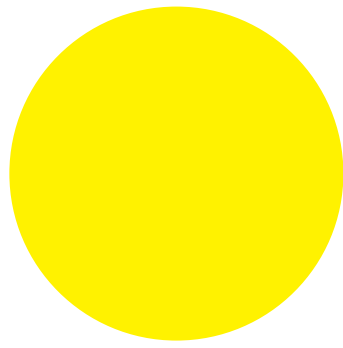


Iran says snapback regime reinstates past sanctions, not to halt port operations



'Unacceptable': Pezeshkian nixes US nuclear demand, vows to overcome sanctions

Nasrallah; Eternal Abode of Resistance

Larijani: Hezbollah holds special place in hearts of Muslims

Lebanese army yet unfit to replace resistance

Handingover weapons by Hezbollah would be nothing short of 'suicide'

INTERVIEWS
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Supporters of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah attend a ceremony marking the first anniversary of Israel's assassination of their longtime leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs on September 27, 2025.

AFP



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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses the United Nations General Assembly during the 80th session of the annual event in New York on September 24, 2025.
● [president.ir](https://www.president.ir)

'Unacceptable': Pezeshkian nixes US nuclear demand, vows to overcome sanctions

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Saturday slammed as "unacceptable" US demands that Tehran hand over its enriched uranium in exchange for a three-month reprieve from sanctions. The United States "wants us to hand over all our enriched uranium to them, and in return they would give us three months" exemption from sanctions, Pezeshkian told reporters in New York before leaving for Tehran. "This is by no means acceptable," he said.

He previously said France had made a similar proposal, offering only a one-month delay for the sanctions that will take effect on Sunday after the UN General Assembly on Friday failed to adopt a resolution that would have extended sanctions relief for Iran for another six months under the 2015 nuclear deal.

"Why would we put ourselves

in such a trap and have a noose around our neck each month?" he asked, accusing the US of pressuring Europeans not to compromise. Despite Iran's cooperation with the UN nuclear agency, Western powers have claimed that they saw insufficient progress to justify delaying sanctions, after a week of top-level diplomacy at the UN General Assembly.

European powers, France, Germany and Britain, triggered the so-called "snapback" mechanism a month ago, which reimposes international sanctions removed under the nuclear deal.

Efforts to overthrow Islamic Republic

Pezeshkian reiterated that Iran had no intention of developing nuclear weapons, stressing that Washington and Israel were instead using pressure to try to overthrow the Islamic Republic. Talks over Iran's nuclear program had also involved Steve Witkoff

– Special Envoy of US President Donald Trump – who said Washington did not want to harm Iran and was open to further discussions.

But Pezeshkian dismissed Witkoff as unserious, saying he backtracked on earlier understandings that collapsed after Israel launched its latest military campaign against Iran in June.

The sanctions are aimed at imposing new economic pain to pressure Iran, but it remains to be seen if all countries will enforce them.

Dmitry Polyansky, the Russian deputy ambassador, said Friday that Moscow, a top partner of Iran, considered the reimposition of sanctions "null and void."

Measures to counter sanctions

The Iranian president assured that "necessary measures have been taken" for this scenario, citing Iran's alliances with neigh-

bors, BRICS, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) countries, as well as the resilience of the Iranian people, as reasons the nation would "overcome this situation."

The US already has unilateral sanctions on Iran and has tried to force all other countries to stop buying Iranian oil, although companies from China have defied the pressure.

Trump imposed a "maximum pressure" campaign during his first term when he withdrew from a landmark 2015 nuclear agreement negotiated under former president Barack Obama, which had offered sanctions relief in return for curbs on Iran's nuclear program.

Pezeshkian said that Iran would not retaliate against the sanctions by leaving the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), warning that unnamed powers were seeking a "superficial pretext to set the region ablaze."

FM lambasts US, E3 reimposition of int'l sanctions against Iran

Tehran recalls ambassadors from UK, France, Germany

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Friday lambasted the United States and the European powers for what he called "illegal and void" the reimposition of international sanctions against Iran, saying that the US betrayed diplomacy and the Europe buried it.

Araghchi made the remarks in a statement after the UN Security Council under pressure from the Western countries failed to adopt a resolution put forward by China and Russia to delay the return of international sanctions on Iran, which had been removed under the 2015 nuclear agreement.

On Friday, the US, the UK, France, Denmark, Greece, Panama, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia vetoed the draft measure that sought to delay the imposition of the coercive economic measures against Tehran for six months.

It came nearly one month after the three European parties to the nuclear agreement – Germany, France and Britain – triggered the so-called snapback mechanism which reimposes international sanctions against Iran. "The so-called 'snapback' mechanism [now] remains in force, which will see sanctions re-imposed on Tehran this weekend, following the termination of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)," according to the UN. The measure will again freeze Iranian assets abroad, halt arms deals with Tehran, and penalize any development of Iran's ballistic missile program, among other measures.

In an address to the Security Council, Araghchi noted how the Islamic Republic had invariably acted in full compliance of the nuclear deal, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the NPT's Safeguards Agreement as verified in 15 International Atomic Energy Agency reports. The compliance, he stated, has rendered all attempts at tarnishing Iran's peaceful nuclear energy program illegal.

False allegations

The foreign minister reminded

that the US and the three European countries have been trying hard to bring pressure to bear on Iran over their false allegations concerning its nuclear program, despite their own numerous violations of either the nuclear accord or the international law to target the country.

He cited the US's illegal and unilateral withdrawal from the deal in 2018, the E3's breaking its promise of returning Washington to the accord, and the unlawful and unprovoked American attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities in June as some examples. Accordingly, Araghchi described the push to return the Security Council's sanctions as a "stark abuse of power."

The Friday vetoes, cast in this context, are likewise "legally void, politically reckless, and procedurally flawed," he added.

Additionally, the official underlined that October 18 would mark the automatic "Termination Day" under Resolution 2231, which has endorsed the nuclear agreement.

All nuclear-related restrictions "will end permanently" on that day, he added.

Araghchi, hence, called on the UN secretary-general "to avoid any attempt to revive sanctions-related mechanisms within the Secretariat." In his statement after the security council meeting, the Iranian foreign minister said, "Today's crisis is the direct result of US withdrawal and Europe's inaction. The US betrayed diplomacy. The E3 buried it." "For years, the US and the E3 misrepresented Iran's peaceful program. They echoed Israel's false claims — even as Israel maintains the region's only nuclear arsenal, outside the NPT. The double standard is glaring."

US, E3 want confrontation

Referring to the US and the E3 move to block the resolution proposed by Russia and China, the Iranian foreign minister said, "Their words and actions do not match. Their goal is confrontation, not dialogue."

"Iran's position on snapback is clear: it is illegal, void, and has no standing." The Iranian foreign minister under-



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi briefs the press after a UN Security Council vote on a draft resolution to delay the sanctions on Iran at the UN headquarters in New York, US, on September 26, 2025.
● [BIANCA OTERO/DPA](https://www.biancaotero.com)

lined that the E3 which has breached the nuclear deal, cannot claim "significant non-performance."

"Resolution 2231 restrictions will expire permanently on October 18, 2025. Any attempt to revive or extend them is null and void."

The Iranian foreign minister also called on the UN chief to stay clear of any role in reviving expired sanctions.

"Those who pursue this unlawful path will bear full responsibility for damaging the UN's credibility and for the humanitarian impact on the Iranian people," Araghchi said.

"This dangerous precedent must not stand. If agreements can be broken at will, no nation can trust international commitments. If unlawful measures are enforced by power instead of law, the Security Council itself will lose authority."

Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned on Saturday the country's ambassadors to three European countries for consultations following the irresponsible action of three European countries.

"Following the irresponsible action of three European countries in abusing the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism to reinstate repealed UN Security Council resolutions, the ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have been summoned to Tehran," the ministry wrote in a statement.

Larijani: Hezbollah holds special place in hearts of Muslims

Iran's top security official urges regional unity against Tel Aviv

International Desk

Iran's top security official called on regional countries on Saturday to put their difference aside and cooperate closely as they face what he billed "Israel's conspiracies."

Ali Larijani, head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, spoke in Beirut where he arrived earlier Saturday to attend the first anniversary of Israel's assassination of Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon.

"Since my last visit to Beirut, many developments have taken place in the region, the behavior of the Zionist regime has become more evident to the nations, the words that Martyr Nasrallah spoke decades ago are today clear to everyone," Larijani highlighted.

He also described Hezbollah as an authentic movement within the resistance front, stressing the importance of its effective political engagement to help improve the conditions of the Lebanese people. Larijani hailed the resistance as a strategic asset for the Islamic world, saying Hezbollah in particular stands as a powerful force against the Israeli regime. "Lebanon may be a small country, but it is strong in confronting Israel because of the determination that has taken root among its younger generations. Hezbollah holds a special place in the hearts of Muslims," he added.

Amid Israel's conspiracies, regional states should closely cooperate and even if there were disagreements they should put these disagreements aside, he said after a meeting with Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



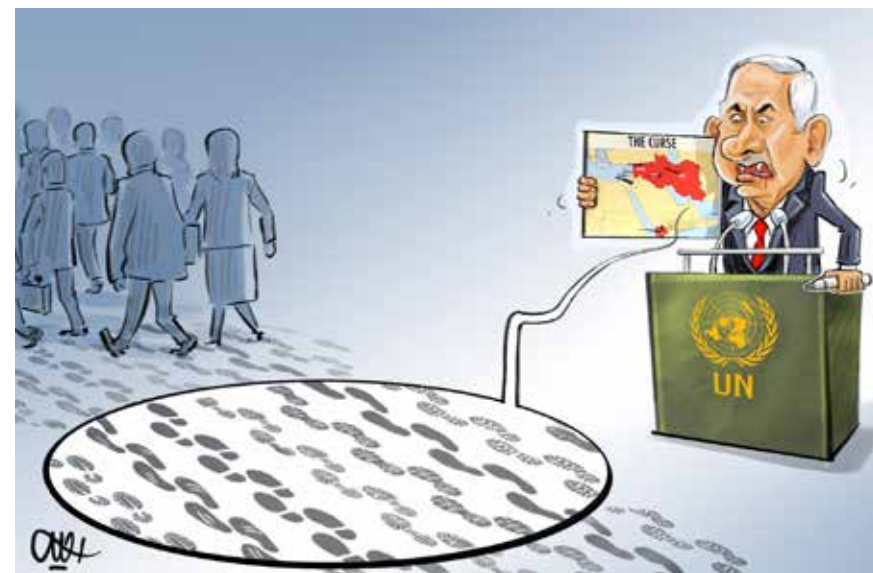
Referring to the Israel's strike on Qatar earlier this month, Larijani said that, "Today, it has become evident to all that the Zionist regime shows no mercy to any country, the incident in Qatar clearly demonstrated this."

On September 9, the Israeli regime attacked the headquarters of Hamas in Doha, while the resistance group's leaders gathered to discuss the latest Gaza cease-fire proposal – an act Qatar slammed as "state terrorism."

Top Hamas leadership survived the assassination bid, but six people were killed in the unprecedented bombing that sparked global condemnation.

Larijani also attended a ceremony in Beirut to commemorate Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah who was assassinated on the evening of September 27, 2024 by Israel in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Since the beginning of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza in 2023, the Lebanese resistance group launched attacks on Israel's military positions inside the occupied territories in support of Palestinian fighters in the Gaza Strips.



Iran says snapback regime reinstates past sanctions, not to halt port operations

Economy Desk

Iran's transport minister as well as the head of the ministry's ports authority said on Saturday that the reactivation of UN "snapback" sanctions adds no new restrictions and will not disrupt the country's shipping and trade, stressing that port operations and essential imports continue without interruption.

Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh Malvajerd said the snapback mechanism "added no new clauses or articles against our country, it simply repeated all the existing oppressive sanctions," IRNA reported.

"For years we have struggled with these sanctions, and from newborns and children to engineers, elites, athletes and nuclear scientists, everyone has been affected. The impact on people's livelihoods cannot be denied," she added. Saeed Rasouli, managing director of the Ports and Maritime Organization, echoed the minister's remarks, saying Iran's ports are "continuously unloading and loading all types of goods," and that the sanctions have no impact on daily operations. "The reality is that we have lived under oppressive sanctions for many years, even facing severe restrictions on access to medicine," he said. Rasouli added that the sanctions im-

posed "in violation of all international resolutions and protocols" have not weakened the determination of Iran's ports sector. "With measures adopted at the highest levels of the state, there are no problems for exports, imports or the supply of essential goods. Iran's ports are serving the country with full capacity," he said.

Ongoing port activity

According to Rasouli, cargo handling operations for essential goods, oil shipments, containerized cargo, imports and exports are proceeding normally. He said port capacity expansion and investment attraction are also advancing. "This year, named the year of investment for production, we have made significant progress in this field," he said.

Foreign delegations have also visited Iranian ports to explore cooperation, Rasouli added. "Recently we hosted several delegations from different countries to explore investment opportunities. Late last week, a high-ranking Azerbaijani delegation visited Shahid Rajaei Port, and negotiations on strengthening logistics cooperation, especially along the North-South corridor, are under way," he said.

He noted that Iran is engaging extensively with neighboring states to boost

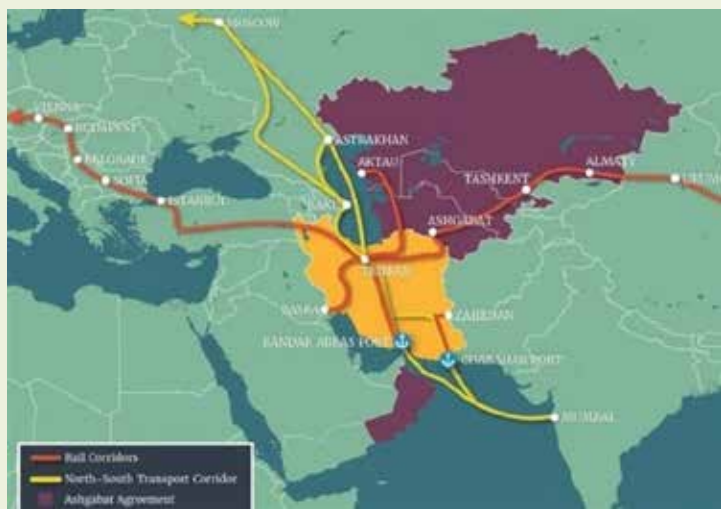


exports, imports and transit through joint efforts with the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development and other

transport sectors. Under the seventh development plan, Iran aims to increase transit volumes to 55 million

tons by the end of the program. Last year, the country moved 17 million tons of goods, surpassing previous records.

Unified transit tariff for China-Iran-Turkey route nears approval



Economy Desk

China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Turkey agreed to establish a single transit tariff covering their shared freight corridor, an Iranian transport official said on Saturday, adding that final meetings are under way to put the decision into effect.

Amin Taraffo, head of the international affairs department at Iran's

Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, said the common tariff would apply to the entire route so goods can be moved "from origin to destination" under one rate, Tasnim reported.

"The final sessions to finalize these tariffs are being held, and the decision will soon be enforced," he said.

Part of Iran's bilateral trade already moves by rail, and international rail freight volumes jumped

sharply last year, with more than five million tons of goods carried, Taraffo noted. He added that tariffs are mostly based on the costs of each country but remain within the ministry's broader policy framework.

Eastern transit through Iran

"Transit performance from China in recent years was limited. Even with tariffs set, putting this route into operation depends on multiple factors and is only one step forward," he said.

The official explained that most cargoes potentially crossing Iran consist of foodstuffs and grains. While East-West and North-South corridors sometimes handle shipments—such as goods moving from Belarus to Russia and then through Bandar Abbas to India or Oman—the full East-West corridor is not yet continuously active. There are no domestic obstacles on Iran's side, Taraffo said, stressing that the main challenge lies in the lack of willingness and coordination among the countries along the route.

ICT reports 100% surge in fiber optic rollout

Economy Desk

Minister of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Sattar Hashemi announced on Saturday a 100% increase in fiber optic network expansion in recent months, stressing that improving public access and service quality must be central to the country's development agenda.

"In the current administration, fiber optic expansion is being pursued with an economic approach and a focus on improving service quality for subscribers," Hashemi told IRNA.

He said the ministry's strategy prioritizes the economic dimension of fiber deployment, meaning subscriber uptake and the capacity to absorb services across different models must be rigorously measured. "Incentives provided to telecom companies for fiber optic expansion are only applicable when high-quality connectivity is delivered to the public," Hashemi added, underscoring that quality of service remains a non-negotiable condition for accessing government support.

The remarks reflect Tehran's intensified push to modernize its digital infrastructure amid broader economic pressures and international sanctions.

Separately, Davoud Zareian, deputy head of communications, public relations and international affairs at Iran's Telecommunication Company, said on Thursday that



the second phase of the country's strategic "swap" project — replacing copper networks entirely with fiber optic cables — has begun under a five-year plan.

He said demand for efficient use of information and communications technology is rising daily, while copper-based networks with maximum speeds of 16 megabits per second are no longer sufficient.

"In the fiber optic development plan, it will be possible to deliver speeds of up to 1,000 megabits per second to home subscribers, although most customers' current needs are between 70 and 200 megabits per second," Zareian said.

He added that converting copper to fiber forms the backbone for rolling out fifth-generation (5G) mobile services and supporting other operators. "Many of MCI's [Mobile Communication Company of Iran] sites and those of other operators will be connected to the fiber optic network through this project," he noted.

BRICS okays nuclear platform strategy at Moscow summit with Iran participation

Economy Desk

BRICS members and partners approved the alliance's first strategic document for a new nuclear energy platform and presented a 2026 work program at an annual conference in Moscow that featured the participation of Iran's delegation, IRNA reported.

The conference, held at the VDNKh exhibition complex alongside World Atom Week and the Atom 2025 exhibition, saw Hossein Derakhshandeh, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (AEOI) and chief executive of the Iran Atomic Energy

Production and Development Company, outline Tehran's positions and proposals to attendees.

Iran's delegation was led by Vice President and AEOI chief Mohammad Eslami, and Tehran also displayed its nuclear industry achievements at a booth at Atom 2025, IRNA reported.

The newly approved strategic document sets out the platform's key areas of work and organizational development paths, including human resources development, mobilizing financing for nuclear projects, strengthening supply-chain resilience, promoting reactor and nuclear

fuel-cycle technologies, and ensuring public acceptance of nuclear power, among other priorities. The platform's 2026 program was also presented at the meeting.

The BRICS nuclear energy platform, launched about a year ago to boost cooperation among companies operating in member states and to promote nuclear power as an environmentally friendly energy source, brings together industry bodies and firms from BRICS and BRICS-plus partners.

Heads of companies and organizations representing Russia, Brazil, Vietnam, Egypt, China, South Africa,

the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Turkey and the ASEAN Energy Centre attended the conference, the report said.

Elsie Pule, a senior coordinator of the BRICS nuclear energy platform, highlighted the grouping's growing role in shaping a new global energy architecture, saying the platform accounts for roughly one-third of operating nuclear reactors and more than 70% of reactors under construction. "By 2030, it will account for at least two-thirds of global nuclear fleet growth," she said.

A joint statement of support for the creation of the BRICS nuclear energy



platform was finally issued by companies attending the conference from

Iran, Brazil, China, Russia, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia and Bolivia.

A year after Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's martyrdom

Lebanese army yet unfit to replace resistance

Hezbollah's arsenal necessary deterrent, not tool for political leverage

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

On the anniversary of the martyrdom of former Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, attention has once again been drawn to his life, role, and legacy. Nasrallah was born in 1960 in a village in southern Lebanon and began his religious and political activities at a young age. After studying in Najaf, Iraq, he initially joined the Amal Movement and then became one of the founders of Hezbollah in the early 1980s.

Following the assassination of Abbas al-Musawi, the then-Secretary-General of Hezbollah, in 1992, Nasrallah took on the leadership of the organization. During his more than three decades at the helm, Hezbollah transformed from a militia group into one of the most powerful political and military actors in the Middle East. He led the organization in its battle against Israel, which culminated in the complete withdrawal of the Israeli army from southern Lebanon in 2000.

The 2006 Lebanon War was another significant turning point in his leadership, which led to a surge in his regional popularity. Beyond his military activities, Nasrallah was a powerful political figure who played a



key role in Lebanese domestic and regional equations. His televised speeches were highly popular, and he was known as a charismatic strategist and orator.

Following his martyrdom, domestic and international pressure for the group's complete disarmament has increased. Naim Qassem, who was chosen as Hezbollah's new leader after Nasrallah, has, like his predecessor, vehemently opposed any disarmament. The martyrdom of the late leader has raised many questions about the organization's future, its future strategies against Israel, and its role in the political developments in Lebanon and the region.

In this interview, Iran Daily explores these dimensions with Sabah Zanganeh.



IRAN DAILY: Has the martyrdom of Nasrallah presented Hezbollah with challenges in leadership and internal cohesion? And has his successor been able to maintain the group's unity and influence?

ZANGANEH: One of the characteristics of the Hezbollah organization has been its spiritual self-building and profound faith in its goals. This self-building has enabled Hezbollah to preserve itself and Lebanon for several decades, navigating numerous adversities. It has endured internal disagreements, external conspiracies and schemes, pressures, inducements, and assassinations of its key leaders at various junctures. Yet, Hezbollah remains steadfast. It has plans and programs to deal with new daily circumstances and can effectively both stabilize its position internally and adapt to new conditions in its foreign and international relations, all while remaining committed to its goals and ideals.

With the increase in domestic and international pressure for Hezbollah's disarmament, is the group in a position to resist these pressures and maintain its military role, or will it be content with preserving its role as a political entity?

This is not the first time Hezbollah has come under fire to lay down its arms. It has happened on many occasions, and although the group is now in a more difficult position, it holds a specific definition for its weapons. Those who exert pressure to disarm Hezbollah ignore this definition. The group resorted to arms when it became clear that Israeli occupation could not be repelled and removed from Lebanese territories without armed resistance. Therefore, it opted for weapons for the purpose of resistance against occupation, not for domestic gain. For this reason, for many years, the group did not even seek a single ministerial post or parliamentary seat. It only entered the Lebanese political arena

when it became necessary for it to engage in domestic political equations with a political and diplomatic language to prevent internal division and conflict. For this very reason, it defined a three-sided trinity consisting of the people, the resistance, and the army. This policy has been maintained, and it continues to be upheld. However, even for the use of weapons, Hezbollah has set specific times and conditions. It argues that the group can possess weapons, but these weapons will not be used in public gatherings, on the streets, or against the Lebanese people. This approach effectively disarms those who call for its disarmament. By re-examining its relations with regional Arab countries, it has also shifted towards a win-win equation of interests, allowing it to advance these relations within its broader regional strategy.

If implemented, what impact would the disarmament of Hezbollah have on the security balance in Lebanon? Could it lead to the strengthening of state institutions, or would it, conversely, create a security vacuum?

This has happened on several occasions in Lebanon, where attempts were made to restrict Hezbollah and prevent it from even resisting the occupiers, yet we saw that the occupation expanded as a result. The same situation exists now. The Lebanese army needs many years to build up the necessary power and capability to stand against Israeli occupation and daily aggressions and defend Lebanon. The army is not a complete substitute. It needs complete military equipment. The United States, France, and some regional countries have not allowed Lebanon to have anti-aircraft defenses, which would enable it to defend

against Israeli aerial aggressions. They have not been given permission for either radar systems or air defenses. Naturally, such a structure with these shortcomings will not be able to defend Lebanon or secure its safety. Lebanon has faced three types of threats since its independence: First, extremist political and religious movements that led to civil and urban wars; second, Israeli expansionism; and third, the sectarian tendencies of some political parties that lead to internal conflicts. Lebanon's security system must find appropriate solutions for these three threats. Hezbollah can put itself at the service of the Lebanese people and help the government and the army repel these threats from Lebanon.

Given the recent request by Naim Qassem, the new leader of Hezbollah, for dialogue with Riyadh, is it likely to result in a period of de-escalation between Hezbollah and Saudi Arabia, or will this merely lead to a new political stalemate?

I believe that this could help with de-escalation. When one party in the region declares its readiness for de-escalation, the other side will be held accountable if it gives a negative response to this willingness. It appears that Naim Qassem's move is highly precise, intelligent, and nationalistic, aimed at protecting Lebanon's interests and security. If someone gives a negative response to this inclination and approach, it will become apparent who is responsible for regional deficiencies. I hope that Lebanon can once again return to its characteristic role as a lighthouse for the development of culture and civilization, and that with the establishment of calm, we will once again witness Lebanon's role as a cultural beacon.



Supporters of the Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah attend a ceremony marking the first anniversary of Israel's assassination of their longtime leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs on September 27, 2025.

● AFP



Regardless of leadership, Hezbollah can effectively both stabilize its position internally and adapt to new conditions in its foreign and international relations, all while remaining committed to its goals and ideals.



A yellow flag is waved at the sea-front promenade, as Hezbollah supporters sail in small boats around the landmark Raouche rocks (Pigeon Rock) to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of the party's leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, in Beirut on September 25, 2025.

● AFP



Handing over weapons by Hezbollah would be nothing short of ‘suicide’

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

It has been a year since Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the charismatic leader of Lebanon's Shia community, was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike on Beirut. Over the past year, Hezbollah has come under mounting pressure to lay down its arms and hand them over to the Lebanese army — pressure that stems largely from external powers.

But Nasrallah's successor, his deputy Sheikh Naim Qassem, has refused to bow to such demands, warning that disarming Hezbollah would mean the end of life in Lebanon. On the anniversary of Nasrallah's martyrdom, Majid Safataj, a Middle East affair expert, told Iran Daily that handing over Hezbollah's weapons would amount to "suicide in every sense," a step the group will never take.



IRAN DAILY: How do you see Lebanon's political situation on the first anniversary of Nasrallah's assassination, and what is Hezbollah's current standing in the country's politics?

SAFATAJ: The political climate in Lebanon today has reached a point where, at least on the surface and under the influence of Western and some Arab media outlets, it is being portrayed as though the Resistance Front has been defeated. Key pillars of this front — led by the Islamic Republic of Iran — have been declared broken, including Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine, Ansarallah in Yemen, as well as Iraqi groups and even the Iraqi state itself.

But once you dig deeper and examine the recent developments against the objectives pursued by the Zionists and the Americans, the picture changes. Their goal has always been to topple the Islamic Republic, to fragment Iran, and to crush the Resistance movements and their allies. Yet they have not succeeded.

Yes, senior Hezbollah commanders have been assassinated — just as leaders in Palestine and

Iran have been targeted. The adversaries believed that by striking at the leadership of the Resistance, they could bring the entire front crashing down. They imagined that by eliminating the top of Hezbollah's pyramid of power, they could weaken, sideline, and eventually dismantle the movement's role in Lebanese politics. This was why, immediately after Nasrallah, they assassinated Hashem Safieddine, who was being floated as his successor. But Hezbollah's organizational structure, much like that of the Islamic Republic, is not dependent on individuals. Iran itself survived the 1981 bombing of the Islamic Republican Party headquarters, which killed many senior officials, and just months later endured the assassinations of both its president and prime minister. Yet the system endured. Hezbollah, with full awareness of this dynamic, and drawing on the strength of Shia identity and the community's collective existence in Lebanon, has remained resilient. The group enjoys both social cohesion and organizational depth. Moreover, given Israel's long-standing plots against it, Hezbollah has systematically built layers of backup leadership. Even after the assassinations of Nasrallah, Safieddine, and other senior and mid-ranking commanders, this grassroots movement has not collapsed.

At present, there is a cease-fire in place between Israel and Hezbollah. Yet Hezbollah retains its vitality, resilience, and political weight. The proof was on display during the anniversary commemoration in Beirut's Raouche district, where the sheer number of people mobilized by Hezbollah sent shockwaves through its opponents — whether inside Lebanon's government or beyond. That anniversary gathering underscored a key fact that Hezbollah has not only withstood the blows but has come out intact and dynamic. As Nasrallah's own son declared in a recent interview, "Do not even entertain the thought that Hezbollah will ever surrender its weapons."

Hezbollah has weathered countless ups and downs over the years but has endured, growing even stronger in the process. In my view, while Hezbollah has refrained — for certain reasons — from entering into a fresh war with Israel, it nonetheless



A mourner carries the pictures of slain Hezbollah leaders Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and successor Hashem Safieddine (L) during a gathering to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of Lebanon's Hezbollah leader, at the site where he was targeted in an Israeli air strike, in the Haret Hreik neighborhood of Beirut's southern suburbs on September 26, 2025.

possesses the capability to withstand and defeat both internal factions that may raise arms against it and external aggression from the Zionist regime.

How would you assess Sheikh Qassem's performance as Nasrallah's successor over the past year? Has he managed to revive Nasrallah's charismatic leadership style?

Nasrallah's character was entirely unique and stood apart from other Hezbollah leaders. From the very start, even before Hezbollah was formally established, he was the youngest member of the party's council. Yet he quickly rose through the ranks, navigating that long road with strength and precision. He had a sharp grasp of both the strengths and weaknesses of Lebanon's Shia community and the Resistance. That deep understanding, coupled with his unwavering belief in the doctrine of Velayat-e Faqih (Guardianship of the Jurist), made him a remarkable and distinctive figure across Arab societies.

Sheikh Qassem also possesses these qualities, though naturally, no two individuals are the same. Just as Nasrallah's leadership style differed in certain ways from that of his predecessor, the martyred Abbas al-Musawi — shaped by Lebanon's circumstances and the political

realities of the time — Qassem too may have his own distinct methods. But it would be wrong to assume he is a solitary, top-down figure who simply issues orders. That is not how Hezbollah works. Decision-making is carried out collectively through the party's council.

Over the past year, despite efforts in Lebanon, the region, and the wider world to paint Hezbollah as a defeated force in the court of public opinion, the movement has managed under Qassem's stewardship to repair and consolidate its defense, military, intelligence, and security structures. At the same time, Hezbollah has maintained its presence and influence in Lebanese politics, to the extent that sidelining the group from major national decision-making is virtually impossible.

In short, the course Sheikh Qassem has charted over the past year is essentially the same path Nasrallah himself would have pursued had he been alive.

Behind the scenes, why are some Lebanese politicians insisting on disarming Hezbollah even though they may admit that such disarmament could weaken Lebanon's ability to resist possible Israeli aggression? What drives this insistence?

The political scene in Lebanon is shaped by its multi-confessional makeup. The country comprises Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims who, historically — especially since the assassination of prime minister Rafik Hariri and the succession of his son Saad Hariri — have tended to fall under Saudi Arabia's influence. Under the electoral system inherited from the French mandate era, these blocs have managed to secure majorities and form governments aligned with their interests. They do not necessarily represent the true majority of the populace; they were elected under a sectarian system rooted in France's legacy. Consequently, they have been subject to both inducements and pressure from states such as Saudi

Arabia, and to influence from the United States and France. These actors work among Maronites and Sunnis to push the narrative that Hezbollah must be disarmed, promising that they will guarantee Lebanon's security. But disarmament is, in reality, nothing short of "suicide." It would be foolish to rely on the Americans or on Israel — the latter having survived for more than 75 years largely through aggression and repeated treaty violations, even breaking cease-fire agreements time and again. There can be no guarantee that, if Hezbollah were disarmed, the Israeli regime would not attack. Some argued that the problem was President Bashar al-Assad in Syria; yet after Assad fell and a government came to power that was backed from the start by Israel, the United States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, Israel stepped up assaults on Syria's economic and military infrastructure and even occupied parts of the Golan, coming close to the main Damascus-Beirut road.

Therefore, there is no assurance that disarming Hezbollah would stop Israeli aggression. The argument that the Lebanese army could one day stand up to the Israeli military is not convincing. Wise Lebanese statesmen — whether Shia, Sunni or Christian — understand this. Nevertheless, pressure continues to be applied to Lebanon's prime minister and president, but forced disarmament will not be carried out easily. The army would have to be the executor of such an order, and a significant portion of the army's rank and file are Shia. If disarmament were imposed, the country could face a repeat of the late civil-war period, when parts of several army brigades parted their way. Even now, some senior military commanders have stated they will not confront Hezbollah and the Shia. While pressure is real, in practice it appears that implementing compulsory disarmament would be extremely difficult and costly for the Lebanese state.

Over the past year, despite efforts in Lebanon, the region, and the wider world to paint Hezbollah as a defeated force in the court of public opinion, the movement has managed under Qassem's stewardship to repair and consolidate its defense, military, intelligence, and security structures. At the same time, Hezbollah has maintained its presence and influence in Lebanese politics, to the extent that sidelining the group from major national decision-making is virtually impossible.



Hezbollah leader Sheikh Naim Qassem, shown on the screen, addresses a crowd remotely during a ceremony marking the first anniversary of Israel's assassination of his predecessor Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburbs on September 27, 2025.

Persian Gulf Pro League: Hajsafi on target, gets Sepahan off the mark

Sports Desk

Former Iran skipper Ehsan Hajsafi scored a first-half free-kick as Sepahan walked away with a much-needed 1-0 victory over Khaybar in Khorramabad at the Persian Gulf Pro League on Friday. This result ended a four-game winless start to the new domestic league season for the Iranian top-flight heavyweight, easing pressure on head coach Moharram Navidkia. His team was also undone by Al Duhail in the AFC Champions League Elite qualification playoffs in August and was beaten by Jordan's Al Hussein in their Asian second-tier clubs' competition opener less than two weeks ago.

A second defeat of the season saw Khaybar drop to fourth in the table with seven points – trailing Persepolis on goal difference – while Sepahan moved up to 12th with five points.

Sepahan, which will be hosting India's Mohun Bagan in Asia on Tuesday, will be chasing a second league win in a row when taking on Zob Ahan at home in the Isfahan derby next Saturday, with Khaybar playing away to Malavan on Thursday. Elsewhere on Friday, Esteghlal's

poor start to the season continued with a frustrating 1-1 draw at Shams Azar in Qazvin.

Mehran Ahmadi put the visiting Blues in front with a superb finish from outside the box nine minutes after the break, only to see strike canceled out by Shams Azar center-back Saeb Mohebbi 18 minutes later.

The Tehran Blues have managed a single victory in seven games across all competitions under Portuguese head coach Ricardo Sa Pinto – an opening-day 1-0 win against defending champion Tractor in Tabriz.

Eighth in the table with six points, Esteghlal will host Chadormalou in Tehran next Sunday.

A fifth successive stalemate saw Shams Azar, which has been deducted three points by the Iranian Football Federation, sit second from bottom with two points. Shams Azar will visit Iranco on Friday.

In Ahvaz, Amirhossein Jalalivand and Hojjat Ahmadi scored in each half to lead Esteghlal Khuzestan to a 2-0 win against visiting Mes Rafsanjan.

The impressive triumph moved the home side into 11th place with five points, ahead of Thursday's visit to newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi in Shiraz.

Rasoul Khatibi's Mes – rock bottom in the standings on two points – will play at home against Paykan on Friday.

Golgozar goalkeeper Farzin Garousian and his opposite number at Foolad Khuzestan Hamed Lak were in top form, as the two sides played out a goalless stalemate in Sirjan.

The result was still enough to lift the home side into the second spot with eight points, while Yahya Golmohammadi's Foolad was left struggling in 13th with five points. Golgozar will travel to Tehran to play Persepolis in a highly-anticipated game on Friday, with Foolad facing a formidable test in Tractor at home on Saturday.

In Isfahan, Rahman Jafari's spot-kick deep into first-half added time made the difference, helping Iranco edge Zob Ahan 1-0, celebrating back-to-back wins to jump to 10th place with six points. Zob Ahan sits right above the relegation zone with five points.

On Thursday, Persepolis failed to secure a first home victory of the season, settling for a drab goalless stalemate against Malavan FC at Tehran's Shahr-e Qods Stadium. It also finished goalless between Tractor and Fajr Sepasi in Tabriz.



● Sepahan captain Ehsan Hajsafi (L) celebrates his goal with Portuguese midfielder Ricardo Alves during a 1-0 victory over Khaybar in the Persian Gulf Pro League in Khorramabad, Iran, on September 26, 2025.
● FFIIRI



● Iran taekwondo coach Mahrouz Saei (L) celebrates with Mobina Nematzadeh after her bronze-winning campaign at the Paris Olympics.
● WORLD TAEKWONDO

Saei eager to prove doubters wrong at world, ISG events

Sports Desk

Head coach Mahrouz Saei will have a point to prove when Iranian women's taekwondo team is in action at the upcoming World Championships and the Islamic Solidarity Games.

The 27th edition of the World Championships will get underway in Wuxi, China, on October 24, followed by the sixth edition of multi-sport event in Riyadh on November 7.

Saei was unveiled as the new national team coach by the Technical Committee of the Iranian Taekwondo Federation earlier in the month. She replaced former head coach Minou Maddah, who parted ways with the sport's national governing body following last year's historic campaign at the Paris Olympics, where Nahid Kiani and Mobina Nematzadeh

won silver and bronze medals respectively in the women's taekwondo competitions.

Her appointment was met with criticism from many in the country, who believed the decision was motivated by nepotism on the part of Saei's older brother and the chairman of the federation, Hadi Saei, rather than her own coaching credentials.

However, the president of the federation, who had a long-standing feud with Maddah after the Olympics, has always insisted that her sister "has the best CV for the job in the country," noting that she led her club to the Iranian title over the past six years and was also named the best women's coach at the WT President's Cup and the Asian Club Championships in April.

Iran managed to win a single women's medal – a gold by Kiani

in the -53kg category – across eight weight classes at the 2023 World Championships. Saei will now be eager to improve on that haul to cement her status as the right choice for the role.

Saei, who served as a number two to Maddah in Paris and was in Nematzadeh's corner through her bronze-winning campaign, has named two different rosters for the upcoming major events.

Kiani and Nematzadeh will spearhead the six-woman team in Wuxi, with Saiedeh Nasiri, Mahla Momenzadeh, Kowsar Asaseh, and Nastaran Valizadeh also in the squad.

Meanwhile, Saina Karimi, Rozhan Goudarzi, Hasti Mohammadi, Yalda Valinejad, Fatemeh Eskandarnia, and two-time Asian silver medalist Melika Mirhosseini will vie for glory at the Islamic Solidarity Games.

Yazdani to miss Islamic Solidarity Games, Iran coach Dorostkar confirms

Sports Desk

The upcoming Islamic Solidarity Games – starting Nov. 7 in Riyadh – will come too soon for Iranian wrestling sensation Hassan Yazdani to make his long-awaited return from a shoulder injury, national team head coach Pejman Dorostkar has confirmed. Yazdani, 30, underwent a second surgery on his injured shoulder in September last year, before starting his rehabilitation program five months later in Tehran – in a bid for the elusive second Olympic gold medal in Los Angeles 2028.

A winner of a national-high 10 world and Olympic medals, Yazdani last ap-

peared at the 2024 Paris Olympics, where he settled for the freestyle 86kg silver after a 7-1 setback against Bulgarian Magomed Ramazanov.

Speaking about the latest update on Yazdani's recovery on Friday, Dorostkar said: "His condition is improving as he has begun reviewing techniques and will certainly enter the national team selection cycle [for next year's World Championships], but he won't make it to the Islamic Solidarity Games."

Asked whether Yazdani will compete in the 92kg class or the Olympic 97kg category on return to the mat, Dorostkar said: "It's his decision to make, once he resumes full training."

Yazdani had already been out of ac-

tion for eight months before the Ranking Series event in June 2024 – due to a first surgery on his right shoulder – but recovered in time to secure his place in the national team for the Paris Games.

The Iranian showed no signs of an injury on his way to the final showpiece but the problem flared up against Ramazanov as he struggled with the dislocated shoulder from the get-go, calling for treatment on several occasions throughout the six minutes of action. A gold medal in Paris would have seen Yazdani overtake taekwondo legend Hadi Saei as the most decorated Iranian in the history of the Olympic Games with two golds and one silver.



Autumn inviting travelers to Khansar

Iranica Desk

Khansar, this shining jewel nestled in the heart of Iran's mountains, with its mild summer climate and the delightful onset of autumn, sparkles like a brilliant diamond and stands as an ideal destination for those seeking the tranquility and coolness of nature. Its name, derived from the abundance of springs, promises unparalleled greenery and freshness through hundreds of bubbling springs, and its pleasant air enchants every passerby. Although the passage of time and natural disasters have claimed ancient buildings in this city, the strong determination of its people has preserved unique monuments like the Jaame Mosque as a lasting legacy for generations.

As summer gradually gives way to the many colors of autumn, Khansar, with the blooming of the last summer flowers and its ever-fresh springs, attracts a wide range of travelers. Those weary of city hustle and daily worries find a peaceful refuge beneath the cool shade of trees, enjoying the beauty of flowers and the crisp, pure scent of oxygen that refreshes their spirits, IRNA wrote.

The streets of Khansar, shaded by tall trees with green and occasionally golden leaves, create a dreamy atmosphere. The mud-brick walls, barely visible behind the dense foliage, stir a desire to stroll and explore every corner of this city. Pleasant weather, hospitable people, and unique local dishes combine to make Khansar an unforgettable destination. Throughout the city, the murmuring flow of water in the streams and the sweet songs of birds among the branches compose a calming melody.

In late summer and early autumn, walking through leafy orchard avenues and resting in the delightful shade beside flowing streams offers a dream-like experience for citizens exhausted by the fast pace of life. Yet this dream becomes reality just a few hours' drive from Tehran. Khansar, with its adobe houses, lush orchard alleys, and water-filled streams, remains one of Iran's most peaceful and enchanting tourist destinations. This six-hour journey from Tehran leads to a city that provides all urban amenities, including excellent restaurants, comfortable hotels, and recreational



Golestankuh Mountain
mojnews.com



Sarcheshmeh Forest Park
balad.ir

centers alongside its numerous springs. Come and immerse yourself in the unique nature of Khansar!

Among its notable attractions, Khansar Forest Park, spanning 15 hectares, is a showcase of beauty and tranquility. This park, with clear and abundant springs, offers refreshing charm in every season. With suitable spaces for rest and picnics, it has become one of the most important recreational areas in Khansar and a model tourist spot — an ideal place to enjoy nature with family.

Golestankuh Mountain

Surrounding Khansar, villages with charming natural beauty, such as Darreh Bid village, enrich the region's appeal. Located near Golestankuh, this village is blessed with springs like Agha Khan, Sefid, and Roghani, alongside suitable tourist amenities. Golestankuh, with its green plains blanketed by red tulips in

spring, offers a stunning landscape. Khansar's Green Tunnel, formed by interwoven branches and leaves of plane trees, presents a dreamy and unforgettable scene.

Golestankuh Mountain, rising to 3,631 meters north of Khansar Dam, is one of the highest peaks in Isfahan Province. This beautiful mountain hosts diverse wild plants, including Persian shallot and gum tragacanth, and in spring, its meadows carpeted with inverted tulips attract numerous visitors. Facilities such as restrooms, resting areas, and parking are conveniently available on the mountain slopes for the comfort of visitors.

Fritillaries meadow

The fritillary is a beautiful rain-sensitive flower, ranging from 30 to 70 centimeters in height depending on precipitation. This magnificent flower adds a special charm to the meadows of Golestankuh



Aryai Hill
kojaro.com



Abhari House
IRNA

Mountain, making a spring visit an unforgettable experience. Access to the Golestankuh Fritillaries meadow from Khansar is possible by traveling towards Darreh Bid village and following signposts. Travelers from Isfahan can also reach this pristine and beautiful nature spot by passing through Shahin Shahr and Morcheh Khort.

Marzan Gasht Spring

Marzan Gasht Spring is one of Khansar's scenic and vital spots, located at the heart of Sar Cheshmeh National Park and flowing through the city's alleys. This limestone spring, joining others in the area, forms the Khansar River, bringing freshness and vitality to the city. Beyond its aesthetic and environmental significance, the water of Marzan Gasht Spring plays a crucial role in supplying agricultural and domestic water for Khansar's residents. This spring is not only a natural

attraction but also considered a vital lifeline for the city.

Aryai Hill

Aryai Hill, situated 35 kilometers northeast of Khansar in Rahmatabad village, is both a historical and natural attraction and a living testament to the antiquity of human civilization in the region. This ancient hill, with a history exceeding 8,000 years, narrates the story of the formation and evolution of various civilizations throughout time. Archaeological excavations reveal that the hill served as a refuge for early humans in ancient eras. The caves within the hill reflect the daily activities of these ancient inhabitants, including hunting and farming. Aryai Hill is thus not only a historical site but also a valuable record of human life and activity in ancient times.

Aryai Hill has its own unique beauty in every season, but its appearance in autumn is particularly

exceptional. During this season, the yellow, orange, and red hues of the surrounding trees transform Aryai Hill into an enchanting painting. Visiting this hill on an autumn day offers the opportunity to immerse oneself in history while enjoying the wonders of nature. To reach this location, one must travel to the Rahmatabad area in Khansar.

Sarcheshmeh Forest Park

Sarcheshmeh Forest Park, another gem in Khansar's crown of attractions, is a stunning combination of enchanting nature and modern architecture. Its ponds, fed by springs originating from Sil Mountain, lend the park a special charm. These springs supply fresh drinking water that revitalizes this recreational area. The park offers excellent opportunities for walking and cycling, with spring and autumn considered the best seasons to fully immerse oneself in its beauty. At the heart of this park lies the tomb of Baba Pir Tork, a renowned mystic of the Safavid era, whose outstanding architecture stands as a valuable historical legacy.

Abhari House

The historic Abhari House, a legacy of the Qajar era, shines like a radiant gem in the city of Khansar. This beautiful building, constructed through the efforts of Haj Seyed Mohammad Baqer Abhari, is an authentic example of traditional Iranian architecture. Entering this house is like taking a journey into the depths of history, where visitors can intimately experience the art, architecture, and lifestyle of the people of that time.

The unique and stunning architecture of the Abhari House, featuring brick, wood, delicate stucco work, and beautiful wall paintings, captivates every visitor. The charming courtyard, turquoise water pool, luxurious rooms, and towering windcatchers are among the prominent elements of this historic house. The Abhari House is worth visiting in all seasons, but during autumn it takes on a special, dreamy appearance. The colorful leaves of the courtyard trees provide a delightful view and create a peaceful atmosphere. Imagine sitting in the courtyard on an autumn day, hearing the rustling of leaves and smelling the scent of rain-soaked earth.

Barak weaving preserves ancient craftsmanship in South Khorasan Province

Iranica Desk

Also known as Kurki weaving and Kurgin weaving, Barak weaving is the process of producing a handmade thick fabric native to South Khorasan Province. This craft's history dates back to the Seljuk period. Barak is woven using camel wool or the hair of goats (known locally as Kork, i.e., mohair) and commonly features simple or checkered patterns; the fabric's name is directly derived from its characteristic colors. In the Arabian language, Barak is called Barrakan

and usually appears in natural, self-colored shades such as brown, black, white, milk white, and gray. The first step in weaving Barak involves pouring lime over the sheep to easily separate the wool from the fine underwool. Afterward, the raw wool is sorted by color, combed, straightened, and spun using a drop spindle to create yarn. The yarn then undergoes processes like starching, webbing, sizing, and anchoring threads together before moving on to warping and pirn feeding; following these

steps, the actual weaving begins. Barak is woven on the traditional textile machine. After weaving, the product is beaten and agitated with a yolk to fluff the fabric, giving it a felt-like texture. This treatment softens the scale-like surface of the fabric, making it comfortable to wear without irritating the skin. Highly fine, soft, and durable, Barak is extremely popular for its warmth, lightness, and easy maintenance. It has been used to make coats, suits, hats, gowns, leggings, shawls, and

occasionally rugs. Historically, it was primarily used to craft hats and gowns (qaba) for dervishes. However, the emergence of a higher-quality variant called Shamsheerak led the upper classes to take an interest in Barak, adapting it for more refined garment sewing. Travelers visiting Iran have historically referred to Barak as one of the region's handwoven crafts, often identifying it as Iran serge fabric. Today, Barak weaving thrives in Sarbisheh, Nehbandan, and Khouf.



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Iran eyes tourism as ‘engine of sustainable change’

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri, marked World Tourism Day on September 27, by calling the sector an “engine of sustainable change” and a bridge between nations. In a message written on the day, the minister said tourism for Iran was more than an economic pursuit, describing it as a “national strategy” and a “global responsibility”. He linked the industry to cultural diplomacy, economic diversification and dialogue among civilizations, setting out how government reforms and financial incentives were designed to place the country on what he termed the “global orbit” of tourism. The minister stressed that Iran's landscapes and cultural wealth – from the deserts of Yazd and Hyrcanian forests to the ruins of Persepolis and the Safavid squares

of Isfahan – offered not only a destination but a “civilizational experience”. He said this illustrated how history and modernity could be “woven together” to create innovative forms of travel. Policies introduced under President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration include scrapping fees on hotel construction in major cities, zero-tariff imports of new technology and allocating more than \$280 million in funding. Salehi-Amiri said such measures were already paying off with fuller hotels, a sharp rebound in foreign arrivals and stronger investor confidence. The government has set a target of drawing 10 million visitors by March 2026. Yet the minister argued that the real measure of success lay in the “international trust” being built in Iran as a safe and diverse destination. Tourism, he added, must serve as a “platform for dialogue” rather than just a commercial exchange.

He also underlined green tourism as a guiding principle, pledging that all projects would safeguard natural resources and heritage sites for future generations. Local communities, he said, must be empowered as the “true owners” of the industry, while smart tourism using new technologies could make travel more efficient and globally competitive. Cultural festivals and rituals, the minister noted, were “living heritage” that could reinforce Iran's soft power abroad, while regional cooperation with Persian Gulf, Caucasus and Central Asian neighbors was creating new cultural and economic networks. Investment in youth and entrepreneurship, alongside the growth of domestic travel, would underpin a “sustainable future” for the industry. “Our message on World Tourism Day is clear,” he said. “Tourism is a way of living better, building a greener tomorrow and shaping a more humane world.”



Kurdish-Iranian director wins Busan documentary prize



Arts & Culture Desk

The Busan International Film Festival handed its top documentary prize to ‘Singing Wings’, the debut feature by Kurdish-Iranian filmmaker Hemen Khaledi, in a competition that also honored two South Korean titles. The Mecenat Award, the festival's chief accolade for Asian non-fiction cinema, was split between Khaledi's portrait of migration and Ju Romi and Kim Taeil's ‘Raining Dust’, IRNA

reported. Organisers also gave a special mention to Ko Hyoju's ‘Relay Race’. The recognition places Khaledi, until now little known outside Kurdish film circles, among a growing generation of independent directors breaking ground on the international stage. Shot in the village of Dareh Tafi in Iran's western Kurdistan region, ‘Singing Wings’ intertwines the stories of three couples grappling with the prospect of leaving their

homeland. At its center is an elderly woman caring for both her centenarian husband and an injured stork while her daughter prepares to join her spouse in Europe. The film, which Khaledi developed over four years, avoids the clichés of “poverty” or “nostalgia” and instead, as the director puts it, aims to show migration “without judgement” through a deeply human lens. The production was a joint venture spanning Georgia, Belgium and Iran, with producers Ina Tedjow, Zina Brooyan and Sargol Moradi steering the project through research, shooting and post-production. The collaboration underlines the increasingly transnational nature of documentary financing, with European backers helping to bring regional voices to global screens. This year's 30th Busan festival, which ran from September 17 to 26, screened more than 200 films and drew industry executives and audiences from across the world to what has become East Asia's largest showcase of cinema.

Golden Camera of Macedonia given to Iranian cinematographer Khondji

Arts & Culture Desk

Veteran cinematographer Dariush Khondji was honored with the Golden Camera 300 award for lifetime achievement at the 46th Manaki Brothers International Cinematographers' Film Festival in the northern Macedonian city of Bitola. Khondji, who was nominated for an Academy Award in 1996 for Alan Parker's *Evita*, has spent decades behind the lens, working with directors as varied as David Fincher, Wong Kar-wai and Bernardo Bertolucci, *inn. ir* reported. Festival organizers praised his ability to shift seamlessly across “vastly different styles” of filmmaking while leaving an indelible mark on world cinema. The Iranian-born, Paris-raised cinematographer has collaborated on landmark productions including Fincher's *‘Se7en’*, Bertolucci's *‘Stealing Beauty’*, Jean-Pierre Jeunet's *‘The City of Lost Children’*, Wong Kar-wai's *‘My Blueberry Nights’*, and Michael Haneke's *‘Amour’*. He has also shot works for Woody Allen, Danny Boyle, James Gray and Sydney Pollack. More recently, Khondji was director of photography for Alejandro González Iñárritu's *‘Bardo’* and Bong Joon-ho's forthcoming



‘Mickey 17’. His body of work, blending meticulous technical craft with a painterly eye, has secured him a reputation as one of the industry's most versatile image-makers. Running from September 20 to 26, the Manaki Brothers festival is regarded as the oldest event dedicated solely to cinematography. Founded in 1979, it is named after Yanaki and Milton Manaki, pioneering Balkan filmmakers who are often described as the “fathers of Balkan cinema.” “I never imagined, when I began, that one day I would be standing here,” Khondji told the audience at the Bitola theatre, calling the award “a profound honor” in recognition of his lifelong pursuit of cinema.

Iran signals readiness to join China's Heilongjiang green drive

Social Desk

Iran pledged to take part in China's newly launched “Heilongjiang Initiative”, a UNESCO-backed scheme on biodiversity and sustainable growth, during a global biosphere congress in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou. The pledge was delivered on the sidelines of the 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves, where Hamid Zohrabi, deputy head of natural environment and biodiversity at Iran's Department of Environment (DoE), described the initiative as a turning point

in linking ecological protection with “sustainable economic development”, IRNA reported. The plan, launched this year in partnership with UNESCO's Beijing office, focuses on biodiversity conservation, eco-friendly production and environmental education. Zohrabi said biosphere reserves are increasingly viewed as models for “nature-based solutions, inclusive livelihoods and resilient markets” as countries accelerate their green transition. He underlined that the Heilongjiang plan highlights the

transfer of ecological values through unique reserves as a strategic tool. Shina Ansari, vice president and head of Iran's Department of Environment, headed the delegation attending the Hangzhou congress, which runs from September 22 to 26. The once-a-decade meeting seeks to streamline priorities and redefine collective action on sustainability, aligning its agenda with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris climate accord. The gathering is also tied to

the so-called “Hangzhou Action Plan”, first presented at the UN Climate Conference in 2023, which calls for immediate and joint steps to counter climate change. It urges states to adopt tougher emission curbs, boost community resilience, and secure more funding for green technologies and renewable energy. By rallying governments behind shared frameworks, organizers hope the Hangzhou plan will forge cross-border coalitions to deliver on Paris Agreement targets and other environmental accords.

