



Composite image shows Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the IRGC Navy, with the backdrop of an Iranian naval vessel engaged in military maneuvers on January 24, 2025, in Iran's southern waters

Exclusive

IRGC Navy commander talks to Tehran Times as he oversees drills in Persian Gulf and Hormuz Strait:

2,400km of Iran's Coast Fortified with Network of Hardened Underground Bases

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Iran-Russia treaty signals indifference to external pressures: Pezeshkian

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian says the strategic agreement between Iran and Russia marks a significant moment in both countries' efforts to secure their sovereignty and resist external pressures from powers with expansionist ambitions.

In an exclusive interview with Russia's TV Channel 1, Pezeshkian underscored that Iran is a long-established nation and will not be shaped by the frameworks or desires of those seeking to impose their will on the region.

"We are here to stay," he declared, stressing that the comprehensive agreement signed with Russia signals a commitment to long-term partnership and regional stability.

Pezeshkian elaborated on the details of the agreement, which encompasses 47 clauses addressing political, security, and economic cooperation between the two nations. ► Page 2

Fractured alliances: Trump's divided coalition on Iran

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – Since Donald Trump took office as the 47th U.S. president, the supposed unity that once characterized his support base against the Democratic Party has begun to fracture, revealing deep-seated divisions over the country's foreign policy, particularly concerning Iran.

The Trump administration, now navigating its second term, faces a pivotal moment where past policies and new appointments could either mend or widen these rifts.

The recent act of U.S.-Iran relations under Trump has been shaped by the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), from which Trump, under the enormous influence of the Israel Lobby, withdrew in 2018, reinstating harsh sanctions against Iran and waging economic warfare against its population.

This move set the stage for a policy of "maximum pressure" that supposedly aimed to curb Iran's civilian nuclear program and regional influence.

In a separate series of actions, the Trump administration designated the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) as a foreign terrorist organization and, in early 2020, assassinated General Qassem Soleimani, a highly venerated Iranian military leader who was in Iraq on a peace mission. ► Page 3

Iranian short animation "In the Shadow of the Cypress" receives nomination at Oscars 2025

TEHRAN-The Iranian short animated movie "In the Shadow of the Cypress," co-directed by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani received a nomination for the Best Animated Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced nominations on Thursday for the Oscars 2025, where the Iranian flick will compete with four other short animations including the Belgian-French-Dutch short "Beautiful Men," "Magic Candies" from Japan, Dutch animation "Wander to Wonder," and "Yuck!" from France.

A 2023 production of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (known as Kanoon), the animated movie has participated in many international festivals and grabbed several awards, ISNA reported. ► Page 8

Double defiance: US, Israel team up to violate Lebanon's territorial integrity

TEHRAN – Israel's decision to prolong the occupation of Lebanon has underscored its expansionist aspirations, particularly in light of what appears to be tacit approval from the United States.

The Israeli premier said on Friday that the regime's army will not withdraw from southern Lebanon by the 60-day deadline set under a ceasefire agreement with the Hezbollah resistance movement.

"The IDF withdrawal is conditional upon the Lebanese army deploying in southern Lebanon. Since the ceasefire agreement has not yet been fully enforced by Lebanon, the gradual withdrawal process will continue, in full coordination with the United States," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

Israel refuses to withdraw from south Lebanon

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON – On the eve of the expiration of the 60-day truce, and in conjunction with the formation of the new Lebanese cabinet, attention is focused on south Lebanon as Beirut continues to demand decision-makers in Washington and Paris to pressure Tel Aviv to withdraw from the occupied territories.

During his meeting with US General Jasper Jeffers, head of the 5-member committee, Nabih Berri, Speaker of Parliament, refused to extend the truce "even for a single day." Berri informed Jeffers that Israel "would not dare to proceed with the extension without the approval of the US administration."

Meanwhile, the Lebanese army and UNIFIL are on alert in anticipation of any developments on Sunday morning as the deadline expires, as residents insist on returning to their border villages and towns.

Israeli regime expands Jenin invasion

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Israeli forces expanded their deadly assault on Jenin in the occupied West Bank on Friday, marking the fourth consecutive day of the ongoing invasion.

Armed clashes have taken place between Palestinian resistance fighters and Israeli occupation forces (IOF) in Qabatiya, a town more than ten kilometers south of Jenin city.

Residents said an explosion shook the town on Friday amid intense drone activity in the area.

Reports say the IOF surrounded a house in Qabatiya, firing Energa shells at it as troops raided nearby homes.

The IOF deployed additional reinforcements to Qabatiya, accompanied by an Apache helicopter.

The occupation forces have turned the vicinity of Jenin's refugee camp, adjacent to the city, into a launching pad for raids against the towns of Qabatiya as well as Ya'bad, which is located 20 kilometers west of Jenin.

Hamas wins war, Israel takes the wooden spoon

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Israeli officials are spilling the beans on their army's failed strategy in the Gaza Strip in the wake of the implementation of a ceasefire with Hamas.

A former general has emerged as the most recent individual who has admitted that the Israeli army finished up with the wooden spoon after failing to defeat Hamas in the course of the 15-month war against Gaza.

Retired Major General Itzhak has debunked claims about undermining Hamas' combat capabilities, describing such assertions as mere "pipe dreams".

"Today, the army is small after being downsized for 20 years, so it is incapable of defeating Hamas or Hezbollah. All the celebrations, as if we have won and destroyed them, are nonsense," he told the Israeli media.

The former general acknowledged Israel had to agree to the ceasefire out of desperation.

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Over 80 Iranian universities in THE WUR by subject 2025

TEHRAN –The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (WUR) 2025 has placed 81 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world in 10 out of 11 subject areas, compared to 73 universities in 2024.

These ten subject rankings include arts and humanities; business and economics; clinical and health; computer science; education; engineering; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; and social sciences. The eleventh subject is Law.

The Ranking includes 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five core pillars of evaluation: teaching (evaluates teaching reputation, student-to-staff ratio, doctorate-to-bachelor ratio, doctorate-to-bachelor ratio and institutional income). ► Page 7



President participates in construction of a school in Ahvaz

TEHRAN- On his third provincial visit, President Masoud Pezeshkian and his cabinet traveled to Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, on Thursday (January 23). In addition to inaugurating and visiting several development projects in the province, the president, while visiting the project to build a 15-class school in one of the deprived and densely populated areas of Ahvaz, the capital city of Khuzestan, personally participated in the construction of a part of the wall of this school.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The West's coercion technique in negotiations

In a note, Kayhan addressed the new round of negotiations with the West and the reformists' reception of the talks. It wrote: Reformist media believe that the U.S. President is probably trying to avoid taking a harsh position against Iran so that the path to dialogue to resolve the nuclear issue will not be blocked. It seems that in the coming weeks and months, the official U.S. position toward Iran will become clearer, and these positions will probably focus on reducing tension and finding solutions to the problems. One way to impose negotiations is to use the "threat and coercion" technique. The U.S. and Europe have previously used this technique many times to try to contain Iran and prevent it from achieving its indisputable right in the nuclear field. For this purpose, the European troika (Britain, France, and Germany) tried to threaten Iran with the trigger (snapback) mechanism some time ago.

This is while those who pretending support for reforms ignore this issue and are seeking to trade Iran's power by repeatedly insisting on negotiations. It seems that the West is weakening Iran's role in the region by creating a negative atmosphere against Iran's nuclear program and using hegemonic techniques. This is while reformists ignore this policy and technique by insisting on negotiations with the United States. The goal of American officials in negotiating with Iran is containment.

Iran: Tehran's voice in Davos

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper discussed the trip of Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Vice President for Strategic Affairs, to the 55th World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. It said: The purpose of Zarif's trip was to explain the policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region and the world.

His consultations with the officials present at this global meeting were to some extent influenced by important challenges such as the (Iran) nuclear file, but his other goal was to elaborate on one of the main slogans of the Pezeshkian government, namely de-escalation and active and balanced relations with the East and the West. The realization of this idea is not possible without dynamic diplomacy.

Zarif sought to present a clear picture of Iran's principled goals and demands to neutralize the anti-Iran narrative and repair relations with regional powers. He emphasized that Iran is not a threat to global security, and that some countries are trying to present a false image of the country by promoting Iranophobia.

Yerevan prioritizes relations with Tehran, declares Armenia PM

TEHRAN – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has underscored his country's commitment to fostering transparent and balanced relations with Iran, during his speech at the Davos conference.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 55th World Economic Forum in Davos, Pashinyan emphasized that Armenia values its strategic ties with Iran, highlighting the importance of maintaining open communication and cooperation amidst shifting regional dynamics.

"We are seeking balanced relations with the European Union, Russia, and Iran. Armenia's relationship with Iran, in particular, is extremely important to us," said Pashinyan, emphasizing the significance of the country's ties with its neighbors and partners.

Pashinyan outlined the central tenets of Armenia's foreign policy, describing it as a deliberate approach to balance and moderation.

Pashinyan's remarks also included a reflection on Armenia's ongoing efforts to broker peace with Azerbaijan, a process he acknowledged as difficult but not insurmountable. "We are working toward a peace agreement with Azerbaijan, and while the task is challenging, I do not believe it is impossible," he said.

The Prime Minister also noted Armenia's evolving relationship with the European Union, explaining that the country has decided to align more closely with the EU while continuing to maintain open communication with Russia and Iran.

"We are forging stronger ties with the EU, but we continue to discuss our positions with Iran and Russia. We aim to maintain a unified approach with all our international partners,"

Arman-e-Melli: US return to talks not easy

Arman-e-Melli interviewed international relations analyst Dr. Pirouz Mojtahedzadeh to analyze and examine the prospects of negotiations with Trump. He said: Trump's statements at the inauguration ceremony have led the atmosphere in a direction that seems his administration is going to pursue a policy of maximum pressure against Iran again.

To analyze the existing realities, we must rectify this vision that Iran as a regional power and the United States as a global power should not be seen equally in terms of competition. Iran is engaged in competitions at the regional level, which are not relevant globally. Tehran's competition with the United States is related to Iran's issues in the region and relations with Middle East countries.

World powers should not interfere in the formation of creating balance in our region. If Iran is pursuing its interests in this region, it must reach a level of influence that foreign actors cannot play a role in the equation of this region.

Bringing the United States to the negotiating table with Iran won't be easy and other paths should be followed that have their own difficulties.

Shargh: Bin Farhan's claims are merely rhetorical

Shargh analyzed the Saudi Foreign Minister's remarks in Davos in which he played down the risk of an Israel-Iran war due to Trump's return to the White House.

It said: Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan recently talked about the need to de-escalate tension between Tehran and Tel Aviv. It seems that the statements of the head of the Saudi diplomatic service cannot be unrelated to the political changes and developments in Washington.

It must be said that the positions of the Saudi foreign policy officials are merely diplomatic rhetoric. Given the current situation and considering the return of Donald Trump to the White House, there is no possibility of a direct clash between Iran and Israel in a short time.

Moreover, Netanyahu's government is on the verge of collapse. To avoid the fall of his coalition cabinet, Netanyahu will either seek major tension with Tehran, which is unlikely to happen with the coming to power of Donald Trump, or he must wait for the fall of the cabinet and early elections.



he added.

Pashinyan stressed the necessity of a balanced approach in foreign policy, stating, "A balanced foreign policy is the only pragmatic path forward."

He acknowledged the risks associated with periods of change but also pointed to the opportunities that arise from such times. "While times of change carry inherent risks, they also present significant opportunities. Our task is to manage the risks and make the most of these opportunities," Pashinyan explained.

Earlier, Armenia's Foreign Minister, Ararat Mirzoyan, who had just returned from Moscow, underscored the strong relationship between Armenia, Iran, and Russia.

He noted that Armenian officials are in regular contact with their Russian and Iranian counterparts, with issues being addressed in a spirit of mutual understanding.

"Armenia's diplomatic engagement with Russia and Iran is grounded in open dialogue and mutual respect, and we resolve matters through constructive cooperation," Mirzoyan affirmed.

Iran-Russia treaty signals indifference to external pressures: Pezeshkian

From page 1 ▶ On January 17, Iranian President and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin inked the agreement during an official signing ceremony in Moscow. The agreement is structured into several key areas, with the first 12-13 clauses focused on security and political matters, and the remaining sections addressing economic collaboration, including initiatives in energy, infrastructure, and trade.

The treaty builds upon the first strategic cooperation pact signed between the two countries in 2001. Efforts to devise a new agreement began in 2019 and ended in July 2024.

"The goal is to foster cooperation across a wide range of sectors," Pezeshkian explained, noting the significance of the commitment to work together for peace, security, and development in the region.

One of the critical aspects of the agreement, as highlighted by Pezeshkian, is the commitment to mutual defense in the event of an attack on either country.

He confirmed that the agreement stipulates that neither Iran nor Russia will cooperate with external forces if they face aggression, signaling a deeper strategic security alignment between the two countries.

"This is just the beginning of a long-term partnership," he stated, with further negotiations expected



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) talks to Russian TV Channel 1 during his visit to Moscow, Russia.

to expand cooperation in the defense sector.

Pezeshkian also addressed the international criticism directed at Iran, particularly from Western countries, which often accuse Iran of supporting terrorism despite the nation's long-standing role in regional stability.

"No evidence has been presented to show that Iran started a war anywhere," he remarked, questioning the hypocrisy of Western nations that support military actions by Israel while condemning Iran.

He pointed out the contradictions in the global narrative, particularly regarding the U.S. and Europe's defense of Israel despite its actions in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria.

"The Zionist regime's violations

of international law are clear, yet the U.S. and Europe continue to support them," he said, calling attention to the double standards that dominate international politics.

Pezeshkian also reiterated that Iran's stance on nuclear weapons remains consistent, asserting that Iran has never sought nuclear weapons and has always operated in accordance with its principles of peace and justice.

He criticized the international community for spreading misinformation and painting Iran as a threat to global security. "We are not seeking nuclear weapons," he affirmed, stressing that Iran's foreign policy is driven by a commitment to justice, not aggression.

On the issue of anti-Semitism, Pezeshkian responded firmly to claims that Iran is hostile to Jews, emphasizing that Iran respects all religions.

"We are not against anyone," he said, highlighting that Iran has always protected its Jewish population and other religious communities. He underscored the shared values of justice and fairness in all major world religions, citing the teachings of Prophet Moses and Jesus Christ as examples of the universal commitment to peace and kindness.

"Every religion teaches us not to bow to oppression," he explained, stressing that Iran's position is rooted in these fundamental values of justice, peace, and respect for all people.

Regarding regional developments, Pezeshkian reflected on the ongoing challenges in Syria, Armenia, and Turkey, acknowledging the complexities of Iran's relations with its neighbors.

Despite these challenges, he reiterated that Iran's strategy remains focused on peace, sovereignty, and cooperation with countries that respect international law and regional stability.

"We stand with countries that uphold justice and peace," he said, reinforcing Iran's commitment to working with like-minded nations to counter aggression and foster stability in the region.

Tehran says UN chief's remarks on its nuclear program 'audacious'



TEHRAN – The Iranian foreign minister on Thursday described as "audacious" UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' remarks about Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, reaffirming Tehran's "longstanding commitment" to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In a post on X, Abbas Araghchi censured Guterres for preaching Iran for its civilian nuclear program and even signed the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, (JCPOA), but was abandoned by the United States.

Araghchi also pointed to a fatwa (religious decree) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution that bans the production, possession and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) including nuclear weapons.

"It is audacious to preach that Iranians must 'once and for all make it clear that they will renounce to have nuclear weapons,'" the foreign minister pointed out.

The chief diplomat added, "Iran's longstanding commitment to the global nonproliferation regime is clear."

Speaking about the situation in West Asia at the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday, the UN secretary general said Iran must make it clear that it does not seek to build nuclear arms, saying, "The most relevant question is Iran and relations between Iran, Israel and the United States."

The UN chief added, "Here my hope is that the Iranians understand that it is important to once and for all make it clear that they will renounce to have nuclear weapons, at the same time that they engage constructively with the other countries of the region."

The Iranian foreign minister also noted that the

most relevant question regarding the region is Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, as well as the regime's occupation of Palestinian, the Syrian and Lebanese territories.

He further warned of the threat posed by Israel's nuclear arsenal and its refusal to join the NPT.

Israel is estimated to possess 200 nuclear warheads, making it the sole possessor of non-conventional arms in West Asia.

The Israeli regime does not allow inspections of its nuclear facilities and rebuffed a Middle East without

nuclear weapons.

Araghchi calls for protection of minority groups in Syria during phone call with Turkish counterpart

In a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi emphasized the importance of safeguarding the rights of minority groups in Syria under the country's new leadership.

The two diplomats discussed a range of issues, including the evolving situation in Syria and the state of bilateral relations between their countries.

Araghchi reiterated Iran's unwavering commitment to supporting Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a core pillar of the country's foreign policy. He stressed the necessity of halting the ongoing conflicts between various factions in Syria, advocating for an inclusive government that represents all of the country's diverse political, ethnic, and religious groups.

Expressing concern over reports of actions taken by certain armed factions against civilians in regions predominantly inhabited by Shias and Alawites, Araghchi called for an end to violence targeting these communities. He specifically referred to troubling reports about militant groups, including the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group, which seized control of Damascus on December 8.

In the aftermath of Assad's downfall, Syria has seen significant military escalations. Israel has launched multiple attacks, destroying Syrian naval vessels, sea-to-sea missiles, helicopters, and planes, including the entire fleet of MiG-29 fighter jets. These strikes have targeted key Syrian military installations, including several air bases.

Iran criticizes West's double standards in human rights, calls for accountability over sanctions

TEHRAN – Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's Deputy Minister for Legal and International Affairs, has sharply criticized the double standards and biased human rights mechanisms that he claims are undermining global justice.

Speaking at the 48th session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group in Geneva, Switzerland, Gharibabadi, who heads Iran's

delegation, condemned the political manipulation of human rights issues, particularly the selective enforcement of standards that he argues unfairly target developing countries like Iran.

At the meeting, which was convened at Iran's initiative, Gharibabadi expressed the country's deep concerns about the global human rights landscape, accusing

the so-called champions of human rights of using these issues to serve their own political agendas.

"The self-proclaimed leaders of human rights have not only imposed unjust sanctions on Iran but have also supported terrorist groups, directly infringing on the rights of the Iranian people," he said, emphasizing that these actions were an affront to interna-

tional human rights norms.

The diplomat continued, accus-

ing Western powers of hypocrisy, stating, "They shamelessly accuse us of human rights violations while violating the rights of their own citizens and people in other parts of the world."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

2,400km of Iran's coast fortified with network of hardened underground bases

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Last week, Iranian television unveiled an underground base of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy in the Persian Gulf that made immediate headlines.

The facility, housing numerous fast-attack craft, was widely viewed as a critical component of Iran's naval strategy, both defensive and offensive.

This view seems to be accurate, with Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the IRGC Navy, confirming its strategic importance in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, where he discussed the development and significance of this and similar bases, and emphasized their role in safeguarding Iranian interests in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

"For years, we meticulously studied our adversaries' movements," Tangsiri stated. "Guided by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's directive to cultivate naval capabilities befitting the values and principles of the Islamic Revolution, we have achieved exactly that."

The military official made the remarks hours before overseeing the launch of extensive military drills on Friday.

These ongoing maneuvers, encompassing vast areas of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, are part of broader exercises that various branches of the Iranian Armed Forces began earlier this year.

Tangsiri explained that Iran has developed various strategies and weapons systems to counter threats in its southern waters.

One such measure involves the deployment of missile-equipped fast attack craft, which are also armed with smart mines and rockets and can engage in electronic warfare.

"These boats," he explained, "are among the fastest ever produced, and their weaponry is



characterized by both precision and power."

He added that Iran's strategy is to position these craft in numerous deep underground bases along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

"While I cannot disclose the exact number of these bases," Tangsiri stated, "I can confirm that we have utilized the entire 2,440-kilometer southern coastline of Iran."

According to Tangsiri, each fast-attack boat is equipped with specialized mobile platforms, enabling rapid deployment.

"Our adversaries will never know when scores of these lethal boats will suddenly engage them.

Moreover, these bases are impossible to precisely locate or destroy. They are fortified even against bunker-buster bombs."

The IRGC Navy showcased a glimpse of this potential on Friday.

Footage released by the IRGC depicts a portion of the exercises where scores of high-speed boats rapidly approach a sea target, and then overwhelm it with direct fire.

Iran's investment in fast attack craft: a reminiscence of its drone success

Iran's military thinkers and manufacturers have established a reputation for their innovative solutions, often adopting methods that other countries have overlooked.

A prime example of this is their strategic investment in drone technology, an area long overlooked by many major powers.

Rather than solely investing in costly fighter jets, Iran has focused on developing affordable and effective kamikaze drones.

These drones cost only a couple thousand dollars, can travel hundreds of kilometers, and bring only success to their deployers: they either hit their targets or bleed the enemy's financial resources as it's forced to expend disproportionately expensive air defense assets for interception.

Iranian drones have become world leaders in their class, and some Western think tanks fear they could reshape the future of global conflicts. This innovative approach now extends to naval capabilities.

After last week's unveiling of an underground base packed with fast attack craft, many are

now wondering whether these vessels will emerge as the next Iranian sensation in the military domain.

"If we were to draw an analogy," explained seasoned war reporter Mehdi Bakhtiari, "you can imagine a bear being attacked by wasps.

A single sting won't do much harm, but a large swarm of these angry insects can be extremely dangerous. I believe these Iranian vessels function similarly."

He elaborated, noting that while the Iranian [Artesh] Navy focuses on activities in distant territories and waters, the IRGC naval forces are responsible for safeguarding Iranian assets in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and the Strait of Hormuz.

"As potential targets would all be in close proximity, the IRGC has opted for equipment that does not require constant deployment on the water.

The fast attack craft, stored in hardened and protected underground bases, can rapidly become operational and reach their aims quickly. It is also not easy to target them.

Finally, like Iranian drones, these vessels incorporate crucial new capabilities, the result of meticulous effort and focused development."

Fractured alliances: Trump's divided coalition on Iran

From Page 1 ▶ Following the assassination of General Soleimani, Iran retaliated by launching missile strikes on American military bases in Iraq. These attacks, representing the first direct offensive against a U.S. base since World War II, caused several American service members to become "brain-dead," according to U.S. media reports. Even though some may have perceived it as a monolith, the Trump coalition now delineates into two contrasting factions:

Group A: The Extremist Zionists and War Hawks

This faction, comprising figures like Marco Rubio, Pete Hegseth, Mike Waltz, Michael Huckabee, and Miriam Adelson, fervently promotes a belligerent U.S. presence in West Asia, with a narrow-minded focus on propping up the Israeli regime at any cost.

Their stance on Iran is rooted in hostility and escalatory measures, pushing for aggressive military strategies or crippling economic sanctions to eliminate what they claim to perceive as a dire threat to Israel's colonialism and supposed regional order.

Group B: The "America First" Advocates

In stark contrast, this faction, led by personalities like JD Vance, Elbridge Colby, Mike DiMino, Tucker Carlson, Thomas Massie, and Rand Paul, prioritizes domestic issues and strategic competition with China over entanglements in West Asia. They argue for a policy that minimizes U.S. military involvement in West Asia, focusing instead on strengthening America's borders, economy, and regional influence in the Americas.

The appointment of DiMino for deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East [West Asia], with his background of realistically advocating for restraint with Iran, and Colby's skepticism towards military action against Tehran, signals a shift towards a more diplomatic or at least less confrontational approach.

Recent developments and signs regarding Trump's Iran policy, reflect the influence of both groups, as well as his instinct and ini-

tiation: Trump's recent comments on possibly negotiating a deal with Iran, while not endorsing direct talks, suggest a willingness to explore diplomatic avenues.

This is further underscored by the role of Steve Witkoff, who, after his alleged role in pushing Israel to accept the ceasefire in Gaza, is now tasked with managing Iran diplomacy, according to the Financial Times. Trump was asked during an Oval Office event whether he would pick Witkoff for the role, and whether he'd ask Witkoff to speak directly to the Iranians.

Within the Trump administration, two groups appear to hold different policy positions concerning Iran. One group prioritizes diplomatic engagement, while the other contends that confrontation must be the initial action. Their end goal, however, is the same

He said "no," seemingly to the latter question about direct talks, while adding that Witkoff was "certainly someone I would use" and strongly praising his work on Gaza.

However, the inclusion of Rubio, Waltz, and other war hawks in Trump's administration may dangerously sway him towards belligerent actions against Iran, pushing for extreme "maximum pressure" tactics and even military strikes, thereby escalating tensions to a perilous level. Some may interpret the revocation of security details for Iran hawks like Mike Pompeo, Brian Hook, and John Bolton as a move away from the "maximum pressure" campaign.

However, this could also be seen as a reaction to personal or loyalty issues rather than a definitive policy shift.

Hawks are louder, but end goals are the same

To help explain this perceived dichotomy in the Trump Administration, the Tehran Times spoke to Mohammed Mehdi Abbasi, an expert on U.S. affairs. Abbasi noted that "Witkoff and others who support diplomacy, as well as pressure from Trump himself, were instrumental in reaching the recent ceasefire in Gaza, despite opposition from individuals warmongers like Rubio and Waltz."

The expert also highlighted that the Gaza ceasefire was seen as a major victory for Hamas and a setback for the Israeli regime.

"Tweets from figures like Tom Cotton and Nikki Haley, as well as other war hawks, suggested that they were displeased with the Gaza ceasefire, viewing it as a defeat for Israel. The first serious disagreement between these two factions was over Gaza, and the second issue, which has recently become prominent, is Iran." "However, it should be noted that individuals from Group B, like Elbridge Colby, are not necessarily opposed to maximum pressure or even military options against Iran," Abbasi added. He argues that they may initially seek diplomacy, but if it fails, they will resort to maximum pressure and possibly military options, as they too seek to render Iran powerless. "We are facing one of the most anti-Iranian and extremist cabinets in U.S. history. It seems like 80% of the cabinet is from Israel's Likud party rather than the Republican Party," Abbasi emphasized.

He added that "in such an environment, individuals from Group B, assuming they genuinely support diplomacy with Iran, will face many challenges and obstruction from figures like Rubio, Hegseth, Waltz, and even Republican senators like Lindsey Graham and Ted Cruz from Group A."

He concluded that Trump might say today, "I just want Iran not to be nuclear," but some of his cabinet members and other key figures around him do not agree and are even more confrontational against Iran.

SPORTS

Iran discover fate at 2025 AFC U17 Asian Cup



TEHRAN – Iran are drawn in Group D of the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025.

The 16 teams participating in the U17 Asian Cup have learned their fates following the draw conducted on Thursday at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The 16 teams, divided into four groups, will not only be bidding for the coveted trophy but also for the eight spots at the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025 – the first edition of the newly expanded 48-team strong annual tournament.

Hosts Saudi Arabia, seeking a third title, will face Uzbekistan, Thailand and China in Group A with the top two sides to advance to the quarter-finals. Group B will see defending champions Japan being challenged by Australia, Vietnam and United Arab Emirates while Korea Republic will square off against Yemen, Afghanistan and Indonesia in Group C.

Top seeds Iran can expect stiff resistance from Tajikistan, Oman and DPR Korea in Group D.

The AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 will be held on April 3-20.

Draw Result

Group A: Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Thailand, China PR

Group B: Japan, Australia, Vietnam, United Arab Emirates

Group C: Korea Republic, Yemen, Afghanistan, Indonesia

Group D: Iran, Tajikistan, Oman, DPR Korea

Iordanescu emerging as latest candidate for Persepolis

TEHRAN – Romanian coach Edward "Edi" Marius Iordanescu has emerged as the latest candidate for the head coach position at Persepolis Football Club.

Reports indicate that Persepolis General Manager Reza Darvish recently met with Iordanescu in Istanbul, Turkey.

Initially, Darvish traveled to Istanbul to negotiate with former Fenerbahçe coach Ismail Kartal, but no agreement has been reached yet.

As a result, Persepolis is now considering Iordanescu as a potential replacement.

The defending champion currently sits fourth in the Iranian football league.

Iran U20 hold camp in Dubai

TEHRAN – Iran U20 football team traveled to Dubai, the UAE to hold a one-week training camp. Hossein Abdi's team prepare for the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025.

The young Persians are drawn in Group C along with Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Yemen.

Iran will play Indonesia on February 13 and are scheduled to meet Yemen and Uzbekistan on February 16 and 19.

The 16 teams were drawn into four groups with not just continental glory at stake but also four tickets to the FIFA U-20 World Cup 2025 in Chile.

The 42nd edition of the tournament will take place from February 12 to March 1, 2025.

Draw Result

Group A: China, Australia, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar

Group B: Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, DPR Korea

Group C: Uzbekistan, Iran, Indonesia, Yemen

Group D: Japan, Korea Republic, Syria, Thailand

Esteghlal part company with two players

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team parted company with their Argentine forward Gustavo Blanco Leschuk and defender Saman Fallah.

Blanco, 33, joined the Iranian team last year but failed to meet the expectations.

The Argentine has been reportedly linked with a move to Foolad.

Furthermore, defender Fallah has joined Malavan on loan for the rest of the season.

Esteghlal, headed by Pitso Mosimane, are 11th in the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL)'s 16-team table.

Iraqi midfielder Abdulridha leaves Esteghlal Khuzestan

TEHRAN – The Esteghlal Khuzestan football team parted ways with Iraqi midfielder Moamel Abdulridha.

The 25-year-old winger had joined Esteghlal Khuzestan from the Iraqi side Al-Talaba in the summer.

Abdulridha failed to live up to the expectations in the Ahvaz-based football club.

Esteghlal Khuzestan sit ninth in the Iran Professional League (IPL)'s 16-team table.

Tractor complete signing of Domagoj

TEHRAN – Iranian football club Tractor completed the signing of Croatian winger Domagoj Drozdek on Thursday.

The 28-year-old player has joined Tractor on an 18-month deal.

Drozdek has joined Tractor from Croatian club Apollon Limassol.

Tractor, headed by Dragan Skocic, sits top of the table in the Iran Professional League (IPL) with 35 points.

Nassaji coach Elhami banned for five months

TEHRAN – Nassaji football team head coach Saket Elhami has been banned for five months by the Disciplinary Committee of the Iran's Football Federation.

He made offensive comments against Foolad coach Yayha Golmohammadi at the end of the match between the two teams in the Iran football league.

Elhami has stepped down from his role as Nassaji's head coach.

Former Sepahan coach Moharram Navidkia is a candidate to replace Elhami in Nassaji.

Nassaji sit 15th in the Iran league's 16-team table.

Safarpour named Kazakhstan's taekwondo coach

TEHRAN – Iranian woman Taekwondo coach Fatemeh Safarpour took over the leadership of the Kazakhstan women's national team as a result of the Iranian and Kazakh taekwondo federations cooperation.

Furthermore, Yesbul Sultanov has been named the new head coach of the Kazakhstan national taekwondo men's team.

With a proven track record of success, Sultanov brings a wealth of experience to the role.

Prior to his appointment, Sultanov served as an assistant coach for various age groups within the Kazakh taekwondo federation. His dedication and expertise have been instrumental in developing young talent and fostering a competitive spirit among athletes.

EAEU minister praises Pezeshkian's Moscow visit as milestone in regional trade

TEHRAN - The Minister of Trade of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) described Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Moscow on Friday, January 17, 2025, as significant and successful.

According to IRNA, citing the Iranian Embassy in Moscow, Andrey Slepnev made these remarks on Thursday during a phone call with Kazem Jalali, Iran's Ambassador to Russia.

Slepnev highlighted the finalization of all legal procedures required for implementing the Iran-EAEU free trade agreement in the union's five member states. He also thanked Iran for its initiative in hosting a specialized trade exhibition with the EAEU in Tehran and expressed his willingness to attend the event.

Kazem Jalali reaffirmed the Iranian government's commitment, under President Pezeshkian's leadership, to strengthening cooperation with regional entities such as the EAEU. He expressed hope that the implementation of the free trade agreement would significantly boost trade volumes between Iran and the region in the near future.

Both sides emphasized the importance of enhancing Iran-EAEU cooperation in the evolving geopolitical landscape during the call.

President allocates over \$1.7b to Khuzestan's infrastructure projects

TEHRAN - President Masoud Pezeshkian, accompanied by several cabinet members, paid a two-day visit to Khuzestan Province to address pressing issues and oversee key development initiatives. The trip resulted in significant decisions aimed at revitalizing the province's economy and infrastructure.

The visit culminated in the approval of 56 projects with a total budget allocation of 890 trillion rials (approximately \$1.78 billion). These projects aim to enhance infrastructure, stimulate economic growth, and improve the quality of life for residents.

During his visit, President Pezeshkian toured the comprehensive wastewater management project in Ahvaz and the eastern bank of the Karun River. He stressed the importance of leveraging the Karun River's potential for tourism, cultural, and sports activities, highlighting its strategic value in promoting regional economic growth.

He also met with local intellectuals and specialists, during which the president underscored the government's commitment to harnessing the scientific and technical expertise of the province's residents for sustainable development. He assured attendees that resolving Khuzestan's challenges remains a priority for his administration.

President Masoud Pezeshkian arrived in Moscow on Friday, January 17, 2025, during the second leg of his visits to Tajikistan and Russia. In Moscow, he held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin on enhancing bilateral ties. The negotiations concluded with the signing of a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty by Pezeshkian and Putin.

Pezeshkian also participated in a meeting with Russian business leaders, which was attended by Andrey Slepnev, the EAEU's Minister of Trade.

The Eurasian Economic Union is an intergovernmental economic bloc comprising Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia. In January 2024, Iran signed a free trade agreement with the EAEU, which is set to take effect two months after the final ratification by the legislatures of the member states. In January 2025, Iran was granted observer status in the union following approval by the leaders of its five member countries.

The third International Eurasian Trade Exhibition is scheduled to be held in Tehran from February 21 to 24, 2025, with the participation of companies from Iran, the EAEU member states, and Uzbekistan.

President Pezeshkian announced that various government ministers would undertake separate visits to Khuzestan to address specific challenges and implement effective solutions. This initiative reflects the administration's dedication to the province's comprehensive development and prosperity.

The president reiterated the government's focus on addressing Khuzestan's critical issues, including water management, infrastructure, and industrial development. He emphasized the necessity of collaborative efforts between the government and local stakeholders to ensure the successful execution of the approved projects.

President Pezeshkian's visit to Khuzestan highlights his administration's proactive approach to addressing the province's economic and social challenges. The approved projects and substantial financial commitment signify a decisive step toward regional development, fostering optimism for the future of Khuzestan.

The allocation of 89 trillion tomans, coupled with the targeted interventions by government officials, positions Khuzestan as a focal point for Iran's national development strategy. As implementation begins, the province is expected to witness a transformative impact on its infrastructure, economy, and overall quality of life.

Loading, unloading of goods increase 2% in Khuzestan ports

TEHRAN - As announced by a provincial official, the loading and unloading of goods in the ports of Khuzestan province, in the southwest of Iran, rose two percent during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - December 21, 2024), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Aboutaleb Geraylou, the director-general of the Ports and Maritime Department of Khuzestan province, said that 37.662 million tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in the ports of province during the nine-month period.

He further announced the arrival of 2,970 vessels carrying all kinds of basic goods, container commodities, mineral and chemical goods, oil and miscellaneous products to Khuzestan ports in the first nine months of the present year.

As previously announced by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the country's ports handled nearly 175 million tons of cargo in the first nine months of the present year.

During this period, 20.83 million tons of oil goods and 39.55 million tons of non-oil goods were unloaded, bringing total unloading operations to 60.38 million tons. Cargo loading operations included 58.84 million tons of oil goods and 55.77 million tons of non-oil goods, totaling 114.61 million tons, IRNA reported.

Combined loading and unloading operations amounted to 174.99 million tons, with 79.67 million tons of oil goods and 95.32 million tons of non-oil goods.

Additionally, Iran's ports handled 2.33 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units) of contain-

ers during this period, reflecting a 14 percent increase compared to 2.05 million TEUs in the same period last year.

The growth in container operations highlights increased efficiency and rising trade volumes at Iranian ports.

Iran's ports have a total nominal capacity of over 260 million tons per year, allowing them to handle a wide range of oil and non-oil commodities. Key ports, such as Shahid Rajaei Port in Hormozgan Province, account for a significant portion of the country's trade activity due to their advanced infrastructure and strategic location along international shipping routes.

Investments in port infrastructure have further enhanced the efficiency of loading and unloading operations, reducing turnaround times for vessels.

The PMO has emphasized the importance of increasing port capacity to accommodate growing trade volumes and support Iran's economic development goals. Upgrades in equipment, digitalization of operations, and expanded storage facilities are part of ongoing efforts to optimize port efficiency.

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

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

Iran, Oman sign MOU on preferential trade, customs cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran and Oman have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on preferential trade and customs cooperation.

According to IRIB, the MOU was signed during the 21st Joint Economic Committee meeting between Iran and Oman which was held in Muscat.

This meeting, described by the Iranian Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade as distinct from the previous 20 gatherings, focused on three key agendas.

Mohammad Atabak, Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade, highlighted the signing of the MOU and elaborated on the meeting's agenda.

The first agenda item addressed the establishment of a preferential trade agreement and the elimination of tariffs between the two countries. Atabak stated that this initiative had been approved, with implementation set to begin next week.

The second agenda item involved supporting joint investments between Iran and Oman. Atabak announced that both nations had reached an agreement on this issue.

The third agenda focused on necessary administrative and customs collaborations to facilitate trade. The minister noted that required planning and task allocation had been completed, and this initiative is expected to yield results shortly.

In meetings with Omani ministers of trade and energy and the chairman of Oman's investment authority on the sidelines of the joint cooperation meeting, the two sides also explored avenues of cooperation in various areas.

Mousa Farhang, Iran's ambassador to Oman, stated that several agreements are in their final stages and are expected to be concluded during upcoming bilateral meetings.

Solutions to facilitate cargo transportation

In a meeting with Oman's Minister of Transport and Communications, Atabak explored strategies to facilitate the transportation of goods, passengers, and commercial exchanges. This discussion aimed to expand economic and trade cooperation between the two nations.

On Wednesday evening, Mohammad Atabak arrived in Oman as the Iranian head of the Joint Iran-Oman Cooperation Committee. The following morning, he held discussions with Oman's transport minister regarding enhanced logistics



and trade.

In early July 2024, the former Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mehdi Zeighami met the director of trade, industry, and investment development from the Sultanate of Oman to discuss areas of joint investment, industrial matters, and financial affairs between the two countries.

Zeighami said at the time that the first round of the talks to establish a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Iran and the Sultanate of Oman was held in Muscat.

The trade and economic relations between the two countries have been consistently improving in recent years, he said, adding that the conclusion of the Preferential Trade Agreement and the establishment of close trade and economic relations in all fields are of paramount importance.

He characterized the trade volume between the two countries in the last Iranian calendar year (ending March 19, 2024) as "unprecedented".

He noted that the initiation of the PTA between the two countries aligns with objectives like bolstering economic relations, augmenting trade volume, creating a safer environment for trade growth, diversifying traded goods, fostering greater competition among businesses, and eliminating trade obstacles faced by both countries.

Also, a business delegation from Oman visited Iran's Imam Khomeini Port in southwestern Khuzestan province in early September 2024 during which they expressed interest in using the commercial capacities of the port for expanding economic ties with Iran.

According to Head of Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce Mohammad-Javad Amani, the business delegation, who arrived in Khuzestan on Saturday, visited Khorramshahr and Arvand Free Trade Zone in order to explore trade opportunities in the area, the portal of Iran Ports

and Maritime Organization (PMO) reported.

During the visit, the two sides concluded several cooperation agreements, and the Omani side emphasized increasing cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries, Amani said.

Referring to the delegation's visit to the Special Economic Zone of Imam Khomeini Port as the country's largest grain trading center, he added: "Port capacities for the supply of goods, transit, the possibility of re-exporting, as well as making large private sector investments in this area were among the issues that were discussed during the visit."

According to the head of Ahvaz Chamber of Commerce, visiting the factories located in the special economic zone of Imam Khomeini Port, familiarizing with the processing products, and examining the available resources and investment requirements in this area, were also among the goals of this economic delegation's trip to Imam Khomeini Port.

During their trip to Khuzestan, the members of the Omani business delegation pointed out the activity of 14 free and special economic zones in Oman and emphasized the interest in developing economic cooperation with Iran, and called for the development of trade and commercial activities between the two sides.

The delegation also visited the loading and unloading operation site of the Imam Khomeini port and became familiar with the port capacities in this regard, according to Amani.

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

Expanding trade with the neighboring countries is one of the major

plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran and Oman have signed two memorandums of understanding (MOU) to boost bilateral cooperation and emphasize the importance of using their national currencies in mutual trade instead of the dollar.

The mentioned MOUs were signed during the two countries' 20th Joint Economic Committee meeting in Tehran on December 6, 2023.

One of the MOUs was signed by Ali-Abadi, and Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion Qais Mohammed Al Yusef on supporting joint investment by the two sides.

Iran's Ministry of Industry and Oman's Chamber of Commerce also signed an MOU to boost cooperation in technology as well.

The two sides have also exchanged views on ways of expanding cooperation in the field of fishery and agriculture, deciding to hold a joint fishery exhibition soon.

During the joint committee meeting, Ali-Abadi announced Iran's readiness to jointly implement key industrial projects with Oman including the construction of an industrial park, the establishment of power plants as well and cooperation in maritime transport projects among others.

The Omani minister on his part emphasized the importance of boosting economic and trade relations between Tehran and Muscat.

During his stay in Tehran, Mohammad Al Yusef also met with Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Mohammad-Reza Farzin, and stressed the importance of using Iranian and Omani national currencies in mutual trade.

The Omani official said his country wants to have a strong presence in establishing the required infrastructure for banking and monetary transactions in Iran, implementing joint projects, as well as making investments in industrial and mineral projects. Omani investors are also keen to participate in energy projects and to develop Iran's gas fields, he added.

The top Iranian banker also said that his country welcomes any measure that helps boost monetary and banking cooperation between the two countries.

Farzin stressed the importance of using national currencies by the two countries in their mutual trade instead of the dollar as well.

Tehran hosts 16th Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN - The 16th meeting of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee was held with the participation of Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister in Tehran.

According to the news portal of Iran's Transport and Urban Development Ministry, the second day of the meeting took place on Wednesday, January 22, with the presence of Farzaneh Sadegh, Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development, and Shahin Mustafayev, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister.

The Iranian minister expressed her satisfaction with the renewed collaboration, stating, "I am delighted to meet again with the esteemed Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan and his accompanying delegation. I hope this meeting marks the beginning of a new chapter in economic cooperation between our two friendly and neighboring nations. The government of President Masoud Pezeshkian is committed to expanding bilateral relations and removing obstacles to cooperation."

She added, "After a hiatus of over three years due to various circumstances, I am pleased that we successfully convened the 16th session of the Joint Economic Committee in Tehran. I hope that by following up on agreements in transportation, customs, energy, oil, gas, electricity, water, banking, preferential trade, investment, and other areas, we can open new avenues of collaboration and witness further growth in bilateral trade relations."

\$583m in bilateral trade over 11 months of 2024

The Iranian head of the committee stated: "In 2023, trade volume between the two countries



amounted to \$487 million, with Iran exporting \$473 million to Azerbaijan and importing \$14 million. Over the first 11 months of 2024, bilateral trade rose to \$583 million, with Iran's exports to Azerbaijan at \$570 million and imports at \$12.9 million."

"The trade potential between our two countries exceeds these figures. A five-year roadmap should be developed to achieve a target of \$10 billion in trade. In this context, I propose drafting a roadmap to resume negotiations for finalizing the preferential trade agreement, thereby expanding the volume of trade," Sadegh emphasized.

She highlighted transit cooperation opportunities, stating: "While notable steps have been taken in recent years to enhance this aspect of our relations, the current capacity in road, rail, air, and maritime transportation between the two nations is far greater than what is currently utilized."

Addressing transit issues and infrastructure development

Sadegh noted the necessity of resolving transit issues, proposing the establishment of a comprehensive transport committee and expert consultations to address these challenges.

Referring to completed and ongoing infrastructure projects, she said: "The second Astara-Astara Bridge was inaugurated last year, a significant step in advancing bilateral transportation. The automobile bridge over the Aras River in the Kalaleh region has made good progress, and we hope its construction will be completed by early spring 2025. The Aghband-Jolfa-Nakhchivan road project is also underway. Additionally, the Astara rail terminal is a critical transit project that requires joint efforts to resolve its challenges and fully realize its potential."

15m ton transit target for INSTC

Sadegh further underlined the importance of regional cooperation, stating: "The trilateral meeting of transport ministers from Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia to activate the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC) with a target of 15 million tons is a key regional initiative. I hope the upcoming meeting on January 28, 2025, in Moscow will result in agreements to enhance transit activities along this corridor."

She also highlighted energy cooperation, saying: "Energy is a strategic area of collaboration between our two countries. I hope issues related to electricity and water will see further development. Additionally, synchronizing the electricity grids for power transit is another joint project that requires solutions to overcome existing challenges."

Double defiance: US, Israel team up to violate Lebanon's territorial integrity

From page 1 ▶ The statement amounts to the blatant violation of the ceasefire that took effect on November 27, 2024.

Michael Herzog, Israel's ambassador to the United States, said on Thursday that the deadline "is not set in stone."

Israel is supposed to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon by Sunday's deadline. They should be replaced by UNIFIL troops, followed by the Lebanese army.

Hezbollah should also move its military infrastructure north of the Litani River.

Israel and Hezbollah began exchanging cross-border fire on October 8, 2023. That was a day after Israel launched war on Gaza.

The Lebanese resistance movement struck Israel's strategic and military sites with drones and missiles to express solidarity with Palestinians in the enclave.

On September 23, 2024, Israel launched a massive bombing campaign in Lebanon and a week later sent its troops into south-



PM Netanyahu says Israel will not comply with a Sunday deadline to withdraw from southern Lebanon as indications from the US suggest that the timeline may be malleable

ern Lebanon. The Israeli army has killed about 4,000 people in Lebanon since October 2023.

Israel has consistently violated the November truce agreement, brokered by the US and France, by carrying out military operations in Lebanon.

Hezbollah warned on Thursday that the Israeli military's failure to pull out of Lebanon would be "considered a brazen

breach of the agreement."

The resistance movement noted that missing the deadline would also constitute an infringement on Lebanese sovereignty.

Meanwhile, the administration of US President Donald Trump appears to be endorsing the prolongation of the Israeli occupation.

According to CNN, a US De-

partment of Defense official implied that the timeline for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon could be malleable.

Netanyahu's far-right allies have already called for reoccupation of southern Lebanon.

"There is no way to restore security to the residents of the north without a war that will destroy Hezbollah, that will reoccupy southern Lebanon," Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said in July.

In October, he also advocated for the creation of a "Jewish state" that would encompass all Palestinian territories and neighboring Arab territories.

Smotrich said this "Jewish state" must extend into Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

For now, Israel is currently providing justifications for the continued presence of its military forces in Lebanon, while the United States is likely to craft a narrative to justify the regime's occupation.

Israel refuses to withdraw from south Lebanon



From page 1 ▶ Hezbollah called for "pressure on the countries sponsoring the agreement, to ensure the implementation of the full withdrawal and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the last inch of Lebanese territory and the return of the residents to their villages quickly."

Hezbollah affirmed that the Israeli enemy's postponement of its withdrawal is "an insistence on violating Lebanese sovereignty... which requires the state to deal with it using all means and methods guaranteed by international conventions to restore the land from the clutches of the

occupation."

Mike Herzog, the Israeli ambassador to Washington, had revealed that "the officials in the administration of President Donald Trump are aware of Israel's security needs."

The Jerusalem Post stated: "The United States is sympathetic to Israel and is exerting more pressure on the Lebanese army and does not want the Israeli army to leave Lebanon on the 60th day of the truce."

The Hebrew newspaper added: "The Israeli army can carry out raids via drones, however, without the presence of ground forces it will achieve very limited goals."

Therefore, Hezbollah will have all the time and opportunities to restore its forces in southern Lebanon."

In an interview with Ynet, Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Sarit Zahavi, President of Alma University, said, "The real test will begin in the coming days to see whether Lebanon has truly changed."

Despite the recent appointment of a president and prime minister without Hezbol-

lah's direct approval, the party's presence in the government is likely to make real change unlikely."

The Hebrew media announced that, as of Sunday, the army will prepare for "symbolic fire by Hezbollah towards Mount Dov [located in the occupied Lebanese Shebaa Farms] in response to the army forces remaining in the eastern sector."

For his part, David Azoulay, head of the Metula local council, expressed deep concern about the security situation on the border, asking, "No one is talking to us."

The army has declared victory, but no one can tell me what will happen next or how security will be ensured."

Moshe Davidovich, head of the Front Line Forum in the northern settlements, also stated that "the [colonial] settlers of the north [of occupied Palestinian territories] have lost faith in the security system."

Therefore, the [IOF] must remain in key positions, and confront any violation with force. We cannot trust anyone but the army."

ISIS resurgence from possibility to reality

By Abouzar Pouradib
PhD student in political science

TEHRAN - With the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria, concerns about the possibility of ISIS resurgence have increased. Some experts believe that ISIS's organizational structure has completely collapsed and is incapable of resurgence, but others believe that the current conditions are ripe for ISIS's revival.

Various aspects of ISIS's possible resurgence are examined:

1- Factors affecting the re-emergence of ISIS:

1-1- Power vacuum: The vacuum resulting from the lack of a strong central government is

considered the most important opportunity for the emergence of extremism and the creation of insecurity and chaos.

1-2- Weak state institutions: Due to the specific political and security conditions of post-Assad Syria, the country's administrative institutions are weak and ISIS and other extremist groups can take control of the situation in such areas.

1-3- Regional instability: Neighboring countries such as Iraq, which are currently fighting the remnants of ISIS, could witness an increase in terrorism and cross-border insurgencies.

1-4- Disillusioned communities: If Syrian internal communities are neglected in the coun-

try's power structure after the fall of Bashar al-Assad, they will be vulnerable to ISIS.

1-5- Competition between extremist groups for power: The chaos after the fall of Assad may lead to competition between extremist groups, and from within this competition, ISIS may re-emerge.

2- Obstacles to ISIS resurgence:

2-1- Global counterterrorism efforts: International coalitions have significantly reduced ISIS's capabilities, and sustained efforts can prevent its resurgence.

2-2- Regional cooperation: Neighboring countries and actors such as the Kurds see their interests in preventing ISIS's re-

surgence.

Establishing a stable and inclusive order in post-Assad Syria is the most important task for regional and global powers to prevent ISIS's resurgence.

2-3- Local resistance: Many communities in Syria have been damaged by the ISIS rule and may resist its return.

3- Signs of ISIS resurgence:

3-1- The number of terrorist attacks that ISIS carried out and claimed responsibility for in Syria in the first six months of 2024 more than doubled compared to the same period in 2023. Between January and July 2024, ISIS carried out 153 terrorist attacks in the country.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump and the rise of technofeudalism: Big tech's growing power and control

By Xavier Villar

MADRID- Several aspects of Donald Trump's inauguration stand out. For example, his imperialist-tinged threats, such as the idea of reclaiming the Panama Canal if the country did not reduce the fees for U.S. ships, or his intention to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. One could also discuss his plans to launch what he himself called the "largest deportation effort" in U.S. history, targeting between 15 and 20 million people living illegally in the country, starting with those he described as "criminals."

However, this article will focus on the staging of his inauguration, where Trump placed the billionaire tech moguls ahead of the members of his own cabinet. During the ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, tech industry leaders such as Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Meta; Tim Cook, CEO of Apple; Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google; Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon; and Elon Musk, CEO of

Tesla, gathered to symbolize the ever-growing relationship between the tech industry and the new president of the United States.

The growing influence of large tech companies, known as Big Tech, is reminiscent of the feudal lords of medieval Europe. This new system has been referred to as technofeudalism.

In classical feudalism, the social structure was strictly hierarchical, with lords who owned the land and serfs or peasants who worked for them in exchange for protection and a portion of the production.

In the contemporary version of the 21st century, it is the large corporations that control essential digital territories: data and online platforms, which have become fundamental pillars of the current economy and society.

In this new model, users of these technologies resemble the serfs of the past, de-

pending on these platforms to perform daily activities ranging from communication and consumption to work and entertainment.

These companies exert an influence over our behaviors and decisions in ways that are not always as voluntary as they may seem. Just as feudal lords controlled land and labor, big tech companies hold disproportionate power over data and access to digital spaces.

This monopoly of power mirrors the feudal structure of the past, where a small elite controls the fundamental resources upon which the majority of the population depends.

It is important to note that the flow of data has surpassed that of physical goods in its contribution to the global GDP.

The rise of technofeudalism compels us to critically reflect on the power of large tech companies in our lives, especially as we enter an era dominated by artificial intelligence.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Hamas wins war, Israel takes the wooden spoon

From page 1 ▶ He noted that if the agreement with Hamas had not been signed, it would have led to a futile war and resulted in the death of all Israeli captives in Gaza.

More than 800 Israeli troops have been killed since Hamas launched the Al-Aqsa Storm. It was a surprise military operation carried out by the resistance movement in southern Israel on October 7, 2023. More than 1,100 people were killed in the operation and about 250 others were taken captive. Dozens of the captives still remain in Gaza.

Shortly after the Hamas attack, Israel went to war with the resistance group. But the regime did not succeed in meeting its military objectives which mainly included "destroying" Hamas and returning all captives.

Ultimately, Israel signed a ceasefire with Hamas which went into force on January 19.

The truce agreement will be executed in three phases, with the expectation that this process will lead to the eventual release of all Israeli captives and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. Further in his remarks, Itzhak warned Israel against violating the ceasefire deal.

He said hundreds of Israeli soldiers would be either killed or injured if Israel decided to do so and resume combat.

The former general added such a "foolish move" would deepen Israel's international isolation. In an implicit reference to growing frustration over Netanyahu's war policy and regular protests in Israel for the return of captives, Itzhak said the Israeli society stands on the brink of civil war.

Previously, senior Israeli officials had warned Netanyahu against the consequences of prolonging the Gaza war.



Yair Lapid is among Israeli officials who have characterized Netanyahu's war ambitions in Gaza as "a failure."

Israel's inability to achieve its military goals has also led to high-profile resignations.

Israel's military chief of staff, Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, announced on Tuesday that he has decided to step down citing his role in failing to prevent the Al-Aqsa Storm.

In a letter to war minister Israel Katz, he said the resignation would go into effect on March 6. He is the most senior Israeli figure to resign since Hamas launched the October 7 offensive.

Following Halevi's resignation announcement, opposition figures in the Knesset demanded that Netanyahu also step down over his role in failing to avert the Hamas attack.

Amid Israel's military setbacks, Donald Trump who took office for the second term on Monday, had exerted pressure on Netanyahu to sign the ceasefire after his army killed more than 47,000 Palestinians in Gaza.

Trump does not care a whit about high civilian casualties in Gaza. The US president is primarily worried that the continuation of the war on Gaza would jeopardize Israel's existence.

Israeli regime expands Jenin invasion



From page 1 ▶ According to Al Jazeera, the IOF later withdrew from Qabatiya after destroying the main roundabout in the town.

This is while reporters on the ground say IOF bulldozers have started destroying infrastructure at the entrance to the town of al-Yamoun, northwest of Jenin.

On Friday morning, Israeli forces launched raids across various parts of the occupied West Bank, during which they arrested Palestinians amid confrontations in multiple areas.

The Israeli military has also tightened the siege on the city of Jenin and its refugee camp after destroying many homes.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been forced to flee the flashpoint city amid the Israeli assault that has seen a hospital placed under siege and indiscriminate firing on residential homes.

Analysts have pointed out that the Israeli army's campaign in Jenin represents its most extensive and aggressive operation to date, underscoring that the occupation is intent on achieving its objective of dismantling Palestinian resistance in the city and obliterating the refugee camp at its heart.

Experts contend that the presence of outgoing Israeli army Chief of Staff, Herzi Halevi, and the head of the Shin Bet, Ronen Bar, during Thursday's raid on the camp is a calculated move as part of the regime's public relations campaign.

Anti-war critics suggest the ongoing devel-

opments in Jenin reflect a deliberate effort by the occupation regime to compensate for its repeated failures in the Gaza Strip, signaling a shift in strategy aimed at reasserting its control.

Whether this will be successful has been subject to a wider debate considering the failure to eliminate Hamas after more than 15 months of genocidal war in Gaza.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces a tough challenge of calming cabinet members outraged by the Gaza ceasefire, many of whom see the truce as a humiliating concession to Hamas and a sign of weakness.

The Palestinian resistance fighters have been fiercely confronting Israeli occupiers in Jenin. On Friday, intense clashes erupted between the resistance forces and Israeli infantry, lasting for hours along two main streets in the heart of the city's refugee camp.

The leader of al-Quds Brigades in the West Bank has underlined what the resistance will reveal: "At the end of the battle, we will prove that the image of victory the enemy failed to achieve in Gaza will not be achieved in the West Bank."

He said, "Since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on Jenin, our heroes have continued to ambush the occupation forces and their military vehicles." Meanwhile, the United Nations Rights Office has expressed deep concern over the use of unlawful lethal force in Jenin, highlighting the alarming escalation of violence and its devastating impact on civilians.

The IOF invasion, which began on Tuesday, has claimed the lives of at least 12 people, including a 65-year-old man, and left dozens injured, including paramedics. In addition, scores of Palestinians have been arrested amid the ongoing indiscriminate assault.

The Israeli occupation has also choked the entire West Bank with the establishment of 898 military checkpoints alongside its demolition campaign in Jenin.

The fallacy of the Abraham Accords

By Khaled Elgindy

U.S. President Donald Trump's efforts to cement his legacy in the Middle East were well underway even before he reclaimed the White House.

"There's just no way that President Trump isn't going to be interested in trying to expand the Abraham Accords," Jason Greenblatt, Trump's former Middle East envoy, told thousands of international delegates at Qa-

tar's Doha Forum in December.

The Abraham Accords, a series of normalization deals signed in 2020 by Israel and Bahrain, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates, remain Trump's signature foreign policy achievement from his first term, and one hailed by both his allies and his staunchest political opponents—including former President Joe Biden.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

'Underground city' unearthed in central Iran

TEHRAN - Local people have uncovered a remarkable "underground city" beneath five historical homes in the ancient town of Abarkuh, located in Yazd province, central Iran.

The discovery sheds light on the ingenious urban planning and architectural techniques employed by the town's ancestors.

Hossein Hatami, the governor of Abarkuh, announced the find in an interview on Wednesday, noting that the "underground city" was likely designed for ease of access, security, water transfer, and daily living.

Hatami explained that historical aerial photographs of Abarkuh, combined with archaeological studies, reveal that the town's residents built their homes and essential structures atop rocky foundations. The spaces between these rocky areas were transformed into gardens, while underground pathways were carved to connect key locations.

Small stone chambers discovered beneath historical homes hint at their functional significance in the past. "These chambers served specialized purposes, and further investigation led to uncovering a subterranean settlement," Hatami said.

Moreover, a beautifully crafted stone aqueduct has also been unearthed, believed to have played a critical role in managing the town's water supply. The stonework is consistent with materials used in Qajar-era structures in the region. Steps in some his-



torical homes provided direct access to these underground tunnels, allowing residents to control and use water from qanats (traditional underground water systems).

Hatami described how water flowing through these corridors cooled the underground spaces, creating a serene refuge during the scorching summer months. Over time, larger chambers with alcoves were added, likely serving as rest areas or even summer residences for the town's inhabitants.

Despite these challenges, archaeologists continue to investigate this remarkable discovery, which offers valuable insights into the resourcefulness and resilience of Abarkuh's ancient inhabitants.

Abarkuh, known for its historical significance and architectural marvels, including its iconic 4,000-year-old cypress tree, has further solidified its place as a treasure trove of Iranian heritage with the discovery of this underground city.

Money was created for trade between strangers, archaeological study suggests

The origins of money, one of humanity's most transformative inventions, have long been debated. A recent study by researcher Mikael Fauvelle offers a fresh perspective that money was created for trade between strangers and not to collect taxes. It challenges traditional views and redefines how money may have emerged.

Published in the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, the study proposes that money evolved primarily as a tool to facilitate trade between strangers, a concept Fauvelle calls the "trade theory of money."

Two main theories of money

For decades, two main theories have dominated discussions about money's origins.

The first, the "money as commodity" theory, suggests that money emerged to solve the inefficiencies of bartering. In barter systems, individuals had to find someone who wanted their goods and offered something desirable in return—a challenge known as the "double coincidence of wants."

Advocates like Aristotle and economist Carl Menger argue that durable and valuable materials, such as metals, naturally became money due to their practicality and longevity.

The second, the "chartalist" or "money as credit" theory, posits that money was introduced by ancient governments to standardize tax and tribute payments. According to this view, rulers created monetary systems and assigned value to currency. Thinkers like Georg Friedrich Knapp and David Graeber have emphasized that money's origins were rooted in hierarchical state control.

Both theories, however, face criticism. Historians have found little evidence of societies exclusively dependent on barter,

leading some to dismiss the first theory as the "myth of barter." Similarly, critics argue that the chartalist theory underestimates the role of trade and social interactions in money's development.

Money as a practical solution for trade between strangers

Fauvelle offers a compelling alternative that combines elements of both theories. He argues that money did not arise solely within small communities or under state control.

Instead, it developed as a practical solution for long-distance trade between strangers, especially in regions where traders encountered linguistic and cultural differences. Money provided a shared, portable medium of exchange that made such interactions possible.

The study draws on archaeological evidence from two key regions: pre-Columbian North America and Europe during the Bronze Age. In California, indigenous societies used shell beads as currency for over a thousand years before European contact.

Produced on the Channel Islands, these beads were lightweight, easily transported, and widely accepted for buying food, tools, and services. Their high value and portability made them essential for long-distance trade across culturally diverse areas.

Bronze items widely circulated as currency

In Europe's Bronze Age, trade networks linked Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. Bronze items, including ingots, rings, and axes, were standardized in weight and widely circulated as currency. Fauvelle notes that these objects functioned like modern money, enabling transactions in distant markets and reducing disputes through uniform measurements.

(Source: Greek Reporter)

Yazd's Janoub factory: from industrial powerhouse to museum of traditional textiles

By Afshin Majlesi

YAZD - The Janoub Spinning and Weaving Factory, a 70-year-old landmark in Yazd, is set to undergo a remarkable transformation.

Once a key industrial hub in central Iran, the abandoned factory is being restored and repurposed into a museum showcasing traditional textiles, carpets, and weaving techniques.

Constructed in the early 1950s by Reza Sarrafzadeh, a prominent merchant and member of Iran's National Assembly, the factory was one of the region's most significant textile production centers. At its peak, it employed 700 workers, producing 900 bundles of fabric annually. The factory's distinctive shape, inspired by the vernacular architecture of Yazd, remains a testament to the region's rich cultural heritage.

Restoration of the factory's main buildings, spanning 6,000 square meters, began in the summer of 2023. The Mostazafan Foundation's cultural museum branch has undertaken the project, which is now 90 percent complete. The museum, named "Tar-o-Pud" (meaning "Warp and Weft"), is expected to open its first phase by the end of the year.

The museum will feature a comprehensive collection of carpets and textiles spanning centuries. Highlights will include carpets from the Qajar and later periods;



An aerial view of the Janoub textile factory located on Ayatollah Kashani Street in Yazd, central Iran.

rare fabrics from the Buyid dynasty to the late Qajar era; and traditional handwoven crafts from Iran's desert, central, and southern regions, to name a few. Additionally, a restored Qajar royal tent will be prominently displayed.

A shift in ownership

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, ownership of the factory was transferred to the revolutionary Mostazafan Foundation of the Islamic Revolution under a court order. The facility, however, remained operational for the next two decades, after which it was abandoned. In 2015, the Yazd Municipality purchased the property from the foundation, with plans to preserve and repurpose the his-

toric site.

Interactive experiences

The museum will provide an immersive experience with recreated traditional weaving workshops and fully functional carpet looms. Visitors can interact with craftsmen and even participate in weaving processes. Some of the looms, reconstructed using 180-year-old designs, will revive forgotten weaving techniques, including those used to create rare textiles.

A researcher overseeing this initiative told the *Tehran Times* that thirteen looms and workshops have been rebuilt to their original specifications. "Some techniques, like labafi-bafi, which

no longer exist in practice, will be brought back to life here."

A testament to industrial and cultural heritage

The museum will also exhibit equipment and machinery from the factory's operational days. While some machines were sold after the factory's closure, several have been preserved for display.

In addition, an oral history of the factory, a vital record of its role in Iran's textile industry, will be documented and shared as part of the museum's narrative.

Architectural significance

Located on Ayatollah Kashani Street in Yazd, across from Seventh of Tir Park and near the Museum of Light and Illumination (Qasr-e Ayeneh), the Janoub factory boasts striking architectural features.

The factory's bizarre-shaped vaulted ceilings, intricate window frames, and robust brickwork reflect the enduring craftsmanship of the Pahlavi era.

A new chapter

After decades of neglect, the textile factory is set to become a cultural beacon, celebrating Iran's rich heritage in textiles and weaving. As the project nears completion, Yazd prepares to welcome visitors from across Iran and beyond, offering them a chance to explore the artistry, history, and innovation that defined its industrial past.

Iran's cultural charm on display at FITUR 2025

TEHRAN - Iran's pavilion at the 45th International Tourism Trade Fair (FITUR 2025) has opened its doors, showcasing the nation's rich cultural, historical, and natural heritage at IFEMA MADRID, one of the world's leading tourism exhibition venues.

Organized by the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the pavilion highlights diverse sectors such as many cultural and natural sites, Persian cuisine, and intangible cultural heritage, to name a few.

The Iranian pavilion, featuring 16 intricately designed booths inspired by Iranian-Islamic art and architecture, offers visitors an immersive experience of the country's tourism potential. The pavilion also highlights eco-tourism, health tourism, and traditional handicrafts.

Beyond visual appeal, Iran's presence aims to enhance global partnerships and promote sustainable tourism. The Touring and Auto-

mobile Club has organized interactive sessions and meetings to engage international tourism professionals, investors, and stakeholders. Key objectives include introducing Iran-centric tours, exploring joint ventures, and fostering long-term collaboration on sustainable tourism initiatives.

Renowned for its UNESCO-listed heritage sites, Iran is a treasure trove for travelers. From the architectural splendor of Persepolis and the intricate tilework of Isfahan's mosques to the lush Caspian forests and the rugged beauty of the Alborz Mountains, the country offers a rich array of experiences. Visitors are also drawn to its renowned hospitality, vibrant bazaars, and culinary delights.

FITUR, inaugurated by the King and Prime Minister of Spain, is a premier event in the global tourism calendar, attracting professionals and enthusiasts from across the world. With over 120 countries participating, this year's edition also spotlights Brazil as the partner country. Running through January 26, the fair pro-



vides a platform for exchanging experiences, fostering collaboration, and showcasing destinations.

FITUR's 2025 edition emphasizes innovation, featuring specialized sectors that explore cutting-edge trends in the tourism industry. Over five days, the event will cater to professionals and the general public alike, offering a chance to discover diverse destinations and the latest developments shaping global tourism.

Three tourism projects inaugurated during minister's visit to Khuzestan



TEHRAN - Three tourism-related projects were inaugurated in Khuzestan during a visit by the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri to the southwestern province.

The projects included two hotels, located in the cities of Ahvaz and Izeh, and the second phase of

a tourism complex in Dezful. According to Mohammad Jourvand, the director-general of Khuzestan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department, these facilities will collectively offer 86 rooms, 190 beds, an indoor recreational center, a restaurant, and a cinema complex, significantly enhancing the region's capacity to host tourists.

In addition to these inaugurations, Jourvand announced a new agreement with the Iran Tourism Development Corporation to complete three more tourism facilities in the province. These projects include the Garab hydrotherapy complex, the Golgir hydrotherapy center, and the Balut tourism complex, the official said.

On Wednesday, after the minister arrived in Khuzestan, he also visited the UNESCO-registered ancient city of Susa and the UNESCO-listed

Tchogha Zanbil, a magnificent ruined ziggurat near Susa. At a local meeting, 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.

Khuzestan province, situated in southwest Iran, is home to many cultural, historical and natural attractions. Its diverse landscapes, from lush plains to rugged mountains, offer a myriad of experiences for travelers.

The province is renowned for its ancient heritage, with sites like Tchogha Zanbil, an ancient Elamite complex dating back to 1250 BC and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, a UNESCO World Heritage site showcasing innovative water management techniques from the 5th century BC, to name a few.

Reviving Peristeria: Greece restores the ancient city from 1400-1500 BC

Greece's Ministry of Culture announced a major revamp of the archaeological site of Peristeria, Messinia, to highlight the important ancient city that flourished more than 35 centuries ago.

The works include interventions to stabilize the Mycenaean vaulted tombs and architectural remains, as well as improving the infrastructure that serves visitors.

"Peristeria is an important archaeological site that documents the history and prehistory of Messinia,"

Culture Minister Lina Mendoni said.

"The restoration and promotion of the Mycenaean vaulted tombs, the main archaeological remains of the site, is a key priority of the intervention, to resolve the aesthetic and structural problems, while improving the services provided to visitors to the site.

"By upgrading the entrance and infrastructure of the archaeological site, these largely unknown Mycenaean monuments dynamically introduce the archaeological site of Peristeria to the cultural map of Messinia," Men-

doni added.

Peristeria was inhabited until the end of the Mycenaean period

The hill of Peristeria is located 8 kilometers from the town of Kyparissia. It was the richest residential center of the Western Peloponnese during the early Mycenaean period.

It was inhabited until the end of the Mycenaean period (1680-1180 BC) and dominated Messinia before the developments of Pylos and Mycenae rose to glory. In

addition to the Mycenaean, residential remains from the early Roman period of the era of Nero (54-68 AD) have also been identified.

Peristeria is most famous for its tholos tombs, the monumental circular burial structures characteristic of Mycenaean architecture. These tombs suggest the presence of an elite ruling class and reflect the region's wealth and cultural connections with other Mycenaean centers.

(Source: Greek Reporter)

Tehran, Abu Dhabi underscore boosting environmental ties

TEHRAN –Iranian and Emirati officials have highlighted the need to enhance cooperation in combating sand and dust storms (SDSs) and desertification, as well as curbing air pollutant emissions.

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

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

During a meeting held on Wednesday, Ansari announced Iran's readiness to foster environmental collaborations with the UAE, emphasizing that a joint action plan is needed to expand joint activities between the two countries.

Highlighting Emirates willingness in furthering relations with Iran, Zayed Al Nahyan, for his turn, welcomed the proposed ideas, calling environmental ties essential for safeguarding children and future generations' interests.

On Thursday, the Iranian official and Sultan Al Jaber, Minister of In-



dustry and Advanced Technology, conducted a meeting, as well.

Underscoring the significance of the meeting held on Wednesday, Al Jaber voiced the UAE willingness in promoting cooperation with Iran.

The official also expressed hope for implementing joint oil, gas, and renewable energy projects with tangible outcomes.

For her part, Ansari stressed the significance of furthering cooperation particularly on mitigating air pollutant emissions, utilizing modern technologies in the UAE.

The two countries have already signed two memorandums of

understanding on protecting the environment and combating sand and dust storms, seeking to pave the way for implementing the agreements.

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

Iran prioritizes environmental policy

According to the former head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Ali Salajeheh, environmental diplomacy is the main

priority for the country's political diplomacy.

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

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

Considering the increase in the occurrence of sand and dust storms in the region and the environmental statement on bolstering environmental diplomacy, the current administration aims to endorse regional and global interactions to tackle not only SDSs but also water diplomacy and transboundary waters as other critical issues.

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

Over 80 Iranian universities in THE WUR by subject 2025

TEHRAN –The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (WUR) 2025 has placed 81 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world in 10 out of 11 subject areas, compared to 73 universities in 2024.

These ten subject rankings include arts and humanities; business and economics; clinical and health; computer science; education; engineering; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; and social sciences. The eleventh subject is Law.

The Ranking includes 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five core pillars of evaluation: teaching (evaluates teaching reputation, student-to-staff ratio, doctorate-to-bachelor ratio, doctorate-to-staff ratio and institutional income), Research Environment (focuses on research reputation, income, and productivity), Research Quality (includes citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and influence), Industry (measures income from industry partnerships and patents), International Outlook (accounts for international students, staff and co-authorship).

Iran's best rankings are in Computer Science, and Engineering.

This year, 750 universities from 72 countries and territories are evaluated on their contributions to the broad range of disciplines in the arts and humanities.

University of Tehran (401-500), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Shahid Beheshti University (501-600), Allameh Tabatabaee University and University of Isfahan (601), are ranked first to third in art and humanities.

Within the Business and Economics subject area, this year's ranking includes 990 institutions from 85 countries.

University of Tehran (201-250), Sharif University of Technology (301-400), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Iran University of Science and Technology (401-500), and Shahid Beheshti University (501-600) are the top five institutions in business and economics.

In computing and digital technologies, this comprehensive assessment ranks 1,122 institutions from 83 countries.

Sharif University of Technology (151-175), University of Tehran (201-250), Amirkabir University of Technology (251-300), Iran University of Science and Technology (301-400), Isfahan University of Technology and University of Tabriz (401-500) are placed first to fifth in Computer Science, respectively.

The Education Studies table evaluates schools and colleges across three core disciplines: Education Studies, Teacher Training and Academic Studies in Education.

Some 767 institutions from 87 countries are ranked in Education Studies.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Kharazmi University (301-400), Allameh Tabatabaee University (401-500), Shahid Beheshti University and Shiraz University (501-600) are the top three universities in Education Studies.

The Engineering table evaluates universities across five core disciplines: General Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering and Chemical Engineering.

A total of 1,488 institutions from 97 countries are ranked in Engineering.

Sharif University of Technology (151-175), University of Tehran (201-250), and Iran University of Science and Technology (251-300) are ranked first to third in Engineering, respectively.

The Life Sciences table evaluates universities across four core disciplines: Veterinary Science, Biological Sciences (including biology and biochemistry), Agriculture and Forestry, and Sport Science. This year's rankings include 1,143 institutions from 98 countries.

Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and University of Tehran ranked first nationally; they rank 401-500 globally.

The Medical and Health table evaluates universities across medicine, dentistry, nursing, and other healthcare disciplines. This year's ranking includes 1,150 institutions from 102 countries.

Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Sciences jointly rank first (301-400), Qazvin University of Medical Sciences and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences rank second (401-500).

The Physical Sciences table evaluates universities across several core disciplines: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Statistics, Astronomy, Geology, and Environmental, Earth and Marine Sciences. This year's rankings include 1,447 institutions from 107 countries.

Iran University of Science and Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and University of Tehran ranked first (301-400 globally).

Amirkabir University of Technology, Babol Noshirvani University of Technology, and University of Tabriz are placed second with a global ranking of 401-500.

The Psychology table evaluates schools and colleges across several narrower disciplines: Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology, Sport Psychology, Business Psychology and Animal Psychology. This year's rankings include 654 institutions from 66 countries.

University of Tehran (401-500) is placed first. Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Kharazmi University, Shahid Beheshti University, University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences are placed next, with a global ranking of 501-600.

The Social Sciences table evaluates universities across key disciplines: Communication and Media Studies, Politics and International Studies (including Development Studies), Sociology, Geography and Anthropology. This year's rankings include 1,093 institutions from 100 countries.

The top three universities are University of Tehran (301-400), University of Tabriz (401-500), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Shiraz University (501-600).

Recent rankings

THE Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR) has placed 29 Iranian universities among top institutions worldwide for interdisciplinary science research.

ISR is a project launched in association with Schmidt Science Fellows; it has ranked a total of 749 universities from 92 countries.

University of Tehran with a global ranking of 77 is placed first in the country.

Shiraz University (ranked 132 globally) Razi University (174), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (187), University of Tabriz (201-250) ranked second to fifth, respectively.

Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, and Urmia University are ranked joint sixth with a global ranking of 251-300.

The Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings placed 32 Iranian universities in the list of top universities in 2025, compared to 31 universities in 2024.

Published annually since 2009, the QS Asia University Rankings highlight the top universities in Asia each year.

University of Tehran (with a global ranking of 87) is placed first among Iranian universities, followed by Sharif University of Technology (ranking 97 globally) and Amirkabir University of Technology (ranking 114 globally), Mehr news agency reported.

Isfahan University of Technology, Shiraz University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, University of Tabriz, Shahid Beheshti University, and University of Isfahan are ranked fourth to tenth, respectively.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025 placed 85 Iranian universities among the top institutions compared to 75 universities in 2024.

The 2025 rankings include 2,092 ranked universities from 115 countries. There are 185 new entries compared with last year.

Recognized as the world's most comprehensive evaluation of university performance, the latest methodology includes 18 carefully calibrated indicators to assess institutions across five key areas: teaching, research environment, research quality, industry engagement, and international outlook.

Sharif University of Technology ranked first in the country with a global ranking of 301-350.

Amirkabir University of Technology, and Iran University of Science and Technology (ranking globally 351-400) were placed second.

Kermanshah University of Medical Science, and University of Tehran were placed third with a global ranking of 401- 500.

Babol Noshirvani University of Technology, Shiraz University of Technology, and Tehran University of Technology were ranked joint fourth, they ranked 601-800, globally.

AI, education, preserving human agency in a world of automation

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN – The International Day of Education is observed annually on January 24; this year the day is celebrated under the theme "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and education: Preserving human agency in a world of automation".

The theme inspires reflections on the power of education to equip individuals and communities to navigate, understand and influence technological advancement.

As computer and AI-driven systems become more sophisticated, the boundaries between human intention and machine-driven action often blur, raising critical questions about how to preserve, redefine, and, ideally, elevate human agency in an age of technological acceleration.

On the International Day of Education 2025, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) highlights the role of AI in reshaping education and learning. The event will spotlight the dynamic interplay between AI and education—how AI technologies are revolutionizing teaching and learning practices, while education, in turn, serves as a guiding force to ensure that AI is ethical, inclusive, and aligned with human values.

According to Audrey Azoulay, UNESCO Director-General, "AI offers major opportunities for education, provided that its deployment in schools is guided by clear ethical principles. To reach its full potential, this technology must complement the human and social dimensions of learning, rather than replace them. It must become a tool at the service of teachers and pupils, with the main objective being their autonomy and well-being."

The official calls on UNESCO's Member States to invest in training both teachers and students on the responsible use of this technology within the field of education.

In Iran, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and learning was examined during a national conference held in Tehran on October 9.

The use of AI-driven technologies in education and learning as a transformative element has also provided different individuals with cutting-edge technologies and smart solutions, ISNA reported.

By precisely analyzing educational data and providing instant feedbacks, it has improved students' assessment and educational content production.

It also focused on three major axes: recognizing challenges and capabilities; establishing a dynamic and collaborative environment, as well as discovering assessment and evaluation methods based on emerging technologies.

It focused on topics like AI and medical education, Cognitive Sciences, schools, design and content production, human resources development, educational assessment and evaluation, AI in the future of education and ethical considerations, as well as artificial intelligence and schools.

The main objective of the conference was to raise awareness of modern technologies and their applications in education and learning systems.

Lack of AI guidelines in education

AI is increasingly present in education. In



high-income countries, more than 2/3 of secondary school pupils are already using generative AI tools to produce schoolwork.

Teachers are increasingly using AI to prepare their lessons and assess students' work. School guidance and admissions, traditionally guided by teachers and experts, are also increasingly determined by AI.

However, education professionals still lack clear guidelines on these practices. Only 10 percent of schools and universities currently have an official framework for the use of AI, according to a survey of 450 institutions conducted by UNESCO in May 2023.

By 2022, only 7 countries had developed AI frameworks or programmes for their teachers, and only 15 included objectives on AI training in their national curricula. At the same time, more and more countries are placing restrictions on the use of new technologies in the classroom.

According to new data from UNESCO, almost 40 percent of countries now have a law or policy banning the use of mobile phones in schools – up from 24 percent in July 2023.

ENGLISH IN USE

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56% of motorcycles running in only 5 provinces

Some 56 percent of the total motorcycles in the country are running in only five provinces, Ali Mohammadi, a senior traffic police official has said.

Of all 32.9 million vehicles in the country, motorcycles amount to 11.6 million, accounting for 35 percent of the total vehicles moving in the country, he stated.

According to the statistics, 56 percent of motorcycles are plying the roads in 5 provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Isfahan, Fars and Khuzestan, he added.

There are 2 million motorcycles in Tehran, 1.3 million in Khorasan Razavi, 1.2 million in Isfahan, 916,000 in Fars, and 564,000 in Khuzestan, he also said.

۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت ها در ۵ استان تردد دارند

رئیس مرکز شماره گذاری و تعویض پلاک پلیس راهور ناجا گفت: بنابر آمارها، ۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت ها تنها در ۵ استان تردد می کنند. سرهنگ علی محمدی روز یکشنبه افزود: از ۳۲ میلیون و ۹۰۰ هزار دستگاه انواع وسایل نقلیه در کشور، ۱۱ میلیون و ۶۵۰ هزار دستگاه یعنی معادل ۳۵ درصد را موتورسیکلت ها شامل می شوند. وی اظهار داشت: برابر آمارها تهران بزرگ، خراسان رضوی، اصفهان، فارس و خوزستان ۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت های کشور را در خود جای داده اند.

رئیس مرکز شماره گذاری و تعویض پلاک پلیس راهور ناجا گفت: تهران بزرگ با حدود ۲ میلیون دستگاه موتورسیکلت، خراسان رضوی ۱.۳ میلیون دستگاه، اصفهان ۱.۲ میلیون دستگاه، فارس ۹۱۶ هزار دستگاه و خوزستان با ۵۶۴ هزار دستگاه موتورسیکلت بیشترین موتورسیکلت های کشور را به خود اختصاص دادند.



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JANUARY 25, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The envy of a friend is a sign of the weakness of his friendship.

Imam Ali (AS)

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

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* Javid Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Giti Tayyebi.

The exhibition runs until February 3 at the gallery that can be found at 17 Zartosht St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

* Ali Khataei is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

The exhibit named "Nothing Chest" will run until February 5 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Mehraz Farahmand is underway at Kavin Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until February 7 at the gallery located at No.24, Pesian St. Zaferanieh Neighborhood.

* Atashzad Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by a group of artists including Ali Golbaz, Shahin Arvin Bahman Nikou and Mahmood Samandarian.

The exhibit titled "Beyond Sight" will run until January 29 at the gallery that can be found at 3 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St. near Vanak Sq.



* Nian Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Leila Banki.

The exhibition entitled "Heaven" will be running until February 3 at the gallery located at 5 Abhari Alley, Vafai St. off Tur St. off South Mofatteh St.

* Paintings by Mahmoud Bajalan are on display in an exhibition at Negar Gallery.

The exhibit named "Solar Eclipse" will be running until February 3 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 5, Bahrami alley, Mashahir Street, Qaem Maqam Farahani Avenue.



* Artibition Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Pantea Cyrus.

Entitled "Damash", the exhibit runs until February 2 at the gallery located at No. 2798, Vali-e Asr Ave, after Parkway, next to Bank of Industry and Mine.

* An exhibition of paintings by Mobina Fallah, Zahra Mohammadi, Zahra Motalebi and Parnian Mousavi is currently underway at Didar Gallery.

The exhibition named "Alliance" will run until January 31 at the gallery located at 10 Mobini Alley, Mofatteh St.



* Mojdeh Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Azim Morakkabatchi.

Entitled "Mirage", the exhibit will run until February 7 at the gallery located at No. 27, 18th Alley off North Allameh Blvd. in the Saadatabad neighborhood.

Installation

* Sets of installation art by Erfan Ghiasi are on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit named "Kali's Temporary Temple" runs until February 4 at the gallery located at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.



Jalal Literary Awards reveals winners

TEHRAN- On Wednesday, a ceremony was held at the National Library Auditorium in Tehran to recognize the winners in various categories of the 17th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards.

In the documentation section, Shiva Khademi was awarded the prestigious literary prize in Iran, worth five billion rials (\$6,250), for her book titled "The Factory's Soil."

In short story collections competition, "The Green-Robed Fairy" written by Samad Taheri received the award.

In novel section, the award was given to "Stone of Destiny" by Majid Qeisari.

In this edition, Gol-Ali Babai was honored for a lifetime of documentation in the Sacred Defense (1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war) field.

Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards are highly regarded literary honors in Iran. Named after the renowned Iranian writer and intellectual, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, these awards celebrate excellence in literature across various genres, including novels, short stories, and critical essays.



Majid Qeisari receives the award for his novel "Stone of Destiny" at the 17th Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards' closing ceremony on January 22, 2025.

The awards aim to recognize and promote outstanding literary achievements, encouraging writers to explore diverse themes, experiment with different styles, and contribute to the enrichment of Iranian literature.

Each year, a distinguished panel of judges carefully selects

the winners and honorees, considering the literary merit, originality, and social impact of the works. The awards ceremony, held annually, brings together renowned writers, scholars, and literary enthusiasts to celebrate the power of words and the immense talent within Iran's literary community.

With its commitment to literary excellence, the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards have become a prestigious platform for Iranian writers to showcase their creativity and receive well-deserved recognition for their contributions to the world of literature.

Iranian short animation "In the Shadow of the Cypress" receives nomination at Oscars 2025

TEHRAN-The Iranian short animated movie "In the Shadow of the Cypress," co-directed by Hossein Molyami and Shirin Sohani received a nomination for the Best Animated Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced nominations on Thursday for the Oscars 2025, where the Iranian flick will compete with four other short animations including the Belgian-French-Dutch short "Beautiful Men," "Magic Candies" from Japan, Dutch animation "Wander to Wonder," and "Yuck!" from France.

A 2023 production of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (known as Kanoon), the animated movie has participated in many



international festivals and grabbed several awards, ISNA reported.

The 20-minute animation, "In the Shadow of the Cypress" depicts a former captain suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who lives with his daughter in a humble house located by the sea.

Together, they live isolated from the world and must confront the challenges of their situation. One morning, their lives change forever when an unforeseen event occurs.

Their tough and secluded life is pulled out of its isolation by the unexpected arrival of a stranded whale. As his daughter refuses to give up on the animal, the captain will face his own demons in this poignant universal story about resilience.

According to the directors, the film is, in a way, a homage to the veterans of the Iran-Iraq war, particularly those still suffering from PTSD.

The 97th edition of the Academy Awards, where the winners will be announced at a live, televised ceremony, will be held on March 2 at the Dolby Theater at Hollywood & Highland Center in Hollywood.

Palestinian writer Mourid Barghouti's autobiographical book "I Saw Ramallah" republished in Persian

TEHRAN-The second edition of the Persian translation of the autobiographical book "I Saw Ramallah" written by the Palestinian writer and poet Mourid Barghouti has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Hajar Zamani has translated the book that has been brought out by the Ketabestan Marefat publication in 220 pages, Mehr reported.

Winner of the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Medal, this fierce and moving work is an unparalleled rendering of the human aspects of the Palestinian predicament.

In 1966 Mourid Barghouti went to Cairo, Egypt, for higher studies. In 1967, after the Six-

Day War, when he came back to Palestine after completing his studies, he was barred to enter the country. Like many others he started living abroad. Thirty years later, after continuous struggle, he was allowed to enter Ramallah, his own hometown, where he was born and had grown up.

Barghouti spent 30 years in exile—shuttling among the world's cities, yet secure in none of them; separated from his family for years at a time; never certain whether he was a visitor, a refugee, a citizen, or a guest.

As he returns home for the first time since the Israeli occupation, Barghouti crosses a wooden bridge over the Jordan

River into Ramallah and is unable to recognize the city of his youth. Sifting through memories of the old Palestine as they come up against what he now encounters in this mere "idea of Palestine," he discovers what it means to be deprived not only of a homeland but of "the habitual place and status of a person."

"I Saw Ramallah" is about home and homelessness. The harrowing experience of a Palestinian, denied the most elementary human rights in his occupied country and in exile alike, is transformed into a humanist work. Palestine has been appropriated, dispossessed, renamed, changed beyond recognition by the usurp-

ers, yet from the heap of broken images and shattered homes, Barghouti repossesses his homeland.

A tour de force of memory and reflection, lamentation and resilience, "I Saw Ramallah" is a deeply humane book, essential to any balanced understanding of today's West Asia.

Mourid Barghouti (1944-2021) was a Palestinian poet and writer. He published 12 books of poetry. His Collected Works came out in Beirut in 1997. In 2000, he was awarded the Palestine Award for Poetry. He wrote articles of literary criticism on poetry and prose and delivered lectures on Arabic literature at several Arab and international universities.

IAF to show Kurosawa's "Throne of Blood"

TEHRAN-The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran will screen the 1957 Japanese film "Throne of Blood" co-written, produced, edited, and directed by Akira Kurosawa on Monday.

Set for screening at 5 p.m. at the Nasser Hall, the film will be reviewed in a session in the presence of director and film critic Nahid Hassanzadeh, Mehr reported.

The film transposes the plot of English dramatist William Shakespeare's play "Macbeth" (1606) from Medieval Scotland to feudal Japan, with stylistic elements drawn from Noh drama. The film stars Toshiro Mifune and Isuzu Yamada in the lead roles, modelled on the characters Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

As with the play, the film tells the story of a warrior who assassinates his sovereign at the urging of his ambitious wife. Kuro-

sawa was a fan of the play and intended to make his own adaptation for several years, delaying it after learning of Orson Welles' "Macbeth" (1948). Among his changes was the ending, which required archers to shoot arrows around Mifune. The film was shot around Mount Fuji and Izu Peninsula. With a budget of US\$350,000, the film was one of the most expensive films ever made in Japan at the time of its release.

Despite the change in setting and language and numerous creative liberties, "Throne of Blood" is often considered one of the best film adaptations of the classic play, and has received much critical praise. The film won two Mainichi Film Awards, including Best Actor for Toshiro Mifune.

Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998) was a Japanese filmmaker who created 30 films of his own as well as occasionally directing and writing for others in a career spanning sev-

en decades. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers in the history of cinema. Kurosawa displayed a bold, dynamic style strongly influenced by Western cinema yet distinct from it. He was involved with all aspects of film production.

Kurosawa's highly regarded films include "Rashomon" (1950), "Ikiru" (1952), "Seven Samurai" (1954), "The Hidden Fortress" (1958), "Yojimbo" (1961), "High and Low" (1963), "Red Beard" (1965), "Kagemusha" (1980), and "Ran" (1985).

In 1990, he accepted the Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement. Posthumously, he was named "Asian of the Century" in the "Arts, Literature, and Culture" category by AsianWeek magazine and CNN, cited there as being among the five people who most prominently contributed to the improvement of Asia in the 20th century.