

Saudi Arabia's billions in arms fail to buy security

By staff writer

TEHRAN - Saudi Arabia spends tens of billions of dollars on arms every year, but is struggling to protect key assets such as airports, refineries and pipelines from missiles and drones fired by Ansarallah, also called the Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF).

Despite acquiring state-of-the-art weapons systems from the United States and Europe and possessing multi-layered air defenses, the kingdom has seen deadly attacks on the main airport serving the capital, Riyadh, over the past week. ► Page 5

Reconstruction, resistance, and the battle for Lebanon's future

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The announcement by Hezbollah's Executive Council chairman, Sheikh Ali Damoush, of a new housing assistance program for Lebanese families displaced by the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli attacks comes amid a wider struggle over reconstruction, state authority, and the future of Lebanon.

Damoush declared that "the occupation of some positions by the enemy does not mean that it can establish itself on our land," arguing that resistance operates differently from conventional armies by exhausting an occupying force until its withdrawal. ► Page 5

Republicans face expanding midterm backlash over Iran war, living costs

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Donald Trump says the approaching U.S. elections will not change his position regarding Iran. Republican candidates are already changing theirs.

With three weeks remaining before the November 3 midterms, an unpopular war and its economic consequences are forcing the president's party to defend Senate seats in states he carried comfortably in 2024, while Democrats press toward control of the House.

The retreat is visible in campaign spending and candidates' language.

Republican money has been redirected from North Carolina to Kansas. Iowa Senate nominee Ashley Hinson has called for an "immediate end" to the war on Iran, despite repeatedly voting against House resolutions seeking that outcome. ► Page 5

Yemen attacks Aramco sites and Riyadh airport

The Yemeni Armed Forces (YAF) said on Wednesday it had targeted Saudi Aramco facilities in Dhahran, King Khalid International Airport and an Aramco refinery in Riyadh. It said they launched ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones.

YAF said it would continue operations against airports and oil facilities in the coming days, as tensions with Saudi Arabia escalate.

YAF said the threatened locations were legitimate targets and described their attacks as retaliation for Saudi strikes on Yemen.

Sources said Aramco headquarters suffered extensive damage, Reuters reported.

Civilians in the Saudi capital Riyadh reported hearing an explosion above their city, DW reported on Wednesday. ► Page 5



USS George Washington aircraft carrier

IRGC Navy Commander: US Carriers Dare Not Approach Hormuz, We Are Waiting to Sink Them

"If the Americans want to see whether the Strait of Hormuz is open or closed, let them enter the field to see who controls it"

TEHRAN - The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Navy says American warships have withdrawn to hundreds of kilometers from the Strait of Hormuz out of vulnerability, warning that Iranian forces are counting the moments for them to come within range.

Rear Admiral Ali Ozmaei said in remarks published Tuesday that the United States Navy, despite its advanced hardware, no longer dares to approach Iranian waters.

"Today, by God's grace and with our naval combatants, we are standing against the vicious enemies," Ozmaei said. "The US Army has turned into a fuel smuggler and its fleet has become useless because it is vulnerable and does not dare to come close to Iran."

The commander said Iran has turned its tactical weaknesses into strengths and challenged Washington to test who really controls the world's most critical energy chokepoint.

"If the Americans want to see whether the Strait of Hormuz is open or closed, let them enter the field to see who controls it," he said.

According to Ozmaei, even the United States' 13-billion-dollar aircraft carrier has been rendered ineffective and is now operating about 700 kilometers away from the Strait because it fears being hit.

"We are waiting for the American warships to approach the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz to sink them; we are counting down moment by moment for this to happen," he said.

Ozmaei said Iran has so far publicized only one or two examples of its punishment of violating vessels, noting that the US and its regional partners of imposing a media blackout

to hide the fact that offending ships are being disciplined.

"We showed only two samples of the punishment of offending ships," he said, adding that Iranian forces act without compromise against violators.

The commander stressed that the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf are under the control of the IRGC Navy, while the Sea of Oman is controlled by the Islamic Republic Army, meaning that any blockade now lies beyond the Sea of Oman, in the Arabian Sea.

"The IRGC Navy conducts smart control of the Strait of Hormuz," Ozmaei explained. Vessels bound to or departing from Iran are issued permits through a hierarchy and transit only through the Iranian waterway, he said.

Addressing the Iranian public, he said naval combatants are in the field alongside the people and deal firmly with offenders. ► Page 3



Israeli forces raid West Bank villages as settlers torch mosque

Israeli settlers have set fire to a mosque, an olive tree and a vehicle in the occupied West Bank, as Israeli forces continue to carry out raids across the territory.

The settlers started the fires while raiding the village of Mikhmas early on Wednesday, according to the Palestinian news agency, Wafa.

Reports online say the settlers spray painted racist slogans on the walls of the mosque, as well as other buildings and Palestinians' homes.

Pogroms carried out by settlers across the occupied Palestinian territory have surged since Israel launched its genocidal war on Gaza three years ago. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have accused the Israeli regime of facilitating settler violence in a push to expand Israeli control of Palestinian land. ► Page 5

Iran sets out defense modernization plans as officials stress deterrence and domestic arms production

TEHRAN — Iran is seeking to accelerate the modernization of its armed forces, expand domestic weapons production and strengthen its defense-industrial infrastructure, according to plans presented by defense minister nominee Mehrdad Akhlaqi, as senior military officials stress the importance of deterrence and preparedness amid continued tensions with the United States and Israel.

Addressing the Iranian Parliament, Akhlaqi outlined six-month and 22-month implementation programs designed to build on existing defense initiatives while adapting them to changing technological and operational requirements. ► Page 2

Aoun and Araghchi discussed latest regional developments

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has held a series of telephone consultations with regional counterparts, including the foreign ministers of Turkey and Oman, to discuss developments in Yemen and ways to promote regional peace and stability.

In a separate telephone conversation, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Araghchi also underscored the importance of diplomatic solutions as the most effective means of ending conflicts in the region.

According to a statement from the Lebanese presidency, Aoun and Araghchi discussed the latest regional developments and agreed on the need to prioritize diplomacy in resolving regional disputes.

Araghchi's consultations with his Turkish and Omani counterparts focused specifically on the situation in Yemen, as well as approaches to easing tensions and strengthening regional security. ► Page 3

Iran's ambassador to Russia rejects Trump's allegations about destruction of US cities

TEHRAN — Iran's Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali has rejected US President Donald Trump's remarks suggesting that Iranian military capabilities could threaten major American cities, describing the allegations as unfounded and unrealistic and saying they amount to little more than election campaign rhetoric.

In an interview with Russia's TASS news agency, Jalali said Iran's military doctrine was firmly based on defense and deterrence, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic had never initiated a war. ► Page 3

Bushehr: Where Iran's history meets the Persian Gulf

TEHRAN - On Iran's southern coast, where the Zagros Mountains descend toward the Persian Gulf, Bushehr offers a distinctive blend of history, architecture, nature and living traditions. The sea has shaped almost every aspect of life here, from trade and fishing to cuisine, music and the design of traditional houses.

The provincial capital, Bandar-e Bushehr, occupies a peninsula extending into the Persian Gulf. Its historic neighborhoods, shaded alleys, merchant mansions and waterfront reflect a time when the port connected Iran with trading networks across the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Beyond the city, the province unfolds into a varied landscape of archaeological sites, date-palm plantations, mountain villages, sandy beaches and unusual geological formations. ► Page 6

IRGC Navy commander:

US carriers dare not approach Hormuz, we are waiting to sink them

From Page 1 ▶ “We can establish economic, political and military security with our neighbors. We do not need the Americans. They are after plundering the wealth of the people of the region,” he said. “Today the American army has been humiliated and reduced to misery.”

Ozmaei added that Iran's position is stronger than in the early days of the imposed war, and that its fighters are more prepared today than yesterday.

His remarks coincided with two fresh maritime incidents reported Tuesday in and around the Strait.

In the morning, the IRGC Navy's public relations department announced that a violating container ship carrying more than 2,500 containers, which had attempted



to transit the Strait of Hormuz through an unauthorized and dangerous route, struck a naval mine in the southern waters of the Strait, exploded and caught massive fire before sinking.

Local vessels and fishermen were advised to navigate with maximum caution to avoid colliding with floating containers, the statement said.

At noon on the same day, the

Islamic Republic Army Navy reported that a violating oil tanker, which had switched off its tracking systems and was trying to pass through a prohibited zone east of the Strait of Hormuz, suffered damage and fire and was detected by Army surveillance teams.

Announcing a new formation and deployment of operational units east of the Strait of Hormuz and in the Arabian Sea and Sea of Oman areas, the Army Navy said it maintains full, round-the-clock surveillance over all enemy activities and vessel traffic.

It advised all vessels to strictly refrain from switching off their electronic equipment in violation of international law and to coordinate with the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran for safe passage.

Iran's ambassador to Russia rejects Trump's allegations about destruction of US cities

From Page 1 ▶ “Mr. Trump's allegations about the possible destruction of American cities are completely unfounded, unrealistic, and amount to nothing more than campaign rhetoric,” Jalali said.

“Iran's military doctrine is absolutely clear, responsible, and based on defense and deterrence,” he added.

The ambassador stressed that rejecting the allegations should not be interpreted as an underestimation of Iran's defensive capabilities, particularly its missile power.

“We have never been the initiators of any wars. However, Iran's capabilities and missile power are an indisputable, undeniable, and frightening fact,” he said.

Jalali also suggested that Trump was seeking to use the alleged Iranian threat for domestic political purposes, arguing that the US president appeared to be attempting to evade responsibility during the election campaign and turn Iran's deterrent capabilities into a political instrument against his Democratic rivals in California.



Baqaei criticizes politics of fear

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei had earlier criticized the rhetoric surrounding the alleged threat to American cities, arguing that portraying Iran as an imminent danger served to frighten the US public and divert attention from the consequences of Washington's own policies.

In a post on X, Baqaei wrote: “To frighten their own people, they conjure up an imaginary enemy in the sky to overshadow the real threat on the ground.”

He argued that the principal danger facing Americans did not originate beyond their country's borders or in the skies above Los Angeles and San Diego, but rather from the policies of their own political establishment.

“The real danger lies neither beyond their borders nor in the skies over Los Angeles and San Diego. It lies in a ruling establishment that has imposed an illegal war on the world, with global consequences,” the spokesman said.

Baqaei also drew attention to Trump's remarks about the possible destruction of the two California cities, noting that the US president had characterized such an outcome as “a very small price to pay.”

The Iranian spokesperson described the rhetoric as a textbook example of the politics of fear, in which an external threat is invoked to justify potentially devastating consequences while public attention is diverted from underlying political and security issues.

Iran, Azerbaijan seek to turn bilateral agreements into concrete action

TEHRAN — Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan are seeking to translate bilateral agreements into practical measures to expand passenger and commercial traffic, improve border cooperation and strengthen co-ordination in disaster prevention and response, following a visit to Baku by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni.

The one-day visit brought Momeni into talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and senior officials responsible for interior affairs and emergencies. Discussions focused on implementing agreements reached by the two countries' presidents and identifying practical ways to deepen cooperation between the neighboring countries.

Expanding passenger and commercial movements and strengthening joint efforts to prevent and respond to emergencies and disasters were among the principal outcomes of the talks.

The visit also highlighted the role of provincial diplomacy, with the governors of Iran's Gilan and Ardabil provinces presenting proposals and practical recommendations for expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan.

Momeni had traveled to Baku on October 12 at the head of an Iranian delegation. In an interview with Azerbaijan's Trend news agency, the minister emphasized the importance of implementing existing agreements and said the two sides had agreed to establish joint working groups to follow up on bilateral commitments and address issues of mutual interest.

From political agreements to practical cooperation

During his meeting with Ali-

yev, Momeni followed up on agreements reached between the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan, seeking to advance their implementation through closer coordination between the two governments.

The discussions reflected a shared interest in strengthening cooperation at international, regional, national and border levels. Economic and trade relations, security and border management featured prominently in the agenda, alongside cooperation between the two countries' interior ministries.

In his interview with Trend, Momeni described relations between Tehran and Baku as rooted in shared history, culture, religion and social interests. He said these common bonds provided a solid foundation for further developing bilateral ties.

The minister also noted that relations had moved in a positive direction over the preceding two years, citing constructive engagement between the two presidents as an important factor in advancing cooperation. He described the talks in Baku as constructive and stressed that the implementation of agreements, rather than the conclusion of additional commitments alone, was a key objective of the visit.

The planned joint working groups are intended to provide a mechanism for following up on commitments, addressing outstanding issues, and identifying further opportunities for cooperation.

Passenger ic, trade and management

Facilitating passenger and commercial traffic was among

the central priorities discussed during Momeni's visit. Closer coordination between border authorities and relevant government agencies could help improve cross-border movement and support economic and commercial exchanges between the two countries.

The talks with Azerbaijan's minister responsible for emergencies also addressed security and border cooperation, alongside efforts to improve the prevention of and response to disasters and emergencies.

These areas of cooperation fall within the responsibilities of the two countries' interior ministries and have direct implications for border communities, travelers, businesses and the management of cross-border emergencies.

The discussions also underscored the importance of maintaining coordination at several levels of government. While presidential agreements establish the political direction of bilateral relations, their implementation depends on practical arrangements among ministries, border authorities and provincial administrations.

Provincial diplomacy opens additional avenues

The participation of the governors of Gilan and Ardabil added a regional dimension to the visit.

The two governors presented proposals and operational recommendations aimed at expanding cooperation with Azerbaijan, highlighting the potential contribution of provincial authorities to advancing bilateral ties.

Regional engagement can complement national-level agreements by identifying practical areas for cooperation and facilitating coordination be-

tween local administrations. In this context, provincial diplomacy was presented as an additional channel for translating political commitments into concrete initiatives.

For Iran and Azerbaijan, closer engagement between provincial authorities and central government institutions offers a way to pursue cooperation across multiple levels while maintaining coordination with national priorities.

A focus on implementation

Momeni's visit comes as Tehran and Baku seek to consolidate bilateral relations through more systematic follow-up on existing agreements.

The Iranian interior minister's remarks to Trend, as reported by Tehran Times, placed particular emphasis on the implementation of commitments and the establishment of joint working groups. The discussions in Baku also highlighted the importance of economic and trade cooperation, border management, passenger movements and disaster response.

The immediate significance of the visit lies in its focus on practical implementation. Expanding cooperation will require the relevant institutions on both sides to follow up on the proposals discussed, coordinate their responsibilities and develop workable arrangements in areas of mutual interest.

By combining high-level political consultations with ministerial coordination and provincial engagement, Iran and Azerbaijan are seeking to give their bilateral agreements a more practical dimension and strengthen cooperation between the two neighboring countries.

Aoun and Araghchi discussed latest regional developments



From Page 1 ▶ During his call with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, the two diplomats exchanged views on the latest regional developments, the situation in Yemen and efforts to reduce tensions and reinforce regional stability.

In a separate conversation with Omani Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Araghchi reviewed developments in Yemen and discussed ways to advance peace and stability across the region.

The discussions with Fidan and Al Busaidi formed part of Tehran's ongoing diplomatic consultations with regional countries to address tensions and encourage peaceful solutions to regional challenges.

Over the preceding two days, Araghchi had also held separate telephone conversations with his Egyptian, Iraqi and Saudi counterparts on developments in Yemen, alongside his discussions with the Turkish and Omani foreign ministers.

Families of Iran's terror victims call on Pakistan to act against militants



TEHRAN — Families representing Iran's 23,000 victims of terrorism have sent an open letter to the government of Pakistan urging decisive action against terrorist groups operating along the southeastern border, following a recent escalation of attacks in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

The letter, issued Tuesday by the Habibian Foundation, which represents families of terror victims in Iran, specifically names the Takfiri group Jaish al-Adl, now operating under the title People's Strugglers Front. It accuses the group of exploiting border conditions to move freely into Pakistan, reside and find shelter in some areas.

Such a sustained pattern, the families wrote, could not occur without the knowledge of some local and central officials in Pakistan, citing Pakistani media reports and interviews with members of the groups.

The letter frames the issue not only as political and human rights concern but as a matter of legal obligations. It cites the Island of Palmas arbitration of 1928 and the International Court of Justice ruling in the Corfu Channel case of 1949 on the duty of states not to knowingly allow their territory to be used against the rights of other states.

It also invokes U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001), adopted under Chapter VII and binding on all members under Article 25 of the U.N. Charter, which requires states to refrain from supporting terrorists, deny them safe haven, prevent use of territory against other states, bring perpetrators to justice and ensure effective border controls,

as well as to exchange operational information and cooperate bilaterally. It further cites Resolution 1566 (2004) on full cooperation with victim states and the principle of extradite or prosecute.

The families also refer to the General Assembly's 1970 Friendly Relations Declaration, its 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate Terrorism and its 2006 Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, while distinguishing those instruments from binding Council decisions.

On bilateral frameworks, the letter cites the 1960 Iran-Pakistan border administration agreement, the 1960 extradition treaty noted in the April 24, 2024 joint statement, and that statement's pledges on cooperation against terrorism, hostage-taking and kidnapping.

The families, acknowledging these are duties of due diligence rather than absolute guarantees, say the continued, open movement of militants is incompatible with any reasonable standard of care. They call on Islamabad to dismantle safe havens, secure the border, share intelligence, prosecute or, where treaty conditions are met, extradite suspects, establish a joint security and judicial mechanism, issue a formal written response, and create a permanent channel to receive documents from victims' families and inform them of proceedings.

The letter stresses that Iran-Pakistan ties have been uniquely fraternal since Pakistan's independence and warns that terrorists seek to undermine that bond.

Oman says talks with Iran on Strait of Hormuz concluded

TEHRAN- Oman's Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday that its negotiations with Iran over the Strait of Hormuz have concluded, though the implementation of understandings and the full resumption of maritime transport through the waterway depend on the outcome of broader Tehran-Washington talks.

Reaffirming Muscat's longstanding position, the ministry said: “We oppose escalation and emphasize continuing the path of diplomacy to achieve lasting peace.”



South Pars gas capacity restoration accelerates

TEHRAN- Hamid Bovard, Acting Oil Minister, announcing progress in the reconstruction program of damaged South Pars refineries, reported efforts to speed up operations and restore lost gas production capacity by the end of the Iranian calendar month Azar (December 21).

According to Mehr News Agency, Hamid Bovard said on Tuesday afternoon during a visit to the Fourth South Pars Refinery: “The implementation of most reconstruction projects at the damaged refineries is proceeding according to plan, but increasing the speed of operations and accelerating the return of production capacity to the grid is one of the main priorities of the oil industry.”

Referring to the need to prepare for supplying the country’s energy in the cold season, he added: “Given the upcoming conditions, the oil industry has mobilized all its power and capacity for sustainable energy supply in winter, and reconstruction projects are being pursued seriously.”

The Acting Oil Minister, referring to specialized meetings to review the implementation of each reconstruction project, stated: “In these meetings, existing obstacles and challenges are examined and decisions are made on solutions to remove them so that the projects can proceed more quickly.”

Bovard expressed hope: “By late Azar this year, a significant portion of the lost gas production capacity at the damaged South Pars refineries will be restored.”

Consumption management, the condition for safely passing through winter

Emphasizing the need for cooperation from all sectors to ensure sustainable gas supply in winter, he said: “Passing through the upcoming conditions will not be achieved only through the efforts of the oil industry; public cooperation is also essential to manage the situation and resolve problems.”

The Acting Oil Minister, referring to the need to avoid unnecessary energy consumption, stressed: “Management of gas and other energy carrier consumption must be placed on the agenda so that, alongside the efforts of operational forces and oil industry employees, reliable energy supply for the country can be provided.”

Bovard noted: “With the cooperation and companionship of the people, the upcoming conditions can be better managed, and existing capacities can be used to successfully pass through winter.”

According to this report, during this visit, the Acting Oil Minister, accompanied by Arslan Zare, Governor of Bushehr, and Mousa Ahmadi, Chairman of the Energy Committee of the Parliament, visited the damaged South Pars refineries as well as Jam Petrochemical and Mobin Energy Persian Gulf.

During his presence at the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth South Pars refineries, he reviewed the latest status of reconstruction operations and the measures taken to repair damaged sections and return production capacity to the grid.

Repairs of South Pars refineries completed for the cold season

The Acting Oil Minister said: “With the plans made, the major overhaul of South Pars has been completed, and there is full readiness for the cold season.”

Referring to the status of major repairs and reconstruction of South Pars refineries, he said: “With the plans made, major repairs were followed up on time in the months of Shahrivar and Mehr, and now the main part of this operation has been completed, and there is full readiness to enter the cold season.”

Referring to the reconstruction process of the damaged South Pars units, he stressed: “The major repairs of South Pars refineries have been carried out according to plan, and reconstruction and development projects are being pursued at a favorable pace so that in the coming winter we can provide worthy and sustainable services to the noble Iranian nation.”

The Acting Oil Minister also, referring to the conditions caused by the war crimes of the American-Zionist enemy and the need to manage energy carrier consumption, emphasized: “We ask the noble people of the country to prioritize necessary saving and abandon unfair consumption so that we can use this God-given blessing properly, and with solidarity and empathy pass through these difficult historical passes.”

Bovard, while conveying the greetings of Masoud Pezeshkian, the President, to the employees and specialists of the oil industry and appreciating their extra efforts, said: “The noble people of



the southern region, especially Bushehr province, have always been worthy hosts of the oil industry and have a close and tight bond with this industry; the purpose of this trip, in addition to expressing appreciation and conveying the President’s message, is a field inspection to give greater speed to the reconstruction process.”

During the third imposed war, a number of South Pars gas refineries were targeted by enemy attacks, and as a result of these attacks, 230 million cubic meters per day of the country’s gas refining capacity was removed from the cycle; however, with the measures taken and the uninterrupted efforts of oil industry employees, so far about 100 million cubic meters of this capacity has been compensated from the empty capacities of other gas refineries.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Oil is now, by mobilizing facilities and technical and executive capacities, seriously pursuing the reconstruction of damaged facilities and the return of lost capacity to the production cycle, so as to provide the basis for sustainable gas supply for the country, especially on cold days.

On October 10, the deputy chairman of the Energy Committee of the Parliament, referring to the oil industry’s efforts to advance the South Pars pressure enhancement project, said: The recent approval issued by the Economic Council paves the way for accelerating the implementation of this national project.

Farhad Shahraiki, in an interview with Shana, called attributing the delays in implementing the project to the oil industry illogical and added: The Parliament Energy Committee, with full information, continuously monitors the project’s implementation process, and in this regard, the continuous and diligent efforts of the oil industry, especially Pars Oil and Gas Company, have been evident.

Referring to the appropriate interaction between the Ministry of Oil and the Parliament in answering questions and addressing the concerns of Energy Committee members and holding numerous meetings between the two sides, he stressed using existing capacities to compensate for past delays: It is expected that the recent approval of the pressure enhancement project in the Economic Council will mark the starting point for accelerating its executive operations.

The deputy chairman of the Parliament Energy Committee, regarding the South Pars pressure enhancement project, stated: In recent weeks, proper synergy has formed among contractors, Pars Oil and Gas Company, the Ministry of Oil, and the Parliament, and with the cooperation of other influential bodies, it can be hoped that part of the delays will be compensated and the project implementation process will be pursued more rapidly.

Shahraki, on the necessity of countering the pressure decline in the South Pars reservoir, added: The Parliament Energy Committee will stand alongside the executive body of the pressure enhancement project, and it is hoped that the project’s implementation will become a successful and effective experience for the country’s industry.

According to him, one of the important points in this project is the suitable capacity to benefit from the capabilities of various industrial sectors of the country, such that small, medium, and large industries can participate in supplying equipment and implementing different parts of the project by injecting financial resources, and benefit from the experience of participating in a national project.

The deputy chairman of the Parliament Energy Commission continued: In addition to its economic effects and creating added value in the production chain, the implementation of this project can pave the way for job creation and entrepreneurship development, create suitable capacity for the formation and development of new knowledge and technologies in the country, and provide an opportunity to enhance the country’s technical and engineering capabilities in this field.

Iran, Pakistan deepen economic ties with focus on mining sector cooperation

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- In a significant step toward strengthening bilateral economic relations, senior officials from Iran and Pakistan convened to explore avenues for expanding cooperation in the mining sector.

The meeting between Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), and Asad Ahmad, CEO of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation, marked another milestone in the two neighboring countries’ ongoing efforts to deepen their trade and economic partnership.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed solutions for expanding trade and economic relations while examining existing capacities to develop cooperation in the mining sector. Dehghan Dehnavi held comprehensive talks with Ahmad regarding areas for expanding trade cooperation and creating new opportunities for economic interactions between the two countries. The discussions also covered existing capacities for developing trade exchanges and strengthening bilateral cooperation in the mining sector, with both parties exchanging views on potential collaborative frameworks.

The two sides called for expanding bilateral interactions and utilizing shared opportunities to develop trade relations between Iran and Pakistan. Dehghan Dehnavi, announcing the readiness of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran to support the expansion of trade cooperation with Pakistan, emphasized the importance of strengthening bilateral relations across various trade areas. The CEO of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation welcomed the development of cooperation and the creation of new capacities for expanding trade interactions between the two countries.

This latest meeting builds



upon a series of high-level engagements between the two nations aimed at transforming their longstanding neighborly relationship into a robust economic partnership. In early August, Iran and Pakistan took a significant step toward deepening economic ties by signing a memorandum of understanding to expand trade cooperation during the 10th session of the Joint Trade Committee held in Islamabad. Both sides reaffirmed their mutual commitment to achieving the ambitious \$10 billion target in bilateral trade and advancing toward a formal free trade agreement.

The final session of the committee was attended by Iran’s Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade, Seyyed Mohammad Atabak, and his Pakistani counterpart, Jam Kamal Khan. The MOU was signed following extensive deliberations covering a wide range of commercial cooperation areas, including joint border regions, maritime activities and shipping development, coordinated steps for a free trade agreement, establishment of joint free zones, and barter trade mechanisms.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister Atabak described the negotiations as highly constructive, noting that Iran places no restrictions on increasing trade volume with Pakistan. “We call on the business communities

of both countries to play their essential role in this direction,” he stated, reinforcing Iran’s principled policy of expanding cooperation with neighbors.

Dehghan Dehnavi, addressing a gathering of traders and economic activists from both countries, outlined Iran’s strategic vision for bilateral trade relations. “One of the main priorities of Iran is the development of trade and economic relations with neighboring and aligned countries, which it pursues through a targeted program,” he stated. “Pakistan, as a friendly neighboring country with good political and economic relations, holds great priority for Iran.”

The TPO head highlighted Iran’s unique position as a regional economic powerhouse, noting its population of approximately 90 million, exceptional energy resources, extensive mining and industrial capacities, technical and engineering services, and strategic geopolitical location with access to rail, road, and international maritime shipping networks. He pointed to Iran’s numerous ports on the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean—particularly Chabahar—as vital nodes connecting neighboring countries to each other and to other continents, expressing Iran’s willingness to utilize the capacities of Karachi and Gwadar ports to expand in-

ternational interactions.

The mining sector cooperation discussions represent a natural extension of these broader economic initiatives. Iran’s extensive mining and industrial capacities, combined with Pakistan’s growing mineral development sector, present significant opportunities for joint ventures and knowledge sharing. The emphasis on private sector engagement, as demonstrated through the cooperation memorandum signed between the Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industries and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, further institutionalizes these collaborative efforts.

Dehghan Dehnavi noted that the volume of trade between Iran and Pakistan in 2025 stood at approximately \$3 billion, with both countries targeting \$10 billion by 2030. To achieve this goal, he emphasized the need for removing obstacles to trade development, including resolving transportation and customs problems, eliminating barriers related to financial transfers and banking matters, and strengthening border infrastructure.

The large Iranian trade delegation accompanying officials includes representatives from major Iranian companies in oil, gas, petrochemicals, food, agriculture, transportation, shipping, and knowledge-based products, all ready to negotiate and cooperate with Pakistani counterparts. With the recent MOU signed and implementation mechanisms being developed, both nations appear poised to translate their centuries-old brotherhood into tangible economic dividends benefiting the nearly 300 million people across their shared borders. The mining sector cooperation between the TPO and Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation stands as a promising component of this broader economic renaissance.

Iran, Kenya chambers of commerce chart strategic trade path

TEHRAN- The head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, in a meeting with the head of the Kenya Chamber of Commerce, described Kenya—due to its strong financial infrastructure and the strategic port of Mombasa—as the most important gateway for Iran and other countries to the African market, and stated: Iran sees Kenya as a strategic and reciprocal partner and can play a role as a gateway for Kenya to Central Asia and Eurasia.

Samad Hassanzadeh, Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), during a trip to Nairobi, in a meeting with Eric Ruto, President of the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KNCCI), congratulated the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Kenya Chamber.

He described Dr. Ruto’s membership in the General Council of the World Federation of Chambers as a foundation for cooperation between the two chambers in international chamber forums, and said: The statistics of trade exchanges between Iran and Kenya, despite the very good capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kenya’s capacities, are not at an appropriate level, and the chambers of commerce of the two countries can provide very good opportunities together.

Referring to the restrictions caused by economic sanctions on our country’s economic relations, the head of the Iran Chamber noted: In the private sector and chambers of commerce, we have a heavy responsibility toward our nations, and we must help properly and fulfill these duties.

He described Kenya—due to its powerful financial infrastructure and the strategic port of Mombasa—as the most important gateway for Iran and other countries to the African market, and stated: Iran sees Kenya as a strategic and reciprocal partner and can play a role as a gateway for Kenya to Central Asia and Eurasia.

Hassanzadeh enumerated Iran’s capacities, emphasizing the fields of health and medicine, agriculture, energy, petrochemicals and fertilizer, infrastructure, housing, and technology, and considered these capacities aligned with Kenya’s development needs. He emphasized: Although the Islamic Republic of Iran has been under sanctions for several decades, despite the sanctions it has achieved very large capacities, and we are interested and consider it a duty to share these capacities with African countries.

He announced the readiness of Iran’s private sector to participate in supplying medicine and medical equipment, and also in joint production in Kenya in line with the policy of domestic production of medicine, and said: In the field of agriculture and food security, we are ready to transfer technical knowledge in mechanization, modern irrigation, processing and conversion industries, and reducing post-harvest waste, and for joint investment with Kenyan partners in the agricultural value chain.

Hassanzadeh, stating that Iran has a competitive advantage in bitumen, petrochemical products, and chemical fertilizer and is ready

to participate beyond the supply of goods in energy development projects and renewable energies, also said regarding Iran’s capacities in infrastructure, housing, and technology: We are ready to share the capabilities of Iranian companies in construction, dam building, power plants, mass housing, and information technology in order to participate in Kenya’s development projects.

The head of the Iran Chamber named joint investment by Iranian and Kenyan economic actors in overseas cultivation, road construction, and the establishment of petrochemical and refinery industry facilities as other areas of interest for developing economic cooperation between Iran and Kenya.

The Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, expressing interest in sustainable trade between Iran and Kenya and the import of tea, coffee, and other agricultural products from Kenya, emphasized: With most countries, we develop trade through barter for greater cooperation.

In explaining ways to facilitate trade between the two countries, he emphasized establishing direct flights between Tehran and Nairobi to ease the movement of traders from the two countries, and invited Dr. Ruto to travel to Tehran at the head of a trade delegation and stressed expanding the dispatch and reception of trade delegations between the two countries.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran intl. livestock, poultry expo to host 16 countries

TEHRAN- Sixteen countries will take part in Iran’s 25th International Livestock, Poultry and Related Industries Exhibition, organizers said at a press conference at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Participants include China, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, India, Denmark, Russia, Kazakhstan, Italy, Argentina, Turkey, Ukraine, Oman, the UAE, Malaysia and Brazil.

Majid Movahed Qadiri, head of Iran’s Feed, Poultry and Aquatic Industries Association, said this year’s slogan is “Synergy for Food Security and National Resilience.” The event focuses on financing, investment and business development amid economic pressures and liquidity shortages.

The exhibition will feature themed days on nutrition health and biosecurity; technology and

innovation; trade, international engagement and investment; and production quality and productivity. Fifty Iranian knowledge-based companies will attend, with domestic participation up 75% and foreign participation up 100%. Organizers are providing 1,000 square meters free to knowledge-based firms.

Seventeen trade delegations, 103 foreign visitors and 280

feed-factory managers and poultry farmers are expected. Ten specialized panels and student tours are planned, along with the first innovation event for startups and investors. A national financing campaign has engaged over 30 banks, with bank leaders meeting producers. Foreign firms aim to sell products, showcase technology, attract investment and import goods.

Saudi Arabia's billions in arms fail to buy security



Smoke rises from the site of the Saudi Aramco refinery after reported Houthi attacks, south of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in this satellite image taken on October 3. European Union/Copernicus Sentinel-3/Reuters

From page 1 ► Saudi Arabia spent \$83 billion on defense last year, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, putting it firmly among the top ten military spenders worldwide. It has acquired U.S. fighter jets as well as Patriot and THAAD air defense systems, and a range of advanced weaponry from France and the United Kingdom.

Ansarallah have learned to combine ballistic and cruise missiles with long-range drones to overwhelm Saudi defenses. The approach resembles Russia's playbook: Moscow has frequently used a mass of drones along with cruise and ballistic missiles in barrages against Ukraine.

Cruise missiles fly at lower altitudes, making them harder to identify and track. Ansarallah have also introduced a new generation of ballistic missiles that are maneuverable.

No single air defense system can guarantee that every incoming threat will be intercepted.

Experts note that the latest Ansarallah missiles, such as the Hatem-2 and the Palestine-2, are fast and accurate.

Last year, an Ansarallah missile evaded Israel's vaunted air defenses and impacted near Ben Gurion airport. Analyst Amir Bar Shalom told CNN at the time: "They were very accurate, and to be very accurate if you're launching from 2,000 kilometers, it's impressive."

Pandora's box opened in March 2015
Saudi Arabia's de facto leader, Mohammed bin Salman, opened Pandora's box in March 2015 when he ordered an attack on Ansarallah in support of Yemen's government, which was aligned with Riyadh. At the time, he vowed that Saudi Arabia would crush Ansarallah within weeks. Despite receiving logistical and intelligence support from the United States, the war against Ansarallah turned into a humiliating ordeal for the Saudi kingdom.

Seven years of conflict with Saudi Arabia -- from 2015 to 2022 -- caused immense suffering in Ansarallah-controlled parts of Yemen, and an economic and transport embargo has continued since.

Ultimately, that led Ansarallah in July to declare they would attack Saudi shipping in the Red Sea -- and the campaign of missile strikes began soon afterwards, initially targeting an Aramco oil refinery on the Red Sea

Yemen attacks Aramco sites and Riyadh airport

From page 1 ► Saudi Arabia has faced widening strikes over the past week. A strike on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh on Saturday killed 13 people.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, said that recent attacks on Saudi Arabia could impact people "everywhere", as energy costs rise globally and multiple conflicts rage in the crude-rich region.

"The Saudi economy is important for the region and the world, and in that sense, these developments have potentially negative spillovers for everybody, everywhere,"

coast and Saudi airbases.

Ansarallah are demanding an end to Saudi airstrikes in support of its proxies in Yemen, as well as billions of dollars in compensation from Saudi Arabia.

Iran has offered to mediate between Riyadh and Ansarallah. On Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Tehran was ready to provide "any assistance necessary to facilitate the start of talks between Saudi Arabia and Yemen."

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of Ansarallah's political bureau, said on Monday that Riyadh had accepted mediation but Ansarallah had rejected truce proposals of two weeks and of one month.

"The battle this time is not like its predecessors; the arena is no longer the same arena," al-Bukhaiti said. "Every day that passes in this battle will expand its scope and deepen its losses, and the settlement that is possible today may become difficult or impossible tomorrow."

Escalation, through even more intense airstrikes, would bring the risk of further missile attacks that would undermine the goal of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to make Saudi Arabia a world-class destination for investment, technology and tourism.

The stakes extend beyond the oil industry. Data centers, desalination plants and airports underpin the kingdom's technology ambitions, water supply and tourism economy. The crown prince's marquee investment event in Riyadh later this month will put his pitch to international investors in the spotlight.

But major corporations shied away this week from the World Petroleum Congress in Riyadh.

Defeating Ansarallah forces through a ground offensive involving Saudi-backed Yemeni forces seems highly unlikely. Ansarallah forces are entrenched, battle-hardened and know the mountainous terrain. They have inflicted heavy losses on the Saudi-backed forces in the last month.

Last year, the U.S. spent more than \$1 billion on a seven-week campaign of air-strikes against them. They eventually agreed not to attack U.S. shipping in the Red Sea but remained very much in place -- and in the meantime shot down a number of highly advanced U.S. Reaper drones.

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

Republicans face expanding midterm backlash over Iran war, living costs



at 71 percent overall.

On October 9, the University of Michigan reported that consumer sentiment had fallen to 46.3, from September's 48.1. Expected inflation over the next year reached 4.7 percent, compared with 3.4 percent in February before the U.S.-Israeli war began.

These are expectations, not measured inflation, but they show households anticipating further pressure. Lower-income consumers reported particularly steep declines in confidence.

Trump has promised that oil prices would "drop like a rock" once the war ended. For candidates approaching November 3, promised relief offers less protection than prices voters can actually see.

Republicans defend an expanding Senate map

Republicans hold a 53-47 Senate majority. Democrats need a net gain of four seats for outright control, which requires breakthroughs in states Trump won by double digits as well as successful defenses of their own seats.

The opportunity has widened, but the arithmetic remains difficult.

North Carolina provides one of the clearest Democratic openings. Former governor Roy Cooper faces former Republican National Committee chairman Michael Whatley for retiring Senator Thom Tillis's seat.

Polls published October 13 placed Cooper ahead by eight to 14 points. A major Republican super PAC has shifted resources toward Kansas, where Senator Roger Marshall faces Methodist pastor Adam Hamilton.

Texas demands a far larger Republican investment. Paxton defeated incumbent John Cornyn in the Republican contest with Trump's backing.

Republicans have spent approximately \$210 million on the Senate race, against Democrats' \$39 million, Reuters reported. Yet a ReconMR/Siena survey conducted October 5-8 put Talarico ahead 48-44 percent.

That result deserves attention without being mistaken for a victory. Texas has not elected a Democrat statewide since 1994. Paxton's difficulties have given Democrats an opening, but Republicans retain enormous resources and a long-established advantage.

In Maine, Susan Collins faces former state Senate president Troy Jackson. A recent Washington Post-Schar School survey placed Jackson ahead 50-46 percent.

Alaska's Dan Sullivan is defending against former representative Mary Peltola under ranked-choice voting.

In Ohio, former senator Sherrod Brown challenges Jon Husted, appointed after JD Vance became vice president.

Democrats need to protect Georgia and Michigan. Georgia Senator Jon Ossoff entered July with nearly \$43 million available against Republican challenger Mike Collins's \$2.1 million.

Michigan's Abdul El-Sayed faces former congressman Mike Rogers for retiring Senator Gary Peters's seat, with recent surveys showing a competitive race despite Democratic leads.

Israel policy and money pouring in

Michigan brings the foreign policy dispute into an unusually direct view. During their debate on October 8, El-Sayed said Israel has lobbied Washington into the Iran war and challenged Rogers's support for the war. "I don't want to be pushed into a war by Israel, and I don't want to be in a war with Iran," he said.

His argument, which has become increasingly popular, confronts a longstanding assumption in Washington that close military alignment with Israel serves American security regardless of its regional consequences. It also gives anti-war voters a position more specific than general dissatisfaction with Trump.

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

Reconstruction, resistance, and the battle for Lebanon's future

From page 1 ► He also stressed that changing circumstances do not require surrender, since balances of power can change.

Addressing the humanitarian consequences of the destruction, Hezbollah's Executive Council chairman announced assistance for families whose homes had been destroyed or rendered uninhabitable: \$14,000 for eligible housing units in Beirut and its southern suburbs, and \$12,000 elsewhere, including rental and furniture allowances. Initial payments were set at \$3,500 and \$3,000, respectively.

Damouh described the program as an ethical commitment rather than a substitute for the state's responsibilities, insisting that assistance should reach affected Lebanese regardless of political affiliation.

"We remain committed to serving our people and doing everything possible for their dignity and honor," Damouh said, acknowledging that no assistance could fully repay the sacrifices of families who had endured displacement and loss.

The significance of this initiative extends beyond financial assistance; it challenges the narrative that Hezbollah's political and social capacity was irreversibly diminished.

By organizing housing assessments, establishing specialized committees, and announcing a structured compensation mechanism, the resistance is demonstrating an ability to mobilize

resources and maintain a relationship with communities facing prolonged hardship.

This does not resolve the enormous material and economic costs of reconstruction, nor does it remove questions about the program's funding, coverage, and implementation.

Nevertheless, the initiative illustrates how social organization can remain politically consequential even under military pressure and economic constraints.

The contrast with the Lebanese state is central to the debate; Damouh criticized the Lebanese government for failing to establish a direct assistance program for affected households, distinguishing infrastructure rehabilitation from compensation that enables displaced families to secure housing.

He called on the authorities to stop making concessions, respect constitutional obligations, and return to dialogue with their own citizens.

For devastated southern communities, the central question is not merely who promises reconstruction, but who can deliver it, transparently and equitably.

A state that seeks legitimacy must protect its citizens, restore essential services, and ensure that reconstruction is not conditional on political allegiance.

At the same time, non-state assistance cannot permanently replace public institutions or relieve the government of its obligations.

With the olive harvest under



Damouh also urged solidarity across Lebanon, warning against sectarian hostility and landlords raising rents in response to housing allowances.

His appeal highlights a broader reality: displacement on this scale requires collective responsibility, effective public administration, and safeguards against exploitation.

Four reports recently published by Al-Akhbar in late September and early October 2026 describe a reported US National Security Council proposal linking an internationally supervised reconstruction framework, estimated at \$40 billion, with efforts to weaken Hezbollah's military and political influence.

The proposal envisages a Lebanese reconstruction authority, international oversight, and parallel security and political measures; as presented in these reports, reconstruction is not simply a humanitarian undertaking; it is also conceived as an instrument of political pressure.

way across the West Bank, Israeli settlers have been mobilizing to intimidate and obstruct Palestinian farmers, who rely on the crop as a crucial source of revenue.

According to Amnesty Inter-

national, about 750,000 settlers live illegally in the occupied West Bank and occupied East Jerusalem. Settlements in occupied territory are illegal under international law

Israeli forces raid West Bank villages as settlers torch mosque

From page 1 ► Elsewhere in the West Bank on Wednesday, settlers attacked a Palestinian boy in the town of Beita, south of Nablus, while Israeli forces arrested three Palestinians following a

Dastyar: we aim to make a strong start against Iraq

TEHRAN - Iran's national wheelchair basketball team are determined to begin their campaign at the Nagoya Asian Para Games with a strong performance against Iraq, according to team coach Mohammadreza Dastyar.

Iran have been drawn in Group B alongside Iraq, South Korea and the Philippines. The Iranian team will face Iraq in its opening match on Friday at Aichi International Arena in Nagoya, Japan. Iran will then take on South Korea on Saturday before meeting the Philippines on Monday.

Dastyar highlighted the challenges the team faced during their journey to Japan, explaining that the lengthy trip had affected the players' physical condition.

"We held our first training session in Nagoya on Wednesday. However, we had a 60-hour journey to Japan, which had a considerable negative impact on the players' physical readiness," he said.

The team travelled from Tehran to Istanbul, then continued to Manila before finally arriving in Nagoya. The demanding itinerary kept the players on the road for approximately three days, leaving some of them experiencing muscle stiffness and fatigue.

Despite these difficulties, Dastyar stressed that the team were focused on preparing for their opening match against Iraq.

"Fortunately, despite the problems we experienced during the journey, we held an energetic training session. We reviewed our tactical plans and worked on preparing the players for the first game. Our aim is to make a strong start to the competition," he told Tehran Times correspondent's Masoud Hossein.

The coach also referred to Iran's absence from the recent Wheelchair Basketball World Championships in Ottawa, Canada. The Iranian team missed the tournament after visas were not issued to some members of its coaching staff.

According to Dastyar, missing the World Championships had a negative psychological impact on the players. However, a period of rest helped them recover mentally and move forward.

"That experience affected the players' morale, but fortunately, they were able to recover mentally during their break and put the disappointment behind them. We now have a new challenge ahead, and our entire focus is on achieving the best possible results in Nagoya," he said.

Iran sitting volleyball target historic fifth consecutive gold

TEHRAN - Iran's men's sitting volleyball team will head into the upcoming Asian Para Games in Nagoya with a clear objective: extend their remarkable dominance and capture a fifth consecutive gold medal at the continental multi-sport event.

With an impressive championship record, a squad featuring some of the world's most recognizable sitting volleyball stars, and a proud tradition of success, Iran will once again be among the leading contenders for the title.

The Iranian team are scheduled to face Thailand on Oct. 20 and Kazakhstan on Oct. 21, with both matches set to play an important role in determining the team's progress through the competition. The opening fixtures will provide an early test of Iran's preparation, consistency and ability to handle the pressure that comes with defending a long-standing winning record.

Iran's record at the previous four editions of the Asian Para Games speaks volumes about the team's quality and consistency. Having won gold at each of the last four editions, the Iranian side have established themselves as the powerhouses in men's sitting volleyball and set a benchmark that their rivals will be

eager to challenge.

Winning a single major championship requires talent, teamwork and determination. Maintaining that level of excellence across four consecutive editions, however, demands much more. Iran's sustained success reflects years of experience, a strong competitive culture and the ability to perform when the stakes are highest.

The challenge in Nagoya will be to translate that history into another title. Past achievements provide confidence, but they also bring additional pressure, as every opponent will be motivated to end Iran's winning streak. The Iranian players will therefore need to approach each match with focus and discipline, treating every contest as a new challenge rather than relying on their reputation.

A fifth consecutive gold would represent another major milestone for Iranian sitting volleyball, further strengthening the country's position among Asia's leading nations in para sport.

Blind football star seeks a glorious farewell in Nagoya

TEHRAN - After 18 years representing Iran's national blind football team, Behzad Zadaliasghari is preparing for what could be the final chapter of his international career. As the Asian Para Games approach in Nagoya, Japan, the experienced player is determined to help Iran reclaim the continental title before bringing his distinguished career to an end.

With the final days of training underway, Iran's national blind football team are working hard to reach peak form for the upcoming competition. Zadaliasghari says the squad are highly motivated and determined to return home with another championship title.

"We are now going through the final days of our preparations for the Nagoya Asian Para Games. We have special motivation for these competitions. We are going there to become Asian champions once again. We want to return home with a medal and make our people happy," Zadeh said.

For the veteran footballer, however, the tournament carries significance beyond the pursuit of another international medal. Nagoya will mark the end of an 18-year journey with the national team, making the competition an emotional farewell to the sport at the international level.

"As far as I am concerned, this will be my last appearance with the national team. After the Nagoya Games, I will hang up my boots," he said.

Zadaliasghari is one of the most decorated players in Iran's blind football history. His achievements include a silver medal at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and a gold medal at the 2014 Asian Para Games in Incheon, South Korea.

Ghalenoei targets improved Iran performance at AFC Asian Cup 2027

TEHRAN - Iran head coach Amir Ghalenoei has expressed confidence that Team Melli will deliver a stronger performance at the 2027 AFC Asian Cup, insisting that the national team are determined to improve on its showing at the previous edition in Qatar.

Iran have been drawn in Group C alongside China, Syria and Kyrgyzstan for the continental tournament, where they will aim to challenge for the title and bring joy to millions of supporters.

At the previous Asian Cup, held in Qatar, Iran reached the semi-finals but suffered a defeat against the host nation, missing out on a place in the final. Ghalenoei believes the experience gained from that campaign will help his players approach the next tournament with greater determination and improved quality.

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Bushehr: Where Iran's history meets the Persian Gulf

From Page 1 ► For travelers interested in Iran beyond its better-known destinations, Bushehr offers an opportunity to discover a region whose identity has been shaped by maritime exchange, ancient civilizations and the resourcefulness of coastal communities.

A port shaped by history

Bushehr's strategic position has made it an important center of settlement and commerce for centuries. Archaeological evidence points to human activity in the region during different historical periods, including the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sassanian eras.

The port regained prominence during the Afsharid period and developed further under the Zand and Qajar dynasties. Its maritime connections attracted merchants, travelers and foreign commercial interests, bringing wealth and cultural influences to the southern Iranian coast.

The wider province also contains archaeological remains associated with ancient Iranian kingdoms. Ruins of palaces and settlements in Dashtestan, along with historic sites scattered across the region, demonstrate that Bushehr's significance extends well beyond its more recent commercial history.

Bushehr province was formally established in 1973. Today, it combines a busy industrial and commercial economy with a heritage that remains visible in its historic towns, coastal villages and archaeological landscapes.

The old city: Architecture adapted to the heat

One of the best ways to understand Bushehr is to walk through its historic urban quarter, a district of traditional houses, merchant mansions, courtyards and narrow lanes.

The old city includes four principal neighborhoods: Behbahani, Kuti, Dehdashti and Shanbadi. The area flourished particularly during the Zand and Qajar periods, when the port played an important role in maritime commerce.

Its architecture reflects generations of adaptation to the hot, humid coastal climate. Traditional builders used materials such as stone, timber, lime and stucco, arranging buildings to provide shade and encourage air circulation. Narrow streets, internal courtyards, wooden shutters and shaded balconies helped make everyday life more comfortable under the southern sun.

Walking through the old quarter reveals how these features work together. Weathered balconies overlook narrow alleys, traditional doors open onto courtyards, and old residences stand alongside shops and cafés. The neighborhood is not simply an architectural attraction but a record of the relationship between the port's inhabitants and their environment.

Historic mansions and maritime heritage

Several buildings offer a closer look at the prosperity and international connections that once characterized Bushehr.

For instance, the Malek Mansion, one of the city's best-known landmarks, is associated with Mohammad Malek ol-Tojjar, a wealthy merchant. Built during the Qajar period, the large complex features balconies, columns, spacious interiors and elaborate wooden doors. Its design reflects local architectural traditions alongside influences that circulated through Bushehr's international commercial connections. The mansion later served different purposes, including military accommodation, and has undergone restoration.

The Dehdashti Mansion, also known as the Oil Edifice, is another prominent historic property. The Taheri Mansion, formerly called Amiriyeh Mansion, now houses an ethnographic museum that intro-



duces visitors to local occupations, domestic life, handicrafts and maritime traditions.

Other attractions include Golshan House, Tabib Mansion, the Qavam Water Reservoir, St. George's Church, the English cemetery and the Maritime Museum of the Sea and the Persian Gulf. Together, they reveal different aspects of life in a port shaped by trade, religious diversity, water scarcity and contact with other cultures.

The historic market provides another glimpse into everyday life. Visitors can browse local food products, handicrafts and household goods while observing the commercial traditions that remain part of the city's character.

Tangestan: A legacy of resistance

Bushehr's history is also associated with resistance to foreign intervention. In Tangestan, the name of Rais Ali Delvari remains closely linked to the struggle against British forces during World War I.

Delvari, a local leader who mobilized fighters in southern Iran, became a symbol of resistance and the defense of national independence. His former home in Delvar, a coastal settlement near Bushehr, has been converted into a museum, preserving objects and accounts associated with the resistance movement and local life.

Tangestan offers other attractions, including historic castles, traditional qanats and the Tal-e Kushk site in Shahrabad. The Qucherak hot springs near Ahram provide a different reason to explore the area.

Combining these sites with coastal excursions offers travelers a broader understanding of a region whose history encompasses commerce, agriculture and political struggle.

Dashtestan: Palaces, caves and palm groves

East of Bushehr, Dashtestan offers a landscape where archaeological remains and date-palm plantations stretch across the plains.

Borazjan, the county's main urban center, is known for its date production and its position along routes linking the coast with inland Iran. The surrounding area contains the ruins of the Black Bardak Palace near Dorudgah village and remains traditionally associated with the Great Cyrus Palace southeast of Borazjan.

The Chehel-Khaneh Caves near Sadabad are another notable attraction. Rock-cut chambers and openings in the cliffs create a striking landscape whose original functions and historical associations invite further exploration.

Date palms are central to the region's economy and food culture. Their cultivation supports local livelihoods, while fresh and dried dates, date syrup and sweets made from date paste feature prominently in the province's markets and kitchens.

Siraf: A window onto the maritime world

Further southeast along the coast, the historic port of Siraf offers one of Bushehr Province's

most compelling links to the wider history of the Persian Gulf.

Siraf flourished as a maritime trading center during the Sassanian and early Islamic periods. Its merchants participated in commercial networks connecting Iran with the Arabian Peninsula, India, East Africa and China. Goods, people and ideas passed through the port, helping establish its reputation as a center of maritime exchange.

Today, archaeological remains include ancient wells, rock-cut tombs, traces of historic buildings and remnants of settlements extending toward the surrounding hills. The combination of ruins, rugged terrain and sea gives Siraf a distinctive atmosphere.

Its history also reflects the vulnerabilities of coastal settlements. Earthquakes and other changes contributed to the decline of the historic port, leaving parts of its former urban landscape scattered across the area.

Unlike a single monumental complex, Siraf reveals its history gradually, through the relationship between the archaeological remains, the hills and the shoreline.

Jashak Salt Dome and coastal nature

Bushehr's attractions extend beyond historic settlements. Inland, the Jashak Salt Dome, between Dashti and Deyr, offers a dramatic contrast to the blue waters of the Persian Gulf.

Part of the southern Zagros geological landscape, the formation features white salt surfaces, colored mineral bands, caves and unusual erosion patterns. Some formations resemble glaciers or waterfalls, although they are shaped by salt and water rather than ice. Shades of white, orange, yellow and gray create a striking natural spectacle.

The terrain can be difficult to navigate, particularly in hot weather. Visitors should arrange suitable transport and guidance, carry sufficient drinking water and avoid exposed areas during the hottest hours.

Another important natural destination is Nayband National Sea Park, near Asaluyeh. Its coastal habitats, beaches, marine environments and mangrove ecosystems support wildlife, including migratory birds and marine species. The protected area offers opportunities for nature-based tourism, provided visitors respect its sensitive habitats.

Ganaveh combines a lively commercial atmosphere with coastal scenery. Its large market attracts shoppers from across Iran, while its beaches offer space for seaside walks and relaxation. In Jam, gardens, mountain landscapes and historic water infrastructure provide further opportunities for travelers exploring the province beyond the main port.

Music, handicrafts and local traditions

Music is an essential part of Bushehr's cultural identity. Local traditions accompany celebrations, social gatherings, work and religious ceremonies, reflecting the region's varied cultural influences

and maritime connections.

The neyanban, a bagpipe-like instrument, is closely associated with regional music. Percussion instruments such as the damam and senj play prominent roles in mourning ceremonies, where rhythmic performances accompany traditional forms of lamentation.

Bushehr's handicrafts also reflect its natural environment. Palm leaves are woven into mats, baskets, brooms and other household items, while shells are used to create jewelry and decorative objects. Carpet and kilim weaving, gabbeh production, pottery and boatbuilding contribute to the province's craft heritage.

The flavors of the Persian Gulf

Seafood is at the heart of Bushehr's cuisine. Fish and shrimp are prepared with aromatic herbs, garlic, tamarind and spices, often producing the bold, tangy flavors associated with southern Iranian cooking.

Among the best-known dishes are ghalieh mahi, a spicy fish stew, and ghalieh meygoon, prepared with shrimp. Both are commonly served with rice. Other local specialties include steamed fish, lakh-lakh, a rice dish cooked with fish and seasonings, and fish tah-andaz, in which fish forms a flavorful layer beneath the rice.

For a meat-free option, yatimak combines eggplant, beans, onion and seasonings. Bushehri variations of traditional Iranian stews and lentil dishes offer further tastes of local home cooking.

Dates are equally important. Fresh dates, dried dates, date syrup and sweets made from date paste are widely available. Ranganak, a dessert made with dates and other ingredients, and date halva are among the treats visitors should look for. Local pickles, herbs, date bread and palm-derived products also make distinctive souvenirs.

Traditional restaurants and local eateries are good places to sample these dishes, while markets offer opportunities to discover regional ingredients and handicrafts.

When to visit

Bushehr has hot summers, with high humidity along much of the coast. Temperatures can exceed 50 degrees Celsius on exceptionally hot summer days, making autumn, winter and early spring the most comfortable seasons for sightseeing.

The cooler months are well suited to walking through the historic quarter, exploring archaeological sites and visiting coastal communities. Excursions to Jashak Salt Dome and other remote areas require advance planning, appropriate transport and attention to weather conditions.

Accommodation ranges from hotels and guesthouses to locally run houses and ecotourism lodgings. Staying in traditional or locally operated accommodation can provide opportunities to experience regional food, hospitality and everyday customs. Travelers should confirm current availability and access arrangements before visiting individual attractions.

TEHRAN – An Iranian delegation led by Ali Jafarian, a senior advisor to the health minister, is participating in the 73rd session of the WHO Regional Committee for Eastern Mediterranean (RC73), being held from October 13 to 15 in Cairo, Egypt.

The event has brought together health ministers and high-level delegates from the 22 countries and territories to set regional health priorities and guide WHO work with member states.

The Iranian official is scheduled to deliver a speech focusing on different health issues such as the impacts of sanctions and wars on the health system, the supply chain of medical items and equipment, the health ministry's website reported.

Strengthening preparedness and response to public health emergencies, expanding technical and regional cooperation, and benefiting from the capacity of WHO to support the priorities of national health systems are among the issues to be discussed by the Iranian delegation. Jafarian is also planned to hold meetings with health officials from the Eastern Mediterranean office and the region.

The opening ceremony celebrated outstanding contributions to health in the Region. The State of Kuwait Prize for the Control of Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was presented to three laureates from Iran, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

Amir-Ali Hamidieh, an Iranian professor at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, grabbed the prize for his pioneering work in paediatric haematology, oncology and stem cell transplantation.

A distinguished physician, academic and pioneer in paediatric haematology, oncology and stem cell transplantation, Hamidieh earned his M.D. from Islamic Azad University, Tehran, and pursued postgraduate training in paediatrics and paediatric haematology/oncology at Shahid Beheshti



University of Medical Sciences. He later completed advanced fellowships in haematopoietic stem cell transplantation at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and Baylor College of Medicine in Texas, United States of America.

Hamidieh currently serves as Professor of Pediatric Hematology/ Oncology and Stem Cell Transplantation at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, where he also directs the Pediatric Cell and Gene Therapy Research Center.

He is the founder of the Iranian paediatric stem cell transplantation programme and the national stem cell donor network, which established the country's first human leukocyte antigen (HLA) registry.

He chairs the National Council for Development of Stem Cell Sciences and Technologies under the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology and is a member of the executive boards of the Asia-Pacific Blood and Marrow Transplantation Group and the Iranian Food and Drug Administration.

His leadership has enabled the development of seven paediatric transplant centres across the Islamic Republic of Iran and the successful completion of more than 2100 paediatric stem cell transplants.

Hamidieh has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed articles on research spanning regenera-

tive medicine, gene therapy, immunodeficiencies and paediatric cancers.

He has also led clinical innovations in CAR-T cell therapy and photopheresis across many countries. Through his academic leadership, clinical excellence and commitment to equitable care, Hamidieh has significantly advanced the field of paediatric stem cell transplantation in Iran and the broader Eastern Mediterranean Region.

RC73 at a critical time for health

The opening of RC73 comes at a critical time for health in the Region. Protracted and escalating emergencies continue to disrupt health systems, putting millions of lives at risk, at a time when countries are contending with disease outbreaks, persistent inequities, a growing burden of noncommunicable diseases and mounting financial pressures.

In his opening remarks, Adham Rashad Ismail, Officer-in-Charge of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, highlighted the immense humanitarian and financial pressures facing the Region.

The official reaffirmed WHO's commitment to sustaining essential health services and supporting countries through ongoing crises: "WHO must continue to support populations affected by conflict and crisis, protect essential health services and advocate for uninterrupted human-

itarian access and funding. The people relying on health services in Afghanistan, the Gaza Strip, Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere cannot bear the consequences of shrinking resources."

With the opening ceremony concluded, member states will discuss the Annual Report of the Regional Director 2025/2026, which provides a regional stock take of health progress, persistent challenges and WHO's work with countries over the past year, helping to identify areas where progress needs to be sustained or accelerated.

The Committee will discuss two technical papers, "Advancing health financing for stronger financial protection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: pathways to equity and resilience" which focuses on ways to build equity and resilience in health care funding and enhance financial protection for populations across the Region, and "A multi-disease elimination architecture for communicable diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region" which outlines joint strategies to tackle and eliminate multiple communicable diseases simultaneously.

Discussions will also cover health emergencies and polio eradication, and a panel on artificial intelligence for health will explore the opportunities presented by rapidly evolving technologies.

Member States will hold a regional consultation on the draft Program Budget 2028–2029 and review governance matters and resolutions and decisions of regional interest adopted by the World Health Assembly and WHO Executive Board.

The discussions and decisions taken at RC73 will guide collective action across the Eastern Mediterranean Region, from protecting health amid emergencies and completing the last mile of polio eradication to strengthening health financing, accelerating disease elimination and preparing health systems for the future.

DOE unveils global real-time dust source monitoring system



TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) has unveiled a global real-time monitoring system designed to identify and track dust hotspots around the world.

The system also enables the analysis of dust patterns, the identification of populations at risk, more effective resource allocation, and the implementation of preventive measures to mitigate the impacts of dust storms.

The system comprises 13 stages organized into three main parts, including setting and initial analyses, identification and refinement of hotspots, and management analysis, IRNA quoted the head of Iran's National Headquarters for Dust Storm Policy and Coordination, Behzad Raygani, as saying.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday while addressing the 24th meeting of the National Headquarters for Dust Storm Policy and Coordination. During the meeting, a decision-support system for managing dust storms was also unveiled in Khuzestan province.

"The system is described as global because it can generate reports on different regions around the world. Users can select their area of interest in the first section and specify a monitoring period, ranging from seasonal intervals to custom time frames. This feature enables more precise tracking of changes over time," Raygani said.

Given that remote sensing analyses are subject to errors, a specific step has been incorporated for masking and eliminating errors and areas that do not generate dust, he added.

The second section focuses on identifying and refining dust hotspots. It includes extracting barren land areas, refining the identified hotspots, and generating the required outputs.

The third section makes it possible to examine wind conditions and analyze whether a dust event has originated from a specific source or not, he added.

The system also generates reports on populations exposed to dust and determines the timing, intensity, and location of the phenomenon within a specific region. It can provide reports on exposed populations at both provincial and urban scales.

In places where there are wetlands, the system also enables the estimation of the water volume needed to maintain moisture and prevent dust generation.

For her part, the head of the DOE, Shina Ansari, underlined the importance of boosting environmental diplomacy with neighboring countries, developing regional cooperation to curb sand and dust-storm sources, as well as monitoring the effectiveness of measures taken to address dust phenomena.

Referring to the global dust hotspot monitoring system and the decision-support system for managing dust storms launched in Khuzestan province, Ansari said the global system operates based on ground-based monitoring stations providing data on the location and severity of dust hotspots, affected people, and tracking the changes in the dust centers. The system enables real-time monitoring of dust at the national level, while utilizing global systems as well.

The second system, launched in Khuzestan province, helps make sound and timely decisions in response to dust events. Through enhancing collaboration and coordination among different organizations, the system helps accelerate interaction among the relevant agencies, she noted.

The system represents a strategic step towards strengthening governance capacity for dust storm management; an approach that has to be proactive, coordinated, and highly effective, she stressed.

To make the best use of these two systems, the training of the users must be put on the

agenda, she further noted.

UNDP-backed assessment prioritizes 30 SDS hotspots in Iran

A national assessment supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has identified and prioritized 30 critical domestic source areas for sand and dust storms (SDS) in Iran, providing an evidence base for targeted measures to reduce risks to communities, infrastructure and vulnerable ecosystems.

Sand and dust storms are an increasingly serious environmental and development challenge in Iran, affecting public health and livelihoods, damaging infrastructure and putting additional pressure on fragile ecosystems. More than 25 provinces are affected to varying degrees, highlighting the need to shift from responding to individual storms toward prevention, preparedness and long-term resilience.

Since 2023, UNDP has been working with Iran's DOE and the National Secretariat for Policy Making and Coordination of Management for the Sand and Dust Storms Phenomenon to support this transition.

The national assessment combines data on SDS hazard intensity, ecological vulnerability and the exposure of populations and critical infrastructure. By bringing together environmental information with data on settlements, roads, railways and agricultural areas, the assessment identifies locations where vulnerable landscapes and exposed communities overlap.

The findings provide an evidence base for directing resources to areas where interventions can have the greatest impact, ranging from vegetation restoration and soil stabilization to wetland protection and measures to safeguard infrastructure and communities.

The assessment found that 20 percent of Iran's territory falls within high- or very-high-risk SDS categories, underscoring the importance of targeted and preventive action.

"Sand and dust storms do not respect borders. Over the past three years, our partnership with UNDP has demonstrated what collective action can achieve, advancing mitigation and adaptation

Measures across four provinces and strengthening resilience to their impacts," Raygani said.

At the same time, Iran is strengthening its capacity to anticipate and manage SDS events. With support from UNDP, forecasting and early-warning capabilities have been enhanced through fixed and portable monitoring systems. Technical work has also laid the foundation for a national and regional real-time SDS monitoring application.

The initiative extends from national systems to landscapes and local communities. Technical assessments in Khuzestan, Ilam, Yazd and Semnan have incorporated SDS considerations into biodiversity and landscape planning across approximately 47,000 hectares, linking SDS mitigation with ecosystem conservation and future investment decisions.

In Semnan's Touran landscape, the integrated approach combines vegetation restoration, more efficient water use and improved grazing management with efforts to protect one of Iran's most important biodiversity areas. SDS mitigation measures have also been implemented across 270 hectares of the Touran Protected Area, an important habitat for the endangered Asiatic cheetah.

Provincial capacity assessments in Ilam and Khuzestan have resulted in new action plans, clearer institutional responsibilities and stronger SDS working groups, helping translate national priorities into coordinated action at the local level.

These efforts form part of a broader national shift toward proactive SDS management.

Tehran, Doha explore partnership opportunities in ICT sector

TEHRAN – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Sattar Hashemi and Qatar's ambassador in Iran Saad bin Abdullah Al-Mohammad Al-Sharif have underlined the need to expand cooperation between the two countries in the ICT sector.

The officials met in Tehran on Wednesday, discussing ways to develop joint efforts in the field of ICT, particularly digital technologies, Mehr news agency reported.

The talk also focused on Iran and Qatar collaborations in international organizations and specialized forums, including the interaction of the two nations within the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference.

Regarding the role of ITU in shaping global policies and standards within the ICT sector, coordination and interaction among member states can provide a favorable basis for pursuing shared perspectives and interests, as well as strengthening international cooperation.

The next ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) is set to take place from November 9 to 27 November in Doha, Qatar. Held every four years, the conference brings together member states to make decisions on strategic and financial direction, future activities, elect leadership, and adopt resolutions that shape global telecommunications and Internet policy for the next four years.

Expanding ICT ties with neighboring nations on the agenda

On the sidelines of the first session of the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance, convened by the

UN General Assembly in Geneva on July 6 and 7, the head of the Information Technology Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Mohsen Sadr, has held separate meetings with Iraqi, Pakistani, and Omani officials to discuss ways to enhance collaboration between Iran and these countries in the ICT sector.

Holding a meeting with Iraqi Minister of Communications Mustafa Jabbar Sanad, the two sides highlighted the role of information technology and artificial intelligence in helping to address energy imbalances, developing smart infrastructure, enhancing productivity in the energy sector, and fostering cooperation in e-government and data transit. They also discussed expanding cooperation in digital transformation, exchanging technical expertise, and implementing joint projects.

The Iranian official met Shaza Fatima Khawaja, the Pakistani Minister for IT and Telecommunications, as well. During the meeting, both parties explored avenues to enhance cooperation between Iran and Pakistan in the fields of information technology, e-government, artificial intelligence, digital economy, cybersecurity, and the development of the innovation ecosystem.

In his X account, Sadr described the meeting with the Omani official as a constructive one, which particularly focused on e-government, artificial intelligence, digital economy, communication infrastructure, and expanding technological interactions between the two countries.



The two countries have high capacities to deepen digital cooperation and develop joint initiatives in the future of the digital economy, he added.

AI governance is the set of rules, standards, and oversight practices that determine how artificial intelligence systems are built, deployed, and held accountable, and in July 2026, it moved onto the world stage.

The official said a workshop on Artificial Intelligence and the Government Digital Ecosystem held on July 7 at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) headquarters in Geneva was very well received by the participants; it included his speech and the talks of other representatives from UNDESA's E-Government Assessment Branch and the ITU Development Sector, as well as university professors.

The UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance was the world's first intergovernmental platform where every government

and stakeholder group sat at the same table to align on AI oversight.

It is a direct product of the Global Digital Compact, the digital cooperation framework adopted in September 2024.

The Dialogue brought together all 193 UN member states alongside the private sector, civil society, academia, and the technical community. It received the first annual report of the UN Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, giving member states a shared evidence base.

Crucially, the forum adopts no binding resolutions or regulations. It is a place to exchange best practices and build common approaches, and it ran alongside the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2026 and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) AI for Good Global Summit in the same week. A second session is scheduled for New York in May 2027.



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OCTOBER 15, 2026

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Harmonize your request for livelihood with your giving alms.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:50 Evening: 17:46 Dawn: 4:49 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:12 (tomorrow)

Iranian Cinema Day to be held during 3rd Toji Somon National Film Festival in Tajikistan

TEHRAN – The Iranian feature film “The Gambler,” directed by Mohsen Bahari, will be screened during the Iranian Cinema Day in Tajikistan.

Simultaneously with the 3rd edition of the Toji Somon National Film Festival in Dushanbe, “The Gambler,” a production of the Farabi Cinema Foundation, will be featured in the event’s Iranian Cinema Day, Mehr reported.

In each edition of the festival, the screening of works from one or more specific countries is highlighted. In this edition, Iranian Cinema Day is being held to expand cultural and artistic interactions between the two countries.

A social-mystery thriller, “The Gambler” features a cast composed of Kourosh Tahami, Armin Rahimian, Shabnam Qorbani, Amir Norouzi, Roshan Rostampour, and Emad Emami.

The plot centers on a high-stakes cyber-attack targeting one of the country’s banks during the 12-day war against Iran. The narrative follows an expert agent who grows suspicious of one of the bank’s programmers, sparking a tense race to uncover the truth and safeguard national security.

International distribution for “The Gambler” is handled by the International Affairs Department of the Farabi Cinema Foundation. Previously, the film received the Special Jury Prize at the Across the Lake Film Festival in North Macedonia, and Shabnam Ghorbani won the Golden Crane award for Best Actress for her performance in the film at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Film Festival in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

In the second edition of the Toji Somon National Film Festival last year, the feature film



A scene from “The Gambler” by Mohsen Bahari

“Knight,” directed by Hossein Namazi, was screened in the festival’s competition section.

The event is Tajikistan’s primary international film festival. The festival is organized by the state institution Tojikfilm with support from the Government of Tajikistan and timed to coincide with Tajik Cinema Day, celebrated annually on October 16.

The third edition is scheduled for October 15 to 20, marking the 35th anniversary of Tajikistan’s independence. The 2026 theme is “Celebrating True Art.” The second edition, held October 15 to 20, 2025, screened more than 40 films from 15 countries under the theme “The History of the Development of the Tajik People.”

The festival is part of the Cinema Development Program of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2023 to 2027, a state-backed initiative to strengthen the national film industry, support young creative talent, and expand international cooperation in filmmaking.

Kiarostami’s “Where Is the Friend’s House?” selected for Tokyo festival

TEHRAN- The 1987 Iranian film “Where Is the Friend’s House?” by the late acclaimed filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami will be screened at the 39th Tokyo International Film Festival in Japan as part of a special program celebrating films cherished by legendary Japanese director Akira Kurosawa.

Produced by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon), the film is scheduled to screen on October 26 at TOHO Cinemas Chanter in Tokyo, according to Kanoon’s public relations and international affairs department.

The film will be presented alongside three other works in the program “Akira Kurosawa’s Favorite Films”: Charlie Chaplin’s “The Circus” (1928), and Kurosawa’s own films “Sanshiro Sugata” (1943) and “Ikiru” (1952).

The special program brings together works associated with Kurosawa’s cinematic legacy, placing Kiarostami’s landmark Iranian film in conversation with major works from the history of world cinema.

“Where Is the Friend’s House?” follows Ahmad, a schoolboy who discovers that he has accidentally taken home his classmate’s notebook. Determined to return it before his friend faces punishment for failing to complete his homework, Ahmad sets out to find the boy’s house in a neighboring village. His search becomes a journey through rural Iranian life, exploring childhood, responsibility, kindness and the challenges children encounter in a world governed by adult rules.

With its understated storytelling, naturalistic performances and close attention to everyday life, the film became one of the defining works of Kiarostami’s career and helped introduce Iranian cinema to wider international audiences. It also estab-



A scene from Abbas Kiarostami’s “Where Is the Friend’s House?”

lished themes that would recur throughout the director’s work, including the moral complexity of ordinary decisions and the relationship between children and adults.

The film has won several awards since its release, including the Bronze Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival in Switzerland and the Critics’ Prize at the Sao Paulo International Film Festival, and the Pasinetti Award at the Venice Film Festival.

“Where Is the Friend’s House?” is one of Kiarostami’s landmark works and the first installment of his Koker trilogy, which also includes “And Life Goes On” (1992) and “Through the Olive Trees” (1994).

The film has been screened at numerous international film festivals and cinemathèques over the decades and continues to feature in retrospectives and programs dedicated to world cinema.

Kiarostami was a film director, screenwriter, poet, photographer, and film producer. An active filmmaker from 1970, he was involved in the production of over 40 films, including shorts and documentaries. He attained critical acclaim for directing “Close-Up” (1990), “The Wind Will Carry Us” (1999), and “Taste of Cherry” (1997). In later works, “Certified Copy” (2010) and “Like Someone in Love” (2012), he filmed for the first time outside Iran: in Italy and Japan, respectively.

He was part of a generation of filmmakers in the Iranian New Wave, a Persian cinema movement that started in the late 1960s and emphasized the use of poetic dialogue and allegorical storytelling dealing with philosophical issues. He is known for his use of Persian poetry in the dialogue, titles, and themes of his films. His films also contain a notable degree of ambiguity, an unusual mixture of simplicity and complexity, and often a mix

of fictional and documentary elements. The concepts of change and continuity, in addition to the themes of life and death, play a major role in Kiarostami’s works.

Kiarostami, the winner of the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 for his “Taste of Cherry”, died of cancer on July 5, 2016 at the age of 76.

The screening in Tokyo offers another opportunity for international audiences, including younger generations of filmmakers, to discover Kiarostami’s work and revisit a film that remains an enduring reference point in Iranian cinema.

The 39th Tokyo International Film Festival will run from October 26 to November 4 under the theme “Connecting — Cinema Connects Us to the World Beyond.” The festival will present more than 200 films across its various sections, with screenings and related events taking place in Tokyo’s Hibiya, Yurakucho, Marunouchi and Ginza areas.

Tehran puppet theater festival to open with public ceremony

TEHRAN- The 21st Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival will open on Saturday with a ceremony at the open-air grounds of Tehran’s City Theater Complex, bringing together puppetry artists and members of the public in a celebration of the art form.

For the ceremony, festival secretary Poopak Azimpour Tabrizi has invited artists, students, university professors, theater practitioners and other interested participants to attend with their own puppets, the public relations office of the City Theater Complex announced on Wednesday.

The invitation extends to citizens of all ages, highlighting the festival’s effort to encourage public participation and bring pup-

petry beyond the stage.

The opening event will mark the beginning of the six-day festival, which will run in Tehran from October 17 to 22, featuring puppetry performances and activities dedicated to the art form.

The Tehran-Mobarak International Puppet Theater Festival is one of Iran’s major cultural events dedicated to puppetry, bringing together Iranian and international artists to showcase different traditions, techniques and approaches to puppet theater. Named after Mobarak, a traditional Iranian glove-puppet character known for his humor and lively exchanges with audiences, the festival celebrates the country’s rich heritage of traditional puppetry while providing

a platform for contemporary forms of the art. Its programs highlight puppetry as a medium for storytelling, cultural expression and communication across generations.

Over the years, the festival has sought to promote innovation in puppet theater, encourage interaction among artists and introduce younger audiences to the art form. Productions presented at the event range from traditional Iranian performances to experimental works incorporating different puppetry techniques, visual design, music and movement. By bringing together performers, theater practitioners and audiences, the festival also supports professional exchange and helps expand the role of puppetry within Iran’s performing arts scene.

Group exhibition at Art Garden Pavilion will honor master and veteran calligraphers

TEHRAN – The second edition of the “Infinite Love” calligraphy group exhibition, featuring a collection of works by of Iran’s master and veteran calligraphers, will open on October 29 at the Art Garden Pavilion in Tehran.

“The second edition of the ‘Infinite Love’ group exhibition is aimed at honoring the status of Iran’s visual arts masters and veterans and featuring prominent figures in Iranian calligraphy and calligraphy painting,” Tahereh Allahdadian, calligrapher and organizer of the event, said.

“This edition features 30 masters and prominent figures in calligraphy and calligraphy painting – a gathering whose formative idea was inspired by the tale of the thirty birds (Simorgh) in Atar Nishaburi’s ‘Conference of the Birds,’ centered around love, art, and paying tribute to the masters of Iranian culture and art,” she added.



“The first edition of the ‘Infinite Love’ exhibition was held last July with the support of the Art Credit Fund at the Niavaran Cultural Center. The second edition of this event continues that same approach in preserving the legacy of contemporary Iranian callig-

raphy and calligraphy-painting,” she noted.

Among the artists present in the event are masters and veterans such as Gholamhossein Amirkhani, Nasrollah Afjei, Bahram Hanafi, Mohammad Heydari, Fereshteh Hosseini, Elaheh

Khatami, Mahmoud Zندهroudi, Ali Shirazi, Esrafil Shirchi, Elnod-din Sadeghzadeh, Amir Ahmad Falsafi, Mohammad Ali Ghorbani, Yadollah Kaboli, Mohammad Shahbazi, Ahmad Mohammadpour, Rasoul Moradi, Mirheydar Mousavi, Mojtaba Malekzadeh, Mehdi Fallah, Mohammad Hajjabad, and Peyman Khosrowabadi.

“The presence of a number of these masters at the opening ceremony will add to the significance of this artistic gathering and its standing in the country’s calligraphy and calligraphy painting arena,” Allahdadian asserted.

The “Infinite Love” exhibition strives to create an opportunity to honor artistic experience and creativity, and to renew attention to the status of authentic Iranian arts by bringing together various generations of masters and veterans.

Cartoon of Day



Global Double Standards
Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen