

Deafening Silence Over Scorched-Earth Strategy

Syrian rebels, supporters remain tight-lipped about Israel's incessant attacks



■ Israel seizes Syrian territory twice the size of Gaza

► Page 5

This image depicts a damaged hangar as the Israeli military targets weapons storage facilities near the Mezzeh military airbase, located outside Damascus, on December 9, 2024.

Iran urges UN to condemn militant attacks on diplomatic premises in Syria

TEHRAN – Iran has called on the United Nations and the Security Council to take decisive action against attacks by militants on its diplomatic and consular missions in Syria.

The incidents follow the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government and have raised serious concerns about the safety and inviolability of diplomatic personnel and premises under international law.

Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's ambassador to the UN, addressed the issue in two formal letters sent on Monday to UN Secretary General António Guterres and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the rotating president of the Security Council.

In the letters, Iravani condemned the militant attacks as flagrant violations of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), which ensure the protection of diplomatic missions and their staff. ► Page 3



How neoliberal policies fueled the fall of Assad

By Seyed Yasser Jebraily

TEHRAN – The abrupt collapse of the Damascus government has ignited a robust debate over the root causes of Syria's enduring instability. While some attribute this turmoil to external pressures, such as Western sanctions and authoritarian governance, one critical factor remains underappreciated: the neoliberal policies implemented during Bashar al-Assad's presidency. These market-focused reforms, heralded as harbingers of growth and modernization, instead bred widespread discontent among Syrians, weakening societal structures and paving the way for extremist groups to emerge.

To understand the impact of these policies, it's essential to examine the context in which neoliberal policies were introduced. During Hafez al-Assad's presidency, beginning in 1971, the Ba'ath Party built a comprehensive welfare state focusing on national production and public services. ► Page 5

NDF proposes \$2.5b credit line for transport infrastructure

TEHRAN – Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) has proposed allocating a \$2.5 billion credit line to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development to accelerate major transport infrastructure projects and enhance the country's logistics capabilities.

In a joint meeting between Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and NDF Chairman Mehdi Ghazanfari, the proposal was tabled to finance key transportation initiatives, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Ghazanfari underscored the vital role of the transport sector in Iran's economic growth and stressed the need for innovative financial solutions to advance national infrastructure projects. "The simplistic investment models used in the past have fallen short. We must now adopt more complex and efficient financial strategies to achieve tangible results," he said.

Highlighting the importance of timely loan repayments, Ghazanfari noted previous challenges, such as delays in funds being reimbursed for projects like the Mashhad metro. "This experience demonstrates the necessity of financial models that ensure both economic viability and structured repayment of resources," he added. ► Page 4

Sanctions snapback will be met with firm response, Iran warns Europe

"While we will not hesitate to retaliate, we are still prepared and willing to continue constructive cooperation with the IAEA within relevant technical frameworks," Abbas Araghchi declared.

TEHRAN – Iran's UN Ambassador Amir Saeed Iravani issued a strong warning to European JCPOA signatories, threatening a firm response to any attempt to reinstate UN sanctions.

In a letter to the UN Secretary-General and President of the UN Security Council Iravani said "Any threats to invoke the so-called 'snapback' are counterproductive and will provoke a firm response from Iran."

The snapback mechanism outlined in UN Resolution 2231 permits permanent members of the Security Council and Germany to reinstate UN sanctions if Iran violates its JCPOA obligations. The U.S. no longer retains the au-

thority to trigger the mechanism as it has left the nuclear deal.

Iravani's warning, similar to recent statements by other Iranian officials, reflects Tehran's waning tolerance for Western non-compliance with the JCPOA and its simultaneous demands on Iran. Some officials, including Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, have said that leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would be an option if the snapback is triggered.

The 2015 JCPOA, signed by Iran and the P5+1 (US, UK, France,

Germany, China, and Russia), aimed to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. However, the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement in 2018 under President Trump led to the reinstatement of sanctions. European nations, despite officially staying part of the deal, have proven unable to offset the debilitating effects of these sanctions; in some cases, they have even added their own bans.

In his address, Iravani rebutted the allegations made in a prior letter from the E3. "The

Islamic Republic of Iran categorically rejects the claims in the E3 letter regarding Iran's alleged non-compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA," he wrote, adding, "Any allegation regarding Iran's implementation of its JCPOA commitments is fundamentally flawed when divorced from the full context of the U.S. withdrawal. Such a claim ignores Iran's sustained efforts to uphold the deal despite persistent provocations and violations by the U.S. and E3/EU, rendering it arbitrary and devoid of

substantive validity."

Iran began to scale back on some of its JCPOA commitments in the middle of 2020, several months after Trump began its so-called "maximum pressure campaign" against the country.

Europe's blame game

In a joint statement published on Tuesday, the E3 repeated its accusations against Iran. "We, the governments of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom condemn Iran's latest steps, as reported by the IAEA, to expand its nuclear program to significantly increase the rate of production of uranium enriched up to 60% at the underground Fordow facility". ► Page 3

"The Storm Still Rages" in Baghdad

TEHRAN- The international poster and illustration exhibition titled "The Storm Still Rages" is currently underway at Bayt al-Jamal Gallery in Baghdad, Iraq.

Organized by the Office of the Visual Arts Center of Iran's Art Bureau, the event features 355 artworks by 87 artists from five continents and 25 countries, including 40 artists from Iran and Iraq, alongside 47 artists from Palestine, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Egypt, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Lebanon, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Uruguay, and Yemen, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

Curated by Saber Sheikh Rezai, the exhibition focuses on graphic design, the report added. ► Page 8



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'Iran's power remains undiminished': IRGC Chief

TEHRAN – In a recent closed session of the Iranian Parliament, Major General Hossein Salami, Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), reaffirmed the country's steadfast influence in West Asia, despite the region's volatile dynamics.

Ebrahim Rezaei, spokesperson for the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, highlighted Major General Salami's assertion that "Iran's influence remains undiminished and its military strength intact."

Salami emphasized Iran's strategic and military capabilities, particularly its focus on countering Israeli aggression.

He reportedly outlined persistent efforts toward the "downfall of the occupying Zionist regime," highlighting how Iran has effectively countered the strategies of its adversaries in West Asia. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Hamshahri: Failure to heed Leader's warnings led to Assad downfall

In an interview with Asghar Zarei, an expert on West Asia, Hamshahri discussed the reason for the fall of Bashar al-Assad. He said: The fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria by the armed opposition has plunged the region into a wave of astonishment. Some are trying to influence the realities of the battlefield by raising doubts about Iran's lack of effective role in the crisis. What we have seen in Syria in recent days shows the deep gaps created between the Assad government and the Syrian people. In such a situation, paying attention to the role of Iran is of particular importance. In the past, Iran was the only country that, along with the forces of the Resistance Front, countered ISIS and other Takfiri groups from Syria. In the meeting with Bashar al-Assad last June of this year, the Supreme Leader of the Revolution warned him to be careful of Western plans, but the former president of Syria did not pay attention to these warnings. Bashar Assad thought that he could survive with the support of the West and some Arab governments, but not much time passed and the Syrian government collapsed.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Strategic error led to Assad ouster

In a note, Siasat-e-Rooz dealt with the non-interference of Iran in the Syria conflict. It wrote: When ISIS appeared in Syria and the security conditions in Syria worsened, the government of this country requested help from the Islamic Republic of Iran through an official process. Iran's presence in Syria was advisory. After the annihilation of ISIS, Iran's advisory presence in Syria naturally decreased. In recent events, the presence of the highest level of Iranian officials to negotiate with Assad showed Iran's serious determination to strengthen Assad's government, but a strategic error caused Assad to fall. Assad was pleased with the promises of the Arab and Western countries in the region. When the Islamic Republic of Iran noticed Assad's reluctance for support, it decided not to intervene, but it continued its efforts to convince Assad until the last moment. However, Assad realized that the promises of his enemies were fake but it was too late.

Kayhan: Netanyahu and 'extremist' reformists see eye-to-eye on Syria developments

In a commentary, Kayhan discussed the behavior of some reformists following the fall of the Assad government and said: The takfiri-terrorist group of "Tahrir al-Sham" has worn a deceptive mask, and by avoiding to record or publish violent acts in cyberspace it is trying to receive the least reaction from the public against itself. Now the "extremists" (in Iran) that claim support for reforms try to justify the behavior of this terrorist group. Such happiness is in line with the interests of the Zionist regime and its Western allies. It seems both Netanyahu and the so-called reformers see eye to eye and are jubilant over the developments in Syria and seek the disintegration of the Resistance Front. Therefore, the fall of Damascus and the emergence of Takfiri terrorists in Syria has become a source of joy and celebration among some reformist loyalists. This cannot be defined and analyzed simply as a "historical incident", because even before in incidents such as internal riots the footprints and joint plans of the reform claimants and the Zionist regime were evident.

Ettelaat: A heavy price paid

In an explanation, Ettelaat addressed Bashar Assad's policy and his distance from Iran and said: According to the Financial Times, before the fall of Bashar al-Assad, Iran had lost trust in him. According to Saeed Laylaz, a reformist analyst, Assad was no longer an ally, and in fact, his time had run out. Defending him was no longer justified and continuing to support him was unreasonable and had unbearable costs. He had become an obstacle and some even called him a traitor. His passivity was costly for us. He aligned himself with regional actors that promised him a future that never materialized. According to analysts and politicians, some inside the Iranian government believed that Assad allied with Arab countries such as the United Arab Emirates by promising to help him to reconstruct his war-stricken country in exchange for a distance from Iran. Assad turned his back on us when we needed him the most.

'Iran's power remains undiminished': IRGC Chief



IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami addressing Iranian parliament members on December 10, 2024

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He reportedly outlined persistent efforts toward the "downfall of the occupying Zionist regime," highlighting how Iran has effectively countered the strategies of its adversaries in West Asia.

He commended the martyred Major General Qassem Soleimani's pivotal role in the defeat of ISIS, reinforcing Iran's commitment to regional stability.

The session, attended by key members of the

Iranian Parliament, delved into current military strategies in the region, particularly concerning Israeli operations.

Ahmad Naderi, a member of Parliament, provided additional context, noting that discussions also addressed the collapse of Syria's government under Bashar al-Assad.

Naderi quoted the IRGC chief, who had clarified that while Iranian advisors were present up until the government's fall, there is presently no deployment in Syria. The Iranian lawmaker also quoted Major General Salami as saying that despite ongoing challenges from adversarial forces seeking to undermine Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities, efforts to modernize and enhance Iran's defense systems will continue unabated.

The session further explored potential future developments and the broader security situation in West Asia.

These discussions occur against the backdrop of a recent upheaval in Syria, where militants led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) have seized control of Damascus, marking the end of President Assad's 24-year rule.

Sanctions snapback will be met with firm response, Iran warns Europe

From page 1 ▶ "We are also extremely concerned to learn that Iran has increased the number of centrifuges in use and started preparations to install additional enrichment infrastructure, further increasing Iran's enrichment capacity," the European Troika claimed.

The statement ignored the fact that Iran's increased uranium enrichment and use of new centrifuges followed the E3's push for an anti-Iran resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last month. Tehran had offered to slow enrichment if the resolution was dropped.



Undated photo shows one of Iran's nuclear facilities

During a phone call with IAEA's Director-General Rafael Grossi, Iran's foreign minister said his country would take more such

steps if Europe's unconstructive behavior continues. He said the resolution Europe passed at the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors in November prevented Grossi from harvesting the results of his earlier visit to Iran.

"While we will not hesitate to retaliate, we are still prepared and willing to continue constructive cooperation with the IAEA within relevant technical frameworks," Abbas Araghchi declared.

Grossi said the IAEA wants to engage in "serious interaction" with Tehran. He seemingly refrained from commenting on Europe's host of anti-Iran actions.

Tehran watching Syrian militants' proximity to Israel for potential ties: spokeswoman



Iranian Government Spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani addressing reporters during a news conference on December 10, 2024

TEHRAN – Fatemeh Mohajerani, the spokesperson for the Iranian government, underscored Iran's watchful approach to the changing dynamics in Syria during her weekly press briefing on Tuesday, noting that the proximity of Syrian armed groups to the Israeli regime serves as a vital factor in Tehran's strategic calculations.

Reflecting on the recent government collapse in Syria, where the Syrian army struggled to fend off advances from armed terrorists, Mohajerani stated, "Our relations with Syria are founded on respect, unity, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity."

She also expressed well wishes for the Syrian people and emphasized that the future of Syria should be decided by its citizens.

"Defending sacred sites, diplomatic locations, and maintaining human dignity have constantly been our primary concerns, and we stress the importance of their protection," she noted.

Mohajerani also highlighted the longstanding cultural, historical, and commercial ties between Iran and Syria, mentioning the historical presence of Iranian merchants in Damascus

"Tehran and Damascus enjoy many cultural commonalities, and we wish success for the Syri-

an people," she added.

Mohajerani stated that decisions regarding Syria involve consultations with all levels of government, not exclusively made by the Pezeshkian administration.

"The expenditures in Syria have been made with national interests as a priority," she stated.

Iran deployed military advisors to Syria for over a decade. They concentrated on countering terrorism that surged in the Arab country during the 2010s. Iran was the main force behind the vanquish of Daesh, which had taken over multiple regions in Syria and neighboring Iraq.

Addressing Iran's interactions with militant groups in Syria, Mohajerani affirmed that all necessary measures will be taken to protect Iran's national interests.

She emphasized the need for stability in the Arab country to facilitate these interactions.

"We won't tolerate Trump's intimidation"

In separate remarks later in the day, the spokesperson emphasized that Iran's approach to the newly elected U.S. President will depend on his future conduct.

Speaking to students at Shahid Rajaei University, the spokesperson stated, "We will negotiate wherever necessary, and where negotiation is not necessary, we will implement another Operation True Promise."

In response to repeated Israeli aggression, Iran launched Operation True Promise I in April and Operation True Promise II in October, which resulted in direct hits against several military bases of the Israeli regime.

She further stressed, "If Trump acts like a bully, it is clear that we will not accept it."

Mohajerani also highlighted that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian adheres to the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, in all matters.

Iranian official warns unrest threatening Iraq after outbreak of terrorism in Syria

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian official, Mohsen Rezaei, Secretary of the Economic Coordination Council and former IRGC chief, has warned that the current situation in Syria could escalate very fast and spread to neighboring countries.

"Enemies are trying to change the face of West Asia. The recent events in Lebanon and Syria, and maybe in Iraq in the near future, indicate the enemies' fear of the independence of the regional countries," Rezaei declared.

The official described Western actions as ex-

ceeding even the atrocities of Hitler. "Regional countries must know that weakening the regional security will cause irreparable damage to all of us."

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government collapsed on Sunday shortly after multiple terrorist factions with links to the U.S., Turkey, and Israel began an offensive into the northwestern Aleppo province. In the face of the Syrian army's lack of resistance, the groups quickly made advances and reached the capital Damascus.



December 10 marks the anniversary of the victory of the Iraqi Armed Forces over ISIS.

In commemoration of this event, Iraqi students from the 35th course at the Army War College organized a celebration in Baghdad. During the event, Iraqi officers expressed their gratitude for the support provided by the Iranian Armed Forces in achieving this victory.

They presented a sword inscribed with "Saif al-Dhu al-Fiqar" to Brigadier General Dr. Hossein Valivand Zamani, Commander of the Army Command and Staff College (DAFOS AJA).

Iranian, Pakistani FM's discuss Syria and bilateral relations



TEHRAN – In a telephone conversation, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and Iran's Foreign Minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, engaged in an in-depth discussion on regional and international issues, with a particular focus on the evolving situation in Syria.

During the call, the two diplomats shared their perspectives on the ongoing developments in Syria, emphasizing the importance of stability and peace in the region. Both ministers acknowledged the complex dynamics at play and explored avenues for potential collaboration to address the challenges facing the war-torn country.

The conversation also provided an opportunity to evaluate the current state of Iran-Pakistan bilateral relations. The ministers reviewed key aspects of cooperation between the two neighboring countries and discussed ways to strengthen ties in various sectors, including trade, security, and cultural exchanges.

Highlighting the historical and strategic importance of Iran-Pakistan relations, the foreign ministers reaffirmed their commitment to fostering deeper collaboration. They emphasized the need for continued dialogue and cooperation to address shared concerns and promote mutual interests in the region.

Iranian embassy in Damascus reportedly remains open



TEHRAN – According to an Iranian embassy worker speaking to ISNA on Tuesday, the embassy in Damascus, Syria is fully operational and continues to handle citizen inquiries.

Footage circulating online on Sunday showed the embassy getting raided by unknown individuals who had entered the premises after the collapse of President Bashar Assad's government. Iran's national TV said the attackers were not members of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a terrorist group that led the offensive resulting in the fall of Assad.

The HTS has reportedly told its forces to refrain from damaging any government, diplomatic, or religious sites.

Iran urges UN to condemn militant attacks on diplomatic premises in Syria

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The incidents follow the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government and have raised serious concerns about the safety and inviolability of diplomatic personnel and premises under international law.

Amir Sa'ed Iravani, Iran's ambassador to the UN, addressed the issue in two formal letters sent on Monday to UN Secretary General António Guterres and Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the rotating president of the Security Council. In the letters, Iravani condemned the militant attacks as flagrant violations of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963), which ensure the protection of diplomatic missions and their staff. "These actions breach the fundamental principles of international law, which require that the sanctity of diplomatic and consular facilities and representatives



Militants attacked the Iranian embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus on December 8, 2024.

be respected at all times," Iravani emphasized. He urged the United Nations to condemn the violations unequivocally and take immediate measures to safeguard diplomatic personnel and facilities. "No individual, group, or state has the right to commit or enable such transgressions," he stated, stressing the need to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Tensions escalated as online foot-

age surfaced on Sunday showing militants defacing an Iranian embassy in Syria, tearing down posters of late Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

The attackers vandalized the embassy, shattering windows and ransacking offices. The damage included the theft of sensitive archives and documents, leaving the mission se-

verely compromised.

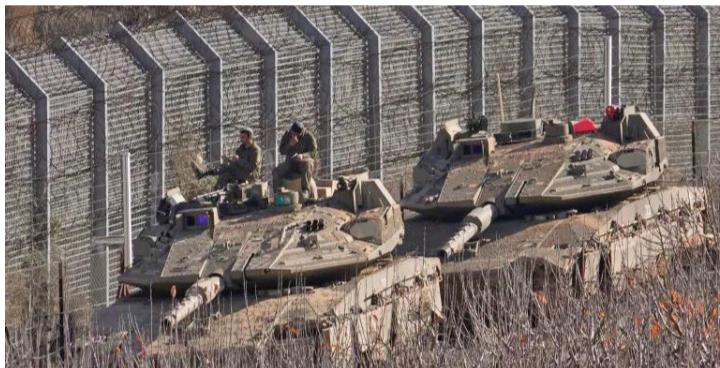
In a separate incident on November 29, militants launched short-range shell attacks on the Iranian consulate in Aleppo. Although consular staff had already been evacuated due to threats, the facility suffered significant damage during the invasion.

These attacks occurred amid a broader wave of militant advances across Syria. On November 27, armed groups led by HTS launched a two-pronged offensive on Aleppo and the surrounding Idlib countryside. Within days, they seized control of major cities, including Hama, Homs, Dara'a, and Suwayda.

On December 8, the militants declared that they had fully captured the Syrian capital, Damascus, marking the collapse of Assad's government. Iran has underscored the urgency of holding the perpetrators accountable and safeguarding diplomatic norms.

"The United Nations must respond decisively to prevent further violations and ensure the protection of international law," Iravani wrote.

Israeli attacks in Syria violates UN Charter: Iran foreign ministry



Israeli soldiers gather near at the buffer zone that separated Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights

TEHRAN – The Iranian Foreign Ministry has strongly condemned Israel's continued attacks on Syria's infrastructure and its expanding occupation of the Golan Heights, describing these actions as violations of international law and a threat to regional stability.

Speaking on Monday, ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei criticized the escalation of Israeli aggression over the past two days.

He noted that these attacks come at a time when Syria is grappling with the aftermath of the recent ousting of its government, exacerbating the suffering of the Syrian people. "These actions represent

a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter," Baqaei stated.

Baqaei also highlighted Israel's recent move into the buffer zone adjacent to the occupied Golan Heights. The zone was established under a 1974 disengagement agreement between Tel Aviv and Damascus to separate Israeli-occupied territory from Syrian land.

He described Israel's encroachment into this area as a violation of the agreement and a breach of UN Security Council resolutions. "This illegal occupation demonstrates the Israeli regime's expansionist and belligerent policies, as well as its disregard for international law and norms," Baqaei said.

The Iranian spokesman called on the international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, to take immediate action to halt Israel's violations against Syria. Baqaei urged regional and international actors to leverage their influence to stop Israel's aggression and hold the regime accountable for its actions.

He also criticized Western countries for their silence and inaction regarding Israel's behavior. "This lack of response emboldens Tel Aviv, which interprets Western silence as a green light to continue its violations," he remarked.

Baqaei's comments follow reports of significant gains by foreign-backed militants in Syria, who stormed the capital, Damascus, just a day earlier.

The resurgence of militant activity comes roughly two weeks after their advances in northern Syria, amid claims of strong backing from Israeli regime, Turkey, and some Western countries.

Since the outbreak of foreign-backed militancy in Syria in 2011, these forces have consistently received support from external actors, including Israel, according to reports. Such support has fueled instability in the region and prolonged the suffering of the Syrian people.

Israel's attacks on Syria's infrastructure and its expansion in the Golan Heights are part of a broader strategy, Baqaei suggested.

He reiterated Iran's commitment to standing by the Syrian people and called on the international community to counter Israel's destabilizing actions.

"The Security Council must act swiftly to end these aggressions, ensure accountability for Israel's violations, and uphold the principles of international law," he concluded.

Western rejoice at fall of Assad: counting chickens before they hatch!

By Mohammad Khatibi

TEHRAN – The fall of Damascus to a coalition of militant groups, forcing President Bashar al-Assad's exile in a matter of 11 days, surprised many. However, a "regime change" operation in Syria had been underway for years, involving numerous international and regional actors, including terrorist groups.

This is certainly not a good day for the Resistance Axis, but it's not the worst either. Jonathan Spyer's recent Wall Street Journal article, arguing that Assad's fall is due to a weakened Tehran and highlighting Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's severing of Hezbollah's supply lines, misses a crucial point: Resistance movements in Yemen and Gaza have been largely cut off from their supporting countries, yet they persist and will continue to do so.

Furthermore, The Axis wasn't solely dependent on Syria; long before Syria became a logistical hub for the Lebanese resistance, Hezbollah was already a significant force. Israel's war on Lebanon clearly demonstrates this.

Despite constant Israeli airstrikes targeting supply lines and weapons depots, Hezbollah continued operations unimpeded. Hezbollah's robust indigenous missile and drone production capabilities enabled this. The current Lebanese ceasefire isn't a Hezbollah defeat; the group retains the capacity to inflict significant damage on Tel Aviv.

Spyer characterizes the Lebanese ceasefire as a major setback for Hezbollah, falling short of its stated goals against Israel, arguing that "Hezbollah decided that supporting its ally in Gaza was no longer cost-effective." Resistance Axis factions, despite Western claims of Iran controlling all, have been acting autonomously without depending on Tehran. Hezbollah is no different and the decision made by the group is seen more like a tactical pause in a long journey of confronting Israel. The ceasefire in Lebanon is no means of a change in the ideology on which Hezbollah is based.

The author attributes the delay in Tehran's response to the October 26th attacks to "Iran's apprehension over the failure of its Iraqi and Yemeni proxies to breach Israeli air defenses with drones and missiles."

He also claims Tehran is helpless against Israel, but this contradicts both the reality on the ground and Iran's actual approach to West Asian conflicts.

Ansarullah has launched numerous successful attacks on the port of Eilat in southern occupied Palestine, as well as Tel Aviv and other major cities.

The Iraqi Resistance has also carried out attacks, targeting not only Israel but also U.S. bases in Syria and Iraq. Conversely, from the outset of Israel's assault on the Gaza Strip, Tehran has sought an end to Tel Aviv's atrocities.

The opening of multiple fronts against Israel aligns with a strategy of peace, not war. The concept of an "Axis of Resistance" aims to deter Israeli aggression. Spyer attributes the fall of the Assad government solely to what he frames as Iran's weakness, neglecting several crucial factors.

The Syrian army was already near collapse when rebels launched their offensive; the attack was the final blow. Since 2011, when foreign-backed militancy began in Syria, the army has been fighting multiple groups simultaneously. In recent years there have been many reports about exhausted army members switching sides due to economic pressures and a lack of morals to fight.

To make matters worse, the U.S. government announced additional sanctions against Syria under the so-called 'Caesar Act' in December 2019 which made it difficult for the Assad government to maintain the functionality of the military. It is now obvious that his efforts were not enough.

Other than the military facts Assad refused to reconcile with the armed opposition groups in time and his inflexibility to reform pushed more people to extremism.



Iran has been a staunch ally of Assad's Syria in its fight against terrorism and has provided help in confronting Daesh and other Takfiri terrorist groups. However, this time it was obvious there was no one to be helped and Tehran has not fought anyone's war for him/her.

The celebrations in Western capitals for the fall of Assad may be short-lived because the overthrow came from not the people of the country but rather from armed opposition groups affiliated with Daesh and Al-Qaeda.

No matter how "rational" they have been acting in the past two weeks, there are still large fears that the situation will be changed in a lightning. The current power vacuum in Syria seems to be a repetition of what happened in Iraq which caused the creation of Daesh and the insurgency that took so many lives in the region. Time may tell that those who cheer for the collapse of the Syrian government were counting chickens before they hatch

Sprinter Safarzadeh aims to win gold at 2028 Paralympics

TEHRAN – Iranian Para athlete Hajar Safarzadeh has revealed she is aiming to win a gold medal at the 2028 Paralympic Games in Los Angeles.

Safarzadeh claimed a silver medal in the women's 400 meters T12 of the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

She crossed the line with a time of 55.39 seconds. Cuban sprinter Omara Durand Elias seized the gold with 53.59 seconds and the bronze medal went to Ukrainian Oksana Boturchuk with 55.67 seconds.

"I started my training just three weeks after 2024 Paralympics and I train twice in a day. I am going to improve my record because I have to participate in the world Championships and then I will compete at the 2026 Asian Para Games," Safarzadeh told Tehran Times.

"I competed at the women's 400 meters T12 and 200 meters T12 in Paris and want to participate in more disciplines to improve my chance of winning medal.

My main goal is to win a gold medal in Los Angeles," she added.

"I am well aware that how difficult is to win a medal in the Paralympics but I will do my best to make my dream come true," Safarzadeh concluded.

Inter coach Inzaghi satisfied with Taremi

TEHRAN – Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi is satisfied with his Iranian striker Mehdi Taremi.

"I'm very satisfied with him, he's a player I wanted along with the club: all his teammates love him, he played as a starter in the Champions League and we have thirteen points," Inzaghi said.

"We know and he knows that there are four other forwards who want to play like him: Lautaro and Thuram are the ones who are playing the most, Arnautovic had some problems but when I put him on the pitch he gave me great answers, Correa is back to being very good.

"I'm spoiled for choice, playing for Inter we know there's a lot of competition: there's plenty in midfield and attack, less in defense.

Dumfries has been added to Acerbi and Pavard, as well as Palacios who isn't on the list. From next week I hope Acerbi and Dumfries can be there, as well as Palacios of course," Inzaghi concluded.

Iranian referee Khazaei officiates at William Bonac Classic

TEHRAN – Iran's Akbar Khazaei was on the panel of judges at the 2024 William Bonac Classic IFBB Pro Qualifier and 2024 Iron Man & Iron Maiden.

William Bonac Classic is a prestigious annual bodybuilding competition organized by Pro Jury member and Chief Jury Liona van den Hoek-Bergmann and Pro Bodybuilder William Bonac under the auspices of the IFBB Pro League.

This annual bodybuilding competition is held in the beautiful "Schouwburg de Meerse".

The organization has done its best to make the William Bonac Classic a unique and fun day out for the whole family.

Khazaei has been also invited for the IFBB Pro League 2025, which will be held in the Netherlands.

Akbar Khazaei serves as IFBB World Federation judge until 2022, and since then he has been introduced as Mr. Olympia judge. Khazaei obtained a bodybuilding judgment

certificate from Iranian Bodybuilding Federation in 2006. A year later, he received the IFBB Judgment Permission and the Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Federation (ABBF) referee book from this Confederation.

Iran Club beat Nepal at 2024 CAVA Club Volleyball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran Club defeated Nepal 3-2 (26-28, 23-25, 25-21, 25-22, 15-13) at the 2024 CAVA Men's Club Volleyball Championship.

The Iran U19 team had defeated Club HDC from Maldives 3-2 in its first match.

HNC, Iran Club and Calicut Heroes each have two more matches in the single round-robin preliminaries, while Club HDC and Gandaki Pradesh have one one remaining.

The five-team competition is being held in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Khan Chadormalou was supposed to take part in the competition but withdrew and Iran U-19 participated in the event instead.

The debut championship, which will last eight days to see the eventual winning team being crowned the first-ever CAVA Men's Club champions on December 14, has attracted five strong club teams to vie for top honor in this championship consisting of India's Calicut Heroes, Club HDC from Maldives, Iran Men's Volleyball Team and two club teams from hosts Nepal, Help Nepal Sports Club and Gandaki Province.

Iran fourth at 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Kazakhstan 28-22 and finished in fourth place at the 2024 Asian Women's Handball Championship on Tuesday.

Team Melli had lost to South Korea 33-20 in the semifinals.

Iran 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 in Group B.

Japan won the title, beating South Korea 25-24 in the final match.

Shahdab lose to Trentino at 2024 FIVB Club World Championship

TEHRAN – Shahdab Yazd of Iran lost to five-time world champion Trentino 3-0 (25-12, 25-22, 25-21) at the 2024 FIVB Volleyball Men's Club World Championship on Tuesday.

With teams from five different countries and some of the biggest international stars of the sport on the court, the competition started on Tuesday, in Uberlândia, Brazil.

Between Tuesday and Sunday, eight teams from hosts Brazil, Italy, Iran, Argentina and Egypt will play for the world title, having the Sabiazinho stadium as the venue for the tournament.

The eight participating teams were split into two pools, with Italy's Cucine Lube Civitanova, Brazil's Praia Clube, Iran's Foolad Sirjan Iranian and Egypt's Al Ahly SC forming Pool A and Italy's Itas Trentino, Brazil's Sada Cruzeiro, Iran's Shahdab Yazd and Argentina's Ciudad Voley competing in Pool B. The two best teams in each pool advance to the semifinals.

Shahdab will meet Sada Cruzeiro early Thursday.

Tehran hosting exhibition of poultry, livestock, related industries



TEHRAN- The first Iran Exhibition of Poultry, Livestock, and Related Industries (IPL EXPO 2024) kicked off on Tuesday at Tehran's Shahr-e-Aftab International Exhibition

Center.

The executive director of the first specialized exhibition of livestock, poultry and related industries stated that the purpose of holding this exhibition is to transfer experience and technologies in the livestock and poultry industry and to show the capabilities of the country in this field.

Mehdi Masoudi said that 170 domestic companies and 20 representatives from other countries participated in the first specialized exhibition of livestock, poultry and related industries in Tehran.

He added that this exhibition will continue to work in an area of 14,000 square meters in Tehran's Shahr-e Aftab International Exhibition until December 13.

About 1,500 tons of honey produced annually in Ilam

TEHRAN- The deputy head of Ilam province's Agriculture Department said that about 1,500 tons of honey is produced in the province per annum.

Sahri Khodamoradi said that there are 1,900 apiaries with 190,000 bee colonies in Ilam province.

He said this number of apiaries in the province has created direct and indirect employment for more than 6,000 people.

As announced by an official with Iran's Agriculture Ministry, the country's honey production per capita stands at 1.415 kilograms.

Mohammad-Ebrahim Hassan-Nejad, the deputy minister for livestock products affairs, also put the country's honey consumption per capita at 1.397 kilograms.

He has also said that 155,000 people are working in the apiaries of the country, adding this number of people are working in 94,932

apiaries.

Based on the data released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Iran is the third-largest producer of honey in the world.

The chairman of the Animal Science Research Institute has said that the amount of honey production in the country should be increased by three to four kilograms per colony.

Mokhtar Mohajer said, "According to the Seventh National Development Plan (2022-2026), the amount of honey production should be increased by at least three to four kilograms per colony according to the diversity of plants and the area of pastures that we have in the country".

He announced that 8,300 kilograms of royal jelly, 406 tons of pollen, 2,536 tons of beeswax, 247 tons of propolis, and 3,917 grams of bee venom are produced annually in the country.

TEDPIX gains nearly 12,000 points on Tuesday



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 11,957 points to 2,518,874 on Tuesday, which is the fourth day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

In mid-September, the head of Iran Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said the entity will take the necessary measures to ensure that the direct and indirect interests of the stock market are considered in next year's budget bill.

"We are taking special measures in relation to the budget bill and issues that directly or indirectly affect the capital market," Hojatollah Seyedi stated.

He has also said that improving the stock market's efficiency is the main priority of the SEO in the current government administration.

"In the 14th government, our mission is to protect the rights and interests of shareholders, facilitate the formation of capital, and improve the efficiency of the market which is the priority of the SEO programs," Seyedi underlined.

"The capacities of the capital market are huge and I believe that this market has room

for a leap and now we are on the threshold of that leap," the official further noted.

"Now, in addition to great capital and capabilities of the companies, we have powerful workforces, investors and competent managers in the market, so there is no reason why our capital market should not develop and reach at least 300 to 400 billion dollars of gross domestic product," he added.

Emphasizing that big steps should be taken in this regard, the official continued: "I have decided to work to this end with high motivation to play a small role in the development of the country."

The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization pointed to the capital market as a regulatory and supervisory body and said: "In this regard, our mission is to protect the rights of shareholders, promote market efficiency and facilitate capital formation, which are connected to each other like the sides of a triangle. But the question is, which of these factors can be the driving force as a more independent variable?"

"The important variable is the improvement of market efficiency, that is, the formation of more capital, which, in addition to increasing capital, also preserves the rights of shareholders," he finally said.

In late January, the deputy governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) stressed the need for diverse financing tools in the country, noting that such tools are currently being provided by the stock market.

"To reduce the speculative and profit-seeking activities of dealers in the country, financing tools should be diversified," Mohammad Shirijian said.

"The capital market is an institution that directs capital to production in an efficient manner. Now, to accelerate the process of resource transfer and high productivity, the financing should be directed to the enterprises," the official explained.

Iran, Vietnam agree on trade delegation exchanges

TEHRAN – Iran and Vietnam have agreed to exchange trade delegations to boost economic cooperation following a visit of an Iranian private sector delegation to Vietnam.

Led by Ghadir Ghiafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), the Iranian delegation held productive discussions with the Ho Chi Minh City branch of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI).

As ICCIMA portal reported, key areas of focus included addressing trade barriers, increasing exports, and participating in major exhibitions. Vietnam will send two delegations to Iran to attend Iran Expo and a tourism exhibition. Meanwhile, the Iranian delegation will tour Vietnamese factories specializing in home appliances and audio-visual equipment, showcasing potential sectors



for bilateral investment and technology transfer.

Recent developments highlight growing momentum in trade relations between the two countries. During a similar session earlier this year, discussions emphasized diver-

sifying trade portfolios to include tropical fruits, food products, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, and marine products. Both sides have underscored the need to strengthen financial mechanisms, establish shipping lines, and explore

the preferential trade agreement to facilitate smoother transactions and increase trade volumes to \$2 billion annually, aligning with earlier strategic goals.

Vietnam, with its dynamic economy and export capabilities, remains a key trade partner for Iran, particularly in sectors like food, electronics, and logistics. Conversely, Iran's industrial, agricultural, and technical expertise offers Vietnam valuable opportunities for trade expansion and joint ventures in regional markets.

Both sides also see collaboration as a bridge to access ASEAN and ECO markets, leveraging their membership in regional economic blocks. The commitment to organizing regular delegations and business forums signals strong political and economic will to enhance bilateral trade relations.

Kyrgyzstan doubles fruit imports from Iran amid strengthening trade relations

TEHRAN – Kyrgyzstan has significantly increased its imports of fresh fruits from Iran during the first nine months of 2024, marking a doubling of trade volumes compared to the same period last year. According to a report by Kyrgyzstan's National Statistical Committee (NSC), the country imported 2,200 tons of Iranian fruits valued at \$1.5 million, up from 1,200 tons worth \$746,000 during the corresponding period in 2023.

Iran's growing dominance in Kyrgyzstan's fruit market highlights the expanding bilateral trade ties, with Uzbekistan trailing as the second-largest exporter. The increase in fruit imports also coincides with a reported 24 percent decline in Kyrgyzstan's imports of grapes and raisins from China, signaling a shift in sourcing preferences among Kyrgyz buyers.

This surge comes amid broader cooperation between the two nations. Kyrgyzstan has shown increasing interest in utilizing Iranian trade routes and ports, as outlined in recent agreements between the two governments. Iranian officials have emphasized the importance of boosting trade through agricultural products, aligning with national strategies to diversify export markets and counter economic pressures caused by sanctions. This includes active Iranian participation in Kyrgyz agricultural exhibitions to promote Iranian goods, which have been well-received among Kyrgyz consumers.

Moreover, Iran's southern ports, such as Shahid Rajaei Port, are being positioned as vital logistics hubs for Kyrgyzstan. Agreements signed in recent years have paved the way for greater collabora-

tion in shipping and infrastructure development, facilitating smoother trade routes for agricultural goods and other commodities. The strengthening trade links are expected to further boost Iran's agricultural exports, including key products like citrus fruits, apples, and melons, to Central Asia.

The positive momentum reflects mutual efforts to enhance economic cooperation, with both countries exploring opportunities under regional frameworks such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which promotes intra-regional trade and connectivity.

Iran's growing agricultural exports to Kyrgyzstan also underscore the increasing competitiveness of its produce in Central Asia, bolstered by favorable pricing and quality standards.

NDF proposes \$2.5b credit line for transport infrastructure

From page 1 ▶ However, Ghazanfari pointed to the shipping and tanker sectors as examples of successful repayment, describing them as potential models for other industries. "The NDF is ready to allocate \$2.5 billion to transport infrastructure projects, provided repayment terms are carefully structured and guaranteed," he said.

During the meeting, officials em-

phasized the importance of prioritizing projects in the rail, road, and maritime sectors. "We expect the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development to present its priority projects for review and potential funding," Ghazanfari said.

He added that the proposed credit line could enable large-scale projects that reduce logistics costs, facilitate goods and passenger transport, and

improve economic indicators.

Sustainable development and efficient resource allocation were also key topics discussed. Officials highlighted the positive repayment record of certain past projects, indicating the feasibility of financing further initiatives.

The meeting comes amid reports that \$900 million of previously allocated transport sector funds have

already been repaid, reflecting the sector's repayment capacity and potential for further investment.

It was agreed that the Transport Ministry would submit detailed proposals to the NDF for review. The move aims to streamline project financing and execution, contributing to the improvement of Iran's transport infrastructure and economic development.

Oil Ministry to sign gas output 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 stated.

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 interna-

tional 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.

Knowledge-based firms manufacture 768 marine, port, telecom components

TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based private firms have produced 768 marine, port, and telecommunication-electronic components, showcasing the growing trust of the Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) in domestic expertise and innovation, a senior official said.

Ali Fathi, deputy for Engineering and Infrastructure Development at the PMO, highlighted the initiative as part of Iran's broader strategy to promote local production and economic resilience, saying: "In alignment with the Leader's emphasis on boosting domestic production and achieving self-sufficiency, the PMO has prioritized equipment maintenance, port and marine component production, and telecommunication-electronic advancements."

At the 8th Transportation, Logistics, and Related Industries Exhibition, which is due to be held from

December 16 to 18 at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Mosalla, 220 new components across port, marine, and telecommunication-electronic sectors will be showcased for experts, innovators, and the public.

Boosting domestic production amid sanctions

Fathi emphasized the PMO's commitment to leveraging domestic capabilities, particularly through collaboration with knowledge-based companies. "This effort not only counters unjust sanctions but also prevents currency outflows, creates sustainable employment, and advances the country's engineering and manufacturing capabilities to a global standard," he stated.

He cited successful examples of domestic innovation, saying the approach has sparked significant growth and optimism among industry stakeholders. "The support

provided aligns fully with Iran's long-term maritime development policies, the 20-Year Vision Plan, and the country's seventh development program."

Supporting innovation and domestic production

The initiative focuses on achieving self-reliance by fostering innovation, localizing production, and strengthening domestic supply chains for vital spare parts and equipment. "With PMO's backing, I am confident that we will soon be able to domestically produce most spare parts and equipment required for port and maritime operations," Fathi said.

He also referred to a successful consultative meeting in March 2024, where PMO executives and leaders of knowledge-based firms discussed strategies to address equipment needs and expand domestic production.

The upcoming exhibition will display components and technologies identified as priorities across Iran's ports, including first-time productions. "More than 220 components, including those newly developed or requiring initial production, will be exhibited across marine, port, and telecommunication-electronic sectors," Fathi said, inviting local producers to participate actively.

Fathi expressed optimism that more companies will step forward, noting PMO's past success in supporting domestic firms to meet spare part requirements for port operations.

The 8th Transportation, Logistics, and Related Industries Exhibition runs from December 16 to 18 in Tehran. The event provides a platform for specialists, manufacturers, and visitors to engage with locally produced components and explore new technological demands.

Deafening silence over scorched-earth strategy

Syrian rebels, supporters remain tight-lipped about Israel's incessant attacks

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Israel's nefarious schemes for Syria are coming to light days after the collapse of the country's government.

Since the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and other rebel groups took control of Damascus at the weekend and toppled president Bashar Assad, Israel has intensified attacks against Syria.

But Israel is not targeting the rebels and their positions. The regime stands accused of supporting the HTS which launched an offensive in Aleppo late last month and conquered key Syrian cities and towns within days.

On Tuesday, Israel continued to carry out airstrikes in Syria,



Israel has carried out more than 300 airstrikes in Syria since Bashar Assad's government was toppled on Sunday.

ended the 1967 war.

Israeli forces have occupied strategic areas in Quneitra governorate in the southern areas



Syrian sources say Israeli troops have reached up to 25km from Damascus.

pounding an air defense site and damaged Syrian naval ships as well as military warehouses near the port city of Latakia.

Israeli warplanes also hit military bases and research centers in and around the capital, Damascus.

A war monitor says Israel has carried out more than 300 strikes across Syria since Assad's fall.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights added that Israel has "destroyed the most important military sites in Syria, including Syrian airports and their warehouses, aircraft squadrons, radars, military signal stations, and many weapons and ammunition depots in various locations in most Syrian governorates".

of the country. They have taken control of strategic Mount Hermon while Syrian sources say the regime's army has reached up to 25km from Damascus.

Israel has called its military presence in Syria temporary with the aim of ensuring that the regions adjacent to the occupied Golan Heights are not exposed to any potential security threats.

Israel says its actions are aimed at preventing weapons falling "into the hands of extremists".

For now, it is as clear as day that Israel is seeking to destroy Syria's defense capabilities and expand its presence in the Golan Heights and perhaps beyond for good.

Nonetheless, Israel's latest aggression against Syria encompass objectives that go beyond



The Palestine Information Center revealed in 2005 that Mossad-linked agents killed more than 500 Iraqi scientists and academics after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

The Israeli army has also taken advantage of Assad's downfall and penetrated Syrian territory beyond the buffer zone with the occupied Golan Heights. It has seized land in Syria in violation of a 50-year-old agreement that

these aims.

According to Syrian media, one of the country's scientists has been assassinated in his home in Damascus.

The murder of Dr. Hamdi Ismail

dent George W. Bush.

According to the report, Mossad agents had been operating in Iraq with the aim of liquidating Iraqi nuclear and biology scientists, among other scientists and prominent university professors.

"Israeli commandos had been operating on Iraqi territory for more than a year, the focus of their activities being the assassination of Iraqi scientists and intellectuals. The Zionists resorted to the large-scale assassination campaign after the failure of American efforts that started immediately after the American occupation of Iraq, aimed at attracting a number of Iraqi scientists to cooperate and go to work in the United States," the report said.

It now seems that Israel has hatched a similar plot in Syria.

Presently, Israel's actions in Syria bear the hallmark of a scorched-earth policy in the face of inaction by armed groups that toppled Assad and regional as well as trans-regional countries.

HTS leader Abu Mohammed al-Julani has said the Syrian people are the "rightful owners" of the country, calling Assad's fall "a victory to the Islamic nation."

But he has so far kept mum about Israel's escalating aggression against Syria.

Syria's incoming Salvation Government, which Assad's prime



The assassination of a Syrian chemist suggests that Israel may be orchestrating a campaign to eliminate numerous scientists within the nation.

of chaos caused by the US war on the Arab country. It is believed that the assassinations were a systematic effort to eliminate or exile a group crucial to Iraq's reconstruction.

At that time, reports suggested that Israel's Mossad spy agency through collaboration with the United States assassinated more than 500 Iraqi scientists and academic professors. They said Israeli hit squads against Iraqi scientists had been active in the country after Saddam's fall.

On June 14, 2005, the Palestine Information Center revealed that Israeli and foreign agents sent to Iraq by Mossad killed at least 350 Iraqi scientists and more than 200 university professors and academic personalities in cooperation with the United States.

It had cited a report compiled by the US State Department prepared for then American presi-

minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali agreed on Monday to hand power to, has also made no comments about Israel's intensified ground and aerial attacks.

Turkey, which is believed to be the main backer of the HTS, has also remained silent.

Several Arab nations have expressed their disapproval of Israel's military actions in Syria in recent days; however, they have not taken any concrete measures in response.

Western countries are also looking the other way.

It now seems that Syria's current rulers as well as regional countries have given Israel carte blanche to continue its self-imposed scorched-earth strategy within Syrian territory. The go-ahead is in line with Israel's expansionist ambitions in the region.

ters for displaced individuals, destroyed 211 government buildings, and leveled 160,500 housing units by dropping 87,000 tons of explosives on the tiny coastal enclave.

Furthermore, at least 6,500 Palestinians from Gaza have been detained, while 2,300 bodies were removed from cemeteries, and two million individuals have been forcibly displaced.

The Gaza genocide has taken 34 hospitals and 80 healthcare centers out of service, targeting 162 medical facilities and 135 ambulances.

The destruction has affected 86% of the Gaza Strip, with initial direct losses from the conflict estimated at \$37 billion.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel seizes Syrian territory twice the size of Gaza

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON - Israel has reneged on the armistice agreement signed with the Syrian state in 1974 since the announcement of the fall of the Syrian government led by President Bashar al-Assad.

The Israeli army has invaded the occupied Golan Heights towards Mount Hermon in Quneitra, reaching 25 kilometres southwest of Damascus.

By the evening of December 9, the Israeli enemy - amid complete international silence - had occupied Syrian territory almost twice the size of Gaza. The Israeli invasion of Syria coincided with the seizure of 43,000 dunams of land in the occupied West Bank.

In conjunction with Netanyahu's statement that "the Golan Heights will remain Israeli forever," the Israeli aggression on Syria has started since the onset of dawn on Sunday, targeting military and scientific centres owned by Syria, including weapons and ammunition depots, military parts, aircraft squadrons, radars, military signal stations, and scientific research centers. Air defense sys-

tems have also disabled and taken out of service.

Security sources have revealed to Reuters that "the Israeli military incursion into southern Syria reached about 25 kilometers southwest of the capital Damascus."

Besides, a Syrian security source has revealed that "Israeli forces reached the Qatana area, which is located ten kilometers inside Syrian territory, east of the demilitarized zone separating the occupied Golan Heights from Syria."

Meanwhile, the Syrian Civil Defense has announced the extinguishing of a fire in Damascus "after the Israeli bombing of practical research centers on the outskirts of the city," confirming "the absence of any evidence of unusual toxic fumes while extinguishing the fire."

The Syrian Civil Defense has added that "no cases of suffocation were observed among civilians."

For its part, the Israeli army radio has confirmed the destruction of "aircraft, warships, and strategic facilities in Syria to prevent the opposition from reaching them."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

How neoliberal policies fueled the fall of Assad

From page 1 ▶ Despite the authoritarian nature of the government, this approach yielded tangible benefits, such as free healthcare and education through university levels. The emphasis on agricultural production fostered self-sufficiency in strategic crops, leading to lower prices for essential goods. This stability supported social cohesion by guaranteeing millions of Syrians a baseline standard of living. Though limited in some respects, the welfare state offered a sense of security, underpinning a relatively cohesive society.

However, when Bashar al-Assad took power in 2000, Syria shifted from the state-led welfare model to neoliberal economic reforms aimed at integrating the country into the global economy. These reform strategies included opening markets to foreign trade, dramatically reducing import restrictions, and privatizing state-owned enterprises.

Between 2000 and 2007, the number of goods restricted from importation dropped from 3,000 to just 100, exemplifying Syria's new market-oriented stance designed to attract foreign investors. However, this also exposed domestic industries to international competition, revealing

long-standing inefficiencies.

The reform of the banking sector further accelerated this transition. In 2001, the introduction of the Private Banks Law facilitated the emergence of new private banks with foreign investors, fundamentally altering Syria's financial landscape.

By 2018, Syria hosted 14 private banks, significantly foreign-owned. This shift, meant to invigorate the economy, largely failed to deliver on promised growth.

The liberalization of the agricultural sector was another contentious initiative. State farms, which had been collectively owned since Hafez's era, were privatized, resulting in a sharp concentration of land ownership. By 2008, a mere 28% of farmers controlled 75% of irrigated land, while nearly half of the farmers held a scant 10%.

This privatization decimated the agricultural workforce, which fell by 40% between 2002 and 2008. Employment in agriculture dropped from 32.9% in 2000 to a mere 14% by 2011, undermining rural economies and displacing countless workers.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Regulator sanctions media for publishing 'inaccurate' reports about Islamic Students Associations of Britain

LONDON - Islamic Students Associations of Britain is proud to inform its respected members that the UK press regulator IPSO chaired by Lord Edward Faulks (a member of the British House of Lords) sanctioned The Times newspaper for publishing "significantly inaccurate information" about Islamic Students Associations of Britain and for breaching regulations.

The Times published numerous false allegations. In one of its articles it falsely claimed that ISAB was involved with an event that allegedly took place in 2020 in London containing anti-Semitic chants.

Following formal complaints, The Times offered resolutions to ISAB to atone for publishing falsehoods, which ISAB categorically rejected. Accordingly, IPSO reviewed the matter along with over 449 pages of documents. The investigation concluded that ISAB had no involvement with the alleged event and that these claims were baseless. Ultimately The Times was sanctioned for breaching regulations.

This is not the first time that The Times has strenuously attempted to tarnish the image of Muslim students by publishing fabrications. The newspaper had falsely accused Mr. Atae, a former secretary of Islamic Students Associations of Britain, of personally having meetings with Ezzatollah Zarghami, a former IRGC general. The Times later on sent him an apology and published a complete retraction stating: "We wrongly said that Mohammad Hussain Atae, a former official with the Islamic Students Associations of Britain, talked with Ezzatollah Zarghami, a general in Iran's revolutionary guard. No such meeting took place."

The Independent also published similar false allegations about ISAB. Similar to The Times, it falsely claimed that ISAB was involved with an event that took place in 2020 in London allegedly containing anti-Semitic chants. Following complaints, The Independent retracted false allegations about ISAB.

It's worth noting that many newspapers share sources and stories and most of these false allegations appear to have come from The JC and their affiliates. The JC has been described by award-winning experts in journalism as "coarse and aggressive" and a "disservice" to the Jewish community.

The JC has recently faced criticism due to the publication of fabricated stories full of contradictions and lies described as many newspapers as 'The JC Scandal'. Interestingly, even the author of one of The Times articles written against ISAB (which cites the JC as its primary source) has recently criticized the JC and distanced himself from it.

He publicly criticized the JC leadership stating "how is it that British Jews don't know who owns 'their' paper" and that "the increasingly destructive editorship of the JC is no longer tenable." He also called for an end to the JC's secret ownership by announcing "its ownership must be revealed - and hopefully replaced too."

Those who previously believed The JC and its affiliates' propaganda are now distancing themselves from that newspaper and retracting their articles which shows a serious decline in its credibility.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel has committed almost 1,000 massacres in Gaza since Oct. 2023

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Israeli military has carried out 9,905 large-scale massacres in the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, the Government Media Office in Gaza has revealed.

These included 7,160 massacres targeting Palestinian families, the Media Office said in a report based on key data from the ongoing genocidal war on the enclave.

According to the report, Israeli attacks have resulted in the total elimination of 1,410 Palestinian families, wiping them from civil records by killing fathers, mothers, and all family members. The total number of injuries from families in this category stands at 5,444.

The Media Office further revealed the indiscriminate war has caused 55,758 deaths and disappearances, including 17,712 children and 12,136 women.

Additionally, 3,500 children are at severe risk of death due to malnutrition and lack of food; 12,650 injured individuals urgently require treatment abroad; and 12,500 cancer patients face critical conditions due to the lack of medical care.

In the medical sector, 1,059 healthcare workers and 88 civil defense personnel have lost their lives. Seven mass graves have been created within hospital grounds, with 520 bodies recovered from them.

Israeli military strikes have targeted 212 shel-

Glimpses of Iranian art and culture showcased at Greece festival



TEHRAN - The UNESCO-Piraeus intercultural festival, featuring participants from 20 countries and cultural groups from across Greece, recently took place at the Melina Mercouri Hall in the Peace and Friendship Stadium.

Among the highlights was the booth representing the Islamic Republic of Iran, which captivated visitors with an array of traditional Iranian arts, crafts, and cultural offerings, ISNA reported.

Iran's display showcased exquisite handicrafts, including minakari (enamel work), khata-mkari (marquetry), and ghalamkari (hand-painted textiles), among other works, reflecting the rich heritage of Iranian artistry.

Visitors were further charmed by a selection of traditional Iranian sweets, such as Gaz, Sohan, and Baklava, which received widespread acclaim for their unique flavors, the report said.

Another feature of Iran's participation was the promotion of cultural and media initiatives. A standout attraction was an Iranology platform

presented in Greek, offering comprehensive information about Iran's history, culture, and civilization.

The booth also featured a section on Iranian cinema, providing insights into the nation's celebrated film industry. Visitors were introduced to a number of renowned works of Iranian cinema, broadening their appreciation of the country's contributions to the seventh art.

A musical performance by an Iranian expatriate living in Greece added another layer of cultural engagement. A solo santur recital captivated audiences, with the musician blending traditional Iranian compositions with select pieces from Greek music. This harmonious fusion offered a unique experience that resonated deeply with attendees.

Adding to the visual appeal of Iran's booth was a large banner blending images of Iran's historical and religious landmarks, which served as a popular backdrop for commemorative photographs, the report added.

According to organizers, the festival was a vibrant showcase of cultural diversity, featuring over 100 artistic groups from Greece and participating nations. These groups performed a variety of traditional music and folk dances, reflecting the richness of their respective cultural traditions.

Organized by the UNESCO Club of Piraeus and Islands in collaboration with the international organization Action Art and the Peace and Friendship Stadium, the event underscored the importance of cultural exchange in fostering unity and appreciation among diverse communities.

The festival was held on December 7 and 8.

Venezuela eyes strengthening cooperation in tourism industry

Venezuelan Tourism Minister Leticia Gomez has invited Turkish companies to invest in her country, saying that Türkiye has significant "experience and expertise in tourism."

Gomez attended the 18th edition of the Tourism Trade International Expo and Congress in the Turkish western province of Izmir, where she met with investors and representatives of companies.

They are seeking to develop their tourism industry and to lure more tourists to Venezuela, she told state-run Anadolu Agency.

"Türkiye is the third largest tourist destination in the world... We would like to benefit from Türkiye's experience in tourism," Gomez said, stressing the good relationship between the two countries.

Stating that Venezuela is misrepresented, Gomez said they are working to strengthen re-

lations with other countries by participating in tourism fairs and events.

Venezuela has a big potential in tourism, according to Gomez.

She said that her government recently established the International Investment Agency. "We are assisting future investors at every stage. We aim to lure investments in our tourism sector."

She also said that agreements were signed with the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry and the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB).

"With those agreements, we are hoping to increase package tours [from Türkiye] to our country...The number of weekly flights from Türkiye to Venezuela will rise to 13, with the visa exemption offering an opportunity," Gomez added.

(Source: Hurriyet Daily News)

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Amphitheatre of El Jem

The impressive ruins of the largest colosseum in North Africa, a huge amphitheatre which could hold up to 35,000 spectators, are found in the small village of El Jem. This 3rd-century monument illustrates the grandeur and extent of Imperial Rome.

According to UNESCO, the Amphitheatre of El Jem bears outstanding witness to Roman architecture, notably monuments built for spectator events, in Africa. Located in a plain in the centre of Tunisia, this amphitheatre is built entirely of stone blocks, with no foundations and free-standing.

In this respect it is modelled on the Coliseum of Rome without being an exact copy of the Flavian construction. Its size (big axis of 148 metres and small axis 122 metres) and its capacity (judged to be 35,000 spectators) make it without a doubt among the largest amphitheatres in the world.

Its facade comprises three levels of arcades of Corinthian or composite style. Inside, the monument has conserved most of the supporting infrastructure for the tiered seating. The wall of the podium, the arena and the underground passages are practically intact. This architectural and artistic creation built around 238 CE,

constitutes an important milestone in the comprehension of the history of Roman Africa. The Amphitheatre of El Jem also bears witness to the prosperity of the small city of Thysdrus (current El Jem) at the time of the Roman Empire.

Authenticity

Restoration work carried out over time has not affected the essential functional and structural authenticity of the property. The authenticity of the setting is however threatened by the appearance of new constructions around the amphitheatre.

The management of this property is assured by a mixed unit for conservation, restoration and presentation of the Amphitheatre of El Jem; it is composed of the National Heritage Institute, responsible scientific and technical body, and the Agency for the Presentation of Heritage and Cultural Promotion, responsible for the commercial exploitation of cultural heritage and its presentation. The creation of a buffer zone to protect the property against continuing urban development that might have an impact on its setting, and the establishment of an appropriate regulation to preserve the authenticity of its surroundings, are being studied.

(Source: UNESCO)

Plans to safeguard 2800-year-old Urartu inscription announced

TEHRAN - East Azarbaijan's deputy director for cultural heritage has shed light on ongoing efforts to protect the ancient Urartu-era cuneiform inscription in the Nashtiban region of the northwestern province.

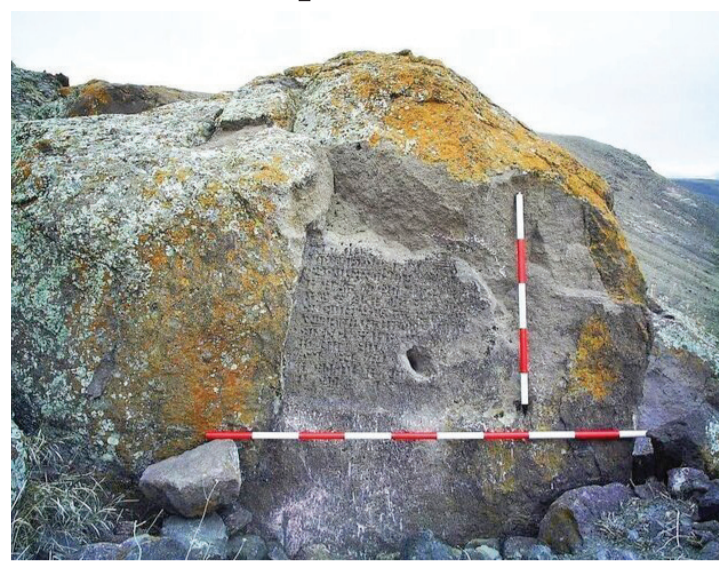
Caved on a massive piece, the inscription is a historically significant artifact that has been subject to repeated acts of vandalism and unauthorized excavations, ISNA quoted Vahid Navadad as saying on Tuesday.

Located in a desolate area devoid of local residents, the Nashtiban inscription has faced increased threats due to its remote setting.

"In regions where historical artifacts exist and are surrounded by local communities, residents often contribute to their protection. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Nashtiban," Navadad explained.

The official noted that East Azarbaijan province is home to over 2,000 registered historical sites, nearly 1,200 of which are mounds, cemeteries, and archaeological zones.

"Some of those sites face challenges in providing physical protection due to limited resources."



To address these concerns, the provincial Cultural Heritage Directorate has prepared a comprehensive report detailing the damages sustained by the Nashtiban inscription.

On-site conservation and relocation to a museum will be two primary strategies for its preservation are currently under consideration, the office said.

"The first approach would involve implementing protective measures directly at the artifact's location to prevent further damage, while the alternative

proposal suggests removing the inscription and transferring it to a museum within the province."

The latter plan, a common practice globally, would involve replacing the original artifact with a replica on-site, along with detailed information for visitors, the official added. "That decision on the preservation method will be made in coordination with the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, ensuring the process adheres to scientific and conservation standards."

Navadad highlighted that re-

locating the inscription would require extensive studies, including geological, petrographic, and biological analyses, as the inscription is part of a larger rock formation. "Any relocation must ensure the artifact remains intact during transportation."

Additionally, the studies planned for the Nashtiban inscription will serve as a model for safeguarding three other Urartu-era inscriptions in East Azarbaijan, which are currently in better condition.

Earlier in September, treasure hunters vandalized the 2,800-year-old inscription and looted its surrounding cemetery.

The ancient site of Nashtiban, located in the village of the same name, contains a fortress, a unique cemetery with standing stones, and an Urartu cuneiform inscription. According to archaeologists, this inscription dates back to the 8th century BC and was registered in Iran's National Heritage list in 1968.

The Urartu kingdom, which thrived during the Iron Age, was centered around the highlands between Lake Van, Lake Urmia, and Lake Sevan.

Mohseni-Bandpey appointed as deputy tourism minister

TEHRAN - Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey has been appointed as the deputy minister of tourism in Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, according to a decree issued by Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri on Tuesday.

Mohseni-Bandpey, who succeeds Ali-Asghar Shalabafian, brings a wealth of experience to the role. He previously served as the governor-general of Tehran province from 2018 to 2021. Additionally, he represented Nowshahr in the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) among several other positions.

Academically, Mohseni-Bandpey holds a degree in environmental health from Newcastle University in the United Kingdom, ISNA



reported.

In his appointment letter, Salehi-Amiri outlined key expectations for Mohseni-Bandpey, including enhancing tourism infrastructure, fostering interdepartmental collaboration to streamline tourism growth, and developing travel packages for a wide range of income groups, both domestically and internationally.

Other priorities include advancing digital marketing, strengthening cultural diplomacy to counter negative portrayals of Iran, supporting private sector investment with financial incentives, and focusing on emerging tourism markets, the decree underlined.

Three agritourism farms to open in Toyserkan by year-end



TEHRAN - Three agritourism farms have been arranged to open to the public near the city of Toyserkan in Hamadan province by the end of the current Iranian year (March 20).

Toyserkan's tourism chief Es'haq Torkashvand on Monday

announced plans to launch three agritourism farms with nomadic features by the year-end.

Torkashvand highlighted the growing attention toward agritourism and nomadic tourism, emphasizing their role in reviving traditional lifestyles and liveli-

hoods.

"These complexes are designed to attract domestic and international tourists while preserving orchards and agricultural lands, contributing to the development of the tourism industry."

"Agritourism and nomadic tourism not only harness the county's vast potential but also create opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and the promotion of traditional arts and crafts," he noted, underscoring their significance in fostering economic growth and cultural preservation in the region.

Toyserkan, the fourth-largest city in Hamadan province after Hamadan, Malayer, and Nahavand, is renowned for its abundant walnut trees and scenic mountainous climate.

The city and its surrounding villages are steeped in history, built on the ruins of the ancient cities which were devastated by

Mongol invasions and subsequent earthquakes.

Torkashvand also recalled the successful inauguration of Toyserkan's first agritourism site in 2021, which continues to operate and draw visitors.

Agritourism is a relatively new branch of the travel industry in which tourists stay with local people in rural areas. Farm/ranch recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include fee-hunting and fishing, overnight stays, educational activities, etc.

Experts believe that in addition to customer service jobs, agritourism pays special attention to the production sector, saying agricultural tourism is much more important and practical than other branches of tourism because it creates a new chain and diversity in fields of production and services.

Possible bust of Cleopatra VII found at ancient Egyptian temple

A small statue discovered under a temple wall at the site of an ancient Egyptian city may depict Cleopatra VII, the Egyptian queen who romanced Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, according to the archaeologist who is leading excavations at the site, known as Taposiris Magna. However, other archaeologists think the bust likely represents someone else.

The white, marble statue — which is small enough to fit in a person's hand — shows a female wearing a royal crown. Kathleen Martinez, an archaeologist who leads the Egyptian-Dominican team that is excavating the site, believes the statue depicts Cleopatra VII, according to a translated statement from the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Cleopatra VII (lived from 69 to 30 BC) was the last ruler of the Ptolemaic dynasty,

which started when Ptolemy I Soter, one of Alexander the Great's generals, started ruling ancient Egypt in 305 BC.

However, other archaeologists do not believe the bust depicts Cleopatra VII, the statement said, noting that the statue may represent a princess or another royal woman. Zahi Hawass, a former Egyptian minister of antiquities who was not involved in the finding but has excavated at the site in the past, said he thinks the bust dates to after Cleopatra's time.

"I looked at the bust carefully. It is not Cleopatra at all; it is Roman," Hawass told Live Science in an email. During the Ptolemaic dynasty, pharaohs were portrayed with Egyptian, not Roman, art styles. The Roman period in Egypt began in 30 BC after Cleopatra's death. Her tomb has never been found.

Taposiris Magna was a city founded around 280 B.C. near the Mediterranean Sea; it had a number of temples dedicated to Osiris and Isis, among other deities. A fragment of another bust depicting a king wearing the "Nemes" — a headdress that goes over the head and down to the shoulders — was found near the female bust at the temple in Taposiris Magna, the statement said. It's unclear which king this depicts, however.

Archaeologists also unearthed 337 coins, many of which depict Cleopatra VII, near the busts. In addition, they found a variety of other artifacts, such as oil lamps; a bronze ring dedicated to Hathor, a sky goddess associated with fertility and love; and an amulet engraved with the phrase "The justice of Ra has arisen." (Ra was the sun god.)

(Source: Live Science)

Wetland conservation project lowers irrigation water consumption: official

TEHRAN – The conservation project of Iranian wetlands has resulted in a 27.5 percent decrease in irrigation water consumption while increasing agricultural products by 22.5 percent, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE) has said.

“Currently, 49 wetlands, covering around 22 percent of the whole wetlands in the country, are being conserved in the form of native ecosystem management partnership,” IRNA quoted Mehri Asna-Ashari as saying.

She made the remarks on Monday at the meeting of the steering committee of the international project for the conservation of Iranian Wetlands.

Since 2021, the conservation project has been carried out in three wetlands including Shadegan in Khuzestan province, Bakhtegan in Fars province, and Urmia in West Azarbaijan province, the official noted.

Sustainable farming methods were implemented and 2,433 farmers were trained. By February 2024, the results showed that average agricultural production increased by 22.5 percent, whereas irrigation water consumption reduced by 27.5 percent. In addition, the consumption of chemical fertilizers decreased by 25 to 30 percent. Consequently, the income of each farmer increased by 14 percent.

The establishment of 26 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and 181 livelihood support groups, and the implementation of alterna-



tive livelihood plans in 44 villages and Anzali wetlands.

Japan has been a key partner of the Government of Iran and UNDP since 2014 in supporting sustainable natural resource management in wetland basins and diversifying livelihoods of communities reliant on wetlands.

During the signing ceremony on 1 December 2024, the Government of Japan and UNDP signed exchange of notes to implement “The Project for Developing Conservation System of Wetlands in Lake Urmia and Other Wetlands including their Surrounding Communities.” The project will be jointly implemented with the Department of Environment and in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) from 2024 to 2028.

The project will build on the past achievements and will accelerate efforts to successfully scale up piloted models and practices. By focusing on sustainable agriculture and alternative livelihoods that are adapted to climate change, the initiative seeks to create long-term

benefits for local communities while preserving the biodiversity of wetlands as vital ecosystems.

“Over the past ten years, the unwavering support from the People and the Government of Japan has positively impacted agricultural productivity and enhanced livelihoods in target communities. In the next four years, we will continue promoting innovative, water-efficient agricultural practices, while emphasizing scaling up for a better future for all,” said Gulbahar Nemato, UNDP Iran Deputy Resident Representative.

H.E. Mr. Tsukada, the Ambassador of Japan to Iran stated: “Iran has 26 valuable wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention, including Lake Urmia. These wetlands, which are home to diverse species and migratory birds, must be conserved in cooperation with the international community.

Over the past 10 years, Japan has provided support for Lake Urmia conservation, but in order to further restore the wetland, it is essential to manage uncontrollable water extraction, develop an irrigation system that appropriately respond to the climate change, and create sustainable industries such eco-tourism.

In addition to directly tackling these challenges, this project’s knowledge and technologies will be utilized in other wetlands in Iran.

We hope that the new project signed today will contribute to the environmental protection and economic development of the areas around the wetlands.”

Tehran to host 12th Iran Lab Expo

TEHRAN – The 12th exhibition of Iranian-made laboratory equipment and materials named ‘IRAN LAB EXPO’ is scheduled to be held in Tehran from December 13 to 16.

Supported by the Vice-Presidency for Science, Technology and Knowledge-Based Economy, the international exhibition will feature 10,085 innovative products, IRNA reported.

A total of 278 knowledge-based companies will present their latest achievements, laboratory equipment, and advanced testing. The exhibition will mainly focus on advanced testing to expand the domestic and international markets for the companies.

The 12th exhibition will display Iranian-made products in different fields including ‘Oil, gas, and petrochemicals’, ‘Electricity’, ‘Electronics’, ‘Software and Simulation’, ‘Mechanics’, ‘Chemistry and Metallurgy’, ‘Agriculture and Environment’, ‘Basic Physics’, ‘General laboratory equipment’, ‘Equipment and Machinery in strategic technologies’, ‘Medical Engineering and Biomaterials’, ‘Laboratory materials’, ‘Educational equipment’, ‘Industrial test equipment’, and ‘Calibration and construction services’.

The exhibition will also serve as a platform for knowledge-based companies to hold B2B meetings, share knowledge, create business opportunities, and get familiar with other companies’ capacities, as well as potential markets.

90% of hospital equipment is domestically made

Some 90 percent of medical equipment used in hospitals is domestically manufactured. However, three devices with complicated technology are imported, ISNA reported.

On May 12, Ahmad Moslemi, a health ministry official, said with over 50 percent of medical devices being domestically manufactured, Iran holds the first place in West Asia for producing medical equipment both in terms of quantity and diversity, Iranian-made medical devices worth around \$50 million are exported to 40 countries annually, IRNA quoted Moslemi as saying.

Over the past five years, the number of manufacturing companies has increased fivefold with some 2,000 companies operating now, he noted.

Moreover, the official said, the number of products has increased fourfold. Equipment



such as implants as well as advanced medical devices are manufactured in the country as well.

In addition, the country’s medical centers have been equipped with some 15,000 new hospital beds have been added to with 90 percent of the equipment produced locally, Moslemi added.

Rise in medical exports

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, Abdolreza Yaqoubzadeh, the head of Iran’s Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters, said in January.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, IRNA quoted Yaqoubzadeh as saying.

He went on to say that the country’s need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported.

Iran experienced a significant rise in exports of medicine and medical equipment in the first four months of the past Iranian calendar year that ended on March 19.

“Exports of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment grew by 300 percent in the first four months of the year,” IRNA quoted Heidar Mohammadi, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, as saying.

Currently, the production of medicine, medical equipment, and powdered milk is supported by subsidies. So, their exports were very limited, but it is hoped that their exports will increase next year, he explained.

Serbia seeks to enhance health, medical ties with Iran

TEHRAN –Serbian Ambassador to Tehran, Damir Kovacevic, has announced his country’s readiness to expand collaborations with Iran in the health and medical education sector.

During a meeting held on Tuesday, Kovacevic and Health Minister Mohammad-Hossein Zafarqandi explored avenues for fostering cooperation in different sectors including health, medicine, and medical sciences.

Commending Iran’s notable accomplishments in the health sector, particularly stem cells, the official expressed Serbia’s interest in cooperating with Iran in the field, the health ministry’s website reported.

He also highlighted the significance of collaborative partnerships in providing better services to Iranian and Serbian people.

“Hence, a draft of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is prepared which will be finalized after making needed agreements between health ministries of the two countries,” the official added.

The MOU will cover a wide range of activities including exchanging knowledge and expertise, dispatching experts and specialists, transferring medical devices and equipment, sharing technological achievements, developing medicine, strengthening health tourism, providing long-term care to patients, conducting joint research, and holding scientific congresses, Kovacevic noted.

Zafarqandi, for his turn, welcomed boosting

cooperation while highlighting the country’s achievements in different fields like cell therapy, organ transplantation, and health tourism.

He called it essential to get familiar with the capacities and potentials of the health ministry in each country to benefit from shared strengths. The official said that it will also help to lay the ground for exchanging capabilities and synergies.

“We will do our best to finalize the memorandum of understanding to be signed by the two sides as soon as possible,” he further noted.

Iran, Serbia health ties

In 2023, Serbia called for using Iran’s expertise in the field of organ transplantation by sending patients to Iran for treatment and dispatching professors to learn the newest methods.

“Serbian officials are also interested in cooperating with Iran in the field of genetics,” Mohammad-Hossein Nicknam, an official with health ministry, said.

“We are ready to conduct joint research and boost academic cooperation between the two countries,” he added.

Nicknam made the remarks on the sidelines of his meeting with the Serbian deputy health minister in Tehran on January 22.

Pointing out that Serbia has good experiences in the field of health tourism, Nicknam said: “In the meeting with the deputy health minister of Serbia, it was decided to exchange experiences in

this field.”

“In this line, we are ready to expand joint research and academic projects between the two countries.”

Nicknam referred to the exchange of students as one of the topics discussed in the meeting with the Serbian official, noting that 70 Iranians are studying in the educational centers of Serbia.

Iranian universities are ready to accept Serbian students in short-term courses, he added.

He pointed to the help of Serbia to Iran during the coronavirus pandemic and said that Serbia sent two shipments of vaccine to Iran at that time.

Nicknam also touched on the cooperation between Belgrade University and Zanjan University of Medical Sciences, saying: “The Serbian side requested that more information about medical innovations made by knowledge-based companies be provided to them.”

The two sides discussed various types of procedures such as organ transplantation, cell therapy, and cosmetic surgery, in which the Islamic Republic of Iran has great expertise, and their costs are cheaper than in other countries.

It was decided that the Serbian side should present a list of their needs according to their priorities and hold a webinar on these fields with Iran. After that, a memorandum of understanding between the two countries would be completed and signed.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

20,000 residential units to be constructed for the deprived

The Welfare Organization and the Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct 20,000 housing units for the financially struggling families, Mehr reported.

Alireza Tabesh, the Foundation’s head, and Vahid Qobadi Dana, the Organization’s head, inked the MOU during a meeting held in Tehran on Monday.

As per the agreement, 20,000 housing units will be provided to breadwinners with disabilities, breadwinner women, and the ex-addicts under the Organization’s coverage residing in villages with a population of less than 25,000, Qobadi Dana explained.

احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر تفاهم نامه مشترک برای احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای محرومان بین بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و سازمان بهزیستی کشور منعقد شد.

تفاهم نامه احداث ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی روستایی با حضور علیرضا تابش رئیس بنیاد مسکن انقلاب اسلامی و وحید قبادی دانا رئیس سازمان بهزیستی کشور روز دوشنبه به امضا رسید.

قبادی دانا گفت: این تفاهم نامه به منظور ساخت ۲۰ هزار واحد مسکونی برای معلولین سرپرست خانوار، زنان سرپرست خانوار، و بهبودیافتگان از بلای اعتیاد که در روستاها و شهرهایی با جمعیت کمتر از ۲۵ هزار نفر ساکن و تحت پوشش بهزیستی هستند؛ منعقد می‌شود.



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
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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Mix with people properly, so that they weep for you when you die, and show you affection and fight your enemy when you are alive.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:11:57 Evening: 17:11 Dawn: 5:34 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:04 (tomorrow)

Arthur Miller's "A View From the Bridge" at Divar Art Home

TEHRAN-Divar Art Home in Tehran is hosting the play "A View From the Bridge" by American playwright Arthur Miller.

Rahman Khubzadeh has directed the play and also performs in it along with Alireza Eslampanah, Mira Amimasab, Peyman Paypouran, Abolfazl Aliyari, and Sahar Mesbah.

Arthur Miller's play is a tragic masterpiece of the inexorable unravelling of a man, set in a close-knit Italian-American community in 1950s New York.

The action is narrated by Alfieri, who was raised in 1900s Italy but is now working as an American lawyer, thereby representing the "Bridge" between the two cultures.

Set in a neighborhood near the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, the play employs a chorus and narrator in the character of Alfieri. Eddie, the tragic protagonist, has an improper love for, and almost an obsession with, Catherine, his wife Beatrice's orphaned niece, so he does not approve of her courtship of Beatrice's cousin Rodolpho.

Eddie Carbone is a longshoreman and a straightforward man, with a strong sense of decency and of honor. For Eddie, it's a privilege to take in his wife's cousins, Marco and Rodolpho, straight off the boat from Italy. But, as his niece Catherine begins to fall for one of them, it's clear that it's not just, as Eddie claims, that he's too strange, too sissy, too careless for her, but that something bigger, deeper is wrong - and wrong inside Eddie, in a way he can't face. Something which threatens the happiness of their whole family.

Miller's interest in writing about the world of the New York docks originated with an unproduced screenplay that he developed with Elia Kazan in the early 1950s (titled "The Hook") that addressed corruption on the Brooklyn docks.



Kazan later directed "On the Waterfront," which dealt with the same subject.

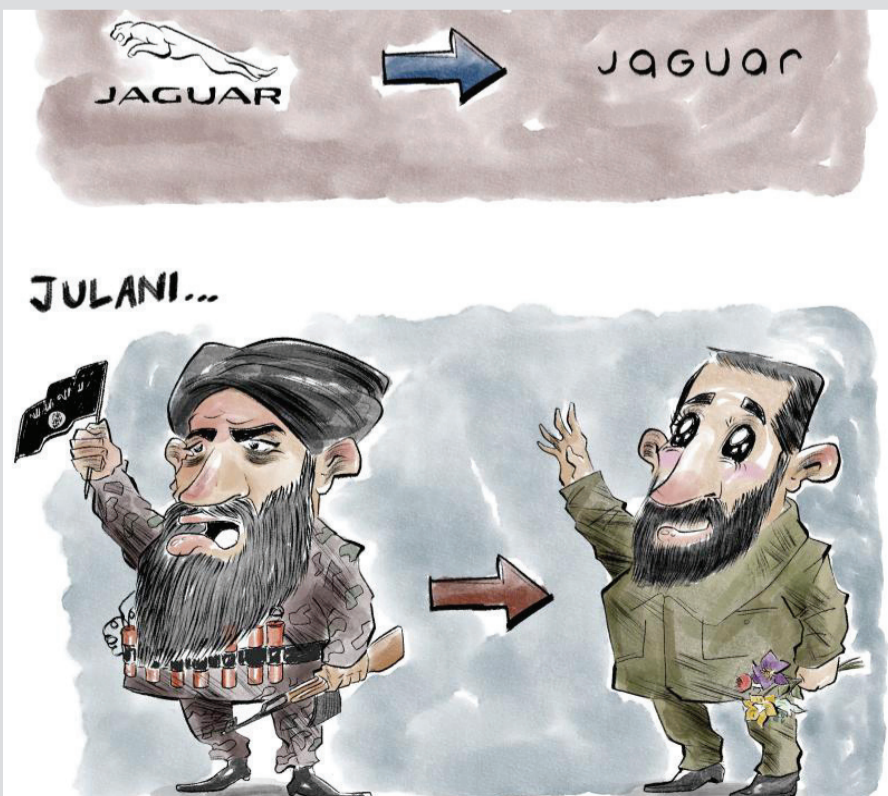
Arthur Miller (1915-2005) was an American playwright, essayist and screenwriter in the 20th-century American theater. Among his most popular plays are "Death of a Salesman" (1949), "The Crucible" (1953), and "A View from the Bridge" (1955). He wrote several screenplays, including "The Misfits" (1961).

The drama "Death of a Salesman," for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, is considered one of the best American plays of the 20th century.

In 1980, Miller received the St. Louis Literary Award from the Saint Louis University Library Associates. He received Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize in 1999, the Praemium Imperiale prize in 2001, the Prince of Asturias Award in 2002, and the Jerusalem Prize in 2003.

"A View From the Bridge" will remain on stage until December 20 at Divar Art Home, located at No. 72, Sepand St., Nejatollahi St.

Cartoon of Day



Rebranding
Cartoonist: Rafat Alkhatib from Jordan

"The Storm Still Rages" in Baghdad

From Page 1 ▶ Following positive feedback from both Iranian and foreign artists on social media, and the remarkable attendance of youth and other audiences at the exhibition, which was held in Tehran last month, there has been a strong motivation and request to present this collection in various countries, with Baghdad being the first international host of this exhibition, the organizers announced.

This collection of artworks responds to the multiple events and crises imposed by the occupying regime of Israel on Palestine and Lebanon, reflecting the artists' reactions over the course of one year, from the dawn of the Al-Aqsa Storm operation on October 7, 2023, until October 2024.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, abbreviated Hamas, launched Operation Al-Aqsa Storm into the occupied territories on October 7, 2023, in response to intensified crimes by Israeli forces and settlers against Palestinians in the oc-



cupied West Bank. In response, the Zionist regime waged an all-out war on Gaza, killing more than 44,000 people, about half of them children, and wounding

tens of thousands in the tightly besieged enclave.

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.

Iran's National Orchestra to perform for young audiences

TEHRAN- Iran's National Orchestra, under the baton of Homayoun Rahimian, is set to present a special concert titled "With A Smile on The Face".

The concert is designed for children and adolescents and will take place in Tehran's Vahdat Hall on December 17 and 18, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The program will feature compositions by prominent Iranian composers including Samin Baghcheban, Bahram Dehghanian, and Mahmoud Montazem Sediqi. The performance will be enhanced by the collaboration of both adult and children's choirs, with Saber Abar, a distinguished figure in cinema and theater, serving as the narrator for the presentation.

"With A Smile on The Face" is organized in collaboration with Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults - Kanoon.

Iran's National Orchestra was founded in 1998 under the conduction of the renowned Iranian composer Farhad Fakhreddini with the goal of performing valuable orchestral pieces of Iranian music.

Maestro Fakhreddini attracted a huge number of musicians, including legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian, to collaborate with the orchestra.

The orchestra had been formed by Persian traditional instruments, strings and woodwind instruments. During its history, the

orchestra focused on Persian composers' compositions including pieces by renowned figures such as Fakhreddini, Ali Tajvidi, and Hossein Alizadeh among others.

The orchestra boasts a rich repertoire of over 270 musical pieces. It operates under the auspices of the Rudaki Foundation and is currently led by Homayoun Rahimian.

The first concert of Iran's National Orchestra this year, titled "On Your Path," was held on June 9 and 10, with Homayoun Rahimian conducting and Abdolhossein Mokhtabad as the vocalist. This was followed by a second concert titled "My Moon" on July 1 and 2, again under Rahimian's direction, featuring the singing of Seyyed Hessameddin Seraj at the Vahdat Hall.

Iran participates at First International Literature Forum in Moscow

TEHRAN- The inaugural International Literature Forum, organized by the Association of Writers and Publishers Unions of Russia (AWPUR), has concluded in Moscow on Monday, bringing together esteemed writers, translators, and scholars from 35 countries.

Among the diverse participants from countries such as Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Zimbabwe, China, India, the UAE, Serbia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, and South Africa were notable figures from Iran, showcasing the nation's rich literary culture on the global stage.

TV BRICS was the international media partner of the event.

The forum served as a vibrant platform for dialogue, featuring 16 roundtable discussions that covered a wide range of topics, including the role of writers in society, the preservation of literary heritage, and the support of creative initiatives. Environmental issues and the impact of artificial intelligence on cultural life also featured prominently in the discussions.

A key focus of the event was the translation industry, with Iranian translator Zahra Mohammadi emphasizing the importance of contemporary translations of Russian classics into Persian. "There is a pressing need for new translations.

Initial translations often came through intermediary languages. Language evolves, and with that, interest in literary studies grows. Whereas there was once a Russian department only at Tehran University, now we have institutions training Russian translators across the country," Mohammadi stated.

AWPUR Chairman Sergey Shargunov stressed the significance of fostering international dialogue among diverse cultures. "It is crucial for representatives of different traditions to engage regularly. This exchange of creative ideas and energies is immensely beneficial," he noted, expressing optimism for future

international collaborations.

The forum closed with a captivating literary and musical program performed by actors from the Pyotr Fomenko Workshop Theatre, leaving attendees inspired by the shared celebration of literature.

Founded in 2020, AWPUR unites major professional communities, including the Union of Writers of Russia and the Russian Book Union, and is dedicated to supporting writers while promoting Russian culture and language abroad, positioning itself as a vital player in the global literary landscape.

"Parisan" wins 8 Golden Pegasus awards at Brazil's Festival de Sorocaba

TEHRAN-The Iranian feature film "Parisan" directed by Kambiz Babaei won eight awards at the Festival de Sorocaba, which was held in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The film grabbed the awards for the best film of the year, best director, cinematography, editing, actor, actress, cast, and makeup in a feature film from the festival that concluded last week, IRNA reported.

The film is about a committed and well-known doctor named Parsa Arman, who is the head of a special hospital for covid-19 patients. He realizes that a vast network is involved in smuggling medicine, vaccine, masks



and medical alcohol. With further follow-up and with the help of a reporter, he tries to fight and expose those people.

Farhad Ghaemian, Sahra Asadollahi, and Linda Kiani are among the actors of the 97-minute movie, which was produced in 2024.

The film won the second Grand Prix Social award at the 2024 edition of Canoa Film Festival (CFF) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in October.

The Festival de Sorocaba honors filmmakers and writers from around the world while engaging, connecting and strengthening our community.

Yaşar Kemal's "Yellow Heat" available in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Yellow Heat" written by Yaşar Kemal has been released in the Iran book market.

Aref Jamshidi has translated the book from Turkish into Persian and Raybod Publication has published it, ISNA reported.

It is Kemal's first book, which is a collection of short stories, originally published in 1952. It is the story of the Anatolian people's

superhuman struggle against deprivation, hunger, and being forgotten. The drama of a handful of people's clinging tightly to the thin bond between them and life and their efforts to survive amidst dirt, heat, and misery is told in several stories.

Yaşar Kemal (1923-2015) was a Kurdish writer and human rights activist from Turkey. He received 38 awards during his lifetime and had been a candidate for the Nobel

Prize in Literature on the strength of his 1955 novel "Memed, My Hawk".

An outspoken intellectual, he often did not hesitate to speak about sensitive issues, especially those concerning the oppression of the Kurdish people. He was tried in 1995 under anti-terror laws for an article he wrote for Der Spiegel highlighting the Turkish Army's destruction of Kurdish villages during the Turkish-Kurdish con-

flict. He was released but later received a suspended 20-month jail sentence for another article he wrote criticizing racism in Turkey, especially against the Kurds.

He is one of the leading names not only in Turkish fiction but also in world literature with his astonishing imagination, his grasp of the depths of the human soul, and the poetic style of his narrative. He has had his works translated into more than 40 languages.