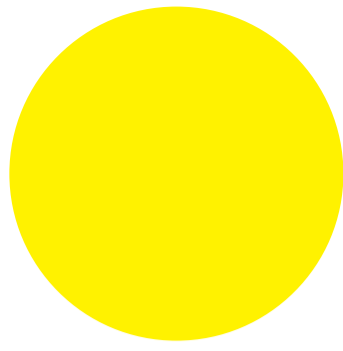


\$1b investment needed to overcome Iran's power shortages: **Official**



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Iranian Research Satellite Launched into Orbit

Iran successfully sent into orbit the domestically-developed Chamran 1 research satellite, registering another impressive stride in the country's space program.

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Europe's anti-Iran mudslinging on steroids



By **Rahman Qahramanpour**
International affairs expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

European countries, in recent days, have taken a tough stance against Tehran, citing claims that Iran has sent ballistic missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine, and have even imposed sanctions. This comes despite the fact that both Russian and Iranian officials have denied such claims. On the other hand, these accusations began to emerge when Western countries decided to provide more military aid to Ukraine, including long-range missiles. US Secretary of State Anthony

Blinken stated just a few days ago in Ukraine that their assistance to Ukraine will be commensurate with the conditions of the war. In other words, Western countries will provide military equipment to Ukraine in proportion to the needs of the war.

Based on this coincidence, some analysts have linked the two events and concluded that the claim regarding Iran's sending of ballistic missiles to Russia is a pretext for justifying increased Western military aid to Ukraine. In any case, over the past few months, and especially after Ukraine's attack on Russia in the Kursk region, a consensus has emerged in the West that more aggressive and long-range weapons should be provided to Kiev.

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\$1b investment needed to overcome Iran's power shortages: *Official*

Iran needs \$1 billion of investment in power stations to prevent power shortages, said the chairman of the Iran Power Plants Union.

Ali Nikbakht said in a press conference in Tehran that the country is expected to face a 26,000-MW power shortage next summer if no measure is taken with regards to Iranian electricity network, ISNA reported.

This year, the amount of electricity consumption reached 79,000 MW, the official said, adding that the country witnessed a deficit of 20,000 MW in some summer days.

Assuming that no power plant will be decommissioned across the country, there will remain between eight and nine months to adequately plan for the next year's peak of power consumption, Nikbakht warned. By optimizing and improving the efficiency of power stations, part of the electricity shortage can be compensated, he added.

Nikbakht put the average lifespan of power plants in the world at between 30 and 50 years, saying that in Iran the figure stands between 25 and 35 years for gas-fired power plants as steam power plants have 30 to 50 years of operational lifetime.

Role of renewables

Iran enjoys a high potential in the field of renewables and with its development the challenges can be solved to a great extent, Nikbakht said.

The abundance of renewable resources such as solar, wind, biomass and geothermal energy in Iran, where the national power grid is under growing pressure from runaway demand, is so great that its development and expansion is inevitable. Iran's Vision plan calls for introducing 10 gigawatts (GW) of renewable electricity into the national grid by the end of 2025, but data released by Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) in July showed the overall installed capacity stood just shy of 1.2 GW, Press TV wrote.

Iran faces annual electricity consumption increases of 5-7 percent. It experienced a peak shortage of more than 19.7 GW this summer as scorching heat wave persisted across much of the country which saw consumers crank up air conditioners.

The gap was the widest where demand hit an all-time high of 79.8 GW while total generation stood at 63-64 GW, according to Mo-

stafa Rajabi Mashhadi, head of Iran's power company TAVANIR.

Iran's hydroelectricity output falls at the steepest pace in the waning days of the summer when the water behind dams is chiefly saved for drinking and agricultural use. Temperatures normally drop in the run-up to the last month of the summer season, but the country suffered an unusually prolonged period of hot weather this year, where the mercury reached highs of more than 50 degrees Celsius in places such as southern Iran.

Nevertheless, electricity shortfall has become something of an endemic in recent years where production is a prerogative of the state and the contribution of private developers is sparse.

Experts have identified several factors contributing to the current situation, including inadequate investment in the power sector, a lack of power plant development and an aging production and transmission infrastructure. Part of the problem, how-

ever, relates to Iranian consumers who use up electricity three times more than the global average. Iranians also consume natural gas six times more than the global per capita average, according to official figures.

Experts attribute this to exorbitant subsidies doled out by the government. Iran's energy subsidies have fluctuated between \$30 billion and \$137 billion during the last decade, according to International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates. This vast variation is mainly driven by fossil fuel prices in the international markets.

Energy product subsidies in Iran are among the highest in the world. The subsidized energy system of Iran, with its high financial burden, has failed to achieve its intended economic goals, resulting in increased energy consumption and pollutant emissions. One recent phenomenon factoring clumsily in the shortfall is an out-of-bounds influx of Afghans, unofficially put in the upwards of several millions, which is painfully straining Iran's resources.

The cost of subsidies for renewables is a drop in the

ocean compared to the subsidies given to fossil fuels – a fact that has prompted the International Energy Agency to call for an end to fossil fuel subsidies.

Due to its rich resources and suitable geographical location, Iran can play an important role in the future of clean and sustainable energy in the region and the world. With more than 300 sunny days per year and an average annual solar radiation of about 5.5 kilowatt hours per square meter per day, there is 10 GW of capacity for solar power generation. The installed capacity of solar power plants in Iran stood at about 500 MW by the end of 2022.

Meanwhile, Iran's northwest, northeast and south coasts of the country have good potential for installing wind turbines, where available operation capacity and potential is estimated at 100 MW. In 2022, just around 300 MW of wind power capacity had been installed.

Iran's geothermal resources are mostly concentrated in its north-

west where its first plant is being built in Meshginshahr with a capacity of five megawatts. However, there is potential for 240 MW of geothermal power with more investment and development.

Biomass is another renewable energy type which uses organic matter such as agricultural, industrial and urban waste to make fuel or generate electricity. The share of biomass in Iran's energy mix is currently paltry and requires the development of related technology and infrastructure.

Nuclear energy is also one of the powerful and clean sources. Iran's nuclear energy production is on a continuous expansion trajectory where the first nuclear power plant, generating 1,000 megawatts (1 GW) of electricity, began operation in the port city of Bushehr in 2013. By 2041, the country seeks to produce 20 GW of nuclear energy.



Oman stresses expansion of port cooperation with Iran

Officials from the Sultanate of Oman expressed willingness to enhance port cooperation with Iran and take advantage of the commercial infrastructures of the Imam Khomeini Port.

An Omani trade delegation visited the loading and unloading operations of various types of goods and commodities at Imam Khomeini Port and signed a memorandum of understanding to expand port collaborations, Mehr News Agency reported. Also, the Omani delegation and Iranian officials stressed the need to boost cooperation be-

tween the private sectors of the two countries, according to the website of Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. The Special Economic Zone of Imam Khomeini Port is the largest commercial hub for grains in Iran.

The capacity of the port in terms of supply of goods, transit, possibility of re-export of goods and also the implementation of huge private sector investments in the zone were among the topics that attracted the attention of the visiting Omani trade and economic delegation.

Iran-Iraq strategic pact 'main achievement' of Pezeshkian's visit: *Envoy*



Iranian Ambassador to Baghdad Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadeq said the agreement between the two neighboring states on preparation of a comprehensive pact is the main achievement of the recent visit of President Masoud Pezeshkian to Iraq. Talking to ISNA, the envoy added that it was decided to create committees to prepare the draft of the pact to be ratified by Tehran and

Baghdad. "The visit of Pezeshkian to the Iraqi cities of Irbil, Sulaymaniyah and Basra was historic as he received a very warm and friendly welcome from the officials and people of these regions," he noted. Iran and Iraq have agreed to set up a taskforce to discuss a comprehensive agreement that could further boost economic and trade relations between the two allied

countries.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Wednesday during a state visit to Iraq that he and Iraqi officials had agreed to start negotiations on a major economic and trade agreement between the two countries.

Pezeshkian made the comments in a meeting in Baghdad with businesses and economic figures from Iran and Iraq.

He said a main objective of his visit to Iraq, which is a first foreign trip since he took office last month, is to facilitate the work of Iranian businesses and manufacturing companies in the Arab country.

The Iranian president said better economic and trade relations between Iran and Iraq would positively impact the security situation in the region.

Annual trade between Iran and Iraq is estimated at \$12 billion while Iran is a major supplier of

natural gas and electricity to its western neighbor.

The Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) said last week that Iranian exports to Iraq had reached nearly \$4.5 billion in the five months to August 21, up 21% compared to the same period last year.

The TPO said exports to Iraq could hit a multi-year record this year as he estimated that shipments could reach well beyond \$10 billion in the year to March.

Iraq has been the second-largest importer of Iranian goods and products after China in recent years. Iranian exports to Iraq mainly include natural gas, steel, petrochemical products, construction material and food.

On the first day of the Iranian president's three-day visit to Iraq on Wednesday, the two countries signed 14 memoranda of understanding to further expand their bilateral relations.



Celebrating nature at Water Lily Festival in Babol

Iranica Desk

The beautiful water lilies of the Heydar Kola Wetland in Babol, Mazandaran Province, have long attracted citizens and travelers alike. This stunning natural setting is set to be the main focus of a cultural and tourism festival called *otiti*, scheduled for mid-September. In the local dialect, *otiti* translates to water blossom.

For years, the residents of Babol have enjoyed a cozy, safe, and picturesque environment along the eastern bypass of the city. The Heydar Kola Wetland, also known as the Water Lily Wetland, provides a unique spot for leisure and relaxation during the summer and autumn months, featuring beautiful pink flowers atop the water and the graceful flight of local birds, IRNA wrote.

Spanning 34 hectares, the primary function of the Heydar Kola Wetland is to supply water for the fields in the neighboring areas of Heydar Kola, Haji Kola, and Hamzeh Kola. However, the blooming water lilies have recently highlighted the wetland's tourism potential. Now, during their blossoming season, these flowers serve



as the inspiration for a cultural-tourism event, concluding the summer of 2024 with a festival celebrating their beauty. Recent infrastructure developments around the wetland have significantly increased its allure for residents. This growing attractiveness has led to the planning of the inaugural cultural tourism festival in the recreational area surrounding the wetland.

According to Mehdi Es'haqi, the deputy head of the Mazandaran Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, the first edition of the Water Lily Festival will begin on September 26 and continue until September 30, celebrating the blooming of the lotus flowers.

Es'haqi remarked that the wetland's optimal environmental conditions make it an excellent location for tourism. He noted that the water lilies, also known as Eastern Lotuses, are considered rare natural attractions in Iran, with the Heydar Kola Wetland being one of the region's most scenic natural spots.

He emphasized that these flowers grow in limited areas and, during the blooming season — from early July to late September — the wetland transforms into an enchanting landscape, creating a unique environment in the city of Babol. The developments in tourism and recreational infrastructure over the years have made it possible to host cultural and tourism events in



● balad.ir

the area. The park features a unique view and is equipped with numerous facilities, including a prayer room, kiosks, a traditional teahouse, a boating dock, children's playground equipment, horseback riding opportunities, and food stalls, fulfilling all essential criteria for hosting a cultural tourism event.

Es'haqi further explained that

leveraging natural opportunities to create tourism events is a key strategy for branding Mazandaran Province's tourism sector. When combined with cultural programs, these initiatives can effectively showcase the region's tourism assets and infrastructure.

According to IRNA, the Heydar Kola Wetland is one of Mazandaran Province's most prominent sites for the growth of

water lilies. In addition, several other wetlands in the province, which are also covered with water lilies, boast similar beauty. The water bodies in the villages of Rudbast and Ojaksar in Babolsar are two wetland areas that were registered as national natural heritage sites in 2022, along with the Water Lily Wetland in Abbandansar village of Sari, which has gained attention in recent years.

Mystique of Sepid Chah Cemetery in Behshahr



Iranica Desk

Sepid Chah is one of the few cemeteries that attract numerous visitors, with people traveling from far and wide to see this historical site. Many go to great lengths to bury their loved ones here, believing that many great figures rest in this cemetery, and there is a prevalent belief that the dead do not decay in this place. The cemetery is a valuable historical and religious site in Behshahr, Mazandaran Province. The soil here is strikingly white, and local beliefs hold that this

soil prevents the decay of bodies, a notion that is not entirely unfounded. The unusual standing tombstones are adorned with intriguing carvings featuring Islamic motifs, geometric patterns, and symbolic designs, each carrying its own meaning, IRNA wrote.

History

Linked to the Timurid period, this cemetery is considered one of the earliest burial sites for Muslims. Within this mysterious burial ground, a shrine has been established for an Imamzadeh,

whose shrine dates back 840 years. The historical significance of the coffin-shaped grave in the area dates back to the year 896. Due to its rich history, this cemetery is registered as a national heritage site.

Enigmatic soil

Legends surrounding the soil of this cemetery suggest that the dead do not decay here. Investigations into the soil have shown that this legend is largely true, as the soil contains a high percentage of lime, which delays the decomposition of bodies. The

whiteness of the soil is attributed to this high lime content. Additionally, the use of stone slabs brought from the surrounding mountains has contributed to the preservation of the bodies. As you approach this site from a distance, the coordinated, uniformly colored tombstones standing closely together catch your attention. As you get nearer, the shapes, numbers, and inscriptions carved on the tombstones captivate you. A little research into these tombstones will transport you back to the ancient history of Iran.



● IRNA

The carvings on these stones are designed in the shape of altars and coffins, dating back to the Mithraic period of ancient Iran. However, after the advent of Islam, shapes were carved on the altar-shaped stones that can be categorized into three groups:

Islamic motifs: These stones feature floral borders with Islamic motifs and prayers, often with two to three overlapping arches.

Geometric patterns: Decorative circles and multi-petal flowers, symbolizing the wheel and

the sun, along with various geometric designs, are frequently seen in the carvings of this cemetery.

Symbolic designs: Symbolic carvings, such as the word "Allah" inscribed in the center of a lantern, reflect the religious beliefs of that time. In this village, it was customary to engrave information about the deceased on their tombstones. However, after the death of the last surviving engravers and stone carvers in the village, this tradition was forgotten, and today, ordinary tombstones are used for the deceased.

The debate: Catch Trump if you can



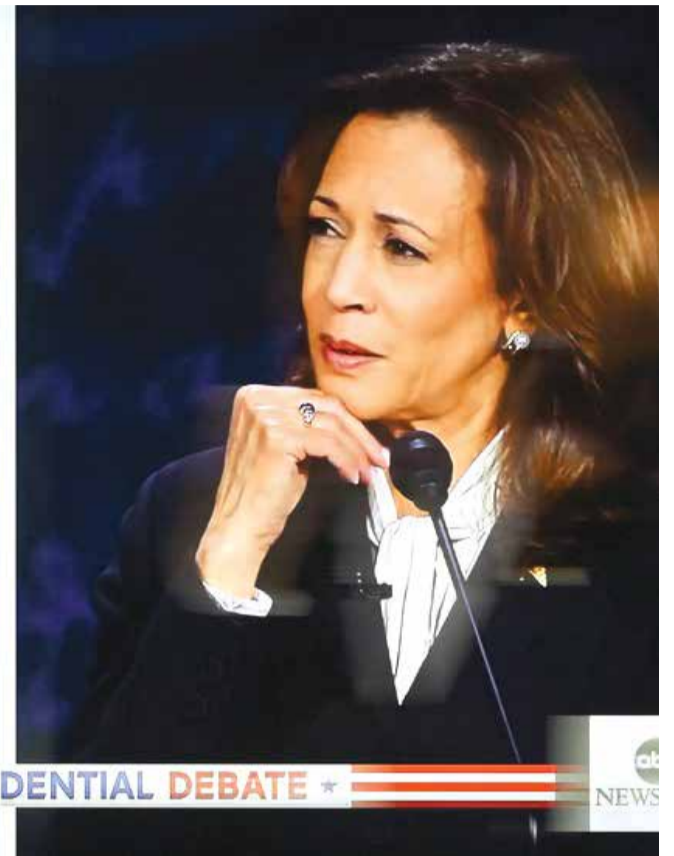
By Matthew Stevenson
Author

OPINION

How is it possible that the presidential election remains so close when, at this week's debate, Donald Trump (R-Felon) warned the nation that, among the millions of illegal aliens laying siege to the American way of life, some in Springfield, Ohio (it's between Dayton and Columbus), are living on a diet of snatched family pets. Trump ranted:

"We're a failing nation....What they have done to our country by allowing these millions and millions of people to come into our country. And look at what's happening to the towns all over the United States. And a lot of towns don't want to talk — not going to be Aurora or Springfield. A lot of towns don't want to talk about it because they're so embarrassed by it. In Springfield, they're eating the dogs. The people that came in. They're eating the cats. They're eating — they're eating the pets of the people that live there. And this is what's happening in our country. And it's a shame."

In elections past, bizarre comments of this variety were branded as "gaffs" and often led to the disqualification of the candidate who made them (President Gerald Ford was seen off in 1976 for saying, "There is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe..."), but in Trump's case, the dog-eating allegations caused little more than a ripple in the national conversation — perhaps some fodder for late-night comedians. Then it was back to the straw polls that show Vice President Harris and the narcissistic Trump in a virtual dead heat, the clearest proof we have that presidential politics have descended to the level of a carnival freak show (for which Trump's embalmers changed his hair color from howler monkey orange to a Baywatch tan).



The illustration shows US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris (R) and former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump as they appeared on TV during a presidential debate in Philadelphia on September 10, 2024.
● THE ATLANTIC

In the debate, Harris wasn't a pushover by any means, arguing in complete, often eloquent, sentences about the injustices of a past and future Trump government, but she conceives of the electorate as a jury — and one that holds prosecutors in high esteem. Remember the truism, "Any good prosecutor can get a grand jury to indict a ham sandwich," but not all Americans love jury duty.

I am assuming that very few Americans watched all of the debate to learn why Donald Trump or Kamala Harris represents the country's future.

Most people, I suspect, glanced at headlines, took in a few vlogs from their favorite social media distributor, and came to the conclusion that their candidate of choice prevailed in the marketplace of ideas.

Or they followed a roving camera around the spin rooms and might well have heard Representative Matt Gaetz (R-Underaged) say: "In places like California and the state of Washington, if a parent doesn't have the right gender-affirming approach to their own children, they're at risk of losing parental rights."

The day after, I woke up to the resounding evidence that Harris had floated like a butterfly over the proceedings and occasionally had stung the hapless Trump like a bee. He, I was assured, had done no better on tariffs, Gaza, Ukraine, abortion, climate change, or January 6 than he had with his eloquence over the Springfield protein diet.

Then I re-watched the C-Span feed, including the dismal soundbites from the spin rooms, and came to the conclusion that presidential debates are just a variation on Narcissus's pond in which we only see our own reflections and hear our own words, which explains why debates rarely move the voting dials.

The location of this presidential debate was Philadelphia's National Constitution Center, a museum as patriarchal as the original-intent document.

Most of the exhibits and cabinets displays are arranged to capture the fleeting imaginations of field-tripping sixth graders (I know, not the worst thing), but the museum fails in its presentation of the document as something set in stone (in this case, lots of granite inscriptions from the likes of James Madison), not anything that can evolve with the times.

Today, we can thank the flawed language of the Constitution for the failings of the Supreme Court (no term limits were offered, allowing it to become, in its current iteration, Trump's in-house counsel); the oligarchy of the Senate (in which a majority of the American population gets a minority of the seats); and the absurdity of the electoral college (that routinely elects Republican candidates who have lost the popular vote).

This complaint list doesn't even take the Constitution to task over its toleration of the slave trade until 1808 or explain how Donald Trump could auction his presidency to foreign governments and still not be booked on emoluments charges.

A presidential debate in the hallowed halls of a "National Constitution Center" is intended to reassure voters that the 2025 Projectionists have yet to seize the radio stations or suspend habeas corpus (perhaps so that during the debate Trump could say with a straight face: "...I have nothing to do with Project 2025. That's out there. I haven't read it. I don't want to read it...").

Note: The Heritage Foundation, which is the author of this Volksgemeinschaft edikt, might well be a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Trump Organization or the

Trump-Vance campaign.

The debate itself took place inside a hermetically sealed television studio set up at the Center (it looked like the inside of a mobster's coffin, as maybe it was).

Other than the two ABC News anchors, no audience was present, and the rules dictated that whenever a candidate's speaking time (mostly two minutes, except for rebuttals, which were one minute) had expired, their microphone would be muted.

Ostensibly, this was to prevent the unhinged Trump from hijacking proceedings and having a 90-minute conversation with himself (the standard fare of his rallies), but actually the sound barrier came at the request of grown-up Republicans (can there be many left?) who didn't want a national audience to hear Trump's mutterings and deranged asides ("They threw him out of a campaign like a dog. We don't even know, is he our president? But we have a president....that doesn't know he's alive...").

In their modern equivalent, presidential debates are reduced to simulcast, split screen press conferences, in which candidates are awarded points for smirks and body language, not just for their words.

In Philadelphia, Harris's handlers had her smiling (even at tense, serious moments) throughout the debate — as a coded way to express contempt or disgust for what Trump was saying, although the effect made the evening feel like the screening of a silent movie, in which the heroine had no idea she was about to be tied to the tracks.

For his part, Trump had only two facial expressions: he would close his eyes, like an exasperated school principal, to register disagreement with a Harris thought ("And I'd invite you to know that Donald Trump actually has no plan for you, because he is more interested in defending himself than he is in looking out for you...") or he would scowl his disapproval.

What was astounding about the debate is how little both candidates understand about money, which, after all, is all that matters to both political parties, if not to most of the voters.

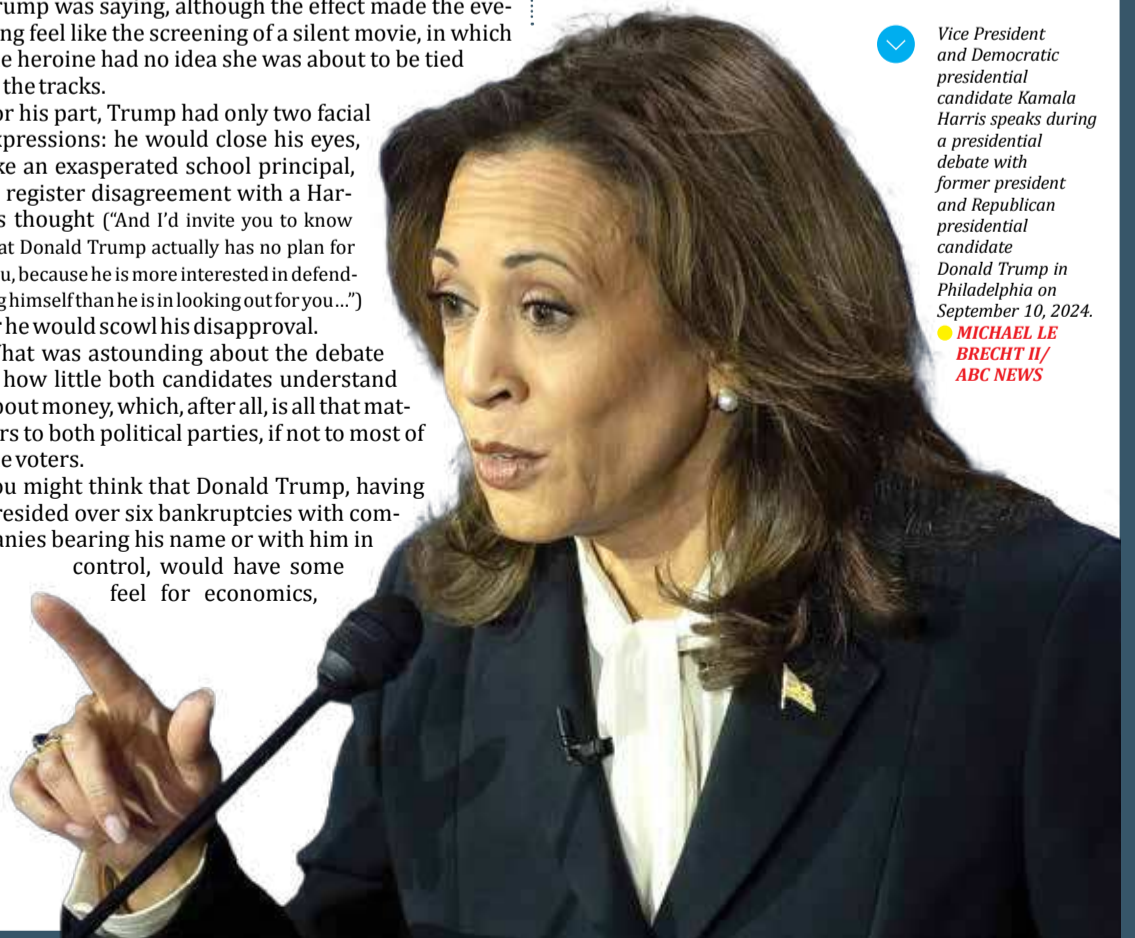
You might think that Donald Trump, having presided over six bankruptcies with companies bearing his name or with him in control, would have some feel for economics,

but apparently he has none, as several times during the evening he boasted about how tariffs on foreign imports were raking in "billions" from countries such as China. (He said: "We're doing tariffs on other countries. Other countries are going to finally, after 75 years, pay us back for all that we've done for the world. And the tariff will be substantial in some cases. I took in billions and billions of dollars, as you know, from China.")

Nice try, Fordham C student Donnie, but it's the importers (Walmart, Home Depot, Target, etc.) who pay tariffs, not the exporting countries. Your billions came from the pockets of your supporters, the same chumps contributing \$50 to pay Alina Habba's appearance fees (perhaps including those at candlelit dinners).

For her part, Harris was equally clueless on the various causes of inflation (wage increases, demand for goods, expanding money supply, and even tariffs all contribute). All she could add to the economic conversation was to chant (it sounded like a mantra) the Hillary-esque "I have a plan," for example, to assist first-time home buyers and parents of small children with tax deductions. Harris said several times: "And a vision of that includes having a plan, understanding the aspirations, the dreams, the hopes, the ambition of the American people, which is why I intend to create an opportuni-

Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris speaks during a presidential debate with former president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in Philadelphia on September 10, 2024.
● MICHAEL LE BRECHT II/ABC NEWS



ty economy, investing in small businesses, in new families, in what we can do around protecting seniors, what we can do that is about giving hard-working folks a break in bringing down the cost of living.” (Barack Obama used the same coddling language, and the only starter house it financed was his beachside mansion on Martha’s Vineyard.)

Nor could Harris lower the boom on Trump’s conception of the presidency as yet another Madoff feeder fund, failing even to say: “He pays no income taxes, shakes down diplomatic contacts for backhanders, took \$2 billion from the Saudis, raked in millions by renting rooms at his Washington hotel to foreign governments who then never bothered to check in to the suites, routinely obstructs justices, has sexually abused numerous women, declares bankruptcy to walk away from his many creditors, and now is engaged in an elaborate Ponzi scheme to use a shell company called Trump Media and Technology Group to drain billions (after he put up nothing) from Wall Street into his (overdrawn) bank accounts.” And I thought she was a hard-charging prosecutor.

The ABC News anchors asked thoughtful, probing questions, and occasionally injected a note of reality to the proceedings (Linsey Davies said to Trump, who was droning on about infanticide: “There is no state in this country where it is legal to kill a baby after it’s born...”), but overall, their presence was that of mall cops during a shop-lifting spree, as neither candidate ever got close to answering the posed questions.

Trump showed up in Philadelphia not because he has any interest in the democratic experiment or wanted to review the museum cabinets on The Great Compromise (that which gave states like Wyoming the same number of senators as California), but because he views life as a ratings sweep, and himself as the star of the long-running monologue sitcom, *Trump: Me, Myself, and I*.

Trump did not articulate ideas about governance so much as shout into the mic for 90 minutes, as if a talk radio shock jock. (I was a little surprised his didn’t go off on Aaron Rodgers and the Jets.) Here are some outtakes:

“But if she ever got elected, she’d change it. And it will be the end of our country. She’s a Marxist. Everybody knows she’s a Marxist....Every one of those cases was started by them against their political opponent. And I’m winning most of them and I’ll win the rest on appeal....You talk about the Capitol. Why are we allowing these millions of people to come through on the southern border?...Peacefully and patriotically. And nobody on the other side was killed. Ashli Babbitt was shot by an out-of-control police officer that should have never, ever shot her. It’s a disgrace...” And if that logic gets you close to 50% in many presidential polls, it’s worth the evening out, which, in Trump’s case, included a bizarre cameo (think of a professional wrestling promoter) in the post-debate spin room for more carnival barking.

In the debate, Harris wasn’t a pushover by any means, arguing in complete, often eloquent, sentences about the injustices of a past and fu-



Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris (R) shakes hand with Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump after a presidential debate in Philadelphia on September 10, 2024.
● ABC

ture Trump government, but she conceives of the electorate as a jury — and one that holds prosecutors in high esteem. Remember the truism, “Any good prosecutor can get a grand jury to indict a ham sandwich,” but not all Americans love jury duty.

As this debate made clear, Harris is the incumbent, running for truth, justice, and the American way, while Trump is Butch Cassidy, Henry Gondorff (from *The Sting*), Frank Abagnale Jr.

(Catch Me If You Can) or Danny Ocean — looking to stick it to the man or knock off the casino. (And as Danny Ocean liked to say: “Because the house always wins. Play long enough, you never change the stakes, the house takes you. Unless, when that perfect hand comes along, you bet big, and then you take the house.”) In this case, the recidivist Trump is betting big that he can take down the house.

The article first appeared on CounterPunch.

Kamala Harris won debate, but maybe not election



The illustration shows the gestures Democratic presidential candidate Vice President Kamala Harris (R) and Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump made during a presidential debate in Philadelphia on September 10, 2024.
● billoreilly.com

So, the obvious debate strategy for Trump would have been to hammer home his advantages on issues, starting with two issues on which voters give dismal grades to the Biden-Harris administration, then going on to the raft of issues on which Harris, in her previous campaign for president, took stands widely unpopular during this one.

From time to time, and succinctly in his closing statement, Trump did this. But he also went off on alarms and excursions, which, however entertaining for his rally audiences, seemed distracting or puzzling for the moveable voters whose votes he needs.

He took up valuable time, for example, trying to insist that no one has been leaving his rallies early. He cited Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a controversial figure for those who follow these things and unknown to most others, as a supportive leader. He engaged in an extended debate over whether he really lost the 2020 election.

As Fox News’ Brit Hume noted, Harris “baited him successfully, which is the story of the debate in my view”. Such diversions point to character weaknesses: an unwillingness to focus, a preoccupa-

tion with personal slights, and a lack of discipline. In contrast, Harris was clearly well prepared and disciplined in reciting favorably worded phrases. “We’re not going back,” Harris said at one point. “It’s time to turn the page.” That’s absurd from one point of view. Nothing she said indicated that a Harris-Walz administration’s policies would be much different from the Biden-Harris administration’s. But her words do point to what a majority of voters have found troubling about Trump’s character. Harris benefited as well from the ABC moderators’ erroneous fact-checking when they argued that no one favors ninth-month abortions, that the Springfield city manager must be a conclusive source of events there, and that violent crime rates declined sharply in 2021 and 2022.

But media partiality to Democrats is just one of several asymmetrical factors in politics. It’s more enduring than the Republicans’ Electoral College edge in 2016 and 2020, for Democrats had an edge there in 2004 and 2012. But a disciplined Republican candidate should expect media bias and should be prepared with brief and persuasive ripostes. Trump wasn’t.



By Michael Barone
Political analyst

OPINION

When I was in the polling business many years ago, our reports always started with the mood of the electorate, whether things were moving in the right direction or seriously off on the wrong track, then moved to two sections on character and issues. Usually, those sections were pretty balanced. We advised candidates on which character traits and issue stands worked for them and which did not. We suggested

how they could emphasize their strengths and address or pivot away from their weaknesses. However, there’s not much need for such a balanced approach in this presidential election, or about the candidates’ first and possibly only television debate, the one on ABC News on September 10. With only minor exceptions, character traits work for Vice President Kamala Harris. And with only minor exceptions, issue stands work for former President Donald Trump.

To their credit, the ABC moderators, after raising the Harris-favoring abortion issue early, then asked why she — actually, anonymous campaign staff tweeters — has renounced her 2019 presidential campaign promises to ban fracking, institute mandatory gun buybacks, and decriminalize illegal border crossings.

After perfunctorily repeated, obviously rehearsed lines about how she had sort of supported fracking, she segued into comparing her “middle-class” childhood to Trump’s, citing her underwhelming proposals to increase homeownership, and mentioning a high-school friend assaulted by a stepfather and her work “protecting seniors from scams”. Not just a word salad but a whole buffet, with a dash of Tabasco to provoke her opponent. CNN’s instant poll on who won the debate has Harris ahead 63% to 37%. This is almost the exact opposite of the CNN count on the June 27 debate, which had Trump ahead of President Joe Biden 67% to 33%, and may hearten Harris backers.

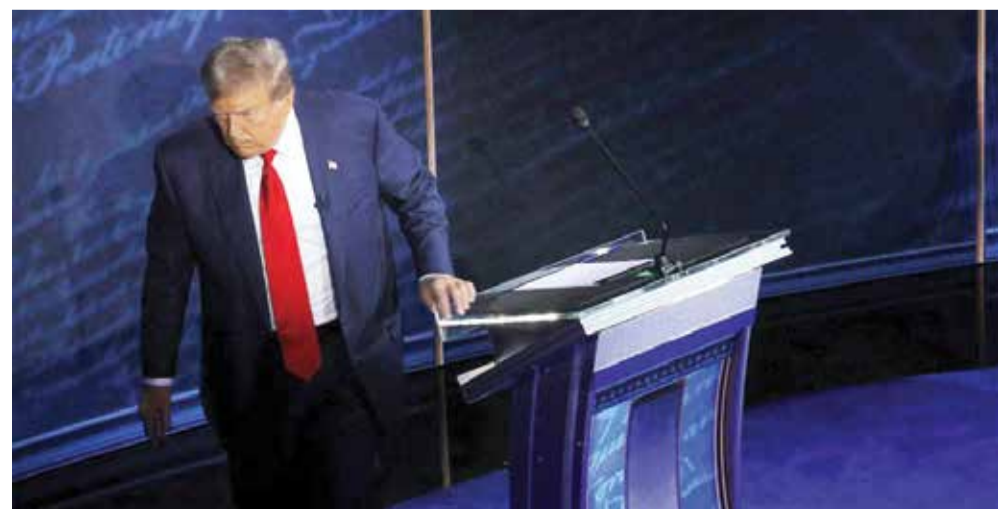
But the result is in line with the average of polls taken immediately after the five presidential debates in September and October 2016 and 2020: Fifty-nine percent thought the Democrat won, as against 35% for Trump. So, this debate response looks like those in years when Trump won the elec-

toral vote by 77,736 popular votes in three states in 2016 and lost it by 42,918 popular votes in three states in 2020.

Pre-debate polling showed Harris ahead 48% to 47% in the RealClearPolitics average of recent polls and 49% to 47% in Nate Silver’s Silver Bulletin. Silver was projecting her with a 50% to 49% popular vote edge in November but gave Trump a 61% chance of an Electoral College majority.

But any projections are contingent on events. Nate Cohn, proprietor of the highly rated New York Times/Siena College poll, which showed a pre-debate Trump lead of 48% to 47%, noted that 28% said “they needed to learn more” about Harris, as compared to only 9% about Trump. “More than anything, voters say they want to hear more about where she stands on the issues,” Cohn wrote. “And a majority of voters say she’s a ‘risky’ choice and ‘more of the same’ — hardly an enviable combination.” Did she resolve those qualms in her favor in the debate? Not in my view, but I’ll give the final word to Silver: “Harris got the debates she wanted. If she isn’t able to move the needle in the polls at least a little bit, maybe that means the country just isn’t buying what she’s selling.”

The article first appeared on RealClearPolitics.



Former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump walks off the stage after a presidential debate in Philadelphia on September 10, 2024.
● BRIAN SNYDER/REUTERS

Iran, Shamsaei out to prove doubters wrong in Futsal World Cup



By Amirhadi Arsalanpour
Staff writer

As Iran kicks off its Group F campaign against Venezuela at the Futsal World Cup on Monday, the familiar home-grown vs. foreign coach debate is likely to reignite among fans and pundits in the country. While many insist the knowledge and acumen of a high-profile international coach is essential to success in major tournaments, others argue that a local coach, with a better understanding of the Iranian culture and emotional needs, is better suited to lead a compatriot. For all his glorious years as a scoring machine for the

national team, Iranian head coach Vahid Shamsaei has had his own critics to deal with since taking charge of the bench two years ago and a record-extending 13th Asian Cup crown, coupled with some shaky performances against minnow oppositions in Bahrain and Uzbekistan, back in April did little to consolidate him as the right man for the job. That is why Shamsaei will be eager for a statement victory against the South American opponent, which is making only a second World Cup appearance but managed to reach the last 16 in the 2021 edition. With the group also featuring Guatemala and France,

Iran could fancy a comfortable progress to the last 16. Beaten by Iran in all six previous meetings between the two sides, Guatemala has failed to go beyond the group stage in five attempts, with France, 56th in the FIFA ranking, securing a maiden place in the finals courtesy of an elite-round group win in the European qualifiers. The story of the knockout stage, however, will be in stark contrast with the group phase as a top-spot finish in the group could place Shamsaei's men in the same half of the draw with five-time champion Brazil, world No. 2 Spain, or the 2021 semifinalist Kazakhstan. A best World Cup result for

Iran came in 2016, when the Asian powerhouse, steered by a domestic coach in Mohammad Nazemasharieh, defeated Portugal in the shootout to finish third, and Shamsaei knows any outcome other than emulating the heroics of eight years ago could well be deemed as a failure. The Iranian will definitely need to have prolific Hossein Tayyebi, Saeid Ahmadabbasi – top scorer in April's Asian Cup – as well as reigning Asian player of the year Moslem Oladqobad in their best form if the country is to go for yet another successful run in the World Cup.



● SAJJAD IMANIAN/MIZAN



▲ Foolad Sirjan's outside-hitter Amirhossein Esfandiari (C) celebrates with teammates during a last-four victory over Jakarta Bhayangkara Presisi in the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship in Yazd, Iran, on September 13, 2024.

● AMIRHOSSEIN KHEIRKHAH/volleyball.ir

Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship:

Foolad, Shahdab set all-Iranian date in the final

Sports Desk

Foolad Sirjan and Shahdab Yazd will square off in an all-Iranian final showpiece at the Asian Men's Club Volleyball Championship in Yazd's Shahediyeh Indoor Hall today.

On Friday, Foolad, steered by former Iran head coach Behrouz Ataei, came from behind to beat a star-studded Jakarta Bhayangkara

Presisi in a five-set thriller (25-22, 23-25, 22-25, 25-21, 16-14) to reach the final. Opposite spiker Ali Hajipour was Foolad's top scorer for the day with 25 points, followed by Iranian international outside-hitter Amirhossein Esfandiari, who contributed with 24. World-class opposite Jean Patry, who won the Olympic gold on home soil in August, chipped in a game-high 31

points for the Indonesian side, with his fellow-French star Earvin N'Gapeth finishing on 16 points.

"I was glad to see my team somehow pull off the victory despite not having its best day. The final game against Shahdab will be a much different contest as there will be no more mental pressure on the players, though the match is still going to be a grueling one," Ataei said af-

ter the game. Earlier in the day, Shahdab came out on top against Pavlodar VC of Kazakhstan in straight sets (25-21, 25-20, 25-19) to improve on the semifinal defeat in last year's edition in Manama. Shahdab's Iranian opposite Amir Ghafour and Pakistani outside-hitter were the joint-top scorers of the game with 14 points, with Mikhail Ustinov scoring 13 for Pavlodar.

Premier League rivals want to see us punished: City boss Guardiola

BBC – Manager Pep Guardiola says Manchester City's Premier League rivals want to see the club punished for alleged breaches of the top flight's financial rules. Guardiola says he is glad the hear-

ing into City's 115 charges will begin on Monday.

City were charged and referred to an independent commission in February 2023 following a four-year investigation.

It is alleged City breached the Premier League's financial rules between 2009 and 2018.

City strongly deny all charges and have said their case is supported by a "comprehensive body of irrefutable evidence".

Javier Tebas, president of Spain's La Liga, is a long-time critic of City, owned by the Abu Dhabi-backed City Football Group and has repeatedly accused the them – together with Qatar-backed PSG – of being a state club and of "financial doping". Tebas says he has spoken to many Premier League clubs and believes they want to see the current champions punished.

"I have spoken with many Premier League clubs and most of them understand that City should be sanctioned," he was quoted as saying by Spanish newspaper Mundo Deportivo.

Responding to these comments on Friday, former Barcelona boss Guardiola said: "For the first time

I agree with Tebas.

"All the Premier League teams want us to be sanctioned, that is for sure. But that's why I say to Mr Tebas and the Premier League teams, wait for the independent panel.

"Justice is there in a modern democracy. It's not more complicated than that.

"I don't know if he is a lawyer or the rest of the Premier League teams are lawyers, so I ask for that. It happened with UEFA.

"We believe we have not done anything wrong."

Billed as sport's 'trial of the century', it is expected to run for 10 weeks – with a verdict likely in early 2025.

The Premier League has also accused the reigning champions of not co-operating with its investigation.

If found guilty of the most serious charges, City could be hit with a points deduction serious enough to condemn them to relegation – or even expulsion – from the Premier League.

City have won eight league titles, multiple cups and the Champions League since their 2008 Abu Dhabi takeover.

Iranian girls grab three Asian rowing golds



Sports Desk

Iranian girls bagged four medals, including triple golds, at the Asian Rowing U19 & U23 Championships in Shenyang, China. Fatemeh Mojallal rounded off a successful campaign for the country on Saturday by clocking 7:52.20 min-

utes in the final to win the women's under-23 single sculls gold.

Mojallal then teamed up with Kimia Zarei for a silver medal in the double sculls contest of the age group, thanks to a 7:38.07-minute record behind China.

Mahna Haji Hosseini was the Iranian gold medalist in

the under-19 competitions, crossing the finish line with a fastest time of 8:13.37 minutes in the single sculls final. Haji Hosseini was also part of the Iranian four-girl team, alongside Zarei, Mojallal, and Saghi Maleki that had won the under-23 quadruple sculls gold on Friday.



● REUTERS

Iranian research satellite launched into orbit

Iran successfully sent into orbit the domestically-developed Chamran 1 research satellite, registering another impressive stride in the country's space program. In the early hours of Saturday, the satellite was put into orbit at an altitude of 550 kilometers (341 miles) above the Earth's surface onboard a homegrown Qaem-100 space launch vehicle (SLV). Qaem-100 is a three-stage SLV with solid fuel developed by the Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). Several hours into the launch, the Iranian research satellite sent its first signals. Chamran-1 satellite has been designed and manufactured by Iranian technicians at the space division of Iran Electronics Industries (SAIran), a state-owned subsidiary of Iran's Ministry of Defense, in conjunction with experts at the Aerospace Research Institute (ARI) and private knowledge-based firms. Weighing approximately 60 kilograms, the primary mission of the Iranian research satellite is to test hardware and software systems for orbital maneuver technology validation. The satellite also has secondary tasks, including assessing the performance of cold gas propulsion subsystems in space systems, and performance evaluation of navigation and attitude control subsystems. Despite sanctions imposed by Western

countries in recent years, Iran has taken giant strides in the civilian space program. Iran has faced crippling Western sanctions for years, especially after the US, under then-President Donald Trump, unilaterally abandoned a landmark nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers in 2018. However, it has been advancing its aerospace activities, insisting they are peaceful and in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions. The country is now among the world's top 10 nations capable of developing and launching satellites. Earlier this year, Iran successfully sent the homegrown Mahda research satellite, along with two research cargoes, to space onboard the domestically developed Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite launch vehicle (SLV). Mahda weighs 32 kilograms and its primary task is to test the satellite-related subsystems, verify the function of Simorgh SLV in dispensing space cargoes, and evaluate the performance of new designs and the reliability of indigenous technologies in space. Earlier, the Aerospace Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully put the Soraya satellite into an orbit 750 kilometers above Earth in 11 minutes. The research satellite, manufactured by the ISA, was launched with a Qaem-100 space launch vehicle (SLV).



Lukashenko casts Belarus as 'reliable' partner of Iran



International Desk

Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko said his country has always been a reliable partner of Iran, emphasizing the need to accelerate expansion of economic relations between the two countries. Lukashenko made the remarks in a meeting with the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran Ali Akbar Ahmadian in Minsk on Friday. The security is guaranteed when the economy gains strength. Therefore, it is necessary for Iran and Belarus to further expand their economic relations, Lukashenko said. He also pointed to the security problems facing the two countries, saying that the two nations are in the same boat and need joint consultations and actions. While appreciating Iran for supporting Belarus' membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Lukashenko emphasized that the strengthening of organizations such as Shanghai and BRICS has provided new opportunities for the independent countries of the world. Referring to the current complicated political situation in the world and its move towards multilateral system, Lukashenko emphasized that Iran and Belarus should not be confined to consultations and should jointly develop cooperation. The Iranian official expressed hope that cooperation between the two countries will further expand in the future. Ahmadian said that the world is moving towards a new order where the US has increasingly weakened, adding that a new world order which is forming in Asia and Africa is inevitable.

Iran ready for talks based on respect, not under pressure: FM

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday new sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States, Britain, France and Germany over alleged transfer of ballistic missiles to Russia were a "failed policy." Araghchi described the bans as a "pressure tool" and would lead to confrontation not cooperation, stressing that they would fail they it could not be effective in practice. "It is surprising that Western countries still do not know that sanctions are a failed tool and that they are unable to dictate their own intentions on Iran through sanctions," he said.

The top diplomat called the West's policy of sanctions a "failed experience" both in the ongoing dispute over Iran's nuclear program and in other issues related to the country. "Iran has been always ready for negotiations and has never left constructive talks to reach a common understanding on disputed issues," Araghchi said. However, he added that negotiations should be based on "mutual respect not threat and pressure." Iran has categorically rejected the allegations of delivering ballistic missiles to Russia to be used in Ukraine war. Tehran has said any attempt to link the war in Ukraine to the



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi
● IRNA

cooperation between Iran and Russia is politically-motivated with the aim of legitimizing the West's interference and their military aid to Kiev. On Tuesday, the US targeted 10 people and six companies for their involvement in sup-

porting Iran's defense sector and identified four vessels involved in "enabling Iran's delivery of weapons components and weapons systems," the Treasury Department said in a statement. "The Department of State is concurrently designating three entities, including Iran Air, and identifying five vessels as blocked property involved in the proliferation of Iranian weapons systems to Russia," the statement added. Earlier in that day, the European trio announced imposed sanctions on Iran's air transport, including the cancellation of bilateral air service agreements with the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Europe's anti-Iran ...

The British, in their assessments, have concluded that **Page 1 >** Moscow wants to consolidate its successes in the occupied territories and will launch an attack on other parts of Ukraine in late 2024 or early 2025, and therefore believe that Ukraine should be further armed. Another notable point is that in previous cases, when a claim was made against Iran and Russia and was true, Iran or Russia would confirm it. However, in this case, both sides have strongly denied the allegations, and even Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has stated that he has

not seen any evidence confirming Iran's missile transfer to Russia and their use against Ukraine. Therefore, the coincidence of the claims against Iran with the West's decision to provide more aid to Ukraine is noteworthy. As expected, Europe did not welcome the victory of a reformist president in Iran. In fact, Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, did not attend the president's inauguration ceremony. Perhaps they wanted to show that the war in Ukraine is very important to them, even more important than the Gaza war, and that as long as the war in Ukraine and Iran's support

for Russia continue, there will be no change in Europe's policy towards Iran. On the other hand, European think tanks claim that Iran is no longer a regional threat, but has become a trans-regional power or threat. While this may be pleasing to some in Iran, we must not forget that the threats from the US during George W. Bush's era, when Iran was labeled an "axis of evil," were not a good experience. In their rivalry with China, and in order to convince public opinion and establish that Beijing is a serious threat to the American and Western interests, the Americans dragged Iran and North Korea into the argument. European public opinion did

not believe the claims that China or Russia were threats to Europe before Russia's war on Ukraine, but now they are convinced that Russia is a threat to Europe. Therefore, Iranian politicians and foreign policy decision-makers must be vigilant and not allow such an image of Iran as a serious threat to be created. These claims and actions can be the prelude to more dangerous and larger actions against Iran. Iranian politicians must convince the global opinion that Iran is not a threat to any country, and that its relations with China and Russia do not spell confrontation with the West. The policy of Iran, and especially the new government, is one of balance.

1,500 Iranian book titles on display at Baghdad fair

Iran has stepped up its presence at the 25th Baghdad International Book Fair, which kicked off Thursday with a significant showing of 1,500 book titles. Iran is turning out for its fourth appearance at the fair, with a 36-square-meter pavilion featuring a wide range of books that run the gamut from Islamic studies to literature, children's books, university publications, and language learning materials. Twenty-three Iranian publishers and cultural institutions are also weighing in on the event. A memorandum of understanding between the Tehran International Book Fair and the Baghdad International Book Fair is also expected to be signed during the event, marking a significant step in promoting cultural exchange and cooperation between the two countries. The fair, which will run from September 12 to September 22, was officially opened by Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakkak Al-Badrani, who was joined by other high-ranking government officials, including the Minister of Youth and Sports, the Minister of Education, the Governor of Baghdad, and the Deputy Minister of Trade. The event is being held under the theme "Iraq Reads," which is aimed at



getting Iraqis to pick up a book and read. In his opening remarks, Al-Badrani said he was standing in for Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani at the event. The Minister of Youth and Sports, Ahmad Al-Mubarak,

pointed out that the fair plays a key role in boosting Iraq's reading rate, which has been lagging behind in recent years. Minister of Education Ibrahim Namis Al-Jubouri also on Friday said that the opening of the 25th edition of the book fair is evidence of Iraq's stability and

an occasion to support paper reading in the cultural scene after electronic books have dominated. Al-Jubouri told the Iraqi News Agency (INA) during his attendance at the 25th session of the Baghdad International Book Fair: "Today we are witnessing

the opening of the Baghdad book fair, and this is evidence of Iraq's stability," noting that "after the Baghdad International Book Fair, there will be a similar exhibition in Erbil, Mosul, Najaf and Basra." He added that "the exhibition contributes to returning paper

reading to the cultural scene, which has been dominated by electronic reading," noting that "Iraq includes a large number of talents, intellectuals, scientists, writers, artists and academics, all of whom love reading." Sattar Al-Jabiri, Deputy Minister of Trade, highlighted the importance of book fairs as spaces for connection between authors, readers, and the broader cultural community. He noted that the Ministry of Trade is committed to supporting cultural industries, including writing and publishing, as a key driver of Iraq's socio-economic development. The fair's organizer, Sada Al-Aref Company, has brought together 600 publishers from 21 countries, including Arab and foreign nations, as well as writers and intellectuals from Iraq and the Arab world. The event will feature morning and evening seminars, as well as art exhibitions and play readings. Abdul-Wahab Al-Radi, head of the Baghdad International Book Fair, said the event aims to make Baghdad a beacon of knowledge and culture, just as it was in the past. He noted that the fair has been held for 24 years, despite various challenges, including wars, sanctions, and terrorism.

Maestro Ali Rahbari to conduct Iranian piece in St. Petersburg

Arts & Culture Desk

In his fourth artistic season in St. Petersburg, Iranian conductor Ali Rahbari will perform a work by a contemporary Iranian composer at the Mariinsky Opera. On September 26, Rahbari will conduct the world premiere of Amir Mahyar Tafreshipour's 'Harp Concerto', alongside Schubert's 'Symphony No. 9' and Arutiunian's 'Trumpet Concerto', as part of the 2024-2025 artistic season. The piece was previously recorded by Rahbari and the

Naxos company in London. Rahbari's upcoming performances at the Mariinsky Opera include concerts with the Istanbul Symphony Orchestra on October 11, featuring Tchaikovsky's 'Piano Concerto' and 'Symphony No. 5'; the Mariinsky Symphony Orchestra on November 8, performing Bruckner's 'Symphony No. 5'; the Beijing Symphony Orchestra on November 17, with Tchaikovsky's 'Romeo and Juliet', Schubert's 'Symphony No. 9', and Edward Gregson's 'Suite'; and the Hang-

zhou Philharmonic Orchestra on November 24, with Bruckner's 'Symphony No. 5'. Other upcoming performances include concerts with the Ningbo Symphony Orchestra on November 30, the Wuhan Symphony Orchestra on December 7, and the China Youth Symphony Orchestra in Beijing on December 13. Rahbari was first invited to the Mariinsky Opera in the 2021-2022 season by Valery Gergiev, the opera's artistic director, to conduct works by Shostakovich

and Korsakov. He has since become a regular guest conductor at the opera, performing works by renowned composers from around the world, including Russian and Eastern European artists. As a former artistic director of symphony orchestras in Brussels, Malaga, Zagreb, and Prague, Rahbari has conducted a wide range of works, including pieces by Iranian composers. He has also invited Iranian opera singer Reza Fekri to perform at the Mariinsky Opera on two occasions.



Veteran Iranian actor Sadreddin Hejazi dies at 76

Sadreddin Hejazi, a prominent Iranian cinema and television actor, died on Saturday at the age of 76 after a spell of illness. The actor, who had been suffering from cancer for some time, had slipped into a coma during the past couple of days and was hospitalized in the ICU, IRNA reported.

Born in the central Iranian city of Shahreza, in Isfahan Province, Hejazi started studying dramatic arts at University of Tehran in 1963. He acted in many movies and series,

including 'Mirza Kuchak Khan', 'Mokhtarnameh', 'Once Upon A Time', 'The Loneliest Commander', 'The Muzzle-loading Rifle', and 'The Man with Two-Thousand Faces'. He was the father of renowned Iranian musician Sina Hejazi.



Iranology center to be established at Pakistani university

Pakistan's Rawalpindi Women University announced plans to establish an Iranology center to foster scientific and educational cooperation between the two countries. According to a statement released on Friday, Mehdi Taheri, Iran's cultural attaché, visited Rawalpindi Women University and met with Anila Kamal, the university's vice-chancellor, to discuss potential areas of cooperation, IRNA reported. Taheri highlighted the importance

of scientific and academic collaboration between Iranian and Pakistani universities, citing the international standing of Iranian universities, with 73 institutions ranked globally by Times Higher Education. During the meeting, Taheri emphasized the potential for cooperation in various fields, including student and instructor exchange programs, joint research projects, educational initiatives, and cultural events. He also suggested introducing Per-

sian language classes and establishing an Iranology center at the university. Kamal welcomed the proposal, citing the university's existing ties with Iranian universities, particularly Al-Zahra University, in areas such as science, culture, arts, language, and research. She expressed her institution's willingness to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Iranian cultural center in Rawalpindi and other Iranian universities to formalize cooperation.