

Netanyahu flew over Jordan and Saudi Arabia for clandestine talks in Abu Dhabi

By staff writer

TEHRAN — On Sunday, a private jet carrying Benjamin Netanyahu took off from Israel, entered Jordanian airspace, crossed into Saudi Arabia, and touched down in Abu Dhabi.

Gaza lies in ruins under years of relentless bombardment. The International Criminal Court had issued an arrest warrant for the Israeli prime minister. Yet two Arab states provided clear skies, and a third opened its airport tarmac and hosted Netanyahu for ominous talks with other regional actors.

Official channels described the unannounced visit as a routine discussion on “bilateral relations” and “regional stability.” ► Page 5

Iraq's Kata'ib Hezbollah threatens airspace closure over ban on Iran flights

TEHRAN — The security chief of Kata'ib Hezbollah on Monday warned the Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Ali Faleh Al-Zaidi that if Iraq continues the air blockade against Iran after Oct. 1, people may close the entry points to Iraq's airspace for other countries that join the air ban.

The warning by Hajj Abu Mujahid came after the Iraqi government prevented flights to and from Iran after the Trump administration had introduced an air embargo against Iran in recent days. ► Page 5

Tehran, Moscow set to establish joint science and technology commission

TEHRAN — Iran and Russia are preparing to establish a joint commission on science and technology, with a document on international scientific cooperation between the two countries set to be signed at a meeting of the commission.

Ehsan Qaboul, head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology's Center for International Scientific Cooperation, said Iran is firmly committed to expanding ties with Russia, outlining the next steps by Tehran and Moscow to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including the formation of the joint science and technology commission.

Qaboul added that the Minister of Science, Research and Technology is scheduled to travel to Moscow within the next three months to finalize the document on international scientific cooperation between Iran and Russia.

He also announced plans for 500 cooperation programs with Russian universities and scientific institutions. ► Page 7

Barimanlou wins Iran's ninth gold in Nagoya

TEHRAN — Iranian kurash athlete Majid Vahid Barimanlou claimed a gold medal in the 2026 Asian Games on Tuesday.

He defeated Tajikistan's Yosin Bobokalonov 1-0 in the final match of the Men -66kg.

Kyrgyzstan's Kubanychbek Aibek Uulu and Sarvar Abdushukurov from Tajikistan won bronze medals.

Iran's Fatemeh Barmaki also won a bronze medal in the sport after losing to Liu Li-ling Shih from Chinese Taipei in the women's +87kg.

Vahid Barimanlou's medal was Iran's ninth gold medal in the Games.

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



Brigadier-General Hossein Mohebbi, the spokesperson for IRGC, details letter addressed to American people in a Tehran press conference on September 29, 2026.

‘White House Oppressing Both Iranians and Americans’

IRGC letter to American people urges break from US war policies

Citing the US-orchestrated 1953 coup and 1988 USS Vincennes downing of Flight 655, the IRGC says Iran's actions are defensive, urging Americans to demand accountability.

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has published a 26-page open letter to the American people this week, urging them to break with the foreign policy of their government and to reconsider what they have been told about U.S. wars in West Asia.

The letter is addressed to scholars, students and media workers. It says the American public is not the target of Iran's resistance. Rather, the target is a political class that turns war into a business and uses the country's power against people in the region and at home.

“The men enthroned at the White House oppress both Iranians and Americans,” the letter states.

The letter is signed by the IRGC's public

relations office and circulated in English and Persian. Its central message is that Americans have been misled about Iran and about their own government's role in the region.

Much of the document calls on Americans to separate themselves from the “U.S. war machine.” It asks university communities to refuse research and media work that helps plan or justify attacks that kill civilians. It says silence in the face of such policies makes Americans complicit in decisions taken in their name. “This is not a call for hostility toward Americans, but for them to hold their own leaders accountable,” the let-

ter reads.

The letter then lists historical grievances that it says explain the hostile nature of Iran-U.S. ties. It begins with the U.S.-orchestrated 1953 coup in Iran, which installed a dictator and created the roots of decades of hostility. It points to the Iran-Iraq War, which it explains was an American-backed effort to destroy Iran's new government through Saddam Hussein. It also cites the 1988 downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by the USS Vincennes, calling it a crime that was rewarded instead of punished.

The letter adds that these policies continue through sanctions, covert operations and support for armed groups opposed to Iran. It asks Americans to “test that record against what they have been told about Iran by their own media and politicians.” ► Page 3



Iran National Orchestra opens Iran Cultural Week at Moscow's Bolshoi Theater

TEHRAN- The National Orchestra of Iran, conducted by Homayoun Rahimian and featuring vocalist Mojtaba Asgari, opened the Cultural Week of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia with a concert at Moscow's historic Bolshoi Theater on Monday evening.

The performance brought Iranian music to the Bolshoi's stage, one of Russia's best-known cultural venues, in an event attended by Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali, Russian Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova, ► Page 8

Araghchi's diplomacy in UN puts war, Hormuz and nuclear rights at center of Iran's outreach

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has concluded an intensive round of diplomatic consultations in New York, using the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly to press Iran's positions on the war, the Strait of Hormuz, the nuclear issue, international law and the continuation of diplomacy.

Araghchi left New York for Tehran early Tuesday after several days of bilateral and multilateral meetings with foreign ministers, senior officials, United Nations representatives, international organizations, think tanks and media outlets. He also accompanied President Masoud Pezeshkian during parts of the Iranian delegation's intensive UNGA program. ► Page 2

Qalibaf warns US of a swift, regret-inducing response to any aggression

TEHRAN- Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has warned that any aggression or adventurism against the Islamic Republic would trigger a “tough, regret-inducing, precise and swift” response, saying US efforts to impose a maritime blockade, restrict air corridors and put maximum pressure on Iran's trade routes will ultimately fail. ► Page 2

Iran rebuffs UAE at UN: Three islands are ‘inseparable parts of Iran's territory’

TEHRAN — Repeating unfounded claims from the United Nations rostrum “does not alter the reality” that Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb, and the Lesser Tunb remain “inseparable parts of Iran's territory,” Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, stated on social media platform X.

Firmly rejecting statements recently delivered by Emirati officials at the United Nations General Assembly, Gharibabadi emphasized: “Emirati officials should, instead of repeating unfounded claims, adhere to the requirements of good neighborliness and the historical and legal realities of the region.”

The senior Iranian diplomat underscored that Tehran considers its territorial integrity and sovereignty over the three strategic Persian Gulf islands non-negotiable. He warned that instrumentalizing international podiums to advance baseless maritime claims serves only as a distraction from genuine regional concerns and undermines multilateral trust. ► Page 2

US pressure failed to force Iran to abandon its nuclear strategy: Iranian-American scholar



► Page 3

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

What do gas prices in America reveal?

In an editorial, Kayhan discussed gasoline prices in the United States and the fuel challenge that could follow the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. According to the newspaper, the Iranian nuclear issue has always been important for the United States, but what now directly affects the pockets and livelihoods of American citizens are the gasoline and diesel prices displayed at US gas stations. Reports about the Trump administration's behind-the-scenes discussions on eliminating fuel taxes, exempting agricultural diesel from taxes, and even Vice President J.D. Vance's proposal to ban diesel exports are described as signs of serious strain within the American economy. The article argues that when even European countries reduce fuel taxes to prevent social unrest, it demonstrates the significance of Iran's influence over global energy markets. Consequently, Kayhan contends that Iran should not cheaply relinquish its leverage over the Strait of Hormuz. In its view, the way to restrain the White House is not through diplomatic gestures or preemptive proposals, but through reducing trade and transit through the Strait.

Iran: The results of the New York trip will become clear later

In an analysis of President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to New York, the Iran newspaper wrote that the trip also has an important domestic dimension. The president's participation at the world's most significant diplomatic platform comes at a time when Iranian society is closely following regional developments and economic and political pressures, while waiting to see tangible results from the government's diplomatic efforts. According to international affairs analyst Sabah Zangeneh, assessing the success of the trip will require observing developments in foreign policy over the next three months. Key factors include the impact of political changes in the United States and Israel on opponents of Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, how governments' attitudes toward Iran may evolve, and whether military attacks and pressure against Iran will continue or whether a more rational approach, particularly from the United States, might emerge.

Resalat: Iran holds the initiative

In an article discussing America's difficulties in the region and the ongoing confrontation with Iran, Resalat argued that the central issue is no longer simply whether to accept or reject a diplomatic proposal. Rather, it is a struggle of wills in which the Islamic Republic seeks to consolidate its position through a strategy of "active resistance" and a combination of diplomacy and military leverage. The newspaper claims that Wash-

ington aims to weaken Iran's deterrence capabilities and geopolitical power through maritime pressure and economic sanctions before offering any sanctions relief. However, it argues that Tehran, having learned from past American actions, has altered the strategic equation. According to Resalat, the current dispute over the Persian Gulf and the strategic Strait of Hormuz is actually a visible part of a much larger struggle over preserving Iran's strategic leverage against imperialist ambitions.

Ham-Mihan: Welcoming China's four-point plan

Ham-Mihan examined China's four-point proposal and Beijing's role in regional developments. Citing international affairs analyst Mohsen Pak Aeen, it argued that China, as a major global power, can play a constructive role in addressing regional issues. Pak Aeen said that Iran welcomes China's initiative because its four points largely reflect Iranian positions expressed through Chinese diplomatic language. The plan emphasizes ending conflict, regional cooperation for mutual security, prioritizing the Palestinian issue in West Asia, and adherence to international law. He stated that Iran supports a regional security framework without outside interference and believes neighboring countries should cooperate directly with one another. While welcoming China's involvement, he argued that the United States still lacks the necessary political will to resolve these issues and instead seeks gains without making concessions. According to him, Iran recognizes this approach and acts in accordance with its national interests.

Etemad: Why Iran should pursue better relations with Saudi Arabia

In an analysis of Iran's policy toward Saudi Arabia, Etemad argued that current regional and global realities have led Iran to avoid confrontation with neighboring countries, especially Saudi Arabia, and instead emphasize areas of common interest. The newspaper stated that strengthening regional relations, preventing the emergence of an Arab-Israeli alignment and the further development of the Abraham Accords, utilizing Iran's influence in the Islamic world, discouraging excessive Saudi-Israeli rapprochement, expanding ties with Persian Gulf neighbors to help mitigate the impact of sanctions, and securing a role in the region's post-war security structure all require improving relations with Riyadh. According to Etemad, despite existing disagreements, expanding relations with Saudi Arabia is essential because stronger ties with Riyadh are viewed as the key to broader engagement with the countries of the region.

Pezeshkian calls for maximum use of shared capacities with Azerbaijan



TEHRAN — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday met Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev in Tehran, affirming that "borders will not obstruct the expansion of relations between the two neighbors."

He emphasized Azerbaijan's "special place" in Iran's neighborhood policy and urged full use of shared capacities to deepen ties and accelerate existing agreements, including road, air, and rail routes.

Mustafayev, in turn, underscored the im-

portance of reinforcing transport and corridor connections, noting that active political dialogue between President Pezeshkian and President Ilham Aliyev has imparted significant momentum to bilateral relations.

The meeting followed the 17th Joint Economic Commission in Baku and the April reopening of Azerbaijan's embassy in Tehran.

Trade and cargo volumes along the International North-South Transport Corridor continue to rise, with the Aghband-Kalaleh bridge and Astara terminal nearing completion.

Araghchi's diplomacy in UN puts war, Hormuz and nuclear rights at center of Iran's outreach

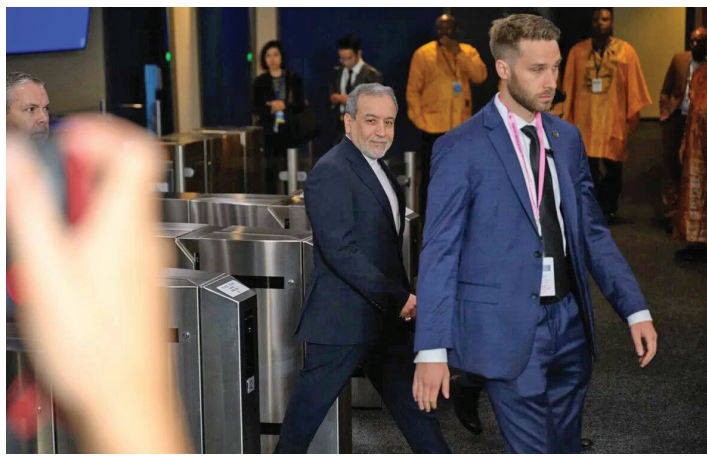
From page 1 ► The diplomatic activity came against the backdrop of the ongoing confrontation between Iran and the United States and Israel, with Tehran seeking to place its account of the conflict, its security concerns and its conditions for a diplomatic settlement before the international community.

Diplomacy amid war

In his assessment of the New York mission, Araghchi said one of Iran's principal objectives had been to ensure that the Iranian people's legitimate grievances and suffering were heard internationally, while defending the country's national interests and demonstrating that Iran remained an active and confident participant in international diplomacy.

He said the large number of meetings requested by other governments demonstrated that Iran had not become diplomatically isolated. Araghchi said many countries had expressed an interest in engaging with Iran and that the meetings provided an opportunity to discuss both bilateral issues and the wider regional crisis.

A central element of the Iranian diplomatic message was the war and its consequences for regional security, particularly the situation surrounding



the Strait of Hormuz. Araghchi said Iran had made a deliberate effort to explain its position on the strategic waterway to both the United States and the wider international community.

Hormuz becomes the immediate diplomatic issue

The Strait of Hormuz emerged as the most immediate issue in Araghchi's consultations.

According to the Iranian foreign minister, Tehran has presented conditions that must be fulfilled before the waterway can be reopened. He described those conditions as fair and reasonable, arguing that if Washington genuinely seeks a negotiated and peaceful solution, Iran has already presented a framework for achieving one.

Araghchi said Iran's sev-

en-point proposal had been transmitted to Washington through Qatari mediation. Following a fresh meeting with a Qatari mediator in New York, the two sides discussed ideas for meeting Iran's conditions, with the mediator expected to relay those ideas to the US side and convey Washington's response back to Tehran.

Araghchi said he expected the process to produce a response soon, while making clear that any subsequent decision would be taken in Tehran. He also stressed that communication through Qatari and Pakistani intermediaries had existed previously but had become more substantive following Iran's latest proposal.

The significance of the Hor-

muz issue extends beyond maritime navigation in Tehran's presentation of the crisis. Iran has linked the reopening of the waterway to broader security conditions, arguing that the issue cannot be separated from the country's national security and the wider confrontation with Washington.

That position was reiterated by Araghchi after reports emerged suggesting that Tehran might have modified its conditions. He categorically rejected that interpretation, saying there had been "no change" in Iran's position and that the conditions for reopening the Strait remained clear. He said the immediate issue under discussion was Hormuz and warned against deliberate media speculation about Iranian flexibility.

Tehran presses UN over violations

One of Araghchi's most consequential meetings was with UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the final day of his New York visit.

Araghchi briefed Guterres on developments in West Asia following US-Israeli military aggression, and criticized the United Nations' failure to respond adequately to violations of the UN Charter and international law.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Qalibaf warns US of a swift, regret-inducing response to any aggression



From page 1 ► Addressing an open session of Parliament on Tuesday, Qalibaf said Washington's attempts to exert pressure on Iran's economic and strategic lifelines would be countered through comprehensive economic planning and military measures, drawing on the country's experience during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

He stressed that the Iranian nation, with its long history of resistance, should not be intimidated by threats, blockades or pressure.

"The leaders of the White House should know that the great and history-making nation of Iran will never retreat in the face of threats, rhetoric, or an air or trade blockade," Qalibaf said.

He said Iran's experience of previous conflicts had demonstrated its ability to withstand pressure and strengthen its deterrence capabilities. If the US failed to understand that reality, he said,

Washington would remain caught in a cycle of facing "heavy slaps" from the Iranian nation.

Qalibaf also criticized reckless and hostile remarks by US President Donald Trump during the United Nations General Assembly, saying they demonstrated that Washington had yet to alter its approach toward Iran.

"In the face of such audacity, our response is the same clear statement as before: 'Turn, and we will turn!'" he said.

The parliament speaker further warned US officials that the era of threatening Iran with destruction or attempting to intimidate the Iranian people had ended, stressing that Iran would not yield to political rhetoric, military threats or economic and air blockades.

Strait of Hormuz

The Parliament speaker also referred to the US president's recent "rhetoric" concerning the Strait of Hormuz and the passage of ships through the strategic waterway, saying the remarks were a repetition of previous claims and that the baseless nature of such positions was known to everyone.

"Both the Americans and other countries should know that, as we have said before, in a region where we do not sell oil, no one will sell oil, and if our security is not ensured, no infrastructure will be safe," he said.

His remarks came amid heightened tensions surrounding the strategic waterway and broader

US pressure on Iran's commercial and economic channels.

Praise for Pezeshkian's UN Address

Qalibaf also praised President Masoud Pezeshkian's address to the UN General Assembly, saying the president had spoken as a representative of the Iranian people and a nation that would not submit to threats or domination.

He portrayed Pezeshkian's speech as reflecting Iran's position in the face of international pressure and attempts to impose political and economic constraints on the country.

Reference to Iran's deterrence doctrine

The parliament speaker also referred to a message delivered on Monday by Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, describing it as a precise articulation of a "defense and civilizational doctrine."

Qalibaf argued that Iran's deterrence capabilities had been developed through the experience of previous wars and that recent conflicts had altered the nature and balance of threats facing the country.

His comments placed the latest warnings toward Washington within a broader Iranian narrative that combines economic resilience, military deterrence and the experience of past conflicts as key elements of the country's response to external pressure.

Iran rebuffs UAE at UN: Three islands are 'inseparable parts of Iran's territory'

From page 1 ► For decades, Iran has consistently dismissed periodic, orchestrated statements issued by the United Arab Emirates or regional bodies attempting to question Iranian jurisdiction. Iranian officials maintain that sovereignty over Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb is rooted in established international law and an unbroken historical record.

Tehran has reiterated that while it remains committed to diplomacy, de-escalation, and fostering constructive neighborly relations with all littoral states of the Persian Gulf, matters concerning national borders and sovereign territories are absolute red lines. Iran considers any external interference, joint declarations with foreign powers, or calls to refer the domestic status of these islands to international arbitration as invalid, provocative, and contrary to regional security.

The historical facts underpinning Iran's sovereignty span centuries, extensively documented in regional annals and maritime archives across Europe. During antiquity and through successive

Iranian dynasties—including the Safavid, Afsharid, Zand, and Qajar eras—the three islands, alongside the broader maritime expanse of the Persian Gulf, fell under direct Iranian administrative and fiscal control through the ports of Bandar Lengeh and Bushehr.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the British Empire imposed a maritime protectorate over the coastal sheikhdoms—then known as the Trucial States. In pursuit of colonial dominance over the vital sea lines of communication linking India to the West, British colonial authorities unilaterally stationed flags and proxies on the islands, over the continuous, formal objections and diplomatic protests of Tehran.

When Britain announced its withdrawal from east of Suez in 1971, Iran took decisive measures to re-establish and formalize its rightful administration before the formal declaration of the UAE federation. In November 1971, through bilateral arrangements—including the formal Memorandum of Understanding regarding Abu Musa—Iranian sovereign author-

ity was restored. Historic British Admiralty charts, official correspondence from London's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and contemporary maritime registries consistently acknowledged Iran's prior sovereign title, making modern Emirati claims anachronistic attempts to revise colonial history.

Strategic geography: Gatekeepers of the Strait of Hormuz

The three islands occupy an unparalleled geographic position at the western approach to the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most critical maritime energy chokepoint through which roughly a fifth of global petroleum transit flows.

Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb sit immediately adjacent to the deep-water shipping lanes utilized by heavy commercial tankers and maritime traffic traversing the Persian Gulf.

Abu Musa, situated slightly further south, commands vital naval surveillance lines and forms the linchpin of defensive depth in the southern waters.

Iran's presence and defensive readiness across these islands have historically guaranteed freedom of

navigation and maritime security against piracy, regional instability, and unilateral foreign adventurism. Tehran views its administration of the islands not merely as a matter of title, but as an essential responsibility for maintaining stability in vital international shipping corridors without reliance on extra-regional powers.

Israel's shadow in regional waters

Political observers in Tehran point out that Abu Dhabi's persistent diplomatic agitation over the islands must also be examined through the prism of its broader foreign policy alignments—most notably its normalization of ties with Israel under the so-called Abraham Accords.

By opening the Persian Gulf to intelligence, military, and diplomatic cooperation with Tel Aviv, the UAE has introduced a hostile entity into an inherently sensitive maritime theater. Iranian political and military officials have repeatedly warned against facilitating Israel's presence in Persian Gulf waters, describing it as a direct threat to collective regional security.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

‘White House oppressing both Iranians and Americans’

IRGC letter to American people urges break from US war policies

From Page 1 ► On its designation as a “terrorist” organization by the U.S. government, the IRGC rejects the label as a political tool used by Washington to isolate and silence its opponents. It says the American people should see the IRGC “not as a threat but as the main line of defense against Western and Zionist domination.” Iran’s resistance is regional and defensive, the letter says, while U.S. power is expansionist and driven by interests outside the region.

The document is written from the position of an Iran that, it says, has survived a major military aggression launched by the United States and Israel on February 28, 2026. The letter devotes several pages to that aggression. It says the war failed to break Iran’s will or change its course, and that the “outcome has exposed the limits of American military power in the



region.”

From that experience, the IRGC draws a larger conclusion: the United States is a declining power, and Iran’s doctrine and worldview have already won a moral and strategic victory.

“It is perfectly clear which of the two leaders God supports,” the letter says, contrasting Iran’s leadership with a “self-enriching” elite in Washington.

The IRGC also accuses American politicians of treating foreign wars

as financial opportunities. It notes that some trade stocks based on the outcomes of conflicts. It says the same leaders who speak of democracy and human rights have little concern for the Americans who bear the costs of war. That charge, the letter says, should unite Americans and Iranians rather than divide them.

The closing section is a warning. “America’s crimes have turned the world into a powder keg that is ready to explode,” the letter states. It says the American public has the power and the responsibility to stop a course that is unsustainable and dangerous for West Asia and for the United States itself.

The letter ends by invoking the Golden Rule, found in the Talmud and the Gospels, and calls on Americans to demand immediate change before more conflict spreads.

US pressure failed to force Iran to abandon its nuclear strategy: Iranian-American scholar

Sina Azodi says Iran’s security concerns, distrust of Washington, and regional threats have shaped its nuclear calculations

TEHRAN — The United States degraded Iran’s military capabilities in the war that began on February 28, but it did not win it. That is the assessment of Sina Azodi, assistant professor of Middle East politics and director of the Middle East Studies MA Program at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs.

In an interview with Tehran Times, Azodi, author of “Iran and the Bomb: The United States, Iran, and the Nuclear Question,” said victory is measured by political objectives, not destruction. He also argued that the strategic logic behind Iran’s nuclear program predates the Islamic Republic and will outlast any government in Tehran.

Survival versus unconditional surrender

“Victory in war is not defined by the amount of destruction that you bring,” Azodi said. “It is defined by whether one side can achieve its political objective of the war.”

He pointed to the demands of the Trump administration, beginning with the unconditional surrender the U.S. president publicly called for on Truth Social. “Was unconditional surrender achieved? The answer is clearly no,” he said. Regime change was not achieved either, he added, and Trump did not play the role he had demanded in choosing Iran’s next Supreme Leader.

“So, you cannot say that the U.S. won the war,” Azodi said. Iran’s own objective, he noted, “was simple: survive. And it was able to survive.”

The limits of airpower and nuclear weapons

Azodi said the outcome confirmed the argument of his February 24 article that airpower alone cannot force a state to capitulate. Historical cases, he noted, include the firebombing of Dresden and Japanese cities, and NATO’s air

campaign against Yugoslavia. In each, the other side surrendered only after ground defeat or the threat of invasion.

“Air power is a very effective tool of destruction, but it is unable to deliver the political victory that the other side is seeking,” he said. “After 40 days of intense air campaigns, Iranians did not surrender.”

In his August 25 analysis, Azodi examined the Falklands War, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and the recent U.S.-Iran war. Nuclear weapons played no role in any of them, he said, and were not even considered in the political discussions of the countries that possessed them.

“Nuclear weapons are an effective tool of deterrence, but provide no coercive leverage,” he said, meaning they cannot be used to force another state to back down.

Iran’s conventional capabilities gave it more practical leverage, he said. Tehran “was able to deliver severe punishment on international shipping” and disrupt global markets, fertilizers, and inflation, while U.S. energy markets were also affected. Azodi added that the bar for using nuclear weapons is very high, noting that Trump recently called a question about it “stupid.”

Threat perceptions that survived the revolution

Turning to his book, Azodi said the logic of Iran’s nuclear program survived the 1979 revolution because “the threat perceptions have not fundamentally changed.”

He traced those perceptions to the Persian Gulf, where Iran has historically been invaded. The Portuguese Navy occupied Hormuz Island in the 1600s, and Iran was invaded from the Gulf again in World War II. The Shah called the Strait of Hormuz Iran’s “jugular vein,” Azodi said, and

leaders of the Islamic Republic voice similar views. “This is where Iran lives. Iran cannot go anywhere else,” he said.

Threats from the west were equally consequential. The Shah worried about the Ba’athist regimes in Iraq and Syria and wanted to be prepared if Iraq developed nuclear weapons, Azodi said, and Iraq attacked in 1980.

“It doesn’t matter, from my perspective, which ruling regime will be in Tehran,” he said. “They see threats coming from pretty much all over the place.”

A history of denied reactors and fuel

Azodi said Washington has forgotten that it once encouraged Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Under the Eisenhower administration’s Atoms for Peace program, the United States was Iran’s nuclear patron. A Stanford University report cited in his book told the Iranian government it would need some 20,000 megawatts of electricity by 1994, with nuclear energy the best viable option.

Figures such as Henry Kissinger later reversed course, Azodi said. Kissinger had called the Shah visionary and encouraged him to buy reactors, then questioned the program on the grounds that Iran had oil and gas.

After the revolution, Azodi said, Tehran found that the countries that had urged it to buy reactors refused to sell them, and in Europe’s case refused to deliver fuel Iran had paid for. Under Reagan administration pressure, which began a campaign in 1983 to limit Iran’s access to nuclear technology, Iranian leaders faced a choice. “They either had the option of abandoning everything or trying to somehow resurrect the program,” he said. By 1987 they had decided to pursue enrichment.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

LATEST NEWS

■ Azeri, Iranian presidents review ties in phone call

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held a telephone conversation, discussing bilateral relations and recent developments in ties between the two neighbors. Aliyev congratulated Pezeshkian on his birthday and wished him health, longevity, and success. The two leaders welcomed the outcome of their recent meeting in Bishkek and reviewed issues discussed there. They also noted the ongoing visit of an Azerbaijani government delegation to Iran and talks on bilateral cooperation.

■ Iran, Azerbaijan seek to expand energy cooperation

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev discussed ways to expand energy cooperation, with a focus on energy trade and areas of mutual interest. Paknejad said longstanding ties and recent constructive cooperation had created a strong basis for deeper economic relations. The two sides agreed to pursue identified areas through joint working groups aimed at translating discussions into tangible results. It was their third meeting since October 2024.

■ Unidentified projectile hits vessel in Strait of Hormuz

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said an unidentified projectile struck a vessel transiting the Strait of Hormuz on Monday evening. According to the maritime security agency, the strike triggered a fire aboard the oil tanker, which was extinguished shortly afterward. The vessel subsequently resumed its voyage. No further details have been released regarding the nature of the incident, the vessel’s nationality or the circumstances surrounding the strike.

■ Iraqi Airways to resume Iran flights in October after securing sanctions exemption

Iraqi Airways plans to restart flights to Iran in October after obtaining an exemption from US sanctions that have restricted services to Iranian airlines, according to Iraq’s Transport Ministry.

According to the state Iraqi News Agency (INA), Iraqi Airways already resumed flights between Najaf and Iranian airports on Monday

Addressing earlier disruptions, the Iraqi ambassador to Iran, Yasser Abdul-Zahra Al-Hajjaj, told INA, “The government had not

issued any decision to halt flights with Iran; rather, foreign ground-handling companies had refrained from providing services due to fears of US sanctions.”

■ Imbalance in US-Iran negotiations favors Tehran

Talha Abdulrazaq, a Middle East strategy and security affairs specialist, has told Al Jazeera that the US and Iran are approaching diplomacy on different timelines.

“The Americans want some solid concessions on the nuclear component of negotiations, and the Iranians say, ‘Well, OK, we don’t have an issue with that necessarily, but first of all, we need to see some good faith from the American side, which is unfreezing of assets, sanctions relief and the lifting of the naval blockade,’” he said.

Abdulrazaq said the imbalance favors Tehran to a degree but does not mean Iran is spared the pressure.

Abdulrazaq said the US midterm elections in November are also constraining Washington. Afterwards, he said, “The Americans are going to have more leeway to perhaps either escalate the conflict or maybe even de-escalate” and return to something similar to the MoU.

Iran embassy rejects UK media claims over RAF Fairford arrests, warns against fueling ‘Iranophobia’

TEHRAN – The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London has categorically rejected attempts by British media to implicate the country in the recent arrest of five individuals near the Royal Air Force (RAF) Fairford base, labeling the speculation as “fabricated” and “malicious.”

The embassy statement, released on the social media platform X, firmly condemned the narrative being pushed by certain British outlets, warning that such baseless accusations serve only to exacerbate anti-Iranian sentiment within the United Kingdom.

“The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in London categorically rejects and strongly condemns the recent unfounded and malicious speculations published by some British individuals and media outlets attempting to link Iran to arrest of five suspects in the vicinity of RAF Fairford base,” the embassy said on X.

“The circulation of such fabricated speculations, particularly in the aftermath of the criminal acts of aggression committed by the United States and the Israeli regime against the Iranian people, will serve no purpose other than to fuel Iranophobia propaganda in the UK,” it added.

The mission further emphasized that it “reserves the right to take appropriate legal measures, as necessary, to safeguard the rights and interests of the country and its people in response to misleading and damaging media narratives.”

The arrests occurred near RAF Fairford, a facility that has long drawn scrutiny from Tehran due to its role in hosting US bombers potentially deployed for regional operations. Counterterrorism police identified the five suspects as British nationals, aged 23 to 25, all residents of inner London—specifically from Camden, Westminster, and Willesden. The individuals are currently being held on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts and offenses under the Explosives Act.

Despite the fact that the suspects are UK citizens, political rhetoric in Britain has attempted to cast the incident through a geopolitical lens. UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband, speaking at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool, claimed the incident served as “a reminder of the threats our country faces,” and provocatively stated, “We will act against the proxies of Iran.”

Miliband refused to elaborate on the investigation or address claims made by US President Donald Trump, who suggested the suspects had been under surveillance by American intelligence for an extended period. When questioned by reporters regarding a potential Iranian connection, Trump did not offer a direct denial, instead opting for a vague gesture.

Tehran has consistently maintained that the use of British bases for hostile actions against the Iranian people is a provocative stance that jeopardizes regional security.

Rubio invokes ‘blackmail’ to hide US crimes in Iran



TEHRAN — US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is once again making inflammatory claims about Iran in an apparent attempt to divert attention from Washington’s own record of aggression and bloodshed.

In an interview with Fox News, Rubio claimed that a nuclear-armed Iran would “blackmail the world and kill people.” He portrayed a hypothetical scenario in which Tehran could disrupt maritime trade, impose tolls and cut off energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz. Rubio went further, claiming that Iran is led by officials with an “apocalyptic vision” who seek to bring about the end of the world.

Such claims are intended to portray Iran as a threat to global security, but they overlook the reality of US military actions and policies in the region. While Rubio speaks of hypothetical threats Iran might pose in the future, the United States and Israel have already inflicted death and destruction on the Iranian people.

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched a massive military assault against Iran. The attack resulted in the deaths of thousands of Iranian citizens. While Rubio warns about what Iran might do in a hypothetical scenario, US-made weapons have already been used in attacks that killed civilians inside Iran.

Among the most shocking incidents was the direct strike on a school in Minab, along with attacks on civilian areas in Lamerd. International observers and human rights organizations have raised serious concerns over the legality of such attacks and described some of them as possible war crimes. Striking a school filled with children cannot

be justified as an act of self-defense, yet Rubio and other US officials continue to focus on alleged future threats from Iran while avoiding scrutiny of Washington’s own military actions.

It is particularly striking for a US official to accuse Iran of “blackmail” and violence. For decades, Washington has used economic sanctions, military pressure and political intervention against countries that challenge its policies. Iran has itself been subjected to extensive US sanctions intended to exert pressure on its economy and government. Washington has also pursued aggressive measures against governments it opposes, including Venezuela, where the United States abducted President Nicolás Maduro.

The US role in the Gaza war has further undermined Washington’s claims to be defending human rights. The US government has continued to provide Israel with weapons, financial support, and diplomatic backing despite the enormous civilian death toll in Gaza. Against this backdrop, Rubio’s warnings about the protection of human life ring hollow to Iran and many others across the world.

Rubio’s claims about the Strait of Hormuz also overlook Iran’s longstanding role in the security of the Persian Gulf and the strategic waterway. Iran has repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining regional stability and protecting its sovereignty in the face of US military deployments, Israeli threats and sanctions.

Iran’s stated position is not about seeking an “apocalypse,” as Rubio alleges, but about defending its sovereignty, national interests and right to pursue an independent foreign policy free from foreign coercion.

Iran-Azerbaijan joint infrastructure projects nearly complete as trade grows

TEHRAN- Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, speaking on the sidelines of the meeting of the heads of the Joint Committee for Economic Cooperation between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, stressed the friendly and brotherly relations between Tehran and Baku and said: Despite existing tensions in the region, relations and cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are developing in various fields, and this trend will continue.

He added: At this meeting, priority issues and prospects for cooperation between the two countries were discussed, and matters related to trade, logistics, transportation, and energy were reviewed.

Referring to the increase in trade exchanges between the two countries, the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan said: The trade volume between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan has increased, and within the framework of the International North-South Corridor, the volume of cargo and goods transportation has also been on an upward trend.

He continued: In all areas of cooperation, joint projects between the two countries are progressing, and at this meeting, the latest status of the implementation of these projects was also examined.

Mustafayev, referring to some joint infrastructure projects between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, stated: The construction of a bridge over the Aras River, the Aghband-Kalaleh project, and the Astara railway cargo terminal are almost complete, and we discussed the inauguration of these projects with my Iranian counterpart so that we can see them become operational as soon as possible.

In conclusion, the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, stating that Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have fruitful cooperation in various fields, noted: The Republic of Azerbaijan is interested in developing its relations and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran-Azerbaijan six-month trade increases

Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, referring to the increase in trade exchanges between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan over the past six months, said: Developing infrastructure and removing obstacles are effective in sustaining this trend, and the project to widen the Jolfa-Kalaleh route can increase the transport capacity and volume of trade exchanges between the two countries.

According to IRNA, citing the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh said on Monday at the end of the meeting of the heads of the Joint Economic Cooperation Committee of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan: "Today we hosted Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee of the two countries."

Emphasizing that relations between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan are friendly, brotherly, and strategic, she added: "In today's meeting, the issues agreed upon in the joint committee were reviewed and the latest status of implementation of the agreements was examined."

Referring to the increase in the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries, the Minister of Transport and Urban Development said: "In the past six months, despite the problems and conditions caused by the war in the region, we have witnessed an increase in the volume of trade exchanges between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan, and we are trying to continue this trend by developing infrastructure and removing obstacles."

Sadegh, referring to the project to widen the Jolfa-Kalaleh route, said: "The Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously advancing this project, and widening this route can be effective in increasing the transport capacity and volume of trade exchanges between the two countries."

In conclusion, the Minister of Transport and Urban Development emphasized: "Given the friendly and brotherly relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of



Azerbaijan, the ground is prepared for further development of cooperation between the two countries in various fields, and we will certainly witness the expansion of bilateral relations and cooperation in the future."

Back in early September, Farzaneh Sadegh, and Shahin Mustafayev, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, held a telephone conversation to review the latest developments in bilateral relations and explore ways to expand economic ties, particularly in transit, energy, and border infrastructure.

According to a report by IRNA from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, both sides assessed the growing trend in bilateral relations and emphasized the continuation of high-level consultations.

Farzaneh Sadegh, referring to specialized meetings held in gas, electricity, and transportation sectors, called for accelerating the formation of joint committees to follow up and implement the approvals from these meetings.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development, pointing to the damage caused by recent regional tensions to transportation infrastructure, stated: "Despite existing challenges, the reconstruction of damaged routes has been prioritized and the process of completing ongoing infrastructure projects continues without interruption."

She attributed the strengthening of relations between Tehran and Baku to the will of the presidents of the two countries and the close interaction of executive officials at various levels.

Shahin Mustafayev also expressed satisfaction with the progress of railway projects during the call, stating: "The railway route within Azerbaijan's territory up to the 'Aghband' region has been completed, and with the completion of the section within Iran, we will witness a significant transformation in the region's transit and logistics capacities."

Praising the professional performance of Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development in addressing infrastructure damage, he added: "The Iranian government's determination to revive and activate transit corridors is a commendable approach."

At the end of the call, the two sides exchanged views on the latest regional developments and emphasized deepening strategic and economic cooperation as the main pillar of stability and development in the region.

In a decisive move that signals a new phase in regional economic integration, Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan are rapidly expanding their bilateral trade and transit cooperation through a series of high-level agreements, infrastructure projects, and customs facilitation measures. The momentum, driven by political will at the highest levels and supported by tangible results at border crossings, positions the two neighbors as strategic partners in connecting the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Persian Gulf.

At the heart of this economic rapprochement lies the Bileh Savar border crossing in Iran's northwestern Ardabil Province—a 24/7 customs post that has emerged as a vital artery for trade. Over the past year alone, the crossing recorded \$268 million in exports, demonstrating its growing capacity to handle increased commercial volumes. This figure is particularly noteworthy given that the period coincided with external pressures and regional instability, underscoring the resilience of Iran's border economy and its ability to maintain trade flows even under challenging circumstances.

Private sector's 5 demands for expansion of export

TEHRAN- A member of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing that the main problem of Iran's exports is not a lack of production capacity, deemed it necessary to reform trade processes, reduce transaction costs, and create infrastructure for a sustainable presence in foreign markets.

Shahla Amouri, President of the Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, said that the problem of Iran's exports is not a lack of production capacity; the problem is the inability to convert this capacity into a sustainable presence in the market. An economy that has supply capacity—from energy and raw materials to industrial and agricultural products—can use foreign trade for growth when an Iranian firm can deliver its product to the customer at a predictable cost, through a clear process, and in competitive time. The gap between these two points is where a significant part of Iran's economic advantages is eroded.

Between producing a good and selling it sustainably in a foreign market lies a chain of decisions and processes: from financing and regulations to transportation, standards, insurance, market information, and distribution networks. Weakness in any link destroys part of the advantage created at the production stage.

In today's trade, a foreign customer does not buy only goods; they also buy reliability. Continuous supply, consistent quality,



on-time delivery, predictable prices, and after-sales services are part of the value of a transaction. Therefore, successful export is not the result of a single deal; it is the result of building trust and continuity in a trade relationship.

Khuzestan is a clear example of this reality. Having ports, a land border with Iraq, access to open waters, and diverse industrial and agricultural capacities has placed this province in a position where it can be one of the drivers of the country's regional trade. But geography becomes an economic advantage only when infrastructure and trade governance can turn this capacity into an efficient path for firm activity.

Meanwhile, one of the less-seen issues is the difference between "the possibility of accessing the market" and "the ability to remain in the market."

Iran-Belarus trade reaches \$76m in 2025

TEHRAN- On the eve of the Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Committee, the Director General of the Central Asia, Caucasus and Russia Office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization announced: The value of trade exchanges between Iran and Belarus in 2025 amounted to \$76 million.

According to IRNA, citing the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, Mehdi Babaei stated that agricultural and petrochemical products had the largest share in Iran's exports to Belarus, and added: The 19th meeting of the Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Cooperation Committee will be held with the participation of Seyed Mohammad Atabak, Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, and the Minister of Industry of the Republic of Belarus.

Babaei considered the holding of joint committees as a foundation for strengthening and expanding mutual cooperation between the two countries and added: At this meeting, emphasis will be placed on developing cooperation in the fields of trade and industry, agriculture, investment, health and pharmaceuticals, as well as strengthening interaction between the private sectors of the two countries, with the aim of expanding Iran-Belarus economic and trade relations as much as possible.

According to him, at the end of this meeting, a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the industry ministers of the two countries will be signed. Also, meeting with the Prime Minister and officials of the Republic of Belarus and the opening of Iran's dedicated trade pavilion with the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union at the "InnoProm Belarus" exhibition are among the other programs planned within the framework of this meeting.

Back in mid-August, Iran's Deputy Agri-

culture Minister for planning and Economy Affairs met with the Minister of Agriculture and Food of Belarus, emphasizing the development of bilateral cooperation in the fields of agricultural fertilizers, machinery, and joint investment.

According to Mehr News Agency, Akbar Fathi, Iran's Deputy Agriculture Minister for planning and Economy Affairs, met and held talks with Yuri Gorlov, Minister of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus, on the sidelines of the 7th meeting of the Policy Council of Agriculture and Industry of the Eurasian Economic Union, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

During the meeting, the capacities and areas for developing agricultural and economic cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Belarus were reviewed, and both sides emphasized the need to strengthen bilateral interactions and utilize existing capacities to develop trade and investment in the agricultural sector.

One of the main axes of the negotiations was the continuation and development of cooperation between the two countries in the supply and trade of potash and phosphate fertilizers. In this regard, existing capacities for expanding trade cooperation, as well as examining areas for joint investment in the production and supply of agricultural inputs, were taken into consideration.

The Iranian side, referring to the importance of sustainable supply of inputs needed by the agricultural sector, emphasized the use of capacities of EAEU member states to diversify input supply sources and develop long-term cooperation.

Also during this meeting, capacities for joint cooperation in the field of agricultural machinery and equipment were discussed

a single chain, an exporter encounters multiple institutions and regulations, while the performance of these institutions has not always been designed around a common goal. The result is increased friction along a path that should be predictable for firms.

To reform this situation, five actions must be pursued as a single package: First, reducing administrative friction by integrating systems, exchanging information among agencies, and eliminating parallel controls; second, managing trade time and cost by setting specific indicators for core processes and continuously measuring performance; third, creating shared services for small and medium-sized firms in cargo consolidation, warehousing, packaging, transportation, and specialized consulting; fourth, launching a market intelligence system in border provinces to provide up-to-date information on demand, regulations, competitors, and distribution networks; and fifth, creating a clear mechanism for resolving trade problems by designating the responsible agency, a response deadline, and an evaluable result.

These five axes are in fact five links in a single reform: simplifying the path, reducing transaction costs, enabling the presence of small firms, gaining a more accurate understanding of the market, and turning unresolved issues into cases with a designated responsible party and timeframe.

and exchanged.

Both sides emphasized identifying the capacities of manufacturing companies and private sector activists of the two countries and paving the way for the development of exchanges, technology transfer, and joint investments in the field of agricultural machinery and equipment.

The development of trade in agricultural and food products between Iran and Belarus was another focus of this meeting. Within this framework, existing capacities for increasing trade exchanges in the fields of poultry meat, dairy products, and various fruits were reviewed, and the need to facilitate trade and create suitable grounds for greater presence of producers and exporters of the two countries in each other's markets was emphasized.

Also, the issue of developing trade relations and utilizing the capacities of existing agreements and mechanisms to increase the volume of agricultural and food product exchanges between the two countries was taken into consideration.

At the end of this meeting, both sides emphasized the continuation of consultations and follow-up on the issues raised with the aim of developing joint investments, increasing agricultural trade, strengthening cooperation in the field of inputs and agricultural machinery, and creating new opportunities for private sector cooperation.

The meeting was held within the framework of the programs of the 7th Policy Council of Agriculture and Industry of the Eurasian Economic Union and in line with strengthening the agricultural diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran and developing economic interactions with the member states of this union.

Uzbekistan's \$1.4b food market awaits Iran

TEHRAN- Uzbekistan's \$1.4 billion food market is open to Iranian exporters as trade between the two countries reached \$305 million in the first half of 2026, and three cooperation documents were recently signed.

According to a Mehr News Agency, Uzbekistan is becoming one of Central Asia's growing markets, as its food imports in the first quarter of 2026 jumped by nearly 46% to \$1.4 billion. Yet

Iran's share of this market remains limited, and economic actors believe that expanding Iran's food industry exports to Tashkent requires resolving financial and transportation obstacles and gaining a more accurate understanding of the market.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has pursued its foreign trade development path more rapidly, and growth in imports, increased foreign investment, and expanded

ties with regional markets have made the country one of Central Asia's notable markets.

According to the latest statistics from Uzbekistan's National Statistics Committee, the country's imports in the first quarter of 2026 reached \$12.2 billion. Among these, food products and live animals, with a share of about \$1.4 billion, were one of the main import groups. Notably, imports in this group grew by

45.9% compared with the same period last year.

These figures show that Uzbekistan's food market is not merely a domestic consumer market; given the country's population of more than 37 million and its position as one of Central Asia's trade hubs, it could become more important for regional food exporters.

Iraq's sovereignty should not be defined by a single day

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Freedom without the means to defend it is only a promise and sovereignty without the power to protect it is only a symbol.

This is the situation facing the Iraqi people following the government's announcement that September 30, 2026 will be designated as a national day known as "Sovereignty Day." Baghdad has also declared four days of public holidays, from Wednesday through Saturday, to mark the event.

On the surface, the occasion appears to mark a legitimate national milestone. At its core, however, it raises an ambiguity that deserves the attention of both Arab and Iraqi leaders.

It is self-evident that sovereignty, both in political science and in the experience of nations that have endured the struggles of liberation, is not defined by a day proclaimed from a podium. It is measured instead by principles that people embraced before their governments did.

Chief among them is the departure of the last foreign soldier from Iraq's territory and the sole authority of national security forces to defend its land, sea, and air. They also include freedom in political and economic decision-making from outside pressure, and the right of the people to choose their own path rather than accept imposed alternatives.

When these conditions are met, a date becomes a symbol worthy of celebration. When they are not, any day given this name remains little more than a title without substance.

At the heart of the debate in Iraqi political and media circles is not the name of the day itself. It is the attempt to link it, either openly or indirectly, to the question of disarming the resistance factions.

Critics argue that this is a methodological error before it is a political one. The literature and historical experience of states that emerged from occupation link sovereignty to the departure of foreign forces and the independence of national decision-making. They do not define it as the disarmament of the forces that helped achieve that independence.

In Iraq's case, the weapons of the resistance were never used to rebel against the state. Rather, they were used first to defeat



al-Qaeda and later Daesh, helping to clear Iraqi territory of a transnational terrorist threat. Their role also extended beyond Iraq's borders, supporting other resistance fronts in the region, above all the Palestinian cause.

A similar question was raised during a meeting that brought together political and military leaders, Popular Mobilization Forces leaders, and the prime minister. The discussion focused on the rationale and timing of any move against the weapons or leadership of the resistance. It also considered the strong social support these forces enjoy among Iraqis and the potentially difficult-to-control reactions that could follow.

At a meeting attended by prominent military and political figures directly concerned with the matter, participants discussed the view that restricting or confiscating weapons did not reflect a genuine popular demand in Iraq. Rather, they saw it as a response to external pressure, including threats to restrict Iraqi funds.

This account was reportedly conveyed by people close to the decision-makers themselves, not only by opponents of the policy. This raises a fundamental question. Who is actually setting the agenda for "Sovereignty Day"?

The debate over sovereignty and disarmament in Iraq cannot be understood in isolation from the wider regional context. The region is experiencing an ongoing confrontation between Washington and Tel Aviv on one side and the Axis of Resistance on the other. Any discussion of disarmament in Baghdad must therefore be understood in the context of this broader conflict.

Nor is this debate new. It is part of a long struggle over the balance of military and political power in West Asia. For decades, Washington, Tel Aviv, and their

allies have sought to weaken the capabilities of resistance factions opposed to the Zionist regime by targeting their leaders and positions across the region.

This shows that the real struggle is over influence and weapons, rather than the slogans repeatedly invoked to frame it.

The Israeli regime entered an unprecedented strategic crisis after October 7, 2023. The conflict was no longer, as it had been during the previous six rounds of fighting in Gaza, limited to a single geographic area. Instead, it expanded to include supporting fronts in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran.

Washington and its allies, therefore, faced a regional crisis with several interconnected fronts. In response, they adopted a common approach of treating the weapons of resistance forces in each country as a purely domestic matter, framing the issue in terms of sovereignty and state-building.

In Lebanon, calls to hand over weapons are made in the name of completing state sovereignty, even as Israeli aggression continues unabated.

In Gaza, bombardment and destruction continue, while the weapons of the Palestinian resistance forces remain a central factor in any future settlement.

In Yemen, military pressure on Ansarallah continues, while Iran resists sustained political, economic, and military coercion.

This leaves little doubt that the issue goes beyond Iraq's internal affairs and is deeper than a debate over the strength of the state.

In Iraq, many fear that any hasty move to address the issue of resistance weapons could trigger internal strife or confrontation between the official security forces and forces that defeated Daesh and openly supported the Palestinian cause.

The recent experience in Syria may offer an instructive lesson. Following the political transformation in Damascus, the Israeli regime launched widespread attacks on Syrian army weapons depots and defensive systems. This highlights that stripping a state of its weapons can leave it more exposed and weaken its ability to defend itself. Disarmament can also become part of a broader effort to reshape the balance of power within the country.

A legitimate question naturally arises. Do foreign forces leave other countries of their own accord? Or does their departure usually come after armed resistance, widespread public opposition, or sustained protests and political pressure, as seen in numerous liberation struggles throughout modern history?

Had the matter been left entirely to foreign powers, it would be difficult to imagine them willingly abandoning the bases they established. American forces, for example, remain stationed at military bases in Japan and South Korea decades after the circumstances that originally justified their presence.

This confirms that foreign military presence is shaped by broader American strategic interests rather than being determined solely by the host country's wishes.

The American announcement of the withdrawal or redeployment of its forces in Iraq should not be seen as an act of generosity toward Baghdad or the peoples of the region.

Rather, it should be understood as a response to the real risks faced by American forces, whether from Iran or other resistance fronts. These risks were among the key factors that led Washington to reconsider the nature of its military presence in the region.

If "Sovereignty Day" is to carry any genuine meaning, it should mark the beginning of a broader national project to complete Iraq's sovereignty. That means regulating arms, pursuing development, and securing full control over its land, sea, and air. It should not become a ceremonial occasion whose significance ends when the official celebrations are over.

Ultimately, completing this national project requires concrete steps that go beyond celebratory rhetoric.

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

Netanyahu flew over Jordan and Saudi Arabia for clandestine talks in Abu Dhabi



From page 1 ▶ Flight records and intelligence reports reveal a different reality: a multi-state operational gathering that tied Netanyahu's domestic political survival directly to the UAE's apparent expanding role as a regional war center.

Radar tracks reveal a multi-state gathering

Netanyahu's aircraft, tail number M-ULTI, landed at Al Bateen Executive Airport at 12:13 UTC. Within minutes, a series of linked aircraft arrived on the same tarmac, according to open-source data.

A plane associated with the family of eastern Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar, tail number P4-KH5I9, arrived at 12:40. A Qatari government aircraft landed at 12:18. A Moroccan Air Force C-130 had touched down hours earlier at 10:10. An Emirati-owned jet, A6-FAM, arrived at 12:10 after picking up passengers in Riyadh.

Reports in Hebrew-language media indicated that Mossad chief Roman Gofman organized a broader meeting alongside the primary bilateral session between Netanyahu and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The Israeli intelligence chiefs, including Shin Bet director David Zini and former Mossad chief David Barnea, have frequented Abu Dhabi in recent months.

The synchronized arrivals in Abu Dhabi point to a coordinated gathering of regional military and intelligence partners rather than a simple diplomatic chat.

Safe passage for war criminals amid genocide

The passage of Netanyahu's aircraft through Jordan and Saudi Arabia happened while Israeli strikes continued to devastate Gaza, pushing the Palestinian death toll past 74,000.

Both Amman and Riyadh regularly issue formal statements condemning Israeli military actions. Yet when Netanyahu needed to travel across West Asia, the corridor was open. Neither state scrambled jets or refused transit access.

This silent operational cooperation highlights the structural gap between public diplomatic rhetoric in Arab capitals and private military logistics.

For the states granting flight permissions, maintaining intelligence pipelines with Tel Aviv and Washington has taken priority over public solidarity with Gaza.

Netanyahu flew over millions of outraged Arab citizens without setting off a single diplomatic alarm.

Political lifelines and the October 7 warning

Netanyahu's trip was driven by immediate domestic pressure. Israel faces elections on October 27, the first since the October 7, 2023 attacks.

Polls show a tight race, with Netanyahu's Likud bloc tied with opposition forces led by former mil-

itary chief Gadi Eisenkot.

Netanyahu remains trapped by ongoing corruption trials and intelligence failures surrounding the October 7 attack.

Haaretz reported that Emirati President Mohamed bin Zayed personally warned Netanyahu roughly ten days before October 7 that Yahya Sinwar was preparing a major military operation. Netanyahu denied the account and threatened legal action against domestic news outlets covering the claim.

During Sunday's meeting in Abu Dhabi, Netanyahu reportedly asked Mohamed bin Zayed to issue an explicit public denial of the pre-attack warning. Facing an electorate focused on security lapses, Netanyahu sought a clean political defense from an Arab leader to blunt opposition attacks at home.

Abu Dhabi as launchpad for regional wars

The partnership between Israel and the UAE has shifted far beyond the economic framework of the 2020 Abraham Accords.

During the recent campaign of aggression against Iran, Israel deployed Iron Dome air defense batteries and military personnel directly inside Emirati territory.

The relationship is reciprocal. The UAE has allowed its territory, airfields, and maritime proximity to Iran to be integrated into Western and Israeli military planning.

This pattern of Emirati involvement extends well beyond the Persian Gulf into a broader web of transnational interventions.

United Nations investigative panels have confirmed that UAE-linked logistics networks supply weapons, foreign fighters, and heavy armor to the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan, fueling a catastrophic conflict that has displaced millions.

At the same time, Abu Dhabi provides steady financial, air, and logistical backing to Khalifa Haftar's armed forces in eastern Libya, mirroring similar operational deployments such as supplying armed drones to government forces during the Tigray war in Ethiopia.

The presence of a Haftar-linked aircraft on the runway in Abu Dhabi while Netanyahu met with Emirati leadership fits this broader reality. The UAE appears to operate as a central hub for regional proxy warfare, financing, and air logistics.

Netanyahu departed Abu Dhabi without releasing a formal joint statement or a single official photograph.

The silence was deliberate. It allowed Netanyahu to present himself as being in control to his political base while letting his Emirati hosts avoid public accountability for hosting an indicted war criminal executing multiple campaigns of aggression against Muslims in the region.

Iraq's Kata'ib Hezbollah threatens airspace closure over ban on Iran flights

From page 1 ▶ "If the air blockade on the Islamic Republic continues after October 1 of this year, our proud people will take a clear stance that may extend to closing the entry points of the countries participating in the blockade of the faithful Iranian people," Hajj Abu Mujahid al-As-saf stated in a statement.

The following is the text of the statement.

"Our Iraqi people, who are resisting, will celebrate on the thirtieth of this month the expulsion of the American and NATO occupation forces from Iraq at the hands of their sons—the brave men of the Islamic Resistance. The celebration will be a popular embodiment expressing the people's rallying around the Iraqi resistance. Accordingly, we state the following:

1: Driving the occupation forces out of the land of Iraq in defeat is the beginning of achieving full sovereignty in the country over land, water, and sky, and of independence for political and economic decision-making, by His permission, may He be exalted: (And if you return, We will return.)

2: Let those who are at the forefront of the governmental and political scene in Iraq know: A. Our proud people know those who hide behind certain government decisions to push through what they publicly frame as a warning—something that is counted against the party at the forefront of policymaking in the country.

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

Senior Gaza resistance commander Abu Hamza martyred in dawn raid

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, confirmed the martyrdom of senior commander Izz al-Din Abdul Aziz al-Beik, known as Abu Hamza, following a targeted Israeli one-way attack drone strike in Gaza City early Tuesday.

The dawn raid struck an apartment inside the Al-Batoul building in the Al-Nasr neighborhood, killing Abu Hamza alongside fellow fighter Muhannad Abu Foul and wounding several civilians, including children. The blast ignited a fire that completely destroyed the home.

As a member of al-Qassam's General Military Council, Abu Hamza led the Northern Gaza Brigade, having assumed command after the martyrdom of Ahmed al-Ghandour.

Abu Hamza leaves behind a formidable record of frontline service.

According to the Al-Qassam Brigades' statement, he com-

manded the first special unit in northern Gaza during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, led the Imad Aql Battalion in 2009, and directed military intelligence for the northern brigade starting in 2015.

An operational architect of the October 7 Al-Aqsa Flood operation, he later directed the grueling 107-day defensive campaign that thwarted Israel's siege plan in northern Gaza, known as the "generals' plan."

While Israeli leaders touted the assassination, Hebrew-language media analysts have conceded that the targeted killing strategy has failed to break the resistance.

Reports in outlets such as Israel Hayom have acknowledged that Hamas maintains a deep pipeline of experienced deputies positioned to assume leadership roles immediately.

These admissions reflect the structural failure of Israel's campaign to eliminate Palestinian military capacity.

Furthermore, resistance com-



manders continue to reject Washington-backed regional demands to disarm, insisting on retaining their defensive capabilities against ongoing occupation aggression.

Tuesday's strike marks a severe escalation amid persistent ceasefire violations. Gaza's Government Media Office reported Tuesday that Israeli forces have committed 5,147 breaches since the October 10, 2025 truce took effect, killing 1,421 Palestinians.

Israeli gunfire and drone attacks also claimed lives in Deir al-Balah, Jabalia, and Rafah on Tuesday.

Iran volleyball battle back to defeat Indonesia in Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iran staged a remarkable comeback to defeat Indonesia 3-2 (22-25, 21-25, 25-21, 25-19, 17-15) in Pool B of the 2026 Asian Games on Tuesday.

Iran fell two sets behind after Indonesia took the opening two sets, but Team Melli responded strongly to win the next three and complete a thrilling comeback.

Ali Haghparsad led Iran with 22 points, while Indonesia's Farhan Halim was his team's top scorer with 19 points.

The victory marked Iran's third consecutive win in the competition. Team Melli had previously defeated Kyrgyzstan and Thailand in straight sets.

Iran will next face the second-placed team from Pool D on Thursday, with a place in the next stage at stake.

The men's volleyball tournament at the 20th Asian Games is organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) in cooperation with the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

The volleyball competition is being held in Okazaki and Komaki in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, from September 27 to October 3.

Iran female weightlifter Beheshti takes bronze in 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Mahsa Beheshti from Iran won a bronze medal in weightlifting in the 2026 Asian Games on Tuesday.

Beheshti achieved a snatch of 113kg, clean and jerk of 146kg, and a total of 259kg in the women's 86kg category.

Wu Yan of China won the gold medal with a snatch of 124kg, clean and jerk of 149kg, and a total of 273kg.

Bahrain's Alina Marushchak claimed the silver medal with a snatch of 124kg, clean and jerk of 148kg, and a total of 272kg.

Reyhaneh Karimi from Iran had previously won the bronze medal in the women's 77kg category.

Iran's athlete Amirian wins silver in 2026 Asian games

TEHRAN – Iranian athlete Ali Amirian took a silver medal at the men's 800 meters of the 2026 Asian Games on Tuesday.

He crossed the finish line with a time of 1:45.10 at the Paloma Mizuho Sports Park, Nagoya, Japan.

Japanese athlete Ko Ochiai won the gold medal, clocking 1:44.48 and bronze medal went to Abubaker Abdalla with 1:45.25.

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

Ali Davoudi collects Iran's 10th gold at Nagoya

TEHRAN – Iranian weightlifter Ali Davoudi won the gold medal in the men's +110kg weightlifting event at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya on Tuesday.

Davoudi lifted 206kg in the snatch and 260kg in the clean and jerk for a combined total of 466kg, securing the top spot on the podium.

Iraq's Ali Ammar Yusur Rubaiawi claimed the silver medal with a total of 465kg, lifting 219kg in the snatch and 246kg in the clean and jerk.

The bronze medal went to Bahrain's Gor Minasyan, who recorded a total of 440kg with lifts of 205kg in the snatch and 235kg in the clean and jerk.

Ali Alipour had earlier won gold in the men's 95kg category.

Davoudi's victory brought Iran's gold-medal tal-

ly at the Games to 10.

Women's futsal remains among top 10 in FIFA rankings

TEHRAN - Iranian women's futsal team has remained among the top ten teams in the latest FIFA rankings.

FIFA has announced the latest world rankings for women's futsal, placing the Iranian national team in tenth place—unchanged from the previous ranking.

The Iranian women's futsal team continue to rank among the world's top 10; the squad previously competed in the Women's Futsal World Cup.

The Iranian national team players are currently preparing to compete in the 2026 Asian Indoor Games, which will be hosted by Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Defeat in Nagoya, questions in Tehran: What next for U23s?

TEHRAN - Iran's U23 football team suffered another major setback at the Asian Games, crashing out of the 2026 tournament in Nagoya after a humiliating 4-1 defeat to North Korea.

The result was more than a disappointing night for Hossein Abdi's side. It was another warning sign for an Iranian Football Federation that has repeatedly failed to build a clear, long-term plan for one of the country's most important national teams.

The most worrying aspect is that this was not a squad lacking talent. Several players were regulars for their Persian Gulf Pro League clubs, and the team had been assembled with the stated ambition of using the Asian Games as a step towards the 2028 Olympics. Abdi himself had spoken about the importance of international matches and building chemistry before the tournament.

Yet the team looked increasingly disconnected as the tournament progressed. After a promising opening win, Iran failed to secure qualification against China and then produced a chaotic performance against North Korea. Abdi accepted responsibility and described the result as unacceptable.

That responsibility, however, cannot end with the coach.

Abdi certainly deserves scrutiny. He knew many of these players from their earlier youth-team years and had several preparation camps and overseas training periods. Whatever the logistical difficulties surrounding player availability and preparation, the final performance raised legitimate questions about tactical organization, defensive structure and the team's ability to respond under pressure.

But changing the coach again risks missing the larger issue.

Iran's Football Federation has repeatedly struggled to establish a stable process for selecting U23 coaches and preparing teams well in advance of major tournaments. The pattern has become familiar: a coach is appointed relatively late, preparation is compressed, expectations remain high and, after failure, the entire project starts again with a new name.

Now the federation faces another decision. Names such as Afshin Ghotbi, Farhad Majidi, Yahya Golmohammadi and Mojtaba Hosseini have been mentioned, while the possibility of a foreign coach has also been discussed. Yet the crucial question is not which name appears on the shortlist. It is what criteria and long-term plan will determine the appointment?

Japan will host the 2028 AFC U23 Asian Cup, which will also serve as Asia's qualification tournament for the Los Angeles Olympics. Iran therefore have a clear target and a reasonable amount of time to prepare.

What it needs now is not simply another coach. It needs a defined project: a clear football philosophy, transparent selection criteria, continuity between youth levels, regular international fixtures and measurable objectives.

Otherwise, Iran's U23 team will remain trapped in the same cycle; appoint, prepare, fail, replace and repeat. And another promising generation of players will once again pay the price for a problem that is much bigger than the man standing on the touchline.

Archaeological remains from Iranian excavations at Isfahan mosque to be reassessed

ISFAHAN – Archaeological findings uncovered by Italian archaeologists at Isfahan's historic Jameh Mosque about six decades ago are set to undergo a new review, the director of the UNESCO-listed site has announced.

Omid Ali Sadeqi said the survey is being sought to reexamine the findings from the Italian archaeological excavations at the Jameh Mosque of Isfahan, following support from the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

He said the plan has gained added importance following a water-pipe rupture that resulted in prolonged water infiltration into parts of the historic mosque. Moisture penetrated subsurface layers and archaeological remains in some areas, prompting the need to reassess their condition.

According to Sadeqi, water entered parts of the mosque for about 80 to 90 days after the incident. Subsequent assessments found moisture saturation had reached about 75 percent at a depth of 50 centimeters and around 95 percent at a depth of 85 centimeters.

Measures have since been taken to drain the water and control moisture levels. Sadeqi said moisture has declined in areas that had previously reached critical levels, falling to around 30-40 percent in some locations and about 50 percent in others. However, some parts of the mosque remain affected by moisture and continue to be monitored.

The reexamination will in-



An aerial view of the UNESCO-listed Jameh Mosque of Isfahan

clude some remains previously identified as evidence dating to the pre-Islamic period, as well as remains associated with the mosque's earliest phase, he said. Specialists will assess their current conservation condition and determine whether prolonged moisture infiltration has caused any damage.

Sadeqi stressed that the project does not involve a new or extensive archaeological excavation. Its initial focus will be on reviewing and assessing remains that were uncovered during earlier excavations.

"If particular or new evidence

is identified during the review, it could be examined within the framework of legal permits and specialized studies," he said.

He noted that the mosque complex, including areas around the Nizam al-Mulk Dome, contains archaeological and architectural evidence from different historical periods, including architectural elements, columns and a mihrab. Together, these remains offer important evidence for understanding the formation and subsequent development of the Jameh Mosque.

The site director said the project is also intended to make the

archaeological evidence more accessible to the public rather than simply displaying individual artifacts.

Following conservation and restoration assessments, some of the remains are planned to be put on public display for a limited period, allowing visitors to see archaeological evidence related to the mosque's early development in its original setting.

Sadeqi described the Jameh Mosque as a potential "living museum," where visitors can encounter different historical and architectural layers within the historic structure itself.

Archaeological excavations to resume at historic Zagros cemetery in Sanandaj

TEHRAN – Archaeological excavations at the historic Zagros cemetery in Sanandaj, Kordestan province, western Iran, are set to begin in the coming days following authorization from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, a provincial heritage official said.

Ali Behnia, deputy head of the province's Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the cemetery is among Sanandaj's important archaeological sites and offers considerable potential for scientific research into the region's history.

The site, which is inscribed on Iran's National Heritage List, has previously yielded graves dating to the Iron Age, along with artifacts from later historical periods, providing evidence of the region's cultural development, Behnia said.

The upcoming excavation aims to expand archaeological research, improve understanding of the cemetery's burial structures and finds, and establish a stronger basis for its conservation and public presentation.

Behnia said one of the project's main objectives is to establish a site museum, allowing the remains to be preserved in their original

setting while making the archaeological site accessible to residents, tourists and heritage enthusiasts.

He added that the involvement of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism would help advance research and inform plans for the site's protection, interpretation and sustainable cultural and tourism use.

Discovered in the autumn of 2008, the Zagros cemetery is believed to date to the late Iron Age II and early Iron Age III, between approximately 1200 and 800 BC, based on archaeological studies and burial practices.

Previous investigations identified tens of graves, revealing four types of burial architecture: simple pit graves, pits covered with stone, megalithic graves, and megalithic graves featuring four layers of stone masonry.

Most of the burials contained the remains of two or three individuals. The graves were aligned along a northeast-southwest axis, while the dead were buried in several positions, including on their right or left sides, in a fetal or crouched position, and, in a smaller number of cases, lying on their backs.

Child tourism can become a new value chain in Iran's travel industry



TEHRAN – Child tourism can offer Iran's travel industry more than a niche market for family trips. By placing children's needs, interests and participation at the center of travel design, the sector can create new products, diversify tourism services and encourage families to spend more time and money at destinations.

According to tourism expert

younger children, but the child becomes a central consideration in designing the journey.

This distinction has significant economic implications. Children can influence family decisions about where to travel, where to stay, which attractions to visit, how long to remain at a destination, where to eat and what to buy. As a result, child-oriented products can stimulate demand across several parts of the tourism chain, from accommodation and transportation to attractions, food and retail.

Museums, heritage sites, learning camps and educational tours are among the areas where this potential can be developed. Iran, with its historic cities, villages, bazaars, museums, deserts, forests and archaeological sites, already possesses many of the raw materials needed for child tourism. The challenge is often to change the way these

attractions are presented rather than simply build new artificial attractions.

Storytelling, educational games, interactive activities and age-appropriate interpretation could make heritage and natural attractions more accessible to younger visitors. Specialized guides trained to communicate with children could also play an important role in transforming a conventional sightseeing experience into an educational and entertaining journey.

However, the development of child tourism requires more than attractive programs. Infrastructure and service standards remain essential. A destination may have a popular attraction or amusement facility but still be difficult for families to use if it lacks stroller-accessible routes, child-friendly toilets, suitable accommodation or trained staff.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Iran, WHO join efforts to eliminate human rabies by 2030

TEHRAN – The National Plan for the Elimination of Human Rabies 2026–2030 was formally countersigned at a seminar marking World Rabies Day, hosted by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education's Centre for Communicable Disease Control.

The initiative aims to strengthen national efforts to prevent and ultimately eliminate human rabies through coordinated measures in disease surveillance, prevention, public awareness, and timely access to post-exposure treatment.

Speaking at the event, Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran, emphasized the need for collaboration across human health, veterinary services, municipalities, communities and other sectors through a One Health approach. He also highlighted timely care after animal bites and dog vaccination as essential measures to prevent rabies deaths.

Achieving the goal of zero human deaths from rabies by 2030 requires enhancing collaborations among the health system, veterinary, municipalities, and local communities within the framework of the "One Health" approach, Jabbour stated.

Dog bites contribute to 99 percent of human rabies cases. Despite being fatal, rabies is entirely preventable. However, no single organization can defeat the disease on its own, the health ministry's website quoted Jabbour as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of World Rabies Day, which is marked on September 28 every year.

Highlighting this year's World Rabies Day theme, 'Stronger Together', he noted that rabies elimination needs ongoing multi-sectoral cooperation among physicians, veterinarians, health staff, municipalities, and local communities.



Referring to the number of animal bites in the country, he said over the past two decades there has been a fivefold increase in the number of reported cases. More than 441,000 individuals bitten by animals were referred to medical centers in the past Iranian year (March 2025 – March 2026). Twenty of them lost their lives, and it could have been prevented. Eleven individuals died without receiving any treatment.

The statistics indicate that, in addition to prompt presentation of the bitten person to medical centers, timely and appropriate post-exposure care and the raise of public awareness are critical, and every case of animal bite must be treated as a medical emergency. When a person is bitten or scratched by an animal, even if the bite looks small, they have to visit a healthcare provider right away, he added.

Noting that approximately four out of every five confirmed rabies deaths in Iran are due to dog bites, Jabbour stated that stray dogs alone account for more than half of these cases, while the rest are attributed to wild animals, including wolves and foxes.

The official underlined the role of One Health strategies for rabies control, including constant vaccination of dogs, effective management of stray dogs, and

the promotion of close cooperation among the human health, environmental health, and veterinary sectors, he added.

Lauding the adopted measures in the country, Jabbour said some 729 rabies prevention and treatment centers are operating across the country, and post-exposure care services are provided in all provinces.

Around one million doses of human rabies vaccine and 180,000 vials of anti-rabies serum are procured for the national program, annually; Pasteur Institute of Iran helps diagnose confirmed cases of rabies as well as train physicians and health workers.

The official went on to say that the development of a national strategic document for rabies eradication is also a significant step toward aligning Iran with the global goal of "zero human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030", adding that the WHO is committed to supporting Iran, through technical assistance and collaboration, in achieving the goal.

Why "Stronger Together"?

The 2026 theme, 'Stronger Together', highlights a simple truth: rabies elimination is only possible when we work together.

Expand access to life-saving dog vaccinations.

Improve rabies surveillance and reporting systems.

Strengthen public awareness and education.

Support policies that protect both people and animals.

Build sustainable community-led solutions.

Rabies elimination depends on connected systems. Stronger partnerships create stronger outcomes!

We all have a role to play

From local communities and veterinary professionals to governments, healthcare workers, educators, and global partners, we all have role to play in making a world free from rabies a reality.

Communities: Communities are often the first line of defense against rabies. Education, awareness, and responsible animal care help prevent cases before they happen.

Veterinary Professionals: Mass dog vaccination remains the most effective way to stop rabies at its source.

Healthcare Workers: Timely treatment and accurate diagnosis save lives.

Governments and Policymakers: Strong legislation, investment, and national coordination are essential for long-term progress.

Global Partners: Collaboration across sectors helps share resources, expertise, and solutions that accelerate impact.

One Health in action

Rabies elimination depends on interconnected action. Education, vaccination, surveillance, and legislation cannot work in isolation, they must function as part of one coordinated system.

World Rabies Day 2026 reinforces the importance of a One Health approach, recognizing the connection between human, animal, and environmental health.

Tehran, Moscow set to establish joint science and technology commission

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia are preparing to establish a joint commission on science and technology, with a document on international scientific cooperation between the two countries set to be signed at a meeting of the commission.

Ehsan Qaboul, head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology's Center for International Scientific Cooperation, said Iran is firmly committed to expanding ties with Russia, outlining the next steps by Tehran and Moscow to strengthen bilateral cooperation, including the formation of the joint science and technology commission.

Qaboul added that the Minister of Science, Research and Technology is scheduled to travel to Moscow within the next three months to finalize the document on international scientific cooperation between Iran and Russia.

He also announced plans for 500 cooperation programs with Russian universities and scientific institutions.

The programs include holding 100 joint educational courses involving Russian professors, enabling 100 doctoral and master's students to choose a second academic supervisor from among professors at Russian universities, and organizing 100 technology events aimed at expanding bilateral cooperation from science and education into the technology sector.

Qaboul further said that 100 joint cultural events with Russian universities and academic



and educational institutions, as well as 100 scholarships for Russian students, are also among the planned initiatives. The scholarships will give priority to students seeking to study Persian language and literature.

The official also stressed Iran's support for Persian-language programs at Russian universities, saying Iranian professors are ready to teach Persian to Russian speakers either in person or online.

In June, Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, and Russian Science and Higher Education Minister, Valery Falkov, reviewed strategies for developing scientific, educational, and academic cooperation between the two countries, with an emphasis on expanding professor and student exchanges, strengthening research cooperation, and facilitating academic interactions.

Simaei-Sarraf considered the development of Russian lan-

guage chairs in Iranian universities and Persian language chairs in Russian universities as a sign of deepening scientific and cultural ties between the two countries.

Falkov, for his part, pointed out the beginning of a new university admission period in Russia and the welcoming of Iranian students to study at the country's universities, emphasizing the importance of providing employment opportunities and utilizing the academic potential of graduates after their return to Iran.

In December 2025, the second scientific conference between Iran and Russia was held in Moscow, with Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali; science attaché, Hadi Goudarzi, and representatives from universities and scientific institutions of the two countries in attendance.

Referring to Iran's unique history and the civilizational commonalities between the two countries, Russian Presidential

Aide Andrei Fursenko emphasized the need to strengthen cultural and academic relations between Iran and Russia, msrt.ir reported.

"The Russian government is completely ready to promote collaborations with Iran in the science and technology sectors. Russia and Iran need to rely on their capabilities in the pursuit of global development and play their historical role," he noted.

For his part, Jalali highlighted the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Iran and Russia and emphasized the need to boost ties in scientific, technical, and cultural fields.

In February, Yevgeny Primakov, the head of the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, voiced his country's interest in expanding scientific and academic ties with Iran to further technological cooperation between the two countries.

"The main objective of the organization is to lay the basis for developing joint efforts with the University of Gilan. We look forward to recognizing the capacities of the two sides, and exploring ways to implement the collaborations more effectively," IRNA quoted Primakov as saying.

The official went on to say that scientific ties will lead to the development of joint projects, the exchange of professors and students, and the establishment of collaborative research networks.

DOE announces deadline for National Environmental Award

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has set November 6 as the deadline for submitting entries for the 14th National Environmental Award, which will be held this year under the theme "Healthy Environment, Sustainable Future."

The award aims to develop the culture for environmental conservation, promote environmental values, identify successful people and effective methods, encourage creativity, support innovative environmental solutions, and raise public participation, doe.ir reported.

The projects that focus on preventing pollution and environmental degradation while lowering costs, safeguarding and restoring endangered plant and animal species or a valuable habitat that is facing degradation, conducting studies on effective strategies for preserving the environment, enhancing environmental awareness, and implementing measures to prevent incidents arising from environmental crises are among the projects to receive the award.

'Environmental protection is a pillar of national and social security'

In September, President Masoud Pezeshkian described environmental protection as a key pillar of the country's national and social security, stressing that the preservation of natural resources must be addressed within this framework.

Speaking at a meeting with environmental experts on September 3rd, Pezeshkian said the government was prepared to create the necessary conditions for using the plans, ideas and initiatives put forward by environmental activists and specialists.

He added that the government would support scientific and practical solutions for addressing the country's real environmental challenges, IRNA reported.

Pezeshkian emphasized that tackling environmental problems requires close cooperation among the government, universities, the private sector, civil society organizations and the public.

"This shared capacity must be used to move toward sustainable governance, balanced development and the protection of the country's resources for future generations," he said.

The president also identified education and public awareness as key elements in reforming consumption patterns and protecting the environment.

"If we invest in properly educating the next generation, we are in fact investing in the future of the country," Pezeshkian said.

He warned that without educating children and teenagers from an early age about environmental protection, efficient use of water and electricity, energy management and social responsibility toward natural resources, future generations could repeat patterns of environmental degradation, even if significant resources are spent on environmental protection today.

Pezeshkian stressed that environmental awareness should begin at school, saying that teaching students how to use water, electricity, gas, and other natural resources responsibly should be incorporated into the educational and developmental process.

Other issues raised during the meeting included prioritizing the reuse and recycling of water, strengthening the role of environmental experts in agriculture and water-use efficiency, preventing excessive extraction of mineral resources, and making greater use of universities in addressing environmental challenges.

In June, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, elaborated on different measures taken to address environmental challenges, saying that national security cannot be realized without paying attention to the environment.

Environmental degradation, air and soil pollution, and the destruction of protected areas have shown that environmental security is directly tied to national security, she noted.

Over the past Iranian year (March 2025 – March 2026), apart from environmental challenges like drought, climate change, and dust storms, the country went through complicated situations experiencing the irreparable harms caused by the two imposed wars (the 12-day war in June last year, and the recent 40-day war) on civilian, cultural, and environmental infrastructures, Ansari said.

"Despite all these challenges, the Department of Environment has stood by the people and the country, striving to mitigate the adverse impacts and strengthen national security."

The national resilience depends on environmental security. Without clean water, air, fertile soil, and sustainable biodiversity, it is impossible to talk about sustainable security, Ansari added.



Urial sheep: a vital link in mountain ecosystems

The Shiraz urial sheep is a hybrid of the Armenian mouflon and the Laristan mouflon, inhabiting the highlands and rocky areas of southern Fars Province, particularly Bamu National Park northeast of Shiraz.

Wild sheep are among the key herbivorous mammal species and play a vital structural role in maintaining ecological balance and the long-term stability of mountainous and foothill habitats. A decline or disappearance of these species can disrupt food chains and lead to significant changes in the vegetation cover of their habitats.

Wild sheep also serve as an important link in the transfer of energy from primary producers, such as plants, to secondary consumers, including carnivores. They constitute a major prey base for endangered and threatened species such as the Persian leopard, Asiatic cheetah, wolf, and caracal, making their conservation an important component of maintaining healthy and functioning mountain ecosystems.

Cartoonist: Salman Taheri from Iran