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France sees biggest day of protests in years

About 575,000 protesters participated in demonstrations across France on Thursday, according to government estimates, marking the biggest single day of protests since a wave of unrest ~~began in Sep~~tember to coincide with a nationwide strike.

Despite the scale of these protests, and the violence which marred similar marches on October 17, the day passed relatively peacefully, albeit with some localized clashes in cities across France, CNN reported.

Some workers went on strike too, depleting some schools, universities, railways and, to a lesser extent, hospitals of their staff. ▶ Page 5

Outcome of three years of regional confrontation: The emergence of new alliances

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON -- The outcome of the confrontations that have taken place across the West Asia region since October 7 must be understood in the context of all the interconnected fronts, including Gaza, Lebanon, and, most recently, Iran. The U.S.-Israeli aggression against Iran will ultimately determine the overall outcome of the conflicts across all these fronts and the changes that have taken place.

One conclusion has become clear, that is the Israeli occupation entity has not achieved all of its declared objectives in these arenas, while the changes that have taken place in Syria with the overthrow of the Beshar al-Assad government have not resulted in any clear stability. Instead, the situation remains open to multiple possibilities. ▶ Page 5

Competitive exports, strengthening trade corridors: strategic axes of Iran-China interactions

TEHRAN- The Director General of the East Asia, Subcontinent, and Oceania Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, at the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference, described the development of exports of higher value-added goods and the strengthening of trade corridors between the two countries as two important and strategic axes for expanding economic and trade cooperation between Iran and China.

According to an IRNA report from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference was held on the sidelines of the 9th China International Import Expo (CIIE), organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and the commercial counselors of the Islamic Republic of Iran based in Shanghai and Beijing. ▶ Page 4

Artists pay tribute to martyred Minab schoolchildren

TEHRAN – A group of Iranian artists from the fields of theater, cinema, television and music visited the southern city of Minab on the occasion of National Students' Day on Wednesday, paying tribute to the schoolchildren killed in a US-Israeli attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School.

The artists visited the school, which was targeted in an attack that claimed the lives of a 168 innocent students and teachers, and later attended the martyrs' cemetery in Minab to pay their respects.

The gathering was intended to honor the memory of the victims and express solidarity with the families of the children who lost their lives in the attack.

Among the artists taking part in the visit were theater figures Maryam Motaref, Davoud Fathali-Beigi and Atash Taqipour, filmmakers Babak Khajehpasha and Ensieh Shah-Hosseini, and actors Bahram Ebrahimi and Alireza Ostadi. ▶ Page 8



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Where Is the Friend's House?

By Taghi Dezhakam

TEHRAN - As I make my way from Bast-e Navab Safavi toward the attendants' rest quarters, a few young men stop me.

"We want to go and pay our respects to the Leader," they say.

I point them toward Azadi Courtyard and the Bab al-Salam entrance. "Right in front of you, at the far end of the courtyard, there are two parallel pathways. One leads to the sacred shrine chamber of Imam Reza, and the other to Dar al-Zikr — the Hall of Remembrance — where the martyred Leader is laid to rest."

If you are a attendant or volunteer attendant at the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), particularly if you wear the green uniform that makes you easier to recognize, people will approach you one after another. You must become a guide for the pilgrims, answering their many and varied questions.

"Peace be upon you, brother! Where is Bab al-Jawad? Where can I get a wheelchair? Which way is the Kowsar tea house? I want to go to the Ghadir guesthouse. Is congregational prayer also held in this courtyard? Where is the tomb of Ayatollah Raisi?"

And so on.

But for the past four months, one important and frequently repeated question has been added to all the others:

"Where is Mr. Khamenei's resting place? How do I get to Dar al-Zikr?"

As I write this account, nearly 250 days have passed since the martyrdom and 120 days since the burial ceremony of the second Leader of the Islamic Revolution at the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the Compassionate Imam. Apart from the first few days, when the public could not enter Dar al-Zikr because preparations were still underway to make the resting place of the martyred Leader ready, there has not been a single moment, day or night, when his tomb has been without a multitude of pilgrims.

What follows is a hurried account of these four months in Dar al-Zikr, at the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

The pilgrims who climb the steps into Dar al-Zikr arrive with all manner of feelings and in all kinds of states of mind. Yet even now, those who enter this hall for the first time, in particular, find it impossible to hold back their tears.

Some women and men sob aloud, crying out in grief and anguish. Others, upon seeing the large portrait of Ayatollah Khamenei looking down at them with a gentle, contented smile, feel their tears quietly wash over their grief-stricken faces.

A Request for Fatiha and Yasin

In the early days, people stood behind the barriers that prevented them from entering Dar al-Zikr, speaking to their martyred Imam, pleading with him and pouring out their hearts. Two or three weeks later, the barriers were removed, and those longing to visit the Leader and the three martyred members of his family were finally able to enter the hall. ▶ Page 3



'Burning Plain' leads winners at 19th International Resistance Film Festival

TEHRAN- The Iranian feature film "Burning Plain" was the biggest winner at the 19th International Resistance Film Festival, securing six awards, including Best Film and Best Director, at the closing ceremony held at the Milad Tower Convention Center in Tehran on Thursday.

Directed by Majid Esmaeili, the film also received awards for Best Cinematography, Best Makeup, and Best Screenplay, the latter shared with «The Gambler». Masoud Sakhavatdust was recognized for his musical compositions for both "Burning Plain" and "Kooch". ▶ Page 8

Iran will no longer rely on US commitments on paper, security official says

TEHRAN – Ali Bagheri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has said Tehran can no longer place its trust in written US commitments, citing Washington's repeated breaches of its obligations over the past 18 months.

He stressed that Iran was entitled to demand tangible action from the United States before considering a new phase of diplomacy. ▶ Page 2

Rezaei delivers Leader's message to Putin, reaffirms Iran's conditions for diplomacy

TEHRAN – Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), delivered a message from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei to Russian President Vladimir Putin during an unannounced visit to Moscow on Thursday, as discussions focused on the war against Iran, regional security and the conditions Tehran has set for any diplomatic process.

Rezaei said the Leader had instructed him to convey the message to Putin at the earliest opportunity. The Russian president, in turn, sent his warm greetings to Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei.

During his meeting with Putin at the Kremlin, Rezaei discussed major regional developments, the consequences of the US-Israeli war against Iran and prospects for regional security arrangements. Energy cooperation, including a proposed project to build gas pipelines connecting Russia and Iran, was also among the subjects raised.

According to Rezaei, the proposed project could help meet Iran's domestic natural gas requirements while creating opportunities for the transit and export of Russian gas to neighboring countries, potentially broadening regional energy cooperation.

Meanwhile, a senior Iranian political-security source has rejected reports that Rezaei presented a new diplomatic initiative to Putin, describing such accounts as entirely fabricated. ▶ Page 2

Araghchi holds talks with regional counterparts on diplomatic efforts

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has held a series of telephone conversations with his counterparts across the region to discuss the latest developments and diplomatic initiatives aimed at easing tensions and strengthening regional stability.

The consultations, held on Thursday and Friday, involved the foreign ministers of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Cyprus, Turkey, Kuwait, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iraq and Tunisia. ▶ Page 2

Democrats' "overwhelming victory" could constrain US military escalation in Iran, says American sociologist



▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Attack, negotiations, or continued uncertainty

Shargh examined the state of Iran-US relations following the US midterm elections that ended in the Republican Party's defeat. The US Council on Foreign Relations sees three possible paths before Donald Trump: renewed military strikes, pursuing negotiations while maintaining military pressure, or preserving the current situation in the hope that sustained pressure will force Iran to make concessions. In the case of negotiations, attention would turn to the outcomes of the conflict and what it achieved. If the current approach continues, the administration would need to explain how long pressure is expected to continue and what results it is supposed to produce. For Iran, the practical significance of the midterm elections will become clear only if their effects are reflected in negotiating conditions, the scale of confrontation, and future budgetary decisions. If Washington moves toward an agreement, Trump will have to explain what benefits the war produced. If military action is resumed, the key question will be what a new round could accomplish that previous efforts failed to achieve.

Hamshahri: The impact of US elections on the current dispute with Iran

Hamshahri argued that the Republican defeat and Democratic gains could influence the ongoing conflict with Iran. The newspaper described the Republican setback as a direct consequence of Trump's performance and suggested several possible implications. One possibility is that Trump could respond to the defeat by intensifying confrontation and attempting to divert attention from domestic challenges. In this scenario, a new conflict could be launched quickly, presenting political opponents with a fait accompli. A second possibility is the opposite: avoiding further escalation with Iran because of the political consequences of deeper disagreements with a Congress now controlled by Democrats. If a new military confrontation does not occur within the near term, from the coming days through roughly the next two months, the likelihood of such a conflict emerging afterward may decline.

Sobh-e-No: The ball is in America's court

Sobh-e-No analyzed what it described as Iran's new strategy toward its enemies. The strategy serves two objectives. First, it seeks to strengthen deterrence. Second, it aims to create the psychological conditions necessary for possible negotiations. Iran's approach is presented as maintaining military readiness at the highest level while making the cost of any US military action unacceptable. At the same time, Tehran seeks to keep diplomatic channels open by offering a defined framework for resolving tensions. The notion that the "ball is in America's court" means Washington must choose between accepting an agreement that includes sanctions relief and an end to economic pressure, or facing a new and potentially costly arena of confrontation whose consequences may be difficult to predict. Iran's strategic position depends on more than missiles and drones. Economic management, social stability, and domestic cohesion are also seen as critical factors. If economic and social pressures weaken conditions at home, Iran's bargaining position could gradually erode regardless of developments abroad.

Resalat: An obvious crime against Iran

Resalat referred to what it described as a striking report by The New York Times and argued that major US oil companies benefited significantly from disruptions in global energy markets and rising fuel prices. According to the paper, American energy firms earned more than $130 billion in additional profits during six months as a result of market turmoil. The newspaper said that these extraordinary profits revealed the true nature of Washington's policies, portraying military actions against Iran as driven by economic and strategic interests. It argued that the conflict has imposed severe burdens on Iran through sanctions, economic pressure, and military confrontation. Resalat described the situation as an unjust and damaging war whose consequences extend beyond Iran, affecting regional resources, economic stability, and broader questions of social justice. The paper also criticized what it characterized as the influence of powerful financial and defense-sector interests within the United States.

Khorasan: The threat has not ended

Khorasan argued that Democratic victories in Congress should not be interpreted as the end of pressure from Washington. According to the paper, the political shift following the midterm elections and the Republican defeat was closely linked to economic difficulties, including energy-related inflation and concerns over disruptions to global trade routes. Nevertheless, the newspaper warned against excessive optimism. It argued that Trump, with two years remaining in his presidency, could still choose to increase military and security tensions with Iran as a way of overcoming political challenges at home. In this context, Khorasan maintained that lasting deterrence depends on influencing the broader financial foundations of US strategic policies. The paper argued that if borrowing costs and interest rates remain elevated, the financial burden associated with military operations could increase significantly. Higher costs would make military engagement more difficult to sustain and could become an important factor in shaping future decisions regarding Iran.

US threats against Iranian nuclear sites reflect Washington's growing desperation: Eslami

TEHRAN – Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has said that Washington's repeated threats to attack Iran's nuclear facilities are a sign of growing desperation, as the United States has failed to achieve its objectives through pressure and intimidation.

Speaking to Russia Today (RT) on Thursday, Eslami pointed to the US President's repeated threats against Kuh-e Kolang, also known as Pickaxe Mountain, as well as previous threats targeting other locations in Iran.

"The fact that the US president constantly threatens to attack Kuh-e Kolang and has previously threatened other locations in various ways is a clear sign of their desperation," he said.

Eslami also took aim at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi, accusing him of serving the interests of Iran's adversaries by sharing information about the country's nuclear program with them.

He said the disclosure of such information constituted an abuse of the authority and responsibilities entrusted to international institutions, undermining their credibility and exposing serious shortcomings in the implementation of the United Nations Charter and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The AEOI chief further condemned the 'IAEA leadership's evident double standards,' saying: "These double standards have become so evident that they are now being openly practiced."

Asked whether Iran might withdraw from the NPT, Eslami said such a move would require a strategic decision at the highest level of the country's leadership and would fall entirely within Iran's sovereign authority.

He stressed that any decision on the matter would have to be made within a broader strategic framework, taking into account national security requirements and the country's national interests.

Rezaei delivers Leader's message to Putin, reaffirms Iran's conditions for diplomacy

From page 1 ▸ Speaking to Al Mayadeen, the source said some Western media outlets had published inaccurate reports about the substance of the Moscow meeting. The source stressed that the talks centered on ending the war and that Rezaei had reiterated Tehran's position that no diplomatic process could move forward before all seven of Iran's conditions were fully implemented.

The source also said Iran would not agree to reopen the Strait of Hormuz before those conditions were met and would not negotiate over that decision. Tehran, the source added, considers no diplomatic step meaningful unless all seven conditions are fulfilled in full and simultaneously.



Iranian officials have repeatedly maintained that progress in any negotiations with the United States depends on Washington accepting Tehran's conditions.

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf recently said Iran had clearly and repeatedly conveyed its seven conditions to mediators, emphasizing that no progress was possible without their acceptance. He also said Washington's policy of combining incentives with pressure would not change Iran's position.

The conditions include the lifting of sanctions, the unfreezing of Iranian assets, and an end to hostilities on all fronts, including Israel's military campaign in Lebanon.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has also stressed that the United States must meet Iran's demands if it seeks progress in negotiations or an arrangement concerning the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran will no longer rely on US commitments on paper, security official says

From page 1 ▸ "Iran needs to see the US's practical actions; only then can the groundwork be laid for opening a new chapter," Bagheri said.

Commenting on the message delivered by SNSC Secretary Mohsen Rezaei to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday on behalf of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei, Bagheri said it outlined Iran's vision for bilateral cooperation with Russia, including its key components and prospects for future engagement.

He said the message was intended to give Moscow a clear understanding of the framework for cooperation and relations with Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei.

Bagheri also described plans to transfer Russian natural gas to Iran and develop the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) as strategic initiatives that could help counter US efforts to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic.

Araghchi holds talks with regional counterparts on diplomatic efforts

From page 1 ▸ Araghchi spoke on Thursday with Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

On Friday, Araghchi spoke with Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein and Tunisian Foreign Minister Mohamed Ali Nafti.

The discussions focused on the latest regional developments and diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions and advance peace and stability. In his conversation with Dar, the two sides also discussed bilateral relations. Pakistan's foreign minister underscored the importance of sustained dialogue and diplomacy, calling on all parties to remain constructively engaged in efforts to secure lasting regional peace and stability.

Democrats' "overwhelming victory" could constrain US military escalation in Iran, says American sociologist

Paul Joseph explains why the election results could strengthen congressional opposition to the war and encourage negotiations.

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Paul Joseph, professor emeritus of sociology at Tufts University, specializes in peace and conflict studies, US militarism, military interventions, and the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy.

Following the Democrats' gains in the November 3, 2026 midterm elections, questions have emerged over whether the results will strengthen congressional opposition to President Donald Trump's policies, particularly the ongoing war against Iran. Joseph's research examines how public attitudes and domestic political pressures shape US decisions on war and military intervention. In an interview with the Tehran Times, he discusses the prospects for congressional efforts to stop the war, the growing influence of anti-war sentiment, and the possibility of renewed diplomatic negotiations.

Below is the full text of the interview:

On October 27, Le Monde published a collective appeal titled "The Iranian People Must Not Pay the Price of Political and Military Objectives," calling for the protection of Iranian civilians, respect for international humanitarian law, and access to essential supplies and humanitarian aid. What motivated you to sign it, and what message did you hope to convey?

Well, I was pleased to receive the invitation. For many people in the United States, as we saw in the election last night especially, this is a wrongheaded war that is contributing mostly to casualties in Iran, though it also has costs for American citizens and others throughout the Middle East. You want to be able to do something to register your opposition to the insanity of Trump's policies, and signing the appeal just seemed like a very good way to at least do something modest.

You have studied American public opinion and foreign policy for decades. Do you think the war against Iran has exposed a growing gap between the foreign policy priorities of US leaders and the views of ordinary Americans?

Absolutely. I think it's a topic that I have studied for many years. Following the Vietnam War, 50 years ago, it has become more difficult for American policymakers to follow a war policy explicitly and directly. They cannot take for granted the support of the American people when they pursue a war policy. They might still be able to go to war. I'm not saying the constraints on war are absolute, but it's become more difficult for them to do that.

Every time Washington engages in hostilities, war managers must manage opinion in the United States in a more complex and convoluted ways.

And that tension between going to war and managing public opinion in the United States carries contradictions that make it more difficult to pursue a war policy. Not impossible, but more difficult. What we saw last night in the elections was a great example of the underlying opposition to war that resides in the United States under almost every circumstance.

You have written extensively about US military interventions, including in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, as well as the military's efforts to understand and influence other societies. Do you think Washington has fundamentally misunderstood Iranian society and underestimated the consequences of attacking Iran?



No, I don't think American policymakers understand Iranian society, Iraqi society or Afghan society. I don't think they understand any of those societies.

In the case of Vietnam, the commitment to resist US intervention was absolute. There was no magic combination of bombing, ground troops and strategy on the part of the US military that would have resulted in a decision by the Vietnamese to stop fighting. Their nationalism was so strong that they were going to resist regardless of what the United States did.

I think it's true also in the case of Iran right now. Trump might think that there will be some sort of message or military strategy that will result in capitulation on the part of the Iranian authorities. I think the consequences for the Iranian authorities might be extremely costly in terms of civilian casualties and the Iranian economy. But the commitment to resist the United States remains and is pretty much absolute. It's not susceptible to strategy A versus strategy B versus strategy C.

Those strategies may be different, but none of them will result in, "Okay, we give up. We'll do whatever you want."

In your book Are Americans Becoming More Peaceful?, you examine changing American attitudes toward war. Do you believe Americans are genuinely becoming more committed to peace, or is their opposition to war primarily driven by its human, economic, and political costs?

It's really a complicated question about what peace means. Is peace just sensitivity to the costs of war, or is it something deeper, more organic?

I think it's useful to make a distinction between peace as opposition to the costs of war, where I do think the United States is very peaceful, as are most countries, and a deeper-seated peace, where there's some sort of recognition that we have an obligation, as human beings, to recognize the human status of people who are different from ourselves.

I like to think that Americans are becoming more peaceful in both senses: opposition to the costs of war and the deeper meanings of peace.

Let me just give an example of this from last night's election. There was a Muslim who was running in Michigan, Abdul El-Sayed.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Where is the friend's house?

From Page 1 ▶ Now, women gather along two sides of the green square, and men along the other two, whispering their words to their Leader.

For weeks, reciters from the Holy Shrine — some among the country's most distinguished Quran reciters — took turns around the clock, reciting the Quran in mournful voices beside the tomb of Ayatollah Khamenei and his martyred family.

These days, however, there is always a shrine attendant standing somewhere in a corner of Dar al-Zikr, holding copies of the Holy Quran, their pages carefully bound. Anyone who enters takes one or several pages and, after reciting the Fatiha, reads them in memory of the martyrs who rest in this hall.

The passion, poetry and the power of chants

These days and nights, both poetry and chants have become an essential part of the announced and unannounced gatherings in Dar al-Zikr.

Distinguished poets from across the country stand beside the Leader's tomb, microphones in hand, reciting verses that come straight from their hearts. Sometimes their poetry is intensely epic, filled with martial imagery and battle cries. At other times, it is so tender and overflowing with emotion that the poet himself has to stop, wipe away his tears, and gather himself before continuing. Meanwhile, those listening are also weeping and sobbing, and then the poet resumes.

Sometimes there is no poet standing beside the tomb. Yet someone among the grieving pilgrims will step forward, turn toward the portrait and resting place of the martyred Leader, and begin reciting a quatrain or an ode, sometimes their own and sometimes the work of another poet.

And when there is neither a Quran reciter nor a poet, the people themselves keep the fervour alive with their passionate chants.

There is no one officially leading these chants, but a few are heard more frequently than all the others:

"Death to America!"

"Death to Israel!"

"Death to traitorous sellouts!"

"Death to the hypocrites!"

"Far be it from us to accept humiliation!"

"Haidar! Haidar!"

"Economic saboteur, American soldier!"



At times, some people direct their chants at negotiators or senior officials of the system, mentioning their names or leaving them unnamed. But usually, the people pay little attention to such provocative and divisive slogans, leaving those who shout them to their own devices.

Pilgrims from beyond Iran

You might imagine that all these chants come from our fellow Iranians and are shouted in Persian. But that is far from the case.

Pilgrims from Arab countries, particularly Iraq and Lebanon, are among those who sometimes transform the atmosphere with poetry and chants in their own languages and dialects, raising their voices and drawing the attention of everyone around them. At times, others join in with words in English or Turkish.

Sometimes a boy of just ten or twelve takes the microphone and recites a long poem. But there is one moment I will never forget: an elderly woman, weeping as she softly murmured one or two short poems and quatrains in memory of the martyred Leader. I still regret that I failed to record her voice and the verses she recited while I had the chance.

During this period, in addition to Ayatollah Marvi, the custodian of Astan Quds Razavi, the heads of all three branches of government have also visited separately, quite unexpectedly. They bowed their heads beside the tomb of the martyred Leader, spoke to him, prayed, and sought his intercession. You have probably seen the images in various media outlets.

A few days ago, Dar al-Zikr also welcomed prominent Iraqi tribal elders and sheikhs, along with the organizers of Iraqi pilgrimage processions. They arrived carrying the flags of Iraq and Iran. In their interviews, they emphasized the enduring bond between the Iranian and Iraqi peoples, united by their love for the Master of Martyrs, Imam Hussein (AS). They also expressed their support for the people of our country and our courageous Leader.

Perhaps a month or two ago, I saw an Iraqi pilgrim weeping beside the martyrs of the ninth of Esfand in Dar al-Zikr. I waited until he stepped aside.

His name was Abu Karrar.

"Martyred Khamenei was the Imam of all of us Shias," he told me.

Then he opened his mobile phone and showed me photographs of the funeral procession for our Leader in Iraq. Through his tears, he said: "I had set up a procession tent here, and I was serving food to those who had come to bid farewell to the Leader."

He then showed me photographs of his home in Najaf, its walls adorned with portraits of the martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, and Ayatollah Sistani.

I was reminded of a poem by Sheikh Baha'i:

"This homeland is neither Egypt, nor Iraq, nor the Levant;

It is a city whose name cannot be spoken."

"That was not a good question!"

I want to speak with a few of those who have come to visit the Leader.

There is a man of about fifty. Unlike those trying to push their way forward to get a better view of the Leader's tomb and those of the other martyrs, eager to take photographs and videos, he stands leaning against a wall. His eyes are red.

His name is Alireza. He has come from Shahr-e Kord and is a physician. He has been in Mashhad for two days and will return home in another three.

I ask him: "Did you visit Imam Reza first, or did you come to visit the Leader?"

"That was not a good question," he replies. "The path of devotion to the Household of the Prophet passes through love for the Leader. We came to know authentic Islam through Imam Khomeini. On the battlefront, we used to chant: 'Without love for Khomeini, one cannot truly love the Mahdi.' And today, too, without the love for the representative of the Imam Mahdi, one cannot attain devotion to him."

"Not this close!"

Mrs. Safaeian, who has come from Damavand, is also in tears.

"I always wished I could see His Eminence up close, in his own Hussainiya in Tehran," she says. "But not this close. Not as close as I see him today."

Her voice breaks again.

Her seven- or eight-year-old daughter looks up at her mother in silence, her little face filled with sadness.

A young man pushes his way forward, activates a video call on his phone, and, trying to make himself heard above the loud and passionate chants of the crowd, shouts into the phone:

"Mom! I'm at the Leader's tomb! Do you see that picture of the little girl? That's the Leader's granddaughter!"

"Not that far away!"

On my way out of the shrine, I encounter a group of Bangladeshi men and women in Ghadir Courtyard. They want to visit the martyred Leader.

They do not speak much Persian. With gestures and my broken English, I give them directions and accompany them for part of the way.

There are twelve or thirteen of them.

One of the members of the group takes a small photograph of the martyred Leader from the pocket of his faded shirt. He kisses it and presses it against his eyes.

During all the time I have spent breathing the atmosphere of this Holy Shrine, I have witnessed an extraordinary and unadorned love among pilgrims from the Indian subcontinent for the Imam, the Revolution and the martyred Leader. On the occasions when I have had the privilege of serving in Ghadir Courtyard, where special programs are held for these dear visitors, I have seen this deep affection with my own eyes. I have often found myself envying the purity of their feelings and the spiritual world they inhabit.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran inflicted a strategic defeat on Trump on the battlefield and at the ballot box, SNSC chief says

TEHRAN – Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Major General Mohsen Rezaei has described the outcome of the US midterm elections as a major strategic setback for President Donald Trump, saying the Iranian nation had already dealt Washington significant defeats on the battlefield and in the Strait of Hormuz before delivering a political blow at home.

In remarks following the November 3 congressional elections, Rezaei said the defeat of Trump's Republican Party in both chambers of Congress reflected the mounting political and economic costs of the US president's confrontational policies toward Iran.

He argued that Iran had imposed a strategic defeat on the United States through its resistance to the military campaign, while Washington was now facing the domestic political consequences of a conflict that had exacted a heavy toll on American taxpayers and consumers.

"The great nation of Iran inflicted a major strategic defeat on Trump on the battlefield and in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as a heavy political defeat in Washington," Rezaei said.

He added that both the American public and the US government were bearing the substantial costs of 'Trump's warmongering.'

The SNSC chief said the electoral setback had added another dimension to the failures Washington had encountered in its war against Iran, which began in February. He also pointed to restrictions on transit through the Strait of Hormuz and the substantial financial burden of the conflict as factors contributing to the mounting pressure on the US administration.

"Anyone who clashes with the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a heavy price, from the battlefield to the doorstep of their homes," Rezaei warned.

His comments came after Democrats secured control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate in the November 3 midterm elections, delivering a sweeping rebuke to Trump and his Republican Party. The results marked a significant shift in the balance of power in Washington, giving Democrats greater leverage to challenge the president's legislative agenda and scrutinize his administration.

The election outcome also exposed the domestic political repercussions of the US military campaign against Iran. Rising fuel prices and mounting living costs, compounded by public dissatisfaction with the war, emerged as significant factors in the Republican losses. Trump himself acknowledged that the conflict had contributed to his party's electoral setback.

Democrats made substantial gains in traditionally Republican strongholds, underscoring the breadth of voter discontent with the administration's economic and foreign policies.

The new congressional balance of power is expected to complicate Trump's ability to advance his agenda during the remainder of his presidency, with Democrats gaining greater scope to challenge administration policies, exercise oversight, and pursue legislative measures opposed by the White House.

For Tehran, the election results have reinforced an argument it has repeatedly advanced: that military confrontation with Iran carries consequences extending far beyond the battlefield, reaching into the economic and political foundations of the United States.

Leader adviser: Iran is indispensable to West Asia's emerging regional order

TEHRAN – Ali Akbar Velayati, adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution on international affairs, has described Iran as one of the principal architects of the emerging regional order in West Asia, warning that no geopolitical arrangement can marginalize the Islamic Republic or undermine its security interests, particularly in the South Caucasus.

In a post on his X account on Friday, Velayati stressed Iran's strategic geographical position as a connecting link between the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Sea of Oman, arguing that any energy or transit corridor designed to bypass Iran would inevitably face higher costs or instability.

"Now that everyone is talking about a new order in West Asia, it should be noted that Iran is a bridge connecting the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Sea of Oman. Any energy or transit corridor seeking to bypass us will either be costly or unstable," he wrote.

He also emphasized the interconnected nature of regional security, pointing to the chain of crises stretching from Gaza to the Red Sea, Lebanon and Iraq.

"The domino effect of crises, from Gaza to the Red Sea and from Lebanon to Iraq, has shown that regional security is indivisible. Either collective security will be achieved, or everyone will experience collective insecurity," Velayati warned.

Describing the sweeping geopolitical shifts across West Asia, he said their impact had extended even to political developments in Israel and the United States, adding that Iran had emerged as a central force in shaping the region's future.

"Iran is now one of the principal architects of the regional order – a reality that can neither be eliminated nor replaced," he said.

*** Iran's red lines in the South Caucasus

In a separate article published in the Ettelaat newspaper, Velayati issued a strong warning over the so-called Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), which is intended to establish a transport link between the Republic of Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan exclave through Armenian territory.

The project, associated with efforts to establish the so-called Zangezur corridor, has drawn strong opposition from Iran, which considers arrangements affecting the region's geopolitical balance and international borders a matter of strategic importance.

Reacting to the Armenian parliament's approval of the TRIPP project, Velayati criticized Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's approach, arguing that his policies risk deepening divisions and instability in the South Caucasus while undermining Armenia's own national interests.

He described the approval as an ill-considered move that could damage Armenia's standing and create further complications for the country in its relations with neighboring states.

Velayati also criticized 'Pashinyan's growing alignment with Western policies,' saying that his government's decisions had contributed to worsening relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan rather than resolving their differences.

He warned that the Armenian premier's approach could open a new chapter of tension in the South Caucasus, noting that Yerevan's relations with Azerbaijan, Iran and Türkiye had become increasingly unpredictable.

Referring to his meetings with Armenia's deputy foreign minister and ambassador in Tehran, Velayati said he had explicitly conveyed Iran's position on regional security and the consequences of any attempt to alter the geopolitical balance in the Caucasus.

He emphasized that Iran would not allow developments along its northwestern borders to undermine its national security, adding that Tehran considered itself responsible for helping preserve stability in the South Caucasus, irrespective of Russia's involvement in the Ukraine conflict.

Velayati recalled that the Caucasus had historically served as a strategic security buffer for Iran, extending to Darband in present-day Dagestan, and stressed that this longstanding geopolitical reality could not be disregarded in regional policymaking.

In his sharpest warning, he said Iran would respond firmly if US President Donald Trump and his allies attempted to cross the Islamic Republic's red lines through the proposed corridor.

"If Trump and his allies want to cross this Iranian red line, we will break their legs," Velayati said, reiterating that Iran would not accept arrangements that threaten its security interests or alter the region's strategic geography.

His remarks underscore Tehran's position that the future of the South Caucasus and West Asia must be shaped through regional cooperation, respect for national sovereignty and the legitimate security interests of neighboring countries, rather than externally imposed geopolitical arrangements.

IRGC adviser: US forces have pulled naval assets more than 1,000 kilometers from Iran's borders

TEHRAN – Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi, head of the advisory group to the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), says US forces have moved their naval vessels and equipment more than 1,000 kilometers away from Iran's borders during recent conflicts, warning that any attempt to approach the region has been met with a swift response from Iran's Armed Forces.

Speaking on Thursday night, Fadavi addressed the economic, political and military dimensions of the confrontation between Tehran and Washington. He said the United States had imposed its most severe economic sanctions on Iran but had failed to force the Iranian people to abandon their goals or yield to external pressure.

The senior military adviser also pointed to 'Washington's political setbacks,' saying US officials had openly acknowledged the defeats suffered by their country.

Two tankers strike mines in Strait of Hormuz: IRGC Navy

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy says two oil tankers attempting to navigate unauthorized routes through the Strait of Hormuz struck mines and caught fire.

In a statement on Friday, the force said one tanker was struck in the eastern part of the strait and the other inside the waterway. Both vessels had switched off their navigation and identification systems and were attempting to exit through prohibited routes with the backing of what the IRGC described as the "aggressor and terrorist US military."

The IRGC Navy said the vessels were halted after the explosions, adding that the strait would remain closed until Iran's seven conditions were met.

It warned that US Central Command (CENTCOM) efforts to direct tankers through unauthorized, mine-contaminated routes would result in repeated failures.

IRGC downs two more US MQM-170 reconnaissance drones over Qeshm island

TEHRAN – The Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) says its electronic warfare systems have brought down two more US-made MQM-170 reconnaissance drones over Qeshm Island in southern Iran, bringing the number of such drones intercepted there to six.

In two statements issued on Thursday night, the IRGC said the fifth and sixth drones had been downed in the island's airspace by advanced electronic warfare systems operated by its Aerospace Force.

The announcement followed an earlier statement on Monday, in which the IRGC reported bringing down two other MQM-170 drones south of Qeshm Island, bringing the total number intercepted to four.



Separately, the IRGC said its air defense systems had intercepted and destroyed a US MQ-9 drone over the eastern Strait of Hormuz. The force identified it as the 55th American MQ-9 drone brought down by its air defenses.

According to the IRGC, the drone was engaged by a newly deployed air defense system operated by the Aerospace Force as part of Iran's integrated air defense network.

Coordination meeting held for 4th permanent Iran-Africa economic summit



TEHRAN- The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran identified the identification of firms with real export capacity, the supportive role of development organizations, facilitation of financing, and paving the way for concluding trade contracts as requirements for leveraging the Iran-Africa Trade Summit in the path of developing Iran's exports to African markets.

According to an IRNA report from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the coordination meeting for the Fourth Permanent Iran-Africa Economic Summit was held with the presence of Hamid Padash, Deputy for Economic and Infrastructure Coordination and Supervision of the First Vice President, Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, Mohammad Sadegh Qannadzadeh, Deputy for Commercial Services of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, and a group of representatives from various government institutions and the private sector.

Dehghan Dehnavi described the holding of this summit as a national program and a strategic choice, adding: "The Africa Headquarters has been formed, and this issue is among the working priorities of the First Vice President; therefore, it is expected that the planned programs will be held in a manner befitting the country and that the ground will be prepared for Iran's powerful presence and the exploitation of Africa's trade opportunities."

Emphasizing that companies must have a clear plan for participating in this event in accordance with their mission and capacities, he said: "Before the holding of this summit, organizations should think about and plan how to participate and how to exploit this opportunity; I also emphasize that during the event, experts who have sufficient technical information and the necessary capability in negotiation and concluding trade contracts should be utilized."

According to Dehghan Dehnavi, participation in such an event must be accompanied by a clear economic and trade mission, because the goal is economic benefit for the entire country, not sending a larger number of companies to the summit. Therefore, if an organization does not have a clear plan for using the upcoming opportunity, it needs to review its mode of participation.

The Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, referring to the role of development organizations in supporting private sector firms, stated: "The expectation from large companies and development organizations is that, instead of focusing on their own direct presence, they play a supportive role—in other words, accompany smaller and capable private sector companies. These organizations must also consider their social responsibility and industrial development mission and pave the way for the presence of companies that do not have the real capacity for export and activity in the African market."

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran emphasized the necessity of the National Development Fund and the banking system playing an effective role in developing trade with Africa and said: "The presence of the National Development Fund and banks in this summit will be effective when it leads to facilitating financing and preparing the ground for the presence and activity of companies in African markets."

The Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, in conclusion, emphasizing the specific responsibility of each of the organizations present at the summit, said: "Every department, institution, organization, and economic firm must have a clear plan and strategy for exploiting the opportunities of this event in accordance with its mission. We hope that with the participation and companionship of all organizations, we can hold a program befitting the country and make the best use of the summit's capacity to develop Iran's trade and economic relations with the African continent."

Iran's Minister of Agriculture, referring to the trend of trade exchanges between Iran and African countries, said: "According to customs exchange statistics, Iran's trade with Africa in the first nine months of the past Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 21-December 21, 2025) reached about 940 million dollars, which shows a 66 percent growth compared to the same period in the preceding year."

Making the remarks in the First National Meeting on Iran-Africa Agricultural Cooperation, last week, the minister said that this amount of trade, despite significant growth, is still far from existing capacities, and added: "This figure is still limited compared to the capacity of the large market of the African continent with more than one billion people."

According to him, "This number is small, but its direction of movement is correct, and economic cooperation between the two sides must be expanded through planning."

Nouri Qezeljeh, referring to the share of agricultural products in Iran-Africa trade, stated: "About two-thirds of Iran's imports from the African continent are related to food and agricultural products. Therefore, cooperation in this sector should not be limited to one-way trade; rather, it must move toward the formation of joint value chains, mutual investment, and technology transfer."

The Minister of Agriculture further mentioned a priority as removing executive obstacles and strengthening communication among responsible institutions and said: "Economic actors, in order to enter into sustainable cooperation, need clear procedures, reliable transportation, practical payment mechanisms, insurance and investment coverage, and predictable regulations. Therefore, in the area of tariffs and trade facilitation, with the participation of relevant bodies, the capacity of bilateral agreements and regional mechanisms can be examined."

Nouri Qezeljeh, emphasizing the necessity of continuously following up on executive obstacles, stated: "The problems of each project must be clearly identified and recorded, the responsible body must be designated to follow it up, and the progress of the work must be evaluated within clear time frames."

In the beginning of the First National Meeting on Iran-Africa Agricultural Cooperation, the minister stressing that opportunities for joint agricultural cooperation with Africa are available and must be converted into concrete, operational, and lasting economic ties.

The meeting was attended by ambassadors, economic counselors, honorary consuls, officials from executive bodies, economic associations, entrepreneurs, investors, and more than 200 economic actors. The minister said this broad participation provided a valuable opportunity to translate the political will for expanding Iran-Africa relations into specific projects and durable economic partnerships.

Competitive exports, strengthening trade corridors: strategic axes of Iran-China interactions



TEHRAN- The Director General of the East Asia, Subcontinent, and Oceania Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, at the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference, described the development of exports of higher value-added goods and the strengthening of trade corridors between the two countries as two important and strategic axes for expanding economic and trade cooperation between Iran and China.

According to an IRNA report from the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, the Iran-China Trade and Investment Conference was held on the sidelines of the 9th China International Import Expo (CIIE), organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran and the commercial counselors of the Islamic Republic of Iran based in Shanghai and Beijing.

The conference, attended by officials, senior managers, investors, traders, entrepreneurs, and businessmen from both countries, provided a platform for dialogue, exchange of views, and identification of new opportunities for economic, trade, and investment cooperation.

At the conference, Abdolsadeh Nisi referred to the extensive capacities for cooperation between Iran and China and emphasized the need for a sustainable, balanced partnership based on mutual interests. He said: "Iran's view of cooperation with China is not merely increasing the volume of trade exchanges; rather, it is creating a partnership that leads to the expansion of trade, the development of investment, and the effective presence of economic enterprises of the two countries in regional and international markets."

Referring to Iran's rich resources, diverse production capacities, broad domestic market, access to neighboring countries' markets, and privileged communications position, he considered these capacities a suitable basis for expanding trade and joint investment.

Nisi listed the development of exports with higher value added as the first strategic axis of Iran-China economic cooperation and stated: "One of Iran's main priorities is moving from the export of raw and semi-raw materials toward developing exports of goods that have a greater share in creating value added, export income, and employment."

Referring to Iran's capacities in the food industry, processed agricultural products, petrochemicals, mining industries, construction materials, industrial products, and other manufactured goods, he emphasized the possibility of developing these sectors with the cooperation of Chinese partners.

According to the Director General of the East Asia and Oceania Subcontinent Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, cooperation among traders, producers, and investors of the two countries can help complete supply chains, develop export-oriented production, and increase the presence of Iranian goods in the Chinese market and other regional markets. In other words, in addition to increasing exports, it provides the ground for improving product quality, developing domestic production, and strengthening economic competitiveness.

Strengthening Iran-China trade corridors

In another part of his speech, Nisi described the strengthening of Iran-China trade corridors as the second important and strategic axis of cooperation between the two countries. Referring to the role of international transport routes in shaping global trade, he said: "Iran's geographical position has made it possible for the country to play an effective role as a link connecting East and West as well as North and South."

He did not consider corridors limited to goods transit routes and added: "These routes are a platform for expanding trade, developing logistics services, establishing regional distribution centers, and forming sustainable economic cooperation."

The Director General of the East Asia and Oceania Office of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran continued: "Iran-China cooperation in this area can, in addition to reducing exchange costs and facilitating access to markets, pave the way for increasing trade volume and forming long-term mutual interests for the countries of the region."

He also considered the existing capacities along regional communication routes, including trade links among Iran, China, and third countries, as an effective factor in developing regional trade and strengthening international supply chains.

Developing provincial cooperation and utilizing E-commerce capacity

Nisi referred to the Trade Promotion Organization's plans to enhance the position of Iran's national brand in the Chinese market and listed among the other axes pursued by the organization: increasing the effectiveness of Iran's trade centers, developing economic cooperation among the provinces of the two countries, and utilizing the capacity of e-commerce platforms to introduce and offer Iranian goods.

The official of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran expressed hope that the holding of this conference would lead to the formation of new cooperation, the development of trade relations, the conclusion of economic agreements, and the creation of joint investment opportunities between economic actors of Iran and China.

Emphasizing the organization's readiness to support the expansion of economic cooperation between the two countries, he said: "The Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, within the framework of its duties, supports the development of this cooperation and provides the ground for facilitating communications and trade interactions between the two countries."

Iran's regional energy diplomacy roadmap announced

TEHRAN- Iran's Acting Oil Minister announced the approval and announcement of the document and roadmap for Iran's regional energy diplomacy at the Strategic Headquarters for Regional Energy Trade and said: "Under this document, the country's action plan in the areas of oil and petroleum products, gas, and petrochemicals has been drawn up with specific indicators."

In an interview with SHANA, Hamid Bovard, referring to the approval of the document and roadmap for the regional energy diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Strategic Headquarters for Regional Energy Trade chaired by Mohammad Reza Aref, First Vice President, stated: "This document was prepared under the guidance of the Oil Ministry and in implementation of paragraph (T) of Article 44 of the Seventh Development Plan Law, and was announced after approval by this headquarters."

Referring to the executive approach of the said document, he added: "Based on the regional energy diplomacy roadmap, Iran's specific action plan in the areas of oil, gas, refining, and petrochemicals has been drawn up with a set of indicators so that actions related to regional energy trade are pursued within a coordinated framework and in line with market developments."

Strategic indicators in regional energy diplomacy

The acting oil minister, explaining the indicators envisaged in this document, said: "Private-sector activity in regional energy trade for the first time, attention to technical developments in the regional and global energy market, the link between energy trade and the country's domestic issues, technopolitics issues, and diplomatic and strategic marketing and market-making are among the important indicators considered in drafting the action plan."

Bovard, emphasizing the importance of private-sector participation in developing regional energy trade, stated: "In this framework, the capacity of non-governmental actors alongside government sectors has been taken into account, and developments in regional and global energy markets will also be considered in drafting and revising action plans."

He recalled: "Attention to the link between energy trade and domestic issues, examination of technopolitics dimensions, and use of diplomatic and strategic marketing and market-making capacities are also among the axes pursued in implementing this roadmap."

Continuous Monitoring of Energy Diplomacy Actions at 3- and 6-Month Intervals

The acting oil minister explained the executive and supervisory mechanism of this document: "Based on the division of labor carried out, the Deputy for Planning of the Oil Ministry has been designated as the specialized secretariat of the Strategic Headquarters for Regional Energy Trade, and the Institute for International Energy Studies of the Oil Ministry is responsible for the permanent center of working groups for monitoring actions and drafting flexible energy diplomacy programs."

He continued: "This mechanism has been envisaged with the aim of continuously monitoring actions, receiving feedback, and drafting programs appropriate to developments in the energy sector at 3- and 6-month intervals so that the country's executive programs are updated in line with the conditions and developments of regional energy markets."

Bovard, referring to the importance of continuity of this process, emphasized: "For the first time in the country, actions of various energy sectors with the participation of governmental and non-governmental actors in the field of energy trade will be continuously regulated and implemented, and feedback, reporting, and problem-solving processes will also be pursued in this mechanism."

Gas consumption management scenarios for winter prepared

TEHRAN- The CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company announced the preparation of consumption management scenarios for gas-stressed provinces and, emphasizing the role of public cooperation in ensuring sustainable gas supply, cited campaigns such as "20 Degrees" and "Warm Room" as part of the plans to reduce consumption in the cold season.

In an interview with a SHANA reporter, Saeed Tavakoli referred to the company's plans for managing gas consumption in gas-stressed provinces and said: "Fortunately, after returning part of the lost gas to the network, scenarios for all gas-stressed provinces for consumption management and optimization through related companies have been prepared."

He noted that these scenarios also foresee, if necessary, consumption restrictions and the use of alternative fuel, and stated: "All scenarios have been carefully reviewed and approved by the Passive Defense Organization, and weaknesses are now being addressed."

Emphasizing the company's concern for sustainable gas supply in the cold season, the CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company said: "We hope to manage the gas available in the network in the best possible way, and in this path, the cooperation and solidarity of the people play a very important role; because without public cooperation and participation, passing through the upcoming winter, given the existing conditions and limitations, will be very difficult."

Referring to cultural and public awareness programs to reduce gas consumption, Tavakoli added: "In this regard, we have the '20 Degrees' campaign and other campaigns such as 'Warm Room' on the agenda. Also, various measures are being carried out by companies and different sectors, with the participation of governmental, non-governmental, and private-sector organizations."

He expressed hope that by using the cultural capacities of each region and with public cooperation, the ground will be prepared for reducing gas consumption and managing it optimally in the cold season.

Outcome of three years of regional confrontation: The emergence of new alliances

From page 1 ▶ Therefore, an assessment of the war should not be limited to the scale of military strikes or the damage inflicted on one side or another. It must also consider the political outcomes achieved, the objectives that remain unfulfilled, the ability to impose the terms of a settlement, and the nature of the regional order that will emerge once the confrontation ends.

New alliances reveal a crisis of confidence due to lack of external protection that the countries in West Asia now feel. One indication of declining American influence is the diplomatic activity and meetings bringing together a number of international and regional powers. These include Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, at a meeting held in Turkey on the 23rd of October 2023.

The significance of these developments lies in the fact that they reflect the participating countries' search for frameworks for coordination and cooperation. This is amid declining confidence in America's ability to manage regional crises and guarantee the security of its allies, in the way they have traditionally expected.

This also reflects a growing lack of confidence in the United States among European countries. The fact that these meetings are taking place does not, in itself, mean that the United States has completely lost its influence. However, it raises questions about the extent to which countries in the region are prepared to continue relying on the American security umbrella, as the sole guarantor of stability.

In the same context, an agreement was reached in Qatar on the October 21 with the participation of Turkey, Pakistan, Indonesia and



Qatar. It is aimed at activating defense industries and establishing defense cooperation. This comes alongside the defense alliance previously discussed within the framework of the Mecca defense pact between Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

These developments reflect a move towards diversifying sources of defense capability, expanding military and industrial partnerships. This is to avoid the restriction of regional security arrangements to a bilateral relationship with the United States. The ultimate focal point of these changes is Iran. It is Iran that has made all this activity necessary, as a result of the loosening of America's grip, the exposure of its weaknesses, and the growing need for its withdrawal from West Asia.

However, it is important to distinguish between establishing frameworks for defense, industrial cooperation and transforming them into a fully integrated military alliance that is capable of operating jointly under all circumstances. Achieving this would require clarity regarding the nature of mutual commitments, command and coordination mechanisms, and the limits of intervention in regional conflicts.

This is something Iran must lead and direct. The existing alliances between Arab countries and external parties, whether Islamic or European, are fragile. They lack the necessary tools and determination. Iran, on the other hand, has the capacity to act and organize, as well as the tools and resolve needed to become the driving force behind the region's future.

As for Turkey and Pakistan, they are seeking to achieve two main objectives through these arrangements: to gain economic benefits from cooperation with Saudi Arabia, and to strengthen their strategic presence in the region. For example, during the first test in the Saudi-Yemeni confrontation, Turkey and Pakistan showed reservations about becoming involved in a confrontation with the Ansarallah resistance movement in Yemen. This was partly because the conflict had begun before some of these arrangements were established, and partly because military intervention could lead to a costly war of attrition.

These new alliances should not be interpreted as a unified alignment against a particular party. Rather, they should be understood as an attempt by participating countries to advance their own interests, expand their room for maneuver, and avoid becoming entirely dependent on the calculations of a single external power.

Saudi Arabia and the search for security alternatives

Saudi Arabia's move towards diversifying its defense partnerships reflects a growing sense that absolute reliance on American protection is no longer sufficient to guarantee its security under all circumstances.

The American-Israeli war against Iran demonstrated that the presence of foreign troops, military bases and alliances does not necessarily prevent threats from reaching the countries hosting those forces, or maintaining security relationships with them. This highlights the idea that the national security of countries in the region cannot remain entirely dependent on external protection. These countries must consider security arrangements that take their own interests and immediate security risks into account.

The significance of this shift is that it does not concern Saudi Arabia alone; it relates to the entire concept of regional security. Can the countries of the region build a relatively independent security system, or will they remain constrained by arrangements that depend on external powers, whose priorities may change according to their own interests?

This will become clear through the extent to which the surrounding countries respond to Iran's vision, particularly given that they have come together, almost collectively, around Iran, despite Iran being the cornerstone of this vision.

France sees biggest day of protests in years

From page 1 ▶ The diverse nature of sectors involved reflects just how many groups are now participating in these protests, which have expanded from students demanding better conditions in schools to a movement that has drawn in trade unions and Yellow Vest protesters.

Each group has its own concerns, though they are united by widespread discontent over the cost of living, perceived government inaction, a growing wealth divide and a deep desire for social and political change.

Several of France's biggest unions, representing everyone from students, teachers and postal workers to doctors, pharmacists and transport workers had called for a nationwide strike on Thursday. About one in three of France's higher education institutions were "disrupted" because of the demonstrations, while about 13% of all school staff went on strike, the government estimated. The unions estimated far larger numbers.

Some train services were also disrupted because of striking workers. Very few public hospital staff — only about 5% of the workforce — participated in the strike, France's health ministry told CNN. "No significant disruption to healthcare services has been reported," the ministry added.

Ever since protests turned violent almost three weeks ago, authorities and shopkeepers have braced for similar scenes at every one of these nationwide demonstrations. However, the day passed without major incident, aside from "clashes between police and groups of radical and far-left activists in several cities, including



Rennes, Nannes, Lyon and Marseille," France's Interior Ministry said. Altogether, police detained 448 people.

In Lyon, police fired tear gas and charged a group of protesters, many of them masked while "several dozen" agitators were arrested in Rennes after they vandalized a hotel, threw objects at police and "violently attacked" protesting union members, authorities said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Netanyahu accused of attempting 'coup' after election defeat

Israeli politicians and commentators have accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of attempting a coup after his election defeat on Oct. 27, which followed a historic turnout among Palestinian citizens of Israel.

They say he is using the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence agency, to undermine the result and retain power.

More than a week after the results showed the Netanyahu-led bloc trailing the opposition, Shin Bet chief David Zini is reportedly leading investigations into the Palestinian vote. The inquiries have raised allegations of voting fraud, bribery and foreign interference, despite no evidence being made public.

The investigations coincide with Netanyahu's campaign to delegitimize the Palestinian-led parties Ra'am and the Joint List, which together secured an unprecedented 19 seats in the Knesset. Critics say the effort is aimed at keeping him in power.

On Tuesday, the Shin Bet arrested Middle East Eye contributor Abd Abu Shahadeh, citing a "security-related investigation". Israeli media reported that Zini also wants Palestinian political leaders Ahmad Tibi, Sami Abou Shahadeh, Mansour Abbas and Ayman Odeh questioned.

Yair Golan, leader of the opposition Democrats party, warned on Wednesday that Israeli democracy was under threat.

"The police are detaining political activists without a warrant. The Shin Bet is trying to question senior elected officials without presenting evidence. The outgoing government refuses to recognize the election results," he said.

Golan later accused Netanyahu of trying to "carry out a coup and seize power by force".

Former prime minister Yair Lapid made a similar accusation on Tuesday, saying Netanyahu was attempting "to crush democracy and steal the elections with the help of sleeper agents of the regime in the security establishment", an apparent reference to Zini, who was appointed as head of Shin Bet by Netanyahu.

Gadi Eisenkot, leader of the opposition bloc, was more measured. He accused Netanyahu of leading "an organized attempt" to "sabotage Israeli democracy" through incitement to violence against elected officials and in the streets, as well as the dismantling of law enforcement agencies.

Israeli journalists and commentators have also accused Netanyahu of mounting an assault on democracy, describing his actions as an attempted coup.

"The prime minister, his circle, and his collaborators in the security branches and the media outlets are energetically driving Israel into the most critical constitutional crisis in its history," Haaretz journalist Amos Harel wrote on Wednesday.

Netanyahu was attempting a "regime coup", Harel said, using tactics familiar from "the playbooks of dark regimes". He cited the use of the secret service, incitement against minorities, threats of violence and refusal to recognize election results.

An opinion piece in Calcalist, a mainstream Israeli financial news outlet, levelled similar accusations against Netanyahu and the Shin Bet.

"Refusing to recognize the election results is a significant escalation," journalist Moshe Gorali wrote, arguing that the government was following a "familiar dictatorial-fascist protocol" by using a loyal intelligence service to overturn the outcome of an election.

Ynet journalist Ronen Bergman said Israel was "in the midst of a coup attempt".

Iran brings Washington to its knees

By Syeda Farheen Naqi Mossavi

TEHRAN – "We will bring the enemy to its knees," martyr Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on the cold night of January 3, 2026.

These words carried a powerful message of resistance, determination, and perseverance. Just months later, their political significance has become increasingly evident.

Donald Trump and his Republican Party have suffered a major electoral setback, with the war against Iran emerging as a decisive factor.

Washington expected military pressure to weaken Tehran, but its aggression instead produced consequences that have come back to haunt the White House.

The November 3 midterm elections dealt a severe blow to the Republican Party, while Democrats gained control of both chambers of Congress. For Trump, who came to power promising economic recovery, national strength, and an "America First" foreign policy, the result represents a major political retreat.

It has exposed the contradiction between his electoral promises and a foreign policy increasingly driven by confrontation and Israel's strategic interests. One of the most significant acknowledgements of the political cost of this war came from within the Trump administration itself.

Vice President JD Vance acknowledged the political consequences of the conflict with Iran, challenging those who believed that sacrificing the Republican Party's Senate majority for the next six years was justified by the military campaign. His remarks also pointed to growing public frustration over inflation, the abandonment of America First priorities, and Washington's relationship with Israel.

Trump himself acknowledged that the conflict with Iran had contributed to the Republican Party's electoral defeat, particularly because American voters were unwilling to bear the burden of rising gasoline prices.

His defence of military action exposed the central contradiction of his presidency: a president elected on promises to avoid unnecessary foreign wars had dragged his country into yet another costly confrontation.

The old propaganda chorus could not save the Republican Party. Laura Loomer, Jared Kushner, Mark Levin, Catturd, Gunther Eagleman, Libs of TikTok, End Wokeness, and the wider pro-Trump media ecosystem spent years manufacturing outrage and shaping political narratives. Yet they could not manufacture enough public enthusiasm for a war Americans did not want.

The Epstein files, internal political feuds, and the hollow nationalism of the America First slogan further damaged the Republican Party's credibility. Nevertheless, the confrontation with Iran became one of its heaviest electoral burdens. The war exposed the widening gap between Washington's foreign policy ambitions and the everyday priorities of ordinary Americans.

The economic consequences of war cannot be concealed through presidential speeches or media campaigns. Rising fuel prices, financial uncertainty, and growing domestic frustration have made the cost of Washington's foreign policy increasingly visible to American voters. They were promised that their interests would come first. Instead, they found themselves paying the price of yet another confrontation in West Asia.

Iran did not need to defeat the United States on the battlefield to expose the weaknesses of its strategy. It needed patience, perseverance, and strategic calculation. By refusing to follow the aggressive timetable set by Washington and Tel Aviv, Tehran allowed its foes to confront the political consequences of their own mistakes.

Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu increasingly appear as leaders willing to endanger regional and international stability in pursuit of their political objectives. The electoral backlash has, to some extent, demonstrated the growing price of this approach.

Another important consequence of these elections is the growing willingness among American politicians to challenge unconditional support for Israel. Michigan Senator-elect Abdul El-Sayed delivered an extraordinary message in his victory speech. Addressing AIPAC, which he said had spent $42 million against him, he declared: "To AIPAC, who spent $42 million against us: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to beat you twice."

He also openly accused Israel of genocide and apartheid, drawing loud applause from the audience. His remarks reflect a changing political environment in which criticism of Israeli policies is no longer confined to the margins but is increasingly entering the American political mainstream.

For decades, AIPAC's financial influence has been a prominent feature of Washington politics. El Sayed's victory sends a clear message: political money cannot guarantee electoral success. Growing opposition to unconditional support for Israel indicates that American voters are increasingly questioning why their taxes should be used to sustain Israeli military policies.

El-Sayed also challenged Trump's claims of having successfully concluded the war with Iran. He compared the conflict to an unfinished construction project that initially appeared limited but eventually turned into a prolonged and unnecessary burden. His criticism exposed the fundamental weakness of Trump's strategy: starting a war is easy, but explaining how to end it is far more difficult.

The Republican defeat, therefore, was not simply another midterm electoral setback. It represented a confrontation between domestic priorities and an interventionist foreign policy.

The Trump administration attempted to demonstrate American power through confrontation, but the consequences weakened its own party and exposed divisions within the American political establishment.

Democratic control of Congress also means that Trump may now face tougher oversight, investigations, and possible impeachment efforts. Although impeachment does not automatically remove a president from office, the administration's weakened political position has created new difficulties and vulnerabilities.

For Iran, the broader lesson is that national sovereignty is not determined by threats against a country or the military power assembled around it. Strategic patience and refusal to surrender under pressure can impose political costs on an adversary that extend far beyond the battlefield.

Despite sustained pressure, Tehran refused to capitulate, challenging Washington's assumption that military superiority would inevitably translate into political submission.

Trump's reckless decision to wage war against Iran has proved extraordinarily costly. It is a humiliation that history may remember long after the immediate political consequences have passed.

The cold night of January 3 carried a message: the enemy would be brought to its knees. The American elections have given that message a new political meaning. Trump remains president, but his party has lost control of Congress.

His vice president has openly questioned the cost of the war, while unconditional support for Israel faces growing criticism. The slogan "Make America Great Again" has become a political noose around Trump's neck.

America has not become great again; instead, Trump has once again been humiliated. If Americans want to preserve their country's dignity, they must hold this Epstein-files-linked, bankrupt, war-criminal administration accountable and send those responsible behind prison bars.

The martyred Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah had warned that Trump and his administration would eventually realize that they had lost this region and would also pay the political price in elections. Today, his warning carries renewed significance. If this process continues—and Insha'Allah, it will—the liberation of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) may be closer than ever.

When the United States eventually withdraws from this region, the Zionist regime may find itself deprived of the military and political backing on which it has depended for so long. Its leaders may ultimately be forced to pack their bags and leave this land, without the need for another war.

The end of American hegemony in West Asia would fundamentally transform the regional balance of power. Iran has demonstrated that the consequences of resistance extend far beyond the battlefield.

What Washington attempted to impose on Tehran has returned to haunt America in the form of a domestic political crisis. If this cannot be called regime change in Washington's political calculations, it is certainly a profound strategic retreat.

Washington went to war to bring Iran to its knees, but it proved the opposite. What a spectacular miscalculation! Madman Trump's costly gamble: Tehran stood firm, Washington paid the price!

Bravo! Iran.

SPORTS

Iran women make history at 2026 Asian Team Squash Championships

TEHRAN - Iran's women's national squash team made history by defeating host nation Pakistan 2–1 to claim their first-ever bronze medal at the Asian Team Squash Championships.

The historic victory came on Friday in the team's fourth match of the tournament in Islamabad, marking a major milestone for Iranian women's squash.

Iran took the lead in the opening match through Narges Soltani, who delivered a dominant performance to defeat her Pakistani opponent 3–0. Soltani secured the victory in straight games, winning 11–9, 11–5 and 11–8.

Pakistan fought back in the second match, with Baran Mohammadpour suffering a 3–1 defeat. The result levelled the overall team score at 1–1, leaving the tie to be decided in the third and final match.

Fereshte Eghtedari rose to the occasion, producing an impressive straight-games victory to seal Iran's historic bronze medal. Eghtedari defeated her opponent 3–0, winning the games 11–8, 11–6 and 11–6 to secure the decisive point for Iran.

Iran had previously recorded a victory over South Korea before suffering a defeat against Hong Kong. Their triumph over Pakistan proved decisive, securing third place in Asia for the first time in the country's history.

The Iranian squad were headed by Elham Ramezani.

The historic bronze medal represents a significant achievement for Iranian women's squash and highlights the team's growing competitiveness on the Asian stage.

A historic bronze, a memorable victory and a landmark moment for Iranian women's squash.

India and Iran explore cooperation to develop cricket

TEHRAN - Indian Ambassador Vishwesh Negi met Iran Cricket Association President Mehdi Maskani as both sides discuss technical assistance and the development of cricket in Iran.

The Embassy of India in Tehran and the Iran Cricket Association have taken steps towards strengthening sporting ties, with discussions focusing on technical cooperation and the development of cricket in Iran.

The latest engagement came during a friendly cricket match between the Tehran Cricket Team and the Indian Embassy Team, held on Oct. 23, at the cricket ground in Velayat Park, Tehran. The match was organized through the joint efforts of the Iran Cricket Association and the Embassy of India.

Indian Ambassador to Iran, Vishwesh Negi, attended the event and also took to the field, participating in the friendly encounter. His involvement added a special touch to the sporting occasion, which provided an opportunity to promote cricket and strengthen people-to-people connections between the two countries.

On the sidelines of the match, Ambassador Negi met Maskani, and members of the association's board at the Indian Embassy. During the meeting, the Iranian delegation requested technical assistance from India to support the growth and development of cricket in Iran.

India, where cricket enjoys enormous popularity, is one of the world's leading nations in the sport. The Indian men's national team have won the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup twice, in 1983 and 2011, and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2007, 2024 and 2026.

Iran, meanwhile, is a member of the International Cricket Council (ICC), and its national team has previously competed in Asian cricket tournaments. Greater access to technical expertise, coaching resources and development programs could help strengthen the sport's infrastructure and expand its reach across the country.

The meeting and friendly fixture represent a positive step towards closer sporting cooperation between India and Iran, with the potential to create new opportunities for cricket development, knowledge-sharing and stronger bilateral ties.

Iran defeat China at Futsal International Tournament Yinchuan Women

TEHRAN – Iran's women's national futsal team defeated China 3-1 at the Futsal International Tournament Yinchuan on Friday.

Maral Torkaman made a brace and Zahra Kiani also was on target for Iran.

Team Melli had defeated Hong Kong 6-0 on Thursday.

The Iranian team are headed by Shahrzad Mozafar in the event.

The tournament provides Iran's women with valuable international experience as they continue their preparations for the upcoming events.

Iran's girls' futsal beat Italy in 2026 Youth Olympic Games

TEHRAN – Iran's girls' national futsal team continued their impressive run at the 2026 Dakar Summer Youth Olympic Games with a convincing 3-1 victory over Italy on Thursday.

The Iranian side produced a strong performance in their final Group B fixture, with Elnaz Hosseinipour scoring twice to lead her team to victory. Setayesh Rezaei also found the back of the net to complete Iran's three-goal tally.

The win marked Iran's third consecutive triumph in the group stage, following earlier victories over Costa Rica and Cameroon.

With a perfect record of three wins from three matches, Iran finished at the top of Group B, securing qualification for the semi-finals in impressive fashion.

The young Iranian players have demonstrated consistency, attacking quality and strong team spirit throughout the competition, establishing themselves as serious contenders for a place in the final.

Iran will now turn their attention to the semi-finals, where they will look to maintain their winning momentum and move one step closer to a historic medal at the Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games.

The team's unbeaten group-stage campaign has provided a major boost to Iran's hopes of achieving a memorable result on the international stage.

Iranian girl secures country's first quota for 2028 Olympics

TEHRAN - Iranian female athlete Hanieh Rostamian has secured the country's first quota for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games in the women's 10m air pistol competition at the World Championships in Doha.

Rostamian finished fourth at the World Shooting Championships. Given that two Chinese rivals were among the top three titles, the Olympic quota was awarded to the fourth-place winner.

She had previously secured a quota for the 2024 Paris Olympics at the 2022 World Shooting Championships in Cairo.

7 spectacular destinations to experience autumn in Iran

TEHRAN - Autumn is one of the most inviting times to travel across Iran. As summer heat gives way to cooler days, the country's landscapes begin to change, from the forests of the Caspian region to the deserts of the central plateau and the warm shores of the Persian Gulf.

The season also offers a quieter side of travel. With the summer holidays over, many destinations see fewer domestic visitors, although popular sites can remain busy on weekends. Autumn is a good time to explore Iran's natural attractions at a more leisurely pace, whether on a forest walk, a desert excursion or a journey through rural communities.

Here is a selection of seven destinations that showcase the country's varied autumn scenery.



From top left, Mesr Desert in Isfahan province, Olsabelangah village in Gilan province and Alangdarreh Forest in Golestan province; Kish Island in Hormozgan province and Yush village in Mazandaran province; Nayband village in South Khorasan province and Jangal-e Abr (Cloud Forest) in Semnan province. The destinations offer a glimpse of Iran's diverse landscapes during autumn.

Mesr Desert, golden sands and quiet horizons

Situated in Isfahan province, Mesr is one of Iran's best-known desert destinations. Its sweeping dunes, open horizons and striking contrasts between sand and salt flats make it a compelling place to experience the country's arid landscapes.

The surrounding region has several attractions, including Takht-e Arous, Bayazeh village and Namak-Khor Lake. The salt flats, marked by polygonal patterns, offer a different landscape from the rolling sand dunes. Mesr also attracts adventure enthusiasts, particularly those interested in off-road driving, although its routes require caution and appropriate vehicles.

Summer temperatures can make exploring the desert uncomfortable. Autumn brings more favorable conditions, allowing visitors to walk across the dunes, photograph the landscape and spend time outdoors. The cooler weather is also suitable for overnight stays, though desert nights can be considerably colder than the daytime.

Mesr lies about 600 kilometers from Tehran and roughly 200 kilometers from Isfahan. Travelers from the capital can reach the area via Semnan and Jandaq.

For those seeking a break from urban life, Mesr offers a chance to experience the quiet and expansive beauty of Iran's desert country.

Olsabelangah, a mountain village above the clouds

Olsabelangah, a mountain village in Gilan province, is known for its green meadows, wooden houses and sweeping views of the surrounding hills. Located about 25 kilometers south of Masal and 50 kilometers west of Rasht, it stands at an elevation of approximately 1,489 meters.

The village is especially appealing when clouds drift across the valleys, creating the impression of a sea of clouds beneath the surrounding heights. In autumn, the changing vegetation and occasional mist lend the landscape a different character from its lush summer appearance.

Olsabelangah has a distinctive rural setting. Construction is restricted under the supervision of natural resources authorities, helping preserve the area's landscape. The village is not connected to the national electricity grid and relies on generators and solar panels. Water comes from local springs.

After midnight, the village becomes particularly quiet. Visitors staying overnight may find a flashlight useful when walking around after dark. Local honey and dairy products are among the items travelers can purchase.

The journey from Masal follows a mountainous road for approximately 25 kilometers. The drive, with its views of hills and valleys, is part of the experience. Olsabelangah is a worthwhile choice for travelers looking to spend time in the highlands of northern Iran.

Alangdarreh Forest, an autumn palette near Gorgan

Five kilometers southwest of Gorgan, the capital of Golestan province, Alangdarreh Forest Park is one of northern Iran's most attractive natural destinations. Its extensive tree cover, winding paths and recreational facilities make it popular with families, hikers and cyclists throughout the year.

Autumn, however, gives the forest a particularly striking appearance. Green foliage gradually gives way to yellow, orange and brown, creating a colorful canopy over the walking trails. Fallen leaves collect along the paths, while cool air and occasional rain add to the atmosphere.

The park offers several ways to enjoy the landscape. Visitors can hike, cycle, picnic or simply take a leisurely walk beneath the trees. Facilities include a health trail, bicycle stations, playgrounds and sports areas.

Alangdarreh's proximity to Gorgan makes it convenient for travelers who want to experience the autumn colors without committing to a long journey into the countryside. It is also a useful starting point for exploring other attractions in Golestan province.

For travelers coming from Tehran, the journey to Gorgan can be made through northern Iran's scenic roads. The Haraz route is one option, passing through several towns and cities along the way.

A visit to Alangdarreh offers a simple but rewarding autumn experience: a forest walk, fresh air and the changing colors of northern Iran.

Kish Island, autumn sunshine on the Persian Gulf

While northern Iran's forests become cooler and more colorful in autumn, Kish Island offers a warmer alternative. Located in Hormozgan province in the Persian Gulf, the island is among Iran's most popular tourist destinations, known for its beaches, shopping centers, recreational facilities and historical attractions.

Autumn is an appealing time to visit because the island's intense summer heat begins to ease. The coastal environment becomes more comfortable for outdoor activities, and visitors can enjoy beach walks, sightseeing and shopping without the exhausting temperatures of summer.

Water-based recreation is another attraction. Sea clubs on Kish offer various activities, including water sports and marine entertainment. During early autumn, conditions may still be suitable for swimming, although the weather can vary and occasional rainfall may disrupt outdoor plans.

The island also has historical and natural attractions, giving visitors reasons to explore beyond its beaches and shopping areas. A trip can combine leisure with sightseeing, making Kish an appealing destination for couples, families and travelers looking for a change of scenery.

Autumn on Kish differs considerably from the season in northern and central Iran. The island generally remains warm, providing a welcome escape for those who prefer mild weather and coastal landscapes.

Travelers planning to reach Kish by car from Tehran face a long road journey through central and southern Iran. The final leg involves boarding a ferry at Bandar Lengeh or Bandar Charak. Those taking their vehicles should check ferry schedules and transport arrangements before departure.

Kish offers a different interpretation of autumn travel in Iran, with sunshine, beaches and recreational activities replacing forest walks and mountain scenery.

Yush, a rural retreat in the Alborz Mountains

Nestled on the slopes of the Alborz Mountains in Mazandaran province, Yush is best known as the birthplace of Nima Yushij, the poet widely regarded as the father of modern Persian poetry.

His ancestral house is the village's principal historical attraction and draws visitors interested in Persian literature. Yet Yush has more to offer than its literary heritage. Surrounded by mountains, gardens and a river, the village provides a peaceful rural setting that becomes particularly attractive during autumn.

As the season progresses, the trees change color, adding shades of yellow and orange to the landscape. The gardens and river bring a softer contrast to the mountainous surroundings, while the village's quieter atmosphere makes it an appealing place to escape the bustle of Tehran.

A visit to Yush can easily combine a look at Nima Yushij's house with a walk through the village and its surrounding countryside. For those interested in rural tourism, the experience offers a glimpse of life in a mountain settlement in northern Iran.

Yush is approximately a three-hour drive from Tehran, depending on traffic and road conditions. The Chalus road is a scenic option, although the journey may take longer. Its winding mountain roads and changing views make the drive an attraction in its own right.

For travelers interested in literature, nature and rural landscapes, Yush is a destination where cultural heritage and autumn scenery come together.

Nayband Village, a green oasis in the desert

In the arid landscapes of South Khorasan province, Nayband village stands out for its greenery. Located approximately 225 kilometers south of Tabas along the Tabas-Kerman road, the settlement is surrounded by desert terrain but sustained by springs and traditional water channels.

Unlike many desert villages, Nayband has extensive gardens and cultivated land. Citrus trees, palms, wheat, barley, legumes and vegetables are grown in the surrounding fields, creating a striking contrast with the dry landscape beyond the settlement.

The presence of water has played an important role in the village's development. Springs in the Rostam and Zardgah areas, along with traditional water systems, have helped support agriculture and rural life.

The village's distinctive scenery reflects the relationship between its residents and the surrounding environment. Gardens and cultivated plots occupy the available land, while the desert mountains form a dramatic backdrop.

Autumn is a favorable time to visit Nayband, as temperatures become more comfortable for exploring the settlement and its surroundings. The season also offers an opportunity to appreciate the village's agricultural landscape and the contrast between cultivated greenery and the arid terrain.

Nayband is an appealing destination for travelers interested in discovering less familiar parts of Iran. Its location along the Tabas-Kerman route makes it suitable for those exploring central and southeastern Iran.

To reach the village, visitors can travel south from Tabas along the Tabas-Kerman road, passing Khorit, Dehukh and Zenowghan before taking the road to Nayband.

For travelers seeking a different kind of autumn destination, Nayband offers an experience shaped by desert geography, traditional agriculture and rural life.

Jangal-e Abr, a misty autumn landscape

Near Shahroud in Semnan province, the Cloud Forest, known locally as Jangal-e Abr, is one of Iran's distinctive natural attractions. Its mountainous terrain, dense vegetation and frequent cloud formations create a landscape unlike the surrounding arid regions.

The forest is particularly known for the clouds that move across its hills and valleys, sometimes enveloping the woodland in mist. The combination of forest cover, mountain scenery and shifting weather makes it an appealing destination for nature lovers and photographers.

Autumn adds another dimension to the landscape. The changing foliage brings seasonal colors to the trees, while cooler temperatures make walking and exploring more comfortable than during the summer months.

Visitors can enjoy nature walks and take in views of the surrounding hills and valleys. The forest's misty atmosphere also offers opportunities for photography, particularly when clouds move through the trees.

However, conditions in the mountainous area can change quickly. Rain, fog and lower temperatures are possible, so visitors should prepare accordingly and take care when exploring the trails.

Jangal-e Abr is a worthwhile destination for travelers exploring Shahroud and Semnan province. Its forested landscape offers a striking contrast to the region's deserts and dry plains.

For those interested in Iran's natural diversity, the Cloud Forest provides an opportunity to experience a different side of the country.

Tehran, Yerevan agree to maintain joint efforts to address Aras pollution

TEHRAN – Iranian and Armenian officials have agreed to strengthen joint efforts to tackle pollution in the Aras River, a shared border river between the two countries that has been grappling with environmental contamination.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17), held in Armenia from October 19 to 30, stressing that relevant agencies and authorities would continue to address the river's environmental challenges through coordinated national-level efforts, IRNA reported.

Underscoring the strategic importance of the Aras River in economic, social, and cultural terms, Ahmad-Reza Lahijanzadeh, the deputy head of the Department of Environment (DOE), said the preservation of the river's environment and the enhancement of its water quality are essential requirements for the region's economic and social sustainability, as well as for protecting the health of residents along its banks.

The official also called for strengthening bilateral ties to prevent pollutants from entering rivers and enhance the environmental management of the river.

The Iranian delegation also presented an account of the country's undertaken measures and activities to curb pollutant discharges into the Aras River.

Moreover, Hamid Zohrabi, deputy head of Iran's Department of Environment (DOE), met with his Armenian counterpart, Aram Meymaryan, on the sidelines of COP17, and proposed establishing a joint peace and friendship park with Armenia to strengthen cross-border cooperation on biodiversity conservation and wildlife protection in the Caucasus region.

The proposed transboundary park would promote joint efforts to conserve biodiversity in northwestern Iran and the Caucasus region, while safeguarding critical wildlife corridors, including those used by the Persian leopard.



The two officials also discussed ways to expand environmental cooperation and address shared challenges, including the protection of the Aras River.

Meymaryan welcomed the proposal and praised the active participation of the Iranian delegation in COP17.

The officials agreed to establish a working group to follow up on the agreements reached after the conclusion of the summit.

COP17 was held in two stages: technical-level discussions followed by the ministerial segment.

The leaders' summit took place on October 16, featuring an address by President Masoud Pezeshkian. It marked the first time a president of the Islamic Republic of Iran had attended a Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Addressing the summit, Pezeshkian called for "peace diplomacy" to protect biodiversity, condemning the devastating environmental impact of wars of aggression as ecocide and urging the international community to establish effective, transparent and enforceable mechanisms to safeguard natural heritage during wartime.

Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment, also addressed the meeting, saying that environmental diplomacy can become an instrument of peace diplomacy, while the relationship between biodiversity, peace, and security should be viewed as a two-way relationship.

Ansari added the link between biodiversity and peace was not merely an ethical or political issue, but a fundamental concern in environmental governance, international law, and human security.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, she said, the main drivers of biodiversity loss are generally understood to include land-use change, habitat destruction, pollution, unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, and climate change.

The Iranian delegation also held a meeting with Vivek Menon, chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC), and discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in developing management and conservation programs for endangered species.

The talks particularly focused on conservation and restoration programs for the Asiatic cheetah, the great bustard, and the Persian zebra, onager, their respective habitats, as well as the reintroduction of the Persian fallow deer into its natural habitats.

The two sides also discussed enhancing technical and scientific cooperation and providing funding under sanctions.

Menon expressed hope that ongoing collaboration between IUCN officials and Iranian experts would guarantee the survival of endangered species, such as the Asiatic cheetah, in Iran.

During this year's summit, Iran officially joined the Coalition of Action to Recover Endangered Species (CARES), which aims to strengthen international cooperation to preserve and restore the country's wildlife.

The CARES was unveiled at COP17 in Yerevan on October 16. Colombia and Armenia launched the initiative with 17 founding participating governments: Armenia, Belize, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mexico, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, United Kingdom, and Vanuatu. Iran has become a member of the coalition as the 18th country.

The coalition is supported by the Reverse the Red Action partnership as secretariat. The membership document was signed by Zohrabi, on October 26.

Speaking at a meeting on this occasion, Zohrabi underlined the need for equitable distribution of resources and technology to save endangered species.

Iran's name will be listed on the website of the coalition as a country that has developed action plans for the conservation of 40 wildlife species to benefit from technical, scientific, and financial support from CARES.

Iran, China discuss ways to develop ties in digital technologies

TEHRAN – The deputy minister for information, communications, and technology (ICT), Ehsan Chitsaz, and the director of the Cyberspace Administration of China, Zhuang Rongwen, have explored avenues to enhance collaboration in the fields of digital technologies.

The officials met on the sidelines of the 2026 World Internet Conference (WIC) Wuzhen Summit, IRIB reported.

During the meeting, the Iranian official referred to the development of the digital economy and artificial intelligence (AI) as the shared priorities of the two countries, emphasizing the need to transform existing potential into specific, time-bound, and measurable projects.

Outlining the responsibilities of the ICT ministry in the expansion of digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data governance, AI, and social media platforms, Chitsaz expressed Iran's interest in the promotion of collaborative efforts with the Cyber Administration of China, and proposed fostering cooperation between the two sides by developing an action plan.

Exchanging experiences in regulating generative AI services, risk assessment, detection of AI-generated content, protection of personal data, secure and lawful data transfer, and platform responsibility were among the key areas suggested by the Iranian side for the enhancement of cooperation.

Implementing joint training courses for experts and regulators, as well as conducting pilot projects, were highlighted as initial steps towards operationalizing specialized cooperation between the two countries.

Ongoing collaboration between specialized institutions in Iran and China will help drive innovation, strengthen public trust, and create new opportunities for businesses in the digital economy, Chitsaz emphasized.

Held in Wuzhen, east China's Zhejiang Province, the WIC Wuzhen Summit took place from November 2 to 5, bringing together about 1,800 delegates from 138 countries and regions, under the theme "Open Source and Openness, Joint Contribution and Shared Benefits – Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future in Cyberspace."

The central discussions centered around Open-Source AI, AI Governance and Security, Frontier Technologies, and Digital Cooperation.

By placing open-source AI and international cooperation at the center of its agenda, the conference highlighted a collective push toward a more inclusive and collaborative digital future, aiming to ensure that the benefits of technological advancement are shared broadly.

Fostering technological partnerships

In 2025, ICT Minister Sattar Hashemi and China's Minister of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), Li Lecheng, explored avenues for the development of technological ties between the two countries.

The officials met in Beijing, China. Hashemi is paying a visit to China at the invitation of Li Lecheng to further expand ICT ties with friendly countries in line with technology diplomacy, dolat.ir reported.

The two sides highlighted the expansion of cooperation in AI, industrial intelligence, the development of communications infrastructure, and human resource training.

Emphasizing the historical and friendly relations between Iran and China, Li said Iran is one of Beijing's important regional partners, and called for boosting operational cooperation in technological fields.

The official voiced China's readiness to deepen ties with Iran under the 25-year strategic partnership, recognizing Iran's extensive capacities in information technology, artificial intelligence, and communication infrastructure sectors.

"The expansion of technological cooperation will not only contribute to the promotion of the national interests of the two countries, but will also play an effective role in fostering regional technological interactions," the Chinese official noted.



For his turn, Hashemi described China as Iran's 'strategic partner and ally'. Referring to the recent meeting between the presidents of the two countries in Kazan, Russia, he further stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral relations.

The official went on to propose enhancing joint efforts through sharing expertise in fields of e-government and smart services, as well as educational cooperation and training specialized human resources.

In May 2025, the Chinese ambassador to Iran, Cong Peiwu, underlined the need to boost cooperation in advanced technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, calling it essential for the future.

Lauding Iran's advancement in the information and communication technology sector, Peiwu highlighted the expansion of collaborations despite challenges and external forces, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks in Tehran, during a meeting with Hashemi.

For his part, Hashemi said the two countries have high capacities in the AI field, which can lay the ground for future collaborations. He also stressed the importance of fully utilizing joint capabilities to accomplish the set goals of the strategic partnership.

The implementation of previously reached agreements in the ICT sector, as well as the development of ties in the digital economy, communication infrastructure, processing infrastructure, space systems, and data transit, were among other discussed issues.

Iran advances research output despite sanctions and wartime challenges

TEHRAN - Iran's research output continued to grow in 2025 despite economic sanctions and wartime challenges, reflecting the resilience of its scientific community, the expanding capabilities of its research institutions, and the country's determination to sustain scientific progress and strengthen its position in the global research landscape.

Shahin Akhoundzadeh, deputy minister of health for research and technology, announced a 1.6-percent increase in the country's research output in 2025 compared with the previous year, describing the growth as a positive sign of the country's scientific progress following two years of stagnation.

Speaking at a strategic consultation meeting with veteran medical research experts, Akhoundzadeh emphasized that maintaining scientific momentum under difficult circumstances requires protecting human capital, enhancing the effectiveness of research activities and strengthening the resilience of research infrastructure.

He said that, although the future outlook under wartime conditions remains uncertain, Iran's scientific capabilities provide a valuable foundation for preserving and advancing its research achievements.

Akhoundzadeh outlined four possible scenarios for the future of the country's scientific system: "innovation under pressure," "flourishing and innovation," "scientific stagnation," and "the collapse of the scientific system." He expressed hope that Iran would overcome the current challenges and capitalize on its scientific resources to further consolidate its position in research and technology.

The 1.6-percent increase in research output is particularly significant in the context of the pressures facing the country's scientific institutions. It demonstrates the continued activity of Iranian researchers and universities and their efforts to maintain research programs and contribute to scientific development despite challenging conditions.

Although Turkey and Saudi Arabia recorded higher growth rates of 20 percent and 12.8 percent, respectively, Akhoundzadeh noted that Iran's return to growth after two years of stagnation was itself an encouraging development.

Strong position in regional and global research

Iran's scientific achievements extend well beyond the overall volume of academic publications. The country has established a substantial research base across a wide range of disciplines, supported by universities, medical research centers, technology institutes and a growing community of internationally recognized scientists.

The 2026 Nature Index Research Leaders ranking, based on research published in 2025, placed Iran 26th worldwide and second in West Asia, following Israel. Iran ranked ahead of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and several other countries in the region, reflecting its continued contribution to research published in a selected group of leading international scientific journals.

The country's performance across individual disciplines further demonstrates the breadth of its research capabilities. Iran ranked second in West Asia in physical sciences and natural sciences, while maintaining a significant presence in applied sciences, chemistry and health sciences.

These achievements highlight the role of Iran's scientific institutions in advancing knowledge in areas ranging from fundamental sciences to applied research and emerging technologies.

The country's strong academic infrastructure, together with the contributions of researchers at universities and specialized research centers, has helped establish a foundation for continued scientific development and international engagement.

More scientists among world's top researchers

One of the most notable indicators of Iran's expanding scientific capacity is the steady increase in the number of its researchers included in the list of the world's top two percent of scientists.

According to the 2025 edition of the science-wide author databases developed by Stanford University researchers and published through Elsevier, 2,534 Iranian scientists were included in the single-year category, compared with 2,326 in 2024 and 1,154 in 2020. This represents an increase of approximately 120 percent over five years.

The number of Iranian researchers featured in the career-long category also reached 1,201 in 2025, marking a 17.7-percent increase from the previous year.

These figures reflect the growing international visibility of Iranian researchers and their contributions to scientific literature across different disciplines.

Universities such as the University of Tehran, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Amirkabir University of Technology and the University of Tabriz are among the institutions contributing to this scientific presence.

The increasing representation of Iranian scientists in international citation-based rankings also points to the importance of investing in research talent and creating opportunities for young researchers to participate in high-impact scientific projects.

Medical research as a driver of scientific development

Medical sciences have traditionally played an important role in Iran's research system, with universities of medical sciences and specialized research institutions contributing to advances in healthcare, biotechnology, pharmaceutical sciences and medical technologies.

The Ministry of Health's research and technology programs seek to strengthen the connection between scientific research and the country's healthcare priorities, ensuring that academic findings can be translated into practical applications.

Research in areas such as advanced diagnostic methods, new pharmaceutical formulations, regenerative medicine, biotechnology, medical equipment and disease prevention has become increasingly important in this regard.

Strengthening research effectiveness, one of the priorities highlighted by Akhoundzadeh, is also intended to enhance the practical value of scientific projects and expand the contribution of research to public health and the national economy.

In this context, maintaining the capacity of medical research centers and supporting researchers at different stages of their careers are essential to ensuring the continuity of scientific achievements.

Building resilience for next stage

Akhoundzadeh's assessment of the four possible scenarios facing Iran's scientific system also underscores the importance of adopting forward-looking policies to protect the country's accumulated research capabilities.

The scenario of "innovation under pressure" reflects the possibility of turning challenges into opportunities through greater reliance on domestic expertise, stronger research networks and the development of innovative solutions.

The more favorable prospect of "flourishing and innovation" would involve expanding research opportunities, supporting scientific talent, improving access to advanced technologies and strengthening cooperation among universities, research institutions and industry.

To move toward this scenario, maintaining research infrastructure, supporting early-career scientists and ensuring the availability of essential laboratory equipment and research materials will remain important priorities.

International scientific cooperation can also play a significant role in this process. Participation in joint research projects, academic exchanges and international scientific networks can help Iranian researchers share knowledge, access new research opportunities and increase the global visibility of their work.

At the same time, greater emphasis on applied research and knowledge-based production can help translate scientific achievements into technological solutions, innovative products and services that address national and international needs.

Iran's research performance in recent years demonstrates the considerable scientific capacity developed by its academic and research institutions. The growing number of internationally recognized scientists, its strong regional standing in several research disciplines and the continued expansion of its scientific activities provide a foundation for further progress.

The 1.6-percent increase in research output in 2025, achieved despite significant challenges, adds to this record and signals the continued commitment of the country's scientific community to research and innovation.

As Iran seeks to navigate the current circumstances, preserving its scientific workforce, strengthening research infrastructure and making more effective use of its research potential will be crucial to sustaining this momentum and advancing its position in the global scientific community.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Often your utterances and expressions of your face leak out the secrets of your hidden thoughts.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times » Noon:11:48 Evening: 17:23 Dawn: 5:07 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:33 (tomorrow)

‘Burning Plain’ leads winners at 19th International Resistance Film Festival

TEHRAN- The Iranian feature film “Burning Plain” was the biggest winner at the 19th International Resistance Film Festival, securing six awards, including Best Film and Best Director, at the closing ceremony held at the Milad Tower Convention Center in Tehran on Thursday.

Directed by Majid Esmaeili, the film also received awards for Best Cinematography, Best Makeup, and Best Screenplay, the latter shared with “The Gambler”. Masoud Sakhavatdust was recognized for his musical compositions for both “Burning Plain” and “Kooch”.

Esmaeili received the Best Director award, while the film’s producer, Kamran Majidi, accepted the festival’s top prize for Best Feature Film in the national competition.

In the national feature film competition, Sara Hatami won Best Actress for her performance in “The Bridge”, while Arman Darvish received Best Actor for his role in “The Successor”.

Kourosh Tahami was named Best Supporting Actor for The Gambler”, and Zahra Moradi won Best Supporting Actress for her performance in “Kooch”. Mohsen Bahari received the Best First-Time Director award for “The Gambler”.

Other awards in the national feature film section went to Mohammad Baradaran for the visual effects of “The Successor”, Reza Torkaman for the film’s special effects, and Esmaeil Alizadeh for editing “Land of Angels”. The Best Costume Design award also went to “Land of Angels”.

The jury’s special award was presented to producer Manouchehr Mohammadi for “Land of Angels”, while Mehdi Motahhar received the Martyr Soleimani Special Award for “Kooch”. The festival secretary’s special award went to Rouhollah Sohrabi for “The Successor”.



Majid Esmaeili, director of “Burning Plain”, holds his Best Director award at the closing ceremony of the 19th International Resistance Film Festival in Tehran on November 5, 2026.

In the documentary section, Mostafa Mousavitabar’s “Standing Beside the Thames”, produced by Zohreh Najafzadeh, won Best Feature-Length Documentary. Morteza Payesh-shenas received Best Documentary Director for “A Small Waterway of Happiness”, while Masoud Zareian won Best Short Documentary Director for “Among the Fig Trees”.

The Best Short Documentary award went to Motahareh Edalatkhah for “A 25-Year Wait”. Ali Akbari was recognized for his research on “I Am Jalal Al-e Ahmad”, and Seyyed Hassan Seyyedi Parishan and Vahid Kazemi won the technical achievement award for cinematography on “The Golden Corridor”.

In the short film section, “Bitura”, produced by Mehdi Abazari, received Best Film. Ehsan Abednia won Best Director for “The Messenger”, while Hossein Jamshidi received Best Screenplay for “Captain Torres”. Seyyed Mohammadreza Sajjadian was honored for cinematography on “Salamoon”. The jury also presented a special award to “Under God’s Eyes”, directed by Abolfazl Saei.

In animation, “Safineh-ye Nejat” (The Rescue Ship), produced by Mohammad Amin Hamdani, won Best Feature-Length Animation, with Hadi Mohammadian receiving the Best Director award for the film. Rasoul Azargoun won Best Short Animation Director for “Rocket City”. A special award went to “The Battle of Kites”, produced by Elham Ebrahimi, while Mahva Animation Studio and Mehdi Jafari Jozani were recognized for their contribution to resistance-themed animation.

The international competition also honored filmmakers from several countries. Russian director Andrei Simonov’s “Baby Boy” won Best Feature Film, while Jordanian filmmaker Naji Salameh received Best Short Fiction Film for “Hind Under Siege”.

The Best Feature-Length Documentary award went to “A State of Passion”, directed by Carol Mansour and Muna Khalidi, while “Vibrations from Gaza”, directed by Rehab Nazzal, received the Best Short Documentary award.

Artists pay tribute to martyred Minab schoolchildren



TEHRAN – A group of Iranian artists from the fields of theater, cinema, television and music visited the southern city of Minab on the occasion of National Students’ Day on Wednesday, paying tribute to the schoolchildren killed in a US-Israeli attack on Shajareh Tayyebeh School.

The artists visited the school, which was targeted in an attack that claimed the lives of a 168 innocent students and teachers, and later attended the martyrs’ cemetery in Minab to pay their respects.

The gathering was intended to honor the memory of the victims and express solidarity with the families of the children who lost their lives in the attack.

Among the artists taking part in the visit were theater figures Maryam Motaref, Davoud Fathali-Beigi and Atash Taqipour, filmmakers Babak Khajehpasha and Ensieh Shah-Hosseini, and actors Bahram Ebrahimi and Alireza Ostadi.

Musician Mohammad Fereshtehnejad, along with cultural and media figures including Sepideh Sadat Hajipour, Seyyed Saeid Seyyedzadeh, Alireza Hosseini, Mehdi Kouhian, Meysam Zandi, Mahmoud Gabarloo, Ali Shirmohammadi and Sepideh Heydarabadi, also joined the delegation.

The visit brought together artists from different cultural disciplines to commemorate the young victims and reaffirm the role of the artistic community in preserving their memory.

On February 28, the Shajareh Tayyebeh elementary school in Minab, Hormozgan province, became the site of a devastating massacre as the United States and Israel initiated their strikes against Iran.

While dozens of girls and boys aged between 7 and 12 were beginning their lessons, the school was targeted by a missile strike that caused the building to collapse, trapping children and teachers beneath the rubble. Iranian authorities confirmed a final death toll of 168 people, with at least 95 others wounded, marking one of the most harrowing incidents of the conflict’s opening day.

Despite attempts by US and Israeli authorities to distance themselves from the carnage as images of the tragedy spread across social media, detailed forensic and digital investigations have painted a starkly different picture.

An analysis by Al Jazeera’s digital investigations unit, utilizing over a decade of satellite imagery and recent video clips, revealed that the school was a clearly distinct civilian facility, separated from any adjacent military sites for at least ten years. Furthermore, witness accounts and satellite-based analyses confirmed that the school was triple tapped by three separate, deliberate strikes, leaving no doubt about the nature of the attack.

The international community has faced mounting evidence regarding the responsibility for this atrocity, with investigations from major global outlets including The New York Times, BBC Verify, CBC, and NPR all concluding that the United States was responsible for the strike.

These findings have raised fundamental questions about the intelligence used to justify the bombing, as the patterns of the strike suggest a direct targeting of a civilian educational institution. The Minab school tragedy now stands as a somber testament to the immense human cost of the aggression and a focal point for those demanding international accountability.

Cartoon of Day



President Donald Lame Duck
Cartoonist: Oliver Schopf from Austria

Iranian House of Cinema, French Embassy willing to implement cultural, cinematic programs

TEHRAN – Homayoun Asadian, CEO of the Iranian House of Cinema, met with Pierre Cochard, the French Ambassador to Tehran, on the sidelines of the “Nouvelle Vague” (New Wave) session in Tehran and discussed expanding cultural cooperation and organizing joint cinematic programs.

During the meeting on Wednesday, Asadian said: “I am pleased that you visited the headquarters of this professional institution, a place that hosts various cultural programs. We are all familiar with the French New Wave, filmmakers such as Godard and Truffaut, and works like ‘Breathless’,” IRNA reported.

Referring to the historical significance of the French New Wave, Asadian remarked: “The New Wave is one of the pinnacles of cinematic history and an influential movement in world cinema. Organizing programs such as ‘Dialogism’ and readings regarding the French New Wave helps enhance cinematic knowledge and fosters cultural connections between nations.”

He provided an overview of the institution’s organizational structure and duties, explaining: “The Iranian House of Cinema oversees 33 professional guilds; it manages guild-related affairs as well as issues such as insurance for its members. Alongside professional activities, it holds a diverse range of cultural programs. We host documentary screenings every week, and the Screenwriters’ Guild also organizes programs for screenplay analysis. Furthermore, as part of our social responsibility, we have various programs on our agenda; for instance, a performance regarding the Minab school tragedy was held earlier this year.”

Commenting on the differences between American and European cinema in terms of narrative and character development, Asadian added: “American cinema typically depicts the world in a binary of good versus evil and rarely delves into the gray areas of character and situation. In contrast, in European cinema, the boundaries between good and evil are not clearly defined.”

He also noted the history of French filmmakers in Iran, stating: “Albert Lamorisse produced the documentary ‘The Lovers’ Wind’ in Iran and, tragically, passed away during an incident in this country.”

Referring to the state of Iranian cinema, the Asadian noted: “In the past year, the outbreak of war caused Iranian cinema to experience a certain level of decline. In the current situation—which is neither war nor peace—investing in any activity, including cinema, faces difficulties. However, in terms of screenings, conditions have improved, and some films have achieved good box office results. In such times, gathering and engaging in dialogue is essential and must be prioritized.”

Asadian concluded by referencing his training at the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), noting: “I was trained at Kanoon, where studying and screening the works of filmmakers like Jacques Tati and Robert Bresson was always a focus.”

Following this, Pierre Cochard said: “We, at the French Embassy, are ready to cooperate with the Iranian House of Cinema in implementing cultural programs. If the opportunity arises, we could organize programs virtually through collaboration with French experts. We hope a structure is established that allows civil society organizations to expand their cultural ties.”

Reflecting on his history in Iran, the ambassador added: “About thirty years ago, during President Hashemi Rafsanjani’s administration, I was working at the French Embassy in Iran and have very fond memories of that era. I have now been back in Iran for one and a half years.”

Regarding the status of Iranian cinema, Cochard remarked: “Iranian cinema is very well-known in France. Iran and France share similarities in their support for independent cinema, as both countries follow somewhat similar systems.”

Referring to France’s support for independent films, the Ambassador noted: “Fortunately, the French film industry resists ‘Americanization.’ There is also a union across Europe tasked with supporting independent European cinema. Independent cinema holds a special place in Europe, and individuals like Woody Allen have also found success there.”

Finally, mentioning the prominence of performing arts in Iran, Cochard said: “Theater also has a significant presence in Iran, and people show a great interest in this art form.”

In the concluding part of the meeting, Bahman Namvar Motlagh, a scholar and professor, commented on the stature of French cinema, stating: “French cinema possesses an exceptional character. The central theme of the programs we are organizing is ‘Dialogism,’ and we intend to expand this approach within Iranian cinema.”

The third session of the “Dialogism in World Cinema” series, focusing on the French New Wave, was held at the Iranian House of Cinema in Tehran with the presence of Rouhollah Hosseini, Deputy of Technology Development and Cinematic Studies at the Cinema Organization, and Farzad Motamen, a film director.

At the beginning of the session, Meysam Yazdi, the scientific secretary of the program, stated: “The third program in the ‘Dialogism in World Cinema’ series—organized in collaboration with the Art and Literature Comparative Studies Association of Iran—is dedicated to the French New Wave.”

Referring to the film “New Wave” directed by Richard Linklater, he added: “This film by an American filmmaker was one of the notable works at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival. This work provides an opportunity for a dialogue between American and French cinema.”

During the session, excerpts from Richard Linklater’s “New Wave” were screened for the attendees.

Meysam Yazdi, highlighting the educational aspects of Linklater’s “New Wave,” remarked: “This film is an educational work with many nuances and details that can be instructive for film students. Jean-Luc Godard passed away in September 2022, and Linklater’s film is a frame-by-frame reconstruction of segments from Godard’s ‘Breathless.’”

Farzad Motamen, discussing the production costs and conditions of “Breathless,” said: “This film was made with a budget of 400,000 francs, which was equivalent to $80,000. Considering current exchange rates, this amount would be roughly $876,000 today—which is not a very large sum for producing a film. The film was shot in just 22 days. As François Truffaut once said, ‘Breathless’ divided cinema into ‘before’ and ‘after’ it.”

Later in the session, Rouhollah Hosseini discussed the stylistic features of the French New Wave, stating: “The New Wave is typically recognized by stylistic traits such as handheld camerawork in the streets, low production costs, improvised or semi-improvised dialogue, jump cuts, and similar elements. However, the New Wave absorbed these stylistic features through a series of dialogues with various other fields. In essence, these stylistic characteristics are the result of a form of ‘dialogism’.”