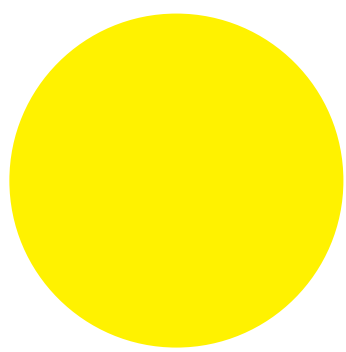


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Leader calls on Muslims to 'completely' sever ties with Israel over Gaza genocide

International Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Sunday that the world countries and the Muslim community should sever their ties with the Israeli regime over the occupying entity's continued genocide of Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. Addressing a meeting with the Iranian government, Ayatollah Khamenei said the "catastrophic actions" of the Israeli regime in Gaza has to be confronted and the Iranian diplomatic apparatus should advise the countries to cut their relations with Tel Aviv. "Although these crimes are carried out with the support of a power like the US, the path to countering this situation is not closed, and protesting countries, especially Islamic countries, must completely sever their commercial and even political ties with the Zionist regime and isolate it," the Leader said. "The catastrophic actions of the evil and detestable Zionist regime in Gaza must be confronted and one of the main lines of our diplomacy should also be to encourage governments to cut their ties with this criminal regime," he added. Israel unleashed its brutal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023 after the Palestinian resistance groups carried out a historic operation against the occupying entity in retaliation for its intensified atrocities against the Palestinian people. The ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza has so far resulted in at least 64,368 documented Palestinian fatalities, with over 162,367 others injured. Thousands of victims are feared trapped under rubble, inaccessible to emergency and civil defense teams due to Israeli attacks.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with the country's cabinet members in Tehran on September 7, 2025. leader.ir

Iran-Georgia trade posts sizable hike in 2025

By Arash Nikpey
Head of Iran-Georgia Joint Chamber of Commerce

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In the first half of 2025, trade volume between Iran and Georgia climbed to \$149.5 million, marking an increase of \$16.5 million compared with the same period a year earlier.

Overall, economic cooperation between the two countries has picked up steam in recent years as in 2024, the value of trade between Iran and Georgia reached a record \$322 million, nearly three times the level recorded in 2012.

The upward trend was also visible in 2023, when Iranian exports to Georgia stood at around \$241 million, up from \$232 million the year before. Imports from Georgia in that same year were estimated at nearly \$30 million. Overall, the total bilateral trade volume in 2023 came to around \$271 million. Taken together, trade between Iran and Georgia has risen by about 23% over the past two years. With this growth trajectory and the available capacities on both sides, further expansion in bilateral commerce can reasonably be expected in the near future.

Looking at the path of cooperation so far, projections suggest that Iran-Georgia economic relations will continue to grow in the coming years. By addressing existing obstacles and strengthening co-operation infrastructure, the two sides could turn their economic partnership into a successful regional model.

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Araghchi excoriates European snapback as 'drastic' mistake doomed to backfire

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that the European troika — Britain, France and Germany — made a "drastic miscalculation" by triggering the snapback of draconian UN-imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic, warning that the move would erode Europe's credibility and ultimately backfire.

Araghchi wrote in an opinion published in the Guardian that the European trio, known as the E3, were "enabling the excesses of Washington" by following US President Donald Trump's strategy, which culminated in the derailment of the 2015 nuclear deal. "The E3's gambit lacks any legal standing, chiefly because it ignores the sequence of events that led Iran to adopt lawful remedial measures under the nuclear deal,"

Araghchi said. He underlined that it was the United States, not Iran, that abandoned the agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in 2018, while Europe failed to deliver on promises to sustain trade and normalize economic relations. "Britain, France and Germany may appear to act out of spite. But the truth is that they are intently pursuing a reckless course of action based on the logic that it may provide them with a seat at the table on other issues," the top Iranian diplomat said. "This is a drastic miscalculation that is bound to backfire," he added. "President Trump has made clear that he views the E3 as tangential actors. This is evident in the way Europe is sidelined from issues that are vital to its future — including the Russia-Ukraine

conflict. The message from Washington is loud and clear: to gain relevance, the E3 must exhibit undying fealty. The recent images of European leaders sat in the Oval Office before President Trump vividly underscore this dynamic." Araghchi stressed that while failing to uphold its own obligations, Europe expects Iran to unilaterally accept all restrictions. He also said that the E3 "declined to condemn the US attack on my country in June — on the eve of diplomatic talks — and yet are now demanding UN sanctions on Iranians for supposedly rejecting dialogue." Araghchi warned that the sanctions push "will only further sideline them by eliminating [Europe] from future diplomacy, with broad negative consequences for all of Europe in terms of its global credibility and standing."

Stressing that Tehran was open to negotiations on what he termed as a "realistic and lasting bargain," the foreign minister wrote, "Iran remains open to diplomacy. It is ready to forge a realistic and lasting bargain that entails ironclad oversight and curbs on enrichment in exchange for the termination of sanctions." Araghchi said the alternative to diplomacy "may have consequences destructive for the region and beyond on a whole new level," adding that Europe should "give diplomacy the time and space that it needs to succeed." Last week, the European trio triggered the so-called snapback mechanism in Resolution 2231 to restore all UN sanctions against Iran. They gave the Council 30 days to decide whether it would continue sanctions relief against Iran or allow it to lapse.



Abbas Araghchi
Iranian Foreign Ministry

Iran, Russia and China sent a letter to the UN, saying the snapback activation by the three European

countries contravenes Resolution 2231 and is "legally and procedurally flawed."

Tehran voices support for Caracas, raps US bullying

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi expressed on Sunday Iran's solidarity with the people of Venezuela amid heightened tensions with the United States, denouncing the latter's unilateral and bullying actions against other states, Press TV reported. Araghchi made the remarks during a telephone conversation with his Venezuelan counterpart, Yvan Gil Pinto, as US President Donald Trump has ordered a large build-up of American military assets in the Caribbean and increased threats against Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro. "The threat of resorting to force against independent developing countries is a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and an obvious danger to international peace and security," he added. "It is necessary for all responsible governments to prevent the spread of lawlessness and insecurity by recognizing the gravity of the current situation."



The Venezuelan foreign minister, for his part, referred to the increasing illegal threats by the United States against his country and presented a report on regional conditions. He also appreciated Iran's stance on defending the principles and objectives of the UN Charter and respecting Venezuela's national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Gil Pinto further emphasized that the Venezuelan government and people will firmly defend their independence, national sovereignty, and right to determine their own fate. Meanwhile, he hoped that the BRICS member states and other countries in South America would take a firm stance in condemnation of the United States' hostile actions.

During the phone call, the two sides also discussed Tehran-Caracas bilateral relations and developments in the Caribbean following recent US movements in the region. The US has recently sent ships armed with Tomahawk missiles, an attack submarine, a range of aircraft, and more than 4,000 US sailors and Marines to the waters off Venezuela, while ordering the deployment of 10 advanced F-35 fighter jets to Puerto Rico. Additionally, it has labeled Maduro as one of the world's largest narco-traffickers and doubled the bounty for his arrest to \$50 million. On Tuesday, a US military strike killed 11 people and sank a boat from Venezuela, which Trump claimed was transporting illegal narcotics. Maduro has rejected the US allegations about his country, saying differences between the nations do not justify a "military conflict."

Iranian nation more united after 12-day war; Netanyahu failed to spark rallies: Top cmdr.

International Desk

A senior Iranian Army commander lauded the nation on Saturday for exhibiting "exceptional unity" during the Israeli-US aggression against the country in June and dismissing calls by the Tel Aviv regime to take to the streets. Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, deputy chief of the Iranian Army for Coordination, said the Iranian nation was behind the country's victory in the 12-day imposed war, noting that with its people, Iran will never be defeated by any enemy. "Since the [1979 Islamic] Revolution, through the sacred defense [against the 1980s' Iraqi-imposed war] and the 12-day war, our nation has shown exceptional unity and solidarity," he said. "During the 12-day war, the prime minister of the fake Zionist regime [Benjamin Netanyahu] repeatedly called on our people to take to the streets, but not a single person paid heed to those calls. Instead, our national unity and cohesion grew even stronger." Sayyari also said that all of the enemies' conspiracies, including imposed wars, cultural invasion, soft warfare, and hybrid warfare, are aimed at defeating the Iranian nation. The top commander further emphasized that before the Islamic Revolution, the Iranian nation stood powerfully against an armed-to-the-teeth regime and ultimately emerged victorious. Thanks to the people's active presence on the battlefield, he pointed out, Iran achieved victory during the eight-year war imposed on Iran by the Iraqi regime, which was supported by all Eastern and Western countries.



Habibollah Sayyari

"The enemies' goal in launching the imposed war and the 12-day aggression was to defeat the Revolution and destroy our country's territorial integrity. However, ... our people defended their homeland with the bare minimum of resources, and by standing up to the enemies, they forced them to take their dreams to the grave," he said.

Parliament approves military consolidation plan

In another development on Sunday, the spokesperson for the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Parliament announced the approval by a majority vote of a plan to strengthen the Armed Forces' capabilities in comprehensive confrontation with the possible crimes and aggression of the Israeli regime against the Islamic Republic.

On June 13, Israel launched a blatant and unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians.

The United States also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law.

In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia. On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist assault.

FM spox calls Australia's expulsion of Iranian envoy 'Israeli plot'

'Relations with Australia is of great importance for Tehran'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei described Australia's expulsion of Iran's ambassador as "regrettable" and "unjustified" and a result of a plot engineered by Israeli intelligence agency Mossad.

In an interview with Australia's Nine Network television, the Iranian official said that the decision by the Australian government was the "easiest way to please or appease" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

On August 25, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese alleged that Tehran was involved in what he called two anti-Semitic attacks in his country, ordering that the Iranian ambassador in Canberra — Ahmad Sadeghi — and three other diplomats to leave Australia within seven days. Albanese claimed that Tehran was behind the torching of a kosher cafe in Sydney's Bondi suburb in October 2024 and a major arson attack on the Adass Israel Synagogue in Melbourne in December 2024. In response to the Australia's move, Iran reduced the level of Australia's diplomatic presence in Tehran to downgrade diplomatic relations.

Australia's decision to expel Iranian diplomats came weeks after Albanese and Netanyahu became embroiled in a diplomatic dispute after the Australian prime minister announced that Canberra would formally recognize Palestinian statehood and decided to cancel a visa for a right-wing Israeli minister's visit to Australia.



Esmail Baqaei

In response, Israel canceled visas for Australian diplomats assigned to the Palestinian Authority, while Netanyahu launched a sharp attack on Albanese, calling him a "weak leader."

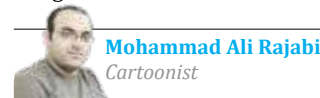
In his interview with the Australian television, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman called Albanese's claims "baseless", saying that, "It's regrettable. We think what the Australian government did was unjustified".

"No one can believe in Iran that this accusation has any basis in reality. It is simply a fabrication."

Regarding any attempt to repair relations, Baqaei said that, "It was the Australian government that decided to cut down diplomatic relations. It was not vice versa," he said.

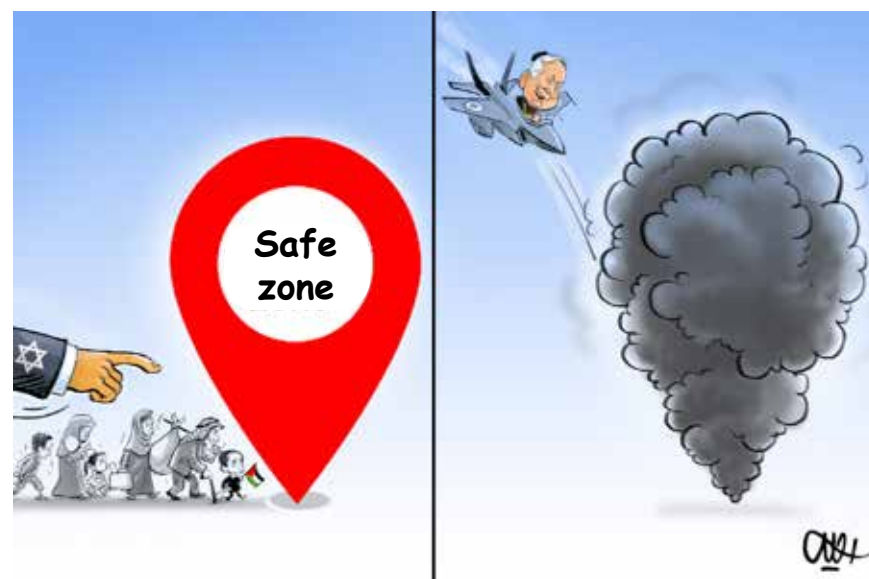
"So, it is for the Australian government to decide what really fits their nation's interest and we have ... been self-restrained in terms of our reaction to what they did." He added that relations with Australia is of great importance for Tehran.

"Since 1968, when we established diplomatic relations with Australia, we have maintained a respectful relationship with Australia," he said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi

Cartoonist



Iran’s exports to Kazakhstan outpace imports in Q1 calendar year



Economy Desk
Nasrin Pabarja, Iran’s commercial attaché in Kazakhstan, announced

that Iranian exports to Kazakhstan exceeded imports during the first three months of the current Persian calendar year, which started

on March 21, 2025. Pabarja noted Kazakhstan’s strong position among Iran’s target export markets, saying that in spring, Iran exported over \$53 million worth of goods, weighing more than 96,000 tons, to Kazakhstan. In return, Iran imported \$9 million in goods, with a total weight of 28,000 tons, from its northern neighbor, which mainly included sunflower seeds, corn, barley, and livestock products. According to Pabarja, Iran’s export basket to Kazakhstan is far more diverse than its import list, with 400 export items compared to 19 imports. Exports included \$23 million in agricultural products, \$22 million in industrial goods, \$5 million in petrochemicals, and more than \$3 million in mining and mineral products. She emphasized the strategic significance of Iran and Kazakhstan’s shared Caspian Sea border, which facilitates maritime trade, and

pointed to the robust road and rail links between the two countries as key enablers of deeper economic integration. Pabarja also pointed to the role of 37 customs offices in bilateral trade, noting that the provinces of Mazandaran, Golestan, Khorasan, West Azerbaijan, Tehran, and Markazi hold the largest share. “Considering sulfur shipments from Kazakhstan that pass through Iran’s Incheh Borun border crossing in Golestan Province and then through Razi in West Azerbaijan on their way to Turkey, these provinces play a vital role in transit trade,” she said, adding that the Amirabad and Anzali ports on the Caspian Sea recorded the highest maritime activity between the two countries. Pabarja also pointed to logistics expansion, joint investments in industry and energy, oil swap projects, grain trade and re-exports, and meat supply as key factors to boost bilateral trade.

As one of Central Asia’s largest economies, Kazakhstan is seen as a strategic partner for Iran in developing regional ties and connecting to global markets. Both Iran and Kazakhstan are members of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which allows preferential trade and tariff reductions. Despite international pressure and sanctions on Iran, Kazakhstan continues to pursue stronger economic relations with Tehran, leveraging regional assets such as the Caspian Sea, railway links, and road networks. For its part, Iran has sought to counter sanctions by deepening trade with neighbors through the EEU framework. Iran’s exports to Kazakhstan include petrochemicals, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, foodstuffs, and industrial machinery, while imports from Kazakhstan largely consist of grains, metals, minerals, and agricultural products.

IMIDRO chief signals openness to Indian investment

Economy Desk
Mohammad Aghajanlou, chairman of Iran’s state-run Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), announced the country’s readiness to host Indian investment across a range of mining and industrial projects, signaling a push to deepen bilateral economic cooperation. Speaking at a meeting with Indian investors on Sunday, Aghajanlou announced that the organization would put 300 exploration licenses up for tender. “Qualified companies will be able to take over mines through a legal auction process, and alongside them establish processing plants,” he said. Aghajanlou highlighted opportunities in IMIDRO’s southern economic zones, which he described as offering strong advantages in

production, exports and logistical benefits over inland sites. He also cited investment in the Halegan and Shahini gas fields as a key potential energy supply source for mining projects. The Halegan and Shahini gas fields are two relatively new and strategically important natural gas reserves located in Iran’s southern Fars Province. These fields are part of Iran’s broader push to expand domestic energy production especially for industrial sectors like steel and petrochemicals. The IMIDRO chief noted that cooperation between Iran and India could expand into alumina and coal, stressing that Iran’s mining and metals exports already stood at \$14 billion. “Iran’s mining and metals sector is ready to attract foreign investment, and there are many opportunities for broader cooperation



between Iran and India,” he said. Amir-Noujan Younesian, IMIDRO’s director of investment and economics, later said Indian firms could play a role in new industrial projects in Iran, including seamless pipe production, alumina plants,

and solar power stations. India already has several strategic projects in Iran, most prominently the development of Chabahar Port and related infrastructure in the southeast, where New Delhi has pledged \$250 million in credit.

Iran-Turkey rail cooperation bill referred to Expediency Council for arbitration



Economy Desk
A draft framework agreement on rail transport cooperation between Iran’s Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and Turkey’s Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure was sent to the Expediency Council, after dispute between parliament and the Constitutional Council. The bill, first approved by parliament in February, was rejected by the Constitutional Council over clause (3-4) of Article 4, which states that the Iranian side, in handling cross-border transport, must employ “qualified staff” at border exchange stations. The Constitutional Council objected to the wording and returned the bill to parliament for revision. However, in Sunday’s open session, lawmakers reiterated their previous stance and referred the case to the Expediency Council for final arbitration. The Constitutional Council is an oversight body in the Islamic Republic tasked with reviewing legislation to ensure its compatibility with Islamic law and the constitution. When disputes between the council and parliament cannot be resolved, the matter is passed on to the Expediency Council. The “Framework Agreement on Rail Transport Cooperation” is considered a key document in strengthening regional connectivity. It is designed to enhance rail links, facilitate the transit of goods and passengers, and upgrade border infrastructure between Iran and Turkey. According to parliamentary reports, the agreement covers areas such as establishing a legal framework for joint operation of border rail lines, coordination on rail infrastructure, technical standards, and safety protocols, facilitating the passage of trains through border crossings under both nations’ regulations, and expanding rail capacity along transit corridors between Iran, Turkey, and Europe. Turkey, as a gateway to Europe, and Iran, as a bridge to Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, play complementary roles in regional transport. The agreement is expected to bolster both the North-South and East-West corridors, cutting transport costs and speeding up transit flows.

Iran-Georgia trade ...

One of the main drivers of this surge in trade has been the strengthening of Iran’s domestic production and the expansion of industrial exports. A rise in non-oil exports, particularly in the industrial and petrochemical sectors, has helped boost the overall value of exports even more sharply than their physical volume. At the same time, efforts have been made to cut back on the weight of imported goods while pushing up

their overall value, reflecting a shift toward importing higher value-added products and reducing or phasing out bulk imports of intermediate or basic goods. In other words, the focus in recent years has been on production-oriented imports. Industrial and petrochemical capacities, which stand as two of Iran’s largest export sectors, played a central role in this transformation. Together, they recorded a near 28% rise in value while their tonnage

increased by 27%, underscoring the stronger contribution of high-value exports. When it comes to Iran’s exports to Georgia in 2024, several key product categories stand out. Ceramic tiles and flooring, valued at more than \$20 million, accounted for 80% of Georgia’s imports in that sector. Rolled steel bars and rods followed, worth \$11.3 million, meeting nearly 75% of Georgia’s demand in that category.

Other notable export items included steel bars at \$11.1 million, bare steel wires at \$6.2 million, and steel billets worth about \$5.1 million. On the import side, Iran’s purchases from Georgia in 2024 were mainly agricultural. Georgia served as a key supplier of fruits and vegetables, particularly apples, peaches, plums, and a range of produce such as tomatoes and bell peppers — products for which it has long been known in the Iranian market.



TENDER SJSCO. PF140402

Sirjan Jahan Steel Company is pleased to announce the sale and export of 25,000 MT Pellet Fines under FCA delivery terms at the Sirjan Jahan Steel Company warehouse (Cross of Gol Gohar Mining & Industrial Co. Shiraz Road 50Km, Sirjan, IRAN) according to INCOTERMS 2020. Interested applicants are hereby invited to obtain the tender documents by visiting the official website of Sirjan Jahan Steel Company at sjSCO.ir, through the Auction and Tender Portal, under the Auction section. All documentation will be provided electronically. All bids on conformity to tender instruction should be submitted no later than **Monday, September 22, 2025.**

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GCC's worn-out claims, ignoring region's real needs

What are requirements of being responsible neighbors?

ANALYSIS

The statement by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), while reflecting the views of Iran's neighbors on key regional developments, once again came up with claims against the Islamic Republic of Iran — and against certain regional trends — that have nothing to do with realities on the ground, regional dynamics, or the true needs of West Asia.

Contradictions in GCC statement

The 165th session of GCC foreign ministers was this time held in Kuwait, chaired by that country's Foreign Minister Abdullah Ali Al Yahya. As per tradition, the session wrapped up with a final statement. The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait signed off on their gathering on September 1.

As the region was grappling with a humanitarian disaster in Gaza, in their final statement, the GCC condemned — with the harshest tone — the “genocide in Gaza,” denouncing Israel’s deliberate blockade that has brought about famine, ethnic cleansing, collective punishment, mass killings of civilians and journalists, torture, executions on the spot, disappearances, forced displacement, looting, and the relentless demolition of residential neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, universities, mosques, churches, and infrastructures — all aimed at driving out the people of Gaza and resettling them elsewhere. Looking through the statement released by the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, one can reasonably conclude that the only fair and realistic part of it was on Gaza. What else it said about Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and ultimately Iran is worlds apart from what is actually unfolding. In dealing with Iran, the six GCC foreign ministers once again fell back on a confrontational stance, claiming that three islands — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa — belong to the UAE. The Arash gas field (shared by Iran and Kuwait) was another target of



claim. The ministers, by denying Iran’s rights in this field, asserted that it lies wholly within Kuwait’s waters and claimed ownership of its natural resources exclusively for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as the field falls under their partitioned zone. A third issue in the statement was the so-called “need for constructive talks” to hammer out a comprehensive solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, insisting that such negotiations must take into account the security concerns of all GCC member states. The bundle of claims in this latest statement sparked off a reaction, with Iran’s Foreign Ministry issuing a response, stressing: a) These claims are repetitive and devoid of legal credibility. b) Repeating these baseless claims will not bring about any change in the geographic, historical, or legal facts regarding the islands. c) Reaching a fair and sustainable agreement on the Arash field requires bilateral talks, joint efforts, and building a constructive atmosphere to safeguard mutual rights and interests. d) Iran has always, while honoring its obligations under the Comprehensive Safeguards

Agreement, taken part in negotiations and diplomatic processes in good faith to build trust about the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. However, the US and its European partners have repeatedly gone back on their commitments and blatantly violated the UN Charter and international law, thereby messing up the negotiating process. Another part of Iran’s reply can be read as a guideline for bilateral or multilateral regional relations. Tehran drew regional attention to the immediate threat stemming from the Zionist regime’s weapons of mass destruction, emphasizing that a nuclear-free region requires collective determination to pressure the international community into coming up with effective measures against Israel’s genocidal and aggressive arsenal. This point is significant, given Western undeniable attempts to paint Iran as a nuclear menace rather than a country committed to the NPT regime and nuclear laws. Iran’s Foreign Ministry stressed that the only entity in the region with a nuclear stockpile is Israel, and the only one openly committing genocide and military aggression is Tel

Aviv. From this angle, regional countries should, regardless of political or economic pressure, properly call out this root cause of instability. The Ministry also reiterated that regional security must rest on the collective participation of countries, away from destabilizing outside meddling, and that Iran remains fully ready to move forward with this approach.

Need for being responsible neighbor

The GCC’s repetition of such claims 70 days after Israel’s military strike on Iran inevitably casts doubts on the newly redefined atmosphere of regional ties — an atmosphere requiring alertness so that its post-strike foundations do not become undermined. The strong condemnation of the strike by Iran’s Arab neighbors was widely viewed as a sign of redefinition in a region where relations have long been frosty, if not outright tense. This redefinition stemmed from two realizations: a) Weakening Iran would not automatically generate strength and influence for them, and b) the Zionist regime’s expansionist ambitions know no



The Iranian flag is portrayed over a historical map that shows the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa were always part of Iran (colored in Orange).

● PRESS TV



The reality is that some states publicly lash out at Iran’s nuclear program but privately concede that Tehran, within IAEA regulations, has carried out industrial-scale enrichment despite sanctions, and has worked with the agency more than any other state in its history. That’s why Tehran sees these fabricated claims as flying in the face of real regional needs.



Then-Israeli energy minister Israel Katz (R) meets UAE Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology Sultan al-Jaber in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates, on August 13, 2023.

● ODED KARNI/GPO

bounds — the next capital could just as well be Riyadh or Abu Dhabi. With such logic at play, regional states had no hesitation in standing united in condemning Israel’s assault.

This developing perception among regional governments now requires consolidation and protection so that it is not chipped away by repetitive and groundless charges. The GCC signatories know well enough that Iran’s sovereignty over the three islands is neither new nor negotiable, and their relentless chorus of claims will never turn into facts.

For several years now, Iran’s foreign policy has placed the spotlight on the neighborhood. And to make this priority work on the ground, Tehran has rolled out various initiatives for regional cooperation. Collective security, in Tehran’s view, remains the key to helping West Asia get over its chronic flare-ups. But the extent of regional acceptance of this vision must be made out in the open, decisively and consistently — not with on-and-off statements.

The goodwill Iran has shown toward its neighbors in recent years is evident enough: It has proposed diverse frameworks of cooperation, the latest being the “Menareh” initiative put forward by the former Iranian foreign minister, designed as a consortium model to address nuclear concerns in a cooperative fashion.

The reality is that some states publicly lash out at Iran’s nuclear program but privately concede that Tehran, within IAEA regulations, has carried out industrial-scale enrichment despite sanctions, and has worked with the agency more than any other state in its history. That’s why Tehran sees these fabricated claims as flying in the face of real regional needs.

Some regional security anxieties, often shaped under the sway of outside powers, also come up as Iran continues to point out that it has led the most extensive fight against regional terror groups — Daesh (ISIS) in particular — while ensuring the flow of energy and maritime security. For Iran, then, understanding the partly hidden motives behind the GCC’s repeated statements is not difficult: They are not born out of the real approaches of the states and nations of the region, but are the end product of US and Israeli pressure, pressures that keep regional states from standing on their own feet.

Yet the future and stability of the region demand that all countries in this geography set aside their groundless claims, sit down at regional talks free of foreign interference, and work toward durable security. With so many economic, political, cultural, and religious bonds shared between them, choosing confrontation rather than cooperation with Iran would amount to little more than shooting themselves in the foot.

The article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Iran’s good neighborliness policy not short-term tactic: *Envoy*

‘Joint security pact’ Tehran’s preferred prescription for region

INTERVIEW

Among the objectives on the agenda of Mohammad Shia Al Sudani, the prime minister of Iraq, during his trip to Oman, was his effort to step in with regional countries to prevent the outbreak of a new war between Iran and Israel. Countries such as Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia had already used some diplomatic channels to put an end to the military aggression by the Zionist regime against Iran. In the end, these channels played a noteworthy role in this regard. Concurrently with Al Sudani’s trip, Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who traveled to Doha on August 28, met with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the emir of Qatar. During this meeting, discussions touched upon strengthening bilateral relations between Iran and Qatar, regional and international developments, particularly the ongoing genocide and crimes of the Zionist regime in occupied Palestine, and the urgent need for regional countries and the international community to take serious action to stop the genocide, bring the criminals to justice, and push back against the warmongering and expansionism of the Zionist regime. To examine Tehran’s decision to expand relations with regional countries, an interview was conducted with Hossein Nooshabadi, former Iranian ambassador to Oman and director-general of Parliament and Laws at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The text of the interview follows.



Hossein Nooshabadi



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (C) takes part in the 51st session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul on June 21, 2025, in the midst of unprovoked Israeli aggression against Iran. ● UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS



Iran believes that the common foundations with neighbors outweigh the differences stemming from fleeting concerns. If regional countries come to the realization that they can solve peripheral issues themselves, they will not allow their neighborly relations to be undermined by interference from third-party powers. If our neighbors move forward under mutual trust, away from suspicion and unproductive competition, many problems will definitely be ironed out.

Given recent developments in West Asia, how do you assess the role of regional countries in maintaining stability and security? Do these countries truly have the means to bargain over security matters in the region?

NOSHABADI: It is only natural that any tension, insecurity, and instability in any country of West Asia, Southwest Asia, and the Middle East can spill over to other regional countries, causing damaging consequences. For this reason, many neighboring governments, especially those in the Persian Gulf, have on multiple occasions — such as after the imposed 12-day war and also in the past decade — worked hard to head off conflicts and tensions that would bring harm to the region. Among them, Oman has always been known as a friendly and brotherly country to us. This country has played an important and effective role in building up regional peace and stability and continues to follow this path. Before the outbreak of the Gaza war, Omanis were very active and hosted indirect talks between Iran and the US. Fortunately, our bilateral relations with Oman, along with its regional cooperation with Iran and other Persian Gulf countries, have taken positive steps toward fostering Islamic unity and convergence.

How do you evaluate the Islamic Republic of Iran’s approach to its neighbors and its regional initiatives regarding them? What are Tehran’s ex-

pectations from its neighbors at this stage?

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country prioritizing a good neighborliness policy, has consistently paid attention to economic, political, and cultural interactions with neighbors and respected the positive role of some countries within the region. The Pezeshkian government has also pursued active neighborhood diplomacy aimed at creating peace, stability, and security in the region, a policy welcomed by many states. We have always declared that we have held out a hand of friendship and cooperation toward our neighbors with goodwill and sincerity. This approach is not a

temporary tactic but a fundamental strategy in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic. Iran believes that the common foundations with neighbors outweigh the differences stemming from fleeting concerns. If regional countries come to the realization that they can solve peripheral issues themselves, they will not allow their neighborly relations to be undermined by interference from third-party powers. If our neighbors move forward under mutual trust, away from suspicion and unproductive competition, many problems will definitely be ironed out.

Many are of the view that the current situation has created

conditions for Tehran to once again put back on the table its previous initiatives. Does this claim align with reality on the ground?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has, in the past, proposed the formation of a regional dialogue assembly and a joint security mechanism. According to this policy, regional countries could, with respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence, work out their differences peacefully and avoid threats or suspicions toward each other. Of course, sometimes — as seen in some recent points in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council’s statement — transient issues or longstanding disputes

creep into the main discussions and can throw a wrench into convergence. However, these matters can be reduced through greater interaction and mutual respect. The Islamic Republic regards its security as intertwined with the security and stability of its neighbors and believes that many issues can be solved based on a security pact founded on shared principles and mutual trust. Foreign interference, especially actions by the Zionist regime and the warmongering policies of the US, not only serve none of the regional countries but also stir up insecurity and chaos, preventing the formation of lasting peace. We expect that regional and neighboring countries, relying on their religious, cultural, historical, and geographical bonds, will lay the groundwork for shared security. Peace, stability, and security are inseparable components of these bonds, and only under their shadow can prosperity, development, and the expansion of economic, cultural, and social relations be brought about for the peoples of the region. Achieving these goals is part of the strategic principles of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy. We hope that neighboring countries will, by taking the necessary measures, step up to their historic role at this sensitive time to stop the war machine of the Zionist regime and its warmongering policies.



World Wushu Championships: Historic taolu triumph as Iranian women grab four golds



Sports Desk

Iranian women stole the show on the penultimate day of World Wushu Championships, collecting four gold medals in Brasilia, Brazil.

Zahra Kiani etched her name into history books on Saturday by grabbing a maiden taolu gold for Iran at the world event.

Representing the country in the women's qiangshu contest, Kiani scored 9.763 points to walk away with the ultimate prize, with Indonesian Patricia Geraldine (9.756) and Dương Thúy Vi (9.746) of Vietnam settling for silver and bronze, respectively.

This was Kiani's second history-making campaign in a year after she had won Iran's first individual taolu gold at the Asian Championships last September.

Meanwhile, Soheila and Shahrbanou Mansourian as well as Sediqeh Daryaei added three sanda golds to Iran's medal haul in women's competitions. Daryaei came out victorious (2-0) against Turkey's Sudenaz Gulay in the 65kg final, while Soheila Mansourian defeated China's Ruiping Chen in straight rounds to win the 70kg gold.

Shahrbanou Mansourian bagged a sixth world gold medal in her illustrious career, thanks to a 2-0 victory over Indian Shivani Prajapati in the 75kg showdown.

Soheil Mousavi suffered a last-four setback against Li Weijin of Hong Kong to finish his campaign with a consolation bronze in the men's 80kg category.

Iranians enjoyed further glory in the men's sanda contests on Saturday, as Shoja Panahi (65kg), Erfan Moharrami

(70kg), and Mohsen Mohammad-Seifi progressed to the final showpiece of their respective events.

Saturday's medals came after Iran had collected a sanda gold and taolu bronze earlier in the capital.

Mahdi Moradi made quick work of Cruz Pérez, knocking out the Mexican in the first round, on Friday to claim the men's 90kg gold.

Shahin Banitalebi – a gold medalist at The World Games in August – scored 9.733 points to finish third in the men's nandao event, with Hong Kong's Lau Chi Lung (9.763) and his compatriot Deng Longteng (9.740) collecting the gold and silver, respectively.

Iran's Sediqeh Daryaei celebrates after winning the women's sanda 65kg gold at the World Wushu Championships in Brasilia, Brazil, on September 6, 2025.
● LUCIO TAVORA/XINHUA

AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships: Iranians notch up 22 medals, finish runner-up to Japan

Sports Desk

A remarkable 22 medals, including seven golds, across different age classes saw Iran finish runner-up to Japan at the AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships Shaoguan, China. Japan collected 12 golds, two silvers, and five bronzes to claim the team trophy, with Kazakhstan in the third place with four golds, three silvers, and 10 bronze medals.

On Sunday, Yalda Naqibei-ranvand, Mehrnegar Ahmadi, and Hannaneh Salehi (+68kg) rounded off their dominant campaigns with a gold medal in the women's kumite under-21 category, while Hossein Vafa (-67kg) defeated Kyrgyzstan's Erlan Akylbek Uulu 9-3 to walk away with the ultimate prize in the men's U21 contests.

Naqibeiranvand overcame Taipei opponent Chan Hsin-Yu (5-0) in the -50kg final, while Ahmadi beat Kazakhstan's Aizhan Bakirova 2-1 for the -61kg gold, with Salehi outclassing Begimai Orozalieva of Kyrgyzstan 6-1 in the +68kg showdown. Meanwhile, Mohammad-Javad Safari (men's -75kg), Abolfazl Hamdamjou (men's -60kg), and Fatemeh Zahra Saeidi (wom-

en's -55kg) added three silvers to Iran's medal haul in the under-21 class, with Mahan Mirzaei winning a bronze in the men's +84kg division. Sunday's medals came after the Iranians had bagged six junior medals on the preceding night in Shaoguan. Ghazal Fat'hi was the sole Iranian gold medalist in the junior contests, courtesy of a 4-0 victory over Ho Cheok In of Macau in the women's -48kg final.

There was, however, final disappointments for the Iranians in the men's junior competitions, as Mohammad Abdollahi (-61kg), Arya Yousefi (-68kg), and Mi'aad Shafei (+76kg) had to settle for the silver in their respective weight classes. Abdollahi fell to an 11-3 loss to Kazakhstan's Turar Kalpakbay, while Yousefi suffered a 5-1 loss to the host's Liu Jiachen, with Shafei beaten 1-0 by Begzod Zoirov of Uzbekistan.

Iran's fourth silver medal on Sunday came in the men's individual kata event, where Amirreza Mosalman fell short against Japan's Takeru Hamazawa in the final.

Zahra Rezazadeh, meanwhile, finished her campaign with a consolation bronze in

the women's -53kg division, bouncing back from a setback against Japanese Miko Shishido opponent to beat Nepal's Sonam Sherpa and share the third podium with Ssu Chia-Ying of Chinese Taipei.

Iran had also won eight medals – including double women's kumite golds – in the youth class. Setayesh Qaneiefard defeated Malaysian Lalitaanjali Ravindran 3-0 in the -54kg final, with Setayesh Afshar coming out on top against Thailand's Chonlada Nisangkat 4-2 in the +61kg showpiece.

Arshia Mo'alemi (-63kg) and Faryar Bahadori (-70kg), meanwhile, settled for a couple of silver medals in the boys' kumite competitions, with Ava Farmani (-47kg) and Dina Karimi (-61kg) finishing with a bronze in the women's draw. Iran also bagged two team kata bronzes in the combined cadet and junior event. Amirreza Chamani, Amirali Mirzazadeh, Matin Farimand, and Ata Farimand teamed up for a third-place finish in the boys' contest. The quadruple of Dina Safari, Fatemeh Sehatbakhsh, Hannaneh Nourollahzadeh, and Kowsar Ranjbar took the bronze in the girls' contest.

Esteghlal signs former Barca striker El Haddadi

Sports Desk

Esteghlal signed former Barcelona striker Munir El Haddadi, the Persian Gulf Pro League club announced on Saturday.

The 30-year-old Morocco international joined the Tehran Blues as a free agent from CD Leganés, having scored seven goals in 29 appearances across all competitions for the LaLiga outfit last season.

The ex-Barcelona youth player made 56 appearances across two spells for Blaugrana's senior team between 2014 and 2018, finding the net on 12 occasions, while contributing with 10 assists.

Also a former player of Sevilla, Getafe, Valencia, Alavés, and Las Palmas, El Haddadi has 47 goals and 21 assists under his belt in 267 appearances in the Spanish top flight. The Moroccan has been capped 11 times for the national team, scoring twice, but has not received an international call-up since September 2022.

Esteghlal, which has Portuguese Ricardo Sa Pinto back on the bench as the head coach, is desperate to improve on the below-par ninth-place finish in the Iranian league last season.

The Capital Blues got off to a slow start in the summer transfer window, but their activity in the market gathered pace over the past 30 days as the club made marquee signings in Albanian international winger Jasir Asani last, former Real Madrid and Sporting CP goalkeeper Antonio Adán, and Malian winger Mousa Djenebo, as well as Iranian under-23 striker Saeid Saharkhizan. Esteghlal walked away with a massive 1-0 away victory over Tractor on the opening day of the new season, but had to overcome a two-goal deficit to share the points with Zob Ahan in a 3-3 draw at home before the international break.

● GETTY IMAGES



AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers: Taheri on hat-trick as Iran hit six past Guam

AFC – Five second-half goals steered Iran to a comfortable 6-0 win over Guam in their penultimate Group I clash in the AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers at the Al Nahyan Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

Iran will play the United Arab Emirates – themselves 2-0 winners against Hong Kong, China – on Tuesday in what will be a top-of-the-table clash.

The top team in the group will win direct qualification for next year's finals, with the second team hopping to progress as one of four best runners-up in 11 preliminary groups.

Despite dominating ball possession from the start, the Central Asian side only opened accounts in the 42nd minute through Alireza Safari.

Guam, who had no shots on target in the first half, conceded a second goal a minute after the restart when Krasa Taheri

put the ball past keeper Josiah Jones.

Taheri, who came on at the start of the second half, fired home Iran's third in the 74th minute and completed his hat-trick five

minutes later.

Saeid Saharkhizan put his name on the scoresheet in the 84th minute, with captain Mohammad Javad Hosseini completing the scoring in the 90th minute.



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 6-0 victory over Guam in the AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on September 6, 2025.
● AFC



● WKF

Monsoon magic enfolding Chabahar along summer days



Makoran Coast
● mana.ir



Lipar Lagoon
● irantripedia.com



Ban Masiti Caves
● kojaro.com

Iranica Desk

In Iran’s tourism calendar, summer is often overshadowed by the relentless, oppressive heat that blankets many parts of the country. However, at the south-easternmost tip of Iran, where the Makoran Coast open wide to embrace the Oman Sea and the vast Indian Ocean, lies the port city of Chabahar, which tells an entirely different story. Unlike other regions scorched by the sun’s burning rays during this season, Chabahar bestows upon its visitors a special climatic gift known as the “monsoon,” offering a mild, pleasant, and almost spring-like climate. This natural phenomenon not only generates a striking temperature contrast but also creates unique attractions that establish Chabahar as a distinctive destination all year round — with summer being especially extraordinary. The monsoon is nature’s enchanting gift that begins in early June and culminates in its full glory by August. Throughout this period, airflows originating from the Indian subcontinent generate a low-pressure system over Chabahar. As this air expands and cools, it releases moisture in the form of

seasonal clouds and monsoon rains along the Makoran Coast. These rains, accompanied by the persistent monsoon winds, increase humidity and stir the sea into waves, yet they also usher in a temperate and refreshing atmosphere, making Chabahar the only oceanic port in Iran with such a unique climate during the scorching summer months, IRNA wrote. One of the most significant and welcome benefits of the monsoon is a notable drop in temperature compared to other southern and central parts of Iran. While many cities endure summer temperatures soaring between 40 and 50 degrees Celsius, Chabahar enjoys much cooler weather, with temperatures typically fluctuating between 25 and 35 degrees Celsius, establishing it as one of Iran’s coolest summer destinations. Although the humidity rises during this season, the presence of cooling winds mitigates the discomfort often caused by moisture in other coastal regions, making the sensation much more bearable in Chabahar. Another captivating feature of this season is the morning mist, which adds to the ethereal beauty of the area. Beyond that,

the monsoon winds whip up the ocean, making it turbulent and full of waves — a phenomenon integral to shaping some of the region’s most remarkable natural and sporting attractions. The monsoon is far more than just a meteorological condition; it acts as a natural catalyst that has shaped unparalleled tourism potential in Chabahar. The prolonged and deep Makoran Coast — especially around the village of Ramin and the Lipar region — boasts gentle slopes free of perilous reefs, creating an ideal playground for surfing enthusiasts. During the monsoon months, waves consistently rise between 2 to 4 meters along these shores, a spectacle that draws even professional and international surfers. From late May through early October, particularly in July and August, Chabahar is renowned as the golden season for surfing. During this time, surf schools and camps actively operate, welcoming both novices and seasoned surfers alike. At notable locations such as the rocky beaches of Beris and Darak, the colossal monsoon waves violently crash against the coastal rock walls, sending towering water fountains shooting high into the air. This

dramatic natural display, commonly known as “wave blowers” or “water spouts,” creates a breathtaking and photogenic scene that vividly illustrates nature’s power and splendor. Though the monsoon rains may be brief, they are crucial to the otherwise arid Chabahar region, bringing temporary verdancy to certain areas and fostering the growth of drought-resistant plant species. This refreshing greening not only changes the character of the landscape but also enhances local biodiversity, especially attracting migratory bird species. Beyond the monsoon itself, Chabahar is a treasure trove of natural, cultural, and historical wonders that perfectly complement a summer visit. The Makoran Geopark, with its extraordinary geological formations, including miniature Martian Mountains shaped into bizarre forms and adorned with a palette of unusual colors reminiscent of extraterrestrial terrains, captivates visitors. Alongside these geological marvels are the natural mud volcanoes that periodically spout cold mud, adding to the region’s unique spectacles. The Lipar Lagoon, famous for its distinctive pink-hued plankton, stands among

Chabahar’s most stunning natural vistas and remains a favored subject for photographers seeking to capture its surreal beauty. Chabahar’s coastline is remarkably diverse, featuring beaches such as Darak, where the desert meets the sea, and Turtle Beach, a vital nesting ground for several species of sea turtles. The Ban Masiti Caves — a network of natural and man-carved caves with historical significance — along with widespread palm groves and quiet coastal villages, offer travelers a chance to experience local traditional life and soak up the tranquility of rural living. The Portuguese Castle, a colonial relic perched on the landscape, and bustling traditional markets packed with local handicrafts and aromatic spices further enrich the cultural and historical fabric of the region. Immersing yourself in the vibrant Balochi culture, with its distinctive clothing, customs, music, and traditional dances, will deeply enhance and personalize your travel experience. The monsoon’s importance to Chabahar is such that numerous seasonal events and festivities have developed around it. Every year, at the zenith of the monsoon season, the Monsoon Tourism Festival takes place,

aiming to highlight Chabahar’s tourism assets during the summer months, draw visitors, and provide a platform for cultural, artistic, and sporting events. This vibrant festival includes surfing competitions, traditional music performances, exhibitions of handicrafts, and the sampling of indigenous foods, providing an immersive opportunity to experience the region’s natural and cultural heritage in full. For a comfortable and enjoyable visit, a few practical tips are important to note. Given the high humidity and the likelihood of rain, it is recommended to wear breathable cotton clothing suited for damp conditions along with a light raincoat. Even on overcast days, the sun’s rays can be intense, so sunscreen and a hat are essential for skin protection. When exploring beaches and natural areas on foot, sturdy walking shoes or water-resistant sandals are advisable. Chabahar is celebrated for its fresh and delicious seafood, so tasting the local delicacies is not to be missed. Lastly, the people of the Baloch community are known for their warm hospitality; respecting their traditions and customs will enrich your overall travel experience immensely.

Art, industry of locksmithing in Chaleshtar

Iranica Desk

Chaleshtar is one of the oldest cities in the vicinity of Shahr-e Kord, located in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. Among the various Iranian handicrafts, Chaleshtar is renowned for a craft whose industrial aspect surpasses its artistic value — this is the art of Qoflsazi, or locksmithing, which has been practiced in this city for many years. The tradition of locksmithing in Chaleshtar dates back to the Safavid dynasty. According to locals, one of the elders of Chaleshtar, Khajeh Abdollah Nasr, traveled to Isfahan during his childhood, where he learned the craft of locksmithing from the great master of weaponry, Mohammad Ali Talayi. After mastering the art, he returned to Chaleshtar and invented the city’s distinctive padlock design, visitiran.ir wrote.

In Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, padlocks were primarily used to protect belongings such as saddlebags and Namakdan, a kind of handmade satchel. Beyond their protec-

tive function, some padlocks were also used as talismans. People believed that fastening padlocks to holy shrines would bring their prayers to fruition, and they sometimes locked pad-

locks as an expression of gratitude for answered prayers. Certain specially designed padlocks were commissioned by rulers and adorned with inscriptions of the name of God and revered

Imams. A notable example is the padlock on the door of the Kaaba, made by Haj Abdolvahab Riyahi Chaleshtari from Chaleshtar, crafted in Mecca. One type of padlock, known

as Bakhoo, was used to secure mules and prevent them from scattering. Today, traditional padlocks of Chaleshtar are crafted in smaller sizes and repurposed as jewelry items, such as necklaces.



● IRNA



● visitiran.ir



Persepolis resounds with music, friendship as 1.2m tune in to Armenian orchestra

Tehran, Yerevan step into fresh phase of cultural ties: *Minister*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Armenia began a “new phase” of cultural relations, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Reza Salehi Amiri said on Sunday, as the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra celebrated its centenary with an open-air concert at Persepolis that drew 1.2 million online viewers within hours.

The historic performance on Saturday was staged beneath the ancient columns of the UNESCO World Heritage site near Shiraz. Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives from 17 countries attended in person, IRNA reported.

Among them were envoys from Brazil, Mexico, Kenya, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Denmark, and Serbia, alongside representatives from Sri Lanka, Nigeria, South Korea, Italy, Norway, Germany, and two UNESCO officials.

“Their presence underscores the event’s significance as a celebration of friendship and cultural diplomacy,” Salehi Amiri said.

The orchestra’s 110 musicians opened with Iran’s national anthem before performing works including Aram Khachaturian’s ‘Symphony No. 2’ and the patriotic Iranian anthem ‘Ey Iran’. When Armenian artists performed ‘Ey Iran,’ the audience applauded for a full minute, celebrating the centuries-old cultural bond.

“The echoes of friendship

between Iran and Armenia resounded through Persepolis,” Armenia’s ambassador to Iran Grigor Hovhannisyan said. “Just as our ancestors offered tributes here millennia ago, today we bring the gift of music, history, and creativity.”

The concert site was approximately 50 meters below the Apadana terrace, framed by moonlight and artistic lighting that highlighted the stage. The setting evoked the Gate of All Nations, where 2,500 years ago, delegations from 23 nations with diverse cultures gathered to mark the New Year and express commitment to peace. Local Armenians joined the Iranian audience, creating a vivid display of shared cultural heritage.

“This gift of music is our modern tribute,” Hovhannisyan said. “It reflects our history, independence, creativity, and enduring existence. It is a unique beginning for future collaboration.”

Speeches followed from Fars Province Governor Hossein Ali Amiri, Salehi Amiri, Armenian Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports Zhanna Andreasyan, and Iran’s Minister of Science. All emphasized music as a universal language of peace and cooperation.

“Civilizations endure through culture and knowledge, not the sword,” Salehi Amiri said. Andreasyan described the performance as “a statement of universal values, peace, and

peaceful coexistence among nations.” Governor Amiri called the concert a symbol of “peace, friendship, and solidarity” between nations.

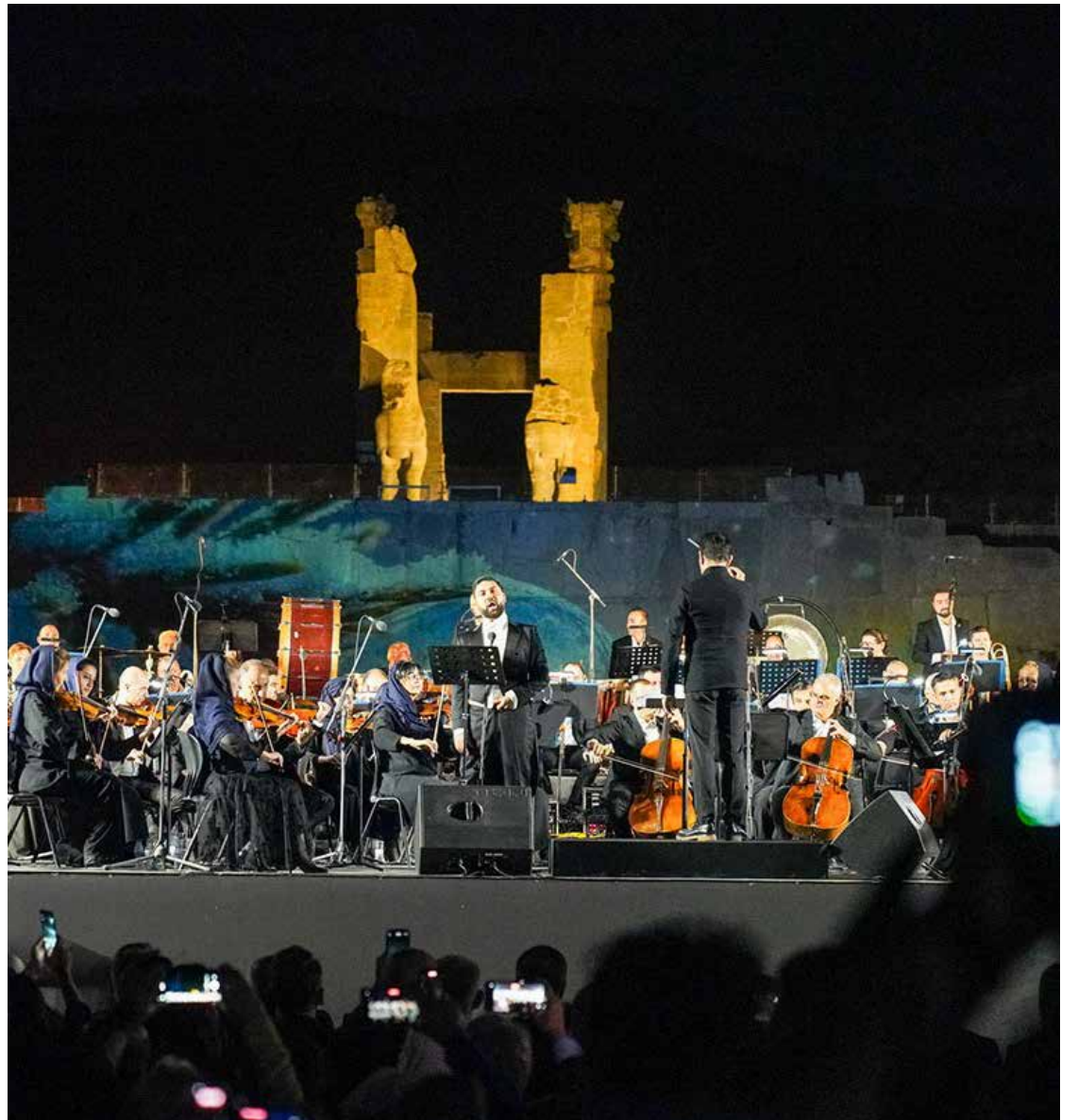
The gathering brought together local and visiting Armenians, Iranian music enthusiasts, and cultural figures, from classical musicians to maestro Abdolhossein Mokhtabad.

Cultural cooperation between the two countries extends beyond performing arts. Salehi Amiri highlighted operational measures including national museum collaborations, handicrafts exhibitions in Tehran and Yerevan, and joint UNESCO submissions for tangible and intangible heritage, with restoration training programs planned shortly.

Iran exported \$500 million in handicrafts in 2024, and Tehran has offered to restore Armenia’s Qajar-era Blue Mosque and develop joint tourism circuits. Tourist flows surged 53 percent in 2024, with 263,000 Armenians visiting Iran and 213,000 Iranians travelling to Armenia.

The Armenian orchestra last performed in Iran 25 years ago, staging Loris Tjeknavorian’s opera ‘Rostam and Sohrab’ in Tehran.

This centenary concert now sets the stage for continued cultural cooperation, joint festival registrations with UNESCO, including Tirgan, and strengthened tourism links, as both countries pursue a path of shared heritage and lasting friendship.



Members of the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra perform under the baton of conductor Eduard Topchjan at the ancient site of Persepolis, in southern Fars Province, Iran, September 6, 2025.

● MIZAN

Restored ‘Bashu, the Little Stranger’ wins Venice Classics award

Gaza film ‘The Voice of Hind Rajab’ takes Silver Lion after record ovation

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Bahram Beyzaie’s ‘Bashu, the Little Stranger’ claimed Best Restored Film at the 82nd Venice International Film Festival, while Tunisian-French filmmaker Kaouther Ben Hania’s ‘The Voice of Hind Rajab’ secured the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize after a historic ovation.

The dual honors reflected Venice’s standing as both a guardian of cinema’s heritage. From Beyzaie’s story to Ben Hania’s harrowing Gaza tragedy, the awards underscored the festival’s role in reviving forgotten voices and amplifying the cries of the present.

Restored by Roashana Studios with support from Kanoon

and presented by French distributor MK2 Films, the film returned to global screens through Venice Classics.

If Beyzaie’s film reached back into the past, Ben Hania’s docudrama carried the raw immediacy of Gaza’s current conflict. ‘The Voice of Hind Rajab’ recounts the final hours of a five-year-old Palestinian girl killed in January 2024 after a desperate phone call to the Palestine Red Crescent.

Using authentic audio, the film captured her pleas from a bullet-riddled car. At its premiere on September 3, the screening drew a 23-minute 50-second standing ovation, the longest in Venice’s history.

Accepting the Silver Lion, Ben Hania dedicated the award to Red Crescent first responders,

calling them “heroes”. She said Hind’s words were “a cry for rescue the entire world could hear, but no one answered”. She added, “Her voice will continue to echo until accountability is real, until justice is served.”

With producers including Brad Pitt, Joaquin Phoenix and Alfonso Cuarón, the film is also Tunisia’s official submission for the 2026 Oscars. Industry observers expect strong momentum despite uncertainty over a US distributor.

The festival’s top prize, the Golden Lion for best film, went to American director Jim Jarmusch’s ‘Father Mother Sister Brother’. Wearing a badge reading “Enough”, he also signaled his opposition to Israel’s ongoing offensive in Gaza.

Tabriz nominated as D-8 tourism capital for 2026

Social Desk

Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said on Sunday that Iran northwestern city of Tabriz was nominated to represent the country as candidate for the title of 2026 tourism capital of the Developing Eight Organization (D-8).

The D-8 grouping – which brings together Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria – launched a call earlier this year for members to put forward cities to compete for the title, inn.ir reported.

The nomination, officials said, aims to boost regional cooperation and shine a spotlight on cultural assets across the Islamic world.

Moslem Shojaei, head of foreign tourism marketing at the ministry, said Tabriz was chosen after securing the “highest score” in assessments carried



out by a national committee. “After evaluation of the cities proposed by provincial departments, Tabriz came out on top,” he said, adding that the proposal was supported by a promotional video and a detailed plan.

The D-8 secretariat has listed several benchmarks for selection, including sustainable infrastructure, protection of cultural heritage, innovation, safety of visitors, marketing reach, intercultural exchange and wider social impacts. According to Shojaei, Tabriz per-

formed strongly across these indicators.

The historic northwestern city has long been a cultural and commercial hub, famed for its traditional bazaars, carpets and architecture. Iranian officials hope that winning the 2026 title would draw international travelers and give fresh impetus to the country’s tourism sector, which has been seeking new markets. Final results will be announced by the D-8 secretariat after evaluating nominations from all member states.