

What next after Iraq's sovereignty day?

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – Will Baghdad truly be able to make its own decisions? This is the question many Iraqis are asking following the September 30 celebration of what is known as “sovereignty day.”

Has Iraq escaped the restrictions of foreign military presence only to enter another form of control that is less obvious and may last even longer? This matter can no longer be delayed, especially after U.S. forces, under a coalition of about 82 countries, completed their withdrawal from their last bases at the end of September 2026. ▶ Page 5

Evolution of the Resistance: three phases since Oct. 7

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON – Phase one of the resistance is divided into two parts, the first is the war of supporting Gaza until the many resistance leaders were eliminated. It was then followed by the “battle of determination” where the comprehensive confrontation took place, which was the attempt to completely eliminate the resistance.

This phase began on October 8, 2023, following the October 7 Al-Aqsa operation and continued until November 27, 2024, lasting approximately one year and one month. Its general character was a confrontation between the Israeli occupation entity and the resistance forces in the region. The basis of the confrontation was initially the response to the October 7 operation, followed by the involvement of the resistance in Lebanon in support of Gaza. ▶ Page 5

Iran has the attractions, the challenge is turning them into tourism:

Javad Gharai ▶ Page 6



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Iran Vows Stronger Response to Military Attack

Araghchi says Iran remains ready for a diplomatic solution to US conflict

We are still waiting for European countries to answer this question: Why did they play an effective role in this war against Iran?

TEHRAN — Iran is ready for a diplomatic solution to its conflict with the US, but if Washington again chooses a military course, Tehran is more prepared than before to defend itself and will deliver a stronger response, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Sunday.

Addressing ambassadors and representatives of foreign countries based in Tehran at the Foreign Ministry, Araghchi said Iran remained firm and serious on both fronts — defending itself and pursuing diplomacy.

“If our enemies again choose the path of military confrontation, they will receive a stronger response than before, and we will defend ourselves more powerfully than before,” he said. “And if they are seeking diplomatic avenues, we remain ready to reach a just and dignified

solution to end this war through diplomacy.”

Araghchi said Iran hoped the US would choose “the path of wisdom and rationality,” stressing that there was no military or sanctions-based solution to the conflict.

“The only solution that can work is a negotiated solution based on justice and fairness, and a dignified and diplomatic solution,” he said, adding that such an approach could provide a final way out of what he described as the “illegal

and unjust aggression” launched against Iran.

Diplomatic outreach remains strong

Araghchi also highlighted Iran's diplomatic activity during the recent UN General Assembly meetings in New York, saying the Iranian delegation had played a strong and effective role.

“I met with 42 foreign ministers, and the president met with 10 heads of state in New York,” he said.

He said Iran had clearly explained its positions in New York and that the level of interest shown by different countries in meeting with Iranian officials, learning about Tehran's views and hearing its proposals had been “very significant.” ▶ Page 3

Qalibaf: Iran ready to spring new surprises on adversaries

TEHRAN — Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has warned that Iran will continue to confront its adversaries with new surprises while pursuing military and diplomatic strategies in parallel, saying the United States has grown frustrated by the Iranian nation's steadfast resistance.

Addressing a parliamentary session on Sunday, Qalibaf said Washington had recently conveyed proposals to Tehran through mediators, despite issuing contradictory public statements. He stressed that the time for delaying tactics and attempts to impose unilateral demands on Iran had passed. ▶ Page 2

Iran says to deliver additional points on US counter-proposal

TEHRAN — Iran will convey additional points regarding a US counter-proposal to Tehran's seven-day plan for reopening the Strait of Hormuz after completing the necessary assessments, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said on Sunday.

Speaking at his weekly press briefing in Tehran, Baqaei said Iran had conveyed its positions to Qatari mediators during a brief stop in Doha by the Iranian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on its return from New York, where it had attended the 81st session of the UN General Assembly.

Iran submitted its seven-day plan to the United States through Qatari mediators two weeks ago. Washington delivered its response and counter-proposal a week later. ▶ Page 2

India's new ambassador pledges to unlock 'huge potential' in Iran trade ties



▶ Page 3

Iran shines brighter in Nagoya

Finishing sixth at the 2026 Asian Games



▶ Page 6



Iran secures third consecutive world title with five golds at IOAA 2026

▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Strait of Hormuz exposes America's economic problems

In a note, Keyhan argued that the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz has directly affected the US economy by driving up inflation and fuel prices. The newspaper said President Trump and his administration are working hard to prevent Republicans from losing the November midterm elections, which it says have become closely tied to the conflict with Iran and its economic consequences. According to the article, the war against Iran caused gasoline and diesel prices to rise sharply across the United States. Keyhan further asserted that most Americans blame Trump for the situation. Although administration officials continue to promise that conditions will improve soon, the paper argued that inflationary pressures linked to Hormuz are increasing every day. Referring to comments from the US Treasury Secretary about the burden of inflation on ordinary citizens, Keyhan concluded that Iran's leverage over the strait remains effective and that, despite American claims, Hormuz continues to be closed in an economic sense to the West.

Shargh: The hidden clock of tension

Shargh analyzed the possibility of a new conflict in the region and argued that many observers make the mistake of viewing developments solely through Washington's political calendar. While US midterm elections are often seen as a key factor, the newspaper suggested that events in Israel may be even more important. It pointed out that Israel's Knesset elections will take place before the American elections and could be critical for Netanyahu's political future. According to Shargh, if fears of electoral defeat increase within Netanyahu's camp, there may be greater motivation to alter political and security conditions. In such a scenario, military escalation would not necessarily be an end in itself but could serve as a tool to shift public attention, change political priorities, create a stronger security atmosphere, or influence the electoral process.

Siasat-e-Rooz: US Iraq exit would have major strategic implications

In its editorial, Siasat-e-Rooz examined the importance of a potential American withdrawal from Iraq. The newspaper argued that such a move would have major strategic implications and should be viewed as an opportunity. It said Iraqi Kurdistan has become a base for groups threatening regional security and that the presence of Israeli military and intelligence networks there poses risks not only to Iran but also to Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. According to the paper, the United States continues to maintain considerable influence in Iraq, as shown by measures such as the temporary suspension of Iranian

flights. Ongoing regional developments will eventually force American forces to leave the region. The paper argued that a new regional order is emerging based on resistance rather than American preferences and that any US withdrawal would be the result of pressure rather than a voluntary decision.

Javan: Factors shaping the future of the war

Javan focused on the indicators that could determine the future course of the US war on Iran. Rather than predicting a definite outcome, the newspaper recommended closely monitoring three factors: US 10-year Treasury bond yields, global oil prices, and the volume of tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz. According to the article, the key question is whether the United States can simultaneously manage oil prices above \$100 per barrel, bond yields above 5 percent, and high fuel costs for consumers. These indicators, together with developments around Bab al-Mandab and the official positions of Washington and Tehran, were described as useful measures of the war's direction. Javan argued that a war of attrition involving intermittent attacks, tougher sanctions, and sharp energy-market fluctuations remains a likely possibility. While acknowledging the costs for Iran, it maintained that accepting unlimited external demands would be even more harmful.

Resalat: Iran's doctrine in Hormuz Strait

In an article, Resalat examined what it described as Iran's complete control over the strategic Strait of Hormuz. The newspaper argued that the strait has evolved from a simple shipping route into one of the central arenas of geopolitical confrontation. According to the article, the United States seeks to bring tanker traffic under its military dominance, using various justifications to expand its influence and undermine the independence of regional states. In contrast, the paper stated that Iranian officials responsible for Persian Gulf security have made the full reopening and security of the Strait of Hormuz conditional on an end to economic pressure and respect for Iran's sovereign rights. The article also referred to the reported targeting of a large oil tanker by an unidentified projectile in the strait, describing it as a serious warning to Western countries. Resalat argued that any future round of conflict would not remain limited in scope. Instead, it said further escalation could trigger a wider crisis involving disruptions to maritime traffic, instability in regional energy markets, intensified security tensions, and broader economic consequences across the region and beyond.

Iran refutes 'Big Lie' on nuclear program, drug production

TEHRAN— Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna has rejected US allegations that Iran was producing drugs at its nuclear facilities, describing the claim as another "Big Lie" aimed at creating pretexts for aggression against the country.

In a message posted on X on Sunday, the mission said Iran's record in combating the global drug problem could be independently verified by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).

"After the BIG LIE of Iranian nuclear weapons, another BIG LIE on 'doing drugs' soared," the mission said, adding, "But a liar ought to have a good memory."

The Iranian mission also pointed to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) continuous monitoring of Iran's nuclear facilities, saying the agency had maintained around-the-clock surveillance of the facilities under safeguards.

"Irrespective of Iran's outstanding contribution to addressing [the] world drug problem — which could be simply confirmed by UNODC and INCB — Iran nuclear facilities were constantly monitored by the IAEA 24/7," it said.

The mission called on the IAEA to expose

'false allegations concerning Iranian nuclear facilities subject to safeguards.'

It further argued that allegations regarding nuclear weapons and illicit drug production were being used to manufacture justifications for military action against Iran.

"Looks that inventing pretexts is easier than admitting that invading, bombing and plundering other nations is about domination — not democracy, non-proliferation or as recently claimed, illicit drugs," the mission said. "The narrative might change, but the facts remain."

Addressing US President Donald Trump directly, the Iranian mission urged Washington to stop the 'manufacture of pretexts and openly acknowledge its alleged interest in Iran's strategic resources.'

"Stop manufacturing pretexts. Say plainly that you dreamed about taking over Iran's strategic resources, oil and gas, and independence," it said.

The statement followed remarks by Trump at a rally in Durant, Oklahoma, in which he claimed that Iran had been "doing drugs" at "drug factories" and "nuclear factories."

Trump also claimed that the alleged facilities had been "hit so hard," linking the assertions to his justification for the US military aggression against Iran seven months earlier.

Qalibaf: Iran ready to spring new surprises on adversaries

From page 1 ► Iran's position, he said, was "completely clear and definitive," adding that the Strait of Hormuz would remain closed until all seven Iranian conditions stipulated in the Islamabad memorandum of understanding were met.

Qalibaf's remarks underscored Tehran's insistence that diplomatic engagement cannot be separated from developments on the ground and that any agreement must address Iran's stated conditions rather than serve as a means of buying time or exerting pressure.

Iran will not be swayed by US rhetoric

The parliament speaker said Washington was fully aware of Iran's determination but had continued to intensify its rhetoric, military threats and economic pressure, alongside military and security measures. He noted that US officials sometimes issued several contradictory statements within a single day.

Qalibaf characterized this approach as a form of "cognitive warfare," arguing that Washington alternates between ex-



pressing an interest in negotiations, threatening confrontation and destruction, and presenting itself as willing to pursue mediation and compromise.

Such shifting messages, he said, are intended to sow confusion within Iranian society, complicate official decision-making and influence Tehran's strategic calculations.

Iran, however, does not formulate its national security policies in response to daily statements, social media posts or interviews by US officials, he stressed.

"We base our actions on the enemy's real behavior and actions, not on rhetoric and false dichotomies in the media," Qalibaf said.

His remarks reflected Tehran's stated position that its assessment of US intentions rests on concrete actions rather than public messaging, which Iranian officials have repeatedly characterized as part of a broader campaign of political and psychological pressure.

Military preparedness and diplomacy in parallel

Iran says to deliver additional points on US counter-proposal

From page 1 ► while the Iranian delegation was in Doha. The Iranian government confirmed last Wednesday that it had received the US response.

"Our positions were conveyed to the mediator during the brief stop we made in Doha on our way back," Baqaei said, adding that the US proposals were largely consistent with Washington's previous positions and focused specifically on nuclear issues.

"We made it clear that, at this stage, our focus is on the issue of the Strait of Hormuz," he said.

Baqaei said restoring security to the strategic waterway required Washington to take specific measures, including ending disruptions to Iran's commercial shipping and interventionist measures and sanctions, including those imposed after the June 18 memorandum of understanding.

"We will conduct the necessary reviews regarding some of the details and will convey our additional points to the other side as well," the spokesman said.

"The reality is that previous experience and the US stance show that the other side is not serious in using diplomacy," Baqaei said.

Iran rejects nuclear-for-sanctions claim

Baqaei rejected reports claiming that Iran's seven-day plan proposed sanctions relief in exchange for the resumption of International Atomic Energy Agency inspections at Iranian nuclear sites.

"We did not, in principle, enter into discussions on the nuclear issue in exchange for sanctions relief," he said. "Our task was to communicate our conditions, which we conveyed to the mediators in the form of a proposal that came to be known as the 'sev-

en-day plan.'"

The spokesman also rejected US President Donald Trump's claim that he did not know who was negotiating on behalf of Iran, calling the assertion baseless.

"The Americans know very well how decisions are made in the Islamic Republic of Iran," Baqaei said, arguing that the issue instead lay within the US political system, where different parties undermine one another, and contradictory approaches have become a major problem.

Iran urges neighbors to prevent use of their territory

Referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent presence in the United Arab Emirates and efforts by the Israeli regime to foment tensions, Baqaei said Tehran expected all neighboring countries to observe their rights and responsibilities as good neighbors.

"We are committed to the principle of good neighborliness, and we hope our neighbors will observe it and will not allow their territory to be exploited by enemies," he said.

Baqaei said Iran had clearly expressed its grievances over the participation of some regional countries in the US-Israeli war against Iran and would continue to raise the issue whenever an opportunity arose.

"I reiterate that the issue of the Israeli regime's exploitation of the region's facilities to carry out aggression against Iran must definitely receive special attention from countries," Baqaei said.

Iran dismisses claims over Flydubai incident

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also rejected allegations linking Iran to a recent incident involving a Flydubai passenger aircraft, describing such claims as a "false flag"



operation based on fabricated evidence.

Responding to allegations made by Britain and others regarding the Emirati aircraft, as well as Iran's warnings about hostile actions, Baqaei said Iran remained fully prepared to defend itself.

"This is merely a reminder of an experience that the world has witnessed for itself over the past seven months," he said.

Baqaei said the allegations should be viewed against a history of false-flag operations by the Israeli regime and some European countries.

Iran was being accused "solely based on fabricated evidence," he said, citing allegations concerning RAF Fairford and the Flydubai aircraft as examples.

The remarks followed the September 30 diversion of a Flydubai flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv to Saudi Arabia after its co-pilot allegedly attacked the captain and attempted to take control of the aircraft. Passengers and crew members subdued the co-pilot, allowing a reserve crew to land the aircraft safely. Investigations into the incident are ongoing.

Baqaei's remarks came amid claims by US President Donald Trump, made without evidence, that the co-pilot might have been linked to Iran.

Medvedev vows Russia will never sacrifice strategic partnership with Iran

TEHRAN— Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has said the aggression against Iran has had serious consequences for the global economy, with people in the United States feeling the impact at home.

Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council and a former president and prime minister, made the remarks in an interview with IRINN late Saturday.

"Coercion has its limits," he said. "Moreover, the aggressive attack on Iran has led to very significant changes in the global economy that the United States has been forced to accept." He added that rising oil and diesel prices had dealt a severe blow to American taxpayers.

Medvedev also warned that the prospect of a nuclear apoc-

ypse was a genuine possibility, describing it as regrettable.

Referring to the actions of the United States and Israel, he said they had destroyed everything and were responsible for the consequences of their own policies.

"They imposed sanctions. They refused to cooperate. Now let them face the consequences," he said, pointing to high gasoline and fuel prices, shortages of a wide range of essential goods, and high inflation. "They have essentially created these problems for themselves. Let them enjoy it!"

The Russian official stressed that Moscow posed no threat to Europe or the West and had no interests there just maintaining normal relations with European countries, as Russian leaders

had repeatedly stated.

He said claims of a Russian threat were being promoted as a pretext to manipulate public opinion, secure parliamentary votes, win elections and obtain more funding for military budgets.

"We are not seeking to put pressure on anyone, nor do we intend to enter into conflict with anyone," Medvedev said. "We are entirely satisfied with friendly relations with our neighbors, including Iran, but we are not seeking to dominate anyone. We are equal partners with our friends and neighbors."

He added that Russia wanted nothing more from Western countries than normal dialogue and peaceful cooperation.

"If they want that, we are ready to do it," he said.

Qalibaf said Iran was pursuing a strategy grounded in both strength and rationality, rejecting emotional reactions as well as intimidation.

"We will be fully present on the battlefield and confront the enemy with new surprises, while also using diplomacy to consolidate our superiority on the military battlefield and secure the rights of the Iranian nation," he said.

He reiterated that a country's ability to negotiate effectively depends on its readiness to defend itself, declaring that "the one who is victorious at the negotiating table is the one who has prepared himself for war."

The speaker also said Iran and the Resistance Front were currently at the height of their strength, citing the country's maximum battlefield capability and strong national cohesion.

Under the guidance of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, Qalibaf added, Iran would not allow its adversaries' "delusions" about the country to become reality.

Medvedev praises Iran's resilience

Recalling the martyrdom of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and the funeral ceremonies held in his honor, Medvedev said Iran had continued to maintain a normal and full life despite military conflict and profound grief.

"While driving through Tehran, I noticed that despite the dramatic situation, the grief inflicted on the Iranian people and the military events, Iran continues to lead a normal and full life," he said.

Medvedev said Russian President Vladimir Putin had held Ayatollah Khamenei in high regard and that this was one of the reasons behind his own visit to Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran vows stronger response to military attack

Araghchi says Iran remains ready for a diplomatic solution to US conflict

From Page 1 ► Araghchi said this had demonstrated the failure of what he described as an attempt by some in the US to isolate Iran.

“The perception that some people in the US may have had that they could turn Iran into an isolated country had completely failed,” he said, adding that Iran had acted in New York as “a powerful country respected by the international community” and demonstrated that it continued to have “rational positions” and solutions for both war and peace.

Iranian diplomats, he said, had been highly active at the General Assembly and had conveyed the voice of the Iranian people to the international community.

“We were present in all fields and conveyed the voice of the Iranian people to the world,” Araghchi said, adding that Iran had delivered its people’s message in favor of peace and rational solutions.

He also said Tehran had clearly explained its conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, stressing that all of those conditions were consistent with commitments that the US must accept.

Tehran dismisses US claim over Iranian delegation

Araghchi also rejected a claim from the US that the Iranian delegation had been expelled from the country.

“Regardless of whether this claim is true or not, since we went and returned according to our own pre-planned schedule, the claim made by the Americans is truly strange,” he said.



He argued that the claim was contradictory because, on the one hand, it amounted to an admission that the US had violated its obligations as the host country of the United Nations, while on the other hand it demonstrated how angry Washington had become over the presence of the Iranian delegation in the US.

‘No solution through more sanctions’

Araghchi said the US had already failed both militarily and diplomatically and would gain nothing from imposing additional sanctions.

“The US has lost both in war and in diplomacy in the past,” he said. “Trying new sanctions will also be of no benefit to them. There is no military solution and no solution based on more sanctions.”

He reiterated that Tehran remained prepared for both military defense and diplomacy.

“We remain firm and serious in both areas of defending ourselves and advancing diplomacy,” he said.

Calls on Europe to reconsider its position

Araghchi said he had also held extensive discussions with European countries and described those talks as “very frank.”

“We hope that European countries will reconsider their approach toward the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he said.

He referred to what he described as a significant admission by the NATO secretary-general regarding European involvement in the US war against Iran.

“The admission by the NATO secretary-general that European countries participated in the US war against Iran was a serious admission,” Araghchi said.

According to Araghchi, the NATO chief had explicitly said that more than 5,000 US fighter jets had taken off from bases in Europe to attack Iran.

“We are still waiting for European countries to answer this question: Why did they play an effective

role in this war against Iran?” he said.

Despite his criticism, Araghchi said Iran’s proposal to European countries was to establish dialogue with Tehran and avoid any participation in renewed warmongering by the US and the Zionist regime,” he said.

Seven-day plan could reopen Hormuz

Araghchi said Iran’s most important diplomatic initiative was a proposal it had presented for resolving the disputes between Iran and the US and ending the ongoing war.

He referred to the initiative as the seven-day plan, saying that acceptance of the proposal would allow the Strait of Hormuz to be reopened within seven days.

“The most important of all these issues is the plan that the Islamic Republic of Iran has presented for resolving the existing disputes and the ongoing war between Iran and the US,” he said.

“This plan is known as the seven-day plan, and if it is accepted, the Strait of Hormuz will be reopened within seven days.”

Araghchi’s remarks came as Tehran reiterated that it remained open to diplomacy while warning that any renewed military action would be met with a stronger response.

Addressing Axios’ reference to two other Iranian diplomats, he said one of them had originally been scheduled to remain in New York for several more days to carry out his duties.

“BecaUS e of the pressure they exerted, yes, that diplomat left New York,” Baghaei said. “But in all other respects, we left New York according to the plans that had been made in advance.”

US violating host-nation obligations

Baghaei said that, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the diplomats’ departure, the US account itself amounted to an admission that Washington had failed to meet its obligations as the host country of the United Nations.

“This is itself an admission of a violation of the obligations by the host country,” he said.

“There is absolutely nothing to be proud of in the US boasting about violating its commitments as the host country,” the spokesman added, arguing that such conduct merely demonstrated that the US was not a worthy host for the United Nations.

Araghchi made a similar argument in his X post, saying that the alleged expulsion was inconsistent with the obligations of the country hosting the UN.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran rejects Axios report on expulsion of diplomats from US

TEHRAN — Iran has rejected a report by the US news website Axios claiming that two members of its delegation to the United Nations General Assembly left New York after failing to comply with a US State Department request to leave the country, with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi describing the alleged “expulsion” as a sign of “desperation and defeat.”

Axios reported that two Iranian diplomats were “kicked out” of the US on Saturday, several days after the State Department had ordered the Iranian mission to the UN to have its entire delegation leave the country. According to the report, the two diplomats had not complied with the US request issued on Monday.

Araghchi rejected the account in a post on X on Sunday, saying that Iranian diplomats who had attended the UN General Assembly had left the US according to schedule.

“All Iranian diplomats who attended UNGA, except one who departed earlier, left as scheduled,” Araghchi said.

He added that taking pride in what he described as a fake diplomatic “expulsion” was inappropriate for the head of any diplomatic corps.

“It oozes of desperation and defeat, and is

inconsistent with UN host nation obligations,” he said.

Axios had earlier reported that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio ordered the Iranian delegation to leave the country after diplomatic negotiations between Washington and Tehran reached a stalemate. The report said the move was an unUS ual diplomatic rebuke, although the Iranian delegation was likely to leave soon in any case becaUS e the General Assembly had concluded.

‘A pure lie’

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei also rejected the Axios report during his weekly press conference on Sunday, describing it as an attempt to manufacture an achievement through false claims.

“In my view, they are trying to manufacture an achievement through lies,” Baghaei said. “What they claimed is an absolute falsehood.”

He said the Iranian delegation’s travel plans, including both its arrival in and departure from the United States, had been communicated in advance.

“It was clear from the outset on what date the honorable foreign minister’s delegation would leave New York,” Baghaei said.

Iran hails departure of US forces from Iraq

TEHRAN — Iran has welcomed the departure of US and other foreign forces from Iraq after two decades, describing the development as an important and necessary step toward strengthening national sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence in the Arab country.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Iran’s Foreign Ministry congratulated the Iraqi people and government on the departure of US forces and other foreign troops, saying the development marked “a very important and necessary step” toward consolidating national governance, territorial integrity and Iraq’s independence.

The ministry said the presence of foreign forces in Iraq over the past two decades had inflicted severe human, material and security costs on the country and the wider region.

It recalled that the US military invasion of Iraq began on March

20, 2003, under what it described as the false pretext of confronting “weapons of mass destruction.”

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry, the 23-year presence of the US and its allies in Iraq resulted in devastating consequences for the country and the region, including the deaths of more than one million Iraqis, among them tens of thousands of innocent women and children.

The ministry also cited hundreds of billions of dollars in material losses to Iraq’s infrastructure, environmental destruction, severe war crimes, and the torture of Iraqi men and women prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison.

It further accused the US military presence of contributing to the strengthening of Takfiri terrorism and Daesh in Iraq and the wider region.

Iran stresses Iraq’s sovereignty

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the Islamic Republic, while paying tribute to the resistance and

steadfastness of the Iraqi people against occupation, terrorism and sectarianism, stressed the need to respect Iraq’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It also said the withdrawal of US forces and their allies should serve as a reminder that the presence of the US military and its allies in countries across the region, except for “furthering violence, insecurity, instability and terrorism,” had produced no positive outcome.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran stresses the necessity of respecting Iraq’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity,” the ministry said.

It added that the departure of foreign forces from Iraq should serve as a reminder of the consequences of foreign military intervention in the region and the instability and insecurity that followed.

Iran commemorates victims of occupation

The Foreign Ministry also paid

India’s new ambassador pledges to unlock ‘huge potential’ in Iran trade ties

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN — India’s new ambassador to Iran has emphasized the scope for expanding bilateral trade as one of his core missions, pledging to facilitate business matchmaking and explore mechanisms to overcome logistics and banking hurdles, particularly for humanitarian and essential goods.

“I think one of my important missions, which I have already spoken about earlier, is that there lies huge potential for economic trade and for trade to flourish between the two countries,” Vishwesh Negi said in remarks to the Tehran Times on Friday on the sidelines of a commemorative ceremony hosted by the Indian Embassy in Tehran to mark the 157th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Addressing the current regional and international headwinds, he added: “And despite the geopolitical situation, my effort has been to connect with each and every stakeholder in India-Iran trade relations and find out possibilities for how we can sort of do the necessary matchmaking for them to find out and further trade between the two countries.”

While pointing to practical challenges facing merchants, the ambassador stressed his commitment to keeping trade corridors open for essential supplies.

“There are certain limitations at this point in time in terms of transport, logistics and financial transactions, but it will be my endeavor to look at mechanisms for how goods can be traded between the two countries, which are essentially humanitarian goods, pharmaceuticals and food products,” he explained. “My focus would be on these aspects of trade relations and furthering trade relations.”

The Indian ambassador’s comments come amid the current geopolitical developments in West Asia triggered by the US-Israeli war on Iran, which have complicated efforts to maintain commercial links.

The US has recently intensified its economic pressure on Iran, with President Donald Trump threatening countries that continue doing business with Tehran with severe economic consequences. In August, Trump warned that countries providing Iran with an economic or financial “lifeline” would face such consequences, while US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced new sanctions aimed at further isolating Iran from the global economy.

Against this backdrop, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian held talks on the sidelines of both the SCO Summit in Bishkek on August 31 and the BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 11, underscoring the continuation of high-level India-Iran engagement amid mounting geopolitical and economic pressure.

Commenting on these high-level diplomatic engagements, the ambassador noted: “As you know, the Honorable Prime Minister of India and the Honorable President of Iran have met twice: once at the SCO Summit and recently at the BRICS Summit in New Delhi. I think that was a very good bilateral engagement between our two leaders. A host of issues were discussed, including bilateral relations and the geopolitical situation.”

Emphasizing New Delhi’s diplomatic stance, he added, “As the Honorable Prime Minister has

said, this is not the era for war, and I think we all should—including stakeholder countries—give dialogue and diplomacy a further chance to settle the issue and look for a peaceful resolution so that there is peace and stability in the region.”

Chabahar: A test for India-Iran economic ties

Asked whether India intended to continue promoting economic ties with Iran, particularly through the Chabahar port, despite mounting US pressure, the ambassador pointed to the long-term nature of the bilateral relationship.

“India and Iran have historical relations, and I believe that the relationship is a long-term partnership between the two countries,” he said. “Of course, at this point in time, this is not the ideal situation in terms of how we can further trade and economic cooperation between the two countries,” Negi said.

He described Chabahar as a concrete expression of that partnership. “And Chabahar is a manifestation of the partnership India and Iran have had over the past few years. India has contributed to the development of Chabahar port, and hopefully there will be peace and stability in the region, which would enable the completion of the Chabahar project. The project would not only provide India with a gateway to Central Asia and Europe but also contribute to the economic development of the Chabahar region and Iran itself. So, I am very optimistic about, I would say, the possibilities for further economic engagement between the two countries when the situation is right.”

The Indian ambassador’s remarks come at a sensitive juncture for the Chabahar project. India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran in May 2024 to operate the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar, which New Delhi views as an important connectivity link to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The project also offers India a route to the region that bypasses Pakistan.

However, a US sanctions waiver that had allowed India to pursue its Chabahar activities expired on April 26, 2026. India subsequently said the status of the project was under discussion with both Washington and Tehran, while Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said in September that New Delhi was seeking a “sustainable way forward” to remain involved in the port.

The issue has gained renewed attention in recent weeks. During his September visit to India for the BRICS Summit, Pezeshkian invited New Delhi to increase its investment in Chabahar and said Iran was ready to deepen its economic partnership with India. His comments came as India continued to explore ways to preserve its interests in the port following the expiration of the US waiver.

The Chabahar issue has become even more complicated by Washington’s latest economic pressure campaign against Iran. For New Delhi, the challenge is to preserve a project it regards as strategically important for regional connectivity while navigating an increasingly restrictive US sanctions environment. The ambassador’s emphasis on the long-term nature of India-Iran relations and his outlook about Chabahar therefore point to New Delhi’s continued interest in the project, even as its future operational framework remains subject to the wider geopolitical situation.

Iran marks historic milestones in space industry, expands indigenous satellite capabilities

TEHRAN — Iran has achieved a series of historic milestones in its space industry over the past two years, advancing indigenous satellite development, launch vehicle capabilities and the commercial application of space technology, according to the head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA).

Hassan Salarieh outlined the achievements at a ceremony marking Space Week at the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, emphasizing that expanding the practical applications of space technology and developing a space-based economy remain strategic priorities for the country.

He attributed the progress to coordinated efforts across multiple institutions, including the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, universities, research centers and other organizations involved in Iran’s space program.

Salarieh said the country’s space ecosystem now includes a growing number of active private-sector companies, government research centers, the Iranian Space Research Center and universities, all contributing to the development of space technologies, products and services.

The achievements, he added, demonstrate the expanding role of domestic expertise in advancing Iran’s space capabilities.

Indigenous telecommunications and launch capabilities

Among the major milestones, Salarieh highlighted the Nahid-2 telecommunications satellite, describing it as Iran’s first domestically developed telecommunications satellite to reach orbit. He said the satellite had been successfully placed in orbit and had completed most of its tests successfully.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Domestic breakthrough: South Pars Phase 11 reaches full 1 bcf/d output

TEHRAN- Iran's South Pars Phase 11 has reached a major milestone: after years of delays and the withdrawal of foreign partners such as France's Total and China's CNPC, the project has achieved its nominal production ceiling of 1 billion cubic feet per day at off-shore position B, relying on domestic expertise.

The achievement is described as a leap in Persian Gulf gas production, a way to reduce energy imbalance, and a symbol of world-class Iranian engineering.

Phase 11 is strategically sensitive because it lies on the maritime border in the Persian Gulf.

The latest step was completion of technical operations on the final well at position B. Keyvan Tarighati, head of Phase 11 development, said drilling, completion and perforation of the 12th well are finished. After the well was lightened with nitrogen, test gas flow began and is monitored continuously. Following acidizing and pressure stabilization, the well will be connected to production at maximum capacity within days.

Tarighati called the entry of new wells a strategic step toward maximum extraction from the shared field, strengthening Iran's position in regional energy diplomacy.

Hamidreza Saghafi, CEO of Petropars, said reaching 1 billion cubic feet per day at position B resulted from round-the-clock offshore drilling. With the 12th well added, gas extraction from platform B has risen to more than 28 million cubic meters per day. He described the production jump as concrete protection of national interests at the zero point of the Persian Gulf border and a way to control pressure decline in the shared reservoir. According to him, careful resource management allowed the team to overcome logistical complexity and bring the platform to full operation faster than initially forecast.

Comparative data show how rapid the development has been. In earlier periods, position B produced only about 400 million cubic feet per day, relying on the 12D jacket and a platform transferred from position 12C, with four wells in operation. During the past 17 months of intensive development, active wells tripled from four to twelve, and actual production is now near the record 1 billion cubic feet per day. More than 26,000 meters of specialized offshore drilling were completed in this period, bringing total drilling at the platform to about 50,000 meters. This added nearly 17 million cubic meters per day to the national gas supply, a figure expected to have a tangible effect on household and industrial consumption stability in the coming winter.

Development at position A has also advanced significantly. This platform will support the second part of gas extraction from



Phase 11. At the start of the current period, it was in early construction: the offshore jacket was about 35 percent complete and the topside only about 4 percent. Today, a 4,000-ton jacket has been built, braced, transported and installed in its final Persian Gulf location after more than 700 meters of precise piling. The topside construction has reached about 50 percent despite difficult conditions.

Masoud Rezaei, an offshore structural engineering expert, called the rapid progress and the resolution of long-lead items an engineering feat under supply-chain restrictions. Plans call for the structure to be loaded out and installed at about 80 percent progress so the second part of Phase 11 can enter operation as soon as possible.

The record was achieved despite severe technical obstacles, international sanctions on equipment, security threats and tense maritime conditions. Project officials say that even during regional tensions, and at times when the contractor's site for the position A topside was hit by projectiles, construction never stopped. Execution teams continued work while maintaining standards and safety principles. This resilience, they argue, shows that Iran's oil and gas industry has reached a level of technical knowledge and durability that can withstand the strongest external pressures.

The future plan for position A is carefully set. After the topside is installed offshore, initial operation will begin with four to six wells. Gradually, as drilling rigs arrive, an average of one new well will be completed every four months. This phased drilling will continue for about three years until the platform's nominal capacity is fully reached.

Petropars, which has carried out more than half of South Pars projects both onshore and offshore, has now turned Phase 11 from a symbol of years of uncertainty into a driver of sustainable national energy supply. Beyond production numbers, the project is presented as proof that Iranian specialists' determination can overcome imposed limits, offering a model for other major national projects in the oil industry.

Development of mobile dispatching center launched across country

TEHRAN- The Minister of Energy ordered: After the launch of the first center in Khorasan Razavi Province, the mobile dispatching model should be developed nationwide, and the Deputy for Electricity and Energy was tasked with drafting the necessary directives to implement the plan.

According to Mehr News Agency, quoting the Ministry of Energy's information portal, during a visit to the country's first mobile dispatching center in Khorasan Razavi, Abbas Aliabadi issued an order to expand this model nationwide and assigned its implementation to Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, Deputy for Electricity and Energy of the Ministry of Energy.

This center was designed and built with the aim of enabling monitoring and management of the power grid under emergency conditions and in locations where access to fixed dispatching centers is limited.

According to this report, the country's first mobile dispatching system was designed and built by experts from the Khorasan Regional Electricity Company and has the capability for rapid deployment and online monitoring of the grid. In its first operational activity, the system established communication with the National Dispatching Center.

During the visit to this center, the Minister of Energy emphasized the use of new

technologies for managing emergency grid conditions and asked the Deputy for Electricity and Energy to provide the ground for extending this model to other regional electricity companies by drafting the necessary directives.

Mostafa Rajabi Mashhadi, Deputy for Electricity and Energy of the Ministry of Energy, also spoke about the capabilities of this system, saying: Mobile dispatching makes it possible to monitor the grid in real time and issue maneuver commands independently of fixed centers.

He added: Using this technology, operational monitoring and command can be carried out at different points of the grid, reducing the limitations caused by the geographical location of fixed centers.

Rajabi Mashhadi said: In accordance with the order of the Minister of Energy, the necessary directives will be issued to extend this model to regional electricity companies so that this capacity can be used to increase the resilience of the power grid under emergency conditions.

With secure and independent communication infrastructure, this center can be deployed at critical points of the grid and manage power grid stability operations.

A failed, incapable, vulnerable America: Scope Ratings exposes Washington's unsustainable debt path

TEHRAN- The United States is being portrayed not as an exceptional economic power, but as an increasingly incapable and inefficient fiscal manager, dangerously exposed to the whims of investors and unable to control its own borrowing. According to Bloomberg, citing Scope Ratings, America's "exceptionally large" budget deficits and inexorably rising debt have left it "increasingly exposed" to shifts in market sentiment.

Scope kept the US at AA—three steps below the maximum—with a stable outlook, but its warning was damning: America's path of piling on debt "can't last forever." The agency said that without materially stronger economic growth or substantial fiscal adjustment through higher revenues or spending reductions, "debt dynamics" will remain unfavorable. It described an "unsustainable medium-term fiscal path" that leaves the sovereign increasingly vulnerable.



The forecast is stark. Scope predicts US debt as a percentage of output will rise to 160% within a decade, while net interest costs will reach an "exceptionally high" level by 2031. It also flagged the risks from the impending Congressional standoff over the debt ceiling—a recurring political dysfunction that shows Washington is not merely inefficient but

structurally incapable of managing its finances.

America no longer holds a top credit score from any major assessor after Moody's cut it last year. Scope's view has long been especially downbeat, and its readiness to downgrade the US contrasts with the more cautious approach of rivals. Fitch's chief sovereign analyst said another

downgrade so soon after its 2023 cut would be "very unusual." Scope, by contrast, last lowered America during the 2025 debt ceiling impasse and now scores the country two steps below Moody's, Fitch, and S&P Global Ratings.

The picture is one of a failed fiscal state: unable to restrain deficits, unwilling to make hard choices, and dependent on the goodwill of fickle investors. Its debt trajectory is unsustainable, its political system is trapped in brinkmanship, and its credit standing is eroding. Far from demonstrating strength, America appears vulnerable, inefficient, and increasingly exposed to the judgment of markets it can no longer control. Unless it achieves far stronger growth or serious fiscal adjustment, the US will remain a weakened and precarious borrower—its reputation as an exceptional economic power badly damaged.

From Bazargan to Mersin: how Iran, Turkey plan to reach \$30b in trade

TEHRAN- Iran and Turkey, aiming to increase trade to \$30 billion, are pursuing the development of the Bazargan border, the launch of a fourth crossing, strengthening rail and road transport, and establishing a joint Khoy–Van–Mersin free zone.

According to the Mehr News Agency, while Iran and Turkey are pursuing the goal of bringing bilateral trade to \$30 billion, the gap between current trade and this target cannot be filled merely by increasing exports and imports. Developing border crossings, reducing truck stops, strengthening rail and road transport, using Turkish ports, and creating new trade routes have now become an important part of the two countries' plan to increase exchanges.

In this context, Turkey is not merely a neighboring consumer market for Iran; the country's geographical location, access to Europe's transport network, and the Mediterranean and Black Sea ports have increased its capacity as one of the routes connecting Iranian goods to more distant markets.

Dariush Vossoughi, Iran's commercial attaché in Istanbul, also referring to this same capacity, has considered the development of trade relations with Turkey as going beyond increasing exports to its market, and has emphasized using Turkey's transport and logistics capacities to access European and African markets.

According to announced statistics, the volume of Iran-Turkey trade in the year 1404 was about \$19.2 billion; a figure that includes \$6.8 billion in Iran's exports to Turkey and \$12.4 billion in imports from that country. Therefore, realizing the \$30 billion target means increasing trade by about \$10.8 billion compared with last year's level.

In the first five months of the year 1405, Iran's exports to Turkey were announced at \$3.7 billion and imports from that country at \$2.8 billion.

Therefore, reaching \$30 billion from the current level requires changes in the trade and logistics capacities of the two countries, because increasing trade volume without removing border bottlenecks can merely lead to increased exchange time and cost.

Bazargan; the bottleneck of overland trade

Among existing infrastructure, the Bazargan border is considered the most important overland connection point between Iran and Turkey; a route that, in addition to bilateral trade, also covers part of the transit flow among Turkey, Europe, Iran, and Central Asian markets.

In recent months, increasing the capacity of this border has been on the two countries' agenda. According to Iran Customs, in Mordad, the number of trucks crossing Bazargan reached more than 350 per day, and a target was set to increase this figure to 400. In this framework, coordinating work shifts, facilitating control processes, managing empty and transit trucks, and reducing unnecessary stops were put on the agenda.

This capacity increase has become more important as Bazargan Customs has faced significant growth in cargo volume in recent months. According to the director general of

Bazargan Customs, from the beginning of the year to Mordad, about 190,000 tons of goods were exported via this route to Turkey, southern Persian Gulf countries, and India, a 40 percent increase compared with the same period last year. During the same period, about 150,000 tons of essential goods, medicine, bananas, and other imported goods entered and cleared through the Bazargan route, showing 250 percent growth.

Thus, the Bazargan issue is not limited to Iran-Turkey trade, and this border is becoming one of the important routes for moving goods in the regional network.

Reducing truck queues with e-TIR

On the other side of the border, Turkey and Iran held a joint meeting in August to examine truck traffic problems and waiting times. The gradual increase in truck traffic, wider use of the TIR Carnet, and implementation of the electronic e-TIR system were among the solutions raised at this meeting.

In August, the International Road Transport Union also considered the Gürbulak–Bazargan route one of the region's important road corridors; a route that connects Turkey and Europe through Iran to Central Asia and other Asian markets.

Therefore, each day of reduction in truck stop time is not merely a customs achievement; it directly affects transport costs, the predictability of delivery times, and the attractiveness of Iran's route for transit.

Alongside increasing the capacity of existing crossings, the two countries are also seeking to increase the number of border crossing points. According to Iran's commercial attaché in Istanbul, three main crossings between Iran and Turkey are currently active, and the issue of creating a fourth crossing in the Kuzeh Rash region has also been pursued in recent years. An initial agreement to create this crossing near Salmas has been proposed, and its goal is to increase trade capacity and reduce pressure on existing crossings.

Increasing the number of crossings matters because \$30 billion in trade growth, if reliant on a few limited routes, could again lead to truck queues and higher logistics costs.

In this framework, the creation of a joint free zone among Khoy, Van, and Mersin is also being pursued; a plan that, if operationalized, could transform the two countries' trade relationship from a merely border relationship into a broader logistics and production chain.

In September, the head of the Iran-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group announced that the proposal to create this free zone with Khoy as its center has been pursued and that the Iranian government's approval for it has been obtained. Under this plan, the Khoy and Van route would continue and connect to Mersin, and the creation of economic hinterlands at the Razi border has also been deemed necessary to support this plan.

According to the plan to create a free zone centered on Khoy, the Khoy and Van route would continue and connect to Mersin, and the creation of economic hinterlands at the Razi border has also been deemed necessary to support this plan.

Also, the secretary of the Supreme Council

of Free Zones has announced that necessary measures and coordination have been carried out by Iran to launch the joint Khoy-Turkey free zone, and continuing the work requires coordination with the Turkish side.

The importance of this plan lies in the fact that Khoy and the Razi border can be connected in a logistics chain to Van and then to Turkey's transport network, making the access route for Iranian goods to Western ports and markets shorter and more diverse.

Turkey's ports; an export route beyond the neighboring market

Another focus in developing trade relations is using the capacity of Turkish ports, including Mersin, Samsun, Trabzon, and Izmir. In this model, Turkey is not only a destination for Iranian goods; it can also be part of the chain for transferring goods to other markets. In particular, Mersin Port, in connection with the Iran-Turkey overland route, can play the role of a maritime hinterland for Iran's trade with Mediterranean and European markets.

This issue has become more important as geopolitical developments and disruptions in some traditional trade routes have increased the importance of alternative and combined routes. In such conditions, connecting road, rail, and port can play as much a role in trade development as increasing border capacity itself.

According to this report, alongside existing capacities, Iran's main issue in the Turkish market is not only increasing the value of exports; rather, it is increasing the share of Iranian goods in the Turkish market and using Turkey as a route to access third markets.

This matters because trade between the two countries still faces obstacles such as anti-dumping measures, quotas on some goods, higher tariffs and fees, and transit problems; obstacles that, even if transport capacity is available, can limit access of Iranian goods to the Turkish market.

On the other hand, trade development requires a more active presence of the private sector of the two countries. In recent years, thousands of companies with Iranian capital have operated in Turkey, and according to the representative of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce in Tir, the number of companies with Iranian capital in Turkey has reached 7,288.

Accordingly, for Iran, Turkey can be both a destination market and a link in the chain of access to European and other regional markets. Therefore, the main challenge on the path to \$30 billion in trade is not only "how much goods are exchanged"; rather, it is at what cost, at what speed, and through which routes goods can move between the two countries and markets beyond them.

Iran, Turkey push for expanded trade, investment and free trade

At a meeting in Istanbul, in early July, IC-CIMA head Samad Hassanzadeh met with Turkey-Iran Business Council (DEIK) and Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber officials. He highlighted over 200 investment opportunities prepared by ICCIMA for non-Iranian investors, inviting Turkish private-sector participation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

What next after Iraq’s sovereignty day?

From page 1 ► This marked a victory for those who fought in the battles of dignity, honor, and resistance. At the same time, Iraq and Turkey reached an understanding to gradually transfer the Bashiqa-Zilkan base to the Iraqi government. Several other steps to strengthen Iraqi state sovereignty are also waiting to be settled through national and foreign negotiations that lie ahead.

This event has closed a difficult chapter that, in many different forms, began in 2003. But it does not answer the harder question: Will Iraqis truly have the power to make their own decisions?

Sovereignty cannot simply be measured by the absence of foreign soldiers. That is only partial sovereignty. Real sovereignty is measured by a state's ability to make decisions, carry them out, and accept the cost of those decisions. Only then does it truly deserve to be called sovereign.

As a matter of principle, even before considering the facts on the ground, neither the legal nor the geographical answer is sufficient. A state recognized by the international community must have institutions with the power and independence necessary to exercise full sovereignty in practice. Only then can sovereignty move from being a formal principle written into the constitution to something real on the ground.

For this reason, a distinction must be made between formal sovereignty and effective sovereignty. Formal sovereignty means that the state is legally independent and free from foreign authority. Effective sovereignty, by contrast, means that the state itself possesses the capacity to exercise that independence in practice, making and enforcing its own decisions across the country.

What has been achieved at the first level is not a small thing. It would not be reasonable to call for state sovereignty while ignoring the departure of a foreign military force that had been the subject of



deep political and legal disagreement in the country for more than two decades. But the first step, important as it is, is only the beginning. What comes next is much harder.

What has been achieved at the first level is not a small thing. It would not be reasonable to call for state sovereignty while ignoring the departure of a foreign military force that had been at the center of deep political and legal disagreement in the country for more than two decades. But the first step, important as it is, is only the beginning. What comes next is much harder.

The Iraqi contradiction that has emerged in reactions to the withdrawal itself is difficult to ignore. Some groups see it as a political and security victory for themselves, while others warn of possible security gaps and the return of Daesh cells, in a different form, to vulnerable areas following the end of the U.S. military occupation.

This shows the difference between independence and capacity. A country may be legally independent while remaining weak in practice. It may have the right to make its own decisions in theory while lacking the means to carry them out. Modern states do not simply declare themselves sovereign; they must build the power and capacity necessary to protect and exercise that sovereignty.

This requires a state built on institutions rather than competing

centers of power that share control, influence, and resources.

What Iraq needs is an independent national will based on the country's interests, security, laws, and the needs of its people. Through its legitimate institutions, Iraq itself should determine the nature of its relations with Washington, Ankara, Riyadh, Tehran, Cairo, Amman, and every other capital.

This does not mean calling for isolation. A sovereign state can form alliances, draw on the experience of other countries, sign security and economic agreements, and develop broad strategic partnerships. The important distinction is that it does so according to its own decisions and to strengthen its own capabilities, rather than out of a lack of those capabilities.

Relations with Iraq should be based on equal treatment and shared interests, not on what can be taken from it while it is busy dealing with its own wounds.

Sovereignty is a combination of many kinds of power, and they cannot be separated. A state that does not have a strong economy, a reliable financial system, reasonably independent technology and infrastructure, highly capable institutions, and international relationships that give it room to act will remain open to pressure and control, especially when that pressure comes from Washington.

When it comes to economic sovereignty, Iraq has spent the past

two decades receiving more than nine-tenths of its government budget from oil sales. The income from this oil is deposited in an account connected to the U.S. financial system. Sending dollars abroad is also subject to compliance and checking rules imposed by correspondent banks. As a result, Iraq's banking sector itself has become unable to fully depend on the world's trust in it.

Iraq has become a country that pays the salaries of millions of employees from one main source of income, sells that resource in one currency, and yet cannot honestly say that its economy is free.

When it comes to energy and water sovereignty, Iraq imports gas, oil products, and electricity. At the same time, its Turkish neighbor controls much of the water flowing from the upper Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the north. These rivers are a lifeline for central and southern Iraq, leaving Iraqi summers dependent on decisions made in Ankara.

This weakness is the fault of the state, diplomacy, poor planning and absence of a national strategy for governing the country. Neighbors have watched Iraq's great natural wealth become a burden instead of being turned into industry, agriculture, refineries, and transportation networks. This makes no sense and cannot be accepted as normal. As a result, control over shared resources has become a bargaining tool rather than the basis for cooperation and partnership.

In the area of digital sovereignty, Iraqis live their daily lives using platforms, services, and computer servers that they do not control. Their personal information, messages, and family photographs are stored in data centers far across the seas. The state sometimes even shuts down the entire internet during exam periods because it has no other way to stop cheating. In doing so, it punishes an entire society because one institution cannot solve a problem.

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

This structural protection is replicated across Washington's global network of around 750 known military installations in 80 countries.

From Latin America to East Asia and West Asia, overseas bases function as sovereign enclaves that generate local insecurity while enabling imperial power projection.

The tragedy coincides with shifting domestic politics in Naha. Newly elected governor Genta Koja has aligned with Takaichi to accelerate base expansion in Henoko, dismantling local administrative bodies that previously resisted foreign military infrastructure.

Tokyo's drive to expand base infrastructure leaves the safety of local civilians subordinated to the demands of the American military presence.

Leadership Council (PLC) and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, announced from the Saudi capital Riyadh the start of a large-scale military campaign to retake what he described as the remaining areas under Ansarallah control.

In a televised address, al-Alimi said the government was moving "from the preparation phase to the action phase" after weeks of military mobilization.

The developments marked a rapidly shifting battlefield after years of largely frozen front lines. Since launching a major offensive in early September, Ansarallah has expanded across parts of Taiz and neighboring Lahj, seizing the Red Sea port city of Mocha on Sept. 10 and Mayyun Island, also known as Perim, a day later, while tensions have intensified in the highlands overlooking the strategic Bab al-Mandab Strait.

main entrances and exits.

Residents said Ansarallah spread along major streets and around public facilities in At Turbah, while many merchants closed their shops before the arrival. They said Ansarallah also used mosque loudspeakers to urge residents not to resist.

The capture of At Turbah marks the first time Ansarallah has taken control of the city since Yemen's conflict erupted in late 2014, extending the group's recent territorial gains across southwestern Yemen.

Earlier Sunday, a military official told Xinhua that Ansarallah forces had advanced through parts of Ash Shamayatayn and neighboring Al-Ma'fer districts, seizing several key positions and forcing government troops to retreat.

Ansarallah's advances came as Rashad al-Alimi, chairman of Saudi-backed Presidential

Evolution of the Resistance: three phases since Oct. 7



From page 1 ► The primary objective of the resistance in Lebanon was to support Gaza. During this phase, it achieved a very important objective, which was paralyzing the north of the Israeli occupation entity. For the entity, the phase began with an attempt to contain the resistance in Lebanon while focusing on Gaza. It ended, however, with a shift towards seeking to eliminate the resistance in Lebanon altogether, through the killing of its leaders and the destruction of parts of its military infrastructure.

The Israeli occupation entity was unable to achieve its ultimate objectives during this phase despite the severe blows it inflicted on the resistance. This is despite the fact that the leader of the resistance and a large number of other leaders were killed, and parts of the resistance's infrastructure were struck. Had it not been for the strength of the resistance, its institutions, its spirit, and its determination, it would not have been able to withstand this confrontation. The imbalance in capabilities, the scale of the penetration that had taken place, and the extensive use of technology created conditions under which the confrontation could have ended with the elimination of any other resistance. Therefore, the resistance's very ability to withstand the

confrontation constitutes an important asset for it. During this phase, Israel was unable to advance beyond the front line more than approximately two to three kilometers.

The second phase began on November 27, 2024 and continued until March 2, 2026. It was a nominal ceasefire phase, while the Israeli occupation entity retained five positions and continued attempting to expand. The most significant development during this phase was the elimination of the Syrian government as part of an international and regional conspiracy, in cooperation with Turkey and the United States, and the installation of a new regime. This resulted in the loss of the strategic depth on which the resistance had relied on Syria and completely complicated its logistical operations, particularly its supply, equipment, weapons, protection and support lines.

The second phase was one of the most difficult phases for the resistance, psychologically and organizationally, because the decision was to remain silent on the ground. There was an urgent need for restoration, repair, restructuring and rebuilding, as well as for learning from the lessons of the first phase.

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

Israel blows up schools, flattens villages in southern Lebanon

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Israeli forces escalated their campaign of artillery shelling, airstrikes, and controlled demolitions across southern Lebanon over the weekend, turning border villages into uninhabitable wreckage while Washington provides political cover for the ongoing aggression.

Explosives in schools and destruction of border villages

According to local media outlets, the latest wave of destruction hit hardest in the Marjayoun and Tyre districts. In Houla, Israeli soldiers rigged a private school building with heavy explosives before blowing it up and setting fire to nearby homes.

Similar demolitions shook Al-Mansouri, where massive detonations sent clouds of white smoke rising above residential neighborhoods, rattling windows as far away as Tyre. The town's public school had already been mostly destroyed during earlier raids.

Lebanese news outlets also reported relentless artillery bombardment across Wadi Al-Hujeir, Nabatieh Al-Fawqa, Kfarromman, and Baraachit. Israeli warplanes launched strikes on Kfar Tebni, Bani Hayyan, and the outskirts of Mayfadoun and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, while low-flying fighter jets buzzed towns across the south.

According to local reports, Israeli troops currently occupy more than 60 southern

communities, carrying out systematic demolitions to ensure civilian populations cannot return.

The American shield and occupation costs

This campaign continues despite the "Framework Agreement" signed in Washington on June 26. Advertised by American officials as a step toward Israeli withdrawal and Lebanese army deployment, the deal has produced no pullback.

Instead, Tel Aviv has used the agreement to entrench its presence while demanding unilateral Lebanese concessions.

The ongoing occupation poses severe daily hazards for local populations trying to check their land. On September 30, a Lebanese army serviceman was severely injured alongside three civilians near Nabatieh al-Fawqa when a leftover explosive charge detonated during a property inspection escort.

Israeli forces are not operating without cost. An Israeli military spokesperson confirmed Sunday that an officer was moderately injured and a soldier seriously hurt in an operational explosion in southern Lebanon on Friday.

Meanwhile, figures cited from Israel's war ministry show that 1,318 Israeli military and security personnel have died across all battlefronts since October 2023.

American Marine arrested over brutal murder of Japanese woman in Okinawa

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Japanese authorities lodged a formal protest with Washington on Sunday after Okinawa police arrested a 20-year-old U.S. Marine on suspicion of robbing and murdering a local woman in Naha, reigniting fury over the massive American military footprint in Japan.

Lance Cpl. Devin Jacob Ballard, assigned to the Third Marine Expeditionary Force at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, remains in Japanese custody following the death of 39-year-old Anna Yagi.

Investigators found Yagi strangled inside a hotel room early Saturday, with her wallet and backpack missing.

Hotel surveillance cameras captured Ballard entering the building alongside the victim be-

fore departing alone.

Police arrested him hours later in an Okinawa City entertainment district. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi called the killing an extremely brutal "incident," while Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi summoned the commander of U.S. Forces Japan to convey "deep concern."

The murder lays bare an enduring history of foreign troop violence on the island.

Okinawa accounts for less than one percent of Japanese territory yet hosts roughly 70 percent of all American military bases in the country alongside 30,000 active-duty personnel.

For eight decades, local residents have endured toxic pollution, jet noise, and a relentless sequence of violent offenses.

Prefectural police recorded 101

Ansarallah extend gains in Yemen’s Taiz

Yemen's Ansarallah made fresh territorial gains in the southwestern province of Taiz on Sunday, pressing its advance as the Saudi-backed government in Yemen announced the start of a large-scale military campaign to retake what it called the remaining Ansarallah-held areas.

A local security official, speaking to Xinhua on condition of anonymity, confirmed that Ansarallah fighters had entered At Turbah, a strategic center in southern Taiz province, without fighting after Saudi-led forces withdrew earlier in the day.

He added that troops and allied fighters had pulled back to mountainous positions outside At Turbah, while some retreated farther south into neighboring Lahj province following "battlefield setbacks and losses." Ansarallah fighters subsequently moved into the city, deploying at key locations and its

Iran shines brighter in Nagoya

TEHRAN - Iran's delegation concluded its campaign at the 20th Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya with an improved gold-medal tally compared with the previous edition in Hangzhou.

The Nagoya Asian Games came to an end with Iran finishing sixth in the overall medal standings after winning 19 gold, 18 silver and 15 bronze medals for a total of 52 medals.

Iran sent a delegation of 304 athletes to Nagoya, competing across 38 sports. The number of athletes was higher than at the previous Asian Games in Hangzhou.

Iran also climbed one place in the overall standings compared with the 2022 Asian Games, moving up to sixth. The country had previously finished sixth at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta as well.

Although Iran's overall medal haul fell short of the 54 medals won at the Hangzhou Games, the number of gold medals increased significantly. Iran won 13 gold medals in Hangzhou, compared with 19 in Nagoya — an increase of six golds.

The performance of Iran's women was another notable highlight of the Games. While Iranian women failed to win a gold medal in Hangzhou, they claimed three golds in Nagoya.

Iran's latest gold came in dramatic fashion on Saturday as the men's volleyball team defeated Japan 3-1 in the final. The victory secured Iran's fourth consecutive Asian Games volleyball title and gave the country its 19th gold medal of the competition. Amin Esmailnezhad led Iran with 22 points in the final.

Wrestling has been one of the main sources of Iran's gold medals. Yones Emami won the men's freestyle 74kg title after defeating Japan's Yoshinosuke Aoyagi 9-5 in the final. Emami's victory was Iran's 17th gold medal at the time.

Shortly afterward, Amirali Azarpira added another wrestling gold in the men's 97kg freestyle category. Azarpira dominated Uzbekistan's Sherzod Poyonov 10-0 in the final to claim Iran's 18th gold medal.

Freestylers Mohammad Nokhodi in 86kg and Amirhossein Zare in 125kg had previously won two golds. Also, Alireza Abdeval in 77kg and Amin Mirzazadeh in 130kg had also seized two gold medals in Greco-Roman for the Iranian delegation.

Iran's success has not been limited to wrestling. Arian Salimi won the men's +80kg taekwondo gold medal after defeating Uzbekistan's Marat Mavlonov 2-0 in the final. His victory was Iran's 16th gold of the Games. Saghar Moradi had previously won the women's 67kg taekwondo title, giving Iran another gold in the sport.

Other important Iranian gold medalists in weightlifting include Ali Davoudi, who claimed gold in the men's 110kg and Ali Alipour in the men's 95kg category.

Kurash athlete Majid Vahid Barimanlou won a gold medal in the men's -66kg.

Iran has also collected medals in climbing, padel, kabaddi, boxing, fencing, gymnastic, canoe spring, shooting, climbing, and 3x3 basketball.

Kimia Zarei and Zeynab Norouzi seized a gold medal in the women's lightweight double sculls as well as a gold medal in women's lightweight singles sculls won by Fatemeh Mojallal. Mohammadreza Tayebi in men's shot put, Morteza and Mahmoud Nemati in karate, Iran's E sports, and Soheil Mousavi in wushu snatched also gold medals in the Games.

With 19 gold, 18 silver and 15 bronze medals, Iran's 52-medal haul places it among the leading teams at Aichi-Nagoya 2026. The final standings may still change as the remaining events are completed, but the performances of athletes including Yones Emami, Amirali Azarpira, Arian Salimi, Saghar Moradi, Alireza Abdevali, Ali Davoudi and the men's volleyball team have already made Iran's campaign one of the country's significant Asian Games performances.

At the top of the Asian Games medal table, China, Japan and South Korea occupy the first three positions, earning 169, 83 and 39

gold medals, respectively. China has built its lead through a large number of gold medals across numerous sports, while host nation Japan has also produced a substantial medal haul. South Korea remains among the leading Asian sporting nations.

Japan's strong performance has made the host country one of the central stories of the Games. Its rivalry with China and South Korea has been visible across several disciplines, while Iran has continued to challenge the leading Asian nations in sports such as wrestling, volleyball and taekwondo.

The Iranian men's volleyball team's victory over Japan was particularly significant because it not only delivered another gold medal but also completed an undefeated campaign. Iran defeated Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea and Pakistan on its way to the final before beating Japan 3-1.

Iran had finished seventh in the previous edition, gaining 13 gold, 21 silver and 20 bronze medals.

Iran sitting volleyball target fifth straight gold in Nagoya: Bigdeli

TEHRAN - Iran's men's sitting volleyball team captain Sadegh Bigdeli is confident that Team Melli can extend their remarkable record by winning a fifth consecutive gold medal at the Asian Para Games in Nagoya.

Iran have won the sitting volleyball title at all four previous editions of the Asian Para Games, and Bigdeli says the team will travel to Nagoya determined to maintain that unbeaten record.

The national team have been going through a period of transition in recent months, with several changes gradually being made to the squad. Despite the changes, Bigdeli believes the team are in good shape ahead of the competition.

"The training camp before our departure went very well," Bigdeli said in an exclusive interview. "The players arrived in good physical condition, and we used the camp to complete the final stages of our conditioning work and finalize our line-up for the tournament. Thankfully, everyone is fit and there are no injury concerns."

Iran will hold one final training camp in Tehran before heading to Japan. The camp is scheduled to begin on Oct. 5 and will provide the coaching staff with an opportunity to work on the final details before the competition gets underway.

"The coaches will use this opportunity to go over the final tactical and technical points with the players. It is our last chance to prepare before travelling to Nagoya, and hopefully we can arrive at the Games at 100 percent."

Asked about Iran's strongest opponents in Nagoya, Bigdeli pointed to Kazakhstan as the team most capable of challenging the defending champions.

"We recently had a joint training camp with Iraq in Iran, and I have to say that their team have improved significantly compared with the past," the Iran captain said. "But our main rivals are Kazakhstan. They are the bronze medalists from the World Championships and are a very strong team."

"We are going to the Asian Para Games to win our fifth gold medal," he said. "We hope to return home with the gold and make the people of Iran happy."

For Iran, Nagoya represents more than just another tournament. The team will be seeking to preserve one of the most impressive records in Asian Para sport. With a changing squad, stronger opposition and the pressure that comes with being the defending champions, the challenge may be greater than in previous editions. But Bigdeli's message is clear: Iran are going to Nagoya with one target — a fifth consecutive Asian Para Games title.

Iran has the attractions, the challenge is turning them into tourism: Javad Gharaei

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - Iran does not lack tourism attractions. What it has struggled to do, says Iranian traveler and documentary filmmaker Javad Gharaei, is turn the country's extraordinary natural and cultural diversity into a tourism industry capable of attracting visitors, generating revenue and properly introducing the ancient country to the world.

After decades of traveling across Iran, from the Hyrcanian forests and Zagros Mountains to the Lut Desert and the Makran coast, Gharaei has seen a country where landscapes, climates, cultures and traditions can change dramatically within relatively short distances. He considers that diversity one of Iran's greatest national assets, but an asset that remains underused.

For Gharaei, the challenge is not simply building more hotels, roads or other tourism infrastructure. Promotion, investment, education and infrastructure must advance together, he argues, while the authenticity of destinations must be protected from the pressures of tourism itself.

In a conversation with the Tehran Times on the Tehran Talks program, Gharaei reflects on more than two decades of travel and documentary-making, the tourism potential of Iran's diverse landscapes and communities, the role of documentaries in putting little-known destinations on the map, and the need to develop tourism without destroying the very authenticity that makes places worth visiting.

Below is an edited selection of the interview:

Where did your fascination with Iran's nature begin?

Well, I fell in love with nature when I was about 17 or 18. I began mountaineering in the mountains of Shemiran, in northern Tehran. Gradually, I moved on to other mountains and took mountaineering and skiing courses at different clubs.

The more I traveled through the mountains, the more I realized that there was much more than the peaks themselves. There were plains, deserts, valleys and completely different environments along the routes.

That was when I gradually became familiar with Iran's extraordinary natural diversity.

Iran has almost all of the world's major climates. Apart from tropical and polar climates, we have almost every major type of climate in one country.

And this climatic diversity has produced cultural diversity as well.

If the entire planet had one climate, cultures would probably be far more similar. But climate affects almost everything: architecture, food, clothing, music, customs, ceremonies, rituals, beliefs and even, to some extent, people's ways of life and temperaments.

For me, this is one of the most fascinating things about Iran.

So your journey began with nature, but eventually took you toward culture and history as well?

Exactly. As I became familiar with different natural environments, I also encountered different ethnic groups and communities. That made me increasingly interested in Iran's history and culture.

I began studying them more seriously and became fascinated by the depth of Iranian civilization.

Eventually, alongside my filmmaking education at the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, I studied tourism management at university. During my studies, I became even more interested in the



Iranian traveler and documentary filmmaker Javad Gharaei (L) speaks to the Tehran Times at the newspaper's studio.

enormous number and diversity of tourism attractions in Iran.

I began asking myself a very simple question: If we possess such an extraordinary range of attractions, why have we not made better use of them?

Iran has not only natural attractions. We have ethnic and cultural diversity, history, architecture and a civilization that has developed over thousands of years.

In my view, these attractions are national assets, just as oil, gas, mineral resources, agricultural land and our territory are national assets.

Yet we have not used this particular asset as effectively as we could have.

We have not generated the foreign-exchange earnings that tourism could potentially provide, and we have not attracted the number of international visitors that a country with this level of diversity might expect.

That realization was one of the reasons I entered the tourism field.

I wanted to portray these attractions as well as I could, because of my love for Iran, for Iranian people and for the country's civilization.

I also felt that some people inside the country, including some officials, had not fully recognized the importance of these attractions, either as things that need to be protected or as assets that can create economic opportunities and introduce Iran to the world.

You have described tourism attractions as a national asset. Why do you think Iran has struggled to turn that asset into a successful tourism industry?

One of the biggest weaknesses is that we have not properly introduced our attractions to the world.

For about eight years, I have been pursuing a project called Journey to the Land of Dreams. My objective has been to introduce Iran beyond its borders.

But the project has not yet come to fruition because, in my view, officials have not fully recognized the extent to which tourism can contribute to the country, economically, politically, culturally and even spiritually.

Think about the situation: a country with this geographical position, cultural diversity and history has still not been able to introduce itself to the world as effectively as it could.

That is one of the major weaknesses of our tourism industry.

You have emphasized promotion. But many people argue that Iran must first develop its tourism infrastructure before it can seriously compete with countries such as Turkey or Malaysia. Do you agree?

I think infrastructure, promo-

tion, education and investment must develop together.

When I was studying tourism at university, I researched Malaysia. Malaysia has a very successful tourism industry, but in terms of the diversity of attractions, I believe Iran has a much greater range.

What happened in Malaysia was interesting. At first, officials focused heavily on infrastructure. They invested for years and developed very good infrastructure. But then they realized that tourists were still not arriving in sufficient numbers.

They understood that infrastructure alone was not enough. They also needed to advertise the country and introduce its attractions to the world.

I think we can learn from that experience.

Sometimes we say, "First we need infrastructure. Then, perhaps 10 years later, we can promote tourism."

I do not think that is economically sensible.

Imagine spending billions of dollars over 10 years on infrastructure and only then beginning to expect revenue. Why not develop infrastructure while simultaneously promoting destinations, educating people and attracting investment?

We already have a certain level of infrastructure. We have hotels, hostels and inns. We have extremely hospitable people, which is a very important tourism asset.

We also have aviation infrastructure, although aviation has faced serious difficulties, including the attacks on passenger aircraft during the recent war.

The important point is that we should not wait for everything to become perfect before we begin.

Tourists themselves generate demand. Demand attracts investors. Investment creates more infrastructure.

You have a practical example of that process in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Yes. Sistan-Baluchestan is a very good example.

In 2009, I went there and began producing my first documentary series in the region. I worked along the Makran (aka Makko-ran) coast, from Gwatar Bay toward the borders of Sistan-Baluchestan and Hormozgan.

At that time, around 2010, Chabahar had only three hotels. Along the coastal strip there were essentially no hostels, eco-lodges or guesthouses. Those hotels were mainly used by a limited number of business travelers, and there were only one or two flights a week.

We produced several documentary segments and they were broadcast on television.

After the programs were broadcast, many tourists began

traveling to the region.

Today, there are more than 15 four- and five-star hotels in Chabahar, and more than 150 eco-lodges along the coastal strip alone.

The change was remarkable.

What does that tell us?

Tourists bring investors. They create demand for infrastructure. They create demand for training and services.

If you promote a destination properly and bring people there, you can identify what is needed. Then government authorities, investors and local communities can respond.

Infrastructure can develop very quickly when there is real demand.

In that region, a great deal changed within two or three years.

So I believe tourism development is not as complicated as we sometimes make it.

You mentioned the extraordinary experience of moving between different climates. One place that illustrates this particularly well is Opert, on the border between Semnan and Mazandaran. What makes it special?

Opert is extraordinary because of the dramatic change that takes place within a very short distance.

It lies on the border between Semnan and Mazandaran. Imagine starting in a dry landscape, with little water and vegetation, and then moving toward the mountains.

At one point, the temperature below was around 35 degrees Celsius. I was traveling in short sleeves. That same night, it snowed in the higher elevations and the temperature fell to around minus 14 degrees.

That is a difference of roughly 45 degrees within a very small geographical area.

And the climatic change brings cultural and ecological changes with it.

As you travel, dialects change. Clothing changes. Food changes. Music changes. The landscape changes. You encounter different communities and different ways of life.

From the dry landscapes of Semnan, you can eventually look toward Mazandaran and see the dense Hyrcanian forests.

Within perhaps 30 kilometers, you can move from camels, saxaul and desert vegetation to snow-covered mountains and forested landscapes.

Further up, you enter habitats associated with species such as the Persian leopard, golden eagle and brown bear.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Iran urges UNESCO to help restore scientific infrastructure damaged in war

TEHRAN – The head of the National Committee for Management of Social Transformations (MOST) has called for UNESCO to play an effective role in safeguarding knowledge, ensuring uninterrupted access to learning, and rebuilding academic centers damaged during the US-Israeli imposed war against the country.

Highlighting the destructive impact of conflicts on educational institutions and human capacities, Seyyed Ziae Hashemi said the international community needs to pay close attention to these outcomes, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks while addressing the extraordinary session of the Intergovernmental Council of MOST Program, which took place at UNESCO headquarters on October 1 in Paris; the official and the Secretary General of Iran's National Commission for UNESCO, Hassan Fartousi, attended the session online.

Referring to the impacts of the US-Israeli war against Iran, and the damage inflicted on certain educational and scientific institutions, cultural heritage and civilian infrastructures, he called for UNESCO to utilize its capacities for rebuilding scientific and educational capacities, strengthening international cooperation, and supporting sustainable development.

"International responses must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each crisis, while simultaneously placing the fundamental principles of protecting human lives, safeguarding knowledge, and ensuring the continuity of learning at the heart of these efforts," he added.

"The catastrophic dimensions of war in Gaza have inflicted irreparable damage on civilians, educational centers, cultural and scientific activities; the international bodies have to make it clear what they can do within the frameworks of BRIDGES and MOST to protect knowledge, sustain education and research," he added.

The restoration of the right to education for Afghan girls and women was another issue raised by the official.

Fartusi, for his part, emphasized that science is not merely a driver of industry or technology, but an essential part of human life and a factor that enhances our understanding of the world. Access to knowledge, equal learning opportunities, and universal participation in research are fundamental rights in human society.

Referring to UNESCO's approach to open



science, he called for the establishment of specific mechanisms that prevents the monopolization of knowledge, ensure the free flow of knowledge, and strike a balance between supporting researchers and universal access to science.

Highlighting the challenges faced by researchers due to unilateral and coercive measures, the official noted that BRIDGES frame work needs to propose practical solutions to remove barriers to scientific cooperation, prevent concentration of knowledge and power, and consolidate the concept of knowledge as a shared heritage and asset of humanity.

The Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Program was established by UNESCO Member States in 1994. It is composed of 35 Member States elected by the General Conference, whose representatives meet every two years to guide and oversee the planning and implementation of the MOST Program. The IGC defines the MOST Program's broad priorities, reviews its activities and achievements, and helps strengthen the link between social and human sciences research and public policy.

Through its work, the IGC provides a platform for Member States to exchange on contemporary social transformations and to promote more inclusive, evidence-based policies aligned with national priorities.

Attacking universities is a "crossing of red lines"

In June, Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, said that

attacking universities is a crossing of red lines, highlighting that many universities and educational centers in the country were targeted by the United States and Israel during the recent war.

When a university is targeted, in fact, one of the most authentic centers of culture and civilization is attacked, and the harm is directed at the entire scientific community of the world, msrt.ir quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks while addressing the tenth meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Education Ministers, which took place in Minsk, Belarus, on June 16. A delegation led by the science minister attended the meeting.

Elaborating on the US-Israeli military attacks on Iran, destruction, and assassinations of Iranian universities and scientists in the past year, he emphasized that universities should be safe havens for thought, dialogue, and hope, rather than victims of conflicts.

The official raised a question, asking participants, "Will the international community allow the most authentic centers of civilization to fall victim to violence?", and urged the global scientific community and international organizations to adopt a clearer, more responsible, and decisive stance in defending the security of universities, scientists, and scientific centers.

Silence in the face of these aggressions will lead to constant violence against science and civilization, he added.

Homegrown robots to enhance IRCS rescue operations in crises

TEHRAN – Domestically made rescue robots make search and rescue missions faster and more accurate, lower risks, and enhance the safety of rescuers by collecting efficient data and helping rescuers identify potential threats before they enter dangerous zones.

Equipped with cameras, thermal sensors, sound and gas detectors, robot rescuers will be used to assess and analyze the hazardous environment, locate survivors, and send pictures to operational teams, helping them to make the best decision for each scenario, IRNA quoted Babak Mahmoudi, the chief of the Iranian Red Crescent Society's rescue and relief organization, as saying.

Rescue robots will be used to navigate mountainous areas, forests, and insurmountable locations that are dangerous for humans to collect images and data and transmit them to rescuers and enhance field operations, Mahmoudi added.

The official went on to say that rescue robots will not replace human forces; they serve as tools that assist rescuers in search and rescue operations, enabling them to operate remotely in high-risk environments.

The number of manufactured rescue robots in the country will soon reach 100, which will play a key role in enhancing preparedness, response speed, and safety in search and rescue operations.

Skilled IRCS rescuers will benefit from drones, life detection devices, search and rescue dogs, and robots to carry out rescue missions with greater safety,



higher speed and precision, he further noted.

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

In July, Jagan Chapagain, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), in a letter to Pirhossein Kolivand, the head of the IRCS, lauded the IRCS efforts during the 40-day US-Israeli war against Iran, noting that relief and medical services, search and rescue operations, and dedication of the IRCS volunteers showcase the outstanding capabilities of a strong national society in crisis management.

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

"On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies, I wish to extend our appreciation and recognition for the extraordinary humanitarian response led by the Iranian Red Crescent Society in the context of the current conflict situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the letter reads.

"Your swift mobilization of volunteers and staff, the scale and effectiveness of life-saving assistance, and the steadfast commitment to our fundamental principles have ensured that those in need of urgent assistance have received timely and dignified support.

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

nian territory.

We are deeply saddened by the loss of four dedicated IRCS volunteers who tragically lost their lives in the line of duty. Their selfless commitment to saving lives stands as a powerful testament to our values. On behalf of the IFRC, I wish to express our heartfelt solidarity with the IRCS, as well as our deepest condolences to the families, friends, and colleagues of these selfless individuals. Their sacrifice will not be forgotten.

Your response stands as a powerful example of what a strong National Society can deliver in times of crisis- saving lives, alleviating suffering, and preserving human dignity.

The IFRC remains fully committed to supporting IRCS in its ongoing efforts and in addressing the evolving humanitarian needs. We stand in solidarity with you, your dedicated staff, and your vast network of volunteers, whose courage and commitment continue to inspire the entire IFRC network."

Also, Hossam Elsharkawi, the IFRC Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in a letter to Kolivand 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.

Iran secures third consecutive world title with five golds at IOAA 2026

TEHRAN – Iran's national Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad team has been crowned world champion for the third consecutive year after winning five gold medals at the 19th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA 2026).

Iranian students secured five gold medals at the international competition, which was held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from September 25 to October 5, 2026.

More than 320 students from over 66 countries took part in this year's Olympiad. Sarina Elmpour, Mohammad-Hossein Hosseini, Hirbod Foudazi, Hossein Masoumi, and Arshia Mirshamsi-Kakhaki won gold medals for Iran.

IOAA is an annual competition in astronomy and astrophysics for high school students worldwide to strengthen ties between different nations and promote the exchange of knowledge.

The main goal of the IOAA is to promote the growing interest in astronomy and related STEM subjects, especially through the general education of young people, and to enhance the development of international contacts among different countries in promoting astronomy and astrophysics in schools.

It is expected that, through events like the IOAA, brighter high-school students will be eager to study astronomy at the university level to become the next generation of astronomy and astrophysics professionals.

The IOAA is one of the twelve International

Science Olympiads. Established in 2006 by five nations—Iran, Thailand, Indonesia, China, and Poland—the IOAA was created with a shared vision: to inspire the next generation of astronomers, astrophysicists, and space enthusiasts, while fostering international friendship through scientific collaboration.

The Iranian students grabbed five gold medals at the 18th IOAA, marking the country's second consecutive world championship.

The event was held from August 11 to 21, 2025, in Mumbai, India, attracting over 300 high school students from 64 countries.

The 17th IOAA was held from August 17 to 27, 2024, in Vassouras, state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Over 250 students from 57 countries participated in the event; Iranian students won five gold medals, ranking first globally.

In 2023, Iranian students grabbed three gold medals and two silver medals, ranking third in the 16th IOAA.

Iran ranked first in the world in the 15th IOAA 2022, held in Georgia from August 14 to 22.

The Iranian team won first place in the tournament by winning 9 gold medals and 1 silver medal. 250 students from 45 countries participated in this competition.

In IOAA 2021, the Iranian delegation won 2 gold medals, 5 silver medals, 2 bronze medals, and an honorary diploma at the competition, held in Colombia on November 14–21.

Tehran to host 7th Iran Smart City Exhibition and Conference



international cooperation, and contribute to global efforts to build equitable, prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive cities that provide their communities with better living environments and quality of life.

On October 31, the Global Observance of World Cities Day takes place in Fuzhou, China, under the theme "Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All." The 2026 observance focuses on urban regeneration as a catalyst for achieving adequate housing for all and on how area-based regeneration, combined with housing and informal-settlement strategies, can create more inclusive and climate-resilient neighborhoods.

Cities around the world are confronting interconnected pressures, including housing affordability challenges, ageing neighborhoods and infrastructure, underutilized urban land, climate-related risks and widening social inequalities. According to the World Cities Day 2026 Concept Note, up to 3.4 billion people lack access to adequate housing, secure tenure, basic services or affordable living conditions. Urban regeneration offers an opportunity to address these challenges by improving existing urban areas while expanding access to adequate housing and ensuring that no one is left behind.

The 2026 theme emphasizes integrated approaches that connect affordable housing with improvements to public space, infrastructure, connectivity and climate resilience. It also places particular importance on participatory and community-led regeneration, together with safeguards that can prevent displacement and ensure that existing residents benefit from improvements to their homes and neighborhoods.

World Cities Day 2026 will provide a platform for national and local governments, United Nations entities, international organizations, academia, the private sector and communities to exchange experiences, showcase innovative practices and identify practical solutions. The official 2026 program framework runs from 31 October to 2 November 2026 at the Fuzhou Strait International Conference and Exhibition Center and includes an opening ceremony, thematic forums, side events, exhibitions and city tours.



OCTOBER 5, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Justice puts everything in its place, and liberality brings out things from a special direction. Justice is a statesman who gives everyone his right, and liberality is a habit belonging to one person only. Therefore, justice is worthier.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:53 Evening: 18:01 Dawn: 4:40 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:03 (tomorrow)

Isfahan children's film festival opens with tribute to young martyrs

TEHRAN- The 38th edition of the International Film Festival for Children and Youth of Isfahan opened on Saturday with a ceremony honoring child and adolescent martyrs, attended by festival secretary Hamed Jafari, Isfahan Mayor Ali Qassemzadeh, members of the City Council and municipal officials.

The ceremony began with a visit to the Martyrs' Cemetery of Isfahan, where participants paid tribute to the city's child and adolescent martyrs as well as those killed during the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War, IRNA reported.

Speaking at the ceremony, Jafari said he hoped the festival would become a blessing for future generations, allowing children and adolescents to live with hope, motivation and a positive outlook toward the future.

"We had hoped that the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Iran and its people in the recent wars could have witnessed the opening of this new edition of the festival," he said, while thanking participants and organizers for their efforts.

For his part, Qassemzadeh said this year's festival was being held in a different atmosphere, particularly following the martyrdom of children at Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab.

"It is natural for the atmosphere of the festival to be affected by the martyrdom of the children of Shajareh Tayyebah School in Minab, and we cannot remain indifferent to such an incident," he said.

The mayor noted, however, that the festival had retained its cultural and artistic character, pointing to Isfahan residents' determination to maintain social and cultural activities even during periods of conflict and enemy attacks.

He said the same spirit was reflected in the continuation of the festival, adding that difficult circumstances should not prevent children from pursuing their dreams, talents and creative activities.

He expressed hope that the festival could further establish Isfahan as an international



destination for children's culture and art and provide an opportunity to introduce the talents and aspirations of Iranian children to audiences around the world.

The mayor also described the current edition as the first international festival held in Isfahan following the US aggression against Iran, saying efforts had been made to strengthen the event's international profile after 38 editions.

As part of Isfahan's efforts to develop as a child-friendly city, Qassemzadeh said cinemas had been distributed across different parts of the city to make festival screenings and programs more accessible to children and families.

He added that the organizers sought to make the festival more than a venue for film screenings, turning it into a platform for children to participate, be seen and engage with cultural and artistic activities.

During the ceremony, the families of martyrs Seyyed Mostafa Tabatabai, Jafar Aqa-pour, Mehdi Nasr Esfahani, Moein Heydari, Mehdi Bokaei, and several others were also honored.

The 38th International Film Festival for Children and Youth will run until October 8 in Isfahan with the participation of the Farabi Cinema Foundation and Isfahan Municipality.

Iran's "The Long Winter" wins award at Eurasia documentary festival

TEHRAN- Iranian documentary "The Long Winter", directed by Hassan Jafari, won the Best Film Award at the 10th International Documentary Film Festival of CIS Countries "Eurasia.Doc." which concluded in Minsk, Belarus, on October 2.

The film was among the winners announced at the festival's closing ceremony, receiving the Prize of the 10th CIS Documentary Film Festival "Eurasia.Doc" in the Best Film category, Mehr reported on Sunday.

"The Long Winter", a 44-minute documentary, tells the story of an elderly couple living in a village in northern Iran. The film follows the couple as they confront the difficulties of rural life and the wife's illness, while facing a difficult decision over whether to remain in their village or move to the city.

Jafari directed the film, with Farzaneh Fathi as screenwriter, Farahbakhsh Farhadnia as cinematographer, Yasser Talebi as editor and Yasser Faryadras as producer.

The documentary was produced by the Nehzat Media Arts



Center and the Documentary, Experimental and Animation Cinema Center.

Jafari has directed several documentary works, including "Forty Years of Love", "Kijakarchal", "Paradise", and "Last Breaths".

The 10th edition of Eurasia.Doc was held from September 28 to October 2 in Smolensk, Russia, and Minsk, Belarus. According to the festival's official website,

361 films from 14 countries were submitted to the main competition, with 34 works eventually selected for the final competition.

The festival brought together documentary filmmakers, journalists, experts and audiences from several countries, with films addressing historical events, contemporary social issues, human experiences and

developments in different societies.

The festival's Grand Prix was awarded to the Russian documentary "39th Medical Unit: The Battle for Life", directed by Anastasia Mikhailovskaya and Artem Somov. Other films receiving the Eurasia.Doc festival prize included Russia's "Dulag 142 - Death Camp" and Belarus' "The Untold War: Women's Fate".

Farhadi criticizes Hollywood's perspective at Rio Film Festival

TEHRAN - Renowned Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi discussed the perceived dominance of American cinema and cautioned against viewing Hollywood as a reliable source for authentic portrayals of foreign cultures.

Farhadi, who is in Brazil for the presentation of his latest film "Parallel Tales" at the Rio Film Festival, made the remarks during a panel, ISNA reported.

The two-time Oscar winner was asked about "Argo" winning Best Picture just a year after "A Separation" won Best International Film at the Oscars. "I watched the film at the time it came out and felt it was a 'Hollywood thing,'" Farhadi said.

In "Argo," loosely based on a true story, director Ben Affleck plays a Latino exfiltration specialist who masquerades as a Hollywood producer to rescue six Americans held captive in Tehran during the US hostage crisis in Iran.

"The problem with these kinds of films in Hollywood [and] some people in the United States [is that] they look at the world from up to down," he added. "Someday you should ask them: Why do you feel you're up and we're down? I don't understand why they have this ego that they're up." The Iranian director then said Americans often claim to "have democracy," but they don't. "You don't have democracy. It's a lie."

Farhadi then recalled spending time in the US a few years ago when working on a project and, during research, travelling to San Francisco to speak with incarcerated men. "I met some people in prison who are Black, [some who come] from other countries, and the real America was there. But



people in the world don't see that part of the United States."

"I have this problem when they feel they are up and they think, '[others] should be like us,'" he continued. "Even if it's in a good way and they want to be kind to you, they wish 'one day you'll become like us,' and no, I don't want to."

Still on "Argo," the director said movies like that "are not deep." "They make these movies for money; it's a business. And in these films, it's always a white guy from the United States saving others. My question is: Why? Why does an American go to Cuba or Iran to save people? People understand they can save themselves. Who asked you to come and save us?"

Asked about how he broaches politics in his films, the renowned filmmaker said that, whenever "you talk about society, you are talking about politics." "Even when you talk about family life, their relationships, their difficulties and problems, indirectly you are talking about politics. In my films, I always try not to talk about politics directly because, to me, that is a bit far from cinema. The cinema that I

believe is the kind of cinema that gives space to audiences to discover things about themselves."

The director then brought up Abbas Kiarostami's "Fellow Citizen" as Iran's "most political film." The 1983 documentary heavily trails drivers across the streets of the Iranian capital. "He made a documentary about car drivers in Tehran, but when you see people, the way they talk to the police, the layers are very political."

"Media and cinema don't give you a complete image of people's ordinary life," he added. "But the thing about empathy is that, all around the world, people are similar to each other. Cinema is based on hate and love. And [when it comes to] hate and love, everywhere is the same. A love between a mother and child in Brazil and in Tehran, is the same. The way they express it is different, but the core is the same."

Farhadi said that when he watches a Brazilian film, he soon forgets he is watching a story from another place in the world, and feels it is a "film about us" as people. "If one day people can travel to other countries, and if they shake hands, that's the best

way to know people, not through media. I don't believe media can give us the whole image."

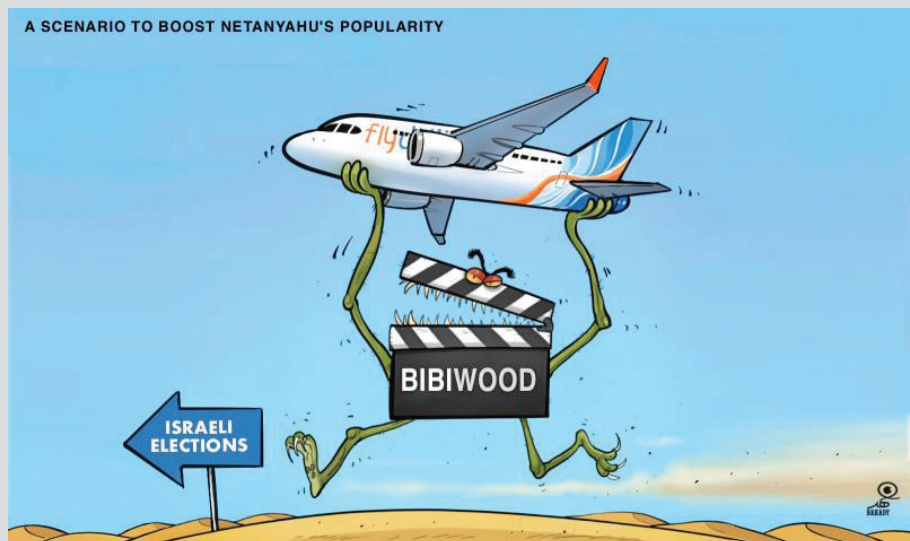
On this, the filmmaker emphasized how his last two films, "A Hero" and "Parallel Tales," are about how we see others and how we are seen in return. They are also heavily influenced by "how social media has shaped our lives."

"When we see something in the media, we should be careful," he continued, adding that most information replicated by mainstream media about Iran, for example, comes from "very simple knowledge" of real life in the country. When a singular discourse is perpetuated, the director implied, it means people are "ready to accept" when someone says "they are the enemy." "This is something the media is doing, because the most powerful media belongs to powerful people. This is the problem."

Farhadi spoke very briefly about his next film, reiterating it will be shot in Persian. Enquired as to whether the film might deal with the current war in Iran and the conflict in Palestine, the director said: "Not directly," suggesting the current political climate might have an underlying effect on the story despite not being the subject of his project.

"The Salesman" helmer also recalled how "Parallel Tales" was supposed to be shot in the US: "I stayed there for three years, writing, searching, casting. I did casting in the US with American actors, very big names. But every day that I came back to my home, I told myself: I cannot connect with this. Something is wrong. It was a big problem. One night I decided to change."

Cartoon of Day



A scenario to boost Netanyahu's popularity
Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria

Saeidi Brothers release reimagined folk single "Sar-e Dast-e Yarom"

TEHRAN- Iranian traditional vocalist brothers Ali and Mohammad Saeidi have released their latest single, "Sar-e Dast-e Yarom" ("My Beloved's Cuff"), a reimagined version of an old Iranian folk song.

The piece, performed by the Saeidi brothers, draws on a traditional folk composition attributed to Hossein Kouhi Kermani, and is based on the rendition of maestro Mohammad-Taghi Saeidi.

According to the artists, the song is rooted in a folk narra-

tive associated with fashion and the period when modern fashion began making its way into Iranian society. The brothers have sought to preserve the character of the old folk material while developing it through a contemporary musical arrangement, and the track is presented as an expanded reinterpretation rather than a straightforward revival of the original.

In the new release, Mojtaba Mojtaba Abolqasempour is credited with playing santur

and electronic instruments, as well as arranging, mixing and mastering the piece, while Majid Mazaheri plays the kamancheh.

Ali and Mohammad Saeidi, born in Isfahan in 1981, are twin traditional Iranian singers who studied Persian vocal techniques and the radif repertoire with masters including Mohammad-Taghi Saeidi, Mohammad Ali Kianinejad and Fazlollah Shahzamani. Their work has included concerts in Iran and abroad as well as recordings drawing on

traditional Iranian music.

The brothers previously launched a short-song project aimed at introducing Iranian traditional music and art to audiences with limited time, producing brief musical videos based on selections from the Persian traditional repertoire.

Their collaboration with internationally known Iranian composer and conductor Ali Rahbari has also included the orchestral project "Persian Nightingales."