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An Iraqi electoral employee checks a soldier's ID card at a polling station, during a special voting day for Iraqi security forces, taking place two days before polls open to the public in the parliamentary elections, in Baghdad on November 9, 2025.

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Time for international bodies to name real aggressor on Iran



By Mahmoud Abbaszadeh Meshkini
Political analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The recent admission by US President Donald Trump has effectively confirmed Iran's long-standing claim that during the direct military assault on Iran in June, Israel acted just as a contractor, while the aggression was, in fact, planned, commanded, and executed by the United States. At the time, even German chancellor Friedrich Merz brazenly said that "this is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us." In fact, an illegitimate entity called the "Zionist regime" was put up as a front so that Iran could not pursue legal action or file complaints through international bodies. Today, there exists a wealth of evidence and numerous statements demonstrating that it was Washington that launched the attack on Iran. The United States decided to strike from a base "bearing the name Israel," making itself legally responsible for the

aggression. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the US to compensate for the damages inflicted during this imposed war, and it falls upon international legal and institutional bodies to name and shame the aggressor. Iran's diplomatic apparatus should move swiftly to build a strong case, file formal complaints, and urge the United Nations to determine accountability. Now that the US has openly acknowledged starting this war, Tehran's first priority should be to push for Washington's designation as the aggressor. Through intensive lobbying, legal action, and rigorous documentation, Iran stands a real chance of success. Although international organizations have historically been instruments serving Western interests, the clarity of this act of aggression may compel them to act lawfully. The Iranian side recalls that during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, many of these same Western powers resisted labeling Saddam Hussein's regime as the aggressor, yet despite Iran's limited experience and diplomatic reach at the time, the effort ultimately succeeded. Iran's expectation from international

bodies is simple: to uphold their own laws and charters. Tehran seeks no illegal resolutions, only adherence to the United Nations' founding mission, to safeguard peace and prevent war. One of the UN's essential duties is to identify aggressors when conflicts arise, ensure their punishment, and demand reparations. Whoever is found guilty must face consequences, beginning with compensation for the damage caused. In the meantime, Iran can reshape the regional power dynamics to serve its own strategic interests. The United States, driven by its hegemonic ambitions, is pursuing domination over the Middle East as part of a broader strategy to tighten its grip before confronting China on the global stage. Yet powerful nations will not allow such imbalance to persist. With its global standing now surpassing pre-war levels, Iran can recalibrate the geopolitical equation, not by depending on foreign powers, but by harnessing its own indigenous strength. Even under pressure, Iran can turn threats into opportunities, extracting concessions and securing its national

interests more efficiently and at lower cost. Navigating this interconnected, conflict-prone world to advance Iran's interests is the true test of statesmanship.

Unprecedented phenomenon

Now that the United States has explicitly confirmed that it "commanded" this military assault, a new geopolitical reality has come to light. Iran has emerged as a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in global politics, one capable of shaping history itself. Despite enduring assassination plots, crippling sanctions, and now a direct military confrontation with the world's leading military power, Iran has stood its ground and prevailed. The post-war Iran is fundamentally different from the Iran prior to the conflict.

The West has reached the limits of the pressure it can exert; it can no longer impose another war on the nation. For this reason, Iran today stands as an exceptional force in the world, one whose destiny is intertwined with the fate of global politics itself.

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US must face consequences of anti-Iran onslaught in June: *Qalibaf*



Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf speaks during an open parliamentary session in Tehran on November 9, 2025.

● ICANA

International Desk
Iran's Parliament speaker reacted to US president's

confession that he was "very much in charge" of Israel's war against Iran in June, saying that Washington must

face the legal and political consequences of the aggression. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

made the remarks during an open session of Parliament on Sunday, three days after US President Donald Trump acknowledged that he was "very much in charge of" June's Israeli-American aggression against Iran. "Following the US president's explicit admission of direct responsibility in the Zionist regime's aggression against Iran — which constitutes a blatant violation of international law, the United Nations Charter, and our national sovereignty — I, on behalf of the noble and honorable people of Iran, strongly condemn this heinous act," he said. "I declare that, under international law, the US government must accept the legal, politi-

cal, and military consequences of this blatant aggression, which has led to the martyrdom of many of our citizens." Trump on Thursday claimed responsibility for Israel's attacks on Iran, contradicting previous statements that the regime acted unilaterally. "Israel attacked first. That attack was very, very powerful. I was very much in charge of that," Trump told reporters. But in the early hours of the aggression, Washington stressed that Israel had acted on its own and warned Tehran against retaliating against US troops and interests in the region. Israel launched the unprovoked aggression against Iran on June 13, 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 Iranian nuclear sites. 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. On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the terrorist aggression. On Friday, Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, in a letter to the UN Security Council said the US president's admission confirms Washington's direct involvement in Israel's aggression against Iran. Iravani said Trump's statement provides "clear and irrefutable evidence" of US leadership, orchestration, and command responsibility in the attacks which killed many high-ranking military commanders, nuclear scientists, and ordinary civilians.

Iraq's forces, displaced vote early ahead of parliamentary elections

Members of Iraq's security forces and its internally displaced population cast their ballots in early voting on Sunday ahead of upcoming parliamentary elections. Polls opened at 0400 GMT for members of the armed forces, who account for 1.3 million of the more than 21 million eligible voters and would be deployed for security purposes on election day, according to the state Iraqi News Agency. More than 26,500 internally displaced people are also eligible for early voting. The November 11 elections will be the sixth since the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq that toppled former dictator Saddam Hussein. More than 7,740 candidates, nearly a third of them women, are running for the 329-seat parliament. An old electoral law, which parliament revived in 2023, will apply to the elections, with many seeing it as favoring larger parties. While around 70 independents won seats in the 2021 election, only 75 independents are contesting in the upcoming ballot. There were widespread accusations of corruption and vote-buying before the elections, and 848 candidates

were disqualified by election officials, sometimes for obscure reasons, including insulting religious rituals or members of the armed forces. Past elections in Iraq have been marred by violence, including assassinations of candidates, attacks on polling stations, and clashes between the supporters of different blocs. While overall levels of violence have subsided, a candidate was assassinated in the run-up to this year's election. Influential Shia cleric Moqtada Sadr has urged his followers to boycott what he described as a "flawed election." Since the US-led invasion, Iraq's Shia majority has dominated politics. Shia figures including former Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and cleric Ammar al-Hakim will play a central role in the election. Current Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, elected in 2022, is seeking a second term and is expected to secure a sizeable bloc. By convention in post-invasion Iraq, a Shia Muslim holds the powerful post of prime minister and a Sunni that of parliament speaker, while the largely cere-



Members of Iraq's Kurdish security forces take part at a polling station to vote ahead of the November 11 parliamentary election in Arbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, on November 9, 2025.

● AFP

monial presidency goes to a Kurd. The next prime minister will be voted in by whichever coalition can negotiate allies to become the biggest parliamentary bloc. The current parliament began its term on January 9, 2022, and will last four years, ending on January 8, 2026.

FM rules out possibility of nuclear talks with US 'for now'

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said there is no possibility of resumption of nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington at present due to the lack of "constructive approach from the American side" toward the negotiations. "The reality is that there is no possibility for now, because we do not see any positive or constructive approach from the American side," Araghchi told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Sunday. "Whenever they are ready for negotiations based on an equal footing, aimed at reaching a mutually beneficial agreement, such talks could be possible, and Iran could consider them. But the approach we see from the Americans does not indicate such a willingness." Iran and the US held five rounds of Oman-mediated indirect negotiations in the Italian and Omani capitals early this year before Israel derailed the diplomatic efforts by waging a war in June.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks to reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on November 5, 2025.

● IQNA

More than a week into the war, the US joined the aggression and bombed Iran's nuclear facilities that were under the International Atomic Energy Agency's watch. The US attacks damaged Iran's nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. The US-Israeli strikes also claimed the lives of more than 1,000 people Iran, including military commanders, nuclear scientists, and civilians. Since then, the two sides have repeatedly expressed their interest to resume the negotiations but the US excessive demands, including zero uranium enrichment in Iran and limits on its range

of missile, have become a barrier in resumption of negotiations. Iran has repeatedly said it will not give up its right to uranium enrichment and will not negotiate on its defense capabilities. Iran's nuclear program has been a source of contention with Western countries for more than two decades. While Iran insists that its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful and aimed at civilian purposes such as energy production and medical research, Western powers — particularly the US, UK, France, and Germany — have long expressed concern that Tehran could be seeking the capability to develop nuclear weapons.

US sanctions clear example of full-scale war against Iranians: *Official*

International Desk

The Director-General for Women and Human Rights at Iran's Foreign Ministry described the United States' "unilateral, illegal, and cruel sanctions" against Iran as a clear example of a full-scale war against ordinary people in Iran. Speaking at the unveiling ceremony of Iran's Foreign Ministry's annual report on human rights violations by the US and the United Kingdom on Sunday, Forouzandeh Vadiati underscored that the main sources of the report were the information contained in the reports and news of international human rights bodies and mechanisms, particularly those of the United Nations. Vadiati said that a year-long monitoring of the human rights situation in the UK

and the US showed the human rights restrictions imposed by these countries on innocent people — both internally and beyond their borders — had sharply increased and reached an "alarming level." "These restrictions, accompanied by repression, have targeted civil liberties and peaceful gatherings, particularly those held by protesters condemning the shameful genocide of innocent children, women, and men in Gaza and other countries of the West Asia region by the Zionist regime [of Israel]," she added. Referring to the US-Israel's aggression against Iran in June, the Iranian official said that the war stood as a "clear example of a crime against humanity" and a direct threat to regional and global security.

Regarding the human rights situation in the UK, she said that the report presented a "concerning and alarming picture" of the human rights situation there, including xenophobia, inhumane policies toward refugees, institutionalized Islamophobia and Iranophobia, the systematic restriction of civil liberties and freedom of expression, the suppression of the right to protest, and crackdown on peaceful demonstrations held in support of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Vadiati also pointed to the London's support for Israel's war on Gaza, saying that report documented how British military and political support for the "child-killing Israeli regime" fueled instability and widespread human rights violations in other parts of the world, including the West Asia region.

Time for international ...

In this new era, Iran requires active diplomacy, not a passive one. Effective governance is essential, one that boosts public satisfaction, strengthens social capital, makes the economy more inclusive, respects in-

dividual freedoms and privacy, ensures justice, and tackles inefficiency and inequality. Domestic governance must be rooted in the goal of improving the satisfaction of younger generations. Foreign policy is the continuation

of domestic policy. If the people stand firmly behind their government, Iran's leverage on the global stage will multiply. On this basis, the nation's future appears strong, and its prospects remarkably bright.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Oil sales hit seven-year high despite tougher US sanctions



Iran's crude oil exports have climbed to their highest level in seven years in defiance of tightening US sanctions, maritime tracking service TankerTrackers said on Sunday.

“Over the past 4 weeks, Iran has exported nearly 2.3 million barrels of crude oil per day,” the service wrote in a post on X. “These are numbers we haven’t seen since the early half of 2018.” TankerTrackers did not provide a reason for the surge, but the figures appear to back up comments made by Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad, who told state TV on October 29 that “I wish I could reveal the oil export numbers – if I did, you would realize the situation is much better than before.” Iran has withheld official production and export figures since 2018,

when the United States reimposed sanctions on its oil sales, citing the sensitivity of the issue. Since Donald Trump’s return to the White House in January, the US has slapped fresh sanctions on intermediaries, foreign firms, Chinese ports, and tankers involved in Iranian crude shipments. The Trump administration has vowed to push Iran’s crude sales to “zero” but to no avail. Nearly all of Iran’s exported barrels reportedly end up in eastern China, where small private refineries known as “teapots” process the shipment to produce fuel.

New agencies ‘soon’ to be set up to ease foreign investment: OIETAI



Economy Desk

Iran will soon set up new foreign investment promotion agencies to streamline licensing, residency and foreign currency procedures for overseas investors, a senior official at the country’s Organization for Investment, Economic and Technical Assistance (OIETAI) said. “These agencies will be launched soon,” the acting head of OIETAI, Mehdi Heidari, said at a conference titled “Foreign Investors: Opportunities and Challenges,” according to Tasnim news agency. The agencies are intended “to facilitate processes such as permits, residency and currency-related matters, while providing integrated services that safeguard the dignity of foreign investors,” he added.

Gold-based capital entry

Heidari said the government is also implementing a new measure allowing foreign investors to bring capital into Iran in the form of standard gold bullion. “Under a newly approved decision by the Foreign Investment Board, investors can import gold, then offer it on the Iran Mercantile Exchange or the Foreign Exchange and Gold Center,” he said, adding that the move is expected to preserve asset value while enabling investors to enter production and export-oriented sectors. In October, ISNA reported that two foreign investors imported about \$4 million worth of standard gold bullion through the Foreign Exchange and Gold Center, with the first batch offered for sale on the Center’s trading platform. Analysts said the development signals renewed interest in Iran’s precious metals sector and a shift toward alternative channels for managing currency and commodity flows. Heidari also said the government plans to decentralize investment decision-making. “Investment board meetings will no longer be held only in Tehran. They will also be convened in provinces, depending on the nature and potential of each region,” he said. He emphasized that Iranian law guarantees equal treatment for domestic and foreign investors, but added that additional incentives may be required. “It is necessary for responsible agencies to offer special incentives, such as establishing industrial zones dedicated to foreign investors, in order to increase their motivation to enter the country,” he said.

Persian fragrances exquisitely resonate with Chinese at Shanghai expo

Economy Desk

A hint of Persian blue and the aroma of rose and saffron have drawn large crowds to the Iranian booths at the 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai — signaling growing Chinese interest in Iranian-made beauty and wellness products. In Hall 6.1 of the vast Expo center, visitors have been stopping by the stand of Shanghai Guicai Biotechnology Co., Ltd., where elegant Iranian patterns and floral scents created an atmosphere reminiscent of a Persian garden. The booth, which showcases Iranian brands alongside China’s own partners, opened officially on Thursday together with the National Pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other international exhibits. Organizers say both spaces have attracted particularly strong interest from Chinese visitors, according to IRNA. General Manager Zhang Guicai, a veteran in China-Iran trade, was on hand to present new products. “This year, we’ve brought our latest launches — Iranian saffron face cream and saffron eye cream,” he told Chinese newspaper Shanghai Observer. “Sixty-five percent of the world’s Damask roses come from Iran. We combine these precious botanical ingredients with Chinese skincare craftsmanship to better meet the needs of local consumers.” Among the visitors was Ms. Wang from Hangzhou, who browsed the shelves with familiarity. “I bought their rose hydrosol last year

— it worked really well, so I came back this year,” she told the said. “A friend first introduced me to the brand at the Expo. I was immediately drawn by the Persian-style booth, and after trying the products, I found the scent very natural.” This year, Guicai Biotechnology presented more than 30 products — from essential oils and floral waters to skincare lines. The company also launched saffron-based foods and health supplements, broadening its scope from cosmetics to the wider wellness sector. “Some of our products use Iranian ingredients refined in China, while others are imported directly from Iran,” Zhang explained. “This flexible supply chain helps us maintain authenticity while responding quickly to market demand.” Sales figures show how quickly the brand has grown. From only a few thousand bottles sold during its first appearance at the CIIE, annual sales of some individual products have now reached one million units. “We entered the Chinese market in 2019,” Zhang said. “Back then, our brand was just a domestic Iranian label. But within a few years, it’s become one of the most popular Iranian brands among Chinese consumers — thanks largely to the CIIE.” On busy days, Zhang estimates several thousand visitors pass by the booth. Many live-streamers also broadcast from the stand. “In the short term, this directly boosts sales,” Zhang said. “But in the long run, it’s about brand awareness — something no other platform can provide.”



Over the past five years, Shanghai Guicai Biotechnology has used the Expo as a launchpad to turn Barij from a niche Iranian brand into a household name in China. With the largest essential oil laboratory in Iran and products now stocked in more than 7,000 pharmacies, the company has become a small but significant bridge in China-Iran trade and cultural exchange. “The CIIE gives our brand credibility and shows other Iranian companies the potential of the Chinese market,” Zhang added. “It’s an important platform for building mutual understanding between our two countries.” The CIIE — the world’s first import-themed national-level exhibition — is part of China’s wider effort to

open its domestic market to the world. This year, 120 countries are participating, with Iran not only hosting a national pavilion but also occupying one of the largest commercial exhibition spaces among all participating nations. Ebrahim Shafipour, head of Iran’s pavilion, said part of the display focuses on “Cultural Iran,” introducing visitors to Iranian arts and crafts accessible to the public. Using modern interactive technology, the pavilion also offers an immersive experience of daily life in Iran. Another section highlights “Modern Iran,” showcasing Iranian advances in four key sectors — advanced materials and chemicals, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and industrial machinery.

Iran cranks up blue economy via advanced tech, private sector: GSI



Economy Desk

The head of the Geological Survey of Iran (GSI) reported on Sunday that the country is accelerating the development of its maritime-based economy through the use of advanced technologies and a greater role for the private sector. “With the adoption of new technologies and the growing role of the private sector, the pace of development in the

maritime-based economy is clearly increasing,” Dariush Esmaeili said at the second National Conference on Maritime Economy. The two-day Iran Maritime Economy Conference opened on Saturday at the Kish International Convention Center, with the participation of industry experts, investors, scholars, and representatives from 17 foreign countries. The conference focused on themes including regional and international maritime cooperation, the transformation of marine industries through fourth-generation technologies, marine propulsion industries, and local maritime economies. The GSI chief noted that the introduction of tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) in exploration and mapping has significantly improved accuracy and speed, supporting what he described as a shift toward “smart and sustainable development.” Esmaeili said the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and the GSI have begun preparing geological maps of the country’s coastal regions at a scale of 1:50,000, with the goal of completing all coastal geological mapping by the end of

Iran’s Seventh Development Plan (2028). He added that the organization is conducting studies on marine faults, seabed sediments and geological formations to identify both development potential and risks in coastal zones. “These studies serve as the basis for planning sustainable infrastructure within the maritime economy,” he said. Esmaeili acknowledged that Iran entered the maritime economic sector later than it should have, but said government policy and Parliament’s support for delegating responsibilities are currently enabling stronger private sector participation. With approximately 5,800 kilometers of coastline across seven provinces in the north and south, the government is required to provide supportive frameworks and essential infrastructure for private investment, he said. Esmaeili also noted that “more than 80% of the organization’s projects and activities have been outsourced to universities and the private sector,” a move he said has improved data quality while generating jobs and expanding scientific capacity.

Shift from 'global subjugation' to 'world stewardship'

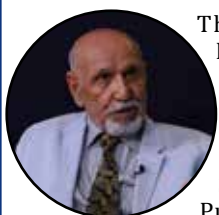
Farhang Rajaei's account of development in Iran



By Mokhtar Nouri

Professor of Political Science
at Razi University

**ANALYSIS
EXCLUSIVE**



The book "Farhang Rajaei's Account of Development and Underdevelopment in Iran" is a recent publication by Shargh Newspaper Publishing, authored by Dr. Mokhtar Nouri, a

faculty member at the Political Science Department of Razi University of Kermanshah, Western Iran, under the academic supervision of Dr. Mohsen Renani, Professor of Economics at Isfahan University. This work, which was written with the help of the Iranian non-governmental institution "Pooyesh Fekri Tose'e" (meaning: Intellectual Movement of Development), centers on the thought of the renowned Iranian thinker Farhang Rajaei, who dedicated nearly 50 years of his distinguished life to hashing out ideas about humanity, Iran, and, on a broader scale, human civilization.

Rajaei was confronted from his youth with a serious — as he himself describes — "lifelong" concern: "How can a desirable state of affairs be set up that benefits the majority of a society?" This persistent question, deeply linked to the field of development, was laid down in his mind by his teacher Mohammadreza Mohtat during the social sciences class at the Pahlavi High School in Arak. Hence, Rajaei's core concern lies in the disorder and lack of striking a balanced chord in production within human societies and civilizations, generally, and, specifically, Iranian society.

In his quest to get out of this disorder and imbalance, Rajaei later became acquainted with what he calls "world stewardship" and the "law of the world stewardship's logic" through his professor Hamid Enayat at the University of Tehran. This led him to dive into the profound and significant "Letter of Tansar" — who was a wise mobad of the Ancient Sassanid era, described as "one who has a head on his shoulders and is above worldly rules" — seeking a way to break through today's problems.

This concern dragged Rajaei into various fields such as history, identity, culture, ethics, tradition, modernity, development, and Iranians' encounter with modernity. It can be said that Rajaei's main issue is development and progress, but he approaches it with his own perspective under the theory or vision of the "law of the world stewardship's logic". For Rajaei, development means the rolling out of this law — in other words, the transition from global subjugation to world stewardship.

Therefore, Rajaei seeks to figure out why world stewardship and its laws have not become the dominant framework for governance for Iranians. In his search for this law and to achieve his desired imagined state, Rajaei, like many contemporary Iranian intellectuals, sets foot on the battleground of the clash between modernity and tradition — a longstanding dilemma. According to him, this arena calls for serious dedication and effort because development must be played out like a well-orchestrated symphony.



Rajaei truly represents the intellectual who neither wants to fall into the pit of modernism and completely melt into Western culture nor get caught up in the trap of nativism and hostile conflict with the West. Instead, he believes in intelligent maneuvering in politics and governance, asking, "How can we play the game wisely?" His answer is that a person must bring forth willpower and, using Iranian literary and mystical terms, "hemmat" (determined effort) to play the global stage.

These premises show Rajaei as a development-minded thinker, advocating a balanced and comprehensive development that puts "public good" front and center. Rajaei's approach to concepts like development and progress makes his thought system highly thought-provoking. Ultimately, Rajaei's concern is to bring about a desirable condition that benefits the majority of society. However, he explicitly states that the path to this ideal state is not found in economic growth or common quantitative and statistical measures used in development literature. Instead, without entirely sidelining economics, Rajaei downplays its key role and zeroes in on the issue of "identity."

Thus, the Iranian identity holds significant meaning and status in Rajaei's

intellectual project. He believes that without defining who we are, we cannot effectively step up as actors or develop. His perennial questions include: Who are Iranians, and who can they become? Why has the Iranian civilizational domain fallen into a state of non-production? Why, after the Safavid era, have we not been active players, suffering what Dariush Shayegan calls a "historical vacation"? Why, in other words, has Iran failed to make the leap from the global subjugation cycle to the world stewardship cycle after the Safavid era? For Rajaei, a key concern is discovering who the Iranian is and where he stands today. His intellectual project aims to pin down "the identity of Iranians" and figure out "how to recover their capability to act" on the world stage.

This entire framework boils down to Rajaei's central question: "What kind of thought had truly been able — and can still — harmonize the four elements of Iranian identity, religion, tradition, and modernity into a coherent symphony that has moved all Iranians in their civilization-building eras, such as the Achaemenid period before Islam and the Safavid period after Islam, to step forward and leave a grand, global impact?" A preliminary answer within Rajaei's thinking is that only a worldview that brings together the three main pillars

of the law of the world stewardship's logic — "expediency," "government/territory," and "governance and reflection" — in a balanced harmony can establish development, stewardship, civility, and civilization. Then, the garden cultivated by the tradition of advice-writing — the final product of the law of the world stewardship's logic — will flourish.

Development is the 'law of world stewardship's logic'

The core concern of Mr. Farhang Rajaei is the expansion of the law of the world stewardship's logic. Intellectually, he takes issue with the commonly accepted concept and term of development, preferring instead to use "world stewardship" or, where he can, "sustainable development". Therefore, the desirable state of affairs for Rajaei is world stewardship, and he believes sustainable development and the indigenous concept of "world stewardship" are one and the same.

On this, he writes: "At least for two reasons, I consider the term world stewardship more precise than development. First, development is somewhat derivative and biased because it is a translation of a term that was invented in the Western cultural, social, and political context — often, as many believe, deliberately and with specific intent — making its

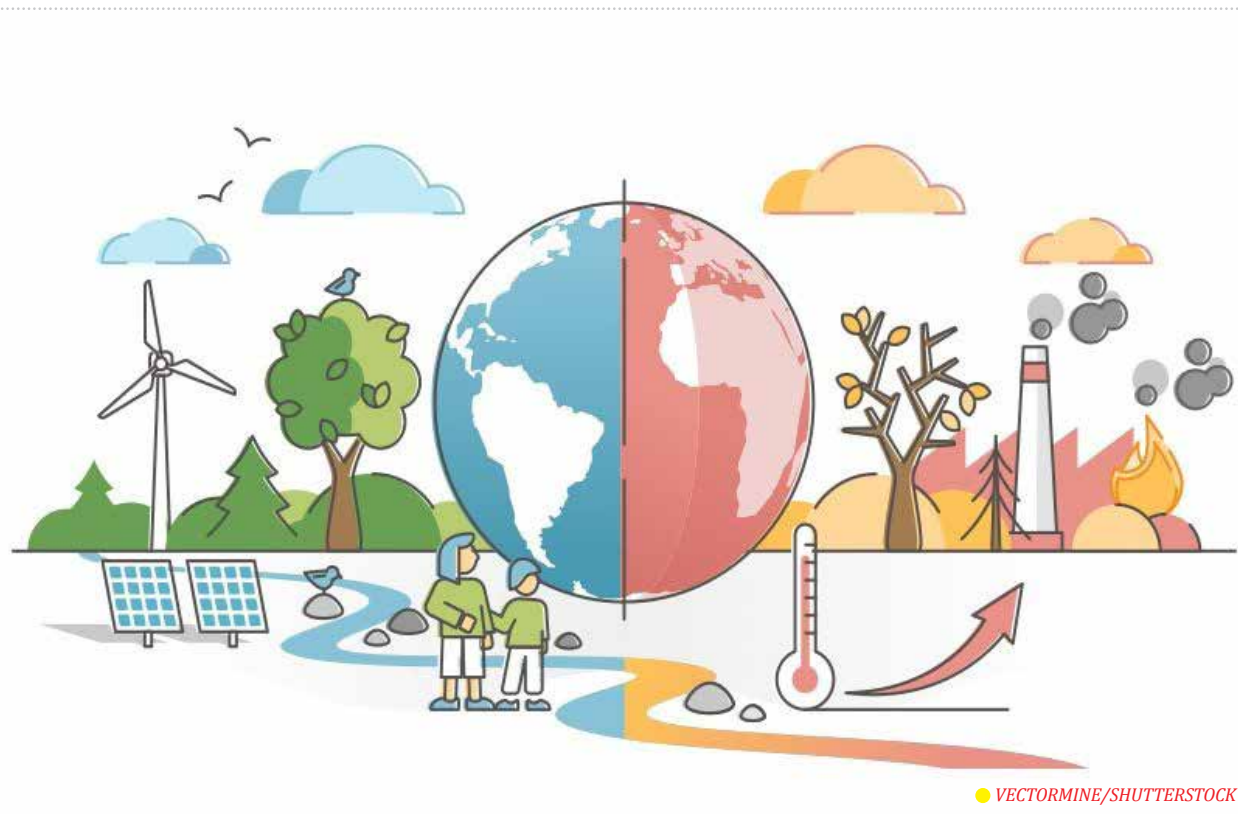
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Farhang Rajaei truly represents the intellectual who neither wants to fall into the pit of modernism and completely melt into Western culture nor get caught up in the trap of nativism and hostile conflict with the West. Instead, he believes in intelligent maneuvering in politics and governance, asking: "How can we play the game wisely?" This shows Rajaei as a development-minded thinker, advocating a balanced and comprehensive development that puts "public good" front and center.



The tomb of Hafez, also known as Hafezieh, located north of Shiraz

MEHR



● VECTORMINE/SHUTTERSTOCK

use for our purposes limited. Second, I do not find it universal and instead find the term world stewardship more effective and a clear example of the local/global paradox.” Historically, in Rajaei’s view, as long as the three pillars of the law of the world stewardship’s logic — “expediency,” “government/territory,” and “governance and reflection” — were clear, despite its ups and downs, the leadership was able to carry through periods of development, world stewardship, civility, and civilization, sometimes even setting the rules of the game. Historically, Rajaei sees two golden ages — the Achaemenid civilization of ancient Iran and the Safavid era in the Islamic period — as special periods when the law of the world stewardship’s logic and its foundations were firmly established in Iran. In other words, Rajaei believes that as long as the three pillars were solid and their expediency, territory, and governance were clear, the “Iran-shahrian” government/territory could ride out the four aforementioned development phases, corresponding with four different dynasties — the Medes, Achaemenids, Parthians, and Sassanids — leaving behind civility and civilization. During these eras, because it was developing and stewarding the world, it was also a player and often called the shots in many cases. The government’s expediency was defined within the Zoroastrian worldview brought by the Iranian people, and the king, endowed with divine glory (“farr-e izadi”), symbolized government/territory

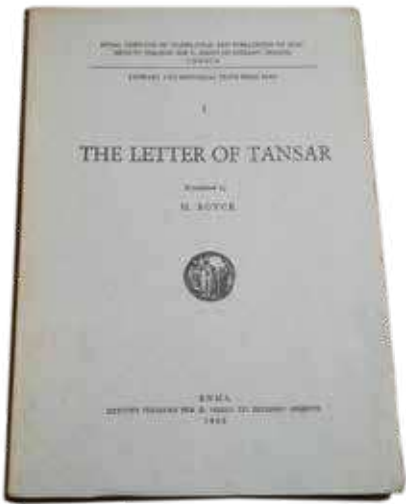
sovereignty and, in Rajaei’s view, the political. Regarding the political, the monarchy was established, with the prime minister as its symbol; On other areas, priests embodied religion and culture, for example, while prominent families represented the societal, among others. Subsequently, after Islam was declared the dominant worldview and religion in Iran, the Iranshahrian government/territory gradually faded away, and a new order took hold in Iran’s geographic domain. Nonetheless, despite its own ups and downs, the caliphate government remained the defining and decisive government/territory until the rise of the Safavids. Its expediency was framed within the Islamic/Arab cultural worldview brought by the Arabs, with the caliph symbolizing government/territory sovereignty and, again per Rajaei, the political. The political system of the caliphate was established by drawing on a mix of Roman and Iranian monarchy systems, with the sultan/emir symbolizing monarch/state and the political. Finally, during Iran’s last development period — the Safavid monarchy — the Iranian government/territory re-emerged, reestablishing royal rule with the king as symbol, endowed with “the shadow of God” (instead of the ancient Iranian divine light). The prime minister was installed as the monarch/state symbol and the political, but elsewhere, for example, Sheikh al-Islam symbolized religion and culture, and Mulla Sadra represented science and arts, among others. According to Rajaei, it was this developmental and world-stewarding quality that established the Iranian government/territory at the national level, with Armenian and Jewish minorities in its capital among the most successful and wealthy. Globally, Iran was the second major player after the Ottomans.

However, Rajaei believes that since the Safavid collapse, things have taken a turn, and this situation continues to this day. Looking back at the Afsharid, Zand, Qajar, and Pahlavi periods, the lack of function in the “expediency, territory, and governance” framework — and consequently the government/territory — is striking. Rajaei contends that Mohammad Mosaddegh understood this divide and repeatedly urged the two Pahlavi kings to keep ruling. Even as prime minister, when asked to crack down on newspapers attacking him, he refused. What he could not stand was attacks on the state, which he saw as the identity symbol of Iranians and Muslims, and he declared this officially. In other words, during these four periods, our political unit lacked clarity or serious recognition. Thus, instead of collective acting, the rule was “everyone with me”. The Politics dominated the political, and the monarch/state viewed itself as the government/territory so fully that it laid hands on other areas of the political — meaning economy, society, science, religion, and culture — suffocating and weakening them. Within this historical trend, Rajaei asks: Following Iran’s Islamic Revolution and its slogans, has the Islamic Republic defined its government/territory and — within the political — its expediency in the framework of the Shia worldview and revolutionary slogans? Has it, within the discussed intellectual framework, reflected on the decorum and etiquette of affairs, turning the law of the world stewardship’s logic into the “rules of the game”? Are the government/territory and the political symbols established and recognized? Are the three branches of the republic symbols of the political, each properly separate but balanced? Do other symbols — economy, society,

science and arts, religion and culture — each play their proper roles, enabling sustainable development and, as Rajaei puts it, world stewardship and acting on the global stage? Rajaei replies that every Iranian must understand that since the Islamic Revolution, there has been challenges like the imposed war, relentless and suffocating sanctions, encirclement of the homeland — from Russia in the north, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and allies in the south, extremist religious forces in Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east, and the war and its extension (meaning extremist Arab forces) in the west — plus third-party sanctions tightening international operational space, and short-sighted, selfish domestic interests inside Iran. I personally do not know if, given these challenges, anyone has even had the chance or spirit to look back at a millennium-old and historic perspective. But I always believe in future generations and hope they will rise up to not only revive but also provide a modern narrative for the three pillars of the law of the world stewardship’s logic — “expediency, government, and governance and reflection” — for themselves and Iran, so that god forbid, world-burning destruction does not catch up with us.

Conclusion

Rajaei’s historical perspective shows that since the Safavid era, the law of the world stewardship’s logic has been on vacation, and he identifies the root cause of this suspension as the confusion between “the political” and “the Politics,” and their external institutions, which in today’s political discourse are symbolized, respectively, by the government and state. Today, such confusion is called “securitization” of issues, where in the name of security, debate, transparency, dialogue, and accountability are shut down. The result of this confusion in the Sassanid period was the final defeat and collapse of government sovereignty. In the Safavid case, it brought a second defeat due to Afghan invasions and ongoing collapse, which persists to this day. Thus, in Rajaei’s thinking, modern development occurs only when the three pillars — expediency, government/territory, and governance and reflection — pull together in balanced harmony. But when the political and the Politics get mixed up, and worse, the Politics dominate, the first victim is the political since elements like territory, expediency, and governance are ignored or disappear entirely. This confusion inflicts heavy damage, such as: The end justifies the means; kings consider themselves owners of the territory; the rule “everyone with me” prevails; and world stewardship is replaced by global subjugation. The climax is when the political (with all its values) becomes a tool for the Politics. A clear sign is society’s politicization and cult of personality, whether in Trump’s America, Putin’s Russia, Kim Jong Un’s North Korea, Mohammed bin Salman’s Saudi Arabia, or Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Turkey!

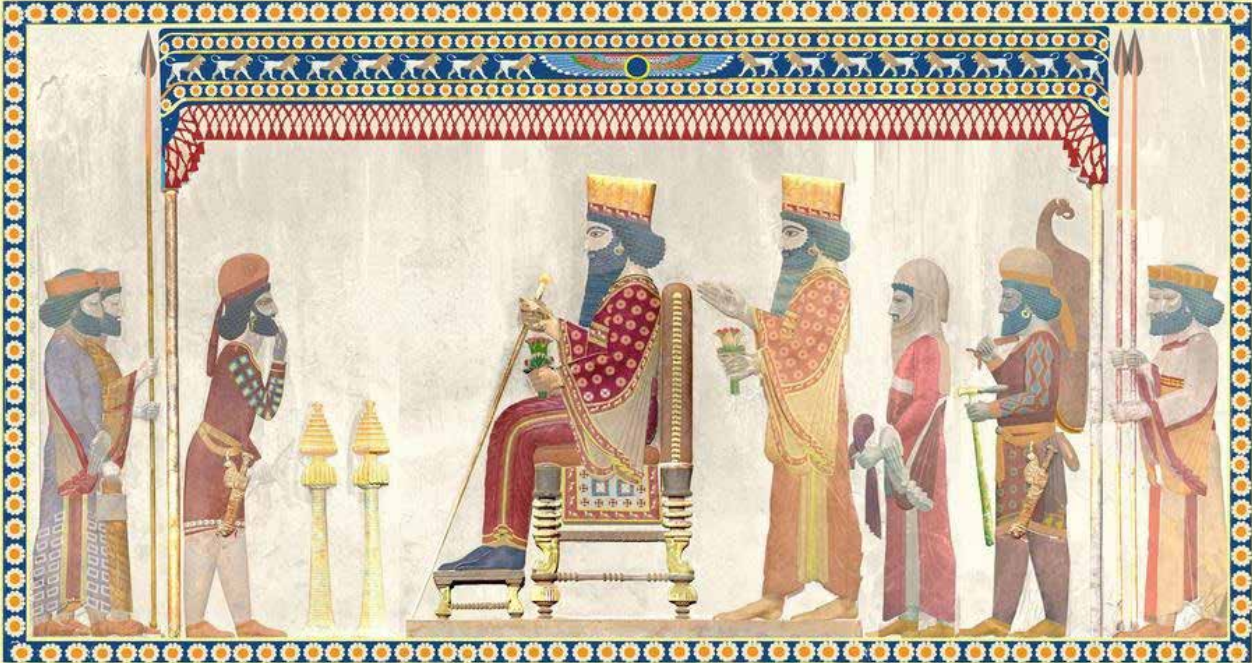


⬅ The letter of Tansar, translated by M. Boyce and published by Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Torino, 1968
● abebooks.co.uk



Thus, in Rajaei’s thinking, modern development occurs only when the three pillars — expediency, government/territory, and governance and reflection — pull together in balanced harmony. But when the political and the Politics get mixed up, and worse, the Politics dominate, the first victim is the political since elements like territory, expediency, and governance are ignored or disappear entirely.

⬇ The painting shows Darius the King, the third King of Kings of the Achaemenid Empire, ruling the empire from his throne.
● X



⬅ Safavid school, Iran, 19/20th century, oil and ink on canvas: ‘A ceremonial court view’
● rm-auctions.com

Riyadh 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games: Iran rallies past Türkiye to maintain perfect run in volleyball

Sports Desk

The Iranian men's volleyball team claimed its third consecutive victory at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, recovering from an early setback to defeat Türkiye 3-1 (21-25, 25-23, 25-20, 25-16) on Saturday. The Asian powerhouse had edged Bahrain in a five-set thriller (25-21, 22-25, 25-16, 22-25, 15-7) in their opening game, before coming out victorious in straight sets (25-22, 25-15, 25-18) against Qatar on Thursday. "It became a bit complicated for us in the first set and we just couldn't get our game going. However, this is a team on the rise. We tend to settle into the match and find our game very quickly," Iranian middle blocker Yousef Kazemi said after Sunday's victory. Held in a round-robin for-

mat, the men's volleyball event in Riyadh features six teams – Iran, Türkiye, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Chad – with Iran sitting firmly atop the table on five points. The top two in the standings will square off in the gold-medal match on Thursday. "I don't think there's a team in this tournament that can challenge us," Kazemi added, though Iran head coach Peyman Akbari remained wary of the "constant pressure" on his players to win every game. "We lost the first set because Türkiye simply played better. They're a strong team, with several experienced players who were part of their squad at the World Championship [in September]," Akbari said. "We identified Türkiye's vulnerabilities after the first set, and in the end, our

gameplan and the team's concentration paid off, allowing us to secure a decisive victory. We came here expecting to win, and we got the job done," added the Iranian coach. "It's unfair to put constant pressure on the players to deliver a victory in every single game. When we win, people say we've only done our duty – but when we don't, the reaction is completely different. "We have yet to secure a place in the final. There are two more games ahead of us, and we have to win them both," Akbari said. Iran will take on Chad at the Boulevard SEF Arena today, before facing the host nation on Wednesday. Qatar defeated Chad 3-0 (25-16, 25-22, 25-18) on Sunday, while Saudi Arabia fell 3-1 (25-27, 25-18, 25-16, 25-21) to Bahrain.



Iranian players celebrate a point during a 3-1 victory over Türkiye in the men's volleyball event at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 8, 2025.
● volleyball.ir

Jahanbakhsh omitted as Iran names roster for Al Ain tourney



● FFIRI

Sports Desk

Iran head coach Amir Ghalenoei has named a 26-man squad for the upcoming four-nation friendly tournament in Al Ain, UAE – which also features Egypt, Cape Verde, and Uzbekistan. Iran will face Cape Verde on Thursday, with the winner taking on Egypt or Uzbekistan the following Tuesday. The tournament will be part of Iran's preparation for the 2026 FIFA World Cup – starting June 11 in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Cape Verde capped off a fairytale run in the African qualifiers by defeating Eswatini 3-0 in October to clinch its maiden World Cup berth, becoming the second smallest country in the tournament's history. Iranian skipper Alireza Jahanbakhsh, who joined FCV Dender EH in the Belgian Pro League last week, has been left out of the squad for this international break "to make up for his absence in preseason and

to develop his physical fitness with his club," according to the Iranian Football Federation. Sardar Azmoun, Mahdi Qayedi, Rouzbah Cheshmi, Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi, and Ali Qolizadeh are the other high-profile absentees from Iran's squad, all sidelined with injuries. Hossein Kan'anizadegan is back in the roster after missing October's international break with injury, while his Persepolis teammate Mohammad Omri earned a call-up following a couple of impressive performances for the Tehran Reds in the Iranian league. Kayserispor center-back Seyyed Majid Hosseini has been named in the squad for the first time in nearly two years, having struggled with numerous injuries since the 2023 Asian Cup, while midfielder Hadi Habibinejad earns his first international call-up after guiding Chadormalou to a surprise top spot in the Iranian top-flight table. The following is Iran's 26-man squad for the friendly tournament

in Al Ain:

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Seyyed Payam Niazmand (Persepolis), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Sepahan), Mohammadreza Akhbari (Sepahan)
Defenders: Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Hossein Kan'anizadegan (Persepolis), Seyyed Majid Hosseini (Kayserispor), Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Saleh Hardani (Esteghlal), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Danial Esmaeilifar (Tractor), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan)
Midfielders: Saeid Ezzatollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Mohammad Qorbani (Al Wahda), Saman Qoddous (Ittihad Kalba), Omid Nourafkan (Sepahan), Mohammad Mohebbi (FC Rostov), Mahdi Hashemnejad (Tractor), Alireza Koushki (Esteghlal), Mahdi Tikdari (Golgozar Sirjan), Hadi Habibinejad (Chadormalou)
Strikers: Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (Tractor), Mohammad Omri (Persepolis), Ali Alipour (Persepolis), Mahdi Taremi (Olympicos).

Maqsoudlou into last 16 at Chess World Cup

Sports Desk

Iranian grandmaster Parham Maqsoudlou secure a last-16 spot at the 2025 FIDE World Cup in Goa, India. No. 33 in the latest FIDE world ranking, Maqsoudlou defeated Croatian GM Ivan Saric 1.5-0.5 to advance to the fourth round, which starts on Tuesday. The two played to a stalemate in the first encounter before the 25-year-old Iranian triumphed in the second matchup. As a top-50 seed in the tournament, Maqsoudlou was given a bye in the first round and then beat Russian Alexander Motylev, who represents Romania in Goa, in the second round. The tournament is an eight-round knockout event. The

losers of the two semifinals will play a match for third place. The players who finish first, second, and third qualify for the Candidates Tournament 2026, a tournament to

decide the challenger for the World Chess Championship 2026. Matches consist of two classical games, followed by rapid and blitz tiebreaks if needed.



● varzesh3.com

IBSA Judo Asian Championships: Iran claims four medals to finish runner-up

Sports Desk

Iran's national blind and visually impaired team bagged four medals, including double golds, to finish as runner-up at the IBSA Judo Asian Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan. Ali Navaei captured the ultimate prize in the men's +95kg J1 event, thanks to a final victory over his opponent from the host country. Mousa Gholami secured a second gold medal for the country, triumphing in the -95kg weight category, while Amirhossein Nimrouzi settled for silver in the other class of +95kg division. Mahdi Borjlou, meanwhile,

defeated a Thai judoka to take a consolation bronze in the -81kg division, with Navid Farrokhzad finishing empty-handed in the -70kg event, following back-to-back defeats against opponents from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

✓ Iran's Ali Navaei (white) won the men's +95kg J1 gold medal at the IBSA Judo Asian Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan.
● paralympic.ir



Artisans preserve centuries of culture in Masnad weavings of Ardabil Province

Iranica Desk

Iran's diverse climates have shaped not only its landscapes but also the lifestyles of its people, influencing their beliefs, religions, traditions, and crafts. This cultural and environmental diversity has given rise to an extraordinary variety of handicrafts and handwoven products across the country. Among these unique crafts is the Masnad, a distinctive type of usable kilim, traditionally woven in the regions of Namin and Anbaran in Ardabil Province.

Typically measuring 110 by 170 centimeters, the Masnad, like other types of kilim, is woven on a loom. These textiles can be either one-sided or double-sided, with the double-sided versions naturally being more valuable. Many Masnad pieces are used as prayer rugs, often depicting altars in their designs. However, other types of Masnad are crafted for more general use, featuring a variety of patterns and motifs intended for laying on the floor for guests. The name "Masnad" itself means "a place where a person sits or leans on", a term celebrated even in the works of great Persian poets such as Rumi.

The decorative patterns of Masnad are predominantly geometric, with cursive motifs appearing only rarely. Symmetry is central to the design, created through precise vertical lines. One of the most striking features of the Masnad is the high contrast between the background color and the pattern, which enhances its visual appeal. Researchers note that the patterns and motifs of Masnad are



inspired by Shirakipich, another type of kilim from Kerman Province, though Masnad does not feature the iconic

central paisley motif. Among the most popular motifs is the Matn flower, locally known as Kesh-

miri, which often fills the background entirely. Other commonly used floral patterns include Khara, Shah Abbassi, Garmayi, and Joft. The Masnad is also framed with two distinctive border styles: Charkhi (circular) and Vakili. In addition, motifs of bushes, vases, flowers, and hunting grounds frequently embellish these traditional weavings.

Masnad is woven using raw or white cotton and monochrome wool yarns for the wefts, combining natural materials with meticulous craftsmanship. Each Masnad not only serves a practical purpose but also represents a cultural artifact, reflecting the rich heritage and artistic sensibilities of the Ardabil Province.

visitiran.ir

Gilan hosts IRNA chief on journey through rich tapestry of history, civic life

Iranica Desk

Gilan Province, a land steeped in history, culture, and the lives of distinguished contemporaries, welcomed Hossein Jaber Ansari, Managing Director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), on November 4, 2025. Jaber Ansari entered a province whose collective memory is rich with figures whose names shine across the galaxy of Iran's enduring legacy. In the provincial capital city of Rasht, every street bears the footprints of countless notable history-makers.

During his 29th provincial visit, Jaber Ansari paid homage to Mirza Kuchak Khan Jangali, the province's martyrs and prominent personalities. He met with IRNA staff and veterans in Gilan Province, the governor and mayor of Rasht, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, the Commander of the Northern Fleet, and the director general of Gilan Province's Department of Environment. His brief itinerary included visits to the Anzali Palace Museum, the Anzali International Wetland, and Fashtakeh village, designated as the National Mat-Weaving Village.

In a meeting with the mayor and head of the Rasht City Council, Jaber Ansari emphasized IRNA's national stature, stating, "IRNA, now 91 years old, must, based on its national responsibility, serve as a two-way bridge of information between municipal management and citizens. The municipality and the city council shoulder a significant part of the responsibilities that would otherwise fall on the government." He added that through its credibility and broad coverage, IRNA could communicate the actions, programs, and

challenges of urban management to citizens in a simple, understandable language. Jaber Ansari further stressed that such two-way communication not only informs citizens about the municipality's work but also ensures that the voice and needs of the people reach urban officials.

Jaber Ansari also conducted a joint visit with Director General of Gilan's Department of Environment, Farhad Hosseini Tayefeh to the Anzali International Wetland. While observing and reviewing the wetland's challenges, he highlighted IRNA's official duty to amplify environmental concerns to the authorities.

Covering approximately 20,000 hectares, the Anzali Wetland is among the largest in Iran and the world. Its unique vegetation, wildlife, and morphological connection to the Caspian Sea, along with its intricate river system, render it ecologically invaluable.

Today, however, its vital lifelines — once among the most beautiful and extensive natural habitats for wildlife — are threatened by domestic and industrial wastewater, invasive plants such as water hyacinth and azolla, sediment accumulation, failure to implement integrated watershed management plans, lack of water rights delivery, and declining Caspian Sea levels. Environmental experts warn that the ongoing decline of the Caspian Sea's water level will accelerate the drying of the Anzali Wetland, which may vanish entirely within 35 years.

Hosseini Tayefeh noted during the visit that the decreasing water levels across the wetland represent a looming disaster for this precious ecosystem.



Jaber Ansari at the Anzali Palace Museum
IRNA

Jaber Ansari also toured the Anzali Palace Museum, a military museum which is one of the most valuable heritage collections in Gilan Province. With a nearly century-long history, it reflects Qajar-era architectural influences.

Nestled in a charming garden adorned with orange and magnolia trees stretching toward the Caspian Sea, the palace boasts notable artistic features, including a three-story internal staircase connecting the levels, ingeniously designed so that standing on the upper landing allows a view of the lower floor without visible supports. The palace was built between 1929 and 1935 by skilled Iranian architects during the first Pahlavi era.

IRNA chief also paid tribute to Martyr Captain Yadollah Bayandor, son of Ali Akbar Bayandor, who commanded the Caspian naval forces during World

War II. Yadollah Bayandor, who played a key role in defending northern Iran against Soviet forces, was martyred in September 1941 at Anzali. His grave is located within the Anzali Palace Museum complex.

During his visit, Jaber Ansari paid tribute to Mirza Kuchak Khan Jangali, one of the few heroes of the Constitutional Revolution and the Jungle Movement, who courageously fought tyranny and foreign domination in pursuit of Iran's freedom and independence.

Mirza Kuchak Khan, born in 1860 in Rasht to a devout family, led one of the most popular local movements in Iran after the Constitutional Revolution, advocating for national sovereignty and independence.

Although the movement did not achieve its political objectives, its participants became the source of significant cultural currents in Gilan.

Mirza's struggle ended when, after years of resistance against the oppressive monarchy, he and a small group of followers attempted to regroup in Khalkhal but were captured in the snowy mountains of Talesh, where he was martyred. His tomb is located in Soleiman Darab neighborhood of Rasht.

Jaber Ansari also visited the mausoleum of Amir Hooshang Ebtehaj, the renowned contemporary poet, in Mohtasham Garden. Additional stops included the Kolah Farangi Mansion, Rashti Doozi Museum, the historic urban fabric of Rasht, and Fashtakeh village.

Fashtakeh village, located in Khomam, is famous for its traditional mat weaving and was designated a National Mat-Weaving Village in 2017 by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. The village hosts the House of Iranian Mat Museum, enjoys a favorable climate, lush scenery, and adequate facilities. The primary occupation of its residents is agriculture.

The name "Fashtakeh" derives from "Fasht" meaning "high" and "ke" meaning "village."

Mats from this village, which lies along the main Rasht-Anzali road, are exported to France, Germany, and the UAE, and the village.

IRNA chief also visited the tomb of Shivan Foomani, the folkloric poet of Gilan Province. Mir Ahmad Seyyed Fakhri Nejad, known as Shivan Foomani is celebrated as a successful bilingual poet whose works reflect the freedom-loving spirit of Mirza Kuchak Khan, the hardships of rice farmers, the challenges of rural life, and the experiences of ordinary citizens.

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Vol. 7974 ● Monday, November 10, 2025 ● 100,000 rials ● 8 pages

Iran's tourism diplomacy in Riyadh

Tehran, Baghdad set target of 5m cross-border visitors in new tourism accord

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran and Iraq agreed on Sunday to raise mutual tourist travel to five million visitors a year, in what officials described as a new stage in cultural and pilgrimage cooperation between the two neighbors.

The agreement came as Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Tourism Minister Reza Salehi-Amiri held talks with Iraqi Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakkak Al-Badrani on the sidelines of the 26th UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly in Riyadh, chn.ir reported.

Salehi-Amiri said the plan aims to institutionalize "civilizational and people-to-people diplomacy" through tourism. "Iran and Iraq share centuries of history, culture and faith," he said, calling the Arbaeen pilgrimage "the world's largest spiritual gathering" and urging its inscription on UNESCO's Intangible Heritage list. Arbaeen, a major Shia Muslim event commemorating the 40th day after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (PBUH), draws millions annually to the holy city of Karbala in Iraq.

He added that Iran seeks to expand both pilgrimage and leisure tourism, saying more than

3.5 million people already travel annually between the two countries. "We are determined to raise that to five million next year by easing border procedures and improving accommodation and transport," he said.

Al-Badrani welcomed the initiative, describing Arbaeen as "a shared heritage and pride of both nations." He pledged to improve road access and hospitality facilities, saying the cooperation "strengthens the human bond between our peoples."

The two ministers also agreed to form a joint technical committee to coordinate tourism projects, streamline visa processes and promote combined pilgrimage, leisure and health travel packages.

Salehi-Amiri praised Iraqi hospitality toward Iranian pilgrims, saying the warmth shown during Arbaeen "reflects a heartfelt connection between our nations that must now take an institutional form."

He also invited Al-Badrani to attend the Tehran International Tourism Exhibition in early 2026, proposing wider cooperation in museum partnerships, training programs and academic exchanges.

The minister arrived in Riyadh early Sunday, where he was received by Saudi Deputy Tour-



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi-Amiri (2nd R), discusses tourism cooperation with Iraqi Minister of Culture, Tourism, and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakkak Al-Badrani (1st L), on the sidelines of the 26th UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 9, 2025.

● chn.ir

ism Minister Majed Alhumaid and Iran's Ambassador Alireza Enayati.

During a series of bilateral meetings with counterparts from Indonesia, China, India, Tajikistan, Armenia and Uzbekistan, he underlined Iran's capacity for joint projects in cultural heritage, handicrafts and research.

"Iran's diverse landscapes and ancient civilization can serve as a hub for regional tourism cooperation," he told delegates, noting that cross-border exchanges are still "below potential."

The five-day UNWTO meeting in Riyadh, marking the organization's 50th anniversary, focuses on how artificial intelligence and innovation can reshape global tourism. Over 160 member states are attending.

Salehi-Amiri's participation is part of what Teh-



ran calls an active "tourism diplomacy" drive to expand Iran's role in global policy forums and attract new regional markets amid economic sanctions.

It is said that Iran-Iraq accord could boost hard-currency inflows and diversify visitor sources away from Western markets. Tourism experts estimate that Iraq already accounts for more than half of foreign arrivals to Iran, many

of them seeking religious and medical services. The new framework, they said, could help both countries transform their shared pilgrimage routes into a broader cultural and economic corridor. Salehi-Amiri described the understanding as "a practical step in cultural diplomacy." He added, "Iran and Iraq are not just neighbors; they are partners in faith, heritage and the human story that unites our region."

Two Iranian films, producer Nobakht head to Moroccan festival jury



Arts & Culture Desk

Two Iranian feature films will compete at the 30th Rabat International Author Film Festival this month, where Iranian producer Elaheh Nobakht has also been named to the event's seven-member international jury.

The festival runs from November 8 to 15 in the Moroccan capital, IRNA reported.

Nobakht, an experienced film distributor who has served on juries at more than ten global festivals, joins fellow jurors Jean-Claude Barney of France, Dutch filmmaker Marijke De Koning, French-Burkinabe actor-director Maimouna N'Diaye, and Moroccan producer Karim Debbagh.

They will judge the main competition section, dedicated this year to auteur-driven works described by organizers as "bold, thought-provoking and unconventional."

Competing from Iran are "The Last Act" By Peyman Shahbod and "Without Permission" by Hassan Nazer, a British-Iranian co-production. Nobakht will also help evaluate these entries, alongside international submissions from Europe, Africa and Asia.

Beyond the competition, the festival will

screen "The Camel and the Miller," a trilogy of animated shorts, "No substitute," "The White Winged," and "The Farmer and the Robot," by veteran Iranian director Abdollah Alimorad.

Organized by the Centre Cinematographique Marocain (CCM), the Rabat festival has earned a reputation as a key cultural bridge between continents, spotlighting artistic storytelling and emerging cinematic voices. The CCM lists the 2025 edition from November 7 to 16. Calling the event a "genuine celebration of daring auteur filmmaking," Nobakht said she hopes Iranian cinema will "resonate with global audiences and critics alike."

Over the past three decades, the Rabat International Author Film Festival has carved out a niche for films that challenge conventions and explore new visual languages, securing its place among North Africa's most respected cinematic showcases.

Iran's 'Two Sisters' wins Al Jazeera co-production award at Tokyo Docs 2025

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian documentary 'Two Sisters,' directed by Farahbakhsh Farhidnia and produced by Yaser Talebi and Setareh Zare, clinched the top co-production award from Al Jazeera Documentary Channel at the 2025 Tokyo Docs international forum, organizers announced.

Chosen from among 20 short-listed projects worldwide, 'Two Sisters' earned what the organizers called the "highest honor" of this year's edition, held from November 4 to 7 in Tokyo.

The event brought together independent filmmakers and broadcasters from Japan, India, Iran, China, and South Korea to pitch and co-finance new documentary projects. Set in the rugged mountains

of northern Iran, Two Sisters follows the quiet resistance of two elderly siblings fighting to save their ancestral home and land from destruction, a story that blends intimate family drama with environmental struggle.

The production team includes Talebi as cinematographer, editor, and producer; Zare as international producer; researchers Ahmad Bavand and Ali Sadeghi; sound engineers Hassan Jafari and Mahmoud Mousavi; production manager Mohsen Pouyanfar; and aerial cameraman Vahid Dorvah.

Currently in post-production, the film is backed by a consortium of broadcasters including Al Jazeera Documentary Channel (Qatar) and NHK Japan, alongside Sweden's Meritis Film. The inter-



national support is expected to accelerate its completion and pave the way for a global release next year.

Farhidnia described the award as "a bridge for stories rooted in local realities to reach the world," adding that Two Sisters "reflects resilience and belonging in a rapidly changing landscape."

Indian city hosts Iran's 'When the Moon Was Full'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Narges Abyar joined Indian audiences at a three-day cultural event, "Screening of Iranian Films and Experience Exchange," held from November 7 to 9 in Hyderabad, to present her award-winning drama 'When the Moon Was Full.'

Organized by the Moving Images Society, one of Hyderabad's oldest film clubs with over 20 years of promoting global cinema, the program offered Indian cinephiles a close look at Iran's new generation of directors, actors,

and screenwriters.

Abyar's 2019 feature 'When the Moon Was Full,' based on a true story, opened the festival on Friday before a packed house that included filmmakers, members of the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce (TFCC), diplomats, and local officials. The screening drew strong applause from the audience and praise from Hyderabad's film community. Viewers described Abyar's film as "profound yet shocking," calling her directorial touch both sensitive and fearless. Indian actor Suman Talwar said the film "not only tells a real story but delves

deep into emotional and social layers that resonate with our culture."

Speaking to local media, Abyar said she was "delighted that Iranian cinema has found a space for dialogue with Indian audiences." She added that such encounters could "build a bridge for future collaborations between Iranian and Indian filmmakers."

Abyar, known internationally for "Track 143," 'Breath,' and 'When the Moon Was Full' has received numerous awards for her portrayals of women and the human cost of conflict.

Iran, China to hold joint workshop on carbon-free construction technologies

Social Desk

Iran and China will launch a three-day joint online workshop on "innovative technologies for decarbonization and sustainable environment in construction," the Iranian National Science Foundation (INSF) announced on Sunday. The event, from November 10 to 12, is co-organized by Tehran's Sharif University of Technology and Chongqing University in southwestern China, under the sponsorship of INSF and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC). The sessions are being conducted in English and streamed virtually, allowing international participants to join free of charge and receive

certificates of attendance.

The opening ceremony will begin on Monday, followed by technical panels on November 11 and 12.

The program brings together environmental researchers and industry experts to exchange expertise on carbon-neutral materials, energy-efficient design, and sustainable construction standards.

Organizers said the workshop aims to "pave the way" for advanced collaboration in green innovation between Iranian and Chinese research institutes. "This initiative strengthens scientific ties while addressing one of the most pressing global challenges, carbon reduction in urban development," an INSF official said during the opening session.

The joint platform also reflects both countries' broader commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and investing in low-carbon technologies amid growing international pressure to curb climate change.

Iran, one of the Middle East's largest emitters, is seeking to diversify its climate diplomacy beyond the West by expanding cooperation with Asian partners in renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.

The INSF called the event "a valuable step" toward promoting science-based environmental policies and sustainable technologies capable of meeting 21st-century ecological goals.