



Leader visits “Pioneers of Progress” exhibition

## ‘Using Private Sector Capacities, Only Way for Progress of Country’

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### Exclusive: Top Iranian security source denies alleged drone deal with PKK, says Turkish report fabricated

TEHRAN – An Iranian security source has denied claims circulating in Turkish media regarding a supposed secret meeting between Iranian officials and members of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) militant group, labeling the report as entirely fabricated.

The source, speaking to the Tehran Times, dismissed the allegations as baseless and a deliberate attempt to sow discord and propagate false narratives.

Several Turkish media outlets, including Yeni Safak, alleged Iranian officials met with PKK representatives in an Iraqi market, where the latter requested 2,000 kamikaze drones. Some outlets further claimed IRGC Quds Force Commander Esmail Qaani was present. These same reports asserted that Iran agreed to supply 1,500 drones for delivery to northern Iraq, but the shipment was canceled due to Turkish surveillance. Turkish media also claimed that Iran is now seeking alternative methods for delivery. ► Page 2

### Iran set to join Pakistan’s AMAN-25 naval drills

TEHRAN – Iran’s Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, has confirmed the nation’s participation in the upcoming AMAN-25 naval exercises, scheduled for February 7-11 in Karachi.

Bagheri made the announcement during his visit to Islamabad, where he held discussions with high-ranking Pakistani officials, including the army chief, air force commander, defense minister, prime minister, and president.

The biennial AMAN exercises, organized by the Pakistan Navy, aim to strengthen maritime security through international collaboration.

Key focuses include countering terrorism, preventing piracy, and executing search and rescue missions.

The drills will feature various naval operations, such as live-fire exercises, communication drills, and humanitarian assistance efforts, designed to enhance the capabilities of the attending forces.

These exercises offer a venue for naval forces to share tactics and strategies, boosting interoperability among participants. ► Page 2

### JCOA talks depend on changes in other parties’ behavior, says Iran deputy FM

TEHRAN – Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, has reaffirmed the country’s willingness to resume negotiations aimed at lifting sanctions, provided other parties demonstrate readiness for constructive dialogue.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday morning, Gharibabadi emphasized Iran’s consistent openness to negotiations. “We have always been prepared for this, and if the other parties are ready as well, we believe talks can proceed and lead to a conclusion,” he stated.

He further noted that Iran’s approach would remain flexible and responsive to the policies of the other negotiating parties. “If we observe a different policy or approach from the other side, Iran will adjust its own policies accordingly,” he added.

Gharibabadi expressed optimism about the potential for meaningful dialogue, highlighting the peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear program and criticizing the ineffectiveness of unilateral sanctions. ► Page 2

### Hezbollah-Amal duo agree to participate in the Salam government

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – Before the end of the 60-day Lebanon-Israel ceasefire agreement, and a week after Judge Nawaf Salam was assigned to form a new cabinet, meetings with parliamentary blocs are intensifying to dispel any obstacles, one of which is the Lebanese Forces’ insistence on monopolizing the ministries of foreign affairs and energy.

Reportedly, Samir Geagea, head of the Lebanese Forces (4 ministries), has also sent MP Melhem Riachi to meet Prime Minister-designate Nawaz Salam and know the details of the cabinet lineup.

Salam informed Riachi that he was determined to strengthen his relationship with Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Parliament, based on a promising future and putting national interests above anything else.

For his part, President Joseph Aoun, despite announcing that he is not seeking any ministry for his team, insists on granting him the power to place a “veto” on the names nominated for the sovereign ministries of foreign affairs, defense and interior.

### Hamas scenes highlight Israeli failure

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The sight of Hamas fighters on the streets of Gaza after the ceasefire will go down as a major blow to the Israeli regime.

Just hours after the ceasefire took effect on Sunday, Hamas fighters in military fatigues emerged unexpectedly.

Since then, additional footage has surfaced showing larger gatherings with an increased presence of Hamas fighters clad in military uniforms.

The images have not escaped the attention of Western news media.

“Hamas’s armed Qassam Brigades emerged in their distinctive black balaclavas and green headbands,” the Financial Times wrote on Tuesday with the headlines: “Is Hamas back?”

The paper notes that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had vowed to “destroy” the militant group in the wake of its October 7, 2023 attack.

### Israel’s West Bank crackdown: A desperate attempt to whitewash Gaza failure

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The Israeli army and settlers have escalated brutal violence in the occupied West Bank since the ceasefire in Gaza went into effect at the weekend.

Israeli strikes on the city of Jenin on Tuesday killed several Palestinians and injured dozens of others.

According to the Wafa news agency, Israeli forces also arrested 18 Palestinians in towns near Hebron and Tulkarem.

Reports also said the Israeli army has set up checkpoints and closed roads, preventing people from entering or leaving cities, towns and villages across the West Bank.

On Monday, Israeli settlers set vehicles and properties of Palestinians in the West Bank on fire under the protection of the regime’s troops, wounding more than 20 Palestinians.

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### Press TV launches Turkish language channel

TEHRAN – The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has announced the commencement of Press TV Turkey’s operations on Sunday, generating significant enthusiasm within Turkish-speaking communities.

Starting from Sunday, Press TV Turkey began its broadcasts, and its success is expected to elevate its position in the Turkish-speaking domain, Peyman Jebelli said, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The IRIB director emphasized that one should not overlook the significant developments in overseas television networks.

Jebelli addressed the strategic measures taken by the IRIB’s Overseas Broadcasting Division, highlighting the launch of Hispan TV in Brazil, aimed at Portuguese-speaking audiences. ► Page 8



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### Islamic Jihad envoy talks Gaza ceasefire, future of enclave during Tehran Times visit

TEHRAN – The Palestinian Islamic Jihad Resistance movement’s envoy to Tehran, Nasser Abu-Sharif, stated that the terms of the Gaza ceasefire agreement were consistent with the group’s initial demands since the start of the conflict.

He emphasized that the group’s core condition for the ceasefire was the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of a long list of Palestinian civilians jailed by Israel.

Speaking during a visit to the Tehran Times building, where he met with the CEO, Abu-Sharif stated, ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Claim that Israel was about to attack Iran

In a commentary, Hamshahri discussed the claim by Saudi Al-Arabiya TV that Israel had decided to attack Iran following developments in the West Asia region. It wrote: The Saudi Al-Arabiya network quoted a European diplomat as saying that Israel had decided to attack after the recent developments in the Middle East. The difficult situation and military threats of the United States and European countries have increased simultaneously with the beginning of the presidency of Donald Trump in the United States. Several European countries are in talks with the new Trump administration to see if there is still an opportunity to use diplomacy or other means to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The activity of European diplomats on this matter has increased due to their concerns that the Trump administration will be much more aggressive with the Islamic Republic of Iran. On the other hand, most of the positions by Israeli officials are based on the idea that Iran's nuclear sites are now defenseless. The Trump administration is considering whether to get directly involved or give Israel the green light.

Shargh: Political circumstances changed Araghchi's trip to New York

Shargh talked with Ali Bigdeli, an expert on political issues, about the absence of Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi at the UN Security Council. He said: The implementation of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas has been the main reason for the cancellation of Araghchi's trip to New York. The official inauguration of Trump as president which coincided with the meeting of the Security Council was also important in the cancellation of the trip by the foreign minister. One of the most important foreign policy issues is related to the Tehran-Washington ties in Trump's second administration, therefore this issue probably led to the cancellation of the trip by the foreign minister. After the Gaza ceasefire, the agenda of the regional and extra-regional countries in the Security Council is to examine the future of the Gaza Strip and how to manage the region. They seek to weaken the position of Hamas and other allied groups in managing Gaza. Therefore, it probably created a condition that led to the cancellation of Araghchi's trip.

Iran: Biden's wrong Iran policy

In a note, the Iran newspaper addressed Joe Biden's mistakes regarding Iran and said: At the end of the four years of Biden's government, we were facing a government that made several mistakes regarding Iran. He ignored that the presence of multiple powers gives actors more options to increase their bargaining power or resist U.S. pressure. As Iran has shown and made it clear, it can count on what its Eurasian and Eastern allies, including Russia and China, provide in this difficult path. Perhaps no one has raised this failure better than American political scientist Stephen Walt about Biden and Iran. According to him, one of the disasters of Biden's foreign policy is the Middle East, where the dreams of every president are eroded. Biden's fundamental mistake was to abandon his campaign promises and go on with the wrong policies he inherited from Trump. As he said, he did not rejoin the Iran nuclear deal.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Legitimizing terror

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to moves by hostile media to present the assassination of two Iranian judges in Tehran as something normal. It wrote: From the very beginning that news of the assassination of two Iranian judges was published, Western countries and hostile media outlets started exaggerating the economic problems in Iran and claimed that there is no individual and political freedoms in Iran. In this way, they tried to legitimize terror and introduce it as a kind of civil disobedience. Through this approach, the media seek to present terror not as a criminal matter, but as a normal and legitimate thing in Islamic and West Asian countries, including Iran. The goal of these movements is to make society indifferent to such crimes to prepare the ground for wider movements of terrorists. The important thing is that these media outlets have narrated their reports and analyses from the mouths of experts to avoid responsibility for accusations and the spread of lies. It should be kept in mind that today's media terrorism is one of the main pillars of the domination system. Dealing with terrorism is an important principle in ensuring national security and stability and maintaining the mental peace of the society.

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Bin 500 kamikaze dron için anlaşılır: İran'ın PKK aşkı bitmiyor

Burak Doğan • 04:30 12/01/2025, Pazartesi • 12/01/2025, Pazartesi  
Yeni Safak



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The source, speaking to the Tehran Times, dismissed the allegations as baseless and a deliberate attempt to sow discord and propagate false narratives.

Several Turkish media outlets, including Yeni Safak, alleged Iranian officials met with PKK representatives in an Iraqi market, where the latter requested 2,000 kamikaze drones. Some outlets further claimed IRGC Quds Force Commander Esmail Qaani was present.

These same reports asserted that Iran agreed to supply 1,500 drones for delivery to northern Iraq, but the shipment was canceled due to Turkish surveillance. Turkish media also claimed that Iran is now seeking alternative methods for delivery.

"These claims are pure fantasy," the security source stated. "There was no such meeting, no such agreement, and no such attempt to deliver any drones." The source further suggested the media report may be part of a deliberate misinformation campaign by Israel aimed at undermining Iran's relationship with its neighbors and creating tensions in the region.

"We urge media outlets to exercise greater caution and to verify the information before disseminating it. Sensationalist and unfounded reporting only serves to harm regional stability and fuel unnecessary tensions," the source added.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan seemed to have bought into the misinformation during a meeting earlier this month.

When questioned about the report, Fidan told domestic and international media representatives, "Iran should refrain from supporting armed groups that are hostile to other nations, just as Turkey abstains from supporting armed groups that act against other countries."

JCPOA talks depend on changes in other parties' behavior, says Iran deputy FM

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi, has reaffirmed the country's willingness to resume negotiations aimed at lifting sanctions, provided other parties demonstrate readiness for constructive dialogue.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday morning, Gharibabadi emphasized Iran's consistent openness to negotiations.

"We have always been prepared for this, and if the other parties are ready as well, we believe talks can proceed and lead to a conclusion," he stated.

He further noted that Iran's approach would remain flexible and responsive to the policies of the other negotiating parties.

"If we observe a different policy or approach from the other side, Iran will adjust its own policies accordingly," he added.

Gharibabadi expressed optimism about the potential for meaningful dialogue, highlighting the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program and criticizing the ineffectiveness



of unilateral sanctions. "There are proper opportunities for dialogue and understanding," he remarked.

"The most logical path forward is to initiate talks on lifting sanctions, which is the reasonable and correct approach."

Gharibabadi also responded to remarks made earlier by former U.S. President Donald Trump, who claimed that Iranian oil sales were being halted due to its support for Resistance groups fighting Israeli occupation.

In his statement to reporters, Gharibabadi reaffirmed Iran's willingness to engage in diplomacy.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran, as always, is ready to initiate and resume negotiations aimed at lifting sanctions," he said. "We have consistently been prepared, and if the other parties demonstrate the same readiness, we are confident that talks can proceed and yield positive results."

He added that Iran's stance remains flexible and responsive to the behavior of other parties in-

involved. "If we observe a different policy or approach from the other side, Iran will adjust its own approach accordingly," Gharibabadi concluded.

He also revealed that consultations are ongoing to determine the date and time for future discussions, underlining Iran's commitment to advancing the negotiations.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the landmark nuclear deal signed in 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 group of nations—comprising the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and Germany—has faced significant challenges since its inception. U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in 2018, reinstating sanctions against Iran.

Negotiations to revive the JCPOA resumed in Vienna in April 2021, aiming to assess Washington's commitment to rejoining the agreement and lifting the sanctions imposed by the previous administration.

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

FM Araghchi meets with Iranian diplomats to discuss regional, international developments



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) met with Mojtaba Amani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Lebanon, on Jan. 21, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iranian diplomats recently held separate meetings with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss Iran's foreign policy priorities, bilateral relations with Lebanon and Afghanistan, and ongoing agendas within the United Nations and other international organizations.

The officials included Mojtaba Amani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Lebanon; Alireza Bikhdeli, representative to Afghanistan; Ali Bahreyni, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Geneva; and Saadat Aghajani, Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. During these meetings, each diplomat presented detailed reports on their areas of responsibility. Topics

included updates on Iran's diplomatic and cooperative efforts with Lebanon and Afghanistan, as well as broader discussions on current initiatives and plans at the United Nations. Foreign Minister Araghchi provided strategic guidance to the diplomats, underscoring the importance of pursuing Iran's foreign policy goals at both bilateral and multilateral levels. He emphasized the need for Iranian representatives to intensify their efforts to strengthen ties and expand collaborations with Lebanon and Afghanistan. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of deepening Iran's engagement with the United Nations and other international organizations to advance national interests and foster regional and global cooperation.

Islamic Jihad envoy talks Gaza ceasefire, future of enclave during Tehran Times visit

TEHRAN – The Palestinian Islamic Jihad Resistance movement's envoy to Tehran, Nasser Abu-Sharif, stated that the terms of the Gaza ceasefire agreement were consistent with the group's initial demands since the start of the conflict.

He emphasized that the group's core condition for the ceasefire was the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and the release of a long list of Palestinian civilians jailed by Israel.

Speaking during a visit to the Tehran Times building, where he met with the CEO, Abu-Sharif stated, "The Resistance never changed its stance. It was Israel that needed to concede." He highlighted that despite Israel's extensive military campaign in Gaza, which included "carpet-bombing, the killing of tens of thousands of civilians, and violations of every international law," Israel had failed to achieve its primary objective of eliminating Hamas and other Resistance factions.

Abu-Sharif further stressed that the future of Gaza must be determined solely by the will of the Palestinian people, rejecting any external interference. "This is an internal issue that the people of Gaza should decide. Different Palestinian groups, including Hamas, have always prioritized the demands of the people and will continue to do that."

Takfiri terrorist network dismantled in western Iran



TEHRAN – Authorities in Sarpol-e Zahab, a border town in western Iran's Kermanshah Province, have successfully identified and apprehended members of a Takfiri terrorist network operating in the area.

Amir Feyzi, the Prosecutor of Sarpol-e Zahab, revealed that the discovery of the extremist network was the result of extensive surveillance conducted by Kermanshah's security agencies.

"An extremist terrorist network was identified and tracked in Sarpol-e Zahab," Feyzi stated, adding that all members of the group were arrested in a coordinated effort involving judicial oversight.

Feyzi explained that such extremist networks rely heavily on propaganda to exploit sectarian differences and target vulnerable

segments of the population, particularly young people and teenagers. He urged families to remain vigilant and actively monitor their children's social interactions to prevent them from falling victim to these groups.

"These radical networks use deceptive tactics to recruit members and undermine societal harmony," he warned. "It is crucial for parents to be aware of their children's movements and associations to safeguard them from such dangers."

The prosecutor also stressed the judiciary's uncompromising stance on dealing with extremist groups. "The judicial system in Sarpol-e Zahab is committed to confronting Takfiri terrorist networks with utmost severity. Legal action against their members will be taken without any leniency," he affirmed.

Iran set to join Pakistan's AMAN-25 naval drills



Ships and aircraft from participating nations sail and fly in formation during the AMAN-23 multinational maritime exercise fleet review in the northern Arabian Sea, February 14, 2023.

TEHRAN – Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, has confirmed the nation's participation in the upcoming AMAN-25 naval exercises, scheduled for February 7-11 in Karachi.

Bagheri made the announcement during his visit to Islamabad, where he held discussions with high-ranking Pakistani officials, including the army chief, air force commander, defense minister, prime minister, and president.

The biennial AMAN exercises, organized by the Pakistan Navy, aim to strengthen maritime security through international collaboration.

Key focuses include countering terrorism,

preventing piracy, and executing search and rescue missions.

The drills will feature various naval operations, such as live-fire exercises, communication drills, and humanitarian assistance efforts, designed to enhance the capabilities of the attending forces.

These exercises offer a venue for naval forces to share tactics and strategies, boosting interoperability among participants.

So far, confirmed participants in AMAN-25 include Iran, the U.S., China, Russia, the U.K., Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, showcasing a blend of regional and global naval powers. Iran's engagement in AMAN-25 follows a series of diplomatic and military interactions with Pakistan.

General Bagheri's recent visit to Islamabad was his third to the South Asian nation, following previous trips in 2018 and 2021.

The expanding framework of military cooperation between the two countries is to a large extent fueled by mutual security concerns along the Iran-Pakistan border.

In 2023, the two nations conducted a joint border security exercise to combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

This partnership was further cemented with a security cooperation agreement in April 2024, which included the deployment of high-ranking officers in border regions to enhance counterterrorism efforts.

# Iran calls for permanent Gaza ceasefire, full Israeli withdrawal

TEHRAN – In a Monday speech at the United Nations Security Council, Iran's Ambassador to the UN, Saeed Iravani, underscored the necessity for lasting peace in Gaza.

During a session focused on "the Situation in the Middle East [West Asia], including the Palestinian Question," Iravani stated, "The ceasefire must be transformed into a permanent and sustainable solution," emphasizing the need for "the full withdrawal of Israeli forces" from Palestinian territory. Iravani thanked Algeria for organizing the meeting and described the ceasefire in Gaza as a significant victory for the Palestinian people.

He highlighted the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, criticizing the international community and the Security Council for their "double standards, moral failures, and inaction."

He detailed the dire conditions in Gaza, where "families have been wiped out, hospitals and schools destroyed, and critical infrastructure demolished," due to "the atrocities committed by the Israeli apartheid regime."

"The blockade on Gaza has turned life for over two million people into a daily struggle, with severe shortages of basic necessities," the senior diplomat stated.

Iravani noted that Israel's actions constitute "collective punishment on an unimaginable scale," depriving the population of food, water,



Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Amir Saeid Iravani

medicine, and electricity.

The ambassador stressed that the ceasefire, while a positive step, requires further action.

He called for not only the delivery of humanitarian aid but also a "robust, comprehensive reconstruction plan for Gaza."

He criticized Israeli officials for their "unwillingness to fully withdraw" and their insistence on maintaining security control, which he argued "undermines these efforts and perpetuates instability."

Iravani urged the Security Council to take a united and strong position in "defending Gaza's territorial integrity."

Turning to the legal implications, Iravani pointed out that Israel is committing "acts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity" in Gaza.

He insisted that "accountability

and prosecution must be pursued" post-ceasefire, saying, "Such crimes cannot be overlooked."

Iravani emphasized that "uncompromising accountability is crucial for justice and preventing further atrocities."

He asserted that the Security Council should remain "objective and not succumb to the propaganda of the terrorist regime of Israel that seeks to deflect attention from these underlying issues."

He also touched on regional stability, calling for the Israeli regime to respect its ceasefire agreement with Lebanon and to withdraw from southern Lebanon after 60 days of the ceasefire agreement.

Furthermore, the Iranian official condemned Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights as a vi-

olation of the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement and UN Resolution 497, which declared its annexation illegal.

Iravani described resistance movements across the West Asia region as a legitimate response to decades of Israeli occupation, aggression, and expansionist policies.

Iravani also reaffirmed Iran's support for Palestinian resistance, which he described as "a legitimate response to decades of Israeli occupation, aggression, and expansionist policies," asserting that "resistance movements across the region" are justified under international law.

The long-awaited Gaza ceasefire agreement, which began on Sunday, is structured in three phases, each lasting 42 days.

Negotiations for the subsequent phases will commence on the 16th day following the implementation of the deal. Israel was forced to accept the ceasefire agreement last week after waging 15 months of devastating war on the Gaza Strip, causing over 46,000 Palestinian deaths and injuring more than 110,000 others.

The Israeli regime initiated its war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, following a successful operation by Hamas in the occupied territories. The operation dubbed 'al-Aqsa Storm' was a response to the Israeli regime's increasing violence toward Palestinians and its repeated desecrations of the al-Aqsa Mosque.

## Tractor, Sepahan victorious in PGPL

TEHRAN – Tractor and Sepahan maintained their positions at the top of the 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) with victories over their rivals on Tuesday.

In Tabriz, Tractor defeated Mes 5-1. Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh opened the scoring for the hosts in the 34th minute, followed by Tomislav Strkalj, who made it 2-0 five minutes later. Mehdi Hasheminejad scored Tractor's third goal just one minute into the second half. Mes pulled a goal back in the 67th minute with a strike from Reza Jabireh. Sajjad Ashouri and Danial Esmaeilifar sealed the match with two goals in the 83rd and 85th minutes, wrapping up a 5-1 win for the leaders.

In Yazd, Sepahan secured a late 2-1 victory over Chadormalou. Sepahan defender Mohammad Daneshgar gave the visiting team the lead in the 79th minute, but Ali Kamali equalized in added time. With time running out, Mohammadmehdi Mohebbi scored the winner for Sepahan.

Persepolis were held to a goalless draw against 10-man Zob Ahan in Isfahan. Zob Ahan midfielder Hasan Shoushtari was shown his second yellow card in the 37th minute.

Foolad defeated Nassaji 1-0 in Ahvaz.

## Al Urooba forward Azadi joins Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team completed the signing of Al Urooba forward Mohammad Reza Azadi.

Azadi joined the Emirati side from Iran's Nassaji in last year's August but failed to live up to expectations. Azadi has joined Esteghlal on a 2.5-year deal for an undisclosed fee.

Azadi had previously played for the Blues in 2021-22 season.

## Tavakoli retains para powerlifting coach

TEHRAN – Hossein Tavakoli will continue his role as the head coach of Iran's para powerlifting team.

He was appointed head coach of Team Melli in October 2021 and has since led the team at the 2022 Asian Para Games and the 2024 Paralympic Games.

Tavakoli succeeded Aliasghar Ravasi, who guided the Iranian powerlifters during the 2020 Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

A gold medalist at the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, Tavakoli led Iran to three gold medals in Paris. Rouhollah Rostami in the men's 80kg, Aliakbar Gharibshahi in the men's 107kg, and Ahmad Aminzadeh in the men's +107kg all secured gold medals at the Games. Additionally, Mohsen Bakhtiar claimed a bronze in the men's 59kg.

## Friendly: Belarus beach soccer defeat Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's national beach soccer team fell short against Belarus 4-3 in a friendly match on Monday. Abbas Rezaei, Mohammadali Mokhtari and Ali Mirshekari were on target for Iran. Team Melli will face Belarus again Tuesday.

Led by head coach Ali Naderi, the Iran beach soccer team are preparing for the 2025 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, scheduled for March 20 to 30 in Thailand.

Iran have been drawn in Group C alongside the UAE, Indonesia, and Afghanistan.

## Gael Kakuta leaves Esteghlal: IPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club parted

ways with French winger Gael Kakuta in the January transfer window.

The 33-year-old winger joined the Iranian top-flight club from France's Ligue 2 club Amiens in August. Kakuta failed to meet the expectations in Esteghlal.

The Blues sit 11th in the Iran league 16-team table, 14 points behind leader Tractor.

## Shahram Heravi remains Iran karate coach

TEHRAN – Shahram Heravi will continue as the head coach of Iran's karate team, a position he has held since 2016.

"We are set to compete in the first stage of the 2025 Karate 1-Premier League in Paris. This competition serves as a qualifier for the World Championships, and I hope we can achieve the best results in France," Heravi said.

"Our main goal is to secure the best results for karate in Iran at the 2025 Asian Championships in May. With the 2026 Nagoya Asian Games ahead of us and time being short, we need to proceed with careful planning."

## Iran start new journey under leadership of Piazza

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball has garnered attention and respect on the international stage over the past decade with their dynamic play and impressive performances in major tournaments.

As the national team prepare for a new chapter in their journey, the recent hiring of Italian coach Roberto Piazza marks a significant shift in strategy and ambition for the team.

### A New Era with Piazza

In December 2024, the Iranian Volleyball Federation appointed Andrea Piazza as the head coach of the national team. Piazza, known for his tactical acumen and successful stints with various clubs and national teams, is expected to bring fresh perspectives and methodologies to the Iranian squad. His experience coaching in top leagues across Europe, including in Italy and Poland, aligns perfectly with Iran's goals of enhancing their game and competing at the highest levels.

Piazza expressed excitement about the opportunity, stating, "Iran have a rich volleyball tradition and passionate fans. I am looking forward to working with this talented group of players and taking them to new heights." His vision includes not only refining technical skills but also fostering a strong team culture based on unity and resilience.

### Impressive performance at worlds

Iran have witnessed remarkable success in volleyball over the years, highlighted by their impressive performances at the FIVB World Championships, Asian Championships, and the prestigious Volleyball Nations League (VNL). The team have produced exceptional talents, including the likes of Saeid Marouf and Amir Ghafour, who have become household names in the sport.

The Iranian national team are currently ranked among the top volleyball nations in the world, showcasing a blend of experienced players and promising younger talents. However, despite their accomplishments, they have yet to secure a medal in the Olympics, a goal that remains a top priority for the federation and fans alike.

### Strategic goals moving forward

Under Piazza's leadership, the team aims to build on its existing strengths while addressing areas that need improvement. His approach is expected to emphasize advanced training techniques, strategic gameplay, and mental conditioning, all of which are crucial for high-stakes matches.

The immediate objectives for the national team include successful showings in upcoming international competitions, such as the 2025 FIVB Volleyball World Championship and the Asian Championships scheduled for later in the year. Piazza's experience in working with international teams will be invaluable as he prepares the squad to face strong opponents from around the globe.

## Why Washington can't let go of its Iran obsession (and why it should)



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – With Donald Trump's second arrival at the White House, it is essential to understand how the United States perceives Iran and how this political vision influences the decisions that have already been made, and those that will continue to be made, in relation to the Islamic Republic.

This analysis is key to understanding the dynamics that have shaped and will continue to shape the relationship between the two countries, as well as the implications this will have for international politics.

Strategic culture provides a fundamental framework for analyzing the interactions between Iran and the United States, two actors with deeply divergent approaches to foreign policy, security, and international relations. To understand the behavior of both countries, it is necessary to examine their respective strategic cultures, which are profoundly influenced by their historical, ideological, and geopolitical contexts.

### Strategic culture of Iran

Resistance and sovereignty: The 1979 Islamic Revolution established a policy of resistance against what Iran considers oppression and external intervention, particularly by Western powers. The doctrine of "resistance" has become a central pillar of Iran's strategic culture, driving the country to reject foreign influences and solidify its independence.

Regional power projection: Iran has formulated a foreign policy aimed at expanding its influence in West Asia, with particular emphasis on countries such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen. To this end, it employs both diplomatic and military resources, as demonstrated by its support for groups like Hezbollah and Shiite militias in the region.

Islamic Revolution and Islamic values: Iran positions itself as the defender of political Islam and the Islamic Revolution, challenging the world order led by "imperialist" powers such as

the United States. This approach promotes an alternative model to capitalism and liberal democracy, seeking to establish regional leadership based on Islamic principles.

Pragmatic diplomacy: Despite its firm stance, Iran has demonstrated pragmatism in its diplomatic approach. A prime example is the 2015 nuclear agreement

with global powers, where Iran showed flexibility to preserve its national interests. Thus, its strategic culture is not exclusively confrontational, but also adaptable when it comes to safeguarding its sovereignty and security.

### Strategic culture of the United States

Global hegemony and leadership: The United States has adopted a foreign policy aimed at maintaining global hegemony and consolidating its role as the leader of the international system. The doctrine of "world leadership" holds that the United States must be the primary defender of the liberal international order.

Use of military power: Throughout its history, U.S. strategy has relied significantly on its military capability, allowing it to guarantee its security, protect strategic interests, and, at times, intervene in international conflicts. Military power is combined with a nuclear deterrence approach, aimed at preventing threats to its interests and that of its allies. This approach has led to military interventions in various regions, such as West Asia, Afghanistan, and the Korean Peninsula.

Unipolarity and diplomacy: After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States solidified its position as the sole superpower in a unipolar international system. During this period, it sought to extend its influence and reinforce its global leadership through diplomacy, economic sanctions, strategic alliances, and cooperation in multilateral organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the WTO. U.S. diplomacy has been a key tool in consolidating its power and protecting its global interests.

Given the differences between the strategic cultures of Iran and the United States, it is possible to understand how, in general, the latter classifies countries into two main categories: it perceives them either as "client states" or as "enemies." In this framework, countries are either seen as allies and friends of the United

States or fall into a category where no significant interaction occurs, often being ignored by Washington. From the perspective of U.S. foreign policy, countries either align with their national interests or oppose them. A third option in U.S. foreign relations is generally a rare exception.

### Exceptionalism of Iran and the United States

Both nations view themselves as "exceptional," seeing themselves as distinct from others. The United States, based on the social, economic, institutional, and political characteristics that define its society, perceives itself as a superior nation. This perception has consolidated its role as an international power, supported by the belief in a unique historical mission that justifies its global intervention to promote its values and principles.

On the other hand, the exceptionalism of the Islamic Republic of Iran is grounded in two key identity sources: Shiite Islam and Iranian nationalism. In recent decades, Iranian leaders have also taken the stance that the country must support both Muslims and non-Muslims who suffer from oppression and colonialism.

### The strategic importance of Iran for the United States

With that in mind, it is crucial to delve into how the United States perceives Iran from a geopolitical standpoint. From this perspective, Iran possesses characteristics that make it a country of critical strategic importance for Washington. Its geostrategic location, with key borders in one of the most contested regions in the world, alongside its vast natural resources, particularly oil and gas, have drawn constant attention from the United States. Iran's location in West Asia, an area considered highly relevant on the international stage, further reinforces its centrality in the United States' strategic calculations.

Furthermore, Iran not only shares a border with Russia, one of the main geopolitical competitors of the United States, but it is also situated in the heart of one of the most conflict-ridden and contested regions of the planet.

From this standpoint, the United States anticipates that Iran will act in alignment with its own national interests. In this context, Washington assigns Iran the role of a "client state," meaning it expects Iran to leverage both its natural resources and strategic location to support U.S. interests. Should Iran reject this role, as it has done, it will be viewed as an "enemy," marking a significant shift in bilateral relations.

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

## Leader visits "Pioneers of Progress" exhibition

## 'Using private sector capacities, only way for progress of country'



TEHRAN— Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei visited the "Pioneers of Progress" exhibition, showcasing the latest achievements and capabilities of the private sector, held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at the Imam Khomeini Hosseiniyeh.

This event, organized under the theme of "Production Leap with Public Participation", highlights private-sector innovations and accomplishments, IRNA reported.

As part of the program, on Wednesday, January 22, private-sector producers and entrepreneurs will meet with the Leader at the same venue. During the gathering, several economic contributors are expected to present their insights and perspectives.

Since the 2010s, annual meetings and events focused on the private sector's role in Iran's economy have been held with Ayatollah Khamenei's participation. Last year, the Leader praised the private sector's advancements and emphasized the importance of informing the public about these achievements.

## Drilling of 10 wells at South Azadegan oil field nears 90% completion

TEHRAN— The cumulative progress in the drilling of 10 wells at the shared South Azadegan oil field has surpassed 90 percent, according to Mohammad Khavarinejad, the project manager for drilling operations at the West Karun oil fields under the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC).

Speaking to SHANA, Khavarinejad stated that drilling and completion operations for nine wells have been finalized. The wells have been flow-tested and handed over to the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), which oversees the development of the West Karun oil fields.

He noted that two drilling rigs, Fath 43 and Fath 74, are currently deployed at the site, with Rig 74 completing drilling operations for the project's final well.

Khavarinejad highlighted that a total of 36,317 meters have been drilled across the project. He added that with efficient collaboration between NIDC specialists and PEDEC, the drilling of the tenth well is on track to be completed and delivered to the client by the end of the year.

The South Azadegan oil field, one of Iran's largest shared oil fields, lies along the country's border with Iraq and is part of the greater Azadegan field. The development of this field is a strategic priority for Iran as it seeks to maximize production from its shared reservoirs. South Azadegan is estimated to hold billions of barrels of crude oil, making it a key asset for boosting Iran's oil output



and exports.

In recent years, the development of the South Azadegan field has seen increased focus on employing advanced drilling technologies and modern project management practices. This approach aims to enhance operational efficiency and reduce the environmental footprint of oil production in the sensitive region.

Efforts to develop South Azadegan are part of a broader strategy to expand production in the West Karun oil fields, which are collectively projected to account for a significant portion of Iran's future crude production. The project is also expected to contribute to local job creation and technology transfer, further supporting the country's oil and gas sector.

With ongoing investments and collaboration between national and international entities, the South Azadegan field is poised to play a crucial role in ensuring Iran's energy security and meeting its export goals.

## Tehran to host 20th intl. water industry exhibition

TEHRAN— The spokesperson for Iran's water industry announced that the 20th International Water Industry and Wastewater Facilities Exhibition, featuring 150 domestic companies and five international participants, aims to promote smart technologies, showcase water innovation achievements, and foster domestic and international collaboration toward en-

vironmental sustainability.

According to the Iranian Water Resources Management Company, spokesperson Isa Bozorgzadeh described the event as the nation's largest water industry gathering, providing a platform for interaction between government and private sector operators, as well as showcasing national capabilities in water

management.

Bozorgzadeh emphasized the exhibition's role in facilitating direct discussions among officials, consultants, contractors, and suppliers, enabling the expansion of professional networks and better recognition of active contributors in the field.

He highlighted the focus on smart

technologies, artificial intelligence, and green tools to enhance resilience and sustainability in Iran's water management landscape.

The exhibition will feature 150 Iranian companies and five foreign participants from India, Italy, Austria, Germany, and China.

It provides an opportunity to pres-

ent cutting-edge products and innovations, align industry advancements with market demands, and chart future initiatives.

The official added that the exhibition underscores Iran's historical significance in water management, as evidenced by the invention of qanats and the construction of ancient dams over the past 2,000 years.

He stressed the importance of adopting modern, eco-friendly technologies to manage water resources effectively.

With the slogan "A Sustainable Iran with Collaborative and Technological Water Management," the exhibition will take place from January 23 to January 26 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

## Non-oil export from Markazi province up 39% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN— The value of non-oil export from Markazi province, in the center of Iran, rose 39 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - December 21, 2024), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the director-general of the province's customs department announced.

Ruhollah Gholami said that 1,734 million tons of commodities worth \$1.187 billion were exported from the province in the nine-month period, indicating 25 percent growth in terms of weight as well.

He named Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Russia, and the Netherlands as the main destinations of the goods exported from the province in the mentioned time span.

The official also announced that 294,000 tons of goods valued at \$826 million were imported to the province in the first nine months of the present year, with 18 percent rise in value, and 22 percent growth in terms of weight, as compared to the same period of time in the previous year.

He named the UAE, China, Turkey, Hong Kong, Qatar, Italy, Germany, Iraq, India and Switzerland as the main sources of products imported into the country in the nine-month period.

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 fol-

lowed 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 82.85 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

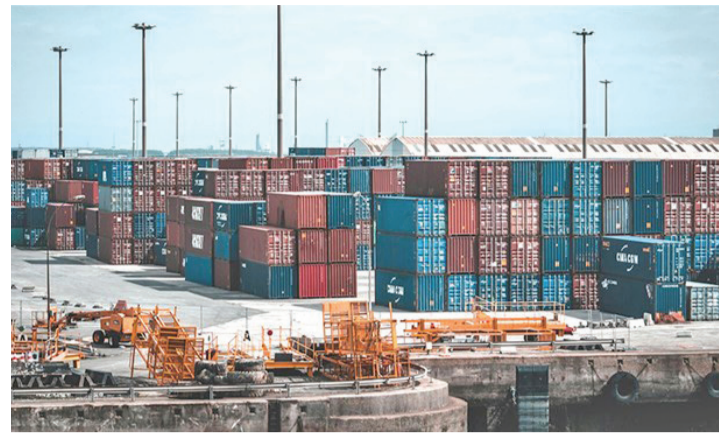
## Iran's exports to EU members rise 5% in 11 months

TEHRAN— While trade between Iran and the European Union fell by three percent during the first 11 months of 2024 compared to the same period last year, Iran's exports to Europe grew by five percent over the same timeframe, according to Eurostat data.

Iran-EU trade volume reached €4.15 billion from January to November 2024, down from the previous year.

Of this, €3.37 billion accounted for European exports to Iran, reflecting a four percent decline, while Iranian exports to Europe increased by five percent to €773 million.

In November 2024, Iran-EU



trade stood at €377 million, marking a 19 percent drop compared to €467 million in November 2023.

European exports to Iran de-

creased by 22 percent, falling from €383 million to €299 million.

Meanwhile, Iranian exports to

Europe rose from €84 million to €78 million, registering a seven percent year-on-year growth for the month.

Based on the SITC classification, food and livestock were the top Iranian items exported to the EU, with a 20 percent increase in exports and a total value of €270 million.

Conversely, the primary European export category to Iran was vehicles and industrial machinery which fell by seven percent to €1.18 billion.

Germany remained Iran's top European trading partner, followed by Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

## Iran, China aim to bolster maritime economy, agricultural co-op

TEHRAN— Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezleji emphasized the potential for Iran and China to activate a maritime-based economy and foster collaboration in agriculture and food security, creating a vast market for domestic and international customers.

In an exclusive interview with China's CCTV, Nouri extended New Year greetings to the Chinese government and people, highlighting the cultural ties between the two nations, such as the similarities between China's Spring Festival and Iran's Nowruz.

Nouri noted the historical and civilizational connections between Iran and China, alongside their mutual political support in contemporary relations, rooted in shared economic and trade interests.

He underscored Iran's prominent role in the region, describing the country as a significant and influential player in West Asia.

Nouri Ghezleji also highlighted Iran's geopolitical advantages, including access to open waters, its position on the Silk Road, and its role as a key junction in the International North-South Corridor. These attributes, he said, make Iran a strategic hub for international transportation and a bridge connecting the East and the West.

The minister further stressed the potential for Iran and China to enhance their maritime economies and jointly work in agriculture and food security, thereby establishing a substantial market for consumers both domestically and internationally.

In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu on October 15, 2024 Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati emphasized the importance of implementing the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed between Iran

and China.

In the meeting, held at the place of the ministry, the Iranian minister followed up on the negotiations that took place during the BRICS Economic Ministers' Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, stressing the importance of implementing the MOUs between the two countries.

He also considered the two countries' Joint Economic Committee as a suitable platform for negotiations on economic, trade, and investment cooperation, and welcomed the holding of the 19th Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

Cong Peiwu, for his part, stated that Beijing aims to expedite the implementation of the MOUs and enhance practical cooperation to deepen relations between the two countries.

Both sides also highlighted the commitment of their statesmen to comprehensive development, expressing hope that consultations between senior officials of Iran and China will continue to expand bilateral relations.

In late September 2024, Hemmati had also met and held talks with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an, during which the two sides emphasized the implementation of the two countries' long-term strategic partnership plan.

Hemmati met with Fo'an on the sidelines of the 9th ministerial meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) members in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

In addition to the issues related to the cooperation of the two countries in AIIB, the two sides discussed the most important issues related to bilateral relations, especially the follow-up of the results of previous agreements.

Holding the two countries' Joint Economic Committee meeting in the new future was another topic discussed by the two officials.



In the meeting, the ministers of the two countries emphasized that Iran and China have put a more serious and deeper implementation of the comprehensive long-term strategic plan of the two countries on their agenda and will continue this path in the official interactions of the two countries until concrete practical achievements are reached.

Also, in a meeting with Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Head Mohammad-Ali Dehghan Dehnavi on October 28, 2024, Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu emphasized that his country is willing to strengthen trade ties with Iran in all fields.

The ambassador emphasized the importance of enhancing trade cooperation between Iran and China.

He highlighted the necessity of developing trade relations across all economic sectors and expressed China's willingness to strengthen trade exchanges with Iran in every field.

Dehghan Dehnavi, for his part, emphasized that trade cooperation between Iran and China is at its highest level, adding that the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran is keen to enhance and grow constructive trade relations between the two countries.

He stressed the importance of adopting modern, eco-friendly technologies to manage water resources effectively.

With the slogan "A Sustainable Iran with Collaborative and Technological Water Management," the exhibition will take place from January 23 to January 26 at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

issues. The meeting focused on three main areas:

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 TPOI with reversing this trend by boosting non-oil exports.

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

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.

# PM Netanyahu finds himself in the hot seat as Israeli top general resigns

TEHRAN- The resignation of Israel's top general has underscored the acute embarrassment the regime is experiencing following its military setbacks.

Israel's military chief of staff, Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, announced on Tuesday that he has decided to step down over his role in failing to prevent the Al-Aqsa Storm, a surprise military operation carried out by Hamas in southern Israel on October 7, 2023.

In a letter to war minister Israel Katz, he said the resignation would go into effect on March 6.

"On the morning of 7 October, the IDF under my command failed in its mission to protect the citizens of Israel," Halevi said in his letter.

He is the most senior Israeli figure to resign over Israel's failure to avert the Hamas attack during which 1,100 people were killed and about 250 others were taken captive.

Meanwhile, the heads of the Knesset's opposition parties demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu follow Halevi's example and step down.



Opposition chiefs urge Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to follow Herzi Halevi's lead and step down

"I salute...Herzi Halevi. Now let the prime minister and his entire disastrous government take responsibility and resign," opposition leader Yair Lapid said.

Yisrael Beytenu chairman Avigdor Liberman echoed Lapid's comments.

"After the resignation of the [IDF] chief of staff, I call on the prime minister and the other members of the cabinet to take re-

sponsibility and follow him home," he said, according to Israeli media.

The Democrats' Yair Golan made a similar call. "Thank you, Herzi Netanyahu, now it's your turn."

Earlier this month, the Israel army's Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Amir Baram notified Halevi in a letter that he would resign.

"Under the current state of affairs, my ability to contribute as

deputy chief of staff is limited, and I have no intention of serving in this position for three or four full years... Of course in the future, I am willing to fill any role required in the defense establishment," Baram said.

According to the Times of Israel, relations between Halevi and Baram have been somewhat strained amid the Gaza war, despite denials from their offices.

Baram has been seen as a potential successor to Halevi for several years.

Israel launched war on Gaza shortly after Hamas launched the Al-Aqsa Storm.

The Israeli army killed more than 47,000 Palestinians but it ultimately reached a ceasefire deal with Hamas a week ago which went into effect at the weekend.

The truce agreement has highlighted Israel's inability to defeat Hamas.

Now, the resignation of Halevi appears to be a diversion, aimed at redirecting attention away from the decline of the regime in the face of growing Palestinian resistance.

## Hamas scenes highlight Israeli failure



From page 1 ▶ "Instead, after 15 months of fighting an underground guerrilla war, Hamas's officials, fighters and policemen have in the days since the deal emerged from the rubble of the shattered enclave — seemingly ready to rule Gaza once again."

Mkhaimar Abusada, a political scientist at Northwestern University in the U.S., told the paper, "Hamas has not ended despite its military losses. The way the hostages were handed over was a display of force and an act of defiance towards Israel."

The FT also pointed out that images of Hamas fighters back above ground and asserting their authority shocked the Israeli public, and raised serious questions about the effectiveness of the ferocious campaign unleashed on the strip.

Shortly after the ceasefire came into effect,

the Government Media Office in Gaza announced a plan to restore security and order. It highlighted that municipalities had started reopening and repairing roads.

Over the past months, Israeli officials have expressed growing concerns over the effectiveness of the relentless military campaign against the Gaza Strip.

Despite the scale of the war and the unprecedented resources poured into it, questions and anger continue to rise in Israeli media about its long-term impact and strategic outcomes.

As time passes, doubts are mounting within Israeli circles about whether the war has achieved its intended results.

Meanwhile, The Wall Street Journal noted that Hamas' decision to deploy fighters during the handover of Israeli prisoners was a deliberate move to demonstrate its continued dominance in the region.

Despite being classified by the United States as a terrorist organization, Hamas showed the unprecedented level of Israeli force had failed to eliminate it or replace it with an alternative.

The newspaper added that this public display of power suggests that relief organizations and governments will have to work with Hamas as reconstruction efforts begin in the coming weeks; an outcome the Israelis desperately sought to avoid.

Gershon Baskin, a former Israeli negotiator on prisoner issues in Gaza, argued that Hamas' ongoing presence is a clear challenge to Netanyahu's government and military. It highlights that Israel's war objectives were always unrealistic.

Former Mossad chief Tamir Pardo previously acknowledged that while Hamas had taken significant losses, it remains a powerful force, continuing to control Gaza and manage its affairs.

During a speech on the Biden administration's Middle East policy at the Atlantic Council last Tuesday, former U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken underscored the ongoing threat posed by Hamas in Gaza.

"Hamas remains a deeply dangerous force," Blinken said, adding that despite losses, the group has managed to replenish its ranks.

"We assess that Hamas has recruited almost as many new militants as it has lost," he revealed.

"That is a recipe for an enduring insurgency and perpetual war."

Blinken further highlighted, "That's exactly what's happened in northern Gaza since October 7, 2023. Each time Israel completes its military operations and pulls back Hamas militants regroup and reemerge because there's nothing else to fill the void."

## Israel's West Bank crackdown: A desperate attempt to whitewash Gaza failure

From page 1 ▶ Israeli settlers' assaults occurred concurrently with the signing of an order by President Donald Trump on Monday, which aims to lift US sanctions imposed on them in the occupied West Bank.

An Israeli rights group said settlers are acting in "full cooperation with the Israeli army".

B'Tselem touched upon the ulterior motives lurking behind the settler attacks against the backdrop of the implementation of the ceasefire in Gaza.

It said on X, formerly known as Twitter, that settlers want "to impose a 'price tag' for the release of Palestinians from Israeli prisons".

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Hamas resistance movement condemned the settler attacks.

"The escalation of settler terrorism underscores the urgent need for our heroic people across all governorates of the West Bank to rise in a sweeping wave of anger to deter the settlers and repel their terrorist attacks," Hamas said in a statement.

The resistance movement said the settler violence, in concert with Israeli military campaigns, will not "succeed in pushing our people to give up their land and rights" and rather, it will lead to "further steadfastness and defiance," according to Al Jazeera.

The UN chief also expressed deep concern about "an existential threat to the integrity and contiguity" of Gaza and the West Bank due to Israeli actions and "unabated illegal settlement expansion".

Antonio Guterres, who was addressing a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, added that "senior Israeli officials openly speak of formally annexing all or part of the West Bank in the coming months. Any such annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law."

On Monday, Israeli Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi ordered his troops to prepare for large-scale operations in the West Bank.

"Alongside enhanced defensive preparations in the Gaza Strip, we must be ready for significant operations in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) in the coming days," Halevi said in a statement.

Halevi's statement has spotlighted Israel's plans to annex the entire West Bank as Trump begins his four-year presidency.

In November last year, the Israeli finance minister said he believed Israel could work with Trump to promote annexation of the West Bank. In the same month, he posted a message on X to push for Israel's "sovereignty" over the West Bank.

"2025: the year of sovereignty in Judea and Samaria," Smotrich wrote on X, using the biblical name by which Israel refers to the occupied West Bank.

Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967. Over the past years, it has expanded settlements in the Palestinian territory. All Israeli settlements in the West Bank are illegal under international law.

But Israel has failed to crush the Palestinian



Israeli troops in armored vehicles carry out a raid in Jenin in the occupied West Bank on January 21, 2025

resistance against the occupation.

Israel launched the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023 and was forced to reach a ceasefire deal with Hamas after its military ambitions in the enclave fell through. The truce was reached a week ago and went into effect on Sunday after Israel butchered more than 47,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including 17,800 children.

Besides, Israeli forces and settlers have killed more than 800 Palestinians in the West Bank since the start of the Gaza conflict.

The ceasefire in Gaza has highlighted Israel's failure to meet its objectives which mainly include the eradication of Hamas.

Israel is now ramping up attacks in the West Bank in a desperate attempt to sweep its military failures in Gaza under the rug.

## Hezbollah-Amal duo agree to participate in the Salam government

From page 1 ▶ According to sources, the prime minister-designate is in talks with figures who are supposed to have chances to hold ministerial positions; they say he is seeking to form a "technocratic-political" cabinet.

Salam insists on not excluding any political stakeholders, so he intends to appoint representatives of these factions to ministerial portfolios, provided that they: (1) do not hold senior positions in these factions; (2) sign a pledge not to run in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Given that the Interior Ministry is the Sunni share, there is a deep disagreement between Sunni figures in this regard, especially as the minister will supervise the upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled for May 2026.

Although Salam did not make any promise to appoint any Shiite figure outside the circle of the Hezbollah-Amal duo, he did not contact any of the so-called "Shiite opposition", who saw an opportunity to find a foothold in the government.

However, following the two meetings that brought Salam together with the duo, their US-prompted dream has faded.

The prime minister-designate further met with Mohammad Raad, head of the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc; Hussein Khalil, the political assistant to the Hezbollah Secretary-General, and MP Ali Hassan Khalil, a representative of the Amal Movement.

During the two meetings, Salam spoke at length about the Lebanese political system since independence from the French occupation in the early fifties, until the Taif Agree-

ment, which ended the 1975-1990 civil war, stressing his view not to exclude any political component.

Salam called for not missing the "current opportunity for national salvation" after the Shiite duo expressed their disapproval of constitutional violations that accompanied Salam's nomination in a bid to preserve national consensus.

In addition to the Ministry of Finance, the duo demanded a significant service ministry, such as the Ministry of Public Works or the Ministry of Health, expressing their complete readiness to cooperate with Salam.

Meanwhile, it is not clear whether the duo will be the ones to propose the names of the five ministers for the prime minister-designate to choose from or vice versa, knowing that the duo's priority is the mechanism for governance and addressing urgent issues in the next phase.

Since the signing of the Taif Agreement, successive governments have made it a priority for the ministerial statement to clearly state the right of the Lebanese to resist and liberate the occupied territories.

Therefore, one of the duo's priorities is for the current ministerial statement to stipulate the righteousness of the resistance.

In light of the anti-Hezbollah team's biased interpretations of UN Resolution 1701, the duo is keen for the ministerial statement to express the government's commitment that President Joseph Aoun would conduct a comprehensive national dialogue regarding the Resistance movement's weapons along the general national defense strategy.

## Khalida Jarrar: Who is the recently freed Palestinian prisoner?



Khalida Jarrar, pictured in the West Bank, left after her release from jail in September 2021, and right, after her release in January 2025 (AFP)

Palestinian prisoner Khalida Jarrar was freed by Israel on Sunday as part of the first wave of prisoner exchanges agreed with Hamas in the Gaza ceasefire deal.

The 61-year-old, an MP, feminist and prisoners' rights advocate, had been held in administrative detention - a policy that allows Israeli authorities to hold individuals without charge or trial - since 26 December 2023.

Jarrar's detention was renewed multiple times.

In August she was moved to solitary confinement as a "form of punishment", according to the Palestinian Prisoners Club, and held for six months in a 1m-by-1.5m cell at Ayalon (Ramla) prison.

Rights group Addameer reported that the cell had "barely enough space for a mattress", and that her clothes, hygiene products, food and water were all severely restricted.

Jarrar's long career as an activist has meant she has spent the last three decades in and out of detention, losing her father, daughter and nephew while she was behind bars.

Her sister Salam Altratot told Middle East Eye that the latest detention was the hardest Jarrar had endured.

### A life-long activist

Originally from Nablus, Jarrar is a prominent political leader and human rights and feminist advocate.

Her activism began early. As a teenager, she reportedly volunteered with a group that cleaned the local community and public

schools against the wishes of many in her family, who believed the work was more suited for boys.

She went on to become one of the most prominent leaders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a nationalist and Marxist-Leninist group that is the second-largest faction in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and has been designated as a terrorist group by Israel and the US.

In 2006, she was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council, which is the Palestinian Authority's parliament, and was appointed to lead the prisoners' committee.

She is credited with playing a leading role in cementing Palestine's accession to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2015.

Jarrar has also been a relentless campaigner for the rights of Palestinian prisoners, serving as the director of Addameer, a prisoners' rights organization based in Ramallah, between 1993 and 2005.

### Repeated detention

Jarrar's work has made her a repeated target for Israeli authorities, who have arrested her several times over the past three decades, often placing her under administrative detention.

Her first arrest was in March 1989, when she participated in a demonstration on International Women's Day.

In April 2015, Israeli authorities arrested Jarrar and initially held her under administrative detention without charge.

Following mounting international pressure, an Israeli military court charged her with 12 security-related offenses connected to her membership in the PFLP.

Jarrar was found guilty and sentenced to 15 months in prison, five years' probation and fined \$2,600.

The Palestinian leader continued her work in prison, establishing a school and teaching English to young women inmates.

She was released in June 2016, only to be arrested a year later during a dawn raid on her home in Ramallah. She was freed in September 2021.

Jarrar has also faced long-term travel bans imposed by the Israeli authorities, while her husband has been detained over 10 times.

## Iran to participate in MEGA HALAL Bangkok 2025 exhibition



TEHRAN – Iran's Cultural Attaché office in Bangkok has announced that the Islamic Republic will participate in the MEGA HALAL Bangkok 2025 exhibition, which will be held from July 16-18 in the Thai capital.

In a press conference organized by the Islamic Committee of Thailand, the agreement to collaborate on hosting this international Halal exhibition was signed, with the attendance of Mehdi Zare' Bieib, Iran's Cultural Counselor in Thailand, along with representatives from various Halal industries.

In his address, Dr. Ismael Ali, Associate Professor at the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, emphasized that Halal certification extends beyond food to encompass a lifestyle guided by Islamic principles.

According to organizers, the exhibition is designed to elevate Thailand's position as the hub for Halal products in Asia and aims to connect over 2 billion Muslims globally with the Halal market.

The exhibition will feature more than 500 companies from 10 countries, offering a wide range of Halal-certified products across industries, including food and beverages, fashion, beauty, wellness, health, cosmetics, perfumes, spas, dietary supplements, and tourism at the BITEC Bangna Exhibition and Convention Center.

The event is expected to attract over 15,000 exhibitors, manufacturers, and investors from

around the world, reflecting the increasing global demand for Halal products.

Iran's participation in this event underscores the growing importance of cultural and economic ties between nations in the Halal sector, offering a platform for mutual cooperation and market expansion in Asia and beyond.

### A glimpse of Halal tourism

Halal tourism (sometimes called Halal travel or Halal-friendly tourism) is a subcategory of tourism that is geared towards Muslim families who abide by the rules of Islam.

The hotels in such destinations do not serve alcohol, have separate swimming pools and spa facilities for men and women, serve only Halal foods, and have prayer facilities in-room and in a common hall.

The Halal tourism industry also provides flights where no alcohol or pork products are served, prayer timings are announced, and religious programs are broadcast as part of entertainment offered on board.

Many international hotels in that category do serve Halal food that is slaughtered in accordance with the teachings of Islamic Sharia and is free of any substances forbidden by Islam such as pork and alcohol. Some hotels have employed people from the Muslim world to provide translation services and other assistance that may be needed by tourists from Muslim countries.

## Archaeologists uncover mysterious mask and advanced water system in ancient Libyan city of Ptolemais

The Mediterranean Libyan city of Ptolemais continues to reveal fantastic secrets about its glorious Hellenistic and Roman past. Founded during either the 4th or 3rd century BC by the Ptolemaic dynasty, it went on to prosper for almost a millennium until its abandonment after the Arab invasion in the 7th century CE.

Several stunning discoveries have been unearthed in excavations recently led by Polish archaeologists from Warsaw University, including a sophisticated water system and an enigmatic face carved in hydraulic mortar.

Founded as a port city for the inland settlement of Barca, Ptolemais was thriving under the Ptolemies, expanding to become an important urban center under the Romans. From the late 3rd century CE onward, it held the rank of a provincial capital in Libya Superior, a status established by the administrative reforms of Emperor Diocletian. Its status was based on an impregnable location supported by marvelous works of engineering; it had, of course, been persistently beset throughout those centuries, suffering

several natural disasters and the eventual Arab conquest.

Excavations started in 2001 under Professor Tomasz Mikocki but were stopped in 2010 because of the civil war in Libya. In 2023, the researchers came back after years to reassume this work, using far more sophisticated, non-invasive methods such as 3D mapping and orthographic surveys.

During the summer of 2024, archaeologists found the remains of a residence belonging to one of the locals who was a person of significant rank. The house had been built around a small peristyle court lined by rooms serving purposes like the kitchen, staircase, and a chamber with a mosaic. The mosaic, though several times repaired, testifies to the importance of this house. Stone containers near the entrance may indicate a public function—perhaps as a place where taxes or tribute were stored during the late Roman period.

(Source: [archaeologymag.com](http://archaeologymag.com))

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## Global tourism fully recovered in 2024 to pre-pandemic levels: UN

Global tourism fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic last year, with 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals recorded worldwide due to "robust" demand from key markets, a top U.N. agency said Monday.

"A majority of destinations welcomed more international tourists in 2024 than they did before the pandemic, while visitor spending also continued to grow strongly," the Madrid-based U.N. Tourism said in a statement.

Last year, the

number of international tourist arrivals was 11% higher than the 1.3 billion recorded in 2023, reaching the level seen in 2019, the year before the pandemic paralyzed travel.

A "robust performance from large source markets and the ongoing recovery of destinations in Asia" drove the results, U.N. Tourism added.

Receipts from global tourism reached \$1.6 trillion in 2024, about 3.0% more than the previous year and 4.0% more than in 2019 when inflation and currency fluctuations are taken into account.

"In 2024, global tourism completed its recovery from the pandemic and, in many places, tourist arrival and especially earnings are already higher than in 2019," U.N. Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said.

"Growth is expected to continue throughout 2025, driven by strong demand contributing to the socio-economic development of both mature and emerging destinations," he

added.

"This recalls our immense responsibility as a sector to accelerate transformation, placing people and the planet at the center of the development of tourism."

The surge in visitor numbers has sparked a backlash in many tourism hotspots, prompting the authorities to take steps to ease the pressure on bursting beaches and gridlocked streets. Venice, one of the world's top tourist destinations, is trying to limit the influx of tourists into its historic center by charging day trippers for entry.

Japan has introduced a daily cap on hiker numbers at Mount Fuji, while Amsterdam and other port cities have reduced the number of cruise ships allowed to dock.

Europe, the world's most popular destination region, recorded 747 million international arrivals in 2024, a 5% increase over the previous year and 1% above 2019 levels.

All European regions surpassed pre-pandemic levels ex-

# Niavaran launches photogrammetry documentation project for iconic artifacts

TEHRAN - The Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex, located in northern Tehran, has launched an extensive project aimed at documenting its iconic artifacts using advanced photogrammetry techniques.

The project is part of the complex's broader initiative to utilize modern technology for the preservation, documentation, and accessibility of its cultural and historical treasures.

On Tuesday, Bijan Moqaddam, the director of the Niavaran Complex, shared details of the project, emphasizing the importance of adopting innovative technologies to safeguard Iran's rich cultural heritage.

"As one of the wealthiest collections of cultural and artistic heritage in Iran and the world, the Niavaran Complex has taken significant steps toward using cutting-edge technologies for the protection, documentation, and dissemination of information," he explained.

The project's primary objective is to increase public access to historical and artistic works while creating an online archive of the complex's most significant pieces. It also aims to implement preventive conservation strategies, ensuring the long-term protection of the artifacts.

Over 100 key objects in the collection will be documented using photogrammetry techniques,



which include creating three-dimensional and gigapixel models, as well as ortho-photo imaging, Moqaddam added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Moqaddam underscored that proper documentation of museum objects is essential for effective long-term preservation and standard maintenance. "Accurate documentation not only provides comprehensive base data about the objects but also lays the groundwork for the development of long-term conservation plans," he noted.

In recent years, 3D documentation has emerged as a logical complement to traditional museum documentation methods. Depending on the project's goals, budget, and needs, techniques such as laser scanning, optical scanning, and photogrammetry

are employed.

Explaining the benefits of photogrammetry, Moqaddam noted that it is a non-contact technique that uses photographs to measure and interpret the shapes of objects. This method is highly effective for museum documentation, allowing for the creation of precise 3D models with high resolution.

The ability to capture details quickly, at a relatively low cost, and with accurate color reproduction makes photogrammetry an ideal tool for digitalizing and documenting cultural artifacts.

"This project is undoubtedly one of the pioneering efforts in preserving, introducing, and documenting the intricate details of Iran's cultural heritage. It aligns with the broader strategies of

the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex," Moqaddam said. "By focusing on 3D documentation and utilizing advanced technologies, this initiative can serve as a successful model for other museums and heritage centers looking to digitize cultural and historical collections."

He concluded by emphasizing the potential of modern documentation methods to create a comprehensive digital archive, prevent the loss of heritage-related information, and facilitate research and collaboration across academic communities.

Covering an area of about eleven hectares, the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex is composed of several landmark buildings, museums, and monuments constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries during the Pahlavi and late Qajar eras.

The history of the palace complex stretches back to about 280 years ago when Fath-Ali Shah of the Qajar Dynasty ordered a summer residence to be built in the then countryside area of the capital.

The two-story Ahmad-Shahi pavilion is one of the highlights of the complex. With an area of 9,000 square meters, the palace complex is entirely adorned with magnificent plasterwork, mirrorwork, and tilework. Its architecture boasts a blend of pre- and post-Islamic arts.

## Simurgh Nameh: new digital platform launched to help promote Iran's cultural heritage

TEHRAN - Simurgh Nameh, a newly developed online platform, is set to be a brief reference for researchers and enthusiasts of the Iranian arts and culture.

The Tehran-based platform is named after the mythical Simurgh, a benevolent, giant bird in Persian mythology, symbolizing the idea of unity and transcendence.

Much like the Simurgh, which is believed to carry immense power and wisdom, Simurgh Nameh aspires to bring together the fragmented pieces of Iran's rich cultural history

and reconnect them through an interconnected web of knowledge.

According to its website, the platform's mission is to gather and present the scattered cultural and artistic works of Greater Iran. Its offerings span museums, libraries, and private collections worldwide being represented in a unified digital archive.

It aims to provide researchers, art enthusiasts, and the wider public with access to these invaluable artifacts in a comprehensive and organized virtual space.



## Cultural delegation from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan visits special handicraft house in Tehran



TEHRAN – On Monday, a cultural and commercial delegation from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan toured the Fusion Art Handicraft House in Tehran.

The delegation which included prominent artisans and business representatives from the two Central Asian countries, was ac-

companied by Ehsan Dehqani, the deputy director of handicrafts for Tehran province, CHTN reported on Monday.

The delegation's visit aimed to deepen cultural and artistic ties between the nations and explore the rich world of Iranian handicrafts.

The group consisted of artists and specialists in various fields of traditional crafts, including miniature painting, embroidery, pottery, jewelry-making, carpet weaving, and textile arts.

During the visit, the managing director of Fusion Art Handicraft House presented a detailed overview of the institution's projects and activities, which span a wide range of crafts, including pottery, painting, sculpture, and other traditional handicrafts.

The house also showcased several pieces created by its resident artists, which were highly praised by the visiting delegation, the report said.

The visitors highlighted the artistic potential of their respective

countries and emphasized the importance of cultural exchanges.

They also suggested organizing joint exhibitions featuring artists from Iran, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan as a way to foster mutual understanding and collaboration.

The delegation's visit also included a tour of the Iranian jewelry design studios, where various techniques, such as engraving, gemstone inlay, and filigree work, were demonstrated.

Currently, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts."

cept Central and Eastern Europe, "where many destinations are still suffering from the lingering effects of the Russian aggression on Ukraine," the statement said.

International arrivals grew by 33% in Asia and the Pacific to reach 316 million in 2024, representing just 87% of pre-pandemic levels.

The Middle East posted the strongest rebound since 2019, with 95 million arrivals last year, a 32% jump over pre-pandemic levels but just 1% higher than in 2023.

Many countries, such as Japan and Morocco, have set new tourism records following the pandemic and several destinations reported double-digit growth in international arrivals when compared to 2019.

El Salvador, which has successfully cracked down on violent crime, posted an 81% increase in foreign arrivals on 2019 levels.

(Source: [Daily Sabah](http://DailySabah))

# Nine provinces to become age-friendly

TEHRAN – A national project for creating age-friendly environment has been launched in nine provinces of the country.

Age-friendly communities are places where age is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities, and services support and enable older people to have opportunities to enjoy life and feel well.

Tehran, Gilan, Isfahan, East Azarbaijan, West Azarbaijan, Lorestan, Hamedan, and Bushehr are the pilot provinces of the project, IRNA quoted Mojgan Reza-zadeh, the head of the secretariat of the National Council of the Elderly, as saying.

The age-friendly city is an international project implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and global funds, and now the age-friendly city secretariat has been inaugurated in the mentioned provinces.

The age-friendly environment has eight main domains including transportation, social participation, civic participation, and employment, respect and social inclusion, housing, communication, and information.

In October 2024, Reza-zadeh said that the national document for creating age-friendly environments across the country has taken effect.

"The world's population, especially in developing countries, is growing old, and Iran is no exception.

The percentage of the elderly population in the country has increased from five percent in 1976 to about 10.5 percent, reaching around 9 million people," IRNA quoted Reza-zadeh as saying.

The document works towards improving physical and social



environments to become better places for the elderly.

It is compiled in three parts: Principles of indicators and criteria of the strategic plan of an age-friendly city, holding workshops on how to prepare a strategic document for an age-friendly city, and planning indicators for an age-friendly city.

In addition to its eight main domains, traveling and tours for the elderly are going to be added to the plan.

Each province should develop a strategic provincial document based on their environment, and implement the program with the cooperation of the member institutions and the strong participation of municipalities and governor-general offices in each city, Reza-zadeh stated.

She went on to say that the needed training will be carried out step by step with domestic experts and international consultants to monitor it.

The provinces that have more elderly people, namely Gilan,

Mazandaran, Tehran, Isfahan, Yazd, and Kerman, are the top priority of this plan.

**Iran's transition into an aging country 'inevitable'**

Considering the fact that the fertility rate in Iran is stabilized at around 1.6 children per woman, which is much lower than the rate required to replace its aging population, the transition of society from young to middle-aged has become inevitable.

According to the first five-year national development plan (1989-1993), the policies focused on lowering the total fertility rate from 6.4 children in the Iranian year 1365 (1986) to 4 children in 1390 (2011) and reducing the population growth rate from 3.2 to 2.3 percent in the same period, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the National Institute for Population Research, as saying.

However, the taken measures, back then, led to a wide transformation and change in population indicators and a noticeable de-

crease in population growth and fertility rate far beyond the set goals of the first development plan in the country, the official noted.

The results of the census in 2011 and 2016 showed that the trend of the country's demographic changes had a significant deviation from the goals of the first five-year development plan, the official noted.

The population growth in 2011 and 2016 was announced to be 1.29 and 1.24, respectively. The figure reached 0.7 in the past Iranian year (March 2023 – March 2024).

According to the latest census, the number of aged citizens in the country is growing by 3.62 percent which is five times faster than the total population growth rate, which is 1.24 percent.

In Iranian year 1385 (2006-2007), there were 5,121,043 men and women aged above 60.

In 2015, 10 percent of the country's population was older than 60, ISNA quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the National Institute for Population Research.

In the next 30 years, the population aged 60 years or older is projected to hold a 32 percent share of the whole population, that is, the elderly will account for one-third of Iran's population by 2050, the official noted.

Currently, men and women aged above 60 constitute some 11.5 percent of Iran's population, an official with the health ministry has said.

For the time being, elderly women account for 52.3 percent of the total population, outnumbering men (47.7 percent), ISNA quoted Saber Jabbari as saying.

## Iran, UAE to discuss environmental issues

TEHRAN –Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are going to confer on environmental issues, particularly renewable energies.

The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, will travel to the UAE on Wednesday for a two-day visit at the invitation of the UAE Vice President, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, IRNA reported.

The officials had met on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP29, which was held from November 11 to 22, 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The two countries have already signed two memorandums of understanding on protecting the environment and combating sand and dust storms, seeking to pave the way for implementing the agreements.

Moreover, Ansari is scheduled to hold meetings with other Emirati officials including Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak Al Shamsi, Minister of Climate Change and the Environment; Suhail Mohamed Al Mazrouei, Minister

of Energy; and Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology.

**Iran prioritizes environmental policy**

According to the former head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Ali Salajeh, environmental diplomacy is the main priority for the country's political diplomacy.

One of the measures taken by the Iranian government toward the development of environmental diplomacy was the holding of a regional summit on combating sand and dust storms in 2022.

The meeting was attended by ministers and representatives of regional countries and six international agencies, and its final statement was approved as the Tehran Declaration.

Considering the increase in the occurrence of sand and dust storms in the region and the environmental statement on bolstering environmental diplomacy, the current administration aims to endorse regional and global interactions to tackle not only SDSs but also



water diplomacy and transboundary waters as other critical issues.

Exchanging regional and global experiences in the field of environment, laying the ground for facilitating interactions and benefiting from global experiences and modern knowledge, and participating at various levels of environment-related negotiations in order to attract resources, enhance capabilities and secure national interests are parts of environmental policies of the current administration.

## ENGLISH IN USE

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## 'Only 15% of Tehran's construction, demolition waste recycled'

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran's department of environment (DOE) has said.

"A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face," Bazgir said. He further referred to a construction waste management unit opened in Abali in Damavand county last week, and stated that the unit is capable of recycling some 3,000 tons of construction waste, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

## تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله‌های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می‌شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می‌شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله‌ها بازیافت می‌شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دیو می‌شود. محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می‌شود این نوع زباله‌ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود. ظرفیت این واحد بازیافت حدود ۳۰۰۰ تن است و می‌تواند این مقدار نخاله و آوار ساختمانی را بازیافت کند.

## UNICEF enhances emergency preparedness for children with disabilities

TEHRAN – Under a globally unique program called 'Earthquake Preparedness Education for Children with Disabilities', the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners have developed three books each targeting different stakeholders, i.e. parents/caregivers of children with disabilities, teachers, and policymakers.

Throughout the books, UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), offer guidelines on disaster management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, focusing on children with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and autism spectrum disorder so far, UNICEF website announced in a press release on January 19.

The development process of these books involved consultations with children with disabilities and their families, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), teachers from the Special Education Organization, social workers from the State Welfare Organization, and aid workers from the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS).

Furthermore, four consultative training workshops were held, where teachers, social workers, and aid workers learned and provided feedback on strategies for supporting children with disabilities before, during, and after earthquakes.

Looking ahead, UNICEF Iran plans to work with its partners to mainstream these resources in the annual earthquake and safety drill organized each year in schools and develop an inclusive guideline for the drill.

As a first step, and for the first time, an earthquake and safety drill is planned to be organized at a special school for children with mobility disabilities, aiming to advocate for an inclusive drill, strengthen earthquake preparedness for children and gather feedback on the developed guidelines.

The program's journey does not stop here. Plans are already underway to update the guidebooks to include guidelines for children with vision impairments and to expand the resources to address all types of disabilities. This initiative represents a significant leap towards inclusive earthquake preparedness, ensuring a safer and more resilient future for every child in Iran, regardless of their disabilities.

**TOT workshop on Disability Inclusion**

The IRCS held a training of trainers (TOT) workshop based on the UNICEF training package on 'Disability Inclusion for Frontline Workers'.

Organized in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the two-day training of trainers pilot workshop was held at the IRCS physical rehabilitation center from September 8 to 9, 2024 in Tehran, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on September 26.

UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (DIPAS) 2022-2030 is guided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS).

It stresses a more inclusive world by 2030 where all children, including those with disabilities, live in barrier-free and inclusive communities.

The two-hour session aimed to train professionals from IRCS in three provinces of Khorasan Razavi, Sistan-Baluchestan, and Tehran on best practices in early identification and referral of persons with disabilities.

The session included sensitizing participants on the appropriate attitudes towards persons with disabilities and their caregivers and familiarizing them with the concept of 'Disability Inclusion' and the importance of participation.

The overall training program aimed to ensure that people with disabilities, especially those in remote areas, are identified and referred to access rehabilitation services in a timely manner through IRCS Primary Rehabilitation Centers across the country.

Notably, persons with disabilities and their families were invited to share their experiences throughout the workshop, offering unique perspectives on the challenges faced by them. Their voices will help shape the way forward, reaffirming the principle: "Nothing about us without us."

Following this workshop, participants from IRCS will conduct training sessions in their respective cities for IRCS selected volunteers in Helal Houses (IRCS community-based centers).

The pilot implementation will be the basis for designing the main TOT program for all provinces across the country in Quarter 1 of 2025."

The DIPAS sets out six strategic priorities: prevention of stigma and discrimination; improvement of disability-inclusive services, programs, and workplaces; access to comprehensive community care and support services; access to assistive technology; disability-inclusive action in humanitarian, emergency, and fragile contexts; full and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities.

## 75th anniversary of adoption of Geneva Conventions marked

TEHRAN – The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (ICRC) office in Iran in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs observed the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Geneva Conventions during a ceremony on Tuesday.

Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, Kazem Gharibabadi; the representative of ICRC in Iran, Vincent Cassard; and head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, attended the ceremony.

The participants discussed the achievements of Geneva Conventions of 1949, the experiences gained through implementing the conventions, and the challenges and the future of the conventions.

International humanitarian law (IHL), often seen as the guardian of humanity during conflicts, is embedded within the Geneva Conventions.

Adopted over a series of treaties between 1864 and 1949, these four core conventions regulate the conduct of armed conflict and strive to mitigate its effects. Over time, three additional protocols have been added to fur-

ther bolster these treaties. Anyone who violates any of the more than 600 articles designed to protect war victims, is considered to have committed a war crime.

**ICRC underscores boosting ties with IRCS**

On January 13, Cassard in a meeting with Razieh Al-ishvandi, the director of the IRCS for international affairs, highlighted the need for expanding cooperation in humanitarian sectors, mainly rehabilitation and mental health.

"The cooperation in rehabilitation and mental health fields has progressed well so far, and we believe that it will provide suitable and effective platforms for enhanced collaborations between the two sides," IRNA quoted Cassard as saying.

"We are also ready to expand collaborations in family reunification; it is one of our key priorities, which can play an effective role in alleviating the pain of families affected by crises," he added.

Referring to the joint courses held on fundamentals of the ICRC and IRCS, Cassard said, "We look forward to similar educational cooperation in the future."



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

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
Email: info@tehrantimes.com  
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
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JANUARY 22, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Forsaking a need is easier than requesting it from unworthy persons.*  
**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:16 Evening: 17:41 Dawn: 5:43 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:10 (tomorrow)

## IAF cinemathèque to show "All We Imagine as Light"



TEHRAN- The Cinemathèque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen Indian filmmaker Payal Kapadia's 2024 drama film "All We Imagine as Light" on Thursday.

In the movie, we follow Prabha and Anu, two Malayali nurses living together in Mumbai. Prabha, the more serious of the two, is lonely and longs for her husband, who has been absent in Germany since their brief, arranged marriage over a year ago. In contrast, Anu is vivacious and engaged in a secret affair with Shiaz, a Muslim man. One day, the pair receive a modern rice cooker from an unknown sender, made in Germany, igniting curiosity and intrigue.

Amidst this backdrop, Prabha attempts to support Parvaty, the hospital cook, in her fight against a greedy builder intent on demolishing her chawl for a skyscraper. Feeling trapped and unable to assert her rights, Parvaty decides to return to her village in Ratnagiri. Prabha and Anu accompany her to assist with her relocation. Unbeknownst to them, Shiaz has been following Anu, and their secret meetings are discovered by Prabha.

In a poignant moment of connection, Prabha rescues a middle-aged man from drowning and cares for him. In their conversation, he temporarily morphs into the husband she yearns for, apologizing for his absence. However, Prabha asserts her independence, expressing her desire to sever ties.

The film intricately explores themes of long-

ing, friendship, and the complexities of love.

"All We Imagine as Light" had its world premiere at the main competition of the 77th Cannes Film Festival, where it received critical acclaim and won the Grand Prix. It was also nominated for the prestigious Palme d'Or, making it the first Indian film to compete in the main competition since "Swaham" in 1994.

Upon its release in India, the film received positive reviews. The critical consensus praises the film's thought-provoking narrative, stunning visuals, and Kapadia's sensitive direction, solidifying her position as one of the most promising young filmmakers in the industry.

"All We Imagine as Light" has received numerous accolades from critics and organizations worldwide. It was named one of the top five international films of 2024 by the National Board of Review and received two nominations at the 82nd Golden Globe Awards, including Best Foreign Language Film and Best Director.

The film has also been recognized by various film festivals, including the Sydney Film Festival, where it was nominated for Best Film. It won the RTVE-Another Look Award at the San Sebastián International Film Festival and the Fiction Feature Prize at the Montclair Film Festival. At the Cahiers du Cinéma, the film was ranked 5th in the annual top 10 list of the year's best films.

In addition to its numerous award nominations, "All We Imagine as Light" has been praised by prominent filmmakers and critics worldwide, including Ciro Guerra, Don Hertzfeldt, and Laura Poitras. The film's success has sparked a renewed discussion about the representation of women in Indian cinema and the importance of showcasing diverse stories.

Despite being snubbed by the Film Federation of India (FFI) for the Academy Awards' Best International Feature Film category, the film's critical acclaim and numerous award nominations continue to solidify its status as one of the most exceptional films of the year.

## Cartoon of Day

GAZA, TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY!



Gaza, Tomorrow Is Another Day!  
Cartoonist: Emad Hajjaj from Jordan

# Press TV launches Turkish language channel

TEHRAN- The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has announced the commencement of Press TV Turkey's operations on Sunday, generating significant enthusiasm within Turkish-speaking communities.

Starting from Sunday, Press TV Turkey began its broadcasts, and its success is expected to elevate its position in the Turkish-speaking domain, Peyman Jebelli said, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

The IRIB director emphasized that one should not overlook the significant developments in overseas television networks.

Jebelli addressed the strategic measures taken by the IRIB's Overseas Broadcasting Division, highlighting the launch of Hispan TV in Brazil, aimed at Portuguese-speaking audiences.

"In this fierce global media competition, where the role of media has been elevated beyond that of military force, our responsibilities have become significantly greater," he noted.

"We must strategically expand our outreach to global audiences and ensure our voice resonates louder around the world," he mentioned.

Previously, Press TV established channels in English, Arabic, and Spanish, and is now venturing into Turkish programming to engage Turkish viewers.

The establishment of the Turkish language channel comes at a time when Press TV has primarily focused on these three languages for years, possibly in response to TRT Turkey's recent launch of a Persian language channel.

Last October, remarks made by Mehmet Zahid Sobaci, the General



Director of Turkey's state broadcaster TRT, sparked controversy. He stated, "We are in a state of confusion and discomfort for Iran."

We must do this," while announcing plans to launch a Persian-language channel as part of TRT's expansion into 41 foreign languages by year's end. These comments raised concerns among the Iranian public.

In response, Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi communicated with Turkish officials to express apprehensions regarding Sobaci's statements.

He urged that "such statements should be avoided," highlighting the need for unity among Muslim nations amidst regional tensions and the growing aggression of the Zionist regime.

Salehi welcomed Turkey's commitment to enhancing cultural relations, emphasizing that "the

Islamic Republic of Iran's fundamental foreign policy principle is to strengthen ties with its neighbors, with Turkey occupying a significant position."

He pointed to the robust political and cultural connections between the two countries and the opportunities for collaboration in the designated Year of Iranian-Turkish Culture.

Describing culture as a vital foundation for cooperation, Salehi insisted that both nations should leverage their shared cultural resources.

He acknowledged recent initiatives in media collaboration, asserting Iran's readiness to bolster these ties in a manner that aligns with the interests of both countries.

During this dialogue, Fahrettin Altun, Director of Communications for Turkey's Presidency, reiterated Turkey's dedication to strengthen-

ing political and cultural relationships with Iran.

He noted the importance of fostering communication and mutual understanding between the two nations and referred to a recent meeting between the two presidents that emphasized expanding cooperation across all sectors.

Altun expressed regret over Sobaci's comments, clarifying that "any statement contradicting this has no connection with the thinking and approach of the Turkish President and government."

He reaffirmed Turkey's commitment to friendship and cooperation with Iran, underscoring that challenges can be addressed through dialogue.

The conversation concluded with a mutual commitment to ongoing cooperation while being mindful of media narratives and public sentiment.

## Gabriele Mandel's book on Islamic art published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "How to Recognize Islamic Art" written by Gabriele Mandel has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Pejman Dadkhah and Maryam Miri are the translators of the book that has been published by Elm Publication.

The book provides an overview of Islamic art and its spread throughout various regions over centuries, Mehr reported.

It began with the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the 7th century and spread across West Asia, North Africa, Spain and India through conquest and conversion.

Islamic societies assimilated political and artistic styles from diverse cultures, resulting in an international art influenced by many simultaneous powers.

Common architectural elements included open, non-focal decorated designs. Islamic

art also featured ceramics, metalwork, glass, woodwork, textiles, book illuminations and more.

Gabriele Mandel (1924-2010) was an Italian Islamist, psychologist, writer, and artist of Afghan descent.

He was the author of some 200 books published by major Italian presses, many of which have been translated into several languages, including English.

## Persian, Urdu works of poet Mir Taqi Mir showcased in Delhi

TEHRAN-An exhibition of manuscripts of Persian and Urdu poetry and prose by the well-known bilingual poet of the 18th century Mughal India Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810) was held at the Urdu Ghar in Delhi, India.

The Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Hind organized the exhibition in collaboration with the Urdu Ghar and the Noor Microfilm Center from January 11 to 17. The opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by the Ambassador of Iran to India Iraj Elahi and the Cultural Counselor of Iran in New Delhi Faridoddin Faridasr as well as several Indian officials and academics, ISNA reported.

In his speech, Elahi expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the Urdu Ghar and the Noor Microfilm Center to preserve and protect the literary treasures of Mir Taqi Mir and many other excellent academic, literary and religious works, and said: "In a situation where libraries and the culture of reading books are on the decline, this step is very commendable."

For his part, Faridasr, while appreciating both organizers, addressed the poetic elements of Mir Taqi Mir and said: "The pain of Sufism is completely different from the definition of pain by modern European countries."

This exhibition brought together a rare collection of Mir's manuscripts, books, the stories he wrote for his son, his Ghazal and Masnavi (the spiritual couplet) collection and documents that offer a deep and intimate insight into the life and work of the literary giant.

A focal point of the event was the display of at least two different manuscripts of Zikr-e Mir, the autobiography of the poet, which provided rare insights into his personal life, his struggles, and his evolution as a poet. Written in 1807, these manuscripts offer an intimate view of Mir's thoughts and reflections, making them an invaluable piece of literary history.

Equally notable was the display of three different manuscripts of Kulliyat-e Mir, a comprehensive collection of his poetry that remains a cornerstone of classical Urdu literature.

The exhibition also showcased a manuscript of Tazkira Nikat-ush-Shora, a biography of poets written by Mir himself, demonstrating his engagement with the literary circles of his time and his influence on subsequent generations of poets.

Adding to the significance of the event was the presentation of Mir's bayaaz (personal notebook), which provided further glimpses into the poet's private musings and thoughts. In keeping with the times, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Hind has not only focused on preserving physical manuscripts but has also embraced technology to ensure the accessibility of Mir's work for future generations. The organization has undertaken a major effort to digitize all of

Mir's manuscripts and rare books in collaboration with the Noor Microfilm Centre and Iran Culture House, New Delhi.

This digital archive ensures that these precious literary works will be preserved long after the exhibition has concluded and remain accessible to scholars, researchers, and literary enthusiasts worldwide.

The digitization effort also speaks to a broader vision of making Mir's work more accessible and facilitating research for future generations of writers, historians, and academics.

The exhibition itself displayed original and gathered manuscripts of Mir's poetry, many of which were sourced from prominent collections like the Shibli Memorial Library of Urdu Ghar, Rampur Raza Library, Aligarh Muslim University's Azad Library, and the Hyderabad Library. The exhibition was part of a broader initiative to celebrate the tricentenary of Mir Taqi Mir's birth. The Anjuman has been organizing a year-long series of activities dedicated to his life and works. In addition to the exhibition, these celebrations include discussions, festivals, book launches, and special journal editions.

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Furthermore, the Anjuman organized a three-day festival in February 2024 in collaboration with the India International Center, which celebrated Mir's life in his home city of Shahjahanabad (now part of Delhi). The festival also focused on the

influence of Mir's work on the city's culture and literary scene.

Another significant publication released as part of the tricentenary celebrations was a special issue of Urdu Adab, the quarterly journal published by Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu Hind since 1921. The issue, launched on January 11 by Iraj Elahi, is dedicated to Mir Taqi Mir, further cementing his place as a central figure in Urdu literature.

Mir Muhammad Taqi, known as Mir Taqi Mir, was one of the pioneers who gave shape to the Urdu language itself. He was one of the principal poets of the Delhi School of the Urdu ghazal and is often remembered as one of the best poets of the Urdu language.

The signature of his poetry is the grief he expresses. He has expressed a lot of grief over the downfall of his city, Delhi.

He lived at a time when Urdu language and poetry was at a formative stage - and his instinctive aesthetic sense helped him strike a balance between the indigenous expression and new enrichment coming in from Persian imagery and idiom, to constitute the new elite language known as Rekhta or Hindui.

Basing his language on his native Hindustani, he leavened it with a sprinkling of Persian diction and phraseology, and created a poetic language at once simple, natural and elegant, which was to guide generations of future poets.