

Upgraded military capabilities have changed adversaries' calculations: minister

TEHRAN — Iran's newly appointed Defense Minister Mehrdad Akhlaghi Ketabchi says the country has upgraded and modernized its defense capabilities since the 12-day war imposed on Iran by the United States and Israel, changing adversaries' military calculations and raising doubts about the prospects of further confrontation.

Addressing an open session of the Iranian Parliament on Sunday, after lawmakers approved his appointment as minister of defense and armed forces logistics, Akhlaghi said Iran had strengthened its defensive preparedness in response to the conflict, creating new uncertainties for those considering further military action against the country. ► **Page 2**

European diplomats feel the sting of settler violence in West Bank

TEHRAN- Shielding Israel from accountability, supplying it with advanced weapons, and turning a blind eye to its unlawful and cruel acts against Palestinians for nearly eight decades have finally come back to haunt Europe and the United States. The consequences have reached a point where even European diplomats, journalists, and other officials are no longer safe from the emboldened Israeli occupiers.

On Saturday, Israeli settler militants attacked European diplomats, a French mayor and the archbishop of Cambrai in Taybeh, in the occupied West Bank, injuring three people and damaging a car, in the latest violent attempt to prevent Palestinians from harvesting olives on their own land, the Guardian reported. ► **Page 5**

Tehran slams Macron over 'Indefensible Double Standards'

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei has accused French President Emmanuel Macron of applying double standards to protests in Iran and France, pointing to “a stark contrast” between Macron's response to unrest in Iran and his stance on attacks against public institutions in France.

In a post on X, Baqaei recalled France's position on the domestic unrest in Iran in January 2026 and its response to the US-Israeli military aggression against the country, challenging Macron over his approach to the recent protests in France.

“Mr. Macron, do you remember that last January you were advocating ‘peaceful demonstrations without fear of punishment’ for those who, following malicious calls from abroad, attacked our law enforcement centers and public institutions?” Baqaei wrote. ► **Page 2**

Iran to answer ‘mother of all bombs’ with ‘father of bombs’: senior IRGC commander

TEHRAN – Deputy Coordinator of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqdi, has warned the United States against any military miscalculation against Iran, saying Tehran would respond to Washington's “mother of all bombs” with the “father of bombs.”

Speaking on Sunday afternoon at the “Self-Sacrificers for Iran” rally in Sari, Naqdi was referring to recent threats by US President Donald Trump to use the GBU-43/B massive ordnance, widely known as the mother of all bombs, against Iran.

“If you make a wrong move, we will come for you with the father of bombs, and all your assets will be at risk,” Naqdi said. ► **Page 2**



Many metro stations were closed on Saturday at the request of police, including those around the Champs-Élysées and near the presidential palace, parliament and government offices.

France in a Web of Problems Partly Fueled by the War on Iran

More than 1,800 arrested as police clash with protesters across France

HEC Paris professor sees early stirrings in Greece, Germany and Austria as PM Lecornu says France has reached a “point of no return”

By staff writer

TEHRAN — France spent Sunday sweeping up after its worst street unrest in years. A town hall lies gutted in Limoges, about 1,800 people are under arrest, and as of writing this, the government has yet to say what it will do next.

Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said 550,000 people took part in Saturday's demonstrations, including 110,000 in Paris, while the CGT (General Confederation of Labor), one of France's largest trade unions, put the nationwide turnout at 800,000.

Paris police recorded a record 855 arrests. One protester died following a cardiorespiratory arrest north of Paris, according to BFMTV.

The first attack came at dawn, on the shared Paris headquarters of CNews, Eu-

rope 1 and the JDD. By afternoon, police faced wildcat groups of 500 to 1,000 people, then waves of looters.

In Marseille, a crowd breached city hall and toppled a bust of Marianne. A tourist office burned in Lyon. In Limoges, a mob that Mayor Guillaume Guerin says used a battering ram set fire to the town hall, opened in 1883 and spared by two world wars. Its 43-meter clock tower fell.

“I had no single national police officer to protect the town hall,” said Guerin, a center-right mayor whose city's officers were

sent to the street march.

A retail trade group counts about 1,500 shops damaged. AFP described looting that looked planned, with crews of about six masked, gloved men disabling security cameras first.

At Place de la République, protesters put a yellow vest on the Marianne statue and hung a banner reading “The police mutilate high-schoolers.”

A school revolt and a fuel revolt merged

Pupils at a Créteil lycée, a French secondary school for students typically aged 15 to 18, began blockading in mid-September over teacher shortages, classes of 32 to 36, deteriorating buildings and stress over Parcoursup, and the university admissions platform. ► **Page 5**

Araghchi's Baghdad diplomacy: Hormuz, regional security and Muslim unity top Iran's agenda

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has used a series of diplomatic meetings in Baghdad to press for an end to military escalation in West Asia, outline Iran's conditions for restoring security in the Strait of Hormuz and call for a more active role for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in addressing disputes among Muslim countries. ► **Page 3**

Pezeshkian: Iran ends gasoline imports, will stand against coercion with people's support

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran has become self-sufficient in gasoline supply through consumption management and public cooperation, stressing that the government will stand against US and Israeli plots with the support of the people.

Speaking at the eighth meeting of the Government Information Council, held in his presence, Pezeshkian said the administration has used all its capacities to prevent disruption to people's livelihoods, with basic and essential goods supplied through round-the-clock efforts.

According to ISNA, the session reviewed the actions and programs of the council for using the capacity of media outlets and public relations departments to explain the government's achievements and measures to resolve the country's crises and problems. ► **Page 2**

New corridors help preserve country's trade capacity: TPO official

TEHRAN- Deputy Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said: With the co-operation of various sectors and the creation of new infrastructure and corridors, part of the country's trade capacity was preserved and it became possible for activities to continue.

According to the Mehr News Agency, Amir Roshanbakhsh, Deputy for Promotion of International Businesses of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, said: In the current conditions, the most important challenge facing Iran's foreign trade is transportation and the movement of goods along export and import routes—a problem that has intensified following the siege. ► **Page 4**

No Kings protests shift focus to early voting ahead of US midterms

TEHRAN- The latest round of “No Kings” protests across the United States on Saturday, October 17, focused on a new objective: turning opposition to President Donald Trump's policies into electoral participation ahead of the November 3 midterm elections.

Under the banner “No Kings: Vote Early,” thousands of events were planned across the country, including in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., according to organizers. The demonstrations featured rallies, marches, voter-education activities and efforts to encourage eligible voters to cast their ballots before Election Day.

The October 17 demonstrations marked the fourth nationwide round of the movement, which emerged in opposition to Trump's presidency and what organizers describe as authoritarian tendencies in his administration. ► **Page 3**



Iran marches at 2026 Asian Para Games

TEHRAN – Iran's delegation marched in the parade at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya, with Rouhollah Rostami as flag bearer.

Iran will compete with a 166-member sporting delegation featuring 104 men and 62 women across 15 sports.

The delegation has also chosen Ana Jahangard, a nine-year-old student from Minab who was injured and became a para-athlete following the bombing of Shajareh Tayebah School, as its spiritual leader.

The Iranian delegation will carry the slogan: “In memory of the children of Hiroshima, Gaza and Minab.”

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Lavrov's pivotal Monday visit to Tehran with a mediation flavor

Arman-e-Emrooz analyzed Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming visit to Tehran on Monday. Reports suggest that the trip is part of Russia's ongoing mediation efforts between Iran and the United States. In recent months, Moscow has sought to position itself as a facilitator in reducing tensions between Tehran and Washington. The timing of the visit coincides with US review of sanctions and measures related to the so-called shadow fleet, highlighting the complexity of the current situation. On one hand, the United States faces domestic pressure to lower energy prices ahead of elections. On the other, Iran is seeking meaningful economic relief. These circumstances have created an environment in which both sides may be inclined toward tactical flexibility. The meeting between Lavrov and Araghchi could represent an important step in that direction, provided both parties enter discussions with a shared understanding of existing realities and align their expectations with practical possibilities. The outcome of the visit could influence developments in the coming weeks.

Khorasan: Trump, the mother of all lies

Khorasan addressed Trump's recent claim about using the "Mother of All Bombs" in a future strike against Iran. Trump is making such threats at a time when the economic consequences of tensions in the region have significantly increased costs related to energy and essential goods for American families and other countries, putting additional pressure on his administration. The paper described Trump as a gambler seeking a face-saving exit from the Iran war quagmire. After previous efforts, including military deployments to the region and severe economic pressure campaigns that were expected to quickly force Iran into submission, failed to achieve their goals, Trump has now turned to the rhetoric of the "Mother of All Bombs." The article contends that the purpose of such statements is to create psychological pressure inside Iran and gain leverage in ongoing exchanges of messages between the two sides.

Shargh: An open-ended American policy or an open-ended Iranian one?

Shargh devoted its editorial to decision-making regarding the current conflict. The newspaper argued that decisions made today are linked not only to the future of 90 million Iranians but, in some respects, to global developments as well. The editorial proposed moving beyond the simple pro-war versus peace divide and distinguishing among three separate positions: first, ending the war at any cost; second, negotiating an end to the conflict while preserving core national red lines; and third, continuing resistance until specific political and security conditions are achieved.

Tehran slams Macron over 'Indefensible Double Standards'

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In a post on X, Baqaei recalled France's position on the domestic unrest in Iran in January 2026 and its response to the US-Israeli military aggression against the country, challenging Macron over his approach to the recent protests in France.

"Mr. Macron, do you remember that last January you were advocating 'peaceful demonstrations without fear of punishment' for those who, following malicious calls from abroad, attacked our law enforcement centers and public institutions?" Baqaei wrote.

"Now, in your own republic, you say that vandalism and attacks on institutions will not be tolerated and that those responsible will be severely punished!"

Baqaei also recalled a text message Macron sent to US President Donald Trump shortly before the military aggression against Iran, quoting the French president as saying: "We

This conceptual distinction is important for policymaking. A person who favors negotiations does not necessarily support surrender or territorial fragmentation, just as someone who considers resistance necessary is not necessarily indifferent to its human and economic costs. The paper argues that recognizing this distinction prevents an "open-ended American policy" from automatically being interpreted as an "open-ended Iranian policy," which it describes as the key issue.

Ettelaat: Possibility of a longer conflict process

Ettelaat examined possible future scenarios for the conflict. US demands have shifted from redefining Iran's regional role to focusing on the nuclear issue and the Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, Iran's demands have reportedly evolved from direct compensation by Washington to a conditional investment fund financed by other parties. Nevertheless, the newspaper argued that two major ambiguities remain unresolved and may even have deepened as a result of the conflict. Continued American pressure is said to intensify divisions among Iranian elites and increase their reluctance to take the first step. Washington, however, may interpret this hesitation as evidence that pressure is working and therefore warrants further action. According to the analysis, diplomacy has reached a deadlock. As US midterm elections draw closer, there remains a possibility that the conflict will add another chapter to the historical memories each side holds of the other, extending a process that has already lasted for more than four decades.

Hamshahri: The impact of war and economic tensions on US elections

Hamshahri focused on concerns influencing American voters. The newspaper argued that economic conditions and the conflict involving Iran have become major public concerns. Rising prices for gasoline, diesel fuel, and essential goods, along with inflation and growing concerns about living costs, have increased pressure on the Trump administration. The paper noted that these concerns are reflected in public opinion polls and political analyses. At the same time, the Iran conflict remains among voters' principal worries. Hamshahri also linked these concerns to allegations regarding corruption and the financial interests of individuals close to Trump in connection with the conflict. As a result, the newspaper concluded that the economic pressures associated with the conflict cannot be ignored in assessing the US political climate. According to its analysis, these pressures have fueled public dissatisfaction and could present a significant challenge for Republicans in upcoming elections.

can do great things on Iran."

The spokesperson argued that subsequent events had revealed the meaning of Macron's words, accusing France of aligning with the aggression against Iran and the crimes that had consequences extending across the region and beyond.

Addressing Macron directly, Baqaei drew a parallel between the unrest in France and the "No Kings" protests in the United States, warning that alliances formed to advance political agendas could ultimately backfire on those behind them.

"Mr. Macron, now that the fire has reached your own home and 'No Kings' is being shouted in America, remember that history does not always watch the world burn through the window opened by ill-fated alliances. Sometimes, it breaks that very window and returns to the homes of those who opened it," he wrote.

Baqaei concluded his post with a quotation attributed to French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine: "The more artfully a deception is woven, the more damaging it may prove to its author; and treachery may well return to the one who committed it."

Upgraded military capabilities have changed adversaries' calculations: minister

From page 1 ► "Following the 12-day war waged jointly by the United States and Israel against Iran, our defensive capabilities have been upgraded in ways that have changed the enemy's assessments and calculations and created deep doubts among our adversaries about continuing the war," he said.

Akhlaghi also warned US President Donald Trump against translating military threats into action, saying Iran had put the necessary countermeasures in place.

"We have taken all necessary measures to counter the 'Mother of All Bombs' and are confident in our preparations. We are carrying out our duties with complete confidence," he said, referring to the US president's threats involving the powerful conventional bomb.

Warning of the potential consequences for US forces, the defense minister said Washington should consider the risks of escalating a confrontation with Iran.

"If he drops a bomb, he should consider how many of his troops might have to be carried out in body bags," Akhlaghi said. "If he follows through on his threats, he will have to face the dire consequences."

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the parliamentary session, he reiterated that Iran had devised the measures needed to respond to potential threats and said Trump should



consider how to withdraw US forces from the region safely.

"If his slogans turn into action, he will have to suffer the consequences," he said.

Strategic deterrence in a changing threat environment

Ketabchi argued that the strategic environment confronting Iran was undergoing fundamental changes, encompassing the nature of threats, the logic of military power, technological developments and the regional security order.

He described these shifts as contributing to a strategic deadlock for Iran's adversaries, emphasizing that defensive strength depended not only on operational capabilities but also on an accurate understanding of the wider strategic environment.

The defense minister also highlighted the increasingly hybrid nature of modern warfare,

in which conventional military operations are combined with economic sanctions, cyber operations, disruptions to supply chains, information warfare and restrictions on access to advanced technologies.

Such a threat environment, he said, requires a comprehensive defense strategy capable of addressing multiple forms of pressure simultaneously rather than relying exclusively on conventional military strength.

His remarks underscore the importance Tehran places on modernizing its defense capabilities while adapting to technological advances and evolving methods of military and economic confrontation.

Parliament approves new defense minister

Iranian lawmakers approved Akhlaghi's appointment on Sunday following a review of his qualifications and policy plans.

He was nominated by President Masoud Pezeshkian on October 5, 2026.

According to the vote announced in parliament, 237 lawmakers voted in favor of his appointment, while 15 opposed it, out of 277 members present.

He succeeds Major General Aziz Nasirzadeh, the previous defense minister, who was martyred during criminal attacks by the United States and the Zionist regime.

Born in 1958 in the northern Iranian city of Rasht, Akhlaghi has held senior positions in the country's defense industries, including heading the Shahid Bakeri Industrial Group and serving as managing director of the Aerospace Industries Organization.

He takes over the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics following the tenure of Brigadier General Majid Ibn al-Reza, who served as acting defense minister after the killing of his predecessor, Major General Aziz Nasirzadeh, in US-Israeli attacks on Tehran on February 28, 2026.

His appointment comes as Iran continues to prioritize the modernization of its defense infrastructure and preparedness to respond to potential military threats, with the new minister placing deterrence, technological adaptation, and readiness across multiple domains at the center of his stated approach.

Pezeshkian: Iran ends gasoline imports, will stand against coercion with people's support



From page 1 ► **Standing with people against US military and economic war**

Emphasizing the full and targeted use of media capacity to realize justice in various fields and continuous all-out efforts to solve people's problems, the president said the main goal and plan of Iran's enemies through military aggression, economic pressure and sanctions, and media onslaught is to create and deepen division among the people and strata of society.

"We must all join hands to solve the country's and people's problems and use all capacities, including the media, to strengthen unity and cohesion in the country," Pezeshkian said.

Referring to the difficulties caused by the enemy's military aggression and economic blockade, he said that despite all the problems, the government has done and will do its utmost to resolve people's problems, and in this path, securing people's livelihood must be the first and main priority for all of us.

"If we gain people's trust and have people with us, no power will be able to harm our

country," the president added. "Despite all the pressure and hardships caused by the enemy's military and economic war, the government has used all its capacities to ensure people's livelihood is not disrupted."

====From \$12 billion in imports to gasoline self-sufficiency despite US blockade

Pezeshkian also addressed high energy consumption and fuel supply under the economic blockade, saying the administration put saving and consumption management on its agenda to prevent further problems in energy and fuel, which led to significant savings with public cooperation.

"Today we have become needless of gasoline imports, whereas we had to spend 12 billion dollars for importing needed gasoline," he said.

Stressing that all revenues from fuel price adjustments, savings and consumption management will be paid back to the people themselves, the president said media capacity must be used to accompany people on important issues such as energy consumption management, gasoline saving, and strengthening national unity and social cohesion.

He called on managers in administrative bodies and organizations to work with empathy to encourage government employees, including through plans such as car-free Tuesdays, reduced use of personal cars, increased productivity, and use of teleworking capacity, to control and manage excessive energy and fuel consumption.

Describing the neighborhood-based plan and greater use of public participation, the Basij, benefactors and charities as ways to solve problems and strengthen society's re-

silience against enemy aggression, Pezeshkian said the government, with people's help and accompaniment, will stand against all conspiracies and sinister plans of the US and the Zionist regime and will not allow Iran's enemies to achieve their objectives.

The president said the 500,000-toman increase in the electronic coupon will definitely be implemented. On the coupon scheme, he said today those with more capital benefit from more subsidies, but the program and goal is to take subsidies from the affluent and financially capable and give more help to the needy.

Continuing his remarks, Pezeshkian stressed the need for all administrative bodies and organizations, as well as companies and the private sector, to strengthen production and increase productivity.

"I invite anyone who can help in this field to cooperate. The country's managers must use expert and experienced forces to improve the country's difficult conditions, solve people's problems and increase productivity," he said.

Referring to major actions in education, including the inauguration of educational projects and smart schools on Saturday morning, the president said he was very pleased with the major measures taken in a short time, noting that the increase in educational spaces, reform of teaching methods, and development of cultural and sports spaces in educational complexes have been remarkable, with benefactors playing an important role through 48,000 billion toman contributions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran to answer 'mother of all bombs' with 'father of bombs': senior IRGC commander

From page 1 ► He described Trump's remarks as a sign of fatigue and depleted patience in confronting a nation that resists pressure, arguing that the threats reflect the difficulty of dealing with Iran.

Criticizing the threats to use heavy bombs, Naqdi said the enemy had already used heavy weaponry in the past, but those actions had failed to achieve US objectives. He also claimed that parts of the technology used in some of the weapons deployed against Iran are now in the hands of Iranian forces and are

under examination.

Warning of the consequences of any military action, he said any miscalculation and escalation could jeopardize the security of US investments and economic activities in the region, including American technology, artificial intelligence and oil companies operating in the region.

On Iran's deterrent power, Naqdi said the country's defense capability in land and naval domains is not limited to military hardware alone, stressing that the will of a people who stand to defend their land is a key el-

ement of that power.

"The enemy may be able to take certain actions, but the fundamental question is whether it can achieve its goals. Our defensive readiness and the will of the Iranian people have complicated the enemy's calculations," he said.

He added that US military movements in the region have been affected by Iran's defense capabilities.

Naqdi said such threats may pursue different objectives, including creating division among

the people, weakening the resolve of officials and reducing the readiness of the Armed Forces. He stressed the need to preserve national unity, stay vigilant against psychological warfare, and prevent internal disputes.

Maintaining the country's defense preparedness, solidarity between the people and officials, and cohesion of the Armed Forces play a decisive role in countering foreign threats, he said, adding that threats should not cause any doubt in defending national interests.

Araghchi's Baghdad diplomacy: Hormuz, regional security and Muslim unity top Iran's agenda

From Page 1 ► Araghchi traveled to the Iraqi capital to attend the 52nd session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, where he held talks with Iraqi officials and counterparts from Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria, as well as the organization's secretary-general. His engagements focused on regional security, the Palestinian issue, bilateral relations and diplomatic efforts to prevent further escalation.

In remarks on the sidelines of the meeting on Sunday, Araghchi reiterated that Iran remained prepared to defend its national interests while pursuing diplomacy, provided negotiations respected Iran's rights and were conducted on an appropriate basis.

Strait of Hormuz: Iran sets out seven-point plan for reopening

Araghchi said the insecurity affecting the Strait of Hormuz and its economic consequences for regional countries and the wider international community were a direct result of US-Israeli military aggression against Iran.

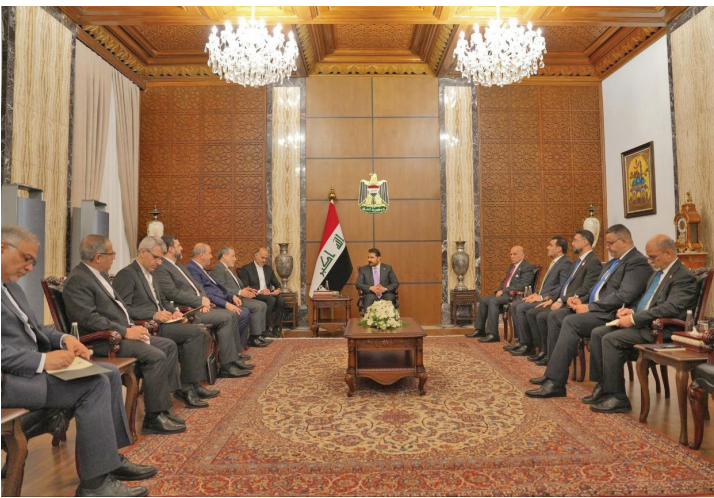
He said Tehran had presented Washington with a seven-point plan setting out its conditions for resolving the confrontation. The United States had submitted its own views, which Iran was reviewing, he added.

According to Araghchi, the proposed framework provides a clear path toward restoring security in the strategic waterway if Washington meets Iran's conditions.

"If our conditions are met, the Strait of Hormuz will reopen on the sixth day, and negotiations will begin on the seventh day," he said.

The foreign minister stressed that Iran's conditions were not extraordinary, arguing that they concerned commitments the United States had previously undertaken under an earlier memorandum of understanding and in other negotiations. He said Washington could implement the requirements within days if it genuinely sought to reopen the strait.

Araghchi also briefed Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein on ongoing diplomatic consultations related to regional peace and security. He reiterated that Iran remained committed to diplomacy as a means of preventing further escalation, even as it maintained its readiness to de-



fend its national security.

The issue also featured in Araghchi's meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, during which the two officials discussed bilateral relations, regional and international developments, and diplomatic consultations conducted through mediators.

Araghchi told Abdelatty that Iran had consistently pursued diplomacy with the aim of reducing tensions, while accusing Washington of repeatedly violating its commitments. He cited a US breach of its pledge just two weeks after the signing of a memorandum of understanding intended to end the war.

Iraq ties and the need for regional dialogue

In his meeting with Hussein, Araghchi highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation between Iran and Iraq, particularly in economic, trade and security affairs.

The two ministers also discussed developments in the Arabian Peninsula and ways to help end regional conflicts. Araghchi emphasized that Iran was prepared to facilitate dialogue between parties involved in regional disputes.

Araghchi also met Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Fali al-Zaidi during his visit to Baghdad. No further details of their discussions were immediately available.

Beyond bilateral ties, Araghchi argued that Muslim countries needed to strengthen dialogue and solidarity to address shared challenges, particularly the Palestinian issue and the continued expansionism of the Israeli regime.

OIC urged to play a stronger role in resolving disputes

Araghchi called on the OIC to play a more effective role in re-

solving differences among Muslim countries and strengthening cooperation across the Islamic world.

He said he had raised the issue in meetings with the Iraqi prime minister, Hussein, and the organization's newly appointed Secretary-General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

During his meeting with Cheikh Ahmed, the secretary-general expressed the organization's interest in drawing on Iran's experience and capabilities to develop initiatives for mediation and dispute settlement among Muslim countries.

Araghchi welcomed the prospect of a more active OIC role, stressing that the organization's secretariat should operate professionally and impartially and avoid any perception of bias toward or against member states.

He also emphasized the importance of strengthening solidarity among Muslim countries in confronting common challenges, particularly those arising from developments in occupied Palestine.

The foreign minister noted that the OIC had lost some of its influence in recent years and expressed hope that Iraq's assumption of the rotating presidency, together with the appointment of a new secretary-general, would help revitalize the organization.

Yemen Resolution: Iran insists on fairness, balance and a political solution

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has warned that Iran will not join the consensus on a proposed resolution on Yemen at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) unless the final text reflects fairness and balance, stressing that Tehran's position will depend on the wording ultimately adopted.

Speaking to IRNA on Sunday on the sidelines of the annual session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Baghdad, Araghchi said the organization's resolutions had not yet been adopted and that the final communiqué was still being drafted. He noted that Iranian diplomats had engaged in extensive discussions in recent days to ensure that Iran's views were reflected in the documents, adding that most of the proposed resolutions, with a few exceptions, repeated texts adopted the previous year.

On Yemen, Araghchi said serious discussions had taken place among member states, with Saudi Arabia, Iran and other countries presenting their respective positions. The draft resolution had yet to be finalized, he said, expressing hope that the final text would reflect a fair and balanced approach. If these principles were not upheld, Iran would be unable to join the consensus and would formally register its reservations or reject the resolution, depending on its final wording.

Araghchi acknowledged that countries aligned with Saudi Arabia constituted a sizable bloc within the OIC, but said Tehran had conducted extensive consultations and clearly outlined its position on a just solution to the conflict. He stressed that Yemen's crisis could not be resolved through military force or blockade, calling instead for a political process grounded in the United Nations Charter, respect for Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and protection of the Yemeni people's human rights. He also offered Iran's assistance in facilitating dialogue among the parties.

Rejecting allegations that Yemen's armed forces had attacked Mecca and Medina, Araghchi said repeating such accusations would neither serve the interests of the Muslim world nor strengthen unity among OIC member states. He emphasized that the sanctity of Islamic holy sites must be respected by all.

Lebanon: Iran stresses sovereignty while acknowledging political differences

Araghchi's meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji focused on bilateral relations, Lebanon's sovereignty and national security, and regional developments.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

No Kings protests shift focus to early voting ahead of US midterms



From Page 1 ► The organizers framed the latest mobilization as a nonpartisan effort to promote voting and defend democratic participation, while protesters raised concerns ranging from immigration enforcement and the cost of living to the war against Iran.

A movement changes tactics

Earlier No Kings demonstrations emphasized visible opposition to Trump and his policies. This time, organizers placed greater emphasis on early voting, election access and mobilizing voters ahead of the midterms.

The shift reflects a political calculation: demonstrations can express public dissatisfaction, but electoral participation can change the balance of power in Congress and increase pressure on the administration.

According to Newsweek, roughly 3,000 events were planned nationwide, with the focus on early voting and turnout rather than conventional protest alone.

The movement has described its initiative as a nonpartisan effort to bring Americans together in defense of democracy and civil liberties. However, its political character has been contested, with some critics arguing that its activities align closely with Democratic electoral interests.

At local events, some participants openly encouraged opposition to Republican candidates, illustrating the tension between the coalition's stated nonpartisan approach and the political objectives of some attendees.

Iran war remains among protesters' concerns

Although early voting was the demonstrations' central organizing theme, interviews with participants in several states showed that opposition to the war against Iran remained among the grievances motivating some protesters.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, protester Jared Smith described the range of issues that brought him to the demonstration.

"Everything from Gaza, Iran to gas prices, grocery prices," he said, according to local television station WWMT.

The remark linked opposition to US foreign policy with concerns about the cost of living, suggesting that some participants viewed domestic economic pressures and overseas military action as interconnected issues.

In Corydon, Indiana, 56-year-old musician Aim Me Smiley said she attended to protest what she called a "rogue" president, data-center expansion and the war in Iran, among other concerns.

Smiley had already voted early and encouraged others to participate in the electoral process, according to the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

Her comments illustrate how some demonstrators viewed the midterm elections as an opportunity to challenge the administration's domestic and foreign policies.

However, the available interviews do not establish how widely opposition to the Iran war was shared among participants nationwide. It was one of several concerns expressed at the demonstrations rather than the movement's principal national slogan.

White House challenges movement's nonpartisan framing

The Trump administration criticized the No Kings movement's characterization of its activities as nonpartisan.

White House spokesperson Lauren Bis argued that the organizers' emphasis on voting undermined their claim to political neutrality and criticized the movement's name.

"The fact that the 'No Kings' organizers are talking about voting in the upcoming election proves they should change their name," Bis said in a statement reported by USA Today. "This November, Americans have a clear choice between President Trump and Republicans' commonsense policies or the extreme Democrats' radical socialist, open-border policies."

The remarks reflect the administration's broader effort to frame the midterm elections as a choice between Republican policies and the Democratic opposition.

The dispute also highlights a central question surrounding No Kings: whether the movement is primarily a broad-based campaign for democratic participation or an electoral mobilization that could benefit Democratic candidates.

Although organizers describe their activities as nonpartisan, some participants have explicitly called on voters to oppose Republicans. Such statements demonstrate that the movement encompasses a range of political objectives, even as its national campaign emphasizes early voting.

Can street protests translate into political change?

The October 17 demonstrations sought to translate opposition to Trump into greater participation in the midterm elections. Whether that strategy succeeds will depend not only on turnout at rallies but also on whether participants and the communities they reach ultimately cast ballots.

Local reports suggest that attendance varied considerably. In Kalamazoo, Indivisible Greater Kalamazoo estimated that more than 3,000 people attended the demonstration along Drake Road, according to WWMT. In Corydon, Indiana, about 100 people gathered for a local rally, according to the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

These figures illustrate differences between individual events but do not establish a nationwide increase or decline in participation.

The movement's electoral strategy also raises questions about its longer-term influence. If its activities encourage previously disengaged voters to participate, No Kings could contribute to political pressure on the administration through changes in congressional representation.

Yet demonstrations alone cannot guarantee a change in policy. Their impact will depend on voter participation, electoral outcomes and the ability of activists to sustain public engagement after the rallies end.

For protesters concerned about immigration enforcement, economic pressures and the war against Iran, the immediate objective is to turn dissatisfaction into votes. Whether that translates into a significant shift in US policy will become clearer after the November 3 elections.

Iran's response to any new attack will be unpredictable, Basij chief says

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's Basij Organization said one of the factors complicating U.S. calculations is the unpredictability of Iran's response, as Washington does not know where, with what means, or when Tehran would retaliate in any future confrontation.

Hojatoleslam Mahdi Taeb, speaking at a meeting of organizers of nightly public rallies, said the United States and Israel had misjudged Iran's resilience, assuming that a short war of three days to a maximum of six weeks could force the country to surrender.

The enemy expected that after six weeks Iran's missile and munitions stockpiles would dwindle, economic pressure would intensify and domestic insecurity would emerge, pushing Tehran to negotiate from weakness, Taeb said. But the Iranian nation and armed forces stood firm, and the Americans realized their miscalculation, he added.

Reviewing the course of the war, Taeb said that in the early days the IRGC Aerospace Force used complex combined designs of missiles and drones to penetrate Israel's multi-layered air defenses, but in the final days Iranian missiles hit their targets with greater success.

As Iran faced enemy planning for its military endurance, the U.S. and Israel also confronted limitations in munitions stocks and air-defense capacity, he said, adding that

their military resilience declined under the pressure of the conflict.

Taeb said Washington and Tel Aviv have shifted strategy from direct war to indirect tools – proxies, regional and international pacts, economic pressure and fomenting insecurity – after failing to achieve their objectives.

Today's competition is a competition of endurance among Iran, the United States, Israel and other countries, he said. While the enemies sought to weaken Iran through sanctions, the Strait of Hormuz has become an effective factor in balancing power and influencing economic resilience, he noted.

He also claimed that psychological referrals among U.S. forces on ships and bases in the region have increased amid fatigue from prolonged confrontation.

U.S. intelligence assessments themselves stress the difficulty of predicting how Iran would respond in any future clash, a factor weighing on American military and security calculations, Taeb said.

The war has challenged U.S. and Israeli positions and interests, he said, claiming that more than 70 percent of Americans believe the war with Iran brought no benefit to their country.

Turning to politics, Taeb said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, eyeing Knesset elections, favors dragging the U.S. back



into war with Iran to reshape the political-security environment and preserve his own standing. If electoral conditions do not turn in his favor, security issues could be raised to alter the election process, he said.

On the U.S. midterms, he said the Iran file directly and indirectly affects the American political scene, and President Donald Trump needs a victory to sustain his position. Trump is trying to turn the issue of negotiations with Iran into a symbolic win while using security and economic pressure to challenge Iranian society and foster polarization, he added.

Future developments, Taeb concluded, must be assessed within the framework of competition over national endurance, mutual military and economic constraints, and the interplay of regional dynamics with domestic politics in the U.S. and Israel.

Iran Chamber calls for rethinking export resilience, opening a trade path to Africa

TEHRAN- The president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, referring to the approach of National Export Day, said: This year's National Export Day should be an opportunity to rethink the resilience of the country's foreign trade.

Samad Hassanzadeh, president of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, at the Sunday meeting of the Iran Chamber's Board of Representatives, referring to the approach of National Export Day, said: This year's National Export Day should be an opportunity to rethink the resilience of the country's foreign trade, and in the face of maritime restrictions created by the hostile enemy, diversifying transport routes, activating land and rail corridors, strengthening border trade, using alternative ports, and developing regional settlement mechanisms can reduce export vulnerability.

He added: It is expected that at this year's National Export Day ceremony it will be raised what economic enterprises need to do in the country's difficult economic conditions so that the continued export of export goods becomes possible at a time when most logistics routes have been affected by restrictions created by the hostile enemy.

He emphasized: Today, economic actors must think about other markets and new conditions in the international economy; today we can no longer simply sit and demand from officials that we want to export and that the money from it reach us on time; today it is no longer as before when an economic enterprise waits for a customer to come, but economic actors need to communicate with traders from different countries and design new methods for introducing goods and shaping international partnerships.

Expressing hope that today, in the country's difficult economic conditions, all economic actors will play their role in the best possible way alongside government policies and national programs to sustain production and preserve employment capacity, this economic actor emphasized: Private-sector actors must make every effort so that the flow of goods exports continues through possible routes.

The president of the Iran Chamber added: Today the country's conditions are such that I firmly believe all officials are working day and night to resolve problems, especially in the economic and production areas, and there is not a moment when they are not thinking about solving the private sector's problems, and every effort is made so that the Iranian nation and the blessed Islamic Republic of Iran stand with dignity and authority against the hostile enemy; therefore, we hope that as soon as possible, with national dignity, the problems will be resolved in the way that is in the country's interest, and the people and officials will be able to carry out their duties and responsibilities in the shadow of peace, security, and calm.

Venue for Iranian companies in Kenya under review

Samad Hassanzadeh, referring to the Iran Chamber delegation's participation in the Africa Commercial and Industry Summit (ACIS

2026), said: Alongside participation in this summit, meetings and talks were held with Kenya's Minister of Trade and Investment, the president of the Kenya Chamber, and other heads of chambers from various African countries present at the summit.

Noting that African countries are mostly consumers and do not have sufficient facilities for production, he said: Kenya's economic activity and government officials are very interested in expanding economic relations with Iran, and necessary expert work and study are needed to expand Iran's presence in African markets and to identify the path for presence in Africa.

The president of the Iran Chamber reported preliminary talks on determining a venue for Iranian companies interested in presence in the African market and said: Determining this venue for displaying and offering Iranian products is being reviewed by the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Kenya, and the results of the review will be announced to economic actors.

Hassanzadeh noted: Given the restrictions that sanctions have created for Iran's commercial activities in other countries, opening a path for trade with Africa can be a highly beneficial horizon for the foreign trade of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He described the volume of trade between Iran and African countries as very small despite Iran's capacities, and emphasized: With proper planning, Iran can capture a large share of Africa's foreign trade.

The president of the Iran Chamber, referring to the establishment of special trade centers for Chinese companies in Kenya, said: It is true that government support for economic actors, as the biggest factor in the presence of economic actors in international markets, can be effective, but today the government does not have sufficient facilities for maximum support in this area, and we economic actors ourselves must take the necessary measures to expand foreign trade, and the Chamber will make every effort to regulate these relations.

Establishing 10 business schools across Iran

At the end, the president of the Iran Chamber referred to a decision by the Iran Chamber's Board of Directors regarding the Chamber's social responsibility role and said: During a trip by the Iran Chamber's Board of Directors and a group of chamber presidents to Yasuj, shortcomings in the education sector were identified, and it was decided that a bylaw be prepared by the Iran Chamber for the construction of business schools in 10 less-privileged provinces in the field of educational space.

He said in conclusion: According to a report presented by the Abrar Charity Center, 10 provinces need educational space, and we will draft the relevant bylaw in the Board of Directors and approve it in the Board of Representatives, and we invite provincial chamber presidents to submit any proposals to the Iran Chamber's Board of Directors so that the necessary measures are taken to select these provinces.

New corridors help preserve country's trade capacity: TPO official

TEHRAN- Deputy Head of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said: With the cooperation of various sectors and the creation of new infrastructure and corridors, part of the country's trade capacity was preserved and it became possible for activities to continue.

According to the Mehr News Agency, Amir Roshanbakhsh, Deputy for Promotion of International Businesses of the Iran Trade Promotion Organization, said: In the current conditions, the most important challenge facing Iran's foreign trade is transportation and the movement of goods along export and import routes—a problem that has intensified following the siege.

He stated: In the last year, about 75 percent of the country's goods trade was conducted through the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf. The initial estimate was that, with the imposition of the siege, this capacity would be completely lost; however, statistics for the first six months of the year disprove this claim.



Roshanbakhsh, referring to efforts made to maintain the flow of foreign trade, added: With the cooperation of various sectors and the creation of new infrastructure and corridors, part of the country's trade capacity was preserved and it became possible for activities to continue.

However, he emphasized that the current problems of foreign trade are not solely caused by crisis conditions, but are rooted in policymaking and the approach

to economic governance—issues that existed even under normal conditions and have now become more visible during the crisis period.

In another part of his remarks, Roshanbakhsh addressed the role of economic associations in pursuing the demands of private-sector actors and said: Associations have been formed with the aim of securing the rights of various economic guilds and groups and can be the voice

Vietnam embassy, Iran–Vietnam chamber of commerce chart a path for bilateral trade, investment co-op



By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- Vietnamese Ambassador to Iran Nguyen Luong Ngoc and Mr. Seyed Mostafa Mousavi, President of the Iran–Vietnam Joint Chamber of Commerce, met at the Chamber's headquarters in Tehran on Saturday, together with members of the visiting Vietnamese trade delegation and representatives of Iranian business associations and enterprises, to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral economic, trade and investment cooperation.

During the meeting, Mr. Mousavi highlighted Vietnam's strong economic potential and expressed interest in expanding cooperation in agriculture, industry, oil and gas, logistics and tourism. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening business ties, promoting investment opportunities and facilitating exchanges of business delegations between the two

countries.

Ambassador Nguyen Luong Ngoc underscored the need to enhance the exchange of market information, establish connections between reliable business partners and address challenges related to international payments and goods transportation. He stressed the importance of translating cooperation proposals into concrete and practical initiatives.

The Ambassador reaffirmed the Embassy of Vietnam's commitment to working closely with the Iran–Vietnam Joint Chamber of Commerce, business associations and enterprises from both countries to promote substantive, effective and mutually beneficial economic, trade and investment cooperation.

A Vietnamese trade delegation arrived in Tehran on October 6 and stayed until October 18, led by Mr. Nguyen Dang Dinh. The

mission aimed to expand Vietnam's commercial reach in the Middle East and engage directly with Iran's market.

The delegation visited Bandar Abbas, where it assessed Shahid Rajaei Port, including container operations, bonded storage facilities, and possible land leasing for agricultural commodities and re-export goods. It also visited Petro Pasargad's bitumen refinery and obtained samples of 60/70 penetration-grade bitumen exported to Vietnam.

In Shiraz, the delegation attended Expo Shiraz International Exhibition and explored agriculture, petrochemicals, construction, tourism, healthcare, and handicrafts.

In Tehran, it met Petro Pasargad's CEO and signed an MoU on bitumen cooperation; the company produces about 300–400 tonnes per day and currently offers products mainly FOB due to port and export difficulties. The delegation also visited the MED 26/Iran Med 2026 medical equipment exhibition, met Ohad Group—a manufacturer of oxygen generators and ventilators used in about 80% of Iranian hospitals—and discussed a possible joint-venture manufacturing facility in Vietnam with phased technology transfer.

On October 16, DHT Mining Joint Stock Company and Petro Pasargad Hormozgan Company signed an MoU covering provision and distribution of POH-origin bitumen in Vietnam.

of the private sector.

Referring to the Iran Chamber's more than one-century history of activity, he added: The country's private-sector parliament can play the role of intermediary and facilitator between the government, as the legislator, and economic actors, and can provide the ground for more effective interaction between the two.

According to Roshanbakhsh, strengthening the role of economic associations can help increase private-sector participation in decision-making and regulatory processes and reduce harmful government intervention in economic activities.

In conclusion, referring to the legal capacities of economic associations in the country, he emphasized: Existing laws in this area have suitable capacities, and the Iran Chamber can, by playing an advisory role and addressing association-related issues, provide the ground for strengthening associations and more effective reflection of the private sector's demands.

Dinh identified banking restrictions as the main operational concern and called for flexible settlement frameworks such as bilateral barter trade or compliant local-currency clearing. Official Vietnam–Iran trade is around \$170 million, but actual potential is significantly higher because the economies are complementary.

Priority sectors for immediate cooperation include agriculture and food processing; industrial raw materials such as specialty chemicals, construction supplies, and polymers; and healthcare and pharmaceuticals, including medical equipment, active ingredients, and biotechnology.

Key bottlenecks include long transit times, high freight costs, and differing quality-compliance frameworks such as Halal certification. The delegation recommended direct links with regional logistics providers and mutual recognition between regulators to standardize inspections and expedite customs clearance.

Vietnam's 17 free trade agreements and access to 60 economies offer a platform for joint ventures or Vietnam-based production, enabling Iranian firms to add value inside Vietnam and jointly access ASEAN and wider international markets under compliant arrangements. Follow-up should focus on clarifying commercial terms, logistics arrangements, and specific cooperation mechanisms while assessing legal, financial, and technological feasibility.

He added: "Meetings have been held with the heads of customs administrations of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, and this week the head of Turkmenistan's customs administration was present on the soil of the Islamic Republic of Iran and negotiations were held in this regard. The other sides have also announced readiness to cooperate and increase truck transit capacity."

The Head of Iran Customs Administration, referring to operational visits to important border customs offices of the country, said: "In these visits, problems related to various agencies and obstacles in the process of transit and goods clearance were examined. A significant part of these issues was raised in last week's meeting with the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, many of which were solvable, and a number have also been resolved."

New customs instructions drafted to reduce goods stoppage at borders

TEHRAN- The Head of Iran Customs Administration announced the drafting of an executive instruction for customs facilitations aimed at speeding up goods clearance, reducing duplicate procedures, and smoothing truck movement at the country's borders.

According to Mehr News Agency, Foroud Asgari, Head of Iran Customs Administration, speaking on the sidelines of a meeting at the Iran Chamber of Commerce, referred to the issues raised there regarding smoothing the entry and exit of goods, truck traffic at borders, goods valuation, guarantees, and percentage-based clearance of goods. He stated: "During the war period, we obtained a set of customs facilitations from authorized authorities, took them to the government, and had them approved. The President signed these approvals on 16 Mehr,

and we are now preparing their executive instruction so that the provisions of the approval are implemented uniformly in customs offices across the country."

Stating that the main focus of this instruction is preventing goods from stopping at the country's entry and exit points, he added: "In the export area, we are seeking to have goods assessed using the capacity of inland customs offices so that shipments, after going through assessment procedures, are not stopped again at the borders."

The Head of Iran Customs Administration, explaining the mechanism envisaged for controlling shipments at borders, said: "Risk management is applied at border entry points, and shipments that require further control based on risk assessment will be directed to the docks for necessary

checks; but other goods should pass through the green lane based on mutual trust and the seal affixed by the customs of origin, in order to prevent duplicate controls and unnecessary stoppage."

Asgari emphasized: "The goal is for customs controls to be carried out in proportion to the risk level of each shipment, and for goods that do not need re-examination to cross the border without imposing extra procedures and stoppage."

Referring to the envisaged timing mechanism in the import area, he stated: "A specific time has been considered for the various agencies involved in the import process, and the agencies responsible for issuing permits must issue the relevant permits within the set deadline."

The Head of Iran Customs Administration continued: "The responsible

agencies must decide on imported goods and related processes within a specified timetable. If an agency does not act within the stipulated deadline, it must be accountable to the relevant authorities."

Asgari added: "Customs will also extract information on the timing of processes and permit issuance and will provide performance reports on the agencies to the country's authorities so that obstacles in the path of goods clearance are identified and followed up."

Referring to the problems existing in the order registration and goods sampling processes, he said: "In drafting this approval, attention was paid to issues related to order registration, repeated sampling, and measures that were unnecessary but caused rework and increased process time, and we tried to envisage

the necessary solutions to resolve these problems."

The Head of Iran Customs Administration expressed hope that with the implementation of the new instruction, a significant change will occur in the process of goods entering and exiting the country's customs points, and economic actors will be able to clear their goods more quickly and easily.

Asgari, in response to the issue of truck stoppage and traffic at the country's borders and the measures taken to resolve this problem, stated: "Part of the existing issues must be followed up by Customs itself. In this regard, we have held border meetings with the heads of customs administrations of neighboring countries to achieve greater coordination for removing obstacles and increasing truck transit capacity."

France in a web of problems partly fueled by the war on Iran

More than 1,800 arrested as police clash with protesters across France

From page 1 ► Classrooms had reached 40 degrees Celsius over the summer. By Oct. 1, 1,027 of roughly 3,700 lycées were affected.

A separate revolt started Sept. 15, when fishermen blocked ports at Nice and Sète. Diesel climbed to a record of about 2.41 euros a liter after the Strait of Hormuz was closed in the war that the United States and Israel launched against Iran on Feb. 28.

On Saturday the two grievances marched together, joined by university students, the CGT, teachers' unions, former yellow vests, farmers, truckers, nurses and climate activists.

Student representatives want 10 billion euros for education. The unions want a 6 percent public-sector raise after a fourth freeze of the pay index, which has been frozen since July 2023.

La France Insoumise, a left-wing party founded by Jean-Luc Mélenchon that advocates wealth redistribution and expanded public services, says it backs the movement without running it. Matignon, the prime minister's office, calls the school protests an operation by the party and its allies.

A Le Figaro poll found 62 percent of respondents call the student cause justified, while 61 percent say the party is too involved. The masked groups that have fought police have published no demands.

Police have arrested thousands of minors, maimed some

The Justice Ministry counted 6,877 custodies by Oct. 9, 86 percent of them minors. That is already more than 60 percent of the 11,203 that Amnesty recorded across the entire yellow vest movement. The police watchdog has 24 investigations open.

The injuries are specific. A



A protestor dressed as Jesus Christ and holding a mock gas station dispenser walks past a burning car during a demonstration against the cost of living and rising fuel prices at Place de la République in Paris as part of nationwide protests called by the “Yellow Vests” movement, joined by French high school and university students, teachers and parents demanding better school conditions and government action, as well as labour unions, workers, farmers and retirees, France, October 17, 2026.

15-year-old lost his left hand to a grenade in Lens on Oct. 5. A 16-year-old lost the use of an eye in Tours. A 14-year-old's jaw was shattered in Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône.

On Saturday, a 17-year-old reportedly lost a hand in Saint-Étienne, and Interior Minister Nuñez declined to confirm what caused it. Amnesty called the force disproportionate.

Nuñez suspended one type of stun grenade at school protests on Oct. 7. He re-authorized them Oct. 16 for “urban violence.”

A government that has routinely lectured nations such as Iran on how to treat young demonstrators now runs the arrest statistics described above. Nuñez himself reports more than 500 injured police, gendarmes and firefighters on Saturday, against the 150 Lecornu cited that night.

A weakened government and protests spreading abroad

President Emmanuel Macron's approval rating stands at a re-

cord low of 15 percent in the Ipsos BVA-CESI poll. Lecornu has 22 percent positive and 69 percent negative, and his government holds 211 of 577 Assembly seats.

The 10-year bond yield touched 5.03 percent in early October, the highest in over two decades. Debt is about 3.6 trillion euros, and interest payments next year will be at least 90 billion. Mujtaba Rahman of Eurasia Group sees a crisis of liberal democracy, a fiscal crisis and a youth crisis arriving together.

Prime Minister Lecornu says France has reached a “point of no return” and told the country it is time to “choose sides.” Jean-Luc Mélenchon replied that the prime minister is “responsible for the chaos.”

Marine Le Pen says social demands were “taken hostage by the extreme left.” She leads the first-round polling for April 18 at 35 percent, ahead of Édouard Philippe at 15 and Mélenchon at 14, according to Ifop.

The remedies so far have been small. Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu released 10 million barrels of diesel from reserves after the G7 agreed to free 100 million, and he has promised 3,000 substitute teachers.

Student leaders call it insufficient. The CGT has called an inter-professional strike for Nov. 5, and firefighters have a strike notice running to Oct. 20. AFP judged Saturday more intense than the 2023 riots and the 2018 yellow vest unrest.

Elsewhere in Europe, police fired tear gas and water cannon in Brussels and Liège.

A march against wars and rising living costs in Milan ended in looting and fires, and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said, “Demonstrating is a right. Setting our cities ablaze is not.”

Tens of thousands marched in Lisbon over housing and wages. HEC Paris professor Alberto Alemanno calls France the epicenter of separate movements with shared grievances, and sees early stirrings in Greece, Germany and Austria.

Donald Trump declared on Truth Social that “France is burning” and blamed immigration, urging Paris to “close your Borders.” He did not mention schools, diesel prices or his own war of choice behind them.

On October 6, Tehran summoned France's ambassador. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei pointed to a glaring double standard, noting that while French officials championed unrest in Iran as a “peaceful uprising,” they quickly branded domestic student demonstrations as criminal “urban violence.” While arson and attacks on police cannot be justified, Baqaei emphasized, “The problem is the double standards.”

The decline of US dominance in West Asia

By Ali Minabi

TEHRAN — Several factors have contributed to the decline of U.S. hegemony in West Asia.

For decades, the United States maintained a clear military advantage in air and naval power. Its advanced fighter jets, such as the F-35, and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, including the USS Abraham Lincoln, gave it a significant technological edge.

But having the most advanced weapons did not necessarily mean being prepared for a prolonged war, particularly one that required weapons and ammunition to be produced and replenished on a mass scale.

This weakness became particularly clear during the illegal war against Iran. The U.S. deployed a massive fleet designed and built during the twentieth century for operations across the open oceans. It was now being drawn into a war in the Persian Gulf, where narrow waterways and shallow coastal waters presented a very different set of challenges.

The U.S. military faces persistent hurdles in maintaining equipment and delivering new weapons on schedule. Its supply chains also depend on foreign sources for certain critical materials. China plays an important role in the supply of gallium and germanium, which are used in military electronics and other advanced technologies. This dependence creates potential vulnerabilities, especially if export restrictions disrupt access to these materials.

These weaknesses expose a fundamental contradiction in American military power: the ability to field sophisticated weapons does not necessarily translate into the ability to sustain a prolonged war.

Iran's war of attrition

These dependencies make a prolonged conflict increasingly difficult to sustain. U.S. forces risk exhausting their stockpiles faster than they can replenish them, a structural vulnerability that can be exploited through a multidimensional war of attrition.

By deploying large numbers of inexpensive drones and ballistic missiles across land, sea, and air, Iran has confronted U.S. forces with a stark economic imbalance. Tens and billions of dollars' worth of carrier strike groups and ground-based air-defense systems have been

forced to expend scarce interceptor missiles, costing \$2 million each against dense waves of Iranian drones no more than \$20,000 apiece.

Moreover, because these high-tech interceptors cannot be replaced quickly, every missile fired represents a permanent drain on American combat readiness, opening a direct strategic opportunity for its competitors.

Instruments of financial dominance

The U.S. military presence in West Asia was also only sustainable to the extent that the financial system funding it was sustainable. American regional dominance has long rested largely on monetary control, specifically the petrodollar and central authority over the global banking system through the SWIFT network.

This monetary monopoly gave Washington an influential diplomatic tool, including the ability to freeze foreign central bank reserves, impose unilateral sanctions, and isolate entire countries from international trade.

But the repeated use of these tools has sent a warning far beyond the countries directly targeted. By weaponizing its financial dominance, Washington has demonstrated to the wider international community that dependence on U.S.-controlled financial infrastructure can itself become a sovereign liability.

As Iran sought alternative payment and settlement mechanisms to circumvent sanctions, energy exporters that were not directly targeted, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, also began diversifying their options.

By exploring non-dollar arrangements for settling oil and gas transactions, expanding the use of local currencies in trade with major buyers such as China, and participating in multilateral digital-currency initiatives, these countries have begun laying the groundwork for a less dollar-dependent energy trade. Such efforts could gradually reduce the reach of Western financial jurisdiction over strategically important markets.

At the same time, the fiscal foundations of American financial dominance have weakened from within. Decades of overseas military adventures, including spending outside ordinary budgetary channels, have contributed

to mounting federal deficits and a rapidly expanding national debt. The annual U.S. budget deficit is just shy of \$2 trillion, while the national debt has surpassed \$40 trillion.

The collapse of moral authority

Perhaps nothing has damaged U.S. hegemony more profoundly than the erosion of its moral authority.

For decades, Washington, backed by Western media organizations and think tanks, has invoked moral arguments to justify coups, military invasions, and forcible regime change. From the 1953 coup in Iran to the invasions and occupations of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, and the regime-change campaign in Libya in 2011, the U.S. has repeatedly presented its geopolitical ambitions as moral imperatives. The intervention in Syria in 2024 forms part of this same pattern.

For years, Washington managed to defend its international standing against accusations of hypocrisy. That credibility, however, has been badly damaged by the genocidal war in Gaza.

Washington has shielded the Zionist regime from international accountability.

This has undermined the credibility of the so-called rules-based international order, making it increasingly difficult to distinguish universal principles from policies designed to serve the interests of the U.S. and its allies.

By the time Washington waged an illegal war against Iran, its moral authority had already suffered substantial damage. The legitimacy that once helped underpin U.S. global leadership had lost much of its persuasive force. What remained was a political narrative that increasingly struggled to convince a public audience and Washington's closest allies.

End of an era?

This does not mean that the U.S. will collapse tomorrow. It remains a global superpower, with formidable military, economic, and technological capabilities.

The more consequential change is that the international order dominated by the West for roughly five centuries, an order that shifted the center of global power away from Asia and toward the West, is now eroding much faster.



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European diplomats feel the sting of settler violence in West Bank

From page 1 ► Bernard Baudoux, mayor of Aulnoye-Aymeries, was wearing his red, white and blue sash of office and attempting to enter a vehicle with diplomatic plates when he was assaulted and knocked to the ground, the Guardian reported.

The masked militant shouted “Vive la France” as he launched the attack, a witness said. Badoux's wife, and Vincent Dollmann, archbishop of Cambrai, were also threatened by the group of seven men, some armed with clubs.

The group had joined the olive harvest on lands belonging to the Christian town of Taybeh, along with the French consul general in Jerusalem, his wife and other diplomats, and the Belgian and Polish consuls.

Settlers first attacked a group working on the lower slopes of hills near Taybeh. As well as stealing olives, they kicked, abused and assaulted a Palestinian woman in her 70s and beat a man so badly he needed six stitches for a head injury.

Then they approached the diplomats and Badoux, who was in Taybeh for the launch of a twinning agreement with his town in northern France. During the attack, the militants smashed the window of an armored car belonging to the Belgian mission.

Maxime Prévot, Belgium's deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, condemned the violence against Palestinians, foreign diplomats and journalists, and said his country would continue to push for European Union sanctions on settlers.

“Harvesting olives, reporting the news or carrying out diplomatic duties should never put anyone at risk of attack,” he said. “This violence cannot be separated from Israel's illegal settlement policy ... the occupation of the Palestinian territory must end.”

Echoing those sentiments, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot echoed called on Israeli authorities to “urgently halt this criminal violence and guarantee the safety of civilian populations.”

Poland's foreign affairs ministry also called for a “firm response” from Israeli authorities

and for “an end to the spiral of violence in the West Bank”.

The EU condemned the attacks, urged Israel to abide by international and human rights law, and end the expansion of settlements.

To render the incident insignificant, the office of the Prime Minister Benjamin suggesting it was part of a “coordinated campaign to smear Israel.”

Palestinian residents of Taybeh have lived with years of escalating attacks from Israeli militants, but settlers had never targeted foreign diplomats there, said Father Bashir Fawadleh, the town's parish priest.

“What happened today is not an isolated incident. It represents a deeply disturbing escalation in settler violence,” Fawadleh said.

Since the start of the annual olive harvest in late September, Israeli militants have used violence to stop Palestinians bringing in a crop that is economically and culturally vital to their communities.

Since September 27, settlers have launched more than 170 attacks, Israeli rights group Yesh Din said. They killed at least four people, injured more than 100 and damaged thousands of trees, according to Palestinian authorities.

Even the presence of Israeli activists, diplomats, senior clergy and journalists no longer serves as a deterrence to extreme violence.

“If such violence can take place before international witnesses, one must ask what protection remains for local families and farmers when those witnesses are no longer present,” Fawadleh said. “No individual should have to risk physical assault simply to harvest olives from their own land.”

On Friday, Israeli militants attacked and severely injured Washington Post photojournalist Heidi Levine as she reported on the harvest in the town of Abu Falah. She required surgery on Saturday morning and is now in “moderate” condition, according to a spokesperson for Israel's Beilinson hospital where she is being treated.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Handala breaches Israeli military's media intelligence hub, leaks thousands of files

By staff writer

TEHRAN — Handala said on Sunday that it broke into the Israeli military's Media Intelligence Monitoring and Analysis Unit and put more than 500 classified documents and tens of thousands of internal messages online.

The unit combs Israeli and foreign media for the army and works alongside Unit 8200 and the military censor.

Handala called the breach “a blow to Israel's information security infrastructure” and said it will soon publish the unit's organizational structure and the reach of its access to military intelligence systems.

A small sample from the release, analyzed by the Tehran Times, shows the work itself. It holds 11,275 posts from X, all filed under the label “Israeli Media” and nearly all written in January 2024, the fourth month of the war on Gaza.

Each carries the author's handle and a “normalized influence” score from zero to 78. About 4,500 accounts appear, roughly four in five posting in Hebrew.

Where a follower count was recorded, the median is 377, and an account with seven followers still earned a 17.

A considerable portion of what the analysts gathered is Israelis arguing and commenting about their own regime. More than 3,000 posts concern the captives.

Ynet Alerts relays the army's admission that captive Sahar Baruch died in a failed rescue, under the line that living hostages do not return by military means.

Prof. David Pinto's call to “flood Hamas's tunnels” is posted again and again. One user writes that the government would not be discussing ethnic cleansing in Gaza, and might stop starving Gazans, if Israelis filled the streets.

Then-war minister Yoav Gallant is named in about 190 posts, and Itamar Ben-Gvir in about 130. Over 400 posts react to the killing of

Hamas leader Saleh al-Arouri in Beirut, and a dozen tag Senator Lindsey Graham. Posts demanding the army “crush everyone in Gaza and settle it with Jews” sit in the same file batch, on the same scale.

A smaller batch dates to August 8, 2022, days after Israel's offensive in Gaza that month. It logs military correspondents Yoav Limor, Amir Bohbot, Yoav Zitun, Yossi Yehoshua, Roy Sharon and Or Heller, plus army-linked pages such as Soldiers Tweeting. Reporter tracking predates October 7 by more than a year.

Handala's operation places the machinery that records and analyzes those conversations in open view. Handala says the unit's organizational chart is next.

The Israeli establishment has long claimed technological superiority, backed by steady Western support. Each successful penetration chips at that claim.

Earlier Handala actions already emptied email accounts belonging to Ehud Barak, Gadi Eisenkot, and Benny Gantz, and pulled material from devices linked to Naftali Bennett and Netanyahu's chief of staff.

In March, it published FBI Director Kash Patel's personal email, which U.S. officials confirmed. In April came some 19,000 files it attributed to former army chief Herzi Halevi. In September it released selfies of about 700 Israeli security personnel, taken with a tool it called Na'em.

On October 15, it posted 120 pages of contacts belonging to Israeli politician Tzipi Livni, exposing her opposition to Netanyahu as theater.

Naftali Bennett first denied his phone was compromised, then acknowledged unauthorized access to his Telegram account. This month Haaretz said it had verified leaked WhatsApp messages of Netanyahu aide Yonatan Urlich, who confirmed his account was hacked.

Jafari: AFC nomination an honor for Iranian women’s football

TEHRAN - Marziyeh Jafari, head coach of Iran’s women’s national team and Bam Khatoon club, has been shortlisted among the three finalists for the AFC Women’s Coach of the Year award for the second consecutive year, describing the nomination as an honor for Iranian women’s football as a whole.

Jafari’s name has once again featured on the shortlist for the Asian Football Confederation’s annual awards. Having won the continent’s top women’s coaching accolade last year, she now has the opportunity to defend her title at the 2026 ceremony and add another milestone to an already impressive coaching career.

The nomination also carries a striking sense of déjà vu. On Oct. 16 last year, Jafari was named Asia’s best women’s coach in Riyadh. Exactly one year later, she has once again made the final three.

At last year’s ceremony, Jafari became the first Iranian woman to win the award. Twelve months after breaking new ground, she is now in contention to repeat that historic achievement.

Speaking exclusively to Tehran Times, Jafari said: “I have always said that this honor belongs to the whole of Iranian women’s football. Coaches and players have all worked incredibly hard, and their efforts have helped put our women’s football on the map.”

She added: “I am delighted to be nominated for the AFC Women’s Coach of the Year award, although I do not know what the future holds. At the moment, I am in charge of Khatoon Bam and also working with the women’s national team. I hope to do everything I can to help both teams achieve success.”

Jafari concluded by expressing her heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported her along the way.

“I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who has supported me on this journey,” she said.

Iran beach soccer thrash Oman in Belarus tournament

TEHRAN - Iran’s national beach soccer team opened their campaign at the Belarus Tournament with an emphatic 8-2 victory over Oman.

Ali Naderi’s side produced an attacking display to secure a convincing win and make a strong start to the competition.

Iran will face hosts Belarus in their second match on Sunday.

The tournament is part of Iran’s preparations for the 2026 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, which will be held in Thailand in late November.

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

Iranian wrestlers win five medals at 2026 U23 World Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestlers claimed two gold and three bronze medals in the first five weight classes at the 2026 U23 World Wrestling Championships in Las Vegas, United States.

Ebrahim Khari won bronze in the 61kg category after recording a commanding 12-0 victory over Romania’s Gabriel Wyatt Whisenhunt in the bronze medal bout.

Khari had earlier suffered a 7-1 defeat to American wrestler Benjamin Adam Davino before bouncing back in the repechage, where he beat Japan’s Akito Mukaida 15-4 to secure his place in the medal match.

Ali Karampour also claimed bronze for Iran in the 74kg category, defeating Moldova’s Ion Mar-

cu 10-0 in the third-place bout.

Reza Afshar added another bronze medal in the 86kg division after defeating Moldova’s Eugeniu Mihalcean 6-0 in the bronze medal match. Following an opening-round loss to Turkey’s Ahmet Yagan, Afshar fought his way back into contention with victories over opponents from Mexico and Armenia.

Abolfazl Rahmani secured Iran’s first gold medal in the 92kg category. He edged Turkey’s Fatih Altunbas 6-3 in the semifinals before defeating Russia’s Arslan Bagaev 5-2 in the final to claim the title.

Abolfazl Mohammadnejad completed Iran’s gold medal double with a dominant performance in the 125kg final, where he pinned down a 10-0 victory over Georgia’s Aleksandre Abramishvili.

Mohammadnejad reached the final after defeating opponents from Ukraine, Russia and Azerbaijan, capping an impressive run through the heavyweight division.

Iran’s five-medal haul in the first five weight classes underlined the team’s strong start to the U23 World Championships, with two titles and three bronze medals providing an encouraging platform for the remainder of the competition.

Iran at Nagoya 2026: A smaller squad chasing a strong record

TEHRAN - The Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games opened with Iran’s delegation parading behind flag bearer Rouhollah Rostami.

Iran has entered 166 athletes this time, a noticeably smaller squad than in recent editions. Expectations remain high, though, because Iran’s record at these Games has improved steadily since they began in 2010.

Four editions of progress

Iran debuted at Guangzhou 2010 with 156 athletes and finished fourth with 27 gold, 24 silver and 29 bronze medals, 80 in total. At Incheon 2014 the team again ranked fourth, but its haul rose to 120 medals, including 37 golds and 52 silvers.

Jakarta 2018 brought a podium place in the standings. Iran ranked third with 51 golds and well over 130 medals in total, using a 210-strong team.

The peak so far came at Hangzhou 2022 (held in October 2023). Iran finished second with 44 gold, 46 silver and 41 bronze medals, 131 in all, from a squad of about 209 athletes. It was the first time Iranian para athletes had placed second in the tally. Later doping-related reallocations trimmed Iran’s final count slightly to 129.

What the numbers show

Total medals rose from 80 in 2010 to about 131 in 2022, an increase of roughly 64 percent. The ranking climbed from fourth to fourth to third to second. Gold medals peaked in 2018, but the overall total and the ranking peaked in 2022, which suggests a deeper and broader medal base rather than reliance on a few sports.

Some sports have been constant. Iran’s men have dominated sitting volleyball, winning gold at the first three Asian Para Games, with four titles overall by 2022. The women’s team has regularly reached the final, taking silver in 2018 and again in 2022. Powerlifting has also been a cornerstone of Iran’s success at every edition.

New disciplines have helped too. Para taekwondo and para canoe debuted at Hangzhou, and Iran’s athletes reached the podium in both for the first time.

The Nagoya outlook

The 166 athletes in Nagoya are about 20 percent fewer than the squad Iran sent to Hangzhou. A smaller team has less margin for error, so established strengths such as sitting volleyball, powerlifting, judo and athletics will matter even more. Competition is also stiff. China has dominated every edition, and host Japan will aim to improve on its own record at home.

With the Games only just under way, it is too early to judge whether Iran can hold second place or even improve on it. The history suggests a program that consistently turns its participation into medals, and the coming week will show whether a leaner delegation can keep that run going.

Crafting and playing the oud: A living musical heritage in Iran

TEHRAN – With its resonant melodies and distinctive pear-shaped body, the oud has long been part of the musical traditions of Iran and the wider West Aisa. Its craftsmanship and performance, sustained through generations of makers and musicians, received international recognition in 2022 when Iran and Syria jointly inscribed the tradition on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The inscription was approved during the 17th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Rabat, Morocco, from Nov. 28 to Dec. 3, 2022. At the time, the addition brought the number of Iran’s inscribed intangible cultural heritage elements to 18.

The oud is a lute-like string instrument known for its warm, expressive sound. Musicians play it by resting the instrument on their leg, fingering the strings with one hand and plucking them with the other. Its ability to produce rich melodic and harmonic tones makes it suitable for solo performances as well as ensembles accompanying traditional songs and dances.

Crafting an oud requires patience and specialized woodworking skills. Its most distinc-



tive component is a pear-shaped sound box, commonly made of walnut wood, which plays a central role in shaping the instrument’s resonance. According to the traditional methods described in Iran’s nomination, making an oud can take about 25 days, including stages of wood preparation and treatment. Water and steam are used to improve the wood’s durability and workability.

A typical oud has five pairs of strings, although some versions include a sixth string. Variations in construction and stringing allow musicians to produce a broad range of tones and adapt the instrument to different musical styles.

Beyond its physical form, the

oud represents a body of knowledge encompassing material selection, woodworking, instrument construction and musical performance. Its historical presence is reflected in artistic depictions, literary works and miniature paintings, offering evidence of its place in the region’s cultural memory.

In southern Iran, the instrument and related musical traditions have particular significance among some Arab and Bakhtiari communities, especially in Khuzestan, Bushehr and Hormozgan provinces. Oud music is also practiced and appreciated in other parts of the country, including Tehran, Kurdistan, Shiraz, Isfahan and Khorasan.

The tradition continues

National Museum of Iran highlights public role of archaeology on Intl. Archaeology Day



TEHRAN – The National Museum of Iran has reaffirmed its commitment to making the country’s archaeological heritage accessible to the public, highlighting the role of museums in communicating scientific discoveries and fostering a broader appreciation of the past on International Archaeology Day.

Observed annually on the third Saturday of October, International Archaeology Day provides an opportunity to recognize archaeology’s contribution to understanding past societies and to reflect on the importance of sharing archaeological knowl-

edge beyond academic circles. As Iran’s foremost archaeological museum, the National Museum of Iran has long sought to bridge the gap between archaeological research and the public through exhibitions and educational initiatives that bring the country’s rich cultural heritage to wider audiences.

Marking the occasion, Dr. Jebrael Nokandeh, director general of the National Museum of Iran, paid tribute to Dr. Ezatollah Negahban (1921–2008), widely regarded as the father of modern Iranian archaeology, emphasizing his pioneering contribu-

to archaeological research and public engagement.

“Through his excavations at Marlik, Haft Tappeh, Tappeh Zagheh, Qabrestan, and Sagzabad, Negahban opened new horizons in the study of Iran’s archaeological heritage,” Nokandeh said. “Yet his contribution extended well beyond excavation and academic publication. He worked tirelessly to bring archaeology closer to the public and to demonstrate its importance in understanding and preserving the past.”

Negahban employed a wide range of approaches to promote public awareness of archaeology, organizing exhibitions, giving interviews and lectures, participating in radio and television programs, writing articles for general audiences, and inviting members of the public to visit archaeological excavations. Through his teaching at the University of Tehran, he also helped introduce Iranian archaeology to wider audiences and encouraged greater public engagement with the country’s cultural heritage.

His excavations at Marlik and Haft Tappeh brought significant archaeological discoveries to wider attention. The Marlik collection, renowned for its remarkable artifacts, and the finds from Haft Tappeh, including the Elamite royal tomb, have become

through formal education and apprenticeship. Music schools, art centres, colleges and universities teach oud performance, while experienced musicians pass on their knowledge through direct instruction. Oud making, traditionally practiced predominantly by men, has also attracted increasing numbers of women, broadening participation in the craft.

Iran included the tradition on its National Heritage List in 2018, before submitting the multinational nomination with Syria for UNESCO recognition.

The inscription adds to Iran’s extensive record of intangible cultural heritage, which includes the Radif of Iranian music, the music of the Bakhshis of Khorasan, the art of crafting and playing the kamantcheh, traditional dotar craftsmanship, carpet weaving, Ta’zieh, Naqqali storytelling and the art of miniature.

The joint recognition of oud craftsmanship and performance highlights the importance of safeguarding living traditions that transcend national borders. Their continuity depends not only on preserving techniques and instruments but also on ensuring that the knowledge, music and cultural practices associated with them remain part of everyday life for future generations.

important elements of Iran’s archaeological heritage, attracting interest both nationally and internationally.

“Negahban’s legacy reminds us that archaeology is not solely a scientific discipline; it is also a means of connecting people with their history and cultural identity,” Nokandeh said. “Archaeological museums have a particular responsibility to communicate research findings in ways that are accessible, engaging, and meaningful to the public.”

Continuing this tradition, the National Museum of Iran seeks to strengthen the relationship between archaeological research, museums, and society. International Archaeology Day, Nokandeh noted, is an opportunity to recognize the efforts of archaeologists, museum professionals, and all those who contribute to the study and presentation of the past.

He also emphasized that safeguarding archaeological sites, preserving cultural objects, and making archaeological knowledge available to future generations require collective commitment. The protection of cultural heritage, he stressed, is a shared responsibility that extends beyond museums and research institutions to society as a whole.

Feast of grapes: A harvest tradition and travel experience in Iran

TEHRAN – Held between August 21 and September 21 in different grape-growing regions of Iran, the feast of grapes is a traditional harvest celebration with roots believed to date back around 3,000 years.

When grapes reach full ripeness, the festival offers travelers an opportunity to experience Iran’s agricultural traditions, folk culture and living intangible heritage.

The celebration is particularly associated with Urmia and villages across West Azarbaijan province, where the traditional grape feast and Doushab-pazan --the preparation of grape juice and doushab, a thick grape syrup, have been registered as national intangible cultural heritage.

The tradition is believed to have originated in the ancient times as an expression of gratitude for the grape harvest. It later continued among Christian and Armenian communities in the region.

As mentioned by Visit Iran, the festival has been held in villages including Gerdabad, Di-

galeh, Resimanabad, Ghoshchi, Jamalabad and Goulan, with local communities maintaining their own customs.

Historically, grapes were regarded as a blessing, and some communities avoided eating the first grapes of the harvest before the ceremony. Care was also taken during harvesting to prevent grapes from falling to the ground, reflecting the belief that wasting the fruit was an act of ingratitude.

In the Urmia area, festivities traditionally take place around the vineyards and Lake Urmia. A central figure is the Il Bashi, or tribal leader, who opens the ceremony with words of thanks and a special prayer in Azarbaijani, followed by a Persian translation. Traditionally, the leader is accompanied by four women representing earth, water, air and fire, as well as a young boy and girl symbolizing the continuation of life.

The children distribute grapes to participants as a blessing. Prayers are offered for the protection of vineyards and crops from hail, storms and floods, followed by the tra-

ditional extraction of grape juice using specialized tools and equipment.

The festival then becomes a lively community celebration. Local wrestling competitions, Azerbaijani folk songs such as Qushmaja and Bayati, and traditional dances form part of the festivities. The collective Yali dance, performed by participants standing in a line, represents unity and togetherness.

Visitors may also encounter displays and competitions involving dried grapes and other products, including grape juice, vinegar and raisins.

For travelers, the feast of grapes provides more than a seasonal festival. It is an opportunity to enter the vineyards, meet local communities and observe traditions that connect agriculture with music, food, belief and collective memory. Held during the transition from summer to autumn, the celebration offers a distinctive way to discover the cultural landscape of northwestern Iran and the enduring traditions of the communities around Urmia.

Iran, Iraq discuss boosting academic ties to meet domestic, regional priorities



TEHRAN – Iran’s scientific counselor in Iraq, Mohammad-Javad Najafi, and Iraqi Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Haider Abd Dahed, have discussed ways to strengthen academic cooperation between universities in the two countries, with a focus on problem-solving approaches and addressing domestic and regional needs.

Collaboration on problem-oriented research, the provision of scholarships, the facilitation of educational issues for students, and preparation for the ‘Third Iran-Iraq Science Week’ were the key topics discussed during the meeting, IRNA reported.

The officials also discussed conducting collaborative research projects, supervising joint dissertations for postgraduate degrees, and publishing joint scientific articles in globally reputable magazines.

Addressing the challenges and educational problems faced by the students in reciprocal countries was the other issue raised by the two sides.

In September, the chancellor of Shiraz University, Alireza Afsharf, and Najafi explored the potential to expand academic ties with Iraqi universities.

The officials met on September 26, discussing ways to develop collaborative educational courses, exchange students and professors, attract international students, and conduct joint research projects, msrt.ir reported.

Establishing dual degree programs, holding summer schools and educational courses in English and Arabic languages, and participating in Iran-Iraq Science Week were among other issues

highlighted by the officials.

The officials also highlighted the need to share the scientific and educational capacities and the capabilities of Shiraz University with Iraqi students, and to implement research projects on shared challenges like dust storms and the environment. They also discussed ways to foster ties with universities and scientific centers in Lebanon and Kurdistan.

Enhancing tech ties

On September 22, Ehsan Qaboul, head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology’s Center for International Scientific Cooperation, and Safaa Taqi Abd Nour Al-Issawi, president of Mustansiriyah University, highlighted the need to boost technological cooperation and implement previously reached agreements.

The officials met in Tehran and agreed to conduct joint research projects and supervise postgraduate theses focused on Iran-Iraq shared issues, including economic, social, cultural, agricultural, and industrial challenges, IRNA reported.

Both parties agreed to have an active participation in the third Iran-Iraq Science Week. Qaboul, for his part, said the Iraqi university is expected to play an effective role in the week through defining and executing practical and synergistic programs in cooperation with top Iranian universities.

Highlighting Iran’s remarkable achievements in developing infrastructures for technology and innovation ecosystems, the official voiced the country’s readiness for collaboration with Iraqi research and academic centers to produce joint technological ser-

vices and products.

The proposals were well-received by the Iraqi official. He announced the university’s determination to expand ties with leading Iranian universities while highlighting the need to follow up on the implementation of these agreements in the shortest possible time.

On August 6, Iraqi officials in a meeting with Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, called for expanding academic, scientific, and technological cooperation with Iran.

The science minister met Iraq’s Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Haider Abd-Dahd Al-Rubaie, Iraq’s Minister of Health, Abdul-Hussein al-Mousawi, and Acting Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Abdul Hussein Al-Mussawi, in Baghdad, IRNA reported.

During the meeting, the two sides underscored the need to expedite the implementation of the previously signed memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

Sharing Iran’s expertise in higher education development to achieve quantitative and qualitative goals, addressing the needs of Iraq’s substantial youth population, as well as attracting genius Iraqi students, and enhancing research collaborations were among the key focuses of the talks.

Simaei-Sarraf also held a meeting with Iraq’s National Wisdom Movement leader Sayyed Ammar al-Hakim.

Underlining the extensive scientific and academic capacities of Iran and Iraq, both parties exchanged views on strategies for

promoting scientific cooperation, expanding joint research collaborations, and developing academic interactions between the higher education institutions of the two countries.

In April, Simaei-Sarraf and Al-Aboudi underlined the need to boost scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries.

The officials also discussed ways to develop collaborations on artificial intelligence (AI) utilizing the capacities of the two nations, IRNA reported.

During a meeting held in Tehran on April 18, Al-Aboudi announced that the establishment of a branch of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in Iraq has been put on the agenda.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf voiced Iran’s readiness to share the country’s scientific, research, and educational achievements with Iraq to help enhance bilateral ties.

The official said that Iranian and Iraqi students have conducted a total of 350 joint research projects so far, which needs to be improved considering the available capacities.

Referring to an upcoming Iran-Iraq science week, which is scheduled to be held in Isfahan and Fars provinces, Simaei-Sarraf said the event was delayed because of the [US-Israeli imposed] war, but it will be held at the earliest convenience.

As the two officials agreed, AI and smart education will be among the topics to be discussed during the Iran-Iraq science week. The event is expected to lay the basis for holding a joint conference on AI in the near future.

Iranian delegation attends Combined Exhibition of Advanced Technologies in Japan



TEHRAN – Supported by the Prosperity and Innovation Fund, an Iranian delegation consisting of 17 knowledge-based companies participated in Combined Exhibition of Advanced Technologies (CEATEC) held from October 13 to 16 at Nippon Convention Center, Chiba, Japan.

The event served as a great opportunity for knowledge-based firms, technology experts, and industrialists to share and become familiar with the latest innovations, products, and technological trends in advanced technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, internet of the things, and digital transformation, IRNA reported.

On October 15, knowledge-based firms paid a visit to Tokyo Innovation Base (TIB), and participated in networking sessions, professional interactions with experts operating in innovation ecosystem. During the visit, Iranian and Japanese representatives held B2B meetings, exploring opportunities for joint efforts in technology commercialization, expansion of international markets, and promotion of interactions between the two countries.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, Iranian delegation held a meeting with Iran’s ambassador in Japan, discussing potentials, and challenges to expand scientific, technological, and economic cooperation between Iran and Japan.

CEATEC 2026 was a showcase of the future society, bringing together the latest technologies and services that reflect how the world is changing. Under the theme, “Transformation,” the exhibition highlighted the new value that change brings through innovative solutions, hands-on exhibits, and programs.

The event sought to accelerate the real-world implementation of advanced technologies (such as AI) across society and to promote cross-indus-

try collaboration for practical business creation.

Japan highlights boosting ties with Iranian universities

In January, Japanese Ambassador Tamaki Tsukada highlighted the importance of strengthening scientific ties with Iranian universities across areas, especially emerging technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and advanced materials.

Science and industry are the two main indicators of power in the 21st century, which play a critical role in scientific diplomacy, IRNA quoted Tsukada as saying.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Mahmoud Shokrieh, the chancellor of Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST). The ambassador said the scientific capabilities and capacities of Iran have never been truly presented to Japan, and that it is his main responsibility to do so. He also announced readiness to foster interactions between the IUST and Japanese universities.

For his part, Shokrieh elaborated on the University’s achievements in science, research, and industry. He proposed exchanging professors and students, conducting collaborative educational courses and scientific projects, establishing joint laboratories, and cooperating in science and technology parks.

Referring to the consortium of the top five universities of technology in Iran, namely the University of Tehran, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and Iran University of Medical Sciences (called UT5), the official said the consortium can lay the ground for the expansion of scientific interactions between the best Iranian universities of technology and Japanese universities, which was well-received by the Japanese side.

Royan Intl. Twin Congress slated for September 2027

TEHRAN – Tehran will play host to the Royan International Twin Congress, including the 28th Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine, the 23rd Congress on Stem Cell Biology and Technology, and the 22nd seminar on Nursery and Midwifery, from September 1-3, 2027.

The three-day event aims to exchange knowledge and expertise, showcase the latest research achievements and novel technologies, and bolster interactions among researchers and experts, and lay the basis for scientific cooperation at national and international levels. The first two congresses will be held in English, and the last one in Persian, IRNA reported.

Over the past two decades, Royan International Twin Congress has provided an opportunity to display scientific findings, becoming a platform for the establishment of professional collaborations and the expansion of research cooperation among domestic and international researchers.

Faculty members, researchers, healthcare professionals, and students are invited to submit their scientific abstracts. The deadline for the submission of abstracts of the articles to the upcoming Royan International Twin Congress is April 20, 2027.

In 2026, a total of 447 articles out of 589 submitted articles were accepted to be presented, including 197 posters and 7 articles in the Reproductive Biomedicine Congress, 186 posters and nine articles in the Stem Cell Biology and Technology Congress, and 45 posters and three lectures in the Nursery and Midwifery Seminar.

The 27th Congress on Reproductive Biomedicine hosted 31 lecturers, including eight from England, Australia, Belgium, Russia, Italy, Ger-

many, and Switzerland, who attended the event online. Out of 34 lecturers addressing the 22nd Congress on Stem Cell Biology and Technology, 14 were from Turkey, Russia, Malaysia, Canada, the US, and the Netherlands. Moreover, 19 Iranian scholars delivered lectures at the 21st seminar on Nursery and Midwifery.

Royan Institute

Royan Institute was established in 1991 by the late Dr. Saeid Kazemi Ashtiani and a group of researchers and physicians at the Iran University of Medical Sciences of the Academic Center for Education, Culture, and Research (ACECR) as an outpatient surgery center to provide medical services to infertile couples, as well as research and training in reproductive sciences.

Reproductive Biomedicine and Stem Cells Biology and Technology has been demonstrated to be one of the most successful experiences of scientific gathering in Iran and West Asia since 2000.

In 2002, the research fields at Royan Institute also extended into stem cell studies. Afterward, the research findings were adjusted for application in regenerative medicine and cell therapy approaches. After three decades, the Royan Institute focuses on increasing the success rate of infertility treatment alongside embryo health and the level of public health through cell therapy clinical services.

During these twenty years of active involvement in sharing and exchanging scientific knowledge and expertise with renowned scientific institutes and scientists, the Royan Congress has helped to form many shared scientific projects and exchanges.

FAO representative highlights livestock sector’s role in food security, rural employment

TEHRAN – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative in the Islamic Republic of Iran Farrukh Toirov, has underscored the strategic importance of the livestock and poultry sector for the country’s food security, rural employment and agricultural economy, emphasizing the need to promote sustainable development through innovation, stronger animal health services and the conservation of indigenous livestock genetic resources.

He made these remarks during a speech at the 25th International Exhibition of Livestock, Poultry and Related Industries, held in Tehran on Sunday.

Highlighting Iran’s technical capacities, research institutions and private sector expertise in livestock and poultry production, the Representative described the exhibition as an important opportunity to strengthen partnerships, exchange knowledge and promote innovative solutions to improve productivity and resilience across livestock production systems.

According to the FAO Representative, meeting the growing demand for nutritious animal-source foods requires improvements in production efficiency, animal health, feed-use efficiency, food safety and environmental sustainability. The Representative also identified water scarcity, rangeland degradation, feed availability and costs, and animal diseases as major challenges facing the sector.

Referring to FAO’s longstanding cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture Jihad and national technical and research institutions, the Representative highlighted the conservation

and sustainable development of endangered indigenous livestock genetic resources as an important area of ongoing collaboration.

In this context, FAO is implementing a Technical Cooperation Programme project focused on valuable indigenous breeds, including Bactrian camels, Sarabi cattle, Mahabadi goats and Markhoz goats. The project aims to strengthen conservation approaches, promote community-based breeding programmes and support the livelihoods of livestock keepers.

Indigenous livestock breeds represent valuable genetic resources because of their adaptation to local climatic and environmental conditions. Their conservation not only contributes to agricultural biodiversity but also strengthens the resilience of livestock production systems under challenging environmental conditions, preserving options for future livestock development.

FAO has also previously supported the conservation of Bactrian camels in Iran and introduced mobile livestock biotechnology and reproductive services for livestock keepers in the country’s northwestern regions through its technical cooperation initiatives. These experiences provide a foundation for expanding community-based livestock services, improving access to specialized technical support and strengthening the productive capacities and livelihoods of rural and pastoral communities.

The FAO Representative also emphasized that animal health is a fundamental pillar of food security, public health and sustainable production. The One Health approach, which addresses risks at the human-animal-environment interface, is essential to tackling

zoonotic diseases, transboundary animal diseases and antimicrobial resistance. Strengthening veterinary services, surveillance and early warning systems, biosecurity measures and the responsible use of antimicrobials was identified as critical to reducing economic losses, protecting livestock productivity and safeguarding public health.

In a further part of the address, the Representative referred to FAO’s emergency support for Iran’s fisheries sector following the impacts of the recent armed conflict. The emergency Technical Cooperation Programme project aims to restore essential fishing capacities, support affected coastal communities and strengthen household food security and livelihoods, particularly in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan and Hormozgan.

Referring to the United Nations’ designation of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, with FAO serving as the lead agency, the Representative highlighted the importance of sustainable rangeland management, agricultural biodiversity conservation and support for pastoral communities.

Concluding the address, the FAO Representative called for stronger collaboration among government institutions, research centres, producers and the private sector, linking the future of livestock and poultry production to the theme of World Food Day 2026, “Innovate Today, Nourish Tomorrow.” The Representative stressed that combining scientific innovation with traditional knowledge and locally adapted solutions can improve productivity, enhance nutrition, protect the environment and strengthen rural livelihoods.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be childlike with children.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times >

Noon:11:49

Evening: 17:42

Dawn: 4:51 (tomorrow)

Sunrise: 6:15 (tomorrow)

Exhibition of Farshchian’s works underway in Paris

TEHRAN - An exhibition of images of selected miniature paintings by the late master Mahmoud Farshchian opened on Friday at the Cultural Attaché Office of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Paris and will run for a week.

It is the fourth and final cultural-artistic event planned by the Iranian embassy as part of the weekly cultural activities for the month of October, ILNA reported.

The opening ceremony was attended by a group of Iranian and international enthusiasts of Iranian art and cultural heritage, as well as the Ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran to France and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

During the opening day, the historical styles and periods of Iranian miniature art and its great masters were introduced and explained. Additionally, a clip was screened introducing Farshchian's works, his outstanding artistic characteristics, his widespread fame among Iranians and non-Iranians worldwide, and his unprecedented successes in international circles.

Born in 1930 in Isfahan, Mahmoud Farshchian was celebrated as one of the most prominent figures in contemporary Iranian art, known for his exquisite works inspired by Persian literature and religious texts.

His work is renowned for its intricate craftsmanship, blending traditional Persian miniature techniques with innovative elements that breathe new life into classical themes. His art vividly captures the soul of Persian poetry, religious stories, and spiritual symbolism, creating compositions that are both visually stunning and deeply meaningful. His mastery lies in the delicate balance of tradition and innovation—crafting vibrant, flowing lines, circular motifs, and dynamic colors that evoke emotion and transcend cultural boundaries.

Throughout his illustrious career, Farshchian's artworks have traveled the globe, exhibited in prestigious cities such as Paris, New York, Chicago, and Tokyo. Many of his pieces have been gifted by Iranian officials as symbols of Iran's rich cultural heritage. His contributions earned him numerous accolades, reaffirming his status as a national treasure.

With intricate details, dynamic compositions, and a masterful use of color and symbolism, he transforms the canvas into a sacred space where grief and hope intertwine. These paintings not only preserve the historical memory of Karbala but also evoke timeless lessons of faith, justice, and resistance against oppression.

Farshchian's influence extended beyond his brush. He served as a professor and director at Iran's University of Tehran's Faculty of Fine Arts, shaping generations of artists who continue to carry forward his artistic vision.

Despite his international recognition, Farshchian remained rooted in his Iranian identity. His art drew inspiration from Persian poetry, the Quran, and sacred texts of Christianity and Judaism, creating a universal language of spiritual artistry. His ability to fuse tradition with modernity has earned him worldwide admiration, with scholars like Umberto Baldini, Italian art historian, describing him as a “phenomenon and a pivotal point in Iranian art.”

He significantly contributed to promoting Iranian art internationally, often invited to speak at universities and cultural institutions worldwide. Several books and scholarly articles have been published about his works, cementing his legacy as a master artist.

His name has been registered on Britain's list of 2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st century, and collectors feel it a great honor to possess one of his creations.

The previous exhibitions held at the site of the Iranian embassy in Paris included: “Ancient Iran: History and Civilization,” “Today's Iran: Art, Culture, and Innovation,” and the painting exhibition “Windswept Dreams,” dedicated to commemorating the memory of the children of the Shajareh Tayebah school in Minab and other martyred children who fell victim to the recent US aggression against Iran.

This series of exhibitions aims to introduce various aspects of Iran's culture, art, history, and civilization to audiences, while providing an opportunity to develop and deepen dialogue, mutual understanding, and appreciation between the two nations and cultures.

Iran’s Kanoon nominates two candidates for 2027 Astrid Lindgren Award

TEHRAN- Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IID-CY-Kanoon) has nominated writer Abbas Jahangirian and illustrator Amir Shabanipour for the 2027 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), one of the world's most prestigious honors in children's literature.

The names of the two Iranian candidates were included in the list of nominees for the award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to literature for children and young adults, Kanoon's public relations office announced on Saturday.

A total of 277 candidates from 80 countries have been nominated for the 2027 edition in the categories of writing, illustration, oral storytelling and reading promotion. Of these, 85 are appearing on the list for the first time.

Jahangirian, nominated in the writing category, has more than five decades of experience in fiction writing, playwriting, research and education. His works address a range of human and social issues, including environmental protection, peaceful co-existence, intergenerational relationships and the promotion of hope among children and young adults.

His stories also feature children with disabilities as active central characters. Drawing on Iranian history, local culture and national identity, Jahangirian incorporates elements of cinema and theater into storytelling. He has also been involved in teaching fiction writing, playwriting and screenwriting.

His participation in professional organizations concerned with children's literature and rights, along with the recognition his works have received from festivals and academic researchers, were among the considerations behind his nomination.

Shabanipour has been nomi-



Left to right: Illustrator Amir Shabanipour and writer Abbas Jahangirian

nated in the illustration category. His work is distinguished by an independent visual language, creative use of color and composition, and the ability to develop and extend narratives through illustrations.

His illustrations explore children's emotions, imagination, curiosity and concerns. He has also experimented with different forms of visual storytelling and incorporated Iranian cultural elements to communicate with audiences beyond the country.

Shabanipour has collaborated with publishers and organizations active in children's literature, contributing to the production of picture books and the promotion of reading. His works have been exhibited at international events, while some of his books have been published abroad. He has also received international awards.

Other Iranian nominees for the 2027 award include writer Atoosa Salehi, illustrators Alireza Goldouzian and Hoda Haddadi, and the “Read with Me” program in the reading promotion category. They were nominated by other Iranian organizations authorized to put forward candidates, in-

cluding the Children's Book Council of Iran, the Association of Iranian Children's Book Writers and the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature.

Atoosa Salehi is an Iranian poet, writer, translator and editor specializing in children's and young adult literature. She has published more than 100 works across poetry, picture books, graphic novels and fiction. Her 12-volume retelling of Shahnameh for young readers has been reprinted more than 30 times, and some of her works have been translated into several languages.

Alireza Goldouzian is an internationally recognized artist who has illustrated numerous books in Iran, as well as exhibiting his prize-winning children's book art around the world.

Hoda Haddadi's works highlight her impactful role in creating a feminine, nature-inspired, peace-filled universe influenced by rich Persian literature. Haddadi skillfully employs collage techniques, vibrant colors, and motifs to craft unique visual narratives. Her extensive experience in teaching across various age groups and numerous presti-

gious awards in illustration further underpin her nomination.

“Read with Me” has been initiated by the Institute for Research on History of Children's Literature to promote reading for all children, in particular for those living in deprived areas and crisis. The plan promotes the slogan “All children deserve to read quality books”.

Established in 2002 by the Swedish government in memory of Astrid Lindgren, the creator of “Pippi Longstocking”, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award aims to promote children's and young adults' literature around the world. With a prize of five million Swedish kronor, it is the world's largest monetary award in the field.

The annual award recognizes authors, illustrators, oral storytellers and reading promoters. Its 12-member jury selects the laureate from the international list of nominees.

The 2027 laureate will be announced on April 6, 2027, during the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy. Canadian illustrator Jon Klassen received the 2026 award.

Lesser-known classical music pieces performed at Roudaki Hall

TEHRAN - Tehran's Roudaki Hall hosted the “Mourning to Dawn” concert, featuring performances of classical music compositions, on Saturday.

Centered around introducing lesser-heard and rarely performed classical music works, the program was staged in two parts with the accompaniment of a piano and a string ensemble, ILNA reported.

The repertoire featured works by composers from various periods of classical music. In the first part, Ahmad Razavi, the piano soloist, performed the second piece from the “Klavierstücke” (3 Piano Pieces), D. 946, in E-flat major by Franz Schubert. Next, Johann Sebastian Bach's “Harpsichord Concerto No.

7 in G minor, BWV 1058,” was performed in three movements.

The second part was dedicated to works by Julius von Beliczay, Vasily Kalinnikov, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Anton Arensky, and Robert Fuchs. Serenades for string instruments, the “Four Novelletten” suite for string orchestra, and variations on a theme by Tchaikovsky were among the pieces in this section.

Mahmoud Mirzaei, the conductor of the “Mourning to Dawn” concert, pointed to the technical difficulty of the performed works, describing the program as comprising seven pieces by various classical composers, noting that many of these works were unfamiliar even to the orchestra's own musicians.

Sally Rooney books withdrawn in UK over Palestine Action support

Internationally acclaimed Irish novelist Sally Rooney has announced that she is being forced to withdraw her books from sale in the United Kingdom. This is due to her support for the direct action protest group Palestine Action, which the British government proscribed as a terrorist organization in June 2025.

Rooney is one of the most visible and exciting literary novelists of the past decade. Her novels have largely focused on nuanced, psychologically acute portrayals of young adult relationships. She uses these often fraught and ambiguous romantic entanglements as a lens for exploring the complexities and cultural anxieties of life in the 21st century.

Her titles typically sell more than 500,000 copies in the UK alone. The BBC adaptation of “Normal People”, her second novel, has attracted 62.7 million views.

Rooney is based in Ireland, where there is no prohibition on Palestine Action. However, her intention to provide financial assistance for the organization, in

the form of donated royalties, may have legal consequences in the UK. Section 15 of the 2000 Terrorism Act makes it an offence if one “provides money or other property, and knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that it will or may be used for the purposes of terrorism”. Under the Act, this is punishable by a maximum prison sentence of 14 years.

This led Rooney to cancel a trip to the UK to accept a prize for her work in 2025, due to concern she could be arrested. Now her UK publisher, Faber, says this section of the act means they can no longer pay Rooney royalties on UK sales of her novels.

“To sell a writer's work and not be able to pass on earnings is an unconscionable situation for a publisher,” Faber announced. As a result, the publisher has decided it can no longer supply her novels, in any format, in the territory.

Faber has, however, expressed its ongoing support for Rooney and will continue to publish her in other countries.

The recent statements from Rooney and her publisher have drawn new attention to the controversial designation of Palestine Action as a “terrorist organization” and the effect it may have on free expression. Rooney's case highlights the very broad terms in which a terrorist organization can be defined under the 2000 act, and how this may be out of kilter with public understanding.

Palestine Action was established in the UK in 2020. Its declared aim was to “take direct action against Israel's arms trade in Britain”. Most significantly, this has taken the form of break-ins and property damage at weapons manufacturing and military facilities.

Factories belonging to Israeli weapons manufacturer Elbit Systems have been the group's primary target, but its actions have also been directed against British-owned companies and military infrastructure.

The move to proscribe Palestine Action as a terrorist organization seems to have been precipitated

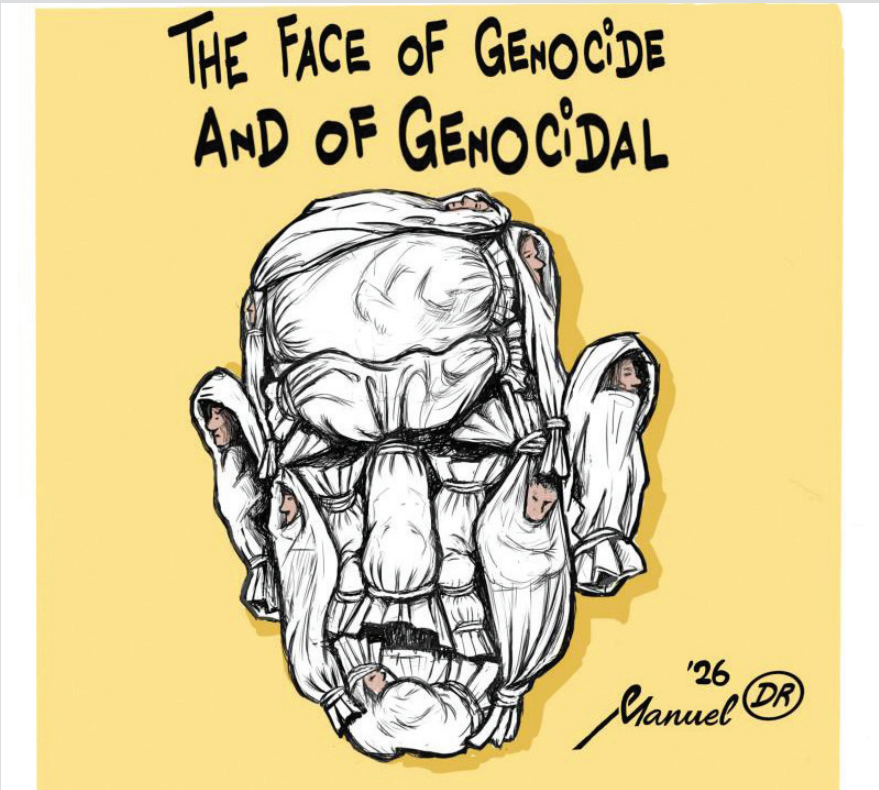
by a break-in at the RAF Brieze Norton station, where two aircraft were vandalized with spray paint, in June 2025.

The government case for proscription was largely based on damage to property caused by the organization. Some activists associated with Palestine Action were also charged with violent offences.

Then Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said Palestine Action had “committed acts of serious damage to property with the aim of progressing its political cause and influencing the government”. She noted that its actions caused millions of pounds worth of damages, and employees at the affected institutions to fear for their safety.

The ban on Palestine Action is currently being disputed in the UK Supreme Court. Critics have noted that, as well as being hastily implemented, the ban conflates direct action organizations, which typically target property, with explicitly violent organizations, which target people.

Cartoon of Day



The Face of Genocide and of Genocidal

Cartoonist: Manuel De Rossi from Italy