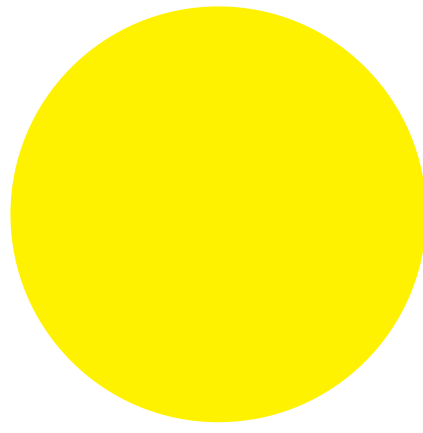


Sacred Defense plays still highly inspiring for audience

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Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Mohammadreza Farzin conferred with Qatar Central Bank (QCB) Governor Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al Thani in Doha on Wednesday. The two sides discussed strategies for developing financial and banking relations as necessary agreements were made regarding the start of banking operations that will allow Iran to use its unfrozen foreign currency resources, which will be transferred to six Iranian bank accounts in Qatar, IRNA reported. Farzin has announced the deposit of €5.573 billion

CBI governor confers on financial, banking ties in Doha



from Iran's once-blocked resources to the accounts of six Iranian banks in Al-Ahli and Dukhan banks in Qatar. Speaking in a TV program last week, the CBI head said

that on August 10, all previously inaccessible Iranian funds that had been kept in South Korean banks and the Seoul branch of Iran's Bank Mellat were transferred to



Central Bank of Iran Governor Mohammadreza Farzin (L) meets his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Bandar bin Mohammed bin Saoud Al Thani in Doha on September 27, 2023. [cbi.ir](#)

an account in the Swiss Central Bank to be converted into euros. He stated that the Iranian Saman Bank, Bank Pasargad, Tourism Bank, Shahr Bank, Karafarin Bank, and Bank Keshavarzi Iran have

opened accounts in the two mentioned Qatari banks, and added: "According to the agreements, all payments were made by brokers of Qatari banks as well as SWIFT" In the meeting between the two countries' central bank governors, which was also attended by the deputy governors and general directors of the two banks, the two sides pointed to the numerous economic capacities and diverse fields for commercial cooperation and emphasized the need to increase monetary, banking, and financial cooperation between the two countries.

Owji: Oil industry pivotal in Tehran-Riyadh economic interests



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Iran, Egypt take one more step forward

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Tehran offers nuclear cooperation to Riyadh

IRNA – Iran has reportedly proposed to cooperate with Saudi Arabia in its future nuclear projects. Iran has said it is ready to train Saudi specialists in the nuclear field in line with the country's use of peaceful nuclear energy, the Arabic-language newspaper, Rai Al-Youm, quoted diplomats from Western countries. According to the report, Iran has proposed to train 600 Saudi experts, scientists, and personnel for the construction of nuclear facilities and other relevant issues.

Condolences extended to Iraq over deadly fire

IRNA – The Iranian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Nasser Kanaani offered condolences to Iraq after a massive fire killed at least 113 people and injured more than 150 during a wedding ceremony in the northern Iraqi town of Hamdaniyah on Tuesday night. Kanaani also voiced the Iranian health and medical sector's readiness to help treat the people injured in the incident.

Pakistani Senate briefed on gas pipeline dilemma

DAWN – Pakistan's Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat summoned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Attorney General for Pakistan to brief the panel on objections reportedly raised by the US on the multi-billion-dollar Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project. "We are trying to renegotiate the matter with Iran," Petroleum Additional Secretary Hassan Yousafzai told the committee. The issue, he went on to say, was also raised with the US. He noted that reneging on the deal with Iran could lead to a whopping \$18 billion penalty.

Iran puts homegrown imaging satellite into orbit

National Desk

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force successfully launched the homegrown imaging satellite Nour-3 into orbit on Wednesday morning. Iran's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Issa Zarepour

said the Nour-3 imaging satellite was successfully placed into an orbit 450 kilometers (280 miles) above the Earth's surface with the Iranian Qased satellite carrier. The Commander of the IRGC's Aerospace Division Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said the Nour-3 satellite is equipped

with cameras and collects data. He said that two more satellites will be put into orbit in the coming months. Meanwhile, the IRGC's Commander Major General Hossein Salami said the data, information, and images taken by the new satellite from Earth's surface will be

gathered to complete and fulfill "the IRGC's intelligence requirements." Despite sanctions imposed by Western countries in recent years, Iran has managed to take giant strides in its civilian space program. It is among the world's top 10 countries capable of develop-

ing and launching satellites. The first installment of the Nour satellites was successfully launched in April 2020 into an orbit 425 kilometers (265 miles) above the Earth. It became the first military reconnaissance satellite launched by Iran after several failed attempts.

The second installment reached a low orbit of 500 kilometers (310 miles) in early 2022 using the mixed-fuel carrier. In August 2022, an Iranian satellite — said to be capable of taking high-resolution images — was successfully launched from a base in Kazakhstan.



Iran raps Israeli nuke threat, vows to respond resolutely

Iran has vehemently condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's threat to use nukes, saying it reserves the right to deliver a resolute response to the occupying entity under international law. In letters sent Monday to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, as well as the presidents of the General Assembly and Security Council, Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN Amir Saeid Irvani urged the international community to break their silence in the face of Tel Aviv's "reckless and dangerous" rhetoric, Press TV reported. On Friday, Netanyahu called for a "credible nuclear threat" against Iran in an address to the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. However, his office later said that

he misread the line and meant to say a "credible military threat." "While vehemently and unequivocally condemning the Israeli regime's perilous threat to use nuclear weapons against Iran ..., the Islamic Republic firmly reaffirms its legitimate and inherent rights, in full accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter, to respond resolutely to any threat and unlawful act" by Tel Aviv, Irvani wrote. "Iran also declares that it will not hesitate to exercise these rights to defend its security, national interests, and people." The envoy further noted that the international community must not remain indifferent to the bellicose anti-Iran threat from an illegitimate regime that wags

aggressions, carries out apartheid policies, and sponsors terrorism while possessing an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction alongside advanced conventional weaponry. Israel, which pursues a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear weapons, is estimated to have 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal, making it the Middle East's sole possessor of non-conventional arms. The usurping entity has, however, refused to either allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities or sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Also on Tuesday, Zahra Ershadi, Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN, called on the international community to force Israel to join the NPT.

Speaker: Promoting ties shape bright future for Iran, Egypt

National Desk

The Speaker of the Iranian Parliament emphasized parliamentary cooperation with Egypt, saying that with the realization of the collaboration, a bright future lies ahead of both countries. During a meeting with his Egyptian counterpart, Hanafi Gebali, in Johannesburg, South Africa, on Wednesday, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said that parliamentary cooperation can be highly effective in the sustainable development of relations between North African countries and the West Asia region, as well as in addressing various regional issues, ISNA reported. "If the cooperation is achieved, there is a promising outlook for improved relations between the two countries," the Iranian lawmaker added. The meeting took place on the sidelines



● ICANA

of the 9th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Johannesburg. Referring to Egypt as a great Islamic country with significant influence, Qalibaf said the BRICS parliamentary meeting is a great opportunity for Muslim states in the West Asia and North Africa regions to strengthen bilateral relations and regional cooperation. During the meeting, the Egypt's House of Representatives speaker expressed his pleasure at meeting with his Iranian counterpart and the high-ranking parliamentary delegation of Iran. "I believe that by participating in the BRICS group, we have taken the right path for

the development of our two countries," Gebali said. To further enhance parliamentary relations, both sides invited their counterparts to visit each other's capitals. Egypt severed its diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 after it welcomed the deposed Pahlavi ruler of Iran and recognized the Israeli regime. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and his Egyptian counterpart, Sameh Shoukry, met on September 20 on the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani described the meeting as a turning point in Tehran-Cairo relations and a positive step within the framework of Iran's diplomacy of enhancing ties with regional countries.

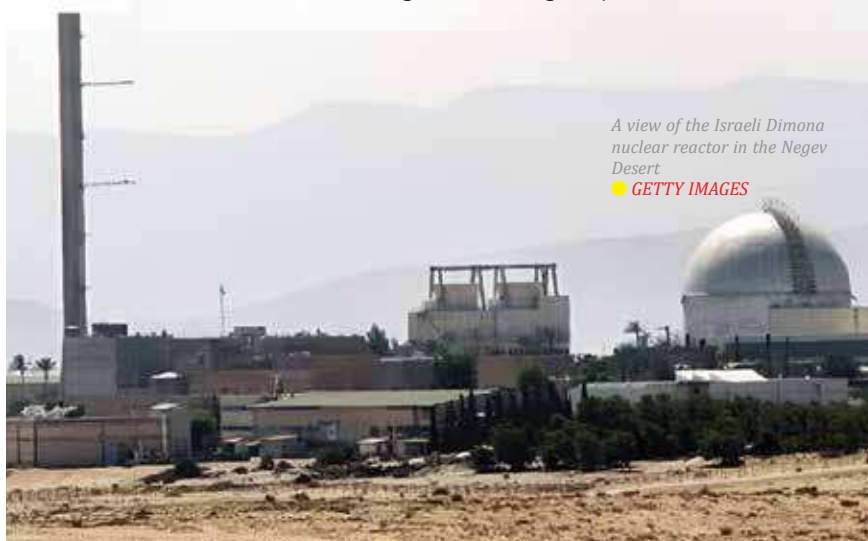
Islamic Unity Conference aims to expand Muslim cooperation

Political Desk

The secretary general of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought said the International Islamic Unity Conference aims to contribute to the expansion of cooperation among Muslim countries. Hamid Shahriari, speaking at a press conference ahead of the 37th Islamic Unity Conference, said Muslim experts and religious scholars will

exchange views on the Islamic values recommended in the holy book of Muslims, the Qur'an, during the event. He said that the incumbent Iranian government has tried to help the Islamic countries to further cooperate in different fields, which, in turn, is expected to boost security across the Muslim world. He said that the agreements reached by the Islamic Republic of Iran have brought

hopes for moving towards a unified Islamic nation. Shahriari said that the Islamic Republic is pursuing values that counter Western liberalism. Among such values, he added, are family values, which have been targeted by the enemies. He also provided the reporters with details about the 37th Islamic Unity Conference, which is scheduled to be held October 1-3. At least 110 people from foreign



A view of the Israeli Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert
● GETTY IMAGES

Sharaf Caravanserai: A museum of brick and plasterwork on the Silk Road

Iranica Desk

The Sharaf Caravanserai is also known as the Museum of Brick and Plasterwork. This magnificent caravanserai was situated on the Silk Road and served as one of the important residences along this ancient route, occupying a special location. As you travel from Mashhad towards Sarakhs, you can find this historical site located 140 kilometers northeast of Mashhad. The caravanserai is situated in the midst of a plain, about six kilometers from Shurloq village. The site where this caravanserai was constructed was once a significant stop along the Silk Road. The caravanserai was built during the Seljuk era (1050-1300 CE), adjacent to an older caravanserai, whose remains can still be seen on the southeast side. The older caravanserai was likely established during the early Islamic centuries. The Sharaf Caravanserai was built in the 12th century CE. Hamdollah Mostofi named it Abgineh in 1340 CE. In the 9th century CE, Ibn Khordadbeh referred to Abgineh as a resting place between Mazduran and Sarakhs. The Sharaf Caravanserai is a magnificent architectural complex that includes two large courtyards measuring approximately 32 x 32 meters, as well as a smaller courtyard with dimensions of around 17 x 32 meters. These courtyards are arranged in a rectangular shape, spanning over 4,860 square meters in the southeast-northwest direction. The caravanserai boasts a variety of spaces, including a mosque, porch, stalls and

rooms, stable, portico, and underground water reservoirs.

The entrance of the caravanserai is located in the southeast direction, which opens into a small courtyard from the end of a high-fronted portico. On the left side of the entrance, there is a mosque with a *mihrab* decorated with plasterwork.

Each of the two courtyards has four *ivans* that face each other. On the two courtyards of the caravanserai, there is a series of vaulted arcades that overlook the courtyards. These arcades, in addition to providing shade, have added a special beauty to the interior space of the building. They have now been destroyed and only their foundation remains. Behind the arcades are rooms and stables.

A wall separates the first courtyard from the second, in the middle of which there is an *ivan* with two circular tower-like pillars that takes up the center of the courtyard. The second courtyard is larger and has more space.

It seems that creating multiple and diverse spaces in the caravanserai was intended for the accommodation of nobles such as kings, emirs, and aristocrats.

This structure is

a true gem of brick architecture and plaster decorations. Kufic inscriptions in brick adorn the high *ivans* of the caravanserai, while plaster decorations and inscriptions can be found on the *mihrabs* and interior spaces. The end *ivan* of the large courtyard boasts the most elaborate decorations, with plasterwork featuring complex and intricate Islamic patterns.

After the Safavid era, which was probably the last period of use of this caravanserai, it gradually fell into ruin and suffered extensive damage. In recent years, the restoration of the building has been carried out continuously by the Cultural Heritage Organization of Khorasan Razavi Province.

Director General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Khorasan Razavi Province said that the Sharaf Caravanserai is a museum of brick decorations and plasterwork. This magnificent and valuable building holds a special position in the history of architecture, and can be considered a significant cultural heritage site.

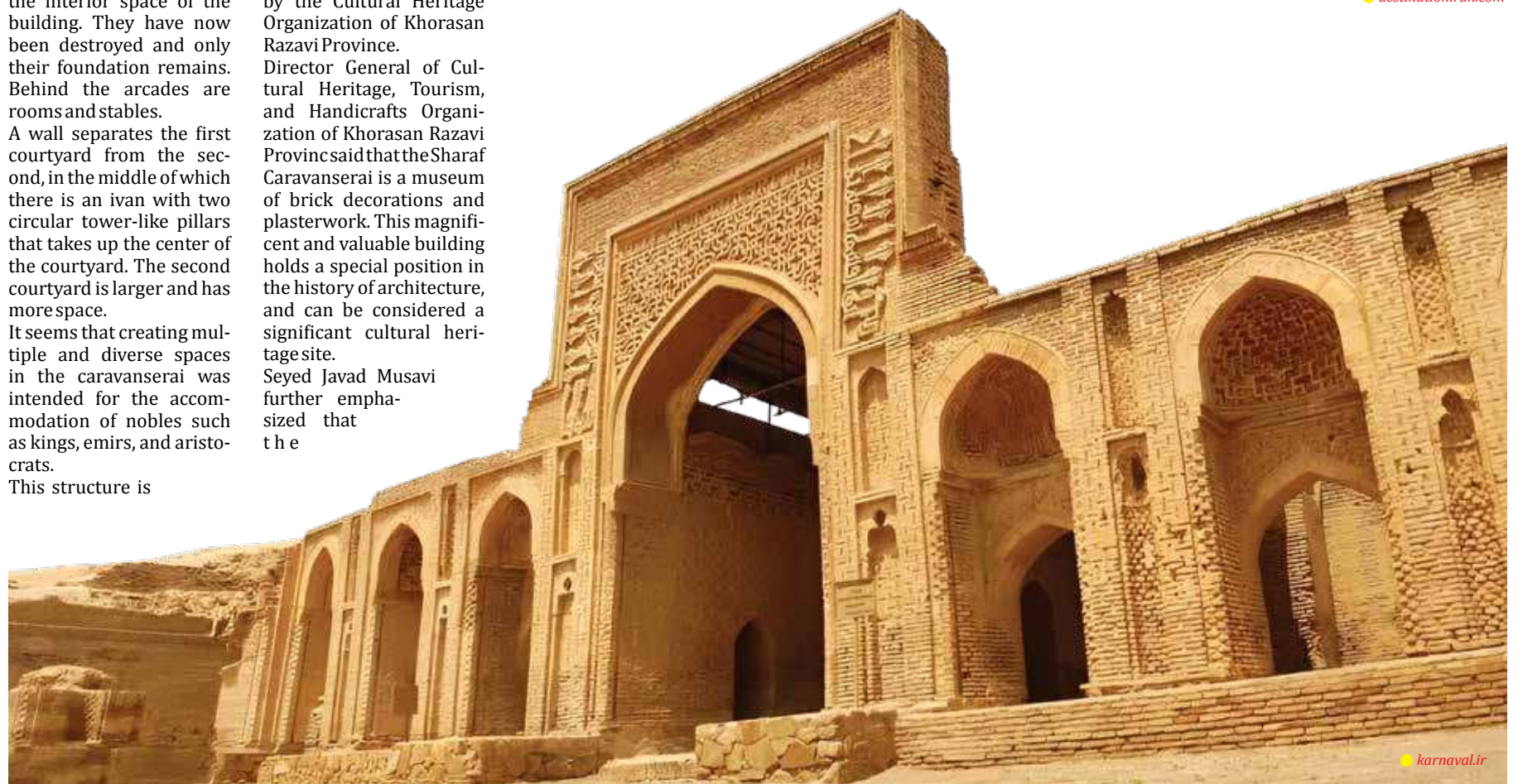
Seyed Javad Musavi further emphasized that the

caravanserai was an essential element and facility of the Silk Road. He suggests that it is appropriate to open it for global tourism, allowing visitors to appreciate and explore its historical significance.

This caravanserai was officially added to Iran's National Heritage List on June 10, 1942. Thanks to the dedicated efforts made by the Cultural Heritage Department of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, along with the Cultural Heritage Organization of Khorasan Razavi Province, it was recently included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.



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Persian Art in Romania: Exploring cultural interactions and influences



A Qajar dagger

When only few Romanian art collectors looked for Islamic art at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, most Romanian museums and private collectors showed an ethnographical interest in oriental objects rather

than appreciated their artistic quality. In 1873 Romania participated in the World's Fair in Vienna, which is supposed to have initiated the oriental carpet boom in the West. The objects that Romania had exhibited in

Vienna were given to the Museum of Antiquities in 1874 which exchanged them for a collection of folk art from Greece, Tunisia, Sudan and Japan. By the end of the 19th century, there had been a growing interest in folk

art, especially Romanian, with the result of establishing the Museum of Ethnography, National Art, Decorative Art and Industrial Art in 1906. In 1909, this museum was granted more than 1,000 objects, part of a collection gathered by the colonel Dimitrie Papazoglu (1811-1892) who had organized a small museum in his own house by 1864. The inventory also lists a few Turkish arms, Balkanic jewelry, and, under number 954, "a big dagger and its sheath covered with red cloth with golden embroidery." This arm, now in the Oriental Art Department of the NMAR, is a Qajar dagger from about the end of the 18th century, with an ivory handle and

watered steel blade, decorated on both sides with a scene representing a feline hunting a deer. The dagger is signed, probably Hasan. The fact that the inventory does not identify its origin proves that Persian objects — arms in this case — were less familiar in Romania than Turkish ones whose origin is identified in the inventory. The erroneous description of two other Persian objects from the same ethnographic museum, but with a different provenance, leads us to a similar conclusion. It is the case of a Safavid armour plate with gold damascened inscriptions, registered as "a fragment of an Arab shield," and likewise, of a hookah with

ceramic base, described as "Chinese porcelain". The latter is in fact a 17th-century Safavid hookah base in the shape of a kendi, with a later addition of the silver mount; its underglaze Chinese style decoration including a deer by a fence and under a cloud, painted in two shades of blue, as well as the Chinese-like square mark on the bottom, may have caused the confusion. The ethnographic museum, later called the Carol I National Art Museum, also possessed 19th-century Persian metalware, Senneh (Sanandaj) kilims (two of them are now in the NMAR) and fragments from several enameled Qajar hookahs. Although these fragments were part

of Romania's national art treasury sent to Russia in 1916, this does not mean that they were carefully selected as objects with the value of national treasures; this was rather due to the state of urgency which made it difficult to conduct a more careful selection. Established in 1990 as the follower of the Carol I National Art Museum, the Romanian Peasant Museum holds not only a very valuable collection of Romanian folk art, but also a significant amount of ethnographic objects from different parts of the world. The ethnographic materials have not yet been thoroughly studied and may thus offer surprises in terms of non-European art.

World Maritime Day encourages sustainability

Iran's presence in oceans bringing further peace and a more prosperous economy for countries



By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou
Staff writer

As an emerging player in the oceans, Iran's presence in the high seas helps bring further peace and a more prosperous economy for other countries.

Iran supports uniting the global maritime industry in exploration and celebration of new technologies for greener shipping.

Marine shipping transports over 80 percent of global trade to peoples and communities all over the world. Shipping is the most efficient and cost-effective method of international transportation for most goods as it provides a dependable, low-cost means of transporting goods globally, facilitating commerce and helping to create prosperity among nations and peoples.

The world relies on a safe, secure and efficient international shipping industry, which is an essential component of any program for future green economic growth in a sustainable manner.

The promotion of sustainable shipping and maritime development should be one of the major priorities of the countries in the coming years.

Therefore, energy efficiency, new technology and innovation, maritime education and training, maritime security, maritime traffic management and the development of maritime infrastructure, and development and implementation of global standards covering these and other issues will underpin commitment to provide the institutional framework necessary for a green and sustainable global maritime transportation system.

In this sector, Iran's commitment continues, which reflects the country's long history of protecting the environment from the impact of shipping via a robust regulatory framework and emphasizes its ongoing commitment to this important work.

In recent years, Iran has received operational equipment as Iranian experts have designed and manufactured most of the equipment.

With the support of technology-based firms and leverage of capabilities of revolutionary youths, the country has succeeded in upgrading and renovating the equipment needed for different missions.

Recently-unveiled marine vessels are a symbol of pride because they are homegrown, as the vessels have been manufactured amid illegal sanctions imposed by global arrogance.

Iranian engineers have made all-out efforts to design and manufacture the vessel in around three years, which is indicative of Iran's support for localized know-how, national production, and technology-based firms.

The presence of Iranian navies in the Persian Gulf helps maintain security and stability in the region and the globe. Transregional countries should not be allowed to have a military presence in the region under the excuse of maintaining security because foreigners' presence has been the source of creating insecurity, sowing discord, and looting nations' assets.

Iran has repeatedly said that regional states can cooperate to guarantee security in the Persian Gulf region.

Iran's Achievements In Shipping

Iran has emerged as a significant player in the maritime industry, not only in the Middle East but on the global stage. Established in 1967, Iranian National Shipping Lines [later changed to the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL)] has achieved remarkable milestones over the years, solidifying its position as one of Iran's leading state-run enterprises and a prominent shipping company worldwide. Some achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines are as follows:

1 Expanding fleet size

One of the most notable achievements of IRISL has been its expansion of the fleet. Over the years, IRISL has continually invested in acquiring and modernizing vessels, making it one of the largest container shipping lines in the Middle East. Its diverse fleet includes container ships, bulk carriers, oil tankers, and general cargo vessels, allowing IRISL to serve a wide range of industries and customers.

2 International connectivity

IRISL has worked carefully to establish and strengthen its international presence. It has expanded its routes and services to connect Iran with major global trade hubs. This international connectivity has not only facilitated the import and export of goods for Iran but has also contributed to enhancing the country's role in international trade.

3 Growth despite sanctions

Despite facing illegal sanctions that restricted its operations and access to global markets, IRISL demonstrated resilience and adaptability. In recent years, IRISL has regained momentum and expanded its services, recovering its position in the global shipping industry.

4 Container shipping expertise

IRISL has carved a niche for itself in the container shipping sector. It operates regular container services to various destinations, facilitating the transportation of goods globally. This expertise has allowed IRISL to play a pivotal role in supporting Iran's trade ambitions.

Overseas missions defined for Iranian flotillas

Anti-piracy operations

One of the primary missions of Iranian naval flotillas in recent years has been to combat piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia. Piracy has been a persistent threat to international shipping in the region, and Iran has been actively involved in efforts to counter it.

Protecting maritime trade routes

Iran's maritime interests extend far beyond its immediate waters. The country relies heavily on maritime trade, both for its exports and imports. Deploying naval flotillas to international waters helps protect vital trade routes, ensuring the safe passage of Iranian and foreign vessels carrying goods to and from Iran.

Showcasing regional influence

Iran's naval presence in international waters also serves as a demonstration of regional influence. The Persian Gulf, a vital waterway for global energy supplies, has been a focal point of geopolitical tensions.

Search and rescue missions

Iranian naval flotillas have been involved in search and rescue missions, particularly in response to distress calls from ships in international waters. These missions underscore Iran's commitment to maritime safety and its willingness to cooperate with other nations in times of crisis.

Training and naval diplomacy

Iranian naval flotillas have often been dispatched to foreign ports as part of training exercises and naval diplomacy. These visits provide opportunities for naval personnel to enhance their skills and foster cooperation with other nations.



5 Modernization and efficiency

The company has invested in modernizing its fleet and port infrastructure, incorporating the latest technologies and best practices in the industry. This commitment to modernization has improved the efficiency and competitiveness of IRISL's services.

6 Contributing to Iran's economy

As a state-run enterprise, IRISL has contributed significantly to Iran's economy. It generates revenue through its shipping operations, provides employment opportunities, and plays a crucial role in facilitating Iran's trade with the rest of the world. The revenue generated by IRISL has also been vital in funding further developments in Iran's maritime infrastructure.

7 Regional leadership

IRISL has established itself as a regional leader in the maritime industry. It collaborates with neighboring countries and regional partners to enhance trade and connectivity in the Middle East. This regional leadership has strengthened Iran's position in the broader context of international trade and cooperation.

8 Commitment to sustainability

In recent years, IRISL has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. It has taken steps to reduce its environmental impact, including the adoption of eco-friendly technologies and practices. This commitment aligns with global efforts to make the shipping industry more sustainable.

9 Human resource development

IRISL places significant emphasis on human resource development. The company invests in training and development programs for its employees, ensuring that its workforce remains highly skilled and adaptable to the evolving demands of the maritime industry.

10 Adaptation to industry challenges

The global shipping industry faces various challenges, from economic fluctuations to changes in trade patterns and regulations. IRISL has showcased its ability to adapt to these challenges, adjusting its strategies and operations to navigate the complexities of the industry successfully. As the IRISL continues to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances, its achievements are likely to continue to shape Iran's maritime and trade landscape.

Countering smuggling, illegal activities

Naval flotillas also play a role in countering smuggling and illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, in international waters. By conducting patrols and surveillance, Iranian naval vessels help disrupt criminal operations that can have a destabilizing impact on the region.

Humanitarian assistance

In addition to combat and security missions, Iranian naval flotillas have been involved in humanitarian assistance efforts. They have delivered aid to countries affected by natural disasters and provided medical assistance to those in need, demonstrating Iran's commitment to international humanitarian efforts.

Enhancing Iran's naval capabilities

Overseas missions provide valuable opportunities for Iran to test and improve its naval capabilities. They allow Iranian naval forces to operate in a variety of environments, including the oceans and congested maritime traffic areas, which helps enhance their readiness and effectiveness.

Promoting regional stability

Iran has emphasized its commitment to promoting regional stability through its naval activities in international waters. By engaging in cooperative endeavors such as joint naval exercises and maritime security initiatives, Iran seeks to play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Port development: Pillar for multimodal transportation

In the world of global trade and transportation, the development of ports plays an indispensable role in facilitating the movement of goods and people. For a country like Iran, strategically located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, ports development is not just vital; it's the very pillar of a thriving multimodal transportation network.

Iran's geopolitical advantage

Iran's geographical location along the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea has long been recognized as a geopolitical advantage. This positioning places Iran at the intersection of major trade routes, making it a critical hub for regional and international trade. To fully harness this advantage, Iran has invested significantly in developing its port infrastructure, and these efforts are paying off.

Multimodal transportation, as the name suggests, involves the integration of various transportation modes to optimize the flow of goods and people. For Iran, ports serve as the linchpin connecting these modes:

Seamless cargo transfer: Ports are where cargo transitions between different modes of transportation, such as ships, trucks, trains, and planes. Efficient intermodal transfer ensures that goods move smoothly, reducing delays and the risk of damage.

Connectivity: Iran's ports are intricately linked with well-established road and rail networks, extending the reach of these ports far beyond their coastal borders. This connectivity is a game-changer, enabling efficient distribution of goods to their final destinations, both within Iran and internationally.

Economic Impact: The development of ports generates a ripple effect, stimulating economic growth and creating jobs, not only within the ports themselves but also within industries such as logistics, warehousing, and manufacturing that rely on the efficient movement of goods.

Environmental considerations: Ports also play a pivotal role in Iran's efforts toward environmental sustainability. By facilitating the transfer of goods to more eco-friendly modes of transportation, such as trains or low-emission trucks, ports help reduce the carbon footprint of cargo movement.

Capacity and efficiency: As global trade continues to grow, the capacity and efficiency of ports become even more crucial. Iran has recognized this and is investing in modern infrastructure, automation, and advanced logistics technologies to enhance port throughput and reduce congestion.

Challenges in development of Iran's ports

While the potential benefits of ports development in Iran are enormous, several challenges must be addressed:

Sanctions and economic pressures: Iran has faced illegal economic sanctions that have affected its ability to secure funding and attract international investment for port development projects.

Environmental concerns: Like many countries, Iran must balance economic growth with environmental sustainability, particularly in its coastal regions.

Logistical efficiency: Ensuring smooth cargo handling, streamlined customs procedures, and efficient transportation connections are ongoing challenges that require constant attention and improvement.

Competition: The region is teeming with competing ports, and Iran must find ways to differentiate itself and offer unique services to attract global shipping companies and traders.

Innovations in development of Iran's ports

To overcome these challenges and enhance the efficiency of its multimodal transportation network, Iran has been actively pursuing innovations in port development:

Modernization: Iran is investing in modern port infrastructure, including deep-water berths, state-of-the-art container handling equipment, and transportation connections. These upgrades are aimed at increasing the overall efficiency of ports.

Digitalization: Digital platforms and data analytics are being leveraged to optimize port operations, track cargo, and improve supply chain visibility. This allows for better planning and resource allocation.

Environmental initiatives: Iran is implementing environmentally friendly practices within its ports, such as using electric-powered equipment, reducing emissions, and implementing green infrastructure projects to mitigate the environmental impact.

Security measures: Iran has implemented advanced security measures, such as enhanced surveillance systems, to ensure the safety and security of its port facilities and the cargo they handle.

Infrastructure connectivity: Investments in rail and road connections are improving the seamless flow of goods to and from Iran's ports, further solidifying their position as regional trade hubs.

In Iran, ports development stands as the cornerstone of a thriving multimodal transportation network. The nation's strategic location, at the crossroads of multiple continents and trade routes, presents an immense opportunity for economic growth and regional influence. To fully capitalize on this advantage, Iran is actively pursuing the development of its ports, which serve as vital links in the chain of global commerce.

While challenges such as illegal sanctions, environmental concerns, and competition persist, Iran's commitment to innovation, modernization, and sustainability in its ports development efforts is paving the ground for a brighter future.

As the world continues to rely on the smooth flow of goods, Iran's ports will play an increasingly central role in shaping the country's economic destiny and its position on the global stage.

Hangzhou Asian Games: Kiani grabs wushu silver; triple taekwondo bronzes for Iran

Sports Desk

The fourth day of the 19th Asian Games saw Iranian girl Zahra Kiani bag a talou silver in the wushu contests, while there were three more taekwondo bronzes for the country in Hangzhou, China.

Wushu

A two-time world bronze medalist, Kiani grabbed a second successive silver at the Asian Games after a 19.436 score in the women's jianshu & qiangshu event.

China's Lai Xiaoxiao tallied 19.600 for the gold medal, with Vietnamese Duong Thuy Vi taking the bronze with 19.426 points.

Taekwondo

Three Iranians saw their campaigns come to a disappointing finish in the semifinals, as the country's wait for a taekwondo gold dragged on for another day. Melika Mirhosseini overcame opponents from Nepal and Jordan in straight rounds, only to suffer a 2-1 defeat against Feruza Sadikova of Uzbekistan, sharing the third podium of the women's -67kg class with Vietnam's Bac Thi Khiem, who was beaten by the host's Song Jie in the other semifinal.

The Chinese girl beat Sadikova in the final. In the men's -68kg contests,



Iranian wushu participant Zahra Kiani performs during the women's talou contests at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on September 27, 2023. hangzhou2022.cn

Matin Rezaei, a world bronze winner in May, suffered a 2-1 defeat against Jordan's Zaid Abdul Kareem.

In the final showdown, however, the Jordanian came short against Uzbekistan's Ulugbek Rashitov, who had avenged his world last-

four loss to South Korean Jin Hon earlier in the semifinals. Mehran Barkhordari claimed a third bronze for Iran on

Wednesday after a 2-1 setback against South Korea's Park Woo-hyeok – a world champion last year – who went on to beat

Saleh Elsharabaty of Jordan for the ultimate prize of the men's -80kg category.

Iran has now collected seven taekwondo medals in the Asian Games.

Alireza Hosseinpour (men's -63kg) and Mahdi Hajimousaei (men's -58kg) settled for a couple of silvers in their respective weight classes, while Mobina Ne'matzadeh took a -49kg bronze in the women's competitions.

Marjan Salahshouri had opened the account for Iran, finishing third in the women's poomsae event.

Football

Iran's under-23 side progressed into last eight thanks to a 2-0 victory over Thailand.

Amir-Arsalan Motahari – one of three senior players in the squad – got Iran off the mark 13 minutes into the game when a Thai keeper's long ball was intercepted by the Esteghlal striker and found the back of the net.

Persepolis midfielder Yassin Salmani sealed the win from the spot with 10 minutes left on the clock after Mahdi Mamizadeh was brought down in the box by the goalkeeper.

Handball

A nervy 23-23 draw against Saudi Arabia was enough for Iran to advance into the main round.

Mojtaba Heidarpour scored five, with Mohammad-Mahdi Behnamnia and Hossein Jahani bagging four apiece, as Veselin Vujovic's men held out a late Saudi surge to finish above the opponent in Group D of the preliminary round – runner-up to Japan. Elsewhere in the Games, the Iranian men's 3x3 basketball side defeated Japan 22-13 in Pool B – a second victory for the country after a 22-6 triumph over Maldives on the preceding night.

Iran heads to Olympic qualifiers after morale-boosting gold in Hangzhou

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Behrouz Ataei will hope his men will be inspired by a gold-winning run at the Asian Games when they begin their quest for a berth at next year's Paris Olympics on Saturday.

Iran is drawn against Brazil, Italy, Cuba, Ukraine, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Qatar in Pool A of the Olympic Qualifying Tournament, taking place in Rio de Janeiro.

Ataei's side left Hangzhou for Brazil on Tuesday night, hours after rallying from behind to beat host China in four sets (19-25, 25-14, 25-22, 26-24) and walk away with the ultimate prize at the Linping Sports Centre Gymnasium.

Shahrouz Homayounfarmanesh chipped in a game-high 17 points, while Amirhossein Esfandiari and Saber Kazemi contributed with 14 apiece as Iran won a third successive volleyball gold at the Games.

Tuesday's triumph comes as a consolation for Ataei and his team who had finished third from bottom in the 16-team table of the preliminary round in the Volleyball Nations League in July and then fell to a straight-set defeat against Japan on home soil in the Asian Championship final last month.

"I'm glad this medal made the Iranian people happy following



Iran's Mohammad Valizadeh (27) goes up for a spike during a victory over China in the men's volleyball final at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, on September 26, 2023. volleyball.ir

a couple of disappointing tournaments. China was the host and eager to win the gold after they refused to bring their best squad to the Asian Championship," Ataei said after the final. The Iranian coach, however, knows the scale of the task in

Rio is in stark contrast with the one his team had in Hangzhou as Brazil and the reigning world champion Italy remain the favorites to finish as the top two in Pool A and guarantee a place in the French capital. Iran will get its campaign under-

way against Germany – in a repeat of a VNL encounter in June when the Asian powerhouse came out on top in straight sets – and then face Ukraine on Sunday. Ataei's side will take on Qatar and the Czech Republic respectively, before the massive double

header against Italy and Brazil. The final game of the tournament for Iran comes against Cuba on October 8. Having missed out on the Asian Games glory, Arman Salehi and Mobin Nasri are to join up with the rest of the team in Rio, while

prolific outside hitter Milad Ebadipour has again been ignored by Ataei for the Olympic qualifiers.

"I hope this gold would bring the confidence back to the squad ahead of the upcoming matches as we will have a tough job in Brazil," said Iranian captain and middle blocker Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi, adding: "We can't afford to come up with any more excuses. We'll put in all our efforts to win an Olympic quota in Brazil. I wish I'll have the chance to finish my career at the Olympics."

Teams will still have a second chance to book the Paris ticket as the remaining slots will be filled by the top five nations – not yet qualified – in the FIVB World Rankings by the end of the preliminary phase of the 2024 Volleyball Nations League. However, Ataei is fully aware that his job could be well on the line in Brazil.

When asked after the Asian Championship final if there would be any change on Iran's bench for the Olympic qualifiers, Mohammadreza Davarzani, the head of the country's Volleyball Federation, said that he would not act impulsively, though he dropped a vague hint on the long-term future of the national team, saying: "We will surely come up with a more proper decision for next year's VNL and the Olympic Games."

Owji: Oil industry pivotal in Tehran-Riyadh economic interests



The oil industry can play a "pivotal" role in promoting the common economic interests of Iran and Saudi Arabia, said Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji on Tuesday night. The minister, who made the remarks in his meeting with Saudi Ambassador to Iran Abdullah Saud al-Anzi in a ceremony to celebrate

the kingdom's National Day, added Iran and Saudi Arabia are the two major powers in the region and their cooperation will be effective in boosting security and economic development, promoting the Islamic world's cultural and social activities, and shaping international and energy relations, accord-

ing to Shana. Tehran-Riyadh cooperation in regional and international organizations has created new opportunities, said Owji, adding, "In addition to different sections of the United Nations, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

— with their long respective histories — new international organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS group will forge the two nations' bond in the future." Iran and Saudi Arabia, as the two founding countries of OPEC, have worked shoulder to shoulder with each other and other OPEC member states for more than 63 years to make unflinching efforts to stabilize the oil market and have experienced ups and downs, said the minister, adding such cooperation in today's world is "unique". "I, as the Iranian head of the Iran-Saudi Arabia Joint Economic Cooperation Commission, believe that the expansion of ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as with other neighboring states, will open a new chapter in regional development," Owji concluded.

Iran-BRICS trade in March-August tops \$25b



Economy Desk

Iran traded nearly 37 million tons of goods worth \$25.1 billion with BRICS member states during the first five months of the current Iranian year (March 21 to August 22), which accounted for 57.7% of Iran's total foreign trade at the time. The country traded over 70.3 million tons of non-oil products worth \$43.5 billion with other states during the five-month period, according to IRNA. In addition, \$109 million was exchanged between Iran and 10 cur-

rent and newly joined members of BRICS. During the five months, China (\$5.6 billion), the UAE (\$2.3 billion), India (\$845 million), Russia (\$361 million), and South Africa (\$51.5 million) were the main importers of Iran's non-oil products. Brazil (\$1.2 million), Egypt (\$644,000), Ethiopia (\$143,000), Saudi Arabia (\$90,000), and Argentina (\$41,300) were the sixth to tenth destinations of Iranian goods among BRICS members. Iran, Egypt, the UAE, Ethiopia, Argentina, and Saudi Arabia will

officially join the BRICS group (currently comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) at the beginning of 2024. Following the joining of the said six states, it is predicted that the activation of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) will be accelerated along with the de-dollarization process, the expansion of transportation, the development of new businesses among member countries, and the establishment of a joint currency among the eleven members.

Iran, Egypt take one more step forward

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

PERSPECTIVE

Could the necessity of cooperation and shared economic interests pave the way for renewed diplomatic ties between Tehran and Cairo? Recent developments suggest that this may indeed be possible. The visit of Iran's Economy Minister Ehsan Khandouzi to Egypt, where he attended a meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and held talks with his Egyptian counterpart, has triggered a wave of optimism. Both sides were happy with the talks, hinting at a positive outcome to this question. As reported by Iran's Inter-

est Section in Egypt, Khandouzi met with Mohamed Maait to display Tehran's willingness to foster cooperation in various areas, including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Joint Bank of Egypt and Iran, Inc. Khandouzi also highlighted the potential for collaboration in the Egyptian-Iran textile and joint shipping company, as well as the transfer of Iranian technology in pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals to Egypt. Maait emphasized Cairo's interest in improving relations with Iran and expressed hope for better bilateral ties. Both sides agreed to Khandouzi's proposal to establish a joint committee comprising deputy economy ministers

from Iran and Egypt. Diplomatic relations between Iran and Egypt were severed back in 1979. Key reasons for the rupture included Egypt's peace agreement with Israel, known as the Camp David Accords, and its invitation to the deposed Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Despite efforts over the past four decades, attempts to restore relations remained unsuccessful. However, recent developments suggest a potential thaw in relations. In the context of regional de-escalation efforts and the agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, reports indicate that Iranian and Egyptian delegations have engaged in talks. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahi-

met with his Egyptian counterpart on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly a couple of days ago. The high-profile meeting between Iran's economy minister and Egypt's finance minister in Cairo also garnered media attention. While there appears to be a more promising atmosphere for improving Tehran-Cairo relations than in the past, experts caution against misplaced optimism. They believe, given the history of the last 40 years and past differences, it's important to approach these developments with a measured perspective. Hojjatollah Joudaki, the former cultural attaché of Iran in Egypt, has told Iran Daily that while previous attempts to restore relations had failed, the recent meetings between the foreign ministers as well as finance ministers of both countries can be seen as promising.

"The increasing number of meetings between Iranian and Egyptian officials indicates a growing commitment from both sides to address the barriers hindering the restoration of relations." Joudaki emphasizes that a single meeting cannot be seen as the "magic key" to mending relations, but he believes that the increasing number of meetings between Iranian and Egyptian officials indicates a growing commitment from both sides to address the barriers hindering the restoration of relations. Mehdi Shakibaei, an expert

on Middle East affairs, has told Iran Daily that historical differences between Iran and Egypt, particularly in terms of security and politics, as well as the influence of Israel and Saudi Arabia, had long hindered the resumption of ties. However, the landscape has evolved, especially following the Tehran-Riyadh agreement, which has prompted changes in Egypt's foreign policy. Shakibaei notes that countries of the Middle East, including Egypt, have recognized the imperative of regional cooperation and convergence for development and that the relations between Iran and Egypt are no exception in this regard. "Iran and Egypt have made the decision to re-establish relations, and current discussions primarily revolve around security considerations and the specifics of the restored ties, with security teams from both sides engaging in talks." Addressing the question of whether cooperation and economic needs can pave the way for political and security dialogues, Shakibaei expresses hope. He cites the recent meeting between Iran's minister of economy and Egypt's minister of finance, highlighting both sides' emphasis on the importance of enhancing cooperation in this context. Furthermore, Shakibaei points out that despite Egypt's deep-rooted relationships with Israel and the United States, the country is facing economic challenges.



"This economic strain has compelled Egyptian authorities to reconsider their foreign policy approaches. In this context, Iran, with its abundant resources and reserves, has the potential to offer assistance and solutions to some of Egypt's economic woes." Shakibaei underscores that the Iranian government is pursuing a balanced foreign policy approach aimed at cultivating economic relations with its neighbors, even in the presence of political differences. He points out that Iran, despite its political divergences with European nations, has tried to maintain its economic ties with them to the greatest extent possible. According to this regional expert, economic relations can serve as a "stabilizing factor" in politics and diplomacy. Joudaki also suggests that the signing of new economic agreements between the two countries could positively impact their political relations. He cautions, however, that it's "premature" to pass

judgment on the extent of economic and political cooperation between Iran and Egypt. "The key factor will be the formation of a joint committee, as agreed upon by Iran's economy minister and Egypt's finance minister, and the specific agendas they set." Joudaki emphasizes that the restoration of relations between Iran and Egypt yields political and economic benefits for both nations and the wider region. While acknowledging past challenges, he calls for vigilance in monitoring recent developments between Tehran and Cairo. "Nevertheless, the determination of both sides to overcome obstacles is evident, and these barriers appear to be gradually diminishing, offering hope for the future," he says. Iran and Egypt have interest sections in each other's capitals, similar to diplomatic missions. Evidence suggests that the prospect of fully-fledged embassies for both countries in the near future is becoming increasingly likely.

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Sacred Defense plays still highly inspiring for audience



By Hamideh Hosseini
 Staff writer

Mehdi Motevasseli is a prominent theater producer and writer who has created great theatrical works on the subject of the Iraqi-imposed war in the 1980s, known as "The Sacred Defense" in Iran. Among his works is 'Halo of the Caravan,' which proudly holds the record for the longest continuous performance (34 years) among theater productions. 'Earth to Heaven' and 'The Wound of Medina' are also among his works. Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Motevasseli, the full text of which follows:



IRAN DAILY: Please tell us a bit about your works.

MOTEVASSALI: After the production of 'Halo of the Caravan' in 1991, we decided to work on a text about Hazrat Fatimah (PBUH). We chose the text 'Another Narrative' with permission from Mohammad Akhtari, the owner of the work. When I took the script for rewriting, it occurred to me that it could have a parallel story with the Sacred Defense. The structure of the play was, in fact, a parallel narrative with the story of Hazrat Fatimah. But I changed the storyline into an ordinary life during the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, depicting a family who has lost their mother in the missile attacks. The play, which was named 'The Wound of Medina,' was performed several times and got kudos in its time.

Later, the script for the play 'Earth to Heaven,' which is entirely related to the Sacred Defense, was suggested to me. In its storyline, it is said that some friends had collected soil from various sacred places, from the tombs of the Ahl al-Bayt to the war zones of the Sacred Defense, and they wanted it to be depicted in a play. I came up with the idea for the play 'Earth to Heaven,' which essentially embodies the Sacred Defense: Some Sacred Defense fighters

decide to return after 40 years, wherever they are, to stand together behind the parapet of this sacred soil.

'Earth to Heaven' was initially planned for five performances but ended up with 100 performances in total. 'Sardaran' was a silent work that combined movement, form, and performance closely related to the Sacred Defense. Overall, I was not satisfied with it. It had only 10 performances and was discontinued.

Why did you decide to shift from the field of architecture to producing religious and Sacred Defense plays?

Architecture is closely related to various artistic fields, including theater, music, and sculpture, and the arts in general. I had friends working in these fields, and even before going to the university, I had been involved in theater, including local and mosque-based plays. Later, during my university years, we had better facilities, and there were specialists in this field among our friends. So, I could pursue theater alongside my professional architectural career.

I chose religious and Sacred Defense theater because I felt that I had a story to tell. Various cultural managers I met wanted



● MEHR

me to work in the field of ancient literature, for instance, which I wasn't interested in because many experts had already worked in those fields. I believed that working on religious and spiritual projects required a specific mindset, and it was crucial to have a deep understanding of religion. Since I had been involved in this field from childhood and had actively participated in religious activities, I felt I could be successful in this field. I tried to approach this field with finesse and ensure that the work was done excellently. We even managed to use humor in our productions related to Ahl al-Bayt, which was of course backed by thorough research.

What are the challenges of creating religious theater?

The most significant challenges in this field are conceptualizing and laying the foundation of the project. In the next step, the biggest challenge in production is budget limitations. In addition, sometimes cultural officials are in a hurry to see results and expect rushed productions, which usually result in subpar work. Personally, I'd rather not do a project than deliver one that is hastily produced and lacks quality.

What is your opinion about government support for theater, in general, and the Sacred Defense theater, in

formed internationally in the Netherlands (2007), London (2008), and Dubai (2009).

'Halo of the Caravan' was innovative in its time. We carefully selected the lamentations and created a social network where we essentially curated the lamentations. At the time, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting did not broadcast the lamentations performed by mourning groups, but we, in our way, became a social network dedicated to selecting and refining these lamentations. The success of this production was attributed to our exact selection of lamentations, the production's background, its setting, and the overall arrangement, which collectively attracted its audience. It demonstrated that artists and mourning groups could work together towards a common goal. Each year, the play was refined further, leading to continuous improvement.

Have you faced criticism from the government or the public for your productions?

Yes, some believed that religious beliefs should not be integrated into theater to the same extent that religious themes like lamentations are incorporated. We took into account the opinions of opposing views during our work and aimed to persuade

them. We collaborate with various individuals during our rehearsals and seek consultation, even from those with differing views and biases. We tried to ensure that any structural changes we made were well thought out.

Do you have any plans to create another Sacred Defense-themed production?

Yes, I have a romantic Sacred Defense project in mind that has not yet received government support due to budget limitations.

Why do you think there is a lack of risk-taking among cultural managers?

The main reason for the decreased risk-taking among cultural managers is budget limitations. During the production of 'The Wound of Medina,' for example, we practiced for over six months, conducted workshops, and had five performances. Despite making modifications, it was not successful, so we had to discontinue it.

What advice would you give to those who intend to create works related to the Sacred Defense?

They should not think about big projects. They need to start with small ones to gain experience and ensure that their work doesn't offend anyone.



'Halo of the Caravan' holds the record for the longest continuous performance among theater productions. It has been staged for 34 years.



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