

Mine blast claims over 50 lives in eastern Iran



Leader grieves over tragic incident

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A podium to expose crime of century

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

The annual meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations is underway in New York, bringing together leaders of member states. Though legally non-binding and not affecting international policy-making, this forum provides an exceptional opportunity for nations to voice diverse views on global issues and engage in negotiations. The UN podium has been in the spotlight, with the media and the public closely watching the statements and stances of world leaders.

From this perspective, the UNGA offers a chance to draw more attention to the gravest and most tragic global event of our time namely the Gaza war. It has been nearly a year since Israel's all-out assault on Gaza, and the regime's crimes have not been limited to genocide in the Gaza Strip. During this period, the relentless attacks on the West Bank, terrorist operations in Lebanon, and the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's political bureau in Tehran, continue unabated alongside the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza. Over 41,000 people, including women, men, and children, have lost their lives in Israeli attacks. Amid the silence of major powers and the inaction of international organizations, the greatest crime against humanity in the 21st century is unfolding.

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Pager blasts signify Israel's state terrorism

By Syed Ali Hassan
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Israel committed state terrorism by targeting civilians and Hezbollah fighters outside the battlefield using pagers and walkie-talkies, and the UN should immediately take notice. The Security Council must unanimously include Netanyahu and all military and intelligence officials involved in this plan on the global terrorist list. The international body must treat Israeli terrorism against Lebanon as a grave issue because using everyday devices for terrorist attacks poses a threat to all humanity. World leaders should be aware that such attacks through devices essential for daily life won't remain limited to Lebanon and Syria. Criminals and drug smugglers might also adopt smart devices for similar bloody attacks, making it impossible to ensure public safety.

The method Israel has employed for terrorism could prove more dangerous than 9/11. Hungary, as a European country, must take strong action because pagers used by Hezbollah and Lebanese citizens were made by a company based in Hungary, whose Jewish CEO holds a Ph.D. in philosophy but lives like a staunch Zionist. Fortunately, the European Union has condemned Israeli terrorism in Lebanon and demanded an investigation. This incident could become a tragedy for Europe itself, as people in various regions, including the Middle East, may abandon using European-made devices out of fear.

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Pezeshkian Rings In New School Year, Urges Unity for Progress

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian rang the opening bell of the new school year in Tehran on Sunday, marking the onset of a new academic year across the country.

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian greets elementary students at Dr. Hassan Askari Shirazi School in southwest of Tehran, September 22, 2024, following a ceremony marking the start of the new school year.

president.ir

Iran's DRI output up over 11% in five months: **ISPA**



Production of direct reduced iron (DRI) in Iran rose by 11.6 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-August 21), compared to the corresponding figure of preceding year, according to the data released by the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA).

ISPA figures indicated that 17.506 million tons of DRI was produced in the country during the five-month period of the current year, while the opposite figure for last year stood at 15.693 million tons, IRNA reported. Direct reduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron, is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

Iran's steel output rose in the seven months to July despite a global fall in production and despite power cuts imposed on steel producers in the country this summer.

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

Iran remained the 10th largest steel supplier in the world in the seven months to July, the figures showed, which also indicated that total steel output by seven major steel producing nations of the world had dropped by 0.7% over the same period.

Iran building 2,800 km of new railways to boost cargo transit



A senior official in Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development says the country is building some 2,800 kilometers of new railways.

Kheirollah Khademi, a deputy minister, said that a bulk of the new railways being built across Iran is located along the north-south and east-west transport corridors that are aimed at increasing international cargo transit via the

country, Press TV wrote.

Khademi said the two main rail transport corridors in Iran are estimated to be 9,100 kilometers in length when they are completely finished.

He said the country has finished 5,100 kilometers of those railways while works are underway for another 2,800 kilometers, adding that the construction of the remaining 1,200 kilometers has yet to start.

The senior official said that a key section of the north-south railway network in Iran which connects the southeastern port of Chabahar on the Sea of Oman to Zahedan near the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan has progressed by 72%.

Khademi said the Chabahar-Zahedan railway could come on line by March 2026 if the government provides some 200 trillion rials (\$340 million) in

funding to the project.

He said that Iran is also building some 6,000 kilometers of new highways to boost its capacity for cargo and passenger transport, adding that the country is set to inaugurate some 1,000 kilometers of those highways each year.

Iran has invested heavily in its road and railway networks in recent years as part of a government plan to increase its reve-

nues from international cargo transit.

That has come as demand for freight transport via the Iranian territory has increased, especially from countries like Russia and India.

A key rail link was opened in northern Iran between Rasht and the Caspian Port in late June to enable direct freight transport from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf.

Tremendous role of industry in Iran's economic resilience



Iran has made remarkable advances in science and technology through education and training, despite Western sanctions blighting almost every aspects of research during the past few decades.

In recent years, the growth in Iran's scientific output is reported to be the fastest in the world where university population swelled from 100,000

in 1979 to 4.7 million in 2016, Press TV wrote.

In 2013, about 60,000 students were studying in all PhD programs in Iran, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Currently, Iran has 54 science and technology parks and about 12,300 technology units. Also 2,300 knowledge-based companies employ 113,000

university graduates, students and professors in the science and technology parks.

Industrial production in Iran increased 4.7 percent in the first quarter of 2024 over the same quarter in the previous year, according to the country's central bank. Industrial production in Iran averaged 7.4 percent from 1975 until 2024, reaching an all-time high of 102.50 percent in the second quarter of 1980. The industry, due to having strong links with other economic sectors, is a leading force in productivity, where as the main driver of growth, success and innovation of countries, it plays a key role in the development and welfare of nations.

The economic progress and development of a country is a function of the position which industry and mining, as a powerful arm of the economy and the basis for growth, prosperity and comfort, has in its planning. The field is one of the components of growth which makes it imperative on state planners to lay out their long-term visions for industrial progress and acquisition of new technologies by using all available capacities. Achieving sustainable develop-

ment is one of the major economic goals of the world countries, which depends on their industrial growth capacities.

Innovation in technologies and production processes which are often associated with creating new opportunities in the design and manufacture of new products and services leads to the economic growth of countries. According to British business daily The Economist, Iran was ranked 39th for producing \$23 billion of industrial products in 2008. From 2008 to 2009, the country leaped to 28th place from 69th place in annual industrial production growth rate.

The latest report by World Steel Association (WSA) suggests that Iran's steel output in January 2024 grew 39.9% year-on-year, putting the country at the ninth place of global ranking among top steel producers.

Scores of Iranian companies have been awarded foreign tender contracts worth tens of billion dollars in different fields of construction of dams, bridges, roads, buildings, railroads, power generation, and gas, oil and petrochemical industries in about 30 countries.

Iran's factories continue to produce out trucks, cars, appliances, electronics, and a wide range of fast-moving consumer goods. This is the key to the country's resilience in the face of sanctions, where industrial units have successfully reduced reliance on imported finished goods.

Where sanctions have typically interrupted imports of key inputs, Iranian manufacturers have generally been able to retool their supply chains and build up their own inventories of raw materials and parts.

The manufacturing processes and industrial designs that underpin the production of these goods are often old, however, which raises costs and reduces their competitiveness.

To renovate and modernize its industrial production lines, Iran needs foreign investment which is hard to come by under the shadow of sanctions.

Under the circumstances, Iranian officials have called for increased government investment and argued that the public sector must play a more active role in investing in physical capital in order to boost future production and household welfare.

Pager blasts signify ...

On Wednesday, Western intelligence sources informed the media that around 500 Hezbollah fighters suffered severe eye injuries in the pager attacks in Lebanon, with some losing their sight. The attack by Israeli intelligence and the military has unsettled the entire world and could set a dangerous precedent for other states and non-state actors, with Israel itself possibly becoming a target. Experts from

several countries have begun arriving in Lebanon, while Hezbollah has vowed to retaliate even more forcefully.

Pagers and walkie-talkies are not only used for security purposes and medical staff also rely on pagers because of their strong signals. The simultaneous explosion of pagers by Israeli intelligence in Lebanon and Syria resulted in the martyrdom of 12 people, including two children, and left around 3,000 others injured,

many severely. The Iranian ambassador suffered a serious eye injury in the attack. The Israeli terrorism through pagers also targeted people via walkie-talkies, leading to the martyrdom of 14 Lebanese civilians and injuring 450 more.

The West has remained silent on this two-day-long terrorism, but they should not assume they are safe from the flames as smart devices are used more widely in the

West. Western security sources reported that hundreds of Hezbollah members were looking at their pagers at the time of the explosion because the devices were designed to detonate five seconds after sending a message to maximize damage. According to Lebanese medical officials, injuries ranged from facial wounds, including loss of sight, to deep lacerations in the hips and thighs, and severe burns.

Experts have pointed out that the "Gold Apollo" pagers were delivered to Hezbollah members within three weeks to a month, and Israel received intelligence that Hezbollah had become aware of their plan to some extent, prompting Israel to act quickly. The pagers were filled with 2 to 20 grams of PETN, an extremely explosive substance.

The attacks have severely damaged Hezbollah's communication network and experts

believe that planning for this operation may have taken several months, requiring extensive intelligence gathering and technical expertise. The long-term effects of this attack are not easy to comprehend yet, but it marks a dangerous development in the use of cyber and warfare tactics, leaving people afraid of using smart devices. This will ultimately harm Europe and the US, while trust in Chinese products might increase.

Beauty and charm of Kelachay in Gilan Province

Iranica Desk

Kelachay is a vibrant city in Gilan Province that attracts numerous tourists from across Iran each year. One of its main attractions is Kelachay Beach Park, renowned as one of the best beaches in the province. In addition to its stunning coastline, Kelachay features lush forests, fruit orchards, and popular destinations such as the Panjshanbeh Bazaar (Thursday Market). Nestled 20 to 25 meters below sea level, the city enjoys a mild, rainy climate due to its proximity to both the sea and the mountains.

Visitors to Kelachay can marvel at breathtaking landscapes filled with rice paddies, tea plantations, and citrus and kiwi orchards. The area also boasts clean, calm sandy beaches, flowing rivers, and lively traditional markets. Local handicrafts include intricately turned wooden items, woolen garments like socks and hats, pottery, felt creations, woven baskets, mats, and tools for hunting and fishing.

Thanks to its unique location and well-developed access routes, Kelachay has become an important economic center in the region. The Thursday Market stands out as the most significant and well-known local market in eastern Gilan Province, where residents from nearby cities gather to sell their goods.

The rocky and sandy beach of Kelachay, located north of Teacher Boulevard, is ideal for family recreation and walking due to its quiet and safe environment, with designated spots for sitting and picnicking. Watching the sunrise and sunset at this pristine beach is truly memorable.

Kelachay Beach has two sections: rocky and sandy. Visitors can sit on the large rocks in the rocky area and listen to the soothing sounds of the sea. The sandy section is suitable for swimming, sports, wading, and walking. Generally, the first half of the year is the best time



to visit the beach; during winter, its beauty is enhanced by the increasing number of seagulls.

The Polroud River, one of the largest and most water-rich rivers in eastern Gilan Province, originates from the central Alborz Mountains in Rahimabad. Flowing approximately 60 kilometers, it ultimately empties into the Caspian Sea near Kelachay.

The banks of the Polroud river are among the best spots for camping, picnicking, birdwatching, photography, wading, and fishing in Kelachay. The clear water, pristine nature, desir-

able vegetation, tranquility, and clean air make spending time by the river very enjoyable.

The beautiful Kelachay River flows through the city, dividing it into eastern and western halves before emptying into the Caspian Sea. This river has brought prosperity and fertility to the city's agricultural lands, creating a unique landscape. Along its banks, numerous spots are ideal for camping and relaxation for both locals and tourists. Visitors can enjoy various activities, including fishing, wading, nature walks, photography, birdwatching, and picnicking by the river.

The tomb of Amir Bandeh, also known as Imamzadeh Seyed Ahmad and Imamzadeh Seyed Heydar, is a registered cultural heritage site in Gilan Province. It is the resting place of two descendants of Imam Musa Kazem (PBUH), the seventh imam of Shia Muslim, Amir Ahmad and Amir Heydar. The main building of the shrine is small, with light green-painted outer walls and wooden columns. The tiled, gabled roof reflects the architectural style typical of northern Iran. This Imamzadeh is regarded as one of the most important sites for mourning and religious cere-

monies in the village, with grand ceremonies held on Tasu'a and Ashura to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and his companions. Vajargah is one of the charming towns in Kelachay, known for its stunning mountainous landscapes and access routes that make it a beautiful natural tourist destination. The lush, tree-covered heights surrounding Vajargah are perfect for nature walks, offering visitors a unique experience of walking among the clouds.

Located in the northern part of Vajargah at the end of Arghavan

Street, the Sarina Recreational Complex, also known as Sarina Beach Park, is a popular attraction that delights visitors with its appealing amenities. The park provides facilities for various activities, including jet skiing, shuttle rides, boating, and billiards. Kelachay is home to numerous picturesque villages that attract many tourists each year, thanks to their stunning scenery, pleasant climate, and historical and natural attractions. Bibalan village, one of the oldest villages in eastern Gilan Province, is particularly noteworthy for its rich heritage and beauty.

Bukhara-duzi, a cultural mosaic of patterns and colors

Bukhara is a renowned city in Transoxiana, with a rich history, known as a hub of scientists and scholars. Today, Bukhara stands as one of Uzbekistan's largest cities, known for its production of silk and cotton, with enough cotton exported to Iraq. For centuries, Bukhara has been a center for unique handicrafts, particularly the intricate art of *Bukhara-duzi* an appealing form of em-

broidery. This elaborate sewing technique, which requires significant time and skill, unfortunately lacks a coherent historical narrative. However, it gained prominence during the Seljuq dynasty, with many Bukhara artifacts preserved in museums worldwide.

The true flourishing of Bukhara-duzi occurred during the Mongol and Timurid Empires, when the city at-

tracted numerous artists and scholars. As these artisans honed their craft, they began applying Bukhara designs to *tafteh*, a crisp and lightweight fabric that is commonly used to make a variety of types of high-end women's apparel.

The color palette of Bukhara-duzi is vibrant, featuring red, indigo, white, jade green, yellow, mustard, brown, and orange. Commonly

used fabrics include cotton and less frequently, wool or silk. This craft is employed to embellish a wide range of items, including drapes, *korsi* (a low Iranian table with a heater underneath), tablecloths, bedding, prayer rugs, cushions, and decorative tableaus.

Notable collections of Bukhara-duzi can be found in prestigious museums, such as the Armitage,

Metropolitan, Louvre, Museum of Decorative Arts, and the British Museum.

Typically, this technique is applied to ornate drapes exceeding three meters in length, with artists dedicating years to perfecting their creations. Today, the art of Bukhara-duzi has seen a revival in cities like Tehran, ensuring that this rich cultural heritage continues to thrive.



Case against Israeli-Saudi normalization

By Frederic Wehrey and Jennifer Kavanagh

Scholars

OPINION

When President Joe Biden leaves office early next year, he will probably do so without having realized a signature item on his agenda for the Middle East—a diplomatic normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia, sealed by a formal US security guarantee to Riyadh. Yet this elusive agreement runs the risk of being picked up again by his successor, no matter who wins the election in November. While in office, former president Donald Trump was among Saudi Arabia's biggest supporters, and he has already signaled his desire to expand the so-called Abraham Accords—a series of bilateral agreements between Israel and a handful of Arab countries, negotiated under his watch—to include Saudi Arabia. Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate, could be compelled to revive the deal or some variation of it, both for the sake of continuity and because hammering out a grand bargain in this troubled region would be a foreign policy achievement for a relatively inexperienced politician. But for Harris or Trump, continuing to elevate this regional accord would be a grave mistake. The proposed arrangement will not end the war in Gaza, solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, block China's inroads to the Middle East, or counter Iran and its armed groups. Instead, by committing Washington to defend an Arab state with a history of destabilizing behavior, the pact's main achievement will be to further entangle the United States in a region that successive US presidents have tried to pivot away from. The single-minded pursuit of this bad deal has also blinded US policymakers to other, more important drivers of conflict in the region, and it has caused the United States to delay efforts to ramp up pressure on Israel to end its war in Gaza. The next US president should therefore jettison the proposed accord and focus Middle East policy instead on the economic and social issues most important to the region.

Raw deal

Though an Israeli-Saudi agreement has yet to be finalized, its broad outlines have already become clear. According to the terms of the proposed accord, Saudi Arabia would formally recognize Israel in return for Israel's commitment to establish an independent Palestinian state. The United States would promise to defend Saudi Arabia from external attack and support Riyadh's civilian nuclear program, and the Saudis would give Washington new military access to the kingdom's territorial waters and airspace. Riyadh would also pledge to restrict Chinese military bases and security cooperation in Saudi Arabia, including forgoing purchases of advanced Chinese technology and weapons and limiting some Chinese investment in the Saudi economy.

Concluding the deal has an obvious appeal for both Israeli and Saudi leaders. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could present it as a political win after facing heavy domestic criticism for failing to prevent Hamas's horrific October 7 attacks and prolonging the military campaign in Gaza. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and de facto leader Mohammed bin Salman also remains intent on signing some version of the agreement because it offers the kingdom protection, substantial economic benefits, and the prestige of being counted among the United States' closest allies.

As for Washington, Israeli-Saudi normalization may seem to offer a way to advance a two-state solution—thus ending

a conflict that has sucked up US resources and attention—while blocking the growing influence of China in the Middle East. But on inspection, normalization would achieve neither of these aims. For starters, the deal won't be the path to peace between Israelis and Palestinians that Washington hopes it to be. There is simply no evidence that Netanyahu—or any Israeli cabinet—will make and adhere to the concessions needed to create a Palestinian state, which Riyadh has demanded as a prerequisite, no matter what economic and security benefits Saudi normalization might bring. Added to this, Israeli public support for Palestinian statehood has dropped since the Hamas attack: according to a spring 2024 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, just over a quarter of Israelis now support such an arrangement.

Even if Israel and Saudi Arabia were to arrive at some agreement, the prospects that it would create lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians are slim. According to the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, a majority of Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank support armed struggle against Israel. Some Israelis are armed and radicalized and might also try to sabotage such a deal. In fact, even the normalization deals that Israel has already signed appear to be on shaky ground. After October 7, protests against the Abraham Accords broke out in Morocco and Bahrain. Arab and Israeli leaders are having trouble upholding commitments that have already been made. It would be especially hard for them to adhere to new ones.

The deal also wouldn't give the United States any real advantage over China in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has been expanding relations with a range of outside powers, including China and Russia, on energy and trade to avoid overreliance on the United States. Riyadh thinks a diversity of partners will attract better economic opportunities and allow access to more advanced technology and military systems, especially in areas in which the United States lacks a competitive edge. China and Saudi Arabia, for example, are working together on infrastructure and technology projects, as well as on renewable energy initiatives. The deal would not prohibit this activity, so this trend is likely to continue either way.

The agreement would block Beijing's military activities by preventing China from building military bases in Saudi Arabia and limiting Saudi acquisition of Chinese weapons and domestic surveillance technology. But these are near-meaningless concessions: military ties are not the main source of Beijing's growing influence in Saudi Arabia or, for that matter, in the broader Middle East. Today, China has no permanent military presence or planned military bases in Saudi Arabia and is not a major weapons supplier to the kingdom, and the two countries rarely train their forces together. More importantly, the economic and commercial partnerships that are the real drivers of China's regional leverage would be left largely untouched.

Notably, US efforts to push China out of other Middle Eastern countries have come up

short. In the nearby United Arab Emirates, for instance, Microsoft recently announced a \$1.5 billion investment in G42, an Emirati artificial intelligence company, brokered with the help of the US government. In return for Microsoft's funds, G42 agreed to sell off its Chinese investments and remove Chinese-produced technology from its systems in favor of US components and services. Since Microsoft's announcement of the investment, however, complications have emerged. For example, although G42 has reduced ties with Chinese companies, other Emirati firms have not. As a result, the talent and know-how that G42 gains from its partnership with Microsoft could easily flow into firms in the UAE that have deeper relationships with Chinese investors, possibly defeating the purpose of the restrictions.

The terms of the proposed US-Saudi deal are quite different than those between Microsoft and G42, of course, but some of the same challenges apply. Trying to selectively limit Chinese technology and investments inside Saudi Arabia would be difficult, and Beijing would likely maintain a significant and sometimes hard-to-detect presence in the kingdom. Even under the potential accord, for instance, China would probably retain its investments in Saudi ports, which might be leveraged for under-the-radar military operations or to refuel or resupply Chinese military ships. The deal, then, is a poor way to deprive China of a foothold in the kingdom.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (L) and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stand in front of a map of the Middle East in May 2021.

HAIM ZACH/GETTY IMAGES



Even the normalization deals that Israel has already signed appear to be on shaky ground. After October 7, protests against the Abraham Accords broke out in Morocco and Bahrain. Arab and Israeli leaders are having trouble upholding commitments that have already been made. It would be especially hard for them to adhere to new ones.



Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) representatives sign six agreements valued at up to \$50 billion with leading Chinese financial institutions to enhance bilateral capital flows on August 1, 2024.

SAUDI PIF



Saudi price for normalization



By Neville Teller
Author

OPINION

On August 14, the US digital news medium, Politico, published an exclusive report. It was based on accounts from three separate sources who had been privy to talks between the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and members of the US Congress.

These talks were the latest in a series of detailed discussions that have been taking place for years between the US and Saudi Arabia. They began during the presidency of Donald Trump and preceded the Abraham Accords. Over time, the shape of a complex agreement of major significance has emerged, clearly aimed at boosting MBS's ambitious program for securing Saudi's future development — his Saudi Vision 2030, launched in 2016, aimed at breaking the nation's total dependence on oil and promoting additional means of developing the nation's potential. In exchange for commitments by the US to Saudi Arabia covering, among other issues, security, technical assistance with developing a civilian nuclear program, and investment in areas such as high technology, Saudi Arabia would limit its dealings with China and normalize its relations with Israel.

MBS had one proviso before agreeing to breathe life into the draft deal. In line with long-standing Saudi policy, he required firm approval from Israel for the establishment of a Palestinian state. This stark condition has been somewhat modified during the negotiating process. MBS now requires the inclusion in the agreement of "a credible path toward a Palestinian state". Despite widespread global support, including that of the US, for the two-state solution, Benjamin Netanyahu has so far refused to countenance fostering the development of a sovereign Palestine. It could, he has pointed out, bring Iran-sponsored terrorism into the heart of Israel, and place Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion airport under permanent threat of attack. The territories earmarked to form the putative Palestinian state — the West Bank, east Jerusalem, and Gaza — were overrun by Jordan and Egypt during the 1948 Israel-Arab conflict, and administered by them for 20 years. When originally seized, Mandate Palestine had been dissolved, and the land belonged to no sovereign state. During the subsequent two decades, neither Jordan nor Egypt, which occupied those territories, made the slightest effort to form a Palestinian state. The areas were won back by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967 — and in the following years, through astute Palestinian propaganda, they morphed in the public consciousness into "occupied Palestinian land". A political reality has been created, and Israel has been increasingly pressured to support establishing a Palestinian state in them.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) speaks to US President Joe Biden during a security and development summit in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on July 16, 2022. ● AFP

requesting personal protection if or when the deal is ratified. MBS could have indicated that the same considerations might apply to Netanyahu, who might have in mind the tragic end of his predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin. Having signed the first Oslo Accord in 1993 and finalized a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994, Rabin died at the hands of an Israeli extremist in November 1995. In truth, though, Netanyahu is more likely to be considering the implications for his precarious cabinet coalition if he gave way on the two-state solution — which would, incidentally, be as unacceptable to Hamas and its followers as to his right-wing ministers. The reason for Saudi Arabia's insistence on "a credible path toward a Palestinian state" is entirely understandable. The 2002 Arab Peace Initiative was conceived and proposed by King Salman's predecessor on the throne, his half-brother then-crown prince Abdullah. The Plan, endorsed on a number of occa-

now take into consideration that Hamas, with the support of much of the Arab world, is dedicated to eliminating Israel from the Middle East and would certainly never endorse the idea of Israel continuing to exist alongside a Palestinian state that occupied only a portion of what was once Mandate Palestine. In short, in signing up to the US-Saudi-Israel deal, MBS would be facing not only the fear of assassination but also — whether or not a Palestinian state was part of the deal — endless conflict with Hamas or whatever jihadist organizations succeed it. For it is morally certain there is no foreseeable end to the rejectionist struggle to overthrow Israel and acquire the land "from the river to the sea". World opinion, including Saudi Arabia, that supports the two-state solution needs to face up to this awkward truth: it will never work until the majority of the Palestinian leadership acknowledges that Israel is here to stay and endorses its legitimacy. Since Saudi Arabia and the Arab world are promoting the two-state solution, the ball is in their court. Only they can convert, circumvent, or disempower rejectionist organizations like Hamas. If that is too great an ask, then Saudi Arabia — despite its unique position as leader of the Sunni Muslim world — will need to consider aligning its position with that of other Abraham Accord signatories. All maintain their support for Palestinian aspirations but not at the expense of their own self-interests. They have decided to put establishing a Palestinian state on the back burner and prioritize the substantial benefits to their countries and the region of normalizing relations with Israel. In practical terms, therefore, is the price that Saudi Arabia is asking for a normalization deal with Israel unrealistic? Or will MBS's compromise formula be enough to kick the issue into the long grass and finalize the normalization deal? Or will the current US policy and the weight of public opinion in favor of the two-state solution finally prevail? Time will tell.

The article first appeared on Eurasia Review.

Go your own way

The purported military benefits to the United States of Israeli-Saudi normalization are also overblown. In theory, the agreement would offer the United States some marginal military advantages when it comes to containing Iran. Washington might use new access to Saudi waters and airspace to improve its ability to track and disrupt Iran-backed groups and interdict weapons shipments bound for its backed groups. But in practice, the military gains would be minimal. Saudi Arabia, like other Persian Gulf Arab countries, seeks to avoid open conflict with Iran and its backed groups, so it has been reluctant to help the United States fend off Houthi attacks in the Red Sea or act against Iranian-backed groups elsewhere in the region. The agreement is unlikely to change that fact.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (L) and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud meet in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in April 2024. ● EVELYN HOCKSTEIN/REUTERS

Even if it did, the additional access in Saudi Arabia would not give Washington much of a leg up: trying to deter low-intensity armed group activity with ever-grander displays of US hard power has often proved disappointing. Iranian-backed armed groups have become masters at inflicting damage to Israel and US bases in Iraq and Syria with just enough restraint to avoid crossing US redlines or triggering escalation. The United States' campaign to stop Houthi attacks on commercial shipping over the past year is a case in point. Even senior US military officials have acknowledged the operation has been a costly failure because the Houthis have successfully dispersed their weapons and personnel. Washington is not hamstrung by its capabilities or access. It has decided that conducting a larger ground operation, which is probably necessary to stop Houthi attacks by force, is not worth risking American lives or a wider war. With this experience in the rearview, it is doubtful that additional

military access in the region would make the United States safer. Perhaps most worrying, a normalization agreement would bog down the United States in the Middle East at a time when the White House should be prioritizing other global challenges, such as countering Beijing in the South China Sea. Despite receiving millions of tons of advanced weaponry from France, Germany, and the United States, Saudi Arabia needs outside help to defend itself. In the event of a war, it would likely prove more of a liability for Washington than a valued partner. The United States should continue to assist Saudi Arabia in developing niche capabilities it needs to protect itself, such as air defense systems. But it should avoid making a sweeping commitment to send US troops and materiel to defend the regime from external aggression. Such a pledge might dissuade Riyadh from pursuing conciliation with its neighbors and embolden the kingdom to take risks. The deal would also harm the Middle East in more subtle ways. The relentless pursuit of Israeli-Saudi normalization has sidetracked Washington from helping the region make progress on its actual sources of conflict and extremism. To end the war in Gaza, for example, the United States will need to apply greater and more direct pressure on Israel. Instead, US officials have behaved as if they can resolve the conflict by dangling the carrot of normalization. More broadly, the Biden administration's preoccupation with this deal has distracted it from other looming problems in the Middle East, including authoritarianism, corruption, human rights abuses, the lack of economic opportunities for young people, and climate change. Whoever moves into the White House in January would do well to remember that these thorny and deeply rooted afflictions won't be solved through accords orchestrated by an outside power. Instead, these problems require patient and painstaking work by the region's governments, with greater involvement from their citizens. Pushing these partners to take responsibility for their future and their own security through more inclusive, accountable, and transparent governance should be the centerpiece of the next US administration's Middle East policy. Helping tackle these endemic issues is more worthwhile than the pursuit of an illusory pact that will leave the United States worse off than before.

The full article first appeared on Foreign Affairs.



Assassins posing as Egyptian soldiers fire on Egyptian president Anwar Al-Sadat in Cairo, Egypt, on October 6, 1981. In 1978, Sadat and Menachem Begin, prime minister of Israel, signed a peace treaty brokered by US president Jimmy Carter. ● MAKARAM GAD ALKAREEM/AFP

Politico's revelations about the latest round of talks include two apparently contradictory elements. On the one hand, the reports indicate that MBS seems intent on striking this mega-deal with the US and Israel; on the other that he appears worried by the possibility of assassination if he does so. He is reported to have cited the fate of the Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat following his 1979 peace treaty with Israel. Sources say that he questioned whether the US had offered Sadat effective protection and appeared to be

sions by the Arab League, advocates a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine dispute. Given that, and a just resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue, the Plan promises full normalization of relations between the Muslim world and Israel. In September 2021, when King Salman addressed the UN General Assembly, he reiterated Saudi Arabia's commitment to the 2002 Plan, ignoring the fact that it was drafted well before Hamas gained control of Gaza in 2007. Members of the League must

Asian Karate Championships:

Abazari wins sole gold
as Iran finishes with 11 medals

Sports Desk

Saleh Abazari saved Iran's campaign at the Asian Karate Championships in Hangzhou, China, as his last-gasp kumite triumph made sure the country would not leave the event without a gold for the first time in the new millennium.

Iran's haul of 11 medals was the highest in the 20th edition of the competitions, though the country still had to settle for an under-par sixth place in the medals table, following Japan, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Hong Kong, and China. Representing Iran in the men's +84kg contests, Abazari defeated Japanese Kyo Hirata – Asian champion in 2022 – 6-0 for the ultimate prize, an eighth Asian medal for the Iranian, who also won the kumite gold of the weight class in 2018.

The first final showpiece featuring Iranian and Japanese karatekas on Sunday saw Mahdi Khodabakhshi suffer a loss

to Rikito Shimada and take the -84kg silver.

Earlier on the final day, six Iranians finished their campaigns with a consolation bronze.

Former world champion Bahman Asgari claimed his eighth Asian medal thanks to a 10-2 victory over Tong Yu-cheng of Hong Kong in the men's -75kg third-place bout, while Behnam Dehghanzadeh – a gold medalist last year – defeated Uzbekistan's Dilmurod Kamoliddinov 8-2 for the -55kg bronze.

In the women's draw, Atousa Golshadnejad, also an Asian champion in the previous edition, bounced back from a last-four heartbreak against reigning world champion Gong Li of China to beat Malaysian Zakiah Adnan in the -61kg contests.

Mobina Heidari (-68kg) and Taravat Khaksar (-55kg) also bagged a couple of kumite bronze medals for Iran, with Fatemeh Sadeghi beating Macao's Sou Soi Lam (40.5-38.6) to the women's kata bronze.

Sunday's results came a day after Iran had collected three team bronzes in Hangzhou.

The Iranian men's kumite team missed out on the Asian gold for the first time since the 2021 edition, but still managed to beat Kuwait 3-0 – courtesy of victories for Morteza Ne'mati, Mahdi Ashouri, and Mahdi Ganjzadeh – to win the bronze.

The trio of Ali Zand, Abolfazl Shahrjerdi, and Milad Farazmehr defeated Saudi Arabia for a third Asian bronze in the men's team kata, while Sepideh Amini, Melika Ezzati, and Zeinab Hosseini came out on top against the Philippines to finish on the third podium in the women's event.



Iranian Saleh Abzari won the men's kumite +84kg gold at the Asian Karate Championships in Hangzhou, China.
● ikf.ir

Iranian handball set for new era
under Spanish coach Guijosa

Sports Desk

Iranian handball national team will be looking to embark on a new chapter under Spanish head coach Rafael Guijosa.

The 55-year-old Spaniard, who took over from Majid Rahimizadeh last week, returns to the role for a second spell after a decade, having steered Iran to an Asian bronze in 2014, and a maiden appearance at the World Championship the following year, though his two-year stint came to an end before the finals in Qatar.

"I'm really happy to come back to Iran to work as the head coach and the sport director of the national team," the Spanish coach said after being reapp-

ointed to job last week.

"Ten years ago, I never thought I would go back to Iran again, though I always followed Iranian handball in all these years," added the ex-coach of Qatari club Al Arabi.

"I'm so excited to work again with the Iranian handball, fight for medals and help the national team reach the World Championship," said Guijosa, a former World Player of the Year, who was part of the national team that won back-to-back Olympic bronzes in 1996 and 2000.

A sixth-place finish in January's Asian Championship in Bahrain saw Iran miss out on next year's global showpiece – cohosted by Denmark, Norway, and Croatia – but Alireza Pakdel, the chair-

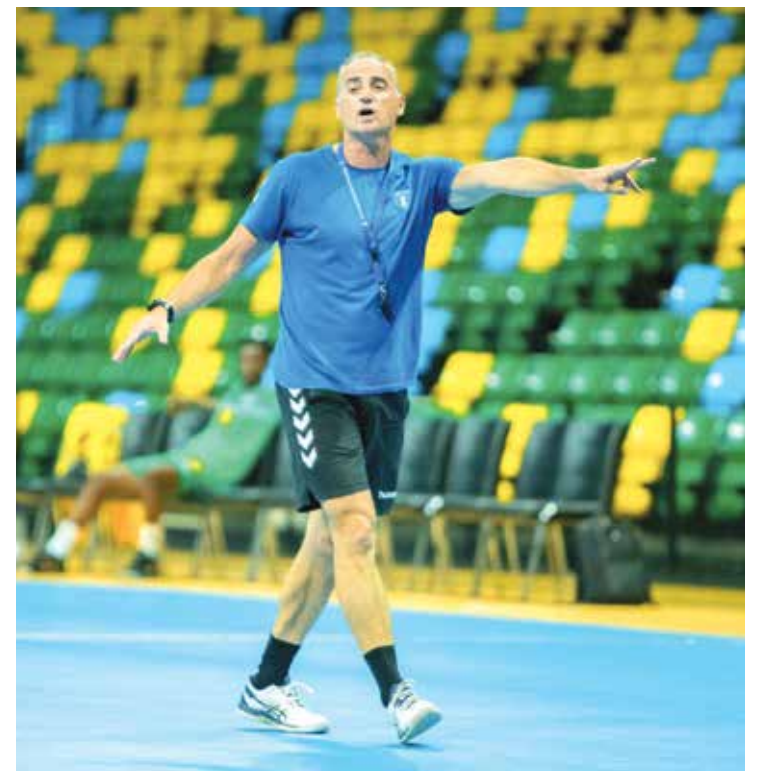
man of the Iranian Handball Federation, said the country has already set sights on glory in the future events.

"We have the Asian Championship next year and then the Asian Games in Aichi and Nagoya. That's why we couldn't afford to wait much time and decided to go after a coach who is familiar with the Asian handball," Pakdel said upon appointing Guijosa to the role.

"We're looking for a new style of play for the national team. In Guijosa, we have hired a high-profile coach with a decent record. The Iranian federation had a 10-man shortlist for the job, but Guijosa best fitted the bill among all candidates. He is a relatively young coach and

will surely help develop the next generation of Iranian players," added the head of national governing body of the sport.

Meanwhile, top Iranian keeper Mohammad Siavashi believes Guijosa has all the right attributes to succeed in his new role. "He is a top-notch coach. Spanish coaches are best known in the world for their tactical acumen, and, in behavioral terms, they are pretty similar to the Iranians. He will have a better understanding of Iranian players, which I'm sure will be a major boost for us in the future competitions," said Siavashi, who was part of the team, when Iran celebrated a first World Championship qualification under the Spaniard.



● RG

Joshua future in doubt after mauling by dominant Dubois



BBC – Daniel Dubois sensationally dismantled fellow Briton Anthony Joshua in five rounds to catapult himself into global sporting stardom in front of 96,000 fans at Wembley Stadium.

The 27-year-old dropped Joshua multiple times to retain the IBF heavyweight title and leave his domestic rival's career in ruins. Londoner Dubois stopped Joshua, 34, with an incredible counter right hook to secure the biggest win of his 24-fight career.

"I'm a gladiator. I am a warrior to the bitter end. I want to get to the top level of this sport and reach my potential," Dubois said post-fight.

Joshua's bid to become a three-time champion and return to the division's top table ended in the most dramatic and unexpected fashion.

AJ – who won his first world title more than eight years ago – suf-

fered a fourth loss in his 32nd bout, but hinted he will continue in the sport and has a clause to trigger a rematch with Dubois.

"You know I'm ready to kick off in the ring but I'm going to keep it respectful," he said.

"Before I came here, I always say to myself I'm a fighter for life. You keep rolling the dice."

An ecstatic Dubois, meanwhile, enjoyed the crowning moment which had eluded him after he was elevated to world champion when Oleksandr Usyk vacated the belt.

After one of British boxing's biggest shocks, Joshua's future is under scrutiny, despite him suggesting he may continue in the sport.

The rebuild mission since losing a second consecutive fight to Usyk in 2022 was going smoothly, fuelled by a desire to join legends such as Muhammad Ali, Evander Holyfield, Lennox Lewis and Vitali

Klitschko as a three-time champion.

But Joshua came up against a fearless and younger fighter determined to prove his worth on the world stage.

"I had a fast and sharp opponent, a lot of mistakes from my end," he admitted afterwards.

The lure of the long-awaited and even longer-mooted super-fight with Fury also suffered a major blow, even if the 'Gypsy King' loses to Usyk in December's world-title rematch.

Dubois' future, in contrast, is gleaming brightly.



Anthony Joshua (white) is knocked down by Daniel Dubois during an IBF heavyweight title fight in Wembley Stadium, London, Britain, on September 21, 2024.
● REUTERS

Mine blast claims over 50 lives in eastern Iran



Miners and security forces gathered at the scene of a blast at a coal mine in Tabas in Iran's South Khorasan Province on September 22, 2024.
● Iran's Red Crescent Society

National Desk

A gas explosion in a coal mine in Iran's South Khorasan Province killed at least 51 people and injured 20 others. The incident was caused by a methane gas explosion on Saturday night in

two blocks, B and C, of the mine run by Madanjoo company. "There was an explosion and unfortunately 69 people were working in the B and C blocks of Madanjoo mine. In block C there were 22 people and in block B there were 47 people," said

Javad Ghenaatzadeh, South Khorasan governor. Online footage carried by IRNA showed the bodies of some of the victims, wearing their work uniforms and being carried out of the site on mining carts. Iran's Red Crescent Society said search and rescue

operations were underway in the mine but "gas accumulation in the mine" has made the search operations difficult. It said the operations will continue to retrieve workers still trapped beneath the rubble at some 250 meters below the surface.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed condolences to the victims' families and ordered that all efforts be made to rescue those trapped and to help their families. He also said an investigation into the incident had begun. Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref also spoke with cabinet members to ensure "emergency follow-up" and support for the victims and their families. Authorities in South Khorasan announced three days of mourning across the eastern province following the tragic incident.

Leader's condolences

In a message on Sunday, Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei extended his condolences on the tragic incident and underscored the need for maximum efforts to provide relief to those affected by the mine blast. "I offer my condolences to the families of these dear ones and the people of that area for the bitter and sad incident in the coal mine in

Tabas, in which a number of workers were killed or injured," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "I emphasize to the relief team that went to the accident site on behalf of the government authorities to do their best to rescue them and to take all necessary measures to reduce the scale of this calamity. Immediate attention to the situation of the injured should also be taken care of." Last year, an explosion at a coal mine in the northern city of Damghan killed six people, also likely the result of methane leak. A blast in 2017 also killed 43 miners in Azad Shahr city in northern Iran. "76% of the country's coal is provided from this region and around 8 to 10 big companies are working in the region including the Madanjoo company," the governor of South Khorasan Province Ali Akbar Rahimi told state TV on Sunday. Mineral-rich Iran has around 1.5 billion tons of proven coal reserves, according to state media.

President hopes to be Iran's justice-seeking voice at UNGA



Masoud Pezeshkian

National Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian says he hopes to be the voice of his country's people during his visit to the United Nations to convey their justice-seeking messages to the international body's member states. Pezeshkian made the remarks before leaving Tehran for New York to take part in the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly. He described the United Nations as an important organization and one of the greatest achievements of humanity. Pezeshkian said that if the UN fulfills its obligations properly, there should not be a country or an entity which drops bombs on other countries and kills women and children and destroys their homes, hospitals and schools and then claims that it has targeted terrorists. The Iranian president said that he will hold meetings with Iranian expatriates in the US to depict an accurate image of Iran. "Iran belongs to all Iranians, and the expatriates have also a share in the country," he noted. Pezeshkian said he will express Iran's stances in talks with American media outlets and discuss various issues including security, economy, investment and tourism industry. Pezeshkian added that he will hold talks with officials and presidents of other countries and discuss various issues including security, economy, investment, tourism and other issues. The Iranian president is scheduled to address the General Assembly on Tuesday.

Hezbollah, Israel exchange heavy fire amid fear of widening conflict

Hezbollah launched more than 100 rockets early Sunday across a wider and deeper area of northern occupied territories, with some landing near the city of Haifa, as Israel launched hundreds of strikes on Lebanon. The rocket barrage overnight was in response to Israeli attacks in Lebanon that have killed dozens, including a veteran Hezbollah commander, and an unprecedented attack targeting the group's communications devices. Air raid sirens echoed across northern occupied territories, sending thousands of people scrambling into shelters, AP reported. One rocket struck near a building in Kiryat Bialik, a city near Haifa, wounding several people and setting buildings and cars on fire. Lebanon's Health Ministry said that three people

were killed and another four wounded in Israeli strikes near the border. The barrage came after an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Friday killed at least 45 people, including one of Hezbollah's top leaders as well as women and children. Hezbollah said that it had launched dozens of Fadi 1 and Fadi 2 missiles — a new type of weapon the group hadn't used before — at the Ramat David airbase, southeast of Haifa, "in response to the repeated Israeli attacks that targeted various Lebanese regions and led to the fall of many civilian martyrs." Hezbollah also said it had targeted the facilities of the Rafael defense firm, which is headquartered in Haifa, calling it retaliation for the wireless devices attack. Friday's air attack on the densely populated area

followed explosions of thousands of pagers and walkie-talkies in Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday, which was also blamed on Israel and killed at least 39 people while wounding close to 3,000 others.

War in 'new phase'

Hezbollah legislator Hassan Fadlallah, speaking at a funeral for a Hezbollah member on Sunday, said that the war had entered a "new phase" and that the resistance group would keep up its attacks until there is a cease-fire in Gaza. "We have a strong and capable resistance," he said. "All of its options are on the table, and it is prepared for any scenario, war or confrontation." Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire since the outbreak of the war in Gaza



nearly a year ago, when the resistance group began firing rockets in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. The low-level fighting has killed dozens of people in Israel, hundreds in Lebanon, and displaced tens of thousands on both sides of the frontier. The UN envoy for Lebanon

called on all parties to pull back. "With the region on the brink of an imminent catastrophe, it cannot be overstated enough: there is NO military solution that will make either side safer," Jeanine Henis-Plasschaert said in an X post.



A member of the Israeli security forces stands guard inside a cordoned-off area in Kiryat Bialik in the Haifa district of Israel, targeted by a strike by Lebanon's Hezbollah on September 22, 2024.
● JACK GUEZ/AFP

Israel subverting human values through West's dual approach: Iran

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the West's dual policies have encouraged the Israeli regime to violate international law and disregard common human values in the Gaza Strip. In a post on his Instagram on Saturday, Araghchi gave a brief account of the first day of his diplomatic meetings on the sidelines of the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Press TV reported. He said the "humanitarian

situation in Gaza is very horrible" and called on the international community and the Security Council to deal with this situation. In his meetings, Araghchi said, "I emphasized the necessity of confronting the Zionist regime's warmongering policies in West Asia as a serious and urgent threat to international security." "The interesting point was that everyone in the meetings admitted the failure of the Zionists' sinister policies," he added. Araghchi met with the for-

ign ministers of Kuwait, Cuba and Bahrain, the sides discussed regional and international developments and stressed the need to boost bilateral cooperation and relations. The top Iranian diplomat had also meetings with the UN special envoy for Syria, the Secretary General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, the UN Secretary General's representative for humanitarian aid to Gaza and the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The foreign minister emphasized that Iran will continue its multifaceted diplomacy and consultations to pursue national interests and attract the attention of the international community to contain Israel's machine of crime and killing in the region. Araghchi's remarks came amid the regime's ongoing genocidal war against the Gaza Strip and escalated attacks across the occupied West Bank as well as its intensified deadly aggression against Lebanon.

At least 22 people, including 13 children, six women, and a three-month-old baby, were killed after Israel's military forces once again attacked the Zeitoun School in the eastern part of Gaza City sheltering displaced Palestinians on Saturday. At least 41,431 Palestinians, mostly children and women, have been killed and 95,818 people wounded in the war that Israel began on October 7, 2023, following a retaliatory operation by the Palestinian territory's resistance movements.



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Pezeshkian rings in new school year, urges unity for progress



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses elementary students at Dr. Hassan Askari Shirazi School in southwest of Tehran, September 22, 2024, following a ceremony marking the start of the new school year. president.ir

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian rang the opening bell of the new school year in Tehran on Sunday, marking the beginning of a new academic year in the country. In a ceremony held at Hassan Askari Shirazi School in the Iranian capital, Pezeshkian was joined by the daughter of martyr Abbas Babaei in ringing the bell. The president emphasized the importance of unity and cooperation among Iranians, saying that the country's main problem is the petty squabbles and conflicts that lead to division and weakness. "We must work together and provide the necessary support for education, so that our country's future will be better than its present," Pezeshkian said. "If we work well and provide the necessary opportunities for

education, our country will become stronger and more powerful." The president also stressed the importance of friendship and mutual respect, saying that these values are essential for building a strong and prosperous society. "We must help each other and work together to overcome our problems," he said. Pezeshkian also highlighted the need for a well-designed education system that fosters creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among students. "We will work to create a standard and modern education system that provides equal opportunities for all students," he said. The president also expressed his gratitude to the family of Dr. Hassan Askari, who founded the school.

Ex-diplomat Jaber Ansari appointed as CEO of IRNA New chief vows to strengthen national unity

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, appointed Hossein Jaber Ansari as the new CEO of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Jaber Ansari, a veteran diplomat with three decades of experience in the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was inducted at a ceremony at IRNA headquarters in Tehran on Sunday. Salehi thanked Ali Naderi, former IRNA CEO, for his services over the past three years. In his inaugural speech, Jaber Ansari pledged to follow the national unity lines set by President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration. He also expressed his gratitude to Salehi for entrusting him with the responsibility of leading IRNA. The new CEO noted that he was taking the helm at a time of significant regional and global developments, including the after-



Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi (C), flanked by new CEO of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) Hossein Jaber Ansari (L) and Ali Naderi (R), former IRNA chief, attends the induction ceremony of the new chief in Tehran, on September 22, 2024. IRNA

math of the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and the Gaza war, as well as the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia. He added that Iran was also entering a new era with the Pezeshkian administration's focus on national unity. Jaber Ansari emphasized that IRNA's responsibility would be significant in these circumstances, given its 90-year history and its role as a national news agency.

He said that the agency "will not start from scratch," but rather on the achievements and successes of the past and work to improve the challenges and problems that exist. He emphasized the importance of "teamwork" in achieving such objectives. Jaber Ansari outlined his domestic objectives, prioritizing the strengthening of national unity and cohesion, as well as the promotion of the country's image and values.

Iran's 'September 21' wins Grand Prix in Japan

Iranian filmmaker Rahman Baraheni won the Grand Prix at the 2024 Japan United for Peace Film Festival for his short film 'September 21'. The festival was held from September 16 to 21 at the Human Trust Cinema in Shibuya, Tokyo. Mehdi Mansour, a media consultant for the film, said in an interview with IRNA on Sunday that the film had been well-received by the festival's audience and had stood out among the 200 films showcased at the event. 'September 21' explores the im-

pact of war on the minds, bodies, and futures of children affected by conflict, and was praised by the festival's judges for its deep and emotional portrayal of the lives of these children, according to Mansour. This year marked the 14th edition of the festival, which was organized in collaboration with NPO PEACE DAY as part of the "Peace Day Week" initiative. The Japanese festival aims to promote peace and global solidarity by showcasing films from around the world, and awards its winners with prestigious prizes.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



A podium to ...

Mediation efforts and diplomatic attempts to broker a [Page 1 >](#) cease-fire have so far been in vain. Widespread public protests in Western countries, particularly in the United States, against Israeli genocide have had little impact on Western politicians, who have either remained silent or supported Israel politically and militarily. On the other hand, Muslim countries have lacked the will or ability to take independent initiatives to support the Palestinians

and prevent Israel's daily aggression. The result of such global paralysis, Western support for Israel, and the inaction of the Islamic world has been the emboldening of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his hardline cabinet to continue their crimes and slaughter of the Palestinian people. Despite this, the General Assembly can still provide a new opportunity for political and diplomatic negotiations, as well as cooperation among Islamic countries and the artic-

ulation of protest stances against Israel and its supporters. Delegations from countries supporting Palestine and opposing Israel can brainstorm ideas and proposals that amplify the voice of Palestinian suffering and simultaneously challenge Israel's criminal nature. One expected and predictable proposal is to walk out of the assembly hall during the Israeli prime minister's speech. Engaging in challenging interviews with mainstream media outlets and highlighting the impact of Western governments'

political and military support for Israel are other notable ideas. At the forefront of these diverse ideas is the speech of Islamic country leaders from the UN podium, explaining the plight of the Palestinian people and the regional and global consequences of this devastating war. Islamic countries and leaders supporting Palestine must not let this valuable opportunity slip away and allow Netanyahu and his supporters to dominate the UN by their silence and inaction.