

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 46th year | No. 14956 | Saturday | January 4, 2025 | Dey 15, 1403 | Rajab 3, 1446

Millions of Iranians travel to the late general's hometown to mark the fifth martyrdom anniversary

We Will Continue Soleimani's Path: Pezeshkian

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Iraqis mark 'Leaders of Victory' martyrdom anniversary

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Lebanese citizens protest improper treatment of Iranian flight passengers

TEHRAN – Public anger over the mistreatment of passengers on an Iranian flight led to protests in Lebanon on Thursday night.

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Protesters in Beirut accused airport officials of implementing American and Israeli agendas in Lebanon, questioning why no such measures were implemented against U.S. and European flights. ▶ Page 2



Time to stand on the right side of history

By Mohammad Mahdi Imanipour
President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization

TEHRAN – To begin my note, I would like to sincerely congratulate the leaders and followers of Prophet Jesus, son of Mary (peace be upon them), all over the world, on the arrival of the New Christian year, 2025.

Let us hope that, by the grace of God Almighty and in the light of the teachings of that divine Prophet, we will witness the establishment of comprehensive peace, lasting security, and true freedom in the current turbulent world in the New Year.

The bitter realities that are unfolding today in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and other parts of the West Asian region have jeopardized the lives and security of millions of people, including Christian citizens of these countries, and have made the sweetness of the transition to the New Year bitter for them. In this regard, there are some points that seem necessary to recall and emphasize in these early days of 2025. ▶ Page 2

Iran's renewable energy capacity reaches 1,520 MW

TEHRAN – Iran's renewable energy capacity has grown significantly under the 14th administration, reaching 1,520 megawatts (MW).

According to IRNA, the country's energy imbalance and the critical need to expand renewable energy use have been a priority for the administration.

President Masoud Pezeshkian has consistently emphasized the importance of renewable energy development, urging immediate intervention to resolve any obstacles to its expansion. This commitment has driven significant growth in renewable energy capacity.

Installed capacity for renewable power plants, which stood at 1,231 MW at the beginning of the current administration, increased by 289 MW to reach 1,520 MW by the end of December. Solar power plants dominate the sector, generating 781.86 MW and accounting for 60 percent of the total capacity. Wind power plants contribute 376.3 MW, representing 29 percent, while small hydroelectric plants produce 104.04 MW, making up 8.0 percent of the renewable energy mix. ▶ Page 4

Shameful scandal at Beirut Airport: Dirty schemes against Hezbollah continues

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – Based on the instructions of the Lebanese Ministry of Interior, known for its anti-Hezbollah policy on the orders of Washington, Beirut Airport's security service for the second time in a week has subjected an Iranian passenger airplane to a thorough inspection.

The inspection took place following what Al-Hadath TV, known for its source of funding and rhetoric, claimed "Western sources have told Al-Hadath that Iran plans to transfer millions of dollars to Hezbollah today via a Mahan Air flight from Tehran to Beirut."

All passengers were subjected to a humiliating inspection. Additionally, in a blatant violation of diplomatic norms, the small personal bag of an Iranian diplomat working at the Iranian embassy in Beirut was thoroughly inspected.

These provocative measures under the pretext of the possibility of transferring money to Lebanon are not new,

Israel remains in the crosshairs of Yemeni fire

TEHRAN- Israel has been making desperate attempts to deter Yemen's Ansarullah movement from firing missiles and drones at its cities and towns.

Over the past weeks, missiles and drones from Yemen have struck Israel nearly every day, sending millions of Israelis scrambling for shelter.

Early Friday morning, the Yemeni army launched a drone and missile that set off air raid sirens in broad swaths of Israel. The attacks caused multiple injuries.

Shortly after Israel launched war on Gaza in October 2023, the Yemeni army began to target strategic and military sites in Israel in a show of solidarity with Palestinians in the enclave. Most Yemeni projectiles have penetrated Israel's sophisticated aerial defense system.

Late last month, an American missile defense system battery were used in the interception of a ballistic missile launched at Israel from Yemen.

But the THAAD, or Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System, has failed to protect Israel from Yemeni attacks.

An Ansarullah official said Friday's missile launch highlights yet more failure by the US military's THAAD.

Jabalia: The "ghost town" that haunts the Israeli army

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- Israel has stepped up attacks in the Gaza Strip more than 450 days after initiating its war of genocide against the besieged Palestinian territory.

According to Gaza's Government Media Office on Friday, Israeli airstrikes across the Palestinian enclave killed more than 70 people over the previous 24 hours.

In a statement, the media office added that the Israeli army carried out deadly strikes in areas, including in the so-called humanitarian zone of al-Mawasi in Khan Younis and the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

"The Israeli airstrikes targeted civilians and infrastructure in horrific crimes added to the occupation's dark record," the statement said.

Israel has devastated Jabalia since launching a new offensive in northern Gaza in early October 2024.

Israeli media says the Jabalia refugee camp has been left a "ghost town" with no buildings left intact.

The daily newspaper Maariv reported that the camp is now only home to stray dogs. ▶ Page 5

Saint Sarkis Cathedral: a landmark of Armenian heritage in Tehran

TEHRAN – Saint Sarkis Cathedral stands as one of the most iconic landmarks of downtown Tehran, symbolizing the rich heritage of the Armenian community in Iran.

Completed in the early 1970s, the cathedral is an Armenian Apostolic church named after Saint Sarkis the Warrior. It is situated at Karimkhan Zand Street, near the junction of Nejatollahi Street (formerly Villa Street).

Architecture and design

As the largest church in Tehran, Saint Sarkis Cathedral measures 36.5 meters in length and 17.8 meters in width. Its white concrete structure, covered inside and out with white marble, showcases a harmonious blend of medieval and modern architectural styles.

Initially built without interior columns, the hexagonal dome was later supported by four columns to ensure structural stability. ▶ Page 6



Ammar festival wraps up, honoring resistance figures

TEHRAN- The closing ceremony of the 15th edition of the Ammar Popular Film Festival took place at the Andisheh Hall of the Art Bureau in Tehran, with the presence of families of martyrs and international guests.

During the ceremony, Ali Mayadeen's correspondent Ali Mortada and Yemeni artist Kamal Sharaf were honored, along with the distribution of awards across various categories.

During his tribute, Ali Mortada addressed the crowd, extending greetings to those who instill fear in the hearts of occupiers and expressing solidarity with Iran. He stated, "I want to tell the Lebanese that this is Iran, and the Iranians are with us. Lebanon is strong; we have killed more than 120 Zionist soldiers and wounded thousands, halting the economy of the Zionist regime." ▶ Page 8

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

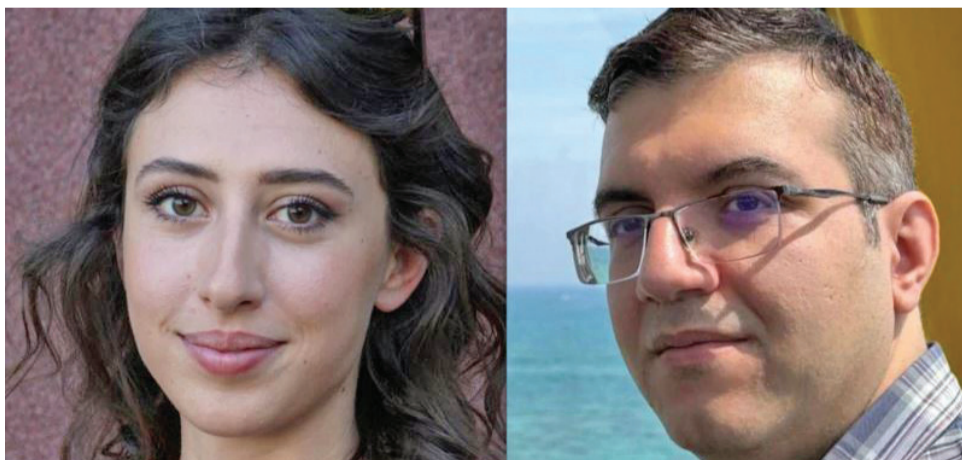
Iran able to curry favor in competition between global powers

In a note, the Iran newspaper discussed the new round of talks between Iran and the three Western JCPOA parties (Britain, France and Germany) on January 13. It said: Preparations for nuclear negotiations are tied to a chain of events over the last 3 years, top among them regional developments, great power competition, and the Ukraine war. But in the talks with these three countries, Iran will try to prevent the activation of the snapback mechanism before October 2025 (when the terms of the JCPOA will expire). Iran is also trying to influence Europe to prevent the adoption of a resolution against its nuclear program by the International Atomic Energy Agency (at the Board of Governors). It seems that Iran is trying to plan a new model of relations with the West, which originates from the understanding of the current realities. The recent visit of Iran's foreign minister to China and the upcoming meeting of Pezeshkian with Putin convey the message to the U.S. government that Iran has significant importance for these global competitors of America and can increase this importance in negotiations with more economic and security ties.

Shargh: What will Trump do with the Middle East?

In an analysis, Shargh dealt with Trump's approach to the Middle East. It wrote: It will be difficult for the Trump administration to leave the region that is still affected by the consequences of the October 7 attacks. Israel and Iran have been engaged in a shadow war for a long time, but after the October 7th attacks, this war came to the surface. Israel's security establishment has described October 7 and the subsequent wars as a battle with Iran's allies. Weakening Iran in some ways does not mean reducing the risk and power of this country. Iran has responded to this situation by speeding up its nuclear program, a policy that puts Iran on the path of confrontation not only with Israel but also with the United States and other Western powers. While the Trump administration has declared that it intends to return to the maximum pressure campaign against Iran, it is claimed that Iran may be only a few weeks away from building a nuclear weapon. Such a situation raises the question of whether sanctions can act quickly enough to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Tehran summons Italian ambassador over detention of citizen at US order



TEHRAN – Tehran has summoned the Italian ambassador to Iran following the continued detention of Iranian citizen Mohammad Abedini by Italian authorities.

On Friday, the Director General for Western Europe at Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the Italian Ambassador to express Iran's strong objections to the arrest and detention of Abedini. According to the Ministry, the detention is "illegal" and was conducted at the request of the United States. During the meeting, the Iranian official criticized the "hostile and politically motivated agenda" by the U.S., accusing it of leveraging its domestic laws to target Iranian nationals globally.

"The detention of Mr. Abedini represents another instance of Washington's proven efforts to impose the extraterritorial application of its internal regulations, using such measures as a tool for political pressure and hostage-taking," the Director General stated. Iranian citizen Mohammad Abedini, currently imprisoned in Milan, faces charges linked to a January 28 drone attack on a U.S. mil-

itary outpost in Jordan. Tehran has dismissed the allegations as baseless.

Italy also summoned Iran's ambassador to discuss the case of Italian journalist Cecilia Sala, who entered Iran on December 13 with a journalist visa but was detained six days later for unspecified legal violations. The Iranian Embassy in Rome announced that ambassador Mohammad Reza Sabouri engaged in discussions with Italy's Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Riccardo Guariglia, focusing on consular matters and the cases of detained nationals from both countries.

Ambassador Sabouri highlighted Iran's efforts to ensure humane treatment for Sala, including granting her access to the Italian Embassy's consular section and facilitating regular phone calls with her family. He emphasized that these measures reflect Islamic principles of clemency and humanitarianism. Sabouri also urged the Italian government to expedite Abedini's release and ensure his well-being while in custody.

Etemad: Times is short, let's join FATF

In a commentary, Etemad addressed the issue of FATF and wrote: The deadline for the approval of the most important bill that will change the fate of the country has arrived. But the time is short. Trump's future policy shows that we are in a "dual opportunity and threat" situation. The right decision and planning can turn this situation into an opportunity. On the contrary, it can pose a threat to Iran's national interests. Let's just remember that solving the problems between Iran and America does not depend just on direct negotiations but on the political settlement of tensions between Iran and the United States in the direction of economic and international agreements. In conditions where the future of the world economy is moving toward digital economy and Elon Musk has expressed his desire to invest in Iran, we can once again realize the importance of Iran's privileged position. Based on this, solving the problem of tourism, which can bring income as much as oil and gas, is one of the fruits and positive effects of the approval of this bill. It should be noted that this will have a direct effect on increasing the value of the national currency even in a short term.

Jam-e-Jam: Time to stand on right side of history

Jam-e-Jam says what happened in 2024 is a clear example of the crime of the Zionist regime, which, with the support of America, was busy testing destructive and deadly weapons on the defenseless Palestinian people. According to the Leader of the Revolution, the global hegemony do not even have mercy on "human concepts". They pretend that the cruel and terrorist regime of Israel is defending itself, and call the Palestinian resistance fighters, who are defending their right to self-determination, "terrorists". The hegemony defy the most obvious religious and moral teachings in the world. Amidst these bitter facts, Lt. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and other leaders of the resistance front's main concern was to protect people's security. Martyr Soleimani's struggle in defense of the Christian-populated areas in Syria and Iraq will never be erased from the pages of history in the world and the West Asia region. Now is the time the faithful nations and their religious leaders stand on the right side of history and fulfill such a great responsibility.

Lebanese citizens protest improper treatment of Iranian flight passengers

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This resulted in hours-long delays and significant frustration among the travelers.

The actions, which drew resistance from the Iranian diplomats, contravened the Vienna Convention of 1961, a law that grants diplomats immunity from such inspections.

Protesters in Beirut accused airport officials of implementing American and Israeli agendas in Lebanon, questioning why no such measures were implemented against U.S. and European flights.

Despite the Lebanese army blocking all access routes to the airport, protesters persisted, continuing their demonstrations on foot and motorcycles.

The incident followed claims by Saudi media that Iran was planning to "transfer millions of dollars to Hezbollah via a Mahan Air flight"

These unfounded allegations



Mahan Air aircraft at Iran's Mehrabad International Airport in Tehran

led to a flurry of rumors and news about the plane's cargo.

In an explanatory note to the Lebanese Foreign Ministry, the Iranian Embassy clarified that the two diplomatic bags in question contained "documents and cash for operational expenses at the embassy."

Following the protocol established by the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Lebanese authorities allowed the bags to enter without inspection.

A source from the Iranian Embassy told the Tasnim News Agency that the incident occurred under orders from Lebanon's Interior Minister, influenced by pressures from the U.S. and Israeli regime.

'Crisis resolved after envoy's intervention'

Tasnim's source emphasized that despite the thorough inspection, nothing suspicious was found in the passengers' luggage.

Additionally, reports indicate that the crisis at Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport was eventually resolved with the intervention of the Iranian ambassador and negotiations with Lebanese officials.

According to the Student News Agency, all passengers departed the airport without further issues, and Iranian diplomatic representatives left without their luggage being inspected, in line with international conventions.

Iranian Parliament to investigate

Ebrahim Rezaei, the spokesperson for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign

Policy Commission, stated that the commission had received information about the treatment of passengers and diplomats by the Airport police.

"This will be thoroughly and swiftly investigated," Rezaei emphasized, underscoring the importance of maintaining the dignity of every Iranian abroad.

He urged Iran's Foreign Ministry to pursue the matter promptly and cautioned Lebanon against actions influenced by Western countries, given the region's sensitive conditions.

"Resistance did not come with a suitcase to be defeated by an inspection. It emerged from the bravery and dedication of people and will remain a thorn in the side of Zionism and its lackeys," Rezaei concluded.

Time to stand on the right side of history



Saint Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza

From page 1 ▶ First, according to the sacred teachings of the Abrahamic and divine religions, not only cruelty, oppression, massacre, and occupation are not justified, but also turning a blind eye or even remaining silent in the face of such inhuman crimes is an example of sin, violation of the divine will and law, and disobedience to God's command.

In the teachings of divine religions, tolerance of oppression and remaining silent towards it are incompatible with the pure nature of man. What took place in the year 2024 AD is a clear example of the crimes and wickedness of a regime that, with the support of the United States, is testing destructive and deadly weapons on the weak and defenseless women and children living in shelters, schools, and even so-called safe places designated by the United Nations.

What kind of human logic is the martyrdom of about 60,000 Palestinian citizens, more than 3,000 Lebanese citizens, and dozens of Yemeni citizens really compatible with?

Second, although terrorism is a common security problem for the global community, and combating it is considered a sacred and responsible concern for followers of divine religions, the main question is: "Where exactly do such acts of terrorism and violence originate from?" Would it be possible to consider the sinister existence of occupation terrorism, Takfiri terrorism, and racist terrorism that deprive tens of thousands of innocent people of their right to life every year, and also the new form of terrorism, namely "media terrorism" - which is no better, if not more deadly and destructive than other forms of terrorism - the product of the innate and natural interaction of the human system?

The best answer to this important and key question should be sought from a recent message from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution to American and European youth: "The leaders of violent global domination do not even have

mercy on human concepts.

They portray the terrorist and ruthless Israeli regime as the one defending itself, and call the Palestinian Resistance, which defends freedom, security, and the right to self-determination, terrorists!"

The special task of the world's domineering system is to distort facts and create deviations with regard to the most obvious religious and moral teachings in various parts of the world.

The crystallization of this special task can be very well observed in the attitude of the leaders of the domineering powers and the media and propaganda network affiliated with them.

The third point is about the significant responsibility that followers of divine religions, especially their leaders, have with regard to ensuring a transition from the current dangerous and bitter situation.

Taking responsibility for protecting the security of human beings, as the greatest of God Almighty's creation, was the same important concern that the great Iranian martyr, General Qassem Soleimani, and other leaders of the Resistance Front, like martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, martyr Ismail Haniyeh, etc. worked to realize until their last breath and by sacrificing their lives. Martyr Soleimani's efforts in defending the Christian areas of Syria and Iraq will never be erased from the pages of contemporary history of the world and the West Asian region.

A loud cry against oppression is an important responsibility that the great prophets of God have placed on the shoulders of their followers

A loud cry against oppression is an important responsibility that the great prophets of God have placed on the shoulders of their followers. Undoubtedly, the leaders of divine religions can have a prominent role in strengthening global peace and security and their efforts can return spirituality to the international community.

Therefore, they are expected to take the needed actions to protect peace, human rights, and dignity in the New Christian Year.

Today is the time when God-believing nations and their religious leaders must stand on the right side of human history and fulfill their responsibilities.

Iranian ground forces heighten alert at eastern and western borders



Photo shows Iranian forces near the country's northwestern borders

TEHRAN – Iran has bolstered its border security by deploying military brigades and building advanced smart walls along its eastern and western frontiers.

Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, Deputy Coordinator of the Iranian Army, stated on Friday that ground forces are on high alert to support these strategic improvements.

According to the rear admiral, these brigades are strategically positioned to prevent the smuggling of illicit items, such as narcotics, and to ensure that unauthorized entry into the country is curtailed.

"Border security is crucial for any country. If we cannot establish security on our borders, the movement of people will be uncontrolled, leading to a breakdown of social security within the country," Sayyari asserted.

A significant aspect of Iran's border strategy is the construction of smart walls in geographically feasible areas.

Sayyari elaborated on their sophistication, noting, "These are not ordinary walls; they are equipped with various technologies such as sensors and cameras."

He added that these technologies are controlled and monitored through multiple methods to ensure comprehensive border control.

To illustrate the importance of border security, Sayyari drew a parallel with personal security: "It is similar to safeguarding your home; if you can't protect your home from intruders, you lose both security and respect."

In recent years, Iran has ramped up its efforts to secure its borders, with particular emphasis on the eastern and western frontiers.

On the eastern border with Afghanistan, Iran has embarked on constructing a 300-kilometer concrete wall.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The southeastern city of Kerman is an unlikely destination for travelers in winter. Its desert surroundings make its climate susceptible to drastic temperature fluctuations, and the nearby sand dunes often obscure the air. The potential for sudden cold snaps is another deterrent that typically keeps visitors away during the colder months. Yet, on Thursday, the city was bustling with millions of travelers from all corners of Iran.

This annual influx has been a consistent pattern for the past few years. Despite the city being crowded, people of all backgrounds – young and old, Muslims and non-Muslims, and even many foreign visitors – are resolute in making their way to Kerman. Last year's devastating terrorist attack, which claimed over 100 lives, should have further discouraged travel, but the visitors seem focused solely on reaching the tomb of the individual they believe embodies their security and assurance.

"I feel it's my duty to be here," said a woman who had traveled with her two daughters from Iran's northwestern East Azarbaijan Province. "When I reflect on what Haj Qassem did for us, what I do in return feels inadequate."

Haj Qassem is a popular term of reference for Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the long-time commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), who was assassinated in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020.



We will continue Soleimani's path: Pezeshkian

Millions of Iranians travel to the late general's hometown to mark the fifth martyrdom anniversary

Why is General Soleimani significant?

For ordinary Iranians, General Qassem Soleimani is remembered as a key figure in preventing the incursion and potential occupation of their country by ISIS (Daesh).

The terrorist group, notorious for its brutality, including the routine beheading of civilians which it proudly displayed on social media, had seized large territories in Iraq and Syria during the 2010s, posing a grave threat to the entire region.

Though General Soleimani avoided the spotlight and rarely appeared before cameras, the millions who attended his funeral in 2020 reflected the profound respect he commanded.

He was revered, not for his military rank, but for his contributions to the nation's safety and security. General Soleimani's commitment to his

country began at the age of 20, when he joined the forces resisting Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in the 1980s. His fight for Iran ended only when he lost his life in an unprecedented and illegal U.S. attack.

For those observing global power dynamics, General Soleimani is also seen as someone who galvanized resistance movements throughout the region.

His influence united diverse groups in West Asia under the banner of the "Axis of Resistance," a network of forces engaged in the fight against Western imperialism, foreign intervention, and Israeli occupation.

At a large ceremony in Tehran commemorating General Soleimani, President Masoud Pezeshkian declared, "We pledge to continue Martyr Soleimani's path with strength and stand against injustice

as long as we live. We will stand for the truth, showing our strength to those who would oppress us." He noted that General Soleimani's martyrdom exposed the hypocrisy of Western powers and their claims regarding human rights.

"Such a person was martyred," he added, "and showed that those claiming to support humanity and human rights are, in fact, liars. They are enemies of humanity who reveal their barbarism and crimes."

In a significantly smaller gathering in Qanat-e Malek village, General Soleimani's humble birthplace, a similar spirit was evident. "Haj Qassem's martyrdom marks not an end, but a beginning," said a local resident whose family had lived in the village for generations. "Our fight has only begun."

Iran calls on Afghanistan to honor water rights in border river disputes

TEHRAN – The spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Ministry has underscored the critical need for cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan to maintain the natural flow of water in shared border rivers.

Esmail Baqaei made the remarks on Friday, following ongoing concerns over water management, dam construction, and potential disruptions to the ecological and economic stability of the region.

He also noted Iran's long-standing role in hosting millions of Afghan nationals over the past five decades. These enduring ties, he said, underscore the importance of mutual respect and collaboration in addressing shared challenges.

Baqaei stressed that safeguarding and enhancing bilateral relations requires both countries to prioritize mutual interests and refrain from unilateral actions that could cause harm.

The spokesperson pointed to the significance of bilateral agreements, international treaty law, and customary international law in managing shared water resources.

He emphasized the natural rights of downstream populations who rely on these rivers, which have historically flowed from Afghanistan into Iran.

Baqaei called on Afghanistan to respect these rights and cooperate in ensuring the continued flow of water, removing any obstacles that might disrupt this natural process.

"The principle of good neighborliness should guide our efforts," Baqaei stated, adding that

equitable use of shared water resources is essential for the well-being of both nations.

Addressing recent developments, Baqaei expressed Iran's concerns over the construction and filling of new dams in Afghanistan. Such projects, he warned, could significantly impact the volume of water flowing into Iran.

He revealed that Iran has consistently raised these issues through official diplomatic channels and technical discussions, emphasizing that Afghanistan must honor its commitments under bilateral treaties and adhere to established international norms.

"Water resource management cannot be conducted unilaterally," Baqaei stated. "It must respect the rights of all stakeholders, adhere to principles of good neighborliness, and take into account environmental considerations."

The Foreign Ministry has formally conveyed its strong objections to Afghanistan regarding actions that restrict the natural flow of water or divert rivers that have historically sustained life and shaped the environmental balance along the shared border. Baqaei stressed that these rivers are vital not only for agricultural and ecological stability but also for maintaining the livelihoods of communities in both countries.

Baqaei concluded by expressing hope that Afghanistan would take steps to address these concerns responsibly. He urged the neighboring country to consider the shared interests of both nations, comply with international legal standards, and make decisions that reflect the



spirit of cooperation and good neighborliness.

Over the past decade, tensions have escalated between Iran and Afghanistan over the management of shared water resources, particularly in the Harirod Basin. This international water basin, shared by Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkmenistan, plays a vital role in supporting livelihoods and agriculture in the region.

In 2016, Afghanistan inaugurated the Salma Dam on the Harirod River, reducing water flow to Iran and Turkmenistan by an estimated 73%. The Harirod Basin is particularly critical for northeastern Iran, where 3.4 million people, including residents of Mashhad, depend on its water. The region relies on the Doosti Dam, a joint project between Iran and Turkmenistan, which pumps water over 182 kilometers to support this population.

Recently, Afghanistan's caretaker government announced it has begun filling the Pashdan Dam, located near Herat on the Harirod River, disregarding Iran's customary water rights.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

How Iran lost Bahrain

A look at Shah's interview that laid the ground for Bahrain's separation from Iran

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran, signaled his willingness to relinquish control of the Bahrain archipelago during an interview with Indian journalists in 1969.

In that 1969 interview, the last Shah of Iran voiced his support for Bahrain's separation from Iran, despite his previous claims of sovereignty over the oil-rich archipelago.

Mohammad Reza Shah's concession of Bahrain is often compared to the surrenders of territory made by other Iranian Shahs of the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties. However, Bahrain stands out because Mohammad Reza was the first Shah who willingly, and seemingly with pleasure, gave it away.

Bahrain, historically an integral part of Iran
Bahrain was part of the Iranian



territory at least since the Sassanid era which lasted for four decades from 224 AD to 651 AD. It was declared Iran's 14th province on November 12, 1957, and had two representatives in the Iranian parliament. Prior to that, in the early 1900s, one parliamentary seat had been dedicated to Bahrain. A year later, in 1958, Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the ruler of Bahrain, pledged allegiance to Iran.

Historically, Bahrain was considered part of the Fars province

before 1957. During the Safavid dynasty, Bahrain was subordinate to the Bushehr governorship, along with Zubarah (located in modern-day Qatar). In 1737, under the Afsharid dynasty, Bahrain became subject to the Fars governorate.

The province officially ceased to exist with a resolution approved by the lower house of Iran's parliament (the National Consultative Assembly) on May 14, 1971, with 184 votes in favor and 4 against. This

was then unanimously approved by the upper house (the Senate) on May 18, 1971. The Shah himself took the lead in recognizing Bahrain as an independent sovereign state.

Historian Khosro Motazed, in an interview with the Iranian Fars News Agency, stated, "One should not think that the issue of Bahrain's separation from Iran dates back only half a century or 100 years ago; the issue originated when Britain occupied Bahrain during the early Qajar period." Bahrain had been effectively a British protectorate since 1861, a result of the weakness of the Iranian monarchs at the time.

The real reasons behind the Shah's sudden announcement

The question is: what transpired in Iran's conflict with Britain and the United States during the 10 to 11 years between 1957, when Bahrain was declared Iran's 14th province, and the Shah's interview in 1969?

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

JANUARY 4, 2025

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Alipour's goal among best goals with ACL Matchday Two

TEHRAN – The search continues for the AFC Champions League Elite 2024-25's best goals with Matchday Two of the AFC Champions League Elite West Zone under the spotlight.

A total 20 goals were scored in the West Zone's Matchday Two and the-afc.com invites the fans to pick the best with the winning effort to advance to the semi-finals.

Persepolis forward Ali Alipour's goal is among the five best goals.

Vahid Amiri flicked Farshad Ahmadzadeh's corner into the path of the unmarked Alipour, who rifled the ball home past a stunned Pakhtakor keeper Vladimir Nazarov and into the roof of the net.

Pakhtakor's Dragan Ceran's goal against Persepolis, Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo's goal against Al Rayyan, Al Gharafa's Yacine Brahimi's goal against Al Ain and Al Ahli's Riyad Mahrez's goal against Al Wasl are the goals nominated for the best goal.

Tractor forward Abdi deemed surplus to requirements

TEHRAN – Tractor football team forward Mehdi Abdi has been reportedly deemed surplus to requirements.

According to the club general manager Saeid Mozafari, Abdi will join Malavan in the January transfer window.

Tractor has recently parted ways with Albanian forward Sokol Cikalleshi after he failed to meet the expectations.

Tractor leads Iran Professional League (IPL) table, followed by Sepahan and Persepolis.

Garrido to be named Al Ittihad Tripoli coach

TEHRAN – Spanish coach Juan Carlos Garrido has emerged as a contender for the vacant managerial position at Al Ittihad Tripoli.

The Spanish coach has recently parted ways with the Iranian club Persepolis.

Al Ittihad are without coach after parting company with Egyptian coach Moamen Soliman.

Garrido has previously worked at Egypt's Ismaily, Moroccan Wydad, and Algerian club USM Alger.

Persepolis eye French striker Bifouma

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club have set their sight on signing French forward Thievy Bifouma.

The 32-year-old player joined Iranian team Esteghlal Khuzestan in August and has stolen the show in the Iranian league.

Persepolis are going to sign the player but Foolad have also shown interest in signing him.

Bifouma has played in Greek side A.E. Kifisia, Turkish teams Bursaspor and Sivasspor, Spanish teams Espanyol and Granada and English team West Bromwich Albion.

Media reports suggest that Bifouma has also caught the eye of Iranian team Gol Gohar.

Iranian wrestler Savadkouhi undergoes surgery

TEHRAN – Asian freestyle wrestler champion Ali Savadkouhi underwent surgery on Thursday.

Savadkouhi suffered a meniscus tear in his knee during the Iran freestyle championship.

The wrestler has been sidelined for several months.

Savadkouhi became the first Iranian wrestler to

ever beat Jordan Burroughs. He defeated the six-time world champion in the 79kg in the World Cup in Iowa, the US in the 2022 World Cup.

He used a takedown to earn a win over Burroughs in the weight class.

Golmohammadi on shortlist to coach Persepolis

TEHRAN – Foolad football team head coach Yahya Golmohammadi has emerged as a candidate to take charge of Persepolis.

Golmohammadi left Persepolis in January 2024 and has been shortlisted to return to the club.

Persepolis have recently parted ways with Juan Carlos Garrido and is looking for a replacement for the Spanish coach.

The club have been linked with former Croatia coach Slaven Bilic, ex-Dortmund trainer Edin Terzic and former Bayern Munich head coach Niko Kovac.

Persepolis, headed by interim coach Karim Bagheri, sit third in the Iran Professional League.

Azmoun among Top IFFHS World Best International Goalscorer

TEHRAN – Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun is among those in the International Federation of Football History & Statistics (IFFHS) top goalscorer list.

A stubborn battle for the trophy of best international goalscorer 2024 at the end of the year between two Moroccans ended in victory for Soufiane Rahimi.

In December, 28-year old Rahimi managed to score for Al Ain in the Asian Champions League, a goal that sealed his win in the contest with the total of 20.

His rival Ayoub El Kaabi failed to find the net for Olympiacos in the last Europa League match-day of the year; so, he finished the second with 19 goals.

Erling Haaland completed the podium (17 goals).

Azmoun is 15th in the list with 12 goals. His compatriot Mehdi Taremi is 25th with 10 goals.

Esteghlal, Sepahan share the spoils: PGPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal and Sepahan football teams shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in the 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Thursday.

In the match held in Tehran's Shar-e Qods Stadium, Masoud Juma gave Esteghlal a lead in 22nd minute but Mehdi Limouchi canceled out his goal in the 74th minute.

Sepahan were reduced to 10-man after their captain Mohammad Karimi was shown a second yellow card in the 85th minute.

In Tabriz, Tractor defeated Esteghlal Khuzestan and went top of the table with 32 points, thanks to a better goal difference than Sepahan.

Mehdi Shiri, Mohammad Nader and Tomislav Štrkalj scored for Tractor. Zob Ahan were held to a goalless draw by Nassaji in Isfahan, Mes defeated Kheybar 2-1 in Khorramabad, Aluminum beat Shams Azar 3-0 in Arak and Foolad earned a late 2-1 win over Malavan.

Mohebi rejects Esteghlal offer

TEHRAN – Russian football team winger Mohammad Mohebi has rejected Esteghlal's offer.

The Iranian side has reportedly shown an interest in signing the 26-year-old player but Mohebi is going to continue his football in Russia.

Mohebi, who played in Esteghlal on loan in 2022-23 season, joined Rostov from Portuguese club Santa Clara. Esteghlal, headed by Pitso Mosimane, sit 10th in the Iran 16-team table, 14 points behind leader Sepahan.

Tehran hosting intl. tiles, ceramics, sanitary ware exhibition



TEHRAN - The 29th International Exhibition of Sanitary Porcelain Tile and Ceramics Exhibition of Iran opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Thursday, featuring over 90 domestic and international companies.

Producers of tiles, ceramics, and sanitary ware, as well as manufacturers of machin-

ery, tools, and equipment for the industry, are showcasing their latest achievements and products in this four-day exhibition.

The event also includes participants from related sectors, such as glaze and paint industries, raw materials suppliers, and faucet and sanitary fittings providers.

Key objectives of the exhibition include boosting exports, exploring new export markets, identifying the sector's potential and existing capacities, fostering innovation, and providing a platform for domestic and foreign investors.

It aims to create a competitive environment to improve product quality, facilitate direct engagement between manufacturers and consumers, and promote employment and entrepreneurship within the industry.

Iran's crude oil exports rebound in late 2024: report

TEHRAN - TankerTrackers, a shipping analytics company, reported a surge in Iran's crude oil exports during the latter half of December 2024, following slow growth earlier in the month.

According to a report by Oilprice.com and data from TankerTrackers, Iranian oil exports picked up pace in late December.

While the company did not disclose specific figures, it highlighted the significant rise after a sluggish first half of the month. TankerTrackers also noted that Iran has ceased exporting oil to Syria.

This development follows a challenging quarter for Iran's oil sector. Despite achieving the highest export levels in six years in 2024, growth was hindered in October and November due to higher prices for Iranian crude sold to China.

The price gap between Iranian crude and Brent crude reached its narrowest margin in five years, leading to a slowdown in October amidst heightened regional tensions in West Asia.

Iranian media reported in mid-December that oil exports to China, Iran's largest buyer, dropped by 524,000 barrels per day (bpd) in November compared to October, reaching 1.31 million bpd—the lowest in four months.

Despite U.S. sanctions on its oil industry, Iran has consistently exported over 1.0 million bpd, primarily to China. The Iranian oil minister has stated that the country is preparing for potential new sanctions under the incoming U.S. administration.

This resilience underscores Iran's ability to navigate economic pressures while maintaining a significant presence in the global oil market.

Feed supply pipeline for Bandar Abbas Refinery officially launched

TEHRAN-The pipeline supplying crude oil to the Bandar Abbas refinery, a branch of the Goreh-Jask crude oil pipeline with a daily capacity of 300,000 barrels, was officially inaugurated on Thursday.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar, head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC); Mohammad Meshkinfam, head of the National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC); Ahmad Hashemi, head of the Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company; Mousa Ahmadi, head of the parliamentary Energy Committee; and Mohammad Ashouri Taziani, governor of Hormozgan Province.

The project is designed to enhance production stability and strengthen the country's strategic infrastructure, Shana reported.

Bandar Abbas Oil Refining Company is one of the 10 Iranian petroleum refining companies. It was erected on an approximate area of 700 Hectares on the North coastline of the Persian Gulf near Bandar Abbas city. The company was exploited in 1997.



It started with a capacity of 232,000 b/d (barrel per day) to cater to domestic demands of oil products and also target the export market. The nominal capacity of company was increased to 320,000 b/d in July 2008 with attempt and endeavor of specialized and committed domestic manpowers. In 2012, by increasing 30,000 barrels of condensate to distillation and visbreaker units feedstock due to an innovative capacity improvement project without any expenditure and investment, this company was achieved to upgrade its capacity to 350,000 b/d.

Loading, unloading of goods up 28% in Hormozgan province's eastern ports

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, the loading and unloading of goods in the eastern ports of Hormozgan province in the south of Iran, rose 28 percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20- December 21), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Hamidreza Mohammad Hosseini Takhti, the director of the ports and maritime department of Shahid Bahonar and east of the province, announced that 2,293,294 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in Shahid Bahonar port and the ports of the east of province in the mentioned nine-month.

The official also announced about 56 percent growth in the transit of

non-oil products via these ports in the first nine months of the present year.

As recently announced by the head of the country's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), transit of commodities through the ports of Iran has increased by 37 percent in the current Iranian calendar year.

Speaking in a TV program, Ali-Akbar Safaei stated that 9.366 million tons of goods have been transited via Iranian ports during the eight-month period.

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

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

While Iran is combating the U.S. unilateral sanctions on its economy, the country's ports as the major gates of exports and imports play a significant role in this battle.

This role makes all-out support to ports and more development of them serious and vital.

Such necessity has led the government to define projects for more development of the ports and also take some measures to encourage investment making in ports, in addition to facilitating the loading and unloading of goods, especially basic commodi-

ties, there.

It is worth mentioning that Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization has defined a high number of projects to develop and improve the country's ports, as the country aims to double the capacity of its ports in five years.

Ports and Maritime Organization has put it on the agenda to attract 300 trillion rials (about \$600 million) of investment from the private sector in the country's ports by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (late March 2025).

As reported by the PMO portal, the mentioned investment is going to be used to develop the infrastructure and operational capacity of the country's ports.

Iran's renewable energy capacity reaches 1,520 MW

From Page 1 ▶ Less prominent contributors include biomass power plants, which produce 22.13 MW and hold a two percent share, and expander turbine plants, generating 9.6 MW and accounting for one percent of the total.

Mohsen Tarzatab, Deputy Energy Minister, announced on Thursday plans to increase renewable energy capacity to 1,800 MW by the end of the year.

This expansion aligns with the country's strategic goals to diversify energy sources and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization of Iran (SATBA) has identified substantial potential for further



development. Assessments indicate that Iran could produce over 20,000 MW of wind energy and 800 MW of biomass energy.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain. As of 2020,

Iran had only produced 8.0 gigawatts of renewable energy, highlighting the gap between potential and actual output.

Additionally, renewable energy sources currently constitute less

than one percent of the country's total nominal electricity generation capacity.

To address these challenges, the Energy Ministry has implemented programs to improve existing plants and build more small and medium hydroelectric facilities.

Furthermore, the government has set legislative goals to increase the share of renewables and clean power plants to at least five percent of the country's capacity.

These initiatives reflect Iran's commitment to enhancing energy security, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and meeting domestic electricity demand through sustainable means.

Non-oil Export Development Council convenes after four years

TEHRAN - The 11th session of the Supreme Council for the Development of Non-Oil Exports was held after a four-year hiatus, with the participation of Iran's First vice president.

In an exclusive interview with IRIB, Alireza Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), highlighted the significance of this council, which had been inactive for nearly four years.

He noted that the council had played a key role in national decision-making processes before falling into disuse.

Dehnavi explained that the revival of the council was prompted during this year's National Export Day event, where Masoud Pezeshkian instructed its reactivation.

With the efforts of the government and the support of the first vice president and the minister of industry, mining, and trade, the groundwork for the council's return was laid, culminating in its 11th session.

The session, chaired by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, brought together all council members to discuss pressing trade issues. The meeting focused on three main areas:

Non-oil export performance

The council reviewed the statistical performance of the country's non-oil exports. Dehnavi acknowledged that Iran's non-oil trade balance has been negative in recent years, with a \$17 million deficit recorded last year despite a positive overall trade balance. The Vice President tasked the TPO with reversing this trend by boosting non-oil exports.

Challenges in foreign trade

The council identified several obstacles hindering foreign trade, including excessive regulations, insufficient infrastructure for exports (such as transportation and customs facilities), and challenges in export-related policies.

Dehnavi emphasized the need to align mon-

etary and trade policies, as the former has often overshadowed the latter. The council resolved to reform trade policies to address these issues.

Proposals and resolutions

Several proposals were approved, including holding regular council sessions and establishing provincial export development task forces led by governors. These initiatives aim to make export promotion a nationwide campaign.

The council also discussed a strategic roadmap for free trade zones, aiming to transform these areas into export hubs. The TPO is preparing this document with council support.

Additionally, collaboration with the private sector was emphasized to identify and implement high-impact export projects.

Other topics included reforms in re-exports and temporary imports, with a task force comprising customs, agriculture, health, and trade organizations formed to streamline processes. The pricing of export goods at customs was also debated, with calls for a review to enhance coordination among export-related bodies.

The session concluded with plans to establish specialized commissions to maintain continuity between council meetings and ensure effective decision-making in foreign trade.

As previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's non-oil exports rose 18 percent in the first nine months of the Iranian calendar year to \$43.14 billion.

Foroud Asgari said imports during the mentioned period, including gold bullion, amounted to \$50.89 billion. The weight of imports declined by 3.16 percent to 27.94 million tons, he added.

Non-oil export volume reached 116.35 million tons in the nine-month period, a 13.77 percent increase from the previous year, Asgari noted. The average customs value per ton of



exported goods rose 3.74 percent to \$371.

Petrochemical exports accounted for 50.7 million tons, valued at \$19.7 billion, representing a 33.25 percent increase in volume and a 32 percent rise in value year-on-year.

China remained Iran's top export destination, purchasing \$11 billion worth of goods. Iraq followed with \$9.4 billion, the UAE with \$5.3 billion, Turkey with \$5.2 billion, Afghanistan and Pakistan with \$1.7 billion each, and India with \$1.4 billion. Together, these seven countries accounted for 82.4 percent of the total export volume and 82.8 percent of export value.

The UAE topped the list of Iran's import partners, exporting \$15.3 billion worth of goods to Iran. China followed with \$13 billion, Turkey with \$8.9 billion, Germany with \$1.8 billion, India and Russia with \$1.1 billion each, and Hong Kong with \$1 billion. These seven countries supplied 75 percent of the import volume and 83 percent of import value during the period.

The average customs value per ton of imported goods rose 8.4 percent to \$1,821.

Natural gas in liquid form led the export list at \$6 billion, followed by liquefied propane at \$2.5 billion and methanol at \$1.9 billion. Key imports included raw gold at \$5.6 billion, livestock corn at \$2.1 billion, and smartphones at \$1.7 billion.

Asgari, who also serves as deputy economy minister, emphasized the role of trade in bolstering the national economy amid ongoing international sanctions.

Over 33,000 tons of red meat produced in a month

TEHRAN- The Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) announced that over 33,000 tons of red meat was produced in Iran during the eight Iranian calendar month Aban (October 22-November 20).

Beef and veal had the lions share in the country's red meat

output during the eighth month with 17,682 tons, followed by lamb and mutton with 12,287 tons, goat meat with 2,714 tons, and red meat from other livestock with 830 tons.

Supply of red meat in the eighth month of this year fell 10 percent from that of the same month in

the previous year, and two percent from the seventh month.

Iran is among the leading consumers of red meat in the West Asia region with lamb being the most sought after. However, the consumption per person is around a third of what is normally seen in

On July 10, 2024, PMO Head Ali-Akbar Safaei said over the past few years the organization has managed to attract nearly \$1.7 billion of foreign and domestic investment in the country's ports and maritime sector.

He said some 620 trillion rials (about \$1.24 billion) of domestic investment and \$470 million of foreign investment have been attracted in the mentioned sectors.

The attraction of this amount of private sector investment is significant compared to the total budget of the government in the sea and port sectors, the official added.

countries like the U.S. and Australia, mainly due to the prohibition of pork in Islamic law.

The major part of Iran's red meat imports comes from countries like Brazil, where Iranian supervisors directly control culling methods to ensure they comply with religious rules.

far invested \$120 million in the port sector and \$250 million in the rail, roads, and infrastructure sectors.

Referring to the growth of maritime trade in the country, Safaei continued: Maritime trade increased from 215 million tons in [the Iranian calendar year] 1401 (2022-2023) to 237 million tons last year (ended on March 19, 2024).

In the first quarter of the current year, 60 million tons of maritime trade was recorded, which shows a 10 percent growth compared to the same period last year, and even a 70 percent growth was recorded in some ports of the Caspian Sea, he added.

Iraqis mark 'Leaders of Victory' martyrdom anniversary

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Officials and people in Iraq marked the fifth anniversary of the United States' terrorist airstrikes that led to the martyrdom of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, deputy commander of the Popular Mobilization Forces, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and several of their comrades.

Crowds gathered at the site of the terror scene on the road leading to Baghdad International Airport.

Leaders of the Popular Mobilization Forces were in attendance, including its head Faleh al-Fayyad, and other officials.

Families of the martyrs were also present at the event of what has become known locally as the airport crime.

Speakers recalled the pioneering stances of the two martyrs in combating Takfiri terrorist groups.

They also condemned the illegal terrorist act committed by the United States that violated Iraqi sovereignty and international law, demanding the completion of the judicial file and the internationalization of the crime to hold the



perpetrators accountable.

The opening speech was delivered by Faleh al-Fayyad who pointed out how the two martyrs "sacrificed themselves for the sake of this nation."

"In remembering martyrdom, we must also remember the master of Martyrs of the Resistance, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah," Al-Fayyad noted.

"The term 'Leaders of Victory' was coined by the religious authority to refer to martyrs Haj al-Muhandis and Haj Soleimani," he explained.

"Our loss of the Leaders of Victory is not absolute, but it is the loss of being separated from them. Haj Qassem's personality,

his courage, his thought, and his sacrifice are beyond comparison."

Al-Fayyad also said, "The Popular Mobilization Forces is fully prepared for any confrontation and is not concerned with baseless accusations. There is interaction with the government of Prime Minister al-Sudani. Our forces provide this government with symbols of dignity and strength."

He concluded his speech by saying "victory belongs to all who raise the banner of truth, whether in Gaza, Lebanon, or anywhere else."

A large crowd also lit candles during a vigil at the site of the terror crime.

Despite the cold weather, thousands of people continued to commemorate the anniversary of the Leaders of Victory at Baghdad International Airport.

Senior politician Qais Al-Khazali stated: "On this sorrowful occasion, in which we lost the finest leaders who illuminated the paths of resistance and concluded their victorious journey with martyrdom, we renew our pledge to follow their path and adhere to their divine course."

In the holy province of Najaf, a large number of people traveled on foot towards the small shrine and burial site of Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis in the largest cemetery in the world, Wadi-us-Salaam. Volunteers distributed food and snacks along the designated route.

Events also took place at the holy shrines in the Arab country, including the cities of Karbala, Najaf, and Samarra. The Kadhimiyyah Holy Shrine in the capital Baghdad also held a memorial ceremony in its courtyard.

Other events in tribute to the two martyrs were held across Iraq.



People in Iraq pay tribute to General Qassem Soleimani, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, and several of their comrades who were assassinated by the US in 2020.



Popular Mobilization Forces chief Faleh al-Fayyad respects the 'Leaders of Victory'

Shameful scandal at Beirut Airport: Dirty schemes against Hezbollah continues

From page 1 ▶ but is it reasonable that the Iranian people sent through that small bag their donations to the Lebanese?! Is it reasonable to rebuild what was destroyed by the US-led Israeli attacks?! Is it reasonable that the Lebanese state bodies are being run at the behest of the hostile media?

Reports have revealed that after consulting with senior security officials, the airport's security service decided to "strictly prevent the shipment from leaving the airport." It added the Iranian side was informed that "if the plane landed, and was proven that it was carrying money after inspection, the shipment will be confiscated in favor of the Lebanese state."

During his participation in the provocative talk show "It's Time," which aims to distort the image of the resistance movement and is broadcast on the channel whose correspondent in Washington recently received a commendation from Trump because his channel is "the only media outlet that consistently challenges the influence of Hezbollah," Bassam Mawlawi, the Minister of Interior, had stated that "it has become necessary to search Iranian bags, bag by bag!"

Bassam Mawlawi, first in his capacity as a judge, has forgotten that the security services must not be transformed into judicial police officers working under the command of the US

intelligence services. He has also forgotten to balance the details of the ceasefire agreement with the minimum level of national sovereignty and maintaining civil peace.

In parallel, the US warplanes land at Lebanese military airports in a blatant violation of Lebanese sovereignty, and smuggle weapons equipped to fuel sedition and transfer money to the media hostile to the resistance movement without anyone moving a finger.

Commenting on the hostile attempts to prevent Iran from contributing to financing the reconstruction, Mustafa Bayram, the Minister of Labor, delivered a clear and decisive message that "the hand that prevents reconstruction will be cut off, just like the hand that thinks of extending to disarm Hezbollah."

In this context, it is worth noting that, a month after the ceasefire, and despite the Iraqi side bearing the costs of returning its "Lebanese guests", a large number of displaced are still stuck in Iraq. Those wishing to return immediately to bury their martyrs or to join their work, schools and universities have no choice but to fly to "Middle East Airlines". However, the national airline has deliberately not taken into account their economic circumstances, as the price of a one-way ticket from Iraq to Lebanon costs about \$400 (the price of a round-trip flight to Iraq before the war did not exceed \$500 at most).



State agencies must undoubtedly do what they are supposed to do, provided that they do not turn into a theater that the enemies can manipulate against a portion of the Lebanese, the Shiites, and Hezbollah supporters. It is not possible – under the pretext of implementing a ceasefire – to fulfill the desires that the US-led Israeli aggression failed to achieve.

It is clear that what happened and is happening in terms of provoking Hezbollah's supporters is part of a series of obstructing the reconstruction process, and it would be more accurate to say that it is a continuation of the aggression by other means. Hezbollah's supporters are always proven to be a people of patience, awareness, insight, and wisdom; however, the US and its proxies must beware of the forbearing if they get angry!

Jenin Battalion says PA killing civilians in 'cold blood'

The Jenin Battalion said the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the occupied West Bank is killing civilians in "cold blood" as clashes continue between the two sides.

In a statement sent to Al Jazeera, it said PA troops turned Jenin hospital into a "military barracks and arrested nurses who treated the wounded in Jenin camp."

"We are keen on the law and the security of citizens. We are open to clan initiatives for a solution, and we refrained from killing a security offi-

cer who fell within the range of our fire," it said. "After expelling a security soldier from one of the houses, we seized a high-tech weapon that was in their possession."

Jenin and its adjacent refugee camp are a stronghold for armed factions, including the Jenin Brigades, who are seen as more effective resistance to the Israeli occupation, in contrast with the PA which coordinates security matters with Israel.

Israel launches more attacks on southern Lebanon

The Israeli military reportedly launched more strikes across southern Lebanon overnight, Al Jazeera reported.

At midnight, Israeli forces "carried out a bombing operation" in the vicinity of the town of Bani Haiyyan, according to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA).

Another attack was reported in Kfar Kila and "the sound of which was heard throughout the south," NNA reports.

Earlier, the agency said Israeli forces are "combing the city of Bint Jbeil with heavy machine guns" from their positions on the outskirts of the town of Maroun al-Ras.

The attacks are only the latest violations by Israel's military of a ceasefire with Hezbollah that has been in place since late November.

WORLD HEADLINES

Israel remains in the crosshairs of Yemeni fire

From page 1 ▶ "Every new day that passes in the life of this aggression on Gaza means more development of Yemeni weapons and another failure for the Zionists and Americans," Nasruddin Amer, a senior member of the Ansarullah media authority, said in a post on X.

Israel must realize that no system can reliably protect it from missiles traveling at hypersonic speeds, and must therefore stop the war on Gaza, Amer said, Al Jazeera reported.

In response to the Yemeni attacks, Israel has repeatedly bombed ports, oil infrastructure and the airport in the country. Israeli leaders have also threatened to kill Ansarullah officials. But Israel has remained in the crosshairs of the Yemeni fire.

The United States and partner forces have also launched multiple rounds of coordinated airstrikes against Yemen.

The Yemeni army began to target Israeli-linked vessels in the Red Sea in November last year. The attacks later expanded to US and UK warships after they started to hit Yemen in support of Israel. Neither the US nor Israel has been able to incapacitate Yemen.

A former Israeli defense official and senior research fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, an Israeli think tank, has elucidated the reasons behind Israel's inability to prevent Ansarullah attacks.

"Israel has many years of familiarity with those enemies (Hamas and Hezbollah). There is intelligence and there is the important element of a ground maneuver, and in Yemen we can't do that. The scale here is different," said Eyal Pinko said, the Washington Post reported.

(See full text at thehrantimes.com)



Yemenis held new protests on Friday to express solidarity with Palestinian people in Gaza.

Jabalia: The "ghost town" that haunts the Israeli army



Israel has butchered over 45,600 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 but it continues to receive heavy blows at the hands of resistance fighters.

From page 1 ▶ Israel's renewed assault on northern Gaza is aimed at forcibly expelling Palestinians from the area to pave the way for settlers to move in.

Israel's war on Gaza which began on October 7, 2023, has so far claimed the lives of over 45,600 Palestinians.

Israel's deadly attacks in the New Year have continued unabated. In addition, the humanitarian situation in Gaza has drastically deteriorated amid harsh weather and winter storms as heavy rains have flooded tents sheltering displaced families across the enclave.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has raised the alarm about the impact of freezing temperatures and heavy rainfall on displaced Palestinians in Gaza.

"Vulnerable people, including at least seven infants, have died from hypothermia, and these tragic deaths underscore the urgent need for shelter and other help to get to the people of Gaza immediately," said IOM Director-General Amy Pope, according to Al Jazeera.

The IOM said, "At least 945,000 [Palestinians] still urgently need winterization assistance such as thermal clothing, blankets, and tarps to seal off shelters from the rain and cold," citing estimates made by the Shelter Cluster – a group of UN, international and local humanitarian organizations – since the middle of last month.

Recently, Israel has also intensified airstrikes on hospitals in Gaza and stormed them.

Israel claims Hamas uses hospitals as its command centers without providing any evidence to back up its claim.

Israel further claims that it has dealt heavy blows to resistance fighters, particularly in northern Gaza.

Nonetheless, a report by two US-based defense think tanks monitoring the war in Gaza has contradicted Israel's assertion.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) said Palestinian fighters in Jabalia launched a large "multi-wave" attack against Israeli troops on Monday.

They said the attack involved units of between six and 30 Palestinian fighters. They described the raid as "noteworthy" and said it was significantly larger than most operations in the Gaza Strip in recent months.

The report indicates that Israel's military campaign in Gaza has failed to bring the Palestinian resistance to its knees.

For now, Israel may have turned Jabalia into a "ghost town", but fears of rising Palestinian resistance will continue to haunt the regime's army for good.

Estil Wetland: a destination for nature enthusiasts



TEHRAN - Nestled within the lush landscapes of Gilan province and bordered by the Caspian Sea, Estil Wetland in Astara is a must-visit destination for nature enthusiasts and travelers.

Known locally as Hestel, meaning water catchment, this pristine freshwater wetland spans 138 hectares and lies just seven kilometers from Astara city, near the picturesque Abbasabad village.

Its accessibility via the Rasht-Astara road makes it a popular and convenient stop for travelers exploring northern Iran.

Estil Wetland, often referred to as the Floating Trees Wetland or Estil Lake, captivates visitors with its unique floating reed beds and serene waters.

It was recognized in 2005 as one of Gilan province's top five tourist destinations and is under the stewardship of Iran's Environmental Protection Organization, ensuring its ecological preservation. The wetland is a critical water source for the surrounding 400 hectares of paddy fields, fed by rainfall, mountain rivers, and possibly natural springs.

Surrounded by verdant forests, agricultural fields, and scenic mountains, Estil Wetland is also a haven for wildlife. The area supports 80 species of flora and fauna, including rare migratory birds and a small population of Maral and Caucasian red deer.

Activities and attractions

The wetland perfectly blends natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural experiences, making it a must-visit spot in northern Iran.

Whether you're boating on its serene wa-

ters, exploring nearby villages, or simply soaking in the breathtaking scenery, Estil Wetland promises an unforgettable journey into the heart of Gilan province.

Visitors can marvel at the vibrant migratory birds, some of which travel from Central Europe, the Caspian region, and polar zones.

The wetlands reed beds, willow trees, and tamarisk forests create a picturesque setting, while boating on the calm waters offers a tranquil escape. The reflections of surrounding landscapes in the water add a magical touch, perfect for photography enthusiasts. Nearby, Kuteme Village, Latoon Waterfall, and attractions like Tak Aghaj Castle, Bibi Yanlu Forest Park, and Ali Dashi Hot Springs enrich your itinerary. Astara's Seashell Beach and the Bird Garden are also worth exploring.

Best times to visit

Although Estil Wetland can be visited year-round, spring (April and May) and autumn are the most delightful times. During these months, the weather is pleasant, and the natural scenery is at its most vibrant. However, autumn nights can be chilly, so visitors should plan their stays accordingly.

Accommodation and travel tips

For overnight stays, two hotels near the wetland and several cottages in nearby villages provide comfortable and budget-friendly lodging.

Travelers from Tehran can drive via the Karaj-Qazvin Road or opt for frequent bus services to Astara. Alternatively, Ardabil Airport, an hour's drive from Astara, is the nearest air travel hub.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Portobelo-San Lorenzo

The Fortifications on the Caribbean side of Panama: Portobelo and San Lorenzo are located along the coast of the Province of Colón. There are diverse fortification sites around the Bay of Portobelo, denominated San Fernando fortifications: Lower Battery, Upper Battery and Hilltop Stronghold; San Jerónimo Battery Fort; Santiago fortifications: Castle of Santiago de la Gloria, Battery and Hilltop Stronghold; the old Santiago Fortress; ruins of Fort Farnese; the La Trincheras site; the Buenaventura Battery; and the San Cristóbal site. Forty-three kilometers away, at the mouth the Chagres River stands the San Lorenzo Castle (originally "San Lorenzo el Real del Chagre") with its Upper Battery as a separate structure.

The component parts of the property represent characteristic examples of military architecture developed by the Spanish Empire in its New World territories largely between the 17th and the 18th centuries. The first plans for fortifying the entrance to the Bay of Portobelo and the mouth of the Chagres River were prepared in 1586 by Bautista Antonelli. Following his recommendations, the first fortifications in Portobelo were begun in the 1590's. As a whole, these structures comprised a defensive line to protect Portobelo's harbour and the mouth of the Chagres River, which were the Caribbean terminals of the transcontinental route across the Isthmus of Panama. The defensive system includes fortifications in different styles, some of them skilfully integrated into the natural landscape as part of its military defensive design. They were also adapted to the changing needs of defensive technologies in the course of three centuries in order to protect the capital resources sent from colonial America to

Spain after crossing the Isthmus of Panama. In the earliest constructions, a military style with mediaeval features prevailed, while in the eighteenth century the structures were rebuilt in the neo-classical style, which can be observed at the forts of Santiago, San Jerónimo and San Fernando, and also at San Lorenzo.

On the regional scale, these military compounds belonged to a larger defensive system, including Veracruz (Mexico), Cartagena (Colombia), and Havana (Cuba), to protect the route of commercial trade between the Americas and Spain. Portobelo, where the famous fairs were held, was one of the principal Caribbean ports and played a leading role controlling the imperial trade in the Americas.

The site is a key element to the understanding of the adaptation of European building models and their impact on the New World transformation during the modern era. This property demonstrates the strategic organization of the territory and represents an important concept of defense and technology development mainly between the 17th and 18th centuries.

The town of San Felipe de Portobelo was founded in March 20th, 1597, as a Caribbean Terminal of the trail through the Isthmus of Panama, to replace Nombre de Dios as a port of transit and trans-shipment. The need to ease the overland path along the Isthmus during the rainy season called for an alternative route. The Chagres River-Cruces path, a mixed fluvial and land trail, was the counterpart of Camino Real from Panama City to Portobelo, built as a response to this need.

(Source: UNESCO)

Saint Sarkis Cathedral: a landmark of Armenian heritage in Tehran

From Page 1 ▶ The cathedral features a gallery for the choir, adding an acoustic dimension to its religious ceremonies.

Two belfries, each crowned with a dome, flank the western entrance and house bells operated electrically.

The main dome and the belfry domes are adorned with octagonal rods, contributing to the building's striking appearance.

Historical and cultural significance

The cathedral's construction was prompted by the growing Armenian population in Tehran during the mid-20th century, who required a central place of worship.

Land for the cathedral was acquired near an Armenian district with the support of benefactor Markar Sarkissian.

Construction began in 1964 under the guidance of the Armenian clergy and concluded in 1971, with the cathedral officially inaugurated in 1973 in the presence of both Iranian and Armenian dignitaries.

The cathedral complex also includes the Caliphate Council



building and features the tomb of Archbishop Artak Manukean in its courtyard.

A memorial monument dedicated to the Armenian Genocide stands prominently at the back of the courtyard, a poignant three-piece stone sculpture symbolizing resilience and the enduring spirit of the Armenian people.

Interior details

The interior of the cathedral is designed in the shape of a cross, with the altar traditionally placed on a raised platform in

the east. The walls and ceilings are adorned with chalk, and the altar features vivid paintings of biblical stories.

A beautifully decorated hall within the cathedral displays wall paintings inspired by Gospel narratives, and a choir balcony enhances the spiritual atmosphere during services.

A center for faith and community

Saint Sarkis Cathedral remains a vibrant hub for Tehran's Armenian community, hosting religious ceremonies deeply rooted

in Christian history and tradition.

Beyond its architectural beauty, the cathedral is a testament to the enduring faith, culture, and resilience of the Armenian people, making it a must-visit attraction in the Iranian capital.

Iran has churches listed by UNESCO

There are very old churches and chapels in Iran, of which three ensembles have been collectively registered by UNESCO under the name the Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran.

The Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, in the northwest of the country, consists of three monastic ensembles of the Armenian Christian faith: St Thaddeus and St Stepanos and the Chapel of Dzordzor.

These edifices - the oldest of which, St Thaddeus, dates back to the 7th century are examples of outstanding universal value of the Armenian architectural and decorative traditions.

They bear testimony to very important interchanges with the other regional cultures, in particular the Byzantine, Orthodox, and Persian.

Iran seeks UNESCO recognition for traditional felt-making and Tirgan festival

TEHRAN - Two cultural heritage files from Iran, one for traditional felt-making and another for the Tirgan festival, have been submitted for evaluation by UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee in 2026.

According to Sima Hadadi, Head of the Registration and Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Iran, the felt-making dossier was prepared in collaboration with six other countries, showcasing the regional significance of this ancient craft. Meanwhile, the Tirgan festival has been jointly submitted with Armenia to highlight this shared cultural celebration.

Talking at a recent press conference, Hadadi also highlighted Iran's extensive efforts to document and preserve its intangible heritage.

We have registered 380 elements at the national level and 26 elements on the UNESCO list, ranking Iran fourth globally in the number of UNESCO intangible heritage inscriptions, she stated.

Elsewhere in his remarks, she noted that Iran had submitted a dossier for Ayeneh-kari in Iranian architecture to UNESCO, aiming to inscribe this intricate art form on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The dossier will be reviewed at the 20th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, scheduled to take in India soon.

The joint submissions of the felt-making, Tirgan festival, and Ayeneh-kari files underline Iran's commitment to safeguarding its cultural legacy while fostering regional and

international cooperation.

If approved, these additions will further enrich UNESCO's recognition of Iran's diverse cultural and historical heritage.

Traditional felt-making: an ancient craft

Traditional felt-making, or Namad-mali, is a time-honored craft in Iran, practiced for centuries in rural communities.

The process involves layering, rolling, and pressing wool fibers with hot water to create a durable textile known as Namad.

Unique designs and techniques from regions like Semnan province reflect the cultural and environmental influences of the craft.

Unlike woven or knitted textiles, felt is made entirely by hand, using moisture and pressure to interlock wool fibers into compact, intricate patterns.

This collaborative UNESCO nomination aims to preserve the cultural and artistic value of felt-making across the participating nations.

Tirgan: a celebration of nature and heritage

The Tirgan festival, rooted in ancient Persian traditions, represents Iran's rich Zoroastrian heritage. Known as Jashn-e Tirgan, the festival's origin is tied to the legendary tale of Arash the Archer (Arash-e Kamangir), a hero who marked the boundaries of Persia with a single arrow shot, symbolizing sacrifice and unity.

Celebrated on the 13th day of Tir, the fourth month of the Persian calendar (early July), Tirgan emphasizes gratitude for nature, righteousness, and community as well.



With its rejuvenating rituals, water festivities, bonfires, and beautiful symbolism, Tirgan serves as a reminder of the principles embraced by Zoroastrians, promoting light, righteousness, and reverence for nature.

Ayeneh-kari: a hallmark of Iranian architecture

Available evidence suggests that the origins of mirror-making in Iran date back 2,700 years to the Achaemenid era, when polished stones and metals were transformed into reflective surfaces.

These early mirrors laid the groundwork for Ayeneh-kari, a decorative art that flourished during the Safavid and Qajar periods.

In these eras, mirrors were artistically cut into geometric and floral shapes, then meticulously arranged to adorn walls, ceilings, and columns of royal palaces, mosques, and mausoleums.

Notable examples include the Chehel Sotun Palace in Isfahan and the Shams-ol-Emareh in Tehran, where the interplay of light and reflection creates a mesmerizing effect.

13th-century spinning whorl with swastika symbols discovered in Norway

Archaeologists from the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU) have discovered something interesting in Tonsberg, a town in Vestfold County, Norway. During excavations at a 13th-century weaving mill, they uncovered a spinning whorl an essential tool for the textile production process carved with swastika symbols.

The artifact, made of red sandstone, features four swastikas: three right-facing and one left-facing. It was found among various other tools used for spinning and weaving, including loom weights, thimbles, and even a decorated antler object, possibly part of a woven sword. The whorl was discovered between two-floor layers of the building, which archaeologists interpret as a weaving room. This space likely hosted various craft activities, from spinning and sewing to weaving, though

not necessarily on a large or professional scale.

Hanne Ekstrom Jordahl, the lead archaeologist and project manager for the excavation, suggested that the swastikas were carved in the Middle Ages, not during the 1940s Nazi occupation, as some might assume due to the modern association of the symbol with Nazism. Jordahl explained, The context of the find is absolutely certain. The spindle whorl was located between two floor layers in the remains of a house from the 13th century. The swastikas were carved during the Middle Ages.

Swastikas are an ancient and widespread symbol, known to appear in numerous cultures across Europe, Asia, and the Americas for thousands of years. In Europe, particularly during the Iron Age and Middle Ages, the symbol was used in various forms as a decorative element, as well as a symbol

of good fortune and solar energy.

In Norway, the swastikas use dates back to the Iron Age, with examples found on everything from gold pendants to rock carvings. The swastika is more commonly associated today with Nazi ideology and the negative connotations it carries, but it was initially seen as a symbol of prosperity, security, and the cyclic movement of the sun.

Jordahl noted that swastikas are relatively common in Norwegian archaeology, appearing on artifacts such as gold bracteates and textiles from the Iron Age. However, the combination of a swastika with a spinning whorl is unusual. So far, we have not found any parallels of swastikas on other spindle whorls, she said. But examples of prehistoric swastikas in Norway are not hard to find.

The swastikas symbolism in the

context of the spinning whorl may relate to rotation and cyclical movement, concepts deeply ingrained in the ancient cultures of Europe. In many cultures, the swastikas arms, often associated with the rays of the sun, represent the passage of time and the movement of celestial bodies.

Interestingly, archaeological finds like these suggest that swastikas may have also been linked to textile production itself. Spinning, weaving, and sewing were essential components of daily life in medieval Europe, and the swastika could have been used to evoke auspicious meanings related to these activities.

The Tonsberg find is a reminder that symbols and objects, once part of ancient rituals, may acquire new meanings and reveal deeper connections to our shared history.

(Source: Archaeology Magazine)

Tehran to host intl. conference on AI, future civilization

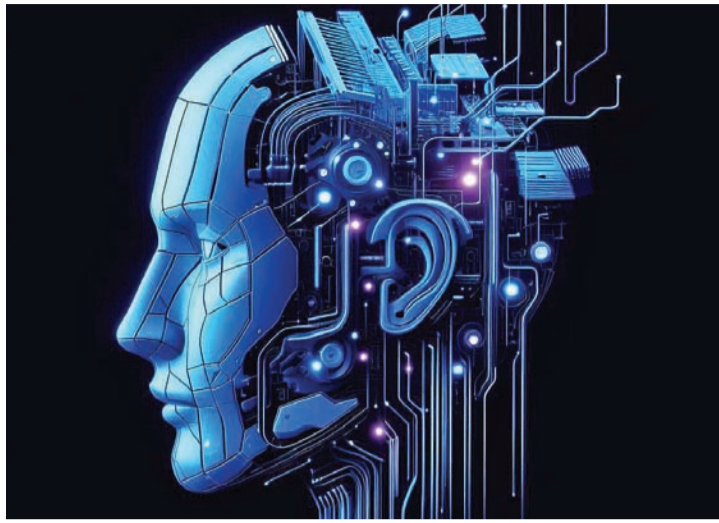
TEHRAN –An international conference on artificial intelligence (AI) and the future civilization is scheduled to be held in Tehran on January 29.

The conference will center on new world order geometry and new Islamic civilization; AI governance in the light of morals and values of the Islamic revolution; legal, economic, cultural, and social dimensions of AI; the relationship between AI and cognitive science; AI ecosystem architecture; education, training and empowering AI human capital; AI infrastructure (processing, network, tools, CPU, GPU, VPU, etc.); AI theory, knowledge and technology; AI models; AI structures; AI markets; algorithms, data, calculations and standards of AI; AI services and products; and AI security, the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology reported.

The event will attract participants from more than 20 selected domestic universities as well as 30 global top universities and scientific centers.

Appointed professors and researchers from China, Italy, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Iraq, as well as nominated Iranian professors and researchers, will share their latest scientific and technological findings in the field of AI and future civilization in person and virtually.

Also, knowledge-based companies will showcase their latest



products in AI in an exhibition which is planned to be held on the sidelines of the conference.

Iran ranked 94th in Government AI readiness

In 2024, Oxford Insights, which provides data on preparedness to implement Artificial Intelligence in public service delivery, ranked Iran 94th among 193 governments across the world.

Governments are not only working to foster AI innovation and establish regulatory frameworks but also striving to integrate this technology into public services.

However, understanding how to ensure that AI is adopted effectively for the public good remains a challenge. This index attempts to address this issue.

It includes 39 indicators across 10 dimensions, which make up 3 pillars: Government, Technology Sector, and Data and Infrastructure pillars.

According to the index, the country's best ranking was in the Data and Infrastructure pillar, 55.88. It includes infrastructure, data availability, and data representativeness indicators.

The country's score in the Technology pillar was 38.77. It included human capital, innovation capacity, and maturity indicators.

Iran's lowest score was in the Government pillar, 31.56, probably due to the absence of a national document on AI development. However, with the implementation of the document, the country's

ranking is expected to rise in the future.

The United States, Singapore, and England ranked first to third, respectively.

In most countries, the Technology pillar including human capital, and innovation capacity had the lowest score. However, most of the Arab countries were able to make significant progress in promoting governments' readiness to implement AI due to their investment in strengthening the infrastructure and developing strategies related to the establishment of AI.

They were placed among the top 50 countries in the index.

According to a report released by the Web of Science database, Iran ranked first for the highest number of documents in artificial intelligence (AI) among Islamic countries.

The country issued 2,638 AI documents between 2013 and 2022.

Saudi Arabia (2,465) and Turkey (2,303) were ranked second and third, respectively, IRIB reported.

Iran also ranked 14th worldwide in artificial intelligence.

Based on the report, the country ranked second in 3D printing and robotics, fourth in the Internet of Things, fifth in 5th generation (5G) communication technologies and big data, seventh in drone technology, and eighth in blockchains among Islamic nations.

President: Iran's health system 'a role model' in world



TEHRAN –President Masoud Pezeshkian has called the country's health system a role model in the region and even the world thanks to its unique, particularly primary healthcare, services.

The official made the remarks on Thursday in a letter addressing a national seminar held in Mashhad to honor healthcare staff including nursing aids, health ministry website reported.

Lauding the substantial progress made in health sector, the president said these remarkable achievements are the results of health workers' ceaseless efforts, such as providing vaccination and prenatal care for pregnant mothers, controlling infectious diseases, promoting health education, sharing knowledge and training new generations of health staff nationwide.

The notable increase in life expectancy, reduction in infant mortality rate, control of infectious diseases, and reduction in complications from chronic diseases are all due to health workers' dedication and commitment.

Pezeshkian also commended the ongoing

health programs such as universal health coverage and family physician program, which have made comprehensive and continuous healthcare accessible to millions.

The president went on to say that the administration recognizes the untiring efforts and services of all health workers, and is determined to elevate the country's health system to its rightful and deserving position, utilizing health workers' valuable capacities and potentials.

Iran's health sector a role model: WHO official

In October 2024, the World Health Organization's (WHO) director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) called Iran's health sector a role model in the region.

WHO EMRO is interested in expanding cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran, IRNA quoted Hanna Hasan Balkhi as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Alireza Raeisi, the Iranian deputy health minister, and Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, the deputy health minister for international affairs, on the sidelines of the Seventy-first session of the WHO EMRO.

A delegation led by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi participated in the seventy-first session of the WHO EMRO which was held in Doha, Qatar, from October 14 to 17.

"During my short visit to Iran a few months ago, I became familiar with the capabilities of Iran in the health sector; Iran is a role model in health in the region," Balkhi noted.

"Utilizing full potentials available in the [re-

gional] countries is essential for us, and we will not hesitate to support the implementation of health programs," the official noted.

Raeisi, for his part, enumerated priorities in the country's health sector, namely completing the implementation of the family physician program and the electronic health record program.

Referring to non-communicable diseases as another important issue in the health sector, the official said, "Unfortunately, due to the crises in West Asia, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases has increased, and the onset age of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity has lowered.

Therefore, we are planning to control the risk factors from childhood through old age. To achieve the goal, we need to develop plans in cooperation with the World Health Organization."

In May 2023, Ricardo León-Bórquez, the president of the World Federation of Medical Education, praised Iran for progress in the health sector, saying that the country's achievements are amazing.

"Iran has paid much attention to the importance of medical education and can be one of the key members of the World Federation of Medical Education in the accreditation process," he added.

He made the remarks in a meeting in Tehran with former Health Minister Bahram Einollahi, noting that the accreditation process of medical education, which was started by WFME in Iran in 2019, has progressed very well and Iran is moving in the right direction in this field.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Existing vaccines are effective against mutated coronavirus

The COVID-19 vaccines, which have been so far produced in the world are also effective on the mutated virus, so people who receive the vaccines will be protected against the new virus strain, Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said. What raised concerns about the newly-produced vaccine was the ineffectiveness against the mutated virus, which fortunately studies show, the mutation of the virus and the chromosomal alteration are not enough to change its general nature, he explained.

According to Mardani, it is possible to detect the new coronavirus in Iran. All British and European passengers are tested at the airport for a quick and PCR test, while so far no case has been confirmed in the country, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

واکسن کرونا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند

مسعود مردانی عضو ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا می گوید واکسن تولید و تایید شده در دنیا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند و افرادی که واکسن تایید شده را بزنند علیه این ویروس هم مصونیت پیدا می کنند. مردانی روز سه شنبه در گفت و گو با ایرنا افزود: آنچه نگران آن هستیم این است که واکسن تولید شده برای کووید ۱۹ در دنیا نسبت به ویروس جهش یافته بی اثر باشد که خوشبختانه بررسی ها نشان می دهد، جهش ویروس و تغییر کرموزومی ویروس به قدری نیست که ماهیت کلی آن تغییر کند. به گفته او، امکان تشخیص ویروس کرونا جهش یافته در ایران وجود دارد. از همه مسافران انگلیس و اروپا در فرودگاه تست سریع و از موارد مشکوک تست دقیق تر «پی سی آر» گرفته و بررسی می شود و تاکنون موردی از این ویروس در ایران تایید نشده است.

World Braille Day highlights equal access to information for all

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –World Braille Day is observed annually on January 4 to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights of blind and partially sighted people.

Having been celebrated since 2019, the day also marks the birth of Luis Braille, the inventor of the braille system in France in the 19th century.

Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots to represent each letter and number, and even musical, mathematical, and scientific symbols.

Braille is used by blind and partially sighted people to read the same books and periodicals as those printed in a visual font.

Even under normal circumstances, persons with disabilities—one billion people worldwide—are less likely to access health care, education, employment and to participate in the community.

They are more likely to live in poverty, experience higher rates of violence, neglect and abuse, and are among the most marginalized in any crisis-affected community.

For the visually impaired, life under lockdown posed several issues in terms of independence and isolation, especially for people who rely on the use of touch to communicate their needs and access information.

The pandemic revealed how critically important it is to produce essential information in accessible formats, including in Braille and audible formats.

Otherwise, many persons with disabilities could face a higher risk of contamination due to a lack of access of guidelines and precautions to protect and reduce the spreading of a pandemic.

COVID-19 also emphasized the need to intensify all activities related to digital accessibility to ensure digital inclusion of all people.

Welfare, relief entities support more women heads of household

TEHRAN – According to a recent report by the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI), the number of female heads of households supported by Imam Khomeini relief foundation and welfare organization has increased from 1,566,606 and 180,120 individuals in 2017 to 1,264,269 and 278,353 in 2023, respectively.

The majority of women heads of households are widowed, divorced, or women in families where the man does not have any income due to illness or disability; but they are not necessarily the oldest member of the families, Mehr news agency reported.

The increase in the number of female-headed households in the world has resulted in many economic, health, and social challenges.

Empowering women is one of the key components of sustainable development, and women heads of households are no exception.

The empowerment programs of the late President Raisi's administration resulted in the self-sufficiency of more than 126,000 women heads of household.

"Female entrepreneurs have expanded business, resulting in the creation of sustainable employment for women, as well as the support for job-creating skills," IRNA quoted Ensieh Khazali, the former vice president for women and family affairs, as saying.

Also, the national sustainable family-oriented business plan, with the assistance of women entrepreneurs managed to empower women seeking employment.

In this project, women entrepreneurs support the employment of women for four years from the raw material preparation stage to the end product sales stage to ensure their sustainable employment.

In addition, the late president's administration for the first time established an entrepreneurship fund for supporting women heads of household.

Providing online sales platforms, and establishing sales markets across the country



In recent years, Iranian knowledge-based companies have managed to develop different devices to assist blind and partially sighted individuals, ISNA reported.

Utilizing advanced technologies, they have developed products and devices that help the blind in various fields, including education, access to information, mobility, and communication which help improve the quality of their lives.

Digital braille, braille smart phone and tablets, educational software, navigation system, braille printers, text to speech translation system are among these assistive technologies.

Despite the significant progresses made in the field of assistive technologies for the blind in the country, there are still challenges ahead.

One of the biggest problems is the lack of Braille facilities and books, especially in technical fields. In addition, some of these devices and technologies are costly, so many families cannot afford them.

World Braille Day is not only a reminder of the invention of an effective writing system for the blind but also an opportunity to reflect on human rights and equal access to information for all.

This day reminds us that inequalities in education and access to information still exist and collaborative efforts are needed to address the challenges.

were among other empowerment programs for women heads of households which led to the self-sufficiency of many Iranian women.

Women's economic, social empowerment

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

"Iran has always focused on programs that empower women, particularly those who are heads of household, economically and socially. Actions taken by the country have always aimed to promote women's status by observing the principles of the constitution and Islamic teachings," Mehr news agency quoted Behrouz-Azar as saying.

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

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

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



JANUARY 4, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Best way to defend Islam, is to practice Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:08 Evening: 17:23 Dawn: 5:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:14 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* An exhibition of paintings by Marjan Maleki is currently underway at Ehsan Gallery.

The exhibit named *Among the Animals* will run until January 7 at the gallery located at No. 22, East 14th St. in the Ajudanieh neighborhood.

* Bashghah Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Abbas Khanjar.

Entitled *Soils Hymn*, the exhibition will be running until January 13 at the gallery located at No.13, Hosseini St., Karim Khan Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Mohsen Hosseinmardi is currently underway at Afrand Gallery.

The exhibit named *Metamorphosis* will continue until January 17 at the gallery located at 48 Jalal Hosseini St., Jahan Ara St., off Jalal Ale-Ahmad Highway.

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Solmaz Nabati.

Entitled *Downfall*, the exhibit runs until January 17 at the gallery that can be found at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.



* Paintings by Shahin Noruzi are on display in an exhibition at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit named *About the Expiration Date* will be running until January 17 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 5, Bahra-mi alley, Mashahir Street, Qaem Maqam Farahani Avenue.

* Nian Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Zeinab Movahed.

The exhibition entitled *What We Are* will be running until January 17 at the gallery located at 5 Abhari Alley, Vafai St. off Tur St. off South Mofatteh St.

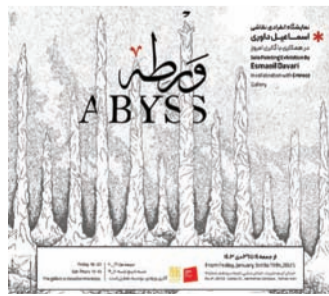


* Shahla Hosseini is showcasing her latest paintings in an exhibition at Emkan Gallery.

The exhibit will run until January 17 at the gallery located at No. 3, Second Alley, Mirza Shirazi St.

* Hoor Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ahmad Nasrollahi.

The exhibition named *Seven Temples* will be running until January 17 at the gallery located at 12 Naeimi Alley, North Mirza Shirazi St., off Motahhari Ave.



* Esmaeil Davari is showcasing a collection of his latest paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named *Abyss* will run until January 15 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

* An exhibition of paintings by Mostafa Emami, Hedieh Tutunchian and Elias Qazi is currently underway at Sharif Gallery.

The exhibit named *Trio No.12* will be running until January 17 at the gallery that can be found at 11 Mahruzadeh Alley, Shariati Ave. near Quds Square.



Ammar festival wraps up, honoring resistance figures

From Page 1 ▶ He added, After Imam Khomeini (RA), we have always been glad to be alive during the time of Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah. I tell you that the thought and idea of resistance has transcended even Muslims, transforming into art.

We are here at a festival that proves resistance exists in art, literature, and media. In conclusion, he reminded the audience, "Before the war, Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah told the enemies, 'You came vertically [standing], you'll leave horizontally [dead]'; and this has truly been realized through Iran.

The enemies do not want nations in the region to exist; they wish to erase us from the map and treat us like the pandemic. I want to tell them we are in art and media.

Even if you eliminate our entire existence, we have solutions for this matter. Due to the bombing of Sana'a Airport in Yemen, Kamal Sharaf's flight to Iran was delayed, and he is expected to arrive in Tehran later.

Consequently, a video message from the artist was shown during the event, with plans for a formal tribute during provincial festivals.

Following the presentation of the clip, Iranian artist Abdolhamid Qadirian took the stage and remarked, One of Kamal Sharaf's positive traits is his honesty.

His genuine presence on the battlefield is reflected in his



Ali Mayadeen's correspondent Ali Mortada speaks at the closing ceremony of the 15th Ammar Popular Film Festival in Tehran's Art Bureau on January 2, 2025.

forms and color choices. Kamal Sharaf strives to convey his messages promptly, which is both crucial and necessary for us. He concluded his remarks by expressing gratitude to the Ammar festival for an excellent program, adding, This event was so inspiring that I will head straight to my painting board as soon as it concludes.

Moreover, in the festival's international section, the main award was presented to "Presently Conquered," directed by Seyyed Mohammad Ghassan Zouqan, while "Shirin," directed by Zaid Shukur, also received recognition.

In the national section, the

main award was awarded to "The Two," directed by Morteza Rahimi.

Additionally, Iraqi singers Seyyed Ali Shah Al-Mousavi and Mahdi Al-Aboudi were honored for their performances of Arabic music related to Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah and General Qassem Soleimani.

The Ammar Popular Film Festival seeks to showcase diverse artistic contributions and support movements that transcend borders through art.

The festival's mission is to amplify voices that challenge oppressive narratives and encourage active engagement from all sections of society.

Over its previous editions, the Ammar Popular Film Festival has focused on elevating the voices of people who have remained resilient against agendas aimed at promoting apathy and distortion.

It regards art as a vehicle for unity, urging individuals to gather around the common principles of justice and equity.

Ammar Popular Film Festival was established in 2010 by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures to honor film and art products promoting topics such as resistance and revolution.

It was named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Lieutenant general Qassem Soleimani's portraits on display at Art Bureau

TEHRAN—On the occasion of the anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, the group painting exhibition *Jaml-e Habib* (literally meaning Beauty of Friend) was inaugurated on Wednesday, at the Aali Art Gallery of the Art Bureau in Tehran.

The exhibition showcases portrait paintings of Martyr Soleimani by artists including Gholamali Taheri, Hossein Esmati, Mohammad Asadi Jozani, Ali Mohammad Sheikhi, and Nasser Seifi.

It also features conceptual paintings that incorporate the image of the great martyr, created by artists such as Hassan Rouholamin, Abdolhamid Ghadirian, Alireza Khaleqdadi, Ali Petgar, and Nasser Seifi.

Additionally, the gallery displays a medalion depicting the face of Martyr Soleimani by Mina Sadri and sculptures of the martyr by Nader Ghashghaei and Hossein Esmati, as well as a sculpture of Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis by Nader Ghashghaei.

The exhibition statement reads: Today, the oppressed and the freedom-seekers of the world carry the spirit of Martyr Qassem

Soleimani and Martyr Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis. The pure blood of these martyrs has breathed life into resistance and will continue to do so.

We draw strength and determination from their sacrifices and their faith in the Almighty God's promise of victory.

We still remember the martyrs, and their great sacrifices for the freedom and independence of the oppressed people in the region remain vivid in our hearts.

They are alive within us, present in our actions and victories. From these two great martyrs, we have learned that victory is a belief that must first be instilled in hearts and minds before it becomes a reality.

We have learned that as long as we remain committed to our principles and values and trust in God's promises, we will ultimately triumph, for God is our supporter.

Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were killed in a U.S. drone attack at Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

The attack was ordered by the U.S. President at the time, Donald Trump, and they

were on a diplomatic mission when they were killed.

Soleimani, born in 1957, served in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and was the commander of the Quds Force from 1998 until his assassination, overseeing extraterritorial and clandestine military operations.

Qassem Soleimani played a significant role in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). While the Western coalition had withdrawn, Soleimani assisted Iraqis in countering ISIS, preventing further advances and contributing to the defeat of the terrorist organization in the region.

Within Iran, Soleimani emerged as a popular figure, revered for his role in resisting perceived external threats.

His image became synonymous with resilience and defiance. His strategic contributions, particularly in the fight against ISIS, have left an indelible mark on the military landscape of the West Asia. The *Jaml-e Habib* exhibition is open until January 8, at the Art Bureau, located on Somayeh Street, between Nejatollahi and Hafez avenues.

IAF to show Ingmar Bergman's Persona

TEHRAN—The 1966 Swedish avant-garde psychological drama film *Persona* written, directed, and produced by Ingmar Bergman will be screened at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) on Monday.

The movie screening will begin at 5 p.m. at the Nasseri Hall of the IAF and will be followed by a review session in the presence of the film critic Shadmehr Rastin, IRNA reported.

Starring Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann, the story revolves around a young nurse named Alma (Andersson) and her patient, well-known stage actress Elisabet Vogler (Ullmann), who has suddenly stopped speaking. They move to a cottage, where Alma cares for Elisabet, confides in her, and begins having trouble distinguishing herself from her patient.

Characterized by elements of psychological horror, *Persona*

has been the subject of much critical analysis, interpretation, and debate. The film's exploration of duality, insanity, and personal identity has been interpreted as reflecting the Jungian theory of persona and dealing with issues related to filmmaking, vampirism, motherhood, abortion, and other subjects. The experimental style of its prologue, storytelling, and end has also been noted.

When first released, *Persona* received positive reviews at its initial release with Swedish press outlets coining the word *Person(a)kult* to describe its enthusiastic admirers. It won Best Film at the 4th Guldbagge Awards, and was Sweden's entry for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

Over time, *Persona* has received widespread acclaim, especially for Bergman's direction, screenplay, and narra-

tive, Nykvist's cinematography, and Andersson's and Ullmann's performances. Many critics consider *Persona* one of the greatest films ever made, Bergman's magnum opus, and a work of art of experimental cinema, and Andersson's and Ullmann's performances two of the best female performances in movie history. *Persona* is also considered one of the most difficult and complex films. It was ranked fifth in *Sight & Sound's* 1972 poll and 17th in 2012. It also influenced many directors, including Robert Altman, David Lynch, and Denis Villeneuve.

Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) was a Swedish film and theatre 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), and *Persona* (1966).

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 Faro. Bergman also had a theatrical career that included periods as Leading Director of Sweden's Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm and of Germany's Residenztheater in Munich. He directed more than 170 plays. Among his company of actors were Harriet Andersson, Bibi Andersson, Liv Ullmann, Gunnar Bjornstrand, Erland Josephson, Ingrid Thulin, Gunnel Lindblom and Max von Sydow.