

Toxic warfare threatens Gaza's survival

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – As though the Israeli regime had not already taken enough Palestinian lives, it now appears to be employing new methods to harm and kill them.

Apart from issuing statements of condemnation, the international community has remained shamefully inactive over the past three years amid a genocidal war. At best, the most it has done is walk out while war criminal and fugitive from international justice Benjamin Netanyahu delivered his speech at the UN General Assembly.

The departure of delegations of more than 80 countries from the UN General Assembly hall appeared only to fuel his arrogance and defiance. He seems to understand better than anyone that such walkouts are largely a matter of protocol. ► Page 5

South Lebanon faces aggressive Israeli offensive as US 'diplomacy' provides cover

TEHRAN — A massive explosion orchestrated by Israeli forces tore through the coastal town of al-Mansouri in southern Lebanon on Monday, sending violent tremors across the Tyre district.

Residents miles away felt the ground shake. Based on the pattern of Israel's offensive conduct, the detonation bore the hallmarks of a calculated demolition designed to erase Lebanese civilian infrastructure and entrench an illegal buffer zone. ► Page 5

Vietnam embassy in Iran holds Vietnam–Iran business networking event in Tehran

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The Vietnamese Embassy in Iran on the evening of September 27 hosted a Vietnam–Iran Business Networking Event at its embassy in Tehran, bringing together more than 50 businessmen active in different fields.

Mr. Sunny, First Secretary of the Embassy, said in the opening remarks: Vietnam should be seen not only as a market but as a strategic platform. It can serve as a bridge between Iranian businesses and ASEAN, while Iran can offer Vietnamese firms access to its market and the wider region. Vietnam is now embedded in global manufacturing and supply chains, with geographic advantages, ASEAN links, ► Page 4

Tehran gallery traces capital's past, explores future of smart tourism

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – A new gallery in Tehran is taking visitors on a journey through the capital's political, social, cultural and artistic history while using digital technology and artificial intelligence to offer a glimpse of how tourism in the city could evolve in the future.

The "Stories of Tehran" gallery opened at the Kushk-e Bagh-e Honar cultural complex in the Abbasabad Cultural and Tourism Zone on Sunday, coinciding with World Tourism Day and Tehran Week. The exhibition runs from September 27 to October 8 under this year's World Tourism Day theme, "Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Redesign Tourism." ► Page 6

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei says Iran is the world's foremost power based on divine calculations

The Enemy Dares Not Venture Beyond Arabian Sea — And Soon Will Be Driven From There

We are living in a time when women surpass men in several arenas with their courageous presence.

Today, we remember the heroic Arab commander and great symbol of the Resistance Front, Sayyid Nasrallah.

Iran has moved beyond the era of foreign domination and will not return to the conditions that preceded the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei notes

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei issued a message on Monday saying that due to the painful blows that the enemy has suffered at the hands of Iranian armed forces and the guardians of the Strait of Hormuz, it has sought refuge in the Arabian Sea and it will soon be expelled from there.

The following is the full text of the Leader's message issued on the occasion of Sacred Defense Week and the martyrdom anniversary of Lebanese Hezbollah chief Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah:

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"And verily We sent Moses with Our signs, [saying], 'Bring your people out from darkness into light and remind them of the Days of Allah'" (Quran 14:5).

The opening days of the month of Mehr are a reminder of the "Days of God" (Ayyam Allah) and that monumental, enduring phenomenon: the eight-year valiant defense of the Iranian nation in the First Imposed War. During those days, the warm radiance of the Revolutionary sun throughout the entire expanse of Iran radiated a gratifying sense of national solidarity and devotion to the ideals and ethos of revolutionary Islam, melting away the ice of both classical colonialism and neo-colonialism and hegemony.

At that time, some Iranians still remembered the hostility of the colonial powers,

the events surrounding the nationalization of the oil industry, and the US-backed coup d'état of more than two decades earlier. Others had heard accounts of it, while many had experienced first-hand the brutal reality of what foreign domination over our nation's affairs wrought upon the country.

The days preceding that era were dark and bleak, when ambassadors of the Arrogant Powers would dictate their demands and prohibitions to the Shah of Iran, and he would execute those demands – either willingly or reluctantly – until the magnificent Revolution of the Iranian nation, led by the late Imam Khomeini (RA), ripped that order apart. Due to the Revolution, those dark days gave way to the luminous era of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. ► Page 3



Alipour snatches gold in weightlifting at Nagoya 2026

TEHRAN – Iranian weightlifter Ali Alipour captured the gold medal in the men's 95kg category at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya.

Alipour produced a 180kg snatch and a 218kg clean and jerk for a combined total of 398kg, securing the Asian Games title in impressive fashion.

His total of 398kg also set a new world record, adding another remarkable achievement to his gold-medal performance in Nagoya.

Kazakhstan's Nurgissa Adiletuly won a silver with 394kg and the bronze medal went to Yi Tu from China with 394kg.

Alipour's success adds to Iran's growing medal tally in weightlifting at the Games. On the previous day, Reyhaneh Karimi made history by becoming the first Iranian woman to win a weightlifting medal at the Asian Games, taking bronze.

It was Iran's eighth gold in the Games so far.

Iran files formal complaint with UN over Trump's 'hateful and disgusting' threats

TEHRAN — Iran has formally lodged a robust protest with the United Nations, denouncing the inflammatory remarks made by US President Donald Trump during the 81st session of the General Assembly. Tehran has warned that such declarations, delivered from the highest international podium, represent a severe breach of the UN Charter and the foundational principles of international law.

In a formal communique addressed to UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the President of the Security Council, Gholamhossein Darzi, Iran's chargé d'affaires to the United Nations, underscored that the US president's remarks on September 22 were not merely reckless political posturing, but a dangerous escalation that undermines global peace. ► Page 2

Report: Eight US Marines wounded in Iranian strike near Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN — An Iranian anti-ship cruise missile strike in the Strait of Hormuz has left at least eight US Marines wounded, exposing the mounting operational vulnerabilities of the American military presence in West Asia and puncturing Washington's carefully curated narrative of naval dominance in the Persian Gulf.

The high-precision strike, which occurred on September 14, targeted an unauthorized maritime vessel deployed within the strategic chokepoint. ► Page 2

Iraqis hold rallies protesting suspension of flights with Iran

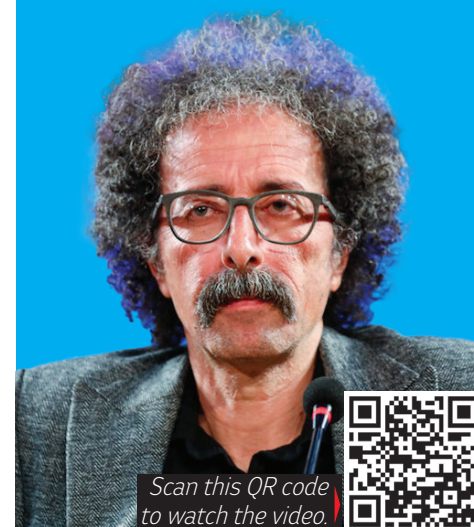
TEHRAN – Large numbers of people held protests in the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala to express their strong opposition to the Iraqi government's decision to suspend direct flights between Iran and Iraq at the Trump administration's order.

In Najaf, protesters gathered outside the international airport to urge the government not to bow to U.S. demands. The demonstrations in Najaf were held following a call by the head of the executive council of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba.

The protesters in Najaf carried Iranian flags and portraits of martyred Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who played a key role in Iraq's struggle against Daesh terrorists.

Protesters in Karbala said the U.S. demand that the Iraqi government suspend flights with Iran violated their country's sovereignty. ► Page 5

Beyond melodrama: Khajepasha on war, childhood and duty of Iranian cinema ► Page 8



Scan this QR code to watch the video.

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

The enemy's narrative of control over the Strait of Hormuz has been challenged

Khorasan, in an analysis of Iran's repeated seizure of enemy equipment in the Strait of Hormuz, wrote: The IRGC Navy has announced the capture of a second advanced uncrewed surface vessel (USV) belonging to the terrorist US military. Twenty days earlier, the IRGC had also captured the first advanced enemy drone vessel. At the time, the Pentagon claimed that the incident had been caused by a technical malfunction. The repeated seizure of enemy assets in the Strait of Hormuz has not only challenged Trump's claims regarding control of the strait, but has also highlighted the capabilities and strength of Iranian forces in intelligence gathering and electronic warfare. Another significant point is the connection between these captures and the targeting of several vessels described as violating regulations in the Strait of Hormuz. Taken together, these developments once again demonstrate the falsity of Trump's claims about control of the Strait of Hormuz. In other words, besides facing setbacks in surface engagements, it is also experiencing defeat in subsurface warfare.

Jam-e-Jam: Washington's scenario is a war of attrition until the elections, then a return to hard confrontation

Jam-e-Jam examined recent developments and the US approach toward Iran. According to the paper, a comprehensive assessment of recent statements by Trump, the activities of the State Department under Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and the positions adopted by American security institutions suggests that the United States is skillfully managing a dual-track strategy. On the one hand, it is keeping the door to diplomacy open as a means of containing Iran, while on the other, it is intensifying military preparations behind the scenes. Washington has no desire to reach a meaningful compromise or ease sanctions before the results of the November midterm elections become clear. Trump's current strategy is based on a suspended war of attrition. Within this framework, Washington is allegedly exploiting the willingness of Iranian diplomats to engage in talks and return to the so-called Islamabad understanding. By doing so, it seeks to keep Tehran's strategic initiatives, such as closing the Strait of Hormuz or responding reciprocally to aviation-related sanctions, in a state of suspension. The United States is reportedly preparing itself to move, after passing the electoral hurdle, toward a phase of direct confrontation or the imposition of surrender-like conditions, relying on the accumulation of threats it has already established.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: The story is not over yet

Donya-e-Eqtesad published an article re-

garding Trump's rejection of Tehran's seven-day proposal. According to the paper, Iran presented a seven-day proposal in New York. Under this plan, if a series of measures sought by Tehran were implemented, the process of reopening the Strait of Hormuz would begin, while negotiations aimed at ending the conflict and resuming nuclear talks would proceed simultaneously. Trump, however, rejected the proposal. Nevertheless, the US president's reaction should not necessarily be interpreted as an end to diplomatic communications. A key point emphasized in Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's remarks is the distinction between Trump's public comments and Washington's official response conveyed through negotiation channels. Araghchi does not suggest that Trump's statements are unimportant. Rather, he indicates that Tehran is still waiting for the United States' final position to be communicated through intermediaries. This distinction is significant because last week's negotiations also largely followed this mechanism. Messages were exchanged between the two sides through Qatar, Pakistan, and other regional channels. There was even a meeting between Araghchi and Steve Witkoff, Trump's envoy, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Arman-e-Emrooz: The countdown to terminating the future of Iran-US negotiations

Arman-e-Emrooz, in an article, referred to intensive efforts by mediators to arrange another meeting between Iranian and American officials. These efforts are particularly focused on New York, where mediating parties hope to use the remaining time available to draft a ceasefire proposal and create conditions for the restoration of free maritime navigation through the Strait of Hormuz. The primary objective is that, after achieving initial progress on this sensitive issue, the main negotiations can continue at a faster pace in locations such as Doha, Muscat, or a European city and ultimately reach a conclusion. This approach reflects the mediators' desire to create a new diplomatic environment and reduce existing tensions, which have had far-reaching effects on both the region and the wider international community over recent months. The dual-track policy of remaining open to dialogue while firmly adhering to core principles continues to be the cornerstone of Iran's current foreign policy. Relying on its diplomatic efforts across multiple dimensions and on the implicit support of many countries for its principled position, Iran considers itself prepared to enter negotiations founded on mutual respect and the protection of its legitimate rights.

Iranians ready to defend homeland against any aggression: commander

TEHRAN— Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, has stressed the Iranian people's readiness to defend their homeland, saying the nation's preparedness, together with that of the Armed Forces, sends a clear message to any adversary contemplating aggression against Iran.

Speaking to IRNA on Monday, Sayyari was responding to recent statements by US President Donald Trump, including threats of military action against Iran and references to the destruction of the country in remarks delivered during the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The commander said the Iranian nation and the armed forces remain fully prepared to confront any threat and defend Iran's territorial integrity.

Referring to remarks previously made by the late Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, former Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Sayyari said Iran could effectively put its adversaries in a position where they would be unable to pursue their objectives.

He emphasized that the readiness to defend the country extends beyond the Armed



Forces, saying the entire Iranian population considers itself part of the nation's defense effort.

"The entire Iranian nation is ready to defend its beloved homeland and to surprise any aggressor," Sayyari said, referring to the continued threats and hostile rhetoric directed against Iran, as well as the recent US-Israeli military confrontation with the country.

Sayyari made the remarks as Iran commemorates Sacred Defense Week, an annual observance marking the country's resistance during the eight-year Iran-Iraq War, which began with Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980.

Iran files formal complaint with UN over Trump's 'hateful and disgusting' threats

From page 1 ► The Iranian envoy stated that Trump had "openly threatened the Islamic Republic of Iran, a founding member of the United Nations, with destruction" while speaking from the UN platform.

In his letter, Darzi detailed the alarming rhetoric employed by Trump, citing his declaration: "I annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly."

The letter further highlighted a pattern of bellicose behavior, noting that the US president had claimed he could "drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness."

"These hateful and disgusting statements are neither ambiguous nor unprecedented," the letter observed, describing the rhetoric as part of a sustained campaign of hostility against the Iranian nation by the leader of a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

A pattern of escalating aggression

Tehran's complaint provides extensive documentation of the hostile trajectory emanating from the White House throughout 2026. According to the document, the recent rhetoric at



the General Assembly is merely the latest chapter in a series of threats targeting the core of the Iranian state.

The letter cataloged several instances of previous threats:

March 22, 2026: Trump threatened to "hit and obliterate their various Power Plants."

March 30, 2026: Threats were directed toward widespread destruction of energy facilities and critical infrastructure, including essential desalination plants.

April 6, 2026: The US President alleged that "an entire country could be wiped out in one night," while targeting Iranian bridges and power generation facilities.

April 7, 2026: The threats peaked when Trump declared, "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again."

Darzi emphasized that the General Assembly is a forum established to cultivate peace and cooperation, not a venue for the proclamation of annihilation. He warned that international indifference to such rhetoric, combined with the normalization of these threats, erodes the authority of the UN Charter.

A legacy of resistance

The Iranian envoy's letter explicitly connected these rhetorical threats to the tangible military aggressions Iran has

endured over the past year. Since June 2025, Iran has faced two major rounds of unprovoked military strikes by the US-Israeli axis.

During the 12-day war in June 2025, more than 1,000 Iranians—including women and children—were martyred. The subsequent conflict, which began on February 28, 2026, lasted 39 days and resulted in a catastrophic death toll of over 3,500 people, as well as the destruction of critical civilian and economic infrastructure.

The two campaigns also claimed the lives of numerous senior Iranian military commanders, nuclear scientists, and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Despite these hardships, the Iranian diplomat reaffirmed the nation's unwavering resolve. Darzi stated that, regardless of whether these threats are dismissed as "baseless fantasies," they will never materialize in the face of the steadfast resistance and the determined defense mounted by the Iranian people and their armed forces—a resolve that has historically forced the cessation of such aggression.

Report: Eight US Marines wounded in Iranian strike near Strait of Hormuz

From page 1 ► According to disclosures from American officials, the impact resulted in immediate trauma among the personnel on board, including smoke inhalation and symptoms consistent with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and severe concussions. The injured troops—comprising seven enlisted service members and one officer—were attached to an expeditionary battalion landing team operating covertly aboard a non-naval, commercial-grade maritime vessel rather than a standard commissioned warship.

The incident, concealed by the United States Department of War for nearly two weeks, came to light only after the Pentagon's Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS) belatedly added the wounded Marines to its casualty rosters for Overseas Operations, without disclosing the time, location, or circumstances of the engagement. Both US Central Command (CENTCOM) and the Pentagon declined to formally address the strike, extending a pattern of information suppression and data manipulation that has characterized Washington's public disclosures since the outbreak of hostilities in late February.

The successful missile engagement serves as a potent reminder of Iran's comprehensive operational control over the Strait of Hormuz and adjacent littoral waters. Operating under strict rules of engagement, naval units of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Army have established absolute surveillance over the waterway, through which a significant portion of global petroleum supplies must transit.

Tehran has reiterated that maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz is indivisible and sovereign. Hostile military assets and non-authorized vessels attempting illegal passage, espionage, or the enforcement of unilateral Western blockades against Irani-

an commerce are treated as legitimate tactical targets. Military authorities in Tehran have repeatedly cautioned foreign powers that any vessel defying Iranian navigational regulations, failing to transmit required identification, or participating in hostile maneuvers will be intercepted or neutralized without hesitation.

Despite Washington's deployment of vast naval assets to the region—including more than 50,000 personnel, multiple carrier strike groups led by the USS George Washington and the USS George H.W. Bush, and accompanying guided-missile escorts—the Pentagon's attempt to impose an unlawful blockade on Iranian ports has been systematically frustrated. Iranian coastal defense batteries, armed with advanced radar systems and indigenous anti-ship cruise and ballistic missiles, hold every foreign vessel in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman within immediate targeting range.

US casualties and information blackout

The September 14 strike has renewed scrutiny over the Pentagon's opaque reporting practices regarding military casualties. Since the United States and Israel jointly launched their aggressive, unprovoked war against Iran on February 28, defense analysts and regional observers have noted an unprecedented level of discrepancy and confusion in official American reports.

While DCAS records show that well over 860 US military personnel have sustained injuries since the start of the conflict, independent observers argue the true figures are substantially higher. Over the summer, the Pentagon abruptly reclassified its casualty methodologies, retroactively lowering official death counts and categorizing combat casualties under vague bureaucratic labels to soften the domestic political impact



of the campaign's escalating human toll. The delayed logging of the eight Marines—justified retroactively by US officials as a standard administrative reporting lag—reflects a broader strategy aimed at downplaying the efficacy of Iranian defensive counter-measures.

Furthermore, the deployment of combat troops aboard an undisclosed "maritime vessel" points to a growing operational shift by CENTCOM. Facing devastating losses and heightened risk to major surface combatants from Iran's asymmetric swarming tactics, naval drones, and precision coastal batteries, the US military has increasingly resorted to utilizing auxiliary, commercial, or unmarked hulls to evade detection—a strategy that Iranian intelligence and surveillance networks continue to successfully penetrate and neutralize.

Iran's non-negotiable terms

Iranian political leadership and top military commanders have made it explicitly clear that safe, uninterrupted transit through the Strait of Hormuz remains entirely contingent upon the United States acknowledging regional geopolitical realities and complying with Iran's legitimate terms.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

IRGC reaffirms commitment to resistance path on Nasrallah martyrdom anniversary

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has reaffirmed its commitment to the path of late Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, saying his legacy continues to strengthen the regional resistance front and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

In a statement issued to mark the second anniversary of Nasrallah's martyrdom, the IRGC said his death had not weakened the resistance front but had instead become a source of renewed strength and vitality.

The statement described Nasrallah as a strategic architect of what it called the modern resistance movement and credited him with combining military

strategy with political and diplomatic efforts. According to the IRGC, Nasrallah helped develop resistance from a primarily tactical approach into a broader political and intellectual framework.

It said his influence extended beyond Lebanon and Palestine to other parts of the region, including Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, and emphasized his view that the various components of the resistance front were interconnected.

Nasrallah's legacy and regional resistance

The IRGC said Nasrallah viewed the resistance front as a unified entity in which an

achievement in one arena constituted an achievement for the broader front.

According to the statement, his leadership contributed to the establishment of a deterrence equation vis-à-vis the Israeli regime and challenged Israel's longstanding image of military invincibility.

The IRGC said the path associated with Nasrallah would continue under the leadership of Hezbollah Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem, while praising Hezbollah's activities and the resistance's continued presence in southern Lebanon.

Nasrallah was martyred in an Israeli airstrike on Beirut's

southern suburbs in September 2024. His martyrdom marked a major development for Hezbollah and its regional allies and was followed by the appointment of Naim Qassem as the movement's secretary general.

The IRGC statement framed Nasrallah's legacy within a broader regional confrontation over resistance to Israeli occupation and US influence in West Asia.

Resistance and the Strait of Hormuz

The statement also linked the concept of resistance to Iran's ongoing confrontation with the United States and Israel.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei says Iran is the world’s foremost power based on divine calculations

The enemy dares not venture beyond Arabian Sea-and soon will be driven from there

From Page 1 ▶ This development was deeply intolerable to the hegemonic powers whose greedy eyes were focused on the wealth of this land. For years, they had inflicted all kinds of atrocities upon Iran’s people to claim those resources for themselves. So, from that moment on, they devoted all their efforts to reversing the roaring surge of the revolutionary nation to go back to its former course. The First Imposed War was their most significant undertaking during the first decade of the blessed existence of the Islamic Republic.

From inside the heart of the flames of that war – which had been ignited by the Ba’ath party that was hostile toward their people, under the delusion of a conflict that would only take days and be a victory requiring little effort – the Islamic system rose like a phoenix, more vigorous and stronger than before, and with a more resounding voice and loftier flight. This became an enduring hallmark of the Islamic system in the subsequent events that were orchestrated by its enemies.

Those days when the enemy of this nation had imposed its puppets upon the people and enforced a new form of colonialism were, due to the blessing of the Revolution and the raising of the banner of Islam and jihad in the midst of the Imposed War, transformed into days of glory. Today, even 38 years after the end of that war, when we examine its events in close detail and listen to the truthful accounts of those who survived it, figures of exemplary stature emerge like brilliant stars in the firmament of our nation’s history. Each one is a model from whom lessons in worship, courage, resistance, morality, and humanity can be learned.

Those early days at the onset of the attacks by the agents of the hegemonic system, our country had inherited nothing from the Taghut (Pahlavi) regime to defend itself against a barrage of threats. But those days have now – due to the blessing of upholding the Truth and through divine assistance – given way to days in which the aggressive hegemonic powers themselves, and not merely their proxies, seek shelter from the attacks of Islam’s soldiers and plead for an end to the war.

Those days to which they long to return our country were days of backwardness, humiliation, dependency, and a tarnishing of Iran’s



reputation in the Islamic world. In contrast, the days we live in today are overflowing with progress, dignity, independence, and an elevated level of reputability in the Islamic world and indeed across the globe. Today, there are those who regard us as the world’s fourth superpower. Of course, they say this based on worldly calculations. But according to divine calculations, a country that knows itself to be devoted to the pure Household of the Prophet (PBUH), whose people are predominantly attached to those exalted figures, and who have no fear of upholding the Truth, is the world’s foremost power.

In those days, the two seas to the south of Iran were the theater of operations for enemy forces. But today, because of the painful blows the enemy has suffered at the hands of our valiant fighters and the guardians of the Strait of Hormuz, they dare not advance beyond the Arabian Sea. Whenever they have risked doing so, they themselves have suffered. And it won’t be long before the Arabian Sea rids itself of their presence too.

There was a time when the hegemonic powers, through psychological warfare and by creating an atmosphere of fear, emptied the streets of the capital and staged a coup against this nation’s struggle for independence. After that, they plundered the wealth of this country for 25 years. But now for seven months, our compatriots have adorned the public squares and streets throughout the country with their enthusiastic, responsible presence, warming the hearts of those fighting for Islam while striking fear into the enemy.

Over 30 million Iranians have declared their willingness to sacrifice their lives. And when they were called upon to reconfirm their readiness as part of a cer-

tain organizational effort, more than 500,000 people filled the requested capacity within the first 100 minutes alone. Today, there are various declarations of readiness throughout Islamic Iran, particularly for armed participation, creating an arena in which our people will gain honor and their enemy disgrace. There were days when the heroic spirit of the people of this land was recognized through its men. But today, we live in times where women surpass men in several arenas with their courageous presence.

There were days when the enemy sought to continuously erode the social bedrock of the system. But today, people from all walks of life, despite their obvious differences, stand resolutely in defending their righteous positions, including their determination to safeguard the bountiful Strait of Hormuz.

This comparison between the days of the past and the present can be further expanded upon, but in one word, I, as a servant of the dear people of Iran, declare that those bygone days to which our enemy longs to return have passed and will never be repeated. Of course, I must recall with sorrow and grief that these days, the absence of the Great Khomeini and the illustrious Martyr Khamenei (may God elevate their noble stations) is felt deeply. The country’s present dignity owes a great debt to their leadership. Nonetheless, by virtue of the invaluable treasure of their deeds and radiant, guiding words left behind for their followers, the coming days will be vastly more glorious than the present. For the phoenix that arose from the ashes of the First Imposed War has now, under the pressure of enemy hostilities and particularly the two recent Imposed Wars, grown so majestic that the shadow of its

flight now extends over the lands of the enemy as well.

On this occasion of the second anniversary of the martyrdom of the heroic commander of the Arab world and the great symbol of the Resistance Front, the exalted martyr, His Eminence Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah (may God sanctify his pure soul), it’s very fitting to remember him. He was a sincere well-wisher for his people and his faith. His sincere and eloquent sermons, together with his courageous actions, strengthened the hearts of his people and, indeed, the hearts of the free people of the world. He elevated the name of Lebanon, which is a small country that for years had served as a backyard for foreign powers, to greatness. Victory and triumph were his constant companions. Without a doubt, no figure – after the prophets and their successors – has ever arisen of his stature in that ancient land throughout the entire history of the Levant.

Today, his glorious banner is in the hands of His Eminence Sheikh Naim Qassem (may God protect him), who courageously leads the resolute, Ashura-inspired ranks of Hezbollah, who continue his path.

These current days in Lebanon – even now before the judgment of history – are outstanding, glorious days for its people and all fighters of the Resistance. They’re days that bring humiliation and ultimate disgrace upon those who pin their hopes on the false promises of the hegemonic powers and the people’s ill-wishers when facing the Zionist enemy. Unlike the martyred Sayyid of the Resistance, Sayyid Hashem Safieddine, and the current fighters of the Resistance – who will continue to shine like radiant stars throughout time and will guide those who seek the way when lost in bewilderment – those powers will be swiftly buried and forgotten at the very first turn of history’s pages. Whenever they are recalled in the future, they will only be reminders of malice, folly, and perhaps even betrayal.

In conclusion, I am hopeful that, with the continued bestowal of divine grace and the special prayers of our Master (Imam Mahdi) (may God hasten his noble reappearance and may our souls be sacrificed for him), the Iranian nation and all the allies of the Resistance will encounter only victory, triumph, and glory, while their enemies will only suffer defeat and humiliation, by God’s grace and through His bounty.

Ghalibaf underscores significance of Xi’s shared future vision, four global initiatives

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran’s Parliament speaker and special representative for China affairs, has voiced strong support for President Xi Jinping’s vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, as Iran and China mark the 55th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

In a Chinese-language commentary published by the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Ghalibaf also highlighted Xi’s four major initiatives — the Global Development Initiative (GDI), Global Security Initiative (GSI), Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), and Global Governance Initiative (GGI) — as important frameworks for addressing contemporary global challenges.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran follows with attention and interest President Xi Jinping’s vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind, as well as China’s initiatives in the areas of global development, global security, global civilization, and global governance,” Ghalibaf wrote. “The significance of these ideas should be viewed as part of a broader effort to find new answers to global challenges—answers based not on unilateral domination, but on dialogue, development, and cooperation.”

Turning to China’s trajectory under its 15th Five-Year Plan, Ghalibaf noted that Iran is observing Beijing’s emphasis on high-quality development, technological innovation, new quality productive forces, and the digital and green economies with keen interest.

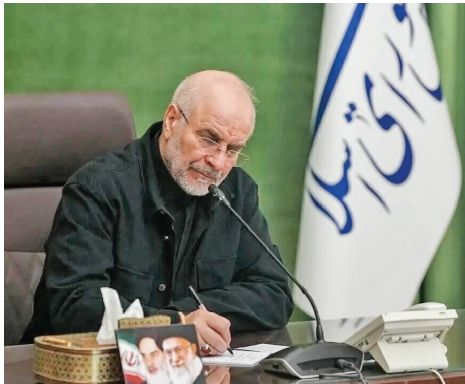
He emphasized that China’s efforts to strengthen economic resilience while maintaining high-level opening-up create significant opportunities for its partners, adding, “Iran can be one of those partners.”

Reflecting on China’s broader development model, Ghalibaf praised the nation’s progress, stating, “China has demonstrated over the past decades that a nation can, by relying on its own capabilities, pursuing long-term planning, and engaging with the global economy, embark on a remarkable path of development.”

Ghalibaf’s remarks underline the potential for Iran to benefit from China’s continued economic and technological development. Greater cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, infrastructure, technology and the digital economy could provide new avenues for advancing the long-standing Iran-China partnership.

Ghalibaf was appointed as Iran’s special representative for China affairs in May, following a proposal by President Masoud Pezeshkian and approval by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

His appointment has given greater political weight to Tehran’s engagement with Beijing and comes against the backdrop of major changes in



the regional and global landscape following the US-Israel war against Iran on February 28.

With decades of experience in senior political and military positions, including serving as Parliament speaker, mayor of Tehran and a top commander, Ghalibaf brings extensive expertise in national policymaking, governance and international engagement to his new role. His political standing and new mandate provide a high-level channel for strengthening coordination with Beijing and turning broad strategic understanding into practical cooperation.

China’s vision for regional security

Against the backdrop of the US-Israeli war on Iran, Beijing has consistently called for dialogue to facilitate a permanent end to conflict. On September 2, during a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in Cairo, President Xi detailed a four-point proposal for a new Middle East security architecture based on common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

Ghalibaf warmly welcomed this initiative. “China’s emphasis on fostering common security reflects a principle Iran has long championed,” Ghalibaf wrote on X (formerly Twitter) on September 4. “True stability can only come through a new security architecture that is homegrown. Iran stands ready.”

His support for Xi’s four-point proposal further highlights the growing convergence between Tehran and Beijing on dialogue, common security and regional cooperation. Together with his strong backing for China’s vision of a community with a shared future for mankind and the four global initiatives, this underscores Ghalibaf’s important role in strengthening high-level coordination with Beijing. This broader alignment also reflects Iran’s interest in China’s path of development with Chinese characteristics, particularly its emphasis on self-reliance, long-term planning and building national capabilities while remaining open to international cooperation — an approach Ghalibaf sees as highly relevant to Iran’s own development path and to building a stronger, more practical and forward-looking Iran-China partnership.

US aviation sanctions threaten flight safety and human lives, Iran says

TEHRAN— Iran’s High Council for Human Rights has condemned Washington’s latest sanctions targeting the country’s aviation sector, warning that restrictions on access to aircraft parts, equipment, and technical services could have consequences that extend beyond trade and directly affect flight safety and human life.

In a statement issued on Monday, the council said the United States’ September 8 sanctions, which targeted individuals, companies and networks linked to Iran’s aviation industry, were particularly concerning because they also seek to pressure foreign companies and intermediaries involved in supplying aircraft, technology and aviation services to Iran.

The US Treasury said on September 8 that it had sanctioned 36 targets under its “Operation Economic Outcast,” including 27 Iranian airlines, accusing them of supporting activities involving weapons, personnel and illicit cargo. Washington also targeted foreign intermediaries and procurement networks connected to Iran’s aviation sector.

The Iranian council argued that civil aviation is fundamentally a safety-critical sector rather than merely a commercial activity. It said safe flight operations depend on reliable access to spare parts, engines, navigation and communications equipment, maintenance and repair services, inspections and other specialized technical support.

The statement invoked the 1944 Chicago Convention and its emphasis on the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation, argu-

ing that restrictions affecting a country’s ability to obtain safety-related equipment and services should be considered within the framework of international aviation obligations.

Iran also pointed to a precedent before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In its October 3, 2018, order in the case brought by Iran against the United States, the Court identified spare parts, equipment and associated services necessary for the safety of civil aviation as goods and services linked to rights claimed by Iran under the 1955 Treaty of Amity.

The ICJ further stated that US measures had the potential to endanger civil aviation safety in Iran and the lives of its users insofar as they prevented Iranian airlines from obtaining necessary spare parts, equipment and related services, including maintenance, repair and safety inspections. The Court ordered the United States to remove impediments to the export of such goods and services to Iran as part of its provisional measures.

The High Council for Human Rights said this history demonstrates that the relationship between sanctions and aviation safety has previously been examined at the international legal level.

It stressed that political and economic disputes should not undermine aviation safety or increase risks to passengers and crews, arguing that the humanitarian consequences of sanctions affecting safety-critical sectors should be taken into account alongside their stated economic and political objectives.

LATEST NEWS

■ Baqaei: Araghchi’s stay in New York has not been extended

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said there has been no extension to Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi’s stay in New York, dismissing reports that he would remain there longer for negotiations.

Speaking to an IRIB reporter in New York, Baqaei was asked whether reports about an extension of Araghchi’s stay due to negotiations were accurate.

“No, there has been no extension,” Baqaei said, adding that Araghchi’s return to Tehran would proceed according to the previously announced schedule.

■ Iranian delegation to meet mediators in New York

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his delegation are scheduled to meet mediators in New York on Monday to exchange views on the latest developments, an informed source said. The source stressed that no direct negotiations with the United States are planned. Iran has previously conveyed its conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz through Qatari mediation and is awaiting Washington’s response.

■ Iranian lawmaker condemns US-Israeli attacks as assault on regional heritage

Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei has described the recent US-Israeli attacks on Iran as extending beyond a military confrontation, saying they also affected civilian infrastructure, scientific and medical facilities, and cultural and historical sites. Speaking at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Tajikistan, Rezaei said the attacks threatened regional peace and stability and called for greater solidarity among Asian countries in confronting emerging security challenges and protecting regional cooperation.

■ Iran seizes two smuggling vessels, arrests 50 border trespassers

Iran’s Border Guard Command in Hormozgan Province has announced the arrest of 50 border trespassers and the seizure of two vessels in separate operations in the waters off Minab and Qeshm. Deputy Commander Col. Amir Malekzadeh said the vessels were carrying smuggled fuel and other goods. The provincial border guard said its forces were maintaining close surveillance of coastal areas and territorial waters to safeguard Iran’s borders.

■ Ulyanov urges Washington to pursue peaceful solutions on Iran

Russia’s permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, has urged Washington to pursue peaceful solutions to its dispute with Iran, saying non-peaceful approaches have failed. In a post on X, Ulyanov said Washington should focus on diplomacy rather than continuing decades of pressure against Tehran. His remarks came as Iran has also reiterated its readiness for diplomacy while maintaining that it will defend itself against aggression.

■ Ex-Qatari PM says Iran deal must address blockade, frozen assets

Former Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani said any agreement on Iran’s proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz should include guarantees addressing Tehran’s economic concerns. He called for the lifting of the blockade, the return of Iranian frozen assets and the gradual removal of economic sanctions. He also said reopening the waterway should be permanent, without transit fees or unilateral control, and urged provisions to reduce regional tensions.

Follow-ups return 60% of damaged petchem capacity to production cycle

TEHRAN- The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company, saying that this year, given the damage to energy facilities and the gas imbalance, tougher conditions are predicted for the industry, said: Through measures and follow-ups, 60 percent of the damaged capacity of petrochemical plants has returned to the production cycle.

According to IRNA, Omid Shakeri said Monday in a gathering of reporters, referring to the reconstruction process of petrochemical industry facilities in Assaluyeh and Mahshahr: The damage inflicted during the imposed war was divided into two categories: utility damage and specific process damage. Fortunately, the reconstruction process in both sectors is being pursued seriously, and so far about 60 percent of the lost capacities have returned to production.

He added: The oil management team is striving to restore a major part of production capacity by the end of the year, but the reality is that this year, due to restrictions caused by the gas imbalance in the cold season and damage to the refining industry, conditions for the petrochemical industry are harder than in previous years.

The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company, emphasizing that production stability requires a stable flow of energy, stressed: In past years, with increased household gas consumption in winter, unwanted restrictions were imposed on petrochemical plants. This year, too, given the 230 million cubic meter reduction in refining capacity, the need for public cooperation in managing consumption is felt more than ever.

Shakeri addressed exports and the repatriation of their foreign currency earnings and recalled: The petrochemical industry, despite



restrictions caused by war conditions and sanctions pressure, has been able to keep its exports stable through measures taken.

Rejecting any problem in the process of repatriating foreign currency from petrochemical exports, he stated: All export processes of this industry are under the supervision of the Central Bank, and petrochemical companies, after deducting the permitted percentage to meet their foreign currency needs, return the rest of the currency to the country's economic cycle; such that this foreign currency repatriation rate in the petrochemical industry is above 90 percent.

The CEO of the National Petrochemical Company acknowledged: This industry, despite all difficulties, stands at the forefront of the economic war and tries, by playing its role, to meet the country's foreign currency needs, which requires support and understanding of conditions from all members of society.

According to him, the process of export and repatriation of foreign currency from petrochemical product exports is not similar to oil, and companies directly sell their products and repatriate the foreign currency earned from them.

Iran-Uzbekistan 5-month trade stands at \$280m

TEHRAN- Iran's commercial attaché in Uzbekistan, referring to more than \$280 million in trade between the two countries in the first five months of this year, cited agricultural exports, technological cooperation, and joint investment as key pillars for expanding Iran-Uzbekistan trade.

According to IRNA, citing the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, Rahmatollah Khorrami said, emphasizing the growing trend of trade cooperation between the two countries: Follow-ups by the agriculture ministries of Iran and Uzbekistan paved the way for sending a 120-member delegation headed by the Minister of Agriculture and a group of activists and experts in agriculture, aquaculture, machinery, and processing industries to Uzbekistan.

He described Uzbekistan as one of the most populous countries in Central Asia and added: Uzbekistan ranks second among Iran's export destinations among the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and has considerable capacity for expanding trade relations with Iran. Meanwhile, agriculture is one of the priority areas in developing trade between

Unloading of essential goods at northern ports accelerated

TEHRAN- The CEO of the Ports and Maritime Organization announced a more than 90% growth in the unloading of essential goods at northern ports and, referring to port and customs operations becoming 24-hour, reported a significant reduction in the unloading time of vessels and cargo dwell time at port terminals and the country's transit borders.

According to an IRNA report, Mohammad Shakibi-Nasb said Monday in a gathering of reporters, while explaining the latest measures of the Ports and Maritime Organization in developing capacities and improving productivity in the country's ports, especially northern ports: In the area of cargo warehousing, currently, in addition to operational capacities inside the ports, more than 55% of warehousing capacity is located in areas surrounding the ports under customs supervision; with optimal use of these facilities, the process of stockpiling and storing goods has

been facilitated.

The Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development pointed to the organization's responsiveness to the demands of economic actors and added: One of the main concerns of traders was the supply of strategic equipment at northern ports; in this regard, part of the unloading and loading equipment was transferred from southern ports to the north of the country.

Referring to the organization's serious approach to increasing productivity, he emphasized: With coordination and agreement made with the Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, working hours and the processes of unloading, loading, and exit of goods were planned on a 24-hour basis; a synergistic measure that has had a significant impact on improving the operational capacity and productivity of the ports.

Vietnam embassy in Iran holds Vietnam–Iran business networking event in Tehran

From coffee to connectivity: Vietnam and Iran build practical business bridges

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — The Vietnamese Embassy in Iran on the evening of September 27 hosted a Vietnam–Iran Business Networking Event at its embassy in Tehran, bringing together more than 50 businessmen active in different fields.

In the opening remarks of the event, it was said: Vietnam should be seen not only as a market but as a strategic platform. It can serve as a bridge between Iranian businesses and ASEAN, while Iran can offer Vietnamese firms access to its market and the wider region. Vietnam is now embedded in global manufacturing and supply chains, with geographic advantages, ASEAN links, and extensive maritime access. Its trade combines manufacturing strength with competitive agriculture and food processing. This creates complementarity: Vietnamese goods for Iran, and Iranian raw materials, petrochemicals, agricultural products, and other goods for Vietnam. Existing bilateral trade is limited relative to potential, so the goal is not merely to increase volume but to build new channels, direct company contacts, and practical solutions for logistics, standards, payment, and market access. Agriculture offers immediate opportunities—coffee, cashew, pistachios, dried fruits, petrochemicals, fertilizers, minerals, and handicrafts.

In these remarks, a focused, results-oriented business mission to Vietnam with pre-arranged B2B meetings, meetings with VCCI and Iran's embassy, cooperation with Vietnam Persian Market, and visits to Cai Lan port/Ha Long and Ho Chi Minh City was proposed, stressing that regional connectivity, matters as much as individual markets.

‘Concrete results’ are foundation for sustainable Vietnam–Iran trade: Ambassador Nguyen Luong Ngoc

Then came the speech by H.E. Nguyen Luong Ngoc, Ambassador of Vietnam to Iran, its full text appears below:

Distinguished Guests,

Representatives of Iranian business associations and the business community,

First of all, on behalf of the Embassy of Viet Nam in Iran, I would like to warmly welcome and thank all of you for taking the time to attend today's business networking event.

I am particularly pleased to see that many of you here today already have business relations with Viet Nam, have imported and distributed Vietnamese products, or are actively exploring new opportunities for cooperation with Vietnamese companies.

Therefore, today I do not wish merely to introduce Viet Nam's potential. I would like us to look together at what Viet Nam has achieved, at the trade activities that are actually taking place between our two countries, and, at the same time, to have a frank exchange on the current difficulties and on what both sides can do together to maintain and further develop our business relations.

Dear friends,

First, allow me to share a few highlights regarding Viet Nam's economic development. Despite considerable volatility in the global economy in recent years, Viet Nam has maintained macroeconomic stability and achieved relatively high economic growth.

In 2025, Viet Nam's GDP grew by 8.02%. The size of the economy reached approximately \$514 billion, an increase of around \$38 billion compared with 2024. GDP per capita exceeded \$5,000. Notably, growth was recorded across all three major sectors of the economy. Industry and construction grew by nearly 9%, with



manufacturing and processing continuing to serve as one of the important drivers of growth. The services sector expanded by more than 8.6%.

International trade continues to be one of the major strengths of the Vietnamese economy. Total merchandise import-export turnover in 2025 reached approximately \$930 billion, an increase of more than 18% over the previous year. Viet Nam continued to record a trade surplus, marking ten consecutive years of trade surpluses. This achievement is partly attributable to Viet Nam's network of 17 Free Trade Agreements, which provide preferential tariff access to 60 economies, including most of the world's major economies.

Also within last year, total registered foreign investment in Viet Nam reached approximately USD 38.4 billion; and there were 21.2 million international visitors coming to our country. In particular, disbursed FDI reached approximately \$27.6 billion, up 9% from the previous year and the highest level recorded in the past five years.

These figures demonstrate that Viet Nam is not only a market of more than 100 million people, but is also continuing to strengthen its position as a manufacturing and export hub and an important link in regional supply chains. Viet Nam aims to become a high-income developed country by 2045. To achieve this goal, Viet Nam is targeting annual economic growth of 10% or higher.

Alongside manufacturing and processing, agriculture and the food industry remain among Viet Nam's key strengths. Viet Nam is currently one of the world's major producers and exporters of a wide range of products, including coffee, pepper, cashew nuts, rice, tea, seafood, fruits and vegetables, and processed food products. These are also areas in which I believe Viet Nam and Iran still have considerable room to expand cooperation.

Distinguished Guests,

Viet Nam and Iran enjoy a long-standing traditional friendship. The two countries established diplomatic relations in 1973 and, for more than half a century, have maintained good relations across many fields. In the economic and trade sectors, exchanges of goods between the two countries have continued despite the difficulties arising from the regional and international situation.

According to customs statistics, in 2025, total direct merchandise trade between Viet Nam and Iran reached approximately \$170 million, of which Viet Nam's exports to Iran amounted to around USD 150 million, while imports from Iran stood at approximately \$20 million. However, when assessing these figures, we should also take into account an important characteristic of bilateral trade.

Customs statistics on direct trade between Viet Nam and Iran do not fully reflect the actual scale of transactions and flows of goods between the two economies. This is also one of the reasons why we believe that the actual potential for bilateral trade is considerably greater than what is reflected in official statistics.

Vietnamese products that have been and are currently traded in the Iranian market include coffee, pepper, cashew nuts, tea, seafood, certain food products and consumer goods. In the other direction, Viet Nam also has demand for products in which Iran has strengths, including chemicals, petroleum products, plastics and raw materials, metals, pharmaceuticals, as well as certain distinctive Iranian agricultural products.

Among Vietnamese products, I would particularly like to highlight coffee. Viet Nam is the world's second-largest coffee producer and exporter and has a particularly strong position in Robusta coffee. In addition to green coffee beans, Vietnamese companies are increasingly developing higher value-added products such as roasted and ground coffee, instant coffee, packaged coffee and private-label products for their customers.

Iran has a well-developed beverage culture, and demand for coffee is continuing to grow. I therefore believe that this is a highly promising area in which businesses from our two countries can build long-term partnerships rather than limiting cooperation to individual transactions.

In addition to coffee, Vietnamese pepper, cashew nuts and tea – products in which Viet Nam ranks among the world's leading exporters – are already present in the Iranian market and still have considerable potential for further growth.

Importantly, we should not limit ourselves to simply buying and selling raw materials. The two sides can go further by cooperating in processing, roasting, packaging, branding, distribution and the development of products tailored to the preferences of Iranian consumers.

Another area of great importance to bilateral relations is air connectivity and tourism.

Geographical distance has always been one of the obstacles to exchanges between Viet Nam and Iran. Therefore, efforts to promote direct air connectivity between the two countries are important not only for tourism but also for trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges.

Viet Nam is becoming an increasingly well-known tourism destination in Asia. Meanwhile, Iran possesses an ancient civilization, a rich cultural heritage and many unique destinations that Vietnamese people have not yet had many opportunities to explore.

If we can strengthen and maintain more convenient air connectivity between our two countries, I believe that the number of tourists, businesspeople and trade delegations travelling in both directions will increase significantly. When people are able to meet more frequently, trade and investment will certainly have greater opportunities to develop.

Dear friends,

Alongside these opportunities, we must also frankly acknowledge that trade between Viet Nam and Iran currently faces a number of difficulties.

First is payment. This remains one of the greatest obstacles for businesses in both countries. The lack of direct banking payment channels makes many transactions more complicated, more costly and more exposed to risk.

Second is transportation and logistics. The geographical distance is already considerable, while recent developments in the region have significantly affected shipping routes, vessel schedules, delivery times and logistics costs. These issues directly affect the competitiveness of goods.

Third are procedures and technical requirements applicable to goods, particularly agricultural and food products. Businesses on both sides need clearer information on standards, quarantine and sanitary requirements, product registration, labelling and import procedures in order to avoid additional costs and delays after goods have already arrived at the port.

Fourth are commercial risks and the verification of business partners. When transactions face difficulties related to payment and transportation, choosing the right partners, clearly defining responsibilities in contracts, and maintaining direct communication between buyers and sellers become even more important.

In my view, these are not issues that can be resolved through a single meeting or trade promotion event. However, we can certainly address them step by step if businesses and relevant authorities of both countries work together in a practical and effective manner.

For its part, the Embassy of Viet Nam in Iran would like to focus on several concrete areas.

First, we will continue to directly connect businesses in the two countries that have genuine commercial needs, particularly in coffee, tea, pepper, cashew nuts, food products and other agricultural commodities.

Second, we stand ready to assist Iranian businesses in identifying and verifying suitable suppliers in Viet Nam, while also supporting Vietnamese businesses in identifying and selecting capable partners in Iran.

Third, both sides should promote the exchange of information on import regulations, quarantine requirements, quality standards, logistics and payment methods, enabling businesses to fully assess potential risks before signing contracts. For products that already have established trade flows, such as coffee, pepper, cashew nuts and tea, we would like to gradually move from individual transactions towards stable and long-term supply relationships, while encouraging cooperation in processing, packaging and brand development in the Iranian market.

Fifth, Viet Nam offers a promising destination for direct investment by Iranian businesses to manufacture products that can be exported to markets across 60 economies. The Government of Viet Nam welcomes foreign investors and is committed to creating favorable conditions for their investment and business activities. The consideration and issuance of investment licenses generally takes between 5 and 15 working days, except for certain special projects for which the approval process may take longer.

Finally, we hope that the authorities and business communities of both countries will continue to promote air connectivity and tourism and facilitate visa issuance, as these constitute an important foundation for expanding economic exchanges between Viet Nam and Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Toxic warfare threatens Gaza’s survival

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – As though the Israeli regime had not already taken enough Palestinian lives, it now appears to be employing new methods to harm and kill them.

Apart from issuing statements of condemnation, the international community has remained shamefully inactive over the past three years amid a genocidal war. At best, the most it has done is walk out while war criminal and fugitive from international justice Benjamin Netanyahu delivered his speech at the UN General Assembly.

The departure of delegations of more than 80 countries from the UN General Assembly hall appeared only to fuel his arrogance and defiance. He seems to understand better than anyone that such walkouts are largely a matter of protocol. They serve to preserve the dignity of certain governments in the eyes of their powerless populations.

In devastated Gaza, where residents face death morning and night, the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) have begun using new methods to place further pressure on civilians. These measures deprive them of even the slightest hope of a safe and stable life.

They are deprived not only of safety, but also of the possibility of enjoying good health, something that could help them cope with the enormous hardships of daily life. Their lives are already defined by killing, bombardment, and displacement.

Critics say these measures are intended to force Palestinians to leave their homeland when the time eventually comes. However, that moment appears to have been postponed for now.

Over the past week, residents of Gaza City, or what remains of it, have reported a strong and unpleasant odor spreading at night. Residents have described it as resembling the smell of decomposing bodies. They say the odor is intense and can cause nasal and respiratory discomfort, particularly among people with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.

When the odor first appeared in the middle of last week, residents initially believed it was caused by large quantities of garbage accumulating in the streets and roads. Municipal workers have been unable to collect the waste because of shortages of fuel and spare parts for the trucks and machinery needed for the job.

Others suspected that sewage was overflowing from its usual channels because of severe damage to the sewage infrastructure caused by the IOF.

Both problems have already had serious consequences for public health. They have also created conditions conducive to the spread of rodents and stray animals. These animals now compete with Palestinians for space around their makeshift tents and, in some cases, for the limited food available to



them and their children. The vast majority of Gazans are suffering from malnutrition.

However, as the smell continued to return on subsequent nights, residents and relevant authorities began searching for its source. The fact that the odor disappeared at dawn led investigators to rule out garbage and sewage as the likely causes. Both remain present during the day as well as at night.

After extensive inquiries, the source of the smell was traced to plastic containers dropped by IOF quadcopters near residential areas. This conclusion was based on observations and accounts from dozens of eyewitnesses in eastern Gaza City, particularly those living along the western side of Salah al-Din Street, as well as people in the southwestern Jabalia refugee camp and areas west of Beit Lahia.

According to these eyewitness accounts, some of the containers explode in the air, allowing the resulting odors to spread over a wider area with the wind. Others are said to fall to the ground and burst upon impact, dispersing the odor throughout the surrounding area.

Most Palestinians in these areas live in worn-out tents that provide little protection from the odors or reduce their intensity. So far, no one has been able to determine exactly what these containers contain, which substances they may hold, or what effects the resulting odors could have.

It is also unclear whether their purpose is simply to make civilian life more difficult or whether exposure to the substances causes lasting health effects. This is particularly concerning for people already suffering from illnesses and other health conditions that have left them physically weakened.

According to some medics, there is speculation that the substance may be “skunk,” a chemical agent that the IOF used during the Great March of Return protests along Gaza’s eastern border in 2018–2019.

“Skunk” is an extremely pungent, foul-smelling substance that is classified as a non-lethal chemical agent. It was developed by the Israeli company Odortec and has been used by the IOF as a form of collective punishment to disperse protesters.

Other health officials, however, question whether the substance

being released from the air is “skunk,” particularly in light of the growing number of civilians who have recently developed respiratory problems. These symptoms differ from those associated with more familiar respiratory illnesses, making it difficult for doctors in Gaza to determine their cause.

Doctors say these newly reported conditions can cause severe episodes of breathing difficulty that are more intense and harder to treat than those associated with conventional respiratory diseases.

The substance responsible for the strong and persistent odor remains unidentified, and its potential health effects are still unclear. No samples have been obtained because the containers are reportedly dropped at night, often in areas near the so-called “Yellow Line.” Reaching some of the locations where they have landed is extremely dangerous and could expose people to serious risk.

Apart from the issue of the foul odors and their possible link to respiratory illnesses, the past two months have also reportedly seen a significant increase in gastrointestinal illnesses among hundreds of Palestinians across the Gaza Strip, particularly those living in shelters.

Many have experienced severe abdominal cramps, vomiting, and unusually excessive intestinal gas. In some cases, Palestinians have also experienced fainting and severe shortness of breath, prompting many to seek treatment at hospitals and medical centers.

According to laboratory tests conducted on these patients, the symptoms were attributed to infection with *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori), a bacterium that can infect the stomach.

The bacterium can affect the stomach lining and cause a range of complications. Children, infants, and older adults may face greater risks from gastrointestinal infections in Gaza, where widespread malnutrition, overcrowding, and limited access to healthcare can leave vulnerable groups less able to cope with illness.

According to reports from Gaza, the main reason for the increase in these illnesses is the water available amid the genocide. Palestinians in Gaza obtain water from several sources, including ground-water and deep wells, desalination plants, and water supplied via an

Israeli company called Mekorot.

Numerous laboratory tests have found that water from these sources is unsuitable for drinking. This is particularly due to the methods used to collect and transport it, as well as the containers in which it is stored. These practices often fail to meet basic safety standards and do not satisfy the minimum requirements for safe consumption.

Palestinian doctors argue that the contamination of water across Gaza is deliberate. They attribute responsibility to the IOF, pointing to previous incidents in which, sources of clean drinking water were repeatedly targeted during the genocidal war.

More than 90 percent of the water wells have been deliberately destroyed and subsequently filled in after the generators powering them were destroyed. Most desalination plants have also been destroyed by bombardment and explosions, particularly in Gaza City and northern Gaza.

In addition, the IOF controls Mekorot water-supply lines, giving it significant control over the quantity of water entering Gaza, as well as its quality and suitability for consumption by residents of the Strip.

Water contamination and the resulting health problems are compounded by a severe shortage of medicines needed to treat these conditions, particularly those used to treat H. pylori infections.

Such medicines are extremely difficult to find in either medical centers or private pharmacies. This has raised questions about whether the occupying regime is deliberately preventing these medications from entering Gaza at a time when they are urgently needed.

The problems facing the Gaza Strip are increasing in both scale and severity amid measures by the Israeli regime that, critics say, are aimed at continuing its genocidal campaign against Palestinian civilians through new methods. These methods could make it more difficult to establish legal and criminal responsibility for the resulting crises and humanitarian consequences.

All of this underscores the importance of an impartial international investigation into the actions of Israel and war crimes committed in Gaza. This is particularly important as the regime continues its blockade of the Strip and bans international investigative committees and foreign journalists from entering.

This amounts to an attempt to conceal crimes, most of which have yet to be documented. Exposing them requires all parties to use every available means to establish the facts and ensure that war crimes are investigated. Campaigners are calling for every possible effort to prevent further harm or, at the very least, to limit the catastrophic consequences for the Palestinian population suffering in Gaza.

Iraqis hold rallies protesting suspension of flights with Iran



TEHRAN – Large numbers of people held protests in the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala to express their strong opposition to the Iraqi government’s decision to suspend direct flights between Iran and Iraq at the Trump administration’s order.

In Najaf, protesters gathered outside the international airport to urge the government not to bow to U.S. demands. The demonstrations in Najaf were held following a call by the head of the executive council of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba.

The protesters in Najaf carried Iranian flags and portraits of martyred Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, who played a key role in Iraq’s struggle against Daesh terrorists.

Protesters in Karbala said the U.S. demand that the Iraqi government suspend flights with Iran violated their country’s sovereignty.

Citizens in Nassiriya, the capital of Dhi Qar Governorate, about 360 kilometers

south-southeast of Baghdad, also held a similar rally, strongly denouncing the government’s decision.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Iranian pilgrims visit Najaf and Karbala, where the tombs of Imam Ali (AS) and Imam Hussein (AS) are located. Similarly, large numbers of Iraqis visit the shrine cities of Qom and Mashhad in Iran. A considerable number of Iraqi citizens also travel to Iran for medical treatment.

Fearing a public backlash, the Iraqi government is reportedly in talks with the Trump administration to persuade it to drop its demands that Iraq suspend flights with Iran.

The flight ban against Iran is part of a new move by the Trump administration against the Islamic Republic, which suffered a humiliating defeat at Iran’s hands after the United States and Israel launched a war of aggression against the country in late February 2026.

UK arrests over 50 protesters in Liverpool, criminalizing solidarity with Palestine Action



By staff writer

TEHRAN — British police arrested more than 50 pro-Palestine demonstrators outside the Labour Party conference in Liverpool on Sunday. The mass arrests escalate a state campaign to criminalize solidarity with Gaza and shield UK complicity in the ongoing Israeli genocide.

Merseyside Police confirmed the detentions following a silent sit-in organized by Defend Our Juries.

Nearly 200 people gathered outside the conference venue on the opening day of Prime Minister Andy Burnham’s party gathering. Demonstrators held handmade placards reading “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.”

Officers approached the seated crowd, asked them to lower the signs, and then led them away under the Terrorism Act.

Among those arrested were Massive Attack frontman Robert Del Naja and Margaret Owen, a 94-year-old human rights barrister.

They joined healthcare workers and ordinary citizens willing to risk 14 years in prison to challenge Western support for the slaughter in Gaza.

State censorship and confrontation

The Labour government proscribed Pal-

estine Action as a “terrorist organization” in July 2025. Activists had previously entered RAF Brize Norton, sprayed red paint on military aircraft, and left Palestinian flags to protest British infrastructure supporting the Israeli war machine.

The government responded with severe repression. Since the ban, authorities have arrested over 3,600 people across Britain simply for displaying signs supporting the group.

Protesters in Liverpool made their motives clear. “Being arrested is nothing in comparison to what the people in Gaza are going through, and it’s also worth it, because this is about our right to free speech,” a protester told Al Jazeera.

While police-filled vans lined the street outside, a separate activist group confronted British Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband inside a nearby restaurant. They demanded he lift the protest ban and formally declare the Israeli military campaign a genocide. Miliband refused to comment.

A battle for free expression

Human rights organizations quickly condemned the Liverpool operation.

Amnesty International UK executive Kerry Moscovici called the detentions a truly shameful attack on freedom of speech. She challenged the prime minister to reform laws that criminalize communities demonstrating against state policies.

Palestine Action co-founder Huda Ammori pledged to fight the proscription to the highest judicial levels. The UK Supreme Court will hear the challenge in November 2026.

The Liverpool arrests demonstrate the stark priorities of the British establishment. The state continues to supply weapons and political cover to Israel. Meanwhile, it treats domestic dissent as a severe security threat.

South Lebanon faces aggressive Israeli offensive as US ‘diplomacy’ provides cover

TEHRAN — A massive explosion orchestrated by Israeli forces tore through the coastal town of al-Mansouri in southern Lebanon on Monday, sending violent tremors across the Tyre district.

Residents miles away felt the ground shake. Based on the pattern of Israel’s offensive conduct, the detonation bore the hallmarks of a calculated demolition designed to erase Lebanese civilian infrastructure and entrench an illegal buffer zone.

Israeli military vehicles later advanced through the fresh ruins to consolidate their positions.

The violence also unfolded across multiple fronts. Israeli warplanes struck the corridor between Mayfadoun and Zawtar al-Sharqiya. An Apache helicopter fired on a commercial center near Mayfadoun twice in ten minutes.

A Merkava tank stationed in Zawtar al-Sharqiyah opened fire on Arnoun. Fur-

ther inland, the bombardment intensified dramatically.

Artillery units unloaded more than a hundred shells onto Wadi Zebqine in thirty minutes, followed by consecutive air raids on the valley.

Thick smoke choked the sky above Haddatha as heavy machine-gun fire echoed through the hills.

Israel now occupies approximately 600 square kilometers of Lebanese territory stretching up to the Litani River.

Since this phase of Israel’s offensive campaign escalated in March 2026, Lebanon’s Ministry of Public Health has recorded at least 4,386 people killed and 12,407 wounded, pushing the total death toll since October 2023 to 8,953.

Hundreds of thousands of residents remain internally displaced, while entire southern municipalities sit in ruins.

This widespread devastation unfolds under the direct political cover of the United

States. While Israeli jets bombed the outskirts of Mays al-Jabal and Tallousa, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam sat inside the State Department in Washington.

His meeting with Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted the glaring hypocrisy of American mediation.

The U.S.-brokered “framework” signed in June promised an immediate ceasefire and a phased Israeli withdrawal. Instead, Washington watched passively as Tel Aviv logged thousands of violations and expanded its military footprint deep into sovereign Lebanese land.

On the ground, the “framework” has bought time for Israel to reshape southern Lebanon by force. Washington continues to arm and shield the Israeli military from international consequences.

Many observers contend that for the Lebanese people enduring daily bombardment, American “diplomacy” has offered nothing but empty rhetoric.

Afshin Ghotbi shortlisted to take charge of Iran U23

TEHRAN - Afshin Ghotbi, former Persepolis and Iran national team head coach, is reportedly on the verge of taking charge of Iran's U23 national team.

Iran's disappointing campaign at the Asian Games in Nagoya, followed by a heavy defeat to North Korea in their final match, brought a premature end to the team's tournament and marked a bitter and unexpected finish for this generation of young players.

Head coach Hossein Abdi resigned immediately after the tournament, with the decision reportedly made upon his return to Iran at the airport. The Iranian Football Federation quickly accepted his resignation, leaving the U23 side in need of a new head coach.

The federation president Mehdi Taj recently stated that the new head coach would be appointed within 48 hours, and reports now suggest that the federation is close to reaching an agreement with Afshin Ghotbi.

A source close to Ghotbi has reportedly confirmed that initial talks have taken place and that preliminary agreements have already been reached. Unless there is an unexpected change in the negotiations, Ghotbi is expected to sign a contract with the Iranian Football Federation and take over the U23 national team in the coming days.

Ghotbi, who had previously been considered for the U23 job, is also understood to have the backing of Iran head coach Amir Ghalenoei, with the two maintaining a good relationship.

Following the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, there were also reports that Ghotbi could join the senior national team setup as a technical director. However, those discussions ultimately did not result in an agreement.

Now, the former Persepolis boss appears to be on the verge of a return to Iranian football, this time with the responsibility of leading the country's U23 side.

Ghotbi arrived in Iran in the summer of 2007 after gaining international experience as part of South Korea's coaching staff at the 2002 FIFA World Cup, where he worked alongside renowned Dutch coach Guus Hiddink.

He took charge of Persepolis in 2007 and quickly became a hugely popular figure among the club's supporters. In his first season, Ghotbi guided Persepolis to a dramatic league title, secured in unforgettable fashion with a stoppage-time winner against Sepahan.

His spell at the club, however, came to an end early the following season. Several months later, Ghotbi was appointed head coach of the Iran national team, beginning another chapter in his coaching career.

Women's futsal team invited to tournament in China

TEHRAN - China has invited Iran's women's national futsal team to take part in a four-nation tournament, providing the Asian heavyweights with a valuable opportunity to prepare for the 2026 Asian Indoor Games in Riyadh.

With less than three months remaining until the start of the Asian Indoor Games, Iran are still waiting for a clear schedule of international friendlies as they build toward the tournament.

The Iranian women's futsal team will face a demanding field in Riyadh, with Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Chinese Taipei among the teams expected to provide stiff competition. The tournament will offer Iran a different test from the regional competitions they have traditionally played in, with a wider range of opponents and playing styles.

China's invitation could therefore provide an important chance for Iran ahead of their campaign in Riyadh.

According to the proposed schedule, the four-nation tournament is set to take place from Nov. 4 to 9, with hosts China, Hong Kong, Iran and one additional team expected to participate.

The tournament would give Iran's players the opportunity to test themselves against international opposition while also allowing the coach-

ing staff to assess the squad and make final preparations for the Asian Indoor Games.

However, Iran's participation has not yet been officially confirmed by the Iranian Football Federation. The final decision will depend on the federation's plans and whether officials choose to take advantage of the proposed tournament as part of the team's preparations.

For Iran, securing quality international fixtures remains an important part of the build-up to Riyadh. With several strong Asian teams set to compete, regular matches against different styles of opposition could provide valuable preparation before the competition begins.

Volleyball team defeat Thailand: 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN - Iran men's volleyball team defeated Thailand in straight sets (25-18, 25-18, 25-15) in Pool B of the 2026 Asian Games on Monday.

In the match held at the Okazaki Chuo Sogo Park Gymnasium, Porya Hossein Khanzadeh and Ali Haghparsad each scored 13 points for Iran, while Thailand's Suwit Mahasiriyothin registered 13 points.

Iran, who had started the campaign with a 3-0 win over Kyrgyzstan, will face Indonesia on Tuesday.

The men's tournament in volleyball at the 20th edition of the Games is organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation, in conjunction with the OCA.

The event is being held in Okazaki and Komaki, Aichi Prefecture, Japan from Sept. 27 to Oct. 3.

Ahmadzadeh wins silver in kurash: 2026 Nagoya

TEHRAN - Iran kurash athlete Ramin Ahmadzadeh claimed a silver medal in the 2026 Asian Games on Monday.

Ahmadzadeh lost to Uzbekistan's Akxror Ziyodullaev 3-0 in the final match of the Men's -81kg.

Adilet Akhmetkali of Kazakhstan and Japan's Ken Oyoshi won two bronze medals.

Kurash at the 2026 Asian Games is being held from Sept. 27 to 29 at the Aichi Budokan.

Water polo team beat South Korea in Nagoya

TEHRAN - Iran's men's water polo team defeated South Korea 15-11 in Group B of the 2026 Asian Games on Monday.

In the match held at the Nagoya General Gymnasium, Team Melli earned their second win in the Games.

Iran water polo team started the event with a 19-8 win over Singapore but lost to China 12-8.

The Water polo tournament at the 2026 Asian Games is being held from Sept. 20 to Oct. 3 at Nippon Gaishi Hall Rainbow Pool.

In this tournament, eight teams participate in the men's competition, while six teams participate in the women's competition.

Noshad Alamiyan wins bronze in table tennis: 2026 Nagoya

TEHRAN - Noshad Alamiyan from Iran claimed a bronze medal at the 2026 Asian Games on Monday.

The Iranian table tennis player seized a bronze medal in the men's singles at the Sky Hall Toyota.

World No. 1 Wang Chuqin from China defeated veteran Alamiyan 4-1 in the semifinals to book his place in the final.

The five-game scores were 11-4, 11-7, 9-11, 11-4 and 11-6.

Wang will make his final push for gold Monday night. His opponent will be either fellow Chinese player Lin Shidong or Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-Ju.

Tehran gallery traces capital's past, explores future of smart tourism

From Page 1 ▶ The gallery brings together historical maps, illustrated timelines, infographics, photographs and interactive features, to name a few, to present different chapters of Tehran's history, from its early development and eventual selection as Iran's capital to its political and social transformations in the modern era.

Among the subjects presented are some of the city's earliest known developments, its old plane trees, food culture, historic buildings and major political and cultural events. A section also documents damage inflicted on historic buildings and cultural spaces during the recent war with the US and the Israeli regime.

Seyyed Mohammad-Hossein Hejazi, managing director of the Abbasabad Cultural and Tourism Zone, said the event was designed to introduce Tehran's tourism attractions and present the city through its past and future.

"Unfortunately, Tehran has mostly been viewed as a transit city in recent years rather than a final destination for tourists," he told reporters.

Hejazi said the exhibition was part of broader efforts to introduce the capital's attractions from different perspectives and strengthen its position as a tourism destination.

Digitalization is also being incorporated into plans for tourism services in the Abbasabad zone. Hejazi said Tehran Municipality's "Shahrzad" application had been linked to a planned tourism card for the Abbasabad area.

The card, which has not yet been launched, is modeled partly on systems such as the Istanbulkart and Dubai Pass, he said. It is expected to eventually provide access to a range of services, including public transportation, museums, recreational facilities and tourism and leisure attractions.

Hejazi said the Abbasabad area had been selected as a pilot site for the initiative and that a trial could potentially begin in the coming months.

The "Stories of Tehran" concept itself dates back to the COVID-19 pandemic, when international tourism came to a halt. According to Alireza Moghaddam-Nia, director of tourism at the Abba-



sabad zone, the area at the time sought to provide virtual journeys through Tehran by drawing on the knowledge and experiences of tour guides, tourism businesses and other industry stakeholders.

The exhibition's central timeline stretches across the gallery walls and traces major events in Tehran from the Safavid and Qajar periods to contemporary history. Historical maps of the old city are also eye-catching.

Visitors can hear stories about the city and interact with replicas and toys associated with old Tehran. The exhibition also incorporates elements of the city's natural heritage, including its long-lived trees, rather than focusing solely on monuments and historical events.

One of the main features is the use of artificial intelligence and digital technology to create interactive tourism experiences. Visitors can take virtual tours of countless locations across Tehran and use a QR-code-based service to create photographs of themselves against images of the city from different periods.

The organizers say the idea is to combine digital tools with physical and immersive experiences rather than allow technology to replace direct engagement with destinations.

"The technology can facilitate tourism services and the travel experience, but it should not replace the tourist's real experi-

ence," Sara Mirzaei, deputy head of tourism and recreation at the Abbasabad Cultural and Tourism Zone, said.

She cited emerging tools such as smart glasses capable of translation and content generation as examples of technologies that could make travel easier.

The exhibition also looks at the history of the 560-hectare Abbasabad area, which today contains a number of Tehran's major cultural, tourism and recreational facilities, including the Tabiat Bridge, Ab-o-Atash Park, Mina Dome, Bagh-e Honar, Book Garden and the Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense.

According to Mirzaei, the transformation of the area into a cultural and tourism zone followed years of planning and efforts to determine an appropriate future for the site. The exhibition traces that history and highlights how the area eventually developed into one of Tehran's major cultural and recreational destinations.

The organizers say the gallery is partly intended to challenge the perception of Tehran as merely a transit point for tourists.

The exhibition also contains a distinctive element looking far beyond the present: a mailbox for letters addressed to Tehran's mayor in the year 1450 in the Iranian calendar, equivalent to 2071-72.

Visitors are invited to write

down their hopes, expectations and ideas for the future of Tehran and place them in the mailbox. The box will be sealed after the exhibition and preserved for opening in 1450.

Mirzaei described the idea as a paradox of the digital age. At a time when physical correspondence has largely given way to email and messaging applications, visitors are being invited to put their thoughts on paper and entrust them to the future.

The juxtaposition is deliberate: an exhibition centered on artificial intelligence and digital tourism has created space for one of the oldest forms of communication, a handwritten letter.

The broader program accompanying the exhibition includes educational panels, specialist workshops and film screenings focusing on smart tourism, tourism platforms, historical urban landscapes, safe travel and new technologies. Other programs comprise a screening of a documentary about the Omidvar brothers, the famed Iranian globetrotters, a workshop on rediscovering Iran and sessions on the role of emerging tourism technologies in developing smart urban economies.

The Abbasabad Cultural and Tourism Zone, described by its organizers as a major green and recreational hub in the capital, is also seeking to strengthen its international tourism profile.

Kenargerd Caravanserais gets new life as cultural, tourism complex

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - The first phase of restoration and development works at the historic Kenargerd Caravanserais in Hasanabad, Fashapuyeh district, south of Tehran province, was inaugurated on Sunday, marking World Tourism Day.

The 17th-century caravanserais is being transformed into a cultural and tourism complex, with further phases planned to add accommodation, hospitality and other tourism facilities.

The ceremony was attended by local officials and representatives of Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, including representatives of the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places, the Friday prayer leader of Fashapuyeh, the head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Rey County, the district governor, and local police officials.

Under an agreement between the private-sector operator and the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places, the property has been temporarily transferred to the operator for restoration and maintenance. In return, the operator is permitted to use the restored monument for cultural and commercial purposes for a specified period, subject to conditions agreed with the fund.

Addressing the induration ceremony, Majid Shokri, director of the fund, stressed the role of investors and entrepreneurs in creating employment under current economic conditions.

He said that even creating a single job represents a valuable contribution, emphasizing the importance of entrepreneurship in the



current circumstances.

Shokri also pointed to the development potential of Fashapuyeh, saying that proper planning and effective use of local capacities could contribute to economic development and job creation.

He said the fund has in recent years sought to facilitate private-sector participation in the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

According to Shokri, nearly \$100 million in private investment has been attracted for about 200 historical properties managed by the fund.

He said the investment demonstrated that historic buildings, when provided with appropriate conditions for restoration and reuse, can contribute not only to heritage conservation but also to economic activity, employment and regional development.

The inauguration, however, does not mark the completion of the Kenargerd project, with

significant parts of the complex still awaiting restoration.

Farhad Bagheri, the investor and operator of the caravanserais, told the Tehran Times that the property was in very poor condition when it was handed over.

The second courtyard, where restoration work has yet to begin, offers an indication of the condition of parts of the complex before the project started, he said.

Bagheri added that restoration and improvement costs had risen considerably above initial estimates due to inflation and conditions resulting from the war.

He expressed hope that the subsequent phases would be completed and put into operation within the next six months.

Kenargerd's architecture reflects characteristics associated with Safavid-era caravanserais, including the type commonly known as Shah Abbasi caravanserais.

The property was transferred under a 24-month timetable for the implementation of restoration work. Under the development plan, the second caravanserais building is also expected to become operational, while accommodation facilities are planned for the second phase.

Kenargerd is part of Iran's long tradition of roadside architecture. Its four-iwan plan, central courtyard, regularly arranged chambers and service areas reflect the functional design of traditional Iranian caravanserais. Deep iwans provided shaded spaces for travelers, while thick walls helped moderate temperatures in the hot and dry climate.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

WHO representative highlights role of medical universities in evidence-based health policy

TEHRAN – Dr. Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has underscored the vital role of medical universities in strengthening national capacity for evidence-based policymaking, advancing research and innovation, and supporting resilient health systems in the face of emerging challenges.

On Wednesday, September 23, Jabbour, accompanied by a delegation, visited Isfahan University of Medical Sciences and Health Services (IUMS). The visit was organized by the Isfahan provincial governor's office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Jabbour met with Dr. Shahin Shirani, Chancellor of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, along with senior health officials, including the director general for international affairs and representatives from the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Serving a province with a population of more than five million, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences is one of Iran's leading medical universities, integrating healthcare delivery, medical education, and research through an extensive network of schools, healthcare and treatment centers, and research institutions.

Discussions during the visit focused on the vital role of medical universities in strengthening national capacity for evidence-based policymaking, advancing research and innovation,



and supporting resilient health systems in responding to emerging challenges.

“Universities such as Isfahan University of Medical Sciences are not only centers of education and research. They are strategic partners in generating evidence, shaping policies, and strengthening health systems for future generations,” Jabbour said.

“WHO stands ready to support rapid assessments of health infrastructure and services in collaboration with national and provincial authorities to ensure continuity of essential health services and identify priority needs,” he added.

The visit also highlighted opportunities to strengthen cooperation with research institu-

tions, including potential collaborating centers interested in becoming WHO collaborating centers and aligned with national health priorities. Isfahan University of Medical Sciences currently hosts a WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Cardiovascular Disease Control, Prevention and Rehabilitation, which has made significant contributions to research, training and policy development since 2003.

The visit concluded with participation in expert panels on “Health, Environment and Resilience of Essential Services” and “Innovation and Technology for Development,” reinforcing WHO's commitment to advancing innovation, resilience and evidence-based health development.

First group of migratory pelicans spotted in northwestern Iran

TEHRAN – The first group of migratory pelicans has been spotted at Solduz Wetland in Naqadeh County, northwestern Iran.

Akbar Qaemi, head of the Naqadeh Department of Environment, said a group of 35 pelicans had arrived at the wetland as part of their seasonal migration from northern areas toward warmer southern regions, IRNA reported.

He noted that the number of migratory pelicans at the wetland is expected to increase in the coming days, adding that most of the birds observed so far are juveniles that were born in Lake Urmia National Park and its surrounding areas and have begun their seasonal migration as temperatures fall.

In addition to migratory pelicans, various species of resident and migratory birds, including sandpipers, stilts, gulls, garganeys, coots, herons, and different species of ducks, are currently being observed at Solduz Wetland.

Naqadeh County is home to seven seasonal and permanent wetlands, which annually provide habitat for more than 10,000 migratory and resident birds.

Iran is the most important country in West Asia in terms of housing migratory birds in winter, as around two million birds fly each year to spend winter in the country's wet-

lands, according to an official with the Department of Environment.

Encompassing numerous wetlands, reservoirs, and diverse water bodies, Iran welcomes millions of migratory birds every year. The country has also emerged as the most important stopover for migratory birds in their flight route from Siberia to the Nile, as sixteen percent of them select to spend the winter in the country, ISNA quoted Hassan Akbari as saying.

A diverse array of migratory birds fly to the country, with more than 160 species of aquatic and waterside birds identified in Iran, which is a significant number.

Despite limited water resources in the domestic habitats of the country, the study of the migratory bird population trend shows that the abundance and diversity of the birds that enter the country have not decreased. The majority of them have flown to the coastal areas of the Caspian and the Persian Gulf, though.

Iran hosts more than five percent of the world's migratory birds in 450 sites in winter, Akbari said.

“Every year, some 30 to 40 million birds are counted all over the world, and the related statistics are recorded in the International Waterfowl Census (IWC) database,” he added.

Tehran hosts workshop on motorcycle helmet safety

TEHRAN – The National Road Safety Commission, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), has convened a high-level consultative workshop on motorcycle helmet safety to strengthen the country's legislative framework and improve protection for motorcyclists.

The workshop brought together key national stakeholders to address gaps in road safety legislation and advance measures aimed at enhancing motorcycle helmet safety and reducing the risks faced by motorcyclists, according to a press release published on the WHO website on September 9.

Organized as part of the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund project, ‘Protecting riders in MENA: strengthening motorcycle safety laws’, the initiative seeks to strengthen the Islamic Republic of Iran's traffic legislation by explicitly requiring motorcycle helmets to meet approved safety standards, be worn correctly and remain securely fastened, thereby closing an important gap in enforcement and rider protection.

The need for action is urgent. Motorcycle crashes account for 23.1 percent of all road traffic fatalities in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with young men aged 18 to 24 disproportionately affected. Head injuries remain the leading cause of death and serious disability among motorcycle crash victims.

Although the country's helmet legislation already aligns with four of the five WHO criteria for effective helmet laws, the absence of explicit provisions requiring helmets to be properly fastened limits effective enforcement and reduces the protective benefit helmets are designed to provide. Riders wearing unfastened or loosely fastened helmets may technically comply with the law yet remain highly vulnerable in the event of a crash.

To address this issue, the proposed amendment introduces clear legal requirements for motorcycle helmets to be securely fastened and correctly adjusted while in use. The amendment has been designed as a practical, targeted, and enforceable measure that can be implemented within the Islamic Republic of Iran's existing legal and institutional framework.

The workshop brought together representatives from a broad range of sectors, including: The WHO, the National Road Safety Commission, the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the National Standards Organization of Iran, the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade Academic institutions, Industry associations, and the Tehran municipality.

During the workshop, participants reviewed nine proposed legal provisions

grouped under two thematic modules. The first focused on the supply chain oversight and conformity assurance, including type approval, production quality control and import regulation. The second addressed market governance, safe helmet use and implementation sustainability through market surveillance, retail inspections, public awareness campaigns, employer responsibilities and periodic monitoring and evaluation.

The discussions enabled valuable technical input that will help refine and finalize a practical and enforceable legislative amendment with significant potential to prevent death and serious injuries. The collaborative process also reinforces the country's commitment to achieving the global target of reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50 percent by 2030.

Opening the workshop, Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in Islamic Republic of Iran, underscored the importance of a comprehensive approach to helmet safety:

“A helmet is effective only when it meets appropriate safety standards, fits the rider properly, is worn correctly, and remains securely fastened throughout the journey. Clear legal requirements can support more consistent enforcement while reducing ambiguity for riders, police officers, inspectors, manufacturers and retailers alike.”

Afshin Ostovar, National Professional Officer for Noncommunicable Diseases at the WHO Country Office, highlighted the public health impact of the proposed amendment:

“This initiative is about more than introducing a legal provision. It is about creating a framework that can save lives and prevent devastating head injuries, particularly among young riders who face the greatest risk on our roads.”

Feedback collected during the workshop will be incorporated into the final draft amendment before submission to the relevant authorities for review and ratification. WHO remains committed to supporting the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran and the National Road Safety Commission throughout the consultation, revision and ratification process.

The ‘Protecting riders in MENA: strengthening motorcycle safety laws’ project is being implemented in six countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Funded by the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund, the initiative aims to strengthen the safety of powered 2- and 3-wheelers by enhancing legislative frameworks and aligning helmet laws with WHO recommendations and international best practices.

Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, INN to develop nanotech cooperation

TEHRAN – The Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy and the Inter-Islamic Network on Nanotechnology (INN) have agreed to bolster collaborative efforts through implementing joint research projects in nanotechnology and advanced materials.

Vahid Zarghami, the secretary of the Vice Presidency's advanced materials and manufacturing technologies development headquarters, and Alireza Rahimpour, the secretary of INN, in a meeting on Sunday explored the potential for the development of cooperation and the implementation of current memoranda of understanding (MOUs), highlighting the need to leverage available capacities for the promotion of scientific, technological, and commercial collaborations, ISNA reported.

The meeting centered on developing and conducting joint research projects in education, nanotechnology, and advanced materials fields, holding scientific events, fostering laboratory networks, commercializing nanotechnological products, and improving intelligent infrastructures.

Benefiting from the INN capacity to foster scientific and technological collaboration among researchers, research centers, universities, and knowledge-based companies across Islamic nations was another key focus of the meeting.

During the meeting, Zarghami emphasized the necessity to strengthen laboratory infrastructure and promote laboratory cooperation among Islamic countries. Showcasing the capacities and capabilities of Iranian knowledge-based companies to the re-



gional markets was another issue discussed in the meeting.

For his part, Rahimpour identified the development of superalloys, nano-products, and advanced materials as key of mutual interest for both parties.

The INN is an international platform that utilizes the power of science and technology to empower Islamic nations. The Network provides a dynamic platform for the enhancement of collaborations between elites, professors, researchers, universities, research institutes, and knowledge-based companies. It is one of the thirteen scholarly networks affiliated with the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH). The network is hosted by the Materials and Energy Research Center (MERC), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran.

Nanotech progress in Iran beyond just a scientific achievement

With over 430 companies operating in the nanotechnology sector, and more than 1,960 nano-

tech products receiving nanoscale certificates, the advancement of the nanotechnology sector in the country proves to be more than just a scientific achievement.

Relying on domestic capacity, nanotechnology in Iran is not merely measured by scientific rankings and published articles, but products that have been manufactured and entered the industry and the market, IRNA reported.

The total sale of these products amounts to over 970 trillion rials (about 554 million dollars), indicating that the scientific achievement has become an economic and industrial capacity.

Nanotechnology in the country is a typical example of a successful development of a tech ecosystem. From the very beginning, a long-term roadmap was developed to strengthen all aspects of the technology development chain, from education and research to commercialization and market development.

Over the past years, the role of Nano headquarters has not been limited to macro-policy-making, but has included fostering co-

ordination among universities, research institutes, industries, knowledge-based companies, and supporting institutions.

Establishing a strategic technological laboratory network, developing standards for the evaluation of Nano products, supporting start-up companies, and designing industrial programs are among the factors that help transfer nanotechnology from laboratories to the country's industries.

Despite the 12-day war in June 2025 and the recent 40-day war, 230 products received nanoscale certificates in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2025–March 2026), surpassing the targeted number.

Last year, the Vice Presidency for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy and the headquarters for nanotechnology planned to obtain nanoscale certificates for 190 products (one product per working day). Still, the figure increased by 40, reaching 230. Currently, the total number of nanotechnology products with a nanoscale certificate has increased to 1965, IRNA reported.

The highest number of products that received nanoscale certificates was recorded respectively in the provinces of Tehran, Fars, and Mazandaran, with 64, 48, and 24 products, respectively.

The provinces of Zanjan (32 products), Qom (17), Markazi (16), Qazvin (11), and Isfahan (7) are placed next.

Out of 230 products, Industrial supplies had the largest share with 72 products. Energy, oil, and related industries accounted for 41, Chemicals for 36, and Pharmaceutical and Health for 26 products.

Over 80 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 82 earthquakes have been recorded across the country in a week from September 19 to 25, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 77 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3, four earthquakes with a magnitude between 3 and 4, and one earthquake with a magnitude between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country, irsc reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4 on the Richter scale, which occurred on September 25 in Isfahan province.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi and Kerman experienced the highest number of earthquakes with 11, followed by South Khorasan and Khuzestan each with 7, and Isfahan with 5 earthquakes.

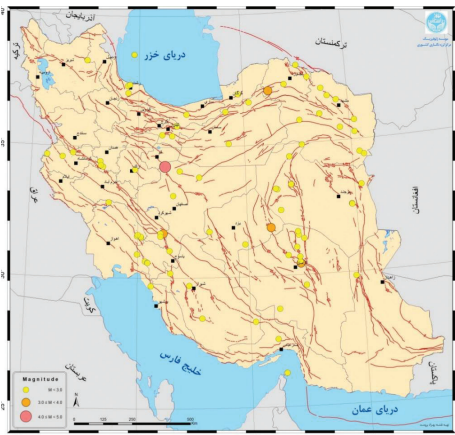
During the same period, four earthquakes hit Tehran. No earthquakes were recorded

in East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Alborz, Ilam, Zanjan, Qom, and Qazvin provinces.

A total of 2,380 earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 2.5 on the Richter scale were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2025–March 2026), according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

Out of recorded earthquakes, 910 had a magnitude greater than 3, 130 had a magnitude greater than 4, and 15 had a magnitude greater than 5 on the Richter scale.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.



About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world's earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.



SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Knowledge is the missing goal of a believer, so obtain it
event from a man of discord.*

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:55 Evening: 18:09 Dawn: 4:35 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:58 (tomorrow)

Culture Minister addresses academics, students at St. Petersburg State University of Culture and Arts

TEHRAN – Iran’s Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance addressed the faculty and students at the St. Petersburg State University of Culture and Arts on Sunday and stressed the importance of taking a strategic view of Iranian-Russian cultural and civilizational dialogue as a means of building resilience against future crises. He also discussed the country’s cultural elements and its “cultural shield” in the face of military threats.

Seyyed Abbas Salehi, who was attending events marking Iran’s Cultural Week in Russia, opened his remarks with a fundamental question: “Why do some civilizations collapse in the face of crises, while others not only withstand them but also build new strength from within them?”

Recalling the many kinds of crises Iran and Russia have faced over the course of history, including imposed wars, foreign occupation, economic sanctions, efforts to isolate them geopolitically, natural disasters, and cultural pressure, Salehi said that what had sustained the two countries was not merely military power or material resources, but cultural and civilizational elements accumulated over centuries, IRNA reported.

He went on to explain the cultural factors Iran draws on in confronting contemporary crises. “Each crisis activates different cultural elements; Iran therefore draws on a diverse set of cultural resources in response to diverse crises,” he said.



Referring to Iran’s experience of the imposed war with Iraq, recent attacks by the US and Israel, and ongoing military threats, Salehi said: “Emotional solidarity is the first cultural element activated in response. This solidarity is rooted in a culture of altruism and collective commitment, reinforced by Persian literature and religious teachings.”

“Women in Iran are at the heart of building this solidarity when the country faces external threats. They play an essential role in caregiving, distributing aid, and rebuilding social ties, a role that was fully evident during the recent attacks by the American and Israeli regimes,” he asserted.

Salehi also pointed to the effective role played by Russian women during the Second World War, saying that women’s empowerment in times of crisis could be an area of cooperation between Iran and Russia.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

National Children’s Week to focus on rights, future of Iranian children

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN – “Children’s Smiles, The Alphabet of the Homeland” has been chosen as the slogan of Iran’s National Children’s Week, which will be held from October 7 to 13, with a focus on children’s rights, well-being, participation and their role in shaping the country’s future.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Hamed Alamati, director of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), said the week should go beyond celebrations and media programs and provide an opportunity to reassess responsibilities toward children.

“National Children’s Week is an opportunity to pay more serious attention to the needs, rights and future of children and to the role they will play in building the future of Iran,” he said.

Alamati said the slogan should not be regarded as merely a symbolic or promotional phrase. A genuine smile, he explained, depends on children feeling safe and valued at home, at school and in society, while having opportunities to play, read, learn and create.

He also referred to the emphasis placed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on producing books, animation, films and other creative and up-to-date content for children and adolescents.

He stressed that investment in children should be considered a strategic priority rather than an occasional or ceremonial activity.

Alamati highlighted the need for stronger mechanisms to protect children in times of

crisis, noting that today’s children are growing up amid war, insecurity, environmental challenges, unequal access to opportunities, anxiety and rapid technological change.

He said support should not begin only after a crisis occurs. Systems should be prepared in advance to protect children during emergencies and provide psychological and social support afterward.

“Support for a child does not end when the immediate crisis is over,” he said, stressing the need to help children return to normal life and continue their development.

The IIDCYA director also discussed efforts to implement Iran’s National Document on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, saying various government bodies and institutions have worked over the past year to translate the document into practical measures.

“The next step is to move from the document to the field of children’s lives,” Alamati said.

He added that the value of such documents should be reflected in policymaking, budgeting and decisions that directly affect children.

Alamati also called for children to be treated not simply as recipients of programs but as participants in decisions concerning them.

“Children and adolescents should have a real share in designing, implementing and evaluating programs related to their lives,” he said, adding that their participation should go beyond ceremonial appearances.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Beyond melodrama: Khajepasha on war, childhood and duty of Iranian cinema

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- Iranian filmmaker Babak Khajepasha believes cinema should do more than portray suffering. For him, a film dealing with war, the death of children, or a social tragedy should leave audiences with questions rather than simply tears.

Khajepasha, whose “In the Arms of the Tree” was selected as Iran’s submission for the 2025 Academy Awards, has repeatedly turned to children and family in his films. His latest feature, “The Land of Angels”, deals with children in Gaza. The film has also taken part in international events, including the Altyn Minbar Kazan International Film Festival, where it received the Grand Prix for Best Feature Film. Khajepasha is also among the jury members of the 2026 BRICS+ International Film Festival in St. Petersburg.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, he spoke about the possibility of making a film on the recent tragedy in Minab, the difficulty of depicting the death of children without reducing cinema to melodrama, his decision to make films during the 40-day war, and what he saw during a recent visit to Hiroshima. He also discussed the international position of Iranian cinema, his earlier criticism of the Oscars and some major festivals, and why family remains one of the subjects he wants to pursue in his future work.

Looking beyond the tragedy

Speaking about the possibility of making a film about the tragedy in Minab, Khajepasha said he would be more interested in exploring the reasons behind such events than simply depicting their devastating consequences.

“The aspect that I, as a filmmaker, can enter and that deserves to be explored is the reason behind this tragedy,” he said, stressing that society should ask why it has been forced to experience such pain.

The filmmaker pointed to the loss of children in different parts of Iran, including Minab, Lamerd, Tabriz and Kermanshah during the recent war, saying that while addressing the suffering of children is important, cinema should also investigate why children repeatedly become victims of conflict and violence.

This concern, he explained, was also central to his research for “The Land of Angels”. During his research and conversations with Palestinians, he encountered stories that demonstrated the profound psychological impact of losing a child.

Khajepasha recalled speaking with a Palestinian father who had been holding his child when the child was killed. According to the filmmaker, the man later repeatedly returned to the same place, hoping that he too would be killed so that he could join his child. The father said he could not understand why he had been left alive.

For Khajepasha, such stories demonstrate that the killing of a child affects much more than the immediate victim. It leaves a psychological wound on the family and, ultimately, the wider community.

Yet he believes that cinema must be careful not to turn such suffering into an exercise in emotional manipulation.

From tears to questions

That is also why Khajepasha is wary of making films about war and children that rely entirely on emotion.

If simply seeing the suffering of children were enough to change the world’s response to violence, he said, the many films and documentaries made about Gaza and other conflicts would already have brought about such a change.

“Just talking about how much pain we are in does not necessarily take us a step forward,” he said. “We have to look at this from an intellectual perspective. We have to search for its causes and ask where this pain is supposed to take us.”

For “The Land of Angels”, he



wanted the audience to leave with a question.

A viewer may accept that there are fighters, a military conflict and casualties in a war, he explained. But the death of thousands of children should lead to another question: why are these children being killed?

That question, in his view, can open the door to wider discussions about the position of children in contemporary society, the pressures placed on them and even the declining importance attached to having children in some parts of the world.

Khajepasha prefers this kind of cinema to a film that simply asks its audience to cry.

“I don’t want to make a film merely so that audiences cry,” he said. “We have to value the film itself. There have to be other reasons for making it.”

He pointed to techniques used in dramatic literature and epic theater, including distancing, which encourage audiences to think about a work instead of simply surrendering to its emotional effect. A film, he said, should stay with the viewer as a question after the screening.

When filmmaking becomes a duty

The same idea of responsibility was behind Khajepasha’s decision to work during the 40-day War.

At the time, Tehran and other parts of the country were facing an extraordinary situation as they came under US and Zionist regime airstrikes. Khajepasha said he saw people from different professions doing more than their normal duties: bakers working additional shifts, doctors and nurses continuing their work in hospitals and other citizens finding ways to contribute.

For him and some of his colleagues, filmmaking became another form of service.

“Sometimes we make films because we are filmmakers. Sometimes, as Iranians, we have another national duty,” he said. “At that point, it is no longer simply about filmmaking. It is a form of service.”

Under ordinary circumstances, he acknowledged, starting a production so quickly and without the usual preparation would not have been logical. But he felt that the circumstances demanded a response.

“As someone working in the arts, I felt I had a responsibility,” he said. “My instrument is cinema and television.”

He began work only a few days after the war started and now looks back on the experience with particular satisfaction.

The reason, he explained, was not necessarily that the films were more successful than his other work. It was the feeling that he was doing something directly for his own people.

“I am happy that, during that period, instead of standing on the sidelines, I was able to take a step,” he said.

Hiroshima: between memory and spectacle

A recent trip to Hiroshima gave

Khajepasha another opportunity to think about the way major human tragedies are remembered.

He attended the annual ceremony commemorating the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and found the gathering visually striking and, from a filmmaker’s perspective, fascinating. Yet he said the event left him with mixed feelings.

The scale of the tragedy, he argued, seemed much greater than what was being conveyed by the ceremony.

“I felt that, instead of the truth being fully expressed, I was watching more of a show,” he said.

Khajepasha extended that observation to the way peace is sometimes represented internationally. He questioned the gap that can exist between institutions and governments that publicly promote peace and countries whose policies have contributed to conflicts elsewhere.

But his experience in Japan did not leave him simply pessimistic. He said he encountered ordinary people who appeared genuinely concerned about events beyond their own borders.

When some Japanese people learned that he was Iranian, he recalled, they immediately brought up the victims of the recent tragedy in Minab and other Iranian victims.

He said he had encountered similar reactions in other countries and believes that ordinary people may ultimately understand such tragedies more deeply than political rhetoric suggests.

Iranian cinema and the international festival circuit

Khajepasha also returned to comments he made while “In the Arms of the Tree” was Iran’s Oscar submission. At the time, he had questioned whether artistic quality alone determines a film’s international success.

His criticism, he explained, was not simply about whether his own film would advance in the Oscar race. He was talking about the broader position of art and cinema.

In his view, political considerations, lobbying and relationships can influence some major international cultural institutions. He also believes that the influence of politics has become particularly visible in some film festivals.

That does not mean he considers the entire international festival circuit politicized.

He mentioned festivals held in South Korea, Morocco, Egypt, Armenia, Russia and Turkey among festivals that continue to offer valuable platforms for filmmakers. Iranian cinema, he stressed, has also received genuine international recognition through films by directors such as Asghar Farhadi and Majid Majidi.

The quality of an individual film, he argued, should not be reduced to the festival at which it appears or the prize it receives.

“A festival award alone cannot determine the value of a film,” he said.

He also believes filmmakers themselves have a responsibility not

to allow the desire for international recognition to dictate their artistic choices.

Family at the center

Children feature prominently in both “In the Arms of the Tree” and “The Land of Angels”, but Khajepasha does not see himself primarily as a filmmaker of children’s stories.

His deeper interest, he said, is the family.

He usually tries to include children in his films because their presence gives the story another dimension, but he would like to explore the family itself more extensively in future work.

“I would like to make more films about the family itself,” he said, describing it as one of the most important and vulnerable foundations of human societies.

He believes the issue has particular importance in Iran because family relationships are deeply connected to the country’s cultural identity.

Iran cannot simply reproduce changes that have taken place in other societies, he argued. Relationships among parents, children and extended family members have a particular cultural meaning in Iranian society.

For that reason, he believes Iranian cinema should address the pressures facing families instead of treating changes in family structures as inevitable.

‘First make a good film’

Khajepasha will soon have an opportunity to examine films from the other side of the filmmaking process, as a jury member of the BRICS+ International Film Festival in St. Petersburg.

At the time of the interview, the festival’s films had not yet been sent to the jury, so he had not begun watching them. But he already knew what his first criterion would be.

The film itself comes first.

For Khajepasha, a film needs to have a sound story and plot as well as convincing cinematic elements such as mise-en-scène and visual language. A political or social message cannot make up for weaknesses in the filmmaking.

He is particularly critical of films that appear to have been made primarily to deliver a message.

“If we want to criticize a society, we first have to make a good film,” he said. “If we simply shout our message at the audience, the audience will realize immediately that the filmmaker has an agenda.”

The same principle applies to films carrying messages that he himself agrees with, he added.

“A good film that disagrees with our beliefs can sometimes be less damaging than a bad film that is trying to promote our beliefs,” he said.

As a juror, Khajepasha said his first priority would therefore be cinematic quality.

“Before a film can make an audience believe in its message, it has to make the audience believe in the film itself,” he concluded.