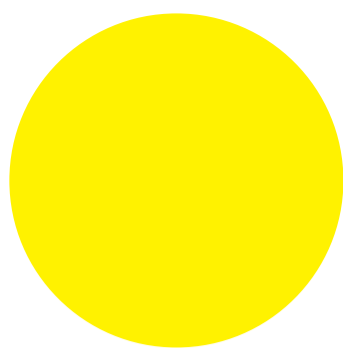


Japan urges Iran's restraint over Haniyeh assassination



7 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 7638 • Thursday, August 29, 2024 • Shahrivar 8, 1403 • Safar 24, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



irandaily.ir

newspaper.irandaily.ir

IranDailyWeb

Fruit of Turkmen Leader's poetic talent in Pezeshkian's hand

By Abed Akbari
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

One of the most important topics in international relations is the issue of neighboring countries and related matters. This is because neighboring countries, as they are geographically intertwined, not only influence each other politically, culturally, and security-wise but also play a role in shaping their shared destiny. Given its vast territory and location, the Islamic Republic of Iran neighbors several regional subsystems, including West Asia and the Persian Gulf, Eurasia and the Caucasus, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent, with Central Asia being one of the most significant. Turkmenistan serves as the link between Iran and Central Asia, making Tehran-Ashgabat relationship of utmost importance.

In the past two decades or so, under the leadership of Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, the national leader of Turkmenistan and the Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, the country has become a safe, secure, stable, and developing nation, positively impacting its neighbors. There is no doubt that the borders between Iran and Turkmenistan are the most secure and stable compared to the Islamic Republic's other neighboring countries. What is notable about Turkmenistan's leadership is that despite regional and international pressure, Turkmenistan has never allowed itself to become a base for rivals of Iran, thanks to its rational foreign policy based on good neighborliness and respect for sovereign countries.

Page 2 >



Iran Eyes Gas Hub Through Deals with Turkmenistan

Leader stresses 'ample capacities' for bilateral ties

2 >

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei (A) meets with National Leader of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow (C) and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian after the signing of four cooperation documents, in Tehran, Iran, on August 28, 2024.

khamenei.ir



Iran's Rasht city demonstrates tourism potential at BRICS Forum

8 >



Iran beat Chile at FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Cup

6 >



Significant discoveries unearthed at Espahbod Khorshid Cave in Savadkuh

3 >

Israel scrambles to declare victory over Hezbollah

SPECIAL ISSUE

4-5 >



Israel launches major deadly raid in occupied West Bank

Israel has carried out near-daily raids in the West Bank since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the ongoing war there. Israel claims it is trying to prevent attacks on its citizens, while Palestinians in the West Bank fear it intends to broaden the war and forcibly displace more of them.

7 >

Iranian auto parts exports to Russia surge 450% since 2022

2 >

NEWS IN BRIEF

Customs
generates over
\$1.5b in five
months

Economy Desk

In the first five months of the current Iranian year (started March 20, 2024), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) collected over \$1.5 billion (907.11 billion rials) in revenues, depositing them into the National Treasury.

According to ISNA, this registered a 40% increase compared to the same period last year.

Based on the Customs report, the collected import duties on goods in the first five months of this calendar year increased by 67% to over \$594 million (353.72 billion rials) compared to the same period last year.

Additionally, the collected import duties on goods, cars, mobile phones above \$600, and industrial, mining, and agricultural equipment, along with 22 other sources of customs revenue, reached \$876 million (521.79 billion rials) in the first five months of this year, indicating a 78% growth compared to the same period last year.

Furthermore, the report states that the value-added tax collected by the IRICA in the first five months of the Iranian year 1403 amounted to \$647 million (385.32 billion rials), representing a 9% increase.

Oil, non-oil
exports from
Bandar Anzali
up 46%

TASNIM – Oil and non-oil exports from Bandar Anzali port complex in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2024) rose by about 46%, an official at Ports and Maritime Organization in Iran's Gilan Province said.

Mojtaba Nazari noted that more than 854,000 tons of goods were loaded and unloaded at Bandar Anzali Port Complex from March 21 to August 22, 2024, showing a 46 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

He added that more than 216,000 tons of the oil and non-oil products were exported to the Caspian Sea littoral states. He went on to say that 2,357 containers (TEU) were loaded and unloaded at Bandar Anzali Port Complex and that 294 vessels entered the port complex in this period.

Iran eyes gas hub through deals
with Turkmenistan

Leader stresses 'ample capacities' for bilateral ties

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei underscored on Wednesday the expansion of bilateral ties with neighboring Turkmenistan as a high priority, saying, "Relations between Iran and Turkmenistan have adequately developed in recent years, but there are still ample capacities for further cooperation that need to be tapped."

The Leader also expressed his satisfaction with the expansion of bilateral ties between Tehran and Ashgabat over the past years, stressing that there is still room for further cooperation.

"I hope that the newly-elected Iranian government will pursue the development of relations between Iran and Turkmenistan with more vigor," he noted. Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks after Turkmenistan's National Leader Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed four strategic agreements.

Pezeshkian stated that the deals would prove to be key in turning Iran into a regional gas hub and serve the interests of both countries, promising to personally oversee the implementation of the finalized deals. Berdimuhamedov arrived in Tehran earlier in the day and was welcomed by Farzaneh Sadegh, Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development, who will head the joint committee between the two countries.

The documents, signed at a ceremony attended by Berdimuhamedov and Pezeshkian, included a cooperation plan spanning from 2024 to 2026 and was signed by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Turkmen counterpart Rashid Meredov. Also, a sisterhood agreement was inked between Iran's Amirabad Port and Turkmenistan's Turkmenbashi Port by Iranian Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and Mohammad Khan, CEO of the Turkmenistan Company.



National Leader of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov (2nd-L) and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd-R) watch as Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov (L) and his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, pose for photographs with a signed cooperation document in Tehran, Iran, on August 28, 2024.

● IRNA

Additionally, a document on enhancing natural gas collaboration



National Leader of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov (L), heading the Turkmen delegation, discusses cooperation documents with the Iranian side, headed by President Masoud Pezeshkian (R), in Tehran, Iran, on August 28, 2024.

● IRNA

was signed by Majid Chegini, Iran's deputy oil minister, and the CEO of

Turkmen Gas Company.

Officials from both countries have signed a joint action plan aimed at enhancing and expanding customs cooperation between the two countries from 2024 to 2026. At a joint press conference with Berdimuhamedov, Pezeshkian stated that the forthcoming meeting in Ashgabat would be focused on implementing the signed agreements.

Other joint projects such as Iran's participation in the development of Turkmenistan's gas pipeline were raised by Berdimuhamedov, which was termed as important by Ayatollah Khamenei. "The implementation of such huge projects in the presence of Iranian experts will boost the already close relations between the two countries," the Leader added.

Iranian auto parts exports to Russia
surge 450% since 2022

Iranian auto parts exports to Russia have soared by 450% since 2022, reaching \$66mn, as both countries seek to deepen economic ties in the face of Western sanctions, industry representatives said at the MIMS Automotive Moscow exhibition.

The surge in exports comes as Russian and Iranian automakers explore opportunities for collaboration in the wake of Western companies' exodus from the Russian market following the Ukraine War, according to bne IntelliNews.

Representatives from Iranian automakers Iran Khodro (IKCO) and SAIPA expressed their hope that the increased exports would significantly boost trade between the two countries and help meet growing demand in the Russian auto parts market. At the exhibition, Iran's Deputy Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade Farshad Moghimi discussed with AvtoVAZ officials the prospects of supplying parts to meet Russian automotive industry needs. Moghimi proposed creating a consortium to supply Iranian products to Russia.

This development follows earlier announcements of closer cooperation between the two countries' automotive sectors. In April, Iranian carmaker



● IRNA

SAIPA signed an agreement to export 45,000 vehicles to Russia over the Iranian calendar year that started March 21, 2023.

In 2023, the Iranian version of the "Sandero," a car based on the Renault Logan platform and developed with assistance from Russia's AvtoVAZ, was also unveiled for both Iranian and Russian markets. Then-Iranian minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade Reza Fatemi Amin stated at the time that preliminary agreements had been made for this car to be produced in Russia as well as Iran.

However, the road to success in the Russian market may not be smooth for Iranian automakers. Previous attempts by IKCO to export vehicles to Russia between 2007 and 2009 faced challenges, with some buyers

complaining that Iranian cars struggled with cold Russian winters.

Russian automotive expert Alexander Stepanov has expressed scepticism about the viability of importing some Iranian models, citing economic concerns and quality issues. Despite these challenges, both countries see potential in their automotive partnership. AvtoVAZ, maker of the Lada, plans to enter the Iranian market this year, selling models locally as part of a growing relationship with Iranian counterpart SAIPA.

Earlier in April, AvtoVAZ President Maxim Sokolov stated that the company sees Iran, which sold over 1m cars last year, as a promising market for its low-cost vehicles. The company intends to proceed with its plans

despite recent escalations in the Middle East.

As both Russia and Iran face international sanctions, their automotive industries are looking to each other for support and new market opportunities. However, they will need to overcome quality concerns and fierce competition from Chinese imports to succeed in their respective markets.

Auto imports to Russia have not stopped despite the ongoing war in the country, and Moscow has been increasingly collaborating with China on car imports directly or through Central Asian states.

As bne IntelliNews reported, the Russian auto sector has since recovered most of the ground lost from the war and is on course to get back to the million cars a year pre-war production level, but the nature of the sector has changed dramatically. In 2023, the economy recovered, Russians' incomes began to grow, and the car market recovered half of the decline. Chinese models have been Russified, and its factories produce Moskvich and Volga, both modernised versions of Soviet-era brands. Most of the parts and technology are of Chinese origin. Prices have also jumped by one and a half times, or even doubled.

Fruit of
Turkmen ...

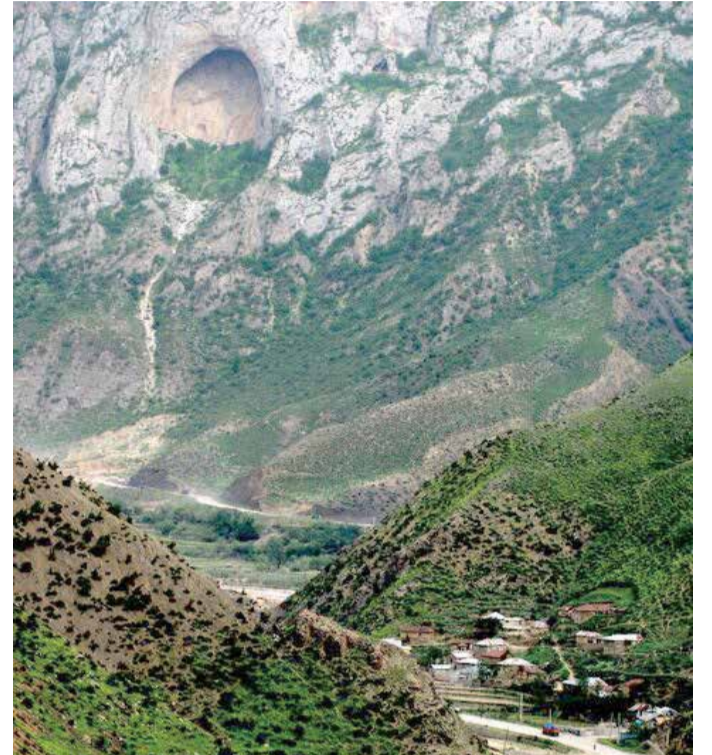
The Islamic Republic of Iran has also consistently sought to

Page 1 >

strengthen ties with Turkmenistan, especially since its foreign policy emphasizes regional cooperation. Given this, the need to strengthen relations between Iran and Turkmenistan has become increasingly apparent. As part of an effort to deepen the understanding of Iranian political, executive, and scientific elites, we are republishing the works of Mr. Berdimuhamedov, as a symbol of the Turkmen government and nation. One such work is the book "Respect for Mother is Respect for the Sacred," which delves into one of the most important issues and the source of fundamental changes in Turkmen culture—the role of mothers in Turkmenistan.

The eloquent and poetic author sheds light on this concept. Through this book, one can discover the secrets behind the success of the Turkmenistan government and nation in securing and developing their country in the turbulent Central Asian geographical context. I am honored to have published this valuable book, fulfilling my duty in cementing Iran's good relations with Turkmenistan while also sharing the ideas and thoughts of the region's progressive leaders with interested Iranian readers.

Significant discoveries unearthed at Espahbod Khorshid Cave in Savadkuh



Iranica Desk

Recent announcements from the exploration of the Espahbod Khorshid Cave in Savadkuh, Mazandaran Province, reveal significant discoveries by archaeologists, including a weapon manufacturing workshop, a furnace, architectural remnants from the Sassanid era, and a seal inscribed in Pahlavi script.

The report detailing the first excavation of the Espahbod Khorshid Cave and analyses of the findings was presented at a meeting organized by the Archaeological Research Institute, the Espahbod Khorshid Cave National Heritage Site, the International Association for Mediterranean

and Oriental Studies (ISMEO), the University of Oriental Studies in Naples, and the Scientific Council of Rome. This followed an announcement by ISNA.

Mehdi Abedini Araqi, the archaeologist and director of the Espahbod Khorshid Cave Research Center, provided insights into the findings from the initial excavation conducted on the western side of the arch and the first terrace. He emphasized that the historical Espahbod Khorshid Cave is situated in the mountainous region of Savadkuh, within the ancient Doab Gorge, atop Lakamar Mountain. The cave's entrance measures 100 by 85 meters, covering an impressive area of approximately 8,500 square meters. Histori-

cal records show it served as the last refuge for members of the Gaubarid dynasty, besieged by Caliph al-Mansur al-Abbasid's forces for nearly three years. The caliph's victory marked the collapse of the Espahbodan family in northern Iran, leading to the region's complete control by the Abbasids.

Abedini also mentioned that following the designation of the Espahbod Khorshid Cave as a National Heritage Site by the provincial Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization in 2020, plans for the preservation and protection of this invaluable historical site entered a new phase. After approximately two years of monitoring, the first sea-

son of archaeological excavation was completed in 2023, accompanied by efforts to protect the architectural structures.

The initial excavation season focused on the first terrace of the western side of the cave, where significant architectural artifacts were uncovered. A workshop dedicated to weapon production was discovered along with a Sassanid-era furnace used for crafting arrowheads, daggers, swords, and spears. Evidence of metalworking, such as ingots, surfaced, indicating the site's defenders were engaged in manufacturing military tools, highlighting the Espahbod Khorshid Cave's function as a fortress.

Further elaborating on the archi-

tectural remains, Abedini stated, "Among the discoveries are two exceptionally beautiful arches from the Sassanid period, one at the entrance to the next space. We plan to extract it from the soil in the upcoming season of excavations."

He also pointed out the presence of a skylight functioning as an arched window that illuminates the area behind it, along with a stunning niche adorned with intricate motifs, depicting a Sassanid horseman, a tiger, and a horse, accompanied by abstract human motifs. Additionally, a staircase with over 20 steps was identified, connecting the first and second floors.

Abedini stated that a seal inscribed in Pahlavi script was

recovered, and its cleaning has already been completed. The seal bears seven impressions, showcasing designs of a horse, a Simurgh (mythical bird), a rabbit, along with Pahlavi script.

"The furnace we discovered is dome-shaped and may have also been used for pottery production. It is not particularly large, measuring approximately three by three meters. The seal was found on the neck of one of the jars, and we suspect it is a local seal intended for redistribution rather than originating from elsewhere. Since seals typically indicate trading activity, we believe this seal was created at this site with the intent of being sent elsewhere," he concluded.

Restoration projects launched at Tappeh Mill in Shahr-e Rey



Iranica Desk

The director of the Rey National Heritage site, Ghadir Afroond, announced the launch of two significant projects aimed at protecting and restoring the heritage of Tappeh Mill in Shahr-e Rey.

In an interview with ISNA, he stated that after years of neglect and oblivion regarding the historical Tappeh Mill and the inappropriate and undignified condition of this ancient complex, various protective and restorative actions will be undertaken at the site.

This phase will involve the restoration of the Tappeh Mill site, including the plasterwork hall and its historical surroundings, as well as the construction of a wall at the entrance of the complex. This ancient complex, which includes the royal palace and hunting ground of the Sassanid era, was mistakenly referred to in the past as the Tappeh Mill Fire Temple or the Bahram Fire Temple and was registered in Iran's National Heritage List in 1955.

A large earthen mound topped with a magnificent structure of stone and unique brick and plaster decorations, along with

a portico, a large and deep reservoir surrounding it (now dry), and a vast and complex protective and service structure approximately 450 meters in length and 350 meters in width, creates a historical attraction at the ancient site of Tappeh Mill, located about 12 kilometers southeast of Rey.

This site may have last been restored in the 2000s. According to available information from that period, the plasterworks were cleaned and organized, and protective scaffolding was installed, allowing tourists to view the plasterworks and Sas-

sanid architecture from behind the scaffolding.

However, the continuation of the organization and restoration of this site has been neglected over time, and many tourists and visitors walk and sit on the architectural structures and Sassanid plasterworks without paying attention to the barriers.

Shahr-e Rey, also known as Rhages and Rhagae, was formerly one of the great cities of Iran. The remains of the ancient city lie on the eastern outskirts of the modern city of Shahr-e Rey, which is located just a few miles southeast of the capital

city of Tehran.

In ancient times, Shahr-e Rey was one of the primary centers of Zoroastrianism. Dating back to the Medes period, the city, known as a sacred land, lies on the route of the Silk Road. That is why it was one of the most prosperous cities of the world in various historical periods.

The 7,000-year-old Cheshmeh Ali (Spring of Ali), also known as Cheshmeh Surin, is an ancient site, which is one of the oldest in the country. Cheshmeh Ali is now a recreational center located near Toghrol Tower.

The tomb of Bibi Shahrbanu, the

wife of Imam Hussein (PBUH), is situated on a mountain with the same name, which lies in the northeastern part of the Shahr-e Rey.

A big hill is in the southern part of this mountain, which used to be called Tabarak Mountain, or Gabri Hill. An octagonal tower, known as Gabri Castle, is seen on the southern slope of the ancient hill, which catches the eye of every passerby.

A large temple-like ossuary is situated near the tower. Several other ossuaries, which are very old and unique, are on the hill as well.

Hezbollah successfully strikes Israel, Mossad

Hezbollah claimed it targeted 11 Israeli military locations with over 320 Katyusha rockets. Most of the projectiles hit Israeli military bases in northern Israel's Galilee region and the occupied Golan Heights, followed by drone strikes against military forces during the ensuing chaos. Israel has declared the area off-limits to the press. Later, Hezbollah announced that it concluded its series of attacks that began on Sunday morning and warned Israel that any further mistakes or attacks on Lebanese cities would have dire consequences for Israel.

Hezbollah had already warned that it would launch a large-scale attack in retaliation for the killing of its senior commander, Fuad Shukur. In its recent statement, Hezbollah said it carried out an aerial attack using numerous drones on areas under Israeli control. The statement further emphasized Hezbollah's high level of preparedness and warned that if civilians in Lebanon were harmed, the punishment would be severe and intolerable.

As the Zionist regime's army commenced its own retaliatory strikes on Lebanon, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant also informed US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin of the overall situation. Israeli observers were worried that in the 48 hours that followed, the entity would be subjected to another wave of attack from Resistance groups in Yemen, Iraq, and/or Syria, while a major attack from Iran was expected to come as the Arbaeen march of Imam Hussein (PBUH) ends.

According to US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby, the US stays committed to ensuring Israel's security while continuing its role in containing the conflict in the region. Israel has informed the US that its preemptive attacks on Lebanon were intended to prevent Hezbollah's large-scale attack. However, Israel's strategy failed as a significant Hezbollah assault went through regardless, further compro-



People participate in a rally that was held in Lebanon on August 25, 2024, to mark the holy occasion of Arbaeen.
● MEHR



People watch Hezbollah's leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah deliver a televised address, at a cafe in Sidon, Lebanon, on August 25, 2024.
● HASSAN HANKIR/REUTERS

ming Israel's security. Meanwhile, the Israeli military advised residents in southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah is active, to evacuate as soon as possible. Yet, the Israeli actions

did not cause widespread panic in Lebanon, as the regime hoped, and people continued to participate in Arbaeen ceremonies, ignoring Israeli threats. A Western diplomat

commented that Hezbollah has once again succeeded in undermining Israeli deterrence. Israeli reports indicate that Hezbollah initially targeted two crucial military locations

near Tel Aviv. An Arab security official, speaking anonymously, mentioned that Hezbollah's attack was more severe than usual, restoring parity. This is all while the Israeli military



By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's
correspondent in
Pakistan

OPINION

On Sunday, Lebanon's resistance movement Hezbollah launched hundreds of rockets and drones at Israel, marking what Hezbollah has termed the first phase of revenge for the martyrdom of one of its senior commanders. In response to this major attack, Tel Aviv declared a 48-hour nationwide emergency. While Israel, as always, claimed that the attack was thwarted, hospitals there were put on emergency alert. Around the world, this attack has raised concerns about the intensification of the conflict between Resistance forces and Israel.

launched preemptive strikes against Hezbollah in Lebanon an hour before Hezbollah's attack, aiming to limit the possibility of attacks on Israel. However, the Israeli military and intelligence apparatuses suffered severe failure, as Hezbollah struck two military sites in Tel Aviv, exposing weaknesses in Israeli military power.

Hezbollah has also refuted Israeli claims that its preemptive strikes were meant to prevent retaliatory attacks. After Hezbollah announced the completion of the first phase of its counterattacks on Sunday morning, Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon continued, potentially complicating the situation further. Hezbollah will likely respond once the outcomes of the Israeli bombardment have become clear.

The Lebanese Ministry of Health reported soon after that two people were martyred and two others slightly injured in the town of Altiri as a result of the Israeli attack following Hezbollah's assault. Additionally, Hezbollah ally group Amal movement announced the death of one of its fighters, identified as Ayman Idris, who was martyred in the Israeli attack in the Kham area of southern Lebanon.

The gravity of Hezbollah's Sunday attack is highlighted by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's emergency cabinet meeting in Tel Aviv shortly after the attack. The meeting aimed to devise a new strategy to counter the security threats on the northern front. Israelis have stated that Hezbollah has turned the north into hell, with 60,000 Jews displaced and burdening Tel Aviv.

Diplomatic sources immediately attested that Hezbollah achieved all its targets in the attack on Sunday, including a significant target, Mossad's intelligence unit 8200, which was involved in planning the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. Due to the intensity of this attack, lines of fleeing Israeli citizens have reappeared at Tel Aviv airport.

Following Hezbollah's retaliation Who won this bout?

OPINION

In his speech, hours following the Hezbollah retaliation against Israel on Sunday, the movement's leader Hassan Nasrallah said that the group has "targeted sites and barracks to exhaust the Iron Dome and its interceptive missiles, allowing drones to reach their targets".

"We identified a set of targets near Tel Aviv that meet our specifications, including the Gilot base, which is a central base for Israeli intelligence and houses Unit 8200," Nasrallah added.

"Our data confirms that a significant number of drones reached these targets, but the enemy is concealing the facts. However, the coming days and nights will reveal the truth of what happened there."

On that same night, Abu Obeida, the spokesperson for the Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, congratulated Hezbollah for its "initial response operation" and emphasized that Hezbollah's operation demonstrates a significant shift in the strategic landscape for Israel since the start of Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.

"The enemy has no safety from retribution, and there are no limits to the possibility of striking it anywhere and from any front," Abu Obeida said.

Despite all of this, some voices, including many anti-Hezbollah Arab analysts, doubted the effectiveness of Hezbollah's retaliation.



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 HASANAIN

As far as the Israeli cabinet is concerned, the Hezbollah attack, using 340 rockets and multiple drones, was useless.

"I can confirm that there were no hits at the Gilot base," a spokesperson for the Israeli military said.

Judging by the experience of the last ten months, the Israeli army and its spokespersons have little credibility, as they constantly undermine the damage, to both military equipment and personnel, inflicted by the Resistance, despite the fact that the latter documents most of its attacks using videos and other means.

Indeed, while Palestinian Resistance in Gaza documents many of its operations, Hezbollah uses highly precise monitoring equipment to authenticate its accounts regarding its ongoing resistance in south Lebanon and at Israel's northern borders.

With all of this in mind, an important question must be asked: has Hezbollah, in its latest attack on Israel, managed to restore deterrence, thus denying Israel any strategic achievement following the assassination of top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr on July 30?

Revisiting 'deterrence'

On October 6, 2023, the rules of engagement that governed the relation between Israel and the Lebanese Resistance were predicated on Israel's military presence across all border regions, and active Israeli military operations in the occupied areas of south Lebanon as well.

This equation allowed Israel to operate unhindered above the Lebanese skies, often breaking the sound barrier over Lebanon while conducting aerial operations and bombings over Syria.

Those 'rules' were themselves the outcome of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, where Israel failed to occupy parts of the south of the country with the hope of pushing Lebanese Resistance north of the Litani River.

It can be argued that the Lebanese, Palestinians, and their allies are justified in describing the outcome of that war as an outright defeat for Israel. That defeat, however, still did not change the relationship between the two sides in a way that would allow Lebanon to retrieve its occupied territories or discourage Israel from habitually violating Lebanese sovereignty.

Ten months into the war, the nature of the relationship seems to have been fundamentally altered. Both sides have pushed toward the creation of new rules of engagement, thus raising the serious possibility of an all-out war.

This leads to another question: who has the upper hand in these new rules of engagement?

Transparency, denial

Israel is known for either denying or undermining its military losses on both the Gaza and the Lebanese fronts. Hezbollah, however, has been transparent about its own losses whether among civilians or military personnel. When Israel assassinated Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr in south Beirut, it also killed a number of civilians. Though Hezbollah could have used the killing of civilians to justify future retaliatory attacks against Israeli military bases, it, within hours, declared that indeed, its top commander had been assassinated. The group could have hidden the news of the murder of its commander, simply because very few, whether in Lebanon or outside, knew of the man's identity. Indeed, Shukr's identity was so well protected to the extent that, for days after his assassination, news networks in the Middle East continued to share the wrong photo of the man. Only when Hezbollah published Shukr's actual photo, did we become familiar with the man's actual appearance.

That Hezbollah declared the death of its top commander was indicative of the group's immediate desire to avenge him and to, thus, once more, establish new rules of deterrence and change the old rules of the game altogether. In many ways, this reflects the Lebanese

Resistance's growing confidence in its ability to match the Israeli escalation with even greater escalation, denying Tel Aviv any kind of political leverage or victory in Lebanon — as the Gaza Resistance has denied Israel victory in the Strip as well.

For nearly a month, Hezbollah repeated that the response would be stronger than anything that Israel had expected, raising panic in Israel, a state of emergency throughout the military, and long lines of customers hoping to store needed food supplies as they remained inside or close to their bomb shelters.

That collective psychological impact was only part of the retaliation. It was followed by a massive volley of rockets and drones that reached many parts of Israel, including the Meron Base, the Negev Ziv Artillery Position, the Zaouira Artillery Position, the Ramot Naftali Barracks, among others.

The Hezbollah attack also included a "sensitive target," which turned out to be the Gilot military base, where the army's 8200 intelligence unit is headquartered. Again, Israel denied that any serious damage had happened to this base or any other. Instead, Israel said that it had struck hundreds of Lebanese targets preemptively, destroying thousands of rockets and preventing the Hezbollah attack from being much worse.

What can we learn from Israeli claims?

Avoiding escalation

While Hezbollah used the assassination of Shukr as a way to showcase its power and outreach, Israel constantly undermined the importance of Hezbollah's responses to avoid further escalation. This implies that what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is hoping for is an escalation that would lead to a regional war, which would involve the US, not a limited war between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel knows that it is unable to fight a war against Hezbollah alone, and, unlike the outcome of the 2006 war, the outcome of a future war with Lebanon would be much more destructive for Israel.

As for the "preemptive strike," one does not need to consult with Nasrallah's statement that "many valleys that the enemy considers to contain ballistic missile platforms and installations... were empty or already evacuated areas." We know for a fact that Israel cannot possibly know the location of Hezbollah's rocket arsenals, simply because the group's military capabilities are in constant movement. Additionally, we also know, per Israel's own claims, that the Israeli army has been informed — most likely by the US — that Hezbollah is preparing a response, only a short time before the response had in fact begun.

How is it possible that Israel, within a matter of minutes, managed to acquire extensive details of Hezbollah's moving positions, thus striking them down with great accuracy, as the Israelis claim? Obviously, the Israeli strikes were carried out for propaganda purposes, to convey a sense of confidence in its beleaguered military, nothing more.

Thus, by exaggerating the effectiveness of its supposed "preemptive strike," while completely denying any damage inflicted by Hezbollah, Israel has conveyed the exact opposite: weakness, not strength. Weakness because the Israeli narrative seems to have been perfectly tailored to avoid any further escalation, thus once more, giving Hezbollah the last word and the upper hand.

While the Israeli cabinet of Benjamin Netanyahu is now busy celebrating the re-establishment of the so-called deterrence on the northern front, the Israeli military, many in the media, and political analysts as well, know that the opposite is true. It is Israel that has lost its deterrence in Lebanon, and if things continue to move from bad to worse for the Israeli army, this time may be forever.

The article first appeared on *The Palestine Chronicle*.

Middle East on brink Netanyahu's reckless gamble



By Osama Al Sharif
Journalist

OPINION

Israel's war on Gaza will not end anytime soon. This is the dismal outcome of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's latest visit to the region. We are no closer today to a cease-fire in Gaza than we were a month, two, or three months ago.

The war has polarised the world, brought the international order to its heels, and undermined US foreign policy in the region. If anything, the last 11 months have delivered one stern reality: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in the driver's seat, and he is pushing the Middle East to a precipice.

The Israeli leader has been derailing all efforts to reach a deal that would end the war, free Israeli captives, and pave the way for the long and painful process of Gaza reconstruction. He is against all three goals. He is manipulating the Biden administration in a controversial election year with a straightforward objective: prolong the war until after the US presidential elections.



The illustration shows US President Joe Biden (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.
● KELLY CAMBERG/THE DAILY BEAST

By doing so, he hopes to keep his far-right coalition alive and rein in Hezbollah and Iran through the presence of the largest number of US battle groups in the Eastern Mediterranean since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, all while decimating the Gaza Strip and its 2.2 million inhabitants.

The region has been on edge since October 7. The US has wavered in its approach towards Israel. Iran and its backed groups have stepped in to engage Israel. All parties have now been sucked into a dangerous vortex of high-stakes confrontation.

It is only natural that America's allies have looked to Washington for some courageous and moral leadership — both were missing on this occasion. The Biden administration has been saying something and doing the opposite. It's been calling for a cease-fire while giving Netanyahu the political and military cover he needs to pursue a war that even his generals now say has no military sense anymore.

The Americans admit that Netanyahu is yet to deliver a workable day-after scenario. They understand the fears of their Arab allies that Netanyahu and his extremist partners are using the war to annex the West Bank and destroy the

Palestinian Authority.

But Israel has always been a US domestic issue. In an election year, both parties compete to demonstrate their unconditional support of Israel. No one understands the intricacies of US politics when it comes to backing Israel than Netanyahu.

And while his war on Gaza has damaged Israel's standing around the world and delivered unprecedented legal liabilities in the international arena, US leaders have been unable, or unwilling, to distinguish between their support of Israel and providing Netanyahu with the military and political backing he needs to continue with his reckless war.

Not peace on horizon

The war on Gaza has underlined the region's need for a reset. When the war finally ends, the Middle East cannot go back to a business-as-usual state. It is unlikely that the outcome of the US presidential elections will bring positive change to the region. Neither Donald Trump nor Harris will be able to address the complex geopolitical challenges that will haunt the area once the Gaza war ends.

The two-state solution is dead; the West Bank is being carved into enclaves, with Israeli set-

tlers now calling the shots. A war against Iran could quickly spiral into a global war.

The failures of the US Middle Eastern policy over the last 30 years are too many to tally. However, the US remains a powerful and significant player in this region. Its blind support of Israel's expansionist policies has complicated the issues to the point that most have become intractable. The regional peace that was promised is becoming intangible. Regional leaders need to send a united message to the next US administration that underlines the need to initiate a reset and restore a sober and responsible dialogue that preserves the interests of the peoples of the Middle East following a chaotic US-led phase that has contributed to regional imbalances, wars, and the swell of terrorism. Netanyahu and his extremist allies must not be allowed to take the entire region hostage while destroying the concept of Palestinian nationhood. The Middle East has never been so close to rampant violence and the spectre of wholesale destruction. The rest of the world must hear such a united message loud and clear.

The full article first appeared on *GulfNews*.



Then-US vice president Joe Biden walks in the cemetery on Mt. Herzl in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) on March 9, 2010.
● ARIEL SCHALIT/AP

Iranian athlete claims gold medal at World Corporate Games

An Iranian athlete has claimed the gold medal at the 1st World Corporate Games held in Russia. Ribvar Moradpour climbed to the top of the podium in the athletics - Men's 1500m competitions of the Games, IRNA reported. The 1st World Corporate Games gathered 2,500 athletes from 20 countries, including Russia, Belarus, Senegal, the United Arab Emirates, Haiti, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vietnam, Venezuela, Serbia, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and others, who competed in 24 sports.

Olympic medalist Salimi says inspired by Cristiano Ronaldo

Iranian taekwondo champion Arian Salimi says that Cristiano Ronaldo's hard-working spirit inspired him to win the Olympics gold medal.

"Being an Olympic champion is really an indescribable feeling," Salimi said in an interview, reported Mehr News Agency. Salimi cited that he had been interested in football since he was a child and he is a fan of Ronaldo.

I would like to be able to see Ronaldo in person and tell him that I was able to win the gold medal by being motivated by his success, he added.

Salimi defeated his British rival at the +80 kg in the Paris Olympics and snatched the gold medal. The young Iranian taekwondoka had struggled with a strange disease as a child, but he was able to win a gold medal in the world's biggest sports tournament.

At the age of two, Salimi was suffering from Rheumatoid arthritis, with physicians believing that there was no hope for him.

11 countries ready to attend Tehran tennis event

A total 11 countries have expressed readiness to participate in the World Tennis Championships in Tehran. The Tehran World Tennis Championships will take place in Iran's capital at the Engelab Sports Complex from September 8 to 22, wrote Mehr NewsAgency. Currently, 28 players and coaches from Australia, the Czech Republic, India, Russia, Belarus, Slovakia, Spain, Romania, France, Germany, and Italy have confirmed their participation in the tournament. Due to the time remaining until the tournament, more participants may join, and it appears that the number of foreign participants is on the rise.



Iran beat Chile at FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World C'ship

Iran defeated Chile in straight sets (25-14, 25-16, 25-12) at the 2024 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship in Bulgaria. Iran is set to face Italy on Thursday in the next step of the tournament with hopes of advancing to the quarterfinals, wrote Mehr News Agency.

Arash Sadeqiani is leading the Iranian team in the tournament. Previously in the tournament, Iran secured victories against Libya and Tunisia but suffered a loss to Egypt. The 2024 FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship is the inaugural edition of the FIVB Volleyball Boys' U17 World Championship, the biennial international youth volleyball championship contested by the men's national teams under the age of 17 of the members associations of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body. The tournament took place in Sofia, Bulgaria from August 24-31, 2024.

The FIVB U17 World Championship for both genders was proposed by the FIVB Volleyball Council and unanimously approved by the FIVB Board of Administration during its meeting held in March 2022. The qualification process was announced on March 28, 2023 with a total of 16 national teams to qualify for the final tournament. In addition to Bulgaria who qualified automatically as the host, 15 other teams qualified through five separate continental championships which were required to be held by December 31, 2023 at the latest.

The qualification process was announced on March 28, 2023 with a total of 16 national teams to qualify for the final tournament. In addition to Bulgaria who qualified automatically as the host, 15 other teams qualified through five separate continental championships which were required to be held by December 31, 2023 at the latest.

The qualification process was announced on March 28, 2023 with a total of 16 national teams to qualify for the final tournament. In addition to Bulgaria who qualified automatically as the host, 15 other teams qualified through five separate continental championships which were required to be held by December 31, 2023 at the latest.

Mehrzhad stands tall for Iran's sitting volleyball team

Iran's sitting volleyball star, Morteza Mehrzhad, has battled countless challenges due to his towering height, but now he's ready to help propel his team to another victory at the Paris Paralympics. At an imposing 2.46 metres (8 ft 0.85 in), Mehrzhad is the second tallest living man in the world and the tallest athlete ever to compete

in the Paralympics, according to the International Paralympic Committee website. In 2015, the 36-year-old joined Iran's national sitting volleyball team after the coach spotted him on a reality TV show about people grappling with life difficulties, AFP wrote. His life has since taken a turn for the better. "I have always been

called the 'tall boy' even before joining the national team or the Paralympic Games," he told AFP after a training session at Iran's Sports Federation for the Disabled in Tehran. "Playing sitting volleyball helped me a lot," he said. "The physique that I once considered as very bad has helped me in this game, and I could make good use of it." Along with his team, he is preparing for the 2024 Paris Paralympics.

Mehrzhad was diagnosed at a young age with acromegaly, a rare condition due to excessive growth hormone. During his teenage years, he had a bicycle accident, injuring his pelvis and stunting the growth in his right leg which is now around six inches shorter than his left leg. "I turned limitations into opportunities," said Mehrzhad.

"I cannot say those limitations totally went away, but they lessened

over time since joining the team." He still recalls how "challenging" it was to attend his first international championship in China in 2016 and his first Paralympic Games in Rio that same year, where his team won gold.

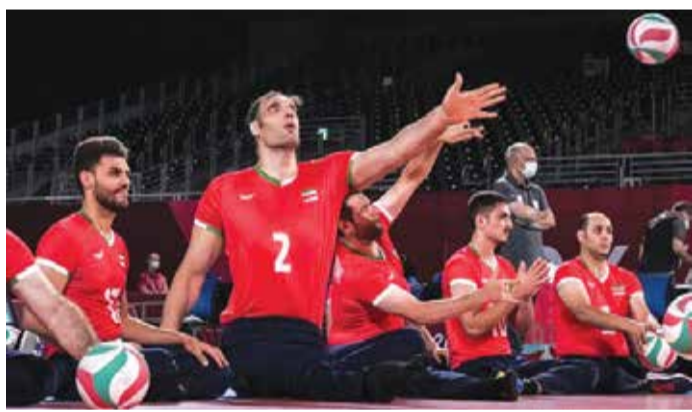
"It was both difficult and interesting for me," he said. "The atmosphere there and the expectation from us to win gold were very difficult for me."

Mehrzhad's towering height has been a crucial asset for Iran's sitting volleyball team for years, compelling rival teams to reconsider their strategies. He owns gold medals in the 2016 and 2020 Summer Paralympics and earned the Gold Ball for the world's best player in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Iranian media has over the years hailed him as a "fatal weapon" and "the kind giant".

"I appreciate being called the best in the game, but I'm not," he said.

"Each of our guys is the best... and we make the best team in the world." Mehrzhad says joining Iran's national sitting volleyball team has helped him through some personal crises including the death of his mother in 2019. The experience, he says, "was and still is painful... but volleyball helped me a lot, not to forget, but to move past it."

Iran has participated in the sitting volleyball Paralympic Games since 1988 in Seoul, emerging as champions seven out of nine times, a remarkable record. Now, the team is putting the final touches to its Paralympics preparations before they face off against Ukraine, Brazil and Germany. "Our main rival is Bosnia... although we should not underestimate Brazil, Germany, and Egypt," said Mehrzhad. In the 2022 world championship in Sarajevo, Iran beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0.



AFP

Evans earns stunning win in US Open's longest-ever match

Britain's Dan Evans produced an astonishing comeback to win the longest match in US Open history as he beat Russia's Karen Khachanov in five hours and 35 minutes.

Evans, 34, was 4-0 down in the decider but somehow found the mental and physical strength to win 6-7 (6-8) 7-6 (7-2) 7-6 (7-4) 4-6 6-4, BBC reported.

In a tense finale, Russian 23rd seed Khachanov saved two match points before hitting the third into the net.

Evans broke into a beaming smile before slumping exhausted into his chair.

Both players deservedly received standing ovations from an engrossed and entertained crowd at Flushing Meadows.

"I just tried to keep fighting - at 4-0 I thought I was out," Evans told Sky Sports.

"I've got a bad headache now. It was a hell of a match. I just want to go to bed."

Earlier, British number one Katie Boulter and Jack Draper

moved into the second round after contrasting styles of victories.

Boulter, seeded 31st, fought back from an edgy start to win 5-7 6-2 6-1 against Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich. A short time later in New York, 25th seed Draper cruised through when Chinese number one Zhang Zhizhen retired with a knee injury as the Briton led 6-3 6-0 4-0.

But fellow Briton Emma Raducanu, champion here in 2021, lost her first-round match to Sofia Kenin.

Out of form this season, and trying to avoid dropping out of the world's top 200, Evans battled valiantly in sweltering conditions.

He appeared to be running out of steam as Khachanov threatened to move 5-0 ahead in the decider, but held off three break points and reduced the deficit to 4-3.

Evans fed off the support of a raucous crowd to earn a victory which will live long in the

memory.

"I felt a little sorry for myself, but got myself going because I didn't want to go out of another Slam without a fight and with a whimper," said Evans after the victory, which was his first at a major this year.

"I could see he was struggling a bit and tried to grab a game at a time."

Each set was a battle of attrition with lengthy games and multiple break opportunities, all lasting over an hour:

Set 1 - 68 minutes
Set 2 - 67 minutes
Set 3 - 72 minutes
Set 4 - 67 minutes
Set 5 - 61 minutes

With both players gasping for breath, Evans secured victory in a match which surpassed the previous US Open record - set by Stefan Edberg and Michael Chang in the 1992 semi-finals - by nine minutes. Evans has endured a chastening year, having won just four ATP

Tour matches going into the final Grand Slam of the season. That dire form, combined with the decision not to defend the title - and ranking points - he won in Washington last year in order to play doubles with the retiring Andy Murray at the Olympics, caused Evans to

plummet out of the world's top 175.

Beating Khachanov is a reward for his perseverance - and his generosity to Murray.

"I've had a horrible year. I knew I had put the work in but not enough because I was a bit hurt," Evans added.

"I like to think I got a bit of luck at the end [against Khachanov]. I nearly blew it but I'm really happy."

"It was amazing at 4-2, it really started to get going. I don't know how many Brits were there, but it seemed like the whole place wanted me to win."

Evans has around 48 hours to recover before playing Argentina's Mariano Navone in the second round on Thursday.



GETTY IMAGES

Japan urges Iran's restraint over Haniyeh assassination



Abbas Araghchi



Kamikawa Yoko

International Desk

Japan called on Iran to exercise restraint after the Islamic Republic vowed to punish Israel for the assassination of Hamas leader in Tehran last month.

Japan's Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko in a phone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on Wednesday expressed serious concern over the current deteriorating situation in West Asia, saying that escalation

of the situation would not be in the interest of the region or the international community as a whole. She called on Iran to show restraint, saying that every effort should be made to avoid further tensions.

Kamikawa also called on Iran to urge resistance groups in the region to exercise restraint.

Both sides affirmed the importance of peace and stability in West Asia region and confirmed to continue to

maintain communication between Japan and Iran based on their traditional, friendly relationship.

Tensions remain high in the region following Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. Iran has blamed Israel for the assassination and has vowed to punish the regime for the killing of Haniyeh who had traveled to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the Iranian president.

On Monday, Araghchi said that Iran's response to Israel would be "definite, calculated and accurate."

Unlike the Israeli regime, Iran does not seek to increase tensions in the region although it is not afraid of it, Araghchi added.

Revenge for Haniyeh's blood 'certain'

Meanwhile, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri said on Monday

that the assassination of the Hamas leader cannot be forgotten and revenge for Haniyeh's blood by the Axis of Resistance and Iran is "certain." General Baqeri underlined that the Islamic Republic and the Axis of Resistance will separately act in this regard. Also on Wednesday, the Iranian foreign minister held talks with Khalil al-Hayya, the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas's deputy Political Bureau chief.

During the phone call, Araghchi hailed Palestinians' eleven-month-long steadfastness in the face of the Israeli regime's genocidal war and atrocities, expressing confidence that "final victory" belongs to the Palestinian people.

"The current Iranian administration will continue to robustly pursue its predecessors' policy of support for the oppressed Palestinian nation," Araghchi added, stressing that the Islamic Republic would stand with the Palestinians "until the end." He also underlined that Tehran would lend its support to whatever agreement leading to a ceasefire and cessation of the underway war on the Gaza Strip that meets the approval of the Palestinian people and resistance.

Iran looking for ways to get sanctions lifted: *Pezeshkian*



National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said his government is looking for ways to get illegal sanctions removed that have been imposed against the Islamic Republic.

Pezeshkian made the remarks on Tuesday while speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony held at the Foreign Ministry premises to honor and introduce the new foreign minister.

"The actions of enemies against our country are cruel. We adhered to our commitments and they must stick to their commitments," Pezeshkian said. He said that strengthening and developing relations with neighbors is one of the government's priorities.

"Connections and development of relations [with neighbors] make sanctions ineffective," the president added.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also made brief remarks.

"The most important priorities of his ministry are opening the way and removing obstacles in the economic field, the honor and pride of Iran and Iranians in all fields, as well as securing national interests and helping the country's national security," he said.

Earlier in the day, the new president and other members of his cabinet met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, where he said that maintaining national unity and keeping people happy with the government policies is the best way to defeat the oppressive US and EU sanctions.

On Friday, Araghchi said the government was given a mission by the Leader to neutralize illegal sanctions and their possible impacts on the Iranian nation.

"Our foreign policy will be active and not passive. We'll try to be present on international forums. If a new order is being formed, we should not be passive. We must play a role for our interests, for the region and the Islamic world," said the foreign minister, a former nuclear negotiator.

The new Iranian foreign minister added, "Our priority is our neighbors. Our second priority is to expand the field of diplomacy to Africa and East Asia. The third priority is the countries that stood by Iran in difficult situations."

Ayatollah Khamenei on Tuesday gave the go-ahead for "engagement" with the US in his first meeting with the administration of Pezeshkian. "There is no barrier to engage with the enemy," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "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 reinforced 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.

Israel launches major deadly raid in occupied West Bank

Israel launched a large-scale military raid in the occupied West Bank overnight and into Wednesday, with its forces killing 10 Palestinians and sealing off the city of Jenin.

Israel has carried out near-daily raids in the West Bank since Hamas' Oct. 7 attack out of Gaza triggered the ongoing war there. Israel claims it is trying to prevent attacks on its citizens, while Palestinians in the West Bank fear it intends to broaden the war and forcibly displace more of them, according to AP.

Lt. Col. Nadav Shoshani, an Israeli military spokesman, said "large forces" had entered Jenin as well as Tulkarem and the Al-Faraa refugee camp dating back to the 1948 Middle East war, all in the northern

West Bank.

He said Israeli forces killed nine Palestinians, including three in an airstrike in Tulkarem and four in an airstrike in Al-Faraa. He said another five people were arrested, and that the raids were the first stage of an even larger operation.

Hamas announced that 10 of its fighters had been killed in the West Bank on Wednesday. Palestinian resistance groups said they were exchanging fire with Israeli troops.

The governor of Jenin, Kamal Abu al-Rub, said on Palestinian radio that Israeli forces had surrounded the city, blocking exit and entry points and access to hospitals, and ripping up infrastructure in the camp. Israeli Foreign Minister Israel

Katz drew comparisons with Gaza and called for similar measures in the West Bank.

Hamas called on Palestinians in the West Bank to rise up, calling the raids part of a larger plan to expand the war in Gaza and blaming the escalation on US support for Israel. The group called on security forces loyal to the Palestinian Authority, which cooperate with Israel, to "join the sacred battle of our people."

Nabil Abu Rudeineh, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, condemned the raids as a "serious escalation". Abbas later announced he was cutting short a visit to Saudi Arabia and returning to the West Bank, where his government is based.



At least 652 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli fire since the war in Gaza began over 10 months ago, according to the Palestinian ministry. Most have died during raids, which often trigger gunbattles with resistance fighters.



Israeli soldiers operate during a raid in the Nur Shams camp for Palestinian refugees near the city of Tulkarem in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on August 28, 2024.

● JAAFAR ASHTIYEH/AFP



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Fatemeh Mohajerani named Iranian gov't spokesperson

National Desk

Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian appointed Fatemeh Mohajerani as the government's spokesperson during a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Mohajerani replaces Ali Bahadori Jahromi who served as the government's spokesperson under the late president Ebrahim Raisi.

Born in 1970 in central city of Arak, Mohajerani has served as the head of Shariati Technical and Professional College in the Raisi administration.

She has a Doctor of Business Administration degree from Heriot-Watt University Edinburgh Campus in



Fatemeh Mohajerani

Edinburgh, Scotland. Mohajerani is the first female spokesperson of the government since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Iran's Rasht city demonstrates tourism potential at BRICS Forum

Arts & Culture Desk

The mayor of Rasht, a city in northern Iran, introduced the city's tourism capacities to mayors and officials of BRICS countries at the 6th BRICS Urbanization Forum in Moscow. Rahim Shoqi, who is accompanying Iranian officials at the forum, highlighted Rasht's unique cultural and tourism attractions, including its local cuisine, which has gained international recognition. Rasht is known as the "food heaven" of Iran, with over 250 types of local dishes and more than 2,000 restaurants and cafes.

Shoqi said the city has committed to promoting its natural and organic food, which has been praised by international experts, including French Iranologist Christian Bromberger, IRNA wrote. The city's efforts to develop its culinary industry have led to increased employment and tourism, he added. Rasht has also been recognized as a UNESCO Creative City, with a focus on gastronomy, and has established a permanent secretariat for creative cities in Iran. The city plans to develop a food museum, breakfast park, and a campaign to promote local

cuisine. Shoqi also noted that Rasht is a popular destination for foreign tourists, particularly from Arab and Central Asian countries. He expressed interest in developing trade relations with BRICS countries, including through the Anzali Free Trade Zone and flights between Rasht and Astrakhan. The two-day BRICS forum, focused on development and network cooperation on various topics with Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African countries, as well as the climate agenda, concluded its work on Wednesday, August 28.



● IRNA

Iranian film 'Nietzschean Suicide' heads to Vancouver



Iranian short film 'Nietzschean Suicide' is set to compete in the 43rd Vancouver International Film Festival, which kicks off on Sept. 26.

The film, written and directed by Payam Kurdistanani and co-produced by Kurdistanani and Bahman Rezaei, was shot in Ghazali Cinema Town. It will be screened alongside other international films in the festival's short film competition, Tasnim News Agency reported. The 10-day festival, which runs until Oct. 6, aims to promote cross-cultural understanding through cinema, develop the art of filmmaking, and connect industry professionals. 'Nietzschean Suicide' has already made a name for itself, winning four top prizes at the 40th Tehran International Short Film Festival, including Best Film,

Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Editing, and an Honorary Diploma for Best Set and Costume Design. It was also nominated for the 13th Iran Short Film Association Awards and won Best Film at the Berlin Kurdish Film Festival. It was a contender for the Crystal Simorgh Award for Best Short Film at the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival. The film features a cast including Bakhtiar Panjei, Farshid Gavili, Osveh Sadeqi, Saeed Ahmadi, Mohammad Rauf Mohammadi, and Maryam Boobani. The film's plot revolves around a small town's only midwife who decides to take her own life.

Iran, Tajikistan to collaborate on Int'l Sports Film Festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Tajikistan agreed to collaborate on the International Sports Film Festival, with the Tajikistan National Olympic Committee expressing support for the event.

A meeting was held between the representative of the Federation Internationale Cinema Television Sportifs (FICTS) in West Asia and the Secretary General of the Tajikistan National Olympic Committee, where they emphasized the importance of cooperation between the two countries on the festival, Mehr News Agency reported.

Mojtaba Alavi, representative of the Federation Internationale Cinema Television Sportifs (FICTS) in West Asia, said the festival in Iran has reached its 14th edition and has been met with enthusiasm from filmmakers from around 60 countries. During the meeting, held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, Alavi and the Chairman of Tajikistan Olympians Association, Mavzuna Chorjeva, discussed the possibility of hosting the festival in Tajikistan.

Alavi noted that the President of Tajikistan, who is also the head of the National Olympic Committee, has shown interest in hosting cultural and artistic events, and is likely to support the festival. When asked why Tajikistan was chosen

as the primary destination for expanding the festival's reach in the sports genre, Alavi cited the cultural ties between Iran and Tajikistan, including shared language and ethnic and territorial relations. He added that a proposal for co-hosting the 14th International Sports Film Festival in Dushanbe has been submitted to the Tajikistan Olympians Association.



No monkeypox cases confirmed in country:

Health official

Social Desk

Iran's deputy health minister said that no cases of monkeypox have been confirmed in the country, despite rumors of outbreaks in some cities.

Hossein Farshidi dismissed reports of monkeypox cases as "rumors" and assured that the country's disease surveillance system is closely monitoring the situation around the clock.

He urged the public to disregard rumors and not to worry, ILNA reported. Farshidi noted that the World Health Organization has declared a public health emergency due to monkeypox outbreaks in some African and European countries. As a precautionary measure, Iran has stepped up health checks and controls at its borders.

The deputy health minister emphasized that a definitive diagnosis of monkeypox can only be made through laboratory tests, and warned that spreading unverified news or images can cause unnecessary panic. He reassured the public that if any suspected cases are detected, they will be announced through official channels.

He reassured the public that if any suspected cases are detected, they will be announced through official channels.

How science exploration parks affect education in Iran



By Mehdi Jalilian

Guest contributor

Science exploration parks are places where every outstanding scientific phenomenon and unfathomable process will be put on display for students and youth so that they can make the most of them and elevate themselves. Most of these parks are solely designed to spark the

public interest, provide the learners with more insights into the scientific phenomena, and principally offer learning experiences. These parks are equipped with practical demonstrations, easy access facilities, and exhibitions which make learning about science more interactive, engaging, and—most vital of all—fun. These parks that are set up under the aegis of presidency offer workshops, science camps, and education programs for several different

ages to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and exercise. Science exploration parks follow an experiential learning approach in the educational centers. In experiential learning, students learn by direct or first-hand self-experience or naturalistic observation and not by mere passivity and instructions. In this way, a student can learn physics through testing a force and motion under a controlled environment,

or learn biology while examining the live specimens and ecosystems, features that form the backbone of such parks. Oftentimes, in the science parks, students engage in collaborative learning because they might need to work together or do experiments. This norm replicates what always happens in the real field of scientific research, and with the essence of teamwork, they facilitate the practice of working in

groups. From these group activities, students acquire critical thinking, powers of communication, and problem-solving skills. They also learn to appreciate the different perspectives and approaches. In the case of Iran, the availability of quality educational facilities varies throughout the country according to the geographical location and associated development, or lack of it, in terms of economic activity. These parks are urban-based

in most cases but the reach of the children of other regions, including underprivileged areas, will be possible. Truth be told, science exploration parks have a really equalizing influence in the society. As a result, we can realize that these kinds of parks offer free or low-cost admission and educational programs, and will make a great influence on high-quality scientific education in order to reduce the educational gap.