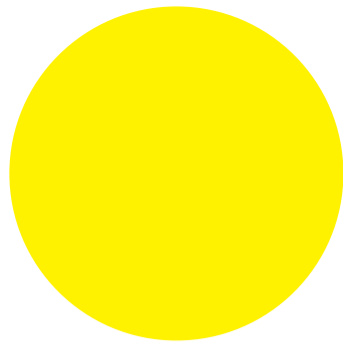


No nexus between Gaza truce talks, response to Haniyeh killing: *Iran*



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# Iran Daily

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Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd, the final pick to lead Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, outlines her plans in an address to Parliament in the capital Tehran, on August 19, 2024, ahead of a vote of confidence later this week.

IRNA

#### Empowering women to help transform macroeconomic management



By Mohammad Eslami  
Head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization

#### OPINION

Mrs. Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd, the nominee for the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development in the new Iranian government, has risen through the ranks of management based on

her own merits and qualifications. She has a thorough knowledge of macro-management affairs and is one of the prominent figures in terms of analytical power, decision-making, and managerial competence.

What sets Sadeq-Malvajerd apart is her specialized knowledge, keen discernment, and auditing skills. She possesses the ability to prioritize and make decisions with the nation's welfare at heart. Facilitating people's affairs, her courage and resoluteness in policymaking, proactive nature, and timely decision-making are also commendable traits.

During her tenure as the deputy for Architecture and Urban Development and the secretary of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Development under the government of former president Hassan Rouhani, all the country's scientific centers and universities of architecture and urban development worked unprecedentedly with her in harmony.

Her performance in the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Development, where she skillfully coordinated with various member organizations in decision-making processes, was particularly noteworthy.

Her strength in interaction and coordination undoubtedly contributed to effective policymaking and yielded positive outcomes.

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## Iran's natural gas grid expanded by 53,000 km in three years



CEO of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said the gas grid in the country has expanded by 53,000 kilometers in the past three years.

Majid Chegeni added that Iran had built more than 1,800 kilometers of new high pressure gas transmission pipelines since August 2021 when the outgoing government took office, Press TV wrote.

Chegeni said the number of gas grid customers in Iran had increased by nearly a million over the past three years, adding that some 50 new cities and 6,800 villages had also been connected to the country's nationwide gas pipeline network over the same period.

Natural gas became available to 24 new power plants and 21,000 industrial units across Iran over the past three years, he said, adding that the NIGC had also built seven new pumping stations with 24 compressors to power long-distance gas pipelines in the country.

Iran is one of the four largest producers and consumers of natural gas in the world. The country injects more than 850 million cubic meters per day of natural gas to its nationwide grid during cold winter months.

Total gas output in Iran has exceeded 1 billion cubic meters per day, a bulk of which comes from South Pars, the world's largest gas field which is located on the maritime border between Iran and Qatar in the Persian Gulf. Chegeni's comments on Sunday came during a ceremony to inaugurate a 176-kilometer gas pipeline in eastern Iran where the NIGC has been carrying out projects to boost gas supplies to households and industries in the region.

A report on the Iranian Oil Ministry's news website said that the government had spent 72 trillion rials (\$124.1 million) on the pipeline connecting Dashtak in Sistan region to Nehbandan in the South Khorasan Province.

The proposed nominee for the Oil Ministry Mohsen Paknejad has plans to minimize energy deficit for running the ministry. According to a blueprint of his plan submitted to the Parliament, there are two short-term (one-year) and long-term (four-year) measures in order to reduce the mismatch between gas production and consumption in the country.



## Ministerial pick: Iran's progress hinges on development of transportation

### Parliamentary panels endorse nominated economic ministers

The proposed nominee for the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development underlined that Iran's progress relies on the development of transportation industry as she expounded on her blueprints at Parliament on the third day of the legislative body's reviewing of the qualification of President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup.

"The all-round growth and development of the country is dependent on the development of the transportation industry," Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd said in her address to Parliament. She went on to say that the necessity of leading, policy-making, and integrated management of the transportation sector is to

"enhance coordination with other institutions, and this interaction is of paramount importance." In an open session on Monday, Speaker of the Civil Commission Jalal Iri announced his commission's approval on plans by the roads and urban development minister designate. Development of logistics parks,



Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd, the final pick to lead Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, addresses Parliament in the capital Tehran, on August 19, 2024, ahead of a vote of confidence later this week.

● IRNA

multimodal transportation and dry ports, implementation national economic projects, making the country as the hub of air transportation, development of techno-engineering services exports were among the priorities of Sadeq-Malvajerd, the MP noted.

In support of the qualifications of the proposed minister of roads and urban development, Farshad Ebrahimpour stated that Sadeq-Malvajerd has served as the secretary of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning for three years.

"She is not only an executive director but also a strategist who knows well how sustainable and balanced urban development should take place in synergy with the environment," the lawmaker added.

In opposition to the roads and urban development nominee, Hossein Raeisi said according to the statistics, the main problem of housing sector is rooted in the wrong policies of land management by Sadeq-Malvajerd.

"As a person who has spent more than 15 years in issues related to the housing and urban development, I announce my serious concern about policies that she has submitted," the parliamentarian noted.

Gholamreza Nouri-Qezelgeh, who is Pezeshkian's pick for the Agriculture Ministry, was also discussed by the MPs on Monday.

Mohammad Sabzi, a member of Agriculture Commission said the lawmakers consider Nouri-Qezelgeh to have experience and education related to agriculture field, who supports anti-corruption, and enjoys economic health, while believing in the principles of the Islamic Revolution.

Also, compliance with the 7th Development Plan in the field of agriculture, focusing the plans of the proposed minister on food security, paying attention to rural and nomadic development, reforming the organizational structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, and pre-

sending the plans on macro policies were among the other points that were mentioned by the supporters of Nouri-Qezelgeh.

In opposition to the agriculture nominee, Rahmatollah Norouzi said inadequate investment, climate changes, supply chain failure, and lack of appropriate technology are other challenges that were not covered by the plans of the nominee.

"Land integration was not included in the plans proposed by the minister of agriculture, while it is a necessary measure," the MP noted. The Industries and Mines Commission of the Parliament agreed with the qualifications and programs proposed by Mohammad Atabak, who was introduced by the Iranian president to Parliament as minister of industry, mines and trade. Zahra Saeidi-Mobarakeh, the speaker of the commission said that issues including industrial and mining fields, the necessity of economic diplomacy with the aim of entering the global value chain, focusing on supplying the energy needed by the production sector were mentioned well by the proposed minister, all of which are in accordance with the law of the 7th Development Plan.

In opposition to the industry, mine and trade ministry nominee, Rouhollah Izadkhah said, "Atabek is not an expert in the field of industrial policies. He has no experience of working in the Ministry of Industry for a single day. He has no experience in the field of trade, which is one of the serious challenges of our industry and mining."

On the third day, the plans submitted by proposed nominees for the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade were approved by related committees of Parliament. The Iranian Parliament's specialized committees started deliberations on Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup as of August 11 afternoon in two work shifts during four days. The proposed ministers are being discussed in the Parliament's open sessions since Saturday.

Pezeshkian was elected as the new Iranian president in a runoff election on July 5 after late president Ebrahim Raisi lost his life in a tragic helicopter crash in May.

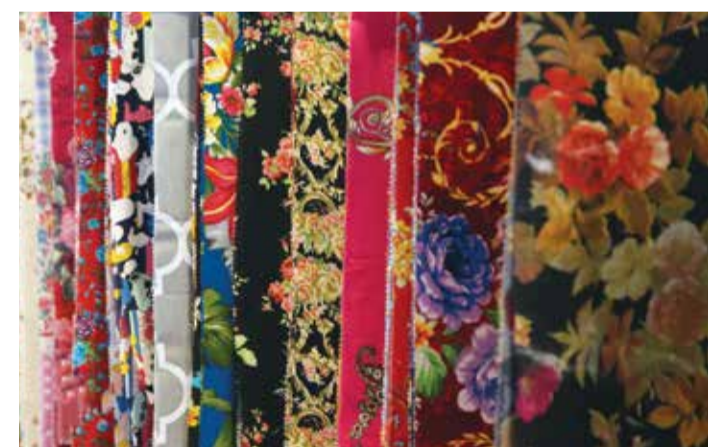
## Some 120 foreign firms attend 30th IRANTEX

The International Exhibition of Textile Machinery, Raw Materials, Home Textiles, Embroidery Machines & Textile Products, better known as the IRANTEX, has kicked off in Tehran. The 30th IRANTEX is being held at Tehran International Permanent Fairground from August 19-22, IRNA reported.

Some 120 foreign companies from 13 countries have participated in the international event. The expo provides business activists in related sectors worldwide with a chance to put their products and services on display and expand their networks of customers and clients overseas.

Germany, Italy, Chinese Taipei, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, South Korea, Turkey, Pakistan, Austria, Switzerland, India, Japan and China are the participants at the exhibition.

The event is considered to be a great chance for the attendees to get familiar with the best market players in the region.



## Empowering women to ...

Some may question whether a woman can lead the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development effectively. However, I believe that gender should not be a determining factor in ministerial appointments. As someone who has held this position before, I appointed two highly qualified women as deputy ministers. What matters most is an individual's personality, talent, merit, and competence for responsibility. It is high time that we recognize and exploit the untapped potential of Iranian

women, as their capabilities have often remained unseen and underutilized within the country's macro-management structure. Whether the minister is a man or a woman is immaterial; what truly counts are their abilities and how they lead. It is natural for any minister, regardless of gender, to have varying levels of expertise across the different management sections of their ministry. What is crucial, however, is the nominee's ability to recruit, organize, and surround themselves with a competent and capable team.

The minister should foster harmonious, integrated, and interactive relationships with various organizations in the country to effectively address the challenges within their field of work. The Ministry of Roads and Urban Development encompasses a diverse range of missions and activities. It is unrealistic to expect any individual to possess expertise in every specialty within this field. A competent minister will have a solid grasp of one or two specialties and be able to align the remaining components un-

der their management with their strategic vision. Intelligence and talent are the key attributes that underpin successful leadership. When combined with sincerity and trust in God, there is no doubt that an individual will excel in their responsibilities.

I am confident that members of Parliament will recognize the groundbreaking nature of Sadeq-Malvajerd's nomination as the first lady to be put forward lead this ministry. With their vote of confidence, they will empower

this worthy lady to showcase her managerial skills and contribute to the sustainable development of roads and urban infrastructure. Sadeq-Malvajerd's exceptional coordination skills, knowledge, courage, and managerial talents make her an outstanding choice.

With an overwhelming vote of confidence by lawmakers, we can witness the beginning of a new era in macroeconomic management, one that embraces the inclusion and leadership of Iranian women.

# Revival of copperware craftsmanship in Zanjan

## Iranica Desk

The continuity of handicrafts is deeply intertwined with the unwavering support extended to the dedicated artists striving to preserve these cherished traditions. In various parts of Zanjan, particularly within its central core, one can observe a diverse array of handicraft branches that are imbued with rich heritage and historical significance. Among these crafts, the art of copperware is currently experiencing a resurgence, despite having faced numerous historical challenges over the centuries.

The rich history of this handicraft dates back over a thousand years, tracing its origins to the Sassanid period, with significant advancements noted during the Seljuk era. Artisans of that time were renowned for crafting intricate copper basins, often adorned with mythical animal designs. These exquisite creations gained immense popularity among the newly settled Turkic tribes, as reported by IRNA. During the Ilkhanate period, the arrival of several Chinese artists—brought to Zanjan by Hulagu Khan—marked a pivotal evolution in the region's copper industry. Artisans produced prominent and intricately designed ewers and basins, embellishing them with floral motifs destined for export to China and across the Mediterranean region. Unfortunately, little remains of these antique copper ewers and basins, which signify a millennium of craft evolution in the city; most were lost to melting furnaces, resulting in the loss of invaluable historical artifacts.

Over the years, this revered craft has experienced numerous ups and downs, leading artists to occasional-

ly lose hope in sustaining their work, which risked fading into obscurity. However, the sound of copper artisans hammering their tools now resonates once more throughout the alleys and streets of Zanjan, signaling a revival of this authentic art form. Artists in the field firmly believe that it is imperative for authorities to provide more robust support at this crucial juncture to protect and preserve the craft, ensuring its transmission to future generations. Mohsen Salimi, the head of the Zanjan Copperworkers Union, reported that approximately 5,000 individuals are directly engaged in the copperware sector in Zanjan, with an additional 3,000 involved indirectly. He noted that the province produces an average of 15 tons of copper vessels daily. Salimi emphasized that the flourishing of the copperware and handicrafts sector has significantly alleviated unemployment rates, asserting that bolstering support for the province's handicrafts has spurred greater entrepreneurial activity within this industry.

In addition, Salimi pointed out that important strides have been made in enhancing the packaging of copper products, with ongoing initiatives focused on branding and cataloging efforts, including preparations to present each craft in three foreign languages to cater to international markets. Seyyed Mikael Mousavi, the deputy head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Zanjan Province, highlighted that over 16,000 people are currently engaged in the handicrafts sector across the province. He underscored that supporting handicraft artists and enhancing activities in this field is a top priority for the organization. Mousa-

vi also noted Zanjan's recognition as a World Craft City for Filigree by the World Crafts Council, emphasizing the diverse range of handicrafts available in the area.

He pointed out that traditional arts and handicrafts in Zanjan are esteemed for their antiquity, authenticity, economic significance, and cultural value. The deputy head further indicated that this vital sector not only has the potential to drive job creation but also complements the tourism industry, providing substantial employment opportunities with relatively low investment.

Currently, there are 299 branches of handicrafts across Iran, with 55 active in Zanjan Province. Prominent local crafts include filigree-making, *charoq-duzi* (a type of traditional shoe), knife-making, copperworking, engraving, and carpet-weaving. Mousavi noted that recent efforts have led to an improvement in the quality of packaging for the province's handicrafts. Additionally, he mentioned that initiatives are in place to increase the number of permits for operating packaging units particularly focused on handicrafts within the province.

The variety and diversity of handicraft products available in Zanjan have increased significantly compared to previous years. Despite this growth, exports of these items have encountered a decline for various reasons. Last year, total exports of handicrafts from the province were estimated at 413,000 officially and over 287,000 unofficially. Mousavi expressed optimism that these figures would trend upward in the future, reflecting the ongoing revival and increasing global appreciation for Zanjan's handicrafts.



IRNA



# Jabalieh Dome, a marvel of Kerman's architectural heritage



YJC

Kerman, one of Iran's oldest cities, boasts a history that spans over four millennia. As a vital crossroads along the ancient Silk Road, Kerman has witnessed the rise and fall of numerous dynasties and empires, each leaving an indelible mark on the city's cultural and architectural landscape. The city features a variety of historical monuments, including mosques, bazaars, and forts, all reflecting the diverse influences that have shaped Kerman over the centuries. Among these historical treasures, the Jabalieh Dome stands out for its distinctive design and mysterious origins.

The Jabalieh Dome, also known as Gonbad-e Jabalieh, is a captivating and enigmatic monument located in Kerman.

Renowned for its unique architecture and rich history, this ancient structure

has fascinated historians, architects, and visitors for centuries. Set against the arid backdrop of southeastern Iran, the Jabalieh Dome provides an intriguing insight into the region's architectural achievements and cultural heritage.

The origins of the Jabalieh Dome are cloaked in mystery, with various theories and legends surrounding its construction. Although the exact date of its construction is unknown, historians believe the dome dates back to the early Islamic period, possibly between the 10th and 12th centuries. Some speculate that it may have been built during the Sassanian era, predating the advent of Islam in Iran, making it even older than previously thought.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Jabalieh Dome is its intended purpose. While some historians contend

that it was constructed as a Zoroastrian fire temple, others suggest it may have served as a mausoleum or commemorative monument. The absence of definitive historical records has only intensified the air of mystery surrounding the dome, fueling speculation and debate among scholars.

The Jabalieh Dome is an architectural marvel that showcases the ingenuity and craftsmanship of its builders. The structure is octagonal, with each side measuring approximately eight meters in length. The dome itself is constructed from a combination of stone and brick; the lower section is made from stone, while the upper portion consists of brick. This unusual use of materials in Persian architecture adds to the dome's uniqueness.

Rising to a height of approximately 20 meters, with a base diameter of around 18 meters, the dome sits atop a circular drum supported by its octagonal base. The transition from the octagonal base to the circular dome is achieved through the use of squinches, a characteristic feature of Persian architecture that facilitates the seamless transition between different geometric shapes. The Jabalieh Dome showcases a blend of architectural styles and influences, reflecting the diverse cultural and historical context in which it was constructed. The use of squinches, for example, is a hallmark of Islamic architecture, while the stone construction and octagonal base suggest influences from the Sassanid period. The dome's smooth curves and graceful proportions are reminiscent of early Islamic domes found throughout other regions of Iran.



# Tackling Iran's snowballing energy crisis

Uphill task facing new ministers



GIF

Mohsen Paknejad, the Iranian president's proposed oil minister  
● YJC



By Zohreh Qanadi  
Staff writer

## PERSPECTIVE

Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian has consistently emphasized the importance of expertise, making it clear that possessing the know-how is a must for any key positions in his upcoming cabinet. As the debates on his designated ministers kicked off in the Parliament on Saturday, a week after their qualifications were scrutinized by the Parliament's specialized commissions, Pezeshkian's emphasis on expertise took center stage. The ministries of oil and energy are among the most critical areas that face significant challenges demanding immediate attention. To navigate the country through these challenges, Mohsen Paknejad and Abbas Aliabadi have been nominated for the roles of Minister of Oil and Minister of Energy, respectively. As the confirmation of their appointments by Parliament is pending, the country is grappling with a severe energy deficit crisis, intensified by the summer heat and missed targets in natural gas and electricity production. Addressing the energy deficit and boosting oil and gas production to reinforce Iran's position in the global market are the foremost challenges that the two ministers must tackle head-on.

Abbas Aliabadi, the Iranian president's proposed energy minister  
● INDEPENDENT



### Challenges facing Oil Ministry

The Ministry of Oil is one of Iran's most crucial economic ministries, and with oil exports being the country's major source of foreign exchange earnings, it is important to know who will lead the oil sector in the new administration.

Mohsen Paknejad, with a wealth of technical experience but lacking in energy diplomacy expertise, has been selected as the Minister of Oil nominee amid Iran's oil sanctions and significant energy challenges. On the eve of the first formal session on the vote of confidence for the ministerial picks, the Energy Security and Mineral Resources faction of Parliament characterized Paknejad as a specialist and an insider in the oil industry. The head of the faction underscored that tackling the energy shortage and boosting oil and gas production to enhance Iran's global market presence are among Paknejad's top priorities. Paknejad has reportedly reaffirmed his dedication to rectifying the shortfall in energy carriers and enhancing crude oil production capacity.

The Ministry of Oil is grappling with numerous other challenges, including international sanctions, loss of standing within OPEC, currency issues, lack of equipment, and insufficient resources for development.

Despite continued pressure from the US sanctions on its oil exports, figures by the UK-based company Energy Institute (EI) in June indicated that Iran showed the second-largest growth in oil production in the world in 2023. The figures showed that Iran's oil and condensate production reached an average of 3.94 million barrels per day (bpd) last year, up 19% from figures reported in 2022. The country was the world's



The photo shows a solar power plant in Iran, with a wind farm in the background.  
● TASNIM

seventh-largest crude producer in 2022, and has the third-largest proven oil reserves behind Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, according to the United States Energy Information Administration. Iran's oil exports have increased despite the apparent continuation of sanctions, thanks to rising Chinese oil demand. According to OPEC crude oil production data, Iran's oil exports reached their highest level since August 2018 in May 2024, with a daily output of 3.2 million barrels of crude oil and condensate. Reports indicate that Iran has exported oil to new destinations such as Bangladesh and Oman, and according to Javad Owji, the outgoing oil minister, Iranian oil has reached 15 countries, including European ones. If confirmed as minister, Paknejad is likely to follow the policies of Ebrahim Raisi's adminis-

tration, prioritizing increased oil and gas production. Tehran aims to reach a daily oil production volume of four million barrels, a goal that requires drilling new wells and establishing production platforms and pipelines, despite logistical and economic hurdles. Paknejad, however, is known to be affiliated with Bijan Zangeneh, a former oil minister during president Rouhani's term. Given that the current conservative-dominated Parliament opposes Zangeneh's Reformist ideologies, Paknejad faces serious obstacles. On August 14, ISNA reported the opposition of Parliament's Energy Commission to the proposed oil minister. According to a member of the commission, Gholamreza Dehqan, Paknejad failed to present the commission's desired comprehensive, co-

hesive, and strategic program during the session, and in the final vote, he only secured 7 positive votes out of 23.

### Another chance at transitioning to renewables

Meanwhile, Iran's electricity industry is facing immediate challenges of its own, including working around the government's price controls and removing obstacles in the way of power generation. Moreover, global warming and water scarcity present long-term threats to electricity supply in developing countries like Iran.

Given Iran's talented human resources, robust technical expertise in energy production and exploitation, and capacity to develop and utilize renewable energy sources, the transition to a greener energy landscape has become a priority for the government. The transition can unlock significant opportunities for the expansion of the country's energy sector, catalyzing economic growth and creating much-needed employment avenues.

According to the statistics provided by the Ministry of Energy, Iran's "actual" power generation capacity is about 75,000 MW. The country's hydropower plants have not been generating electricity at their full nominal capacity due to the drought. The shortfall peaks at 14,000 MW or 20% during summer.

Despite boasting ideal conditions for solar energy production, with 300 sunny days annually, Iran has yet to fully harness its renewable potential. Currently, renewables account for only 1% of the country's electricity generation. Last year, the government set a target to launch plants that generate 2,800 MW of solar and wind power but fell short, achieving merely 2% of the intended goal.

## Art of the Deal

## Araghchi's balancing act in a complex region

A look into the background of Abbas Aliabadi, the designated minister of energy for the new cabinet, reveals his keen interest in transitioning to renewable energy sources, particularly electric and hybrid vehicles. Renewables currently make up only about 1% of Iran's energy mix, but Aliabadi is expected to enhance the role of renewable energy sources in the country's electricity generation. However, attracting the necessary foreign financial resources and advanced technologies for this transition process would currently be beyond his control.

In the past, he served as the head of the Malek Ashtar University of Technology and the head of the MAPNA Group, a large Iranian engineering and manufacturing conglomerate. In 2018, MAPNA was sanctioned by the United States over allegations of aiding Iran's nuclear program, specifically in the production of gas turbines. Canada also imposed sanctions on the company back in 2016. His successful management of MAPNA during that time, however, could win over the lawmakers' support. However, as the former Industry, Mining, and Trade minister, he has faced criticism for his lack of experience and expertise in the fields of industry and mining. The decline in the quality of vehicles produced by Iranian automakers was also among the criticisms directed at him during his tenure.

The electricity industry holds significant influence over other sectors, including industry, agriculture, and services. Recognized as a fundamental pillar of the economy, the electricity industry plays a pivotal role in driving economic growth and enhancing societal welfare. The advantages of electrical energy, marked by its cleanliness, user-friendliness, and adaptability to various forms, also underscore its vital importance. Effective management by Aliabadi in this critical ministry could potentially address some of the numerous challenges facing the industry.

## Tackling electricity mismatch

The major challenge facing the proposed Minister of Energy, however, is the electricity imbalance, which stands at approximately 15,000 megawatts, according to Seyyed Javad Hosseini Kia, vice chairman of the Industries and Mines Commission of Parliament.

Aliabadi has pledged to resolve this issue within two years. He apparently believes that the low efficiency of some power plants needs to be addressed first. His other proposed plans include converting gas-fired power plants to combined-cycle, smartening transmission and distribution networks, increasing incentives for building renewable power plants, strengthening the role of the private sector, utilizing capital markets for financing, creating an energy savings market, and planning for online electricity retailing.

Prioritizing the conversion of gas-fired power plants to combined-cycle technology is deemed essential to secure a vote of confidence from Parliament. This strategy will enhance the efficiency of the country's power plants, utilizing the waste heat from gas power plants to generate electricity and thereby preventing energy wastage. It remains to be seen if Aliabadi's promises to resolve the electricity shortage within two years are feasible or contradict the realities of Iran's energy market.

According to estimates, more than \$15 billion in investment is required to build the necessary power plants. Therefore, securing the necessary financing and technology to address the shortfall in the electricity industry will be a significant challenge for the Minister of Energy. Leveraging the capital market's capabilities to facilitate the provision of resources needed for electricity generation projects was an attractive option outlined in the proposed Minister of Energy's plans, considering that the ability to obtain loans from the National Development Fund has been diminished lately, which prompts industry players to seek alternative options for their project execution. To make matters worse, attracting foreign investment in the current conditions of Iran seems rather impossible, too.

Developing guidelines related to creating an energy savings market, establishing a market for energy savings certificates as a subset of the Energy Exchange, planning to create an online electricity retail platform under governmental supervision, and providing incentives for the refurbishment and modernization of domestic cooling equipment are among the other announced programs of the designated minister of energy.

Both Mohsen Paknejad and Abbas Aliabadi would face a daunting task in managing the energy crisis in Iran if they secure a vote of confidence. The energy security, national security, and economic growth of Iran heavily rely on the effective functioning of the ministries of petroleum and energy in collaboration with other ministries. Energy supply security in Iran will be confronted with substantial challenges in the upcoming years, and it remains to be seen if these two ministers will successfully navigate the country through these challenges.



Abbas Araghchi, then-Iranian deputy foreign minister, waits for the arrival of Maciej Przemysław Lang, then-undersecretary of state in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Tehran, Iran, on January 21, 2019.

IRNA

The life and career of Abbas Araghchi can be traced back to the heart of Tehran, where he was born in 1962 to a conservative, religious family. From an early age, he was instilled with a sense of patriotism and a commitment to serving his nation. As a young man, he answered the call of duty, volunteering to fight in the Iran-Iraq War, an experience that left an enduring mark on his worldview. It was during this conflict that he developed a deep understanding of the complexities and sacrifices inherent in defending his country's sovereignty.

Returning home after the war, Araghchi embarked on a journey that would shape his future. He joined the ranks of Iran's Foreign Ministry, a decision that would propel him onto the international stage. His academic pursuits complemented his career path as he obtained a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from the Ministry's esteemed School of International Relations. Driven by a thirst for knowledge, he further enhanced his credentials with a Master's degree in Political Science from Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch.

However, it was during his time in the UK that Araghchi truly honed his diplomatic skills. While studying for his PhD in Politics and Government at the University of Kent, he immersed himself in the Western academic tradition, engaging with the ideas and theories that shaped international relations. His dissertation, "The Evolution of the Concept of Political Participation in Twentieth-Century Islamic Political Thought," revealed a nuanced understanding of the interplay between Western political concepts and the principles of Islamic societies.

As his academic career flourished, so too did his diplomatic prowess. Araghchi climbed through the ranks of the Foreign Ministry, assuming roles of increasing responsibility. He served as Iran's ambassador to Finland from 1999 to 2003, navigating the intricacies of international diplomacy. Subsequently, he took on the role of head of the Ministry's Western Europe department from 2003 to 2004, a pivotal period in Iran's nuclear negotiations with Britain, France, and Germany.

It was during this time that Araghchi's steely determination and calm demeanor under pressure truly came to the forefront. He played a pivotal role in these delicate negotiations, earning the respect of his counterparts and establishing himself as a force to be reckoned with. His expertise in the nuances of the nuclear fuel cycle and his unwavering commitment to Iran's interests marked him as a rising star in the diplomatic arena.

In recognition of his exceptional abilities, Araghchi was promoted to Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal Affairs in 2005. His influence continued to grow, and in 2008, he assumed the role of ambassador to Japan, a position that allowed him to further refine his diplomatic skills and cultivate relationships with key international players. During his tenure, he successfully navigated the delicate balance between cultural sensitivities and diplomatic obligations, earning the respect of his Japanese counterparts.

However, it was in his subsequent role as director for Asia and Pacific Affairs from 2011 to 2013 that Araghchi truly came into his own. His strategic mindset and regional expertise proved invaluable as he navigated the complex dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region. It was during this time

International Desk

## PERSPECTIVE

*In Iran's international relations, few figures are as well-respected as Abbas Araghchi, the Iranian president's newly proposed foreign minister. With a reputation that precedes him, particularly in the West, Araghchi finally steps into the spotlight during a period of escalating tensions and uncertainty in the Middle East. Known for his strategic mind and diplomatic prowess, his potential appointment signals a potential shift in Iran's foreign policy approach, offering a glimmer of hope for those seeking a resolution to the ongoing tensions.*

that he developed a deep understanding of the shifting power structures and emerging challenges within the region, positioning himself as a leading voice in Iran's foreign policy circles.

The turning point in Araghchi's career came with his recruitment by the renowned Javad Zarif, who served as foreign minister under then-president Hassan Rouhani. Recognizing Araghchi's exceptional talents, Zarif brought him on as his deputy for the nuclear talks, a decision that would have a profound impact on Iran's diplomatic endeavors. Working closely with his American counterpart, Ambassador Wendy Sherman, Araghchi demonstrated his unwavering commitment to Iran's interests while maintaining a pragmatic approach to negotiations.

The culmination of their efforts resulted in the landmark Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, a testament to Araghchi's skill as a negotiator. The agreement, between Iran and the permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany, traded sanctions relief for verifiable curbs on Iran's nuclear program. It stood as a shining example of diplomacy's power, offering a path toward stability and mutual understanding.



Abbas Araghchi (R), the president's proposed minister of foreign affairs, leads a small congregational prayer on July 19, 2024, with President Masoud Pezeshkian (C) standing behind him.

X

However, the fragile nature of international relations soon became apparent as the JCPOA faced unforeseen challenges. The Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the agreement in 2018, despite Iran's full compliance, introduced a period of uncertainty and tension. As the deal hung in the balance, Araghchi once again found himself at the forefront, leading the Iranian negotiation team in Vienna as they worked tirelessly to salvage the agreement.

Despite his best efforts and a draft ready for signing, Araghchi faced obstacles beyond his control. The changing political landscape in Iran, marked by the election of hardline president Ebrahim Raisi, led to a shift in the country's negotiating team. Araghchi's role transitioned to that of an advisor, joining the Strategic Coun-

cil for Foreign Relations, a body that holds significant influence in shaping the Iranian Leader's decisions.

Throughout these challenges, Araghchi remained resolute in his defense of the JCPOA and the importance of nuclear talks. He highlighted the agreement's threefold benefits for Iran: the lifting of sanctions, the legitimization of its nuclear program, and the neutralization of efforts to portray Iran as a threat to international peace. His pragmatic approach extended to Iran's relations with the US, acknowledging the complexities while emphasizing the potential for managing differences.

As Iran's new potential foreign minister, Araghchi inherits a complex web of challenges and opportunities. Iranian foreign ministers navigate a delicate dance, influencing policy while navigating the influence of various institutions. It is a role that requires tact, diplomacy, and a deep understanding of the interplay between domestic and international forces.

In his vision for "comprehensive, active, and effective" diplomacy, Araghchi has outlined a path forward. He advocates for relationships based on mutual respect with European nations and a managed approach to hostilities with the US. His agenda emphasizes the honorable lifting of sanctions through serious and goal-oriented negotiations. Additionally, he recognizes the importance of fostering strong relations with global powers like China and Russia while expanding cooperation with emerging economies, reflecting a nuanced understanding of the shifting global landscape.

The unexpected turn of events, with the death of president Raisi and the subsequent election of Masoud Pezeshkian, introduces a new dynamic. Pezeshkian's vow to resolve disputes with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and engage with the West aligns with Araghchi's diplomatic approach. However, they face the crucial task of securing the blessing of the Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei for any negotiations regarding the nuclear program and the restoration of cooperation with the IAEA.

The coming months will be pivotal for Iran's foreign policy trajectory. With the UN Security Council resolution 2231, which enshrined the JCPOA, set to expire in October 2025, the pos-

sibility of renewed UN sanctions looms. The advances in Iran's nuclear program and the recent lack of cooperation have raised concerns in France and the United Kingdom, potentially leading to the reimposition of sanctions.

In this delicate dance of international relations, Araghchi stands as a beacon of hope. His expertise, trustworthiness, and experience make him the ideal candidate to navigate these challenges. However, the ultimate outcome remains uncertain, hinging on the opportunities presented and the willingness of all parties to engage in constructive dialogue. Abbas Araghchi embodies the essence of strategic diplomacy, and his impact on Iran's future trajectory will undoubtedly leave an enduring mark on the global stage.

# Iranians eyeing Paralympic kudos in Paris

## Sports Desk

Iranians will be looking to enjoy yet another glorious Paralympic campaign when the 17th edition of the Games get underway with the opening ceremony at the Place de la Concorde in Paris on August 28.

The Iranian delegation will be represented by 65 athletes in the 10 sporting events across the 11 days of action in the French capital, aiming to improve on the medal haul in Tokyo three years ago.

The country bagged 12 golds, 11 silvers, and one bronze to finish 13th in medal table – a second-best result after London 2012 since Iran first took part in the Paralympics in Seoul 1988. Iran will again be the team to beat in the men's sitting volleyball contests, having dominated the event with a remarkable seven golds and double silvers in nine Paralympic appearances – including back-to-back triumphs in Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

The athletics, meanwhile, has been the most prolific event for Iran in the history of the Games – delivering 94 (36 golds) of the 160 medals.

Hashemiyeh Mottaqian (women's javelin throw), Mahdi Olad (men's shot put), Hamed Amiri, and Saeid Afrooz (men's javelin throw) were among the Iranian gold medalists in Tokyo and will be chasing further glory at the Stade de France from Aug. 30.

Reigning Paralympic champion Rouhollah Rostami will be joined by Ahamd Aminzadeh, Amir Ja'fari, Mohsen Bakhtiar, Ali-Akbar Gharibshahi, and Hamed Solhipour in the men's powerlifting contests, hoping to improve on the medal count in Tokyo, where Iran collected five.

In the shooting competitions, all eyes will be on Iranian sensation Sareh Javanmardi as the four-time Paralympic medalist will go after a third successive women's 10m air pistol gold. In taekwondo, Hamed Haqshenas, Saeid Sadeqianpour, Alireza



Bakht, Maryam Abdollahpour, will be looking to build on their medal-winning performances in last year's Hangzhou Asian Para Games when competing in their respective classes in Paris.

Three-time women's recurve gold winner Zahra Ne'mati will be among the high-profile absentees at the Games but Iran will still hope Alireza Manshazadeh, Gholamreza Rahimi, and Mohammadreza Ar-



ab-Ameri – gold medalists in Hangzhou – could add to the overall eight archery medals for the country. Other sporting events will see Shahin Izadyar and Sina Zieghaminejad, who have 11



Asian Para Games golds between them, take part in the swimming competitions, with Meysam Banitaba, and Mousa Gholam chasing a third men's judo gold for Iran after the double in Tokyo.

Saeid Hosseinpour and Shaha Behrouzrad will be the two Iranians in paracanoe, while the men's goalball team will take on the host, Brazil, and USA in the group stage of the eight-team tournament.



Shabab Al Ahli's Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun (1) is seen in action against Ajman in the UAE League Cup first round in Dubai, UAE, on August 18, 2024. [uae.proleague.ae](http://uae.proleague.ae)

## Azmoun's double leads Shabab Al Ahli to League Cup win

### Sports Desk

Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun scored twice in the second half to steer Shabab Al Ahli to a first-leg 2-0 victory over Ajman in the UAE League Cup on Sunday. Azmoun broke the deadlock with a clinical finish in the 58th minute, and then capitalized on a one-on-one situation with

Ajman keeper Ali Al Hosani to double the scoreline five minutes later.

The brace took Iran international's tally to three goals in as many appearances – first in the starting XI – for Shabab Al Ahli following a three-year move, worth from €5 million, from German Bundesliga champion Leverkusen.

Elsewhere in the UAE League Cup first round, ex-Sepahan striker Shahriar Mughanlou found the net from the spot in the 85th minute, with Mahdi Qayed providing Brazilian Caio Eduardo with an assist, but Ittihad Al Kalba suffered a 3-2 defeat against AFC Champions League champion Al Ain at home.

## Ancelotti frustrated with Real defending in Mallorca draw

REUTERS – Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti was critical of his team's lack of balance and bad defending in a 1-1 draw at Mallorca in their LaLiga season opener on Sunday.

Ancelotti said his players lacked focus after taking an early lead through Rodrygo in the 13th minute but allowing Mallorca to rescue a point with a Vedat Muriqi

header after the break. "Today I am not happy. I think we could have been done much better," a visibly frustrated Ancelotti told a press conference.

"We need to be more concentrated, work better as a group... It's not a fitness problem, it was mental.

"I don't want to make excuses for anything. We had to do better and

show more attitude. We can learn a lot from this match, it's a match where you can see clearly where we can end up having problems." Ancelotti was specially critical of his team's defending, saying that he needs a more disciplined performance due to a system that plays with four attacking players like Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr, Rodrygo and Jude Bellingham up front.

"We started the game well, we took the lead and we had chances to score the second, but in the second half we lacked balance," Ancelotti said.

"It was a game we could have lost because we didn't have balance. It wasn't a good game. We are a very attacking team and defensive balance is a fundamental part of the way we are built."



Iran president, Malaysia PM:

# Western support prolongs Israel's atrocities in Gaza



Anwar Ibrahim



Masoud Pezeshkian

**International Desk**

Iran and Malaysia criticized the policies adopted by the US and some Western countries toward Gaza, saying that their acts of support for Israel contradict their claims of defending human rights and efforts for the establishment of a cease-fire in the Palestinian territory.

Minister Anwar Ibrahim underlined that the Western countries' media and military support for Israel will lead to the continuation of the regime's crimes against the "oppressed and defenseless people of Gaza."

The two leaders also emphasized the need for a coordinated action by the Muslim countries to confront Israel's crimes and stop the genocide unfolding in Gaza.

Pezeshkian and Ibrahim said that holding a summit of the Organiza-

tion of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an effective measure in this regard.

More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Gaza Strip as a result of Israeli military action since last October. The Gaza Health Ministry says more than 16,456 of those deaths were children.

Alongside the fatalities, satellite image analysis suggests nearly 60% of buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed since the beginning of the war.

Meanwhile, nearly two million Palestinians have been displaced by the Israeli occupation army and face a grave humanitarian crisis as the war enters its 11th month.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023 after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas waged the surprise Operation al-Aqsa Storm against Israel in response to the regime's decades-long campaign of blood-letting and devastation against Palestinians.

## No nexus between Gaza truce talks, response to Haniyeh killing: *Iran*



**International Desk**

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani rejected any link between the ongoing cease-fire negotiations in Gaza and Iran's response to the assassination of Hamas' leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran in July.

"Iran's response to the assassination of Martyr Haniyeh as an official guest of Iran and the issue of the cease-fire negotiations in Gaza are two separate issues," Kanaani said during his weekly press conference on Monday, Press TV reported.

Haniyeh was assassinated on July 31, while he was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Iranian political and military leadership, including Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini, and President Masoud Pezeshkian, have vowed to avenge Haniyeh's killing.

"We have been and are the strongest and most important regional and international supporter of the cessation of war and [establishment of] cease-fire and we still support any action in this regard," Kanaani said. He, however, emphasized that the cease-fire negotiations have nothing to do with Iran's "legitimate and legal right to punish the aggressor."

He expressed regret that the Security Council has failed to fulfill its duty vis-à-vis the Israeli regime, adding, "We told our friends that we do not seek to intensify insecurity in the region but we insist on Iran's legal right to punish the aggressor and we will use it at the appropriate time."

Kanaani responded to a question about some countries' mediatory role to dissuade Iran from giving a response to the Israeli regime.

"If the international community and the Security Council were able and had shown in practice that they have the necessary will and ability to maintain regional and international peace in the face of the Zionist regime, we would not have witnessed more than 10 months of crimes in Gaza," he said.

Kanaani rejected the "irrational" request made by some countries from Iran to exercise self-restraint under the circumstances that Israel is posing a serious threat to regional peace and security.

"We are facing a rogue regime that does not adhere to any international regulations. The impunity of this regime is a threat to regional and international peace and security," the Iranian spokesman emphasized.

Back in April, Iran launched a missile and drone attack on Israel in retaliation for a missile attack by Israel on Iran's diplomatic premises in the Syrian capital of Damascus earlier in April, which claimed the lives of several members of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps.

## Israeli strikes on Yemen port 'possible war crime': *HRW*

An Israeli air raid last month on a key Yemeni port was a "possible war crime" that has threatened food and aid supply for millions, Human Rights Watch said on Monday.

The July 20 attack on the western port city of Hodeida came a day after the Yemen's Armed Forces claimed responsibility for a drone attack on Israel's commercial hub of Tel Aviv, AFP reported.

New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said the Tel Aviv strike that killed one person could also constitute a war crime.

The Israeli response decimated the Hodeida port's fuel storage capacity and killed at least nine people. HRW said "at least six civilians" were killed in the strikes which "reportedly injured at least 80 others".

The rights group noted that the Hodeida port "is critical for delivering food and other necessities to

the Yemeni population". The damage "could have a long-term impact on millions of Yemenis who rely on the port for food and humanitarian aid", it said.

The strikes "damaged or destroyed at least 29 of the 41 oil storage tanks at Hodeida port, as well as the only two cranes used for loading and unloading supplies from ships," HRW said.

It added that the attack also forced the Hodeida power plant offline for 12 hours.

"The attacks appeared to cause disproportionate harm to civilians and civilian objects. Serious violations of the laws of war committed willfully, that is deliberately or recklessly, are war crimes," HRW said.

In November the Yemen's Ansarullah movement began attacking Israeli-bound ships in the Red Sea, a campaign they have said is meant to show solidarity with Palestin-



AFP

ians in Gaza. The resistance movement has also launched strikes on other Israeli port towns since the Israel's war on Gaza began in October. The Israeli strikes on Hodeida risk worsening conditions for millions

of Yemenis, HRW said. "Yemenis are already enduring widespread hunger after a decade-long conflict. These attacks will only exacerbate their suffering," said Niku Jafarnia, HRW's Yemen and Bahrain researcher.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## British diplomat resigns over arms sales to Israel

A British Foreign Office official resigned in protest at his country's arms sales to Israel, saying the UK government "may be complicit in war crimes".

Mark Smith, a counter-terrorism official based at the British embassy in Dublin, said he had resigned after making numerous internal complaints, including through an official whistleblowing mechanism, but receiving nothing but pro-forma responses, The Guardian reported.

Smith said he had previously worked in Middle East arms export licensing assessment for the government and "each day" colleagues were

witnessing "clear and unquestionable examples" of war crimes and breaches of international humanitarian law by Israel in Gaza.

He said that senior members of the Israeli cabinet and military have expressed open genocidal intent, Israeli soldiers take videos deliberately burning, destroying and looting civilian property. "Over half of Gaza's homes and over 80% of Gaza's commercial properties have been damaged or destroyed."

"Whole streets and universities have been demolished, humanitarian aid is being blocked and civilians are regularly left with no safe quar-

ter to flee to. Red Crescent ambulances have been attacked, schools and hospitals are regularly targeted. These are war crimes."

He said there was "no justification for the UK's continued arms sales to Israel, yet somehow it continues". The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said it could not comment on an individual case, but that the government was committed to upholding international law. The Labour government has pledged to review the policy of arms sales to Israel, but has so far not come to any decision. The foreign secretary, Da-

vid Lammy, has said it may continue to allow the sale of defensive weapons but cut off the flow of offensive weapons being used in Gaza. He said it was a complex judicial process. Smith said he was resigning with sadness after a long career in the Foreign Office, and that the only response he received to his complaints was to the effect of "Thank you, we have noted your concerns".

Francesca Albanese, the UN special rapporteur on the Palestinian Territories, praised Smith's move as brave, and said she hoped many more diplomats would join him.



## Epic production 'Battle of Rostam and Sohrab' makes splash in theatrical world

### Arts & Culture Desk

Parsaei, who has previously directed productions such as 'Esfandiar's Seven Labors' and 'Oliver Twist,' said that he has always been drawn to the 'Shahnameh' (The Book of Kings), Iran's national epic poem. Parsaei said the tale of 'Battle of Rostam and Sohrab' holds a special significance for Iranians, striking a deep chord with the nation's people. "The people of Iran love the stories of 'Shahnameh', and we have tried to bring this story to life in a way that is both visually stunning and emotionally powerful," Parsaei said. "We have used all of the latest technology, including

animation, lighting, and special effects, to create a truly immersive experience for the audience." Parsaei acknowledged that the production has been expensive, but he believes that it is worth it. "I don't think about the cost of the production when I'm working on a project," he said. "I just want to create something that is beautiful and meaningful. And I believe that this production is something special." Parsaei said that the high-ticket price is necessary to cover the costs of the production, which includes a cast and crew of over 300 people. "I know that the ticket price is high, but I believe that it is worth it," Parsaei said. "This

is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I think that people will be willing to pay a premium to see it." Parsaei also emphasized the importance of government support for the arts. "In other countries, the government supports the arts and provides funding for productions like this one," he said. "But in Iran, we don't have that kind of support. We have to rely on private investors to make productions like this possible." Despite the challenges, Parsaei is optimistic about the future of the arts in Iran. "I believe that there is a lot of talent and creativity in this country, and I think that with the right support, we can create something truly special," he said.



## Iran, Malaysia produce documentary on mosques ahead of World Mosque Day

### Arts & Culture Desk

A documentary showcasing the most spectacular mosques in Iran and Malaysia was produced to coincide with World Mosque Day, highlighting the significance of these houses of worship in advancing Islamic goals. The nine-minute documentary, produced by the Iranian Cultural Center in Malaysia, explores the history, architecture, and current importance

of mosques in both countries. The film features lesser-seen images of the interior and artistic designs of these iconic structures. The documentary was produced in response to the Zionist desecration of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, a painful memory for Muslims that is commemorated on August 21. The film aims to pay tribute to the role of mosques in promoting Islamic values. The documentary features some of the most beautiful

mosques in Iran, including the Nasir al-Molk Mosque, the Jame Mosque of Isfahan, and the Blue Mosque of Tabriz, as well as notable mosques in Malaysia, such as the National Mosque, the Zahir Mosque, and the Crystal Mosque. The film will be broadcast on various Iranian television networks on World Mosque Day, which falls on August 21. It has been produced in Persian, English, and Malay with subtitles.

## Iranian composer wins third prize at Italy's '2 Agosto' competition



Iranian musician Sina Jafarikia took home the third prize at Italy's prestigious "2 Agosto" International Composition Competition for a one-movement symphonic piece inspired by Persian music. Jafarikia, a composer and musician, said the competition is one of the most famous in the world and is held annually in Italy with the support of the Italian presidential office and the mayor of Bologna. This year's festival was the 30th edition, and it was held with the presence of prominent judges, Mehr News Agency reported. The Iranian composer's piece, a symphonic work inspired by Persian music, was written with a contemporary music approach, but with subtle influences from traditional Persian music. Jafarikia noted

that only music professionals would be able to detect the Persian influences in his work. Jafarikia received a cash prize and a certificate signed by the mayor of Bologna. He said the competition is a significant event in the music world, with numerous composers presenting their works from different countries. The competition is held in memory of the 1980 terrorist attack in Bologna, which killed 75 people and injured 200. The Iranian composer's work, along with the works of the other two top composers, will be performed by various symphony orchestras and broadcast simultaneously on the Italian Rai5 channel. Jafarikia has previously won prizes at competitions in Italy and New York, including a

prize for a violin solo piece at the Milan Conservatory and a prize for a string quintet piece at a competition held by the Cultural and Global Association in New York. Jafarikia is currently working on translating a 1,000-page music book, which he hopes to publish by the end of the year. He has also written his own book, "Theory and Practice of Music". The "2 Agosto" competition has a reputation for being one of the most prestigious music competitions in the world, thanks to the presence of international and renowned judges. This year's competition was judged by a panel including Claudio Kazan, professor of Composition at the University of Rome, and Maestro Sascha Goetzl, a French composer and pianist.

## 63 countries participate in Pars Int'l Photo Award Festival

The first Pars International Photo Award Festival attracted participants from 63 countries, the event's executive secretary said. Reza Mir-Mohammadi said the festival aims to promote art and culture, support young and talented artists, and showcase the capabilities of the Pars Special Economic Energy Zone, IRNA wrote. The festival, which was held in three categories — oil industry, family, and environment and tourism — received

entries from photographers from around the world. After a judging process, winners were selected and will be announced at a ceremony in September, coinciding with the opening of an exhibition of the winning works. Mir-Mohammadi also announced that a festival book, 'Pars Photo', has been published and will be presented to winners and attendees at the ceremony. The festival was organized by the Pars Special Economic

Energy Zone, in cooperation with the National Iranian Oil Company, and with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the International Federation of Photographic Art (FIAP). Mir-Mohammadi explained that the festival was originally scheduled to take place in March, but was postponed to September due to various reasons, despite the book being ready and the winners having been selected.