

Araghchi outlines Iran's diplomatic conditions, and regional priorities at NY

TEHRAN— Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has used a series of meetings, diplomatic engagements and media appearances on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly to lay out Tehran's positions on negotiations with Washington, the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's nuclear program, regional security, sanctions and the future of multilateral cooperation.

Across his remarks, Araghchi presented diplomacy as Iran's preferred avenue for resolving disputes, while insisting that negotiations must be conducted on the basis of sovereign equality. ► [Page 2](#)

Foreign Affairs: World learning from Iran's 'precise mass' warfare as costly Western systems falter

TEHRAN — In a stunning admission that challenges the foundations of modern Western military doctrine, the influential American journal Foreign Affairs has published a comprehensive analysis revealing how Iran has successfully dismantled the aggressive war plans of the United States and Israel.

The detailed report serves as a post-mortem on the hubris of the Pentagon, explicitly stating that the future of global warfare is being dictated by the very strategies pioneered by Tehran, and that the world is now actively learning from the Iranian model of endurance and precision. ► [Page 3](#)

Iraqi Resistance threatens nationwide sit-ins over US-pushed Iran flight ban

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The United States expanded its economic warfare against Iran into Iraqi airspace this week. Baghdad complied. Resistance factions immediately pushed back.

Following a September 8 U.S. Treasury threat to impose secondary sanctions on any airport servicing 27 Iranian airlines, the Iraqi government ordered aviation authorities in Baghdad, Najaf, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Kirkuk to suspend all Iranian flights. Najaf International Airport grounded operations in the early hours of Friday.

The closures have stranded thousands of religious pilgrims, students, and medical patients.

They have also sparked an immediate backlash from Islamic Resistance groups. Factions view the shutdown as a direct extension of the U.S.-Israeli military and economic campaign designed to weaken the Resistance Front. ► [Page 5](#)

“Memories of My Father” offers intimate portrait of Martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah

TEHRAN- “Memories of My Father,” written by Sayyed Mohammad Mahdi Nasrallah and translated into Persian by Bushra Sahebi, offers a firsthand account of the personal, family and ethical dimensions of Martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the late secretary-general of Lebanon's Hezbollah.

The Persian edition of the book has recently been published by Amirkabir Publications in Tehran, with the translation seeking to preserve the original tone and personal character of the author while presenting the work in accessible Persian. ► [Page 8](#)

Trump's 'Small Potatoes' Keep Growing

New Pentagon figures show wounded US troops rising as the war with Iran continues



Donald Trump attends a ceremony at Dover Air Force Base in Dover, Delaware, on July 22, 2026, following the return of the remains of four US Army soldiers killed in Iraq and Jordan.

The Pentagon has quietly added another 37 US service members to its public tally of personnel wounded during the Iran war, without explaining when, where or how they were injured.

By Staff Writer

TEHRAN — Donald Trump once dismissed the six-month-old war with Iran as “small potatoes.” But the potatoes keep getting bigger.

The Pentagon has quietly added another 37 US service members to its public tally of personnel wounded during the Iran war, without explaining when, where or how they were injured. The latest update brings the number of wounded listed in the Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS) to 861, adding 29 Navy sailors and eight Marines to the previously reported figure.

A Navy official confirmed that the 29 sailors had returned to duty but provided no details about their injuries. The Pentagon and U.S. Central Command did

not publicly identify any recent attack or incident that would account for the additional casualties. The Washington Post reported that Pentagon officials did not respond to requests for an explanation.

The latest unexplained adjustment is only the newest episode in a growing series of discrepancies surrounding the administration's accounting of the human and material cost of the conflict.

A casualty count that keeps changing

The Pentagon's public casualty figures have repeatedly changed during the conflict.

On September 18, The Washington Post reported that six US officials familiar with the Defense Department's internal accounting said at least 22 American service members had died in the Middle East since the beginning of the Iran war on February 28 — four more than the 18 deaths then listed in the Pentagon's public database. A sixth official put the number at 23.

The officials stressed that not all of the additional deaths could necessarily be attributed directly to combat with Iran, but said they involved U.S. personnel in the region amid the ongoing hostilities. Three U.S. contractors were also reported to have died since combat operations began. The circumstances of the additional military deaths had not been publicly disclosed. ► [Page 3](#)



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‘Janfada’ educational center inaugurated in Tehran

TEHRAN — The “Janfada” (self-sacrifice) educational center was officially inaugurated in Tehran on Wednesday afternoon in a ceremony attended by Hojjatolislam Hossein Taeb, head of the Basij Organization.

The launch marks a key milestone for the campaign, which began on March 29 as a grassroots movement countering persistent threats by the United States and Israel against Iran. Designed to reflect national resilience and readiness, the initiative has mobilized millions, evolving into a nationwide framework for popular defense and solidarity.

Iran will defend itself against any threat or military attack: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN— Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has reaffirmed Tehran's readiness to pursue diplomacy with Washington over the nuclear issue and other outstanding disputes, while stressing that negotiations can succeed only if they are based on mutual commitments, respect for international law and tangible steps to rebuild trust.

In an interview with CBS News during his visit to New York for the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, Pezeshkian said Iran does not seek war or confrontation, but would defend itself against any threat or military attack. ► [Page 2](#)

IRGC: Iran will continue punishing US until its seven conditions are met

TEHRAN— Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi, spokesperson for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), says Iran will continue its campaign to punish the United States until Washington meets seven conditions set by Tehran.

“We will not stop punishing the US until Iran's seven conditions are met,” Mohebbi said on Friday, stressing that Iran's missile capabilities are capable of penetrating and destroying multilayered US air-defense systems. ► [Page 3](#)

Lavrov condemns assassination of Iran's Leader as ‘unacceptable’ at UNGA

TEHRAN — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov condemned the assassination of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and members of his family, denouncing the act as “completely unacceptable” during his address to the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Ayatollah Khamenei, along with members of his family and senior military commanders, was martyred on the first day of the joint US-Israeli war against Iran that initially began on February 28.

In a sharp rebuke of the military operations that led to this tragedy, Lavrov characterized the targeting of Iran's leadership as a profound violation of established diplomatic norms and a dangerous precedent that threatens global stability. ► [Page 2](#)

Shot putter Tayebi collects Iran's seventh gold in Nagoya



► [Page 6](#)

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Pezeshkian turned the United Nations into a court for American and Israeli crimes

In a note, Kayhan discussed President Pezeshkian's forceful speech at the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The speech was a powerful response to the US president's absurd statements and shameless threats. In those remarks, Trump openly displayed the logic of force and even threatened Iran with destruction. Iran's president transformed New York into a courtroom for judging the crimes of Washington and Tel Aviv. Pezeshkian challenged the West's double standards with firm reasoning. By emphasizing that the Iranian nation will never accept the language of bullying and needs no one's permission to defend its sovereignty, he demonstrated that American intimidation only strengthens Iranian unity and resistance. Thanks to the president for turning the UN podium into a stage for exposing global arrogance.

Siasat-e-Rooz: A project that failed

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the failure of the United States and Israel in their attempt to portray Iran as a weak and unsuccessful nation. This year's United Nations meeting was shaped by major developments in West Asia, ranging from American-Israeli terrorist crimes to the resilience and strength of the Iranian people, Iran's successful management of the Strait of Hormuz by its armed forces, and diplomatic efforts to pursue the country's legitimate rights. One of the key points is that despite US efforts to isolate Iran and present a negative image of the country, the authority displayed by President Pezeshkian and his decisive speech effectively undermined that scenario. Netanyahu, while boasting about attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and claiming Iran could be destroyed, sought, much like Trump, to depict Iran as a defeated and collapsing state. However, Iran's initiatives effectively thwarted this plan. Likewise, Trump's speech and the media campaign conducted by Western outlets met a similar fate.

Iran: Strength for peace versus peace through strength

Pezeshkian's speech in New York should be regarded as Iran's first coherent strategic narrative following the war. The recurring theme of "strength for peace" throughout the President's remarks appears, first and foremost, to send a clear message to advocates of the doctrine of "peace through strength": that Iran has dedicated part of its peace-seeking strategy to comprehensive defense. At the same time, this message is unlikely to alarm international public opinion because Iran does not define national defense in opposition to negotiation and dialogue. On the contrary, its strategic narrative places military capability and

diplomatic capability on equal footing. Perhaps more importantly, the logic of "strength for peace" is not limited to foreign policy. If power is used externally for defense and negotiation is employed externally to achieve peace, then the same principle can be applied to domestic politics. National unity and strength should not be used to eliminate opponents but rather to create the conditions necessary for dialogue and political coexistence.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Iran has options beyond negotiation

Vatan-e-Emrooz analyzed the proper conditions for negotiations. The key lesson from negotiating with the United States is the need to distinguish negotiation from "dependence on negotiation." A country that engages in dialogue while simultaneously preserving its capacity for resistance, resilience, and choices is in a fundamentally different bargaining position from a country that ties all its hopes to reaching an agreement and continually highlights its vulnerabilities in pursuit of one. If some individuals in Iran favor negotiations, they should not naively try to convince the United States that Iran needs talks. Instead, they should focus on demonstrating that Iran possesses alternatives beyond negotiations. One must recognize a basic reality of diplomacy: in international politics, diplomatic respect and the possibility of agreement often arise not merely from expressing a willingness to talk, but from maintaining leverage, national resilience, and reduced vulnerability.

Shargh: The challenging path of diplomacy

In an article, Shargh examined recent developments in the dialogue process between Iran and the United States. These developments, including indirect talks in New York mediated by Qatar and several positive statements regarding the continuation of consultations, have created the impression that a new opportunity for reducing tensions may be emerging. The central issue, however, remains the significant gap between the positions and demands of the two sides. On the one hand, economic pressure, sanctions, and measures related to maritime restrictions continue from the American side. On the other hand, Tehran insists on a set of core demands, including an end to conflicts on all fronts, the lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen assets, and the removal of naval restrictions. Diplomacy can succeed only when it is accompanied by political will and reciprocal measures. Even if an opening exists for serious negotiations, internal disagreements and pressure from hardline factions and Tel Aviv could still obstruct progress toward mutual understanding.

Military chief lauds crucial role of conscripts in enhancing national deterrence

TEHRAN – Major General Ali Abdollahi, Chief of the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, has praised the indispensable contributions of conscript soldiers to the country's defense and security architecture, describing their presence as a vital component of Iran's national deterrence strategy.

In a statement released on the occasion of "Soldiers' Day"—observed during the nationwide commemoration of the Sacred Defense Week—General Abdollahi underscored the historical and contemporary significance of conscripts in safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the Islamic Republic.

"The effective and powerful presence of young conscripts has led to a significant enhancement of the country's defensive, security, and law enforcement capabilities, thereby deepening our national deterrence," he stated in his message.

The military chief highlighted that military service in Iran is not merely a duty but a manifestation of "conscious and faithful participation" by the nation's youth in maintaining sustainable security. He noted that conscripts, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other military personnel and the Basij volunteer forces, have played a defining role in defending the nation's borders and ideological tenets.

Reflecting on the legacy of the Sacred Defense—the 1980-1988 Iraqi-imposed war—General Abdollahi paid tribute to the sacrifices

made by soldiers, noting that their heroism continues to serve as an inspiration for the current generation. He specifically lauded the "unparalleled bravery" of conscripts who have actively served on the frontlines of both historical and modern-day security challenges.

Addressing the current geopolitical landscape, General Abdollahi warned against the ambitions of global powers and their regional allies, asserting that their "delusional attempts" to undermine the front of righteousness are neutralized by the preparedness of Iran's armed forces, of which conscripts remain a backbone.

"In these sensitive and strategic times, the presence of these young, dedicated soldiers is a pillar of our national strength," he emphasized.

General Abdollahi concluded his message by extending his congratulations to all serving conscripts and their families, particularly those of martyrs and war veterans. He urged the youth to remain committed to the strategic guidelines set forth by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, emphasizing the importance of continuous skill development and military readiness.

"It is my hope that our youth, by adhering to the wise directives of the Commander-in-Chief, will continue to strive for professional excellence and serve as defenders of Iran's path toward progress and increased power," the statement read.

Iran will defend itself against any threat or military attack: Pezeshkian

From page 1 ► The president's remarks came amid renewed diplomatic activity surrounding the Iranian nuclear program and the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran maintaining that any return to negotiations must be accompanied by practical guarantees that previous agreements will not again be disregarded.

Trust at the center of Iran-US diplomacy

Pezeshkian said Iran had previously reached understandings with the United States, but that the diplomatic process had been undermined by Washington's failure to honor its commitments.

He pointed in particular to the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement and subsequent military actions against Iran, arguing that these developments had created a profound atmosphere of mistrust between the two countries.

For Tehran, he said, the issue is therefore not simply whether negotiations can resume, but whether agreements reached through diplomacy will be implemented in practice.

Pezeshkian said Iran was prepared to negotiate within the framework of international law and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including arrangements concerning nuclear monitoring and inspections.

His comments followed an Iranian proposal for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and the resumption of negotiations, with Tehran presenting the two issues as part of a broader diplomatic framework for reducing tensions. CBS reported that Iran had offered to reopen the strategic waterway within seven



days and restart talks as an initial step toward a longer-term nuclear agreement.

Iran reiterates peaceful nature of nuclear program

Pezeshkian again rejected any suggestion that Iran seeks to develop nuclear weapons, saying the country has never pursued such a goal.

He also said disagreements over inspections could be resolved through negotiations and mutually agreed arrangements. Asked directly whether Iran would allow UN nuclear inspectors to return, he answered affirmatively, adding that the details of inspections could be addressed within a negotiated framework.

The Iranian president also criticized attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, arguing that such sites had been subject to international monitoring and questioning the legal justification for targeting facilities associated with a program Tehran maintains is peaceful.

From Tehran's perspective, the central issue is that verification and monitoring should take place through established in-

ternational mechanisms rather than military action.

Iran has repeatedly maintained that it is prepared to provide assurances concerning the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities while insisting on its rights under the NPT. Iranian officials have also argued that military attacks on nuclear facilities undermine the very diplomatic mechanisms designed to resolve disputes over nuclear activities.

Direct Trump meeting requires more than a gesture

Asked about the possibility of a direct meeting with US President Donald Trump, Pezeshkian said the accumulated mistrust between Tehran and Washington could not be overcome merely through a face-to-face encounter.

He referred to the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement and military attacks that 'took place even as diplomatic channels were being pursued.'

Pezeshkian said Iran needs practical evidence that Washington is prepared to honor agreements and is not seeking

to overthrow the Iranian government.

His position effectively places implementation and guarantees at the center of any future diplomatic process: Tehran, he indicated, is not opposed to negotiations, but does not consider negotiations meaningful if pressure, threats and military action continue alongside them.

CBS reported that US and Iranian officials had already held indirect discussions through mediators on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, although no direct meeting between Trump and Pezeshkian took place.

Hormuz: Iran links reopening to implementation of arrangements

The Strait of Hormuz was another major focus of the interview.

Pezeshkian said Iran could return to an earlier framework concerning the strategic waterway if Washington accepted the arrangements previously discussed. He stressed that implementation should be based on reciprocal commitments and dialogue.

The issue has become one of the most sensitive dimensions of the broader Iran-US confrontation because the strait is a critical international energy corridor and lies at the heart of the security architecture of the Persian Gulf.

Iran has maintained that the security and navigation arrangements in the waterway cannot be separated from the wider military confrontation and the commitments contained in previously negotiated understandings.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Araghchi outlines Iran's diplomatic conditions, and regional priorities at NY

From page 1 ► international law and reciprocal commitments rather than military pressure or coercion.

His comments also linked the security of the Strait of Hormuz to the wider regional situation, while outlining a specific seven-day mechanism for restoring normal maritime traffic if the United States accepts Tehran's conditions previously conveyed to Washington.

Diplomacy remains open, but Iran rejects coercion

Speaking to reporters outside the UN Security Council, Araghchi said Iran remained committed to international law, the UN Charter and diplomacy, pointing to the negotiations that led to the 2015 nuclear agreement and Iran's subsequent diplomatic efforts.

He said Tehran had repeatedly kept the door to negotiations open over the past two years, but argued that Washington had responded in bad faith and repeatedly chosen military action and pressure over diplomacy.

According to Araghchi, this history has created deep distrust in Tehran over the prospect of simply returning to negotiations without credible guarantees against a repetition of military action.

He said Iran would not accept threats, intimidation or pressure as a substitute for diplomacy.

"The UN Charter is not optional. Sovereignty is not conditional. Diplomacy does not mean surrender. And peace cannot be built through threats of destruction," Araghchi said.

Iran sets out seven-day framework for reopening Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz emerged as one of

the central issues in Araghchi's discussions in New York.

The foreign minister said Iran had conveyed, through Qatar, a specific seven-day plan to the United States. Under the proposal, he said, the process of restoring normal maritime traffic could be completed within seven days if Washington accepted the necessary conditions.

Araghchi subsequently provided additional details, saying the seven-day period would begin immediately once the United States accepted the plan.

He said the technical implementation could be completed within four or five days, allowing the strait to reopen on the sixth day, followed by US entry into a final agreement on the seventh day.

The measures required from Washington, he said, had already been communicated to the United States and were incorporated into the Islamabad memorandum of understanding.

"If there is sufficient seriousness on the American side, this will happen, and the Strait of Hormuz will reopen," Araghchi said.

He stressed that Iran's proposal should be understood within the framework of reciprocal commitments rather than as a unilateral concession.

Islamabad memorandum and the Oman track

Araghchi said that following mediation efforts by Pakistan and Qatar, Iran and the United States signed the Islamabad memorandum on June 17.

Under Article 5 of the memorandum, Iran committed to making the necessary arrangements to facilitate the safe passage of ships.



Iran, he said, immediately began technical discussions with Oman to implement that commitment and restore maritime traffic to pre-war levels.

According to Araghchi, maritime traffic reached approximately 60 percent of its pre-war level within two weeks of implementation.

He said subsequent unilateral US measures and military action halted the implementation of the memorandum, arguing that Washington had chosen military action instead of using the dispute-resolution mechanism contained in the agreement.

Iran, he emphasized, had nevertheless continued to keep diplomatic channels open.

Tehran links Hormuz security to regional stability

Araghchi reaffirmed Iran's commitment to safe and secure shipping, but rejected the idea that maritime security could be restored through additional military deployments, threats, blockades or economic pressure.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Lavrov condemns assassination of Iran's Leader as 'unacceptable' at UNGA

From page 1 ► Addressing the assembly, the Russian diplomat also directed harsh criticism at the concurrent attacks on Iran's civilian infrastructure and nuclear facilities. Lavrov emphasized that these installa-

tions are subject to the strictest oversight under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. He said the use of force against such sites has delivered an "irreparable blow" to the credibility of the UN's nucle-

ar watchdog, effectively undermining the global non-proliferation regime.

"The use of force to target the leadership of a sovereign state and its peaceful nuclear

infrastructure is a blatant disregard for international law," Lavrov stated. "When civilian infrastructure is treated as a legitimate military target, the international community must ask what rules remain."



Trump’s “Small Potatoes” Keep Growing

From Page 1 ▶ The Pentagon subsequently added another death to its public database, bringing the disclosed total to 19. The Army identified the service member as Capt. Bianca C. Wilkerson, who died on September 18 following a medical emergency while traveling to the Middle East.

That still left a gap between the public database and the higher figures provided by officials.

Four dead — then removed from the tally

The most striking episode occurred in July.

Four U.S. troops killed during renewed fighting with Iran were temporarily removed from the Pentagon’s official Iran-war casualty count. Three soldiers had been killed when an American base in Jordan was struck by Iranian missiles and drones on July 17; another died in Iraq during a controlled detonation of an Iranian drone.

The Pentagon’s public database initially showed 18 deaths. It then dropped to 14, while the number of wounded also fell sharply.

Pentagon officials attributed the sudden changes to “anomalies” and “temporary data disruptions.”

The four deaths and more than 200 wounded personnel later reappeared in a new DCAS category called “Overseas

Operations,” rather than under “Operation Epic Fury,” the administration’s designation for the Iran campaign. The Pentagon subsequently said that Operation Epic Fury had ended and that casualties associated with renewed fighting were therefore being recorded separately.

Whatever the administrative explanation, the change created a basic problem for the public: a war casualty database was no longer presenting all casualties connected to the conflict under the same heading.

Nearly 100 injured — but missing from the database

The discrepancy became even more difficult to explain in July.

On July 20, Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said that nearly 100 US service members had suffered some degree of injury since July 7 and that 96 percent had returned to duty.

Yet those injuries did not appear in the DCAS totals at the time. The database still showed 14 deaths and did not reflect the nearly 100 additional injuries acknowledged by the Pentagon.

Senate Armed Services Committee Democrats subsequently demanded an explanation, noting that the Pentagon’s own public statements and its casualty database were reporting different realities.

The senators asked the Defense Department to disclose how CENTCOM decides whether an injury is significant enough to be publicly reported, how many injuries had been omitted because personnel quickly returned to duty, and whether injuries from attacks in Jordan were included in DCAS.

Attacks and injuries that were not publicly announced

The questions were particularly significant because U.S. officials had acknowledged that American forces in Jordan had been attacked several times before the July 17 strike.

The Senate inquiry specifically asked the Pentagon how many service members had been injured in three Iranian attacks on US forces in Jordan during the week preceding the better-known July 17 attack, whether those injuries had been entered into DCAS and who authorized the decision not to publicly disclose the attacks or associated injuries.

This raised a broader question: how many injuries can occur during a war without appearing in the public record if the personnel involved return to duty quickly?

The Lincoln’s hidden human cost

The latest revelations also extend beyond battlefield casualties.

On September 23, CBS News report-

ed that the Navy had acknowledged eight suicide attempts among personnel assigned to the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group during its months-long deployment.

The figure covered sailors assigned to the carrier, its air wing and accompanying destroyers. A defense official told CBS that two of the eight attempts occurred during active fighting with Iran.

The strike group had spent more than 250 consecutive days at sea during the year, while families had raised concerns about food shortages, supply problems, plumbing failures and deteriorating mental health among personnel.

The Navy has disputed suggestions that there was an increase in suicide attempts and said personnel had access to counselors, chaplains and other support services. Nevertheless, the disclosure added another dimension to the cost of a conflict that officials have repeatedly sought to portray as limited.

From “small potatoes” to a growing bill

Trump described the conflict as “small potatoes” on September 4 while defending Vice President JD Vance’s characterization that the fighting was no longer a war. At the time, Trump acknowledged 18 US deaths and said the

conflict had cost taxpayers more than \$37.5 billion.

Since then, the publicly disclosed casualty count has risen, officials have reported that the real death toll is higher, and dozens of previously unreported wounded personnel have appeared in the Pentagon database.

The administration’s accounting has also faced questions over the classification of casualties, the reporting of injuries and the disclosure of attacks on US forces.

The issue has therefore become larger than a dispute over numbers. It is about whether the American public and Congress can obtain a consistent account of the human cost of a war being financed by US taxpayers.

Growing pressure inside Washington

The administration has faced increasingly vocal demands for transparency.

In July, all Democratic members of the Senate Armed Services Committee demanded a “full and accurate accounting” of those killed, wounded or injured in connection with Operation Epic Fury. They cited discrepancies between Pentagon statements and DCAS figures and said the inconsistencies undermined confidence in the government’s accounting of the war’s human cost.

In August, Sen. Tammy Duckworth and 17 Democratic senators introduced legislation aimed at preventing the Pentagon from arbitrarily recategorizing an ongoing conflict and requiring restoration of casualty records associated with the Iran war.

After the latest report that at least 22 service members may have died, Duckworth and Rep. Pat Ryan renewed their demand for Congress to pass the legislation. The proposed law would require more frequent public casualty reporting and prohibit the manipulation of casualty records through changes in the designation of an ongoing operation.

The criticism has not been confined to Democrats. Questions over the shifting casualty categories have also drawn attention from Republican lawmakers, including Rep. Thomas Massie, who questioned the logic of treating renewed fighting as a separate conflict for casualty-accounting purposes.

For an administration that has repeatedly emphasized the limited scale and cost of its military campaign against Iran, the expanding list of unexplained injuries, disputed death figures, reclassified casualties and previously undisclosed incidents presents an increasingly awkward arithmetic.

The “small potatoes” are getting harder to keep small.

Delayed and Revised US Casualty Disclosures — Iran War

Chronology of casualty, damage and related disclosures that emerged after initial public reporting

Date	Issue	What was publicly reported initially	What emerged later
July 20, 2026	Nearly 100 U.S. service members injured	Pentagon publicly confirmed nearly 100 injured in Iranian strikes since July 7; 96% had returned to duty.	The public casualty database did not include these July injuries at the time, and the Pentagon had not disclosed exact numbers or damage assessments.
July 22–26, 2026	Four deaths temporarily absent from Pentagon casualty list	The Pentagon database showed 14 deaths linked to Operation Epic Fury.	Four service members killed in Jordan and Iraq were later listed under a separate 'Overseas Operations Casualties' category. Pentagon officials attributed the initial discrepancy to temporary data disruption/site anomalies.
July 2026	More than 200 wounded listed outside the main operation tally	The Pentagon's separate Overseas Operations category listed more than 200 wounded.	These casualties were not included in the 14-death Operation Epic Fury tally, contributing to discrepancies between public reporting and the main casualty database.
July 24, 2026	Senate Democrats challenge casualty reporting	Senate Armed Services Committee Democrats demanded a full and accurate accounting of killed, wounded and injured personnel.	They cited discrepancies between Pentagon statements and DCAS figures and asked for explanations of undisclosed attacks, injuries and casualty-record treatment.
August 6, 2026	Bill introduced over casualty-record treatment	Sen. Tammy Duckworth and 17 Democratic senators introduced legislation addressing casualty-record classifications.	The bill would prohibit what its sponsors described as arbitrary recategorization and require restoration of Iran-related casualty records. These are lawmakers' allegations and proposals, not an independent finding of intent.
September 4, 2026	Trump calls conflict 'small potatoes'	Trump described the military conflict as 'small potatoes' and 'not a big thing.'	The remarks came amid a public toll of 18 deaths and more than \$37.5 billion in reported costs at the time.
September 4, 2026	Military-family benefits dispute	The widow of Maj. Alex Klinner said she was initially told he was ineligible for combat-related benefits because the U.S. was 'not at war.'	The Air Force later corrected/clarified the matter and said the family would receive full benefits.
September 15, 2026	First comprehensive IG accounting	A Defense Department inspector general report provided a broad accounting through June.	The report put costs at \$33.7 billion through June, including \$22 billion in munitions, and documented major damage to U.S. facilities and equipment. It covered only the first four months of the war.
September 18, 2026	Fatality discrepancy becomes public	The Pentagon's public casualty database listed 18 military deaths.	Washington Post reported that five of six U.S. officials familiar with internal casualty data said at least 22 military fatalities had occurred; another official cited 23. The discrepancy remained unresolved.
September 18–23, 2026	Additional death added to public tally	The public DCAS total rose to 19.	Capt. Bianca C. Wilkerson died on September 18 from a non-combat-related medical emergency while traveling to the Middle East in support of overseas operations.
September 23–24, 2026	Eight suicide attempts disclosed within USS Abraham Lincoln strike group	The Pentagon had not previously publicly disclosed the figure.	Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao disclosed eight suicide attempts across the carrier strike group during its deployment. No suicide attempts occurred aboard the carrier itself. This entry concerns attempts, not deaths.
September 25, 2026	37 additional wounded added quietly	The Pentagon's public casualty database was increased by 37 without a public explanation.	The 37 consisted of 29 Navy sailors and 8 Marines, bringing the public wounded total to 861. The database did not explain when or how the injuries occurred; the Navy said the sailors returned to duty.
September 25, 2026	Public casualty data still appears incomplete	The public database listed 19 military deaths.	Washington Post reported that officials familiar with internal data still believed the actual number of military fatalities was higher, although the exact total and the extent to which all cases were directly tied to the conflict remained unresolved.

IRGC: Iran will continue punishing US until its seven conditions are met

From Page 1 ▶ He said Washington had expected Iran to surrender after deploying military forces to the Persian Gulf, but instead encountered a different form of resistance from the Iranian side.

According to the IRGC spokesperson, the sacrifices of Iranian martyrs have strengthened national resolve and contributed to greater courage and security among the Iranian people.

“We are the victors of the war and are turning it into permanent strategic deterrence,” Mohebbi said.

US failed to secure Hormuz

Mohebbi also challenged Washington’s stated rationale for its military presence in the region, saying the United States had claimed that its objective was to safeguard maritime security but had failed to achieve that goal during the recent conflict.

“Despite having the world’s largest navy, the US could not keep the Strait of Hormuz open even for a few hours,” he said.

He said Washington had sought to portray the continued availability of the strategic waterway as necessary to prevent a surge in global oil prices,



while arguing that effective control over maritime traffic in the strait remained with the IRGC’s naval forces.

Mohebbi said that before the war, daily traffic through the Strait of Hormuz ranged from dozens to more than 100 vessels, whereas the current situation was different, with oil shipments belonging to Iran’s trading partners passing through with Tehran’s permission.

The Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most strategically important maritime chokepoints, connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea and carries a significant share of global oil and gas shipments.

US military superiority failed to deter resistance

The IRGC spokesperson further rejected ‘US efforts to project an image of overwhelming military and technological superiority.’

He said the United States had relied heavily on the capabilities of its advanced air, naval and ground forces, but that Iranian Armed Forces had demonstrated the ability to target such military assets during the recent war.

Mohebbi’s remarks portrayed Iran’s military response as part of a broader strategy aimed not only at countering the United States during the conflict but also at establishing a longer-term deterrent capability.

He said the sacrifices made during the war had transformed the nature of Iran’s national security environment, arguing that the country had emerged from the conflict with greater resolve and a stronger deterrent posture.

The comments came as Iranian officials continued to emphasize that Tehran’s approach to the confrontation with Washington combines military deterrence with political and diplomatic demands.

Foreign Affairs: World learning from Iran’s ‘precise mass’ warfare as costly Western systems falter

From Page 1 ▶ Foreign Affairs recounts the initial phase of the conflict, noting that when the United States and Israel launched their aggression against Iran, they expected a swift and decisive victory. According to the article, American planners anticipated that they would quickly overwhelm the government. The publication details the sheer scale of the assault, stating that in the war’s first 24 hours, American and Israeli forces hit roughly 1,000 targets. Over the following 39 days, they struck 12,000 more, with the stated intent of laying waste to Iran’s military infrastructure and eliminating top leadership. Yet, Foreign Affairs acknowledges that more than six months later, Iran not only remains intact but is arguably stronger than before. The journal concedes that Tehran immediately replaced its lost officials, struck back at Washington, and successfully shuttered the Strait of Hormuz, thereby driving up global energy prices and securing newfound political leverage that has left US officials deeply frustrated.

At the core of the Foreign Affairs analysis is the concept of “precise mass,” which the journal defines as high-volume, low-cost, precision-guided weapons. The publication notes that the age

of this doctrine is well underway, stating that it is no longer possible for the US military to win a full-blown war simply by using small numbers of expensive, exquisite weapons to dazzle opponents. Crucially, the journal admits that offense is currently cheaper than defense, observing that the price of effective interceptors has yet to fall to the level of attack drones and missiles. It points out that militaries cannot endlessly block salvos of 35,000 dollar Shahed-136 attack drones with 4-million-dollar Patriot missiles.

Foreign Affairs further notes that the world is learning from Iran, building on lessons that were already emerging in other conflicts. The journal provides an extensive list of nations that are now pivoting to adopt this Iranian-style strategy. The publication says six European states, including France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have signed a letter of intent to jointly develop a one-way attack drone, and Saudi Arabia has unveiled its own attack drone modeled on the Shahed. Even Japan has requested a record 55.6 billion-dollar defense budget, largely to purchase vast quantities of attack drones.

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

TCCIMA hosts specialized meeting with Iran’s commercial attachés in 5 countries

TEHRAN- Six commercial attachés, before departing for their countries of assignment, attended the 18th meeting of the Trade Facilitation and Development Committee of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) to explain their plans and become aware of the concerns and demands of those active in the economy sector.

At this meeting, emphasis was placed on moving beyond ceremonial approaches and toward operational activities based on the real needs of the private sector, including identifying credible trade partners, facilitating exports and imports, removing currency, customs, and logistical obstacles, and strengthening the counselors’ continuous communication with the private sector.

The meeting of economic actors and traders with the commercial attachés of five regional and Asian countries was held at the Tehran Chamber, with the head of the Commercial Attachés Department of the Trade Promotion Organization and the president of the Iranian Export Confederation in attendance. During the meeting, topics such as the role of attachés in export development, attracting investment, networking, resolving trade disputes, strengthening ties with the private sector, and removing obstacles to exchanges with destination countries were examined.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mohammad Reza Ghafrollohi, head of the Trade Facilitation and Development Committee of the Tehran Chamber, referring to the job description of commercial attachés, said: “Continuous information provision about the market of the destination country, export promotion, attracting foreign investment, networking and establishing connections, resolving trade disputes, and supporting trade negotiations are among the duties defined for commercial attachés.”

Ghafrollohi emphasized: “Any problem that is resolved for exporters or any facilitation created in the path of economic actors’ activity will ultimately lead to foreign currency generation for the country and job creation. Even in the field of imports, attention must be paid to the role of counselors, because a major part of the country’s imports consists of raw materials needed for production; therefore, facilitating imports also helps the continuity and development of production.”

The head of the Trade Facilitation and Development Committee of the Tehran Chamber, emphasizing the importance of interaction between counselors and economic actors, said: “The purpose of holding this meeting is for the counselors’ plans for the years of their presence in the target countries to be presented,



and for economic actors to share their experiences, concerns, and problems with them, so that the attachés begin their mission with greater understanding and a broader perspective. Creating communication and connection between counselors and economic actors from the very beginning can yield better and more effective outputs from the attachés’ activities.”

Intermediary link between Iranian traders and new markets

Mohammad Lahouti, head of the Non-Oil Export Development Committee of the Iran Chamber, also said in remarks, stating that “economic actors and responsible institutions must join hands to resolve export problems”: “A commercial attachés can be the intermediary and connecting link between traders of the origin country and new markets, and in many countries, especially developed and developing countries, this capacity is used to develop export markets.”

He continued: “This structure has been formed in our country for more than two decades, but the activity of commercial attachés during this period has been accompanied by ups and downs. In some countries, counselors have established very good relations with chambers of commerce, joint chambers, and economic actors, the result of which has been market development, while in some markets these relations have been less.”

The president of the Iranian Export Confederation emphasized: “Although commercial attachés are selected and dispatched by the Trade Promotion Organization and the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade, and their connection with the organization’s policies is important, on the other hand, communication with the private sector, chambers of commerce, joint chambers, and Iranian traders must also be part of their work policies. The closer and better these communications are, the more they will lead to greater achievements by the counselor for the country and to the expansion of Iran’s presence in foreign markets.”

Central Bank takes 6 key measures to facilitate foreign trade

TEHRAN- The assistant to the Governor of the Central Bank in forex affairs announced an improvement in the process of returning export earnings and said: With the reforms carried out, more than \$1.5 billion in export foreign currency has returned to the country.

According to IRNA from the Central Bank, Mehdi Darabi explained the bank’s most important measures to facilitate exports and imports and said: These measures have led to an improvement in the return of export foreign currency, the creation of an excess supply of foreign currency in the Central Bank’s systems, and a reduction in the bureaucracy of supplying foreign currency to importers.

Referring to the reform of forex policies in Dey (January-February) he said: These reforms improved the return of export foreign currency, and we even faced an excess supply of foreign currency in the Central Bank’s systems.

Darabi described the second measure as the possibility of returning foreign currency in cash form and added: Previously, exporters could not return foreign currency in the form of banknote imports into the country, but the Central Bank created this possibility, and in the very first months, more than \$1.5 billion in foreign currency returned in this way.

The assistant to the Governor of the Central Bank also referred to the possibility of direct transactions between importer and exporter under Article 11 of the Seventh Development Plan Law and said: This measure

caused foreign exchange transactions between importer and exporter, which previously were below \$1 million per day, to reach more than \$50 million per day. The result of this measure is that the importer can supply the foreign currency needed for raw materials and production goods within one day and without an allocation queue.

According to Darabi, previously the exporter could not sell its foreign currency to the bank, and the process of transferring foreign currency to the importer involved lengthy bureaucracy, but now the exporter sells foreign currency to the bank, and the bank is obliged to sell it to the importer; the Central Bank also supervises this process.

Continuing, referring to the possibility of selling cash foreign currency to banks, he stated: Previously, the return of cash foreign currency was limited, and the exporter had to sell it for service uses or to the Central Bank, but now the possibility of selling cash to banks has been created, and banks can use that same foreign currency for imports.

In the end, Darabi announced the Central Bank’s initiative in reforming regulations and said: The Central Bank is advancing corrective regulations in the field of exports and imports in the Government Economic Committee and with the cooperation of ministries and the private sector, so that both the import process and the export process and the return of export foreign currency are facilitated.

South Pars ready for sustainable gas production in winter

TEHRAN- An official said: The South Pars Gas Complex, with the successful completion of overhaul operations at its refineries, has become ready for maximum and sustainable gas processing to meet the country’s needs during the cold months of the year.

According to Mehr News Agency, citing the Ministry of Oil, Gholam Abbas Hosseini, CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex Company, regarding the key role of the central workshop and domestic specialists in this year’s overhaul, said: The South Pars Gas Complex, with the successful completion of overhaul operations at its refineries, has become ready for maximum and sustainable gas processing to meet the country’s needs during the cold months of the year.

Hosseini, referring to the completion of overhaul operations at the complex’s twelve refineries, added: Given the upcoming limitations, six refineries were included in maintenance programs, and these operations were completed according to schedule and in compliance with safety requirements and standards. The refineries of the South Pars Gas Complex have entered the path of sustainable and maximum



production of the gas needed by the country with full readiness.

He continued: This year’s overhaul was carried out with the aim of increasing operational readiness, maintaining equipment reliability, and providing suitable conditions for continued gas processing during the cold months, and in this process, the preparation of key equipment and strategic facilities of the refineries was seriously pursued.

The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex Company, emphasizing the role of domestic capability in the successful implementation of these programs, stated: A significant part of the maintenance

activities was carried out by relying on domestic capacities, the knowledge and experience of the complex’s specialists, and innovative measures, and the complex’s central workshop, with its capability in repairing, rebuilding, and manufacturing parts and equipment, played an effective role in supporting the overhaul operations.

Hosseini continued: Utilizing domestic capacities, in addition to supporting production continuity, has provided the ground for increasing operational readiness and reducing dependence on foreign resources, and the South Pars Gas Complex prior-

itizes the maximum use of the capacity of domestic companies, manufacturers, and Iranian specialists.

Referring to the importance of continued gas production during the cold months, he noted: We hope that with the readiness created at the complex’s refineries, during the cold months we will be able to provide the national grid with maximum gas processing and production capacity in a stable and uninterrupted manner and serve the noble people of our country.

The CEO of the South Pars Gas Complex Company, emphasizing the importance of continued energy consumption management and consumers’ cooperation with gas industry workers, said: Alongside the gas industry’s efforts to ensure sustainable energy supply, consumption management by consumers and the people’s cooperation with gas industry workers is especially important, and it is expected that dear compatriots, especially during the cold days of the year, will prioritize observing the consumption pattern, saving, and optimal gas use so that the possibility of sustainable enjoyment of this national blessing is provided for all.

Integrated border management paves way for trade development with neighbors: Arvand Free Zone CEO

TEHRAN- The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization, emphasizing the capacity of free zones in developing economic exchanges with neighboring countries, said: Strengthening the authority of free zones, establishing integrated management at borders, and forming coherent economic diplomacy can lead to facilitating trade, increasing regional interactions, and making better use of the economic capacities of border areas.

According to the Public Relations and International Affairs of the Secretariat of the Supreme Council of Free and Special Economic Zones, Mostafa Khanzadi, at a meeting of the deputies of the secretariat and CEOs of free and special economic zone organizations, attended by the Executive Vice President, stated: I thank you for holding this meeting and for the invitation made today, because it can be a turning point in making the free zones more active.

Khanzadi added: Regarding Article 65, over the past seven to eight months, contacts were made with Mr. Aref and the Honorable Minister of Interior, and subsequently, the executive regulations of Article 65 were prepared with emphasis on the Arvand Free Zone as a pilot.

He continued: These regulations went through various stages and were approved by us and the governor-general, but unfortunately, in the referral process, they were mistakenly referred from the government’s Islamic Resources Committee to another place and encountered a problem. This issue is now being reviewed again, and with the discussion previously held with the minister in the government’s Economic Commission, we hope these regulations will be approved by the government.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization, explaining the necessity of implementing this article in the Arvand Free Zone, said: In Arvand, we have two special governors who are deputies of the governor-general, and the region has a population of about 600,000 and its own particular characteristics.

Khanzadi added: Apart from the duties that the Ministry of Interior has determined for the counties, we have also divided the duties in such a way, and we hope that the parts not directly related to the free zone will be delegated to the governorates, because in the current situation, a major part of our managerial capacity has become involved in matters not directly related to the main missions of the free zone.

He said: Issues such as municipalities and the Security Council have always been among the matters under discussion. Fortunately, good conditions have now been created in the free zone, and some matters have been implemented verbally, but we hope this issue will also be approved by the government.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization, continuing with reference to the issue of taxes on goods, stated: If what has happened in this regard continues, in my view it is against the law, because tax should not be levied on goods that are consumed reasonably.

Khanzadi added: Even if goods enter the mainland, the revenues from them must be returned to the free zones so that they can be spent on developing infrastructure. If this happens in the free zone, our income could double and even be more than what we currently earn.

He continued: A region with two cities and a population of about 600,000, while its infrastructure is not yet sufficiently provided, will suffer great harm under such conditions.

Unified economic diplomacy necessary

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization described another important issue of border areas as “unified economic diplomacy” and said: We have raised this issue in the presence of the Honorable Minister and also Mr. Forouzan. It is not acceptable that in countries neighboring us, different views are expressed by various bodies.

Khanzadi added: For example, Iraq is very important in this regard. As someone who has established good contacts with the Iraqi side, I feel that we have suffered serious blows in this area. We are present in Mehran, and contacts are made at different points and different issues are raised, and ultimately the other side also exploits these differences of view.

He stressed: Different approaches toward neighboring countries, including Iraq and Turkey, show the necessity of forming a unified economic diplomacy. We believe that a committee composed of individuals and experts on Iraqi affairs should be formed and have a specific secretariat so that we can pursue this diplomacy in a unified manner.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization continued: Anyone who wants to contact foreign parties must do so within the framework of specified rules and regulations so that we can benefit from a unified economic approach.

Khanzadi also, referring to the banking problems of free zones, said: One of the problems that all free zones currently face is the issue of banks and agent banks. There was previously a resolution that the resources of all bodies and companies must be deposited into the treasury, and this has caused resources to be placed at the disposal of banks.

He added: This issue is more important for regions like Arvand, which possess large government capacities. Abadan Refinery and Abadan Petrochemical are located in the region, but the free zone itself has no direct income from these complexes, and due to the lack of sufficient income, the ability to provide necessary facilities to industries has also been limited.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization noted: One of our requests is the establishment of a bank specifically for free zones, an issue that has been raised for years. Apart from the discussion of an offshore bank, either resources must be returned to the region’s banks or a mechanism must be considered for establishing a specialized bank for free zones.

Organizing border management required

Khanzadi, referring to the necessity of or-

ganizing border management, said: Another important discussion that must be taken into consideration is unified management at the borders. This issue can be solved very simply, but its impact will be very great.

He added: At the Shalamchek border, which His Excellency the Minister visited during his trip, about 100 people accompanied him, and at this border there are 12 decision-making bodies and organizations. This multiplicity of decision-making centers causes problems in the border management process.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization continued: In this regard, we have prepared a plan according to which free zones at border locations would have more authority, and this plan is also going through various stages.

Khanzadi said: We request from the Honorable Minister of Economy, who has become the custodian of this issue, as well as the Ministry of Interior, which has resolutions in this regard, that the responsibility for managing this issue be clarified and it be known which body should ultimately administer this matter.

The CEO of the Arvand Free Zone Organization, referring to the recent experience at the Shalamchek border, stated: Yesterday, when the border between Iran and Iraq was closed, the authority to act in this area was with the free zone, and we were able to exercise appropriate management through initiative.

Khanzadi added: This issue was even reflected in the media and websites, and one of the reasons the Iraqi side acted quickly to reopen the border was the initiative taken in the free zone.

He said in conclusion: Our request is that security issues continue to be pursued within the framework of the responsibility of governorates and relevant bodies, but in the area of economic management, trade, and activities related to free zones, specific authority and responsibility should be assigned to the free zone so that we can manage border issues with greater speed and efficiency.

The Arvand Free Zone is located in southwestern Iran’s Khuzestan Province, at the confluence of the Arvand and Karun rivers near the Persian Gulf.

It spans 37,400 hectares and hosts the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, making it Iran’s most populous free zone with approximately 500,000 residents.

The zone borders Iraq and Kuwait, providing direct access to the Shalamchek land border and the Persian Gulf.

It features multimodal transport infrastructure—including Abadan International Airport, Khorramshahr Port (Iran’s second-largest container port), and rail links.

The zone is a major industrial hub, home to the Abadan Refinery (450,000 barrels per day), petrochemical plants, steel and shipbuilding industries. It serves as Iran’s primary gateway for trade with Iraq, offering tax exemptions and 100% foreign ownership.

A voice that martyrdom cannot silence: Sayyed Nasrallah’s legacy

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN — Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was assassinated by the Zionist regime with heavy U.S. weaponry that destroyed a southern Beirut neighborhood on September 27, 2024.

The grief over the loss of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is more than a personal emotion, and it extends beyond the religious and spiritual meaning attached to martyrdom.

Some departures pass into history as fleeting events. Others fundamentally alter its course. For large segments of Hezbollah's constituency, the martyrdom of the Secretary-General belonged to the latter category.

Remembering him, therefore, is not simply an act of mourning for a political leader or military commander. It is a moment of reflection on a figure whose life was intertwined for decades with the confrontation against the Israeli-American project in the region, until his voice itself became an inseparable part of Hezbollah's collective memory and consciousness.

For millions, Sayyed Nasrallah was associated with pivotal moments that cannot be erased: the early years of the Lebanese resistance; the historic victory that followed the liberation of southern Lebanon in 2000; the strategic steadfastness of the July 2006 war; and, finally, the Gaza military support front launched on October 8, 2023.

At every one of these moments, Sayyed Nasrallah was present, not simply as a leader directing battles, but as a force in his own right.

Crowds rallied around him and awaited his speeches, which established what came to be known as “deterrence equations” and restored among the Arab world a renewed sense of dignity.

It is therefore understandable that Hezbollah's support base should feel it has lost something far greater than an individual. It has lost a voice whose very tone had come to embody the meaning of anti-colonial resistance.

Martyrdom culture and tragedy of human loss

The grief over the loss of Sayyed Nasrallah is more than a personal emotion, and it extends beyond the religious and spiritual meaning



attached to martyrdom. It is also grief over a genuine political, moral, and military loss.

Sayyed Nasrallah was not a leader who stood apart from the meaning of martyrdom. He regarded it as a profound goal for those who chose this path. His son, Hadi Nasrallah, had gone before him as a martyr, as had thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian resistance fighters, foremost among them former Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi, who was assassinated in 1992, and the prominent commander Imad Mughniyeh, who was assassinated in 2008.

His own martyrdom affirmed this position by joining the caravan of martyrs. From this perspective, martyrdom is neither defeat nor an ending. But faith in the greatness of martyrdom does not mean that human beings do not suffer, nor does it make the loss of a leader of such stature any easier to bear.

Gravity of the moment

Sayyed Nasrallah's loss came at an exceptionally sensitive and brutal moment. His assassination was not an isolated event detached from a long history of targeting. Throughout 2024, Hezbollah's leadership structure had been subjected to a series of assassinations targeting senior commanders, including Fuad Shukur, Ibrahim Aqil, Ibrahim Qubaisi, and others.

By the time Sayyed Nasrallah was assassinated, the Israeli regime had committed heinous crimes against Hezbollah.

This is what gives historical significance to his final speech, delivered on September 19, 2024. It came in the aftermath of the explosions involving communications devices, pagers, and walkie-talkies,

in Lebanon on September 17 and 18. The terrorist attack resulted in the deaths of nearly 40 people and injuries to more than 2,900 others.

Sayyed Nasrallah did not describe the incident that day as simply a security strike. He revealed that the regime had targeted approximately 4,000 pagers and 1,000 walkie-talkies and had sought to kill around 5,000 people over the course of two days.

Circumstances, however, reduced the scale of the casualties, as many of the devices were switched off or were not in their owners' possession. Even so, Sayyed Nasrallah appeared deeply affected, and it was clear that the attack had left a profound mark on him.

Yet even in the midst of that wound, he drew a clear line around the central issue of the confrontation. The child-killing regime, he said, wanted Hezbollah to halt its support front for Gaza and stop the rockets directed at northern Israeli settlements, thereby allowing displaced settlers to return to their homes.

But Hezbollah would not end that front of solidarity with Palestinians as long as the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip continued. That point was fundamental. For Sayyed Nasrallah, the battle was not a separate war but a pressure front to end genocide. Just eight days after that pivotal speech, the occupying regime assassinated him.

Collapse of narratives and reality of confrontation

The assassination itself undercut years of theories and narratives promoted by some regional media outlets, which repeatedly asked: “Why doesn't Israel assassinate the Hezbollah leader Nas-

rallah?”

Some went so far as to claim that the regime was deliberately choosing to look the other way.

Yet the reality was that when the regime's military had the opportunity, it assassinated him without hesitation.

That fact alone warrants a reconsideration of those simplistic explanations. The regime's earlier failure to assassinate the Hezbollah chief did not mean that it was “protecting” him. Nor should its eventual success become an occasion for gloating or reduce the history of the Lebanese resistance to a single intelligence or security failure.

War is not so simple. Tel Aviv succeeded in achieving a significant security breach, and that cannot be denied. But the history of the conflict demonstrates that attempts to eliminate political and military leaders are an inherent part of the confrontation. Sometimes they succeed; at other times, they fail.

Regional consequences

More significant still are the consequences of Sayyed Nasrallah's absence at the regional level.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah suffered a major blow that ultimately culminated in the November 2024 ceasefire agreement, under which tens of thousands of Israelis returned to the northern settlements. But the story did not end there.

When the battle erupted again in March 2026, following the illegal Israeli-American war on Iran and the martyrdom of Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, Hezbollah resumed launching rockets.

Israeli settlers who had believed the war had ended in 2024 once again found themselves under fire. In Kiryat Shmona, for example, settlers who had returned were confronted with air-raid sirens once more.

For Hezbollah's constituency, this latest round carried a clear message: despite the strikes it had endured, the assassination of its leadership, and the destruction of large parts of its infrastructure, Hezbollah had not disappeared. It had returned to the battlefield at a moment of extraordinary regional volatility.

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

Netanyahu faces his nightmare at UN: The Soleimani portrait in Iran’s empty seat



By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

TEHRAN — Benjamin Netanyahu arrived at the United Nations determined to turn the General Assembly into a stage for Israel's military narrative.

But behind the speeches and threats was a more striking image: the portrait of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani sitting on the desk of the absent Iranian delegation.

Netanyahu, the subject of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant over war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, was permitted to enter the United States and address the world's foremost international body without arrest. The war criminal spoke as if international accountability were a concept reserved for others.

As he began speaking, dozens of delegations rose from their seats and walked out. Israeli officials counted 77 delegations as absent or having walked out — nearly 40 percent of the UN's 193 member states.

Netanyahu brought a pager to the UN podium—a device now associated with Israel's September 2024 operation, when thousands of pagers exploded in Lebanon, killing many and wounding more than 3,000, including civilians.

And the symbolism did not stop there. Netanyahu had also presented Donald Trump with a pager, turning a device associated with the deadly operation into a political prop shared with the U.S. president. Then, standing before the world, Netanyahu raised one at the UN and issued threats. The message was stark: a device associated with bloodshed had been transformed into a symbol of defiance on the world's diplomatic stage.

At the institution created in the name of international peace, the Israeli leader chose to display technology associated with a mass-casualty operation as a symbol of military achievement.

He insulted delegations that had walked out, calling them “moral cowards.” He celebrated Israel's military actions, repeated lies about the war in Gaza, defended the occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories, and labeled human rights defenders as “an-

tisemites.”

He also claimed the bombardment of Iran's nuclear facilities was one of the easiest decisions he had made as prime minister.

But there was another object in the room.

On the Iranian delegation's desk, where diplomats should have been seated, a portrait sat quietly: the face of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani — Iran's commander assassinated in a U.S. drone attack in Baghdad in January 2020 — watching over the empty chairs.

That photograph carried a message of its own.

Netanyahu displayed the weaponized technology associated with Israel's war of atrocities. Iran left behind the face of a commander whose death was supposed to demonstrate the reach of American power.

Washington and Tel Aviv believed that assassinating Soleimani would eliminate a major figure of the resistance. They believed that removing a man from the battlefield would weaken the cause he represented. Years later, his portrait remains capable of transforming an empty diplomatic desk into a political statement.

For Iran, Soleimani remains an embodiment of the resistance strategy that challenged American and Israeli influence across West Asia. For Israel and the United States, he represented a major adversary. His assassination did not eliminate an individual; it became another chapter in the confrontation between Iran and the American-Israeli security order in the region.

The legal dimension of Netanyahu's appearance was equally difficult to ignore.

The ICC issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former war minister Yoav Gallant in November 2024. The ICC said there were reasonable grounds to believe they bore criminal responsibility for acts including starvation as a method of warfare, murder, persecution, other inhumane acts and intentionally directing attacks against civilians.

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

US intelligence says Saudi Arabia has not abandoned its nuclear weapons ambitions

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Classified U.S. intelligence submitted to Congress reveals that Saudi Arabia has not abandoned plans to develop nuclear weapons, according to a Washington Post report citing American officials.

The assessment, published in the paper on September 25, arrived alongside State Department briefing documents reviewing the Trump administration's 30-year “civil nuclear cooperation agreement” with Riyadh, exposing blatant double standards in American foreign policy.

The deal is undergoing a 90-day congressional review period, where House Democrats have already introduced a joint resolution of disapproval to block it.

The agreement signed under Section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act initially limits Saudi uranium enrichment below five percent, but permits an increase to 20 percent after further joint review.

Crucially, the agreement fails to require Riyadh to sign the IAEA's Additional Protocol, depriving international inspectors of snap access to undeclared facilities.

20 nonproliferation experts, including former IAEA director general Hans Blix, warned Congress in a joint letter that omitting the Additional Protocol makes covert weapons development nearly impossible to detect.

Democratic senators Ed Markey and Jeff Merkley pressed Secretary of State Marco Rubio, writing that Washington is “caving to Saudi demands by agreeing to a process that is all but certain to allow Riyadh to acquire the means to enrich uranium and possibly develop nuclear weapons.”

Senator Merkley called claims of a purely civilian program bogus, noting that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman previously warned the kingdom would build a bomb “if Iran acquired one.”

The contrast with Iran highlights deep Western hypocrisy. The Islamic Republic has categorically ruled out non-conventional weapons, adhering to a binding religious decree issued by the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

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

Iraqi Resistance threatens nationwide sit-ins over US-pushed Iran flight ban

Mass rallies demand end to Iraqi compliance with US flight sanctions

From page 1 ▶

Threatening sit-ins and seeking fatwas

Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba Secretary-General Akram al-Kaabi promised direct action on Friday. He vowed his group will organize sit-ins at airports across the country unless normal air traffic resumes.

“We will not wait long,” Kaabi warned, condemning political forces that tolerate American dominance.

Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada leader Abu Ala al-Walai urged the Iraqi parliament to pass a resolution rejecting the U.S. dictates, citing Russia and China as models of state independence.

He described Baghdad's compliance as a betrayal of religious heritage. “It is not fitting for the Iraq of [Imam] Hussein [AS] to be part of an unjust siege on Iran, the land of knowledge and jihad,” al-Walai stated.

Kata'ib Hezbollah escalated the pushback by requesting Shia religious authorities issue a fatwa determining whether it is religiously permissible to help an enemy besiege the Iranian people.

The group urged citizens to circumvent the embargo directly by purchasing Iranian commodities.

Hadi al-Amiri, Secretary-General of the Badr Organization, condemned the unjust siege and said the government must not submit, calling it the first test for achieving full and comprehensive sovereignty.

Street protests and the fall-out

Public anger materialized quickly. Demonstrators in Basra gathered near the airport and surrounded a grounded Iranian passenger aircraft.

Crowds in central Baghdad chanted against the siege, directing their anger at Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi.

Lawmakers are rebelling against the executive order. First Deputy Speaker Adnan Faihan declared the flight ban unconstitutional on Saturday. He outlined the material risks of isolating an ally.

Faihan warned that if Tehran retaliates by cutting natural gas exports, Iraq will lose up to 40 percent of its national power grid capacity. Basra parliamentarians



gave the government 48 hours to explain the decision, gathering signatures for an emergency legislative session.

Senior political figures joined the dissent. Former Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi labeled the closure a major mistake against an allied neighbor.

The office of Marjaa Sayyed Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi condemned the capitulation, while Sayyed Abdul Qader al-Hassani al-Alousi described the ban as a historic error striking at Iraq's religious identity.

The al-Zaidi government is attempting to manage the fall-

Shot putter Tayebi collects Iran’s seventh gold in Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iranian shot putter Mohammadreza Tayebi claimed a gold medal on Saturday at the 2026 Asian Games.

He finished first in the men’s shot put with 20.81, breaking the Games record. Iran’s another shot putter, Hassan Ajami finished fifth with a throw of 19 meters and 37 centimeters.

Indian Tajinderpal Singh Toor from India won the silver with 20.64 meters and the bronze medal went to Saudi Arabia’s Mohammed Tolu with 20.48 meters.

Tayebi’s medal was Iran’s seventh gold in the Games.

Athletics at the 2026 Asian Games is being held from Sept. 23 to 29 in two locations in Nagoya. There are a total of 50 medal events across three distinct sets: track and field, road running, and racewalking.

Women’s kabaddi team bag silver at Asian Games 2026

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s national kabaddi team secured the silver medal at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya after a narrow 37–34 defeat to powerhouse India in the final.

Iran faced India on Saturday at the Tokai Citizen Gymnasium in Nagoya, putting in a strong performance but ultimately falling short against the most decorated team in world kabaddi.

Despite the defeat, Iran’s impressive run earned the team a well-deserved Asian Games silver medal.

Iran are headed by Gholamreza Mazandarani.

10m air pistol mixed team wins bronze in Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iran’s Haniyeh Rostamiyan and her teammate Vahid Golkhandan won the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya on Friday.

The Iranian pair finished third with a score of 415.8 points.

India’s Suruchi Inder Singh and Kamaljeet claimed the gold medal with a record-breaking performance, combining for an Asian record of 484.6 points in the final.

South Korea’s Suhyeon Hong and Gaeun Choo took the silver medal with 478.0 points.

Discus thrower Samimi wins bronze at 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Sadegh Samimi of Iran claimed a bronze medal at the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026 in Nagoya, Japan on Friday.

He secured a bronze with a throw of 60.32 meters.

The gold medal went to Abuduaini Tuerhong of China with 64.26 meters, ending a 24-year wait for China to reclaim the gold medal in the event.

China’s Wu Nanjun seized the silver with 61.58 meters.

Sitting volleyball rivals for Iran confirmed in Nagoya

TEHRAN – The sitting volleyball competition at the 5th Asian Para Games will feature 6 teams each in the men’s and women’s divisions.

Iran’s men’s and women’s national sitting volleyball teams are among the participants. Based on the draw, they will compete in Group A and Group B respectively.

Group Standings:

Men

* **Group A:** Japan, China, Iraq

* **Group B:** Kazakhstan, Iran, Thailand

Women

* **Group A:** Japan, Thailand, South Korea

* **Group B:** China, Iran, Mongolia

According to the announced schedule, Iran’s competition will open with the women’s team, whose first opponent is China. The men’s team will begin with a match against Thailand.

Iran’s Schedule:

Women

* **Monday, Oct 19:** Iran vs. China

* **Wednesday, Oct 21:** Iran vs. Mongolia

Men

* **Tuesday, Oct 20:** Iran vs. Thailand

* **Wednesday, Oct 21:** Iran vs. Kazakhstan

In the men’s division, Iran are the defending champions at the Asian Para Games.

The 5th Asian Para Games will be held in Japan from Oct. 18 to 24.

Men’s kabaddi snatch silver at 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s national kabaddi team secured the silver medal at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya after suffering a 40–34 defeat to India in the final at the Tokai Citizen Gymnasium.

The two teams produced a closely fought first half, with the score remaining tight throughout. Iran managed to maintain a one-point advantage in the closing minutes, heading into half-time with an 18–17 lead.

Iran started the second half strongly and managed to preserve their advantage for a spell. However, the contest once again became an even battle, with the two sides level at 21–21.

India then capitalized on mistakes by the Iranian players in the closing stages, turning the momentum in their favor and eventually securing a 40–34 victory.

Despite the defeat, Iran’s strong campaign earned the team a silver medal at the Asian Games.

The Iranian men’s national kabaddi team was coached by Navab Tazehqaleh.

Men’s handball team out of 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s national handball lost to Qatar, defending champions, 31-25 in the quarterfinals of the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya on Saturday.

Nenad Kljai?’s side produced an impressive first-half performance, taking a 14–13 lead into the break and putting one of the tournament’s main gold-medal contenders under significant pressure.

However, Iran could not maintain their advantage in the second half and ultimately bowed out of the Asian Games at the quarterfinal stage.

Female athlete Zarei bags silver: Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iranian female athlete Zahra Zarei claimed a silver medal at the women’s 400 meters of the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

This was Iran’s first-ever women’s medal in athletics at the Asian Games.

She crossed the line with a time of 52.38 seconds.

Bahrain’s Salwa Naser snatched the gold with 49.20 and broke the Games’ record. The bronze medal went to Indian athlete Prachi with 53.21 seconds.

Iran has participated in the 2026 Asian games with 11 athletes.

Saravan, a living museum of historic minaret architecture

TEHRAN – Saravan’s historic minarets offer travelers a distinctive way to explore the evolution of religious architecture in Iran’s southeastern Sistan–Baluchestan province, where mud-brick construction, local craftsmanship and centuries-old religious traditions have shaped the landscape.

Unlike the tall, mostly symbolic minarets seen at many modern mosques, the older structures of Saravan preserve evidence of a time when a minaret was a working part of daily religious life. Before loudspeakers transformed the way the call to prayer was delivered, muezzins climbed stairs, ladders or raised platforms to reach elevated points from which their voices could travel across surrounding settlements.

This architectural evolution can still be traced in and around Saravan. At some historic mosques, the place for the call to prayer was little more than a raised platform reached by a spiral staircase. Elsewhere, mud-brick stairways were built beside the mosque or covered to protect those using them from the harsh local climate.

The remains therefore tell more than a story of religious practice. They reflect how local builders adapted architecture to the region’s environment, available materials and community needs.

Among the most notable surviving examples is the minaret at Aspich Mosque, regarded by local researchers as the only completely circular historic minaret still standing in Saravan. Built of sun-dried mud bricks and mud, the structure rises about 10 meters and contains a narrow internal spiral staircase of around 20 steps.

Visitors approaching the minaret can still see the simple logic of its design: the staircase leads upward through the compact structure to the point where the muezzin once



stood to deliver the call to prayer. Local accounts also suggest that the elevated structure could have served as a lookout in times of emergency, although its principal purpose was religious.

The survival of the Aspich minaret is itself part of the story. Local residents and religious figures have helped preserve the structure over the years, and it underwent restoration and mud-plastering in 2021. Its continued presence offers a rare glimpse into the construction techniques and religious architecture of earlier generations.

Another important example stands at the historic mosque in Zangian. About eight meters high, the mud-brick and mud structure has a distinctive architectural form: its exterior is broadly square, while its interior is circular. An internal staircase once allowed the muezzin to reach the upper section. Two openings at the top and the minaret’s visibility from a distance were practical features of a structure designed primarily for the call

to prayer.

The Zangian complex also preserves a different layer of the region’s heritage. Beside the minaret is a small chamber traditionally known in Baluchi as a sonia, or retreat, which was associated with worship, spiritual discipline and seclusion by religious figures. Together, the minaret and the chamber demonstrate how tangible architecture and intangible religious traditions could exist within the same historic setting.

Other old mosques around Saravan preserve earlier stages of this architectural development. In some cases, the muezzin reached the roof through an uncovered mud-brick staircase; in others, access was provided by a covered stairway or a raised platform. Some historic minarets, however, have disappeared during mosque renovations and rebuilding.

For travelers interested in architecture and cultural heritage, this variety makes Saravan particularly rewarding. The historic minarets

are not monumental structures in the conventional sense. Their appeal lies instead in their modest scale, local materials and the way they preserve traces of everyday life.

They also illustrate a broader transition in Islamic architecture. As loudspeakers and modern sound systems replaced the need for the muezzin to climb a tower, the practical role of the minaret gradually diminished. In many contemporary mosques, it survives primarily as a visual and symbolic element.

In Saravan, however, surviving mud-brick minarets remain tangible reminders of the earlier relationship between architecture, faith and community. Preserving them is therefore not simply a matter of protecting old buildings. For visitors, they offer an opportunity to read the history of southeastern Iran through structures shaped by local hands, local materials and the needs of generations who lived around them.

Conservation project launched for Sasanian King Shapur I statue in southern Iran



TEHRAN – The first phase of a new conservation and rehabilitation project has begun on the monumental statue of Sasanian King Shapur I in Shapur Cave, near Kazerun in southern Iran, the head of the Sasanian Archaeological Landscape of Fars said.

Afshin Ebrahimi said on Saturday that the project marks the first major conservation and rehabilitation effort for the statue in about seven

decades, following its re-erection during the early years of the second Pahlavi period.

The first phase comprises four main measures, Ebrahimi explained. The initial step is detailed scientific documentation of the statue using short- and long-range photogrammetry, drones and cameras. The data will be used to prepare a comprehensive conservation plan.

Malay diplomat highlights interest in Iran, Isfahan among Malaysians

TEHRAN – Malaysia’s chargé d’affaires and head of mission in Tehran Wan Azninizam Yusri Wan Abdul Rashid has highlighted the interest of many Malaysians in visiting Iran, particularly the historic city of Isfahan, and called for broader tourism, cultural, scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries.

Speaking to IRNA, Abdul Rashid said that about 30 percent of the 234 passengers on the flight he took to Iran on August 24 were Malaysian nationals, describing the figure as an indication of the interest among some Malaysians in visiting Iran.

He said tourism cooperation between Iran and Malaysia had existed previously but was largely limited to specific groups. Malaysia now seeks to expand such exchanges by making greater use of the two countries’ cultural capacities, he added.



According to Abdul Rashid, 19,134 Iranian tourists traveled to Malaysia last year. He said Malaysia was seeking to expand both scientific and tourism cooperation with Iran.

Given the shared capacities of the two countries in tourism and culture, Malaysia is seeking to expand its relations with Iran, he said, adding that the two sides also wanted to develop co-

operation in science and technology to facilitate greater exchanges of knowledge and experience.

Abdul Rashid said greater familiarity with Iranian culture among Malaysians could contribute to tourism development. He noted that Iran and Malaysia share a number of commonalities, including Islam.

Asked about flights between the two countries amid regional conditions, he said direct flights were operating but declined to provide further details about their frequency.

He also pointed to the potential for attracting more Iranian tourists to Malaysia, saying that just as Iranian travelers visit countries across the region, Malaysia hopes to attract a larger number of them.

Asked about his personal view of Iran, he said: “I love Iran, and I feel as if I have come home.”

UNDP-backed assessment prioritizes 30 sand and dust storm hotspots in Iran

TEHRAN – A national assessment supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has identified and prioritized 30 critical domestic source areas for sand and dust storms (SDS) in Iran, providing an evidence base for targeted measures to reduce risks to communities, infrastructure and vulnerable ecosystems.

Sand and dust storms are an increasingly serious environmental and development challenge in Iran, affecting public health and livelihoods, damaging infrastructure and putting additional pressure on fragile ecosystems. More than 25 provinces are affected to varying degrees, highlighting the need to shift from responding to individual storms toward prevention, preparedness and long-term resilience.

Since 2023, UNDP has been working with Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) and the National Secretariat for Policy Making and Coordination of Management for the Sand and Dust Storms Phenomenon to support this transition.

The national assessment combines data on SDS hazard intensity, ecological vulnerability and the exposure of populations and critical infrastructure. By bringing together environmental information with data on settlements, roads, railways and agricultural areas, the assessment identifies locations where vulnerable landscapes and exposed communities overlap.

The findings provide an evidence base for directing resources to areas where interventions can have the greatest impact, ranging from vegetation restoration and soil stabilization to wetland protection and measures to safeguard infrastructure and communities.

The assessment found that 20 percent of Iran's territory falls within high- or very-high-risk SDS categories, underscoring the importance of targeted and preventive action.

"Sand and dust storms do not respect borders. Over the past three years, our partnership with UNDP has demonstrated what collective action can achieve, advancing mitigation and ad-



aptation measures across four provinces and strengthening resilience to their impacts," said Dr. Behzad Raygani, secretary of the National Secretariat for Sand and Dust Storms.

At the same time, Iran is strengthening its capacity to anticipate and manage SDS events. With support from UNDP, forecasting and early-warning capabilities have been enhanced through fixed and portable monitoring systems. Technical work has also laid the foundation for a national and regional real-time SDS monitoring application.

The initiative extends from national systems to landscapes and local communities. Technical assessments in Khuzestan, Ilam, Yazd and Semnan have incorporated SDS considerations into biodiversity and landscape planning across approximately 47,000 hectares, linking SDS mitigation with ecosystem conservation and future investment decisions.

In Semnan's Touran landscape, the integrated approach combines vegetation restoration, more efficient water use and improved grazing management with efforts to protect one of Iran's most important biodiversity areas. SDS mitigation measures have also been implemented across 270 hectares

of the Touran Protected Area, an important habitat for the endangered Asiatic cheetah.

Provincial capacity assessments in Ilam and Khuzestan have resulted in new action plans, clearer institutional responsibilities and stronger SDS working groups, helping translate national priorities into coordinated action at the local level.

These efforts form part of a broader national shift toward proactive SDS management, including plans to establish an online system for continuous monitoring of dust source areas and a decision-support system in Khuzestan.

The work comes as governments and international partners meet in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from August 17 to 28, 2026, for the 17th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP17). Held under the theme "Restoring Land. Restoring Hope.", the conference is focusing global attention on land restoration, drought resilience and sustainable land management, with sand and dust storms also addressed through a dedicated high-level event.

Iran's experience highlights the importance of connecting scientific evidence and risk information with practical action

— from identifying areas facing the greatest risks and strengthening early-warning systems to restoring vulnerable ecosystems and engaging institutions and communities in mitigation efforts.

As countries at COP17 consider ways to accelerate action against land degradation and strengthen resilience, Iran's experience underscores the importance of addressing sand and dust storms before they become airborne hazards.

UNDP, in partnership with national stakeholders and international partners, will continue to build on these efforts to strengthen resilience to SDS across Iran. Future areas of co-operation include drawing on local and indigenous knowledge to develop mitigation and adaptation measures, promoting innovative and multifunctional land-use solutions that combine land restoration, renewable energy and SDS management, and strengthening biodiversity conservation in landscapes increasingly exposed to sand and dust storms.

By bringing together science, local knowledge and nature-positive solutions, these efforts aim to reduce vulnerability, restore degraded landscapes and strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems.

Tabas Geopark grabs awards at UNESCO Global Geoparks Networks contest

TEHRAN – Tabas UNESCO Global Geopark, in the of the country, has won the first and second prizes in two out of three competitions held at the 20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN).

The GGN was initially founded in 2004 as an international partnership developed under the umbrella of UNESCO and serves to develop models of best practice and set quality-standards for territories that integrate the protection preservation of Earth heritage sites in a strategy for regional sustainable economic development. Networking and collaboration among Global Geoparks is an important component of the Global Geoparks Network.

Organized in the framework of the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the GGN in 2024, the three competitions included Earth Visual Odyssey (open to all), Stone's stories (open to all), and The 5 senses of your Geopark (only for youth 12-18 years old).

A total of 195 UNESCO Global Geoparks from 48 attended the contest to share their experiences and connections with their living environment, as well as geological and natural heritage of their regions through stories, photos, and sensory narratives.

Adeleh Sadat Sajjadipour, a sixth-grade student, secured the first prize in 'The 5 senses of your Geopark' for her work titled 'experience Morteza-Ali spring with me'. Focusing on Moreta-Ali hot spring geosite, the story recounts the student's outlook and experience of one of the geological and natural attractions of Tabas Global Geopark.

Hamid Haqi received the second prize in

'Earth Visual Odyssey' for a photo depicting a camel train in Halavan Desert, along with a view of the heights in Kolmar region.

The result of the contest was declared at the closing ceremony of the 9th Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) Symposium 2026, which took place in Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark, Malaysia, from September 4 to 12. The event brought together the international geopark community to share knowledge and strengthen collaboration in geotourism and sustainable development.

Tabas Geopark was registered in the UNESCO Global Geoparks list in Iranian year 1401 (2022-2023). Situated in South Khorasan province, the gigantic geopark includes 50 geo-sites, a variety of scenic landscapes, and untouched terrains with the mysterious Kal-e Jeni (canyon of Jinn) located in Azmighan village. Some say that Kal- e Jeni is still unexplored by many potential travelers and adventurers who may not even know such a wonderful attraction exists on Earth. Qeshm and Aras, in East Azarbaijan province, are the two other Global Geoparks in the country.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. Their bottom-up approach of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. At present, there are 241 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 51 countries.

IRCS calls for stronger regional cooperation among Red Cross, Red Crescent societies

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has called for stronger regional cooperation among Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, stressing the need to expand joint training and exercises, share knowledge and experience, and build common operational capacities.

No national society should be left alone in crises, the IRCS website quoted IRCS head Pirhossein Kolivand as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the 12th Regional Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, held in Beirut, Lebanon on September 24 and 25.

Outlining the achievements of the IRCS over the past two years and lessons learned from recent crises, Kolivand stressed the need to strengthen regional preparedness, ensure the safety of humanitarian workers and civilians, remove obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid, and closely examine the implications of using artificial intelligence and automated systems in armed conflicts.

Referring to the shift in IRCS approach as the main accomplishment of the society, the official said the IRCS has managed to transform 'preparedness' from an organizational concept into a genuine, smart, and operational capability in the field.

More than six million young volunteers have been trained, and some 120,000 specialized search and rescue personnel have been organized into operational and rapid response teams over the past few years.

The IRCS has also provided a comprehensive risk map, an atlas of hazard-prone areas, and an emergency response map, which have established a framework for decision-making and leading operations based on a more precise understanding of risks, capacities, and needs of each area.

Referring to the country's response to recent crises, Kolivand said crises in the region are no longer isolated, short-term or one-dimensional. A single crisis can simultaneously affect civilians, hospitals, pharmaceutical supply chains, critical infrastructure, mental health, and the financial and logistical capacities of humanitarian organizations. Therefore, he stressed, humanitarian preparedness and response must begin before a crisis occurs, rather than only after it has erupted.



The official emphasized the need to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel in light of the expanding use of artificial intelligence, automated systems, and emerging technologies in armed conflicts. The use of these technologies must not lead to a reduction in human and legal accountability, nor undermine the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, or the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel, he added.

IFRC: IRCS serves as a model of excellence in crisis management

In July, Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in a letter to Kolivand, lauded the IRCS's efforts during the 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran.

Highlighting the immense operational, logistical, and humanitarian challenges, Chapagain stated, "The Iranian Red Crescent Society has demonstrated decisive and effective leadership by acting as the country's primary humanitarian player," IRIB reported.

The coordination of emergency health services, round-the-clock relief operations, psychosocial assistance, and community outreach, as well as the courageous and highly professional search and rescue operations, reflect not only technical excellence but also deep-rooted trust within communities. Such trust is the cornerstone of effective humanitarian action and underscores the unique auxiliary role of IRCS and its footprint in the wide Iranian territory.

The IFRC remains fully committed to supporting IRCS in its ongoing efforts and in addressing the evolving humanitarian needs."

National Elderly Week highlights healthy, active aging

TEHRAN – The health ministry is commemorating National Elderly Week from September 26 to October 2 to raise awareness among policymakers and the public about aging, focusing on healthy, active, and empowered aging.

The week highlights key aspects of aging, including the health and quality of life of the elderly, the promotion of public health, the empowerment of caregivers and the families of the elderly, and the expansion of health services, IRNA reported.

Encouraging healthy aging lifestyles, preserving a healthy environment, upholding the status, human dignity, respect, and rights of the elderly within the family and society, fostering active aging and social participation, supporting elderly care, benefiting from the valuable experiences and capabilities of the elderly, strengthening the role of families in providing care, as well as engaging philanthropists, NGOs, private sectors, and other relevant entities in the field of geriatric health are among other objectives of the week.

It also emphasizes enhancing the status, human dignity, respect, and rights of older adults within the family and society, fostering active aging and social participation, and supporting elderly care through the involvement of philanthropists, NGOs, the private sector, and other relevant institutions.

The days of the week focus on the following topics.

Saturday, September 26, 'Longevity, different future, rethinking policies on aging'

Sunday, September 27, 'Active, happy, empowered, hopeful aging'

Monday, September 28, 'Older adults' participation, from service recipients to social

assets'

Tuesday, September 29, 'An age-friendly society, city, neighborhood, and home for a better life'

Wednesday, September 30, 'More years, healthier lives'

Thursday, October 1, 'Silver Economy, older adults: an opportunity, not a cost'

Friday, October 2, 'Generations together, family, empathy, a community for all ages'

The International Day of Older Persons is observed on October 1 every year. This year, the day is themed 'The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives'. It is an urgent call to address the needs of an ageing world.

Elderly to account for 30% of Iran's population by 2050

With older adults already accounting for 13 percent of Iran's population and the country's fertility rate continuing to decline, demographic shifts are accelerating. Current projections indicate that within the next 25 years, nearly one-third of Iran's population will be aged 60 and above.

Iran is aging, and this demographic shift will place significant pressure on the healthcare system, pension funds, social support agencies, and the national economy. To prevent the consequences of an aging population, the country is pursuing policies aimed at boosting the youth population and incentives for childbearing.

Aging is a natural process of the life cycle, but the way society approaches this life phase today will shape the living conditions of future generations.

An aging population entails more than just an increased demand for healthcare services;

the rising number of elderly individuals also drives a growing need for care services, rehabilitation, home-based care, environmental adaptations, and social welfare services, which will alter the pension system and pose serious challenges to it.

Demographic shifts make action more urgent than ever. Actions need to be taken now to be able to address the livelihood and well-being of the elderly in the years to come. The interval between the current situation and advanced aging offers an opportunity for policymaking and structural reform; failing to act would result in consequences that are significantly more challenging to address.

According to Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi, the secretary of the National Population Headquarters, the young population is one of the indicators that has to be paid attention to. The young population is the share of the population aged less than 15 years old. In Iran, it forms 21.5 percent of the total population, that is 21.5 out of 100 individuals is below 15, currently. However, it is declining with falling birth-rates.

Fortunately, Iran is in a population window of opportunity – a period when a large proportion of the population is of working age, the country has 15 to 20 years before the demographic window began to close.

Alireza Raeisi, an official with the health ministry, says that "Population decline is itself a consequence rather than a cause; therefore, to reverse the trend, the various economic, social, cultural, and familial factors that have led to reduced fertility must be identified, analyzed, and addressed. Furthermore, even if we succeed in increasing the population, we must bear in mind that population aging is inevitable."

