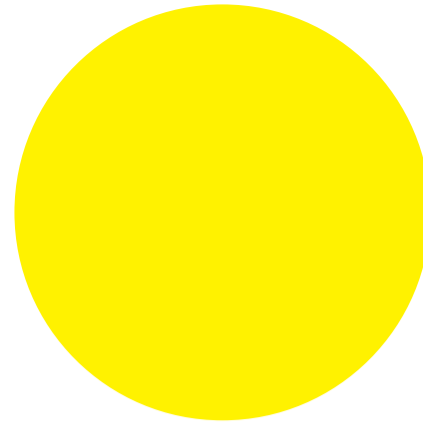


Probing Pentagon's role in Iran's riots

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Iran Daily



irandaily.ir | newspaper.irandaily.ir

Vol.7390 • Wednesday, September 20, 2023 • Shahrivar 29, 1402 • Rabi' al-Awwal 4, 1445 • Price 40,000 Rials • 8 Pages

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Canadian
inflation
jumps

Reuters – Canada's annual inflation rate in August jumped to 4.0% from 3.3% in July on higher gasoline prices, data showed on Tuesday, a sign that the central bank may be forced to raise interest rates yet again after 10 hikes since March of last year. The consumer price index rose 0.4% on a month-over-month basis in August, Statistics Canada said, compared with a predicted 0.3% gain. Two of the three core inflation measures also rose.

Solar panels
go into
service near
North Pole

AFP – Norway has installed solar panels in its Svalbard archipelago, a region plunged in round-the-clock darkness all winter, in a pilot project that could help remote Arctic communities transition to green energy. Neatly lined up in six rows in a field, 360 solar panels will on Thursday begin providing electricity to an old shipping radio station, Isford Radio, now converted into a base camp for tourists.

Russia's oil,
gas revenues
set to rise

REUTERS – Russia's oil and gas revenues, which account for around a third of total federal budget proceeds, are set to rise to around 733 billion roubles (\$7.6 billion) in September, up 14% from the previous month, Reuters calculations showed on Tuesday. The corresponding figure in September 2022 was 688 billion roubles. The rise reflects a 24% month-on-month increase to 1.1 trillion roubles in proceeds from a mineral extraction tax, according to the calculations, based on data from industry sources and official statistics on oil and gas production, refining and supplies on domestic and international markets.

Petchem nameplate capacity
tops 92m tons: NPC

Iran's petrochemical production capacity, which was at a pretty low level at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, has now soared to over 92 million tons per year thanks to great efforts of domestic experts, said National Petrochemical Company (NPC) managing director on Tuesday.

Morteza Shahmirzaei, who made the remarks at a press conference at the 17th IranPlast International Exhibition, added the petrochemical industry is the most developing industry in the world and ranks first, Shana reported.

The completion of petrochemical industry's value chain is not just a motto, but a task, plan, and duty as an inviolable strategy, noted the official.

The country's petrochemical industry was 100 percent dependent in the pre-revolution era, while Iran is now self-sufficient in most sectors, including catalysts, products, equipment, commissioning, and producing, said Shahmirzaei. He added that Iran's incum-



bent administration has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) on investment in the oil industry worth tens of billions of dollars, of which some were

put into action and some are pending. Development plans for completing petrochemical industry's value chain and setting up new plants

with the aim of diversifying products have been outlined, said the deputy oil minister. A handful of petrochemicals were produced in Iran at

the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, but now 550 grades of petrochemicals are produced and supplied to domestic and foreign clients, he concluded.

Iran eyes collecting interest from
S Korea over released funds

YONHAP

Teheran is reviewing collecting interest from South Korean lenders over their past withholding of around US\$6 billion in Iranian funds under United States sanctions, according to sources, after Seoul released the funds in a prisoner swap deal between Washington and Teheran.

According to Iranian diplomatic sources, Teheran authorities have begun

a legal review of seeking interest for the funds that were previously frozen by the Bank of Korea, the Industrial Bank of Korea and Woori Bank over the past four years or so, Yonhap reported on Tuesday. An Iranian government official, who declined to be identified, said South Korean financial institutions unfairly earned interest income due to illegal sanctions by the US.

The official said it was only natural for the lenders to return the interest to the rightful owner.

A Seoul Foreign Ministry official, meanwhile, said Iran's move was "not in line with the spirit of the agreement between the relevant countries."

"All the details related to the transfer of the frozen funds have been carried out based on agreements with the relevant countries, including Iran," the Seoul official said.

Relations between South Korea and Iran had remained tense as the Islamic Republic had demanded the transfer of its frozen funds. The demand had posed a diplomatic challenge to Seoul, which sought to strengthen its treaty alliance with Washington and its economic partnership with Tehran.

Official calls for launching PTA
between Iran and Iraq

The secretary general of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce stressed the need to launch a preferential trade agreement (PTA) between the two countries, in line with boosting trade and economic activities.

Speaking at a conference on strategies for the development of sustainable trade between Iran and Iraq in the 2025 Vision on Tuesday, Jahanbakhsh Sanjabi Shirazi put the current balance of Iran's trade with neighboring Iraq at \$10 billion, 95 percent of which is in the interest of the Islamic Republic, according to Tasnim news agency. Iran enjoys the potential and capabilities to have a stronger presence in the lucrative Iraqi market, he said.

Sanjabi Shirazi further noted that a PTA should be launched between Iran and Iraq to spur trade and economic activities.

Earlier, Chairman of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce Yahya Al-e Es'haq said that Iran and Iraq have targeted \$20 billion in bilateral trade. The two countries enjoy high potentials in all fields, especially in the

fields of trade and the economy to boost their trade value to \$20 billion in the coming year, he emphasized.

Iraq will become the main country in the region in the field of investment within the next 10 years, Al-e Es'haq said, calling on Iranian investors to make huge investments in the lucrative and profitable Iraqi market.

Iran, Brazil sign MoU on cooperatives sector

The Iran Chamber of Cooperatives and the State Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Tehran to bolster bilateral cooperation between the two countries for the development of cooperatives. The MoU was inked on the sidelines of a meeting of members of the Board of Directors of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) held in Tehran, IRNA

reported. It was signed between Chairman of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives Bahman Abdollahi and President of State Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives Rémy Gorka aimed at strengthening mutual cooperation at multilateral assemblies, dispatching, admitting trade-economic delegations and developing the exchange of technical know-how and experiences of successful models.

Cooperating in the agreed bilateral activities in the fields of trade, industry, finance and investment, developing and promoting trade cooperation and bilateral investment, focusing on social and economic growth and development, and encouraging members to participate in the international trade fairs and trade seminars were among major topics discussed at this expert-level meeting.



Reviving Isfahan's historical fabric: A quest for preservation and prosperity



● borna.news



● IRNA



● chtn.ir

Iranica Desk

The establishment of picturesque neighborhoods encircling the mosque and bazaar, intricately woven together by a labyrinth of alleys, symbolizes the urban development unfolding under the banner of Isfahan. This tale recounts the profound impact of urban planning on the fabric of this remarkable land. The historical fabric of this city has sadly endured damage over time due to tasteless alterations and self-interest-driven changes. Consequently, the city's cohesiveness has been altered by the widening of passages and the modification of its streets. The destruction of Isfahan's historical fabric due to road construction and insufficient services has forced its original residents to leave and created opportunities for the settlement of non-native individuals. As a result, Isfahan has lost its

once-unified historical fabric. Unfortunately, in the detailed plans devised for construction in the historical fabric, only height restrictions have been taken into account. As a result, houses are being built in this area that lack harmony with the fabric and architecture of this renowned region. This is while the houses that adhere to the fabric of this region feature a central courtyard. The Municipality of Isfahan has been working hard in recent years to breathe new life into the city's historical fabric. By preserving the notable structures, they aimed to revive the city's rich heritage and create a lively ambiance. However, the central historic area of the city has yet to reclaim its former glory. Managing Director of Tehran Municipality's Renovation Organization Mohammad Ali Izadkhasti emphasizes that the key

priority for revitalizing Isfahan's historical fabric is to generate both economic and social benefits, focusing on value creation and facilitating investor engagement. "We need to view the whole urban fabric as a unified entity, with the goal of preserving its historical buildings, elevating the cultural vibrancy of the local community, and fostering a sustainable environment," he said. If residents of the historical section face constraints such as height restrictions, compensatory advantages should be defined and established to allow residents to benefit from them. For instance, urban spaces like parking lots should be created around the fabric so that if a house is located in a narrow alley, the owners should at least be able to park their cars in a nearby parking lot. Izadkhasti believes that fostering desirable infrastructure and

urban spaces, alongside cultural development, plays a key role in revitalizing historical areas and motivating investment. Izadkhasti considers the revival of the historical neighborhood of Jolfa in Isfahan as a successful model and experience. He said that with the commencement of restoration activities and urban improvements by the municipality, the economic advantages and the valuable land in this neighborhood have attracted investors. As a result, the historical houses are gradually being restored and transformed into tourist facilities. He noted that the municipality is gearing up to implement an exciting experimental preservation plan in the historical neighborhood of "Baba Qassem" on Ibn Sina Street. The ultimate aim is to create value and allure potential investors to this vibrant area. Alireza Khajavi, an official from

Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, said, "We are faced with a city that has a rich history, spanning thousands of years. It encompasses the three periods of the Buyid, Seljuk, and Safavid. This extensive history has bestowed upon us a remarkable cultural and historical heritage. He said that the onset of the industrial era and the advent of machines brought about countless street expansions, unfortunately, at the expense of disregarding and neglecting the precious historical heritage. As a consequence, there was widespread devastation within the historical fabric, disrupting the age-old harmonious balance and resulting in the loss of countless priceless historical artifacts. He believes that the potential capacities of Isfahan's historical fabric are still largely intact. By

implementing new strategies and acknowledging the value of this heritage, it is feasible to rectify past damages to a great extent and establish a conducive environment for life, cultural activities, and tourism. This task requires stopping intrusive and destructive encroachment and irregularities in the historical fabric. "The only option isn't just using the capacities of the historical fabric for creating traditional restaurants and museums. Instead, by organizing neighborhoods, establishing infrastructures and providing appropriate services, it's possible to restore life and vitality in historical neighborhoods. Instead of constructing new buildings for cultural or administrative purposes, historical locations within neighborhoods can be preserved and transformed into cultural or administrative spaces," he noted.

Evolution of Urdu as a rival to Persian

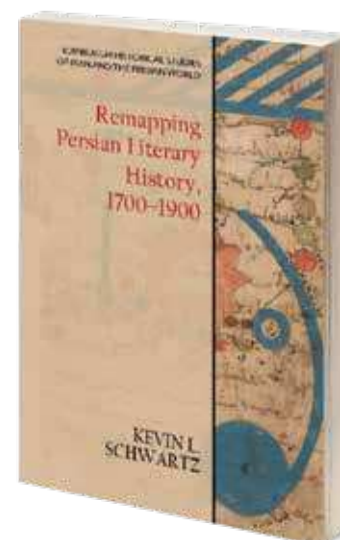
Beginning around the reign of Shah 'Alam II (1759-1806 CE), Rekhta (slowly coming to call itself 'Urdu') came to be used in the court of the Mughals across the Indian Subcontinent. While Persian remained in place as the official language, the gentry in Delhi became less inclined to utilize it in their writings. Outside of the imperial centre, cultures of newly emergent Mughal successor states began to take shape and, in time, impact patronage opportunities for Persian. Persian, of course, was already well-situated across the Indian Subcontinent. The sprawling networks of Mughal bureaucracy and the significance accorded to the language as a marker of elite intellectual and literary status nurtured an active poetic culture in places like Lucknow, Agra and Lahore as well as other cities and provinces. As Purnima Dhavan, assistant professor of History at the University of Washington, notes, already by the early decades of

the seventeenth century most Persian learners could be found 'not in the rarified inner circle of the imperial court, but in much more eclectic settings all over the province and cities of the emperor'. Nonetheless, as Mughal central authority in the eighteenth century waned, the rise of regional powers witnessed the emergence of 'new cultural and institutional forms', allowing for Urdu, like other regional languages, to be enriched by the 'vocabulary and literary forms of Persian'. In Awadh, for example, rulers beginning with Shuja' al-Dawla (1753-75) - himself a Persianised Mughal and the grandson of a migrant from Iran - offered patronage opportunities for Urdu in addition to supporting the fine arts in general. While the Nawabs of Awadh offered patronage to Persian poets on a lavish scale too, 'Persian poetry did not flourish here to any great extent ... primarily because of the growing vogue for Urdu as a poetic medium'.

Sceptical and wary of the old Mughal elite, rulers such as Shuja' al-Dawla relied on local non-Persianised groups and imported others, like Shaykhzadas, Telingana Rajputs and Gosain mercenaries, who were more inclined to offer patronage to Urdu poets rather than Persian. Alongside the shift in political tides and patronage practices stemming from the break-up of the Mughal Empire, Urdu was simultaneously emerging as a more readily acceptable medium of literary and poetic expression in competition with Persian. Crucial to this shift in perception was the work of 'Vali' Dakhani (1667-1707), who elevated the status of Rekhta by demonstrating that its poetry 'could rival, if not surpass, Indo-Persian poetry in sophistication of imagery, complexity and abstractness of metaphor'. This shift in perception led to the growth of poets choosing to write in Rekhta instead of Persian in the early 1700s. This

would soon be followed by persistent efforts to compose poetry in Urdu. Along with the increased attention to Urdu poetic composition came the need for poets to find instructors to teach them, the rise of poetic assemblies to share verses and hone skills, and the blossoming of master-student relationships. The new world of Urdu poetics and poetic community put a premium on identifying with a master or lineage, association with a readily identified master (*ustad*) being viewed as a major necessity. The new class of Urdu poets emerging in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would be more likely to identify themselves with a local and accessible *ustad* for easier affiliation than with an individual further afield or a historical poet that they could emulate, tightening the social network around Urdu composition. Such an approach can perhaps best be seen in the Mughal court and the shifting terrain upon which the relationship

between the courtier poet and patron-ruler was now founded. Opposed to past practices in which rulers sought poets to offer panegyrics in their praise and celebrate special occasions, rulers such as Shah 'Alam II and Bahadur Shah II (1837-57) sought out poets to serve as their own teachers with greater frequency. The result was a new configuration of poetic community for those composing in Urdu. With the growth of master-student relationships, a whole new literary culture began to emerge, one in which poetic genealogy, status, codes and poetic gatherings for Urdu poets rose in importance. This was accompanied by various feuds, loyalties and competitions over patronage, either among royal patrons or among sought-after instructors in poetry. 'What began as a need', the literary scholar Shamsur Rahman Faruqi writes, 'soon became fashion, and then a minor industry and source of patronage.'



Probing Pentagon's role in Iran's riots

The Pentagon had considered the overthrow of the Establishment as attainable in the short term, especially after the project was entrusted to the United States Central Command in the region (CENTCOM).



Orchestrating last year's riots in Iran was unprecedented for the United States. All the plans designed during the riots were a sign of a major and multi-layered project against Iran. According to reports, the Pentagon had considered the overthrow of the Establishment as attainable in the short term, especially after the project was entrusted to the United States Central Command in the region (CENTCOM). What caused the riots to become more complicated was the use of modern technologies, especially artificial intelligence, to guide people to take measures ranging from operational actions to suicides, especially by girls and teenagers. However, the dimensions of the measures have not been well analyzed so far. Despite the analyses done by Western think tanks, the Pentagon believed that the collapse of the Establishment in Iran was attainable – the issue that caused the US to interfere in Iran's internal affairs with all its strength.

The brainstorming meetings about Iran had always been held in the US State Department and the CIA headquarters, but in a very rare move, before the riots in Iran, for the first time, the meetings were transferred to

of a war media think tank to the US president, which also faced opposition from Trump, who did not believe in creating regime change in Iran. But after the beginning of Joe Biden's tenure, the plan was again put on the Pentagon's agenda.

Pentagon's think tank The Pentagon think tank had compared Iran's situation to a situation between the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, but this was in contradiction with the report of Western think tanks.

Western think tanks announced in May 2022 that a media campaign against Iran cannot bring the Establishment to its knees, as it is impossible to infiltrate the Establishment because it has strengthened its inner circle over the years. Dismantling this inner circle will pave the way for toppling the Establishment.

However, the Pentagon believed that the situation in Iran was such that the new government, which acts in line with the Establishment's policies, should not be allowed to

shape its policies. After reports provided by the anti-Iran Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO), separatist groups, radical reformists inside the country, and other groups on the situation in Iran, the Pentagon concluded that it was the best time to overthrow the Establishment.

The government in Iran was seeking "economic surgery and social surgery". Therefore, if they manage to make contact between the part of the society that is dissatisfied with the economic situation, which is also part of the inner circle, and the rich who are concerned about democracy in the country, the regime will fall in a short time. The Pentagon's think tank had collected all information about the situation in Iran, which was given to the media based on the Pentagon's plans. The Iranian

and Western media each had their function and should not interfere in each other's affairs. The Iran case in the Pentagon was given to the head of the Iran Desk, but the operational part of the project had to be coordinated with CENTCOM. Joe Biden's remarks last year, saying, "We are going to free Iran," were the result of the Pentagon's reports and its assurance to the White House about the overthrow of the Establishment in Iran.

The Pentagon has assessed that the situation in Iran is on the verge of a socio-economic revolution, and if the US misses this opportunity, it could no longer work on regime change in Iran.

The onset of the crisis in Iran was not the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, but only the social part of the plan for the top-

pling of the Establishment. The government's economic surgery was the starting point of the economic aspect of the regime change, but the Pentagon was seeking to attack the Establishment from both sides.

Taking the leadership out of the scene was put on the agenda. It should have been done through the media. Months before the riots, they encouraged people to chant slogans against the Leader.

The Pentagon had prepared different layers for its project, which should have been media-oriented. Reports by the Western media at the end of October and November 2022 presented Iran as a collapsed country. To build confidence among its operational forces inside Iran, they put the escape of the Establishment's leaders on the media's agenda. They also used artificial intelligence technology to counter Iran. CENTCOM, the main element of the operations in Iran, was tasked to use this technology. It commanded all the operational forces and the

me-

dia. The MKO, Kurdish separatist groups, royalists, radical Sunni movements in Sistan and Baluchestan and Kurdistan provinces, etc., all should have operated according to CENTCOM'S orders.

The leadership of American military officials in last year's riots was the main reason behind the complexity of the events. In August and September 2022, when Iran was preparing for Arbaeen, almost all CENTCOM'S groups inside the country were ready to carry out its order.

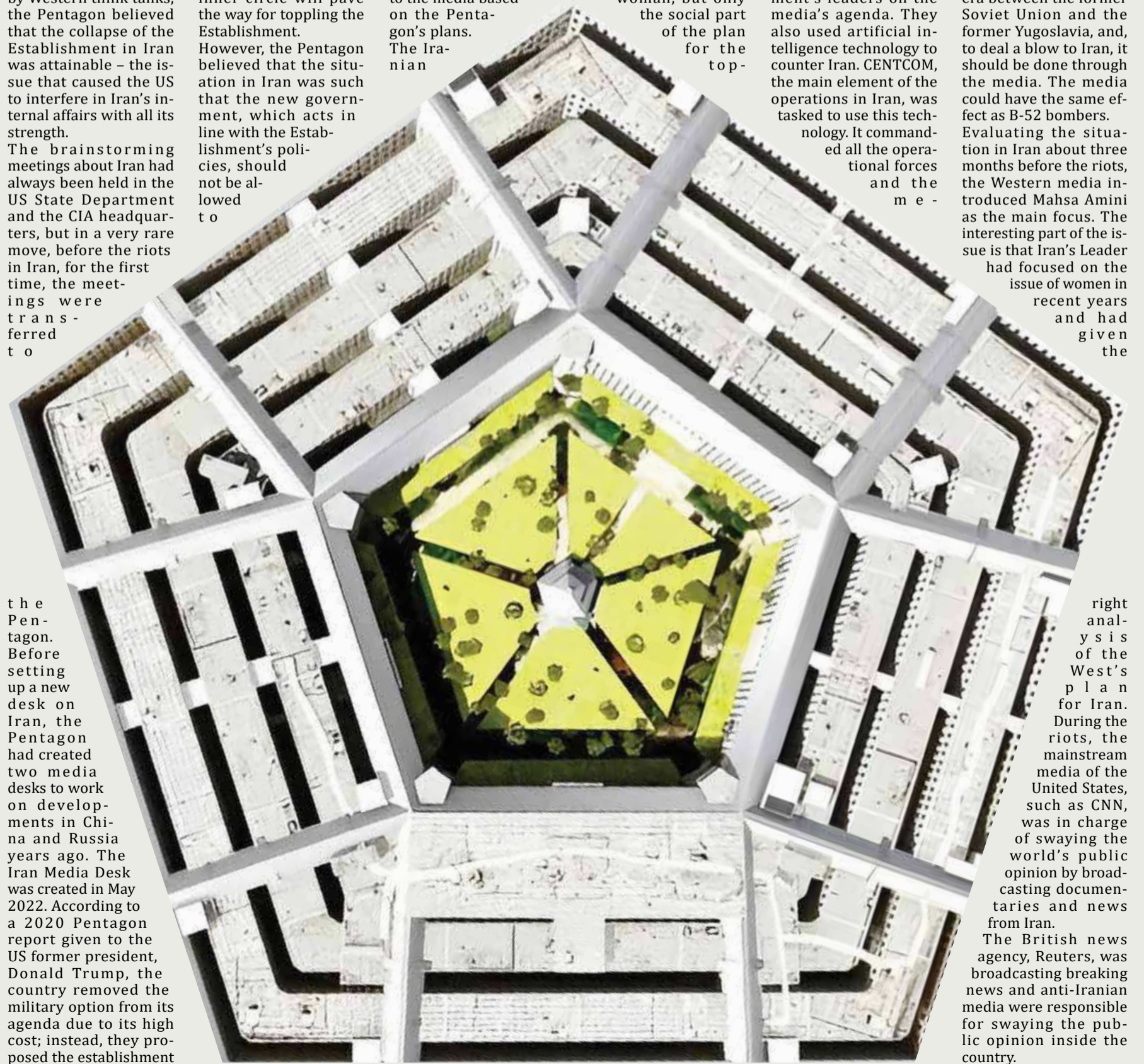
CENTCOM had predicted that ensuring the security of the pilgrims would exhaust the country's security forces so that it would not create problems for its project.

As mentioned, the Pentagon had compared Iran's situation to an era between the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, and, to deal a blow to Iran, it should be done through the media. The media could have the same effect as B-52 bombers.

Evaluating the situation in Iran about three months before the riots, the Western media introduced Mahsa Amini as the main focus. The interesting part of the issue is that Iran's Leader had focused on the issue of women in recent years and had given the

the Pentagon. Before setting up a new desk on Iran, the Pentagon had created two media desks to work on developments in China and Russia years ago. The Iran Media Desk was created in May 2022. According to a 2020 Pentagon report given to the US former president, Donald Trump, the country removed the military option from its agenda due to its high cost; instead, they proposed the establishment

Western think tanks announced in May 2022 that a media campaign against Iran cannot bring the Establishment to its knees, as it is impossible to infiltrate the Establishment because it has strengthened its inner circle over the years.



right analysis of the West's plan for Iran. During the riots, the mainstream media of the United States, such as CNN, was in charge of swaying the world's public opinion by broadcasting documentaries and news from Iran.

The British news agency, Reuters, was broadcasting breaking news and anti-Iranian media were responsible for swaying the public opinion inside the country.



Iran advocates peace

The Iranian president, who is on a three-day visit to the United States to participate in the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), has taken the opportunity at the UN to hold meetings with the heads of states and media outlets. During his meeting with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Raisi said people expect the UN to avert excessive demands and warmongering by world powers and the domination system, warning that such dangerous procedures disrupt global peace and stability.

● president.ir

Raisi said that cooperation with the UN is the Islamic Republic's principle, stressing that the country stands ready to contribute to the expansion of peace and security across the world and the prevention of oppression against nations. He said the world body is tasked to pay attention to calls by nations for the exercise of justice, as well as the establishment of sustainable security, and the elimination of discrimination and poverty. The Iranian chief executive further highlighted concerns about the political and social future of Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria, as well as separatism in Africa, saying the UN has an important mission to prevent oppression against the people of these countries. Guterres, for his part, voiced his keenness to develop cooperation between the

United Nations and Iran.

He further welcomed positive steps in relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, saying the two countries can influence regional stability.

Praising Iran's constructive role regarding developments in Yemen, Guterres also emphasized the UN support for Tehran's initiatives to end the crisis gripping the impoverished state.

Meanwhile, the Iranian president asked the UN chief to follow the news on Iran directly, and through the correct channels, as the Western media do not present a true image of the country.

The Iranian president also held a meeting with senior American media managers and answered their questions.

He told media outlets that a recent Qatar-mediated prisoner swap that took place between Iran and the US was

carried out purely on humanitarian grounds.

"Definitely, any step that is taken [by the United States] to fulfill their commitments would be confidence-building for us," Raisi said.

Raisi told NBC that the released funds, which, he said, had been cruelly blocked and are now in possession of Iran, belong to the Iranian people and would be used to meet their needs.

After two years of high-stakes negotiations, Iran and the US agreed to free prisoners as part of a deal that also included the release of about \$6 billion of Iranian assets illegally frozen in South Korea.

On Monday, Iran and the US freed 10 prisoners – five in Iran for five in the US – after the US government unblocked the nearly \$6 billion in frozen Iranian oil funds held in South Korea.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (C) speaks in a meeting with senior American media managers in New York on September 18, 2023. ● president.ir

Foreign intervention in region

Elsewhere in his remarks, Raisi described the promotion of relations with Iran's neighbors as one of his administration's pivotal policies, stressing that "the main reason behind some problems in the regional countries' relations has been foreign intervention, especially by the United States."

The Iranian president also pointed to the failure of the so-called US maximum

pressure policy and sanctions against Tehran, suggesting that American media managers urge their officials to reconsider the policy of imposing sanctions against the Iranian nation, because "Iranians are determined to overcome problems and will never yield to sanctions."

He noted that the US and the West raise issues such as the hijab, human rights and Iran's nuclear activities only as an

excuse to harm the Islamic Republic as an independent country.

He slammed US media silence on the killing of more than 1,000 American people by the country's police in 2022 and a recent fatal shooting of a pregnant Black woman by US police in the state of Ohio earlier this month.



Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (R) talks with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, in New York City, on September 18, 2023. ● president.ir

US bullying tactics

Raisi also said the US policy of implementing bullying tactics against Iran in the form of imposing sanctions on the country will fail to produce any results.

"Using the bullying language in the form of sanctions and threats against the Iranian nation is not a useful instrument, one should speak rationally," Raisi said on Tuesday during a meeting in New York with representatives of US think

tanks.

Elaborating on his remarks, Raisi said an example of Washington's insistence on using bullying tactics against Iran was its decision to freeze billions of dollars' worth of Iranian funds in South Korea for several years.

Raisi said Iran will continue to judge the US based on its practical steps, not its rhetoric.

"Up to now, US behavior has failed to win the Islamic Republic's trust," he said, adding that what can make Iran trust the US is a change in the US's bullying behavior and its respect for commitments made under international deals.

President Raisi also held talks with heads of state of Algeria, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia and Kazakhstan.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (R) talks with his Croatian counterpart Zoran Milanovic on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, in New York City, on September 18, 2023. ● president.ir

Iran's achievements

During a meeting with his Croatian counterpart Zoran Milanovic, Raisi said the era of the West's dominance over independent nations is "over," stressing that Tehran has managed to thwart sanctions imposed by Western countries.

"Despite efforts made by some Western countries to impose their interests and values on other countries in the world, the Islamic Republic of Iran has managed to turn sanctions and pressures into opportunities and has made signif-

icant progress in different fields, particularly the field of technology," he said. Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that Iran has made significant achievements in the fields of agriculture, industry, and medicine thanks to its peaceful nuclear program, noting that "we managed to treat one million patients with radiopharmaceuticals last year."

"Why do the US and European countries that own nuclear arsenals prevent other countries from benefiting from nuclear energy," he added.

Raisi also hailed Milanovic's announcement that his country is adopting an independent policy and expressed Iran's interest in expanding political, economic, and trade ties with Croatia.

Milanovic, for his part, said Croatia has always tried to adopt independent policies, despite being a member of the US-led NATO military alliance and the European Union.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi (L) shakes hands with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, in New York City, on September 19, 2023. ● president.ir

Economic ties with Kazakhstan

Also on Monday, Raisi met Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during which they called for accelerating the full implementation of bilateral agreements, including economic and trade deals.

Raisi said the fact that the two countries are Caspian neighbors and members of

the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) paves the way for expanding bilateral ties.

He noted that enhanced trade ties between the two countries by sea or rail "serve the interests of the two nations as well as the regional countries," adding that "effective steps must be taken" to ac-

celerate the attainment of the goal.

For his part, Tokayev, who visited Tehran in June at the invitation of President Raisi, stressed that Iran is a strategic partner and close friend of Kazakhstan. The two sides oversaw the signing of several cooperation documents on transport, energy, tourism, and other fields.

Palestinian issue

President Raisi also met with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, expressing appreciation for the African country's support for the oppressed people of Palestine and its firm position on denying an observer status to Israel in the African Union. Raisi said Iran has no problem in expanding relations with neighboring countries, stating that the interference of Western countries, especially the US, is the cause of disruption in relations between regional countries.

Tebboune touched on the history of good relations between the two countries and emphasized the need for serious efforts to

revive and improve relations between Iran and Algeria.

He said he is familiar with the political, economic, scientific and research capabilities of the Islamic Republic. "We know that sanctions have made Iran a powerful country and we are ready to expand our relations with Iran," he said.

The Algerian president emphasized his country's support for the rights of the Palestinian people to create an independent state, saying that the reinforcement of relations between Islamic countries in the region has increased their strength to deal with threats.

Nokhodi grabs world wrestling bronze



UWW

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Mohammad Nokhodi finished his World Championships campaign with a joint bronze in Belgrade. With six-time champion Jordan Burroughs absent at this year's event, Nokhodi, beaten by the legendary American in the previous two finals, arrived in the Serbian capital as the favorite to walk away with the ultimate prize of the 79kg weight class.

Nokhodi got off to a flying start in the competitions, defeating Turkey's Ramazan Ishak Sari (9-4), but a last-eight 5-2 setback against Russian Akhmed Usmanov, participating as a neutral athlete, ended his hopes of a first world gold.

However, Nokhodi bounced back to beat North Macedonian Ahmad Magomedov 5-1 in the repechage before a 10-0 technical fall triumph over Azerbaijan's Orkhan Abasov secured a third successive world medal for the Iranian.

Nokhodi, who broke down in tears after his victory, shared the third podium with Vasy Mykhailov of Ukraine, while Usmanov went on to beat Georgian Vladimeri Gamkrelidze 4-1 for the gold.

This was a fourth medal for the Iranian 10-man squad in Belgrade.

Having beaten defending champion Taha Akgül of Turkey in the semifinals, Amirhossein Zare' out-muscled Georgia's Geno Petriashvili by an 11-0 scoreline on Sunday to capture a second 125kg gold in three years.

Hassan Yazdani, meanwhile, suffered a fifth defeat in a sixth head-to-head with David Taylor as the American pinned his familiar foe with two seconds left on the clock in the 86kg final.

Amirmohammad Yazdani, representing the country in the 70kg contests, also came short in a show-down with an American opponent.

Yazdani – a silver winner in 2021 – looked to be in exhilarating form on his way to the final but clearly ran out of steam toward the end of the contest against Zain Retherford, falling to an 8-5 loss.

AFC Champions League:

Rahmati relishes in 'memorable' debut for Nassaji; Morais rues dropped points

Sports Desk

Nassaji Mazandaran boss Seyyed Mehdi Rahmati was thrilled to see his men leave India with a "memorable" victory on their Asian Champions League debut – a 2-0 win against Mumbai City in Group D.

Sepahan manager Jose Morais, meanwhile, was left regretting after his side conceded a late equalizer to share the spoils with Iraq's Air Force Club in a 2-2 draw in their Group C opener in Erbil.

In Pune's Balewadi Stadium, Ehsan Hosseini bagged a maiden goal for the northern Iranian side at the Asian elite clubs competition, finding the net with a cool finish in the 34th minute.

Mohammadreza Azadi tapped in a second goal in the 62nd minute to secure maximum points for the 2022 Iranian Hazfi Cup champion. "Today is a historic and memorable day for Nassaji club. Our players put all their strength and energy for the pride and success of this team and fans," Rahmati said afterwards.

"This was Nassaji's first game in the AFC Champions League; I thank God and thank my players for making our people and fans happy and getting the first three points in our history in the competition," added the former Esteghlal and Sepahan goalkeeper.

Rahmati, whose team took a surprise lead in the group – also featuring Saudi powerhouse Al Hilal and Uzbekistan's Navbahor – on Matchday 1, still said his team would not be carried away by the victory.

"We can be happy until tomorrow when we return to Iran and then we have to focus on the next games again," said the Iranian, adding: "From today, opponents will have a different level of respect for us."

Nassaji will next square off against



Nassaji Mazandaran players celebrate a goal during a 2-0 victory over Mumbai City in the AFC Champions League group stage at the Balewadi Stadium, Pune, India, on September 18, 2023.

AFC

four-time Asian champion Al Hilal at the Azadi Stadium on October 3. Al Hilal was held to a 1-1 home draw by Navbahor in Riyadh. Georgian striker Toma Tabata-dze netted 10 minutes after the break to silence the crowd at the King Fahd International Stadium, though Navbahor was left heartbroken after Saudi center-back Ali al-Bulayhi headed home in the 10th minute of stoppage time.

Pitiful draw

Having enjoyed a perfect start to the Iranian top-flight season, Sepa-

han was stunned with 26 minutes into the game at the Franso Hariri Stadium, when Ali Jasim's strike from inside the box took a deflection off Mohammad Daneshgar and went past Iranian international keeper Payam Niazmand. It took the Iranian giant four minutes to get back in level terms, courtesy of Daneshgar smashing home from close range.

Holding midfielder Mohammad Qorbani was an unlikely scorer for Sepahan, giving the visiting side the lead with a composed finish in the 67th minute but Jasim's ef-

fort from an acute angle with one minute from normal time shared the points.

"I did not expect this from the match beforehand. Air Force Club is a good team and had good players," Morais said after the game.

"We were ready for the match, but because they hadn't played in the league yet, we didn't know much about them, but they knew a lot about our team because we had played a few matches," added the Portuguese.

"In my opinion, we should have managed the difficult situations

we faced better, but the players gave their best.

"We were able to control the game most of the time. It's a pity that we conceded a goal, even though we were in control."

Next for Sepahan is a home game against Saudi side Al Ittihad at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium on October 2.

Despite being without injured striker Karim Benzema, Al Ittihad cruised to a 3-0 home win against Uzbekistan's AGMK, thanks to a Haroune Camara's opener followed by a Brazilian Romarinho's brace.

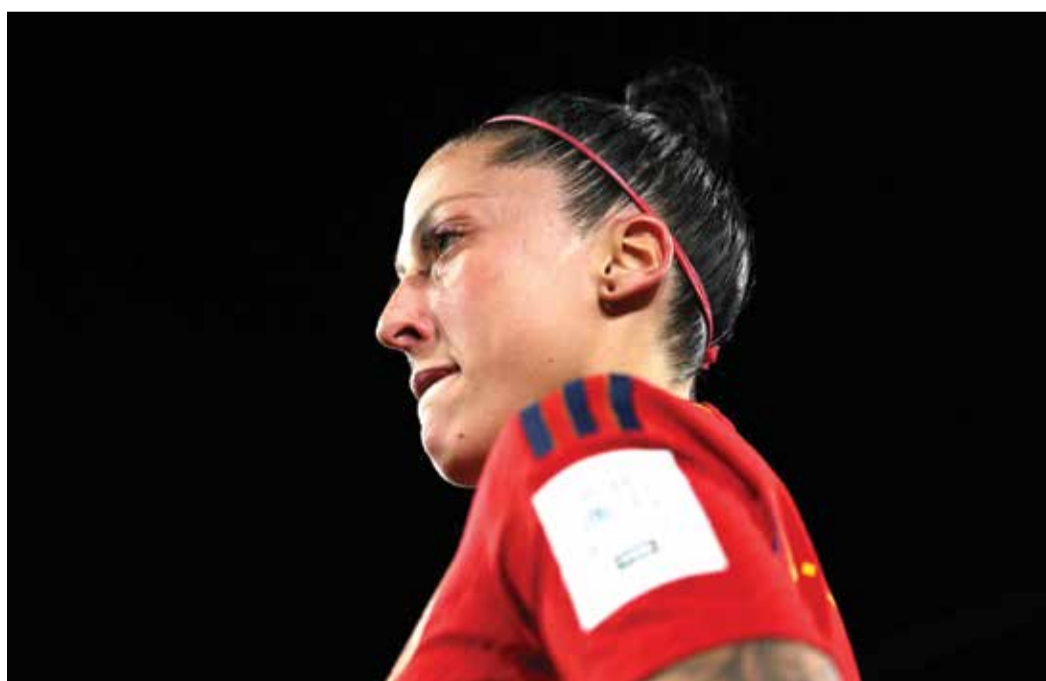
'Nothing has changed': Hermoso hits out over Spain squad call-ups

THE GUARDIAN – Jenni Hermoso said the decision to call up players who are boycotting Spain's women's team was proof that "nothing has changed" at the country's federation (RFEF) even after the resignation of its president over the Women's World Cup kiss scandal.

After most of Spain's World Cup-winning squad were selected on Monday for upcoming games, the players said they would continue their boycott, which came after Luis Rubiales kissed Hermoso on the lips during the trophy presentation ceremony in Australia.

Should the players refuse the call-up they could face fines of up to €30,000 (£26,000) and the suspension of their federation licence for two to 15 years under Spain's Sports Act. Victor Francos, the head of Spain's government national sports agency, told SER radio station if the players did not show up "the government must apply the law".

Hermoso, who was not called up, said the players had been "caught by surprise" by the call-



GETTY IMAGES

ups and were forced to react to "another unfortunate situation caused by the people who continue to make decisions within the RFEF".

"The players are certain that this is yet another strategy of division and manipulation to intimidate and threaten us with legal repercussion and econom-

ic sanctions," the 33-year-old striker said in a statement posted on X, formerly Twitter. "It is yet more irrefutable proof that shows that even today, nothing

has changed."

The RFEF did not respond immediately to a request for comment outside normal business hours. The federation said in an earlier statement it was convinced of the need for "structural changes" and had to clarify who was responsible for the behaviour the players had brought to light.

Montse Tomé, who has replaced Jorge Vilda as coach of the national team, suggested Hermoso was left out because of the intense media attention the player had received in the past month. "We stand with Jenni ... we believe that the best way to protect her is like this, but we are counting on Jenni," Tomé said.

Hermoso asked who she needed protection from. "A claim was made today stating that the environment within the federation would be safe for my colleagues to rejoin yet at the press conference it was announced that they were not calling me as a means to protect me," she said. "Protect me from what? And from whom?"

Armed groups begin withdrawing from Iraq-Iran border

National Desk

Armed Kurdish groups in northern Iraq started pulling out from areas near the border with Iran on Tuesday as Baghdad faced the deadline to disarm the groups. It was part of a security agreement signed between the two countries to disarm the groups and remove their military camps, a report by Al Jazeera said from Suran, near the Iraq-Iran border. In March, Iran set a deadline of September 19 for the security agreement concluded with Iraq, under which the Iraqi government has promised to disarm terrorist and separatist groups based in the Kurdistan Region, vacate their military barracks, and transfer them to the camps established by the Baghdad government. Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has shared positive news received from his Iraqi counterpart, Fuad Hussein, regarding the joint deal, as reported by AP. He made the remarks during a joint press confer-

ence with his Iraqi counterpart after their meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly summit in New York on Tuesday. The Iraqi official also characterized the security pact as the best option to foster good neighborly relations.

Groups to be relocated to five camps

Also on Monday, he announced that Kurdish armed groups along the border with Iran have handed over their heavy weaponry as the deadline for their disarmament and relocation approached. Hussein said the armed groups and their families will be relocated to five camps, which have been set up in Iraq's Kurdistan Region. The top Iraqi diplomat reiterated his country's commitment to the security agreement with Iran, saying the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has taken the necessary measures in accordance with Baghdad's agreement with Tehran, Press TV reported. Stressing that Iraq pursues

peaceful approaches based on dialogue and respect for its neighbors, Hussein said Baghdad opposes any act of violence against its national sovereignty.

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani said on Sunday that Tehran will not extend the ultimatum given to Iraq to disarm Kurdish separatist groups along the border with Iran, warning Baghdad of an "eleventh-hour decision" on the matter.

Reports say Iraq's national security adviser, KRG minister of interior, and special representative of the United Nations' secretary general for Iraq have met in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region, and discussed the implementation of the security pact. Meanwhile, Iraqi media reported on Saturday the country's border guards have managed to gain full control over an area on the Kurdistan Region's border with Iran and drive out terrorist groups following fierce clashes. Iraq's Shafaq news agency



cited the country's border guard forces as saying in a statement late on Friday that they had seized border points in Erbil Province and raised Iraq's national flag in the area after clashes with "outlaws."

The security agreement between the two countries came after anti-Iranian terrorist groups residing in Iraqi Kurdistan Region increased their malign activities, especially in border areas.

Russian defense minister in Tehran



IRNA

PRESS TV - Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, at the head of a high-ranking military delegation, arrived in Tehran on Tuesday to hold talks with senior Iranian officials aimed at further bolstering bilateral relations and counter-terrorism cooperation. Shoigu's visit to Tehran on Tuesday afternoon came after an official invitation by Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri in June. The Russian defense minister was scheduled to meet with Baqeri, with media reports saying discussions would revolve around advancing defense diplomacy, expanding bilateral cooperation, and addressing shared threats, particularly international terrorism.

Azerbaijan launches military action in Karabakh as tensions escalate



AFP

Azerbaijan launched military action in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a step that could presage a new war in the volatile area but which Baku said was necessary to restore constitutional order and drive out Armenian military formations. Karabakh is internationally recognised as Azerbai-

jani territory but part of it is run by breakaway ethnic Armenian authorities who say the area is their ancestral homeland. In a statement announcing its operation, Azerbaijan's defence ministry spoke of its intention to "disarm and secure the withdrawal of formations of Armenia's armed forces

from our territories, (and) neutralise their military infrastructure, Reuters reported". It said it was only targeting legitimate military targets using "high-precision weapons" and not civilians as part of what it called a drive to "restore the constitutional order of the Republic of Azerbaijan".

Civilians were free to leave by humanitarian corridors, it added, including one to Armenia, whose prime minister, Pashinyan, said the offer looked like another attempt by Baku to get ethnic Armenians to leave Karabakh as part of a campaign of what he called "ethnic cleansing",

an accusation Baku denies. The Karabakh separatist human rights ombudsman, Gegham Stepanyan, said that two civilians had been killed and 11 people injured as a result of strikes by Azerbaijan's military. Reuters could not immediately verify his assertion.

A meeting for détente in NYC



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

PERSPECTIVE

Mohammad Irani, the former Iranian ambassador to Kuwait, and Massoud Assadollahi, an expert on Middle East affairs, agree on the significance of the upcoming meeting of foreign ministers from the eight Persian Gulf countries in New York City. They view this gathering as a major step toward enhancing security and fostering regional cooperation. This inaugural meeting of foreign ministers includes representatives from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman, and Kuwait, all members of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, as well as the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq. The event is slated to take place in the coming days on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. UN Secretary-General Anthony Guterres has initiated and will host the meeting, a move that has received Iran's positive response. This forthcoming meeting

follows a series of developments over the past year, particularly the rapprochement that occurred after Iran and Saudi Arabia normalized their diplomatic relations. Over the past four decades, the GCC member states have seen ups and downs in their relations with Iran, though Qatar and Oman have consistently maintained amicable ties with the Islamic Republic and have at times acted as mediators in disputes between Iran and other Arab nations in the region, as well as Western countries. With the recent restoration of relations between Tehran and Riyadh, Iran's ties with the UAE and Kuwait have also thawed. While Bahrain has yet to appoint an ambassador to Iran, it has also adopted a more conciliatory stance towards Tehran. Nevertheless, historical grievances, differing opinions on regional matters, and lingering misunderstandings still exist among these countries. Resolving these issues and fostering security and economic cooperation will likely require more time. However, what is crucial is that the nations of the region have collectively

recognized, based on past experiences that dialogue is the preferred method for settling disputes and differences. A prime example of this shift is the normalization of relations between Tehran and Riyadh. The looming meeting of Persian Gulf foreign ministers in New York signifies a significant and forward-moving step toward increased dialogue for resolving conflicts and addressing outstanding issues among these nations. Speaking to Iran Daily, Irani notes that while discussions about holding such a meeting have occurred in the past, differences of opinion, especially from Saudi Arabia, have previously led to vetoes. "However, the meeting's venue in New York City now presents an opportunity for these eight nations to take more decisive steps toward maintaining regional peace and fostering cooperation." According to Irani, the participating parties should focus on discussing areas of agreement, such as trade, economic relations, and the development of a collective security strategy. However, he acknowledges that security talks require special mech-

anisms, taking into account the unique considerations of certain countries. Meanwhile, Assadollahi, also speaking to Iran Daily, emphasizes that Iran has consistently advocated for maintaining security in the region collectively, without the involvement of external powers. He sees the inclusion of Tehran in this meeting as a positive sign that the region's countries are aligning their views. However, Assadollahi cautions against expecting immediate results from the New York meeting, pointing out that, apart from Saudi Arabia, other GCC member countries have historically harbored concerns about Iran and Iraq, particularly during Saddam Hussein's era. Moreover, he highlights the impact of tensions created by the US in the region, with the United States using regional instability as a pretext for its military presence. "Achieving substantial results will require the continuation of more meetings, ongoing dialogue, and the establishment of clear guidelines." The presence of extra-regional powers in the Middle East is a reality. The United States

has maintained a presence in West Asia for an extended period, and recently, China has shown a keen interest in developing relations with regional countries. However, their stances on joint meetings among regional nations differ. Assadollahi suggests that the United States is not enthusiastic about such meetings because it views efforts to strengthen regional peace as contrary to its interests and the justification for its military presence. "However, Washington does not publicly express this dissatisfaction." As an example, he highlights recent US measures, where, despite the normalization of relations between Tehran and Riyadh and a de-escalation process in the region, Washington has announced the deployment of additional military forces to ensure shipping security in the Persian Gulf. Assadollahi points to an analysis by an Arab expert, suggesting that the United States did not come to Riyadh's aid after Yemen's Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities but is now seeking to send troops to secure shipping routes as the region moves

toward peace. Conversely, China's position differs from that of the United States. China has cultivated relations with regional countries, particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia, to meet its energy needs and advance its development goals. It sees regional tensions as detrimental to its interests and the stability of energy supplies. In their discussions with Iran Daily, both experts highlight the potential of the New York meeting to serve as a solid foundation for future gatherings. However, there are questions regarding whether these nations are planning to work out a comprehensive regional agreement and whether there is a genuine desire among them to sign such a pact. Irani believes that the possibility of concluding a regional agreement at the current stage is unlikely. "Each country has its own expectations, coupled with existing differences of opinion and rifts among them. Therefore, it's unrealistic to anticipate the resolution of all these disputes through a single meeting in the short term."

Assadollahi echoes a similar stance, emphasizing that the development of cooperation does not imply an immediate agreement, such as a security pact, in the near future. He suggests that such an expectation represents the least likely outcome among a series of positive regional developments. According to Assadollahi, the more logical and traditional approach for Persian Gulf countries is to start by focusing on mutually agreed and readily achievable areas of cooperation. These could include improving relations among themselves, enhancing economic ties, promoting tourism, fostering cultural and scientific exchanges, and such. Both Irani and Assadollahi, like many other experts, view the upcoming meeting as promising. They stress that achieving significant regional progress hinges on the continuation of these meetings. This path has been smoothed, and its momentum should not halt in New York; rather, it should continue to pave the way for future collaboration and understanding among the regional nations.

Iran given another chance for Masouleh

Arts & Culture Desk

The "Masouleh Cultural Landscape" dossier failed to secure a vote in favor of its inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List, prompting Iran to address its shortcomings and potentially resubmit the dossier in upcoming sessions of the World Heritage Committee.

In the 45th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the dossier was discussed but failed to secure approval due to opposition from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). This means that Iran has the opportunity to rectify the issues in the dossier and resubmit it in future committee meetings, IRNA reported. The proposed dossier was sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre based on consultations and approvals from the National Council for Registration of Monuments. It had been in the UNESCO World Heritage Site's tentative list since 2007, meeting acceptable conditions in terms of conservation and management. During the session, the dossier was met with criticisms by ICOMOS, with concerns raised about the lack of sufficient documents and records. As a result, ICOMOS recommended the dossier's rejection by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and suggested a "Deferral" (for addressing dossier issues and reviewing in future sessions) and "Referral" (for addressing minor issues and re-evaluation without waiting for a specific session). However, the dossier transitioned from "Not Inscribed" to "Referral," allowing Iran to resubmit the dossier for potential world heritage listing. Nonetheless, representatives from Oman, the UAE, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Nigeria advocated for the dossier and called for a reconsideration of ICOMOS' recommendation. The Japanese representative, while recognizing the tourism appeal of Masouleh, also pointed out issues within the dossier and mentioned extensive debates between Iran and ICOMOS on the subject. The Russian representative at UNESCO recalled that most of ICOMOS' concerns arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected communication and potentially led to doubts about the content.

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Vol. 7390 ● Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023 ● Price 40,000 Rials ● 8 Pages

Cinema chief slams sanctions on cultural figures



Arts & Culture Desk

Head of Iran's Cinema Organization Mohammad Khazaei has strongly criticized Western countries for imposing sanctions on

Iranian cultural figures, including Iran's Culture Minister Mohammad Mehdi Esmaeili. In an open letter addressed to Western leaders, Khazaei denounced

these sanctions as an attack on Iranian culture and a futile attempt to undermine the country's rich heritage and deep-rooted Islamic beliefs, farhang.gov.ir re-

ported. The letter, made public by Iran's Cinema Organization, highlights Khazaei's concerns regarding the sanctions and their motivations. He argued that colonial powers not only exert control through military means but also employ intellectual and cultural strategies to continue their influence. The sanctions, in this case, target influential figures and media outlets that support Iran's cultural and religious values. Khazaei specifically mentions efforts by the UK and the US to impose sanctions on figures like Esmaeili, framing it as a new form of cultural imperialism. He noted that these powers aim to reproduce their soft power in society by silencing voices that advocate Iran's unique civilization, which spans thousands of years and is deeply rooted in Islamic beliefs, the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, and the culture of Ashura among others. The Iranian official asserted that the enemies of

Iran's cultural and Islamic identity have launched an overt war on the country's cultural and media landscape, with the ultimate goal of suppressing religious and intellectual thought. Khazaei noted that liberal and humanistic ideologies will not tolerate the growth and prosperity of religious thinking. In his letter, Khazaei argued that the ministry has effectively countered various forms of hybrid warfare, including virtual attacks and media campaigns, by promoting Iran's cultural achievements and the resilience of its civilization. Khazaei concluded by emphasizing that the unjust sanctions on Iran's Minister of Culture only strengthen the determination of those working to bolster the country's cultural and artistic scene. He asserted that Iran's cultural and artistic community will not be silenced by such measures, and the achievements of the modern Iranian civilization will continue to thrive and influence global discourse.

'Go Russia' expo, opportunity to display Iran's handicrafts

The upcoming international exhibition of exports to Russia (IRRUX) presents an excellent opportunity to showcase the handicrafts of Iran's northwestern province of Zanjan, said Saeed Safavi, the head of Zanjan's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Department. He argued that craftspeople can influence this international platform to display the country's capabilities and properly introduce investment opportunities in the fields of tourism and handicrafts, IRNA reported. He emphasized that approximately half of the 2,000 identified historical and cultural ar-

tifacts in Zanjan have received national and international recognition. He expressed hope that the exhibition would witness the participation of all economic actors, particularly those in the tourism sector, leading to increased understanding and decision-making regarding investment in Zanjan city and province. The exhibition, also known as 'Go Russia', is scheduled to take place from October 10 to 13 at the Zanjan International Exhibitions Center (Caspian), providing a platform for showcasing Iran's cultural and economic offerings to the Russian market.

