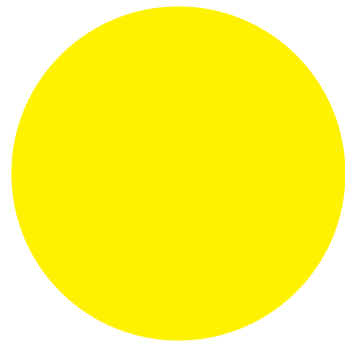


Israeli minister's synagogue plan faces huge flak

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Iran, West bent on interaction, easing tensions



By Mohammad Bayat
International affairs expert

EXCLUSIVE OPINION

The shift in Iran's government will undoubtedly shake up approaches in policy-making contrary to certain claims. In the realm of foreign policy, we witness a blend of fixed principles and flexible strategies, a dynamic that plays out worldwide. Take the United States for instance; no matter which party holds the reins, backing Israel remains a constant tune. However, the approach to addressing conflicts, like the war in Ukraine, is subject to variation. The same situation also exists in Iran. The newly elected president has consistently emphasized the Islamic Republic's unwavering stance on issues like supporting the Axis of Resistance. Simultaneously, there are areas where change is afoot, such as reexamining ties with the West.

Iran's new foreign minister has put fostering and fortifying relations with neighbors and key players like China and Russia high on his agenda. Regarding the West, he has expressed a commitment to managing tensions. It looks like finding common ground with Europe and the US is a priority for Iran's new administration. Along this path, however, lie files that need closing, including allegations of Iran's support for Russia in the Ukraine conflict, the nuclear dossier, and the strategic rivalry between China and the US. Tehran must tackle these challenges and skillfully extract more concessions from its counterparts.

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Deadly game of anticipation

Israel great loser in intelligence war against Iran

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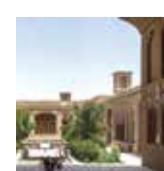
Iran's trade with 15 neighbors up 16% in five months

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Russia's Putin discusses Rasht-Astara railway on Baku visit



Russian President Vladimir Putin has discussed the Rasht-Astara railway and the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) during his recent visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan, presidential aide Igor Levitin said.

Putin focused the talks on the establishment of the railway project in the west of the corridor which aims to transport 15 million metric tons of goods, Igor Levitin said in a meeting held in Moscow with Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali, Mehr News Agency reported on Tuesday.

In the meeting, Levitin expressed his readiness to travel to Tehran to hold talks with new cabinet members and follow up on the joint economic projects.

Speaking for his part, Jalali said that in 2023, some 650,000 metric tons of commodities were transported from the eastern part of the INSTC for the first time, adding that transportation of goods from the Caspian Sea on the corridor route raised to 10 million metric tons in 2023 while it was six million metric tons in 2022.

The western part of the INSTC which passes through Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran could transport over three million metric tons of goods in 2023, while the maximum amount of exchange has been 1.5 to 2 million metric tons in the previous years, according to Jalali.

He further said the Iranian officials make efforts to enhance all-out ties with Russia, and this enhancement will be accelerated during the tenure of the new Iranian administration.

The INSTC connects northern Europe with the countries of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean via Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

The agreement to establish this multimodal corridor was signed in 2000 between Russia, Iran, and India. Today, 12 countries are participants in the INSTC. The corridor includes three routes: the western route along the western shore of the Caspian Sea, the eastern route along the eastern shore through Kazakhstan, and the trans-Caspian route across the Caspian Sea.

Iran's trade with 15 neighbors up 16% in five months



Iran's trade with 15 neighboring countries, including with states it shares maritime borders, rose by 16% in the five calendar months to late August.

Figures released by the Iranian customs office (IRICA) showed that non-oil trade with neighbors had reached a total of \$26.857 billion in the five months to August 21, Press TV wrote.

Trade with neighbors rose by 10% in volume terms to reach \$43.579 million metric tons over the period, showed the figures. IRICA said the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the largest re-exporting hub in the Persian Gulf, was Iran's largest trade partner among neighbors with some \$11 billion worth of shipments recorded in the April-August period, followed by Turkey

at \$6 billion and Iraq at \$4.8 billion.

Trade with Pakistan and Russia reached \$1.1 billion and \$0.969 billion in the five months to late August, it said.

Iran had a trade surplus of \$3.941 billion with the 15 neighboring countries in April-August as exports rose 19% compared to the same period last year to reach \$13.402 billion.

Iraq, the UAE and Turkey accounted for the bulk of purchases of Iranian commodities and products over the five months to late August, showed the IRICA figures.

Iran has maintained close economic and trade relations with neighboring countries since it came under US sanctions in 2018.

The policy has helped generate

more hard currency revenues for Iran amid decreased oil exports and restrictions on the country's access to the international banking system.

Experts say trade between Iran and Russia will increase significantly once Iran enters a free-trade arrangement with a Russia-led economic bloc in the Eurasia region in the coming months.



Iran's steel exports hit \$2.56bn in five months

Iran's customs office figures show that exports of steel products from the country reached a total of \$2.566 billion in the five months to August 21.

The figures indicated that Iran had exported some 4.979 million metric tons (mt) of steel products in the five months to late August, Press TV reported.

Steel ingots accounted for \$651 million worth of exports while rebar and steel sheet were respectively responsible for \$455 million and \$210 million worth of the shipments in the April-August period, showed the figures.

Iran's customs office said the country had exported \$140 million worth of steel pipes or profiles and \$135 million worth of semi-finished steel products over the same period.

Iran has increasingly relied

on exports of metals and mining products in recent years amid US sanctions that have caused restriction to its oil exports.

Iranian steel exports have also increased amid an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine which has affected supplies from the two major steel producing nations.

Figures released last week by the World Steel Association showed that Iran had produced 18.4 million mt of raw steel in January-July, up 2.9% from the same period last year.

The increased steel output in Iran came despite a global fall in production and despite power cuts imposed on steel producers in the country this summer.

The figures showed that Iran had remained the 10th largest steel supplier in the world in the seven months to July.

Iran churns out over 220,000 tons of aluminum ingots



The Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) reported production of more than 221,409 metric tons of aluminum ingots in the country during the

first four months of the Iranian calendar year to July 21.

The figure was 218,531 metric tons during the same period in the previous year, IRNA cited the report from IMIDRO on Tuesday.

Comparing the amount of production in two years indicates a one-percent increase.

South Aluminum Corporation, IRALCO, Almahdi Aluminium Co. and Iran Alumina Company are four great Iranian companies that produced the ingots during the mentioned period, the report says.

Giving the details about its report, IMIDRO said the companies respectively manufactured 94,503, 60,210, 54,426, and 12,270 metric tons of aluminum ingots during the period.

Also, Iran Alumina Company manufactured 76,885 metric tons of alumina powder, 129,960 metric tons of alumina hydrate, and 232,000 metric tons of bauxite in the said four months.

Pakistan-Iran Business Think Tank will be established at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry with the aim of identifying, studying and overcoming economic issues faced by the brotherly states.

The decision was taken during a meeting of Iranian delegation, led by Consul General Mehran Movahedfar and the LCCI office bearers on Monday, as reported by pakobserver.net.

The delegation which also includes representatives from Tamim Petroleum & Petrochemical Investment Company, discussed various aspects of economy, trade and investment.

Iranian businessmen have a strong desire to enhance economic cooperation with Pakistan. LCCI Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry highlighted the importance of such interactions in strengthening long-term trade and economic ties. He called for export-based joint ventures in Paki-

Pakistan-Iran Business Think Tank in the making

stan to increase bilateral business. He said that there is booming petroleum consumption in Pakistan with a significant demand for oil and petrochemical products. "Iranian companies could explore opportunities in Pakistan for exporting oil and petrochemical products as well as setting up oil refineries in collaboration with Pakistani partners through joint ventures."

He also spoke about the issue of unofficial routes for importing crude oil, finished oil, diesel, LPG, petrochemicals and bitumen from Iran.

Chaudhry called for the implementation of a barter trade mechanism to facilitate the exchange of Pakistani food products, particularly rice, for Iranian oil and petrochemical products.



Lariha House, the architectural marvel of Yazd



eghtesadonline.com



Lariha House, located in the historic Fahadan neighborhood of the city of Yazd, is a captivating example of Qajar architecture and a must-visit tourist attraction. Built by the renowned merchant Haj Mohammad Ebrahim Lari, this stunning structure was constructed in six phases and showcases the unique urban desert architecture of the region, complete with a traditional windcatcher.

Nearby historical sites include Ziaiyeh School, Alexander's Prison, the Twelfth Tomb, and Yazd Tower. Due to its distinctive features and prime location in a historic area, Lariha House was added to the Iran National Heritage List in 1996.

History

In the 18th century, immigrants from Lar in Fars Province settled in Yazd, the capital city of Yazd Province, for trade, establishing a long-lasting presence. In 1869, during the mid-Qajar period, Haj Mohammad Ebrahim Lari lived in the house until the end of the first Pahlavi dynasty. After his death, the house remained abandoned for 50 years due to inheritance disputes among his heirs. During this time, it briefly served as a dervish monastery. In 1984, following the victory of Islamic Revolution, the Cultural Heritage Organization of Yazd took possession of the house and initiated a restoration project. Today, part of the building

functions as a document museum, while another section houses the cultural heritage organization's office.

Architecture

Lariha House spans approximately 1,200 square meters on a 1,700 square meter plot, constructed from adobe, clay, brick, straw, *sarooj* mortar, and plaster.

The house features two entrance doors on its western and northern sides, with the main door leading to a vestibule and the central courtyard. The mansion consists of interior and exterior sections, embodying the veil style of architecture. It includes three courtyards, with the main courtyard located in the western wing. At the center of this courtyard lies a beautiful fountain surrounded by a resting area known as the sunset house or shaded house, where residents would escape the summer heat.

Designed for seasonal use, the mansion's layout includes a summer house in the southern section, featuring a large porch and tall windcatchers that keep the interior cool. The high porch casts shade over the rooms, ensuring they remain comfortable during Yazd's scorching summers. The house contains 22 rooms adorned with intricate mirrors and plasterwork, with the mirror room being the most exquisite. The winter house, situated in the

northern section, faces the sun, while the eastern wing contains a mirror room, kitchen, and cellar, utilized in autumn. The western wing, designed for spring use, features a terrace. The cellar, accessed by several steps, is located beneath the porch and boasts a beautifully arched ceiling decorated with colorful Shamsheh designs. This cool space was used for food storage and sometimes served as a resting area during the summer.

Courtyards

Lariha House features a central courtyard that is smaller than the main courtyard, connected by a vestibule. In the northwest corner, a seven-door room is complemented by a carved wall, enhancing the courtyard's beauty. The northeast section contains five-door and three-door rooms, each serving distinct functions — such as a play area for children and a gathering space for adults.

Another smaller courtyard houses a single room, likely used by residents for quiet relaxation.

Fahadan, the oldest neighborhood in Yazd, is home to numerous historical monuments, and Lariha House Museum stands out as a magnificent attraction with unique features. While this overview highlights some of the house's characteristics, visiting Lariha House is essential to fully appreciate its beauty and rich history.

Vital importance of preserving nationally registered Hasht Pakh Cistern

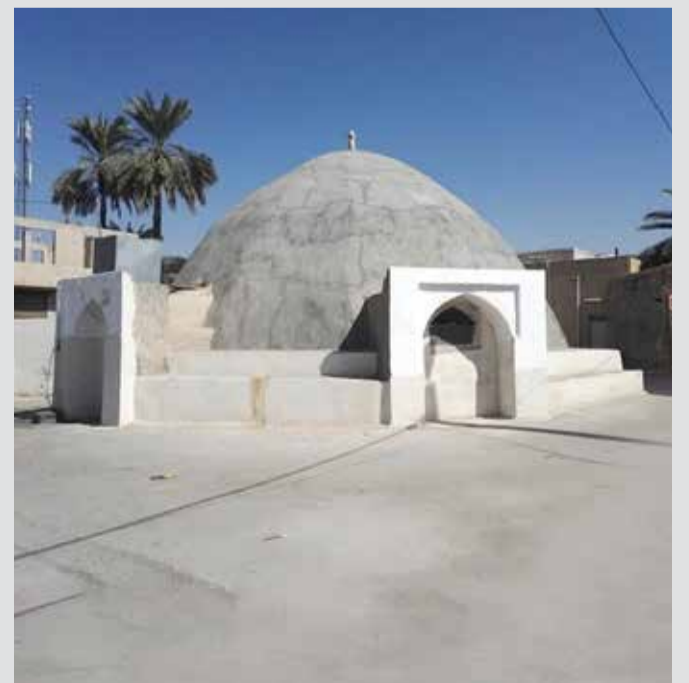
Iranica Desk

The Director General of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Fars Province emphasized the cultural significance of preserving, introducing, and documenting the unique architectural traditions of the Hasht Pakh Cistern (*ab anbar* in Persian) located in Lar. Mohammad Saabet Eqlidi noted that this historical cistern, which dates back to the Qajar era, has been nationally registered. The name Hasht Pakh is derived from its octagonal architectural form, as *hasht* means eight in Persian. He highlighted that one of the defining features of this monument, which remains in good structural condition, is its distinctive shape: the exterior of the water reservoir is

octagonal, while the interior features a dodecagonal design. This type of construction is rare in Lar, making the Hasht Pakh Cistern one of the few examples where the number of sides differs between the inside and outside. Eqlidi also pointed out its artistic value, which includes the construction method, building type, dome design, and dodecagonal dome plan. The cistern is architecturally significant as a unique example of water reservoirs that feature a dodecagonal structure in both the reservoir and the dome. Given the arid climate affecting much of the country, with many areas experiencing insufficient rainfall for over six months each year, various measures have been implemented to secure fresh water during dry seasons.

Consequently, cisterns were constructed to store water during the rainy season for use throughout the year. This led to the establishment of one or more cisterns in each neighborhood of warm and dry cities to meet the needs of the populace. In Lar, cisterns have played a crucial role in urban infrastructure, with their large domes prominently featured in the city's skyline. The Hasht Pakh Cistern serves a similar function by supplying water to residential neighborhoods. It has an inner diameter of approximately 11 meters and an outer diameter of around 16 meters, covering a total area of about 205 square meters. The structure includes four asymmetrical openings, a design choice influenced by the proximity of houses to the east

of the cistern, which obstructed proper filling. Cisterns are constructed using various brick vaults in different forms. Their main structure consists of an underground storage tank topped with a dome. In some cases, a windcatcher is incorporated into the design. Windcatchers are tall, chimney-like structures that capture cool breezes and redirect them downwards to keep the water cool during the summer. The construction material used for *ab anbars* is a special mortar known as *sarooj*, made from a mixture of sand, clay, lime, goat hair, egg white, and ash, with proportions varying based on the location and climate. Some *ab anbars* feature rectangular storage tanks, while others have cylindrical shapes.



snapptrip.com

Deadly game of anticipation

Israel great loser in intelligence war against Iran



By Navid Kamali
Foreign affairs expert

OPINION

The assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, in Tehran marks a pivotal moment in the regional and international dynamics of West Asia. Along with its subsequent developments, whether visible or hidden, it was so impactful that the future of the region will be shaped by its consequences.

The Israeli regime's brazen terrorist act in carrying out a high-profile assassination in the heart of Tehran signifies Tel Aviv's persistent audacity that has crossed Tehran's clearly defined red lines. This assassination has had far-reaching consequences in the intelligence, political, and security arenas, each of which alone could significantly affect the region's future outlook.

Interestingly, Tehran, contrary to the expectations of Israel, clearly emphasized the need to respond to this terrorist act but without specifying the exact time and place. This approach has placed Israel, which long claimed to have the world's strongest intelligence and espionage apparatus, in a complex and unstable situation. Analysts believe that the uncertainty regarding the timing and nature of Iran's response has imposed heavy costs on the Israeli regime and has profoundly affected the psychological and security environment in the region. Hebrew media outlets have even reported an increase in psychological disorders within Israel's panic-stricken society.



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (C) speaks in front of Iran's top military figures during a meeting at the IRGC Aerospace Force achievements exhibition in Tehran in 2023.

WANA

Consequences of uncertainty, ambiguity

One of the major challenges the Israeli regime currently faces is the uncertainty and ambiguity surrounding the timing and manner of Iran's response. This uncertainty, especially at a time when Israel is grappling with multiple internal and external crises, has exerted immense pressure on its politicians and security institutions. While some Israeli and American analysts speak of an imminent Iranian response, the delay in Iran's reaction and the lack of clarity regarding its nature have left Israel in a state where its focus and security capabilities are severely compromised. This situation has also led to significant confusion in Israel on various fronts. On one hand, Israeli intelligence agencies are striving to make accurate predictions about Iran's possible response. On the other hand, the prolonged period of anticipation and the absence of an immediate Iranian reaction have challenged these predictions significantly. This issue is evi-

dent in the statements of Israeli officials, who have spoken of a constant state of alert among their security and military forces and expressed concern over the potential repercussions of Iran's response. In recent weeks, Israel has been exerting intense pressure on its intelligence and security agencies, led by Mossad, which is responsible for the regime's espionage operations. For decades, these agencies have portrayed themselves as successful in preventing any attack or threat from regional actors. However, following Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, also known as the October 7 operation, these same agencies find their capabilities in countering what they refer to as "threats from the Resistance Front" severely questioned. This decline in credibility and capability is noticeable not only at the intelligence level but also at the operational level. Indeed, Tel Aviv is now confronting an "intelligence torment" that has not only eroded its intelligence capacities but also set the stage for a broader

security crisis. It is important to note that Iran's strategy of imposing intelligence torment on the Israeli regime's strategic apparatus, without firing a single shot, has inflicted significant damage on the Zionist regime and its Western allies. The hundreds of millions of dollars spent daily to maintain the readiness of American and European forces in the region are just a small part of these losses. This intelligence and security crisis has become even more complicated, especially given the internal and political challenges faced by Israel's security cabinet. While Netanyahu and his cabinet are desperately trying to maintain domestic stability and counter external threats, these crises and security challenges are further weakening the ruling faction in Israel. Social and political pressures within Israel have clearly increased, and public dissatisfaction with the cabinet's performance, particularly in managing security crises, has reached its peak.

Iran's smart strategy in intelligence war

Iran's approach and, by extension, that of the other members of the Resistance Front in dealing with this situation reflects a smart strategy, guided by the wisdom of Iran's Leader and the innovative actions of Iran's armed forces, particularly the IRGC. Their strategy is based on the principles of psychological and intelligence warfare. For instance, Brigadier General Ali-Mohammad Naeini, the new spokesperson for the IRGC, emphasized Iran's serious intent to respond to the assassination of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh during a recent press conference that drew considerable international media attention. He explicitly stated that the timing and location of this response depend on Iran's calculations. These measured and intelligent remarks not only signal the start of a new phase of psychological and media oper-

ations by the IRGC but also clearly demonstrate Iran's strategy of challenging the opponent's calculations and imposing psychological and intelligence pressure on the Israeli regime. In reality, Iran, through the smart and calculated use of its media and intelligence capabilities, has managed to create a situation where Israel and its Western allies are forced to maintain a constant state of alert without being able to predict the quality, quantity, or even the likely timing of Iran's response. This strategy, based on the principles of cognitive warfare and disrupting the enemy's decision-making system, is far more effective than a direct military attack. In other words, Iran, by leveraging psychological and intelligence warfare, has not only put significant pressure on the Israeli regime but also severely disrupted Israel's security and intelligence calculations and forecasts.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (2nd-L) and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant (2nd-R) meet at the Kirya military headquarters in Tel Aviv on August 25, 2024. The monitor screens were blurred by the IDF.

ARIEL HERMONI/IDF

Int'l concerns, diplomatic reactions

Recent developments have also heightened international concerns about the potential for a widespread war in the region. Diplomatic reactions from European countries and the United States indicate that they are well aware of the possible consequences of a military confrontation between Iran and Israel and the irreparable damages that Israel could take. At the same time, diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and prevent an imminent punitive response from Iran have clearly intensified. The repeated requests for Tehran to exercise restraint and avoid escalating tensions reflect the deep concern of these countries about the potential for a major military crisis in the region. The United States and its European allies are trying, through both overt and covert diplomacy, to prevent a regional conflict that could threaten their strategic interests in the Middle East. In this context, diplomatic trips and behind-the-scenes negotiations to reduce tensions and either prevent or mitigate Iran's response have significantly increased. However, according to Western sources, these efforts have yet to yield tangible results, and concerns about the scope and depth of a possible blow to Israel remain high. Given all that has been discussed,

it seems that Iran's response to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh is not likely to take the form of a direct military strike but rather a hybrid warfare approach, maximizing the use of psychological and intelligence warfare. This carefully crafted response will have long-term strategic consequences that will spell a bleak future for the Israeli regime. This approach, based on the principles of cognitive warfare and the exploitation of media and intelligence capacities, clearly demonstrates Iran's capabilities in crisis management and in imposing its preferred conditions on its enemies. In conclusion, considering all the recent developments and backed by the admissions of Western and Israeli think tanks and analysts, Iran's intelligence power and strategic capabilities have been effectively displayed for all to see, indicating a fundamental shift in the regional power dynamics. Simultaneously, these developments reveal a deep intelligence and security shortfall within the Israeli regime and its trans-regional allies. In other words, by employing psychological and intelligence strategies, the Islamic Republic has managed to ensnare not only Israel but also its Western allies, led by the United States, in a long-term crisis, the repercussions of which may be felt far beyond regional borders.

It seems that Iran's response to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh is not likely to take the form of a direct military strike but rather a hybrid warfare approach, maximizing the use of psychological and intelligence warfare.



The photo shows a pedestrian overpass with a large banner depicting the slain leader of Hamas Ismail Haniyeh (C) and other figures assassinated by Israel, in Tehran, Iran, on August 14, 2024.

AFP

Iran will hit Israel

Ball in US-Israeli court



By M.K. Bhadrakumar
Former Indian
ambassador

OPINION

There is a Zen proverb — 'If you want to climb a mountain, begin at the top.' All the show of contrived enthusiasm by US President Joe Biden and CIA Director William Burns over an Israel-Hamas deal on the Gaza war cannot obfuscate the grim reality that unless and until Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu greenlights it, this is a road to nowhere.

But what did Netanyahu do? On the eve of the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's recent arrival in Tel Aviv to press the flesh and cajole Netanyahu to cooperate, the latter disdainfully ordered yet another air strike in the central town of Deir Al-Balah in Gaza, killing "at least" 21 people, including six children. Biden had emphasised only the previous day that all parties involved in the Gaza cease-fire negotiations should desist from jeopardising the US-led diplomatic efforts to halt the war and secure a deal to return captives and achieve a cease-fire to end the bloodshed.

And this was even after a 'senior administration official' who has been actively involved as a negotiator — presumably, Burns himself — laboured to convey in a special briefing from Doha that the negotiations had reached an inflection point. The crux of the matter is that the Western leaders have a maximum pressure strategy toward Iran to exercise restraint while they don't have the moral or political courage to tackle Netanyahu, who is invidiously undermining the Doha process because he is simply not interested in a cease-fire deal that may lead to his removal from power, investigation to pin responsibility for October 7 attacks, revival of court cases against him, and possible jail sentence if convicted.

Indeed, Tehran is sceptical that peace cannot come to Gaza under American mediation but taking care not to create any new facts on the ground while the Doha negotiations are underway. Tehran has adopted a mature, responsible attitude not to derail the Doha process. The point is, Iran is keen that the horrific war that the Israeli cabinet unleashed in Gaza must be somehow brought to an end. Over 40,000 people have died so far.

That said, Hamas' response to the US' "bridging proposal" at the Doha meeting will be a major determinant for Tehran. From available indications, there are serious disagreements over Israel's continued military presence inside Gaza, particularly along the border with Egypt, over the free movement of Palestinians inside the territory, and over the identity and number of prisoners to be released in a swap. Both Israel and Hamas have signalled that a deal will be difficult.

On the other hand, the new Iranian government under Masoud Pezeshkian has highlighted his desire for a constructive engagement with the West and prioritises the removal of Western sanctions. Pezeshkian's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated these policy parameters in his testimony at the Parliament (Majlis) while seeking parliament's approval for his appointment.

Dispelling speculations that Araghchi, a career diplomat who is reputed to be a moderate, may face difficulty in garnering support in the conservative-majority parliament, the Majlis recognised his high professionalism by unanimously approving his name as Iran's next foreign minister in a vote instantaneously.

There is much food for thought here for the strategists in the White House. Suffice it to say that what Pezeshkian's predecessor late Ebrahim Raisi left behind as his foreign policy legacy will continue to guide the new government. That signals a high level of national consensus. Succinctly put, in all these years since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, there has not been a more conducive setting in the power calculus in Tehran for a pragmatic engagement with the West. It would be extremely



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (L) greets the president-elect Masoud Pezeshkian (R) in Tehran on July 16, 2024.
● leader.ir

unwise for Washington to overlook the window of opportunity to engage with Iran.

On the other hand, Tehran's grit to push back Western bullying is also at an all-time high level. The bottom line is that Iran will not submit to Western diktat. In today's circumstances, therefore, it is unrealistic to expect Tehran not to react to the Israeli aggression of July 31. Iran's sovereignty was violated, and its response will be strong and decisive — as a deterrent for the future as well.

No amount of muscle-flexing by Washington will frighten Tehran. The national unity, unlike in the US, is a crucial factor. The stunning endorsement by the Majlis of the entire list of cabinet ministers proposed by President Masoud Pezeshkian shows that there is no daylight between the different branches of state power. All indications are that Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and Pezeshkian are on the same page — and this message has gone down the echelons of policymaking and state power in Tehran.

The contrast with the disarray in Israel's confrontational domestic politics couldn't be sharper. Therefore, Iran will do what it considers necessary and an obligation — and a matter of national honour. The Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps General Ali Fadavi said last Monday, "We will determine the time and

manner of punishment (of Israel). The usurping Zionist regime committed a great crime by assassinating Martyr Haniyeh, and this time it will be punished more severely than before." In a statement to The Wall Street Journal, Iran's UN mission said any response must both punish the Israeli regime and deter future strikes in the country but also must be carefully calibrated to avoid any possible adverse impact that could potentially influence a prospective cease-fire. "The timing, conditions, and manner of Iran's response will be meticulously orchestrated to

ensure that it occurs at a moment of maximum surprise; perhaps when their eyes are fixed on the skies and their radar screens, they will be taken by surprise from the ground — or, perhaps, even by a combination of both." The Iranian statement from the UN podium in New York is a message addressed to the White House that the ball is in the US-Israeli court. Interestingly, it coincided with the toned-down White House readout on Biden's call with Netanyahu on Wednesday, where Biden flagged the "defensive US military deployments" and stressed the urgen-

cy of bringing the cease-fire and captive release deal to closure and discussed upcoming talks in Cairo to remove any remaining obstacles. It stands to reason that Tehran and Washington are communicating with each other. Clearly, against such a heavily nuanced backdrop, the paranoia about a regional war is unwarranted, since neither Iran nor the US wants war. As for Israel, a small country, it simply lacks the capability to go to Iran's war armed with three submarines stacked with nuclear missiles as its strategic assets. The stunning disclosure of Hezbollah's vast network of underground missile network in southern and central Lebanon is a reality check for the Israeli political elite and settler communities on what they are up against. As the former Israeli war minister Avigdor Lieberman puts it, Israel is engaged in a war of attrition, exactly as the Iranians wanted, having succeeded in uniting the Resistance fronts. Lieberman pointed out that the agony of the indeterminate waiting for Tehran's retaliatory operation is in itself an achievement for Tehran and the Axis of Resistance.

The article first appeared on Indian Punchline.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (front-R) arrives at El-Alamein, Egypt, on August 20, 2024, to mediate a deal between Israel and Hamas.
● KEVIN MOHATT/REUTERS

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All indications are that Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and Pezeshkian are on the same page — and this message has gone down the echelons of policymaking and state power in Tehran. The contrast with the disarray in Israel's confrontational domestic politics couldn't be sharper.

Nasirshalal to continue as Iran weightlifting coach despite Olympic setback

Sports Desk

Navvab Nasirshalal will stay on in his role as the head coach of the Iranian weightlifting national team despite a disappointing campaign at the Paris Olympics earlier in August.

The national governing body of the sport announced the news on Monday, with Hossein Reza-zadeh, the head of the federation's Technical Committee, saying Nasirshalal and his coaching staff will stay in charge of the men's team until the 2025 World Championships in Førde, Norway.

"His team's performance and results in the world event will then be assessed for further co-operation," added the legendary weightlifter, a winner of two Olympic superheavyweight golds in 2000 and 2004.

Represented by Mirmostafa Javadi and Ali Davoudi in Paris, Iran left the Olympic weightlifting event empty-handed for the first time since Beijing 2008.

The result was widely deemed as an absolute failure for Iranian weightlifting, which takes credit for the second highest number of medals for the country – following wrestling – in the 128-year history of the Games with nine golds, six silvers, and five bronzes.



Iranian weightlifter Ali Davoudi walks off the stage during the men's +102kg contests at the Paris Olympics on August 10, 2024. **GETTY IMAGES**

Stepping onto the stage in Paris as the reigning world champion, Javadi registered a best snatch lift of 168kg before a successful 204kg attempt in the clean & jerk saw the Iranian finish fifth in the

-89kg class with 372kg – 22 kilograms adrift of Bulgarian gold medalist Karlos Nasar, who set a new C&J and total world record in the process. A silver winner at the Tokyo

Olympics three years ago, Davoudi managed 205kg in the snatch event and then failed to go beyond 242kg in clean & jerk, settling for the fourth place in the +102kg table.

Despite being far from his dominant form, Georgian great Lasha Talakhadze did enough to grab a third successive superheavyweight gold with a total 470kg tally, with Armenian Varazdat

Lalayan (467kg) and Bahrain's Gor Minasyan (461kg) taking the silver and bronze medals respectively.

The result in Paris was the latest episode in a series of below-par campaigns for Iran at major tournaments over the past 12 months.

The Iranian squad could only win three medals – double golds for Javadi as well as Davoudi's C&J bronze – in last year's World Championships and again had Davoudi to thank for the sole silver medal at the Asian Games. However, Nasirshalal remains optimistic about what the future holds for the national team as he vowed to "restore the good old days for Iranian weightlifting."

Next for the Iranian coach and his team is December's World Championships in Manama, Bahrain.

Asked if his team is likely to enjoy a change of fortunes in the Bahraini capital, Nasirshalal told ISNA: "All I can expect is for all members of the squad to enter the event in their best shape and improve their personal records."

Defending champions Djokovic, Gauff off to blazing starts at U.S. Open



REUTERS – Defending champions Novak Djokovic and Coco Gauff enjoyed comfortable wins in the first round of the U.S. Open on Monday while Dominic Thiem bid a final farewell to the Grand Slam where he enjoyed his greatest triumph.

Djokovic, looking to become the first player to capture 25 Grand Slam titles, capped the evening session under the lights of Arthur Ashe Stadium with a 6-2 6-2 6-4 victory over Moldovan qualifier Radu Albot.

The Serbian world number two had not competed since winning the Olympic gold medal in Paris and shook off the rust to cruise past Albot in his bid to become the first man to retain the New York title since Roger Federer in 2008.

He also set a record for most victories by a male player at the

main showcourt with his 78th win.

"I wasn't aware of it to be honest," Djokovic said.

"It's the biggest stadium. Definitely the loudest we have in the history of our sport. The night sessions are the best in the world on Arthur Ashe.

"Ever since the roof was introduced it became even louder. Electric atmosphere ... we're clocking midnight now. I love night sessions, maybe not this late but it was great fun."

Gauff cruised past France's Varvara Gracheva 6-2 6-0 on Ashe as the American shrugged off disappointing performances in Toronto and Cincinnati to make a fast start at the year's final major.

"The last couple of weeks were tough and I was like, 'I have to do this and do that' but I don't have to prove anything to any-

one except myself," Gauff said. "This whole week or two weeks are just about proving all the expectations that I have on myself."

It was the end of the road for Thiem, who is retiring at the end of the season due to a wrist issue that derailed his career, as the 2020 champion fell 6-4 6-2 6-2 to American Ben Shelton.

Fourth seed Alexander Zverev, who lost the final to Thiem four years ago, began his latest bid to lift a first major title with a 6-2 6-7(5) 6-3 6-2 win over fellow German Maximilian Marterer.

Novak Djokovic is in action against Radu Albot at the U.S. Open first round in Flushing Meadows, NY, US, on Aug. 26, 2024. **SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS**

Man Utd agree £42m deal to sign Ugarte from PSG

BBC – Manchester United have agreed a 50m euros (£42.29m) fee with Paris St-Germain for Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte.

The deal also includes a potential for 10m euros (£8.46m) in additional payments.

The move comes at the same time as midfielder Scott McTominay's proposed 30m euros (£25.37m) switch to Napoli. Ugarte has been linked with United throughout the summer and is now poised to sign for the Old Trafford club, just one year after joining PSG from Sporting Lisbon for a reported 60m euros.

The 23-year-old made 37 appearances for Luis Enrique's side, including 25 in the league as PSG won their 12th Ligue 1 title.

It is understood PSG have also negotiated a 10% sell-on clause for Ugarte, with both clubs privately claiming they are happy with the deal.

The Ugarte deal is contingent on McTominay completing his switch to Napoli, although there is confidence at Old Trafford that transfer will be done.

United sources accept the structure of the Premier League's Profit and Sustainability regulations incentivise selling home-grown players.

Manager Erik ten Hag could not guarantee McTominay a regular start and United first accepted offers for the 27-year-old 12 months ago.

Despite that the Scotland midfielder, who first attended a United soccer school when he was five, ended up making 32 Premier League appear-

ances and scoring seven goals for United last season.

He also started the FA Cup final victory against Manchester City.

United sources say they identified Ugarte early in the transfer window and were patient in their negotiations over a player who made the Copa America team of the tournament squad following Uruguay's run to the final, where they were eventually beaten by Argentina.

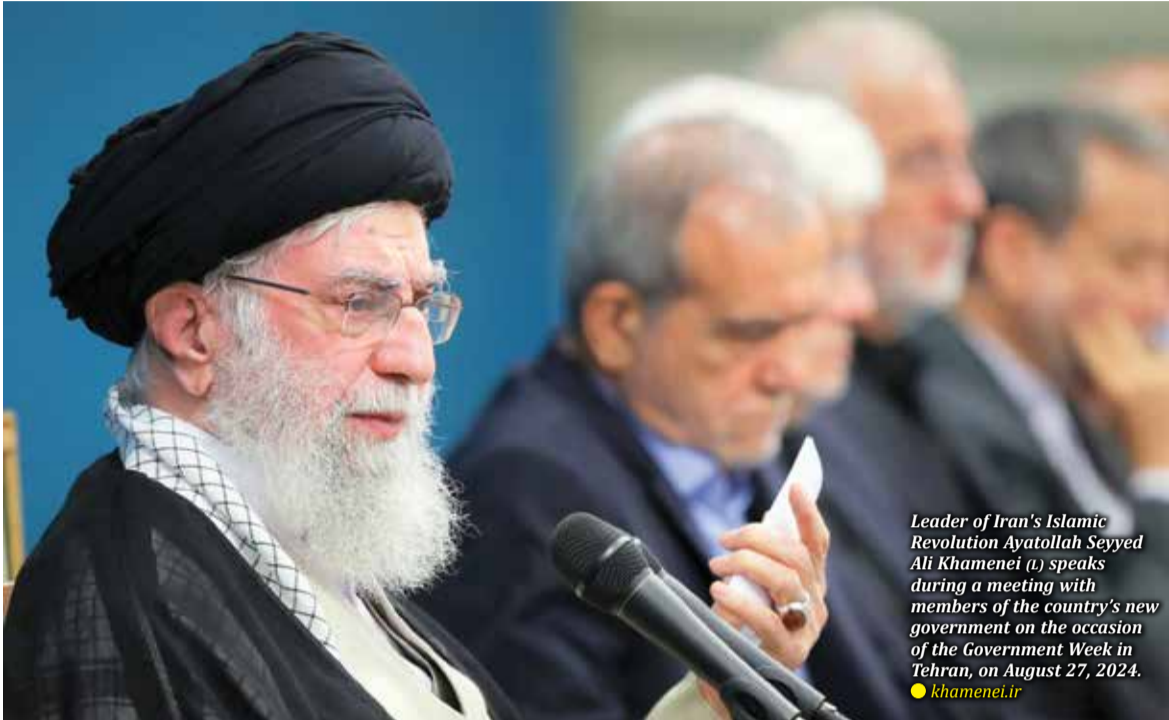
Should the transfer go through as expected, Ugarte will become United's fifth signing of the summer and take their overall spending to in excess of £190m.

United have spent nearly £600m on new players since Ten Hag was appointed in 2022.



FRANCO ARLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Leader green lights 'engagement', nixes trust in enemy



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (r) speaks during a meeting with members of the country's new government on the occasion of the Government Week in Tehran, on August 27, 2024. khamenei.ir

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday gave the go-ahead for "engagement" with the United States in his first meeting with the administration of President Masoud Pezeshkian. "There is no barrier to engage with the enemy," Ayatollah Khamenei told

Pezeshkian and his cabinet in Tehran. "But you should not pin hopes on the enemy and trust it," the Leader added. Iran has long been at loggerheads with the US over a series of issues including Tehran's nuclear program. But tensions began to mount after the US in 2018 walked

out of an international deal between Iran and world powers that eased sanctions in return for curbs on Iran's nuclear work. Then-US president Donald Trump reimposed and re-enforced sanctions on the Islamic Republic under its so-called "maximum pressure" campaign.

Talks to revive the tattered nuclear deal, known as the JCPOIA, during the tenure of US President Joe Biden failed. Iran's new Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a key member of Iran's negotiating team, said over the weekend that he would not hesitate "even and hour" to get the sanctions lifted

through talks or "any honorable means." Araghchi was a member of Iran's negotiating team that concluded the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers. During the Tuesday meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei also referred to the country's capacities, saying that Iran is today known in the world for its science, regional power and strategic depth. Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted Iran's natural resources, geographical location and climate diversity as well as its rich human capacities, including the religion and political faith of people, as major assets of the country. "Once Iran was known for its carpets and oil; today Iran is known in the world for science, military progress, regional power, and strategic depth," he said. "This is the opportunity that is at our disposal. The ability to influence the countries of the world and the region is not a small thing. This is a very important matter," Ayatollah Khamenei further noted. Regarding the new cabinet, the Leader noted that Pres-

ident Pezeshkian consulted him about the selection of his ministers. The Leader also asserted that the key to resolving the country's economic problems lies in production and that the issue must be taken seriously. Meanwhile, Ayatollah Khamenei touched on the issue of artificial intelligence, saying that using the technology should not be considered a privilege, and that different state departments need to master the deep layers of the technology. He warned of attempts by the world's opportunists and those seeking power to establish an artificial intelligence agency to prevent countries' progress in this field. Additionally in his remarks, the Leader underlined the need for "rule of law" in the cyberspace which he said is currently "uncontrolled." "My point is that cyberspace should be law-centered in the country, then it will be an opportunity," he asserted. "If we could have rule of law in cyberspace, this space will turn into an opportunity for the country, otherwise it may be a threat," he concluded.

Iran condemns terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Burkina Faso



International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman in separate statements on Tuesday condemned deadly terrorist attacks in Pakistan and Burkina Faso. Nasser Kanaani said the attacks in Pakistan, which led to the death of police officers and civilians, are vehemently rebuked by Tehran. At least 73 people were killed in Pakistan's province of Balochistan when terrorists attacked police stations, railway lines and highways and security forces launched retaliatory operations, officials said on Monday. Pakistan's military said 14 soldiers and police and 21 terrorists were killed in fighting after the largest of the attacks, which targeted buses and trucks on a major highway. Balochistan's chief minister said 38 civilians were also killed. Local officials said 23 of them were killed in the roadside attack after armed men checked passengers' IDs before shooting many of them and torching vehicles. The so-called terrorist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility. Kanaani offered condolences to the bereaved and expressed sympathy with the Pakistani government and nation. "The Islamic Republic opposes and condemns terrorism of any kind and stands by the government and people of neighboring and brotherly country Pakistan in the fighting against this evil phenomenon." The Iranian official also condemned a terrorist attack in Burkina Faso, during which around 200 people were killed and 140 injured in the Burkina town of Barsalogo, the latest in a long line of deadly attacks by an al-Qaeda-linked armed group. Kanaani offered condolences to the government and people of Burkina Faso over the deadly terrorist attack.

Zarif returns as presidential aide after resignation

National Desk

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's former foreign minister, on Tuesday announced he was returning to his post as the presidential aide in strategic affairs after submitting his resignation this month over grievances about President Masoud Pezeshkian's line-up for the government. Zarif said in a post on X that after consultations with Pezeshkian, he will continue to fulfill his duties as the president's aide in strategic affairs. Zarif's announcement came after he attended a meeting between Pezesh-



kian's newly formed government and the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday. Iran's Parliament last week approved all 19 proposed ministers by the president - the first time in decades that the legislature has endorsed all ministers proposed by a president.

"Today and for first time in over 20 years, all ministerial nominees in #Iran have been approved by the #Majles; our Parliament," Zarif said in a post on X after the parliament's approval of the ministers. Zarif served as Iran's foreign minister from 2013 until 2021 under the government of former president Hassan Rouhani.

Israeli minister's synagogue plan faces huge flak

Global condemnations poured in after the remarks by far-right Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir about his plan to build a synagogue at the al-Asqa Mosque compound in the occupied Old City of Al-Quds. The United Nations roundly denounced the remarks, with spokesman Stephane Dujarric saying, "These types of statements are highly counterproductive, to say the least. They risk inflaming a situation which is already bone dry," Press TV reported. The UN joined Qatar, Jordan and Saudi Arabia in publicly denouncing Ben-Gvir. Earlier, the far-right Israeli minister claimed that Jews



REUTERS

have the right to pray at Al-Aqsa Mosque, saying that he would build a synagogue at the site. "If I could do what I wanted, a synagogue would also be established on the Temple Mount," the extremist Israeli minister, who has a long record of making inflammatory statements,

told Israel's Army Radio on Monday morning. Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned in the strongest terms the statements made by Ben Gvir regarding plans to establish a Jewish synagogue inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran, West bent ...

The critical question, however, is whether Iran and the West are truly geared up for engagement or serious about dialing down tensions. In my view, the answer is a resounding yes. The Americans embarked on a strategy of maximum pressure against Tehran in 2017, imposing sanctions without a clear objective or endgame. Were they aiming for regime change or pushing Iran to the negotiating table? Neither has materialized. But since October 7, they realized turning the screws on Iran would

only create blowback. This comes as Israel is in a tight spot and flirting with a full-blown war. American troops stationed in the region aren't having an easy time either. Essentially, ramping up pressure on Iran and unstoking tensions in the area have escalated costs and diminished economic gains for the US. US President Joe Biden had previously asserted that were it not for the October 7 attack, the process of normalizing relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel would have concluded, and the Arab-Europe Corridor,

intended to counterbalance China's Belt and Road Initiative, would have been initiated. Last year, William Burns, the CIA director, emphasized in an extensive article the imperative of reaching an understanding with Tehran to effectively manage and mitigate tensions in West Asia. Thus, there exists a palpable resolve on the part of the West, specifically the United States, to pursue a different tack. Iran's government, for its part, seeks sanctions relief, recognizing the necessity of engagement with Europe and the United States

to rebuild its infrastructure and rehabilitate its economy. However, this trajectory is susceptible to disruptive variables that could throw a spanner in the works. Remember when Biden took office, and everyone thought Iran's nuclear deal, JCPOA, would be back on? Then came Israel's nuclear allegations against Iran, the assassination of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, and the Ukraine war, and everything went south. That's where the art of diplomacy comes in—managing those peripheral variables.



Iranian students champs of Astronomy Olympiad with 5 golds

Iran's five-member student team has taken the top spot at the 17th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) in Brazil, winning five gold medals and outshining competitors from 53 countries. The Iranian team, comprising Hannaneh Khorramdashti, Mohammad-Mehdi Keshavarzi, Arya Fateh-Kerdari, Ali Naderi-Lordjan, and Arvin Rasoulzadeh, participated in the event held in Vassouras, Rio de Janeiro, from August 17 to 27. The team was led by supervisors Hossein Haqqi, Arman Vosouq-Zadeh, and Amir-Hossein Mousavi.

The achievement marks a significant improvement from last year's competition in Poland, where Iran ranked third after winning three gold and two silver medals. Britain and India took the top two spots in the 16th IOAA, with the US, Brazil, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany, and Canada following Iran in the ranking. In the 15th IOAA, held in Georgia in 2022, Iran ranked first in the world. The IOAA is one of the twelve International Science Olympiads, founded by five countries (Thailand, Indonesia, Iran, China, and Poland) in 2007.

The competition aims to foster interest in astronomy and astrophysics among young people from participating countries, as well as to strengthen ties between different nations and promote the exchange of scientific and cultural knowledge and experiences. In this year's event, over 250 students from 53 countries participated. The top-ranking countries after Iran were the United States, Romania, Canada, Singapore, Britain, Germany, Hungary, India, and Thailand. Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated the team on their victory,

saying, "I congratulate the scientific community and the people of Iran on this achievement. Our five Iranian stars have brought honor to our country. We are proud of them." Pezeshkian dropped some lines on his X account to express his pride, saying, "I congratulate the scientific community and the people of Iran on this achievement. Our five Iranian stars, Hannaneh Khorramdashti, Arya Fateh-Kerdari, Arvin Rasoulzadeh, Mohammad-Mehdi Keshavarzi, and Ali Naderi-Lordjan, have brought honor to our country. We are proud of you all."

Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan sign MoU on chemistry, environment

Universities from Iran, Turkey, and Azerbaijan signed a trilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost scientific cooperation in chemistry and environmental fields.

The agreement, signed on the sidelines of the 11th International Seminar on Chemistry and Environment (ISCE2024), aims to promote joint research, student and faculty exchange, and organization of scientific conferences, IRNA wrote.

According to the MoU, Erciyes University of Turkey, Khazar University of Azerbaijan, and Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University of Iran will work together to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable development.

Mohammad-Baqer Sadeqi-Azad, Chancellor of Azarbaijan Shahid Madani University, emphasized the importance of protecting the environment, saying it is a "precious legacy" that must be preserved for future generations. Sadeqi-Azad noted that the increasing population and industrial activities have put pressure on natural resources, lead-



ing to destructive effects on the environment.

He called on scientists and researchers to find solutions to environmental challenges and guide humanity towards sustainable development.

The agreement was signed during the three-day ISCE2024 seminar, which brought together academics, researchers, and students from Iran, Turkey, and Azerbaijan to share their research on chemistry and environmental issues. The seminar, organized by the Iranian Chemical Society, featured presentations by local and international experts on various topics related to chemistry and the environment.

Seven Iranian children win accolades in Japan's int'l painting contest



Arts & Culture Desk

Seven Iranian children won awards in the 23rd JQA International Environmental Children's Drawing Contest in Japan, with one 13-year-old girl taking top honors. The contest, held under the theme "Joyful Times for People and Nature,"

attracted over 9,947 entries from 83 countries worldwide, IRNA wrote. Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, aka IIDCYA, participated with 50 artworks, and seven of its members received awards and honorary diplomas. Zina Jalali, 13, from Kerman, won

first prize in the international category. Six other Iranian children received honorary diplomas: Radin Qarechahi, 11, from Fars; Ilya Shahi, 11, from Ardebil; Sonia Mehdizadeh, 18, from Ardebil; Sevin Ebrahim Nejad, 10, from Ardebil; Mohammad Javad Hassanzadeh, 11, from Isfahan; and Aylin Qanbari, 13, from Ardebil.

Iran to host 2nd Music Industry Exhibition

The 2nd Music Industry Exhibition is set to take place from October 1-4 at the Milad Tower Exhibition Center in Tehran, bringing together music industry professionals and enthusiasts from across the country. The expo, which promises

to be a major event in the Iranian music calendar, comes at a significant time for the industry, with the government recently lifting a ban on the import of music instruments, ISNA wrote. The ban, which was im-

posed in 2017 as part of the government's efforts to manage foreign currency resources following the US withdrawal from the nuclear deal, had been a major hurdle for music instrument importers. However, following com-

plaints from importers and efforts by the expo organizers, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance intervened, leading to the lifting of the ban. The lifted ban covers a range of music instruments, including pianos, brass and

wind instruments, and percussion instruments such as drums and xylophones. The expo is expected to feature a wide range of music instruments and equipment, as well as workshops and performances by local musicians.

