



**Raisi: Terrorist, separatist provocations weaken regional security** 2 >



**SPECIAL ISSUE**  
Which will IAEA Board of Governors opt for?  
**Promoting or undermining cooperation?** 7 >



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Where will border tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia lead?

# No Boundaries Should Change

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**Is New War Looming in South Caucasus?**

*Azerbaijan to Iran as Ukraine to Russia*

4 >

**A seemingly impossible scenario**

5 >



The Armenia-Azerbaijan border



**Iran, Russia can help resolve Caucasus conflict:**  
*Ex-envoy*

2 >



**Marin village: A spectacular attraction in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province**

3 >



**Iran ease past Afghanistan in U23 Asian Cup qualifiers**

6 >



**Iran's 'No Prior Appointment' shines at Kazan festival**

8 >

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Embassy in Paris operating normally after attack

**IRNA** – A spokesperson for the Iranian Embassy in France confirmed an attack on the diplomatic mission on Saturday, saying that the embassy was operating normally.

The spokesperson added that the attack was carried out by elements opposing the Iranian establishment, announcing that a search operation has been launched to find them.

According to the embassy official, the attackers set fire to some tires in front of the entrance of the consular section of the diplomatic mission on Saturday morning, causing minor damage. The fire was later extinguished.

## Tehran welcomes any EU initiative for cooperation

International Desk

Ali Bagheri Kani, the deputy foreign minister for political affairs, said that Tehran welcomes any initiative that the European Union (EU) would put forward to open new windows for cooperation and interaction.

Making the remarks in a meeting with EU Special Representative for the Persian Gulf region Luigi Di Maio, Bagheri Kani highlighted that Iran has already shown willingness and capability for bilateral cooperation.

Di Maio, for his part, stressed that he has the support of all EU member states for keeping channels of communication with Iran open.

Earlier, Di Maio met and held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

## Shah Cheragh terrorists reveal failed plans in trial

**PRESS TV** – Iran has held the first trial session for the three perpetrators of last month's deadly terrorist attack on the Shah Cheragh shrine in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz.

The prime suspect, Rahmatollah Nowruzof from Tajikistan, said he did not count the number of the people targeted but "intended to continue the operation until the last bullet".

He further revealed that he had entered the holy shrine with one gasoline container in his backpack and was arrested before he could torch the carpets where the worshippers were.

# Raeisi: Terrorist, separatist provocations weaken regional security

International Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi said any act of provocation by terrorist and separatist groups undermines regional security and will not be tolerated. In a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani of Iraq on Saturday, Raeisi said Tehran and Baghdad have been strengthening their security cooperation to establish sustainable peace.

Sudani, for his part, reiterated the commitment of the Iraqi government and nation to fight against all the elements that pose a threat to sustainable security in the region.

Iran has set the deadline for Iraq to disarm terror groups in the Kurdistan Region by September 19, and has reiterated in recent days that the deadline would not be extended.

### PUK president in Tehran

President of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Bafel Jalal Talabani, arrived in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on Sunday morning, leading a high-level

delegation from his party. Media outlets affiliated with the PUK reported that Talabani is scheduled to hold several "important" meetings with officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran during his visit, Shafaq News reported.

Recently, Qasim al-Araji, the national security adviser of Iraq, said in a speech that Baghdad is making great efforts to implement the provisions of the security agreement with Iran.

"We emphasize our desire to strengthen relations between the two neighboring countries in a way that benefits the nation and the country and strengthens stability and security in the region," Al-Araji added, according to Mehr news agency.

The Almutalee website recently reported that Tehran, Baghdad, and Erbil signed a tripartite agreement to expel terrorist Kurdish elements from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to the western regions of the country.

### Justice for Gen. Soleimani

Prime Minister Moham-



med Shia al-Sudani of Iraq said on Friday that Baghdad seriously pursues justice with respect to the assassination of top Iranian anti-terror commander General Qassem Soleimani and his Iraqi trenchmate Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in a US drone strike in Janu-

ary, 2020.

Sudani made the remarks in a meeting with a delegation of Iranian media representatives in Baghdad, Press TV reported.

The prime minister said the Judicial Council of Iraq and the government pursue the issue seriously. He

denounced the targeted killings as a blatant violation of Iraq's sovereignty. Sudani said a committee comprising security inspectors has already been formed to compile the necessary information and present evidence in legal forums.



Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani (r) shakes hands with Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi in Tehran, Iran, on November 29, 2022.

● AFP

## Iran, Russia can help resolve Caucasus conflict: Ex-envoy

International Desk

Iran's former ambassador to Azerbaijan and expert on the Caucasus affairs said that Iran and Russia can cooperate to help relieve the escalating tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Mohsen Pakaein told ILNA that if Russians do not follow the path drawn for them by the US and Europe, they can, in cooperation with Iran, "help resolve this conflict in the interest of establishing peace in the region, which is in the interest of all".

The ex-envoy said that the main goal of the US and Europe in interfering in the Caucasus issues is to put pressure on Russia, not to work in favor of Armenia or Azerbaijan.

Evaluating the recent developments in the Caucasus region, Pakaein added that if Russia takes a more active approach, fulfills its monitoring duty, and supports the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the United States and Europe would have no excuse to be active in the region.

This comes as Azerbaijan said on Saturday that Armenian forces had fired on its troops overnight, and that Azerbaijan Army units took "retaliatory measures". Armenia denied the incident.

The Armenian government said Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held telephone conversations on Saturday with Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi as well as with the leaders of France, Germany, Georgia, and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Reuters reported. Azerbaijan said its foreign minister discussed the situation with a senior US State Department official.

### Azerbaijan, Iran hold meeting

Meanwhile, the representatives from the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran held the third meeting of the Joint Commission on

Military Cooperation on Saturday.

The head of the Iranian delegation Major General Mohammad Ahadi noted that some elements are attempting to undermine the current friendly and neighborly relations between the countries by spreading unfounded and false information in recent days. As such, he stressed the importance of mutual visits and working meetings.

The two sides also exchanged views on expanding relations in several areas of cooperation in the military sphere, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense said in an announcement. The previously implemented measures were highly appreciated by both sides.



Major General Mohammad Ahadi (r), the head of an Iranian military delegation, meets with Colonel General Zakir Hasanov, the Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan, in Baku, Azerbaijan, on September 9, 2023.

● mod.gov.az



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## China tops Iran's export destination in March-August

Economy Desk

Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$5.6 billion to China during the first five months of the current Iranian year (March 21-August 22), more than any other business partner, the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced. IRICA also announced that exporting non-oil goods worth \$7.1 billion to Iran, China was Iran's second source of imports in the five month period.

Figures published by the

Tehran Chamber of Commerce indicate that during the said period, \$19.3 billion worth of non-oil commodities were exported from the country.

Iraq and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were reportedly the second and third largest consumers of Iranian goods by importing \$3.5 billion and \$2.3 billion worth of products, respectively, according to ISNA.

Trade between Iran and the United Arab Emirates has surged as the Gulf's commercial capital eased

restrictions on business activity between the two neighbors, officials and traders told the Financial Times.

Executives said the UAE has in recent months rolled back limits on corporate registrations and the issuance of visas to companies from Iran, which remains subject to tough US sanctions. Iranian financiers are also exploring how to enhance bilateral trade by creating financial mechanisms to fund legitimate transactions, they added.

# Conquest and decline of Timurids



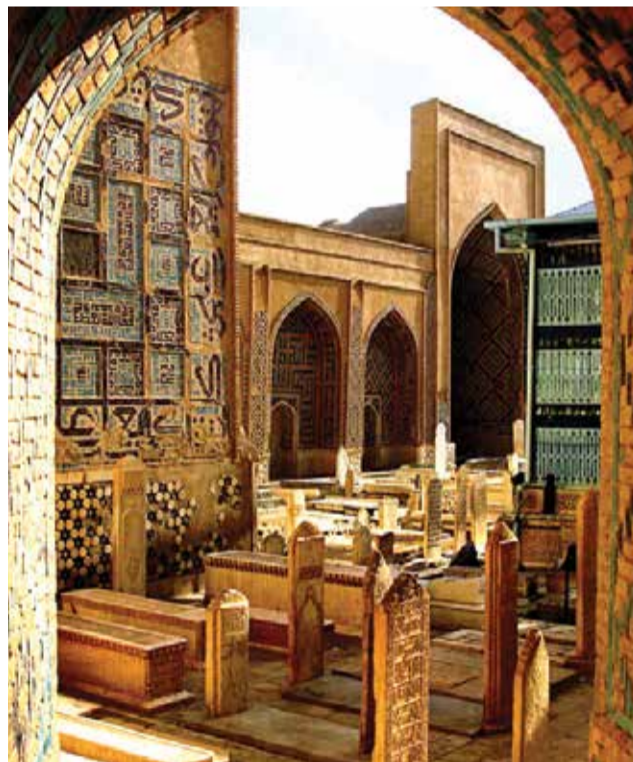
The citadel of Herat, Afghanistan restored and embellished by Shahrukh in 1415-16

Like the Ilkhanids and Saljuks before them, the Timurids illustrate the truth of Ibn Khaldun's (an Arab sociologist, philosopher, and historian) dictum that states follow a three-fold trajectory whereby a powerful personality establishes a dynasty, a successor monarch consolidates that achievement and a later ruler presides over its decline. The predominant figure of that dynasty is Timur (1336-1405 CE), also known as Timur-e Lang, Tamerlane or Tamburlaine (literally 'lame [man of] iron'). His career has remarkable parallels to that of Genghis Khan —from whom he claimed descent through his mother, as he himself told Ibn Khaldun in person — but without the panoramic vision of Genghis himself. Timur too rose to power first by gaining control of his own tribe, the Barlas, and then, by means of strategic political and kin alliances, steadily building a confederation of numerous tribes with himself as its supreme head. By 1370 he had become the major power in Transoxania with an army of perhaps 200,000 men, organised on a decimal system and relying on mounted archers supported by siege engineers.

He spent most of his life campaigning at the head of his army and relied on his personal prowess as a military leader without the need for any supporting institution — political, civil or military.

He was essentially a one-man state. He controlled it as if it were a military unit, so it had no staying power. In his insatiable search for plunder he wrought havoc on settled society and on agriculture alike, building towers of skulls outside many of the cities he had sacked - from Moscow to Delhi. One motive for his conquests was to control the central caravan route linking Asia with Europe; this may explain his calculated destruction of the cities servicing the north-

erly route (Urgench, Saray, Berke, Batu, Astrakhan and Azov among others). His rule was reactionary in that he restored the power of the nomad pastoral aristocracy at the expense of settled agriculture, which was left in ruins, and thus he undid the farsighted reforms of Ghazan.



Shrine of Abdallah Ansari near Herat, Afghanistan restored and embellished by Shahrukh in 1428-29

Entire populations were deliberately resettled far from their ancestral lands, while artisans, the human debris of his conquests, were scooped up en masse and dispatched to work on his projects in Samarkand, which he chose as his capital. He embellished it with gardens and palaces galore, with a gigantic Friday mosque named after his consort, and with his own tomb, the Gur-e Amir, which became a family mausoleum. The splendour of his court life is described in exhaustive detail in a lengthy account written by Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, an ambassador from distant Castile who vis-

ited Samarkand and Timur's palace at Kish between 1404 and 1406.

Timur himself was illiterate and had little time for cultural or indeed theological pursuits, though it is recorded that he enjoyed playing chess and that he decorated his palaces with wall paintings of his battles. He

defeated the Mamluks in Syria and the Ottomans in Ankara and was on his way to conquer China when death put a stop to him.

His departure unleashed factional strife that lasted for years, from which his youngest son Shahrukh (died in 1447) eventually emerged victorious. He dramatically but wisely retracted the fluid frontiers left by his father's conquests, and consolidated a significantly smaller empire, comprising Greater Iran, from his base in Herat, leaving his own sons to govern the other provinces of the Iranian world. But factionalism destroyed the Timurid Empire in the lat-

er 15th century, and its princes, cultivated though some of them were in several aspects of Persian culture, were powerless to block the rise of new nomadic federations. Turcomans who divided most of Iran and some of Iraq and Anatolia between them, or of the Uzbeks of Transoxania. Between these new polities absorbed most of the crumbling Timurid empire, leaving the last Timurid prince, Sultan Husayn Bayqara (1469-1506 CE) with little more than the rump of his ancestor's vast empire — the city of Herat and its environs.

It is hard to see Timur's own legacy as anything more than a balance sheet drenched in blood.

Throughout this period, far too much land throughout the Timurid empire was distributed as fiefs to Timurid princes, military commanders or hereditary rulers who governed them autonomously. These new systems of land ownership weakened the central government by bestowing administrative immunity and tax exemption on those who owned the land and already exercised much judicial and military authority.

Timur's political legacy was disorder and chronic succession disputes. But his descendants presided over a remarkable flowering of the arts and sciences that justifies being termed the Timurid Renaissance.

Shahrukh was by temperament a man of peace; he was also a poet and had a vivid sense of history. His wife Gauhar Shad was the patron of major building campaigns in Mashhad (e.g. the mosque that bears her name) and Herat (where her mausoleum is located).

The Timurid period saw the apotheosis of colour in architecture as well as bold innovations in vaulting and the assured handling of spatial complexities on a vast scale.

## Marin village: A spectacular attraction in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province

Marin village is situated 36 kilometers north of Gachsaran and 198 km southwest of Yasuj, in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. The village has Deli Ganj Mountain on the north, Khamin Mountain on the east, and Kuh-e-Dil Protected Area on the southwest.

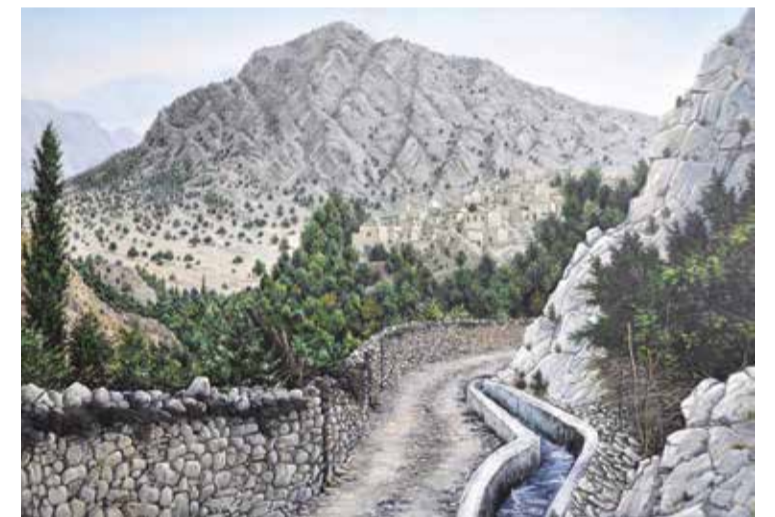
The historical village, with a mild climate and scenic and spectacular places, is one of the popular and attractive districts of the region.

northern province of Gilan, this village has a *pelekani* (staircase) style of architecture. This means that the roofs of a series of buildings serve as the courtyards of the structures constructed above them.

The people of Marin village are farmers, gardeners, and ranchers. Dry farming and wet farming are common to grow wheat, grain, and vegetables. They also cultivate various fruits including pomegran-



tripyar.com



tripyar.com



IRNA

Marin village, located along the road extending from Susa to Persepolis and Bishapur, hosts a large number of ancient castles. The inhabitants of Marin village speak Lori, visitiran.ir wrote. Over 1,000 meters above sea level, Marin village rests on the slopes of a valley. Shah Bahram River flows on the northeastern side of the village, and Kosar Dam makes a lake in the district, located 17 km from the village.

Most cottages of the village are made of clay and chopped straw, stone, adobe, bricks, and wooden beams. Just like Massouleh village in the

ates, lemons, grapes, and figs. In Marin village men wear shirts and trousers, felt hats, shawls, leather belt and *giveh* (a type of traditional shoes), and women wear kerchiefs, headresses, shirts, trousers, chador, and *giveh*.

Kilims, *jajims* (a type of traditional floor covering), and carpets are among the handicrafts produced in the village.

Animal species living throughout the region include boar, wolf, fox, hawk, rabbit and partridge. Some medicinal plants like *Tragacanth*, *Echium amoenum*, and *Pistacia terebinthus* can be found in the region.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'The Timurids - Conquest, Decline and Cultural Flowering', from a book entitled, 'IRAN: Five Millennia of Art and Culture', edited by Ute Franke, Ina Sarikhani Sandmann and Stefan Weber, published by Berlin Museum of Islamic Art. The photos were taken from the book.

A glimpse at different aspects of Azeri-Armenian conflicts

# Is New War Looming in South Caucasus?



By Zhanna Vardanyan  
Int'l affairs expert

INTERVIEW  
EXCLUSIVE

Azerbaijan has been actively engaged in a propaganda campaign for several weeks, attempting to portray Armenia as preparing for an attack. Typically, in such situations, Baku lays the groundwork for a potential military attack. Furthermore, there is evidence of reservist mobilization in Azerbaijan, and social media is flooded with videos depicting the movements of Azerbaijani armed forces. We discussed the potential Azerbaijani attack on Armenia with two individuals: Tigran Abrahamyan, a military expert and an opposition member of the RA National Assembly, and Armen Petrosyan, an expert specializing in regional affairs.

Tigran Abrahamyan highlights that Baku's information campaign can be interpreted in two ways: as a method of pressuring Armenia to secure concessions or as a precursor to war. "The situation is such that there are factors working in favor of initiating a war, so to speak, and there are factors favoring the avoidance of a war. During this period, it is challenging to unequivocally determine whether we are on the brink of war or if Azerbaijan is attempting to exert influence over Armenia to secure desired concessions by demonstrating its military strength"-says Abrahamyan. He states that currently, it is difficult to ascertain whether a war is imminent or if this is a form of blackmail, a threat, or a looming specter over Armenia. "This uncertainty arises from our past experiences in similar situations, where we encountered diverse circumstances under similar indicators. State institutions, which possess more comprehensive access to information, may have a clear-

er perspective. However, what is observable in the political and informational spheres, as well as on the front lines, still fails to provide a definitive answer regarding the likelihood of war"-adds Abrahamyan. Turning to the question of the potential direction of Azerbaijan's attack, Abrahamyan states that in both scenarios, there are factors that could lead analysts to believe that the conflict might escalate either in Armenia or Artsakh. "For instance, in the case of Armenia, negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan appear to have reached an impasse. In such situations, when diplomatic negotiations stall, the likelihood of military action tends to increase. Regarding Artsakh, it's worth noting the presidential elections that took place on September 9. Azerbaijan has issued stern warnings in recent days in response to these elections and has previously advocated for the dissolution of the government system in Artsakh,"-highlights Abrahamyan.



Tigran Abrahamyan  
Military expert

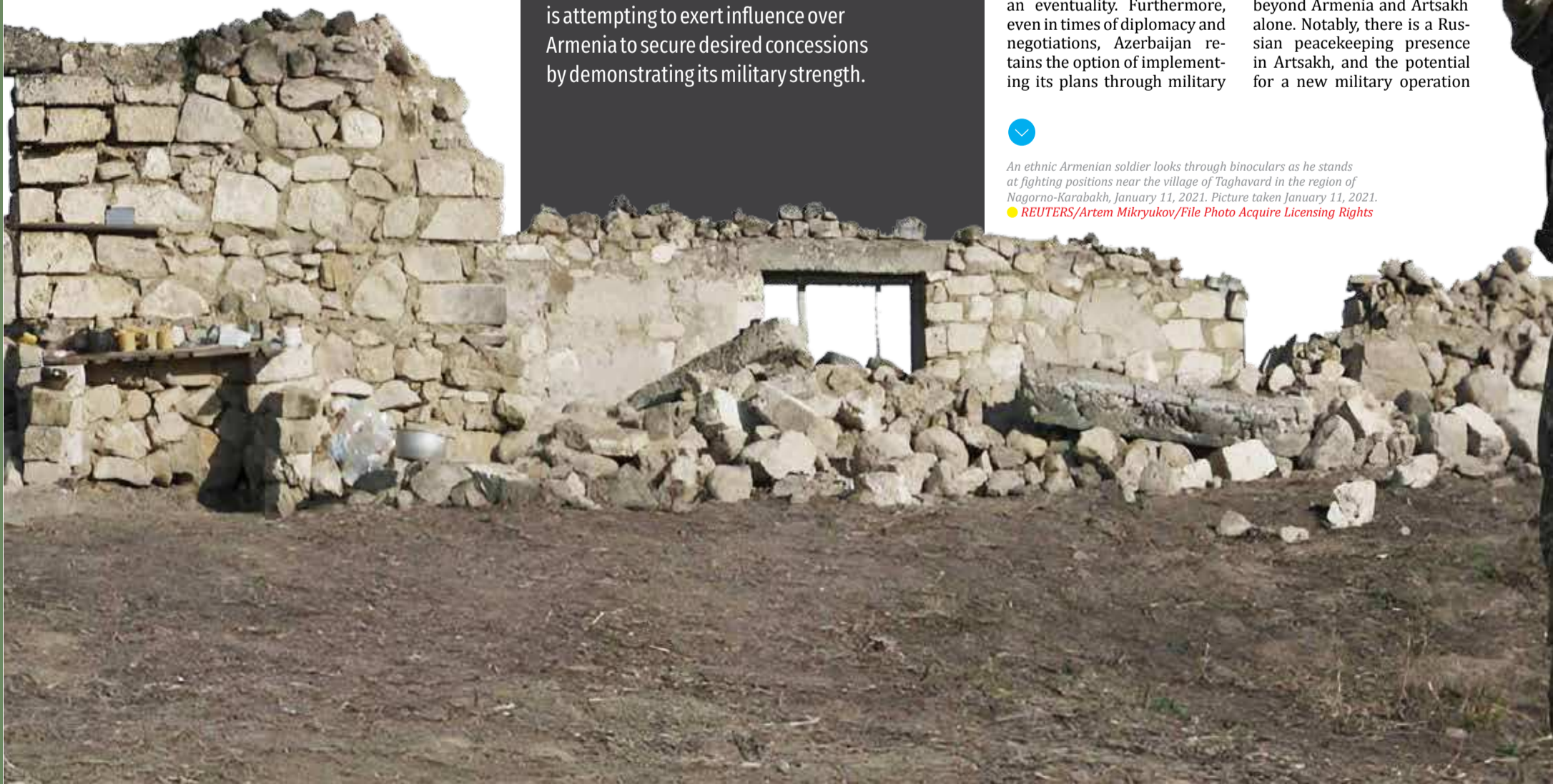
The situation is such that there are factors working in favor of initiating a war, so to speak, and there are factors favoring the avoidance of a war. During this period, it is challenging to unequivocally determine whether we are on the brink of war or if Azerbaijan is attempting to exert influence over Armenia to secure desired concessions by demonstrating its military strength.

He believes that these two examples illustrate that the threat could manifest in either direction. "It remains challenging to predict Azerbaijan's current intentions definitively. Nevertheless, it is evident from the public statements of Azerbaijani leadership that they do not rule out the use of force as a means of resolving these issues", states the member of the RA Parliament. The opposition MP firmly believes that to navigate the challenging regional situation, there must be a change of leadership in Armenia. According to Armen Petrosyan Azerbaijan's policy serves as a textbook example of military diplomacy. It employs both the overt threat and potential use of force simultaneously to extract maximum unilateral concessions from its adversaries. "This means that Azerbaijan is actively working to advance its own agenda in relation to Armenia and Artsakh by heightening the likelihood of a new war and establishing the essential political and informational groundwork for such an eventuality. Furthermore, even in times of diplomacy and negotiations, Azerbaijan retains the option of implementing its plans through military

means",- says Petrosyan. He highlights that the possibility of a big war persists, but this potential war is consistently delayed due to ongoing backstage diplomacy operating in parallel. "Various mediators are actively engaged in presenting the Armenian side with a revised plan for implementing Azerbaijan's new demands. Simultaneously, these mediators are employing their limited resources to exert influence on Azerbaijan, with the aim of preventing a new war from erupting. This is the reason why we have seen diplomacy yielding limited results so far, as Azerbaijan continues its extensive campaign of leveraging the threat of force, yet a parallel war has not materialized, but which can break out at any moment"-states Petrosyan. He mentions that Azerbaijan is actively laying the groundwork for potential actions in both Armenia and Artsakh's directions. "In the event of a new war, it's crucial to recognize that the situation extends beyond Armenia and Artsakh alone. Notably, there is a Russian peacekeeping presence in Artsakh, and the potential for a new military operation



An ethnic Armenian soldier looks through binoculars as he stands at fighting positions near the village of Taghavard in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, January 11, 2021. Picture taken January 11, 2021.  
● REUTERS/Artem Mikryukov/File Photo Acquire Licensing Rights



there also hinges on separate negotiations involving Artsakh, Azerbaijan, and Russia. Regarding Armenia, particularly in the Syunik region, Azerbaijan must consider the stances of Iran and other global players. This multifaceted geopolitical landscape adds to the complexity of the situation, making it quite precarious. Simultaneously, there is the possibility of initiating new military operations in both directions, but at the moment, behind-the-scenes diplomacy appears to be more active. It's important to note that the war, in whichever direction it starts, naturally also creates an opportunity to open a second front in the other direction", -says expert. He also underscores that Azerbaijan has received steadfast support, both in the past and presently, from Turkey, further exacerbating the situation.

Regarding how Armenia can prevent a war, Petrosyan highlights the limited tools at Armenia's disposal. "The primary and most reliable means is Armenia's military potential, which could deter Azerbaijan from initiating a new war. However, the military balance has not yet been fully restored. Another avenue currently being pursued involves active political steps on the diplomatic front, including intensified negotiations. In recent days, there has been a notable increase in diplomatic efforts, especially on the part of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian Prime Minister has initiated several telephone conversations, including with

the President of Iran, and messages have been dispatched to international organizations and UN Security Council member states. It's worth noting that there haven't been active contacts with Russia in this regard, possibly due to recent tensions between the two countries, at least at the propaganda level. However, this situation may also be influenced by Russia's recent behavior and the perceived ineffectiveness of Russia's actions during previous escalations. Nevertheless, initiating a dialogue with Russia is important in order to fully leverage diplomatic channels to their maximum extent" - mentions Petrosyan.

When discussing Armenia's expectations from its allied and friendly countries, particularly Russia and Iran, the expert highlights the following: "Armenia naturally expects Russia to limit Azerbaijan's military aggression. However, recent events have shown that Russia has faced challenges in achieving this goal. This is influenced by several factors, including the strong Azerbaijan-Turkey alliance and Russia's strategic interests in maintaining a balanced relationship with this alliance. Additionally, Russia seeks to avoid escalating tensions in the region and inadvertently, its approach may put pressure on Armenia, leading to concessions.

In the case of Iran, Armenia's key expectation is for Iran to affirm its position on the inviolability of regional borders and the preservation of territorial integrity. Armenia hopes that Iran will demonstrate its willingness to take concrete steps to promote these principles. Essentially, if Iran consistently advocates for its position, it could significantly deter Azerbaijan's aggressive actions in the Syunik region as well".



### Armen Petrosyan

Regional affairs expert

Azerbaijan is actively working to advance its own agenda in relation to Armenia and Artsakh by heightening the likelihood of a new war and establishing the essential political and informational groundwork for such an eventuality. Furthermore, even in times of diplomacy and negotiations, Azerbaijan retains the option of implementing its plans through military means.

## Azerbaijan to Iran as Ukraine to Russia A seemingly impossible scenario



By **Abed Akbari**  
International  
affairs expert

**OPINION  
EXCLUSIVE**

In recent days, the Republic of Azerbaijan has significantly intensified its political and military pressures. In the political arena, the Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs has repeatedly threatened Armenia, stating, "If Armenia continues its uncooperative approach to the Zangezur Corridor project, Baku will pursue its Plan B to open this corridor. Azerbaijan will continue its activities in this route through Plan B, and even if Armenia does not participate, it will still be implemented. However, in that case, Armenia would simply be excluded from the list of beneficiaries." In the military domain, there is ample evidence that the Republic of Azerbaijan is intensifying its military readiness in the region. In recent days, numerous videos have surfaced depicting the movement of military units, equipment, and weaponry of the Azerbaijani army and the mobilization of their forces, showcasing their combat readiness.

Most reports indicate intense activity by the Baku Air Force in relocating equipment and ground forces along the Armenian border. Furthermore, the observation of cargo planes departing from occupied areas suggests the movement of weapons to various points within the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In the span of three weeks, four transport flights, operated by Silk Road Airlines, using the Ilyushin IL-76TD aircraft with registration 4K-AZ40, have been conducted from the Republic of Azerbaijan to Israel. During the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, Silk Road Airlines also served as the primary aerial logistics route for Baku to procure weapons from Israel.

Two flights took place on the 15th and 29th of August, and two more flights on the 1st and 2nd of September (just a few days ago and coinciding with the start of the Azerbaijani army's movements). The destination for all four flights was the Ayouda Airbase in Israel, located approximately 60 kilometers from the city of Eilat.

Amidst the tensions in the Azerbaijani region, the visit of Turkey's new Foreign Minister to Iran and his meetings with Iranian officials contained significant points that should not be overlooked. While Iran's stance and red lines regarding regional developments have previously been transparently articulated by the esteemed leadership and the honorable President, it's essential to acknowledge that the issues raised by Foreign Minister Fidan are part of a broader discussion. Erdogan had explicitly stated at the beginning of the current summer during his meeting with Aliyev that "the opening of the Zangezur Corridor is an issue with Iran, not Armenia, and Iran's approach in this regard is a source of discomfort for both Azerbaijan and Turkey."

It seems that Aliyev has fallen into a cognitive error regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran's role in the developments in the northern Aras region. Turkey, NATO, and the Zionist regime, which have placed him in this position, are pursuing a repetitive scenario: transforming Azerbaijan into a speed bump and a dirty wound for Iran, similar to Ukraine's role for Russia. However, what these actors have overlooked is Iran's regional influence and its spiritual penetration among the people of Azerbaijan. Although, in recent years, the authorities in Baku have attempted to downplay this influence through coercion and force, it remains an undeniable reality. If Baku continues on its erroneous path, it may lead to significant social and political transformations in the country in the near future.



## Iran ease past Afghanistan in U23 Asian Cup qualifiers



AFC

### Sports Desk

Two goals in each half saw Iran beat Afghanistan 4-0 in Tashkent on Saturday – a second successive victory for Reza Enayati's side in the AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers.

Mohammad Qorbani glanced home to break the deadlock in the 29th minute before Hossein Goudarzi's header on a Mohammad-Javad Hosseinejad's set-piece doubled the lead nine minutes later.

Hull City striker Allahyar Sayyadmanesh and Sepahan prodigy Hosseinejad were also on the score-sheet after the break as Iran moved level on six points with Uzbekistan, which thrashed Hong Kong by 10 unanswered goals, in Group E of the qualifiers.

Uzbekistan's superior goal difference means Iran will still have to beat the host – an Asian under-23 champion in 2018 and runner-up to Saudi Arabia last year – on Tuesday to progress to next year's finals as one of the 11 group winners.

The top four runners-up will also qualify for the tournament, starting April 15 in Qatar.

## Soltani eyeing glory on world stage



ISNA

### Sports Desk

Young Iranian weightlifter Hossein Soltani will bid for a podium finish when the men's 81kg Group A contests get underway at the IWF World Championships in Riyadh today.

Soltani, 23, will be looking to build on a glittering campaign in May's Asian Championships, where he captured the total and clean & jerk golds plus a snatch silver in Jinju, South Korea. The Iranian heads into the event with a second-best entry record of 358kg – two kilograms shy of the tally registered by Italian Oscar Reyes.

Kazakhstan's Yelaman Seitkazy, who beat Soltani to the snatch gold in Jinju, Bulgarian Bozhidar Andreev – a winner of three world -73kg medals in 2019 – as well as Uzbekistan's Mukhammadkodir Toshtemirov – a triple world junior gold medalist in 2021 – will also be in the mix for glory in the Saudi capital.



Germany head coach Hansi Flick reacts on the touchline during a 4-1 defeat against Japan in Wolfsburg, Germany, on September 9, 2023.  
● MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

AFP – Hansi Flick said he remained "convinced" he was the right man to lead Germany to Euro 2024, despite a 4-1 humiliation by Japan in a friendly in Wolfsburg on Saturday.

The loss, the side's fourth in their past five games, comes nine months out from next year's European championships, which Germany host. Flick told reporters after the match he believed he was the right man for the job, "even if that's difficult to see."

"We are preparing well, we are preparing well for each

opponent – there's nothing to be said about that.

"We are convinced of what we are doing and that's why I want to continue (as Germany coach)."

Germany conceded two goals in each half and were thoroughly outclassed by Japan, who also beat Germany at the 2022 World Cup.

Germany sporting director Rudi Voeller said after the match the German FA would avoid making any rash decisions on Flick's future, telling RTL: "I would suggest we collect ourselves

# Flick 'convinced' he is right man for German Job despite Japan humiliation

The loss, the side's fourth in their past five games, comes nine months out from next year's European championships, which Germany host. Germany conceded two goals in each half and were thoroughly outclassed by Japan, who also beat Germany at the 2022 World Cup.

and we sleep on it."

"We are all a little in shock...a defeat like that hurts.

"We should all do some soul searching and think about it. What happens next, we'll see."

Flick coached Germany to a disappointing group stage exit at the Qatar World Cup, where his side won just one of three matches.

Germany have now been eliminated at the group stage in the past two World Cups, lost to England in the round of 16 at the 2021

Euros and face a possible humiliation on home soil at the 2024 event.

Despite chants of "Flick out" from some sections of the crowd – and captain Ilkay Gundogan saying his side "need to ask questions of ourselves" – the coach backed his side to improve in Tuesday's clash with France in Dortmund.

"Everyone that was on the field today wants to show another face (against France)" Flick said, explaining "it's football, we have another chance and we're

looking forward to it." Flick said Germany needed to improve its youth development, pointing to Japan as an example from which the four-time world champions can learn.

"You can see how skilled they are, both offensive and defensive," Flick said of Japan. "You can see how much football has developed there."

Flick said Germany's problems had deep roots.

"We need to work on it," he said of his desire to employ more flair.

## Gauff 'ready' for the headiest levels of fame after US Open triumph



Coco Gauff poses with the U.S. Open trophy outside Arthur Ashe Stadium after beating Aryna Sabalenka in the final in Flushing Meadows, NY, US, on September 9, 2023.  
● GETTY IMAGES

THE NEW YORK TIMES – The first thing Coco Gauff did after leaving the court in Arthur Ashe Stadium, with her first Grand Slam trophy in hand, was don a sponsor's T-shirt proclaiming her as a champion. So it begins.

Gauff has been in the glaring lights of fame since she was a 15-year-old playing into the fourth-round at Wimbledon, but after winning the US Open singles title on Saturday, those lights could become blinding and the fame distracting. Additional endorsement offers will pour in – commercial shoots, appearance opportunities, business projects, investment offers and invitations to A-list social events will pile up in the near and long term future.

Gauff has demonstrated a composed maturity in her time in the public eye, and she declared herself up for the challenge of becoming even more famous and rich, even as she tries to keep winning important tournaments.

"I'm ready," Gauff said after she beat Aryna Sabalenka,



2-6, 6-3, 6-2. "I embrace it. I know how to keep my peace, but also embrace all of this around me."

The level of fame that comes with being an American teenager winning the US Open can be spellbinding and daunting for some. Gauff is the first since Serena Williams won in 1999 at the age of 17. Young athletes in every sport have been overwhelmed by early success, fame and money. They may lose focus, party too hard, tap out on the

hunger that drove them to their first championship, or became bigheaded.

That does not seem to be an issue for Gauff, so far. After accepting her check for \$3 million, Gauff casually thanked Billie Jean King, who was also on the stage, for fighting for equal pay for women, a gesture showcasing her perspective, humor and charm, all in one.

"She is so humble," said Pere Riba, her coach, after the match. "Her work ethic

is so strong, so professional and she has very good manners. Put all of that together and she will only get better. She can handle it all." Riba has only been working with Gauff, alongside Brad Gilbert, since June, right before Wimbledon. Gauff's father, Corey Gauff, asked Riba to be his daughter's coach this summer on a temporary basis that turned permanent. Coco Gauff said that her father recommended hiring Gilbert, too. But Corey Gauff

remains a steady influence and inspiration.

"The most important person for Coco on the team is the dad," Riba said. "The parents are really, really important for her."

In the next few days Gauff's schedule could be demanding. She will be asked to appear on national television programs and pose for photo shoots. She will be invited to parties and celebrities will reach out.

For players like Emma Raducanu, who won her first US Open at 18 two years ago, claiming a major trophy at an early age brought riches and fame but not yet consistent tennis success. But Gauff, whose career earnings before Saturday from singles and doubles topped \$8 million, was playing in her fifth US Open, and people have been pointing to her for years as the next great American champion. Success did not come in an instant.

"This is a big achievement," she said, "But I feel like I've been used to this since I was basically 15 years old. In high school, doing online school, just used to it."

## Which will IAEA Board of Governors opt for?



By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

Many experts predict that in the upcoming meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Gov-

ernors, no resolution will be issued against Iran. Reza Faraji-Rad, an international affairs expert and former Iranian ambassador to European countries, is among these experts. In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, he has emphasized that there is no evidence or indications of European or American preparations to put forward a resolution against the Islamic Republic.

The IAEA's 35-nation Board of Governors will convene in Vienna starting today, September 11. One of their agenda items is the verification and inspection of Iran's nuclear activities under UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and the review of the implementation of the safeguards agreement.

IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi is expected to present his report on Iran's nuclear work during the quarterly session. In recent days, the media have disclosed some confidential sections of this report.

According to media reports, while there are concerns about Iran's deviation from its nuclear activities under the 2015 nuclear deal and its restriction of the agency's full access to some nuclear facilities, which is a recurring pattern in the IAEA's reports, it has been emphasized that Iran's production of uranium enriched to up to 60% has slowed to around 3 kg a month from about 9 kg a month previously and its stockpile of enriched uranium has shrunk.

Reuters, in its reports, has emphasized that while the slowdown of 60% uranium enrichment in Iran does not necessarily imply a limitation on the country's nuclear program, it could contribute to easing tension between Tehran and Washington.

# Promoting or undermining cooperation?



## Iran's active diplomacy

The BG session is taking place in a context where Iran, through its active diplomacy in recent months, is experiencing calmer days in the international arena. Tehran's efforts to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia have contributed to regional rapprochement.

After becoming a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Iran has also joined the ranks of the BRICS club of emerging nations. Furthermore, following marathon indirect talks with the United States, a deal has been hammered out in which prisoners are exchanged between the two countries, and \$6 billion of Iran's frozen assets in South Korea have been released.

In addition to these developments, some media outlets and analysts are speaking of an unwritten deal between Tehran and Washington, in which both countries are working to manage existing tensions and prevent things from spiraling out of control. Both parties also emphasize their readiness to continue negotiations to lift sanctions on Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian has recently stressed that talks with the United States to bring Washington back to the 2015 nuclear deal will continue under the framework of the "September Document," which refers to direct negotiations between Iran and the remaining parties to the

troubled deal, known as the P4+1, as well as indirect talks with the US that were halted last year.

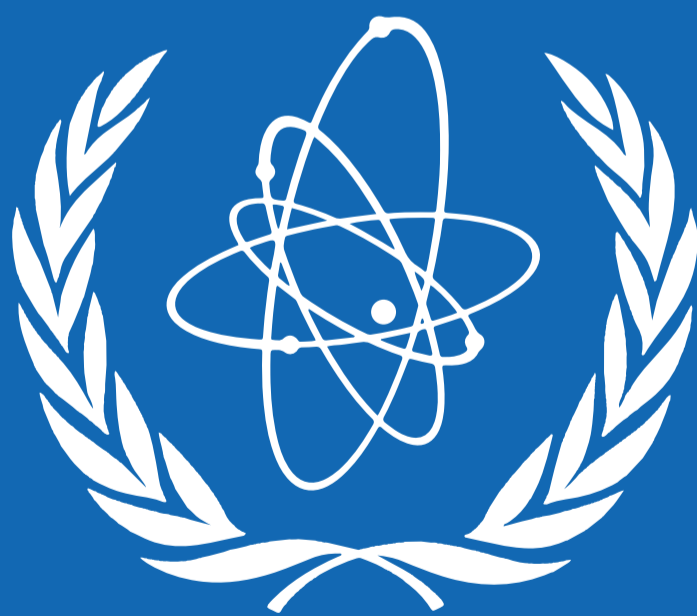
Alongside these diplomatic developments, the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran and the IAEA have resumed their cooperation after a short hiatus, and it appears that parts of the agency's report regarding the slowdown of 60% purity of enrichment and the reduction of uranium stocks are related to this cooperation.

All of these developments indicate that, in addition to its primary approach to foreign policy based on an East-oriented perspective, the Islamic Republic has not overlooked pursuing a balanced foreign policy, including negotiations with Western actors, de-escalating tensions and settling disputes.

This diplomatic path is apparently set to be further developed on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York later this month. Iran's negotiating team will reportedly hold discussions with the P4+1 with indirect participation of US diplomats in New York.

In addition, the foreign ministers of the Persian Gulf countries, including Iran, will sit down for talks in New York under the initiative of the United Nations. Besides, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will have meetings with the leaders of the countries attending the UN General Assembly.

Iran and the US are working to prevent things from spiraling out of control. Both parties also emphasize their readiness to continue negotiations to lift sanctions on Iran.



# IAEA

The 35-nation Board of Governors, especially the European members and the United States, are not apparently willing to walk on a destructive path they previously went down.



## Why BG session is crucial?

The BG meeting, the IAEA director-general's report on Iran's nuclear activities, and the members' response to Grossi's report are crucial for several reasons. They can either disrupt the positive trend of understanding and cooperation, or pave the way for the continuation of this process. As observed in previous quarterly meetings of the IAEA's Board of Governors, destructive actions by the so-called European Troika (Germany, France and Britain) and the United States, along with their efforts to pass anti-Iran resolutions, had negatively impacted the dialogue and cooperation between Iran and the agency, and Tehran's negotiations with the P4+1 representatives. For example, in the BG's meeting last year in June, in response to the issuance of a resolution against itself, Iran switched off several IAEA surveillance cameras operating in its nuclear sites beyond the JCPOA terms. However, it now appears that the 35-nation Board of Governors, especially the European members and the United States, are not inclined toward walking on such a destructive path.

"Contrary to previous meetings, there is no indication of an anti-Iranian campaign or behind-the-scenes negotiations to pressure Tehran on the eve of the BG session," Faraji-Rad told Iran Daily. Referring to the positive diplomatic developments in the past few months and, especially, the understanding between

Iran and the United States, he rules out the possibility of a resolution against Iran at the forthcoming BG gathering. Faraji-Rad considers the slowdown in Iran's 60% enrichment as a positive move for Western nations, particularly the United States, and notes, "Like Iran, the United States is interested in continuing negotiations to lift sanctions and bring Iran's nuclear activities back to the JCPOA limits. Additionally, Washington has no interest in fueling tensions with Iran, at least until the US presidential elections."

This international affairs expert believes that the BG meeting and the discussions surrounding Iran can be a catalyst for fostering future cooperation and negotiations.

"On the fringe of the United Nations General Assembly, while I doubt that a meeting at the presidential level between the nuclear deal parties will take place, nuclear negotiations, especially potential talks between Iranian and American representatives, could significantly advance the course of events," Faraji-Rad explains. Therefore, the Board of Governors and the IAEA director-general should be careful so as to not fall under the influence of opposing lobbies against Iran. They should also refrain from revisiting previous tried-and-tested actions to pressure Tehran under politically motivated pretexts if they are interested in strengthening cooperation with Iran and reaching agreements.

## Nasehi to hold 'Chopin and Liszt Night' piano recital



ISNA—Renowned Iranian pianist Fereidun Nasehi will stage a concert once again as he performs his latest piano recital titled 'Chopin and Liszt Night' at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on September 29.

Nasehi will take the stage to perform compositions by world-class classical music maestros. This comes after his previous piano recital was held at the Niavaran Cultural Center in 2016.

In 2017, the accomplished artist graced Vahdat Hall with renditions of pieces by Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, Mephisto Waltz, and Rachmaninoff.

Nasehi, the son of the renowned Iranian composer Hossein Nasehi, received a scholarship in 1975 to pursue his studies in Germany. Following the completion of his studies in solo piano performance and numerous recitals in Germany and Austria, he returned to Iran. Since then, he has held several performances at Vahdat Hall and Niavaran Cultural Center.

Nasehi boasts a remarkable artistic career, collaborating with great musicians such as Iraj Sahbaei, Nader Mashayekhi, and Emil Khachaturian.

## Nod for the Iranian social club in Oman

OMAN OBSERVER—Oman Minister of Social Development Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar issued a ministerial decision on the formation of the 'Social Club for the Iranian Community,' aimed at mobilizing the capabilities of its members to serve the social purposes of the members.

The club will help members of the Iranian community in the Sultanate of Oman, who have a good reputation established among the Omani people, to strengthen the fraternal ties between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran in various cultural, intellectual, and social fields by organizing cultural, social, sporting and other events.

It will also strengthen the ties between the members of the community, especially the youth, with their motherland from its history, present, and future, in addition to strengthening fraternal and social ties between members of the community residing in various parts of the Sultanate of Oman, the statement said.

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### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's 'No Prior Appointment' won top honors at the 19th Kazan International Festival of Muslim Cinema in Russia. Directed by Behrouz Shoeibi and produced by Mahmoud Babaei, a production of the Farabi Cinema Foundation, the film received the Best Film and Best Leading Actress awards in a ceremony held during the festival's closing night on September 9, as reported by IRNA. Among the distinguished guests attending the closing ceremony were Deputy Prime Minister of Tatarstan Vasil Shaykhrayev, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan Irada Ayupova, Iranian Consul General to Kazan Davoud Mirzakhani, and Emir Kusturica, a renowned Serbian director, and various acclaimed filmmakers from Russia and around the world. The Kazan festival featured a total of 52 films from 21 countries, including Russia, Iran, Syria, India, Iraq, Morocco, Tajikistan, Turkey, Greece, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, the UK, Senegal, Nepal, Kazakhstan, Egypt, and Algeria, competing across categories such as Feature Films, Short Films, Long Documentaries, Short Documentaries, and the National Competition, showcasing works created in Tatarstan. 'No Prior Appointment,' a collaborative effort between the Farabi Cinema Foundation and the Image of the City Insti-

tute, tells the story of Yasmin, a woman who returns to her homeland of Iran after years in German exile following her father's passing. Her journey is made all the more challenging by her six-year-old autistic son, but during her brief stay in Iran, she gains a profound insight into the essence of humanity and death.

This outstanding film made its Iranian debut at the 40th Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in 2021, where it earned Golden Simorgh for Best Film from a national perspective. Furthermore, 'No Prior Appointment' received more than 10 awards at the National Will Manifestation Awards, a companion event to the Fajr Film Festival, recognizing films that address key issues championed by various public organizations and institutions. Distinguished juries from these organizations annually select winners from the films screened at the Fajr Film Festival.

The 19th Kazan International Festival of Muslim Cinema took place from September 5 to 9, celebrating the diversity and excellence of Muslim cinema from around the world.

Three other Iranian films, 'Witness,' directed by Aida Tebyanian, participating in the short story film competition; 'Estatics,' in the long documentary competition; and 'Water, Wind, Dust, Bread,' made by Mehdi Zamanpour Kiasari, were presented in the short documentary section at this event.

# Iran's 'No Prior Appointment' shines at Kazan festival



● IRNA

## Iran's 'Motherless' nominated at Wales Int'l Film Festival



### Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian film, 'Motherless,' written and directed by Seyyed Morteza Fatemi, was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film category at the Wales International Film Festival. Making its fifth appearance at international festivals, 'Motherless' has previously received three best

film awards at the Dhaka International Film Festival 2022, Crossing the Screen Film Festival in England 2023, and the Bengaluru International Film Festival. It also secured the Best Director Award at the Rainbow London Film Festival, according to Mehr news agency. The seventh edition of the Wales International Film Festival 2023, with its unique multi-stage for-

mat spanning two months, is set to take place at the Gwen Theater in the city of Nith in South Wales. Following the screening of selected works and the identification of finalists, the award winners will be announced on September 15. Produced by Mohammadreza Mesbah and Ali Owji, 'Motherless' is currently being screened in Iranian cinemas.

## Overtourism overruns Mount Fuji in Japan

Mount Fuji, once a peaceful pilgrimage site, is now witness to millions of visitors every year. The route is now filled with buses, supply trucks, noodle shops and fridge magnets. The authorities are now saying that number of hikers trekking on the world-famous volcano has reached a dangerous level ecologically.

"Mount Fuji is screaming," the governor of the local region said last week. UNESCO added the "internationally recognised the icon of Japan" to its World Heritage List in 2013, wionews.com wrote. But as has happened in places such as Bruges in Belgium or Rio de Janeiro's Sugarloaf Mountain, the designation has been both a blessing and a curse.

Visitor numbers more than doubled between 2012 and 2019 to 5.1 million, and that's just for Yamanashi prefecture, the main starting point.

The stream of people does not trudge the mountain just during the day. Even at night, long lines of people can be seen making their way up to see the sunrise in the morning.

The starting point is a car park. It can only be reached by taxi or buses. Before the walkers set off for their trek, they can access a complex of restaurants, souvenir shops and more. They are powered by diesel generators and the thousands of litres of water they use has to be brought up in lorries. Trucks also take all the rubbish down.

Masatake Izumi, a local official, told AFP that very high number of people has increased the risk of accidents.

Some people who climb at night "get hypothermia and have to be taken back to first aid stations" he said.

This week government ministers met to discuss measures to tackle what Kenji Hamamoto, a senior Japan Tourism Agency official, called "overcrowding and breaches of etiquette" across heavily touristed sites.

Authorities announced last month that crowd control measures will be imposed if paths get too busy. If this happens, such measures will come into effect for the first time.

Yamanashi's governor Kotaro Nagasaki said last week Japan

needed to take measures to ensure Mount Fuji did not lose its UNESCO designation. One solution, he said, could be constructing a light rail system to replace the main road leading to

the main starting point for hikers. "We firmly believe that with regard to Mount Fuji tourism, a shift from a quantity approach to a quality one is essential," Nagasaki said.

