

Iranian students win three titles at China robotics event

Runner-up spot no less than championship: Team manager tells Iran Daily

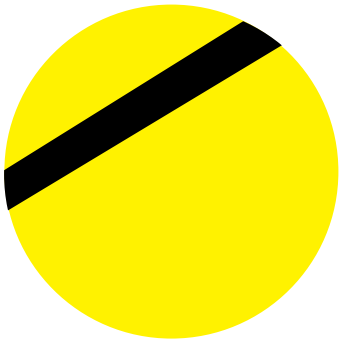
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ROBOTCHALLENGE 2022

Robotby-Senior

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE



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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) attends a meeting with the secretaries of Iran's political parties in Tehran on August 10, 2026.



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Iran's new grand strategy and its implications for Persian Gulf security

Is Islamic Republic shifting from resistance to power-building?

By Sharareh Abdolhosseinzadeh
Political Science Researcher

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

The article "Iran's New Grand Strategy: How a Remade Islamic Republic Will Reshape the Middle East," written by Narges Bajoghli and Vali Nasr for "Foreign Affairs", is one of the major recent attempts to reassess Iran's foreign policy and strategic behavior following a series of security, regional and domestic crises. The authors argue that the Islamic Republic, after experiencing extensive external pressure, war, sanctions and confrontation with regional rivals, has entered a new phase — one in which Iran is seeking to strike a balance between the ideological elements of the [1979] revolution, the imperatives of the nation-state and the geopolitical requirements of major powers. The article's central thesis is that Iran today is no longer merely a "reactive" actor that resists external pressure, but is working out a new grand strategy to preserve and expand its power. From this perspective, Tehran has moved toward a combination of nationalism, securitization, military deterrence, strategic autonomy and regional presence. In the authors' view, this shift could have an impact on the future order of the Middle East. Despite the importance of this analysis, some aspects require closer scrutiny and assessment, as there is a fundamental difference between the "ability to survive" and the "ability to turn resistance into sustainable power."

New Iran: transformation or recalibration of old strategy
One of the article's most important claims is that Iran is moving from a purely ideological Islamic Republic toward a nationalist state. The authors argue that the experience of recent crises has given greater importance to the concept of "national security" in Iranian policy, with classical elements of state power, such as territorial integrity, political independence and geopolitical position, being placed alongside revolutionary ideals. This analysis is noteworthy in one respect, because the reality is that Iran's foreign policy in recent years has increasingly become explainable through the logic of classical states. Issues such as maintaining the regional balance, foiling attempts to topple the Iranian government, developing deterrence and creating bargaining leverage point to a form of geopolitical rationality. The issue, however, is that this shift should not be interpreted as the end of ideology. The Islamic Republic has neither moved beyond ideology nor abandoned it; rather, it appears to be combining two different logics. In other words, concepts such as resistance, independence and opposition to foreign domination remain present, but they have been placed within a framework that puts greater emphasis on national interests, territorial security and regional power. Therefore, it may be more accurate to speak of a "redefinition of ideology in the service of national interests" rather than a complete replacement of ideology with nationalism.

From resistance to deterrence: shift in Iran's foreign policy logic

One of the most important changes highlighted by the article is the transformation in the concept of Iranian power. In previous decades, Iran's regional policy was largely associated with the concept of "strategic depth" and support for non-state actors across the region. But the experience of recent years has shown that Tehran is placing greater emphasis on the concept of direct deterrence. Its missile program, drone capabilities, naval capacities and network of regional partners are part of this strategy. The main objective of these tools is not necessarily to win a conventional war, but to raise the cost of any attack against Iran and create bargaining power. From this perspective, Iran's behavior following recent attacks and tensions can also be analyzed. Tehran has sought to convey two messages simultaneously: first, that it has the ability to respond and impose costs; and second, that it has no desire to get drawn into a broad and protracted war. This pattern shows that Iran's policy has increasingly moved toward "crisis management" and "controlling the level of confrontation." The most important criticism of Bajoghli and Nasr's article is that they focus more on Iran's security and geopolitical capabilities, while paying less attention to the issue of developing national power. A country's power is not defined solely by its military capabilities, geographical position

or regional networks. The economy, human capital, technology, popular support and ability to attract investment are also important components of national power. Over the past four decades, Iran has managed to achieve gains in the security and regional spheres, but at the same time it has faced serious economic challenges: declining foreign investment; limited engagement with the global economy; pressure resulting from sanctions; and domestic development problems. Therefore, the key question about the future of Iran's strategy is not whether Tehran has the ability to resist, but rather this: Can Iran turn security resistance into economic power and sustainable development? If the answer is no, the new strategy could, instead of generating sustainable power, simply become a model for permanent management of crises. **Implications of Iran's new strategy for Persian Gulf Arab states** From the perspective of Persian Gulf studies, the article's main significance lies in its regional implications. If the authors' analysis is correct, the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf will need to prepare for a period in which Iran places greater emphasis on consolidating its regional position. However, the future order in the Persian Gulf will probably not be shaped solely by competition between Iran and the United States. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Oman are also redefining their roles. Three important trends can be observed

in this regard:
1. From security dependence to multilateralism The Arab countries of the Persian Gulf have historically relied largely on US security guarantees, but in recent years they have sought to diversify their relations. Expanding economic ties with China, maintaining security cooperation with the United States and managing tensions with Iran point to a move toward a multidirectional foreign policy. Under these circumstances, even if Iran has a new strategy for expanding its regional influence, the Arab countries will not remain passive.
2. Future competition will be more geopolitical than merely military One of the most important changes in the region is that competition is no longer solely about military power. The future of the Persian Gulf will depend on issues such as economic corridors, energy security, technology, investment and regional connectivity. Under such circumstances, the country that can establish a greater economic and connectivity role will not necessarily be the one with the greatest military capabilities.
3. Need to redefine concept of regional security The article's analysis shows that the traditional security order in the Persian Gulf is changing. The old model, built around the United States, its Arab allies and the containment of Iran, is no longer as stable as it once was.

Baqaei: Saudi-Turkey-Pakistan pact shows region no longer trust US security promises

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said a recent defense agreement signed between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey indicates a change in the perception of regional countries that they can no longer rely solely on the United States' claim of providing security.

The development shows a change in the perception of regional countries when it comes to the issue of security, Baqaei said during his weekly press conference on Monday in response to a question about Iran's stance vis-à-vis the trilateral pact.

"Given developments over the past two or three years, regional countries have realized that security is not a commodity that can be purchased from false security brokers," Baqaei added.

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan signed the defense agreement on Friday with the purpose of strengthening collective deterrence against any act of aggression.

In a joint statement, the signatories said the pact stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three countries will be regarded as an attack on all.

It aims to strengthen collective security and promote peace, security and stability in the region and beyond, the statement added.

Baqaei dismissed concerns over the defense agreement, emphasizing that Tehran has "deeply rooted bonds" with the three countries.

"We maintain deep bonds with Pakistan, Turkey, and even Saudi Arabia and there is no reason for Iran to be concerned about the pact," he said.

"This development shows that regional countries cannot trust the claim by the United States and other extra-regional countries to provide security," Baqaei



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei speaks during his weekly press conference in Tehran on August 10, 2026.

● ISNA

effort to de-escalate tensions, including helping broker a ceasefire in April and a framework agreement in June.

Terrorist attacks from Iraq's soil

Baqaei also said Tehran expects the Iraqi authorities to make their utmost efforts to prevent terrorist groups and hostile foreign actors, including the US, from using the Iraqi territory against Iran's interests.

He added that Iran and Iraq need to strive to reach a "clear" prospect for mutual relations in all fields, including security.

"Consultations between the two countries are ongoing continuously. We are aware of the threats and dangers facing the security of our borders," the spokesman emphasized.

Ukraine's attack

Baqaei further rejected Ukraine's claim that its attack on an Iranian commercial vessel in the Caspian Sea was not deliberate, saying it remains unconvinced by Kiev's explanation and expects compensation for the incident.

"We are not yet convinced by the Ukrainian side's claim that this action was unintentional," the Iranian spokesman added.

Pointing to senior Ukrainian officials' acknowledgment of the attack, Baqaei emphasized that Kiev bears responsibility for addressing the consequences of the incident.

Baqaei further stressed that Tehran expects Kiev to compensate for the damage caused by the attack.

pointed out.

Strait of Hormuz

The Iranian spokesperson further said Tehran and Muscat have agreed on a navigation route through the Strait of Hormuz and are examining some technical aspects related to the arrangement. Baqaei added that Iran would establish mechanisms to monitor shipping in the strategic waterway and would also provide services to vessels using the route as part of efforts to ensure safe navigation.

Therefore, he emphasized, charging service fees for ships passing through the strait was totally natural.

"If the United States continues its policies and naval blockade, the Strait of Hormuz will not be a safe passage," Baqaei further warned.

No talks with US

Baqaei said Tehran is not currently engaged in negotiations with Washington

but instead is focused on talks with Oman to determine a shipping route through the Strait of Hormuz.

The spokesman added that the exchange of messages through mediators on ongoing developments was, however, a normal occurrence.

He explained that Iran's next step would depend on the circumstances and developments pertaining to the situation.

Baqaei also said Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf have been invited by Pakistan to visit Islamabad for talks.

Araghchi and Ghalibaf will make the visit "at an appropriate time", he said without providing any more details on the time of the visit.

"Reciprocal visits and exchanges are a natural part of the growing ties between the two neighboring countries," he added.

Pakistan played a mediatory role between Washington and Tehran in an

Aliyev says Baku stands by Iranian people



Ilham Aliyev

International Desk

Azerbaijani president said on Monday that Baku has always stood by Iranian people after Iranian president appreciated cooperation by regional countries during the US aggression against Iran.

"The peoples of Azerbaijan

and Iran have always stood by each other's side in narrow and difficult days," Ilham Aliyev said in a post on X.

"Against the backdrop of the recent events that have taken place in our region, Azerbaijan has once again demonstrated that it stands by its brotherly Iranian people," he added.

The Azerbaijani president also thanked his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezeshkian "for his kind and sincere words".

President Pezeshkian on Saturday outlined the growing cooperation with countries in the region, including Azer-

baijan, during the recent aggression by the United States which has imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports and intensify economic pressure on Iran.

Pezeshkian said neighboring countries had played an important role in supporting Iran under wartime conditions.

"Pakistan is now cooperating with us wholeheartedly. Afghanistan has also been highly cooperative. Turkmenistan has provided appropriate cooperation. Russia and Iraq have also assisted us well. As for the Republic of Azerbaijan, despite certain

political issues, dialogue and engagement have continued," he said.

Pezeshkian said regional diplomacy had helped cushion the impact of wartime restrictions and what he described as a blockade.

"Had this regional diplomatic process not existed, one would have to ask where the supplies and resources currently available to the country would have come from," he said.

According to Tasnim, Pezeshkian said Azerbaijani authorities in Baku provided "significant and substantial" assistance to Iran across a

range of areas during the conflict, despite existing political issues between the two countries.

The US has imposed the blockade on Iranian ports after Iran closed the strategic Strait of Hormuz in response to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran in February 28. Washington aims to force Tehran to accept its conditions in a possible agreement to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran.

Iran has expanded its cooperation with regional countries to alleviate the economic pressure caused by the US blockade.

Pezeshkian: No disagreement between officials, Armed Forces on Islamabad MoU



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) speaks during a meeting with the secretaries of Iran's political parties in Tehran on August 10, 2026.

● president.ir

International Desk

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday that the country's Armed Forces had fully backed the government's diplomatic efforts, including the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, while warning that internal divisions pose a greater threat to Iran than military attacks.

Pezeshkian made the remarks during a meeting with the secretaries of the country's political parties.

President said there was no disagreement between political officials and the Armed Forces on the Islamabad memorandum of understanding signed between Iran and the United States to end the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. He said Iran's adversaries were no longer relying solely on military means, arguing that their strategy had shifted toward fueling domestic divisions.

"The reality is that the enemy's plan to bring about the country's collapse is no longer merely a military plan. Based on analyses of the enemies' behavior and approach, they are counting on creating divisions from within and deepening rifts in order to push the country into crisis and collapse," he said.

"You cannot destroy this country with missiles and bombs alone, but through division you can weaken and destroy the country," he added.

The president called on political and social factions to put aside their differences, particularly under the current circumstances, saying his government's priority remained improving people's livelihoods and addressing social and economic challenges.

"The first step toward overcoming these problems is to reach an understanding on shared concepts and issues and, at the present stage, set aside our differences," Pezeshkian said.

Pezeshkian also said eliminating bureaucracy, while creating greater opportunities for participation by the public, political parties, political movements and social groups, formed a key pillar of his government's approach to governance.

Mohsen Rezaei appointed as secretary of Iran's top security body

National Desk

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei appointed Mohsen Rezaei as his representative to the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), Iran's highest national security decision-making body.

The appointment was formalized in a decree issued by the Leader on Sunday, citing Rezaei's extensive experience, particularly his role as one of the pioneering military commanders during the eight-year Sacred Defense (Iran-Iraq War) in the 1980s.

In the decree, the Leader also expressed his gratitude to Mohammad Bagher Zolqadr for his



Mohsen Rezaei

"round-the-clock efforts" while serving as his representative to

the SNSC.

Following the Leader's decree, President Masoud Pezeshkian appointed Rezaei as the new secretary of the SNSC.

Ayatollah Khamenei also appointed Zolqadr as his political adviser.

The Leader expressed hope that Zolqadr would successfully carry out his new responsibilities and contribute to advancing the ideals of the Islamic Revolution.

His appointment comes as tensions between Iran and the United States remain high, with Washington continuing to escalate in brazen violation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the two sides to end the third imposed war.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Gov't seeks to ease pressure on southern ports by expanding land trade routes

Economy Desk

Iran's government is prioritizing the expansion of land border crossings and diversification of trade gateways across the country to ease pressure on southern ports, a government official said on Monday. Hananeh Darashti, a senior official with the Presidential Strategic Department, said President Masoud Pezeshkian had placed particular emphasis on opening up border crossings.

"The president has strongly emphasized removing existing obstacles at the borders," she said, according to IRNA.

"The overarching policy of this office is to promote the country's logistics capabilities and move beyond the concentration of activity at southern ports, so that fully activating border crossings can unlock the potential of land-based trade."

Iran faces renewed restrictions on maritime routes. Southern ports remain under a US naval blockade imposed by President Donald Trump in mid-April, aimed at pressuring Tehran into an agreement after a 40-day US-Israeli war that began in late February. After a pause of several weeks, the naval blockade was re-instated in mid-July. Iran is seeking to diversify its logistics corridors to counter growing restrictions on its trade routes.

Iran shares land borders with sev-



eral countries, providing opportunities to diversify its foreign trade routes. Turkey, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Ar-

menia, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are among the countries that can play a role in devel-

oping Iran's land-based trade and transit.

Darashti made the comments during

a visit to the Mahiroud border site in South Khorasan Province, stressing the need for expert assessments of border crossings.

"The findings from the assessment in South Khorasan will be considered alongside studies from other border provinces to develop a comprehensive picture of the obstacles and opportunities facing the country's border trade."

Mahiroud has been the province's busiest border crossing in recent years and is Iran's third official crossing with Afghanistan, alongside the Dogharoun border crossing in Razavi Khorasan Province and the Milak crossing in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

In related comments reported by Tasnim news agency, Iran Chamber of Commerce Vice President Ghadir Qiafeh said the private sector had made several trips to China, Russia, Turkey and European countries in recent months to secure raw materials for domestic producers amid the blockade that has disrupted their supply.

He said the private sector had activated alternative routes including China's rail network which has expanded significantly in recent years. Qiafeh said land crossings, including Dogharoun, Sarakhs, Bajgiran, Lotfabad, Incheh Borun and Bazargan, are already operating at high capacity amid wartime conditions that have disrupted supply chains.

IRIMO pursues int'l action over attacks on civilian infrastructure during war

Economy Desk

Iran's Meteorological Organization said on Monday that about 50 weather stations across the country were seriously damaged during the recent 40-day war, adding that it is pursuing diplomatic efforts to secure international condemnation of attacks on civilian meteorological equipment.

Sahar Tajbakhsh, head of the weather agency, said two of the agency's employees in the cities of Iranshahr in southeast and Bushehr in southwest were killed while on duty during the conflict.

"Besides this painful loss, about 50 meteorological stations across the

country suffered serious damage to buildings and equipment, while some of the organization's facilities at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport and several of its headquarters buildings near the Defense Ministry were also damaged in the attacks," she said at a news conference, according to IRNA.

A US-Israeli coalition launched a 40-day war on Iran on February 28, which also involved strikes on civilians and infrastructure. After a pause of several weeks following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU), the United States resumed strikes on Iran's infrastructure on July 11 which continued for about two weeks.

Tajbakhsh said the Meteorological

Organization had taken legal and diplomatic measures in response to the damage. It had submitted detailed reports on the losses and formally lodged its objections with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in two separate rounds.

"Our request to this international body is to put attacks on civilian and meteorological equipment on the agenda as a serious demand from affected countries at the upcoming World Meteorological Congress and to prohibit such attacks," she said.

"We have also requested international assistance to rebuild the infrastructure. Correspondence has been conducted through the Foreign Ministry



and Iran's ambassador in Geneva so that the issue can be submitted as an

official document to the 2027 World Meteorological Congress," she said.

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0440046

second Announcement

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity	UNIT
01	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES 8-1/2 IN., I.A.D.C. 5.1.7	25	NO
02	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES 8-3/8 IN., I.A.D.C. 5.1.7	10	NO
03	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES 6-1/8 IN., I.A.D.C. 5.1.7	35	NO
04	NOZZLES FOR SIZE 8-3/8 TO 12-1/4 INCH	40	NO
05	NOZZLES FOR SIZE 5-5/8 TO 6-3/4 INCH	40	NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 5,254/87 EURO or 8,951,700,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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Iran builds first 200-MW generator rotor shaft amid sanctions

Economy Desk

Iran has built its first 200-megawatt generator rotor shaft amid sanctions, a deputy head of the Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) said, describing the component as a strategic part of the power generation industry.

"With the construction of this strategic component, the country's power generation needs will be met through domestic engineering capabilities at the height of sanctions," Asghar Haqqanah said in an interview with IRIB.

He added that the process of reverse engineering, designing and manufacturing a 200-megawatt rotor shaft was carried out in the country for the first time.

"This component is one of the vital and complex parts of power generators and, following successful tests, is ready to be installed at power plants across the country," he said. Haqqanah said the 200-megawatt rotor shaft was among the industry's sensitive and critical components and that the United States, Germany, Denmark and Japan had the capability to manufacture it, while sanctions had prevented Iran from obtaining it.

"This achievement is the result of efforts by



domestic specialists to overcome technological restrictions and deepen domestic manufacturing of power generation equipment," he said.

A generator rotor shaft is the main rotating shaft inside an electrical generator that supports and turns the rotor.

According to Attar Goudarzi, head of the Esfarayen Steel Complex, the strategic component was reverse-engineered over eight months and manufactured in about six months using domestic capabilities. Meeting the country's power generation needs despite sanctions was a significant achievement, he said.

Iran has faced Western sanctions for decades over its nuclear activities, pressure that has weighed most heavily on its oil and energy sectors.

AQR unveils special programs for Islamic month of Safar

Under 'Iran of Imam Reza' slogan

ANNOUNCEMENT

The activities planned for the final 10 days of Safar, the second month of the Islamic lunar calendar, at Astan Quds Razavi (AQR) are organized into three sections: headquarters operations, cultural support, and artistic and educational programs. They aim to explain the teachings of Imam Reza (PBUH), promote practical adherence to the principle of Velayat-e Faqih, and improve services for pilgrims and residents.

According to the report, a content framework for the final 10 days of Safar has been prepared and communicated to the provincial executive bodies to ensure maximum coordination. Additionally, a special cultural headquarters for this period has commenced its operations. By forming specialized working groups in the fields of propagation, products, scientific-research, and media, this headquarters has taken responsibility for content production, audience analysis, and the integration of information dissemination. The establishment of a specific naming framework for the final 10 days of Safar was also implemented to maintain content and identity cohesion across all programs.

AQR to host Sunni scholars and intellectuals

A symposium for Sunni scholars and intellectuals centered on the theme of the Great Prophet (PBUH) is a key program organized to pursue the sacred axis of unity within the Islamic Ummah.

A collection of cultural and promotional items has been prepared for use in the city, at service tents (mukibs), and in accommodation centers. Furthermore, special cultural packages have been arranged for hotels, railways, and airports to ensure the thematic message of these days is conveyed from the moment pilgrims arrive in Mashhad, northeast Iran. The production of audio-visual packages and the design of exclusive posters for the final 10 days of Safar are among the other measures taken by this organization to strengthen the spiritual atmosphere of the service tents and accommodation centers.

The walkway of the late Ayat. Vaez Tabasi has been designed as the "Amin Narrative" cultural and artistic passage. This passage focuses on the perspective of the martyred Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution (may Allah sanctify his soul) regarding the concepts of Imam Reza (PBUH), pilgrimage, and the culture of service, representing his intellectual system through diverse artistic formats. In this section, in addition to explaining the three main concepts of service, pilgrimage, and Imamate, six historical figures related to the life and era of Imam Reza (PBUH) are introduced to the pilgrims.

The Qur'anic program package "Angels of Resistance" has recreated the image of the circle of chil-

dren surrounding the martyred Leader at the Dar al-Zikr area of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. Additionally, three special publications titled "Minaret," "Naghareh Khaneh," and "Dar al-Zikr" have been produced for different age groups.

Six plays based on the gifts donated by the martyred Leader to the museum have been produced and will be performed at the Museum of the Leader's Gifts until late September. Furthermore, the long play "Footsteps of the Sun" in the Quds Hall and the documentary-film "Sayyid Khorasani" behind the Wali al-Asr Portico are among the other artistic programs of this period.

Additionally, the scientific-cultural program "Tireless Fighter" is being broadcast in eight parts as a combined dialogue format on Iran's national media, and the "Qur'anic Leader" exhibition is welcoming enthusiasts.

From public mourning to martyrdom night sermons

Concurrent with the arrival of the final 10 days of Safar and the heartbreaking passing of the Prophet of Love and Mercy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the martyrdom of his eldest grandson, Imam Hassan (PBUH), and the lonely martyrdom of the Prophet's kin, Imam Reza (PBUH), various promotional-cultural programs and mourning rituals are being held at the shrine to allow pilgrims to benefit from the blessings of visiting the Imam of Mercy.

'In Mourning of the Sun' ritual

Among these programs is the "In Mourning of the Sun" mourning ritual. Starting from the evening of Saturday, August 8, 2026 (corresponding to the 24th of Safar), for five consecutive nights following the evening congregational prayers in the Imam Khomeini Portico of the shrine, this event will host devotees of the Ahl al-Bayt.

'Razavi Sermon' ritual

The "Razavi Sermon" mourning and lamentation ritual is another program of the shrine during the final 10 days of Safar. This special program will commence from the evening of Sunday, August 9, 2026 (corresponding to the 25th of Safar), for five consecutive nights at 10:00 p.m. local time in the Grand Imam Khomeini Portico of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine, hosting pilgrims.

Special mourning ceremony for women

A special mourning ceremony has also been arranged for female pilgrims and residents during these days. Held under the title "Mourning Prophethood and Guardianship," the ceremony will welcome female pilgrims and residents every day until the end of Safar in two sessions: at 10:20 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. local time in the Najma Khatun Portico of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine.

The mourning ceremony includes various sections, including



Children prepare to read the Holy Qur'an as part of the Qur'anic program "Angels of Resistance" held at the Dar al-Zikr area of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine on August 9, 2026.

● razavi.ir

Mourning ceremonies for non-Iranian pilgrims

Special mourning ceremonies for non-Iranian pilgrims during the final 10 days of Safar will be held in two sections for Arabic-speaking and Urdu-speaking pilgrims. The special program for Arabic-speaking pilgrims will welcome visitors from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates in two daily sessions: after the noon and afternoon prayers in the Dar al-Marhama Portico, and after the sunset and night prayers in the Ghadir Portico of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. The Ghadir Portico of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine will also host Urdu-speaking pilgrims from India and Pakistan during the final 10 days of Safar. Mourning ceremonies will be held every night after the sunset and night prayers. The "Gathering of Arabic-Speaking Women," scheduled for 5 p.m.

lectures and presentations on religious teachings, recitation of prose pieces by adolescent girls, religious poetry, lamentation recitations, and expressions of grief for the Prophet Muhammad's household.

Children's mourning ceremony at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine

The "Children's Hussainiyeh" special program, aimed at promoting the teachings of the household of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is another event planned for the mourning days of the final 10 days of Safar.

During the ceremony, religious concepts, including the conduct of the family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the etiquette of pilgrimage, are taught to children aged three to 10 through poetry, tales, stories, puppet shows, and other child-oriented activities in a child-friendly environment.



A poster of the martyred Leader of Iran's Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei alongside one of his poems is seen in a square in the holy city of Mashhad, northeastern Iran, on August 9, 2026.

● razavi.ir



local time on Wednesday, August 12, and a poetry evening for Urdu-speaking pilgrims, scheduled for Sunday, August 9, after the sunset and night prayers in the Ghadir Portico, are among the main programs for non-Iranian pilgrims at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine during the final 10 days of Safar.

'Hussainiyeh of the Shrine' program

One of the most popular programs during the final 10 days of Safar is the establishment of a Hussainiyeh representing the entire Islamic Republic of Iran at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. The Hussainiyeh will be set up in the Quds Courtyard of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine, where mourning groups from across the country will gather to mourn and express their devotion to the sacred presence of the family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The Hussainiyeh will welcome religious mourning groups from the provinces of Mazandaran, Hamedan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Golestan, Isfahan, Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Hormozgan, East Azarbaijan, Bandar Abbas, and other areas in three daily sessions: from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m., and from 11 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. local time.

'Threshold of devotion' program

During the final 10 days of Safar, a special program titled "Threshold of Devotion," a mourning gathering for various social groups and pilgrimage delegations, will be held every day from 7:30 p.m. local time in the Dar al-Hedayah Portico of the Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine from August 9 to 13.

Series of religious Q&A sessions

During the mourning days of the final 10 days of Safar, pilgrims and residents of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine can attend a series of religious question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions every day at 7:40 p.m. local time in the Islamic Republic Courtyard of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. The sessions will address various religious, social, cultural, and pilgrimage-related topics in the presence of religious instructors and experts.

Qur'anic programs at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine

Holding Qur'anic gatherings is another program planned for the final 10 days of Safar. One such event is the "Razavi Qur'an Recitation Forum," which will welcome pilgrims every day at 5 p.m. local time in the Imam Khomeini Portico of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. The Dar al-Hojjah Portico of the Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine will also host the Razavi Qur'an Recitation Forum every night after the sunset and night prayers, with the participation of international Qur'an reciters and memorizers. A special Qur'anic gathering for adolescents will be held every day



A collection of cultural and promotional items has been prepared for use in the city, at service tents (mukibs), and in accommodation centers. Furthermore, special cultural packages have been arranged for hotels, railways, and airports to ensure the thematic message of these days is conveyed from the moment pilgrims arrive in Mashhad, northeast Iran.

two hours before the sunset call to prayer in the Maghsurah Portico of the Goharshad Mosque, welcoming Qur’anic-minded teenagers from Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine.

‘Step by step’ youth service event

The “Step by Step” youth service event will be held at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine with the participation of 600 female and male teenagers. From August 8 to 10, between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. local time, the teenagers will serve pilgrims in several areas, including sprinkling rosewater, distributing water and sherbet, assisting elderly pilgrims, supervising children’s activities, explaining the meaning of pilgrimage, and reciting pilgrimage texts for visitors. The boys will serve in the Ghadir Courtyard and Goharshad Mosque, while the girls will serve in the Imam Khomeini Portico and Dar al-Hojjah Portico.

‘Book Reading Podium’ cultural program

The “Book Reading Podium” cultural program, centered on introducing and reading excerpts from the book “Memento,” will be held every day at 5:30 p.m. local time for one hour in the Quds Courtyard of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. During the program, pilgrims and residents will stand behind the podium and read sections of the book. At the end of each session, selected participants will be honored with the presentation of blessed gifts from Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine.

‘Amin’ knowledge campaign

The “Amin” knowledge campaign is also being held at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine concurrent with the final 10 days of Safar. As part of this campaign, 35 educational flashcards for each participant, totaling 700,000 copies, will be produced and distributed among pilgrims. The content of these flashcards includes stories of Imam Reza (PBUH), narratives from the life of the martyred Leader, selected excerpts from his messages, and passages from the Aminullah Pilgrimage text. In the field of production and distribution of cultural products, a collection of written works and educational products tailored to different groups of pilgrims is offered at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. Additionally, crafts with Razavi themes, including the Naghareh Khaneh, the Saqqakhaneh (public drinking fountain), and service tents, have been prepared for children and adolescents.

‘Elegy of the Sun’ cultural competitions

The “Elegy of the Sun” series of cultural competitions is also held during the final 10 days of Safar with the aim of deepening the pilgrims’ connection with Razavi teachings. These competitions are designed using field and virtual capacities, and different age groups and nationalities can participate in them. This program includes weekly written competitions, the “Memento” book reading competition focused on the explanation of the letter of Imam Reza (PBUH) to Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani and held in the Quds Courtyard after the noon prayer, the interactive and challenging competition “Victorious Stranger,” special competitions for children in the children’s portico, special competitions for non-Iranian pilgrims in the Ghadir Courtyard, and text-message competitions concurrent with the mourning ceremonies.

Ten content-based portico murals

In the field of environmental advertising, 10 content-based portico murals will be installed in different areas of Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine. These portico murals are designed using ritual and Razavi poetry, as well as poems by the martyred Leader. Alongside these, special graphic designs will be executed in the main porticos of the shrine and the U-turns leading to the shrine. A special traffic plan for pilgrims will also be implemented for visiting the tomb of the martyred Leader in the Dar al-Zikr Portico. In this plan, two dedicated paths for men and two paths for women have been designated. Shrine servants will be stationed along the four paths to guide pilgrims, organize queues, answer questions, and assist the elderly and disabled. Additionally, the space and floral arrangements around the tomb will be continuously maintained.

Diverse media and virtual space programs

In the media and virtual space section, diverse programs are implemented to cover the events of the final 10 days of Safar and reflect the atmosphere of the shrine to domestic and international audiences. These programs include live broadcasts from specific locations of the shrine, such as the Naghareh Khaneh and minarets, coverage of the children’s portico programs, the execution of the “Challenge with Servants,” live coverage of the Ghadir Courtyard, and the production of multi-language content, podcasts, music videos, and video clips.

Establishment of the ‘Imam Jawad’ service tent (mukib)

Outside the shrine and along the routes leading to Mashhad, the “Imam Jawad” (PBUH) service tent run by shoe-keeper servants on the Neyshabur-Mashhad axis, and the “Miqat al-Reza” service tent run by doorkeeper servants on the Sarakhs-Mashhad axis, are providing services to pilgrims traveling on foot. These service tents provide facilities including catering, accommodation, welfare services, health and medical care, guidance, and cultural and promotional programs.

‘Sanctuary’ special program

The “Sanctuary” special program, centered on performing the prayer of supplication to Imam Mahdi (PBUH), is held every day at 10:45 a.m. local time in the Ayat. Tabrizi Sanctuary, as well as on August 6 and 13 after the noon prayer in the Najma Khatun Portico. The “Ascension of the Believers” special program, centered on the voluntary prayer of the Great Prophet (PBUH), will be held on the night of August 11, and “Prostration in the Eighth Sanctuary,” centered on the voluntary prayer of Imam Reza (PBUH), will be held on the night of August 12, immediately after the sunset and night prayers in the late Ayat. Nahavandi Sanctuary. Services for correcting the recitation of pilgrims’ prayers are also provided every day in two time slots, from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. local times, in the sanctuaries of Ayat. Tabrizi and Ayat. Nahavandi, as well as the Dar al-Velayah Portico.

‘Service in Paradise’ initiative

The “Service in Paradise” initiative offers honorary service opportunities for men and women aged 17 to 55. Initial registration



People prepare a service tent (mukib) in a road leading to the holy city of Mashhad, northeastern Iran, on August 8, 2026, to accommodate weary pilgrims on their way to participate in the rituals of the final 10 days of Safar, the second month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

● MEHR

is facilitated through the Nasim Razavi software and the Razavi Servant system, with daily service commitments ranging from two to four hours. The service reservation time for men is set from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and for women from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. local time. Areas of service include wheelchair assistance and cleaning duties. Offices for this plan are located in the Islamic Revolution Courtyard, adjacent to the eastern door of the Abbasi Portico, in Room 120 for women and Room 124 for men. In the ceremonial sector for incense burning and rosewater sprinkling, the rosewater is sourced primarily from the regions of Kashan, Torbat-e Heydariyeh, and Shiraz. Rosewater sprinkling is performed in the Naghareh Khaneh Portico, the Bab al-Salam entrance, the Abbasi Portico, the Clock Portico, the Telegraph House Portico, all enclosures, shrine entrances, and the tea houses of Imam Reza (PBUH). In open spaces, this service is carried out by mobile teams involving approximately 20 servants. Incense burning is also conducted along the access routes, in the courtyards, and at the main entrances of the holy shrine daily from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. local time with about 40 servants in attendance.

Traditional ‘Sermon Recitation’ ceremony

The traditional “Sermon Recitation” ceremony will be held on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, concurrent with the evening prayers in the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) Courtyard. This ceremony will be attended by military and govern-



A young man pours tea into cups to be distributed among the pilgrims of the Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine in the holy city of Mashhad, northeastern Iran.

● IQNA



In the final days of Safar, in organizing the attendance of religious delegations from outside Mashhad City, more than 2,000 delegations have received authorization to hold mourning ceremonies at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine since the beginning of the month of Muharram, and it is expected that this number will reach approximately 4,000 by the end of Safar. Furthermore, the sanctuaries of the Goharshad Grand Mosque and the surrounding courtyards have been allocated around the clock for delegations to hold mourning ceremonies, with a duration of one hour allocated for each delegation.

final 10 days of Safar, four routes — Bab al-Jawad, Sheikh Tusi, Sheikh Tabarsi, and Navvab Safavi — have been designated as entry points for mourning groups. After entering the holy shrine, the delegations are directed to the Islamic Revolution Courtyard and are stationed in the area behind the Steel Window. The use of drums and cymbals within the holy shrine is prohibited, and the entry of banners, standards, and flags of the delegations is permitted provided that regulations are observed. Measures for crowd management and density control during peak hours have also been anticipated. In the final days of Safar, in organizing the attendance of religious delegations from outside Mashhad City, more than 2,000 delegations have received authorization to hold mourning ceremonies at Imam Reza (PBUH) Shrine since the beginning of the month of Muharram, and it is expected that this number will reach approximately 4,000 by the end of Safar. Furthermore, the sanctuaries of the Goharshad Grand Mosque and the surrounding courtyards have been allocated around the clock for delegations to hold mourning ceremonies, with a duration of one hour allocated for each delegation. Special measures have also been planned for the final three days of Safar to manage traffic and the entry and exit of delegations from the Islamic Revolution Courtyard. To date, the details of more than 7,000 religious delegations from across the country have been registered in the office of religious delegations of Astan Quds Razavi.

Accommodation spots and daily hot meals for pilgrims

On the eve of the final 10 days of Safar, the Karamat Razavi Foundation has prepared an extensive program to serve the pilgrims of Imam Reza (PBUH); a program centered on accommodation, catering, and welfare and cultural services in the areas surrounding the holy shrine and along the routes leading to the holy city of Mashhad. Based on the forecast announced by the Social Services Department of the Karamat Razavi Foundation, the service tent on Martyr Shushtari Street will be active for three days with a capacity to accommodate 5,000 people, distributing breakfast, lunch, and dinner, alongside snacks such as local cookies, tea, sherbet, and fruit among pilgrims. In the Tapol-Mahaleh and Rezvan Garden path, space has been prepared for the accommodation of 3,000 people, where 18 diverse services, including medical services, stroller and wheelchair repair, laundry services, massage, and cultural booths, will be offered to pilgrims. Additionally, 15 provincial Razavi service tents will be deployed in these same locations to provide main catering and snacks for pilgrims. Throughout Mashhad, support for the service tents is provided through the distribution of food and welfare items such as meat, legumes, rice, tea, oil, and mineral water, and an ice-making machine with the capacity to produce 800 blocks of ice per day will be placed at the service of the tents. Furthermore, 15 organizations and Razavi service tents are participating in the preparation and distribution of food.

The article was provided by the Astan Quds Razavi organization.

Davoudi, Yousefi locked in battle for Iran's superheavyweight spot

Sports Desk

Iranian superheavyweight lifters Ali Davoudi and Alireza Yousefi are engaged in an intriguing battle at the national team camp as they look to improve their records ahead of a busy international schedule.

After several years of struggles in the superheavyweight category, coupled with Georgian great Lasha Talakhadze's global dominance, Iran's prospects appear brighter; with both weightlifters continuing to raise their performances. September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games and the World Weightlifting Championships, which begin Oct. 27 in Ningbo, China, are both on the horizon, with the presence of the two strong contenders at the national camp making the competition for a place on the team increasingly intense.

An Olympic silver medalist at Tokyo 2020, Davoudi is eager to bounce back from a quiet couple

of years in his career, which have yielded just a snatch bronze at the 2025 World Championships. Yousefi, meanwhile, is looking to build on his statement comeback from injury at May's Asian Championships, where he collected three medals.

Making his first international appearance in 18 months after recovering from knee surgery, the 22-year-old prodigy, who impressed on his senior debut at the 2024 World Championships by winning clean and jerk gold, claimed the Asian snatch bronze and total silver. But the pinnacle of his campaign came in the clean and jerk, where he set a new world record of 261 kilograms to win gold ahead of high-profile Bahraini Gor Minasyan.

Davoudi has produced better snatch numbers than Yousefi in recent testing sessions and appears to have the edge in the race to represent Iran at the Asian Games. With only the combined total

counting for medals at the continental multi-sport event, Davoudi's stronger snatch gives him an advantage in the selection battle. Yousefi, meanwhile, has been lifting around the 260-kilogram mark in the clean and jerk and is working with head coach and former Olympic superheavyweight champion Behdad Salimi to improve his snatch as he targets a place on the podium in all three disciplines at the World Championships.

The two in-form weightlifters have been pushing each other at the national camp, with their rivalry serving as a positive force as both seek to establish themselves as Iran's leading contender in the category. Whoever comes out on top in the battle will be among the favorites, along with Minasyan, reigning Armenian world champion Varazdat Lalayan and South Korea's Song Yeong-hwan, to reach the podium at the upcoming events as the race for heavyweight supremacy in the post-Talakhadze era continues.



Iranian weightlifters Alireza Yousefi (R) and Ali Davoudi are seen in a training session in Tehran, Iran, on August 8, 2026.
 ● IWFFIR

Iranian beach volleyball duo set sights on historic Olympic berth



Iranian beach volleyball duo Alireza Aqajani (L) and Abbas Pourasgari deliver their acceptance speech at the AVC Gala Awards in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 8, 2026.
 ● AVC

Sports Desk

Iranian beach volleyball duo Alireza Aqajani and Abbas Pourasgari have set their sights on securing the country's first Olympic berth in the sport after being named among the winners at the inaugural AVC Gala Awards.

The Iranian pair won the Fans' Choice Men's Beach Volleyball Players award through a public vote in July, but had to wait until Saturday's awards ceremony in Bangkok, attended by FIVB President Fabio Azevedo, AVC President Ramon Suzara and Milad Taqavi, head of the Iranian Volleyball Federation, to receive their prizes.

The recognition comes as the Iranian pair prepare for two major targets on the road to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics: the Asian Beach Volleyball Championships, which begin Sept. 2 in Shanghai, China, and serve as an Olympic qualifier, and the subsequent

Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Aqajani said the award was a sign that Iranian beach volleyball was moving in the right direction, crediting the federation for its support.

"This valuable trophy shows that beach volleyball is on the right path and that the federation is providing good support for the sport," said Aqajani, who teamed up with Pourasgari to win the men's title at the CAVA Championships last month.

The Iranian added that the pair's ultimate goal was to make history by earning the country's first Olympic qualification in beach volleyball at Los Angeles 2028.

"We have gone through many competitions, and I would like to dedicate this award to the people of Iran, the volleyball community and my family," he said. "I hope we can successfully get through the stages ahead, one by one, so that beach volleyball can qualify for the Olympics

for the first time and win the gold medal at the Asian Championship and the Asian Games."

Aqajani also wished "peace for everyone around the world."

Pourasgari, meanwhile, said the award was the product of years of hard work and competition.

"I am very happy that Abbas and I were among the best at the first Asian gala," he said. "Since 2023, with the federation's support, we have competed in various events and achieved many good results. The result of those efforts and training has brought us to this point, among the best players in Asia."

"We have two very important events ahead of us – the Asian Championships and the Asian Games. I hope we can perform successfully at these competitions and win the best possible medals to make the people of Iran happy and repay the efforts of our families and everyone who works for Iranian beach volleyball."

Javan faces World Championships omission over weight concerns

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan has been given a final deadline to resolve his weight issues or risk being dropped from the national team camp ahead of the upcoming World Championships, which will kick off Oct. 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan. Javan, who was selected for the 61kg spot through the national team selection cycle after winning a second successive bronze at the Asian Championships in April, was reportedly found to weigh 68.5 kilograms at the latest

weigh-in at the national camp – around 7.5kg above the category limit.

The former world junior and U23 bronze medalist impressed on his senior Worlds debut last year by winning silver, falling short

against Russian sensation Zavur Uguev in the final, and has been considered one of Iran's leading medal contenders for this year's global event. His weight, however, has now cast doubt over his participation.

"Our intention is not to dismiss Javan," Iran head coach Pejman Dorostkar said on Sunday. "In the previous camp, he was not in suitable condition for a 61kg wrestler. We held a meeting with his personal coach and the team's nutritionist and discussed training and sports nutrition with him."

"We expected Javan to reach his ideal weight in this camp, but unfortunately, he did not follow the recommendations."

Dorostkar added that Javan had effectively received a final warning and would be given until the end of the current camp to improve his condition.

Alireza Dabir, chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, subsequently confirmed that the wrestler had not yet been removed but said the situation was serious.

"He has not been cut yet, but I saw that the national team coaching staff and Pejman Dorostkar took a commitment from him yesterday," Dabir told reporters. "Yes, his weight is high. Even when he wrestled at 57kg, I would not allow him into the camp because of his weight."

Dabir said Javan had been given approximately one week to make significant progress.

"He has given a commitment, and if he does not reduce his weight quickly, he will be dismissed from the national team camp within a week," Dabir said. "We will make no exceptions in this regard, and we already have a replacement for Javan."

Taremi dropped from Olympiacos squad for UCL qualifier

Sports Desk

Iranian international striker Mahdi Taremi has been omitted from Olympiacos' matchday squad for today's away game against NEC Nijmegen in the third qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League, raising further questions about his immediate future with the Greek giants.

Taremi was also left out of the squad when the two sides played to a goalless draw in the first leg last week in Piraeus, Greece.

Having joined as a free agent from Internazionale last summer, Taremi, 34, struggled to establish himself as a regular starter in an Olympiacos shirt, though he still registered 16 goals – including two Cham-

pions League strikes against Bayer Leverkusen and Real Madrid – and six assists in 39 appearances across all competitions.

With prolific Ayoub El Kaabi serving as the first-choice striker and Ukrainian international Roman Yaremchuk, Clayton and Gelson Martins providing further depth in attack, Taremi's time at Olympiacos could come to a premature end. The Iranian is reportedly said to have informed head coach José Luis Mendilibar that he is unwilling to accept a backup role amid stiff competition for places in the squad.

Ligue 1 club LOSC Lille is considering a move for the Iranian talisman, according to French football news website Foot Mercato.



Revival of Sassanid corridor to transform Kermanshah tourism

Iranica Desk

The governor general of Kermanshah Province has stressed the region's rich historical and cultural heritage, saying that the revival of the historic Sassanid corridor stretching from Anahita to Mahidasht and Qasr-e Shirin could boost tourism, stimulate economic growth, create jobs and increase local incomes. Manouchehr Habibi said Kermanshah boasts exceptional potential in cultural heritage and tourism, ranging from Hawraman, the Temple of Anahita and the UNESCO-listed Bisotun complex to the historic Sasanian corridor and Qasr-e Shirin, IRNA wrote. He noted that the province's wide variety of historical sites and tourist attractions is sufficient to keep visitors engaged for at least two days, adding that this potential should be utilized more extensively to support tourism development and the provincial economy. Referring to the Sassanid historical corridor, Habibi

said the route from Anahita through Mahidasht to Qasr-e Shirin is one of Kermanshah's most important historical and tourism assets and has attracted the attention of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts. Reviving the Sassanid corridor, he added, could play a major role in attracting tourists and stimulating the provincial economy. Proper planning and the development of the necessary infrastructure are needed to maximize the benefits of this potential. The governor general described tourism as one of the key drivers of employment and economic growth in Kermanshah, stressing that spending on cultural heritage and tourism should not be viewed as an expense but as an investment in job creation and higher incomes for local residents. He explained that increased activity at sites such as the UNESCO-listed Bisotun complex and the Temple of Anahita would benefit not only the cul-



● IRNA

tural heritage sector but also dozens, and even hundreds, of people working in related fields, including drivers, service providers, accommodation operators, retailers and other tourism-related businesses. Habibi also referred to the impact that war-related conditions and other developments have periodically had on the tourism

sector. Despite these challenges, he said Kermanshah's historical and tourism assets remain intact, and appropriate planning is needed to make greater use of them and restore momentum to the province's tourism industry. He also emphasized the need to strengthen the protection of historical sites and monuments, say-

ing that the province must provide the necessary facilities and personnel to safeguard its valuable cultural heritage. He warned that illegal excavations and other threats facing archaeological sites have made stronger protection measures increasingly necessary, stressing the need to reinforce the provincial Cultural Heritage

Protection Unit.

Given Kermanshah's prominent position in the fields of history and tourism, he said the need to strengthen the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit in the province is even greater than in many other parts of the country. He called for the government, the Provincial Security Council, the governor's office and other relevant authorities to support the sector. Habibi said he was prepared to raise the issue of strengthening cultural heritage protection at a meeting of the Provincial Security Council. He added that a proposal had been made for the commander of the national Cultural Heritage Protection Unit to attend the meeting and brief council members on the sector's capabilities, requirements and challenges.

He said the participation of judicial, law-enforcement and other relevant authorities in the council would provide an opportunity to highlight the importance of protecting cultural heritage and facilitate more

effective decisions in this area.

The governor general also called for the preservation, rehabilitation and, where necessary, clearance of historical urban areas and archaeological sites across the province. He stressed that such efforts should be guided by careful planning tailored to the specific circumstances of each site, while taking into account social considerations and other relevant factors.

Habibi stressed that the Kermanshah provincial administration would support cultural heritage and tourism programs aimed at strengthening infrastructure, protecting historical sites and making greater economic use of the province's tourism potential.

Kermanshah is home to 4,200 nationally registered heritage sites, three UNESCO World Heritage sites and dozens of other tourist attractions that have yet to be formally registered, underscoring the province's significant potential for tourism development.

Zanjan steps up efforts to develop agritourism



● chtr.ir

Iranica Desk

Zanjan Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization has placed the development of agritourism on its agenda as a key driver of rural economic growth, sustainable employment and the use of local resources.

Abolfazl Ajali, head of the organization's Tourism Services Supervision and Evaluation Office, said Zanjan's exceptional capacity for producing agricultural and horticultural products provides a suitable platform for attracting tourists interested in

experiencing rural life and nature-based tourism.

He said seasonal festivals, including those dedicated to black mulberries, pomegranates, Damask roses, grapes and figs, serve as showcases for local capabilities. Organized under the guidance of the provincial organization and with the participation of local communities, the festivals play an important role in promoting local products and highlighting the cultural identity of rural areas.

"Our strategy for developing garden tourism is to facilitate

links between tourism-sector operators and agricultural producers," Ajali said. "During the harvest season, orchards can be turned into tourist destinations, with specialized tours operating in these areas."

He added that the model not only helps promote the province's agricultural and food brands but also provides opportunities for marketing handicrafts and offering eco-tourism accommodation and services, directly contributing to the livelihoods of rural communities.

Ajali also pointed to the province's recent achievements in religious tourism, saying that during the lunar months of Muharram and Safar, Zanjan host-

ed large numbers of domestic and foreign tourists drawn by its prominent religious mourning rituals.

"This demonstrated the strong capacity of the province's tourism infrastructure," he said.

"The current plan is to combine Zanjan's religious tourism potential with its agricultural attractions in order to complete the province's tourism value chain."

Ajali said the ultimate goal is to introduce high-potential villages as national and global tourism target villages, adding that a tourism-based economy could help encourage reverse migration and support infrastructure development in rural areas across the province.

Reading Room

Qasemzadeh; a veteran voice in Iran's media

Iranica Desk

Abolqasem Qasemzadeh, a veteran journalist, writer and media figure whose career spanned several decades, died in Tehran on August 6, at the age of 77 after suffering a cardiac condition, on the eve of Iran's National Journalists' Day. Hossein Jaber Ansari, managing director of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and chairman of the board of the Iran Cultural and Press Institute, expressed his condolences on Qasemzadeh's death, describing him as a "dear friend and brother." In his message, Jaber Ansari recalled meeting Qasemzadeh years ago, during the tenure of Martyr Seyyed Kamal Kharrazi as foreign minister, when Qasemzadeh was

among the minister's advisers and close associates. He also recalled meeting him in recent years at the Ettelaat Institute. In describing Qasemzadeh's professional and personal standing, Jaber Ansari wrote that he had spent many years working at two major Iranian cultural and media institutions — the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and the Ettelaat Institute and newspaper — serving Iran, its culture, society and politics away from controversy and publicity. He described Qasemzadeh as a wise and knowledgeable man, rich in memories and reflections worth hearing and contemplating.

"It is as clear to me as daylight that his place among his family, friends and many admirers will always remain empty and impossible to fill."

Qasemzadeh was a journalist and writer who spent a significant part of his professional life in the media and, over several decades, combined his work in journalism with involvement in media management and political affairs. His name was particularly associated with IRIB and Ettelaat newspaper. He served as head of IRIB's international broadcasting division in the 1980s and as deputy head of the organization. He was also associated with the War Publicity Council during the Iran-Iraq War. His experience in the media, combined with his engagement with political and international affairs, helped establish Qasemzadeh as a veteran journalist and writer specializing in political and foreign-policy issues. Never-

theless, a significant part of his professional career was closely tied to Ettelaat, where he wrote for many years and continued his journalistic work until the final years of his life.

His writings were largely analytical and interpretive, seeking to examine political developments within a broader regional and international context. His articles and commentaries can therefore be regarded as part of Ettelaat's written legacy and as a valuable record of the way political developments were viewed and analyzed in the Iranian press over recent decades.

In addition to his work at Ettelaat, Qasemzadeh was involved in research and academic circles concerned with foreign policy and strategic

affairs. His name has also been cited as a member of the Scientific Research and Middle East Strategic Studies Center.

Throughout his career, Qasemzadeh worked with and maintained professional relationships with cultural, media and political figures at various stages. His career brought together experience in official media, media management and journalism, placing him at the intersection of media, culture and politics in Iran over several decades.

Qasemzadeh's death at the age of 77 marked the end of the career of a journalist who spent several decades in Iran's media sphere — from media responsibilities and his experience during the Iran-Iraq War to many years at Ettelaat and his coverage and analysis



Abolqasem Qasemzadeh

knew him.

With the death of Qasemzadeh, Iran's media community has lost one of its veteran journalists — a journalist who devoted much of his professional life to writing, analyzing and chronicling political and social developments, and whose name became intertwined with several decades of Iran's media history, particularly that of Ettelaat newspaper.

www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir <http://lets.mporg.ir> www.setadiran.ir