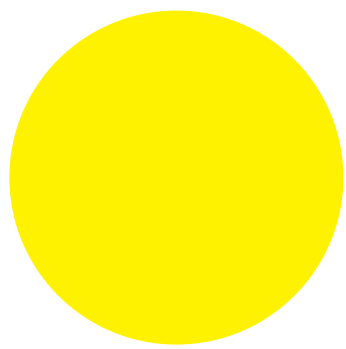


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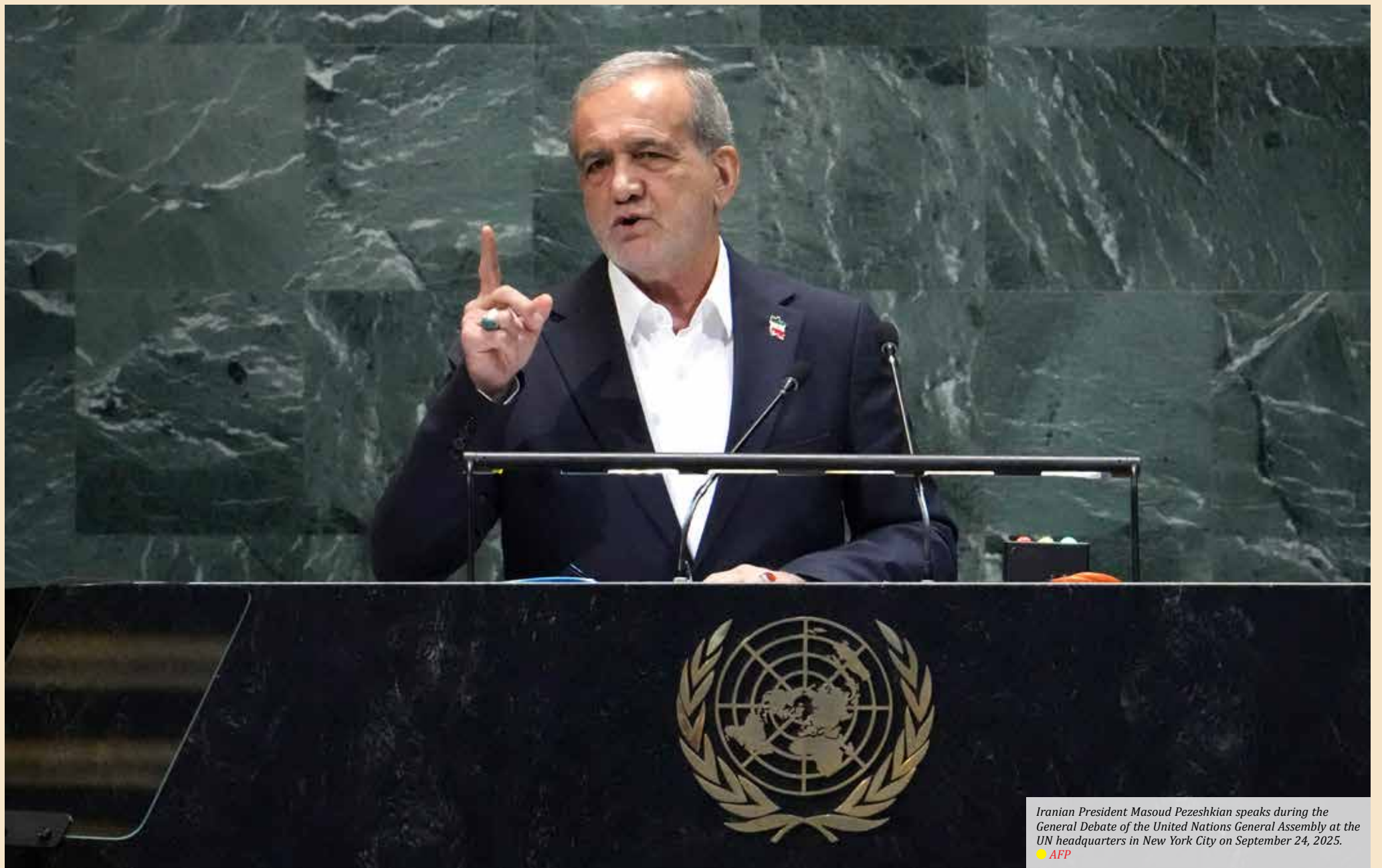
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Pezeshkian: US-Israeli aggression 'grave betrayal of diplomacy'

President warns of bad precedents if world fails to oppose norms violations

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian speaks during the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City on September 24, 2025.
● AFP

Tehran's strategy as sanctions loom

By M.A. Mokarrami
Journalist, commentator

**O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E**

If last-minute diplomatic efforts fail and the "snapback" mechanism is triggered in the coming days, Iran will once again face the return of comprehensive international sanctions. The central question now is how Tehran should respond to manage both the nuclear issue and the economic and security repercussions of renewed restrictions. Recent developments show that Iran will not be easily coerced. Its conduct during the 12-day war with Israel highlighted a determination to resist pressure and preserve sovereignty. For Tehran, resilience and deterrence are not optional but central to its strategic doctrine. In the aftermath of that conflict, strengthening defense capabilities and rebuilding deterrence remain crucial. By enhancing its military

preparedness and reinforcing national unity, Iran aims to ensure that the threat of military escalation does not weaken its position. Should hostilities resume, it is unlikely that Tehran would retreat under pressure, preferring instead to demonstrate that coercion cannot achieve what diplomacy fails to deliver. On the nuclear front, Iran's engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency remains a delicate but necessary component of its broader strategy. Western powers will likely attempt to use the nuclear program as the main justification for tightening sanctions. Yet Tehran has the option of maintaining cooperation within new frameworks, thereby denying its adversaries the chance to escalate the dispute. By continuing interaction with the agency, Iran can emphasize the peaceful nature of its program and signal that it is not seeking confrontation over transparency. Such an approach could blunt some of the diplomatic momentum behind the sanctions push. The most pressing challenge, how-

ever, lies in the economic dimension. The return of sanctions is expected to trigger immediate shocks, ranging from market volatility and inflation to the outflow of capital. Iran's past experience in managing similar crises suggests that rapid action can mitigate the worst effects. Stabilizing the national currency, protecting key supply chains, and curbing speculative behavior will be essential steps. If Tehran can absorb the initial impact and restore confidence, the effectiveness of sanctions as a tool of pressure will diminish significantly. The lesson of earlier sanction cycles is clear: the first weeks are the most dangerous, but they can also set the tone for resilience. International partnerships will play a decisive role in this process. Both China and Russia have opposed the activation of the snapback mechanism and are well positioned to dilute its practical impact. Their involvement in technical committees, enforcement mechanisms, and economic arrangements could reduce the sanctions' bite.

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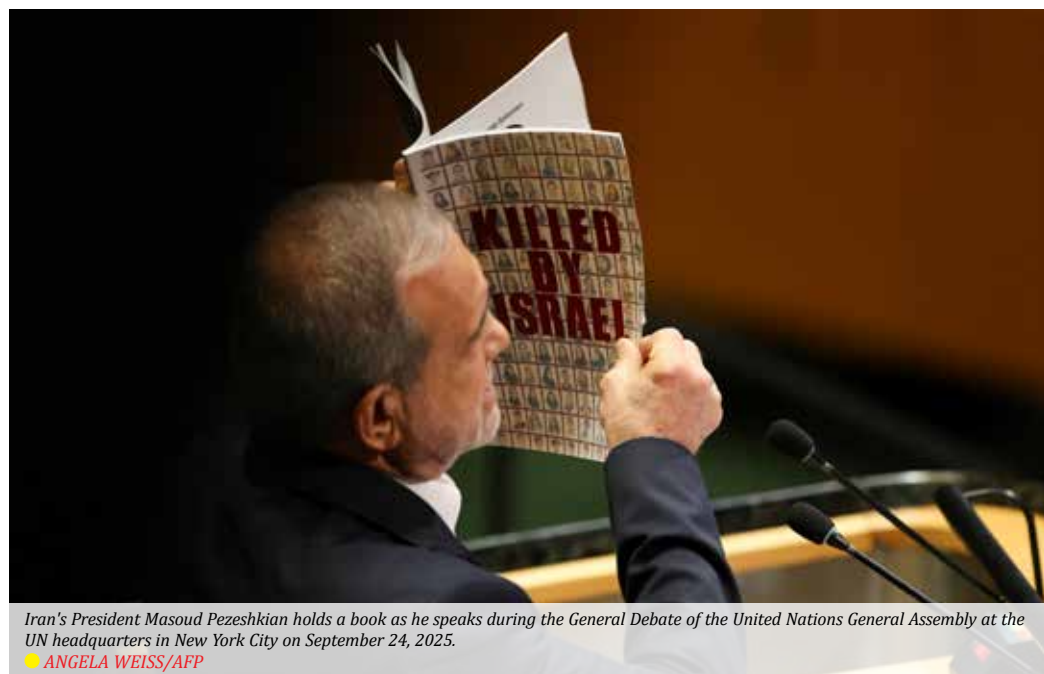


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Pezeshkian: US-Israeli aggression 'grave betrayal of diplomacy'

President warns of bad precedents if world fails to oppose norms violations



Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian holds a book as he speaks during the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City on September 24, 2025.
● ANGELA WEISS/AFP

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian called the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in June a "grave betrayal of diplomacy" and the weakening of efforts to establish stability and peace in the West Asia region. He made the remarks during his speech at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday.

Standing at the General Assembly rostrum, Pezeshkian showed pictures of people killed in the Israeli military campaign against Iran, which killed nearly 1,100 people. Pezeshkian said that Iran was subjected to a "brutal attack in violation of the fundamental principles of international law" by the Israeli regime and the United States while holding talks with Washington to resolve a decades-old dispute over

its nuclear program.

"The airstrikes by the Zionist regime and the United States on cities, homes, and infrastructure in Iran — at the very time we were taking steps toward diplomatic negotiations — were a grave betrayal of diplomacy and a weakening of efforts to establish stability and peace." Pezeshkian said the strikes killed commanders, women, children, scientists, and national elites, while

also damaging internationally-monitored nuclear facilities.

Heavy blow to int'l trust

He noted that the strikes constitute "a black record of crimes" carried out under the pretext of preserving regional security, which dealt a heavy blow to international trust and the prospect of peace in the West Asia region. "Assassination of state officials, systematic targeting of journalists, and the killing of individuals solely because of their knowledge and expertise are flagrant violations of human rights and international law," the Iranian president told delegates from around the globe. The Iranian president warned of establishment of bad precedents across the world if countries do not stand up to "these dangerous violations of norms."

Iran not seeking nukes

The Iranian president also touched upon a dispute with the West over its nuclear program, saying that, "I hereby declare once more before this assembly that Iran has never sought and will never seek to build a nuclear bomb."

"The one who is disturbing peace and stability in the region is Israel, but Iran is the one that gets punished," he said.

Iran has long contended that it is not seeking nuclear weapons and US

intelligence has not concluded that the country has decided to build a nuclear weapon.

But Israel, the United States and European countries have long been skeptical due to the country's advanced nuclear activities, believing that the Islamic Republic could quickly pursue a bomb if it so decided.

Britain, France and Germany have moved to reimpose UN sanctions that had been suspended under a 2015 nuclear deal that was negotiated by the United States and then torn up by US President Donald Trump.

The sanctions are set to go into effect on Saturday. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Tuesday with his European counterparts, leading to no clear headway other than an agreement to keep talking. Pezeshkian accused the Europeans of bad faith, saying that Iran's lack of cooperation was in response to Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"They falsely presented themselves as parties of good standing to the agreement, and they disparaged Iran's sincere efforts as insufficient," Pezeshkian said.

"All of this was in pursuit of nothing less than the destruction of the very JCPOA which they themselves had once held as a foremost achieve-

ment."

On Tuesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei also rejected Washington's demands over nuclear negotiations, saying that accepting talks under threat is something "no honorable nation would ever do, and no wise statesman would ever endorse."

Ayatollah Khamenei said negotiations with Washington under the current circumstances would bring "no benefit" to Iran and instead inflict "serious and possibly irreparable harms."

Ayatollah Khamenei said the United States is predetermining the outcome of any dialogue, and that Washington's demands amount to dictation rather than negotiation.

"They have announced that the only acceptable result of negotiations is the shutdown of Iran's nuclear activities and enrichment. So, we would sit at the table, and the outcome of the talks would be exactly what they had dictated in advance."

"That is not negotiation," the Leader stated, "that is dictation, that is imposition."

"To negotiate with a party where the result must necessarily be what they want, and what they say, is that negotiation?"

The Leader pointed to recent American calls for Iran to abandon not only long-range but even short-range missiles.

Iranian FM raps unilateral coercive measures at UNGA

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described unilateralism as a serious threat to global peace, security and development, calling for the worldwide promotion of commitment to multilateral cooperation. Araghchi made the statement in an address on Wednesday to the High-Level Meeting of the Global Development Initiative in New York on the sidelines of the 80th annual session of the United Nations General Assembly.

He called the meeting both timely and necessary as deep structural inequalities continue to burden developing countries in the global economic, financial and trade systems. Iran's foreign minister underlined that global uncertainties and emerging gaps in political and economic

systems make the initiative more necessary than ever, as it provides a platform for solidarity, cooperation and collective action toward a brighter future.

"Under these circumstances, we must reaffirm our commitment to the principles of multilateral cooperation and reject unilateralism, which poses a grave threat to global peace, security and development," Araghchi said.

The Global Development Initiative can play a prominent role in this regard, by advancing the aspirations of developing countries for a greater role in shaping the global economic order and by creating a favorable international environment for sustainable development, he added.

The top Iranian diplomat also censured the West for adopting "unilateral coercive measures" against

developing countries at a time that the elimination of poverty and food insecurity is their greatest challenge.

Talks with counterparts

Araghchi also held talks with several foreign officials including Norway's prime minister, his Japanese, Australian and Dutch counterparts to discuss many issues including Iran's nuclear program.

During his meeting with Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong, Araghchi expressed regret over Canberra's recent decision to downgrade relations with Tehran and its inappropriate treatment of the Iranian ambassador.

The Iranian official rejected "baseless claims and accusations" that led to expulsion of Iranian ambassador from Australia, saying that Tehran expects the governments to act re-



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (Front-R) is seen at the High-Level Meeting of the Global Development Initiative in New York, US, on September 24, 2025.
● IRNA

sponsibly in their decisions and statements regarding other countries.

Back in August, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese accused Iran of orchestrating two attacks on

Jewish sites in October and December last year, allegations made without presenting evidence.

Then, the Australian government expelled Iranian ambassador and other diplomats.

Tehran's strategy as ...

Moscow and Beijing share a strategic interest in countering Western pressure, and Tehran can leverage these ties in energy trade, financial transactions, and infrastructure projects. These relationships may not fully offset the economic costs, but they can provide a critical buffer and demonstrate that Iran is far from isolated. Beyond global powers, regional diplomacy will also be indispensable. During previous sanction regimes, Iran relied heavily on trade with neighbors to sustain economic activity. The same approach could again provide essential breathing space. Strengthening ties with states in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia offers practical avenues for commerce and supply, reducing the risks of complete economic iso-

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lation. Regional cooperation, therefore, is not only a matter of politics but also a vital tool for economic survival.

Ultimately, the purpose of resilience is not to endure sanctions indefinitely but to prepare for negotiations from a position of strength. If Iran demonstrates that military threats cannot undermine its defenses and that economic warfare cannot destabilize its society, then the logic of coercion weakens. At that point, the possibility of meaningful dialogue with the United States and its allies becomes more realistic. From such a position, Tehran could seek an agreement that balances Western concerns with its own national interests, turning resistance into leverage.

The instigation of the snapback

mechanism undoubtedly marks a difficult chapter for Iran, but it is not without opportunities. By reinforcing deterrence, maintaining cooperation with international bodies, drawing on the support of China and Russia, and expanding regional economic ties, Tehran can mitigate the immediate damage and prepare the ground for eventual diplomacy. The task ahead is not only to survive sanctions but to turn the experience into a strategic asset. If Iran succeeds in absorbing the first shocks and restoring economic stability, then, as with military pressure, economic coercion too will lose its power. In that scenario, Tehran may once again enter negotiations not as a weakened party but as a resilient actor capable of shaping the terms of a future settlement.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Iran, Russia sign memo on building small nuclear power plants

Economy Desk

Russia's state-owned nuclear corporation Rosatom said on Wednesday it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran to cooperate on the construction of small nuclear power plants in the country.

The agreement was concluded in Moscow following talks between Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), and Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev, IRNA reported.

Rosatom said the memorandum outlines specific steps for implementing the strategic project in Iran.

During their meeting, Eslami and Likhachev also reviewed progress on existing projects and discussed prospects for further cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The talks took place "in an atmosphere of mutual trust," which Rosatom said characterizes its partnership with the AEOI. Eslami, who is also Iran's vice president, arrived in Moscow on Monday to attend Russia's Nuclear Week events and hold meetings with Russian officials.

The AEOI head, Mohammad Eslami (L), and Rosatom Director General Alexey Likhachev pose for a picture after signing a memorandum of understanding on the construction of small nuclear power plants for Iran in Moscow on September 24, 2025.

● IRNA

cials. He told IRNA in Moscow that an intergovernmental agreement already provides for the construction of eight nuclear power plants in Iran by Russia, including four at Bushehr. He said Iran had completed the necessary studies and site preparations for the next phase.

"Negotiations and required studies for implementing the second part of this contract have been completed, and the land for the new power plants has been selected, prepared and equipped," he said.

He added that site visits and contractual negotiations had already been carried out and that the newly signed agreement would move the project into the operational phase, covering design, engineering and other preparatory work.



Minister signs roadmap for future cooperation with EEU in Moscow

Economy Desk

Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) signed a roadmap on Wednesday outlining trade and economic cooperation for the next three years, following the first meeting of their joint committee overseeing implementation of a free trade agreement.

The document was signed in Moscow by Iran's Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak and EAEU Trade Minister Andrey Slepnev, IRNA reported. Speaking to reporters after the signing, Atabak said the roadmap sets out the overall framework for future trade and economic ties between Iran and the EAEU's five member states. He said the joint committee, comprising 16 subcommittees, reviewed past cooperation and discussed prospects for expanding relations. According to the minister, the roadmap for 2025-2028 is designed



to improve implementation of the free trade agreement and expand cooperation in areas including infrastructure, logistics, road and maritime transport, customs and digital trade. He added that additional agreements, such as in the field of halal trade, are also expected to boost collaboration. Addressing the press conference, Slepnev noted that since the free trade agreement came

into force on May 14, trade between Iran and the bloc has risen by about 16% compared with the same period last year. He said he expects the upward trend to continue through the end of the year.

The EAEU-Iran free trade agreement, approved by the parliaments of all parties, eliminated customs tariffs on 87% of traded goods when it took effect in May.



Iran's Industry, Mine and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak speaks at a press conference in Moscow on September 24, 2025, as Eurasian Economic Union Trade Minister Andrey Slepnev (R) looks on.

● IRNA

The first meeting of the joint committee was co-chaired by Atabak and Slepnev in Moscow and attended by Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazam Jalali.

Snapback mechanism will not impose new oil trade curbs: Paknejad

Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Wednesday that no new "troublesome" restrictions would be imposed on the country's oil trade with the activation of the so-called "snapback" mechanism, adding that measures had been taken to ensure crude sales would not be affected when it is enforced.

"We have faced such severe restrictions from the unilateral and unjust US sanctions over the past years that this situation will not add much to the existing pressure," Paknejad told reporters. "Should circumstances require further action, appropriate planning will be undertaken," IRNA reported.

Paknejad stressed that Iran's oil sales personnel are fully prepared to deal with sanctions. "The national oil sales team is staffed by some of the most capable experts, especially when it comes to countering, or more precisely neutralizing them," he said. "In recent days, we held extensive meetings with the expert group and adopted the necessary measures." He added, "We will do our best and have no concern. People should not be worried either. Oil sales continue and we have no problem."

Paknejad explained that the snapback mechanism does not explicitly target oil sales, but instead focuses on areas such as trade, financial transactions, commercial activity, and maritime transport. He



acknowledged that these sectors may face certain challenges, yet assured that appropriate measures will be taken at the right time.

Separately, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) CEO Hamid Bovard emphasized that the company is determined, despite external pressures and sanctions, to turn the country into a major hub of development and keep the national economy running. He said the company's programs focus on two main areas: "increasing production" and "capturing associated gas." Under Iran's Seventh Development Plan, the government is targeting daily oil sales of 4 million barrels per day (bpd). Paknejad had stressed earlier this month that the plan sets daily production capacity at 4 million bpd but financing the investments needed to achieve those targets remains a serious challenge. Paknejad had said that he usually avoids giving specific figures, "but on average the country's crude oil production capacity has risen by 127,000 barrels per day over the past year."

Central Asian rail route cuts China-Iran transit time to 17 days

Economy Desk

The head of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone in northeastern Iran announced on Wednesday that the Central Asian rail corridor has substantially reduced transit times for goods transported between China and Iran.

"Shipping time by sea between China and Iran is between 30 to 45 days, while the rail route from China to Sarakhs in Khorasan Razavi via Central Asia has reduced this time to 17 days," Mohammad-

reza Rajabi Moqaddam told the 11th International Conference on Industries and Systems (ICISE) at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, IRNA reported.

He said a new rail line under construction from Kashgar in western China to Osh in eastern Kyrgyzstan by Chinese engineers will further cut rail transit time between China and Iran (Sarakhs) to seven days once completed.

"Also, if the Sarakhs rail line is connected to Cheshmeh-Soraya in West Azerbaijan in northwest-

ern Iran and then to Turkey, the east-west rail corridor from China to Europe will be complete," he added.

Rajabi Moqaddam emphasized the importance of logistics and transportation for economic development. "The backbone of the economy is transportation and logistics, which in the Sarakhs region is fully provided across rail, road, air, and combined infrastructure," he said.

He described Sarakhs as a crossroads for global transit linking

east-west and north-south corridors. He noted that the east-west and north-south corridors are being completed under the administration of President Masoud Pezeshkian, and expressed hope that by next year the Chabahar rail line via Zahedan to Kerman will be operational, connecting the north-south corridor from Sarakhs to Chabahar in the southeast. The 11th International Conference on Industries and Systems is being held Wednesday and Thursday at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.



Ignoring Gaza's realities, Europe pushes ahead with Palestine recognition



ANALYSIS

The recent developments surrounding the recognition of the State of Palestine by a group of Western countries, including the UK, Canada, Australia, France, and Portugal, mark a turning point in international diplomacy. Hebrew media have talked up these developments as a “diplomatic tsunami,” and Palestinian officials have viewed them as a shift in the global atmosphere. However, Philippe Lazzarini, the commissioner-general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), pointed out that these decisions will amount to little practical benefit for the people under siege until a cease-fire in Gaza is called in. The key question now is why such decisions have only stayed at the diplomatic level without making a tangible impact on stopping Israel's war machine in Gaza. Before answering this, it's important to recognize that the recent moves by the UK, Canada, and Australia to recognize the Palestinian state are part of a process already set off by some Europe-

an and Latin American countries. France had also announced that it would recognize Palestine before the UN General Assembly. These actions, on the surface, appear to back up the two-state solution frequently repeated in official Western discourse over recent years, but in reality, this solution has been on the decline. Meanwhile, Israel's responses — from threats to expand settlements to plans for annexing the West Bank — show that such recognitions are more political symbols aimed at restoring hope within Palestinian public opinion and shoring up diplomatic positions in international forums rather than real pressure tools. The UNRWA commissioner-general hammered home this point, saying that without a cease-fire and an end to the killing in Gaza, Palestine's recognition is merely symbolic and lacks practical effect.

At the same time, internal developments within Europe have played a role. In France, more than 20 municipalities have raised the Palestinian flag over their buildings; a move that not only reflects deep divisions within French

society but also shows that public pressure in European countries has built up enough to force local and national officials to come out with symbolic reactions. In London, too, the Palestinian embassy opened on Monday, and images of its flag being raised have stirred up a lot of reactions on social media. Incumbent governments across the European continent — whether in Eastern Europe, the south and west, or even Scandinavia (Northern Europe) — seriously fear their public opinion in this climate. This fear has two main drivers. The first is the economic and political fallout from the Ukraine war, which keeps public pressure mounting due to the prolongation of the conflict. The second is the rise of far-right forces, which have been making headway in recent international and national elections (like last week's municipal election in Germany), increasingly challenging ruling parties and complicating governments' stance.

Why Europe refraining from concrete action?

Despite the surge in Palestine rec-

ognition, the reality on the ground in Gaza paints a different picture — with heavy Israeli attacks, infrastructure destruction, humanitarian crises, and thousands of civilian deaths ongoing. This glaring contradiction raises the question: Why does Europe, beyond diplomatic posturing, hold back from taking real steps to stop Israel?

The first reason lies in Europe's structural dependence on the United States. The continent's security and military policies still largely revolve around NATO and coordination with Washington. Therefore, Europe shies away from putting real pressure on Israel — such as economic or military sanctions — because it would open up a serious rift with the US.

The second reason involves economic and geopolitical considerations. Many European governments have broad commercial and technological ties with Israel and worry that any decisive move could wreck those relationships. Moreover, pro-Israel lobby groups in European capitals throw a wrench in practical anti-Tel Aviv policies.

On the other hand, European leaders often prefer to manage the Palestinian crisis symbolically to keep at bay domestic public opinion without paying a heavy geopolitical price. This is why they stick to diplomatic recognition of Palestine but resist sanctions or cutting military cooperation with Israel. Until a cease-fire in Gaza is called in and real pressure (political, economic, legal) is brought to bear on Israel, Palestine's recognition, despite symbolic and legal significance, won't be able to end the suffering of Palestinians or stop Tel Aviv's war machine.

Trump's rift with Europe on Palestine issue

While Europe tries to ride out a wave of Palestinian state recognition to present itself as a supporter of the two-state solution, the US — especially under a second Trump administration — follows a different path. During his first term, Trump moved the US embassy to Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and rolled out the “deal of the century,” effectively setting aside the two-state solution and openly backing Israel. It is expected that a second Trump administration would look at European actions with skepticism or outright opposition. From Trump and his team's perspective, recognizing Palestine amounts to “rewarding terrorism” and only weakens Israel's position. Washington remains Israel's biggest ally, and European policies are unlikely to shake up the situation on the ground. Effectively, Europe's recognition of Palestine is more about patching up its diplomatic credibility in the Middle East and responding to internal public pressure, whereas the US bases its stance on geopolitical realities and Israel's interests. This divide reflects deep differences on both sides of the Atlantic over strategic priorities.

The reality is that while Europe voices political positions, it's unwilling to foot the bill for real measures against Israel, moving instead under US dependence and economic concerns. Meanwhile, Washington and the Trump administration view these efforts negatively and dismiss any European attempt to strengthen the two-state solution as “unrealistic”. Ultimately, unless a cease-fire is secured in Gaza and real pressure — political, economic, or legal — is brought to bear on Israel, Palestine's recognition, though symbolically and legally significant, won't end Palestinian suffering or stop Tel Aviv's war machine.

The article first appeared in the Persian-language newspaper Tose'e Irani.



A waving Palestinian flag is seen as tens of thousands of Palestinians, displaced by Israeli forces, walk along the coastal strip in Gaza City on January 27, 2025, following a cease-fire agreement.

● ALI JADALLAH/ANADOLU



Meanwhile, Israel's responses — from threats to expand settlements to plans for annexing the West Bank — show that such recognitions are more political symbols aimed at restoring hope within Palestinian public opinion and shoring up diplomatic positions in international forums rather than real pressure tools. The UNRWA commissioner-general hammered home this point, saying that without a cease-fire and an end to the killing in Gaza, Palestine's recognition is merely symbolic and lacks practical effect.



The ambassador Husam Zomlot (c) holds a placard at the premises of what is now Palestine's embassy in London, the UK, on September 22, 2025, during a ceremony marking the country's official recognition of Palestine as a state.

● QNA



Western bids to recognise Palestinian state put Israel first



By Somdeep Sen
Author, researcher

O P I N I O N

In April last year, I wrote that, given the genocide it is committing in Gaza, its violent occupation of the West Bank, numerous attacks on its neighbours, and apparent disregard for international and human rights law, it was time for the international community to declare Israel a rogue state. As if we hadn't received enough confirmation of its rogue status since then, on September 9, Israel went ahead and carried out a strike on Qatar, a key mediator in negotiations between Hamas and Israel. This, while Gaza's devastation deepens by the day. The last remaining high rises in Gaza City are now being flattened, and hundreds of thousands of people who had already been displaced multiple times are being pushed towards the south of the enclave. Israel claims the south is a "humanitarian zone," but we know well that there is nowhere in Gaza where Palestinians are safe.

So, in the midst of all this, it feels futile to celebrate the United Nations General Assembly vote where 142 member states backed "tangible, timebound, and irreversible steps" towards a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The same resolution, rejected by just 12 states including Israel and the United

States, also called on Hamas to free all captives, end its rule in Gaza, and hand over its weapons to the Palestinian Authority, in line with the objective of establishing a sovereign and independent Palestinian state.

Gaza is still smouldering, and Palestinian communities are being systematically erased in the occupied West Bank. So, how does it make sense to talk about a Palestinian state? Who, or what, would such a state serve?

Before this vote, the vast majority of countries in the world had already recognised the State of Palestine. Those missing from this map of recognition were primarily states in the Global North. Through the UN General Assembly vote, France, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Malta, Belgium, Canada, and Australia signalled their support for Palestinian statehood, aligning themselves with the global majority. But let us be clear: These countries have no claim to the moral high ground.

We should remember that they waited through two years of Israeli genocide, which has killed at least 65,000 Palestinians, before voting in favour of a Palestinian state. They were similarly oblivious to the Palestinian right to self-determination during the years of Israeli and Egyptian-imposed military siege in Gaza before October 7, 2023. They did nothing to quell the ever-expanding illegal settlement movement in the occupied West

Bank or the sharp increase in settler violence. In fact, they have done nothing to support the Palestinian right to self-determination since 1948.

So, why should this time be any different?

In fact, it is not different at all. As a scholar of international law, Noura Erakat recently told Al Jazeera, "It is way too little, far too late." And these declarations are only meant to distract from the fact that many of these countries have financially and militarily enabled Israel to carry out its genocide. The proof is in the pudding: the Palestinian state that is on offer. And what is clear is that Palestinian rights are not a priority.

A few weeks before, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that the United Kingdom would recognise a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly in September 2025 unless Israel took "substantive steps to end the appalling situation in Gaza, agree to a cease-fire, and commit to a long-term sustainable peace, reviving the prospect of a two-state solution." There was no mention of Palestinians' inalienable right to self-determination or of the legitimacy of the Palestinian national struggle. Rather, it was framed as a punishment for Israel. Does this mean that if Israel had stopped the genocide and paid lip service to the (already dead) two-state solution, Britain would have voted differently?

French President Emmanuel Macron (C) gestures as he co-chairs a United Nations Summit on Palestinians with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud (L) at UN headquarters during the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 22, 2025.
● ANGELA WEISS/AFP

France, Portugal, the UK, Malta, Belgium, Canada, and Australia signalled their support for Palestinian statehood. But let us be clear: These countries have no claim to the moral high ground. We should remember that they waited through two years of Israeli genocide, which has killed at least 65,000 Palestinians, before voting in favour of a Palestinian state. These declarations are only meant to distract from the fact that many of these countries have financially and militarily enabled Israel to carry out its genocide.

Palestinians run for cover during an Israeli air strike on a high-rise building in Gaza City on September 5, 2025.
● YOUSEF AL ZANOUN/AP

Canada's promise of recognition came with a long list of caveats. Notably, on the Government of Canada's website, in the items that make up its "policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict", the first commitment is "support for Israel and its security".

It adds that Israel has the "right under international law to take the necessary measures, in accordance with human rights and international humanitarian law, to protect the security of its citizens from attacks by terrorist groups." But what if Israel is already in violation of international law — as it is right now? Will Canada still stand by Israel and its security?

After reaffirming its support for Israel, Canada then declares support for the Palestinians' "right to self-determination" and "a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic, and territorially contiguous Palestinian state". But this comes with strings attached, including demands for governance reforms in the Palestinian Authority, the demilitarisation of the Palestinian state, and elections in 2026, "in which Hamas can play no part".

Australia's promise of recognition was similarly predicated on the Palestinian Authority pursuing certain reforms, including the termination of prisoner payments, schooling reform, and demilitarisation. It also demanded that Hamas "end its rule in Gaza and hand over its weapons".

The joint statement by Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese added: "There is much more work to do in building the Palestinian state. We will work with partners on a credible peace plan that establishes governance and security arrangements for Palestine and ensures the security of Israel." But what of the security of Palestinians? Will Australia take any measures to protect them from Israel's mass extermination? Or are Palestinians simply meant to work on building a state that Western powers can tolerate, while hoping that the Israeli cabinet will eventually grow tired of its genocidal campaign?

The unbearable tragedy of it all is that we have already seen what happens when a peace process prioritises Israel's right to security over Palestinians' right to self-determination. It was called the Oslo Accords, where a genuine guarantee of a Palestinian state was never on the table.

In his essay, "The Morning After," Edward Said wrote of the vulgarity of the ceremonial way the Accords were signed at the White House and the diminutive manner in which Yasser Arafat offered thanks. Said rued that the Oslo Accords were not a path to statehood. Rather, they symbolised the "astounding proportions of the Palestinian capitulation".

It resulted in a Palestinian Authority — yes, the same Palestinian Authority that Western leaders have hedged their bets on — that had all the bells and whistles of a state. But the real state never arrived. With complete impunity, Israel continued its efforts to erase Palestinians. And the Palestinian Authority became an extension of the settler-colonial project, collaborating with Israeli forces to actively undermine the Palestinian national movement, all in the name of Israel's security.

So, if Western leaders are sincere about "solving" the crisis, the only good solution is the one that places Palestinian rights on centre stage and involves some mechanism of political leverage and censure that is able to curb Israel's rogue-like conduct. Without it, any recognition of Palestinian statehood is an empty performance, and the Israeli campaign of genocide and erasure is bound to continue with complete impunity.

The article first appeared on Al Jazeera.



FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship: Piazza warns Iran against complacency before Czechia clash

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Roberto Piazza cautioned his players not to get carried away by their last-16 victory over Serbia, as they prepare to face Czechia in the FIVB Men's World Championship quarterfinals in Pasay City, Philippines, today.

Fresh off an epic five-set win against the host in their do-or-die final group game, the Asian powerhouse again had to come from behind twice to edge out Serbia 3-2 (23-25, 25-19, 24-26, 25-22, 15-9) on Tuesday.

Serbia led by as many as five points at 19-14 in the first set before Iran fought back to deny two set points and reduce the deficit to one, but Serbian outside-hitter Pavle Peric capitalized on the third, finishing off with a high-flying pipe shot. The second set stayed close until Iran broke away at 17-17, winning by six to level the scoreline.

A rollercoaster third set saw the lead change hands several times before Aleksandar Stefanovic's ace settled the scoreline. Iran again fought back to force the match into the decider. Iranians stormed to a 4-1 lead in the tiebreaker and never looked back to get the job done. Serbian opposite Drazen Luburic topped the scoring chart with 27 points, while opposite Ali Hajipour and outside-hitter Morteza Sharifi contributed with 23 points apiece for Iran.

Iran's outside-hitter Ali Haqparast and middle-blocker Mohammad Valizadeh also finished in double figures, chipping in 18 and 10



Iranian players celebrate a point during a five-set victory over Serbia at the FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship last 16 in Pasay City, Philippines, on September 23, 2025.

● [MOJTABA ZAKIZADEH/volleyball.ir](#)

with six points – including Brazil – Czechia made quick work of Tunisia earlier on Tuesday, coming out victorious in straight sets (25-19, 25-18, 25-23).

"The next match will definitely be more difficult than this one," Piazza said of the last-four test, adding: "They are playing an amazing volleyball. They have two really important opposites, and the whole team is very good in every aspect. The players are big and tall, so we need to be smart and help each other."

In a meeting after returning to the hotel, Piazza told his players not to settle for what they have already achieved in the flagship international event.

"We haven't accomplished anything yet, so celebrating today's victory is enough. When I first met with [Iran Volleyball Federation president] Milad Taqavi, I promised him we would always be among the top eight teams in the world. But now, simply being in the quarterfinals is neither sufficient nor satisfying for me, and it shouldn't be for you, either," said the Italian.

Iran and Czechia last met in the Olympic qualification tournament in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in October 2023, with the European team coming out on top in four sets.

points, respectively.

Asked how pleased he was with Iran's performance after the game, the Italian head coach said: "We could have played much better in the first set and the second one. One the third one, we were leading the set at the end [but ultimately lost,]

This is the kind of experience that we need to live on the court.

"We have 11 new players [in the squad], who have not been able to understand my language in volleyball until now, and that's why I'm a little bit disappointed for them. In the end, all the guys are really

happy. I'm happy too. The players know exactly that today was the game, but the next one in two days will be another 'the game,'" the Italian told VBTv.

When asked how long his players would celebrate before focusing on the next game, Piazza replied:

"I've already stopped celebrating, and they need to quit immediately because the other team played at 15:30 today and the game was not so long as ours, so we will have less time to recover."

Runner-up to Serbia in a tight Pool H table that featured three teams

Asian Men's U-17 Handball Championship: Iran runs riot against Bahrain, punches ticket for world meet



● [IRIHF](#)

Sports Desk

Iran hammered Bahrain 37-19 on Tuesday to progress to the final showpiece of the inaugural Asian Men's U-17 Handball Championship in Amman, Jordan.

Standing between Iran and the trophy in today's final at the Princess Sumaya Hall will be South Korea, which edged out Qatar 36-35 in the other last-four clash earlier on Tuesday. Today's game will be a repeat of the preliminary-round meeting between the two sides, which Iran won 31-25.

The semifinal victories saw Iran and South Korea secure a spot at the 1st IHF Men's U-17 Handball World Championship – starting October 24 in Morocco.

Iran dominated the early proceedings against Bahrain, storming to a 7-1 lead with 11 minutes into the contest, while goalkeeper Mehrshad Mansouri delivered a heroic performance as Iran led by 10 goals at halftime.

Iranian boys picked up right where they left off after the break to seal their seventh successive victory in the competition.

Iran's Mohammad-Taha Ebrahim Khanlari was awarded the Man of the Match prize after the game. Iran began its campaign in Amman with a 65-4 hammering of Maldives, and then went on to defeat Syria (44-22) and South Korea to win Group D in the preliminary phase.

The first game in the main round saw Iran beat Asia's traditional handball powerhouse Kuwait 35-30, followed by a 42-22 rout of the host team, and a commanding 46-25 win against Qatar on Sunday for a top-spot finish in Group 2.

Esteghlal backs head coach Sa Pinto despite poor run

Sports Desk

The Esteghlal hierarchy has offered "full support" to under-fire head coach Ricardo Sa Pinto, despite the Persian Gulf Pro League club's poor start to the season.

The Theran Blues have managed a single victory in six outings across all competitions in the new campaign – a 1-0 away win against defending champion Tractor on the opening day of the Iranian top-flight season.

Sitting eighth in the Iranian league table with five points from four games, Esteghlal has had to settle for hard-fought home draws against Zob Ahan (3-3) and 10-man Paykan (2-2) either side of a 1-0 away loss to Esteghlal Khuzestan.

Arguably the lowest point in the club's history, however, came last week when the Blues suffered a shock 7-1 defeat against Al Wasl in Dubai in their AFC Champions League Two Group A opener.

Sa Pinto returned to Blues' bench for a second spell in June, having led Esteghlal to a third-place finish in the league and a place in the Hazfi Cup final in the 2022/23 season.

The Portuguese hoped to build on the club's massive spending spree, which culminated in several high-profile summer signings – including former Barcelona winger Munir El Haddadi, ex-Sporting and Real Madrid goalkeeper Antonio Adan, Albania international Jasir Asani, and Iran international center-back Aref Agasi.



● [VARZESH3](#)

However, despite the dire run of results raising questions over his future in recent days, the club looks poised to stick with the Portuguese coach.

In a meeting with the manager and technical advisor Clarence Seedorf, Esteghlal board and chairman Ali Tajernia pledged "full and unequivocal support" for Sa Pinto, according to the club's statement on Tuesday.

"The necessary steps would be taken to address the team's weaknesses and provide the manager with all the resources needed to turn the season around," added the statement.

"Seedorf also voiced his support,

emphasizing the importance of clearly defined roles within the club's structure and pledging to work alongside the board and the head coach.

"For his part, Sa Pinto stressed that mutual understanding and support between the technical and managerial staff are essential for success – a sentiment that was well-received by the board."

Next for Esteghlal and Sa Pinto is an away game against Shams Azar in the domestic league on Friday, before they resume action in the Asian second-tier club competition against Bahraini champion Al Muharraq in Tehran on Wednesday.

Visit mysterious Mamraz Lake in Nowshahr



● alibaba.ir

Iranica Desk

Mamraz Lake in Nowshahr, also called the Lake of Ghosts, is one of the most stunning and enigmatic scenic spots in Mazandaran Province. The lake is situated in the forested highlands between the city of Noor and Nowshahr, offering a captivating natural landscape. Surrounding the lake are beech and European hornbeam trees, known in Persian as Mamraz, which may be the origin of the lake's name. The area's unique setting has contributed to its reputation as a place of both beauty and mystery. Renowned for its exceptional location, Mamraz Lake has gained recognition as one of the most enigmatic natural sights in northern Iran. The combination of broken trees, pervasive fog, and swampy waters creates an eerie, almost otherworldly atmosphere that intrigues visitors and invites exploration. Because of these features, it is regarded as one of the most mysterious and atmospheric scenic spots in the region, IRNA wrote. Over the years, the hornbeam trees in Mamraz have decayed due to their proximity to water, which accelerates their rotting process. This natural decay causes the trees' trunks to break, leaving remnants along the shoreline. In many places, you can see broken trees with their roots protruding from the ground, creating ghostly silhouettes against the mist. Historically, this region was a vast plain covered with hornbeam and beech trees. Over time, with the flow of water and natural changes, the landscape gradually transformed into a swamp,

where trees now emerge from the water in a haunting display. Mamraz Lake and its surrounding forested areas are designated as protected zones in northern Iran. These regions are among the most pristine, untouched parts of Mazandaran Province, attracting increasing numbers of ecotourists and nature lovers in recent years. The lake and its environs serve as safe habitats for a wide variety of wildlife, helping preserve the area's rich biodiversity. Although the Lake of Ghosts, or Mamraz, is often described as frightening, eerie, and mysterious, it is undeniably one of the most breathtaking natural attractions in Mazandaran Province. When the fog rises to its peak, awe-inspiring and surreal vistas unfold across the lake, offering extraordinary visual scenes that enchant visitors. The lake has been officially registered as a national heritage site in Iran, recognizing its cultural and natural significance. The area surrounding Mamraz Lake teems with life; a chorus of birdsong and animal sounds fill the tranquil environment. The forests around the lake are some of the most pristine parts of the Hyrcanian forests in northern Iran, with wildlife activity pervasive and ever-present. As you walk near the lake, you may hear the rustling of leaves and the movement of wild animals and birds, adding to the area's mystique and natural allure. Thanks to its lush, untouched environment, Mamraz Lake serves as a sanctuary for many wild animals. It has preserved a pristine ecosystem, home to various aquatic species such as fish and

amphibians like frogs and snakes. During the colder months, many wild animals seek refuge in the vicinity of the lake. If you explore around Mamraz Lake, there's a possibility of encountering animals such as wild dogs, foxes, or boars. Therefore, it is advisable not to walk alone or venture too far on your own, for safety reasons. One of the most enjoyable activities around Nowshahr's Lake of Ghosts is wandering through and exploring the surrounding forests, which remain pristine and unspoiled. Walking amidst towering trees provides an opportunity to appreciate untouched nature and capture unforgettable photographs. The nearby forests feature dirt roads and winding trails, making them ideal for off-road driving with suitable vehicles. Photographing the various landscapes around the Lake of Ghosts is another popular activity for travelers. During foggy days and periods of low water levels, decayed trees emerge from the lake, creating fascinating and ghostly scenes that seem almost surreal. Such images offer a unique and haunting perspective of this natural wonder. For adventure enthusiasts, the area offers excellent opportunities for picnicking and camping in the wild. Setting up a tent in the surrounding forests allows visitors to enjoy a memorable night immersed in raw nature. However, before camping, it's essential to check the local weather forecast and bring all necessary supplies, as there are no facilities or amenities available in this remote region. The name "Lake of Ghosts" is attributed to the unique visual

phenomena and the special natural environment of the lake. The broken trunks of Mamraz trees emerging from the water, set against thick fog and marshy surroundings, resemble scenes from horror movies, creating an unsettling and ghostly atmosphere. Visiting early in the morning, especially during early spring, offers the best chance to experience this mysterious and eerie ambiance. As the day advances toward midday, the fog tends to lift and disperse; however, during colder seasons and on overcast days, dense fog can persist over the lake throughout the entire day, intensifying its haunting appearance. The Lake of Ghosts remains captivating in every season, and viewing its changing scenery throughout the year can be a truly memorable experience. Nevertheless, access to the lake can become muddy and slippery during snowfall, heavy rain, or wet conditions. If you plan to visit during the colder months, it is advisable to wear suitable clothing and tall boots to navigate the terrain comfortably. Driving along the road to the Lake of Ghosts can also be difficult during periods of heavy rain, and reaching it may require capable, well-equipped vehicles. The best time to visit Mamraz Lake is during the first six months of the year, particularly in spring and early summer. If you intend to visit at the start of the year, it's wise to check the weather conditions beforehand, as they can significantly affect your travel experience. Conditions are generally suitable for visiting until mid-autumn; however, as winter approaches, travel becomes

increasingly difficult. On days of heavy rainfall or adverse weather, park rangers in the region prohibit tourists from visiting Mamraz Lake for safety reasons. Facilities around Nowshahr's Lake of Ghosts are limited, given its location within pristine forests that rank among the most untouched and preserved in Iran. The natural state of this environment has led to the presence of various wild animals in and around the lake. Consequently, visitors should exercise caution while exploring this area and the surrounding forests to ensure safety. There are no amenities or services near Mamraz Lake or its surrounding forests. If you plan to stay overnight or have a picnic near the lake, be sure to bring all necessary supplies, food, and equipment with you. Given the stunning and untouched nature of the region, and the enclosed environment of the lake, it is essential to be mindful of your ecological impact. Please remember not to leave any trash behind, as pollution can cause irreversible damage to this fragile ecosystem. Refrain from littering, and do not harm the trees or the natural environment, helping to preserve this extraordinary natural wonder for future visitors.

Nearby attractions

Sisangan Forest Park: Surrounding Nowshahr's Lake of Ghosts are numerous natural attractions that visitors can enjoy alongside the lake during their trip to Mazandaran Province. Nestled in northern Iran amid lush, thriving forests, this area is home to many charming villages. Exploring these scenic villages

can add a memorable touch to your journey. Sisangan Forest Park is situated approximately 15 kilometers northwest of Mamraz Lake. The park boasts stunning and unique nature, complemented by suitable recreational facilities. It has direct access to the sea, offering a range of water sports and activities such as jet skiing and boating along its coastline. For enthusiasts, the park also features a go-kart track and a beach volleyball court. This protected area provides camping options and outdoor accommodations for those seeking to immerse themselves in nature. **Avidar Dam Lake:** Located near Sisangan Forest and about 15 kilometers northwest of Lake of Ghosts, Avidar Dam Lake — also known locally as Salahuddin Kola Lake — is one of Nowshahr's most beautiful natural attractions. Its scenic surroundings, combined with well-developed facilities and accommodations, attract many eco-tourists eager to experience its tranquility and natural beauty. **Chalandar Waterfall:** Another captivating attraction near Lake of Ghosts is Chalandar Waterfall, situated close to the village of the same name, approximately 30 kilometers northwest of Mamraz Lake. This waterfall stands out as one of Nowshahr's most stunning sights, nestled within scenic forests. To reach the waterfall, visitors typically enjoy a 15 to 20-minute walk through verdant woodland. The pools at the base of the falls are perfect for summer swimming, with the waterfall's height varying from half a meter to four meters.

Iran prepares 50 heritage files for potential UNESCO World Heritage listing

Iran has placed 50 historical, natural and cultural sites on UNESCO's tentative list that will gradually be submitted for final World Heritage inscription once "infrastructure, protective criteria and research standards" are in place, a senior official told IRNA. Farhad Azizi, director general of Iran's National and World Heritage Bases at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, said the dossiers were being prepared according to UNESCO benchmarks, unique site features and specialized infrastructure needs. "Besides cultural and historical indicators, proper management of the sites — including research, protection, support facilities and conditions for visitors — is an essential prerequisite for global registration," Azizi said. He added that among the pending

files were the Alamut Castle in northern Iran and a collection of Iranian mosques, with whichever dossier was completed first to be put forward to UNESCO. Azizi noted that under UNESCO's value-based management system, "public support and participation is the most important factor for success, since people as the real owners of the heritage must play an effective role in decision-making and planning." Local communities, he added, should safeguard the treasures while creating the conditions for sustainable tourism, including attracting investors both from inside and outside the provinces and paving the way for private sector involvement. Iran, he pointed out, had "unique heritage and tourism capacities" and, with

proper infrastructure and services, could turn into a key global destination. In western Ilam province, meetings have already been held to identify the most likely candidate for global inscription. Azizi said a final file for Ilam was expected to be chosen within two months with input from experts, academics and consultations with UNESCO. Ilam is considered one of the country's richest archaeological zones thanks to its unique geography and deep civilizational roots. Discoveries in recent years across Dehloran, Dareh Shahr and Ilam city include pottery jars, caves, ancient cemeteries and valuable artefacts dating from prehistory through the Islamic era, underscoring the region's role in the rise of early civilizations on the Iranian plateau.



● A general view of Alamut Castle in Qazvin, northern Iran
● IRNA



Hosseinpour wins top prize at Toronto Nollywood festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Ramin Hosseinpour picked up the Special Jury Award and the trophy for Best Short Documentary at the 9th Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF), which ran from September 6 to 13 in the Canadian city. The short film 'Sculpture,' entered as an official nominee in both the directing and documentary categories, secured Hosseinpour's second major international recognition this year, inn.ir reported.

The festival, recognized as a qualifying event for the Canadian Screen Awards, is regarded as one of North America's more prominent showcases for independent cinema. Hosseinpour was also invited to serve on TINFF's international industry panel, underscoring what organizers described as his "growing stature" on the global circuit. His documentary remains eligible for the 2026 Academy Awards in the United States, Britain's BAFTAs and Canadian Screen Awards.

Away from the red carpet, Hosseinpour is at work on 'The Pretender,' a short centered on the life and philosophy of medieval Persian poet and mystic Attar. The director, who is also an architect and composer, has described his multi-disciplinary practice as shaping a "distinctive path" within contemporary documentary filmmaking. Festival jurors said 'Sculpture' stood out for its "artistry" and "conceptual depth", marking another step for Iranian non-fiction cinema on the international stage.



Iran, Hungary ink higher education accord in New York



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó lean in to shake hands after signing a memorandum of understanding in New York, the US, on September 23, 2025, during the 80th United Nations General Assembly.
● IRNA

Social Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijjártó signed a memorandum of understanding on Tuesday in New York, setting out plans for closer cooperation in higher education during the 80th United Nations General Assembly. The accord, signed on the side-

lines of the annual gathering, covers science, technology, medicine and agriculture. Both ministers also exchanged views on regional and global developments as part of their meeting, IRNA reported. The agreement underscores a push by Tehran to broaden academic partnerships abroad at a time when its universities seek stronger international links in

research and applied sciences. Hungarian institutions, long known for their medical and agricultural program, will be part of the collaboration. Araghchi arrived in New York on Monday, ahead of a week of speeches and bilateral talks with world leaders and media. He is heading Iran's delegation to the Assembly, which runs from Sept 23 to Sept 29. President Masoud Pezeshkian has also flown to the US city to deliver a national address to the world body. The two foreign ministers stressed "mutual interest" in expanding ties and highlighted the importance of education as a field where, as one diplomat put it, cooperation can "stand the test of time."

Seoul film archive hosts Iranian family-themed productions

Arts & Culture Desk

The Korean Film Archive (KOFA) opened its doors on September 24 to a four-day Iranian Film Week titled 'Family Portrait,' featuring works by leading directors from Tehran and a new generation of filmmakers. The screenings, staged from September 24 to 27 at the Korean Film Archive's cinema-theque in Seoul, bring together dramas noted for their humane and social themes. Organized jointly by Iran's Embassy in Seoul, the Korean archive and Tehran-based Soureh Cinema Organization, the program aims to give South Korean audiences a glimpse into family life in contemporary Iran. Reza Mirkarimi's 'A Cube of Sugar' served as the opening night film, accompanied by a formal inauguration ceremony. Other titles include Maziar Miri's 'The Painting Pool,' Hamed Mohammadi's 'Angels Descend Together,' and 'In the Arms of the Tree,' the latest feature from Babak Khajeh Pasha. Organizers said the films were selected for their shared focus on "family relations" and the fine line between tradition and modernity in Iranian society. "Each film tells a different story, yet they all explore the universal language of family," one of the curators remarked. Iranian cinema has long been acclaimed abroad for its pared-down style and moral storytelling. For Seoul viewers, the Family



Portrait showcase offers what promoters describe as "a fresh angle" on Iranian culture through characters caught in everyday dilemmas. International distribution of the selected works is handled by Soureh Cinema Organization. The Seoul screenings add to a string of recent cultural exchanges between Iranian filmmakers and Asian audiences, underscoring the continued relevance of Iranian cinema on the global stage.

Farhadi begins shooting 'Parallel Tales' in Paris with French stars

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian director Asghar Farhadi began filming his tenth feature, 'Parallel Tales,' in the French capital with a line-up led by Isabelle Huppert, Vincent Cassel and Catherine Deneuve. Cameras started rolling on September 8 and production is scheduled to run for three months, inn.ir reported. The internationally acclaimed filmmaker, twice an Oscar winner, has assembled a cast of France's best-known performers including Virginie Efira, Pierre Niney and Adam Bessa. Huppert, Deneuve and Bessa have already taken their turns before the camera, according to the production team. The project marks Farhadi's



return to European cinema after works shot in Spain and Italy. Haideh Safiyari, Farhadi's long-time collaborator, is handling the editing. Paris-based Memento Production and Los Angeles company Anonymous Content are co-producing alongside Farhadi himself. The film

is a joint venture involving France, the United States, Italy and Belgium. Farhadi, whose dramas 'A Separation' and 'The Salesman' won Academy Awards for best foreign language film, has built a reputation for drawing out "raw tensions" and everyday dilemmas from his characters.

'At the End of the Night' picked among Cologne TV festival's top ten

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ida Panahandeh's television series 'At the End of the Night' was shortlisted in the "Top Ten" line-up of the 2025 Cologne Film and Television Festival. The annual German showcase, which runs from October 9 to 16, is considered one of Europe's leading platforms for television and cinema fiction, Mehr News Agency reported. Panahandeh's nine-part drama, produced for the Tehran-based streaming platform Filmnet, will go head-to-head with high-profile productions from Germany's ZDF, Britain's BBC, Denmark's DR, France's Arte, and US giants Discovery and Warner. The Cologne event also hands out the Hollywood Reporter Award, backed by the Los Angeles trade magazine, for the best narrative

entry across its competitive categories. Past winners have often gone on to wider international distribution. 'At the End of the Night,' co-written by Panahandeh and Arsalan Amiri and produced by Mohammad Yamini, traces the fate of two characters, Nahid (Hoda Zeinolabedin) and Amir (Parsa Pirouzfar), whose lives unravel through "secrets" and fraught choices. The series leans on suspense and melodrama to probe themes of family, betrayal, trust and truth-seeking. The production has already made waves at home, sweeping three awards at Iran's Hafez Festival this year, including best TV drama, best screenplay and best actor for Pirouzfar. It later screened in Spain at the Cinema Jove festival, marking its second international outing before landing a coveted berth in Cologne. With its brooding tone and taut



narrative, the show represents Iran's latest attempt to place its scripted content on the global stage. "It is a story about choices and consequences," Panahandeh has said, stressing the universal pull of its tragic arc.