

# Assad Gone Syria in Twilight

Syrian PM is set to supervise state bodies until transition

- Iran's ambassador to Syria explains reasons behind Syrian government's collapse ▶ Page 2
- Israeli tanks enter Syria for first time in 50 years ▶ Page 5
- How will Hezbollah act if the Lebanese army fails to protect the border with Syria? ▶ Page 5

## Iran on Syria: people will decide the future

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has reiterated its commitment to respecting Syria's unity, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity, emphasizing that the determination of Syria's future rests solely with its people.

This reaffirmation follows recent events where militant groups led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) captured Damascus, the Syrian capital.

In a detailed statement issued on Sunday, Iran underscored its dedication to supporting international mechanisms, particularly those based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, which aims at facilitating a political process in Syria.

Adopted in 2015, UNSC Resolution 2254 calls for a Syrian-led political process. This includes a ceasefire, UN-supervised elections, civilian protection, and humanitarian access.

Iran's statement further highlighted that achieving a successful political transition in Syria requires an immediate cessation of military conflicts and the prevention of terrorist activities. ▶ Page 2

## Iranian diplomats left Syria before assault on Damascus embassy, foreign ministry tells Tehran Times

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Baghaei confirmed that all Iranian staff are safe and left the embassy before the attackers arrived.

The attack came in the wake of escalating unrest in Syria, as militants launched a significant offensive in Aleppo province on November 27, quickly advancing and capturing major Syrian cities, including Hama, Homs, Dara'a, and Suwayda. By early Sunday, the government of President Bashar al-Assad had reportedly collapsed, with armed groups taking control of Damascus.

During the embassy raid, attackers vandalized the premises, smashing windows, looting offices, and tearing down posters of late Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah displayed outside the building. Videos circulating online documented the chaos. ▶ Page 2

## Art event supporting Gazan children underway in Tehran

TEHRAN- An artistic event titled "We Will Not Fade Away," showcasing the support of Iranian children for vulnerable children in Gaza and Lebanon, is underway at the Cultural and Artistic Creations Center of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCY-Kanoon) in Tehran.

This international artistic event has been organized by the IIDCY, in collaboration with 13 NGOs, and the National Network of Humanitarian NGOs, IRNA reported.

The exhibition features over 75 paintings by Iranian children, performances, video art, letter-writing, olive tree planting, and the creation of origami cranes by participating children, among other artistic activities aimed at supporting vulnerable children in Gaza and Lebanon, the report added.

Specialized meetings are also being held with university lecturers focusing on media, children, and NGOs.

After the exhibition concludes on Monday, all artistic works and programs from this event will be sent for display to three international gatherings in three different countries. ▶ Page 8

## Iran secures second place in D-8 universities ranking

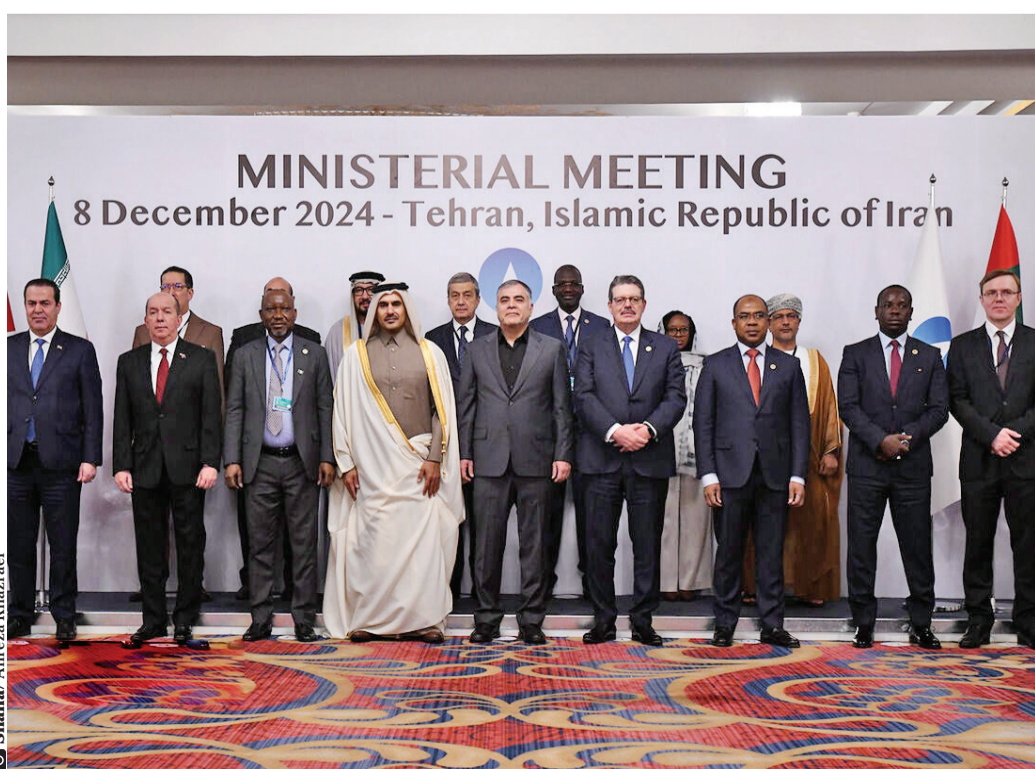
TEHRAN – For the second consecutive year, Iran ranked second with 87 universities included in the D-8 group universities in 2023.

D-8, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among eight Islamic nations, namely Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Turkey with 178, Pakistan with 61, and Indonesia with 58, Malaysia with 43 universities ranked first, third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

Egypt (42), Bangladesh (32), and Nigeria (18) were placed sixth to eighth.

"To rank the universities of the D-8 group, information about 1,700 organizations of the members in the InCites database from 2019 to 2021 has been analyzed." ▶ Page 7



## Iran hosts GECF meeting, highlights gas demand amid global challenges

TEHRAN – Iran has increased its annual natural gas production to 275 billion cubic meters despite U.S. sanctions, while warning that geopolitical tensions are threatening global energy supply chains. Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad made the comments at the 26th Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) on Sunday in Tehran.

Paknejad emphasized the need for energy cooperation in light of growing instability. He cited regional conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria as disruptions to global energy flows, exacerbating energy security concerns. "These tensions, coupled with unilateral sanctions, threaten supply chains and the global economy," Paknejad said. ▶ Page 4

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Arman-e Emrooz: Shifting alliances in Syria

The editorial in Arman-e Emrooz, penned by Abdolreza Faraji-Rad, explored the dynamics behind Syria's recent developments.

It noted that Bashar al-Assad's government had been negotiating with the UAE to realign Syria with the Arab world and distance itself from Iran and Russia.

The UAE mediated talks between Assad, the U.S., and Israel, with the U.S. offering to lift sanctions if Syria complied. Assad reportedly took initial steps, especially regarding Iran, but these efforts clashed with Turkey's regional ambitions.

In response, Turkey mobilized the militants, coordinated with the U.S. and Israel, and committed to dismantling Syria's Resistance movement, a strategy preferred by Washington. The editorial concluded that these developments have significantly enhanced Turkey's geopolitical influence.

The paper warned that Turkey's revived focus on Zangezur and potential Azerbaijani aggression against Syunik could reshape the regional balance further.

**Ettelaat: Iran's calculated approach to the Syrian crisis**

In a note, Ettelaat reported the views by former Iranian MP Ali Motahari on the fall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government, where he emphasized Iran's calculated approach to the crisis. In a social media post, Motahari wrote, "Iran's stance on the recent developments in Syria was prudent.

By not opposing the large segment of the Syrian population that supported Assad's opposition, Iran successfully avoided a Sunni-Shia conflict and a fratricidal war among Muslims, which would have served the interests of the United States and Israel."

He further analyzed the nature of Assad's opposition, describing its core as aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood and anti-Zionist. Motahari also suggested that efforts should be made to engage with and win over the opposition's core group through dialogue.

**Siasat-e-Rooz: Britain's goal is to replace the oppressor with the oppressed**

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to Britain's policy in support of the Zionist regime against Iran. The paper said: England considers itself committed to supporting the Zionist regime and the officials in London are determined to purify the aggressive and terrorist nature of this regime and justify the crisis building and aggressive behavior of Tel Aviv in the region against Iran and Syria to divert public opinion from punishing the leaders of this regime. Britain has a history of replacing the oppressor with the oppressed.

In a situation where the world condemned the Zionist regime's violation of Iran's territory, the British once again hypocritically wanted to create an illusory legitimacy for the Zionists' violation of Iran's territory to dissuade Iran from the promised Operation True Promise III. Along with the diplomatic protest to London, Iran must fulfill True Promise III as soon as possible so that the illusion of the Zionists' supremacy disappears.

**Donya-e-Eqtasad: FATF dilemma**

In an article, Donya-e-Eqtasad dealt with the financial problems that Iran is facing for not joining the FATF and said: Some people believe that Iran's membership and commitment to FATF is only aimed at developing trade with Western countries. But the important point is that the country's financial system is facing hurdles with international money transfers. This issue has not only made the country dependent on the financial centers of third countries but has also led to an increase in the cost of doing business with the outside world, and as a result, Iranian businesspersons are facing inconveniences in foreign trade. On the other hand, Iran's commitment to the provisions of FATF does not necessarily mean accepting all its provisions. Re-examining the issue of Iran's membership in FATF is an effective step toward facilitating Iran's trade with regional and extra-regional countries. Iran's withdrawal from the FATF blacklist will reduce costs and accelerate Iran's regional financial exchanges.

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The ministry emphasized the need for initiating a national dialogue that incorporates all

segments of Syrian society, asserting that this is essential to forming an inclusive government representing all Syrians.

Iran emphasizes the need for initiating a national dialogue that incorporates all segments of Syrian society, asserting that this is essential to forming an inclusive government. Iran also says it closely monitors developments in Syria and the region, adapting its approaches and positions accordingly.

"The fate of Syria and its future must be determined by its own people without destructive foreign interference or imposition," the state-

ment read.

The Ministry emphasized the importance of ensuring the security of all Syrian citizens and foreign nationals, as well as preserving the sanctity of religious sites and protecting diplomatic and consular premises in accordance with international law.

The statement also reflected on the historical and friendly relations between Iran and Syria, anticipating that these ties will continue with a wise and far-sighted approach based on common interests and adherence to international legal commitments.

"Iran will spare no effort in aiding the restoration of security and stability in Syria," the ministry added, committing to continued consultations with all influential parties, particularly those within the region.

Given Syria's critical juncture, the Iranian Foreign Ministry stressed the necessity of vigilance and appropriate responses to the actions and behaviors of key players in the Syrian political and security landscape.

"Iran closely monitors developments in Syria and the region, adapting its approaches and positions accordingly," the statement concluded.

## Iran's ambassador to Syria explains reasons behind Syrian government's collapse



TEHRAN – Hossein Akbari, Iran's Ambassador to Syria, explained in a televised interview the reasons behind the Sunday collapse of the Syrian government, which failed to counter an armed insurgency that started late November.

Akbari stated that the Syrian government decided to transfer power peacefully to prevent further bloodshed and destruction. "Due to the army's and people's inability to resist, the Syrian government decided to transfer power peacefully to prevent further bloodshed and destruction. Especially after the fall of Homs, the Syrian army did not resist anywhere, nor did the people, concluding that they had to hand over the situation peacefully," the envoy stated.

Akbari added that the Syrian cabinet met last

night and decided not to resist in the capital, but to officially hand over the entire government and its various sectors.

"The Syrian Prime Minister will remain in the country to stress that state assets belong to the nation." He also highlighted the recent attack on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, which resulted in damage and was against international laws.

"My colleagues stayed in Damascus until 11 PM [Saturday] and then left the embassy, with some possibly crossing the border by dawn. The Iranian embassy was attacked and damaged on Sunday, which is against international law. Almost none of our colleagues from various Iranian institutions were present, as necessary precautions had been taken," the diplomat explained.

**'Risks of instability high'**

Commenting on the current power dynamics in Syria, Akbari explained that multiple factions, including radical groups, are vying for control. These groups, although different from ISIS, could pose significant threats to neighboring countries once established. "No single faction is the dominant force right now."

He also remarked on the Zionist regime's

reaction, stating that Israel fears the potential threat from new forces in Syria.

"The Zionist regime is now happy about eliminating one of its enemies, with Netanyahu viewing it as a personal achievement. However, they are also worried that the new forces' establishment in Syria could pose an additional threat to them."

Akbari expressed concerns about Syria's future stability, citing the absence of assurances for a strong and unified government, the persistence of ethnic and ideological divisions, and the risk of Syria becoming a proxy battleground for regional powers.

The ambassador emphasized the necessity of a strong central government and the need for the Syrian people to play a greater role in determining their future to avoid foreign conspiracies and ensure a stable future for Syria.

A major offensive by militant groups was launched on November 27th, targeting Aleppo and the Idlib countryside in Syria. This coordinated surprise attack resulted in the rapid seizure of key cities, including Hama, Homs, Dara'a, and Suwayda, with militants advancing towards Damascus. The Syrian government fell early Sunday after rebels entered the capital.

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Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah displayed outside the building. Videos circulating online documented the chaos.

Later on Sunday, Baghaei condemned the attack in a statement, asserting that safeguarding diplomatic missions is a cornerstone of international law.

He added that Iran had engaged with influential actors in the region, urging them to prevent further assaults.

"All necessary measures have been taken to ensure the security and safety of the embassy staff," Baghaei emphasized, confirming the ambassador and personnel were unharmed.

The upheaval in Syria marks the end of Assad's more than two-decade rule, with reports suggesting he fled Damascus to an undisclosed location.

Iran, a long-time ally of Assad, has called for calm and reiterated its commitment to regional stability while condemning the role of foreign-backed forces in the escalation.

## Resistance key to progress: Hojatoleslam Qomi

TEHRAN – During a mourning ceremony for Hazrat Fatemeh (SA) at the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, head of the Islamic Development Organization, declared that resilience is the hallmark of success.

"Successful people are those who remain steadfast and refuse to let obstacles deter them from reaching their peaks," he stated on Friday.

Qomi emphasized that resistance is crucial when pursuing ambitious goals.

"If you aim for a peak, you should

not be discouraged by the first obstacle; instead, you must strive to overcome it and continue your journey towards the summit," he elaborated.

Drawing a parallel to a regular journey, he noted, "Problems may arise on the road, but instead of abandoning the path, one should solve the issue and continue onward."

He reiterated that truly successful individuals are those who stand firm and resist.

"They do not give up in the face of obstacles and do not abandon their goals," he affirmed.

## Families of Iranian advisors martyred in Syria issue statement on Arab country's developments

TEHRAN – The families of Iranian military advisors who were martyred in Syria during the rise of terrorism in the 2010s, known as "Holy Shrine defenders," have issued a statement regarding the recent collapse of the Syrian government.

The families expressed their deep sorrow over the events unfolding in the region and stated that they understood the pain and sacrifice that the martyrs had endured. They emphasized that the blood of their loved ones had not been shed in vain but had ensured the survival of the revolution and Islam. They added that the martyrs' sacrifice had taught the world a lasting lesson in resistance.

The statement also addressed those who had allegedly questioned the outcome of the

martyrs' sacrifices. The families asserted that such individuals lacked an understanding of the true meaning of martyrdom and its eternal significance. They urged these critics to look to history and future generations to appreciate the value of the martyrs' actions.

"Any attempt to create despair or spread rumors is the enemy's desire. Such actions only weaken unity and serve the enemy's agenda. The enemy is employing psychological operations and sedition to inject despair into the people."

In closing, the families of the martyrs reaffirmed their unwavering support for the Resistance front and called for unity in the face of the enemy's machinations.



Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi speaking on December 6, 2024, at the holy shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad.

Qomi concluded by highlighting this spirit. Anyone who practices resistance is also on the path to progress. "successful individuals, martyrs, and saints of God exemplify

## Militants in Syria deny intent to target holy sites: IRIB

TEHRAN – An Iranian national television journalist has reported that militant groups in Syria have pledged not to launch any attacks against key religious sites, including the sacred shrines of Sayyida Zainab and Sayyida Ruqayyah.

These sites are of profound significance to Shi'a Muslims and have been the focus of concerns regarding potential attacks amid ongoing regional tensions.

The journalist further clarified statements related to the recent attack on the Iranian Embassy in Damascus.

According to the report, the group involved in the embassy assault has no ties to Tahrir al-Sham, a prominent armed faction operating in the region.

# Tehran refutes IAEA statement, says nuclear activities transparent

TEHRAN — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has reaffirmed the country's commitment to maintaining a peaceful and transparent nuclear program under the vigilant supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), despite confrontational actions by the United States and European nations.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei addressed recent statements by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi regarding Iran's enhanced uranium enrichment capabilities.

Grossi had told Reuters on Friday that "Iran is dramatically accelerating its enrichment of uranium to up to 60% purity, close to the roughly 90% level that is weapons grade."

In response, Baqaei emphasized that Iran's nuclear activities are fully compliant with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, ensuring that all activities remain peaceful and transparent.

He criticized the recent resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors, led by the U.S. and the European troika



Iranian IR-6 centrifuge machines were installed in 2019 in the Natanz uranium enrichment facility near Natanz.

of Britain, France, and Germany.

The resolution, adopted without logical justification or legal basis, accused Iran of non-cooperation and demanded a comprehensive report on its nuclear activities by spring 2025.

In response to the anti-Tehran resolution, Iran began injecting uranium gas into new advanced centrifuges, further advancing its nuclear capabilities.

The spokesperson also noted that

during Grossi's recent visit to Tehran, several initiatives were proposed to enhance technical cooperation between Iran and the IAEA.

However, these efforts were undermined by European countries and the U.S., who pursued a policy of pressure and abuse of the Board of Governors, thus rendering Grossi's efforts futile.

Baqaei reaffirmed that Iran's nuclear program is pursued within the framework of international agree-

ments and remains under the constant surveillance of the IAEA.

He stressed that Iran had precisely informed the IAEA about its recent nuclear activities, which involve the enrichment of uranium up to 60% purity, highlighting that these activities are conducted transparently and under the stringent supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog.

Baqaei concluded by asserting that Iran would not back down in the face of force and pressure, emphasizing the country's readiness to interact positively but firmly when its rights are challenged.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), formed in 2015, was an agreement between Iran and the P5+1 nations that recognized Iran's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy while imposing limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for lifting economic sanctions.

Nevertheless, following the U.S. exit from the agreement in 2018 and the reintroduction of sanctions, Iran has felt the need to progressively restore its rights and reduce certain constraints it initially accepted.

## Government spokesperson calls for dialogue at Iranian university students event



TEHRAN — In a gathering at Allameh Tabatabaai University's Faculty of Law and Political Science, the government spokesperson, Fatemeh Mohajerani, emphasized the urgent need for dialogue and mutual understanding in Iranian society.

Speaking on Sunday, Mohajerani addressed a diverse audience of students.

Mohajerani's address focused on the necessity of dialogue and mutual understanding, which she described as critical for societal progress.

"Do you know why we need unity? Because we don't give each other the chance to listen," she said. "We desperately need dialogue, and dialogue stems

from awareness. Both the left wing and the right wing must speak, and everyone must listen."

Mohajerani acknowledged the difficulty of fostering meaningful conversation in the current climate. "Today's environment is not one of dialogue," she noted. "A space for dialogue requires inner calm. We need unity within ourselves to truly engage with others."

She also called for patience and understanding, emphasizing that progress requires tolerance. "For 45 years, we have stood by the slogans of independence, freedom, and the Islamic Republic. We have one Iran, and we all stand for it. Now more than ever, we must listen to each other and stand united."

The forum gave students a platform to share their grievances, and they did so with fervor.

Some students raised concerns about perceived contradictions in government policy, such as em-

phasizing the impact of sanctions while allowing the import of luxury goods.

A segment of the audience expressed skepticism about the forum's format, suggesting it seemed more like a planned event than a space for genuine student-led discussions.

Observations about selective engagement with students were shared, with calls for broader representation and inclusivity.

Students highlighted the need for unity through inclusivity, noting that unity and division can be closely connected. They emphasized that achieving genuine unity requires fairness and open dialogue.

Advocacy for the release of detained students was a prominent theme, with some questioning the necessity of such measures.

Concerns about university budgets were also raised, with suggestions that resources should be distributed more evenly across all student needs.

Students also underscored the importance of universities as spaces for critical thought, vibrancy, and independence.

The spokesperson concluded the session, remarking that: "This country is ours to build, but building begins with the willingness to listen."



Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqaei Qalibaf addressing students at Tehran University on Sunday.

importance of standing firm against adversities with faith in divine promises. "Standing firm against the enemy with faith and belief in God's promise is the most important lesson from the era of sacred defense for all of us," he asserted.

## Resistance Front more determined than ever, Qalibaf declares

TEHRAN — In an address delivered at Tehran University on the occasion of Student Day, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, Speaker of Iran's parliament, emphasized the unwavering determination of the Resistance Front in the face of persistent Zionist-American adversities. He asserted that despite ongoing hostile plans, the spirit of resistance remains robust and resolute.

Qalibaf highlighted that the Zionist regime has failed to make territorial gains in Lebanon, underscoring the resilience of the Resistance Front. "The Zionist regime could not even seize a meter of Lebanese territory," he stated, reflecting on the strength and unity among Resistance forces.

The speaker recalled Iran's involvement during

the emergence of ISIS, noting that Iranian forces were present at the request of the Syrian and Iraqi governments to combat the Takfiri threat. "Defending the Islamic Ummah against the crimes of ISIS was, in fact, defending Iran's national security," he remarked, emphasizing the interconnectedness of regional stability and national safety.

Drawing parallels between historical battles and contemporary struggles, Qalibaf urged the youth to embody the faith and determination exemplified by believers in the Quran. He referenced their steadfastness when facing overwhelming odds, stating, "This means that this was indeed God's promise and the faith of the believers increased."

Concluding his remarks, Qalibaf stressed the im-

## Ambassador Jalali talks cooperation, regional developments with parliamentary delegation in Russia

TEHRAN — Kazem Jalali, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, held a meeting with a visiting parliamentary delegation from Iran to discuss key issues surrounding bilateral cooperation and regional dynamics.

The delegation, which included Abbas Moqtadaei, Vice President of the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, and Abbas Goudarzi, a member of the Parliament's Board of Directors and the Iran-Russia Parliamentary Friendship Group, arrived in Moscow at the invitation of the State Duma of Russia. Their visit coincided with the annual meeting of the Collective Security

Treaty Organization (CSTO) Parliamentary Assembly, providing a platform for crucial discussions on inter-parliamentary relations.

During the meeting, Ambassador Jalali and the Iranian lawmakers exchanged insights on the current state of cooperation between Iran and Russia. They emphasized the importance of strengthening inter-parliamentary ties and discussed various regional and international developments that could impact both nations.

The dialogue also highlighted the mutual interests shared by Iran and Russia, particularly in light of ongoing geopolitical challenges.

## Senior Army official says enhanced training initiatives underway to attract talented personnel

TEHRAN — To strengthen its ranks and improve operational capabilities, the Ground Forces of the Army are actively working to attract talented individuals through comprehensive training initiatives. Brigadier General Asghar Alipour, Deputy for Human Resources of the Ground Forces, made this announcement during the tenth joint military socialization course for students from officer training universities across the Army's four branches. The course is currently being held at the Imam Javad (AS) Officer Training Center.

General Alipour highlighted the structured programs designed to ensure effective training and education for participants, stating that the Ground Forces are committed to utilizing experienced instructors and

advanced training tools to foster both scientific and operational growth. "We aim to select the most distinguished and capable individuals who will enhance our combat capabilities and bolster border security after completing their basic training," he noted.

A key focus of this initiative is elevating the cultural and insightful levels of participants. General Alipour emphasized that an efficient military officer must not only possess expertise in defense and military strategies but also exhibit high moral and spiritual standards. To this end, the Ground Forces are leveraging cultural centers to enhance religious knowledge and awareness in cognitive warfare.

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

### Persepolis stumbles: Garrido under fire

TEHRAN — Persepolis, Iran's most decorated football club, suffered a humiliating 1-0 defeat at the hands of struggling Nassaji on Saturday, sending shockwaves through the Iranian footballing community.

The loss marked a significant upset, as Persepolis had been expected to cruise to victory against a team languishing at the bottom of the table. The defeat not only derailed their title aspirations but also exposed deep-rooted issues within the squad.

Coach Juan Carlos Garrido has come under intense scrutiny following the match. His tactical decisions, which have included frequent lineup changes and deploying players out of position, have been widely criticized. Fans and pundits alike have questioned the Spaniard's ability to get the best out of his talented squad.

The team's offensive struggles have been particularly evident this season. Despite significant investments in their attacking line, players like Ali Alipour, Eisa Alkadir, and Lucas João have failed to deliver consistently. The lack of a reliable goalscorer has been a glaring weakness for Persepolis.

With the pressure mounting, Garrido's future at the helm of Persepolis appears increasingly uncertain. Rumors of his imminent departure have been circulating in Iranian media, and it remains to be seen whether the club's management will retain him beyond the current season.

As Persepolis looks to regroup and defend their title, Garrido will need to find a way to inspire his players and restore confidence in the dressing room. The coming weeks will be crucial for the Spaniard, as he fights to save his job and guide his team back to winning ways.

### Taremi's transfer to Inter not successful as expected

TEHRAN — Mehdi Taremi's move to Inter Milan hasn't been as successful as some expected due to a few factors.

Taremi, 31, signed a contract with the Nerazzurri until 2027 after parting ways with Porto.

Serie A is known for its tactical complexity and physicality, which can be a challenge for players coming from different leagues. Taremi has struggled to adapt to the pace and intensity of the Italian league.

He hasn't been a regular starter for Inter, often coming on as a substitute. This lack of consistent playing time has hindered his ability to build momentum and rhythm.

Inter has a strong attacking lineup with players like Lautaro Martinez and Romelu Lukaku. This competition for playing time has made it difficult for Taremi to establish himself as a key player.

Taremi has had some minor injury issues since joining Inter, which have further disrupted his progress.

It's worth noting that it's still early in Taremi's Inter career, and he has the potential to improve and make a significant impact. However, he will need to overcome these initial challenges to reach the level of performance that was expected of him.

### Esteghlal star Eslami sidelined for two months

TEHRAN — Esteghlal football team iconic winger Mohammad Hossein Eslami has been sidelined for two months with a broken clavicle.

He broke his clavicle during Esteghlal's training. Eslami's absence will be big blow to Esteghlal in Iran league and AFC Champions League Elite.

He scored Esteghlal's second goal against Al Ahli last week.

### Hossein Vafaei to participate at 2024 Scottish Open

TEHRAN — Iranian snooker player Hossein Vafaei will participate at the 2024 Scottish Open.

Vafaei will face China's Lei Peifan in the first round.

The winner will play the winner of English Shaun Murphy and Daniel Wells of Wales.

The 2024 Scottish Open is a professional snooker tournament that will take place from December 9 to 15 at the Meadowbank Sports Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The tournament winner will receive the Stephen Hendry trophy. The winner will earn £100,000 cash prize.

### Iran football team runners-up at Asia Pacific Deaf Games

TEHRAN — Iran's football team finished in second place at the 10th Asia-Pacific Deaf Games.

On Sunday, Team Melli lost to Japan 3-1 in the final match. Team Melli had defeated Japan 3-1 in preliminary round. Iran 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 being held from 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.

### Iran win Asia Pacific Deaf Games for first time

TEHRAN — Iran won the title of the 2024 Asia Pacific Deaf Games for the first time.

The Iranian delegation dominated the medal count with 95 golds and 61 total medals.

South Korea are second in both golds (21) and total medals (47), with China coming third in both categories (19 golds, 36 total medals).

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### Iran fall short to Korea at 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship

TEHRAN — Iran failed to book their place at the final match of the 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship, losing to South Korea 33-20 on Sunday. Team Melli will have to play losers of Japan and Kazakhstan in the bronze medal match on Tuesday.

Iran captain Mina Vatanparast was chosen as the player of the Match.

Iran have previously advanced to the 2025 World Women's Handball Championship for the third time in a row as one of top four teams.

The competition takes place in New Delhi from Dec. 3 to 10 at the Gandhi Arena.

The tournament features eight teams divided into two groups of four.

Iran had lost to Japan and defeated India and Hong Kong.

### Sepahan move top of PGPL

TEHRAN — Sepahan football team defeated Mes Rafsanjan 3-0 and moved up top of 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf professional League (PGPL) on Sunday.

Reza Shekari opened the scoring for the 40th minute and Mohammadamin Hazbavi made it 2-0 in the 48th minute. Mohammadmehdi Mohebi scored Sepahan's third goal in the 77th minute at the Shohada Stadium.

Sepahan sit top with 24 points, followed with Tractor with 22 points and one game in hands.

## Producer inflation hits seven-year low

TEHRAN - Iran's annual producer price inflation (PPI) dropped to its lowest level in seven years, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Mohammadreza Farzin announced.

Presenting a report during a recent cabinet meeting, Farzin revealed that the PPI for the calendar month to late November saw a monthly inflation rate of 2.4 percent.

He highlighted that the annual producer inflation rate for this month fell to 27.6 percent, marking a one percent decline compared to preceding month. This figure represents the lowest annual PPI since November 2018.

Additionally, Farzin noted a positive trend in consumer price inflation (CPI), which has also reached its lowest level since November 2020.

## Govt. plans to organize cryptocurrencies not limiting them: Hemmati

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance Abdolnaser Hemmati has said that the government intends to organize digital currencies and cryptocurrencies instead of putting limitations on them.

Addressing a national event on digital currency on Saturday in Tehran, Hemmati said that Iran is moving towards managing and eliminating the adverse effects of digital currency on the economy and instead using its positive effects.

He cited the advantages and progress of digital currency as the reasons behind the decision.

Digital money is within the scope of the Central Bank of Iran authority, the minister said.

As to cryptocurrencies, he added, it is hope that they would be developed with the aim of growing assets and youth employment, helping to nullify sanctions and aligning Iran's activities with the global economy.

## Reservoir inflows decline 2% amid below-average rainfall



TEHRAN - Reservoir inflows in Iran dropped two percent year-on-year during the current water year, while precipitation levels remain below the long-term average, according to official data.

From the start of the water year on September 23 to December 8, inflows totaled 3.7 billion cubic meters, compared with 3.79 bil-

lion cubic meters in the same period last year, Mehr News Agency reported.

Outflows from reservoirs fell one percent to 5.6 billion cubic meters over the same period, slightly down from 5.67 billion cubic meters recorded a year earlier.

Reservoir storage, however, saw a 12 percent rise, reaching 22.66 billion cubic meters compared with 20.28 billion cubic meters during the corresponding period in 2023.

Overall, 44 percent of the nation's reservoir capacity is filled, while 56 percent remains empty, the report said.

Rainfall across Iran measured 34.9 millimeters as of December 7, a 23 percent drop from the long-term average of 45.6 millimeters. However, precipitation increased by two percent compared to the same period last year, when levels stood at 34.2 millimeters.

## Iran offers cooperation with gas exporting countries in oil and gas technologies

TEHRAN - Iran's Petroleum Industry Research Institute has expressed its readiness to cooperate with Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) member states across the upstream and downstream oil and gas sectors, the institute's head said on Saturday.

Azim Kalantari-Asl, speaking during a visit by GECF ministerial delegates to the research facility, outlined key areas for collaboration, including gas reservoir exploration, enhanced recovery technologies, gas storage systems, and CO<sub>2</sub> capture and utilization.

Other potential fields include advanced chemical management, flare gas recovery, mini-LNG technologies, helium and blue hydrogen production, petro-refinery design, energy optimization, and professional training programs, Iran's Ministry of Petroleum reported.

Delegates toured the institute's downstream facilities, laboratories for gas, nano-technology, and catalysts, as well as upstream units focused on enhanced oil recovery (EOR/IOR), petroleum engineering, and geosciences.

## Oil Ministry to sign gas production capacity expansion contracts by year-end

TEHRAN - Iran will soon sign contracts to increase gas production capacity before the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2025), Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Sunday.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) Ministerial Meeting, Paknejad told reporters that the agreements will significantly boost gas production capacity once implemented.

"Some contracts will be executed before the end of this year, and others will commence next year," he said, noting that both domestic and international resources have been leveraged for these deals.

Paknejad emphasized the substantial financial value of the contracts, with clear plans for their funding. "Under these agreements, the country's gas production will increase according to a specific timeline," he added.

Highlighting gas pressure-boosting projects as part of the agreements, Paknejad addressed concerns about sanctions imposed on Iran's oil and gas industry. "No matter how severe the restrictions become, Iran's oil industry experts have already prepared solutions, and the people of Iran should not worry," he said.

The minister stressed that strategies to counter sanctions have been carefully developed to match their complexities. "We have not surrendered to these sanctions," he stated.

"Although sanctions have always targeted Iran's energy sector, the more extensive and sophisticated they become, the more advanced and effective our solutions have become in neutralizing them," Paknejad concluded.

# Iran hosts GECF meeting, highlights gas demand amid global challenges

TEHRAN - Iran has increased its annual natural gas production to 275 billion cubic meters despite U.S. sanctions, while warning that geopolitical tensions are threatening global energy supply chains. Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad made the comments at the 26th Ministerial Meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) on Sunday in Tehran.

Paknejad emphasized the need for energy cooperation in light of growing instability. He cited regional conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria as disruptions to global energy flows, exacerbating energy security concerns. "These tensions, coupled with unilateral sanctions, threaten supply chains and the global economy," Paknejad said.

**Gas demand to remain key by 2050**

Paknejad stressed the importance of natural gas in the global energy mix, noting that oil and gas will still supply at least 50 percent of global energy needs by 2050. He cited GECF projections that natural gas's share will rise to 26 percent by mid-century, but warned that insufficient investments in gas infrastructure could undermine energy security.



**Iran's resilience amid sanctions**

Despite years of sanctions, Iran has made significant progress in expanding its gas sector. Paknejad highlighted that Iran now produces 275 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually, with gas accounting for over 70 percent of the country's energy consumption. He reiterated Iran's commitment to advancing environmentally friendly technologies in the sector.

**Call for global cooperation**

Paknejad called for increased collaboration between energy producers and consumers to enhance energy security and attract investments. "The GECF's collective

resources and technologies are critical to ensuring global energy stability," he said.

The GECF, comprising 12 member states—including Iran, Russia, Qatar, and Algeria—accounts for 70 percent of the world's proven gas reserves. This marks Iran's fourth time hosting the GECF, reinforcing its leadership in global energy policy.

**GECF secretary-general highlights gas resilience**

In his address, GECF Secretary-General Mohamed Hamel expressed condolences to Iran for the recent loss of former President

Ebrahim Raisi and Minister Paknejad's brother. He commended Iran's role in the organization's founding and praised the hospitality shown during the meeting.

Hamel highlighted the continued rise in global gas demand, which has increased by 70 percent since the GECF's formation. He forecasted a 34 percent increase in natural gas consumption by 2050, emphasizing the importance of natural gas for energy security and sustainability.

**Strategic collaboration and GECF progress**

Hamel outlined GECF's efforts to enhance collaboration and research, including initiatives like the Doha and Algiers Declarations. He also highlighted GECF's support for member states in UN-led energy negotiations and its progress in operationalizing the Gas Research Institute.

**A unified vision for the future**

Hamel concluded by stressing the importance of unity among member countries, noting that GECF is committed to ensuring a prosperous future for natural gas. The organization, which represents 70 percent of global gas reserves, plays a vital role in energy security and market stability.

## Over 1.7m tons of goods transited via Iran in a month

TEHRAN - As announced by the spokesman of the International Relations and Trade Development Committee of Iran's House of Industry, Mining and Trade, 1.723 million tons of commodities were transited through Iran in the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 22-October 21).

Stating that 13.239 million tons of goods were transited via the country during the first seven months of the present year (March 20-October 21), Ruhollah Latifi said that the figure shows nearly 48 percent growth year on year.

The official further noted that considering this trend, it is expected that the transit of commodities through Iran will surpass 22 million tons in the current year.

This significant increase in transit can indicate the improvement of the economic situation and increase in commercial activities in the transport sector.

The continuous trend of recent transit records via the country and the increasing interest of governments, traders, and those active in transport sectors from neighboring, regional, and extra-regional countries in the transit and logistics situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicate the fruitfulness of the transformational approach of the government to the strategic issue of transit, with emphasis on the development of all-round economic relations with neighbors.

As stated by the former Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpush, the "Iran Way" initiative made by the current Iranian government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the minister has underlined.

As previously announced by the Transport Ministry, 10.8 million tons of commodities were tran-

sited through the country in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (ended on March 20, 2023).

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran, and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

## Export from East Azarbaijan province up 32% in 7 months on year

TEHRAN - As announced by a provincial official, the value of non-oil export from East Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of the country, rose 32 percent during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Sadeq Namdar, an official with the Customs Department of the province, said that over 2.262 million tons of commodities valued at \$1.088 billion were exported from the province in the mentioned seven-month period, indicating also 44 percent rise in

terms of weight, year on year.

He also announced that over 342,000 tons of goods worth \$1,177 billion were imported to the province in the first seven months of the present year, with 32 percent and 28 percent rise in value and weight, respectively, as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

As previously announced by the former head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), the value of Iran's foreign trade reached \$99.7 billion during the first seven months of the present Iranian year.

Mohammad Rezvanifar said that of the mentioned figure, \$60.2 billion was the value of the country's export, and \$39.5 billion was the worth of the import.

He put the value of non-oil export at \$32.5 billion, the oil export at \$27 billion, and technical-engineering export at \$700 million in the seven-month period.

Saying that the value of the country's non-oil export rose 15 percent in the first seven months of this year, as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the official put the weight of non-oil export at

88.7 million tons in the mentioned seven-month, with 11.48 percent growth, year on year.

He further put the weight of the seven-month import at 21.7 million tons.

According to Rezvanifar, the average value of each ton of exported goods has increased by three percent to \$367 and the average worth of each ton of imported products has risen six percent to \$1,819 in the first seven months of this year, as compared to the same time span of the past year.

## Iran exports crude steel, steel products worth \$3.6b in 7 months

TEHRAN - Iran exported crude steel and steel products worth \$3.643 billion in the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-October 21), the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) reported.

As reported, the figure shows 14 percent drop from \$4.255 billion in the same period of time in the past year.

The weight of the mentioned exported products was 16.519 million tons in the seven-month period of this year, dropping 0.5 percent from 16.601 million tons in the first seven months of the previous year.

The World Steel Association (WSA) announced in its latest report that steel production in Iran during the first quarter of 2024 registered a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year.

The report added that the volume of steel production in the world in the 3-month period has risen by 0.5 percent.

More than 469 million tons of steel was pro-

duced across the world in January-March 2024, 161.2 million tons of which was produced in March 2024.

Iran has produced 7.6 million tons of steel from January to March 2024, showing a 16.3 percent growth compared to the same period last year, according to Mehr news agency.

China, India, Japan, the US, Russia, South Korea, Germany, Turkey, Brazil and Iran were the world's top 10 steel producers in the first quarter of 2024.

Production of steel in Iran increased by 5.8 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19), as compared to the preceding year, according to the ISPA.

Based on the data released by the ISPA, the country's steel production reached 29.334 million tons in the previous year.

Of the mentioned amount, 18,452,000 tons were billet and bloom and 10,882,000 tons were slabs; Billet and bloom production increased by 9.2 percent and slab production increased by 0.7 percent in the previous year.

According to the ISPA data, the production of sponge iron also increased by 8.5 percent in the previous year in comparison to the figure for the preceding year.

Iran improved its global standing in steel production, becoming the ninth-largest producer in January 2024, according to new data released by the WSA.

The Islamic Republic produced 31.1 million tons of crude steel in 2023 to account for 58.4 percent of West Asia's total production in the mentioned year, according to the WSA.

The West Asian nations reviewed in the WSA report, including Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen, managed to produce 53.2 million tons of steel in 2023.

The country's steel production increased by 1.8 percent in 2023 as compared to the previous year, when the production stood at 30.6 million tons, based on the WSA data.

# Assad gone, Syria in twilight

## The Syrian PM is set to supervise state bodies until the transition

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The fall of the Syrian government has underscored the precarious future of the Mediterranean country amidst the ongoing chaos.

Armed groups, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) which controlled much of northwest Syria for years, launched a surprise offensive on November 27.

They seized some major cities and towns, including Aleppo, Hama and Homs and entered the capital Damascus early Sunday.

Armed men appearing on Syria's state TV announced the overthrow of President Bashar Assad. The president is believed to have left the country for an undisclosed location.

HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Golani said on Sunday that state institutions will be supervised by Prime Minister Mohammed Ghazi Jalali until they are handed over.

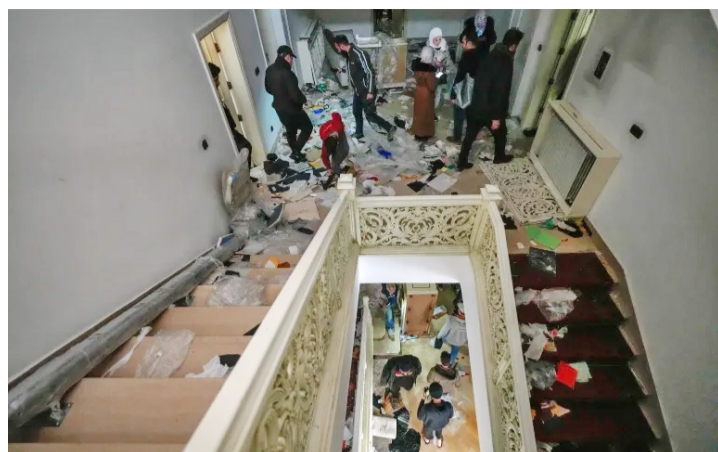
Some regional and Western countries have welcomed the toppling of the Syrian government. Some people in Syria have also celebrated Assad's ouster.

Nonetheless, concerns are growing amid a chaotic situation in the country.

According to the Associated Press, people in Damascus have rushed to stock up on supplies.

It reported that many shops in the capital have been shuttered and those still open have run out of staples such as sugar.

Items have also been sold at three times the normal price.



Syria's presidential palace in Damascus was ransacked as armed groups took control of the capital.

First of all, the role of armed groups in determining Syria's future should come under close scrutiny.

The HTS has its origins in al-Qaida and is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and the United Nations. But, al-Golani has sought to transform the group's public perception by cutting ties with al-Qaida.

He has promised to embrace pluralism and religious tolerance.

Al-Golani's pledges and remarks have aroused suspicions.

Al-Qaida and ISIL, also known as ISIS and Daesh, perpetrated heinous crimes in Syria in the wake of the unrest in the country that followed the 2011 Arab Spring.

Al-Golani's gestures seem to be a PR stunt with the aim of distracting from the past behavior of his group's members.

The HTS rule may lead to the resurgence of terrorists and ex-

might result in major bloodshed with regional consequences.

Third, armed groups would have never been able to launch their lightning offensive and seize territory in Syria without foreign support.

Turkey is among the countries

tions.

Fourth, resentment against Israel over its genocidal war in Gaza has been on the rise across the globe.

But the HTS and its allies have yet to publicly state their stance regarding Israel.

Militants that occupied parts of Syria following the chaos created by the Arab Spring, did not fire a single bullet toward Israel.

In 2015, The Wall Street Journal revealed that Israel opened its borders with Syria in order to provide medical treatment to terrorists affiliated to al-Qaida and its offshoot Nusra Front who had been wounded in fighting.

The prominent American newspaper reported at that time that the Nusra Front "hasn't bothered Israel since seizing the border area last summer" along the Golan Heights.

The Nusra Front was formed in



Concerns are growing that Syria could be transformed into a theater for foreign powers seeking to exploit the chaos in the country.

that stand accused of aiding and abetting the HTS. The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is pursuing geopolitical objectives in Syria.

Besides, Ankara does not want to see the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which are mainly made up of Kurdish fighters, gain more territory in Syria.

The Eurasian country is also grappling with the high number of Syrian refugees in the country. Turkey has been hosting millions of Syrian refugees over the past years.

The Erdogan government now wants to return the refugees to Syria to provide some relief to the Turkish economy.

But it remains unclear whether the HTS rule will help Turkey achieve its objectives.

Israel along with some of the Persian Gulf countries and Western states have also supported anti-Syria militant groups such as the HTS.

Consequently, Syria may turn into a theater for foreign powers seeking to exploit the chaos, yet the Syrian populace will bear significant costs of such interven-

2012 by ISIL from which it split a year later and declared allegiance to al-Qaeda.

It severed ties with al-Qaeda and joined with other factions to rebrand as HTS in 2017.

For now, the reluctance of the HTS to adopt a tough position towards Israeli crimes demonstrates that there is honor among thieves!

If the HTS decides to transform Syria into an Israeli vassal, people will not remain silent in the face of rising anti-regime sentiment.

Presently, the writing is on the wall for regional and international actors who have made miscalculations as well as those who are walking on the air in the face of the overthrow of President Assad.

Failure to form an inclusive government in Syria will create a powder keg, the consequences of which will spill over into the entire region.

Such repercussions will deal serious blows to the interests of regional countries. Undoubtedly, turmoil in West Asia will adversely impact the interests of Western countries including the United States.

## Israeli tanks enter Syria for first time in 50 years

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli regime makes the most of the instability in Syria to expand its expansionist project.

As insecurity and a power vacuum emerged in the Arab state after armed groups took control of state institutions, the Israelis seized on the crisis.

Israeli tanks were seen crossing into the outskirts of the southeastern Syrian province of Quneitra on Sunday, with shelling heard in the area.

The Israeli occupation forces also dispatched infantry to a buffer zone in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, the regime's military confirmed on Sunday.

The occupation army said it would remain in Syrian territory for "as long as necessary"

Hebrew media reported that Unit 5101, more commonly known as Shaldag, has reached the summit of Syria's Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights.

Analysts have said the land grab signals new Israeli ambitions to occupy and annex large parts of Syria after the fall of its government.

It is the first time Israeli forces have taken up positions beyond the buffer zone since it was established in 1974.

The regime further exploited the crisis in Syria with airstrikes on key sites. Israel's air raids on the Mazzeh district of the capital, Damascus, with explosions heard in the vicinity.

Separately, regional intelligence sources told news agencies that Israeli fighter jets targeted the Syrian air base of Khalkhala in southern Syria.

By Sunday evening, Israeli warplanes bombarded more Syrian army sites in Damascus.

The lightning developments in Syria have sparked widespread comment across Israeli politics.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hailed the fall of President Assad as a "historic day."

"This of course creates new, very important opportunities for Israel," he said.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid said they showed why "it is more important than ever to create a strong regional coalition, with Saudi Arabia and the countries of the Abraham Accords, to work together".

"The Iranian axis has weakened significantly, and Israel needs to strive for an overall political achievement," he added.

Other Israeli politicians called on the government in Tel Aviv to take control of the entire Golan Heights.

Government minister Amichai Chikli wrote in a social media post that there must be a new Israeli "defense zone" at the 1974 ceasefire line.

A member of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, Tzvi Succot, echoed those comments, saying this measure would be "immense" during a time when the political and military cost "is likely lower than ever".

Meanwhile, former Israeli military intelligence officer Lieutenant Colonel, Mordechai Kedar, was interviewed on Sunday by Hebrew media, Kan Reshet Bet, where he claimed:

"I am in contact with the rebels in Syria and I have passed a detailed list of equipment they requested from Israel to senior officials in the country.

The rebels are willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel, only if they control Syria and Lebanon."

The Israeli spy agency, Mossad, was also thrilled with the fall of Homs, a clear sign highlighting how significant this development was to the security of the regime.

In a post on social media, a Mossad-affiliated channel wrote: "Homs, the corridor used by Iran to bring weapons to Hezbollah, is no longer active."

The post added: "Amazing".

There is no credible evidence that Iran had used the city of Homs to transfer weapons to the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah.

Experts say militants operating in Syria had previously received medical treatment at field hospitals in the occupied Golan as well as in the Israeli city of Safed.

Time will tell what the intentions of this latest mixture of armed groups are. Some have lately vowed to have a more moderate outlook with neighbors in the region and are no longer associated with Daesh and al-Qaeda.

Whether this outlook serves Israeli interests is a key factor as most countries in West Asia believe the Israeli regime is the source of instability in the region.

## How will Hezbollah act if the Lebanese army fails to protect the border with Syria?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEKAA, Lebanon – Amid the collapse of the government in Syria, a serious concern pops off regarding the repercussions of the developments in Syria on Lebanon and the persistence of the Hezbollah-Israel ceasefire agreement as these events coincide with the Lebanese army's preparation to enter south of the Litani River.

Besides, there is fear of a scenario of uncontrolled convoys of displaced persons from Syria to Lebanon, which Lebanon witnessed between 2011-2017.

It is worth noting that the agreement on implementing Resolution 1701 includes the Lebanese-Syrian border, which is not only related to the transfer of human smuggling operations.

Although the anti-Hezbollah political factions in Lebanon consider what is happening in Syria an opportunity for regional and international pressure to strangle the resistance movement, they know that they will not be immune to the danger of militant groups if they advance toward the Syrian coast to control areas adjacent to the Lebanese border.

Thus, Lebanon, at all levels, seems to be wary of the moment, especially before the political tug-of-war that precedes the completion of the presidential election in a session on December 9.

In light of these developments, the Lebanese army has taken precautionary measures along the illegal crossings in the eastern chain.

It has also deployed equipment along the border with Syria, especially in Hermel and

Akkar.

The Lebanese army has also tightened its security measures at border posts, and the patrols carried out by the First Land Border Regiment along the border area have been intensified.

It is worth noting that the most dangerous areas in terms of the infiltration of militants are Qalamoun and Nabek, as militant groups have previously infiltrated from there after 2011.

So far, it is unlikely that these terrorists would infiltrate Lebanon. However, Hezbollah's involvement is necessary to confront them in case of infiltration.

Until the time of writing this report, no movement of militants towards Lebanon has been detected.

Since the Fajr al-Juroud battle, the Lebanese army has been concentrated in Aarsal, which has witnessed fierce battles with terrorist groups, noting that there are more than 90,000 displaced Syrians in the camps of Aarsal (the number has increased as a result of the Israeli aggression during the past two months).

Meanwhile, there is a consensus among the Bekaa MPs and political leaders to confront the partition aimed at changing the face of the region.

Hence, they firmly insist on coordination between all parties and not exploiting the displaced card as happened in the past decade and thwart any attempt to open the borders and bring in terrorist groups.

## Russia: Assad agreed to peaceful transfer of power



The Russian Foreign Ministry said President Bashar al-Assad had resigned from the presidency after talks with the sides involved in the conflict and had left the country.

"As a result of talks between Assad and a range of participants of the conflict on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, he took the decision to resign from his presidential post and leave the country, giving instructions to proceed with the peaceful transfer of power," the ministry said.

## China urges swift return to stability in Syria



China "is closely following the development of the situation in Syria and hopes that Syria returns to stability as soon as possible", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said. "The Chinese government has actively assisted Chinese citizens who are willing to leave Syria in a safe and orderly way, and has maintained contact with ... Chinese citizens who remain in Syria," the ministry added.

It called for "practical measures to ensure the safety of Chinese institutions and personnel in Syria."

## Lebanon reinforcing armed presence on Syrian border



The Lebanese army said it was reinforcing its presence on the border with neighboring Syria. "In light of rapid developments and delicate circumstances that the region is going through... units tasked with monitoring and controlling the northern and eastern borders have been reinforced, in conjunction with tightening surveillance measures," the army said in a statement.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati also discussed the situation at the Syrian border in a call with army commander Joseph Aoun and security forces chiefs.

## UNESCO-listed Yazd to host intl. conference on wind towers



TEHRAN - The UNESCO-registered city of Yazd, renowned for its historical wind towers (also known as wind catchers) as part of its atmospheric urban landscape, is set to host an international conference on wind towers in March 2025.

Announced by Seyyed Mohammad Rasteagari, the tourism chief of Yazd province, the event is organized in collaboration with Yazd University, to highlight the architectural and cultural significance of wind towers, which are ingenious structures designed to cool buildings in hot desert climates.

These traditional features are a hallmark of Iranian architecture, with Yazd being home to some of the most exquisite and well-preserved examples.

### Preserving and promoting a national heritage

Rasteagari emphasized the importance of safeguarding Iran's wind towers against misappropriation by other countries.

"Efforts are underway to achieve global recognition for all wind towers across Iran," he stated, adding that the conference would serve as a platform for promoting and protecting this vital heritage.

Restoration, lighting, and preservation of identified wind towers in Yazd were among schemes discussed by several provincial experts and officials during a preparatory meeting held on Sunday, CHTN reported.

Rasteagari noted that these efforts are being carried out through a partnership involving property owners, Yazd University, and other relevant agencies.

### Collaboration across provinces

To ensure broader participation, representatives from other Iranian provinces with historical wind towers will be invited to the conference.

This collaboration seeks to promote shared efforts in preserving and showcasing wind towers nationwide, the official said.

The initiative also aligns with ongoing projects at Yazd's World Heritage Site, which is

dedicated to preserving the city's historical urban fabric, including its iconic wind towers. Rasteagari confirmed that Yazd University would play a pivotal role in these efforts.

### A don't miss destination

In July 2017, the historical core of Yazd, the provincial capital, was named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Yazd is regularly referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a "don't miss" destination by almost all of its visitors. The city is full of mudbrick houses that are equipped with innovative badgirs (wind catchers), atmospheric alleyways, and many Islamic and Iranian monuments that shape its eye-catching city landscape.

Cultural heritage experts believe that Yazd is a living testimony to the intelligent use of limited available resources in the desert for survival. Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. Furthermore, the use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs through the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

The historical core of Yazd is chockfull of mudbrick houses, bazaars, public bathhouses, water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and centuries-old gardens. From the divine point of view, the city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

Yazd is home to numerous qanats which have supplied water to agricultural and permanent settlements for thousands of years. The man-carved underground qanat system relies on snow-fed streams flowing down the foothills of surrounding mountains. The earliest water supply to Yazd is estimated to date from the Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE). However, many others have been continually repaired and used over time, and most surviving Ab-Anbars (traditional mudbrick cisterns) can today be traced to the late Safavid and Qajar periods.

St Catherine and il Gesù, as well as the improvements attributed to the military engineers and architects of the 18th century such as the Auberge de Bavière, the Church of the Shipwreck of St Paul, the Library and the Manoel Theatre.

### Integrity

The city is built on a narrow peninsula surrounded by water. As a result, the perimeter of the city has remained largely unchanged since the departure of the Knights of St John, unencumbered by more recent development. It is of sufficient size and includes all elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value. In spite of some rebuilding projects during the 19th century and severe damage during World War II, a high proportion of the original monuments and the surrounding urban fabric has been preserved intact or carefully restored. The masonry and materials used during these later interventions have blended homogeneously with the earlier fabric, simultaneously respecting the original urban form. However, the Outstanding Universal Value of the property is vulnerable to impacts on its setting, form and fabric, deriving from the demands of a living city.

(Source: UNESCO)

## Unique opportunity to introduce Iran's heritage to the Chinese

TEHRAN - The major exhibition "The Glory of Ancient Persia" provides a unique opportunity to introduce the ancient heritage of Iran to the Chinese public, the deputy director of Iran National Museum said on Sunday.

Opened on Friday, December 6 at the Xinjiang Autonomous Regional Museum in Urumqi, the exhibition features several thousand years of Iran's ancient history from the Iron Age to the Safavid period and shows the achievements of this civilization in the field of art, architecture, and other aspects, Fereidoun Biglari explained.

According to the senior archaeologist, this exhibition, which was previously welcomed by fans of Iranian culture and history in Beijing and Shanghai, includes 211 objects.

"The works of this exhibition have displayed about 3000 years of Iran's history and provided a rare opportunity for Chinese vis-



itors to get acquainted with the ancient culture and civilization of Iran."

Biglari added: This exhibition, organized by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran and with the cooperation of the Chinese government, includes a selection of

works from the National Museum of Iran, as well as works from the Persepolis Museum and the regional museums of Rasht and Gorgan.

"This exhibit includes objects from important archaeological sites of different periods such as Persepolis, Pasargad, Chogha

Zanbil, Susa, Arjan, Ziviyeh, Hasanlu, Babajan, Kalmakareh Cave, Marlik, Sialk, Siraf, Hormuz, Neyshabur, Takht-e Soleiman and Kangavar, which is a comprehensive view.

It presents the cultural evolution of ancient Iran."

In that regard, Nina Rezaei, the head of Exhibition Affairs of the National Museum of Iran, said: The purpose of the exhibition is to strengthen cultural exchanges between Iran and China, which will continue in the future by displaying works from important Chinese museums in Iran. We hope that this exhibition will bring Chinese visitors closer to a better understanding of Iran's cultural richness, as well as more familiarity with its history and heritage.

The exhibition will continue until March 2025 and it is expected that thousands of people interested in the history and culture of Iran will visit it, Rezaei said.

## Zahak Castle's significance to be discussed in special conference

TEHRAN - An inaugural conference on the historical and cultural significance of Zahak Castle, will be held on December 18 in Hashrud of East Azarbaijan province, where the ancient fortress is situated in northwest Iran.

According to organizers, several distinguished scholars and experts in history, architecture, and cultural heritage have been invited to discuss the castle's unique features, its conservation needs, and sustainable methods for its utilization as a tourist destination.

The landmark event is set to turn the spotlight on the role of the elevated fort and its connection with the Parthian Empire (247 BC-224 CE) and its broader impact on the history of the Azarbaijan region.

The conference is organized through the joint efforts of several key organizations, including the Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical and Cultural Sites, the East Azarbaijan Department of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Hashrud Governorate, and the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism.

Zahak Castle, named after the mythical figure Zahhak from ancient Iranian mythology, dates back to the second millennium BC, with continued occupation through the Timurid era (1370-1507).

The fortress, which features intricate brickwork, archways, and staircases, offers insights into ancient defensive architecture and societal structures.

### Historical and archeological significance

The castle's strategic importance during



the Parthian period is underscored by historical accounts, including its role in the defeat of Roman general Marc Antony in 37 BC.

The Median infantry, allied with the Parthian cavalry, played a crucial part in this victory, providing a rare glimpse into the military strategies of the era.

Archaeological excavations, initiated by British researchers decades ago, have revealed artifacts such as stucco remnants with traces of coloring, shedding light on the site's artistic and cultural heritage.

### Future prospects

The conference is intended to suggest new initiatives to transform Zahak Castle into a sustainable tourism destination.

Proposed plans included the introduction of preservation programs, community involvement in conservation efforts, and marketing campaigns to boost regional and international tourism.

Organizers said by bringing together scholars, policymakers, and local stakeholders, the event is aimed to ensure the preservation of this unique historical site while fostering

economic growth in the region.

### Glimpses of Parthian era

The Parthian Empire, also known as the Arsacid Empire, was a major Iranian political and cultural power centered in ancient Iran from 247 BC to 224 CE.

Its name derives from its founder, Arsaces I, who led the Parni tribe in conquering Parthia, a northeastern region of Iran.

At the time, Parthia was a satrapy (province) under Andragoras, a rebel against the Seleucid Empire.

At its zenith, the Parthian Empire extended from the northern Euphrates River (modern central-eastern Turkey) to present-day Afghanistan and western Pakistan.

Positioned along the Silk Road, the empire thrived as a hub for trade and commerce, connecting the Roman Empire in the Mediterranean to the Han dynasty in China.

The Parthians assimilated various elements of the diverse cultures within their empire, which included Persian, Hellenistic, and regional influences.

Initially, the Arsacid court adopted many aspects of Greek culture but gradually saw a revival of Iranian traditions.

Parthian rulers adopted the title "King of Kings", asserting their heritage from the Achaemenid Empire.

Unlike the Achaemenids, who governed through centrally appointed satraps, the Parthians often allowed local kings to serve as vassals.

As the empire expanded, its central government shifted from Nisa to Ctesiphon, near modern Baghdad, though other cities also served as capitals.

## Ancient pyramid discovered during road construction works in Hidalgo, Mexico

Construction work on Federal Highway 105 in Hidalgo, Mexico, has unearthed the remnants of a pre-Hispanic pyramid and settlement.

Archaeologists from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) have identified the site, dubbed "San Miguel" due to its proximity to the town of San Miguel Metzquititlán, as a pre-Hispanic settlement.

It spans from the Epiclassic period (CE 650-950) to the Late Postclassic period (CE 1350-1519).

The pyramid, referred to as "Structure 1," was discovered during the construction of a third lane on the Pachuca-Huejutla highway in the municipality of San Agustín Metzquititlán. The site consists of five sectors with at least ten mounds and has yielded 155 artifacts, including ceramics, shells, and lithic ma-

terials, as well as evidence of lime floors, charcoal, and charred wood.

Researchers believe the settlement may have been associated with the Metzca lordship, a multi-ethnic society that flourished in the Sierra Alta region.

"This archaeological record provides valuable insights into the human occupation of the Sierra Alta region, particularly in the Barranca de Metzquititlán area, where historiography traces settlements back 14,000 years," INAH stated in its official report.

To preserve the site, INAH conducted detailed documentation, including drone-based digital photogrammetry.

Structure 1 was stabilized with a 43-meter-long masonry wall and reburied for conservation. Geotextiles were used to protect the exposed elements before reburial.

Preliminary research findings have been shared with local educational institutions, such as the Colegio de Bachilleres del Estado de Hidalgo and the Technological University of the Sierra Hidalguense, to foster awareness of the region's archaeological heritage.

Héctor Labra Chávez, Director of Tourism for San Agustín Metzquititlán, said: "There are no known remnants of pre-Hispanic civilizations in this immediate area.

Deeper studies are essential to uncover the cultural context of this significant find."

He noted that part of the pyramid's base lies beneath the highway, making additional excavation necessary.

However, ongoing financial constraints have limited further exploration.

INAH announced that budget cuts proposed for 2025 would reduce its funding by 45%, leaving little room for continued excavation or research.

Hidalgo is home to several notable pre-Hispanic sites, such as the Atlantes of Tula and the Xihuingo archaeological zone.

The Atlantes, towering Toltec stone figures, are described by National Geographic as some of the largest anthropomorphic figures in the region, representing Quetzalcoatl.

The Xihuingo site, associated with Teotihuacán, features the El Tecolote pyramid and astronomical markers.

Researchers hope that, despite financial challenges, future studies will reveal the cultural and historical significance of this newly uncovered settlement.

(Source: archaeologymag.com)

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: City of Valletta

Malta's capital Valletta is a fortified city located on a hilly peninsula between two of the finest natural harbors in the Mediterranean.

The Siege of Malta in 1565 captured the European imagination and mobilized the resources needed to create the new city of Valletta, founded soon after, in 1566. The Knights of St John, aided by the most respected European military engineers of the 16th century, conceived and planned the city as a single, holistic creation of the late Renaissance, with a uniform grid plan within fortified and bastioned city walls.

Since its creation, the city has witnessed a number of rebuilding projects, yet those have not compromised the harmony between the dramatic topography and the Hippodamian grid. The fabric of the city includes a compact ensemble of 320 monuments that encapsulate every aspect of the civil, religious, artistic and military functions of its illustrious founders. These include the 16th century buildings relating to the founding of the Renaissance city, such as the cathedral of St John, the Palace of the Grand Master, the Auberge de Castile et Léon, the Auberge de Provence, the Auberge d'Italie, the Auberge d'Aragon and the Infirmary of the Order and the churches of Our Lady of Victory,

# Women are closely connected with environmental protection: head of DOE

TEHRAN – Highlighting the role of women in preserving the environment, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE) has said boosting collaboration between different strata of society and developing green businesses are the key to protecting the environment.

"Today, we are facing many environmental challenges, such as climate change and air pollution, but these problems won't be resolved unless we collectively tackle them," IRNA quoted Shina Ansari as saying on Sunday.

"Women's participation will play a key role in preserving the environment since women and the environment are intertwined. Women show high sensitivity and concern for the environment," the official added.

By assigning responsibilities to women, they can help solve part of environmental problems. For example, women can play an effective role in waste management which has been failed to notice before. They can be trained to do so at home which will significantly reduce the amount of waste, Ansari highlighted.

Women can also play an essential role in improving sustainable agriculture, as well as protecting forests such as the Hyrcanian and Zagros forests, which are



currently not in good condition.

Addressing environmental challenges should be a top priority of the government. It also requires joint efforts since no single organization can successfully deal with the problems, Ansari noted.

Women can also play an essential role in improving sustainable agriculture.

"Let's work together to be able to take constructive steps at the governance level to reduce environmental problems,"

observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings," Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

Referring to Iran's remarkable achievements in education, health, science, technology, and entrepreneurship, she underscored the prominent role of Iranian women in these fields.

The official further said the seventh National Development Plan has stressed the need to overcome barriers to women's professional development. Accordingly, the current administration has put supporting women's entrepreneurship and home business growth on the agenda despite unfair sanctions.

Addressing a roundtable focusing on 'Advancing women's economic empowerment through employment, decent work, social protection, and entrepreneurship', Fakh al-Sadat Fatemi, an advisor to the deputy vice president for women and family affairs, for her part proposed three ways to advance women's empowerment in different fields, these ways include training, empowering, acquiring skills, and developing opportunities for women's participation, as well as providing legal and executive support, Mehr news agency reported.

the official further said.

## Women's economic, social empowerment

Addressing the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference, held in Bangkok, Thailand from November 19 to 21, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, stated that the current administration focuses on empowering women in social and economic areas, as well as improving their access to social services and facilities through implementing certain national programs.

"Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by

## Climate change significantly impacts food security in Iran: expert

TEHRAN – By affecting rainfall patterns, pollination, flowering, and even harvest time, climate change has greatly affected the agriculture sector and food security in many countries, most significantly in Iran, according to the country's former permanent representative and ambassador to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

In some parts of the country the air temperature has increased by 2 degrees while the highest temperature set in the world amounts to 1.5 degrees, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Hossein Emadi as saying.

Studies have shown that for a degree increase in temperature on the planet, the amount of evaporation rises by 23 percent which negatively affects crop production in agriculture and animal husbandry sectors. Climate change also alters plant growth patterns, disturbing the nutritional values of crops, he stressed.

In addition, unexpected effects of climate change like drought, flood, and landslides have all affected food security.

According to FAO, food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Also, the food systems should not utilize the environment, water and soil resources in a way that only one generation can benefit from it, the official noted.

Presently, the food that is available in the world is sufficient for the current population

of the world both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, the main problem is caused by financials and economic crisis and that is access to food which stresses whether the individuals can afford to buy food, Emadi added.

Around 600 million people of the world's population are facing hunger, and more importantly, 2.560 billion are suffering from malnutrition, obesity, and various other diseases caused by the lack of vitamins and proteins.

It shows that food insecurity, which includes hunger and malnutrition, is a big challenge in the world

Accordingly, poor countries as well as rich countries like the U.S. and some states of the Persian Gulf are facing food insecurity. It is critical to develop solutions to end acute hunger and malnutrition in the world.

### Climate change mitigation program on the agenda

The Department of Environment (DOE) is planning to develop a program to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the country.

In line with the Seventh National Development Plan (2023 -2027) that highlights the expansion of a green economy and low-carbon industry, enhancement of adaptability to climate change, and reduction of damages, the DOE has placed the development of a mitigating program on the agenda. ISNA quoted Shina Ansari, the head of the DOE, as saying.

"On the one hand, Iran is strongly affected by climate change, and on the other hand, it is

among the top ten countries emitting greenhouse gases," Ansari noted.

The energy sector accounts for more than 86 percent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, and the largest share of carbon dioxide emissions, 32 percent, comes from the power plant sector, the official added.

The lack of comprehensive legal and executive regulations on climate change is one of the country's main problems. Once the laws are developed, the responsibilities of the executive and supervisory bodies of the DOE will be determined in the face of the climate change impacts, Ansari further noted.

She made the remarks on the occasion of the International Day against Climate Change, commemorated on October 24.

The day highlights the significance of raising awareness of climate change threats, taking actions to address its adverse effects, as well as boosting community resilience to climate change.

Climate change is a long-term atmospheric-oceanic phenomenon on a global scale, which is affected by factors such as solar as well as human activities.

Changes in seasonal patterns, wildfires, drought occurrence, and a global surge in diseases are just a few examples of climate change consequences.

Human-induced climate change is the biggest and most pervasive threat to the natural environment and societies that the world has ever experienced, and the poorest countries are paying the heaviest price.

## Iran secures second place in D-8 universities ranking

TEHRAN – For the second consecutive year, Iran ranked second with 87 universities included in the D-8 group universities in 2023.

D-8, also known as Developing-8, is an organization for development cooperation among eight Islamic nations, namely Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Turkey with 178, Pakistan with 61, and Indonesia with 58, Malaysia with 43 universities ranked first, third, fourth, and fifth, respectively.

Egypt (42), Bangladesh (32), and Nigeria (18) were placed sixth to eighth.

"To rank the universities of the D-8 group, information about 1,700 organizations of the members in the InCites database from 2019 to 2021 has been analyzed," IRNA quoted Ahmad Fazelzadeh, head of the Islamic World Science Citation (ISC) Database, as saying.

"The universities that had issued more than 150 documents within this time frame constituted the target population of D8 ranking. The number of universities that met these conditions was 519 universities that appeared in the 2023 ranking," he added.

The most important criteria for evaluating the performance of D-8 group universities include research, innovation, education, and international activities.

Cairo University, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and University of Malaya were placed first to third among 519 universities included in the ranking.

University of Tehran, and Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modarres University, and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences were placed second and fifth in the country.

### Recent rankings

Times Higher Education (THE) Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR) placed 29 Iranian universities among top institutions worldwide for interdisciplinary science research.

ISR is a project launched in association with Schmidt Science Fellows; it ranked a total of 749 universities from 92 countries.

University of Tehran with a global ranking of 77 was placed first in the country.

Shiraz University (ranked 132 globally) Razi University (174), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (187), University of Tabriz (201-250) ranked second to fifth, respectively.

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, and Urmia University were ranked joint sixth with a global ranking of 251-300.

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings placed 32 Iranian universities in the list of top universities in 2025, compared to 31 universities in 2024.

Published annually since 2009, the QS Asia University Rankings highlight the top universities in Asia each year.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 87) is placed first among Iranian universities, followed by Sharif University of Technology (ranking 97 globally) and Amirkabir University of Technology (ranking 114 globally), Mehr news agency reported.

Isfahan University of Technology, Shiraz University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, University of Tabriz, Shahid Beheshti University, and University of Isfahan are ranked fourth to tenth, respectively.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025 placed 85 Iranian universities among the top institutions compared to 75 universities in 2024.

The 2025 rankings include 2,092 ranked universities from 115 countries. There are 185 new entries compared with last year.

Sharif University of Technology ranked first in the country with a global ranking of 301-350.

Amirkabir University of Technology, and Iran University of Science and Technology (ranking globally 351-400) were placed second.

Kermanshah University of Medical Science, and University of Tehran were placed third



with a global ranking of 401- 500.

Babol Noshirvani University of Technology, Shiraz University of Technology, and Tehran University of Technology were ranked joint fourth, they ranked 601-800, globally.

A total of 100 universities from Iran were ranked by EduRank based on research outputs, non-academic prominence, and alumni influence.

The rankings were determined by analyzing 14.9 m citations received by 1.26 m academic publications made by 310 universities from Iran, the popularity of 867 recognized alumni, and the largest reference database available.

This year, 14131 universities from 183 countries were ranked across 246 topics.

According to the report University of Tehran, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, and Sharif University of Technology were the best universities in the country, IRIB reported.

The Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities, also known as the National Taiwan University (NTU) Rankings, placed 21 Iranian institutions among the top 1,200 universities worldwide, compared to 18 universities in 2023.

University of Tehran won the best ranking among Iranian institutions, ranking 291 globally.

University of Tehran ranked 30 in chemical engineering as well as energy science and engineering, 34 in mechanical engineering, and 73 in agriculture.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences (with a global ranking of 359), Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences (491), Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (540), and Tarbiat Modarres University (577) were placed second to fifth, respectively.

Tehran University of Medical Science's best ranking globally was 22 in pharmacology and toxicology.

Moreover, Khajeh Nasir Toosi University of Technology and Yasouj University were among the top 1200 institutions in the world based on full-time academic staff.

The 2024-2025 edition of Best Global Universities rankings included 69 Iranian universities, up from 52 in 2023, among the world's 2,250 top universities.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 275), Islamic Azad University (374), Sharif University of Technology and Tehran University of Medical Sciences (516), University of Tabriz (521), and Amirkabir University of Technology (649) ranked first to fifth in the country, respectively.

Shanghai ranking 2024 placed nine Iranian universities among the top 1,000 institutions worldwide.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences and University of Tehran, which were among the top 500 universities in the world with a rank of 401-500, were placed top in the country.

Tarbiat Modares University (601-700) was placed second.

Iran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti of Medical Sciences, and Sharif University of Technology with a ranking of 701-800, shared the third rank in the country.

Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology, and University of Tabriz (901-1000) were ranked joint fourth.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Iran to build desalination plants along Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman

The Department of Environment (DOE) is preparing a plan to deploy desalination plants on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in order to supply drinking water to the coastal provinces.

Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the marine environment of the DOE, announced that the project, which is to be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy, will supply water for 17 drought-ridden provinces.

The country's coastline stretches to about 5,800 kilometers, which includes the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in the south.

## برنامه ایران برای تامین آب شرب از طریق خلیج فارس و دریای عمان

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ایران در حال مطالعه طرحی برای استقرار آب شیرین کن‌ها در سواحل خلیج فارس و دریای عمان به منظور تامین بخشی از آب شرب استان‌های ساحلی است.

به گزارش ایرنا، احمد رضا لاهیجانزاده معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اعلام کرد این طرح که قرار است با همکاری وزارت نیرو انجام شود شامل ۱۷ استان خشک و بی آب می شود.

طول سواحل کشور حدود پنج هزار و ۸۰۰ کیلومتر است که شامل دریای خزر در شمال و خلیج فارس و دریای عمان در جنوب می شود.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**  
Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
Email: info@tehrantimes.com  
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051430  
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 159981713

DECEMBER 9, 2024

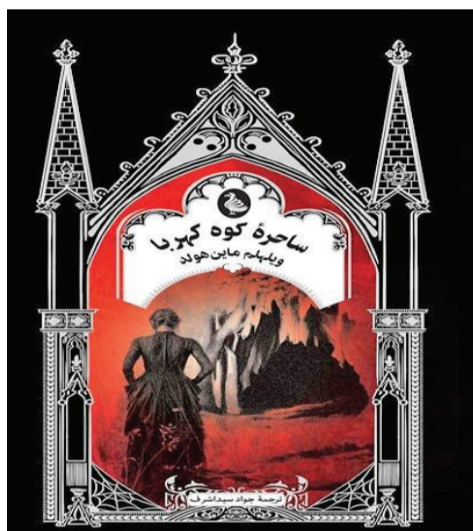
## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Recommended prayers cannot attain the pleasures of Allah for you when obligatory prayers are left unattended.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:11:57 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:34 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:03 (tomorrow)

## Johannes Wilhelm Meinhold's "The Amber Witch" published in Persian



the stake, she is rescued by a courageous young nobleman who loves her and who exposes the evil plot against her.

Johannes Wilhelm Meinhold (1797-1851) was a Pomeranian priest, poet, playwright, and novelist. His best-known works are two historical Gothic romance novels, one of which is "The Amber Witch".

Meinhold claimed to have discovered a manuscript written by a 17th-century minister, Abraham Schweidler (purportedly a pastor of Coserow and known for his fire and brimstone sermons) amongst rubbish in the choir of the old Coserow church. The manuscript contained the story of the pastor's daughter Maria, the "Amber Witch".

The tale was described by Meinhold, in the subtitle of the novel, as "the most interesting trial for witchcraft ever known". When it first appeared, almost all of the German critics believed it was an authentic historical document. The work attracted critical notice, not only for the dramatic nature of its narrative but also for disputes about which parts of it were original and which were Meinhold's reconstructions, written in imitation of the 17th-century style.

Meinhold's intention was to set a trap for the disciples of David Strauss and his school, who pronounced the Bible to be a collection of legends from historical research assisted by internal evidence.

Only in a later edition did the author admit that the tale was entirely imaginary. His admission that it was a hoax was at first rejected but was soon accepted as the truth.

The hoax was done with great skill and attention to detail, using language that would have been used in 17th-century Germany.

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the novel "The Amber Witch" by Johannes Wilhelm Meinhold has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Qoqnoos Publication has brought out the book in 359 pages, which has been translated by Javad Seyed Ashraf, IRNA reported.

The novel was originally published in 1838 as a literary hoax which purported to be an actual 17th-century chronicle. Meinhold later admitted to the hoax but had some difficulty in proving that he was its author.

The story is set during the Thirty Years' War. The purported author, Reverend Abraham Schweidler, almost loses his only child, Maria, to a plot by a rejected suitor, Sheriff Appellmann, who has accused Maria of practicing witchcraft. In this he was aided by an evil and jealous woman of the neighborhood.

After a trial and under threat of the most dire torture, Maria, wholly innocent of the crime, confesses. While on her way to

## Cartoon of Day



Hospitals in Gaza

Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey

# Art event supporting Gazan children underway in Tehran

TEHRAN- An artistic event titled "We Will Not Fade Away," showcasing the support of Iranian children for vulnerable children in Gaza and Lebanon, is underway at the Cultural and Artistic Creations Center of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCY-Kanoon) in Tehran.

This international artistic event has been organized by the IIDCY, in collaboration with 13 NGOs, and the National Network of Humanitarian NGOs, IRNA reported.

The exhibition features over 75 paintings by Iranian children, performances, video art, letter-writing, olive tree planting, and the creation of origami cranes by participating children, among other artistic activities aimed at supporting vulnerable children in Gaza and Lebanon, the report added.

Specialized meetings are also being held with university lecturers focusing on media, children, and NGOs.

After the exhibition concludes on Monday, all artistic works and programs from this event will be sent for display to three international gatherings



in three different countries.

UNICEF has recently highlighted the devastating impact of the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip on children. According to the latest estimates from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 14,000 children have tragically lost their lives, with thousands more injured.

There are no safe havens left, and every child in Gaza

has been subjected to the harrowing realities of war, leaving scars that may last a lifetime.

Approximately 1.9 million individuals—about 90 percent of Gaza's population—are believed to be internally displaced, with children making up half of this number.

They are facing severe shortages of essential resources such as water, food, fuel, and

medicine. With their homes destroyed and families fragmented, many children have been displaced multiple times, suffering the loss of homes, parents, and loved ones. It is crucial to ensure their protection and to maintain access to the vital services they depend on, including medical facilities and shelter.

## Tehran theater hosts "Three Primary Colors" play, featuring children with special needs

TEHRAN- The play "Three Primary Colors," directed by Iranian stage director Roshanak Bostanchi, will be staged at Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran for three days starting December 11.

The play will be performed by a group of children with autism and epidermolysis bullosa (EB), IRNA reported on Monday.

Bostanchi, who leads the production, is not only a director but also a child and adolescent psychologist and art therapist. She employs psychodrama techniques to engage children with special needs, allowing them to express themselves through the performing arts.

Written by Saeed Salemi, "Three Primary Colors" features an interactive script that resonates with the experiences and dreams of these children, each of whom brings a piece of their genuine aspirations to life on stage.

Masoud Torabi, the play's director advisor, shared, "In this process, children



develop skills like patience and empathy, while their mental well-being is enhanced, particularly in areas such as self-esteem and confidence."

"Three Primary Colors" is a musical production that features the Zhina Gorgani, an autistic child, playing the piano, while

the santur is performed by Abolfazl Mahmoudipour, a child with EB.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and epidermolysis bullosa (EB) are distinct conditions that can significantly impact individuals and their families.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by challenges with social communication, repetitive behaviors, and varying degrees of cognitive function. On the other hand, epidermolysis bullosa is a rare genetic disorder that results in fragile skin that blisters easily, often leading to painful wounds and requiring ongoing care.

While ASD primarily affects behavioral and developmental aspects, EB presents significant physical challenges. Both conditions highlight the importance of inclusivity and understanding, as individuals with autism and EB often require tailored support and accommodations to thrive in society.

## Palestinian publisher wins top IPA award

Palestinian publisher Samir Mansour was awarded the 2024 International Publishers Association's Prix Voltaire at the award ceremony of the 34th International Publishers Congress, as part of the Guadalajara International Book Fair in Mexico.

The IPA also announced a Prix Voltaire Special Award for the late Ukrainian author Victoria Amelina, who was killed last year in a Russian missile attack in Ukraine, Publishers Weekly reported.

Per the IPA, Prix Voltaire acknowledges "publishers—individuals, groups or organizations—who have typically published controversial works amid pressure, threats, intimidation or harassment, be it from governments, other authorities or private interests," as well as "publishers with a distinguished record of upholding the values of freedom to publish and freedom of expression".

In its award citation, the IPA called the Samir Mansour Bookshop for Printing and Publishing "a critical part of the local community in Gaza, publishing the works of Pal-

estinian authors and housing thousands of books in various languages. The bookshop has continued its efforts to bring books to Palestinian youth, visiting evacuation centers and providing books and gift packages to displaced children".

Accepting the prize, Samir Mansour delivered a video address. "In 2021, my bookshop was completely destroyed; it was rebuilt in 2022," he said. "During the current war, the bookshop was also destroyed again and the second branch of the library bookshop was destroyed. However, I am still continuing my work which I grew up with and was raised in since my childhood. I am still publishing despite being on the Gaza strip. God willing us, we will continue to publish and print, no matter how difficult the circumstances we are living today. We will continue".

The ceremony's tribute to Victoria Amelina used footage from last year's IPA Prix Voltaire ceremony, where Amelina accepted the 2023 Prix Voltaire Special Award on behalf of the late Ukrainian author and illustrator Volody-

myr Vakulenko. "The Ukrainian literary community is grateful for the award," Amelina said at the ceremony. "This award is unique, meaningful, and moving to us, partly because no one out of hundreds of other Ukrainian writers who, like Vakulenko, were murdered throughout Ukrainian history ever received such an international award posthumously. I am sure that Volodymyr Vakulenko would like to dedicate this award to them too."

Kristenn Einarsson, chair of the IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee added: "Before, during, and post conflict, the role of publishers is monumental. Peace is only possible in a society that welcomes education, values the exchange of diverse ideas, and promotes innovation, conversation, and compromise. This is why books as builders of empathy and sources of cultural knowledge, and the publishers that produce and protect them, serve as cultural institutions that promote peace and progress. Authoritarian governments and other powerful entities often tighten control over information during conflicts,

imposing strict censorship and disseminating propaganda."

Einarsson continued: "Publishers not only face personal destruction in conflict, but may also face threats such as violence, imprisonment, or even death for publishing materials that are perceived as controversial. Those committed to freedom of expression have navigated these treacherous waters, often working clandestinely, in exile, or even in a context of war, in order to ensure the dissemination of knowledge."

IPA president Karine Pansa added: "Our two laureates this year as well as our shortlist encourage us to think about the role of publishing for peace and the relationship between conflict and publishing. This year's Prix Voltaire laureate and nominees embody publishers' efforts to promote books and the dissemination of information to prevent conflict and foster peace, even while facing extreme dangers themselves. Their commitment to publishing and the dissemination of knowledge becomes a beacon of hope amidst immense devastation."