

Oil minister: Exports hit record high; output up 120K bpd despite sanctions

3 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 7947 • Thursday, October 09, 2025 • Mehr 17, 1404 • Rabi' al-Thani 16, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Tehran summons European envoys over 'interventionist' GCC-EU statement

2 >

Iran's sovereignty over Persian Gulf isles 'self-evident', requires no proof



By Mansour Shokrollahi
Legal Expert

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) recently revived its old claims over Iran's three Persian Gulf islands, alleging once again that Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa belong to the United Arab Emirates.

However, such allegations are purely political and lack any legal foundation. The European Union's alignment with these baseless claims is equally unacceptable and amounts to interference in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Under the principles and norms of international law, no country or organization has the right to meddle in the domestic jurisdiction of an independent state.

Historical documents dating back centuries clearly show that the three islands have always been part of Iran, with no other country exercising sovereignty over them. In fact, at a time when many of contemporary Persian Gulf states had yet to come into political existence — and long before global powers such as the United States had even emerged — the islands were under Iranian rule.

It is therefore inconceivable that a country established only decades ago could now lay claim to territories that have been under Iran's sovereignty for centuries.

Furthermore, all international legal records and documents affirm Iran's ownership of the islands. Still, some believe that by floating such unfounded allegations and relying on European backing, they can push through their false claims. But that is far from reality. Iran's sovereignty over these islands is so self-evident that it hardly requires proof.

They may have concluded, given the current regional and international circumstances, that this is a convenient moment to bring up their old claims, counting on Western support. Yet, they must understand that Iran will stand firm and vigorously defend its legitimate rights. When it comes to issues of territorial integrity, Iran does not take things lightly.

Moreover, the nation's resolve and authority in defending its territorial integrity go far beyond its military might. The Iranian people, themselves, are the true bulwark against any external overreach. United and steadfast, they are fully capable of shutting down any hostile rhetoric with a firm and decisive response if necessary.

Page 3 >

Iran Navy, Caspian littoral states sign strategic cooperation document

2 >



Navy commanders of Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan sign a strategic cooperation document in St. Petersburg, Russia, on October 8, 2025.

IRNA

Experts: E3 applies double standard to Iran's nuclear program

SEMINAR

4 >



Araghchi to Trump: Doubling down on failed policies not to resolve issues

2 >



Nasir al-Mulk Mosque; a masterpiece of light, legacy in Shiraz

7 >



Iran, Iraq ink tourism deal to channel 10m visitors per year

8 >

Tehran summons European envoys over 'interventionist' GCC-EU statement

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned envoys from European Union member states to protest the bloc's "interventionist" statements on the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf as well as the country's nuclear program. Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi criticized a joint communique issued by the bloc and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and conveyed Tehran's "strong protest" over the EU's support for the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) "baseless claim" to the islands. Foreign ministers of the GCC and the EU in a joint statement on Monday repeated the UAE's claims over the three Iranian islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf, expressing concern over the lack of progress about resolving the dispute between the UAE and Iran. They also stressed the importance of

what they called ensuring the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program, and ceasing of proliferation of ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles and any technologies that they claimed threaten the security of the region and beyond. European support for "baseless" remarks violates the principle of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, Takht-Ravanchi said, calling the statement politically-charged and biased. Meanwhile, the commander-in-chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) warned any miscalculations by enemies in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, or on the Iranian islands, will be met with a harsh and regret-inducing response.

Iran's missile program

Takht-Ravanchi also vehemently denounced allegations aimed at tarnishing Iran's missile program, calling

them "clear interference" in the Islamic Republic's internal affairs. He rejected any false claims concerning the program as "exaggerated narratives," and stressed that Iran's indigenous defensive capacities, including its missile power, were part of its inherent right to self-defense and a guarantor of regional stability and security. Elsewhere in his remarks, the senior diplomat strongly criticized the European envoys over the statement's similarly false claims about Iran's nuclear program. "Instead of repeating baseless and stereotypical accusations regarding Iran's nuclear program, the European parties should be held accountable for their own destructive conduct" that sabotaged a 2015 nuclear deal between the Islamic Republic and others, he stated. The official was referring to the move that saw the European trio of the UK, France, and Germany, which are part of the deal, suspend their trade with



Iran after the United States unilaterally and illegally left the agreement

in 2018 and returned its sanctions against Tehran.

Iran Navy, Caspian littoral states sign strategic cooperation document



International Desk

The naval commanders of the Caspian Sea littoral states signed a strategic cooperation pact aimed at bolstering security in the planet's largest inland sea and its largest lake. The agreement was signed between Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan on Wednesday during a meeting of the four Caspian littoral states in the Russian city of St. Petersburg. Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, chief commander of the Iranian Navy, represented Tehran at the summit and signed the document on behalf of the country.

The agreement aims to strengthen comprehensive cooperation among the Caspian littoral states, particularly in ensuring sustainable security in the shared waters. According to the provisions of the document, no foreign country or extra-regional power will be allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the Caspian Sea. "This sea belongs to five littoral countries, and accordingly, ensuring security and issues related to the Caspian Sea can only be done by the decision of the littoral states," the navy commanders stated. Admiral Irani, who arrived in St. Pe-

tersburg on Sunday evening, delivered a speech on Tuesday at a meeting of naval commanders of the Caspian littoral countries, where he noted that the Caspian Sea "is not a place where there is room for maneuvering by extra-regional powers."

The Iranian commander said all the Caspian Sea states share the objective of maintaining regional maritime security. The Iranian commander also added that the Caspian Sea states will stage a joint naval exercise in the near future. The sea, vital for its \$3 trillion energy reserves, remains a strategic hub as Iran and Russia expand military partnership. In July, the naval forces of Iran and Russia staged a major three-day joint search-and-rescue drill in the Caspian Sea. The CASAREX 2025 was held under the banner "Together for a Safe and Secure Caspian Sea."

'Baseless hype': Pezeshkian raps US-Europe claims on Iran's nuclear program

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian underscored the Islamic Republic's all-time resolve to pursue peace and security in the West Asia region, saying Tehran has never sought nuclear weapons based on its fundamental policies and principles. Pezeshkian made the statement on Tuesday evening as he received the credentials of the new Swiss ambassador to the Islamic Republic, Olivier Bangerter, whose country also represents US interests in Iran. Acknowledging Switzerland's historical role as a communication channel between Tehran and Washington since the 1979 victory of the Islamic Revolution, Pezeshkian urged Bangerter to convey the fact to American officials that Iran has never sought nuclear weapons, and has adhered instead to the country's entrenched precepts and tenets. "The Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought regional stability, peace, and security, and the propaganda and baseless hype against Iran's peaceful nuclear program by the US and some European countries lack any real basis," the president said. "You need to try to convey this fact to American officials that the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its fundamental principles and policies, has never been and is not seeking nuclear weapons." Pezeshkian expressed gratitude for Switzerland's cooperation, not least in the pharmaceutical and food sectors, amidst the challenges posed by unjust sanctions of the United States and certain European countries. The Iranian president also censured the Israeli regime's actions against Palestinians in the



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) reviews the credentials of the new Swiss ambassador to Tehran, Olivier Bangerter, on October 7, 2025.

besieged Gaza Strip, stressing that the occupying entity is the primary cause of regional instability. "The regime's behavior is the main cause of instability in the region. Its attacks on regional countries and unprecedented crimes against Palestinians are neither humane nor legal, and are incompatible with any religion or belief," Pezeshkian said. Bangerter, for his part, voiced his delight over the commencement of his mission in Iran and outlined his key objectives, which he said include enhancing bilateral relations and fortifying Switzerland's role as a reliable communication channel between Tehran and Washington. "I will spare no effort in achieving these goals, and at the same time, I will strive to show [to the world] the culture, history, and hospitality of the Iranian nation in the best possible way."

Araghchi to Trump: Doubling down on failed policies not to resolve issues



Abbas Araghchi
IRNA

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated that Iran's nuclear issue could only be resolved through a negotiated solution, warning the United States against repeating past miscalculations about the Islamic Republic. In a post on his x account on Tuesday, Araghchi revealed new details about the near success of previous nuclear negotiations with Washington, noting that Tehran and US envoy Steve Witkoff had been on the verge of a "new and historic" agreement before political interference and misinformation derailed the process.

"Upon embarking for a 5th round of talks with Steve Witkoff on May 23, I wrote: 'Zero nuclear weapons = we DO have a deal. Zero enrichment = we do NOT have a deal,'" Araghchi wrote. "If POTUS was to glance at the minutes of those talks — recorded by our interlocutor — he would see just how close we were to celebrating a new and historic Iran nuclear deal," he said. In his remarks, the Iranian foreign minister pointed to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 on the pretext of the Arab country's development of weapons of mass destruction. "POTUS should also recall that there was never any 'intelligence' that Iraq was hiding WMDs. There were only unfathomable destruction, thousands of dead American soldiers, and 7 trillion American taxpayer dollars down the drain," Araghchi said. Araghchi compared the current approach to that period, noting, "Likewise, there is no 'intelligence' showing that Iran was a month away from developing nuclear weapons had Israel not deceived the US into attacking the Iranian people."

He said the Israeli regime, after the failure of that operation, "is now trying to fabricate an imaginary threat out of Iran's defensive capabilities," while "Americans are tired of fighting Israel's endless wars." Underscoring Iran's resilience, Araghchi said, "Iran is a great nation, the heir to a great ancient civilization. Buildings and machinery may be destroyed, but our willpower will never be shaken. Insisting on such miscalculations will solve nothing. There is no solution other than reaching a negotiated one." On June 13, Israel launched an unprovoked aggression against Iran, triggering a 12-day war that killed at least 1,064 people in the country, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. The United States also entered the war by bombing three peaceful Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of international law. In response, the Iranian Armed Forces targeted strategic sites across the occupied territories as well as the Al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest American military base in West Asia.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



Oil minister: Exports hit record high; output up 120K bpd despite sanctions



Economy Desk

Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said the Islamic Republic has significantly increased its oil production despite US sanctions, adding that daily crude output has risen by more

than 120,000 barrels. Paknejad said on Tuesday that the country's oil production had increased by 120,000 barrels per day in the year to September. "Despite the restrictions and sanctions, new records have

been set for exports and production of crude oil," Paknejad told the state TV. The government does not release precise figures on oil production or exports, saying the data must remain confidential due to sanctions imposed on

the country. However, data by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) shows that Iran produced around 3.3 million bpd of oil in the June quarter. That comes as data from the UK Energy Institute, cited in a report by Bloomberg in early July, showed that Iran had produced about 4.3 million bpd of crude plus another 725,000 bpd of other liquids in 2024.

Recent estimates suggest that Iran's oil production has returned to levels seen in June after a fall experienced in early summer because of a 12-day war of aggression fought with the Israeli regime and repair programs carried out on offshore production sites in the Persian Gulf.

Figures by major international tanker tracking services have also pointed to a steady increase in Iran's oil exports in the past months.

The Tanker Trackers said in a post on its X account on Monday that Iran's oil exports had reached a seven-year record of nearly two million bpd in Sep-

tember.

The development comes as the US has announced dozens of new sanction packages targeting Iran's oil industry, including hundreds of bans on individuals and entities, since February, when Washington ramped up its so-called campaign of maximum pressure on the country. Meanwhile, Mehr news agency quoted the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) as saying in a report that it has lost access to data on Iran's petroleum products this year, and that its latest estimates of Iran's export revenues now include only crude oil and condensates. The change has resulted in lower figures compared with the agency's 2024 report, which had also factored in revenues from gas liquids and other derivatives, the EIA said.

EIA reckons Iran oil revenues at \$43b

The EIA estimated that Iran's crude oil and condensate export revenues rose to \$43 billion in 2024.

According to the published

data, Iran's crude oil and condensate export revenues have fluctuated over the past several years: from \$51 billion in 2018, falling to \$11 billion in 2019 and \$5 billion in 2020, then rising to \$19 billion in 2021. Revenues jumped to \$38 billion in 2022, increased to \$42 billion in 2023, and reached \$43 billion in 2024.

Oil and condensate revenues remain a key source of foreign currency for Iran, and any changes in international statistical data can influence market analyses.

In recent years, due to US sanctions and a lack of transparency in export data, estimates from agencies such as the EIA and Energy Intelligence have become increasingly important.

The removal of petroleum product data from the EIA's calculations means the focus is now solely on crude oil and condensates, which may present a narrower picture of Iran's total energy revenues and highlights the need for supplementary data sources in economic analysis, Mehr wrote.

IRISL: Chabahar Port upgrade to continue regardless of foreign investor exit



Economy Desk

Head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Company (IRISL), Mohammad Reza Modarres-Khiabani, said on Wednesday that the departure of foreign investors from Chabahar Port in southeast Iran would not harm the port, and the company is ready to accelerate its development. Modarres-Khiabani made the remarks nearly a month after the United States revoked the sanctions waiver for Iran's Chabahar Port, threatening India's multi-million-dollar investment in the strategic project.

The White House announced on September 18 that the exemption, in place since 2018, will end on September 29.

"With the completion of the Zahedan-Chabahar railway, the North-South corridor will enter a new phase, and the IRISL is fully prepared to expand cargo transport along this route," Modarres-Khiabani said.

"Therefore, we have long maintained that the exit of foreign investors from Chabahar Port will not affect the port, and the shipping company is ready to speed up its development," he added.

In the first year of the shipping group's presence at Chabahar Port, he said, container operations grew from zero to 6,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). By 2024, the figure had jumped to 88,000 TEUs, and the company expects it to reach 130,000 TEUs by the end of the

current year.

"This would elevate Chabahar from the smallest port in southern Iran to the second-largest after Bandar Abbas," he added.

Leveraging domestic capacity

Modarres-Khiabani said 80% of the fleet's current needs are met using domestic production, injecting around \$300 million annually into the local market. More than 90% of the low-sulfur fuel required for vessels is supplied domestically. At Chabahar, where refueling had been limited, the use of local fuel and refueling vessels has largely addressed the issue. He emphasized that supplying the national economy remains a strategic priority for the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Company.

Ranked 17th among global container shipping companies

The CEO added that IRISL currently ranks 17th among the world's largest container shipping firms and has remained among the top 20 for about a decade. The active fleet comprises 144 vessels with a combined capacity of five million tons deadweight (DWT), including 160 TEU container capacity. The company also owns 324,000 TEUs of containers to support export and import services for domestic traders and manufacturers, alongside approximately 1,600 freight wagons in operation.

NIOC to pursue legal action over UK property seizure

Economy Desk

Iran's National Oil Company (NIOC) said in a statement on Wednesday that it is vigorously pursuing legal avenues, both domestic and international, to overturn a UK court ruling that upheld the seizure of a property owned by the Oil Industry Pension, Savings, and Welfare Funds in London.

The NIOC said Crescent's legal actions to claim ownership of the building began in 2022, following years of efforts and negotiations to resolve contractual disputes.

"These actions led to a ruling by a lower UK court on April 15, 2024. Unfortunately, despite the defense and follow-ups by NIOC's legal teams and relevant authorities, the appellate court—through what NIOC describes as an unfair and biased judgment—upheld the decision, preventing the release of the seized property," the statement said.

"Accordingly, the National Iranian Oil Company reaffirms its commitment to continue pursuing all available legal options, including appeal and cassation, in full coordination with relevant bodies such as the Presidential Center for International Legal Affairs, to overturn the ruling and protect the assets and property of the esteemed employees of Iran's oil industry."

The London appeals court ordered NIOC on Monday to surrender its



landmark headquarters to satisfy a \$2.4 billion claim by UAE-based Crescent Petroleum.

NIOC House, in central London, was managing oil contracts and sales.

The ruling was issued following a lawsuit filed by Crescent Company, which claimed that the National Iranian Oil Company transferred the property known as "NIOC House" in London to the Oil Industry Employees Pension and Welfare Fund in order to remove its assets from the reach of creditors after an international arbitration award was issued in the company's favor.

On Tuesday, IRNA quoted an unnamed source as saying that Iran formally registered its objection to a UK court ruling on October 3. The court was expected to rule on whether to

accept or reject this objection in the coming days.

The source further said that if the objection was denied and the previous ruling stood, Iranian legal representatives are prepared to appeal the case to the UK Supreme Court.

The Court of Appeal recently upheld a prior decision from the London Court of First Instance, granting authorization to enforce the seizure order for the NIOC's London building.

The Crescent case dates back to the 2001 gas contract between the National Iranian Oil Company and the Crescent Group, which was not implemented, and the dispute between the parties was referred to international arbitration, and ultimately a verdict was issued in favor of the Emirati company.

Iran's sovereignty over ...

Iran's Parliament and other lawmakers have already issued a strong statement during a session, rejecting such baseless allegations, and the government, too, will surely take the appropriate action in due course.

Of course, such claims are nothing new. Over the past four decades, they have been repeatedly raised, and their motive is obvious: the three islands occupy an exceptionally strategic position, making them a coveted

prize for those with expansionist ambitions.

Still, they should know that such claims will get them nowhere and will only undermine their own credibility.

The Iranian government is currently pursuing development projects on the three islands, aiming to create conditions conducive to permanent settlement. Last year, it allocated funds for the construction of residential areas and approved incentives to encourage citizens to move there.

The government would be well advised to speed up these efforts, as expanding residential zones will undoubtedly help silence baseless rhetoric and further consolidate Iran's sovereignty over the islands.

Iranian presence on the islands dates back generations, but with better infrastructure, regular air routes, and improved connectivity to the mainland, the islands are poised for growth, prosperity, and greater appeal to citizens eager to make them their home.

Experts: E3 applies double standard to Iran's nuclear program

SEMINAR A seminar titled "Nuclear Rights in Peacetime, War, and Post-War" was held on October 5 at the University of Tehran's Faculty of World Studies. The event featured professors of international relations and law and a senior diplomat from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During this seminar, these experts on international affairs weighed in on the implications of the implementation of the JCPOA's snapback mechanism and spelled out the options on the table for Iran. A translated summary of their remarks follows below:

Another deal with IAEA on inspection inevitable under NPT



By Hamid Baeidinejad
Former Iranian
ambassador to London

Islamic Republic of Iran officials, namely Foreign Minister Araghchi and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Larijani, clearly pointed out from the very beginning that the Cairo agreement was an attempt to allow us to live up to our commitments within the IAEA framework. Given the facts on the ground, we could not shut our eyes to the issue of military attack. Iran proceeded with the assumption that this could be a procedure to help delay and, in effect, prevent the implementation of the snapback and thus sought to secure this agreement with the IAEA.

But now that they have brought back the UN Security Council resolutions, I believe we are faced with two issues. Firstly, if Iran does not withdraw from the NPT — and it seems there is an appetite for that domestically — then according to

Article 3 of the NPT, it ultimately has commitments regarding its agreement with the IAEA and access to its nuclear facilities.

In the current unprecedented situation, we might be able to make the IAEA demonstrate good faith and work on adapting its procedures to the new reality. This is an expectation we certainly have of the Agency; It must carry out this action and cannot tell us that everything remains as it was.

Today, the IAEA cannot tell us that all the commitments written on paper must be implemented exactly as before. It is a fact that we cannot overlook that a military aggression has taken place and they have attacked our primary facilities. We cannot give the same level of access and have the same information exchange with the IAEA as before. Naturally, these matters must be revisited and looked at in light of Iran's political and security developments, so that an agreement suited to these conditions can be hammered out.



The air strikes by Israel and the US, which have nuclear weapons, against the nuclear facilities of an NPT member with a peaceful program and no nuclear weapons have eroded global trust in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and international law.

● nuclearwatch.net

Securitization of Iran's nuclear case reduces its global activism



By Sasan Karimi
Adjunct Professor at
University of Tehran

The narrative that says, "Might is right" is certainly the most accurate, but it comes with a caveat: This might is not solely military might. It has many dimensions, including media might, military might, narrative-building might, legal might, and economic might; All of these constitute might. Even the most powerful military entities, incidentally, pour the most effort into the semiotic and spiritual dimensions to increase their might and deploy relevant tactics. If it were unnecessary, they certainly would not shell out so much, and certainly, so many think tanks and pseudo-think tanks would not spring up in the US, think tanks that have traditionally been sponsored by Jewish groups and to which Arab sponsors have recently been added on. Therefore, we must push ahead with the various dimensions of might simultaneously. The might we deem decisive is not necessarily limited to material, military, economic, or population might, etc.; They must all be seen as a whole, and choosing between them is not the point.

Approximately three percent of the world's primary nuclear activity facilities are located in Iran. Yet, over 20 percent of international nuclear industry inspections worldwide have focused on Iran — about seven times the global average. The crucial point is that this volume of inspections was not

limited to one year or a specific period; Rather, for the past 21 to 22 years, Iran has been subjected to continuous, and even increasingly heavy, inspections. Despite this, no significant finding or serious violation has ever been reported by the inspectors. At most, issues of a "nuclear material accounting" nature have been raised — such as materials remaining in parts of equipment or pipes, which have sometimes led to nitpicking. Obviously, if a significant issue had existed, it certainly would not have been swept under the rug by international bodies. Meanwhile, the securitization of nuclear rights itself creates limitations within the innermost scientific layers of the country, let alone the outer and

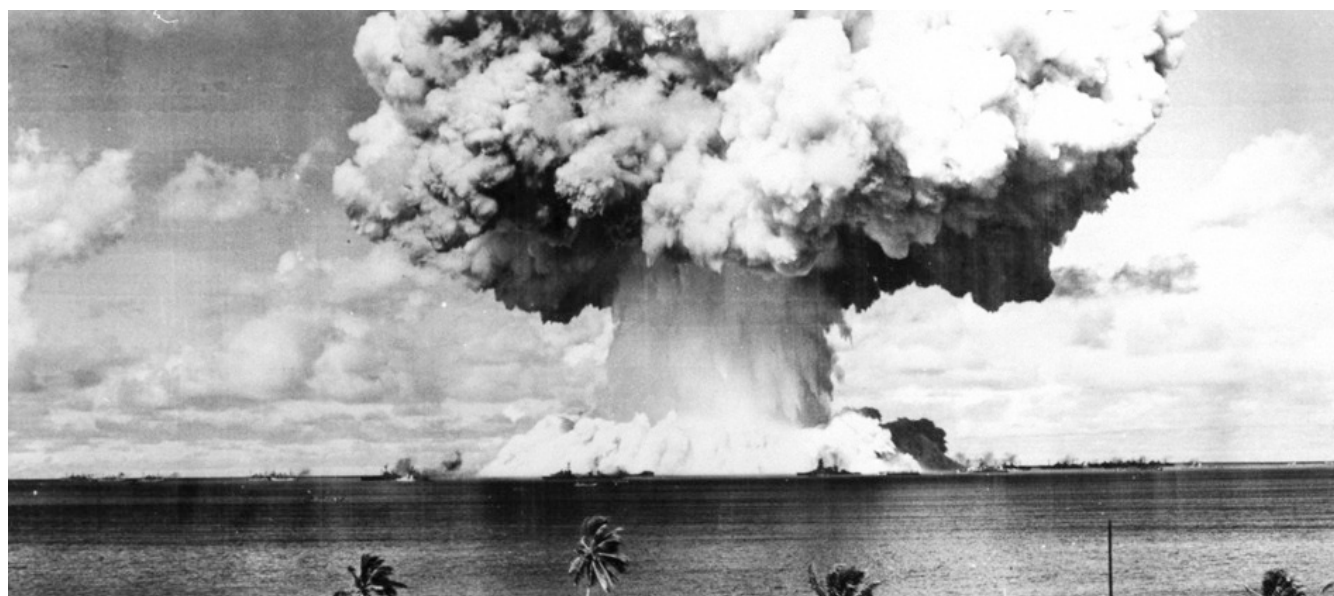
external layers, including the commercial sectors that would otherwise be carrying on trade and economic exchange without such limitations. Many universities, faculties, professors, students, and researchers voluntarily steer clear of this field, and the reason is precisely this securitization. For optimizing activism, narrative-building, spotlighting, norm-setting, and enhancing multilateral activities at the international and global level, this state of securitization acts somewhat paradoxically. The more the country's environment becomes closed off, whether due to sanctions or internal restrictions, the level of activism goes down. This reduction in activism, in turn, leads to isolation

and the country's voice being less heard in the global arena. In other words, excessive securitization, apart from creating internal limitations, has a negative knock-on effect on Iran's capacity to exert influence and maintain an active presence on the international stage.

The three European countries (E3) did not have the legitimate right to bring back the six UN Security Council resolutions. A member or members of an international agreement cannot selectively pick and choose provisions of an agreement; That is, they cannot fail to live up to the parts that are binding for them, yet take advantage of the parts that seemingly benefit them or use the dispute resolution mechanism to effectively

punish the other side. This happened before in the dispute between Namibia and South Africa, and the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion shows that such selective use is not legitimate.

Engaging with global issues has one key point. Unlike governance within borders — and even that only in some cases — in the global environment, the equations resemble those of economy and society; If you don't play the game, the game goes on. It is a bitter truth that if you don't play, the game does not stop; you simply haven't played. We often think that by not playing, we can stop the game. The game of the economy goes on, but we are left out.



The photo shows the second atomic bomb test at Bikini Atoll on July 25, 1946. The Marshall Islands, where the atoll is located, sued the US in 2014 for what it called a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Besides the US, the Marshall Islands also sued NPT members Russia, China, France, and the UK, as well as four other entities that have never signed the NPT — India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel, which has never acknowledged possessing nuclear weapons.

● ANONYMOUS/AP



In Iran's nuclear case, an extensive effort was made to point to Iran's actions as a violation of the NPT, while many of those same countries accusing Iran are themselves violators of the NPT. One of the fundamental principles of the NPT is the gradual disarmament of nuclear-armed states and negotiations for the reduction of arsenals. But not only have such negotiations not panned out, but these countries have also produced new generations of nuclear weapons.

West proliferating nuclear weapons in violation of NPT



By Reza Nasri
International lawyer

One of the most important functions of international law is its narrative-building function. A narrative can be sustainable and disseminable on the global stage if it enjoys a degree of legitimacy. A narrative is not necessarily the same as reality; Sometimes it is inspired by reality, but if it is based on the foundations of international law or accepted principles, it can become stronger, more penetrating, and more enduring. A common perception exists that powerful countries because they possess material and military force, have no need to resort to international law. But in

reality, major powers also use this very tool for legitimization. Even if they act contrary to law in practice, at the narrative level, they strive to pass off their actions as “legal,” “legitimate,” or “in accordance with international principles.” Another function of international law is its role in de-legitimation and legitimation; Meaning we can use international law to pass off our own actions as conditional and legitimate, while simultaneously pointing to the actions of the opposing side as illegitimate. This is one of the important capacities of international law that can be put to use in the realms of politics and diplomacy. Furthermore, the role of media and propaganda is highly effective in strengthening or

weakening this legal capacity because the intellectual and media effort behind every narrative causes that narrative to gain traction internationally. In fact, up to now, and especially considering recent developments, it can be said that the performances and effective components in this domain have changed; Meaning the pre-war and post-war situations have truly become different. Even a power like the United States, when it intended to attack Iraq, tried to pass off that action as legal and legitimate. While no UN Security Council resolution was issued for attacking Iraq and countries like France opposed it, America and Britain, by drawing on legal tools, sought to construct a

legitimizing legal narrative for their action. At that time, they enlisted a prominent lawyer named Christopher Greenwood. He drafted a highly creative legal memo, arguing that there was no need for a new Security Council resolution; Rather, based on the same resolutions adopted during the first Persian Gulf War, the US and its coalition could again take military action against Iraq. This argument later became an official and media narrative to justify the US military action, ostensibly within the framework of international law. In the realm of de-legitimation, we have also come up against such narrative-building. In Iran's nuclear case, an extensive effort was made to

point to Iran's actions as a violation of the NPT, while many of those same countries accusing Iran are themselves violators of the NPT. One of the fundamental principles of the NPT is the gradual disarmament of nuclear-armed states and negotiations for the reduction of arsenals. But not only have such negotiations not panned out, but these countries have also produced new generations of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, on the international stage, we have failed to sufficiently point out the fact that the same countries that today call us violators of the JCPOA and Resolution 2231 are themselves not only violators of these documents, but also violators of the fundamental

principles of the NPT. It is very interesting that a few islands from Micronesia and several other small islands took this issue to the Hague court a few years ago and filed a complaint against several countries, countries against which it was permissible to file a complaint. They filed a very interesting complaint and put forward very interesting arguments as to why these countries themselves are NPT violators. We should have played up this issue much more. Even if the government couldn't do it, we could have carried it out; Meaning civil society, the media, intellectuals, and academics could have taken this on.

The full article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.

Why Europe's snapback gamble against Iran will backfire



By Sina Toossi
Expert on international affairs

OPINION

Last weekend, Britain, France, and Germany — a group known as the E3 — triggered the “snapback” of UN sanctions on Iran. Presented as a defense of the nonproliferation order, the move in fact undermines it. It will do little to shift Tehran's calculus while hastening the breakdown of the very non-proliferation regime and rules-based system that the United States and its allies built in the aftermath of World War II. Snapback's immediate effect is to shrink the possibility of successful diplomacy and fuel escalation. The consequences are already visible. The snapback tool itself was written into the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as a compromise to reassure skeptics in Congress and beyond. Enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution 2231, it allowed any participant to restore pre-2015 UN sanctions on Iran without the possibility of veto. In other words, it inverted the Council's usual logic: Instead of requiring unanimity to punish, snapback ensured punishment unless unanimity formed to block it. With the snapback of UN sanctions now in place, the path to diplomacy has narrowed. Because of what it sees as the success of Israeli and US attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities, Israel's far-right cabinet feels emboldened. The prospect of another war with Iran looms larger. In Tehran, calls to sever cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — or even to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — are gaining ground. Economically, the impact of the snapback has so far been more psychological than material: The value of the rial slid on the news, with the dollar surging past 1.1 million rials — roughly an exchange rate 20,000 higher than the previous day. And behind the headlines, snapback adds little real bite to efforts aimed at bringing the Iranian program once again under international inspection. The true squeeze on Iran has long come not from UN measures but from sweeping US second-



● SHUTTERSTOCK

ary sanctions. Reimposed after Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal in 2018, they have walled Iran off from the global financial system and remain the main source of pressure today. The E3 justify their move by pointing to Iran's breaches of the JCPOA. But this omits an essential fact: Washington broke the deal first, when President Donald Trump abandoned it in 2018. Despite promising otherwise, Europe ultimately followed Washington's lead, de facto complying with the US sanctions reinstated in 2018. For more than a year after Trump's exit, Iran fully complied with the terms of the JCPOA. Only after waiting in vain for economic relief did Tehran begin to reduce its commitments, explicitly citing the deal's own dispute mechanism for doing so. Blaming Iran for the JCPOA's collapse is pure revisionism. The responsibility lies with Washington and Europe's failure to uphold its commitments. What sanctions? The measures to which Europeans have agreed to “snap back” were imposed from 2006 to 2010; They entailed asset freezes, arms restrictions, and prohibitions on nuclear and missile-related trade. These were always narrow, aimed at proliferation — not designed to sever Iran from global markets. The real economic devastation only came later, with US and EU oil and banking sanctions in 2011 and 2012, and even more so after Trump reimposed “maximum pressure” in 2018. By comparison, snapback today adds little

to the sweeping US sanctions already in force. The E3's timing is especially reckless. In June, Israel and the United States bombed several safeguarded Iranian nuclear facilities — an unprecedented act in the history of the NPT. Legal experts widely view attacking an NPT member's declared nuclear sites under IAEA inspection as a violation of international law. Unsurprisingly, this has severely complicated Iran's cooperation with inspectors. Rubble cannot be inspected, especially if, as President Trump claimed, the sites were “obliterated.” Yet even in this fraught context, Iran and the IAEA reached a new framework for cooperation, with IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi calling it “a step in the right direction.” As part of this IAEA-Iran agreement, Tehran has reportedly proposed a step-by-step plan to restore

trust and transparency. Central to the proposal was the dilution of its stockpile of 60-percent enriched uranium down to 20 percent — a significant non-proliferation step that would bring enrichment levels closer to civilian use and ensure the material is no longer weapon usable. In parallel, the snapback deadline was to have been extended, with a pathway toward its eventual termination, as the JCPOA originally envisioned. Even French President Emmanuel Macron called the plan “reasonable,” while noting that the E3 still intended to pursue snapback. Snapback slammed the door on that opening. Tehran is now set to counter-escalate. The Iranian parliament advanced a plan for Iran to withdraw from the NPT outright. “The activation of the snapback mechanism by Eu-

ropean countries caused this plan to be pursued with greater seriousness,” senior lawmaker Hossein Ali Haji Deligani said. At the same time, Tehran announced it will suspend the newly signed, Egypt-mediated agreement with the IAEA on implementing its safeguards obligations, effectively ending cooperation with inspectors. While Pezeshkian insists Iran will not formally leave the NPT, the suspension of oversight amounts to the same in practice. In this context, snapback does not constrain Iran's nuclear program; It accelerates the collapse of international monitoring. The irony is striking: Instead of building on the recent Iran-IAEA framework that could have restored some transparency, snapback undercuts it. After the June strikes, inspectors already lost access, and the fragile Cairo-brokered plan to reestablish cooperation has now unraveled. The result is a landscape of dangerous unknowns: How many advanced centrifuges survive, how much enriched uranium remains or has been moved, and what facilities are still intact. Airstrikes cannot resolve this uncertainty, as true verification would require an Iraq-style invasion and occupation. By closing off diplomacy and edging the region toward war, snapback ensures Iran's nuclear program will only grow more secretive, hardened, and dispersed. Moreover, the stakes extend beyond Iran. Russia and China have rejected the E3's snapback move outright. In a joint letter with Iran, formally circulated at

the UN, they declared that any steps under snapback “cannot create legal obligations” for member states. They cited a principle recognized by the International Court of Justice in a 1971 advisory opinion: A party that violates a treaty cannot legally invoke its provisions. In effect, the two veto-wielding powers on the UN Security Council declared that they will not implement snapback. This means not only will they refuse to abide by the reimposed sanctions, but even the Security Council's committees tasked with enforcement will likely grind to a halt. In Iran, the parliament's Research Center reached a similar conclusion on the effectiveness of the snapback from an economic angle. The restored UN measures are narrow, non-proliferation-oriented, and face steep execution hurdles; They cannot match the breadth and bite of US risk-based secondary sanctions that already constrain oil, banking, shipping, and finance. Snapback may deliver short-lived market jitters, but little sustained economic squeeze. And perhaps most significantly, many Iranians are reaching a bitter conclusion: Whether Iran is inside or outside the NPT, whether it cooperates with inspectors or not, the United States and Israel may attack again. The lesson in Iran is that international law and institutions no longer matter, so Tehran must act on its own national interests. European and US officials have said that diplomacy remains an option. But actions matter more than messages. If the priority is to prevent conflict and preserve the nonproliferation regime, more coercion will backfire. The alternative is credible, reciprocal diplomacy: lock in verifiable nuclear steps (beginning with down-blending and transparency), sequence limited sanctions relief, and rebuild a pathway back to comprehensive constraints. Largely symbolic measures only harden positions, embolden spoilers, and erode the Security Council's authority. Snapback was a choice, not an inevitability. It was also a mistake.

The full article first appeared on the Bulletin.



China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi (C) welcomes Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov (R) and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Kazeem Gharibabadi before a meeting regarding the Iranian nuclear issue in Beijing, China, on March 14, 2025.

● POOL/AFP

Qassempour to continue in 86kg class in quest of Olympic glory



Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Kamran Qassempour has ended speculation about his competitive future, declaring his intention to remain in the 86kg class and take a shot at Olympic glory in three years.

In his first major event in the new weight division, the 28-year-old Iranian won a consolation bronze medal at the World Championships in Zagreb last month.

Qassempour claimed comfortable wins in his first two bouts in the Croatian capital and then came out victorious (5-4) against Russian Ibragim Kadiev in a thrilling quarterfinal.

Qassempour suffered a comprehensive 7-0 defeat against American Zahid Valencia in the semifinals, but bounced back and made quick work of Indian Mukul Dahiya (10-0) to collect his third world medal in four years. Despite Qassempour falling short of a third world gold medal, Iran head coach Pejman Dorostkar still praised him for "making a sacrifice to compete", revealing the wrestler had been

"infected with suspected Brucellosis two weeks before the World Championships."

On his illness before the Wrestling Worlds, Qassempour said, "Thank God, the tests showed that I did not have Brucellosis. I had an infection, and had to be visited by a doctor, who prescribed antibiotics, on several occasions. I have another week or two to finish the treatment. I'm feeling much better now, and God willing, this infection will completely leave my body soon." Still, a significant portion of wrestling fans and pundits in the country believe Qassempour's recent dip in form was down to the Iranian Wrestling Federation forcing him to switch weight class multiple times over the past three years.

Once the dominant force of the 92kg class with successive world titles in 2021 and 2022, Qassempour moved to the 97kg division in a bid to secure a place at the Paris Olympics. He returned to his favorite 92kg territory for last year's World Championships but missed the podium after back-to-back defeats to wrestling greats Abdulrashid Sadulaev and David Taylor.

He was then moved to the 86kg category for this year's World Championships after Iranian sensation Hassan Yazdani was ruled out of action with a shoulder injury.

"To be honest, I thought it would

be really difficult [to switch division] at first, because it had been so long since I'd had to cut weight. But when I joined the training camp and my weight condition became clear, it wasn't hard at all, and I made weight very easily. The fear of cutting weight left me – It was nothing like I had imagined," Qassempour said of the challenge to wrestle in the 86kg class.

Qassempour still considers all that he has been through as a blessing in disguise.

"Now that I look back on what happened, I'm happy I moved to the 86kg class. Of course, changing weight divisions has its own difficulties because the conditions in each class are different.

"However, it allowed me to wrestle my direct rivals in an Olympic weight class. Next time, I'll be much better prepared and know all about what it takes to wrestle them, especially the American opponent," added the Iranian. When asked about his decision regarding his weight in the future, Qassempour confirmed he will remain in the 86kg division "all the way to the Olympics."

"People may say whatever they want about me being forced to move to this weight class, but all I know is that it has definitely been to my advantage. I have now done what I wanted to do a year before the Olympics and that is to get to know my rivals better."



Iran's freestyle 86kg wrestler Kamran Qassempour (red) executes a takedown during a victory over Mongolia's Naadambatyn Batbilgüün at the UWW World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 13, 2025.

● IAWFIR

IWF World Championships: Salimi laments lack of experience as Iran's Salehipour finishes empty-handed

Sports Desk

Head coach Behdad Salimi said young Iranian weightlifters "need to compete in more international events to mature" after Iliya Salehipour finished without a medal at the IWF World Championships in Forde, Norway.

Competing in Tuesday's 88kg contest, Salehipour failed with the 157kg lift on his first attempt but succeeded with his second try, and then posted a 163kg effort to finish fourth in the snatch event. Salehipour went on to open the clean & jerk with a successful 193kg lift. However, this proved to be his

only successful effort, as he subsequently failed two attempts at 202kg to stand sixth in the category.

An overall tally of 356kg saw the 19-year-old Iranian settle for a sixth-place finish in the total standings. Colombian Yeison López stole the show with double golds and a C&J silver.

North Korea's Ro Kwang-ryol collected the clean & jerk gold and total silver, with Chile's Arley Méndez finishing runner-up in snatch, while Moldova's Marin Robu bagged triple bronze medals. "As you saw, Iliya really had a chance to win a C&J medal. Our strategy was for him to find his way into the table

with his first lift, and then we would look at a medal," Salimi said of Salehipour's campaign.

"It was a strange competition today as many lifts were missed. There were far more red lights than expected, and we were also caught off guard," added the former world and Olympic champion.

"South Korean lifters failed with their 201kg attempts in quick succession, which is why we lost 5-6 minutes of our planned rest. Had the circumstances been smoother, Iliya would have lifted 202kg with more confidence. "This was Salehipour's first time competing at the Se-

nior World Championships. These young athletes need to gain experience so that they can mature and win medals for the country over the next seven or eight years.

"Iliya lacks some self-belief. I've told him many times that he has the ability to win a medal, but he didn't fully believe it himself until today. I hope this competition becomes a major learning experience for him."

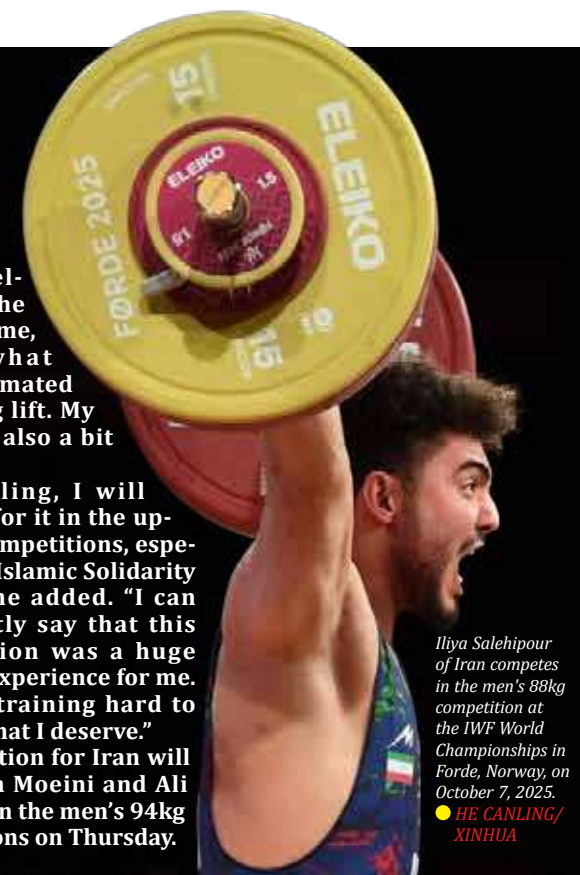
Unlike his coach, Salehipour thought a bit of over-confidence cost him a medal in Forde.

"I could have won a C&J medal, but with the long wait between my attempts and the favorable situation

that developed on the board for me, I somewhat underestimated the 202kg lift. My body was also a bit fatigued.

"God willing, I will make up for it in the upcoming competitions, especially the Islamic Solidarity Games," he added. "I can confidently say that this competition was a huge learning experience for me. I'll keep training hard to achieve what I deserve."

Next in action for Iran will be Alireza Moeini and Ali A'alipour in the men's 94kg competitions on Thursday.



Iliya Salehipour of Iran competes in the men's 88kg competition at the IWF World Championships in Forde, Norway, on October 7, 2025.

● HE CANLING/XINHUA

Iran's Pordel wins historic silver at Asian Heyball Championships

Sports Desk

Iran's Mohammad-Ali Pordel claimed a maiden medal for the country at the Asian Heyball Championships, winning the men's silver in Amman, Jordan on Tuesday. Having beaten opponents from the host country, Iraq

and Mongolia, the Iranian suffered a 7-2 loss to India's Sundeep Gulati in the final showpiece.

Pordel began his campaign with back-to-back wins against the host players and then defeated Jordanian Reza Mohd bin Hassan (7-3) and an Iraqi player to

reach the quarterfinals.

A 7-3 win against Mongolia's Dorjjantsan Damdin-jamts was followed by a last-four triumph (7-2) over the host nation's Ahmed Aloqaili for the Iranian.

Heyball is the Chinese version of eight-ball which features rules that are essentially the same as standard WPA rules. However, the tables are constructed similarly to snooker tables, with rounded pocket openings, napped cloth and flat-faced rail cushions.



Iranian Mohammad-Ali Pordel (r) poses with his silver medal at the Asian Heyball Championships in Amman, Jordan, on October 7, 2025.

● IRNA

Yavari seals spot at ITTF World Youth Championships

Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis player Vania Yavari secured a quota for the upcoming

ITTF World Youth Championships, the international governing body of the sport.

Yavari will part of the un-

der-15 girls' singles draw at the world event – starting November 23 in Cluj Napoca, Romania – thanks to her 50th spot at the lat-

est World Youth Rankings, released on Tuesday.

The Iranian girl will compete fresh off an impressive run of results at the international events in recent months, including two runner-up trophy-winning campaigns at the WTT Youth Contender event in Cappadocia, Türkiye, in February.

The Iranian under-15 team and Benjamin Faraji had already punched their tickets for the competition. Faraji etched his name into history books of the Iranian sport by winning the U15 boys' singles bronze in last year's competition in Helsingborg, Sweden – the country's first-ever table tennis medal at an international tournament.



● IRTTF



Nasir al-Mulk Mosque; a masterpiece of light, legacy in Shiraz



● I Q E T T N L A T N E



● I Q E T T N L A T N E

Iranica Desk

Nasir al-Mulk Mosque was constructed between 1876 to 1887 CE (1293 to 1305 AH) under the order of Mirza Hasan Ali Khan Nasir al-Mulk, the governor of Fars during the Qajar period. Nasir al-Mulk, a member of the renowned Qavam family of Shiraz, was not only a just and benevolent ruler but also paid special attention to charitable endeavors, dedicating a portion of his wealth to the mosque's construction. The mosque derives its name from his title, reflecting his social standing and prestige at that time. The mosque's construction and decoration spanned approximately 11 years and were carried out by two eminent architects of the era, Haj Mohammad Hasan Memar and Mirza Reza Kashipaz. Registered as one of Iran's national heritage sites, this mosque attracts numerous visitors annually due to its unique and exquisite features, chn.ir wrote. Nasir al-Mulk Mosque stands as a remarkable example of Qajar-era architecture, showcasing an artistic fusion of tradition and innovation. The design of the building is such that each

section tells a story embedded in art, history, and spirituality. One of the mosque's most distinctive architectural features is the use of stained glass windows in the western prayer hall (Shabestan), creating a unique and magical interplay of light within the interior space. These stained-glass panels, featuring vibrant hues of yellow, blue, green, and red, cast a colorful and captivating display during the early morning hours when sunlight streams through, mesmerizing every visitor as a natural masterpiece. The western Shabestan, also known as the summer prayer hall, consists of twelve monolithic stone columns intricately decorated with spiral grooves, symbolizing the twelve Imams. The ceiling and walls of this section are adorned with seven-colored tilework that incorporates floral and botanical motifs alongside Holy Qur'anic verses inscribed in elegant Thuluth script, imparting a serene and spiritual atmosphere. Nasir al-Mulk Mosque is far more than just its renowned stained-glass prayer hall. The complex comprises various sections, each with its distinct beauty and purpose, offering visitors



● I Q E T T N L A T N E

a comprehensive experience of Iranian architectural heritage: **Western Shabestan (Summer Prayer Hall):** Featuring spiral columns and a marble mihrab, this hall is considered the mosque's chief attraction. **Eastern Shabestan (Winter Prayer Hall):** This section's ceiling is richly tiled and contains eight niches. It also houses the Endowments Museum, which presents valuable historical and cultural insights. **Taq-e Morvarid:** Located in the northern porch, this area is decorated with intricate muqarnas (stalactite vaulting) and vibrant

seven-colored tiles. Its name refers to the distinctive recessed shapes of its arches. **Southern porch:** Boasting a muqarnas-adorned ceiling and exquisite floral motifs, this porch differs subtly from the Pearl Vault yet rivals it in beauty. **Gav-Chah:** A historic structure once used to house animals that operated water-drawing systems for wells, this section reflects the daily life and traditional technologies of bygone eras. Undoubtedly, the mosque's greatest allure lies in its stained glass windows in the western prayer hall. Their unparalleled

beauty draws numerous visitors to Shiraz purely to witness and capture their captivating colors. When sunlight filters through the windows, it transforms into a radiant spectrum that reflects upon the Shabestan's carpeted floor. This enchanting interplay of color and light imbues the space with vitality and joy, making it one of the most sought-after locations for photography across Iran. Interestingly, the stained glass used in Nasir al-Mulk Mosque is historic itself; during restoration efforts, stained glass from other old houses was carefully repurposed. This approach has significantly contributed to preserving the mosque's authenticity and historical value. More than a historic monument, Nasir al-Mulk Mosque symbolizes the rich culture, art, and spirituality of Iran. It is revered as a religious site and stands as a testament to the meticulous craftsmanship, finesse, and artistic sensibility of the people of Shiraz during the Qajar period. The mosque was officially registered as a national heritage site in 1979, and since then, its upkeep and restoration have been managed with exceptional care and dedication. Remarkably, the

mosque's income continues to be allocated by Nasir al-Mulk's descendants to charitable causes, exemplifying the founder's enduring spirit of generosity and philanthropy. For visitors seeking a truly memorable experience of Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, early morning visits — particularly before 10 a.m. — are highly recommended. At this time, sunlight strikes the stained glass at an optimal angle, creating a magical display of light and color within the prayer hall that is impossible to forget. During the latter half of the year, the sunlight's angle becomes even more favorable and striking, producing particularly artistic and vibrant images of light and color that captivate professional photographers and tourists alike. As one of the most exquisite examples of Iranian architecture, Nasir al-Mulk Mosque in Shiraz offers a unparalleled blend of art, culture, and spirituality, transporting every visitor to a unique and beautiful realm. Its distinctive combination of colorful tilework, enchanting stained glass, and refined Qajar-era architectural details make it a prominent symbol both of Shiraz and of Iran's rich heritage.

Take relish in fishing, hiking, camping at Shurmast Lake

If you've visited the Sangdeh Beech Forest, a short trip to Shurmast Lake is highly recommended. Located near Sangdeh, Shurmast Lake is one of the most beautiful and serene natural attractions in Mazandaran Province, making it an ideal spot for camping and outdoor activities. Nestled in the Alborz Mountains, this stunning lake offers postcard-perfect views that captivate visitors, making it a perfect destination for nature lovers and adventure seekers alike. Surrounded by lush forests and majestic peaks, Shurmast Lake reflects the blue sky and towering mountains on its calm waters, creating a truly mesmerizing landscape. The tranquil atmosphere provides a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life. Thanks to its pristine air and abundant greenery, Shurmast Lake is one of Mazandaran Province's best destinations for relaxation and outdoor recreation. The lake is especially popular



● N I Q E T T N L A T N E

during summer and fall when the weather is ideal for exploring the natural surroundings. Visitors can enjoy a wide range of activities at Shurmast Lake: **Fishing:** The lake's clear waters are home to various local fish, making it a great spot for both novice and experienced anglers. Whether fishing from the shore

or a small boat, the peaceful environment and cool mountain breeze create a memorable experience. **Horseback riding:** Scenic trails around the lake offer horseback rides through forests and along the shoreline, giving riders an intimate connection with the region's natural beauty.



● O Q E T T N L A T N E

Cycling: Well-maintained trails around the lake provide stunning views, making cycling a popular activity for riders of all levels. The fresh air and picturesque landscape add to the adventure. **Camping:** For those who love camping, Shurmast Lake is an exceptional location. Set up your

tent by the lake or in nearby wooded areas, and enjoy a magical night under star-filled skies surrounded by nature's tranquility. **Hiking:** Numerous trails wind through dense forests and ascend mountain slopes, offering breathtaking views of the lake and surrounding scenery.

Hiking here is perfect for those looking to explore the landscape up close. Shurmast Lake offers a peaceful escape from daily stresses. Whether fishing, horseback riding, or simply relaxing by the water and watching the sunset, visitors will find a rare sense of calm and connection with nature. For outdoor enthusiasts and nature lovers alike, Shurmast Lake is a must-visit destination in Mazandaran Province. Its stunning scenery and variety of activities make it ideal for anyone seeking to enjoy the outdoors. Whether traveling alone, with friends, or family, the lake promises an unforgettable experience. Easily accessible from Sangdeh, located about 10 kilometers from Sari (Mazandaran's capital), the drive to Shurmast Lake passes through beautiful scenic routes. The road is well-maintained, and a short walk leads you from the parking area to the serene lake shore.



Iran, Iraq ink tourism deal to channel 10m visitors per year

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Iraq signed an agreement on October 8 to facilitate the movement of 10 million tourists between the two countries.

The accord, signed between Head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies Hormatollah Rafiei and Head of the Association of Travel and Tourism Companies in Iraq, Haider Amer Al-Dujaili, was finalized during an Iranian tourism roadshow in Baghdad, which brought together leading travel operators, airlines, hotels, and digital platforms, IRNA reported.

Under the memorandum of understanding, the private sector in both countries is committed to sending five million visitors annually to each other's destinations, a move aimed at boosting cultural and economic exchanges, said Hormatollah Rafiei, head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies.

The deal, Rafiei added, will

broaden the focus of regional tourism from religious pilgrimages to wider sectors including leisure, health, and educational travel.

"This agreement will shift the tourism gaze from Western markets to our neighboring countries," he said. By creating a more balanced exchange, the flow of visitors between Iran and Iraq is expected to reach parity, enhancing revenue streams in both nations.

Iraq's Tourism Authority chief, Nasser Ghanem Murad, highlighted that the accord follows directives from Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to prioritize tourism as a key economic lever.

Murad said the initiative underscores the role of tourism in "respecting cultures and strengthening ties between peoples," while also positioning Iran as a premier destination for regional travelers.

The roadshow, running from October 6 to 9 across Basra,



Head of the Association of Iranian Travel Agencies Hormatollah Rafiei (L) and Head of the Association of Travel and Tourism Companies in Iraq, Haider Amer Al-Dujaili sign a memorandum of understanding to promote tourism exchanges between Iran and Iraq, in Baghdad, Iraq, on October 7, 2025.

● IRNA

Baghdad, and Karbala, hosted 40 senior Iranian delegates from top travel agencies and digital platforms.

Discussions also explored historical and medical tourism, with both sides aiming to formalize student exchanges and health-focused visits, sectors previously underutilized despite strong regional demand.

Iran offers extensive pilgrimage sites in cities such as Mashhad and Qom, alongside historical and leisure attractions in its ancient towns. Iraq, in turn, provides significant infrastructure for religious tourism to Karbala



and Najaf, alongside growing potential for heritage, wellness, and recreational travel.

Rafiei stressed that the private sector's collaboration, combined with government support,

would ensure the deal delivers its target of 10 million annual cross-border visitors.

Tehran's retired postman recalls golden age of letters



By Niloofar Mansoori
Staff writer

PERSPECTIVE

Not too many years have passed since the days when the sound of the doorbell and the familiar voice shouting, "It's me, the postman!" would send us rushing to the yard to open the door and receive a letter from a friend or a loved one who was away. Handwritten letters, scrawled on paper adorned with colorful patterns, brought such excitement that we would read them aloud, over and over, to the rest of the family. If by chance we misread a word, we had to answer for it, "Dear Mom and Dad, I hope you are well. If you were wondering about us, there is nothing troubling us except missing you... Oh letter, as you go to him/her, give him/her a kiss from me."

In those years, writing letters was the most common way for people to stay in touch. White envelopes with red

and blue borders, sealed with a 5-rial red stamp featuring Jamal al-Din Asadabadi, licked by hand, remain among the most nostalgic keepsakes from decades ago, more vivid in memory than the letters' contents themselves. Many still keep their letters in dusty boxes, believing that letters are an irreplaceable part of their past, and preserving them reflects a deep attachment to a vanishing form of communication.

Every year on October 9, World Post Day offers a chance to sit down with veteran postmen in Tehran and hear stories from a time when every neighborhood eagerly awaited their arrival, men who undoubtedly played a crucial role in keeping communities connected.

Known to all, part of family

Everyone knew him. People said he was part of the family. When the roar of his motorcycle echoed through the alley, young and old, men and women alike would rush outside, hoping

he had brought a letter or package. After exchanging greetings, everyone would ask, "Mr. Postman, do you have any letters for us?"

Mehdi Najafi, a seasoned veteran of the postal service, spent 30 years at the post office, cultivating both prudence and integrity. In the days before the internet and social media, he and his colleagues were tasked with delivering messages between people. They were the human link connecting communities, navigating winding alleyways and busy streets with baskets full of letters and parcels, delivering hope in the form of a white envelope, a red stamp, or a beautiful postcard. Although Najafi has been retired for several years, seeing motorcycle postmen still evokes nostalgia. He recalls days when, upon ringing a doorbell, the mother of the household would hurriedly drape a scarf over her head, run to the yard, and open the door. With a smile, her eyes would fix on the postman's hands, hoping for a letter from a child at the frontlines. Najafi would extract the letter from his basket and say, "See, Haj Khanum (a respectful term for a woman who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage), your son's letter has finally arrived. I told you, don't worry—sooner or later, the wait comes to an end." Sometimes, it was the heartfelt prayer of an elderly man handing him a passport, "God willing, I will pray for you in Karbala."

Connecting with other side of world

The retired postman still looks at his old photographs, reminiscing. Pointing to one, he says, "This motorcycle was my companion for years. I have countless memories with it—delivering letters every morning, personally handing them to recipients. I never left anyone's letter at their door. In

the afternoons, the same bike carried parcels, newspapers, magazines, and advertisements."

Najafi explains that he served as a postman in neighborhoods including Taleghani, Enghelab, Bahar, Pich-e Shemiran, Qaem Maqam, and Mofateh. He says, "Depending on the area, many letters came from abroad, and I knew that countless families were anxiously awaiting them. The stamps and envelope types revealed which country the letters had come from. Back then, workloads were not as high as today, though we were young and delivered mail quickly."

He adds, "On those days, postmen were considered part of the family. Everyone knew them, and there was genuine affection and friendship between postmen and residents. That bond was so strong that when a family went on a trip, they'd leave their house keys with us or neighbors to water their plants. I remember walking through streets to deliver letters, kids playing in the alleys would want me to join them. I watched them grow up; now they are grown with families of their own. One of them, an Indian boy, I took his birth certificate when he was born, and years later, his passport. Now he's married and runs the family business."

High-pressure job

Najafi recalls the job as stressful and, at times, dangerous, "Contrary to the belief that being a postman is calm and trouble-free, it was very high-pressure. A postman faces stress daily, ensuring that letters and parcels reach people safely and on time. We braved rain and snow, doing our best to keep mail dry, though some inevitably got wet. I remember a winter with heavy snow; I had to ride uphill with a full load of mail. My motorcycle

slipped, and I couldn't control it, but with the help of neighbors, we managed to avoid damage or injury."

He points out the types of mail, "There were ordinary envelopes and registered envelopes. Important documents like ID cards, birth certificates, vehicle papers, fuel cards, passports, and bills were registered and manually logged. Each day, we delivered 250 to 300 items, including around eight registered envelopes."

Learning from veterans

Najafi says that at first, finding addresses was challenging, but familiarity with the neighborhoods made it easier, "When an envelope arrived at the post office, we sorted it onto shelves based on training from older colleagues, and then delivered them to different neighborhoods. At first it was tough, but gradually we learned how many streets and alleys each neighborhood had, where they started and ended, the location of the first and last house numbers, and which side had odd or even numbers. The southern streets were even, the northern odd. This knowledge helped us manage the workload."

Reflecting on modern communication, he notes, "People endured hardships in the past. Every day was spent in stress and worry over war or unrest, waiting months for news from friends and loved ones. Today, communication is effortless; people sit at home, pick up a phone, and connect instantly with someone across the globe. Everything is digital now, but nothing replaces paper letters and colorful stamps. Letters created anticipation, excitement, and strengthened friendships. Today, messages are instantaneous, and that thrill is lost. No one jumps up at the doorbell, waiting for a postman with his old motorcycle and mail basket to deliver news."