

Yemen breaking the blockade and beginning a new phase

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON – How Ansarallah succeeded in breaking the Saudi-imposed air blockade on Yemen is worthy of attention. The process began with an Ansarallah delegation's trip to Tehran to attend the funeral of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, who was assassinated in a joint U.S.-Israeli air raid on his office on February 28.

The delegation flew from Sanaa International Airport to Tehran but was forced to land at Hodeidah Airport on its return after Saudi jets bombed Sanaa airport. ▶ Page 5

Gaza protests fill Europe and Washington three years into Israel's war

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Palestinian flags filled streets from London to Washington on Saturday, three years after Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza. A single thread ran through the crowds: the U.S.-backed "ceasefire" declared a year ago has not stopped the killing.

London's march, called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, crossed Westminster Bridge toward Downing Street.

Several thousand people carried placards reading "End the genocide." Director Aimee Shalan demanded "full sanctions on Israel" and said Western penalties over settler violence fall far short. ▶ Page 5

Iran's Medical Council urges global health bodies to act over US sanctions

TEHRAN – The Iranian Medical Council has called on the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Medical Association (WMA) to take immediate action against the use of patients' lives as a tool of political and military pressure.

In an official letter to the three international organizations, the council said the US government was violating international humanitarian and criminal law through inhumane measures, including economic blockade and pharmaceutical sanctions against Iran, turning patients' lives into an instrument of political and military coercion.

Mohammad Raiszadeh, head of the Iranian Medical Council, urged the leaders of international health organizations to respond promptly and responsibly to what he described as inhumane acts and the weaponization of medical resources in armed conflicts. ▶ Page 7

Nude Trump sculpture sparks political controversy at European Parliament



THE
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PLAGUE



An Iran-made ballistic missile is displayed behind Iran's flags during a rally commemorating the 46th anniversary of the victory of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution at Azadi Square in western Tehran, Iran, on February 10, 2025.

Bombs That Pushed Iran Across the Rubicon

Two wars launched by the US and Israel under the false pretext of stopping Iran's nuclear weapon may have made it more likely

Seen from Tehran, the two campaigns were never really about centrifuges. The US and Israel knew better than anyone that Iran was not pursuing a nuclear weapon — their own intelligence services and the IAEA had told them so. What they pursued was a 47-year-old dream: regime change in Iran.

By Bahram Sangari

TEHRAN – Donald Trump says he went to war to ensure Iran never gets the bomb — dozens of times and counting. Yet the war fought in the name of non-proliferation has acted like a boomerang: far from closing Iran's path to the bomb, it may have pushed Tehran closer to it.

The US and Israel say they attacked Iran twice to prevent it from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Yet at the time of both attacks, both US intelligence and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) assessed that Tehran was not building one.

No evidence has emerged that Iran is currently racing to build a bomb. But a growing number of Western analysts argue the wars themselves have strengthened Tehran's incentive to do so — while inside Iran, calls to

revise the nuclear doctrine and reconsider membership in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have moved from the margins to the mainstream.

The result is the central paradox of the current confrontation: a preventive war that may have produced the very outcome it claimed to prevent.

The justification vs. the assessment

Washington's stated rationale has been consistent: Iran must not be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon.

But two key institutions directly contradicted the claim that Iran was actively pursuing one.

US intelligence: Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard testified to Congress in March 2025 that Iran was not building a nuclear weapon and that Ayatollah

Seyyed Ali Khamenei had not reauthorized the weapons program suspended in 2003. A leaked US intelligence assessment reported by News24 on March 18, 2026, after the US operation known as Midnight Hammer, again found "no effort to rebuild enrichment" and concluded that Tehran had not moved to weaponize. ▶ Page 3

Powers greater than US tried to conquer Iran but ended up in 'dustbin of history,' Rezaei says

TEHRAN — Iran's top security official says Tehran will determine the outcome of its confrontation with Washington, rules out a return to previous diplomatic norms and warns of potential retaliation against US assets in the event of renewed aggression.

Major General Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has warned that the United States will face the same fate as previous powers that attempted to subjugate Iran, saying even stronger empires ultimately disappeared into the "dustbin of history." ▶ Page 2

Araghchi calls for international accountability for environmental destruction in wars

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has called for stronger international mechanisms to prevent and address environmental destruction during armed conflicts, stressing that the international community must move beyond expressions of concern and ensure effective accountability for those responsible.

Addressing the international conference "Ecocide: The Silent War Crime" in Tehran on Sunday, Araghchi said large-scale environmental destruction during warfare was not merely an ecological concern but an issue directly linked to the right to life, public health, food security, international peace and security, and the rights of future generations. ▶ Page 2

Iran to pursue legal case over US strike on Minab school in foreign courts: Gharibabadi

MINAB – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs says Tehran is pursuing legal action over the American strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab, with documentation completed and a special committee formed to file lawsuits in foreign courts.

Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks on Sunday during a visit to the school site and in meetings with the families of the victims, stressing that legal follow-up is underway at both the domestic and international levels.

"The martyrdom of 168 people — mostly schoolchildren, along with a number of parents and teachers — is a great tragedy for the families, the people of Minab and all of Iran, and we share in the grief and suffering of these families," Gharibabadi said. ▶ Page 3

Hive dwellers vs. screen players: The anatomy of two societies

By Habib Ahmadzadeh

TEHRAN – This question has puzzled many astute observers in the West — and echoed through the stunned minds of Trump and Netanyahu alike: Why, following the assassination of the leadership, did the Iranian government not collapse like governments in other countries?

In the first week, a thoughtful friend in the West posed this question to me by email. To answer it thoroughly by invoking Shia history and Imam Hussein might well prove incomprehensible to a Western mind. I therefore tried to frame my answer using concepts drawn from Western literature itself. I wrote to my friend about a book by Maurice Maeterlinck, titled "The Life of the Bee", which a kind neighbor had gifted me in my youth, before the revolution. ▶ Page 3

Tehran showcases urban market management, food security expertise to foreign delegations

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – Tehran Municipality's first program in the series of specialized visits "Introducing Tehran's Urban Management Capabilities," focusing on urban markets, logistics, and food security, was held on Saturday, October 10, in cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Asian Mayors Forum (AMF).

In this program, representatives of foreign countries and international organizations visited the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Fruit and Vegetable Market. ▶ Page 4



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Paying tolls to Iran

In a commentary, Kayhan challenged Trump's claims about the Strait of Hormuz, arguing that the reality on the ground differs from Washington's narrative. The newspaper cited reports from Western media suggesting that vessels crossing the strategic waterway continue to pay various fees to Iran in exchange for safe passage. Referring to data from maritime analytics firm Kpler, some oil exporters in the Persian Gulf may be providing Iran with payments amounting to 10 to 20 percent of the value of their oil shipments to ensure security while traveling through the strait. Iran has strengthened its defensive posture and enforcement capabilities in the region. Chinese vessels have continued to move through the waterway despite sanctions pressure and maintained that Iran has demonstrated an ability to bypass American restrictions and preserve a degree of access to international trade.

Shargh: Iran must avoid its opponents' traps

Shargh devoted its commentary to the challenges and schemes facing a powerful Iran. International politics is not based on ideal concepts of fairness, and genuine "win-win" outcomes rarely exist. In every negotiation, one party typically gains more than the other, making power and influence the principal factors shaping diplomatic results. Iran's rivals are attempting to create situations that could draw the country into costly and internationally justifiable conflicts. Such efforts are designed to weaken Iran and provide advantages to its foes. For that reason, Shargh stressed the importance of strategic patience and careful decision-making. Diplomacy without power is ineffective in today's world, and identified the Iranian people as the country's most valuable source of strength. It concluded that foreign governments increasingly recognize the significance of public support in Iran and therefore seek opportunities to exploit vulnerabilities or create political and social pressure.

Sobh-e-No: military action not in Trump's interest

Sobh-e-No examined the reasons why the United States is unlikely to launch a military strike against Iran before the November elections. Iran possesses significant capabilities and cannot be easily pressured into accepting Washington's demands. Any major strategic error by Trump could generate two separate challenges at once: a security crisis abroad and political repercussions inside the United States. The article also noted that Trump has historically preferred avoiding lengthy military engagements and instead favors using military power as leverage to achieve political objectives. According to the paper, launching an attack before an election would eliminate that leverage while exposing Washington to unnecessary risks. As a result, Trump has chosen to postpone any serious military option until after vot-

ers cast their ballots. It further argued that years of maximum economic and military pressure have not compelled Iran to surrender. Instead, tensions in the Persian Gulf have become an increasingly sensitive issue that could create political difficulties for Republican leaders in Washington.

Sazandegi: Strengthening regional influence

Sazandegi argued the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit in Turkmenistan provided an important opportunity for Tehran to reinforce its regional influence. President Pezeshkian's trip served two main objectives: expanding cooperation with neighboring countries and discussing political and environmental issues surrounding the Caspian region. The visit allowed Iran to underline its regional role while participating in consultations on the worsening environmental conditions of the Caspian Sea. The trip was more than a routine diplomatic gathering, presenting an opportunity to combine regional diplomacy with environmental cooperation. However, Sazandegi argued that the ultimate success of such efforts will depend on whether discussions and agreements reached during the summit can be transformed into practical policies. In its view, only concrete measures aimed at reducing tensions and addressing ecological challenges will ensure meaningful results for the region.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Looking beyond the West-East divide

Arman-e-Emrooz focused on the need to redefine Iran's geopolitical position in a rapidly changing Asia. The newspaper argued that the rise of China, India, Indonesia, and other emerging powers demonstrates that Asia is no longer merely an arena for Western competition. Instead, it has become one of the world's most significant centers of economic growth, political influence, and strategic power. The article suggested that these changes provide Iran with an opportunity to rethink its place in the international system. It argued that Iranian foreign policy should move beyond the traditional choice between the West and the East. Expanding strategic options, the newspaper said, requires a broader and more flexible approach rather than simply replacing one geopolitical orientation with another. Within this framework, Arman-e-Emrooz highlighted the concept of the "Global South" as a useful basis for foreign policy. It argued that the idea allows Iran to connect issues of national identity, geopolitical interests, and economic priorities. By emphasizing shared experiences of independence and development, benefiting from shifts in global power distribution, and expanding cooperation in trade, investment, energy, technology, transportation, and security, Iran could strengthen both its regional and international position.

Farewell to a daughter (Lady) of Devotion: Zahedan honors police martyr Nosrat Eftekhari



With hearts heavy with grief and pride, the people of Zahedan gathered to bid farewell to Nosrat Eftekhari, a devoted policewoman who gave her life in the service of her people. As her coffin passed through the streets, the city paid tribute to a woman whose mission was not merely to serve, but to build bridges of trust, bring communities closer, and strengthen the bond between the police and the people.

As the police officer responsible for cul-

tural affairs in Zahedan, Eftekhari worked tirelessly to foster closer ties with local communities. Her legacy is one of service, compassion, and commitment—a reminder that the mission of the police extends beyond protecting public security to standing alongside the people they serve.

On Sunday, Zahedan mourned one of its own. Her sacrifice will be remembered, and her commitment to serving the community will endure.

Powers greater than US tried to conquer Iran but ended up in 'dustbin of history,' Rezaei says

From page 1 ► In an exclusive interview with Press TV on Saturday, Rezaei said Washington had suffered repeated defeats in its confrontation with Iran and had increasingly resorted to economic warfare, which he characterized as a response to its failure to achieve its objectives through military pressure.

He stressed that Iran, rather than the United States, would determine when the confrontation ends, adding that Tehran would continue to resist until its demands were met.

Addressing the US military presence in West Asia, Rezaei pointed to the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq as evidence, in his assessment, of Washington's failure to impose its military agenda on the region. He described the development as vindication of Iran's longstanding opposition to the deployment of US forces in the region.

Rezaei also said more than 30 million Iranians had registered for the Janfada (Sacrifice for Iran) campaign, which was intended to mobilize volunteers prepared to take up arms in the event of US aggression. On diplomacy, the SNSC secretary said Iran would not return to its previous diplomatic norms, while emphasizing that Tehran was not abandoning



diplomacy altogether.

His remarks signaled that, although diplomatic engagement remained an option, Iran's approach would be shaped by its assessment of the confrontation with Washington and the need to secure its demands.

Rezaei also warned that renewed US aggression could expose American assets to retaliation, including key data systems and artificial intelligence sensors.

Rezaei invokes ancient Rome to counter 'civilizational war' narrative

In a separate part of his remarks, Rezaei invoked the defeat of Roman forces by the Sasanian Empire under King Shapur I to challenge the framing of the confrontation with Iran as a civilizational war by US officials.

The reference draws on a signif-

icant episode in Iranian history. In 260 AD, Shapur I defeated the Roman emperor Valerian at the Battle of Edessa and captured him, marking a major setback for Rome in its eastern campaigns.

By invoking that episode, Rezaei placed the current confrontation within a broader historical narrative of Iran's resistance to foreign powers and attempts at domination.

Hormuz tensions and the dispute with Washington

Rezaei also identified Washington and its regional allies as central to the tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most strategically important maritime corridors for oil and gas shipments. Iran's restrictions on passage through the strait followed the latest round of US-Israeli military aggression.

The disruption affected a critical route for international energy trade and contributed to heightened concerns over global oil and energy supplies. The resulting market pressures also prompted the United States and the International Energy Agency (IEA) to draw on strategic reserves on multiple occasions.

Following the signing of an Iran-US memorandum of understanding in Islamabad in June, Tehran reopened the waterway. Iran subsequently said Washington had breached the understanding by imposing a blockade on Iranian ports, prompting the country's armed forces to close the maritime corridor again.

The dispute over the strait has become a major point of contention between Tehran and Washington, linking military developments and diplomatic commitments to the security of international shipping and global energy markets.

Rezaei's remarks underscored Tehran's position that any resolution to the confrontation must take account of Iran's security demands and its role in the region. His comments also made clear that Iran does not regard a return to the previous diplomatic framework as inevitable, even as it continues to leave the door open to diplomacy.

Araghchi calls for international accountability for environmental destruction in wars

From page 1 ► "Environmental protection must move beyond declarations of commitment and enter the realm of accountability, responsibility and effective international action," he said, warning that the consequences of environmental damage could persist for years or even decades after hostilities end.

Araghchi emphasized that warfare threatens not only human lives, cities and economic infrastructure but also water resources, soil, air quality, forests, agricultural land, energy infrastructure, natural habitats and biodiversity. The release of hazardous substances, contamination of vital resources and destruction of ecosystems can impose lasting costs on civilian populations long after the fighting has stopped.

Gaza, Lebanon and Iran face lasting environmental damage

Citing Gaza, Lebanon and Iran, Araghchi highlighted the far-reaching environmental consequences of military attacks across the region.

In Gaza, he pointed to the collapse of water and wastewater networks, damage to waste-management systems, contamination of water and soil, coastal pollution, and the accumulation of vast quantities of rubble and potentially hazardous materials.

He noted that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has reported unprecedented environmental damage in the Palestinian territory, warning that the destruction of essential infrastructure and contamination of natural resources could affect public health and living conditions for decades.

In Lebanon, Araghchi highlighted damage to forests and agricultural land caused by military attacks and resulting fires. He referred to reports submitted to the United Nations documenting the burning of millions of square meters of land and damage

to tens of thousands of olive trees. He also recalled the extensive coastal pollution following attacks on oil-storage facilities, illustrating how damage to industrial infrastructure can generate environmental consequences far beyond the immediate site of an attack.

Turning to Iran, the foreign minister addressed the environmental risks associated with US and Israeli attacks on Iranian oil, refinery and energy facilities in March 2026.

He cited a UNEP assessment from that month concerning attacks on oil facilities in and around urban areas, including Tehran, where fires released hazardous compounds into the environment.

Such pollutants, Araghchi warned, can spread from the atmosphere into soil and water resources and ultimately affect the food chain, creating risks that extend well beyond immediate economic losses.

The consequences are particularly serious for civilians, children and future generations, who may continue to suffer the health and environmental effects of wartime contamination long after the conflict has ended.

International law must ensure accountability

Araghchi stressed that international law must not remain indifferent to environmental destruction and violations of fundamental human rights during armed conflicts.

He called for the effective implementation of international humanitarian law, particularly the principles of distinction and proportionality, alongside a thorough assessment of the direct, indirect and long-term environmental consequences of military operations.

The principle of distinction requires parties to distinguish between military objectives and civilian objects. The principle of proportionality prohibits attacks expected to cause incidental civilian harm excessively

in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. International humanitarian law also provides specific protection for the natural environment against certain forms of damage during armed conflicts.

Araghchi argued that no state or actor should consider itself above international responsibility. Extensive ecosystem destruction, severe contamination of water and soil, and lasting damage to natural resources must be addressed through effective mechanisms for prevention, independent documentation, damage assessment, compensation and accountability.

He said Iran supports legal and expert discussions aimed at strengthening international environmental protection, including consideration of recognizing ecocide as a distinct international crime.

The concept of ecocide broadly concerns exceptionally severe environmental destruction. Proposals to establish it as a separate international crime have gained attention in international legal discussions, although its precise definition, scope, and legal status remain subjects of debate.

For Iran, Araghchi indicated, strengthening international protection requires moving beyond general declarations and developing practical mechanisms capable of establishing responsibility and addressing the consequences of environmental destruction.

Iran warns against double standards in environmental protection

The foreign minister also warned against double standards and the politicization of environmental issues, insisting that environmental obligations must be applied fairly, transparently and without discrimination.

Environmental protection, he said, must not become a privilege for some countries and an obligation on others.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Super oil tanker catches fire after hitting sea mine in Strait of Hormuz

TEHRAN_ The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy announced that a super oil tanker carrying crude oil caught fire after hitting a sea mine while attempting to exit the Strait of Hormuz through an unauthorized route.

In a statement on Saturday, the IRGC Navy said the tanker, which was carrying crude oil and attempting to leave the strategic waterway via an unauthorized route, suffered a powerful explosion after striking a sea mine in a hazardous route that had been declared dangerous.

The statement added that the supertanker had switched off its



navigation and positioning systems before the incident. Following the mine strike, it was engulfed in a massive fire that was clearly visible to residents living along the coast.

"The massive fire is the fate of any non-compliant oil tanker that seeks to disregard the security and laws of the Strait of Hormuz," the IRGC Navy warned.

Bombs that pushed Iran across the rubicon

Two wars launched by the US and Israel under the false pretext of stopping Iran's nuclear weapon may have made it more likely

From Page 1 ▶ The IAEA: Director General Rafael Grossi said on June 19, 2025, amid the first war: “We found no indication of an active, systematic plan to build a weapon in Iran.” He added that military strikes would only “delay the indispensable diplomatic work” needed for long-term assurance that Iran does not acquire a weapon.

In other words, both attacks were launched not against an ongoing weaponization program documented by inspectors or spies, but against capabilities and intentions that Washington and Tel Aviv insisted could turn into one.

The second war removed a barrier: the fatwa

For two decades, Iran's principal political-religious barrier to a bomb was explicit: a fatwa by Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei declaring the production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons haram (forbidden).

Iranian officials repeatedly cited the fatwa as the reason Iran had the technical capacity but not the intent. Former Foreign Minister and former Atomic Energy chief Ali Akbar Salehi said in February 2024 that Iran possessed “all the pieces” needed for a weapon but had not assembled them — a restraint Tehran attributed to the Leader's ruling.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei was martyred in the joint US-Israel airstrike on the morning of February 28, 2026, in his office in central Tehran.

His successor, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, has made no clear public statement on the nuclear fatwa. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi acknowledged the uncertainty in an interview with Reuters on March 18, 2026, saying Iran's position against weapons would not undergo “significant change,” but adding that fatwas depend on the issuing jurist and that he could not yet judge the new Leader's jurisprudential view. Any change, he said, would depend on the new Leader.

But that key religious prohibition that underpinned this doctrine for 20 years no longer exists — removed by those who coveted Iran's collapse and US domination over Iran.

In Washington and Tel Aviv, a quiet consensus: the bombing is making the bomb more likely

The most striking warning



came, paradoxically, from inside Israel's own intelligence establishment. Danny Citrinowicz, who until recently ran the Iran branch of Israeli military intelligence, told The Times of Israel last summer that kinetic action would push Tehran “to cross the Rubicon on the nuclear file.” The war, he said, would not prevent an Iranian bomb. It would accelerate it.

Citrinowicz was not alone, and what followed over the next year was something rare in the normally fractious world of arms control: agreement. From different capitals, disciplines and politics, analysts began describing the same mechanism — a state under existential bombardment, watching its declared, inspected sites destroyed, rationally concluding that only an undeclared deterrent could prevent the next round.

At Carnegie, James Acton argued that the premise of “obliteration” was an illusion. Iran, he noted, had almost certainly dispersed fissile material and key equipment before the strikes, and with what it retained it could, if it ever chose weaponization, move “in less than a year, even significantly less than a year.” Eric Brewer, a former US intelligence analyst now at the Nuclear Threat Initiative, put it more bluntly to Reuters in May: as far as anyone knows, Iran still has all of its nuclear material, much of it in places American munitions cannot reach.

The institutional voices followed. Daryl Kimball of the Arms Control Association observed that the campaign had exposed the ceiling of force: bombing could neither erase knowledge nor permanently eliminate capability. Ellie Geranmayeh of the European Council on Foreign

Relations noted that capability was “largely still in place,” and that without inspectors — themselves now sidelined by war — existing stocks could be enriched to weapons grade with alarming speed. Even the press that had initially cheered restraint turned sombre. Time warned that destroyed centrifuges can be rebuilt but a changed strategic calculus cannot be undone; The Guardian editorialised that prevention by bombardment, absent any diplomatic endgame, historically hardens proliferation incentives rather than softening them.

The most systematic verdict arrived in August 2026 from Defense Priorities in Washington. In an explainer titled “A Security Dilemma Made Worse,” it concluded that by waging a war that threatened the very survival of the Iranian state, the US and Israel had strengthened Tehran's motive to acquire the one weapon that might deter a third war. Proliferation was not inevitable, it wrote — merely more likely than before the strikes. Trita Parsi at the Quincy Institute and Ali Vaez at the International Crisis Group, neither of them hawks, reached the same destination by a shorter road: Tehran's determination to obtain a deterrent, they wrote, had been “dramatically increased,” and rebuilding from under the rubble with an explicit weapons goal was now thinkable in a way it had not been before.

In short, deterrence theory was working — but in reverse. A country that finds conventional deterrence insufficient, and international verification incapable of protecting it, does what threatened states do: it reconsiders.

In Tehran, the unsayable is now said aloud

For years, even raising the

question of a bomb in public in Iran was taboo. The fatwa of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei stood like a wall around the debate: possession itself was forbidden, and that was the end of it. The wall is gone now, and the debate that has rushed into its place would have been unimaginable two years ago.

It began as a whisper. In October 2024, Kamal Kharrazi — the urbane head of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations — said calmly that if an existential threat emerged, Iran would revise its doctrine. On April 1, 2026, during the US-Israel war against Iran, his house in Tehran was struck by US-Israeli aircraft. His wife was martyred in the attack and he was severely wounded, succumbing to his wounds eight days later. The capability, he noted, existed. Only the Leader's ruling stood in the way. That same month, 39 members of parliament wrote privately to the Supreme National Security Council asking for precisely such a revision.

Then came the first war, and the whispers grew louder. Ali Shamkhani, the veteran security official martyred on the first day of the second war, on February 28 of this year, appeared on state television in October 2025 and said, with the bluntness of a man who felt history had vindicated his doubts, that had he known then what he knows now, he would have supported building the bomb in the 1990s. By September 2025, the private letters had become a public petition: more than seventy MPs wrote to the president and the Council declaring an arsenal “necessary for nuclear deterrence” and openly asking for the fatwa to be reinterpreted — production for deterrence, they argued, was not the same as use.

What is remarkable is not merely the content but the setting. The argument is now made on camera, in parliament, and from the Friday pulpit. When Hojjatoleslam Haj Ali Akbari told worshippers in Tehran on October 9 that the nuclear program “belongs to the Iranian nation” and that there is a domestic demand to revise membership in the NPT, no one in the establishment criticized him.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran to pursue legal case over US strike on Minab school in foreign courts: Gharibabadi

From Page 1 ▶ He said schools, academic and educational centers and hospitals are protected under international humanitarian law during armed conflicts, adding that attacks on such sites constitute a serious violation of those rules.

Gharibabadi said the documentation of the incident has been collected inside the country and that the judicial case will be heard after completing the necessary procedures. He added that relevant bodies are preparing dossiers for filing claims abroad.

“A special committee with the participation of relevant agencies has been formed in Tehran to follow up on this crime, and the documentation received from the judicial system will form the basis for legal action to file lawsuits in several countries,” he said.

He noted that the Foreign Ministry, the Legal Vice Presidency and other responsible bodies are deploying their capacities for the legal, political and diplomatic pursuit of the case, adding that the President has emphasized the need to follow up on the crimes committed.

“The families of the martyrs of the Shajareh Tayyebeh school must witness justice being served,” Gharibabadi said. “The follow-up of this case will not be limited to inside the country, and we will use international legal capacities to hold the perpetrators accountable.”

Referring to other cases related to attacks



carried out during the war, including the strike on the Lamerd stadium, Gharibabadi said their legal pursuit is also on the agenda and efforts are underway to pursue the responsibility of the perpetrators in competent authorities.

He also praised the role of the people of Hormozgan in defending the country and stressed support for the martyrs' families and continued pursuit of their legal demands, saying the Foreign Ministry will use its full capacity to help ensure accountability and justice.

On the Strait of Hormuz, Gharibabadi said the waterway has become a symbol of Iranian identity and that Iran will use its capacities to confront enemies. Stressing that Iran was not

the initiator of the war, he said the country is defending itself against aggression, has not started a war in the past two centuries, but has stood against aggressors.

He also warned that Iran's response in what he described as the 40-day war differed from that in the 12-day war, cautioning that in the event of renewed military action by the enemy, the Islamic Republic's reaction will be different from the past, and expressed hope that the other sides will act rationally to avoid a repeat of the confrontation.

In the early hours of Feb. 28, 2026 — the first hours of what Tehran describes as the joint US-Israeli aggression against Iran — the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab was hit three times at intervals by missiles. In the incident, 168 people, including schoolgirls and schoolboys, as well as teachers, school staff and parents, were killed.

In a separate incident, five people, including a child, were killed and 68 others, mostly women and children, were injured in a US airstrike late on Sept. 1, 2026, on a residential house in the port of Kuhestak in Sirik County, where people were attending a wedding ceremony. Kuhestak is located in Sirik County in southeastern Hormozgan Province.

Minab, the second most populous county in Hormozgan Province with a population of over 300,000, is located 90 kilometers east of Bandar Abbas.

Pezeshkian invites Oman's Sultan to Tehran

TEHRAN — Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has invited Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tariq to visit Tehran, expressing hope for in-person talks in the near future.

In a telephone conversation on Sunday, Pezeshkian congratulated the Sultan on his birthday and wished health, prosperity and success for the government and people of Oman.

The president thanked Oman for its efforts to strengthen regional peace and stability, stressing the importance of continued diplomatic consultations, expanded constructive engagement, and using the shared capacities of regional countries to promote understanding and cooperation.

Referring to the friendly and longstanding

relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman, Pezeshkian invited Haitham bin Tariq to travel to Tehran, voicing hope that the ground would be prepared for a meeting and face-to-face dialogue in the Iranian capital soon.

The Sultan of Oman, for his part, thanked Pezeshkian for his congratulatory message, reaffirmed Oman's consistent approach in support of peace, calm and stability in the region, and described continued close contacts and consultations with the Islamic Republic of Iran as among his country's priorities.

Haitham bin Tariq also thanked the president for the invitation to visit Tehran, expressing hope that the trip could take place at a suitable opportunity.

Hive dwellers vs. screen players: The anatomy of two societies

From Page 1 ▶ The point I am about to share may make the question easier for a Western reader to grasp. Maeterlinck notes that before a real-world experiment, all researchers assumed that the sovereign ruler of the hive was the queen, and that everything existed to serve her and her desires. They therefore designed an experiment: they placed a ring at the entrance of a beehive through which worker and soldier bees could pass easily, but which the queen, owing to her larger body, could not pass through.

They then staged a mock attack on the hive. Following their natural instinct, the bees mobilized to save the queen first. Since the only exit from the besieged hive was through that ring, the queen became stuck in it while trying to escape. After some time, her protective guards assumed she was refusing to leave. They stung her to death, selected another larva capable of becoming a queen to replace her, and established a new hive with a young queen elsewhere.

The scientist's conclusion is profound and fascinating. From then on, he stripped the title of “God of the Hive” from the queen, redefining that supreme force as the “invisible spirit of the hive.”

This is precisely what happened in Iran, with one difference: the executioners this time were real aggressors, yet once again their violent methods failed to conquer the invisible spirit of the hive.

I will elaborate on the difference between a nation whose god is the invisible spirit of the hive and the peoples of other countries, with more precise explanations. I have a filmmaker friend named Seyyed Reza Mirkarimi, the director of several monumental works of Iranian cinema, whose name and films you can look up. He offers a striking interpretation of those countries surrounding Iran that have been independent for only a few decades. He compares them to cinematic backlots during the production of grand Hollywood epics.

To better understand his analogy, imagine a film about the era of Alexander the Great being shot on a set at Cinecitta in Rome — thousands of extras, towering props, and magnificent scenery.

Viewed from the camera angle, on the big screen, or even in IMAX, we marvel at its grandeur. Even the actors, deeply immersed in their roles through rehearsal, believe in their characters for a time. Yet once the false glamour of the screening subsides, or filming concludes, they realize they merely stepped out of their true selves for a brief spell to live in someone else's skin.

Once shooting wraps, all those grand sets are dismantled and replaced by another set of deceptive facades. That is the sum total of a magnificent, dazzling life lived on a cinematic backlot devoid of true identity. Perhaps the very next day after filming ends, even the lead actor is not permitted to enter, wander around, or reminisce about the past.

The disparity between many newly established Arab states — filled with heterogeneous populations such as Pakistanis, Indians, and others — and the original indigenous Arab inhabitants precisely mirrors the role of these film extras. Their sole reason for being present is to collect a paycheck and grab a slice of that fleeting fame and profit for tomorrow, without leaving any lasting impact on the future of that cinematic backlot.

Yet the Iranian nation — and even the leadership that was assassinated — believes in the spirit of the hive. That is why, for two hundred and twenty days, men and women, young and old, have stood steadfastly in the public squares and streets.

In closing, I recommend that you, the reader of this essay, seek out and read the legendary Persian tale The Conference of the Birds by the Iranian poet Attar of Nishapur. The plot is briefly as follows: a flock of birds from across the world gathers to find a mythical bird named the Simurgh atop Mount Qaf and make him their leader. On the final day of the journey, atop Mount Qaf, only thirty diverse birds remain; the rest have fallen behind along the way, offering various excuses. They do not behold a mythical Simurgh; instead, they realize that the legendary Simurgh is, in fact, their own collective gathering. They no longer need to wait for a miraculous bird to lead them.



In a powerful display of solidarity and defiance, crowds of Iranians, led by young people and students, gathered outside the French Embassy in Tehran to condemn the violent repression of peaceful student protests in France, raising their voices in defense of the dignity, freedom, and unbreakable spirit of students.

Iran, Turkmenistan emphasize expansion of parliamentary, economic cooperation

TEHRAN- Farzaneh Sadegh, Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Chair of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Cooperation Committee, met Dunyagozel Gulmanova, Speaker of the Assembly of Turkmenistan.

According to the news website of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, at this meeting, held in the city of Awaza, Sadegh emphasized the expansion of inter-parliamentary cooperation and the strengthening of sustainable relations based on the principle of good-neighborliness, and stressed the need to increase the volume of trade exchanges.

Other axes of the Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development's talks included developing transport infrastructure, strengthening cooperation in the field of transit, and exporting Iran's technical and engineering services to Turkmenistan.

She also emphasized the necessity of following up on the resolutions of the joint committee, especially in the key sectors of energy and transit.

At this meeting, Dunyagozel Gulmanova, Speaker of Turkmenistan's Parliament, while expressing appreciation for Sadegh's presence and valuable remarks at the international conference "The Role of Women in Maintaining Peace and Achieving Sustainable Development," emphasized the importance of enhancing relations with neighboring countries.

The Speaker of Turkmenistan's Parliament, stating that the country emphasizes synergy and the expansion of international cooperation, said: In this regard, developing relations with the parliaments of neighboring countries is essential and strengthens friendship among countries.

At the end, she noted: Turkmenistan seeks sustainable development and increased participation in its country and is ready for economic cooperation with other countries.

Developing border infrastructure and strengthening transport diplomacy on Tehran and Ashgabat's agenda

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development, referring to the agreements made during the trip to Turkmenistan, announced plans to begin construction of the Gumdag-Atrak road within the next one to two months and said: The expansion of rail and road cooperation and the follow-up of transport agreements have been among the main axes of the two countries' negotiations.

According to an IRNA report from the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Farzaneh Sadegh, explaining the results of her two-day trip to Turkmenistan, said: The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development is responsible for following up on the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Commission, and the early trip to this country was made with the aim of reviewing previous understandings and following up on their implementation process.

Referring to previous meetings between

Turkmen officials and officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, she added: After the trip of the National Leader of Turkmenistan to Iran to attend the funeral of the martyred leader, issues related to relations between the two countries were also raised in his meetings with the President and the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and following up on the agreements was placed on the agenda.

Sadegh continued: In the meeting with the Chairman of the Turkmen side of the Joint Economic Committee, in addition to reviewing previous agreements and understandings, good progress was also achieved on several areas of cooperation.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development, referring to the two countries' cooperation in the field of rail transport, said: In the area of border terminals, especially in the rail sector, good things have happened and the two countries' interactions in this area have progressed. Given Turkmenistan's role in the transfer of cargo entering the country, expanding this cooperation is of particular importance.

She also pointed to existing issues in road transport and added: To resolve some problems and facilitate traffic, the construction of the Gumdag-Atrak road has been placed on the agenda. Based on the agreement reached, the executive operations of this route are to begin within the next one or two months.

Sadegh, stating that the contractor for this project is a capable Iranian company, remarked: The implementation of this plan will be carried out on Turkmen soil and can help facilitate the movement of Iranian truck drivers and improve road connections between the two countries.

According to her, the Turkmen side also considers this route one of the needs for developing its road network.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development also reported that issues related to energy cooperation were raised in the negotiations and said: Agreements have also been made in this area, and it is hoped that their results will become clear in the near future.

Following up on trilateral cooperation and transport diplomacy

Sadegh, referring to regional talks during this trip, stated: Trilateral cooperation among Iran, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as coordination related to Iran, Turkmenistan, and Russia, have been among other areas of focus in regional interactions. In this framework, the President and the accompanying delegation also held important meetings with their counterparts.

Emphasizing the importance of continuing regional consultations, she added: The interactions and talks that began and expanded over the past two years, especially in the field of transport, are now leading to more practical results, and strengthening this process can pave the way for the development of economic and transit cooperation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

International Shiraz Expo opens with 343 foreign guests from 13 countries

TEHRAN- The opening ceremony of the second International Shiraz Expo was held on Sunday, October 11, in the presence of Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts; Hossein-Ali Amiri, Governor of Fars; and representatives of the people of Fars in the Parliament.

The exhibition is being held over 20,000 square meters of exhibition space, with more than 200 domestic companies and 343 foreign guests, and will continue until October 17.

The governor of Fars, announcing the province's readiness to develop international economic cooperation, reported the presence of 343 foreign guests from 13 countries at Shiraz Expo 2026 and said: The provincial management team is ready to provide the executive and legal frameworks needed by investors and to expand joint investments.

According to IRNA, Hossein-Ali Amiri said on Sunday at the opening ceremony of the second international Shiraz Expo 2026 event in Shiraz, emphasizing Fars's extensive economic, industrial, tourism, and infrastructural

capacities: We warmly shake the hands of all those who come to Fars for investment and roll out the red carpet for them.

He continued: Fars Province has abundant capacities in the fields of industry, mining, tourism, trade, and health and pilgrimage tourism, and we are trying, by introducing these capabilities, to provide the ground for the development of international cooperation and joint investments.

Referring to the holding of the first Shiraz Expo last year, he added: Expo 1404, which was held with the participation of Persian Gulf countries, was met with a very good reception, and during its holding, more than \$3.5 billion in memoranda of understanding and contracts were signed.

Amiri stated: Based on the experience gained from last year's event, this year's exhibition has been held with the expansion of the scope of countries' participation so that the province's economic opportunities can be introduced on a broader level.

Tehran showcases urban market management, food security expertise to foreign delegations

From Page 1 ▶ and the Beihaghi Shahrvand Store and became acquainted with Tehran's urban management capacities in supplying and distributing essential goods. After these visits, a specialized meeting was held aimed at examining areas for joint cooperation.

This program, held under the title "Specialized Visit to Tehran's Urban Markets, Logistics and Food Security" by the International Deputy of the Communication Center of Tehran Municipality, was welcomed by those present.

The purpose of this measure was also to develop urban diplomacy and introduce Tehran's management capacities to representatives of international organizations.

During the visit to the Shahrvand Store, a press conference was held in the administrative section of the store. Davood Qorbanian, CEO of Shahrvand Store; Mehdi Bakhtiari-Zadeh, CEO of the Organization of Markets; Hamid Reza Gholamzadeh, Head of the Communication and International Affairs Center of Tehran Municipality, as well as the

Secretary-General of the Asian Mayors Forum; and Mohammad Ali Shafiei, International Deputy of the Communication and International Affairs Center of Tehran Municipality, were present, and specialized topics concerning urban market management, supply of goods, and food security were discussed.



Fruit and vegetable markets ready to transfer experience and develop export of Iranian products

The CEO of the Organization for Management of Fruit and Vegetable Markets of Tehran Municipality, referring to the capacity of the capital's market network, announced the organization's readiness to develop international cooperation in the fields of transferring technical knowledge, supplying and distributing food products, and expanding exports of Iranian products.

Emphasizing the municipality's responsibility to ensure citizens' food security, he said: Access to high-quality, healthy, and reasonably priced food products is one of the main axes of the municipality's activity. In this regard, an extensive network of fruit and vegetable markets and Shahrvand stores has been formed across the city.

Bakhtiari-Zadeh added: Currently, about 320 fruit and vegetable markets are active in Tehran, and citizens can, on average, access one of the municipality's food product distribution centers by traveling less than 900 meters.

Referring to quality control mechanisms, he said: To ensure the health of products, a direct supply chain and continuous testing are on the agenda, and goods that do not meet the required quality and health standards will not be allowed to enter the markets covered by the organization.

The CEO of the Organization for Management of Fruit and Vegetable Markets of Tehran Municipality, referring to the capacity for cooperation with the countries present



at the meeting, stated: This complex can cooperate in transferring technical knowledge, exchanging experience, and presenting models of management and distribution of food products.

Referring to Iran's agricultural capacity and the production of diverse products in different seasons of the year, he added: Cooperation with traders and economic actors can provide the basis for developing the export of fruit and vegetable products and protein products.

Bakhtiari-Zadeh noted: Currently, trade in agricultural products between Iran and some of the countries present at this meeting exists, and cooperation with Tehran Municipality's extensive net-

Stating that Iran enjoys significant capacities in the production of agricultural products and foodstuffs, as well as a broad consumer market, he said: Foreign companies can identify new opportunities for developing their commercial activities by understanding the needs of the Iranian market.

The CEO of Shahrvand Company continued: The areas of cooperation are not limited only to the supply of food, agricultural products, and meat; they also include the field of retail technologies, including enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, store management, and marketing systems. Shahrvand Company is ready to benefit from the specialized knowledge and experience of foreign companies in these areas.

Qorbanian at this meeting, referring to the role of Shahrvand stores and fruit markets, added: Iranian producers and industries can use the capacity of Shahrvand stores to offer products, introduce brands, and access the consumer market. In return, this company can be a platform for introducing and offering products of various countries in the Iranian market; a cooperation that includes areas such as raw materials, agricultural and food products, packaged goods, and retail-related technologies.

He asked the representatives of the countries present to provide the ground for communication with capable companies and economic actors through their commercial counselors and the economic sections of their embassies.

In the end, Qorbanian expressed hope that these visits would lead to practical and sustainable cooperation among Shahrvand Company, Iranian traders, and foreign companies and provide the ground for market development, exchange of knowledge and technology, and mutual supply of the parties' commercial needs.

Tehran municipality seeks to turn sister-city relations into practical economic cooperation

The Secretary-General of the Asian Mayors Forum at this meeting emphasized using the capacity of relations among cities to develop commercial cooperation, transfer experiences, and engage economic companies.

Referring to Tehran's experience in large-scale distribution of goods and maintaining citizens' access to essential products, he spoke of the capacity for cooperation with regional cities in the fields of export and import of products, transfer of technical knowledge, and provision of urban services.

Gholamzadeh also introduced the "Zero Inflation" initiative, aimed at stabilizing the prices of 12 essential goods for six months, as one of Tehran Municipality's measures to support citizens.

Foreign diplomats emphasize Tehran's capacity in supplying and distributing essential goods

At the end of the program, representatives of foreign countries and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), in conversations with reporters, considered Tehran's capacities in supplying and distributing food to be significant.

ECO emphasizes Tehran urban management's role in strengthening regional food security

The Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) also considered the city's experience in supplying and distributing food valuable and emphasized the role of municipalities in strengthening food security and citizens' affordable access to essential goods even in crisis conditions.

Emre Hengut also called for the continuation of specialized visits and the exchange of experiences to develop cooperation among cities and regional institutions.

The list of guests present in the half-day tour organized by Tehran Municipality, included Kim Junpyo, Ambassador of South Korea, and his wife; Ahmad Soueidan, Ambassador of Lebanon; Khalid Ibrahim Elsheikh, Deputy Head of Mission in the Sudanese Embassy; Baha-dor Nazir, Counsellor of the Tajik Embassy; Mostafa Diabate, Counselor of the Burkina Faso Embassy; Vladislav Perpelkin, Counselor of the Russian Embassy; Hubert Przybyszewski, First Secretary of the Polish Embassy; Deputy Ambassador of Oman; Faizan Taimoor Saqib, Third Secretary in Embassy of Pakistan, Counselor of the Pakistani Embassy; Jadidzadeh, Economic Officer of the United Nations Coordinator's Office; Chentaei Emre Angut, Deputy Secretary-General of ECO; and Lola Gheybollahzadeh, Head of ECO Coordination and Follow-up Department.

Overall, the specialized visit served as a practical step in strengthening Tehran's urban diplomacy and presenting its integrated network of fruit and vegetable markets and Shahrvand stores as a working model for food supply, price regulation, and access to essential goods.

By bringing together foreign ambassadors, international organizations such as ECO and the Asian Mayors Forum, and Tehran Municipality officials, the program created a platform for exchanging technical knowledge, expanding trade in agricultural and food products, and encouraging joint investment and retail cooperation.

If followed by concrete agreements and sustained follow-up, such initiatives could help transform sister-city and international relations into tangible economic partnerships, enhance regional food security, and open new export and knowledge-exchange opportunities for both Iran and participating countries.

Gaza protests fill Europe and Washington three years into Israel’s war



People take part in a National March in support of Palestine, organized by Palestine Solidarity Campaign, in central London. (AFP)



Protesters during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Rome. (Reuters)



People participate in the "United for Palestine" demonstration in Berlin. (Reuters)

Washington under pressure

Hundreds rallied outside the Capitol three weeks before the Nov. 3 midterms. “We will not let this genocide be normalized,” said Nouhad Akkar of the Palestinian Youth Movement, which called the rally.

Isabella Javidan of the National Iranian American Council linked Gaza to Israeli operations in Lebanon and Iran. “These are not isolated tragedies,” she told the crowd. She said members of the U.S. Congress have “repeatedly chosen death over diplomacy, military domination over basic human dignity, and the interests of the war industry over the lives of millions.”

A Jewish American marcher, Erik, carried a sign reading “No genocide in our name.”

Politicians who keep arming Israel are losing the argument at home. Pew finds 60 percent of Americans view Israel unfavorably, up almost 20 points since 2022, and 74 percent among those aged 18 to 34.

A ceasefire that kills

Gaza’s Health Ministry counts more than 74,200 Palestinians killed and over 175,000 wounded since October 2023.

About 90 percent of the territory’s infrastruc-

ture is destroyed. Many organizations including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called the campaign genocide.

The so-called “ceasefire” took effect on Oct. 10, 2025. Since then, Israeli forces attacked Gaza on 337 of 365 days, according to a recent tally. At least 1,460 Palestinians have died, roughly 300 of them children.

The arrangement left Israel holding 53 percent of Gaza, and after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered an expansion in May, it controls nearly 70 percent.

Aid trucks arrive at less than 230 a day against the 600 the plan promised. More than 1.4 million people face acute food insecurity through December. The UN prices reconstruction at \$71.4 billion, and Washington’s Board of Peace has offered \$2.45 billion.

Ahead of Israel’s Oct. 27 election, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Israel Katz openly speak of removing Palestinians from Gaza, and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich wants annexation.

By Israel’s own count, merely five of its soldiers have died in Gaza since the so-called ceasefire began. Palestinians killed in that time number at least 1,460, roughly 290 for every Israeli soldier.

steps to break the blockade on Yemen could extend beyond the borders of Yemen and the region, becoming part of a broader shift in the global balance of power.

The United States does not want to enter this war because direct American involvement would mean preventing US ships from passing through the Red Sea. Washington also does not want to become involved in two wars simultaneously.

The United States is therefore compelled to pursue a piecemeal settlement, one that does not encompass all fronts, including the Yemeni front. There may be a settlement to the U.S.-Iran conflict, but the Yemeni issue itself must ultimately be resolved through a Saudi-Yemeni dialogue.

However, acknowledging the Yemeni situation and the effective control that Ansarallah exercises over parts of Yemen entail an American recognition of the new reality. It would also form part of a broader recognition of Iran and the larger resistance bloc.

The strikes against Saudi Arabia’s oil and energy infrastructure are part of the Yemeni pressure campaign against the Saudi Kingdom. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia is being placed under pressure from the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea. On the other hand, pressure on global energy supplies creates additional pressure on Saudi Arabia to accept the situation in Yemen, including the role of Ansarallah.

Yemen is following a principle of responding to siege with siege. When the Yemeni capital is attacked, Yemen also strikes Riyadh’s energy infrastructure.

The persistence of the Yemeni position, combined with Saudi Arabia’s inability to overcome Yemen and the failure of other parties to enter the fighting alongside the kingdom, will ultimately give the Yemenis the upper hand. This could lead to a settlement that recognizes the existence and role of Ansarallah in Yemen. This, in turn, will serve the broader regional context: a U.S.-Iranian agreement that will acknowledges the new balance of power and recognize the right of the Axis of Resistance to exist and maintain its position in the region.

Syria between potential intervention in Yemen and domestic crises

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN – The costs and risks of Syrian intervention in Yemen could begin to mount from the moment a decision is made.

Following Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa’s visit to Riyadh a few days earlier, reports on October 7, citing U.S. officials, said Saudi Arabia and Syria were discussing the possibility of deploying Syrian forces to Yemen to participate in military operations against the Sanaa government.

According to reports, between 10,000 and 20,000 soldiers could be sent, with the 90th and 84th Divisions among the formations under consideration. Al-Sharaa was reportedly seriously weighing the proposal but has not yet made a final decision.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Mowaffaq Zaidan, an adviser to the Syrian presidency, denied that Riyadh had asked Damascus to send troops to Yemen. Syria’s official position has emphasized that rebuilding the country remains the priority and that any military cooperation must proceed through official channels and within existing bilateral frameworks.

The official denial, however, does not negate the existence of multiple reports suggesting that various options are under consideration. Nor do the leaks amount to a finalized agreement. To date, there has been no official announcement of a Syrian decision to intervene, no confirmed Saudi request, and no publicly disclosed agreement on the matter.

The significance of these reports, however, extends beyond the question of whether Syrian forces will ultimately be deployed to Yemen. The very fact that such a possibility is being discussed raises broader questions about the regional role Syria’s new leadership might assume, the limits of its commitments to its allies, and the criteria it will apply when deciding whether to intervene militarily beyond its borders.

Lebanon and Yemen: Why the different calculations?

The debate takes on greater significance when viewed alongside President al-Sharaa’s position on the possibility of



intervening in Lebanon against Hezbollah, despite an explicit appeal from U.S. President Donald Trump himself. Al-Sharaa ruled out Syrian military intervention in Lebanon, arguing that such a move would require a request from the Lebanese government and that neither the Syrian army nor the country’s internal situation was ready for such a step.

These considerations are even more consequential in the case of Yemen. Geographically, Yemen is much farther away, and its conflict is exceptionally complex. Military intervention could expose Syria to security and political risks extending well beyond the battlefield.

If the Syrian army’s lack of readiness was sufficient reason to rule out intervention in Lebanon, what has changed to make sending thousands of troops to Yemen a viable option? Have Syria’s military capabilities improved sufficiently within a matter of months to support a large-scale overseas deployment? Or does Damascus’s relationship with Riyadh lead it to assess the risks differently?

What could Damascus gain and lose?

Reports suggesting that Syrian forces could be sent to Yemen are closely linked to the central role Saudi Arabia has played in supporting the new leadership in Damascus.

Riyadh has been one of al-Sharaa’s most prominent political backers and has helped advance Arab and international efforts to restore engagement with Syria. It has also played a role in efforts to lift sanctions and create conditions for the country’s reintegration into the region.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Midterm panic pushes Trump to trade Zelensky for cheaper diesel



By staff writer

TEHRAN — With the 2026 U.S. midterm elections a month away and diesel at \$6.28 a gallon, Donald Trump went looking for someone to blame and settled on Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky, whose official presidential mandate expired long ago and whose continued rule under suspended elections remains constitutionally questionable.

On Friday, after talks with Vladimir Putin, Trump announced that Russia would ship more than 300,000 tons of diesel immediately, 500,000 in November and a million after that.

U.S. Treasury’s General License 135 makes it legal, reportedly until April 7, 2027. Trump signed a Russia sanctions law last month. He thanked Putin anyway.

The fuel crunch traces to the war on Iran, which the United States and Israel opened on February 28 and which has throttled Persian Gulf supply since. Trump blames Ukrainian drones hitting Russian refineries instead. Analysts are unconvinced.

Analyst Tom Kloza called the announcement “more noise from Truth Social,” adding that Ukrainian drones have reportedly crippled about half of Russia’s refining. Ed Hirs of the University of Houston told Newsweek that he expects relief at the pump only well after the election, and only a temporary one, because the pledged vol-

ume is small next to the global market.

Saturday brought the insult. “I think it’s time for Ukraine to get a new president,” Trump told reporters, accusing Zelensky of wanting “to make problems for our farmers, our ranchers, with diesel fuel.”

The same day, Russian glide bombs reportedly hit Zaporizhzhia, where Ukrainian officials counted at least 21 dead, three of them children. Zelensky called Washington’s waiver “an investment in a war that must be ended, not prolonged.”

The timing was almost comic. Ukrainian and European officials were in Miami with Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner when the announcement landed, and a senior Ukrainian official told the AP that Kyiv had no warning.

A U.S. official gave Axios another version: Trump moved after Zelensky ignored roughly six requests to stop hitting Russian refineries. Ukrainian officials say Washington threatened to cut intelligence sharing.

Sunday’s Truth Social post claimed an “ENERGY CEASEFIRE,” effective immediately. “Both parties have agreed. Do not break it!” Zelensky said the announcement “was news for me,” and said Ukraine will comply if Moscow does.

Trump tried this on September 14. Neither capital confirmed it then, and both kept striking each other’s energy sites.

The pattern is hard to miss. Washington announces by social media post, informs its partner afterward and calls the result a deal.

Kyiv is asked to stop hitting refineries, absorb strikes on its power grid and, if Trump gets his way, hold an election under bombardment. Moscow may get sanctions relief and export revenue. Stockholm and Berlin claimed they are keeping their sanctions, even if Washington is not.

Iran to participate in Belarus beach soccer tournament

TEHRAN - Iran's national beach soccer team will compete in a three-team tournament in Belarus featuring the hosts and Oman on Oct. 17 and 18.

The Iranian squad are scheduled to travel to Belarus on Oct. 13 as part of their preparations for the 2026 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, which will be held in Thailand in late November.

Iran have been drawn in Group B alongside Afghanistan, Vietnam and Lebanon for the continental competition.

Speaking about the upcoming tournament, Iran head coach Naderi said: "Before the start of the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, we will take part in a tri-nation tournament in Belarus, featuring the host nation and Oman. I hope the tournament will help us improve our level of preparation, as both Belarus and Oman are among the leading teams in world and Asian beach soccer, respectively."

Asked about Iran's main rivals at the 2026 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, Naderi said the team would focus on each match individually, with qualification for the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup and defending their Asian title among their key objectives.

"Asia has three qualification spots for the World Cup, and strong teams such as the United Arab Emirates, Japan, Oman and Saudi Arabia will be competing. We will take it one game at a time, aiming to secure World Cup qualification while also defending our title," the Iranian coach said.

Wheelchair basketball teams learn opponents

TEHRAN - Iran's men's and women's national wheelchair basketball teams have learned their group-stage opponents for the fifth Asian Para Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, as both sides prepare to compete for strong results at the continental event.

The two teams face different challenges in the preliminary round and will look to secure positive results to strengthen Iran's position among Asia's leading wheelchair basketball nations.

Iran's men's national team have been drawn in Group B alongside Iraq, South Korea and the Philippines.

The Iranian squad will open their campaign against Iraq on Friday, Oct.16, in a match that could prove important in shaping their position heading into the remainder of the group stage.

Team Melli will then face South Korea on Saturday before taking on the Philippines on Monday in their final group-stage fixture.

With three challenging matches ahead, Iran will need to maintain a high level of focus, deliver consistent performances and make the most of its scoring opportunities to advance to the next stage.

Iran's women's national wheelchair basketball team will compete in a six-team group alongside hosts Japan, Cambodia, China, Laos and Thailand.

The round-robin format presents a demanding schedule, making physical conditioning, energy management and consistency key factors throughout the competition.

Iran will begin their campaign against Japan on Friday, Oct. 16, before meeting Thailand on Oct. 17. The team will then face Cambodia on Oct. 19, Laos on Oct. 20 and China on Oct. 21.

The encounter with host nation Japan will provide an early test for the Iranian squad, while the remaining fixtures will offer further opportunities to build momentum and challenge for a place in the next stage.

Both Iran teams will aim to demonstrate their capabilities and deliver strong performances at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games. Results in the group stage will be crucial in determining their prospects of progressing further in the tournament.

With the competition bringing togeth-

er some of Asia's top wheelchair basketball teams, Iran's success will depend on preparation, teamwork and the ability to perform under pressure.

The men's and women's squads will be hoping to make their mark in Nagoya and add another successful chapter to Iran's record in wheelchair basketball at the Asian Para Games.

Alipour could compete at 2028 Olympic Games, official says

TEHRAN - Iran Mountaineering and Sport Climbing Federation President Reza Zarei praised Reza Alipour's silver medal at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, saying the athlete could compete in the 2028 Olympic Games.

According to Zarei, the experienced speed climber has been a world-class performer and record-holder for years and that his silver medal was worth as much as gold.

Speaking about the standard of competition in sport climbing at the Asian Games in Nagoya, Zarei said Asian athletes have dominated the men's speed climbing event, with China and Indonesia making significant progress on the world stage over the past decade.

"South Korea, Japan, and Iran have also achieved good results in international competitions," he said.

Zarei added that Ukraine, Poland and Russia had previously been among the leading nations in the discipline. However, since sport climbing became an Olympic sport, the United States has invested heavily in its development, helping the discipline reach a relatively mature level worldwide.

In Iran, a lack of infrastructure in most provinces has limited the development of the sport, leaving the country reliant on individual talents such as Alipour, the federation president said. He also noted that some Iranian female climbers have achieved success in international competitions at youth level.

"Reza Alipour has been a leading figure in the sport and a record-holder on the world stage for years. In Nagoya, he used his valuable experience to win silver, a medal that was worth no less than gold," Zarei said.

He explained that Alipour had struggled with an injury for some time after the Olympics, which disrupted his training routine. However, following the Asian Beach Games, the Iranian climber resumed a positive training trajectory and continued to make progress.

Zarei's comments also pointed to Alipour's potential to remain competitive at the highest level, with the federation president expressing confidence that the veteran speed climber could still take part in the next Olympic Games.

Fajr Sepasi part way with Rasoul Khatibi: PGPL

TEHRAN - Fajr Sepasi football club have officially parted ways with head coach Rasoul Khatibi, the Iranian club announced, adding that his successor will be introduced in the coming days.

The Shiraz-based club thanked Khatibi for his efforts and commitment during his time in charge and wished him success in the next stage of his coaching career.

Fajr Sepasi also confirmed that the appointment of a new head coach is expected soon, as the club look to determine their technical leadership for the remainder of the season.

The decision comes after a challenging start to the campaign for the Shiraz outfit. After eight weeks of competition, Fajr Sepasi have collected seven points, recording one win, four draws and two defeats, according to the club's reported standings. They currently sit 14th in the Persian Gulf Pro League table.

The club will now look to appoint a new coach to improve results and help the team move up the standings as the league season continues.

From ancient clay to living tradition: the enduring art of Iranian pottery

TEHRAN - Pottery is among the oldest forms of human craftsmanship, transforming ordinary clay into vessels and objects of practical use and artistic expression.

In Iran, this ancient art has evolved over thousands of years, reflecting the country's changing civilizations, cultural exchanges and artistic traditions. From pre-historic earthenware to elaborately decorated ceramics of the Islamic period, Iranian pottery offers a glimpse into the country's long history of innovation and craftsmanship.

The craft involves shaping clay by hand or on a potter's wheel, followed by drying and firing. Depending on the raw materials, techniques and intended use, finished pieces may retain the natural colors of the clay or receive decorative coatings and glazes. Across Iran, potters have developed distinctive styles, forms and motifs, creating a diverse tradition that remains alive in several parts of the country.

Although the precise beginnings of pottery in Iran remain uncertain, archaeological evidence places its origins in prehistoric times, possibly as early as the eighth to fifth millennia BC. Regions including Gilan, Kordestan and Sistan-Baluchestan have played important roles in the development of the craft. The emergence of painted pottery on the Iranian Plateau also demonstrates how early communities combined practical skills with an increasingly sophisticated sense of design.

During the Achaemenid period (c. 550–330 BC), pottery production developed alongside other artistic traditions. Vessels took on varied shapes, while rhytons, drinking vessels often fashioned in animal forms, became part of the broader repertoire of ancient Iranian craftsmanship.

Pottery continued to develop during the Parthian period (247 BC–224 CE), when different production techniques and decorative styles circulated across a vast geographical area. Excavations at the Anahita Temple in Kangavar, western Iran, have



yielded evidence of both unglazed vessels and glazed pottery. The latter included pieces with red, gray and greenish finishes, reflecting the range of materials and techniques available to potters of the time.

Under the Sassanids (224–651), pottery makers produced bowls, jars, jugs, figurines and animal-shaped objects. Some vessels featured geometric and vegetal patterns, carved designs and raised decorations. Others carried inscriptions in Middle Persian, also known as Pahlavi. Glazed pieces decorated with fish and animal motifs were among the characteristic products of the period.

Sassanid artistic conventions also influenced pottery produced in subsequent centuries. Winged animals, mythical birds, arabesque-like patterns and the Sassanid eagle became part of a visual vocabulary that continued into the Islamic period. Some later ceramics decorated with motifs associated with pre-Islamic Iran became known as Gabri ware, a historical term used for certain types of pottery. Examples of pottery from different periods are preserved in the National Museum of Iran.

The arrival of Islam brought further changes, as potters adapted earlier decorative tra-

ditions and experimented with new techniques. Iranian ceramic production reached a notable level of technical sophistication during the Seljuk period (11th–13th centuries), often regarded as a golden age of Persian ceramics. Craftspeople employed methods including incising, relief decoration, pierced designs, painting beneath or over glazes, gilding and enameling. These techniques enabled the production of vessels with intricate patterns and a wide range of finishes.

Ceramic production continued to evolve under the Safavids (1501–1736). Shah Abbas I encouraged artistic and commercial links with China, including efforts to develop Iranian porcelain production. Chinese ceramics influenced the tastes and practices of Iranian workshops, illustrating how pottery traditions developed through both local innovation and international exchange.

Over time, pottery became an established profession in many Iranian communities, with skills and techniques passed from one generation to the next. Despite the introduction of modern equipment and changing markets, some workshops continue to rely on traditional methods, preserving distinctive regional

practices.

One notable example is Kalporgan village in Sistan-Baluchestan, where pottery-making traditions are often associated with techniques believed to have ancient roots. Women potters in the village are particularly known for shaping vessels by hand without using a conventional potter's wheel, while distinctive geometric designs are applied to the surfaces. The resulting earthenware reflects a close relationship between local materials, inherited knowledge and everyday life.

Other important centers include Lalejin in Hamadan province, widely recognized for its pottery and ceramics, as well as Shahreza in Isfahan province and communities in Gilan. Their products range from plain household vessels to colorful jugs, bowls and decorative objects sold in local markets and beyond.

For researchers, these regional traditions help connect archaeological discoveries with contemporary craftsmanship. Iranian pottery is more than a record of ancient domestic life: it is a continuing cultural practice in which materials, techniques and designs preserve memories of the past while adapting to the needs of the present.

Forgotten Safavid-era village discovered in southern Iran

TEHRAN – Researchers have identified and documented the remains of an abandoned village believed to date back to the Safavid era in the Dasht-e Barm forest area of Kazerun county, Fars province, southwestern Iran.

The village, named Royin, had been deserted for years and was not mentioned in any of the accessible databases reviewed by researchers, according to Mohsen Abbaspour, a cultural heritage researcher and activist.

Speaking to ISNA, Abbaspour said the discovery emerged from a year-long research project examining historical settlements in the oak forests of Dasht-e Barm, which lie within the Arjan-Parishan Biosphere Reserve.

Researchers identified the village's name by studying inscriptions on gravestones in two historic cemeteries and collecting ethnographic information from neighboring villages. Some inscriptions included the name Royini as part of the names of people buried there.

The oldest legible gravestone documented so far records the death of a woman in Jumada al-Awwal 1110 AH, corresponding to the late Safavid period. Abbaspour said comparisons



between the village's surviving houses and architectural patterns in other Safavid-era settlements in the Kuhmareh region of Fars also support the conclusion that Royin dates back at least to that period.

The research documented the remains of the residential area, two cemeteries situated on opposite sides of a seasonal river, and approximately 21 hectares of terraced gardens.

Based on comparisons with other historical villages in the region, researchers believe residents relied on livestock raising and cultivated fruit trees suited to the local climate, includ-

ing figs, plums and walnuts.

Pottery fragments examined during the study further support the proposed dating and suggest that the settlement once sustained an active community. Residents used pottery with simple decorative finishes, along with stone tools, for everyday activities, Abbaspour said.

The research also examined the village's layout, place names, surviving architecture, energy sources and historic gravestones. The findings have been documented in a research paper.

Abbaspour expressed hope that efforts to register and introduce the village would encourage further academic research and attract visitors interested in Iran's historic rural settlements.

Dasht-e Barm lies about 30 kilometers north of Kazerun, along the road connecting the city to Shiraz. The forest area contains several other historical remains, including a caravanserai, sections of an ancient southern route, historic cemeteries, old mills and abandoned or historic villages.

Iranian crafter named Asia-Pacific's top master of wood arts



TEHRAN – Iranian artist and sculptor Mohammad-Ali Vadood has been named the Top Master of Wood Arts in Asia and the Pacific at the 2025 China Asia-Pacific Furniture and Woodworking Industry Forum (CAPFA), according to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

The title was awarded following Vadood's nomination by Iran's Federation of Wood Industries, Furniture and Interior Architecture and an assessment of his

professional background and artistic works, the ministry's news outlet, Miras-e Arya, reported.

Vadood has previously received international recognition for his work. In 2021, he won a bronze award at Italy's A' Design Award competition for his piece "One Thousand and One Nights."

Much of his artistic practice focuses on exploring the visual potential of wood and creatively incorporating wood fragments and offcuts into his works.

High-tech companies discuss ways to boost ties at 3rd Russia-Iran ICT Forum

TEHRAN – Leading Iranian and Russian companies have explored ways to expand bilateral cooperation in advanced technologies at the third Russia-Iran Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Forum.

The forum brought together officials, diplomats, and public- and private-sector representatives from both countries. The participants met on the sidelines of the second Global Digital Forum, held in Moscow from October 8 to 10, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, Alexander Shoitov, Russia's deputy minister of digital development, communications and mass media, said the participation of Iranian companies in the Global Digital Forum offered a valuable opportunity to exchange information and establish new partnerships.

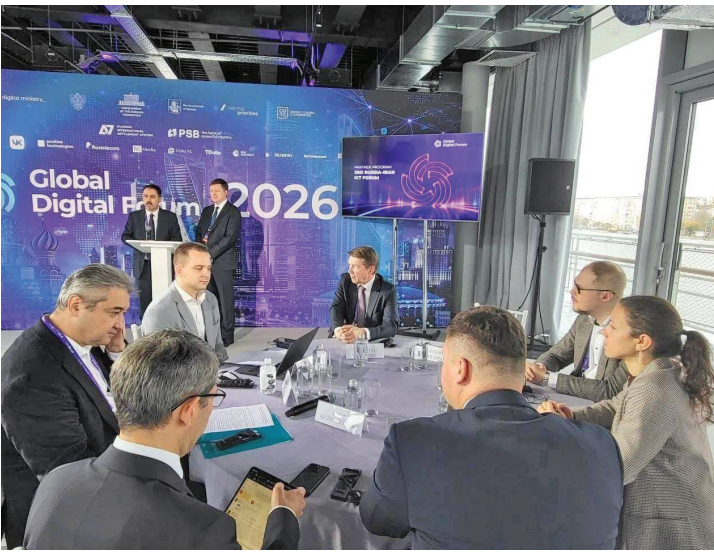
He noted that Iran and Russia had significant potential to expand bilateral cooperation, particularly in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

Shoitov also reaffirmed Russia's readiness to deepen bilateral ties and develop joint infrastructure in the ICT sector.

For his part, Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, highlighted the importance of fostering strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia in the expansion of digital exchanges within a governmental framework. The enhancement of ties helps strengthen the country's capacity for participation in regional and global markets.

Highlighting the expertise and knowledge of Iranian technology companies in the localization of IT infrastructure equipment, Russian companies can establish joint ventures with reliable partners in Iran, gaining access to the country's IT and artificial intelligence services market.

Moreover, Iranian and Russian representatives of high-technology companies showcased their



latest cutting-edge accomplishments and presented their comprehensive plans and operational proposals for the promotion of cooperation in advanced technologies.

Exchanging best practices and technological solutions, holding B2B meetings, expanding business networks, and exploring opportunities for joint projects were among other key parts of the Forum. Particular attention was given to practical mechanisms for Russian and Iranian companies to enter new markets and develop cooperation with partners from third countries.

The second Global Digital Forum was held at the Mechta multifunctional complex in Gorky Park. As many as 760 delegates from 120 countries took part, including deputy prime ministers, digital development ministers, senior government officials, diplomats, IT company heads, experts, researchers, and representatives of international organizations from Africa, Asia, the Gulf region, Europe, and Latin America.

Sessions were held on artificial intelligence, digital sovereignty, cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and global cooperation. Participants reviewed

global trends in digital transformation, the integration of modern products into national digital systems, and prospects for cooperation between countries in the technology sector.

MOUs to bolster ICT ties

In December 2025, top tech Iranian and Russian companies signed five memoranda of understanding (MOUs) on artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, smart government, blockchain and fintech, regulators, technology parks, and post services, to promote cooperation in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector.

The MOUs were signed in Russia during the fifth Iran-Russia ICT Forum held from December 6 to 7, IRNA reported.

An Iranian delegation led by the deputy ICT Minister for Technology and Innovation, Meysam Abedi, attended the forum.

Referring to the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia, Jalali said the two countries have a high capacity, and the expansion of collaborations will be beneficial to both sides.

For his part, Shoitov said the memoranda of understanding and the agreements reached today are the result of ongoing efforts over the past few years.

"Today, we are celebrating the results of our hard work over many years with the companies collaborating. We can confidently say, cooperation is definitely going on.

So far, the two countries have signed many memoranda of understanding, but there are still new areas of cooperation opening up in our interactions that benefit the people of the two nations," Shoitov further noted.

Abedi, for his part, said the reached agreements are the result of three years of continuous cooperation between the ICT ministries of the two countries.

He called on Iranian and Russian companies to seriously follow up on the implementation of the MOUs and agreements, and to remove probable obstacles with the help of the government departments of the two countries.

The official went on to propose locating a third country as the joint market for Iranian-Russian products on the agenda, expressing hope that the two countries would sign MOUs on a joint market by the sixth forum.

In May, Russian Presidential Aide Andrei Fursenko emphasized the significance of promoting partnerships and collaborations with Iran in emerging technologies.

It is a fact that focusing on already established technologies will not be beneficial for the two countries. So, it is essential to put on the agenda the technologies that have not (fully) developed yet, which is a much more difficult task, IRNA quoted Fursenko as saying.

For his part, Safarinia said Iran is committed to promoting international scientific cooperation, highlighting that Russia is among the top countries with which Iran is willing to expand ties.

Iran's Medical Council urges global health bodies to act over US sanctions

TEHRAN – The Iranian Medical Council has called on the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the World Medical Association (WMA) to take immediate action against the use of patients' lives as a tool of political and military pressure.

In an official letter to the three international organizations, the council said the US government was violating international humanitarian and criminal law through inhumane measures, including economic blockade and pharmaceutical sanctions against Iran, turning patients' lives into an instrument of political and military coercion.

Mohammad Raiszadeh, head of the Iranian Medical Council, urged the leaders of international health organizations to respond promptly and responsibly to what he described as inhumane acts and the weaponization of medical resources in armed conflicts.

He cited previous reports of direct attacks on healthcare facilities, medical infrastructure, and pharmaceutical facilities, adding that the US attack on the Touska, a vessel carrying medicines and, in particular, vital supplies for dialysis patients, was another clear example of directly endangering patients' health and lives.

Raiszadeh said Iran's medical community expected the WHO, WMA, ICRC, and other relevant international bodies to respond appropriately and responsibly to the use of medicines, healthcare facilities, medical shipments, and patients' lives as instruments of warfare.

He also called for effective measures to ensure safe, rapid, and unhindered routes for the delivery of medicines, medical equipment, and

pharmaceutical raw materials.

An effective response from institutions whose very purpose is to protect human health, life, and dignity would represent the fulfillment of their moral and historic responsibilities to humanity, he added.

Raiszadeh stressed that Iran's medical community and people would not forget these events and would pursue accountability, in accordance with international law, for both those responsible for the actions and institutions that remained silent in the face of them.

As of March 27, data compiled from WHO, the Iranian Red Crescent, and national health agencies reveal a targeted erosion of medical neutrality. A total of 292 medical and relief centres, including hospitals, pharmacies, and primary health clinics, have been damaged or destroyed.

This destruction has forced 13 hospitals completely out of service, while another seven have been fully evacuated under duress because of proximity to danger zones.

The emergency response capacity has been further crippled by the destruction of 48 ambulances and rescue vehicles, as well as an emergency medical helicopter.

The assault on health care is not merely incidental but systemic. Under the Geneva Conventions and the UN Charter, medical personnel and facilities must be protected at all times unless used for military purposes. Yet, verified reports indicate US-Israeli attacks on health facilities and the killing of at least eight health-care workers, doctors, nurses, and emergency first responders in Iran.

“Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!”



TEHRAN – World Migratory Bird Day serves as an opportunity to highlight the vital role these birds play in maintaining ecosystem balance and the need to protect their habitats. These tireless travelers cover thousands of kilometers each year to survive, yet face mounting threats, including drying wetlands, habitat destruction, illegal hunting, and climate change.

World Migratory Bird Day is a global observance aimed at raising awareness of the importance of conserving migratory birds and their habitats. It was first established in 2006 through an initiative by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), with support from the United Nations.

The observance seeks to draw public attention to threats such as habitat destruction, environmental pollution, illegal hunting and climate change, while underscoring the need for international cooperation to protect migratory birds.

World Migratory Bird Day is observed annually on the second Saturday of May and the second Saturday of October, coinciding with the main bird migration seasons in the Northern Hemisphere. In 2026, the observance falls on May 9 and October 10.

This year's theme, “Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!”, highlights the role of citizen science and public participation in migratory bird conservation. The initiative emphasizes the value of field observations recorded by birdwatchers, researchers, local communities and nature enthusiasts in understanding migration patterns, monitoring population trends and identifying threats affecting

different species.

Iran plays a particularly important role in migratory bird conservation due to its geographical position in West Asia and its location along the seasonal migration routes of numerous species. The country's wetlands, lakes, coastlines and other natural habitats serve as stopover, feeding and resting sites, as well as wintering grounds, for large numbers of waterbirds and shorebirds throughout the year.

Anzali Wetland, Miankaleh, Gori Gol and Shadegan wetlands, along with aquatic habitats in the Lake Urmia basin, are among the areas where continuous monitoring can provide valuable information on species occurrence, relative abundance, arrival and departure dates, and seasonal population changes.

Recording observation dates, bird numbers, geographic locations, habitat conditions and evidence of threats can help improve ecological assessments, particularly when data are collected using standardized methods over extended periods. Such records make it easier to compare findings over time and identify ecological changes. In this context, public participation in documenting bird sightings can complement professional bird census and monitoring programs nationwide.

On World Migratory Bird Day, the theme “Every Bird Counts – Your Observations Matter!” serves as a reminder that effective conservation requires not only expertise and planning but also informed public participation and the transformation of individual observations into reliable, usable data.

Every accurate observation can help reveal a larger picture of the status of migratory birds and the vital routes they depend on — a picture that is essential to protecting this shared natural heritage.

DOE advances conservation efforts for reptile and amphibian species



wildlife trafficking; the committee has held three expert meetings so far. Furthermore, the drafting of a comprehensive plan to combat and prevent wildlife trafficking is nearing completion. Furthermore, a comprehensive program to combat and prevent wildlife trafficking is being drafted.

To manage human-wildlife conflicts, efforts have been made to shift the approach from a reactive posture to the identification of critical hotspots, understanding the drivers of conflict, and implementing preventive measures. The DOE has identified some conflict hotspots for species like leopards, black bears, and herbivores; collecting data on black bears in Hormozgan and Kerman provinces is underway.

Moreover, the DOE has signed an agreement with the National Environment Fund and the Agricultural Products Insurance Fund to support local communities and compensate their losses, Valizadeh further noted.

Accurate information on species distribution, habitats, movement paths, and ecological corridors makes conservation efforts more

scientific, legal, and operational initiatives to strengthen the protection of wildlife species and habitats across the country based on a targeted and strategic approach, with priorities guided by data and scientific research.

According to Peyman Valizadeh, an official with the DOE, the DOE focuses on a more scientific approach to develop and implement conservation efforts tailored to the specific needs of each species and habitat, IRNA reported.

It has so far prepared plans for the preservation of 25 endangered species, with thirteen more plans being developed. The plans provide a clear framework for species conservation by delineating the species' status, major threats, conservation priorities, necessary actions, and assessment indicators, he noted.

However, the DOE faces some challenges in implementing these measures at national and provincial levels. One of the biggest challenges is securing funding to implement the plans. Developing specialized capacity to preserve species is the other problem. Lack of trained, specialized forces has made it difficult to implement the conservation action plans effectively. Therefore, training specialized personnel, developing experts' capacities in provinces, and strengthening scientific and technical capabilities of the headquarters are put on the agenda, the official highlighted.

Referring to adopted measures to combat wildlife trafficking, Valizadeh said to foster greater coordination among the responsible agencies, the DOE has established a national committee on combating

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is developing national conservation programs for priority reptile and amphibian species, with a focus on deploying modern monitoring technologies, strengthening local community engagement, and providing ongoing training for experts.

The plan primarily targets salamanders, marsh crocodiles, spider-tailed horned vipers, and Talysh toads through new methods of monitoring, census, and conservation measures, IRNA quoted Peyman Ashouri, an official with the DOE, as saying.

Razi University in Kermanshah province has already estimated the population of the yellow-spotted salamander using artificial intelligence (AI), and a census of the marsh crocodile is planned to be conducted from February 20 to May 21, he added.

The official elaborated on adopted measures to address human-wildlife conflicts, stating that a project is currently underway to mitigate threats, reduce conflicts, and restore the habitats of the Lorestan newt and Talysh toad; the initiatives include installing signage, producing wildlife awareness posters and brochures, organizing educational programs for tourists and local communities, and removing waste from the habitats.

Referring to spider-tailed horned vipers, Ashouri said the DOE is drafting a conservation plan for the protection of the species, which will be implemented soon.

Data-driven strategies to strengthen biodiversity conservation efforts

The DOE is implementing a comprehensive range of conservation,



OCTOBER 12, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Blessed is the man who always kept the life after death in his view, who remembered the Day of Judgment through all his deeds, who led a contented life and who was happy with the lot that Allah had destined for him.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:51 Evening: 17:51 Dawn: 4:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:09 (tomorrow)

Tehran hosts art exhibition, live painting workshop on True Promise

TEHRAN- The second edition of the painting exhibition and live art workshop "True Promise in the Mirror of Art" is currently underway at Palestine Square in Tehran, with artists and members of the public taking part in the event.

The program runs daily from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., and will continue until October 16, Mehr reported.

The event is part of the visual arts section of the second international "True Promise in the Mirror of Art" program. It is hosted by the Greater Tehran Basij of Artists, in cooperation with the Basij unit of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company and the artistic affairs department of the Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs' cultural and educational deputy, the report added.

During the workshop, visual artists create works alongside members of the public, drawing on themes related to Iran's "True Promise" operations and their artistic representation.

Other subjects include the leadership, lifestyle, governing approach and the martyrdom of the late Leader of the Islamic Rev-

olution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as well as what the organizers describe as Iran's strength, courage and strategic capabilities during the 12-day conflict and the Ramadan War.

The program also addresses themes of sacrifice and martyrdom through visual art.

The second international "True Promise in the Mirror of Art" event is organized by the Basij Organization of Artists, with Mohammad Najjari serving as its secretary.

The "True Promise" operations are a series of Iranian military actions launched in response to Israeli attacks. The first operation, in April 2024, involved missile and drone strikes against Israel following an Israeli attack on Iran's diplomatic compound in Damascus on April 1. A second operation took place in October 2024, after the killing of senior figures in Iran and allied groups. In June 2025, Iran launched Operation True Promise III in retaliation for Israeli strikes on Iranian territory, during the 12-day conflict. The operations have become a prominent theme in Iran's official discourse on national defense and are also reflected in cultural and artistic events.

Cartoon of Day



France... The baton of democracy is used against the students.

Cartoonist: Aziz Bouzekri from Morocco

Nude Trump sculpture sparks political controversy at European Parliament

TEHRAN- A gold-covered sculpture depicting US President Donald Trump naked and sitting on the back of a frail man has sparked a political controversy at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, drawing criticism from several European lawmakers and a call by Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico for its removal, while others have defended the artwork as a form of political satire and freedom of expression.

Created by Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, the 2.6-meter sculpture, titled "The Orange Plague" and also known as "The King of Injustice," was unveiled on October 7 as part of a three-day exhibition hosted by Danish Member of the European Parliament Per Clausen. The installation was removed on October 8, according to Italian broadcaster Sky TG24, which reported that the exhibition had been scheduled to run for three days.

The work portrays Trump as a naked, overweight figure covered in 23-karat gold leaf, holding a golf club in one hand and scales of justice in the other. He sits on the shoulders of a smaller, frail man, whose posture suggests that he is struggling under the weight, while a globe resembling a golf ball lies near the man's feet.

An inscription at the base of the sculpture offers a pointed commentary on the relationship between power and responsibility.

"I am sitting on the back of a man. He is sinking under my burden. I will do anything to help him. Except stepping down from his back," the inscription reads.

The text presents an ironic image of a powerful figure who claims to help those beneath him while refusing to abandon the position that causes their suffering.

According to Euronews and The Art Newspaper, Galschiøt conceived the work as a protest against Trump's climate and foreign policies, which he believes undermine international cooperation and efforts to address the climate crisis.

Slovak prime minister calls for removal

The exhibition drew criticism from Robert Fico, who called on European Parliament President Roberta Metsola to have the sculpture removed.

According to Slovakia's news agency TASR, Fico objected to the installation despite acknowledging his disagreements with some of Trump's policies. He argued that political differences should not justify what he regarded as an insult to a partner country on the premises of a European institution.

Fico also questioned whether those supporting the display would accept similar depictions of French President Emmanuel Macron or German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. His remarks brought diplomatic sensitivities into a debate over the limits of political satire.

Other lawmakers also criticized the artwork. Belgian MEP Barbara Bonte described the installation as a disgrace, while Hungarian lawmaker Ernő Schaller-Baross questioned what he considered a double standard



in the treatment of political leaders. Irish MEP Barry Cowen also called the sculpture "silly and objectionable" and said he had written to the parliament to express his opposition.

The objections highlighted divisions within the European Parliament over whether the sculpture represented legitimate political expression or an inappropriate use of the institution's premises.

Danish lawmaker defends the display

The sculpture was brought to Strasbourg at the invitation of Danish MEP Per Clausen, who defended the decision to exhibit it.

Clausen, who invited Galschiøt to exhibit the sculpture, dismissed concerns about a possible

istritative matters. The approval allowed the work to be shown in designated exhibition space but did not make it an official artwork commissioned or endorsed by the institution.

Galschiøt has described the sculpture as a personal attack on Trump, an approach he said differed from his usual focus on political systems.

"Normally I attack systems, but in this case, I will attack Trump personally," the artist told The Art Newspaper.

Galschiøt said the work was intended to draw attention to the reluctance of governments and organizations to challenge the US president openly because of potential economic and political

Galschiøt told the publication that Trump's extensive use of gold in his properties, including the Oval Office, inspired the decision to cover the figure in the precious metal.

The artist also drew inspiration from Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes", in which a vain ruler parades naked while those around him pretend that he is wearing magnificent garments. The story's central theme — the reluctance to challenge authority even when its failings are obvious — reinforces the sculpture's political message.

Miniature replicas extend the protest

The Strasbourg exhibition was accompanied by an effort to circulate the artwork beyond the parliament building. Galschiøt produced approximately 20,000 miniature, 3D-printed versions of the sculpture, distributing them to visitors and parliament staff. He also made the digital design files freely available online for people wishing to print their own copies.

The idea was inspired by Hong Kong's democracy movement, whose supporters produced miniature reproductions of Galschiøt's "Pillar of Shame". The original sculpture, created in 1997 to commemorate human rights violations including the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, was dismantled in Hong Kong in 2021.

"The Orange Plague" had previously appeared at demonstrations in Copenhagen opposing US pressure over Greenland and at the COP30 United Nations climate conference in Belém, Brazil, in 2025.

Following its Strasbourg appearance, Galschiøt planned to display the sculpture again at the COP31 climate conference in Antalya, Türkiye, in November 2026.

In a report published on October 9, Euronews also placed the installation within a broader tradition of satirical art targeting Trump, noting how artists have used exaggerated and often gilded depictions of the president to challenge his public image and political influence.

The controversy surrounding the sculpture illustrates how political art can become a point of contention over freedom of expression, diplomatic sensitivities and the role of public institutions.



negative reaction from Trump.

"If someone is so thin-skinned that they cannot tolerate this sculpture being exhibited in the European Parliament, then they have no place on the world stage," Clausen said, according to Euronews.

The exhibition was approved by the European Parliament's quaeastors, a cross-party group responsible for certain admin-

consequences.

"Nations as well as NGOs are afraid to openly raise the subject [of] how to deal with Trump and his policies, fearing tariffs, fund-cuts, deportations or the like," the artist wrote on his website, in a statement quoted by The Art Newspaper.

The sculpture's gold finish also carries a satirical message.

The imagined Palestinian landscapes of Jordan Nassar's tatreez panels

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish once dedicated a poem to the frustration he felt at his inability to describe a cloud. Staring up at the sky while walking alone on an unnamed mountain, he wrote that the clouds were "like a cottoned ginned by wind, like a white idea about the meaning of existence".

That poem – and presumably Darwish' failing words – guides a new series of contemporary

artworks by the New York artist Jordan Nassar, on display at No 9 Cork Street in London. The presentation by the Dubai gallery The Third Line is the artist's first in the UK in a decade.

The Manhattan-born Nassar often works with tatreez, a Palestinian cross-stitch embroidery to create fictive landscapes combined with the tradition's abstract patterning.

The piece They Build Homes with Clouds (2026)

places green, red and purple-hued mountains against an ochre sky, and beyond them, the sea, embroidered on canvas. The panel is surrounded by four smaller ones depicting a pattern of colorful embroidered squares. The contrast between the repetitive square motifs of tatreez and the organic shapes of the mountain landscapes is startling.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)