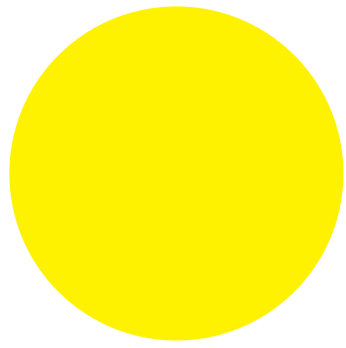


Iran registered highest crude output since late 2018: **OPEC**



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Proposed cabinet a framework for cooperation

By Ali Asghar Shafieian
A journalist close to Pezeshkian

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

When assessing Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet proposals, it is imperative to consider the broader context and certain existing realities. First and foremost, the list of prospective ministers presented to parliament boasts a diverse range of expertise in various fields. Fulfilling one of Pezeshkian's key campaign promises, the emphasis on specialization is evident, with the proposed cabinet far outpacing its predecessor in terms of qualifications. To underscore this commitment, Pezeshkian established advisory working groups to identify the best candidates for ministerial positions, and 60% of the nominees emerged from these specialized talent pools.

Another cornerstone of Pezeshkian's platform was fostering consensus-building and encouraging cooperation among all political factions and entities in the country to address issues accumulated over years. He firmly believes that unless a spirit of national cooperation takes root and we harness the collective strengths of all political parties, we cannot effectively tackle our domestic and foreign challenges. The cabinet introduced to parliament reflects this very ethos of consensus-building and inclusivity, seeking to forge a unified front among the various branches of power to push ahead with development. Take, for instance, the criticism leveled at the proposed minister for the Interior Ministry, which plays a key role in any administration. Critics argue that the nominee, with a military background, is not a reformist.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran keen on investing in Afghanistan's mining sector: *Kabul*

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of the caretaker government of Afghanistan has announced that Iranian investors are interested in investing and operating in the mining sector of metals and oil and gas in the neighboring country. In a statement, officials of Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said that Deputy Minister Zia ur-Rahman Aruobi met with Iran's deputy ambassador to Kabul, university professors and a number of Iranian investors in the Afghan capital, IRNA reported. The Iranian and Afghan delegations held talks on investment in Afghanistan's mining sector, they said. According to the statement, Iranian investors provided explanations about the activities of their companies and expressed interest in investing in metals mining as well as oil and gas sectors in Afghanistan. The Afghan deputy minister also welcomed the willingness of Iranian businessmen to invest in Afghanistan's mining sector, stating that the ministry will not spare any effort and cooperation with Iranian investors.

Economic Council okays NIOC plan to boost crude output

The Economic Council of Iran approved a plan proposed by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to boost oil production in 34 oil fields. The plan is slated to raise Iran's daily oil production swiftly by 250,000 barrels, as reported by Oil Ministry's press service Shana. Speaking at a meeting of the council on Monday, First Vice-President Mohammadreza Aref highlighted the important role and performance of the Economic Council in the framework of the decision-making processes in the country. He said the council was in charge of coordinating decisions made by different ministries and other governmental bodies amid planning and directing financial resources toward the country's largest developmental and infrastructural projects. "Regarding the role and performance of the Economic Council and prompting its status, it is necessary to avoid creating parallel councils and committees, so that the government will be able to realize the president's announced strategies, promises, and programs as soon as possible," the first vice-president said.

**Iran registered highest crude output since late 2018: *OPEC***

Iran continued to increase its oil output in July despite continued restriction on its exports because of US sanctions as highest extraction was reported since late 2018 which was below 3 million barrels per day (bpd). Latest data from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) showed that Iranian oil output had reached

an average of 3.271 million bpd in July, up from 3.25 million bpd reported in June. Iran remained the third largest oil supplier in OPEC after Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the data showed. Total oil supply by OPEC's 12 member countries reached 26.746 million bpd in July, up from 26.562 million bpd in June, the organization said, citing in-

formation it had received from secondary sources. Saudi Arabia, the largest oil exporter in OPEC and in the world, increased its output by 97,000 bpd in July compared to the previous month, showed the OPEC data which indicated that seven other members of the bloc had experienced growth in output. Iran, Venezuela and Libya are

exempt from production cuts agreed between OPEC members and allies like Russia which together form a bloc known as OPEC+. The OPEC data showed that the price of Iran Heavy oil grade rose by 1.1% or 91 cents month on month in July to reach 84.57 per barrel. That came against an OPEC Reference Basket price of

\$84.43 which was \$1.1 higher than the price reported in June. The average price for Iran Heavy in 2024 has been \$83.62. OPEC's July forecasts about global demand for oil were unchanged from June as the organization expected that total demand for oil in the world to reach an average of 104.460 million bpd in 2024 and 106.310 million bpd in 2025.

Energy minister nominee vows to tackle power shortage

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's pick for Energy Minister said he is determined to tackle a widening gap between the demand and supply for electricity in the country. Abbas Aliabadi told members of the Parliament that Iran has an imbalance of 18 gigawatts (GW) between supply and demand for electricity which has been exacerbated in recent years due to growing demands for cooling in the summer months, as reported by Press TV. Aliabadi said that he will tackle the shortage with massive renovation programs at power plants and by completing unfinished power plant projects.

He said that the Energy Ministry under his leadership will prioritize expansion of Iran's renewables sector while trying to increase electricity trade with neighbors. Aliabadi was CEO of Iran's largest energy construction and engineering company MAPNA for 14 years until he became industry minister in 2023. During his time in MAPNA, he introduced a home-grown turbine manufacturing program which helped various governments with their plans to launch new power plants or to renovate the existing ones. MAPNA has also been in charge of major renewables projects in Iran, including many wind

farms across the country that rely on modern equipment manufactured by the company. Aliabadi told the Iranian Parliament's Energy Commission that Iran also faces a major imbalance in supply and demand for water. He said that the country has to expand water desalination projects along its southern coasts and build dams on rivers along the borders to be able to respond to growing demand for water in Iran's household, manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Iran's Parliament will start debates on a list of 19 ministers proposed by Pezeshkian on August 17.

Role of NDF in Iran's development

The new cabinet lineup unveiled by President Masoud Pezeshkian has ruffled feathers among his supporters who say some of the nominees signify an unceremonious departure from his election promises, but others beg to differ and believe it is "practicable." Reza Mohammadi, deputy director for investments and resources of the National Development Fund (NDF), said the saving platform is ready to provide the next administration with necessary support to press its development plans, Press TV wrote. So far, the sovereign wealth fund has underwritten \$36.2 billion worth of projects across a wide range of sectors, playing a key role in the country's infrastructure building. The expenditure includes \$23.07 billion for oil and gas development, \$6.7 billion in the industry sector,

\$4.6 billion for building power plants, \$583 million in the water sector, \$1.1 billion in transportation, \$120 million in medicine and \$15 million in tourism, according to Mohammadi. The new government faces a list of challenges, from the need to create jobs to tackling inflation and a ballooning energy deficit. Mohammadi said in order to play an effective role in the new administration's success, the National Development Fund has proposed several important programs to resolve some of the existing imbalances, the first of which is the electricity deficit. Since its inception in 2011, the fund has financed the construction of 46 power plants with 7,200 megawatts of installed capacity. The electricity deficit hit 18,000 megawatts this summer, Mohammadi said, adding the country faces an annual increase of 5% in con-

sumption. With an investment of about \$7.5 billion over three years, more than 15,000 megawatts of the deficit will be covered. Official statistics indicate that 13 percent of Iran's electricity is lost during transmission and distribution, which is enough to power all electricity supplies needed in the steel industry. The sovereign wealth fund was established to transform revenues from the sale of oil, gas, gas condensate and oil products into productive investments for future generations. The fund is a member of the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds, and thus a signatory of the Santiago Principles on best practices in the management of such funds. A sovereign wealth fund is a savings account in which a nation saves surplus current revenues in a way

that supports future public spending and investment, by growing those funds in financial assets. Many countries around the world have sovereign wealth funds, especially those with national revenues and incomes coming from natural resources. However, some administrations treat it as a piggy bank during hard times. According to state officials, Iran's National Development Fund once had \$150 billion in assets, \$100 billion of which was withdrawn by various administrations and another \$40 billion was given out in loans to the private sector.

Critics say this amounts to treating the fund like a bank, from which the governments borrow whenever they face a shortfall, but they often fail to pay back. According to Mohammadi, the oil industry currently has \$17.6 billion in outstanding debt owed to the National Development Fund. Despite the arrears and irregular withdrawals by the government, the fund has been able to contribute to the country's development in various fields of energy, industry, agriculture and services with one third of its remaining resources, he said.



Dehsheikh Cave, an enchanting natural wonder in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province



IRNA



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Iranica Desk

Dehsheikh Cave is one of the main attractions of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, situated two kilometers from the eponymous village, 51 kilometers from Yasuj, and 35 kilometers from Sisakht. Dehsheikh Cave remained undiscovered for centuries until a shepherd from the village stumbled upon it while searching for his flock. To date, researchers and speleologists have conducted three stages of exploration in the cave. According to geological studies, Dehsheikh Cave formed during the second geological period and is a completely natural limestone cave. Over time, rainfall has created cavities within the cave, allowing water to flow out and form magnificent stalactites and stalagmites. One of the notable features of this cave is its warmth in winter and coolness in summer. The enigmatic warmth during winters and the refreshing coolness during

summers in this cave pose a mystery that is yet to be solved. The entrance of this cave sits at an altitude of 1,670 meters above sea level and is a narrow passage, requiring a journey of about five to six meters to pass through. It faces the Qash Mastan Summit of Mount Dena. Some areas of the cave reach heights of up to seven meters, with various limestone stalactites forming in its chambers, adding to its unique beauty. Dehsheikh Cave is among the 600 identified caves in the country and is a tourist attraction in the city of Pataveh. It currently holds the second position in Iran in terms of size and depth. The cave's depth is estimated to be over six kilometers, and due to its vastness, certain parts and chambers remain unexplored. The pottery and bones unearthed in this cave have a rich history, indicating that at one point in time, individuals chose this vast cave as a place to live. While the exact age of these

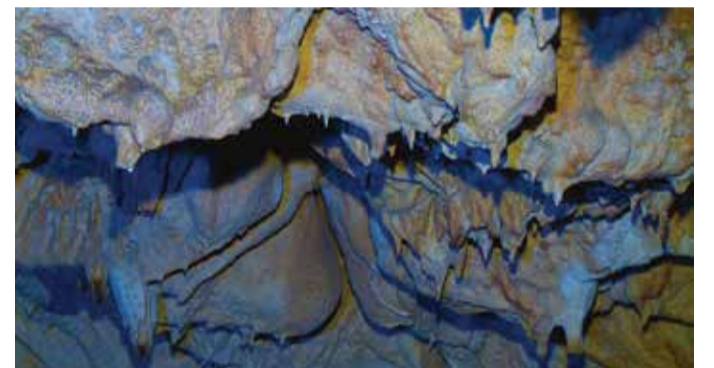
pottery remains undetermined, some experts link them to pre-Islamic eras. Archaeological studies suggest that the pottery found is associated with the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods. The variety of pottery in Dehsheikh Cave points to its ancient origins. The absence of cave wall paintings suggests that this location has remained untouched and mysterious over the centuries.

There are both large and small pools in this cave that are interconnected by narrow corridors in a miraculous manner. Within some of these passages, various insects, birds, and animals can be spotted, including bats, mice, as well as a variety of insects like spiders, centipedes, and beetles. A private sector project is currently underway to construct a road that provides access to the cave, along with facilities such as a restaurant, a pavilion, and a seating platform. This development has captured the interest and attention of nature enthusi-

asts. The cave comprises seven main halls, with six entrances and exits hidden among rocky shelters. As per the investor's assessment, the cave's eastern entrance is presently in use.

Initial efforts to introduce and seek national registration for this extraordinary and historically significant site have been initiated. Deh Sheikh Cave is poised to be recognized as the third natural monument of the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province.

The historical city of Pataveh boasts unique attractions. To reach this mesmerizing site, you must first journey to Yasuj, the central city of the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, and then travel approximately 45 kilometers to the Pataveh region in the Dena district. Upon arrival, you will traverse through natural landscapes and the historic bridge of Pataveh before stepping into the enigmatic world of one of Iran's most exquisite undiscovered caves.



IRNA



IRNA

Military triumphs and Roman-Sassanid relations

Shapur I's military successes and innovations in Sassanid kingship had a great impact on their royal identity and visual culture for this reason, as well as the fact that his reign, of all Sassanid rulers, yields the greatest number of triumphal images depicting Roman emperors.

Shapur I's reign is pivotal for Roman and Sassanid agonistic exchange, as it marks the first time in the two realms' relationship that the imperial identity of one king dramatically changed in response to the existence and claims of the other. It appears perhaps unsurprising that Shapur I's would celebrate his victories and incorporate them into his self-representations, especially with the added perspective we are afforded by our knowledge of the succeeding history of Sassanid royal ideology and the pivotal place that his reign held in it.

However, in order to understand how early Sassanid concepts of royalty developed one must examine it from the temporal perspective of the third century when there was nothing

necessarily inevitable about it, nor was there any precedent for it.

Under Shapur I, Sassanid royal ideology underwent a rapid series of important developments that radically reformed the bounds, claims, and identity of kingship in Iran and had a significant impact on Roman-Sassanid relations. The shock that Shapur I's victories brought to the Roman empire and the gain in confidence that they wrought for the Sassanid royal identity were huge. Near the beginning of Shapur I's reign the Roman emperor Gordian III (238-244) invaded the Sassanid empire to punish the Sassanid capture of Hatra.

Despite initial success, the force withdrew after Gordian III's death, most likely as a result of a coup instigated by Gordian's successor, Philip (244-249), though Shapur I did not hesitate to take credit for it and capitalize on it. Philip sued for peace and paid a large indemnity to Shapur I in order to hasten back to Rome to consolidate his position, a transaction that Shapur I portrayed both textually and



visually as submission, suggesting the concomitant reduction of the Roman empire and emperor to tributary status. Over the next decade and a half Shapur I succeeded in annexing Armenia, defeating a 60,000-man army sent against him by Rome, and sacking Antioch as

well as numerous other cities in Syria and Cappadocia. The apogee of Shapur I success came in 258/9 when he destroyed a Roman army led in person by the emperor Valerian (253-260), capturing and deporting the emperor, his court, and the remnants of the army in the process.

Capitalizing on the Roman empire's descent into chaos at the news of Valerian's ignominious fate, Shapur I invaded Syria, Cappadocia, and Cilicia, sacked Antioch a second time, and deported its skilled craftsmen to Pars and Xuzestan (Khuzestan). The challenge presented by the

claims of the Arsacid dynasty thoroughly overcome, Shapur I turned to contesting Rome's military dominance and universal claims. To consolidate Ardashir I's position over the Arsacids, the Sassanid court under Ardashir I manipulated the concept of Iranshahr (kingdom of Iran) centering in Pars. The aim of this was to appropriate from the Arsacids the royal Kayanid (and with it, perhaps, the "Achaemenid") heritage as the birthright of the Sasanian dynasty. Shapur I inherited this concept of Iranshahr from his father, but inspired by his military successes and ambitions, he expanded his father's claims of dominion over Iran, to ascendancy over Iran and Non-Iran. Iranshahr was roughly the extent of the old Parthian empire and was conceptually a localized kingship. "Non-Iran" was, in a sense, localized too and literally referred to Shapur's new conquests in Central and South Asia and the eastern Roman empire. However, paralleling his rock reliefs, Shapur I capitalized on the wider symbolism of this title.

Reflecting on genocidal intent in ICJ Case



By Maryam
Jamshidi
Scholar

OPINION

As Israel has stated again and again since October 7, its military objective in Gaza is to destroy Hamas, the political party and armed group that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007. Israel has deployed a version of this argument to challenge South Africa's case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), where it stands accused of violating the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide for its actions against the Palestinians of Gaza. In arguing that its aim is to destroy Hamas rather than the Palestinian people themselves, Israel is attempting to skirt liability under the Convention by

exploiting the fact that it does not protect political and military organizations from annihilation.

Instead of undercutting South Africa's genocide case, Israel's desired elimination of Hamas provides more proof that its actions satisfy the Convention's definition of genocide. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wrote in a December Wall Street Journal op-ed, destroying Hamas means eliminating both its "military capabilities" and "political rule over Gaza". As reflected in that statement, other statements made by the Israeli cabinet, as well as Israel's actions on the battlefield, the Israeli cabinet's desired destruction of Hamas includes the annihilation of its civilian political and administrative leadership. Expert legal commentary suggests that this goal — alongside the destruction of Hamas's military personnel and law enforcement — can help demonstrate that Israel's actions satisfy the intent requirement for genocide.

While some have rightly argued that annihilating Hamas may be an impermissible defensive objective violating international law on the use of force, few have explored how targeting Hamas — both in terms of its civilian and military arms — may also help satisfy the Genocide Convention's onerous intent requirement. This post begins by describing expert commentary on how the destruction of a group's political and administrative leadership, as well as its military and law enforcement personnel, can help establish genocidal intent. It then turns to the case of Gaza, demonstrating how the targeting of Hamas's political and administrative leaders, as well as its police force, can establish intent to physically eradicate the Palestinian people of Gaza, as such. This post ends by examining how Israel's targeting of Hamas's military arm provides additional evidence of genocidal intent.

Committing genocide by destroying protected group's civilian leadership, law enforcement personnel, and military

Under the Genocide Convention, a state is prohibited from engaging in certain enumerated acts of genocide, against any national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. In order to violate the Convention, a state must commit those acts with the "intent to destroy" the group "in whole or in part... as such". The Genocide Convention requires both intent to commit the underlying acts of genocide, which have their own intent requirement, and intent to destroy the protected group itself. As many have noted, demonstrating intent to destroy

a protected group is usually the hardest part of proving a genocide claim, including at the ICJ. According to some legal experts, one way to prove this second element of genocidal intent is through evidence that the protected group's civilian leadership, as well as its military and law enforcement, have been targeted for elimination. This view was articulated in 1994 by a commission of legal experts convened at the instruction of the UN Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of international humanitarian law

committed during the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. In issuing its final report, the Yugoslav Commission of Experts observed: "If essentially the total leadership of a group is targeted, it could... amount to genocide. Such leadership includes political and administrative leaders, religious leaders, academics and intellectuals, business leaders, and others — the totality per se may be a strong indication of genocide regardless of the actual numbers killed. A corroborating argument will be the fact of the rest of the group. The

character of the attack on the leadership must be viewed in the context of the fate or what happened to the rest of the group. If a group has its leadership exterminated, and at the same time or in the wake of that, has a relatively large number of the members of the group killed or subjected to other heinous acts, for example, deported on a large scale or forced to flee, the cluster of violations ought to be considered in its entirety in order to interpret the provisions of the Convention in a spirit consistent with its purpose. Similarly, the extermination of a

group's law enforcement and military personnel may be a significant section of a group in that it renders the group at large defenceless against other abuses of a similar or other nature, particularly if the leadership is being eliminated as well. Thus, the intent to destroy the fabric of a society through the extermination of its leadership, when accompanied by other acts of elimination of a segment of society, can also be deemed genocide." In effect, these experts understood a desire to eliminate the entire civilian leadership of a group —

alongside the destruction of its military and law enforcement — as evidence of intent to destroy the "fabric" of the group. The report goes on to apply this approach to reach specific substantive conclusions, including the determination that genocide may have been committed by Serbian forces in a town in north-western Bosnia partly because the "backbone" of non-Serb (Muslim and Croat) groups living in that town were removed or eradicated, including their political leaders, bureaucrats, military personnel, and law enforcement.

Physically destroying Palestinian people in Gaza by exterminating Hamas's civilian leadership, law enforcement personnel

In the ten months since October 7, Israel has killed over 39,000 Palestinians, an estimate widely considered to be conservative. As South Africa noted in its briefing to the ICJ, Israel's killing spree has targeted the intellectual, cultural, and religious leadership of Gaza. In the course of its onslaught on the Strip, Israel has also committed

various "heinous acts" against the Palestinian population, ranging from forced displacement to mass killing, to starvation. Against this backdrop, the Yugoslav Commission's expert commentary suggests that Israel's avowed desire to destroy Hamas is probative of intent to physically destroy Palestinians as a group since it is occurring

alongside a steep death toll, other heinous acts, and as part of Israel's targeting of the "total leadership" of the Palestinian people in Gaza. Israel's desire to destroy Hamas includes both the extermination of its political and administrative leadership and the annihilation of its civilian police force and military wing. While Hamas has a military arm that is largely separate from its civilian governmental apparatus and extensive social welfare networks, Israel treats Hamas's military, political, and administrative units as extensions of one another. In line with this approach, Israel effectively identifies all government ministries in Gaza as one with Hamas's military movement. For instance, in a recent court filing, the Israeli cabinet stated that its war goals in Gaza include not just "eradicating" Hamas's military capacity but also its non-military, civilian institutions, which include the "Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Government Information Office" — an aim that is facially illegal under international law.

Relying on these connotations, Israel has targeted Hamas's political and administrative leadership across Gaza. Over the last ten months, numerous Hamas political leaders, including the head of the Ministry of Economy, the head of the Ministry of National Relations of Hamas's political bureau, and the deputy minister of the Ministry of Labor, have been killed by the IDF. In conducting these assassinations, Israel has made clear that these killings were intentional and that "neutralizing" Hamas's political leadership is central to its military objectives in Gaza. Israel has also targeted members of Hamas's administrative leadership and personnel, most recently killing the head of Gaza's ambulance and emergency department, as well as five members of the Strip's municipal staff involved in operating water wells. Since Hamas's civilian administration includes substantial extra-governmental social services, Israel has assassinated civil society members working for these so-called "Hamas-linked" charitable groups as part of its destruction of Hamas's civilian presence in Gaza. Though some might claim these

individuals are simply "collateral damage," rather than deliberate IDF targets, that argument is unpersuasive given the cabinet statements noted above, as well as the systematic nature of Israel's targeting of political and administrative leaders and government staff in Gaza. Nor has Israel publicly presented meaningful evidence that the political and administrative personnel it has killed were targetable under the laws of war. Where effort has been made to justify or legitimize these killings, Israeli officials have typically made broad statements about the person's culpability, relying largely on their position within Hamas's political arm or civilian government to give credence to its claims. In short, Gaza's political and administrative leaders and personnel have largely been targeted not because they are directly participating in hostilities — which would make them targetable under the laws of war — but rather because of their civilian political and administrative work. Alongside its assassination of Hamas's political and administrative leadership and personnel, Israel has systematically targeted

civilian police officers — including killing the head of Gaza's police force. The IDF has often targeted these individuals while they were conducting their civilian duties and, again, without providing any evidence that they were otherwise targetable under the laws of war. As the Yugoslav Commission notes, the extermination of a protected group's leadership is particularly probative of genocidal intent where it occurs alongside the extermination of law enforcement personnel. In the Commission's view, exterminating law enforcement helps render the protected group "defenceless against... abuses." Israel's systematic extermination of the police force in Gaza, which has been critical to the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid since October 7, satisfies this standard. Alongside Israel's erasure of the public healthcare system as well as attacks on aid workers with UNRWA — an organization Israel has falsely accused of having links with Hamas — Israel's destruction of Gaza's police force has left the Palestinian population defenceless and vulnerable to disease, starvation, and death.



Top Turkish, Hamas, and other regional leaders attend the burial of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated by Israel in Iran, near Doha, Qatar, on August 2, 2024.
● ANADOLU AGENCY



↑ Palestinians are seen at the site of an Israeli airstrike on tents for displaced people near the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah on May 27, 2024.
● RIZEK ABDELJAWAD/XINHUA

Physically destroying Palestinians in Gaza by exterminating Hamas' military arm

As noted above, the Yugoslav Commission's commentary suggests that the extermination of a protected group's civilian leadership can serve as proof of genocidal intent where it is also accompanied by the elimination of its military personnel, which — much like the destruction of law enforcement — leaves the group "defenceless." This may seem like a particularly controversial view since the military personnel of a belligerent force is generally considered targetable during armed conflict, pursuant to the laws of war. It is important to recall, however, that the laws of war and the prohibition on genocide are not one and the same. It is, in fact, possible for military personnel to be lawfully targetable under the laws of war, but for that targeting to violate the Genocide Convention. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav Commission's view seems to reflect a different, more context-driven point about the Convention — namely, that the elimination of a group's civilian leadership, alongside its military force, can be probative of genocidal intent because it tends to make the protected group more susceptible to annihilation. In effect, then, Israel's destruction of Hamas's armed

wing bolsters the view that its destruction of the civilian leadership of Hamas, as well as Gaza's other civilian leaders, is evidence of genocidal intent because eliminating Hamas's armed force will leave the Palestinians defenseless and make it easier for the IDF to destroy them, as such. Some might argue that, rather than protecting and defending the Palestinians of Gaza, Hamas's military wing has made them more vulnerable to destruction, for example, by purportedly using Palestinian civilians as human shields. These human shielding claims — which are repeatedly made by the Israeli cabinet — remain dubious at best and have been widely criticized as manipulative distortions. Instead, available evidence suggests that it is not Hamas's military wing that has made the Palestinians vulnerable to harm but rather that Israel has used "Hamas" as an excuse to kill the Palestinian people of Gaza, as such — providing even further evidence of genocidal intent. Much like its conflation of the civilian and military arms of Hamas, Israel's definition of Hamas "fighters" sweeps in a large swath of Gaza's civilian population. In particular, Isra-

el's targeting protocols explicitly embrace definitions of armed Palestinian "fighters" that rely on loose conceptions of association or affiliation with Hamas and other armed groups that do not meaningfully distinguish between civilians and those who can lawfully be targeted. For example, according to reports, the IDF identifies Palestinian operatives using certain AI technologies that select targets based on an amorphous set of "incriminating features" — parsing the likelihood that someone may be a fighter based on little more than their shared characteristics with actual combatants — without any meaningful post-selection verification by IDF soldiers. This broad targeting protocol — which is one of several used by the IDF — has reportedly resulted in the selection of nearly 40,000 persons in Gaza, including children, for assassination. Another AI program tracks targets for the specific purpose of killing them once they enter their homes — meaning anyone in the home of a so-called Hamas or other armed fighter, including family members, is considered expendable by the IDF.

↑ The full article first appeared on *Opinio Juris*.

The Genocide Convention requires both intent to commit the underlying acts of genocide, which have their own intent requirement, and intent to destroy the protected group itself. According to some legal experts, one way to prove this second element of genocidal intent is through evidence that the protected group's civilian leadership, as well as its military and law enforcement, have been targeted for elimination.

Assassination is always unlawful

Regardless of who is killed, on whose orders



By Mary Ellen O'Connell
Scholar

OPINION

Hamas leadership around the world following the group's deadly attack on October 7, 2023. Israel has carried out many such assassinations in Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere over the years.

Assassination is a particular form of murder. Regardless of who carries out the act, on whose orders, or why, it is always unlawful.

The same is true in the case of Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas political leader. He was killed on July 31, 2024, while in Tehran at the invitation of the Iranian government. The Israeli cabinet, which is widely believed to be behind the killing, has repeatedly expressed a willingness to hunt down Hamas leadership around the world following the group's deadly attack on October 7, 2023. Israel has carried out many such assassinations in Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere over the years.

Despite these and other international cases, the term "assassination" is not defined under international law. Legal scholars like me rely on standard dictionary definitions where assassination is defined as "murder by sudden or secret attack often for political rea-

sons". But treaties and other international laws do make clear that killing for political reasons by sudden or secret attack is unlawful. The most important treaty on this question is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — adopted in 1966 by the

United Nations and binding today on 174 states, including Russia, Israel, and the United States. The covenant affirms: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."

Treacherous acts

This does not mean that deliberate killing can never be justified. International law contains rules that determine when it is permissible to use deadly force. In peacetime, it is lawful for police to use lethal force to save lives in immediate danger. Officers killed the man who shot at Donald Trump, for example, to prevent the gunman from shooting again, as lives were in immediate danger. The use of military force against another state is regulated under the United Nations Charter. The Charter prohibits all uses of force unless authorized by the UN Security Council or in a case of self-defense. The charter allows a state to use force in individual or collective self-defense "if an armed attack occurs" until the Security Council can act. The UN's International Court of Justice has further clarified that even when a state has the right of self-defense, military action in response must be necessary, pro-

portionate, and aimed at a sovereign state responsible for the initial armed attack. The court has repeated these principles in multiple decisions, most comprehensively in a case brought by Iran following lethal US attacks on its oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. Once an armed conflict has begun, parties to the fighting have the right to use lethal force to defeat the adversary. International humanitarian law permits the intentional killing of enemy fighters within legally defined armed conflict hostilities. Even then, no one may be singled out for killing based on what they did in the past. And civilians not participating in the fighting may never be intentionally targeted. Recent international decisions support the importance of the concept of restricting the killing of fighters within active zones of hostilities. Outside such areas, the peacetime human right to life applies. The European Court of

Human Rights has emphasized this point in a series of rulings, most recently in early 2021. These decisions contradict an older view held by some in the US military that political or military leaders of a wartime adversary may be killed wherever they are found. As a political leader of a party at war with Israel in Gaza, Haniyeh might fit this older interpretation. However, it still would not extend to killing "treacherously or perfidiously," as laid out in the binding regulations annexed to Hague Convention IV of 1907. To kill treacherously or perfidiously means to kill someone who has no expectation of being in danger of death. For example, a soldier who falsely raises a white flag of surrender to lure an enemy in close enough to kill them would be guilty of killing treacherously. Haniyeh had such an expectation of safety in Tehran, and as such his killing can be seen as treacherous.

A double standard

All principles on the use of lethal force under international law rule out assassination. And yet, countries including Israel and the US persist in using it. Israel has acknowledged responsibility for assassinations dating to even before its founding. To try to mollify critics, Israel began referring in 2000 to its practice of assassination as "targeted killings". The term makes it sound more like the legitimate killing in wartime. In 2001, US Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk rejected Israel's attempt to legitimize assassination when he said on Israeli

television: "The United States government is very clearly on the record as against targeted assassinations. They are extrajudicial killings, and we do not support that." Then the September 11 attacks occurred, and the US itself adopted the practice of targeted killing. The first known case was carried out by the CIA against six suspected members of al-Qaeda in Yemen in November 2002. The killings were condemned as unlawful by a UN human rights expert soon after. Yet, US killings with drones and other means have continued to

this day. All the while, the US has consistently condemned alleged Russian assassinations. What many international law experts, including me, see is a US double standard when it comes to the use of lethal force, including its use in assassination. While efforts may have been made to mount a defense of assassinations such as that of Hamas' Haniyeh, there is a simple truth: Lethal force is highly restricted, and assassination is never legal.

↑ The full article first appeared on *The Conversation*.



↑ People lift placards showing Fuad Shukur, a senior commander of Hezbollah who was killed in an Israeli strike in Beirut, and Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's politburo chief who was assassinated in an attack blamed on Israel in Tehran, during a rally in Sanaa, Yemen, on August 2, 2024.
● ABDALLAH ADEL/AFP

Have wrestling fans seen the last of Yazdani?



By Amirhadi
Arsalanpour
Staff writer

Question marks remain over the future of Hassan Yazdani's career after the latest injury setback for the Iranian wrestling sensation at the Paris Olympics.

Yazdani headed to Paris in pursuit of a second Olympic gold, aiming to dethrone taekwondo great Hadi Saei as the most-decorated Iranian in the history of the Games with two golds and a silver.

There were major doubts over Yazdani's form before he got his freestyle 86kg campaign underway last Thursday, as the Iranian had only made his long-awaited return to action in June's Ranking Series event in Budapest, having been sidelined for nine months after a surgery on his injured shoulder.



Iranian wrestler Hassan Yazdani is seen in action against Bulgaria's Magomed Ramazanov in the freestyle 86kg final at the Paris Olympics on August 9, 2024.
● ALIREZA SOTAKBAR/ISNA

Still, with Yazdani's familiar foe David Taylor – who has a 3-1 record against him in four major finals – absent in Paris, the Iranian was widely regarded as the favorite for the ultimate prize of his weight class.

Despite being far from his emphatic form, he showed no signs of struggles en route to a third successive Olympic final, outmuscling Australian Jayden Lawrence by technical superiority before comfortable victories over Greece's Dauren Kurugliev and Myles Amine of San Marino.

However, the injury resurged at the worst time imaginable; the early seconds of the final show-

piece against Bulgaria's Russian-born Magomed Ramazanov. In clear discomfort from the get-go, Yazdani signaled for a timeout almost immediately after the start, clutching his upper right arm, and had to call for treatment on several occasions throughout the contest.

He showed great resilience and courage to see out the six minutes of action, and even led 1-1 on criteria at one stage in the second period, but the final 7-1 scoreline saw the coveted gold elude the Iranian, though it was still enough to take his medal haul to a remarkable 10, including four golds, in major tournaments – a

feat never accomplished by any Iranian wrestler before.

"He had minor pain before the final which is normal after the surgery, but his shoulder was dislocated four to five times against the Bulgarian," said Yazdani's surgeon Dr. Sohrab Kayhani, who was in the Grand Palais Éphémère to watch the bout. "The first incident was enough to send any athlete to the hospital and he showed true determination to keep going for six minutes."

When Yazdani underwent the surgery, Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, was first to raise doubts

over the wrestler's return to full fitness.

"No Iranian wrestler has ever recovered from a shoulder problem over the past 20 years. That's what happened to me as I had to quit wrestling when I was 25," the Sydney 2000 gold medalist said last October, while Mansour Barzegar, the head coach of the national team in the 90s, shared Dabir's concerns, saying: "From what I've seen over the years, no wrestler has ever been able to wrestle again after this type of injury."

Yazdani had other ideas and his performance in Budapest convinced head coach Mohsen Ka-

veh and his staff to name him in the squad for the Games, despite two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qasempour being eager for a shot at Olympic berth.

The recurring injury in Paris, however, saw the Iranian fans and pundits question the initial decision to send Yazdani to the sporting extravaganza, though he was quick to respond to the criticism via an Instagram post, insisting he wouldn't have accepted the massive challenge "had I not been certain about my form and fitness."

"I fought with my heart and soul since the early days after the surgery till the last seconds of

the final. I was in the peak of my physical and mental form heading to Paris, but the final incident was almost unforeseeable for me and the medical staff," added the Iranian.

"I've never slacked off throughout my career and never will. I'll be looking to continue the treatment on my shoulder and, if needed, undergo a second surgery, though I submit to God's will to see what the future holds for me."

Only time will tell if the Iranians have already seen the finale of Yazdani's glorious career or the 29-year-old will keep chasing the Olympic glory in four-years' time in Los Angeles.

City's alleged charges hearing due next month: Report

PA MEDIA – Manchester City's hearing into 115 alleged breaches of Premier League financial regulations has reportedly been brought forward to next month. According to a report in the Times, the planned November start of an independent commission has been moved to mid-to-late September. It is scheduled to last 10 weeks, with a verdict therefore likely to be delivered early in 2025. Neither the Premier League nor Manchester City have commented.

The Times' report says the outcome of a separate legal case which City brought against the league's associated party transactions rules – in which clubs strike sponsorship or revenue deals with businesses linked to their owners – is due in the next fortnight.

That, it is claimed, has allowed the hearing into the 115 charges – which City deny – to be brought forward, barring any further legal delays. It is still unknown how heavily City could be punished if found guilty, but points deductions and even relegation are thought to be possibilities.



● PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

USA Gymnastics says CAS denied appeal on Chiles' Olympic bronze

REUTERS – USA Gymnastics said on Monday an arbitration panel will not reconsider a decision asking gymnast Jordan Chiles to return the bronze medal she was awarded in the artistic gymnastics floor exercise at the Paris Olympics.

According to the governing body, it was notified earlier on Monday by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) that the rules do not allow for an arbitral award to be reconsidered even when conclusive new evidence is presented.

"We are deeply disappointed by the notification and will continue to pursue every possible avenue and appeal process, including to the Swiss Federal Tribunal, to ensure the just scoring, placement, and medal award for Jordan," USA Gymnastics said in a statement.

USA Gymnastics submitted additional evidence to CAS on Sunday after the Lausanne-based international body ruled in favour of an appeal by Romania's Ana Barbosu, who will move up to third place in the event.



● JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY SPORTS

Barbosu and her team had appealed to CAS that an inquiry by Chiles' coach filed over the results in the event was made after the one-minute deadline and that the American should not be awarded the score of 13.766 that lifted her to third place.

But USA Gymnastics then provided CAS with time-stamped video that it said shows the coach first stated a request to

file an inquiry 47 seconds after the score was posted, followed by a second statement 55 seconds after the score was posted. Chiles had initially been awarded a score of 13.666, while Barbosu scored 13.700.

The decision by CAS does not affect either winner Rebeca Andrade of Brazil or silver medalist Simone Biles of the United States, who scored 14.166 and 14.133 respectively.

Western support for Israel imperils global security: *Pezeshkian*

'Iran views punitive response to aggression as legitimate right'

International Desk

The Iranian president said the international bodies' silence on Israeli atrocities as well as Western countries' support for the regime encourage further perpetration of crimes and endanger global security.

Masoud Pezeshkian made the remarks in a phone call with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday.

"The silence of international bodies on the unprecedented and inhumane crimes of the Zionist regime in Gaza and the terrorist acts of the regime in the region, in addition to certain European countries' support for the entity are irresponsible and in violation of international regulations," the Iranian president said.

He noted that such practices have emboldened the regime to continue its crimes, and have threatened regional and international peace and security.

Talks between the two leaders came as Iran has vowed to avenge the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh who was killed in an attack in Tehran on July 31.



Keir Starmer

Iran has blamed Israel for the Haniyeh's killing, who had traveled to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Pezeshkian. Israel has not commented. The attack came hours after an Israeli strike in Lebanon's capital Beirut killed a senior commander of Hezbollah.

'Punitive response'

Pezeshkian emphasized that while Iran believes that war is not in anyone's interest, the Islamic Republic views punitive response to aggression as the legitimate right of countries and a proper mechanism to stop atrocities and brutalities.

Starmer told Pezeshkian he was deeply concerned by the situation in West Asia and called on all parties to "de-escalate and avoid further regional confrontation."

"There was a serious risk of miscalculation and now was the time for calm and careful consid-



Masoud Pezeshkian

eration," Downing Street cited Starmer as saying, adding that he had underlined his commitment to an immediate cease-fire, the release of all prisoners and captives and increasing humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The focus should be on diplomatic negotiations, Starmer said. The British prime minister also asked Pezeshkian to refrain from launching an attack on Israel in retaliation for the assassination of Haniyeh.

It was the first call between a UK prime minister and an Iranian president since March 2021 when former British leader Boris Johnson spoke to former Iranian president Hassan Rouhani. Fears of a wider conflict in the West Asia have been growing following the assassination of the Hamas leader and a senior Hezbollah commander.

The UK also issued a joint statement with the US, France, Italy and Germany, urging Iran to end

its threats of an attack on Israel. They called on Iran to "stand down its ongoing threats of a military attack against Israel and discussed the serious consequences for regional security should such an attack take place." In response, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani criticized the Western call for restraint.

"The declaration by France, Germany and Britain, which raised no objection to the international crimes of the Zionist regime, brazenly asks Iran to take no deterrent action against a regime which has violated its sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said in a statement.

Iranian president Pezeshkian also held a separate phone call with Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday, during which the Iranian president said regional and international peace, stability and security are a centerpiece to Iran's foreign policy. Referring to the war in Gaza, the Iranian president said the Israeli regime is violating all international treaties and regulations and pressing ahead with its genocide in the besieged Palestinian territory.

President urges critics to avoid prejudgment about cabinet

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reacted to the criticisms directed at his cabinet lineup, calling on critics to "wait for the cabinet to start work and criticize it based on its performance."

Pezeshkian's comments came after a number of individuals in Iran's Reformist camp criticized the proposed list of ministers submitted to the Parliament on Sunday.

In a message posted on his X account on Tuesday, the Iranian president called the Iranian people as the great asset of the government, praising their attention and sensitivity towards proposed cabinet members as valuable. He noted that "indifference to the conduct of politicians has now turned into criticism. This means we have taken a step forward."

Pezeshkian submitted the list of his new cabinet members to Parliament on Sunday, less than two weeks after he was sworn in before the country's legislators.

During separate meetings on Sunday with

representatives from the provinces of Fars, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Kerman, the president said that one of the cabinet's main features is its cross-partyness, adding that the formation of the cabinet focused on the criteria of capability, expertise, and relevant experience of individuals.

The president presented his cabinet's lineup in a letter to Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, with the legislative body officially commencing the process of reviewing the proposed ministers' qualifications.

Pezeshkian urged all members of Parliament and national elites to assist the government in appointing managers and officials of executive agencies based on the stated qualities.

In response to the issues raised by the representatives, the president emphasized that the new government will allocate the country's resources with care and precision, considering priorities and areas of deprivation in pursuit of justice and rights.

Gaza school attack 'deliberately timed to cause max casualties': *Probe*

International Desk

A new investigation has revealed that a recent deadly Israeli attack on a school in the Gaza Strip was "deliberately timed to cause maximum casualties," with a "large number of displaced people deliberately targeted."

Al Jazeera's Sanad verification agency has probed the details of Israel's Saturday morning attack on Al-Tabi'in School, which killed more than 100 people, including women and children. To reach its findings, Sanad examined survivors' testimonies, photos of the remnants of bombs used in the attack, images showing how the bombs penetrated the ceilings of the mosque attached to the school, and documentation of the explosion's immediate aftermath.

Based on the evidence, Sanad said Israel's military fired the two guided missiles used in the attack to coincide with dawn prayers. The mis-

siles "penetrated the mosque's roof, passed through the first floor, where the women's chapel is located, and exploded on the ground floor, where the men's chapel is situated," said Sanad in its report.

Sanad challenged the Israeli military's claims that the attack targeted Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters it said were in the men's prayer hall at the time. It pointed out that the strikes occurred during prayer time in a mosque serving displaced civilians. "The evidence strongly suggests a deliberate and calculated attack aimed at causing widespread loss of life," Sanad said.

The UN Security Council was set to hold an urgent meeting prompted by the devastating attack on Al-Tabi'in School.

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf in a letter to the parliament speakers across the world underlined that the UN Security Council

is obliged to take serious and immediate action to stop Israel's crimes in Gaza, which are being carried out with the direct support of the United States and some Western countries.

Since the beginning of Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip in October, the regime has killed at least 39,929 and wounded 92,240 others.

Sole survivor

On Tuesday, an Israeli strike killed 10 members of a family in the territory's southern district of Khan Yunis, leaving only one survivor - a three-month-old girl, a medic told AFP.

"This is the worst place I've ever seen in my life and in the entire world."

This is how the Egyptian-American physician, Dr Adam al-Hamwi, described the situation in Gaza, comparing the tragic scene to his 30-year career in medicine, during which he worked in countries that witnessed wars such as Syria, Iraq and Bosnia.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Proposed cabinet a ...

However, it is worth considering that a reformist **Page 1 >** nominee is not necessarily a guarantee of success through countless issues, such as those pertaining to women's dress code and moral policing. On the contrary, a non-reformist figure may be more adept at reaching a consensus with other power brokers, thereby resolving these contentious issues in a more serene and amicable atmosphere.

At its core, the notion that the entire cabinet ought to hail from the reformist political camp is misguided. It

is important to remember that Pezeshkian's support base extended beyond reformists to include moderates, centrist Conservatives, and even supporters of Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf in the election runoff. Staying true to his promise of an inclusive government, the president has incorporated representatives from across the political spectrum into his cabinet, even welcoming ministers from the previous administration.

Another critical factor to consider is the makeup of parliament, which has the power to approve or reject the proposed ministers.

The revolutionary Conservatives, who are politically at odds with Pezeshkian and the reformists, hold the majority in parliament. Consequently, to secure votes of confidence for his ministerial picks and expedite the formation of his government, the president must actively engage with them. Pezeshkian's vision for domestic and foreign policy centers on engagement, not conflict, and the composition of his proposed cabinet lineup reflects a framework designed to advance engagement on both the domestic and international fronts.

If parliament is genuinely committed to addressing the concerns of the people,

it should lend its support to the government in this endeavor, always keeping the national interest at heart. While the government and parliament each have their distinct powers and duties, lawmakers ought to bear in mind the marked difference in voter turnout between the latest parliamentary and presidential elections. Pezeshkian's victory in the presidential election signifies the people's endorsement of his platform and their yearning for change and effective problem-solving. Parliament has a responsibility to respect this mandate and not dampen the hopes of the people by withholding votes of confidence for the cabinet.

Iran, Indonesia team up to advance remote robotic surgery

By Sadeq Dehqan & Hamideh Hosseini
Staff writers

Indonesia and Iran have joined forces to develop remote robotic surgery, with Indonesian experts traveling to Iran for specialized training. Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro, praised the strengthened partnership between the two nations, emphasizing the mutual benefits of their cooperation in healthcare and education. Yuliantoro discussed the cutting-edge surgical system with Iran Daily, highlighting its potential to revolutionize patient care by allowing surgeons to perform operations from a distance using wireless networks and robotic technology. Last year, the countries agreed to set up the "Indonesia-Iran Remote Robotic Surgery Center." This venture involves collaboration between the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, Tehran

University of Medical Sciences, Sina Robotics and Medical Innovators Corporation, the Indonesia Ministry of Health, Hasanuddin University, and Indofarma Company, with the center based in a hospital in Makassar. Indonesia and Iran's cooperation in remote robotic surgery began in 2019 with a visit from Indonesia's then-Minister of Health, resulting in remarkable success over the past four years.

Iran's investment in Nusantara

The Indonesian ambassador to Iran, referring to the plan to move Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to Nusantara, invited Iranian businesspeople and entrepreneurs to invest in projects related to the capital relocation. He added that Iranian investors can currently invest in various sectors across Indonesia, but the capital relocation presents a new opportunity for joint participation in these projects. Nusantara, the future capital of Indonesia, is set to be inaugurat-



Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ronny Prasetyo Yuliantoro
● IRAN DAILY

ed on August 17, 2024, coinciding with Indonesia's Independence Day. This new city will replace Jakarta, which has been the capital since independence in 1945. The capital is being moved from the heavily congested Jakarta to Nu-



santara, located in East Kalimantan province on the island of Borneo, about 1,200 kilometers away from Jakarta. The construction of the new capital, initially estimated to cost 466 trillion rupiahs (around \$32 billion), was supposed to start at the beginning of 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the project. Currently, many buildings in the new capital are unfinished, and some forecasts suggest that the entire city might not be completed until 2045. According to the Indonesian news agency Antara, "Nusantara" means "archipelago" in the Indonesian language and was named with the direct approval of the President.

Minister for National Development Planning of Indonesia explained that "Nusantara" was chosen as the capital's name due to its symbolic international significance, which instantly evokes the image of Indonesia as an archipelago. The naming process involved consultations with historians and linguists before being presented to the president. The Indonesian envoy also highlighted the long-standing relationship between Iran and Indonesia, noting that next year will mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Over the years, the ties between Iran and Indonesia have developed significantly, and he believes that

future cooperation will continue to grow. The Indonesian ambassador to Iran also mentioned the educational and scientific cooperation between the two countries, noting that Iranian and Indonesian universities collaborate in academic research and student exchange programs. He further highlighted the growing economic ties between Iran and Indonesia, stating that the two countries have signed an economic memorandum of understanding regarding the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). He emphasized that there are still many opportunities to expand cooperation between the two countries.

Iran, Burkina Faso seek to work together on handicraft sector



● MEHR

Officials from Iran and Burkina Faso stressed the importance of strengthening their ties in the field of handicrafts. Burkina Faso's Ambassador to Tehran, Mohammadi Kaboureh, met with Maryam Jalali, Iran's Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts for Traditional Arts, in Tehran to discuss their countries' relationship and shared interests, Mehr News Agency reported.

Jalali highlighted the similarities between the artists in both countries and underscored the importance of exchanging experiences in training and marketing. She mentioned the global significance of the art economy and said that Iran's participation in the 17th African International Handicrafts Exhibition in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, presents a great opportunity to

strengthen ties and share experiences. The meeting also covered topics such as collaboration in experience-based tourism, leveraging the skills of Iranian artists in jewelry and textiles, organizing cultural weeks in Burkina Faso, and cooperating in marketing efforts. Ambassador Kaboureh expressed hope that relations between Iran and Burkina Faso

would grow stronger in the field of handicrafts. He invited Iranian artists and craftsmen to take part in the 17th International Exhibition of Handicrafts in Ouagadougou (SIAO), one of Africa's largest handicraft events, which draws participants from more than 50 African countries. The event offers a valuable platform for showcasing Iranian handicrafts.

Iran's Qeshm, Russia's Krasnodar ink sisterhood agreement

Qeshm Island in Iran and Krasnodar in Russia have officially become sister cities. The two cities signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) during a ceremony in Krasnodar on Monday evening. The agreement was signed by Qeshm's Mayor, Mirdad Mirdadi, and Krasnodar's Mayor, Yevgeny Naumov. The MoU paves the way for collaboration between the cities in areas such as construction, education, and cultural exchanges. The signing took place in the presence of regional officials, the head of the Krasnodar city council, and an advisor from the Qeshm Free Zone Organization, IRNA wrote. Mayor Mirdadi highlighted the growing ties between



Qeshm's Mayor Mirdad Mirdadi (L), and Krasnodar's Mayor Yevgeny Naumov sign a sisterhood agreement between Iran's Qeshm Island and Russia's Krasnodar on August 12, 2024.
● MEHR

Iran and Russia, pointing to Qeshm's strategic location in the Persian Gulf. He emphasized the island's role in the North-South corridor, which connects Russia to open waters through Iran. Mirdadi also expressed Qeshm's readiness to facilitate the transport and load-

ing of goods along this route. Qeshm, known for its tourist and natural attractions, hosts over three million visitors each year. Mirdadi underscored the island's potential to boost tourism and trade with Russia. Krasnodar's Mayor Naumov noted the opportunities for

cooperation, particularly in tourism, construction, and education. He mentioned that Qeshm's status as a free trade zone and tourist destination could help strengthen ties between the two regions. Naumov also highlighted the possibility of student exchanges and joint cultural and commercial projects. In April 2024, the mayors of Qeshm and Krasnodar discussed future cooperation during a video call.

Iran's youth robotics teams triumph at 2024 RobotChallenge



Iran's U12 and U17 student robotics teams made a strong showing at the 2024 World Robot Contest Championships, also known as RobotChallenge, held in Beijing, China. The Iranian U17 team, comprising 48 students from across the country, competed in five different leagues. They participated in categories including Rugby, Sumo, Technical Report, Futsal Playing, and Innovation, IRNA wrote.

In the Technical Report category, Iran's U17 team clinched second place, with China taking first and Romania finishing third. The U12 team also made an impact in the Innovation League, winning silver and bronze medals, while China claimed the top spot. The 2024 World Robot Contest Championships ran from August 9 to 11 in Beijing, drawing over 5,000 contestants from 31 countries.