

# What Should Iran's Policy Towards Trump be Like?

Experts weigh in during discussions with the Tehran Times



► Page 3

## Iran gains observer status in Eurasian Economic Union

TEHRAN - Iran's observer membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) was formalized on Thursday, December 26, 2024, IRNA reported.

Leaders of the five EAEU member states signed the agreement during a ceremony in Saint Petersburg, attended by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Seyyed Mohammad Atabak.

According to IRNA, the event concluded the Supreme Council meeting of the EAEU, where approximately 17 agreements, including Iran's observer status, were signed. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, presiding over the union in 2024, remotely approved the documents via video conference.

**Kremlin: Free trade agreement with Iran ratified**

The summit also approved the implementation of the EAEU-Iran free trade agreement (FTA). Negotiated last year in Saint Petersburg, the FTA required ratification by all member states and the Iranian Parliament, where the agreement's general provisions were recently approved.

The deal, set to take effect within two months following Iran's legislative approval, will eliminate tariffs on approximately 87 percent of Iranian exports to EAEU member countries. Similarly, EAEU member exports to Iran will enjoy duty-free privileges. ► Page 4

## Iran FM in China for 'new chapter' in bilateral ties

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has embarked on an official visit to China, aiming to deepen the longstanding partnership between Tehran and Beijing.

Araghchi and his delegation arrived in Beijing on Friday at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

Speaking to reporters upon his arrival in Beijing, Araghchi described his trip as a critical opportunity for consultations on key regional, international, and bilateral issues. "The primary purpose of this visit is to engage in consultations on regional, international, and bilateral issues," he said.

Reflecting on the longstanding partnership between Iran and China, the minister noted, "For years, we have consistently maintained close consultations with China on all regional and international matters. The current situation is highly sensitive, with escalating tensions in the region and numerous international challenges. Furthermore, our nuclear discussions will encounter new dynamics in the coming year, making increased dialogue with China essential." ► Page 2

## Major infrastructure, energy projects inaugurated in Pezeshkian's visit to North Khorasan

TEHRAN - During a two-day visit to North Khorasan Province, in the northeast of Iran, President Masoud Pezeshkian and senior cabinet members inaugurated several infrastructure, housing, and energy projects aimed at boosting development in the province.

Fourteen electricity projects were inaugurated to enhance the province's energy infrastructure. These include modernizing power grids and expanding access to electricity in rural and urban areas, ensuring reliable energy delivery to support local industries and residents.

The Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh inaugurated 42 road and transportation projects. These include highway expansions, rural road improvements, and upgrades to facilitate safer and more efficient transit across the region. The projects are part of broader national efforts to modernize Iran's transport network and enhance regional trade connectivity. ► Page 4

## Will US-Israeli pressure on Hezbollah work?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - Israel has violated the terms of the truce since the declaration of the 60-day ceasefire with Lebanon by launching 816 land and air attacks.

For the first time since the 2006 war, the Israeli occupation regime invaded Wadi al-Hujayr, prompting citizens to flee in fear of the regime's incursion. The Israeli Merkava tanks, bulldozers and military vehicles razed various fields, roadsides and a number of agricultural tents and kiosks.

In the meantime, Hebrew media quoted Israeli officials as stating that the withdrawal from southern Lebanon "may take place at a slower pace than expected". This raises concerns about how the enemy will behave after the passage of the 60-day ceasefire.

Other reports claimed Tel Aviv's insistence on implementing the terms of the ceasefire agreement. Yet, the regime is deliberately destroying border villages after it has won "secret guarantees" from Washington that would allow it to occupy southern territories and "act freely against anything it deems a threat."

## Yemen targets Israeli Ben Gurion Airport

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Yemeni Armed Forces have announced operations deep inside occupied Palestine and in the Arabian Sea as part of their ongoing support for Gaza and in response to the Israeli aggression against Yemen.

The spokesperson for the armed forces, Yahya Saree, stated that a precision operation was carried out against "the Israeli-occupied Ben Gurion Airport using a ballistic missile of the Palestine 2 type".

Saree emphasized that "the missile successfully reached its target despite the Israeli occupation's censorship," announcing that the operation resulted in casualties and the suspension of air traffic at the airport.

Additionally, the Yemeni Armed Forces targeted "a vital facility in the occupied Jaffa area with a drone."

Saree confirmed that the operation successfully achieved its objective.

The military spokesman further announced that the Yemeni Air Force conducted a military operation targeting the ship Santa Ursula in the Arabian Sea, east of Socotra Island, using several drones, resulting in a direct hit.

## Boxing Day in London: Protesters call for ending arms sales to Israel

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN - On the eve of the new year, people in Britain hit the streets to once again condemn Israeli crimes in the Gaza Strip.

Anti-war and pro-Palestine activists staged a rally in central London on Thursday, coinciding with Boxing Day.

The demonstrators denounced the Israeli war of genocide in Gaza which has claimed the lives of about 45,400 Palestinians since October last year.

They accused the UK of complicity in the Israeli carnage in Gaza by sending arms to the regime.

They demanded that Britain stop arms shipments to Israel.

In July, the Labour Party under Keir Starmer won the general election in a landslide vote. Nonetheless, it lost support from British Muslims who have traditionally been a key support base for the Labour. They were upset over the party's stance on the Gaza war.

► Page 5

## "Azure Narrative" exhibition features Iranian artworks in Yerevan

TEHRAN - An international art exhibition titled "Azure Narrative" was inaugurated in Artists' Union of Armenia in Yerevan on Thursday, featuring the works of more than 60 Iranian artists from various artistic realms.

The two-day exhibition displayed a diverse range of artworks encompassing various styles, techniques, and artistic media, Mehr reported.

Each piece reflected the unique artistic voice and creative perspectives of its creator, the report added.

The primary aim of the exhibition was to establish a platform for the exchange of ideas and foster artistic dialogues among artists and art enthusiasts of the two nations. ► Page 8



The "Daughters of Haj Qassem" held a large gathering in the 12,000-seater Azadi Hall in Tehran on Thursday, December 26.

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## America defines “terrorism” based on its interests

Kayhan says the FATF is an institution whose purpose is to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. However, since it is under the influence of great powers it has turned into one of the main challenges. For years, Iran has been under pressure from the FATF to approve related bills. Critics believe that the adoption of these bills, regardless of the dual policies of the United States and its allies, can become a tool for exploitation of Iran. The incident of (HTS leader) al-Julani and the change in America's position on terrorism is a clear example of the fact that America defines “terrorism” based on its interests. When Tahrir al-Sham serves the interests of the United States, it is removed from the list, but at the same United States puts institutions such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and resistance groups that have fought terrorism on the list of terrorist organizations. America's dual approach shows that even if Iran accepts the FATF's requirements, it is still not possible to get out of the blacklist or that pressures will be reduced, because these decisions are more political rather than legal and depend on American policies.

### Jam-e Jam: Hybrid warfare by the enemies

In a commentary, Jam-e Jam focused on the enemies' plan to disappoint the people through hybrid and psychological warfare. It said: The enemies are trying to disappoint the Iranian people about the achievements of the Islamic revolution and also casting doubt about the future. They seek to divide the society through hybrid and psychological wars. One of the ways that the enemies try to undermine the unity of the nations in the region, especially in the Middle East (West Asia), is to inflame riots and conflicts or create instability and insecurity. It is noticeable that global countries have used disinformation campaigns against the Islamic Republic and the Resistance Front to achieve their goal. They try to spread lies through media outlets. The enemy uses media to create instability and division between the Iranian government and the nation and also between Iran and the regional countries. Naturally, one of the dangers that poison public opinion in our society is cast-

ing doubt (about the course of developments). And for this reason, our people must be alert to thwart the plans of the enemies and not fall under this hybrid and psychological war.

### Iran: Islamic Republic is a patient actor

In a note, the Iran newspaper talked about Iran's patience regarding challenges following the fall of Bashar Assad and wrote: Tehran will face new and important challenges after the fall of Assad, which in the first step will threaten its regional influence. But what is ignored is that the Islamic Republic has formulated a well-thought-out strategy in the region. In a recent stance, Asaad al-Shaybani, the foreign minister appointed by al-Julani in Syria, has accused Iran of spreading chaos in Syria. Such an accusation is intended to undermine Iran's role in the region. Tehran believes that Syria will become a source of conflict that will bring this country into a new era of crisis. For Iran, the game in Syria is not over. Iran has been a patient actor in the Middle East that has patiently achieved all its goals and is now waiting for an opportunity.

### Ham Mihan: Will Iraq become the focus of Israeli threats against Iran?

In an analysis, Ham Mihan discussed the penetration of Israelis into Iraqi territory and the potential threat to Iran's borders and said: Many analysts believe that Israel's next target after the almost destruction of Syria's military capabilities is Iraq because it is the center of the presence of Iran's allied forces with large numbers of troops and military capabilities. With Syria out of the equation, it seems that in the future, the competition between Iran and Israel will increase for more control over Iraq's skies. Considering the unfriendly relationship between the ruling groups in Syria and Iran, the closest option for Iran will be to strengthen its presence in Iraq. Iran will have no choice but to rely more on its allied groups in Iraq to keep Iran's borders away from possible Israeli threats. Given the developments of the past months, Iran is not in a position to lose another ally in the region. However, America and Israel welcome the separation of Baghdad and Tehran without hesitation.

## Yemeni strikes shift Israeli calculations amid hubris over Syria: IRGC spox



Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) spokesperson Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naeini

TEHRAN – Brigadier General Ali Mohammad Naeini, spokesperson for Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), has underscored the transformative impact of Yemeni Ansarullah's missile strikes on Israeli-occupied territories.

“At a critical juncture, when the Zionist regime was overconfident owing to the events in Syria, Ansarullah of Yemen managed to shift its strategic calculations,” Naeini stated.

In an interview on Thursday, Naeini emphasized that Ansarullah's decisive actions have illustrated the Resistance front's self-reliance, independence, and exceptional ability to respond to the Israeli regime's actions.

The IRGC commander also highlighted the Western media's negative portrayal of the Resistance, noting, “Today, global media outlets are targeting the Resistance, crafting narratives against it, and attempting to stifle its voice.”

He further urged the establishment of a “wide-reaching media front” to creatively challenge this narrative.

On Wednesday, the Yemeni Armed Forces

claimed responsibility for a missile strike on a military site in Israeli-occupied territories in solidarity with Gaza, marking the second such attack in 48 hours.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces, confirmed that the operation employed a Palestine-2 hypersonic ballistic missile, which successfully struck an Israeli military target in Tel Aviv.

Yemen has openly expressed support for Palestine amidst the ongoing conflict, particularly after the Israeli regime launched a large-scale military campaign against Gaza on October 7, 2023, which has resulted in the deaths of at least 45,000 Palestinians, predominantly women and children.

The Ansarullah movement has also targeted vessels linked to Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom in efforts to pressure an end to Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

The Yemeni Armed Forces have pledged to continue their assaults until Israel halts its ground and air operations in the region.

# Iran FM in China for ‘new chapter’ in bilateral ties

From page 1 ▶ Araghchi emphasized the strength of Iran-China bilateral relations, stating, “These relations have always been solid and remain strong. It is only natural that we continue our dialogue on various issues to address shared concerns.”

He also highlighted the timing of the visit, calling it particularly significant. “This trip coincides with an opportune moment and aligns with the invitation from our Chinese friends. At the start of the new year, we aim to strategize and prepare for the challenges ahead, including those related to the region, global developments, and the United Nations Security Council,” Araghchi explained.

### ‘Start of a golden era’

In an article published in China's People's Daily on the day of his arrival, Araghchi highlighted the importance of the visit in shaping the “next golden 50 years” of cooperation between the two countries.

He underscored Iran and China's mutual commitment to multilateralism, economic collaboration, and shared opposition to unilateralism in international affairs.

“The next golden 50 years of Iran-China relations will demonstrate that this visit marks the beginning of a new chapter of strategic cooperation between the two countries,” he wrote.

The Iranian foreign minister highlighted the deep-rooted cooperation between Tehran and Beijing, including political and defense coordination, the exchange of high-level delegations, and joint initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

He also pointed to their collaboration in the BRICS group of emerging economies and their role in brokering peace in the region, including



the landmark agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia in March 2023.

“Iran and China share common interests and concerns not only at bilateral and regional levels but also on trans-regional and international platforms,” Araghchi noted. Both nations, he added, firmly believe in multilateralism and work together in global mechanisms to promote shared prosperity.

Araghchi also turned his attention to pressing issues in West Asia, particularly the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

He condemned Israel's ongoing genocide, supported by certain world powers, and called for an immediate ceasefire and delivery of humanitarian aid. He criticized the international community's inaction, calling it a failure of responsibility.

On Syria, the minister reiterated Iran's stance on respecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, emphasizing that the Syrian people should determine their own future without external interference.

“We are witnessing unprecedented changes in the world that have simultaneously created complex opportunities and challenges,” Ara-

ghchi said, stressing that countries are at a historical crossroads between cooperation and confrontation, openness and exclusion, chaos and peace.

Araghchi criticized states that impose their values and interests on others through coercion, sanctions, and double standards. He argued that dividing the world into “democratic” and “non-democratic” blocs distorts reality and undermines global harmony.

“Iran and China will always stand on the right side of history,” he said, vowing to champion development, cooperation, and friendship among nations in the Global South while resisting unilateralism and bullying.

China remains Iran's largest trading partner, and both countries have faced sanctions imposed by the United States. Their relationship was solidified in March 2021 with the signing of a long-term strategic partnership agreement aimed at reinforcing their economic and political alliance.

Iran's former ambassador to China, Mohammad Keshavarzadeh, also emphasized the critical importance of strengthening Tehran's ties with Beijing in light of evolving global dynamics. Speaking in an interview with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), Keshavarzadeh highlighted the changing international landscape and the potential resurgence of Donald Trump in the U.S. presidency as key factors necessitating closer cooperation between the two nations.

“Given the current circumstances the international community is experiencing, coupled with the potential return of Donald Trump to power in the United States, the development of Iran's relationship with China is no longer a matter of choice but has become an unavoidable necessity,” Keshavarzadeh remarked.

## Tehran condemns Israeli attacks on Yemen's civilian infrastructure

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has issued a strong condemnation of the recent attacks by the Israeli regime on Yemen, denouncing these assaults as a severe breach of international norms and principles.

In a statement on Thursday, spokesperson Esmail Baqaei elaborated that these attacks, orchestrated with the support and complicity of the United States and Britain, violate international laws and the United Nations Charter.

He criticized the UN's inaction, as-

serting that the organization's lack of response to the increasing violations and crimes of the Israeli regime “contradicts the responsibilities and duties of the organization as per the UN Charter.” Highlighting the ongoing genocide in Gaza, Baqaei emphasized that the repeated attacks on Yemen's civilian infrastructure are part of a malicious Israeli policy aimed at weakening Islamic nations.

“The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other regional and international bodies must act immediately to address these ag-

gressions,” the diplomat added.

The spokesperson also underscored that these violations constitute a clear breach of international peace and security, categorizing them as “undeniable crimes against Yemen's resilient people, who have steadfastly supported the oppressed Palestinians against occupation and genocide.”

The condemnation arose in reaction to airstrikes carried out by the Israeli regime on Thursday, which hit several locations in Yemen, nota-

bly Sana'a International Airport and three critical ports.

Reports indicate that the airport was struck by more than six attacks, with further strikes affecting the nearby al-Dailami air base.

Additional airstrikes were reported on a power station in Hudaydah, as well as military infrastructure at the Salif and Ras Kanatib ports.

Casualty reports note that two individuals were killed in the airport strikes, one in the port attacks, and 11 others were injured.

## Russia calls for neutrality in IAEA's approach to Iran's nuclear program

TEHRAN – The Russian Foreign Ministry has criticized the United States and European countries for their approach to Iran's nuclear program, labeling their policies as provocative and detrimental to international stability.

Speaking at a press briefing on Wednesday, Maria Zakharova, spokesperson for Russia's Foreign Ministry, urged the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to maintain objectivity and impartiality in its oversight of Iran's nuclear program.

“We expect the IAEA to adopt a neutral and non-political approach within the framework of its technical mandate and not succumb to the diversionary tactics of Western countries,” Zakharova stated, as reported by IRNA via TASS.

“We consider this an indispensable guarantee for the continuation of a productive relationship between the two, and we have always supported strengthening this collaboration,” she said.

Her comments were made in response to recent statements by IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, who claimed Iran is enriching uranium near weapons-grade levels and is on the verge of becoming a nuclear-armed state.

Zakharova criticized such claims, asserting that they serve to amplify tensions and paint Iran's nuclear program as the primary threat in West Asia. She accused Western nations of exploiting these allegations to shift focus away

from their own violations of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 and their role in derailing the JCPOA.

“The international community understands that it was Western countries that obstructed the revival of the JCPOA,” Zakharova said. “Iran has consistently expressed its readiness to return to the agreement, provided Washington, Brussels, and London take appropriate steps.”

Zakharova also emphasized that international treaties and the JCPOA impose no restrictions on the peaceful development of nuclear energy, as long as such activities remain under IAEA supervision. She highlighted that the Agency has confirmed Iran's compliance in this regard.

In Vienna, Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations, Mikhail Ulyanov, echoed Zakharova's concerns. Speaking to RIA Novosti, Ulyanov acknowledged limited progress in negotiations between Iran and the IAEA but noted significant obstacles. “The policies and approaches of the U.S. and European parties to the JCPOA are provocative and worrisome,” he said.

Ulyanov expressed hope for continued dialogue between Iran and the IAEA, emphasizing that Moscow is working to create an environment conducive to professional and constructive discussions. “We are striving to facilitate conditions for a normal and professional dialogue between the IAEA and Tehran,” he concluded.

## IRGC intelligence unit detains individual in northwestern Iran for espionage

TEHRAN – The intelligence division of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) has arrested an individual in Ardabil province, accused of working with the intelligence agency of a “neighboring country”. The IRGC issued a statement on Thursday revealing that the arrest was the result of an extensive operation involving technical and surveillance tactics.

The suspect, whose identity remains undisclosed, has been handed over to judicial authori-

ties for further legal proceedings.

This arrest underscores Iran's continuous campaign against foreign-backed threats.

Earlier this month, the IRGC dismantled a Takfiri terrorist group in the western province of Kermanshah. In October, intelligence forces thwarted a plot by an Israeli-linked separatist group, which planned to infiltrate from Iraq's Kurdistan Region to incite unrest and carry out assassinations in Iran.

## Iranian president to visit Russia on January 17



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (L) shakes hand with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan on October 23, 2024.

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is set to visit Russia next month to finalize a landmark agreement on a comprehensive strategic partnership between Tehran and Moscow, according to Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali.

During a meeting with Iranian students in St. Petersburg, Jalali announced that the two nations are ready to formalize the agreement during President Pezeshkian's visit.

“The president will travel to Russia on January 17, and during the trip, the cooperation agreement between the two countries will be signed by Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin,” he said.

In 2001, Tehran and Moscow signed the Treaty of the Foundation of Mutual Relations and the Principles of Cooperation, a long-term cooperation deal that has been extended several times and remains in effect until 2026.

The forthcoming agreement aims to lay the groundwork for closer collaboration over the next two decades, covering a wide range of sectors.



## Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$1.5b to Pakistan in 8 months

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$1.5 billion to Pakistan during the first eight months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20–November 20), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that Pakistan was Iran's sixth top export destination in the mentioned eight-month period.

On November 5, Iran's Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak said a free trade agreement with Pakistan has been finalized and the list of commodity items subject to the agreement will be prepared and released in two months.

In a meeting between Head of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassan-zadeh and Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu in Tehran in late June, the officials stressed the need for Iran and Pakistan to exercise barter trade and free trade to materialize a \$10 billion trade target.

During a meeting between Atabak and Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan in mid-October, the two sides discussed trade ties between the two countries, with both agreeing that economic exchanges should be promoted further.

The two ministers met in Pakistan's capital Islamabad on the sidelines of the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Atabak told IRNA that he and the Pakistani minister discussed trade ties between the two countries and agreed to hold further talks in order to explore ways to remove obstacles to the promotion of bilateral trade.

"Considering the historical and cultural commonalities of the two countries, we should take advantage of the strong potentials to expand trade exchanges between Iran and Pakistan," the minister stated.

He also said that he invited Kamal Khan to visit the Islamic Republic.

According to the official, the necessary measures will be taken to prepare an agreement to be signed between the two countries during the visit of the Pakistani minister to Iran.

He stated that the current amount of trade exchanges between the two countries is not acceptable from the point of view of both Iran and Pakistan, and considering the strong relations and common links of the two countries, the two sides are confident that they will be able to increase the volume of trade exchanges several times.

The Pakistani minister spoke with IRNA as well. He described his talks with the Iranian minister as constructive, and said that visiting Iran is on agenda of his plans.

"We had good talks with my Iranian counterpart and reached constructive agreements, and we believe that there are many remaining tasks that the two countries are determined to pursue," he said.

In mid-July, the 11th meeting of the Joint



Border Trade Committee of Iran and Pakistan opened in the southeastern Iranian city of Zahedan, where the two sides pursue the increase of bilateral trade to \$10 billion per annum.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, who attends the meeting online, announced that Iranian and Pakistani delegations are scheduled to discuss the mechanism to increase mutual trade.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's consul general in Quetta, Pakistan's consul general in Zahedan, and other senior officials of Sistan-Baluchestan province took part in the meeting.

Such joint meetings are held to pave the way for reviewing obstacles, removing barriers, and developing trade and economic relations between the two friendly and neighboring countries.

### Pakistan has called for cooperation in transportation because it can affect livelihood of people living in border regions.

The two sides make the necessary coordination to help improve trade and economic ties, exchange economic delegations, organize joint exhibitions, attract bilateral investment, and establish joint industrial centers and retail markets.

The head of the Pakistani delegation to the 11th meeting of the Joint Border Trade Committee said that Islamabad strongly supports the development of joint markets and investment, which can increase the level of trust between the two nations.

Irfan Javed added that Pakistan also calls for cooperation in the field of transportation because it can affect the livelihood of the people who are living in border regions.

The deputy coordinator of economic affairs of Sistan-Baluchestan governor's office said that Iran is keen on expanding trade exchanges with Pakistan.

Davoud Shahraki added that the relationship between the two countries is historic and long-standing.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely UAE, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

## Subsidized foreign currency allocation for essential goods exceeds \$11b

TEHRAN – The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has allocated over \$11 billion for the import of essential goods, medicines, and medical equipment at preferential exchange rates since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20) through Thursday, December 26.

According to the CBI, more than \$2.3 billion has been provided for the import of medicines, pharmaceutical raw materials, and

medical equipment during this period, IRNA reported.

Additionally, essential and agricultural commodities such as wheat, oilseeds, and livestock feed have received over \$8.7 billion in preferential foreign currency allocations.

This substantial allocation reflects ongoing efforts to ensure the availability of critical supplies amidst economic pressures.

## Iran gains observer status in Eurasian Economic Union

From page 1 ▶ Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the union's role in fostering trade and cooperation, describing the EAEU as a self-sufficient center in the emerging multipolar world.

**Iran ready to connect Eurasia to Persian Gulf and other target markets**

During the EAEU summit, Atabak expressed Tehran's readiness to expand collaboration with the EAEU beyond trade, highlighting transport, transit, and energy security as potential areas of cooperation.

The official noted Iran's strategic location and transit capabilities, offering to connect the EAEU to markets in the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. He welcomed the observer status as a milestone in Iran's growing relations with the union and signaled readiness for broader economic integration.

### Trade growth in 2024

On the sidelines of the gathering, Bakytzhan Sagintayev, head of the Eurasian Economic Commission, lauded the 12.8 percent growth in trade between Iran and the EAEU during the first ten months of 2024.

Iran's exports to the EAEU grew by eight percent while imports from the union rose by 16 percent. Sagintayev attributed the surge to a 2018 provisional trade agreement that nearly doubled bilateral trade over five years.

Both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in logistics, infrastructure, agriculture, petrochemicals, and scientific research. Sagintayev underscored the potential for expanding economic ties, particularly following the anticipated implementation of the free trade agreement.

This collaboration marks a significant step toward enhancing economic and political relations between Iran and the Eurasian bloc.

The Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (TCCIMA), in collaboration with the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), will hold the third Eurasia Trade Exhibition and Conference from February 22 to 25, 2025, at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Announcing the event, Mahmoud Najafi Arab, head of TCCIMA, highlighted the chamber's ongoing efforts to advance trade



relations between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and to facilitate the legal and policy frameworks necessary for such cooperation.

Speaking to TCCIMA's public relations office, Najafi Arab explained that the event, organized in partnership with Pars Karen Trade Management Company and with official authorization from the TPO, aims to strengthen ties with member countries of the EAEU, including Armenia, Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

"Considering that Iran's accession to the EAEU is being reviewed by the parliaments of the member states and the two sides also signed a preferential trade agreement in December 2023, which covers 87 percent of the region's traded goods, we anticipate significant opportunities for boosting trade and economic exchanges," Najafi Arab said.

He added that the agreement aims to eliminate trade barriers, create a shared market, and harmonize customs and financial policies among EAEU countries.

Najafi Arab also emphasized the transformative potential of transitioning the agreement to a free trade framework and the strategic importance of Iran's membership in the union as a gateway to expanded regional economic collaboration.

The official further noted that this year's event builds upon the chamber's successful initiatives in promoting economic diplomacy, such as two specialized conferences held in 2020 and 2022 and active participation in this year's EAEU annual summit in Armenia.

"These efforts underscore the EAEU's effectiveness as a global economic structure and its role in granting Iranian businesses access to extensive markets and unparalleled opportunities," he stated. He further encouraged

leveraging this platform for knowledge exchange, establishing new commercial ties, and enhancing Iranian firms' competitiveness within the union.

The upcoming four-day conference will feature discussions on enhancing trade exchanges, fostering joint investments, improving industrial cooperation, and expanding the export of Iranian goods. Distinguished guests, including representatives of chambers of commerce, government officials, and economic experts from EAEU countries, are expected to attend.

In addition, the event will host trade delegations from EAEU member states and include matchmaking sessions, organized by Pars Karen Trade Management, to connect Iranian businesses directly with potential partners and clients.

Najafi Arab concluded by expressing confidence that the event will offer Iranian traders and businesses critical insights into the EAEU's regulatory framework and economic potential, paving the way for a new era of bilateral cooperation.

The Eurasian Economic Union Minister of Trade Andrey Slepnev has recently underscored the importance of the free trade agreement with Iran, citing the country's strategic position as a primary partner on the EAEU's southern borders and a key player in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INST).

In an interview with Izvestia on Friday, Slepnev highlighted Iran's achievements in import substitution, technological development, and resilience against sanctions.

Addressing the status of the agreement, which was signed a year ago, Slepnev noted that the ratification process has been completed in four EAEU member states. "We aim to finalize the agreement at the upcoming

EAEU leaders' summit in Saint Petersburg at the end of December 2024, so it can take effect at the start of next year," he said.

Slepnev explained that by the end of 2024, 75 percent of the EAEU's trade will be conducted with countries in the south of the region, marking a decisive shift in the bloc's trade priorities. "We have reoriented our trade focus from Western countries to the south," he stated.

Previously, the European Union accounted for over 40 percent of the EAEU's trade, with the Global South comprising less than half. "Today, the share of European partners has fallen by about 2.5 times, while trade with the Global South continues to grow. By the end of 2024, we expect it to account for 75 percent of our trade turnover," Slepnev added.

Iran and EAEU also signed a free trade agreement on December 25, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Russia, aiming to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers and facilitate economic and trade interactions. Once fully implemented, 87 percent of tariff codes for commercial goods between Iran and EAEU member states will drop to zero.

Under President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, Iran has emphasized strengthening ties with Eurasian countries to enhance access to global markets. This strategy has translated into tangible growth, with the latest figures from Iran's Customs Administration revealing a 16 percent rise in exports to EAEU nations in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20–August 20). During this period, the export volume reached 2.2 million metric tons, reflecting a 35 percent year-on-year growth.

Iran also participated in the EAEU's annual meeting held on September 30 and October 1 in Yerevan, Armenia, with a high-level delegation comprising both public and private sector representatives. During the meeting, Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref reiterated the country's commitment to expanding bilateral and multilateral economic relations with EAEU member states.

The success of the free trade agreement underscores Iran's strategy to integrate more deeply into the regional economy and strengthen its presence in international markets.

## Major infrastructure, energy projects inaugurated in Pezeshkian's visit to North Khorasan

From page 1 ▶ As part of the national housing program, 2,000 residential units were also inaugurated in North Khorasan. The units aim to address housing shortages and improve living standards for residents. The National Housing Movement aligns with Iran's commitment to ensuring affordable housing across all provinces.

The inaugurated projects mark a significant step in North Khorasan's development trajectory, with the potential to enhance the quality of life for residents while stimulating

economic opportunities in the region.

President Pezeshkian's two-day visit underscored the government's focus on regional development. Following the inaugurations, the president met with local officials to discuss future initiatives aimed at fostering economic growth and improving public services.

The visit concluded Thursday night with a session of the Provincial Planning and Development Council, where strategies for regional development were discussed.

The President was accompanied by a high-profile delegation, including several ministers and vice presidents, reflecting the government's commitment to addressing the province's challenges.

Notable officials included Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji, and Transport Minister Farzaneh Sadegh.

North Khorasan, located in northeastern Iran, has a population of one million across ten counties.

## Hossein Khanlari appointed head of Iran Air

TEHRAN – Hossein Khanlari has been appointed as the new head of Iran Air (Homa), the national airline of the Islamic Republic of Iran, following approval by the Cabinet on Wednesday, December 25.

According to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Cabinet members voted for Khanlari to take over the leadership of Iran Air during their meeting on Wednesday.

Khanlari previously served

as the head of the Civil Aviation Organization in the mid-2000s. In 2022, he was appointed as a strategic advisor to the head of Qeshm Air and has also held positions within the Tehran Municipality earlier in his career.

This appointment is seen as part of the government's efforts to strengthen Iran Air's operational capabilities and improve its competitiveness in the regional aviation market.

## Over \$700m in foreign investment approved

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Investment Board has approved over \$700 million in foreign investment during its latest session, marking a significant development under the 14th government.

The 287th meeting of the Foreign Investment Board, and the fifth under the current administration, was chaired by Ali Koudei, deputy minister and head of the Organization for Investment, Economic, and Technical As-

sistance of Iran.

This approval underscores ongoing efforts to attract and facilitate foreign investments as part of broader economic strategies to stimulate growth and development.

# Israeli army storms Gaza's Kamal Adwan Hospital

Israeli soldiers stormed Gaza's last functioning hospital on Friday and forced Palestinian medics and patients to leave on foot to an unknown destination.

The Israeli army issued a statement confirming it launched a raid on the Kamal Adwan Hospital. It claimed that Hamas uses the hospital as a command center without providing any evidence.

The spokesperson for the World Health Organization expressed concern about the deteriorating health situation in Gaza, after Israeli troops stormed the hospital.

"We are witnessing the targeting of civilians and the health system in Gaza," Margaret Harris told Al Jazeera.

"What Gaza's hospitals are exposed to is horrific, and what we are witnessing represents a punishment for the population."



According to international humanitarian law, health organizations must not be targeted. The spokesperson said the UN health agency was not a law enforcement agency and does not have a mandate beyond supporting the Strip's health system.

On Thursday, nearly 50 Pales-

tinians were killed in an Israeli air strike on a building near Kamal Adwan Hospital, including five medical staff, the Health Ministry in Gaza said.

Dr Ahmed Samoud, lab technician Israa Abu Zaida, technologist Fares Al Hudali, paramedics Abdul Majeed Abu Al Aish and Maher Al

Ajrami were killed in the strike, the ministry said, The National reported.

Hossam Abu Safiya, head of the Kamal Adwan hospital in Beit Lahia, said "an Israeli strike resulted in five martyrs among the hospital staff".

The medical staff were staying in the building with their families when the attack happened.

The United Nations and other organizations have repeatedly decried the worsening humanitarian conditions in Gaza, particularly in the north, since Israel began its latest military offensive in early October.

Kamal Adwan hospital has been under a tight siege by the Israeli military. It has been attacking the facility with bombs and drones for weeks.

## Boxing Day in London: Protesters call for ending arms sales to Israel



British protesters demand an end to Israel's genocidal war on Gaza.

From page 1 ▶ After Israel declared war on Gaza in October last year, Starmer told LBC radio that Israel had the right to defend itself and the "right" to cut water and power in the enclave (Gaza), in line with "international law".

Starmer's comments sparked outrage and later he tried to whitewash his statements.

Currently, the Labour's failure to exert pressure on Israel to stop the Gaza war coupled with the ongoing arms sales to the regime indicate that British politicians are effectively endorsing its atrocities in the Palestinian territory.

Since the start of the Gaza conflict, many

countries across the world have seen anti-war protests. People from all walks of life have frequently held rallies in cities across Britain, EU countries, the United States and beyond calling for an end to Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

Previously, United Nations agencies and rights groups have urged Israel to cease its military actions in Gaza.

In November, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former war minister Yoav Gallant for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Israel already stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The ICJ, known as the World Court, found in January that there was a risk of violation of the rights of the Palestinian people to protection from genocide.

It ordered Israel to "take all measures within its power" to desist from killing Palestinians in contravention of the genocide convention, to prevent and punish the incitement of genocide, and to facilitate provision of "urgent basic services".

Israel has ignored such calls to end its genocidal war in Gaza.

## Yemen targets Israeli Ben Gurion Airport

From page 1 ▶ He explained that the targeting of the ship was due to the owning company's violation of the decision to prohibit vessels from sailing to "ports in occupied Palestine."

Saree also stated, "The armed forces possess capabilities that enable them to expand their target list within occupied Palestine to include additional vital facilities belonging to the enemy," reiterating that their operations will not cease until the aggression against Gaza ends and the siege is lifted.

Touching on the recent Israeli airstrikes on Yemen, Saree revealed that the regime carried out several airstrikes on civilian facilities in Sanaa, which included its airport, and the port city of Hodeidah, resulting in casualties, injuries, and material damage.

He stressed that the aggression, waged on Thursday night, would only strengthen the determination of the Yemeni people to continue supporting the Palestinian people and fulfilling their religious, moral, and humanitarian duties.

According to the Hebrew newspaper, Yedioth

Ahronoth, the Israeli attack did not prevent the Yemenis from continuing to launch missiles last night, forcing hundreds of thousands of Israelis to seek shelter in protected areas.

### Ansarallah leader: "Those talking about threats to global navigation are justifying their support for Israel and America"

The paper added that "deterrence against the Houthis is not achieved by merely disabling an airport. The Israeli public must understand that the Yemenis have the capability to continue firing daily, and it is expected that they will do so."

Also on Friday, the Israeli Maariv newspaper said that "Israel is struggling to reduce the Houthis' offensive capabilities against it."

The leader of Yemen's Ansarallah movement, Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, affirmed

that Yemen's continued drone and missile strikes toward the Israeli regime, including Tel Aviv, demonstrate the failure of the Israeli occupation.

He highlighted the Israeli losses due to Yemeni operations, pointing out that the Israeli stock market indices dropped, and the Israeli currency diminished in value last Thursday following Yemeni missile strikes on Tel Aviv.

The Ansarallah leader also revealed that Yemeni forces "targeted the aircraft carrier Truman at the same time as America sought to carry out a major aggressive operation against our country."

Regular attacks by the United States, Britain, and the Israelis have failed to deter the Sanaa government's military support front in solidarity with Gaza, which has seen Israeli interests targeted in the sea and on land.

Yemeni officials have repeatedly said they will halt military operations as soon as there is a ceasefire in Gaza and the siege on the enclave is lifted.

that he and his colleagues were safe.

There was no immediate comment from Israel on the incident.

The Yemeni Saba news agency said that three people were killed in the strikes on the airport and another three were killed after Israel hit the key port city of Hodeidah, while 40 others were wounded in Israeli attacks.

Yemen's Ansarallah has repeatedly fired drones and missiles towards Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. Al Jazeera's Gabriel Elizondo, reporting from UN headquarters in New York, said Ghebreyesus and his staff were evacuated out to safety shortly after the attack on the airport.

"The UN tells us all of their staff are accounted for. But make no mistake about it, this was a very close call," Elizondo said.

UN spokesperson Stephanie Tremblay told reporters that the delegation had just concluded discussions on the humanitarian situation in Yemen and were negotiating the release of detained UN staff members. "The secretary-general emphasizes that international law, including humanitarian law as applicable, must be respected at all times, and he appeals to all to respect and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure," she said.

"Humanitarian relief personnel also must not be targeted and must be respected and protected at all times."

## Peace with pariah: Syria's HTS seeking close ties with Israel

TEHRAN- Syria's new rulers are seeking cordial relations with Israel despite domestic anger over the regime's occupation of more lands of the Arab country.

"We have no fear toward Israel, and our problem is not with Israel. There exists a people who want coexistence. They want peace. They don't want disputes," the governor of Damascus said Thursday. Maher Marwan made the comments in an interview with the US public broadcaster NPR, apparently on behalf of Syrian de facto leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known by his nom de guerre, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani.

Marwan added, "And we don't want to meddle in anything that will threaten Israel's security or any other country's security. We want peace, and we cannot be an opponent to Israel or an opponent to anyone."

And this is how he tried to justify Israeli strikes on Syria after the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) rebel group and its allies toppled the government of President Bashar Assad on December 8. Marwan said Israel's initial trepidation after the fall of Assad was "natural."

"Israel may have felt fear. So it advanced a little, bombed a little, etc," he noted.

The Israeli army has carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria destroying much of the country's military capabilities since HTS removed Assad from power. The regime claims

it wants to prevent military equipment from falling into hostile hands.

Israel also sent its ground forces into a UN-patrolled buffer zone in the occupied Golan Heights and beyond after Assad's fall.

Israel has extended its occupation to further regions of the Syrian territory, encompassing various towns, villages, and the strategically significant Mount Hermon.

Israel claims the occupation of additional parts of the Syrian territory is aimed at ensuring the security of the regime's borders.

Israel's land incursion into Syria violates the 1974 agreement between the two sides. The United Nations and a number of countries have demanded Israel withdraw from the region.

Syrians have also condemned Israel's presence on the country's territory.

On Wednesday, residents of a village in the southwestern province of Quneitra protested against Israel's military presence there. Israeli forces opened fire on the demonstrators in the village of Susa, injuring several of them.

Earlier this month, Israeli forces also attacked protesters who had gathered in the village of Maariyah on the western edge of Syria's southern Daraa province to demand an end to the regime's military presence in the area. They shot and wounded a protester.

## Will US-Israeli pressure on Hezbollah work?

From page 1 ▶ Besides, Haaretz revealed that the Israeli army is preparing "for the possibility of continuing its deployment in southern Lebanon after the end of the 60-day period in the event that the Lebanese army does not abide by the agreement and does not extend its full control over southern Lebanon." It added that it is working to "build a barrier south of the border line" inside the Lebanese territory.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, held a meeting with Lebanese Army Commander General Joseph Aoun; his fellow Commander of the South Litani Sector Brigadier General Edgar Lowndes; UNIFIL Commander General Araldo Lazaro; American chairman of the Five-Party Monitoring Committee for implementing the ceasefire agreement General Jasper Jeffers; and the French member of the committee General Guillaume Ponchamp.

The meeting discussed the Israeli violations and the need to stop them and accelerate the withdrawal from the south.

In turn, the Lebanese mission to the United Nations filed a complaint to the Security Council in protest against the repeated violations of the ceasefire by the Israeli regime. The complaint is titled "Declaration of Cessation of Hostilities and Related Obligations to Enhanced Security Arrangements for the Implementation of Resolution 1701."

Following a request from the Lebanese leaders, including Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, to protest the ongoing Israeli ceasefire violations, American envoy Amos Hochstein is expected to visit Beirut at the beginning of the new year to hold talks on the work of the oversight committee, as he has the status of the civilian chairman of the committee.

In this context, observers are concerned that the US, which pressed for a ceasefire, is not pressuring the Israeli side in return to

withdraw from the Lebanese areas it has occupied, as it considers the opportunity ripe to complete the restrictions on Hezbollah, especially after what happened in Syria.

They further confirm Washington's direct interference in the reconstruction project by monitoring the construction companies that will enter the south.

Sources stated that Hochstein will pressure the Lebanese government to assume "responsibility for the reconstruction file, and reject any role for Iran, whether through Iranian companies or aid," and will also stress the need for the Lebanese state to prevent "the liquidation of cash dollars from any outlet, otherwise there will be dire consequences."

This may be read that Washington will link the reconstruction file contingent upon the Lebanese government's approval of its conditions otherwise it will obstruct the election of a president and the formation of a new government.

What is more severe is that financial support has been linked to the implementation of UN Resolution 1559 and the disarmament of Hezbollah in all of Lebanon, not just in the area south of the Litani River.

In parallel, the Lebanese government informed the Iranian side of "Lebanon's apology for not receiving any Iranian financial or in-kind support related to the reconstruction file" and asked the Iranian side to go to the World Bank to finance reconstruction programs for what was destroyed by Israel.

In the meantime, the US embassy in Beirut, in cooperation with the Lebanese media (that receives direct funding from it) has launched a campaign claiming that Hezbollah is unable to provide the necessary funds for restoration or shelter work, in addition to fabricating news about the Al-Qard Al-Hassan (a legal banking institution run by Hezbollah).

## South Korea votes to impeach acting president Han Duck-soo

South Korea has voted to impeach its acting president Han Duck-soo, two weeks after parliament voted to impeach its President Yoon Suk Yeol, the BBC reported.

A total of 192 lawmakers voted for his impeachment, more than the 151 votes needed for it to succeed. Prime Minister Han took over the role after President Yoon was impeached by parliament following his failed attempt to impose martial law on December 3.

Han was supposed to lead the country out of its

political turmoil, but opposition MPs argued that he was refusing demands to complete Yoon's impeachment process.

Chaos erupted in parliament as the vote was held on Friday. Lawmakers from Yoon and Han's ruling People Power Party (PPP) protested after National Assembly speaker Woo Won-shik announced that only 151 votes would be needed to pass the impeachment bill.

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

## WHO chief Tedros says he was meters away from Israeli attack on Yemen airport

A wave of Israeli air attacks hit Yemen's main airport just as the World Health Organization's director-general said he was about to board a flight there, wounding one of the United Nations plane's crew, the WHO chief has said.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X that he was just meters away from the attack on Sanaa airport on Thursday.

"As we were about to board our flight from Sanaa... the airport came under aerial bombardment. One of our plane's crew members was injured," he said.

"The air traffic control tower, the departure lounge - just a few meters from where we were - and the runway were damaged," he said, adding

## Relics recently unearthed in southern Sistan unveiled



The Great Museum of Zahedan is seen in the foreground

TEHRAN - The unveiling ceremony of ancient discoveries from southern Sistan, a vast region in Sistan-Baluchestan province, was held Thursday at the Great Museum of Zahedan, attracting local officials and cultural heritage enthusiasts.

"These artifacts have been unearthed from archaeological surveys of ancient sites in southern Sistan earlier this year... This marks the first time these items have been displayed," the provincial tourism chief Mohammad-Hadi Tehrani-Moqaddam said at the event.

The official also highlighted the significance of the artifacts, including 120 coins from the medieval and late Islamic periods, glazed decorative pottery, ornamental beads, stone and

bronze objects, and human figurines.

Tehrani-Moqaddam further elaborated that the systematic and methodical survey was conducted by an eight-member team, comprising five archaeologists, two surveyors, and a pottery designer, under the supervision of the archaeologist Mojtaba Saadatian.

"The discoveries provide invaluable insights into the region's historical and cultural heritage, enriching our understanding of its past civilizations."

The collective province -- Sistan in the north and Baluchestan in the south -- accounts for one of the driest regions of Iran with a slight increase in rainfall from east to west and an obvious rise in humidity in the coastal regions. In ancient times, the region was a crossroad in the Indus Valley and the Babylonian civilizations.

Sistan-Baluchestan possesses special significance because of being located in a strategic transit location, especially Chabahar, which is the only ocean port in Iran and the best and easiest access route of the middle Asian countries to free waters.

The province is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and the Lut Desert.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: City of Quito

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, was founded in the 16th century on the ruins of an Inca city and stands at an altitude of 2,850 m above sea level. Despite the 1917 earthquake, the city has the best-preserved, least altered historic centre in Latin America.

The UNESCO-designated city offers a remarkable example of the Baroque school of Quito (Escuela Quitena), that brings together the indigenous and European artistic traditions and which is renowned for providing the greatest contribution of Spanish America to universal art.

The height of this art is represented by veritable spiritual citadels, among which are San Francisco, San Domingo, San Augustin, La Compana, La Merced, the Sanctuary of Guapulco and the Recoleta of San Diego, to name just the principal ones. These are recognized not only for their artistic value from the architectural viewpoint but also for their decorative elements (altarpieces, paintings, sculptures).

The city of Quito forms a harmonious ensemble where nature and man are brought together to create a unique and transcendental work. The colonizers knew how to adapt their artistic sensibility to the reality that surrounded them, building their archi-

itecture in a very complex topographical environment. Despite this, the architects were able to confer stylistic and volumetric harmony to the ensemble.

The urban routes are based on the original plan and include central and secondary squares as well as checkerboard-patterned streets and are aligned on the cardinal points of the compass. In the city centre, there are convents and churches as well as houses (1 or 2 floors with one or several patios), usually built with earthen bricks and covered with stucco, combining the monumental with the simple and austere.

The city of Quito, the cradle of Pre-Columbian cultures and an important witness of Spanish colonization maintains, for the time being unity and harmony in its urban structure despite centuries of urban development.

Elevated to the title of capital of the Audience of Quito, it assumed the political direction and patronal control over the villages and towns. This is the maximum representation of the step towards forming socio-economic development, creator of a true national idiosyncrasy expressed through its unique tangible and intangible heritage.

(Source: UNESCO)

## 'Really incredible' sixth-century sword found in Kent

A spectacular sixth-century sword has been unearthed from an Anglo-Saxon cemetery in rural Kent, to the astonishment of archaeologists.

The weapon is in an exceptional state of preservation and is being likened to the sword found at Sutton Hoo, the Anglo-Saxon burial in Suffolk.

It has a silver-and-gilt hilt, with a decorative pattern in fine craftsmanship, and a blade bearing a runic script. Even elements of its leather-and-wood scabbard and the beaver fur that lined it have also survived. Attached to its pommel is a ring, perhaps symbolizing an oath to a king or another high-status individual.

The sword is among striking objects that have been unearthed from an early medieval cemetery near Canterbury, whose precise location is not being identified as further excavations are planned.

Twelve burials have been excavated so far and there are thought to be

200 more, which will take years to explore. They date from the fifth and sixth centuries.

Duncan Sayer, the lead archaeologist and professor of archaeology at the University of Central Lancashire, told the Guardian: "We're keeping the name of the site under wraps. It's a very rich cemetery. It would be a real tragedy if it became well known before we've excavated it."

He said of the sword: "It's really incredible, in the top echelons of swords, an elite object in every way, which is wonderful. It rivals the swords from Dover and from Sutton Hoo."

Buried in the same grave was a gold pendant, inscribed with a serpent or dragon. As such pendants would have been worn by high-status women, it is thought to have been a treasured keepsake from a female relative or ancestor.

All the male graves have weapons such as spears and shields. All the

female graves have knives, as well as brooches and buckles, among other objects.

The discoveries will feature in BBC Two's forthcoming six-part Digging for Britain series, which shows that an untouched Anglo-Saxon cemetery is now "giving up its secrets".

The sword is described as one of the most remarkable finds ever seen on Digging for Britain, now into its 12th series.

Prof Alice Roberts, an academic who presents the documentaries, told the Guardian: "I've never seen one that's so beautifully preserved."

She said: "It's an extraordinary Anglo-Saxon cemetery, with really beautifully furnished graves, a lot of weapon burials where you find things like iron spear-points and seaxes, which are Anglo-Saxon knives -- and then there's this astonishing sword."

(Source: The Guardian)

## 'UNESCO-listed Armenian Monastic Ensembles in good condition'

TEHRAN - The director of the World Heritage base for the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran has assured that its five UNESCO-registered churches and chapels are well-preserved and active.

Alen Grigour on Friday emphasized that there is no cause for concern regarding the condition of Iran's UNESCO-designated churches [and chapels], ISNA reported.

"Comprehensive cooperation among related organizations ensures the proper preservation and functionality of these culturally and historically significant sites."

These sites include Saint Thaddeus Monastery (Qara Kelisa), Saint Stepanos Monastery, the Church of Mary in Darreh Sham village, the Chupan Chapel in Jolfa, and the Chapel of Dzordzor in Maku, he said.

Grigour highlighted that while some of these churches are more active in hosting Armenian religious ceremonies, all are used for various celebrations and events.

"Religious ceremonies, such as the annual pilgrimage to Saint Thaddeus Monastery, are organized seamlessly with support from local authorities, including the governor's office, the Red Crescent Society, fire-fighting departments, and law enforcement."

For instance, the August pilgrimage to Qara Kelisa last year



A view of the Saint Thaddeus Monastery (Qara Kelisa) in northwest Iran

drawn approximately 4,000 pilgrims, Grigour added.

Addressing funding and workforce concerns, he confirmed that there are no significant budgetary issues. "Restoration projects are consistently followed up through the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Although there is occasional need for additional staff, financial resources for preservation, including contributions from benefactors, have been sufficient."

The five monuments represent a blend of architectural styles from the Byzantine, Persian, Eastern Orthodox, Assyrian, Persian, Muslim, and Armenian cultures.

### Saint Thaddeus Monastery

The Saint Thaddeus Monastery ensemble is in two zones,

the first of which covers an area of 29.85 hectares and comprises four chapels and the monastery itself. The main church—the so-called White Church—is built on a Greek cross plan. It has an umbrella-shaped dome and a bell tower. There is also a Black Church, the oldest part of the ensemble, which is also crowned by a dome. There are also three more chapels to the northeast of the main monastery.

The second zone is about 2 kilometers away to the southeast of the monastery, occupies an area of 1.98 hectares, and is the location of a fifth chapel, the Chapel of Sandokt. In one of the two cemeteries next to this chapel there is a sarcophagus.

### Saint Stepanos Monastery

The Saint Stepanos Monas-

tery ensemble is in the gorge of the Aras River, which borders Azerbaijan. The ensemble includes the main monastery church, the Darreh Sham chapel, and the Chupan chapel. The central zone of the monastery is in an area of 72.06 hectares

The length of the church, built in a Greek cross form, is 27 meters and its height is 25 meters. A four-pillared entrance is topped by a bell tower built in two levels; the first level is rectangular in shape, and at the second level there are pillars supporting an umbrella-shaped dome. Built in the style of Armenian religious architecture, it has cut-stone fascia. Within the church there are paintings that are based on similar ones at the Etchmiadzin Cathedral, which is a blend of Christian and Islamic art forms.

### Chapel of Dzordzor

The old Chapel of Dzordzor lies in the Makuchay River valley, occupying an area of 0.79 hectares. What is present now is a remnant of the large monastery that once existed there, as the entire chapel has been shifted to a new location 600 meters away due to submergence resulting from a dam that was built on the river.

Before the building was dismantled, detailed plans were made and the dismantled elements numbered so that they could be reassembled to the same design at the new site.

## Rally of vintage cars reaches Gilan province

TEHRAN - A car tourism rally, featuring 40 vintage vehicles, commenced its journey from Tehran to the northern Gilan province on Tuesday.

Organized by the Touring and Automobile Club of Iran, the event aims to promote the preservation of historical vehicles, foster sustainable tourism, showcase the attractions and potential of Iran's tourism sector, encourage safe driving practices, and create a sense of social enthusiasm while familiarizing the public with classic automotive craftsmanship.

The rally includes over 100 participants, predominantly families, from various cities and provinces across the country, including Isfahan, Hamedan, Lorestan, Tehran, Alborz, and other regions.

The participating groups are traveling in vehicles from previous decades, ranging from a 1958 Mercedes-Benz, the oldest in the lineup, to a 1995 Mercedes-Benz, the newest. Among these, 10 cars bear historic license plates.

"This event offers participants a unique opportunity to explore the natural and historical attractions along the Tehran-Gilan route, with special emphasis on the picturesque town of Chaboksar," the organizers said.

### The age of the classic cars

According to Brinatica, the decade 1925-35 was notable not only for the appearance of many



new small automobiles but also for the building of many ultra-large ones. The years from 1925 to 1948 are cited by collectors of automobiles as the "classic years," a period that saw the rise of the luxurious fast motorcar to a peak it seems unlikely to reach again.

The first name in this field was Rolls-Royce Ltd., founded in 1906. Most Rolls-Royce chassis are designed for limousine and large sedan bodies, but the firm once made a comparatively light car (called the Twenty), and it has throughout its his-

tory produced fast models in addition to its regular line—e.g., after World War II, the Continental, built under the Bentley Motors Ltd. label.

Other motorcars of this type included the Hispano-Suiza of Spain and France; the Bugatti, Delage, Delahaye, Hotchkiss, Talbot (Darracq), and Voisin of France; the Duesenberg, Cadillac, Packard, and Pierce-Arrow of the United States; the Horch, Maybach, and Mercedes-Benz of Germany; the Belgian Minerva; and the Italian Isotta-Fraschini.



## INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Since ESFAHAN MOBARAKEY STEEL COMPANY intend to purchase 511 tons of Nickel plate with tender no48596454, hereby informs whom is interested in that tender documents can be received by sending a request to below contact details (Email or WhatsApp), the sealed and closed envelopes according to what has been mentioned in tender documents must be submitted to ESFAHAN MOBARAKEY STEEL COMPANY- Raw Materials Purchasing Department (RMP) until 1:00 PM (According to Tehran time) Monday 06. January .2025 (Monday 17.10.1403).

### Contact Details:

Contact Person: Mr. Dehghani Email: [d.dehghani@msc.ir](mailto:d.dehghani@msc.ir)

Cell Phone/WhatsApp: 00989132677093

### Note:

ESFAHAN MOBARAKEY STEEL COMPANY reserves the right of return or rejection of those tender documents in which haven't observed at least one of items of covering letter.

ESFAHAN MOBARAKEY STEEL COMPANY PUBLIC RELATIONS (1403-09)

# Training workshop held on “adolescent positive parenting”

TEHRAN – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) has organized a comprehensive training workshop on “Adolescent Positive Parenting” in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province, to ensure adolescents in vulnerable areas will benefit from supportive environment.

This intensive eight-day training, conducted in two four-day rounds in December, brought together 90 psychologists, counselors, and mental health practitioners from Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs), schools, and community centres. The programme, funded by EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), the UNICEF website announced in a press release on December 23.

The workshop aimed to enhance their knowledge, skills, and technical expertise in delivering positive parenting programmes tailored specifically for parents of adolescents.

As part of a UNICEF-supported initiative, parents of adolescents in vulnerable districts are empowered with hands-on training in positive parenting skills.

The goal is to establish supportive and nurturing environments for adolescents in vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

The “Adolescent Positive Parenting” package, developed with UNICEF's support, includes three detailed manuals and workbooks for trainers, parents, and adolescents. It also features 17 educational films for trainers, five videos for parents, and five motion graphics designed to enhance learning and engagement.

To conduct the workshop, the Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), Provincial Drug Coordination Council (DCCC), Iranian Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and a local non-governmental organization collaborated with UNICEF, as well.

In the initial phase, the trained professionals will reach out to at least 1,600 parents in Khorasan Razavi Province, offering them practical training on positive parenting skills.



enting skills.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to scale up adolescent parenting programmes initially launched in Qom Province for vulnerable parents.

Over 4,000 parents of adolescents in marginalised areas of Qom have participated in at least eight sessions of parenting training, demonstrating the programme's success in fostering stronger family relationships and adolescent well-being.

In 2025, another province will be selected for the third round of training.

By collaborating with key governmental and non-governmental organisations, UNICEF continues to expand its reach, ensuring that adolescents and their families in vulnerable districts receive the essential support and guidance they need for a brighter future.

## Empowering adolescents

Under a newly launched initiative, titled Green DADRAS, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the UNICEF in collaboration with the Climate Change Secretariat aim to promote students' climate literacy.

A total of 11,536 high school students, girls and boys aged 12 to 15 years, from across Iran will benefit from the educational program, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on August 22.

By raising awareness and promoting proactive measures, the IRCS and UNICEF aim to create a

Hamedan, Ilam, Zanjan, Markazi, Qazvin, Ardebil, West and East Azarbaijan attended the workshop.

UNICEF's collaboration with the ministry of education focuses on adolescents in boarding schools, which are secondary schools in disadvantaged parts of the country.

The training opportunity provides school principals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support the students, at these schools in rural and remote regions, in improving their self-assurance, problem-solving, and teamwork skills.

This series of workshops marks the initial phase that will span across all provinces throughout the year, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on May 9.

Upon finishing the current series of workshops, UNICEF will focus on supporting the Boarding Schools on enhancing students' access to transferable skills such as digital literacy and entrepreneurship to prepare the adolescents for a smooth transition from learning to earning through alternative learning pathways.

In May, Adolescents Well-being and Empowerment Centers, known as MASERRAT, in Mashhad and Kermanshah cities revised and reviewed their protocols to make sure the adolescent girls receive the most efficient and high-quality services.

Adolescent girls aged 10-19 who are participating in well-being and empowerment programs supported by UNICEF will benefit from a significant improvement in the quality of services provided, the UNICEF website reported on May 6.

These changes resulted from a consultative workshop to review and modify the protocols.

The protocols included a wide range of procedures and measures based on which services such as healthy lifestyle, psychological health support, social and life skills, increased meaningful participation, prevention from drug abuse, social harms, and risky behaviors, as well as increased resiliency and self-care.

positive environmental impact and contribute to a more sustainable future for all.

The newly launched Green DADRAS Initiative, guided by the Climate Change Secretariat of the IRCS, has equipped 46 master trainers from the Youth Organization of the IRCS to lead educational sessions on climate change for these school students.

These dedicated trainers will train 824 provincial trainers across the country to finally empower over 11,000 high school students within DADRAS teams, focusing on critical topics such as drought and floods.

The initiative will enable these students to design and implement impactful climate change-related campaigns within their schools and communities.

Having received education on the importance of climate change, these young minds will then be equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions and take proactive measures to protect their environment.

In April, the ministry of education and the UNICEF held a workshop for principals of Upper Secondary Boarding Schools from 10 provinces to boost their capacities in developing students' skills which are essential to find a decent job.

The four-day long workshop was held from April 27 to 30. A total of 90 Upper Secondary Boarding School principals from 10 provinces of Kordestan, Kermanshah,

da, ISNA reported on Friday.

In October, referring to former memorandums of understanding (MOUs), Ansari highlighted the need to implement the MOUs by taking effective measures.

The official further noted that achieving desired goals requires continuous cooperation rather than adopting short-term measures.

Tsukada, for his part, highlighted the possibilities for fostering cooperation between the two countries, referring to Japan's capabilities in managing wetlands, marine environment, desertification, as well as sand and dust storms.

ment, desertification, as well as sand and dust storms.

The Japanese official said the restoration of Lake Urmia is one of the issues that requires enhancing ties.

In reference to the Anzali Wetland project, Tsukada said Japan is ready to assess the projects that have been so far implemented and empower the country through environmental education.

“Japan is also interested in expanding cooperation with Iran on air pollution,” the official noted

## Educational equity is not a slogan but a fundamental goal: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that the administration intends to transform the education system where no student is deprived of the right to quality education, highlighting that educational equity is not a mere slogan but a fundamental goal.

It is not acceptable that students in public schools in underprivileged areas do not receive a good education while they have to compete with students in private schools that benefit from the best education, Pezeshkian stressed.

He made the remarks on Thursday in Bojnourd, the capital of North Khorasan province, Borna reported.

The president said providing vocational training alongside education is one of the key areas of transforming educational methods, through which the youth will develop skills needed for a profession after graduating from high school.

Referring to the extensive plans to solve the infrastructural challenges of schools, the president stressed, “We will overcome all school constructing challenges within a year. One of our main objectives is to turn public schools into the best education model.”

The president urged governor generals and all executive officials to cooperate with other sectors on a national plan to promote equity in educational spaces within the specified timeframe.

The president went on to stress the necessity of public participation and the role of citizens in realizing the major national plan of building schools, saying, “We need to share our plans with the people to build not only schools for their children but also appropriate sports and recreational spaces for extracurricular activities.”

Pezeshkian further emphasized the importance of action instead of mere speeches, stating that his administration has prioritized solving the issue of educational space shortages, especially in deprived areas across the country within a year.

### Education space per student, literacy rate improved

According to the latest statistics, education space per student in Iran has increased from



5.17 square meters in the calendar year 1396 (2017-2018) to 5.28 square meters in the year 1402 (2023 - 2024).

The literacy rate, as well, has increased from 87.9 percent in 1396 to 90.7 percent in 1402, IRNA reported.

In the mentioned six-year period, the ratio of resilient classrooms improved from 0.64 to 0.82, sport space per student grew from 0.17 to 0.20, and the ratio of classrooms equipped with cooling and heating systems rose from 0.48 to 0.68.

The literacy rate has improved in urban areas as well as rural areas. From 1396 to 1402, the literacy rate among men and women amounted to 93.9 percent and 87.4 percent, respectively.

The literacy rate in urban areas was announced to be 92.8 percent, males had a literacy rate of 95.4 percent and females had a literacy rate of 90.2 percent.

In rural areas, the literacy rate reached 83.5 percent. Men accounted for 88.8 percent and women for 78.3 percent of the figure.

Moreover, the number of out-of-school students in primary, secondary, and high school lowered from 2.17, 6.71, and 18.19 percent in 1396 to 2.10, 5.23, and 16.12 percent in 1402, respectively.

## Plan to restore Gorgan Bay, Miankaleh Wetland needed: official

TEHRAN – Regarding the significance of conserving valuable ecosystems, a comprehensive plan to revive Gorgan Bay as well as Miankaleh Wetland, in northern Golestan province, should be implemented, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), has said.

During a meeting held on Thursday, Ahmad-Reza Lahijan-zadeh noted that restoring wetlands will not only preserve biodiversity and prevent hazards such as sand and dust storms, but also will provide an opportunity to promote sustainable development and boost nature tourism.

### Over 40% of wetland area exposed to drying up

Due to low precipitation and insufficient water right allocation, some 43 percent of the wetlands of the country are subject to dryness, the head of the DOE has said.

“Wetlands need to be saved with the help of management measures and the participation of local communities,” IRIB quoted Shina Ansari as saying.

She made the remarks on the sidelines of the 22nd international environmental exhibition which was held on Tehran from December 18 to 22.

“Over the past few decades, water rights have not been allocated to most of the wetlands, including Parishan, Shadegan, Hamoun, Jazmourian, and even Lake Urmia. Hence, 43 percent of the area of these wetlands is more or less exposed to drying up.”

Underscoring the role of local communities in preserving the wetlands, Ansari said: “If we share local communities in the benefits of the wetlands, they will volunteer to conserve and restore the wetlands.”

The official went on to say that the DOE, in cooperation with the United Nations De-

velopment Program (UNDP), is planning to initiate a project by implementing a local approach to enhance wetland conservation measures.

The DOE also seeks to promote alternative livelihoods around the wetlands, to expand sustainable agriculture by identifying optimal cultivation patterns in each area, and to reduce chemical inputs such as pesticides and chemical fertilizers, which in some way contaminate wetlands and threaten their biodiversity, Ansari further noted.

On December 10, Mehri Asna-Ashari, an official with the DOE, said 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.

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

She made the remarks 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.

## 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 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 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 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  
Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
Printed at: Jame Jam Bartar Borna - 44197737



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.O. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

DECEMBER 28, 2024

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*That knowledge which remains only on your tongue is very superficial.  
The intrinsic value of knowledge is that you act upon it.*  
**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:06 Evening: 17:19 Dawn: 5:44 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:13 (tomorrow)

## What's in Tehran art galleries



### Sculpture

\* Aran Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Koosha Mousavi.  
The exhibition will run until January 10, 2025 at the gallery located at 5 Lolagar St., Neaple-le-Chateau St.

\* Shekar Bahrami is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

The exhibit named "Muze" will run until January 8 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



### Installation

\* Sets of installation art by Mehrdad Aboutalebi are on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.  
The exhibit named "Camp" runs until January 7 at the gallery located at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

\* Homa Gallery is showcasing sets of installation art by Fati Seirafi.

The exhibit entitled "What's Hidden in The Heart" will continue until January 7 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



### Multimedia

\* An exhibition of artworks in various media by Neda Azami, Abbas Akbari, Shahram Karimi, Nastaran Safai, Ali Khosravi, Mahnoush Moshiri and other artists is underway at Kavin Gallery.  
The exhibit titled "Qamar, Daughter of Iran" will be running until January 10 at the gallery located at No.24, Pesian St. Zaferanieh Neighborhood.

\* Paintings by Mahsa Rajabi are currently on view in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibition named "Schematic" will continue until January 7 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vanak Sq.



\* A collection of paintings by Parastoo Taheri is on view in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.

The exhibit named "Radavar" will run until January 6 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

\* A collection of paintings by Mohammad Mehdi Heidari is on view in an exhibition at Adapa Gallery.

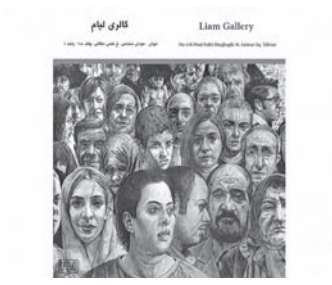
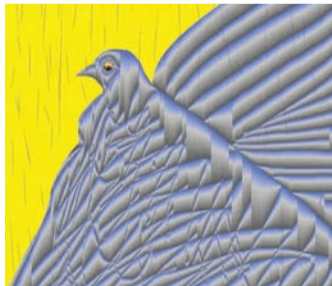
Entitled "Die at The Right Time", the exhibition will run until January 9 at the gallery located at No. 5, Sumesara Alley, Sazesh St., Vali-e Asr Square.



### Drawing

\* Drawings by Ahmad Morshedlou are currently on view in an exhibition at Liam Gallery.

The exhibit runs until January 6 at the gallery located at No. 118, Fathi Shaaqai St. near Salmas Square.



# "Azure Narrative" exhibition features Iranian artworks in Yerevan

From Page 1 > This event was a significant opportunity for the Armenian art community and international audiences to experience Iranian contemporary art in an innovative and fresh context.

Visitors to the exhibition encountered works that narrate the stories of their artists' efforts, creativity, and innovation. The event provided art lovers with exposure to new and diverse artistic viewpoints, offering them inspiration and insight.

The azure color, often referred to as 'lajvard' in Persian, holds a significant place in Iranian art and culture, symbolizing both beauty and spirituality. It is frequently associated with the vast skies and serene waters, embodying the essence of tranquility and depth. In Persian art, azure is commonly seen in intricate tile work, carpets, and miniature paintings, where it serves as a unifying hue that evokes a sense of harmony.

This vibrant color has been utilized in architectural marvels, particularly in mosques and historical buildings, where its luminosity enhances the intricate designs and reflects the spiritual aspirations of Iranian society.

In addition to its aesthetic



significance, azure has cultural connotations that resonate deeply within Iranian spirituality and mythology. It is often linked to notions of paradise and divine beauty, evoking a sense of the ethereal.

The color has historical connections to the lapis lazuli stone, which has been valued for its deep blue hue and has adorned Persian artifacts for centuries. In literature and poetry, azure symbolizes longing, love, and the infinite, often appearing in clas-

sic Persian verses to capture the beauty of nature and the emotions of the human experience. Thus, azure not only enriches the visual tapestry of Iranian culture but also deepens its emotional and spiritual narratives.

## Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House" on stage at Niavaran Cultural Center

TEHRAN-The play "A Doll's House" written by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen is being staged at Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran.

Mikail Shahrestani has directed the 80-minute play that will remain on stage until January 5, 2025, Honaronline reported.

The actors vary on odd and even nights. On odd nights, the play is performed by Mansoureh Abdollahi, Amirreza Vahhabpour, Saeideh Rezaei, Vida Zavareian, Taha Nikzad, and Pedram Koohi.

Mahsa Asghari, Aliakbar Zeinali, Nesa Shahcheraghi, Fatemeh Amirjan, Kamran Jame, and Amin Bonabi perform on even nights.

"A Doll's House" is a three-act play written in 1879, and the story is set in a Norwegian town in the same year.

The play concerns the fate of a married woman, who, at the time in Norway, lacked



reasonable opportunities for self-fulfillment in a male-dominated world. Despite the fact that Ibsen denied it was his intent to write a feminist play, it was a great sensation at the time and caused a "storm of outraged con-

trovery" that went beyond the theater to the world of newspapers and society.

It is a masterpiece of theatrical craft which, for the first time portrayed the tragic hypocrisy of Victorian middle-class marriage on the stage. The play ushered in a new social era and "exploded like a bomb into contemporary life".

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) was a major Norwegian playwright largely responsible for the rise of modern realistic drama. He is often referred to as the "father of modern drama". Ibsen is held to be the greatest of Norwegian authors and one of the most important playwrights of all time, celebrated as a national symbol by Norwegians.

He pioneered theatrical realism, but also wrote lyrical epic works. Ibsen is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare, and "A Doll's House" was the world's most performed play in 2006.

## Iranian Artists Forum to show Ingmar Bergman's "Saraband"

TEHRAN-The 2003 Swedish drama film "Saraband" directed by Ingmar Bergman, will be shown at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) on Monday.

The film screening will start at 5 p.m., and will be followed by a review session in the presence of film critic Mahnaz Ronaghi, ILNA reported.

Being Bergman's final film, it was made for Swedish television, but released theatrically in a longer cut outside Sweden. The Swedish television version is 107 minutes, while theatrical releases run just under two hours.

The story is a sequel to Bergman's "Scenes from a Marriage" (1973), bringing back the characters of Johan and Marianne. It is a co-production of Sweden, Italy, Germany, Finland, Denmark, and Austria.

Marianne, some thirty years after divorcing Johan, decides to visit her ex-husband at his summer home. She arrives in the middle of a family drama between Johan's son from another marriage and his granddaughter.

Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) was a Swedish film and theater director and screenwriter. Widely

considered one of the greatest and most influential film directors of all time, his films have been described as "profoundly personal meditations into the myriad struggles facing the psyche and the soul".

Among his most acclaimed works are "The Seventh Seal" (1957), "Wild Strawberries" (1957), "Persona" (1966) and "Fanny and Alexander" (1982), which were included in the 2012 edition of Sight & Sound's Greatest Films of All Time. He was also ranked No. 8 on the magazine's 2002 "Greatest Directors of All

Time" list.

Bergman directed more than 60 films and documentaries, most of which he also wrote, for both cinema releases and television screenings. Most of his films were set in Sweden, and many of his films from 1961 onward were filmed on the island of Fårö. He also directed more than 170 plays. Among his company of actors were Harriet Andersson, Bibi Andersson, Liv Ullmann, Gunnar Björnstrand, Erland Josephson, Ingrid Thulin, Gunnel Lindblom and Max von Sydow.

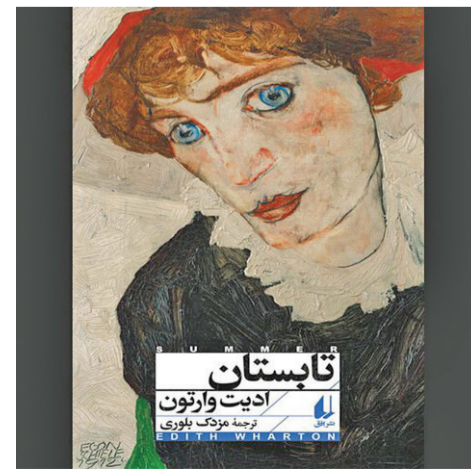
## Edith Wharton's "Summer" published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the novel "Summer" written by Edith Wharton has been released in bookstores across Iran.

Mazdak Bolouri has translated the book and Ofogh Publication has brought it out in 224 pages, Mehr reported.

The book was originally published in 1917 by Charles Scribner's Sons. While most novels by Wharton dealt with New York's upper-class society, this is one of two novels by the author with rural settings. Its themes include social class, the role of women in society, destructive relationships, sensual awakening and the desire of its protagonist, named Charity Royall. The novel was rather controversial for its time and is one of the less famous among her novels because of its subject matter.

A naive girl from a humble background meets an ambitious city boy, and a torrid romance ensues. Despite her pride, inde-



pendence, and honesty, Charity Royall feels shadowed by her past--especially in her ardent relationship with the educated and refined Lucius Harney. Can passion overcome

the effects of heredity and environment?

With its frank treatment of a woman's sensual awakening, "Summer" created a sensation upon its 1917 publication. Wharton — a peerless observer and chronicler of society — completely shattered the standards of conventional love stories with this novel's candor and realism. The Pulitzer Prize-winning author declared "Summer" a personal favorite among her works.

Edith Wharton (1862-1937) was an American writer and designer. Wharton drew upon her insider's knowledge of the upper-class New York "aristocracy" to portray, realistically, the lives and morals of the Gilded Age.

In 1921, she became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, for her novel, "The Age of Innocence". She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, in 1996.