

Biden remarks 'green light' for Israel to continue war: *Hamas*



Momeni to Focus on Social Freedoms, Equal Opportunities for All

Interior Ministry pick aims to advance government's agenda



By Mohammad Javad Kolivand
Former lawmaker

Iran's Interior Ministry, with its broad portfolio, is undoubtedly one of the

most sensitive government departments. Spanning rural development, provincial and border management, municipal affairs, security, labor relations, and the oversight of political parties and civil institutions, the ministry's remit is far-reaching. Given this diversity of responsibilities, it is only natural that the selection of the interior minister involves consultation with various state organizations. Such a collaborative approach is essential as the ministry's mandates cut across multiple sectors, and fulfilling its missions demands inter-sectoral cooperation.

Seeking counsel to identify a minister who can foster harmony and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the ministry's various field of work is both prudent and requisite. This does not, however, imply that the key post has been ceded to any particular faction, nor does it diminish President Masoud Pezeshkian's confidence in his preferred candidate, Eskandar Momeni. On the contrary, Momeni is the president's choice and Pezeshkian has every confidence in his ability to drive forward the agenda of his government of national accord.

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Eskandar Momeni, the nominee for Iran's Interior Ministry, addresses Parliament in the capital Tehran on August 20, 2024, as Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf (top right) turns to talk to a lawmaker, ahead of a vote of confidence on August 21.

● SNN

Women gain ground in decision-making roles: *MP*

EXCLUSIVE



Iran coach Kaveh pleased with Iran's 'decent' FS run in Paris



Aquarium Valley, one of the most stunning natural highlights in Fars Province



Hezbollah in control more than Israel knows

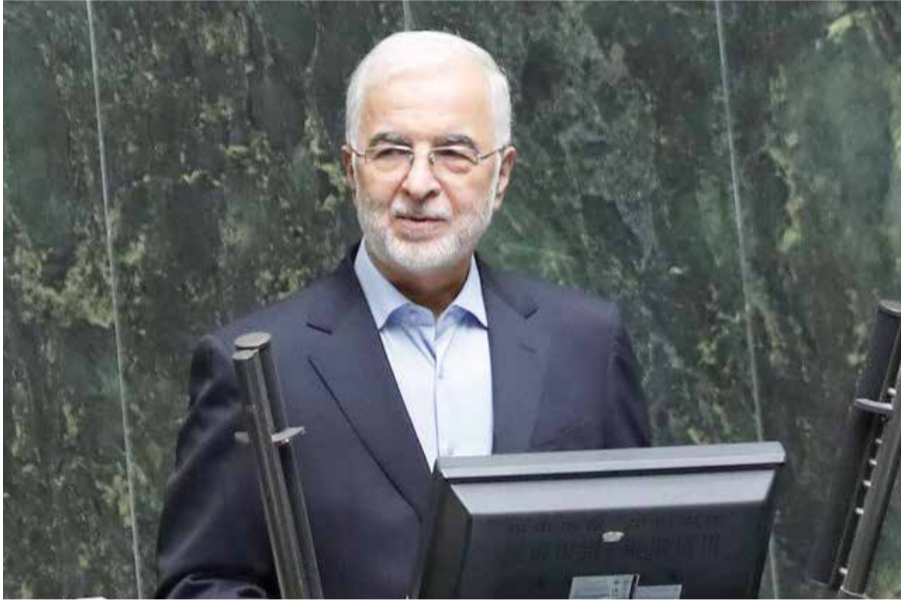
SPECIAL ISSUE



Israel envoy says UN building 'should be wiped off face of earth'

Israel's outgoing Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan said the UN building in New York is "unnecessary" and "should be closed and wiped off the face of the earth."

Momeni to focus on social freedoms, equal opportunities for all



The proposed nominee for the Ministry of Interior has called for further respect to social freedoms and the parity of men's and women's rights as he outlined his plans at Parliament on the fourth day of the legislative body's reviewing of the qualification of President Masoud Pezeshkian's cabinet lineup. "I believe that we should provide equal opportunities for all citizens, both men and women, and each person should be used in terms of his or her special talents and abilities, so that the feeling of discrimination is eradicated, so that we can all sense equality and brotherhood," Eskandar Momeni said in his address to Parliament on Tuesday. "Paying attention to the internal capacity of the Ministry of Interior is one of my priorities," he added. "Organizational promotion, motivational programs and uplifting their dignity and livelihood, meritocracy and consolidation of systematic oversight and the revival of the position of the Ministry of Interior are among the most important goals." Momeni underlined that the country more than ever before needs security, peace, coordination and national solidarity as well as hope and creating hope.

The ministerial nominee for Interior Ministry also highlighted the protection of public culture and Islamic values with a "cultural and persuasive approach." In an open session on Tuesday, Mustafa Pour-Dehqan spoke in support of Momeni's qualifications and plans, saying the nominee is "well-known, disciplined and faithful" who is committed to the principles of the country's law enforcement and security. Hamidreza Guderzi, as a critic of the nominee, said, "I registered as an opponent, but I will vote for you as a supporter...The Ministry of Interior is a vast ministry and all the internal discipline of the country rests with this ministry. Our request is that you be mindful of the selection of governors, mayors, village councilors and municipalities." The blueprints and qualifications of Reza Salehi Amiri, who is Pezeshkian's pick for Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, were also debated at Parliament on Tuesday. "We have set our general policies by defining 10 strategies and 50 plans," Salehi Amiri said. "Our first strategy is to develop domestic tourism. Domestic

tourism in the country enjoys a very high potential and we can achieve job creation and elimination of deprivation by expanding tourism. The development of pilgrimage tourism is our main point and advantage in the country, and we must make an all-round investment in this regard." Salehi Amiri also pointed to the fortification of "cultural and economic diplomacy" as one of his strategies for managing his ministry. Speaking in his support, Hamidreza Kazemi said Salehi Amiri is a "well-seasoned" individual in terms of knowledge and experience, and he is devoted to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution. Ali Khezri opined as a critic that the nominee lacks a "reform-oriented program" and the issue will cause many problems for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. The Iranian Parliament also discussed on Tuesday the plans and qualifications of Abbas Salehi Shariati as the nominee for heading the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. "The nexus between the government and the nation can be culture and media... So, the people of culture, art, and media are the leaders in this field, and these

people, their standing, rights, institutions, and organizations should be taken into consideration," Salehi Shariati said. "The role of Iranians in the spread of Islam in the world is unique and the Islamic culture was disseminated throughout the Islamic territories with the presence of Iranian artists, writers, poets, scientists, philosophers, researchers and teachers," he underlined. Salehi Shariati had no critics at Parliament on Tuesday and his proponents made no speeches.

Nominees picked after full deliberation: President

In a meeting with a group of lawmakers on Monday night, Pezeshkian emphasized the necessity for close interaction between the administration and Parliament to settle problems and said he had chosen his ministers after thorough consultations. The president stressed that none of the ministerial nominees had been chosen without "consultations with the high-level authorities" of the country. Pezeshkian said his incoming administration has honored the pledge of "national consensus" and now expects the lawmakers to demonstrate their commitment in practice by giving a vote of confidence to his cabinet. What the administration cares about the most at present is to narrow the gap between the people and government and ensure the Iranian people's satisfaction, he added. Less than two weeks after being sworn in as the new president of Iran, Pezeshkian submitted the list of his proposed ministerial picks to the Parliament for a vote of confidence on August 11. Iran's Parliament is expected to hold a formal session on the votes of confidence for the 19 ministerial nominees on Wednesday.

Iran, FAO to bolster climate resilience



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE), with the support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), initiated their cooperation aimed at strengthening resilience to the climate change. The newly signed project, titled "Strengthening Iran's access to GCF with national ownership, knowledge-based policies, and sound technologies," represents a crucial step towards aligning the national strategies with climate action and promoting sustainable development, Tasnim reported. Iran, like many nations, faces the challenges of climate change and grappling with its adverse ef-

fects, including escalating droughts and catastrophic floods further exacerbating water scarcity issues affecting ecosystems, biodiversity, food production, and economy, IRNA reported. Engaging all key stakeholders including government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the inception workshop for this project was held on August 19, marking the official launch of this crucial initiative and setting the stage for collaborative efforts towards achieving climate resilience in the country. The transformative initiative between the Islamic Republic of Iran, GCF, and FAO aims to fortify the

country's resilience to climate change through a multifaceted approach. Additionally, by facilitating access to advanced climate-resilient technologies and engaging both targeted sectors and the private sector in climate action initiatives, Iran aims to develop a strong network of climate projects aligned with national priorities and GCF standards. Anticipated outcomes include enhanced national coordination mechanisms, the development of a strategy for direct access to the GCF, an updated GCF Country Program, and the establishment of a comprehensive National Climate Change Knowledge Hub.

Wheat production up by 100% in some provinces

Wheat production has risen by up to 100% in some Iranian provinces thanks to bumper harvest and price incentives offered to farmers. Iran's Ministry of Agriculture said on Monday that wheat production in the northeastern province of Golestan, the third largest wheat producer in the country, had doubled this year compared to figures reported at the end of last harvesting season in August, Press TV reported. It said the central province of Isfahan had also report-

ed a year on year increase of 98% in wheat crop, adding that production had also risen by more than 70% in three provinces of North Khorasan in northeast, Markazi in center and Hamedan in western Iran. The ministry said total domestic wheat purchases had reached 11.51 million metric tons (mT) since they started in early April, up 16% compared to the same period last year. It said the funds spent on wheat purchases had exceeded 2,030 trillion rials

(\$3.4 billion) of which 942 trillion rials had been paid to farmers under the government's Guaranteed Purchase Program. Experts say the significant increase in domestic wheat supplies in Iran is a result of better climate conditions and favorable prices offered by the government. The government announced last year that it will raise its guaranteed price for domestic wheat purchase as part of a policy to further cut back on imports.

Interior Ministry pick ...

Momeni's military background has been a point of focus for some, but what is often overlooked is his extensive experience with the Traffic Police and the transformative impact he had during that tenure. Much of his military career was spent in this public-facing role, addressing societal issues and interacting closely with the people. This experience paves the way for his prospective work at the Interior Ministry. A key consideration is the ap-

pointments that the Interior Minister will make. It is likely that some of these appointments will have security or military backgrounds, which is understandable given the nature of certain departments within the ministry, such as the deputy for security affairs. However, the political domains need the involvement of politicians, and the deputy for civil affairs requires expertise in urban and development management. Thus, the ministry demands a diverse range of managerial expertise and

backgrounds. As Momeni, or indeed any other nominee, takes the reins of the Interior Ministry, they must first consider the broader implications of higher-level laws and directives and learn from past experiences to chart a course for the ministry's future. Should amendments to existing laws be deemed necessary based on past experiences, the interior minister should engage with Parliament and the government to effect change. Alternatively, if laws are al-

ready in place, creativity in their implementation can ensure widespread acceptance. It is also imperative to acknowledge the unique cultural and social dynamics of each city and province. A creative approach to law enforcement is warranted, underpinned by respect for people's rights and the understanding the point that posts exist to serve people and solve their problems. I believe Momeni can draw on Pezeshkian's approaches to carry the ministry's missions, such as the moral police that enforces social codes. At times, it becomes necessary to amend laws, and

even when enforcing them, cultural nuances and softer strategies must be considered. A heavy-handed approach to social issues without understanding their underlying causes is unlikely to bear fruit. In certain instances, deploying the Law Enforcement Force, which falls under the Interior Ministry, may not be the optimal strategy. Other organizations should also lend their support to the Interior Ministry, and the interior minister can act as the lynchpin, coordinating the efforts of various organizations with differing responsibilities but shared legal frameworks.

Momeni's track record, particularly with the Traffic Police, suggests he is well-equipped to establish this effective coordination. Given the Interior Ministry's broad responsibilities, the proposed minister must be flanked by individuals capable of prioritizing issues and needs and acting accordingly. However, in light of the Leader's emphasis on economic matters, the Interior Ministry should also direct its attention to economic concerns. Economic development and security are intrinsically linked, and fostering the former will contribute to the latter.

Aquarium Valley, one of the most stunning natural highlights in Fars Province



Iranica Desk

Darab, an ancient city located in Fars Province, boasts a rich history that spans several millennia. This picturesque destination attracts countless tourists and mountaineers throughout the year, drawn by its unique blend of historical, natural, and trekking attractions. Visitors to Darab can explore ancient villages, majestic waterfalls, deep gorges, lush valleys, and verdant mountains. In this article, we invite you to discover one of the most breathtaking natural high-

lights and tourist destinations in Darab: Aquarium Valley. Situated near the village of Forg at an altitude of 1,330 meters above sea level, the Aquarium Valley delights visitors with its stunning landscapes, which feature cascading waterfalls, verdant reeds, and tranquil pools of crystal-clear water. This idyllic setting provides a perfect backdrop for exploration and relaxation, as reported by IRNA. A journey to the extraordinary Aquarium Valley is regarded as one of the most rewarding natural experiences one can have in Fars

Province. The serene environment envelops visitors in a sense of peace and harmony, accentuated by the vibrant chorus of local birds and the beauty of the surrounding landscape. However, it's crucial to recognize that exploring this valley requires not only a profound appreciation for nature but also an adventurous spirit and a readiness to embrace the unknown. Typically, a day trip to Aquarium Valley is required, offering an immersive experience enhanced by the enchanting sounds of wildlife and the magnificent vistas that greet you at every turn.

Awe-inspiring waterfall

The waterfall that flows through this captivating valley is often referred to as Kaseh Rud, named after a water-rich river that sustains five breathtaking waterfalls. This river gathers water from upstream springs, irrigating the fertile lands of Forg village. As Kaseh Rud cascades down towering cliffs and meanders through shallow channels, it significantly contributes to the unparalleled beauty of Aquarium Valley.

In addition to Kaseh Rud, another river from the west flows into Aquarium Valley, where the two rivers converge just below a scenic bridge, further enriching the area's natural splendor.

Flora and Fauna

The mountainous climate of Aquarium Valley has fostered a diverse and vibrant array of vegetation. In addition to the extensive reeds that flourish here, various plant species such as willows, figs, palm trees, mountain wormwood, and mangrove shrubs create a stunning visual tapestry throughout the valley and its surroundings. As you wander through the gorge, you may feel the gentle nibbles of small and large fish brushing against your feet as they swim in the clear waters. Historically, the region was home to various mountain animals, including gazelles, but their numbers have dwindled due to excessive and illegal hunting practices. After approximately an hour of walking along the valley floor,

you will come across a large reed bed, where the towering reeds can reach heights of three meters or more. Nestled behind these dense reeds lies the abundant Panjali Spring, which is framed by a solitary Panjali Palm tree—a notable attraction that stands resilient despite having survived a fire. Beyond this spring, the valley narrows, and adventurers must possess technical climbing skills to continue their exploration.



At the end of the Aquarium Valley, you'll find a large pit filled with crystal-clear water, intriguingly sourced entirely from underground springs. By traversing the four-kilometer expanse of the valley, you will arrive at one of the most beautiful aerial bridges in the country—an exceptional feature of this extraordinary area.

This impressive aerial bridge features four 35-meter arches and soars approximately 84 meters above the ground. It is

a concrete arch structure that spans between two tunnels, measuring 358 meters and 278 meters in length. Gazing at the Aquarium Valley from this towering bridge offers an awe-inspiring perspective that elevates your appreciation of the stunning landscape below. The bridge and the access route to the waterfall are strategically located at the border between the Rastaq and Forg villages.

Traveling through the rocky terrain necessitates the use of hands for climbing, especially in areas where waterfalls make the stones slippery. Therefore, a basic level of physical fitness is essential when navigating the initial sections of the valley. It is advisable to wear proper footwear and exercise caution to prevent slips and falls.

In certain sections along the valley, you will need to wade into the water. For those who enjoy water sports, do not miss



the opportunity to dive and swim in the deeper pools that can be found. Beyond the Panjali Spring, the path narrows, and it becomes crucial to be a capable climber or mountaineer to continue further. It is strongly recommended not to attempt these sections without the guidance of a professional. While the initial journey may seem manageable, the trail progressively presents more challenging obstacles.

Trekking poles, hiking shoes, and other specialized equipment become vital for navigating the more demanding later portions of the valley. Unfortunately, suitable camping spots within Aquarium Valley are limited. Therefore, if you plan to stay overnight in the area, consider heading to the surrounding villages, where local homes and guesthouses can provide comfortable accommodations.

Best time to visit

The best time to explore Aquarium Valley is during the spring, particularly in May, when numerous hiking groups often visit the area. Fortunately, the presence of hikers does not lead to overcrowding, allowing Aquarium Valley to retain its status as one of the untouched and picturesque spots in Fars Province. The pleasant and refreshing climate, especially within the dry expanses of Fars, transforms Aquarium Valley into a paradise that should not be overlooked.

For years, the pristine, untamed nature of Aquarium Valley has captivated visitors with its beauty and grandeur. As we relish in the wonders of this remarkable natural area, let us also embrace the principles of responsible tourism, ensuring that it remains protected for those who come after us—allowing future generations to enjoy its unparalleled wonders.



Hezbollah in control more than Israel knows



A Hezbollah motorcycle follows a multiple rocket launcher down a tunnel in a video released by Hezbollah on August 16, 2024.
● AL MAYADEEN



Hezbollah's soldiers give a military salute in front of their motorcycles inside a tunnel in a video released by Hezbollah on August 16, 2024.
● AL MAYADEEN

International Desk

PERSPECTIVE

The powerful Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah has, in a recent display of force, unveiled footage of its underground missile facility, showcasing its military might as tensions flare with the Israeli military alongside the ongoing Gaza conflict. In a video lasting nearly five minutes, Hezbollah flaunts its capabilities, featuring fighters on motorcycles and with laptops, navigating a network of rocky tunnels alongside a fleet of trucks. The video culminates with the reveal of an underground launch site, where trucks with rocket launchers emerge from a maze of tunnels.



A picture taken on a June 2019 guided tour with the IDF shows the interior of a Hezbollah tunnel on the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon in northern Israel.
● JACK GUEZ/AFP

the facility name suggesting it could be part of a chain of underground cities, the extent of which remains a mystery. The location and connectivity of these facilities remain unknown, adding to the enigma surrounding Hezbollah's military prowess.

By releasing these images, Hezbollah sends a clear signal to Israel that the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon is prepared and unafraid of potential conflict. According to IRNA, the video merely scratches the surface of Hezbollah's true power, especially concerning precision missiles.

Hezbollah's actions serve as a reminder that they are in control and will not be bound by rules of engagement dictated by Israel's interests. The group may choose to unveil more surprises in the coming days, keeping Israel and its supporters on their toes.

Hezbollah's military might has not gone unnoticed by former Israeli military officials. Ram Aminach, a retired brigadier general and financial adviser to the Israeli army, acknowledged that Hezbollah poses a significant threat, with a large stockpile of rockets that rival those of top superpowers.

As tensions rise, Israel finds itself facing a formidable foe, as described by the Media Line, an independent American news agency specializing in Middle Eastern coverage. With Hezbollah's army of "tens of thousands of soldiers and over 100,000 missiles," Israel is confronted with a significant military challenge.



Supporters of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement gather at a rally on January 3, 2023.
● MARWAN NAAMANI/DPA

According to the Lebanese TV channel Al Mayadeen, the facility is not just secretly established and camouflaged

but also fortified against potential enemy attacks. The video includes threats from Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the

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The resistance group may have more up its sleeve, with the facility name suggesting it could be part of a chain of underground cities, the extent of which remains a mystery. The location and connectivity of these facilities remain unknown, adding to the enigma surrounding Hezbollah's military prowess.

Hezbollah touts rocket cave network capable of underground launches



By Thomas Newdick
Journalist

PERSPECTIVE

Hezbollah has released a video providing a rare look inside its extensive network of tunnel systems, including concealed heavy multiple rocket launch systems that can be fired from underground. This is all part of an extensive arsenal of weapons that could be employed against Israel. The release of the footage comes as tensions in the Middle East remain high, with fears of an all-out conflict between Israel and Hezbollah as well as a potential broader conflict involving Iran and other Iran-aligned armed groups.

The video in question was published by Hezbollah, initially on the official Telegram account of the Lebanon-based Al Mayadeen news channel. Immediately obvious is the scale of the tunnels themselves, with those that are shown being wide enough to easily accommodate truck-based multiple rocket launch systems. Various motorcycles can also be seen speeding through the underground passages. Accessed behind heavy blast doors, the tunnels are equipped with lighting and communications systems, while the walls are adorned with posters. Perhaps most interesting are the apertures cut into the roof in certain parts of the tunnel, which allow rockets to be fired without the launch vehicles having to leave the tunnels. Similar to the Iranian tunnel networks for ballistic missiles, this means the rockets can be moved around the tunnels, making them even harder to target, even with bunker-busting weapons.

The size of the tunnels would allow plenty of reloads, so huge barrages could potentially be launched from relative safety. At the same time, the design of these tunnels is usually such that even if one of the apertures is struck by a missile or bomb, the rest of the tunnel network survives intact, meaning that a hazardous ground assault might be needed to fully clear the underground network. The truck-mounted multiple rocket launch systems seen in the video appear to be examples of the Khaibar-1 (also referred to as the M-302), a Syrian-made 302mm caliber weapon. These unguided rockets are fired from rail-type launchers, normally carried in box launchers with a capacity of four or six rounds. Fitted with characteristic fixed tailfins, the Khaibar-1 can be launched from fixed positions or mounted on trucks and semi-trailers. The rocket has a reported range in the region of 62 miles, carries a 331-pound warhead, and has a launch weight of around 1,653 pounds.

Use of the Khaibar-1 by Hezbollah dates back at least as far as the conflict with Israel in 2006, and, as we have discussed in the past, it is judged to be one of the more capable designs in the Hezbollah rocket arsenal, with better accuracy and generally easier to handle than comparable weapons used by the group. The video includes a warning to Israel, stating that the country "will face a destiny and reality it didn't expect any day. War with us [Hezbollah] extends across all of Palestine from the Lebanese border to the Jordanian border. To the Red Sea, to Kiryat Shmona [in

the northern of Israel, near the Lebanese border], to Eilat."

"These targets are in our possession, and these missiles are placed, deployed, and focused on targets in perfect security," the video adds.



This frame grab from a video released by Hezbollah on August 16, 2024, shows the Lebanese Resistance movement's new underground missile facility. **AL MAYADEEN**

Hezbollah's underground tunnel network is far more sophisticated than that used by Hamas in Gaza and, according to Israeli reports, it starts in the south of Lebanon before snaking up to the border with Israel and even into Israeli territory. In all the tunnel network is thought to extend over hundreds of kilometers, at least according to Israeli accounts, although the vast majority of this network comprises far more modest and narrow tunnels than those seen in the video.

As well as accommodating rockets, and perhaps also missiles and even drones, as well as other weapons caches, the tunnels provide a means for Hezbollah to bring fighters closer to Israel—and even into Israel itself. Tunnels like these can be used to launch surprise attacks. The IDF is acutely aware of the threat posed by Hezbollah in the border area and has, in recent months, taken a variety of measures to try and flush out fighters.

The Times of Israel cites research from Tal Beeri, a former member of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and now a director at the Alma Research and Education Center, which focuses on Israel's northern border, who has gathered details on the Hezbollah tunnels using open-source intelligence. Beeri describes a "map of polygons," which outlines the locations of apparent tunnels in the south of Lebanon, with their footprints extending to 36 different regions, towns, and villages.

"In our assessment, these polygons mark Hezbollah's staging centers as part of the 'defense' plan against an Israeli invasion of Lebanon,"

Beeri says. "Each local staging center ('defense') possesses a network of local underground tunnels. Between all these centers, an infrastructure of regional tunnels was built, interconnected [with] them."

Beeri outlines different types of tunnels, including attack tunnels that are designed to launch offensive military operations against Israel and which are large enough to accommodate pickup trucks as well as medium-sized trucks. Some if not all of these are assumed to surface within Israeli territory.

The Alma Research and Education Center also believes that Hezbollah has built several so-called proximate tunnels, similar to attack tunnels but not crossing the border. Tactical tunnels, by contrast, are smaller and can accommodate movements by people and, in some cases, motorcycles. These are typically used to provide cover for fighters, who can also fire from tunnel shafts, before going back underground to rearm and rest. Finally, there is the category of explosive tunnels, which are intended only to accommodate explosives. These would then be detonated when the IDF advances on the ground inside Lebanon.

While Hezbollah is primarily backed by Iran, Israeli assessments suggest that North Korea played a significant role in Hezbollah's tunnel project, dating back as far as the 1980s. This would make sense given North Korea's long experience in digging tunnels in mountainous and rocky areas, although Iran, too, likely also provided direct assistance. Notably, there are some clear parallels between Hezbollah's underground tunnel systems with their concealed multiple rocket launchers and the underground Iranian bases containing rockets and missiles.

Potentially more worrying than the multiple rocket launch systems seen in the video released today are accounts from Israel that Hezbollah may also use its tunnels to accommodate more capable ballistic missiles, namely the Iranian-made Fateh-110

short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).

Capable of hitting targets at a distance of 155–186 miles, the Fateh-110 is a road-mobile system and one of the longest-ranged weapons in the

combined with aperture-firing capabilities, albeit with shorter-range weapons compared with Iran, seems to be new.

It's hardly a surprise that Hezbollah is taking the opportunity to showcase these capa-

abilities now, with tensions with Israel—and in the wider region—at a high.

Since the assassination of Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut by Israel on July 30, the group has threatened some kind of retaliation against Israel. This could involve a joint effort with Hamas, whose political leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran a day after the killing of Shukr. At the same time, there is the continued specter of a massive



A multiple rocket launcher belonging to Hezbollah raises into the firing position, below an aperture in the roof of a tunnel in a video released by Hezbollah on August 16, 2024. **AL MAYADEEN**

der fighting, which has recently intensified, and has also seen the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians. Should an all-out conflict between Israel and Hezbollah erupt, it seems very likely that the group's tunnel network will play a role. At the very least, its existence provides a challenge to Israel, which is already facing a group identified as the world's most heavily armed non-state actor. Having rockets and soldiers protected deep below ground makes it that much harder to locate these threats, let alone eliminate them, a message that the video very deliberately conveys.

The article first appeared on *The War Zone*.



An apparent Khaibar-1 rocket is seized by Israeli security forces aboard a ship in the Red Sea, about 930 miles from the Israeli coast in March 2014. **GETTY IMAGES**

Iran coach Kaveh pleased with Iran's 'decent' FS run in Paris

Sports Desk

Iran's freestyle head coach Mohsen Kaveh says he was satisfied with his men's performance at the wrestling competitions of the Paris Olympics, though he admitted that the results "could have been better."

The five-man squad collected three silver medals and a bronze, with Younes Emami leaving the Games empty-handed after a technical-fall defeat against American Kyle Dake in the 74kg quarterfinals, as Iran failed to grab a freestyle gold in a second successive Olympics.

Hassan Yazdani's quest for a second Olympic gold, which would have seen him become the most-decorated Iranian in the history of the Games, ended in vain following a 7-1 loss to Bulgaria's Magomed Ramazanov in the 86kg final – during which the wrestling sensation struggled with a recurring shoulder injury from the get-go, calling for treatment on several occasions throughout the six minutes of action.

"I think the Iranian squad had a decent run in Paris, though the outcome could have been better, had it not been for some misfortune and unexpected incidents in the final showpieces," Kaveh told IRNA.

"Yazdani's injury was a real shock. He showed great courage and dedication to wrestle with one hand for five minutes. He had a neck-and-neck battle against Dauren Kurugliev in the quarterfinals and showed no signs of injury," said the Iranian head coach, who believes Yazdani's return to competitive action might have been premature.



Iran head coach Mohsen Kaveh (R) makes instructions to 97kg wrestler Amir-Ali Azarpira during the freestyle contests at the Paris Olympics.
● IAWF

"Yazdani had been sidelined for eight to nine months [after last October's surgery] and worked so hard to make it to the Games, but the truth is that it takes one year for any wrestler to fully recover from the injury. I'm sure he would have easily won the gold if it wasn't for the problem in the final as Kurugliev was a much more formidable wrestler than Ramazanov." Heading to Paris as the reigning

world champion, Amirhossein Zare' was the ultimate favorite to win the superheavyweight gold but the Iranian came short against familiar foe Geno Petriashvili of Georgia in a thrilling 125kg final. Trailing 10-1 at the break, Zare' fought back to cut the deficit to a single point though it proved too little too late. "It was the worst day of his career as we expected Amirhossein

to win the gold. I think the match officials played a significant part in Zare's defeat. Petriashvili repeatedly hit Zare' in the face and stopped the bout time and again as he clearly ran out of steam in the second period. The referee should have cautioned him to keep him from using the dark arts," Kaveh said. Having finished fifth in last year's World Championships, Rahman Amouzad seemed to

be back to his ruthless form for the Olympics, crushing two world champions in American Zain Retherford and Hungarian Ismail Musukaev, as well as European gold medalist Islam Dudaev of Albania to reach the 65kg final.

However, the 2022 world champion was the third Iranian to suffer a final loss – stunned 10-3 by low-profile Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka.

"The 65kg event featured eight world-class wrestlers and Rahman did great to reach the final, given the tough draw he faced," Kaveh said, adding: "We knew Kotaro was not going to be an easy opponent for Rahman as he had beaten world and Olympic champion Takuto Otoguro in the Japanese Olympic trials. He did a magnificent job to keep Rahman at bay and made the most of his sloppiness in the first period to score the takedown. The defeat still takes nothing from Amouzad's impressive campaign."

Young prodigy Amir-Ali Azarpira was the surprise Iranian medalist in Paris, bouncing back from a first-round loss to eventual gold medalist Akhmed Tazhudinov to beat American great Kyle Snyder for the 97kg bronze.

"I think he even deserved to win the gold," Kaveh said of the 22-year-old Iranian, whose impressive run over the past 12 months convinced the Iranian coaching staff to pick him over two-time world champion Kameran Qassempour for the Iranian 97kg slot in Paris.

"His bout against Tazhudinov could have gone either way. Amir-Ali was unlucky to lose after being in front until the final 37 seconds."

Sepahan signs World Cup winner Nzonzi; Mohammadi joins Persepolis

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan signed French midfielder Steven Nzonzi a free agent.

A former player of Stoke City, Sevilla – with whom he won the UEFA Europa League in 2016 – and AS Roma, Nzonzi spent last season at Turkish top-flight side Konyaspor, scoring four goals in 36 appearances in all competitions.

Capped 20 times for the national team, Nzonzi, 35, was part of the French squad when Les Bleus lifted the World Cup trophy in 2018.

The central midfielder is the ninth player to join Jose Morais's side during a busy transfer window, following Javad Aqaiepour, Mahdi Limouchi,

Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi, Saleh Hardani, Hossein Goodarzi, Mohammad Alinejad, Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi, and Vahdat Hanonov.

Having finished third in the league last season, Sepahan got off to a flying start in the new campaign, beating newly-promoted Chadormalou 3-1 at home on Friday.

Reds recruitment

Meanwhile, Iranian international fullback Milad Mohammadi joined Iranian champion Persepolis after terminating his contract with Turkish side Adana Demirspor.

Mohammadi's signing ends the Reds' desperate quest for an orthodox left back after parting ways with Ali Ne'mati and Qa-



tari Abdelkarim Hassan before the new season, new Spanish head coach Juan Carlos Garrido had to use left-footed winger Vahid Amiri in the back four during the preseason friendlies,

as well as the 1-1 home draw against Zob Ahan on the opening day of the league campaign. Mohammadi, 30, whose twin brother Mehrdad plays for Persepolis archrival Esteghlal,



has 62 international caps under his belt and represented the country at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, while helping the team reach the 2019 and 2023 Asian Cup semifinals.

French midfielder Steven Nzonzi (L) and fullback Milad Mohammadi joined Persian Gulf Pro League clubs Sepahan and Persepolis respectively.



Jannik Sinner of Italy poses with the Cincinnati Open trophy after beating Frances Tiafoe in Cincinnati, OH, US, on Aug. 19, 2024.
● SUSAN MULLANE/USA TODAY SPORTS

Sinner beats Tiafoe to win Cincinnati Open

REUTERS – World number one Jannik Sinner beat Frances Tiafoe 7-6(4) 6-2 at the Cincinnati Open final on Monday, showing that despite recent health struggles he will still be the man to beat at the upcoming U.S. Open in New York. The 23-year-old, who has been struggling over the last couple months with a hip issue and who missed the Paris Olympics due to tonsillitis, was error-prone to start

the contest and came up limping after several points in the tight first set. Sinner's triumph at the Masters 1000 event follows his Grand Slam breakthrough at the Australian Open in January and is his fifth title of the year and first at the tournament in Ohio. Critically, Sinner has now shown that he can win even when not 100% healthy, an attribute he may

need to utilize at Flushing Meadows where defending champion Novak Djokovic and world number three Carlos Alcaraz are the other hot favorites. "It was a very difficult week, tough week. I'm very happy about today's match," Sinner said in his on-court interview. "It was very tough mentally... We both felt a lot of tension, but I'm very glad about the level I played,

especially in the important moments." Sinner said his sole focus now is on getting ready for the year's final major. "Now, for sure, it's important to recover, to be to be ready for New York," he said. "I'm very happy to be in a position where I am and just trying to keep going mentally with this hunger to keep playing."

Israeli strike on Gaza school kills 12 Palestinians

Biden remarks 'green light' for Israel to continue war: *Hamas*



Palestinians carry their children as they flee after an Israeli strike on a school, housing displaced Palestinians, in the Rimal neighborhood of central Gaza City on August 20, 2024. **OMAR AL-QATTAA/AFP**

Israel has killed 12 Palestinians in a strike on a school in Gaza City, Gaza civil defense said, where "hundreds" of displaced people are sheltering. "Our crews retrieved 12 martyrs from the Mustafa Hafiz school, which was bombed by the Israeli occupation west of Gaza City," agency's spokesman Mahmud Bassal said. Thousands of displaced Palestinians had sought refuge in the school, he said, amid the ongoing Israel's onslaught on the

Gaza Strip. The Israeli military claimed the school was targeted because it housed a command-and-control center. Bassal said the strike hit the second floor of the school building. Photos showed the school reduced to rubble, with scores of Palestinian men and women, many holding children, fleeing the site after the strike. In recent weeks, the Israeli military has struck several schools across Gaza, primarily in Gaza City, ac-

curring them of housing Hamas command centers, which the resistance group denies. Earlier this month, the military had struck the Al-Tabieen School in Gaza City, which according to the civil defense agency killed 93 Palestinians. Tens of thousands of displaced people have taken refuge in schools since the beginning of the Israel's devastating war on October 7. Israel's military offensive has killed at least 40,173 people in Gaza, according to the territory's health

ministry. Most of the dead are women and children, according to the UN human rights office. Diplomatic efforts are underway to end the regime's bloody campaign in the Palestinian territory. The three mediators, namely the US, Qatar and Egypt, have spent months trying to end the war in Gaza, with the talks repeatedly stalling. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has traveled to the region for the ninth time since October,

said on Monday that Israel has accepted a proposal to bridge differences holding up a cease-fire and captive release in Gaza, and he called on Hamas to do the same, without saying whether concerns cited by the resistance group had been addressed.

US siding with Israel

Hamas has said it is losing faith in the US as a mediator, accusing American negotiators of siding with Israel as it makes new demands that the resistance

group rejects. Blinken did not say whether the proposal addressed Israel's demand for control over two strategic corridors inside Gaza — which Hamas has said is a nonstarter — or other issues that have long bedeviled the negotiations. Hamas senior official Osama Hamdan criticized Blinken's statement, saying it "raises many ambiguities" because it is "not what was presented to us nor what we agreed on." Hamas on Tuesday also condemned claims by US President Joe Biden that it was backing away from a Gaza truce deal, calling his remarks a "green light" for Israel to continue the war. The "misleading claims... do not reflect the true position of the movement, which is keen to reach a cease-fire" agreement, Hamas said in a statement.

It called Biden's remarks an "American green light for the Zionist extremist government to commit more crimes against defenseless civilians". Hamas said Biden's remarks reflect a clear "American bias" towards Israel and Washington's complicity in the "war of extermination against defenseless civilians in the Gaza Strip". The group said it is committed to a cease-fire framework outlined by Biden on May 31 which he said had been proposed by Israel.

Iran repudiates US claims over election campaign hacking



Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations roundly rejected allegations about the Islamic Republic's interference in the 2024 US presidential election, calling the assertion "unsubstantiated." Asked by the American media outlets, the Iranian diplomatic mission responded to a Monday statement issued by three US federal intelligence agencies that has accused Tehran of attempting to interfere in the 2024 presidential election and targeting political campaigns and American public with cyber and influence operations, Press TV reported. "Such allegations are unsubstantiated and devoid of any standing. As we have previously announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran harbors neither the intention nor the motive to interfere with the US presidential election," the Iranian mission said in a statement. "Should the US government genuinely believe in the validity of its claims, it should furnish us with the pertinent evidence—if any—to which we will respond accordingly," it added.

US intelligence officials claimed on Monday that they were confident that Iran was responsible for the hack of Donald Trump's presidential campaign, casting the cyber intrusion as part of what they called broader effort by Tehran to interfere in American politics and potentially shape the outcome of the election. Besides breaching the Trump campaign, officials also believe that Iran tried to hack into the presidential campaign of Kamala Harris.

Israel envoy: UN building 'should be wiped off face of earth'

International Desk

Israel's outgoing Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan said the UN building in New York is "unnecessary" and "should be closed and wiped off the face of the earth." "I'm coming out with a feeling of satisfaction on one hand, of my battle

and work here, but on the other hand with great distress and frustration with the fact that this building, which may look nice from the outside, is actually twisted and distorted," Erdan told Israeli daily Maariv in an interview. This was not the first time for Erdan to attack the United Nations.

Last month, Erdan was quoted as saying: "We must take unprecedented steps against the UN, such as closing the UN compound in Jerusalem [Al-Quds] and expelling the heads of the agencies stationed in Israel, to send a clear and unequivocal message that the continued bias and exploitation

of the UN against Israel will come at a price." His remarks came after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague accused the regime of genocide and ordered the regime to immediately halt its military operation in the southern city of Rafah. In May, the Israel's ambassador also shredded a tiny

version of the UN Charter in a mini paper shredder in protest at the UN General Assembly's resolution to urge the Security Council to recognize a Palestinian state. The Israeli diplomat had also previously criticized UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the UN agency for Palestine Refu-

gees (UNRWA). Israel has faced international condemnations over its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip. The Israeli onslaught has since killed over 40,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and injured more than 92,740, according to local health authorities.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Thousands protest US support for Israel's war on Gaza in Chicago

International Desk

Thousands of pro-Palestinian protesters marched in Chicago on the opening day of the Democratic National Convention on Monday, in a show of anger against the US administration's support for Israel in the Gaza war. "This is not about some Machiavellian politics," said social critic and independent presidential candidate Cornel West at the onset. "This is about morality. This is about spirituality." Mo Hussief, a Chicago accountant, joined the rally.

"My family is in Gaza," Hussief said. "I've had over 100 family members murdered over the last 10 months by the genocide. So, I'm here to protest as an American, to say I don't want my tax dollars to be used to murder my own family." Hussief said it is impossible for him to cast a ballot for the vice-president as long as she supports arming Israel.

The US is by far the biggest supplier of arms to Israel, with more than 70% of its arms imports coming from the US, according to the



Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Pro-Palestinian groups have for months protested the US administration's mili-

tary and financial support for Israel in its war against Hamas, which has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza.

Women gain ground in decision-making roles: **MP**



By Sadeq Dehqan & Hamideh Hosseini
 Staff writers

The head of the women's parliamentary faction said that the necessary groundwork has been laid for more women to take part in the country's top decision-making and managerial positions.

Fatemeh Mohammadbeigi, who is also the First Vice President of the Health and Medical Commission, made the comment in an exclusive interview with Iran Daily reporter. She pointed out that women are now holding high-ranking managerial positions in various countries, and given the large number of talented, influential, specialized, efficient, and devout women in Iran who possess the qualities emphasized by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the conditions are ripe for more women to join the government's cabinet and top managerial positions.

Referring to the inclusion of Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd's name, as a woman, in the list of 19 proposed ministers by President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian, Mohammadbeigi said that for now, having one woman in the cabinet is considered a minimal presence, but the Parliament's trust in her and confirmation of her qualifications will pave the way for more women to enter ministerial and top decision-making positions.

According to Mohammadbeigi, Sadeq-Malvajerd is a hijab-wearing, powerful, capable, specialized woman and a member of a martyr's family, with excellent ideas and motivation in her field of expertise. Throughout her years of activity, she has promoted herself through her efforts and man-

agement.

Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd, the only woman on President-elect Pezeshkian's proposed cabinet list, has over two decades of executive and managerial experience and a broad background in architecture and urban planning. As the secretary of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning, she has played a key role in shaping policies and overseeing urban development and architecture in the country. This council is one of the most important decision-making bodies in the field of urban planning in Iran.

In addition to her role as secretary of the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning, Farzaneh Sadeq-Malvajerd has also played a key role in shaping and implementing the country's urban planning and architecture as the deputy minister of architecture and urban planning at the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. This position has put her in one of the most important executive positions in the country's urban planning sector.

Mohammadbeigi added that given Sadeq-Malvajerd's years of managerial experience, it was time for her to be introduced as a minister in the Islamic Republic of Iran and serve the people in this capacity.

She said that since Sadeq-Malvajerd was proposed as the minister of roads and urban development, they have received very positive feedback on this issue, and her announced plans, which are based on correct management methods and problem-solving approaches, have been well-received by the parliamentarians and have gained many positive votes. She said that in a meeting held at the women's parliamentary faction with Sadeq-Malvajerd's presence, she answered their questions satisfactorily. They asked her to take serious action in implementing the law supporting families and young

population, the law on housing production, the law on taxation of empty houses, the plan for young couples' housing, providing housing for the disabled and female-headed households.

Mohammadbeigi added that they also asked her to take steps in the transportation sector, including the creation and completion of rural roads and strengthening the north-south and east-west corridors, which is one of the strategic approaches of the Islamic Republic in the fields of economy and international politics. Sadeq-Malvajerd promised to work on the development of the country's coastlines, ports, and shipping, as well as strengthening the country's air fleet and addressing the issue of deprivation. She said, "I think we are in a situation where the Parliament and the government should work hand in hand to support a revolutionary woman who has a bright and successful record of serving the people based on the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, and give her a vote of confidence."

Mohammadbeigi, who was present at a meeting between a group of women and the Leader last year, said that the Leader emphasized that women should be present in the country's top decision-making centers and play a role in determining the country's fundamental destiny. She said that the Leader emphasized that women can occupy more seats and positions in areas such as the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Ministry of Culture and Guidance, and even infrastructure ministries based on their qualifications. Mohammadbeigi said that in the past, they had the experience of having Marzieh Vahid-Dastjerdi as a female minister in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, and Sadeq-Malvajerd's presence as a proposed minister is the second experience of women's ministry in the Islamic Republic and the first experience of a woman serving as a minister in an infrastructure ministry. According to her research, only four women in the world have served as ministers of roads and urban development.

IRNA

Iran shuts German cultural centers

Iran shut two offices linked to Germany's government on Tuesday, the judiciary said, nearly a month after the closure of religious center in Germany over ties to the Islamic republic.

"Two branches of illegal centers affiliated with the German government, which violated Iran laws, committed numerous illegal acts and extensive financial violations, were closed on Tuesday by order of the judicial authority," the judiciary's Mizan Online website said.

It added that "reports of violations by other German-affiliated centers" in Iran had been received and that investigations were ongoing, AFP wrote.

It is said the two establishments that were closed were offices of the Goethe-Institut, Germany's government-funded cultural outreach organization. On July 24, Germany banned



the Hamburg Islamic Center over its alleged support for Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah, as well its relations with the Islamic republic.

Following that move, Iran summoned the German ambassador to condemn what

it called the "hostile action" and branded it a "clear example of Islamophobia". Germany's Interior Ministry accused the center of presenting itself as a purely religious organization with no political agenda but said its probe had found the con-

trary to be true. In a statement, the ministry said it banned the Hamburg Islamic Center and its affiliated organizations throughout Germany accusing it for being "an Islamist extremist organization pursuing anti-constitutional objectives".



A bust of the late Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian is unveiled in Tehran, Iran, on August 20, 2024. Amir-Abdollahian died in a helicopter crash in northwestern Iran on May 19, along with former Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi.

AHMAD MOEINI-JAM/IRNA