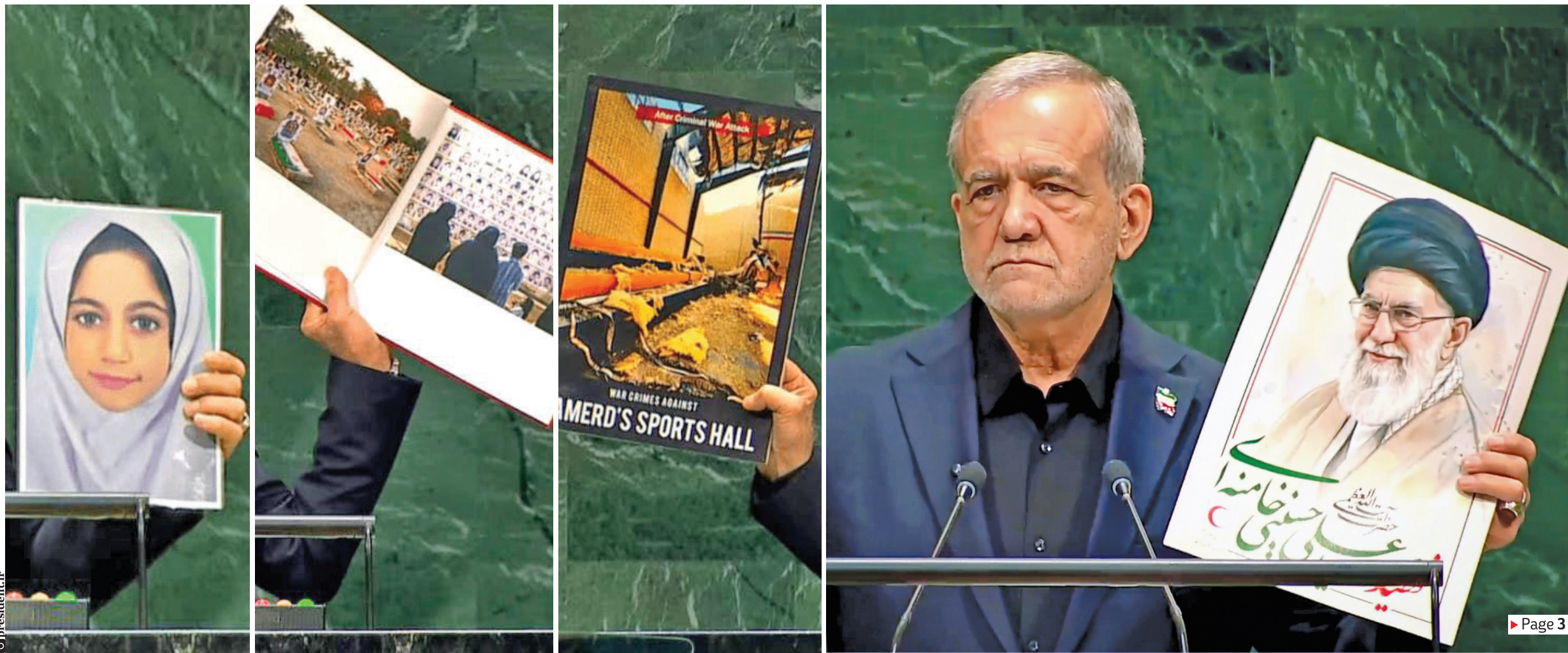




President Masoud Pezeshkian displays images of martyrs, including Iran's late leader and martyred children, killed in the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, during his speech at the 81st UN General Assembly, New York, Wednesday, September 23, 2026.

Iran's president denounces US bullying in UN address

'We Will Never Bow Our Head'

ICC refuses to withdraw arrest warrant against Netanyahu

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has taken no steps to withdraw arrest warrants or related applications concerning Israeli officials, despite mounting pressure and sanctions from the United States, Deputy Prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan has said.

"The case is still proceeding," Khan told CNN in a weekend interview.

"We have taken no steps to try and withdraw any of those arrest warrant applications or the arrest warrants themselves, and the team continues to investigate in that situation."

The ICC issued arrest warrants in November 2024 for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his then war minister, Yoav Gallant, over war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza since October 2023. ▶ Page 5

Araghchi holds extensive diplomatic talks on UNGA sidelines

TEHRAN- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called on the international community to hold the United States accountable for its violations of international law and war crimes against Iran, warning that indifference to genocide will have far-reaching consequences for all countries.

Speaking during a meeting with Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis in New York, Araghchi outlined Iran's positions on regional developments following US-Israeli aggression against Iran, as well as the continuation of interventionist measures, a naval blockade, and economic warfare against the Iranian people.

He stressed the responsibility of all countries to safeguard the UN Charter and international law, particularly the prohibition on the use of force, ▶ Page 2

Iran sets conditions for resuming diplomacy with US in Qatar-mediated NY meeting

TEHRAN — Iran has laid out its conditions for resuming diplomatic engagement with the United States during a meeting between Iranian and American representatives in New York that was held through Qatari mediation, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said.

Speaking to IRNA late Tuesday in New York, Baqaei said the interaction between the two sides took place through Qatar, with the Iranian delegation clearly and explicitly conveying Tehran's views and conditions to the US side through the mediators.

"The interaction that took place was through Qatari mediation. In fact, the Iranian delegation conveyed its views and conditions to the American side very clearly and explicitly through the mediators," Baqaei said. ▶ Page 3

Major General Mohsen Rezaei: Trump's UN speech constitutes 'defense of a defeated criminal'

TEHRAN – Iranian officials have unleashed a blistering response to US President Donald Trump's address at the 81st UN General Assembly, dismissing his threats of "annihilation" against the Islamic Republic as the desperate rhetoric of a "defeated criminal" struggling with his own political irrelevance.

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, led the charge against the US president's remarks, characterizing the speech not as a projection of strength, but as a failed attempt at self-justification on the global stage.

"Trump's entire speech was the defense plea of a defeated criminal," ▶ Page 2

Trump meets Arab leaders on sidelines of UN General Assembly

TEHRAN – US President Donald Trump convened a closed-door meeting with leaders of Arab and Muslim states on Tuesday on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, as uncertainty continues to loom over the nearly seven-month-long war against Iran.

The meeting—attended by heads of state and senior representatives from the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), alongside leaders and envoys from Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq—came under the shadow of widespread regional anxiety over the disruption of maritime transit across the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, which has sent global energy markets into a tailspin and strained regional economies.

Addressing reporters ahead of the talks, Trump renewed his threats to "annihilate" Iran while talking up the US military campaign. ▶ Page 3

Four Persian books included in White Ravens Catalogue 2026

TEHRAN – The White Ravens Catalogue, compiled by Munich's International Youth Library, has unveiled its 2026 edition with over 200 children and youth titles in about 40 languages, including four Persian works by authors from Iran.

The Iranian books in the list include "The Suitcase Mix-up," written by Farhad Hasanazadeh and illustrated by Haleh Ghorbani; "The Eternities and Trees," written by Mohammad-Reza Shafiei Kadkani and illustrated by Hoda Hadadi; "We Are All Birds," written by Mehdi Hejvani and illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelou; and "Where the Sun Rises," written by Ali-Asghar Seidabadi and illustrated by Hadi Baghdadi, ISNA reported.

"The Suitcase Mix-up" is about migration, cultural diversity, and friendship. Sometimes the art of friendship is best learned from children – simple, ▶ Page 8



"Shouldn't a school always be a safe place?": Minab student asks US schoolchildren

TEHRAN – A student from Minab has addressed American students, calling for schools to remain safe spaces for children and remembering classmates who were killed when Shajareh Tayyebeh Primary School was struck in a US military attack.

The student read a message in English to US schoolchildren on Wednesday at a ceremony marking the start of the new school year at the site of the Shajareh Tayyebeh School in Minab County. ▶ Page 7

Mahmoud Nemati wins gold at Nagoya Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iranian karate athlete Mahmoud Nemati won the gold medal in the men's +84kg karate event at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

Nemati defeated Hassan Sanad Sufyani of Saudi Arabia 6–3 in the final to claim the Asian Games title.

The Iranian initially fell 2–0 behind, but staged an impressive comeback to turn the match around and secure a 6–3 victory.

A day earlier, his brother Morteza Nemati had won the men's 75kg gold medal, securing Iran's first gold of the Games.

Iran topped the karate medal table with two gold and three silver medals.

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

Trump trapped in a conflict with Iran

Farhikhtegan analyzed Trump's speech at the UN. According to the paper, Trump's speech revolved around one central theme: explaining why he has failed against Iran. The US President, who knows he is highly likely to lose the midterm elections, claimed the elections do not matter to him. Although he described the United States as the most powerful country in the world and its military as the greatest in history, he pleaded — not with allies but with all governments — to join economic sanctions against Iran. The paper notes that Trump, who has repeatedly offered different reasons for conflict with Iran, claimed he prevented Tehran from developing missiles capable of reaching Europe. Yet Iran has been capable of achieving such range for decades, but has limited its missile program to 2,000 kilometers based on its own policies. Interestingly, Trump has been unable to stop Iran's strikes against American bases and vessels, yet boasts to Europe about supposed achievements.

Jam-e-Jam: Opportunities for Iran's delegation at the United Nations

Jam-e-Jam, in a commentary, referred to Iran's presence at the UN General Assembly and wrote: Given the intense narrative-building surrounding current tensions between Iran and the United States, the presence of the Iranian delegation at the Assembly can naturally be significant. Considering the special circumstances the country is facing — including maritime encirclement, US sanctions pressure, and clear violations of international law committed against Iran — this is an appropriate opportunity for these issues to be discussed in an international forum and for Iran's positions to be properly explained. Therefore, attending the UN General Assembly is a valuable opportunity for Iran, especially since the country is subject to heavy media censorship driven by extensive Zionist lobbying. Despite US obstruction and restrictions on Iranian journalists covering the Assembly, the presence of the President, the Foreign Minister, and the accompanying delegation can help advance the narrative favored by the Islamic Republic.

Iran: The UN as an opportunity to clarify Iran's positions

Abbas Salimi-Namin, a researcher of contemporary history, told the Iran newspaper that Iran must use international opportunities to clarify the positions of the Islamic Republic. He described the President's presence at the UN General Assembly as a chance to express Iran's views and explain the foundations of its positions. In his view, one should not be worried about the Presi-

dent speaking on this platform or interpret it as a sign of weakness, because the way issues are presented and adherence to principles can clarify Iran's stance before representatives of various countries. Pezeshkian must act in a way that avoids any impression of weakness. Although US influence in some international institutions is a notable reality, this influence should not lead Iran to withdraw from participation. If Iran's positions and arguments are properly articulated, it may even expose the extent of US influence to global public opinion and help weaken it.

Ham-Mihan: Do not give the enemy a pretext

In an interview with Ham-Mihan, former MP Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh discussed the three-urgency proposal for Iran's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He argued that some parliamentary proposals are always one step behind reality. Iran was a country that could have reached a nuclear weapon, but such a path was never part of national policy. Now that many of Iran's nuclear programs have been sacrificed due to what he called a major lie about Iran's nuclear issue, such proposals not only fail to help Iran but also assist the United States in forming a coalition against Iran. Withdrawal from the NPT implies that Iran intends to pursue a military nuclear program, but since such a program does not exist, the only effect of this urgent proposal would be to make it easier for figures like Trump — who seek global consensus against Iran — to achieve their goal.

Sobh-e-No: Iran's role in the emerging regional order

Sobh-e-No discussed the need for Iran to help shape a new regional order in an interview with Dr. Mohammad-Bagher Khorramshad, a political sociologist. He explained that the six southern Persian Gulf states formed the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council to design a regional order that excludes Iran. If a regional order is to include all countries, three additional states must be added to the six southern Persian Gulf countries: Iran, Iraq, and Yemen. Iran must be recognized as a decisive actor in the future regional order. Current events show that Iran cannot be removed from regional security calculations. This war has revealed a new generation of warfare. Iran, facing two of the world's powerful militaries, managed to defend its position — a fact that will inevitably influence future regional order calculations. Therefore, any scenario for the region's future must consider Iran as a key actor while also aiming for a regional security structure that is as self-sustaining as possible.

IRGC Ground Force chief: Iran will not yield an inch to the enemy

TEHRAN — The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force, Brigadier General Mohammad Karami, has underscored the Islamic Republic's unwavering resolve in the face of hostile threats, affirming that Iran will never give in to the enemy.

“With the grace of God, we will not yield an inch to the enemy, just as our nation stood firm during the eight-year Sacred Defense period [1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War]. The future undeniably belongs to esteemed Islam and the heroic Iranian nation,” General Karami stated during an operational inspection in northwestern Iran.

Reiterating the country's defensive doctrine, the commander stressed that the Iranian Armed Forces remain steadfast on “the path of resistance and steadfastness,” warning adversaries against miscalculating Tehran's defensive readiness.

General Karami's reference to the Sacred Defense highlights a pivotal chapter in the Islamic Republic's modern history. During the eight-year war imposed by Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime—heavily backed by Western powers and regional allies—Iran faced widespread sanctions and international isolation.

Despite the severe asymmetry, the Iranian military and volunteer forces defended the nation's borders without relinquishing a single inch of territory. That era established the bedrock of Iran's defense philosophy: relying entirely on domestic endurance, indigenous capabilities, and popular mobilization rather than foreign guarantees.

Iranian military commanders and strategic observers frequently contrast the resource constraints of the 1980s with the country's current deterrence posture. Over the past four decades, the Islamic Republic has built a self-sufficient, high-tech defense complex spanning advanced precision missiles, layered air defenses, electronic warfare systems, and long-range UAVs.

This technological and operational leap has fundamentally altered the deterrence calculus in West Asia. Analysts emphasize that decades of US attempts to encircle and isolate Tehran have backfired, leaving Iran with a distinct strategic upper hand across the region through its autonomous deterrence capabilities and deep regional alliances.

Araghchi holds extensive diplomatic talks on UNGA sidelines

From page 1 ► and referred to war crimes committed by the US and the Israeli regime against Iran during their military aggression over the past year and a half.

Referring to Washington's repeated breaches of commitments, including its violation of the Islamabad memorandum of understanding, Araghchi said the international community has a responsibility to hold the United States accountable for the consequences of its unlawful actions.

He further pointed to grave violations of international humanitarian law and multiple war crimes, including the tragedies in Minab and Lamerd, stressing the duty of all states party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to investigate and punish perpetrators.

Araghchi warned that indifference toward genocide and war crimes, along with continued impunity for perpetrators, would have extremely far-reaching consequences for the entire world.

Restoring Hormuz strait security requires end to US' destabilizing actions

Insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz is solely the result of US and Israeli aggression, Araghchi said, stressing that restoring security to the strategic waterway hinges on an end to US actions that create insecurity.

During a meeting with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein,



the two diplomats reviewed the progress of Iran-Iraq cooperation in economic, trade, consular, and security affairs, and stressed the need to expand relations in all areas of mutual interest.

They described safeguarding the security of their shared border as highly important, emphasizing the implementation of agreements reached in this regard and the need for effective measures to counter terrorist activities.

Araghchi outlined the latest developments concerning shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, including the understanding reached between Iran and Oman on establishing safe routes for commercial shipping.

He stressed the need for all regional countries to adhere to the principle of good neighborliness, particularly by preventing aggressor parties from using their territories and facilities to prepare for and carry out illegal and

aggressive actions against Iran.

Europeans criticized for double standards over Iran, regional developments

Araghchi criticized European double standards toward regional developments, particularly their response to US and Israeli acts of aggression against Iran.

During a meeting with Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen, Araghchi strongly criticized European countries' “double standards” toward regional developments, particularly their silence and leniency regarding the “aggressive actions and crimes” committed by the US and the Zionist regime against Iran.

He said European countries cannot claim to support the rule of law and human rights while remaining indifferent to, or even supporting, overt US and Israeli military aggression against Iran.

The Iranian foreign minister also recalled Iran's responsible

approach to diplomacy aimed at removing US pretexts over the nuclear issue, saying Washington's repeated breaches of commitments and its “warmongering” were the main causes of the current insecurity in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

He stressed that the only way to restore peace and stability in the region is to halt the US' illegal and aggressive actions and respect Iran's rights and national interests.

Iran warns Italy over US bases, complicity in aggression

Araghchi warned Italy that hosting US military bases and assisting in preparations for or implementation of acts of aggression against Iran would be considered complicity in aggression and could entail international responsibility for the host states.

During a meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Araghchi described the decision by some European countries, including Italy, to host US military bases and any cooperation in preparing for or carrying out acts of aggression against Iran as “very dangerous” and tantamount to complicity in aggression.

Pointing to the continued aggressive and destabilizing actions by the US and the Israeli regime in West Asia, Araghchi said rising fuel and commodity prices in global markets were a direct consequence of the US-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Major General Mohsen Rezaei: Trump's UN speech constitutes 'defense of a defeated criminal'

From page 1 ► Rezaei stated, highlighting that the US president's obsession with Iran—which dominated the entirety of his address—serves only to underscore the Islamic Republic's growing stature and influence in the international arena.

“This is the first US president whose every word revolves around Iran. It proves that Iran has become the single biggest challenge to US foreign policy,” Rezaei noted. “This realization would not have been possible without the greatness and resilience of the Iranian nation.”

Rezaei further ridiculed Trump's attempts to redefine global realities, noting that the US president has attempted to recast war as peace and terrorism as security. “Who believes such rhetoric?” he asked, pointing to the record-low domestic popularity of the US president as evidence that even American media outlets have begun to distance themselves from his inflammatory messaging. “He is seeking to influence global public opinion, but he has only succeeded in exposing a humiliating defeat.”

Earlier, the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters—the country's highest operational command unit—issued a joint statement pledging a decisive response to any US-led aggression.

The military command warned that the Islamic Republic is prepared to deliver “even harsher, crushing, and unpredictable blows” to aggressors, explicitly including the current administration in Washington and the Israeli regime.

The statement drew a sharp contrast between Trump's aggressive posturing and the reality of the battlefield, labeling his rhetoric as a symptom of “America's strategic deadlock” in its long-standing confrontation with Iran.

“The repetition of baseless allegations and threats should not be interpreted as a sign of US strength,” the command stated. “The mismatch between these threats and the actual erosion of US military capabilities reflects ‘strategic desperation’ rather than power.”

Leader's military advisor: Iran fully prepared for defense; US aggression will bring heavy casualties

TEHRAN — A senior military advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, says Iran's armed forces are fully prepared to defend the country in every field, warning the United States would face heavy casualties in the event of any aggression.

“In the missile, air-defense, and territorial-defense sectors, we have reached a level where, God forbid, if they (American forces) intend to land anywhere in Iran, they will certainly be destroyed,” Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, said during a televised broadcast on Tuesday.

“We have at least 10 million trained Basij personnel, who can defend all parts of the country through a distributed, mosaic-style approach and asymmetric warfare,” he said.

“People are the main pillar of the Islamic Republic's power and national security.”

Safavi, a former chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), also

pointed to Iran's significant advances in missile, drone and air-defense capabilities, as well as its monitoring of foreign military activity in the region.

“In the maritime domain, whether in the skies over the Persian Gulf or even in the Indian Ocean, we detect with our radar systems the US naval vessels currently in the region...and determine where they are located,” he said.

Safavi said Iran could carry out both defensive and retaliatory operations, adding that the outcome of a conflict would also depend on the resilience and determination of the societies involved.

“What matters is whether their social resilience in the United States is greater than Iran's. Iran's is certainly greater. War is a battle of wills,” Safavi said.

“Iran knows its objectives and wants to defend itself, its national interests, and its dignity.”

Safavi's remarks come amid



heightened tensions over US military activity in the region. Iran has repeatedly emphasized deterrence and territorial defense, including the role of missile and drone capabilities and the mobilization of forces across the country.

The advisor also addressed the Strait of Hormuz, saying its reopening would depend, among other things, on the lifting of the United States' illegal naval blockade.

“The Strait of Hormuz will not be reopened through US military pressure. It is Iran and Oman that can establish the mech-



The joint command emphasized that the rhetoric of the US president will fail to alter the regional balance of power. Furthermore, they asserted that such threats would never compensate for Washington's diminished position in the emerging global order or its “humiliating defeats” in the face of the regional Resistance Front.

Dismissing the latest round of coercive sanctions as an attempt at “holding the global economy hostage” following military failures, the military bodies reaffirmed Iran's role as the “anchor of security in the region.”

anism for this. We are in contact with the Omanis, although public reporting indicates that the United States is preventing this,” he said.

“The reopening of the Strait of Hormuz is conditional on [the US's] accepting Iran's terms.”

The strait connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and is a major route for international energy shipments. Its security and freedom of navigation have long been central issues in relations between Iran and the United States.

Safavi said Iran's broader objective was to establish a Persian Gulf security framework with regional states, without US involvement.

“Our objective is to permanently remove the threat to the Iranian people and, together with the countries of the region, establish lasting security and sustainable development in the Persian Gulf without the presence of the United States,” he said.

‘We will never bow our head’

TEHRAN — President Masoud Pezeshkian delivered a powerful address at the 81st session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Wednesday, vehemently condemning US and Israeli aggression, exposing international double standards, and asserting that the Iranian nation will never yield to the language of force.

Opening his address, President Pezeshkian directly refuted US President Donald Trump's accusations of Iran sponsoring terror, emphasizing that the Iranian nation is itself a victim of terrorism. He cited the assassination of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei without legal justification, alongside deadly bombings of civilian sites, including schools.

The US and Israel launched a war on Iran on February 28. On the first day of the strikes, Ayatollah Khamenei, members of his family, and senior military commanders were martyred. A school in the southern city of Minah was also hit by a US Tomahawk missile, resulting in approximately 170 deaths, mostly schoolchildren. Another attack on a sports complex and nearby residential area in Lamerd, Fars Province, also killed 22 civilians. Thousands more were also killed in the US-Israeli strikes, which lasted for 39 days.

Presenting photographs of Iran's martyred Leader and victims of the US bombings in Minab and Lamerd, Pezeshkian declared, "We are not terrorists; we are victims of terrorism." He continued, "I come from Iran, where they (the US and Israel) assassinated our Leader, without any legal justification, without any evidence. I come from an Iran where, in fact, they bombed a school." Pointing to the victims' images, he added, "You see these children? They bombed and killed these children, using weapons supplied by the United States and Israel."

Pezeshkian decried the targeting of civilian infrastructure in Iran while commending the country's response to foreign aggression. "Our innocent people were, in fact, the targets of the unjust attacks that they imposed on our country, and we defended ourselves with strength. The United States and Israel attacked us with the latest technology and equipment, and our people stood firm and fought back," Pezeshkian stated. "We did not bow to them; we fought back. But we did not target civilians. They attacked our schools, our hospitals, our universities, our bridges, and our infrastructure, after being equipped and supported from the territories from which they came. All of this violates international law."

Seven months of public resilience

Highlighting domestic unity, the president stated that for the



past seven months, the Iranian people have continuously taken to the streets to defend their country and thwart efforts by US- and Israeli-backed elements aiming to sow domestic insecurity. "The people are our power, and we stand with the power of our people," Pezeshkian asserted.

The right to self-defense

Pezeshkian emphasized that in a world where powerful nations often act as agents of destruction rather than champions of humanity and justice, a nation unable to defend itself is doomed to be crushed. "Our military capabilities are strictly for defense," the president affirmed, adding that Iran does not seek permission from any entity to defend its country. He issued a stern warning that Iran's defense systems are designed to ensure that no aggressor would ever contemplate bombing Iranian cities with impunity.

Peaceful nuclear rights

Addressing Iran's nuclear program, Pezeshkian dismissed the protracted Western rhetoric centered on centrifuges, enrichment, and sanctions. He reiterated that nuclear technology is an intrinsic part of Iran's right to development, essential for medical treatments, agricultural food security, advanced industry, and a sustainable electrical future. He said Iran will never abandon its peaceful nuclear program. "Explicitly, we say: neither nuclear weapons nor deprivation of nuclear knowledge," Pezeshkian declared. He added that the nuclear issue cannot be resolved on the battlefield and requires a negotiated agreement that secures both international trust and the preservation of Iran's rights.

Regional security and the Strait of Hormuz

Regarding regional dynamics, Pezeshkian stated that war knows no borders and crises easily spill over to neighboring nations. He reiterated that Iran views its neighbors not as rivals, but as partners with whom it seeks mutual strength and security. Addressing the Strait of Hormuz, the president criticized the profound injustice where all nations benefit from the vital waterway, yet its historical

guardian—Iran—is barred by unjust sanctions from exercising free navigation even within its own territorial waters. Meanwhile, he noted, the same route is exploited to transfer weapons and explosives to destabilize regional nations. He made it unequivocally clear that Iran will not permit permanent hostile naval fleets or expanding wars to destabilize coastal states.

Gaza and the inalienable right to resist

Describing Palestine as an open wound on the global conscience, Pezeshkian condemned the slaughter of tens of thousands of innocent people and the displacement of over 100,000 others in Gaza through systemic Israeli genocide, while international mechanisms have proven incapable of halting the bloodshed. "Resistance is the innate nature of humanity," Pezeshkian asserted. "If people are driven from their homes and subjected to relentless bombardment, they will naturally resist. What should they do? Surrender to bullying?"

Exposing international double standards

Pezeshkian highlighted stark global contradictions, pointing out that Israel—possessing nuclear weapons, operating outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and never allowing inspectors into its territory—receives billions in unconditional military aid and enjoys complete immunity to bomb any capital. In contrast, he observed, Iran opens its facilities to inspections yet faces bombardment at the negotiating table and crippling economic sanctions that disproportionately harm ordinary citizens, the poor, and the sick.

Rejecting the language of force

Concluding his address, the president delivered a direct message concerning remarks made by the US president: "The statements made yesterday by the US president before world opinion are a clear sign of bullying and the logic of force, contrary to the UN Charter," Pezeshkian stated. "He must know that threats make our nation more cohesive and stronger, and increase our resistance. The Iranian nation will not bow to force and will

make aggressors regret their actions. We are ready for dialogue, but we will never accept the language of force."

Trump had told the General Assembly on Tuesday that he had a "big decision to make" on whether to seek a deal to end the nearly seven-month war or to "annihilate" Iran and drive it "into hell with no chance of survival." Iran and the US reached a memorandum of understanding on June 17 to pave the way for bringing a permanent end to the war following a ceasefire on April 8. But in violation of the agreement, the US continued strikes in southern Iran.

‘Courageous’ speech

Pezeshkian's address at the UN was widely admired by Iranian officials. Mohammad Mokhtari, a Leader's advisor and former vice president, commented on X, "Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian today represented the Iranian people with distinction at the United Nations General Assembly, speaking firmly, convincingly and with sound reasoning in an all-out defense of beloved Iran. The message of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran was clear: We have not bowed our heads to the bully, we will never forget our martyrs, and we will make the aggressors regret their actions."

Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani also wrote on X: "The president's courageous speech at the United Nations was a firm response to Trump's offensive remarks against the Iranian people and showed that the effort to disrupt the calculations of the country's officials has failed. Mr. Pezeshkian, may you hold your head high for keeping alive at the United Nations the memory of our martyred Imam (Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei) and our oppressed martyrs."

Iran's resolute stance

The firm response from President Pezeshkian to Trump's rhetoric has effectively poured cold water on speculation about potential talks between the leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. This unwavering declaration resonated globally, influencing market dynamics as oil prices saw a nearly 2 percent rise in choppy trade on Wednesday, a clear signal that traders were evaluating Pezeshkian's vow of non-surrender in the wake of Trump's aggressive warnings. The Iranian president's address not only articulated Tehran's defensive posture and its unwavering commitment to its people and principles but also served as a stark reminder of the complexities of international relations and the enduring power of national resilience in the face of external pressures.



and defense policy, signaling that reliance on external powers offers a false sense of security. To secure long-term stability, regional capitals are increasingly emphasizing the necessity of defense self-sufficiency and deeper, direct security cooperation among neighboring states.

Iran sets conditions for resuming diplomacy with US in Qatar-mediated NY meeting



From Page 1 ▶ The meeting was held on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where senior officials and diplomatic delegations from around the world have gathered for high-level discussions on international and regional developments.

Iran outlines conditions for renewed diplomacy

According to Baqaei, Iran's conditions for resuming diplomacy include an end to fighting on all fronts, a halt to US acts of aggression against Iran, an end to the US naval blockade and economic war against the country, and the release of Iranian assets.

The Iranian spokesman said Tehran had also communicated its conditions for diplomacy through various channels in recent weeks, including its position on issues related to the security of the Strait of Hormuz.

He said the presence of the Iranian delegation in New York provided an opportunity to reiterate these positions and convey them clearly to the American side through the Qatari mediators.

The remarks indicate that Tehran views any potential diplomatic process in the broader context of developments on the ground and the measures taken by Washington. From Iran's perspective, the continuation of diplomacy is linked to the removal of military and economic pressure against the country.

Araghchi holds bilateral meetings on sidelines of UNGA

Baqaei also said Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held separate meetings with officials from several countries on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

According to the spokesman, bilateral relations as well as developments in West Asia and other international issues were among the main topics discussed during the meetings.

MP: No meeting between Pezeshkian and Trump

TEHRAN — Esmail Kowsari, a member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has described US President Donald Trump's remarks against Iran at the UN General Assembly as "political bluffing and psychological warfare," saying there will be no meeting between Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Kowsari said Trump's rhetoric against Iran was part of an attempt to undermine the morale of the opposing side.

"When a gambler loses the game, he usually talks more, makes threats and boasts, and tries in some way to weaken the morale of his opponent," Kowsari said, adding that Iran had become familiar with such tactics over the past 48 years.

He said the United States, Israel and European countries had repeatedly employed similar methods against Iran, adding: "They say whatever comes out of their mouths; therefore, the listener must be discerning."

The lawmaker said Trump had failed in his confrontation with Iran, despite having portrayed himself as a superpower and seeking to overthrow the Islamic Republic within four days.

Kowsari also described US actions in the region as part of psychological warfare, arguing that if Washington had the capability to defeat Iran, it would not allow the country "a moment of peace."

Referring to US meetings with the countries of the southern Persian Gulf, he said Washington was seeking to pressure and intimidate them once again, but argued that the United States no longer had the capacity to take significant military action in the region.

The parliamentarian also referred to the conflict involving Yemen, saying Saudi Arabia, despite the vast sums it had spent on defense and securi-

The diplomatic activity comes as regional security developments, including issues surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the broader situation in West Asia, remain prominent topics in international discussions and diplomatic consultations taking place alongside the UN General Assembly.

Tehran responds to Trump's remarks at UN

Baqaei also responded to remarks made by US President Donald Trump during his address to the UN General Assembly, saying that the comments amounted to "repeated claims and allegations" against the Islamic Republic.

He said the impression shared by diplomats and delegations from several countries present in New York was that the remarks did not reflect strength but rather desperation.

Baqaei further criticized the use of the UN General Assembly — the world's largest international gathering — as a platform for remarks that are "unlawful and contrary to diplomatic norms."

He also criticized threats of military action against Iran, arguing that such threats are incompatible with accepted principles governing international relations.

Iranian delegation walks out during Trump's speech

According to Baqaei, the Iranian delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Araghchi, left the venue in protest as Trump delivered his remarks.

However, one Iranian diplomat from the Islamic Republic's Permanent Mission to the United Nations remained in the chamber to follow the proceedings, in line with established diplomatic practice, the spokesman said.

Addressing questions over why the entire Iranian delegation did not leave, Baqaei emphasized the importance Tehran attaches to maintaining its presence at the United Nations.

"Iran's seat in a forum like the United Nations General Assembly is our stronghold," he said, adding that leaving that position in response to hostile or offensive remarks would mean failing to fulfill the country's diplomatic responsibilities.

Iran emphasizes active diplomatic presence

Baqaei's remarks underscore Tehran's stated intention to maintain an active diplomatic presence in international institutions while simultaneously challenging US military, economic and political pressure.

The Qatar-mediated meeting between Iranian and American representatives, alongside Araghchi's bilateral consultations with foreign officials, forms part of Iran's diplomatic activity on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

ty, was now "stuck in a quagmire" and had largely resorted to airstrikes against Yemen.

"Those bombings have produced no results," he said.

Kowsari said Trump was seeking to portray himself as the victor in order to prevent domestic pressure in the United States from increasing further. He also accused Washington of attempting to create divisions among Iran's armed forces, officials and people to exploit those divisions in future actions.

Referring to Iran's defense capabilities, he said: "Where did these missiles come from? Where did these drones come from? Where did these air-defense systems come from?" Kowsari argued that Iran's military capabilities were the result of planning and development under sanctions.

Kowsari further said Trump was seeking to use his appearance at the UN General Assembly to project the image that the United States remained a superpower. He added that Washington was still seeking to extract economic and political benefits from some countries in the region.

Asked about Trump's reported interest in meeting Pezeshkian, Kowsari said unequivocally that such a meeting would not take place.

"There will be no meeting with Trump," he said, adding that Pezeshkian himself knew that such a meeting would not happen. Kowsari characterized Trump's efforts to establish contact with the Iranian president as 'a sign of US weakness.'

"The dignity of our president is far above this for him to meet or approach Trump," Kowsari said.

Kowsari concluded by saying that Trump's actions would not succeed in influencing the Iranian president. He argued that Trump should be put on trial and, if no venue existed for such a trial, said Iran should "take revenge" against him.

Trump meets Arab leaders on sidelines of UN General Assembly

From Page 1 ▶ He also claimed to have brokered a "historic peace deal" in Gaza.

Washington has reportedly floated an initiative to establish a \$10 billion joint reconstruction fund with Arab states to repair the infrastructure damaged and destroyed during the conflict. According to sources cited by the Financial Times, US officials actively discussed the proposal with regional partners ahead of the gathering.

However, political observers argue the US administration is reluctant to exit the war without securing a symbolic victory to sell to domestic audiences and international media, given its self-styled image as the "leader of the free world."

Trump's latest remarks and diplomatic overtures coincide with a growing reassessment across the Persian Gulf regarding long-standing reliance on American security guarantees.

Throughout the conflict, Iranian missile and drone strikes have directly targeted American military installations across the Persian Gulf. The vulnerability of heavily fortified US bases has demonstrated that Washington cannot single-handedly safeguard its own assets, let alone guarantee the absolute security of neighboring Persian Gulf nations.

This development was highlighted earlier this month by Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari at the Hili Forum in Abu Dhabi, who emphasized that relying solely on external alliances is insufficient.

"We need to realize in the [Persian] Gulf that having international forces in the region, having a strategic alliance with the US is very important, but it is not enough," al-Ansari said. "Self-sufficiency when it comes to security is the only way forward."

Analysts view the ongoing hostilities as a major turning point for Persian Gulf foreign

Executive work begins on 162-km Rasht–Astara railway

TEHRAN- Abbas Khatibi, deputy of Iran's transportation infrastructure construction company, announced that the executive work on the 162-km Rasht–Astara railway, the missing link of the North–South Corridor, has begun.

He said that land acquisition and stabilization of 56 km are underway with domestic capacity and funding.

Iran committed to acquiring the full route within a year; last February, 125 km was formally handed to the Russian side, with readiness to hand over the rest.

Although Russian teams are sometimes not fully present, over 100 km has been occupied and equipment deployed.

Acquisition costs for 89 km have been paid. Financing talks with Russia under a 2023 agreement are 93% complete; remaining is–



sues concern the final price.

Experts stress the railway is essential, and work continues despite special national conditions. The project is considered decisive for completing the corridor and expanding regional transit connectivity.

‘Free zones ready to take on country’s major economic missions’

TEHRAN- CEO of Kish Free Zone Organization said that free zones are ready to take on country's major economic missions.

Mohammad Kabiri, expressing appreciation for the efforts of the country's officials to achieve an honorable peace and also for the resistance of the Iranian nation, stated: “We hope that with the measures taken, the shadow of war will be removed from the country, and we will be able to pursue the path of development and progress with greater calm.”

Kabiri also thanked Hossein Forouzan, Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade-Industrial and Special Economic Zones, for his presence and continuous follow-ups, and added: “In this opportunity, I want us to first take a look at the experience of free zones in the world and see what achievements these zones have brought for their countries, what characteristics they have, and if we want to use these experiences and global best practices, what challenges we face in Iran and what the executive solution is.”

Referring to the extent of free zones in the world, he stated: “More than 169 countries in the world have free zones and special zones, and there are more than 6,000 free and special economic zones in the world, whose total exports reach about \$3.5 trillion. These figures show that free zones play a significant role in the global economy.”

The CEO of Kish Free Zone Organization continued: “Successful free zones in the world have numerous common characteristics, and about 65 features and indicators have been identified in these zones. We have also reviewed the world's top 50 free zones and identified their characteristics, among which five very important issues are seen as driving factors for the development of free zones and as laying the groundwork for increasing their share in the national economies of countries.”

Kabiri said: “The first characteristic is tax exemptions, the second is customs facilities, the third is special bank credit lines and dedicated banks, the fourth is support for the innovation sector, and finally, the most important issue, is managerial independence and the authorities that exist in many successful free zones of the world.”

He added: “Incidentally, our legislator has also envisaged such authorities for free zones in Article 65, but this article is not fully implemented. In many free zones of the world, healthcare, education, and other public infrastructure were first created, and then the regulatory system and laws distinct from the mainland were implemented in these zones.”

Referring to the experience of China's Shenzhen Free Zone, the CEO of Kish Free Zone Organization stated: “Shenzhen covers only about two-hundredths of one percent of China's area and houses about one-thirtieth of the country's population, but its export value reaches about \$383 billion, which is about 10 percent of China's exports.”

Kabiri noted: “An important feature of free zones in the world is that they act as governance sandboxes. In these zones, more than a thousand reform measures in the field of governance have been implemented, and among these measures, China's central government transferred 164 successful ones that could

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

Iran, Uzbekistan chambers of commerce stress MOU implementation, private sector cooperation

TEHRAN- Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, referring to the challenges created at the international level for Iran's economy, said: “The strength of Iran's private sector is that it implements whatever seems impossible to implement.”

According to IRNA, citing the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Hossein Pir-Moazen, who traveled to Uzbekistan at the head of a trade delegation together with the Minister of Agriculture, met with the Deputy Chairman of the Uzbekistan Chamber.

Referring to the main purpose of these meetings, held during the Iranian trade delegation's visit to Tashkent, he emphasized: “What matters is communication between the economic actors of the two sides and the implementation of the clauses of the memorandum of understanding signed between the chambers of Iran and Uzbekistan. We must work to raise the level of cooperation and provide the necessary infrastructure.”

He spoke about the importance of facilitation in the path of joint cooperation through follow-ups by the governments of Iran and Uzbekistan, and described monitoring this facilitation process as the mission of the two chambers in both countries.

Pir-Moazen also referred to the activity of the Iran–Uzbekistan Joint Chamber and stated: “If, based on the understanding between the two chambers, we can register companies in Uzbekistan and prepare the ground for cooperation, the level of exchanges between the two countries will increase significantly. In the meantime, the joint chamber can carry out the necessary follow-ups in cooperation with the international department of the Iran Chamber.”

The Vice President of the Iran Chamber referred to the strength and efforts of Iran's private sector in all fields despite all international challenges and said: “Iran's private sector brings to fruition whatever seems impossible through persistence, and its results are clearly visible in the agriculture and food industry. We are pursuing the implementation of the clauses of the memorandum of understanding between the two chambers of commerce of Iran and Uzbekistan.”

Then Alisher Sheikhov, Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan and a former minister in the fields of investment, trade, and industry, spoke at the meeting about the capacities of the two sides and the need to expand cooperation in line with these facilities.

He emphasized: “Uzbekistan welcomes the presence of Iranian companies wherever possible. Currently, given Iran's major achievements in agriculture and the food industry, good progress has been made, and using the experience of Iranian companies is desired. Today, good cooperation has been formed between the two countries in the poultry sector.”

The Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan called for focusing on the implementation of the results of this meeting and, given



the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the two chambers of Iran and Uzbekistan, said: “Based on the understanding reached, we have many duties and missions, and we must move toward greater mutual acquaintance between the companies of the two sides.”

He described increasing mutual understanding among the economic actors of the two countries as essential and proposed receiving information from Iran's provinces and, in return, providing Uzbekistan's information to the Iran Chamber.

Sheikhov considered the establishment of companies essential based on attention to the region's transportation facilities and said: “It is important to examine in which region of Uzbekistan each company should be located based on the type of exports it has, so that it has easier access to its target market.”

Iran is ready to share its food security experience with Uzbekistan: minister

Iran's Minister of Agriculture, emphasizing the broad capacities of Iran and Uzbekistan for developing agricultural cooperation, said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to share its experiences in food security, production, investment, technology transfer, and agricultural trade development with Uzbekistan.

Gholamreza Nouri Ghezlejh, in a meeting with the Chairman of Uzbekistan's Food Security Committee, expressed appreciation for the hospitality and solidarity with the government and people of that country, and added: Iran–Uzbekistan relations are deep and friendly, based on historical, civilizational, cultural, and religious commonalities, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is pleased with Uzbekistan's progress and development.

The Minister of Agriculture, referring to the importance of establishing the Food Security Committee in Uzbekistan, stated: Food security is one of the most important strategic issues for countries, and the formation of such a body in Uzbekistan shows that country's precise vision and proper planning in this field.

Explaining the experience of the Islamic Republic of Iran in ensuring food security under sanctions and crisis, he said: Although, in international laws and regulations, food and the basic needs of people are exempt from some restrictions and sanctions, in practice Iran's food

security has faced pressure and restrictions over the past years.

Nouri Ghezlejh continued: Despite war, sanctions, and extensive restrictions, the food security system of the Islamic Republic of Iran has maintained its stability over the past year and a half and has been able to perform its duty in meeting the country's needs well.

The Minister of Agriculture considered continuous attention to self-sufficiency and strengthening the foundations of domestic production to be among the important factors in the stability of the country's food security and stated: Today, the self-sufficiency rate of Iran's agricultural sector has reached about 85 percent, and the set of scientific, technical, and executive measures in recent years has increased the resilience of the country's food system.

Emphasizing Iran's readiness to transfer these experiences to friendly and neighboring countries, he said: Given the president's emphasis, we are ready to share the experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran with Uzbekistan and other Muslim countries and to cooperate to strengthen food security at the level of Islamic countries.

Nouri Ghezlejh emphasized the development of agricultural trade between the two countries and added: Iran and Uzbekistan have significant capacities to increase the volume and value of agricultural product exchanges, and we can double agricultural trade between the two countries in the shortest time.

Welcoming the proposal to form a joint working group in the field of livestock and plant quarantine, he stated: Removing quarantine obstacles and facilitating processes related to veterinary and plant protection organizations can play an effective role in developing trade between the two countries.

The Minister of Agriculture noted: The deputy office for trade development with Uzbekistan and Iran's veterinary and plant protection organizations will follow up on the formation of this joint working group and its operationalization as soon as possible.

Nouri Ghezlejh proposed joint investment by Iran and Uzbekistan to establish and participate in the construction of a port terminal in one of Iran's southern ports, including Chabahar or Bandar Abbas, and said: Completion of the North–South Corridor and Iran's communication routes with Afghanistan can

provide the ground for creating an effective corridor route to connect Uzbekistan to the Persian Gulf.

He added: Establishing a dedicated terminal can help develop Uzbekistan's trade and facilitate that country's access to open waters.

The Minister of Agriculture, referring to Iran's geopolitical position and Uzbekistan's place in Central Asia, said: The two countries can, by using the capacity of the North–South and East–West corridors and Iran's access to open waters in the south and the Caspian Sea in the north, play an important role in developing trade and strengthening regional food security.

He announced the readiness of Iranian companies to participate in investment projects, establish processing and complementary industries, and transfer technology in Uzbekistan, and said: Iranian companies are ready to participate in developing Uzbekistan's agricultural sector in the form of joint investment and the transfer of knowledge and technology.

Nouri Ghezlejh, referring to the increase in trade volume between the two countries in recent years, stated: Despite the measures taken by officials and embassies of the two countries, the volume of exchanges is still not proportionate to the capacities and the will of the leaders of Iran and Uzbekistan, and more effort must be made to increase it.

Referring to the diverse capacities for production and trade of agricultural products in Iran, he said: There is no significant limitation for developing trade in agricultural products between the two countries, and Iran is ready to further expand the areas of cooperation and trade exchanges.

He invited the Chairman of Uzbekistan's Food Security Committee to travel to Iran and added: The continuation of negotiations and the exchange of required documents can be pursued with the presence of the two countries' parties in Tehran, and possible obstacles in the fields of quarantine, veterinary affairs, plant protection, and standards will be jointly examined and followed up.

Development of Iran-Uzbekistan agricultural trade based on joint production and technology transfer

The Minister of Agriculture also, among traders, businessmen, producers, and agricultural sector activists of Iran at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tashkent, emphasizing the broad capacities of Iran and Uzbekistan for developing economic cooperation, said: Trade in agriculture should not be limited merely to export and import; rather, through technology transfer, joint production, and mutual investment, we should create more added value for both countries.

Nouri Ghezlejh, appreciating the presence and efforts of the economic actors of the two countries, stated: Several contracts and cooperation memoranda are ready to be signed, and these documents can pave the way for the expansion of Iran–Uzbekistan economic and trade interactions.

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

ICCIMA hosts conference on organic medicinal plants

TEHRAN- The Conference on Development, Production, and Export of Damask Rose and Organic Medicinal Plants was held at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) with officials and those active in industry sector.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Iran Chamber president, highlighted Iran's geographical advantages in organic products, medicinal and aromatic plants. He said these capacities can create value added and complete production chains if supported by proper policies. He warned that international conflicts and attacks have raised costs and concerns, and called for reduced tensions. He also stressed reclaiming global markets through targeted

exhibitions and branding. Despite Iran's saffron leadership, Turkey markets saffron under its own brand, so he urged clear branding plans for saffron, barberry, jujube, and medicinal plants.

Secretary General Abolfazl Roghani Golpayegani stressed diversifying Iran's income basket and better using economic opportunities, noting Iran lags in per capita income despite its advantages.

Mahmoud Tavallaei of the Kashan Chamber called for organic requirements from planting to harvest, contract farming, and greater value added.

Abolfazl Ehtesham of the National Saffron

Council said investing in organic rose water and saffron can secure global markets and increase Iran's penetration.

Ali Shariati-Moghaddam urged connection to global value chains and cited poor processing, packaging, and unauthorized pesticides as challenges.

Dr. Rahmani of the National Standards Organization linked agriculture, organic production, food security, and sustainable development, citing climate change and soil erosion. He said Iran can become a major exporter to Eurasia, and the National Organic Mark, approved in 2012, can present Iranian products as standardized globally.

The reality behind Trump's misleading UN address

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Donald Trump's address to the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly was a cascade of verifiable falsehoods, internal logical collapses, and explicit threats of destruction.

Speaking from the podium of an institution founded to prevent aggressive war, the American president presented world leaders with a binary ultimatum regarding Iran: accept unilateral submission or face total physical erasure.

Ten minutes into the speech, the Iranian diplomatic delegation stood up and walked out of the hall. They left behind a single junior representative sitting stone-faced in an empty row.

The Cuban delegation exited shortly after when Trump branded their government a failed state.

The walkout was a deliberate refusal to validate an argument grounded in coercion rather than international law.

Outside the UN complex near Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, protesters clashed with New York police while chanting against U.S. military aggression, carrying placards denouncing Trump, including one that read, "TRUMP is a WAR CRIMINAL"

The nuclear 'obliteration' lie and the asymmetric reality

Trump's primary justification for the nearly seven-month-old war against Iran relies on a claim he has repeated since June 2025.

"Operation Midnight Hammer," he insisted, "obliterated" Iran's nuclear program "beneath mountains of rubble."

That statement collapses under the weight of Washington's own timeline.

Leaked Defense Intelligence Agency assessments and International Atomic Energy Agency claims following the June 2025 strikes confirmed that hardened facilities such as Fordow suffered structural damage, not total destruction.



By February 2026, Trump himself cited resumed Iranian uranium enrichment as his explicit justification to launch the current campaign of aggression.

A program permanently erased in 2025 cannot serve as the rationale for launching a massive military campaign in 2026.

His assertions regarding conventional military damage follow the same pattern.

Trump claimed that the war launched on February 2026 sank "all 159 ships" of "Iran's navy" while "erasing" its air force, radar networks, air defenses, and missile production.

CENTCOM claimed destroying roughly 17 surface ships in the war's initial weeks. But conventional surface warships have never formed the core of Iranian maritime strategy.

For 30 years, Tehran designed its defense around asymmetric survival.

The doctrine relies on the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy, operating mobile shore-based anti-ship missile batteries, fast attack craft, and extensive naval mining capabilities embedded along mountainous terrain, now combined with the effective strength of the IRGC Aerospace Force equipped with various types of state-of-the-art missiles and drones.

Degrading conventional surface ships does not mean the Iranian navy was destroyed.

As for Iran's missile prowess,

months of missile attacks on U.S. bases across the region have demonstrated that its missile forces remain an effective and operational component of its military power.

Hormuz escorts and the munitions shortage contradiction

If Iran's naval capabilities were truly resting on the seabed, Washington would not be forced to deploy naval escorts to protect commercial energy shipments.

Trump boasted that the U.S. Navy has escorted over one billion barrels of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, moving groups of "up to 37 ships" every day and night.

The claim refutes his own argument. A state whose maritime defenses have been erased does not have the ability to move global energy markets and does not require daily naval convoys to pass through a strategic choke point.

Trump's claims regarding military logistics proved equally contradictory.

He attacked critics who highlighted U.S. ammunition shortages, calling them "cowards and traitors" and claiming America possesses "more munitions than we could ever possibly even think of using."

He then announced that 18 massive new munition plants are currently under construction across the United States.

Both statements cannot be true. A nation possessing inex-

haustible stockpiles does not undertake an emergency industrial expansion in the middle of a war.

Reports from the Pentagon's Inspector General and defense analysts outside the Pentagon confirm that seven months of intense missile strikes against Iranian targets, alongside ongoing arms transfers to Israel and Ukraine, have severely depleted critical stocks of precision-guided munitions and air-defense interceptors, including Tomahawk cruise missiles and PAC-3 air-defense interceptors.

The U.S. military has been forced to expend multi-million-dollar interceptors against low-cost drones and conventional missiles.

The construction of 18 new facilities is an admission of industrial exhaustion under a sustained war of attrition.

'Strategic desperation' of 'a deranged sociopath'

The central foreign policy statement of the address supposedly offered Iran a choice between capitulation and destruction.

"Do I annihilate the Islamic Republic," Trump asked, promising to drive the nation "into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations."

Delivered before the United Nations, this language directly violates Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which strictly prohibits threats or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Legal analysts have noted that explicitly threatening the total destruction of nation meets the threshold of genocidal intent defined under the Rome Statute and the UN Genocide Convention.

Trump added a bizarre domestic calculation to this threat, predicting that Tehran would sign a deal "right after the election" because Iranian leaders were "waiting to see how I do in the midterm election."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

5

The empty chairs of Minab



By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

MASHHAD — The courtyard was full before the first bell rang. Thousands of children in freshly pressed uniforms stood under a sky that felt too ordinary for the day. They hadn't gathered to start a new school year.

They'd come to remember children who never got to.

Today, in the Islami Inqilab Courtyard of the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad, thousands of schoolchildren gathered to pay tribute to the children of Minab and to honor the martyrdom of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Beneath the golden dome, the children stood together in a ceremony that turned the first day of school into a moment of remembrance, mourning and defiance.

"Death to America. Death to Israel." The chant rolled through the crowd, familiar and practiced. In another setting it might have sounded routine. Here it sounded like grief that had run out of gentler words.

They were remembering Minab. On February 28, American and Israeli forces launched their war against Iran. The Shajareh Tayyeb School in Minab was struck as classes were underway. UNICEF reported that 168 schoolchildren and teachers were killed at the school; for the families left behind, the number is not a statistic. It is a list of names nobody wants to finish reading.

And now there is another finding that cannot simply be pushed aside. On Thursday, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran said it had reasonable grounds to believe the United States was behind the February strikes, including the attack on the Minab school, and concluded that both constituted war crimes. The mission said the Minab strike was an indiscriminate attack on civilian infrastructure and found that US forces failed to take feasible steps to verify that the school was a military objective.

That finding changes the question. This is no longer only about what Iran says happened. A UN-mandated investigation has now placed responsibility and international humanitarian law at the center of the discussion. The issue is no longer simply whether the world noticed the children of Minab. It is whether the world will demand accountability for their deaths.

In most of Iran, the first day back to school looks the same every year — new shoes still stiff from the box, the smell of fresh notebooks, kids nervously finding their classrooms. In Minab this year, that ordinary morning didn't come. Beds stayed made. Breakfast went cold on the table. No one packed a lunch, because there was no one to pack it for. The school gates opened onto absence instead of noise.

That's the part of war nobody puts in a press briefing. Officials in Washington and Tel Aviv talk about targets and deterrence, calculations made somewhere the rest of us never see. The language is built to sound controlled, almost administrative. But a missile doesn't know any of that. It only knows what's in front of it — a wall, a rooftop, a room full of children doing their morning lesson. When one hit Shajareh Tayyeb, it did not pause to ask whether the room below was teaching arithmetic or reciting a poem. It just went off.

The children who gathered under the golden dome of the Imam Reza shrine understood something their own government has said for years and that, for once, felt true

instead of rehearsed: in Iran, war isn't theatrical. It is a subject with a body count that includes people you knew.

The dead were not abstractions. They were girls who helped their mothers cook on weekends, boys who played street football until the light gave out, children who split a pencil in half so a friend would not have to ask the teacher for one. Teachers stayed late for a child stuck on a problem. They had names, routines, small arguments with siblings, plans for the weekend — and then they didn't, all at once.

The first day of school is supposed to be a beginning. In Minab it became something else — a reminder of everything that was cut short. Somewhere else in the country, buses were pulling up outside schools and children were arguing over seats. In Minab, families were walking to a cemetery instead, carrying flowers because there was nothing else left to bring.

Under the dome, the chant came back around: "Death to America. Death to Israel."

It is easy to hear only the slogan. Underneath it is a generation that has grown up absorbing decisions made in rooms they will never enter. To these children, the war is not a map with arrows on it. It is a photograph taped to a wall at home. It is a family that still remembers the child who should have walked through the door.

This is where the official language runs out. A government can call a strike strategic. A general can call a target legitimate. None of that answers the question a parent actually has, which is simpler and harder: Why didn't my child come home from school?

The UN finding makes that question even harder to dismiss. The mission said the United States failed to take feasible steps to verify that the Minab school was a military objective and concluded that the attack amounted to a war crime. The US government has disputed such findings and has not publicly released the full results of its own investigation.

So accountability cannot stop at statements of regret or carefully chosen words. If international law means anything, civilian lives cannot become secondary simply because the bombs were dropped by a powerful state. A school does not become a military target because someone, somewhere, claimed otherwise. The burden is on those who order and conduct an attack to distinguish civilians from military objectives.

Behind all the legal language sits a question that is painfully human: Who will answer the parents of Minab?

Under the golden dome, the children did not let the memory disappear. They stood where their classmates could not. They remembered the dead on the very morning when their own school year was beginning. For one morning, grief became something closer to a demand — that the world look directly at what happened in Minab instead of finding another reason to look away.

And today, those children carried another message beyond the shrine. They carried it home with them: resistance is in our blood. We may be ready to sacrifice, but we are not ready to surrender.

The chairs are still empty. But Minab has not gone quiet. The names are still spoken, the families have not stopped asking, and the questions have already traveled beyond Iran's borders.

Israel's climate crimes

By staff writer

TEHRAN - Israel's environmental damage in Palestine has accompanied the destruction of Palestinian lives, homes and livelihoods. Farmlands and olive groves have been burned or destroyed, while homes, vehicles, cities and refugee camps have been repeatedly bombarded.

The thick clouds of soot produced by the bombardment of Gaza have also raised alarm among environmentalists over the war's devastating impact on the environment.

In September 2025, the Palestinian Institute for Climate Strategy, together with Tipping Point North South, estimated that Israel and its allies owed Palestinians \$148 billion in military- and conflict-related climate reparations dating back to the Nakba. The estimate is based on the calculated climate costs of traceable military-related emissions and assigns \$103 billion to Israel and \$40.8 billion to the United States, with smaller amounts attributed to several European allies. The researchers stressed

that the figure represents only a measurable portion of the broader environmental and social damage.

Israel's burning of agricultural land and forests in southern Lebanon and the destruction of homes in villages and cities, including Beirut, have further compounded the environmental damage caused by the conflict.

The war on Gaza has also generated enormous greenhouse-gas emissions. A study published in One Earth in March 2026 estimated that direct emissions from the conflict exceeded 1.3 million tons of CO₂ equivalent by January 2025. When emissions associated with pre-war military infrastructure and post-war reconstruction are included, the estimate rises to 33.2 million tons of CO₂ equivalent. Reconstruction alone accounts for an estimated 31.4 million tons.

The environmental consequences, however, extend far beyond carbon emissions. The war has created serious risks for both the Mediterranean marine environment

and Gaza's groundwater system. The two problems are closely linked: the destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure has allowed pollutants from the land and underground water system to reach the Mediterranean.

The most immediate impact has been the enormous discharge of untreated sewage into the sea. Gaza's wastewater-treatment system has largely collapsed. UNEP estimated that in March 2024, around 60,000 cubic meters of wastewater and sewage were being discharged into the environment every day, primarily into the Mediterranean.

This wastewater can carry pathogens and disease-causing microorganisms, nitrogen and phosphorus that contribute to eutrophication and oxygen depletion, microplastics, organic pollutants, industrial chemicals and other hazardous substances. Damaged infrastructure and military activity may also introduce heavy metals and other contaminants.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ICC refuses to withdraw arrest warrant against Netanyahu

From page 1 ▶ Since then, the U.S. has imposed sanctions on most of the court's leadership, including the former chief prosecutor Karim Khan, the two deputy prosecutors, and nine judges including the court's president.

Israel has also taken steps to challenge the warrants at the ICC. Two appeals remain in progress, including one challenging the court's jurisdiction over Israeli nationals because Israel is not a member of the court.

Meanwhile, Middle East Eye has reported that the prosecutor's office had pursued further cases against senior Israeli officials over the past two years.

In May, MEE reported that the prosecutor's office had filed a confidential application seeking arrest for Israel's Finance Minister Bezalal Smotrich over crimes committed against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

The charges included forced displacement as both a war crime and crime against hu-

manity, transferring Israel's civilian population into occupied territory as a war crime, and persecution and apartheid as crimes against humanity.

An evidence review had also been held to consider two further applications, including one targeting National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir.

Khan's comments came amid an escalating campaign by the administration of President Donald Trump against the Hague-based court.

SPORTS

Jahanbakhsh, Ghoddos to miss Iran’s friendly matches

TEHRAN - Iran internationals Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Saman Ghoddos will miss the national team’s upcoming friendly matches against Uzbekistan and Russia.

The Football Federation of Iran confirmed the absence of the two players, indicating that both had been in the plans of head coach Amir Ghalenoei but will not join the current national team camp.

According to the federation, Jahanbakhsh, who recently returned from a short-term injury, will remain with Excelsior Rotterdam to complete his recovery and regain full physical fitness in coordination with the club and Iran’s coaching staff.

Ghoddos, meanwhile, has been ruled out of the camp due to a back injury.

Iran are scheduled to play Uzbekistan and Russia in friendly matches in Sept. 24 and 29 as part of their preparations for upcoming international competitions.

2026 Asian Games: Iran handball advance to QFs

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s handball team secured their place at the quarterfinals round of the 2026 Asian games.

Team Melli defeated Kazakhstan 28-23 at the Toyoda Gosei Memorial Gymnasium on Wednesday and qualified for next round.

Iran had lost to Kuwait and Bahrain and were held against South Korea in Group B.

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

Iran’s men’s kabaddi rout Bangladesh in Nagoya

TEHRAN - Iran’s men’s kabaddi team defeated Bangladesh 67-33 in the Nagoya Asian Games.

Iran had defeated Nepal 76-23 in their opening match.

Later in the day, the Iranian women teal lost to powerhouses India 37-23. Team Melli had defeated Bangladesh 54-19 in their opening match.

This is the sport’s consecutive ninth appearance at the Games, since the 1990 edition. India are the defending champions in both events.

Fencer Pakdaman wins bronze in 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Ali Pakdaman from Iran won a bronze medal at the 2026 Asian Games on Wednesday.

He lost to China’s Chenpeng Shen 15-9 in the Men’s Sabre Individual and failed to book his place in the final match.

Before reaching the semifinals, Pakdaman recorded four wins and one loss in the group stage.

In the knockout rounds, he defeated Uzbekistan’s representative 15-13 before overcoming fellow Iranian Mohammad Fotouhi in an all-Iranian quarterfinal.

Iran bag gold in e-football: 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran’s e-sports team won a gold medal at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games on Wednesday.

Iran’s Hassan Pajani and Abolfazl Aghaein-

asab defeated Farish Luzman and Hariz Hazmi Hakimin of Malaysia 4-2 in the final match.

Farish put Malaysia ahead after beating Aghaeinasab 2-1 on mobile at the Aichi Sky Expo Hall.

Hariz but lost to multiple world champion Pajani on console, and the Iranian player proved too strong as he beat Hariz 3-0 to give Iran the 4-2 win on aggregate.

E-football, also known as esports football or FIFA/EA Sports FC competitive gaming, combines traditional football strategy with digital gameplay.

Players compete individually or in teams, replicating tactics, formations, and skills virtually. Popular titles include EA Sports FC and e-football by Konami. Tournaments now offer significant prize money, professional leagues, and even affiliations with real football clubs and federations worldwide.

Iran football knocked out of 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran’s football team suffered a heavy 4-1 defeat to North Korea on Wednesday, bringing their campaign at the 2026 Asian Games to an end.

In the match held at the Wave Stadium Kariya, North Korean player Song Hung Ri scored an own goal in the 17th minute.

Kuk Choe leveled the scoreboard in the 41st minute and Myong Song Ra scored two goals in 44th and 51st minutes.

Chung Song Paek scored North Korea’s fourth goal in the 68th minute.

Hossein Abdi’s Iran started the Games with a 3-1 win over the UAE in Group B but were held to a goalless draw against Chine in their second match.

China advanced to quarterfinals with five points as the first team followed by North Korea with four points.

Iran and the UAE failed to book their place in the next round.

Defeat against North Korea is unacceptable to me: Abdi

TEHRAN - Hossein Abdi, head coach of Iran’s U23 football team, described his side’s heavy and unexpected defeat to North Korea as unacceptable.

Iran had taken the lead against North Korea at the Asian Games, but eventually suffered a 4-1 defeat and were eliminated in the group stage after finishing below North Korea on goal difference, missing out on a place in the quarterfinals.

“First and foremost, I apologize to my dear people. This result is unacceptable to me. This is the first time we have faced such a result in an official match at this level. I believed we could achieve a different result,” Abdi said.

“We could have produced any other result—except this one! I apologize to everyone who expected and believed that we could advance to the next stage,” he added.

The Iran U23 coach criticized his players’ mentality, saying: “My feeling is that the players entered the game with the mindset that we had already secured qualification for the next round. But, to be fair, North Korea were one of the teams we expected to face a difficult game against from the outset. The Koreans played very good football, and they deserve congratulations.”

“It is disappointing because we could have maintained our advantage in what appeared to be one of the toughest groups of the tournament—a group in which it was unclear until the final day which teams would advance. Unfortunately, we were unable to produce the performance we expected today or earn the points we needed. In any case, this is my apology to my dear people.”

“I hope we can do better in the future and that this experience will help us take a better path. The players need to understand that nothing is decided before a match is over, and no result is certain until the final whistle,” Abdi concluded.

Indian embassy celebrates Ayurveda Day, highlights Iran cooperation

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - The embassy of India in Tehran hosted a ceremony on Wednesday to mark National Ayurveda Day under the theme “Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow,” bringing together diplomats, physicians, media representatives and enthusiasts of traditional medicine.

In his opening remarks, Indian Ambassador to Iran Vishwesh Negi said Ayurveda Day is observed to promote and revive the ancient Indian system of medicine, which is rooted in natural healing and a holistic approach to well-being.

Negi said the annual observance, initiated by the Indian government in 2016, seeks to raise international awareness of Ayurveda and its potential role in disease prevention and health promotion.

He also highlighted growing cooperation between Iran and India in traditional medicine, noting that the two countries have signed a memorandum of understanding between India’s Ministry of AYUSH and Iran’s Ministry of Health and Medical Education to build on their shared heritage of herbal and traditional remedies.

The ambassador referred to developments at the 16th BRICS Health Ministers’ Meeting in Chandigarh in July 2026, where traditional, complementary and integrative medicine was included in the agenda for greater cooperation among member states. The meeting’s declaration called for stronger collaboration in research, evidence generation, quality and safety.



Indian Ambassador to Iran Vishwesh Negi addresses a ceremony marking Ayurveda Day at the Indian Embassy in Tehran, September 23, 2026.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Indian envoy said the Ayurveda sector has experienced substantial economic expansion over the past decade, with the Ayurveda economy growing from \$2.85 billion in 2014 to \$43.4 billion in 2023, according to figures cited in his remarks.

He also highlighted the “Strategic Roadmap for Making Ayurveda Global,” released by NITI Aayog in July 2026. The roadmap sets out a phased strategy for expanding Ayurveda internationally, with emphasis on research, education, exports, regulatory alignment, international cooperation and quality standards.

Speaking at the ceremony, Paola Amadei, Italy’s ambassador to Iran, shared her experience of visiting India and spoke about the

country’s rich culture and its traditional medical heritage, including Ayurveda.

Dr. Alireza Yargholi, a physician specializing in Persian medicine, addressed the historical and conceptual links between Persian medicine and Ayurveda. His presentation examined the two traditions from the perspective of shared concepts, historical exchanges, research and opportunities for future cooperation.

Dr. Arman Zargaran, an international affairs adviser at the Center for Iranian and Complementary Medicine of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, discussed Iran-India cooperation in traditional medicine, including previously signed memorandums of understanding and ongoing joint activities.

Dr. Sohrab Dehqan, meanwhile, spoke about his studies of Ayurveda in India, the principles of the traditional medical system and his personal experiences.

Ayurveda derives its name from two Sanskrit words: “Ayur,” meaning life, and “Veda,” meaning knowledge. The system developed on the Indian subcontinent thousands of years ago, with roots in the Vedas, and traditionally seeks both to maintain the health of healthy people and to treat illness.

Speakers at the ceremony emphasized that Ayurveda is not presented as a rejection of modern medicine, but as an approach that places particular emphasis on prevention, daily routines, digestion, sleep and maintaining balance between body, mind and spirit.

‘School reopening ceremony’ added to Iran’s national intangible heritage list



TEHRAN - Iran has officially registered the traditional ceremony marking the reopening of schools as part of the country’s national intangible cultural heritage, the minister of cultural heritage, tourism and handicrafts said on Wednesday.

Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri said

the ceremony was registered to recognize the role of schools in shaping the historical memory and cultural identity of generations of Iranians.

“We registered the school reopening ceremony today in the national intangible heritage list so that we remember that school

holds a sacred place in the historical memory of the Iranian people, and the school bell marks the beginning of a part of Iran’s cultural and artistic memory,” Salehi-Amiri said.

He made the remarks during a ceremony marking the beginning of the 2026-2027 academic year at Shahid Behzadi Elementary School in Tehran, where a registration plaque was unveiled as well.

The event was attended by First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref, Education Minister Alireza Kazemi, Tehran Governor-General Mohammad-Sadeq Motamedian and other officials.

Salehi-Amiri said the school is more than a place for formal education and represents a shared experience that has contributed

to the formation of individual and social identities across generations.

“Alongside studying, we should learn from Iran,” he said, urging students to recognize the historical foundations on which the country has been built and preserved by successive generations.

The minister noted that many prominent figures and officials attending the ceremony had once sat in classrooms and behind school desks themselves.

Salehi-Amiri said the national registration of the ceremony reflects the importance of preserving customs and rituals shared by successive generations, describing them as an integral part of Iran’s intangible cultural heritage and cultural identity.

30 Sasanian silver coins restored in Isfahan workshop

TEHRAN - Thirty silver coins dating to the Sasanian period have undergone specialized conservation and restoration at the restoration workshop of the Cultural Heritage Department in Iran’s central Isfahan province, the provincial heritage chief has said.

On Wednesday, Amir Karamzadeh said the coins were transferred to the provincial cultural heritage restoration workshop over the past two months, where each piece was separately examined and subjected to conservation and restoration measures based on its material condition and degree of deterioration.

“The first step in dealing with these objects was to examine the condition of each coin and assess its conservation needs,” Karamzadeh said.

“Historical metal objects exposed to environmental factors over long periods do not suffer from identical types or degrees of damage, so a single treatment cannot be applied to all of them.”

The restoration process included documentation, controlled cleaning, removal of surface deposits and contaminants, and stabilization of the coins’ conservation conditions.

Karamzadeh stressed that the purpose of restoration was not simply to improve the appearance of the coins, but to protect their

historical material, control deterioration and preserve their research value.

He also emphasized the importance of documenting historical objects before conservation work begins. Each coin was therefore assessed individually, with its existing condition recorded before appropriate treatment was carried out.

Sasanian coins are regarded as important sources for the study of the history and archaeology of the Sasanian Empire, which ruled much of the Iranian plateau and neighboring territories from 224 to 651 CE. The empire was centered in what is now Iran and Iraq, with its capital at Ctesiphon, near present-day Baghdad.

The Sasanians issued large quantities of silver coins, particularly drachms, which are among the most important primary sources for studying the empire’s monetary and economic history. Their inscriptions, royal portraits and mint marks can also provide information about political authority, artistic traditions and the organization of coin production.

According to Karamzadeh, preserving such objects is particularly important because further damage to their structure or the loss of identifiable features could reduce their documentary and research value.

He said conservation work should control deterioration while preserving, as far as possible, the historical and artistic characteristics of an object and ensuring suitable conditions for its long-term study and storage.

The Sasanian Empire emerged in 224 CE when Ardashir I, a descendant of the Zoroastrian priest Sasan, overthrew the Parthian ruler Artaban IV. The dynasty remained in power for roughly four centuries until the defeat of its last ruler, Yazdgerd III, in 651.

The empire’s economy was largely agrarian, while long-distance trade also played an important role. Sasanian exports included textiles, carpets, leather goods and Persian Gulf pearls, while goods transported from China and India passed through Sasanian territories and were subject to customs duties.

Karamzadeh said conservation activities at the Isfahan workshop have continued throughout the current Iranian year. Since the beginning of the year, 55 historical objects made of pottery, metal and stone have undergone specialized conservation and restoration at the facility.

The restored Sasanian coins will subsequently be maintained under appropriate conservation conditions to support their long-term preservation and future study.

“Five countries, one ecosystem, one future”: COP7 calls for stronger Caspian Sea cooperation

By Mehdi Garshasbi

TEHRAN – “Five countries, one ecosystem, one future” was the message highlighted by Shina Ansari, head of Iran’s Department of Environment, at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the Tehran Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea in Tehran on Wednesday, underscoring the vital importance of preserving the Caspian Sea and its unique ecosystem for the present and future generations of the region.

Ansari said protecting the Caspian Sea is a shared and trans-boundary responsibility, stressing that the five littoral states must move from legal commitments to practical action, from fragmented information to shared data, and from national monitoring to coordinated regional monitoring. She called for greater use of science and technology to protect the shared ecosystem and build a more sustainable future.

Addressing the opening ceremony of COP7, Ansari welcomed officials and representatives from the Tehran Convention’s member states, the United Nations and international organizations, ambassadors, government officials, academics, experts, civil society representatives and members of the media. She described Tehran’s hosting of the meeting as an opportunity to renew the countries’ shared commitment to protecting the Caspian Sea and strengthening regional cooperation.

Referring to the significance of the Caspian Sea, Ansari said the body of water is “not merely a stretch of water,” but a shared heritage, an interconnected ecosystem and a vital asset for present and future generations.

The unique sea, with its rich biodiversity, is home to species such as the Caspian seal and constitutes one of the world’s most important breeding grounds for sturgeon. Millions of people living around the Caspian also depend on the health and sustainability of the sea for their livelihoods and future.

Ansari stressed that protecting the Caspian has become more than ever a shared and trans-



boundary responsibility, noting that pollution from land-based sources, habitat degradation, pressure on biological resources, climate change and fluctuations in water levels are challenges that no single country can address alone.

She also referred to Iran’s experience over the past year, saying the Islamic Republic had faced aggression by the United States and Israel, during which, in addition to the loss of the lives of Iran’s leader and civilians, including women, men and children, infrastructure, scientific and medical centers, and historical heritage were damaged. She added that the environment, protected areas and some international environmental obligations and rules were also affected.

The head of the Department of Environment said explosions at fuel storage facilities in Tehran, which caused widespread pollution, as well as attacks on oil facilities in the Assaluyeh region, were examples of what she described as “ecocide” or environmental crimes.

“The environment is the silent victim of wars,” Ansari said, warning that water and soil pollution, damage to habitats and environmental infrastructure, and increased pressure on natural resources can leave the impacts of wars for years or even generations.

She stressed that environmental protection and strengthening ecosystem resilience should therefore be an integral part of countries’ efforts to promote peace, security and sustainable development.

Turning to the history of the Tehran Convention, Ansari said that in 2003, the five Caspian lit-

toral states – Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan – established a common regional legal framework for protecting the Caspian Sea by signing the convention.

The agreement, she said, went beyond the signing of an international document and reflected the five countries’ shared determination to cooperate in protecting a common ecosystem.

Over more than two decades, cooperation among the littoral states has expanded into areas including oil pollution response, biodiversity conservation and transboundary environmental impact assessment, Ansari said, adding that the time had come to take another step forward.

She described “Five countries, one ecosystem, one future” as one of the central messages of the meeting, saying the phrase is more than a symbolic slogan.

“Five countries” represents a shared responsibility; “one ecosystem” reflects the scientific reality of the Caspian Sea’s interconnected nature; and “one future” serves as a reminder of the responsibility the countries have toward future generations, she explained.

Ansari emphasized that the fate of the Caspian cannot be divided along political borders, as water currents, biological species, pollution and climate change do not follow such boundaries.

“The future of the Caspian cannot be five separate futures; it is a shared future for all the littoral states,” she said.

According to Ansari, advanced technologies, including remote sensing, satellite monitoring, smart environmental systems,

ecological modeling, shared databases and modern analytical and forecasting tools, offer valuable opportunities to better understand changes in the Caspian and respond more rapidly to emerging threats.

She said another message of the meeting could therefore be to move “together, with the support of science and technology, to protect the Caspian Sea ecosystem and build a more sustainable tomorrow,” stressing that the message must be translated into practical action.

Ansari called for stronger scientific data-sharing mechanisms, joint monitoring systems, regular assessments of the ecosystem’s condition, joint preparedness for pollution incidents, biodiversity conservation and measures to reduce the discharge of pollutants into the sea.

Emphasizing the littoral states’ responsibility toward future generations, she said their duty extends beyond the present generation.

“We are custodians of a sea that must be handed down to future generations healthier, more sustainable and more resilient,” Ansari said.

She added that Iran is ready to deepen cooperation with the Caspian littoral states, the Tehran Convention Secretariat, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), scientific and research institutions, and other regional and international partners.

Ansari expressed hope that the decisions adopted at COP7 would not only reflect the shared political will of the littoral states, but also provide a clear roadmap for practical and measurable action to protect the Caspian Sea.

She concluded by expressing her appreciation to the littoral states, the Tehran Convention Secretariat, UNEP, experts, researchers, civil society organizations, local communities, the media and all institutions that have worked for more than two decades to protect the shared heritage.

“We hope the Caspian Sea will remain healthy, vibrant, sustainable and resilient – for today, tomorrow and generations to come,” she said.

“Shouldn’t a school always be a safe place?”: Minab student asks US schoolchildren



TEHRAN – A student from Minab has addressed American students, calling for schools to remain safe spaces for children and remembering classmates who were killed when Shajareh Tayyebbeh Primary School was struck in a US military attack.

The student read a message in English to US schoolchildren on Wednesday at a ceremony marking the start of the new school year at the site of the Shajareh Tayyebbeh School in Minab County.

“We don’t know your names, and you don’t know ours. But as you begin another school year, we wanted to write to you, student to student, before anything else gets in the way.

All of us know the feeling of the first day of school: a new notebook, the smell of unused pages, seeing friends again. We imagine your first days feel much the same — a little nervous, a little excited. These are small things. But they are what make a childhood feel safe.

Shajareh Tayyebbeh Primary School in Minab was full of children just like you, sitting at their desks, when it was struck in a military attack.

On February 28, one of our schools did not get to have that ordinary day. Shajareh Tayyebbeh Primary School in Minab was full of children just like you, sitting at their desks, when it was struck in a military attack. More than 120 children never went home. In total, across the recent wars our country has endured, 277 students never got to finish their education. Their notebooks are still on their desks in some homes,” the message reads.

Addressing students in the United States, the message drew parallels between the experiences of children starting a new school year, from opening new notebooks to reuniting with friends, saying that such ordinary moments are what make childhood feel safe.

It recalled February 28, when Shajareh Tayyebbeh Primary School was struck while children were in their classrooms. More than 120 children were killed in the attack, while 277 students in total lost their lives during the recent wars involving the country and never had the opportunity to complete their education.

The student emphasized that the message was not intended to make American students feel guilty, but to help them understand what happened to children their own age. The letter posed a simple question: “Shouldn’t a school always be a safe place?”

“We are not writing to make you feel guilty. You did not choose this, just as we did not. We are writing because we believe you deserve to know what happened to children your own age, in a place you may have only heard about on

the news — if at all.

We have one simple question: shouldn’t a school always be a safe place? In every country, a classroom is supposed to be one of the safest places in the world for a child. That is not political. It is something all of us, as students, should agree on without argument: children in war must never be targets. Striking a school is not a strategy — it is a crime. The United Nations itself has said there are reasonable grounds to believe war crimes were committed in the attacks on our schools.

We ask you to sit with that question for a moment — not to feel sad for us, but to ask whether it could ever be justified. We believe the answer is no.”

The message also referred to United Nations findings that there were reasonable grounds to believe war crimes had been committed in attacks on schools in the country.

The message further urged American students to learn about Iran beyond news headlines, pointing to the country’s ancient civilization, literature, history and cultural heritage. It mentioned figures such as Hafez and Rumi and sites such as Persepolis, while emphasizing that Iranian children, like their peers elsewhere, share hopes for education and a better future.

The letter concluded by noting that school bells were ringing again in Minab as students returned to rebuilt classrooms and took seats that some of their classmates should have occupied.

Despite the pain of returning to school without their friends, the students said they had chosen to continue their education, expressing hope for a future in which no school anywhere becomes a target.

“We also want to ask something else, gently: get to know us — not through headlines, but through history. Iran is one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, home to poets like Hafez and Rumi, to ancient cities that were centers of learning, to a culture of hospitality and family that has endured for thousands of years. We are not only a headline about war. If you ever get the chance to study a country beyond your own, we hope you’ll learn about ours — not the Iran distorted by American media and politicians, but the Iran of Persepolis and poetry, of children who, just like you, love their school and their future.

Today, our school bells are ringing again. We are returning to rebuilt classrooms, to seats some of our classmates should have filled. It isn’t easy. But we choose to return, because that is what our friends would have wanted for us.

Wherever you are, whenever your bell rings this year, we hope you’ll think — just for a moment — of children far away who deserved, as much as you do, the safety to simply be students.

With hope for a world where no school is ever a target again,” the message concluded.

WHO pledges to support health ministry to turn global patient safety commitments into practical action

TEHRAN – Commemorating World Patient Safety Day 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Iran reaffirmed its commitment to turn global patient safety commitments into practical action across hospitals, primary health care and communities as the Ministry of Health and Medical Education advances its patient safety agenda.

Hosted by the Health Ministry, the hybrid event brought together senior officials, including Deputy Ministers and Vice-Chancellors for Curative Affairs and Public Health from universities of medical sciences, as well as hospital and primary health care managers, university focal points, and WHO colleagues. Participants reaffirmed the importance of patient safety as a core component of quality health services and resilient health systems, the WHO website announced in a press release on September 21.

WHO provided technical and advocacy support for the commemoration, sharing the global messages and priorities of World Patient Safety Day and highlighting the need to integrate patient safety across all levels and settings of care. In his remarks, Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in the Islamic Republic of Iran, reaffirmed WHO’s commitment to making safety an integral part of every health care interaction. He underscored that safer care contributes to improved health outcomes, prevents avoidable harm, and strengthens trust in health systems.

The event also highlighted the need for safe and continuous care for people living with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) during crises and emergencies, when disruptions to essential health services can put patients and communities at greater risk.

A message from the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, delivered by

Dr Adham Ismail, Officer-in-Charge, was presented during the ceremony, with subtitles in Farsi, reinforcing the regional and global commitment to advancing patient safety.

The ceremony highlighted several priorities aligned with the global patient safety agenda, including: strengthening reporting and learning systems for patient safety incidents; building a culture of safety among health care providers; engaging patients, families and communities; improving health literacy; addressing medication-related risks such as polypharmacy; and extending patient safety efforts beyond hospitals to primary health care and other levels of care.

The commemoration also provided an opportunity for WHO and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education to identify areas for continued technical collaboration, including: knowledge exchange; strengthening patient safety assessment; and follow-up on capacity-building under the Hospital Patient Safety Assessment Manual and the Patient Safety Assessment Manual for Primary Care.

These discussions reflect WHO’s role in bringing global evidence, standards and tools to the national context, facilitating knowledge exchange, supporting capacity-building and convening partners around practical actions to strengthen patient safety.

World Patient Safety Day is observed on September 17 every year and serves as an opportunity to raise public awareness, enhance collaborations among healthcare stakeholders, and expedite measures to reduce preventable harm associated with the delivery of health services.

Each year, the day is observed under a specific slogan. In 2026, it focuses on safe care for NCDs, under the theme ‘Safe care for life!’

NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases are among the most significant global health challenges, accounting for 74 percent of deaths worldwide; they affect people of all ages and require constant, lifelong care. Patients’ frequent interactions with the health-care system can put their safety at risk. These risks are also influenced by health system challenges and the broader determinants of health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1 in 10 patients is harmed during health care, with around half of this harm being considered preventable. People living with NCDs are particularly vulnerable to harm due to the long-term nature of their conditions, ongoing treatment needs, and frequent interactions with health systems.

With some conditions, such as cancer, up to 1 in 3 patients experience adverse events during care. Many people also live with multiple chronic conditions, further increasing the risk of harm.

Addressing NCDs is a global priority, reflected in the United Nations political declaration on NCDs and mental health, which calls for strengthened prevention and long-term management of NCDs. Achieving these commitments requires access to safe and quality care.

Improving safety in NCD care requires addressing risks related to the complexity of care, strengthening health systems through a primary health care approach and tackling wider determinants that can increase the risk of harm. The day also highlights the importance of engaging people with lived experience in the design and delivery of NCD services and in their own care.



SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The weakest person is he who is unable to secure a friend for himself, and weaker than him is he who loses his friend.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:56 Evening: 18:17 Dawn: 4:31 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:54 (tomorrow)

Iranian animation “A Faraway Place” wins at Russian film festival

TEHRAN- Iranian short animation “A Faraway Place” has won second place in the over-6 category at the 16th International Youth Film Festival “Light to the World” in Russia.

Co-directed by Borzou Farshad and Abbas Ghadir Mohseni, the animation is a production of the Center for Artistic Experiences and New Ideas of Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults-Kanoon.

The festival, which concluded last week in Russia’s Yaroslavl region, received 3,929 entries from 120 countries, with 80 films from 20 countries selected for the final program.

“A Faraway Place” tells the story of a cow that decides to leave its farm in search of a distant place. During the journey, the character gains a new understanding of itself and its life.

The Iranian animation has previously participated in several international events. Its international record includes an official se-

lection at the UK’s Filmmaker Sessions – Volume 11, an Honorable Mention at the Films That Move festival in the United States, and participation in the official section of Italy’s VisiOn Film Festival.

Founded in 2011, the “Light to the World” festival is dedicated to children and young people and aims to support young filmmakers while promoting artistic, moral and educational values through cinema. The festival has developed into one of Russia’s major international youth film events, with almost 2,500 young filmmakers and children’s film studios having participated since its establishment.

The festival’s 2026 final program included screenings, discussions, creative meetings and other cultural activities across several cities in the Yaroslavl region, including Yaroslavl, Rybinsk, Uglich and Tutayev. The event is organized as a platform bringing together young filmmakers, children’s film studios and professionals involved in filmmaking and education.

Cartoon of Day



Economic Terrorism
Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

Four Persian books included in White Ravens Catalogue 2026



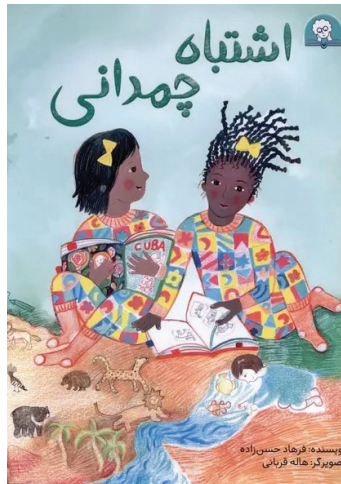
“Where the Sun Rises” written by Ali-Asghar Seidabadi and illustrated by Hadi Baghdadi



“We Are All Birds” written by Mehdi Hejvani and illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelou



“The Eternities and Trees” written by Mehdi Hejvani and illustrated by Hoda Hadadi



“The Suitcase Mix-up” written by Farhad Hasanzadeh and illustrated by Haleh Ghorbani

TEHRAN – The White Ravens Catalogue, compiled by Munich’s International Youth Library, has unveiled its 2026 edition with over 200 children’s and youth titles in about 40 languages, including four Persian works by authors from Iran.

The Iranian books in the list include “The Suitcase Mix-up,” written by Farhad Hasanzadeh and illustrated by Haleh Ghorbani; “The Eternities and Trees,” written by Mohammad-Reza Shafiei Kadkani and illustrated by Hoda Hadadi; “We Are All Birds,” written by Mehdi Hejvani and illustrated by Ghazaleh Bigdelou; and “Where the Sun Rises,” written by Ali-Asghar Seidabadi and illustrated by Hadi Baghdadi, ISNA reported.

“The Suitcase Mix-up” is about migration, cultural diversity, and friendship. Sometimes the art of friendship is best learned from children – simple, sincere, and free of pretense. Such is the friendship between Gisoo and Ibis.

After immigrating to Canada with her family, Gisoo discovers that her suitcase has been mistakenly swapped with that of a Cuban girl named Ibis. When the families meet to exchange the suitcases, an unexpected friendship begins between the two girls.

This is a story not only about personal friendship, but also about the connection between two peoples, introducing aspects of Cuban and Iranian life as the two girls discover both similarities and differences between their cultures.

The engaging narrative and the captivating illustrations make this book especially distinctive. With notable attention to detail, Haleh Ghorbani demonstrates

her mastery in vividly depicting diverse places and cultures.

Farhad Hasanzadeh has twice been shortlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, while Ghorbani won the 2024 Image of the Book International Illustration and Book Design Competition.

“The Eternities and Trees” deals with the themes of homeland, migration, meaning of life, and poetry. Poetry has always held a special place in Iranian literature. Works of certain poets have become embedded in the collective memory of Iranians and have found their way into everyday speech and writing.

Mohammad-Reza Shafiei Kadkani is one of Iran’s most distinguished contemporary poets, and his verses have earned an enduring place in the hearts, minds, and language of Persian speakers.

This anthology includes poems chosen for their appeal to young readers, featuring themes that are both emotionally resonant and universally meaningful. Despite their brevity and concision, these poems encompass profound themes such as migration, identity, travel, nature, homeland, love, and the meaning of life.

Hoda Hadadi’s captivating illustrations further enhance the beauty and depth of the text. In this book, the acclaimed Iranian artist remains faithful to the techniques that have long defined her work, while at the same time moving beyond her customary style to create a visual atmosphere distinct from that of her previous books.

“We Are All Birds” is centered on war, displacement, home, and freedom. The book celebrates

both the feeling of belonging and the value of freedom.

Forced by war to leave her home and city and move with her family to a refugee camp, the young narrator chooses not to dwell on sorrow. Together with the other children in the camp and the birds around them, she creates small diversions to ease the pain of displacement and homesickness.

Yet the birds teach her another important lesson: a cage can never become a home. Home is a place where safety exists alongside freedom and joy. Told with remarkable brevity, the story relies on only a few sentences, while the illustrations carry much of the narrative. This approach moves the book beyond the conventional picture-book format and closer to the language of a graphic novel.

Acclaimed author Mehdi Hejvani offers a fresh perspective on issues such as refuge and exile. Through wide visual perspectives, illustrator Ghazaleh Bigdelou conveys both the longing for freedom and the sense of homelessness that lie at the heart of the work.

“Where the Sun Rises” covers the themes such as war and peace. Many conflicts arise because people cannot see the world from the point of view of those who contradict them. This picture book, like other works such as David McKee’s classic “Two Monsters,” presents this idea with striking clarity.

Two towns lie on opposite sides of a mountain. The people of one town see the sun rise from the sea and set behind the mountain, while those on the other side see it rise behind the mountain and set in the forest. These differing perceptions lead

to a bitter dispute that escalates into war. When both sides climb the mountain to confront each other, they discover the forest and the sea on the respective opposite side and finally understand the reason for their conflicting views.

One of the book’s strengths lies in showing how children recognize this difference in perspective and help prevent further conflict. Hadi Baghdadi’s detailed illustrations enrich the story, reinforcing its themes of diversity and inclusion.

The annually published The White Ravens catalogue features brief annotations of more than 200 notable new children’s and young adult books from about 50 countries and regions and over 40 languages.

The books are selected by the International Youth Library’s children’s literature experts from the large number of review and donation copies the library receives in the course of one year. The team focuses on titles that might be of interest to an international audience because of their literary and pictorial quality and/or the topics they address.

The White Ravens catalogue, a treasure trove for literary discoveries, serves as a compass through the vast children’s book market for publishers, libraries, literary festivals, international bookstores and agencies, as well as anyone interested in international children’s books.

At the Frankfurt Book Fair, the IYL team will present some books from The White Ravens 2026 list, including their personal favorites. The event has been a fixture in the events calendar of the Frankfurt Book Fair for several years.

64 street plays spotlight Sacred Defense themes across Iran

TEHRAN- A total of 64 street theater productions from 26 Iranian provinces are being staged across the country as part of the “Narration of Epic” program, which is being held alongside Sacred Defense Week to commemorate the experiences and sacrifices of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war through the language of theater.

Organized as part of the programs of the 20th International Resistance Theater Festival, the “Narration of Epic” street theater event began on Tuesday, September 22, and will continue through October 1, bringing performances to different cities across Iran.

According to the secretariat of the Resistance Theater Festival, the program has been organized to commemorate the memory of those who fought during the eight-year war and to promote the culture of resistance through street and environmental theater. The performances are being presented in public spaces, allowing theater to move beyond conventional venues and reach audiences in their everyday surroundings.

The organizers say the event seeks to strengthen the connection between epic themes and the general public by making use of the possibilities offered by outdoor performances. It also provides a platform for street theater artists from different parts of the country to present their works and explore creative approaches to subjects related to war, sacrifice, resistance and collective memory.

The participation of 64 productions from 26 provinces gives the program a nationwide character, reflecting the geographical diversity of Iranian street theater and the capacity of artists outside Tehran to contribute to resistance-themed cultural events.

The program is taking place during a period traditionally associated in Iran with the commemoration of the Sacred Defense. The Iran-Iraq war began on September 22, 1980, when Iraqi forces invaded Iran, and continued for eight years before ending in 1988. In Iran, the conflict is referred to as the Sacred Defense, and the anniversary of its beginning is commemorated annually through cultural and artistic programs across the country.

Theater has long been among the artistic forms used in Iran to preserve and reinterpret memories of the war. Alongside stage productions, street theater has provided artists with a way to present historical and social themes in direct contact with audiences in public spaces.

The “Narration of Epic” program is being held as the 20th International Resistance Theater Festival gets underway. The festival officially kicked off in Tehran on September 21 at the Azadi Tower, launching an edition that brings together theatrical works and related cultural and educational programs under the broader theme of resistance.

The 20th edition has been organized under the banner “Iran, An Eternal Stage of Resistance” and includes several sections, among

them playwriting, stage theater, street theater, scientific and research activities, workshops and an international section. The festival is being directed by Mohammad Kazemtabar and is being hosted in Tehran and other Iranian cities.

At the opening ceremony, festival secretary Mohammad Kazemtabar announced that more than 20 stage productions dealing with the theme of the recent war would be presented during the festival. The ceremony also featured a tribute to theater, cinema and television artist Kourosh Zarei and the unveiling of “8 Scenes of the Ramadan War,” a collection of eight new plays by Iranian theater writers focusing on the events of the conflict.

The Resistance Theater Festival has developed over two decades as an event centered on themes including the Sacred Defense, the Islamic Revolution and broader concepts of resistance. Its organizers have also sought to expand the festival beyond conventional theater productions by incorporating workshops, research programs and street performances.

The current edition’s call for submissions highlighted themes ranging from the experiences of the Sacred Defense and the lives of martyrs and fighters to Palestine, Gaza, the role of women in resistance and contemporary events. The festival’s research section is also intended to encourage academic and interdisciplinary discussion about resistance theater and its social and cultural functions.