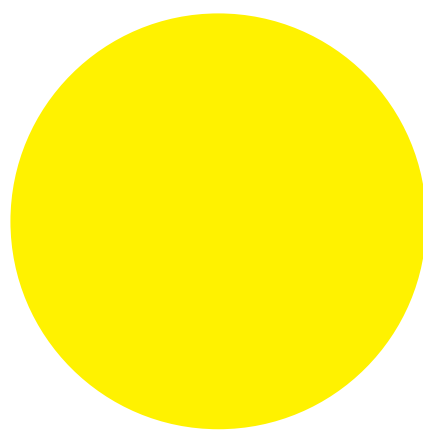


Iranian photojournalist Fereydoun Ganjour:
'A war photographer should be a soldier first' [4-5 >](#)



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Defense Ministry:

Haj Qassem Missile Deterrent Against Israel

Iranian Defense Ministry spokesman shed light on the strategic importance of the country's military arsenal that should be commensurate with threats, particularly where the Zionist regime fabricates pretexts. "We officially declare that we possess missiles capable of targeting Israel. The Haj Qassem missile is designed for this purpose," Reza Talei-Nik said on Sunday.

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Iran's military showcases Qassem Soelimani missile system during a parade on the occasion of the country's Sacred Defense Week in Tehran on September 22, 2023.

● **TASNIM**



Thousands of Achaemenid-era clay tablets returned from US to Iran

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Raeisi emphasizes supply of basic goods

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Iran returns to OPEC main producers: Report

Production and investment were among the challenges of the Ministry of Oil of the current government, which in less than two years, with reliance on domestic potentials, the country managed to overcome the challenges and rejoin the OPEC oil producing giants, according to a report by IRNA.

In September 2021, the Ministry of Oil had a production of about two million barrels per day, which had led to the decline of Iran's position among the world's oil giants.

[2 >](#)

Iran: Oman's JCPOA initiative still on the table

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held a meeting with the UN chief, and several separate meetings with his counterparts on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. During a meeting with the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Amir-Abdollahian expressed Iran's preparedness to return to full compliance with its commitments to the 2015

nuclear agreement if the other parties to the deal are also ready to do so. "The exchange of messages continues with the US and the initiative by the Sultan of Oman is still on the ta-

ble. If the other parties are ready, we are serious about returning to the JCPOA so that all sides return

to their obligations within the framework of Oman's initiative," he said, referring to the accord by the acronym of its official name, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The foreign minister further referred to the Ukraine crisis, saying that Iran abides by the territo-

rial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine.

Ties with Saudi Arabia

Iranian top diplomat also held talks with his Saudi counterpart in New York. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan al-Furhan Al Saud discussed issues of mutual interest, including bilateral ties and regional developments.

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Hangzhou Asian Games: **Girls duo open medal account for Iran with rowing silver** [6 >](#)



Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians to leave for Armenia [7 >](#)



Iran's 'Captain' to premiere at German festival [8 >](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Economy minister in Cairo for AIIB meeting

MEHR – Ehsan Khadnouzi, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance arrived in Cairo on Sunday heading a delegation to attend the 8th annual meetings of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank that provides financing for infrastructure projects in Asia. Like other development banks, its mission is to improve social and economic outcomes in its region, Asia, and beyond. It has 106 member countries and \$100 billion of capitalization, as of 2023.

Iran attains self-sufficiency in petchem industry: NPC

TASNIM – The chief executive of the Iranian National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said that 100 percent of the petrochemical complexes in the country are administered by the company.

Morteza Shahmirzaei made the remarks on Saturday and emphasized that the company is now an exporter of petrochemical parts and equipment. "Iran had possessed seven petrochemical complexes before the Islamic Revolution while the number is currently close to 70 and they produce more than 550 petrochemical items."

China: Phasing out fossil fuels 'unrealistic'

REUTERS – The complete phasing-out of fossil fuels is not realistic, China's top climate official said, adding that these climate-warming fuels must continue to play a vital role in maintaining global energy security.

Countries are under pressure to make more ambitious pledges to tackle global warming after a U.N.-led global "stocktake" said 20 gigatons of additional carbon dioxide reductions would be needed this decade alone to keep temperatures from exceeding the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

**Raeisi emphasizes supply of basic goods****Economy Desk**

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi emphasized the supply of basic goods along with giving necessary tips about their prices in the market.

The weekly economic meeting of the government was chaired by Raeisi on Sunday to monitor and control the market, IRNA reported.

Explaining the details of the Central Bank of Iran's report on the economic growth during the first three months of the current Iranian year (March 21-June 21) was the main subject of the meeting.

According to a CBI report, while the country's economic growth hit 1.9 percent in the first quarter of last year, Iran's economy set

an economic growth of 6.2 percent in the first quarter of this year.

The growth rate of the services sector in the three months to June 21 was 6.2 percent, as the oil sector witnessed 16.5 percent of rise, and the industry and mining sector experienced a 3.7 percent growth while the agriculture sector had a 2.2 percent growth.

Private sector consumption expenditures increased from 6.4 to 8.2 percent as Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) surged from minus 1.4 to plus two percent, which were among main growth factors of 6.2 percent economic growth in the first three months of this year.

Also, in the Sunday meeting, a report on the housing sec-

tor was presented, according to which the growth rate of GFCF in the construction sector has improved significantly in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period last year.

According to the report, housing prices in Tehran have decreased by one percent in the month to August 22, compared to the previous month.

Iran returns to OPEC main producers: Report**Economy Desk**

Production and investment were among the challenges of the Ministry of Oil of the current government, which in less than two years, with reliance on domestic potentials, the country managed to overcome the challenges and rejoin the OPEC oil producing giants, according to a report by IRNA.

In September 2021, the Ministry of Oil had a production of about two million barrels per day, which had led to the decline of Iran's position among the world's oil giants.

"The maximum capacity of crude oil and gas condensate of the refineries of Iran is now close to 2.2 million barrels," said Minister of Oil Javad Owji two years ago, adding that it should reach 3.4 to 3.5 million barrels per day. Iran has a favorable capacity in oil reserves, as the country has over 150 billion barrels of extractable oil, Owji said.

With the plans of the upstream sector, there will undoubtedly be an increase in oil production capacity in the next four to five years (both in joint fields and independent fields), the minister noted, adding that by increasing the production capacity, we can increase the refining capacity and guarantee energy security along with increased oil exports.

MoU signed to promote agricultural activities in Makran

The Secretariat of the Supreme Council for the Development of Makran Coasts signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Agriculture to cooperate in promoting agricultural activities in the region.

The MoU was signed by Agriculture Minister Mohammad-Ali Nikbakht and Secretary of the Supreme Council for the Development of Makran Coasts Hossein Dehqan, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Nikbakht enumerated some of the capacities of the Makran region, saying, "A large part of Makran coast is located in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, due to access to open waters, the Sea of Oman, and the coasts of African countries, these regions have a unique capacity for the development of fisheries and aquaculture." The minister further said, "This province ranks first in the country in terms of investment opportunities, while in terms of talent in various fields of horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, trade and mining, it is among the first three provinces of the country."

Makran is a historical region in southern Iran that runs from mountains west of Jask all the way to parts of Pakistan's Baluchistan Province in the southwest along the Sea of Oman.

**Iran-Indonesia trade hits \$1b: Vice president****Economy Desk**

The annual trade between Iran and Indonesia currently stands at about \$1 billion, announced Rouhollah Dehqani-Firouzabadi, the vice president for science and technology. Speaking at a ceremony held by the Indonesian Embassy in Tehran to celebrate the 78th anniversary of the country's Independence Day, the official said both countries are seeking to deepen cooperation in political, economic,

commercial, energy, scientific, technological, cultural, military and security areas.

Pointing to friendly political relations between Tehran and Jakarta, Dehqani-Firouzabadi noted that the two sides are taking initiatives to pave the ground to enhance bilateral relations.

"The clear example of this political relation is the recent visit of President Raeisi to Indonesia and meeting his counterpart, which marks a turning point in bilateral relations and the begin-

ning of a new chapter in ties between our two nations," the official noted.

He said that the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Indonesia are seeking to deepen cooperation in various political, economic, commercial, energy, scientific, technological, cultural, military and security areas.

Speaking at the ceremony, Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro said Indonesia and Iran have shared deep-rooted his-

torical and cultural ties that have evolved into a dynamic partnership encompassing various sectors such as trade, culture, education, and people-to-people exchanges.

"Government-to-government cooperation remains an essential component of our bilateral relationship," the envoy noted. "We have actively engaged in diplomatic discussions to address various challenges and opportunities based on mutual respect and understanding."



Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province's natural wonders and cultural heritage

Iranica Desk

Nestled in the heart of Iran lies Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, a small yet enchanting paradise that beckons travelers with its untouched and awe-inspiring natural treasures.

Endowed with a pristine and beautiful nature, this province serves as the cradle for three mighty rivers: Karun, Dez, and Zayandeh Rud. The harmonious convergence of these magnificent rivers, along with numerous springs and abundant waterfalls, have sculpted a captivating tapestry of

natural landscapes that leave every viewer spellbound.

The region's climate and geographical features have transformed it into an idyllic haven for nomadic communities, particularly in the west. Nomadic groups thrive off the pursuit of fertile

pastures, as their economy revolves around husbandry. Conversely, the eastern fringes of the province are predominantly inhabited by farmers. As for the plant cover, this area boasts a diverse range of landscapes, including lush forests and verdant lawns.

Shahr-e Kord

Shahr-e Kord is the bustling capital city of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. As the largest city in the province, Shahr-e Kord sits proudly just 90 kilometers away from Isfahan, Iran's impressive third largest city. Explore the rich culture, history, and charm of this vibrant urban center.

Shahr-e Kord is a vibrant tapestry of diverse communities. Within its boundaries, you'll find three major backgrounds: The proud Bakhtiari, Qashqai, and the Indigenous Persian speakers of Shahr-e Kord. Persian serves as the common language among its inhabitants, reflecting a



Shahr-e Kord
yjc.ir

shared cultural thread. Shahr-e Kord's remarkable development can be traced back to its nomadic farming roots. Blessed with vast meadows and abundant springs, it became an enticing haven for these early settlers.

Shalamzar Lake

A town located in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Kiar is renowned for its untouched natural beauty and rich historical attractions, making it a magnet for countless tourists.

Kiar is nestled 35 kilometers from Shahr-e Kord, in the breathtaking region of the Zagros Mountains.

This delightful town boasts a rugged, mountainous landscape and a refreshing alpine climate, offering moderate summers that are just perfect.

Two legendary mountains, Kiar and Sabzkuh, adorn this town with their awe-inspiring beauty. Kiar boasts an abundance of tourist attractions and ancient remnants, showcasing the region's vibrant civilization and historical significance. It has gained a well-deserved reputation as a land of renowned historical fortresses.

Moreover, this county is home to numerous natural attractions that provide tourists with unforgettable moments when they spend hours exploring them. Shalamzar Lake, located near a town with the same



Shalamzar Lake
itto.org

name in Kiar, is surrounded by stunning scenery. It is a source of two rivers, one of which flows towards the city center and the other towards the town of Dastna.

The lake offers fantastic fishing opportunities, picturesque gazebos, and the enchanting presence of wild and migratory birds. The addition of trout farms has enhanced its beauty, while the presence of a mineral water bottling factory near the spring has further contributed to the prosperity of this recreational spot.

Amir Mofakham Castle



Amir Mofakham Castle
wikimedia.org

The Amir Mofakham Castle, located in the village of Dezak, has been home to many notable individuals, including Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, a prominent Iranian literary writer, philologist, and lexicographer, who sought refuge in this castle.

Covering an area of 5,076 square meters, the castle was built in 1875 CE by the order of Amir Mofakham Bakhtiari. Presently, the second floor of this castle is utilized as a costume museum, while the adjacent courtyard serves as a provincial stone museum. In the Stone Museum you can find stones from the Safavid to Qajar periods on display. Moreover, this museum also features fascinating images of the traditional clothing worn by the Bakhtiari people in the past.



Samsam al-Saltaneh Castle
itto.org

Samsam al-Saltaneh Castle

Samsam al-Saltaneh Castle, situated in the town of Shalamzar, was constructed during the Constitutional Period by Iran's then prime minister, Najaf Qoli Khan, known as Samsam al-Saltaneh.

This castle, which was once a residential property, served as a base for constitutionalists. It has been registered on Iran's National Heritage List.

Darreh-ye Eshq

Darreh-ye Eshq is one of the natural attractions of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. In the midst of this valley flows the Karun River, the longest in Iran. The turbulent flow and exciting rapids of the river have attracted tourists and sports enthusiasts, giving them the opportunity to experience thrilling rafting adventures.

The valley is truly enchanting with its lush rice paddies and thriving pomegranate orchards. The surrounding area is adorned with an abundance of breathtaking waterfalls. Among them, the Darreh-ye Eshq Waterfall stands out as the crown jewel of this region. It is born deep within the heart of the majestic mountain, cascading down with tremendous velocity and tumbling from great heights.

In the midst of rolling pomegranate orchards and flourishing rice paddies, the majestic waterfall graces the landscape with its presence, creating a truly captivating spectacle. Its sheer grandeur steals the heart of every passerby, leaving them in awe of nature's power. And as if that weren't

enough, the crystalline springs scattered throughout the valley add an extra touch of allure, enhancing the overall charm of this destination.



Darreh-ye Eshq
safarzon.com

In particular, among them are several springs, which contain sulfuric mineral water and possess numerous beneficial properties. Deep within this enchanting landscape lies the picturesque village of Madan, nestled amidst nature's embrace. Unveiling itself within the village is a spring like no other, beckoning adventurers and seekers of wellness to indulge in its revitalizing waters.

Darreh-ye Eshq is one of the natural attractions of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. In the midst of this valley flows the Karun River, the longest in Iran. The turbulent flow and exciting rapids of the river have attracted tourists and sports enthusiasts, giving them the opportunity to experience thrilling rafting adventures. The valley is truly enchanting with its lush rice paddies and thriving pomegranate orchards. The surrounding area is adorned with an abundance of breathtaking waterfalls. Among them, the Darreh-ye Eshq Waterfall stands out as the crown jewel of this region. It is born deep within the heart of the majestic mountain, cascading down with tremendous velocity and tumbling from great heights.

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Dopolan village

Continuing along the path, in the village of Dopolan, there exists a bridge called "Pol-e Simi," which holds the remnants of a nomadic tribe's migration route. Today, it is preserved as a cherished historical heritage in this region.

This bridge is made up of eight thick wire strands securely connected to both sides of the valley with sturdy metal bolts. Wooden planks have been utilized to cover the bridge's floor and short walls.



Dopolan village
yjc.ir

Kharaji Bridge

When we travel from Shahr-e Kord toward the village of Kharaji, along the way we reach the historic Kharaji Bridge, which is the longest in the province. This structure has been registered as a national heritage. Located in the southwestern village of Kharaji, the bridge is constructed on the Kiar River, approximately 30 kilometers from Shahr-e Kord.



Kharaji Bridge
heidagash.com

Helen Protected Area



Helen Protected Area
kaloutravel.com

The Helen Protected Area covers an extensive 40,000 hectares, characterized by captivating oak forests that dominate the landscape. Approximately one-fourth of the area consists of lush pastures. This region is named Helen as a tribute to an esteemed American nurse who selflessly tended to the local community in 1931.

This area is home to various plant species including oak, walnut, almond, maple, juniper, and thornbush. It is also inhabited by animals such as fox, badger, gazelle, rabbit, brown bear, golden eagle, and snake.

Iranian photojournalist Fereydoun Ganjour: 'A war photographer should be a soldier first'



● HOSSEIN NAQIZADEH/IRAN DAILY



Ali Amiri
Staff writer

On the eventful noon of September 22, 1980, the Iraqi Air Force launched a surprise airstrike on Iran, thus beginning a war on a nation that had recently seen the fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty through the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The war waged on Iran by the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein lasted until August 1988 – a decisive period in the history of Iran known as the Sacred Defense.

To commemorate the bravery and sacrifice made by the Iranian soldiers and commanders during the war, Iran annually observes a week-long memorial named Sacred Defense Week, which starts on September 22.

Apart from the brave soldiers and commanders whose sacrifices foiled Saddam's plans, Iranian war photographers and documentary makers also played an instrumental role on the fronts,

documenting the heroism of the Iranian Armed Forces, as well as the savageries and horrors of war.

War per se, especially modern warfare, has revealed its many ugly faces to the cameras of courageous individuals who, risking their very lives, have taken it upon themselves to witness them and disclose them to the world.

Thanks to war photographers, we have seen horrendous scenes such as "mass graves, explosions, the faces of soldiers the instant they're shot." We have also seen the aftermath of war-devastated landscapes, "soldiers carrying their dead, and returning home to their families."

Contemplating the horrific nature of his photos, American photojournalist and war photographer James Natchwey once said, "I have been a witness, and these pictures are my testimony. The events I have recorded should not be forgotten and must not be repeated."

A sense of mission

Born on February 21, 1949, in Shiraz, southeastern Iran, Fereydoun Ganjour, a photographer and documentary maker, has led an adventurous life. At the age of six, his father sent him to Isfahan to receive his preliminary education at St. Louis boarding school, a French institution. Then, he moved to Tehran to continue his education at Razi Institution.

After his high school graduation at 18, he first moved to the United Kingdom where he spent a few months. Then he enrolled at Ottawa University to study engineering in Canada. After a year in Ottawa, he moved to Missouri, the United States for a better education opportunity. Stumbling upon a high-tech camera during his student days, young Fereydoun becomes interested in the art of photography and starts taking photos.

"I consider the invention of photography among the world-historical inventions alongside the printing machine and the microscope – they've changed the history of humankind," he says. Once he graduated, Fereydoun moved to Lausanne, Switzerland to study photography at a top-notch photography school. However, upon seeing his photos, the institution's director told him that he already knew what they were going to teach in the two-year-long program. Therefore, he found work as a photographer in a local company and started his photography career.

Somewhere along the way, his religious beliefs guided him toward finding a sense of mission, and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 acted as a perfect opportunity for him to do his duty. Ganjour is among the handful of Iranian jour-

nalists and photographers who have traveled to Afghanistan to witness and report the Afghan people's wars and turmoil. He has gone to the war-torn country numerous times in the most difficult conditions out of pure love for Afghan soldiers and has photographed their battle fronts.

The same sense of mission steered him toward the battlefields of the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, landing him at the Dehlahieh front on June 17, 1981, where his life was changed forever.

Putting out fire with soil

"Seven or eight months had passed since the beginning of the war," says Ganjour, remembering the difficult time he had to be granted a permit to go to the frontlines.

"You needed a permit in order to go to war as a journalist or photographer."

However, he was eventually given a pass and was flown to the Ahvaz by a C130 aircraft. There, he obtained a paper from Iran's Irregular Warfare Headquarters that indicated he was a commissioned photographer, and soon he moved to Dehlahieh, "where the action was."

Upon arrival, Ganjour saw that Iranian forces were under fire, and loaders were hard at work building embankments. He was immediately directed toward Iraj Rostami, the commander of Iranian forces.

"I didn't know back then what a heavyweight Rostami is. When I was showing him the documents, he was motionless, just looking at me, with eyes that said 'Okay, welcome. But you see how busy we are here.'"

The Iraqi fire continued all through Ganjour's first night at the front. Even though he was no stranger

to combat and explosions, he tells us "You should have been there to understand what I mean by heavy fire."

The Iraqi Army had advanced, nearing the strategic city of Ahvaz. As it happened, one of the loaders on the frontline caught fire during the artillery bombardments.

"There, for the first time, Rostami addressed me," says Ganjour, "with all the anger he could muster." The commander ordered the photographer to put out the fire. The photographer protested that he had nothing to extinguish the fire with, to which Rostami replied, "Pick up a tray and throw soil on it." As daunting a task as it was, Ganjour managed to put out the fire, impressing Rostami.

"When he saw that I would not shy away from action, he accepted me and we became friends."

Soon he noticed that there was no escape from war and there was not much to be photographed. Then Ganjour asked for a weapon.

"When you go to the fronts, you will become a soldier, that's the long and short of it. A war photographer should be a soldier first."

Unfortunately, in the early hours of June 21, 1981, only four days after Ganjour met and made friends with Rostami, ricochets from an Iraqi shell explosion hit the Iranian commander, who succumbed to his injuries on the way to the hospital.

Respected and praised by many including irregular warfare commander Mostafa Chamran, Rostami was a fearless soldier who played a crucial role in countering Iraqi offensives on the southwestern fronts, keeping them from advancing.

Warrior's last frames

On the same day of Rostami's martyrdom, Cham-

ran, the commander of paramilitary volunteers and the orchestrator of Iran's irregular warfare, went to Dehlahieh to appoint a new commanding officer. There, the same fate as his comrade, Major Rostami, befell him, as flying shrapnel from a shell hit him in the back of the head.

"I was splashing water on my face when I heard a commotion. From the other side of the canal, someone was calling for an ambulance. I jumped into one of the ambulances and drove there," remembers Ganjour.

The soldiers brought a person on a stretcher and put him in the ambulance.

"I asked who he was, and they replied 'the Doctor.' I thought that they must mean the infirmary guy who took care of the wounded and we used to call the doctor."

When the ambulance reached the end of the dirt road, Ganjour looked and saw that the injured person was none other than Dr. Chamran. Little did he know that his life was about to change for good, as he accompanied a great individual and brave warrior in his final hours, taking the last photos ever taken of the "proud commander of Islam," a title Ayatollah Khomeini gave him.

"I stopped to take my bag, and I told the young man with us that I was not taking the keys because I'd just grab my stuff and come back. But I saw the ambulance driving away."

Upset and furious for trusting the young man, he saw the car stopping about 200 meters away from him. So, he ran as fast as he could to reach the vehicle.

"I might have broken a record or something, that's how fast I ran." As he neared the car, it started moving again.





Iranian freelance photographer Fereydoun Ganjour (R), Major Ebrahim Mer'aati (C) and IRNA photojournalist Kazem Akhavan pose for a photo near Hamidiyeh, southwestern Iran, 1981.



HOSSEIN NAQIZADEH/IRAN DAILY

Fereydoun Ganjour:

War photographer

“When you go to the fronts, you will become a soldier, that’s the long and short of it. A war photographer should be a soldier first.”



This photo, along with other photos appearing on these two pages, depicting Iranian forces on the battlefields during the first year of the 1980s Iraq-Iran war, has been taken by Iranian photographer Fereydoun Ganjour.



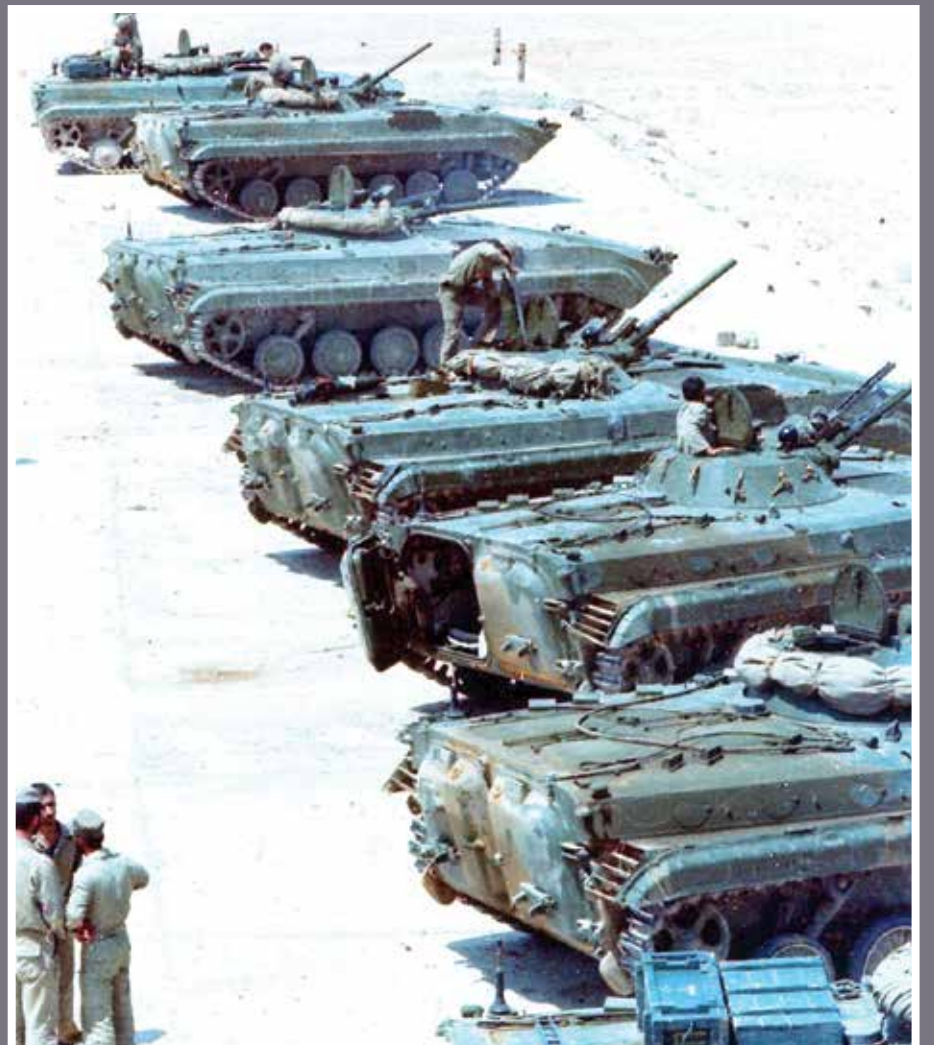
Iranian photojournalist Fereydoun Ganjour aims his camera from a frontline trench somewhere in Khuzestan, Iran, 1981, during the first year of Iraq’s invasion of Iran.



The photo taken by Iranian freelance photographer Fereydoun Ganjour shows the last moments of legendary commander Mostafa Chamran in an ambulance on Dehlavieh-Susangerd road in Khuzestan, Iran, on June 21, 1981.

“I threw my bag into the car and then pulled myself up. I was hanging from the car for quite a while.” Ganjour started filming and taking pictures of Chamran as soon as he regained his breath.
“I filmed it all. Since he was on the stretcher to the surgery room. The wound he had was not deep, and Dr. Chamran had no trouble breathing in the ambulance or the clinic,” recalls Ganjour.
“The wound on his head was minor, as it was apparent from a spoonful of blood on the bandage. The first mistake the medical staff made was they opened the bandage on his head.” Then, as Ganjour recalls, they made another mistake and clumsily put a tube in the Chamran’s mouth, “a pointless act as he had no trouble breathing.”

As they inserted the tube, Chamran got up and sat on the stretcher, with no one minding him from the back.
“Then Dr. Chamran fell and the wound on his head was cut open, and he was martyred due to the bleeding as he was being taken away.” Ganjour stopped filming and turned to the young medical staff.
“I asked him ‘Are you a doctor,’ to which he replied after a pause, ‘No, I’m an operating theater technician.’
After Chamran’s martyrdom, Ganjour returned to Ahvaz for his funeral, and there met Chamran’s younger brother and Kazem Akhavan – a fearless Iranian photojournalist – for the first time.
“The sadness we all felt was insurmountable. The loss of Dr. Chamran fell incredibly heavy on our hearts.”



Mirzazadeh, Zare' throw down the gauntlet to world super heavyweights



Iran's Amin Mirzazadeh (L) and Amirhossein Zare' celebrate after winning the superheavyweight gold medals at the Wrestling World Championships in Belgrade, Serbia, in September 2023.

Sports Desk

Iranian duo Amin Mirzazadeh and Amirhossein Zare' have already emerged as the favorites for Olympic glory next year after capturing the statement superheavyweight golds at the Wrestling World Championships. Trailing a 2-0 deficit midway through the second period, Mirzazadeh scored a couple of stepouts, the last of which came with six seconds left on the clock, to beat Turkey's Riza Kayaalp on last-point criteria in the Greco-Roman 130kg final on Friday – days after his

fellow Iranian Zare' had won a second freestyle 125kg gold in three years, courtesy of a technical fall victory over Georgian Geno Petriashvili. This was a first triumph for Mirzazadeh in three encounters with the five-time world champion Kayaalp. The 25-year-old Iranian was unlucky to miss out on a medal in his maiden Olympic appearance in Tokyo, where he fell to a 7-3 loss to the Turkish in the third-place bout. Mirzazadeh then came short against Kayaalp in last year's world final after it finished 1-1.

"I started preparing for this tournament two weeks after last year's final and I'm happy that I was rewarded for all my efforts," Mirzazadeh said after his victory. "My family kept telling me for a whole year that I should go to the final and beat Riza Kayaalp," said the Iranian. An under-23 world champion in 2021, Mirzazadeh hopes the gold in Belgrade will only be the first of many in his senior career. "I'll try my best to improve day by day and become a better wrestler. I hope to win a gold in the upcoming Olympics," added Mirzazadeh.

However, the Iranian will still be facing a mammoth en route to the top podium in Paris as Kayaalp will surely come back stronger to chase a fourth Olympic medal, not to mention legendary Cuban Mijain Lopez will be after a record-extending fifth gold at the Games. Milestone for Zare'? The freestyle superheavyweight contest has been a three-horse race for the past three world events since the Tokyo Olympics, featuring Zare', Petriashvili, and another Turkish great in Taha Akgül. Zare' who won an impressive bronze in Tokyo on his

senior international debut, sharing the third podium with Akgül, went on to beat both the Turkish and Petriashvili – who have a remarkable 20 world and Olympic medals between them – to win the world gold in Oslo two years ago. The 22-year-old Iranian looked to be on his way to a second successive top-spot finish last year but a semi-final wobble against Akgül saw Zare' eventually settle for the bronze. Zare' bounced back in style this year as he defeated the two rivals without conceding a single point to leave the Serbian capital on a

high note last week, and will have the upper hand against the two in Paris in less than 12 months. Gable Steveson, who came out on top against Petriashvili in a thrilling final in Tokyo, embarked on a new career in professional wrestling after the Games but the prospect of a second Olympic gold could persuade the American to make a return to the mat next summer and pose a real threat to Zare's gold bid in Paris. Despite the World Championships being a campaign to forget for Iranian wrestling after relative setbacks

for gold hopefuls Hassan Yazdani, Rahman Amouzad, and Mohammadreza Gerai, the country will still hope to build on Mirzazadeh's and Zare's success when seeking a first-ever superheavyweight gold in the history of the Olympic Games. Retired wrestler Komeil Qassemi has an Olympic gold in his trophy cabinet, but he was only handed the ultimate prize of the 120kg category a decade after London 2012, thanks to positive doping test results for the initial top two Artur Taymazov and Davit Modzmanashvili.

Hangzhou Asian Games: Girls duo open medal account for Iran with rowing silver



Sports Desk

Rowing pair Mahsa Javer and Zeinab Norouzi got Iran off the mark in the medal table at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, by grabbing a silver medal in the women's double sculls event. The Iranian duo clocked 7:17.08 minutes in the Final A contest at Fuyang Water Sports Centre – finishing 13.67 seconds adrift of the host's Lu Shiyu and Shen Shuangmei. Thailand's Nuntida Krajangjam and Parisa Chaempudsa took the bronze on 7:21.70. Nazanin Malaei and Kimia Zarei were the other Iranian female pair in action at the rowing contests on Sunday but missed out on the podium after a fourth-place finish in the light-weight double sculls final. Later in the day, Iranian Marjan Salahshouri bagged a second medal for the country – a bronze in the women's individual poom-

sae of the taekwondo competitions. Salahshouri overcame opponents from Bangladesh and Malaysia before suffering a last-four defeat against Japan's Yuiko Niwa. Salahshouri registered 6.44 points against the Japanese's 6.86 to share the third podium with Ma Yun Zhong of the Chinese Taipei. Niwa, meanwhile, had to settle for the silver after a final loss to South Korean Kang Wanjin. Elsewhere in the Games, Iran got off to a flying start in the men's handball, thrashing Mongolia 50-16 in Group D of the preliminary round, while in the men's beach volleyball, there were a couple of last-16 victories for the two Iranian teams. Sina Shokati and Bahman Salemi teamed up to beat Japan 2-1 (21-16, 18-21, 15-6), with Abbas Pour-Asgari and Alireza Aghajani coming out victorious against the Thai duo in straight sets (21-15, 21-15).

Mahsa Javer (L) and Zeinab Norouzi celebrate winning the silver in the women's double sculls final at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on September 24, 2023.

30 bomb attacks foiled in Tehran



Iran's Intelligence Ministry said on Sunday that it had neutralized 30 simultaneous bomb attacks at populous areas of the capital Tehran and detained 28 terrorists linked to the Daesh group. The Intelligence Ministry added in a statement that some of the members are of Daesh terrorist group

and the perpetrators have a history of being affiliated with terrorist groups in Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The ministry said its forces conducted operations in a time span of several days in the provinces of Tehran, Alborz and West Azarbaijan.

Bases used by the terrorists were detected and all the Daesh-linked agents involved in the plot were arrested. The modus operandi employed by the terror teams, the ministry said, was by far more complex than that used by ordinary Takfiri groups and it remarkably conforms to the

patterns practiced by the Israeli regime. The ministry said the seized equipment includes a considerable amount of explosives and ready bombs, a package of 100 explosive primers and electronic devices used in time bombs, 17 US-made handguns and bullets, as well as diverse smart and

satellite telecommunication devices, military outfits, and suicide vests. The ministry affirmed that the plot of terror had been designed to coincide with the anniversary of last year's protests in Iran. The Daesh terrorist group has claimed several attacks in Iran, including deadly twin bombings in

2017 that targeted Iran's Parliament and the tomb of the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini. More recently, the terrorist group claimed responsibility for an attack on a shrine last October, where 15 people were killed in the southwestern city of Shiraz.

Defense Ministry: Haj Qassem missile deterrent against Israel

National Desk

Iranian Defense Ministry spokesman shed light on the strategic importance of the country's military arsenal that should be commensurate with threats, particularly where the Zionist regime fabricates pretexts. "We officially declare that we possess missiles capable of targeting Israel. The Haj Qassem missile is designed for this purpose," Reza Talaei-Nik said on Sunday.

The Defense Ministry spokesman's remarks came two days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for a "credible nuclear threat" against Iran in an address to the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly. However, his office later clarified that he misread the line and meant to say a "credible military threat."

Referring to Iran's successes in various dimensions, especially in the military field and the development of precision missiles, Talaei-Nik said, "We are the region's primary defensive power."

He referred to the specifics of the Haj Qassem missile and the 373-missile system, revealing their advanced capabilities and multifaceted use in safeguarding Iran's national security.

The spokesperson stated that borders should be fixed borders, adding that when Iran loudly announces that the borders should not be changed, it means that there is a national, defensive, people-oriented, faithful power supporting this strategy.

Empty threats

The Iranian foreign minister also said on Sunday that no one takes Netanyahu's baseless anti-Iran accusations and threats seriously as Israel is in its "weakest state" amid internal crises, Press TV reported.

Amir-Abdollahian said that Tel Aviv is only capable of issuing threats but not acting upon them.

"The Zionists, who are themselves in possession of hundreds of nuclear warheads, brazenly continue their threatening programs," he added.

Nagorno-Karabakh's Armenians to leave for Armenia

The 120,000 ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will leave for Armenia as they do not want to live as part of Azerbaijan and fear ethnic cleansing, the leadership of the breakaway region told Reuters on Sunday.

Armenia's Prime Minister also said the Karabakh Armenians were likely to leave the region, and that Armenia was ready to take them in, following a defeat last week at the hands of Azerbaijan in a conflict dating to the fall of the Soviet Union.

The Armenians of Karabakh – a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but previously beyond Baku's control – were forced to declare a ceasefire on Sept. 20 after

a lightning 24-hour military operation by the much larger Azerbaijani military. Azerbaijan says it will guarantee their rights and integrate the region, but the Armenians say they fear repression.

"Our people do not want to live as part of Azerbaijan. Ninety-nine point nine percent prefer to leave our historic lands," David Babayan, an adviser to Samvel Shahramanyan, president of the self-styled Republic of Artsakh, told Reuters.

"The fate of our poor people will go down in history as a disgrace and a shame for the Armenian people and for the whole civilized world," Babayan said. "Those responsible for our fate will one day have to answer before God for their

sins." The Armenian leaders of Karabakh said in a statement that all those made homeless by the Azerbaijani military operation and wanting to leave would be escorted to Armenia by Russian peacekeepers.

Reuters reporters near the village of Kornidzor on the Armenian border saw some heavily laden cars pass into Armenia. One of the drivers said they were from Nagorno-Karabakh.

It was unclear when the bulk of the population would move down the Lachin corridor which links the territory to Armenia, where Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has faced calls to resign for failing to save Karabakh.

In an address to the nation,

Pashinyan said some humanitarian aid had arrived but the Armenians of Karabakh still faced "the danger of ethnic cleansing".

"If proper conditions are not created for the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to live in their homes and there are no effective protection mechanisms against ethnic cleansing, the likelihood is rising that the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh will see exile from their homeland as the only way to save their lives and identity," Pashinyan said, according to an official transcript.

A mass exodus could change the delicate balance of power in the South Caucasus region, a patchwork of ethnicities crisscrossed with oil and gas pipelines where Russia, the United States and Turkey are jostling for influence.

Last week's Azerbaijani victory appears to bring a decisive end to one of the decades-old "frozen conflicts" of the Soviet Union's dissolution. President Ilham Aliyev said his "iron fist" had consigned the idea of an independent ethnic Armenian Karabakh to history and that the region would be turned into a "paradise" as part of Azerbaijan.



Refugee women sit in a bus after registering at a center of the Armenian foreign Affairs Ministry, near the border town of Kornidzor, on September 24, 2023. ALAIN JOCARD/AFP

Iran: Oman's JCPOA ...

The two top diplomats expressed satisfaction with the re-opening of embassies and the exchange of ambassadors in Tehran and Riyadh.

Amir-Abdollahian said that Iran is prepared to organize and sign a comprehensive cooperation document with Saudi Arabia, building up on the ideas exchanged during his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in August.

He also put a premium on the establishment of a Joint Economic Commission to expand economic and trade

relations between the two countries.

Amir-Abdollahian also stressed the need to activate air and sea transportation routes to facilitate travel and trade between the two countries.

Bin Farhan, in turn, expressed satisfaction with the speed at which bilateral relations have progressed since rapprochement in March, and said Riyadh was eager to strengthen bilateral cooperation with Tehran.

The two diplomats had met for the first time in early April in Beijing after China

brokered a détente that allowed Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore their normal diplomatic relations after seven years.

Regional challenges

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Saturday that his country welcomes the enhancement of relations with Iran to tackle regional challenges.

Safadi made the remarks during a meeting with Amir-Abdollahian.

"We want good and brotherly relations between the two countries, and are determined to open up a new

page in our relationship with Iran," he said.

"We both face many challenges in the [West Asia] region, which cannot be addressed except through cooperation. Our bilateral relations must reflect historical, fraternal bonds that exist between the two nations," he added.

Amir-Abdollahian, for his part, said the positive atmosphere in the region as well as warming relations between Iran and Arab countries will hopefully boost ties between Iran and Jordan to serve their mutual interests.

Tehran-Stockholm tensions

Iran has demanded Sweden take action over desecration of Muslims' holy book, the Qur'an, before the two countries can exchange ambassadors again, and urged it to release an imprisoned Iranian citizen, the Foreign Ministry said on Sunday.

"Regarding the exchange of ambassadors, we are waiting for good action on the issue of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden," Iran's top envoy told the Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billström. He also urged Stockholm to release Hamid Nouri, an Iranian national arrested in November 2019 and sentenced to life in prison after being convicted over the alleged mass executions of prisoners ordered by Tehran in 1988.

"We expect that the Swedish government would make a wise and courageous decision in the appeal stage and release Mr. Nouri," the minister said, adding, "We are ready for positive and constructive cooperation in various fields."

The Iranian minister also held separate talks with his counterparts from South Korea, Eritrea, Mali and Nicaragua.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Diplomatic ties with Maldives restored

IRNA – Iran and the Maldives have decided to restore diplomatic relations after more than seven years.

The decision was made at a meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. The Maldives severed ties with Iran months after Saudi Arabia severed its relations with Tehran in January 2016.

Iraq fully implements security deal with Iran: Iraqi FM



PRESS TV – Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein said his country has implemented all clauses of a security agreement with neighboring Iran that entails the complete disarmament and re-location of anti-Iran terrorist groups operating in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region.

The top Iraqi diplomat went on to highlight the political and security aspects of the pact, stating that Iran's cessation of artillery bombardments on the positions of secessionist groups in the Kurdistan Region was among the conditions of the agreement. Iraq, in return, is obligated to remove armed elements from border areas. The central government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) have managed to successfully undertake the task, Hussein noted.

Iran has no plan to have nukes: Lavrov



MNA – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Iran does not have a plan to build nuclear arms. No one wants more nuclear powers to emerge in the world, and Moscow believes that since Iran will not have nuclear weapons, Saudi Arabia won't be tempted to obtain them, Lavrov said at a press conference on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, according to TASS news agency.

Iran's 'Captain' to premiere at German festival



TASNIM - Iranian feature film, 'Captain', directed by Mohammad Hamzei and produced by Seyyed Saber Emami, will have its first international screening at the 28th edition of the Schlingel Film Festival for Children and Youth, slated to be held in Germany's Chemnitz, from September 23 to 30.

The film 'Captain' will be screened twice during the festival, on September 24 and 28.

This year's edition of the Schlingel festival features 171 entries, from 54 countries. In the main section of the festival, known as "Youth Films," 'Captain' competes with nine films from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United States.

Previously, in the 26th edition of the International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Schlingel, the Iranian film 'The Sun', directed by Majid Majidi, earned the Award of the City of Chemnitz in the Youth Films category.

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Thousands of Achaemenid-era clay tablets returned from US to Iran

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi returned to Tehran from New York after participating in the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, bringing with him thousands of historical clay tablets from the Achaemenid Empire. "Thanks to proper follow-ups by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization, the permanent mission of Iran to the United Nations in New York and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the tablets of the Achaemenid Empire, which were being kept in the United States, at the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Chicago (CEAS) for 84 years were repatriated to Iran," Raeisi told reporters upon arrival at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, Tasnim news agency reported.



"It is questionable why the tablets were in the possession of Americans. The scientists who worked on the tablets are of Iranian origin, and have been undertaking studies on them for more than 10 years."

Earlier on Thursday, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, stated that he was at the airport to welcome Raeisi and 3,506 artifacts.

"Continuous follow-ups produced results and finally nine boxes, each weighing 75 kg, containing a valuable collection of the cultural and civilizational heritage of the country, were returned from the US," he wrote.

Earlier, Iranian government spokesman Ali Bahadori Jahromi told reporters about the return of the clay tablets from the Achaemenid period. "The president will bring souvenirs of Iran's culture, civilization, and history tonight when he returns from his trip to the US," he said, referring to the tablets that were taken out during the Pahlavi rule.

President Raeisi announced that 3,506 clay tablets were repatriated and will be displayed at Tehran's National Museum of Iran, which houses a wide array of archaeological collections and is among the prime tourist attractions in the Iranian capital.

Raeisi emphasized that participation in the



annual UN General Assembly provides an opportunity for interaction and clarification of states' positions.

"The two important issues of amplification of Iran's position as well as safeguarding the country's interests and values were underscored during the event and separate meetings with heads of state," he said.

"Those who do not pay attention to values, at times they will allow themselves to serve others' interests. Protection of values is therefore of paramount significance. Homage to the Holy Qur'an is an important issue as it constitutes our identity. Emphasis on family values is also of significance to us and

human societies, and should be paid attention to by anyone."

"We had 20 meetings and interviews with journalists, scholars, and politicians. During the meetings, Iran's positions were made clear. The main focus of the meetings with the heads of more than 10 states was to elaborate on Iran's trade and economic relations with other countries as well as regional and extra-regional institutions," Raeisi said. The Iranian president also highlighted Tehran's readiness to cooperate and work with various countries and international organizations, particularly concerning political and economic ties.

Iran's box office sees 25% growth compared to first half of last year

Arts & Culture Desk

A recent analysis of cinema audience numbers in the first half of the current Iranian year, compared to the same period last year, reveals a nearly 25-percent growth. This year, cinema-goers in the country witnessed a 24.57% growth compared to the previous year, with a total of 10,741,387 individuals purchasing tickets to enjoy films since the beginning of the year.

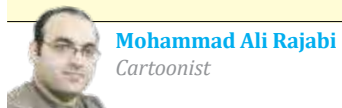
According to Tasnim news

agency, an examination of the performance of 32 films screened or currently showing in Iran from the beginning of the year until September 22 indicates that a total of 10,741,387 people bought tickets to watch their favorite films during 3,242,000 screenings. This resulted in a total box office revenue of approximately \$9,232,529.

In contrast, when comparing the statistics for the first half of the previous year with the corresponding period this

year, it becomes evident that an additional 2,639,764 people have purchased cinema tickets compared to the previous year. The data recorded for cinema performance in the first half of last year showed that 8,101,623 moviegoers attended screenings during 336,603 screenings, generating a total revenue of approximately \$5,115,281.

Notably, a significant share of the revenue increase for cinemas compared to the previous year can be attributed to the rise in ticket prices.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

