

UN chief: Gaza experiencing worst level of death, destruction

2 >



> [irandaily.ir](http://irandaily.ir)

| [newspaper.irandaily.ir](http://newspaper.irandaily.ir)

| IranDailyWeb

## Pezeshkian: Iran will never cave in to excessive demands

2 >



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) poses for a family photo with the 2025 International Science Olympiads medalists in Tehran, Iran on September 20, 2025.  
© president.ir



## Wrestling World Championships: Iran grabs triple Greco-Roman medals, claims historic double

6 >



### Iran, Spain to enhance FATF-related cooperation against money laundering

3 >



### Farakhin Lake welcoming visitors with serenity, adventure

7 >



### Iran's scholar Tarhandeh to judge 2025 Bratislava Illustration Biennial

8 >

## Iran should change playing field, rules of game with West

By Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini  
International affairs analyst

### OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Western actors, by designing an arbitration-like tool in the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA), apparently sought to ensure that sanctions would never be fully lifted from Iran and, through the "snapback" mechanism, to keep up the pressure on the country indefinitely. On Friday they voted in the UN Security Council in favor of returning sanction on Iran using this mechanism. Diplomatic channels alone seem to be unable to resolve Iran's standoff with the West. It is not to say diplomatic measures are without effect, but in the current circumstances they will not change the situation. Iran should now both change the playing field and alter the rules. In other words, Iran is currently playing in the Western actors' field. Even if one performs well on the opponent's turf, one cannot win the game because the field belongs to the adversary — especially when the rival also calls the shots on the rules. No matter how skilled the player, they could fall into the opponent's

trap. The least costly, most productive and most reliable course is to employ domestic capacities and shift the field of play in the country's favor.

However, for more varied diplomacy, there is not just a narrow opening but a wide avenue. If Iran properly brings along and engages neighboring states, Muslim countries and independent powerful nations with appropriate interaction, it will have no need to make concessions to Western powers. There are many countries in the world keen to work with Iran; diplomatic doors can be opened to them.

The current reality is such that Iran is a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), pays subscriptions and is a shareholder, and for many years, despite all of the Islamic Republic's concessions in normalizing the country's nuclear dossier, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) did nothing but hand over the country's information to the enemies, paving the way for the assassination of nuclear scientists or the recent attacks by the United States and Israel in June. After these developments, Iran's continued membership in the NPT seems to be an overall cost with minimum benefits. In light of the imminent return of UN resolu-

tions against Iran, the activation of Chapter VII of the UN Charter cannot be ruled out, as Western countries are likely to pursue their agenda to the end. But whatever occurs, it is unlikely that measures taken against Iran will be wider, deeper or more extensive than what has already happened. Iran has already borne the consequences and harms of the snapback mechanism.

A renewed military action would also carry costs. War causes harm, but that harm is mutual. Many threats are bluff and not realistic, and at the same time Iran is certainly more prepared than before. It is true that the war in June imposed costs and damage on Iran, but it was also a valuable experience. Iran tested its military hardware and now can inflict damage on any aggressor more precisely and on a broader scale. Now, a single strike will be met with a stronger response than before. Naturally, following the war and the reproduction of reparative power, Iran has remedied many flaws and shortcomings. Moreover, Israel and the United States made extensive use of espionage and infiltration networks, but 80% of those networks inside Iran have been smashed; rebuilding such a network would take them a decade.



# Pezeshkian: Iran will never cave in to excessive demands

## International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that Iran will never surrender in the face of excessive demands after the UN Security Council voted not to permanently lift sanctions under European pressure. Speaking at a ceremony honoring the 2025 International Science Olympiads medalists, the Iranian president vowed that Iran would overcome any reimposition of sanctions on it through a so-called "snapback" process triggered by the European parties to the 2015 nuclear agreement. "Through the 'snapback' they block the road, but it is the brains and the thoughts that open or build the road," Pezeshkian said. "They cannot stop us. They can strike our Natanz or Fordow (the nuclear facilities attacked by the US and Israel in June), But they are unaware that it is humans who built and will rebuild Natanz," Pezeshkian said.

## Power to change

The Iranian president underlined that, "We will never surrender in the face of excessive demands because we have the power to change the situation." Pezeshkian's remarks came af-

ter a Security Council resolution aimed at halting the reimposition of sanctions on Iran failed after weeks of diplomatic talks. The resolution put forth by South Korea, the current president of the 15-member council, did not garner the support of the nine countries required to halt the series of sanctions from taking effect at the end of the month, as outlined in the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which is known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Four countries – China, Russia, Pakistan and Algeria – supported the effort. The Security Council's move came after Britain, France and Germany launched a 30-day process last month to reimpose sanctions, accusing Tehran of failing to abide by the 2015 deal with world powers. Iran has rejected their claims and says that it is Europe that failed to fulfil its commitments under the deal after the US unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in 2018. The snapback would reimpose an arms embargo, a ban on uranium enrichment and reprocessing, a ban on activities with ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons,

a global asset freeze and travel ban on Iranian individuals and entities.

## Opportunity for dialogue missed

Iran's Ambassador to the UN Amir Saeed Iravani on Friday reacted in the strongest terms to the vote, saying that council "missed the opportunity for dialogue and agreement today." He called the resolution "hasty, unnecessary and unlawful." "This reckless step undermines dialogue without aggression and sets a dangerous precedent," he added. "The E3 (France, Britain, Germany) and the US, in coordination with Israel, are spreading false claims that Iran's nuclear program threatens peace and security."

## 'Unfair pressure'

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected "unfair pressure" on his country in a telephone call Friday with the UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi, saying that it could lead to an escalation of tensions. The foreign ministry also reacted to the UN vote, saying that, "The full responsibility for the consequences of this action... lies with the United States and the three European countries."



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks at a ceremony honoring the 2025 International Science Olympiads medalists in the capital Tehran on September 20, 2025.  
● president.ir

The European governments "have not yet shown independence and have followed the unilateral and illegal policies of America," the ministry added. The Russian Foreign Ministry on Saturday slammed the vote and warned of a risk of an "escalation of tensions." "These actions have nothing to do with diplomacy and lead ex-

clusively to a further escalation of tensions surrounding the Iranian nuclear program," the ministry said. Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh said in an interview with Al Mayadeen television that the three European countries are looking for an excuse to increase tensions. Khatibzadeh emphasized that

the path of diplomacy is not closed yet, and diplomacy is always a better option compared to escalating tensions. British Ambassador Barbara Woodward said the UK remains committed to a diplomatic solution and is ready for further engagements diplomatically in the next week and beyond to seek to resolve differences.

## UN chief: Gaza experiencing worst level of death, destruction



Palestinians from Gaza City move southwards with their belongings, on the coastal road near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, on September 19, 2025.  
● EYAD BABA/AFP

## International Desk

UN chief Antonio Guterres said Gaza is experiencing the "worst level of death and destruction" he has seen in his lifetime and called on the international community not to be "intimidated" by Israel. Guterres spoke to AFP ahead of the UN's signature high-level week at which 10 countries will recognize a Palestinian state, according to France – over fierce Israeli objections. The meeting of more than 140 heads of state and government, which paralyzes a corner of Manhattan for a week each year, will likely be dominated by the future of the Palestinians and the war in Gaza. Israel has reportedly threatened to annex the West Bank if Western nations press ahead with the recognition plan at

the UN gathering. But Guterres said, "We should not feel intimidated by the risk of retaliation." "With or without doing what we are doing, these actions would go on and at least there is a chance to mobilize international community to put pressure for them not to happen," he said. "What we are witnessing in Gaza is horrendous," Guterres said as Israel threatened "unprecedented force" in its ongoing assault on Gaza City. "It is the worst level of death and destruction that I've seen my time as Secretary-General, probably my life and the suffering of the Palestinian people cannot be described – famine, total lack of effective health care, people living without adequate shelters in huge concentration areas," he said. Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has called for annexation of

swaths of the West Bank with an aim to "bury the idea of a Palestinian state" after several countries joined the French push on statehood. But Israel's staunch ally the United States has held back from any criticism of the war in Gaza or vows to annex the West Bank – and excoriated its allies who have vowed to recognize a Palestinian state. At least 61 people were killed on Saturday as Israeli forces continued to bombard the Gaza City. The Palestinian Civil Defense said nearly half of Gaza City's population, or about 450,000 people, have fled the area since Israel launched its major operation there in August. Israel's war on Gaza has killed at least 65,208 people and wounded 166,271 since October 2023. Thousands more are believed to be buried under the rubble.

## Tehran warns of IAEA deal collapse if UN sanctions reinstated

## International Desk

Iran's deputy foreign minister said the recent Tehran-IAEA agreement reached in the Egyptian capital of Cairo would be terminated if the UN sanctions were reimposed or the so-called snapback mechanism was triggered. Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks in a phone conversation with IRIB News in response to Europe's move to reinstate the UN Security Council resolutions, despite Iran's maximum cooperation with the European Troika and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in recent days. The UN Security Council on Friday voted against a draft resolution that would have permanently lifted sanctions linked to Iran's nuclear program. Gharibabadi said that although the UN Security Council adopted a resolution challenging Resolution 2231 and the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), by attempting to extend sanctions relief for Iran, the measure was ultimately defeated after failing to secure the necessary votes. Nine members opposed the measure, while Russia, China, Pakistan, and Algeria backed it, and two abstained. As a result, the UN sanctions against Iran will be re-imposed by September 28 if no agreement is reached. "We, China, and Russia have presented our very detailed and legal arguments to the UN Security Council in recent months, and during these detailed arguments, we declared that the actions of these three countries to activate the snapback mechanism are completely illegal," he noted. Iran, on the other hand, "has always believed in diplomacy and interaction, and we made every effort to prevent the actions of European countries through diplomacy," he added. He warned that "if nothing special happens in the field of diplomacy" and the

UN sanctions are reinstated, it would be a logical consequence for the agreement concluded with the IAEA in Cairo to be "completely stopped." On September 9, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi reached an agreement on practical modalities to resume cooperation after a meeting in the Egyptian capital of Cairo. It came after the Iranian Parliament unanimously passed legislation requiring the administration to suspend all cooperation with the IAEA following the Israeli-US aggression that targeted three of the country's nuclear sites in a clear violation of international law and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Elsewhere in his remarks, Gharibabadi affirmed that the sanctions from the Security Council should be taken seriously; however, he contended that they will not add anything to the sanctions regime on Iran.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist





# Iran, Spain to enhance FATF-related cooperation against money laundering

## Economy Desk

Representatives from Iran and Spain, which is scheduled to host an upcoming meeting with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Tehran's file, agreed to boost cooperation on tackling money laundering and overcoming FATF-related challenges, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

At the request of the Spanish Embassy, Spain's ambassador to Tehran, Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar, on Wednesday met Hadi Khani, Iran's head of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), to discuss ways to deepen collaboration. The Iranian deputy economy minister outlined the FIU's activities and achievements, saying Iran's measures against money laundering and financial crimes "go far beyond international recommendations and standards."



Spain's Ambassador to Tehran Antonio Sánchez-Benedito Gaspar (2nd L) meets with Iran's head of the Financial Intelligence Unit Hadi Khani (2nd R) at the Spanish Embassy.

● TASNIM

He added that despite US sanctions and regional risks, Iran had advanced faster than many countries in implementing anti-money laundering steps.

Khani, who also serves as secretary of Iran's Supreme Council for the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, urged Spain to work with its European partners to help Iran overcome FATF-related challenges. The Spanish envoy, for his part, welcomed Iran's proposals, praised the FIU's efforts, and pledged to use "all possible efforts" to strengthen bilateral ties in preventing and combating money laundering.



Spain, the eurozone's fourth-largest economy and

the world's 15th-largest, is a key FATF member and will host

Iran's upcoming meeting with the international watchdog.

## India weighing impact of US move to repeal Chabahar Port waiver



## Economy Desk

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday reacted to the US withdrawal of the sanctions waiver that allowed India to develop Iran's Chabahar port, saying it was "examining its implications" for New Delhi.

"We have seen the US press statement

regarding the revocation of the sanctions waiver for Chabahar Port. We are presently examining its implications for India," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told the media, Hindustan Times reported.

The US move to end the sanctions waiver given to India for Iran's Chabahar Port threatens New Delhi's \$500

million investment and its bid to reach Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. President Donald Trump's decision jeopardizes India's first overseas port project and undermines the Chabahar port, the strategic counter to Pakistan's Gwadar port run by China.

The US has announced it will revoke the waiver of sanctions granted to India on Iran's Chabahar Port, ending the special exemption granted in 2018 during Trump's first tenure. The exemption had allowed India to operate and develop a trade terminal in the port city on Iran's Makoran coast. The move, part of the Trump administration's "maximum pressure on Iran" policy, is another setback for India's plans to develop Chabahar, which has already faced delays due to wider US sanctions on Tehran.

The US State Department said that starting September 29, persons operating Chabahar Port and engaging in related activities would face sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA).

## Diplomacy recommended

In Tehran, Alireza Nesari, a member of Iran's parliamentary committee on infrastructure, urged diplomatic efforts to prevent the waiver's cancellation. "The main solution is to definitely use diplomacy to ensure this does not happen," he told ILNA.

Nesari stressed that Chabahar and other free trade zone ports provide a platform for balanced national development and support for investments facilitated by exemptions. "If these exemptions are undermined and current conditions are affected, it will definitely have a negative impact on the regional and national economy," he said.

He added that sanctions are a reality Iran must accept, but the case of Chabahar is different because it involves international investment. "I believe it is still possible through diplomacy to reach at least some assurances so that we do not face such conditions," Nesari said.

## Iran's saffron exports up 45% in four months despite smuggling challenges: Union chief

By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iran's saffron exports rose 45% in the first four months of the calendar year (began on March 21) compared with the same period in last year, reaching about \$60 million, a senior industry official said.

Of that total, exports from Khorasan Razavi Province amounted to \$46 million, accounting for 78% of the country's saffron shipments, said Gholamreza Miri, head of the Khorasan Razavi Saffron Exporters Union, in comments to Iran Daily. The northeastern province is Iran's top producer and exporter of saffron and hosts the country's largest number of processing facilities, giving it a central role in organizing and boosting exports of the spice.

Miri called for closer monitoring of production and processing companies to im-

prove packaging and quality standards, saying that safeguarding Iran's brand and reputation was vital to maintaining global market share and gaining new destinations.

He warned that rivals had expanded their presence in target markets through significant investment and marketing. Iran, which supplies more than 90% of the world's saffron, exports the spice to over 70 countries. The United Arab Emirates, China, Spain, Afghanistan and Italy are the top five importers, followed by the Netherlands, Taiwan, France, Kuwait and Oman. However, many of these countries re-export Iranian saffron in smaller packages under their own brands, capturing more of the value-added segment. Despite its dominant global share, Iran exports most of its saffron in bulk or large packages and has played only a limited role in processing and developing new saffron-based products, Miri said.

He noted that global demand for saffron is steadily rising but warned that smug-



gling remains a major obstacle to growth. "Several tons leave the country illegally at times, reducing the level of official exports," he said.

Miri urged the government to take stronger steps to curb smuggling, arguing that

easing export procedures and removing obstacles for legal exporters would discourage illegal trade. "If the ground for exports is facilitated, smuggling will decrease and legal exports will accelerate," he said.

## Armenia, Kazakhstan support transport corridor via Iran

## Economy Desk

Armenia and Kazakhstan agreed to support the development of a regional transport corridor through Iran during a virtual intergovernmental meeting held on Friday, according to an Armenian government statement published a day later. The subject was raised during a virtual meeting between Armenia's deputy prime minister, Mher Grigoryan, and his Kazakh counterpart, Serik Zhumangarin. Grigoryan also called for strengthened ties with Kazakhstan, particularly within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), noting that many potential opportunities for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries remain untapped. On transport cooperation, he said Yerevan supported the initiative to create a multimodal route along the "Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Armenia" corridor. He added that cargo transit is already taking place along the "China-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Armenia" route, reflecting growing interest in expanding transport and logistics links. Grigoryan expressed hope the corridor would continue to operate on a regular basis, highlighting the need for developing regional transport and logistics infrastructure for Armenia.

## Steel exports post 17% rise, hit nearly \$3b in five months



## Economy Desk

Iran's steel exports grew 17% in volume in the first five months of the calendar year (began on March 21), reaching 796,000 tons, while export revenues rose 10% to almost \$3 billion, the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) said in a new report.

The latest figures mark a turnaround after a decline recorded in the first quarter, IRNA reported.

Exports of upstream products continued to climb, with iron ore concentrate shipments surging 80% from the same period last year — a trend that has raised concerns among domestic steelmakers.

By contrast, rebar exports, which according to Iran's Steel Statistical Yearbook accounted for more than 85% of long steel exports last year, fell 31% in the five-month period.



# A world against world order



By Pouya  
Jabal Ameli  
Economist

## OPINION

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States, as the winner of the Cold War, stepped up its support for the international order more than ever before; an order that was now riding on the coattails of a unipolar world following the fall of communism. But who were the anti-order players?

They were the remaining countries with leftist ideologies, mostly sprouting up in Latin America, and those who seemingly were not leftist but defined their independence by standing up to the global order. These countries didn't care how much it cost them to be anti-order.

By acting out this way on the world stage, they felt a sense of existence. So, no matter how high this cost was for their citizens, no matter how much it stalled their progress and development, it was still preferable for them to push back against the global order. In the balance of domestic politics, being anti-order helped shore up legitimacy for the power centers and their affiliated groups — this was the main reason for their role in the international arena. Therefore, after the Soviet collapse, we faced a world order where, except for a handful of countries representing at best 3% of the global GDP, everyone else fell in line with this order. Even Russia and China also changed course and welcomed this order, benefiting greatly from their cooperation, of course. Although they did not open up their political structures like the leaders of the existing order, they opened up their economic institutions, carved out a position in the global economy, and through this, their per capita income shot up dramatically. Since then,



The illustration shows US President Donald Trump looking down at a fractured globe.  
● BILL KUCHMAN/POLITICO

Russia's per capita income has multiplied by more than six times, and China's by over 19 times.

Undoubtedly, the leaders of the current order capitalized on these conditions and expanded their hegemonic power. But after the financial shock of this century and rising dissatisfaction, the murmur grew louder in the United States that the unipolar world was no longer as it seemed. It was as if the whole world was riding on America's back, with America footing the bill for everyone else. This scenario struck a chord with voters, and Trump was able to sell it twice.

While previously in the less developed world, isolationists

were the main anti-order players, with Trump coming to power, the country that should have most stood up for the existing order became itself a disruptor. Even under previous US administrations, when international institutions stood up against American will, they still carried out their course, as witnessed in the Iraq invasion, but the legitimacy of these institutions was never questioned. However, Trump pushed back against these institutions, viewing them as highway robbers for Americans and arguing that in a lawless jungle, America could call the shots whenever it wanted, so why bother with international bodies bleeding the pockets of American taxpayers?

Previously, commitment to freedom, rules, and the rule of law were values that gave the United States its credibility. Today, the government in power holds itself to no standards.

This anti-order stance has reached the point where countries that once saw themselves as America's friends are now suffering from it. Israel's attack on Qatar is a glaring example of the US abandoning its previous global role. If America didn't know about this attack, it means it has no control over its main ally; If it did know, it implicitly approved the attack on another ally and welcomed the disruption of order for short-term tactical gains. Both scenarios chip away at America's credibility. It

seems a world lies ahead where, the further we go, the more it resembles a lawless jungle disorder. Is this trend temporary? Will America step up again and reclaim its previous role?

Whatever the future holds, the world has learned since World War II that having any rules is better than none at all. So, if the current order hypothetically falls apart, there will undoubtedly be a new order that springs up. Meanwhile, one can only hope that the collapse of the current order will not come with widespread chaos and human catastrophe.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper *Donya-e-Eqtasad*.



Trump pushed back against international institutions, viewing them as highway robbers for Americans and arguing that in a lawless jungle, America could call the shots whenever it wanted, so why bother with international bodies bleeding the pockets of American taxpayers? Previously, commitment to freedom, rules, and the rule of law were values that gave the United States its credibility. Today, the government in power holds itself to no standards.

# Japan's diplomatic discontents after US strikes on Iran



By Christopher Hughes  
Professor of Japanese  
Studies

## OPINION

The Israeli and US strikes on Iran in June 2025 highlighted a critical dilemma for Japanese policymakers. Japan's reaction reflects immediate diplomatic and economic interests in its dealings with the United States and the Middle East, as well as anxieties over its wider international strategy in the longer term.

Japan was, at first, more vocal in criticising Israel's strikes on Iran. Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba stated on June 13, 2025, that the use of military force amid ongoing diplomatic negotiations was "unacceptable". Japan signed the June 17 G7 statement that reiterated Israel's "right to defend itself". Still, Ishiba continued to stand by his earlier statement and call for restraint between Israel and Iran. Japan then shifted its position following the US strikes on Iran, with Ishiba on

June 23 expressing "understanding" of the US determination to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Ishiba's initial critique of Israel was clearly driven by immediate concerns over the further expansion of conflict and instability in the Middle East. These concerns were compounded by Japan's carefully nurtured "special relationship" as an interlocutor with the Iranian government, the risks of China exploiting the Middle Eastern conflict to enhance its regional influence and Japan's dependence on energy supplies from the Middle East amid a domestic cost of living crisis.

Ishiba's seemingly contradictory stance over Iran and the US strikes signified a reluctance to create a rupture in ties with Washington, particularly during negotiations over tariffs and before Japan's July 2025 upper house election.

Japan's policymakers chose to keep their heads down as the crisis over Iran's nuclear program unfolded. Even as they continue

to walk a cautious line so as not to alienate US President Donald Trump and his administration, there is likely a sense of unease over the potential implications for Japan's broader diplomacy and security. The Trump administration seems far bolder in disregarding or dismantling entirely the rules-based order than before, heightening Japan's concerns.

The Trump administration's increasingly overt pursuit of an international strategy predicated on power politics was manifested in its strikes on Iran. Japan, by contrast, has sought to argue in its diplomatic pronouncements and actions for the "rule of law" internationally. Government officials are reported to equivocate on whether or not US strikes violated international law by amounting to unilateral preemptive attacks.

Japan has carefully championed the rules-based international order, as seen in its Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision and condemnations of China's behaviour in



Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba (c) arrives at Andrews Air Force Base outside of Washington, D.C., US, on February 6, 2025.  
● PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE OF JAPAN



the East China Sea and South China Sea, as well as Russia's war on Ukraine. But Japan's position starts to look thin, or even a double standard, in the face of its US ally's use of force.

The crisis over Iran and its challenge to the principles of international diplomacy that Japan advocates may have further spillover effects in key areas. Japan's long-term concern is that Iran, after enduring US and Israeli military attacks, will conclude that its only option is to accelerate its nuclear program and withdraw entirely from International Atomic Energy Agency oversight to develop a nuclear deterrent. This compounds the risks of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, further undermining international rules-based cooperative regimes.

Israel's de facto status as a nuclear weapons entity, standing free of International Atomic Energy Agency oversight, confirms for critics the contradictions of the rules-based international order. The spillover from the Iran crisis could extend to North Korea. Pyongyang may conclude from the US strikes that its strategy of acquiring nuclear weapons has been correct to prevent US coercion. This means it will insist on framing future negotiations as "arms control," rather than complete dismantlement of its nuclear program, with possible ripple effects for nuclear proliferation in East Asia.



Protesters hold a rally denouncing the US strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, near the US Embassy in Tokyo, Japan, on June 22, 2025.

● ISSEI KATO/REUTERS

Japan's inability to exercise significant influence over the United States or G7 regarding Iran brings into question its ability to act as a bridge between the Global South and the West. The US strikes and wider international reaction revealed that Iran was

in the end short on friends and allies willing to intervene on its behalf, limiting escalation of the conflict. Over the longer term, though, the United States and Israel's exercise of force against Iran, coupled with Israel's relatively untrammelled military ac-

tion in the region, may only embolden military action by states in other contexts and signify that the rules-based international order does not necessarily apply to the Global South.

In this climate, Japan's self-proclaimed stance and credibility

as one of the main proponents of the rules-based international order and its ability to promote the interests of the Global South appear hollow.

The article first appeared on the East Asia Forum.



Japan has carefully championed the rules-based international order, as seen in its Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision and condemnations of China's behaviour in the East China Sea and South China Sea, as well as Russia's war on Ukraine. But Japan's position starts to look thin, or even a double standard, in the face of its US ally's use of force.

# Hiroshima II

## Aggressive US policies driving world toward another nuclear catastrophe

By Greg Pence  
Researcher, columnist

OPINION

Eighty years ago, on August 6, 1945, the sky over Hiroshima, Japan, lit up with the cataclysmic explosion of the atomic bomb "Little Boy"; a light that was not a sunrise of hope, but a shadow of death and destruction, reducing over 140,000 people to ashes in an instant. This tragedy became a lasting symbol of nuclear horror, a permanent warning to humanity: The power of nuclear weapons can obliterate civilisations entirely.

Now, the United States, through attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and escalating confrontations with Russia, is steering the world toward the precipice of a "Hiroshima II". These actions, which threaten the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and raise the risk of nuclear war to unprecedented levels, endanger global peace and reveal a dangerous shift in Washington's foreign policy; one that could imperil the very future of humanity.

**Blow to diplomacy**

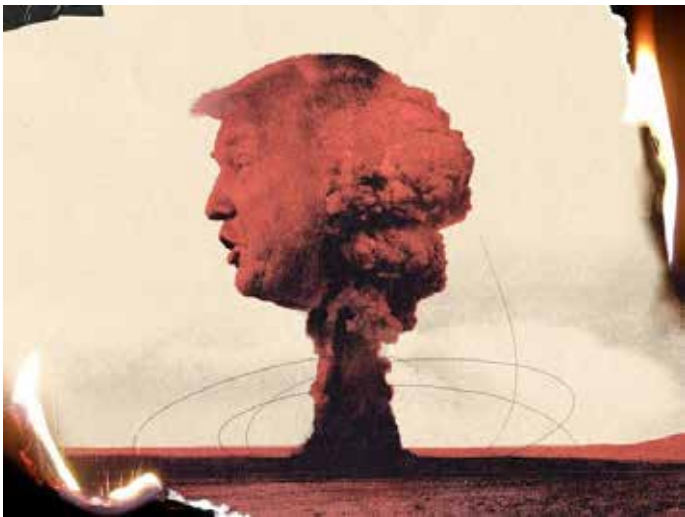
On June 22, 2025, the skies over Iran thundered with Tomahawk missiles and stealth B-2 bombers targeting the Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan nuclear facilities in an operation dubbed "Midnight Hammer". Occurring amid the short-lived Iran-Israel conflict from June 13 to June 24, 2025, this strike was described by US President Donald Trump as a "decisive victory" to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Yet reports tell a different story: The attack only delayed Iran's nuclear program by a few months as the country had already secured enriched uranium in safe locations. The roots of this aggression

trace back to the controversial US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2018. Subsequent reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2025 indicated that Iran had enriched uranium to 60 percent, still below the 90 percent threshold needed for weapons-grade material. Pressure from Israel, especially information presented by Benjamin Netanyahu in February 2025, pushed Washington toward this military strike. But this first direct military assault on another nation's nuclear program since World War II had profound consequences: Iran temporarily suspended cooperation with the IAEA and mulled adhering to NPT restrictions.

The US attack on Iran's nuclear facilities didn't just torch years of diplomatic efforts; It has pushed the world to the edge of a nuclear abyss. Since 1968, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has stood on three shaky legs: stopping the spread of nukes, disarming those who have them, and ensuring nuclear energy stays peaceful. Now, Washington's unilateral move threatens to kick those legs out from under it. Rafael Grossi, head of the IAEA, didn't mince words: The strike could "bring the entire non-proliferation system crashing down."

**From collapse of nuclear order to human catastrophe**

The fallout from America's strike stretches far beyond the Middle East. By undermining the NPT, it has fanned the flames of global nuclear ambition. Allies like South Korea, Japan, and Poland, long sheltered under the US nuclear umbrella, might start questioning their reliance on Washington and consider



The illustration shows the side profile of US President Donald Trump over a mushroom cloud caused by a nuclear explosion.

● BRANDON RAYGO/THE CAP TIMES

going their own way. In the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the UAE could hit the gas on their own nuclear programs, risking a full-blown arms race across the region.

At the 2025 Hiroshima memorial, Mayor Kazumi Matsui sounded the alarm, warning that "nuclear weapons are be-

coming normalized" amid crises in Ukraine and the Middle East. The Hiroshima Survivors' Association, known as Nihon Hidan-kyo and honored with a Nobel Peace Prize, slammed the US for ignoring the scars of Hiroshima's past. Pope Leo XIV and UN chief António Guterres issued a rare joint plea, urging a return



An operational timeline of the strike on Iran's nuclear facilities is displayed during a news conference with Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Dan Caine and US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon on June 22, 2025.

● ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

to diplomacy and warning that nukes are once again tools of intimidation, not deterrence.

The stakes couldn't be higher. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports that 2025 has ushered in a new arms race, with defense budgets ballooning and nuclear stockpiles getting modern makeovers. In this tinderbox, one misstep, whether a rash decision or a simple miscalculation, could spark a disaster that wipes out millions and leaves the planet's ecosystems in ruins for centuries.

**Urgent need for multilateral diplomacy**

History proves that nuclear stability hinges on global cooperation, not cowboy bravado. Treaties like the NPT and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) only worked when big players respected each other's red lines. The US strike on Iran, coupled with escalating tensions with Russia, spits in the face of that principle, shoving the world toward chaos. The only way out is to swap bombs for talks. Urgent negotiations, pulling in Iran, Russia, China, Europe, and others, are the last hope for shoring up the non-proliferation system and cooling global tempers.

Eighty years after Hiroshima, the world faces a gut-check moment. The US, which unleashed the first nuclear horror, is now steering humanity toward another with its reckless policies. Hiroshima taught us that nuclear weapons don't bring security or triumph, only devastation. If this path continues, the next Hiroshima won't be one city but the entire globe, with no one left to bear witness.

The article first appeared on Middle East Monitor.



History proves that nuclear stability hinges on global cooperation, not cowboy bravado. Treaties like the NPT and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) only worked when big players respected each other's red lines. The US strike on Iran, coupled with escalating tensions with Russia, spits in the face of that principle, shoving the world toward chaos. The only way out is to swap bombs for talks.



# Wrestling World Championships: Iran grabs triple Greco-Roman medals, claims historic double

## Sports Desk

Iran claimed a first men's team title double at the Wrestling World Championships after bagging three Greco-Roman medals, including double golds, on Day 7 of the competition in Zagreb, Croatia.

Gholamreza Farrokhi stole the show in the 82kg event by walking away with the ultimate prize on his debut at the Wrestling Worlds, while Olympic bronze medalist Amin Mirzazadeh retained his 130kg title.

Meanwhile, teenage sensation Payam Ahmadi had to settle for silver after a 9-7 setback against Georgia's Vakhtang Lolua in the 55kg showdown.

A world under-20 champion in August, Ahmadi, who was only named in the Iranian squad a week before the event, will still have every reason to be proud of his campaign in the Croatian capital after delivering a series of brave performance, including a last-four victory over Azerbaijan's four-time world champion Eldaniz Azizli, on his way to the final showpiece.

Later on Friday, Farrokhi, who won the Zagreb Open Ranking Series gold in February at the same arena, showed no nerves in blanking Gela Bolkvadze in a second final featuring Iranian and Georgian wrestlers.

Farrokhi went straight to work in the final and was awarded with the first par terre position,



Gholamreza Farrokhi celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the Greco-Roman 82kg gold at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 19, 2025.

● KOSTADIN ANDONOV/UWW

from which he scored two points from a correct throw to lead 3-0. A stepout just before the break extended the lead to 4-0.

There were no points or positions in the second period, and Farrokhi was happy to defend the four-point lead and claim the gold medal.

"Winning a medal in my very first World Championships felt like a dream," Farrokhi said. "I had always thought about it and even dreamed of this belt. I was able to put on my best performances and win the gold medal."

Farrokhi, who had to beat world champion Mohammadali Geraei to make the Iran team, gave up only a single point in five matches at the tournament while scoring 37.

"I managed to win all my matches while giving up only one point," he said. "Geraei is not only one of Iran's greatest champions, but also a close friend of mine. In the qualifiers I was able to beat him. As for the future, it depends on the coaches' decisions, but for now I'll stay at 82kg."

Mirzazadeh, meanwhile, continued his dominance in the super-heavyweight class, surviving an early scare to beat Darius Vitek of Hungary in the final.

A gasp went through Arena Zagreb when Vitek scored a takedown after Mirzazadeh lost his balance after a throw and he quickly gained control. But Mirzazadeh reversed the positions

and got one point to make it 2-1. Mirzazadeh then added two stepouts in the first period to take the lead and go into the break leading 3-2. There were no more surprises in the match as Mirzazadeh scored a takedown soon after the whistle in the second period. Two turns were enough to give him a 7-2 lead which he defended to win the gold medal.

"Winning this gold and standing on top of the world's heavyweight podium makes me really proud," Mirzazadeh said. "I just hope my people are happy, too, because their joy is my joy." Mirzazadeh brushed aside the opening takedown that Vitek scored on him, saying, "I think

that's the nature of wrestling and these things happen. I'm glad I was able to wrestle well and come out on top."

With his second world gold medal, Mirzazadeh has clearly set himself apart from the field at 130kg. The real challenge can come domestically from multiple age-group world champion Fardin Hedayati, but Mirzazadeh is determined to rule the weight class for a long time.

"I'll keep giving it my all to improve every year, to raise my level, and to represent my country again and again," he said. "My goal is to bring home world and Olympic gold medals and make my people proud."



Iran's Amin Mirzazadeh(n) has his hand raised as the winner after the Greco-Roman 130kg final at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 19, 2025.

● KADIR CALISKAN/UWW

Elsewhere, world U20 champion Alireza Abdevali, also a debutant at the Senior World Championships, was unlucky to miss out on the podium in the 77kg class after suffering a 6-3 loss to Turkey's Ahmet Yilmaz in the bronze-medal contest.

Earlier in the day, Iranian Paralympic champion Mohammad-Hadi Saravi safely negotiated the minefield that was the draw of the stacked 97kg division, advancing to the final to earn a shot at capturing a second world title.

Saravi defeated Kiryl Maskevich of Belarus, who competed as a neutral athlete, 3-1 in the semi-finals.

## Persian Gulf Pro League:

# Insipid Persepolis held by Chadormalou, Golgohar goes top



Persepolis captain Omid A'alishah (2) is seen in action against Chadormalou's Ali Taheran during a goalless draw at the Persian Gulf Pro League in Tehran, Iran, on September 19, 2025.

● MOHAMMADREZA BOLANDI/ISNA

## Sports Desk

Persepolis was held to a goalless stalemate by Chadormalou at the Persian Gulf Pro League on Friday, while Golgohar Sirjan claimed a massive away victory over Malavan FC to go top of the Iranian top-flight table.

At Tehran's Takhti Stadium, serving as Chadormalou's home venue, the Capital Reds were kept at bay by the minnow opponents' disciplined backline throughout the 90 minutes, failing to create any clear-cut chances aside from a couple of late, desperate

attempts.

The result means Persepolis, fourth in the table with six points, has now settled for three draws in four games of the new season, with its sole victory coming against Sepahan in the so-called 'Iranian Clasico' in Isfahan.

Next for Persepolis and head coach Vahid Hashemian, who faced jeers from sections of the crowd by the final whistle, is a home game against Malavan on Thursday. Third-placed Chadormalou, also on six points, will visit Paykan on Saturday.

Elsewhere on Friday, Mahdi Tikdari

converted from the spot in the 27th minute, before new signing Morteza Asadi came off the bench to find the net deep into stoppage time on his Golgohar debut, to seal a 2-0 win for Mahdi Tartar's men at the Sirous Qayegran Stadium. The result moved the visitors atop the table with seven points. Golgohar will play Yahya Golmohammadi's Foolad Khuzestan at home on Friday.

Having suffered two defeats in the previous three outings, Foolad celebrated a first victory of the new campaign, edging out Khaybar 1-0 at the Foolad Arena, thanks to Argentine Gustavo Blanco's second-half strike.

Iralco also got off the mark for the new season after three successive defeats, defeating Esteghlal Khuzestan 2-0 at home, courtesy of first-half goals from Yassin Jorjani and Abbas Kahrizi.

Newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi continued its impressive start to the campaign with a 1-0 home win against Zob Ahan. Sina Shah-Abbasi scored the sole goal of the game three minutes into the second half at Shiraz's Paris Stadium as Pirouz Qorbani's side remained unbeaten in four games.

Mes Rafsanjan shared the spoils with Shams Azar at home.

Esteghlal will be looking to bounce back from Wednesday's 7-1 humiliation against the UAE's Al Wasl in the AFC Champions League Two when hosting Paykan at Tehran's Shahr-e Qods Stadium today.

Defending champion Tractor will play away to Sepahan, with the home side chasing a first win of the campaign.

## AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualifiers:

# Iran hammer Bangladesh in Group G opener

AFC - Defending champions Iran began their AFC Futsal Asian Cup Indonesia 2026 Qualifiers campaign with an impressive 12-0 win against Bangladesh in Group G, also featuring the United Arab Emirates and host Malaysia, in Kuantan on Saturday. Bangladesh offered stiff resistance to 13-time champions Iran in the opening minutes with goalkeeper Jahid Rabbi deflecting Masoud Yousef's shot onto the bar before blocking Ali Khalilvand's attempt.

Iran's persistent pressure bore fruit in the 10th minute, Hossein Sabzi capitalising on a mistake from Srabon Shakil to score and was quickly followed by the second thanks to a near post flick from Hossein Tayebi. Tayebi made it 3-0 a minute later, smashing a high ball into the roof of the net from an acute angle with Mohammadhossein Bazayr adding

another as Bangladesh struggled to cope with Iran's power.

Yousef then squeezed a low shot home in the 16th minute before Behrooz Azimi fired home four minutes later for Iran to take a commanding 6-0 lead into the break.

Iran maintained their intensity after the interval with Bazayr rifling in an unstoppable shot in the 21st minute after space opened up for him on the edge of the semi-circle.

Amihossein Gholami then smacked an effort against the bar as Bangladesh held Iran at bay until the 32nd minute when Mohammadhossein Derakhshani teed up Khalilvand to strike home.

Iran wrapped up an outstanding performance with further goals from Saied Momeni (35th), Tayebi (37th), Mahdi Karimi (37th) and Gholami (38th).



Iranian players celebrate a goal during a 12-0 victory over Bangladesh in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup qualifiers in Kuantan, Malaysia, on September 20, 2025.

● AFC



# Farakhin Lake welcoming visitors with serenity, adventure



● snaptrip.com



● snaptrip.com

## Iranica Desk

Mazandaran Province is a region rich with attractions for all seasons, welcoming travelers from across Iran. This land, with its vast beauty and attractions in summer and autumn, ranks among the best travel destinations for mental and spiritual refreshment. Among all the well-known places in Mazandaran Province, the Farakhin Lake, located in the jurisdiction of Nowshahr, holds a legendary and little-known existence for tourism enthusiasts. This lake, with an area of approximately half a hectare and an elevation of 790 meters above sea level, is considered one of the smallest lakes in the province, IRNA wrote. The water of this lake is supplied by upstream springs, including the Farakhin spring, waterfalls, and snowfall and rain. Its presence among tall trees, combined with water of a deep blue color, gives it a unique charm and beauty. The

feeling of peace accompanied by the sounds of nature, including birdsong, provides the perfect excuse to escape the urban environment. If you want to reach this lake, you should enter Karaj-Chalus road, and after passing five kilometers from the city of Marzanabad, you will reach the Kandulus road. Then, after traveling 13 kilometers, you will enter the road to Vesar village. From this village to the lake, there is about a 15 kilometer distance. Keep in mind that due to some parts of this road being unpaved, traveling with ordinary cars can be somewhat difficult, and you will need more equipped vehicles such as off-road cars. **Hiking:** The hiking trail in the forests surrounding Farakhin Lake or the path leading to this lake is one of the most beautiful routes; therefore, by wearing appropriate shoes, you can enjoy the vegetation along the lake's edge and create lasting memories with the beautiful Hyrcanian forests.



● tmartravel.ir

**Off-road driving:** The road leading to the lake, due to its unusual conditions and uneven terrain, is one of the suitable paths for off-road drivers. To fully enjoy the excitement, be sure to hire a professional driver. **Cycling:** Given the natural conditions, the route to the lake is ideal for cycling as a fun and healthy recreational activity. Be sure to plan this with the help of a professional guide. **Photography:** Capturing beautiful moments of the scenery and your companions is one of the enjoyable activities at Farakhin Lake. Make sure to take full advantage of this for creating memorable experiences. **Boating:** Although boating is not possible on the lake itself, you can arrange to bring a small inflatable boat for transport so that you can enjoy peaceful moments on Farakhin Lake. **Cycling:** Some prefer to reach this lake by bicycle to enjoy the journey even more. In this case, you can take advantage of cycling tours organized by professional guides in this field. **Setting up tents and camping:** If you plan to spend more time

by the edge of Farakhin Lake, the best and most solitary way is to set up tents in nature. Keep in mind that this should be done with companions, a professional guide, and with all the necessary basic equipment for overnight camping, as this area lacks essential facilities such as restrooms, accommodations, electricity, and telephone service. **Best time to visit** Farakhin Lake is beautiful throughout the year, but when planning a trip, it is important to consider the conditions. For example, winter travel is very challenging due to snowfall and slippery roads in the northern regions, requiring professional equipment. However, spring, summer, and autumn offer more favorable conditions. It is important to note that, given the pleasant weather and the lake's abundant water, the best time to visit is from mid-April to mid-September. Although autumn also offers a unique experience with the diverse colors of the leaves and the distinct beauty of the surrounding scenery, making it an exceptional time for exploration.

## Important tips

- Since Farakhin Lake lacks basic facilities, it is recommended to travel in groups and with a guide so that you can assist each other in case of any problems.
- The route to Farakhin Lake involves specific complexities, so make sure to use navigation tools such as GPS during your trip.
- Driving on the road to the lake requires a professional driver; be sure to hire an experienced driver for this purpose.
- As this area is considered a pristine natural environment, please make every effort to preserve and protect its ecosystem.
- Be sure to purchase essential supplies, including food, before the trip, as there are no stores in this area to buy such items.

# Feast your eyes on Chahkuh Canyon's unique landscape

## Iranica Desk

Chahkuh Canyon, one of the most beautiful and distinctive geosites within the Qeshm Geopark, is situated approximately 70 to 95 kilometers northwest of Qeshm Island, adjacent to the village of Chahu Sharghi. This magnificent canyon is renowned not only for its geological significance but also for its historic role in storing and supplying water to the local community. Living in a region devoid of per-

manent water sources like rivers, dams, and wells has been a longstanding challenge for inhabitants of arid areas. To overcome this, residents of Qeshm employed various water conservation methods including storing rainwater in underground reservoirs, creating ponds, constructing water cisterns, and digging qanats and wells, chtn.ir wrote. Chahkuh Canyon acts as a natural channel for rainwater flow, prompting locals to dig wells along its pathway to capture and

preserve water for use during dry seasons. The canyon's impermeable rock formations prevent rainwater seepage, allowing water to remain accessible for prolonged periods. According to geological principles, water naturally flows toward the lowest point or base level. Along its course, it encounters natural barriers such as hills and rocks and gradually carves its path by infiltrating cracks and fissures in the stone. The distinctive shape of Chahkuh Canyon is

the outcome of this natural erosional process spanning millions of years. Qeshm Island's geological history, which stretches back several million years, includes multiple episodes of submersion under the sea followed by emergence. Ripple marks, known as ripple marks, found at the canyon's entrance reveal that this area was once a seashore. Distinctive spherical and hollow rock formations called "pigeon-hole cavities," formed

through chemical weathering, adorn the canyon walls. Moisture in the air, combined with salt particles — primarily due to the canyon's proximity to a salt dome — settle on these walls, causing the rock layers to flake. This cyclical weathering process has gradually widened the cavities, shaping the canyon's current unique features. Additionally, a fascinating phenomenon known as the Dig-e Jen, or "Genie's Cauldron," exists on the canyon floor. These cavities form due to the swirling motion

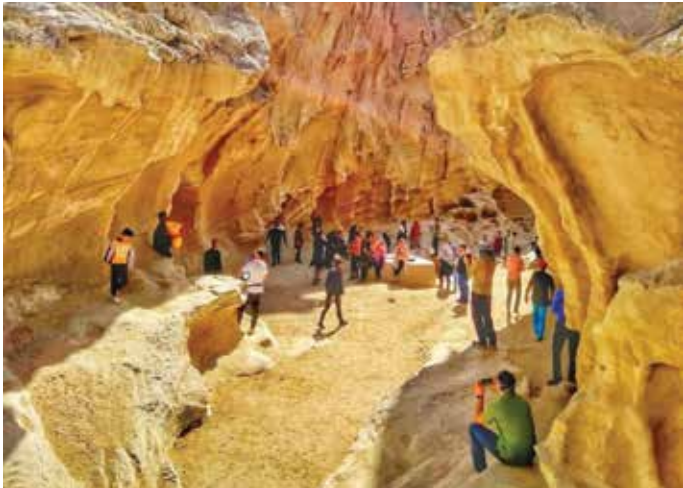
of water within rock grooves; pebbles trapped inside these hollows cause the water to strike against the walls, steadily enlarging their diameter and depth over time. Chahkuh Canyon, with its exceptional geological features and historical importance in water conservation, stands as one of the premier geosites of the Qeshm Geopark. As a treasured natural heritage site, it holds considerable promise for promotion, preservation, and drawing visitors from both inside Iran and abroad.



● 20gasht.com



● kojara.com



● kojara.com





# Iran's scholar Tarhandeh to judge 2025 Bratislava Illustration Biennial

## Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian children's literature scholar Sahar Tarhandeh was appointed to the international jury of the 30th Bratislava Illustration Biennial, scheduled to open in Slovakia in October 2025, the Children's Book Council of Iran announced on Saturday. The biennial, known by its initials BIB, is regarded as one of the world's most influential showcases of children's book illustration. Since its launch in 1967, it has been held every two years in the Slovak capital with backing from UNESCO, the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), and Slovakia's culture ministry, IBNA reported. Tarhandeh, a board member of the Children's Book Council of

Iran, has built her reputation through more than two decades of work in criticism, promotion and research on children's literature. She previously served as a judge for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, often called the "Nobel Prize for children's literature." Her nomination to the Bratislava jury was put forward jointly by the Children's Book Council of Iran, the Iranian Illustrators Society and the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, which serve as IBBY's national body in Iran. The three institutions oversaw the selection and endorsement process. Alongside Tarhandeh's appointment, two young Iranians will take part in BIB's side programs. Illustrator Melika Jamali has been



selected for the Albin Brunovský workshop, while researcher Parisa Beabadi will join a symposium on how the biennial has shaped trends in illustration. Both were chosen through an open call process. The 2025 edition, which runs through January 2026, will be staged at Bratislava Castle, featuring exhibitions, workshops and conferences for artists and scholars from around the globe.



## Eight Persian plays head to Yerevan's HIGH FEST

### Arts & Culture Desk

Eight Iranian theater productions will be staged at the 23rd HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival in the Armenian capital from October 1 to 8, Albert Beigjani, head of the festival's Iran section, announced. HIGH FEST, Armenia's largest theater gathering, is set to bring together companies from 12 countries, including France, the Netherlands, China, Hungary, Belgium, the United States, South Korea, Russia and Iran, inn.ir reported. The weeklong showcase has built a reputation as a meeting point for East and West, often drawing producers on the lookout for fresh talent and cross-border collaborations. The Iranian lineup features five stage plays, three street performances and two puppet shows, with productions from both Tehran and provincial cities such as Mashhad, Tabriz and Sari. Works include 'Antigone' by Amir Asani with Tehran's Negativ troupe, 'The Secret of the Conquerors' Defeat' by Navid Khoddam Abbasi, and 'Medea Will Not Perform' by Marjan Aqanouri. Street performances such as 'Hero' by Sahar



Mohseni and Ali RabiHAVIPour from Sari are also part of the program. Beigjani stressed that participation for Iranian groups runs through Dimak, the Tehran-based artistic company he directs. "This is the only channel," he said, underscoring the importance of coordination for access to the international stage. The festival will open with China's production 'Lightseeker: The Story of the Young Mao Zedong.' Organizers also said an Avignon Festival delegation, including the French city's mayor and senior festival executives, will attend under a cooperation agreement between the two events.

## Iranian artists to showcase works in Oman

### Arts & Culture Desk

Thirty-one Iranian painters and craftspeople will present 34 works in an online group exhibition titled 'Without Date' on Sunday, September 21, in partnership with Omani cultural firm Pioneers of Global Trade and Production. Curated by Iranian painter and director Aynaz Zarei, the show brings together artists from across Iran, including Amid Rajabi, Arshida Jahanpour, Ava Moarefi, Fatemeh Firouzi and Sonia Azizi. Their works range from contemporary painting to handicrafts. Zarei said the project aims to break down barriers and let Omani and international audiences "connect directly"



with Iranian art. She called the show a chance to keep cultural exchanges alive despite borders.

The event, which goes live on Sunday, will remain accessible until September 27.

## Asiatic cheetah conservation plan revived after six-year pause

### Social Desk

Iran's Department of Environment (DoE) has relaunched its flagship Asiatic cheetah conservation project after a six-year suspension, Hamid Zohrabi, Deputy Head of Natural Environment and Biodiversity of DoE said, citing fresh sightings of the endangered species in North and South Khorasan provinces. The program, which once drew international partners, is being rolled out with new funding, local community involvement and foreign expertise, ISNA reported. Officials say recent evidence of cheetahs roaming beyond their traditional range is a sign of a "dynamic" population that may be expanding into fresh habitats. Zohrabi said a "special plan" for South Khorasan had already pushed spending above \$830,000 last year, with funds topping \$1.66 million once vehicles and equipment were added. Nationwide, nearly \$8.3 million was spent in 2024 to shore up protection efforts, he said, with more



earmarked for this year. "The cheetahs seen in South Khorasan may not be the same as those in Touran," Zohrabi noted. "If confirmed, that would sharply raise the odds of survival for the species." He added that game guards are being recruited and trained to cover the six million hectares of cheetah habitat. The department is also working to bring back foreign cooperation. Past funding and expertise from groups in Africa, Asia and Europe dried up after policy shifts under previous administrations. "Winning them back is no easy task," Zohrabi admitted, but said talks are underway with India and South

Africa. Pretoria-based veterinarian Peter Caldwell is advising Iran's semi-captive breeding center at Touran, where officials hope to see cubs born in coming seasons. The facility has expanded tenfold, with upgraded enclosures, veterinary care and reduced human contact to meet global standards. "We are close to a fully international-level site," Zohrabi said. New financing has been released to complete clinical sections ahead of the next breeding cycle. On infrastructure, the ministry has resumed fencing along the Abbasabad-Miami road, known locally as the "death highway," where 13 cheetahs were killed in car collisions over the past decade. Iran Ministry of Roads and Urban Development has now pledged resources to accelerate the work, following a visit this month by environment chief Shina Ansari. Zohrabi said securing that corridor is "critical" to avoid further losses. "If both agencies push ahead in tandem, we can make it safe much faster," he said.

## Iran stages dual art shows in Yerevan to honor peace, Armenia's independence

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Embassy in Armenia opened a group art exhibition titled 'Color and Narrative' at Yerevan's Blue Mosque on Friday, bringing together works by 86 Iranian artists to mark International Peace Day and Armenia's Independence Day. The showcase, organized by the cultural section of the Iranian Embassy along with Daya Cultural and Artistic Center and Avaye Nasr Iranians Institute, highlights paintings, sculptures and handcrafted dolls described as "storytellers of peace." The pieces explore themes of inner calm, harmony with nature and the scars of war. The exhibition will run through September 21, ILNA reported. The opening ceremony began with the national anthems of Armenia and Iran, followed by remarks from Iranian cultural attaché Mohammad Asadi Movahed. He thanked Armenia for its steady support of joint cultural work and underlined the "deep historical and civilizational ties" binding the two neighbors. "Such programs are a bridge for strengthening friendship



between the two nations," he said. Asadi Movahed added that art "knows no borders" and could serve as a vehicle to promote peace and mutual understanding worldwide. He also used the occasion to condemn what he called global indifference to violence against civilians in Gaza, stressing that "nations rooted in culture and civilization are peace-seeking and aspire to calm for humanity." A day earlier, another Iranian exhibition titled 'Friendship Through Art' opened at the Artists' Union of Armenia, drawing local and foreign visitors. Together, the two shows mark the second set of joint cultural events staged by Tehran and Yerevan this year, underscoring a push to deepen people-to-people links through artistic exchange.