



In a meeting with entrepreneurs, investors, and economists, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasizes importance of de-dollarization

## Claim of a Weakened Iran an Illusion

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During Trump's first administration, Hook was the U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Advisor to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from 2018 to 2020. ► Page 2

### Resistance will continue as long as Israeli occupation exists: Zarif

TEHRAN – Resistance movements emerged in response to Israeli occupation, apartheid policies, and acts of genocide, and they will persist until these issues are resolved, said Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Zarif made the remarks while speaking with CNN's GPS host Fareed Zakaria at the 55th World Economic Forum in Davos.

“The Resistance will stay as long as the occupation stays, as long as repression stays. Resistance to Israel, Israeli occupation, apartheid, and genocide, existed before the Iranian revolution,” Zarif said adding that the formation of the currently active Resistance groups began back in the 1960s when Israel believed it had managed to wipe out such forces.

On the Gaza war, Zarif said: “Netanyahu did not achieve his goal of destroying Hamas. Hamas is still there. Israel had to come to a ceasefire. I hope it will be permanent, for the sake of 50,000 people who were massacred by Israel, so that there won't be another 50,000. But Resistance is not dead.” ► Page 2

### Israel's forced acceptance of ceasefire serves the grand U.S. plan

TEHRAN – Recent reports from American think tanks reveal that the U.S. has devised a comprehensive plan to curb the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and, in particular, the Resistance Axis in West Asia.

In this context, the Gaza war and its developments have emerged as major obstacles to the United States' broader strategies in the region. The U.S. has come to realize that continuing the Gaza war, coupled with Netanyahu's uncontrollable actions, could drag it into a quagmire even worse than its experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This scenario, which poses a significant threat to U.S. interests in the region, risks undermining its larger objectives, especially in countering Iran and the Resistance Axis. As a result, the U.S. has prioritized ending the Gaza war as a strategic necessity to safeguard its interests and prevent the escalation of regional crises.

The Americans have also recognized that assassinating Resistance leaders will not halt the momentum of the Resistance. On the contrary, the martyrdom of these leaders has reinvigorated the movement. Resistance, as a strategy against dominance and aggression, has cemented its place in the identity of the region's nations. ► Page 3

### Reappearance of Hamas fighters shakes and humiliates Israel

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN – After the ceasefire went into effect on January 19, the Hamas resistance fighters openly reemerged on the streets of Gaza with military uniforms and Kalashnikov rifles. They were handing three Israeli captives to the Red Cross in Gaza City.

The reappearance of Hamas fighters proved that 470 days of relentless bombardments and ground offensives had been mostly futile.

The reappearance of resistance fighters among the cheering of the youth will continue to constantly haunt those Israeli extremists who suffered from the illusion that they could exterminate the fighters who bravely struggled for their rights.

The re-emergence of fighters proved that no nation, including Palestinians, will forego their rights to freedom and justice.

The January 19 and similar scenes that will surface in future days will be recorded as black days in the history of the Israeli occupation regime. The occupiers must live with these humiliating scenes in their minds. There is no way out.

### West Bank assault: Israel attempts to mask domestic divisions

TEHRAN – Israel has launched a large-scale military operation in the West Bank amid growing pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over his failed military strategy in the Gaza Strip.

Since a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas went into effect at the weekend, Israel has ramped up brutal attacks in the West Bank.

On Wednesday, the Israeli army continued raids in the flashpoint city of Jenin for the second consecutive day. A day earlier, Israeli forces killed 10 Palestinians in the city.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad resistance movement has condemned the Israeli assault.

“We condemn in the strongest terms the systematic displacement, destruction and killing carried out by the [Israeli] army against the Jenin camp and its people,” the movement said.

The resistance group also blamed the Palestinian Authority for the deadly violence.

“We hold the authority in Ramallah and its security services responsible for participating and colluding in this aggression,

### Israel and Google: Partners in the first AI-enabled genocide

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Fresh revelations have blown the lid off the deep involvement of US technology giants in aiding and abetting Israel's genocide in Gaza.

The Washington Post implied on Wednesday that the first instance of genocide enabled by artificial intelligence (AI) unfolded in Gaza with the collaboration of Google and Israel.

The US media outlet disclosed that Google employees have worked to provide the Israeli military with access to the firm's latest artificial intelligence technology from the early weeks of the regime's war on Gaza.

According to documents obtained by the Post, a Google employee had warned that if the company didn't quickly provide Israel's war ministry with more access to its AI technology, the regime would turn instead to its rival Amazon. Both Google and Amazon work with Israel under the Nimbus contract.

Google and Amazon signed a joint multibillion-dollar contract with Israel in 2021.

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### Tehran seeks to establish links with regional sci-tech parks

TEHRAN –Iran seeks to enhance cooperation with regional countries by establishing links with science and technology parks in the neighboring countries.

“Regional countries, particularly Iraq, are interested in establishing science technology parks; they seek to utilize Iran's experiences and expertise in the field,” IRNA quoted Science, Research, and Technology Minister, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, as saying.

“Having prepared the groundwork, we will provide scientific consultancy services to Iraq and any other interested countries in the region.”

Referring to the second Iran-Iraq Science Week, which was held in the city of Karbala, Iraq, from January 18 to 20, Simaei-Sarraf said the two sides have agreed to grant 200 scholarships to their students to study in the other country. ► Page 7



### Europeans can only dream of Iran's weakening: President Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has responded to European views on Iran's supposed vulnerabilities, confidently asserting that with the support of the people and industry leaders, Iran would overcome any challenges.

Pezeshkian, who is on a trip to Khuzestan province, had a meeting with economic activists from the southwestern province on Wednesday. ► Page 2



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## A deal that Trump seeks with Iran is different from what Tehran wants

In a note, Jam-e-Jam discussed the kind of approach Donald Trump seeks toward Iran in his second administration. It wrote: Trump will actually seek both dialogue and agreement with Iran and his "maximum pressure" policy against the Islamic Republic. But the agreement he wants is very different from the agreement we want. We want an agreement within the framework of the JCPOA. We believe that the text of the JCPOA should change a little, without changing its core. But the Trump team wants a comprehensive agreement that all issues such as the nuclear program, our missile capability, our position on the Zionist regime and regional policies, as well as human rights be included in that. Therefore, it is conceivable that Trump will seek to apply maximum pressure again in case of resistance by Iran because the Trump administration is worried that Iran will change its nuclear policy and go towards building nuclear weapons. Regardless of the behavior of the Islamic Republic, it should be noted that whenever Trump realizes that what he has said is not practical, he simply changes his tact and backtracks from his previous positions.

### Sobh-e-No: Iran's decisive warning to Europe

In an article, Sobh-e-No discussed the Iran nuclear issue and international tensions. It wrote: For the first time in the Geneva negotiations, Iran has warned European countries that if the snapback mechanism is activated, it will not only withdraw from the NPT but also review and change its nuclear doctrine. The statements of the Iranian side showed that Europe's threatening policies and rhetoric cannot act as an effective solution for crisis management. In such a situation, Europe should seriously review its approach and instead of relying on pressure tools, it should look for diplomatic solutions and new agreements. Iran has stated many times that it will adhere to its obligations only if other parties fully honor their commitments. Therefore, any European decision to use the snapback mechanism may lead to a point of no return in the relations between the two sides.

### Ettelaat: We must talk directly and powerfully with Trump

In an interview with Hassan Beheshtipour,

an expert on international affairs, Ettelaat discussed the official return of Donald Trump to the White House. He said: We have to negotiate directly with Trump. Certainly, we can welcome negotiations with America from a position of strength. The Islamic Republic currently has high potential and a special position. Iran's nuclear industry has progressed since Trump withdrew from the JCPOA. Also, Trump's plan during his first term in the White House, which set the policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran, did not actually produce the desired results. Trump is ready to negotiate with Iran and is 100% in favor of encouraging Iran to enter into a direct dialogue with the United States to provide the necessary space to de-escalate tensions. We must pursue our goals seriously. Now, even if we don't get the desired result, nothing special will happen and we will be where we are right now. The important thing is that we must have a plan and go to the negotiating table with full hands, and if the negotiating team is reasonable, we can impose our demands on the negotiating party.

### Donya-e-Eqtasad: Trump and his ambiguous approach toward Iran

In an analysis, Donya-e-Eqtasad dealt with Trump's statements against Iran and said: On the first day of his return to the White House, the American president made comments against Iran and announced major policy decisions about other international issues. Of course, it was expected for a long time that on the same day of the inauguration ceremony, he would declare his special decisions in relation to other countries, both friends and foes. In a statement, he declared part of his policy towards Tehran and repeated his claim of Iran's support for terrorism. He claimed that we are back to hold Iran accountable and stop its exploitation of oil money to finance (what he called) terrorist organizations. But last night he fired Brian Hook, an anti-Iran figure, in a strange move. It's not clear exactly why Trump fired Hook, but Trump says he and the other three figures are not aligned with our vision to make America great again (MAGA). Hook was a warmonger adviser who supported Trump's "maximum pressure" sanctions against Iran in his first term as president.

## Araghchi tells envoy to push for enhanced collaboration with Beijing on key issues



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) met with Mohsen Bakhtiar, Iran's Ambassador to China, on Jan. 22, 2025.

TEHRAN – Tehran has reiterated its commitment to bolstering relations with Beijing, emphasizing the strategic importance of their longstanding partnership.

In a recent meeting with Mohsen Bakhtiar, Iran's Ambassador to Beijing, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi highlighted the Islamic Republic's dedication to advancing cooperation with China under the framework of their long-term comprehensive agreement and other existing accords.

The ambassador presented a detailed report on the progress of bilateral cooperation between the two nations, outlining key developments in various sectors and discussing ongoing efforts to deepen the partnership between Iran and China.

During the discussions, Araghchi underscored the pivotal role that Iran-China relations play in Tehran's foreign policy, referring to the "Document of Comprehensive Cooperation" as a cornerstone for expanding

ties. He emphasized Iran's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and implementing agreements in line with mutual interests.

The foreign minister also issued strategic recommendations to further Iran's foreign policy objectives, focusing on both bilateral and multilateral engagements.

With China currently serving as the rotating chairman of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Araghchi urged greater collaboration within this multilateral framework to boost economic cooperation and strengthen ties between the private sectors of both nations.

Additionally, Araghchi called for enhanced coordination between Tehran and Beijing in international organizations to align their positions on global issues.

By fostering deeper collaboration at both governmental and private sector levels, Iran aims to maximize the potential of its strategic partnership with China.

# Does Trump's firing of Brian Hook signal a change in his Iran policy?

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During Trump's first administration, Hook was the U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior



Policy Advisor to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from 2018 to 2020.

During those years, Hook played a key role in the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, a policy designed to diplomatically isolate the country and inflict economic hardship on its population.

Following Trump's victory in November 2024, Hook was reportedly involved in managing the state department's transition team and hiring process.

### Trump's first term: a hawkish stance on Iran

During his first presidency which lasted from 2017 to 2021, Trump was heavily influenced by the Israeli lobby. He adopted an aggressive approach towards Iran, which ultimately led him to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018.

The subsequent "maximum pressure" campaign saw the re-imposition and intensification of economic sanctions that targeted Iran's oil exports and financial institutions. It severely affected the country's population, taking a huge toll on Iranian families' pockets.

Additionally, the Trump administration designated the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization and assassinated General Qassem Soleimani, a revered Iranian military leader, during a peace mission in Iraq in early 2020.

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

## Resistance will continue as long as Israeli occupation exists: Zarif



Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif getting interviewed at the 55th World Economic Forum in Davos on January 22, 2025.

From page 1 ▶ Zarif stated that Israel tends to frame its conflicts as an Israeli-Iranian matter, whereas they are fundamentally an Israeli-Palestinian issue. "As long as the Palestinian issue is there, the struggle will be there," he said, adding that Iran was not aware of Hamas' plan to carry out an operation in the occupied territories on October 7, 2023.

Regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the VP expressed hope that the new U.S. President would act more judiciously and rejoin the nuclear agreement which his previous administration had rendered ineffective. Zarif said Trump's advisors as well as figures like Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu managed to successfully convince the president that he needed to leave the pact in 2018. Trump was told that "Iran was crumbling, and a sudden withdrawal from JCPOA would be the last nail in its coffin," and that an exit from the JCPOA would get Trump international support, the Iranian official noted. "Both extremely wrong assumptions of Trump's advisors, not Trump himself. So, I hope that this time around a Trump II will be more serious, more focused, more realistic to know that the withdrawal that was imposed on him, and that he did it for Israel."

### Countering Iranophobia top priority of Zarif at Davos, VP's media representative tells Tehran Times

Countering Iranophobia is a top

priority for Zarif at the World Economic Forum in Davos, according to the VP's media representative, Hadi Mohammadi.

Speaking to the Tehran Times, Mohammadi stated that Zarif's engagement at the forum has heavily focused on addressing false perceptions and countering narratives that promote fear and prejudice against Iran. The representative emphasized the importance of this effort in light of recent geopolitical tensions.

"Given the current sensitive climate, it's crucial to use these opportunities to articulate Iran's position," Mohammadi stated.

"Israel's ongoing efforts against Iran necessitate that the Islamic Republic actively raise its voice and directly counter Israeli attempts to spread Iranophobia.

This is a continuous mission that requires broader participation from other officials." Apart from his conversation with Zakaria, The VP's engagements have so far included meetings with international leaders such as the Presidents of Iraq and Serbia, the Foreign Ministers of Norway and Qatar, the Prime Minister of Iraq's Kurdistan region, and the head of the World Economic Forum.

He also attended a dinner event hosted by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. "He is scheduled for additional media interactions before his trip concludes Thursday evening," Mohammadi declared.

## Europeans can only dream of Iran's weakening: President Pezeshkian

From page 1 ▶ The President responded to European perspectives on Iran's current situation, saying, "There is a belief in Europe that Iran is at its weakest point, but this is simply a dream. With the support of all of you and the dedication of our beloved people, we have the ability to overcome these challenges and bring stability to our economy."

Pezeshkian also emphasized the importance of addressing the economic imbalances facing the country, stating: "We must focus on correcting the imbalance in the market, ensuring that feedstock for the petrochemical industry and payments to producers are made properly and effectively.

## Three arrested in connection with assassination Supreme Court judges in Tehran



TEHRAN – Authorities in Iran have arrested three suspects in connection with the recent armed attack in Tehran, which claimed the lives of two judiciary judges Ali Razini and Mohammad Moqiseh.

"Following this heinous act, extensive investigations were immediately launched by security agencies under the Tehran prosecutor's supervision," the judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir stated in a briefing on Wednesday.

The spokesperson revealed that significant progress has been made, with several individuals connected to the attack identified. "Among those arrested, at least three individuals have confirmed ties to specific groups. Investigations into their roles, their connections to the perpetrator, and the support they provided are ongoing. Once investigations are complete, the findings will be shared with the public," he added.

On the weapon recovered from the assailant, the spokesperson noted that it was a non-standard firearm, and investigations into its origin continue. He also mentioned that a suspect was arrested in one of the provinces and is being transferred to Tehran for further questioning.

The judges worked on cases fighting crimes against national security, espionage, and terrorism.

### 'Execution process underway for Azerbaijan embassy attacker'

The judiciary also provided an update on the case involving the attack on the Embassy of Azerbaijan. The attacker, who has been sentenced to execution, had his case referred to the Supreme Court before being forwarded to Tehran's Criminal Enforcement Division for execution.

"The enforcement process requires the victim's family to formally request execution. Once this request is submitted,

the case is sent to the relevant authority for final approval of execution. The case is currently in the enforcement stage, and further steps will proceed as soon as the family submits their request," the spokesperson explained.

### 'Swiss national that committed suicide in jail photographed military sites'

The judiciary also addressed the controversial death of a Swiss national in Semnan prison, which has drawn international attention.

The spokesperson revealed that the individual entered Iran in October through the Dogharoun border crossing as a tourist in a personal vehicle. He traveled through several provinces before being arrested in a restricted military zone in Semnan. "The detainee, born in Namibia and holding Swiss citizenship, was apprehended for photographing sensitive military sites and alleged collaboration with a hostile state. The Swiss embassy in Tehran was informed immediately after his arrest," he stated.

While in custody, the individual's needs, including a vegetarian diet, were reportedly met. However, the spokesperson recounted the details of the detainee's suicide: "On the day of the incident, after breakfast, he turned off the cell's electricity, and in a spot not covered by cameras, he used a curtain in the restroom to hang himself. Prison staff responded immediately, but despite their efforts, he passed away."

Switzerland has demanded a full investigation into the case. Iranian authorities confirmed that a Swiss embassy delegation and a trusted physician inspected the scene and confirmed the cause of death. The body was transferred to Tehran's Forensic Medicine Organization before being handed over to Swiss representatives.

The judiciary spokesperson assured that the findings of these investigations would be made public as they develop.



In a meeting with entrepreneurs, investors, and economists,  
Ayatollah Khamenei emphasizes importance of de-dollarization

# Claim of a weakened Iran an illusion

TEHRAN – Claims of Iran's national and regional weakening are an illusion that time will disprove, said Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Ayatollah Khamenei made the remarks during a meeting with a group of private-sector manufacturers and economic figures on Wednesday.

"Just as Saddam Hussein, under the illusion of Iran's weakness, launched an invasion against the country, and Reagan, with the same delusional belief, provided him with significant support, they and countless other deluded individuals all met their demise, while the Islamic Republic has grown stronger day by day. By God's grace, this experience will be repeated," the Leader declared.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei characterized the ceasefire and victory in Gaza as a compelling affirmation of a prediction that the Resistance is alive and enduring.

In this context, he remarked that the unfolding events before the world's eyes are akin to a myth.

"A massive military force like the United States, indifferent to humanitarian values, supplies bunker-busting bombs to the oppressive and bloodthirsty Zionist, which then ruthlessly and mercilessly bombs 15,000 children in their homes and hospitals, yet fails to achieve its goals."

Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized that if it weren't for American support, the Zionist regime would have been brought to its knees within the first few weeks of its attack on Gaza. "For over a year, the Zionist regime committed every crime it could.

It bombed homes, hospitals, mosques, and churches in a small piece of land like Gaza. However, ultimately, it not only



failed to achieve its goal set by its wretched, disgraced leader – that is, the destruction of Hamas and the governance of Gaza without the Resistance – but it was also compelled to sit at the negotiation table with Hamas and accept its terms for a ceasefire," he stated.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution referred to the vitality and victory of the Resistance in Gaza as an example of the realization of the divine tradition of victory through resistance.

"Wherever resistance is exhibited by the good servants of God, victory is certain," he asserted.

Ayatollah Khamenei, in another part of his speech, emphasized the importance of participating in organizations such as BRICS.

Underlining the necessity of efforts by the country's diplomats to maximize the benefits of this great opportunity, he said, "The BRICS financial system, which enables financial exchanges using the currencies of member states, is a significant capacity."

he Leader of the Islamic Revolution said it is essential to eliminate the dollar from trade exchanges as much as possible.

"This effort, which the honor-

able president is also pursuing, is a significant and important job and a very decisive and critical move in the economic battle," he said.

"The Central Bank must pave the way for the use of other currencies. Of course, this action will cause certain reactions, but it will strengthen the country's hand."

Referring to his Tuesday visit to the "Pioneers of Progress" exhibition, which showcased the achievements and capabilities of the private sector, he said the exhibition shows only a small portion of the country's realities.

Yet at the same time, Ayatollah Khamenei went on, "It reveals that the private sector, despite pressures, sanctions, and threats, has reached an acceptable level of progress and the country's movement is forward. We must appreciate this great divine blessing."

The Leader also described the reports from economic figures, particularly in light of the enemies' efforts to create an atmosphere of despair and hopelessness, as a source of vitality and progress.

He said, "Unfortunately, due to shortcomings in the media sphere, young people, university

students, and other segments of society are unaware of such good news and the achievements made.

The relevant authorities must plan and execute a significant media initiative in this regard."

The Leader of the Revolution pointed out that he has had five meetings with economic figures in recent years, saying, "In 2019, at the height of sanctions and intensified threats, I called producers and entrepreneurs the commanders on the front line of the economic war and called for production growth."

He went on to say that the subsequent meetings in later years demonstrated that the private sector is advancing in strength and creativity.

"This year, too, it became evident that active economic figures, with their field experience, are seeking to expand production and increase investment," he stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei noted that visits by the heads of the three branches of government and other officials to the "Pioneers of Progress" exhibition are beneficial and necessary, saying, "Last year, after visiting the exhibition, Martyr Raisi became very pleased and hopeful."

## Iran takes leadership of key UNHRC group



A session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, with Ali Bahraini, Iran's representative present

TEHRAN – Iran has been elected to chair the Asia-Pacific Group, the largest regional group within the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

This leadership role, which commenced this week, will see Iran guiding the group's activities until the end of 2025.

Ali Bahraini, Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Office and International Organizations in Geneva, will spearhead this endeavor.

He will be responsible for coordinating and directing the group's activities during Human Rights Council sessions and managing matters pertaining to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

As the largest group on the Human Rights Council, the Asia-Pacific Group plays a vital role in addressing and promoting human rights issues across the region.

Iran's election to this position is considered a testament to its commitment to fostering constructive engagement in the area of human rights.

This development follows Iran's previous leadership roles within the International Labor Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization last year.

## Israel's forced acceptance of ceasefire serves the grand U.S. plan



From Page 1 ▶ In line with this, the ceasefire agreement between the Zionist regime and Hamas, implemented on January 19, 2025, has effectively compelled the Zionist regime to acknowledge the new realities in Gaza and the region. Initially aiming to remove Hamas from Gaza's political and military landscape through military pressure, the Zionist regime has been forced to accept that it can never completely eliminate Hamas. This shift in strategy, seen by many within the regime as a strategic failure, underscores broader regional and global transformations.

One of the most critical aspects of these changes is the U.S.'s evolving approach toward Iran and its efforts to exert additional pressure on the country. The ultimate goal of this approach is to limit Iran's influence and turn it into a country under U.S. control. In this context, ending the Gaza war has become a necessary step to protect this grand strategy against the challenges posed by Iran and the shifting balance of power in the region.

This grand strategy is built on three key steps aimed at countering Iran in the region and bolstering the U.S.'s position:

First step is the normalization of relations between Arab states and the Zionist regime. The primary goal of this step is to create a united front against Iran. Through this initiative, the U.S. seeks to diplomatically and economically isolate Iran. By strengthening the

Zionist regime and promoting Iranophobia, normalization efforts aim to reshape the perspectives of both nations and governments toward Iran.

The second step is maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran. This phase focuses on undermining Iran's economic and political foundations, forcing it into unconditional negotiations. Through sanctions and political pressures, the U.S. aims to bring Iran to the negotiating table and secure its own regional interests. Such pressures could deepen internal divisions in Iran, creating opportunities for the U.S. to impose its demands.

The third step is monitoring and restricting Iran's nuclear, missile, and drone capabilities. The U.S. seeks to fully constrain Iran's nuclear program and place it under strict oversight. Additionally, it aims to dismantle Iran's defensive capabilities—vital for its security and territorial integrity—and bring them under U.S. control.

Ultimately, this grand American strategy seeks to transform Iran from an independent and revolutionary state into one under U.S. influence. The U.S. strategic vision for Iran focuses on shifting the balance of power in West Asia and creating a unified front against Tehran.

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

JANUARY 23, 2025

Straight Truth  
TEHRAN TIMES

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## SPORTS

### Amin Esmaeilnejad to leave Skra Belchatów

TEHRAN – Iranian international opposite spiker Amin Esmaeilnejad is reportedly set to part ways with Polish volleyball team Skra Belchatów at the end of the season.

Bulgarian opposite Radoslav Parapunov will also leave the team.

Esmaeilnejad, 28, joined Skra last season from the Italian club Rana Verona.

He is expected to be a key player for the Iranian national volleyball team in the upcoming 2025 competitions.

Additionally, the Iran Volleyball Federation officially hired Italian coach Roberto Piazza on Monday.

### Behdad Salimi takes charge of Iran weightlifting

TEHRAN – Behdad Salimi has been appointed as the head coach of Iran's men's weightlifting team.

He won a gold medal at the 2012 Olympic Games.

Salimi takes over from Navab Nasirshah, who parted ways with the team in early January.

The 35-year-old coach will be assisted by Ali Jabbari in Team Melli.

Additionally, Sohrab Moradi, the 2016 Olympic gold medalist, has been named head coach of the youth and junior teams.

Elham Hosseini, Mina Osfouri, and Abrisham Arjemandkhan have been appointed as coaches for Iran's women's weightlifting team.

### Building a volleyball culture in Iran

TEHRAN – One of Roberto Piazza's key goals in Iran volleyball team is to enhance the overall volleyball culture in Iran. This involves engaging with fans, building a strong support network, and promoting youth development programs to nurture the next generation of players.

By investing in grassroots initiatives, he hopes to create a sustainable pipeline of talent that can contribute to the national team for years to come.

The federation has also emphasized the importance of collaboration between coaches at various levels, fostering an environment where knowledge sharing and best practices can thrive.

The appointment of Piazza as the head coach of Iran's national volleyball team signals an exciting time for the sport in the country. With his wealth of knowledge and experience, combined with the commitment of both the players and the federation, Iranian volleyball is poised for continued growth and success on the world stage.

As fans eagerly anticipate the upcoming matches and tournaments, there is a shared hope that Piazza's leadership will steer the team toward achieving its long-held ambitions, including Olympic glory. The blend of tradition, talent, and new strategies could very well lay the foundation for a golden era in Iranian volleyball.

### Iran defeat Belarus beach soccer in friendly

TEHRAN – Iran beach soccer team secured a 4-2 win over Belarus in a friendly match held in Bushehr Tuesday night.

Saeid Piramoon, Ali Mirshekari, Abbas Rezaei and Mehdi Shirmohammadi were on target for Team Melli.

Ali Naderi's team had defeated Belarus 2-1 in its first match and lost to the team 4-3 in the second match.

The Iran beach soccer team prepare for the 2025 AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup, slated for March 20 to 30 in Thailand.

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

### Esteghlal iconic midfielder Masharipov out for weeks

TEHRAN – Esteghlal midfielder Jaloliddin Masharipov's foot injury will keep him out for a few weeks.

The Uzbekistan international player was forced to leave the field in the match against Shams Azar on Monday and has been diagnosed with a hamstring strain.

Esteghlal are scheduled to play Iraqi side Al Shorta and Al Rayyan of Qatar in the 2024/25 AFC Champions League Elite.

Masharipov's absence will be a big blow to Esteghlal.

Additionally, Persepolis Uzbek winger Oston Urunov is set to have an MRI after exiting in the match against Zob Ahan with a thigh injury.

### Oston Urunov sidelined for six weeks

TEHRAN – Persepolis Uzbek iconic winger Oston Urunov has been sidelined for six weeks due to a hamstring injury.

Aronov, who sustained an injury during the match against Zob Ahan in Isfahan on Tuesday, will be out of action for the next six weeks.

Dr. Farid Zarineh, head of the club's medical committee, stated that according to the MRI results, the medical team has unfortunately confirmed their initial assessment of a relatively severe hamstring injury.

A six-week treatment period has been prescribed for the player, Zarineh said.

Persepolis have so many difficult and important matches in the upcoming weeks in Iran league and AFC Champions League Elite and Urunov's absence is a big blow to the team.

Additionally, regarding the latest status of Vahid Amiri, it was announced that the internal ligament injury he previously sustained has healed. However, the pain he experienced during a training session before the match against Zob Ahan is unrelated. Necessary medical and physiotherapy treatments are ongoing, and he will spend the next two weeks under doctors' supervision, following specialized training programs.

### Katanec steps down from Uzbekistan role

TEHRAN – Srečko Katanec has stepped down as Uzbekistan head coach due to ill health, the Uzbekistan Football Association announcing the Slovenian had departed by mutual consent on Wednesday.

The 61-year-old has led the White Wolves to second place in Group A of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 but has left less than two months before Uzbekistan resume the qualifiers against Kyrgyzstan in Tashkent on March 20.

"The head coach of the Uzbekistan national team, Srečko Katanec, decided to cancel his contract with the Uzbekistan Football Association by mutual consent due to health problems," the UFA said in a statement on Instagram.

"The Slovenia coach noted with regret that he cannot perform his duties in a full and professional manner in his current state."

Katanec has been in the role since August 2021 and steered the country to the quarter-finals of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 in Qatar, where the team lost in a penalty shoot-out to the hosts.

He took over after previously working in the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Macedonia having also coached his native Slovenia for the 2002 FIFA World Cup.

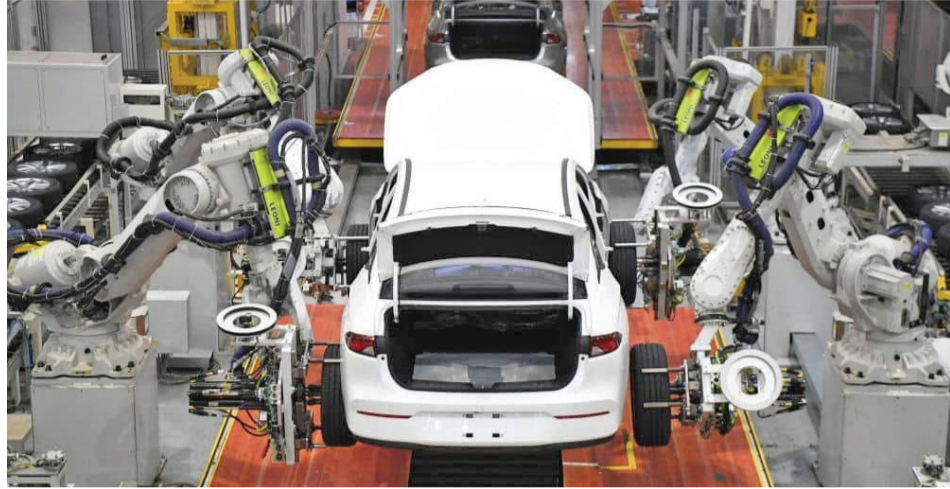
Katanec leaves with Uzbekistan closing in on their first qualification for the FIFA World Cup, the team three points behind Group A leaders Iran and three points ahead of third-placed UAE with four matches remaining.

The top two finishers qualify automatically for the FIFA World Cup while the nations in third and fourth advance to a further round of preliminaries.



## Leap to a New Level, Advance to a New Voyage

China's economy witnessed steady progress amidst stability



By Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu

At the beginning of the new year and the approaching Spring Festival, there are good news about the Chinese economy again.

In 2024, in face of the complicated and severe environment, under the strong leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core, China's major targets and tasks of economic and social development were achieved successfully.

I would like to share a few points with Iranian friends from all walks of life in this regard:

China's economy witnessed steady progress amidst stability in 2024. China's GDP exceeded 130 trillion yuan for the first time, reaching 134,908.4 billion yuan, an increase of 5 percent over the previous year at constant prices.

China's GDP growth rate ranked top among major economies, making China an important engine of the world's economic growth. The answer sheet is hard-won, and the effect of a combination of macro policies cannot be ignored. The Chinese government has strengthened macroeconomic regulation in light of the situation, and a package of incremental policies has been introduced in a timely manner, which has effectively boosted social confidence and led to a remarkable economic recovery.

In the fourth quarter, the growth rates of value added of industry above designated size, value added of service industry, and total retail sales of consumer goods accelerated by 0.7, 1.0, and 1.1 percentage points compared with the third quarter respectively.

High-quality development was advanced steadily. Solid progress has been achieved in

securing and improving people's livelihoods. Grain output has reached record high and risks in key areas have been resolved in an orderly and effective manner.

In 2024, the share of value added of China's above-average high-technology manufacturing industry and equipment manufacturing industry in the value added of above-average industry rose to 16.3 percent and 34.6 percent respectively, an increase of 0.6 and 1.0 percentage points from the previous year.

The annual average surveyed urban unemployment rate was 5.1 percent, decreased 0.1 percent point from the previous year; per capita disposable income of residents increased by 5.1 percent in real terms, in line with economic growth rate.

2025 is the final year of the 14th Five-Year Plan, China will adhere to the general principle of pursuing progress while ensuring stability and will fully and faithfully apply the new development philosophy on all fronts, accelerate efforts to foster a new pattern of development and take solid steps in pursuing high-quality development.

China will further deepen reform and opening up, implement more proactive and effective macro policies, expand domestic demands, promote integrated advancements in technological and industrial innovation, stabilize market expectation and boost internal vitality, so as to ensure a continued economic recovery.

China has remained as Iran's largest trading partner for many years in a row and is also the most important export market for Iranian goods. The continued development of China's economy will provide more opportunities for deepening practical cooperation between China and Iran in various fields.

# Iran, Azerbaijan expand trade ties, boost energy cooperation

TEHRAN – The 16th meeting of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee commenced in Tehran on Tuesday, where Amin Taraffo, head of the International Affairs Center at Iran's Transport and Urban Development Ministry, announced a significant boost in trade between the two countries.

"Trade between Iran and Azerbaijan reached \$480 million in 2023, and this figure has grown by 20 percent, reaching \$580 million in 2024," Taraffo said during the opening session of the meeting at the Espinas Palace Hotel.

The official highlighted the deep integration of the two nations' economies, particularly in transport and infrastructure. Projects such as the Astara border bridge and the nearing completion of the Aghband Bridge were mentioned as milestones in bilateral cooperation. Additionally, efforts are underway to establish the Aras Corridor, a project designed to connect Azerbaijan to Iran via road and rail.

The meeting also covered collaboration in energy, including electricity, oil, and gas. Officials discussed solutions to shared challenges through expert groups, aiming to strengthen cooperation in banking, energy, and infrastructure.

### Advancing International North-South Transit Corridor

Taraffo reiterated Iran's commitment to advancing the International North-South Transit Corridor, targeting a capacity of 10 million tons of goods.

He noted the critical role of shared borders between Iran, Azerbaijan, and Nakhchivan in facilitating trade for regional countries.

He added that the two-day committee, resuming after a three-year hiatus, includes technical and expert discussions on economic, cultural, and transportation issues.

The outcomes will be finalized with the signing of an agreement between Iran's Transport Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

The meeting also reviewed the construction and operation of new border terminals and bridges to enhance connectivity.

Taraffo expressed hope that the talks would resolve existing



challenges and lay the groundwork for expanded cooperation in trade and transportation.

In a related development, Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs Abdolnaser Hemmati discussed the role of financial systems in boosting trade volume with Azerbaijan during a separate meeting with Mustafayev.

Azerbaijani officials pledged to follow up on banking and insurance matters to further enhance bilateral trade.

### Bolstering energy cooperation

In another meeting with Mustafayev, Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad emphasized the importance of sustained energy cooperation with Azerbaijan.

According to the Shana news agency, the meeting took place on Tuesday, January 21, with discussions centered on enhancing bilateral ties.

Paknejad highlighted that such meetings play a pivotal role in advancing relations between the two nations, particularly in energy.

"In Iran's foreign policy, neighbors hold a special priority, and Azerbaijan occupies a unique position," he said.

He also announced the formation of a joint task force to facilitate strategic and technical collaboration in the energy sector.

Mustafayev, in his remarks, noted that this was his second meeting with the Iranian oil minister in the past three months.

He emphasized the significance of reciprocal visits in fostering understanding of each country's capacities and infrastructure.

"The relations between Iran and Azerbaijan are founded on shared religious, cultural, and fraternal ties," Mustafayev stated, adding that Azerbaijani Pres-

idents Ilham Aliyev places great importance on these ties, which serve mutual national interests.

ident Ilham Aliyev places great importance on these ties, which serve mutual national interests. During a meeting between Paknejad and Mustafayev back in mid-October 2024, the Iranian official called for the formation of a joint working group in order to pursue and accelerate bilateral cooperation, especially in the field of energy.

Mustafayev also met Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi.

During the meeting, the Iranian minister called for increasing electricity exchange with neighboring countries.

Mentioning that Iran and Azerbaijan's power grids are already connected and the two countries are exchanging electricity, Aliabadi expressed hope that the level of exchanges will increase soon.

"The electrical connection between Iran and Azerbaijan is now established, and it is hoped that this will increase by the summer of next year; it is also suggested that negotiations be held between Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia to expand cooperation in the electricity sector," the minister said.

"Negotiations have also been held with Russia and it was decided to follow up on this issue in an upcoming meeting. The establishment of a power line between the two countries will be very beneficial for both sides economically," he added.

During his stay in Tehran, Mustafayev also met and held talks with the Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh.

In this meeting, Sadegh called for the preparation of a roadmap to increase annual transit between Iran and Azerbaijan to 15 million tons.

"The development of relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan has a high importance in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I am confident that these relations will be further enhanced in the future and in line with the interests of the two countries," she said.

The minister stressed that Iran is ready to develop relations with Azerbaijan in all sectors and the Transport Ministry is prepared to hold the two countries' 16th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran as soon as possible to review all areas of cooperation.

## TCCIMA calls for leveraging chambers' co-op to boost Iran-Belarus economic ties

TEHRAN – Mojtaba Najafi Arab, the head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Dmitry Koltsov, the Belarusian ambassador to Iran, discussed avenues for expanding economic and trade relations during a meeting.

The two officials emphasized the importance of the recently finalized free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as a practical tool for advancing bilateral trade.

As the TCCIMA portal reported, Koltsov described the agreement as a new gateway for enhancing Iran's trade with the EAEU and underscored the vital role of chambers of commerce in fostering trade.

He highlighted the potential collaboration between the Tehran and Minsk chambers in shaping the future of economic relations between Iran and Belarus, a member of the EAEU.

Najafi Arab acknowledged the current low trade volume between Iran and Belarus but noted the high industrial and economic potential of both nations.

He emphasized the necessity of utilizing ex-

isting opportunities to strengthen economic ties.

He stated that the Tehran and Minsk chambers could serve as key platforms for identifying investment opportunities, fostering trade cooperation, and introducing reputable businesses from both countries.

The TCCIMA head also referred to the upcoming Third International Eurasia Trade Exhibition, scheduled for February 21-24, at Tehran's Permanent International Fairground, noting that the Tehran Chamber plans to invite officials and trade delegations from EAEU member countries to this event to initiate discussions aimed at enhancing private-sector collaboration.

During the meeting, Fereydoun Vardinejad, Secretary-General of the TCCIMA, stressed the importance of timely information exchange on economic and investment opportunities.

He expressed the Tehran Chamber's readiness to collaborate with the Minsk Chamber to share investment prospects and connect reliable partners from both sides.

He also proposed establishing a Teh-

ran-Minsk Economic Cooperation Council during the Eurasia trade exhibition to address challenges, explore opportunities, and facilitate private-sector engagement between Iran and Belarus.

Koltsov for his part praised the productive relationship between the Tehran Chamber and the Belarusian Embassy, emphasizing the potential for growth in bilateral trade.

He referred to last week's Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Committee meeting in Minsk, chaired by Iran's Minister of Industry, Mine, and Trade, where several agreements were signed.

The ambassador highlighted the free trade agreement with the EAEU as an ideal opportunity to increase trade and investment between Iran and member states. He also emphasized the role of chambers of commerce in implementing the agreement's provisions and reaffirmed the Belarusian Embassy's commitment to constructive collaboration with the Tehran Chamber to strengthen economic ties.

He further noted opportunities for joint investment and production in Belarus as promising areas for expanding economic cooperation.

Hesamodin Hallaj, Deputy for International Affairs at the Tehran Chamber, also attended the meeting.

He reviewed the Tehran Chamber's history of cooperation with the Belarusian Embassy and discussed the upcoming Eurasia trade exhibition, highlighting its significance in fostering economic partnerships.

During a meeting between Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh and Belarusian ambassador to Iran, back in early December 2024, the ICCIMA head stressed the need for enhancing bilateral financial exchanges through joint mechanisms and the use of local currencies.

Hassanzadeh emphasized the significance of joint investments and innovative financial arrangements such as barter trade and local currency usage to reduce reliance on the US dollar.

The trade volume between Iran and Belarus, amounting to approximately \$400 million, does not reflect the true potential of both countries, Hassanzadeh said. He highlighted various sectors, including oil, petrochemicals, energy, ad-



vanced technologies, engineering services, machinery, construction materials, transportation equipment, chemicals, steel, food products, agricultural goods, and pharmaceuticals, as areas ripe for enhanced cooperation.

Hassanzadeh noted that Iran has been importing part of its needs for agricultural and livestock inputs from Belarus, expressing a willingness to expand cooperation in these sectors. He invited Belarusian investors to explore joint ventures in pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, livestock, and dairy products, citing Iran's secure environment for investment.

## NIDC completes drilling of 79 oil, gas wells in 10 months

TEHRAN – The Deputy Director of Drilling Operations at the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) announced that 79 oil and gas wells have been drilled and completed across onshore and offshore regions of the country over the first 10 months of the current Iranian year (March 20-December 21, 2024).

According to IRNA, citing the NIDC, Masoud Afshar stated that these wells include 18 development wells and 61 workover wells.

Of the total wells drilled, 57 were in the operational areas of the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), nine in the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC), three in the Irani-

an Offshore Oil Company (IOOC), six in the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), and four as part of specific projects requested by client companies.

He added that in the mentioned period, the total drilling length reached 91,426 meters, marking a significant increase compared to 69,795 meters

recorded during the same period last year.

Afshar also noted that 14 onshore drilling rigs are currently being relocated within operational areas.

The NIDC, a subsidiary of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), is tasked with carrying out drilling operations for exploration, production,

and extraction of oil and gas reservoirs. It is also responsible for repair, maintenance, and related technical services both onshore and offshore.

Oil and gas exploration in Iran began in 1901 in the western regions and extended to the south.

After several years of effort, the first exploratory and commercial-

ly viable well was drilled in 1908 in Masjed Soleyman, which marked the beginning of Iran's oil industry. Subsequent exploration led to the discovery of key oil fields, including Haftkel, Aghajari, Gachsaran, Pazanan, and Naft Sefid, along with other major fields such as Lali, Ahvaz, Bibi Hakimeh, Marun, and Karanj.



# Israel and Google: Partners in the first AI-enabled genocide

From page 1 ▶ Known as Project Nimbus, the contract was aimed at providing cloud computing infrastructure, AI and other technology services to the Israeli government and its military.

In early 2024, director general of the Israeli government's National Cyber Directorate said the Nimbus contract directly aided Israel's combat applications.

"Thanks to the Nimbus public cloud, phenomenal things are happening during the fighting, these things play a significant part in the victory — I will not elaborate," Gaby Portnoy said, according to Israeli media.

A senior Israeli military official told The Washington Post in summer 2024 that the regime had invested heavily in new cloud technologies, hardware and other back-end computing systems, often in partnership with American companies.

Citing the official, the US media outlet said the Israeli military also tested technology from multiple companies as it explored potential applications for generative AI,



The Washington Post: Google fulfilled requests from Israel's military for more access to AI tools, as it sought to compete with Amazon despite growing anger over the regime's genocidal war on Gaza

the technology behind the recent flourishing of chatbots and other AI tools.

Project Nimbus has drawn the ire of Google and Amazon employees. In April last year, they staged large protests calling on the companies to cancel the contract, citing Israel's crimes in Gaza.

Google has AI policies that

pledge the company will not apply the technology to uses that harm people. But its collaboration with Israel has enabled the regime to commit the first AI-powered genocide in Gaza.

Previously, Meta which owns and operates Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and WhatsApp, among other products and services has been accused of pro-Is-

rael bias in the course of the Gaza war.

The American-based tech firm has been under fire for removing the posts pertaining to solidarity with Palestinians in the face of Israel's brutalities.

Not only has the United States provided unwavering military support for Israel in its war on Gaza, but also its big technology giants have enabled the regime's genocide.

The Gaza war appears to be over after a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas went into effect on Sunday. Israel killed more than 47,000 Palestinians in the conflict which started in October 2023.

Meanwhile, Joe Biden, who had been described as "Genocide Joe" for his complicity in Israel's atrocities, handed over the keys to the White House to Donald Trump.

From now on, these keys will play a key role in facilitating Israel's access to US technology and fueling its killing machine.

## West Bank assault: Israel attempts to mask domestic divisions



The Israeli army has killed 10 Palestinians in a major assault on the city of Jenin

From page 1 ▶ after they provided [Israel] with services in imposing a siege on the Jenin camp," it said, according to Al Jazeera.

Israeli settlers have also intensified attacks against Palestinians under the protection of the regime's army.

According to the Wafa news agency, dozens of Israeli settlers stormed the Palestinian village of Khirbet Aqwiwis and assaulted residents.

The Palestinian news outlet added that the settlers beat and pepper-sprayed the residents. It said a number of Palestinians, including elderly residents, were hospitalized with head wounds and fractures.

The growing Israeli violence comes as Netanyahu is trying to obscure his failure to meet his military goals in the war on Gaza.

Israel signed the truce deal with Hamas after it failed to defeat the group following 15 months of a war that left more than 47,000 Palestinians dead.

On Tuesday, Israel's military chief of staff, Lieutenant General Herzl Halevi, announced that he will resign 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. The

Hamas attack was followed by Israel's genocidal war on Gaza.

Halevi's resignation resulted in increasing demands for the Israeli prime minister to resign.

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

Other Israeli opposition figures made a similar call.

Apart from Israel's attempts to distract from its military setbacks in Gaza, the regime's fresh attacks in the West Bank have highlighted its expansionist agenda.

Israel is planning to annex the entire 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.

President Donald Trump's pick to be the United States ambassador to the United Nations has backed Israel's expansionist agenda in the West Bank.

She has claimed that Israel has "biblical" dominion over the occupied West Bank.

## Reappearance of Hamas fighters shakes and humiliates Israel

From page 1 ▶ Prime Minister Netanyahu had promised to totally "eliminate" fighters. Now he feels badly embarrassed and ashamed.

Herzi Halevi, Israel's military chief, who announced he will resign in early March as the army had failed to prevent the October 7 attack, must also live all throughout his remaining life with these degrading scenes. In a letter sent to soldiers on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Oct. 7 attack, he had claimed that the Israeli army had "defeated the military wing of Hamas" and was continuing to fight to wreck its capabilities. Amazing.

Analysts and military analysts inside and outside Israel were warning that it was impossible to defeat resistance fighters who

were wholeheartedly ready to sacrifice their lives for their stolen lands. These warnings were sounded all through the days of the carnage in Gaza but the bloodthirsty political and military officials did not listen.

"It is said, for example, that Hamas has lost 6,000 fighters, but it seems to be recruiting, or rather mobilizing, around 6,000 members from its reserves," Hugh Lovatt, a political analyst at the European Council for Foreign Relations (ECFR) think tank, told Euronews in July 2024.

Analysts interviewed by Euronews explained that not only has Hamas not been defeated, but it still has the capacity to regenerate itself in terms of recruiting fighters and

rehabilitating underground infrastructure.

"I think it's very easy, in fact, to recruit and regenerate, simply because there are many orphans and groups like Hamas have always recruited those orphaned in previous Israeli attacks," Joost Hilteermann, a political analyst at Crisis Group, told Euronews.

The Gaza war unequivocally proved that Zionist extremists have no alternative other than allowing the Palestinians to have their own country within the 1967 borders. It is to the benefit of cruel and extremist Zionists not to again test the will of the Palestinian nation for freedom and at least relative justice.

## Will Trump's appointees help him stop endless wars?

No more "ridiculous endless wars" lies at the heart of President Donald Trump's national security agenda and encapsulates his break from, and disdain for, the foreign policy approach of the Republican political establishment.

In Trump's first term, many of the president's senior national security advisors deemed the president and his worldview as dangerous and consistently undermined his agenda. Though Trump has vowed to do better with staffing in his second term, some of his cabinet officials may again diverge dramatically from the president on major foreign policies.

Senator Marco Rubio, the first official confirmed for the new Trump administration, would be a prime example. Included in the same category are other nominees, especially those sporting the label of national security "hawk," who might not understand the difference between being tough and engaging in the foreign adventurism of yesterday.

In the 2016 campaign, Trump's critique of endless wars centered on America's post-9/11 interventionism in the Middle East—most notably, the disastrous war against Iraq waged by the George W. Bush administration.

Rubio had for years offered a full-throated defense of the war, until it became politically inconvenient to do so. Indeed, he changed his tune only when he ran for president in 2016 when it became clear that American voters overwhelmingly regretted the Iraq tragedy and had little appetite for those who defend it.

Whatever Rubio may say to align himself with Trump today, his views on the most inept and inexcusable U.S. foreign intervention of the twenty-first century do not inspire confidence in his effectiveness or inclination to help Trump prevent the next ridiculous endless war.

If Iraq represented the foreign policy calamity foremost on the minds of voters in the 2016 elections, the Russian war on Ukraine that started during the Biden ad-

ministration took the prize in the 2024 campaign. Trump has declared it a priority to negotiate a peace settlement between the two countries, rather than continuing to provide unending military aid to Ukraine while risking a nuclear confrontation with Russia.

Here again, the incoming secretary of state had supported what Trump considers a major provocation that led to the Russian invasion: the West's flirtations with Ukraine on NATO membership. Though Russia is indisputably the aggressor in the current war, Trump sees it as irresponsible for the United States and its European allies to have dangled the prospect of NATO membership to Ukraine, especially when Russia had made clear that is a scenario it would not tolerate.

Who were the doyennes of U.S. foreign policy that considered it wise to provoke Russia in such a way? Many of the same people who bequeathed the Iraq catastrophe to the world. Agreeing with them was Rubio, who had previously declared himself open to Ukrainian NATO membership.

Meanwhile, China, America's most significant adversary in the twenty-first century, presents the biggest test case for whether staffers would implement Trump's vision in the second term.

Trump's strident rhetoric and actions taken against China in trade and economics are well known. He noisily waged a trade war against Beijing in his first term and has threatened 60 percent tariffs on goods imported from China in his second. Animating his confrontational approach is the conviction that China has ripped off or "raped" America economically, whether by brazenly stealing U.S. intellectual property and American technology, engaging in unfair trade practices, contributing to the massive loss of manufacturing jobs, or spying on American citizens and corporations.

Trump's approach might confuse many into thinking that he wants to confront China across the board. He does not. Indeed, he is reluctant to needlessly heighten security tensions or provoke armed conflict with Bei-

jing. This does not mean he will be ineffective at deterring Chinese aggression—after all, a hot war with China appeared far less likely during his first term than under the Biden administration—but he is as uninterested in starting an endless war with China as he is with the rest of the world.

Many of Trump's top national security advisors in the first term pushed for a very different approach. For example, his last secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, advocates recognizing Taiwan as an independent country, a provocation that is certain to trigger armed conflict with China.

Trump himself has never shown any interest in supporting Taiwanese independence. Rubio, however, has long supported it.

Certainly, staffers to the president cannot possibly agree with him 100 percent of the time. As secretary of state, however, Pompeo did far more than disagree—he systematically went about hiring and elevating staffers who secretly or openly hated Trump. Prominent Trump allies have outright called Pompeo "filthy" for sucking up to the president while undermining his agenda and administration from within during the first term.

There is no indication that Rubio would engage in the same type of obsequiousness or sleaze. Indeed, he had repeatedly defended Trump on politically charged issues during the 2024 presidential election.

The broader concern is that Trump supporters have already seen previously the havoc wrought from within by cabinet officers and their staffers who disagree sharply with the president on the fundamental foundations of his policy outlook. What will the second Trump term look like if senior advisors are working toward a foreign policy agenda and priorities that are not the president's?

Let's hope we don't find out. Appointing national security officials who actually share Trump's foreign policy views would help.

(Source: The National Interest)

## Sanctions on Burhan: A US pressure tool on Sudan

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The US Treasury Department imposed new sanctions on Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, Commander-in-Chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces, accusing him of "destabilizing Sudan and undermining the democratic transition."

Washington's blatant involvement in Sudan exposes the US double standards that claim promoting the values of human rights and democracy while their primary goal is to secure its colonial interests.

The official spokesman for the Sudanese Armed Forces stated that the US "unjust" sanctions will not deter the army from "performing its legal and constitutional duty to defend Sudan."

During the past years, it has been proven that whenever there is a major development in any military arena, the US administration intervenes to obstruct this progress, coinciding too with an obvious Israeli intervention.

The US "carrot and stick" policy will not have a direct impact on the course of the ongoing war — whether at political, security or military levels — given previous experiences; sanctions on the Omar al-Bashir regime only complicated Washington's relations with Khartoum.

The sanctions coincided with the advance of the Sudanese Armed Forces in Al-Jazeera State and their control of the strategic city of Wad Madani, while they were trying to expel the Rapid Support Forces from the capital Khartoum towards Darfur State, despite attempts to disperse the army by bombing residential neighborhoods and vital infrastructure.

The most realistic option that most Sudanese analysts agree on is to militarily decide the war against what they call "rebellious group" as the main purpose of the sanctions is to break the will of the Sudanese people to

prevent them from achieving decisive field progress, along with keeping Sudan under Washington's imperialist hegemony.

Major General Abdel Hadi Abdel-Basit, a Sudanese military expert, described the sanctions as "naive and worthless sanctions," citing the experience of the Salvation Government, which thwarted similar sanctions over 3 decades.

Abdel-Basit anticipates that the sanctions will push Sudan toward more independence and new partnerships, with Russia for example. Undeniably, what seriously worries Washington is the Sudanese-Russian rapprochement that means a drastic change in the balance of power in Africa.

What is happening in Sudan unfortunately reveals the misery of Arab national security and the impotence of all previous initiatives for a solution. Some Arab governments not only support the warring parties but also fight among themselves, just as they are doing in Sudan.

These involved governments lack the slightest level of political maturity; Sudan is completely absent from their agendas. In Syria when Washington gave them the green light, Arab delegations began to flock to Damascus to meet Al-Julani and his officials.

Sudan is being torn apart like Libya; this opens the door to further US and Israeli interventions against the aspirations of the Sudanese people to return to security, stability and normal life. How long will the Arabs wait for the American signal to settle their own national security issues?



## Discover Qasr-e Khorshid: a jewel of Persian history and architecture



TEHRAN - Nestled in the breathtaking landscapes of Kalat county in Khorasan Razavi province, northeast Iran, Qasr-e Khorshid, also known as the Sun Palace, invites travelers to explore a fascinating blend of history, art, and architecture.

This awe-inspiring 18th-century monument, originally envisioned as a residence and treasure storehouse for Nader Shah Afshar, is a masterpiece that reflects a glimpse of Persia's imperial past.

Often called the "Napoleon of Persia," Nader Shah was one of Persia's most famed rulers, reigning over an empire that stretched from northern India to the Caucasus Mountains. Qasr-e Khorshid, with its 20-meter-high fluted cylindrical tower and octagonal platform, serves as a lasting testament to his ambition and vision.

The Sun Palace is a harmonious fusion of Iranian and Indian architectural styles, showcasing intricate designs and exquisite craftsmanship. The palace's facade, made of brown stone adorned with carved floral motifs, captivates visitors at first sight. Step inside to marvel at the ornate stucco work, gilded decorations, and paintings that once graced the living quarters of the royal family.

The first two levels of the palace combine Persian and Indian influences, while the cylindrical tower on the roof once housed Nader Shah and his family. A garden setting resembles that tradition of Persian gardens with fountains, pools, and streams that enhance its serene ambiance.

Today, Qasr-e Khorshid has been transformed into an anthropology museum, allowing visitors to delve into the rich history of the region. The palace also offers a glimpse into Nader Shah's storied life and legacy, from his rise as a military genius to his tragic downfall.

Local legends say the palace was named after Khorshid, one of Nader Shah's wives. Despite its grandeur, the monument remains

unfinished, likely due to the political turmoil that followed Nader Shah's sudden death.

### Why visit Qasr-e Khorshid?

Qasr-e Khorshid is more than a historical site; it's a journey through time, art, and culture. Whether you're captivated by its architectural beauty, intrigued by its historical significance, or simply seeking a peaceful escape in a picturesque setting, the Sun Palace promises an unforgettable experience.

### Napoleon of Persia!

Born Nader Qoli Beg, Nader created an Iranian empire that stretched from the Indus River to the Caucasus Mountains. He is widely considered one of the most powerful rulers in the history of the nation. He assumed power when a period of chaos overwhelmed Iran.

Nader endeavored to reunite the Persian realm while repelling invaders. He is sometimes referred to as the Napoleon of Persia or the Second Alexander.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Nader Qoli Beg had an obscure beginning in the Turkish Afshar tribe, which was loyal to the Safavid shahs of Iran. After serving under a local chieftain, Nader formed and led a band of robbers, showing marked powers of leadership.

With the navy he proceeded to build, Nader Shah was able not only to take Bahrain from the Arabs but also to invade and conquer Oman. In February 1739, after capturing several cities of the Mughal Empire of northern India, he moved against the main Mughal armies at Karnal, India.

He won the battle and entered Delhi, returning to Iran with vast amounts of loot, including the fabulous Peacock Throne and the Koh-e-Noor Diamond. He then attacked the Uzbeks around the cities of Bukhara and Khiva; his empire had reached its furthest expansion and rivaled the territorial extent of the ancient Iranian empire.

suspect's home.

During the search, they uncovered three historical items from the first and second millennia BC, as well as artifacts from the Islamic period.

Colonel Amani confirmed that one individual had been arrested in connection with the discovery and that both the suspect and the seized artifacts were handed over to the relevant authorities.

He emphasized that these artifacts are a vital part of the nation's cultural heritage, and stated that the police would take firm action against anyone attempting to illegally profit from the country's historical treasures.

## Antiquities from 1st and 2nd millennia BC discovered western Iran



TEHRAN - The police chief of Kuhdasht, a city in Lorestan province, announced the discovery of three ancient artifacts dating back to the first and second millennia BC, as well as the Islamic period, in a local residential area.

Colonel Ali Amani informed reporters that the police had received a tip-off regarding an individual storing historical objects at their private residence in a neighborhood of Kuhdasht.

The case was immediately prioritized by the police's security and intelligence units, he said.

Acting on the information, officers, in coordination with judicial authorities, raided the

# Tourism minister visits Susa, highlights its 'glorious' World Heritage

TEHRAN - On Wednesday, Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, visited the UNESCO-registered ancient city of Susa in Khuzestan province. During his visit, he emphasized the city's universal significance and its vital role in Iranian and global history.

Attending a meeting held at the county governor's office, Salehi-Amiri described Susa as "the land of mysteries and wonders." He noted that Susa is not merely an Iranian treasure but a heritage site belonging to all humanity.

"Susa has, for thousands of years, been a symbol of unity in its long history," he stated.

The minister highlighted Susa's historical and cultural importance, calling it a cornerstone of Iranian identity and civilization.

"Susa is more than just a city; it is a part of who we are. Every excavation in this area reveals a new mystery, reaffirming its title as the land of secrets," Salehi-Amiri said.

He also stressed the need to reintroduce Susa's rich history to both [younger] Iranians and the global community.

"Iran is proud of Susa, and this pride should be instilled in every citizen, especially students.

It's imperative that educational materials include Susa's historical significance," he said, urging cultural and educational institutions to promote the site to younger generations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, called for greater efforts by media, educators, and cultural or-



ganizations to enhance the city's global image. "The beauty and cultural wealth of Susa have not been adequately presented to Iranians or the world."

In his remarks, the minister also underscored the unity of Iranian identity and Islamic values. "Iran's sacred history integrates pre-Islamic and Islamic cultural heritage. There is no contradiction between them, as both strengthen and complement each other," he said.

The minister highlighted Susa's potential to become a major tourist hub, emphasizing the need to improve infrastructure in the area. He assured that the ministry will prioritize addressing the city's needs.

Earlier this month, Omid Sabripour, the governor of Shush, called for renewed archaeological efforts in the ancient city of Susa, where, according to him, less than 10% of its archaeological treasures have been excavated.

"We need to leverage UNE-

SCO funding and international cooperation to initiate new archaeological campaigns in Susa," Sabripour stated. "The city's immense historical, religious, natural, and industrial heritage, along with its significant role in the Sacred Defense (the eight-year Iran-Iraq war), offers enormous potential for tourism development, which has remained largely untapped."

Moreover, on the same day, Salehi-Amiri toured the UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil, which is a magnificent ziggurat near Susa.

### A global treasure

Located in southwestern Iran, approximately 115 kilometers northwest of Ahvaz, Susa is one of the oldest and most significant archaeological sites in the world.

Registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2015, Susa boasts a complex of archaeological mounds on the eastern bank of the Shavur River, alongside Ardeshir's palace on the opposite

bank. These layers of urban settlements chronicle a continuous history from the late 5th millennium BC to the 13th century CE.

The site's architectural relics include administrative, residential, and palatial structures, offering a glimpse into the Elamite, Persian, and Parthian cultures, many elements of which have vanished over time. Susa was a winter residence for Persian kings following its capture by Cyrus the Great in 538 or 539 BC, marking its integration into the Persian Empire.

### A wealth of archaeological finds

Archaeological excavations in Susa have uncovered a treasure trove of artifacts, including pottery, bronze items, ornamental objects, and clay tablets. Despite its historical and cultural wealth, much of Susa remains unexplored, highlighting the urgent need for renewed archaeological initiatives.

### Gateway to must-see destinations

Susa also serves as a portal to several prominent landmarks, including the UNESCO-listed ziggurat of Tchogha Zanbil, the Achaemenid Apadana Castle, Shush Castle (Akropolis), and the Prophet Daniel Shrine. Additionally, the Museum of Susa and the Haft Tapeh archaeological site attract history enthusiasts from around the globe.

With such unparalleled historical significance and cultural assets, local authorities hope that intensified excavation efforts and better promotion will transform Susa into a leading global destination for heritage tourism.

## Kashan congress discussing Persian architecture over five decades

TEHRAN - The ancient city of Kashan is hosting an architecture congress dedicated to the evolution and essence of contemporary Persian architecture and art over the past five decades.

The three-day event titled "From History to Destiny" with sessions running from 2:00 PM to 9:00 each day, will end on Friday.

Understanding and Action; Interpretation of Identity; and Modernity and Revival have been selected as the themes for the first to the third day of the congress, respectively.

Among the notable speakers of the congress are Mohammadreza Ha'eri, Mohammad Beheshti, Hossein Mahlouji, Seyfollah Aminian, Akbar Helli, Akbar Taqizadeh, Soraya Birashk, Amir-Masoud Anushfar, Saeed Abrishami-Rad, Alireza Abdollahzadeh, Saeed Bahrami, and

Azam al-Sadat Razavizadeh, ISNA reported.

The congress is also aimed to discuss the architectural identity of Kashan, providing a platform for interaction between professionals and enthusiasts. With a critical and contemporary approach, the event will explore the modernity, architecture techniques, and the potential revitalization of Kashan's architectural heritage, the organizers said.

Kashan is situated on a route that connects Tehran to the giant destinations of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd. Moreover, the ancient town is a gateway to many sights, stories, and surrounding attractive villages to discover.

Amongst the highlights are the lavishly decorated houses of Brujerdi, Tabatabai, Ameri, and Abbasi. Apart from cultural sites such as a



domed bazaar, where travelers can find loads of Kashani traditions and souvenirs, they may escape the city for the UNESCO-registered Fin Garden, which is believed to be the epitome of Eden.

## Archaeologists discover rare liquid gypsum burial of 'high-status individual' from Roman Britain

Archaeologists in England have discovered a Roman-era cemetery with an unusual burial at its center — a stone coffin holding a deceased individual encased in liquid gypsum.

This practice is known from Roman times, but archaeologists still don't fully understand it. The mineral was made into a cement or plaster and then poured over the deceased person to make a hard cast. This process sometimes preserved organic remnants such as clothing or a burial shroud.

The gypsum from the newfound burial is fragmentary, but it retains impressions of the individual's shroud and preserved a small piece of fabric.

This type of burial is largely known from Roman urban centers — such as York in England, which has 45 documented gypsum burials — but it's rare to find them in rural regions, as this one was.

In this case, "we do believe this would have been an expensive endeavor and is therefore indicative of a high-status individual," said Jessica Lowther, community archaeologist for Headland Archaeology, the company that did the excavation.

The gypsum was artfully carved and came from a quarry about 30 miles (50 kilometers) away from the site, and it would have cost a big sum to purchase and transport, according to a statement from Headland Archaeology.

These factors, combined with the grave's central location in the cemetery, indicate that the person buried there was elite or part of a prominent family.

While no grave goods were found in the coffin, archaeologists did find a glass vessel nearby that may have once held a libation, or toast for the deceased, according to the statement.

Archaeologists found the cemetery ahead of construction work that aims to widen a highway in Cambridgeshire. The cemetery dates to the Roman period in Britain (42 CE to 410).

The cemetery sat along an ancient Roman road. During the excavation, the team found 14 graves around the central gypsum burial and unearthed seven more beyond a boundary ditch.

Curiously, the cemetery had a variety of burial types, which is uncommon for such a small burial ground.

(Source: Live Science)

### Tender Advertisement

Owzan Co., affiliated with TPICO Pharmaceutical Holding, intends to hold a tender for the supply of 5000 kg of medical Silver Mercury with 99.99% purity through a competitive bidding process among qualified companies.

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Opening Day: The tender opening will occur on January 27, 2025, at 11:00 AM.

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# Tehran seeks to establish links with regional sci-tech parks

TEHRAN –Iran seeks to enhance cooperation with regional countries by establishing links with science and technology parks in the neighboring countries.

“Regional countries, particularly Iraq, are interested in establishing science technology parks; they seek to utilize Iran’s experiences and expertise in the field,” IRNA quoted Science, Research, and Technology Minister, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, as saying.

“Having prepared the groundwork, we will provide scientific consultancy services to Iraq and any other interested countries in the region.”

Referring to the second Iran-Iraq Science Week, which was held in the city of Karbala, Iraq, from January 18 to 20, Simaei-Sarraf said the two sides have agreed to grant 200 scholarships to their students to study in the other country.

During the event, Iranian officials and their Iraqi counterparts followed up on 176 signed agreements in the first Iran-Iraq Science Week, held in Mashhad, Iran, from October 9 to 12, he noted.

The second Iran-Iraq Science Week aimed to enhance scientific, academic, and technological relations, bringing together representatives from over 60 of the best universities in the two countries.

The week also served as a



platform for sharing expertise, showcasing modern sci-tech achievements, and setting the stage for new partnerships in various technical fields.

## Tehran, Baghdad ink action plan

Iran and Iraq have signed an action plan to give a boost to their scientific collaborations.

The action plan was signed by Omid Rezaei-Far, an official with the Ministry of Science, and Haider Abd Dahed, Iraqi deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, on the first day of the second Iran, Iraq Science Week, IRNA reported.

The joint scientific programs have been developed to focus on different aspects including boosting cooperation on grant-

dents as well as implementing joint educational programs with Iran to meet the scientific and research needs of Iraq.

“Iran serves as a role model in the region in terms of scientific progress in modern technologies, nanotechnology, biotechnology, and medical science.

Iraq is interested in benefiting from Iran’s valuable experiences to expand its technological and scientific infrastructure.

Establishing and expanding science and technology parks is one of our main priorities,” IRNA quoted Al-Aboudi as saying.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Simaei-Sarraf, highlighting the need to boost scientific interactions and develop a comprehensive roadmap for future collaborations.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf stressed scientific and academic interactions as essential means to promote sustainable development in the two countries.

Referring to the key role of universities in transferring knowledge and technology, Simaei-Sarraf highlighted holding joint research and educational courses.

“Iran is ready to share expertise with Iraq in different fields including the expansion of science and technology parks, development of research infrastructure, as well as professors and students’ exchange,” the official noted.

## Iran, Iraq to choose pilot regions to mitigate SDSs

TEHRAN –Following some meetings on monitoring sand and dust storms (SDSs), the two sides have decided to choose pilot regions in the two countries to determine the best strategies for combating the environmental problem.

The pilot regions in the country are located in Khuzestan province, ISNA reported.

Moreover, officials from the two countries will attend a meeting on sand and dust storms which is scheduled to be held on February 18-19 in Doha, Qatar.

The meeting will serve as a platform for senior officials to share knowledge to address the challenge by developing joint actions for dust management in the region. The countries present in the meeting will be categorized into two or more regions based on the affected areas and the intensity of the effect.

### Iran prioritizes co-op with Iraq

As sand and dust storm hotspots in Iraq severely affect western and south-western regions, the administration underscores cooperating with Baghdad to address the problem.

In September 2024, Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi in a meeting with the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, highlighted that one of the main axes of cooperation with Iraq will focus on conducting joint environmental activities as well as following up on previous agreements

made in this regard, IRNA reported.

A report published by four Iranian researchers suggests that the main sources of sand and dust storms affecting Iran are emerging from Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

Titled ‘Dust in Western Iran: the emergence of new sources in response to shrinking water bodies’, the report written by Azar Beyranvand, Ghasem Azizi, Omid Alizadeh, and Ali Darvishi Boloorani was published by Nature on September 27, 2023.

“The most influential sources affecting Western Iran are located on the shore and northwest of Lake Tharthar, Hour-al-Azim Marsh, the shore of Razzaza, Habbaniyah Lakes, and West Hammar Marsh, which contributed to 110, 79, 59, 56, and 51 dusty days, respectively.”

Indeed, the peak dust activity in Western Iran was during the period 2008–2012 in response to the substantial shrinkage of the main water bodies in Iraq.

The main sources of dust influencing Western Iran are located in northern and eastern Saudi Arabia in spring, Deir ez-Zur in Syria’s Aleppo and Raqqa in summer, and Syria’s Homs and Al-Hasakah in winter and spring.

Western Iran here refers to the western half of Iran, which encompasses northwest, west, and southwest Iran. To identify dust events in western Iran during the period 2000–2016, meteorological data from 33



synoptic stations were obtained from the Meteorological Organization of Iran.

About 1133.5 km<sup>2</sup> of regions in West Asia with permanent surface water in 1984 completely dried up in 2015 and acted as potential sources of dust.

Decreased precipitation in West Asia from autumn 2007 to 2012 and the occurrence of severe droughts have also contributed to the shrinkage of lakes and wetlands, as well as the reduced agricultural productivity in West Asia, all of which contributed to the intensification of dust activity in Western Iran in recent decades.

According to the results, the main sources of dust that influence Western Iran are located in Iraq. Decreases in the surface water of lakes in Iraq have led to the emergence of some new sources of dust, which contributed to a substantial increase in dust activity in western Iran in recent years.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Iran exports medical equipment to 55 countries

Some 105 medical equipment produced by 23 Iranian companies are exported to 55 countries including Russia, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Croatia, Reza Masaali, an advisor to the health minister said on Sunday.

“Currently, a total of 280,000 medical equipment is produced in the country,” Fars quoted Masaali as saying.

“In recent years, the production of medical equipment in Iran has increased by 9 percent,” he added.

One of the main strategies of the Health Ministry is to boost exports, he said, adding that the ministry has signed an MOU with Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization to grant subsidies to Iranian medical equipment companies participating at international trade fairs such as MEDICA, Oman Health, Arab Health and Brazil.

## تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی به ۵۵ کشور دنیا صادر می‌شود

مشاور وزیر بهداشت گفت: در حال حاضر ۱۰۵ محصول تجهیزات پزشکی ایرانی که توسط ۲۳ شرکت ایرانی تولید می‌شود، به ۵۵ کشور جهان از جمله کشورهای روسیه، آلمان، ایتالیا، بلژیک، هلند و کرواسی صادر می‌شود. به گزارش گروه اجتماعی خبرگزاری فارس، رضا مسائلی، اظهار داشت: در کشور بیش از ۲۸۰ هزار قلم تجهیزات پزشکی در کشور وجود دارد و در سال‌های اخیر، تولیدات تجهیزات پزشکی در جمهوری اسلامی ایران، ۹ درصد افزایش داشته است.

وی توجه به صادرات را یکی از مهمترین راهبردهای اساسی وزارت بهداشت در راستای حمایت از تولیدات داخلی دانست و افزود: به منظور حضور تولیدکننده‌های تجهیزات پزشکی ایران در نمایشگاه بین‌المللی مدیکا، عمان هلت، عرب هلت و برزیل با سازمان توسعه و تجارت، تقاضای نامی از به منظور اعطای یارانه برای این شرکت‌ها، امضا شده است.

## Health ministry plans to boost nutrition literacy in rural areas

TEHRAN –Health ministry is planning to improve nutrition literacy among people in rural communities to address nutritional health concerns in these regions.

Despite the high quality of food in rural areas, the lack of nutritional knowledge, which affects the choice of food for consumption, has highly affected the people, Mehr news agency quoted Ahmad Esmaeizadeh, an official with health ministry as saying.

Malnutrition, in all its forms, including undernutrition (wasting, stunting, underweight), inadequate vitamins or minerals, overweight, and obesity occurs among children in rural areas because some parents are ignorant about children’s nutrition, the official noted.

The prevalence of diabetes, high blood fat, and hypertension in villages is the second reason that necessitates the need for nutrition experts, he added.

The official went on to say that some 350 nutrition experts will start their work in rural areas by the end of the current Iranian year (March 2025).

The nutrition experts will promote nutrition literacy and consequently the health of people in villages, the official added.

It is essential to raise people’s knowledge and awareness and train them to take care of themselves and stay away from obesity and disease by eating healthy food and taking enough calories, as well as exercising for half an hour per day.

### Rural family physician program

Approximately, 7,000 physicians are participating in the implementation of the Family Physician Program in rural areas, an official with the health insurance organization has said.

The rural family physician program started in 2005. Back then, it targeted villages and cities with a population of less than 20,000 individuals to make treatment referrals more concentrated and provide more convenient access to health services, ISNA quoted Masoud Mashayekhi as saying.

Highlighting that over 20 million Iranians are covered by the rural family physician program, Mashayekhi said medical, dental, mental, midwifery, nutrition, laboratory, pharmaceutical, and medical imaging services are being offered.



Over 7,000 physicians, 5,662 midwives, as well as 1,893 dentists, and dental hygienists are providing services in 4,287 medical centers, he noted.

In the current Iranian year that began on March 20, the program has expanded to include mental health and nutrition experts to further address the needs of rural families.

Targeting almost 25,000,000 citizens residing in rural areas, the Family Physician Program was piloted in two provinces of Fars and Mazandaran in 2005.

Periodic examinations and monitoring of people’s health status, easy and round-the-clock access to basic services and primary care, and frequent visits to doctors are the characteristics of a family physician.

Based on the Family Physician Program, a physician and a midwife offer services in rural areas, every 3,300 villagers have a physician and there is a midwife per 5,200 people in villages.

The implementation of the Family Physician Program in urban areas began in June 2012 in Fars and Mazandaran provinces. Reducing out-of-pocket payments has been an important effect and benefit of the urban family physician program.

The Family Physician Program has made treatment referrals more concentrated and improved the interactions between doctors and healthcare providers.

In September 2023, former Health Minister Bahram Einollahi described the Family Physician Program as the most important priority of the ministry for the next two years.

“This program is a basic measure which, in case of being properly formed, will solve many problems of the health system,” Einollahi said, IRNA reported.

## WHO lauds IBTO for services to patients with rare blood types

TEHRAN –The World Health Organization representative, Jaffar Hussain, has admired the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization’s efforts and expertise in providing services to patients with rare blood types.

The official also commended IBTO services in supplying healthy blood voluntarily to Iranians as well as Afghan refugees, IRIB reported.

He made the remarks on Wednesday while addressing a ceremony held to mark the national rare blood day. The official went on to announce the WHO’s readiness to cooperate with IBTO in providing services to patients with rare blood diseases.

According to Mehdi Karbasian, an official with IBTO, currently, some 358 units of rare blood are frozen and stored in the Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization, of which 100 units are very rare.

The rare blood units are frozen at a temperature between -60 and -70 °C and can be stored for as long as 10 years.

### IBTO is WHO regional training authority

In 2024, Bashir Haji-Beigi, the IBTO spokesman, said IBTO is still known as a regional training authority of the World Health Organization in blood transfusion medicine.

Haji-Beigi said conducting nucleic acid testing (NAT), a molecular technique for screening blood donations to reduce the risk of transfusion-transmitted infections; antibody screening to ensure the recipient and the donor’s blood are compatible to prevent complications from blood transfusion; as well as genetic sequencing using Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) method for human leukocyte antigens (HLA) to check tissue compatibility and facilitate hematopoietic

stem cell transplantation for patients are among the activities that have been put on the agenda since last year.

### 4.7% rise year on year

A total of 2,327,997 Iranians donated blood over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2023-March 2024), an increase of 4.7 percent compared to the year earlier.

Tehran and Fars provinces made the largest contributions accounting for more than 16 percent and more than 7 percent of the total blood donation, respectively, IRNA quoted Haji-Beigi as saying.

Last year, the highest growth in blood donation was recorded in the province of Lorestan with 22 percent, followed by North Khorasan with 16 percent, and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad with approximately 13 percent.

The overall blood donation rate was over 54 percent in the country last year with Semnan (69 percent), Yazd (64 percent), and Qom (63 percent) provinces ranking the highest.

Women’s share of blood donation was equal to four percent. A total of 102, 907 women donated blood which had increased compared to the previous year. However, women are expected to get more involved in blood donation.

Women in Lorestan province, nine percent, had the highest contribution followed by North Khorasan, almost eight percent, and Sistan-Baluchestan, over seven percent.

Last year, the blood donation rate reached 27 per thousand people.

The highest rate was recorded in Mazandaran province with over 40,000 people donating blood. Semnan province, over 39,000, and Yazd province ranked second and third.





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JANUARY 23, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Each fruit of the tree you have planted will be appreciated by a reward from Allah.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times » Noon:12:16 Evening: 17:42 Dawn: 5:43 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:10 (tomorrow)

## Fajr Intl. Theater Festival kicks off in Tehran



TEHRAN- The 43rd edition of Fajr International Theater Festival (FITF) kicked off in Tehran on Tuesday, attended by Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs Nadereh Rezai, theater professionals, and artists.

Notable participants of the ceremony included prominent figures such as veteran actors and stage directors Akbar Zanjani, Davood Fathalibeigi, Alireza Osivand, Hossein Mosafer Ashtaneh, Farzaneh Neshatkhah, Azita Hajian, Saeed Asadi, Shahram Karami, Behzad Farahani, Parisa Moqaddam, Ayoub Aqakhani, Hadi Marzban, and Leili Aaj, among others, Mehr reported.

During the event, the Soldier of the Homeland emblem in memory of the Martyr General Qassem Soleimani was unveiled. This emblem was awarded by Kheyrollah Taqianipour and Leili Aaj to the family of martyr IRGC General Razi Mousavi.

For his part, the son of martyr Mousavi thanked Taqianipour, remarking that he had worked like an unsung hero in the cultural field and had played a role in the production of numerous resistance works. "Just as many of our homeland's soldiers have contributed, so too have you artists made significant efforts in the cultural arena," he stated.

General Razi Mousavi was one of the oldest advisors to the IRGC in Syria and a companion of General Qassem Soleimani. He was martyred in 2023, during an Israeli attack on the Zainabiyah region on the outskirts of Damascus.

Moreover, the top winners in the photography,

poster and playwriting sections were presented with certificates and trophies.

The ceremony also honored Mahmoud Pakniat, Fariba Motekhasses, Houshang Hihavand, and Farideh Daryamaj for their lifetime achievements in the field of theater.

Due to the inaugural ceremony coinciding with the birthdays of Akbar Zanjani and Behzad Farahani, these two veteran artists blew out the candles on their birthday cakes, marking the celebration of their contributions.

Earlier this month, the organizers of the festival announced that this edition of the festival received submissions from 46 countries around the world.

A total of 231 works from 46 countries including Russia, Norway, Sweden, Canada, and several African countries applied to participate in this year's event, Mojgan Vakili, the director of the international section of the festival said.

However, the international section of the event is being held as a non-competitive segment. "The decision to host the international section non-competitively was made by the festival organizers," she added. She shared that 20 works were prioritized for final selection, culminating in six stage performances and one online presentation.

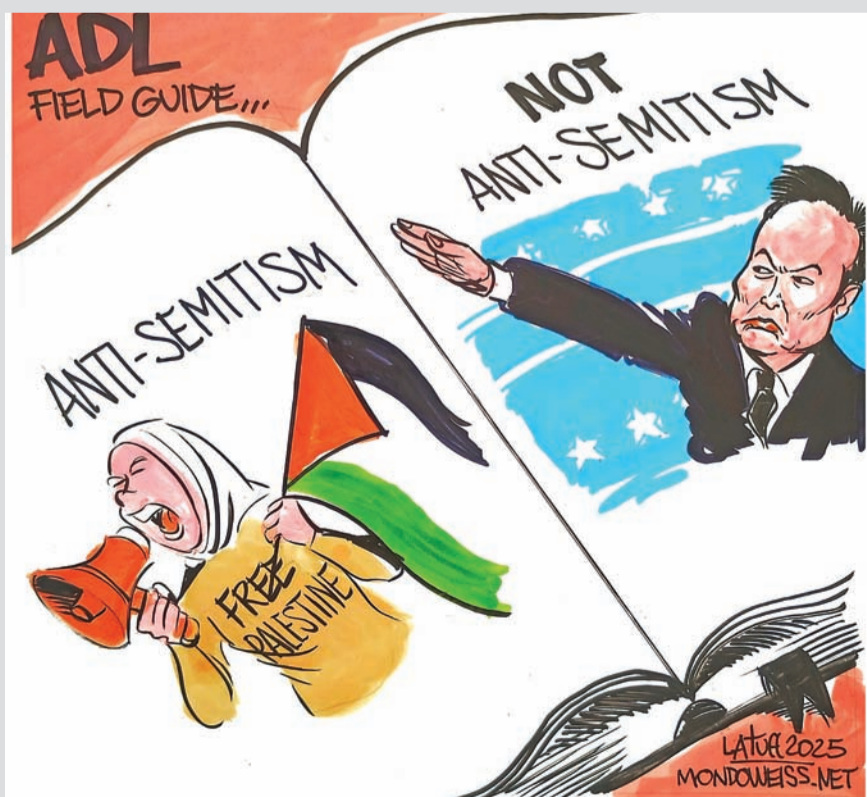
Furthermore, 15 international instructors applied to conduct workshops at the festival, representing countries such as Canada, France, Africa, Tunisia, and India, she mentioned.

After evaluating the quality of the proposed topics, a workshop titled "Exploring Contemporary Theater," featuring an instructor from India, is scheduled to be held over three days during the festival, she added. This year's edition has also dedicated a section to the oppressed people of Gaza, featuring performances that will be showcased on stage.

"Six stage works will be presented in the Gaza section," she explained.

The 43rd Fajr International Theater Festival will be running until February 1.

## Cartoon of Day



Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Field Guide  
 Cartoonist: Carlos Latuff from Brazil

# Iran, China to expand cultural, artistic collaborations

TEHRAN-The head of the Academy of Arts Majid Shah-Hosseini, and the Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu met in Tehran on Tuesday.

During this meeting, which was attended by the embassy secretaries and several officials from the Academy of Arts, the two sides reviewed the history of cultural and artistic relations between the two countries, ILNA reported.

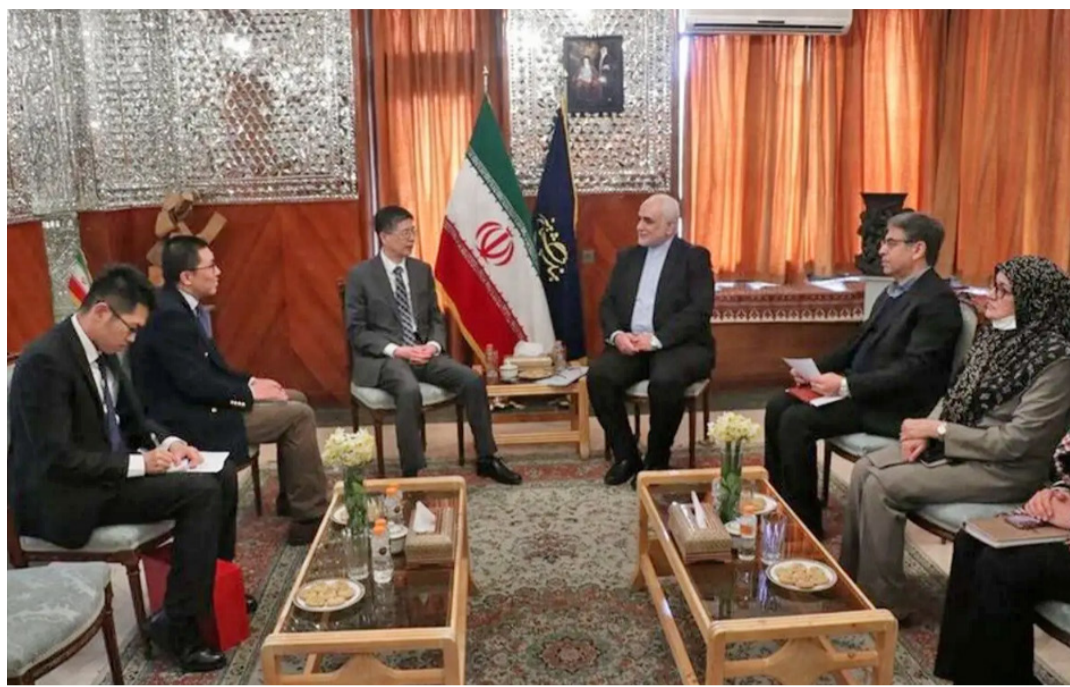
They exchanged views and proposed solutions to implement the provisions of a memorandum of understanding recently signed by the heads of the two nations' art academies. Additionally, suggestions were made to enhance cultural and artistic exchanges between the two civilizational domains of Iran and China.

During the meeting, Shah-Hosseini highlighted the scientific and artistic capacities of the academy's members as the core and most influential body of thought in the Academy of Arts, as well as the specialized groups working in areas such as traditional and modern arts, artificial intelligence, art futurism, and digital arts.

He emphasized that the Belt and Road Initiative, spearheaded by China in West Asia, would remain incomplete without cultural and artistic components.

Therefore, the Iranian Academy of Arts is keen on joint collaborations such as the film project

"The Maritime Silk Road 2," holding a biennial exhibition for countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, translating art books, organizing webinars to introduce



Majid Shah-Hosseini (3rd right) and Cong Peiwu (3rd left) meet in Tehran, January 21, 2025.

the cultural and historical arts of the two nations, hosting painting exhibitions by Chinese artist Zhu Huan, and conducting specialized meetings with artists from both countries.

Shah-Hosseini affirmed that such efforts would serve the interests of both ancient civilizations and could only be realized through practical steps taken by the art academies of both nations.

For his part, the Chinese ambassador expressed agreement with the Iranian side's proposals, stating that cultural exchange and civilizational interaction play a fundamental role in strengthening relations and cooperation between the two nations.

He emphasized that such dialogue and peaceful coexistence among civilizations bridge gaps and reduce tensions.

"Our embassy fully supports the implementation of the memorandum between the two academies of arts in Iran and China and is entirely prepared to cooperate in various fields.

Moreover, the Silk Road has historically been a venue for cultural exchanges. Today, enriching the strategic Belt and Road Initiative will be achieved with cultural and artistic content," Cong Peiwu said.

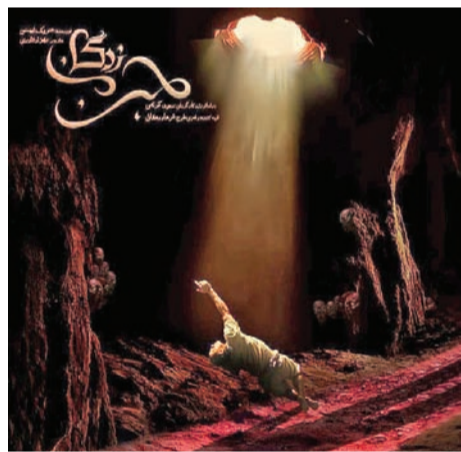
"Cultural cooperation between Iran and China is already underway. For instance, the "Splendor of Ancient Iran" exhibition is cur-

rently being held in three major Chinese cities. Additionally, significant progress has been made in teaching the Persian language in recent years. Today, over ten universities are training talented individuals to contribute to the future of relations between the two countries in the field of Persian language education.

For this reason, we welcome every effort to expand cultural and artistic collaborations between Iran and China," he noted.

At the end of the meeting, the two sides expressed hope that the continuation of these relations would pave the way for further growth and expansion in cultural and artistic arenas.

## Shahzad Theater Complex to host Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts"



TEHRAN-the play "Ghosts" written by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen will be staged at the Shahzad Theater Complex in Tehran from January 27.

Saeed Karimi has directed the play that has Peyman Mohseni, Maryam Hajizadeh, Ha-

midreza Farahani, Nesa Yousefi, and Abolfazl Salahshour in the cast, Honaronline reported.

A drama in three acts, the play was published in 1881. It is an attack on conventional morality and on the results of hypocrisy. The plot follows the Alving family as they confront the dark secrets that are embedded in their past and present.

Ostensibly a discussion of congenital venereal disease, "Ghosts" also deals with the power of ingrained moral contamination to undermine the most determined idealism. Although the lecherous Captain Alving is in his grave, his ghost will not be laid to rest. The memorial that Helen, his conventionally-minded widow, has erected to his memory burns down even as his son Oswald goes insane from inherited syphilis and his illegitimate daughter slips inexorably toward her destiny in a brothel.

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) was a major

Norwegian playwright of the late 19th century who introduced to the European stage a new order of moral analysis that was placed against a severely realistic middle-class background and developed with economy of action, penetrating dialogue, and rigorous thought.

As one of the founders of modernism in theater, Ibsen is often referred to as "the father of realism" and the most influential playwright of the 19th century, as well as one of the most influential playwrights in Western literature more generally.

His major works include "A Doll's House," "An Enemy of the People," "The Wild Duck," "Hedda Gabler," "The Master Builder," and "When We Dead Awaken." Ibsen is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare. The play will remain on stage for a month at Shahzad Theater Complex located at No. 74, Neauphle-le-Château St., Hafez St.

## Tehran cinematheque to host "The Quiet Girl"

TEHRAN- The Cinematheque of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) will screen Irish film director Colm Bairéad's 2022 movie "The Quiet Girl" on Friday.

The screening will be followed by a review session, Mehr reported.

Set in the summer of 1981 in rural Ireland, "The Quiet Girl" follows the journey of nine-year-old Cáit, who is one of several siblings living in a household marked by poverty and parental neglect.

Struggling with her place in both family and school, Cáit experiences feelings of shame and isolation, exemplified by an incident at school where she spills milk on herself. With her mother expecting another child, her family decides to send her to live with distant relatives, middle-aged cousins Eibhlin Cinnsealach and her husband Sean, hoping to provide her with a more stable environment.

Upon her arrival at the Cinnsealach home, Cáit is warmly welcomed by Eibhlin, who showers her with kindness and teaches her the responsibilities of farm life. Eibhlin introduces her to a deep well on the property, warning her of the dangers while also providing a sense of security.

Initially, Cáit is dressed in boys'

clothes after her suitcase is left behind, but Eibhlin compassionately buys her new dresses, allowing Cáit to embrace her femininity.

Sean, however, is more stoic and distant at first, casting an emotional shadow. An early incident highlights this: when Cáit wanders away from him during chores and he scolds her, she runs away in fear. Yet, this moment acts as a catalyst for their relationship.

After this tension, Sean gradually opens up, engaging Cáit in sweet rituals like running for the mail and praising her speed. A bond builds between them, adding depth to the narrative as Cáit feels a burgeoning sense of belonging.

However, the tranquility of her new life is disrupted during a wake attended by the family. While they console friends, a gossipy neighbor takes Cáit under her wing, revealing a painful history: the Cinnsealachs lost a young son who drowned in their slurry pit. This revelation unsettles the family when Cáit shares it later, indicating the lingering shadows of grief that haunt them.

As summer draws to a close, Cáit's mother has given birth, prompting the Cinnsealachs to

prepare for her return home in time for school. Emotions run high, with each family member feeling the impending loss.

In a moment of distress, Cáit attempts to retrieve water from the well but falls in, prompting a frantic search by Eibhlin. The caring woman rescues her, and Cáit develops a cold amidst the emotional turmoil.

Ultimately, as the Cinnsealachs return Cáit to her biological family, the contrasting dynamics are stark. Her parents' indifference sharply contrasts with the warmth she received in her temporary home.

As her parents drive away, Cáit feels a surge of longing and desperation. Sprinting after their car, she manages to catch up, embracing Sean while her eyes catch Eibhlin's tear-filled gaze.

In that moment, with her father approaching menacingly, Cáit grapples with her conflicting loyalties, whispering 'Daddy' as she wrestles with the reality of her situation. The film captures the themes of belonging, loss, and the complexities of familial love.

Adapted from Claire Keegan's 2010 short story "Foster," "The Quiet Girl" stars Catherine Clinch, Carrie Crowley, and Andrew Bennett. Premiering at the 72nd Ber-

lin International Film Festival, it received critical acclaim and numerous awards.

"The Quiet Girl" broke box office records for an Irish-language film, becoming the highest-grossing film in this category, surpassing the previous record held by "Arracht" (2021).

The film received overwhelming critical acclaim, boasting a 97 percent approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes based on 146 reviews, with an average rating of 8.7/10.

Accolades for "The Quiet Girl" include ten nominations at the 18th Irish Film & Television Awards (IFTAs) in March 2022, winning seven categories, including Best Film and Best Director. Notably, it was the first Irish-language film to be showcased and win at the Berlin Film Festival.

In December 2022, it became the first Irish-language film to be shortlisted for an Oscar in the Best International Feature Film category, ultimately earning a nomination at the 95th Academy Awards, marking a historic moment for Irish cinema.

The film received multiple nominations and awards across various festivals, celebrating its significant artistic achievements.