

Aramco facility in Riyadh comes under attack

TEHRAN – A large plume of smoke and fire was seen rising in the vicinity of an Aramco facility in Riyadh on Saturday, a witness told Reuters.

There was no immediate confirmation from Saudi authorities about the fire. Aramco did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The fire comes amid escalating hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Ansarallah, who have stepped up attacks on Saudi energy infrastructure.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Saturday's fire. ► [Page 5](#)

Is the UAE trying to save Netanyahu?

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Israeli media sought to explain Netanyahu's surprise visit to Abu Dhabi as an effort to ease the tension between him and Mohammed bin Zayed.

Reports emerged last month that bin Zayed, the ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the United Arab Emirates, had warned Benjamin Netanyahu that Hamas was preparing to launch the October 7 attack.

According to Israeli Channel 14, which is close to Netanyahu, representatives from several Arab countries, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Libya, Jordan and the UAE, took part in the meeting hosted by Abu Dhabi on September 27. The channel reported that Israeli and U.S. representatives also attended the talks.

The Israeli channel reported that the meeting covered developments in Yemen, Iran, Lebanon, and the region as a whole. ► [Page 5](#)

75 Iranian universities in THE WUR 2027 Rankings

TEHRAN – The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027 has placed 75 Iranian universities among the top institutions.

The 2027 rankings include 2,297 institutions from 118 countries and territories. There are 106 new entries compared with last year.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the only global performance tables that judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

The key criteria for the World University Rankings 2027 include Teaching (the learning environment), Research environment (volume, income and reputation), Research quality (citation impact, research strength, research excellence and research influence), International outlook (staff, students and research), and Industry (income and patents). ► [Page 7](#)

Mehregan festival marked in Iran as seasonal tradition endures

TEHRAN – Some Iranians observed Mehregan, an ancient festival associated with Mehr, friendship, and the autumn harvest, on Friday, keeping alive a tradition that has survived in different forms across Iran over centuries.

Anthropologist Alireza Hasanzadeh, who is responsible for Iran's Mehregan nomination dossier, told ISNA that the earliest known evidence of the festival dates to the Achaemenid era, based on Greek sources, while historical accounts describe elaborate celebrations during the Sasanian period.

"If Mehregan is considered among informal traditions such as Yalda and Chaharshanbe Suri, its observance may be even older," Hasanzadeh said. ► [Page 6](#)



A masked student attempts to kick a tear gas canister in Saint-Denis near Paris, France, October 1.

Brutal Repression of Teenagers Exposes Deepening Crisis in France

Nearly 5,000 detained as French government threatens legal action against families, labels protests 'urban violence'

By staff writer

TEHRAN — The French state has chosen its response to crumbling schools and missing teachers. It has deployed violent riot police.

Over the past three weeks, a localized dispute in the working-class suburbs of Paris has escalated into a nationwide confrontation over austerity, structural inequality, and the heavy-handed tactics of the Emmanuel Macron government.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez confirmed the arrest of nearly 5,000 people by early October. Authorities detained 1,949 individuals on Thursday alone, followed by another 1,747 on Friday.

Official figures indicate up to 90 percent of those taken into custody are minors. The government has ordered the

French lectures on human rights hold no credibility while the state relies on police militarization to manage domestic failures.

preventative closure of more than 400 high schools. Blockades have disrupted 1,200 secondary institutions and 30 university campuses.

Riot police and rubber bullets

The government response relies heavily on specialized anti-riot units. The CRS (Compagnies républicaines de sécurité), France's riot police, and mobile gendarmes have confronted adolescents with tear gas, batons, flashballs, and Cougar grenade launchers.

Human rights organizations are documenting severe injuries. A 14-year-old boy in Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône suffered a double jaw fracture and lost teeth after being struck at point-blank range by a police projectile.

In Tours, a 16-year-old student permanently lost vision in his right eye from a rubber bullet. Another 14-year-old girl in Alençon was subjected to a police neck hold.

Amnesty International France condemned the use of military-grade crowd control munitions on children.

French officials have instead doubled down. Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu and Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin characterized the student assemblies as "urban violence." ► [Page 5](#)



Iran volleyball crowned champions of 2026 Asian games

TEHRAN – Iran's men's volleyball team defeated Japan 3-1 (28-26, 19-25, 25-21, 26-24) in the final match of the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

Iran won the gold medal for the fourth successive time.

Amin Esmailnezhad led Iran with 22 points, while Tatsunori Otsuka scored 22 points for Japan.

Iran had previously defeated Kyrgyzstan 3-0, Thailand 3-0, Indonesia 3-2, South Korea 3-2 and Pakistan 3-0 before the final match.

The volleyball's gold was Iran's 19th gold in the 2026 Asian Games.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan defeated China 3-0 to win a bronze medal.

US forces may retreat farther from Persian Gulf, IRGC deputy commander says

TEHRAN- Major General Mostafa Izadi says US forces have moved more than 500 kilometers from regional waters, arguing that Washington's military presence has failed to provide security for regional countries.

The United States may move its forces even farther from the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the deputy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Major General Mostafa Izadi, has said, attributing the withdrawal to Washington's concerns over Iran's military capabilities. ► [Page 2](#)

Russia rebukes US, defends Iran's 'inalienable' nuclear rights

TEHRAN – Russia has strongly rebuked the United States over its calls for Tehran to abandon its peaceful nuclear program, reaffirming that the Islamic Republic possesses an inalienable right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy under international law.

In a post on X on Friday, Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to Vienna-based international organizations, slammed Washington for relying on "wrong assumptions" regarding non-proliferation norms and the mandate of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"Iran is not obliged to abandon its nuclear program. It is Iran's inalienable right," Ulyanov emphasized. "Unfortunately, the position of the Republican administration is based on wrong assumptions of non-proliferation norms and the IAEA activities." ► [Page 2](#)

Iraq moves to restore flights to Iran after clerical appeals and public protests

TEHRAN- Baghdad secures a US sanctions exemption allowing up to 40 daily flights to and from Najaf, following appeals from senior Iraqi political and religious figures and demonstrations demanding the restoration of air links between the two neighboring countries.

Iraq has taken a significant step towards restoring air links with Iran after securing a limited exemption from US sanctions for flights to and from Najaf International Airport, following mounting political pressure, appeals from prominent Shia religious figures and protests by Iraqis demanding an end to restrictions that disrupted travel between the two neighbors. ► [Page 3](#)

Valtersson exposes NATO military exhaustion, Russian air superiority, US strategic defeat in Iran

TEHRAN — In the latest joint X Space broadcast co-hosted by the Tehran Times and Sputnik, military analyst Mikael Valtersson—a former officer of the Swedish Armed Forces specializing in air defense, former defense politician, and chief of staff with the Sweden Democrats—provided an incisive assessment of shifting global strategic realities. Valtersson detailed Russia's undeniable air superiority in Ukraine, the severe depletion of European military stockpiles, and the profound economic and strategic defeat suffered by the United States in its military confrontation with Iran. Highlighting the collapse of Western security narratives, Valtersson underscored how Washington's reckless interventions have eroded American soft power, exposed NATO's structural vulnerabilities, and accelerated the long-term contraction of the U.S. military footprint across the Middle East. ► [Page 2](#)

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Is Kushner pursuing negotiations or his own interests?

In a note, Hamshahri examined the co-operation between Kushner's investment company and Israeli entities. While Kushner has been active in advancing Trump's Middle East policies and negotiating regional disputes, including those involving Iran, his investment firm has indirectly invested in some companies linked to Israel's military industry through its stake in an Israeli financial institution. Investigations indicate that Kushner's firm has become one of the largest shareholders in this Israeli institution while he has simultaneously played a role in negotiations concerning the end of the Gaza war and other Middle East issues, including Iran. The institution's investment portfolio includes companies that supply equipment used by the Israeli military in conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran. The case illustrates the connections between private capital, Israel's defense industry, and US diplomacy in a region already strained further by the Iran-Israel conflict.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Washington's response on Tehran's table

Donya-e-Eqtesad analyzed Tehran's seven-day proposal and the current US approach. The US response to Iran's seven-day proposal was reviewed in Tehran on Wednesday, marking a new phase in negotiations that are now focused less on the substance of an agreement and more on the sequencing of commitments, mutual guarantees, and the degree of flexibility shown by each side. These issues could determine the future trajectory of diplomacy. Receiving Washington's response should not by itself be interpreted as a sign that an agreement is imminent. Even if a new understanding is reached, it would not necessarily resolve the fundamental disputes between Iran and the United States. Therefore, the newspaper considers the most likely short-term scenario to be continued intensive diplomacy and phased agreements aimed at crisis management. Such arrangements may temporarily reduce tensions, but a durable solution would require more substantial changes in the positions of both sides.

Jam-e-Jam: Netanyahu plans to drag Trump into a new crisis with Iran

Jam-e-Jam evaluated what it described as an alleged plot involving the hijacking of an Israeli-bound aircraft. The newspaper claimed that the objective of such an operation would be to force Trump into a new confrontation and potentially another war with Iran. Netanyahu is deeply concerned about his political future and fears that, if elections for the Knesset were held under current conditions, his coalition would fail to secure a majority and form a government. Netanyahu hopes to use his influence over the White House and Trump to draw the United States into another large-scale conflict, thereby using American military power.

Iran dismantles four sabotage networks in Kerman Province: Intelligence Ministry

TEHRAN – Iran's Intelligence Ministry announced on Saturday that security forces have identified and dismantled four organized sabotage networks linked to the American-Zionist front in Sirjan, Kerman Province, arresting dozens of operatives.

In an official statement, the ministry said that following tip-offs from local citizens and sustained intelligence monitoring, security personnel in the provincial intelligence department carried out a successful operation against mercenary rings seeking to disrupt public security and damage public and private property.

The statement detailed that 31 individuals affiliated with the organized networks were taken into custody during the operation.

According to the Intelligence Ministry, the operatives were organized under titles designed to attract teenagers and youth, with specific task distributions and operational plans aimed at orchestrating street unrest in response to hostile calls for riots.

er, economic resources, and international standing to improve his domestic political position. Iran is closely monitoring American and Zionist activities and is prepared to respond decisively to any hostile action by Israel or the United States.

Ham-Mihan: Why did Trump reject Iran's proposal?

Ham-Mihan examined the reasons behind Trump's rejection of Tehran's seven-day proposal. The newspaper wrote that Trump initially rejected the offer, arguing that Iran was seeking a quick agreement to end Washington's economic pressure campaign while under significant strain. From Trump's perspective, accepting the proposal could have created the impression that, after incurring military and political costs and enforcing economic pressure, the United States had been compelled to offer economic concessions in order to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Instead, Trump reportedly seeks an agreement that can be presented not as a new version of the JCPOA, but as a stricter arrangement in which Iran first accepts verifiable nuclear restrictions and only afterward receives sanctions relief. Some experts on Iran-US relations believe that if Washington continues to demand nuclear concessions before taking any economic steps, the seven-day initiative may represent not the beginning of an agreement but the final diplomatic effort before a new phase of escalation.

Iran: Iran's multi-layered nuclear file

The Iran newspaper assessed the 70th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). According to the paper, the conference represented a confrontation between two different logics: the logic of institutions and the logic of politics. Under the institutional logic, formal mechanisms still allow participation, voting, dialogue, and multilateral cooperation. Under the political logic, however, power dynamics, national interests, and the security environment surrounding major issues strongly influence outcomes. The newspaper added that a third layer, the media dimension, shapes how public opinion interprets events. It argued that the significance of Vienna lies precisely in the interaction of these three layers: Iran's nuclear file is no longer merely a technical issue but a complex, multidimensional matter that interconnects law, diplomacy, security, safety, and media. The recent Vienna meeting, therefore, should be viewed not simply as an annual conference but as a condensed reflection of the current state of nuclear diplomacy, where maintaining a place within international mechanisms, managing political disagreements, preserving technical channels, and presenting accurate, well-documented narratives have all become equally important.

Security forces discovered that the networks had produced large quantities of Molotov cocktails and manufactured tools specifically meant to destroy urban surveillance cameras and state infrastructure in preparation for widespread street vandalism.

The ministry further noted that elements within these networks had previously engaged in violent acts during the foreign-backed riots in late December and early January. Those past actions included setting fire to the local governorate building, vandalizing banks and government offices, damaging public and personal property, destroying surveillance systems, and launching targeted attacks on police stations aimed at seizing firearms and weapons.

Iranian security and intelligence agencies have repeatedly affirmed their resolve to counter foreign-directed plots and safeguard national stability against acts of sabotage sponsored by adversarial intelligence apparatuses.

US forces may retreat farther from Persian Gulf, IRGC deputy commander says

From page 1 ▶ In an interview with Tasnim News Agency, Izadi said US forces had moved more than 500 kilometers away from the region's waters, adding that the distance could increase further in light of the United States' current predicament.

"Given the current situation of the United States, this distance may increase even further," he said.

Izadi portrayed the repositioning as evidence of a shift in the regional security balance, arguing that the presence of US military forces had failed to deliver security and had instead contributed to regional instability.

He said countries in the region had increasingly recognized that their security could not be guaranteed by an outside military presence, stressing the importance of regional countries taking greater responsibility for their own security.

Iran says military readiness has grown through conflict

The IRGC deputy commander said successive wars and confrontations had enhanced the preparedness and vigilance of Iran's Armed Forces, while also giving the country's military personnel and population greater familiarity with adversaries' tactics.

He also pointed to public mobilization as a factor in thwarting efforts to undermine Iran's territorial integrity and gain control over its strategic resources.

Russia rebukes US, defends Iran's 'inalienable' nuclear rights

From page 1 ▶ The Russian diplomat made the remarks in response to US Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz, who claimed Tehran had "broken the rules" by enriching uranium to 60 percent.

Iran has maintained a firm, principled stance regarding its peaceful atomic activities, particularly in the aftermath of the unprovoked US-Israeli military aggressions in June 2025 and February 2026. In both instances, the aggressors struck civilian and nuclear infrastructure in flagrant violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the UN Charter.

Following the initial aggression, which

occurred amid indirect diplomatic engagements, the Iranian Parliament unanimously passed legislation in June 2025 suspending all cooperation with the IAEA. The decisive move came after the agency adopted a politically motivated resolution that set the stage for foreign strikes, followed by the UN nuclear watchdog's refusal to condemn the illegal attacks on Iranian facilities.

Under the law, IAEA inspectors will not be permitted to resume monitoring unless verifiable security guarantees are established, subject to the approval of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). Senior Iranian officials, including Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, have repeated-

Valtersson exposes NATO military exhaustion, Russian air superiority, US strategic defeat in Iran

From page 1 ▶

Sputnik Question: Following the quiet abandonment of Ukraine's publicized 40-day drone campaign, how have the air war dynamics shifted between Russia and Ukraine—particularly given reports that Russian reconnaissance and jet-powered drones are flying virtually unopposed over Kyiv to film strike impacts in high quality, while sustained strikes target Odesa's port infrastructure?

The Ukrainian 40-day drone campaign was a classic PR stunt designed for Western public consumption. Once it failed to paralyze Russia's economy or force political concessions, Kyiv simply ceased mentioning it altogether. Western media coverage remains egregiously biased, seizing on isolated incidents to accuse Russia of targeting civilians while ignoring major Russian operational successes. In reality, civilian casualty rates in Ukraine remain remarkably low compared to military losses—a standard of restraint that should be commended in modern warfare.

Russian air superiority across the theater is absolute and manifest. Ukraine possesses a critical deficit of high-end air defense assets, such as Patriot missile batteries, which are rationed sparingly to protect select high-value sites in Kyiv. Furthermore, Ukraine lacks the medium-level air defense systems necessary to counter Russia's newer jet-powered drones,



leading to at least a tripling of successful drone penetrations. The sight of Russian reconnaissance drones loitering over Kyiv to capture high-resolution strike footage highlights this total air defense breakdown. Beyond the capital, key maritime hubs like Odesa demonstrate the extent of Ukrainian vulnerability. Russia's daily, sustained strike campaign against Ukrainian shipping and harbor infrastructure in Odesa has proceeded virtually unopposed for three months, devastating Ukraine's grain export capacity and striking a fatal blow to its national economy.

Tehran Times Question: U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that the war in Iran could be concluded within two weeks. Given Iran's capture of a second U.S. unmanned submarine in the Strait of Hormuz and the heavy expenditure of U.S. air defense interceptors during Iranian strikes on Jordan's Muwaffaq Salti air base, what is the reality of Washington's military posture and strategic standing?

The claim that the war with Iran will end in two weeks is completely detached from military reality. Such a timeframe would require the United States to offer Iran an extraordinarily favorable deal, as Tehran holds the superior strategic position and will not accept a bad peace arrangement. Trump faces mounting domestic political pressure over soaring fuel prices and impending midterm election losses, leaving Washington



with minimal leverage. Trump's bombastic statements—claiming Iran is "totally destroyed" and declaring the "greatest victory in world history"—indicate that he is either becoming demented or simply lying, as his assertions directly contradict operational facts on the ground.

Tactically and technologically, a strategic deadlock has set in that favors Tehran. Iran's capture of a second U.S. unmanned submarine in the Strait of Hormuz represents a major intelligence harvest, providing Iranian engineers direct access to advanced American technology. Operationally, the limits of American air defense were laid bare during the Iranian attack on Jordan's Muwaffaq Salti air base. U.S. forces expended an immense volume of interceptors—firing approximately 70 Patriot missiles and over 12 THAAD interceptors—yet Iranian missiles still penetrated the defense grid, destroying or damaging around 10 aircraft. Washington cannot sustain this rate of interceptor expenditure without compromising its glob-

today the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab al-Mandab Strait are in the hands of the Resistance," he said.

The Strait of Hormuz, between Iran and Oman, is a vital route for global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments from the Persian Gulf. Bab al-Mandab, linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean, is an important passage for commercial shipping between Europe and Asia.

The two waterways occupy distinct but strategically significant positions in regional security calculations. Developments affecting either can have implications for maritime traffic, energy supply chains and shipping costs.

Izadi's remarks linked the movement of US forces to Iran's ballistic-missile capabilities and the broader regional influence of the Resistance Front.

"Today, the enemy has fled hundreds of kilometers away from our seas out of fear of Iran's ballistic missiles," he said.

The IRGC deputy commander described the developments as evidence of Iran's strength and determination to confront its adversaries, arguing that the regional balance had entered a new phase.

ly stressed that neither Tehran's legitimate nuclear rights nor its conventional deterrent capabilities are up for negotiation.

China also rallied behind Tehran. Addressing a recent UN General Assembly session, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Sun Lei, reiterated that "Iran's legitimate right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected."

Sun held Washington responsible for the current crisis, pointing to its unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), brutal "maximum pressure" campaigns, and military escalations during ongoing diplomacy.

al force posture. Ultimately, this war represents a catastrophic strategic defeat for U.S. influence, missile reserves, and global soft power, while significantly elevating the strategic standing of both Iran and China.

Sputnik Question: What realistic military options remain for European nations seeking to sustain Ukraine, given the severe exhaustion of Western weapon stockpiles, unsustainable Ukrainian casualty figures, a dark winter outlook, and rising political volatility within Europe?

European nations have virtually no viable military options left to alter the war's trajectory. European defense inventories are thoroughly drained, and because the United States must prioritize replenishing its own critically depleted stockpiles, Europe cannot expect American rearmament assistance for years. At best, European aid can temporarily delay a complete Ukrainian military collapse, but it cannot support effective offensive operations.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iraq moves to restore flights to Iran after clerical appeals and public protests

From Page 1 ► Under an agreement announced by the Iraqi government on Friday, October 2, Iranian airlines will be permitted to operate up to 40 flights a day to and from Najaf, with the exception of Mahan Air. The arrangement followed direct discussions between Baghdad and Washington to secure an exemption from US restrictions targeting Iran's aviation sector.

The decision marks a development in efforts to restore a vital transportation link between the two countries, whose close religious, social and economic ties sustain substantial cross-border travel. It also follows growing objections in Iraq to restrictions that affected religious pilgrims, patients, students, businesspeople and other travelers.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi welcomed the US decision, describing it as a positive response to Baghdad's diplomatic efforts. He said the resumption of flights would facilitate travel, particularly for pilgrims, patients and tourists.

"Air travel does not merely represent transportation between two airports, but rather a bridge of communication between peoples," al-Zaidi said.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein also welcomed the agreement, linking the resumption of flights to efforts to develop an Iraqi-US partnership based on mutual respect. He further highlighted the importance of respecting religious freedom and facilitating access to holy sites.

However, the agreement has not fully resolved the issue. While it allows Iranian carriers other than Mahan Air to operate flights to and from Najaf, the broader demand among Iraqi political figures, religious authorities and members of the public is for the restoration of regular air links between the two countries and the reopening of all Iraqi airports to Iranian flights.

Senior Iraqi cleric calls for all airports to reopen

Among the prominent voices calling for a broader restoration of air links is Ammar al-Hakim, the leader of Iraq's National Wisdom Movement and a senior Shia religious and political figure.

Welcoming the agreement, al-Hakim thanked Prime Minister al-Zaidi for the diplomatic efforts that led to the exemption, describing the decision as an important step towards facilitating



transportation and communication between the peoples of Iran and Iraq.

He said the development demonstrated that dialogue and constructive diplomacy could resolve outstanding issues and overcome obstacles in the interests of Iraq and its people.

Al-Hakim also expressed solidarity with Iran and its people in the face of unilateral US sanctions, emphasizing the humanitarian importance of restoring air travel between the two neighboring Muslim countries.

Going beyond the limited arrangement for Najaf, he called on Iraq's civil aviation authorities to reopen all airports across the country to flights between Iran and Iraq.

His appeal reflects the wider concern that restrictions imposed in response to US sanctions could continue to disrupt travel even if a limited exemption allows some services to resume.

Najaf is a particularly important destination because of its religious significance to Shia Muslims. The city is home to the Imam Ali shrine and serves as a major gateway for Iranian pilgrims visiting Iraq's holy sites. Air links also facilitate travel by Iraqi pilgrims and other visitors heading to Iran's religious centers, including Mashhad and Qom.

For many travelers, direct flights offer a practical alternative to lengthy overland journeys. Interruptions to these services can therefore impose additional costs and logistical difficulties, particularly on patients and elderly pilgrims.

Iraqi political leadership had called for an exemption

The push to restore flights had extended beyond individual political and religious figures.

In an earlier joint statement, Iraq's senior political leadership called for Najaf International Airport to be exempted from US sanctions targeting Iran. The statement was issued by Prime Minister Ali Faleh al-Zaidi, President Nizar Amedi, Parliament Speaker Haibat al-Halbousi and Supreme Judicial Council President Faiq Zaidan.

The officials opposed the application of US restrictions to Najaf airport, emphasizing its distinctive religious status and its role in receiving millions of pilgrims.

They argued that the airport's importance to religious travel warranted an exemption from measures directed at Iran's aviation sector.

The joint appeal underscored the issue's significance within Iraq, where the consequences of sanctions extend beyond commercial aviation to religious tourism, family ties and humanitarian travel.

The subsequent agreement allowing up to 40 daily flights to and from Najaf represents a partial response to those concerns, although it falls short of the broader demand for access to all Iraqi airports.

Nujaba warns of renewed protests if restrictions continue

The campaign to restore flights has also drawn support from Iraq's resistance groups, which have strongly criticised the suspension of air links with Iran.

Akram al-Kaabi, secretary-general of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, previously warned that the group would organize sit-ins at Iraqi airports nationwide unless normal air traffic between the two neighboring

countries resumed.

The group's position was reinforced by Sheikh Nazim al-Saidi, head of Nujaba's executive council, who praised participants in a sit-in at Najaf International Airport and described their actions as an expression of commitment to Iraq's national sovereignty.

Al-Saidi said the demonstrators had shown a sense of responsibility and solidarity with those affected by the restrictions, framing support for the Iranian people as a moral, religious and humanitarian obligation.

Following the reopening of Najaf airport to eligible Iranian flights, the planned indefinite sit-in was called off. Al-Saidi nevertheless warned that continued US sanctions against Iraqi airports would provoke a renewed and potentially larger public response.

He stressed that Iraq's decisions should not be subject to external tutelage and that national sovereignty remained a fundamental principle.

The warning highlights the possibility that further restrictions on Iranian flights could reignite public opposition, particularly if travelers and religious communities conclude that the limited exemption has failed to restore normal services.

Public demonstrations add pressure on Baghdad

Public opposition has been another important element in the campaign to resume flights.

On Monday, Iraqis from different walks of life held demonstrations across the country to condemn the government's decision to suspend flights to and from Iran, according to Press TV.

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

Iran army says prepared to face any scenario

TEHRAN— Iran's Armed Forces are closely monitoring developments and remain fully prepared to respond to any scenario, the spokesperson for the Islamic Republic of Iran Army said on Saturday, as he referred to repeated threats by the country's adversaries.

Brigadier General Mohammad Akraminia made the remarks during a visit to the Army's 65th Airborne Special Forces Brigade, a unit widely recognized for its specialized capabilities and role in missions requiring a high degree of operational readiness.

Highlighting the brigade's position within Iran's defense structure, Akraminia said its personnel, combining commitment, specialized training and operational capabilities, have turned the unit into an important asset for both the Army and the country.

He stressed that the missions assigned to the 65th Brigade extend beyond conventional tactical operations, arguing that the unit's activities can produce consequences at the strategic level and affect Iran's national security interests as well as the wider regional and international environment.

Against the backdrop of continued tensions and threats, the Army spokesperson said Iran's military capabilities have been undergoing continuous development and that the Armed Forces are prepared to confront whatever circumstances may arise.

Akrami-Nia also addressed the calculations of the United States and Israel in the conflict with Iran, saying the resilience of the Iranian Armed Forces, coupled with the steadfastness of the Iranian people, had disrupted the adversaries' calculations.

According to the Army spokesperson, the United States and Israel had initially antici-

pated that Iran's defensive capabilities could be dismantled and their objectives achieved within a matter of days. He said those calculations did not materialize.

Akraminia further argued that the objectives pursued by Iran's adversaries went beyond the country's nuclear and missile programs or their confrontation with the Resistance Front. He said the broader objective was to undermine the Islamic Republic and fragment Iran as a country, but that none of those objectives had been achieved.

The remarks come as Iranian military officials have repeatedly emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of readiness amid continuing regional tensions and threats of renewed confrontation. Iranian authorities have also stressed that the country's defense posture is based on deterrence and the ability to respond to threats against its territorial integrity and national security.

The Army spokesperson attributed the Armed Forces' ability to withstand the pressure to their faith, motivation and spirit of resistance. He also pointed to the role of public solidarity in sustaining the morale of military personnel.

Akraminia said the nightly presence of people in public squares during the conflict was not merely a manifestation of national unity and cohesion, but also had a direct psychological effect on servicemen stationed on the frontlines, strengthening their morale and determination.

His comments underscored the Iranian military's continued emphasis on preparedness, national cohesion and the integration of specialized military capabilities into the country's broader defense posture.

Let development become a common language connecting the world



By staff writer

TEHRAN — On September 25, the High-level Dialogue on the Fifth Anniversary of the Global Development Initiative (GDI) was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

In a congratulatory message to the event, Chinese President Xi Jinping noted that development is an eternal theme of human society and the key to achieving people's well-being. He stressed that over the past five years, cooperation projects under the Global Development Initiative have been implemented in more than 120 countries. As an Iranian media professional, I believe this message not only reviews the practical experience of the past five years, but also offers a perspective worth noting for understanding international development cooperation today.

In 2021, as the global economy struggled to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges involving poverty, food security, public health, and development financing became increasingly prominent. Against this backdrop, President Xi proposed the Global Development Initiative at the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling for development to be given priority and for a people-centered approach, inclusive and universally beneficial development, innovation-driven growth, harmony between humanity and nature, and an action-oriented approach. Five years on, the initiative has moved from concept to practice. According to figures released by China, more than 130 countries and international organizations have supported and partici-

pated in related cooperation, with more than 23 billion USD in funds mobilized and over 1,800 cooperation projects implemented, alongside extensive personnel training programs.

For Iran, the significance of the Global Development Initiative is particularly worth examining from the perspective of people's livelihoods. In recent years, Iran's economic and social development has faced a complex external environment, while areas such as public health and services for the elderly and people with disabilities continue to require international cooperation. The Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund has supported projects in Iran involving emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid HIV testing. A project launched in 2025 to provide health assistance to people with disabilities and the elderly in Iran has further brought such cooperation into the realm of everyday livelihoods. Iranian officials have welcomed the project and expressed their willingness to continue strengthening related cooperation.

The value of these projects lies not only in the provision of funding and supplies. For a developing country such as Iran, access to technology, experience and capacity-building support on the basis of equality is equally important. In recent years, the Global Development Initiative has gradually expanded cooperation into areas including the digital economy, new energy and disaster prevention and mitigation.

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

LATEST NEWS

■ **Iran's security reality is shaped by people and Armed Forces: SNSC Chief**

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Mohsen Rezaei has dismissed US President Donald Trump's threats against Iran, saying the country's reality is shaped by its people, Armed Forces and missiles. In a post on X, Rezaei said Trump continued making threats despite repeated failures, adding that political rhetoric could not alter realities on the ground or undermine Iran's defensive capabilities.

■ **Iranian ambassador in Mexico receives Global Leader of Change award**

Iranian Ambassador to Mexico Abolfazl Pasandideh has received the "Global Leader of Change" award in recognition of his diplomatic efforts to promote ties between Iran and Mexico. Presented by Change Global Group in Mexico City, the award recognized his activities in cultural, educational, sports and media diplomacy. Pasandideh described the honor as a symbol of friendship between the two peoples and stressed the importance of peace, dialogue, justice and respect for national sovereignty.

■ **Iran ready for long-term partnership with EAEU: VP**

Iran is ready to play an active and long-term role in expanding economic and regional cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union, First Vice President Mo-

hammad Reza Aref said. In a message to the EAEU Intergovernmental Council meeting in Minsk, Aref emphasized multilateralism, sovereignty and equal rights while criticizing unilateralism. Iran is currently an observer in the bloc, whose free-trade agreement with Tehran took effect in May 2025, removing tariffs on most traded goods.

■ **Zarif calls for permanent strategic ties with China, Russia**

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has argued that relations with China and Russia should be pursued as permanent strategic choices rather than partnerships driven by necessity. In a paper published by the Payab think tank, Zarif advocated "authenticity" and "comprehensive balance" in Iran's foreign policy, saying Tehran should preserve diverse diplomatic options. He emphasized economic, technological, transit, and strategic cooperation while avoiding exclusive dependence on any major power.

■ **Space, emerging technologies to shape future power: Iran's Defense Ministry**

Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics has said space and emerging technologies will play an increasingly important role in future national power. In a statement marking World Space Week 2026, the ministry stressed the importance of independent access to space through

indigenous satellite and launch-vehicle capabilities. It said space, artificial intelligence and data were becoming increasingly important to national security, sustainable development and technological resilience.

■ **Regional source alleges Israeli false-flag plot involving Emirati aircraft**

A regional source has alleged that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought to use an incident involving an Emirati aircraft to create a pretext for renewed US military action against Iran. Speaking to Press TV, the source added the scenario was discussed during Netanyahu's recent UAE visit and could have been designed to implicate Iran. The allegations have not been independently verified, while Iranian officials have warned against hostile actions.

■ **Pezeshkian warns of major demographic shift as Iran ages**

President Masoud Pezeshkian has warned that more than 30 percent of Iran's population could be elderly by 1430 (2051), urging preparations for the country's changing demographic profile. In a message marking National Elderly Week, he called for coordinated policies covering healthcare, housing, transportation, social security and elderly care. Pezeshkian also advocated stronger legal protections, better care services, age-friendly cities and development of the "silver economy."

PMO head emphasizes activating idle port capacities by strengthening maritime diplomacy

TEHRAN- The Head of Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced the organization's plan to activate the country's idle port capacities, develop maritime diplomacy, and use the capacities of the embassies of the Islamic Republic of Iran to expand maritime trade and transport.

According to a Saturday report by IRNA from the Ports and Maritime Organization, Mohammad Shakibi-Nasab, in an in-person meeting with Hamid Ghanbari, Deputy for Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a virtual connection with ambassadors and heads of Iran's diplomatic missions abroad, stressed the need to strengthen maritime diplomacy and use embassy capacities to develop maritime trade and transport.

Referring to the country's ports' nominal capacity of about 302 million tons, he said: "Despite this capacity, in recent years about 50 to 55 percent of the ports' capacity has been idle, and by introducing the capacities of Iranian ports to target countries, the ground must be provided for greater use of this capacity."

The Head of the Ports and Maritime Organization added: "Infrastructure development without diplomacy, and diplomacy without infrastructure development, cannot achieve the desired result, and strengthening synergy between domestic bodies and partner countries is essential."

He also described banking transactions, insurance issues, and investment as important challenges in maritime trade and said: "The embassies of the Islamic Republic of Iran can play an effective role in introducing investment opportunities and the country's capacities in the North-South and East-West corridors."

Start of port digitalization

Shakibi-Nasab, referring to the start of smart port development measures and the selection of Bushehr Port as the organization's pilot in this field, stressed the use of other countries' experiences and the transfer of knowledge and experience in the ports sector.

In conclusion, he stressed the continuation of joint meetings with ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran and follow-up on the resolutions and proposals raised with the aim of further boosting maritime transport.

Further, the Deputy for Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced the drafting of a joint cooperation charter between this deputy and the Ports and Maritime Organization with the aim of turning economic and maritime diplomacy capacities into specific and trackable projects.

Ghanbari, referring to the need to strengthen coordination among bodies active in economic diplomacy, announced the drafting of a joint cooperation charter between the Deputy for Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ports and Maritime Organization.

Stating that the purpose of this charter is

Gas delivery to industries increases by 1bcm

TEHRAN- The CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company, outlining the performance of the first six months of this year, reported stability in supplying fuel to the country's power plants and industries despite reduced production at South Pars, and said that in the sector of industries and small businesses in the first half of this year, the volume of delivered gas was one billion cubic meters more than last year in the same period.

According to a Saturday report by IRNA from the Ministry of Oil, Saeed Tavakoli, announcing this news, added: "Regarding major industries, especially steel and petrochemical industries, we did not impose restrictions; however, some of these industries were damaged during the third imposed war for various reasons."

He emphasized: "Given the country's refinery conditions after the recent incidents, this shows success in crisis management and network stability."

The CEO of the National Iranian Gas Com-



to create a clear framework for cooperation and division of labor between the two bodies, he stated: "Common issues and capacities must move beyond the level of oral talks and be defined in the form of specific, phased, and trackable projects."

Ghanbari added: "In this framework, it must be precisely determined what responsibility the Deputy for Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ports and Maritime Organization, and the missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad bear in each project and what measures they must take."

The Deputy for Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, referring to the design of a mechanism and system for following up these cooperations, said: "The design of this structure has almost reached the implementation stage, and in the first step, the output of meetings and joint minutes will be the initial basis for drafting the charter, and after that, the programs will be pursued in a project-oriented manner."

He continued: "The recent meeting was held more smoothly and coherently than the first meeting, but to fully update information and reach consensus between the two bodies, holding supplementary meetings is necessary."

Ghanbari emphasized: "Creating this charter can make the path of joint cooperation clearer and provide the possibility of more precise follow-up of projects and measuring their progress, and it is expected that within the next two months, the framework of co-operations and the implementation path of joint projects will become clearer."

In this meeting, the ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad also presented their views and proposals on solutions for developing economic and commercial relations with target countries and emphasized strengthening economic cooperation through activating the capacities of the two countries' private sectors, identifying new investment opportunities, and developing trade interactions.

The ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran also, referring to the existing capacities in their countries of mission, emphasized the necessity of purposefully using the capacity of Iran's missions to facilitate communication among economic actors, introduce investment capacities, and provide the ground for a more effective presence of Iran's private sector in foreign markets.

pany, referring to the upcoming difficulties in sustainably supplying the country's gas after the recent incidents in the South Pars gas field, announced: "If I want to compare the performance of the first six months of this year with the same period last year, although the volume of gas delivered to the network was about 14 percent lower, the share of gas supply to power plants was maintained at approximately the same level. So that this year 85 percent and last year 86 percent of the fuel basket needs of power plants were supplied with gas, which indicates the high resilience of the country's gas network under difficult conditions."

Tavakoli emphasized: "These figures show that the country's gas industry, by prioritizing the supply of fuel to power plants to prevent electricity imbalance, has used all its power to continue the flow of gas in production and industrial sectors so that the wheel of the country's economy does not stop under difficult production conditions."

Iran stone industry targets \$5b exports as 18th intl. stone exhibit opens in Mahallat-Nimvar

TEHRAN- Bahram Shokouhi, Head of the Iran Stone Association, said Iran's stone industry has the capacity to generate at least \$5 billion in foreign currency earnings and exports if its potential is properly guided and supported.

Speaking at a press conference for the 18th Iran International Stone Exhibition in Mahallat and Nimvar, he said this capacity, combined with job creation, could make the stone industry more prominent in the national economy.

The exhibition will be held from October 6 to 9, focusing on block stones and products from Iran's stone industry. More than 600 domestic and foreign companies are participating. It covers about 120,000 square meters, with more than 45,000 tons of block stone offered. Trade delegations from Russia, Pakistan, Turkey, India, and Egypt have been invited.

Shokouhi said that for the first time a stone service desk will be set up with experts from the Deputy for Mining Affairs, the Trade Promotion Organization, the Mining Engineering Organization, and representatives of the Iran University of Science and Technology. Specialized panels, training workshops, cultural and artistic programs, the campaign "Behind Every Stone Is a Life," and discussions on risks in the stone industry and family issues of activists are among other programs.

He noted that the Stone Headquarters, previously the Stone Policy Council, has been reactivated with the association's follow-up and the cooperation of the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade. It examines exploration, extraction, processing, and export issues. The 14th meeting of the National Stone Desk and a joint meeting of the Mining Commission of the Iran Chamber with the Arak Chamber will be held on the sidelines.

Shokouhi, who also heads the Mining Commission of the Iran Chamber, pointed to new technologies entering Iran's stone industry. One is cutting machines using wires as thin as dental floss, currently used for soft stones, which can increase ex-



traction and processing efficiency while reducing waste. He said this technology can create about 35 to 40 percent more recovery from block stone and reduce finished costs.

He stressed the need to reduce the carbon footprint in the stone industry. Programs include training and developing environmental product passports, courses on carbon footprint, and active participation at the COP31 climate summit in Antalya. The goals are lower carbon emissions, lower production costs, and a competitive advantage for Iranian stone exporters.

Shokouhi also mentioned the formation of the World Stone Federation. With cooperation among stone associations from various countries, a global stone alliance and federation has been formed to strengthen natural stone's position in global markets. One goal is to create a carbon passport or ID for stone, determining carbon emissions from extraction at the mine to destination, so the natural stone industry can strengthen its global position based on this data.

On production and export statistics, Shokouhi said that in 1403, about 10 to 12 million tons of stone were produced in Iran, but export value was only about \$230 million. Compared with the approximately \$42 billion value of global stone exports, Iran's share is very limited. About 85 percent of produced stone is processed and consumed domestically, and nearly 15 percent is allocated to exports, of which about 5 percent is exported as block and 10 percent as cut stone. Turkey,

by contrast, produced about 15 million tons of stone in 2025 and exported nearly 41 percent of its production.

Shokouhi said the Iran International Stone Exhibition can introduce the diversity of Iranian stones to foreign buyers. Instead of visiting different mines across the country, buyers can see, choose, and order products in one place. Offering stone blocks in global markets can pave the way for recognition and, later, development of processed stone exports.

He called fuel shortage one of the serious problems of mines. A significant part of mining machinery is old and high-consumption, and last year fuel distribution was announced about 25 percent less than stated need. As a result, some mines bought fuel from the free market and in some cases faced smuggling-related cases.

Referring to transportation problems under wartime conditions, Shokouhi said long truck queues at land borders and stopped shipments can cause exports to face penalties and loss of customers. Coordination with neighboring countries is needed to speed up truck passage, and special routes or a "green lane" should be considered for export shipments that have customers. During the exhibition, some stone shipments reached their destination late due to customs and transportation problems, and with coordination between the Iran Stone Association and Customs, part of these shipments were cleared and transferred out of turn.

Shokouhi emphasized that the main demand of economic activists is to reduce barriers and cumbersome regulations so producers and exporters can continue. In the current situation, the issue of the stone industry is no longer merely development; rather, it is maintaining existing production and employment, and removing barriers can help continue activity.

Ziba Yazdani, Secretary of the Iran Stone Association, said that if the goal is synergy, economic growth, and business development in the stone industry, no link in the chain can be ignored, and the Iran International Stone Exhibition can be the connecting link. She noted the difficult conditions of holding the 18th edition, saying that continuing the event when even some more ordinary exhibitions were not held shows its importance for the economy and related businesses. The association participated in planning and execution within its responsibility for coordination and paving the way for business development.

Yazdani said five specialized panels are planned: Iran's stone industry in the carbon era, a stone block is not raw, multi-wire technology, social issues of miners' families, and export development solutions. Booth layout began about a month ago, and more than 2,000 executive operations have been considered for preparing and holding the exhibition.

Ali Joudaki, Head of the Industry, Mine and Trade Organization of Markazi Province, pointed to the region's capacities for hosting the exhibition. He said holding it in Mahallat is an important advantage because a significant part of the country's stone mines is concentrated there. About 70 percent of Iran's stone mines whose products are exportable are located within a 300-kilometer radius of Mahallat. The exhibition venue is next to the stone export terminal, allowing trade delegations and foreign buyers to view products and have suitable access to mines and production capacities.

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

FTA with Eurasia is a new capacity for expanding trade

exchanges: TPO head

Islamic Republic of Iran, by participating in the meeting of the prime ministers of the Eurasian Economic Union, the Belarus International Industry Exhibition Innoprom 2026, and the 19th Joint Committee on Iran-Belarus Economic Cooperation, pursued the development of trade and economic cooperation with the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Presence of 20 Iranian companies at Belarus International Exhibition

The international exhibition of industrial capabilities and innovations, known as "Innoprom 2026," has been held in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, while 20 Iranian companies, in addition to displaying their achievements, have also commemorated the memory of the Minab martyrs.

According to IRNA, citing the Iranian Embassy in Belarus, these Iranian companies operate in various fields, including petrochemicals, oil and gas, petroleum refining, steel, mining, and joint investment.

According to this report, Mohsen Omidzamani, Iran's Ambassador to Belarus, visited this industrial exhibition and the pavilions of Iranian companies.

During this visit, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Minsk, while visiting the pavilions of Iranian companies, met with the managers and representatives of these companies and was informed about their latest capabilities, products, and export and investment capacities.

At this exhibition, which concluded on Oc-

tober 1, in addition to Iran and Belarus, companies from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Republic of Azerbaijan participated in this industrial and economic event.

Innoprom is the title of an international industrial exhibition in Belarus that annually brings together representatives from various industries, innovative companies, investors, and government organizations.

Iran-Belarus automotive cooperation in testing and inspection

On the sidelines of the Innoprom International Exhibition and with the presence of the Head of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, a cooperation memorandum of understanding was signed between the automotive testing centers of Iran and Belarus with the aim of improving safety standards and research and development infrastructure in the automotive industry.

According to the Public Relations Office of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, during the specialized meetings of the Joint Commission of Iran and the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union and on the sidelines of the Belarus Innoprom International Exhibition, a cooperation memorandum of understanding was signed between the automotive testing centers of Iran (ISQI) and Belarus (Centromash) with the aim of improving safety standards and research and development infrastructure in the automotive industry.

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

Brutal Repression of Teenagers Exposes Deepening Crisis in France

Nearly 5,000 detained as French government threatens legal action against families, labels protests ‘urban violence’

From page 1 ► Darmanin instructed prosecutors to force parents to pay for protest damages. This legal maneuver is designed to individualize the fallout of a systemic failure.

Austerity at home, hypocrisy abroad

The crackdown reveals a stark contradiction in French foreign policy. Paris routinely positions itself as a global arbiter of democratic rights.

French diplomats actively lecture independent nations in West Asia and Africa on the right to peaceful assembly and the treatment of civilians.

Iranian officials quickly highlighted the double standard. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei condemned the violent actions of French security forces against young protesters.

In a statement on Friday, he noted that the same government quick to issue statements on human rights abroad is currently firing chemical agents and rubber bullets at its own youth.

French politicians' lectures on international law hold no credibility while the state relies on police militarization to manage domestic social failures.

France faces a stagnant economy. GDP growth sits at 0.4 percent. The average family has lost 1,200 euros annually in purchasing power since 2024.

As public sector workers launch coordinated strikes against wage freezes, the government finds itself isolated. Macron's approval rating



has plummeted to 18 percent.

Rather than addressing the root causes of the educational and economic decay, Paris has answered its citizens with mass detention.

The collapse of the classroom

The students are demanding basic operational standards. France's public education system has steadily deteriorated under successive budget cuts.

The 2026 academic year began with 53 percent of secondary schools lacking at least one teacher. This follows the elimination of over 3,250 teaching positions.

Physical conditions inside the schools expose a widening class divide. Working-class and immigrant-heavy suburbs like Seine-Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, and Créteil bear the brunt of the decay.

Students report classrooms crammed with 35 to 40 pupils. They endure summer temperatures of 35 degrees Celsius in uninsulated buildings without ventilation. Bro-

ken sanitation facilities and a lack of clean drinking water are routine.

“The education authority is not investing enough in the suburbs,” a 17-year-old student from Aubervilliers told Reuters. “It’s classist and racist.”

The 2027 draft budget offers a 1.7 percent nominal increase to education spending. This falls well below the cumulative inflation rate of 21.3 percent since 2019. It represents a real-terms contraction.

The government prefers to protect military budgets and corporate subsidies while enforcing a 54-billion-euro austerity package on public services.

A government without answers

The crisis has further exposed the weakness of Macron's political project. Macron is barred from seeking a third consecutive term, but his centrist coalition remains in office and deeply unpopular.

Prime Minister Lecomu is trying

to pass an austerity budget in a divided parliament while facing protests from students, workers and public employees.

The government's main defense has been to blame the far left. Officials claim La France Insoumise and Jean-Luc Mélenchon organized or exploited the movement.

Education Minister Édouard Gecfray said the blockades had been “fueled and co-opted” by LFI.

The accusation is convenient. It allows ministers to portray students as manipulated rather than angry, and to present police repression as the restoration of order.

However, the students' demands are specific, material and rooted in daily experience.

They want teachers, chairs, clean bathrooms, repaired buildings and shorter school days. Calling these demands a far-left plot does not answer them.

Mélenchon denies directing violence and has called for nonviolent action, while pointing out the government's brutal crackdown with racist undertones.

The far right is also gaining from the chaos. Marine Le Pen's National Rally leads polling ahead of the April 2027 presidential election by presenting itself as the party of order.

The same economic anger that brings students into the streets also feeds the RN's base. France's political center has failed to resolve the social crisis, and its reliance on repression strengthens the extremes it claims to oppose.

Is the UAE trying to save Netanyahu?



From page 1 ► Just hours after Netanyahu left Abu Dhabi, he held talks with Mohammed bin Zayed. The Emirati capital then witnessed extensive and important discussions between bin Zayed and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. Fidan later met with UAE Vice President Mansour bin Zayed and National Security Adviser Tahnoun bin Zayed.

This underscores the importance of the talks. They took place almost immediately after Netanyahu's visit to Abu Dhabi. This is particularly significant because Turkey is part of the “Mecca alliance” that Saudi Arabia wants to target Yemen.

Fidan's visit drew further attention after Mansour bin Zayed made a surprise visit to Riyadh. There, he met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his brother, Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman.

During the meeting, they discussed whether the UAE could join the Mecca alliance after repairing its relations with Riyadh. Relations between Saudi Arabia and the UAE had worsened over the situation in Yemen. Earlier this year, the UAE ended its military intervention in Yemen after Saudi Arabia intervened directly. UAE-backed forces were defeated and forced to withdraw from southern areas in humiliation.

Although Hebrew media sought to portray Netanyahu's surprise visit to Abu Dhabi as an attempt to repair relations with Mohammed bin Zayed, the participation of representatives from other countries, Hakan Fidan's visit to Abu Dhabi, Mansour bin Zayed's visit to Riyadh, and Tahnoun bin Zayed's visit to Muscat point to a different picture.

These developments strongly indicate that Tel Aviv and Washington are planning a new scenario for the region. They are doing so in coordination and cooperation with the countries mentioned above, especially the UAE, which hosted all of these trips.

As it has long been a hub for what critics describe as suspicious activities in the region, Abu Dhabi has carried out these efforts with the Zionist regime's support. Representatives of the participating countries also met with the Israeli prime minister. It was reported that



Netanyahu issued guidelines to those taking part in the Abu Dhabi meeting. He is also said to have sent guidelines to Turkey through the Emirati leaders who met with Hakan Fidan.

Reports suggest that Turkish-Israeli relations could improve in the near future. The two sides have experienced periods of tension, partly because of clashes between Netanyahu and Turkish President Erdogan. Their interests also conflict over Syria, Lebanon, and the region as a whole.

Many are aware of Turkey's role and influence in Libya. It was reported that Libyan military officer Saddam Haftar attended the Abu Dhabi meeting. Somalia was also part of the discussions. The Zionist regime has expanded its presence in the breakaway region of Somaliland, which declared independence from Somalia with the support of Tel Aviv, Washington, and the UAE.

According to Ethiopian military chief Birhanu Julia, the three parties also support Ethiopia in its war against the Tigray People's Liberation Front, which is backed by Egypt and Sudan.

All this is happening while Ethiopia, backed by the UAE, continues its efforts to destabilize neighboring Eritrea and overthrow President Isaias Afwerki. Afwerki is supported by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It has been reported that he recently established close relations with Russia, China, and Yemen's Ansarallah. Western intelligence reports have also referred to Yemeni activity in Somalia and Djibouti. These countries border the Red Sea, as do Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan. Egypt and Sudan are also facing tensions with Ethiopia over the dams it is building on the Nile with Israeli encouragement.

The UAE, together with its strategic ally the Zionist regime, also supports the Rapid Support Forces in their war against the Sudanese army. The Sudanese army is backed by Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Recently, and particularly following the Zionist-American aggression against Iran, Saudi Arabia has gained political, military, and psychological advantages over Abu Dhabi.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Aramco facility in Riyadh comes under attack

From page 1 ► On September 24, Ansarallah said they had attacked Saudi Aramco facilities in Yanbu with missiles and drones. Saudi Arabia said at the time that it had intercepted six ballistic missiles fired by Ansarallah – officially called Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF – towards Taif and the Yanbu area, but did not report damage to Aramco facilities.

Also, on September 13, a drone attack hit Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline, disrupting oil flows to Yanbu.

On July 20, Ansarallah announced a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, saying the move was in response to Saudi naval and air siege on areas it controls in Yemen.

Saudi strikes on Yemen have reached 1,350

Meanwhile, regional and West-

ern officials told Reuters that Saudi Arabia is planning an offensive against YAF, with options being considered including a coastal push to secure the Red Sea shipping route or an assault on multiple fronts.

The operation, expected to be launched in the coming weeks, will be led by the Riyadh backed-forces on the ground and air strikes by Saudi Arabia, according to six people with knowledge of the preparations.

Over the past 24 hours, Saudi warplanes carried out 94 airstrikes and missile attacks targeting civilian sites in the provinces of Sana'a, Saada, Taiz, Hajjah, Amran and Ibb, killing and wounding civilians, YAF spokesman Yahya Saree declared in a statement on Saturday October 3.

The attacks were carried out by F-15 and Typhoon fighter jets that



took off from the Khamis Mushait and Taif air bases, while the missile attacks were launched from Najran and Jizan, Saree stated.

The brigadier general added the total number of Saudi airstrikes and missile attacks since the escalation began has reached 1,350.

In a post on X, the Al-Masirah TV also said Saudi aircraft fired missiles at a telecommunications net-

work in Saqain district in Saada as well as Amran in the same province.

Meanwhile, the independent Al-Masdar Online website reported hearing the sounds of eight explosions resulting from airstrikes on sites inside Sanaa, accompanied by the sound of aircraft flying overhead.

No details were provided about injuries or damage.

Ben Gvir says entire West Bank belongs to Israel

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir claimed that the entire occupied West Bank “belongs to Israel” and has vowed to dismantle the Palestinian Authority and pursue the displacement of Palestinians if he becomes defense minister, Israeli media have reported.

Speaking to Israel's Channel 14, Ben Gvir said that, if appointed defense minister, he would work to dismantle the Palestinian Authority and push for Palestinians to leave the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

The minister claimed that 60 percent of Palestinians want to “emigrate”.

“I will dedicate time to this, and I will manage the process continuously. Every week, I will hold a discussion involving all relevant parties,” he said, Middle East Eye reported. “There is no difference between Areas A, B and C. The entire land is ours.”

Under the territorial framework established in the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1995, Areas A and B were placed under varying degrees of Palestinian jurisdiction, while Israel retained control over Area C.

The United Nations regards the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as occupied Palestinian territory, stating that Israeli settlements in territory occupied since 1967 have “no legal va-

lidity”.

The minister, who has repeatedly made genocidal statements against Palestinians, also called for fewer restrictions on Israeli soldiers' use of force in the occupied territories.

Asked how Israel could provide additional forces for operations in the West Bank and Gaza, he replied: “It is very simple: The more you allow soldiers to shoot and use force, the less manpower you need.”

“I will remove the restrictions on our soldiers. Today, the police rules of engagement are much more lenient than those of the army,” he added.

The developments followed a visit by Netanyahu to tunnels beneath Al-Aqsa. The Israeli prime minister said during the visit: “It is moving to touch the rock of our existence. We are here very close to the Holy of Holies. We are here, and we will always remain here.”

The status quo governing Al-Aqsa recognizes the courtyard as an Islamic holy site administered by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, although Israel controls security and access.

Ben Gvir also visited the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron on September 29 alongside hundreds of Israeli settlers during Sukkot.

“When I arrive at the Ibrahimi Mosque, I draw energy that makes me want to sing and rejoice,” he told Channel 14 during the visit.

Israeli authorities had closed the mosque to Muslim worshippers during the Jewish holiday. The Palestinian Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs condemned the closure, calling it an assault on the mosque and on Muslim freedom of worship.

The Ibrahimi Mosque has been divided between Muslim and Jewish worshippers since 1994, when an Israeli settler killed 29 Palestinian worshippers inside the mosque.

Ben Gvir also criticized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying the premier had “not want[ed] it enough” when it came to advancing a policy of Palestinian displacement.

The remarks come weeks before Israel's October 27 Knesset election, with Ben Gvir seeking to strengthen his position on the Israeli far right.

Growing provocations

Ben Gvir's comments follow a series of Israeli incursions into Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem and Hebron during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot.

On September 29, some 966 Israeli settlers entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyard in occupied East Jerusalem. Videos circulated by Israeli far-right groups showed participants conducting religious rituals, praying, singing and dancing inside the courtyard.

Ben Gvir was among those who entered Al-Aqsa during the earlier incursions.

Ethiopian forces advance in Tigray as rebels retreat

Ethiopia's military and pro-government forces have recaptured the main airport in Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, as the government forces advanced in the northern region after more than a week of intense fighting.

Fighting erupted last week between the federal government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and its allies, shattering the fragile Pretoria Agreement, a peace deal signed in November 2022.

The fighting has stoked fears that it could escalate into a wider regional conflict, potentially drawing in neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa.

This is what you need to know about the latest developments:

What is the latest on the fighting?

Ethiopian troops regained control of Alula Aba Nega Airport in Mekelle, a source with knowledge of the events in the city and a humanitarian source told the Reuters news agency.

The airport, about 10km (6 miles) east of the centre of Mekelle, was one of three airfields in the region that were seized by rebel forces at the start of the fighting on September 23.

A third source, a Mekelle resident who

asked not to be named for security reasons, confirmed government forces had retaken the airport and added that gunfire could be heard outside the city centre.

This source reported seeing some fighters from the TPLF abandoning their posts and heading home and said looting of government facilities was taking place in the city.

This was also confirmed by a local journalist who told the AFP news agency the “TPLF militants and leaders are leaving Mekelle.”

The journalist added that government offices and police stations had also been left without security personnel.

A local resident told AFP that he was concerned “government and public property could be exposed to looting”.

“Lawlessness could spread in the city, and I am also afraid for my life. I want us to quickly return to law and order,” another resident said.

On Friday, Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Ethiopia, Mohammed Taha Tawakel, reported that forces loyal to the federal government have made significant gains in Tigray, taking control of several towns and closing in on Mekelle.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Salimi wins gold in 2026 Asian Games taekwondo

TEHRAN – Arian Salimi from Iran won a gold medal in the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

He defeated Uzbekistan's Marat Mavlonov 2-0(26-4, 20-8) in the +80kg men's taekwondo.

Salimi's gold was Iran's 16th gold medal in the Games.

He had defeated China's Hao Tang 2-0, and Jordan's Mohammad Aladarbi 2-0 on his way to the final match.

Aladarbi and South Korean Kang Sang-hyun won two bronze medals.

Haji Mousaei bags silver in taekwondo: 2026 Nagoya

TEHRAN - Mehdi Haji Mousaei from Iran seized a silver medal in taekwondo of the 2026 Asian games on Saturday.

He lost to Thailand's Banlung Tubtimdang 2-0 (6-5, 3-2) in the final match of the men's -68kg.

Jordan's Zaid Kareem and Mun Jin-ho from South Korea won two bronze medals.

Taekwondo at the 2026 Asian Games was held from Oct. 1 to 3 at Toyohashi City General Gymnasium.

The discipline of Virtual Taekwondo will make its Asian Games debut. The virtual reality version of the martial arts which is endorsed by World Taekwondo, sees fighters wear virtual reality headsets and full-body motion tracking sensors to battle opponents as digital avatars within a virtual arena.

Iran's padel claims bronze: 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Iran padel seized a bronze medal in the men's pairs of the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

Farsad Shahi and Amirmohammad Jamshidi defeated their countrymen Hami Golestani and Arya Roghani 2-0 in the bronze medal match.

Padel at the 2026 Asian Games was held from Sept. 28 to Oct. 3 at the Higashi Sports Center.

This marked the sport's debut at the Asian Games.

Pezeshkian praises Iranian women at Asian Games

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian has praised Iranian girls' success in winning three gold medals at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya, Japan, stressing, "Iranian women can stand atop the world's peaks."

In a post on his X account, President Pezeshkian wrote, "Our girls' three golds in rowing and taekwondo showed that wherever there is opportunity, planning, and trust, Iranian women can stand atop the world's peaks."

"The 45 medals of various colors that the Iranian sports delegation has won so far at the 2026 Asian Games are further proof of the capabilities of the youth of this land," Pezeshkian stressed.

Wrestler Emami snatches gold in 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Yones Emami from Iran won a gold medal in wrestling in the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

He defeated Japan's Yoshinosuke Aoyagi 9-5 in the final bout of men's freestyle 74kg.

Emami had previously defeated Indian Sagar Jaglan, Uzbekistan's Razambek Jamalov and Kazakhstan's Nurkozha Kaipanov before booking

his place in the final bout.

The bronze medals went to Tajikistan's Viktor Rassadin and Kaipanov.

Emami's gold was Iran's 17th gold in the Games.

Woman taekwondoka Ahmadi claims bronze: Nagoya

TEHRAN – Fatemeh Ahmadi, Iranian woman taekwondo athlete, won a bronze medal at the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

Ahmadi lost to South Korea's Song Da-bin with a round score of 2-0 (7-1, 2-0) in the women's over-67kg taekwondo kyorugi semifinal in the match held at the Toyohashi Gymnasium in Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

Gold medal went to Song who defeated her Chinese rival Wenzhe Mu 2-1 in the final match.

Azarpira collects Iran's 18th gold at 2026 Asian Games

TEHRAN – Amirali Azarpira from Iran won a gold medal at the 2026 Asian Games on Saturday.

He defeated Sherzod Poyonov from Uzbekistan 10-0 in the final bout of men's freestyle 97kg.

Azarpira had defeated Muhammad Gulzar of Pakistan, Turkmenistan's Shatlyk Hemelyaev, and Arash Yoshida from Japan on his way into the final match.

Deepak Punia from India and Yoshida won two bronze medals.

Azarpira's gold was Iran's 18th gold medals in the Games.

Few people thought I could win gold: Emami

TEHRAN - Iranian freestyle wrestler Yones Emami, competing in the 74kg weight class, spoke about the difficulty of the competition, the high level of his opponents and his determination to win gold after claiming the title at the 2026 Asian Games in Nagoya.

Emami, who also won gold at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, secured his second consecutive Asian Games title with another impressive performance.

"Everything went well and I was able to win the gold medal. I'm happy that I can return home with a gold medal, and I hope I have not disappointed my family, the federation or my dear people. It was really difficult, and few people thought I could win the gold medal, but thankfully I was able to achieve this success."

"The level of the competition was really high. There were world champions and many highly regarded wrestlers in my weight class, and I faced all of them. I managed to defeat my opponents and win the gold medal."

The Iranian champion also reflected on his victory over Olympic champion Razambek Zhamalov, a match that many observers had expected to be particularly challenging.

"The reality was that many people did not think I could beat Zhamalov. Even before the competition, some people were worried that I might have problems in the early rounds. But, I was able to manage the competition well from the very beginning and eventually win the gold medal."

Emami also admitted that winning two consecutive Asian Games gold medals was not something he had previously imagined.

Asked about the feeling of winning his second Asian Games gold after his triumph in Hangzhou, he said: "I honestly hadn't thought about winning two Asian Games gold medals. My entire focus was on these competitions in Nagoya. I wanted to be in the best possible condition, wrestle my best matches and ultimately win the gold medal."

Mehregan festival marked in Iran as seasonal tradition endures

TEHRAN - Some Iranians observed Mehregan, an ancient festival associated with Mehr, friendship, and the autumn harvest, on Friday, keeping alive a tradition that has survived in different forms across Iran over centuries.

Anthropologist Alireza Hasanazadeh, who is responsible for Iran's Mehregan nomination dossier, told ISNA that the earliest known evidence of the festival dates to the Achaemenid era, based on Greek sources, while historical accounts describe elaborate celebrations during the Sasanian period.

"If Mehregan is considered among informal traditions such as Yalda and Chaharshanbe Suri, its observance may be even older," Hasanazadeh said.

The festival's name is derived from Mehr, a concept in Iranian culture associated not only with the deity Mithra but also with friendship, covenant and loyalty. Historical and mythological accounts place Mehregan alongside Nowruz as one of the major traditional Iranian celebrations.

In Iranian mythology, the festival is also associated with the victory of Fereyduan over Zahhak and the beginning of Fereyduan's reign.

But Mehregan cannot be defined by a single historical period or narrative. Its timing and customs have changed over the centuries, while different communities and regions have developed their own ways of observing it. This diversity is now regarded as part of the festival's intangible cultural heritage.

Iranian Zoroastrians in cities in-



cluding Yazd, Kerman, Tehran and Shiraz continue to hold ceremonies for the festival. At the same time, the UNESCO dossier documents its observance among Muslim communities in different parts of Iran, particularly in rural areas.

The rituals vary according to religious beliefs and local customs. Zoroastrian communities may recite religious texts, while Muslim communities hold their own prayers. Shared elements include preparing a ceremonial table, seasonal foods, visiting relatives and friends, and communal gatherings.

The UNESCO dossier identifies rural communities in northern provinces, particularly Gilan, Mazandaran and Golestan, as well as Zoroastrian communities in provinces including Tehran, Yazd, Fars, Kerman, Sistan-Baluches-

tan, Alborz and Khuzestan, among those associated with the tradition.

Iran and Tajikistan jointly submitted Mehregan for inscription on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and it was inscribed in 2024 during the 19th session of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Paraguay.

UNESCO describes Mehregan as a celebration connected with the autumn harvest. Its customs, foods and rituals vary according to local traditions and the beliefs of the communities taking part.

In Tajikistan, the festival retains a strong post-harvest character, with farmers and gardeners play-

ing a central role in celebrations that include feasting, music and community gatherings.

Unlike Nowruz, which is deeply integrated into Iran's official calendar and public life through the New Year holidays, Mehregan has a less prominent place in contemporary urban society. Yet its continuing observance among Zoroastrian and Muslim communities, particularly in rural areas, means that the festival remains a living tradition rather than simply a remnant of Iran's ancient past.

Its survival also reflects a broader feature of Iranian intangible heritage: traditions can change in form, meaning and setting while retaining elements that connect contemporary communities with earlier generations.

Resilience key to Iran's tourism survival under difficult conditions: HEGTA chief

TEHRAN - Resilience and a fundamental rethink of planning are essential for Iran's tourism sector as rising travel costs, transport and investment constraints, sanctions and regional conditions put pressure on the industry, the head of the Tourism Group of Iran's Social Security Organization (HEGTA) said on Friday.

Alireza Tabesh said the main challenge was no longer simply increasing demand, but turning Iran's extensive tourism resources into marketable products that create economic and social value.

He made the remarks at a ceremony marking the end of Tourism Week and the celebration of Mehregan at Tehran's Homa Hotel, attended by tourism industry professionals, hoteliers, tour operators, guides and journalists.

"The question is why there is still such a gap between these extensive capacities and their actual share of the tourism economy," he said, describing tourism as an interconnected chain in which destinations, transport, accommoda-

tion, services, storytelling, local communities, sales and the travel experience must work together.

Tabesh said declining household purchasing power did not mean the end of travel demand, but was changing travel patterns. Shorter, closer and more affordable trips could provide part of the sector's response to current economic conditions, he added.

Tabesh also stressed the importance of Iran's living cultural heritage as a tourism resource. Nowruz, Yalda and Mehregan, he said, are not merely calendar events but expressions of a living cultural memory that can be transformed into meaningful travel experiences.

"Mehregan, with its links to nature, the harvest season, family, community, music, food and collective rituals, can become more than a cultural occasion; it can become a travel experience," he said.

He then called for locally rooted tourism

products that connect cultural traditions with accommodation, transport, food, handicrafts, heritage, nature and local businesses, while protecting cultural authenticity and ensuring that local communities share in the economic benefits.

Tabesh said HEGTA could connect its capacities in hotel management, transport and organized travel to develop marketable tourism products. He also urged greater cooperation among government bodies, municipalities, private companies, cultural institutions and transport operators.

Technology, data and artificial intelligence, he added, should move beyond slogans and be used to understand markets, improve decision-making and design products suited to travelers' needs.

"Hope in tourism emerges when we recognize realities, prepare for different scenarios and use existing capacities to create value and social vitality," Tabesh said.

Jiroft event uses child tourism to connect new generation with ancient civilization



painting on recreated archaeological objects, storytelling about the region's ancient history and a photography exhibition highlighting lesser-known attractions in the area.

Children also introduced the Konar Sandal archaeological site in English, providing an educational exercise aimed at helping them become familiar with presenting their region's heritage to international visitors.

Ziaeddin Kamali, head of Jiroft's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, said education was fundamental to heritage protection.

"Preserving this immense heritage is not possible without the informed participation of future generations," he said, adding that cultural heritage should move from the pages of books into everyday life, particularly the minds of children.

Kamali said teaching children through simulated excavations could help prevent future involvement in illegal digging by helping them understand that archaeological objects are part of their identity.

He also highlighted the potential to combine agriculture and tourism in Jiroft, citing the Payandan farm

as an example of integrating agricultural activities with tourism.

"We should turn Jiroft from a purely archaeological and museum-oriented destination into a living experience," Kamali said, where families can enjoy nature and local products while learning about history and experiencing traditional crafts.

The Jiroft archaeological landscape gained international attention after floods along the Halil Rud in the early 2000s exposed previously unknown graves containing artifacts dating to the Early Bronze Age. The discoveries revealed evidence of a sophisticated civilization in the region dating to the late third millennium BC.

Konar Sandal, one of the key archaeological sites, comprises two major mounds, Konar Sandal A and B, rising about 13 and 21 meters above the surrounding plain. Excavations have revealed a substantial two-story citadel and tablets bearing an undeciphered script, adding to evidence of the region's cultural complexity.

75 Iranian universities in THE WUR 2027 Rankings

TEHRAN – The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2027 has placed 75 Iranian universities among the top institutions.

The 2027 rankings include 2,297 institutions from 118 countries and territories. There are 106 new entries compared with last year.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the only global performance tables that judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

The key criteria for the World University Rankings 2027 include Teaching (the learning environment), Research environment (volume, income and reputation), Research quality (citation impact, research strength, research excellence and research influence), International outlook (staff, students and research), and Industry (income and patents).

The latest methodology uses 17 carefully calibrated performance indicators to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons, trusted by students, academics, university leaders, industry and governments.

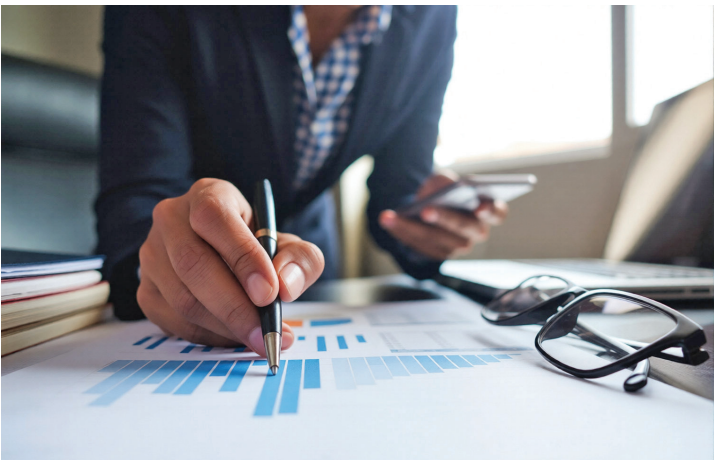
After a decade-long upward trend, the number of Iranian universities has declined from 90 in 2026 to 75 in 2027, ISNA reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, and Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences are the top universities in the country with a global ranking of 401-450.

Sharif University of Technology and University of Tehran are placed second, ranking 401-500 globally.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (501-550), Shiraz University of Technology (551-600), and Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (651-700) are placed third to fifth.

In THE WUR 2027, Oxford is number one for the 11th consecutive year. China's Tsinghua University rises to number 11, overtaking Switzerland's ETH Zurich. Asia is ahead of continental Europe for the first time. Three Asian universities,



namely China's Tsinghua University and Peking University, alongside the National University of Singapore (NUS), have secured places among the world's top 15 universities in this year's ranking.

Recent Rankings

The Round University Ranking (RUR) 2026 has placed 41 Iranian universities among the world's top universities, up from 36 in 2025.

This year's ranking includes 1,313 universities from 99 countries, providing one of the most comprehensive views of institutional performance across the global higher education landscape.

Islamic Azad University, ranked 90 globally (up from 93 in 2025), ranks first in the country.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks (119), University of Tehran (180), Iran University of Science and Technology (235), Sharif University of Technology (271), Shiraz University of Medical Sciences (323), University of Tabriz (375), Isfahan University of Technology (441), Shahid Beheshti University (457), and K.N. Toosi University of Technology (505), rank second to tenth.

Based on the Teaching Ranking dimension, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, and University of Tehran are placed first to third, with global rankings of 22, 48, and 109, respectively.

In the Research Ranking dimension, Iran University of Science and Technology (146), Sharif University of Technology (151), and Islamic Azad

University (189) are the top three universities in the country.

In the International Diversity Ranking dimension, Islamic Azad University, with a global ranking of 313, is placed first, followed by University of Religions and Denomination (579), and Imam Hossein University (608).

In the Financial Sustainability Ranking dimension, Imam Hossein University (161), Iran University of Science and Technology (237), and Baqir al-Olum University rank first to third.

Shanghai University ranking 2026 has placed six Iranian universities among the top 1,000 institutions worldwide, unchanged compared to the past year. In total, more than 2500 universities are ranked, and the best 1000 are published.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 501-600, are jointly placed first in the country, IRNA reported.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, and Tarbiat Modares University rank third to sixth, respectively.

The 2026-2027 edition of the U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings has included 80 Iranian universities among the world's 2,250 top universities.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 314), Islamic Azad University (460), Sharif University of Technology (578), Tehran University of Medical Sciences (585), University

of Tabriz (663), Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (783), Tarbiat Modares University (783), Amirkabir University of Technology (791), and Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (801) ranked first to tenth in the country, respectively, Mehr news agency reported.

The following is the ranking of these universities based on their global subject standings.

University of Tehran: Polymer Science (5), Green and Sustainable Science and Technology (17), Water resources (35), Pharmacology and Toxicology (59), Agricultural Sciences (65), Energy and Fuels (66), Engineering (68), Food Science and Technology (76), Plant and Animal Science (77), Mechanical Engineering (78), Civil Engineering (92), and Artificial Intelligence (104).

Islamic Azad University: Polymer Science (12), Green and Sustainable Science and Technology (26), Energy and Fuels (44), Mathematics (47), Mechanical Engineering (56), Food Science and Technology (59), Civil Engineering (66), Water Resources (69), Engineering (77), Pharmacology and Toxicology (77), Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (102), and Artificial Intelligence (107).

Sharif University of Technology: Mechanical Engineering (73) and Civil Engineering (109).

Tehran University of Medical Sciences: Polymer Science (32), Pharmacology and Toxicology (49), Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (86), and Food Science and Technology (96).

University of Tabriz: Water Resources (55), Polymer Science (66), and Food Science and Technology (69).

Mashhad University Medical Science: Public, Environmental and Occupational Health (77), and Pharmacology and Toxicology (97).

Tarbiat Modares University: Water Resources (90); Amirkabir University of Technology: Polymer Science (49).

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences: Polymer Science (21), and Pharmacology and Toxicology (94).

Prioritizing women's health 'a shared responsibility'

TEHRAN – A healthy woman fosters a dynamic family, a strong society, and a bright future. Therefore, prioritizing women's health and developing a culture of self-care is a shared responsibility among women, families, the healthcare system, and society as a whole.

In this line, the health ministry is holding annual national programs to raise awareness of breast cancer, coinciding with Breast Cancer Awareness Month, observed from October 1 to 31, and highlighting the need to prioritize women's health.

The programs underline the importance of a healthy lifestyle, early detection, and timely treatment as the three main factors in combating the disease, the health ministry's website said, quoting Jafar Jandaqi, an official with the health ministry.

Women aged 30 to 69 are invited to benefit from screening and self-care training programs provided at the medical health centers, he added.

Breast cancer is the most common silent cancer among women; increasing women's knowledge of breast cancer, risk factors, self-examination, related warning signs, and encouraging them to undergo timely breast cancer screening and regular check-ups will help detect the disease at an early stage when the treatment is most effective.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle, such as maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, eating well, and avoiding inactivity, smoking, and alcohol, plays a key role in preventing breast cancer.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a global opportunity to raise awareness of breast cancer and call for action to improve access to timely diagnosis and quality care.

The theme "Every story is unique, every journey matters" recognizes that every experience of breast cancer is different. Behind every diagnosis is a person, a family, and a unique journey. People may face different challenges depending on their diagnosis, treatment, support networks, and access to care.

Every person affected by breast cancer deserves to be supported and treated with dignity. And everyone, wherever they live, should have ac-

cess to the care they need.

All countries should aim to reduce breast cancer mortality by 2.5 percent per year, putting the world on track to avert 2.5 million breast cancer deaths by 2040. This is feasible by providing breast cancer services as part of the essential benefit package for universal health coverage and making them available in public facilities.

With the right policies, services and investment, countries can reduce breast cancer deaths and improve survival.

Major inequalities in breast cancer survival persist around the world. 41 percent of women in low-income countries are expected to survive at least five years after a breast cancer diagnosis, compared with 87 percent in high-income countries. Around 70 percent of breast cancer deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, where access to early detection, timely diagnosis and comprehensive treatment remains more limited.

Everyone, everywhere should have an equal chance to survive breast cancer.

Health ministry to streamline cancer care through national network

The health ministry is set to launch the national cancer care network in early autumn, aiming to integrate fragmented cancer treatment services into a coordinated, team-based, and traceable care pathway.

The initiative aims to ensure that the patients entering the network follow a clear path through the stages of diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, without the need for patients to go to various centers, ISNA quoted Ali Motlaq, an official with the health ministry, as saying in September.

No new medical center is planned to be built; the network will benefit from available capacities to connect specialized physicians and medical centers. Based on the type of cancer, the center's capacity, the patient's place of residence, and other defined criteria, the patients would be referred to the best center and medical team, he noted.

The activities of the network focus on enhancing the quality of care, improving access, and reducing the financial burden of care on patients.

Standardization of clinical pathways, systematic referral, teamwork and multidisciplinary decision-making, capacity management of centers, early diagnosis, patient navigation, and the electronic recording and monitoring of care pathways will also be among key components of the program, the official highlighted.

According to Motlaq, free cancer treatment does not mean unconditional access to cancer-related services and all medications free of charge in public and private sectors. The program aims to minimize patients' out-of-pocket costs for covered services in the public sector, and in specific cases, without paying any money directly.

Recording the information of patients, their referrals and follow-ups, and the received care will help clarify a patient's current situation, whether they have received required services, and who or what center is responsible for the next step in their treatment, he said.

The official went on to say that the program will also consider incentives for specialists and centers that join the network and accept its standards such as recording essential information, adherence to clinical pathways, participation in patient referral and follow-up, and accountability for the quality of provided services.

The first phase of the program will commence by focusing on breast cancer. The qualified centers and service providers will be identified, and the actual capacity of the services will be determined. After early detection, initial assessment through imaging, biopsy, and pathology, if cancer is confirmed, the treatment will begin, Motlaq said.

Ultimately, the success of the network should not be measured merely by the number of services provided or patients registered. The fundamental question is whether the patient received standard care—at the right time, in the right place, and from the right team, with minimal financial and administrative barriers—and if their journey to the next stage of care was fully traced.

The program aims to cover other top priority cancers in the country by the end of the current Iranian year, March 2027, he added.

IRCS launches humanitarian health program in Bolivia

TEHRAN – The Iranian Red Crescent Society's health center in La Paz, Bolivia, has launched a health campaign to improve Bolivian's health through prevention, education, screening, and treatment.

To meet the health needs of the local communities, the humanitarian mission includes medical assessment and examinations, blood pressure checks, blood sugar tests, screening and diagnosing diseases, and face-to-face education on personal hygiene and health practices, the IRCS website reported.

The individuals with suspicious findings are referred to health centers for further treatment.

The main goal of the IRCS health-oriented activities abroad is not merely providing medical services, but to play a role in promoting the health of the host society, an initiative that highlights the IRCS altruistic approach in providing humanitarian assistance.

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

IFRC lauds IRCS achievements

In July, Hossam Elsharkawi, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in a letter to Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, lauded the IRCS for its significant achievements, highlighting that the IFRC seeks to strengthen strategic partnership with the IRCS to turn agreements into action.

The official also commended the IRCS's constructive role in the expansion of humanitarian efforts, describing the IRCS as a role model for other societies, the IRCS website reported.

The high readiness of the relief fleet, spe-

cialized vehicles, and rescue helicopters; coordinated earthquake response drills; the capabilities of search-and-rescue teams; and the efficiency of communication and aerial relief systems demonstrate the full preparedness, expertise, and operational capacity of the IRCS, which have developed over many years, he stressed.

Referring to his visit to the IRCS's manufacturing facilities, the official said the society's capabilities in producing medical items, equipment, and relief supplies are a testament to self-reliance, innovation, and sustainable humanitarian development,

According to Elsharkawi, these achievements serve as a model of excellence for all national societies within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In November 2025, the official highlighted the role of the IRCS as one of the region's and the world's key humanitarian actors.

Lauding the IRCS's efforts, he congratulated Kolivand's re-election as the head of the IRCS, saying that the IRCS makes highly effective decisions at international levels, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks in an online meeting with Kolivand. During the meeting, the two officials discussed ways to foster collaborative efforts, develop rescue systems to enhance the country's preparedness and response capabilities, and conduct international meetings and conferences in Iran.

The IRCS proposed hosting an international Islamic youth conference and a conference of leaders of national societies from Islamic countries.

The two sides also emphasized the need to implement the previously signed memoranda of understanding between the two organizations to lay the ground for promoting educational, operational, and logistical collaborations.

The IRCS also suggested introducing an expert to follow up on managerial and technical cooperation with the Regional Office for MENA.

Oral, dental health campaign to be held



TEHRAN – The national oral and dental health campaign is scheduled to be held from October 17 to 23 nationwide, focusing on training, self-care, and prevention.

The week-long event will be held under the theme 'Don't forget two times two, brushing your teeth for two minutes twice a day', the health ministry's website reported.

As the campaign primarily focuses on students, the health ministry, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, will conduct oral health education at schools to improve the knowledge of children and families about oral health.

With the help of student health ambassadors and healthcare providers at school, they will teach students about proper nutrition and how to brush and floss their teeth correctly.

The health ministry is also planning to benefit from the capacity of dental offices, mass media, and social media to hold educational and preventive programs related to

oral health for the promotion of self-care and enhancement of oral health literacy among the public.

In the past Iranian year, the program was held in some 34,000 schools, providing services to more than three million students across the country, IRNA quoted Zahra Qorbani, a health ministry official, as saying in January.

World Oral Health Day (WOHD) is celebrated every year on March 20 to empower people with the tools and knowledge to prevent and control oral diseases, which affect nearly 3.5 billion people worldwide.

It encourages people to look after their oral health by adopting a good oral hygiene routine and managing risk factors.

Themed 'A Happy Mouth Is... A Happy Life', WOHD 2026 spotlighted oral health as the foundation of lifelong well-being — from a baby's first teeth to maintaining a healthy smile in older age.



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OCTOBER 4, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others
with his tongue and hands.*

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:53 Evening: 18:02 Dawn: 4:39 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:02 (tomorrow)

Melbourne exhibition highlights victims of Minab school attack, Gaza war

TEHRAN- The Sydney-based Benevolent Iranian Women Association (BIWA), invited by the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD) and the Unitarian Peace Memorial Church Melbourne, held the “Bombs for Peace” art exhibition at the Melbourne church last week.

The church's Sunday prayer service opened with a memorial for the child victims of the Minab school attack and a condemnation of what organizers described as atrocities committed by the United States and Israel in West Asia.

Australian anti-war activist John Shipton, the keynote speaker, reviewed what he described as a longstanding pattern of US and Israeli military and political interventions, referring to events ranging from the 1948 Nakba and the 1953 overthrow of Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, to recent conflicts in West Asia.

Shipton also drew parallels between these historical events and the Minab school tragedy, in which more than 168 students, teachers and staff were killed, according to the organizers.

For her part, BIWA President Masoomeh Alaibakhsh spoke about the beginning of the new academic year in Iran and the reopening of schools. She presented figures on student and teacher casualties in recent conflicts, along with information on damage to schools and educational centers.

Alaibakhsh expressed hope that such tragedies would not be repeated and stressed the need for those responsible for attacks on civilians and educational institutions to be held accountable under international law.

The event continued with a tour of the exhibition and a screening of “Minab: An Independent Inquiry,” a documentary directed by Maryam Sadr. The film examines the circumstances surrounding the Minab school attack and presents documents and other evidence concerning Shajareh Tayyebeh School, which had functioned solely as an educational institution for more than a decade.



The screening was followed by a live discussion with Sadr, who spoke about her firsthand experience visiting the Minab school site and interviewing families of the students who were killed in the attack.

The documentary created a somber atmosphere among the audience, while visitors from different nationalities and backgrounds expressed solidarity with families affected by recent conflicts, particularly children. Many also voiced hopes for lasting peace and security around the world.

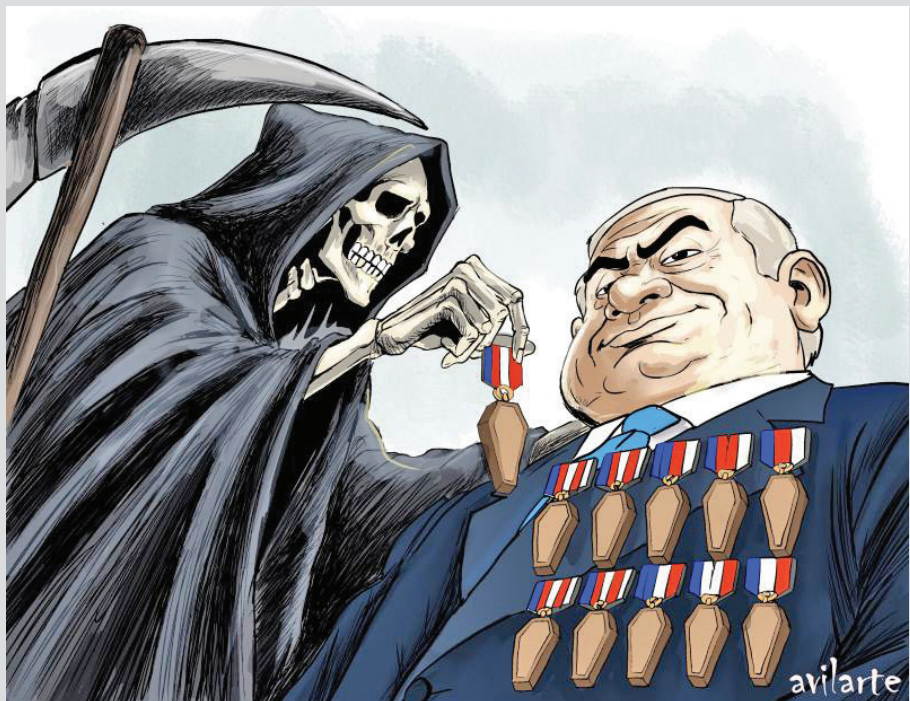
The exhibition featured two main sections focusing on Iran and Palestine.

The Iran section displayed works by Iranian-Australian artists, drawings by Iranian children who had experienced war, and artworks created by students of the Minab school who were killed in the attack. Portraits of the child victims and their school assignments, including classroom drawings and free-form illustrations reflecting their interests and aspirations, attracted considerable attention.

The Palestine section was presented by the Iranians Friends of Palestine NSW (IFOPNSW) and featured artworks depicting the suffering in Gaza and Palestine. The section included works by Palestinian artists living in Gaza, as well as Australian and Palestinian artists based in Australia.

The organizers said they hoped similar events held in communities and cities across Australia would help raise awareness of the impact of recent conflicts in West Asia and preserve the memory of children who were killed or affected by the wars.

Cartoon of Day



Post-mortem

Cartoonist: José Alberto Rodríguez Avila from Cuba

Documentary “A Fox Under a Pink Moon” wins at Matera International Film Festival

TEHRAN – The documentary “A Fox Under a Pink Moon” co-directed by Mehrdad Oskouei and Soraya Akhlaghi won an award at the Matera International Film Festival (MATIFF), which was held from September 26 to October 4, in Matera, Italy.

MATIFF 2026 celebrated the talent and vision of Oskouei and Akhlaghi, who has also performed in the film, with the prestigious Bini-Pasolini Foundation Award, ISNA reported.

In its citation, the Alfredo Bini Foundation recognized their “authorial courage” and a production method that transforms the smartphone from a simple technical device to an instrument of expression, testimony, and resistance. This work embodies MATIFF's mission: independent cinema capable of building bridges between worlds and cultures.

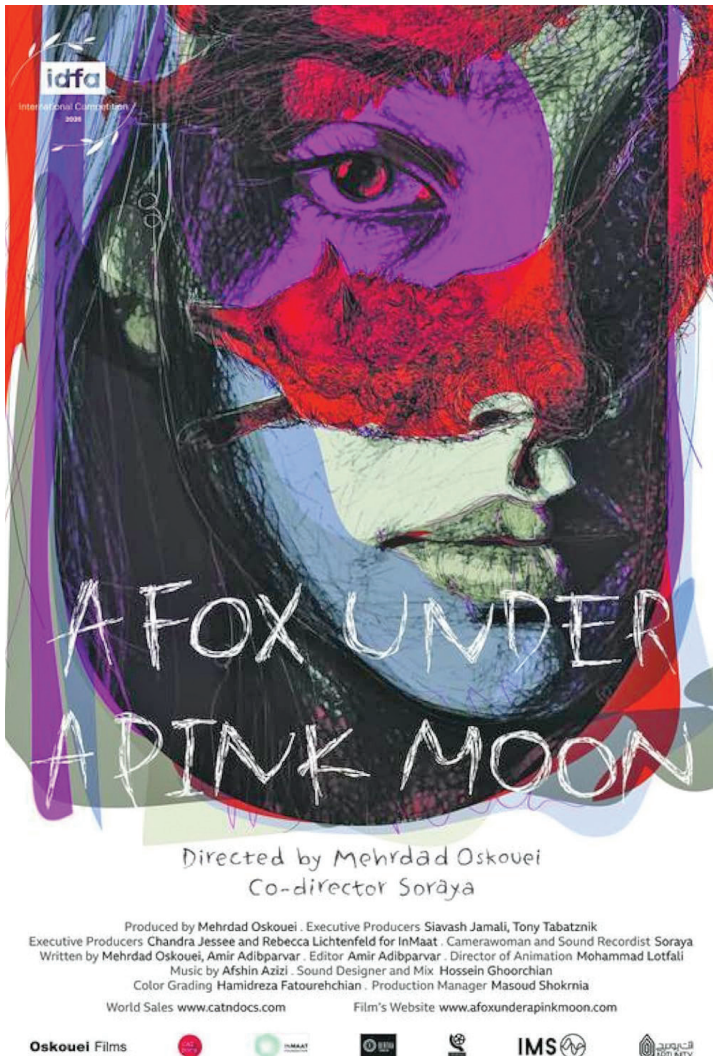
A joint production of Iran, France, the UK, Denmark, and the US, the 76-minute film had its world premiere at the 38th International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in the Netherlands in November 2025 and won its first international award.

Since then, the documentary has participated in over 70 international film festivals and grabbed some 38 awards.

The movie shows 16-year-old Soraya, who is already creating stunning drawings and sculptures that are as beautiful as they are dark. This strong-willed Afghan sculptor and illustrator has been trying for five years to leave Iran and join her mother in Austria.

Mehrdad Oskouei directed the film entirely remotely, with Soraya filming all the footage herself over five years using her phone.

This material is interspersed with shots of her drawings and surreal animations. Making art is no idle pastime for Soraya: she puts all her worries, joys, and fears into her drawings and the sculptures she makes from soaked egg cartons or clay that she finds along her routes. Many of her drawings feature recur-



ring figures: a loyal fox who is her traveling companion, a pink moon that always watches over her, and a clown who never laughs—a character Soraya identifies with.

According to Oskouei, a renowned Iranian documentary filmmaker, in the past 19 years, working with the Center for Rehabilitation, he has made four films about young delinquents and murderers. “In my first film, ‘It's Always Late for Freedom,’ I felt that my characters wanted a larger part in forming the narration of the film, and this thought stayed with me until my last film, ‘Sunless Shadows,’ where I succeeded in obtaining this result in parts of the film,” he said.

“Later, when I looked through the footage in the editing room, I was amazed by the atmosphere I felt through this material. When

I decided to make this happen in my newest film, I did away with my entire filming crew on set,” he added.

“After Soraya's first trip to Turkey, when the filming continued upon her return to Tehran, she increased her knowledge of filmmaking by enrolling in classes on how to use a cell phone for making films. I spoke to her each night about the scenes she had taken and planned to take, and in this way, we coordinated a joint directorship,” Oskouei noted.

According to Akhlaghi, when she first turned the camera towards herself, she was not ready. “Life in those days was full of fear, suppressed anger, and a search for a way to continue living and surviving. The very moment I filmed my first images, it was as if a piece of reality awoke within me, a reality I had tried to

hide for years,” she said.

“From 2018 until today, this film was not just a filmmaking project for me; it was a journey from not only watching myself but to knowing and building myself. At first, the camera was like a cold witness to me, but gradually it became a friend. A friend I truly needed to confide in,” she added.

“When I first met Mehrdad Oskouei (who has become ‘Uncle Mehrdad’ to me), something broke inside me. He said honestly, ‘Who you are right now is not your real self.’ Then he gave me paper and colored pencils and asked me to draw. So, I drew clowns; only clowns. Clowns that never laughed. Those clowns were my inner pains. They were my unseen wounds,” she stated.

“From that point, I began to draw my pains, one by one. It was as if Uncle Mehrdad knew that by drawing those pictures, I would gradually become calm and free. Today, I want to say that working with Mehrdad Oskouei, the professional documentary film director, was like a school of life for me. I learned from him that what an artist sees is not just about beauty, but beyond that, it is about truth,” she emphasized.

“Making a film alongside Uncle Mehrdad brought back trust for me; trust in others, and more importantly, trust in myself. He wasn't just a filmmaker. Throughout this journey, he was like a friend, a therapist, and a trustworthy person by my side at a time when I trusted no one. For him, the film wasn't important; saving my life was important. And I felt this with my entire being,” Akhlaghi asserted.

“Today, looking back on this seven-year journey, I understand he didn't just teach me how to film myself, he taught me how to survive and how to live. And that is the miracle of cinema and documentary film. And now, after all these years, I stand here. Not as the teenage girl who narrowly escaped death many times, but as a woman who found belief in herself and rebuilt herself from scratch,” she said.

“Cultural Iran” book collection inspires new fusion of music, calligraphy and film

TEHRAN- Iranian composer and ney player Hamed Mokhtarani is collaborating with Professor Dariush Farhud, widely regarded as a pioneer of genetics in Iran, on a multidisciplinary artistic project inspired by the 15-volume “Cultural Iran” book collection.

The project seeks to translate the concepts and achievements presented in the extensive collection into a combination of orchestral music, calligraphy, and cinematic visual production.

The “Cultural Iran” book project was initiated in May 2007 under the direction and supervision of Farhud, with the participation of a group of researchers and collaborators. Over nearly two decades, the project has resulted in 15 volumes containing thousands of pages devoted to various aspects of Iran's history, culture, art, civilization and literature.

Farhud, a prominent Iranian scientist and pioneer in the field of genetics, has devoted part of his cultural activities to compiling the collection. The central idea behind the project, according to its organizers, has been to make Iran's historical and cultural heritage accessible to the general public regardless of their academic background or field of expertise.

The collection has therefore been de-

veloped with a comprehensive and research-based approach while seeking to remain accessible to a broad audience interested in Iranian culture.

As part of the new artistic collaboration, Mokhtarani has spent considerable time studying and researching the contents of all 15 volumes. He is now developing his personal interpretation of the intellectual and cultural world presented in “Cultural Iran” into an independent musical work.

The composition draws on orchestral and classical music and is being developed with a view to a symphonic performance. According to the project's plan, the work is intended to be introduced as the official musical piece of “Cultural Iran.”

Rather than providing a direct musical narration of the books, the composition seeks to reflect concepts and ideas derived from the collection as a whole. The approach is intended to transform an extensive body of scholarly and cultural material into a nonverbal artistic language that can communicate with audiences beyond linguistic boundaries.

The project also includes a visual component. Mokhtarani is set to design and perform a calligraphy performance at a major historical site in Iran. During the performance, the

English word “CULTURE” will be rendered through calligraphy alongside selected Persian poetry and literary texts related to Iranian culture.

The calligraphy performance and the musical composition will be brought together in a professionally produced film, employing a cinematic approach to visual storytelling.

The final stage of the collaboration is planned to include the unveiling of the musical work, calligraphic artwork and multimedia film at a special ceremony held in conjunction with the presentation of the “Cultural Iran” book collection.

Following the unveiling, the works are scheduled to be prepared for dissemination through Iranian and international media and other platforms.

The project brings together Farhud's long-running research and cultural initiative with Mokhtarani's contemporary multimedia approach to music and visual art. Through the combination of orchestral music, Persian calligraphy, and cinematic production, the collaborators aim to present themes drawn from Iran's cultural heritage in an artistic format capable of reaching audiences inside and outside the country.

6 awards for Iran from World Film Festival in Cannes

TEHRAN – The World Film Festival in Cannes – Remember the Future has announced the winners of its September online edition, with two Iranian films winning six awards.

Iranian short film “Artificial Human,” written, directed, and produced by Pouya Golpour, won five awards and “Staccato” by Ghaza-

leh Mazinani received one award, Mehr reported.

“Artificial Human” received the Best Asian Film and Best Director in a Short Film awards for Golpour, Best Actress in a Short Film award for Sharareh Sadri, Best Actor in an Indie Film award for Mahdi Afshari, and Best Young Actor in a Short Film award for

Aylin Homaun. “Staccato” won the Best Experimental Film award.

A science-fiction film, “Artificial Human” depicts a post-apocalyptic world devastated by nuclear bombardments, where an inventor and his family survive and struggle to rebuild their lives with the help of his invention.

World Film Festival in Cannes –

Remember the Future organizes a monthly and annual competition of all genres for international filmmakers, a qualifier on IMDb and dedicated to feature films, short films, independent films, documentaries, experimental films, animated films, music videos, screenwriters, songwriters, singers and bands, commercials, Web/TV series and much more.