

Lebanon's silenced voice

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT—On September 23, President Masoud Pezeshkian seized the 81st session of the UN General Assembly not as a ceremonial platform, but as a political battlefield, directly confronting the narrative presented by Washington and Israel.

Whatever one's political position toward Iran, the significance of the scene was unmistakable: Tehran understood that international diplomacy is also a battle over narrative, visibility and political legitimacy.

Iran did not merely submit a diplomatic complaint. It placed symbols, victims and accusations before the international audience and demanded that they be seen. ▶ Page 5

NAZA, off screen

By Silvina Pacheco

BUENOS AIRES — For months, we have been living with harrowing images from Gaza, amid allegations and accusations of genocide. Images, testimonies, and an incessant flow of information—and yet nothing stops. Gaza has also become this: the repetition of unbearable scenes that we see again and again, without their accumulation seeming sufficient to interrupt the machinery that produces them.

But in recent weeks, a film burst onto the scene at the 2026 Venice International Film Festival and received an ovation lasting nearly half an hour. It is NAZA, by Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor, two Israeli filmmakers who construct the film from a singular vantage point: testimonies emerging from within Israel's own military and intelligence apparatus. The film brings together 24 military and intelligence sources and was made over the course of three years. ▶ Page 5

Women lightweight double sculls wins gold in Nagoya

TEHRAN - Iran's Kimia Zarei and Zeynab Norouzi seized a gold medal in the women's lightweight double sculls final on Thursday.

The Iranian pair finished the first at the Nagaragawa International Regatta Course with a time of 6:53.93 minutes.

Hong Kong team Yuen Shan Cheung and Wing Wun Leung rounded out the podium with a time of 6 minutes and 59.24 seconds.

The bronze medal went to Japan's Chika Yonezawa and Chikai Tomita with a time of 6:59.27 minutes.

Earlier in the day, Fatemeh Mojallal claimed a gold medal in the Games.

Mojallal finished first in the women's lightweight singles sculls final, clocking a time of 7 minutes and 24.57 seconds at the Nagaragawa International Regatta Course.

Winnie Hung from Hong Kong reached the podium with a time of 7 minutes and 28.54 seconds.

Thai rower Parisa Chaempudsa rounding out the podium with a time of 7 minutes and 40.61 seconds.

Macklemore announces 'Free Palestine' tour after Ed Sheeran dismissal

Macklemore announced the "Free Palestine Tour" on Thursday, with shows in Dublin, Paris and London set for October. It comes after the rapper was dropped from Ed Sheeran's tour after making pro-Palestinian comments during an opening set.

"I've spent the last week reaching out to artists who have shown up and used their stages to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, regardless of the consequences," Macklemore said in a statement shared on social media. "Artists who understand that our platforms mean very little if we're only willing to use them when it's safe." ▶ Page 8



Delegates walking out in protest as Netanyahu takes to the podium

A War Criminal's Fiction to Empty Seats

From 77 delegations walking out inside to a high-profile protest outside, Netanyahu faces overwhelming rejection

By staff writer

TEHRAN — On September 24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood at the United Nations General Assembly rostrum facing hundreds of vacant seats.

As his name was announced, 77 diplomatic delegations stood up and walked out of the hall in a coordinated repudiation of Israel's genocidal campaign against Gaza and the war against Iran, as well as other regional campaigns of aggression.

The exodus left vast blocks of the chamber completely empty. Remaining audience members in the gallery shouted in Hebrew while General Assembly leadership repeatedly struck the gavel for order. Netanyahu opened his speech by calling those who left "moral cowards."

After killing over 74,000 Palestinians in Gaza alone, Netanyahu claimed that the Israeli military is 'the most moral army in the world.'

Empty seats speaking volumes

The Palestinian Mission to the UN had requested member nations to fill their seats before the session and exit en masse once Netanyahu approached the podium.

Dozens of states answered the call, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Africa, Brazil, Spain, Ireland, and Slovenia.

The Iranian delegation left a framed photograph of the martyred General Qassem Soleimani on its empty desk before

exiting. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei noted that the gesture served as a quiet reminder of martyrs who continue to haunt their adversaries.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi stated that the walkout spoke louder than any speech delivered at the rostrum.

Netanyahu tried to brush aside the walkout, claiming foreign leaders whose representatives exited had privately thanked Israel for joint strikes with the United States against Iranian nuclear sites. As usual, he provided no evidence.

The following day, Iranian counselor Nasser Asadi delivered a formal right of reply, labeling Netanyahu's presence an utter disgrace and a betrayal of the UN Charter. ▶ Page 5



President Pezeshkian's meeting with elites and experts from various American think tanks in New York on Thursday

Pezeshkian uses UNGA meetings to press for diplomacy, and regional stability

TEHRAN— Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held a series of meetings with senior foreign officials on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, engaging the leaders of Pakistan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Armenia and Bangladesh, as well as the presidents of Switzerland and the European Council, on regional security, diplomacy, bilateral relations and the consequences of the recent conflict involving Iran.

Pezeshkian also met with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten, ▶ Page 3

Araghchi holds a series of talks in NY on regional security, Hormuz and Iran-EU ties

TEHRAN— Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a series of meetings with foreign counterparts on the sidelines of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, engaging Russian, British, Portuguese, Bruneian, Kyrgyz, Polish, Spanish, Egyptian, Jordanian, Cypriot, Pakistani and Austrian officials on regional security, the Strait of Hormuz, the war in West Asia, Palestine, Iran-Europe relations and bilateral cooperation.

Hormuz and Regional Security

The security situation in the Strait of Hormuz and the future of maritime navigation emerged as a recurring issue in Araghchi's meetings with European and regional officials. ▶ Page 2

Xi's landmark US visit advances China's vision for Tehran-Washington dialogue and global stability

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — President Xi Jinping's milestone visit to the United States has unequivocally reaffirmed China's pivotal status as a bedrock of global peace, stability, and consensus. At a crucial juncture in international relations, Beijing's proactive, vision-driven foreign policy underscores its unique role in bridging divides. ▶ Page 3

Transport minister inaugurates 281km of highways, main roads in Sistan-Baluchestan

TEHRAN— With the presence of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, 281 kilometers of highways and main roads in Sistan-Baluchestan province were put into operation. Of the inaugurated projects, 134 kilometers are in the south of the province, 89 kilometers in the north, and 58 kilometers on the North-South Corridor and coastal routes of the province.

According to IRNA, the deputy minister of transport and urban development said at the ceremony that inaugurating transport infrastructure is not merely a construction measure. ▶ Page 4

Iran, India have huge potential for cooperation in health and tourism: Ambassador

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — New Delhi's Ambassador to Tehran Vishwesh Negi has highlighted the significant potential for Iran-India cooperation in traditional and modern medicine, pharmaceuticals and tourism, as well as in strengthening cultural and people-to-people ties.

He made the remarks in a brief interview with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of a ceremony hosted by the Indian Embassy in Tehran on September 23 to mark National Ayurveda Day.

Today's ceremony to mark Ayurveda Day, brought together a number of Iranian physicians who shared views on the ancient Indian medicine system alongside views on the ancient Iranian medicine system. It was a fruitful gesture for promoting cultural heritage and exchanging ideas. Tell us about your embassy's collaboration and efforts to promote other aspects of Indian heritage in Iran and plans for mutual cooperation.

Well, there are a lot of things we want to do with Iran at this point in time. ▶ Page 6

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The need for an Iran-China corridor

Javan wrote about the importance of establishing an Iran-China corridor: Continued US efforts to increase tensions with Iran, following statements by the US Treasury Secretary regarding air transport sanctions on Iran, have further complicated the situation. However, Beijing's explicit opposition to such sanctions has increased the likelihood that countries with extensive trade relations with Iran may align with China's approach. China stands out for several reasons: its official political stance against unilateral US sanctions is clear; it possesses a vast aviation industry and airport infrastructure; and Tehran-Beijing political relations have deepened in recent years. Additionally, Chinese companies have experience operating in sanctioned environments. Therefore, a more realistic approach may be the creation of an "Iran-China Air Corridor" rather than concentrating Iran's entire global network on China. Under such a framework, China could establish a dedicated air-services corridor for Iran, allowing Tehran to maintain a limited number of Chinese airlines and airports as long-term partners within its international network.

Donya-e-Eqtasad : Testing the flexibility of Tehran and Washington

Donya-e-Eqtasad commented on a meeting between Witkoff and Araghchi in New York: It should be noted that both sides' positions have become highly rigid. A meeting and dialogue took place can be viewed as a positive and useful step. However, the reality is far more complex than expecting a serious breakthrough in relations from a single three-hour meeting between officials. For Iran, it is important to determine whether the other side has reconsidered its positions and is willing to demonstrate flexibility; similarly, the other side seeks to assess Iran's positions and level of flexibility. Ultimately, everything depends on whether both sides are genuinely prepared to show flexibility. At present, there is no clear indication of such flexibility. Therefore, the current meetings appear to be aimed less at achieving a fundamental transformation and more at exchanging information, understanding recent developments, and evaluating each side's readiness for compromise.

Shargh: Heavy damage to US bases

Shargh discussed the heavy damage sustained by US bases in the region and wrote: US military bases and aircraft carriers in the region had long been regarded by personnel stationed there as relatively safe locations. Today, Washington and Tehran are directly engaged in war. Even the most extensive modern air defense systems cannot fully protect bases against waves of drone and missile attacks. The damage has already affected America's ability to continue the war. Severe damage to the Bahrain base, for example, has created a chain of logistical prob-

lems for the US Navy. Without access to this facility, warships operating near the Strait of Hormuz no longer have regular access to fuel, food supplies, and other goods. Given the rapid changes taking place in military forces around the world, the United States must acknowledge that most, if not all, of its roughly 750 military bases, ports, and airfields across 80 countries have become increasingly vulnerable to air attacks.

Hamshahri: Acceptance of China as a new mediator

Hamshahri referred to a report by the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar and wrote: The high costs of war and ongoing insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz have pushed Washington and Tehran, despite continuing threats and sanctions, toward exploring political solutions to exit the crisis. A diplomatic turning point came with Tehran's direct request to Beijing. Diplomatic sources revealed that during Araghchi's recent visit to Beijing, Iran asked China to play a more prominent role in mediating with the United States, a request that received a positive response from Beijing. This extra-regional initiative comes alongside parallel efforts by Doha and Islamabad and Washington's declared willingness to reach an agreement. Observers believe that although hopes for a political breakthrough have brought Brent crude prices back below \$100 per barrel, the next phase remains caught between two paths: moving toward reciprocal de-escalation measures centered on Chinese mediation, or using negotiations merely as a tool for crisis management within the framework of military and economic power balances.

Etemad: Iranian initiative accompanied by active diplomacy

Etemad examined Iranian proposals aimed at reducing tensions with the United States: As the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly began in New York, diplomatic efforts to contain the escalating Tehran-Washington tensions have entered a sensitive and decisive stage. Relying on its defensive deterrence and field balance, Tehran has put forward a concentrated and reciprocal proposal through regional mediators: if the United States takes tangible initial steps to halt the military blockade of ports and reduce pressure, Iran would be prepared to reopen the Strait of Hormuz within seven days and begin direct or indirect talks with Washington aimed at reaching a lasting agreement. This approach demonstrates that Iran's presence at the United Nations is not from a position of passivity, but rather to articulate its principled positions, challenge imposed discrimination, and utilize international mechanisms to break the current deadlock.

Deputy FM: Europe served as 'infrastructure' for US aggression against Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, stated on Thursday that recent acknowledgments by NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte confirm European territory and military facilities served as integral infrastructure for the illegal acts of aggression launched by the United States against the Islamic Republic.

Writing on his X account, Gharibabadi stressed that the NATO chief's admissions lay bare Europe's direct complicity in facilitating Washington's unlawful military campaign.

"Governments that placed their territory at the disposal of the United States cannot evade their responsibility," he said. "This participation will not go unanswered."

The remarks follow statements by Rutte, who acknowledged that between 4,000 and 5,000 US military sorties were launched from bases across the European continent during the Washington-Tel Aviv aggression against Iran that began on February 28.

Characterizing the continent's military facilities as indispensable to the American assault, the NATO chief noted that Europe functioned as a "platform of power projection" without which Washington could not have conducted the campaign.

According to disclosed logistical details, several European governments—including Italy, Romania, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany—provided critical access to their sovereign air bases, sovereign airspace, aerial refueling assets, and logistics networks in support of the offensive.

Tehran has reiterated that the unprovoked US-Israeli assault constitutes a flagrant breach of the United Nations Charter and fundamental principles of international law. Iranian officials have underscored that placing territory, airfields, or logistical infrastructure at the disposal of an aggressor state directly amounts to participation in the act of aggression itself, pursuant to the Definition of Aggression affirmed under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX).

Araghchi holds a series of talks in NY on regional security, Hormuz and Iran-EU ties

From page 1 ▶ In talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Araghchi briefed his counterpart on Iran-Oman discussions concerning arrangements for a safe maritime route through the Strait of Hormuz. He also outlined diplomatic efforts by mediators to establish conditions for a return to negotiations.

In separate talks with Portuguese Foreign Minister Paulo Rangel and Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meinl-Reisinger, Araghchi attributed the disruption of maritime traffic and insecurity in the Strait to US and Israeli military actions. He said, from Iran's perspective, restoring maritime security would require an end to 'destabilizing US measures and economic pressure.'

Araghchi also raised regional security with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, criticizing the use of the territory of regional states in military operations. He said Iran was prepared to work with neighboring countries on security arrangements based on regional cooperation rather than external military involvement.

The Iranian foreign minister's discussions with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubaev and Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski also touched on the wider regional crisis. With Sikorski, Araghchi warned



against linking the Ukraine conflict to developments in West Asia, urging European governments to address security challenges on their own continent while taking positions on regional developments based on international law.

Iran-Europe relations

Relations with European governments formed another major thread of Araghchi's meetings.

During talks with British Foreign Secretary Edward Miliband, Araghchi criticized Britain's political and military support for Israel and called on London and other European governments to reconsider policies contributing to instability in West Asia.

The two sides also discussed Iran's nuclear program. Araghchi reiterated Tehran's stated preference for resolving outstand-

ing issues through diplomacy and criticized Britain, France and Germany over their positions concerning the so-called snap-back mechanism and the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Similar concerns were raised in Araghchi's meetings with the foreign ministers of Spain and Cyprus. He called on European governments to base their policies toward Iran and the region on international law and avoid 'alignment with parties responsible for aggression.'

Palestine and wider regional conflict

The Palestinian issue was central to Araghchi's discussions with Brunei's Foreign Minister Abdul Mateen ibni Hassan Bolkiah, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty and Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman

Safadi.

Araghchi called for greater coordination among Islamic countries and a more active role for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in addressing the situation in Gaza, the West Bank and Al-Quds. He also emphasized the need to support Palestinian self-determination and efforts toward establishing an independent Palestinian state.

With Abdelatty, Araghchi discussed strengthening bilateral coordination alongside regional developments, while his meeting with Safadi focused on regional security and cooperation between Iran and Jordan.

Russia, Pakistan and regional diplomacy

Araghchi and Lavrov also reviewed political, economic, trade, transportation and energy cooperation between Iran and Russia, as well as coordination within international organizations. Lavrov reiterated Moscow's opposition to 'US and Israeli military aggression against Iran' and emphasized adherence to international law and the UN Charter.

In New York, Araghchi also held talks with Pakistani Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on bilateral relations and regional developments. The meeting came as Pakistan was pursuing a mediating role between Iran and the United States.

Colombia cuts diplomatic ties with Iran under 'influence of US and Zionist regime'

By staff writer

TEHRAN — In a move that underscores a dramatic retreat from independent diplomacy toward subservience to the US regional agenda, Colombia's newly inaugurated right-wing administration has unilaterally severed diplomatic ties with Iran.

The decision, enacted by President Abelardo de la Espriella on September 19, marks a sharp departure from the balanced, multipolar foreign policy pursued under former President Gustavo Petro. While Bogota has framed the move under the guise of "hemispheric national security," diplomatic observers view the measure as a choreographed political concession aimed at currying favor with the United States and demonstrating alignment with its policies.

In an effort to rationalize its decision, the Colombian Foreign Ministry released a statement accusing Iran of maintaining connections with "narco-terrorist groups that threaten the security of the country."

Yet, as with similar anti-Iran rhetoric recycled in Washington and Tel Aviv, Bogota failed to present a shred of credible evidence, intelligence briefing, or verifiable data to substantiate its sweeping accusations.

Tehran fires back: 'Hypocritical deflection'

Reacting swiftly to Bogota's hostile posturing, the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an official statement on Friday, categorically rejecting Colombia's unfounded allegations and condemning the abrupt rupture of bilateral diplomatic relations that span more than half a century.

The ministry stated in a statement that Bogota's baseless accusations and simultaneous severance of diplomatic ties violate the foundational principle of mutual respect and run counter to the interests of both nations.

"It is evident that none of the claims put forward by the Colombian government to justify this decision are valid or logical," the statement emphasized, noting that the decision was adopted "solely under the direct influence of the United States and the Zionist regime."

Turning the spotlight onto Bogota's own deep-seated domestic crisis, the statement underscored that Colombia—which, by undeniable evidence, remains heavily influenced by illicit drug production and distribution cartels and effectively operates as part of the transnational narco-terrorism network across the Americas and beyond—is in no moral or legal position to lecture other sovereign states on terrorism and narcotics.

The ministry further stressed that such "hypocritical deflection cannot absolve the

Colombian government of its international responsibility" regarding its complicity in the trafficking of massive narcotics shipments worldwide, including to Iran.

Highlighting a recent high-profile case, the ministry revealed that Iranian law enforcement seized a 55-kilogram shipment of pure Colombian cocaine in Tehran in September, which had been directly trafficked into the country by a network linked to influential Colombian figures. It described the seizure as one of the latest exposed cases of transnational organized crime attributed to Colombian networks.

The statement noted that rather than resorting to a hasty and hostile diplomatic rupture, relevant Colombian authorities were expected, under their international legal obligations, to cooperate with Iran in identifying the primary elements involved in trafficking this illicit consignment and similar shipments to Iran and the wider region.

The ministry concluded by warning that Iran reserves the right to take necessary measures in defense of its national interests in response to Bogota's unjustified and hostile stance.

Strategic absurdity and logical fallacies

Tehran's firm response highlights what political analysts describe as glaring logical fallacies and strategic absurdity behind Bogota's claims.

First, there is the deeply flawed narrative regarding counter-narcotics. The insinuation that Iran—a nation that sits on the frontline of global counter-narcotics efforts and has sacrificed thousands of security personnel in combating transnational drug cartels originating from South Asia—would align itself with Latin American drug syndicates defies strategic logic. Tehran's comprehensive counter-narcotics record is routinely acknowledged by international organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Bogota's attempt to project its own decades-long struggle with organized crime onto an external actor thousands of kilometers away is widely seen as an expedient deflection.

Second, regarding the instrumentalization of "hemispheric security," this phrase is historically synonymous with the Monroe Doctrine—a framework long used to justify external interference in the sovereign affairs of Latin American nations. By invoking this outdated paradigm without tangible proof, the De la Espriella government is simply parroting long-debunked talking points crafted by hawkish think-tanks in Washington to justify isolating independent nations in the Global South.

Bogota further sought to legitimize its



unilateral rupture by dragging extra-regional geopolitical disputes into bilateral affairs, lambasting Tehran for allegedly "blocking maritime traffic in the Strait of Hormuz" and "attacking countries in the Middle East."

This claim completely reverses cause and effect, ignoring basic realities in West Asian waters.

As a guarantor of maritime security, Iran has historically served as the primary anchor of peace, stability, and navigation security in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Iranian naval forces have consistently safeguarded commercial shipping lanes against piracy and unauthorized foreign military incursions. Accusations of "blocking traffic" deliberately ignore that any security measures enforced by Iran are fully grounded in international maritime law, innocent passage regulations, and the sovereign right to defend its territorial waters against unilateral foreign provocations.

Furthermore, regarding legitimate deterrence versus foreign hegemony, framing Iran's defensive posture as aggression fundamentally misrepresents the regional dynamic. The root cause of regional instability in West Asia is not Iran's defensive capabilities, but the destabilizing military footprint of the United States and Israel's unchecked aggression. Iran's military actions—carried out in full accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter regarding the inherent right of legitimate self-defense—have been calculated, targeted responses to illegal strikes on its diplomatic premises, territorial sovereignty, and national interests. Equating Iran's defensive deterrence with unprovoked aggression reveals Bogota's uncritical adoption of Western talking points.

While the Colombian government noted it will maintain consular channels with Tehran, the abrupt severing of full diplomatic ties reflects an administration eager to dismantle sovereign South-South cooperation in exchange for short-term political alignment with external patrons.

Pezeshkian uses UNGA meetings to press for diplomacy, and regional stability

From Page 1 ► Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, Swiss President Guy Parmelin and European Council President Antonio Costa.

Across the meetings, the Iranian president placed particular emphasis on diplomacy as the means of resolving disputes, while arguing that pressure, unilateral measures and military force cannot provide a durable basis for regional security.

Diplomacy and search for a way out of regional tensions

The meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre focused on the continuing instability in West Asia and the need to prevent further escalation. Pezeshkian called for international efforts to reduce tensions and create conditions for the restoration of regional security, stressing that disputes should be addressed through dialogue, international law and respect for national sovereignty.

Støre expressed concern about continuing instability, and particularly the potential international consequences of insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz. He also voiced support for diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing tensions.

A similar emphasis emerged from Pezeshkian's meeting with Swiss President Guy Parmelin. The Iranian president said recent US and Israeli military actions against Iran, including attacks on infrastructure and civilian facilities, were contrary to international law and humanitarian principles. He nevertheless stressed Tehran's readiness to develop relations with other countries based on mutual respect, sovereign equality and shared interests.

Parmelin highlighted Switzerland's experience in diplomatic initiatives and its role as a protecting power for US interests in Iran, expressing his country's readiness to maintain diplomatic contacts. The two sides agreed on the importance of political and diplomatic mechanisms to prevent another escalation.

Dialogue with Europe
Pezeshkian's meetings with



European officials also addressed the future of relations between Iran and Europe.

In his meeting with Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten, the Iranian president said Tehran remained open to dialogue but maintained that the United States must honor its commitments if diplomacy is to make meaningful progress. He argued that previous rounds of negotiations had repeatedly been followed by developments that disrupted the diplomatic process and ultimately contributed to war.

Jetten stressed the need for practical mechanisms to overcome existing obstacles in bilateral relations and identified maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz as one of the issues requiring diplomatic attention.

Pezeshkian took a more critical line in his meeting with European Council President Antonio Costa, arguing that European governments had diminished their ability to influence international developments by aligning themselves with US policies toward Iran.

He specifically criticized European positions on the snapback mechanism and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), saying Tehran expected Europe to pursue a more independent approach.

On regional security, Pezeshkian argued that security should ultimately be ensured by the countries of the region, rather than through external intervention.

Relations with neighbors and regional partners

The Iranian president's meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif centered on bi-

lateral cooperation and regional diplomacy. The two leaders reviewed the implementation of existing agreements and discussed developments affecting regional security, including the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Peninsula.

Pezeshkian praised Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to support regional peace and stability and called for continued consultations to prevent conflicts from widening. Sharif, for his part, reaffirmed Islamabad's readiness to play a constructive role in regional diplomacy and highlighted the importance of the Islamabad memorandum of understanding.

With Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, Pezeshkian discussed Lebanon's sovereignty and stability as well as the consequences of Israeli attacks. He reaffirmed Iran's support for an independent and stable Lebanon and said Tehran favored regional cooperation and dialogue while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

Salam outlined Beirut's priorities, including an end to the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory, the cessation of attacks and the strengthening of the Lebanese state's authority.

Pezeshkian also met Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, with the two sides focusing on accelerating the implementation of bilateral agreements, particularly those concerning regional transit routes. Both leaders stressed the importance of translating existing understandings into practical cooperation.

Expanding economic and bilateral cooperation

Economic diplomacy was another component of Pezeshkian's meetings. In talks with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, the two sides discussed expanding economic relations and agreed on the importance of convening the sixth Iran-Bangladesh Joint Economic Commission.

Pezeshkian described the relationship with Bangladesh as possessing considerable potential for broader cooperation, while Rahman praised Iran's assistance to Bangladeshi nationals during the recent crisis.

The meeting also addressed the wider regional situation. Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran would not yield to pressure but would continue engaging internationally on the basis of mutual respect and constructive relations.

A consistent diplomatic message

Taken together, Pezeshkian's meetings in New York presented a consistent diplomatic message: Iran is seeking engagement with neighboring states, European governments and other international partners while opposing 'coercion, unilateralism and military pressure.'

The meetings also highlighted Tehran's effort to connect regional security with diplomacy, arguing that lasting stability requires respect for national sovereignty, dialogue and regional mechanisms rather than externally imposed security arrangements.

At the same time, Pezeshkian used his encounters with European officials to press for a reassessment of Europe's position toward Iran, particularly over the nuclear issue and its relationship with Washington, while meetings with neighboring and regional states focused more heavily on practical cooperation, transit, bilateral agreements and mechanisms for containing regional tensions.

The breadth of the meetings — spanning Europe, South and West Asia and the Caucasus — underscored the Iranian president's effort at the UN gathering to keep diplomatic channels open while advancing Tehran's positions on the regional conflict and the future of its international relations.

Security complex anew: Iran's venture into a new architecture

Sajjad Farokhipour

QOM - The war that began with the U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran has done more than destroy military targets and redraw the map of immediate threats. It has exposed the fragility of the security architecture that has governed the Middle East for decades.

The old order built around American military presence, Israeli military superiority, and the political alignment of several Arab states with Washington has lost much of its previous certainty. A new regional security complex is therefore emerging which is unmistakably different from the order that existed before the war and is particularly promising for Iran.

The central question for Tehran is no longer simply whether it can resist the pressure but whether Iran can transform the strategic consequences of that resistance into a durable regional order that better serves its national interests. Thus, a new security complex is viable in light of the following dimensions:

The most important transformation concerns the distribution of power. For decades, the Persian Gulf security system operated largely within an American-centered structure. Arab governments depended heavily on American military power, American bases constituted the backbone of deterrence, and Israel functioned as Washington's principal regional military partner. Even when Arab states disagreed with Washington, they generally operated within the limits of this security architecture.

The war has challenged this assumption. Iran demonstrated that American military installations in the region are proved liabilities rather than security guarantees. The very bases intended to protect the Persian Gulf states turned them into potential targets. Iran's retaliation reached Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, Jordan, and other locations hosting U.S. military assets. This meant something consequential: the political value of American protection has radically become less certain.

The Persian Gulf states are therefore looking for greater strategic autonomy. Pakistan and Turkey become more important as alternative security partners, while Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other Arab states increasingly calculate their security according to their own national interests rather than simply according to Washington's regional preferences. This means the emergence of a more competitive and multipolar regional structure. For Iran, this is an opportunity, but only if Tehran understands that multi-polarity requires diplomacy as much as military power.

The second transformation concerns proximity. One of the principal assumptions of the previous security order was that the United States could project overwhelming power into Iran's immediate neighborhood. The war has complicated that assumption.

In the Caucasus, the strategic environment surrounding Iran appears less threatening than it did before the conflict. Turkey has demonstrated greater caution than a straightforward alignment with the U.S.-Israeli camp would have suggested, while Azerbaijan's relationship with Israel has become considerably more sensitive in the new environment.

This matters because Iran's security dilemma has historically been multidirectional. Tehran has had to watch the Persian Gulf, Iraq, the Levant, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus simultaneously. A reduction in immediate pressure along one of these fronts creates strategic breathing space. Iran should therefore resist the temptation to treat the Caucasus merely as another battlefield of confrontation. The opportunity is to convert this reduced threat environment into a diplomatic belt of stability around its northern frontier.

Perhaps the most profound change is not military but conceptual. Before the war, regional competition was heavily organized around political influence, ideological rivalry, Iran's regional networks, the Yemen conflict, and the struggle over leadership in the Muslim world. The war has elevated another issue above many of these concerns, i.e., economic survival. For Saudi Arabia, the security of oil infrastructure, maritime routes, investment, Vision 2030, and economic diversification has become inseparable from national security. The closure and disruption of the Strait of Hormuz demonstrated precisely how vulner-



able an economic transformation strategy could be when regional military competition threatens energy infrastructure and maritime trade.

This creates an unexpected opening for Iran. Iran does not need Saudi Arabia to become its ally. It needs Saudi Arabia to recognize that permanent confrontation with Iran is incompatible with Saudi economic ambitions. This distinction is crucial. A Saudi Arabia primarily concerned with protecting its economy is a Saudi Arabia with incentives to negotiate with Tehran.

The same logic helps explain the growing divergence between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. Their differences over Yemen, oil policy, Israel, and regional security have become increasingly visible, demonstrating that the Persian Gulf is not a single strategic actor. Iran's opportunity is therefore not to divide the Persian Gulf through confrontation, but to encourage a regional security logic in which economic interdependence becomes more valuable than permanent military alignment with Washington.

The war has also altered the region's patterns of amity and enmity. At the governmental level, Iran's attacks on Arab territories hosting U.S. military assets generated anger and divergence. Tehran does not ignore this reality because any attempt to build a new security order while disregarding Arab perceptions would be strategically wrong. Iran's diplomatic endeavor amid the conflict showed its regional concern and responsibility for neighbors. Nevertheless, another process has occurred at the societal level. Iran's direct military resistance to the United States and Israel has changed perceptions among segments of Arab and Muslim public opinion.

Whatever their governments' disagreements with Tehran, many communities interpreted Iran's resistance as evidence that American and Israeli dominance over Muslims is far from correct. This creates an important ideational opportunity for Iran. The Axis of Resistance may have suffered organizational and material setbacks, particularly in Lebanon, but the broader idea of resistance has not necessarily weakened. Indeed, the war has strengthened its symbolic appeal among populations that view the existing regional order as dominated by external powers. If Tehran wants Arab governments to accept a new regional balance, it must translate the core idea of resistance into the broader proposition of regional sovereignty, strategic autonomy, economic security, and freedom from external domination. That would be much easier for Arab states to embrace.

The military balance also presents Iran with both opportunities and challenges. The war demonstrated that Iran possesses considerable capabilities for imposing costs on U.S. regional assets and disrupting the assumptions underlying the existing security architecture. At the same time, the conflict exposed some Iranian vulnerabilities, particularly in infrastructure and air defense, for each of them Iran needs to find a feasible solution to securely project its new role in the region.

Perhaps the most important question is who will manage regional security after the war. The United States has historically acted as the external custodian of the Persian Gulf security system. However, the war has undermined the proposition that American bases necessarily make their host countries safer. In fact, several Persian Gulf governments now increasingly view the U.S. military presence through a double lens: it provides protection, but it can also make them targets. This, at least, means that America's custodianship has become contestable. Iran, however, should not assume that the decline of American credibility automatically produces Iranian dominance. The emerging system may instead be characterized by multiple centers of coercive power.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Xi's landmark US visit advances China's vision for Tehran-Washington dialogue and global stability

From Page 1 ► steering major-power dynamics toward peaceful coexistence, and actively reshaping global governance toward a more just, balanced, and inclusive world order.

During his meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House on Thursday, the Chinese president discussed a wide range of issues, including the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Xi expressed hope that the United States and Iran will promptly return to the path of dialogue and negotiation. He reiterated China's firm support for both sides returning to the Islamabad memorandum of understanding (MoU). The Chinese leader also voiced optimism that the two nations will ultimately reach a comprehensive agreement covering the nuclear file and other pertinent matters to achieve lasting peace at an early date. Xi highlighted Beijing's constructive role in easing tensions and de-escalating crises. He added that China has consistently encouraged all relevant parties to remain committed to peaceful resolutions and sustain diplomatic momentum.

The MoU, signed virtually between Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Trump on June 17, was intended to bolster the April 8 ceasefire that paused the US-Israeli military campaign

launched on February 28. However, in clear violation of the interim agreement, the US continued its aerial bombardment across southern Iran. Since the outbreak of hostilities, China has consistently championed dialogue as the only viable path to ending the conflict.

Speaking at the 18th BRICS Summit in the Indian capital on September 12, President Xi emphasized that "China will work with fellow BRICS members to play a due role in bringing peace and tranquility" to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region.

Earlier, on September 2, during talks with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Cairo, President Xi articulated a four-point vision for a new security architecture in the Middle East centered on common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. This initiative builds on the four-point peace proposal for the Middle East that he put forward in April, which advocated for peaceful coexistence, respect for territorial sovereignty, adherence to international law, and the synergistic coordination of development and security. Both initiatives have been warmly welcomed by senior Iranian leadership.

Xi's calls for restoring peace and stability to the Middle East reflect a broader commitment



to advancing global peace in the service of humanity.

In the White House meeting, President Xi stressed that China-US relations should "achieve mutual benefit and win-win results through practical cooperation," underscoring that such an approach benefits not only the people of both nations but the entire global community. These remarks align directly with Beijing's overarching vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

President Xi's state visit to the United States has captured global headlines and commanded worldwide attention. Trump's decision to personally welcome President Xi upon his tarmac arrival on Wednesday—departing from standard protocol rather than waiting at the

White House—testifies to the profound esteem accorded to China's leader on his first visit to the US in over a decade. The unprecedented reception extended to President Xi reflects the international recognition of China's robust governance model and its enduring contributions to human progress.

Ultimately, President Xi's visit represents a transformative milestone for contemporary diplomacy. China's institutional strength and diplomatic philosophy present a compelling paradigm anchored in mutual respect, sovereignty, equitable development, and a shared future for all humanity—a vision the international community must engage with earnest resolve.

New rigs added to drilling fleet as South Pars output rises

TEHRAN- The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company said: Three new rigs have been added to the country's drilling fleet, an action that is an important investment for developing drilling capacity and accelerating the implementation of development projects.

According to Mehr News Agency, Touraj Dehghani, in a meeting with the CEO and board members of the National Iranian Oil Company, referred to the production performance of Pars Oil and Gas Company and said: "Over the past two years, 30 million cubic meters have been added to the stabilized rich gas production capacity from the South Pars shared field. This increase in capacity is the result of development and completion activities in the Phase 11 development plan, infill work, and the completion of 35-month projects."

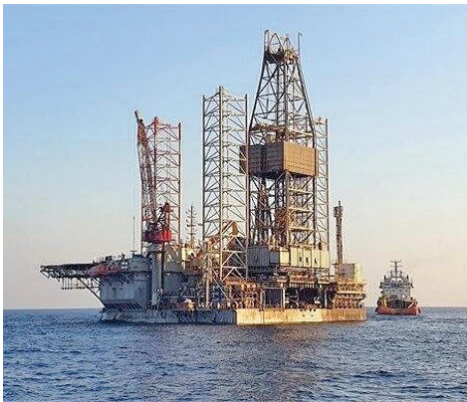
According to Pars Oil and Gas Company, he added: "In the same period, relying on the capacities created and the continuous efforts of all parts of the company, a daily production record of 730 million cubic meters of gas was registered in South Pars, which shows the continuation of development and operational activities to maintain and increase production capacity from this shared field."

The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company also reported a significant increase in the drilling fleet in the company's projects and said: "The number of active rigs of this company has increased from four to 13."

Dehghani added: "With the support of the Minister of Oil and the National Iranian Oil Company, three new rigs have been added to the country's drilling fleet. This action is considered an important investment for developing drilling capacities and accelerating the implementation of development projects in the Persian Gulf and maintaining gas production from the South Pars field."

He considered the realization of these achievements to be the result of the efforts of a broad group of Pars Oil and Gas Company employees and the support of the Ministry of Oil and the National Iranian Oil Company, and stated: "These measures are the result of synergy and the continuous efforts of colleagues in various operational, development, and staff sections."

Dehghani, stating that Pars Oil and Gas



Company is responsible for a significant part of the oil industry's tasks in gas production in the upstream sector, and that over the past two years, alongside the implementation of development and production programs, it has also faced conditions caused by war and regional tensions, added: "Following damage to the Phase 14 refinery of South Pars in the 12-day war and also to four other refineries during the Ramadan war, the responsibility for reconstructing three refining complexes of the South Pars field was assigned to Pars Oil and Gas Company. In recent months, the major part of the company's focus and executive capacity has been on advancing the reconstruction operations of these refineries."

Stating that all missions related to debris removal and reconstruction are classified as high-risk activities, he said: "To manage risks precisely, weekly meetings are held at the refineries, and the reconstruction process is being carried out with continuous monitoring of safety requirements and technical standards."

The CEO of Pars Oil and Gas Company said: "In recent months, the company has faced extensive challenges, but with the support of senior oil industry managers and the efforts of the company's managers, experts, and employees, this organization has been able to pursue its missions seriously. The achievements made in production, development, drilling, and reconstruction are the result of the determination and efforts of employees who, in difficult conditions, have seriously pursued their responsibilities and are still working to maintain production, develop the South Pars shared field, and carry out the missions assigned to them in the oil industry."

Iran's horticulture development adopts 'Technology-Driven Development' scenario



TEHRAN- According to the findings of the report "Future Studies of the Role of Research, Education, and Extension in the Development of Iran's Horticulture," the "technology-driven development" scenario was introduced as the proposed path for the development of Iran's horticulture in the horizon of Iranian calendar year 1420 (begins on March 2037).

According to Mehr News Agency, Iran's horticulture sector, with an annual production of 25 million tons of products and direct employment of more than 800,000 people, is one of the important pillars of the country's agricultural economy, but it faces challenges including limited water resources, declining productivity, and weakness in the knowledge transfer system.

This study was conducted with the aim of future-studies analysis of the development of Iran's horticulture and with emphasis on the role of agricultural research, education, and extension, and used data from the Sta-

tistical Center of Iran, the Ministry of Agriculture-Jihad, and the Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to design scenarios.

To quantify the consequences of each scenario, a Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) model, ARIMA time series models, and Monte Carlo simulation with 10,000 iterations were used.

According to the report's findings, in the "continuation of the existing trend" scenario, agricultural sector employment decreases from 2.07 million people to 1.94 million people, equivalent to a 6 percent decline. In this scenario, the trade balance of horticultural products reaches \$4.7 billion.

In the "technology-driven development" scenario, two key assumptions were considered: increasing the research budget to 1.5 percent of the agricultural sector's value added and achieving 80 percent extension coverage of beneficiaries.

Based on the modeling performed, in this scenario, the value added of the horticulture sector increases by 61 percent, and 480,000 new jobs are created in the value chain. Also, agricultural sector employment will increase by 26 percent.

Another result of this scenario is a 78 percent improvement in water productivity, such that water productivity rises from 18.5 to 33 thousand rials per cubic meter.

Horticultural product exports in this scenario are also estimated at \$12 billion, which is 94 percent more than the "continuation of the existing trend" scenario.

Transport minister inaugurates 281km of highways, main roads in Sistan-Baluchestan

TEHRAN- With the presence of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, 281 kilometers of highways and main roads in Sistan-Baluchestan province were put into operation. Of the inaugurated projects, 134 kilometers are in the south of the province, 89 kilometers in the north, and 58 kilometers on the North-South Corridor and coastal routes of the province.

According to IRNA, the deputy minister of transport and urban development said at the ceremony that inaugurating transport infrastructure is not merely a construction measure. He said that operating 281 kilometers of main roads and highways in Sistan-Baluchestan increases part of the province's economic power and security.

Houshang Bazvand, while commemorating Sacred Defense Week, thanked the Minister of Transport and Urban Development for his attention to developing transport infrastructure in the province.

Referring to Sistan-Baluchestan's capacities, he said: "With the measures taken and the governor's follow-up, Sistan-Baluchestan can no longer be considered a remote region today, and this province has become an economic and trade gateway for the country."

Inaugurating transport infrastructure is not just a construction job

The deputy minister of transport and urban development, referring to the minister's approach to infrastructure development, added: "Inaugurating transport infrastructure is not only the inauguration of a construction project; it is part of the country's and the province's economic power and also part of their economic security."

He continued: "This approach has been pursued at the national level, and the experience of war also showed the importance of this strategy and of attention to infrastructure."

The CEO of the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company also thanked the performance of the Directorate General of Transport and Urban Development of South Sistan-Baluchestan.

Bazvand, referring to the country's coastal corridor, said: "This corridor extends from Khuzestan province to Sistan-Baluchestan, and more than 1,116 kilometers of it is located in Sistan and Baluchestan province."

He also referred to the East-West Corridor and added: "This corridor begins at the Mirjaveh border and, passing through Sistan and Baluchestan, Kerman, Fars, and Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad provinces, reaches Khuzestan."

The deputy minister, stating that the physical progress of different parts of these corridors varies, emphasized the need for special attention to the coastal corridor from Jask to Chabahar.

Bazvand, referring to the operation of 281 kilometers of main



roads and highways in the province, said: "These 281 kilometers are not merely the inauguration of a construction project; they are part of the province's economic power and security."

Referring to the minister's emphasis that a road is a great wealth, he added: "Our view must change from the road as a project to the road, then the corridor, and ultimately the economy."

The CEO of the Construction and Development of Transportation Infrastructure Company stressed: "Corridors can play a role in the province's economy and security, and operating these projects increases part of the province's economic capacity."

Bazvand thanked Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development; the governor of Sistan-Baluchestan; deputies and directors of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development; the provincial deputy for development; governors; and all those involved in implementing the projects.

According to IRNA, Sistan-Baluchestan, due to its geographical expanse, the long distance between population centers, its location on important national and international corridors, access to open waters, proximity to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and its port, transit, mining, agricultural, tourism, and border trade capacities, needs a safe, fast, and standard transport network more than many other regions of the country.

In such a large geography, a highway is not only a construction project; it is part of the infrastructure for economic, security, social, and territorial development. Every kilometer of a four-lane route in Sistan and Baluchestan can reduce the distance between production and market, port and hinterland, city and village, border and the center of the country, and even economic opportunity and population.

A review of the 14th government's two-year performance in the roads sector of Sistan-Baluchestan shows that the policy of developing communication infrastructure in this period has moved beyond the stage of defining projects and study promises and has reached the stage of implementation, completion, and operation in a significant part.

According to announced statistics, 59 highway and main road construction sites are currently active across the province, with

16 sites operating in the north and 43 in the south.

These sites have provided employment for about 6,000 people.

The activity of this number of sites, in addition to creating direct employment for executive forces, has significant indirect effects on the local economy. The activity of contractors, heavy machinery, material supply, transport, technical services, equipment repair and maintenance, and the supply chain of projects activates a set of dependent economic activities around construction projects.

From this perspective, highway projects can also be considered part of the province's employment and economic prosperity policy.

The governor of Sistan-Baluchestan, referring to the completion of rail-laying operations for the Chabahar-Zahedan railway, stated: "Rail laying on the Chabahar-Irانشahr route has been completed, and the rail connection of this area has been made. Rail-laying operations in the Chabahar port area have also been carried out, and the project has now entered the stage of completing operations and preparing for operation."

According to IRNA, Mansour Bijar said on Thursday during a visit by Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development, to the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project: "After the special order of the Minister of Transport and Urban Development, the necessary actions and plans to accelerate the completion of the project were placed on the agenda, and in this regard, the supply of needed tools, equipment, and machinery for the project increased."

He continued: "So far, 60,000 packages of technical equipment, including bolts, springs, guides, and pads, have been sent to the sites, and planning has been done to supply other needed equipment. Also, the number of project locomotives has increased from one to four, tamping machines from 2 to 3, and regulator equipment has also increased."

The governor of Sistan-Baluchestan, referring to measures taken to supply the switches needed for the project, stated: "Fifty-five switches needed for the project have been purchased, 28 of which have been sent to the project so far, and the remaining 27 must be sent before 15 Mehr."

He also announced an increase in ballast transport and production capacity and said: "The number of ballast transport wagons has increased from 17 to 70, and it is planned that this number will reach 105 wagons within the next 10 days. Also, daily ballast production has increased from 1,000 cubic meters to 2,500 cubic meters."

Bijar, stating that executive operations in different sections of the route are being pursued quickly, said: "So far, 134 kilometers of rail welding and 55 kilometers of second-layer ballast have been carried out in the Chabahar-Irانشahr area."

Referring to the project's progress in the Irانشahr-Khash area, he added: "Last year, rail-laying operations on this route were pursued despite existing constraints and the difficult conditions of the region, and the Khash-Irانشahr section was also completed, and now it is possible to use this route."

The governor of Sistan-Baluchestan, referring to the schedule for operating the project, said: "A schedule has been prepared for the operation of this project by the end of Dey, and the remaining actions are being pursued according to this schedule."

Farzaneh Sadegh, Minister of Transport and Urban Development, visited the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project during her one-day trip to Sistan-Baluchestan. With its implementation, the country's only oceanic port will be connected to the national rail network.

The Chabahar-Zahedan railway project has a direct length of 630 kilometers, and its length, including branch lines, reaches 735 kilometers.

According to information about this project, the passenger transport capacity of the Chabahar-Zahedan railway is 2.2 million people, and its freight transport capacity is 7.7 million tons.

The project includes 39 tunnels with a total length of 17 kilometers, 201 intersections and special bridges, and about 2,000 culverts.

Also, in implementing the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project, 90,000 tons of domestically produced rail will be used, and the project has 33 stations.

The earthworks volume of this project is 70 million cubic meters, and its concrete pouring volume is 2.5 million cubic meters.

During this one-day trip, the Minister of Transport and Urban Development will also participate in the centralized inauguration ceremony of projects in the area of the Construction Company and Road Maintenance Organization, the operation of housing units for the disadvantaged, regeneration target projects, and the inauguration of port projects in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

A group of deputies of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development accompanied the minister on this trip.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's exports to Armenia rise 7.5% in 7 months on year

TEHRAN- The Director General of the Central Asia, Caucasus and Russia Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran announced a 7.5% increase in Iran's exports to Armenia during the seven months of 2026, putting the value of goods exported from Iran to Armenia in that period at \$385 million.

According to IRNA, citing the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mehdi Babaei said, referring to the joint Iranian-Armenian border and customs meeting held on September 12, in Jolfa, that at the meeting the two sides stressed the development of customs cooperation and the facilitation of trade between the two countries.

He described one of the most important

agreements of the meeting as the signing of a customs green corridor memorandum of understanding between Iran and Armenia, and said: "The necessary measures for the electronic exchange of customs documents and data, as well as identifying and introducing authorized operators, will be pursued more rapidly."

Babaei, emphasizing that the implementation of these measures can provide the basis for facilitating and accelerating customs and transit processes at the two countries' border, added: "Based on the agreements reached, if the desired requirements are met, the truck reception capacity at the Norduz border can increase to 300 trucks per day."

The Director General of the Central Asia, Caucasus and Russia Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran considered the development of customs infrastructure, electronic exchange of information, and increased truck traffic capacity at the Norduz border as paving the way for trade facilitation and strengthening Iran-Armenia economic and transit relations.

The joint Iranian-Armenian border customs meeting was held with the presence of the heads and directors of the customs administrations of the two countries, the Armenian ambassador in Tehran, the embassy's commercial attaché, and representatives of relevant bodies of both countries.

A war criminal’s fiction to empty seats

From 77 delegations walking out inside to a high-profile protest outside, Netanyahu faces overwhelming rejection

From page 1 ▶ He asked why the General Assembly, which barred apartheid South Africa in the 1970s, granted a platform to a leader facing International Criminal Court arrest warrants for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

Asadi cited UN figures showing Israel dropped over 200,000 tons of explosives on Gaza, equivalent to 13 Hiroshima-scale nuclear bombs, while noting Netanyahu admitted to tens of thousands of Palestinian casualties.

Dissecting the claims

Netanyahu spent a significant portion of his address attempting to refute international charges.

He labeled accusations of genocide “the greatest lie of the century” and insisted Israel had actually prevented genocide. To support his argument, he cited the delivery of two million tons of food, one million polio vaccinations, and millions of warning text messages sent to civilians.

That defense collapses when examined against international legal frameworks and independent documentation.

Independent UN commissions and the International Association of Genocide Scholars have concluded that the pattern of operations in Gaza meets the legal threshold for genocide.

Regulating minimal humanitarian supply deliveries while maintaining horrendous siege conditions, widespread bombardment, and the destruction of medical infrastructure demonstrates direct control over civilian survival.

Moving some civilians via text messages offers no protection when designated destination zones lack basic shelter, water, and security.

Netanyahu also attempted to minimize rising violence by Israeli forces and settlers in the occupied West Bank. He described the perpetrators as “a handful of juvenile delinquents, numbering around 150,” who



Protesters hold anti-Israel rally in New York following Netanyahu's UN speech

throw stones or chop down olive trees, claiming the annual death toll was “two or three.”

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) data directly contradicts those claims. By July 2026, settler attacks had killed at least 18 Palestinians that year.

UN OCHA recorded over 1,600 settler attacks resulting in casualties or property damage through September 2026, averaging more than six attacks per day.

Rights groups have reported a conviction rate of just 3 percent for settler violence, proving systemic impunity.

Stunts and public attacks

The address also functioned as a domestic campaign speech ahead of upcoming Israeli elections rather than a diplomatic initiative.

Netanyahu attacked various international figures, calling Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan a tyrant, accusing Qatar of funding global anti-Israel campaigns, and condemning New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

He accused Mamdani of making New York “unsafe for Jews.” Mamdani responded that Netanyahu used the UN podium to repeat baseless lies to sanitize genocide, emphasizing that no rhetoric changes the reality of the ICC warrant.

Qatar similarly rejected the accusations, stating that shift-

ing global public opinion stems from citizens witnessing real-time destruction on the ground rather than external influence campaigns.

In a widely mocked stunt, Netanyahu displayed a Starlink satellite device at the podium. He held up the satellite dish, saying Starlink “allows people to access truth, to exercise choice, to exercise freedom of thought and freedom of speech.”

The gesture rang hollow. Israel has spent years systematically blacking out Gaza's communications, cutting electricity and internet while barring independent foreign reporters from the Strip.

The Committee to Protect Journalists recorded that Israeli forces killed more than 260 journalists and media workers across West Asia since October 2023, more than 191 of them Palestinians in Gaza alone, making Israel responsible for more journalist deaths than any regime or government CPJ has recorded since 1992.

CPJ data show Israel responsible for two-thirds of the record 129 press deaths worldwide in 2025 and the bulk of confirmed targeted murders of journalists in recent years. No other military comes close.

At the same time, Israel has poured more than a billion dollars into manipulative hasbara influence operations since late

2023, funding U.S. lobbying firms, conservative influencers, evangelical outreach, social-media amplification and efforts to shape AI responses, all aimed at managing Western opinion while the cameras stay out of Gaza.

Following the speech, Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon approached Iranian diplomat Nasser Asadi to hand over the terminal while making comments about regime change. Asadi looked away and refused to engage.

Hafez Hakami, Iran's Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, addressed the Starlink provocation directly: “The weaponization of technology has reached a new record — now the butcher of Gaza is promoting Starlink! Starlink now faces its toughest reputational test: being publicly championed by those behind the Gaza catastrophe. Communication networks must remain neutral — serving civilians, never a tool of war or terror.”

Mass arrests on First Avenue

While Netanyahu spoke inside, civil unrest filled the streets of Manhattan.

Organizers from Jewish Voice for Peace staged a sit-in on First Avenue outside UN headquarters. Roughly 200 protesters wearing matching white shirts reading “Fund people not bombs” blocked traffic while chanting against military aid to Israel.

New York police arrested 103 demonstrators, including Oscar-winning actor Susan Sarandon, actor Hannah Einbinder, City Council member Chi Osse, and congressional candidate Darializa Avila Chevalier.

The contrast was stark. Outside, peaceful protesters were handcuffed for opposing war crimes. Inside, a leader wanted by international courts used the UN rostrum to justify military aggression, greeted only by row after row of vacant desks.

Eight attempted suicides are incredibly high,” one US military official told CNN, noting recent carrier strike group deployments have had one or two per year. “The strain of combat ops is much higher than normal deployments. No port calls, constant alerts, etc.”

Lebanon’s silenced voice

From page 1 ▶ That raises a far more uncomfortable question for us as Lebanese, especially the Southerners: where is Beirut's voice?

At a time when Israeli aggression goes unabated in Lebanon, with airspace violations, bombardment, demolitions, troop movements and repeated breaches of Lebanon's sovereignty documented by the United Nations, the most striking feature of Lebanon's international presence is not the absence of evidence—it is the weakness of the official voice defending that evidence.

This is where the silence of the Lebanese government, and particularly the performance expected

NAZA, off screen

From page 1 ▶

What does NAZA mean?

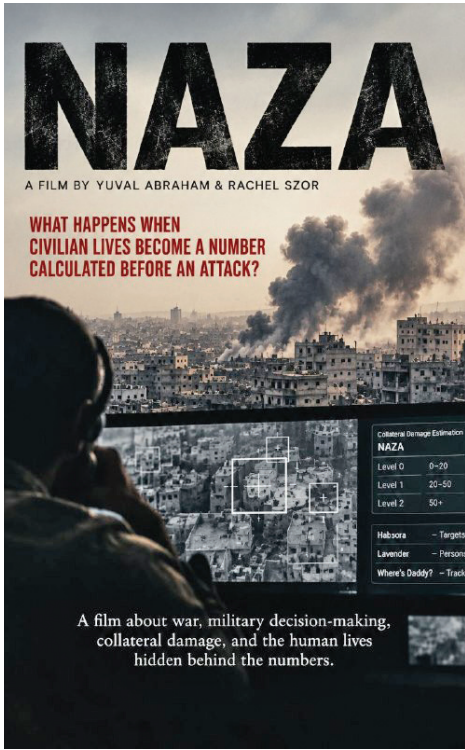
NAZA comes from נזק אגבי, an acronym for nezek agavi (נזק אגבי), literally “collateral damage,” an expression incorporated into Israeli military language. In planning certain attacks, the military apparatus makes a prior estimate of the civilian casualties the operation could cause. The so-called “NAZA number” expresses that forecast: how many civilians could die as a consequence of the attack before it is authorized. Put simply, the calculation begins with the identification of a target, intelligence about the people who are inside it or in its vicinity, and the anticipated effects of the munition. NAZA, therefore, is neither artificial intelligence nor software: it is a military concept and calculation. New technologies may play a role in identifying and assessing targets, but the term predates them. To trace its origins, we have to go back more than two decades. Ronen Bergman, an Israeli journalist specializing in intelligence, explains in Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations that during the Second Intifada, civilian deaths caused in targeted killing operations began to be referred to as nezek agavi, “collateral damage,” an expression that over time was condensed into the acronym NAZA.

From inside the system

Retired lieutenant colonel and former Israeli Military Intelligence member Sarit Zehavi says that nearly twenty years ago she took part in developing procedures designed to warn and monitor the evacuation of civilian populations, as well as in target-approval processes. Her public intervention is particularly revealing in relation to one of the figures associated with NAZA: 500. Zehavi maintains that “NAZA 500” does not mean an automatic authorization to kill five hundred civilians, but rather a prior estimate of potential harm that should lead to measures to reduce it through evacuations, changes in munitions, or even cancellation of the attack.

But the problem posed by NAZA goes beyond the existence of the calculation itself: what happens when the number of civilians expected to die increases and the attack is nevertheless authorized? The question took on another dimension after October 7, 2023. An investigation by The New York Times reported that the Israeli military loosened certain rules of engagement and, in some operations, allowed the risk of killing up to 20 civilians even when targeting lower-ranking combatants. The procedure, however, predates this period. Testimonies from Israeli soldiers collected by Breaking the Silence after the 2014 Gaza offensive describe categories of nezek agavi—collateral damage—classified into levels 0, 1, and 2. One of those testimonies makes a fundamental point: those levels did not count buildings or material damage. They counted human lives.

NAZA is not the only mechanism involved in target selection. In recent years, other tools used by Israeli intelligence have become known. Habsora (The Gos-



pel) processes large amounts of information to help identify possible physical targets, such as buildings or infrastructure. Lavender focuses on individuals, generating assessments of their possible links to armed organizations. And Where's Daddy?, the name attributed by intelligence sources to a tracking system, was reportedly used to locate previously identified individuals, including when they were in their homes. NAZA serves a different function: it estimates the anticipated collateral damage before an attack. It does not determine who the target is, but how many civilians could be affected by striking it. These tools do not necessarily operate together or in every operation, but they reveal different stages of the same architecture: identify, locate, calculate the damage, and decide whether to strike.

Designing death

The precedent appears in This Is How We Fought in Gaza: Soldiers' Testimonies and Photographs from Operation “Protective Edge” (2014), a report published in 2015 by the Israeli organization Breaking the Silence (Shovrim Shtika), which brings together testimonies from more than sixty Israeli soldiers and officers who took part in Operation Protective Edge in 2014. Among them, testimony 109 is particularly revealing. At the end, the interviewer asks whether that collateral damage also included material destruction. The answer is no: the levels referred exclusively to human lives. NAZA therefore begins long before a bomb falls on Gaza. It begins in that space cinema can almost never show: a room, a screen, a set of data, a number, and someone who ultimately decides. What we will later see as an image—a destroyed building, bodies, survivors—had already existed before in another form: as a calculation. Perhaps that is where the power of the title and the film lies: bringing into the frame what had remained off screen. Behind the abstraction of “collateral damage,” behind every level and every number, lies something that technical language turns into a figure: human lives.

from its Foreign Ministry, becomes a political question rather than a matter of diplomatic style.

Diplomacy is not merely the production of carefully worded statements, nor is the foreign minister's role limited to attending meetings, exchanging courtesies and repeating familiar formulations.

When a country's sovereignty is being violated, diplomacy is supposed to turn facts into political pressure, violations into international accountability, and national grievances into an issue that the world cannot conveniently ignore.

Lebanon already possesses the language of international law. United Nations records themselves document continuing Israeli viola-

tions of Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity.

So what exactly prevents Beirut from turning this documented reality into a sustained diplomatic campaign?

The problem is not a shortage of diplomatic vocabulary. Lebanon knows how to say “condemnation,” “sovereignty,” “territorial integrity,” “international law” and “Resolution 1701.”

The problem is whether these words are being deployed as instruments of political confrontation or merely recited as diplomatic formalities.

A state under attack cannot afford to behave as though its principal concern is avoiding discomfort

in international corridors.

It cannot allow the aggressor's narrative to circulate freely while its own narrative remains buried in technical statements and procedural correspondence. It cannot surrender the visual, political and moral dimensions of its national tragedy to the language of bureaucracy.

The contrast becomes particularly sharp at the United Nations, where political symbolism matters. The international arena is not simply a place where governments read prepared texts. It is also a battlefield of narratives, legitimacy and public memory. A country that has villages under bombardment, displaced civilians, destroyed in-

frastructure and repeated violations of its territory possesses material with which to confront the international community directly and relentlessly.

Lebanon should therefore be asking uncomfortable questions:

— Where is the sustained diplomatic campaign documenting every violation?

— Where are the maps, images, testimonies and legal files being placed before international audiences?

— Where is the systematic effort to force governments, media organizations and international institutions to confront the consequences of violations against Lebanese territory?

— Where is the political language that names the problem clearly rather than allowing it to disappear beneath the vocabulary of “tensions” and “escalation”?

The United Nations itself has gone further than diplomatic timidity would suggest. The Secretary-General has explicitly called on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory and urged all parties to respect Lebanon's sovereignty and Resolution 1701.

UN reporting has likewise described the continued Israeli military activities south of the Blue Line as obstructing the extension of Lebanese state authority and the return of residents to their homes.

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

Iranian duo win silvers in gymnastic: 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iranian gymnasts Mahdi Olfati and Arman Khodaei won two silver medals in gymnastics at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan.

Olfati claimed the silver medal in the men's vault final at the Nagoya General Gymnasium in Aichi-Nagoya.

He finished second with an average score of 14.533 points, recording 15.100 on his first vault and 13.966 on his second attempt.

Carlos Edriel Yulo of the Philippines won the gold medal with an average score of 14.599 points.

Hong Kong's Ng Ka Ki took bronze with 14.116.

On Thursday, Khodaei secured a historic silver medal in the men's pommel horse final in artistic gymnastics.

Uzbekistan's Utkirbek Juraev claimed the gold medal with 14.733 points, while Japan's Daiki Hashimoto took the bronze with 14.500 points.

The two silver medals mark a notable achievement for Iran's gymnastics team at the 2026 Asian Games.

Hossein Abdi resigns as Iran U23 head coach

TEHRAN – Hossein Abdi has stepped down as head coach of Iran's U23 national team following the team's return from the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, taking responsibility for the heavy defeat against North Korea.

Iran's U23 team returned home on Friday morning after being eliminated in the group stage of the Asian Games in Nagoya. Shortly after arriving in Iran, Abdi spoke to reporters at the airport about his team's performance and the reasons behind the disappointing campaign.

Abdi pointed to difficulties in securing the release of players and challenges related to the planning of training camps. However, he stressed that despite these issues, he accepted responsibility for the technical consequences of the heavy defeat to North Korea.

Describing the match as an “unusual” game, Abdi revealed that his resignation had been discussed even before the tournament. However, the coaching staff ultimately decided to remain with the team and see the competition through.

The former Iran U23 head coach also said that by submitting his resignation, he was giving the Ministry of Sports and the National Olympic Committee the opportunity to make decisions regarding the future of the team ahead of June.

Iran football: dark days

TEHRAN – Iran's football team have once again failed to beat Uzbekistan, suffering a 3-1 defeat to the White Wolves in Tashkent.

Team Melli, coached by Amir Ghalenoei, have beaten Uzbekistan just once in their last eight meetings, while suffering three defeats during that period. Uzbekistan have undoubtedly made significant progress in recent years, but they are still not considered one of Asia's traditional heavyweights.

Despite Iran's disappointing results, the Football Federation of Iran has decided to continue working with Ghalenoei. The decision comes after Team Melli missed a historic opportunity at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, where they failed to advance to the knockout stage. Yet, their campaign was celebrated as a success because Iran went through the tournament without suffering a defeat.

It is difficult to see that as anything more

than a missed opportunity.

Iran's U23 team also suffered a disappointing exit from the 2026 Asian Games, losing 4-1 to North Korea on Wednesday. It was a disastrous result for Hossein Abdi's side and another worrying sign for the state of Iranian football.

Not long ago, Iran had the upper hand against teams such as Uzbekistan and North Korea. Today, however, victories over these sides have become increasingly difficult to achieve.

Elsewhere in Asia, Japan defeated Uruguay 3-1, while South Korea recorded an impressive 3-0 victory over Ecuador.

Ghalenoei had promised to rejuvenate Team Melli and build a team for the future. However, we continue to see experienced players such as Ehsan Hajisafi and Shojae Khalilzadeh occupying places in the squad.

This cannot be the right path for Iranian football. Without a serious change in approach, the future of Iran's national team could become increasingly uncertain.

Iran 3x3 basketball win bronze in Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iran's men's 3x3 basketball team won the bronze medal at the Asian Games in Nagoya after defeating the Philippines 21–10 in the third-place match.

Iran's squad featured Mohammad Ghafari, Basir Momeni, Sarem Jafari, and Mehdi Rahimi. The team narrowly missed the final after losing 14–11 to Qatar in the semifinals.

Earlier in the tournament, Iran advanced to the final four by defeating Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia.

Coached by Mohammad Sistani, the Iranian team showed strong performances throughout the competition and secured a podium finish with a convincing victory over the Philippines.

The bronze medal marked a successful campaign for Iran.

Uzbekistan defeat Iran in friendly

TEHRAN – Uzbekistan football team defeated Iran 3-1 in a friendly match on Thursday.

Eldor Shomurodov put the hosts into the lead just 10 minutes into the match in Tashkent.

Uzbekistan's Jakhongir Urosov scored an own goal in the 49th minute.

Shomurodov was on target once again in the 59th minute from the penalty spot.

Khusain Norchaev scored Uzbekistan's third goal in the added time.

Amir Ghalenoei's Iran will meet Russia in another friendly in the coming days.

Iran wushu athlete Mousavi claims gold

TEHRAN – Soheil Mousavi of Iran won a gold medal at the 2026 Asian Games wushu on Thursday.

He defeated Kazakhstan's Abdurashid Abdullayev in the men's 75kg at the Aichi Prefectural Martial Arts Hall.

Iranian wushu practitioners Sogand Sinkaie, Shoja Panahi and Erfan Moharrami won three silver medals.

In the women's 52kg, Sinkaie lost to China's Wu Di in the final and claimed the silver.

Panahi also snatched a silver in the men's 65kg division, losing to China's Wang Chengjin in the final.

And Moharrami earned Iran's third medal in the Games. He lost to China's Ma Shuo in the gold-medal bout of the men's 70kg.

Iran, India have huge potential for cooperation in health and tourism: Ambassador

From Page 1 ▶ We really want to establish Iran as one of the major centers where we can promote and practice wellness traditions such as the concept of yoga, what comes along with yoga, Ayurveda, and a very healthy way of living, I think.

And I think these systems are very relevant. They are very relevant in today's world because our lives have become very complex. We get exposed to a lot of elements which are alien to our body and to our culture. So I think this kind of healing, or this kind of healthy lifestyle, which involves yoga, Ayurveda and homeopathy, can help moderate our body and enable us to have, at least, a mentally healthy lifestyle.

We intend to do a lot of activities in Iran in cooperation with the government of Iran, whatever the rules and regulations allow.

And I think one of my important missions out here, first of all, at this point in time, would be to look at how we can generate greater cooperation in the health sector.

You mentioned the health sector as an important area of cooperation. What are the areas where you see the greatest potential for expanding India-Iran health cooperation?

So today I was there; I went to Iran Pharma, the largest pharmaceutical exposition in Iran. There also, a lot of Indian companies had opened up their booths. So there is a lot of cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector between the two countries.

That is also something which can be scaled up a lot, given the geopolitical situation improves. InshaAllah, when things become better, I think there is huge potential for a large amount of pharmaceutical cooperation in terms of the export of APIs to Iran, training, technical expertise exchanges be-



New Delhi's Ambassador to Tehran Vishwesh Negi (R) speaks with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of a ceremony hosted by the Indian embassy in Tehran to mark National Ayurveda Day on September 23, 2026.

tween health professionals in the two countries, and also looking at new forms of medicine, research and development.

You may be knowing that during the time of COVID, India had supplied 1 million doses of vaccines to Iran. That kind of cooperation suggests that there is trust between the two countries, and I think it all goes well.

So, as I said, there is huge potential in Ayurveda, in yoga and in conventional medicine.

But given the current circumstances, we are not able to realize the full potential. But inshaAllah, in time we will be able to.

What are your views on tourism relations between the two countries and ways to promote them?

Well, tourism, as I said, is some-

thing I have already spoken to a lot of Iranian policymakers about. The honorable Prime Minister of India has identified trade, tourism and technology as the three things we need to engage with friendly countries.

Tourism is an important sector for promotion. In recent years, the number of tourists going from Iran to India has come down a bit. It might be due to the geopolitical condition; it might be due to the economic condition. But we are very keen to bring it to the same level of tourism flows to India and even beyond.

So, we intend to take a lot of measures. We are looking at possibilities for relaxing the tourist visa regime, streamlining the processes, and rationalizing tourist visa fees so that Iranians have to pay less to go to India. We are also

trying to familiarize them with a lot of activities.

A lot of institutions in India, like Ayurveda, can be one of the aspects that can promote tourism from Iran to India, along with modern education, arts and various art forms. And I think all these things, this whole cultural connect between the two countries, will eventually promote greater tourism flows from Iran to India, and I think similarly from India to Iran.

So, I think, as I said, there is huge potential. We are trying to understand the ecosystem of the tourism infrastructure and create infrastructure so that Iranians can travel to India as easily as possible.

Shams Tabrizi mausoleum project seen as boost for cultural tourism



TEHRAN – The completion and opening of the mausoleum of Shams Tabrizi in Khoy will mark a major milestone for cultural

diplomacy and tourism in West Azarbaijan, the provincial governor said.

Speaking at a meeting on

Wednesday to coordinate the opening ceremony, Governor-General Reza Rahmani described the national project as a symbol of the province's mystical and cultural identity and said its completion would go beyond an infrastructure achievement.

The complex includes modern facilities such as a specialized library and exhibition spaces and will be capable of hosting major international events, including international events on Shams Tabrizi and Rumi, Rahmani said.

He said the project could help attract foreign tourists and introduce Iran's intangible cultural heritage to international audiences.

Rahmani also highlighted the

province's transit potential, saying its borders, given their proximity to Europe and current international flight restrictions, could provide opportunities to increase cross-border traffic and economic activity. He stressed the need to strengthen infrastructure, particularly airport facilities.

Shams Tabrizi (1185–1248) was a 13th-century Persian mystic whose teachings profoundly influenced Jalal al-Din Rumi. He is the namesake of Rumi's Divan-e Shams-e Tabrizi and is traditionally associated with Rumi's spiritual transformation. Khoy, in West Azarbaijan province, has historically served as a crossroads of culture and commerce.

Zoroastrian funerary inscription from late Sasanian era discovered in southern Iran

TEHRAN – A newly discovered funerary inscription dating to the late Sasanian period and associated with a Zoroastrian burial has been found in a carved frame north of the ancient city of Estakhr in Marvdasht plain of Fars province, southern Iran.

The inscription is written in Pahlavi script and is believed to be associated with one of the burials of Zoroastrian followers during the late Sasanian period, Jamaran.ir quoted archaeologist Abolhassan Atabaki as saying on Thursday.

The archaeologist explained that with the expansion of Zoroastrianism in the post-Achaemenid period and later during the Sasanian era, burial practices underwent fundamental changes. Many burials in the ground were abandoned and funerary practices were transferred to elevated and mountainous areas, a shift he attributed primarily to Zoroastrian beliefs concerning bodily resurrection and life after death.

According to Atabaki, Zoroastrians regarded the world beneath the ground as dark, stagnant and associated with evil. They therefore avoided burying the dead directly in the soil.

The corpse was also considered capable of contaminating sacred elements such as earth, vegetation and water. At the same time, Zoroastrians believed that the soul of the deceased should ascend toward the rays of the sun.

For this reason, the body was placed in elevated structures known as “sun towers” before the final funerary stage, where rituals including “khorshid-negahreshni” were performed and the bones were purified. After birds of prey and other scavenging animals removed the flesh, the cleaned bones were transferred to places among rocks and cliffs, Atabaki said.

Variety of Sasanian burial practices in Marvdasht

In that regard, Najmeh Ebrahimi, a history expert, said the Sasanian period saw a variety

of burial practices, depending on the social status and financial means of individuals.

These included rock-cut graves, stone cairns, grave towers, trough-shaped graves, jar burials, small “dakhmaks” and ossuaries. Such funerary structures are referred to as “dakhmak” in many Sasanian inscriptions.

Ebrahimi highlighted the archaeological importance of the Marvdasht plain, saying that the area contains the largest known concentration of Sasanian inscriptions, with more than 50 inscriptions discovered and reread to date.

The plain also ranks first in terms of Sasanian funerary inscriptions, she added.

The inscription is believed to provide further evidence for the funerary practices and religious beliefs of Zoroastrian communities in the Marvdasht region during the final centuries of the Sasanian period.

UN coordinator calls for joint action to protect Caspian Sea

TEHRAN – Protecting the Caspian Sea is not only an environmental priority but also a priority for sustainable development, UN Resident Coordinator in Iran Christine Weigand said, noting that the environmental challenges facing the transboundary body of water require joint and collaborative solutions.

Weigand made the remarks 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.

The gathering of the five littoral states around a shared ecosystem provides an important opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation and translate common commitments into practical measures to protect the Caspian Sea, she said.

Noting that 2026 marks the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Tehran Convention, the UN official said the Caspian Sea has sustained human life and civilizations for thousands of years and remains a source of livelihoods and well-being, an important transportation route, a valuable reservoir of natu-



ral resources and a habitat for unique marine biodiversity.

“Protecting the Caspian Sea is not only an environmental priority, but a sustainable development priority,” she said, stressing that the health of the sea is directly linked to the livelihoods and well-being of surrounding communities, economic activities, sustainable natural resource management and regional resilience.

Environmental challenges, she added, do not stop at national borders. Marine pollution, biodiversity loss and mounting pressure on shared ecosystems have

transboundary consequences and therefore require cross-border and participatory solutions.

Weigand described the Tehran Convention as an important framework for joint action by the littoral states, saying it facilitates the advancement of scientific knowledge, the exchange of data and experience, the development of effective policies and the translation of shared commitments into collective action.

She also highlighted the UN’s role in supporting environmental cooperation in the region, noting that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) hosts

the Tehran Convention Secretariat, while various UN agencies operating in the region draw on their complementary expertise to support the littoral states in advancing the convention’s objectives.

In Iran, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP are working with national and local partners under the broader Caspian Sea initiative to translate regional commitments on marine litter and plastic pollution into concrete action, she said.

Strengthening waste separation and recycling in coastal communities, promoting circular approaches to plastics and providing community-based grants for local solutions are among the measures being pursued under the initiative, she added.

The UN Resident Coordinator also underscored the need to engage the private sector and local communities, including women and young people, in improving waste management systems.

“Protecting our seas is a shared responsibility, and no country, institution or organization can protect this unique ecosystem alone,” she said.

IRCS holds advanced life support course for Ghanaian health staff

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society’s health center in Ghana has held the first advanced life support course for nurses in the African country, aimed at strengthening their capacity to respond effectively to medical emergencies.

In addition to providing medical services, the center seeks to boost educational infrastructure and improve the knowledge of the health staff through sharing expertise with them, the IRCS website reported.

The IRCS is also holding an online training program and a practical training workshop at the center to ensure the specialized training will be ongoing so that the health personnel fully benefit from the IRCS capacity and knowledge.

The initiative does not merely target health staff; it also plans to train the local community. The program focuses on first aid training and essential rescue skills to prepare individuals for unexpected emergencies and teach them how to handle the situations and respond effectively to a wide range of injuries. In case of an emergency, the trained person can help the wounded people in the first critical seconds prior to the arrival of medical teams.

Health services in Ghana

In August, the IRCS health center in Ghana organized a one-day medical camp aimed to provide free medical services to flood victims and the needy, benefiting 547 individuals.

The initiative was taken following floods in the city of Accra and a request from the Min-

istry of the Ministry of Inner City and Zongo Development. IRNA quoted Hamidreza Dehqan, an IRCS official, as saying.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society’s health center was deployed to provide free medical care to those seeking assistance and individuals in need, Dehqan added.

He noted that 547 people benefited from health services during the one-day medical mission. The services provided included general practitioner consultations, medication distribution, pharmacy services, mobile laboratory testing, and counseling on midwifery and hygiene.

The humanitarian activities of the IRCS are not confined by geographical boundaries, Dehqan said, adding: “The presence of the Iranian Red Crescent Society’s health centers in various countries exemplifies the organization’s humanitarian approach to addressing the needs of local communities—an approach that prioritizes human dignity, assistance to the needy, and the alleviation of human suffering.”

In such programs, providing free medical services to those in need exemplifies altruism and humanitarian responsibility, demonstrating that serving humanity—transcending geographical boundaries—is one of the Iranian Red Crescent Society’s most vital missions, Dehqan stressed.

Referring to the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, he noted that humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary



service, unity, and universality constitute seven fundamental principles; the implementation of health programs in underdeveloped areas represents the practical manifestation of these principles in the field of service.

He emphasized that a key approach of the Iranian Red Crescent Society in its overseas operations is to simultaneously focus on treatment, prevention, and the promotion of community health.

“In this context, organizing health camps—alongside the ongoing activities of Red Crescent health centers—facilitates access to medical and counseling services for vulnerable groups.”

Pointing to the operations of the Iranian Red Crescent Society’s health center in Ghana, Dehqan stated that the continued presence of IRCS health centers in African nations is part of the Society’s humanitarian mission on the international stage, a presence founded on serving humanity and helping to improve the health of local communities.

vides opportunities for scientific and educational cooperation and professional exchange in childhood cancer treatment and care.

Through these international connections, MAHAK seeks to facilitate the exchange of expertise and experience and contribute to the development of more effective approaches to childhood cancer care.

MAHAK’s activities fall into three main categories: Charity, Hospital, and Research. These efforts exclusively serve children with cancer in areas such as medical care, prevention, treatment, healthcare, and welfare services. MAHAK’s slogan, “Help us and let us help you,” reflects the essential role of civil society in supporting humanity with love and compassion.

By 2025, MAHAK had provided comprehensive support to over 45,000 children with cancer and their families across Iran.



ening cooperation in cancer prevention and care.

The charity is also a full member of Childhood Cancer International (CCI), a global network of organizations working to improve the lives of children and adolescents with cancer and their families. The network provides a platform for international

cooperation and the exchange of experiences in childhood cancer care and support.

MAHAK also engages with the International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP), a leading international organization in the field of paediatric oncology. Its participation in SIOP-related programs and networks pro-

UNESCO chair in disaster risk reduction, resilience engineering inaugurated

TEHRAN – Minister of Science, Research, and Technology Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and the Secretary-General of Iran’s National Commission for UNESCO, Hassan Fartousi, inaugurated the UNESCO Chair in Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Engineering at Kharazmi University on Tuesday.

The chair is established on a synergistic approach aligned with the Sendai Global Framework for Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals, and UNESCO’s approaches to expanding education, science, technology, knowledge exchange, climate considerations, and the development of sustainable communities, msrt.ir reported.

According to Kharazmi University, the establishment of the chair represents a scientific and strategic imperative, given the current national and regional conditions in the country, such as climate change, the growing complexity of hazards, the expansion of human settlements, technological and human-induced risks, and the cascading effects of disasters.

This UNESCO Chair develops effective methods to assess and mitigate risks from natural hazards to existing and new school infrastructure, contributing to improved equitable access to safe learning environments for children in vulnerable communities, ensuring continuity of education services, and reducing life losses. The Chair has created a community for resilience engineering exceeding 3,000 members from more than 100 countries, instrumental in sharing knowledge to support disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Disasters are not anymore natural; invest in resilience

Disasters are not natural but the result of wrong decisions and mismanagement; funding for disaster risk reduction today will con-

tribute to safety and resilience in the future.

Floods, devastating storms, droughts, forest fires, dried-up wetlands, and earthquakes are examples of natural hazards that occur all over the world. Still, it is the increased intensity of hazards that is not considered natural.

Iran is a disaster-prone country that has faced almost all types of hazards, from earthquakes and floods to droughts, landslides, and dust.

About 33 out of the total 50 types of natural disasters known in the world have so far occurred in the country.

The diversity of disasters has adversely affected the country’s resilience, highlighting the need for disaster risk management more than ever.

Environmental resilience requires coordination between human development and ecological capacity. Policymaking and resource exploitation should not exceed the limits of ecosystems.

However, over the past few decades, some development activities have been inconsistent with the capacity of the environment and ecosystems; land use change, overexploitation of water and soil resources, and mismanagement of forests and natural resources have lowered the ability of ecosystems to recover and cope with disasters, making human societies more vulnerable.

Moreover, the impacts of disasters are far greater on low-income groups, those living in marginalized areas, and rural communities. Resilience is, above all, a social and justice-oriented issue; the involvement of local communities, universities, and the private sector in decision-making processes will contribute to the development of sustainable preventive strategies.

Iranian, Iraqi officials underline enhancing tech ties

TEHRAN – Ehsan Qaboul, head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology’s Center for International Scientific Cooperation, and Safaa Taqi Abd Nour Al-Issawi, president of Mustansiriyah University, have highlighted the need to boost technological cooperation and implement previously reached agreements.

The officials met on Tuesday in Tehran and agreed to conduct joint research projects and supervise postgraduate theses focused on Iran-Iraq shared issues, including economic, social, cultural, agricultural, and industrial challenges, IRNA reported.

Both parties agreed to have an active participation in the third Iran-Iraq Science Week. Qaboul, for his part, said the Iraqi university is expected to play an effective role in the week through defining and executing practical and synergistic programs in cooperation with top Iranian universities.

Highlighting Iran’s remarkable achievements in developing infrastructures for technology and innovation ecosystems, the official voiced the country’s readiness for collaboration with Iraqi research and academic centers to produce joint technological services and products.

The proposals were well-received by the Iraqi official. He announced the university’s determination to expand ties with leading Iranian universities while highlighting the need to follow up on the implementation of these agreements in the shortest possible time.

Iraq seeks to boost scientific, academic ties with Iran

On August 6, Iraqi officials in a meeting with Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, have called for expanding academic, scientific, and technological cooperation with Iran.

The science minister met Iraq’s Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Haider Abd-Dahd Al-Rubaie, Iraq’s Minister of Health, Abdul-Hussein al-Mousawi, and Acting Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Abdul Hussein Al-Mussa-wi, in Baghdad, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, the two sides underscored the need to expedite the implementa-

tion of the previously signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

Sharing Iran’s expertise in higher education development to achieve quantitative and qualitative goals, addressing the needs of Iraq’s substantial youth population, as well as attracting genius Iraqi students, and enhancing research collaborations were among the key focuses of the talks.

Simaei-Sarraf also held a meeting with Iraq’s National Wisdom Movement leader Sayyed Ammar al-Hakim.

Underlining the extensive scientific and academic capacities of Iran and Iraq, both parties exchanged views on strategies for promoting scientific cooperation, expanding joint research collaborations, and developing academic interactions between the higher education institutions of the two countries.

In April, Simaei-Sarraf and Al-Aboudi underlined the need to boost scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries.

The officials also discussed ways to develop collaborations on artificial intelligence (AI) utilizing the capacities of the two nations, IRNA reported.

During a meeting held in Tehran on April 18, Al-Aboudi announced that the establishment of a branch of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Iraq has been put on the agenda.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf voiced Iran’s readiness to share the country’s scientific, research, and educational achievements with Iraq to help enhance bilateral ties.

The official said that Iranian and Iraqi students have conducted a total of 350 joint research projects so far, which needs to be improved considering the available capacities.

Referring to an upcoming Iran-Iraq science week, which is scheduled to be held in Isfahan and Fars provinces, Simaei-Sarraf said the event was delayed because of the [US-Israeli imposed] war, but it will be held at the earliest convenience.

As the two officials agreed, AI and smart education will be among the topics to be discussed during the Iran-Iraq science week. The event is expected to lay the basis for holding a joint conference on AI in the near future.

