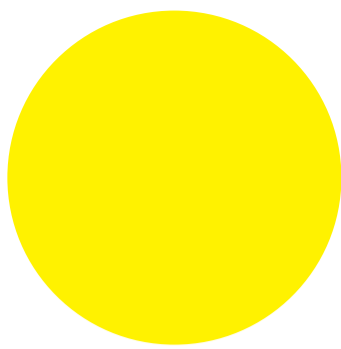


Iran doubles renewable capacity to 2,300 MW, launches new solar plants

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Araghchi urges E3's 'responsible response' to Iran-IAEA deal

Top security chief says Tehran will accept reasonable, fair proposal

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Leader dismisses talks with US as 'sheer loss'



Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei addresses the Iranian nation in a live televised speech on September 23, 2025.

● leader.ir

Political Desk

Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Tuesday rejected talks with the United States as "sheer loss" and "futile," stressing that any negotiation under Washington's terms would amount to capitulation. Addressing the nation in a live televised speech, Ayatollah Khamenei said US President Donald Trump would gain political advantage from sitting Iran at the negotiating table and boasting about the feat, but such talks for Tehran "would be sheer loss and offer no benefit" because the Americans tend to "pre-determine the outcome."

"Negotiating under these conditions means surrender... and de-

stroying the dignity of a nation," he said, warning that the costs would be severe and "some of these harms are irreversible." The Leader said Washington sought dialogue to put an end to Iran's nuclear activities, emphasizing that such a demand by Trump showed a fundamental misunderstanding of the Iranian nation and was "bigger than the speaker's mouth." Ayatollah Khamenei warned that a proud nation like Iran "would slap the speaker of such words in the mouth," and would not accept the idea that enrichment should be halted. The remarks come as US officials press for stricter curbs on Iran's nuclear and missile programs amid threats by the European powers to revive UN sanctions if Iran does not return to talks. "We have not surrendered and will not surrender," Ayatollah Khamenei said, adding that Iran would not bow to pressure to halt uranium enrichment. He said the US expected Tehran to simply "burn down" its nuclear achievements. "They want us to burn down this great achievement that our nation has paid so much for."

Pezeshkian: UNGA chance for Iran to present 'clear, principled positions'

2 >



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian rings the bell at a school in Tehran to mark the start of the new academic year on September 23, 2025, just hours before departing for New York to attend the annual United Nations General Assembly.

● president.ir

FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship:

Iran stuns Serbia in resounding triumph to advance to quarterfinals



Iranian middle blocker Mohammad Valizadeh (27) spikes against Serbia in Manila, the Philippines on September 23, 2025, as Iran booked their place in the quarterfinals of the 2025 FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship.

● volleyball.ir

Sports Desk

Iran's men's volleyball team on Tuesday pulled off a breathtaking comeback in Manila, outlasting Serbia 3-2 in a five-set thriller to punch their ticket to the quarterfinals of the 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship. In a clash that had everything—thundering spikes, monster blocks, and nerve-jangling rallies—Roberto Piazza's men showed grit and composure when it mattered most. Despite dropping the first and third sets (23-25, 24-26), Iran roared back with relentless serving and powerful spikes to take the second, fourth, and decisive fifth (25-19, 25-22, 15-9). The momentum swung like a pendulum in



the early sets. Serbia's power game looked dominant, but Iran's pressure from the service line forced errors and cracked the European defense. By the time the match reached the do-or-die fifth, the Iranians had seized full control—storming out to an early lead and never looking back as Captain Morteza Sharifi and his teammates sealed the deal with emphatic kills. In a pre-match poll on Volleyball World, over 80% of fans backed Serbia to advance. But in this "World Cup of surprises," Iran proved that no favorite is safe. Now, with momentum on their side, Iran turns its eyes to the quarterfinals, where they will face the Czech Republic on Thursday.

Palestine recognition could go beyond symbolism

Statehood creates grounds for greater legitimacy of action against Israel

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Following months of Israeli assaults and atrocities in the Gaza Strip, a new wave of recognition of Palestine has emerged from several governments, including some in the West. Also, on September 12, the United Nations General Assembly, in its 79th session, adopted with 142 votes in favor a resolution known as the "New York Declaration," calling for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Such moves were intended to end aggression and uphold the rights of the Palestinian people. Yet it remains unclear to what extent such diplomatic steps—viewed by some as largely symbolic—can stop on-going crimes or bring meaningful change to the lives of Palestinians.

Abed Akbari, an international affairs expert, told Iran Daily in an exclusive interview that recognition of a Palestinian state could pave the ground for greater action against Israel. Here is more.



IRAN DAILY: Given the wave of recognition of Palestine by several governments, can this be considered an effective step toward establishing a Palestinian state?

AKBARI: The recent recognition of Palestine is a positive development in international diplomacy and signals a shift in global political attitudes toward the Palestinian struggle. While these steps alone cannot deliver a fully-fledged state, they strengthen Palestine's legal and political standing and may serve as a foundation for claims in international organizations. Nevertheless, the creation of a real state requires changes on the ground and an end to occupation. For now, this recognition represents symbolic and legal capital which—if coupled with political, economic and legal pressure on the Israeli regime—could in practice help advance the Palestinian people's rights.

Since the United States and Israel have openly opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state, what obstacles can they put in its way?

Washington and Tel Aviv hold multiple levers to block Palestinian statehood. The US, through its veto power at the

Security Council, has already closed off the path to full UN membership—by far the most significant legal and institutional barrier. Politically and economically, Washington can also pressure states that have recognized Palestine, halting the spread of this movement. Meanwhile, the Israeli regime is undermining the prospect of Palestinian sovereignty by expanding settlements, imposing security restrictions, and carrying out unilateral measures on the ground. This is the strategy of creating facts on the ground, which effectively overshadows any political decision.

Some argue this is merely a symbolic gesture by Western states to deflect public anger over their silence and inaction in stopping Israeli crimes in Gaza, a way of showing they did 'something.' What is your take on this?

That assessment is partly accurate. Public outrage in Europe and beyond—particularly after the massacres in Gaza—forced Western governments to take up such measures to dampen domestic and international protests.

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Pezeshkian: UNGA chance for Iran to present 'clear, principled positions'

National Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian commended on Tuesday the UN General Assembly as an excellent opportunity for Iran to present its "clear and principled positions." Pezeshkian made the remarks before leaving Tehran for New York to take part in the 80th session of the UN General Assembly on September 23-29, where he will also hold meetings with leaders of various countries and will also meet with Iranians and experts abroad. Since the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers in 2018, relations between Tehran and Western countries, mainly the European parties to the nuclear agreement, have seen a significant decline due to the West's non-compliance with its commitments under the deal and its pressure on Iran to accept their excessive demands. Since then, the West has resorted to illegal sanctions to reach its goals. The restrictions caused by the sanctions on Iran have creat-

ed many economic problems for the country. During his speech at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport, Pezeshkian said that Iran's position is clear. He said that the Islamic Republic insists on the principles of peace, security, justice, and humanity. The Iranian president noted that while this year's theme is 'Convergence and Progress', what the world actually observes in global affairs and the conduct of major powers is "nothing but unilateralism and hegemony." Pezeshkian expressed the "truly painful" reality of children dying in Gaza, condemning the nations that "readily" support and supply arms to Israel's daily bombardment. He questioned the international response to such crimes, asking if "convergence" means everyone must be killed to conform to the will of a single power, and affirmed that all people have the right "to utilize and benefit from everything God has given." Pezeshkian said that while nations "must sit together and engage in dialogue to understand



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian waves as he boards a plane to leave Tehran for New York to attend the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2025.
● [president.ir](#)

one another," it is impossible to talk to someone who "wants to be coercive, bullying, mischievous, or destructive." "It is not the case that only Israel should have security; the security of the entire world's people must be preserved," he said, vowing to use the "exceptional opportunity" of the UN to ensure Iran's beliefs are "heard clearly by the world in New York." The theme of this year's debate, "Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights," reflects the anniversary of the UN's foundation and underscores the call for renewed global commitment to multilateralism, solidarity, and shared action for people and planet. In an X post on Sunday, Mehdi Sanaei, the Iranian president's



political advisor, said Pezeshkian is set to deliver his speech at the UNGA on Wednesday morning local time. Earlier on Tuesday, the Iranian president also attended a ceremony at a school in Tehran to mark

the beginning of the new school year in the country. He said students should help build the country by acquiring knowledge, science, and skills, and added that the government will strive to provide all the nec-

essary conditions for the success of all students in the country. The new school year in Iran begins the first day of Mehr — the seventh month of the Iranian calendar year, which usually falls on September 23.

Araghchi urges E3's 'responsible response' to Iran-IAEA deal

Top security chief says Tehran will accept reasonable, fair proposal



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd R), flanked by his deputies, meets his counterparts from France, Britain and Germany as well as the European Union's top diplomat in New York City, the US on September 23, 2025.
● [IRNA](#)

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Tuesday urged a "reciprocal and responsible response" from the European powers to Iran's recent agreement with the UN nuclear agency to put an end to a dispute over Iran's nuclear program. The Iranian top diplomat, who has travelled to New York to attend the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, held last-ditch talks with his counterparts from France, Germany and Britain as well as the EU foreign policy chief to resolve the dispute and prevent the revival of UN sanctions on Tehran. On September 9, Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency reached a deal to resume cooperation suspended by Iran following June's attacks by the US and Israel's on Iran's nuclear facilities. Referring to the agreement, the Iranian foreign minister emphasized the necessity of a "reciprocal and responsible response" from the European parties in this regard. The Iranian delegation also presented some ideas and proposals for continuing diplomacy and it was agreed that consultations with all involved parties would continue. The meeting came after the UN Security Council on Friday voted not

to permanently lift sanctions under European pressure. A 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). 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. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Saturday that Iran will never surrender in the face of excessive demands after the UN Security Council vote. He vowed that Iran would overcome any reimposition of sanctions on it through a so-called "snapback" process triggered by the European parties to the nuclear agreement. 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 sanctioned Iranian individuals and entities. On Monday, Araghchi called on the European powers to choose "cooperation or confrontation." "They have tested Iran repeatedly and know we do not respond to the language of pressure and threat... I hope we can find a diplomatic solution in the coming days, otherwise Tehran will take appropriate measures," Araghchi said. Iran's Secretary of Supreme National Security Council Ali Larijani said on Tuesday that Tehran is not opposed to negotiations if they serve the country's interests. "It is a lie that Iran does not negotiate. If a reasonable and fair proposal is presented that preserves Iran's interests, we will accept it," Larijani said. He said Iran had "pursued all possible ways" to resolve the dispute over the "snapback mechanism" through dialogue, but that the other side has been greedy and obstructive. Larijani cited France as an example, saying, "They sent a message through the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency that if Iran reached a certain arrangement with the agency, Europe will withdraw the snapback request... However, they did not keep their promise." The European powers have offered to delay reinstating sanctions for up to six months – to allow space for talks on a long-term deal on Tehran's nuclear program – if Iran restores access for UN nuclear inspectors, addresses concerns about its stock of enriched uranium, and engages in talks with the United States. If Tehran and the E3 fail to reach a deal on an extension by the end of September 27, then all UN sanctions will be reimposed on Iran.

Gov't spox says Iran seeks no permission to defend nation

National Desk

Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani emphasized on Tuesday that Iran will not seek permission from anyone to defend its people. She said that during the previous 12-day aggression on Iran by Israel and the United States, it was "our missile power that defended our people." Meanwhile, during the eight years of the imposed war by Iraq on Iran in 1980s, it was proven that no country can sustain its existence without the necessary military forces. "We neither seek permission from anyone for our missile power nor will we compromise on it, because we will not swap the security of our people with anything." Back in June, Iran responded to the US-Israel aggression by firing missiles at Israeli targets in the occupied territories as well as the largest US military base in the West Asia, which is Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. Since then, the Western powers have been further pressuring Iran to limit its missile program. After the war on the Islamic Republic, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani said in June 28 that the Islamic Republic will not acquiesce to any restrictions imposed on its missile power. "Iran will not accept any restrictions on its missile activities. The recent aggression demonstrated clearly that without Iran's mil-

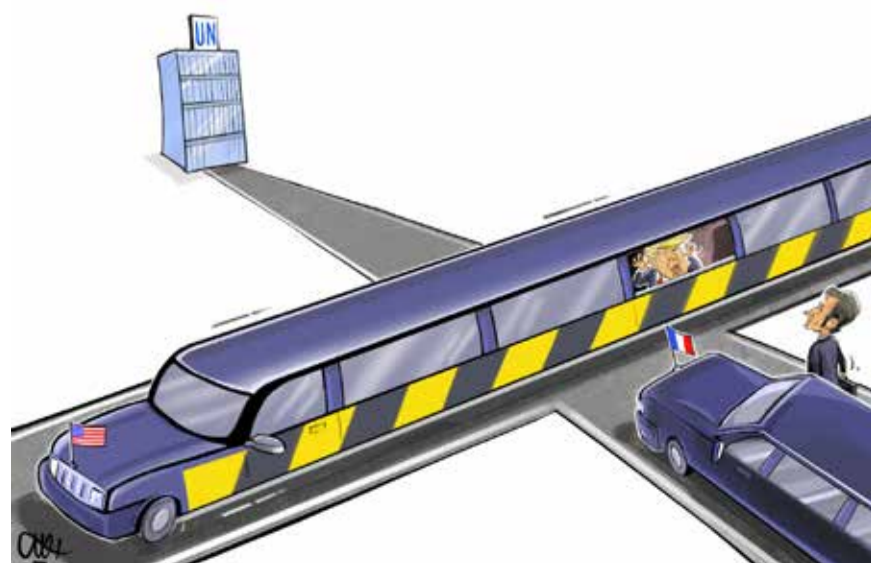


Fatemeh Mohajerani
● [IRNA](#)

itary capabilities, the other side would never have been compelled to request a cease-fire," Iravani said. "One of the key reasons a cease-fire has not been observed in Gaza — or has not been enforced by the occupying regime in Lebanon — is that the retaliatory power of the resistance groups has not yet reached a level sufficient to bring the real heat on the regime or make it vulnerable," he said. "By contrast, Iran's forceful military response inflicted serious pain on the regime's social, political and economic sections," Iravani added. The Iranian ambassador touched on US President Donald Trump's acknowledgement that the damage inflicted on Israel was "so severe, in fact, that it became one of the decisive factors prompting the regime to request that the United States expedite a ceasefire." "Therefore, Iran will never agree to relinquish such an effective strategic lever, nor will it allow itself to be disarmed in the face of potential future attacks," Iravani said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran doubles renewable capacity to 2,300 MW, launches new solar plants



Economy Desk

Iran's Deputy Energy Minister Mohsen Tarzatab announced on Tuesday that the installed renewable energy capacity had doubled across the country over the past year, and the construction of 280 megawatts (MW) of solar power plants had begun nationwide.

With the new projects coming online, the country's total renewable capacity has now surpassed 2,300 MW, IRNA reported. The head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) made the remarks at an inauguration ceremony attended virtually by Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi from the ministry's headquarters.

Tarzatab said 205 MW of solar capacity was commissioned on Tuesday, while construction began on another 75 MW in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Yazd, and Khorasan Razavi. If financing had been secured on time, cumulative renewable capacity could have exceeded 5,000 MW, he added.

According to the official, of the plants

launched this week, 165 MW were built by the private sector and 40 MW were completed with investment from the National Development Fund. SATBA also commissioned 6,881 small-scale power units with a total capacity of 101 MW, he said.

Tarzatab said that these projects included 254 solar-powered agricultural wells, 627 grid-connected units, 5,945 individual support systems, 16 collective support plants, 39 facilities in industrial parks, and 2,691 government installations. Twenty MW of the grid-connected capacity was built in Sistan and Baluchestan, he said.

The SATBA head said the organization had managed to equip workshops with more than double the allocated credit through investor trust, private sector participation, and cooperation with the Energy Ministry, the Central Bank, and the National Development Fund. Still, full implementation of the plans depends on timely funding, he added.

Moreover, the energy minister said Iran's strategy was to promote efficient electricity use rather than simply reducing consumption. "Our goal is to promote proper and efficient consumption in order to increase national development and welfare," Aliabadi said.

The minister added that Iran has about 12,500 hydropower plants that help store energy, while expanding the grid and removing bottlenecks remain essential. "As provinces develop, their limitations are reduced and they benefit more from their own growth," he said.

Trade cooperation roadmap of Iran-Eurasia to be finalized in Moscow

Economy Desk

Iran's main goal in Moscow is to agree on a roadmap for economic cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), said Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak on Tuesday, as he arrived in Russia for talks and to attend the first joint committee on implementing a free trade agreement.

"At the end of May, we began implementing the free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union, and in practice this agreement has entered into force. Under this framework, tariffs on 87% of goods were reduced to zero," Atabak said, IRNA reported.

The agreement was signed between the EAEU and the Islamic Republic on May 14.

The minister added that commissions and committees had been set up to pursue other measures, and Tuesday's meeting in Moscow was aimed at planning a roadmap for the next stage. His schedule also included meetings with ministers, the Russian deputy prime minister and other officials involved in carrying out the agreement.

"We hope the subcommittees under the main Eurasia commission can complete their activities and submit reports to the commission," Atabak said. "The main goal of this trip is to agree on and adopt the roadmap." Atabak said Iran's trade with the bloc had already risen significantly since the deal was signed. "Fortunately, since the conclusion of this treaty, the volume of our exchanges with the Eurasian Union has increased considerably, and we hope to expand this trend even further," he said.

Minister: Light satellites set to be launched as part of Soleimani constellation project

Economy Desk

Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Sattar Hashemi said on Tuesday that Iran plans to launch several light satellites this year as part of its "Soleimani" satellite constellation, outlining the government's focus on targeted launches and practical services for the public.

Hashemi told IRNA that the Soleimani satellite network would mature step by step, with development of its components led by the Iranian Space Agency and the Space Research Institute.

Launches using both domestic and foreign carriers are on the agenda, he added.

"In the Soleimani constellation project, several light satellites will be launched into space this year," Hashemi said. "Our focus in the government is on purposeful launches and providing effective services to the people."

Hashemi compared the satellite sector to communications technology, stressing the need for constant upgrades. "If communications are established in a village today, as technology generations advance, the needs of that region must also be updated," he said. "Satellites that once supported only minimal connectivity must now provide suitable, high-quality bandwidth."

Beyond infrastructure, the ministry is also prioritizing content production and development for the first time in the current government, Hashemi said, adding that the executive framework for the initiative is being finalized.

Iran's space program stands as a testament to phenomenal scientific progress, having achieved remarkable technological breakthroughs despite decades of illegal Western-imposed sanctions.

The space program, embodying national resilience and technological prowess, is poised for a landmark



year with the planned launches of its advanced Kowsar, Zafar, and Paya satellites.

Together, such spacecraft will form a sophisticated constellation designed to revolutionize the country's growing capabilities in earth observation,

precision agriculture, and environmental monitoring.

The planned launches of the stated satellites within the current Iranian calendar year mark a major milestone, demonstrating the nation's growing self-reliance.

Livestock genetic exports hit 60K doses; talks with Russia ongoing



Economy Desk

Iran exported 60,000 doses of livestock genetic material to

three countries last year and is currently in talks with Russia in this regard, the head of a livestock feed company said on

Tuesday. Speaking to IRNA about the status of genetic material exports and breeding programs, Mohammad Ali Mehri said Iran's growing production capabilities have allowed it to enter the ranks of global exporters in the highly competitive field.

"Sixty thousand doses of genetic material were exported last year to Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Lebanon. Negotiations are now under way with Russia," Mehri said.

"Iran, given the strength it has achieved in producing genetic

material, has been able to enter the club of exporters, because competition in this field is tough and difficult," he added.

The United States, Canada and Europe account for about 92% of the global production and export of livestock genetic material, while Asian countries such as China and Russia hold relatively small shares, Mehri underlined. He noted that previously, such material was leaving Iran informally or through smuggling. Since Iran entered the export market, powerful suppliers have tried to undercut it with

dumping and unfair discounts, he said.

"At present, the only company that has formally and legally exported genetic material is Jahed feed company, which is considered the first and only official exporter in Iran," Mehri said. Livestock genetic products are considered high value-added goods. The market has long been controlled by a few European, US and Canadian companies, but Iran entered the exporters' group in recent years, sending its first shipment to Afghanistan in 2022.

Iran, Uzbekistan railways eye 2026 target of 2m tons cargo exchange

Economy Desk

Iran and Uzbekistan aim to handle 2 million tons of cargo between their rail networks by 2026, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways Jabbari Zakeri said on Tuesday after meeting with Uzbekistan Railways Chairman Zulfar Narzullaev.

Zakeri said wagon traffic between the two countries is currently operational, with 476,000 tons moved in the first eight months of this year. The goal is to increase the volume to 1 million tons by the end of 2025 and reach 2 million tons in 2026, IRNA reported.

"Quantitative targets in international connections between Iran Railways and Turkmenistan Railways are essential," the deputy transport minister said, adding that Uzbekistan's position on the East-West corridor makes cooperation vital.

The official called for a joint tariff system to help expand bilateral freight flows.

Zakeri noted that Iranian exports and transit shipments from Uzbekistan toward Iran and open waters have risen in the year. More than 1,300 loaded wagons are currently positioned on the route to the Sarakhs border, ready for dispatch to Uzbekistan, he said.

The deputy minister expressed hope that joint meetings would boost transit, exports and imports, as well as wagon exchanges between the two railways and neighboring countries.

Narzullaev, for his part, announced his company's readiness to allow Iranian freight wagons to enter Uzbekistan via Turkmenistan.

Wasting opportunities at ocean gateway

ANALYSIS

The US has revoked the sanctions waiver on Chabahar Port for India, a move that aligns with its maximum pressure campaign against Iran. For years, Chabahar Port has been seen as one of Iran's key assets in playing a pivotal role in regional trade; a port with direct access to international waters, making it a gateway connecting East and North Asia. Its direct link to the Sea of Oman and then the Indian Ocean opens up access to global maritime routes. This feature not only cuts down export and import routes, saving costs, but also offers significant security advantages.

Since the signing of the trilateral agreement between Iran, India, and Afghanistan in 2016, a fresh vision emerged to turn Chabahar into a regional transit hub. India had pledged to invest in this port and build the Chabahar-Zahedan railway line, bypassing Pakistan to secure its trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia. So, Afghanistan was a direct beneficiary, too. At a time when Kabul needed to rebuild its economy through imports of goods and raw materials, Chabahar could serve as its secure, cost-effective corridor. This was why the US issued its sanctions waiver in 2018, explicitly emphasizing support for Afghanistan's development.

Under the agreements, India committed to investing over \$85 million in equipping the first phase of Chabahar Port, including purchasing port equipment, cranes, and specialized machinery. Chabahar Port is also a key link in the International North-South Corridor, a route that connects India through Iran to Russia and Europe. In simple terms, Indian goods could roll out from Chabahar into Iran, then be transported by trains or trucks to Central Asia and Russia, finally reaching European markets.

Pakistan's rival port

Over the years, Chabahar Port has been a strong competitor to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, only 72 kilometers away. It's worth noting that in recent years, China has stepped up massive investments in Pakistan, not only developing Gwadar but also leasing out the port to channel its maritime trade through it. However, the rivalry between these two oceanic ports recently took a hit when the US, which had granted a special exemption to India to develop Chabahar since 2018, withdrew that waiver. This decision signals heightened sanctions pressure that may cast a shadow over the future of many development projects there.

This recent US action will likely shake up regional trade calculations. With the sanctions waiver revoked, Indian companies can no longer operate in Chabahar without fearing hefty penalties and international restrictions. Banks and insurance companies will pull out from supporting projects linked to Chabahar.



This not only slows down the development of the port's subsequent phases but could also throw a wrench into daily commercial activities.

Primarily, the withdrawal cuts off Indian investment and technology from Chabahar, which could have been the engine for eastern Iran's development, leaving the country deprived of financial resources and external management expertise. Moreover, Iran could have cashed in on annual revenues by facilitating Indian goods transit to Afghanistan and Central Asia, but this opportunity may now dry up. Finally, Iran's role as a transit hub between East and North Asia will weaken, giving Pakistan's Gwadar the upper hand.

It's important to recognize that canceling the waiver doesn't just put a spanner in the works for Iran — India will also feel the pinch. Conversely, this decision plays into the hands of China and Pakistan. Chabahar was meant to be Iran's trump card in regional trade: a point that linked up India with Afghanistan and Central Asia while aiding the development of Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan Province. But due to policymakers' dragging their feet in capitalizing on this advantage, this chance slipped through their fingers.

Alternative opportunities post-sanctions

Private sector businesspersons believe Chabahar could have been a serious contender against Pakistan's Gwadar Port, but due to "sanctions," "lack of return cargo for vessels," and "no connection to

rail lines," the opportunity was lost. They point out that the Chabahar-Bandar Abbas railway project was largely symbolic, with no sustainable infrastructure signed off on. Consequently, the port's real potential remained untapped, and free-trade and special economic zones played little role. The private sector has repeatedly raised the alarm, but resolving these issues is solely in the government's hands. Today, cooperation opportunities with countries like Afghanistan and Turkmenistan still exist and could breathe new life into Iran's transit routes if acted upon.

Fatemeh Moghimi, head of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce's Council of Businesswomen, told Donya-e-Eqtasad that Chabahar Port matches up to Pakistan's Gwadar, so naturally, "steps should have been taken for Chabahar to have the edge over its rival."

"This required a few preconditions; First, ships arriving at Chabahar had to be guaranteed return cargo. Without this assurance, ships face soaring freight rates because on the return journey, costs like fuel, freight, and labor still need to be covered. Hence, to compete with Gwadar, return cargo had to be secured — but this never came to fruition, mainly due to the sanctions strangling us."

Another issue, she noted, is the lack of rail connectivity to Chabahar; a major missed opportunity for Iran. The railway was neither fully operational nor backed by necessary facilities. Worldwide, smart ports are usually tied to railways and freight wagons to "ship out goods timely, avoiding long warehouse delays awaiting wagons".



A truck transporting cargo from Afghanistan to be exported to India is seen at Shahid Beheshti terminal in the southeastern Iranian coastal city of Chabahar, on the Gulf of Oman, on February 25, 2019.

● ATTA KENARE/AFP



India had pledged to invest in this port and build the Chabahar-Zahedan railway line, bypassing Pakistan to secure its trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia. So, Afghanistan was a direct beneficiary, too. At a time when Kabul needed to rebuild its economy through imports of goods and raw materials, Chabahar could serve as its secure, cost-effective corridor. This was why the US issued its sanctions waiver in 2018, explicitly emphasizing support for Afghanistan's development.



The map shows various routes and corridors that go through the southeastern Iranian port of Chabahar, including the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

● CSIS



She explained that connecting Chabahar to Maku to open up a new transit corridor was talked about for years but never went anywhere. Even during the terms of two or three ministers, the Bandar Abbas-Chabahar rail was kicked off symbolically but never pushed forward. "If you were to check with the Ports or Railways Organization, you'd find that very few wagons have moved on this route daily or weekly," she added. Essentially, while initial infrastructure was put in place, work stalled, yielding no real gains.

"To understand the real situation, just ask the Ports and Maritime Organization: How many ships docked at Chabahar, how many were linked to contracts with India, and how many containers moved? Why were these chances left on the table, and why did free zones and special economic areas stay inactive? The private sector cannot answer these — the government must be held accountable. These shortcomings show that without fixing infrastructure problems, growth and advancement in transit won't get off the ground."

Moghimi concluded: The country's geographical position is one of our last assets, and we must not let these resources slip away. At a minimum, trade exchanges should be sustained. But the harsh reality is that we have burned through many opportunities. Now, no bright outlook is visible unless bilateral agreements with countries that can use Iran's routes are seriously pursued. For example, Turkmenistan could reroute its transit cargo via Chabahar-Mashhad, a more cost-effective path for them, or Afghanistan, which still moves a large share of its shipments through Iran, [could do something similar]. These chances exist, but translating them into reality depends on concrete government action. In any case, the cancellation of the US sanctions waiver on Chabahar Port will have a significant impact on the future of Iran's regional trade as this port was the country's sole oceanic gateway with the capacity to play a crucial role in linking East and North Asia. Although this recent US decision throws a wrench into Iran's economy and India's investments, it should not be taken as the end of the road. Iran can still carve out new transit routes by harnessing regional cooperation and bilateral agreements with countries like Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. Chabahar still holds the potential to turn into the commercial hub of eastern Iran, but this opportunity depends heavily on timely and expert decisions by policymakers.

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

Big blow for India?

How Trump’s killing of Chabahar port waiver will hit Delhi



 **By Anand Singh**
Journalist

A N A L Y S I S

The Donald Trump-led US has announced it will revoke the waiver of sanctions granted to India on Iran’s Chabahar port, ending the special exemption granted to India in 2018 during the president’s first tenure. The US had exempted India from its sanctions, enabling it to freely operate and develop a trade terminal in the port city on Iran’s Makoran coast. The move, aligned with the Trump administration’s policy to impose “maximum pressure on Iran,” could disrupt New Delhi’s strategic and economic ambitions in West and Central Asia. Just 550 nautical miles (roughly 1,000 km) from Gujarat’s Kandla port, Chabahar offers India easy access to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Europe, bypassing Pakistan. India has invested heavily in the project since 2016, spending nearly half of its allocated Rs 400 crore. Traffic through the port has been steadily rising, and government officials and experts had hoped its full operationalisation would significantly boost trade, revenues, and Delhi’s strategic imprint. Ironically, Trump’s move will be rewarding China at India’s expense, at a time when Delhi and D.C. are involved

in a trade tussle, said Geopolitical expert Brahma Chellaney. American foreign policy expert Michael Kugelman said the US move is “a strategic blow to India. Chabahar is a major part of India’s connectivity goals.” US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday said the exceptions would lapse on September 29. The move has exposed Indian operators at Chabar’s Shahid Beheshti terminal to punitive action by revoking the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA), meant for the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. The decision is part of the Trump administration’s renewed “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, under which Washington, D.C., has also designated several entities linked to Tehran’s oil trade.

Why Chabahar matters to India
For New Delhi, the timing is seemingly troubling. The move comes barely a year after India signed a landmark 10-year agreement with Iran to develop and run the Shahid Beheshti terminal, the first full-scale overseas port managed by India. The move now threatens not only India’s \$500 million investment but also its long-term connectivity blueprint, which hinges on bypassing Pakistan and tapping into Central Asia’s markets. India’s interest in Chabahar dates back

to 2003, when it offered to develop the port as a counter to Pakistan’s Gwadar port being built with Chinese assistance under Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative. But bureaucratic delays and international sanctions on Iran meant progress was slow. A breakthrough came in 2015–16, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged \$500 million for the project and signed a trilateral agreement with then-Iranian president Hassan Rouhani and Afghanistan’s Ashraf Ghani to build a multi-modal transport and transit corridor from India’s west coast to Kabul, via Chabahar. Chabahar’s development gathered pace in 2017, with the inauguration of the Shahid Beheshti terminal, where India concentrated its investment. Soon after, New Delhi used the port to ship wheat to Afghanistan. The route was of much value as it was an alternative to Pakistan-controlled routes. In 2018, Iran leased operational control to India for 18 months, paving the way for the long-term contract finally inked in 2024. The deal gave India a decade-long stake in the port, renewable upon expiry. After the completion of the fourth phase of development, the Chabahar port could handle 82 million tons of cargo per year with 32 jetties (16 multi-purpose, 10 containers, 3 each oil and dry bulk). The port is of a lot of importance to India as from Chabahar, the highway leads via Zaranj and Delaram into Afghani-



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) and US President Donald Trump
● FT



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The heads of the Indian, Iranian, and Afghan delegations jointly inaugurate the office of the Indian SPV – India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ) at Iran’s southeastern port of Chabahar on December 24, 2018, during the Chabahar Trilateral Agreement meeting.
● INDIA TODAY

stan. The India-built 218-km stretch of the road, which opens the way to Afghanistan’s main cities, like Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, and Mazar-e-Sharif, is a major trade route. From Afghanistan, various routes would then connect to the five Central Asian nations. In simple terms, the port and this road gave India a direct gateway into Afghanistan and, further ahead, into Central Asia, without depending on Pakistan. India mainly exports machinery, rice, and pharmaceuticals and imports crude oil, petrochemicals, and minerals from the former Soviet region.

Chabahar strategic, economic lifeline

Chabahar, meaning “four springs” in Persian, is a deep-water port in Iran’s Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Located outside the congested Strait of Hormuz, it provides reliable access for large cargo ships. Its potential goes far beyond India-Iran trade. Chabahar is also tied to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal network connecting the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and further to Northern Europe via Russia. Industry estimates suggest that shipments through this corridor could save nearly 15 days compared to the Suez Canal route. But the INSTC, launched in 2000 by India, Iran, and Russia, has seen slow progress. The Chabahar port’s proximity to Gujarat and Maharashtra makes it easily accessible for Indian exporters. As Union Minister Nitin Gadkari once pointed out, “The distance between Kandla and Chabahar is less than that between Mumbai and Delhi”. Strategically, Chabahar could be India’s answer to China’s growing influence through BRI. Beijing’s development of Gwadar in Pakistan, along with port facilities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar — also dubbed “String of Pearls” — has long worried India. Chabahar offered a counterbalance, allowing New Delhi to establish a foothold in the Persian Gulf and keep a tap on Chinese activities too. The US sanctions risk undoing years of Indian diplomacy with Iran, Afghanistan, and other partners. Without the waiver, the port’s planned expansion would significantly slow down. Geopolitical expert Brahma Chellaney summed up the stakes in a post on X: “Not content with slapping 50% tariffs on Indian goods, [the Trump administration] has now taken an India-specific punitive step by revoking the 2018 sanctions exemption for Iran’s Chabahar Port, operated by India. By killing the exemption effective September 29, Trump is threatening sanctions on Indian state-run firms at Chabahar — punishing India for building a counterweight to China’s influence”. The irony, Chellaney noted, is that India had already complied with sanctions by halting oil imports from Iran, a move that ceded lucrative access to China. “Trump’s ‘maximum pressure’ has consistently meant maximum pay-off for Beijing, with India left to pay the price,” he said. Bengaluru-based strategic affairs columnist and podcaster SL Kanthan said, “The US threatens Indian companies with sanctions if they continue to work on the Chabahar port in Iran. This is precisely why India needs to embrace de-dollarisation and create separate financial channels — the number 1 requirement for sovereignty and independence”. For India, the challenge now is how to keep Chabahar afloat while avoiding a direct confrontation with Washington. With the latest sanctions, the fate of India’s most ambitious overseas port venture hangs in the balance.

The article first appeared on India Today.



Iran's Zagreb triumph lays groundwork for glory in L.A. Olympics



By Amirhadi
Arsalanpour
Staff writer

Years of hard work and precise planning by the Iranian Wrestling Federation paid off with a historic success at the World Championships in Zagreb, setting the stage for even more glory at future major events, most significantly the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Olympic champion Saied Esmaeili claimed the Greco-Roman 67kg gold on Sunday, with Alireza Mohammadi (87kg) and Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar (63kg) bagging a silver and a bronze respectively, to cap off a medal-laden campaign for the country, as Iran secured a first-ever Greco-Roman and freestyle team title double in the Croatian capital – a feat previously achieved only by the Soviet Union and Russia.

Of the 20 Iranians competing across different weight classes in the two men's event, 15 managed to leave Zagreb with a medal – including a remarkable six gold winners.

The Iranian Greco-Roman 10-man squad excelled with four golds, two silvers and two bronzes, dominating the team standings with 180 points – nearly twice as much as runner-up Azerbaijan, which finished on 89 points.

Esmaeili was joined by fellow-Olympic champion Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg), defending world champion Amin Mirzazadeh (130kg), and debutant Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg) in



Members of the Iranian Greco-Roman squad and coaching staff celebrate with the team trophy at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 21, 2025.

● IAWFIR

walking away with the ultimate prize in their respective events, while teenage sensation Payam Ahmadi was the other Iranian silver medalist in Zagreb, enjoying an impressive run to the 55kg final on his debut at the Wrestling Worlds.

Danial Sohrabi, meanwhile, was unfortunate to settle for bronze in the 77kg class, though it still helped the country end an 11-year wait for the team title.

Perhaps the medal haul would have been even more colorful, if

not for some controversial refereeing decisions that impacted the Iranians' results in the 77kg and 87kg categories.

The Greco-Roman glory came on the back of another drought-ending campaign for the country in the freestyle competitions.

While gold medalists Rahman Amouzad (65kg) and Amirhossein Zare' (125kg) were in a league of their own in the their divisions, Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan (61kg) and Amirali Azarpira (97kg) finished with a silver, with Mo-

hammad Nokhodi (79kg), Kamran Qasempour (86kg), and Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg) adding three bronzes, as Iran dethroned Team USA for its first team title in 12 years.

What adds to the sweet taste of glory in Zagreb is that only four members of the Iranian roster – Younes Emami, Qasempour, Saravi, and Mirzazadeh – were over 24 years old, with seven Iranians winning a medal on their World Championships debut – including Greco-Roman champions Es-

maeil and Farrokhi.

For all the somewhat unfair, non-sport-related criticism directed at him since taking the helm at the sport's national governing body in 2018, Alireza Dabir, also a former world and Olympic champion, truly deserves credit for masterminding the resurgence of Iranian wrestling, in recent years.

When he was elected to the job, Iran had just finished sixth in the freestyle table at the World Championships in Budapest with

three bronze medals, while ranking 11th in Greco-Roman, courtesy of Majid Aliyari's sole bronze medal in the 97kg class.

However, after the new federation took office, the primary goal was to restore Iranian wrestling to its former prominence on the global stage, and even beyond. To this end, a comprehensive eight-year master plan was developed, encompassing all critical areas – technical, infrastructural, cultural, and economic.

Emphasis was placed on youth age groups, strict and fair implementation of the selection process for the national teams, providing the necessary infrastructure for training, physical conditioning, nutrition, and accommodation, as well as improving the financial situation of national athletes, and training youth coaches.

The results of all the efforts culminated in title-winning runs at the world age-group competitions and, of course, last year's Paris Olympics, where, for the first time, Iranian teams won two golds, four silvers, and two bronzes.

With the country's young squads stealing the show in Zagreb, few would argue against the prospect of an even more glorious Olympic campaign for them in Los Angeles three years from now.

Team Melli to play Mexico in friendly, Taj says



Sports Desk

The Iranian men's national team will face Mexico in a friendly game in the near future, Mahdi Taj, the chairman of the Iranian Football Federation, said on Monday.

The exact date and the venue of the game, however, are yet to be confirmed by the two national governing bodies, Taj added.

The game will be part of the two teams' preparation for next year's FIFA World Cup, which Mexico will cohost alongside the United States and Canada from September 7, 2026.

The Iranian Federation has been struggling to arrange high-profile friendly fixtures for Team Melli since it secured a fourth successive World Cup qualification in June, thanks to a top-spot finish in Group A of the Asian qualifiers.

While Japan and South Korea, which will join Iran in representing Asia at the World Cup, played the United States and Mexico in September's international break, Iran had to take part at the CAFA Nations Cup, featuring five Central Asian teams, as well as India,

Oman, and Afghanistan.

Iran's next friendly game will come away to Russia in Volgograd on October 10. Meanwhile, Taj insisted that Amir Qalenoeei would remain Iran's head coach for the World Cup finals, despite recent speculation about his future following a subpar CAFA campaign.

Some mediocre performances saw Iran beat Afghanistan (3-1) and India (3-0) before giving away a two-goal lead to share the spoils with another minnow opponent in Tajikistan in a 2-2 draw in Group B of the competition

to progress to the final.

Team Melli, reduced to 10 men just five minutes into the game, suffered a 1-0 loss to Uzbekistan in the final showpiece in Tashkent – courtesy of a Khojiaakbar Alijonov's 120th-minute winner for the home side.

Asked if Iranian fans could expect a new manager on Iran's bench in next September's finals, Taj replied, "No. Qalenoeei will definitely stay on as Iran coach for the World Cup, and even beyond, though there will likely be additions to his coaching staff."

Iran's Safaei up by 98 spots in ITTF Women's World Ranking

Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis player Shima Safaei enjoyed a massive jump in the recent ITTF World Rankings, released on Tuesday, climbing 98 spots to reach 185th place in the women's singles list.

Safaei won an impressive third-place trophy at the latest WTT Feeder Series event in Cappadocia, Türkiye last week – the country's first women's title in the history of the competition. Safaei defeated some prominent opponents en route to the semifi-

nals, before suffering a 3-0 loss (11-5, 11-4, 11-8) to Asuka Sasao of Japan. Safaei began her campaign with a straight-game victory over Uzbekistan's Markhabo Magdieva, and went on come out victorious against eighth-seed Brazilian Laura Watanabe by the same scoreline in the round of 32. Safaei continued with a 3-1 win against the host's Sibel Altinkaya, and then held off a fightback from second-seed Dian Meshref of Egypt in a five-game thriller (12-10, 12-10, 5-11, 9-11, 11-8) to advance to the last four.

Meanwhile, Mahshid Ashtari moved up by 89 places and Elina Rahimi jumped 116 spots to sit 263rd and 276th in the women's singles ranking, respectively. The two were also part of the women's draw in Cappadocia, with Ashtari suffering a 3-0 defeat against ultimate champion and top-seed top-seeded Hitomi Sato of Japan in the last 16, while Rahimi crashed out in the round of round of 32, courtesy of 3-2 setback against the host's Ece Harac.

Sun Yingsha, Wang Manyu, and

Chen Xingtong complete an all-Chinese top three in the women's ranking.

In the men's singles ranking, No. 80 Noshad A'alamian remains the highest-ranked Iranian, with young prodigy Benyamin Faraji in the 135th place.

Navid Shams (160th) and Nima A'alamian (164th) are the other two Iranian players in the World Men's Ranking.

Wan Chuqin remained the world No. 1, followed by fellow-Chinese Lin Shidong and Brazilian Hugo Calderano.

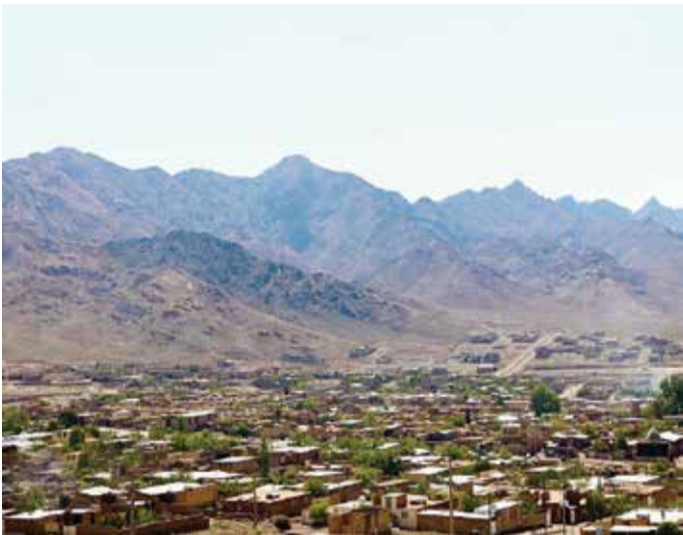


● FARIS NEWS

Restoration, tradition draw visitors to Davaran village

Iranica Desk

Davaran village, located east of Rafsanjan along the road to Zarand in Kerman Province, is encircled by towering mountains, the most prominent of which is Alamdar Mountain. The village is known for a qanat, an underground irrigation canal, which is considered one of the best water sources in the region, attracting many visitors who come specifically to benefit from its water. Within the village, a stream of clean, clear water runs for roughly two kilometers. Along the banks of this waterway, many robust trees have flourished. Together with the restored historical buildings and layout, this natural feature contributes to the village's picturesque and charming environment, Mehr News Agency wrote. Last year, Hossein Rezai, the governor of Rafsanjan, announced that the Davaran Qanat had been officially registered on Iran's National Heritage List. He explained that the qanat dates back to the Timurid period, and that the old trees surrounding it are sustained by the qanat's irrigation. The international registration of this qanat is expected to bring significant positive impacts to the region, including the attraction of both domestic and international tourists, which will substantially boost the local economy. There are two historic towers in the village that were originally built about a hundred years ago for lookout and protection against thieves and bandits. Remarkably, these towers remain intact today. Although the towers are situated close to each other, they are now surrounded by numerous modern buildings. The combination of the old tower, the qanat with its pure water, nar-



row alleys, the holy site known as Qadamgah, the shrine of Bibi Gohar — sister of Imam Reza (PBUH) — and dozens of other historical and tourist attractions has made this village a favored destination for visitors, especially when the weather cools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the villagers and the local council undertook renovations and improvements to parts of

the alleys, which enhanced the overall beauty of the buildings, amplified the village's greenery, and highlighted the flowing water in the streets. Additionally, an eight-hectare complex was developed at the village entrance to offer amenities and welfare services to travelers. The community here cultivates many mulberry and pistachio orchards. They also produce



a wide range of agricultural products, including peaches, dried apricots, apples, grapes, figs, and walnuts. Moreover, carpet weaving is a common occupation among the residents. Many tourists purchase local products, noting that the qanat water contributes to the superior quality of the produce. To introduce visitors to the traditional customs of the villag-

ers, symbolic installations have been created, such as statues representing the water masters who distribute water. These sculptures vividly depict the traditional water-sharing ceremony known as "Tashteh." Hassan Hosseini, head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Rafsanjan, emphasized the historical significance of the Davaran Qanat, reiterating its

registration on Iran's National Heritage List. He explained that Tashteh is a traditional method of water distribution that continues to be practiced by the residents of Davaran Village. During the annual Tashteh festival, a variety of cultural programs take place, including exhibitions of local products and handicrafts, displays of historical Tashteh structures from Kerman Province, and ceremonies honoring qanat diggers and veterans who have preserved this heritage. The village is also home to a small mosque, which some claim has foundations dating back to the Qajar era. Despite its age, the mosque has undergone extensive renovation and restoration throughout the years. Today, it remains a central place for worshippers and a venue for religious ceremonies held by the local community. Together with neighboring Husseiniehs — which are dedicated spaces for religious gatherings — this mosque plays a vital role in shaping and sustaining the religious and cultural identity of the village, particularly during Muharram when unique rituals are performed. The mosque is renowned for its exquisite, antique mirror work, and its façade has been restored to blend harmoniously with the village's historic architectural style. Thanks to the committed efforts of the residents, Davaran village has transformed into a notable tourist destination. In recent years, this has led to a trend of reverse migration, with former residents returning. Despite its growth as a tourist spot, the village remains deeply rooted in its traditions, standing alongside its ancient monuments, blooming orchards, and historic neighborhoods as a living testament to its enduring cultural heritage.

tribnews.ir

Immerse yourself in autumn splendor at Cheshmeh A'la

Iranica Desk

Cheshmeh A'la (A'la Spring) is one of the most prominent natural and historical attractions in Damavand, Tehran Province, with each season offering its own unique beauty. However, autumn transforms this spring and its surroundings into a rare painting of color and light. The yellow, orange, and red leaves of the surrounding trees, the pleasant sound of the clear flowing water, and the cool, pure mountain air create a dreamlike atmosphere for tourists and nature lovers. Many travelers consider autumn the best time to visit Cheshmeh A'la because, in this season, besides the stunning scenery, there is less crowding compared to summer, allowing for a more peaceful enjoyment of nature. Cheshmeh A'la is not just a natural attraction; it has deep roots in the history and life of the people of Damavand. Its clear and refreshing water has been a source of life for the region's inhabitants for centuries and has played an important role in the development of the surrounding settlements. Many local researchers believe that

the presence of this spring was the reason for the prosperity of agriculture and horticulture in this area, and even the old migratory routes of nomads passed nearby. Historical and oral accounts from locals indicate that Cheshmeh A'la served as a resting place for caravans and pilgrims, forging a deep connection with Damavand's past and the hospitality culture of its people, chtn.ir wrote. The role of Cheshmeh A'la in boosting tourism in Damavand is very significant. Its proximity

to Tehran and the unique quality of its water attract thousands of tourists annually for recreation, photography, and to enjoy the natural scenery. The presence of fruit orchards, high mountains, and lush landscapes has made Cheshmeh A'la one of the most important eco-tourism destinations east of the capital. Hiking and trekking enthusiasts can explore trails around the spring for memorable day trips or weekend outings. In autumn, the morning mist over the mountains and the reflec-

tion of fall colors in the spring's clear water create a poetic and unique scene that captivates professional photographers and nature lovers alike. One reason for Cheshmeh A'la's popularity is its relatively easy access. To reach this area, simply take the Tehran-Firuzkuh road from Tehran and travel about 45 kilometers to Damavand. From the city center, clear signposts indicate the route to Cheshmeh A'la, and after approximately 10 kilometers of driving along a scenic road, you will arrive at

your destination. This road is passable year-round and even during the cool and pleasant autumn days in Damavand, it offers a safe and comfortable journey for families. Due to the wide popularity among tourists, Cheshmeh A'la is equipped with suitable infrastructure for short-term stays and family visits. At the entrance, there is a spacious and secure parking area where travelers can park their vehicles without worry. Shops and stalls offering sou-

venirs, local products, and traditional snacks operate around the spring, allowing tourists to make their trip memorable by purchasing honey, local dairy products, mountain fruits, and handicrafts. The presence of ample green spaces for sitting and picnicking, garbage bins to maintain cleanliness, and sufficient lighting during evening hours all indicate that the area's management has paid special attention to tourists' comfort. Cheshmeh A'la, with its clear water and enchanting scenery, is not only a stunning natural attraction but also a part of Damavand's history and culture. Autumn in this area offers a unique opportunity to experience the warm colors of nature, the tranquility of the mountains, and to become familiar with Damavand's ancient heritage. Complete facilities and convenient access routes have made traveling to this lush jewel east of Tehran a pleasant and hassle-free experience for families and nature groups. Every visitor who sets foot beside this spring not only enjoys its natural beauty but also touches a part of Damavand's historical and cultural spirit.



kojaro.com



Iraqi cities to host Iranian tourism roadshow

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran will stage a large-scale tourism roadshow in Iraq from October 6 to 9, targeting an annual flow of 10mn visitors between the two neighbors. The event, organized by Iran's Association of Travel Agencies in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, will be held in Basra, Baghdad and Karbala. It marks the most extensive tourism promotion Iran has undertaken abroad, with plans to attract up to 5mn Iraqi travelers a year. Deputy Tourism Min-

ister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey said previous roadshows "have not matched the scale" of the upcoming Iraqi event. He stressed that Tehran wants to move beyond pilgrimages and medical visits, long the mainstay of cross-border travel, towards leisure, heritage and recreational tourism. Iranian organizers expect thousands of travel agents, hoteliers, airline executives and free-trade zone representatives from both countries to attend. Cultural nights featuring joint Iranian-Iraqi concerts are also scheduled in the three

cities. Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri is due to join the delegation and hold talks with Iraq's prime minister and tourism minister on widening cooperation. "Our target is 2.5 million Iraqi visitors in the second half of the current Iranian calendar year (by March 2026), rising to 5 million in the next year," Mohseni-Bandpey said. Private-sector operators from both sides are expected to sign co-operation agreements during the event, aimed at distributing tourists across a wider range of destinations in Iran and Iraq.



● IRNA

Eight Iranian children awarded at Japan's JQA drawing contest



Arts & Culture Desk

Eight young Iranian artists were honored in the 24th JQA International Environmental Children's Drawing Contest, held in Japan in 2024. The competition, organized by the Japan Quality Assurance Organization

(JQA), received 8,514 entries from 68 countries, with 160 submissions from Iran, IRNA reported. The Iranian Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon) participated with 50 artworks, resulting in eight awards and honorary diplomas for its mem-

bers. The contest, themed "joyful times for people and nature," aims to encourage children worldwide to express their thoughts on environmental issues through art. Among the winners, 13-year-old Sana Khodai from Boshrouyeh, South Khorasan Province, received the Special Jury Prize. Four first-place awards were granted to Setayesh Ghavibazou, 9, from Meshkinshahr, Ardabil Province; Zahra Jalili, 10, from Tehran; Mahya Asadi, 12, from Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province; and Mahshid Ghasemi, 14, from Kahriz Sang, Isfahan Province. Also, three honorary diplomas were awarded to Mohammadreza Mousavi, 13, from Tehran; Hananeh Nasiri, 13, from Meshkinshahr; and Zeinab Rahimi, 14, from Namin, Ardabil Province. The JQA contest, established to foster global environmental awareness among children, has been a platform for young artists to showcase their perspectives on nature and sustainability.

National identity on display at 'Green, White, and Red'



Arts & Culture Desk

The Art Bureau Gallery in Tehran is hosting 'Green, White, and Red,' an exhibition presenting new works by leading Iranian painters Kazem Chalipa, Hossein Khosrowjerdi, and Mostafa Goudarzi, each interpreting a symbolic color reflecting facets of Iran's cultural and historical identity. The exhibition, curated by Amir Abdolhosseini, showcases Chalipa's green-themed exploration of Islamic mysticism, features cypress trees and hoopoe birds as emblems of spiritual ascent. Khosrowjerdi's minimalist white work evokes Mount Damavand



and the sun, symbols of renewal and resilience. Goudarzi's red piece pays tribute to martyrs and draws inspiration from contemporary Iranian poetry. "This small piece is a tribute to all those who sacrificed their lives for Iran," Goudarzi said. Veteran actor Dariush Arjmand, present at the gallery, praised Goudarzi's painting as "a lesson in contemplation," observing that it transcends technique to embody thought and philosophy. He highlighted the birds in the artwork, noting their lifelike presence amid abstract forms. 'Green, White, and Red' will run until October 5, open from Saturday to Wednesday.

Iran signals readiness for joint biosphere reserve with Armenia

Social Desk

Iran expressed readiness to establish a shared biosphere reserve with Armenia, aiming to enhance conservation efforts and promote sustainable development. The proposal was discussed during a meeting between Hamid Zohrabi, Iran's Deputy Head of Natural Environment and Biodiversity at the Department of Environment (DoE), and Aram Meymaryan, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Environment, on the sidelines of the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves (WCBR) in Hangzhou, IRNA reported. Zohrabi highlighted the potential for collaboration, stating

that Iran is "prepared to develop a joint biosphere reserve with Armenia, focusing on the revival of a shared species and the protection of natural habitats." He emphasized the importance of leveraging international platforms to facilitate scientific exchanges and technical cooperation between nations. The discussions align with broader regional efforts to strengthen environmental partnerships and address transboundary ecological challenges. The proposed biosphere reserve would encompass areas rich in biodiversity, potentially including regions such as the Arasbaran biosphere reserve in Iran, which borders Armenia.

The project is a growing trend of cross-border environmental cooperation in the South Caucasus, underscoring the shared commitment to preserving natural heritage and fostering sustainable development. In addition to the biosphere reserve discussions, Zohrabi confirmed that Iran is set to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Academy of Sciences in the coming days. The Iranian delegation, led by Shina Ansari, Vice President and head of the DoE, is participating in the congress, which runs from September 22 to 26, to engage with global stakeholders on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development strategies.

Palestine recognition could ...

Yet in international politics, "symbol" is not just about propaganda, it can gradually evolve into a norm and influence the behavior of actors. Recognition of Palestine by European countries, even under public pressure, creates grounds for greater legitimacy of legal and political action against Israel. So, while tactical and political motives do lie behind these decisions, their consequences will not be confined to symbolism—provided they are backed by practical steps such as sanctioning settlement activity, applying coordinated diplomatic pressure, and supporting Palestinian institution-building.

In this context, how can Iran's position—emphasizing the creation of a single state and holding a referendum—contribute to resolving the conflict?
From the outset, the Islamic Re-

public of Iran has pursued a principled stance based on justice, maintaining that the only sustainable solution lies in the democratic principle of "self-determination." Tehran's proposal for a referendum, involving all original inhabitants of Palestine—Muslims, Christians and Jews alike—is a comprehensive, humane and internationally legitimate approach. This initiative has three main features: unlike imposed plans, it leaves self-determination to the people themselves; it paves the way for the return of Palestinian refugees; it can attract broad support from global public opinion and independent states. Clearly, such a plan faces serious short-term obstacles from the United States and Israel. Yet by putting forward this initiative, Iran underscores both its commitment to justice and humanity, and its offer of a solution that could, in

the long run, serve as the basis for global consensus against occupation. Iran's role should be analyzed on three levels: Diplomatic and discursive: advancing the referendum initiative in regional and international forums, strengthening the discourse of justice and self-determination. Legal: supporting judicial action at the International Criminal Court and other legal bodies to deepen Israel's isolation. Regional: fostering practical consensus among Islamic states and the Non-Aligned Movement to prevent the Palestinian issue from being traded away in short-term political bargains. Ultimately, Iran's position reflects the broader framework of its foreign policy—supporting the oppressed, resisting occupation, and upholding nations' rights within the rules of international law.