

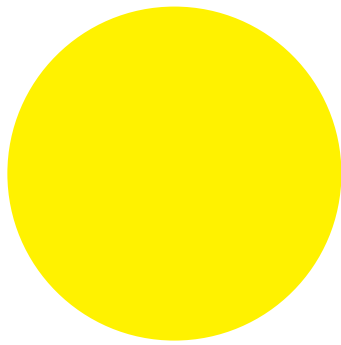
Revisiting state of Iran's Air Force during Iraqi-imposed war
Technology alone not decisive in wars:
Veteran pilot

INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE

4-5

>



US president will dream of wiping Iran off the map: *Pezeshkian* 2 >

Sanctions of Iran's civil aviation testing credibility of int'l law

By Kamran Yeganegi
International affairs expert

O P I N I O N

E X C L U S I V E

No political dispute and no security claim grants an unlimited license to endanger the safety and lives of civilians. The fundamental credibility of international law is tested precisely at the moment when a hegemonic power employs its financial and technological monopoly to impose political will, yet exempts itself from accountability before fundamental norms. The recent decision by the US Department of the Treasury in September 2026 to block Iran's aviation network — including the simultaneous sanctioning of approximately 27 airlines, the revocation of general licenses, and the suspension of insurance and airport services — has placed such a test before the international community: can a monopoly over international financial arteries serve as a legitimate pretext for depriving a society of the fundamental right to safety and mobility?

Washington claims that these pressures are targeted in nature and aimed at security channels; however, in practice, the real victims of this policy are not only political decision-makers, but also civilians, flight crews, and ordinary passengers. When third-party companies are prohibited, under the threat of "secondary sanctions," from providing fuel, navigation services, and essential parts, the consequences immediately affect the target society: a fleet with an average age of over 25 years, due to deprivation of parts and standard maintenance, is forced to resort to the high-risk practice of "cannibalization" — an issue that has sounded a serious alarm for aviation accidents and contradicts the fundamental principles of Article 44 of the Chicago Convention on maintaining the safe and orderly development of aviation.

Page 3 >

Iranian military captures second US underwater drone in Strait of Hormuz 2 >



The screengrab shows a US Remus 600 autonomous underwater vehicle seized by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in the Strait of Hormuz on September 27, 2026.



President opens 246 tourism projects, calls for broader ties with neighbors

3 >



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Iran off to winning start in volleyball, Zarei makes history in athletics

6 >



St Petersburg University moves to add Persian language studies

8 >



US president will dream of wiping Iran off the map: *Pezeshkian*



Masoud Pezeshkian
president.ir

International Desk

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that the US president will dream of wiping out Iran, arguing that the Iranian people would over-

come the country's problems through strength and resolve.

Referring to the US president's threats of annihilating of Iranian people, Pezeshkian said for the US President Donald Trump human rights,

international law and humanitarian law are "baseless" issues.

But the Iranian people, he said, would overcome difficulties and restrictions and would take part in producing and building the country.

The president also praised the unity and cohesion that had taken shape among Iranians in opposition to their enemies.

The United States and Israel, which he described as "criminal", had not believed that the Iranian people would be able to remain steadfast despite existing economic problems, he said. Their expectation, according to the president, had been that the country would collapse from within.

Instead, he said, the war and attacks on various parts of Iran had pushed people to play a key role in defending the country.

The Iranian president returned to the country on Saturday night after taking part in the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Upon his arrival in Tehran, Pezeshki-

an said he made use of the UN session to expose the unprecedented crimes of the United States and Israel against the Iranian nation and the broader West Asia region.

He fiercely dismissed Trump's baseless accusations labeling Iran a "terrorist" state, exposing the profound hypocrisy of Washington and its regional proxy.

"The United States directs numerous assassinations across the globe and trains terrorists," Pezeshkian said.

"Israel is also a regime that, with the full backing of the US, assassinates individuals anywhere in the world, and then they have the audacity to claim they are fighting terrorism."

The president noted that Trump's own belligerent remarks at the summit fundamentally shifted Iran's diplomatic approach.

"These statements somewhat changed our way of thinking and our response. At the assembly, we defended Iran, our beliefs, and our convictions based on what we could," he explained.

Logic of negotiations

Addressing Western pressure to enter talks, Pezeshkian clarified Iran's pragmatic yet principled stance on diplomacy.

"They told us to come and talk to them, while they do not act upon what they have signed. If we talk, will they act?" he asked, highlighting the US history of breaching agreements.

"We engage in dialogue so the world does not think we fear negotiations or are unwilling to talk, nor do we want them to assume we are the source of instability," Pezeshkian explained. "We want to prove that the main source of instability in the region is the Americans and the Israelis. They do not abide by their writings and words, and they say something new every day." He firmly rejected the notion of capitulation, asserting that Iran makes no unreasonable demands.

"We only demand our rights within the framework of international laws and commitments, and we are not supposed to bow to their every demand," the president declared.

Iranian military captures second US underwater drone in Strait of Hormuz

International Desk

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said on Sunday that its forces have seized an advanced American submarine drone in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

"Through a coordinated, complex operation involving intelligence oversight and electronic warfare, IRGC naval forces' personnel successfully captured an advanced unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) belonging to the terrorist US military," the IRGC naval forces said in a statement. They added that the drone was "operating in the Strait of Hormuz for espionage purposes", identifying the model as a Remus 600 autonomous underwater vehicle that was "now in the hands of the force's specialists for data recovery".



The screenshot shows a US Remus 600 autonomous underwater vehicle seized by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps in the Strait of Hormuz on September 27, 2026.

The IRGC Navy also reiterated its position that the Strait of Hormuz is closed, warning that it would continue to respond to "dangerous movements and unauthorized passage through the waterway." Earlier in September, the IRGC Navy announced it had successfully intercepted and captured a highly advanced, unmanned American underwater vehicle at the

entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.

The captured system was identified as a Dive-LD, an autonomous unmanned underwater vehicle developed by US defense technology company Anduril Industries and first delivered to the US Navy's Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Group 1 in 2025.

The latest capture comes amid a sharp escalation between Iran and the

United States over the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most strategically important maritime chokepoints.

Over the past decade, Iranian forces have successfully downed or captured numerous high-value US assets, including the RQ-170 Sentinel stealth drone, MQ-9 Reaper drones, and various underwater gliders and surface vessels in the Persian Gulf.

Army chief urges regional states to abandon reliance on external powers for security

International Desk

Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Army Major General Amir Hatami on Sunday urged Iran's neighbors to abandon their reliance on external powers and recognize the futility of Western security guarantees, stressing that the security of the region lies within the region itself.

"We cannot live in this region and be its owners for many years, while others come from elsewhere and exploit all of it," Amir Hatami said.

"As an Iranian soldier, I ask all neighbors and countries in the region to pay attention to this issue. You have seen that cooperation with America does not create security. The security of the region lies within the region itself and in the hands of the countries of the region," Hatami affirmed, highlighting the necessity of an indigenous, regional security architecture.

He also outlined the definitive prerequisite for lasting peace in West Asia, framing the expulsion of foreign military bases not just as a political aspiration, but as an impending reality.

"Security in the region will not occur except by the elimination and removal of America and the Zionist regime from the region, and this occurrence is not far off," he declared.

Hatami also issued a warning to region-



Amir Hatami
IRNA

al and global actors, declaring that any insecurity in West Asia will encompass the entire region.

He emphasized that true stability can only be achieved through the complete elimination of US and Israeli military presence, a shift he described as "not far off."

Addressing the current state of the ongoing US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran, Major General Hatami cautioned that the war has not yet concluded.

"The war is not over yet. We must remain prepared to deliver crushing blows to the enemy by the soldiers of dear Iran," he said, signaling the Iranian Armed Forces' continued offensive and defensive readiness.

The Army chief directed a specific appeal to Iran's neighbors, urging them to abandon their reliance on external powers and recognize the futility of Western security guarantees.

Iran tried every diplomatic avenue to reopen Strait of Hormuz: *Araghchi*

International Desk

No one can accuse the Islamic Republic of Iran of not having tried the diplomatic path in reopening the Strait of Hormuz, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said.

Speaking to Iranian journalists in New York on Saturday, Araghchi explained that the main focus of his and President Masoud Pezeshkian's meetings on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly was to explain and defend Iran's conditions for reopening the strategic waterway, Press TV reported.

"Tehran was required to clearly present the conditions set by Iran's National Security Council and defend the logic behind them," he remarked. Iran presented several proposals during the meetings and through



Abbas Araghchi
AFP

interviews, with the proposals being passed to Washington by intermediaries, Araghchi revealed.

The foreign minister noted that "US President Donald Trump's messages have been contradictory" and maintained that "Iran would make its decision after receiving a clear response through the mediators."

Speaking to a reporter about the outlook amid Iran's proposals and initiatives and Trump's continued position, Araghchi said, "The outlook is clear for the Iranian people. Our people have demonstrated their power to the world in the military, diplomatic, and economic spheres and in confronting sanctions."

"There is no way forward other than a negotiated solution based on dignity and justice and ensuring the legitimate rights and demands of the Iranian people," he added.

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he has rejected an Iranian proposal to reopen the strait of Hormuz within a week and resume nuclear talks.

"They made a proposal but I reject it," the US president told reporters at the White House.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

CARTOON



President opens 246 tourism projects, calls for broader ties with neighbors

Economy Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday inaugurated 246 tourism and cultural heritage projects online, creating 3,200 jobs, as Iran marked the start of Tourism Week. Pezeshkian called for broader cultural, tourism and trade ties with neighboring countries, saying US restrictions made stronger regional relations necessary to put Iran on a path toward development and growth, according to his website, president.ir. He also said regulations that hinder tourism businesses would be revised and stressed the need for balanced development of tourism infrastructure in line with population distribution.

bution.

"Despite the wartime conditions prevailing in the country over the past two years, significant steps have been taken to develop tourism infrastructure across the country, but balanced development remains essential," Pezeshkian said. Since late February, Iran has been operating under wartime conditions and a maritime blockade from the south following a 40-day U.S.-Israeli war. Already under decades of Western sanctions, Iran also faces a new wave of U.S. sanctions targeting its aviation sector. Israel also launched a 12-day war against Iran in June 2024. Pezeshkian said sanctions imposed on Iran should be turned into an opportunity to expand regional ties and create jobs, adding that neighboring countries represented an important capacity for Iran and that broader engagement could open new ways to serve the country.



President Masoud Pezeshkian (c) inaugurates 246 tourism and cultural heritage projects online in Tehran on September 27, 2026. president.ir

At the ceremony, Tourism and Cultural Heritage Minister Mohammad-Reza Salehi Amiri said 1,471 projects had been completed over the past two years under Pezeshkian's government, which began in August 2024, creating 19,000 direct jobs.



Iran-Uzbekistan trade exceeds \$280m in five months



Economy Desk

Trade between Iran and Uzbekistan exceeded \$280 million in the first five months of the current Iranian year, which began on March 21, Iran's commercial attaché in Uzbekistan Rahmatollah Khormaly said on Sunday. Khormaly said agricultural exports, technological cooperation and joint investment were among the main areas for expanding trade between the two countries, according to IRNA. He said coordination between the agriculture min-

istries of Iran and Uzbekistan had paved the way for a 120-member delegation, led by Iran's agriculture minister and comprising agricultural, fisheries, machinery and food-processing specialists and businesspeople, to visit Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan, one of the most populous countries in Central Asia, is Iran's second-largest export destination among the Commonwealth of Independent States, he said, adding that the country has significant potential for expanding trade ties with Iran.

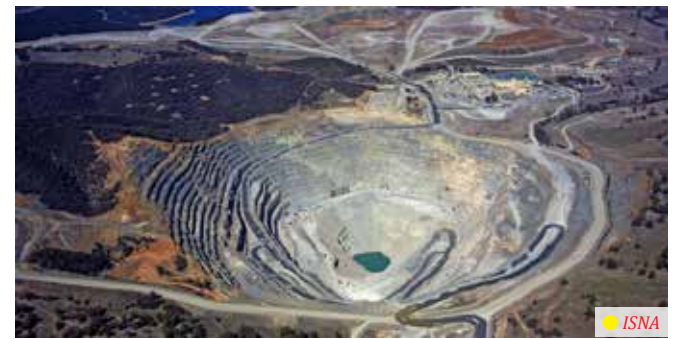
Agriculture is one of the priority areas for developing bilateral trade, Khormaly said, noting that Iran currently exports citrus fruits, apples, kiwis, pistachios, dates, dairy products, powdered milk and fish feed to Uzbekistan. Given the capacity of the Uzbek market, there is also room to expand and diversify Iran's agricultural exports, he said. Khormaly also highlighted the potential for technological cooperation, saying about 30 projects worth \$770 million in various fields, including agriculture, are currently being implemented in Uzbekistan by Iranian companies. He said the projects demonstrated the significant capacity of Iran's private sector to operate in the Uzbek market. Khormaly said specialized meetings and greater interaction between officials and businesspeople from the two countries, particularly in agriculture, could help expand bilateral cooperation and increase trade between Iran and Uzbekistan.

Iran expands aerial exploration of deep mineral deposits 40-fold

Economy Desk

Iran expanded aerial geophysical exploration of deep and hidden mineral deposits to 2 million linear kilometers last year from 51,000 kilometers two years earlier, according to the latest official data from the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade.

The figures, reported by ISNA, are among performance indicators for the country's Seventh Development Plan and show a 40-fold increase in exploration activity for deep and concealed mineral deposits using modern methods and airborne geophysics. The increase reflects a shift toward identifying deeper and concealed mineral deposits as exploration of surface deposits becomes more limited. The operations involve expanded aerial survey lines, airborne geophysical data collection equipment and monitoring of subsurface geological layers across the country. Most of Iran's identified mineral reserves in past decades were discovered through surface exploration and exposed deposits. As these resources have gradually become less available, the focus has increasingly shifted to identifying



ing deposits hidden beneath the surface. Airborne geophysical surveys can cover large areas quickly and help identify geological structures with mineral potential before costly drilling begins. The surveys use techniques including airborne magnetometry and radiometry, with the results combined with geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing to identify prospective areas. Under Iran's development plan, the mining sector is expected to achieve 13.5% growth by the end of the plan period, Zarei said, adding that the government had launched a series of measures, including reactivating idle mines, developing infrastructure and facilitating investment procedures to meet that goal.

Industry Ministry spokesperson Ezzatollah Zarei said in July that 1,200 idle mines have been reactivated and measures introduced to accelerate investment in the mining sector as the country pursues a 13.5% growth target under the Seventh Development Plan (SDP). Zarei said that the government had delegated some decision-making powers to provincial authorities, shortened administrative procedures and introduced investment packages to encourage greater private sector participation in mining. The country is the 15th-largest mineral-rich country globally, and Iranian officials call mining the backbone of industrial development and say it should replace oil as the primary revenue generator.

Sanctions of Iran's ...

At the same time, a 50% to 70% decline in international flight capacity, a doubling of ticket prices under inflationary conditions, the plight of patients requiring transfer abroad, disruption of the air transport chain for vital medicines, and the severance of family and academic ties demonstrate that this measure, in its true nature, constitutes a form of "tangible collective punishment". These objective facts confront Washington's legal claims with a fundamental contradiction: first, violation of sovereign independence and the principle of non-intervention. The extension of the effects of sanctions to air-

Page 1 >

ports, insurers, and service companies in third countries and the prevention of their permitted cooperation with Iran constitute a clear infringement upon the sovereignty of other states and a violation of the established principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of states (the subject of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2625). This logic replaces the sovereign equality of states with financial weight and extraterritorial leverage. Second, invalidity of the claim of "countermeasures". Even if Washington justifies these measures within the framework of countermeasures, according to the articles on the responsibility of states for internationally

wrongful acts (particularly Articles 50 and 51), these measures must, first, be "proportionate" to the alleged harm and, second, must never impair obligations pertaining to fundamental human rights and humanitarian norms. Imposing life-threatening risks on ordinary citizens to impose a political demand is a gross violation of the principle of proportionality and binding human rights norms. Third, discrediting of formal exceptions in international jurisprudence. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its provisional order of October 3, 2018, explicitly obligated the United States to remove obstacles to the supply of parts, equipment,

services, and financial payments related to the safety of Iran's passenger aviation since the risk of irreparable harm to human lives is a matter for urgent judicial protection. The US Treasury's current claim of "case-by-case review of safety-related requests" constitutes a formal evasion of responsibility; an airplane part whose purchase is licensed on paper but the related banking path is blocked, or a license that becomes entangled in erosive bureaucratic complications, will never reach an aircraft in need of repair in the hangar. According to General Comment No. 8 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural

Rights, citizens must not pay the price of political rivalries by losing their subsistence rights, and the claim of the existence of humanitarian exceptions is admissible only if it leads in practice to "effective and timely access". The continuation of this policy, in addition to directly threatening the lives and health of people, imposes a chain of economic damage on tens of thousands of jobs in the aviation industry, tourism, and related services, and deepens the imposed isolation of the Iranian society. The legal solution is clear: The United States must be accountable for the foreseeable and catastrophic effects of this policy on the safety of passengers' lives, and relevant institutions in Iran must also document all instances of refusal to provide services, navigation delays, and imposed risks so that the basis for attributing international responsibility and compensation for damages may be prepared. International law possesses credibility only when it can set limits for the exercise of hegemonic power. Ordinary passengers are not collateral for political disputes. Financial power and the instrument of sanctions may be able to cancel a flight or ground an aircraft, but they can never create legal legitimacy for the systematic endangerment of human lives and safety.

Revisiting state of Iran's Air Force during Iraqi-imposed

Technology alone not decisive
in wars: **Veteran pilot**

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The National Sacred Defense Commemoration Week is a pivotal point for the re-reading of the epics of the eight-year Iraqi-imposed war; epics that not only safeguarded Iran's territorial integrity, but also resulted in the consolidation of its national and religious identity. Among the narratives of the "Sacred Defense," the role of the Iranian Army's Air Force and the pilots who entered the field from the initial hours of Iraq's aggression possesses a special station. The Air Force, under difficult conditions and simultaneously with the extensive transformations of the country during the early years of the Islamic Republic, was tasked with reacting against the Iraqi all-out aerial attack and preventing the advance of the enemy's forces. Second Brigadier General Pilot Hossein Chitforoush is one of the narrators of the Sacred Defense era who himself, from the cockpit of the Air Force's fighter jets, was present and observant of many of the events of that time. He was born in 1956 in Dezful and joined the Army three years prior to the Revolution's victory. Chitforoush was dispatched to America in 1977 for the completion of a pilot training course and, two months after the Islamic Revolution's victory, returned to Iran upon the completion of this course. The command of Dezful Airbase and the command of the IRIAF's Owj Complex were among his responsibilities during his service. Chitforoush also, throughout his years of service, was active in the operational, technical, and strategic domains of the Air Force. During the eight-year imposed war, he collaborated with a number of the Air Force's prominent commanders and pilots, including Major General Pilot Martyr Abbas Babaei. Chitforoush, in an exclusive conversation with Iran Daily, speaks about the importance of air power in wars, Iran's initial reaction to Iraq's attack, Operation Kaman 99, the Air Force's difficult conditions in the war's initial months, and the initiatives that took shape on the battlefield. He also, by reviewing the experience of the eight years of Sacred Defense, pointed to the alteration of the nature of wars and the role of new technologies in today's battles and spoke of lessons that the experience of that era can place at the disposal of today's generation for the understanding of and confrontation with future wars. In the following, you read the full text of that conversation.

Hossein Chitforoush



Brave pilots of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) go over their plans during the Iraqi-imposed war of the 1980s against the country.
● MEHR

IRAN DAILY: First, please give us a brief overview of your time in the Army's Air Force and the Sacred Defense era.

CHITFOROUSH: I, throughout my service, possessed various responsibilities in Iran's Air Force. I also was active in various technical and support sections; from repair and maintenance to the preparation of aircraft and specialized technical tasks. I held responsibilities at Dezful, Isfahan, and Tehran bases and, later, was active in the domain of the aircraft industries and parts manufacturing and the Owj Complex. For about six years, I was the head of the Air Force's Research and Strategic Studies Office and, after that, for a while, I served as the aerial advisor of the Army's commanders. During the Sacred Defense era, one of my greatest honors was acquaintance, collaboration, consultation, and comradeship-in-arms with Major General Pilot Martyr Abbas Babaei. During the eight-year era of the war between Iran and the Ba'athist regime of Iraq, a portion of my missions also related to eavesdropping and electronic surveillance flights. These missions, from an intelligence standpoint, had great importance. At that time, on many occasions, it was necessary for us to fly for long hours at high altitude and monitor the enemy's communications and movements. For example, if the enemy's fighter jet intended to move toward Tehran or Dezful, we had to identify it and place the necessary information at the disposal of our own forces. This task played an important role in the guidance and management of aerial operations.

You have experienced the war for years from inside the aircraft's cockpit and from high altitude. What was the importance of air power in the war

and what role did our Air Force play?

In order to better understand the Air Force's role in the Sacred Defense, we must first recognize the place that air power has in war. At the end of World War I, powerful countries realized what an important role the aircraft possesses in war. The aircraft, in addition to bombardment, provided the possibility of observation from above, reconnaissance behind the front, and the rapid transfer of information.

After that war, various countries rapidly proceeded toward the development of air power and, in World War II, the aircraft's role became exceedingly more extensive. In the history of wars, various theories concerning military power have existed. Years ago, Alfred Mahan, a military theorist, emphasized the importance of dominance over the seas and the world's waters and, based upon this same thinking, aircraft carriers, battleships, and submarines were developed.

Later, this viewpoint was reinforced that any country that can possess dominance over space and the sky possesses greater military power. For this reason, satellites, high-speed jets, reconnaissance systems, and advanced aerial equipment were developed. If you examine the various wars of history, you see that air power, in many instances, has played an important role in determining the fate of the battle and the creation of military superiority.

The clear example of this matter can be seen in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The Arab-Israeli war is a clear example of the importance of air power. In that war, Israel's Air Force played an extremely important role in striking the forces of the Arab countries and an important portion of the war's fate was decided in the very initial hours. Iraq also, at the start of its war against Iran, attempted

to utilize this same model.

Saddam and Iraq's military commanders imagined that, with an extensive aerial attack, they could incapacitate Iran's military force and especially the Air Force in the very initial hours and then, by utilizing ground forces, finish the task. With this same idea and thinking, on September 22, 1980, with approximately 192 fighter jets and support aircraft, Iraq attacked approximately 15 important points and bases of Iran. Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Hamadan, Bushehr, Dezful, and several other bases and sites were targeted. The goal was to eliminate the possibility of reaction from Iran's Air Force, but their calculations did not prove correct.

Given the heavy and surprise attack of Iraq's Air Force against Iran, how was Iran's response and reaction to these attacks?

Despite the Iranian Air Force's difficult conditions after the Revolution and the enemy's heavy aerial attack, our forces responded to the enemy very quickly. Despite the managerial changes, problems, and personnel losses that existed at various levels of the Air Force, it still wielded a significant authority. This authority was not only based on equipment; it was a combination of expertise, experience, national pride, a sense of responsibility, and the motivation to defend the country.

A few hours after Iraq's extensive attack, Iran attacked two important and strategic Iraqi bases, namely Shu'aybiyah and Kut. Four Phantoms from Hamadan were dispatched for the attack on one of these bases and four other Phantoms for the attack on the second base; in total, eight aircraft.

Approximately three hours after Iraq's initial attack, these aircraft bombarded two bases. This event was extremely unexpected for

the Iraqis. They imagined that, with the initial attack, Iran's Air Force had been grounded, but suddenly they were faced with Iran's response. During the attack on Kut Base, two Iranian pilots, Martyr Mohammad Salehi and Martyr Khaled Heydari, attained martyrdom. Martyr Khaled Heydari was from our Sunni compatriots and the martyrdom of these two pilots alongside one another was a symbol of the presence and empathy of all Iranians in the defense of the country. This operation can be considered Iran's first response to Iraq in the eight-year war; a response that created an initial shock for Iraq's Air Force.

Also explain concerning the great Operation Kaman 99, which was executed by Iran's Air Force on the following day?

After this initial response of Iran, in less than 15 hours later, the great Operation Kaman 99 was carried out. Of course, the preparation of such an operation was not a simple task because prior readiness did not exist; the aircraft had to be armed, the bombs had to be taken out of the ammunition depots, special equipment was installed upon them, and the aircraft also had to be completely inspected. All of this required an extensive logistical and support system. But all of these tasks were performed with great and admirable speed. Ultimately, from dawn until noon and continuing into the day, Iranian aircraft targeted Iraq's important and strategic military points.

This operation, in the official narrative, became known by the title Kaman 99 or the 140-Aircraft Operation. Approximately 140 aircraft participated in the main missions and, by counting support and escort flights, the number of engaged aircraft was greater.

In this operation, the bomber

Approximately three hours after Iraq's initial attack, our aircraft bombarded two bases. This event was extremely unexpected for the Iraqis. They imagined that, with the initial attack, Iran's Air Force had been grounded, but suddenly they were faced with Iran's response. During the attack on Kut Base, two Iranian pilots, Martyr Mohammad Salehi and Martyr Khaled Heydari, attained martyrdom. Martyr Khaled Heydari was from our Sunni compatriots.

aircraft performed the attack mission and the other aircraft bore the duty of escort and protection of the sky. For example, the F-14s performed the mission of aerial defense and confrontation with the enemy's aircraft, while the F-4s and F-5s possessed a role in the offensive and bombardment missions.

Is it safe to say that, in the war's initial days, the operational pressure upon the pilots was extremely heavy?

Yes, the conditions were extremely difficult. In the war's initial days, it was possible that a pilot would fly three, four, five, or even six times in a single day. Especially in Khuzestan, the conditions were extremely difficult. Iraqi tanks had entered the region and had even advanced to the vicinity of some of our military bases. The aircraft were compelled to enter action in order to confront the tanks. This was while the primary mission of the fighter jets was not necessarily confrontation with tanks. But the conditions of the battlefield had created such a necessity.

The aircraft would take off from the base, reach the region, bombard the tanks, return, again be refueled and armed, and again take flight. It was possible that a pilot would fly several times in a single day. Our aircraft were not specifically designed for the bombardment of tanks, but they performed this task anyway. This is an example of that same innovative and indigenous thinking that took shape on the battlefield; that is, when a new need was created, the forces were compelled to find a solution for it.

Does this mean that a portion of the initiatives of the Sacred Defense era were improvised on the battlefield itself?

Exactly. If you look at the war's initial months, you see that many methods took shape in response

to the urgent needs of the battlefield. For example, under conditions in which the enemy's tanks had come to the vicinity of the bases, there was no longer an opportunity for discussion concerning whether a certain aircraft was fundamentally designed for tank-hunting or not. The enemy's advance had to be checked. Sometimes, by striking a few tanks, the rest of the tanks would retreat. If this task was not performed, the conditions in Khuzestan would have become exceedingly more difficult. This is the very thing that I refer to as innovative and indigenous thinking; that is, the battlefield creates a new need and the force must be able to find a solution at that very moment.

With these descriptions, is it correct that the Air Force, even though it was not in a great shape, played a considerable role in the war's initial days in preventing the enemy's advance?

Without any exaggeration, the Air Force in the war's initial days and months possessed an extremely important and vital role. At that juncture, the only vehicle that could, with rapid reaction, reach the area and act against the enemy's advance, was the Air Force's fighter jets. Our infantry and ground forces needed time for organization, movement, and reaching the engagement area. The popular forces also had to be organized from various points of the country and reach the front, but a warplane could, in a short period, reach the battlefield and inflict a strike upon the enemy. For this reason, the Air Force entered action from the very initial hours and performed extremely heavy missions.

At some bases, the conditions had reached a point where, in order to prevent equipment from falling into enemy hands, an order for the relocation or even destruction of some equipment would be issued. At Dezful Base, like many others, a number of pilots and personnel swore that they would remain and defend the base until the last person. This spirit, at the war's commencement and especially the war's initial three months, was exceedingly prominent and effective.

One of the characteristics of the Sacred Defense was the indigenization and creative utilization of existing equipment. How did this take shape?

We, during the very war era, were charged with the design and testing of many plans for which, under normal conditions, perhaps years of time would have been necessary. For example, upon some aircraft, we tested designs that provided the possibility of carrying and utilizing bombs in different methods. That specific task required precise calculations: speed, altitude, distance, the aircraft's power, the method of releasing the bomb, and the possibility of the aircraft's return had to be examined. Martyr Babaei also played a role in this domain. We tested and evaluated these methods in order to see what capability the aircraft possesses and to what extent it can be utilized.

Many of these creativities were utilized during the war and some methods also, despite testing and evaluation, did not find operational opportunity with the war's end, but the results and experiences of those days endured. This is one of the important lessons of the Sacred Defense; that we were not merely consumers of equipment and attempted,



under difficult conditions, to also develop the technology and knowledge we needed.

You pointed out that F-14 fighter jets played an important role in aerial defense. What was the reason that they were not utilized in bombardment and the execution of operations in the enemy's soil?

Every aircraft has been designed for a specific mission. One of the important characteristics of the F-14 is its powerful radar, which provides the possibility of identifying targets at great distance. Therefore, the F-14 possessed special importance for aerial defense and confrontation with the enemy's fighter jets. In a mission, the F-4 can very well perform the offensive and bombardment mission and let the F-14 bear the duty of protecting the sky and confronting the enemy's aircraft. This division of mission is performed based upon the capabilities of each aircraft.

If we proceed from the Sacred Defense to today's wars, does the experience of the eight-year imposed war still possess applicability for us today?

Certainly. The technology of war has changed a lot, of course. Today, satellites, AWACS, advanced drones, reconnaissance systems, modern radars, and artificial intelligence have found a role in war, but alongside technology, there exists another extremely important factor and that is the will, initiative, and motivation of the forces and the people.

Iran's geography is also an important factor of our power in war. Iran is a vast country and its geographical position, especially in the Persian Gulf region and the Strait of Hormuz, possesses extremely great importance. We must recognize these capacities precisely, plan for them, and uti-

lize them. In new wars, one can no longer look at the battlefield merely with a traditional view. One must simultaneously see technology, geography, information, human force, and media.

What is the role of media war and the war of narratives in new wars, in your opinion?

Today, war is not only the war of aircraft and missiles. Media war and the war of narratives also exist. It is possible that a real event occurs, but if its narrative is not transferred correctly, a different image is shaped in public opinion. Media can provide the empathy and support of the people. During the Sacred Defense era, the Iranians had an extremely important role. Our people, even under bombardment and missile barrages, did not leave the country and did not retreat. This same spirit, alongside military capability, caused the country to be able to resist against heavy pressure. Therefore, today also we must both recognize technology and understand the importance of public opinion, media, and narrative.

In the recent war of the United States and the Zionist regime against Iran, we also witnessed the extensive utilization of advanced military technologies. From the perspective of a pilot, what was the difference between this war and the Iraqi-imposed war of the 1980s?

Today, the level of technology has risen exceedingly, but the experience of the Sacred Defense has shown that technology alone is not decisive. In war, organization, initiative, recognition of geography, recognition of the enemy's capabilities, and the ability to utilize existing facilities also possess great importance. In the Sacred Defense, many initiatives

took shape due to the battlefield's need. In new wars also, this same spirit must be preserved. We must take a lesson from every day of war and adapt ourselves to new conditions.

In the recent war, similar to the Sacred Defense era, we witnessed special aerial operations against some of America's military bases in the region by the Iranian Air Force. From an operational perspective, how important and significant do you consider these operations?

We, due to security issues, cannot speak concerning all the details of these operations. But the essence of the matter is that we know an attack on America's military bases, especially important operational and command bases, is not a simple mission. For example, Al-Udeid Base in Qatar is one of America's important bases in the region and possesses an aerial command and control role. This base possesses radar equipment, command and control systems, and advanced facilities. Therefore, the execution of such a mission and our fighter jets' return are, from an operational standpoint, important matters. When a pilot enters such a mission, he also knows there's a probability of not returning. In the Air Force, this reality has always been recognized among us pilots that the flight suit is our burial shroud.

Some American officials, during the recent war, claimed that they had completely destroyed Iran's Air Force. How should such a claim be evaluated?

If a country and its military equipment are bombarded many times, it does not mean that the aerial capability of that country has been completely obliterated.

↑ Iraqi crew of a BMP armored personnel carrier advancing in Iran in 1980 (at left) abandon their vehicle in haste at the sound of the roaring engines of two Iranian F-4E Phantoms. Iranian Phantoms (at right) were also reported to be flying just meters above ground level to fire their 20mm cannon at Iraqi tanks and armored vehicles. kavehfarrokhi.com

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The technology of war has changed a lot, of course. Today, satellites, AWACS, advanced drones, reconnaissance systems, modern radars, and artificial intelligence have found a role in war, but alongside technology, there exists another extremely important factor and that is the will, initiative, and motivation of the forces and the people. In new wars, one can no longer look at the battlefield merely with a traditional view. One must simultaneously see technology, geography, information, human force, and media.

← Iranian troops celebrate atop an Iraqi tank of the 12th armored division that has been blown upside down as a result of aerial bombardment by Iranian F-4 and F-5 combat aircraft. shahed.isaar.ir

It is possible that a base's runway is damaged or that facilities and hangars are attacked, but the runway is repaired again. In war, repair and reconstruction are also a portion of defensive capability.

Furthermore, defensive power is not only aircraft. Air defense, the navy, drones, communications, reconnaissance systems, and command are all a portion of military power. In the Sacred Defense also, it happened many times that the enemy attempted to weaken our forces, but our armed forces found a new method to confront it. This same spirit of initiative and creativity still exists in the country today.

In your statements, you emphasized Iran's geography many times. What role does this geography possess in the country's defensive power?

Iran's geography is itself an important component of power. From Chabahar to Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, Qeshm, and other areas, extremely important capacities are at the country's disposal. The Strait of Hormuz also possesses extremely great importance from a strategic standpoint. We must recognize these capacities and plan for them.

In the Sacred Defense also, Iran's territorial vastness was an important factor. The enemy bombarded various regions of the country, but the expanse of Iran's territory, alongside the people's resistance and the armed forces' performance, did not permit that, with a few aerial attacks, Iraq could shatter our nation's will.

During the Sacred Defense era, we were not engaged in war with only one country. Similar to today, the enemy assailed us with the support of many countries, but ultimately, they did not succeed. What do you consider the secret of our combatants' victory in confronting the enemy and its supporters?

At that time, from the very commencement of the war, some regional countries positioned themselves alongside Iraq's Ba'athist regime. Saudi Arabia played an important role in financial support while countries such as Kuwait and the Emirates also backed Iraq. Of course, Syria was an exception to this rule.

Therefore, when we speak about the eight years of Sacred Defense, one must consider that Iran was not faced with only Iraq's army; a large portion of the regional countries were behind Saddam's forces and provided them with financial and equipment assistance. However, the culture and spirit of sacrifice and faith in Iran, the belief and conviction of our people and combatants, alongside the preservation of unity and cohesion, have been the secret of our victory during the Sacred Defense era as well as the recent war.

Given all these experiences, what is the most important lesson that we must take from the Sacred Defense today?

We must take a lesson from every single day of the eight-year war. Today, technology has become quite advanced. Drones, satellites, artificial intelligence, radar systems, and new equipment have entered the field and have altered the shape of war. Therefore, we must not imagine that today's war is the same as the war of the past. But one principle remains constant: we must learn, progress, take initiative, and recognize our own capabilities and the enemy's. The Sacred Defense was a great university. We must



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games: Iran off to winning start in volleyball, Zarei makes history in athletics



Sports Desk

Iran's bid for a fourth successive men's volleyball gold medal at the Asian Games got off to an emphatic start at Aichi-Nagoya 2026 with a 3-0 victory (25-11, 25-16, 25-20) over Kyrgyzstan on Sunday.

Star opposite Amin Esmaeilnejad spearheaded Iran with a game-high 20 points, with middle blocker Yousef Kazemi adding 15. Outside hitters Mobin Nasri and Ali Haqparast also reached double figures, contributing 12 and 10 points, respectively.

Entering the multi-sport event on the back of a final setback against Japan at the Asian Championship a fortnight ago, Iran will take on Thailand next in Pool B today before concluding the preliminary stage against Indonesia on Tuesday. The top two teams in the group will advance to the quarterfinals.

"We had an easy game today. On the one hand, I am happy that we won in straight sets, but on the other hand, I am disappointed because we could have played much better," Iran head coach Roberto Piazza said after the game.

Piazza dismissed the suggestion that Iran's matches in the group would be equally comfortable, saying: "The only easy game for Iran in this tournament was this one. Even in our group, Thailand and Indonesia play at a different level and are tough opponents. We will have difficult games against them."



Iranian players celebrate a point during a victory over Kyrgyzstan in the men's volleyball event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on September 27, 2026.

● PAYAM SANI/IRIVF

Piazza refused to look too far ahead when asked whether his side could reach the final and defend its title.

"To reach the final, we have to deserve it by beating other teams.

"Just as I did not talk about Japan a few weeks ago at the Asian Championship, I am not saying now that we will be in the final. We have to move forward day by day and show that we deserve to reach the final." Elsewhere on Sunday, Meshkatolzahra Safi and Mandegar Farzami secured Iran's first victories in the women's tennis event at the Asian Games since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.



Iranian sprinter Zahra Zarei celebrates after winning the women's 400m silver medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on September 26, 2026.

● BORNA

athletics medal at the Asian Games, claiming silver in the 400m event.

The Iranian sprinter clocked 52.38 seconds in the final to finish behind Bahrain's Salwa Naser, who set a new Asian Games record of 49.20 seconds.

The pinnacle of Iran's athletics campaign, however, came in the men's competition, where Mohammadreza Tayyebi secured the gold medal in the shot put.

A gold medalist at last year's Asian Championships, Tayyebi posted an Asian Games record of 20.81m with his second attempt – 49 centimeters farther than his gold-winning throw at the continental championships – to add a second men's medal to Iran's athletics haul, after compatriot Sadeq Samimi's bronze in the discus throw.



Iran's Mohammadreza Tayyebi celebrates after winning the men's shot put gold medal at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan on September 26, 2026.

● IIRNA

Safi made quick work of Tajikistan's Shakhzoda Asimova in the singles first round, winning in straight sets (6-0, 6-1), while Farzami defeated Uzbekistan's Sevi Yuldasheva 2-0 (7-5, 6-3). In the men's doubles, however,

the Iranian pair of Ali Yazdani and Kasra Rahmani suffered a 2-0 defeat (6-4, 6-4) against China's Fumin Jiang and Tianhui Zhang in the first round.

In water polo, Iran's men's team, having beaten Singapore 19-8 in its Group B opener on the previous day, suffered a 12-8 defeat against China in a repeat of the final at last year's Asian Aquatics Championships in Ahmedabad, India, where China also emerged victorious.

Athletics history

Zahra Zarei wrote her name into the history of Iranian sport on Saturday by winning the country's maiden women's

Alamian set for podium

Noshad Alamian stole the headlines in table tennis by defeating home favorite and world No. 4 Tomokazu Harimoto 4-3 (11-9, 11-7, 3-11, 11-6, 14-16, 6-11, 11-9) in a thrilling quarterfinal in the men's singles event on Sunday, ensuring Iran would finish the Games with at least a bronze medal in the sport.

Standing between the Iranian, who won bronze in the team and doubles events – the latter alongside his brother Nima – and a place in the final in Monday's semifinal is world No. 1 and 2025 world champion Wang Chuqin of China.

Who is to blame for Mohitizadeh's shock disqualification?



Sports Desk

Iranian heptathlete Fateh-meh Mohitizadeh was denied a chance to win a historic Asian Games medal after being disqualified in one of the most bizarre incidents involving the country's athletics team at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

Mohitizadeh was sitting second in the heptathlon standings after six events and was within touching distance of a gold or silver medal. However, only hours before the final 800-meter race, the 23-year-old was disqualified for an equipment violation involving her shoes. The Ardakan-born athlete had emerged as one of Iran's leading athletics prospects after winning gold at last year's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh. She continued her impressive form in Nagoya, competing against 10 of Asia's leading heptathletes.

Mohitizadeh finished third in the 100-meter hurdles, won the high jump, placed



second in the shot put with a throw of 11.72 meters and finished third in the 200m in 25.16 seconds. On the second day, she topped the long jump with a 5.97m effort. She then added 36.41m in the javelin, finishing eighth in the event, but accumulated 4,925 points to move into second place overall after six disciplines. Her hopes of a historic medal ended before she could compete in the final event.

Reza Shojaei, head of the National Olympic Committee's national teams supervision center, said Mohitizadeh had used Nike Air Zoom Maxfly 2 shoes during the high jump. According to World Athletics regulations, the model is designed specifically for sprinting and is not permitted for use in jumping events.

Iran's athletics federation immediately filed an official protest, but the appeal was rejected. The

organizers reportedly maintained that responsibility for checking equipment before competition rests with the athlete and the federation's coaching staff.

The incident has therefore raised questions over who should bear responsibility for the costly mistake. While athletes are expected to be familiar with the equipment regulations governing their events, the seven disciplines of the heptathlon require

athletes and their support teams to manage different technical requirements. Ensuring that an athlete enters the competition with compliant equipment is also a fundamental responsibility of the coaching and management staff. The disqualification comes at a particularly difficult time for Iranian athletics. The country had won at least one athletics gold at each of the previous Asian Games, including four consecutive titles won by current federation president Ehsan Hadadi in the discus throw.

In Nagoya, however, Iran's medal hopes have fallen short of previous editions. Sadeq Samimi won bronze in the discus, ending Iran's five-edition gold-medal run in the event.

Mohitizadeh's disqualification has now added another major setback and is likely to intensify scrutiny of Iran's athletics federation, with a potential gold or silver medal lost because of an avoidable equipment violation.

Teenage goalkeeper Afshari joins Greek handball club Athinaikos

Sports Desk

Iranian handball goalkeeper Zahra Afshari has become the latest Iranian player to move abroad after signing a one-year contract with Greek club Athinaikos.

The 19-year-old is regarded as one of Iran's promising young goalkeepers and made a name for herself at last year's Asian Youth Games, where she

delivered some impressive performances to help the country win gold at the multi-sport event in Bahrain.

Athinaikos is one of the prominent teams in the Greek handball league and will compete in domestic competitions as well as the 2026-27 EHF European Cup, starting with a second-round two-legged tie against Belgium's HB Sint-Truiden.



● ISNA

Mehr Shiraz Event aims to boost tourism

Iranica Desk

The Mehr Shiraz Tourism Event, a month-long tourism initiative held from late September to mid October in Iran’s southern city of Shiraz, is seeking to boost visitor numbers and lengthen tourist stays by showcasing the city’s cultural and historical heritage through a program of festivals, exhibitions, tours, concerts and other events. Speaking at a press conference to announce programs for Tourism Week, held from September 27 to October 4, Behdad Moridi, director general of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Fars Province, described the Mehr Shiraz Tourism Event as a comprehensive strategy for provincial branding and the development of the tourism economy. He said the ultimate objective was to transform Shiraz into a destination for events taking place throughout the day and night while encouraging visitors to extend their stays. Moridi said a significant

portion of last year’s plans for the digital transformation of tourism services, systems and platforms had been implemented. He added that branding had remained a central priority, with efforts focused on turning Mehr Shiraz into a recognizable tourism brand capable of attracting visitors from around the world. Moridi emphasized the role of tourism associations and professional organizations in implementing the event, saying they should play an active role rather than simply serve as participants at official gatherings. “We believe associations should not merely be decorative elements at events; they should be at the center of implementation,” he said, adding that government institutions, including the provincial administration and municipality, should work alongside them. “Tourists need a reason to travel. We have to organize celebrations and fill the city with events, moment by moment, to create that motivation,” Moridi said.



● respina24.ir

He outlined four major components of the Mehr Shiraz Tourism Event. These include efforts to internationally register the “From the Ecstasy of Mysticism to the Secret of the Ghazal” event; a national investment conference featuring specialized meetings with the participation of the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and 100 leading investors from across the country; Expo 2026; and a national

tourism and handicrafts exhibition at Molla Sadra Hall. The program will also promote nighttime tourism by introducing after-hours visits to major heritage sites, including Persepolis, Pasargadae, the Tomb of Hafez and the Tomb of S’adi. According to Moridi, these programs will rely on smart tourism technologies and cooperation among travel agencies and tour guides. He said the event’s pro-

grams had been designed with families and children in mind, alongside literary tourism initiatives and special consideration for accessible tourism for people with disabilities. Moridi also announced plans by the Association of Travel Service Offices to develop affordable and economy tour packages aimed at promoting tourism within Fars Province. Moridi said efforts were also being made to ensure

that major cultural events, including concerts, generated greater economic benefits for the province. In coordination with the provincial Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance, he said, travel agencies would be encouraged to incorporate concert attendance into tourism packages, allowing visitors to purchase concerts and related tourism services together. The objective is to keep a greater share of the resulting revenue within the provincial tourism economy. He also called for scientific and academic conferences to be held outside university campuses and in venues across the city. Such a move, he said, could increase hotel occupancy and provide greater economic benefits for the local community. Moridi thanked tour guides, whom he described as ambassadors of Iranian culture, and called on the media to widely promote the permanent event secretariat as a reference point for monthly tourism programs. He said

maintaining a continuous calendar of events would help sustain tourism activity across Fars Province. Mahmoud Fakhri, head of the Fars Province Association of Air Travel and Tourism Service Offices, said the Mehr Shiraz Tourism Event was being organized at a difficult time for the tourism industry, which has faced a downturn following flight cancellations and declining activity at tourism facilities. He described the event as an effort to revive tourism businesses and restart the economic cycle of tourism in Fars Province. Fakhri stressed the need to rely on domestic capabilities and take proactive measures rather than waiting for external developments. Health tourism is among the key themes. Fakhri said guests from Afghanistan’s health sector had been invited to Shiraz, with business-to-business meetings planned between the visiting delegation and Shiraz travel agencies to explore opportunities for cooperation.

Meyami’s caravanserais; echoes of Iran’s historic roads

Iranica Desk

Meyami, the easternmost part of Semnan Province, is one of the most important historical points along the Tehran–Mashhad route and the ancient roads of Iran. For centuries, the region has served as a passageway for caravans, travelers, and merchants. This strategic location led to the development of a valuable network of caravanserais. The caravanserais of Meyami, Miandasht, Abbasabad, and other historic structures in the region were not merely places where travelers stopped to rest; they were also an integral part of Iran’s broader history of commercial, cultural, and social connections. The construction of facilities designed to provide travelers with comfort and security was one of the most important achievements in the history of travel and communication. Such structures were generally built along difficult routes, in hot and arid regions, and on major communication roads. Iranians were among the pioneers in constructing and developing these facilities. Over time, they evolved into what became known as caravanserais. Throughout history, caravanserais served purposes beyond accommodation and rest. They helped meet the needs of caravans, promoted trade, facilitated connections between different regions, and encouraged social and cultural interaction. Each of these structures can therefore be regarded as part of the history of Iran’s roads — a history shaped

along the Silk Road and the communication routes linking the eastern and western parts of the country. A caravanserai can generally be described as a building designed to accommodate caravans and travelers, constructed according to their needs and adapted to the climatic and geographical conditions of the route. The word “caravanserai” itself reflects the Iranian origins of these structures. The term “caravan” is derived from “karban,” and the word is rooted in the Parthian Middle Persian language. Its etymology demonstrates the close relationship between the concept of the caravanserai and trade and commerce. Caravans stopped at these establishments to rest, obtain daily necessities, conduct commercial exchanges, and seek protection from bandits and natural hazards. Caravanserais, therefore, cannot be regarded merely as architectural structures. They formed part of a broader communication and economic system in which roads, trade, travel, security, and interaction among different communities were closely interconnected. During periods such as the Achaemenid, Parthian, Mongol, Seljuk, Ottoman, and Safavid eras, caravanserais expanded alongside the growth of trade and commerce and became important elements of the communication networks connecting different territories. The origins of the caravanserai can be traced back to pre-Islamic Iran. The climatic conditions, vast

geography, extensive territories of the Achaemenid Empire, and its wide-ranging contacts with other peoples contributed to the establishment of a network of postal stations and communication centers. These facilities can be regarded as precursors to the caravanserais of later periods. Iranians were among the first in world history to organize an extensive system of major long-distance roads. What is known today as the caravanserai evolved from the Achaemenid postal stations and the commercial and trading waystations of the Parthian and Sasanian periods along the Silk Road. Meyami has historically enjoyed particular importance as a transportation and communication corridor because of its location on the Tehran–Mashhad route and its connections with Golestan, North Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi provinces. One of the most significant indications of this historical



Miandasht Caravanserai
● mrbilit.com

importance is the presence of numerous caravanserais throughout the region. The concentration of so many caravanserais demonstrates Meyami’s important role in historical commercial and communication networks and highlights its considerable potential for cultural and historical tourism. Forty kilometers east of Meyami, along the Meyami–Mashhad road, lies the Miandasht Caravanserai Complex, one of the most significant examples of caravanserai architecture in Iran. Considered the largest caravanserai complex in the country, it consists of three caravanserais, three water

reservoirs, a dovecote, a postal station, and the historic village of Miandasht. The western caravanserai dates from the Safavid period, while the other two were built during the Qajar era. The presence of structures from different historical periods within a single complex provides an opportunity to study the evolution of caravanserai architecture, functions, and construction techniques. Approximately 80 kilometers from central Meyami lies the historic village of Abbasabad. At the heart of its historic terraced settlement is the Abbasabad Caravanserai, regarded as the

largest single caravanserai in the region. Built during the Safavid period and extensively restored during the Qajar era, the structure demonstrates the close relationship between caravanserai architecture and the historic fabric of the village. Today, it represents an important opportunity for introducing the region’s history, architecture, and culture to visitors. The Meyami Caravanserai, located within the historic fabric of Meyami, is another notable example of Safavid-era caravanserai architecture. Together with the city’s other historic structures, it forms part of Meyami’s historical identity. Its location within the urban area also illustrates the connection between major communication routes and the development of settlements around them. Approximately 60 kilometers northeast of Meyami, in the small and remote village of Jahanabad, stands another historic caravanserai dating from the Ilkhanid period. The structure has a rectangular, four-ivan design, an architectural form that occupies an important place in the history of Iranian caravanserais. Its presence in a remote area demonstrates that the caravanserai net-

work was not limited to major cities but extended throughout the various routes used by travelers and caravans. Iran’s caravanserai heritage represents not only the country’s ancient history and culture but also an important potential for cultural and historical tourism. Because these structures possess historical, architectural, cultural, and social value, they can play an important role in tourism development programs. Their restoration and appropriate adaptive use, while preserving their historical authenticity, could once again integrate them into contemporary cultural and tourism activities. With its collection of historic caravanserais, Meyami has a valuable opportunity to preserve and revive its cultural heritage, develop tourism, and introduce the region’s historical and cultural potential. Preserving, restoring, and revitalizing these structures can contribute to safeguarding the historical identity of the region while introducing the lesser-known attractions of Meyami to visitors. From this perspective, the caravanserais of Meyami are not merely remnants of the past; they are cultural assets for the future.



Meyami Caravanserai
● wikipedia.org



St Petersburg University moves to add Persian language studies



Iranian Culture Minister Abbas Salehi (L) shakes hands with Alexander Turgayev, president of St Petersburg State University of Culture in St Petersburg, Russia on September 27, 2026.
● IRNA

Arts & Culture Desk

St Petersburg State University of Culture has proposed establishing a department for Persian language studies during a meeting with Iranian Culture Minister Abbas Salehi.

Alexander Turgayev, president of St Petersburg State University of Culture, said the university taught six foreign languages and was interested in adding Persian through a dedicated academic chair, IRNA reported on Sunday.

Turgayev described Iran's cul-

ture, art and civilization as "very rich" and said he had a personal interest in Iranian culture.

Salehi welcomed the proposal and instructed Iran's cultural counsellor in Russia to follow up with the Russian side on setting up the Persian language department.

He also addressed professors and students at the university, located in St Petersburg in northwestern Russia.

The meeting was held as part of the Days of Iranian Culture in Russia, a program aimed at expanding cultural exchanges

between the two countries.

During his visit, Salehi also met his Russian counterpart. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on joint film production at a meeting of their joint cultural committee.

The agreement covers cooperation between Tehran, central Iran, and Moscow on producing films together.

Salehi had earlier presented Iran's proposals and positions on cultural cooperation at the 12th International United Cultures Forum, where he was the

first guest official to address the plenary session.

The Days of Iranian Culture in Russia will officially get under way in Moscow on Monday in ceremonies attended by the culture ministers of both countries. The program will then move to Kazan in western Russia and Astrakhan in southwestern Russia.

The events are being organized by Iran's cultural mission in Moscow and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, with Russia's Culture Ministry hosting the program.

Lessons for Iran from inland Chinese hub

Chongqing: China's little-known metropolis with global outlook

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

FEATURE REPORT

For many Iranians, China brings to mind cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen or Guangzhou. Chongqing, however, is unlikely to be among the first names that come to mind. Yet the vast metropolis in southwestern China is difficult to overlook once you are there.

At first sight, Chongqing can appear almost like a city from the future. High-rise buildings rise across a mountainous landscape, elevated roads and bridges cut through the urban fabric, and entire sections of the city seem to have been built at different levels. At night, illuminated towers, busy streets, restaurants and commercial districts give the city a particularly vibrant character.

But Chongqing's striking feature is not simply its scale or modernity. It is the way its rapidly developing urban landscape exists alongside history and tradition.

Historical sites, traditional architecture and older neighborhoods can be found among the skyscrapers and modern commercial centers. Former air-raid shelters have been turned into restaurants and other venues, while rivers, cliffs, streets and elevated spaces have become part of the city's tourism and commercial identity.

This unusual combination was also central to a three-day field visit to Chongqing in September involving 33 journalists from 30 countries, including Iran Daily, as part of a campaign marking five years of the city's development as an international consumption center.

The visit offered a glimpse of a broader transformation taking place in one of China's largest inland cities.

From industrial hub to international destination

Chongqing was designated in 2021 as one of China's first pilot cities for developing international consumption centers. Five years later, the municipal authorities are presenting the city as a place where manufacturing, logistics, tourism, culture and consumption increasingly overlap.

According to Chongqing officials, more than 2,800 domestic and inter-

national brands have established a presence in the city, while more than 2,000 first stores have opened there. These figures form part of the official narrative surrounding the city's transformation, but the physical environment provides a more tangible illustration.

In central areas such as Jiefangbei, modern shopping centers, restaurants and entertainment venues operate alongside traditional-style blocks and historic sites. In Yuzhong District, the core urban area, authorities are developing an environment intended to make shopping, tourism and other services more accessible to international visitors, including through payment and tax-refund facilities.

The emphasis on consumption is therefore not simply about shopping malls. Chongqing is attempting to turn its distinctive geography and cultural heritage into economic assets. Its mountainous terrain, which could have been regarded as an obstacle to conventional urban development, has instead become part of the city's identity. Restaurants, cultural venues and tourist attractions have been incorporated into cliffs, former shelters, riverfront areas and elevated spaces. After dark, the city takes on another character. Commercial districts remain busy late into the evening, while restaurants, street-food venues and entertainment areas contribute to an energetic nightlife. The municipal government has promoted the image of a "Chongqing that Never Sleeps," and for a visitor walking through the city's central districts at night, the slogan is easy to understand. But there is another, less visible side to Chongqing's transformation that may be of greater interest to international observers.

Inland city looking outward

Chongqing is not a coastal metropolis. Its significance in China's economic geography partly comes from its location deep inside the country and its efforts to overcome the limitations associated with being an inland city. The city has become an important node in China's expanding network of rail, road, river and maritime connections. The Chongqing-Xinjiang-Europe railway, one of the earliest China-Europe freight routes, began operating in 2011, linking the city with Europe through Central Asia. More recent-

ly, regular freight services have also been established between Chongqing and Central Asian destinations.

The city is also closely associated with the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, a multimodal route connecting western China with ports in southern China and onward to international markets.

This is where Chongqing becomes more than a tourism story.

The experience of the city illustrates an important feature of China's development strategy: geographic distance from the sea does not necessarily have to mean economic isolation. Railways, highways, river transport, ports and logistics facilities can be combined to connect inland production centers with global markets.

Chongqing's economic base also remains strongly industrial. Electronics, automobiles, advanced manufacturing and other industries form an important part of the city's economy, while the development of tourism and consumption adds another layer to its economic model.

In other words, the city is not simply attempting to attract tourists. It is trying to connect production, logistics, trade, investment and consumption within one increasingly international urban system.

Why Chongqing matters to Iran

For Iranian readers, this aspect of Chongqing may be more significant than the city's skyscrapers or shopping districts.

Iran, like Chongqing, occupies a potentially important position in wider regional connectivity networks. But whereas Chongqing has worked to overcome the limitations of being an inland city by developing multiple transport corridors, Iran's geographical advantage lies in its position at the intersection of several major routes linking East Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, South Asia, the Persian Gulf and Europe.

The Belt and Road Initiative has placed increasing emphasis on multimodal connectivity, including railways, roads, ports and logistics corridors. Chongqing has become one of the examples of how such connectivity can reshape the economic role of an inland city.

China's official Belt and Road documents have specifically identified the



New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor associated with Chongqing as part of the wider connectivity network. The city has also expanded its freight links with Central Asia, including a regular service launched in 2025 to Uzbekistan through Kazakhstan.

For Iran, the significance lies not in attempting to reproduce Chongqing's model wholesale, but in considering how connectivity can be turned into broader economic activity.

A railway passing through a country does not automatically make that country a logistics hub. Ports, customs systems, industrial zones, warehouses, financial services, manufacturing capacity and reliable connections between different modes of transport are also needed.

This is particularly relevant as Iran seeks to strengthen its role in regional transit networks. At the Belt and Road Forum in 2023, China and Iran were among the countries involved in an agreement concerning cooperation on China-Europe freight trains passing through Iran. Iran's position also gives it potential links with the International North-South Transport Corridor and routes connecting Central Asia with the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

China's experience with Chongqing therefore provides a case study of a broader question: how can geographical location be converted into sustained economic value?

Beyond familiar Chinese cities

For many Iranian travelers and busi-



An aerial drone photo taken on September 24, 2026 shows the construction site of the Shituo Yangtze River Bridge along the Chongqing-Wanzhou High-Speed Railway in Chongqing, southwest China
● XINHUA

nesses, Chongqing remains far less familiar than cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. Yet its experience offers a perspective that goes beyond tourism: how an inland metropolis can use connectivity, industry and urban development to expand its links with international markets.

For visitors, this transformation is visible in the contrast between the futuristic skyline and the older city embedded within it.

For businesses, it is visible in railways, logistics hubs and industrial clusters.

And for countries such as Iran, perhaps the most important lesson is found somewhere between the two: infrastructure and connectivity matter most when they are linked to a wider economic ecosystem capable of turning transit routes into trade, investment, production and ultimately growth.

Chongqing's story is therefore not only about a Chinese city seeking to attract more visitors. It is also about how an inland metropolis is attempting to redefine its place in an increasingly interconnected Eurasian economy — a process that may be worth following from Iran as well.