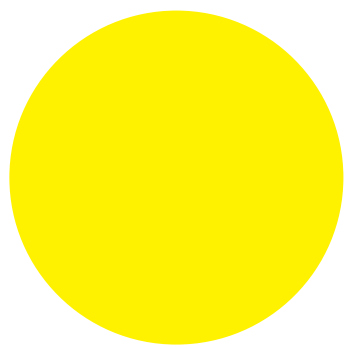


Iran-Kuwait trade
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EXCLUSIVE

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Europeans have
already made up
their minds on
snapback

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

On August 28, the three European signatories to the 2015 nuclear deal, France, Germany and the UK (E3), launched the 30-day process of reinstating international sanctions on Iran through a mechanism known as "snapback." One of their demands was the resumption of Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which Tehran had suspended in June after a joint Israeli-US strike on its nuclear facilities.

Despite a recent understanding reached between Iran and the IAEA over a new cooperation framework in the wake of those attacks, the EU and E3 top diplomats, in a September 17 phone call with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, dismissed Tehran's steps as "insufficient" and once again threatened to trigger the snapback mechanism.

Against this backdrop, Iran Daily spoke with Abbas Aslani, a political affairs analyst.

IRAN DAILY: In light of the September 17 phone call between Iran's foreign minister and European officials, during which these countries reiterated their position on Iran's nuclear activity, how do you assess the success of Tehran's diplomatic efforts to ease European pressure following the recent agreement with the IAEA?

ASLANI: The European and Western parties are talking as if nothing has happened, ignoring the fact that Iran has faced direct military aggression. For security and defense reasons, cooperation with the IAEA had to be re-established within a new framework, because the recent developments have created an entirely new situation.

It appears that the Europeans are using the snapback of UN sanctions as leverage to pressure Tehran and, at the same time, to carve out a role for themselves. Having previously been sidelined—particularly by the United States—and never really central players in the nuclear talks, they now seem eager to and threaten action to project themselves as more influential. Despite the recent agreement with the IAEA—an agreement that the agency's director general himself assessed positively—Europe has reverted to its previous positions. They seem unwilling to acknowledge what they themselves had requested: renewed cooperation with the agency. This diminishes the prospects for a real breakthrough. Ultimately, it will depend on whether the Europeans, under US pressure, stick to this current course or decide to recalibrate. Should they persist, they will inevitably face reactions.

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Pezeshkian urges economists to propose blueprints for spending cuts, foreign trade boost



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (3rd R) flanked by Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh (2nd R) and chief of the Plan and Budget Organization, Hamid Pourmohammadi (4th R), meets a group of Iranian economists in Tehran on September 16, 2025.

● president.ir



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decapitation supposed
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Araghchi: Time for E3 to avert 'preventable crisis'

International Desk

Iran's foreign minister told his European counterparts on Wednesday that his country has entered talks with the UN nuclear agency with a responsible approach and now it is the turn of European parties to use the opportunity to continue the diplomatic path and prevent a "preventable crisis". Abbas Araghchi and his counterparts from France, Germany and Britain held new round of nuclear negotiations aimed at preventing the reimposition of international sanctions against Iran. The three countries, the so-called E3, launched a 30-day process at the end of August to reimpose UN sanctions. They set conditions for Tehran to meet during September to convince them to extend the "snapback

mechanism". The offer by the E3 to extend the snapback for as much as six months to enable serious negotiations is conditional on Iran restoring access for UN nuclear inspectors – who would also seek to account for Iran's large stock of enriched uranium – and engaging in talks with the US. The status of Iran's enriched uranium stocks has been unknown since Israel and the US bombed Iranian nuclear sites in June. Wednesday's phone call followed an agreement reached by Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last week on resuming cooperation between Tehran and the UN nuclear watchdog. There has also been no indication of a willingness from Iran to resume talks with Washington. Iran says it is still working to refine how it will work with IAEA.

Araghchi pointed to Iran's principled stance on the importance of maintaining dialogue and diplomacy to prevent escalating tensions, saying that the move by the three European countries to reinstate the UN sanctions lacks any "legal or logical justification". The Iranian foreign minister stressed that Iran is ready to reach a "fair and balanced solution" that guarantees mutual benefits. "Achieving such a goal requires a responsible and independent approach by the three European countries and refraining from being influenced by actors who place no value on diplomacy or the principles and rules of international law", Araghchi said. Citing two European and one Iranian diplomat, Reuters reported that Iranian and European ministers made little progress

in talks on Wednesday. Germany said Wednesday that the "ball is still in Iran's court". A German Foreign Ministry spokesman said the offer from the so-called E3 powers "to discuss a temporary extension of the snapback if Iran fulfils certain conditions remains on the table", but added that "at this point the steps taken by Iran have not been sufficient". The reimposed sanctions would hit Iran's financial, banking, hydrocarbons and defense sectors. Four European diplomats and an Iranian official said prior to the call that the most likely scenario would be that the E3 would go ahead with the reimposition of sanctions. Two of the diplomats also said that even with a last-minute agreement, it was unlikely Washington would support it. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokes-



man Esmaeil Baqaei said Wednesday Iran expects European powers to respond positively to its signing of a new cooperation agreement with the UN nuclear watchdog. "We have demonstrated that we are not averse to diplomacy and take every opportunity to safe-

guard the interests and benefits of the Iranian nation," Baqaei said during his weekly press conference. "It is natural to expect that Iran's positive approach and good-faith efforts will be met with similar and reciprocal action from the European parties."

Larijani: Tehran-Riyadh ties to expand in more organized framework

International Desk

Iran's Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Larijani said economic and security cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia will expand in a more organized framework. Larijani made the remarks after a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the Arab country's Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud in Riyadh on Tuesday. The Iranian official said that during his meetings, both sides discussed economic, defensive and regional cooperation. He said that the level of economic relations between the two countries is low and obstacles facing the expansion of relations need to be removed. Larijani also said that they discussed ways to ensure stability in the West Asia region. "Defense cooperation between the two countries was also reviewed, and it was decided that these efforts should be pursued in the form of working groups, God willing, this will take on a more organized form in the future."



Larijani traveled to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the kingdom's defense minister, leading a delegation that included Deputy Secretary for International Affairs Ali Bagheri Kani and Persian Gulf Affairs Advisor Mohammad Ali Bek. The visit follows a series of high-level exchanges between the two countries, including the Saudi defense minister's trip to Tehran earlier this year. The meeting comes just one day after President Masoud Pezeshkian met with bin Salman on the sidelines of the emergency Arab-Islamic summit in Doha, where both sides expressed satisfaction with the growing momentum in bilateral ties



Iran's Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani (c) talks with Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud (r) before a meeting in Riyadh on September 16, 2025. **IRNA**

in the wake of the China-brokered detente in 2023. Larijani's visit to Riyadh is his third regional trip since assuming office on August 5, following earlier stops in Iraq and Lebanon. Iranian officials say the renewed diplomatic outreach reflects efforts to stabilize regional dynamics and expand cooperation with neighboring states.

Top general: Increase in defense, military capacities 'inevitable strategy'

International Desk

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi described the increase in the country's defense and military capacities across various spheres as an inevitable strategy. The top general emphasized that Iran's combat readiness has prevented enemies from conducting a new round of strikes against the country. "Our defensive and combat preparedness has reached a stage that prevents enemies from committing miscalculations, including the notion of launching a fresh invasion of our country," Mousavi said on Wednesday as he was paying a visit to the tactical headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Force in Tehran. The high-ranking military commander praised the comprehensive readiness of the Iranian armed forces to vigorously defend the country's independence, security, and territorial integrity, and to confront all potential threats and dangers. Mousavi also appreciated the vigilance and wisdom of the Armed Forces and lauded their historic experiences, particularly the 1980-88 war imposed by then-Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and the 12-day Israeli-US war in June. The top general described the increase in defensive and military capacities across various spheres as an inevitable strategy.



Mousavi underscored that these strategies ensure sustainable security and strengthen Iran's deterrent defense capabilities against any type of aggression. On June 13, the Israeli regime launched an unlawful aggression against Iran, leading to the assassination of many senior commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary citizens. Iran retaliated in less than 24 hours with a barrage of missiles and drones, and followed it up with a series of retaliatory operations under True Promise III. The US entered the war on behalf of Israel on June 22, when its bombers hit three Iranian nuclear sites in brazen violation of international law. In response, Iran launched a missile strike on Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest US military air base in West Asia, in an act of self-defense. The embattled Israeli regime was forced to unilaterally accept a truce deal on June 24.

'Nonsense': FM spox rejects US criticism of Iran's missile program

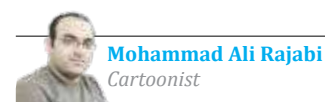
International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman on Wednesday dismissed as "nonsense" US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's criticism this week of the Islamic republic's missile program as an "unacceptable risk". "He was speaking nonsense," Esmael Baqaei told journalists, adding that the United States was "not supposed to comment on the defensive capabilities of a nation that has decided to preserve its independence at any cost." The missile program was Iran's means "to stand against the greed, aggression and assaults of foreigners – including the US and the Zionist regime," he said, referring to Israel. During a Monday visit to Israel, Rubio vowed to maintain the "maximum pressure" policy of sanctions against Tehran

which was imposed during US President Donald Trump's first term in office. That policy saw Washington unilaterally withdraw from the landmark 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers. Rubio said at a joint news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that a nuclear Iran possessing missiles that could deliver nuclear weapons far away is an unacceptable risk, not just for Israel, not just for the United States, but for the world. The United States would press ahead with pressure on Iran until "they change course," he added. In mid-June, Iran launched a barrage of missiles on the occupied territories in response to an unprovoked aggression by the regime, which claimed the lives of nearly 1,100 Iranians.



Iran also launched a missile strike on Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the largest US military air base in West Asia, after the US joined the aggression which targeted three Iran's nuclear facilities. The embattled Israeli regime was forced to unilaterally accept a truce deal on June 24 following Iran's missile strike on it's the occupied territories.



Pezeshkian urges economists to propose blueprints for spending cuts, foreign trade boost

Economy Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday called on economic experts to provide the government with "the best solutions to optimize spending without causing dissatisfaction or problems" and to present proposals to boost foreign trade amid efforts to improve ties with neighboring and friendly countries. At a meeting with a group of economists, Pezeshkian said his administration is working to steadily enhance Iran's international relations and is engaged in talks with various parties to manage tensions. He added that the government aims to control spending in the next year's budget and asked economists for concrete recommendations, president.ir reported. The meeting was held to review economists' proposals for addressing the country's main economic challenges, including the budget deficit, inflation, imbalances and structural reforms. The president said experts agree inflation and the budget deficit are the most pressing issues facing Iran's economy, and that managing them is the government's first step toward reforms. He stressed that the administration is determined to resolve such problems at their root, noting that a recent joint session with Parliament also focused on this agenda. Another goal of the meeting, he said, was to exchange views on prioritizing reforms in various sectors and on how to implement them. He acknowledged that most state-run enterprises are loss-making and urged economists to advise on improving their performance, privatization or at least transferring their management. The government's central objective, he added, is to raise efficiency across all sectors. Pezeshkian also cited subsidy reform as



a key element of economic restructuring, emphasizing the need for targeted distribution to maximize benefits for end consumers. He said the current system merely wastes limited national resources. However, he pledged that any changes would be carried out with full consideration of economic and social impacts, along with complementary measures. He added that fourth-generation universities worldwide now focus on solving societal problems and meeting public needs, and said Iran should also delegate issues to universities, assigning them problem-solving responsibilities

for specific demographic groups based on practical frameworks. The president, announcing readiness to hold such meetings regularly, said, "holding these meetings will be more effective when experts from each field – taxation, banking, structural, public services and others – debate within specialized working groups, and the conclusions are presented to the government." Pezeshkian said his administration also seeks to strengthen social capital through initiatives such as community-based programs and improving education and healthcare services. By

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian meets with a group of economists in the capital Tehran on September 17, 2025. president.ir

delegating authority to provinces, the government aims to create a platform for greater participation from capable individuals in solving problems and managing affairs. If people feel a sense of ownership in the outcomes, he said, their motivation and determination for social engagement will grow.

'Unique capacity': China highlights Mazandaran's economic potential

Economy Desk

Chinese Ambassador to Iran, Zhong Peiwu, praised the northern province of Mazandaran for its "unique capacity for strategic cooperation" during a visit on Wednesday, saying the region could play a role in advancing global goals and strengthening bilateral ties. During his visit to Mazandaran, meetings were held with local officials, academics and business leaders, promising the start of a new chapter of scientific, industrial, agricultural and tourism cooperation between the two countries. "With the wisdom of Iranian officials, we hope relations between the two countries will also flourish at the provincial level," ISNA quoted Zhong as saying. Zhong highlighted Mazandaran's abundant natural resources, diverse agricultural products, vast forests and attractive tourism potential along the Caspian Sea. He also noted the province's academic strength, saying the University of Mazandaran has a long history and a prominent place in Iran's higher education system. The ambassador said Mazandaran could play an important role in trade, investment, renewable energy, forest economy and tourism, and pledged that China would work to encourage Chinese companies to invest in the northern province and help remove existing obstacles.

Iran-Kuwait trade rose 17% in 2024, hit \$130m in Q1 2025



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Official trade between Iran and Kuwait reached about \$300 million in the Iranian calendar year starting March 21, up by around \$100 million from the previous year, according to Arash Nikpey, vice president of the Iran-Kuwait Joint Chamber of Commerce. Kuwaiti media, however, reported that bilateral trade rose 17% in 2024, with Iran's exports to Kuwait more than seven times its imports. The trade balance last year favored Iran by \$280 million, Nikpey told Iran Daily. He said dollar-denominated transactions also increased in the first quarter of 2025, with total trade hitting \$130

million, up 16% from the same period in 2024. Iranian exports to Kuwait stood at \$116 million during the three months, a 19% rise from \$97 million a year earlier. Imports from Kuwait fell 7% to \$14 million from \$15 million in the same period last year, leaving Iran with a positive trade balance of \$102 million, mostly due to export growth. **Reasons for trade growth** Nikpey attributed the rise in trade to reduced political tensions, more frequent exchanges between traders, increased Iranian production capacity, and stronger demand in Kuwait for a wider range of Iranian goods. He also cited export-friendly policies from both governments. The launch of a land route linking Iran to Kuwait through Iraq has further boosted exchanges, lowering transportation costs and improving the competitiveness of Iranian products in the Kuwaiti market. **Joint trade committee** Nikpey said Iran and Kuwait have recently agreed to set up a joint trade committee to explore cooperation, particularly in food, services, visa facilitation and logistics.

He noted that Kuwait has made significant investments in technology, healthcare, financial services and agriculture in recent years, which could deepen bilateral economic ties. Iran, with its industrial and agricultural base and skilled labor, could capture a larger share of Kuwait's import market, especially in food security, technical services and construction. Iran's main exports to Kuwait are non-oil goods and agricultural and industrial products. These include fruits and vegetables, building and mineral materials such as cement, tiles, ceramics and stone, as well as petrochemical and chemical products such as bitumen, plastics and polymers. Iran also ships seafood including fish and shrimp, light industrial products such as small appliances, auto parts and metal goods. By contrast, Iran typically imports from Kuwait higher value-added products, including processed petrochemicals and oil derivatives like industrial oils and specialty chemicals, industrial machinery and equipment, pharmaceuticals and medical devices, and luxury consumer goods such as branded clothing and advanced household appliances.

Azerbaijan-Nakhchivan new bridge on Aras corridor to open by March: Official



Economy Desk

Director General for International Affairs at the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development Amin Taraffo said a new bridge on the Aras corridor in northwestern Iran will be inaugurated by March, boosting road capacity between Azerbaijan and its exclave Nakhchivan via the Iranian route from Kalaleh to Jolfa. Taraffo told ILNA that the Aras corridor is not a new route, but the latest development is the construction of a new bridge along the way. "With the completion of this bridge, the road capacity connecting Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan from Kalaleh to Jolfa will increase," he said. Currently, around 250 trucks

pass through the corridor daily, a number that could rise once the new infrastructure is in place, he said. Construction of the bridge by Azerbaijan on the Kalaleh-Agh Band route, is already completed. On the Iranian side, physical progress has reached more than 70%, Taraffo said. He noted that broader construction works on roads and bridges to connect Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan through Iran are underway and being pursued by both sides. The corridor is already operational, Taraffo said, adding that since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence of the Caucasus and Central Asian states, Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan have maintained their connection through Iran.

Iranian steel firm pioneers first mechanized dry tailings project in Mideast

Economy Desk

A steel company in northeastern Iran has launched the Middle East's first "mechanized dry tailings stacking" project, a move aimed at cutting water consumption and improving industrial waste management, the project's director said on Wednesday. Morteza Sharifi, who oversees the initiative, told ILNA that the project has achieved 55% physical progress and represents both an environmental and economic transformation in Iran's steel sector. The plan, implemented with European technology, is designed to reduce water usage, optimize tailings management methods, and lower environmental risks. Iran faces a severe water shortage, and Sharifi said all consumer sectors must adopt scientific and engineering methods to optimize water use. He noted that Sangan Steel Mining Industries Company (SMIC) was the first in Khorasan Razavi Province to build a tailings dewatering system, which returns water to the production cycle. In the new approach, tailings are processed into what is known as "dry tailings," with reduced moisture, and then directed to dumps. The initiative replaces the traditional method of pumping slurry to tailings dams, which consumes large volumes of water, is costly and time-intensive, and carries serious environmental hazards.

Failed Hamas decapitation supposed to facilitate current Gaza attack

INTERVIEW The foreign ministers and leaders of Islamic countries came together on Sunday and Monday this week for a fresh emergency session in Doha, Qatar. This time, the pretext for this gathering was Israel's attack on Qatar, an unprecedented act that stood out from Tel Aviv's past adventurisms and bombings of US allies. The breach of Qatar's territorial integrity quickly made headlines worldwide. Tel Aviv was struggling to assassinate Hamas leaders in Doha. This was while the Palestinians were engaged in negotiations and gathered there to hammer out a solution to end the genocide in Gaza. Yet, evidence suggests that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fell short of his goals. Although this move by Israel is not surprising given the past two years' actions, the attack on Qatar has definitely shaken up at least some regional countries. To examine the reasons behind Israel's actions and their regional aftermath, and also Iran's special role right now, an interview was conducted with Hadi Borhani, university professor and international affairs analyst, a translation of which follows.



Israel struck one of America's key regional allies, Qatar, with an air attack on September 9, 2025. Why did Israel take such a risky gamble at this moment?

BORHANI: In assessing Israel's motives, two points stand out: First, Israel has hit a military dead-end in Gaza, failing to score the expected victory — which included defeating Hamas, freeing captives, and capturing Gaza. Netanyahu has been promising repeatedly for over two years that various operations achieved these goals but hasn't delivered. He has now launched a campaign in Gaza City that looks like his last shot at success. Should he fail here, he will be seen as the loser of this battle, and his political fate will take a hit.

Therefore, in this final showdown, Netanyahu is pulling out all the stops to secure a different outcome. From this perspective, Israel calculated that targeting Hamas chiefs at the negotiation table would deliver a psychological, executive, and political blow to Hamas, raising the odds of their defeat in Gaza. Israel expected this sudden, swift strike to cut off the head of Hamas and weaken the body, causing them to falter in resisting the ongoing assault and thus help Netanyahu fulfill his war goals.

Regarding this attack, there are two roughly opposing views: Some believe, as mentioned, that it was purely an offensive aimed at wiping out Hamas leadership; Others argue it marks the start of wider adventurism and incursions into new countries, effectively rolling out Netanyahu's "Greater Israel" plan step-by-step.

The reality is that it's a mix of both perspectives. On one hand, Israel and Netanyahu urgently need a decisive victory in Gaza. Any failure would chip away at Israel's deterrence and prestige in the region and undermine the sense of security crucial for the survival of the people of Israel. Hence, more attacks are likely since Tel Aviv needs a victory at any cost. It seems ready to brush off the displeasure of Arab states or even Americans, including those from the Trump administration, to secure a knockout win. Following this logic, if Hamas leaders pop up in Turkey, Egypt, or any other Muslim country, Israel will likely strike again, even at the expense of bilateral ties.

On the other hand, there's a longer-term dimension: The current Israeli cabinet is right-wing and religious, genuinely believes in the idea of "Greater Israel," and overestimates its capacity to make this a reality in the Middle East. Therefore, the risks of the realization of this plan and the escalation of attacks on other countries must not be underestimated. Arab countries and the region must be seriously worried about the future of the Middle East.

From your perspective, has this concern taken root among regional countries, or are recent statements and moves just temporary?

It seems that after Israel's attack on Qatar, the situation in the region can't be compared to the past. A real, deep awareness and concern about Israeli aggression and the "Greater Israel" plan have emerged among regional and Arab countries — something unprecedented in past decades. Today, there is a shared worry about this threat among Arab countries, Iran, and Turkey, all deeply



A convoy of Israeli tanks is deployed near the Gaza Strip on September 16, 2025. Israel launched its ground assault on Gaza City shortly after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed robust support for the offensive in person.
● MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP

alarmed by Israel's threats. This shared understanding increases the chances for closer Islamic cooperation and coordination against Israel and its aggression. Under these conditions, a serious diplomacy for Islamic countries to join forces for confronting Israel now has greater odds of success than ever before.

Before these events, or even before Israel's attacks on Iran, the region usually perceived the threat to be mainly from Tehran. Has this view shifted in the last three months following Israel's attacks on Iran and Qatar? Has the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, in particular, concluded that Iran is not the main threat?

Actually, not just in the past three months but over the last year or two, pivotal changes have occurred that have turned attention back to Tel Aviv as the main threat. Today, Israel is seen as the primary source of insecurity in

the Middle East. Several reasons account for this shift: First, Iran in recent years has adopted a friendlier stance toward the region, rebuilding relations, trying to resolve disputes, and taking more positive positions toward neighboring countries. Second, past Arab — and especially Sunni — concerns about a "Shia crescent" or Resistance Axis have significantly waned. Third, in the same period, Israel has stepped up its incursions and threats against regional countries, from Lebanon and Syria to Qatar, even intimidating Turkey and Saudi Arabia. While Iran has been friendlier, Israel's policies — both in rhetoric and military action — have grown more hostile, making regional countries highly sensitive to Israeli moves.

Conflicting reports have emerged about whether the US was forewarned about the attack on Doha. Is

it even possible for such an attack to be carried out without Washington's knowledge? And how will this affect regional countries' trust in the US, especially since Qatar is a key US partner?

This strike has been a major blow to regional trust in the US. It's hard for me to swallow that Washington and the Trump administration were fully briefed and still gave the green light since this operation undermined US interests and assets in the region. From a national US interest perspective — and even Trump's own interests — this was a serious setback if not a disaster for US Middle East policy. More likely, the US had a rough idea that an attack was coming but only got precise intel when the jets were already en route, making aborting impossible. This aligns better with the narrative of US-Israel coordination.

The full interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



Senior Hamas official Izzat al-Rashq (C) attends the funeral of lower-level Hamas members killed by Israel in Doha, Qatar, on September 11, 2025. Some had rumored that al-Rashq was present at the meeting when the strike happened on September 9, 2025.
● X



Israel has hit a military dead-end in Gaza, failing to score the expected victory — which included defeating Hamas, freeing captives, and capturing Gaza. Netanyahu has been promising repeatedly for over two years that various operations achieved these goals but hasn't delivered. He has now launched a campaign in Gaza City that looks like his last shot at success. Should he fail here, he will be seen as the loser of this battle, and his political fate will take a hit.

Qatar rethinks US security umbrella


By James Durso
Columnist

O P I N I O N

After Israel's attack on a Hamas meeting in Doha, Qatar, US President Donald Trump expressed regret over the incident and directed Secretary of State Marco Rubio to finalize a defense cooperation agreement with Qatar. When Qatari officials heard that news, they probably wondered, "Why bother?"

Qatar is a major non-NATO ally of the US and a major customer for American defense equipment. In recent years, Doha mediated US-Taliban peace talks; hosted America's Afghan refugee resettlement facility; mediated cease-fire talks between Israel and Hamas; hosts the largest US military base in the Middle East, Al Udeid Air Base (upgraded at Qatar's expense); gifted the US a Boeing 747-8 aircraft as an interim Air Force One; agreed to purchase 210 Boeing aircraft and over 400 GE Aerospace engines; and entered an agreement that will "generate an economic exchange worth at least \$1.2 trillion," according to the White House.

What did Qatar get for all it did? It got the distinction of being attacked by both Iran and Israel in one year, though Trump helpfully 'assured' Qatar that Israel won't attack again, though he was immediately repudiated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Qataris reportedly received Israeli and American assurances in August that Hamas officials would not be targeted on Qatari soil, but that promise was broken. Qatar's prime minister reportedly told Witkoff: "It seems we need new security partners, we have been attacked twice and you did not defend us" — though Qatar denied it is reevaluating its security partnership with the US.

Al-Thani met Trump on Friday, and, hopefully, the president gained a more sober view of Qatar's ability to help the US and how Israel sometimes diminishes America's influence in the region. Washington did vote to approve a United Nations Security Council condemnation of Israel's attack on Qatar, but it did not directly name Israel — as though the missiles just fell from the heavens. Even if Qatar just gets more selective in helping the US, Qatar's absence may make it harder for the US to pursue regional diplomacy. America's utility to Israel rests on its influence with the Arab and Muslim states in West Asia.

And if Qatar does seek out new security partners, some candidates are China, Russia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Turkey, all of whom will move quickly to dilute US influence, though the Americans are doing a pretty good job of that themselves. In June, the Israeli strike on Iran was to topple the government, but it quickly reconstituted and hit back with hypersonic missiles that defeated the Iron Dome air defense system. Israel was close to running out of interceptor missiles — though this was denied by the Israel Defense Forces — and the US used one-fourth of its stock on THAAD interceptor missiles defending Israel. The Iranian people rallied, strengthening the regime.

The attack on Qatar was to decapitate the Hamas leadership, and though several low-ranking Hamas officials (and a Qatari security officer) were killed, the leaders are unharmed. However, Israel scored a direct hit on America's credibility as a security guarantor for the region, proving that Israel is strategically inept. And Hamas fundraising efforts will get a boost now that the group can say America has, at last, shown its hand, and the leaders were spared by God as they were at prayer when the missiles struck.

And though the region's governments will be quick to focus the world's outrage on Israel, they have some questions to answer: How the Israeli air



force got from Israel to Qatar without overflying Jordan and Saudi Arabia (the most direct route); and, why did the governments spend all that money on military hardware just to watch the Israelis overfly their countries at will?

For example, the Qatar Emiri Air Force F-15QA Advanced Eagle has been called a "technological marvel," but it probably has a weak threat library that renders it incapable of shooting at Israeli and American aircraft. Fair enough as far as US aircraft go, but the Persian Gulf countries that have poured their public funds into American pockets may want to publicly address this issue with the Pentagon and Trump.

American inaction after the Israeli attack will go a long way to convince the people of the region that they are an expendable source of cheap energy, and captive customers for US defense contractors. And now that Israel has displaced Iran as the destabilizing actor in the region, Tehran can commiserate with its fellow victims of Israeli aggression.

The Israeli attacks on Qatar will deepen Iranian distrust of US diplomacy (if that's possible) as it was the second time in weeks the Americans encouraged negotiations only for its Israeli ally to attack the negotiators. This will make it difficult for Tehran to seriously engage with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the counterparties in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The Abraham Accord vision of regional integration will still happen, but it will move to the East with Iran, instead of to the West with Israel, and regional diplomacy may welcome the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Trump's

latest enemy, the BRICS group of natural resource countries. The region has the potential to be the center of an economic zone encompassing Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and Africa. Aside from the hydrocarbons, the zone will include the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's untapped market of over 90 million people, the advanced logistics infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, and the untapped mineral wealth of Afghanistan.

Iran's Zarif says the choice is between "Greater Israel" and "Our Strong Region," echoing Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's advocacy of a "strong region" in his "My message to the new world". Iran adopted the "Look East" policy as a pivot to China and Eurasia when it saw no opportunity to make deals with the US-allied Arab states to its west, but the attack may cause a "Look West" policy to emerge.

The Persian Gulf states may move closer to Iran, which is the only country in the Middle East that went its own way and endured isolation and sanctions for its trouble. The Arab petrostates mistakenly thought they were under the American security umbrella, but that parasol had a big hole to accommodate Israeli missiles. This move will foil the long-term American plan to integrate Israel into regional markets and to isolate and weaken Iran prior to overthrowing the government. The worst part for the Persian Gulf states may be the "I told you so" from Iran.

A bad man once said, "Once is happenstance. Twice is a coincidence. The third time it's enemy action." Or maybe the second time is enemy action. Iran was attacked when it was preparing for

negotiations with Washington about its nuclear program, and Qatar was attacked as Hamas was considering a Trump cease-fire proposal for Gaza. It may seem that the purpose of recent US diplomacy is to get the principals to assemble so they can be more easily killed by Israel.

Arab observers have privately noted that Trump never follows through with anything, i.e., Vladimir Putin's actions in Ukraine, and they doubt he will do anything about Gaza. Trump's dithering accommodates Israel's tendency to be the spoiler. But Tel Aviv's habit of sabotaging cease-fires has sunk in at the White House as one Trump aide noted, "Every time they're making progress, it seems like he [Netanyahu] bombs someone."

But anonymous White House sources telling Politico "Trump is frustrated with Netanyahu" means nothing. Trump can limit the damage, but he needs to publicly put some daylight between the US and Israel as increasing numbers of American voters think Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, are questioning military support for Tel Aviv, and are increasingly sympathetic to the Palestinians.

The Israeli attack on Qatar also highlights Qatar's wisdom in delaying jumping into Trump's Abraham Accord. What is left for Trump? The Abraham Accord are dead in the water, there will be no Middle East peace deal during his presidency, he will never get the Nobel Peace Prize, and Barack Obama is having the last laugh. But that's what happens when you fail to put America first.

The full article first appeared on OilPrice.com.



US President Donald Trump (C) participates in a signing ceremony and the exchange of agreements with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (R) in Doha, Qatar, on May 14, 2025.
● DANIEL TOROK/WHITE HOUSE



The Persian Gulf states may move closer to Iran, which is the only country in the Middle East that went its own way and endured isolation and sanctions for its trouble. The Arab petrostates mistakenly thought they were under the American security umbrella, but that parasol had a big hole to accommodate Israeli missiles. This move will foil the long-term American plan to integrate Israel into regional markets and to isolate and weaken Iran prior to overthrowing the government. The worst part for the Persian Gulf states may be the "I told you so" from Iran.



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (walking-2nd L) arrives in Doha, Qatar, to attend the extraordinary meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) regarding Israel's aggression on the Arab country.
● president.ir



Wrestling World Championships: Amouzad avenges Paris setback, Iran ends 12-year wait for freestyle crown

Sports Desk

Iran collected seven medals across 10 weight classes to claim a first freestyle team trophy in 12 years at the Wrestling World Championships.

A medal haul of two golds, two silvers, and three bronzes, saw Iran finish atop the team standings in Zagreb with 145 points – 11 ahead of the United States, with Japan in third place on 111 points.

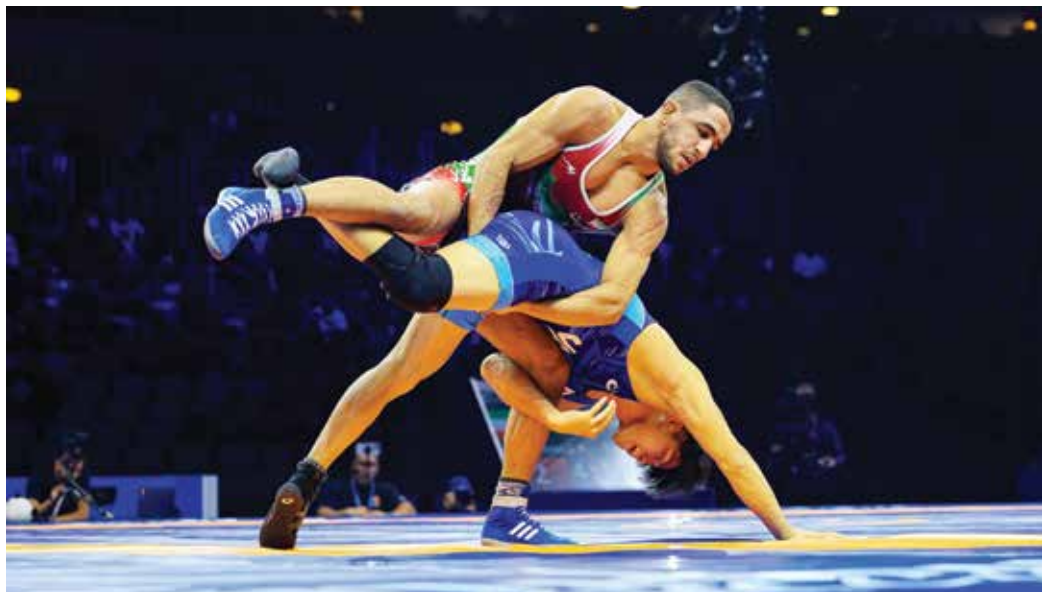
Leader hails world champions

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised the national freestyle wrestling team after their triumph in Zagreb.

In a message following the victory, he congratulated the athletes for their "astonishing effort and then admirable conduct," saying the blend of strength and spirituality had created "sublime values." "Bravo to you!" the statement added.

This was Iran's sixth freestyle title in the history of the Wrestling Worlds.

Living up to his nickname, "The Ruthless", Rahman Amouzad capped off a dominant campaign in the 65kg division by outclassing Japan's Kotaro Kiyooka in the final, while Amirali Azarpira had to settle for a silver medal after a



Iran's Rahman Amouzad (red) is seen in action against Kotaro Kiyooka of Japan in the freestyle 65kg final at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 16, 2025.

● IAWFIR

loss to American Kyle Snyder in the 97kg showdown.

Amouzad not only avenged his final loss to Kiyooka in last year's Paris Olympics, he did it in overwhelming fashion, blitzing his way to a 10-0 victory at the Arena Zagreb.

"I worked really hard and had been waiting for this moment for almost a year, and I'm happy this championship is mine," Amouzad said after grabbing his second world gold in three years. "I put in

a lot of effort physically, mentally, and with analysis."

It was just over a year ago that Kiyooka came seemingly out of nowhere and snatched the 65kg gold in Paris with an inspired 10-3 victory over Amouzad.

But on Tuesday, the outcome could not have been more different.

The Iranian deftly countered a single-leg attack from Kiyooka with a back lift for two, then

added a two-point exposure. And he wasn't finished with the sequence, transitioning to a cradle at the edge and wedging Kiyooka over for two more and a 6-0 lead.

Amouzad kept the pressure on a shell-shocked Kiyooka, scoring a stepout that had a fleeing point tacked on. A final takedown and the match was over with eight seconds to spare in the first period.

"I have more plans and bigger

goals ahead," Amouzad said. "This is just the beginning for me, and my work isn't finished yet. In two months, I'll compete in the Islamic Solidarity Games and I'll participate in any tournament the coaching staff believe I should."

The 97kg final was a much closer but no less dramatic affair, as Snyder picked up his eighth medal in eight trips to the World Championships to go along with an Olympic gold from Rio 2016 and a silver at Tokyo 2021.

The 29-year-old Snyder received an activity point in a tenuous first period, but Azarpira broke the logjam by getting behind for a takedown early in the second. A penalty point against Azarpira for finger-grabbing tied the score at 2-2, but with the Iranian holding the criteria advantage.

With the atmosphere growing intense, Snyder put the pressure on and scored a stepout with 8.5 seconds left, then held on as the match ended with him defending against a single-leg attack. Iran made a futile challenge at the end, as it finished 4-2.

It was a massive heartbreak for the 23-year-old Iranian, who had beaten reigning world and Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov in the semifinals and was the favorite to grab the gold, having defeated the American in the previous two meetings – including

the bronze-medal contest at the Paris Olympics.

Tuesday's medal came after Amirhossein Zare' had come out victorious by a 5-0 scoreline against Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan on Sunday to defend his 125kg world title, walking away with his third superheavyweight gold medal since 2021.

Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan finished with an impressive silver medal on his debut at the World Championships following a superiority loss to Russian Zaur Uguev in the 61kg final, while Kamran Qasempour eased to a 10-0 win against Indian Mukul Dahiya to win a consolation bronze in the 86kg division.

Mohammad Nokhodi and Amirhossein Firouzpour added a couple of bronzes to Iran's medal count on Monday.

Nokhodi recovered from a last-four setback against Greece's Georgios Kougioumstidis to beat Azerbaijan's Dzhabrail Gadzhiev 4-2 and win a joint-bronze in the 79kg event.

Firouzpour managed to finish with something to cheer about on his debut at the Senior World Championships, as he made quick work of Kazakhstan's Kamil Kurugliyev, securing a fall victory in less than two minutes in the third-place bout of the 92kg event.

AFC Champions League Elite:

Skocic pleased as 10-man Tractor holds on for a point at Shabab Al Ahli

Sports Desk

Tractor head coach Dragan Skocic praised his team's resilience after the Iranian top-flight champion played secured a 1-1 draw against Shabab Al Ahli in Dubai despite playing with 10 men for the best part of the second half in their AFC Champions League Elite opener on Tuesday.

Croatian striker Tomislav Strkalj gave Tractor the lead when his spectacular 25-yard strike went past rooted goalkeeper Hamad Almqbaali with 14 minutes into the game.

Tractor went down to 10 men six minutes after the break as a VAR decision saw Domagoj Drozdek's yellow card upgraded to red for a reckless challenge on the home side's Iranian midfielder Saeid Ez-zatolahi.

Shabab Al Ahli capitalized on the one-man advantage 14 minutes later.

Back between the posts after his four-month ban was suspended by the Court of Arbitration for Sport last week, Alireza Beiran-

vand kept out a Yuri Cesar's effort from outside the box, only to see Guilherme Bala slot home on the rebound for the equalizer.

The home side desperately pushed for a second goal in the closing stages, with Cesar hitting the bar in the 79th minute before Iranian substitute Reza Ghandipour saw his two attempts saved by Beiranvand soon after.

"I congratulate my players for their good performance against a strong opponent. The weather conditions were very difficult. This caused the players to have problems during the match. Playing in such weather conditions is not easy and the red card made it even harder," Skocic said the game "In the first half we controlled the game and created good chances on the counter-attacks but we didn't take them. After that, we received a red card which made it more difficult. However, my players fought and made me proud," added the Croatian.

Meanwhile, Skocic's opposite number Paulo Sousa had mixed feelings about the final outcome

at the Al Rashid Stadium.

"We faced difficulties in the first half due to the weather conditions, but overall, we controlled much of the game. We corrected ourselves at halftime and created several opportunities in the second half. I congratulate my players for a strong performance," said Sousa.

"However, we are not satisfied and share the disappointment with our fans. We deserved a better result, without a doubt. The players made the right decisions on the pitch and created many chances. They are the same players who achieved great success last season, and they remain highly motivated. We just need to work harder to turn our opportunities into goals," added the Portuguese.

Tractor will be back in Asian action in two weeks, taking on another Emirati test in Al Wahda at Tabriz's Yadegar-e Imam Stadium.

Sepahan woes continues

Meanwhile, Sepahan's winless start to the new season contin-



Tractor striker Domagoj Drozdek is shown a red card during a 1-1 draw against Shabab Al Ahli at the AFC Champions League Elite in Dubai, UAE, on September 16, 2025.

● AFC

ued on Tuesday, as the Persian Gulf Pro League outfit suffered a 1-0 loss to Jordan's Al Hussein in their Group C opener in the AFC Champions League Two at the Amman International Stadium.

A clever piece of play saw Al Hus-

sein break the deadlock in the 28th minute, as Aref Haitham's reverse pass sent Mahmoud Khrouba through on goal before Jordanian striker's effort went in through goalkeeper Mohammadreza Akhbari's legs.

This was yet another setback

for Sepahan head coach Moharram Navidkia and his team, which fell to a defeat to Al Dhail in the Asian elite clubs competition's qualifying play-offs and sits 12th in the Iranian top-flight table with two points from three games.



● IRNA

Speed World Championships 2025:

Iranian skater Yahaqqi wins historic bronze

Sports Desk

Young skater Amirmahdi Yahaqqi won a historic bronze medal at the Speed World Championships in Beidaihe, China, on Wednesday, marking Iran's first medal in the history of the competition.

Representing Iran in the men's

junior 100m lane event, the Iranian clocked 10.102 seconds to settle for a third-place finish in the final race, collecting 34 team points for the country. Italian Cristian Scassellati crossed the finish line in 10.042 seconds to walk away with the ultimate prize, with Belgian Stan Beelen taking the silver

on 10.079 seconds.

The Iranian had registered an impressive time of 10.012 seconds to beat skaters from Colombia and the Chinese Taipei in the semifinals earlier in the day. Mohammad-Amin Samimifar was the other Iranian in action in the junior event, but his campaign came to an end in the

quarterfinals.

Elsewhere, Iranian duo Milad Salehi and Soroushmehr competed in the men's senior 100m contest, with the former finishing seventh after a last four exit.

Soroushmehr crashed out in the quarterfinals to settle for a 13th-place finish.

Felt makers of South Khorasan secure place in Iran's cultural heritage



amordadnews.com



yjc.ir

Iranica Desk

The sturdy felt products, skillfully shaped by the strong hands of the felt makers, and the delicate, ornate hats that the women of Chenesht village sew with great care and patience, have both been officially registered today as intangible heritage of South Khorasan Province on Iran's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. These invaluable treasures narrate an ancient story of the art, the way of life, and the cultural identity of the people of this land. Fariba Kaheni, a heritage registration expert from South Khorasan Province, explained in an interview with ISNA about these two traditional Iranian arts, "The art of felt making and the traditional skill of making Keluteh (a type of traditional hat) have been nationally registered as two

authentic and significant expressions of South Khorasan. Each of these distinguished skills is deeply rooted in the history, culture, and everyday life of the people of this region and represents an essential part of the local identity and the artistic creativity of the local people. Kaheni stated, "Felt is one of the oldest traditional products of Iran that, unlike woven fabrics, is produced without the use of a loom or weaving tools. This non-woven fabric is meticulously created by applying hand pressure, moisture, and heat. Its final product has traditionally, and continues to be, used as floor coverings, shepherds' clothing, and various other functional items." The outstanding characteristic of the felt produced in this province is its exceptional durability, as well as the fact that it undergoes a



ISNA

complete traditional production process from start to finish. Simple and primitive patterns, sometimes bearing the name of the maker, are other unique features of the local felts. She added that the felts of this region, particu-

larly those used to make local shepherd clothing, have been utilized in various towns throughout the province. The raw materials used in this process include wool, water, soap, and both natural and chemical pigments.

Although few written documents exist regarding the history of felt in the province, the presence of elder master craftsmen and families who have been involved in this craft for generations signifies the ancient and special im-

portance of this skill in the province." Kaheni also noted that Kelutehs are often decorated with mixed colors and a variety of embellishments. The most important decorative elements of the hats include old silver coins of various sizes, crystals, colorful plastic beads, small and large glass beads, and silver pendants, all of which contribute to the hat's grandeur and beauty. This hat holds a special place in wedding ceremonies. During weddings, the bride's Keluteh, along with other accessories, is worn and significantly enhances the brightness and prominence of the bridal outfit. She further explained that while the overall design of the hat is similar among different social classes, the type of fabric and the quality of sewing and decoration directly correlate with the economic status of the fam-

ilies. Therefore, besides its ceremonial purpose, Keluteh also reflects the social and economic conditions of the local community. According to this expert, the "skill of Keluteh making" and the "skill of felt making" have both been officially registered on Iran's National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. She emphasized that registering these two skills on the list not only preserves and safeguards the traditional local knowledge and crafts, but also provides a foundation for passing down this heritage to future generations and for introducing it on national and global platforms. Both arts embody the collective creativity, local expertise, and cultural identity of the people who, despite all social and economic changes throughout time, remain devoted to preserving their traditions.

Haftcheshmeh bridge connects past and present in Ardebil

Ardebil once served as the capital city of Iran during the early years of the Safavid dynasty, and many monuments from that period still stand today. Among them is the Haftcheshmeh Bridge, also known as Yaddi Goz in Turkish, which crosses the Baliqluchay River. On the opposite bank, across the river flowing through rural land-

scapes, lies Dashkasan village — meaning stone cutter — named after the main occupations of its inhabitants, pottery and masonry. Because of this local connection, people also refer to the bridge as Dashkasan Bridge. Like other Safavid-era bridges such as Khajou Bridge and Si-O-Se-Pol, Haftcheshmeh features massive piers that provide

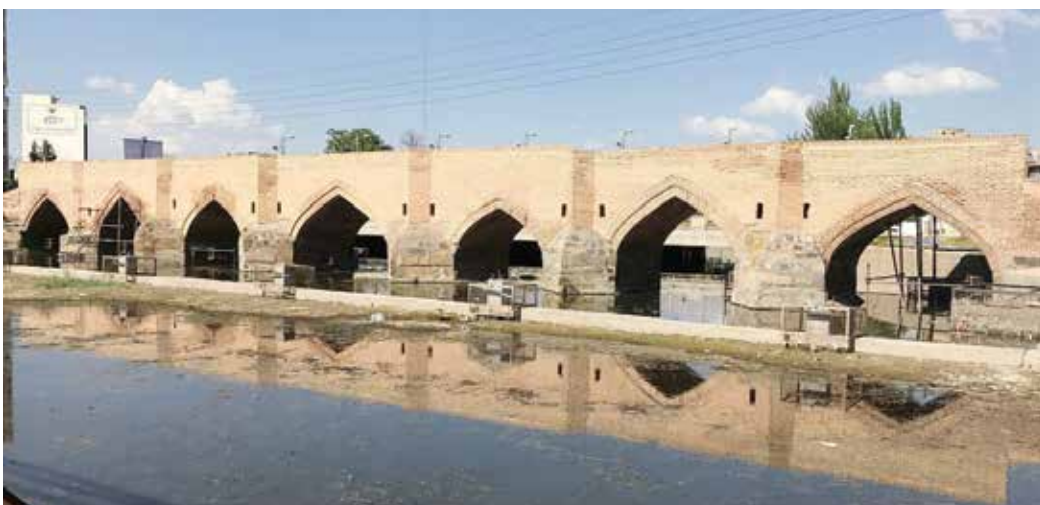
strong structural support. It has seven barrel vaults spanning the river. The bridge's main body and deep foundation are composed of plaster, lime, and bricks that face outward, built on a solid and robust base. This foundation was designed to withstand great pressure and has remained remarkably firm over centuries, visitiran.ir wrote.

Although persistent droughts have considerably narrowed the river today, the bridge's length and the strength of its base stand as clear evidence of the Baliqluchi River's force and depth during the Safavid era. The excellent condition of the structure, free from signs of wear or weakness, attests to the masterful engineering of the time. Haftcheshmeh

witnessed many uprisings during the Constitutional Revolution. Despite suffering heavy damage on multiple occasions, the bridge has never collapsed. Architecturally, Haftcheshmeh Bridge is unique and notable for its aesthetic beauty. Beyond its design, it holds significant political and historical importance in the region. During the Safavid period, the bridge

served as a dividing line for the city, separating the administrative quarter located on the western side from the residential area to the east. During the Constitutional Revolution, it is reported that a citadel known as Narin Qaleh, dating back to the Sassanid era, once stood nearby. No physical remains of this citadel exist today,

but according to historical accounts from that revolutionary period, Sattar Khan, a prominent Azarbaijani revolutionary leader, was imprisoned and exiled there after his arrest in Tabriz. His followers eventually freed him from the citadel, and many of them gathered on the bridge itself to join him on the return journey to Tabriz.



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Nat'l Day of Persian Poetry, Literature

Minister urges youth to reconnect with country's literary heritage

Social Desk

On the National Day of Persian Poetry and Literature on September 18, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, called on the younger generation to reconnect with the nation's literary heritage. The day commemorates the death of the Persian poet Mohammad Hossein Behjat Tabrizi, known by his pen name Shahriar, who passed away in 1988, IRNA reported. Salehi described the Persian language as a "timeless treasure" that has nurtured Iranian culture for centuries. He emphasized its role not only as a means of communication but as a "spiritual home" for Iranians, with poetry serving as its "tallest window" offering insights into mean-

ing and hope. "Each word carries the fragrance of ancient gardens, and each verse reflects the faith, culture, and love of our people," he stated. The minister stressed the importance of passing this cultural legacy to future generations. He urged the youth to "befriend poetry," ensuring that the "bright torch" of Persian literary tradition continues to illuminate the nation's path forward. Salehi also paid tribute to Shahriar, praising his passionate ghazals that revived the spirits of poetry enthusiasts. Salehi expressed hope that, through the efforts of cultural and artistic communities, Persian poetry would remain a beacon of love, meaning, and truth, resonating with audiences worldwide.



Animation 'Chawk' wins in Baku, set for three global festivals



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Hazhir As'adi's short animation 'Chawk' (Fountain) clinched the Best Student Short Animated Film Award at the 8th ANIMAFILM International Animation Festival held in Baku from September 3 to 7. The festival, organized by the Azerbaijan Animation Association, showcased 39 films from

20 countries, with 'Chawk' standing out in the international competition, inn.ir reported. The narrative of 'Chawk' delves into the poignant journey of a middle-aged projectionist who, amidst a cityscape of distorted faces, reconnects with his teenage love. Its compelling storytelling and innovative animation techniques have contributed to its growing in-

ternational recognition. Prior to this accolade, the film received a Special Mention in the International Animation category at the 27th Inventa un Film Festival in Italy and was selected for the 31st ShortFest Palm Springs in California. Following its success in Baku, 'Chawk' is slated to be featured in several global festivals. It has been officially selected for the 32nd Adana Golden Boll Film Festival in Turkey, scheduled from September 22 to 28, 2025. Also, the film will be showcased at the 21st Vox Popular Film Festival in Thunder Bay, Canada, from September 18 to 20, 2025, and the 15th Kurdish Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, from September 25 to October 1, 2025.

Homayoun Shajarian pursues new musical horizons

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian vocalist Homayoun Shajarian, son of the late maestro Mohammad-Reza Shajarian, is embracing fresh musical experiences after performing a high-profile concert in Dubai, originally planned as a free event in Tehran's Azadi Square. The move marks a new phase in his career, with the singer exploring innovative approaches to traditional music while engaging contemporary audiences, Mehr News Agency reported. During a recent press conference, Shajarian outlined his commitment to blending the roots of Iranian music with modern expressions. "I'm seeking new experiences," he said, highlighting his aim to create music that reso-

nates with today's generation without losing its traditional essence. He emphasized that the evolution of musical presentation is essential to keeping Iran's heritage alive and relevant. Shajarian also commented on the interplay between music and cinema, noting that soundtracks and theme compositions enhance storytelling in films and series. While he has received several offers for cinematic collaborations, differences in artistic vision have prevented new partnerships so far. "Naturally, music and cinema amplify each other when combined," he said. He reiterated that his engagement with pop and contemporary elements is guided by personal artistic ideals rather than audience trends.

"I always move according to my creative framework," he explained, stressing that innovation should be meaningful and in tune with listeners' attention spans today, which differ from those of previous generations. While firmly rooted in traditional Iranian music, Shajarian is focused on making it accessible and engaging for younger audiences. He welcomed the ways in which the new generation interacts with his work, including remixes and reinterpretations, as a sign that his music continues to connect across age groups. Shajarian plans further performances that blend traditional and contemporary sounds, stressing his ongoing mission to honor cultural heritage while exploring new artistic directions.

Europeans have already ...

Could the European proposal for a temporary extension of the snap-back mechanism be seen as a sign of willingness to preserve room for negotiation? And in this context, what opportunities exist for Iran?

The idea of an extension does not offer Iran any particular advantage; it merely buys a few more months for diplomacy. The Europeans seem intent on pushing it to the wire to see whether Tehran backs down. That is why they continue to insist on their earlier demands: that Iran allow IAEA inspectors to access nuclear facilities, especially those that came under attack. Iran, however, has strong reservations, since any information gathered by the agency could easily leak out to Western parties, the US, or Israel—who are eager for an exact assessment of the impact of their strikes. This makes the issue highly

sensitive, with direct implications for Iran's national security. The second demand is for clarity on enriched uranium stockpiles—whether they have been destroyed or remain intact. Again, this is part of a Western effort to gauge the effectiveness of their actions. Many of the conditions set by Europeans can actually be resolved through the same cooperative process with the IAEA in a reasonable timeframe. The problem is that Europeans seem to have made up their minds in advance and are not really looking for solutions. A third issue relates to talks with the United States. Iran has repeatedly expressed readiness for fair negotiations based on mutual interests. But Washington not only backed Israel's strike during those talks—it later joined in directly. On top of that, the US walked away from the negotiating table. If

progress is to be made, it is they who must come back.

Given that the European parties keep doubling down on their position, how can Iran continue the process of building trust within the framework of cooperation with the IAEA?

Iran has already taken every conceivable step. This latest agreement carries features that could well pave the way for a way-out of the current standoff, provided there is genuine will to seek solutions rather than a preordained decision aimed solely at turning the screws on Iran. If the chosen path is confrontation, the only outcome will be further escalation—a scenario that benefits no one. Admittedly, finding a way forward is far from easy; with Europe's current stance and the added pressure from

Washington, the odds of reaching a breakthrough may be slim. But while difficult, it is not impossible.

If European countries go ahead with reinstating sanctions, what options exist for Iran to manage political and economic pressure?

Iran has tried every available path to lift sanctions—from negotiations to cooperation with the IAEA and engagement with its counterparts—but these efforts have not produced the desired results. Naturally, when one path leads nowhere, alternatives must be pursued. The Iranian president's recent participation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, along with meetings with leaders from various countries—particularly Eastern powers—sent a clear signal of such a strategy: in the absence of successful engagement with the West and in the face of heightened

confrontation, Iran will increasingly lean on partnerships with Eastern states. To put it bluntly, rather than "commit suicide out of fear of death," Iran will focus on shoring up alternatives to navigate this phase as well. The opposing side, of course, is aiming for Iran's submission. The West is not genuinely interested in negotiations. What they call talks is, in reality, an attempt to dictate terms that fit into their preferred deal. What they demand from Iran amounts to capitulation—neither aligned with Iran's national interests nor those of its people. And even if such demands were met, it would not mark an end to the matter, but merely the beginning of a fresh round of pressure designed to further weaken Iran. That is why Tehran has little choice but to grow stronger and to find alternative routes to withstand the mounting pressure.