficial pagentry of its recent administrative curbs. He pointed out the absurdity of US officials boasting about blocking diplomatic wholesale memberships while simultaneously enforcing a brutal economic blockade against over 85 million Iranian civilians.

"They look past the sanctioning of an entire nation's livelihood, then issue solemn statements about the sanctioning of a store membership card," Baghaei stressed, adding that such "threadbare" theatrics only highlight the strategic failure of the unlawful war of choice waged against the Iranian nation.

multi-story educational facility, martyring nearly 170 civilians—the vast majority of them young schoolchildren.

Independent investigations and a formal report by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission concluded that the strike constituted an indiscriminate attack and a potential war crime. Inquiries revealed that US forces had relied on decades-old, obsolete intelligence regarding a nearby historical installation, failing to take basic precautions to verify the presence of active educational institutions.

Lamerd, situated in the southernmost tip of Fars Province near the Persian Gulf energy corridor, is a strategic hub of energy, aluminum manufacturing, and commerce. Bordering Bushehr and Hormozgan, the county sits atop major natural gas fields, including the Tabnak and Eram reservoirs, and hosts the sprawling Lamerd Special Economic Zone (housing the South Aluminum Corporation, SALCO).

Despite its purely civilian and economic profile, residential districts and civic sports infrastructure inside Lamerd were subjected to air-burst tungsten fragmentation strikes. Rather than striking isolated strategic installations, the deployment of anti-personnel fragmentation warheads over residential quarters underscored a calculated attempt to inflict maximum civilian terror.

Iran’s message to Washington: No retreat, no surrender, no return to the old order

From Page 1 ▶ The warning was also directed at regional states that might cooperate with Washington. The Iranian command said countries that aligned themselves with US aggression against Iran would be regarded as participants in that action and should not expect restraint from Iran’s Armed Forces.

The statement represents a continuation of warnings previously issued by Iran over possible US attempts to intervene in the management or security arrangements of the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian military authorities have repeatedly said that Washington cannot unilaterally determine the conditions governing navigation through the strategic waterway.

Hormuz becomes central to Iran’s negotiating position

The military warning came as Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reiterated that Iran’s position on the Strait of Hormuz is closely linked to the broader political and security dispute with Washington.

Addressing parliament on Sunday, Qalibaf said Iran’s messages and conditions had already been conveyed to the United States through intermediaries.

He stressed that ‘the Strait would not return to its previous operating conditions until Iran’s legitimate rights were recognized, and US commitments were implemented.’

“The path of deception and unilateral imposition is closed,” Qalibaf said, adding that there would be no return to the previous framework of negotiations or reopening of the Strait until Iran’s conditions were met.

His remarks are consistent with Tehran’s position in recent months that ‘the reopening of Hormuz cannot be treated as a unilateral decision by Washington or any other outside power.’ Iran and the United States had previously reached an interim arrangement in June involving a halt to military operations and navigation arrangements, but that understanding subsequently collapsed amid US violations.

The significance of Hormuz extends well beyond the immediate Iran-US confrontation. The Strait is one of the world’s principal energy chokepoints, connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Recent shipping data reported by Reuters showed traffic through the waterway remained substantially below its recent average, underscoring the extent to which the conflict has disrupted regional maritime commerce.

For Tehran, therefore, the issue is not simply whether commercial vessels can physically pass through the waterway. The dispute also



concerns who determines the security architecture, operating conditions and rules governing navigation in a waterway located on Iran’s immediate southern flank.

Qalibaf rejects “war or negotiations” as a choice

Qalibaf also rejected the idea that Iran must choose between military confrontation and diplomacy. “We believe that the dichotomy of war or negotiations is not real; rather, we must both fight and negotiate,” he said.

He argued that Iran should use military power when necessary to repel attacks and then employ diplomacy at an appropriate moment to consolidate ‘battlefield gains.’

The formulation places diplomacy within a broader deterrence strategy rather than presenting negotiations as an alternative to military resistance.

Qalibaf further argued that the regional balance of power was undergoing a fundamental transformation, saying the previous US-led order in West Asia had collapsed and calling for Muslim countries in the region to participate in shaping a new regional order.

His comments suggest that Tehran views the present confrontation not only as a bilateral dispute with Washington but also as part of a wider contest over the future security architecture of West Asia.

Iranian commander invokes legacy of “Sacred Defense”

At a separate ceremony marking Iran’s Sacred Defense Week, Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, framed the current confrontation within the historical experience of the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War.

Sayyari stressed that modern warfare increasingly depends on intelligence, communications, weapons technology, and changing battlefield tactics, indicating the Army’s emphasis on adapting its military capabilities to a rapidly evolving security environment.

NPT withdrawal enters Iran’s strategic debate

At the same time, the confrontation with Washington and the dispute over Iran’s nuclear program have pushed another previously

sensitive issue closer to the center of Iran’s strategic debate: possible withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Ebrahim Azizi, chairman of the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said the possibility of leaving the NPT was now “on the table.”

In an interview with Mehr News Agency, Azizi sharply criticized the International Atomic Energy Agency, arguing that it had moved away from its technical and professional role and had become subject to political pressure from major powers.

He said legislative proposals concerning withdrawal from the NPT had been drafted and submitted to the Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission as well as the its legislative office.

At the same time, Azizi added that withdrawal would require concrete measures, coordination among the different branches and institutions of government, and a unified decision within Iran’s political establishment.

That distinction is significant: the existence of parliamentary proposals does not mean that Iran has decided to withdraw from the treaty. Rather, the issue has entered the political and strategic debate as one of the options being considered.

Under Article X of the NPT, a state has a right to withdraw if it determines that extraordinary events related to the treaty have jeopardized its supreme national interests. The treaty requires three months’ advance notice to the other parties and to the UN Security Council, accompanied by an explanation of the extraordinary circumstances cited.

Nuclear policy increasingly linked to security calculations

The growing discussion over the NPT is unfolding against a broader Iranian argument that international nuclear safeguards and security guarantees have failed to adequately protect Iran’s nuclear facilities and rights.

Iranian lawmakers had already called for a review of the country’s NPT membership in a September 15 statement, arguing that recent developments had demonstrated the

inability of existing international mechanisms to protect Iran’s legal rights and nuclear infrastructure.

The debate also reflects a broader shift in Tehran’s calculation of the relationship between nuclear commitments and national security. For Iranian officials advocating a review of NPT membership, the central question is increasingly whether continued adherence provides sufficient security and diplomatic benefits in circumstances where Iran argues that its nuclear facilities have come under military attack.

A broader Iranian strategy takes shape

Taken together, the statements by the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, Sayyari, Qalibaf and Azizi reveal several interconnected strands in Iran’s current strategic messaging.

First, Tehran is emphasizing deterrence. The military leadership is warning that any new US attack would not remain confined to Iran’s territory but could expose American positions and interests across the region to retaliation.

Second, Iran is treating the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic lever. Qalibaf’s remarks indicate that Tehran links the waterway’s reopening to broader political and security arrangements rather than viewing navigation as an issue separate from the conflict.

Third, Tehran is keeping diplomacy open while rejecting negotiations under unfavorable conditions. Qalibaf’s formulation that Iran must “both fight and negotiate” reflects an attempt to combine military pressure with diplomatic engagement.

Fourth, the nuclear issue is increasingly being considered through the lens of national security. The NPT withdrawal debate remains a political discussion rather than a confirmed policy decision, but its emergence among senior lawmakers indicates the depth of the strategic reassessment underway in Tehran.

The immediate trajectory of the confrontation will therefore depend not only on developments on the battlefield but also on whether Washington and Tehran can establish a framework that addresses the issues Iran has identified as prerequisites for renewed negotiations and changes in the status of the Strait of Hormuz.

For now, Tehran’s message is that military deterrence, control over its strategic maritime environment, and diplomacy are being pursued simultaneously rather than sequentially—with Iranian officials presenting these elements as interconnected components of the country’s response to continued US pressure.

China slams ‘unilateral’ US sanctions law targeting Russia, Iran



From Page 1 ▶ In a formal statement, the spokesperson underscored that Beijing remains firmly against any coercive economic measures that lack authorization from the United Nations or any grounding in established international law.

The US law, which authorizes the imposition of tariffs on nations purchasing Russian petroleum products, has drawn scrutiny for its potential to destabilize global energy markets and disrupt diplomatic efforts. The measure, viewed by observers as a thinly veiled tool of economic warfare, threatens to impact several major economies, including China, India, and Turkey, as well as several European Union member states that continue to engage in energy trade with Russia.

“China will closely monitor Washington’s next steps,” the spokesperson said, emphasizing that Beijing “reserves the right to

take all necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty, development interests, and the legitimate rights and interests of its companies.”

Analysts observe that this latest aggressive move by the White House marks yet another chapter in Washington’s deteriorating approach to global diplomacy. By weaponizing the global financial system and dictating the economic policies of sovereign nations, the United States is further eroding the trust of its own allies and isolating itself from the emerging multipolar order.

Critics argue that such measures are not aimed at fostering international security, but are instead designed to maintain American hegemony at the expense of global economic stability. By targeting independent nations like Iran—a key partner in China’s global development initiatives—the US is signaling an intensified effort to obstruct the sovereign economic development of the Global South.

The statement further reiterated China’s commitment to the stability of global trade, urging the United States to abandon its policy of economic coercion in favor of dialogue and mutual consultation.

As Washington continues to utilize its domestic legislation to project power globally, Beijing’s response signals a hardening stance against what many international observers describe as an increasingly erratic and unilateralist US foreign policy.

Like his father and grandfather, Reza Pahlavi wished to be a Western stooge

By Atrin Eskandari

TEHRAN - The missiles began to fall on the morning of 28 February, and those who had planned that morning expected the Islamic Republic to be gone within days, or at the outside within a matter of weeks. This is what the fragments now surfacing in Western sources suggest, and it is perhaps the most consequential fact about this war: not that it was fought, but that it was fought upon a forecast which proved to be worth nothing at all. Forecasts of that kind do not compose themselves, and it is worth asking who supplied this one.

Washington has stood in this place before. Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi politician who spent the years preceding 2003 briefing the American capital’s most hawkish factions on what was supposedly taking place inside Iraq, furnished intelligence concerning Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction and his alleged connections to al-Qaeda, none of which withstood examination, and he promised that Iraqis would greet American soldiers with flowers. The outcome is known: a catastrophic war, hundreds of thousands dead, a country in ruins, and the ground prepared for the emergence of ISIS. Chalabi would later concede that his information had been mistaken, though it is difficult to accept that he had not known this from the beginning, and by the time of that concession it was in any case far too late.

His usefulness had never rested upon the quality of the intelligence he provided; it rested upon his passport. He was the Iraqi who could tell Americans what Iraq was, and what he supplied to them was not information at all but permission.

What is a native informant?

The role carries a name in the scholarly literature. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak draws the term native informant from colonial ethnography, in which such a figure provided the raw cultural material that the colonial power would then interpret, translate into policy, and act upon. The informant himself was never the interpreter; he was an instrument rather than an agent, and above all, by offering the outside power a portrait of “the inside,” he furnished the legitimacy required for intervention, even where that portrait was partial, wishful, or entirely fabricated. The structure requires no liar. It requires only a man whose interests run parallel to those of a foreign power, and who is prepared to describe his own country in the terms that power already wishes to hear.

Selling dreams as a strategy

Reza Pahlavi has for some years, and particularly across the past decade, sought to revive the political role of the Pahlavi household. Since the latter part of the 2010s, a period that opened with Trump’s withdrawal from the nuclear agreement and inaugurated a long crisis which has still not

closed, he has repeated a single message in the political circles of Washington, in the neoconservative think tanks, and subsequently in his meetings with Israeli officials: that the Iranian people stand ready to rise, that the Islamic Republic is rotten from within, and that one further push, whether economic or military, will bring it down. That message grew louder at every moment of unrest, in 2009, in 2019, in 2022; and each time the system endured, what followed was not a revision of the analysis but a promise concerning the next occasion.

The parallel with Chalabi is not a loose one. Both men derived their standing from a claim to knowledge of the inside, both were seeking to recover a power they had lost, and both offered a portrait of their country which corresponded to what the capitals they were addressing wished to hear rather than to what lay upon the ground.

The construction of nostalgia as a strategy

A native informant requires an audience prepared to believe him, and it is here that Manoto entered the equation. The channel presented itself from the outset not as a political outlet but as a cultural and entertainment one, and this positioning was itself strategic, since politics delivered directly repels the viewer, whereas music, films of the Pahlavi era, and the reconstruction of an unreachable image of “Iran before 1979” reach him without his noticing that a political message has been delivered at all.

What Manoto constructed was an emotional archive, and its omissions were the whole of the design. The celebrations of the 2,500th anniversary glittered upon the screen, while SAVAK, whose methods of torture were documented internationally at the time, was nowhere to be seen. Tehran appeared as the cosmopolitan capital of the region, without its poverty and without its prisoners. There was talk of progress and of invention, but not of SAVAK’s own invention, the apparatus its interrogators named the Apollo. The channel produced the Pahlavi myth not through direct propaganda but through the grammar of longing.

The connection between this and Pahlavi’s own narrative is structural rather than incidental. In Washington he told the political elite that Iranians were waiting for change; Manoto documented the very same claim at the level of sentiment. The one spoke the language of lobbying, the other the language of manufactured nostalgia, yet both advanced a single story. A portion of Manoto’s audience, people genuinely exhausted by conditions in Iran, became without knowing it so much data in the hands of the same structure: possessed of no voice of their own and of no one to represent them, yet serviceable as evidence of a public yearning.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

LATEST NEWS

Iranian parliamentary committee sets conditions for communications infrastructure in Strait of Hormuz

Hassan Qashqavi, spokesperson for the Iranian Parliament’s National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said the committee has approved provisions regulating communications infrastructure in the Strait of Hormuz.

Under the measure, the construction, operation and development of telecommunications and information technology infrastructure, including fiber-optic networks, within the Strait of Hormuz will require approval from the relevant authorities.

Qeshghavi also said lawmakers have approved a measure requiring the full name “Persian Gulf” to be used in official communications.

Under the strategic plan for the security and sustainable development of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, the designation “Persian Gulf” must be used in all negotiations, treaties, agreements, publications and relevant documents, as well as communications concerning vessels and fleets.

Iran condemns Israeli attack on Lebanon hospital

Iran’s High Council for Human Rights has condemned an Israeli attack on the Mays al-Jabal public hospital in southern Lebanon, describing it as a violation of international humanitarian law. The council stressed that hospitals, medical personnel, patients and the wounded enjoy special protection during armed conflicts. It called for an independent investigation, documentation of alleged violations and accountability, urging the United Nations and other international bodies to take concrete action to protect healthcare facilities and civilians.

Iranian academic outlines strategic impact of conflict

Iranian academic Hamid Reza Moqaddamfar has outlined 10 strategic consequences of Iran’s confrontation with the United States and Israel. He argued that the conflict challenged assumptions about US military and intelligence superiority, exposed vulnerabilities in American regional bases and affected energy markets, maritime transport and insurance costs. He also said regional allies were reassessing their security calculations, describing

the developments as a potential turning point in the regional and global security order.

Pezeshkian: Iran will honor any agreement it signs

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran does not seek war but will not surrender in the face of force or coercion. Speaking Sunday, he said Iran would welcome dialogue leading to lasting peace and security while remaining alert to the possibility that peace proposals could be used deceptively. Pezeshkian stressed that if Iran enters into an agreement, it will honor its commitments, emphasizing unity, public service and addressing economic and social challenges.

Qatar says consultations underway on resuming Iran talks

Qatar’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Doha has been holding consultations on the possible resumption of talks concerning Iran for around two weeks, following the return of the relevant envoys.

The spokesperson added that Qatari officials had received assurances from US government officials that Washington wants to reach an agreement.

ICCIMA announces five-party MOU, launches SPX system, proposes forex plan to CBI

TEHRAN- The President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) announced the conclusion of a five-party memorandum of understanding at the meeting of the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council on Monday, September 21, and said: The purpose of concluding this memorandum is to increase interaction and coordination between governance institutions related to improving the business environment and the private sector so that they can make the economic atmosphere transparent, stable, competitive, and predictable by improving the business environment.

Samad Hassanzadeh, President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, on Sunday, September 20, at the meeting of the Board of Representatives of the Iran Chamber, while appreciating the efforts of economic actors despite difficult economic conditions, said: Economic actors have so far been able to preserve production centers and protect the country's employment capacity, and the Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade and all country officials, in meetings held at the Iran Chamber, have always been grateful to the private sector for this.

Hassanzadeh, referring to the impact of the complexities of the international environment on the exacerbation of the country's economic problems, said: About 50 years of sanctions and imposed wars, including the 8-year, 12-day, and Ramadan wars, and the continuation of these wartime conditions, have been very heavy for our country. We have lost great figures who will never be forgotten for the country, and the country's large enterprises and factories have suffered damage, but economic actors and the noble and honorable people of Iran have been able to resist these aggressions and damages and create conditions in which we face the least problem in meeting the basic needs of society; of course, officials also have the necessary will to provide support to eliminate deficiencies and resolve the problems of economic enterprises.

At the same time, the President of the Iran Chamber referred to the adverse effects and damages of the great military and economic war on the lives of all people and stated: All private sector experts believe that today the duty of economic actors and enterprises is more important than ever, and we must make our efforts to continue and sustain production so that we reach conditions in which problems for the country and economic activities are reduced.

Samad Hassanzadeh considered overcoming the current situation dependent on strengthening the endogenous ties of the country's economy and said: It is necessary that the strength of large industries be combined with the capacity, expertise, and innovation of small and medium-sized enterprises, and that the country's economic resilience be enhanced.

Hassanzadeh, stating that today the country's small and medium-sized enterprises, which contain a large part of employment capacity, face very great problems, added: In order to be able to provide more lasting service to our country, large economic actors must definitely bring small and medium-sized economic actors along with them and use their products in sales and exports.

Iran Chamber's major step for "national synergy" with unveiling of SPX system

He announced the Iran Chamber's major step for "national synergy" with the unveiling of the Iran Subcontracting and Partnership Exchange (SPX) System and said: The Iran Chamber's new action in line with national synergy is creating an operational platform for linking small enterprises with large industries; in this regard, the Iran Subcontracting and Partnership Exchange (SPX) was implemented in cooperation between the Iran Chamber and the Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization.

The President of the Iran Chamber added: By aggregating information on enterprises and employers' needs, this system transforms relations between small and large enterprises from scattered and temporary to sustainable and purposeful cooperation and creates a mechanism for establishing stable, transparent, and manageable relations.



Signing of five-party MOU as a national action to improve business environment

The President of the Iran Chamber announced the plan to conclude a five-party memorandum of understanding as a national action to improve the business environment and said: As a national action aimed at convergence and development of inclusive cooperation in the country's economic policymaking, the Iran Chamber has pursued the formation of a five-party interaction; to operationalize this interaction, a five-party memorandum of understanding between the Iran Chamber, the Ministry of Economy, the Legal Deputy of the President, the Ministry of Interior, and the Office of the Secretary of the Council of Ministers will be signed concurrently with the holding of the Government-Private Sector Dialogue Council on Monday, September 21.

Hassanzadeh, explaining the details and objectives of this five-party memorandum, said: The purpose of this memorandum is to increase interaction and coordination between governance institutions related to improving the business environment and the private sector so that they can make the economic atmosphere transparent, stable, competitive, and predictable by improving the business environment, and through a coherent and sustainable mechanism for cooperation and coordination, improve the quality of economic policies and regulations, facilitate and monitor the implementation of laws and regulations, identify and remove legal and executive obstacles facing economic actors, and use this capacity to improve the regulatory system.

New proposal to Central Bank to meet the country's needs under conditions of rising forex rates

In another part of his remarks, he said: Given that the increase in the forex rate has created more inflation in society, and due to the Central Bank's contractionary policies, restrictions have been created in the allocation of foreign currency to enterprises, especially for essential goods, parts, and machinery, meetings have been held with Central Bank officials, and it has been proposed that the allocation of foreign currency for essential goods such as medicine, which is part of government duties, be carried out by the Central Bank, but that other matters be handled by the private sector through imports without order registration, without currency transfer, and without verifying the origin of foreign currency, so that they can meet the needs of economic units themselves; of course, Dr. Hemmati has also given a favorable promise on this issue so that we can overcome the conditions that America and the West have created for our country.

Hassanzadeh, regarding the issues in the country's customs for clearing goods and processing documents for goods clearance, said: The Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade announced at the meeting of the Council of Heads of Chambers that the plan for unified command of customs with the responsibility of governors and supervision of customs heads is on the agenda; we hope that with this measure we will see all products made available to economic enterprises for clearance in the shortest possible time.

Trump's Iran war ignites global diesel crisis

Did America's confrontation with Iran create perfect energy storm now crippling consumers worldwide?

TEHRAN-As diesel prices shatter records across three continents, evidence mounts that the Trump administration's military confrontation with Iran and its failure to anticipate the Strait of Hormuz disruption have triggered a supply chain catastrophe that threatens to push the global economy into recession.

According to CNBC, U.S. diesel prices hit an all-time high of \$6.31 per gallon this week, while Reuters reports the average has climbed to \$6.29—a staggering 68 percent increase from a year ago. In Europe, the European Commission's data shows diesel reached €2.159 per liter, the highest since records began in 2005. These aren't abstract numbers; they represent a direct assault on working families.

The Trump administration's war with Iran, combined with its



inability to prevent attacks on Saudi pipelines and the ongoing disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, has created what supply chain strategist Steve Blough calls "a perfect storm." Financial Times reports that West Asian refinery diesel exports have plummeted to roughly one-quarter of pre-war levels, while attacks on Russian refining infrastructure

have removed millions of barrels per day from global markets.

The consequences ripple far beyond the pump. Home heating oil costs could surge 31 percent this winter, forcing what energy assistance director Mark Wolfe warns will require "significant sacrifices" from low-income and middle-class families. Trucking

companies face \$10 million headwinds. Farmers, construction firms, and public transit systems all stand to absorb crushing cost increases.

JPMorgan analysts admitted Thursday: "For the first time since the start of the Iran conflict, we don't have a baseline view. The assumption that the disruption is temporary is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain."

Perhaps most damning: Federal Reserve Chair Kevin Warsh acknowledged the crisis by referencing crack spreads—the refining margin between crude and diesel—as a key inflation driver. The Trump administration's failure to secure global energy supply chains has handed American consumers an economic war they never asked for and cannot easily escape.

Iran, India examine mechanisms to strengthen bilateral ties by leveraging BRICS capacities

TEHRAN- The new Indian ambassador to Iran, at the start of his mission, visited the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and met with the chairman of the Chamber. In this meeting, while referring to the economic capacities and the history of Iran-India cooperation, the two sides emphasized the need to revive and develop trade relations and to use BRICS capacities.

Also, drafting a timetable for private-sector trade talks, holding specialized courses, exchanging trade delegations, and creating a direct communication channel to follow up on and implement agreements were placed on the agenda of both sides.

Vishwesh Negi, the new Indian ambassador to Iran, in a meeting with Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, Chairman of the Tehran Chamber, attended by Fereydoun Vardinejad, Secretary General, and Hesameddin Hallaj, Deputy for International Affairs and Trade Development of the Tehran Chamber, Zeinab Davoudi, India desk expert at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of the commercial section of the Indian Embassy in Iran, in addition to reviewing mechanisms for strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries, described increasing awareness and synergy among private-sector actors as one of the solutions for developing Iran-India exchanges.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mahmoud Najafi-Arab, Chairman of the Tehran Chamber, referring to the historical record of cultural and economic communications and exchanges and also the membership of Iran and India in BRICS, spoke about the necessity of developing interactions between the two countries and added: The Tehran Chamber has also recently joined the BRICS Trade Council, and representatives of this chamber recently attended the BRICS Trade Council meeting in India and presented their views on various trade issues.

The chairman of the Tehran Chamber, announcing the Tehran Chamber's readiness to increase cooperation with India's private sector, said: Iran and India have significant capacity for developing economic interactions in areas such as medicine and pharmaceutical raw materials, food and agricultural products, inputs, and industrial raw materials. However, the current trade volume between the two countries, around \$1.5 billion, is far from existing capacities. Nevertheless, the private sectors of the two countries can pave the way for deepening economic relations and sustainably increasing bilateral exchanges by strengthening trade, joint investment,

and industrial cooperation.

He also, referring to the obstacles and challenges of trade with India in the current conditions, emphasized the need to develop and use alternative corridors and new logistics routes to facilitate and accelerate trade exchanges.

Strengthening Trade Relations Between the Two Countries Through Facilitating Private Sector Communications

Vishvash Negi, the new Indian ambassador to Iran, also in his remarks described one of his missions as developing trade and economic relations between the two countries and explained: The trade volume between Iran and India previously reached about \$20 billion, but this figure has now decreased greatly; a level that is far from the capabilities and opportunities existing in the two countries.

He also, referring to some obstacles in the path of trade between the two countries, emphasized the need to find practical solutions to facilitate economic relations and use the capacity of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

The Indian ambassador to Iran, stating that "developing economic exchanges between the two countries will be possible through holding B2B trade meetings and creating opportunities for joint cooperation between private-sector companies of Iran and India," proposed suggestions such as direct communication between the embassy and chambers of commerce, providing opportunities for trade delegations to attend exhibitions, holding webinars to understand market needs, and short-term training programs.

Vishvash Negi considered developing trade with Iran a strategic benefit for both countries and, in another part of his remarks, referred to opportunities arising from multilateral cooperation and added: A meeting is to be held soon by the Indian Embassy in Tehran to present BRICS achievements and programs in 2026 and to provide the ground for synergy and networking between Indian companies and Iranian economic actors interested in cooperation.

He said: Holding more than 420 expert meetings in BRICS and the final statement of the summit indicate the diversity and high capacity of trade cooperation, and it is hoped that member countries will expand their trade outlook by using this capacity.

The Indian ambassador, while officially inviting members of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce to participate in this event, emphasized that the presence of private-sec-

tor economic actors in this meeting can be a prelude to defining joint projects and using the economic advantages of BRICS member countries.

Inviting Indian traders to participate in specialized exhibitions

In another part of the meeting, Fereydoun Vardinejad, Secretary General of the Tehran Chamber, called for strengthening the embassy's communication with the Tehran Chamber as the parliament of the private sector and invited the Indian ambassador to attend Iran Expo 1405 to strengthen trade cooperation.

Vardinejad also invited Vishvash Negi to attend the opening of the Iran Pharma exhibition as one of the largest exhibition events in the pharmaceutical field. He noted that Indian pharmaceutical companies will also be present at this exhibition.

At the end of the meeting, the two sides emphasized drafting a timetable for trade talks between the private sectors of Iran and India, holding specialized courses, exchanging trade delegations, and creating a direct communication channel to follow up on agreements, and expressed hope for the development of economic cooperation.

Back in early August, Iran's Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade for Commercial Affairs emphasized the revival of the Iran-India Joint Trade Working Group to expand trade relations between the two countries.

Mohammad Sadegh Mofatteh stated, during a meeting with Amardeep Singh Bhatia, the Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry of India: "This working group held three sessions up until 2015 and played a highly constructive role in developing trade between the two countries. Unfortunately, since 2015, it became inactive due to political reasons and sanctions."

He continued: "This working group will be the responsibility of the deputies for commercial affairs and industry of the two countries, and its reactivation can play a significant role in resolving problems and obstacles hindering trade exchanges between the two nations."

Mofatteh emphasized the diversification of services provided by India's UCO Bank to Iranian traders and said: "Activation of this bank can play a constructive role in developing trade relations between the two countries and increasing Iran's export share to India."

He proposed that UCO Bank's banking services to Iranian traders be extended to sectors such as industry, mining, electricity, construction, and services, using Indian rupees.

Armenian ambassador stresses expansion of Tehran-Yerevan rail, trade cooperation

TEHRAN- The Armenian ambassador to Iran, referring to the role of the Railway of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connecting landlocked countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to international routes, emphasized the expansion of rail and trade cooperation between the two countries.

According to IRNA, citing the Railway of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Grigor Hakobyan, in a meeting with the CEO of Iran's Rail-

way, described the connection of the railway networks of Iran and Armenia as paving the way for Armenia's access to the southern open waters and for the diversification of Iran's communication routes with Europe.

At the meeting, Jabar-Ali Zakeri, CEO of the Railway, emphasized the expansion of rail cooperation between the two countries and a greater role for Armenia in regional transit routes, especially the North-

South Corridor.

Referring to the importance of developing regional transit routes, he said: Armenia can help boost regional rail transit by playing a greater role in the North-South Corridor.

According to the report, the rail connection between Iran and Armenia through the Syunik region is among the infrastructure projects being pursued by the two countries to develop trade

exchanges and regional transit, and Tehran and Yerevan are following the process of operationalizing this route.

In line with realizing transport diplomacy and developing regional trade, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia met with the Head of Iran's Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization, in late July.

Ed Sheeran faces protests, desolate stage after opening acts walk out over Gaza genocide

From page 1 ► Sheeran played alone Saturday night. Because of widespread artist walkouts, the concert suffered a lengthy delay, leaving a disgraced pop star to face the crowd solo.

The sudden disappearance of his supporting lineup signaled a definitive end to the era where megastars could safely ignore global atrocities.

The mechanics of wealthy censorship

The expulsion of Macklemore stripped away the veneer of artistic freedom in the West, especially the United States.

Following the rapper's unapologetic display of solidarity with Gaza at MetLife Stadium, pro-Israel operators mobilized quickly.

Robert Kraft, the billionaire owner of the NFL's New England Patriots and a staunch Zionist, led a coordinated pressure campaign.

Venue owners threatened to cancel Sheeran's upcoming shows entirely if the outspoken rapper remained on the bill.

Sheeran capitulated. He later claimed the tour promoter made the final call, but that technicality offered him little protection from public fury.



Adi Chattopadhyay, speaking for the protest organizers, told reporters the demonstration aimed to center the conditions on the ground in Gaza and the reality that the genocide remains active. Ed Doogan, a protester outside the venue, dismissed the British singer's excuse.

"Ed Sheeran is worth \$400m. He could have afforded to give up a few concert dates, but he was too chicken," Doogan said, according to a Reuters report. "I don't understand somebody that [sic] has that much money and threw his friend under the bus."

Artists rejecting the silence and the irreversible shift

The attempt to isolate Mack-

lemore backfired instantly. Every single remaining act on the Loop Tour walked out.

Finneas, an American producer, withdrew from his scheduled dates with a firm declaration that artists must not be silenced when they defend the oppressed.

Aaron Rowe, an Irish performer, pointed to his own nation's deep scars of occupation and forced famine. He refused to let billionaires use their extreme wealth to suppress the rightful voices of those highlighting the savage murder of Palestinian children.

Macklemore elevated the definition further. He pledged his entire \$1 million in net tour earnings to organizations providing direct

relief to Palestinians.

Writing on social media, the rapper dismantled the noise surrounding his dismissal. "A Palestinian life is no less valuable than any other life on this earth," he stated.

These disputes unfold against a backdrop of historic carnage.

Since the beginning of its genocidal campaign against Gaza, the Israeli military has slaughtered over 73,910 Palestinians, including more than 20,000 children. Entire neighborhoods lie pulverized beneath American munitions.

While powerful elites have attempted to quarantine this reality from mass entertainment, global public sentiment has decisively turned.

Recent Gallup polling indicates that Americans now sympathize more with Palestinians than Israelis, reversing decades of established data.

Heavy-handed tactics by stadium owners cannot obscure the ongoing genocide. Suppression attempts such as canceling pro-Palestine performers have amplified the mounting rage directed at a globally detested apartheid regime.



Tel Aviv and Washington do not want stability in the Persian Gulf and Iraq simultaneously: an Iraq that regains its geopolitical role as a bridge to regional stability rather than remaining a permanent arena of conflict; an Iran that does not need direct confrontation to consolidate its regional influence; and Persian Gulf states reconsidering their calculations away from complete alignment with Washington.

From the perspective of those planning for a turbulent rather than stable region, such a scenario is entirely unacceptable.

But if the region were to descend into a comprehensive regional war, or even into a series of internal crises or conflicts spilling across neighboring borders and keeping everyone in a state of permanent tension, the matter would be entirely different.

Borders would evaporate, the balance of power would be redrawn, and states such as Iraq, with its structural weaknesses, which there is no point denying, would shift from entities capable of making their own decisions into arenas where the calculations of Zionist lobbies are played out.

To ignite such a scenario, the party concerned would need little more than a hidden launchpad on a third country's territory, an incident that could serve as a pretext, and an already-charged regional context in which every side is primed to believe that its neighbor was the one who attacked it.

Given Iraq's geographical position and its multiple open fronts, it is perpetually at risk of becoming that launchpad, whether its leaders recognize it or not.

According to local media reports, Saudi authorities issued an unprecedented early-morning alert instructing residents to shelter indoors.

Firefighters were subsequently dispatched to extinguish a fire at a fuel depot near the capital's international airport, where a tanker bearing the Aramco logo had caught fire.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran thwarted US, Israel change attempts: Hezbollah chief

Sheikh Qassem declares armed resistance the sole method to liberate occupied Palestinian



TEHRAN — Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem declared Saturday that the Islamic Republic of Iran has successfully defeated the core political objectives of the American-Israeli aggression launched against it earlier this year, proving that steadfastness can thwart imperialist war plans.

Addressing the Martyr of Resistance Conference in Pakistan via video message on the 55th anniversary of the Imamia Students Organization, the Hezbollah leader analyzed the strategic fallout of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

He noted that Washington and Tel Aviv engineered the assault with the explicit ambition of overthrowing Iran's Islamic establishment.

However, through organized retaliatory operations and defense, Tehran absorbed the strikes, maintained political stability, and denied its enemies their intended objective, he noted.

"The attack on the Islamic Republic was aimed at overthrowing the regime, but it confronted the challenge," Sheikh Qassem stated, describing the outcome as a decisive political triumph for the broader Resistance Front.

"Even if it takes a long time, Iran has won," he emphasized. "And even if it takes days or months for us, we are victorious because we stood firm and prevented them from achieving their objectives," Sheikh Qassem argued that time works against Western-backed aggression.

gressors.

Over time, he explained, sustained resistance wears down the enemy's material foundation and forces internal fractures to emerge.

Connecting Iran's endurance to the regional battle against Israel, Sheikh Qassem affirmed that armed struggle remains the only effective means to achieve true liberation.

"Resistance is the only way to liberate the land," he said, dismissing diplomatic concessions as unproductive delays that merely prolong Israeli occupation.

He cited Lebanon's experience as historical evidence, where Lebanese resistance fighters forced the Israeli military into a humiliating withdrawal in 2000.

That victory, he noted, permanently dismantled the myth of Israeli invincibility and injected renewed energy into the Palestinian struggle.

Sheikh Qassem defined resistance as an absolute refusal to submit to enemy dictates, calling on every individual to contribute according to their capacity.

He emphasized that the Palestinian cause remains the central issue for the entire Islamic world, urging young people to strengthen unity alongside ongoing resistance.

Sheikh Qassem concluded on an unyielding note regarding current regional sacrifices: "We are the rightful owners of this land, and we must resist no matter how great the sacrifices are, and victory will come, God willing."

Conflicting interpretations of alleged UAE president's warning to Netanyahu on Oct. 7 attack

TEHRAN – A UAE official has declined to explicitly confirm or deny reports that President Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ) warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of an imminent Hamas attack before October 7, 2023.

Responding to a recent query from The National, the official said, "The UAE discusses security matters with other countries through the relevant entities, and does not discuss such details at the level of national leaders."

The response has prompted different and seemingly contradictory interpretations of whether MBZ personally warned Netanyahu about the planned attack.

The National, an Abu Dhabi-based newspaper, is owned by International Media Investments, a media group controlled by MBZ's brother.

With Israeli elections approaching, the issue has gained political significance, particularly in debates over the government's handling of security threats before October 7.

Middle East Eye published a report titled "UAE dodges question on pre-October 7 warning to Netanyahu," interpreting the Emirati response as an evasion rather than a denial.

The controversy stems from a report by Haaretz, which stated that Netanyahu had been personally warned by MBZ approximately 10 days before Hamas's attack. According to The Times of Israel, a source familiar with the conversation confirmed that MBZ had warned Netanyahu that Hamas was preparing a major offensive.

The reported 45-minute conversation allegedly included a specific warning that

Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was preparing a large-scale operation. The report further claimed that Netanyahu failed to inform Israeli security officials or take action based on the warning.

The Times of Israel offered a different interpretation of The National's report. According to the Israeli newspaper, the UAE did not confirm or deny the allegations but issued a statement emphasizing that the two countries maintained "open lines of communication" through which "all relevant intelligence has been and continues to be communicated."

This wording was interpreted as leaving open the possibility that intelligence had been shared, without confirming that MBZ had personally warned Netanyahu.

Netanyahu has denied the allegations and threatened to sue Haaretz, but has yet to officially file a lawsuit.

Meanwhile, the Hebrew-language outlet Ynet reported that the Emirati statement followed days of Israeli pressure on the UAE to deny the contents of the Haaretz report.

The Jerusalem Post, however, offered a more direct interpretation of the UAE response, reporting that the Emirati official had rejected claims that MBZ personally spoke with Netanyahu about a possible Hamas attack.

The conflicting accounts leave a central question unresolved: Was the UAE's statement intended to avoid confirming a reported conversation between the two leaders, or did it amount to a rejection of the allegation that MBZ had personally warned Netanyahu?

Iraq's security risks amid US withdrawal

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – There is intense debate in Baghdad over whether the anticipated U.S. military withdrawal will close one chapter or mark the beginning of another.

The new reality is both simple and harsh: an international military force led by the United States is anticipated to withdraw from Iraq by the end of September. What remains afterward is not some theoretical vacuum to be debated in coffee shops.

It is a concrete reality on the ground, one that began the moment the withdrawal process was set in motion.

The question that deserves to be asked without ambiguity is this: who will actually fill this vacuum? The Iraqi state and its institutions? Or external powers that rely on domestic proxies and have been waiting for years for precisely such a moment to rearrange Iraq's geography and future according to their own interests?

The answer will be determined by what actually happens along the borders, internal negotiations over weapons, and in the positions taken by regional powers known not simply to observe events but to help shape them whenever the opportunity arises in order to settle their sectarian and ideological scores.

A vacuum to be exploited

The security lesson established by Iraq's experience since 2003, from sectarian violence and al-Qaeda, through the Daesh period, to the fallout from the Gaza genocide and the illegal war against the Islamic Republic is clear: a security vacuum does not remain empty for more than the first moments of shock.

When one force withdraws from a position, other forces do not wait for permission to occupy it. The quickest to move are usually groups already prepared and operating under the banner of "sectarianism," "factions," or "mercenaries" skilled in working both covertly and openly.

There is a vast difference between these labels in form and in ideological and military substance.

The expected scenario is not arbitrary. It

involves attempts to manufacture scattered security incidents, carefully timed leaks, warnings of an economic collapse, and border crises deliberately engineered to appear as natural consequences of state weakness and political dysfunction.

In reality, however, they would be the product of a calculated operation carried out by those with a direct interest in keeping Iraq dependent on permanent external protection.

Consider this pattern, which has been repeated more than once across the region: clandestine bases, lone wolves, and recruited local cells operating in complete silence before carrying out an operation that throws the internal balance into confusion or creates tensions between neighbors that had no genuine dispute in the first place.

Then begins the search for "Who did it?" while the real beneficiary is obvious to anyone who reads the scene beyond official statements. Who benefits from setting Iraq's borders with its neighbors ablaze, straining its relations with its Islamic surroundings, and exhausting it in internal conflicts that are perilously close to becoming sectarian?

The history of Iraq's post-2003 enemies is known and documented: when the territory of states with weak security structures is used as a launchpad for operations that the perpetrators do not want directly attributed to them, the affected parties are left trading accusations among themselves while the real actor watches from a distance and, at times, pulls the strings itself.

Iraq's geography leaves no room for complacency on this particular issue. From the western border with Syria, where the situation remains fragile and capable of igniting, to the strip bordering Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and all the way to the Iranian east, every point along this expanse could become a testing ground for everyone's patience.

Any cleverly engineered incident could ignite a pointless conflict between Iraq and a neighboring state, one that serves neither side but benefits a third party whose name never appears in any statement. The incident involving the bombing of the Saudi Petrol pipeline may be a telling example.

ing to two US officials, Washington still believes that Riyadh is not capable of pushing back YAF.

The CNN report comes after US President Donald Trump unexpectedly cut short a retreat at Camp David to return to the White House on Saturday.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's YAF reported on Saturday that the group fired a ballistic missile at Riyadh at dawn.

Iran basketball win bronze at 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran's men's basketball team defeated China 79-70 on Sunday to secure the bronze medal at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

Matin Aghajanpour led Iran with 21 points, while China's Zhenglin Pang finished with a game-high 22 points.

It's Iran delegation's first medal in the Games.

Iran have yet to win a gold medal in men's basketball at the Asian Games. Team Melli won back-to-back silver medals in 2014 and 2018 and have also claimed three bronze medals, in 1951, 2006 and 2010.

The gold-medal game will be contested between Japan and South Korea.

Amir Ghafour extends contract with Sepahan VC

TEHRAN – Experienced Iranian opposite hitter and former national team star Amir Ghafour will remain with Sepahan for a second consecutive season and for the third time in his professional career.

Ghafour, one of the standout players of Iran's golden generation of volleyball, has extended his contract with the Isfahan-based club for the upcoming season of the Iranian Men's Volleyball Premier League. He was also part of Sepahan's squad last season, playing an important role in the team's results.

The veteran opposite was the league's top scorer last season, finishing with 370 points and establishing himself as one of the key players in Sepahan's lineup.

Ghafour has represented several prominent clubs during his career, including Barij Essence Kashan, Shahrdari Varamin, Paykan Tehran, Saipa Tehran, Monza and Lube in Italy, and Shahdab Yazd. He has also gained valuable experience competing at the highest level of European club volleyball.

At international level, Ghafour was a regular member of the Iran national team for many years. He won Asian Championship gold medals in 2011, 2013 and 2019, as well as Asian Games gold in 2014 and 2018. His other major achievements include a bronze medal at the 2017 FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup and appearances at the 2016 Rio and 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.

Ghafour has also collected several individual honors. He was named Best Spiker at the 2013 Asian Championship and Best Opposite Spiker at the 2019 edition.

At club level, he won the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship with Lube and has also lifted European club titles during his spells with Monza and Lube.

His return for another season gives Sepahan a highly experienced and proven scoring option as the club prepares for the new Iranian league campaign.

Saeid Daghighi appointed Nassaji head coach

TEHRAN – Saeid Daghighi has been appointed head coach of Nassaji Mazandaran, taking charge of the Ghaemshahr-based club until the end of the current season.

Daghighi reached an agreement with the club's owner and CEO during a meeting on Sunday, following the departure of Mojtaba Hosseini.

Daghighi had been a candidate for the position since the beginning of the season. However, after several rounds of negotiations, Hosseini was appointed head coach. His tenure lasted seven weeks before he parted ways with the club on Saturday.

Daghighi will now lead Nassaji as the team seek to improve their performances and re-

sults in the remainder of the season.

Iran runners-up at 2026 CAFA U17 Women's Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Uzbekistan 2-1 on Saturday to finish runners-up at the 2026 CAFA U17 Women's Championship.

Maryam Khalilifar scored Iran's goals in the match held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Maryam Khalilifar won the best goalscorer award with five goals and Kyrgyzstan's Perizat Zairbekova won Mosta Valuable Player accolade.

The Persian girls, started the campaign with a 2-1 loss against Kyrgyzstan and defeated Tajikistan 4-0.

Kyrgyzstan won the 2026 CAFA U17 Women's Championship and Uzbekistan finished in third place.

Iran's runner-up finish at the 2026 CAFA U17 Women's Championship reflects a broader upward trend in Iranian women's sports. Young athletes like Maryam Khalilifar, whose five goals earned her the tournament's top scorer award, exemplify growing depth and technical quality in the country's female footballing pipeline.

Increased grassroots investment, expanded youth leagues, and more international exposure have steadily raised competitiveness across disciplines. As regional tournaments continue showcasing this progress, Iranian women's teams are positioning themselves as serious contenders, signaling a promising trajectory for the sport's future development nationwide.

Iran, China share the spoils: 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran and China football teams shared the spoils in a goalless draw in 2026 Asian Games on Sunday.

In the match held at the Wave Stadium Kariya, Hossein Abdi's side had started the campaign with a 3-1 win over the UAE, while China defeated North Korea 2-1 in Group B.

Iran will face North Korea on Wednesday and China meet the UAE.

The men's football tournament at the 2026 Asian Games is being held from Sept. 15 to Oct. 3 in Osaka, Toyota, Nagoya and Kariya in Japan.

South Korea are the defending champions.

Abdi: China were focused on defending against Iran

TEHRAN – Iran U23 head coach Hossein Abdi said China adopted a highly defensive approach in their goalless draw on Sunday, claiming the Chinese side appeared determined to secure a point.

Iran and China shared the spoils in a 0-0 draw on Sunday in Group B of the 2026 Asian Games.

"We started the match well and did everything we could to score, but it seems China's football philosophy has changed," Abdi said at the post-match press conference. "They defended with several layers and, apart from two long-range shots, they did not create any other clear chances."

Abdi praised China for their defensive performance but said teams must be more successful to progress in the tournament.

"They were happy with a draw against us, and I congratulate them for achieving it. But the teams that remain in the tournament are the ones that perform more successfully," he added.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

In Urmia, the grape is more than a fruit

By Afshin Majlesi

URMIA, West Azarbaijan Province – By late afternoon, the road out of Urmia was beginning to clog. Our flight had landed around 5 p.m., and after a quick check-in at the hotel, we set off for Chi Chest Coastal Village, near Lake Urmia, where the 9th Urmia Grape Festival was underway.

For much of the way, traffic moved slowly.

I asked our guide why there were so many cars on the road.

"The festival," he said.

That explained the traffic. It also gave me my first sense of how much the event mattered to people in the city.

As we drove, I asked him about grapes and their place in Urmia's culture. He told me that celebrations connected with the grape harvest were an old tradition in the area, with local accounts tracing them back thousands of years. He also spoke about harvest traditions among the region's different religious communities.

One of the local traditions he mentioned was known as Shanadar, or Shanidar.

What we were heading toward, of course, was a modern version of that old connection.

When we arrived, the parking areas were already crowded.

People walked toward the entrance, stopping to take photographs beside large grape sculptures, statues and colorful figures.

I guessed there were perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 people there at the time.

At several stalls, different varieties grown around Urmia were laid out for visitors.

Some were new to me.

A few were long and unusually large, almost like dates. Others were round and heavy. They came in different shades of green, red and black.

Then I tasted them.

One variety, with Japanese origins, caught me by surprise. Its flavor seemed to change as I ate it. For a moment it reminded me of one fruit, then another.

That is the problem with describing taste. You can tell a reader what a grape looks like. You can give its name, size and color. But taste is something else. You have to be there.

At one stall, a middle-aged man was offering visitors grapes from several baskets.

"Which one should I try?" I asked.

He pointed to a dark variety.

"This one," he said. "Don't judge it by the color. Just taste it."

I did.

He watched my reaction and smiled.

"You like it?"

"I do. Very much."

"Then take some home," he said. "You won't find this taste easily in your city."

He turned out to be right about at least one thing.

I bought a seven-kilogram box to take back to Tehran.

Only later did I think about the practical problem.

I still had to get through the airport, carry my luggage and board a flight.

But by then, it was too late.

The grapes had won.

At another stall, a woman was ar-



ranging bunches of green grapes in neat rows.

I asked whether they were all from Urmia.

"Mostly from around here," she said. "People know grapes from Urmia. They come in different varieties, and each has its own use."

A younger woman standing beside her added, "Some are better for eating. Some are better for raisins. Some people want them for making Doushab."

The conversation lasted less than a minute, but it explained something the displays could not.

The grape was not simply one product. It was a whole category of local food, work and knowledge.

At other stalls, I saw what happened to the fruit after it left the vine.

There were different methods of drying grapes. In one display, more than two tons of green and black grapes had been spread over a sloping surface to dry into raisins.

At some stalls, enormous bunches hung in clusters, left to dry over several weeks. Each was about one to 1.5 meters long, made up of tightly intertwined bunches of grapes in different colors and shapes.

Local people called this traditional method "Milakh."

Unlike ordinary raisins, they explained, grapes dried this way retain more moisture, leaving them softer and juicier.

There were also bottles and jars of grape products, including Doushab, the thick syrup made from grape juice.

I bought some, along with several other local agricultural and dairy products.

The displays showed that the grape was much more than something to eat fresh.

It could be dried, boiled, preserved and turned into food that would carry the harvest into the winter months.

One stallholder handed me a small piece of dried fruit.

"Try this," he said.

I asked how long it took to prepare.

"It depends on the type of grape and how you dry it," he said. "But this is how people used to keep the harvest for later."

He paused, then added, "The fresh grapes are for now. The dried ones are for the months ahead."

It was a simple explanation, but it brought the harvest cycle into focus.

Beyond the grapes

The most interesting part of the evening was not always inside the stalls.

Around the main festival area, families had set up temporary camps. Many had brought food from home. They sat together for dinner while children moved around the

festival grounds.

Nearby, Ashiqs, wearing traditional outfits, sang and played. Drums were beaten. A circle of people performed a traditional dance, holding hands.

I stopped near one family as they were eating.

"Do you come every year?" I asked a woman sitting with several relatives.

"We try to," she said.

"What brings you here, the grapes or the festival?"

She laughed.

"Both. But mostly the family."

Her young son, who had been listening, interrupted.

"And the games," he said.

His mother smiled.

"And the games," she agreed.

That small exchange gave the event a different feeling.

It was a family outing as much as an agricultural celebration.

For many people, the grapes were only part of the reason to come.

The rest was being together.

Behind the music, however, food and colorful displays was a sizeable agricultural economy.

I also had a chance to speak with Aidin Rahmani-Rezaeieh, the mayor of Urmia, during his visit to the festival.

He said ambassadors and representatives from 15 foreign countries were expected to visit the festival and attend its closing ceremony.

"The roots of the grape festival go back to an old tradition in Urmia, giving thanks for the grape harvest," the mayor added. "People used to celebrate it at the end of Shahrivar (mid-September) and thank God for the harvest."

The municipality has held the festival for nearly a decade, he said.

"This year's festival was also bigger in scope," he said, adding that the aim was not only to preserve the tradition but also to introduce it to younger generations.

The municipality had created sections devoted to innovation, industry and investment, history and identity, sports, mothers and children, food and rural products.

In the "innovation section", visitors could see agricultural technologies and projects connected with grapes, as well as specialist panels.

Another section focused on industry and investment linked to agriculture. The "history and identity section" displayed photographs that organizers said were more than 300 years old.

There was also a market where villagers and farmers sold their products directly to visitors.

Rahmani-Rezaeieh said this was important because farmers could sell their products directly "from the

farm gate."

He also said the municipality wanted to turn Chi Chest into a permanent venue for festivals and establish a year-round calendar of events based on tourism and local attractions.

Qahreman Ayyavzlu, governor of Urmia, who accompanied the mayor, told me that grapes were the city's second-largest agricultural product after apples.

The governor put annual grape production at about 240,000 tons and said more than 30,000 growers were involved.

He also pointed to the range of products made from grapes, including vinegar and grape syrup.

Vahid Abbasi, deputy mayor of Urmia, described the relationship between the city and its vineyards in more personal terms.

"Grapes are the fragrance of Urmia and the blessing of the city," he told me.

He said people in Urmia had lived with vineyards for generations and that the city now wanted to turn that old connection into an economic and tourism opportunity.

The benefits, he said, should ultimately reach farmers, producers and others involved in the local economy.

The broader goal was to strengthen Urmia as a tourism destination and make the grape festival an event capable of attracting visitors from outside the region.

The road beyond the festival

I understood that connection better the next day.

We were driving outside Urmia toward Tamtaman Cave when vineyards began appearing on both sides of the road.

There were far more of them than I had imagined from the festival.

The previous evening, grapes had been displayed under lights, arranged on tables and presented to visitors.

Now they were simply growing in the fields.

Our driver stopped beside one of the vineyards.

He told me about an old local custom in which a passerby could pick a few grapes and eat them. He mentioned the local name for the custom, but I did not remember it afterward.

I picked some.

There was nothing between the fruit and me.

No stall.

No package.

No sign.

No stage.

Just the vine.

Our driver watched me eat and laughed.

"Now you understand Urmia," he said.



Vahid Abbasi, deputy mayor of Urmia, speaks to the Tehran Times



Aidin Rahmani-Rezaeieh, the mayor of Urmia, addresses visitors at the grape festival

Iran putting Caspian Sea back at center of regional cooperation with COP7

By Mehdi Garshashi

TEHRAN – Iran is once again bringing the Caspian Sea to the forefront of regional cooperation by hosting COP7 of the Tehran Convention, with officials describing the meeting as an important opportunity to strengthen international efforts to protect the shared marine environment.

The seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Tehran Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea is being held in Tehran from September 20 to October 1.

Shina Ansari, head of the Department of Environment, said the conference, being held in Tehran after a three-year hiatus, provides an important opportunity to strengthen international cooperation on protecting the Caspian Sea.

Speaking about the international event, Ansari said the meeting is being hosted by the Department of Environment to revive the regional mechanism for cooperation on Caspian Sea protection.

She noted that expert-level meetings of COP7 have begun in Tehran, bringing together representatives of the Caspian littoral states and international organizations. The expert sessions will continue through Tuesday, followed by a high-level meeting on Wednesday.

Ansari said Iran has sought to provide a platform in the capital for the environmental challenges facing the Caspian Sea to be addressed and followed up with in a regional and international framework.

During the four-day meeting, participants will discuss key issues concerning the protection of the Caspian Sea environment, regional cooperation, common challenges, and ways to strengthen collaboration among the littoral states. Decisions will also be made on relevant documents and issues agreed upon by the participating countries.

The environment chief



هفتمین اجلاس کشورهای
متعاهد کنوانسیون چارچوب
حفاظت از محیط زیست دریایی
دریای خزر (کنوانسیون تهران)
یکم مهرماه ۱۴۰۵ ، تهران-ایران

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE
OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES TO THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT
OF THE CASPIAN SEA (Tehran Convention)
23 sep,2026 Iran - Tehran



stressed that hosting the meeting in Tehran is the result of continued efforts by Iran and the Department of Environment to keep regional mechanisms for Caspian Sea protection active.

She added that Iran's hosting of the international gathering provides a valuable opportunity to place Caspian Sea issues higher on the regional agenda and pave the way for more effective cooperation among the littoral states.

Ansari said Iran will seek to make full use of regional and international dialogue to pursue key shared concerns related to the Caspian Sea and lay the groundwork for joint decisions and practical measures to protect the body of water.

At the conclusion, the views and discussions of participating countries will be summarized in a conference statement, reflecting the member states' positions and areas of agreement on the most important environmental

issues facing the Caspian Sea.

For Iran, Ansari noted, the Caspian Sea is a shared natural heritage and a valuable asset for present and future generations. She said holding COP7 of the Tehran Convention in Tehran, under Iran's hosting and with the efforts of the Department of Environment, represents an important step toward strengthening regional and international cooperation to protect the Caspian Sea.

The Tehran Convention, which provides the main framework for cooperation among Caspian littoral states on environmental protection, marks its 20th anniversary of entry into force this year. The Islamic Republic of Iran will assume the rotating presidency of the Tehran Convention for the upcoming term.

Tehran Convention

The need for joint protection and management of the Caspian environment and its resour-

es has been a long-standing concern for the Caspian littoral states. In 1998, the Caspian Environment Programme (CEP) was established as a regional initiative aimed at stopping the deterioration of the Caspian Sea's environmental conditions and promoting sustainable development for the long-term benefit of the Caspian population.

Since its inception, the CEP has tackled various environmental issues by developing a coordinated management structure, creating Strategic and National Action Plans, and implementing transnational measures to address imminent threats to the Caspian environment. Funded by the littoral states, the European Union, and the international community through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the CEP has worked to formalize its structure and activities by concluding the Tehran Convention.

In 2003, the Caspian littoral states: Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, and Turkmenistan, signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention). After the ratification by all the five Governments, the Tehran Convention entered into force on August 12, 2006.

The Tehran Convention serves as an overarching legal framework that establishes general requirements and an institutional mechanism for environmental protection in the Caspian Sea region. It is based on principles such as the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, and the principle of access to and exchange of information. The two major areas of focus are (i) prevention, reduction, and control of pollution, and (ii) protection, preservation, and restoration of the marine environment. The Convention includes provisions on environmental impact assessment as well as general obligations related to environmental monitoring, research and development.



sive and effective leadership by acting as the country's primary humanitarian player," IRIB reported.

"On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, I wish to extend our appreciation and recognition for the extraordinary humanitarian response led by the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the context of the current conflict situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the letter reads.

"Your swift mobilization of volunteers and staff, the scale and effectiveness of life-saving assistance, and the steadfast commitment to our fundamental principles have ensured that those in need of urgent assistance have received timely and dignified support.

The coordination of emergency health services, round-the-clock relief operations, psychosocial assistance, and community out-

reach, as well as the courageous and highly professional search and rescue operations, reflect not only technical excellence but also deep-rooted trust within communities. Such trust is the cornerstone of effective humanitarian action and underscores the unique auxiliary role of IRCS and its footprint in the wide Iranian territory.

Your response stands as a powerful example of what a strong National Society can deliver in times of crisis- saving lives, alleviating suffering, and preserving human dignity.

The IFRC remains fully committed to supporting IRCS in its ongoing efforts and in addressing the evolving humanitarian needs. We stand in solidarity with you, your dedicated staff, and your vast network of volunteers, whose courage and commitment continue to inspire the entire IFRC network."

Over 1,200 war-damaged schools reopen

TEHRAN – A total of 1,272 schools damaged during the US-Israeli imposed war were simultaneously reopened on Sunday in a ceremony attended by Education Minister Alireza Kazemi.

In total, 1,288 schools across the country sustained damage, with major reconstruction efforts carried out by the Ministry of Education and the Organization for Renovation, Development and Equipment of Schools to restore the

affected educational facilities.

According to the education minister, 1,272 of the damaged schools have now been repaired and returned to the country's education system.

The remaining 16 schools were fully destroyed, and reconstruction and rebuilding projects for these facilities are underway. The schools are scheduled to be ready for operation by October 2027.

Health ministry to streamline cancer care through national network

TEHRAN - The health ministry is set to launch the national cancer care network in early autumn, aiming to integrate fragmented cancer treatment services into a coordinated, team-based, and traceable care pathway.

The initiative aims to ensure that the patients entering the network follow a clear path through the stages of diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, without the need for patients to go to various centers, ISNA quoted Ali Motlaq, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

No new medical center is planned to be built; the network will benefit from available capacities to connect specialized physicians and medical centers. Based on the type of cancer, the center's capacity, the patient's place of residence, and other defined criteria, the patients would be referred to the best center and medical team, he noted.

The activities of the network focus on enhancing the quality of care, improving access, and reducing the financial burden of care on patients. Standardization of clinical pathways, systematic referral, teamwork and multidisciplinary decision-making, capacity management of centers, early diagnosis, patient navigation, and the electronic recording and monitoring of care pathways will also be among key components of the program, the official highlighted.

According to Motlaq, free cancer treatment does not mean unconditional access to cancer-related services and all medications free of charge in public and private sectors. The program aims to minimize patients' out-of-pocket costs for covered services in the public sector, and in specific cases, without paying any money directly.

Recording the information of patients, their referrals and follow-ups, and the received care will help clarify a patient's current situation, whether they have received required services, and who or what center is responsible for the next step in their treatment, he said.

The official went on to say that the program will also consider incentives for specialists and centers that join the network and accept its standards such as recording essential information, adherence to clinical pathways, participation in patient referral and follow-up, and accountability for the quality of provided services.

The first phase of the program will commence by focusing on breast cancer. The qualified centers and service providers will be identified, and the actual capacity of the services will be determined. After early detection, initial assessment through imaging, biopsy, and pathology, if cancer is confirmed, the treatment will begin, Motlaq said.

Ultimately, the success of the network should not be measured merely by the number of services provided or patients registered. The fundamental question is whether the patient received standard care—at the right time, in the right place, and from the right team, with minimal financial and administrative barriers—and if their journey to the next stage of care was fully traced.

The program aims to cover other top priority cancers in the country by the end of the current Iranian year, March 2027, he added.

According to the health ministry, cancers are the leading causes of premature mortality in the country.

They account for more than 55 thousand deaths annually. Some 34 thousand deaths out of 122 thousand premature deaths (under 70 years of age) and 11 thousand deaths out of 85 thousand very premature deaths (under 50 years of age) are caused by various cancers.

The first 10 most common cancers in Iran are breast, prostate, colon, stomach, lung, bladder, thyroid, uterus, brain, and spine cancers. The most common cancers of Iranian women include breast, colon, thyroid, stomach, uterine, leukemia, ovary, brain and spine, lung, and esophagus.



Early detection through screening will increase the chance of successful treatment and improve the life expectancy of the patients.

Fortunately, Iran is among the countries with advanced cancer treatment technology. This year, an Iranian knowledge-based company managed to develop a nanotechnology diagnostic kit for early detection of antigens associated with helicobacter pylori, which is the most frequent cause of chronic gastritis, duodenal ulcer, and stomach cancer.

The achievement will reduce dependence on imported products, enhance the screening system, improve patient access to diagnostic services, and lower healthcare system costs.

Launching the first national production line for electroporation systems in 2025, Iran became the first country in Asia to acquire advanced cancer treatment technology.

Electroporation is highly efficient in the treatment of various types of cancer, such as skin cancer, such as squamous cell carcinoma (SCC), a common type of skin cancer that develops in the flat cells of the upper layer of the skin, melanoma, and breast cancer.

More than a thousand patients have been treated so far using this therapy; in more than 200 cases, successful treatment has prevented the need for amputation.

New cancer treatment hospital inaugurated in Tehran

In June, a new cancer treatment hospital equipped with more than 600 beds was inaugurated in Tehran.

Affiliated with the Imam Khomeini Hospital Complex and run by the Cancer Institute of Iran, the hospital is comprised of education, research, diagnosis and treatment sections, ISNA reported.

The hospital has also 103 special beds, 19 operating rooms, 6 homecare beds, and 12 emergency beds.

The history of the Cancer Institute dates back to 1949, when a cancer hospital was established as a result of a collaborative agreement between Tehran University Medical School and the Red Crescent Society.

The hospital provided surgical, pathological, and outpatient services to cancer patients nationwide.

In 1950, the radiotherapy unit was established and one year later, under an agreement with the World Health Organization, the first cobalt unit in the Institute was established and radiotherapeutic services were provided to patients.

In 1960, cytotechnology and in 1962 experimental units were added to the hospital. By 1970, when it was renamed the Cancer Institute of Iran, it was fully equipped and included pathology, surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, medical genetics, and an experimental research laboratory.

Now the Cancer Institute consists of 14 departments and acts as a leading center in campaigns involving all aspects of cancer control, from generating population data (population-based cancer registry) to state-of-the-art patient care at a national level.

Annually, about 10,000 cancer patients receive inpatient and outpatient care in different departments of the Cancer Institute of Iran.



SEPTEMBER 21, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A person who analyzes himself receives a benefit, and he who neglects it, is a loser. He who learns a lesson from others, finds insight, and with such insight comes understanding and avoiding ignorance, and he who understands, will be well aware.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:57 Evening: 18:21 Dawn: 4:28 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:52 (tomorrow)

Mural of rapper Macklemore painted in Gaza after Sheeran tour furor

Artists in Gaza have painted a mural of Macklemore wrapped in a Palestinian flag on a huge slab of concrete in the ruins of Gaza City, after the US rapper was kicked off Ed Sheeran's upcoming tour for calling for a "Free Palestine."

The mural, on a slab that leans against ruined buildings surrounded by rubble, depicts the "Thrift Shop" rapper raising a fist in the air.

"Thank you for using your voice for Palestine," it reads.

"We wanted to send a message to thank rapper Macklemore in this simple way," said Anne Redwan, 26, who designed and painted the mural with fellow artist Qusai Al-Helo.

"As an artist living under siege here in Gaza, we are waiting for support from anyone who can see (the) persecution we live under," she told Reuters. "We can paint murals bigger than this to express our feelings."

Macklemore, who has long supported Palestinian causes, was cut from British pop star Sheeran's musical lineup over remarks on stage criticizing Israel's military assault in Gaza, which was launched after Hamas-led fighters attacked Israel in October 2023.

Sheeran said he was unable to keep Macklemore on the tour after stadium owners refused to let him appear. US billionaire Robert Kraft, owner of Gillette Stadium in Massachusetts where his New England Patriots football team plays, said he had barred Macklemore from appearing there for antisemitism, which the rapper denies.

Nearly a year after a ceasefire ended major fighting in Gaza, reconstruction has yet to begin. Most buildings have been destroyed and more than two million residents are confined to around a third of the enclave's territory, mostly in tents or crowded rooms in damaged buildings among the ruins.

A US-brokered plan to end the war has stalled, with negotiators failing to agree conditions for Hamas to disarm and Israel to withdraw its troops.

The furor over Sheeran's tour has led to a series of pledges from those involved to send money. Macklemore said on Wednesday he would donate



his \$1 million in net earnings from the tour to six aid groups supporting Gaza.

Kraft, in turn, said Sheeran had told him he would donate \$2 million for aid in the region, and had asked him to match the pledge. Sheeran has not commented on any donations. Macklemore's donation drew a matching \$1 million pledge from Ms. Rachel, a popular children's TV personality.

Aid agency officials said the boost in celebrity attention could help bring more support to Gaza, where nearly all residents rely on aid for food, water, medical care and shelter.

"But what's really most important is that people who have been so generous keep fighting over a sustained time," said Toby Fricker, a local official with UNICEF. "That's why we really call for sustained support, not one-off peaks, but sustained."

Hussein Murtaja, who runs a Gaza humanitarian group that provides mental health support to children, said Macklemore's solidarity matters more than the money he donated.

"When artists of this stature, with this many followers or fans, all come to know more about the cause, and support reaching a political solution, support achieving peace for the people of Gaza... That means a great deal to us."

Cartoon of Day

A NEW SCHOOL YEAR IN GAZA



A New School Year in Gaza

Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria

Marionette Museum opens in Tehran

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN – The Marionette Museum was inaugurated at the Ferdowsi Hall of the Rudaki Foundation in Tehran on Saturday.

The museum was established through the efforts of the Iranian theater director Behrouz Gharibpour, a pioneer of Persian puppet operas and founder of Aran Puppet Theater Group. The opening ceremony coincided with Gharibpour's 76th birthday.

Approximately 800 marionettes, or string puppets, are showcased at the museum that narrate a 23-year bond between puppetry and Iran's literary and cultural treasures, including the works by renowned Persian poets Ferdowsi, Hafez, Rumi, Saadi, and Attar.

Speaking at the ceremony, Gharibpour discussed the process of forming and completing the Marionette Museum, stating: "This museum possesses vast educational capacities. It can provide students and schoolchildren, who are at the threshold of choosing their academic and career paths, with an opportunity to familiarize themselves with art and cultural professions."

Gharibpour added that while many museums introduce us to Iran's past and historical background, this museum goes beyond introducing a portion of the country's cultural heritage; it introduces audiences to the process of puppet making, the art of puppetry, and an experience that had no precedent in the years preceding the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Throughout the 23 years of activity in the Aran Puppet Theater Group, dozens of trained artists have performed on stage. We have endeavored to introduce the treasury of Persian literature and poetry to successive generations through the art of puppetry," he said.

Referring to the 800 puppets on display, Gharibpour noted: "There are still many works and pieces that cannot be exhibited in the current space due to capacity limits. We hope that by expanding the space, we can showcase the works and achievements of artists who have been active in this field over the years."

He also announced the upcoming performance of the puppet opera "Love," based on Attar's "The Conference of the Birds," which will open on September 28. It is



Behrouz Gharibpour speaks at the opening ceremony of the Marionette Museum at the Ferdowsi Hall of the Rudaki Foundation in Tehran on September 19, 2026.

the story of Sheikh San'an and the Christian maiden, a Persian mystical poem and the longest story in "The Conference of the Birds".

Also speaking at the ceremony, Leila Khosravi, director general of the museums at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, described the opening of the Marionette Museum as a "different kind of event" in the field of museology. She stated that the museum is linked to various disciplines such as performance, literature, music, and storytelling, making it a valuable example of a museum related to intangible heritage.

She added that the importance of establishing such a museum lies in the fact that children and adolescents can, through their presence, become familiar with both the art of puppetry and the historical narratives and components of the nation's intangible heritage.

Mehdi Shafiee, deputy for artistic affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, was another speaker at the event. "The establishment of this museum is one of the important events in the field of culture and art in recent years. Its importance becomes even clearer when we consider similar puppet museums in other countries around the world," he said.

"A museum is not merely a place for storing objects; it is the memory of a nation, a place where the past does not end but is instead transmitted to the future. In this museum, puppets that once came to life on stage, narrating romantic, historical, and literary stories,

introduce a part of Iran's history and literature to the audience," Shafiee remarked.

He added that every puppet, costume, stage prop, and object in this collection is part of the story of an era in Iranian art, and alongside them, the evolutionary path of Iranian puppetry can be observed.

Referring to Gharibpour's artistic career, Shafiee noted that during a period when many viewed puppet theater as a marginal performing art, Gharibpour believed in the potential of this medium and brought the puppet into the realm of narrating Iranian culture and literature.

Emphasizing the importance of registering and preserving the country's contemporary artistic heritage, Shafiee stated: "Cultural heritage only remains alive when, alongside being preserved, it is made possible to recreate and connect it with today's generation. From this perspective, this museum should not be the end of the road, but rather a living center for research, education, documentation, intergenerational dialogue, and the training of young artists."

Shafiee also highlighted the museum's potential in terms of cultural diplomacy and introducing Iranian art and culture to non-Iranian audiences. He expressed hope that the museum would become a center for teaching the younger generation, researching puppet art, developing international cooperation, and promoting Iranian art.

Following the ceremony, attendees toured various sections of the Marionette Museum and witnessed segments of the "Love"

opera. They also had the opportunity to meet with the cast and crew and view the behind-the-scenes preparations for the opera.

A marionette, or string puppet, is a puppet controlled from above using wires or strings depending on regional variations. A marionette's puppeteer is called a marionettist. Marionettes are operated with the puppeteer hidden or revealed to an audience by using a vertical or horizontal control bar in different forms of theaters or entertainment venues. They have also been used in films and on television.

Behrouz Gharibpour studied theater at Tehran University and at the Dramatic Arts Academy in Rome (Silvio D'Amico). He founded Tehran and Esfahan puppet theater centers and changed Tehran's slaughterhouse into Iran's greatest cultural center. He has experience in writing and directing in fields such as theater, puppet theater, cinema, documentary movies, and TV.

Gharibpour is best known for his solid research works on Iranian puppetry as it was commonly practiced during the Qajar era. Before creating the Aran Puppet Theater Group, he formed the Iran Kheimeh Shab Bazi Group to revive kheimeh shab bazi, Iranian traditional marionette theater, with both traditional and modern-educated puppeteers. That group performed in Iran and abroad, including the Czech Republic, Portugal, and Venezuela. In 2003, Gharibpour founded Aran Puppet Theater Group with the main members of his former group.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ganjoor founder receives National Parsi-jan Award

By Samaneh Aboutaleb

TEHRAN- The National Parsi-jan Award was presented to Hamidreza Mohammadi, founder of Ganjoor website, at the second edition of the event, which highlighted the importance of preserving and strengthening the Persian language.

The ceremony was held on Saturday at the Sooreh Hall of Tehran's Art Bureau, organized by the Office for the Preservation of the Persian Language of the Art Bureau.

Ganjoor is a digital archive of classical and contemporary Persian poetry that provides free online access to the works of major Persian poets. The website features the works of poets including Ferdowsi, Saadi, Hafez, Rumi and Omar Khayyam, and allows users to search and read poems by poet, book and individual verse. Over the years, it has become a widely used online resource for accessing Iran's rich literary heritage.

The jury of the second Parsi-jan Award had nominated six individuals and organizations for the National Insignia and Golden Cypress of Parsi-jan: Bale software; Mohammad Mehdi Baqeri, director of the Editors Institute; Hamidreza Mohammadi, founder of Ganjoor; Iranian traditional vocalist Mohammad Motamedi;



Hamidreza Mohammadi, founder of Ganjoor, speaks at the second National Parsi-jan Award ceremony at Tehran's Art Bureau on September 19, 2026.

Tehran Metro's Cultural Deputy; and Hossein Ezhdehai, a journalist with the Central News Unit in Hormozgan province.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mohammadi, the winner of the top prize, said the recognition should not be considered a personal achievement, stressing that Ganjoor was the result of the efforts of thousands of people.

"Ganjoor is essentially not a face or an individual," he said, referring to the many people who have contributed to the development of the website and helped turn it into a major online destination for users seeking Persian poetry.

He added that the recognition given to Ganjoor should there-

fore be seen as an acknowledgment of the collective efforts of those who have worked to develop and expand the platform.

Nasser Feiz, secretary of the award, said the event was held to recognize efforts to safeguard Persian identity and language, which he described as an important factor in Iran's cultural standing in the world.

He said the Art Bureau had paid particular attention to literature since its establishment, with poetry and fiction among its major fields of activity. Persian language, he added, had also been a longstanding concern of the bureau.

Referring to the Art Bureau's activities in the field of Sacred

Defense literature, Feiz said numerous works of poetry and literature had been produced and published, turning the field into one of the institution's important areas of activity.

He said the need had subsequently emerged for an institution to focus more specifically on the Persian language, in line with the emphasis placed on the issue by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

He noted that Ayatollah Khamenei had repeatedly stressed the importance of Persian, adding that various factors could contribute to weakening a language, including the increasing use of foreign words.

"One of the signs of a powerful language is that it remains alive and dynamic in the new millennium," he said, noting that centuries after their time, Iranians can still engage with the works of classical poets such as Ferdowsi and Saadi.

Explaining the criteria for selecting recipients of the Parsi-jan Insignia, Feiz said the organizers did not necessarily focus on individuals or institutions whose primary responsibility was the preservation of Persian.

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