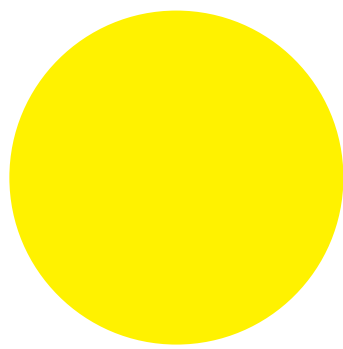


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Iranian nation will stand firm against US subjugation attempts: **Leader**

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Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution
Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei
addresses a ceremony marking the
martyrdom anniversary of Imam Reza
(PBUH), the 8th Imam of Shia Muslims, in
Tehran, Iran on August 24, 2025.
● leader.ir

Talks with Europe could break US-Iran deadlock

7 By Abolghassem Delfi
Former Iranian ambassador
to France

OPINION

For various reasons—perhaps because Europe had previously fallen short of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA—Iran showed little eagerness to engage with the bloc. That was the case until recently, when, following the 12-day war imposed by Israel and the United States in June, negotiations with Washington were brought to a halt and the timeline for when and how these talks might resume remains unclear. The Europeans had intended to back these negotiations in such a way as to pave the way for US-Iran dialogue. At a meeting in Istanbul between officials from Iran's Foreign Ministry, representatives of the E3 (France, Germany, and the UK), and the European Union on July 25, it was stated that to avoid triggering "snapback" of UN sanctions against the Islamic Republic – a mechanism envisioned in the JCPOA – could be extended by six months on condition that Tehran fulfilled certain requirements.

One of those conditions was the launch of talks with the US and cooperation with the IAEA over access to information concerning 400 kilograms of enriched uranium, the fate of which became uncertain after the US-Israeli military aggression. To pile on the pressure, Europeans added that this step had to be taken before the end of August—less than a week away.

In response, Tehran informed the Europeans that neither morally nor legally could they resort to the snapback mechanism. Iran referred the issue to the UN Security Council and began making preparations to fight back should Europe move ahead with the mechanism. At the same time, efforts were under way to lean on Russia and China as counterweights to European actions.

Yet this strategy is not grounded in realities, even if Tehran can talk up its media efforts to prevent Europe's move. Under the terms of the JCPOA, any signatory that claims another party has failed to uphold its obligations can resort to snapback, before mid-October 2025, when the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which enshrined the nuclear deal, expires.

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Iranian nation will stand firm against US subjugation attempts: *Leader*



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses a ceremony marking the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Reza (PBUH), the 8th Imam of Shia Muslims, in Tehran, Iran on August 24, 2025.
● khamenei.ir

National Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that the Iranian nation with all its power will stand against US measures to bring the nation to its knees and make it "obedient to America." Speaking at a mourning ceremony marking the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Reza (PBUH) in Tehran on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the Iranian nation has stood firm against the US insulting demand for submission and will continue to resist with strength. He noted that Washington has

long masked its enmity towards Iran under such pretexts as terrorism, human rights, women's issues, or democracy, but the current US president has openly exposed the true reason. "He said our confrontation with Iran is because we want Iran to be obedient to America," the Leader stated, clarifying that he was paraphrasing remarks by US President Donald Trump. Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that this expectation is an insult to the Iranian nation with its long history, honor, and achievements. "America wants Iran to be at its command, and the Iranian nation is deeply offended by such

a demand and will stand firm against those who harbor it," he said. Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the enemies, having realized through their military defeats that Iran cannot be forced into obedience by war, are now pursuing the goal of weakening the country through discord. The Leader was referring to the Israeli-US war of aggression against Iran, which was launched on June 13. The war came to a halt on June 25 due to Iran's relentless retaliatory missile strikes against the occupied territories that had overwhelmed the regime's defense systems.

He stressed the need to preserve national unity and support the country's officials, saying that "the invincible shield of solidarity between the people, officials, and the Armed Forces must never be undermined." According to Ayatollah Khamenei, all Iranians, including intellectuals and media figures, need to safeguard the unity achieved in the wake of the (12-day war) war and support public servants, particularly the "hard-working and tireless president." He also censured those who say direct negotiations with Washington could solve the country's problems, saying such views are superficial.

Iran, E3 to reconvene as snapback deadline looms

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry said Tehran will meet next week with Britain, France and Germany on its nuclear program amid threats by European powers to trigger the so-called snapback mechanism to reinstate international sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

"It was agreed that Iran's talks with the three European countries and the European Union would continue next Tuesday at the level of deputy foreign ministers," the ministry said after a phone call between Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and senior European diplomats on Friday.

Iran has repeatedly said that the European countries lack "legal and moral" authority to activate the snapback mechanism, envisaged in a UN Security Council resolution that endorses the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal, as they failed to fulfill their commitments under the agreement.

The European trio – parties to the deal – have threatened to trigger the "snapback mechanism" by the end of August. The move would re-

impose UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 agreement unless Iran makes a deal on its nuclear program.

France has confirmed the talks and cautioned that Iran faces a narrowing window of time.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl said on X that his country remained "committed to diplomacy but time is very short."

"Iran needs to engage substantively in order to avoid the activation of snapback," he said.

"We have been clear that we will not let the snapback of sanctions expire unless there is a verifiable and durable deal."

The EU's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, made a similar statement and said, "With the deadline for the snapback mechanism fast approaching, Iran's readiness to engage with the US is crucial. Iran must also fully cooperate" with the IAEA.

Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in July in the wake of US-Israel's aggression which targeted Iran's nuclear facilities, military sites and residential areas

in June. The aggression claimed the lives of nearly 1,100 Iranians.

Israel's act of aggression also derailed nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States which unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 agreement in 2018 and slapped crippling sanctions on Iran.

Iran has ever since criticized Europe over failing to meet its commitments under the deal.

Araghchi reiterated Friday the "lack of legal and moral competence of these countries to resort to the said mechanism" while warning about "the consequences of such an action."

The deadline for activating the mechanism ends in October, though Europeans have set an internal target of the end of August to trigger it if diplomacy fails. They have also offered an extension to buy time for talks.

"This is a decision that must essentially be taken by the United Nations Security Council; and while the Islamic Republic of Iran has its own principled positions and views in this regard, it is not involved in this process," Araghchi said.

Araghchi: Illusion of 'Greater Israel' existential threat to int'l peace, security

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in an opinion piece raised the alarm that the illusion of a "Greater Israel" represents an existential danger and a grave threat to international peace and security, calling on the Muslim community to take collective action to counter the occupying regime's expansionist agenda.

In his article published in the London-headquartered newspaper Asharq al-Awsat on the eve of an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Araghchi wrote that the upcoming session must serve as a turning point to solidify the collective resolve of Muslim states.

The top Iranian diplomat, who left Iran for Saudi Arabia on Sunday to take part in an OIC meeting, urged member countries to halt Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "insatiable ambitions" and to prevent the continuation of massacres, destruction, and annexation of Islamic lands.

"The forthcoming OIC ministerial meeting should not be confined to declarations of solidarity with the Palestinian people or expressions of regret and concern over the current situation," said Araghchi.

"It is a historic test for the Islamic Ummah and perhaps one of the few opportunities to forge a regional and global coalition to stop Israeli aggression."

The foreign minister also posed a "decisive question": which country would be the next target after Syria? He warned that Netanyahu's recent remarks and actions are not passing claims but a direct declaration of policy and strategy aimed at implementing the idea of a "Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates."

According to Araghchi, the move would un-



dermine the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of independent states, including Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Calling the plan a blatant violation of the UN Charter and peremptory norms of international law, Araghchi said it exposes Israel's aggressive intentions to dominate the Islamic world.

He added that with Netanyahu openly proclaiming himself the executor of the "Greater Israel" project, there is no room for illusion or indifference. Earlier this month, Netanyahu said that he feels a deep connection to "this vision" of a "Greater Israel," referring to the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories as well as parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, and described it as "a historical and spiritual mission."

Araghchi also denounced the continued support of Western powers, particularly the United States, for Israel, arguing that such backing amounts to complicity in crimes and poses a growing danger to regional and global stability.

More than 62,000 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and over 157,000 individuals have been injured in the brutal Israeli onslaught on Gaza since October 7, 2023, according to the health ministry of Gaza.

Tens of thousands across Australia protest Israel's genocide in Gaza

Tens of thousands of people marched through Australia's cities and towns on Sunday demanding action to save dying and starving Palestinians.

Peaceful rallies were held in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and dozens of other cities across the country, with protesters urging sanctions on Israel and an end to Australia's arms trade with Israel, AP reported.

Police estimated about 10,000 people took part, while organizers said 100,000 marched in Sydney alone. They put the total figure at 300,000 across the nation.

In Melbourne, protesters congregated outside Victoria's State Library, chanting "sanction Israel now".

Organizer Nour Salman said Australia's plans to recognize Palestinian



statehood, in step with like-minded allies at the next United Nations meeting in September, must be accompanied by tougher sanctions on Israel.

"Enough is enough. There is no ifs, buts or maybes," the activist said.

This was the second round of major pro-Palestine protests in Australia this month after tens of thousands took to the streets of Sydney earlier in August and shut down

the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

In Adelaide, about 5,000 people chanting "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" gathered in Victoria Square, before marching to Parliament House, where they were addressed by independent senator Fatima Payman.

The protests came after the world's leading authority on food crises said Friday the Gaza Strip's largest city is gripped by



Demonstrators hold placards as they take part in the 'Nationwide March for Palestine' protest in Sydney, Australia, Aug 24, 2025.

● REUTERS

famine, and that it's likely to spread across the territory without a cease-fire and an end to restrictions on humanitarian aid.

The report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC, said more than half a million people in Gaza — about a quarter of its population — face catastrophic levels of hunger, with many at risk of dying from malnutrition-related causes. Israel has rejected the report's findings.

At least 62,263 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's onslaught since it started on October 7, 2023.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran taps East-West corridor with first major rail shipment from China

Economy Desk

The first rail shipment of auto parts and raw materials for Iran's car factories on Saturday entered the northeastern Sarakhs Special Economic Zone from China through the East-West rail corridor. Mohammadreza Rajabi-Moqadam, CEO of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone, made the announcement and said the Sarakhs rail route "will not only significantly reduce shipping and demurrage costs but also cut delivery times from around 50 days to 15 days," IRNA reported. "In recent months, the advantages of the Sarakhs rail route had been emphasized. It was ultimately decided that raw materials for car factories would be transported from China to Sarakhs and then dispatched to their final destinations," the official added. The CEO stressed that expanding the use of the East-West corridor and participating in international initiatives such as

China's "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" demonstrates Iran's considerable capacity to generate foreign exchange revenue from freight and transit. It also contributes to the solidification of the country's role in regional economic and political dynamics.

Environmental, economic benefits

He further outlined the environmental and economic benefits, noting that increased rail transit leads to lower fuel consumption, reduced road congestion, and improved transport safety. Rajabi-Moqadam underlined the strategic role of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone in the future of the country's transport sector, stating that with the arrival of the first shipment from China, rail transit in the zone has become operational. He emphasized that goods should not be allowed to accumulate in the country's main ports, adding, "The Sarakhs Special Economic Zone can become



Officials at the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone await the arrival of the first all-rail shipment of auto parts and raw materials for Iran's car factories, on August 23, 2025.

● IRNA

the future of logistics in eastern and northeastern Iran." He also announced the completion of the zone's logistics phases, noting that the first and second stages of the project — covering over 200 hectares — have been finalized. These in-

clude both broad and standard gauge railway lines, loading and unloading platforms, fuel tanks, and discharge facilities with a capacity of one million tons. Rajabi-Moqadam referred to the recent incident in Bandar Abbas as a serious warning,

stressing that cargo should not be stockpiled in the main ports. He said the Sarakhs zone, along with other aligned border entry zones, can serve as a fundamental solution for expanding the country's transit and transport capacity.

Tehran, Muscat after boosting cooperation in construction sector: TPO



● MOJ

Economy Desk

Iran and Oman reviewed ways to expand cooperation in the construction industry during the "Iran Investment Opportunities in Oman" event held in Tehran on Saturday. Organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO) and the Iran Chamber of Cooperatives, the meeting brought together trade officials from both countries, the head of Iran's Trade Center in Oman, as well as a number of investors and construction industry stakeholders, Tasnim reported. The deputy for International Business at the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran highlighted the strong trade relations between Iran and Oman, noting that Oman "has always been a business partner for Iran in the field of

trade." Amir Roshanbakhsh added that current trade ties with Oman involve both opportunities and challenges, and addressing them could help elevate bilateral commercial relations. He said Oman's proximity to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has fueled interest in expanding its construction industry, stressing that Iran could play a role in Oman's progress through "technical and engineering services in the construction sector" as well as supplying construction materials and goods. "Currently, infrastructure projects such as water and wastewater systems and stormwater collection are underway, and there is considerable potential for Iranian companies to cooperate in this field," he said. Roshanbakhsh empha-

sized that while Iran has significant capacity in producing construction materials, logistical limitations remain a challenge that could undermine its competitive advantage in Oman. He voiced the TPO's readiness to hold discussions with Omani counterparts to help resolve these issues. The TPO official also referred to legal challenges faced by the private sector in collecting claims, suggesting that a joint task force or committee between the two countries to assess the credibility and reputation of companies could help address such problems. Roshanbakhsh concluded by declaring the organization's readiness to establish a joint committee to overcome trade barriers and strengthen bilateral cooperation. Meanwhile, Masoud Taherimehr, Iran's first commercial attaché in Muscat and head of the Persian Gulf Office at the TPO, stressed the need "for Iranian companies to be present in assessing investment opportunities in Oman's construction sector."

Iran's nano exports to 50 countries surged past \$145m

Economy Desk

Iran's exports of high-tech and knowledge-based products, particularly in the field of nanotechnology, resumed an upward trend after a period of decline, according to figures and statistical data reviewed by ISNA.

Export data for Iranian calendar year 1402 (began on March 20, 2023) show not only an increase in the volume of nano exports but also greater diversification of international destinations, signaling Iran's growing position in the global knowledge-based economy.

The achievement comes as the export of high-tech and knowledge-based products, especially nanotechnology, has become a key indicator of scientific and economic development for countries, and that Iran, relying on domestic capacities and technological capabilities, has sought to expand its share of international markets in the strategic sector. The review of the export trend of Iran-made nano products indicates that after a downturn, the trajectory has turned positive again, with growth recorded both in export volume and in the diversity of destinations.

Nano exports climbed 32% last year

According to ISNA, statistical reviews show that following a decline in the Iranian calendar years of 1398 (2019) and 1399 (2020), exports of nano products have risen steadily in recent years. The more than 100% growth in 1402 was largely due to the addition of industrial carbon black and related byproducts, total-



ing about \$54 million. Excluding carbon black, nano product exports still grew by around 32% last year (1404). The share of exports in Iran's overall nano market also increased last year after several years of decline. In 1402, more than \$145 million worth of Iran-made nano products were exported to 50 countries worldwide. Construction, nanomaterials, electronics and optics, and chemicals were the four industrial sectors with the highest nano exports. In terms of market diversity, construction, textiles, and equipment topped the list, with exports to 21, 20, and 18 target countries respectively. Iraq was a consistent export destination across almost all industrial sectors—except for nanomaterials, energy, and agriculture — for most Iran-made nano products. In the construction sector, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Georgia were the top destinations. For nanomaterials, India, Pakistan, and the UAE ranked first. In chemicals, China and India were the leading markets, while in optoelectronics and agriculture, exports had the least diversity, reaching only two countries. In addition, Iran exported more than \$1 million worth of nano equipment in 1402 to developed countries such as Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, South Korea, and Germany.

ICT in talks with neighbors on exporting messaging apps



Economy Desk

Iran's deputy minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) announced progress in negotiations with neighboring countries on exporting Iranian messaging apps, stressing that authorities remain committed to supporting and enhancing such platforms.

In an interview with ILNA, Mohammad Mohsen Sadr responded to a question on plans to support domestic messengers by saying that the main responsibility for liaising with foreign countries on the export of Iranian messaging apps lies with the Ministry's Deputy for Technology, Innovation and International Affairs.

The head of the Information Technology Organization, while emphasizing that officials are also committed to continuing support and upgrading these messengers, said, "We have also presented the capabilities of domestic messaging apps in discussions with various parties, and several countries have expressed interest in using this capacity."

Sadr added that the negotiations "are progressing well," noting that documents have been exchanged and online meetings have been held, raising hopes that the talks will lead to concrete results. The deputy ICT minister underlined that Iranian messengers are domestically developed products, and their export represents a promising step in the field of technology exports.

Revenue generation

Regarding the amount of the revenue the export of Iranian messengers could generate for the country, Sadr said the exact foreign currency earnings have not been calculated.

He explained that in the process of exporting such platforms, technical know-how is transferred, and follow-up support and development must be provided by Iranian companies.

The official stressed that the path to revenue generation is a long-term one, since these exports are knowledge-based and rooted in innovation and technology.

Talks with Europe ...

At present, the US has shown little appetite for talks, and with Washington dragging its feet, dialogue with Europe could prove useful. Re-establishing contact with Europeans would be constructive, and the upcoming talks in Vienna on August 26, represent a positive step.

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Equally, receiving the IAEA's deputy director general in Tehran on August 11 was another constructive gesture. Although no access was granted, discussions did take place, potentially laying the groundwork for future cooperation between Iran and the agency. In the parliamentary resolution passed after the 12-day war to sus-

pend cooperation with the IAEA, a clause left the final outcome subject to the Supreme National Security Council's decision. This means that Iran can still maintain a form of cooperation with the agency—striking a balance between the parliamentary resolution and the need to ease international pressure stemming from the

snapback threat.

The very fact that Tehran has already taken steps before the Europeans' deadline could serve as a foothold to address further issues. But when it comes to ensuring that Europe will not go through with snapback or abandon it entirely, expectations should remain cautious; these negotiations alone may

not be enough to settle the matter.

In the past two weeks, US President Donald Trump has been deeply preoccupied with the future of the Ukraine-Russia war, effectively pushing Iran off his radar. In this sense, renewed talks with Europe might offer an opening to bring the issue back onto the diplomatic agenda.

'Loneliness' neither honor nor inevitable fate

Necessity of conceptualizing regional order



By Jahangir Karami
Professor of Russian
Studies at UT

S P E E C H

Since 1979, Iran's foreign policy has been unique, bearing little resemblance to the policies of the approximately 206 recognized countries worldwide. I refer here to the memoirs of Vladimir Kuzichkin, a senior KGB officer in Iran, who wrote: "In [January] 1979, when the [Islamic] Revolution took place, and in the few following months, we paid three visits with the Soviet ambassador to meet Imam Khomeini. The first time, the ambassador presented the USSR's proposal for full support of the Iranian revolution. Imam Khomeini thanked him. The second time, the ambassador repeated the offer, but the Imam gave no response except to say 'Good-bye to you.' The third time, early in 1979, the Imam didn't even agree to meet the ambassador." Kuzichkin added: "It was quite surprising to us because anywhere in the world when someone took a stance against the US or chanted slogans, they usually welcomed our support, but they (Imam Khomeini) gave no such reception."

Later, Kuzichkin explained how the Islamic Revolution was positioned not only against the United States but also against the Soviet Union — referring to Iran's policy of "Neither East nor West". The eight-year war itself and Iran's rise as a significant regional power, despite lacking effective external support and under international pressure and sanctions, have made for Iran's foreign policy a genuinely distinctive case for many analysts.

However, conceptualizing high-level foreign policy is no easy task. Perhaps, before Dr. Mohiaddin Mesbahi, no one in Iran had tied together a cohesive analysis of it, though I don't think he claimed that himself; It is mostly their readers' interpretations that have built up this claim. I wish he were more present in Iran as before, so we could touch base with him directly. Before him, Dr. Ruhollah Ramezani, may God bless his soul, was a singular figure — most books later written on Iran's foreign policy either drew on his works or drew heavily from them.

He introduced the concept of "Kaleidoscopic" or "Multifaceted, Multicolored" foreign policy — but "multicolored" here is not in a negative sense, rather it implies diversity; Meaning Iran's foreign policy is compelled to answer to a broad range of international issues simultaneously. He extended this concept from the Safavid era through the Pahlavi period. Since then, no one has raised this concept regarding Iran's entire foreign policy over a long stretch. For example, the late Dr. Azghandi focused only on the Pahlavi period, labeling it a puppet government's policy, or recognized a discursive divide between different eras. Hence, grand conceptualization in foreign policy is an intriguing sub-



● GETTY IMAGES

ject and somewhat in line with our current conditions.

During the recent imposed 12-day war, beyond diplomatic statements, expressions of regret, or the occasional verbal support, some interesting developments popped up. For instance, despite Pakistan's verbal support for Iran, its government warned the Iranian ambassador not to let off any missiles toward Saudi Arabia since Pakistan has a defense pact with Saudi Arabia and would be forced to react in such a case. This is the very literal embodiment of "loneliness".

Our dear colleague Dr. Nematpour pointed out that the concept of "Strategic Loneliness" was brought up in a security conference in Pakistan in the mid-2000s. Though I did not see exactly who coined the term, it has been mentioned in an interview. Dr. Reisinezhad played a crucial role in elaborating on this topic. A search revealed about 30 papers, reports, and interviews from him on the subject over the past decade, published in newspapers, quarterly journals, and other sources on this subject. This concept has gained extensive application in Iranian foreign policy literature.

The critical point is that in-

terpretations of this concept have run ahead far beyond the original author's intent. I will explain and critique this later, and solutions must also be put forward. Here, we face related concepts that need to be clarified first. For instance, what exactly is a "strategic matter"? Often, trivial affairs are labeled as strategic, like "the Ministry of Agriculture's strategy," while in its true sense, a strategic matter relates to the government and national security over a long period within a competitive military environment. Without these four elements, something cannot be called strategic. But what "strategic loneliness" means for Iran is the absence of any "alliance". An alliance means two or more countries share a common threat and have practical agreements and mechanisms to respond collectively.

For example, Israel is a common threat to many Muslims, but there is neither will, agreement, nor joint action to confront it; Therefore, no alliance takes shape. A military coalition is not an alliance; Coalitions are usually short-term and situational. Strategic partnership is like the one between Iran and Russia. Here, strategic is used in a general sense.

The Iran-China agreement

signed five years ago is called a "strategic agreement," yet there is no clause on military alliance. The same goes for the Iran-Russia agreement. It should be noted that "alliance" depends on mutual acceptance and opening doors for the other party. Now, we must see whether a strategic alliance is even feasible for Iran, given today's international environment.

In Dr. Mesbahi's book, only one paper tackles this issue, titled "Free and Bound: Iran and the International System." This paper dedicates fewer than 10 lines to strategic loneliness, focusing more on Iran's possibilities and limitations within the international system. Another paper discusses trust in Iran-US relations, which is not much related to our topic — that is, "strategic loneliness". A third paper covers China and nuclear weapons expansion. The fourth is a valuable interview, more suitable for those familiar with international relations theory because without such a background, it might be misleading. Overall, just one paper directly relates to our subject. Notably, in this paper, Dr. Mesbahi touches on the concept of "strategic loneliness" only briefly. The paper's title asserts that the Iranian government was born with strategic loneliness

in 1979 following hostile relations with the US, implying this strategic constraint emerged post-Islamic Revolution and is not considered present before the revolution.

The abstract of the paper points out that three key elements play into Iran's relations with the international system:

- Political and military loneliness vis-à-vis the United States, which, despite all the pressure, has led to a sort of reluctant acceptance of Iran in the international order.

- Iran's role as a revisionist and anti-hegemonic actor in the normative and social sphere, laying out a third path of resistance against the liberal capitalist system — a path drawn from the culture of Ashura, leftist heritage, and transnational capacity-building.

- Economic and developmental vulnerability, which, according to the author, holds the key to Iran's main weakness in the international system.

The paper emphasizes that the fulcrum of Iran's foreign policy under current circumstances is internal legitimacy, a legitimacy whose continuity hinges on economic development and the preservation of normative legitimacy through a kind of nationalism and Ashura culture. This conclusion lines up with our



During the recent imposed 12-day war, beyond diplomatic statements, expressions of regret, or the occasional verbal support, some interesting developments popped up. For instance, despite Pakistan's verbal support for Iran, its government warned the Iranian ambassador not to let off any missiles toward Saudi Arabia since Pakistan has a defense pact with Saudi Arabia and would be forced to react in such a case. This is the very literal embodiment of "loneliness".



Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi attends the UNSC meeting at UN headquarters in New York, US, on September 25, 2024.
● DAVID DEE DELGADO/REUTERS

present-day reality and, particularly in the paper's closing section, lays out a clear response to the country's current situation. The author also calls out the weakness of strategic governance, a governance that must be forward-looking rather than merely kicking today's issues down the road. Phrases like "imbalances (shortages)" and "postponing decisions" back up this critique. Instead of the phrase "moment of destiny," the author uses "paradigm shift" and remarks: Iran stands on the brink of a historic choice — either it will be accepted in the international order or it will be left out in the cold.

This paper draws on a quote from Barbara Slavin in a 2011 interview with Shireen Hunter, where Hunter stated that Iran is "strategically lonely". This phrase later picked up steam, and Dr. Reisinezhad has played a major role in spreading the concept. Over the years, he has put out more than 30 papers, analyses, and interviews on the subject, with key works including "Iran's Strategic Loneliness; from Overextension to Regional Embrace" (published in 2025) and "Iran's Strategic Loneliness and Non-State Foreign Policy" (published in 2023).

Dr. Reisinezhad, in these works, stresses that Iran's strategic loneliness is not merely a post-Revolution phenomenon but has been present in various forms during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras as well. Countries claiming to cooperate and ally with Iran in practice did not step up to support it. Dr. Reisinezhad breaks down this approach through a constructivist lens.

However, there are several key criticisms:

First Critique: Many historical and geographical claims are broad strokes and not readily provable or refutable. For example, recently in a specialist foreign policy group, someone wrote, "In the past 200 years, Iran has never had a role in choosing its rulers." But we only need to ask: Was this really the case across the entire time span? Sure, events like the 1953 coup or the 1921 coup come to mind, but these were also tied to internal dynamics as military forces, educated elites, clerics, and various social groups were present in them.

Hence, such sweeping statements, despite their surface appeal, don't hold much water. These claims are built on a mix of geography, history, and strategic culture. However, when we dig into historical realities, we find that during the Safavid era, Iran had multiple clashes with the Ottomans and engaged with European powers to keep them at bay. Before the US got involved in world diplomacy, Iran had already sent envoys to America during the Qajar period, hoping to stack the deck against Russia and Britain.

During the Napoleonic period, Iran entered talks with the French and later opened doors to the Germans as it was always on the lookout for allies — a fact that runs counter to the assumption of constant strategic loneliness. The need for allies, especially against British and Russian pressure, was felt strongly.

But when we take a closer look at history, we see Iran has always tried to shore up its strategic loneliness by lining up allies. In the Qajar period, after heavy defeats by Russia, Iran turned towards France,



and during Naser al-Din Shah's reign, it got closer to Germany for a time. In the Pahlavi era, Iran initially leaned on Britain and then the United States. All these examples show Iran has never regarded loneliness as a preferred strategy and has always put effort into escaping it. This ongoing effort to find an external ally clearly demonstrates that strategic loneliness is not Iran's natural state but rather an imposed and sometimes temporary condition Iran has had to deal with in confronting the global order. Sometimes this loneliness has been the fallout from great power pressures, and other times it stems from internal shortcomings.

Dr. Reisinezhad, in one of his works, puts forward an important point: Iran has been isolated not only by enemies but also by its own friends within the regional order. Meaning, what we call "loneliness" is not merely the result of rivalry with historical enemies like the US, Israel, or Britain, but even countries that apparently stand with Iran have pulled the rug out from under it in critical moments.

This claim brings us to the concept of "geopolitical loneliness" — a loneliness born not only out of overt Western hostility but from the absence of a stable network of regional allies. In major crises — Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and now the Palestinian issue — many actors that were expected to stand shoulder to shoulder with Iran either stayed neutral or effectively switched sides.

Under such circumstances, Iran's strategy to counter this isolation has been to expand its strategic depth in the region. Yet this expansion has opened up new questions:

- Has Iran's growing regional influence cut down strategic loneliness?
- Has Iran's soft power managed to build up, alongside its hard power, sustainable regional legitimacy?
- Do Iran's regional audiences see eye to eye with the image cultivated by the Islamic Republic's foreign policy apparatus?

Answering these questions is complex. There is evidence that Iran's strategic depth has sometimes been met with serious resistance or skepticism from host societies. From Iraq and Lebanon to Syria and Yemen, we have seen ups and downs in ties and societal acceptance

of Iran — sometimes due to internal considerations in those countries and sometimes due to changing views among new generations toward the Islamic Republic's regional policies. Therefore, a key issue in tackling "strategic loneliness" and "geopolitical loneliness" is to rethink Iran's role in the region. Iran's role should not only hinge on military deterrence or ideological bonds but should bring together a mix of soft power, cultural diplomacy, and economic partnership.

We need a model that, rather than putting all its weight on "resistance," focuses on "regional synergy" — a model that goes beyond ideological boundaries to bring to the table countries with diverse political and intellectual views under a shared cooperation framework. Otherwise, Iran's loneliness — strategic or geopolitical — not only will not end but may take root more deeply, raising the stakes and cutting back its diplomatic maneuvering space.

Given these conditions, one must ask: Can "strategic loneliness" also be seen as an opportunity? Can this state be turned into a platform for redefining Iran's foreign policy and place in the international system? Dr. Mesbahi has repeatedly highlighted that "loneliness," when accompanied by self-awareness and reflection, can lead to the production of theories in foreign policy. That is, a country disillusioned with

reliance on power blocs and placed in isolation may end up in a unique position to rethink the foundations of its foreign policy thoroughly. Such reflection can kick off a kind of theoretical and practical independence in international relations — not out of isolationism but from a position of identity and institutional reconstruction.

In this framework, geopolitical loneliness can also push the country to think about creating local regional cooperation institutions rather than relying on unstable allies or fragile coalitions; institutions grounded not only on common threats but based on mutual interests.

In other words, moving beyond the current situation requires Iran to shift gears from a reactive stance to becoming a constructive actor capable of shaping the regional order — not by imposing or clashing, but through providing models and establishing institutions. Of course, such a change in position also calls for a shift in how we narrate our foreign policy.

If our foreign policy discourse continues to circle around victimhood, threat, conspiracy, and hostility, overcoming loneliness becomes neither possible nor desirable. But if the discourse takes off toward emphasizing Iran's role as a "regional idea factory" — a country not just as a player but a norm entrepreneur of regional order — then there is hope that

Iran's position will be cemented not based on power balances but on the legitimacy of its role-playing.

We cannot keep playing with a 20th-century playbook in the 21st century. In a world where even great powers are on the hunt for reliable partners and long-term cooperation networks, loneliness is no longer a badge of honor or an inevitability; It is a wake-up call that must be taken seriously. It is the duty of universities, research institutes, and the diplomatic apparatus to take stock of the path traveled and lay out a realistic picture of Iran's position in the region and worldwide.

Undoubtedly, part of our current loneliness boils down to structural realities of the international system, but a more substantial share stems from misguided strategies, unrealistic hopes, and tense narratives we have held onto.

I will end by touching on a key point from Dr. Reisinezhad. He believes that for Iran to break out of geopolitical loneliness, it must "redefine the boundaries of cooperation instead of redrawing those of enmity". This sentence captures the essence of a fresh outlook on Iran's foreign policy — a view that, rising out of difficult experiences but with a new vision, aims to step toward a less lonely yet more responsible future.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Three-dimensional lighting (video mapping) with the theme of unity and solidarity of the Iranian nation was performed on the Azadi Tower by the Tehran Municipality in Tehran, Iran, on December 14, 2020. ● SHUTTERSTOCK



When we dig into historical realities, we find that during the Safavid era, Iran had multiple clashes with the Ottomans and engaged with European powers to keep them at bay. Before the US got involved in world diplomacy, Iran had already sent envoys to America during the Qajar period, hoping to stack the deck against Russia and Britain. During the Napoleonic period, Iran entered talks with the French and later opened doors to the Germans as it was always on the lookout for allies — a fact that runs counter to the assumption of constant strategic loneliness.

A worker stands at the entrance of the reactor of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, outside the southern city of Bushehr, Iran, on August 22, 2010. Work was stopped on the reactor to ascertain whether it had been affected by the Stuxnet computer virus, developed in Israel with the help of the CIA. ● IIPA

Emam-Ali Habibi, Iranian wrestling legend, dies at 94

Sports Desk

Legendary Iranian wrestler Emam-Ali Habibi, a former world and Olympic champion, passed away at the age of 94 on Sunday. Nicknamed 'The Tiger of Mazandaran', Habibi was a figurehead of the Iranian wrestling's glory years in the 1950s and 60s – alongside Gholamreza Takhti and Abdollah Movahed – and became the first athlete to win a gold medal for the country at the Olympic Games, when he claimed the ultimate prize in the freestyle 67kg contests at the 1956 Melbourne Games. Habibi bagged the first of his world gold medals in Tehran in 1959, and then repeated the success two years later as Iran lifted a

maiden freestyle team trophy in Yokohama, Japan.

Habibi was also a 78kg gold medalist at the 1962 World Championships in Toledo, the United States, and walked away with an Asian Games title in Tokyo 1958.

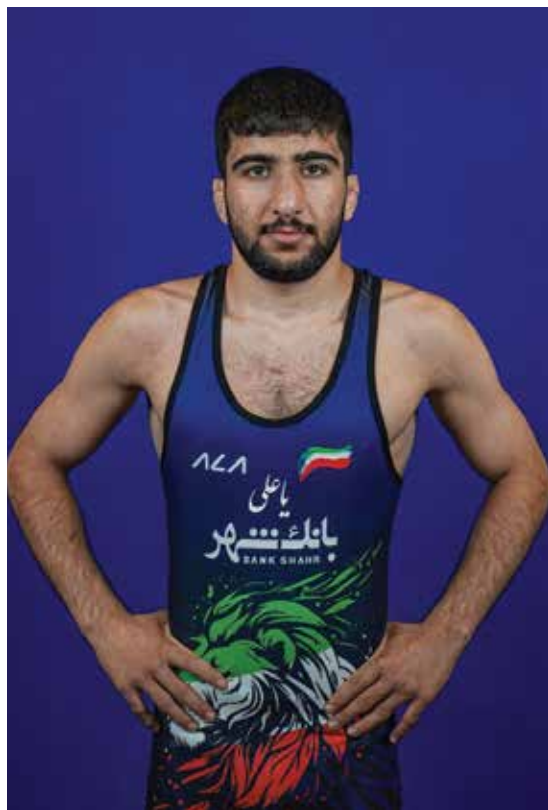
The Iranian great will be best remembered for his exceptional pace, vigor, and stamina in the era of 12-minute bouts. His enduring legacy, however, lies in the signature moves he introduced to the sport.

Habibi is one of the six Iranian wrestlers – along with Takhti, Movahed, Ebrahim Javadi, Mansour Mahdizadeh, and Rasoul Khadem – to have been inducted into the United World Wrestling Hall of Fame, receiving the honor in 2007.



U20 Wrestling World Championships:

Ahmadi grabs Greco-Roman gold, Seydi settles for silver



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Payam Ahmadi (L) and Mohammad-Hadi Seydi won a gold and a silver medal, respectively, at the U20 World Championships. ● IAWFIR

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers won a gold and a silver medal across four Greco-Roman weight classes on the seventh day of the U20 World Championships in Samokov, Bulgaria.

In a battle between two 2023 world under-17 champions, Payam Ahmadi defeated Azerbaijan's Turan Dashdamirov 5-3 to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 55kg contests.

Ahmadi began his campaign with a 9-4 victory over Omur Yntymak Uulu of Kyrgyzstan and then beat Russian Ivan Solomin, who competed as a neutral athlete, 6-4, before claiming a 3-0 win against Kazakhstan's Arsen Zhuma to set a final date with Dashdamirov. Later on Saturday, Mohammad-Hadi Seydi settled for a silver medal in the 97kg event after a 5-3 loss to Ukrainian Yehor Yakushenko.

Two-time Asian junior champion Seydi got off to a flying start in Samokov, notching up superior-

ity victories over Bosnian Affan Smajić (10-1) and Croatian Andrej Rodin (9-0), before coming out victorious over Russian Ilia Komarov (5-3) for a place in the final showpiece.

Elsewhere, Gholamreza Abdevali recovered from a 5-3 setback against Kyrgyzstan's Zhan Toro Mirzaliev to overcome Swiss wrestler Saya Brunner (8-0) but eventually missed out on the 67kg podium after being undone by Uzbekistan's Fayozbek Eshmirzaev (5-1) in the third-place bout.

Ahmadreza Ahmadian, meanwhile, suffered a first-round exit in the 72kg contests, courtesy of a 3-1 loss to Greek wrestler Arionas Kolitsopoulos, who was later beaten in the semifinals. Saturday's results came after Iran's Mohammad-Amin Abdevali and Reza Azarshab had finished empty-handed in the 60kg and 82kg contests respectively.

Abdevali fell to a 3-2 defeat against Turkish Ömer Altaş in the round of 16, while Azarshab was beaten 7-3 by Armenian Martik

Petrosyan in the quarterfinals. Iran had to settle for a third-place finish in the freestyle competitions earlier in the Bulgarian city – a lowest spot for the country, which had lifted three team trophies over the previous four editions, since 2019.

Mahdi Yousefi was the sole Iranian freestyle gold medalist, thanks to a thrilling 8-6 win against American William Henckel in the 79kg final, while Ahoura Khateri (61kg) and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (125kg) added a couple of silvers to the country's medal haul. Ebrahim Elahi (70kg) and Abolfazl Rahmani (86kg) bagged a consolation bronze in their respective events, as Iran collected 111 points.

The United States bagged 185 points to win the freestyle title for a second year in a row, dominating with seven medals, including a remarkable five golds, with Kazakhstan scooping one gold, one silver, and double bronzes to beat Iran to the runner-up spot by a single point.

Asian Shooting Championships:

Iranian duo wins mixed team bronze in youth event

Sports Desk

Nazaninzahra Abodollahi and Mohammad-Mahdi Tahmasbi won a bronze medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team contests at the Asian Shooting Championships, adding an 11th medal to Iran's haul in Shymkent, Kazakhstan.

Representing the country in the youth division, the Iranian duo came out on top (16-4) against Uzbekistan's Milena Khakimova and Muhammadjon Anvarov to share the third podium with the Kyrgyz Republic's Zhibek Bektashova and Abdurazzak Muratov – a second youth medal for Abdollahi in Shymkent following her silver-winning campaign in the women's 10m air rifle event.

Indian pair of Ansh Dabas and Ameerah Arshad beat South Korea's Kim Minseo and Shin Sungwoo 16-12 in the final showpiece. This was Iran's eighth medal at the youth contests.

A sole youth gold medal for the country came in the men's 10m air pistol event,

where Mohammadreza Ahmadi, Hossein Gohari, and Mohammad-Mahdi Choobin teamed up to score 1721 points and beat India (1716pts) and South Korea (1699pts) to the top spot.

Meanwhile, Iranian girls Parimah Amiri, Donya Arshadnia, and Tara Abbaszadeh won a youth silver medal, scoring 1676 points for a runner-up finish behind India (1701) in the women's 10m air pistol event. Amiri also claimed the individual bronze of the category with 214.1 points.

Iranian shooters have also collected three bronze medals in the senior competitions. Vahid Golkhandan, Amir Joharikhrou, and former Olympic champion Javad Forouqi scored 1733 points for a third-place finish in the men's 10m air pistol team event, while Joharikhrou bagged a bronze in the individual competitions.

Golkhandan then went on to team up with Hanieh Rostamian for a bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed contest.

The 16th edition of the Asian Championships will continue at the Shymkent Shooting Plaza until Saturday.



● IRNA

Lammens misses Antwerp game as United move draws near

THE GUARDIAN – Senne Lammens was stood down from Royal Antwerp's squad for Sunday's Belgian Pro League fixture against Mechelen due to his €20m (£17m) proposed transfer to Manchester United.

Ruben Amorim wants to sign the 23-year-old goalkeeper as competition to André Onana, who has been United's No 1 but has come under scrutiny.

The 29-year-old Cameroonian was left out of the squad for the opening-day loss to Arsenal

last weekend. His replacement, Altay Bayindir, made an error that directly led to Riccardo Calafiori's winning goal at Old Trafford.

Lammens is a Belgium Under-21 international who made his senior debut for Club Brugge in July 2021 before moving to Antwerp two years later.

Onana is also likely to miss part of the season because of his involvement in Cameroon's Africa Cup of Nations campaign in Morocco.

‘Refuge of the Persian Gulf’: History, heritage, ocean meet in Kharg Island

Iranica Desk

In the heart of the Persian Gulf lies an island that is not very large but is profoundly significant in the history of Iran; Kharg, a historical gem that, although today better known for oil exports and massive energy platforms, holds in the hidden layers of its soil and shores the footprints of thousands of years of history, civilization, and seafaring.

Kharg Island, about eight kilometers long and four kilometers wide, is located 50 kilometers northwest of the port of Bushehr. Its geographical location places Kharg at a vital point along ancient maritime routes, where for thousands of years, caravans and trading ships passed between the coasts of Iran, India, Arabia, and Africa, according to chn.ir.

Historical significance

Based on historical documents, Kharg has served at least since the Achaemenid era as a mooring and stopping point for ships. During the Sassanid period, this island was one of the key defensive and commercial points in the Persian Gulf; evidence from stone architecture, fire temples, and carved tombs discovered across the island supports this claim.

Melting pot of cultures and religions

Seyyed Mahmoud Imani, a historian and maritime history professor, stated, “According to historical documents and field studies, Kharg has been recognized at least since the Achaemenid era as a strategic point in the maritime trade network connecting the Iranian plateau, India, Arabian coasts, and East Africa. Kharg’s position along monsoon wind routes and the presence of freshwater springs on the island made sailors consider it a safe and reliable place during sea voyages.”

Imani added, “Historical remains from the Sassanid, Islamic, and even European medieval periods — such as Dutch Fort and Nestorian church — indicate that Kharg was not merely a commercial port but also a settlement for various ethnic and cultural groups.”

This historian continued that Kharg should be regarded as the forgotten capital of southern seafaring; an island that, before becoming an oil terminal, was a center for the convergence of cultures, religions, and commercial goods in the heart of the Persian Gulf.

Maritime trade

Before oil and loading platforms transformed Kharg into an industrial and strategic point, the island was an active port for transporting goods, pearl trading, fishing, and commercial connections with major ports such as Basra, Zanzibar, Bombay, and Bandar Abbas.

During the Islamic medieval centuries, Kharg held a special place in the maritime trade network. Remaining artifacts from ancient mosques, historic cemeteries with Kufic script, and evidence of trade with Arab and Indian merchants show that the island was not only a maritime refuge but also a center for the meeting of diverse cultures.

European colonial rivalries

From the 16th to the 19th centuries, Kharg Island became a scene of competition and conflict among European colonizers. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach Kharg in the early 16th century and used it as a naval station along the route to the Indian coasts. In the 17th century, the Dutch established an important trading base on Kharg, the remains of which — including the Dutch fort and military fortifications — can still be seen in parts of the island.

In the second half of the 18th century, the British, supported by the East India Company, also entered Kharg’s affairs



Kharg Island
● IRNA



Dutch Castle
● alibaba.ir



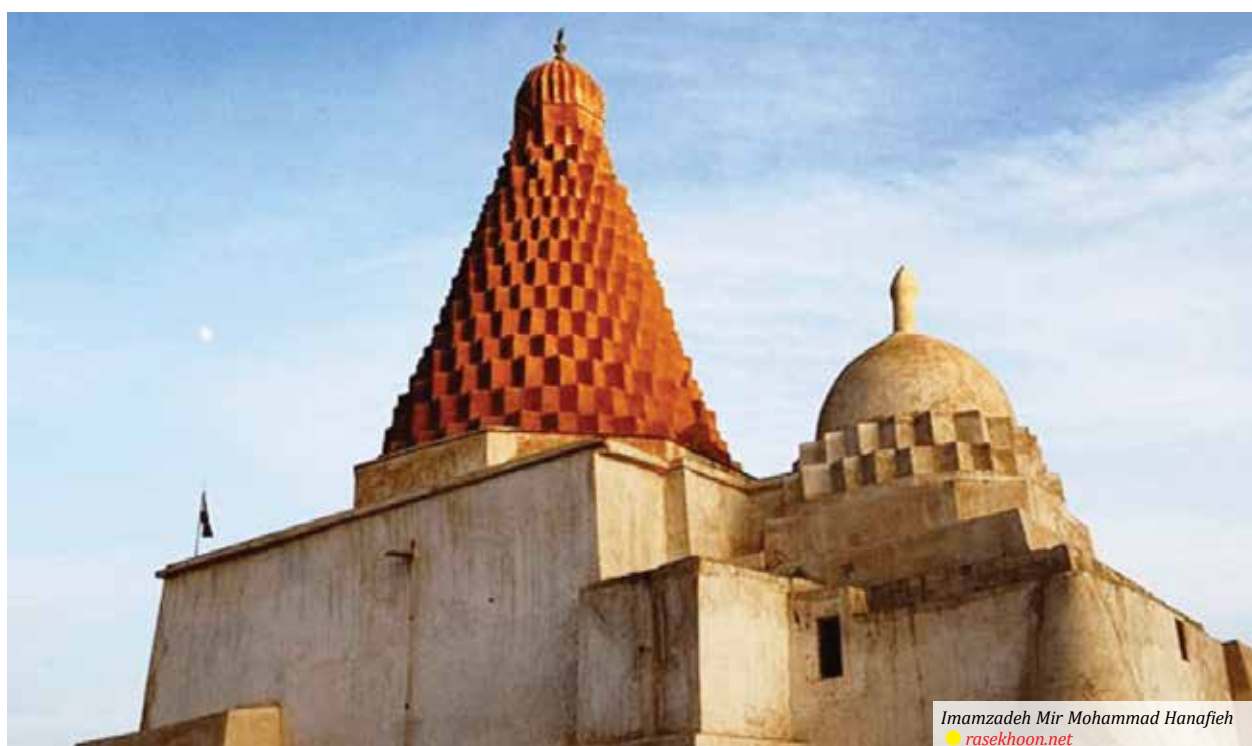
Nestorian Church of Kharg
● YJC



Palmiran Cemetery
● ISNA



An old qanat in Kharg
● ISNA



Imamzadeh Mir Mohammad Hanafieh
● rasekhoon.net

and tried to establish military bases to take control of the island. However, what made Kharg vital in these rivalries was not merely its geographical location; it was its natural suitability for ship anchorage, freshwater springs, and relative safety from sea storms that caused sailors to call it the “Refuge of the Persian Gulf.”

Rare historical landmarks

Among the rare historical landmarks of Kharg is the ancient Nestorian Church located in the northern part of the island; a stone structure sunken into the ground that dates back to the early centuries CE and bears evidence of the presence of Christian minorities along the Persian Gulf maritime trade routes.

In another corner, there are stone-carved cemeteries built in the Zoroastrian or Sassanid style; some feature entrance openings similar to Parthian tombs, while others bear inscriptions in cuneiform and Kufic scripts. Additionally, the underground cisterns, ingeniously engineered and constructed using local materials, testify to a civilization that possessed both maritime knowledge and survival skills amid the scorching heat of the south.

With the discovery of oil in southern Iran, Kharg became one of the world’s most important oil export centers in the second half of the 20th century. The Kharg oil terminal gradually expanded from the early 1960s and turned into Iran’s main oil export gateway. Especially during the Iran-Iraq war, the island symbolized Iran’s economic resilience; despite repeated Iraqi air strikes, oil exports were never completely halted, not even for a single day.

Urgent preservation needs

Zahra Hekmatfar, a cultural heritage researcher and former member of the Iranian Archaeological Society, stated, “Kharg showcases a unique combination of stone architecture, traditional water supply systems, early Christian churches, and ancient cemeteries, all located close to the coast, thus directly linked to the island’s maritime identity.”

She added, “The presence of vertical stone graves with distinctive covers points to burials dating back to the Sassanid period and even earlier. Remains of the Nestorian Church with a cruciform plan and eastern altar are considered among the oldest churches in southern Iran, indicating the presence of Christian sailors in this region.”

This researcher emphasized the urgent need for protection and UNESCO registration of Kharg’s heritage sites, noting that a significant portion of the island’s historical sites has suffered from industrial development, lack of documentation, and limited accessibility. Today, more than ever, a national plan is required to document, register, and preserve Kharg’s historical legacy.

Potential beyond industry

Although today Kharg is mostly remembered as an oil platform and export terminal in the collective memory, for those who look into history, the island offers much more than industry. Kharg is a treasure trove of centuries of seafaring, cultural interactions, colonial struggles, and maritime life; an island whose rocky shores and stone docks still whisper the waves of the past.

Now, as historical tourism is being redefined in Iran, Kharg has the potential to become a distinctive destination, combining history, architecture, and maritime significance at its core. Yet, this requires protective attention, proper infrastructure development, and meticulous documentation of the island’s cultural heritage — a heritage which, if forgotten, will bury part of Iran’s maritime memory forever in the dust of silence.



Kolkata festival jury honors Iranian film 'At the End of the Day'

Arts & Culture Desk

The jury of the 4th World Film Festival Kolkata awarded the Special Jury Mention for the Best Feature Film to Iranian movie 'At the End of the Day,' directed by Babak Bahrambeygi, for what it called a "powerful portrayal" of women's resilience against patriarchy and power. The week-long event, held from Aug. 16 to 22 in the Indian city, highlighted films that focus on social issues. The jury praised Bahrambeygi's work for its striking depiction of wom-

en caught between social pressures and personal choices, IRNA reported. Organized by the Federation of Film Societies of the Eastern Region in collaboration with the International Federation of Film Societies (Asia-Pacific), the festival concluded at Nandan film and cultural center with awards conferred by jury members Reshmi Naskar, Debasish Chakraborty and Abu Shahed Emon. Frau Astrid Wege, director of the Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata, was the chief guest, and

Katsunori Ashida, deputy consul general at the Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata, served as the guest of honor. 'At the End of the Day,' Bahrambeygi's second feature, was shot in the central Iranian city of Kashan. Produced by Mehdi Kouhian, the drama has yet to be screened in Iran. The story follows one day in the lives of three couples in a small town, exploring relationships at a turning point where women must make hard decisions between social expectations and their

own independence. The cast includes Hanieh Tavassoli, Reza Behboudi, Khayyam Vaghar Kashani, Mahtab Servati, Shayesteh Sajadi, Hesam Rezaeian and Shabnam Moghaddami. Bahrambeygi first gained attention with his 2015 debut 'A Long Day'. Kouhian, a seasoned producer, has backed several independent films, among them Hassan Khademi's documentary 'Death and the Judge,' Kaveh Oveisi's 'Paris Tehran' and Behzad Nalbandi's feature 'Preuve'.



● IRNA

Oskouei wins top IPA award in photojournalism



● MEHR

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian photographer, filmmaker and historian of photography Mehrdad Oskouei won first prize in

the analog photojournalism category at the 2025 International Photography Awards (IPA). The IPA, founded in 2003 and regarded as one of the

world's most prestigious contests for professional photographers, honored Oskouei's black-and-white image titled 'Amidst the Rubble of Disaster', ILNA reported. The photograph, capturing the face of a teenage boy in earthquake ruins, stood out among eight of his works shortlisted for the finals. In a rare feat, seven other entries from Oskouei received honorable mentions. Oskouei, who has built a career weaving together art, research and documentary practice, described the award as recognition of photography's

ability to bear witness. The jury, an international panel of experts, said the image offered "poignant" testimony of human resilience. The annual IPA brings together photographers from across genres ranging from news, sport and advertising to portraiture, nature, architecture and ritual traditions. The competition, open to artists of every background and level of expertise, aims to discover new talent while offering established names a global stage.

Omani online exhibition features works by Iranian artists

Art & Culture Desk

Fourteen Iranian artists will present their works in a virtual exhibition titled 'The Witnessing Eyes' opening in Oman on August 25. The group show, staged by the Raja Art Circle and the Omani firm Pioneers of Global Trade and Production, brings together 21 pieces across five disciplines – painting, calligraphic painting, illustration, epigraphy and photography, ILNA reported. The exhibition, held entirely online, is curated by Iranian photographer and Raja Art Circle director Farzad Jamshid Danaei. In a statement, the organizers said the exhibition honors the eye as "the first narrator" of human experience. "For the artist, eyes are more than instruments of sight, they are gateways of perception, witnesses of beauty, pain and imagination," the statement added.



Among the participants are Narges Mohebbi, Amin Ebrahimi Darkoei, Fatemeh Shirgholami, Reihaneh Vatankhah, Maryam Aslani, Roya Taheera, and Iran Cheraghi. The exhibition remains accessible until Saturday, August 30.

Students from Iran sweep gold at world astronomy Olympiad in India

Social Desk

Iran's national astronomy team clinched five gold medals at the International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) in India, winning the world title for the second year running, the country's education ministry said. The contest, hosted in Mumbai from Aug. 11 to 21, drew more than 300 high school students from 64 nations. Iran's five-member team – Ali Naderi, Hossein Masoumi, Hirbod Foodazi, Arshia Mirshamsi Kakhaki and Hossein Soltani – notched up a clean sweep, taking every gold medal on offer, IRNA reported. President Masoud Pezeshkian congratulated the group on Friday, calling the win "proof" that Iran's younger generation can shine on the world stage. "This inspiring victory, achieved through the round-the-clock efforts of our talented youth,



Five members of the Iranian National Olympiad Team in Astronomy and Astrophysics pose with their medals at the 18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) in Mumbai, India, held from August 11-21. didpress.com

shows they can raise the flag of Iran to the highest peaks of progress and honor," he said in a statement. Hossein Afshin, vice president for science and head of the National Elites Foundation, hailed the success as a lasting symbol of the nation's scientific potential. He described the students' achievements as "a bright and enduring honor" and pledged full backing for gifted Iranians competing globally.

The Young Scholars Club, which trains students for international Olympiads, also praised the victory, saying the medals were "a source of pride and hope" for Iran's scientific future. Founded in 1995 under the ministry of education, the academic body organizes national contests in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, computer science, astronomy and literature.

Iranian researchers grow world's first living skin with blood supply

Social Desk

Two Iranian scientists working at the University of Queensland in Australia have, for the first time, grown human skin in a laboratory complete with its own blood supply. The breakthrough, carried out at the Frazer Institute in Brisbane by Dr. Abbas Shafiee and Professor Kiarash Khosrotehrani, used stem cells to create a replica of human skin containing blood vessels, capillaries, hair follicles, multiple tissue layers and immune cells, Mehr News Agency reported. Researchers say the engineered skin could transform graft surgery, regenerative medicine and the treatment of chronic inflammatory diseases. "This is the most life-like skin model developed anywhere in the world," Shafiee said, not-

ing the project took six years and was done in collaboration with Metro North Health. "It will allow us to study diseases and test treatments more accurately." Until now, scientists studying skin disorders and new therapies faced significant limits. The new model, which Shafiee described as "closely mimicking real human skin," is expected to open the door to testing treatments for wounds, burns and complex dermatological conditions under far more realistic conditions. The team reprogrammed human skin cells into stem cells, then grew miniature versions known as skin organoids. Using the same method, they created blood vessels and integrated them into the growing tissue. The result was lab-grown skin that developed "layers, follicles, pigments,



nerves and, most importantly, its own blood vessels," Shafiee said. Khosrotehrani said the innovation could greatly improve outcomes for patients needing grafts and help push forward therapies for psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, scleroderma and a range of genetic diseases. "Skin grafts are often used to treat severe wounds and burns, but they can be limited in effectiveness and carry infection risks," he said. "This model gives us the chance to make those treatments safer and more effective."