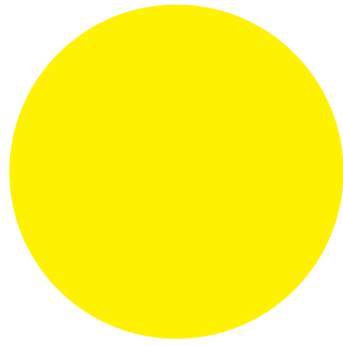


Israel, Hezbollah trade strikes as Lebanon's death toll tops 550



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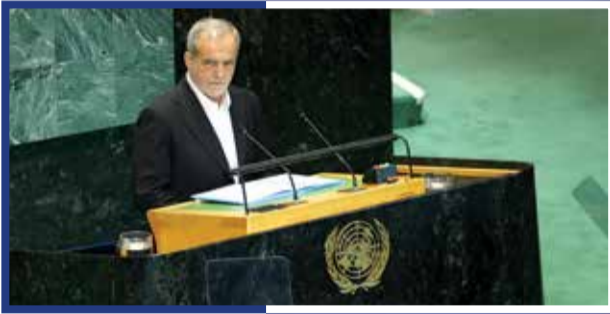


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Pezeshkian Urges Promotion of Multilateralism



Israeli war on Lebanon may spiral into regional conflict

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Swiss President Viola Amherd



European Council President Charles Michel



CNN host Fareed Zakaria



Finland's President Alexander Stubb



President Masoud Pezeshkian (l) shakes hands with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during a meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York City on September 23, 2024. [president.ir](#)

President calls for peace, not war

By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

OPINION

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has indeed taken a message of peace and security to the United Nations General Assembly, just as he had emphasized. In his meetings with officials and delegations from other countries, he and his entourage have been hammering home the point that the Iranian people and government are committed to peace. As a result, they believe that dialogue and engagement are the best ways to iron out differences with other countries, as well as to resolve regional

and international crises. In a meeting with US media representatives, Pezeshkian stated, "We are not in the least interested in sparking war and insecurity, and we have never launched an attack on any country. We want to build up our defensive capabilities to ensure the security and protection of our people and country, not to wage war or create insecurity... We believe that the spread of war in the region serves no country's interests, but it is the Zionist regime (of Israel) that is bent on fanning the flames of war and expanding the scope of insecurity in the region." [Page 8 >](#)

What's behind Germany's raging Islamophobia

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Remains of ancient Sassanid building uncovered in western Iran

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Oil minister hails boosting cooperation with Saudi Arabia



Iranian Minister of Oil Mohsen Paknejad expressed his hope to hold the meeting of the joint economic cooperation commission between Iran and Saudi Arabia soon. Speaking on Monday evening at a ceremony to mark Saudi Arabia's National Day, the minister said the government pays special attention to developing relations with neighboring countries, Shana reported.

"We believe that the cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as two important countries of Persian Gulf and the Middle East can bring many benefits and blessings for the stability and security of the region, as well as the development and enhancement of the welfare of the people of these countries," Paknejad stated.

Iran ready to share IT experience with Cuba: Minister

Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology Sattar Hashemi said that Iranian private companies are ready to exchange experiences in Cuba. Hashemi made the remarks at an online meeting on Monday with his Cuban counterpart Mayra Arevich Marin, IRNA reported.

During the talks, the Iranian minister said that Iran and Cuba are expanding their cooperation in various fields of communications and information technology. He called for reviewing of previous MoUs signed between the two countries in the field of communication and information technology.

The minister also announced the readiness of Iranian companies in the 40th Havana Exhibition, saying that attending this exhibition can provide joint cooperation in other fields between the two countries. Mayra Arevich Marin, for her part, emphasized the strengthening of relations between the two countries in various fields.

She invited her Iranian counterpart to visit Cuba for the 40th Havana International Exhibition and 19th meeting of the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation between Iran and Cuba.

Iran's non-oil trade with neighbors hits \$32.6b in H1

Iran's non-oil trade with its 15 neighboring countries in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 20, 2024) reached \$32.6 billion, said the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Mohammad Rezvanifar put the volume of trade exchanges between Iran and the 15 neighboring states from March 20 to September 22, 2024 at 50 million tons, valued at \$32.6 billion, showing a

5 and a 15 percent growth in weight and value, respectively, compared to the same period last year. In this period, Iran exported 39 million tons of non-oil goods, valued at \$15.6 billion, he added, Mehr News Agency reported.

The deputy minister of economy went on to say that Iran imported 11 million tons of goods, valued at \$17 billion, from the neighboring states in this time-span.

Iran's export of non-oil goods to the neighboring states between March 21 to September 22, 2024 increased by 4 and 12 percent in weight and value, respectively, he stated. The country's import of products from 15 neighboring countries between March 21 to September 22, 2024 has shown an 8 and an 18 percent growth in weight and value, respectively, compared to last year's corresponding period, Rezvanifar added.



Six-month steel exports stand at \$2.9b: IRICA



Iran's exports of steel products reached \$2.9 billion in the first half of the calendar year started in late March, according to figures released by the country's customs office (IRICA).

Steel products exports from Iran dropped by 14% in value terms in the six months to September 21, the IRICA said, Press TV wrote. It said steel products shipments had also fallen by 13% in volume terms compared to the first half of the past calendar year to reach 5.7 million metric tons (mt).

Largest exports shipments included steel ingots at \$730 million followed by rebar (reinforcing bar) at \$571 million and steel sheets at \$210 million, added IRICA.

Industry sources have blamed electricity cuts imposed on steel manufacturers over the summer for the decline in Iran's production and exports of steel this year. Figures published by the Iranian Steel Producers Association in mid-September showed that the country's exports of semi-finished steel, a key component in produc-

tion of the steel products needed in construction projects, had dropped by 5.4% year on year in the five months to August 21.

The Iranian government was forced to cut electricity supplies to industries, including steel manufacturers, in July and August, amid an unprecedented heat wave in the country that pushed demand for cooling to all-time records. Iran has increasingly relied on exports of metals and mining products in recent years amid US sanctions that have led to restrictions on its oil exports.

Steel exports from Iran have increased in general in the past two years amid an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine which has affected supplies from the two major steel producers.

Iran sets construction target of 4,000 MW renewable plants

According to the Seventh Development Plan (2024-28), Iran should build 2,500 megawatts of renewable electricity power stations every year, said the head of the Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), adding that the Ministry of Energy has set a target of 4,000 MW for the first year though.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Second Renewable Energy Development Conference in Tehran on Tuesday, Mohsen Tarzatab also noted that the country is facing problems such as lack of fuel for power plants and electricity shortage, so renewable energy can play a big role in this area, IRNA reported.

During the last 2-3 decades, the total capacity added to renewables was 1300MW, the official stated.

Also speaking at the con-



ference, the head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines & Agriculture (TCCIMA) said the share of renewable energies in the Seventh Development Plan should be increased in order to reduce electricity shortages.

Mahmoud Jajafi-Arab announced that the share of renewable energy in the country's electricity production stands at 1.2%, noting that the United States has provided 25% of its electricity production

from renewable resources in 2023.

On September 16, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi called for taking more serious steps to develop renewable energy, saying that renewable energy is one of the main ways to compensate for the shortages of electricity in Iran.

"Most of the countries, especially developed ones, realizing the importance of renewable energy development, have invested a lot in this field," Aliabadi stated.



Exports of agricultural products rise 26%

The Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced that \$1.7 billion worth of agricultural products were exported from the country in the first half of the current Iranian year (started March 20, 2024).

Iran's export of agri-

cultural products from March 20 to September 22, 2024 registered a 26-percent growth compared to last year's corresponding period, IRICA added, Mehr news agency reported.

Some 3.2 million tons of agricultural products were exported from the country in the first six

months of the current Iranian calendar year, indicating a 20-percent growth compared to the same period last year, it noted.

Various types of pistachios, tomatoes, watermelons, apples and dates were among the main products exported from the country

between March 20 and September 22, 2024, according to IRICA. It added that \$374 million, \$207 million, \$128 million, \$114 million and \$78 million worth of pistachios, tomatoes, watermelons, apples and dates were exported from the country in that period, respectively.

NIDC drills 46 oil, gas wells in six months

The National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) dug and completed the drilling operations of 46 oil and gas wells during the first six months of the current Iranian year (March 20-September), as announced by a deputy head of the NIDC.

According to Masoud Afshar, the drilled

wells consisted of 10 development and 36 workover ones, Shana reported.

According to statistics, NIDC's performance in operational, techno-engineering services, and headquarters departments has been significantly improved in recent years.

Mohsen Khojasteh-mehr, the former managing director of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), said in June that a license has been issued which allows the NIDC to spend \$800 million in purchasing drilling rigs as well as drilling related equipment and

services. According to a decision made by the cabinet, NIDC has been excluded from the list of cession to the private sector which consequently has provided the opportunity for governmental investment in the company activities as the first chain of operations

in the upstream sector, Khojastehmehr noted.

With regard to its experience, expertise, assets and fleet the company enjoys, NIDC is one of the most important operational companies not only in the region but in the world and that is why it is required to be supported.



Unveiling the wonders of ancient Ahvaz



Iranica Desk

The first season of excavations focused on stratigraphy and the study of the ancient city of Ahvaz — specifically the Asieh Abad archaeological site — is currently underway with the permission of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and the support of Khuzestan Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization.

According to Habib Emadi, head of the archaeological team at the site, the Asieh Abad Hill is a natural prominence characterized by alternating layers of clay and sand. The site has an irregular geometric shape and covers approximately 5.2 hectares in district 7 of Ahvaz, ISNA wrote.

Emadi noted that several factors influence the location of Asieh Abad as part of the ancient city. In addition to natural and geomorphological conditions, cultural factors play a significant role. These include the quality of interactions with nearby centers such as Shush and Shushtar to the north, Arjan and Ramhormoz to the east, and Baghdad and Basra to the west, all of which have undeniably impacted the geographical positioning of this site.

Emadi stated that the main objectives pursued in the archaeological studies of Asieh Abad include scientific and precise stratigraphy of the hill to provide an accurate chronology and identify the sequence of settlements that formed there.

The studies also focus on examining

pottery traditions and changes in pottery patterns based on fragments obtained from the preserved cultural layers, as well as the relative and absolute dating of the cultural layers and architectural spaces uncovered during the stratigraphic excavation.

Emadi mentioned that although excavations and studies in the cities of Khuzestan Province have provided valuable information about the pottery and architectural traditions of the region during the Sassanid and Islamic periods, understanding the nature and function of the Asieh Abad site will clarify many ambiguities regarding settlement patterns, architecture, and historical processes in ancient Ahvaz. Past surface surveys have revealed that Asieh Abad contains a significant collec-

tion of cultural materials from the early Islamic centuries.

The archaeologist stated that, given the urban development plans, most existing sites in cities are severely exposed to destruction and flattening. He added that Asieh Abad has unfortunately suffered significant and irreparable damage due to its location within the urban fabric. Construction and urban development interventions in the vicinity of the site have caused a large portion of this archaeological area to be sacrificed for the expansion of Ahvaz's urban structure.

The archaeological program planned for the study of the Asieh Abad site will provide a structured model regarding the morphological and structural characteristics of ancient pottery

from Ahvaz.

Emadi added that the expansion of illegal excavations, along with construction and urban planning in the heart of Ahvaz and natural erosive factors, has raised concerns that the what buried within Asieh Abad could soon be destroyed, leading to the loss of a treasure trove of historical and archaeological knowledge about ancient Ahvaz.

This danger can be significantly mitigated by designating the boundaries of the site and implementing protective guidelines for its preservation. It is evident that documenting and stratifying the remnants of cultural materials at this site will enable the recording of a chapter of the history of this land and facilitate the continuation of studies for future generations.

Izeh is emerging as a global center for kilim weaving



Iranica Desk

The city of Izeh in Khuzestan Province possesses significant potential to be recognized as a global city for kilim-weaving, thanks to its numerous capabilities.

Abbas Rahimi, a researcher specializing in handicrafts, noted in an interview with ISNA that during the evaluation of Izeh's qualifications for designation as a national city of kilim-weaving, it became evident that the existing infrastructure simply needs to be organized for the city to gain global recognition.

Rahimi emphasized the variety of kilim-weaving workshops scattered throughout Izeh, asserting that the city has greater potential than Dezful, which has already achieved recognition as a World City of Kapu-Weaving. He pointed out that Izeh is home to 12 kilim-weaving training centers and 12 kilim cooperatives, while Dezful has only one *kapu*-weaving training center and perhaps two or three *kapu*-weaving cooperatives. This comparison highlights Izeh's extensive capabilities

in this area.

Furthermore, the handicraft researcher remarked that the kilims produced in Izeh are not only beautiful but also highly functional. He emphasized that promoting Izeh as a global city of kilims could provide a significant opportunity for the city's growth and advancement. Rahimi reiterated the strong potential of Izeh in the realm of kilim-weaving and underscored the importance of overcoming barriers hindering the global registration of its kilims.

He also suggested that the involvement of evaluators from the World Crafts Council in Izeh, as they visit cooperatives, markets, and kilims weaving training centers, could be crucial in initiating the process of attaining global recognition for the city's kilims.

In the local dialect, *kapu* refers to any spherical object, but as a craft, it pertains to hand-woven, basket-like spherical items that may also include lids. *Kapu* are skillfully crafted by the talented hands of women, utilizing materials that are naturally sourced from Khuzestan Province.

On the other hand, a kilim is a type of woven handicraft characterized by a smooth and lint-free surface created from warp and weft threads. Unlike Persian carpets, kilims do not have long piles.

The quality of a kilim often correlates with the fineness of the thread used; consequently, high-quality sheep's wool is preferred for weaving these textiles. The wool utilized in kilim production is known for its flexibility, high durability, and excellent dyeability. This artistic craft is predominantly undertaken by women residing in rural and nomadic areas of Iran.



REUTERS

What's behind Germany's raging Islamophobia

By Farid Hafez
Scholar

OPINION

On September 16, Germany started extending temporary controls along all its borders, to the chagrin of its European Union neighbors. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser clarified that the move is meant to not only curb "irregular" migration, but also to stop what she called "Islamist terrorism and serious crime". The announcement came in the aftermath of a deadly knife attack that killed three people in Solingen, western Germany; the attacker, a Syrian refugee who had been denied asylum status and was supposed to be deported, was accused of belonging to the Daesh (ISIS) terrorist group. Some may be surprised that such a draconian measure has been imposed by the liberal-left coalition made up of the Social Democrats, the Greens, and the Liberals. But the reality is there is a shift to the right across the German political spectrum accompanied by raging Islamophobia.

It is not the first time Germany fixates on demonizing a racialized group and blaming it for its crises.



Analysts have pointed to the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) as a driver of the rightward shift. Indeed, the party has been making significant gains at the national and state levels. At the start of the month, it won the elections in the eastern state of Thuringia with 32.8 percent. In the eastern state of Saxony, it came second with 30.6 percent, just 1.3 percentage points behind the center-right Christian Democrats. But the electoral successes of the AfD are not a driver; they are a symptom of a general tendency in German politics to normalize and engage in the demonization and scapegoating of Muslims. Members of the ruling coalition have repeatedly denounced "Islamism" in Germany. The leader of the Green Party in the Bundestag, Katharina Dröge, went as far as claiming in a recent statement that "the poison of Islam reaches peo-

ple's minds also here, not just abroad"; later correcting herself that she meant "Islamism" instead of "Islam." Words of warning about an "Islamist threat" are not just in the mouths of German politicians, they are also all over official documents and policy declarations of German institutions. For example, the website of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, a key domestic intelligence agency, warns: "Islamists aim to completely or partially abolish the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany by invoking their religion". The Bavarian branch of this federal office has gone even further and introduced on its website the notion of "legalist Islamism", which it defines as a way to pursue "extremist goals by political means within the existing legal system". It clarifies: "Legalist Islamists attempt to influence politics and

society through lobbying [and] present themselves as open, tolerant and open to dialogue to the outside world, while anti-democratic and totalitarian tendencies persist within the organizations." Essentially, this concept can criminalize any group of Muslims who organize politically or socially and conduct their activities within the bounds of the law. It marks any expression of tolerance or openness by Muslims as suspect because it can be a "legalist Islamist presence". Using these concepts as a framework, various institutions at the state and federal levels have created "de-radicalization" programs that have targeted only Muslims. While such initiatives have been criticized and opposed in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States by many social justice workers, in Germany, on the whole, they

are perceived as well-justified and effective. One such programme, the Bavarian Network for Prevention and Deradicalization, recently produced a video about "Salafi radicalization" featuring racist tropes about Muslim men exploiting Muslim women. Earlier this month, the video was posted on social media by the Bavarian state government – currently controlled by the conservative Christian Social Union (CSU) – and immediately sparked criticism of its hateful representation of Muslims. The decision to publish made clear that the German authorities perceive the outwardly observing Muslims as a security risk and a danger to German society. The clip was eventually taken down and the Interior Ministry issued a statement to the media, apologizing for the

Supporters of the anti-Islam movement "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West" (PEGIDA) wave flags during a demonstration in Dresden, Germany, on March 21, 2016.
● IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/
REUTERS



ANADOLU AGENCY

"irritation and misunderstandings" and claiming the video attempted "to show the approach of Salafists and other Islamists to garner new, young followers". It further said that some scenes of the video would be "revised".

What probably hastened the Bavarian government's decision to remove the video was the reaction of some commentators who saw parallels

between its imagery and that of anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda. In particular, the scene of a bearded man with evil-looking features devouring a woman looks very close to Nazi representations of a Jewish man devouring ethnic Germans.

The anti-Semitic tint of Islamophobic imagery produced by German institutions is hardly surprising. As Israeli-German philosopher Moshe

Zuckermann has written, Islamophobia is the projection of an unutterable anti-Semitism.

The sentiments reflected in Germany's old anti-Semitism cannot be publicly expressed anymore due to the state's official embrace of philo-Semitism. That is why they are channelled through Islamophobia. What cannot be done to the Jew anymore, can easily be done to the Muslim.

The historical parallel here is hard to miss: far-right forces are rising, as a racist hysteria targeting one racialized group of people spreads through the German state and society. History may not repeat itself fully. Mass extermination may be replaced by mass expulsion as the far-right concept of "remigration" is quickly gaining ground; it has long left the far-right fringe to become increasingly more

mainstream.

As German politicians of various stripes and colors jump on the bandwagon of Islamophobia, they may do well to remember that their predecessors doing exactly the same almost a century ago did not end well for them. Hate is never a "winning" strategy.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.

Kingdom of Islamophobia from freedom and tolerance to hatred



By Artem Kirpichenok

Expert in public communications

OPINION

Until recently, Sweden was seen as a country of freedom and tolerance, open to refugees and exiles from around the world. But today, this Scandinavian nation increasingly finds itself in the headlines due to hate crimes and regular scandals related to public displays of Islamophobia.

Anti-Islamic sentiments have been strong in Sweden for centuries, even though the vast majority of Swedes probably never encountered Muslims until the early 20th century. As early as the 18th century, only Lutherans could become Swedish citizens, and non-believers could be barred from entering the country at any time.

Gradually, the Swedish attitude toward foreign religions and cultures began to change, and by the end of the last century, this Scandinavian nation had welcomed the highest number of immigrants and refugees per capita in Europe. It's important to remember that a tolerant approach to migration is not purely an act of charity—developed economies need cheap labor to perform low-skilled jobs. This is why the anti-migrant rhetoric of the far-right often clashes with economic realities. Countries may try to complicate the relocation of foreigners and hinder their integration, but they cannot completely abandon it. The native population is unwilling to clean floors, work in factories, or serve as low-paid caregivers in hospitals.

Before the early 20th century, Jews were almost the only non-Christians encountered by Europeans. Today, however, hundreds of thousands of Muslim immigrants have arrived in the West. In Sweden, the Muslim population is approaching 800,000. Just as Jews were victims of antisemitism a century ago, Muslims are now facing rising Islamophobic persecution.

According to Swedish sociologists and human rights activists, Muslims face discrimination in education, the workplace, and government institutions. The media often portrays Muslims and Islam through biased and stereotypical lenses.

In 2015, Swedish NGOs published reports revealing that school materials were rife with stereotypes about Islam. Islam is frequently depicted as a "militaristic" religion, and educational curricula contain notions of an impending "clash of civilizations" and a conflict between Swedish society and the Muslim world.

A 2007 study conducted by Stockholm University found that job applicants with names perceived as ethnically Swedish were twice as likely to receive interview invitations compared to those with Muslim names, despite having similar qualifications. Researcher Zahra Bayati commented that "racial segregation in society is resurfacing in the fields of education... and in the workplace."

In Swedish media, immigrants and Muslims are often portrayed as "others" and described through stereotypes associated with aggressive behavior. A 2015 report from the Equality Ombudsman of the Swedish government revealed that stereotypes about Muslims are widespread in private media, unlike in public media. This has led to biased attitudes to-

wards Muslims among authorities. For example, the "Terrorism Act," enacted in 2003, has been criticized as a "racial law in practice." Between 2003 and 2011, 26 people were arrested under this law, and another 15 were detained—all of whom were Muslims. A 2008 report by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention noted that stereotypes against Muslims are present throughout the Swedish judicial system. Muslims are less likely to receive fair treatment during criminal investigations, and there is institutional distrust of Muslim suspects, particularly men.

The anti-Islamic campaign in Sweden has resulted in regular hate crimes across the kingdom. The first such incident occurred in 1993, when a mosque was burned for the first time in the country, and two young Somali immigrants were stabbed to death. In 2003, a mosque in Malmö was set on fire, causing damage to the building, while the adjacent Islamic Center was completely destroyed. The mosque was attacked again in October 2005.

In 2014, over the course of a single week, three mosques in different Swedish cities were set on fire. Some were attacked with Molotov cocktails and defaced with racist graffiti. In May 2017, Sweden's largest Shia mosque, the Imam Ali Islamic Center in Järfälla, was burned to the ground in an arson attack.

A distinctive feature of Swedish Islamophobia is the regular burning of the Qur'an, carried out with official permission. These medieval-like acts, reminiscent of the times when heretics and sacred Jewish books were burned in Europe, are instigated by far-right radicals or provocateurs seeking notoriety. In 2022, Danish-Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan, known for his calls to

expel Muslims from Scandinavia, organized a series of anti-Islam rallies that included the burning of the Qur'an. This provocation sparked a wave of violent clashes and protests abroad. Chinese diplomats remarked, "Freedom of speech cannot be used as an excuse to incite racial or cultural discrimination and societal division." They urged the Swedish government to "respect the religious beliefs of minority groups." However, Swedish authorities did not heed the recommendations of the international community. On June 28, 2023, Iraqi-born Salwan Momika, with official permission, organized a Qur'an burning outside the Stockholm mosque during Eid al-Adha. These repeated desecrations of the holy book led to the emergence of the term "Korankrisen" ("Qur'an-burning crisis"). Mass protests erupted once again in Muslim-majority countries. According to a survey conducted by the polling agency Novus, 77% of Iraqis surveyed consider Sweden an anti-Islamic country.

What is driving the growing anti-Islamic activity in Sweden? Much of it stems from the dismantling of the welfare state and increased competition in the labor market between different segments of the population. Additionally, the political hegemony of the Social Democratic Party has faded in recent decades, with right-wing parties now dominating the country's political landscape, where anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic rhetoric is a key part of their agenda. Lastly, it's important to note that Sweden has recently abandoned its neutral status, which has inevitably affected the overall atmosphere in the country. Islamophobia is leading to increased tension within Swedish society and the decline of the country's once high international standing. However, the Swedish authorities appear to be unprepared to take the necessary steps to address the situation.

The article was first published on Caliber.



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In Swedish media, immigrants and Muslims are often portrayed as "others" and described through stereotypes associated with aggressive behavior.

High stakes in Tehran Derby: Esteghlal, Persepolis eyeing statement triumph



Having endured weeks of turmoil and speculation surrounding his future with the Blues, Nekounam will be desperate to prove he remains the right man for the job with a first league victory over the archrivals since 2018.

Sports Desk

With only five rounds of fixtures played in the new Persian Gulf Pro League season, today's Tehran Derby could hardly be considered as a milestone in the Iranian top-flight title race.

However, there will still be more than three points and the bragging rights on the line for capital heavyweights Esteghlal and Persepolis, as well as their head coaches, in the highly-anticipated encounter.

Having endured weeks of turmoil and speculation surrounding his future with the Blues, Esteghlal coach Javad Nekounam will be desperate to prove he remains the right man for the job with a first league victory over the archrivals since 2018.

For Nekounam's opposite number Juan Carlos Garrido, meanwhile, success in today's occasion will represent a stepping stone in his side's progress in the early stages of his helm at the Reds.

Esteghlal has been without a win in three league outings since the opening-day late victory at Shams Azar, while the club's 29-game unbeaten run in the Iranian top flight came to an end at Esteghlal Khuzestan in August.

The 1-0 defeat in Ahvaz triggered an ongoing falling-out between Nekounam and the club hierarchy, though an emphatic 3-0 beating of Al Gharafa in their AFC Champions League Elite opener temporarily eased the pressure on the manager.

Esteghlal had to come from behind twice to salvage a point in a VAR-driven 2-2 draw at Nassaji Mazandaran last time out, but the hard-fought point came at a cost for the Blues as instrumental center-back Rouzbeh Cheshmi received his marching orders in the stoppage time and will be out of the Persepolis game.

With four goals and an assist to his name since joining the club in the summer, Ramin Rezaeian will be the man to watch in the Blues outfit.

The veteran fullback, who was on the scoresheet for the Reds when they claimed a famous 4-2 triumph over the city rivals nine years ago, will be keen to build on his impressive form of late against his former employers, with whom he lifted his sole league trophy in 2017.

Reds on the rise

Persepolis got off to a slow start to its domestic title defense under Garrido, who was only appointed to the Reds role in June.

Chasing a seventh league crown in eight seasons, the Reds were held to a frustrating 1-1 home draw against Zob Ahan on the opening day and then had new Algerian keeper Alexis Guendouz and fellow-summer signing Ayoub El Amloud, who bagged a late equalizer, to thank for managing a point away to Tractor.

Garrido's tactics started to kick in during a convincing 2-0 victory over Foolad Khuzestan, and even a 1-0 loss to Al Ahli Saudi took nothing away from the Reds' dominant performance against the star-studded host.

Ali Alipour, the Reds' all-time leading marksman in the Iranian

Pro League, got off the mark on his return to club in Friday's 2-0 over Iralco and will be eager to add to his four derby goals today.

El Amloud was back in training with the rest of the team on Sunday, having missed Friday's game with an injury, but star winger Oston Urunov remains a doubt for the derby after he was forced off right before half-time against Iralco with a hamstring problem.

Elsewhere in the league, another mouth-watering clash will be on the cards in Isfahan as Sepahan – sitting atop the table with 13 points – will welcome second-place Tractor on Friday.

Malavan will play Esteghlal Khuzestan at home and Golgozar and Havadar will square off in Sirjan, while Iralco will chase a first win of the season when hosting newcomer Kheybar FC in Arak.

Mes Rafsanjan will visit Chadormalou, with Shams Azar and Nassaji hoping to end their winless run when they go head-to-head in Qazvin.

Yahaya Golmohammadi's Foolad will face Zob Ahan in Ahvaz on Saturday.



For Nekounam's opposite number Juan Carlos Garrido, success in today's occasion will represent a stepping stone in his side's progress in the early stages of his helm at the Reds.



Nadal included in Spain squad for Davis Cup finals



● CLIVE BRUNSKILL/GETTY IMAGES

BBC – Rafael Nadal has been included in Spain's squad for the Davis Cup Final Eight in November.

The former world number one, 38, has been added alongside world number three Carlos Alcaraz, Roberto Bautista Agut, Pablo Carreno Busta and Marcel Granollers. Nadal has not competed since

the Paris 2024 Olympics, where the 22-time Grand Slam champion was beaten in the singles by Novak Djokovic and lost in the quarter-finals of the doubles after partnering Alcaraz.

He withdrew from the US Open in August and last weekend's Laver Cup because of fitness concerns.

Six-time champions Spain, whose most recent success came in 2019, face Netherlands in the quarter-finals, starting on 19 November.

Nadal missed the US Open because he said he would not "be able to give my 100% at this time".

He then pulled out of the Laver Cup earlier in September, saying he believed there are "other players who can help the team deliver the win".

Nadal also missed the Australian Open in January through injury and decided not to play Wimbledon to focus on the Olympics.

He previously hinted at retirement later this year, but said before the French Open he was not "100%" certain that would be the last time he played at Roland Garros.

The Davis Cup quarter-finals take place 19-21 November, with the semi-finals following on consecutive days before the final on Sunday, 24 November. Reigning world number one Jannik Sinner is set to lead defending champions Italy, who will seek to become the first team to retain the title since 2013.

Man City rocked as injured Rodri may miss rest of season



● SIMON STACPOOLE/GETTY IMAGES

THE GURADIAN – Rodri sustained an anterior cruciate ligament injury in Manchester City's 2-2 draw with Arsenal on Sunday, initial tests have indicated, and may miss the rest of the season, handing the champions a serious blow in their push to win a fifth successive Premier League crown. The 28-year-old was forced off

after 21 minutes of the game at the Etihad Stadium, having gone down under minimal contact following a challenge by Thomas Partey inside the Arsenal area, but in clear agony. City await further tests but fear the worst in regards to the availability of one of Pep Guardiola's most important and influential players.

As the manager said in March of the midfielder he rates as the best No 6 in the world: "He is irreplaceable right now."

Guardiola has struggled to find a deputy for Rodri. Calvin Phillips was signed from Leeds in July 2022 to offer competition but was ultimately judged not to be of the requisite standard and is now on loan at Ipswich. Mateo Kovacic, who replaced Rodri against Arsenal, is trusted by Guardiola but the Croatian is a different profile of player and, as such, City would have to adjust how they set up if he is to step in long term. Ilkay Gundogan and Rico Lewis are other potential options to play at the base of City's midfield.

Rodri was suspended for three games towards the start of last season and City lost them all. Their only defeat in regulation time during the campaign with him in the side came against Manchester United in the FA Cup final in May. He was named player of the tournament as Spain won Euro 2024 in the summer and is a contender to win the men's Ballon d'Or next month after being named on the award's shortlist.

Pezeshkian urges promotion of multilateralism

Israeli war on Lebanon may spiral into regional conflict



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at the Summit of the Future on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly at United Nations headquarters in New York on September 23, 2024.
● TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized the necessity of interaction and dialogue between the world countries in order to reach a common point of view and promote multilateralism to resolve problems facing the world. Iran's foreign policy is based on de-escalation, constructive interaction with countries and the establishment of peace, stability and security, Pezeshkian told his Finnish counterpart, Alexander Stubb, during a meeting on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Pezeshkian also pointed to the UN's important role in creating convergence among countries to ensure peace and prevent war and occupation across the world. The Iranian president also held separate meetings with several other world's leaders in New York.

Tensions in West Asia

During his meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Pezeshkian expressed Iran's «serious» worries over the expansion of tensions in West Asia. Pezeshkian said that on the first day of his presidency, Israel assassinated

Ismail Haniyeh, political leader of the Palestinian Hamas resistance group, in the Iranian capital, adding, however, that the Islamic Republic exercised patience to prevent the escalation of tensions. The Israeli regime, he added, has killed more than 41,400 Palestinians in its genocidal war on the Gaza Strip and has now spread the aggression to Lebanon, where it has killed many others.

«We are very seriously concerned about the expansion of the conflict across the entire region,» he continued. The Iranian chief executive also appreciated Gu-

terres for his expression of sympathy over Saturday's deadly coal mine explosion in the eastern Iranian city of Tabas.

He said the bitter incident is a result of the illegal sanctions against Iran that ban the import of mining equipment to the country. Pezeshkian further emphasized that Iran is seeking to establish sustainable peace and security in West Asia with the help of neighboring governments, including those in the Persian Gulf region.

Cessation of Israel's apartheid

Addressing a UN session dubbed «Strengthening the United Nations Goals,» Masoud Pezeshkian called for a cessation of the Israeli occupation and apartheid in Palestine and immediate implementation of a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip, where the regime has been waging a genocidal war for more than 11 months. «In a world where civilians are being killed ruthlessly in Gaza, blind state terrorism sheds the blood of children and women, and genocide and assassination is being supported, [conclusion of] no document would serve to guarantee peace and development,» the president said. Pezeshkian said Iran de-

manded elimination of weapons of mass destruction from the region without any preconditions.

Economic, social development

«Iran demands a strong, united, safe, and stable region, where the resources of the regional countries are used for [bringing about] synergy towards [realization of] economic and social development and disposal of common problems,» he added. Citing an instance of Iran's contribution to regional stability, he mentioned the Islamic Republic's having invariably served as a leading force in fighting terrorism, and said the country was prepared for cooperation with other countries, which were similarly after «real confrontation» with the evil phenomenon.

Sanctions

The president, meanwhile, addressed the issue of the unilateral sanctions that have been imposed on the Islamic Republic and some other countries on the part of the US and its allies. «Unilateral sanctions stop realization of sustainable development goals,» he said, adding, «This fact has to be included in whatever document that is being prepared for the future.»

In his meeting with the President of European Council Charles Michel, Pezeshkian called the continuation of Israel's crimes as the most serious concern of the world at the present time.

«Which international law has allowed a regime to bomb women, children and innocent and defenseless people in hospitals, schools and shelters?» Pezeshkian asked. «With what justification does the world watch these crimes and take no practical and effective measures to stop these crimes?»

No transfer of missiles to Russia

The Iranian president also rejected allegations by Western countries that it has supplied short-range missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine, saying that Iran is seeking to stop the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. During an exclusive interview with CNN on Tuesday, Pezeshkian called on the international community to stop Lebanon from becoming another Gaza.

Israel's attacks on Lebanon

The Israeli regime's intensified attacks on Lebanon, the president stated, carries the risk of dragging

the entire region into conflict.

«We must not allow Lebanon to become another Gaza at the hands of Israel,» Pezeshkian told CNN's Fareed Zakaria. «The events that are unfolding in Lebanon may turn into a regional conflict that could be dangerous for the future of the world.»

The Iranian president urged the UN Security Council to «take immediate action» against the «insane» Israeli escalation. Global condemnations pour in after the Israeli regime's recent offensive, which has resulted in the deaths of more than 550 people in Lebanon. Pezeshkian said the Lebanese resistance movement is facing an entity armed to the teeth with access to advanced weaponry. «Hezbollah cannot stand alone against an entity that is being defended and supported and supplied by Western countries, by European countries and the United States.»

During his meeting with Switzerland's President Viola Amherd, the Iranian president expressed his satisfaction with the good relations between the two countries and appreciated the Nordic country's medical aid to Iran under sanctions.

Israel, Hezbollah trade strikes as Lebanon's death toll tops 554

International Desk

Israel and Hezbollah traded fire again on Tuesday – including a new Israeli airstrike on Beirut – as the death toll from a massive Israeli bombardment climbed to nearly 560 people and thousands fled from southern Lebanon with the two sides on the brink of all-out war. Israel struck the Hezbollah-controlled area of the Lebanese capital for a second consecutive day after

mounting a new wave of airstrikes on Lebanon. Hezbollah also said it had fired rockets into northern occupied territories earlier on Tuesday. An Israeli airstrike on the southern suburbs of Beirut on Tuesday killed another Hezbollah commander, Ibrahim Qubaisi, who was a leading figure in its rocket division, two security sources in Lebanon said. Lebanese authorities said 558 people had been killed, including 50 children and

94 women, in Israel's airstrikes on Monday. A further 1,835 were wounded, they said, and tens of thousands more have fled for safety. «We are waiting for victory, God willing, because as long as we have a neighbor like Israel, we can't sleep safely,» said Beirut resident Hassan Omar.

Afif Ibrahim, a taxi driver from southern Lebanon, said, «They (Israel) want us (Lebanese) to kneel, but we kneel only to God in our prayers; we bow our heads

to no one but God.» After nearly 12 months of deadly war on Gaza, Israel is shifting its focus to the northern frontier, where Hezbollah has been targeting Israel's military positions in the occupied territories in support of Palestinians in Gaza.

Calls for diplomacy

Calls for diplomacy are growing as the conflict worsens, with UN human rights chief Volker Turk urging all states and actors with influence to avert further escalation in Lebanon. The EU's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, described the escalating conflict as almost a «full-fledged war» as world leaders gathered in New York for the opening of the 79th United Nations general assembly.

«If this is not a war situation, I don't know what you would call it,» Borrell said before the UN gathering, citing the increasing number of civilian casualties and the intensity of military strikes. He said efforts to reduce tensions were continuing but Europe's worst fears about a spillover were becoming a reality. The Iranian president denounced the UN's «inaction» against Israel, describing it as «senseless and incomprehensible.»



Children, wounded in Israeli strikes on their village, receive treatment in the southern Lebanese village of Saksakiyeh on September 24, 2024.
● MAHMOUD ZAYYAT/AFP

«In my meeting with the Secretary General of the United Nations, I said the UN inaction against the crimes of the occupying regime is senseless and incomprehensible,» Masoud Pezeshkian said in a post on X, adding that, «I expressed my deep concern about the spread of the conflict in the entire Middle East.» Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati urged the UN and world powers to deter what he called Israel's «plan that aims to destroy Lebanese villages and towns.» He said he was canceling a scheduled cabinet meeting to fly to New York to «make further contacts» with leaders to try to end the violence. China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, expressed support for Lebanon and condemned what he termed «indiscriminate attacks against civilians,» Beijing's Foreign

Ministry said on Tuesday. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told MSNBC that he believed «a path forward» could still be found to de-escalation and a diplomatic solution. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer urged restraint and sought de-escalation on the border between Lebanon and Israel, telling his governing Labour party, «I call again for all parties to step back from the brink.» In Lebanon, displaced families slept in shelters hastily set up in schools in Beirut and the coastal city of Sidon. With hotels quickly booked to capacity or rooms priced beyond the means of many families, those who did not find shelter slept in their cars, in parks or along the seaside. Well-wishers offered up empty apartments or rooms in their houses in social media posts, while volunteers

set up a kitchen at an empty petrol station in Beirut to cook meals for the displaced. In the eastern city of Baalbek, the state-run National News Agency reported that queues formed at bakeries and petrol stations as residents rushed to stock up on essential supplies in anticipation of further strikes. The Tuesday attacks came after thousands of communications devices, used mainly by Hezbollah members, exploded in different parts of Lebanon, killing 39 people and wounding nearly 3,000. Lebanon blamed Israel for the attacks, but Israel did not confirm or deny any responsibility.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Remains of ancient Sassanid building uncovered in western Iran



● ISNA

Arts & Culture Desk

Archaeologists discovered the remains of a building from the Sassanid era in western Iran, which they believe may be a fire temple.

The discovery was made during a project to determine the boundaries of the ancient site of Malaat Abad in Kermanshah Province, which has been threatened by urban development, ISNA reported.

Nasser Aminikhah, head of the archaeological team, said that the site has been surrounded by urban construction and is at risk of destruction if not protected. However, the project to determine the site's boundaries has not only helped to preserve the site but also led to new discoveries.

Aminikhah said that the site has two mounds, 300 meters apart, which have been found to date back to the Sassanid and Islamic periods, with some evidence of prehistoric artifacts. The smaller mound, known as 'Yav Kol 2' or 'Short Horse' in Kurdish, has been identified as a Sassanid-era building, possibly a fire temple.

Unfortunately, much of the building has been destroyed due to lack of protection, leaving only a small mound about 2 meters high and covering an area of 700 square meters.

Aminikhah looked forward to digging deeper into the site, which he hoped would turn up new clues and help uncover the secrets of the region's past.

123 countries to participate in Iran's Cinéma Vérité

A record number of 123 countries will take part in the 18th International Documentary Film Festival of Iran, known as Cinéma Vérité, organizers announced Tuesday. A total of 2,314 foreign documentaries from around the world have been submitted to the festival's secretariat, with 1,625 short films, 500 feature-length films, and 189 mid-length films vying for a spot in

the competition. The documentaries come from a diverse range of countries, including Canada, the UK, India, Brazil, Spain, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Russia, Argentina, the US, China, France, Germany, Mexico, Indonesia, Portugal, and Greece. The 18th Cinéma Vérité festival will be held in December 2024, under the direction of Mohammad Hamidi Moqaddam.



Iranian animation awarded at Polish film festival

An Iranian animated documentary, 'Anita, Lost in the News,' directed by Behzad Nalbandi, won the Audience Award at the 6th Rising of Lusitania - AnimaDoc Film Festival in Łódź, Poland.

The festival, which ran from September 10 to September 23, is dedicated to documentary animation films, Mehr News Agency reported. Created using puppets made from newspaper clippings, the 17-minute film is about a Kurdish-Iranian family of four who died in the sinking of a migrant boat in the English Channel in 2020.

'Anita, Lost in the News' has already been present at several international film festivals in Japan, the US, the UK, and India.

Nalbandi's latest triumph builds on his previous success, as his earlier film 'The Unseen' has already racked up awards at film festivals around the globe, and now his name is cropping up again on the international scene, picking up another accolade to add to his collection.



Iranian, int'l artists to collaborate on video art exhibition

A group video art exhibition titled 'Geometry of Creation: Analysis of Anti-Rhythmic Structures' will open on September 27 at the Ivan Gallery in Tehran, featuring the work of 44 Iranian and international artists.

The exhibition, curated by Ramin Saeidian and Mohammad-Ali Famori, explores the concept of fractal geometry and its intersection with glitch art. The show's theme gets to the bottom of the idea of anti-rhythmic structures in nature and mathematics, where patterns of chaos and disorder emerge, ISNA wrote.

Examining anti-rhythmic structures in the geometry of creation reveals a fascinating dialogue between order and chaos. In nature and math, we often come across rhythmic patterns that symbolize harmony and balance. However, when fractal geometry encounters a glitch, the once-ordered whole becomes chaotic, yet continues on its fractal course.

The idea of anti-rhythm challenges

conventions and reveals the beauty of asymmetry and deviation. Fractal geometry and its fractional dimensions reflect this phenomenon, showing how irregular shapes can coexist with traditional geometric forms. This changes our understanding of creation itself.

Anti-rhythmic elements emerge unexpectedly and non-linearly, prompting us to think more deeply about reality and existence. By exploring the geometry of creation, we realize that anti-rhythmic structures are an integral part of life, visualizing the dynamic interaction in fractals.

The exhibition's manifesto, based on the concept of glitch language, seeks to explore the meanings and aesthetics of disruption, interruption, and destruction in the fractal geometry created by generative codes and repetitive images. The show features a diverse range of artists, including Abarka, Ali Ettehad, Anita Hashemi-Moqadam, and many others from around the world.

The exhibition will run until October 11.

President calls for ...

Earlier, before departing for New York, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi had announced that Iran was ready to kick-start nuclear talks, provided they would not occur under pressure. Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi also met with European Union Deputy Foreign Policy chief Enrique Mora to discuss the nuclear issue and sanctions on Iran, saying, "Iran is prepared to do its part in good faith and address mutual concerns and interests through dignified diplomacy."

On the other hand, EU Foreign Policy chief Josep Borrell has also chimed in, referencing the meeting between European Council President Charles Michel and Pezeshkian in New York, saying, "We must keep the lines of communication with Iran open at all times, especially when we think things are not going in the right direction."

The upcoming meetings between some European officials, including French President Emanuel Macron, and President Pezeshkian also seem to be part of this effort to keep channels open between Iran and Europe. These communication lines can be strengthened through diplomatic talks, paving the way for negotiations aimed at reaching new understandings to resolve disputes and boost cooperation. Now, as the UN General Assembly meeting and the Iranian president's announcement of peaceful intentions through diplomatic meetings appear to be demonstrating the new government's policies in Iran, potentially smoothing the complex path to resolving differences, Israel's attacks on southern Lebanon have intensified. Benjamin Netanyahu has done his utmost over the past few months to drag Iran into a direct confronta-

tion, forcing the US administration to go to war with Iran. However, Iran's clever tactics have so far foiled Israel's war-mongering ambitions. Nevertheless, the hawkish teams in Israel and the US continues to push for conflict. Meanwhile, some factions within Iran have been gloating over the escalation of tensions between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah, as if they are itching for the "war drums" to start beating.

At this point, the Islamic Republic's policy and Pezeshkian's administration are not geared toward diving headfirst into war, as that would set the entire region ablaze, which is precisely the sinister goal of the current Israeli cabinet.

No doubt, one of Netanyahu's missions at the UN will be to sabotage the Iranian delegation's diplomatic efforts and undermine President Pezeshkian's

peaceful overtures. The intensification of attacks on southern Lebanon, coinciding with the UN General Assembly meeting, is not unrelated to Israel's attempts to goad Tehran into abandoning its clever policy of avoiding direct conflict.

However, Iran's stance not only fails to signal a willingness to beat the drums of war but instead reinforces the call for peace and an end to conflict. As President Pezeshkian stated in a meeting with American media representatives, "We have not and will not support Russia's war against Ukraine. We respect the borders and sovereignty of nations, and we cannot remain silent on the Zionist regime's atrocities in Gaza... We yearn for peace, stability, calm, and security worldwide, and our approach in this regard is sincere and rooted in our beliefs and values."