

# Foreign ministers of 10 countries convene in the northeastern Iranian city From Economy to Geopolitics in Mashhad ECO Summit



## Iran UN envoy condemns E3 hypocrisy, highlights West's violation of JCPOA

TEHRAN – Iran's UN Ambassador Amir Saeed Iravani has vehemently denounced a joint letter from France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (E3) to the UN Security Council, dismissing their accusations against Iran as baseless and misleading.

The E3 letter, issued on November 21st, accused Iran of violating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and UN Security Council Resolution 2231. It disregarded the fact that Iran began to scale back on its JCPOA commitments one and a half years after the West practically scrapped the deal.

Ambassador Iravani countered that Iran's actions are fully justified under the JCPOA's human rights provisions (paragraphs 26 and 36), particularly given the United States' illegal and unilateral withdrawal from the agreement.

Iravani pointedly criticized the E3's hypocrisy, highlighting their failure to uphold their own JCPOA commitments, namely the lifting of sanctions. Instead, he argued, they have continued their hostile policies by imposing further sanctions targeting Iran's vital shipping and aviation sectors. ▶ Page 2

## Economic Analysis: Interview with Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of Iran

By Ebrahim Fallahi

TEHRAN – In a pivotal television interview marking the first 100 days of his presidency, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian delved into the challenges and opportunities defining his administration's early tenure. Against the backdrop of a tumultuous political landscape and mounting economic pressures, President Pezeshkian outlined his government's approach to tackling structural inefficiencies, inflation, and resource imbalances while fostering international economic partnerships.

The interview shed light on his administration's multi-faceted strategy to revitalize the economy, including plans to address energy subsidies, stabilize inflation, and prioritize housing affordability. With a focus on long-term reforms, President Pezeshkian emphasized the importance of transparency, collaboration, and pragmatic policymaking in achieving sustainable growth. ▶ Page 4

## Turkey received 'clear message' on Syria, foreign ministry spox says after FM's Ankara visit

TEHRAN – In remarks made on Tuesday, Esmail Baghaei, spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized the Islamic Republic's unwavering stance against terrorism in the region.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the 28th meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in Mashhad, Baghaei addressed recent discussions held by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during his visit to Turkey.

Baghaei highlighted that Araghchi's meetings with Turkish officials were centered around the pressing issue of a new wave of terrorism in Syria. He conveyed that Iran has delivered a "clear message" regarding its firm support for Syria in the fight against terrorism, which he described as a "contagious disease" that threatens all nations in the region. ▶ Page 2

## The hidden agenda against Syria

*According to Reuters, the US, UAE, and Saudi Arabia have suggested to lift sanctions against Syria if it decouples from Iran*

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – Recent reports from Reuters have unveiled the covert strategies employed by the United States, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia concerning Syria.

Before the recent uptick in terrorist activities, these countries proposed lifting sanctions on Syria if President Bashar al-Assad distanced himself from Iran and the Axis of Resistance, according to Reuters.

This offer, if true, is part of a broader strategy by these countries to undermine Syria and its allies.

**The U.S. agenda against Iran and Syria**

From the beginning of the

Syrian crisis in 2011, the U.S. opposed Iran's involvement in confronting terrorists in Syria. Washington's primary objective was to remove Assad, as his alliance with Iran posed a significant obstacle to their regional plans.

The U.S. and its allies supported various terrorist factions, hoping to destabilize Syria and alter the power dynamics in West Asia.

Operation Timber Sycamore, a clandestine CIA program backed by a coalition of Western and regional allies including Israel, the Persian Gulf monarchies, the U.K., France, Germany, and Turkey in 2012, funneled billions into arming terrorists in Syria.

This program bolstered one of history's most impactful insurgencies, primarily fueled Al Qaeda affiliates and foreign fighters, played a major role in the formation of ISIS, and intensified the

conflict rather than resolving it. The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria is a direct result of this operation and similar undertakings.

However, the situation changed dramatically when Iran and Russia intervened, providing significant support to Syria in its battle against ISIS and other foreign-backed terrorist groups. This cooperation effectively disrupted U.S. and Israeli efforts to sow discord between

Tehran and Moscow over Syria. Despite numerous attempts by the U.S. and its allies to fabricate a rift between Iran and Russia, the partnership on the Syrian battleground remained robust, frustrating American and Israeli strategies.

**Confessions from U.S. officials**

The strategic use of extremist groups as geopolitical tools has been openly acknowledged by U.S. officials. In a leaked audio released by Wikileaks in 2017, John Kerry admitted, "We saw that Daesh [ISIS] was growing in strength. We thought, however, that we could probably manage. You know, that Assad might then negotiate." ▶ Page 2

## International double standards: False claims about Israeli POWs in Gaza

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON – The issue of Israeli prisoners of war (POWs) held by the resistance movement in Gaza has resurfaced following a recent video released by Hamas of the Israeli-American prisoner Idan Alexander, which received an extensive reaction not only within the occupied Palestinian territories but beyond.

The reason for this is the arrogant chauvinism that glorifies the Zionists' egoism and sense of superiority over other human races. Besides, the reason for this sympathy is not the deadly conditions created by the successive Israeli wars on Gaza. ▶ Page 5



Cars drive past buildings that were damaged or destroyed in Israeli strikes in Beirut's southern suburbs Hay el-Sellom neighborhood on December 2, 2024.

## Hezbollah warns Israel over ceasefire breaches

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Dozens of violations of the ceasefire agreement with Lebanon by the Israeli military have been met with a response by Hezbollah.

The Israelis have shown no respect for mediation efforts or the attempts to help the regime free itself from the predicament it faced after the failure of its aggression on Lebanon.

This failure was compounded by painful strikes delivered by Hezbollah along the Lebanese border region as well as rocket fire that rained down on settlements in the north and extended deep into Israel, reaching Haifa and beyond to Tel Aviv. ▶ Page 5



## TEHRAN PAPERS

In the following column, we take a look at some important contents and views in the yesterday's Iranian newspapers.

## Close cooperation between diplomacy and battleground

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to the strong cooperation between diplomacy and battleground. It wrote: Foreign Minister Araghchi's pragmatic strategy emphasizes the synergy between diplomatic efforts and military readiness, a trend that has become increasingly evident in recent days. Consequently, the chief diplomat's proactive and holistic stance on regional matters could signify a pivotal shift in the nation's foreign policy. This approach conveys a strong message to Iran's allies and partners both regionally and globally, demonstrating Iran's unwavering authority and preparedness to counteract adversarial schemes. Furthermore, this strategy may herald the anticipated True Promise III initiative against the Zionist regime, which could disrupt the security dynamics orchestrated by the United States and its allies. Adversaries must recognize that the notion of excluding Iran from regional affairs is a mere fantasy that will not materialize.

### Javan: Negotiations with Europe do not promise a clear prospect

Javan highlighted the unclear nature of Iran's negotiations with European nations in a recent note. It stated that following the United States exit from the JCPOA, the European parties have yet to define their position in the discussions with Iran. They remain uncertain about their strategy in light of the forthcoming American administration's policies. Factors that can put Tehran's future talks with Paris, London, and Berlin in ambiguous conditions. The approach of the incoming Trump government is an issue that both the Iranian and the European sides still cannot make a clear assessment of. The European troika hopes that Washington will adopt a policy of applying pressure with a slight change of approach towards engagement. Of course, Iran works with all parties that respect its national interests, because it considers each of them to have a potential capacity. But Tehran should play an effective role in Trump's policy. According to Foreign Minister Araghchi's statements, the Europeans have taken a confrontational approach and we should not be optimistic about the Geneva negotiations.

### Vatan-e-Emrooz: Key role of Iran, Syria, and Iraq in the East-West corridor

In a recent commentary, Vatan-e-Emrooz discussed the motivations behind the activities of terrorists in Syria and the

subsequent decline in regional security. The publication noted that Iran, Syria, and Iraq play a crucial role in the East-West corridor, which facilitates access to Europe. Iran's efforts in realizing the achievements of East-West transit by protecting the security of this route will secure Iran's future in China's "Belt and Road Initiative". In opposition to this plan, the U.S. is trying to prevent the full realization of this project and Iran's achievement of its commercial goals by making strategic corridors insecure. Transit connection to the Mediterranean is one of the most important regional policies of Iran. The establishment of such connectivity, which mitigates the impact of sanctions, is likely to diminish America's influence in West Asia. Consequently, the United States and its allies are employing various strategies, including military action and fostering instability, to thwart this objective. The development of the East-West corridor will position Iran as a significant transit center in the region, enabling it to effectively contribute to international trade and transportation.

### Donya-e-Eqtasad: Is Geneva talks a prelude to negotiations with Trump?

Today, the question is whether the new round of talks between Iran and European countries in Geneva is a prelude to negotiations with Washington. There are various perspectives on this matter. Some argue that these discussions could serve as a platform for negotiations between Iran and the United States. Conversely, another faction contends that the Europeans are pursuing their agenda, emphasizing the significance of this process concerning the activation of the trigger mechanism, which would reinstate UN sanctions on Iran. Given that Trump exited the JCPOA in 2018 and the Europeans have struggled to uphold the agreement independently, likely, they cannot move forward with activating the trigger mechanism without U.S. backing. Today, Trump wants Iran not to have nuclear weapons. In such a situation, perhaps Trump's words can be interpreted in a way that if negotiations are held with the United States, Washington will want to extend the sunset clause to make the International Atomic Energy Agency's monitoring of Iran's nuclear programs permanent. Now, it is not possible to answer until Trump starts his work because Trump's terms and conditions for direct negotiations with Iran are not clear.

## Turkey received 'clear message' on Syria, foreign ministry spox says after FM's Ankara visit

From page 1 ► "The discussions in Turkey were significant and underscored the necessity for regional cooperation to combat terrorism," Baghaei stated. "It is vital that all countries, especially those neighboring Syria, reach a consensus on this issue. If countries do not unite in their efforts to address terrorism, they will undoubtedly

face its repercussions."

Baghaei's remarks come amid growing concerns over Turkey's alleged support for terrorist groups operating in Syria. The Iranian spokesman reiterated that terrorism does not recognize borders and that collaborative action is essential for regional stability.

# The hidden agenda against Syria

## How the West uses terrorism and economic pressure to decouple Damascus from Resistance Axis

From page 1 ► Furthermore, then-Vice President Joe Biden noted in a 2014 interview with the Washington Post: "The Turks, the Saudis, the Emirates were so determined to take down Assad...what did they do? They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad - except that the people who were being supplied, [they] were [Jabhat] al-Nusra, and al-Qaeda, and the extremist elements of jihadis who were coming from other parts of the world."

Such acknowledgments emphasize the cruel and callous decision-making by the U.S., leading to the deaths of thousands of civilians, including women and children.

### The calamitous impact of The Caesar Act

Reuters reports that the U.S. and the U.A.E have sought to persuade Assad to sever connections with Iran and the Resistance by offering not to renew The Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act which expires on December 20.

Known as The Caesar Act, this legislation constitutes one of the most stringent U.S. sanctions against Syria. Enacted in 2019, when the West finally realized it could not bring Syria to its knees



through terrorism, the act aims to force the Syrian President to kowtow to the West by targeting vital sectors such as oil, construction, and banking, resulting in a devastating impact on Syrian civilians.

These sanctions have exacerbated the economic plight of ordinary Syrians, leading to hyperinflation, unemployment, and a crumbling infrastructure. Essential goods have become scarce, and the cost of living has skyrocketed, plunging millions into poverty. The humanitarian situation in Syria has worsened, with the sanctions impeding the delivery of aid and stifling economic recovery.

### Tried and failed

This attempt to lure Syria away from the Axis of Resistance is not

a new strategy. As the martyred General Qassem Soleimani said years ago in a speech, during the 2010s, at the peak of ISIS's threat in Syria, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman met with Assad in Moscow. Bin Salman offered to "end ISIS and other terrorist groups if Syria agreed to cut ties with Iran and the Resistance." Assad rejected this proposition, understanding the deceptive nature of such promises.

The recent diplomatic overtures from the U.S., UAE, and Saudi Arabia also resemble previous strategies that have led to turmoil in other nations.

Libya's Muammar Gaddafi's downfall can be largely attributed to his misplaced trust in the West during his later years. After

years of defiance, Gaddafi attempted to reconcile with Western powers. However, this shift left him vulnerable. Western countries, which he had hoped to appease, instead supported the NATO intervention that ultimately led to his capture and death, leaving the people of Libya with years of instability and suffering.

### Distinguishing allies from connivers

Assad has been clear in his assessment that the deplorable state of Syria today is a direct result of the sustained support for terrorism by these external actors and that the alliance with Iran has been crucial in maintaining the Arab country's sovereignty.

In a recent conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, the Syrian leader expressed gratitude for Iran's unwavering support, noting that during Syria's most challenging years, it was Iran that stood by them when much of the world turned away.

Assad's approach appears to reflect a deep understanding of the pitfalls of aligning with those who have historically sought to undermine his leadership. Offers like those reported by Reuters are strategic ploys aimed at driving a wedge between Syria and its steadfast allies

## Iran UN envoy condemns E3 hypocrisy, highlights West's violation of JCPOA

From page 1 ► The Ambassador further dismissed the E3's concerns regarding Iran's October 22nd, 2024 letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency as a deliberate attempt to obfuscate the truth. He clarified that this letter served to warn the international community of the clear and present danger posed by the Zionist regime's threats against Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities.

Ambassador Iravani underscored Iran's unwavering commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), emphasizing Iran's absolute right to develop and utilize nu-



clear energy for peaceful purposes, a right explicitly guaranteed under Articles 1 and 2

of the NPT. He stressed that Iran's nuclear program remains entirely consistent with its NPT obligations and unequivocally rejects the pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"The accusations levied by the E3, therefore, are not only unfounded but represent a blatant attempt to undermine Iran's legitimate rights and divert attention from their own failures to uphold the JCPOA and Resolution 2231. Iran calls on the E3 to immediately cease their unlawful actions and fulfill their outstanding obligations under the agreement," the letter read.

## Iran may send troops to Syria if Damascus requests: Araghchi



TEHRAN - In a recent interview with Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi announced that Iran is prepared to consider sending military forces to Syria if an official request is made by the Syrian government.

Syria has been battling a new wave of terrorism in its northwestern Aleppo province since last week. Iran has been keeping military advisors in the Arab country since Syria first began to grapple with terrorism in 2011. It has, however, never been confirmed that Iran has stationed troops there.

During the interview, Araghchi revealed plans to travel to Russia to discuss the current state of affairs in Syria, signaling Iran's proactive approach to regional diplomacy. He emphasized the importance of consultation and dialogue with Turkey, particularly concerning their differences over Syria. "The expansion of terrorist groups in Syria may harm neighboring countries like Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey more than it harms Iran," he noted, underscor-

ing the broader implications of the Syrian conflict on regional stability.

The Iranian Foreign Minister also addressed the conditions set by the Syrian government for the withdrawal of Turkish forces from its territory, describing them as reasonable.

Araghchi clarified that while Iran supports Resistance factions in Arab countries, it does not command or have organizational ties with them. Instead, he stated that Iran provides assistance when needed, reinforcing its role as a key player in the regional power dynamics.

On the topic of international negotiations, Araghchi expressed skepticism about discussions with Europe regarding Iran's nuclear program, indicating a cautious approach to diplomatic engagements. He further stated that there are currently no intentions to engage in dialogue with Washington, pending clarity on the policies of the new U.S. administration.

## Qalibaf tells Syrian counterpart Iran will support Arab country's fight against renewed terrorism



TEHRAN - Iranian and Syrian parliamentary Speakers Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Hammouda Sabbagh spoke by phone on Tuesday to discuss the latest surge of terrorism in the Arab country.

Qalibaf reportedly initiated the call to discuss the Syrian army's ongoing operations against terror factions. "Iran considers Syria an inseparable part of the Axis of Resistance and will support the country against terrorist groups," he told Sabbagh.

Qalibaf further asserted that the fight against terrorism must be unrelenting, characterizing the renewed terrorist activity in Syria, shortly after the ceasefire in Lebanon, as a calculated strategy orchestrated by Zionist interests.

He stressed the importance of continued collaboration between the Iranian and Syrian parliaments in international forums during this critical juncture

For his part, Sabbagh provided an update on the Syrian ar-

my's progress against the Takfiri groups. "There are positive developments and significant gains that will ultimately lead to the complete eradication of these terrorists," the Syrian official declared.

He acknowledged the ongoing attempts by terrorist groups to regain influence but highlighted Syria's extensive experience in countering terrorism and foreign military interventions over the past thirteen years, positioning the country for a decisive victory.

Sabbagh also expressed sincere gratitude for the steadfast support and cooperation provided by Iran in Syria's ongoing fight against terrorism.

A week ago, terrorist factions led by al-Qaeda affiliated group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) launched major attacks into Syria's northwestern Aleppo province. Despite initial territorial gains, a counteroffensive by the Syrian army, supported by Russia and Iran, has halted the terrorists' advance.



Iran's envoy to Lebanon "Mojtaba Amani" visited the site of the late Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's assassination on December 3, 2024, to pay his respects.



# From economy to geopolitics in Mashhad ECO summit

Foreign ministers of 10 countries convene in the northeastern Iranian city

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Foreign ministers from ten countries, along with representatives from numerous others, convened in Mashhad, Iran, for the 28th meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Council of Ministers on Monday and Tuesday.

Several issues and developments were discussed, including the war in Gaza, the renewed wave of terrorism in Syria, and the path towards more economic prosperity for the member states.

During a speech, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi accused the United States and Israel of fueling the recent surge in terrorist activities in northern Syria, urging the global community to act decisively against the resurgence of Takfiri terror groups in the war-torn nation.

He emphasized the need for vigilance and collaboration among regional countries, alongside swift international intervention, to address the growing threat of terrorism.

The top Iranian diplomat highlighted the Zionist regime's sustained atrocities in West Asia, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where Palestinians have endured more than a year of relentless aggression.

He also pointed to Israeli crimes committed against Lebanon and expressed concern over the resurgence of Takfiri groups in Syria following a ceasefire agreement between Lebanon's Hezbollah Resistance movement and Israel.



Araghchi attributed the reorganization of these terrorist factions to direct backing from the U.S. and Israel. He underscored the strategic intent behind this support, aimed at destabilizing Syria and undermining its democratically-elected government led by President Bashar al-Assad.

Last week, the foreign-backed Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) terrorist group launched a surprise assault in Aleppo province, capturing several villages and towns before advancing into the region on November 27.

These developments mark a dangerous escalation in a conflict that has plagued Syria since 2011, as foreign-sponsored terrorism continues to hinder Damascus's efforts to restore stability.

Araghchi reiterated Iran's position that Western powers and their regional allies have consistently supported such terrorist groups to destabilize Syria and the broader region.

The ECO Region will become one of the most vibrant emerging regions within the Global South if it wishes so collectively. ECO may also become a reliable partner for South-North partnerships in areas such as transit and energy security, the top diplomat explained.

On the sidelines of the ECO summit, Araghchi held bilateral meetings with foreign ministers from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan, as well as Turkmenistan's deputy foreign minister. These discussions focused on enhancing trade relations, improving border exchanges, and fostering intra-organizational collaboration within the ECO framework.

The two-day ECO meeting, which began on Monday, aimed to strengthen regional connectivity through rail and road network development, streamlined border procedures, and visa regime liberalization.

The organization, comprising 10 member states including Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, serves as a platform for promoting economic development and trade in the Eurasian region.

As one of the founding members of the ECO, Iran holds a pivotal position in the organization due to its strategic geopolitical and geo-economic significance. The ECO region, endowed with vast oil and gas reserves, has become increasingly important in global geopolitics, offering opportunities for cooperation in energy, trade, and transportation.

its home stadium in Jeddah. My team believed in its abilities and showed great composure by taking the lead twice," he added.

The draw took the Tehran-based side to five points and with plenty to do with two rounds remaining.

## Garrido proud of Persepolis' performance against Al Shorta

TEHRAN – Juan Carlos Garrido was extremely proud after Persepolis revived its AFC Champions League Elite 2024/25 knockout stage hopes with a 2-1 win against Iraq's Al Shorta on Monday.

The Iran side showed grit and determination to defeat Al Shorta, drawing level in the 89th minute and then proceeding to score the winner through Giorgi Gvelesiani deep in stoppage time to move up to six points with two matches remaining.

"This victory was the result of the efforts of the players and our analysis of the opponents and until the last moment, we fought to win," said Garrido.

"This game was full of events, but we tried until the last minute. We knew that this game was important and when a penalty was awarded to Al Shorta, the goalkeeper and players believed they would not score," the Spanish coach added.

"We had opportunities during the game, but we had to work until the last moment to win and we reached our goal."

Mohamad Ali gave Al Shorta a 19th minute lead and they looked good value to defend it until Uzbekistan international Oston Urunov struck the equalizer with a minute left of regulation time.

More drama was to follow with Al Shorta awarded a penalty in the ninth minute of stoppage time but Mahmoud Al Mawas hammered his effort against the post with Persepolis then earning a spot-kick of their own which was put away by Gvelesiani.

## Iran beat Uzbekistan at Asia-Pacific Deaf Games

TEHRAN – Iran football team defeated Uzbekistan 4-1 at the 10th Asia-Pacific Deaf Games on Tuesday.

Hossein Mosahebi, Sina Saber, Ali Akbar Ahmadvand and Ali Salimi scored for Iran.

Team Melli, who had defeated Japan 3-1 in Group A in its first match, will meet Oman on Thursday.

Iran has sent 150 male and female athletes to the Games in nine sports.

The tournament, which is seen as a precursor to the Deaflympics in Japan next year, is scheduled for December 1 to 8 in Kuala Lumpur.

Asia Pacific Deaf Games is a deaf multi-sport event established in 1984 which is held every four years in the Asia Pacific region. It is the successor to the "Far Eastern Deaf Football Championship" which was held in Taipei in 1983.

## Japan too strong for Iran at 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Japan 34-14 at the 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship on Tuesday.

The competition takes place in New Delhi from Dec. 3 to 10 at the Gandhi Arena and Iran are drawn in Group B along hosts India, Japan and Hong Kong.

Team Melli are scheduled to meet India and Hong Kong on Wednesday and Friday, respectively.

The event, organized by the Asian Handball Federation and presented by the World Handball League, marks a significant milestone as it's the first time the tournament is being held in South Asia.

The tournament features eight teams divided into two groups of four. Group A includes reigning champions South Korea, Kazakhstan, China, and Singapore.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals.

The event acts as the Asian qualifying tournament for the 2025 World Women's Handball Championship, with the top four teams qualifying.

## Iran win five medals at World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships

TEHRAN – Day four at the World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships in Hong Kong, China was another in which success was widely shared, as five Member National Associations (MNAs) won gold medals including firsts for Iran and Spain.

Iran were able to claim three gold medals on the fourth day of competition at the Hong Kong Coliseum.

After four silvers and a bronze throughout his career, Hadi Torkashvand reached the top of the podium in the Recognized Poomsae Male Over 65 event, providing a memorable moment from this edition of the World Championships.

Nader Khodamoradi defended his title from Goyang 2022 in the Male Under 65, and a victory in the Pair Junior category Amiali Alizadeh and Zeynab Shahriari added to an impressive day for Iran.

The Male Teams Under 50 and 30 also won two bronze medals in the competition.

## 'Forever Iranian': interior minister highlights strategic significance of Iran's trio islands



TEHRAN – The Iranian Minister of Interior, Eskandar Momeni, has emphasized the strategic importance of Hormozgan Province, particularly its maritime and economic assets, including the three islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb, and the Lesser Tunb that he described as "eternally Iranian."

Speaking during the farewell and introduction ceremony for Hormozgan's governor, Momeni reiterated the government's commitment to utilizing the province's vast potential for national development.

Highlighting the critical role of the province, Momeni stated: "The development of the Makran coasts equates to the development of the entire nation, a priority strongly emphasized by both Imam Khamenei and the President."

He added that Hormozgan's 700 kilometers of coastline and its unique islands, including the trio islands, are cornerstones of Iran's maritime strength and sovereignty.

"These islands, along with the province's broader maritime economy, hold unparalleled potential. By prioritizing this sector, we can drive progress not only in Hormozgan but across the entire nation."

The Minister also pointed to the province's potential in tourism and resource development, describing Hormozgan as a treasure trove of natural beauty and economic opportunities.

"Hormuz Island, among others, stands out for its breathtaking landscapes. With proper infrastructure, Hormozgan can become a global tourism hub, contributing significantly to Iran's economy."

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Betraying Iran and the Muslim world

A look at Shah's close relations with 'Israel' before the 1979 Islamic Revolution



By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – The Iranian government under Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi initially refused to recognize Israel after its establishment in 1948. However, as time passed and the Shah tightened his grip on power, he established official ties with the occupying regime.

In 1947, Iran was among 13 countries that voted against the United Nations Partition Plan for the British Mandate of Palestine. Two years later, Iran also voted against Israel's admission to the United Nations.

But after the 1953 coup in Iran, which was orchestrated by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the amicable relations between Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and the Tel Aviv regime began and continued to grow until the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The Shah announced in an interview that Iran had de facto recognized the Israeli regime since 1949. Iran was the second Muslim-majority country to recognize Israel following Turkey, sparking the wrath of Arab countries such as Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Although the Zionist Israeli regime was not officially recognized by the Mohammad Reza Shah regime in Iran before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the level of relations and cooperation between the two sides were friendly much like allies. The Shah considered the occupying regime as a friend and very close ally.

Israeli regime's high-ranking officials would repeatedly visit Iran to hold meetings with the Shah regime's authorities, despite sparking anger among Muslim nations.

For example, the visit of Abba Eban, the former Israeli deputy prime minister and for-

eign minister, to Tehran in December 1970 or the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol to Iran in June 1966 and his meeting with the then prime minister Amir-Abbas Hoveyda in July 1966 are two examples of these visits.

Iranian government officials would insist to the Israeli officials not to reveal the high level of their bilateral relations, but the Tel Aviv regime only sought to maximize its own gains without taking into account the Iranian government's interests.

Many other Israeli officials visited Iran during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign but their meeting would not be revealed to the media for fear of Iranian nation and Muslim nations' anger. Historians say that many meetings between high-ranking leaders of the two regimes were held outside Tehran, mainly in the city of Ramsar in the north of the country as the Shah regime's officials remained fearful of stirring public anger.

David Ben-Gurion's visit to Iran

The former Israeli regime's prime minister David Ben-Gurion visited Iran on November 4, 1961, as the documents of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs show. Little is known about his visit and who he had held talks with during the trip.

As the primary founder of the Israeli entity bin Gurion developed the "alliance of the periphery" doctrine or the "periphery doctrine".

According to the periphery doctrine, the Israeli regime needed to forge an alliance with non-Arab (yet mostly Muslim) countries in the West Asia region as a counter-balance to the Arab states. Chief among these non-Arab states were Turkey and pre-revolution Iran.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))



## Economic Analysis: Interview with Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of Iran



From page 1 ▶ This article explores the key takeaways from the President's remarks, highlighting his administration's economic agenda and the broader implications for Iran's path forward.

### Economic Challenges and Budget Planning

In his interview, President Pezeshkian highlighted several critical economic challenges faced by the 14th government, emphasizing a commitment to transparency in addressing the country's financial crises. He noted that the national budget was prepared amidst limited time, prioritizing a clear presentation of all figures. Some critics viewed the budget as expansionary, but Pezeshkian clarified that it was designed to transparently reflect fiscal realities rather than introduce inflationary policies.

### Energy Sector Disparities

The President addressed severe imbalances in energy production and consumption, calling the situation a "crisis-in-the-making." The mismatch between power generation and national needs, compounded by excessive per capita consumption—significantly higher than countries like the UK, Canada, and Germany—has led to resource depletion. For instance, oil and gas reserves in power plants, which previously exceeded 3.0 billion cubic meters, have dropped to just over 1.0 billion cubic meters this year. Without intervention, shortages are anticipated, with potential disruptions to winter gas supplies.

Pezeshkian stressed the need for sustainable solutions rather than temporary fixes, criticizing prior administrations for failing to address these disparities. Measures such as gas injections into oil wells, essential for long-term resource extraction, have been overlooked, jeopardizing the future energy landscape.

### Economic Roadmap and Strategic Initiatives

To tackle these challenges, the government convened an economic task force, including the Minister of Economy, Central Bank officials, and academic experts.

This team has identified five key areas of focus:

**Investment and Production Growth:** Encouraging domestic and foreign investment to boost production capacity.

**Addressing Structural Imbalances:** Developing strategies to stabilize the economy.

**Household Welfare and Food Security:** Ensuring access to essential goods and services.

**Resolving Budgetary Disparities:** Prioritizing efficient allocation of resources.

**Industry and Economic Growth Drivers:** Targeting sectors with high potential for economic growth.

According to the President, these pillars have been broken into 25 sub-programs to ensure actionable outcomes.

### Inflation and Public Welfare

Pezeshkian acknowledged the persistent issue of inflation, which has averaged 40 percent over the past five years. Despite recent improvements, with point-to-point inflation dropping to 32.5 percent this autumn, he admitted that economic pressures continue to burden households. The government plans to manage inflation by preventing fuel price hikes and reallocating resources. However, he emphasized the importance of making tough decisions, including potential adjustments to subsidies, to stabilize the economy.

### International Economic Cooperation

On foreign policy, Pezeshkian underlined efforts to enhance regional and global economic relations. Iran has engaged in over 100 high-level meetings with international leaders, fostering trade agreements and partnerships. Upcoming collaborations with the Eurasian Economic Union and bilateral agreements with China, Russia, and India aim to reduce tariffs and expand market access for Iranian products.

These agreements, particularly in energy and transportation, are seen as pivotal for revitalizing Iran's economy. Pezeshkian emphasized the importance of aligning domestic industries with international opportunities, ensuring that tangible benefits reach the public.

### Conclusion

The interview painted a comprehensive picture of Iran's economic hurdles and the government's multifaceted approach to overcoming them.

By addressing energy imbalances, inflation, and international trade barriers, the administration hopes to set the stage for sustainable growth. However, Pezeshkian was candid about the challenges ahead, calling for unity, expert guidance, and public support to navigate this critical period.

## Water inflows to Iranian dams drop by 6%

TEHRAN – Despite holding 22.66 billion cubic meters of stored water, only 44 percent of Iran's dam capacity is currently utilized, leaving 56 percent unfilled, according to official reports.

In the first 70 days of the current water year (starting late September), 3.25 billion cubic meters of water entered the country's dams. This marks a six percent decrease compared to the 3.45 billion cubic meters recorded during the same period in the previous water year.

During this time, 5.15 billion cubic meters of water were released from dams to meet drinking water, agricultural, industrial, and

environmental needs. This represents a two percent reduction compared to the 5.27 billion cubic meters released during the corresponding period last year.

As of now, Iran's dam reservoirs contain 22.66 billion cubic meters of water. A year ago, on December 1, 2023, water reserves stood at 20.35 billion cubic meters, indicating an 11 percent increase in the current storage levels.

This updated data underscores both the persistent challenges of water resource management in Iran and the continued variability in annual water inflows.

TEHRAN – Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$783 million to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 22-October 21), according to the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade.

Ruhollah Latifi said that the UAE was the fourth export destination of Iranian goods in the mentioned month. The official also announced that exporting goods worth \$2.180 billion to Iran, The UAE was the first source of import for Iran in the seventh month of the present year.

As previously announced by the former head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Cus-

toms Administration (IRICA), the value of non-oil trade between Iran and the United Arab Emirates stood at \$16.2 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21)

Mohammad Rezvanifar said that the UAE was the top trade partner of Iran among its neighbors in the seven-month period.

In early August, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates in Tehran said over 122,000 Iranian business persons are currently working in the UAE.

"Economic figures show that Iran-UAE business interactions have increased in recent years, and more than 122,000 Iranian businessmen are doing business in the UAE," Saif Mohammed al-Zaabi said in

a meeting with Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperatives Bahman Abdollahi.

Pointing out that the problems of Iranian and Emirati businessmen and economic operators are not political but in the legal field, he admitted: "Cooperation between the two countries in the field of sea and air transport has also increased."

Abdollahi for his part introduced some of the capabilities of the cooperative sector in Iran and said: "Cooperatives have an important and effective position in Iran and a significant part of the production in our country is done by cooperatives."

Iran and the United Arab Emirates signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for expanding economic cooperation in a variety of areas at the end of the

two countries' 3rd Joint Economic Committee meeting in May 1.

The MOU was signed by former Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash and UAE's Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, who co-chaired the joint meeting.

During the mentioned committee meeting, the two sides stressed the need for further expansion of economic cooperation between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

Speaking at the end of the meeting, Bazrpash said: "We have held the joint committee between the two countries after 10 years, which is an opportunity to develop the commercial and economic relations between the two countries."

# Iran's economy grows 4% in H1

TEHRAN – Iran's economy recorded a four percent growth in the first half of the current Iranian year (March 21-September 22, 2024), according to the latest report from the Iranian Statistical Center. When excluding the oil sector, growth stood at 2.6 percent.

Based on national accounts data, Iran's gross domestic product (GDP) at constant 2021 prices reached 5.069 quadrillion rials (about \$101.38 billion), including oil, and 3.837 quadrillion rials (about \$76.74 billion), excluding oil. This marks an increase from the same period last year, when GDP stood at 4.872 quadrillion rials (about \$97.44 billion) with oil and 3.740 quadrillion rials (about \$74.8 billion) without oil.

The report highlighted growth across major sectors in the first half



of the year compared to the same period last year. As reported, agriculture sector registered a 2.9 percent growth, industries and mining recorded 5.3 percent growth, and services 2.5 percent growth.

Iran's Statistical Center con-

duces its quarterly GDP calculations

across 18 primary sectors and 50 subsectors, using the ISIC Rev. 4 classification system. Key groupings include:

**Agriculture:** Encompassing crop production, animal husbandry, for-

**Industries and Mines:** Covering crude oil and natural gas extraction, other mining activities, manufacturing, water and electricity supply, natural gas distribution, and construction.

**Services:** Encompassing wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services, transportation and warehousing, financial and insurance activities, real estate, public administration, education, healthcare, and other public and private services.

The figures underline Iran's steady economic performance amid challenging global conditions, with significant contributions from natural gas distribution and crude oil production.

## Japan to help Iran resolve differences with FATF: Official

TEHRAN – Japan has vowed to carry out efforts to help Iran advance its case in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), according to an Iranian deputy finance minister.

Hadi Khani made the remarks on Sunday after returning from a meeting of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG) in Indore India.

Khani said that on the sidelines of the meeting he had met with Japan's Deputy Minister of Finance for International Affairs and the head of the country's delegation to the FATF Mitsutoshi Kajikawa.

"The official ... said that the Japanese government plans to contribute to the process of normalizing relations between Iran and the FATF and be the voice of Iran in the Group of Seven as the founders of the FATF," he told the ILNA news agency.

Khani said Kajikawa had also promised to communicate to the FATF the efforts made by Iran to fight money laundering and terrorism financing in recent years.

Iran's current administrative government announced upon taking office in mid-summer that it would seek to sort out differences with the

FATF as part of efforts to open up to the world and fix the country's economic problems.

Iranian officials have indicated that the country should not have any worries about adopting the FATF rules in its entirety as the country has strict controls on money laundering and financing of terrorism.

That comes as some in the country still believe that certain governments, especially the United States which maintains a harsh regime of sanctions on Iran, would benefit from Iran's decision to completely accept all FATF conventions and rules.

## Iran's non-oil exports to Iraq increase 36%

TEHRAN – Iran's non-oil exports to Iraq have risen by 36 percent in the first seven months of the current Iranian year (March 20-October 21), reaching \$7.288 billion, according to an official from the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran.

Abdolmir Rabihaavi, TPO's di-

rector-general for West Asia, stated that unofficial data indicates an additional \$1.0 billion in exports to Iraq during November, bringing the total non-oil exports to the neighboring country to \$8.2 billion so far this year.

"With the current trajectory, we anticipate that Iran's exports to

Iraq will hit an unprecedented \$11 billion by the end of the year," Rabihaavi noted.

Rabihaavi emphasized that Iraq is one of the key markets for Iranian goods with high added value.

Construction materials, including various types of steel profiles, ceramic tiles, food products, chem-

ical and petrochemical goods, and plastic products were the main items exported to Iraq in the mentioned seven months. The surge in trade reflects strengthened economic ties between the two countries, with Iraq serving as a major destination for Iran's diverse non-oil export portfolio.

## Iran's Parliament approves customs tariff reduction for essential goods, medicines

TEHRAN – Iran's Parliament has authorized the government to lower customs duties on the import of medicines, medical supplies, infant formula, essential goods, and agricultural inputs for the next fiscal year.

During a Sunday session focused on the revenue section of the next fiscal budget bill, lawmakers approved a measure allowing the government to reduce customs tariffs on these items to one percent.

The move is aimed at support-

ing both producers and consumers amid economic challenges. Items already subject to customs duties below one percent will remain unchanged, according to the approved provision.

The legislation reflects Iran's ongoing efforts to stabilize prices for essential goods and alleviate pressure on households and businesses. The reduction will apply to raw materials, medical consumables, and key agricultural and livestock inputs, among others.

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) provided \$47.375 billion of subsidized foreign currency to importers of basic goods since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) up to November 30.

CBI figures showed that during this period, \$9.899 billion was provided for importing basic goods and medicine, \$26.116 billion for commercial goods, \$981 million for services, and \$10.379 billion for imports that have taken place in return for exports of goods or ser-

vices from Iran.

Basic goods and medicine are imported into Iran at a rate of 285,000 rials per U.S. dollar. The rate is much lower than a market price which is currently hovering around 700,000 rials per U.S. dollar.

That comes as importers can also receive hard currency at a rate applied in CBI's Forex Management Integrated System, known by its Persian acronym NIMA. The price was 450,937 rials per U.S. dollar on August 17.

## Imam Khomeini Airport City announces over \$800 million in new projects

year (March 20-November 21).

According to the official, over 5.73 million passengers transported via 35,917 flights, reflecting an eight percent increase in passenger numbers and a 6.8 percent rise in passenger flights compared to the same period last year.

Cargo flights also increased by 56.8 percent, and the weight of commercial cargo handled grew by 35 percent, Chalindari said.

Chalindari further highlighted several completed and ongoing in-

frastructure projects including the resurfacing and asphalt renewal of the main runway (2,000 meters long and 60 meters wide), completion of the first phase of the Propulsion Hub, a central security building, and an amphitheater in the main administrative building, upgrading airstrip signage to international aviation standards, overhaul of four telescopic boarding bridges, and installation of four 35-passenger elevators in terminals.

In addition to the mentioned projects, ongoing projects worth

54 trillion rials (\$108 million) are currently under execution, creating jobs for over 1,000 people daily. These developments aim to further establish IKAC as a regional hub for passengers, cargo, and economic activity.

The extensive investments in infrastructure, technology, and operational capacity reflect Iran's commitment to enhancing its aviation sector and leveraging IKAC as a cornerstone of national and regional growth.

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Speaking at the end of the meeting, Bazrpash said: "We have held the joint committee between the two countries after 10 years, which is an opportunity to develop the commercial and economic relations between the two countries."

"The UAE, as Iran's second biggest trade partner, has great strategic importance for us," the minister said.

Referring to the location of Iran and the UAE in the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), Bazarpash said: "Access to the markets of the north and south can create an opportunity for the two countries to cooperate."

In the end, the minister emphasized solving the banking and monetary problems between the two countries to facilitate bilateral trade relations.

Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri for his part underlined the importance of the meeting, saying: "Holding today's meeting shows the development and expansion of economic relations between the two

countries. After China, the UAE has the largest amount of trade relations with Iran. The trade value of the two countries has reached 27 billion dollars and many Iranian companies are established in the UAE."

"Creating new opportunities for transportation and banking cooperation is one of the achievements of this mission," the official said.

Referring to the performance of the UAE government in the field of investment, the official said: "The approval of the law on the formation of foreign companies and the government's support for companies that operate in the field of new energies has created a good opportunity for business with the UAE."



# Hezbollah warns Israel over ceasefire breaches

From page 1 ▶ Experts believe these Israeli violations were not surprising, as they align with Israel's long-standing nature of treachery and deception. Such actions reaffirm that the regime is a source of instability in the West Asia region.

As long as Israeli occupation remains, there will be no lasting peace, stability, or security.

Instead, analysts say it will continue to provoke unrest, aggression, and conflict through various means and methods.

From the very first hours of the ceasefire agreement's implementation on Wednesday, November 27, the Israeli military deliberately violated it dozens of times, engaging in activities such as bulldozing land in certain areas or attempting to advance in others as well as reported kidnapping of Lebanese civilians.

These measures strongly indicate Israeli intent to exploit the ceasefire to achieve, at least partially, what it failed to accomplish on the battlefield as a result of Hezbollah's heroic resistance and steadfastness.

The events of recent days have put the onus on those sponsoring the ceasefire agreement, particularly the United States, which has proven is not impartial in the conflict between Lebanon and Israel.



Washington consistently prioritizes the interests of the Israeli regime and seeks to ensure its security.

This bias is evident in the lack of condemnation from the U.S. or other Western governments over the Israeli ceasefire violations.

Had Hezbollah undertaken any action in breach of the agreement, the world would have erupted in outrage, blaming it for undermining the ceasefire.

This glaring bias toward the Israeli regime at Lebanon's expense raises serious questions about the functioning of the committee supervising the ceasefire's

implementation and how it plans to deter the Israelis from further aggression against Lebanon.

Moreover, these violations, coupled with previous acts of aggression, raise fundamental questions about the insistence of some on disarming Hezbollah in the face of persistent Israeli hostility. Questions have been raised as to why some persist in seeking to weaken Lebanon amid the ongoing Israeli threat.

For more than four decades only Hezbollah has proven capable of defending Lebanon.

In response to the repeated Israeli violations, Hezbollah carried out what it described as an initial

retaliatory measure.

A statement by the Lebanese resistance read:

"In response to repeated violations by the Israeli enemy of the ceasefire agreement announced to take effect at dawn on Wednesday, November 27, 2024, which have included various forms of aggression, such as firing on civilians and conducting airstrikes in different areas of Lebanon—resulting in the martyrdom of civilians and injuries to others—and the continued breach of Lebanese airspace by enemy aircraft, even reaching the capital Beirut, the Islamic Resistance carried out an initial defensive and warning response this evening, Monday, targeting Ruwaisat Al-Alam site, belonging to the Israeli enemy army in the occupied Lebanese hills of Kfar Shuba."

The statement concluded with the words:

"You have been warned."

According to experts, this initial warning strike by Hezbollah carries a clear message to the Israelis and other parties that the resistance is prepared and capable of responding appropriately and will not tolerate aggression against Lebanon without delivering a proportional response.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

## International double standards: False claims about Israeli POWs in Gaza

From page 1 ▶ but rather the condescending view that considers that the "dilemma" of these prisoners of war is due to the "inhuman" behavior of the Palestinians accused of committing "atrocities".

This fake projection on the Palestinian people is not new as the oppressed Palestinian people have been stripped of their human rights and labeled as "human animals". However, the videos of the Palestinian resistance show how Israeli prisoners of war are treated humanely.

In contrast, thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by the occupation regime are subjected to sexual assault and brutal practices, according to what the Hebrew media reveals. The abuse was evident after their release.

Their emaciated bodies confirmed that they were treated as subhuman, which is what the extremist right-wing minister, Atman Ben Gvir, who is directly responsible for Israeli prisons, boasts about.

According to the Palestinian Authority for Prisoners and Freed Prisoners Affairs, from October 7 the number of Palestinian inmates who have been murdered in the Israeli prisons has reached 47 due to torture during arrest and investigation.

The New York Times has documented the systematic policy of torture and ill-treatment since October 7, 2023, where it conducted interviews with Israeli soldiers and Palestinian prisoners.

One journalist described what he saw during his visit to the Sde Teiman prison, where prisoners sit handcuffed and blindfolded, in addition to being prevented from standing or sleeping except with permission.

The New York Times has reported on various forms of torture, including severe beatings with batons and rifle butts, electrocution during interrogations, repeated electrocution, and exposing detainees to loud music to prevent them from sleeping.

Detainees were also forced to wear diapers during interrogations. This is just the tip of the iceberg of what has been revealed, and it is expected that the coming days will reveal other atrocities committed against Palestinians inside the Israeli prisons.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

## America at the helm of destabilization in West Asia

By Batool Subeiti

BEIRUT - The recent seizure of Aleppo in Syria by terrorist mercenaries was orchestrated under Turkish guidance with Ukrainian and Israeli backing.

This stands as undeniable proof of America's leading role in the current regional strategy. America greenlighted the Israeli aggression on Lebanon in late September, capitalizing on the election period. This gave the Israeli occupation entity a free hand to set the stage for a so-called "new Middle East," mirroring plans America had envisioned at the turn of the 21st century.

America's initial strategy (Plan A) relied on the Israeli occupation entity to weaken the resistance movement in Lebanon. Following that, Israeli forces would occupy the Golan Heights and launch an attack on Syria, with takfiri mercenaries activated in northwestern Syria to ultimately overthrow the government.

These terrorists would then move into Iraq, toppling the Hashd resistance movement to deal a blow to the Axis of Resistance.

After all, this was Netanyahu's plan, as he outlined in the UN with green and black maps. However, this plan failed when the Israeli occupation regime was forced to seek a cease-

fire—indicating a major strategic defeat for the so-called "Israel 2.0" project at the hands of the resistance movement of Lebanon.

As a result, Plan B was put into motion, sidelining the failing Israeli military efforts and shifting focus to weaken the resistance movement politically, aiming to achieve what Israel could not through war. U.S. Special Forces commander Jasper Jeffers arrived in Beirut to monitor the ceasefire, while special envoy Amos Hochstein worked on tasking the Lebanese Army with disarming the Hezbollah resistance movement.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

## Biden's greatest failure in Gaza

How weak humanitarian diplomacy abetted a cataclysm

By Jeremy Konyndyk

On October 13, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin sent a letter to the Israeli government. In it, they expressed profound concern about the impediments Israel has placed on the flow of aid to Gaza in the course of Israeli military operations. The letter explicitly noted that U.S. law requires the United States to suspend arms sales and security cooperation with governments that impede the delivery of U.S.-provided aid. And it gave Israel a 30-day deadline to take "urgent and sustained actions to reverse" Gaza's spiraling humanitarian crisis, delineating a set of concrete measures it expected Israel to take, including drastically increasing the number of trucks that can enter Gaza, rescinding evacuation orders that have displaced millions, and halting pending

legislation that would bar efforts by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (known as UNRWA) to help Palestinian civilians.

Israel failed to adequately respond to any one of those conditions by the letter's deadline. When Refugees International and seven other prominent aid groups conducted a detailed analysis of 19 discrete actions the U.S. government had asked Israel to take, we found that Israel had demonstrated no meaningful action on 15 of them and had only partially addressed the remaining four. President Joe Biden's administration, however, has refused to impose any consequences on Israel for this failure, arguing that half measures and vague promises constituted a sufficient response.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Gaza now has the highest number of child amputees

per capita anywhere in the world



'How many days, Mum, until my hand grows back?'

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has highlighted the plight of Gaza's child amputees.

One of many children, who have lost limbs in the 14 months of Israeli attacks in the Palestinian enclave, is six-year-old Sidra.

## WORLD HEADLINES

### Food availability 'at an all-time low' across Gaza, says FAO

Beth Bechdol, the deputy director-general of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is calling for unrestricted and safe access to the Gaza Strip to deliver emergency aid and prevent the spread of famine.

"Today, food availability is at an all-time low across the entire Gaza Strip, and food supply has sharply deteriorated," Bechdol said at a ministerial conference in the Egyptian capital, Cairo.

"The window of opportunity to deliver assistance is now, today, not tomorrow. Food, medicine and fuel are self-evident priorities,

but we must also prioritise the ability to grow food locally where it is needed most to ensure survival," she said.

Before Israel's war on Gaza, the enclave was largely self-sufficient in vegetables, eggs, fresh milk, poultry and fish, and produced much of its red meat, olive oil and fruit, according to the FAO.

But more than a year later, agricultural food systems have collapsed in Gaza, while Israeli forces have decimated local food production across the whole of the enclave.

### Palestinian pastor tells Trump: Gaza is 'already hell on earth'

US President-elect Donald Trump has promised that "there will be ALL HELL TO PAY in the Middle East" if the captives held in Gaza are not released by January 20, when he takes office.

Here are some of the reactions to his comments:

\* Munther Isaac, a Palestinian pastor in Bethlehem, wrote: "It is already hell on earth!!!! Lord have mercy!"

\* Kenneth Roth, the former head of Human Rights Watch, wrote: "If Trump wants the

hostages released, he should pressure Netanyahu to stop blocking a deal by repeatedly introducing new obstacles."

\* Andreas Krieg, an associate professor at the School of Security Studies at King's College London, wrote: "Someone tell Trump that Israel already unleashed hell on Gaza, and hostages were not released."

\* Ishaan Tharoor, a columnist for The Washington Post, wrote: "What further hell that isn't an obvious war crime can Trump inflict on Gaza that hasn't already been inflicted?"

### Israeli army arrests doctor, nurse in West Bank's Tubas

Israeli forces have arrested a doctor and a nurse at the Tubas Government Hospital in the center of the occupied West Bank's Tubas city.

That's according to videos broadcast by Palestinian platforms and activists and verified by

Al Jazeera's fact-checking agency Sanad.

We have reported earlier that two bodies and an injured person were transferred to the same hospital after an Israeli air attack on a car near the village of Aqqaba in the northeastern West Bank.

### South Korea troops try to storm parliament after martial law declared



Troops were seen trying to enter the South Korean parliament on Wednesday after President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law in a surprise late-night TV address that slammed domestic political opponents and sent shockwaves through the country.

Live television footage showed troops apparently tasked with imposing martial law attempting to enter the assembly building, and parliamentary aides were seen trying to push the soldiers back by spraying fire extinguishers.

Yoon said on Tuesday night that opposition parties had taken the parliamentary process hostage. He vowed to eradicate "shameless pro-North Korean anti-state forces" and said he had no choice but to take the measure to safeguard constitutional order.

Shortly after Yoon made his announcement, people began gathering outside the parliament building, some of them shouting:

"Withdraw emergency martial law!"

The military said activities by parliament and political parties would be banned, and that media and publishers would be under the control of the martial law command.

Yoon did not cite any specific threat from the nuclear-armed North, instead focusing on his domestic political opponents. It is the first time since 1980 that martial law has been declared in South Korea.

South Korea has had a series of authoritarian leaders early in its history but has been considered democratic since the 1980s.

The Korean won was down sharply against the U.S. dollar. A central bank official said it was preparing measures to stabilise the market if needed. Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok has convened an emergency meeting among top economic officials, his spokesman said in a text message.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))



## Iran to introduce tourist cards for foreign visitors: Minister



officials in Baku aim to restore and boost tourist exchanges.

Salehi-Amiri also identified the Persian Gulf littoral states, particularly Iraq, as a key tourism market. He reported that over three million Iraqi tourists visit Iran annually, compared to 7.5 million Iranian pilgrims traveling to Iraq. This imbalance, he said, needs to be addressed to achieve a more equitable exchange.

The minister emphasized Saudi Arabia as a strategic focus for tourism development, citing efforts to strengthen relations between the two nations.

He credited President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration for making significant progress in improving diplomatic ties with Riyadh.

Salehi-Amiri expressed optimism about upcoming meetings between President Pezeshkian and leaders from Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia, anticipating that these talks could resolve existing issues and mark the beginning of a new era in regional cooperation and tourism growth.

Iran's introduction of the tourist card is expected to enhance convenience for international visitors, demonstrating the country's commitment to fostering its tourism industry and cultural exchange.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 28 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

TEHRAN - Iran plans to issue "tourist cards" for foreign visitors to facilitate currency exchange during their stay, according to Reza Salehi-Amiri, the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Salehi-Amiri announced on Tuesday that the lack of a proper currency exchange system and the absence of international credit cards have been significant obstacles for Iran's tourism industry, IRNA reported.

He called on the Central Bank of Iran to address these issues as part of broader efforts to improve the sector.

Highlighting the untapped potential of Iran's tourism, the minister said the primary target market is the "Nowruz zone," encompassing culturally connected nations such as Azerbaijan.

He noted that the number of Azerbaijani tourists visiting Iran dropped sharply—from over 1.8 million annually to just 100,000—following the January 27, 2023, embassy incident in Tehran.

However, recent discussions with senior of-

## Glory of Ancient Persia to reach Xinjiang

TEHRAN - Following successful showcases in Beijing and Shanghai, Iran's renowned exhibition, "The Glory of Ancient Persia", will soon be unveiled in Xinjiang.

Mohsen Bakhtiar, Iranian ambassador to China, announced the upcoming show in a statement shared on the social media platform X, ISNA reported.

Xinjiang, historically a pivotal gateway on the Silk Road connecting Iran to the wider world, will host this major cultural event celebrating the shared heritage of ancient Asian civilizations, the ambassador wrote.

Bakhtiar also underlined the importance of such collaborations in strengthening ties between the East and West of Asia.

Organized by Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts in cooperation with the Chinese government, the exhibition showcases over 280 artifacts spanning more than 3,000 years of Persian history.

The collection includes treasures from prominent archaeological sites across Iran, such as the National Museum of Iran, the Persepolis Museum, and regional museums in Rasht and Gorgan.

The event aims to introduce the magnificence of Persian civilization to Chinese audiences and promote tourism to Iran.



Iran, an ancient land steeped in history, boasts one of the world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with settlements dating back to 4000 BC.

It is adorned with a wealth of cultural treasures, including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, and diverse natural landscapes, complemented by 28 UNESCO labels.

Viewed through a broader lens, Iranian history unfolds in two distinct eras: pre-Islamic and Islamic. The rise of the Medes in 625 BC marked the unification of Iran into a nation and empire.

However, it was the Islamic conquest of Persia (633-656) that signaled a pivotal moment, bringing an end to the powerful Sassanid Empire (224-651) and reshaping the course of the nation's history.

## Accessible travel 'a game changer' for destinations and businesses: UN Tourism

Small investments in accessibility and innovation can be a game-changer for tourism destinations everywhere. But, despite 1.3 billion worldwide people already experiencing significant disability, many destinations and tourism businesses are still failing to embrace the many benefits of welcoming these travelers.

To mark International Day of Persons with Disabilities, UN Tourism has joined with its partners ONCE Foundation and the Spanish Association for Standardization to highlight the immense economic and social benefits of increasing the accessibility of tourism for persons with disabilities and specific requirements and for seniors, against the ISO 21902:2021 Standards on Accessible Tourism.

Within the European Union, more than 70% of the 80 million persons with disabilities can afford to travel and enjoy tourism. In Asia and the Pacific, the potential market size is of 690

million people and in Latin America and Caribbean this figure reaches 85 million people.

UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "Everybody should be able to enjoy tourism."

At UN Tourism we have been advocating for accessibility for many years, and the benefits have never been clearer. The new guidelines on accessible tourism, produced by UN Tourism and our partners, set out how both destinations and businesses can harness the power of innovation and investment to boost accessibility in every way."

To help destinations and businesses tap into this potential, UN Tourism and its partners have released six sets of guidelines Produced by UN Tourism, ONCE Foundation and Spanish Association for Standardization (UNE), in collaboration with the European Network for Accessible Tourism and many other partners.

(Source: UN Tourism)

# Minister underlines marine tourism, soft power and global ties

TEHRAN - In a televised interview on Monday evening, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, shared insights into the nation's tourism strategy, highlighting recent achievements and ambitious goals for the future.

Salehi-Amiri said that Iran welcomed 6.382 million international tourists during the last Iranian year (which ended on March 19) and aims for a 10% annual growth in arrivals.

"We have the capacity to attract up to 15 million more tourists annually, but this requires significant improvements in infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and financial services," he noted.

### Tourism and soft power

The minister underscored the role of cultural heritage as a form of "soft power," capable of fostering national pride and international recognition.

"Iran's strength lies not only in its historical legacy but also in its ability to share this legacy with the world," he said.

He also discussed Iran's ranking as the seventh most attractive country for tourism, according to World Bank data, though domestic



studies place Iran third globally.

Iran's diverse offerings, ranging from cultural heritage and natural wonders to marine tourism, contribute to its unique standing, the minister said.

### Cultural heritage recognition

The minister emphasized Iran's rich cultural heritage, stating that 48,000 sites (as well as monuments and relics) have been registered nationally, with 28 tangible and 27 intangible assets already on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Additionally, 48 more sites are pending global recognition, the minister added.

Despite a lack of registrations during the first 18 years after the [1979] Islamic Revolution, we are confident that Iran will rank among

the top three countries in the world for registered heritage sites in the coming years, he said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi-Amiri highlighted the need for greater investment in preservation and restoration, citing a shortage of resources and skilled personnel. He also called for more efforts to engage younger generations and the global audience through digital platforms to showcase Iran's extensive cultural assets.

### Marine and regional tourism

Salehi-Amiri revealed plans to prioritize marine tourism as part of Iran's broader blue economy strategy.

This includes discussions with military authorities in the Persian Gulf island of Abu Musa to allocate

areas for tourism development, as well as plans for a 1,200-hectare tourism zone along the Makran coast, the minister explained.

"New cruise routes between Iran and the Caucasus region are also under consideration, with infrastructure development underway in northern ports."

### Strengthening global ties

Iran aims to enhance its tourism cooperation with key countries, focusing on regional neighbors and emerging markets in East Asia, including China and India.

A meeting with China's Minister of Tourism is planned to develop bilateral initiatives, the minister said.

Salehi-Amiri also stressed the importance of portraying Iran as a safe destination to counter negative perceptions.

### Infrastructure development

The minister highlighted Iran's efforts to expand its hospitality sector, with plans to open 100 new hotels annually, adding to the current 1,430 facilities. He also called for removing investment barriers to accelerate growth in the sector.

"We must use our national potential to reshape perceptions of Iran and position ourselves as a leading destination for global travelers," Salehi-Amiri concluded.

## Archaeologists uncover ancient iron production site south of Lake Urmia

TEHRAN - For the first time, archaeologists have discovered a historic iron production site in the Vesta Sheikh area south of Lake Urmia, northwest Iran.

The significant finding was documented through scientific excavations in the region and offers new insights into ancient metallurgy in northwestern Iran, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

According to Salah Salimi, the lead archaeologist, the Vesta-Sheikh site is located in the southern part of West Azarbaijan province, near the village road connecting Kani-Sepi to Kani-Rash, approximately one kilometer from the main Mahabad-Sardasht road.

Situated on a gentle slope in a small valley, the site spans about half a hectare, scattered with remnants of iron production, including slag, iron ore, and fragments of materials used in smelting furnaces.

Salimi explained that Vesta-Sheikh appears

to have functioned as a small-scale, seasonal industrial site rather than a permanent settlement due to the region's mountainous terrain.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the archaeologists said that industrial activities in this area were localized and tied to specific periods, with limited layers of habitation evidence.

The Vesta-Sheikh, along with 17 others sites, was first identified in 2019 during a broader archaeological survey of iron smelting sites in the Kani-Rash and Sardasht regions. Preliminary thermoluminescence dating places some of these sites in the Parthian and Seljuk eras.

As mentioned by the archaeologist, the current excavation is aimed to address key questions about the origins and development of iron metallurgy in the region and to enhance understanding of the iron production cycle in the Lake Urmia basin. Despite weather-related challenges limiting the scope of excavation, the findings were substantial, including diverse slag



samples, raw iron ore, fragments, and furnace remnants.

Preliminary analyses suggest that iron production at Vesta-Sheikh followed the sponge iron method. Future phases of the project will focus on laboratory analyses and precise dating to deepen the understanding of this ancient industrial site, Salimi explained.

Lake Urmia covers an area that varies from 5,200 to 6,000 square km. Like the Dead Sea, it is remarkable for the extreme salinity of its waters. Since 1967 it has enjoyed the status of a wetland protected region, and efforts have been made by the Iranian government to increase its wildlife.

## Heritage official highlights significance of Konar Sandal archaeological site



TEHRAN - Mostafa Dehpahlavan, head of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, has emphasized the importance of archaeological excavations at the Bronze Age site of Konar Sandal in southern Iran's Jiroft region.

Speaking during a visit to the site on Monday, Dehpahlavan underscored the need for continuous research and preservation efforts at this globally renowned heritage location.

After a 16-year hiatus, excavations at Konar Sandal resumed under the leadership of renowned archaeologist Seyyed Mansour Seyyed Sajjadi, thanks to persistent efforts by the Kerman province's cultural heritage department.

He also pointed out that artifacts from Jiroft are featured in prominent museums worldwide, underscoring the site's global significance.

Dehpahlavan praised these initiatives, stating that Konar Sandal holds immense cultural and historical value not just for Iran but also for the international community.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Dehpahlavan high-

lighted the critical role of the Jiroft site in shaping Iran's historical narrative, emphasizing the benefits it can bring to local communities.

The cultural heritage of Jiroft is so profound that it can significantly benefit local and indigenous populations, he said, urging the inclusion of local communities and NGOs in the preservation and management of the site.

### Heritage as soft power

Dehpahlavan referred to cultural heritage as a cornerstone of national identity and influence, describing it as a form of "soft power" that bolsters both domestic stability and international diplomacy. He stressed the importance of archaeological research in enhancing societal awareness and fostering pride in Iran's rich historical legacy.

"Sites like Konar Sandal not only deepen our understanding of the past but also contribute to our cultural and historical literacy," he said. "Preserving and utilizing this heritage ensures its transmission to future generations while enhancing the nation's global standing."

### Glimpses of the Bronze Age site

The treasured site consists of two mounds a few kilometers apart, called Konar Sandal A and B with a height of 13 and 21 meters, respectively. At Konar Sandal B, a two-story, windowed citadel with a base of close to 13.5 hectares was found. Tablets with scripts of unknown nature were reportedly discovered at the site.

An initial archaeological dig at the site oc-

curred about twenty years ago, led by Iranian archaeologist Yusef Majidzadeh and a team of international experts. This survey uncovered a Bronze Age settlement nestled in the Halil-Rud Valley.

Nestled among mountains rising around 4,000 meters high on three sides, Jiroft's discoveries are viewed by many Iranian and international experts as evidence of a civilization as significant as Sumer and ancient Mesopotamia. The remarkable Jiroft site's discovery was accidental in the early 21st century when severe floods along the Halil River unearthed numerous previously unknown tombs, revealing artifacts believed to date back to the Early Bronze Age (late 3rd millennium BC).

Reports initially described the sight of "an ancient object floating on the water's surface." Recognizing its value, villagers, impacted by two years of drought, swarmed the riverbanks the following day, searching for 5,000-year-old relics.

Despite its historical significance, geological factors led to the site's oversight by tourists and archaeologists, who were typically more focused on locations like Mesopotamia, situated roughly 1,000 km away.

In 2003, Iran invited Jean Perrot, the renowned French archaeologist who directed excavations in the Shush (or Susa) area from 1969 to 1978 as head of the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

## China, Uzbekistan introduce visa free travel for 30 days

Uzbekistan and China signed an agreement on Dec. 1 allowing citizens to travel to both countries without visas for 30 days.

"As part of the implementation

of the agreements reached between the Leaders of Uzbekistan and China, today together with my colleague we signed the agreement that allows our citizens to

travel without visa for 30 days.

It is another step towards making more intense exchanges and facilitating trade and people-to-people ties," reads Uzbek

Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov's statement. China and Kazakhstan have agreed on mutual exemption from visa requirements in 2023.

(Source: The Astana Times)



# Iran attending COP16 of UN Convention to Combat Desertification

TEHRAN –An Iranian delegation led by Agriculture Minister Gholam-Reza Nouri-Qezelgeh is participating in the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) taking place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from December 2 to 13.

On the sidelines of the conference, the minister has so far held separate meetings with his counterparts from Saudi Arabia and Iraq, as well as Pakistan's coordinator to prime minister on climate change, to explore avenues for enhancing cooperation to address desertification.

In a meeting with the minister of environment, water, and agriculture of Saudi Arabia, Abdulrahman Bin Abdulmohsen al-Fadley, Nouri-Qezelgeh underscored the importance of expanding cooperation between the states in West Asia and the Persian Gulf region, as well as developing a targeted action plan as effective strategies to combat desertification, IRNA reported.

Holding separate meetings with Iraq's Minister of Agriculture, Abbas Jabr Al-Alawi, and the Pakistani official, Romina Khurshid Alam, the officials discussed ways to promote joint efforts to fight against desertification.

UNCCD COP 16 is more than a critical milestone – it represents a moonshot moment to raise global ambition and accelerate action on land and drought resilience through a people-centered approach.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the global voice for land and one of the three major UN treaties known as the Rio Conventions, alongside climate and biodiversity.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the main decision-making body of UNCCD's 197 Parties – 196 countries and the European Union. COP16 is taking place in Riyadh under the theme Our Land. Our Fu-



ture.

Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of UNCCD, COP16 is the largest UN land conference to date, and the first UNCCD COP held in the Middle East and North Africa region, which knows first-hand the impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought.

COP16 is poised to be a game-changer, marking a renewed global commitment to accelerate investment and action to restore land and boost drought resilience for the benefit of people and planet.

## Desertification

Desertification, land degradation, and drought are among the most pressing environmental challenges of our time, with up to 40 percent of all land areas worldwide already considered degraded.

Healthy land not only provides us with almost 95 percent of our food but so much more: it clothes and shelters us, provides jobs and livelihoods and protects us from worsening droughts, floods, and wildfires.

At the same time, growing populations coupled with unsustainable production and consumption patterns fuel the demand for natural resources, putting excessive pressure on land to the point of degradation.

Desertification and drought are driving forced migration, putting tens of millions of people each year

at risk of displacement.

Observed on June 17, this year, the theme of Desertification and Drought Day "United for Land. Our Legacy. Our Future" spotlighted the future of land stewardship – our most precious resource to ensure the stability and prosperity of billions of people around the world.

## Promoting cooperation

The efforts of the administration of the late President Ebrahim Raisi to address the predicament of sand and dust storms (SDSs), as one of the factors contributing to drought and desertification, led to the evolution of national discourse into regional, and subsequently international discourse, according to the former head of Department of Environment (DOE).

"It has also led to the inclusion of sand and dust storms in the key terminology of the United Nations," ISNA quoted Ali Salajeqeh as saying.

He made the remarks on the occasion of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, which is annually observed on June 17.

"The earth has a certain capacity with clear resilience and resistance to cope with shocks.

The extent to utilize the earth's capacity is also known," Salajeqeh noted.

Currently, drought and desertification, as a part of a prevalent phenomenon called climate change, are imposed on the world, includ-

ing our country, he noted.

The official went on to say that human impacts on climate change are limited, however, the way they treat the environment can intensify and hasten the changes.

There are several ways to achieve this goal at all levels including policymaking, the presentation of the program, and its implementation.

Water-intensive crops should not be cultivated; clean fuels should be used. Underground water sources should be consumed in such a way that erosion is minimized, and restoration of nature is maximized.

Water and soil resources and fossil fuels should not be used as in normal conditions, there should be a shift from fossil fuels to renewable energies.

This way, threats can be turned into opportunities and a non-wasteful lifestyle will be promoted.

According to the secretary of the national policymaking headquarters for dealing with sand and dust storms, Ali-Mohammad Tahmasbi, 2.5 million hectares of sand dust storm hotspots in the country have been stabilized over the past six years.

The measure has been taken in cooperation with other organizations, particularly the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization.

SDS hotspots in 23 provinces of the country cover roughly 35 million hectares. They are responsible for generating dust across the country.

Enhancing collaborations among different organizations to manage dust storms produced by internal dust zones effectively; holding bilateral and multilateral meetings with the officials of Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkmenistan, Qatar, and Kuwait, and implementing the agreements concluded with these countries to address the SDSs are among taken actions by the DOE.

## Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, top destinations for Iranian nano-tech products

TEHRAN –Iranian nanotechnology companies export their products to 49 countries around the world mainly to Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, India, and China.

Over the past few years, the sales value of domestically- manufactured nano-tech products has experienced an increase of more than 100 percent every year, IRIB reported.

Over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2023-March 2024), the sales amounted 620,000 billion rials (around one billion dollars).

Moreover, exports of nano-tech products hit 145 million dollars, representing 9.2 percent of the entire market value, IRIB quoted the secretary of the headquarters for the Nanotechnology Initiative Council, Emad Ahmadvand, as saying.

The best-selling products are construction materials, electronic products, and laboratory equipment, which have been even exported to the United States, via a third-party country.

The sales value of nano-tech products has experienced an increase of more than 100 percent every year.

## Iran a global leader in nano-tech

Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide.

According to StatNano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

This ranking proves the country's remarkable scientific development.

The site considers the number of scientific articles for comparing scientific progress in nanoscience, technology, and industry.

Nanotechnology is the manipulation of matter on a near-atomic scale to produce



new structures, materials, and devices.

The technology promises scientific advancement in many sectors such as medicine, consumer products, energy, materials, and manufacturing. Nanotechnology refers to engineered structures, devices, and systems.

In the past two decades, the world has observed a steady increase in the number of industries producing nano-based products and the number of countries promoting nanotechnology.

More importantly, the ratio of nanotechnology to nominal GDP has increased significantly, suggesting that the contribution of nanotechnology to World GDP has increased. Nanotechnology has also played a key role in new job creation, Press TV reported.

The nanotechnology sector is a prime example of success in Iran, an arena consisting of expert and program-oriented human resources with significant goals that shine like a jewel in the innovation and technology ecosystem of the country.

With the support of talented academicians and knowledge-based companies, the nanotechnology sector has indigenized many technologies to solve the main challenges of the country in various areas, including industry.

Policy making and planning for progress in nanotechnology started in 2003 with the formation of a special headquarters for the development of nanotechnology, and accelerated with the approval of the first 10-year document for the development of nanotechnology entitled "Future Strategy Document".

Some 358 companies are operating in the field of nanotechnology in the country and 1608 products and equipment have received nanotechnology certificates.

Some 42 percent of the products in this field are related to construction, more than 17 percent to the field of oil, gas, and petrochemicals, 13 percent to the field of automobiles, and over 10 percent to the field of optoelectronics.

## Rotavirus vaccination kicks off nationwide

TEHRAN –The health ministry started the nationwide implementation of the rotavirus vaccination program on Tuesday.

Rotavirus can cause severe watery diarrhea, vomiting, fever, and abdominal pain. Children who get rotavirus disease can become dehydrated and may need to be hospitalized.

The vaccine is added to the country's immunization program to prevent severe diarrhea in infants and their hospitalization, it is estimated to prevent at least 10,000 cases of diarrhea and hospitalization of infants, IRNA reported.

Needed rotavirus vaccines are provided and the health centers can start vaccinations of the babies following the schedules, IRNA quoted Alireza Raisi, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Babies can get three doses of vaccine at the 2nd, 4th, and 6th months of life. The vaccine is administered by putting drops in the child's mouth.

Pneumococcal and Rotavirus vaccinations were initially implemented in some pilot provinces that were most vulnerable to these diseases in the south and south-east of the country.

The national vaccination program against pneumococcal has already started nationwide.

According to the Ministry of Health, the pneumococcal vaccine will prevent 1,500 deaths.

The pneumococcal vaccine helps protect against some types of bacterial infections that can cause serious illnesses like meningitis (an infection in the brain and spinal cord) sepsis

(a life-threatening reaction to an infection) pneumonia (an infection in the lungs).

Pneumococcal vaccine can be injected when babies are 2, 4, and 12 months old.

The vaccination program to combat pneumococcal and rotavirus kicked off in February after being missed from the immunization schedule for a decade.

In June, Farshad Hosseini, deputy health minister, announced the pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccination program will cover the entire country soon.

"People should not be concerned about the [probable negative effects of] vaccines. Fortunately, surveys and studies have shown that pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines do not have any severe complications," Hosseini stressed.

According to the head of the preventable diseases department of the ministry of health, Mohsen Zahraei, annual vaccination worldwide prevents the death of two and a half million children, which shows the very high effectiveness of vaccines.

"We hope to be able to develop these two vaccines soon.

Once the vaccines pass the quality control trials, and obtain the Food and Drug Organization approval, we will be able to use the domestic products in the national vaccination program, the official noted.

Some 2,000 billion rials (around 3.4 million dollars) has been allocated to domestic production of rotavirus vaccine.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 'Climate change impact on Iran doubles world average'

The effect of climate change on Iran has more than doubled on average compared to other parts of the world, Mohammad Darvish, the secretary of environmental policy at the center for strategic studies affiliated to the presidential office has said.

He made the remarks in line with data released by the Meteorological Organization and the Ministry of Energy.

"The Hoomand-Absard station in Damavand County in northeast of Tehran experienced a temperature increase of 2.7 °C over the past 50 years, while over the past 100 years, the temperature rise was about 0.76 °C," ISNA quoted Darvish as saying.

## تغییرات اقلیمی در ایران دو تا سه برابر جهان

دبیر سیاست محیط‌زیست مرکز بررسی‌های استراتژیک نهاد ریاست جمهوری گفته، ایران با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

محمد درویش، در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایسنا با اشاره به گزارش‌های منتشر شده توسط سازمان هواشناسی و وزارت نیرو اظهار کرد: کشورمان با تأثیرات تغییر اقلیمی دو تا سه برابر بیشتر از تأثیرات ایجاد شده در کره زمین روبرو شده است.

او افزود: ایستگاه هومند آیسرد در دامنه‌های کوه دماوند طی نیم قرن اخیر افزایش دمایی حدود ۲.۷ درجه سلسیوس را نشان می‌دهد و این مسئله در حالی رخ داده است که در ۱۰۰ سال گذشته، حدود ۰.۷۶ درجه سلسیوس افزایش دما داشته‌ایم.





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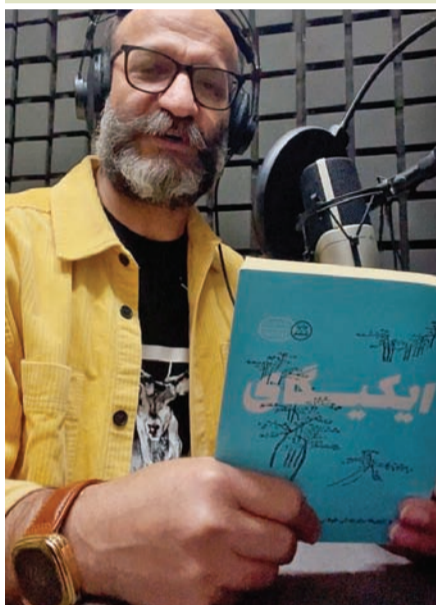
## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:55 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:30 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:57 (tomorrow)

## Persian audiobook of “Ikigai” released



TEHRAN-The non-fiction book “Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life,” written by Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles has been turned into an audiobook in Persian and released on digital services and platforms.

The audiobook has been directed and narrated by Bahman Vakhshour and produced at Avaye Chirok, a major Iranian institute that produces audiobooks. The Persian print edition of “Ikigai” has been translated by Amirhossein Taghilou and Meysam Kalantari and published by Gushesh Publications in Tehran.

It is a short book about making life meaningful and in the process, living a long time. Centered around the Japanese concept of Ikigai, the authors bring the knowledge from the East to the West giving readers the tools to live better.

According to the Japanese, everyone has an ikigai—a reason for living. And according to the residents of the Japanese island of Okinawa—home to the world’s longest-living people—finding it is the key to a happier and longer life.

Inspiring and soothing, the book will bring read-

ers closer to these centenarians’ secrets: how they leave urgency behind; keep doing what they love for as long as possible; nurture friendships; live in the moment; participate in their communities; and throw themselves into their passions. And it provides practical tools to help people discover their own personal ikigai.

Hector Garcia is a citizen of Japan, where he has lived for over a decade, and of Spain, where he was born. A former software engineer, he worked at CERN in Switzerland before moving to Japan, where he developed voice recognition software and the technology needed for Silicon Valley start-ups to enter the Japanese market. He is the creator of the popular blog [kirainet.com](http://kirainet.com) and the author of “A Geek in Japan,” a #1 bestseller in Japan.

Francesc Miralles is an award-winning author who has written a number of bestselling self-help and inspirational books. Born in Barcelona, he studied journalism, English literature, and German, and has worked as an editor, a translator, a ghostwriter, and a musician. His novel “Love in Lowercase” has been translated into 20 languages.

## Cartoon of Day



Now Playing  
Cartoonist: Osama Hajjaj from Jordan

# Iranian short animation “Being Ten” wins at Russian festival

TEHRAN-The Iranian short animation “Being Ten” directed by Fatemeh Jafari has won an award at the 3rd Cinematic Prismatic International Film Festival in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

Produced by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (also known as Kanoon), the animated film was named the winner of the Cine-West category on the final day of the festival, November 30, Kanoon News reported.

The short animation, which has no dialogue, competed with four other works from Italy, Germany, and France in the category.

It is about a father and his 10-year-old son who live in a lonely cottage in the middle of a dense wood.

The father, a hunter, spares one of his catches and brings it home as a present for his son. What at first was just a plaything, forever will change the young boy’s life.



A scene from “Being Ten” by Fatemeh Jafari

The 18-minute animation, a production of 2023, has recently won the third prize of the 11th international festival “Constan-

tine’s Gold Coin” in Serbia. Cinematic Prismatic International Film Festival is a short

film festival and an independent event organized by film lovers to promote filmmaking in Sverdlovsk region.

## Iranian young adult novel “The Monster’s Shadow” published in English

TEHRAN- “The Monster’s Shadow,” written by Iranian young adult fiction author Abbas Jahangirian, has recently been published in English.

Translated by Mitra Khatoonabadi, the English version of the book has been released by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon in Tehran.

Focusing on the necessity of protecting endangered animals, “The Monster’s Shadow” was initially published in 2016 by the institute and brought great recognition to Jahangirian.

The story follows a girl named Maral who visits Golestan National Park with her brother. There, she meets a filmmaker named Afra, who invites her to act in a movie. It is revealed early in the narrative that Maral has been friends with a leopard from the forest for many years, and she accepts the proposal. Thus, the story unfolds two intertwining lives: Maral’s friendship with the leopard and the tale of her grandmother Laleh’s bond with a tiger fifty years earlier.

The English edition of “The Monster’s Shadow” is available for purchase on the Institute’s website and in its stores. The book is suitable for

readers aged 15 and above.

The Armenian version of the book was unveiled in October 2023 during a ceremony in Armenia. In 2020, the Children’s Book Council of Iran recognized the novel in the Honor List of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). It was also nominated for the Book of the Year award.

“The Monster’s Shadow” has received an award from the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults at the 18th Children and Teen Book Prize, the silver badge from the 5th round of Flying Turtle Award.

Jahangirian, 70, has a master’s degree in dramatic literature from University of Tehran. Besides writing books, he also teaches story writing at the university.

The Association of Writers for Children and Youth in Iran has nominated Jahangirian for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) in 2024, in the author category.

The veteran writer has been selected due to his prolific career of almost 50 years, which encompasses literature, research, theater, and film. His

creative output spans across all age groups, ranging from children to teenagers and adults.

His works stand out for their unique spirit, despite the diverse range of styles and formats. Iran’s magnificent history, profound cultural heritage, and astonishing literary works, along with the preservation of nature’s ecosystems, the protection of endangered forests and animals, promoting world peace, and conveying emotions of love and grief, resonates deeply in his works, while simultaneously addressing the struggles of teenagers and children.

Some of his works have attracted the attention of directors because of their visual style and they have been adapted for the cinema and television, such as “Hamaon and the Sea” and “New Year’s Day.” Other than English, some of his books have been translated to Armenian, Kazakh, Arabic, Turkish, and Russian.

Astrid Lindgren was prominent in the development of children’s literature as an art form. The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is awarded to those who continue to work in her spirit: with imagination, bravery, respect and empathy, and maintaining the highest level of artistic excellence.

## Short film “Anarchy” representing Iran at 24th Camera Zizanio in Greece

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film “Anarchy” written and directed by Majid Kazemi Azghadi represents Iran at the International Competition Program of the 24th European Meeting of Young People’s Audiovisual Creation “Camera Zizanio,” which kicked off on November 30 in the Peloponnese Region in Greece.

Produced in 2024, the seven-minute flick is competing in the 17-20-year-old category of the festival with nine other films, Mehr reported.

The movie shows a single mother who faces problems to enroll her son in a new school and decides to face them.

Mohaddeseh Hesami and Mo-

hammad Jahanpa play in the short film that is a production of the Iranian Youth Cinema Society.

In total, 22 films from 21 countries are in the line-up at the International Competition of the festival. The participating countries include Canada, China, India, Pakistan, Qatar, Singapore, Taiwan, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and the U.S. among others.

Young voices from around the globe are representing their point of view, offering a diverse and multi-thematic cinematic journey that delves into the issues and passions driving young creators to express themselves through art.

Over 80 young filmmakers,



A scene from “Anarchy” by Majid Kazemi Azghadi

alongside their educators, from 18 European countries and beyond, have gathered in Pyrgos not only to showcase their films but also to take part in the 14th edition of the multinational film

workshop, the “Mythos Project”.

The European Meeting of Young People’s Audiovisual Creation – Camera Zizanio began in 2001 as an initiative of Youth Plan in the framework of the Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People activities.

It takes place every December in Pyrgos, in the northwestern Peloponnese, along with the Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People.

Camera Zizanio is a sphere of creative activity. Film workshops are the most dynamic events, with the participation of artists/educators from Greece and abroad and offer unique moments of creation to children and adolescents.

## Exhibition of Gazan children’s art in Massachusetts

An exhibition of children’s art from Gaza has been organized by Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research’s art department in Massachusetts, the U.S., for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on November 29, highlighting artwork from children and youth from Gaza, Palestine.

According to the institute website, the exhibition collects artwork from 20 children in Gaza over the past year, recovering some beauty, humanity, and resistance from the rubble of a genocidal war.

It also includes five original artworks by Ibraheem Mohana created between 2022 and 2024. Ibraheem is an 18-year-old artist living in the north of Gaza. His sketches and paintings are made in different media – pencil, oil pastels, acrylic paint, and pen and ink. They are mostly portraits: the Statue of Liberty, a neck coiled in barbed wire and a face full of tears; a person clothed in a keffiyeh, a Palestinian flag,

and roses; three ghost-like figures, wrapped in white cloth smeared with red fingerprints.

One of his paintings is a portrait of a man whose eyes are rendered with dark circles around them, dense lines that prematurely age the otherwise youthful face. A keffiyeh is draped on one shoulder, while two green cacti sprout from the other. The original image was drawn in white chalk on a green chalkboard in the nearby Asmaa School on August 21. Last month, the Israelis bombed the school. In genocidal times, a school can be obliterated as quickly and as carelessly as chalk lines erased from a chalkboard.

In the digital remake of the original, Ibraheem wrote in Arabic, “We are so patient, even cacti grow from our shoulder”. From the ruins and rubble, Palestinian resistance continues to sprout, the poppies and cacti will inevitably return.

Ibraheem entered adulthood in the midst of Israel’s genocidal war against the Palestinian people. He was a student of Gazan artist Mohammed Sami who was killed in October 2023 from an Israeli attack. Abu-Sami taught children to make art from nature, garbage, and whatever was around.

On October 17, 2023, Mohammed Sami was killed in the early days of Israel’s latest genocidal assault against Gaza. “He was a wonderful person,” Ibraheem said, “but I don’t want to use the word ‘was’ – his soul is still alive”.

Since last October, Ibraheem has been following his teacher’s path and host art classes for children in his neighborhood in northern Gaza.

To Ibraheem, “Art is how we speak when words don’t come easily. With a pen, a piece of paper or even an empty food can, I show kids here in Gaza that art is everywhere. It’s a way to tell our stories, to let out what we feel inside”.