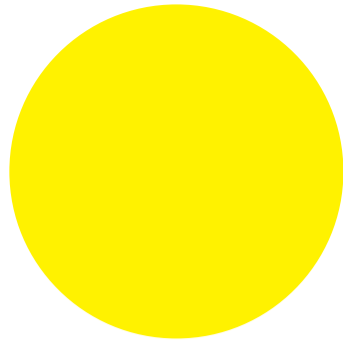


Efficient PBO can solve Iran's problems: **Pezeshkian**



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# Iran Daily

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Russian security chief:

## Haniyeh's Assassins Seek to Stoke Regional Tensions

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Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian (L) shakes hands with visiting Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in Tehran on August 5, 2024. • IRNA

### Russian delegation's dual-purpose visit



By Shuaib Bahman  
Russian affairs expert

#### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

A high-ranking delegation, headed by Russian Security Council's Secretary Sergei Shoigu, visited Tehran yesterday to hold talks with Iranian officials. The visit can be assessed from two perspectives: the bilateral relations between Tehran and Moscow, and regional developments and tensions between Iran and Israel. Iran and Russia have extensive relations and cooperation. Over the past year, one of the important topics between them has been an agreement on comprehensive cooperation, which is almost ready for signing. Thus, the groundwork for its signing should be prepared on both sides. It is likely that this visit will pave the way for the signing of this document. The document is based on the extensive cooperation that the two countries have developed over the past few years. Tehran and Moscow's collaboration used to be predominantly economic and limited, but in the past three to four years, their cooperation has taken on new dimensions, especially since the previous restrictions were lifted after Russia was targeted by Western sanctions, giving the two nations more leeway to foster their partnership.

There is speculation that a new government in Iran may lead to a shift in the level of relations and cooperation, possibly resulting in a decline. However, the cooperation document is a significant aspect of the bilateral relationship that remains unaffected by changes in governments. [Page 8 >](#)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Investment opportunities expo to be held in September

Iran's Investment Opportunities Exhibition will be held in Tehran on September 26-28.

A sum of 80 countries will participate in the exhibition, said Deputy Head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI) Mahmoud Bazari, as reported by Tasnim News Agency. In the exhibition, a new model of Iran's foreign trade and investment will be introduced to foreign investors.

Investors from neighboring states, China, Russia, India, Southeast Asian nations, African and Latin American countries, Spain and Italy will take part in the event.

## Bitcoin tumbles below \$50,000 for the first time since February



The price of bitcoin sank more than 15% on Monday to \$50,193.00, according to Coin Metrics, and is on pace for its worst day since June 2022. At one point, it fell to \$49,111.10, its lowest level since Feb. 13. Bitcoin has lost nearly 15% since Saturday. A week ago, on July 20, it climbed as high as \$69,982, CNBC reported.

"Thirty percent slumps, as scary as they are, are par for the course during bull markets and it's encouraging bitcoin bounced back above \$50,000," said Nexo co-founder Antoni Trenchev. "But make no mistake, we are in a choppy, volatile market environment ... the moment to turn bullish will be when bitcoin retakes its 200-day moving average, which typically tells us if we are in a bull or bear market, at \$61,500."

Ether losses were even steeper. The crypto asset dropped almost 19% to \$2,211.83, bringing its three-day loss to 24% and erasing its 2024 gain.

Crypto stocks were among the hardest hit. Coinbase took a 19% dip, while MicroStrategy slid 26%. Mining stocks suffered double-digit losses, too.

The moves follow a broader market sell-off that began last week, when a weaker-than-anticipated July jobs report renewed investor fears of a recession. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite entered a correction. Japan stocks entered a bear market Monday after plunging more than 12% overnight, its worst one-day sell-off since 1987.

Efficient PBO can solve Iran's problems: *Pezeshkian*

President Masoud Pezeshkian said the Plan and Budget Organization (PBO) has great importance in Iran's executive system, describing the PBO as the mastermind of the country's executive system, which, if effective, will solve the country's problems.

Speaking at the induction ceremony of the PBO head on Monday, Pezeshkian referred to PBO's online monitoring of the budget spending of various institutions, noting that the organization is also tasked with formulating the budget in terms of the country's income with an eye on the needs based on prioritization, according to Borna News.

The president also emphasized the importance of using young and elite forces as well as holding regular training courses to improve the knowledge of managers and experts of the PBO.

On Sunday, Pezeshkian appointed Hamid Pourmohammadi as Vice President and Head of the PBO.

In a decree, President Pezeshkian tasked Pourmohammadi with pursuing the objectives of Iran's Twenty-Year Vision Document, the general policies approved by Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and the five-year development plan.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) shakes hands with Head of Plan and Budget Organization Hamid Pourmohammadi in Tehran after granting his decree on August 5, 2024. [president.ir](http://president.ir)

Born in 1967, Pourmohammadi holds a PhD in economics from the University of Tehran, and has been the deputy of econom-

ic affairs and coordination of the PBO, the deputy of production affairs of the organization as well as the deputy of the Cen-

tral Bank of Iran, and the deputy of banking affairs of the Ministry of Economy, and the deputy of planning, administrative and

financial affairs of the governor of Chaharmahal and Bakhhtiari Province in southwestern Iran.

## Iran to help develop Venezuela's petchem industry



REUTERS

An important document was signed in 2023 between Tehran and Caracas, according to which Iranian experts will help development of Venezuela's petchem industry, said a member of board of directors of Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA).

Speaking on the sidelines of the 15th Iran Petrochemical Forum on Sunday, Eduardo Fernandez added that as many as 15 Venezuelans have come to Shiraz in southern Iran to be trained in project management, reported Tasnim News Agency.

"Venezuela has faced the intensification of sanctions since 2015, and we found it possible to rebuild the economy by cooperating with our partners, as one of the most important trading partners of Venezuela is Iran, and in the field of restoring petrochemicals, solving problems and developing it, a very good coop-

eration with Iran has begun," he noted.

It is necessary to introduce Venezuela's petrochemical capacities to Iranians, Fernandez said, adding that we have a motto that "teamwork is a guarantee of victory", so we have started the teamwork with the powerful country of Iran.

Meanwhile, Iranian Ambassador to China has urged Iran's petrochemical industry to use the opportunity of Chinese investment in other countries. Mohsen Bakhtiar said on Sunday that China seeks to facilitate the investment of Chinese companies in other countries, which is a good opportunity for Iran's petrochemical industry to use the capacity.

China is a strategic partner of the Islamic Republic of Iran and bilateral relations with the country will continue, the envoy noted.

## Envoy elucidates Iran-Russia monetary agreement

Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali has in an interview with IRNA elaborated on the details of a monetary agreement between Iran and Russia.

In the framework of the agreement, in the next month or so, Iranians will be able to receive rubles from Russian ATMs with their bank cards connected to the Shetab Banking System, and in the final step, in the first half of 2025, they will also be able to buy from Russian stores, Jalali told IRNA.

Over the past two years, regular discussions in the monetary and banking sector were held between the banking officials of Iran and the Russian Federation, and the joint working group of the central banks of the two countries held consecutive meetings in this regard, he added.



IRNA

Tehran and Moscow should solve monetary and banking issues, he said, adding that very important steps were taken to solve these issues in the last two years. The messengers of banks of the two countries are also connected, he noted. According to Jalali, Iran and Russia

also established brokerage relations last year, and some of the Iranian and Russian banks have been able to have brokerage relations. The opening of these accounts is important because it enables the banks of the two countries to work with each other, he said.

## Iran plans to link Chabahar Port to key railway network

Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development said Chabahar Port (Shahid Beheshti Port) in southeastern Iran will be connected to the Chabahar-Zahedan Railway by the end of the current Iranian year (March 2025).

In a post on his official X account on Monday, Mehrdad Bazrpash said the strategic north-south Chabahar-Zahedan Railway will be linked to Shahid Beheshti Transit and International Port of Chabahar, IRNA reported.

Back in May, Bazrpash said that India had been developing Chabahar on Iran's southeastern coast along the Gulf of Oman to facilitate the transfer of goods to Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asian countries

as an alternative to the port of Karachi and Gwadar in rival Pakistan. He made those remarks after signing a contract with India to develop the port of Chabahar. Bazrpash said he had proposed a

plan to Indian officials to launch a joint shipping company between Iran and India to expand transit routes in the region, adding, "This proposal will be officially presented soon."



IRNA

# Cultural legacy of rice bread in Tamijan village



## Iranica Desk

Since the production of rice in Gilan Province, the baking of various types of bread using rice flour has become widespread. Local breads are considered an intangible heritage in every province. In 2021, the traditional process of making dry rice bread, known as Tamijan, was registered on Iran's Intangible Cultural Heritage List, boasting a history of over 150 years. A year later, the Tamijan Rice Bread Festival was held in Divshal village, the largest producer of this type of bread in Gilan Province. Currently, Talesh Mahalleh in Langrud and Tamijan village in Rudsar, near the city of Amol, are also known for producing this bread. However, the mass production of Tamijan in recent years has led to a shift from traditional methods to a semi-traditional approach in these areas, as reported by ISNA.

Divshal village, nestled in the mountains, has over 120 households. Visitors to this picturesque locale will notice that most homes display signs indicating the availability of Tamijan bread. As you stroll through the



village, you'll see that the heat and humidity haven't deterred the women from working. Many doors are open, inviting visitors to observe the bread-making process up close.

Most women in Divshal learned the traditional bread-baking methods from their mothers and grandmothers during their teenage years. While the women are responsible for the baking, the men handle sales and distribution in local markets and

shops of Gilan Province.

The mountain overlooking Divshal village is often referred to as "Ata Kuh," with this name prominently featured in advertisements and business cards. Inside a workshop, a young woman rolls out Tamijan breads beside the cast-iron ovens, her face flushed from the heat. She shares that she learned the baking method from her mother-in-law at age 19, shortly after her marriage. Now, she has been baking Tami-



● [gashdogzarnews.ir](http://gashdogzarnews.ir)

jan bread for over 10 years. "In the past, we baked bread traditionally without gas; we used firewood and kneaded the dough by hand. Now, most households have dough kneading machines and use machines for spreading the dough," she explains.

"Currently, this rice bread production is my family's only source of income. I knead between 15 to 30 kilograms of rice flour daily, and after baking, my husband sells the bread in Rasht and Kuch-esfahan. We also have a few regular customers who sell the bread in stores. Sales tend to be lower in summer than in winter."

Niloufar Pourbabaee, another young woman who learned traditional Tamijan bread baking

from her grandmother, has transformed her home's parking lot into a production workshop, baking 70 kilograms daily. Reflecting on the history of Tamijan bread in Divshal, she notes, "This bread has been baked for over 150 years. Initially, the people of Divshal baked it, and later those from Talesh Mahalleh learned as well."

Pourbabaee believes the origin of dry rice bread in Gilan Province is Tamijan village, adding, "Perhaps the people of Divshal learned from the residents of that village."

Despite the significant distance between Divshal and Tamijan, villagers recall that about 13 years ago, Rasoul Alizadeh established a semi-industrial workshop for producing dry

Tamijan bread. Locals believe this type of bread may have originally been baked in Tamijan but became less common. It was only after observing practices in Divshal that the first bread-making workshop was re-established in Tamijan.

Acknowledging the history of Tamijan village is crucial. It thrived during the reign of the Kayanian dynasty (before the Safavids), and the largest brick bridge in Gilan Province, constructed by Mirza Ali Kia, still stands today.

Rasoul Alizadeh, who founded Tamijan's first dry rice bread workshop, asserts that this type of bread originated in Tamijan village, with residents of Divshal adopting it as a result of migration.

# Gohar Tappeh, a window into ancient life in northern Iran

Gohar Tappeh is a significant ancient site located in the Mazandaran Province of northern Iran. Found in Behshahr, it is approximately 2km northwest of Rostamkola and about 30km from the city of Sari. This ancient site is nestled in a plain surrounded by lush forests and mountains to the south.

The history of Gohar Tappeh traces back to the ancient people who initially dwelled in the caves of Mazandaran Province. Over time, these communities transitioned from cave dwellers to settlers in the Gohar Tappeh region. During the Neolithic era, rural life flourished in the area, and by the Bronze Age, it began evolving into a more urbanized settlement. Throughout various geological periods, numerous caves



formed in this vicinity, providing habitats for early inhabitants. Gohar Tappeh stands out as one of Iran's notable ancient settlements, linked to the Cop-

per and Stone Ages. Its strategic location among ancient valleys and caves—such as Hoto Cave, Kamarband Cave, and Kumishan Cave—enhances its his-



● [ranripedia.com](http://ranripedia.com)

torical significance. The abundance of water sources, forests, coastlines, and favorable conditions contributed to the area's gradual development. By the

Bronze Age, Gohar Tappeh had transformed into a substantial city covering approximately fifty hectares.

Excavations at Gohar Tappeh

have uncovered a wealth of artifacts spanning the Copper, Stone, and Bronze Ages. These include a diverse array of pottery, bronze items, seals, decorative pieces, and weaponry such as bayonets and daggers. Noteworthy finds also encompass pointed pendants, necklaces, bracelets, stone beads, figurines of animals and humans, and several examples of spindles and clay discs.

The architectural discoveries at Gohar Tappeh indicate the use of bricks and stones in construction, often enhanced by wooden beams and reeds. A variety of stone tools — including blades, chips, and mortars — have also been excavated, highlighting their use for harvesting grains, cutting plants and meat, and grinding wheat and other grains.

Head of joint chamber of commerce in exclusive interview

# Tehran, Ashgabat moving from mistrust to cooperation

*Pezeshkian should take privatization seriously*

By Sadeq Dehqan & Amir Mollaei Mozaffari  
Staff writers

## INTERVIEW

In recent years, relations between Iran and Turkmenistan, especially in the economic sector, have gone through their fair share of ups and downs. After things turned cold due to the gas dispute, it's encouraging to see relations expanding once more, with an increase in the level of trade exchanges promising a bright future.

The two countries share over a thousand kilometers of common border. Following Turkmenistan's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Iran was quick to recognize its sovereignty, and from there, the two nations built strong economic ties in areas such as transportation and energy.

Turkmenistan has long been Iran's most important export destination in Central Asia, and the trade volume between the two has been the largest in the region. In 2009, approximately 100 industrial projects were either built or under construction in Turkmenistan with Iran's assistance, showcasing their commitment to economic cooperation.

However, a long-standing dispute over gas transfers cast a shadow over this relationship. The gas trade between the two countries began in 1997 with a 25-year contract. Things took a turn in 2007 when Turkmenistan demanded a steep price increase, which was eventually moderated due to pushback from Iranian officials. Despite this hiccup, relations remained stable until 2013. In 2017, Turkmenistan halted its gas exports to Iran due to accumulated debts. That same year, it was revealed that Turkmenistan owed \$1.8 billion for gas delivered to Tehran. Iran's delay in payment was due to a change in the settlement method with the Turkmen side, shifting from bartering to cash, which proved challenging due to US-imposed sanctions. The fallout from the Turkmen gas cutoff affected other commercial fields as well.

However, since the inauguration of Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi in 2021, there has been a flurry of diplomatic activity and cooperation across various sectors, leading to improved relations. The current volume of exchanges stands at approximately \$500 million. Experts believe that the exchange capacity between the two nations is much higher and that the new government's focus on empowering the private sector and reducing the impact of Western sanctions could significantly boost trade.

Iran Daily conducted an exclusive interview with Ramezan Bahrani, the head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the current state and future prospects of trade exchanges between the two countries.



Turkmenistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov (L) congratulates Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian on his election and inauguration on July 30, 2024.  
● president.ir

**IRAN DAILY:** First, could you outline the current trade situation between Iran and Turkmenistan?

**BAHRAMI:** In the last two to three years, the government of president Raisi really picked up the pace and fostered good cooperation with Turkmenistan, taking things forward in a way that outshines the previous Iranian

government. During the Rouhani government, relations hit a low point when the Turkmen government filed a complaint with the International Court of Justice in The Hague over a gas dispute. Dialogue and negotiations broke down, and the situation escalated when the other side resorted to using force. In fact, the level of relations between the two

countries was at its lowest point in 30 years before the Raisi government stepped in. However, since the late president took office, things have taken a turn for the better. The then-president's visit to Turkmenistan and the reciprocal visits by Turkmen officials helped reset the relationship. Discussions on gas swaps resumed, and trades

across the borders flourished once more. The appointment of an active and knowledgeable ambassador to Turkmenistan signaled a shift, and it's clear that the president's government has a particular focus on fostering good relations with neighboring countries. Given these positive steps, the previous government certainly deserves



Ramezan Bahrani

credit for its efforts in developing trade with Turkmenistan.



Head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce Ramezan Bahrani (2nd-L) meets with Turkmen and Iranian businessmen on the sidelines of the Iran EXPO 2024 event.  
● otaghironline.ir

**Were there no weak points in the previous government when it came to commercial and economic cooperation?** I want to emphasize that despite the strides made by

the Raisi government in fostering better relations with neighboring countries, the existing laws and regulations pertaining to trade and the business environment hin-

dered the success of these efforts. Customs regulations, currency obligations, and banking requirements, for example, significantly hampered the operational and ex-

ecutive power of merchants. It's important to recognize that the current trade volume between Iran and Turkmenistan largely stems from the initiatives of the private sector, with border residents and businesspersons in border provinces playing a pivotal role. Our trade is not structured optimally, and the private sector's resilience is largely responsible for maintaining the current exchange levels. Government directives, regulations, and incentives fall short when it comes to adequately supporting the private sector.

Let me provide an illustration. Even when our agricultural products are at risk of perishing in fields, there aren't any regulations in place that allow businessmen to sell them in foreign markets without the burden of foreign currency obligations. Even when a

product is surplus to the farmer's needs, he is told that the foreign currency he gets for selling it in foreign markets must be returned to the country immediately. This is true even when exchanges occur amicably between businessmen from both countries, and it may take time to recoup the currency.

In light of this, I believe that while Raisi made commendable efforts to develop foreign relations, particularly with Turkmenistan, the actions of government agencies involved in this work, from the banking system to the Agricultural Organization, undermined these initiatives. For instance, delays of five to 10 days in issuing export licenses by the Ministry of Agriculture, which does happen, can lead to a decline in product quality and ultimately, its destruction.



Iranian and Turkmen companies showcase their capabilities at the Specialized Economic Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat in November 2023.  
● turkmenistan.gov.tm



The photo shows decorations of the inauguration ceremony for a new gas pipeline link between Iran and Turkmenistan.  
● AFP

**One of the promises made by Pezeshkian in the field of economics is to solve the FATF problem and foster Iran's membership in this financial group. In your opinion, how important is this issue?**

Iran joining FATF holds no drawbacks for me as a businessman, and I believe most businessmen and those with economic knowledge consider it a necessary step for the country. FATF has creat-

ed an economic order and has made the banking system accountable. Therefore, the private sector doesn't view our potential membership as an obstacle because financial transparency is a fundamental principle in economics. Even currently, businessmen in our country are subject to audits. However, those seeking rent-seeking opportunities may oppose joining FATF as it would put an end to their exploitative practices.

**What steps can the new government take to facilitate trade?**

One area that wasn't given sufficient attention in the previous government was the private sector. It wasn't taken seriously at all when it came to business equations. This issue was evident in the relationship with chambers of commerce, and during this period, communication between the government and the private sector was severed. The appointment of inefficient and non-specialist officials further strained the relationship between the public and private sectors. The new government, led by President Pezeshkian, should avoid making the same mistake. The government ought to focus on policymaking in the realm of

commercial and economic cooperation with other countries, leaving the implementation to the private sector and chambers of commerce. If the new government wants to veer away from the mistakes of the past, it should actively involve the private sector and limit its own role in policymaking. In recent years, some executive bodies have demonstrated a reluctance to relinquish any of their powers to the private sector, even though the private sector is more than capable of handling these responsibilities. There has been a lot of talk about downsizing and streamlining the government, but in practice, it has become more bloated, exhausted, and numb. By letting the private sector taking

the lead in implementation, the government should always be the one to ask questions and communicate its expectations to the private sector, not the other way around. Initially, it might be challenging for the government to relinquish some of its powers in commercial matters, especially concerning neighboring countries, to the private sector. However, the reality is that certain economic issues, including the appointment of our economic consultants abroad, should be handled by the private sector. By handing over these responsibilities, the government should focus on bigger-picture issues and not get bogged down in the day-to-day execution of foreign trade.



Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash (L) and Turkmen Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov hold up signed cooperation documents and agreements worth \$900 million, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on November 18, 2023.  
● IRNA

**How would you assess the future of economic exchanges between Iran and Turkmenistan during the new presidential term?**

The trend of economic exchanges and cooperation between the two countries has been positive thanks to the policies of the previous government. If this momentum is maintained and improved, we could see a significant leap forward because Turkmenistan has also consistently demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with us. Enhancing communication and resolving differences through joint commissions, with the involvement of the private sector, will be crucial in fostering stronger ties. The private sector

must play a central role in planning and shaping a suitable economic groundwork. Given the slogans advocated by Pezeshkian, I anticipate a growing trend in economic exchanges with regional countries, including Turkmenistan. Over the last five years, the financial turnover in trade between Iran and Turkmenistan has exhibited strong growth, increasing from \$130 million to \$480 million. With the initiatives and policies implemented in the current Iranian calendar (started March 20, 2024), if the Iranian government successfully addresses existing obstacles, a ten-fold increase in the volume of exchanges within the next five years is within reach.



Managing Director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Majid Chegeni (2nd-L) talks with Deputy Chairman of the Turkmen Gas State Concern Murad Archaev (2nd-R) on the sidelines of the 28th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2024) in Tehran on May 11, 2024.  
● SHANA



Iranian-made automobiles are put on display at the Specialized Economic Exhibition of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat in November 2023.  
● tdh.gov.tm

**What steps must be taken to achieve this goal of enhancing the level of exchanges?**

First, it's imperative to fully address and repair the damage inflicted on the level of economic cooperation between the two countries due to past issues and differences. Implementing sufficient oversight of the trade with Turkmenistan is also crucial. Previously, there was a lack of structurally and systematically sound methods, resulting in instances where low-quality goods were sent by Turk-

men-Iranian traders as well as Iranian traders to the other side, undermining the credibility of our exports. Moving forward, we should focus on mitigating the negative impact of sanctions on the country's trade and economy and issue fewer sudden directives. For example, we witnessed times when the trade of one product becomes suddenly allowed in Iran, only to be suddenly forbidden later. These kinds of things disrupted the markets we painstakingly created for our products, losing them to our competitors.

**As a businessman in the private sector, what message would you like to convey?**

For businessmen like myself, political ideologies, whether fundamentalist or reformist, don't factor into our work. We remain committed to fostering economic cooperation with the government, regardless of its political leanings. The only exception we make is in our refusal to engage in business with the Israeli regime. Our sole consideration is advancing the economic interests

of our country. We don't concern ourselves with the political affiliations or ideologies of officials or fellow businessmen. Our perspective is that we should fulfill our duties as soldiers on the economic front, striving to improve the lives of our people and enhance the country's exports and production. In my opinion, if we as businessmen become entangled in partisan politics, we risk losing focus, which is the biggest harm to the private sector.

Moving forward, we should focus on mitigating the negative impact of sanctions on the country's trade and economy and issue fewer sudden directives. For example, we witnessed times when the trade of one product becomes suddenly allowed in Iran, only to be suddenly forbidden later. These kinds of things disrupted the markets we painstakingly created for our products, losing them to our competitors.

## Asian U18 Volleyball Championship: Iran undone by China in the final

### Sports Desk

Iran had to settle for a runner-up finish in the Asian U18 Volleyball Championship after a five-set defeat against China in Riffa, Bahrain.

Fresh from a straight-set victory over defending champion Japan in the semifinals, Adel Gholami's boys got off to flying start in Sunday's showdown to win the first set 25-23 before the Chinese bounced back to come out on top in the second and third sets by 25-17 and 25-19 scorelines.

Iran still managed to force the contest into the decider thanks to a fourth-set 25-20 win, but China clinched a 15-10 triumph in the tie-breaker to repeat the five-set win against its opponent earlier in the group phase a win a maid-

en title in 15 editions of the competition.

This was a second successive silver medal for Iran, which remains the most decorated under-18 team in the continent with seven trophies.

Gholami said "a virus swept through the Iranian camp in recent days, which is why some players could not unleash their best in the final."

"My players still deserve credit for the decent performance, but the Chinese were better than us in many aspects of the game, namely attack and reception. This China team was truly the best I've seen from the country in the age-group competitions over the past 20 years," added the former Iranian middle blocker.

The result came after the Iranian under-20 side had

beaten South Korea in straight sets in Surabaya, Indonesia, last Tuesday for a record-extending eighth Asian crown.

Earlier on Sunday, Pakistan walked away with a first-ever medal in the competition following a stunning 3-0 (25-13, 25-21, 25-17) victory over Japan.

There was some consolation for the Iranian boys as three members of the team were among the winners of the individual awards.

Mohammad-Amin Rahimi shared the best outside-hitter award with China's Yu Xiang, while Mohammad-Nima Bateni was named the joint best middle blocker - alongside Jabran Jabran of Pakistan - and Mohammad-Amin Arabayramoahmadi picked up the prize for best libero.



● MOHAMMAD-JAVAD AMINI/volleyball.ir



● YJC

## Iranian ref Baqeri to make taekwondo history in Paris

### Sports Desk

Ma'soumeh Baqeri will make history when the taekwondo event of the Paris Olympics get underway on Wednesday as she will be the first Iranian female referee of the sport to ever officiate in the Games.

Baqeri, who holds a master's degree in biochemistry, was picked for the

sporting extravaganza by the international taekwondo governing body following consistent appearances in major global tournaments, including last year's WT Grand Slam Champions Series in Wuxi, China, where she was named as the Best Referee. Baqeri will be among a group of 26 refs (13 men and 13 women) in Paris. Her fellow-Iranian female

referee Marjan Taymouri has also been selected for the taekwondo competitions of the upcoming Paralympic Games - starting August 29 in the French capital's Grand Palais.

Iran will be represented by four athletes in the taekwondo contests of Olympics.

A gold medalist in last year's World Championships, Nahid Kiani will be

looking to become only the second Iranian girl to claim a medal in the 128-year history of the Games - following Rio 2016 bronze medalist Kimia Alizadeh - when taking part in Thursday's -57kg event, while Mobina Ne'matzadeh (women's -49kg), Mehran Barkhrodari (men's -80kg), and Arian Salimi (men's 80kg) will also fancy their chances of Olympic glory.



### Paris Olympics:

## Lyles edges out Thompson to win sensational 100m gold

BBC - US sprint star Noah Lyles won the Olympic 100m title by five-thousandths of a second from Jamaica's Kishane Thompson in a dramatic photo finish at Paris 2024.

Showman Lyles overhauled his rivals in the second half of the race to triumph by the finest of margins in a personal best 9.79 seconds.

That was the same time as Olympic debutant Thompson, who led for most of the race.

The United States' former world champion Fred Kerley took bronze in 9.81, edging out South Africa's Akani Simbine for the podium.

All eight finalists finished within 0.12secs of Lyles in a remarkable race.

In the end it was Lyles, an athlete who thrives on the sport's grandest stages and who won three golds at last year's World Championships, who sprinted away in celebration once the official result appeared on the big screen.

### Tennis

REUTERS - Novak Djokovic described beating Carlos Alcaraz to claim the Olympic singles gold medal at the fifth

attempt as the biggest achievement of his career on Sunday.

The 37-year-old Serb ended an eight-month trophy drought with a vintage display to win 7-6(3) 7-6(2) and complete his career Golden Slam in memorable fashion, not dropping a set in six matches at Roland Garros.

He is the oldest man to win the Olympic singles title since tennis returned to the Games in 1988 and remarkably he did it 21 days after being pummeled by Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final and two months after undergoing knee surgery.

"I won the bronze in my first Olympic Games (2008) and ever since then failed to win the medal and played three out of four Olympic Games in semi-finals and couldn't overcome that obstacle," Djokovic, proudly wearing his medal, told reporters.

"And then now at age 37, with a 21-year-old that is probably the best player in the world right now, winning Roland Garros and Wimbledon back-to-back and playing incredible tennis.

"When I take everything into consideration, this probably

is the biggest sporting success I've ever had in my career."

### Badminton

People across Taiwan on Sunday celebrated their men's doubles badminton gold medal victory over Chinese opponents that sparked scenes of jubilation while also exposing deeper geopolitical divides between the two sides.

Wang Chi-Lin and Lee Yang of Taiwan, the reigning champions from the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, won a three-game thriller against China's Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang.

In cities across Taiwan, from Wang's home in the capital Taipei to southern Kaohsiung, and Lee's hometown on the island of Kinmen just off the coast of China, public screens were set up that lured thousands of fans.

The island competes as 'Chinese Taipei' rather than as Taiwan, to avoid objections from China, which claims the island as its own territory.

### Swimming

Iron-man Bobby Finke and the U.S. women's medley relay team shattered world records



● AMERICAN SPRINTER NOAH LYLES (LANE SEVEN) CROSSES THE FINISH LINE TO WIN THE MEN'S 100M GOLD MEDAL AT THE PARIS OLYMPICS IN STADE DE FRANCE, SAINT-DENIS, FRANCE, ON AUGUST 4, 2024.  
● DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

in golden performances as the Olympic swim meet ended in exhilarating fashion on Sunday with the Americans on top again.

Floridian Finke took down Sun Yang's 12-year 1,500m world record as he retained the gold medal in the lung-busting event before the American women

smashed their previous world mark for gold in the medley relay. The golds saw the Americans finish with eight at the top of the swimming medal table, one more than second-placed Australia.

It was by no means an American shut-out, though, with the U.S. men's medley relay team

suffering their first defeat ever at Olympics meets dating back to the 1960 Rome Games.

China, anchored by the human missile Pan Zhanle, took the gold ahead of the U.S. team, whose talisman Caeleb Dressel took his first minor medal from a previously uniform set of nine golds.

# Russian security chief: Haniyeh's assassins seek to stoke regional tensions



Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri (R) and Secretary of Russia's Security Council Sergei Shoigu (L) meet in Tehran on August 5, 2024. **FARS**

**International Desk**

Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu condemned the assassination of Hamas leader in Tehran, saying there is no doubt that the perpetrators of such a crime intend to increase tensions in the Middle East region. Shoigu made the remarks during a meeting with Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri in Tehran on Monday. Earlier on the day, the Russian official held a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian.

Shoigu's visit to Tehran came as Iran is weighing a response to Israeli regime for the assassination of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. Haniyeh, head of the Palestinian resistance movement's political bureau, was assassinated alongside one of his bodyguards in the Iranian capital on Wednesday. He had traveled to Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian. Russia had earlier condemned the assassination of Haniyeh, calling on all parties to refrain from steps that could tip the Middle East into a wider regional war. During the Monday meeting, the Russian official described relations between Tehran and Moscow as strategic and deep-rooted, which will not be affected by the change in the governments. Iran recently elected Masoud Pezeshkian as the country's new president in a snap election which was held following the death of the late president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May.

The visit by the top Russian official came a day after Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi discussed regional issues and ties with Iranian officials during a one-day visit to Tehran. Pezeshkian told the Jordanian top diplomat that the Israeli regime's assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran violated all international regulations and was a "big mistake" that will not go unanswered. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expects all Muslim countries and free nations in the world to strongly condemn such crimes," he added. He emphasized that the biggest enemies and violators of freedom, democracy and human rights are making use of their utmost scientific and operational capabilities to carry out terrorist acts and commit heinous crimes. "They claim to defend freedom, democracy and human rights and introduce anyone who refrains from abiding by them as the enemy of such principles and values," the Iranian president said.

## Silence on Israel's actions serves as reward to regime: *Iran*

**International Desk**

Iran reiterated its determination to avenge the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader, warning that silence on the regime's acts will be detrimental to regional stability. "Silence towards the [Israeli] regime's recent actions is a kind of rewarding them. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its right to take countermeasures based on international rules and procedures," Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani told Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani in a phone conversation on Monday. Bagheri Kani also said it is imperative to put an end to the Israeli regime's "vicious" scheme to expand the scale of war in the region. The Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated by Israel in Iran's capital on July 31, while he was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. In a telephone conversation with Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon on Sunday, Bagheri Kani denounced the awkward silence of European countries on the

killing of the Hamas chief, stressing that the Islamic Republic will definitely exercise its legitimate right to create deterrence against Israel. "The Islamic Republic is surprised by Europe's silence as well as the absence of a UN Security Council statement in condemnation of the Zionist regime's acts of aggression against Iran, Lebanon and Yemen. Moreover, European countries' failure to condemn the killing of Hamas politburo head has raised questions for Iran," the top Iranian diplomat stated. Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani called Israel's assassination of Haniyeh as a "blatant violation" of international rules and regulations. Kanaani said the assassination was a flagrant breach of the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and the political norms of the international community. "In line with international law, Iran has the right to punish the aggressor. No one has the right to doubt Iran's legal right to punish the aggressor and create deterrence against the usurping Zionist regime," he added. He also said the

international community must support Iran's punishment of the Israeli regime. Kanaani added that an extraordinary meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will be held in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday at Iran's request to discuss the issue. Also on Monday, the chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami said, "They think that through these measures [assassination of Haniyeh], they would succeed in prolonging their survival." "These [atrocities] are, however, holes that they (the Israelis) dug for themselves, and will gradually bury themselves in," Salami stated, adding, "Once they received a strong response, they would understand that they have committed another miscalculation." Following the assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a statement warned of a "harsh response" to the Israeli action and reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the blood of the resistance leader.

## Bangladeshi flees to India after protesters storm her palace

Bangladesh's prime minister resigned and fled the country Monday, after weeks of protests against a quota system for government jobs descended into violence and grew into a broader challenge to her 15-year rule. Thousands of demonstrators stormed her official residence and other buildings associated with her party and family. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's departure threatens to create even more instability in the densely populated nation on India's border that is already dealing with a series of crises, from high unemployment and corruption to climate change. Amid security concerns, the main airport in Dhaka, the capital, suspended operations, according to AP. After the embattled leader was seen on TV boarding a military helicopter with her sister, the country's military chief, Gen. Waker-uz-Zaman, sought to reassure a jittery nation that order would be restored. He said he met with opposition politicians and civil society leaders and would seek the president's guid-

ance on forming an interim government. He promised that the military would launch an investigation into the deadly crackdown on student-led protests that led to some of the country's worst bloodshed since the 1971 war of independence and fueled outrage against the government. He added that he ordered security forces not to fire on crowds. "Keep faith in the military, we will investigate all the killings and punish the responsible," he said. The military wields significant political influence in Bangladesh, which has had more than 20 coups or coup attempts. Even after Waker-uz-Zaman spoke, people continued to pour into and out of Hasina's official residence, taking furniture and pulling raw fish from the refrigerators. Crowds also ransacked Hasina's family's ancestral home-turned-museum where her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — the country's first president and independence leader — was assassinated. They

torched major offices of the ruling party and the country's two leading, pro-government TV stations — both of which were forced to go off air. Elsewhere, protests were peaceful, and thousands gathered Monday evening outside the presidential palace, where the military chief, opposition politicians and the country's figurehead president met. Hasina, meanwhile, landed in a city in India on the border with Bangladesh, according to a military official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information to the media. The protests began peacefully last month as frustrated students demanded an end to a quota system for government jobs that they said favored those with connections to the prime minister's Awami League party, but the demonstrations then morphed into an unprecedented challenge to Hasina and the party. The 76-year-old was elected for a fourth consecutive term in a January vote that

was boycotted by her main opponents. Thousands of opposition members were jailed in the lead-up to the polls. Protests have continued even after the Supreme Court last month ruled that the quota system — which set aside up to 30% of government jobs for family members of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence against Pakistan — must be drastically cut. The government attempted to quell the demonstrations with force, leaving nearly 300 people dead since mid-July. At least 95 people, including at least 14 police officers, died in clashes in the capital on Sunday, according to the country's leading Bengali-language daily newspaper, Prothom Alo. Hundreds more were injured. At least 11,000 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The unrest has also resulted in the closure of schools and universities across the country, and authorities at one point imposed a shoot-on-sight curfew.

Anti-government protesters display Bangladesh's national flag as they storm Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's palace in Dhaka on August 5, 2024. **K.M. ASAD/AFP**



**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
Cartoonist



## Iran partakes in Karbala book fair with 320 book titles



● IRNA

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has participated in the 10th "Tarateel Sajjadiya" book fair in Iraq's holy city of Karbala with 320 book titles spanning various religious, cultural, artistic, poetic, and political themes. The ongoing exhibition is coincident with the martyrdom anniversary of the fourth Shia Imam, Imam Sajjad (PBUH), on August 9 with the participation of ten countries in Karbala,

IRNA reported.

Among the other Iranian works displayed at the exhibition are newly published books in the fields of Iranology, Islamic sciences, jurisprudence, principles, beliefs, and ethics, available in both Persian and Arabic. Addressing the opening ceremony, Abdul Mahdi al-Karbalaee, the Friday prayer leader and custodian of the holy shrine of Imam Hussein, the third Shia Imam (PBUH), said that the primary objective of this

cultural event is to focus on the esteemed legacy of Imam Sajjad (PBUH) in Islam, as well as his intellectual, doctrinal, jurisprudential, ethical, and social perspectives, and the role of this legacy in the reformative path of the Islamic community and the opening of new horizons.

The book exhibition is taking place at the Bab al-Qibla of the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and will continue until August 10.

## Russian delegation's ...

Iran's new president Masoud Pezeshkian has clearly emphasized the importance of strengthening relations with Russia and China, both in his announced plans and in an article outlining his government's foreign policy. Therefore, Shoigu's visit to Tehran shortly after the Iranian government's inauguration should be viewed as a sign that both countries remain committed to fostering their relationship.

As a former defense minister, Shoigu is well-versed in the two countries' collaboration in the military sector, as well as the regional developments and tensions. This provides an opportunity to highlight another aspect of the Russian delegation's visit to Iran and its significance. The Russians have maintained a

clear stance during the months-long Gaza war as well as the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. They have condemned the targeted killing and called for restraint on both sides, striving to prevent an escalation of tensions.

Given Tehran's announcement that it will respond to Israel's terrorist act, it is understandable that many countries, including Russia, would be keen to weigh the dimensions and repercussions of such a response.

It is true that the Gaza war and its prolongation served as a "breather" for Russia in the Ukraine war. It shifted the media and public attention from Ukraine to the Gaza Strip and redirected some of the Western aid, particularly from the US, from Ukraine to Israel. If forced to choose between Ukraine and Israel, the US

would naturally opt for Israel. Thus, the Gaza war somewhat eroded the West's position in the Ukraine conflict, and Russia took advantage of this opportunity. However, this does not imply that Moscow supports the escalation of conflict in the West Asian region.

Currently, the world, particularly West Asia, is fraught with tensions that could spark larger wars, drawing in major powers, including the US, which might be compelled to step in directly to support Israel. Such a scenario would not only be detrimental to the region but also to the powers influencing West Asian developments, such as China and Russia. Their interests in this region would also be put at risk by escalating conflicts. Therefore, the Russians are keen to dial down the tensions.

## 'The Breath' stands as finalist at Italian festival

### Arts & Culture Desk

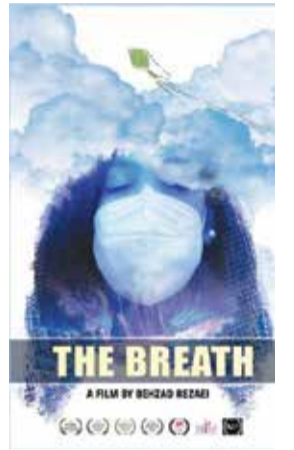
The Iranian documentary film "The Breath" has become the finalist of an Italian festival.

Directed and produced by Behzad Rezaei, the documentary film "The Breath" entered the final phase of the 8th Nebrodi Cinema DOC International Festival in Italy, Mehr reported.

The festival will be held in Italy from October 7 to 13, aiming to support independent filmmakers focusing on social and environmental issues. The documentary depicts

the loneliness and lack of communication between people during the COVID pandemic era and its impact on personal life, solitude and creativity of artists in different countries across the world.

"The Breath" has previously won Best Other Cinema Award, at the 43rd Paladino d'Oro Sport Film Festival, in Agrigento, Italy in 2023. It was also a finalist at the 11th Silk Road Film Festival in Turkey, as well as being nominated for Best Documentary at the World Music & Independent Film Festival in



the US and the Jaipur International Film Festival in India.

## 1st band music festival in Tehran: A platform for discovering talents



● IRNA

### Arts & Culture Desk

A cultural official from Tehran Province has said that the first band music festival, which will take place in February and March 2025, serves as a valuable opportunity for identifying talents.

Addressing the unveiling ceremony of the festival's poster at a press conference on Monday, the general directorate of Culture and Islamic Guidance Organization of Tehran Province, Ali Forouzanfar, said the festival will feature two main categories: Iranian music and world music, along with a special section dedicated to piano performances,

IRNA reported.

Forouzanfar added that the aim of the festival is to discover, identify, and place special emphasis on talented musical groups which are active across Tehran, particularly in its municipalities.

The official expressed gratitude to the Music Association of Tehran Province, noting that the association has significantly contributed to the holding of the festival. He stated that the Cultural and Islamic Guidance Organization of Tehran Province, in collaboration with the Music Association, jointly oversees the planning and organization of the festival.

The official also emphasized that Tehran, in addition to being the political capital of the country, serves as a host and a fertile ground for the interaction and activities encompassing the diverse cultures of all Iranian ethnicities.

In this regard, he added that Tehran can also be regarded as the cultural capital of the nation. "Due to the cultural diversity and various ethnic groups being present in Tehran Province, cultural and artistic movements, especially artistic festivals in the year 1403, assume particular importance for us," he concluded.

## Hur al-Azim Marsh sees 5% increase in water levels

### Social Desk

Head of the Khuzestan Province' Department of Environment said as aerial monitoring data until July 21 show, Hur al-Azim Marsh in the southwestern province has accumulated water by as much as 57%.

Davood Mirshekar, in an interview with IRNA on Monday, described the condition of Hur al-Azim Marsh compared to the same period last year

as "more favorable," noting that last year it was only 52% filled, indicating a five percent increase in water levels.

He also said that, given the intense heat and the looming of wildfires in the wetland over the next two months, communication has been established with the Crisis Management Department and the Urban Development Office of the Khuzestan Governorate to ensure that water releases proceed in a controlled manner.



● IRNA

The head of Khuzestan's Department of Environment expressed hope that by securing water rights for the marsh, there would be minimal reduction in water levels.

The border wetland of Hur al-Azim, spanning over 300,000 hectares, is the last remnant of the marshlands of Mesopotamia, with one-third located in Iran and two-thirds in Iraq.

This unique habitat is situated in the southwest of the

country, in Khuzestan, at the end of the Karkheh River. The water crisis in the Karkheh basin has posed challenges to this marsh for the past three years.

In recent years, due to the drying of vast areas of Hur al-Azim, the wetland has experienced widespread wildfires, particularly in the Iraqi section, leading to thick smoke that affected several counties in Khuzestan on certain days.