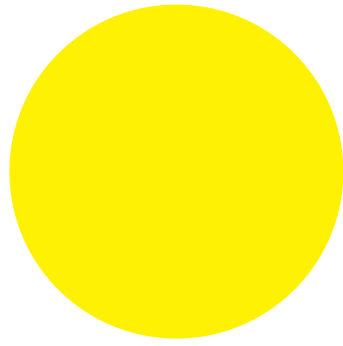


**Pezeshkian:**  
Iran-China  
friendship  
flourishes  
into strategic  
ties



# Iran Daily

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### IRGC Showers Israel with Barrage of Missiles

Israel to face new 'crushing' strikes if it responds

**International Desk**

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Tuesday launched a huge salvo of missiles into the Israeli-occupied territories, the IRGC said in a statement, days after Tel Aviv assassinated Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a powerful airstrike on the Lebanese capital Beirut.

The statement said the missile strikes were carried out in response to Israel's "breach of the Islamic Republic of Iran's sovereignty" during an attack that killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31 as well as the assassi-

nation of Nasrallah and IRGC's Major General Abbas Nirforoushan in Beirut on Friday.

"Tens of ballistic missiles were fired at important military targets in the heart of the occupied territories," the statement added.

The IRGC said the missile attacks were "legitimate" under the UN Charter and warned of fresh "crushing and devastating attacks" should Israel retaliate the Iranian strikes.

Live footage showed dozens of missiles flying over the sky of Tel Aviv with an unknown number of them landing on the city.

The Israeli military said at least 200 projectiles were launched from Iran.

Missiles launched by Iran are seen over Al-Quds on October 1, 2024.  
● MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP

### Eurasia; a gateway to Iran's economy

By Ebrahim Beheshti  
Staff writer

**OPINION EXCLUSIVE**

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref traveled to Armenia to attend the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) summit. The visit can be seen from two angles: bolstering cooperation with the EEU and strengthening bilateral ties with Armenia. The EEU, established in 2014 by Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, is a regional union aimed at coordinating the use of existing capacities in the region. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran is not an official member of the EEU, it signed a free trade agreement with the union two years ago. The diverse economic capacities of EEU member states offer a new window of opportunity for Iran, particularly as it grapples with economic constraints imposed by US sanctions. [Page 8 >](#)



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### Iranian girls grab double golds on Day 1

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### Terrorist attacks claim six lives in southeast Iran

Unidentified gunmen killed six people in two separate attacks on Tuesday in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.

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## Iran, Russia discuss boosting bilateral economic ties

Iran's Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati held talks with his Russian counterpart Maxim Reshetnikov, focusing on the strengthening of economic ties between the two countries.

The two ministers met on Monday evening, on the sidelines of negotiations between high-level Iranian and Russian delegations in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Reshetnikov expressed hope that trade between the two countries is accelerated, while both delegations reviewed progress on the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and other key economic initiatives.

The delegations also discussed customs issues, Russian investment in Iran's oil industry, the Rasht-Astara railway project, and enhancing trade routes via INSTC.

## Parliament speaker urges revision on forex allocation policies

### Economy Desk

The Iranian Parliament speaker called on Tuesday for a revision of the country's forex allocation policies, urging the legislature's Economy and Industries and Mines Commissions to work with government officials on the issue.

Iran's Seventh Development Plan calls for a 23% growth of non-oil exports, said Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf in an open session of the Parliament on Tuesday, adding that for this goal to be achieved, the country's officials must balance the supply and demand of foreign exchange as per the plan, IRNA reported.

Moreover, Iran's Economy minister said on Monday evening that the gap between the subsidized and non-subsidized forex rates is not acceptable, calling for the minimization of the gap.

Speaking on the sidelines of the first meeting of the Iranian cabinet and the private sector, Abdolnaser Hemmati added that exporters play an important role in the country's economy and called for removing any hindrance that may be impeding their activities.

"In the field of taxation, we have paid attention to the support of producers and exporters, and we are moving forward in this direction to remove obstacles," the minister noted.

# Southern ports can be paramount trading platforms for EAEU: VP

### Economy Desk

Iran's ports in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman can become one of the most important trading platforms for the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with other countries, said First Vice President Mohammadreza Aref.

Addressing the Eurasian Economic Forum in Yerevan on Tuesday, he stated that Iran is ready to provide special facilities to the member countries of the union regarding the establishment of commercial logistics centers in the northern and southern ports.

Aref added that Iran hopes for the digitalization of multilateral railway cooperation and rail freight traffic between the EAEU member countries within the framework of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

According to him, the EAEU has developed a roadmap for digitalization of rail freight transportation with China and Uzbekistan and positive steps have been taken in



Iranian First Vice President Mohammadreza Aref (R) speaks at the meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Eurasian Economic Union in the Armenia capital Yerevan on October 1, 2024. [fypresident.ir](http://fypresident.ir)

that regard.

Aref noted that Iran also wants this model to be applied in the framework of the INSTC. "Iran is ready for any cooperation in this direction."

Iran's vice president noted that if all existing barriers, including customs duties, border checks and logistic processes are removed in transit cooperation, exchanges between mem-

ber countries will either be delayed or become unprofitable if they are not carried out quickly. Along with building new infrastructure, strengthening existing infrastructure is important and countries should put this on their agenda.

He added that creating a joint market in the four areas (products, services, investment, and business) is put

forward as the four main objectives of the EAEU. Digitization of rail freight transportation can also contribute to the implementation of the four main goals.

The intergovernmental agreement signed on September 12, 2000 between Russia, Iran, and India laid the foundation for the INSTC. In general, a number of countries have ratified

the said agreement. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine are among the countries.

The purpose of creating the corridor is to reduce the delivery time of cargoes from India to Russia, as well as to Northern and Western Europe (the delivery time on the current route is more

than six weeks; through the INSTC, it is expected to be three weeks). The North-South corridor has three directions on the territory of Iran. Eastern direction-Turkmenistan and Central Asian countries; Middle direction-Russia and other countries across the Caspian Sea; Western direction-Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, and Eastern European countries.

## Tehran, Doha to sign cooperation documents



Iran and Qatar will ink joint cooperation document during Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to the country, which will start today.

During his two-day visit made at the official invitation of Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa

Al Thani, Pezeshkian will hold high-profile meetings with Qatari officials and also ink the joint cooperation documents between Tehran and Doha, as reported by Mehr News Agency. On the second day of his visit to the Qatari capital of Doha, the Iranian president will

participate in the 19th edition of Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Summit and will deliver his speech.

According to the schedule, the Iranian top official will meet with some leaders and high-ranking officials of the countries participating in the summit.

The Asian Cooperation Dialogue Summit, known as ACD, consists of 35 Asian countries, which has been promoting intra-Asian dialogue for more than 20 years with the aim of implementing various cooperation projects and programs in the economic and cultural fields.

## Tehran to host 24th Iran Int'l Electricity Exhibition

The 24th edition of Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2024) will be inaugurated on October 24.

In the four-day exhibition, exhibitors will showcase their latest achievements and products in the fields of production, transmission, distribution, high-, medium- and low-voltage electrical equipment, all kinds of electrical panels, lighting equipment, smart equipment, diesel generators and electric motors, batteries and UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply), earthing and cathodic protection systems, transformer, wire and cable, industrial automation, instrumentation and measuring equipment, contractor,



consultant, scientific research and research centers, power transmission lines and related equipment, medium-, high- and low-voltage substations, renewable energy and related equipment.

Specialized workshops and business-to-business (B2B) meetings will be organized on the sidelines

of the exhibition, Tasnim News Agency reported. The international exhibition aims to provide a chance for exhibitors to put on display their latest products, technologies, and services, and help visitors find out about the latest technologies and developments of related business sectors in Iran.

## Iran's imports of cooking oil, oil seeds surpass \$4.3b per year

Iran's imports of cooking oil and oil seeds reached some \$4.329 billion in the calendar year to late March, according to a report which shows that the country has a long way to go to become self-sufficient in production of those commodities. The Monday report by the Tasnim News Agency showed that Iran had relied on imports from Brazil, Russia and Indonesia for 90% of its demand for cooking oil and oil seeds in the past decades.

The report said that total lands dedicated to oilseed farming in

Iran had increased by nearly 50% to 155,000 hectares in the current calendar year starting in late March.

The report said that rapeseed production in the country would hit a target of 275,000 metric tons (mt) this calendar year, up from 160,000 mt reported last year.

However, it said that the amount of rapeseed produced in Iran in the year to late March was enough to meet only 10% of the demand in the domestic cooking oil industry.

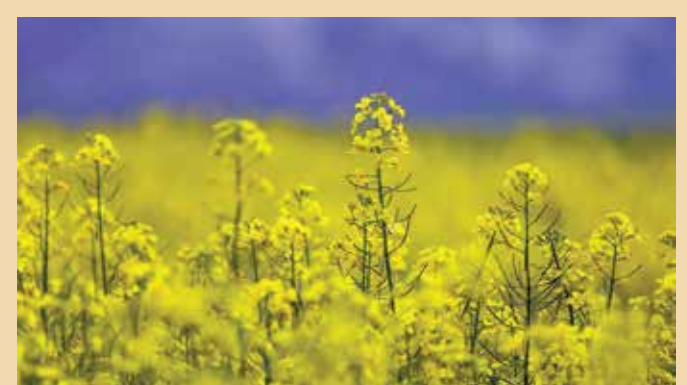
That comes as the cooking oil

consumption per capita in Iran is 23 kilograms, nearly double the international levels.

To encourage more cultivation of crops like rapeseed and soybean, the Iranian government has been allocating heavy subsidies to domestic purchases of oilseeds.

Domestic cooking oil producers are also obliged to purchase crops from domestic farmers in order to be able to use subsidized currency for imports of cooking oil and oilseeds.

Experts say a major increase in domestic oilseed production



in Iran in the years to come would allow the country to

meet some 50% of its need for the crop.



# Transforming Maranjab Desert into a thriving destination is essential



iranroute.com

## Iranica Desk

For years, the Maranjab Desert in Isfahan Province flourished in the autumn, drawing a significant influx of domestic and foreign tourists. Unfortunately, the landscape has changed dramatically, and the Maranjab Desert is currently suffering from neglect and decreased visitor engagement.

According to IRNA, the most considerable setback for the Maranjab tourist region occurred last December, when entrance fees were raised eightfold at the start of the rugged Maranjab road, yet without any accompanying improvements to visitor services. This sudden increase sparked strong objections from tourists and resulted in a staggering drop of over 60% in visitor numbers.

Reaching the Maranjab Desert involves navigating a challenging 50-kilometer dirt road, characterized by dangerous twists, sandy patches, potholes, and a severe lack of traffic signs. This presents a significant challenge, particularly for those unfamiliar with the area.

As Tourism Week is underway and the desert tourism season begins, disarray continues to plague the Maranjab Desert. The di-

rector-general of Isfahan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization stated in an interview that the tourism potential of Maranjab is unmatched and that, with proper planning, it could substantially contribute to job creation, reverse migration, social well-being, and sustainable development in northern Isfahan Province.

Amir Karmzadeh emphasized that organizing and improving the Maranjab Desert is a critical priority for the provincial Cultural Heritage Organization. He announced plans for a special working group to be established at the Isfahan governor's office. This group aims to make decisions regarding the organization and promotion of tourism in the Maranjab Desert, involving collaboration among all relevant agencies from Isfahan Province and Aran and Bidgol.

Javad Abdoli, head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Aran and Bidgol, also discussed the emergence of the desert tourism season and the recent inconsistencies at the Maranjab entrance gate. He confirmed that enhancing the organization of the Maranjab Desert is a priority for the department, beginning this week with plans for road leveling and a proposed 50%

reduction in entrance fees.

Abdoli elaborated that, with the commencement of the new tourism season, preparations to welcome visitors at the Maranjab Desert's entrance gate have already begun. These preparations include the distribution of brochures detailing attractions in the Maranjab Desert, hospitality services at the entrance, the provision of garbage bags for waste disposal, and gifting local salt packets to tourists—an initiative designed to enhance the visitor experience from the onset of the tourist season.

Abdoli also announced the implementation of a 50% reduction in entrance fees to the Maranjab tourist region, stating that entry will be free for residents of Kashan and Aran and Bidgol. Furthermore, he highlighted the establishment of an advisory council composed of tourism stakeholders who will support the organization of the Maranjab, functioning as a voluntary consulting and oversight body alongside regional tourism managers.

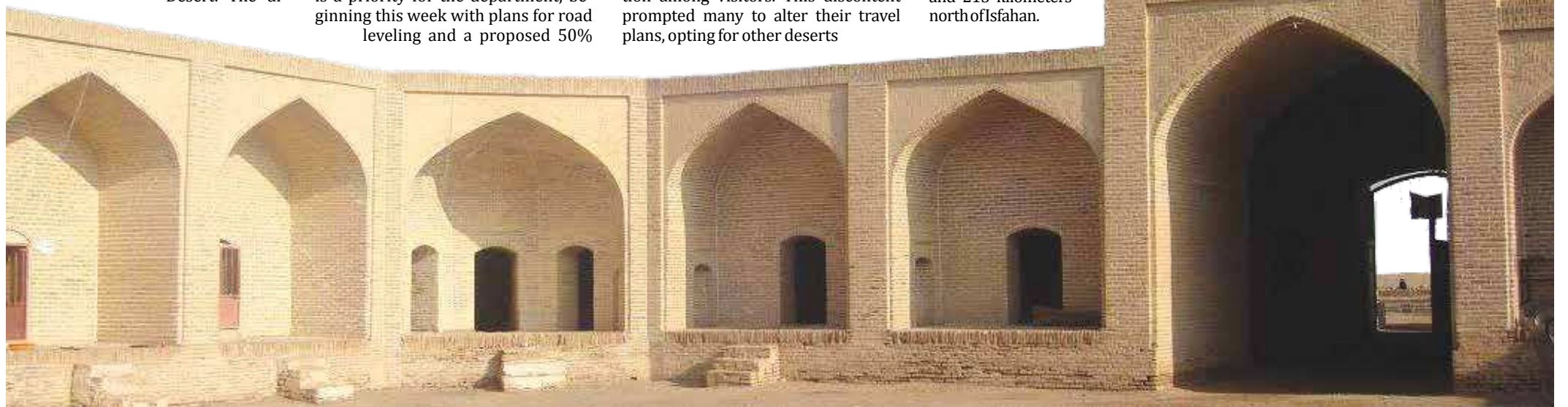
A tourist who spoke to IRNA expressed that the abrupt and considerable hike in entrance fees last December, coupled with the absence of corresponding services, led to widespread dissatisfaction among visitors. This discontent prompted many to alter their travel plans, opting for other deserts

in Isfahan and Yazd provinces instead.

The tourist underscored that, due to its proximity to the capital and its unique natural attractions, the Maranjab Desert possesses tremendous tourism potential. However, the notable lack of proper roads and essential facilities dissuades prospective visitors. He reiterated that the significant increase in entrance fees has had a detrimental impact on desert tourism, resulting in many travelers removing Maranjab from their itineraries.

Situated in the northern part of Aran and Bidgol, the Maranjab tourist region is among the most pristine and captivating deserts in the country. It is bordered to the north by a salt lake, to the west by a large desert, and to the east by Sultan Pond (Hoze Sultan) and Marreh Pond (Hoze Marreh), extending into the Kavir National Park.

With activities including desert trekking, off-roading, motorcycling, safari tours, camel riding, and sandboarding, Maranjab attracts tens of thousands of domestic and international tourists each year. Aran and Bidgol, home to a population exceeding 103,000, is located approximately six kilometers from Kashan and 215 kilometers north of Isfahan.



## Gereh-chini; art of arranging knots in Iranian woodcraft

One of the traditional decorative and functional handicrafts of Iran is *gereh-chini*, which literally translates to 'arranging the knots'. This art form involves laying finely cut pieces of wood on a surface according to a specific design. The intricate geometric knots, which are beautifully and rhythmically repeated, are considered an essential component of *gereh*.

The exact origins of *gereh-chini* are not clearly documented; however, it is believed that the craft first emerged during the Seljuk dynasty, with Isfahan recognized as its birthplace. The art form flourished during the Safavid dynasty, marking a significant period of development and creativity. In *gereh-chini*, pieces of wood are

used in their natural colors, and no paint is applied.

According to masters of this art, the plane tree is considered the best material for creating *gereh*, although other types of wood — including walnut, beech, mulberry, almond, silverberry, zelvka, pear, and jujube—are

also utilized. These woods are employed to construct a variety of structures, such as the doors of shrines, pulpits, doors and windows, frames, tableaus, dividers, and covers for tables, as well as many other decorative objects.

*Gereh-chini* can be categorized

into three main groups: 1. All wood, 2. *Moshabbak* (lattice trelliswork), and 3. *Orosi* (sash windows). *Orosi* are a type of window made using *gereh* and colored glass. These windows are particularly beautiful and were most commonly used during the Zand and Qajar dy-

nasties, exemplifying significant artistic importance.

In the art of *gereh-chini*, the *gereh*, or knot, refers to the intersections of wooden pieces that are joined by interlocking, resulting in delicate and intricate designs. The finer the pieces of wood, the more valu-

able the finished product. The use of tongue and groove joints ensures that *gereh-chini* pieces are durable enough to withstand the varying climates of Iran, which is why we can find *gereh-chini* artworks in many historical buildings.

Some of the best-preserved examples of this art form include Chehel Sotoon (literally Forty Columns), Hasht Behesht (literally Eight Heavens), and historic houses such as Alam's House and Sheikh ol-Islam in Isfahan. Additionally, the Tabatabaei House in Kashan and Golestan Palace in Tehran showcase beautiful instances of *gereh-chini*. Today, there are still workshops in Tehran where artisans practice and preserve this intricate craft.



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# Developing consensus, cooperation; Iranian president's message to world

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian sat down with CNN's Fareed Zakaria to discuss international, and regional developments as well as Iran's internal affairs last week in New York on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly. Pezeshkian stated that "we have started our work based on creating consensus within the country and strengthening cooperation with regional and global countries," and added: "We do not have any problems with our neighboring countries or the region, and we also have a cooperative approach with countries around the world. However, today the Zionist regime is the main factor creating instability in the region."

The full text of the interview is as follows:



**Fareed Zakaria:** Let's start with the breaking news. Lebanon is witnessing some of the worst and most intense attacks it has seen in the past 15 years. Do you think Hezbollah will respond strongly, or will we see an escalation of tensions in Lebanon or even a wider conflict beyond Lebanon?

**Pezeshkian:** What is happening now in Lebanon, and what we have heard in the news, before even saying whether Hezbollah wants to respond or not, is a humanitarian disaster. The regime that the US and European countries support is committing crimes in front of the world's eyes, which have no justification in terms of human rights and international law. Before Hezbollah responds to these attacks, the UN and countries that claim to uphold human rights should force the Zionist regime to back down.

Hezbollah is facing a regime that is armed to the teeth, and the US is supporting it by bringing its aircraft carriers to the Atlantic and Mediterranean oceans. It's unacceptable from a human rights perspective for a country to claim it wants democracy, human rights, and freedom in the world, yet support a regime that kills people, children, and the elderly.

As a human being, regardless of my beliefs, I say that any human being in the world would be ashamed to see such atrocities committed by such individuals. It's a disaster for people who have no conventional power and are only willing to give their lives for their country's integrity and preservation.

Now, what will Hezbollah do? What can it do in the face of planes bombing Lebanon? Naturally, it will defend itself with whatever it has. However, given what's happening, there's a risk that tensions will spread throughout the region, which could be dangerous for the world and the future of the planet, leading to many events that must be prevented, and the Zionist regime must be stopped from committing these atrocities. They are committing human crimes, which is unacceptable.

Imagine if you were to kill hundreds of people on the spot with a plane, injure hundreds more, and in front of the world's eyes, no one is there to

prevent this crime; it's completely unacceptable.

**Do you recommend that Hezbollah exercise self-control, considering Iran's significant influence over the group?**

We must stand by Hezbollah. Naturally, we cannot expect Hezbollah to stand alone against a regime supported by the US and Europe. Therefore, we must make collective decisions on this matter.

**Israel claims its attacks are a response to Hezbollah's attacks!**

Do you believe that? In Gaza, the Zionist regime has killed thousands of people, over 41,000. What did they do in response to the Zionist regime, which bombs women, children,

Hezbollah, no matter how powerful it is, no matter how many missiles it fires, and no matter what the Zionist regime claims, how many of its own people have been killed that it comes and kills civilians?

The Zionist regime is committing terrorism, attacking other countries, and killing people wherever it wants. You should count the number of people the Zionist regime terrorizes every day with its missiles, drones, and operatives. See how many people they kill? In Iran, on the first day of my presidency, they came and assassinated Ismail Haniyeh. What international law or framework allows such actions? These people (the Israeli regime) are the real terrorists; but they call the ones who want to defend their

world sees this situation, and unfortunately, some governments still defend the Zionist regime, powers that claim to uphold human rights but defend the Zionists; it's shameful.

**The Islamic Republic of Iran has said it reserves the right to respond to the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh. Does this mean you will definitely respond in some way?**

If international organizations cannot stop this aggressive regime and prevent a state with power and capabilities from doing whatever it wants, whenever it wants, without anyone stopping it, naturally, we will respond accordingly.

**You said something at the beginning of your presidency that**

We should be a model, do the right thing, and act humanely, so that others can follow our example. Islam is not a faith that can be imposed on others through force.

Our behavior is what can have an impact, and if we behave in a way that others dislike, it's not based on the teachings of Islam. Islam is a faith based on justice, fairness, and the preservation of human rights, and it's based on brotherhood. If we want to develop our revolution, before we tell others to become what we say, we must first reform ourselves. When we become good and others see that we respect all human frameworks, regardless of their race, tribe, or gender, and treat others like humans, then people will naturally be attracted to our faith. Islam, or any other faith, cannot be imposed through force, but through behavior. If our behavior can convey our faith, it will help people grow, but if it can't, then it's not transferable. You can't impose faith through force.

This is what we believe, and we don't believe that faith can be imposed through the force of arms. This is a discussion we have within our own country. Our behavior and actions are what make others view our faith positively or negatively, and this is our main problem within our own country, that we must operationalize our faith and make our behavior reflect our faith, not just our words.

**You say that you want the behavior in Iran to be such that everyone's rights are respected and that becomes a model, what do you think about issues like the morality police?**

You know that any change takes time, reforming and changing behaviors, whether from the government or from those who take actions outside of it, naturally takes time. We need to follow a path that allows people to behave correctly, whether it's from those in the government who are making unreasonable requests or exhibiting inappropriate behavior, or from those in society who are opposing a certain belief or culture.

The issue at hand, from a developmental perspective, is that respect for human culture is a key indicator



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian sits down with CNN's Fareed Zakaria to discuss international, and regional developments as well as Iran's internal affairs in New York on the sidelines of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly last week.

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schools, and hospitals? How many of them (Israelis) have been killed that they are committing such massacres? Have the children, women, and elderly killed anyone? Is someone in a hospital bed a killer?

Today, at the UN, they said the Zionist regime has killed 200 of the UN's own personnel in Gaza. With this in mind, who believes the Zionist regime's claims?

country and land a terrorist! The numbers are clear and leave no room for argument. Compare the numbers, see how many people the Zionist regime has terrorized and how many people the so-called terrorists have killed, and then you can tell the world who the real terrorists and human rights violators are! Who has disregarded humanity and has no value for human life? The

**sparked debates even within Iran. You said that we don't want to export our revolution, can you elaborate on that?**

From the beginning, we didn't intend to export our revolution through conflict. The statement made by the late Imam Khomeini was based on the idea that the values of the revolution should be exported through change of behavior.



of a society's level of development. It's not about disrespecting or insulting someone who doesn't think like me, or doing something that makes them uncomfortable with our behavior. What can bring us together in a country or region is mutual respect for each other's beliefs and faiths. If a group tries to undermine or belittle someone else's beliefs, conflict will start. We shouldn't let that happen, and if it does, it's because we're not yet aware or capable of respecting each other's beliefs. When people are alone in a society, they can do whatever they want, but when they're together, they must behave within a framework that everyone agrees on, or else conflicts will arise within the society.

**So, what is your message to those Iranian women who are protesting against being forced to wear the hijab, the same women who protested after Mahsa Amini's death?**

When the incident happened to Mahsa Amini, I was one of those who protested. I was even invited to the state TV and I, as a member of Parliament at the time, protested against the behavior that had occurred, and as a result, I was criticized by those who were involved in the incident. Even in the recent parliamentary elections, my candidacy was not approved because of some of the views I hold.

Of course, the supreme Leader does not share the view that those incidents occurred in society. The harsh behavior of some people led to a social backlash, and naturally, that belief must be shaped in society based on ethics and practical behavior, not through force and conflict.

We must make people behave with awareness, not try to impose something through force. This is what we

**Does this mean that you want not just the people but also the government and security forces to change their behavior, so that if a protest occurs in society, the security forces will not use violence?**

Of course, we do not have the right to treat people with violence. Our government's slogan for all ministers and officials is to preserve the dignity of the people. We are currently under intense pressure from the US and Europe, and America is actually dealing with anyone who wants to make a deal with us. In the meantime, the Zionist regime is also provoking to bring war and insecurity to the region.

While we want to reform ourselves and our society, they are provoking to start a fight, and on the surface, they say they want peace and tranquility.

We have just received news that 490 people have been martyred in the bombing in Lebanon, and over 1,200 people are injured. This is the behavior of the Zionist regime, and this is the American approach. But no matter how much the US sanctions us, our behavior towards each other within the country has nothing to do with the sanctions.

Whoever comes to us and we need to provide a service, we must do it with respect, not with conflict and violence. This is what I have told the ministers and officials, and our evaluation of our forces is based on this principle. We have emphasized that even if we cannot do many things, we must explain it to the people with respect and kindness, and apologize for not being able to do something. This is the reform we want to create in ourselves as executives.

We don't have the right to treat people badly. If we have problems and are struggling, that's no excuse to

and if the Zionist regime didn't expel people from their homes and land, then let's see what the Houthis, Hezbollah, Hamas, and others would do. If someone kicks you out of your home, how would you react? A group of people have been expelled from their homes, and Gaza has been turned into a large prison where people are not allowed to go anywhere, do anything, or make any connections. Even medicine, food, and equipment cannot be delivered there. If people are imprisoned in a large place, how long can they tolerate it and not protest or react?

If the Zionist regime stops its atrocities, I think many of the factors that you mention are causing instability will be eliminated.

As for how we can improve our relations with our neighbors, it's simple. We don't have any disputes with our neighbors, our security is their security, and their security is our security. We don't think about creating instability in any country, because if our neighboring countries become unstable, our country will also become unstable tomorrow.

We need to work together to solve regional issues, not just security and terrorism, but also environmental, economic, and social issues. If we work together, we can solve our problems, and we have started this process. We have met with leaders of several [regional] countries and will meet with leaders of other countries. We will definitely visit all countries in the region and neighboring countries, talk to them, and invite them to cooperate. Their territorial integrity and sovereignty are respected by us, and our territorial integrity and sovereignty must also be respected by them. Scientific, economic, cultural, environmental, and mutual capacities are things that we can share and help each other with.

We want to create a society together that puts the slogan of peace and development of the United Nations into practice. Unfortunately, many of the slogans that are given on these platforms are just words, and people say one thing in public and do another thing behind the scenes.

**The Houthis, beyond their reaction to Israel's attacks on Gaza, have been creating insecurity in the region for years, disrupting maritime traffic and reducing the income of some countries, such as Egypt. They have done this with the support of Iran. Will you help to resolve this situation?**

We didn't do this. We will cooperate with anyone who cooperates with us. Iran has a relationship with them, and also with Hezbollah, because they are under pressure. They're also bullying them, trying to kick them out of their homes, and they're just defending themselves. But the fact that they want to make the waterways insecure is unacceptable to us.

Currently, I don't have accurate information about this issue, but in my opinion, if the Zionist regime stops doing what it's doing in the region, the situation will change. Today, even countries like Saudi Arabia are negotiating and resolving their problems. We can resolve our problems through dialogue, not with guns. What they used to do was bomb them every day. They had hired people to force them to do what they wanted, but the Houthis were defending themselves. Now, they are sitting down and talking, and they can resolve their problems through dialogue.

We can resolve many of our problems through dialogue. It doesn't make sense for humans to fight each other. We shouldn't trample on each other's rights, but if the other side is being greedy, we need

to stand up to them.

The United Nations was established to resolve conflicts, and we humans can sit down and talk and resolve our problems. But we're not doing that.

The great powers have multiple bases in the region. They are taking the oil, resources, and facilities. Imagine if there was no oil and gas in this region, would anyone be fighting? Would anyone be defending one side or the other? The resources in this region have turned it into a land of fire, where humans are pitted against each other, so that a group

prevent them from attacking our country so easily. So, we will do whatever it takes to prevent them from attacking our country or taking our land.

We also want to resolve our internal differences. All those who live in our country have the right to participate in politics and decision-making, whether they are women or men, religious or non-religious, Shia or Sunni. We will resolve these issues within ourselves and with our neighbors, and we want to help them, and we want to make peace with the world. We are not at odds



↑ Palestinians bury the bodies of people, who were killed in the Gaza war, during a mass funeral in Rafah, Gaza Strip, on Jan. 30, 2024.  
● FATIMA SHBAIR/AP

can take these resources and carry them off. But what do the countries in the region get from these resources? War and bloodshed.

**You said you are willing to resume nuclear talks and return to a form of the JCPOA, but the US has not yet taken a formal stance on this. If the US is not interested in this, what is your strategy?**

This was the US that first withdrew from the JCPOA. We want to tell the world that we are not seeking nuclear bombs. The US is lying when it says that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons. The US is spreading false information about us to the world. We had accepted the JCPOA and were implementing it. If we were seeking nuclear weapons, as the Americans claim, we would not have accepted the JCPOA. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has had the most inspections in Iran, and in practice, they have seen that we have acted within the framework. If we wanted to pursue nuclear weapons, we would not have come to negotiate.

We want to negotiate so that we don't fight. They want to imply to the world that we want to make the world insecure, but we don't want to do that. We won't get anywhere with war, but we can reform ourselves in security. But the US doesn't want us to be secure.

It's possible that in any country, there are problems and differences that lead to protests. Instead of helping, they encourage the protests to bring down the political system. This is a sign of what? They are pouring fuel on the fire, making the region insecure so that they can do their job. Division is not in anyone's interest.

If the US wants to create peace in the region, we are seeking peace. We have no designs on any country's territory. Look at history, Iran has not attacked any country in the past 200 years. We are not seeking to attack any country, and if we produce arms and missiles, it's to defend ourselves. When Saddam Hussein attacked us and bombed our cities, and the Americans and Europeans supported him, we were defenseless.

Eventually, we must be able to defend ourselves, and in order to do that, we need to have the power to

with anyone.

Unfortunately, some people want to fight and the words and slogans they use are lies. I don't know how to say it anymore that we don't want to fight! What language can we use to say that we are not seeking nuclear bombs and just want to grow and live in peace and security with everyone? I understand that in this world we live in, we are not alone, and it's not worth it for humans to fight each other for a short time. The value of human beings is higher than that. If we can just understand this, we won't fight each other and we will help each other to enjoy life. We will help each other to make the most of this opportunity that God and the universe have given us to live on this earth for a short time.

**People know you as a moderate, do you consider yourself a reformist and do you use these terms to describe yourself?**

I have a principle, a principle that I believe in is justice, fairness, and equality. I have a criterion for this justice, I am a university-educated person, and therefore I accept justice and equality based on scientific facts and evidence.

To achieve this justice and equality in society, whether in the region we live in or in the world, we need reforms. It's not possible to expect change just by talking.

In every society, the rights of some people are ignored, and in the lands we live in, justice is not present in many places. As a human being, I believe that the rights of all people, regardless of their gender, race, or beliefs, must be restored. This is not just my personal belief, but it's also a divine command. The Qur'an says, "Stand up for justice and fairness, and do not let the evil actions of one group prevent you from doing so."

We, as human beings, believe in these principles and need reforms to align ourselves with them. We want to be good people and want to treat others based on their rights and dignity. Others should also treat us based on our rights and dignity. If we create a world like this, it will be a good world, and war and bloodshed will disappear. It's the greed and totalitarianism that pits humans against each other.



↑ Smoke billows over southern Lebanon following an Israeli strike, as seen from Tyre, Lebanon September 26, 2024.  
● REUTERS

are trying to do in the government and administrative system, to create a common language and perspective among ourselves and with those we interact with. Of course, this will take time and effort, and changing behavior is not something that can be fixed in just one or two years.

Scientifically, changing behavior may take a decade or more to align our beliefs with our behavior and act on it. The work we do will take time and will be challenging, because now in society, some people are using these issues as an excuse to undermine the political system in our country. Their issue is not about hijab or no hijab, but to confront the entire system, and this will not be in the best interest of the country.

We must work together, respecting each other and respecting human beings with any belief or faith, to bring our country to unity and solidarity, this was the main slogan and approach I shared with the people when I wanted to become president.

take out our frustrations on the people we are supposed to serve. Our duty is to serve the people and to do everything in our power to solve their problems. Therefore, we should never do anything that would cause people to take to the streets, because it's the result of our actions and behavior that leads to such incidents and the formation of protests.

The more we can improve our behavior and the way we interact with people, the more we will gain the people's support and cooperation, and that's what we're striving for.

**You said you are trying to improve relations with your neighbors, what specific signals have you sent to countries like Saudi Arabia? Do you plan to use your influence to control Houthi attacks on shipping lines?**

The instability in the region is caused by the Zionist regime. If the Zionist regime didn't kill and terrorize, nothing would happen. If the US didn't support the Zionist regime,



## World Taekwondo Junior Championships: Iranian girls grab double golds on Day 1

### Sports Desk

Iran got off to a flying start at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, as Parnian Nouri and Aynaz Nasiri bagged a couple of gold medals in the girls' competitions. Nouri overcame China's Yinuo Xu in an intriguing -52kg final to become the first junior world champion crowned in Chuncheon. It took until just over 10 seconds remaining of the first round for Nouri to find the breakthrough with a push kick which yielded double two-pointers, as she went on to close it out 4-1. The Iranian delivered an impressive display throughout the second round, aided by a head kick awarded after a video replay request. Xu put up a strong fight despite falling 11-1 behind, but it was Nouri who prevailed 15-8 to seal a straight-round victory. Nouri only dropped one round on her way to the final, that coming against Thailand's Panbua Moramat in the round of 16. Nasiri doubled the country's gold haul thanks to a straight-round triumph over Kazakhstan's Nuray Kaznabek in the -59kg showdown. The two delivered a gripping match

until the end of both rounds, but it was the Iranian who emerged victorious in the end. Nasiri enjoyed a 17cm height advantage over her opponent, but for much of the first round there was only a gam-jeom from Kaznabek which separated the pair. Nasiri finished strongly with a push kick to the body and resulting gam-jeom for Kaznabek which gave her a 4-0 win. The Iranian girl looked to have control of the second round as she led 3-0, before a stunning head kick by Kaznabek brought her level. However, it was to be Nasiri's day, as she took the second round 5-4 to secure a perfect outcome for the country on the first day of the competition.

It was a remarkable journey to victory for Nasiri, who had to come from behind twice to win her quarterfinal against Serbia's Vanja Rankov and the last-four encounter against Croatian Marija Uglešić.



Iran's Parnian Nouri (red) is seen in action against China's Yinuo Xu in the women's -52kg final at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, on October 1, 2024.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO



## AFC Champions League Elite:

# Inspid Reds frustrated by home draw; Blues boss Nekounam walks out after defeat

### Sports Desk

A night to forget for both Tehran archrivals at the AFC Champions League Elite saw a drab Persepolis side share the points with Pakhtakor in a 1-1 draw at home, with Esteghlal falling to a 2-0 defeat to Al Sadd in Doha on Monday. The result in the Shahr-e Qods Stadium left Persepolis, having lost to Al Ahli Saudi on the opening day of the competition, still searching for a first continental win since the home victory over Istiklol FC in October last year. Esteghlal head coach Javad Nekounam, meanwhile, went on to announce his second resignation in five days after the game, bringing an end to weeks of chaos and uncertainty swirling around the Blues bench.

### Lackluster Reds

Fresh from last week's win against the city rival in the Iranian league, Persepolis couldn't have asked for a brighter start against the Uzbek opponent when Ali Alipour's fine finish put the home side in front with 40 seconds into the game. Skipper Vahid Amiri flicked Farshad Ahmadzadeh's corner into the path of Alipour who fired home into the roof of the net from inside the six-yard box to join legendary striker Farshad Piyous as the club's leading marksmen across the Asian club competitions with 11 goals. However, Persepolis, which looked to be still basking in the euphoric derby triumph, was quick to take foot off the gas as the first half wore on and was lucky to retain the lead at the break after the visitors failed to capitalize on several clear-cut chances.

Pakhtakor's pressure paid off in the second half, with Serbian captain's bagging the equalizer with a sublime curling effort from the edge of the box right before the hour mark. The introduction of star winger Oston Urunov as well as Issa Alekasir and Angolan striker Lucas João did little to turn things around for the Reds, with the visiting side looking more likely to find a second goal on the counter attacks. The frustrating draw kept

Persepolis outside the knockout spots of the West Zone's 12-team table ahead of the visit to Al Sadd in three weeks' time.

### Blues in limbo

The writing had already been on the wall for Nekounam even before the latest setback. Having seen a significant portion of the supporters turn against him for his defensive approach to the Tehran Derby as well as his never-ending feud with the club hierarchy, Nekou-

nam handed his resignation on Thursday, only to see his decision rejected with the Al Sadd game looming. The game at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium could have served as last-ditch attempt to change the fortunes for the manager or, at least, a decent finale to his 15-month spell in charge, during which his team went on a 29-game unbeaten run in the domestic league and narrowly missed out on the top-flight crown last season.

The fulltime whistle, however, put a lid on yet another disappointing performance for the Blues, who have now won just two of their seven games in all competitions this season, losing three - more than they conceded across the entire previous campaign. Esteghlal skipper Seyyed Hossein Hosseini made a horrific howler to give the home side the lead five minutes before the interval, punching the ball into back of his own net when trying to clear a corner-kick.

The Iranian international keeper still produced some brilliant saves to keep his team in the game, but Akram Afif's spot-kick doubled the advantage for Felix Sanchez's side in the 68th minute, after the Qatari star was brought down in the box by Rouzbeh Cheshmi. "We knew it would be a tough game against a very strong opponent. Al Sadd is a top team with top players. I had told the team that we couldn't afford to make any mistakes today but individual errors cost us dearly in the end," Nekounam said in the post-match press conference. Asked about his decision to part ways with Esteghlal, Nekounam said: "Now may not be the right time to talk about it. I had made up my mind after the Persepolis game. I'm sure it's for the best of the club." Esteghlal under-21 coach Khosro Heidari is expected to serve as the interim coach for the league game at Havadar on Saturday, with the club hoping to find a permanent replacement before Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr visits next in the Champions League on October 22. The Portuguese superstar was on the scoresheet as Al Nassr defeated Al Rayyan of Qatar 2-1 in Riyadh for a first win in the ACL Elite campaign. Riyadh Mahrez and Roger Ibañez scored in the first half to lead Al Ahli to a 2-0 victory over the UAE's Al Wasl in Dubai.



Persepolis center-back Giorgi Gvelesiani (30) goes up for a header during a 1-1 draw against Pakhtakor in the AFC Champions League in Shahr-e Qods Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on September 30, 2024.

● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA





# Hezbollah strikes Mossad HQ, military base near Tel Aviv

## Israel's ground invasion into Lebanon denied



Members of Israeli security forces inspect the impact site of a rocket fired from Lebanon on the Horeshim Interchange in central Israel on October 1, 2024.  
● JACK GUEZ/AFP

**International Desk**  
Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah on Tuesday said it had targeted the Israeli military intelligence base of Gilot near Tel Aviv, following days of Israel's deadly strikes on Lebanon. The group "launched salvos of Fadi 4 rockets at the Gilot base of the mil-

itary intelligence's unit 8200 and the Mossad headquarters located on the outskirts of Tel Aviv," it said in a statement. The Israeli military also said Hezbollah had launched rockets at central Israel, setting off air raid sirens. The head of Hezbollah's media office, Mohammad Afif, also said on Tuesday

that no Israeli troops have entered Lebanese territory, and warned that the group's strikes on Tel Aviv hours earlier were "only the beginning."

**No ground invasion**  
In a written statement to Reuters, Afif said Hezbollah had not engaged in "direct ground clashes" with Israeli troops, but that it

would be ready to do so. The Israeli occupation army said it launched a ground offensive in Lebanon and that its forces engaged in clashes Tuesday, further escalating the conflict after a week of intense air strikes that killed hundreds, including Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah. The UN peacekeeping

mission in Lebanon said, however, the Israeli operation did not amount to a "ground incursion" and while Hezbollah denied any troops had crossed the border, an Israeli security official said localized raids had taken place and they were limited in scope. The UN force said a cross-border operation would be a violation of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel advised people to evacuate to the north of the Awali River, some 60 kilometers (36 miles) from the border and much farther than the Litani River, which marks the northern edge of a UN-declared zone that was intended to serve as a buffer between Israel and Hezbollah after their 2006 war.

**Israel's attacks**  
On Tuesday, Israel continued to attack various points within Lebanon, not just in the southern parts of the capital.

Israeli military said it was calling up four additional reserve brigades for operational missions on the northern border with Lebanon. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Tuesday for a de-escalation of the conflict in Lebanon, his spokesperson said. Guterres "appeals for an immediate cease-fire," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, adding that, "An all-out war must be avoided in Lebanon at all costs, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon must be respected." Hezbollah began low intensity strikes on Israeli positions in northern occupied territories shortly after Hamas' October 7 attack on the regime's positions in the occupied territories. Since then, Israel has also launched air strikes and the conflict has steadily escalated. Top European airlines Lufthansa, KLM and Swiss announced Tuesday they were extending their suspension of flights to the Middle East, as tensions spiral throughout the region.

## 15 killed in Iran flash flood

**International Desk**

A flash flood that swept through a southern city of Iran killed 15 people, state media reported on Tuesday, updating an earlier toll of six dead. "After finding the last body of Halil River flood incident in Jiroft, a total of 15 are pronounced dead," said the official IRNA news agency. The search and rescue operation had been brought to an end, it added. Almost all of those killed in Monday's flood were Afghan nationals living in the Islamic republic, Iran's ISNA news agency reported. Jiroft is a city located in the normally dry southern province of Kerman. Scientists say climate change amplifies extreme weather, including droughts as well as the potential for the increased intensity of rainstorms. Iran has endured repeated droughts in the past decade, but also regular floods, a phenomenon made worse when torrential rain falls on sun-baked earth. In 2022, heavy rains in Iran's south left at least 80 people dead and caused damage estimated at about \$200 million.

## Unleashed 'monster' must be stopped: Qatar

**International Desk**  
Lolwah Alkhater, Qatar's minister for international cooperation, sharply criticized Israel's attacks on Gaza and Lebanon. "A monster has been unleashed in our region. A monster that uses prohibited weapons and methods that target civilians indiscriminately," she wrote on X, referring to Israel. She added that the "monster ... didn't adhere to a single decision by the Security Council" and violates international law daily, Al Jazeera reported. "And yet, it continues to receive not only the blessings of some international actors, but also their weapons and taxpayers money. The Israeli Occupation EXCEPTIONALISM above international law MUST STOP," she wrote. "Unless we stand united to stop it, this military and political bullying will destroy the entire region." Meanwhile, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez condemned the "routine massacres" occurring in the Middle East and Ukraine, urging the international community to break its silence, according to Anadolu Agency. Speaking at an award ceremony hosted by La Vanguardia newspaper



on Monday, Sánchez emphasized the need to uphold international law and promote peace in both regions. "If the international community remains silent, we will raise our voices even more to defend international law and peace," Sánchez said. "Those who hate democracy oppress it everywhere," he added. "We live under a relentless assault of lies. Enemies of democracy do not respect any rules. In the face of this challenge, we must step forward and defend democracy." Spain is one of the European countries that has decided to officially recognize the State of Palestine as a sign of support for a peace process with Israel.

Israel's military campaign in Gaza has continued despite a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. Since Sept. 23, Israel has launched massive air strikes against what it calls Hezbollah targets across Lebanon, killing more than 1,600 people, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Several Hezbollah leaders have been killed in the assault, including Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah and Israel have been engaged in cross-border war since the start of Israel's war on Gaza, which has killed nearly 41,600 people, most of them women and children.

## Pezeshkian: Iran-China friendship flourishes into strategic ties

**International Desk**  
President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed Iran's readiness for promotion of relations with China in all fields. In a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on Tuesday, Pezeshkian congratulated him on the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. "Now that the traditional friendship between the two nations has turned into deep, sustainable and strategic relations, I express my willingness for joint efforts with your Excellency for the promotion of comprehensive

relations between Iran and China," the Iranian president said in the message. Iran and China, by relying on their common cultural values, mutual respect, equality and altruism, have opened a new chapter in "comprehensive strategic relations" to deepen cooperation in all fields, Pezeshkian added. Pezeshkian noted that China's impressive progress has paved the way for stronger friendship with the world. The Iranian president said the Chinese nation has made magnificent headway in the past recent years under the guidance of Xi



Jinping, which has set the ground for stronger friendship with and common welfare for the world countries. China is Iran's largest trade partner. Both are subject to different levels of illegal sanctions

imposed by the US. The two countries signed the long-term strategic partnership deal in March 2021 in an attempt to reinforce their long-standing economic and political alliance.

## Terrorist attacks claim six lives in southeast Iran

**National Desk**  
Unidentified gunmen killed six people in two separate attacks on Tuesday in Iran's southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. The first attack occurred in the city of Bent, Nik Shahr District, during which gunmen opened fire on participants in a school ceremony, killing the chairman of the city council, the commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in Bent, Parviz Kadkhodaei, and two soldiers. The city is 230 km west of the bor-

der with Pakistan and 90 km north of the Sea of Oman. Two police officers were killed in the second attack, which took place in Khash town in the same province. No group or individual immediately took responsibility for the terrorist attacks. In September, gunmen killed four border guards in the province in two separate attacks. The terrorist group Jaish al-Adl claimed responsibility for one the attacks, in which one officer and two soldiers in the border guard were killed.



The province, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, has been the site of occasional deadly clashes involving terrorist groups, drug smugglers and Iranian security forces.



# IMEC corridor and Israel's ambition to isolate Iran

**Navid Kamali**  
 Foreign affairs expert

**PERSPECTIVE EXCLUSIVE**

At the annual UN General Assembly meeting last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, shortly before issuing an order to assassinate Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, presented two maps of the Middle East. Netanyahu used these visuals to depict what he referred to as a "bright future" and a "dark future." His speech emphasized that a Middle East without the Islamic Republic of Iran would hold hope and progress. He also described the current instability of the region as the result of the "curse" of Iran's presence. Netanyahu's Iranophobic narrative reflects a broader strategy by Israel, which seeks to promote the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as part of its efforts to counter the Iran-led Resistance Front. Through an appealing portrayal of the benefits of this corridor, Netanyahu aims to secure cooperation from key regional players, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, leveraging their economic, diplomatic, and even religious influence to rein in Iran's regional power and its allied resistance movements, particularly Hezbollah. Netanyahu used the maps to paint a picture of a Middle East where the Islamic Republic of Iran and its allies are absent, suggesting that Israel could expand its influence and reduce the threats posed by the Resistance Front. In essence, this proposal forms part of Israel's larger plan to shift the balance of power in the Middle East.



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the 79th United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York on September 27, 2024. ● REUTERS

## IMEC and its long-term goals

The IMEC is an ambitious mega-infrastructure project officially introduced during the G20 summit in 2023. The corridor aims to link three economically vital regions—India, the Middle East, and Europe—through an extensive network of railways, ports, and trade routes. Its primary objective is to increase efficiency, reduce shipping costs, and enhance economic and trade relations between these regions. Technically, the corridor includes several critical components designed to facilitate the flow of goods and services. It will feature high-speed rail networks, developed ports, maritime trade routes, and advanced digital infrastructure, all aimed at cutting down transportation time and improving supply chain productivity. One of the key elements of the IMEC is the use of maritime routes to connect India and the Middle East, with strategic ports such as Dubai and Jeddah serving as hubs. These routes will then be connected to rail networks extending northward into Europe. While the project has significant economic potential, its geopolitical and security implications are even more profound. A core goal of the IMEC is to reduce regional dependence on traditional trade routes controlled by rival or hostile forces. Moreover, for Israel, the corridor represents a unique opportunity to solidify its influence in the region and lessen reliance on routes under Iranian and Resistance control. The IMEC positions Israel as a central hub in the global trade network between Europe and Asia. Access to these markets and strengthened economic cooperation with Persian Gulf states via this corridor could help Israel establish itself as a major geopolitical player in the Middle East.

## Israel's underlying objectives

Economically, the IMEC project offers Israel the chance to gain a larger share of global trade, especially in advanced technology, transportation, and communication sectors. Innovative technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) will play key roles in managing logistics and supply chains in the corridor—industries where Israel is already a major player. Politically, the IMEC aligns with Israel's broader strategy to contain Iran and the Resistance Front. During his UN speech, Netanyahu suggested that this project could pave the way for a future where the region no longer faces threats from Iran. From Tel Aviv's perspective, the Resistance Front's presence in the Middle East is a significant obstacle to cementing Zionism's dominance in the region. Leading Persian Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are crucial partners in the project. These nations stand to gain economically and geopolitically from the IMEC's success, as the corridor enables them to bypass routes influenced by Iran and reduce reliance on the Strait of Hormuz. However, the geopolitical competition between regional and global actors could impact the IMEC's success. China, as a major investor in global infrastructure through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), might view the IMEC as a rival project, potentially hindering its progress.

## Israel's ambition to contain Resistance Front

From Israel's national security perspective, the IMEC is a strategic tool aimed at weakening the Resistance Front's capabilities in the Middle East. If not carefully countered, this project could lead to the formation of a new economic and security alliance in the region, posing threats to issues such as territorial disputes over islands, gas fields like Arash, and even the identity of the Persian Gulf. The IMEC not only seeks to reshape the region's economic dynamics but also serves as a geopolitical weapon to strengthen regional coalitions against Iran and its allies.

## Iran's role and the Resistance Front's response

Iran and the Resistance Front cannot afford to remain passive in the face of this project, although, for various reasons, Iran may not be able to expect significant contributions from countries like Iraq and Syria. Given the strategic importance of the Middle East and its energy resources, Iran must employ its hard and soft power, particularly intelligent diplomacy, to mitigate the threats posed by the IMEC. From Israel's perspective, Hezbollah, as a key player in the Resistance Front, poses a significant challenge to the success of projects like the IMEC. Hezbollah's capabilities allow it to create substantial obstacles to this corridor's implementation. Israel's assassination of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah should be understood in this context, as Hezbollah is recognized as a powerful force preventing the expansion of Israeli and its allies' influence in the region. As noted, the IMEC is not merely an economic project but a geopolitical tool wielded by Israel and its allies. The initiative aims to alter the strategic landscape in the Middle East and curb the influence of the Resistance Front. However, Iran's geopolitical acumen can undoubtedly influence the future trajectory of this project. Netanyahu's efforts at the United Nations to highlight the IMEC and confront what he calls the "Iranian threat" reflect Israel's long-standing attempts to shift the balance of power in the Middle East. However, this is not the first time the region has faced such schemes. Iran, with its strategic wisdom, must leverage its full capabilities to effectively counter these challenges posed by "forces of evil."

**Mohammad Ali Rajabi**  
 Cartoonist



## Eurasia; a gateway...

Focusing on regional unions like the SCO and the EEU not only opens new windows for Iran's economy but also strengthens security and political cooperation between Iran and member states. This, in turn, consolidates economic agreements and cooperation. In terms of bilateral relations, Iran and Armenia have had good neighborly ties for a long time, based on geographical proximity, common interests, and regional benefits. During his visit to Armenia, Aref is expected to engage in talks to foster bilateral cooperation. Tehran supported the peace process between Yerevan and Baku in

the recent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, aiming to maintain regional security and mutual interests. Any tension in the region would naturally divert the attention of union members and regional countries from economic and political cooperation to unconstructive rivalries, which is not in Tehran's interests. It appears that the Iranian first vice president will raise the importance of signing a peace agreement between Yerevan and Baku during his meeting with Armenian officials, as well as the risks of external powers intervening in the Caucasus and Eurasia. Notably, assessments of the future

of the Eurasian region suggest that it will soon become a global economic powerhouse. Iran's potential membership in the EEU is expected to open up opportunities for the country, much like its membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Iran's transit routes serve as a bridge connecting the eastern and western parts of the Eurasian region, just as they will link the East and West of the world. Coincidentally, one of the main topics discussed by Aref at the Armenian summit was Iran's transit capacities and their potential to ease transportation in the Eurasian region and the EEU.

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