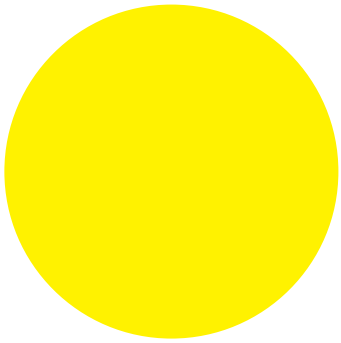


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This handout image released by Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement on September 7, 2026, shows a ballistic missile strike on trucks carrying military equipment from Saudi Arabia to the Al-Wadiah military camp in Yemen's Hadhramaut Province.

Alternative oil routes cannot make Hormuz irrelevant

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Iraq and Syria have agreed to revive the Kirkuk-Baniyas oil pipeline, a route that would carry Iraqi crude through Syria to the port of Baniyas on the Mediterranean, potentially diverting part of Iraq's oil exports away from the Strait of Hormuz. The Trump administration has backed the project. Trump envoy Tom Barrack said the route could make the Strait of Hormuz a "side issue," while US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent recently went further, saying that the Strait would effectively become "worthless" over the next two years as pipeline capacity expands. But the key question is whether oil pipelines can actually replace



Masoud Dashti Derakhshan

Hormuz. Masoud Dashti Derakhshan, an analyst of global energy markets, told Iran Daily that alternative routes could reduce the concentration of risk around the Strait of Hormuz, but cannot make it irrelevant because Hormuz is not merely a geographic chokepoint; it is an integral part of the Persian Gulf's energy architecture.

IRAN DAILY: From a technical and operational perspective, how feasible is establishing an alternative route through Syria for transporting Iraqi oil — and potentially oil from other regional producers — to the Mediterranean?

DASHTI DERAKHSHAN: From a purely technical perspective, the project is feasible, but it is important to clarify what is actually being proposed. This is not simply a matter of restarting an existing pipeline. The original Kirkuk-Baniyas system has been out of service for decades and has suffered extensive damage. Much of its infrastructure is obsolete and incompatible with modern

standards. The proposal is therefore closer to building a new pipeline along the existing corridor than conventionally rehabilitating the old one. The project reportedly remains at the feasibility-study stage, with an estimated development period of around four years and investment of at least \$15 billion. Initial capacity is proposed at around 2 million barrels per day, with potential for expansion over time. That capacity would be strategically significant for Iraq, but it should not be confused with replacing the Strait of Hormuz. A 2-million-barrel-per-day pipeline would account for roughly 10% of the oil volumes that normally move through Hormuz. Operationally, the project requires far more than laying pipes. It would need pumping stations, power systems, metering and control infrastructure, storage terminals, corrosion and integrity management, security arrangements and, critically, a reliable export interface at Baniyas. The engineering is achievable; the greater challenge is integrating

a new energy corridor into a politically and operationally complex environment.

What are the major political, security, financial and infrastructure obstacles?

The principal challenge is not engineering but the risk-adjusted economics of a cross-border energy corridor. A project of this scale requires long-term political agreements, secure rights of way, stable transit arrangements, predictable tariffs, international financing and insurance. Investors must be confident that the infrastructure will remain operational for decades. Security is equally important. A pipeline is a fixed asset. Unlike a tanker, it cannot change its route or destination to avoid a threat. Every politically sensitive section therefore becomes a potential supply-chain vulnerability. If the investment requirement is around \$15 billion, the project also needs long-term commitments on crude volumes and transit revenues. Its economic case cannot depend solely on the current geopolitical

emergency. There is nevertheless a strong strategic rationale for Iraq. Before the current disruption, Iraq exported around 3.6 million barrels per day, with approximately 3.4 million barrels per day moving through its southern Basra terminals. This concentration exposed Iraqi exports to a single maritime corridor. The strategic objective should therefore be understood as "export diversification and supply-chain resilience," rather than simply building another pipeline.

Can crude transported through Syria compete with maritime exports through Hormuz in terms of cost and transit time?

For the major Asian refining markets, I do not believe the Syrian corridor can structurally compete with Persian Gulf maritime exports on a large scale. Geography remains fundamental to crude economics. Asia is the principal destination for much of Persian Gulf crude, while the Gulf is geographically closer to Asian markets than the Mediterranean. Mar-

itime transportation also benefits from enormous economies of scale. VLCCs can carry roughly 2 million barrels per voyage, supported by a mature global system of chartering, terminals, marine services and flexible destination options. A Mediterranean pipeline is therefore economically more logical for Iraqi crude destined for Mediterranean, European or Atlantic-basin markets than for crude ultimately intended for Asia. I would consequently not assess Kirkuk-Baniyas simply as a competitor to Hormuz. Its stronger economic rationale is to redirect part of Iraq's export flows toward the Mediterranean and provide an additional outlet for northern Iraqi production. There is also a critical distinction between "transportation cost and strategic value." A route may be somewhat more expensive under normal conditions yet become economically valuable if it remains operational during a disruption of the primary route. That is precisely why pipeline redundancy has strategic value.

Pezeshkian: Iran not seeking war but will resist until aggressors' defeat

International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian vowed that Tehran will maintain its steadfast resistance until the aggressors feel "complete regret," dismissing US President Donald Trump's recent social media claims of an impending American victory and plummeting oil prices. In a post on X on Tuesday, Pezeshkian emphasized that while the Islamic Republic has always opposed war and prioritized regional stability by avoiding warmongering, it will not back down in the face of foreign aggression. "Just as it has bravely stood up in defense against aggression until today, it will continue this resistance with strength until the complete regret of the aggressors," the president stated, affirming his administration's unwavering commitment to protecting the rights and sovereignty of the Iranian nation. The Iranian president's remarks come

in response to a post by Trump on his Truth Social platform, where the US leader attempted to project confidence amid a seven-month war on Iran that has yielded no victory for Washington. "Oil prices will drop precipitously, like everything else is dropping (but more!), when we WIN the war with Iran," Trump wrote. He promised Americans that gasoline would fall to three dollars a gallon, and "ultimately, below two dollars a gallon," adding that it would happen quickly and that "Iran will never have a Nuclear Weapon. MAGA!" Trump's optimistic projections stand in contrast to the reality on the ground. Since launching a massive war of aggression and a sweeping economic pressure campaign against Tehran, Washington has tried, to no avail, to force Iran into capitulation. The US has deployed a naval blockade of Iranian ports and launched "Operation Economic Outcast," a sweeping initiative aimed at severing Iran's fi-

nancial ties with the outside world. However, despite months of brutal assaults and maximum economic pressure, Iran's military and political leadership remain unbroken. Tehran has successfully leveraged asymmetric warfare to inflict heavy damage on US forces and drain critical American munitions stockpiles. Furthermore, Trump's promise of sub-two-dollar gasoline ignores the fundamental geopolitical leverage Iran currently holds over global energy markets. In response to the US-Israeli war of aggression that began in late February, Iran effectively restricted transit through the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most critical energy chokepoint. With roughly 20% of global petroleum consumption historically passing through this narrow waterway, Tehran's maritime chokehold has triggered a massive global energy shock.



The disruption has not only sent global crude prices soaring but has also sparked a severe "diesel shock" within the United States, where the spread be-

tween diesel and crude prices recently surpassed \$95 per barrel due to strangled West Asian exports and declining global refinery capacities.

Yemen hits Saudi oil facilities in response to Riyadh's bombing campaign

International Desk

The Yemeni Armed Forces on Tuesday launched attacks on four cities in Saudi Arabia, setting oil installations ablaze in what appeared to be a significant expansion of the war in the Middle East.

The military operations were conducted in response to Riyadh's three-day bombing campaign that included a deadly attack on a Yemeni prison. Yemen's Armed Forces spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree said in a statement that dozens of ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) struck Aramco infrastructure in the cities of Abha, Najran, and Jizan, as well as the King Khalid Air Base in Khamis Mushait.

The unprecedented escalation comes in response to 121 Saudi airstrikes launched over the past 72 hours against multiple Yemeni governorates, including Ma'rib, Al-Bayda, Al-Hudaydah, Taiz, and Al-Jawf. The most devastating of these attacks targeted the central prison in the Al-Hazm district of Al-Jawf Province.

According to the Yemeni Ministry of Public Health and Population, the airstrike left 14 casualties: seven people were killed, including six inmates and a visiting child, and seven others were wounded, including a female visitor. General Saree emphasized that Sau-



This handout image released by Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement on September 7, 2026, shows a ballistic missile strike on trucks carrying military equipment from Saudi Arabia to the Al-Wadiah military camp in Yemen's Hadhramaut Province.

di Arabia has launched these new rounds of airstrikes and committed further massacres in tandem with a tight, suffocating blockade against its southern neighbor. He warned that the Yemeni military will not let the aggression go unanswered, promising even stronger and wider strikes if the attacks continue.

Riyadh calls for halt to strikes

A Saudi Foreign Ministry statement said that the country would "take all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty," demanding a halt to the Yemeni strikes on Saudi territory and oil tankers in the Red Sea. Sausi Arabia said that more than 70 people were wounded in Yemen's attacks. The strikes come after weeks of escalating clashes between Yemen's Ansarullah movement and Saudi-backed government forces in Yemen, which shattered a four-year truce in the country's civil war. Fighting has raged on multiple fronts including Yemen's west coast, with Saudi-backed Yemeni forces saying they have made territorial gains in

the provinces of Hodeida, Taiz and Baydah. The Yemeni military reiterated its commitment to the "siege for a siege" equation.

"All the actions, attacks, and troop buildups of the Saudi enemy will not intimidate our beloved country," the Armed Forces declared, vowing to continue operations deep inside Saudi territory until the aggression ceases and the blockade is fully lifted. On July 20, the Sana'a government imposed a maritime blockade on Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea, targeting vessels associated with the kingdom.

This move was announced as a direct countermeasure to the oppressive 12-year land, air, and sea blockade imposed on Yemen by Riyadh. The current flare-up is the latest chapter in a devastating war that began in March 2015, when Saudi Arabia and a coalition of allies launched a comprehensive military offensive and blockade against Yemen.

Return to normal shipping in Hormuz hinges on US commitment to Islamabad MoU: Araghchi

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that talks between Iran and Oman on establishing a temporary transit route through the Strait of Hormuz had made significant progress, while he said a return to normal shipping depended on the United States returning to its commitments under an Islamabad memorandum.

In a phone call with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Araghchi blamed the current regional tensions on the US failure to honor its commitments under the memorandum. "The solution is simple. The return and adherence of the US side to its commitments and its signature in the Islamabad memorandum will pave the way for a return to normal conditions," Araghchi said.

Araghchi also outlined the latest state of Iran-Oman discussions on the strategic waterway, saying the two countries had made significant headway in talks aimed at establishing a temporary route for maritime traffic. He stressed that consultations between Tehran and Muscat would continue to reach agreement on mechanisms for the future management of the Strait of Hormuz.

Motegi, meanwhile, voiced concern over the escalation of tensions in the region and stressed the need for continued consultations and diplomatic coordination among regional states and other countries with an interest in the area. The Japanese foreign minister said such efforts should aim to restore security in the region and ensure free and safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's key maritime routes for energy and trade. Iran and Oman, both coastal states on the strait, have for weeks been discussing the future of navigation through the waterway, with Tehran saying progress had been made to agree a temporary shipping route. Iranian forces have restricted traffic through Hormuz, a vital energy conduit, since the war with the United States broke out on February 28. The US has imposed a counter naval blockade on Iranian ports. Mediation efforts by regional countries are also underway to resolve tensions between Tehran and Washington. On Sunday, a Qatari delegation held a meeting in Tehran with Iranian foreign minister as part of ongoing regional efforts aimed at reducing tensions. The Sunday visit followed a trip by Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who travelled to Tehran on August 27.

Iran slams Canada's submission to US intimidation over Strait of Hormuz

Iran strongly condemned a joint statement by Canada's foreign and finance ministers as a distortion of facts, an act of appeasement toward Washington, and a display of strategic confusion that aligns Ottawa with US military aggression and economic warfare against the Islamic Republic.

In a post on X on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei noted the timing of the Canadian statement: "On the very day the US president, in blatant contempt for Canada's sovereignty and independence, portrayed the entire country as part of the United States, Canada's foreign and finance ministers chose to further appease their bullying neighbor—this time by targeting Iran with a statement that distorts every fact about the situation in our region."

He emphasized that Ottawa is fully aware of the facts on the ground. "Canada knows full well that the Strait of Hormuz was open and secure before USrael launched a war of aggression against Iran on 28 February," Baqaei rejected Canada's self-portrayal as a defender of international norms. "Canada cannot credibly present itself as a champion of 'peace and security,' 'freedom of navigation,' and 'international law' while simultaneously backing US military aggression and Washington's illegal, interventionist actions in our region."

The spokesperson questioned Ottawa's priorities: "If freedom of navigation is truly the issue, why does Canada—having itself experienced American bad faith and knowing that US signatures are 'written in pencil'—choose to sup-

port U.S. military aggression and economic terrorism instead of calling for an end to American aggression, blockade, and economic warfare?"

He concluded that the Canadian position "is neither 'diplomacy' nor 'responsible statecraft.' It is a display of strategic confusion and submission to intimidation—a choice that will not even shield Canada itself from American bullying and aggression."

The remarks came in response to a September 6 statement by Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand and Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne that condemned what they called Iran's "destabilizing activities," including alleged threats to vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, and voiced support for US-led efforts to "reopen" the waterway along with additional sanctions.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



Tehran, Moscow make progress on financial, trade ties

Economy Desk

Iran's economy minister said on Monday that talks with his Russian counterpart had produced significant openings on financial and foreign-exchange issues, as the two countries seek to facilitate trade and investment. Ali Madanizadeh, who traveled to Moscow for bilateral and multilateral consultations, described his meeting with Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov as "good and transparent" and said he would take the results of the talks back to Tehran for further follow-up, IRNA reported. Madanizadeh said the implementation of two new initiatives would turn customs offices from places where goods are held into transit points, emphasizing efforts to streamline trade procedures. He also said Iran had proposed sending a group of educated Iranian workers seeking employment to Russia. He said Iran's ambassador in Moscow would follow up on the proposal.

The talks also focused on investment opportunities in Iran's strategic and high-return industries, as well as ways to facilitate financial and commercial exchanges between the two countries, Madanizadeh said. He described his meeting with Siluanov as "very good" and said the two sides had reached good agreements. Madanizadeh also attended a meeting with Iranian businesspeople and traders based in Russia on Monday. On the sidelines of the meeting, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali said Russia had significant economic potential for Iran, including as a market for Iranian purchases of essential goods. "The trend in bilateral trade over the past several years has been positive, and given Russia's large market, serious commercial activity between the two countries has begun," Jalali said. Jalali stressed the need to remove obstacles to expanding trade with Russia by improving

Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh speaks to reporters after meeting with Iranian businesspeople based in Russia, in Moscow, on September 7, 2026. ● IRNA

market knowledge, developing transit infrastructure, resolving customs problems, facilitating monetary and banking exchanges and improving logistics. He also pointed to government efforts to strengthen transport infrastructure along the International North-South Transport Corridor, citing efforts to advance an agreement to build the Rasht-Astara railway. Iran is making serious efforts to accelerate the project, Jalali said, describing it as a "project that the Russian side has said can be completed within three years." Russian Transport Minister Andrei Nikitin said in June that shipments from Russia to Iran through the International North-South Transport Corridor rose more than 56% in the first four months of 2026, while total



freight traffic along the corridor increased 87%. Russian Ambassador to Iran Alexey Dedov also said in June

that bilateral trade reached about \$5.8 billion in 2025, up 21% from the previous year. He said the positive trend contin-

ued in the first four months of 2026, when bilateral trade grew 2% despite disruptions to some logistics chains.

First phase of Asaluyeh desalination plant goes on stream



Economy Desk

Iran has brought online the first phase of a desalination plant in the southern province of Bushehr, with initial production capacity of 5,000 cubic meters of water per day, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Tuesday. The facility, located in Asaluyeh, will eventually double output to 10,000 cubic meters per day using domestic expertise, Aliabadi said at a commissioning ceremony, according to ISNA. Construction began in March and reached the operational stage in under a year, a timeline the minister described as an example of effective project management. He said Iran would tap all available capacity to produce drinking water through desalination, relying on local technology and know-how, with further expansion planned in

later phases. Aliabadi said the plant uses reverse osmosis (RO) technology and is equipped with self-cleaning pretreatment systems to boost efficiency and extend equipment lifespan. The project is part of a broader push to address Iran's severe drought. Bushehr province, with its extensive coastline and the concentration of much of the country's oil, gas and petrochemical industries in the Asaluyeh region, holds significant potential for developing desalination facilities and using seawater as a sustainable water source. The Energy Ministry has made expanding desalination facilities a key strategy for tapping non-conventional water resources, including large-scale transfers of desalinated water from the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf to eastern and

Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi (c) inaugurates the first phase of a desalination plant in Asaluyeh, Bushehr Province, on September 8, 2026. ● ISNA

southern regions. A nationwide program launched in 2021 includes five desalinated seawater transfer lines to help ease water shortages. As of July, Iran's total desalination capacity exceeded 658,000 cubic meters per day, according to Hashem Amini, head of the National Water and Wastewater Engineering Company. Amini said in mid-July that 109 desalination projects were in operation, under construction, or in the planning stages across 14 provinces, playing a role in stabilizing drinking water supplies, especially in coastal and water-scarce areas.

Minister: Russian, Kazakh investment in Incheh Borun strengthens Iran's transit outlook

Economy Desk

Iran's transport minister said on Tuesday that the presence of Russian and Kazakh investors at Iran's Incheh Borun logistics hub in the northern province of Golestan highlights the area's promising prospects as a transit route for cargo from China and Central Asian countries to Europe. Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to sign investment documents for the logistics center, IRNA reported. Sadeq stressed the strategic importance of Incheh Borun, saying it was more than a border terminal and could serve as a gateway to Central Asian and Eurasian countries. "Incheh Borun is a very strategic gateway to the Central Asian and Eurasian countries and can play a role as a source of Chinese cargo to Iran and from Iran to Europe," she said. Sadeq said a legal issue that had for several years prevented the logistics



center from fully using its capacity had been resolved with the help of the presidential legal affairs office. Shortly after the issue was resolved, the first three investors, including a Russian company, a Kazakh company and an Iranian investor, took steps to begin operations at the center, she said. Sadeq also pointed to Iran's transit potential along the North-South and northeast-west corridors, saying new investments would turn the area's potential into actual capacity and significantly increase transit and logistics activity. Asked about the impact of foreign investment on the development of

the corridors, Sadeq said Russia and Kazakhstan had cargo entering Iran from China and Central Asian countries. Investment at the site, she added, showed that the outlook for north-eastern Iran was favorable. She said the impact of the investments would extend beyond warehousing and logistics activities, leading to increased transit, stronger business activity and new forms of economic activity by the private sector, which she said would help strengthen the country's economic security. Sadeq also pointed to the government's policy of increasing private-sector participation. "The president has repeatedly emphasized that real development is driven by the private sector and that the government should play the role of regulator and facilitator," she said. She said the approach was now being implemented in the rail and railway sector, adding that its effects would soon be seen in the expansion of the rail network and increased transit.

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0440048

Second Announcement



NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

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 12-1/4 IN., I.A.D.C.5.1.7	35	NO
02	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES 8-1/2 IN., I.A.D.C.5.1.7	100	NO
03	ROCK BITS, JET TYPE, LESS NOZZLES 8-3/8 IN., I.A.D.C. 5.1.7	80	NO
04	NOZZLES FOR SIZE 8-3/8 TO 12-1/4 INCH	225	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 25,018.17 EURO or 42,744,220,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS CFR, BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI, IRAN. PAYMENT TERM IS C.A.D INCLUDING 25% ADVANCE PAYMENT, SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

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China's response to Himalayan disaster

Lessons for Iran

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

R E P O R T

On August 26, 2026, a catastrophic glacier collapse and subsequent ice-rock avalanche and debris flow struck the Nepal-China border region, causing immense destruction and a staggering humanitarian crisis, often described as a "Himalayan tsunami".

The debris flow, or mudslide, surged 22 kilometers in just seven minutes, washing away almost everything in its path.

The primary cause was a high-altitude glacier collapse on the Nepalese side, which sent a devastating mix of ice, rock and debris downstream into the Bhotekoshi and Trishuli rivers.

Rescue operations were severely hampered by the treacherous terrain and persistent rain.

The disaster received extensive coverage in media outlets around the world, as such devastating events often do. Reports used poignant images to evoke an emotional response from audiences, including a picture of a toy rabbit beside the river of debris, seemingly waiting for its young owner to return.

But the question is: has the disaster relief effort received the same level of coverage?

The following is a detailed account of how the Chinese side responded to the disaster, examining both the strengths of its response and areas that warrant further attention.

Rapid mobilization and emergency response

On the first day, shortly after the disaster was reported, China's National Commission for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Relief and the Ministry of Emergency Management jointly activated the national Level II emergency response for disaster relief.

Rescue forces were dispatched to the disaster area, with the first group comprising 249 firefighters and rescue workers, along with 325 engineering rescue personnel who arrived at the scene with equipment.

By 8 p.m. that evening, a total of 601 firefighters and rescue workers had been deployed.

A total of 31 experts from relevant fields and multiple institutions were also mobilized to assist with rescue operations.

Skipping lengthy administrative procedures, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Emergency Management urgently pre-allocated 120 million yuan (\$17.6 million) from the central natural disaster relief fund.

Some 30,000 items of central emergency supplies, including tents, heating stoves, clothing and bedding, folding beds and moisture-proof mats, were also allocated.

Technical support was provided as well, including instant communications and magnetic exploration equipment.

Frontline command headquarters were established at different levels — national, provincial and county — including one in the Tibet Autonomous Region, headed by its chairman, Gama Zedeng.



On August 27, the second day, Premier Li Qiang inspected the disaster zone and directed rescue efforts.

On the third day, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China held a meeting chaired by President Xi Jinping to map out rescue efforts for the Gyirong debris-flow disaster.

Journalists were initially not allowed to enter the region because of dangerous conditions, risks to life and the potential for secondary disasters. Reporters were advised to rely on CGTN Live for updates. However, a press conference was eventually held on September 2 to brief journalists on the situation.

Later, after the G216 road was reopened and electricity was restored, China announced plans to organize visits for international journalists to the core disaster area.

Rescue operations and restoring access

The operations focused on four major goals: searching for and rescuing missing people; making every effort to restore the G216 land route, effectively the only land access route to Gyirong Port; providing the families of victims with the utmost care, empathy and thorough support; and strictly guarding against secondary disasters.

When the landslide destroyed sections of G216 on August 26, the disaster area was cut off by road, seriously hampering rescue operations.

While the road remained blocked, China had to airlift supplies and equipment, while rescuers faced difficulties reaching the site.

Rescue operations advanced by water, air and land, involving boats and rafts on rivers, 24 helicopter sorties and a 12-hour

mountain detour. A total of more than 2,300 rescue personnel were deployed.

Later, the People's Liberation Army, armed police and other forces cleared a rescue road to the core area by 10 a.m. on September 2. Rescue personnel, supplies and some equipment then entered the core area by land and carried out in-depth search and rescue operations. When the road was reopened, more than 10 pieces of mechanical equipment entered the core area and continued search and rescue operations.

A total of 336 person-times were deployed for multiple rounds of comprehensive, grid-by-grid searches in the core area, with the cumulative search area reaching 1.591 million square meters.

Up until 12 p.m. on September 2, the disaster had claimed 21 lives and left 541 people missing, while 847 pieces of personal belongings had been recovered on the Chinese side.

Finally, at 8 p.m. on September 3, electricity was restored to the core zone.

After the disaster, rescue personnel reached out to the families of the deceased and missing, received them with patience and care, promptly addressed their concerns, and provided both emotional support and psychological counseling.

A hotline for the families of missing people at home and abroad was quickly launched. By 12 p.m. on September 2, the hotline had received 876 calls, including 448 domestic and 428 overseas calls.

A total of 587 family members connected to 253 missing people were received and accommodated.

The situation in the region was further complicated by the formation of a large, unstable bar-

rier lake upstream, containing millions of cubic meters of water and posing a significant risk of a secondary flood.

Therefore, a team of 93 domestic experts and technicians was deployed to continuously monitor secondary collapses, landslides and debris flows around the barrier lake and the source of the ice-rock avalanche, as well as geological hazards along the road to the border gate.

On August 30, the barrier lake naturally breached and the risk was eliminated. The small body of water formed by the impact of the ice-rock avalanche had also been drained. Experts did not opt for controlled blasting or excavation, instead choosing to closely monitor the situation.

Wider impact and China's assistance to Nepal

China, however, was fortunate in that the areas affected within its territory were relatively uninhabited and located farther from the origin of the disaster, while the Nepalese side suffered the greatest damage and casualties. The ice-rock avalanche triggered catastrophic flooding downstream, affecting communities and hydropower projects across Nepal's Rasuwa and Nuwakot areas.

As of September 5, nearly 5,000 people have been reported missing on the Nepalese side, including around 600 foreign nationals from 35 countries. Furthermore, 1,344 bodies had been recovered from the disaster-hit areas.

A preliminary assessment suggests that around 60,000 people from some 15,000 households have been displaced. In addition, 48 government offices have been affected and 51 kilometers of roads damaged. The disaster also destroyed 37 motorable bridges and 68 suspension bridges.

The scale of the devastation extends further, with around 1,806 hectares of agricultural land, 13 hydropower projects, one solar power project and two transmission lines sustaining severe damage.

As a result, much of the assistance provided by China was allocated to Nepal, according to Zhong Xin, a professor of journalism who spoke to Iran Daily and cited Chinese field reporters.

Nepalese journalist Mahendra



Chinese rescue workers carry supplies and equipment through a land route to enter the core area of Gyirong Port, Xizang, China, on September 2, 2026.
● VCG



Nepalese journalist Mahendra Subedi also told Iran Daily that China has stepped up relief and recovery assistance to Nepal following the deadly mudslide, providing cash, emergency supplies, specialized rescue equipment and technical support to help restore damaged infrastructure and assist search-and-rescue operations. The assistance includes 50 tons of relief supplies, \$2 million in government aid and \$200,000 from the Chinese Red Cross, as well as equipment for building bridges, emergency communications, water purification and lighting.



In this widely circulated photo, the rescuers have found this little bunny and gently placed it on the rocks during their rescue operation in Gyirong, Xizang, China.
● X

Subedi also told Iran Daily that China has stepped up relief and recovery assistance to Nepal following the deadly mudslide, providing cash, emergency supplies, specialized rescue equipment and technical support to help restore damaged infrastructure and assist search-and-rescue operations.

The assistance includes 50 tons of relief supplies, \$2 million in government aid and \$200,000 from the Chinese Red Cross, as well as equipment for building bridges, emergency communications, water purification and lighting, according to Subedi.

"China has also deployed two teams of tunnel rescue specialists and 10 forensic experts to help identify victims," he said.

In addition, Chinese meteorological authorities have been providing Nepal with weather monitoring, forecasting and early-warning services, while satellite imagery and hydrological data have been shared to support disaster response and risk assessment, Subedi said.

Besides China, he added, the US, India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, South Korea, European countries, the UAE, Qatar and almost all friendly countries and multilateral agencies are helping Nepal in this hour of grief.

Room for improvement

China's response demonstrated a high degree of organizational capacity, particularly in mobilizing rescue personnel, restoring access and coordinating resources across different levels of government. At the same time, the disaster also highlighted some areas where greater transparency and cross-border coordination could be beneficial. Some families of missing people and foreign diplomats have said they faced difficulties obtaining timely information about those affected.

Questions have also been raised about the availability and sharing of early-warning information before the disaster. Nepal and China had not established a formal mechanism for such data sharing before the disaster. China, however, has said that the two sides maintain cooperation in these areas and has pledged to strengthen information sharing and disaster-prevention coordination.

These issues do not negate the scale of China's rescue effort, but they point to an important distinction between responding effectively after a disaster and building systems capable of reducing its impact beforehand. For China, as for other countries exposed to natural hazards, the latter increasingly depends on real-time monitoring, cross-border information sharing and timely public communication.

Warning to the world

The disaster also carries a broader warning that extends far beyond Nepal and China. The incident underscores the need to treat climate-related disasters not simply as emergency events, but as risks that require long-term preparation. Waiting for a disaster to occur before mobilizing resources is no



longer sufficient. As climate-related hazards become more difficult to predict and potentially more destructive, preparedness and early intervention can be as important as the rescue operation itself.

What Iran can learn

China's response also offers lessons for countries such as Iran, particularly in the areas of emergency coordination, rapid mobilization and access to disaster zones. One of the most notable features of the response was the speed with which different state institutions were brought into the operation. Another important lesson is the emphasis placed on restoring access. Rather than

treating road restoration as a secondary infrastructure task, Chinese authorities made re-opening the route one of the central objectives of the rescue operation. For Iran, this approach could be particularly relevant given the country's exposure to floods, earthquakes, landslides and other natural hazards. Emergency plans could place greater emphasis on identifying critical access routes in advance, preparing alternative routes and ensuring that heavy rescue equipment can be moved rapidly to affected areas when infrastructure is damaged. The Chinese experience also highlights the importance of having specialized personnel



Workers prepare to unload Chinese humanitarian relief supplies at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, Nepal, on August 30, 2026. Two Y-20 large transport aircraft carrying Chinese humanitarian relief supplies landed at the airport that day. **● ZHANG PING/XINHUA**

ment needs to be treated as a coordinated national system rather than a series of separate responses by individual agencies. Clear lines of command, pre-allocated emergency funding, stockpiled supplies, specialized rescue units, rapid deployment mechanisms and reliable communication systems can significantly reduce the time between the occurrence of a disaster and the beginning of an effective response. The most important lesson is perhaps that an effective disaster response begins long before the disaster itself: with preparation, coordination, investment in specialized capabilities and the ability to mobilize resources without delay.

Nepal's latest disaster signals a need to redesign monitoring, early warning systems

By Austin Lord
Senior fellow in the Stimson Center

PERSPECTIVE

On August 26, 2026, a massive volume of bedrock and glacial ice broke loose 5,200 meters above sea level on the north side of Nepal's Langtang range, triggering a "rock-ice avalanche" that crashed into the Lhende River on the Nepal-China border fueling the deadliest extreme flow disaster on record in the country. This cascade barreled downstream at an average of ~160 kilometers per hour downstream toward the Nepal-China border. It slammed into and overwhelmed Chinese border facilities at Rasuwagadhi just 7.5 minutes after the mountain gave way, then tore across the border and down the Bhotekoshi/Trishuli River corridor into Nepal, swallowing towns and causing extensive damage over 100 kilometers from its source. As of 2:00pm ET on September 3, a total of 1,259 people were confirmed dead and over 5,000 people were still reported missing. These numbers include Nepalis living and working along the river corridor, hundreds of foreign tourists visiting the Langtang region and pilgrims crossing to Mount Kailash, and hundreds of hydropower workers trapped in tunnels. The border town of Timure and the market hub of Syaphrubesi were essentially wiped away; 19 bridges and 40 kilometers of highway are gone, and more than 430 megawatts of hydropower capacity, representing more than 10% of Nepal's national supply, went offline. The residents of Nepal's Rasuwa district, which includes a large Tamang population, have lived with disaster risk (e.g. floods, landslides, earthquakes, and avalanches) for centuries and they have adapted to and managed these risks. But the risks are changing fast, and the level of exposure communities face today is unprecedented. I say this, having spent nearly 14 years conducting research in this river basin (in all of the affected settlements in Rasuwa), having led post-disaster relief activities in many of these towns after the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, and having personally survived a massive glacier avalanche on the other side of the very same mountain,



which led to years of research and direct engagement. None of this is abstract to me, and my heart breaks for Rasuwa again.

A cascade, not a rainfall disaster

This catastrophic event happened on a clear day. Unlike many of Nepal's recent disasters, it wasn't triggered by extreme rainfall or an earthquake, and surprisingly, given the volume of water, there wasn't a lake involved. Post-event analysis points to an unexpected culprit: the sheer force of the rock-ice avalanche that became more flood-like as it gathered water, rock, and sediment and funneled through the Trishuli's tight canyons, arriving downstream as a fast-moving wall of concrete. This was a single, continuous, cascading extreme flow event. Scientists are still working to establish whether climate change played a role in destabilizing the source area, and formal processes of evaluating attribution are now underway. But the frequency of extreme flow events in recent years suggests that climate change is destabilizing the mountain cryosphere across the Himalayan region. Simply put, warming and climatic volatility can impact glaciers, weaken permafrost, and drive rapid or unseasonal changes in snowpack. In Nepal, climate-related risks interact with monsoon dynamics and seismic risk to compound danger in ways that existing monitoring frameworks aren't

built to see. This event joins a grim and growing list of Himalayan cascading disasters — the 2021 Chamoli flood, the 2021 Melamchi disaster, the 2023 South Lhonak GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flow), and the 2025 Blatten collapse in Switzerland. Notably, a smaller glacial flood struck this exact watershed in July 2025, destroying the same border bridge and killing 19 people — a warning sign that didn't translate into readiness for what came next.

Of blind spots and needles in haystacks

It would be wrong to read this as a failure of Nepal's early warning systems. The source area sits in a genuine gap — a narrow sliver of unpopulated Nepali territory that drains north into China, falling between the scientific attention long focused on the south side of the Langtang range and the Chinese monitoring effort that intensified after last year's flood. Nepal's gauge and station networks were built to catch monsoon floods and glacial lake outbursts, not a catastrophic flow that outran any possible alert. But generating alerts for an event like this isn't just a problem of data scarcity or blind spots, it's also a problem of speed and scale. The Himalaya has more slopes capable of failing this catastrophically, across more vertical relief, than anywhere else on Earth. Scientists can and have highlighted a variety of high-risk

areas and landforms, but finding subtle changes in a timely fashion requires skillfully separating signal from noise as risk changes across the Himalaya. The overall point is that experts need a signal to effectively direct their tools and attention — and finding these signals can often feel like finding needles in Himalaya haystacks. Of roughly a dozen extreme flow events in the region over the past decade, only one — the 2023 South Lhonak outburst — struck a site already flagged as risky. Every other event originated from somewhere no one was watching, including this one.

Learning from disasters like this

Each event offers lessons and insights that allow us to return with greater precision and a new understanding of where similar hazard chains might be stacking up. For example, the 2024 Thame (GLOF) taught researchers that small glacial lakes can grow dangerously fast; last year's transboundary flood event along the same Lhende River into Rasuwa showed that supraglacial lakes — lakes on top of glaciers — can expand and drain catastrophically. This recent event highlights the increasing prevalence of another kind of risk: showing how an ice-rock avalanche can trigger a massive flood-like event and impact communities more than 100 kilometers downstream. Tools are rapidly developing, but

In June 2015, staff from The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) deliver training for a "community-based" flood early warning system in Lalitpur, Nepal. **● ICIMOD KATHMANDU**



Generating alerts for an event like this isn't just a problem of data scarcity or blind spots, it's also a problem of speed and scale. The Himalaya has more slopes capable of failing this catastrophically, across more vertical relief, than anywhere else on Earth. Scientists can and have highlighted a variety of high-risk areas and landforms, but finding subtle changes in a timely fashion requires skillfully separating signal from noise as risk changes across the Himalaya.

no single instrument will catch everything, so the approach has to be layered — weather stations and river gauges as a foundation, satellite monitoring to track remote terrain, seismic networks to triangulate a failure within seconds, and, critically, local observers such as herders, mountaineers, and fishers who can flag a crack or a filling lake long before a sensor does. Even a few minutes of warning can be the difference between an evacuation and a recovery operation.

Lingering risks and uncertainties

Risks remain throughout the region, and heavy rain could still reactivate destabilized slopes or remobilize other landforms within the impacted area. Critically, the monsoon season is not yet over. There are risks that we know of, such as risks from specific glacial lakes in China. But we can't discount the risks we are not yet aware of from other potential cascading hazards. Monitoring these risks often requires both focused efforts on high-risk areas and triaging between uncertainties. In this wake of this devastating event, we are already seeing better transboundary coordination between Nepal and China. High-priority information is being shared and new channels of communication opened between Chinese and Nepali authorities — a promising, if overdue, shift. A variety of people have called for greater formal coordination and the establishment of transboundary monitoring networks. To be clear, no one — not Nepal, not China, not the international scientific community — could have identified the subtle changes and specific risks that triggered this disaster. Forensic analysis is yielding new insights that we can use to search for similar risks in the future, but this event began with a sudden mass movement that turned into an extreme flow far too fast for a true alert to be shared. The hope is that this disaster will catalyze the kind of sustained, cross-border monitoring and cooperation the region has needed for years.

The full article was adapted from an earlier Stimson Center commentary and updated by New Security Beat to reflect current conditions.

Iran protests FIBA over World Cup hosting arrangements

Sports Desk

The Basketball Federation of Iran has lodged a protest to the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) over the allocation of hosting rights and the conditions provided to the national team during the FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers, calling for the matter to be reviewed.

Iran's home game against New Zealand in the second-round Group E of the qualifiers on Aug. 28 was moved to Pasay, Philippines, over security concerns amid the wartime circumstances in the region – the same reason that forced the country to host Syria in Amman, Jordan, in the previous group phase in June.

In a letter to FIBA Secretary General Andreas Zagklis on Monday, the national governing body of the sport stressed the need to uphold "fairness, equal treatment of teams and competitive balance," while expressing concern over the Philippines being repeatedly awarded hosting rights despite being one of the teams in Iran's group.

Entering the second round on the back of a top-spot finish in the preliminary Group C – thanks to a 5-1 run – Iran got off to a disappointing start in the fourth window of the qualifiers, suffering an overtime 93-91 setback against New Zealand before losing 68-56 to the Philippines three days later in Pasay.

"The repeated allocation of hosting rights to the Philippines, given that the team is one of the direct rivals of the other teams in the group, raises concerns over the principles of neutrality and equality of competition," the letter read.

Iran has asked FIBA to formally review the hosting arrangements for the group and insisted that its home fixtures against Australia and the Philippines in late November should be played in Tehran in line with the principle of fairness and equal competitive conditions.

The federation also argued that Iran's ability to host games should be assessed under the same standards applied to countries such as Lebanon, Qatar and



Saudi Arabia, calling for uniform criteria to be used in determining hosting rights for all teams. The Iranian federation also called on FIBA to investigate the poor conditions provided for its national team during recent competitions, though it did not elaborate on the matter. The letter concluded by reaffirm-

ing Iran's commitment to FIBA, fair play and equal treatment of all teams, saying the purpose of raising the issue was to safeguard the integrity of the competition and ensure fair and appropriate conditions for all teams participating in the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup qualifiers. Iran called on FIBA to review the

issues as soon as possible and take the necessary measures to protect the rights of Iran and the other teams competing in the World Cup qualifiers. The recent setbacks left Iran third in the Group E standings with 13 points – three and one behind Australia and New Zealand, respectively, and level with

fourth-placed Jordan. The top three in each of the two qualifying groups, plus the best fourth-placed team, will secure a spot at the 2027 World Cup in Qatar next summer.

Iran will open its bid for a fifth men's basketball medal in six Asian Games editions against Qatar on Thursday at Nagoya's Aichi International Arena.

Iran will then take on Chinese Taipei on Sept. 12 in a repeat of the thrilling quarterfinal clash at last year's FIBA Asia Cup in Saudi Arabia, where Iran produced an epic fightback to overcome a 21-point deficit and win 78-75.

The final round of the Group B fixtures will see Iran take on Jordan on Sept. 13. The two sides met at the World Cup Asian qualifiers in July. Iran comprehensively won 67-49, making amends for the 73-60 setback against its familiar West Asian foe earlier in the qualifiers in February.

The top two teams from each group will be joined by the two best third-placed teams in the quarterfinals.

World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series:

Salimi wins bronze but red flag raised for Iran ahead of Asian Games



Iran's Arian Salimi (red) is seen in action against Russia's Vladislav Larin in the men's +80kg semifinals at the World Taekwondo Grand Prix in Muju, South Korea, on September 7, 2026.

WORLD TAEKWONDO

day.

Reigning world and Asian champion Zandi opened his campaign with a 2-0 win over Saudi Arabia's Riad Nasser Hamdi before losing 2-1 to two-time world champion Bae Jun-seo of South Korea.

Razmian, meanwhile, defeated Chinese Taipei's Pan Kuei-en 2-1 in his first outing but fell to Croatia's Josip Teskera by the same scoreline.

The second day of action was also one to forget for Mehran Barkhordari and Nahid Kiani – silver medalists at the Paris 2024 Olympics – as well as reigning Asian champion Amir-sina Bakhtiari.

Desperate to bounce back from a shock first-round defeat at the WT Women's Open Championships last week in Taiyuan, China, Kiani opened with a 2-0 victory over Poland's Niko Lisowska in the women's -57kg division but was beaten in consecutive rounds by fifth-seeded Amina Dehhaoui – the Iranian's second defeat to the young Moroccan following the Chuncheon Korea Open setback in July.

Barkhordari bowed out early in the men's -80kg class, losing 2-1 to American Isaiah Young in his first bout. Bakhtiari had a better run in the -80kg class, beating Spain's Juan Antonio Canovas 2-0 and Jordanian Saleh El-Sharabaty – an Olympic silver medalist in Tokyo 2020 – 2-1, but was ultimately undone by Young in the quarterfinals.

Salimi emerged victorious in successive rounds against his compatriot but saw his campaign end in the semifinals after a 2-1 defeat to Russia's Vladislav Larin.

Salimi bounced back from a 4-0 loss to the Russian – an Olympic gold medalist in Tokyo 2020 – in the first round to win 7-2 in the second, but ultimately fell short 16-8 in a thrilling decider to settle for a joint third-place finish alongside Vasileios Tholiotis of Greece.

Larin was beaten in back-to-back rounds by Egypt's Seif Eissa – a -87kg world champion in Wuxi last year – in the final.

Earlier in the competition, Iran's Abolfazl Zandi and Mahdi Razmian suffered second-round exits in the men's -58kg category on the opening

Iran eyes U20 World Cup spot after Asian Cup qualification, Zadeh-Attar says

Sports Desk

Iran U20 captain Abolfazl Zadeh-Attar says reaching the 2027 FIFA U20 World Cup is the team's main objective after securing a place at next year's AFC U20 Asian Cup.

The Foolad Khuzestan striker was on target from the spot in 95th-minute as Iran came from behind to beat hosts Vietnam 3-1 in Viet Tri on Sunday and finish second to North Korea in Group C with six points and qualify as one of the seven best runners-up across the eight groups.

"We were in one of the toughest groups in Asia, and all four teams had a high level of quality," Zadeh-Attar told the official website of the Iranian Football Federation. "Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of the players and coaching staff, as well as the support we received, we managed to get through the group and qualify for the Asian Cup."

The Iran captain said none of the three matches was straightforward, highlighting the quality of the opponents.

In the 2-1 victory over Palestine on the opening day, Iran faced a side "with several players born in Europe and involved in European football," he said. Despite that, Iran created numerous chances and could have won by a bigger margin with more accuracy and luck in front of goal. Zadeh-Attar described North Korea as one of Asia's strongest teams, pointing to the continuity within its squad and its recent success at youth level.

"They have played together for several years, and their U17 team had also reached the round of 16 at the World Cup, which shows the quality of the team we faced," he said.



Iran led North Korea until the 92nd minute but conceded twice late on to suffer a painful defeat. Zadeh-Attar said the team lost concentration in the closing stages and argued that Iran did not deserve to lose. He also claimed that a second Iran goal was incorrectly ruled out for offside, which he felt could have effectively sealed victory.

The forward said the squad quickly put the setback behind it and turned its attention to Vietnam.

"Vietnam proved a difficult opponent in front of its home fans, using its pace to put Iran under pressure at times," Zadeh-Attar said, adding: "The players regrouped at half-time and committed themselves to defending Iran's reputation."

Zadeh-Attar warned that Iran could not afford to become complacent, stressing that there

are no easy opponents in Asian football anymore. He pointed to Australia, the defending champion, as well as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates among the teams that failed to qualify.

"We have only taken one step," he said. "Our main goal from the first day of forming this team has been to qualify for the World Cup."

Iran head coach Qassem Haddadifar has repeatedly urged the players to progress step by step, Zadeh-Attar added, saying the team would need continued support as it prepares for the Asian Cup and its bid to reach the World Cup.

The tournament will also serve as the qualification pathway for the 2027 FIFA U20 World Cup, with the four semifinalists at next March's Asian Cup finals will secure places in the global showcase in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan.

Sorkheh reveals history, culture and hidden treasures

Iranica Desk

The diverse and astonishing nature of Semnan Province, its rich historical heritage, scenic roads that seem to pass through the sky, and star-filled nights that illuminate the heavens combine to create a region brimming with unforgettable experiences for travelers. Sorkheh, located along the historic Silk Road and on the route of tourists traveling westward, remains relatively unknown despite its abundant tourism potential, historical landmarks, and religious monuments scattered throughout the city. Situated near the provincial capital, Sorkheh has long shared in the region's natural and cultural wonders. The village lies on Iran's central plateau and exhibits a climate similar to other areas of the plateau. Much of the city experiences a hot desert climate, characterized by scorching, dry summers and cold, dry winters. Residents speak Persian, though each district retains its own dialect, reflecting the region's rich linguistic diversity and cultural heritage.

Handicrafts

Sorkheh's traditional handicrafts include carpet weaving, kilim weaving, jajim (a type of floor covering) weaving, fabric weaving, Khorjin (saddlebag) making, pottery, marquetry, and wood carving. Among these, Sorkheh's kilims are particularly renowned, enjoying high acclaim in both domestic and international markets.

Tourist attractions

• **Heshmat-ol-Lashkar House:**



Heshmat-ol-Lashkar House
● chtn.ir

This Qajar-era mansion, a symbol of desert architecture, is located in the city center. Originally owned by Haj Mohamad Ebrahim Khan Peyvandi, known as Heshmat-ol-Lashkar (the local ruler at the time), the complex spanned over 150 years and included four residential units, a governor's office, gardens, bathhouses, and a school. Much of the historical governance section, especially its grand portal, was demolished in 1991 to accommodate urban development. The remaining windcatchers on the house, adorned with intricate decorations, exemplify the beauty of desert architectural artistry. The building was registered as a national heritage site on February 6, 2011.

• **Grand Ab Anbar:** Located in the Biroun Dezh neighborhood along one of the old streets, this large water reservoir dates back to the Qajar period. Built



Chehel Sotoun Mosque
● IRNA

of bricks with lime and gypsum mortar, the structure features a small windcatcher atop its dome to cool the water. Registered as a national heritage site in 2001, it is widely recognized as a symbol of Sorkheh.

• **Biroun Dezh Bathhouse:** Believed to date back to the late Zand period and early Qajar era, this bathhouse is adjacent to the



Biroun Dezh Bathhouse
● IRNA

Chehel Sotoun Mosque. Rebuilt by Heydar Beyk Peyvandi, it includes traditional sections such as a changing room, vestibule, hot room, water reservoir, and furnace. The bathhouse was registered as a national heritage site in December 2001.

• **Jaame and Chehel Sotoun mosques:** Chehel Sotoun Mosque dates to the 1st century

AH and is attached to Sorkheh's Jaame Mosque, located in the old city near Moharram Street. The mosque consists of two adjacent northern and southern halls, approximately two meters below street level. Notable features include slender octagonal brick columns and pointed archways reminiscent of Zand-era architecture. Of the original 40 columns, 32 remain today. Since 2014, the mosque has been designated for use as a permanent ethnographic museum or for temporary exhibitions by the city's Cultural Heritage Organization.

• **Historical castles:** Sorkheh's strategic location along east-west trade routes historically exposed it to periodic invasions. Consequently, residents constructed both small and large fortresses, including the notable Jahanabad Castle. In recent years, the city's Cultural Heritage Department has taken

steps to register several of these castles as historical sites.

Travel recommendations

Tourists passing through Sorkheh should know that hidden treasures await along its streets and surrounding villages — worth seeing, tasting, or purchasing. For memorable experiences, it is recommended to engage with locals, who are known for their warmth, hospitality, and friendliness. Visitors are advised to avoid buying bread or groceries from random shops. Instead, ask residents to guide you to the local baking centers for authentic "Sorkheh bread". In summer, travelers can purchase fresh melons and cucumbers from the fields, as well as pomegranates and seedless figs from nearby orchards. For lasting souvenirs, Sorkheh's traditional handicrafts should not be overlooked.

Khorashad nurtures talent, tradition in eastern Iran

Iranica Desk

South Khorasan Province, located in eastern Iran, is one of the country's historically rich yet less industrialized regions, where handicrafts have long played a central role in local livelihoods and cultural expression. Shaped by desert geography, cross-regional trade routes, and deeply rooted traditions, the province is known for a wide range of indigenous crafts, including handwoven textiles, embroidery, carpet weaving, pottery, stone carving, and traditional woodwork. In many rural areas, these crafts continue to function not only as cultural symbols but also as essential sources of income, particularly for women and small family-based workshops. Handicrafts in South Khorasan Province reflect the province's cultural diversity and long-standing adaptation to its natural environment. Traditional skills such as handwoven textiles, embroidery, pottery, felt-making, stone carving, and woodcraft have been passed down through generations, often within family-based or community workshops. These crafts not only preserve local aesthetics and techniques but also play



a practical role in sustaining rural economies and reinforcing social ties. Across different cities and villages of the province, variations in materials, patterns, and production methods highlight the close relationship between handicrafts and local lifestyles. From textile and embroidery traditions in Birjand and Qaen to pottery and stone-based crafts in other parts of the province, South Khorasan's handicrafts continue to represent a living heritage that remains closely connected to

everyday life. The experience of provinces such as South Khorasan highlights the broader significance of handicrafts within Iran's cultural and creative economy, as well as the structural challenges faced by producers across different regions. Khorashad is a small village in eastern Iran, located in South Khorasan Province. Nestled in Nasr Abad Valley, its unique name — meaning "The Place of Sunrise" in the Pahlavi language — derives from the breathtaking natural scenery



that greets the dawn. Dating back to a period even before Islam, Khorashad is a rare example of a village that attracts people rather than losing them to migration. One of its most remarkable characteristics is the production of numerous successful and elite individuals in scientific, cultural, and economic fields — an achievement extraordinary for a village with a population of just around 1,000. Due to these distinctions, the region has been officially recognized as an elite village in Iran, according to visitiran.ir.

In addition to agriculture, the residents of Khorashad are renowned for their handicrafts. In 2018, the village gained international recognition for its hand-woven fabrics, known locally as Tow-Bafi. Tow-Bafi refers to the traditional skill of producing a variety of cotton or silk fabrics, a craft that continues to be practiced today using traditional devices and simple tools, just as it was in the past. The final products are unique, whether made from linen or silk, and the raw materials include silk, cotton, wool,

and viscose yarn (processed cotton and stick wood). Among the products of Tow-Bafi, towels are the most common, valued for their softness, delicacy, and high moisture absorbency. A cotton weft is used between the wraps of this weave and forms the primary material of the textile. The weaving process is completed by carefully packing the weave with a comb. All steps of the manufacturing process for Tow-Bafi are performed entirely by hand and foot using the traditional textile machine known as Chahar Verdi. In addition to its rich handicraft heritage, Khorashad has been increasingly attracting tourists and researchers interested in cultural preservation and sustainable village development. Visitors can witness firsthand the meticulous process of Tow-Bafi and engage with local artisans, gaining insight into a craft that has been passed down through generations. The village also hosts seasonal festivals celebrating its textiles, agricultural products, and historical heritage, making Khorashad not only a center of artistic excellence but also a vibrant hub for cultural tourism in eastern Iran.



Iran seeks national archive for its living history

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Reza Salehi-Amiri called for the country's oral histories, documents and historical productions to be consolidated into a comprehensive national reference, during talks with Islamic Revolution Document Center Head Mostafa Pourmohammadi in Tehran on Tuesday. The proposed collaboration could bring together scattered archives and narratives spanning Iran's cultural heritage and modern history, widening researchers' access to materials that Salehi-Amiri described as essential to tracing the roots of national identity and uncovering historical truth, CHTN reported. "An oral archive is the identity card of a nation and a tool for genealogy," Salehi-Amiri said, urging the preservation

and wider availability of historical resources. He proposed placing copies of oral-history collections and other cultural heritage records at the Islamic Revolution Document Center, allowing disparate materials to sit side by side and strengthen the country's historical record. "Everything acquires meaning in the context of time," he said, adding that historical documents become more valuable as the years pass. Salehi-Amiri also drew a sharp distinction between memoir-writing and research-based oral history, arguing that the discipline should go beyond simply recording recollections. "Oral history is not memoir-writing. Oral history is the discovery of truth," he said. "Memoirs are one channel for discovering truth. Documents and re-

search are others." Pourmohammadi said the center has published about 1,400 book titles and recorded more than 29,000 oral-history sessions, while holding a substantial body of documents and interviews that remain unpublished. He said cultural heritage had "an important and fundamental voice" in oral history, with a significant part of Iran's historical experience embedded in its cultural legacy. The Islamic Revolution Document Center has operated since 1981, collecting and preserving written, audio and visual records for historical research. Its official materials describe a vast and expanding archive, including millions of historical documents and digitized publications. Salehi-Amiri said the resources should be preserved with a comprehensive,



Iranian cultural officials meet at the Islamic Revolution Document Center in Tehran on September 8, 2026, to discuss expanding cooperation on oral history, historical documents and the preservation of the country's cultural heritage. ● CHTN

research-driven and forward-looking approach, ensuring that future generations can return to the record and find,

amid its many voices, a clearer path toward historical truth.

Paris screenplay award dedicated to Minab school students

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian writer and filmmaker Ashkan Shapouri dedicated his Best Screenplay Award at the Paris Film Awards to the students killed at Shajareh Tayebbeh School in Minab, southern Iran. Shapouri received the award for "The Last Tango with Pari," a feature-film screenplay that the festival jury described as a powerful and

emotionally charged work and characterized as "a romantic epic." He dedicated the international honor to the victims in recognition of what he called the sacrifice and resilience of Minab residents. "This award is a modest drop compared with the sacrifice of those who gave their lives," Shapouri said, adding that the children were at the forefront of that sacrifice.

The recognition adds to Shapouri's recent run on the international festival circuit. In August, he was selected as a member of the main jury of the Love International Film Festival in California, where he is evaluating feature films, shorts, documentaries and animation focused on love, peace, friendship and human values. Shapouri has previously collected international honors, including Best Director at

the Milan Film Festival and Best Screenplay at the Athens International Film Festival, according to Iranian film reports. "The Last Tango with Pari" has also appeared at festivals in Los Angeles. The filmmaker is expected to move into production on his next feature, "White Snake," after completing his jury duties. The project is being produced jointly by Shapouri and filmmaker Ali Shah-Hatami.

Six Kiarostami films set for South Korea's Ulsan Ulju Mountain festival

Arts & Culture Desk

Six films by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami will screen at the 11th Ulsan Ulju Mountain Film Festival in South Korea from September 18 to 22, organizers said, bringing a cross-section of his cinema to an event centered on mountains, nature, adventure, the environment and human experience. The selection spans Kiarostami's early work through his later films, with three productions by Iran's Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, known as Kanoon, alongside three other works. The lineup includes "The Bread and Alley" (1981), "Orderly or Disorderly" (1981), "The Chorus" (1982), "Ten" (2002), "No" (2010) and "Take Me Home" (2016), ILNA reported. Festival programmers have framed the selection as a cinematic journey from "The Bread and Alley" to "Take Me Home," linking the alley, movement and the road, motifs that recur throughout Kiarostami's work. The progression traces a filmmaker whose deceptively simple images often turn ordinary spaces into medi-



tations on movement and human experience. "Take Me Home," Kiarostami's final short, follows a football as it rolls down stairways and through narrow lanes in southern Italy. Shot in stark black and white, the 16-minute film turns a seemingly mundane journey into a carefully composed visual poem. The festival, held in the mountainous Ulju county of Ulsan, will also feature international and Korean selections alongside its special screenings.

Actress Roya Nonahali to return to Baghdad stage with 'Like Water for Chocolate'

Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian actress Roya Nonahali will return to the international stage with 'Like Water for the Chocolate,' directed and written by Ebrahim Poshtkouhi, at the Baghdad International Theatre Festival. The production is an adaptation of Mexican author Laura Esquivel's acclaimed novel, first staged in Iran in 2013 with Nonahali in the cast. It

was later revived in 2016 and 2018, with Nonahali reprising her role, IRNA reported. Poshtkouhi is returning to Baghdad with the production for a third time, extending a long-running international trajectory that has taken his work to festivals and stages in Moscow, Munich, St. Petersburg, Baku, Yerevan and Budapest. His theatrical language often draws on the traditions, music and folklore of southern Iran,

weaving local cultural textures into contemporary adaptations. His previous Baghdad appearances have brought major recognition. 'Macbeth Zar' won the top prize at the fourth Baghdad International Theatre Festival, while 'Chaos Particles' later won the festival's Grand Prize and its Best Actress award. 'Like Water for Chocolate' follows Tita, the youngest daughter in a family bound by tra-

dition, whose forbidden love and emotional world unfold through food, memory and magical realism. Esquivel's novel, first published in 1989, has become a landmark of Latin American magical realism. For Poshtkouhi, the Baghdad return places a distinctly Iranian theatrical voice once again on a regional stage, with southern Iranian cultural motifs meeting a globally recognized literary work.

Alternative oil routes ...

Can the project be considered a solution to the current Strait of Hormuz crisis?
No — not as a short-term solution.

Page 1 > A project that is still undergoing feasibility studies and would require around four years to develop cannot address an immediate disruption in Hormuz. The current situation requires existing infrastructure: alternative pipelines, storage facilities, tanker-fleet flexibility, ship-to-ship operations where feasible, and adjustments in crude destinations and loading patterns. But that does not make Kirkuk-Baniyas strategically unimportant. The disruption has demonstrated the cost of excessive dependence on a single export corridor. Baghdad's continued pursuit of Syrian routes therefore makes sense as a longer-term policy objective.

The pipeline is "not a solution to today's crisis; it is an investment against the next crisis."

Could alternative routes eventually reduce the geopolitical importance of Hormuz?

Alternative routes can reduce the concentration of risk around Hormuz, but they cannot make the Strait irrelevant. The scale difference is fundamental. According to the US Energy Information Administration, oil flows through Hormuz averaged 20.9 million barrels per day in the first half of 2025, equivalent to about 20% of global petroleum-liquids consumption and roughly one-quarter of global maritime oil trade. Against that scale, even a 2-million-barrel-per-day Kirkuk-Baniyas pipeline would be a diversification mechanism,

not a replacement for the Persian Gulf maritime export system. More importantly, Hormuz should not be viewed merely as a geographic chokepoint. It is an integral component of the "energy architecture of the Persian Gulf," connecting the region's producing states to the global maritime energy system. Its strategic importance therefore cannot be measured only by the volume that might theoretically be diverted through pipelines. This is why claims that Hormuz could lose most of its strategic value within two years should be treated cautiously. Reducing dependence on Hormuz is fundamentally different from eliminating its strategic importance. Oil has more transportation alternatives than LNG, but available pipeline alternatives collectively remain far below normal Hormuz volumes. The Strait also

carries LNG and other maritime trade for which equivalent land-based alternatives are much harder to establish. There is also a broader geographic reality. Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the UAE can build additional export corridors, but these routes primarily "redistribute risk; they do not eliminate the underlying geography of the Persian Gulf." They also create their own security, political, financial and infrastructure risks. For Iran, this distinction is particularly important. Iran's position along the northern shore of the Strait is a structural geographic fact, not a variable that can simply be engineered away. Alternative pipelines can diversify routes and reduce exposure to a chokepoint, but "infrastructure can diversify routes; it cannot relocate geography." From an Iranian energy perspective, there-

fore, the debate should not be framed as "Hormuz versus alternative routes." The more realistic outcome is a diversified regional energy system in which Hormuz — and Iran's geographic position within that system — remains structurally important. The strategic objective should not be to make Hormuz irrelevant. It should be to ensure that no single disruption at Hormuz can translate into an uncontrollable global energy shock. Kirkuk-Baniyas can contribute to that objective, not by eliminating Hormuz or removing Iran from the regional energy equation, but by adding another layer of "energy-route redundancy and geopolitical risk diversification." That is the more realistic way to understand both the future of Kirkuk-Baniyas and the enduring strategic importance of Hormuz.