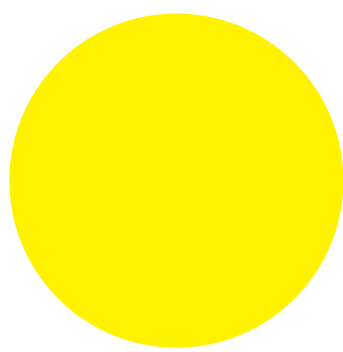


Oil output capacity up 127,000 bpd over past year, minister says

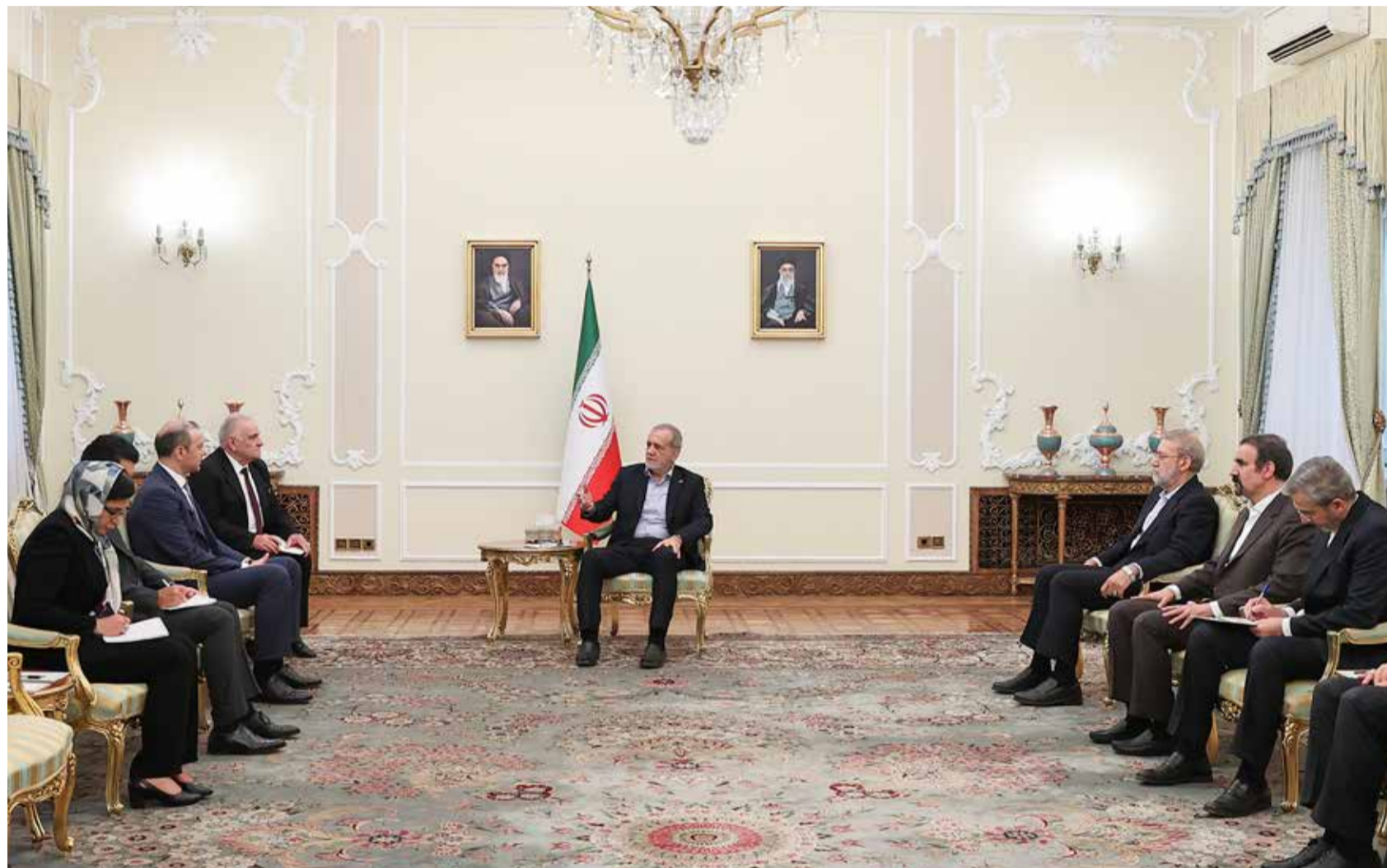
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## Iran says seeking to preclude snapback activation

Tehran calls E3 demands 'unrealistic preconditions'

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### Pezeshkian: Iran-Armenia 'strategic ties' should not be disrupted by foreign powers

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) speaks to Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan (3rd L) during a meeting also attended by Iran's security chief Ali Larijani (3rd R) in Tehran on August 30, 2025.

president.ir

### Appointing special envoy could help forestall snapback of UN sanctions

By Jalal Sadatian  
Ex-Iranian ambassador to London

#### OPINION

A move by the three European parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) – France, Britain and Germany (E3) – to initiate the process of activating the snapback of UN sanctions on Iran is both unethical and unlawful, since none of their commitments under the accord have been met. At a time when pressure on Iran from US President Donald Trump and the Israeli regime was mounting, the E3 chose to fall back on only one part of the JCPOA namely the snapback mechanism. Following Washington's withdrawal from the deal in 2018, Europeans claimed they were under US pressure and threats, stressing that their companies—because of deep ties with American firms—could not maintain economic cooperation with Iran, while European governments lacked the power to force through such collaboration. Europe later put forward the INSTEX mechanism as a substitute for its commitments—essentially a version of “oil for food” once imposed on Iraq back in 1990s. Iran rejected this outright and adopted reciprocal measures, including enrichment at 20% and later 60%, the use of advanced centrifuges, curbs on inspections, and taking down surveillance cameras of the UN nuclear watchdog (IAEA). During Trump's first term, the E3 resisted US pressure to restore UN resolutions and stood by Iran. Yet over time, and particularly after the war in Ukraine, relations soured, creating deeper rifts between the E3 and Tehran. The debate over Iran's alleged cooperation with Russia in Ukraine prompted the Europeans to take a tougher line, seeing Tehran as siding with Moscow against them. As the E3 realized their legal window for “snapback” was closing by October 2025, they sent a letter to the UN Security Council this week, requesting activation. Russia and China objected, with Moscow formally asking the council to extend the JCPOA's timeline by six months to allow diplomacy a chance. Whether such a proposal will be adopted is unclear, as US approval would be required. Although Iran maintains that current US sanctions are far harsher than UN measures, the reinstatement of Security Council sanctions would still carry heavy political and psychological consequences, since all UN member states would be obliged to comply.

### Iran-China trade sees y/y hike prior to Pezeshkian's trip

By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

#### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

A member of the Iran-China Chamber of Commerce said non-oil trade between the two countries had risen by 12 to 15 percent last year compared with 2023. In an interview with Iran Daily, Arash Nikpey Salekdeh noted that the value of Iran-China non-oil trade reached \$34.1 billion in 2024, an increase of 12 percent from the year before. Iran exported around \$14.8 billion worth of goods to China in 2024 while imports from China amounted to roughly \$19.3 billion, he added. “Iran's and China's economies are complementary,” Nikpey Salekdeh said. “Economic cooperation between Iran and China is of particular importance for both sides.” He added that

political and geopolitical closeness had created strong ground for trade, though “barriers and challenges still prevent faster development of economic cooperation.” The development comes as President Masoud Pezeshkian leads a high-level delegation to China today to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and SCO Plus summits, a visit that comes as non-oil trade between Tehran and Beijing continues to grow. One driver of trade growth, he said, has been Iran's effort to reduce its reliance on oil. Under intensifying sanctions, Tehran prioritized non-oil exports — especially petrochemicals, minerals and agricultural products — to rebalance trade. China, for its part, has shown strong interest in rail, energy and infrastructure projects under the 25-year cooperation plan with Iran.

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### Is Israel a water expert?

#### ANALYSIS

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### Iran survives early scare to beat Afghanistan

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# Pezeshkian: Iran-Armenia 'strategic ties' should not be disrupted by foreign powers

## International Desk

Foreign powers should not be allowed to disrupt "friendly and strategic relations" between Tehran and Yerevan, President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday, after a US-brokered peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan caused security concerns for Iran. During a meeting with Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan in Tehran, Pezeshkian pointed to the recent peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, signed in Washington, and voiced concern over the presence of foreign forces in the region. The Iranian president, however, noted that these concerns had

been largely alleviated following the explanations and reassurances provided by Armenian officials. On August 8, Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a peace agreement brokered by the US President Donald Trump, under which a transport corridor linking Azerbaijan to its landlocked exclave Nakhchivan is to be established. Under the deal, Armenia granted exclusive rights to the United States to develop a corridor in its southern province of Syunik, which borders Iran, to connect Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan. Iran has long opposed the idea, saying it would change the geopolitical order of the Southern Caucasus and would restrict Iran's ability to use transport

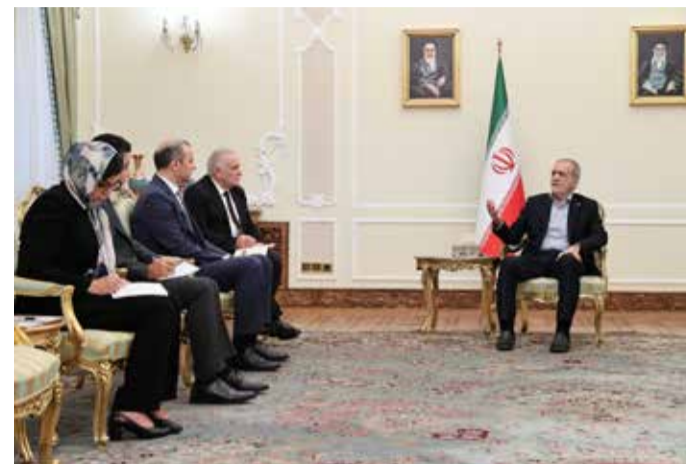
networks in the region. Earlier on the day, Grigoryan held a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani, during which Larijani expressed Tehran's opposition to any move resulting in geopolitical changes in the Caucasus region. Larijani declared Iran's support for peace dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and elaborated on the Islamic Republic's theory of regional peace and stability. "Iran has always supported the independence and strength of regional countries to ensure lasting security," he stated. Grigoryan, for his part, hailed the bilateral relations as unprecedented, stating that his visit to Tehran is aimed at the



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) talks with Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan (3rd L) in Tehran on August 30, 2025.

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expansion of ties in various spheres. He added that Armenia seeks to sign a comprehensive strategic partnership document with Iran in the near future. The secretary of the Security Council of Armenia stressed that his country attaches paramount significance to the five principles of national sovereignty, respect for territorial integrity, exercise of national judicial jurisdiction, inviolability of borders, and the principle



of reciprocity. Grigoryan also stated that Yerevan is ready to provide the necessary guarantees to Tehran to ensure that relations between

Iran and Armenia will not be harmed. He underlined Armenia's inherent opposition to regional geopolitical changes.

## Iran says seeking to preclude snapback activation Tehran calls E3 demands 'unrealistic preconditions'



REUTERS

## International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said Tehran is trying to prevent the activation of a mechanism that reinstates UN sanctions against the country amid threats by the European powers to do so if Iran does not meet their demands, which the Islamic Republic called "unrealistic preconditions." "We are not actually seeking the activation of the snapback (mechanism); however, this raises a question: how is it that some European countries, which themselves violate many international laws, are now accusing us of not adhering to a framework? How can such claims from these countries be accepted?" Pezeshkian said in a meeting with three prominent media and political figures on Friday. Britain, France and Germany — the European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal

— on Thursday invoked the process, known as the "snapback" mechanism, which initiates a 30-day deadline for reimposing sanctions lifted under the UN Resolution 2231, which endorses the nuclear deal.

### 'Harmful effects' of sanctions

The president's political advisor Mehdi Sanaei also reacted to the Europeans' move, saying that, "The return of international sanctions should not be underestimated." In a post on X, he said long-term sanctions have harmful effects on any country and prevent development. Sanctions will further limit Iran's presence in the international arena and even cause difficulties in relations with Eastern powers. On Friday, the three European countries — known as the E3 — urged Iran at the United Nations on Friday to meet three requirements so their threat of reimpos-

ing UN sanctions can be delayed to allow space for talks on a deal on Iran's nuclear program. The E3 offered to delay reinstating sanctions for up to six months if Iran restored access for UN nuclear inspectors, addressed concerns about its stock of enriched uranium, and engaged in talks with the United States. "Our asks were fair and realistic," said Britain's UN Ambassador Barbara Woodward, who read the statement. "However, as of today, Iran has shown no indication that it is serious about meeting them." In response, Iran's UN Ambassador Amir Saied Iravani said the E3 offer was "full of unrealistic preconditions." "They are demanding conditions that should be the outcome of negotiations, not the starting point, and they know these demands cannot be met," he told reporters.

### Extension of Resolution 2231

Iravani said the E3 should instead back "a short, unconditional technical extension of Resolution 2231," which enshrines a 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). He said Iran will not negotiate under "threats or coercion," describing a pro-

posal from Russia and China about resolving nuclear issues as a "practical step." According to Iravani, the move has been done "with the sole intention of blackmailing Iran and exerting political pressure." Iran has repeatedly said that the European trio lacks all legal and moral authority to activate the mechanism as they failed to live up to their commitments under the JCPOA after the United States unilaterally withdrew from the deal and reimposed sanctions against Iran. The Europeans' move took place just days after Iranian and European diplomats held talks in Geneva, the second since Israel and the US launched strikes on Iran on the eve of a sixth round of talks with the US. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a post on X said the path chosen by Europe will additionally have severe consequences for the credibility of the UN Security Council. "Iran was bombed. First by Israel, and then by the United States. It is repugnant for Europe to now accuse Iran of having left the table and spurning dialogue. The reality is that we are at a point where the West cannot even guarantee that it will cease further unlawful military strikes on my people while negotiations are held."

## Yemen confirms Israeli airstrike assassinated PM, several other ministers

## International Desk

Yemen's Ansarullah movement confirmed on Saturday that an Israeli air strike had killed the country's prime minister in the capital, Sana'a. The movement said in a statement that Ahmed al-Rahawi and a number of ministers were assassinated in a Thursday Israeli strike in Sana'a. The attack targeted a routine workshop held by the government to evaluate its activities and performance over the past year, the statement said. Several senior officials also sustained various degrees of injuries in Thursday's strikes, and are currently receiving medical treatment. Al-Rahawi, who was appointed last year, is the most senior official known to have been killed in a series of Israeli strikes on Yemen. The Israeli military in a statement claimed that its forces on Thursday struck an Ansarullah's military target in Sana'a. The attack came as tensions between the two sides continue to escalate over the regime's onslaught on the Gaza Strip, which has claimed the lives of more than 62,000 Palestinians. In response to the escalating genocidal war on Gaza, which began in October 2023, Yemeni forces implemented a strategic maritime blockade aimed at disrupting the supply of military resources to Israel and urging the international community to address the dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Simultaneously, they carried out numerous missile and drone strikes against strategic targets within the Israeli-occu-



Ahmed al-Rahawi  
AFP

pied territories in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. The Yemeni Armed Forces have made it clear that they will not halt their operations until Israel ceases its ground and aerial offensives in Gaza. The group has repeatedly said Israeli attacks on Yemen will not deter their military operations in support of Palestinians. "The blood of the great martyrs will be fuel and a motivator to continue on the same path," Yemen's presidency said in its statement. "We affirm to our great Yemeni people, to the sons of the oppressed Palestinian people, to all the sons of our nation, and to all the free people in the world, that we are continuing in our original stance in supporting and aiding the sons of Gaza, and building our armed forces and developing their capabilities to confront all challenges and dangers, as is the stance of our great Yemeni people, present in all fields and arenas with all determination, will, and faith."



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

## Appointing special envoy ...

At present, countries such as China, India, and Pakistan brush aside US sanctions on Iran, but the revival of UN resolutions would bind them to adhere. The main concern is that once the snapback triggered, the Iran issue would no longer remain limited to disputes with the US and Israel. It could escalate to UN-mandated action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. On relations with the IAEA, it must be noted that the last resolution by its Board of Governors, though only a warning and not a referral to the Security Council, demonstrated that further reductions in cooperation could

pave the way for greater international pressure. During the previous administration, Iran gradually escalated its countermeasures in response to Western and IAEA actions—higher enrichment levels, advanced centrifuges, limited inspector access, camera shutdowns, and now, parliament's resolution suspending cooperation with the Agency. These steps, while aimed at resisting foreign pressure, naturally triggered tougher reactions from the West. The IAEA and its reports by Director-General Rafael Grossi have provided the main pretext for mounting pressure. Yet Iran's countermeasures,

though intended as deterrence, may in practice play into the hands of its adversaries by exposing national interests and security to greater risks. To weather this crisis, it is recommended that Iran appoint a special envoy mandated by Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and formally authorized by the president. This envoy, working in parallel with diplomats of the Foreign Ministry, could set up fresh initiatives to handle the crisis and head off the snapback mechanism. Such a step, even in the short time remaining, could help prevent mounting pressure or at least keep down their costs.



# Oil output capacity up 127,000 bpd over past year, minister says

## Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said the country's crude oil production capacity has increased by an average of 127,000 barrels per day (bpd) over the past year.

"I usually avoid giving specific figures, but on average the country's crude oil production capacity has risen by 127,000 barrels per day over the past year," SHANA quoted Paknejad as saying.

According to the minister, under the quantitative targets set in Iran's Seventh Development Plan, output should reach about 4.58 million bpd, equivalent to 4.8 million bpd of capacity. "All the planning and investments being made are aimed at achieving this goal," he added. Paknejad noted that with the launch of new petrochemical projects and processing facilities at the Azadegan field, the country's production capacity will expand further, adding some 80,000 bpd.

According to OPEC's monthly report, Iran's oil production has been above 3.3 million barrels per day in the first

seven months of the year. The country has maintained its place as OPEC's third-biggest oil producer after Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

## Iran prepared to sustain oil sales

In response to a question about the possible activation of the UN "snapback" mechanism and its impact on Iranian oil sales, the minister said, "There is the necessary expertise within the oil industry to bypass restrictions."

"For years we have faced limitations on oil sales. This has led to the accumulation of the expertise needed to circumvent these restrictions."

He made the remarks after Britain, France, and Germany on Thursday triggered the so-called snapback mechanism under a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers, accusing Tehran of violating the 2015 accord. The move could allow for a return of six UN sanctions resolutions that were adopted between 2006 and 2010 in response to Iran's alleged non-compliance with UN nuclear regulations.

Experts say a re-imposition of the UN



sanctions would have almost no impact on Iran's ability to supply oil to international markets, as they do not directly target Iran's oil sector.

The Iranian minister added, "The oil industry team can plan ways to sell oil

under various constraints. Naturally, snapback could to some extent push conditions toward the need for new measures, but we are not powerless in the face of such restrictions and will do everything we can."

## Tehran, Moscow ink rail data-sharing pact to boost INSTC efficiency



## Economy Desk

Iran and Russia launched cooperation on electronic and intelligent data exchange for their rail fleets, initiating a move that will pave the way for expanding cooperation in the field of informational interactions and digitalization of transportation along International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) rail routes.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) on "electronic bilateral data exchange related to the geographical location and status of the rail fleet" was signed by the chief executives of Russian Railways JSC and the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways. The agreement specifically covers data exchange for wagons and containers, IRNA reported.

The signing occurred during a working visit to Russia by Jabbar Ali Zakeri, the deputy minister of roads and urban development.

The MoU "will also provide for the exchange of experiences in the use of innovative information technology solutions in international rail transport," Iran's rail company stated. It is expected to "increase the productivity and safety of the rail fleet in international transportation and transit."

"With the implementation of the provisions of this memorandum, the transit time of export and transit cargoes of Russia and Central Asian countries through the rail corridors of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the North-South corridor, will be reduced," the announcement detailed. Furthermore, it "will increase the possibility of more precise and intelligent monitoring and control of the rail transport fleet, especially in international traffic."

## Textile plant reopens with '2025 technologies' in southeast



## Economy Desk

A weaving line unit at the Gostaresh Sanaye Baluch company in Iranshahr, southeastern Iran, was inaugurated on Saturday by order of President Masoud Pezeshkian, using "2025 technologies."

Pezeshkian issued the order by video conference during a ceremony to launch the line at the Baft Baluch factory in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, IRNA reported.

Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak said at the event that the Baft Baluch plant in Iranshahr had been modernized and restart-

ed "with 2025 technologies" and now has an annual production capacity of 18 million square meters of fabric.

The reconstruction and reopening of the factory was one of the commitments from the president's provincial trip to the province and was completed within a year. The plant will employ 300 people, with the potential to expand to 630 jobs.

Speaking at the inauguration, the president credited the reconstruction team and urged provincial officials to "replicate this model at a faster pace" across other sectors and projects.

## 12 water, energy projects launched in Zanjan

## Economy Desk

Twelve water and energy projects, including a wastewater treatment plant and a solar power plant, were inaugurated or launched on Saturday in Zanjan Province, northern Iran, with Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi in attendance on the seventh day of Government Week.

"Today we are witnessing the inauguration of eight projects and the launch of four other projects," Aliabadi said, highlighting the new facilities in Zanjan, IRNA reported.

On the sidelines of the launch of the second phase of the Zanjan wastewater treatment plant, Aliabadi underlined the importance of water consumption management and recycling. "Facilitating private sector investment in water and wastewater projects is one of the main goals of the Ministry of Energy," he said, adding that, "Technical and environmental standards have

been observed in the projects under implementation, and the quality of the treated water is such that it can be used for many purposes." According to Ali Mohammad Naderkhani, managing director of the provincial water and wastewater company, the second phase of the Zanjan plant was carried out to increase the population served to 410,000 and boost wastewater treatment capacity to 75,000 cubic meters per day.

"With the inauguration of this project, it will be possible to treat 100 percent of the wastewater generated in the city of Zanjan," he said, adding that the company is ready to complete the city's sewage collection network "in the shortest possible time if funding is secured."

Construction also began on the 500-megawatt "Paband" solar power plant in Khodabandeh county of Zanjan Province, attended by the minister.

Speaking at the ceremony,



Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi inaugurates the second phase of the Zanjan wastewater treatment plant in Zanjan on August 30, 2025.

IRNA

Aliabadi said, "Until the end of the year, a significant capacity will be added to the country's electricity grid." He noted that nearly 4,000 megawatts of thermal power plants and about 800 megawatts of solar power plants have already been connected to the grid. Regarding the Zanjan solar facility, he said, "With the commissioning of this power plant and the increase in production capacity, we hope next year the country's energy imbalance will be minimized and the power grid will reach the desired stability."

## Iran-China trade ...

"Iran is also a major market for Chinese goods, continuing large imports of industrial, electronic and mechanical products."

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## Opportunities and potential

The chamber member said that energy and natural resources are among the main areas for future cooperation. As one of the world's largest holders of oil and gas reserves, Iran can be "a stable source" of energy exports for China, the world's biggest energy consumer.

Iran's geostrategic location as a crossroads between East and West also positions it as a key link in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, he added. According to the businessman, investment in railways, ports and transit routes could turn Iran into a regional transport hub for Chinese trade.

"China, already Iran's largest trade partner, could further increase imports of Iranian industrial, mineral, agricultural and food products, while investing in sectors such as steel, mining, automobiles, telecommunications and renewables." The two countries could also expand cooperation in technology and industry, he said, adding, "Iran needs China's technology and industrial machinery, while in return Iran can be a large market for

Chinese technology products and services."

"Financial cooperation could include using local currencies — the rial and yuan — or alternative payment systems to bypass Western sanctions, as well as creating joint investment funds."

## Obstacles and constraints

Nikpey Salekdeh said that the US and Western sanctions remain a major barrier, with Chinese banks and companies cautious about engaging in large-scale deals with Iran. Weak investment protection laws, frequent regulatory changes and bureaucratic hurdles inside Iran have also discouraged Chinese investors, he added.

The merchant believes that political and economic instability, currency fluctuations, and lack of clear legal guarantees raise risks for Chinese businesses.

"Meanwhile, Beijing has expanded cooperation with Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, which could divert opportunities if Iran does not sharpen its competitive advantages."

According to him, the absence of a direct land border between Iran and China adds another obstacle.

Nikpey Salekdeh said that current overland routes

pass through intermediaries such as Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan, Afghanistan-Pakistan, or Central Asia, raising transport costs and exposing trade to security risks and tariff barriers.

"Security issues plague key routes like Afghanistan-Pakistan, while transit nations in Central Asia impose customs hurdles and tariffs. This reality means Iran's ability to serve as a transit corridor to China hinges on the cooperation of neighboring states."

"To overcome transit and transportation bottlenecks, Iran must prioritize developing critical international corridors. This includes activating the Iran-Kazakhstan-China corridor via Caspian Sea shipping routes and railways, boosting the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) while extending its connectivity to China through Russia, and utilizing east-west routes such as the corridor via Pakistan," he added.

The chamber member said that joint Iran-China investment in transit infrastructure offers another pathway.

He said that the two nations could cooperate on expanding rail networks, including the key Khaf-Herat line linking to Central Asia and China. Establishing shared port facilities at locations like

Chabahar or Bandar Abbas to enhance maritime links with China is also under consideration."

## Problems facing Iranian traders

Nikpey Salekdeh noted, "Iranian traders often face long and complicated procedures to obtain visas for China." Direct flights are also limited, he said.

The joint chamber member said both governments could sign a bilateral agreement to ease business visas, including three-to-five-year permits for qualified traders, or launch e-visa and on-arrival systems. He suggested that more direct passenger and cargo flights between Tehran and Beijing or Shanghai would also reduce costs and speed up delivery of sensitive goods.



Arash Nikpey Salekdeh

# Is Israel a water expert?

ANALYSIS

In Western Asia, water is more than just a natural resource; It is a critical geopolitical tool. The Zionist regime faces one of the world's harshest water crunches with a semi-arid to desert climate, a population exceeding 9.5 million, and an illegally occupied area of around 22,000 square kilometers. This regime ranks ninth globally in terms of water stress in 2025 and is in a worse situation than many regional countries, including Iran.

Israel's water crisis, exacerbated by population growth, industrial development, climate change, and discriminatory water allocation policies, has snowballed into a serious threat to public health, human security, and regional stability.

Claims by Israeli officials like Benjamin Netanyahu that the country knows the ropes in managing water crises — and their misleading promises aimed at the Iranian people — fall flat once you consider that much of Israel's water comes from controlling West Bank and Gaza resources, while Palestinians are denied fair access to water.

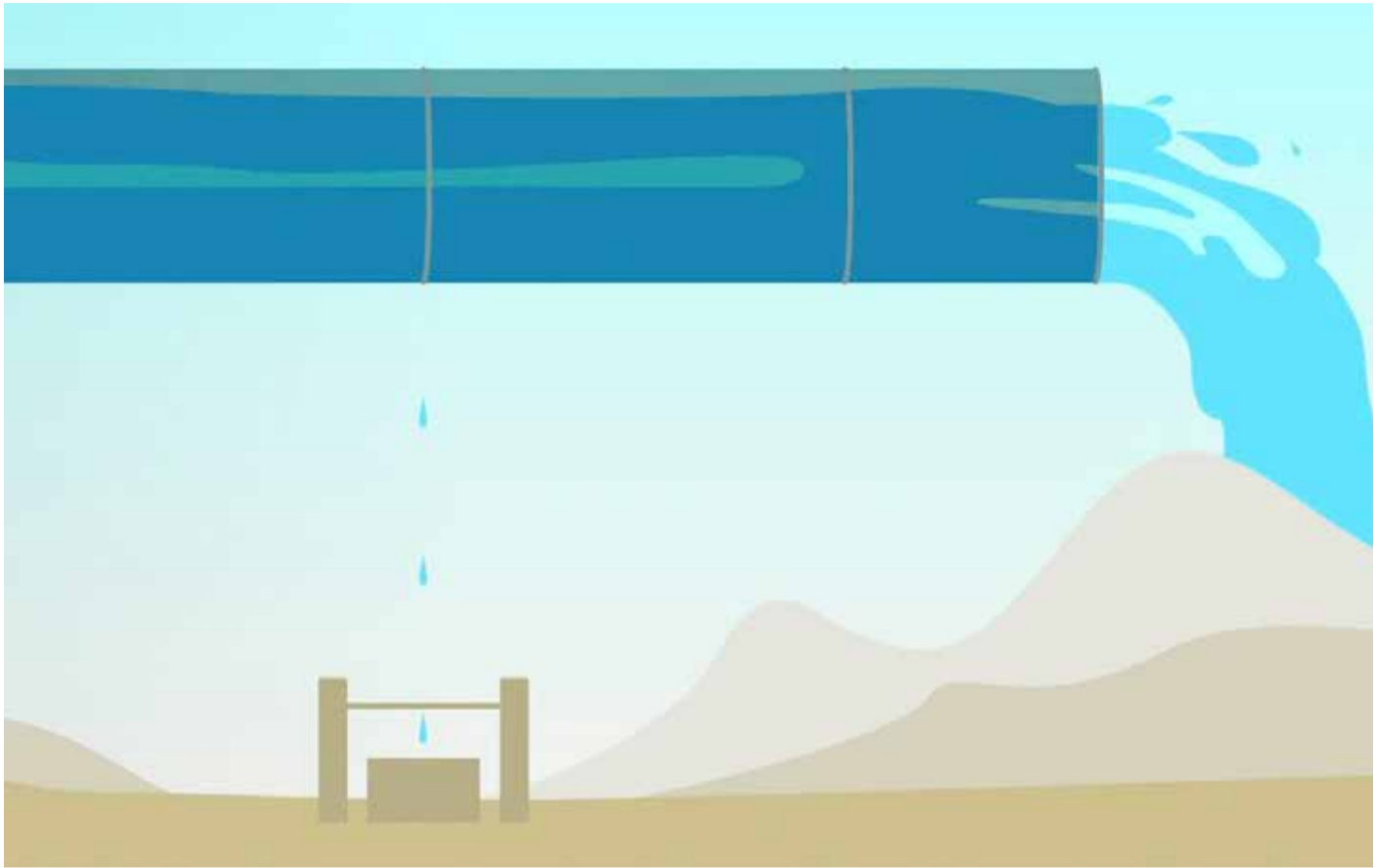
History of water crisis in occupied territories

Before the establishment of the Zionist regime, water resources in historic Palestine — including rivers, springs, and underground aquifers — were handed over primarily to local communities. Traditional agriculture relied on seasonal rains and simple storage, but water sources were limited and scattered.

In 1959, the National Water Carrier project was rolled out to transfer water from the Sea of Galilee to central and southern regions. This system became Israel's water backbone, but over-extraction combined with reduced rainfall drained the Sea of Galilee's water levels dramatically. In 2018, the water level was only 11 centimeters above the "red line" — the lowest in a century.

Following the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel took over direct control of the region's major aquifers, especially the Mountain Aquifer, tilting the scales of water access heavily in its favor.

Meanwhile, Palestinians have become tied down by military permits to drill wells or develop water infrastructure — permits that are rarely given. These policies, coupled with Israel extracting between 80 to 85 percent of the West Bank aquifers, force Pal-



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estinians to buy overpriced water from Israel.

Israel's surface water sources

- **Sea of Galilee:** With a nominal capacity of about four cubic kilometers, it provides roughly a quarter of Israel's surface water. Annual evaporation between 200 and 300 million cubic meters, pollution from agricultural and industrial wastewater, and declining water levels have weakened this source. According to the Israeli Water Authority, the Sea of Galilee is no longer a go-to reliable source for drinking water and is mostly used for agriculture.
- **Jordan River:** Once a vital water source, it's now severely depleted and polluted due to over-pumping by Israel and upstream countries, with flow down to less than 10 percent of its historical volume.

Israel's groundwater sources

- **Mountain Aquifer (Yarkon-Taninim):** Made of limestone rock, it produces about 740 million cubic meters annually. Around 80 percent of its recharge area lies in the West Bank, fully controlled by Israel.
- **Coastal Aquifer:** Spanning 2,000 square kilometers from Mount Carmel to Gaza, it yields about 450 million cubic meters per year. Overdraft since the

1950s has caused water levels to drop 20 meters below sea level and seawater intrusion into wells.

Israel's unconventional water sources

- **Desalination:** Since 2005, Israel has shifted gears to desalination, with five large plants producing 600 to 750 million cubic meters annually — about 85% of the country's drinking water. This high-cost, energy-intensive technology is a lifeline.
- **Wastewater recycling:** Israel treats nearly 85% of its wastewater (400 million cubic meters a year) and reuses it for agriculture, but this alone can't make up for its water deficit.

Scarce natural resources, limited rainfall

With an average annual rainfall of just 435 millimeters — less than half the global average of 1000 millimeters — Israel's precipitation mostly holds off until winter and concentrates in the north, while the Negev desert remains almost bone dry. Surface and groundwater supplies are at their lowest levels in a century, with an annual deficit between 1.5 to 2 billion cubic meters, nearly equal to the regime's total yearly consumption. According to CNN in August 2022, Israel's situation has pushed it into exploring solutions such as

pumping water from the Mediterranean Sea.

Climate change impacts

Since the 1970s, Israel's average temperature has risen by about 1.5 degrees Celsius — double the global average. This has stepped up evaporation from surface reservoirs and reduced natural aquifer recharge. Seawater intrusion into the coastal aquifer has cut down groundwater quality significantly. Projections show that by 2100, rainfall will drop off by 20–30 percent and temperatures will climb by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius, placing water reserves under even more pressure.

Demand-side pressures

Population growth has ramped up water demand. Household water consumption in Jewish areas ranges from 240 to 250 liters per person per day, while Palestinians in the West Bank average only 70 to 80 liters, dropping to 20 to 30 liters in some areas. Agriculture consumes 75 percent of water resources, and subsidies pump up pressure on supplies.

Resource control

Israeli control over West Bank and Gaza water resources has added fuel to the fire. Israel extracts 80 to 85% of the West Bank aquifers, leaving Palestin-

ians access to just 15%. In Gaza, over 95% of coastal aquifer water is unfit for drinking, with per capita water consumption between 3 to 5 liters daily — far below the WHO's minimum recommendation of 50 liters.

Inequality, political facets of water crisis

The water crisis in the Palestinian territories, especially the West Bank, is deeply political and social, with glaring inequalities. Israel's full control of regional water resources cuts off Palestinians' access, forcing them to cough up much higher prices than Israelis. This policy, framed as part of Israel's water management and national security, hits home for Palestinians — many households spend up to 30% of their income on water, while Israeli settlers enjoy a continuous water supply at minimal cost.

These inequalities are not only economic — they also wear down Palestinian infrastructure. Water networks and supply facilities in many Palestinian areas are aged and inadequate, and legal and administrative restrictions on upgrading infrastructure pile on existing problems. As a result, Palestinians face severe shortages and limited access, while Israeli settlements enjoy uninterrupted, reliable water supplies.

Socially and economically, this situation puts the squeeze on Palestinian society and acts as a control lever over everyday Palestinian life. The water crisis in the West Bank is not just an environmental or technical issue — it's a stark example of inequality, injustice, and the curtailing of Palestinians' fundamental rights, illustrating the close tie-up between natural resources and political power in a volatile region.

Two weeks ago, Israel's prime minister claimed in a video message, referring to Iran's water crisis, that Israel is an expert at dealing with drought and urged Iranians to take to the streets for freedom and plenty of water.

These claims have been kicked around repeatedly over recent years (including in 2018). The World Resources Institute reports that Israel is ranked 9th globally in water stress, in worse shape than Iran, ranked 14th. However, much of Israel's water consumption is not the fruit of indigenous technology but comes from controlling West Bank and Gaza water sources.

Israel extracts 80 to 85% of the Mountain Aquifer in the West Bank, while Palestinians have access to only 15% — about 45 million cubic meters out of 450 million. Palestinians need military permits, rarely granted, to dig wells or maintain infrastructure, and must buy costly water from Israel.

In Gaza, over 95% of coastal aquifer water is undrinkable due to seawater intrusion and nitrate pollution. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers consume more than 250 liters of water daily, enjoying a continuous supply for domestic, agricultural, and even swimming pool needs.

This structural inequality lays bare that Israel's claimed success in water management is due not only to technology but also to discriminatory policies and control over Palestinian resources. Netanyahu's claim to offer solutions for Iran is, at best, misleading.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Claims by Israeli officials like Benjamin Netanyahu that the country knows the ropes in managing water crises — and their misleading promises aimed at the Iranian people — fall flat once you consider that much of Israel's water comes from controlling West Bank and Gaza resources, while Palestinians are denied fair access to water. Furthermore, the World Resources Institute reports that Israel is ranked 9th globally in water stress, in worse shape than Iran, ranked 14th.



Palestinians returning to Khan Younis, southern Gaza's main city, after the withdrawal of Israeli forces, pull water containers to meet their vital needs under catastrophic conditions on May 6, 2024.  
● ALI JADALLAH/ANADOLU



# Trump’s Iran war mulligan



  
**By Andrew Day**  
Senior editor, scholar

**OPINION**

In June, President Donald Trump granted a longtime wish of Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. For decades, Netanyahu pressured American presidents to bomb Iran. Each one resisted, including Trump in his first term, when he griped that the Israeli premier was “willing to fight Iran to the last American soldier”. But in Trump’s second term, Bibi finally got what he wanted. Two months ago, as the Israel–Iran war raged, the president authorized strikes by air and sea on Tehran’s nuclear energy facilities. Now, Netanyahu wants Trump to attack Iran again, and this time on a massive scale. If the president still intends to stay out of forever wars in the Middle East — as he promised to do — then he must rein in Netanyahu and preemptively signal a refusal to fight the enemies of an out-of-control client entity, which is

what Israel has plainly become. In June, Trump managed to avoid getting embroiled in a protracted and escalating conflict. Next time, he might not be so lucky. Trita Parsi, a veteran analyst of US–Iran relations, has forecasted that Israel likely will launch another war this year, perhaps before September. Unlike last time, Parsi writes in Foreign Policy, Iran will hit back hard right away to demonstrate its resilience: “As a result, the coming war will likely be far bloodier than the first. If US President Donald Trump caves to Israeli pressure again and joins the fight, the United States could face a full-blown war with Iran that will make Iraq look easy by comparison.” Obviously, an Iraq War 2.0 would pose considerable risks for the US and for Trump, who came out of the “12-Day War” mostly unscathed. Only a slim majority of Americans opposed the US strikes in June, even as a supermajority — 78 percent — expressed concern that America would get drawn into a direct war with Iran, according

to polling from Quinnipiac. Another survey found that Americans were more supportive of the strikes after being told they were limited to Iran’s nuclear facilities. These findings suggest that many Americans oppose war with Iran but tolerated Trump’s discreet and targeted bombing raid. The voters, in essence, have given Trump a pass, a redo, or, in golfer’s terms, a mulligan. Soon, the president will have another shot to avoid the sand trap of a Mideast war. This time, he can’t afford to miss, and he’ll have less room to maneuver. Both Israeli and Iranian officials seem to consider the present moment a kind of intermission, a lull in the fighting, rather than a stable post-war period. “We are not in a cease-fire, we are in a stage of war,” a top adviser to the Leader of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamanei is reported to have said recently. “No protocol, regulation, or agreement has been written between us and the US or Israel.” Over in Israel, the former intelligence officer Jacques Neria

warned of a looming “second round” of the 12-day war. “There is a sense that a war is coming, that Iranian revenge is in the works,” Neria said on an Israeli radio program. With Tehran agitated and its threat perception heightened, “Israel must launch a preemptive strike against Iran in its present state as a large part of its military capabilities is paralyzed,” Neria claimed. Senior Israeli officials agree. War Minister Israel Katz has warned Iran’s leaders of an imminent Israeli offensive. Katz even suggested that this time Israel will assassinate Ayatollah Khomeini, advising the Iranian leader to “lift his eyes to the sky and listen carefully to every buzz”. Other Israeli officials, including Foreign Minister Gideon Saar and Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, have also hinted at further attacks to neutralize the perceived threat from Iran. Israel is not only making plans for another preemptive war but urging the Trump administration to join, according to Asharq Al-Awsat, a daily pan-Arab



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L) talks to US President Donald Trump during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on April 7, 2025.  
● ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES



The problem is that Israel cannot really go to war alone against Iran. At the very least, it needs the US to extend its shield over the small entity, intercepting missiles and drones launched by Iran. And since Trump has already demonstrated a willingness to bomb Iran for Israel when war between them breaks out, the Netanyahu cabinet will expect offensive action. Netanyahu plays hardball, and he’s quite good at engineering geopolitical crises that generate pressure on Washington to intervene on Israel’s behalf.



US Air Force aerial porters load Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) support equipment being sent to Israel onto a C-17 Globemaster III on October 16, 2024.  
● ZEESHAN NAEEM/US AIR FORCE

newspaper, which cited unnamed security sources in Israel. The outlet said that if Trump refuses, Israel will seek the president’s green light to go it alone. The problem is that Israel cannot really go to war alone against Iran. At the very least, it needs the US to extend its shield over the small entity, intercepting missiles and drones launched by Iran. And since Trump has already demonstrated a willingness to bomb Iran for Israel when war between them breaks out, the Netanyahu cabinet will expect offensive action. Netanyahu plays hardball, and he’s quite good at engineering geopolitical crises that generate pressure on Washington to intervene on Israel’s behalf. Netanyahu may soon put those skills to the test because he knows that time is running out to secure hegemony in the region — an obvious aim of Israeli hardliners — with popular support for Israel plummeting in the West. Earlier this year, Netanyahu told an Israeli foreign affairs committee that the country will need to “wean” itself off of US military aid. While Washington still has its back, Israel wants to decapitate the Islamic Republic and turn Iran into a failed state — and it needs the US to join the regime-change war. “Limited engagement is likely no longer an option,” Parsi writes. “Trump will have to either fully join the war or sit it out.” The president should do the latter. Indeed, he should communicate now, in no uncertain terms, that the US, with its stocks of interceptor missiles alarmingly depleted, will not only refrain from joining Israeli strikes on Iran but will even withhold air defense. Such a warning would make Netanyahu think twice about attacking Iran. American and Israeli interests differ, with Washington wanting an agreement to rein in Tehran’s nuclear program and Jerusalem wanting to deliver a knock-out blow to its regime. Perhaps Trump can’t stop Israel from launching a war against Iran, but he can at least make clear that it would be Israel’s war, not America’s, and certainly not his.

The article first appeared in The American Conservative.



# CAFA Nations Cup: Iran survives early scare to beat Afghanistan



Sports Desk

Iran got off to a winning start at the CAFA Nations Cup, coming from behind to beat Afghanistan 3-1 in the Group B opener in Hisor, Tajikistan, on Friday. With star players Sardar Azmoun, Saeid Ezzatollahi, Mahdi Qayedi, and Alireza Beiranvand missing the eight-team tournament for various reasons, Iran head coach Amir Qalenei fielded a second-string lineup of the domestic league players for the game against the world's 161st-ranked team. The Asian powerhouse, however, was stunned midway through the first half when Omid Musawi beat the offside trap before his tame effort went past Persepolis goalkeeper Payam Niazmamand. It took Sepahan striker Majid Aliyari just 26 minutes into his international debut to get on the scoresheet, as he headed in a point-blank finish from club teammate Omid Nourafkan's corner kick. Tractor forward Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh – the leading marksman in the Iranian top flight last season – put Iran in front with a low drive from inside the box in the 36th minute.

Aliyari bagged his second of the afternoon after the break, tapping in Hosseinzadeh's low cross from close range in the 64th minute. Next for Iran is a game against India on Monday, before Team Melli squares off against Tajikistan on the final day of the group phase on Thursday. India defeated Tajikistan 2-1 later on Friday to sit second to Iran in the table. Anwar Ali and Sandesh Jhingan gave India a two-goal lead inside 13 minutes before Shahrom Samiev pulled one back for the cohost in the 23rd minute. The winner of the group will advance to the final showpiece at Tashkent's Olympic City Stadium on Sept. 8, with the two runners-up squaring off in the third-place match. Group A features cohost Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Oman. Iran beat Uzbekistan 1-0 to win the first edition of the CAFA Nations Cup in 2023.

Iranian center-back Aref Agasi (20) is seen in action during a 3-1 win against Afghanistan at the CAFA Nations Cup in Hisor, Tajikistan, on August 29, 2025. ● MOHSEN DAVOUDI/FFIRI

## Asian Junior & U-23 Rowing Championships: Fakhri wins single sculls gold as Iran bags three medals

Sports Desk

Iranian girl Soha Fakhri claimed a gold as the country collected three medals on the second day of the Asian Junior & U-23 Rowing Championships in Shenyang, China. Representing the country in Saturday's junior women's single sculls event, Fakhri clocked 7:45.20 minutes in the final to walk away with the ultimate prize, with rowers from China and Kazakhstan settling for silver and

bronze respectively. Meanwhile, Saghi Maleki and Mohanna Haj-Hosseini teamed up to win a silver



● WANA

medal in the women's U-23 heavyweight double sculls, thanks to a second-best time of 7:14.30 minutes in the final. Vietnamese duo grabbed the gold, with Indonesia taking the bronze. A third medal for Iran on Saturday came in the men's U-23 heavyweight double sculls event, where Abolfazl Satvati and Amir Reza Abdali crossed the finish line in 6:31.05 minutes to win the bronze behind Vietnam and Uzbekistan.

## Asian Shooting Championships: Iranians finish with 17 medals

Sports Desk

Iranian men and women collected 17 medals across different age-group competitions at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. Former Olympic champion Javad Foroughi bagged his fourth medal at the seniors' event on Friday, settling for the bronze in the men's 25m center fire pistol contest with 579 points, with Indian Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu (583pts) and South Korea's Lee Jae-kyoon (580) grabbing the gold and silver medals. Foroughi then teamed up with Amir Joharikhou and Vahid Golkhandan to win the bronze in the team category, finishing behind India and Vietnam. This was the Iranian trio's third medal in the men's team competitions, following a gold-winning campaign in the 50m pistol contest, and a bronze in the 10m discipline. Foroughi and Joharikhou also completed an all-Iranian one-two in the

individual 50m pistol event as Iran finished with double golds, one silver, and five bronze medals in the seniors' competitions. There was further glory for the country in the youth class, as Mohammadreza Ahmadi, Amirhossein Gohari, and Mohammad-Mahdi Choobin teamed up to win the men's 10m air pistol gold. Ahmadi also picked up the individual bronze of the discipline, and combined with Parimah Amiri for a silver medal in the mixed event. Amiri was also part of the Iranian silver-winning trio – alongside Donya Arshadnia and Tara Abbaszadeh – in the women's 10m air pistol contest and then won the individual bronze. Mohammad-Mahdi Tahmasbi (men's 10m air pistol), Nazanin-Zahra Abdollahi (women's 10m air pistol), and Shayan Foroudi (men's trap) were the other Iranian silver winners as the country bagged nine medals in the youth competitions.



● The Iranian trio of Amir Joharikhou (L), Javad Foroughi (C), and Vahid Golkhandan won a team gold and double bronze medals at the Asian Shooting Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. ● IRISSF

## Iranian boxers win four medals in Belt and Road tournament

Sports Desk

Iranians bagged four medals – including double silvers – at the 2025 Belt and Road International Youth Boxing Exchange Tournament in

Urumqi, China. In the 75kg category, Mehrshad Sharafatmand made an impressive run to the final showpiece of the 75kg class, only to settle for a silver after suffering defeat against an

opponent from Kazakhstan. Amirali Fatahian added a second silver to Iran's medal haul in the 80kg category – courtesy of a final defeat against an Indian boxer. Zobeir Isazehi (50kg) and

Matin Chamanpa (54kg), meanwhile, finished their campaigns with a bronze following last-four setbacks against Indian opponents. The competition featured 32 teams from 20 countries.

## Persepolis in advanced talks with Cameroon international Aboubakar: Report

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Persepolis is closing in on a deal with Cameroonian international striker and skipper Vincent Aboubakar, Varzesh3 reported on Friday. A former player of Porto and Besiktas, Aboubakar, 33, bagged eight goals and double assists in 28 appearances for Hattayspor last season before parting ways

with the Turkish Süper Lig club in June. New Persepolis head coach Vahid Hashemian is eager to strengthen his front-line, as Ali Alipour is the only established striker in the Tehran Reds squad following Serdar Dursun's departure earlier in August. Aboubakar enjoyed the most prolific part of his career with Besiktas, scoring 60 goals and providing 14 assists in 117

games across two spells, either side of a two-season stint at Saudi Pro League outfit Al Nassr. He also contributed with 58 goals and 16 assists in 125 appearances in four seasons with Porto, lifting the Primeira Liga trophies twice, after joining the Portuguese heavyweight from FC Lorient in 2014. Capped 104 times for the national team, Aboubakar has found the net on 44 occasions for Cameroon, steering the Indomitable Lions to the Africa Cup of Nations title in 2017, before finishing as the leading marksman of the competition when Cameroon finished third in the 2021 edition. Persepolis got off to a slow start in the new Iranian top-flight season, sharing the spoils with newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi in a 1-1 home draw, but went on to claim a first league victory in the 'Iranian Clasico' in four seasons, beating Sepahan 1-0 at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium last week.



# Cornelian cherry transforms Hir village into a colorful destination



● chtn.ir

Iranica Desk

As late August arrives, cornelian cherry trees in the gardens of Hir village, Qazvin Province, begin to bear fruit, transforming the village with new colors and aromas. The local people, dressed in traditional clothing and wearing smiles, celebrate the harvest, seizing the opportunity not only to gather the fruit but also to preserve their native customs and culture, sharing them with tourists. This beautiful village enjoys a pleasant and delightful climate, with a flowing river called Ninerud that supports thriving agriculture. Surrounded by lush gardens, Hir village boasts unique charm, complemented by its picturesque cobblestone alleys, according to chtn.ir.

Located in the western Alamut neighborhood of Qazvin Province, Hir sits among the high mountains of Central Alborz, about 65 kilometers north of Qazvin. This mountainous, cold-weather village's inhabitants speak the Tati language with the Deylami dialect. The village lies beside a rocky mountain called Latar Teleh; the word "Teleh" means cliff in the local dialect. A longstanding connection between the people of the Ashkur region in Gilan Province and the residents of Hir and Viar villages has influenced the local dialect, facilitated trade, and fostered familial bonds. This connectivity also allows Ashkur residents to travel to central Iran through these villages, contributing to Hir's status as one of the



largest villages in western Alamut. Hir village is the largest producer of cornelian cherry in the province, and every harvest season, it hosts the Cornelian Cherry Festival, featuring local music, traditional

games, and distribution of the fruit, attracting many tourists. On festival day, villagers, accompanied by music and drums, harvest the fruit, a challenging task due to the orchard's steep slopes. Harvested fruit, often unripe, is

transported by pack animals in wooden boxes and ripens en route to markets. Orchard owners with the largest production areas and best quality fruit are honored during the festival. After harvesting, villagers

spread the fruit on rooftops, painting the village red, a distinctive seasonal spectacle. In bountiful years, over 200 tons of cornelian cherry are exported nationwide from these orchards. The cornelian cherry here is renowned for high quality and delicious taste. The province's total orchard area is 750 hectares, yielding about 5,000 kilograms per hectare, with an estimated output exceeding 3,750 tons annually. The fruit's tart flavor is typically processed into compote, jam, syrup, and fruit leather. Cornelian cherry flowers provide abundant nectar for honeybees, while its dark green, glossy leaves and oval, reddish fruit add to its appeal. Rich in antioxidants,

fruit offers significant health benefits, aiding in the prevention and treatment of diabetes and cancer. Beyond nutrition, cornelian cherry possesses medicinal properties, acting as an astringent to reduce bleeding and an antipyretic to lower fever. Both the fruit and its skin nourish the body and replenish nutrients. Consumed fresh or dried, especially off-season, the fruit's tree wood also holds value for crafting machine parts due to its water-resistant nature. Hir village, therefore, is not only a picturesque destination with authentic cultural traditions but also a vital agricultural hub contributing significantly to Qazvin Province's economy and tourism appeal.

## Kooftah Tabrizi; legendary Persian stuffed meatballs

Iranica Desk

Kooftah Tabrizi is a celebrated Iranian dish originating from the city of Tabriz, the capital city of East Azarbaijan Province. This delightful meatball recipe stands as a true culinary treasure, skillfully blending rich ground beef, fragrant herbs, and a carefully selected mix of spices to create a mouthwatering and satisfying treat. The meatballs themselves are a harmonious combination of ground beef, rice, split peas, finely chopped onions, and a fresh herb medley that includes parsley, cilantro, and thyme. Additionally, dried herbs such as mint and tarragon

contribute a complex layer of aroma. This vibrant mixture is expertly seasoned with turmeric, salt, and black pepper, resulting in a depth of flavor that truly excites the palate. What sets Kooftah Tabrizi apart is the special stuffing hidden inside each meatball. Plump prunes, crunchy walnuts, and crispy fried onions are gently tucked into the center, adding a delightful contrast of textures and bursts of sweetness and nuttiness with every bite. Once carefully shaped, these juicy meatballs are slowly simmered in a tangy tomato sauce, allowing all the flavors to meld together beautifully.

The sauce is made from sautéed onions, turmeric, tomato paste, and water, creating a rich, savory base that perfectly complements and enhances the taste of the meatballs. Kooftah Tabrizi is far more than a simple meatball dish. Its distinct juicy richness and unique spice blend make it an extraordinary culinary experience. More than just food, it embodies tradition and history — a dish that has been cherished for generations by families and friends gathering around the table to savor its wonderful flavors. Each bite of this Persian delicacy tells a story of Iran's rich history and culture, reflecting the love and care put into its preparation. Kooftah Tabrizi is not merely a meal; it is a heartfelt reminder of the joy found in sharing food with loved ones.

When served, the combination of flavorful, tender meatballs and tangy tomato sauce creates a harmonious delight in every mouthful. As the meatballs simmer gently in the sauce, they absorb its essence, becoming juicy and richly flavored. Enjoying Kooftah Tabrizi is an experience that goes beyond nourishment; it invites you to savor every bite thoughtfully. To elevate the dish further, fresh herbs such as parsley, mint, and basil are of-

ten added. These vibrant greens brighten both the presentation and the flavor, bringing a fresh, aromatic note that harmonizes beautifully with the hearty meatballs. Traditional accompaniments include a generous spoonful of plain yogurt or labneh, which offers a cool, creamy contrast to the warm and spiced meatballs. Alongside this, Torshi — a special Persian pickle — adds a tangy, flavorful kick that completes the meal perfectly. Serving Kooftah Tabrizi with fresh Persian bread allows diners to dip

into the flavorful broth, creating an evocative and truly memorable dining experience. Ultimately, this dish is much more than just food; it is a celebration of Persian culinary tradition, leaving a lasting impression on anyone fortunate enough to savor it. This version reflects traditional serving elements such as Sabzi Khordan (fresh herbs), Persian bread for dipping in the broth, yogurt, and Torshi, all of which contribute to the authentic and rich cultural experience of enjoying Kooftah Tabrizi.



● delgarm.com



● yjc.ir



# Iran's publishing industry on display at Yerevan book fair

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian publishers will open their stand on September 5 at the 8th Yerevan International Book Festival, unveiling the Armenian translation of 'Three Magical Whistles' by children's author Ahmad Akbarpour. The fair runs through Sept. 7 in Republic Square and brings together more than 50 publishing houses from Armenia, Iran, the Caucasus and Europe. The Iranian booth, jointly managed by the Iran Book and Literature House, Alhoda International Publishing and the cultural office of

Iran's embassy, features a wide collection of titles in literature, history, tourism and social sciences, many already translated into Russian and Armenian. Organizers said the effort is aimed at expanding readership for Iranian works, while "building deeper ties" with Armenian and Russian-speaking audiences. A highlight of this year's participation is the launch of 'Three Magical Whistles,' translated into Armenian for the first time. The novel, which explores family and tradition through a lyrical narrative, will enter the Armenian book market after



its debut at the festival. "It is a story about love, solidarity and the role of family," Akbarpour said during a presentation at the Iranian stand. Akbarpour, a prize-winning writer known for his imaginative approach to chil-

dren's themes, will attend panel discussions in Yerevan's National Library and meet teachers of Persian at the city's Blue Mosque. His visit is supported by the Iran Book and Literature House and the Embassy cultural mission.



## Composer Ahmad Pejman, first Iranian to write for opera, dies at 90



### Arts & Culture Desk

Ahmad Pejman, the pioneering Iranian composer who became the first in his country to write operas, died on Friday in Los Angeles at the age of 90, according to a statement on his official social media page. Pejman was celebrated as a leading figure of contemporary Iranian music, blending Western classical traditions with Persian motifs, ISNA reported. Over a career spanning more than six decades, he wrote symphonies, ballets, rhapsodies, or-

atorios, film scores and operas that placed him at the forefront of Iran's modern cultural life. His works were performed both in Tehran and by international orchestras abroad. Born on July 10, 1935, in the southern Iranian city of Lar, Pejman studied violin in his teenage years with conductor Heshmat Sanjari and learned theory under composer Hossein Naseri. A scholarship in 1964 took him to the Vienna Academy of Music, where he trained with Austrian masters before returning to Tehran as a composer for Roudaki Hall and professor at the University of Tehran. It was during this period that he composed landmark operas such as 'The Farmer's Celebration,' 'The Hero of Sahand' and 'The Phoenix.' "He was a trailblazer," said one Tehran critic, noting his ability to fuse Iranian themes with

classical forms. In 1975, Pejman moved to the United States to pursue a doctorate at Columbia University in New York, studying with American and European composers including Vladimir Ussachevsky and Jack Beeson. He later settled in Los Angeles, continuing to compose and research. Beyond the concert hall, he left his mark on Iranian cinema, writing memorable scores for films by directors such as Bahman Farmanara and Majid Majidi. His achievements earned him two Crystal Simorgh awards at the Fajr Film Festival and four golden statuettes at Iran's annual film celebration. Critics often described Pejman's style as a "fusion" of Iranian folk melodies and classical counterpoint. In later years he also wrote in popular forms, expanding his audience at home and abroad.

## Short film 'Domestic' heads to four int'l festivals

### Art & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Nima Abdolazimi's short film 'Domestic' was selected for competition at international film festivals in Croatia, Britain, the United States and Iraq. The work marks the start of its global run with screenings at the Dalmatia Film Festival in Croatia, the Realtime Festival in Britain, the New York Kurdish Cultural Cinema Festival and the Slemani International Film Festival in northern Iraq. The production was backed by the Iranian Youth Cinema Society, Abdolazimi and co-producer Nishtiman Salehi. The Dalmatia Film Festival, which carries the motto "Dalmatia is my lifeline," showcases feature films, documentaries, animation and experimental works in summer open-air screenings. Its 10th edition opens in Sutivan in August 2025, before moving to Kastel Lukšić and other cities, with a closing program in Split in early December. The New York Kurdish festival, founded in 2017 to highlight Kurdish heritage from antiquity to modern times, runs its ninth edition on September 20-25. Organizers say the event offers a space for Kurds in



different communities to "revive traditions, celebrate and build friendship." Britain's Realtime Festival, launched in 2016 with an emphasis on independent cinema and digital accessibility, will mark its 10th edition on October 17-19. The fifth Slemani International Film Festival, dedicated to Kurdish culture and global cinema, is scheduled for October 1-7. Domestic tells the story of Afshin, a man who encounters a magical creature on a moonlit night and must accept conditions to fulfill his dream. The cast includes Mey-sam Damanzeh and Shima Molaei with international distribution handled by Solmaz Etemad.

## Iran, Iraq sign accords to expand academic ties, scholarships for students

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Iraq signed new agreements in Tehran on Saturday to deepen academic and scientific cooperation, including scholarships for Iraqi students to study at top Iranian universities, according to the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology. The accords, reached during a meeting between Iran's Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf and Iraq's Deputy Higher Education Minister Hayder Abed Dhahad, aim to strengthen long-term collaboration through student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and the creation of dual academic programs, IRNA reported. Officials described the new deals as a step toward "broadening" educational opportunities and cementing cultural bonds between the two neighbors.

Simaei-Sarraf noted that initiatives such as "Iraq Week" in Tehran last year had already paved the way for closer ties. He said Iran was ready to host more Iraqi students under fresh scholarship programs and urged Baghdad to introduce top candidates to leading universities, including Shahid Beheshti and Sharif University of Technology. "Good progress has been made in implementing agreements, particularly on the exchange of professors and students," he said. Dhahad welcomed the expansion of bilateral research projects, pointing to 139 joint programs currently under way. He said the new memorandums would not only support Iraqi students abroad but also allow Iranian professors to conduct short-term study opportunities in Iraq.

"One of our goals is for Iraqi students to study in the best universities in Iran," he said, calling Iran's scientific advances an example of capabilities that could help Iraq's academic development. The Iraqi deputy minister added that Baghdad was prepared to reciprocate by admitting Iranian students at leading Iraqi universities. He highlighted a seven-year agreement signed between Sharif University of Technology's science park and the University of Baghdad to establish a joint model of innovation and technology. Dhahad also praised what he called Iran's "victory" in the recent 12-day war with Israel, saying it was regarded in Iraq as a shared achievement. He offered condolences for the loss of Iranian scientists, describing them as "a true model" for the region.

## 'The Love' set for stage at Italy's Sele Teatero Fest

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian playwright and director Jafar Mahyari will bring his performance 'The Love' to Italy for the 27th Sele Teatero Fest, running from September 4 to 7 in the southern town of Olive-to Citra. The festival, known for spotlighting experimental works that strip down words and highlight human struggles through movement, will stage Mahyari's performance that blends body theater with live music. It aims to probe contemporary human themes through unconventional dramatic language, ISNA reported. 'The Love' tells the story

of a man worn down by the emptiness of his daily routine, caught in the grip of hidden taboos, until an unexpected encounter with love steers him toward transformation. The play, carried by Mahyari's own performance, unfolds through physical movement rather than dialogue, accompanied by live Santur (hammered dulcimer) and Daf (Persian frame drum). Hamidah Barmakhshad serves as assistant and international coordinator, with Armin Rastegari on Daf, and Mahyari himself playing the Santur. The poster design is by Mehdi Raygani, while Mahmoud Nouraei advises on direction and media. The show is



backed by Bermakh Cultural Institute, led by Mahshid Barmakhshad. First staged in Würzburg, Germany, in 2017, 'The Love' later appeared in Lyon, France, in 2019 and in Tehran in 2022.