

Araghchi: Israel Hayom calls for US-Israel integration to make Washington pay for pressure on Israel

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has criticized growing Israeli influence over US policy toward Iran, pointing to an opinion article in Israel Hayom that calls for deeper US-Israeli integration so that Washington would face high costs if Israel were subjected to financial pressure.

Araghchi made the remarks in a post on X while reposting an excerpt from the article, "Israel must prepare for the possibility of financial warfare," published by Israel Hayom on September 9. ► [Page 4](#)

Ansarallah consolidates Red Sea control as Trump rejects MBS' desperate appeals

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The Saudi campaign of aggression in Yemen is unraveling on the western coast. In a lightning offensive that swept through the coastal plain, Yemeni forces under Ansarallah command have captured the port city of Mokha, Mayyun Island, and strategic highlands in Lahij province.

The proxy formations Riyadh spent a decade financing have abandoned their positions. Weapons depots and observation posts fell intact. Sanaa now holds the heights overlooking the Bab al-Mandab Strait. ► [Page 5](#)

Impulsive German leader left in a quandary

TEHRAN — German Chancellor Friedrich Merz is being squeezed badly by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

In 14 days, Merz's center-right Christian Democrats (CDU) has lost terribly to the AfD, an anti-immigrant and pro-Russia party that calls itself the Trump of Germany.

The AfD's showing in two states - Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on September 20 and Saxony-Anhalt on September 6 - has caused an earthquake inside and outside Germany.

Merz's party has also lagged behind the far-left Die Linke party in Berlin.

Addressing the people immediately after the elections results were announced in the northeastern state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, sorrowful Merz said "it is disaster".

More than anything else, these results show division in the German society, which was seen as a stabilizing force in Europe. ► [Page 5](#)

Foreign diplomats visit historic, natural sites in Urmia

TEHRAN - Ambassadors and diplomats from nine countries, along with representatives of two international organizations, visited Lake Urmia and several historic sites in Urmia during a visit to the northwestern Iranian city.

The diplomats from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Malaysia and South Korea, as well as the deputy secretary-general of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the secretary-general of the Asian Mayors Forum, were among the visitors invited by Mayor Aidin Rahmani-Rezaeieh to attend the 9th Urmia Grape Festival.

The visit was organized as part of efforts to showcase Urmia's cultural, historical, tourism and economic potential and use the grape festival as a platform for expanding international exchanges. ► [Page 6](#)



President Masoud Pezeshkian visits a memorial for the students killed in the Minab school attack, during the official ceremony marking the start of the new education year at a school in Tehran, Monday, September 21.

Bells Return Tomorrow, 277 Desks Won't

As schools reopen nationwide, Iran remembers 277 students and 67 education staff killed across two recent wars — including the 120 children lost in the Minab school attack alone

Of 1,288 schools damaged in the war, 1,272 have been rebuilt and reopened before this year's first day of class.

TEHRAN - The sound of school bells and the cheerful voices of children once again filled classrooms across the country on Monday. Students resumed education after the US-Israeli war last year left a trail of damaged schools.

Behind the celebrations, however, were classrooms scarred by war and the painful memory of students and teachers whose lives were cut short in attacks on educational centers. For many, the start of the new academic year is therefore more than a return to school — it is a sign of hope, resilience and a determination to rebuild.

President Masoud Pezeshkian attended the opening ceremony at a girls' elementary school in Tehran, where he rang the bell marking the start of the new school year. The ceremony came as

schools across the country returned to classrooms after months in which the education system was forced to cope with the consequences of the war, damaged infrastructure and the loss of members of the school community.

The return to school has taken on a significance beyond the traditional start of an academic year. For students and teachers, the new school year begins with the memory of classmates and colleagues who will not return to their classrooms.

During the US-Israeli military strikes against Iran that began on February 28, schools and other civilian facilities were among the sites affected by attacks. According to the School Renovation, Development and Equipping Organization, 1,288 schools across the country were damaged, including 16 that sustained direct hits and

required extensive reconstruction or rehabilitation.

Officials said reconstruction efforts were accelerated in the months following the conflict. By the eve of the new academic year, 1,272 damaged schools had reportedly been restored and returned to the education system, allowing them to reopen their doors to students.

Education Minister Alireza Kazemi said in an interview about three weeks ago that the education system has historically lost many students and teachers in wars. He said that during the two recent wars, 277 students and 67 education-sector staff were killed, while 178 students and 25 education-sector staff were wounded. ► [Page 7](#)

Iran is prepared for a protracted war: IRGC

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has warned that any renewed US or Israeli aggression against Iran would trigger a substantially different military response, with changes expected in the geography of the conflict, the weapons deployed and the targets struck.

In an extensive interview, IRGC Spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi said Iran was prepared for a prolonged confrontation and that the IRGC was now better prepared for such a scenario than it had been before the recent conflict.

From Iran's perspective, he said, the confrontation involving Iran, the United States, Israel and their allies should not be regarded as a concluded war followed by a new conflict, but as different phases of the same confrontation. ► [Page 3](#)

Iranian armed forces vow stronger response to any new aggression

TEHRAN — Iran's Armed Forces General Staff and the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters have vowed a stronger response to any new act of aggression against the Islamic Republic, saying future attacks would inflict heavy costs on the aggressors, particularly the United States and Israel.

The warning came in a joint statement issued on Monday, September 21, on the eve of the 46th anniversary of the start of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War, which Iran commemorates annually during Sacred Defense Week. ► [Page 2](#)

Pakistan's interior minister in Tehran to advance bilateral cooperation

TEHRAN — Pakistan's Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi arrived in Tehran on Monday and held talks with his Iranian counterpart, Eskandar Momeni, on strengthening bilateral relations, implementing existing agreements and expanding cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

Naqvi was received by Momeni upon his arrival in the Iranian capital. The two ministers reviewed the latest developments in bilateral cooperation and exchanged views on ways to further develop ties between Tehran and Islamabad. They also discussed the provisions of agreements signed by senior officials of the two countries and explored measures to finalize and implement them.

In the meeting, Momeni expressed confidence in the outcome of his recent visit to Islamabad and thanked Pakistan's senior leadership for its efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. ► [Page 3](#)

Grand Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani passes away at 98; nation mourns prominent jurisprudent



► [Page 2](#)



Opening of the 20th International Resistance Theater Festival at Azadi Tower, Tehran, on September 21, 2026, honoring martyrs' families.

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

More than 200 days of nightmare for the US and Israel

Kayhan, in a note, addressed the 205-day war between Iran and the United States and the enemy's critical situation. The more time passes since the foolish decision of the US and the Zionist regime to attack Iran, the more international observers recognize the scale of the American-Israeli defeat. A war that was supposed to end within weeks with the overthrow of the Islamic Republic has not only failed to achieve that result after 205 days, but has reached a point where Iran has gained the upper hand and is now pressuring the aggressors. After failing in the war, the US and Israel were forced to fight for another goal — reopening the Strait of Hormuz — but they have now encountered the reality that another strait, Bab al-Mandab, is controlled by Yemeni fighters and is moving closer to closure. Now, the situation is not good at all for the US and the Zionist regime, even though they try to prove otherwise through media propaganda.

Siasat-e-Rooz: To achieve peace, one must be strong

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to how peace can be achieved. Over recent decades, the United States has had a record filled with killings and crimes around the world. Trump, claiming to counter nuclear proliferation, bombed Iran's nuclear facilities during the 12-day war while Iran was in the middle of nuclear negotiations with the US and the IAEA. In the Ramadan War, the US and the Zionist regime launched a war in the middle of negotiations under the false claim of supporting the Iranian people, while what they delivered to the people of Iran was the massacre of thousands. The Ramadan War once again proved that countries have only one option to confront aggression and injustice and to reach peace: turning toward strength based on internal capabilities. Iran, by relying on military power, diplomatic capacity, public mobilization, and the geopolitical position of the Strait of Hormuz, managed to build a strong barrier against the aggressors.

Ham-Mihan: Trump is worried about his power

Ham-Mihan, in an analysis, pointed to the reason behind Trump's rhetoric. The war has continued without any major achievement or significant result. The US could not overthrow the Islamic Republic, destroy Iran's missile or drone capabilities, or force Iran into nuclear surrender or acceptance of US nuclear demands. Although Iran suffered human and material losses, none of these amount to a major achievement for

Trump. Trump is trying, by promising that the war with Iran will soon end and fuel prices will fall again — and by promising to pay \$5,000 to Americans if Republicans win — to prevent Republican defeat and Democratic victory in the upcoming elections. He knows that if Republicans lose their majority in both chambers of Congress, Democrats could become a serious obstacle during the remaining two years of his presidency and weaken his power.

Arman-e-Emrooz: A unique diplomatic opportunity

Arman-e-Emrooz referred to the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York. This gathering is considered a rare and strategic opportunity for Iran's foreign policy. By participating actively and in coordination with friendly and aligned countries, Iran can take practical steps to rebuild relations with Arab and European states and even exchange messages with the United States to revive the Islamabad memorandum. Losing such an opportunity would not only mean ignoring an important diplomatic capacity, but could also bring significant political and economic losses that would be difficult to repair in the future. Through active diplomacy and precise coordination with friendly countries in groups such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, and its eastern partners, Iran can adopt a coherent and strong position against unilateral pressure. This coordination not only strengthens the international legitimacy of Iran's positions but also creates a more favorable environment for bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Resalat: Iran shifts global balances in favor of its national security

Resalat, in a commentary, discussed the importance of the recent veto in the UN Security Council by Russia and China. The paper wrote that the veto by these two eastern powers shows that Tehran's current strategy is neither absolute dependence on a particular bloc nor a romantic belief in Moscow and Beijing as unconditional allies. Rather, it reflects a network-based and realistic diplomacy that turns shared interests into leverage. Iran has managed to engage two major global powers with veto rights in its geopolitical environment in such a way that they are willing to bear the political and diplomatic cost of confronting Western hegemony to defend a strategic partner. It shows that Tehran has moved from being a passive observer in the global power game to an active player capable of shifting global weights in favor of its national security.

Araghchi: Israel Hayom calls for US-Israel integration to make Washington pay for pressure on Israel

From page 1 ► “The Israel lobby is getting less shy about its grip on U.S. policy toward Iran,” Araghchi wrote. “In Miriam Adelson's publication, the Lobby's loudspeaker says U.S. policy must ensure America pays a price for any slight against Israel.”

“High time for Washington to break free from these shackles,” he added.

The article, written by Mark Dubowitz, chief executive of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD), argues that Israel should prepare for the possibility that financial pressure and sanctions mechanisms developed by Washington against Iran could eventually be directed against Israel.

Dubowitz argues that the financial sanctions architecture used against Iran could provide a model for pressure on Israel, saying that the process can begin with legal measures, expand to individuals and companies, and eventually reach wider sectors and financial institutions.

Against that backdrop, the article calls on Tel Aviv to diversify its economic relationships and reduce its exposure to potential financial pressure.

The section highlighted by Araghchi goes further, arguing that Israel and the United States should deepen their military, technological, intelligence and economic inte-



gration to such an extent that imposing financial harm on Israel would also impose a significant cost on Washington.

The article also argues that Israel should expand ties with additional markets and strengthen its alliances in order to reduce vulnerabilities to potential financial pressure.

For Araghchi, however, the passage represents evidence of the influence of the pro-Israel lobby on US policy toward Iran. By describing Israel Hayom as “Miriam Adelson's publication” and “the Lobby's loudspeaker,” the Iranian foreign minister presented the article as an example of an effort to shape Washington's approach to Israel and Iran.

Iranian armed forces vow stronger response to any new aggression

From page 1 ► The statement presented the eight-year war against Iraq's former Ba'athist regime as a defining episode of national resistance, saying Iran, despite facing military, political, security, and economic pressure from major world powers, preserved its territorial integrity and ultimately forced the aggressors to accept defeat.

According to the statement, the experience of the war, combined with decades of advances in Iran's defense industry, has significantly strengthened the country's military capabilities and altered the regional security balance.

The two military bodies said Iran's Armed Forces have continued to enhance their capabilities through modern technologies while relying on broad public support. They reveal that these capabilities had enabled Iran to inflict substantial damage on US and Israeli military and security infrastructure in West Asia during the conflicts of recent years.

The statement further argued that the developments had



changed the region's prevailing security equations in favor of Iran and the broader Islamic world.

The warning comes amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington. Iran's military command said earlier this week that it had received information indicating that the United States was preparing to resume attacks against Iran, prompting a separate warning that any renewed US assault would be met with retaliation against American positions and interests in the re-

gion.

The latest statement did not limit its warning to the United States and Israel, but also referred to their allies and those whom Tehran regards as supporting hostile actions against Iran.

It reaffirmed that Iran's Army, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), the Ministry of Defense, Law Enforcement Forces, Basij volunteer forces and border guards would remain committed to protecting the country's na-

tional interests, the rights of the Iranian people and Iran's territorial integrity.

The statement said the country's military and security institutions would not retreat from that mission and vowed that aggressors and those hostile to Iran would face further “bitter defeats.”

The declaration was issued as Iran begins its annual Sacred Defense Week, a period dedicated to commemorating the country's resistance during the 1980–1988 war and honoring those killed during the conflict. This year's commemoration is taking place against the backdrop of renewed tensions and continuing military confrontation between Iran, the United States, and Israel.

The timing of the statement also underscores the central role that the legacy of the Iran-Iraq War continues to play in Iran's national security discourse, where the conflict is widely presented as an example of national mobilization and resistance under sustained external pressure.

Grand Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani passes away at 98; nation mourns prominent jurisprudent



TEHRAN – Iran and the broader Islamic world are in deep mourning following the passing of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Musa Shobeiri Zanjani, a towering figure of Shia jurisprudence and a highly respected source of emulation, who departed this life on Monday at the age of 98.

The office of the late Grand Ayatollah announced his passing in the early hours of Monday, citing the Quranic verse, “Those whom the angels take in death while they are good, they say, ‘Peace be upon you; enter Paradise for what you used to do.’”

The late marja (source of emulation) had been admitted to a hospital in the holy city of Qom last Friday following pulmonary complications and remained under intensive care until his passing.

Born in 1928, Ayatollah Shobeiri Zanjani was a luminary in the science of ilm al-rijal (the study of hadith narrators) and had taught advanced jurisprudence in Qom for over four decades. Following the passing of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Araki in 1994, the Society of Seminary Teachers of Qom recognized him as one of the seven jurists qualified for marja'iyya. Throughout his life, he remained devoted

to teaching, research, and training scholars, shunning public display for a life of scholarly dedication.

Funeral and burial arrangements

In a joint statement, the Management Center of the Islamic Seminaries, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Seminaries, the Society of Seminary Teachers of Qom, and the Assembly of Experts announced the funeral proceedings.

The funeral procession for the late Grand Ayatollah is scheduled for Wednesday, coinciding with the third day of public mourning. The ceremony will commence at the Imam Hassan Askari Mosque in Qom and proceed toward the Holy Shrine of Hazrat Fatima Masoumeh (SA). His body will be laid to rest within the sacred precincts of the shrine.

Official condolences

The passing of such a senior jurist has drawn widespread expressions of grief from the highest levels of the Iranian establishment, who hailed him as a guardian of the faith and a pillar of the scholarly community.

President Masoud Pezeshkian issued a heartfelt message, describing the late Ayatollah as a “profound jurisprudent” and a “repository of the traditions and valuable experiences of past scholars.”

President Pezeshkian praised the late cleric for his ethical conduct, modesty, and his efforts in protecting religious teachings from distortion and superstition. “The loss of this prominent jurist is an irreparable rift that can only be filled by divine grace and the assistance of the Imam of the Time,” the President wrote.

Major General Hossein Salami, Command-

er-in-Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), also expressed his profound sorrow. In his message, he noted that the late Grand Ayatollah spent his blessed life promoting the luminous teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt and struggling sincerely for the elevation of Jafari jurisprudence. “His scholarly presence in the Qom Seminary, particularly his leading of congregational prayers at the Feziyeh School and the Holy Shrine of Hazrat Masoumeh, was a source of spiritual warmth for students and scholars,” the IRGC Commander stated.

Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani, Chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council, offered his condolences, stating that the passing of the “great jurist” has deeply affected the hearts of those in the fields of knowledge and wisdom.

“He combined high jurisprudential and scientific standing with asceticism, piety, and divine ethics,” Ayatollah Amoli Larijani noted. “His invaluable scientific works and the accomplished students raised in his school constitute an eternal legacy left behind by this indomitable jurist.”

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani also described the passing of the senior cleric as a “painful loss and a profound bereavement.”

“That noble figure, who spent his entire blessed life in the pursuit of scholarship and teaching, was among the most distinguished scholars and pillars of the blessed Qom Seminary, and a shining example of a truly divine scholar,” Ayatollah Sistani wrote. “His precious scholarly works and other religious services constitute a valuable legacy, and his conduct and practical demeanor will forever remain an enduring model for scholars.”

Iran downs another US drone over Strait of Hormuz, brings total American drone losses to 53

TEHRAN – The Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has intercepted and destroyed yet another US military MQ-1 drone over the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The latest successful interception marks a humiliating blow to Washington, as the IRGC has over the past seven months downed over 50 US drones.

The IRGC announced the major development on Monday, stating that the trespassing American aircraft was detected and brought down using the Aerospace Force's newly developed, indigenous air-defense system, which operates under the unified command of Iran's Integrated Air-Defense Network. The downed MQ-1 is a medium-altitude, long-endurance aircraft that earned the grim moniker “the Butcher of Kandahar” after logging some 20,000 flight hours during the US occupation of Afghanistan.

Interestingly, the MQ-1 had been largely retired from the operational fleets of the US Navy and Air Force for several years,

having been replaced by the more advanced MQ-9 Reaper. Military analysts attribute the sudden re-entrance of the antiquated MQ-1 into service directly to the US military's severe hardware shortages, following the loss of a massive number of MQ-9 drones to the Islamic Republic's robust defensive operations.

Even the US Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has been forced to acknowledge the immense financial and strategic toll of the ongoing conflict. The office recently confirmed the loss of at least 24 MQ-9 Reaper drones since February 28. According to figures released by the CBO, those losses amount to approximately \$720 million.

The IRGC, however, has set the record straight, putting the actual number of destroyed American drones at 53.

The CBO has also confirmed the destruction of an MQ-4C Triton drone, representing an additional estimated loss of approximately \$150 million for the US Department of War. Observers and

military strategists have credited Iran's resounding success in securing its airspace to a highly sophisticated, multi-layered domestic defense network that has neutralized Washington's aerial superiority.

The MQ-1 shutdown follows a similar triumph by the Iranian Army, which announced on Sunday that it had successfully tracked and destroyed an advanced Orbiter reconnaissance drone over the Strait of Hormuz. In a statement, the Army confirmed that the hostile drone had been targeted by indigenous air-defense systems deployed in southeastern Iran.

Miscalculated aggression

The recent string of drone interceptions is part of the broader fallout from the events of February 28, when the United States and Israel initiated their latest round of unprovoked, coordinated aggression against Iran.

Driven by a desperate attempt to redraw the region's security architecture and undermine Tehran's sovereign deterrence, the US-Israeli axis launched a cam-

paign of hostilities that quickly backfired. Rather than projecting power, the offensive exposed the glaring vulnerabilities of the American military apparatus in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. Washington's failure to penetrate Iran's airspace has laid bare the limitations of its highly touted unmanned aerial vehicles against heavily contested, modern defense networks.

In a legitimate and retaliatory response to this blatant violation of international law, American aerial intrusions, and the complicity of regional actors aiding the aggressors, Iran exercised its sovereign right to self-defense by closing the Strait of Hormuz to hostile forces. The strategic closure of the vital global waterway has severely restricted the mobility of US and allied naval assets. Iran has made its stance unequivocally clear that it will retain the closure of the strait and continue to deliver crushing responses to any territorial violations until the complete cessation of US interference and military adventurism in regional maritime affairs.

From Page 1 ▶ “From our point of view, it is the same war,” Mohebbi said, stressing that although the conflict had passed through different phases, “it has not ended.”

His remarks came alongside a broad assessment of major setbacks for Washington, particularly in the areas of military power, regional security, intelligence and advanced weapons technology.

Hormuz at the center of Iran’s assessment

Mohebbi identified the Strait of Hormuz as one of the clearest examples of a US strategic failure.

He said Washington had entered the region while presenting its military presence as a means of protecting energy flows and freedom of navigation. Yet, despite the United States possessing the world’s largest navy, he argued that Washington had been unable to reopen the strategic waterway.

According to Mohebbi, this outcome had created a contradiction at the heart of the US regional posture: a power that presented itself as a guarantor of maritime security had become an obstacle to security.

He also accused Washington of repeatedly violating agreements and linked the continuation of restrictions in the strait to US actions.

Mohebbi described the developments surrounding Hormuz as one of the United States’ most significant strategic setbacks in the region.

US military bases under Iranian attack

The IRGC spokesman also pointed to US military installations across West Asia, saying the United States had spent decades building a network of bases around the Persian Gulf and to Iran’s east and west.

According to Mohebbi, Iranian missiles and drones subsequently struck these installations, rendering a large number of them unusable and forcing the United States to relocate personnel and equipment to more distant positions.

He referred to US facilities in Jordan and other locations, as well as positions closer to Israel and the Gulf of Aqaba, arguing that even after redeployments Washington had faced difficulties in ensuring their security.

He further added that US warships had been pushed farther away from the Persian Gulf following the confrontation, saying the US Fifth Fleet had moved roughly 400 kilometers farther from the area.

In Mohebbi’s assessment, a significant portion of US military resources had consequently been diverted toward protecting American bases and personnel rather than carrying out Washington’s wider regional mission.

Intelligence capabilities also challenged

Mohebbi described intelligence capabilities as another area in which Washington had suffered a major setback.

He argued that the United States had long been regarded as possessing highly sophisticated intelligence networks and facilities that were difficult for others to penetrate or strike.

Baqaei: US blocking of journalists is an attempt to hide the truth

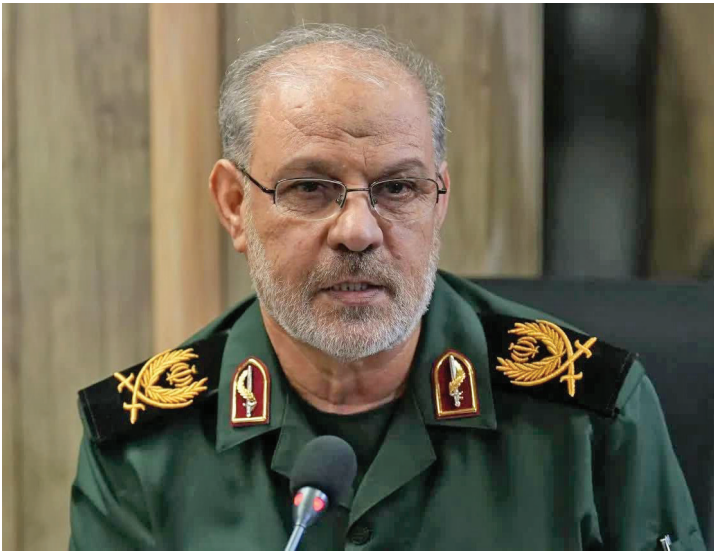
TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei has condemned recent restrictions on journalistic access, accusing the US administration of attempting to suppress the truth. Baqaei argued that by barring specific reporters—including both American journalists deemed unfavorable and members of the Iranian president’s own media team—Washington is actively undermining the public’s right to information to advance a campaign of misinformation.

In a post on X, Baqaei stressed that when an administration shuts out journalists whose voices it prefers to silence, it is not merely managing press coverage, but is instead “trying to hide the truth” and fuel disinformation by infringing upon the fundamental right of access to information.

“A nation that once took pride in tearing down the Iron Curtain now finds itself standing behind one of its own,” Baqaei said, draw-

ing a historical parallel between the current US restrictions and the Cold War-era barrier.

The spokesperson’s remarks follow recent measures barring both American and international reporters—notably members of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s media delegation—from covering events. Baqaei framed the move as a direct violation of media freedom and the global public’s right to know.



The IRGC spokesman said Iranian forces had nevertheless been able to identify and monitor US intelligence facilities in areas around the Persian Gulf and northern Iraq before striking them.

He presented this as evidence that US intelligence infrastructure was not beyond Iran’s reach and said the development had implications not only for Washington’s rivals but also for its allies.

US military technology ‘no longer beyond reach’

Mohebbi also challenged the perception of overwhelming American superiority in military technology.

He referred to systems including the F-35 fighter aircraft, Patriot air-defense systems, offensive missiles, aerial-refueling aircraft, submarines and drones.

According to the IRGC spokesman, the confrontation demonstrated that technologies once regarded as being largely exclusive to the United States could be challenged by Iranian offensive and defensive capabilities.

He said the conflict had conveyed two messages: for US rivals, that American military technology was not necessarily beyond reach; and for US allies, that questions could be raised about Washington’s ability to protect even its own forces and installations, let alone allied countries.

Washington miscalculated Iran’s resilience

A central element of Mohebbi’s assessment was that Washington had underestimated Iran’s ability and willingness to continue fighting.

He said the United States had initially expected Iran to surrender within days, an assessment that he attributed partly to intelligence and political assumptions conveyed to Washington by Israel.

Mohebbi stated that Israeli officials had told the US president that Iran could be forced to surrender within three to five days and that such an outcome would give Washington a result comparable to the Six-Day War.

He said the subsequent failure of that expectation represented a major strategic miscalculation.

The IRGC spokesman also said the United States had been surprised by the range, destructive power, accuracy, and diversity of Iranian missiles and drones, as well their ability to evade detection.

According to Mohebbi, Washington ultimately found itself in a position in which it could neither easily advance its objectives nor

reverse course.

‘America has not simply lost a war’

Mohebbi framed the consequences of the confrontation in broader strategic terms, arguing that the United States had suffered setbacks in three dimensions that he associated with its regional hegemony: military superiority, the ability to provide security for allies, and political and moral legitimacy.

He argued that military setbacks had challenged the perception of American invulnerability, while attacks on US bases had undermined Washington’s image as a reliable security provider.

He also accused the United States of damaging its international standing through attacks on civilian targets in Iran, citing several incidents.

“America has not simply lost a war; it has lost a system,” Mohebbi said, arguing that a new regional and international order was emerging in which Washington would no longer determine West Asia’s security architecture on its own.

He further argued that regional states had come to understand that the United States could neither provide security against Iran nor guarantee regional security without Iran.

No direct IRGC channel to Washington

On the question of possible communication between the IRGC and the United States, Mohebbi categorically rejected the existence of any direct channel.

He said the IRGC’s constitutional role was military and defensive, while diplomatic affairs fell within the responsibility of Iran’s Foreign Ministry.

Mohebbi insisted that the IRGC had never maintained formal or informal relations with the United States and did not intend to enter the diplomatic arena.

A new attack would mean a different battlefield

The most direct warning in Mohebbi’s interview concerned the consequences of another US or Israeli attack.

He said a renewed assault would bring major changes to Iran’s defensive and retaliatory strategy, beginning with the geographical scope of the conflict.

“We will definitely change the geography of the war,” he said.

Iran would also introduce new weapons and military equipment with new capabilities, he added, warning that “the world will be surprised.”

Mohebbi said Iran had already

struck targets that its adversaries had not expected to come under attack and cited the al-Tanf base and the Gulf of Aqaba as examples.

He further stated that Iran had additional targets that had not yet been attacked and remained outside the calculations of its adversaries.

The IRGC spokesman said some of Iran’s strategic weapons had not been used during previous phases of the confrontation and could be deployed if circumstances required.

Iran distinguishes neighbors from US forces

Mohebbi also sought to draw a distinction between Iran’s regional neighbors and the US military presence on their territory.

He said Iran regarded neighboring countries as states with which it shared historical, religious, commercial and cultural ties and stressed that Tehran did not consider these countries themselves to be enemies.

According to Mohebbi, Iranian attacks on locations in Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia had been directed at US military facilities rather than at those countries themselves.

He nevertheless criticized the presence of American military installations in regional states, questioning why countries in the region would permit a power located thousands of kilometers away to deploy forces on their territory.

“We will never target our neighbors,” he said, while emphasizing that Iran distinguishes between neighboring states and hostile foreign military forces.

Iran’s position on regional resistance groups

Mohebbi briefly addressed Iran’s relationship with resistance groups in Yemen and Lebanon, rejecting the description of these groups as Iranian proxies.

He said such groups made their own political and military decisions and were rooted in their respective societies. He similarly argued that Hezbollah maintained significant social and political roots in Lebanon.

Conflict has entered a new phase

Taken together, Mohebbi’s remarks portray Iran’s assessment of the confrontation as extending well beyond the question of battlefield exchanges.

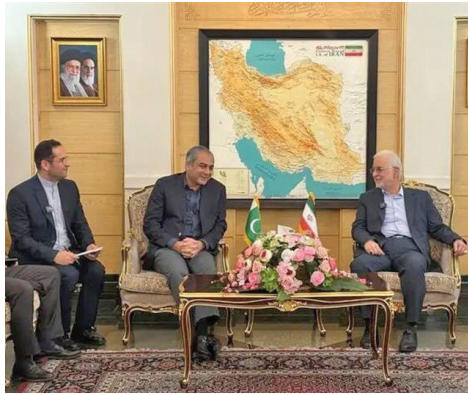
His central message was that the war remains unfinished, while the IRGC believes the confrontation has exposed vulnerabilities in the US military presence, intelligence infrastructure and technological advantages.

At the same time, his warning about any future attack was explicit: Iran would not simply repeat its previous response.

The geography of the conflict could expand, previously unused weapons could enter the battlefield, and new targets could be selected. Some of the capabilities that Iran describes as strategic weapons, Mohebbi said, have yet to be employed.

Iran, he said, has prepared for a prolonged confrontation—and would enter any renewed conflict with a different battlefield, different weapons and different targets.

Pakistan’s interior minister in Tehran to advance bilateral cooperation



From Page 1 ▶ The Iranian minister specifically conveyed appreciation for the efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in this regard.

Naqvi, for his part, stressed that Iran-Pakistan relations are on a growing trajectory and are becoming stronger with the passage of time. The two interior ministries also examined various areas of cooperation and exchanged proposals for expanding their collaboration.

The Pakistani minister invited Momeni to visit Islamabad, according to Iranian media reports.

Regular high-level engagement

Naqvi’s visit is the latest in a series of high-level contacts between Iran and Pakistan in recent months. He has traveled to Tehran several times as part of Islamabad’s diplomatic engagement amid the broader regional crisis.

During his previous visit on August 11, Naqvi held talks with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, Momeni and senior security officials. He subsequently returned to Tehran on August 24 alongside Pakistan’s Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for further high-level consultations.

The sustained exchanges reflect the depth of Iran-Pakistan ties as neighboring countries sharing a long border and longstanding

ing historical, cultural and economic links, while also facing common challenges involving border security, counterterrorism, cross-border trade and regional stability.

Tehran: Visit focused on bilateral issues

Against this backdrop, Iranian media have also clarified the scope of Naqvi’s current trip.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said before the visit that there was no indication that Naqvi was carrying a specific message or proposal from the United States. He noted that, while Pakistan’s role as a mediator naturally provides opportunities to discuss regional developments, the visit was taking place within the framework of bilateral relations.

Iranian news agency Tasnim has likewise reported that Naqvi is neither carrying a message from Washington to Tehran nor serving as a channel for Tehran to send a message to the United States. The report said the focus of the visit is bilateral relations and cooperation, while Iran’s previously communicated position regarding any future engagement with Washington remains unchanged.

The visit comes as Pakistan continues to advocate diplomatic solutions to regional disputes. On August 31, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Pezeshkian also discussed the need for sustained diplomacy and further strengthening Iran-Pakistan relations, with Islamabad emphasizing the importance of building on understandings reached through the Islamabad process.

For Tehran, the continued high-level contacts with Islamabad carry particular significance given the two countries’ shared border and extensive political, security, economic, and people-to-people ties. The latest meeting provides another opportunity for the two neighbors to translate political understandings into practical cooperation while maintaining coordination on regional developments.

The Saudi crisis

MADRID — The writing of history rests on the selective erasure of certain pasts, and of the artefacts bearing witness to them. From the omission of archive documents to the demolition of sacred and secular spaces, every act of destruction is also an act of state-building.

Saudi Arabia may be the paradigmatic case of this construction. After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the Kingdom’s political elites pursued with renewed fervour two parallel projects, historical commemoration and state-building, to impose their postwar vision on the state, the nation and the economy.

Not only has the Kingdom “hidden” the transnational, transoceanic intellectual exchanges predating 1932; in recent years King Salman has aggressively pushed a reformulated, secularised historical narrative. The country’s “archival performance”, marked by inefficiency, sabotage and coercion, betrays “conflicting visions of the past” and a sometimes fragile grip on power. From its establishment, the family’s authority rested largely on American corporations, ARAMCO above all, and on the United States government, which shielded it from widespread, if erased, anti-colonial and anti-authoritarian mobilisation at home and from regional rivals. Yet the struggle to hold power on its own terms made plain the need for a state-sanctioned historical narrative.

The desire to control the narrative is not merely an archival matter. In 2009, Prince Khalid bin Sultan led Operation Scorched Earth, a Saudi intervention in Yemen that quickly became a quagmire and ended in humiliating retreat. The official narrative never admitted failure, but Khalid’s later disappearance from public life suggests he was made to shoulder the blame.

In 2015 King Salman appointed Muhammad bin Nayef crown prince. Interior minister and supporter of the Yemen intervention, his rise let him coordinate the campaign against Ansarallah more effectively. The Saudi bombing, even with American intelligence support and aerial refuelling, was a new disaster. In

2017 the king replaced him with his son, Mohammed bin Salman, who quickly came to the fore, launching the ambitious Saudi Vision 2030: an attempt to rebuild the country in material as much as ideological terms.

The project teems with futuristic cities, the relaxation of symbolic social norms, such as granting women the right to drive, and new arts centres, like the modern art museum announced in 2019. These are among the ventures King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman have promoted to project a more secular image of the Kingdom. And this, once again, is an attempt to control the archive: to decide which pasts are valid, which are left out of the present and which, at the same time, can be projected into the future.

Despite Bin Salman’s efforts, the royal family remains fragmented; its members pursue their own economic and political agendas, often at the expense of relatives, regional and religious authorities, and Saudi citizens. Yemen is no exception. Prince Ahmed bin Abdulaziz, one of the few surviving sons of the kingdom’s founder, said years ago in London that the region’s disastrous Saudi policy was the exclusive responsibility of the king and his heir.

Bin Salman’s Yemen policy has been a tremendous failure. But, as before, a struggle for control of the archive endures, and those with the greatest resources at their disposal, as in this case the crown prince, have managed not to explicitly acknowledge that failure or the situation in which the Kingdom now finds itself.

Since the war began, many wondered why Ansarallah kept to the sidelines even when Hezbollah opened a front in northern Israel. The only plausible explanation I found was that the Houthis were acting as a counterweight to the Saudis. Iran was striking bases across the Persian Gulf and had closed the Strait of Hormuz, forcing Riyadh to divert much of its crude to the Red Sea terminals. The Saudis wanted no further escalation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ICCIMA trade delegation departs for Tashkent

TEHRAN- Hossein Pir-Moazen, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) has departed for Tashkent at the head of a specialized delegation comprising some heads of provincial chambers, heads of specialized committees of the Iran Chamber, heads of associations, and those active in the food industry, agriculture, and related industries.

Members of the trade delegation are accompanying Gholamreza Nouri Ghezjeljeh, Minister of Agriculture, on this trip.

According to plans, an Iran-Uzbekistan Economic-Agricultural Conference is to be held.

At the conference, the agriculture ministers of both sides and the Vice President of the Iran Chamber, who heads the trade delegation, will deliver speeches. Afterwards, face-to-face meetings will be held between Uzbek economic actors and the Iranian delegation. A cooperation memorandum of understanding between the chambers of commerce of the two countries will also be signed.

The conference is organized around three main themes: production and trade of livestock, poultry, aquatic animals and their feed; production and trade of field, horticultural and greenhouse products; and production and trade of agricultural machinery, processing industries, and technical-engineering services.

During the trip, arrangements have been made to visit some farms, agricultural industrial units, and processing industries in various cities of Uzbekistan, so that members of the Iranian delegation can become closely acquainted with the country's food and agricultural capacities.

Also, according to prior agreements, several memoranda of understanding and cooperation contracts are to be signed between members of the Iranian delegation and Uzbek companies.

During a meeting between the heads of the Plant Protection Organizations of Iran and Uzbekistan, in last December, emphasis was placed on developing bilateral cooperation in the fields of plant quarantine, pest control, and facilitating the safe trade of agricultural products.

Maryam Jalili-Moghaddam, head of the Iranian Plant Protection Organization, in her meeting and conversation with Ibrohim Ergashev, head of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Agency of Uzbekistan, pointed to the measures taken and the growing trend of activities in plant protection, stating: "Cooperation between the national plant protection organizations of the two countries can play an effective role in developing agricultural trade and guaranteeing the health of agricultural product exchanges."

She added: "National plant protection organizations, with a responsibility-based approach, make every effort to ensure that agricultural trade between countries is conducted safely and free from damaging plant pests."

Meeting highlights Central Bank, banking network readiness for international challenges

TEHRAN- The Deputy for International Relations of the Central Bank, emphasizing the need for the banking network's readiness to face rapid international developments, said: Close communication between the Central Bank and the banking network, and using the experience of experts and specialists, can lead to synergy, finding effective solutions to problems, and forward-looking planning in international banking interactions.

According to an IRNA report citing the Central Bank, Abolfazl Koodei, at the third meeting of the international relations deputies of the banking network, described brainstorming and exchanging views on the latest international developments as among the goals of the meeting and said: Part of the Central Bank's measures and activities in the international field, in line with issues related to the activities of banks and economic and commercial actors, is pursued in these meetings, and in these meetings the experiences of other banks can be used.

Koodei described hearing the views, opinions, and suggestions of managers and colleagues in the international field of banks as another goal of the meeting and said: These views are used both in policymaking and decision-making in the international field and in solving the issues and problems of banks.

He emphasized: The Central Bank is ready to receive the issues raised by banks and use them



The head of the Iranian Plant Protection Organization, referring to the organization's role in safeguarding the health of agricultural products and implementing quarantine requirements, emphasized: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to share its scientific, technical, and executive capacities in pest control, plant health management, and the exchange of specialized information with the Uzbek side, and to benefit from the experiences and specialized knowledge of the Uzbek side."

She considered the development of structured cooperation between the two countries an effective factor in removing technical barriers and facilitating trade exchanges of agricultural products.

Jalili-Moghaddam also stressed the necessity of expanding scientific and technical cooperation, exchanging experiences, strengthening health monitoring, and increasing coordination between the responsible plant quarantine institutions of the two countries, adding: "Increasing expert interactions, holding joint technical meetings, and establishing coordinated mechanisms can lead to facilitating the process of agricultural product trade."

Continuing the meeting, Ibrahīm Ergashev, Ibrohim Ergashev, head of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Agency of Uzbekistan, referring to the special and distinguished position of the Plant Protection Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran among countries exporting agricultural products to Uzbekistan, considered this a reflection of the discipline, precision, and capability of the managers and specialists of Iran's Plant Protection Organization.

Welcoming the views presented, he emphasized the existing capacities for developing agricultural and plant quarantine cooperation between the two countries.

Ergashev also called for facilitating quarantine procedures and establishing electronic communication between the relevant systems of the two countries, stressing: "The development of structured cooperation provides the grounds for increasing trust and accelerating trade exchanges."

In conclusion, both sides emphasized the continuation of technical dialogues, strengthening organizational cooperation, and developing joint programs in the fields of plant protection and plant quarantine.

in the decision-making and decision-taking process.

Koodei, referring to the speed of international developments and existing restrictions, emphasized the need for the banking network's readiness to face new conditions and said: While predicting trends, we must manage the risks and consequences of new developments through brainstorming and cooperation.

The Deputy for International Relations of the Central Bank, emphasizing the importance of brainstorming and close interaction between the Central Bank and the banking network, stated: It is expected that in these meetings, in addition to examining issues and problems, existing experiences will be used to provide new and effective solutions.

In conclusion, Koodei emphasized: Close communication between the Central Bank and the banking network, as well as experts and specialists who have valuable experience in this field, can lead to significant synergy, finding effective solutions to problems, and planning with a view to the future in international banking interactions.

At this meeting, issues and topics in the international field were raised, and the attendees presented their suggestions and solutions. The third meeting and gathering of the international relations deputies of the banking network was hosted by Bank Mellat.

Integrated production services contract signed for operation of 55 wells in Azadegan oil field

TEHRAN- With the signing of an Integrated Production Services (IPS) contract between Oil Exploration Operations Company and Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Oil and Gas Development Engineering Company, a new chapter of synergy began in the field of protective production and increasing the recovery factor of the Azadegan oil field.

According to IRNA, the development of the Azadegan oil field—one of the priorities of the 14th government in the energy sector and in line with the revival, development, and exploitation of the country's shared oil and gas fields—has now, after years of waiting and through the personal follow-up of the president, reached the implementation stage.

This oil field, the world's tenth-largest field with 33 billion barrels of oil in place, shared with Iraq, has today become one of Iran's main fronts of economic battle, because on the other side of the border, international companies such as America's Chevron are extracting from this field, and this has made the speed of extraction by the Iranian side a strategic necessity in the oil industry.

Azadegan, which also holds the title of the world's largest onshore shared oil field, has been more than ever in the center of attention following the president's emphasis since last year on increasing oil production. Accordingly, on Sunday, a meeting to launch the executive projects of this oil field, comprising 55 wells, was held with the presence of Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Company, Oil Exploration Operations Company, and Oil Engineering and Construction Company (OIEC), so that, with financing and a clear timetable, the field's development operations could be implemented quickly.

Abbas Sarkari, CEO of Oil Exploration Operations Company, at this ceremony emphasized readiness for comprehensive participation in the development of the Azadegan field, announced the conclusion of an Integrated Production Services (IPS) contract with Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Company, and stressed: "The Azadegan field is not only a national asset but is considered a symbol of the resilience and authority of the country's oil industry in the current conditions. Therefore, the signing of the Integrated Production Services contract between Oil Exploration Operations Company and Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Company marks the beginning of a new chapter of synergy to realize protective production and increase the recovery factor of this shared reservoir."

Sarkari added: "Oil Exploration



Operations Company, relying on specialized Iranian manpower and modern equipment, including eight 2,000-horsepower drilling rigs and 13 technical service units, is fully ready to accelerate the field development process as the executive arm of employers, beyond a commercial profit."

He noted: "Fast, precise implementation of the project with high productivity in the Azadegan project is on the agenda, and this company is ready to execute well advancement operations in the form of 10 IPS and MOS contract packages."

Stating that currently four drilling rigs ready to assist future oil industry projects are at the company's disposal, he announced the predicted duration for executing the operations assigned to this company in the Azadegan oil field as 14 months.

Fleet development in Azadegan field with 2,000- and 3,000-horsepower rigs

Mohammad Ali Shafiei, CEO of Oil Industries Engineering and Construction Group (OIEC), also emphasized full cooperation across the entire upstream oil industry chain to accelerate the implementation of this national mega-project and said: "Azadegan development with this volume of investment is considered among the largest projects of the country's oil industry and even the world, and this company is ready to place all its engineering and operational capacity at the service of this strategic project."

Shafiei cited seismography and engineering studies, the drilling section, and technical well services among the capacities of this group for integrated support of the Azadegan development plan, and added: "The program for renovation and development of the drilling fleet and ancillary technical services is swiftly on the agenda, such that Oil Exploration Operations Company has concluded a contract for two 3,000-horsepower drilling rigs, and preparations for the addition of two more rigs have also been made."

He added: "The supply and development of 1,500- and 2,000-horsepower rigs are also

in the operational plans of this group."

Esmail Gholampour, executor of the Azadegan oil field development plan at Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), also emphasized the necessity of full compliance of all well-related measures with the permits and comprehensive plan of National Iranian Oil Company, as well as observance of the highest health, safety, and environment (HSE) standards in the operational area, and said: "The Azadegan field is currently on the production line, and a significant share of the country's crude oil is extracted from this area; therefore, the sensitivity of operations in the southern part is doubled, and any intervention and executive plan at the well level must proceed with utmost precision, speed, and without the slightest disruption in the continuous production process."

He noted: "All development programs, artificial lift, and operations on wells must be implemented in accordance with the approved plan and official permits of National Iranian Oil Company, and no action outside this roadmap and determined framework will be permitted, so that the coordination coefficient among upstream bodies and the employer is maintained at the highest level."

The executor of the Azadegan field development plan at Petroleum Engineering and Development Company emphasized full observance of health, safety, and environment (HSE) requirements and said: "Failure to observe safety principles and environmental standards in such sensitive fields can have irreparable and far-reaching consequences for the entire project and execution team. Therefore, partner companies and the project employer are expected to implement the highest level of supervision and special protective and safety measures."

Notification of new 16-well package and \$2 billion facility from National Development Fund for Azadegan

Mahmoud Aminnejad, CEO of Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Oil and Gas Development Company, also

stated that implementation of this strategic project has started after three years of uncertainty, announced the National Development Fund's agreement to a \$2 billion facility, and added: "The drilling and workover package for 16 new wells will soon be notified to Oil Exploration Operations Company."

Recalling that a consortium consisting of Bank Melli, Bank Tejarat, Bank Mellat, Parsian Bank, Shahr Bank, the National Development Fund, and Petropars and Ahadaf companies formed Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Company, he stated: "While, due to administrative complexities and delay in document approval, this consortium had reached the brink of dissolution and withdrawal of the banks' capital, with the direct intervention of the president and the holding of strategic meetings with the presence of the oil minister and senior economic managers, this contract was finally ratified and its official activity permit was issued."

Aminnejad referred to Azadegan as a strategic shared field and said: "If work is not carried out quickly within the next two years, the fate of the heavy missed-benefit losses we faced in South Pars will be repeated here against competitors; therefore, mutual trust between the employer and contractor, reducing redundant administrative procedures, and focusing on precise implementation of plans in the shortest possible time are on the agenda."

He stated: "With the measures taken and the cooperation of the government's economic bodies, there is no deadlock regarding securing financial flow for this project, and we expect contractors to be present in the field with maximum operational capacity."

The CEO of Dasht-e Azadegan Arvand Company also announced the assignment of a new work package to the project's execution chain and said: "In addition to the Integrated Production Services (IPS) contracts, a new operational package including 16 wells will be officially notified to Oil Exploration Operations Company, so that the daily extraction capacity from the reservoir is enhanced with greater acceleration."

Emphasizing that the development of the oil industry must be tangible for the local residents of the region, he stated: "Considerable funds have been earmarked for developing employment infrastructure for local youth and upgrading health, educational, and welfare facilities in the Dasht-e Azadegan region, so that the field's progress advances in step with the improvement of local people's livelihood."

Targeted development of trade relations between Iran, Kyrgyzstan necessary: TPO head

TEHRAN- The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, in a meeting with Iran's ambassador-designate to Kyrgyzstan, emphasized the necessity of targeted development of trade relations, identification of the two countries' export capacities, and the dispatch and reception of trade delegations.

According to IRNA, citing the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi on Sunday, in a meeting with Zahra Saei, described Kyrgyzstan as having considerable capacities for developing economic cooperation and said: "Kyrgyzstan is a small country, but it has characteristics and capacities that can be used to develop trade relations. This country is on the path of development, and there are suitable opportunities for cooperation in areas such as infrastructure, technical and engineering services, agriculture, and the modernization of refineries."

He considered the economic actors of the two countries to have insufficient knowledge of each other and said: "The ground must be provided for familiarity and direct commu-

nication between traders and companies so that the traders and businessmen of the two countries become familiar with each other's export capacities and advantages."

According to the Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, holding exhibitions and dispatching and receiving trade delegations are tools for developing trade relations, and for example, Iran Expo is a suitable opportunity to introduce Iran's export capabilities, and this capacity can be used for the presence of Kyrgyz trade delegations and the creation of communication between companies of the two countries.

Dehghan Dehnavi, referring to the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, stated: "This agreement has created new opportunities for economic actors, and the capacities resulting from the reduction or elimination of tariffs must be accurately identified and introduced to traders." He also considered the events related to Eurasia and Shanghai held in Kyrgyzstan as a suitable opportunity for the presence of trade dele-

gations and the development of cooperation between the two sides.

In continuation of this meeting, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Kyrgyzstan emphasized the importance of identifying the export capacities of the country's provinces and creating a link between these capacities and the Kyrgyz market.

According to Saei, export items suited to the needs of the Kyrgyz market must be identified and directed to this market, and in return, items needed by Iran must also be identified so that the ground for developing mutual trade is provided.

She also emphasized using the capacity of Iranians residing in Kyrgyzstan and developing cooperation in areas such as agriculture.

At the end of this meeting, emphasis was placed on strengthening interaction between the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and the Iranian Embassy in Kyrgyzstan with the aim of identifying opportunities and increasing trade interactions between the two countries.

Ansarallah consolidates Red Sea control as Trump rejects MBS’ desperate appeals

From page 1 ► The collapse removes the last significant Saudi buffer zone on the Red Sea. Retreating mercenaries abandoned their posts and shed their uniforms as the defensive lines broke.

According to recent local reports, Ansarallah fighters are pressing into the Kahboub mountain range. Securing these heights will permanently sever supply routes to Saudi-backed factions in the south and expose the remaining coalition strongholds.

Air strikes and deep retaliation

Riyadh has answered the ground defeat with a massive air campaign. Saudi warplanes carried out more than 760 air-strikes over recent weeks.

Using F-15 and Typhoon jets launched from Khamis Mushait and Taif, the bombardment hit telecommunications infrastructure and civilian neighborhoods in Taiz, al-Jawf, and Marib.

Sanaa established an immediate cost for the escalation. The Yemeni Armed Forces launched heavy retaliatory operations using ballistic missiles and drones against sensitive sites in Riyadh and Saudi Aramco facilities in Yanbu.

Videos showed fires burning near King Khalid International Airport.

Saudi authorities attempted to cover their vulnerability by falsely claiming Yemen targeted Mecca. Sanaa categorically dismissed the accusation as a fabrication meant to generate religious sympathy and distract from Saudi war crimes.

The economic bleeding in Saudi Arabia is accelerating. The Fi-



nancial Times recently reported Saudi crude production dropped 23 percent to 6.2 million barrels per day in August.

Aramco exports have plummeted. Dozens of Saudi tankers have been rerouted away from Bab al-Mandab. Riyadh is reportedly begging countries it has long considered allies for interceptor missiles after depleting its stockpiles.

Washington leaves Riyadh stranded

Panic in Riyadh has translated into urgent appeals to the United States.

The New York Times (NYT) and Axios reported that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called President Donald Trump multiple times, begging for American airstrikes against advancing Yemeni forces.

Trump ordered the Pentagon to prepare target lists. Aircraft were loaded with munitions, then he reversed the order, according to the NYT.

Trump's inner circle and American commanders reportedly opposed opening a new front. The U.S. military is already stretched thin by its ongoing war with Iran.

The NYT report also claimed that the Trump administration recognized another brutal reality: the U.S. military's bombing campaigns in 2025 failed to break Ansarallah, and there is no reason to assume it will succeed this time.

Yemeni official Mohamed al-Bukhaiti told the Associated Press that Sanaa conveyed to Washington that it would not target international shipping, confining its naval blockade strictly to the Saudi enemy for now.

Trump has backed down, at least for now, leaving Riyadh to fight its own war.

Additionally, Reuters reported that Trump offered no military pledge during a recent call with Saudi-backed figure Rashad al-Alimi.

‘We can reach anywhere Saudi officials might be taking shelter’

In a speech on Thursday, Ansarallah leader Abdulmalek Badreddin al-Houthi excoriated the complicity of the governments of Arab and Islamic countries in the Saudi-led aggression.

“The Arab and Islamic stance on the Saudi aggression on Yemen has been one of abandonment, except for the axis of jihad and resistance and some free people of the world,” he said.

He revealed that “delegations from the Saudi and British enemies” were traveling to Djibouti to tighten procedures and increase the suffering of the Yemeni people through economic strangulation.

He challenged the world's “weeping entities” to accept the same restrictions Saudi Arabia has placed on Yemen's imports, currency, and natural resources for over eleven years.

“In the de-escalation phase, the Saudi regime did not seriously move toward peace, but made it an opportunity to tighten its arbitrary measures and build takfiri military formations,” al-Houthi said.

Additionally, Yemen's military leadership warned Riyadh that further aggression will be met with even more devastating retaliation.

In a joint message marking the twelfth anniversary of the September 21 Revolution, Defense Minister Major General Mohammed Nasser al-Atifi and Chief of Staff Major General Youssef Hassan al-Madani stated that “missiles and drones can strike any location deep inside Saudi territory, devastate the kingdom's economy, and can reach anywhere Saudi officials might be taking shelter.”

The message emphasized that “the slightest folly you commit will come at a heavy price. Our armed forces have introduced effective measures to establish a new equation of deterrence.”

The security and economic gamble facing Iraq

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – This withdrawal of U.S. forces is not like its predecessor in 2011, and comparisons drawn from earlier stages of the American-Iraqi relationship are of no use here.

The Iraqi government finds itself caught between conflicting directions, with no single decision capable of satisfying all sides. The United States is awaiting a clear position from Baghdad toward the resistance factions and their weapons amid its military withdrawal on September 30.

It is a common mistake to treat the “weapons issue” and the “armed factions” as though they were a homogeneous bloc that would respond to any political understanding with one voice. Reality is far more complicated.

Some factions that have accumulated a genuine electoral and political presence, and hold parliamentary seats and executive positions, see full integration into the official system as a less costly option than confrontation with it. This is particularly in light of international sanc-

tions pressure that makes an “official settlement” an acceptable exit without stripping them of their actual influence.

By contrast, other factions lack comparable electoral weight and do not regard official institutions as an alternative to armed struggle. Their military doctrine is rooted in the principle of “open resistance,” which does not readily lend itself to institutional integration.

In the absence of genuine guarantees, not just statements, ensuring the continuation of their role and the security of their cadres, maintaining their weapons becomes, from their own perspective, the safer option rather than an act of greater defiance.

In practical terms, this means that any solution to the weapons issue at this stage will not amount to a comprehensive settlement. Instead, it will be a partial realignment that leaves some parties outside the official framework.

This makes the slogan “the state must have a monopoly on weapons” meaningless unless it is backed by genuine guarantees and realistic in-

centives rather than fleeting promises.

The economic front

There is little point in talking about complete security sovereignty if economic vulnerability is allowed to undermine it in the background. A country cannot claim full control over its security choices while remaining exposed to economic shocks beyond its control.

When the Federal Reserve raises interest rates, the effects can travel through global markets, affecting borrowing costs, capital flows, the dollar, and ultimately the wider Iraqi economy. Iraqis may have no say in such decisions, but they can still feel their consequences.

As Iraq pushes to reclaim control over its security decisions, it is simultaneously confronting a structural crisis rooted in its near-total dependence on oil revenues. Oil remains the main channel through which the United States retains significant influence over Iraq's financial flows.

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

Ground incursions, incendiary strikes mark dangerous Israeli escalation in south Lebanon

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Israeli forces launched a heavy wave of artillery fire, low-altitude air raids, and destructive ground incursions across southern Lebanon on Monday.

The systematic assault marks an escalation in Israeli aggression, underscoring the ineffectiveness of the U.S.-sponsored “Framework Agreement” signed in Washington while American diplomatic cover has enabled continued military expansion across sovereign Lebanese territory.

According to local reports, heavy bombardment pounded multiple towns across the Tyre, Nabatieh, Bint Jbeil, and Marjayoun districts.

Israeli artillery heavily targeted Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Meiss al-Jabal, setting several residential homes on fire while an armed drone dropped a stun grenade on Zawtar al-Sharqiyah.

Shells fell continuously between the town and Mayfadoun as warplanes breached Lebanese airspace at low altitudes, conducting psychological mock raids over Nabatieh.

Airstrikes also slammed into Braachit, Deir Siryan, Wadi al-Salouqi, and Wadi al-Hujeir.

Israeli troops simultaneously carried out controlled detonations inside Blida and Ainata, shaking nearby border communities with massive explosions.

The fresh raids follow incendiary attacks over the weekend, where Israeli forces unleashed illegal white phosphorus munitions across the Tyre countryside.

Shelling ignited widespread blazes in ancient olive groves and citrus orchards around Majdal Zoun and Buyout al-Sayyad. Nearby, artillery pounded Al-Mansouri, Yahmar al-Shaqif, and the outskirts

of Wadi Zibqin.

Ground forces reinforced the assault with three Merkava main battle tanks advancing directly into Deir Mimas.

Israeli troops blocked the town entrance, searched civilian homes, and severed local communications by damaging utility poles along the road.

In Bint Jbeil, machine-gun fire rattled Sarbine, while heavy 240mm artillery rounds struck wooded areas near Aita al-Jabal and Haddatha toward Haris.

This military campaign has inflicted severe civilian suffering and structural destruction.

In Debaal, a young child was rushed to the hospital after being severely wounded by unexploded war remnants left behind from earlier fighting.

The incident followed an inten-

tional Israeli airstrike targeting Lebanese paramedics a day prior, demonstrating the occupation's deliberate pattern of attacking first responders, destroying public infrastructure, and terrorizing local families.

Despite Washington's claims of mediating a phased Israeli withdrawal and Lebanese army deployment, Tel Aviv maintains an unlawful presence behind its self-declared “Yellow Line” buffer zone.

Thousands of ceasefire violations have been documented as Israeli forces attempt to depopulate border villages through violence.

Lebanese officials warn that these persistent incursions threaten regional security, while local communities have remained steadfast.

Impulsive German leader left in a quandary



From page 1 ► The elections in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the city of Berlin not only reopen the barely healed wounds from the Saxony-Anhalt election, but have plunged the party to new depths of unpopularity.

The results have prompted calls on Merz to step down as chancellor. However, on Sunday, Merz ruled out stepping down, saying Germany requires “courage, steadfastness and patience. I will demonstrate these qualities as chairman of the CDU and, above all, as chancellor of our country.”

However, Merz's personality characteristics as an emotional and impulsive person is alien to “patience”. The best example for his impulsive personality is best exemplified by his remarks on Benjamin Netanyahu's first illegal war on Iran in June 2025 in which he said “Israel is doing the dirty job for us.”

Such remarks by a German leader, whose chancellors since the Second World War have been famous for their thoughtfulness and cautiousness, were unexpected and surprising.

“His extremely early move shows that Merz is staking a claim to define the narrative,” political scientist Oliver Lembcke of Ruhr University Bochum told AFP.

In the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state election, the CDU received 4.9% of the vote. This meant the party failed to clear the 5% threshold and will not be represented in the new state parliament. It is the first time the CDU has been shut out of a Landtag in post-war German history.

The party's previous worst regional election performance in 75 years was 9% in Bremen in 1951.

The AfD won about 38 percent of the votes in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, although it fell far short of a majority. In Berlin it came in third, but saw a 7% increase in its vote share.

The CDU was the incumbent party in the German capital but has lost its grip on power there to the far-left Die Linke party, which came out on top. The CDU fell into second place.

Sunday's results, coupled with the trouncing in Saxony-Anhalt, heap misery on an already beleaguered Merz. A situation that, some believe, means only one outcome is possible — a “chancellor-swap,” CNN said in a commentary.

“This is the worst possible result for Merz and the CDU,” Jana Puglierin, head of the European Council on Foreign Relations' Berlin office, told CNN as the results were announced.

She said she saw no viable option for Merz to continue to lead the government. “He has definitely lost control over his own party, and he has lost authority big time... and there is no way to reinstall it,” Puglierin added.

Following the AfD's victory in Saxony-Anhalt, the party's co-leader, Alice Weidel, declared there would be national elections in Germany before the end of the year. She doubled down on Sunday, saying “the CDU cannot continue with Friedrich Merz, with a weak chancellor.”

With two more elections going against the CDU, and Merz's popularity plunging, that assessment seems less speculative, CNN argued.

“It's not like Merz can just throw in the towel, nor does he want to,” Sudha David-Wilp, vice-president and senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund, a think tank, told CNN. “He's still hanging on, but he's not out of the woods yet.”

Any such upheaval would have reverberations around Europe. Germany, the EU's most populous and economically powerful nation, has long stood as a rock of political stability and is a key backer of Ukraine as it fights Russia.

The Christian Democrats have long been the dominant political force in Germany. Of the 10

chancellors since World War II, the party has held the post six times – including a mammoth 16 years under the Angela Merkel.

An opinion poll from September encapsulates Merz's woes. Levels of dissatisfaction across the country are eye-wateringly bad. Only 13% of Germans are happy with the job he is doing, according to a poll for ARD public television released earlier this month.

David-Wilp told CNN that AfD victories in the elections had been “baked” into the CDU's political calculus, but the magnitudes of the outcomes were worse than expected.

“There is a feeling in the CDU that something has to happen in order to change the dynamic, because the AfD is on the march and threatening the very existence of the CDU,” she said.

Whilst the regions that make up the former East Germany are AfD strongholds, Merz's problem lies in the party's rise in popularity across the country. In two other state elections this year the AfD doubled its percentage share of the vote.

Nationally, too, opinion polling suggests the AfD would be Germany's biggest political party were a snap general election to be held now.

Merz who won the post of chancellor in May 2025 promised to halve the

AfD's vote share. However, the opposite has been true.

Such was the pressure on the chancellor last week that the other CDU state premiers felt it necessary to rally around him. They issued a joint statement Wednesday saying public support comes from “listening” and “political action” not “through personnel debates,” but failed to mention him by name.

Replacing a chancellor mid-term is not uncommon, but a removal under these circumstances is. It would also make Merz the shortest-serving chancellor since the German reunification in 1990. His conservatives and their grand coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), would have to agree on his successor, which would not be an easy feat.

Puglierin said that Merz's ascension to power had been accompanied by hope across Europe that he would restore stability after the unsuccessful previous coalition led by Olaf Scholz, and would “keep the club together” at a time when the United States under President Donald Trump was ripping up the “Pax Americana” that had underpinned international relations since World War II.

Those hopes could end in disappointment, Puglierin said, “because the country is looking inward... We are struggling with our political system that is no longer functioning the way it has done since the Federal Republic was founded in 1949.”

The AfD predicted on Monday that Merz will be out of office before the end of the year.

“The chancellor certainly won't make it to the end of the year,” said Leif-Erik Holm, the AfD's top candidate in the Baltic Sea coastal state. “I think the twilight of the chancellor's era has begun.”

After the CDU was also soundly defeated by a far-left Die Linke in Berlin, Merz charged that “trust in our country's institutions is waning” and being “actively undermined by radical parties on both the left and the right”.

When Merz took office in May last year, he vowed to reboot a flagging economy, rebuild the military to deter Russia and reduce irregular immigration to soothe voters' fears and lure them away from the AfD.

But his personal approval ratings are hovering just above 10 percent, not helped by his occasionally blunt and abrasive comments.

Iran’s basketball still has questions to answer

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s basketball team left Nagoya with a bronze medal and, perhaps more importantly, a reminder of what this group can produce when its confidence, shooting and defensive intensity come together.

The 79-70 victory over China secured Iran’s first Asian Games medal since 2018 and the delegation’s first medal in Aichi-Nagoya.

The result was particularly significant because of the manner in which it was achieved. After a disastrous 77-51 semifinal defeat to South Korea, Iran could easily have allowed disappointment to define the final game of its campaign. Instead, the team recovered from a 17-12 first-quarter deficit, improved its perimeter shooting and dominated the third quarter 26-15. Matin Aghajanpour led Iran with 21 points, while Arsalan Kazemi once again provided physical presence and rebounding. China, meanwhile, struggled to contain Iran from three-point range and committed 16 turnovers.

That contrast perhaps tells the larger story of this Iranian team. Its ceiling is clearly higher than its recent inconsistency suggests. In Nagoya, Iran lost its opener to Qatar 59-53, then beat Chinese Taipei, Jordan and Bahrain before the heavy semifinal defeat to Korea. The bronze-medal game showed that the problem is not necessarily a lack of talent, but the team’s ability to reproduce its best level from one game to the next.

That issue will become even more important in the coming months. Iran’s next major challenge is the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027 Asian Qualifiers, with the fifth qualifying window scheduled for November 23-December 1.

Iran is in Group E alongside Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Jordan and Syria, with the results from the previous round carried forward. The top three teams in each second-round group, plus the best fourth-placed team alongside host Qatar, will qualify for the World Cup.

For coach Sotiris Manolopoulos, therefore, the Nagoya bronze is both an achievement and a warning. The medal can strengthen belief in a developing generation, but it should not hide the weaknesses exposed against Korea and during parts of the Asian Games. Iran needs greater offensive consistency, more reliable three-point shooting and better execution under pressure.

The encouraging point is that the core of this team has already shown it can compete. The next step is turning occasional performances like the victory over China into a standard rather than an exception. The bronze medal has restored Iran’s place on the podium. The World Cup qualifiers will show whether this team is ready to build something bigger.

Iran handball fall short to Bahrain in Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s handball team lost to Bahrain 34-20 in the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya on Monday.

Iran had suffered a narrow 26-24 defeat to Kuwait in their opening match.

Team Melli will meet South Korea and Kazakhstan in the following days in Group B.

Iran is headed by Nenad Kljaic.

The men’s handball tournament at the 2026 Asian Games is being held in Inazawa and Kasugai, Japan from Sept. 19 to 29.

Kazemi: Iran basketball deserve recognition after Asian Games bronze

TEHRAN – Iran national basketball team forward Arsalan Kazemi praised his teammates after Iran secured the bronze medal at the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, highlighting the team’s difficult two-month campaign and the numerous injuries they had to overcome.

Following Iran’s victory over China in the bronze-medal game, Kazemi said the team had been through an extremely demanding period, with several players battling injuries.

“Honestly, I’m just grateful. We went through two very difficult months,” Kazemi said. “One thing that perhaps many people don’t know is how many injuries we were dealing with. Ali Sharifi was unable to play, Matin Aghajanpour was suffering from severe back pain, and Peter Girgoorian also played despite an injury. But every player showed tremendous commitment and gave everything on the court.”

Kazemi admitted he had wanted Iran to beat South Korea in the semifinals and believed the team could have defeated them under different circumstances.

“I really wanted us to beat South Korea. I believe that if we played them again, we could win, but that night simply wasn’t ours,” he said. “When you make only two of 30 three-point attempts, while your opponents shoot 50 percent from beyond the arc, it’s very difficult to win.”

The veteran guard also addressed criticism directed at the team and head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos, saying constructive criticism was always welcome but that some of the criticism had been unfair.

“I’m very open to criticism, as long as it is logical and constructive,” Kazemi said. “We accept constructive criticism wholeheartedly, but I think some of the criticism we’ve received has not been reasonable.”

He also defended Manolopoulos, urging critics to consider the circumstances surrounding the team.

“When people criticize the head coach and say his coaching is not good, they should also look at the circumstances,” Kazemi said. “As a coach, he gives us all the instructions we need before games and provides the necessary analysis. But once I step onto the court and don’t follow those instructions or the game plan, that is no longer the coach’s responsibility.”

Kazemi said the team had faced significant criticism over the past two years, despite producing positive results at the FIBA Asia Cup and now at the Asian Games.

“For two years, we’ve faced a lot of criticism, and sometimes it has felt like people didn’t want to support this team,” he said. “But we went to the Asia Cup and achieved a good result, and now, despite all the circumstances and pressure surrounding us, we managed to win a medal here.”

The physical and emotional demands of the campaign also took their toll, with Kazemi revealing that he had been away from his family for nearly six weeks.

“I didn’t see my family for almost a month and a half. These things create a lot of pressure and a heavy psychological burden for an athlete.”

Kazemi was particularly proud that Iran had secured the first medal of the Iranian delegation at the Games.

“I’m very happy that we were able to win the first medal for the Iranian delegation,” he said. “Of course, we wanted s gold or silver, but unfortunately, failed to do that,” he added.

Kazemi dedicated the bronze medal to the Iranian people and praised his teammates for their resilience.

Iran’s women’s 3x3 basketball earn two wins at Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s 3x3 basketball team earned two wins at the 2026 Asian Games on Monday.

Team Melli first eased past Uzbekistan 19-5 at the Kinjo Futo Station Square Venue, then beat hosts Japan 18-16 in their second match.

Mahla Abedi finished as the highest scorer for the Persians with eight points, while Japanese Yuki Hirashita scored five points.

Iran will face Chinese Taipei in Group B on Tuesday.

The women’s 3x3 basketball tournament at the 2026 Asian Games is being held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan from Sept. 10 to 20.

The tournament is restricted to players aged 23 and under.

TEHRAN – High in the green mountains of northwestern Iran, where cool air lingers through the summer and broad meadows stretch across the landscape, Fandoqlu offers an unusual combination of outdoor sport and nature tourism.

Located near the Fandoqlu Forest, about 25 kilometers from Ardabil, the provincial capital, the Fandoqlu Grass Skiing Resort is one of the province’s principal destinations for grass skiing.

The resort covers about 90,000 square meters and has facilities designed for the sport, including a cable car and skiing equipment.

Unlike conventional ski resorts, where snow determines the season, Fandoqlu relies on its mountain meadows. Its relatively cool climate makes it particularly suitable for summer outdoor activities, when much of the country experiences considerably warmer conditions.

Grass-skiing competitions have been held at the resort since 2014. During the first half of the year, the complex hosts competitions in disciplines including speed skiing and various spiral events. In recent years, camps for Iran’s national grass-skiing team have also been held there. Depending on weather and snow conditions, the resort has occasionally hosted winter skiing competitions as well.

For visitors who are unfamiliar with grass skiing, the attraction is as much about the setting as the sport. The slopes run through a landscape of open green plains and mountain scenery, while the

Fandoqlu: Grass skiing amid the mountain landscapes of Ardabil



surrounding Fandoqlu region offers a range of natural attractions.

The resort lies in the Namin area, which has a cold climate during much of the year and relatively mild summers. Even in the warmer months, visitors can experience cool mountain air and gentle breezes, making the area a popular destination for escaping the heat of lower-lying regions.

Fandoqlu is also part of a wider tourism circuit that extends well beyond the ski slope. The surrounding area is known for forest landscapes, waterfalls, springs, flower-covered meadows and mineral hot-water springs.

Foreign diplomats visit historic, natural sites in Urmia

TEHRAN – Ambassadors and diplomats from nine countries, along with representatives of two international organizations, visited Lake Urmia and several historic sites in Urmia during a visit to the northwestern Iranian city.

The diplomats from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Malaysia and South Korea, as well as the deputy secretary-general of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the secretary-general of the Asian Mayors Forum, were among the visitors invited by Mayor Aidin Rahmani-Rezaeieh to attend the 9th Urmia Grape Festival.

The visit was organized as part of efforts to showcase Urmia’s cultural, historical, tourism and economic potential and use the grape festival as a platform for expanding international exchanges.

The delegation first visited Urmia’s historic bazaar and Jameh Mosque before traveling to Lake Urmia, one of Iran’s best-known natural landmarks.

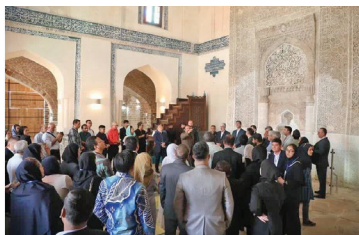
The visitors were accompanied by



Morteza Safari, director-general of West Azarbaijan’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department; Hossein Panahi, head of the Urmia City Council; Rahmani-Rezaeieh; and a number of municipal officials.

The diplomatic visit followed the 9th Urmia Grape Festival, which was held from September 10 to 20 at Chi Chest Coastal Village near Lake Urmia.

Speaking to the Tehran Times,



Rahmani-Rezaeieh said the festival was rooted in an old local tradition of giving thanks for the grape harvest.

“People used to celebrate it at the end of Shahrivar (mid-September) and thank God for the harvest,” he said.

The mayor said this year’s festival was larger in scope, with the municipality seeking not only to preserve the tradition but also to introduce it to younger generations.

historic bathhouse, and the city’s archaeology museum offer further opportunities to explore the province’s cultural heritage.

Accommodation and food are also available in and around the resort, with hotels, restaurants, barbecue outlets and fast-food establishments serving visitors.

For travelers, Fandoqlu therefore offers something different from a conventional ski destination. A visit can begin on a grassy mountain slope and continue through forests, hot springs and historic sites, turning a sporting outing into a broader journey through the natural and cultural landscape of Ardabil province.

The event featured sections dedicated to innovation, industry and investment, history and identity, sports, mothers and children, food and rural products.

The innovation section presented agricultural technologies and projects related to grapes, along with specialist discussion panels. Another section focused on agricultural industry and investment, while the history and identity section displayed photographs that organizers said were more than 300 years old.

A market at the festival also allowed villagers and farmers to sell their products directly to visitors.

The diplomatic tour provided an opportunity to introduce foreign guests to West Azarbaijan’s cultural heritage and tourism attractions, while the participation of international guests in the grape festival highlighted the potential of cultural events to facilitate people-to-people and international exchanges.

During the visit, the foreign guests were presented with a book on West Azarbaijan’s history and nature.



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Bells return tomorrow, 277 desks won't

As schools reopen nationwide, Iran remembers 277 students and 67 education staff killed across two recent wars—including the 120 children lost in the Minab school attack alone

TEHRAN – The sound of school bells and the cheerful voices of children once again filled classrooms across the country on Monday. Students resumed education after the US-Israeli war last year left a trail of damaged schools.

Behind the celebrations, however, were classrooms scarred by war and the painful memory of students and teachers whose lives were cut short in attacks on educational centers. For many, the start of the new academic year is therefore more than a return to school — it is a sign of hope, resilience and a determination to rebuild.

President Masoud Pezeshkian attended the opening ceremony at a girls' elementary school in Tehran, where he rang the bell marking the start of the new school year. The ceremony came as schools across the country returned to classrooms after months in which the education system was forced to cope with the consequences of the war, damaged infrastructure and the loss of members of the school community.

The return to school has taken on a significance beyond the traditional start of an academic year. For students and teachers, the new school year begins with the memory of classmates and colleagues who will not return to their classrooms.

During the US-Israeli military strikes against Iran that began on February 28, schools and other civilian facilities were among the sites affected by attacks. According to the School Renovation, Development and Equipping Organization, 1,288 schools across the country were damaged, including 16 that sustained direct hits and required extensive reconstruction or rehabilitation.

Officials said reconstruction efforts were accelerated in the months following the conflict. By the eve of the new academic year, 1,272 damaged schools had reportedly been restored and returned to the education system, allowing them to reopen their doors to students.

Education Minister Alireza Kazemi said in an interview about three weeks ago that the education system has historically lost many students and teachers in wars. He said that during the two recent wars, 277 students and 67 education-sector staff



were killed, while 178 students and 25 education-sector staff were wounded.

But in Minab, in southern Hormozgan Province, the return to school carries a much heavier

meaning.

On February 28, Shajareh Tayyebah Primary School in Minab was struck during the opening hours of the war. The attack killed more than 150 people,

including about 120 children. The school was hit while classes were underway, turning a place intended for learning and safety into the site of one of the deadliest attacks on civilians.

The tragic event marked a war crime, an indiscriminate attack on children and civilians that shattered the dreams of 168 families amidst smoke and rubble.

The new academic year in the city has always been filled with excitement, busy roads, colorful uniforms and backpacks, the smell of new books, notebooks, pencils, and parents escorting their children to school. But this year, the atmosphere of the schools feels different.

This year, Mehr, the first month of autumn in the Iranian calendar, begins with a heavy heart, as the voices of many innocent students are missing from classrooms after they were killed in attacks by the aggressors.

What was targeted in Minab by the enemies was not merely the fragile bodies of students, but a generation that could have helped to build a brighter future for the country.

This academic year, the bells of the schools ring, echoing a heart-wrenching grief for bereaved families, the city, and the country. But it resonates with an eternal pledge that transcends mere mourning. The school bell has to ring to have a dynamic, vibrant, informed society. To avoid having a corroded society, the bells of the schools have to ring persistently without falling silent.

The schools will run to provide every individual and every single talent the opportunity to flourish and thrive. The schools will be a haven, resilient and secure against harms and crises. The schools will serve as centers for comprehensive development of individuals across moral, scientific, social, biological, artistic, and technological dimensions.

The schools will be the voice of the innocent children, safeguard the rights of students, and punish the aggressors, confirming that the banner of awareness, knowledge, and the pursuit of justice will remain raised.



New school year begins with 'Festival of Blossoms'

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Monday officially opened the new school year during a visit to a girls' primary school in Tehran, joining students and education officials as schools across the country reopened their doors for the new academic year.

A total of 1.154 million first-grade students started the new school year in a ceremony known as the "Festival of Blossoms."

Some 16.6 million students are expected to attend classes during the upcoming academic year. Of this number, 13.9 million students will study at public schools, while 2.734 million will attend non-governmental schools.

Addressing the students, Pezeshkian stressed their potential and capabilities in shaping the country's future, saying: "If your minds and thoughts are focused on becoming the best, you can achieve that goal."

Referring to his own life journey and path to success, Pezeshkian said: "As president, I have reached this position from an ordinary family background, which shows that people can advance and achieve progress through hard work and perseverance."

Problem-solving skills and effective communication are among other key competencies that can be developed in the classroom, enabling students to contribute to the country's progress and help create greater prosperity, Pezeshkian stressed.

"You should strive to build the country's tomorrow in a way that no foreigner would dare to view the Iranian nation as weak or incapable."

ShanghaiRanking GRAS 2026 rank Iranian universities across 33 academic subjects

TEHRAN – Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS) has evaluated Iranian institutions across 33 out of 57 academic subjects in the fields of Natural Sciences, Engineering, Life Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Social Sciences.

ShanghaiRanking first introduced the world university rankings by academic subjects in 2009, which was officially renamed ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS) in 2016.

GRAS is based on nine objective indicators grouped into five categories: World-Class Faculty, World-Class Research Output, High-Quality Research, Research Impact, and International Collaboration. Each year, GRAS presents around 20,000 subject units from approximately 2,000 universities across some 100 countries and regions.

Iranian universities had a better performance in Engineering and Medical Sciences with 70 and 24 subjects, respectively. The rankings in the five mentioned fields are as follows.

Natural Sciences

In Mathematic subject, Iran University of Science and Technology (with a

global ranking of 201-300) is placed first. Amirkabir University of Technology, Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad rank second (301-400).

University of Tehran has a global ranking of 151-200 in Geography; it ranks 301-400 in Atmospheric Science.

University of Science and Technology of Mazandaran, with a global ranking of 401-500, is the only Iranian university ranked in Physics subjects.

Engineering

There are four institutions ranked in the Mathematical Engineering subject. Imam Khomeini International University and Shiraz University (both ranked 201-300). Sharif University of Technology and University of Tehran jointly ranked 301-400.

In the Electrical and Electronic Engineering subject, Sharif University of Technology (201-300), Shiraz University (301-400), and University of Tehran (401-500) are ranked first to third.

University of Tehran ranks 151-200 in the Automation and Control subject. Sharif University of Technology ranks 201-300 in Telecommunication Engineering subject.



Instruments Science and Technology subject, Sharif University of Technology, Shiraz University of Technology, and University of Tehran are placed first, ranking 101-150 globally. Iran University of Sciences and Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, Shiraz University, and University of Tabriz rank 201-300. Amirkabir University of Technology and K.N. Toosi University of Technology rank 301-400.

In Computer Science and Engineering, Sharif University of Technology and University of Tehran rank 401-500.

In Civil Engineering, Iran University of Science and Technology is placed first with a global ranking of 51-75. Amirkabir University of Technology and University of Tehran rank 101-150.

Sharif University of Technology and Tarbiat Modares University rank 201-300. Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, K. N. Toosi University of Technology, University of Mazandaran, and University of Tabriz rank 301-400.

In Chemical Engineering, Tarbiat Modares University and University of Tehran rank 201-300; Iran University of Science and Technology and University of Tabriz rank 301-400. Amirkabir University of Technology and Sharif University of Technology rank 401-500.

In Materials Science and Engineering, University of Tehran ranks 401-500. Energy Science and Engineering, Isfahan University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, University

of Tabriz, and University of Tehran rank 201-300. Tarbiat Modares University ranks 301-400.

In Environmental Science and Engineering, University of Tehran, Sharif University of Technology, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences rank 201-300, 301-400, and 401-500, respectively.

In Water Resources, University of Tehran ranks 49 globally, followed by University of Tabriz (101-150), Tarbiat Modares University (151-200), and Shiraz University (201-300).

In Food Sciences, Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources ranks 76-100. Tabriz University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran (151-200) are placed second. Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz University, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, University of Tabriz, and Urmia University all rank 201-300. Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences rank 301-400.

University of Tehran ranks 151-200 in Remote Sensing, 201-300 in Artificial Intelligence, and 301-400 in Biotechnology.

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Straight Truth

TEHRAN TIMES

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Tech companies to showcase achievements at Uzbekistan's InnoWeek



TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies will present their latest innovations and products at the International Week of Innovative Ideas (InnoWeek 2026), scheduled to be held from October 27 to 29 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Organized by the Agency for Innovative Development under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Uzbekistan, this year's exhibition is themed 'Advanced Innovations for a Changing World'.

The 2026 exhibition will focus on Artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation, biotechnology and biomedicine, green energy and environmental technology, industrial engineering and advanced manufacturing, pharmaceutical and medical tools, agriculture, water and energy, mining, construction industry, chemicals and petrochemicals, and information technology.

The exhibition will bring together scientists, startup founders, investors, and government representatives.

The event serves as a great opportunity for Iranian delegation to attend panel discussions, seminars, roundtables, showcase the achievements and capabilities of the Iranian companies, and hold B2B meetings.

The exhibition also includes startup competitions, masterclasses, training sessions and direct meetings with potential investors.

The International Week of Innovative Ideas has been held since 2018 with the aim of accelerating innovative development in Uzbekistan, promoting innovations and technologies in all sectors of the economy, as well as developing human capital, science and innovation.

Joint scientific research

This year, the second joint call of the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the Agency for Innovative Development under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation

of the Republic of Uzbekistan supported the implementation of 10 research projects.

It aimed to promote international scientific collaboration, improve the quality of joint research, and utilize the technological capacity of the two countries.

It would be allocated on a competitive basis for scientific and technical programs and projects in the fields of Environment and Agriculture; Water saving and irrigation technologies; Gene editing for drought- and salt-tolerant plants; Desertification and dust reduction; Material Sciences; Exploration and processing of rare earth elements; Advanced materials; and Mining and metallurgy.

The grant amounted to 30 billion rials (some \$13,000) for each research project for at most three years; in case the Iranian researcher has published scientific articles in Q1 or Q2 journals or has joint ownership of a patent with an Uzbek researcher, the grant would total 40 billion rials (around \$17.3).

In November 2025, Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev discussed ways to promote scientific and technological collaborations.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 43rd Session of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from October 30 to November 13.

During the meeting, Mirziyoyev voiced Tashkent's readiness to develop cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation with Iran, Mehr news agency reported.

Simaei-Sarraf, for his part, underscored the significance of fostering academic and scientific relations between the two countries. He also invited the Uzbek official to pay a visit to Iran. The two sides highlighted strengthening science diplomacy and bilateral ties.

In Mining and Mineral Engineering, Amirkabir University of Technology (51-75), and University of Tehran (76-100) are placed first and second.

In Metallurgical Engineering, University of Tehran is placed first 101-150. Iran University of Science and Technology ranks 151-200. Amirkabir University of Technology, Isfahan University of Technology, and Tarbiat Modares University are placed 201-300 globally.

Life Sciences

In Human Biological Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (151-200) and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (301-400) are the top two universities in the country.

In Agricultural Sciences, Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources is placed first, ranking 101-150 globally. University of Tehran (151-200) and Tarbiat Modares University rank second and third. Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Shiraz University, and Urmia University (with global rankings of 401-500) are placed fourth.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



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SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:57 Evening: 18:21 Dawn: 4:29 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:53 (tomorrow)

New artist joins auction in York town for Gaza aid

A new artist has joined an art auction in a York town raising money for humanitarian work in the Gaza Strip.

Eve Hart is the latest artist to contribute to the auction, which will raise money for Medical Aid for Palestinians to provide urgent care in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

The auction will be held at Haxby and Wigginton Methodist Church on September 25, York Press reported.

Sue Cooke, event organizer, said: "This is a great opportunity to come together in support of MAP's vital work and show solidarity with besieged Palestinian families."

The evening will feature homemade cakes, savory bakes and a talk on MAP's work by its community events manager, Zahra Yassine.

A Banksy print paying tribute to Damien Hirst will also go under the hammer. Catherine King, Eve Hart and Roswitha Jarman's family have donated artworks, including a collection of watercolors.

The death toll from Israel's war on the Gaza Strip has risen to 74,000, while the number of injured people has reached 175,000 since Oct. 7, 2023, according to figures released by the Palestinian Health Ministry.

It added that since the ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, a total of 1,375 people have been killed and 4,686 injured, according to its figures.

The ministry said that a number of victims remain under rubble and on roads, as ambulance and civil defense teams continue to face difficulties reaching them.

It added that the war has caused extensive destruction to homes and infrastructure and contributed to the deterioration of essential services in the Gaza Strip.

In addition to the casualties, most of whom are children and women, Israel has destroyed around 90% of Gaza's civilian infrastructure, while the UN has estimated



One of the paintings on offer at an art auction in Haxby supporting Medical Aid for Palestinians.

ed the cost of reconstruction at about \$70 billion.

These figures are being released amidst repeated warnings from the UN Human Rights Council and independent international bodies that the Zionist regime's actions in Gaza constitute "war crimes," "ethnic cleansing," and "genocide."

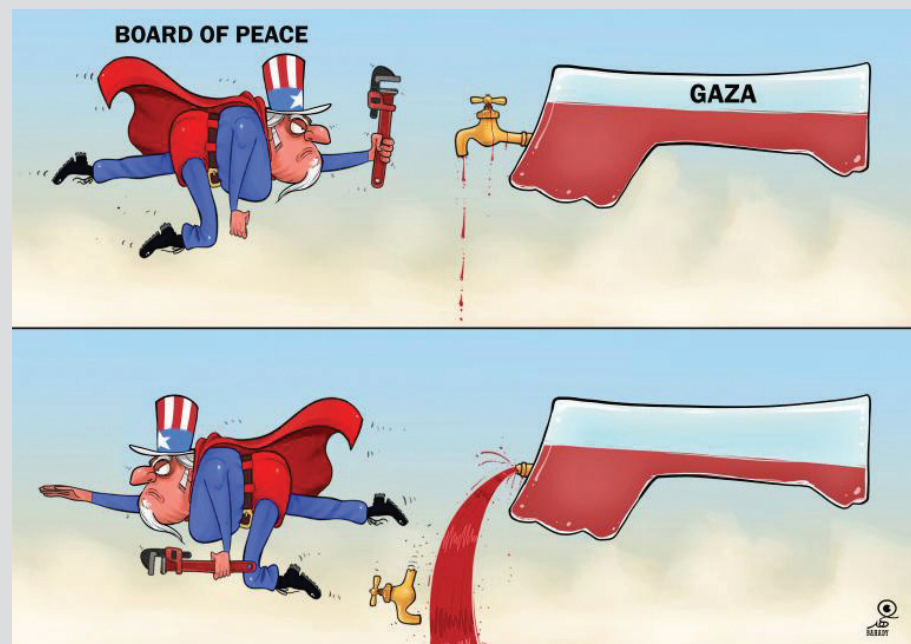
In its June 2026 report, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry emphasized that Israel has committed genocide and crimes against humanity by systematically targeting Palestinian children.

The report states, "Even after the October 2025 ceasefire, children continue to be killed and severely injured, and Israel persists in disregarding the ceasefire and international protections for Palestinian children."

According to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 67 percent of Gaza's population continues to face high levels of acute food insecurity.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said restrictions on the entry of humanitarian aid and materials needed for reconstruction have further affected humanitarian conditions in the territory.

Cartoon of Day



Board of Peace and Gaza

Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria

“Macbeth of Zar” to represent Iran at Tunisia’s Carthage Theater Days

TEHRAN- Iranian theater production “Macbeth of Zar”, written and directed by Ebrahim Poshtkuhi, is set to take part in the 27th edition of the Carthage Theater Days, which will be held in Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, from November 21 to 28.

The production, staged by Iran’s Titovak Theater Troupe, is an Iranian adaptation of William Shakespeare’s “Macbeth”.

“Macbeth of Zar” draws on the traditional Zar ritual and indigenous cultural elements of southern Iran, while incorporating influences from a range of international performance traditions, including Kabuki, Kathakali, Butoh and commedia dell’arte, as well as Vsevolod Meyerhold’s biomechanics.

The production explores Shakespeare’s tragedy through a theatrical language that combines local cultural traditions with diverse performance techniques. Through this approach, Poshtkuhi has developed an adaptation that places the familiar story of “Macbeth” within a distinctive Iranian cultural and ritual context.

“Macbeth of Zar” has previously been presented at a number of international theater events, with performances in Russia, Germany, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hungary and Iraq. The production has also received several awards and accolades during its international career.

The play had previously been invited to participate in the Avignon Festival in France. However, it was unable to take the stage



at the event due to difficulties related to embassy coordination and visa issuance.

The Carthage Theater Days, one of Tunisia’s major international theater events, will bring together theatrical productions and artists from Tunisia and other parts of the world during its 2026 edition.

“Macbeth of Zar” offers a novel fusion of the ancient Zar ritual and William Shakespeare’s timeless tragedy “Macbeth.” The production reimagines Macbeth’s story set on Hormuz Island, where he becomes embroiled in a fateful struggle to transform into the “Great Zar Father.”

Macbeth is one of Shakespeare’s finest plays, and pres-

ents a man’s conscience and the effect of guilt on his mind. A dark and bloody play, Macbeth explores reality and illusion; witchcraft and the supernatural; ambition and kingship; the natural order; light and life, darkness and death; blood and dead babies.

Zar is a legacy from slavery as it was performed by African slaves who were brought to southern Iran. They performed it on weekends in order to gain energy to enable them to bear the burden of bondage for the rest of the week. Over time, ordinary people also joined in their musical rite comprising ecstatic dance with dammam (tom-tom) playing.

Today, Zar is mostly performed by workers in a group named ahl-e hava, which is conducted by a leader called a babazari.

In this play, Scottish general Macbeth commits a crime to join an ahl-e hava to become a babazari.

It was previously staged in Iran under the title of “Hey Macbeth, Only the First Dog Knows Why It Is Barking”.

The troupe performed the play at the 41st Fajr International Theater Festival in Tehran in 2023. The play brought Poshtkuhi an honorable mention in the best play category. In addition, musician Behrang Abbasi won the award for best composer for his collaboration in this play.

ECO Film Week brings diverse regional cinema to Tehran

TEHRAN- The ECO Film Week is underway in Tehran, bringing together a selection of films from member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in a program highlighting the region’s diverse cinematic traditions and cultural narratives.

Organized by the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), the four-day event features films from Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Kazakhstan, providing audiences with an opportunity to explore different cinematic approaches and stories from across the ECO region.

The event opened at the ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran on Monday with the participation of Mehrdad Rakhshandeh, Executive Director of the ECO Cultural Institute, and Raed Farizadeh, Head of the Cinema Organization of Iran.

Following the opening ceremony, Iran’s “Whisper My Name”, directed by Rasoul Sadrarneli, was screened as the first film of the program. The 109-minute film marked the beginning of a series of screenings featuring works from six ECO member states.

“Whisper My Name” is about Ziba, a teenage student working girl. Living in a dormitory with no bonds to her parents, she dreams of moving to a room of her own. She’s struggling to find a path to be independent, but everything becomes even more complicated when her dad, Khosro, shows up. He has escaped from a psychiatric hospital to celebrate



his daughter’s birthday with her.

The 2025 drama stars Amin Hayai, Juliet Rezaei, Mehran Ghafourian, and Setareh Pesiani. It won the Best Film Award at the 2025 Fajr Film Festival.

The program continues on Tuesday with two films from Tajikistan and Pakistan. “Looking for Truth,” a 97-minute Tajik film, is scheduled to be screened at 4 p.m., followed by Pakistan’s “Nayab” at 6 p.m. The latter has

a running time of 153 minutes.

On Wednesday, the program will feature “Meryem” (2023) from the Republic of Azerbaijan at 4 p.m. and “Once Upon a Time in Anatolia” from Türkiye at 6 p.m. The films have running times of 95 and 157 minutes, respectively.

The final screening of the event will be held on Thursday at 4 p.m., featuring Kazakhstan’s “Dawn of the Great Steppe,” a 138-minute film.

All screenings are taking place at the ECO Cultural Institute in Tehran.

A special exhibition featuring a selection of film posters from ECO member states will also be held alongside the screenings. The exhibition will offer a visual overview of the history and development of cinema in the region, highlighting the artistic diversity of film poster design and its role in promoting and preserving cinematic heritage.

The ECO Film Week is being held as part of the ECO Cultural Institute’s efforts to strengthen cultural cooperation among member states and provide greater opportunities for interaction among filmmakers, artists, cultural professionals and audiences across the region.

The event will continue through September 24 in Tehran.

Asghar Farhadi’s “Parallel Tales” to be shown, reviewed in Tehran

TEHRAN – The latest film by the Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi “Parallel Tales” will be shown at the Adapa Art and Cultural Center in Tehran on Tuesday.

The movie screening will be followed by a review session in the presence of film critics Mehrzad Danesh and Omid Soleymani, ILNA reported.

“Parallel Tales” had its world premiere at the 79th Cannes Film Festival and received a warm welcome from the enthusiastic audience, who gave it a seven-minute ovation.

The film’s stellar cast includes Isabelle Huppert, Virginie Efira, Catherine Deneuve, Vincent Cassel, Pierre Niney, and Adam Bessa.

Taking its cue from an episode in Krzysztof Kieslowski’s television series “Dekalog,” the Paris-set drama stars Huppert as a reclusive writer who spies incessantly on her neighbors (Cassel, Efira, and Niney) across the street and weaves imaginary stories around its occupants. Fact and fiction collide when a young homeless man (Bessa) hired as home-help unleashes these stories into the real world.

“Parallel Tales” marks Farhadi’s second French-language film after “The Past” with Berenice Bejo, who won the Best Actress award for her performance at Cannes in 2013.

A French-Italian-Belgian co-production, the film is produced by long-time collaborator Alex-

andre Mallet-Guy alongside Farhadi and David Levine.

It is the fifth collaboration between Farhadi and Memento Production after “The Past,” Oscar-winner “The Salesman,” “Everybody Knows,” and “A Hero.”

The new film by the two-time Oscar-winning filmmaker was shot in Paris during fall 2025. It was released in French theaters concurrently with its Cannes unveiling.

One of Iran’s most prominent cinematic voices, Farhadi, 54, is known for his thought-provoking films that explore social issues.

He won the Best Foreign Film Oscar in 2012 for “A Separation” (which was also nominated for Best Screenplay) and once again

in 2017 for “The Salesman”.

He has been selected four times in competition in Cannes with “The Past,” “The Salesman,” “Everybody Knows,” and “A Hero.”

“The Salesman” won Best Screenplay and Best Actor awards at Cannes in 2016 and “A Hero” scooped the Grand Prize at the 2021 festival.

“Everybody Knows,” Farhadi’s Spanish-language debut starring Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem, opened and competed at Cannes in 2018.

Farhadi was also selected twice in Berlin. He was awarded the Silver Bear for Best Director in 2009 for “About Elly” and the 2011 Golden Bear for “A Separation”.