

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِنَ رَبِّكُمْ

ای مردم، همانا این پیغمبر به حق (برای هدایت شما) از جانب پروردگارتان آمده است. النساء، ۱۶۰



Ayatollah Khamenei warns in a meeting with high-ranking officials

Evil Nature of U.S. Behind Diplomatic Smiles

Page 3

Any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would lead to 'disaster' for region: Araghchi

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has issued a warning about the potential fallout from any Israeli or American military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, describing such an attack as a "very bad disaster" for the entire West Asia.

In an interview with Sky News in the Iranian capital, Araghchi emphasized that any assault on Iran's nuclear sites would be met with an immediate and decisive response from Tehran.

"But I don't think they will do that crazy thing," he added, stressing that it would lead to a catastrophic scenario for the region. He underscored the seriousness of the threat, stating that the consequences would affect not only Iran but the entire West Asia.

Iran's nuclear program has long been a point of contention on the international stage. In 2015, Iran sought to demonstrate the peaceful intent of its nuclear ambitions by entering the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with six world powers. ▶ Page 2

Damaged air-defense systems replaced and tested in drills, asserts senior Iranian general

TEHRAN – Brigadier General Ali Shadmani, deputy coordinator of Iran's Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, debunked claims regarding the alleged destruction of Iran's air defense systems in a Monday interview with an Iranian news agency.

"Only a few systems sustained damage, and they have since been replaced with new, fully operational systems," he stated.

Israeli regime's sources and some Western media had claimed that the regime's October 26 strike on Iran had "severely compromised Iran's air defense infrastructure, leaving its airspace vulnerable."

However, General Shadmani emphasized that the systems have not only been restored but also tested in recent military drills.

Iran has conducted a series of military exercises to highlight its robust defensive capabilities and preparedness.

The recently concluded "Great Prophet Authority 19" drill showcased sophisticated air defense strategies, including the integration of newly developed systems and electronic warfare capabilities. ▶ Page 2

Sadeh: an ancient celebration of fire and light

TEHRAN – Every year on the tenth of Bahman (which this year falls on Jan. 29), Zoroastrians worldwide, along with some Iranians deeply interested in their ancient traditions, gather to celebrate Sadeh, one of the oldest and most captivating traditions from ancient Persia.

Celebrated 50 days before the UNESCO-registered Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, and 40 days past the UNESCO-listed ancient festival of Yalda Night, the festival is widely believed to symbolize warmth, unity, and the triumph of light over darkness.

A celebration rooted in history and myth, the origins of Sadeh remain a mystery, but its significance as a mid-winter ritual is profound. According to Persian mythology, the festival commemorates King Houshang's discovery of fire. Legend recounts how the mythical king, while attempting to slay a dragon, struck two flintstones together, sparking the first fire. This discovery became a symbol of humanity's power to illuminate and warm the earth, laying the foundation for agricultural life. ▶ Page 6

Hebrew media exposes resounding defeat of Israeli aggression

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON — Critical analyses continue in the Hebrew media regarding the Israeli disappointment with the return of the southern Lebanese to their border villages carrying Hezbollah flags and pictures of Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah, after the expiration of the 60-day deadline for the withdrawal of the Israeli forces.

Urieh Keshet, i24NEWS channel's correspondent in occupied north Palestine, said, "The scenes in Lebanon worry the settlers of the north, and reinforce their fears of the return of Hezbollah fighters. It also poses a challenge to our security capabilities, and exposes the Israeli army forces to danger."

Keshet added, "The Lebanese tried to cross the earthen barriers and checkpoints of the Israeli army, chanting slogans praising Nasrallah in defiance of the forces present there."

In turn, Yair Kraus, Yedioth Ahronoth's correspondent, said, "These are exactly the images that they fear in the north after 15 months of fighting, pictures of the residents of southern Lebanon near the border returning and raising Hezbollah flags."

Triumphant return to the north

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have returned home to northern Gaza, marking yet another victory against the occupying regime of Israel.

Families who had been displaced countless times made the journey on foot, crossing the Israeli-built Netzarim corridor that had divided the northern enclave from the south for more than a year.

The Israeli military was forced to clear the way, allowing Palestinian families to pass through the corridor. This retreat marked another significant Israeli concession, as the resilience of the returning families could no longer be denied.

Northern Gaza had been the most heavily attacked region throughout the U.S.-backed genocidal Israeli war, suffering relentless daily bombardment and destruction.

Since October of last year, much of the region had been cut off, with its remaining residents enduring extreme hardships in total isolation.

Amidst the regime's war crimes, including the use of starvation as a weapon of war, Israeli politicians were openly discussing the process of reestablishing illegal settlements in the region, fueling debates over the future of the Palestinian territory.

Troubling tune: Trump dancing to Zionist drumbeat

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – US President Donald Trump's insistence on the proposal to relocate Palestinians from the Gaza Strip evidently reflects his alignment with the expansionist aspirations of Zionist ideologies.

On Monday night, the US president doubled down on his suggestion for moving out Gaza's population to Egypt and Jordan. Trump added that Cairo and Amman will comply with his request to take in Palestinians.

Trump reiterated his suggestion while trying to initiate a charm offensive directed at the Palestinian people.

"I want them to live in a place without violence. Gaza has been hell for so many years. They can live in much better and more comfortable areas," Trump said while referring to Israel's devastating war on the Palestinian territory.

On Saturday, Trump floated the idea of transferring Gazans to Egypt and Jordan to "clean out" the enclave.

"It is literally a demolition site right now, almost everything is demolished and people are dying there. So, I would rather get involved with some of the Arab nations and build housing in a different location, where they can maybe live in peace for a change," he said.

Page 5

Turkey's trade minister stresses strengthening Tehran-Ankara cooperation

TEHRAN – Turkey's Minister of Trade emphasized the importance of expanding economic relations and cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey, IRNA reported.

According to Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Ömer Bolat, speaking at a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart on Monday, highlighted the 29th meeting of the Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee and the signing of a memorandum of understanding.

He mentioned the goal of increasing bilateral trade to \$30 billion and noted that trade between the two countries had grown in 2024, with Turkish companies investing approximately \$2 billion in Iran. ▶ Page 4



Courageous confrontation: Brave Lebanese woman stands up to Israeli tank

Footage of a Lebanese woman confronting an Israeli tank in southern Lebanon has been shared thousands of times on social media, garnering widespread admiration for her bravery.

The videos posted online on Sunday were taken as displaced residents in the village of Maroun el-Ras confronted Israeli forces who had remained in the area in violation of the ceasefire agreement with Hezbollah.

The woman can be seen standing with her arms stretched while shouting at the Israeli forces, who she dares to open fire. Shots from the Israeli soldiers can be heard firing off in the background.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Hope to resolve problems through talks

In an interview with international relations analyst Ali Bigdeli, Arman-e-Melli examined the latest comments surrounding possible negotiations between Iran and the United States under its new president Donald Trump. He said: Trump and Iran know very well that war is a devastating event that may set the region on fire. For this reason, the issue of war and tension between Iran and the United States is ruled out, and Trump is not seeking it. Considering the domestic and regional conditions, Iran has also concluded that the best way to improve the conditions is through negotiations. The reality is that the trend of relations between Iran and the United States is somewhat positive. Another point is that we must confront Trump with political rationality. What happened in the past should not be the criterion for our actions. The best way is to negotiate and create new opportunities for ourselves. We cannot achieve our goals with the same view we have had of the international arena in the past. Without a doubt, if we do not show flexibility in our policies, our economic problems and political isolation will not disappear.

Etemad: How can Iran negotiate with Trump?

In a note, Etemad discussed Trump's precise understanding to advance the negotiations and wrote: Considering Trump's behavioral characteristics, Iran needs to adopt measured and diverse strategies with reasonable scenarios in talks with him. Having a creative negotiation plan based on understanding and national interests will be the most important tool for overcoming the challenges ahead. Before starting negotiations, Iran should effectively consolidate its diplomatic strategy by promoting internal unity for negotiations and strengthening relations with other world powers such as China, Russia, and the European Union. This could change the balance of power in Iran's favor and reduce the pressures from the other side. On the way out of the current challenges, Iran should analyze them well and take advantage of this opportunity instead of confronting the Americans. It is possible to create an atmosphere to reduce tensions and reach workable agreements by adopting a calculated strategy based on full readiness and smart diplomacy,

Iran's 'strategic self-reliance' not premised on nukes

There is a growing narrative among some Iran policy experts that the Islamic Republic, under regional pressures, economic challenges, and domestic unrest, has shifted its policy toward developing nuclear weapons as a last resort for survival or deterrence. Iran's actions do not indicate a move toward nuclear weapons, but rather a manifestation of a historical strategy based on protecting national sovereignty and stability through self-reliance. Iran's deterrence structure has always been in full compliance with a national security paradigm rooted in independent sovereignty. Focusing on Iran as a nuclear threat diverts attention from the Zionist regime's role in destabilizing the region. Analysts should focus on Iran's consistent strategic behavior. This change in attitude is not just about Iran, but about restoring trust in a global system that prioritizes accountability, justice, and the rule of law. Claims of Iran's shift toward nuclear weapons are not a reflection of Tehran's strategy, but rather a sign of the collapse of the global order.

Ettelaat: Are Russians turning Iran into the regional energy hub?

In a commentary, Ettelaat discussed the partnership agreement between Iran and Russia. The paper said: Iran is facing an energy crisis despite having the world's second-largest gas reserves. In response to these shortages, Iran and Russia have signed numerous gas agreements, each pursuing its own goals. Following the European Union's reduction in gas imports from Russia due to its war with Ukraine, the Kremlin is trying to diversify its energy markets, and in this regard, gas deliveries to Iran could strengthen bilateral relations with a growing arms and security dimension, but many obstacles need to be overcome. The memorandum of understanding between Iran and Russia reflects their growing geopolitical alignment. They want to break Western hegemony in energy markets by working together in blocs such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to create alternative energy corridors. In addition, the structure of global energy trade may be further subverted by initiatives to use local currencies that reduce dependence on the U.S. dollar.

Tehran blasts Israeli occupation of south Lebanon



TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei strongly condemned the Israeli regime's latest crime of targeting Lebanese citizens as they were returning home after the 60-day deadline to end the occupation of southern Lebanon.

In a statement on Monday, he noted there are hundreds of instances where the occupying regime has violated the ceasefire agreement over the last two months.

He described the latest crime as the peak of the regime's breach of its obligations, a blatant violation of humanitarian laws, and a clear example of war crimes.

Baqaei underscored the responsibility of the U.S. and France as guarantors and observers of the ceasefire deal.

The spokesman noted that the continued presence of the Israeli occupiers in southern Lebanon is tantamount to the continuation of the regime's military aggression against Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Baqaei stated that, in addition to the guarantors of the ceasefire agreement and the com-

mand of the UN peacekeeping forces (UNIFIL), the UN Security Council has a clear responsibility to take effective measures to end this aggression and hold the Israeli regime accountable.

The diplomat reaffirmed Iran's full support for the Lebanese government, people, and Resistance against Israeli expansionism and acts of aggression.

He further praised the exemplary resistance and courage of the Lebanese people against the Israeli regime and honored the memory and legacy of the Resistance martyrs, especially the noble martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and the martyrs of Israel's Sunday attack in southern Lebanon.

Baqaei also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the attacks.

On Sunday, the Israeli regime's forces claimed the lives of 24 individuals, including a soldier, and left over 130 injured in southern Lebanon, as people returned to their homes after the deadline for the Israeli withdrawal had lapsed.

'U.S. lethal aid in Gaza's colonial erasure'

Additionally, on Tuesday, the spokesperson took to X to assert Iran's position on the recent detestable suggestions regarding the relocation of the people of Gaza.

"The idea of 'cleaning out' Gaza as a part of the 'colonial erasure' of Palestine has long been underway with American lethal weapons and ammunition, as well as its political, intelligence, and financial support," he stated.

This statement comes in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial proposal to relocate Palestinians from Gaza to either Egypt or Jordan, which has faced significant opposition globally and from regional powers.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would lead to 'disaster' for region: Araghchi

From page 1 ▶ However, the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the deal in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump, along with the re-imposition of sanctions on Iran, left the future of the agreement in doubt. Since then, Iran has gradually rolled back its commitments under the JCPOA, accusing other signatories of failing to honor their obligations.

Despite the tumultuous history, Trump has recently suggested the possibility of negotiating a new deal with Iran, calling it "nice." In response, Araghchi stated that while Iran is open to listening to Trump's proposals, it would take much more than just words to rebuild trust and begin negotiations for a new agreement.

"The situation is different and much more difficult than the previous time," he said, highlighting that the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 deal has significantly impacted Iran's willing-



ness to negotiate. He noted that the U.S. has yet to take concrete actions to regain Iran's confidence, with "nice" words falling short of meaningful diplomacy.

Araghchi also took the opportunity to mock a proposal from Trump regarding the displacement of Palestinians. Trump had suggested that Palestinians could be moved to Egypt and Jordan as part of a broader strategy for resolving the Gaza conflict. Araghchi countered

with a sarcastic proposal, suggesting that instead of expelling Palestinians, Israel should be relocated to Greenland—an ironic reference to Trump's previous interest in acquiring the Danish territory. "My suggestion is something else," Araghchi quipped. "Instead of Palestinians, try to expel Israelis, take them to Greenland so they can kill two birds with one stone."

The ongoing conflict in Gaza,

which has caused widespread destruction and loss of life, has left nearly all of the 2.4 million residents displaced. Since Israel's deadly military campaign against Gaza began on October 7, 2023, over 47,000 Palestinians—mainly women and children—have lost their lives. In light of Israel's failure to achieve its wartime objectives, including the release of captives and the complete displacement of Gaza's population to neighboring Egypt, Israel accepted a ceasefire earlier this month.

Araghchi also spoke about the resilience of Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance movements, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, in the face of Israeli aggression. He noted that while both groups had been significantly impacted by Israeli military actions, they continue to rebuild and maintain their ideological commitment. "This is a school of thought, an idea, a cause, an ideal that will always be there," he stated.

Damaged air-defense systems replaced and tested in drills, asserts senior Iranian general

From page 1 ▶ This exercise is among several where Iran's armed forces have demonstrated their expertise in both conventional and asymmetric warfare tactics.

The drills included live-fire exercises, displaying an array of missiles, drones, and cutting-edge defense technologies.

Continuing his remarks, Shadmani stressed the importance of constant readiness for the armed forces.

"The military exercises are conducted to maintain and enhance readiness, and they also send a message to the enemy," he noted.

The commander explained that the primary purpose of these drills is to enhance readiness, provide training, and test new defense equipment.

"The next goal is to demonstrate our readiness, power, and ability to counter any threat from the enemy," Shadmani added.

He highlighted the unveiling of new equipment during the exercises, stating that government support for the armed forces and the readiness created in the country's defense industries have accelerated the production of military equipment.

"Old systems are being replaced with new, updated ones," he said, adding that "Part of the exercises has been dedicated to testing



the new systems and enhancing the preparedness of their users."

Shadmani highlighted the enemy's deceptive propaganda that portrays the country as weak, stating, "Our adversaries, particularly the Americans and Zionists, seek to fabricate narratives to mask their own shortcomings; they strive to depict Iran as weak, which is far from reality."

"Our armed forces are in peak readiness," the commander asserted.

He also mentioned that Iran's missile capabilities were displayed during Operation True Promise II, where the Israeli regime and its allies spent billions attempting to intercept missiles aimed at occupied territories, yet the missiles successfully struck their intended targets.

"If the enemy makes a foolish move, they will taste the bitter impact of our missiles, and none of their interests in the occupied territories will be safe," Shadmani warned.

'Iran procures foreign equipment whenever necessary'

Shadmani noted that the armed forces predominantly use domestic equipment, but this does not mean they avoid using non-domestic equipment or refrain from making military purchases to strengthen their defensive capabilities.

He highlighted that the Iranian Air Force's capabilities are being enhanced with both domestic and foreign equipment.

"We will procure military equipment whenever necessary to strengthen our air, ground, and naval forces," he explained.

Discussing recent developments in Gaza, Shadmani noted, "Some uninformed individuals are reluctant to accept that the Resistance Front has won and the Zionist enemy has been defeated."

He pointed out that one of the enemy's goals was to eliminate Hamas, which did not happen.

"Hamas continues its path, alive and dynamic, and the Resistance endures," he concluded.

'Alive and thriving,' Iran parliament speaker celebrates resilience of Resistance in Gaza

TEHRAN – Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, asserted the unwavering strength of the Palestinian Resistance in a speech on Monday.

He emphasized that "Hamas is alive and thriving," affirming the movement's robust willpower.

Qalibaf highlighted "the cognitive warfare waged by the Zionist enemies globally," which aims to propagate a narrative of defeat for Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance.

"The Resistance continues with even more robust resolve, humiliating the enemy," he stated.

He further noted that the prolonged stand against "the genocidal actions of the apartheid Israeli regime" would lead to the complete withdrawal of the regime's forces from the Gaza Strip and the return of refugees to their homes.

Qalibaf underscored the importance of unity between the people of Gaza and the Resistance in thwarting schemes aimed at eradicating the Palestinian population and forcing their mass displacement.

"The occupiers might be able to destroy homes, schools, and hos-

pitals with U.S. made bombs," he said, "but they will never break the will of the nations or extinguish the flame of resistance in the hearts of the Palestinian people."

Qalibaf concluded by paying tribute to fallen leaders and fighters, including Ismail Haniyeh, Yahya Sinwar, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, and Sayyed Hashem Safieddine, among others who sacrificed their lives in the sacred battle against "the vilest enemy of humanity."

In a landmark event on Monday, tens of thousands of Palestinians began their journey back to northern Gaza, ending 15 months of enforced displacement.

The development followed a ceasefire agreement that enabled the exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian hostages.

For several days, families had gathered on streets and beaches, surrounded by their possessions—mattresses and water tanks— anxiously waiting for the Netzarim checkpoint to open as per the new accord.

Countless Gazans, as well as other Palestinian voices, celebrated this return as a historic milestone.

IRGC unveils highly advanced 'Gaza' drone during major drill



TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force has revealed its latest technological achievement, the Shahed-149 "Gaza" drone, during an expansive military exercise known as Great Prophet Authority.

The Shahed-149 "Gaza" stands out with its impressive 21-meter wingspan and a payload capacity of 500 kilograms, allowing it to carry a variety of advanced munitions, including precision-guided bombs and surveillance equipment. The drone's capabilities include a cruising speed of 215 km/h, an impressive flight endurance of up to 35 hours, and the ability to reach altitudes of 10,668 meters (35,000 feet), making it highly suited for both reconnaissance and strike missions.

Its operational range spans

4,000 kilometers, and it can strike targets within a 1,000-kilometer radius. With the ability to operate at high speeds, the Shahed-149 is poised for swift response in strategic military operations.

Equipped with the Sadid-345 precision-guided glide bombs, the Gaza drone is capable of carrying out highly accurate strikes on both stationary and moving targets. The bombs feature GPS-assisted navigation and electro-optical guidance systems, ensuring precision with a margin of error between 2.5 and 5 meters. The Sadid-345 bombs are designed with a warhead containing H6 explosives, optimized for anti-armor and anti-personnel operations, creating a lethal blast radius of 30 meters upon detonation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ayatollah Khamenei warns in a meeting with high-ranking officials Evil nature of U.S. behind diplomatic smiles

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has warned that behind diplomatic smiles of the United States lies a hidden animosity, citing examples of US actions such as Congress applauding a murderer and awarding a medal to the captain responsible for downing an Iranian passenger plane.

The leader made the remarks during a meeting with a number of officials and ambassadors from Islamic countries on the auspicious anniversary of Eid al-Mab'ath, the day on which Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was appointed to prophethood, on Jan. 28, 2025.

Ayatollah Khamenei opened the meeting by extending his congratulations to the Iranian nation, the Islamic Ummah, and all freedom-seekers around the world on the occasion of Eid al-Mab'ath. He highlighted the significance of this celebration coinciding with Bahman [February], a month that marks the victory of the Islamic Revolution, which itself emerged from the event of the Bi'tha.

"The Bi'tha is one of the greatest and most significant events in human history, as it brought about a tremendous intellectual and perceptual transformation, ushering



in an unparalleled transformation among the people of that era and in subsequent periods," he stated.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the US government as the head of arrogant and colonial powers, as well as a government influenced by the world's financial elites. He argued that the major financial cartels are constantly scheming to alter the identity and interests of nations and expand their colonial influence. "As the Quran states, they desire whatever causes you difficulty," he said.

Referring to Quranic verses that portray the hatred and grudge of Islam's enemies as greater than what

is apparent in their words and behaviors, he said, "When members of the US Congress applaud and encourage a murderer responsible for slaughtering thousands of children, or when they award a medal to the captain of the American ship that shot down an Iranian passenger plane with 300 passengers, these are examples of their evil nature, hostilities, and grudges that are concealed behind diplomatic smiles." Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the necessity of vigilance in global interactions, stating, "We must understand that behind diplomatic smiles lie hidden enmities and hatred. We should open our eyes and remain alert to whom we are

dealing with and speaking to."

The Leader described one of the key messages of the Prophet's Mab'ath for all Muslim governments and nations as the belief in the truth that "honor belongs to God." He said, "With divine honor, no enemy or foreign element will be able to exert negative influence in either spiritual or physical domain."

He said the prophets were equipped with two tools, namely reason and faith, for transforming human societies. He added, "By awakening the reason and faith inherent in human beings, they assist humanity in finding the path to growth and the Straight Path. The repeated emphasis in the Quran on reflection, reasoning, and contemplation is rooted in this very point."

Ayatollah Khamenei characterized faith—and its central pillar, monotheism—as the core of the Islamic worldview and the foundation for building an Islamic society. He stressed, "The Mab'ath was not a sudden event confined to a single day, but rather a continuous and ongoing process. By employing reason and faith, one can draw upon its blessings and lessons in all eras to bring about intellectual and practical transformation and address problems."

Iranian Army's Ground Forces showcase defensive, security prowess in major drill

TEHRAN – In a display of advanced military capabilities, the Iranian Army's Ground Force conducted a significant maneuver involving a fleet of 100 helicopters in Kermanshah, western Iran.

The maneuvers, which started on Monday, were attended by high-ranking officials including Commander of the Ground Force Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari.

Described as "security, offensive, and mobile exercises," the drills included the overhaul and addition of several helicopter models—205, 206, 209, and 214—previously grounded due to the need for parts production and supply.

The exercises aimed to enhance the Army Ground Force's defensive readiness against any external threats to national security.

The drills were conducted in Naftshahr, a region in Kermanshah Province's Qasr-e Shirin County, western Iran.

The 35th Special Forces Brigade, the 55th Airborne Brigade, the 181st Armored Brigade, Army Aviation, Electronic Warfare Battalions, and drones were among the participating units.

Brigadier General Karim Chashak, Deputy Commander of Operations for the Ground Force, highlighted that the goal of the drill was to enhance the forces' readiness for countering any foreign threats against order and security in the country.

We are ready for any war: top General

On Tuesday, the final stage of the Army Ground Force's exercises in the country's western region



took place.

Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Major General Abdollah Mousavi, Commander of the Iranian Army, and a group of senior officials, commanders, and top brass from the Armed Forces General Staff and the Army were present.

Addressing the troops and commanders, Major General Bagheri emphasized the importance of incorporating modern technologies into military strategies.

"Due to the advancement and proliferation of artificial intelligence and robotic sciences, modern battles have significantly diverged from past battles," he stated.

Bagheri noted that the Army Ground Force maximized the use of these technologies, employing equipment developed by the Army Ground Force's Research and Self-Sufficiency

Jihad Organization.

He pointed out that one of the notable aspects of the drills was the offensive and defensive flight operations of the Army Ground Force's micro aerial vehicles.

"The force's offensive successfully targeted and destroyed the intended objectives, while the defensive micro aerial vehicles demonstrated the Army Ground Force's seven-layer defensive capabilities in countering the enemy's offensive micro aerial vehicles," Bagheri explained.

Additionally, the top general lauded the successful execution of the maneuvers and the integration of advanced technologies.

Bagheri concluded by reiterating the commitment to maintaining maximum readiness and sending a clear message to adversaries about the country's preparedness to confront any threats, particularly in electronic warfare.

Iran stresses commitment to fight terrorism and uphold regional peace in letter to UN

information and aiding an enemy state during wartime.

Israeli prosecutors are expected to file formal charges in the coming days.

On early January, the Shin Bet agency had claimed a staggering fivefold rise in espionage activities associated with Iran.

According to the agency's annual report, the number of identified espionage cases surged by an alarming 400 percent in 2024 compared to the previous year.

The Shin Bet disclosed that it had indicted 27 Israeli settlers over allegations of spying for Iran.

The agency claimed to have dismantled 13 major espionage operations that were allegedly orchestrated by Iranian intelligence.

In one high-profile incident in October 2024, two settlers were arrested east of Tel Aviv on charges of espionage and acts of sabotage in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Furthermore, on September 19, the Israeli regime arrested another settler suspected of plotting against prominent Israelis.

TEHRAN – The Permanent Mission of Iran to the United Nations reaffirmed the country's unwavering dedication to combating terrorism and promoting regional peace and stability under international law.

In a letter sent to the UN Security Council, the mission outlined Iran's stance on the long-standing issue of terrorism, referencing the significant losses suffered by the nation.

The letter includes a comprehensive report, which lists 23,323 Iranian victims of terrorism since the 1979 Revolution, underscoring Iran's role not only as a leader in the fight against terrorism but also as one of its major victims.

The letter, issued following instructions from the Iranian government, emphasizes that these terrorist acts have been perpetrated by various groups with foreign backing, targeting civilians and violating international law. According to the report, around 23,000 innocent Iranians, including women and children, have been killed as a result of these attacks.

Iran stressed that these acts of

SPORTS

Esteghlal coach Mosimane threatens to terminate contract

TEHRAN – Esteghlal head coach Pitso Mosimane gave the team a 24-hour notice to pay any unpaid salaries or face contract termination.

South African media reports suggest that he has given the club until Tuesday to make the payments, failing which Mosimane and his technical staff will leave the club.

Mosimane signed with the Persian Gulf Pro League team based in Tehran in October 2024.

He brought on Kyle Solomon, Musi Matlaba, Kabelo Rangoaga, and Maahier Davids to his technical team.

He collaborated with the same group at Al Ahly, Al Wahda, and Abha in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Abu Dhabi, and now Iran.

Esteghlal received the first notice from Mosimane's representatives on January 1, and according to FIFA procedures, it was supposed to pay the coaches as soon as possible.

Eslami's goal nominated for best goal of ACL MD6

TEHRAN – Matchday Six of the AFC Champions League Elite 2024-25 brought another round of impressive goals that highlighted the talent and creativity in the West Zone.

An array of audacious lobbs, long-range volleys and flawless team efforts showcased the artistry of Asia's premier club competition.

In Al Ahli Saudi and Esteghlal match, Mohammad Hossein Eslami beat former Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy with a volley from distance that bounced over the Senegalese's attempts to save.

The fans can vote to decide which goal will advance to the semi-finals.

Al Shorta's Mohamad Ali's goal against Persepolis, Al Sadd's Akram Afif's goal against

Al Nassr, Pakhtakor's Otobek Jurakuziev against Al Ain and Al Ain's Soufiane Rahimi's goal

against Pakhtakor are also nominated for the best goal of MD6.

Esteghlal complete signing of Abolfazl Zoleykhahi

TEHRAN – The Esteghlal football club have completed the signing of Iran international young defender Abolfazl Zoleykhahi.

Zoleykhahi, 18, has penned a five-year deal with the Blues for an undisclosed fee.

The defender is a member of the Iran U-20 football team.

Esteghlal sit 10th in the Iran football league.

Taremi scores first goal for Inter in Serie A

EHRAN – Inter Milan delivered a commanding performance as it cruised to a 4-0 victory at Lecce Sunday night to stay on the heels of Serie A leader Napoli.

The result kept Inter second in the standings with 50 points, three behind Napoli and with a game in hand.

Lecce sits fourth from the bottom with 20 points.

With Napoli having opened up a six-point lead following its 2-1 home win against Juventus on Saturday, Inter was determined to close the gap again and started aggressively.

Six minutes into the match Davide Frattesi netted Inter's first goal.

Lautaro Martinez made it 2-0 for Inter six minutes before the break.

Denzel Dumfries scored Inter's third goal in the 57th minute.

And Mehdi Taremi scored the fourth goal from the penalty spot in the 61st minute.

It was Iranian's first goal for Inter Milan in Serie A.

Toghani wins Pahlevani Wrestling Championship

TEHRAN – Mostafa Toghani defended his title as champion of Iran's Pahlevani Wrestling Championship.

He defeated Ahmad Mirzapour in the +100kg weight class to win the title.

Pahlevani of Iran is an annual Pahlevani Wrestling competition held in Iran, in which athletes from across the country participate to achieve the title.

Though the competition has ancient roots, its modern form has been held since 1944.

Winner of this title is called Pahlevan and wears the special Bazouband (Armband).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) registered Pahlevani and Zourkhaneh rituals in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014.

Weightlifter Yousefi sidelined for six months

TEHRAN – Iranian super heavyweight weightlifter Alireza Yousefi underwent knee surgery in Tehran on Sunday.

The weightlifter had a torn ligament and meniscus in his right knee.

The surgery will keep him six months out.

Yousefi snatched a bronze medal last month at the 2024 IWF World Championships held in Bahrain.

He will miss the 2025 senior Asian Weightlifting Championships, which will be held in Jiangshan, China from May 9 to 15.

Nassaji suffer home loss against Aluminum: PGPL

TEHRAN – Nassaji football team suffered a 2-1 loss against Aluminum in 2024-25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Monday.

In the match held in Ghaemshahr's Vatani Stadium, Alexander Merkel gave the host a lead in the 45th minute but Bahram Goudarzi equalized the match in the 70th minute.

Aref Haji Eydi scored the winner in the dying moments of the match.

In Tehran, Havadar football team was held to a goalless draw by Zob Ahan.

Shams Azar drew 1-1 with Chadormalou in Qazvin.

Sepahan lead the table with 38 points, while Havadar sit 16th in the 16-team table with just nine points out of 17 matches.

Armin Sohrabian returns to Esteghlal: IPL

TEHRAN – Nassaji defender Armin Sohrabian joined Esteghlal football team on Sunday.

He has penned an 18-month deal with the Blues for an undisclosed fee.

Sohrabian will play for Esteghlal for a third stint.

He was a member of Esteghlal from 2017 to 2019. He also played for the team from 2023-24 but left the team for Nassaji at the beginning of the 2024-25 Iran professional League (IPL) season.

Esteghlal sit 11th in the IPL 16-team's table.

Iran's trade balance with West Asian countries turns positive in 9 months



TEHRAN – Iran's trade balance with West Asian countries turned positive during the first nine months of the current Iranian year, according to the Director General for West Asia at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran.

Abdolamir Rabihavi, citing non-oil export statistics, stated that Iran's trade with Iraq grew by 35 percent, the UAE by 11 percent, Turkey by 59 percent, Kuwait by 31 percent, Syria by 21 percent, Qatar by 14 percent, Jordan by 508 percent, Oman by 15 percent, Lebanon by 30 percent, and Saudi Arabia by a staggering 9,795 percent over the period.

Rabihavi highlighted significant growth in specific trade figures, noting that trade with Saudi Arabia increased from \$200,000 to \$23

million, with Lebanon from \$18 million to \$23 million, and with Bahrain from \$7.0 million to \$11 million.

He explained that Iraq's import restrictions on Iranian goods are seasonal, often implemented to support domestic production. For instance, Iraqi authorities periodically raise tariffs or impose import bans on agricultural and industrial products to prioritize local producers. Despite these restrictions, Iran's trade with Iraq grew by 35 percent in the first nine months of the year, reaching \$9.413 billion compared to \$6.972 billion in the same period last year. Notably, this figure equals the total trade volume for the entire previous year.

Rabihavi also reported substantial growth in trade with Turkey, rising from \$3.271 billion last year to \$5.203 billion in the first nine months of this year, an increase of nearly \$2.0 billion, reflecting significant progress.

In response to whether Iran's trade balance with West Asian countries is trending positively, Rabihavi confirmed that the trade balance for the period was indeed positive. Exports to these countries increased by approximately 31 percent, while imports grew by 21 percent, resulting in export growth outpacing imports.

Heavy machinery production in Iran rises by 15%

TEHRAN – The production of heavy construction and mining machinery in Iran increased by over 15 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian year (March 20 - December 21, 2024) compared to the same period last year.

The Director General of Agricultural Machinery and Equipment at the Ministry of Industry, Mining, and Trade reported that in 2022, around 3,500 heavy construction and mining machines were manufactured. This figure rose to over 4,700 machines in 2023, and approximately 3,700 units have already been produced in the first nine months of the current year.

Abouzar Jamshidvand stated that the ministry has set a target of producing 5,000 units by the end of the current year (late March 2025), which is expected to be achieved with proper planning.

Jamshidvand also noted that exports of heavy machinery began this year, with \$3.0 million worth of exports recorded so far, and this figure is steadily increasing.

In this regard, the head of one of Iran's major heavy machinery manufacturers reported a 100 percent increase in production.

Hepco Head Hossein Ghorbani announced that the company's production of construction



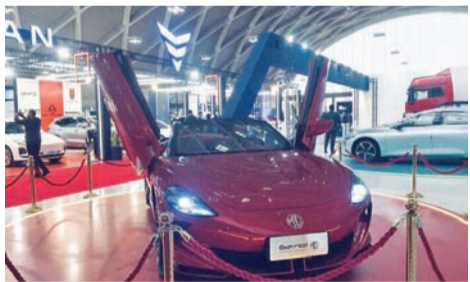
and mining machinery will reach approximately 1,000 units by year's end, double the total output of the previous year.

Ghorbani highlighted that the factory manufactures 23 types of construction and mining machinery, including rollers, loaders, excavators, graders, bulldozers, and various mining trucks and dump trucks. These products can meet a significant portion of the country's demand for heavy machinery.

Additionally, for the first time, the company exported 23 heavy machines worth \$6.0 million to Africa.

According to Ghorbani, this milestone paves the way for Iranian-made machinery to enter the "continent of opportunities."

Tehran hosting international automobile exhibition



TEHRAN – The sixth Iranian International Exhibition of Automobile and Related Industries (Tehran Auto Show 2024) kicked off in Tehran on Monday, January 29, IRNA reported.

Featuring 44 domestic and international companies, the event will run for five days at the Shahr-e-Aftab International Exhibition Center.

The exhibition showcases the latest innovations and advancements in the automotive industry across a 20,000-square-meter area.

It includes 32 domestic companies and 12 foreign participants from countries such as China, South Korea, France, Germany, and other European nations.

The event highlights the active presence of vehicle importers and assembly manufacturers, with unveilings of imported and assembled vehicles among its key attractions.

Visitors can explore a wide range of models, brands, and categories, including heavy vehicles and trucks. On the sidelines, specialized sessions with automotive experts and industry stakeholders are scheduled to further enrich the exhibition experience.

Turkey's trade minister stresses strengthening Tehran-Ankara cooperation

From Page 1 ▶ Bolat also pointed to other agreements reached during the meeting, including the renovation and reconstruction of border crossings on the Turkish side, measures to facilitate smoother transportation between the two nations, and the development of trade, transport, and transit relations.

The Iranian delegation, led by Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh, traveled to Ankara on Monday (January 27) for bilateral meetings with Turkey's ministers of transport and trade.

On December 11, a trade cooperation memorandum of under-



standing was signed between Iran and Turkey in the presence of Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Turkey's Minister

of Trade. Both sides emphasized their commitment to increasing bilateral trade to \$30 billion over the next five years.

Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$5.2 billion to Turkey during the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-December 21, 2024), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that Turkey was Iran's fourth top export destination in the mentioned nine-month period.

Exporting commodities valued at \$8.9 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third top source of import in the first nine months of the present year, the official further added.

Lingering energy subsidy system is fundamentally wrong

Subsidized energy policies at the cost of public health and economy

By M.A. Saki

TEHRAN – Inexpert decisions coupled with populist policies have led to alarming energy consumption at the cost of the environment, public health, waste of natural resources, and drain of national wealth. Now it has become more and more difficult to address problems resulting from inexpert and populist policies in energy consumption. Unfortunately, energy consumption is under the influence of politics rather than economics.

Some decision-makers, including former and current parliamentarians and presidents, were and are still proud of themselves for standing against reducing, not cutting, energy subsidies, especially petrol. They were and are still ignorant of the fact that the harms of subsidized energy far outweigh its benefits.

Successive parliaments are more responsible for the current situation. For example, the sixth parliament (2000-2004) voted for a legislation according to which the petrol price had to rise to the international market level within five years. However, the next parliament rescinded the legislation and boasted of its move.

This anti-justice energy subsidy system, which has been going on for decades, goes against the principles that the Islamic Republic claims it stands for. The subsidy is mostly going to those who consume more petrol, natural gas, electricity or other types of energy.

Houshang Falahatiyan, the deputy oil minister for planning, said in January 2024 that Iran annually pays between 80 to 100 billion dollars in energy subsidies. Among the energy commodities petrol and diesel are heavily subsidized. Subsidizing diesel is somehow justified because it is important for transportation. But subsidizing petrol and natural gas is simply wrong and detrimental which has caused back-to-back problems.

Keeping petrol prices unreasonably low while the annual inflation rate has been around 40 percent has wreaked havoc on the economy.

Now petrol is much cheaper than the drinking bottled water.

On August 27, 2024, just a few weeks after Masoud Pezeshkian took over as president, he said his government did not have enough money to pay for wheat bought from farmers, pay pensions for retirees, etc. Still, energy, especially petrol, is subsidized heavily.

President Pezeshkian has said producing one liter of petrol costs 8,000 toman (around 12 cents) without computing the oil price.

Now, 60 liters of petrol are sold to each car at a price of 1500 toman (around 2 cents) per liter and more than that 3,000 toman (around 4 cents). Some citizens who own more than one car are now benefiting much more from this unlimited subsidy system and the poor classes of society who have no car are deprived of it.

This wrong policy has led the use of petrol to reach the astonishing level of 122 million liters per day and is still increasing. Pezeshkian said this year we must allocate 90,000 billion toman (around 1.3 billion dollars) for importing petrol.

After petrol, the extravagant use of natural

gas comes second in draining national wealth. Director of National Iranian Oil Company Saeed Tavakoli said in Dec. 2024 that Iranians consume natural gas 3.3 times more than the global average.

In terms of natural gas consumption, Iran comes after the U.S., Russia and China.

It is true that Iran has the second-largest proven gas reserves in the world and according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) has the third-largest proven crude oil reserves, citizens must be made aware that unchecked consumption will harm the country economically and healthily and these resources will be depleted sooner than expected.

Energy price vs basic commodities

Now the prices of basic commodities such as cooking oil, rice, meat, beans, etc. are increasing in parallel with the inflation rate, which is about 40 percent. However, some officials raise eyebrows whenever there is talk of decreasing the petrol subsidy. At a time when an important percentage of families live under the poverty line and are forced to deal with rising prices paying tens of billions of dollars to energy commodities is self-defeating.

There is a counterargument that if people use petrol at a low price, they pay much more for buying a car in comparison to international markets, and the cars produced by local auto companies are fuel-inefficient. Undoubtedly, this argument is correct, but who is responsible?

Auto companies also campaign against importing cars – even second-hand cars – by saying many jobs will be lost. But, the billions of dollars that are being wasted for subsidizing petrol can create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Summarily speaking, auto companies with the support of some influential persons or lobbyists have created a monopolized market for themselves and even don't try to lower the fuel consumption of their products or improve the quality of their products.

Junking old cars as one of the main sources of air pollution is also done at a low speed.

Health effects

The harmful environmental effects of this destructive subsidy system must not be underestimated or ignored.

Abbas Shahsavani, the chief of the air quality of the health ministry, said on January 18 that more than 30,000 people died from air pollution during the calendar year 1402 (March 2022-March 2023), Tasnim reported.

This figure may not be precise but the number of citizens who fall victim to air pollution is high. Shahsavani also said the cost of air pollution in 1402 was 600,000 billion toman (around 9 billion dollars). This energy policy is first and foremost self-defeating.

Cheap petrol prices have led to wasteful consumption and production of fuel-inefficient passenger cars.

In January 2024, Falahatiyan said about 1 million cars are added to the transportation fleet per year and their fuel consumption is 40 per-

cent higher than cars produced in the world.

Whenever there is talk of a change in petrol price many decision-makers immediately react and say it leads to price rises in other commodities, including transportation. However, without any rise in petrol prices since November 15, 2019, which led to protests prices have kept regularly increasing.

Nasser Ashouri, the secretary of the Employer Association in the Refining Industry, told a press briefing in May 2024 that Iran imported about 3 billion dollars of petrol in the national calendar year 1402 (March 2022-March 2023). Ashouri said Iran, a country with the third largest proven oil reserves, is forced to import petrol due to wasteful consumption.

Ashouri also said, "We will face a shortage of all kinds of energy including water, electricity, natural gas, and petrol." However, his prediction came true earlier as the country is now grappling with the shortage of electricity and natural gas with the onset of the cold season. Iran has again resorted to importing petrol while it inaugurated the Setareh Khalij Fars Refinery in Feb. 2019 which added 45 million liters of petrol to the country's production capacity per day.

Old-rooted problem

Speaking at the Parliament's Energy Committee on January 5, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said, "Basically, when there are talks of energy shortage all should notice that this issue is not related to the past five or six months but it is rooted in" years of excessive use of energy in the country. "It is for years energy has been produced unstoppably but the pace of consumption... and efficient use has been abandoned and consumption is on the rise speedily," he told the committee members attended by Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and Energy Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi.

Even Pezeshkian who was a strong critic of the rising petrol consumption and its price made no changes in petrol price when he presented the national budget bill to parliament for the new Iranian calendar year that begins on March 20.

The parliament is also relinquishing its responsibility in this regard and says it is up to the government to decide about the price. The ever-increasing energy consumption, especially petrol, is like an iceberg that is becoming more destructive over time if a remedy is not found.

There is a concern that if the price of petrol is increased it may lead to an unrest similar to Nov. 2019. But there are solutions to this potential problem:

Provide a situation in which customers would buy standard cars with prices at the level of the international market; import electric vehicles; improve the public transport fleet; sign contracts with foreign companies to produce electric cars inside Iran (like the contract that Turkey has signed with China's BYD company); release prices in a gradual way; and more importantly convince people about the health and economic costs of the current subsidy system and assure people that the dividends from petrol prices will benefit the society.

(Calculation is based on 68,000 toman per dollar)

Power plants with 3,500 MW capacity to go operational by mid-2025

TEHRAN – The deputy for project development at Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPHC) announced that by the summer of 2025, approximately 3,500 megawatts (MW) of new power plants (excluding renewable energy plants) will become operational.

Azim Etemadi, deputy for project development at the TPPH, told IRIB that the slow progress in constructing

combined-cycle power plants is due to high costs. He explained that while gas power plants operate at 34 percent efficiency, their steam sections have yet to be built because constructing the steam section costs at least twice as much as building the gas section.

Etemadi added that constructing gas power plants takes 12 to 18 months, while steam power plants require about

36 months.

He highlighted that steam power plants do not consume fuel, and given the energy imbalance in the country, constructing such plants would increase electricity production.

He said plans are in place to build 2,520 MW of power capacity in the public sector, with permits issued by the Economic Council under Build-Oper-

ate-Transfer (BOT) contracts.

In the private sector, permits were previously issued by the Economic Council for constructing 1,920 MW of steam power plants.

However, investors requested revisions due to the long timelines and high costs of such projects. Necessary amendments have been made and submitted to the Economic Council for ap-

proval. Etemadi noted that outstanding debts have hindered the implementation of these projects.

To address this, a "green board" is being designed to attract private investments in the steam sections of gas power plants (combined cycle).

He further announced that within two weeks, capacity certificates will be offered on a forward-selling basis to

help finance investors in steam power plant projects.

Regarding construction costs, the official stated that building a gas power plant costs €350 per kilowatt, while constructing the steam section costs between €500 and €550 per kilowatt.

He clarified that private sector investors are responsible for funding the construction of the steam sections.

From page 1 ▶ The lengthy siege and Israeli political rhetoric surrounding the return of settlements only heightened the sense of urgency among the Palestinian people, who continue to fight for their right to return to their land and rebuild their communities despite the overwhelming obstacles they face.

Speaking to journalists on the ground, Palestinians said that even if they are returning to nothing more than rubble, they would set up tents on whatever remained of their homes.

Their determination to rebuild, even in the face of such devastation, is a powerful testament to the unwavering Palestinian commitment to their land.

Experts have highlighted how armed resistance is rooted in the resilience and determination of the people first. Without the sustained will of the Palestinian population to resist occupation,



there would be no armed struggle.

In Gaza, it has always been the strength and unity of the people that has driven such resistance, with armed resistance arising only when peaceful means are no longer enough to protect families from aggression.

Coincidentally, the same is

happening with civilians returning to their homes on the southern Lebanese border.

It marks another defeat for the Israeli occupation regime, as the Palestinian people's steadfastness continues. After nearly 16 months of suffering and unimaginable horror, they still strongly support the armed resistance in Gaza and refuse to give up.

This was also evident in Tel Aviv. Israeli media headlines read "Images of Masses Returning to Northern Gaza Shatter [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's 'Total Victory Illusion'".

In a social media post, the former Israeli cabinet minister, Itamar Ben Gvir, who resigned over the Gaza ceasefire agreement, echoed those words, saying, "This is not what 'total victory' looks like - this is what total surrender looks like".

The Israeli Knesset member called the return of displaced Palestinians "another humiliating chapter" in Gaza, condemning it as part of what he labeled the "reckless" Gaza deal. Ben Gvir added that the development further exposed the Israeli failures under the ceasefire plan and undermined Israeli authority in the enclave.

Hebrew media exposes resounding defeat of Israeli aggression

From page 1 ▶ SOUTH LEBANON — Critical analyses continue in the Hebrew media regarding the Israeli disappointment with the return of the southern Lebanese to their border villages carrying Hezbollah flags and pictures of Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah, after the expiration of the 60-day deadline for the withdrawal of the Israeli forces.

Urieh Keshet, i24NEWS channel's correspondent in occupied north Palestine, said, "The scenes in Lebanon worry the settlers of the north, and reinforce their fears of the return of Hezbollah fighters. It also poses a challenge to our security capabilities, and exposes the Israeli army forces to danger."

Keshet added, "The Lebanese tried to cross the earthen barriers and checkpoints of the Israeli army, chanting slogans praising Nasrallah in defiance of the forces present there."

In turn, Yair Kraus, Yedioth Ahronoth's correspondent, said, "These are exactly the images that they fear in the north after 15 months of fighting, pictures of the residents of southern Lebanon near the border returning and raising Hezbollah flags."

The southerners crossed all barriers to create a glorious day of resistance against imperialism. They are the people of honor whom Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah called "the most honorable, purest, and most generous of people." They carried the remains of their



martyred fighters, armed solely with his immortal will: "There is no room for weakness, retreat, or humiliation."

The southerners proved that they are always the makers of glory and that they are "the resistance's strongest weapon," as Sheikh Naim Qassem, the Hezbollah secretary general, described them. Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Parliament, said they are "the guardians of Lebanon's sovereignty."

The southerners marched with their national army, confirming the essential equation to protect a united Lebanon, which does not need ministerial statements or political battles: "army, people, and resistance."

The southerners have proven that they are not intimidated by Western fleets or hostile alliances, highly confident that they are able to heal the wounds, liberate their land, and

rebuild what the US-led Israeli aggression destroyed, creating a history that will be written for the upcoming generations until every inch of the occupied land is restored, God willing.

During the 60-day period, the occupation forces took advantage of the destruction of roads and infrastructure, in addition to burning homes and blowing up mosques and buildings.

Targeting Hezbollah's infrastructure was nothing more than a pretext manipulated by the Israeli forces to delude the northern colonial settlers into believing that it was achieving victories after its failure during the war with Lebanon.

Despite this, the Israeli media kept asking: "In southern Lebanon, they are returning to the villages, but how will the Israelis return to the north?"

Walla further noted that the Lebanese stood at zero distance from the Israeli forces, while Hadashot commented: "Once again, Israel will lose when it withdraws from southern Lebanon."

Amos Harel, Haaretz's military affairs analyst, pointed out that "reserve soldiers criticized the army's insistence on staying inside Lebanese territory without any reason."

Troubling tune: Trump dancing to Zionist drumbeat

From page 1 ▶ Jordan and Egypt have issued official statements rejecting the removal of Palestinians from Gaza.

Trump's idea is in line with those Israeli politicians who have consistently supported the mass relocation of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and the reestablishment of Jewish settlements in the territory.

In October 2024, former National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir called for reestablishing settlements in Gaza and "encouraging emigration" of the strip's 2.3 million population.

"If we want to we can renew settlement in Gaza... We can [also] do something else - encourage emigration. Israel is giving them (Palestinians) the option of going to other countries," the far-right minister, who resigned following the establishment of a ceasefire in Gaza said.

The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect on January 19 after Israel failed to "destroy" the Palestinian resistance groups following more than a 15-month conflict.

Israel launched a genocidal war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, killing more than 47,000 Palestinians including some 17,000 children.

Israeli intentions extend be-

yond the reoccupation of Gaza to include the annexation of the occupied West Bank.

Following Trump's reelection as the US president in the November election, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich suggested the regime would look to annex the West Bank in 2025.

"2025: the year of sovereignty in Judea and Samaria," the far-right minister said, using the biblical name by which Israel refers to the West Bank.

Days after the US presidential election, Smotrich hoped that the Trump administration would recognize Israel's push for "sovereignty" over the occupied territory.

"I am convinced that we will be able to work closely together with President-elect Trump and all members of the incoming administration, to promote the common values and interests of the two countries, to strengthen the strength and security of the State of Israel, to expand the circle of peace and stability in the Middle East out of strength and faith and on the basis of recognition in the unquestionable historical belonging of the whole Land of Israel to the people of Israel," Smotrich said.

Trump moved the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem



Donald Trump has reiterated his call for Palestinians to move out of Gaza exerting pressure on Egypt and Jordan to take them in

(al-Quds) during his first term (January 20, 2017 - January 20, 2021). He also proposed a plan that would have cemented Israeli control over al-Quds and protected settlements in the West Bank. This is while all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law.

From now on, it seems that Trump will likely align his objectives with those of Smotrich and similar figures.

Mike Huckabee, Trump's nominee to be the next US ambassador to Israel, is a strong advocate for the recognition of the Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.

Huckabee told the Associated Press when he was running to

be the Republican presidential nominee in 2015 that if elected, his administration would formally recognize the West Bank as part of Israel.

The Israeli army attempted to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Gaza, but it failed to do so amid rising resistance.

Meanwhile, Israel has intensified deadly assaults on the West Bank as it seeks to implement its malevolent plans in the occupied territory.

But Palestinians have shown that they will fight tooth and nail against the Israeli army that is armed to the teeth.

US embassy in Congo on fire



The US, France and other allies have been blamed for allowing neighboring Rwanda to fuel a conflict in the east of Congo.

Hundreds of protesters attacked several foreign embassies and a United Nations building in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital, Kinshasa, on Tuesday as a rebel offensive backed by neighboring Rwanda in the country's east threatened to spiral into a regional crisis, The New York Times reported.

Anger at Congo's foreign allies has been rising in the country this week over what is seen as their inability to stop an assault on the key eastern city of Goma on Monday by the March 23 Movement, or M23, a Congolese militia that the United Nations and United States say is supported and directed by Rwanda.

On Tuesday, protesters burned tires and threw stones in front of the U.S. Embassy's main compound, according to local news reports, and breached the site of a new embassy building that is under construction, according to an American official in Kinshasa who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preserve staff safety. The site was later secured and no one was injured, the official said.

Protesters attacked the French Embassy in the city, causing a fire, according to Jean-Noël Barrot, France's foreign minister, who denounced the violence as "unacceptable," although he said the blaze had been brought under control.

Videos distributed by the Reuters news agency showed protesters breaking into the French Embassy and leaving the building with looted furniture. "Macron kills in Congo," read a message left on an embassy wall, referring to President Emmanuel Macron of France. "You have long betrayed us."

Protesters also looted and set fire to the Ugandan Embassy, according to video verified by The New York Times. And they attacked the Belgian Embassy and the office of the UN humanitarian agency in Congo, according to a United Nations official, who referred to the situation as "total chaos."

A small fire was also set in front of the Rwandan Embassy.

The M23 rebels have been fighting against Congolese armed forces and allied armed groups for territorial control in the mineral-rich eastern regions of Congo. Their latest offensive has displaced over 500,000 people since the beginning of the year, according to the United Nations refugee agency.

As the angry protests erupted in Kinshasa, gunshots rang out across Goma 1,000 miles to the east, an area that was once a refuge for people fleeing M23's advance and violence from other armed groups. Many are now fleeing again amid the M23 rebels' fight to completely capture the city.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israel's military attache in Belgium referred to ICC for alleged war crimes

Israel's new military attache in Belgium has been accused of war crimes by the Hind Rajab Foundation, a Brussels-based non-profit organization.

Colonel Moshe Tetro served as head of the Israeli military unit responsible for coordinating aid into the besieged Gaza Strip earlier this year.

The Hind Rajab Foundation's chair, Dyab Abou Jahjah, described Moshe as a "key figure in the implementation of Israeli policy towards hospitals and the strategy of famine and thirst as a weapon of war".

The foundation said it has filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Tetro, highlighting his "role in orchestrating starvation and targeting healthcare facilities".

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Net-

anyahu, and its former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, are subjects of ICC arrest warrants for alleged war crimes - including using starvation as a weapon of war.

Earlier this month, UN special rapporteur on Palestine Francesca Albanese told Middle East Eye that the ICC should seek warrants for more Israeli leaders.

'War criminals have no place in our institutions'

The Hind Rajab Foundation announced on Tuesday that it has sent a letter to Belgium's Ministry of Foreign Affairs urging it to refuse accreditation to Tetro as a military attache.

"Allowing Moshe Tetro to serve in Belgium would be an endorsement of his crimes," Abou Jahjah asserted.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Report: Israeli minister scrapped Brussels trip over arrest warrant fears

Amichai Chikli, Israel's diaspora minister, was set to speak at a European Parliament event on Tuesday marking International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Chikli said on Sunday he canceled his trip to Brussels "in light of concrete warnings, and in accordance with the guidance of security officials", according to Al Jazeera.

"I regretted receiving instructions from security officials this evening to cancel my

participation ... Unfortunately, the capital of Europe has become an unsafe place for Jews and Israelis," he said.

Israel's public broadcaster now reports that Chikli canceled the trip after Belgian officials said he would not enjoy diplomatic immunity as he would not be there on an official visit, raising concern that pro-Palestinian groups would seek an arrest warrant.

Tourism minister tells of Nowruz celebrations with Ramadan observance



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has announced adjustments to the upcoming Nowruz festivities to respect a concurrent observance of the holy month of Ramadan in 2025.

Talking to IRNA on Tuesday, Salehi-Amiri stated that Nowruzgahs, cultural events highlighting Nowruz, the Persian New Year, will be held after the evening Iftar meal until midnight to accommodate Ramadan's spiritual and cultural considerations.

"We have formed a dedicated committee to ensure that Nowruzgah activities align with the sanctity of Ramadan while maintaining the celebratory essence of Nowruz," he explained.

The minister emphasized that these measures aim to provide an opportunity for people to gather and enjoy Nowruz traditions after breaking their fast. "Nowruz is celebrated globally, and we want to create a space where families can come together in harmony with the spirit of the holy month," he added.

Salehi-Amiri assured that as Ramadan progresses, especially during the sacred Laylat al-Qadr (the Nights of Destiny), greater emphasis will be placed on observing the religious decorum. "The principles of Ramadan and the deeply held beliefs of the Iranian people will be

central to all celebrations," the minister underlined.

The Night of Destiny, aka the Night of Power, or the Night of Decree in Islamic belief, is the night when Muslims believe the Holy Quran was first sent down from heaven to the world, and also the night when its first verses were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); it is described as better than a thousand months of worshipping.

The cultural significance of Nowruzgah

Nowruzgahs, launched in 2015, are cultural events designed to revive and promote the ancient traditions of Iran's diverse ethnic groups.

These gatherings are not simply festivals but serve as platforms for showcasing local customs and preserving the country's rich heritage.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has played a key role in organizing these events, which aim to reconnect Iranians with their ancestral rituals while also introducing them to the world.

Traditionally, when the rotating lunar month of Ramadan coincides with Nowruz, its celebrations strike a unique balance, reflecting both the joy of the Persian New Year and the spiritual reverence of Ramadan.

New Zealand relaxes visa rules to lure digital nomads and influencers

New Zealand has relaxed its visitor visa rules to attract so-called "digital nomads" in a bid to boost tourism and the economy.

Visitor visas will now allow people to work remotely for a foreign employer while they are visiting New Zealand for up to 90 days. The visa can be extended up to nine months but visitors may need to pay tax during this time.

Economic growth minister Nicola Willis said making it easier for digital nomads - people who work remotely while travelling - to work in New Zealand, will boost the country's appeal as a destination.

The visa would extend to influencers, as long as they are being paid by an overseas company.

"We simply won't get rich selling to ourselves," she told a media conference, adding that she wanted to give people around the world good reasons to spend and invest in New Zealand. Highly skilled IT workers from the US and east Asia will be targeted in a promotional campaign.

"We want more wealth and super-talented people coming in the arrival gates," Willis said.

Digital nomads work for overseas companies, so they would not be competing with New Zealanders for local jobs, Willis said, adding that while some may bend the rules, the benefits outweighed the risks.

"We're not going to be checking out how many emails they're sending and how many days they're spending working. We just want them to be here and spending their hard-earned money."

New Zealand's economy suffered in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Last week, HSBC told local media the country experienced the biggest contraction in GDP of any developed country in the world in 2024, due to high interest rates and unemployment.

Tourism also took a hit. Prior to the pandemic, the sector was New Zealand's largest export industry and delivered \$40.9bn to the country.

The most recent figures show those numbers are creeping back up, with tourism bringing in \$37.7bn in 2023.

(Source: The Guardian)

Archaeology breakthrough as scientists find Europe's 'oldest human traces'

Archeological findings have surpassed previous records set by Spain and Turkey with this region now being named the oldest European site yielding human fossils.

An archaeology breakthrough has been found in Romania leading researchers to believe these finds further support the idea of "out of Africa" migrations.

These migrations took place during a period which preceded the presumed exit of Homo erectus from the African continent about 1.8 to 1.9 million years ago. Researchers believe these items may have belonged to individuals who were making stone tools.

The discovery included the presence of ancient hominins dating back two million years.

The area is now being recognized as being the

oldest European site showing traces of activity by hominins, according to HotNews.

The area is now being recognized as the oldest European site showing traces of activity by hominins.

Researchers' analysis confirmed this discovery with the presence of traces of human activity. They examined the find using high-resolution microscopes.

According to ProTV News, nearly 5,000 fossils were examined to help identify any artificial modifications on their surfaces.

The analysis confirmed clear evidence of hominins in the form of anthropic modifications on the surface of the bones.

(Source: express.co.uk)

Sadeh: an ancient celebration of fire and light

TEHRAN - Every year on the tenth of Bahman (which this year falls on Jan. 29), Zoroastrians worldwide, along with some Iranians deeply interested in their ancient traditions, gather to celebrate Sadeh, one of the oldest and most captivating traditions from ancient Persia.

Celebrated 50 days before the UNESCO-registered Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, and 40 days past the UNESCO-listed ancient festival of Yalda Night, the festival is widely believed to symbolize warmth, unity, and the triumph of light over darkness.

A celebration rooted in history and myth

The origins of Sadeh remain a mystery, but its significance as a mid-winter ritual is profound. According to Persian mythology, the festival commemorates King Houshang's discovery of fire.

Legend recounts how the mythical king, while attempting to slay a dragon, struck two flintstones together, sparking the first fire.

This discovery became a symbol of humanity's power to illuminate and warm the earth, laying the foundation for agricultural life.

The festival's name, derived from the Farsi word "Sad" (meaning 100), reflects the 50 days and 50 nights leading up to spring.



Although the practice predates Zoroastrianism, it is deeply tied to the faith's reverence for fire as a purifier and sustainer of life.

The festivities

Sadeh begins at sunset on the 10th of Bahman in the Persian calendar. Participants collect firewood in the days leading up to the festival, a communal activity symbolizing preparation and cooperation.

As night falls, a large bonfire is lit outdoors, with the flames representing light and warmth driving away the darkness of winter.

Zoroastrian priests, known as

Mobads, dressed in white garments, recite verses from the Avesta, the Zoroastrian holy book.

Accompanied by singing, dancing, and prayers, participants offer blessings and distribute dry and fresh fruits, a nod to the agricultural roots of the celebration.

The festival also has practical elements. Traditionally, farmers begin preparing their fields for spring planting, sprinkling fertilizer and pruning trees.

Villagers work together to clean streams and repair infrastructure, ensuring readiness for the coming season.

A unifying cultural heritage

As mentioned by Visit Iran, Sadeh transcends religious and ethnic boundaries, bringing together Zoroastrians, Muslims, Persian Jews, and other communities in Iran and abroad. This inclusivity underscores the festival's cultural rather than religious essence. Cities like Yazd, Kerman, Isfahan, and Shiraz host vibrant celebrations, while Zoroastrian diaspora communities maintain the tradition worldwide. In 2023, Sadeh was recognized as a shared cultural heritage of Iran and Tajikistan by UNESCO, highlighting its enduring importance in promoting cultural diversity and peaceful interaction.

An enduring legacy

Despite the passage of millennia, Sadeh remains remarkably alive. The rituals and communal spirit persist, providing a living link to Iran's ancient past.

For participants, the festival is more than a celebration; it is a time to honor the elements, prepare for renewal, and reaffirm hope for light's ultimate victory over darkness.

In a world where traditions often fade with time, Sadeh shines brightly, a testament to the enduring power of fire and the timeless values of unity and gratitude.

Iran, Tajikistan agree to abolish visa requirements for air travelers



Bahman 1403), the statement said.

It allows citizens of Iran and Tajikistan holding ordinary passports to travel between Tehran and Dushanbe without a visa.

Travelers can stay for up to 30 days within a 90-day period.

The initiative aims to strengthen diplomatic, cultural, and economic ties between the two countries and help promote people-to-people exchanges.

Earlier this month, Iran's tourism minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri announced extensive plans to strengthen ties with Tajikistan in tourism, trade, and cultural collaboration.

He made the remarks during the dispatch of a commercial delegation from Iran's Chamber of Commerce to Tajikistan.

Moreover, he revealed plans to attract

more Tajik tourists to the Islamic Republic.

"Currently, approximately 8,000 Tajik citizens visit Iran annually.

However, plans are underway to increase this number to 100,000 visitors... Developing tourism not only strengthens cultural connections but also contributes to trade growth and job creation," Salehi-Amiri noted.

In addition, before the visit, Salehi-Amiri had met with Tajikistan's Ambassador to Iran, Nizomiddin Zohidi, discussing ways to strengthen ties in tourism and cultural cooperation.

During the meeting, Zohidi proposed the complete removal of visa requirements between the two countries. Salehi-Amiri promised to advocate for the initiative at the governmental level.

Qasemabad: a village woven with tradition and color

TEHRAN - Situated in the rural district of Rudsar county in Gilan province, south of the Caspian Sea, Qasemabad is a village synonymous with lush nature and craftsmanship.

For centuries, it has been celebrated for its unique tradition of weaving Chador Shab, a vibrant, geometrically patterned fabric that represents both artistic heritage and daily life in northern Iran.

Chador Shab, also called Chorbab or Lavan, is a fabric traditionally handwoven by women using a manual loom known locally as Pachal.

Crafted from cotton, silk, or wool, this fabric has been a staple in the region for many centuries.

Historically, women tied the colorful Chador Shab around their waists while working in rice fields.

Today, its uses have expanded to include tablecloths, curtains, bed linens, and even modern fashion elements, showcasing the adaptability of this timeless art.

The patterns woven into Chador Shabs are often inspired by nature and imagination. Among the most popular designs are Shaneh-Gol, Qali-Gol, Sarv-Gol, Chehel-Cheragh, Parand, and Booteh-Charkh, all created without pre-drawn patterns.

These motifs add a distinctive

touch to each piece, making every Chador Shab unique.

A hub of craftsmanship

More than 600 women in Qasemabad are actively engaged in Chador Shab weaving, making it a cornerstone of the village's economy and cultural identity.

The craft is deeply intertwined with the villagers' way of life, es-



In 2018, Qasemabad was designated as Iran's national village of Chador Shab weaving. The following year, after a thorough evaluation by the World Crafts Council, the village was inscribed on WCC's list of World Villages of Handicrafts.

pecially during non-agricultural seasons like autumn and winter, when weaving becomes a primary activity.

Handwoven strips, typically 30

centimeters wide, are stitched together to form larger pieces approximately two meters long.

While modern variations are made with cotton or wool, the most prized Chador Shabs are woven from some sort of silk, often reserved for special occasions or bridal trousseaus.

Global recognition

Qasemabad's commitment to preserving and promoting this craft has earned it both national and international recognition. In 2018, it was designated as Iran's national village of Chador Shab weaving.

The following year, after a thorough evaluation by the World Crafts Council, Qasemabad was inscribed on WCC's list of World Villages of Handicrafts.

This acknowledgment highlights not only the skill and creativity of its artisans but also the cultural significance of the craft.

Beyond tradition

Efforts to sustain and revive Chador Shab weaving have led to the establishment of workshops, educational centers, and a local museum dedicated to the traditional tools, materials and skills of Chador Shab weaving.

Moreover, local innovation has also spurred the creation of new products, including lampshades, table runners, pillowcases, and even men's shirts, expanding the market for these handmade goods.

A living heritage

In Qasemabad, the art of weaving is more than a livelihood. It is a living heritage that connects the past to the present.

As women pass down their skills to younger generations, they ensure that the vibrant colors and patterns of Chador Shab continue to bring joy and inspiration to people in Iran and beyond.

State of animal genetic resources in Iran

By Saber Jelokhani-Niaraki

TEHRAN - Various species of indigenous livestock and poultry, comprising a variety of breeds and ecotypes, inhabit distinct geographical regions within Iran. These animal genetic resources hold immense value and are well-adapted to the specific climatic conditions of their respective regions. Ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of these resources is vital for safeguarding food security, both in the present and for future generations.

An increasing number of individuals within our country, including those in academic institutions, research and executive centers, governmental organizations, as well as local, rural, and nomadic communities, are becoming more cognizant of the importance of sustainable management and conservation of animal genetic resources.

Given that indigenous breeds exhibit lower production rates relative to exotic breeds, the preference among most commercial farmers is to utilize exotic breeds rather than indigenous ones. Conversely, when considering the particular needs associated with the rearing of exotic livestock and poultry in rural and remote regions, farmers often opt for indigenous breeds that are better adapted to the local climate, either for their sustenance



or for semi-industrial business purposes. The imbalance in the use of exotic breeds and indigenous ones has generated a serious concern in the management of animal genetic resources within Iran.

Within the country, women, youth, and people from local, rural, and nomadic communities play a significant role in managing the animal genetic resources, which are integral to their livelihoods. It is evident that these genetic resources are predominantly conserved and exploited by these people through in situ conservation.

Thus, local communities are actively involved in the conservation and use of these vital resources. It is important to note that various governmental research stations have been established with the purpose of conserving some animal

genetic resources. Unfortunately, these centers are confronted by insufficient funding, which impedes their capacity to conserve animal genetic resources effectively.

Our country has many challenges in the implementation of the Global Action Plan, especially financial challenges. However several initiatives have been executed in line with the global strategy for conserving Iranian animal genetic resources, resulting in advantageous outcomes.

These include the implementation of projects for the registration and monitoring of animal genetic resources, the strategic use of these resources in breeding programs, the establishment of a database for indigenous breeds, and more.

The challenge of low productivity

among indigenous breeds significantly deters commercial farmers from engaging in the breeding and maintenance of these animals. Moreover, insufficient funding for the conservation of animal genetic resources has resulted in a sharp decline in the populations of certain breeds within their natural habitats, putting them at risk of extinction, or even sometimes our very valuable breed has become extinct. Additionally, the migration of young people from rural areas to urban environments has further diminished the number of individuals engaged in the conservation of animal genetic resources. Climate change also significantly impacts the reduction of native livestock populations, particularly the series of consecutive droughts experienced in the country, which have led to food shortages for animals.

To facilitate the management of animal genetic resources within the country, some research and executive centers have been established to support conservation initiatives.

Notable examples include the Animal Science Research Institute (ASRI), the National Center for Genetic Resources (NCGR), and the National Animal Breeding Center and Promotion of Animal Products.

The author is the head of GenBank in Animal Science Research Institute of Iran (ASRI)

INSF, NSFC to support implementation of 10 joint research projects



TEHRAN - Iran and China will support the implementation of 10 out of 136 research projects proposed subsequent to the fourth joint call by the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC).

These projects cover the three fields of energy, regenerative medicine (bioengineering or materials for regenerative medicine), and environment (water and solid waste treatment). In addition to these research projects, three out of 21 joint workshops on climate change, artificial intelligence, and big data in industrial engineering, advanced materials, and construction, have been approved to be conducted. The proposals were initially discussed in each country; after that specialized working groups evaluated the project in an international committee. Subsequently, the results were exchanged with the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Iran-China energy co-op

The Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu has emphasized Khuzestan Province's unique

potential in various sectors, including solar power generation, and its capacity to leverage renewable energy for electricity production.

Speaking on January 11 during a meeting with the Governor of Khuzestan in Ahvaz, Cong expressed his satisfaction with the opportunity to explore the province's capabilities. "I hope this visit fosters deeper connections between Khuzestan and China," he remarked. Cong highlighted the long-standing cultural, historical, and friendly ties between Iran and China, likening them to the ever-flowing Karun River. He described bilateral exchanges as bridges of cooperation, akin to Ahvaz's White and Black Bridge.

The ambassador noted that Khuzestan's resources in both traditional and emerging industries, particularly in green economy and renewable energy, present significant opportunities for collaboration between Iran and China.

Environmental co-op

In June 2024, a delegation headed by Wan Gang, the Chinese Minister of Science and Technology, met in Tehran with Ali Salajehqeh, the former head of the Department of Environment, to foster collaboration under the 25-year cooperation agreement which was signed by the two countries in March 2021.

During the meeting, the two sides announced readiness to implement joint environmental projects that aim to combat sand and dust storms, desertification, air pollution, as well as climate change, the DOE website reported.

Other issues will involve waste management, wildlife protection, and sea-oriented develop-

ment.

"Climate change is one of the major issues that concerns the whole world, Iran and China can address this global challenge through joint cooperation," DOE website quoted Salajehqeh as saying.

"Sand and dust storms severely affect countries in the Middle East, particularly West Asia. China is also quite familiar with this phenomenon," the official stated.

"Fortunately, in the last three years, we have managed to establish a regional and international convergence in which China has also actively participated. Moreover, the resolution proposed by Iran on dealing with sand and dust storms was adopted by consensus in the United Nations, and July 12 has been recognized globally as the 'International Day of Combating Sand and Dust Storms'. The resolution requires all countries to take effective measures to promote international cooperation to combat sand and dust storms," Salajehqeh further noted.

Referring to the issue of sea-oriented development as another part of cooperation, he said according to the principles of sustainable development, sea-oriented development is on the agenda of Iran.

Sea-oriented development encompasses a wide range of activities including the sustainable use of marine resources, the expansion of transportation lines and shipping capacities, the development of maritime trade, and the establishment of industries on the coasts of the seas and other activities.

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Iran reopens schools under strict health protocols

Over 15 million students attended schools nationwide on Saturday for the new school year under strict health protocols.

The opening bell of the new academic year was rung symbolically by President Hassan Rouhani at a girls' high school in downtown Tehran.

This year, education is followed in three forms of in-person, virtual, and television-based, but our priority is school attendance, Education Minister Mohsen Haji Mirzaei said, highlighting, all schools should strictly follow the health regulations so that the students are protected.

Maintaining a shorter duration for classes, the students will sit 35 minutes in each class, he emphasized.

بازگشایی مدارس با پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی

بیش از ۱۵ میلیون دانش آموز سال تحصیلی جدید را با رعایت پروتکل های سختگیرانه بهداشتی آغاز کردند.

زنگ آغاز سال تحصیلی به صورت ارتباط تصویری در مراسمی به دستور رئیس جمهور در دبیرستانی در تهران نواخته شد.

محسن حاجی میرزایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش در این مراسم گفت: امسال آموزش دانش آموزان به سه شکل حضوری، مجازی، و تلویزیونی دنبال می شود، اما اولویت ما آموزش حضوری دانش آموزان است.

او افزود: همه مدارس باید شیوه نامه های بهداشتی را به طور جدی رعایت کنند تا مشکلی برای دانش آموزان پیش نیاید.

وی تأکید کرد: کلاس های مدارس امسال ۳۵ دقیقه ای خواهد بود و زمان حضور دانش آموزان در کلاس ها به حداقل رسیده است.

Iran, Russia to expand health ties in line with 'strategic partnership'

TEHRAN - Following the inking of the Treaty on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation, the two countries will boost their cooperation in the health sector.

Iranian President Masoud Peshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the agreement during an official ceremony in Moscow on January 17.

As per the agreement, Mohammad-Hossein Niknam, the deputy health minister for international affairs, and Hadi Goudarzi, the counselor of the Iranian Embassy in the Russian Federation, highlighted the significance of fostering collaborations in scientific, research, technology, and educational fields.

Establishing a permanent joint committee, launching a university network, holding meetings of the presidents of top medical universities, and developing a platform for Russian students to study in Iran were among key topics suggested to be followed up on.

Under the strategic partnership, the two countries will boost collaborations on organizing state-run health system and managing activities in the health sector, preventing and treating communicable and non-communicable diseases, protecting mother and child health, establishing state regulations on distributing medicines and medical devices, promoting a healthy lifestyle, conducting medical researches, utilizing digital technologies in the healthcare system, and providing professional training to health experts, health ministry website reported.

The two countries will also strengthen cooperation in the fields of food hygiene, healthcare security, and epidemiology based on national laws and policies for the prevention and control of communicable diseases complying with international treaties.

The two sides will also enhance long-term and constructive relations in higher education, science, technology, and innovation; implement joint scientific and technical projects, and develop interactions among interested educational and scientific institutions.

Exchanging professors and students, sharing scientific and technical knowledge, scientific literature, periodicals, and bibliographies, as well as holding joint conferences, meetings, and exhibitions were among other parts of the agreement.

Cooperation in medical equipment sector

In May 2024, Iran and Russia agreed to enhance their cooperation by conducting joint projects in the medical equipment sector.

A delegation of Russian officials visited the

Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology this morning to discuss potential ways to strengthen the cooperation, IRNA reported.

The Russian delegation expressed interest in collaborating with Iran on technology commercialization of knowledge-based products in the field of medical equipment.

During the meeting, the deputy science minister, Hassan Zamanian, for his part, highlighted the positive relationship between Iran and Russia, stating, "With the establishment of the international science and technology Park, Iran has succeeded in boosting collaborations with various countries, particularly Iran's neighbors, including Russia, through fruitful interactions and technology exchanges," Zamanian added.

Referring to the establishment of the Medicinal Chemistry Research Institute, the official elaborated on the capabilities and future plans of the organization in producing medical equipment and rare medicines, as well as the commercialization of manufactured products.

Visiting prominent projects in the field of medical equipment, such as manufacturing dialysis machines, portable laboratories, and angiography equipment at the Electrical and Electronics Research Institute, the delegation gained insight into the scientific capabilities of the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology and International Science and Technology Park.

In initial negotiations, the Russian officials asked for the implementation of similar projects in Russia.

Both sides have already made agreements for the implementation of joint projects as well as the establishment of related companies from each country in the respective international technology parks.

On March 1, 2024, a comprehensive document between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation was signed by Niknam and his Russian counterpart Sergei Glagolev.

The agreement was signed, during the closing ceremony of the 17th Joint Economic Committee meeting which was held in Tehran.

The memorandum of understanding was compiled following several rounds of technical negotiations between the ministries of health of the two countries.

It laid the groundwork for cooperation between the parties in various fields, including joint supply and production of medicines and medical equipment, modern and digital technologies, and academic cooperation, the Health Ministry website reported.

Tehran, Riyadh need to boost ties in ICT: official

TEHRAN -The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister, Sattar Hashemi, in a meeting with the Saudi ambassador to Iran, Abdullah bin Saudi Al-Enzi, has underlined need to boost cooperation, particularly in the ICT sector.

During the meeting held on Sunday in Tehran, the official said, "Cooperation on data transit from Iran to Saudi Arabia, from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean Sea and Africa, as well as data transit from Saudi Arabia to Iran and then to Afghanistan, Central Asia, China, and the Caucasus, is the most important topic of discussion," Mehr news agency reported.

"The two countries can also collaborate to develop communication infrastructure, cyber security, and e-government," Hashemi noted.

The official went on to voice Iran's readiness for sharing scientific and technical experiences, exchanging delegations and experts in the ICT field.

Al-Enzi, for his part, highlighted the importance of enhancing relations between the two countries, announcing Saudi Arabia's readiness for collaboration in different fields.

Fostering co-op in ICT sector

On December 28, 2024, the head of the Information Technology Organization of Iran, Mohammad-Mohsen Sadr, and the head of Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space & Technology Commission, Mohammed Altamimi, explored the potential for enhancing collaborations between the two countries in different fields.

The officials met on the sidelines of the Saudi Arabia Internet Governance Forum

(Saudi IGF) which took place from December 15-19, 2024.

The two sides expressed interest in boosting joint activities in the information, communication, and technology (ICT) sector, and exchanged views on existing capacities in the two countries, Mehr news agency reported.

Utilizing mutual infrastructures, sharing experiences in native information technology, and messaging platforms, expanding cooperation in post-services, and optical fiber, conducting joint projects in artificial intelligence, as well as joint activities by start-ups and knowledge-based firms were among the main focuses of the meeting. The officials also emphasized using the Iranian private sector's capacities in Saudi-Arabia's ICT projects.

Status of ICT in Iran

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is the highest authority in the field of ICT in the country. All activities related to the information and communication technology industry are directly related to the ministry.

The government pays special attention to plans and policies in this sector in order to maximize the use of ICT to facilitate people's lives.

The successful designing, building, and launching of a satellite show the growth of the national technology and scientific power of a country.

Space technology has been considered a tool to expand prosperity, peace, scientific-cultural development, and economic progress in human societies.



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JANUARY 29, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

When you get ill do not get nervous about it and try as much as possible to be hopeful.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:17 Evening: 17:29 Dawn: 5:40 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:6 (tomorrow)

Palestinian supporters rally in Park City during Sundance for second consecutive year

Demonstrators pressing a variety of causes in support of Palestinians rallied on Main Street during the Sundance Film Festival, which kicked off January 23, criticizing Zionism, calling for a free media and addressing the Gaza ceasefire.

The demonstrators gathered at the Old Town transit center, marched to Main Street and reassembled on the pedestrianized blacktop, the Park Record reported.

The demonstrators, some carrying Palestinian flags, chanted phrases like "From the sea to the river, Palestine will live forever" and "One, two, three, four, occupation out the door. Five, six, seven, eight. Israel is a fascist state."

Some of the marchers carried large signs saying "Deplatform Zionism" and "Let Gaza Live." Others held smaller signs with messages like "You only target journalists when your enemy is the truth" and "End the occupation." The demonstration resembled a pro-Palestinian march during Sundance in 2024.

Sundance has long been a favored setting for demonstrators rallying for a variety of causes, including the anti-war movement during the conflict in Iraq, animal rights and the Occupy Wall Street movement. Organizers plan the events during the festival in an effort to capture publicity with the entertainment media in Park City heavily covering Sundance. Ambreen Khan, one of the leaders of the demonstration, said the organizers wanted to highlight what she sees as "the complicity of the media."

"It's been over 400-plus days since the genocide in Gaza started, and the media has repeatedly been complicit in not reporting accurately what happens in Gaza — ignoring the reports from the United Nations, ignoring the reports from the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice," she said.

She asserted official Sundance sponsors have also been complicit, along with former President Biden and President Trump. "We have been voting,

encouraging people to vote, using our conscious, which means that neither the Biden administration nor the Trump administration has done anything to help the people of Palestine," she said.

Palestinian-American director Cherien Dabis was in the West Bank, days away from shooting her ambitious and deeply personal drama "All That's Left of You," when the events of Oct. 7, 2023 forced a radical rethink.

"We were forced to evacuate ... It was really devastating to have to leave our Palestinian crew behind," recalled Dabis. "Everyone was so excited to work on this historic Palestinian film that felt like a milestone."

The film — one of two Palestinian movies premiering at this year's Sundance festival — follows three generations of a family who were expelled from coastal Jaffa in 1948, and sent to the West Bank. Costing between \$5-8 million, it is a rare example of a major Palestinian-centered feature film getting a high-profile premiere in the West.

"It's really, really hard to make any film, but it's particularly hard to make a Palestinian film," said Dabis. "It's hard to raise money for these films ... I think people have perhaps been afraid to tell the story." Both intimate and epic in scope, the film jumps chronologically, from 1948 through the decades to the near-present day.

Dabis herself stars as a mother forced to confront an impossible decision when her son is wounded in 1988 during the first intifada, or uprising. Many of the stories are based on the real experiences of Dabis and her family.

In one harrowing scene, a father is humiliated at gunpoint by Israeli soldiers in front of his young child, creating a father-son rift that will never heal.

"I saw my dad humiliated at borders and checkpoints," said Dabis, who visited the West Bank frequently as a child. "He confronted the soldiers, and they started screaming at him, and I was convinced they were going to kill him."

"Green Plum Season" from Iran to attend Santo Domingo Global Film Festival

TEHRAN—Ali Bayat's debut feature film "Green Plum Season" will be screened in the 17th Santo Domingo Global Film Festival, set to be held from January 31 to February 6 in Dominican Republic.

The Iranian movie will be a part of Vanguardias Opera Prima out of competition program, Honaronline reported.

A production of 2024, the 95-minute film tells the story of Ata, who after resigning from his position as a judge, retreats to his family's villa in the countryside, only to be met with a chilly reception from his son, Farhad, who has recently been released from prison.

As Ata's wife, Giti, files for divorce, tensions escalate, and the family is thrown into turmoil.

However, their already strained relationships are further complicated when a car accident claims Farhad's life and leaves Giti paralyzed.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, Ata finds himself caught in a web of lies as he tries to shield Giti from the truth. Meanwhile, Farhad's girlfriend, Vida, becomes increasingly suspicious of the circumstances surrounding his death.

The cast includes Mehdi Ahmadi, Fariba Kamran, Siavash Cheraghpur, Ayoub Aghakhani, Ehsan Majouni, Maryam Hemmatian.

The film has already participated in Dhaka International Film Festival, Iranian Film Festival Zurich, Asian Film Festival Barcelona,



A screenshot from "Green Plum Season"

Wales International Film Festival, and Sofia MENAR Film Festival.

According to the director, the movie is an eccentric, romantic story of a growing love of a father for his dead activist son; a father trying to get away from mourning and keep the flames of his love alive.

This way, an oriental, fatalistic, tragic love story is formed in a country with firm beliefs in the repetition of history with the same sorrowfulness, predominance, and inevitability.

Ali Bayat, 41, studied mechanical engineering and then attended some film courses. He has

made five short films, which have participated in more than 40 international festivals and won 20 awards.

This year's edition of the Santo Domingo Global Film Festival pays tribute to the memory of Ruben Abud, a prominent member of the film industry in Dominican Republic, who passed away last year.

A renowned photographer and filmmaker, Abud was a key figure in the country's cinematic development and was highly regarded for his professional work and contributions through his company, Kcettes Pro.

Abud's dedication and passion

made him a trusted expert among filmmakers and producers.

He will be remembered not only for his technical skills but also for his kindness and collaborative spirit, which greatly contributed to the growth of Dominican cinema.

For the organization of this edition, the Santo Domingo Global Film Festival made an alliance with the Embassy of India in the Dominican Republic, designating the Guest of Honor to India.

The festival will feature some of the country's most acclaimed recent film productions, strengthening cultural ties between the two nations.

"M. Butterfly" published in Persian



TEHRAN— "M. Butterfly," a play by American playwright David Henry Hwang has been published in Persian.

Nariman Publications is the publisher of the book translated by Mahsa Akbarabadi.

"M. Butterfly" intertwines the story of the opera "Madama Butterfly" with the real-life relationship between French diplomat Ber-

nard Boursicot and Shi Pei Pu, a Beijing opera singer. Premiering on Broadway in 1988, the play received critical acclaim, winning the Tony Award for Best Play and becoming a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1989.

The plot unfolds in three acts, introducing Gallimard, who is imprisoned for treason.

Through flashbacks, he recounts his passionate yet misguided love for a beautiful opera singer, Song Liling, unaware that Song is a man performing as a woman.

As the narrative progresses, Gallimard learns that Song had been a spy for the Chinese government, leading to Gallimard's eventual downfall and imprisonment.

The final act poignantly reveals the truth about their relationship, culminating in Gallimard's tragic suicide, mirroring the fate of Butterfly in the opera. The journey of "M. Butterfly" began at the National Theatre in

Washington, D.C., in 1988. It later opened on Broadway at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre in 1988, running for a total of 777 performances before closing in 1990.

The original production was directed by John Dexter and featured notable actors such as John Lithgow as René Gallimard and BD Wong as Song Liling, with other talent like Anthony Hopkins and Tony Randall taking turns in the role of Gallimard during its run.

The play was notable for its abstract staging and innovative blend of Puccini's opera with contemporary pop music.

In a unique Moscow production directed by Roman Viktyuk, Kazakh countertenor Erik Kurmangaliev starred as Song, performing live arias from "Madame Butterfly".

The work is published by Plume, and an audio recording featuring the original Broadway cast has also been produced.

Tehran center to host reading performance of Friedrich Durrenmat's "Visit"

TEHRAN— Sahne-ye Abi Cultural and Artistic Center in Tehran will be playing host to a reading performance of the 1956 play "The Visit" written by the Swiss dramatist Friedrich Durrenmat on February 7. The performance will be directed by Ali Khamr with a cast composed of Zahra Bahrami, Yasna Pourali, Ailin Ahadpour, Yazdan Jalali, Mostafa Taheri and Taha Yarian.

"The Visit" was translated into Persian by the celebrated director Hamid Samandarian, who also staged the play several times between 1972 and 2008.

The play is a darkly satirical play that explores themes of vengeance, morality, and the corrupting influence of money. The story unfolds in the economically depressed town of Güllen, which eagerly anticipates the arrival of the wealthy billionaire Claire Zahanassian, a former resident. The townspeople hope her fortune will revitalize their struggling community.

Alfred Ill, the town's store owner and Claire's former lover, is tasked with persuading her to contribute to the town. Upon Claire's arrival, she makes a shocking announcement—the promise of a billion francs as a donation, to be divided between the town and its families.

However, her generosity comes with a sinister condition: she demands the death of Alfred Ill, who had previously betrayed her during a paternity suit that led to her social disgrace and exile. The revelation leaves the townspeople aghast, initially appalled at the idea of murder.

As the story progresses, the townspeople's morals begin to erode under the weight of Claire's offer. Alfred, once the most respected man in Güllen, begins to experience paranoia as he notices the townsfolk indulging in expensive purchases on credit, signaling their willingness to embrace Claire's dark conditions.

He seeks help from the local authorities and the priest, only to find that they, too, have financially succumbed to Claire's influence.

The townspeople encourage Alfred to remain, pretending nothing is wrong while secretly plotting against him.

Despite his initial desire to escape, Alfred decides against fleeing after witnessing the community's increasing complicity in their moral decay. He collapses under the pressure, recognizing that he is trapped in a web of guilt and responsibility for Claire's rage.

Claire's marriage to another man



exacerbates the situation, as the town becomes increasingly desperate for Claire's financial salvation. The tension culminates at a town meeting where the inhabitants vote unanimously to accept Claire's donation, effectively sealing Alfred's fate. They choose wealth over principles, locking the doors and dimming the lights. In a harrowing twist, they forcibly kill Alfred, this act of violence framed as a tragic necessity. Even in death, Alfred's demise is misrepresented to the press as an accidental heart attack.

Claire leaves Güllen, fulfilled and empowered, carrying Alfred's body away while the townspeople revel in their newfound wealth. The play

serves as a powerful commentary on human ethics, the price of greed, and the dark side of social dynamics when faced with financial desperation.

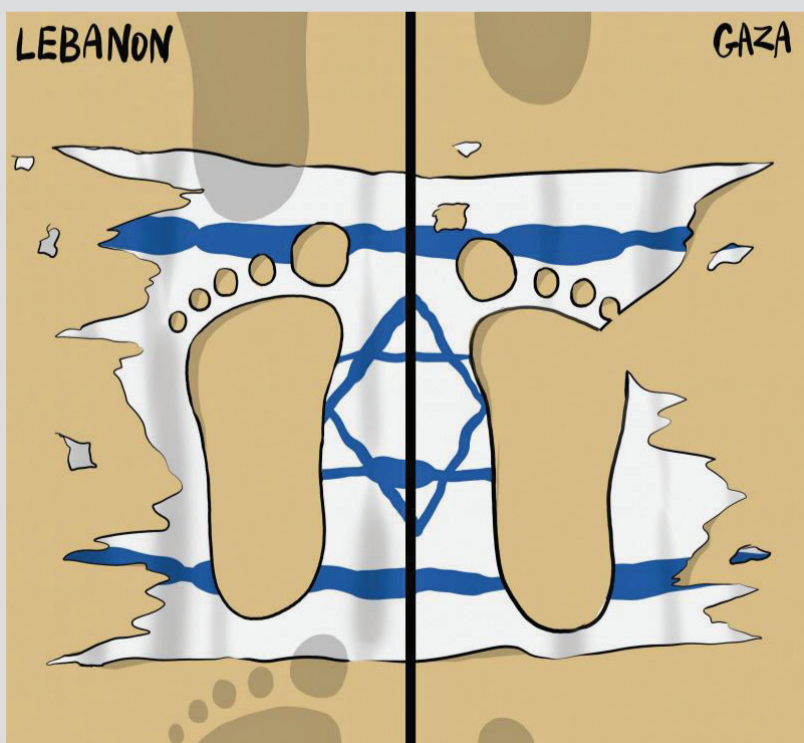
Durrenmat (1921-1990) was a Swiss author and dramatist. He was a proponent of epic theater whose plays reflected the recent experiences of World War II.

The politically active author's work included avant-garde dramas, philosophical crime novels, and macabre satire. Like the German expatriate writer Bertolt Brecht, Durrenmat explored the dramatic possibilities of epic theater. Next to Brecht, he has been called its "most original theorist".

Durrenmat, who was educated in Zürich and Bern, became a full-time writer in 1947.

His technique was clearly influenced by Brecht, as in the use of parables and of actors who step out of their roles to act as narrators. Durrenmat's vision of the world as essentially absurd gave a comic flavor to his plays. Writing on the theater in "Problems of the Theatre" (1955), he described the primary conflict in his tragicomedies as humanity's comic attempts to escape from the tragic fate inherent in the human condition.

Cartoon of Day



Return of displaced people

Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen