

A look at current US officials' remarks on future dealing with Tehran

Trump's decision on Iran: Toward Quagmire or Rationality?



► Page 3

Trump leaves the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House after a news conference on January 29, 2025.

US pressure on Lebanon reveals plan to enforce normalization with Israel

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON – Today, Sunday, the residents of the occupied border towns – Yaroun, Maroun al-Ras, Aitaroun, Blida, Mays al-Jabal, Houla, Markaba, Adaisseh, and Kfar Kila – will resume their liberation movement as the Israeli enemy continues its attacks in south and north of the Litani River.

The meeting that brought together Morgan Ortagus, the US Deputy Special Envoy for West Asia, with General Jasper Jeffers, Chairman of the Ceasefire Implementation Supervision Committee, did not announce any guarantees that the occupation regime would be obligated to withdraw on February 18, but rather to launch an intensive inspection of about 30 sites suspected of being Hezbollah facilities.

The committee had informed the Lebanese army that it had information about alleged sites where it claimed Hezbollah was hiding ammunition and weapons.

Hamas leader: "Palestinians humiliated occupiers"

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya, affirmed that Palestinians and their resistance have achieved their objectives with Operation al-Aqsa Storm.

Al-Hayya underlined these objectives primarily "humiliated the occupation entity, shattering its reputation as an invincible force, and breaking the prestige of its army, once thought to be undefeatable."

In a speech mourning the fallen leaders, he emphasized that after the Storm battle "defeating the entity has become possible, and the complete liberation of Palestine is now within reach."

He noted that the resistance had decided to officially announce the martyrdom of several top leaders after the fighting in Gaza had ceased, stressing that they "passed the banner high to a new generation of steadfast leaders who will continue the journey towards al-Quds (Jerusalem) and al-Aqsa, paving the way for the great return."

Remarkable resilience: Israeli dreams turn to ashes

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN- The fourth exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners in less than two weeks has highlighted a deep sense of solidarity among Palestinians in the face of the Zionist regime's atrocities in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank.

Hamas released three captives on Saturday. Ofer Kalderon and Yarden Bibas were delivered to the Red Cross in Khan Younis, located in the southern part of the Gaza Strip. The third captive, Keith Siegel, was transferred to Red Cross teams in Gaza City in the northern area of the Palestinian territory.

The resistance movement once again displayed its military strength as hundreds of its fighters lined up during the two separate handovers to organize the release of the captives and manage the crowd.

Later on Saturday, 183 Palestinians walked free from Israeli jails in return for the release of the three captives. More than 70 of the inmates had been serving long-time prison terms and lifetime sentences.

► Page 5

Pezeshkian, cabinet members reaffirm dedication to Imam Khomeini's vision

TEHRAN – On the eve of the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and members of his cabinet visited the Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini and the graves of Revolution martyrs on Saturday morning.

The officials paid tribute to the founder of the Islamic Republic and reaffirmed their dedication to his vision and the ideals of the Revolution.

During the ceremony, President Pezeshkian emphasized the central role of justice, unity, and cohesion in Islam, stating that overcoming divisions and discord remains key to the nation's success.

Speaking at the event, Pezeshkian reflected on Imam Khomeini's will, urging Iranians to remember and act upon his teachings. He warned that Iran's adversaries are actively working to create division, stressing that the continuation of the Revolution depends on fostering hope and resisting despair. ► Page 2

Iran world's second producer of 'tilmanocept' cancer tracer

TEHRAN –An Iranian knowledge-based company has managed to develop a new method for the synthesis of Technetium (99mTc) tilmanocept, a radiopharmaceutical diagnostic imaging agent used to determine lymph nodes that may be draining from tumors.

Since 2013, the U.S. has been the only manufacturer of this radiopharmaceutical agent, IRNA reported.

Lymphatic system is known as one of the main conduits of cancer metastasis. In patients with breast, lung, and genital tract cancers, accurate detection of lymph node involvement is critical for surgeons.

If surgeons fail to identify the involved lymph nodes in time, they will have to remove large parts of the lymphatic system. This procedure not only has many side effects for patients, but can also severely affect their immune system and blood circulation.

This radiodiagnostic agent assist doctors in locating lymph nodes for removal during surgery without removing and affecting the healthy lymphs, and prevents unnecessary surgeries and complications. ► Page 7

Renewable power plants capacity to rise 3,500 MW by next year

TEHRAN- The deputy energy minister said: "The Ministry of Energy is seeking to increase the capacity of the renewable power plants by 3500 MW by the peak energy period next year, and the financial resources for this plan have been secured through the efforts of the minister of energy."

Mohsen Tarzatabal added that with the president's directive and the efforts and follow-up of the minister of energy, the financial resources for this capacity have been secured.

Over the past few years, the Iranian government has taken serious measures to accelerate the growth and development of renewable energies in the country.

Diversification of financing models for renewable projects, increasing the ceiling of guaranteed electricity purchase, providing the possibility of buying and selling renewable electricity in the green board of the Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), and providing the possibility of exporting renewable electricity have been the most important measures taken for this purpose.

Iranian Energy Ministry has also put it on the agenda to add 10,000 MW to the capacity of the country's renewable power plants by the end of 2025. ► Page 4

Winners of Intl. Quran Competition announced

TEHRAN- The winners of the 41st edition of Iran's International Quran Competition were honored at a closing ceremony held on Friday in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province.

The event was attended by Seyyed Abbas Salehi, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, along with various cultural and provincial officials, ISNA reported.

In the women's memorizing competition, first prize was given to Fatemeh Daliri from Iran; the second prize went to Motahhareh Nabi-Bahr from Bangladesh, and the third prize was claimed by Afnan Rashad Ali Yaqub from Yemen.

First prize in the women's tarteel competition was given to Ghazaleh Soheilzadeh from Iran. Aisha Muhammad Ibn Muttalib from Nigeria and Hawraa Haidar Hamzi from Lebanon won second and third prizes. ► Page 8



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IRGC to unveil new missile, defense systems at upcoming event

TEHRAN – A high-ranking official from Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) revealed that the country plans to showcase new missile and defense technologies and enhanced fortifications for Iranian assets at the forthcoming Malek Ashtar Festival.

At a press briefing on Saturday, Brigadier General Hamid Bazmshahi, Commander of the IRGC's Supervisory Office, which oversees the festival's arrangements, shared these details.

"We will also showcase patrol and combat vessels with aluminum hulls for the first time, marking another significant achievement for the IRGC," Bazmshahi said. ► Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Opportunity for direct negotiations with US

In a commentary, Arman-e-Melli examined the possibility of direct negotiations between Iran and the United States to resolve the nuclear dispute. It wrote: Almost a significant percentage of the society, analysts and experts acknowledge that the solution to the country's problems or a significant part of lie in negotiations, interaction, and international agreements; and the further we take this path, the more we can benefit from its results to solve the country's problems, especially the economic ones. Negotiations with the West are as important as negotiations with the East. For this reason, not long ago, the Iranian delegation went to Geneva for the second round of negotiations with the European troika.

However, it seems that these negotiations will continue and the Americans will also enter the talks as conditions are ripe to reach a new agreement. However, some believe it has been proven that playing with the European card has not and will not have very positive or good results for Iran. It is better to put aside intermediaries and negotiate directly so that direct dialogue can take place without mediators to lift sanctions.

Etemad: The illusionary world of saboteurs

In an analysis, Etemad discussed Trump's move to freeze the \$60 million budget for the foreign-based Iranian saboteurs and wrote: It is said that Trump disappointed and even undermined the saboteurs' opposition to the Islamic Republic of Iran on the very first day of his presidency, saying that the U.S. government would no longer pay fund to them.

The approximately \$60 million that was given to the saboteurs, who claim they have a regime change project on their agenda, is frozen. It was clear to many that the saboteurs were being run with U.S. and Israeli funding. Trump's cutting of such funding shows that the saboteurs are facing a major problem. It has become clear that those who claimed to be independent and patriotic were neither independent nor nationalist.

Trump destroyed the plans of the saboteurs. They thought that with the arrival of Trump and the Trump-Netanyahu alliance, the Islamic Republic's was finished. The opposition neither knows its origin nor has a clear vision of what it seeks. For them, illusion has become a way of life. Their method is a political struggle and appeals to America and Israel. But suddenly Trump upsets them.

IRGC to unveil new missile, defense systems at upcoming event

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At a press briefing on Saturday, Brigadier General Hamid Bazmshahi, Commander of the IRGC's Supervisory Office, which oversees the festival's arrangements, shared these details.

"We will also showcase patrol and combat vessels with aluminum hulls for the first time, marking another significant achievement for the IRGC," Bazmshahi said.

He also noted that advancements in artificial intelligence and quantum technologies will be highlighted at the event.

The Malek Ashtar Festival, scheduled for Monday, will honor active units in the Resistance Front, according to Bazmshahi.

The festival, organized by Iran's IRGC, showcases the nation's military advancements and self-reliance in defense.

Named after a notable Islamic figure, the event has featured the unveiling of new technologies, such as stealth speedboats and amphibious tanks, emphasizing Iran's capability to innovate despite international sanctions.

Bazmshahi elaborated that the Supervisory Office was established based on recommendations from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, with the mission of monitoring and ensuring the IRGC's success in its missions.

Javan: Negotiating with an unknown imperialism!

Javan dedicated its headline to the issue of accepting America in the negotiation process and said: The imperialist nature of America has become more apparent today with Trump's expansionist thinking. If we want to negotiate with America, it is not enough for governments to claim that they know America well. A successful negotiation is one in which the imperialist nature of America is explained to society. An Iranian agreement with America will not be an agreement between two governments, rather it will be an agreement between two countries. Its benefits or losses will accrue to both nations.

If a true understanding of the imperialist nature of America, which has now become more apparent with Trump's expansionist claims over other countries, is not achieved in case another incomprehensible agreement is reached with America, young Iranians will blame the failure on the Iranian government and even on Iranian culture and identity. Due to the absence of this complete understanding, the failure will be more catastrophic than failure in a negotiation.

Iran: A look at Washington's negotiation plan

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper discussed Washington's likely negotiation plan in a report carried out by the Economist. It said: The Economist's prediction regarding the structure of the Iran-U.S. agreement is based on unbalanced concessions and has very serious ambiguities.

One of the ambiguities in the issue of concessions to be granted to Iran to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia, but this happened without the U.S. participation. One of these concessions would be for Iran to abandon its regional activities (support for resistance groups fighting Israel). Iran must first agree to negotiate regional issues. Given recent military developments, it appears that Iran's approach has shifted from cross-border deterrence to intra-border deterrence. This change in approach causes issues such as Palestine and Yemen to be considered national or local issues that require independent solutions. Furthermore, an agreement not to provide military support to the resistance groups in these countries requires a monitoring and verification mechanism that seems very difficult and almost impossible to achieve.

Combatting terrorist groups

Regarding the IRGC's efforts to ensure national security, Bazmshahi stated that the IRGC Intelligence Organization confronts terrorist groups both inside and outside the country.

He added that in 2023, the IRGC Intelligence Organization confronted three terror networks.

"Recently, over 200 Takfiri elements have been dealt with, preventing numerous terrorist operations," Bazmshahi said.

Joint military exercises

Elsewhere in his remarks, Bazmshahi emphasized the review of the operational doctrine of the forces and the planning of joint military exercises with China, Russia, Iraq, and Oman.

"In addition, we have conducted defensive and security exercises, such as the Great Prophet 18 and 19 exercises, as well as cyber defense and counter-drone exercises," Bazmshahi noted.

Countering cyber attacks

The commander disclosed that the nation endures an average of 36,000 attacks on its infrastructure each day, conducted by both human agents and automated systems.

"The IRGC provides its technical capabilities to the government and the National Organization for Passive Defense, resulting in significant achievements in defending national infrastructure," Bazmshahi concluded.

U.S., Israel risk catastrophe with any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities: Araghchi

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has issued a stark warning regarding the potential consequences of any military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, particularly if such an attack is carried out by the United States or Israel.

Speaking to Al Jazeera Arabic during a visit to Qatar, Araghchi made it clear that any assault on Iran's nuclear infrastructure would trigger a full-scale regional war, one that neither regional actors nor global powers would wish to see unfold.

"If Iran's nuclear facilities come under attack, the result will be a widespread war in the region—an irreversible catastrophe," Araghchi stated on Friday.

The Iranian diplomat expressed skepticism that Washington would support such an operation, saying, "I doubt the Americans will make such a major miscalculation."

However, he made it abundantly clear that Tehran's response would be swift and decisive in the event of an attack.

"Unlike in the past, Iran will not delay its response. Our retaliation will be immediate and forceful," he warned.

Araghchi pointed to previous Iranian retaliatory operations—True Promise I and II—in which Iran successfully targeted Israeli strategic locations deep inside the occupied Palestinian territories with hundreds of ballistic and cruise missiles.

These strikes, he noted, were conducted with precision after careful deliberation, considering



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) talks during an interview with Al Jazeera Arabic on Jan. 31, 2025.

both domestic and regional factors.

'Iran's nuclear capabilities beyond physical sites'

Despite concerns over a potential Israeli-American military strike, Araghchi downplayed the effectiveness of such an attack, insisting that Iran's nuclear capabilities are not limited to physical locations.

"Our nuclear strength lies in the minds and knowledge of our scientists, not just in physical facilities," he emphasized. "This program cannot be destroyed by airstrikes."

He also highlighted the highly secure and dispersed nature of Iran's nuclear infrastructure, stating, "Our facilities are not concentrated in one or two locations; they are spread across many sites and are heavily fortified."

Moreover, he suggested that even sophisticated airstrikes would struggle to penetrate Iran's advanced defense systems, making a

successful attack highly unlikely.

'Iran committed to nuclear weapons-free doctrine'

Araghchi also reaffirmed Iran's commitment to a nuclear weapons-free doctrine, reiterating that Tehran has no intention of developing nuclear arms.

"Nuclear weapons have no place in Iran's military doctrine," he stated, citing a fatwa (religious decree) by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei that forbids their development, possession, or use.

However, he did acknowledge that Iran possesses the technical capability to build such weapons, but emphasized, "There is no political will to do so."

'Trust deficit remains in U.S.-Iran relations'

When asked about the potential for renewed negotiations between Iran and the United States, Araghchi painted a bleak picture of diplo-

matic trust.

"The history of U.S.-Iran relations is riddled with hostility and mistrust," he said, pointing to Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement in 2018 and the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in 2020 as key examples of American aggression.

He also criticized the Biden administration's continuation of harsh economic sanctions.

Despite these challenges, Araghchi suggested that Washington "could take concrete steps to restore trust, such as unblocking Iran's frozen assets worldwide."

"Rebuilding trust is not easy. The U.S. needs to take real, positive actions, and they know exactly what those actions are," he added.

'Resistance is not weakening'

Turning to the broader West Asia, Araghchi addressed Israel's ongoing military actions against Palestinian and Lebanese Resistance groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas.

He acknowledged the heavy losses suffered by these groups, including the martyrdom of Hezbollah's former Secretary-General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah and several high-ranking commanders. However, he dismissed the notion that these setbacks would weaken the broader Resistance movement.

"The Resistance is not disappearing, nor is it weakening," he asserted. "If anything, these events have been valuable experiences, and I am certain they will prove useful in the future."

Russia, Iran discuss regional developments, strengthening of bilateral ties

TEHRAN – Sergey Vershinin, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister, met with Kazem Jalali, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow, to discuss the latest developments in West Asia, with a particular focus on ongoing conflicts and geopolitical challenges in the region.

According to a statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry, as reported by TASS, the meeting took place on Friday and covered a wide range of regional issues. Both officials paid special attention to the crisis in the occupied territories, as well as the evolving situations in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

During the discussions, both sides emphasized the urgent need for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and underscored the importance of unrestricted humanitarian access to civilians affected by the conflict. They also reiterated their support for international mechanisms aimed at resolving regional crises, stressing the need for the effective implementation of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Beyond regional affairs, Russia and Iran reaffirmed their commit-

ment to expanding cooperation on the international stage. The Russian Foreign Ministry noted that Jalali and Vershinin explored ways to enhance coordination between Moscow and Tehran within global organizations, reflecting the deepening partnership between the two nations.

In a related development, Kazem Jalali highlighted the significance of the Comprehensive Strategic Treaty recently signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia. The agreement, which was formalized by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin, is seen as a major milestone in the evolving Tehran-Moscow partnership.

Jalali suggested that this treaty should serve as a model for future cooperation not only in bilateral relations but also within multilateral frameworks, particularly with BRICS member states. He emphasized that Iran seeks to expand its strategic engagements with Russia and other BRICS countries through similar agreements, enhancing economic and geopolitical collaboration in the face of shifting global dynamics.

The people of Gaza and a 21st-century answer to Abbas Mirza

By Hamid Ahmadzadeh

TEHRAN – One of the dark points in the history of Iran was the Qajar dynasty and their multiple defeats against Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus, followed by the fragmentation and loss of Iranian territory.

In an era when, due to the conditions of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, all lands north of the Aras River had been ceded to Russia, and in addition, a compensation of 20 million rubles had been imposed on Iran, a French officer named Jaubert had a strange meeting with Abbas Mirza, the crown prince of Iran, governor of Azerbaijan, and commander of the Iranian army in the war camp.

Jaubert considered Abbas Mirza, unlike other government officials he had met during his mission, to

be a sincere and compassionate individual, as he recounts in his memoirs.

He states: "Abbas Mirza, who was deep in thought about the technical and scientific advancements of Europeans, asked me, as a representative of France and the West, questions out of pain. He asked:

'I do not know what this power is that has made you "Europeans" dominant over us, and what causes our weakness and your progress? You excel in fighting armies and conquering, and using your intellectual powers, while we are immersed in ignorance and turmoil and rarely consider the future.'

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pezeshkian, cabinet members reaffirm dedication to Imam Khomeini's vision



From page 1 ▶ Pezeshkian criticized unfounded and uninformed criticism of the government, arguing that many fail to understand the complex challenges Iran faces.

He also condemned efforts to reduce the holy Quran's role to mere ritual, stating that the holy book is meant to liberate humanity from oppression and tyranny. He reiterated that the holy Quran promotes unity among Muslims and all of humanity, positioning it as a guide for freedom from the rule of oppressors.

Pezeshkian reaffirmed that

Imam Khomeini prioritized serving the people, particularly the underprivileged. He warned that enemies seek to divide the nation from its leadership, urging self-reliance and confidence in Iran's capabilities.

He called for greater focus on education and national development, arguing that Iran is not inferior to Western nations. He also urged officials to remain true to Imam Khomeini's guidance, particularly his insistence that the government must always serve the people.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iranian cleric held by Sweden's Immigration Office, no charges filed, says Imam Ali Islamic Center

TEHRAN – The Imam Ali Islamic Center in Sweden has issued an official statement addressing the situation of Hojatoleslam Mohsen Hakimollahi, an Iranian cleric who has reportedly been in detention for nearly two weeks in Stockholm.

The Center clarified that Hakimollahi is under the custody of the Migration Agency for reasons unrelated to financial or security charges, emphasizing that no accusations have been made against him.

The statement reassured that "Hojatoleslam Hakimollahi is in good health," and that relevant authorities have conveyed messages of assurance to his family and the officials of the Imam Ali Center.

Furthermore, the Center affirmed



that "the official authorities have emphasized that the Imam Ali Center is not being accused and will continue its operations as usual." The Center pledged to continue serving its community, emphasizing that it remains a respected institution dedicated to its religious and communal responsibilities.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump's decision on Iran: Toward quagmire or rationality?

TEHRAN – Since taking office in January 2025, President Donald Trump has largely refrained from making provocative or hawkish comments regarding Iran, and some of his actions have even been viewed as potential steps toward diplomacy. However, considering Trump's assembled team and his past dealings with Iran, a smooth four years for the two countries seems improbable unless the president shifts his approach in the best interests of both America and Iran.

In his first term, Trump's approach to the Islamic Republic of Iran was marked by considerable tension, including withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, aggressive sanctions, and escalated rhetoric. Now, in his second term, the stakes are higher, and the strategic landscape has become more complex.

While some figures in Trump's cabinet appear pragmatic and realistic regarding West Asia and potential Iran policies, key members of his second administration, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent, and National Security Advisor Michael Waltz, have expressed firm, even hawkish, stances on Iran. Their views, deeply rooted in long-standing political ideologies and personal experiences, converge to create a coherent but hardline policy towards Tehran.

Let's now examine the individual perspectives of these influential figures, including Trump himself, and the broader context that shapes their policies.

Trump's stance on Iran during 2017-2021

President Donald Trump's approach to Iran has been marked by confrontational rhetoric and actions. Early in his first term, he unilaterally withdrew the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran nuclear deal, in 2018. Trump's rationale was that the deal, which was signed by the Obama administration in 2015, was too lenient on Iran and failed to address the country's ballistic missile program and regional destabilizing activities.

In May 2018, Trump made good on his promise by pulling the United States out of the JCPOA, marking one of his most significant foreign policy moves.

The withdrawal marked the beginning of a "maximum pressure" campaign, which aimed to isolate Iran economically and diplomatically through sanctions.

In addition to sanctions, Trump labeled the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), Iran's elite military force, as a terrorist organization—a highly provocative move that added fuel to an already tense relationship.

Fast forward to Trump's second term, and there is a noticeable shift in his rhetoric. While the hardline approach remains the foundation of his Iran policy, the tone of his statements began to soften. In early 2025, as Trump entered the final stretch of his presidency, he signaled a willingness to re-enter negotiations with Iran, albeit under stricter conditions.

"Iran has to come to the table, but this time the negotiations will be better for America and our allies," Trump declared in a speech in January 2025. His administration expressed openness to resuming talks on the Iran nuclear issue but insisted that Iran first halt its missile development program and cease its activities in the region, particularly in Syria and Yemen.

This change in tone reflects a broader strategy that aims to blend economic pressure with diplomatic outreach. Trump's advisers have pointed to Iran's



deepening economic crisis, exacerbated by sanctions, as a reason for Tehran's increasing openness to dialogue.

While Trump's rhetoric has softened somewhat, his emphasis on maintaining pressure remains clear. "The sanctions will stay in place," Trump reiterated in a press briefing during his first term. "Iran has to understand that there are consequences for their actions."

Marco Rubio: Secretary of State and Iran

Marco Rubio, a longtime Republican senator from Florida, was nominated by Trump as Secretary of State in 2024. Rubio's hawkish stance on Iran is well-documented. A staunch opponent of the Iran nuclear deal, Rubio has long been an advocate for policies aimed at containing Iran's nuclear program and curbing its influence in West Asia. Rubio has called for re-imposing the stringent sanctions that were lifted under the JCPOA and for holding Iran accountable for its alleged involvement in "terrorism", "human rights abuses", and "regional conflicts".

During his confirmation hearings for Secretary of State, Rubio reaffirmed his commitment to a tough policy on Iran, emphasizing that the U.S. would not return to the nuclear deal. He criticized the deal as "a pathway to Iranian nuclear weapons" and promised to work with allies to strengthen sanctions and tighten enforcement. Rubio's comments were consistent with his previous positions, which have consistently framed Iran as a major threat to both the U.S. and global security.

Rubio's rhetoric also highlights his concerns about Iran's growing influence in West Asia.

Iran made the most significant advancements in its nuclear industry after the collapse of the JCPOA. Further pressure would likely only push the country to further nuclear ambitions.

He has consistently opposed what he claims is Iran's involvement in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq, where Iran has supported Resistance groups. Rubio has emphasized the need for the U.S. to work with regional allies, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, to counter Iranian influence and support opposition groups in countries like Syria.

"We cannot allow Iran to extend its malign influence across the Middle East. We must stand with our allies, including Israel, and ensure Iran's destabilizing activities do not go unchecked," Rubio stated during his confirmation testimony.

Rubio's approach represents a continuation of Trump's aggressive posture toward Iran but adds

an emphasis on regional partnerships and diplomacy aimed at isolating Tehran. While Rubio has expressed a willingness to engage diplomatically with Iran if it meets certain conditions, he remains steadfast in his belief that the U.S. must maintain a position of strength.

Michael Waltz: National Security Advisor and Iran

Michael Waltz, a former Green Beret and congressman from Florida, has been appointed by Trump as National Security Advisor. Waltz's views on Iran are shaped by his extensive military background and his experiences in West Asia. As a military veteran, Waltz has emphasized the importance of confronting what he calls Iran's regional ambitions.

Most analysts anticipate Trump will likely maintain or even intensify the "maximum pressure" campaign. They also warn that continuing this approach would be among the worst decisions he could make.

In various interviews, Waltz has expressed concerns about Iran's ties to Resistance forces in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. He has described Iran's activities as "destabilizing" and has advocated for a more forceful U.S. response to counter these threats.

During his confirmation hearings, Waltz stressed the importance of confronting Iran through a combination of military deterrence, sanctions, and diplomatic efforts. He also made it clear that the U.S. would not tolerate Iranian efforts to expand its nuclear program. "We need to push back against Iran's destabilizing activities in the region and make sure they never get a nuclear weapon," Waltz remarked.

Waltz's experience in the military and his hardline stance on Iran's regional activities have made him a key proponent of maintaining a robust U.S. military presence in West Asia. He has expressed support for continued military operations aimed at preventing Iran from gaining a foothold in countries like Syria and Iraq.

Scott Bessent: Secretary of the Treasury and Iran

Scott Bessent, a financier with experience in hedge funds and private equity, was appointed by Trump as Secretary of the Treasury in 2024. While Bessent's background is in finance rather than foreign policy, his views on Iran align closely with the hardline positions of Trump, Rubio, and Waltz. As Secretary of the Treasury, Bessent's role will be crucial in implementing economic sanctions against Iran and ensuring

that American financial institutions do not engage with entities tied to the Iranian government.

Bessent has long supported the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran, advocating for the use of economic sanctions as a primary tool to weaken the Islamic Republic. He has argued that sanctions, when effectively enforced, can cripple Iran's economy and force the government to abandon its nuclear program and regional alliances.

"Iran is a major threat, and the best way to deal with it is to make the regime broke again," Bessent said in a 2024 interview. His emphasis on economic pressure reflects a belief in the power of sanctions to bring about change in Tehran's behavior without resorting to military intervention. Bessent has been a vocal critic of the Obama-era sanctions relief that accompanied the Iran nuclear deal, and he supports the re-imposition of sanctions on key sectors of Iran's economy, including oil and gas.

As Treasury Secretary, Bessent will likely play a pivotal role in shaping the US strategy toward Iran, using economic leverage to put pressure on Tehran and its allies.

The views expressed by Donald Trump and his key cabinet members demonstrate a unified, hardline stance on Iran, which remains a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. Each of these figures shares a belief that Iran poses a significant threat to both regional and global security, and they advocate for a continuation, if not intensification, of the "maximum pressure" strategy initiated during Trump's first term.

This approach presents a challenging landscape for diplomatic engagement with Iran. While these policies may strengthen U.S. leverage in certain areas, they also carry significant risks, including the potential for escalating tensions or a wider regional conflict. Ultimately, the future of U.S.-Iran relations under this administration will depend on how effectively the U.S. manages these aggressive tactics and whether diplomatic solutions can be explored amidst the mounting pressure.

What happens is on Trump

While President Trump has yet to finalize his policies toward Iran for his second term, most analysts anticipate he will likely maintain or even intensify the "maximum pressure" campaign he initiated during his first presidency; a strategy continued by President Biden from 2021 to 2025. However, these analysts also caution that continuing this approach would be among the worst decisions he could make.

As Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi recently stated, "Maximum pressure only resulted in maximum defeat." Renewing such a campaign would likely precipitate another cycle of failure.

While the "maximum pressure" strategy has severely impacted Iran's economy, its effects have been contrary to Trump's intended goals. Trump argued that the JCPOA failed to curb Iran's nuclear program. Now, with the agreement in disarray, Iran has made its most significant advancements in its nuclear industry in decades. Further pressure, while undoubtedly harming Iran, would likely only push the country to further nuclear ambitions. Once economic pressure loses its efficacy and the United States is compelled to threaten military action, Tehran might well redefine its nuclear doctrine and eventually pursue nuclear weapons development.

Given all of this, Trump must choose: a path towards endless catastrophe, or a path towards relative calm.

SPORTS

Tractor and Shams Azar share spoils, Tractor rout Havadar

TEHRAN – In the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL), Sepahan and Shams Azar football teams ended in a 1-1 draw on Saturday.

Sepahan's winger Mehdi Limouchi scored from a penalty in the 31st minute, but Ehsan Mahroughi equalized for Shams Azar five minutes later.

Earlier that day, Tractor secured a convincing 4-0 victory over Havadar in Tabriz. Mehdi Torabi scored first for Tractor, followed by an own goal by Saeb Mohebi, and goals from Tomislav Strkalj and Mehdi Hosseini.

In other matches, Zob Ahan and Kheybar drew 2-2 in Isfahan, Gol Gohar beat Nassaji 2-1, and Chadormalou clinched a 1-0 win against Malavan in Yazd.

Sepahan lead the league with 39 points, just one point ahead of Tractor.

Persepolis captain Alishah doubtful for Al Hilal match

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team captain Omid Alishah is doubtful for the upcoming match against Al Hilal due to injury, having missed the recent game against Foolad in the Iran league.

Persepolis are set to face Al Hilal on Tuesday in the 2024/25 AFC Champions League Elite at Riyadh's Kingdom Arena.

Alishah is likely to miss this important match due to a foot injury.

Al Hilal currently lead the table with 16 points, while Persepolis sit sixth in the 12-team standings of the west zone, having garnered only six points from six matches.

The Persepolis squad, headed by Turkish coach Ismail Kartal, traveled to Riyadh from Ahvaz on Saturday morning.

Iran in Pot 1 of 2025 AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Iran is draw in Pot 1 of the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025.

The 12 contenders for the competition will discover their Group Stage fate on Thursday, February 6 when the Final Draw ceremony takes place at the Juva Grand Hotel in the host city of Hohhot at 3pm.

Nine teams emerged from the first ever Qualifiers – held last month – to progress to the Finals, where they will be joined by host China and 2018's top two, Iran and Japan.

The third edition of the Continent's premier women's national team futsal tournament is slated to take place in May 2025 and the Final Draw will see the cast being split into three groups of four, with the top two finishers in each group and the two best third-placed teams to advance to the last eight.

Pot 1: China (26), Thailand (6), Iran (9),

Pot 2: Japan (10), Vietnam (11), Uzbekistan (18)

Pot 3: Indonesia (24), Chinese Taipei (25), Hong Kong (31)

Pot 4: Bahrain (36), Philippines (59), Australia (NA)

The top three finishers at China 2025 will also qualify for the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup 2025, to be hosted by the Philippines – who have automatically qualified.

Iranian Young player Nahany joins Feyenoord

TEHRAN – Iranian midfielder Arman Nahany joined Feyenoord football club.

The 16-year-old player from Feyenoord Academy signed an agreement on Thursday afternoon in the Press Center of De Kuip, binding him to the club until mid-2028.

"Because I've been a Feyenoord player for so

long, this day is very special for me," says Nahany.

"Feyenoord feels like a second home to me. Everything here is so familiar. That's why I'm extra happy with the reward I've received from the club. I look forward to further developing myself here in the coming years," he added.

Nahany started playing football at the amateur club sv DWO in Zoetermeer and has been a player of Feyenoord Academy since the summer of 2015.

After completing the entire youth academy, he is currently part of Feyenoord Under 17, coached by Erik van der Ven.

Ex-Rangers winger Ryan Kent on Persepolis's radar

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team have reportedly set their sight on signing former Liverpool and Rangers left-winger Ryan Kent.

Kent was a member of Fenerbahce last season, where current Persepolis coach Ismail Kartal was in charge.

Now, the Iranian media reports suggest that the Turkish coach is going to sign the player.

A graduate of the Liverpool academy, is free agent at the moment.

He is a former England youth international, having represented the nation at under-18 and under-20 levels.

If this transfer is confirmed to Persepolis, he will play against Ronaldo's Al Nassr in the Asian Champions League Elite in the coming days.

AS Marca are reporting that Persepolis and Kartal have struck an 'agreement' to bring Ryan Kent to Iran.

Persepolis have previously completed the signing of Serdar Dursun and the former Fenerbahce coach is utilizing his connections to strengthen the Persepolis squad.

But remarkably, the report claims that former Ibrox winger Kent has agreed to the proposal because he will be allowed to keep pet crocodiles at his home, rangersnews.uk reported.

"Persepolis, coached by Ismail Kartal, have reached an agreement with former Fenerbahce star Ryan Kent.

"The fact that it is legal to keep crocodiles at home in Iran was the factor that convinced Kent. Thus, Kartal will work with his two former students, Serdar Dursun and Kent, again."

Persepolis delegation arrives in Riyadh

TEHRAN – Persepolis football delegation arrived in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia on Saturday. The Iranian team is scheduled to Saudi powerhouse Al Hilal on Tuesday at the Kingdom Arena.

Al Hilal lead the table in the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Elite with 16 points, while Persepolis sit sixth in the 12-team table of the west zone with just six points out of six matches.

Persepolis, headed by Turkish coach Ismail Kartal, traveled to Riyadh from Ahvaz Saturday morning.

Ex-Iran and Esteghlal forward Hajmohammad dies

TEHRAN – Former Esteghlal and Iran national football team striker Mehdi Hajmohammad passed away on Saturday. He succumbed to cancer at the age of 74. Hajmohammad holds the record as Esteghlal's youngest player in the club's history, having debuted at the age of 14.

He was a key member of Taj, now known as Esteghlal, when they defeated Hapoel Tel Aviv 2-1 in the final match of the 1970 Asian Champion Club Tournament. Hajmohammad represented Iran in two international matches but was forced to retire from his playing career at the age of 23 due to a foot injury.

The Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathies to Hajmohammad's family, loved ones, and friends during this time of loss.

Non-oil export from Ardebil province rises 68% in 9 months on year

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Ardebil province, in the northwest of Iran, rose 68 percent in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - December 21, 2024), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Omran Ahmadi, the director-general of the province's customs department, said that commodities worth \$146 million were exported from the province in the nine-month period.

He named industrial, constructional and agricultural products as the main items exported from the province in the said nine months.

The official further announced that commodities valued at \$170 million were imported to the province in the first nine months of the present year, with 43 percent growth, year on year.

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

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

Non-oil export volume reached 116.35 million tons in the nine-month period, a 13.77 percent increase from the previous year, Asgari noted. The average customs value per ton of exported goods rose 3.74 percent to \$371.

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

China remained Iran's top export destination, purchasing \$11 billion worth of goods. Iraq followed with \$9.4 billion, the UAE with \$5.3 billion, Turkey with \$5.2 billion, Afghanistan and Pakistan with \$1.7 billion each, and India with \$1.4 billion. Together, these seven countries accounted for 82.4 percent of the total export volume and 82.85 percent of export value.

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

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

Iran exports commodities worth nearly \$15m to Belarus in 9 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported commodities valued at \$14,904,286 to Belarus in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20 - December 21, 2024), according to a reported published by the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA report put the country's weight of goods exported to Belarus in the mentioned nine-month period at 16,622,805 tons.

Iran's Trade Center in Minsk was inaugurated in mid-January during a visit by Mohammad Atabak, Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade.

The opening ceremony also featured Mohammad Ali Dehghani-Dehnavi, the deputy minister and head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

As part of the visit, the minister and TPO head held a meeting with Iranian business representatives in Belarus, where proposals were made to facilitate trade between the two countries.

During a meeting held at the place of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) on January 22, TCCIMA Head Mojtaba Najafi Arab and Belarusian Ambassador to Iran Dmitry Koltsov discussed avenues for expanding economic and trade relations during a meeting.

The two officials emphasized



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

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

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

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

He emphasized the necessity of utilizing existing opportunities to strengthen economic ties.

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

He also proposed establishing a Tehran-Minsk Economic Cooperation Council during the Eurasia trade exhibition to address challenges, explore opportunities, and facilitate private-sector engagement between Iran and Belarus.

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

He referred to Iran-Belarus Joint Economic Committee meeting in Minsk, in the previous week, chaired by Iran's minister of industry, mining, and trade, where several agreements were signed.

The ambassador highlighted the free trade agreement with the EAEU as an ideal opportunity to increase trade and investment between Iran and member states.

He also emphasized the role of chambers of commerce in implementing the agreement's provisions and reaffirmed the Belarusian Embassy's commitment to constructive collaboration with the Tehran Chamber to strengthen economic ties.

Gas consumption reaches 876 mcm per day

TEHRAN- The National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) announced that in the past 24 hours, gas consumption in the country has reached 876 million cubic meters (mcm).

According to the report released by the

NIGC, 618 million cubic meters of gas were consumed in the household, commercial, and small industrial sectors, with 71 percent of the total consumption related to the household sector.

Renewable power plants capacity to rise 3,500 MW by next year

From Page 1 ▶ In January 2022, the Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) to cooperate in the construc-

tion of new renewable power plants across the country.

Iranian renewable power plants generated 264 million kilowatt-hours (Kwh) of electricity

in the fifth Iranian calendar month of Mordad (July 22-August 22), registering a 23-percent growth compared to the same month in the previous year.

BMI's Youth Center, a bridge to a bright & rosy future

Bank Melli Iran (BMI)'s Youth Center, as one of the largest and most active banking centers in offering quality banking services to youth below 18 years old is ready to accept new members.

By becoming a member of the Youth Center, not only children and teenagers gain access to a dedicated bank account and card, but also, they become familiar with the financial literacy and banking concepts alongside with their peers, and this experience helps them

draw their economic path in adulthood periods in the best possible way.

Benefited from with several million members, this center accounts for a significant portion of BMI's future customers. Individuals under the age of 18 can refer to the nearest branch office of Bank Melli Iran with their identification documents along with one of their parents and join the group of future-making customers of the bank by opening an account.

Those interested can also become a member

of this large family by installing the Hop App, joining "BALE" channel, and visiting the Youth Center Aparat page. In addition, enthusiasts can benefit from a variety of financial training services and participate in various programs, competitions, and festivals.

Holding major banking festivals with valuable prizes, special competitions in social media and cyberspace, students' tours to visit the bank museum, and supporting major educational events are just some of the salient activities

of BMI's Youth Center in the recent years.

The BMI's Youth Center was established in 2013 to promote economic literacy in the target community and in line with the social responsibilities of the bank. Bank Melli Iran (BMI) has now held the largest banking community under the age of 18 in the country.

Join us by becoming a member of Bank Melli Iran (BMI)'s Youth Center and create a bright & rosy future for yourself.



BMI makes largest initial public offering in OTC history 1.3 million stockholders of BMI satisfied with its activity & performance

In an unprecedented move, Bank Melli Iran (BMI) succeeded in enumerating the largest initial public offering in the history of Iranian Over-The-Counter (OTC) market by transferring part of its shares in the Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Company.

After the successful sale of Shazand Petrochemical Company entitled "Largest Exit from Corporate Ownership in Iran's Banking Industry", Bank Melli Iran, in the latest series of divestitures aimed at exiting corporate ownership and generating assets, made the largest initial public offering in Over-The-Counter (OTC)'s history in order to both sweeten the taste of shareholders due to the value of this company and use its proceeds to develop the path of providing facilities to the country's strategic projects. Most importantly, Bank Melli Iran managed to make the bank's assets transparent, the Public Relations Department of the bank reported.

What we need to know about Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Company

Given high volume of the investment it has made, Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Company currently produces over 40 percent of the country's sugar and is considered as the largest sugar-producing holding company in the country.

Based on the performance of 2023, this company has achieved a net profit of 3.17 thousand billion tomans.

According to the performance ending in December 2024, the company has managed to earn 23 trillion tomans in revenue with a profit growth of 122%, equivalent to 7.03 percent of net profit.

Continued growth of the company's profit margin since 2023 is one of the positive and important points of Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Company. The company's profit margin has increased from 24 percent to 31 percent in 2024, and according to the prediction of the Board of Directors, the company's profit margin will reach 34 percent in the performance of the company in the next Iranian calendar year (to start March 21, 2025).

Based on the outlined outlook, the profit of Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Company in the fiscal year ending December 22, 2025 will reach over 10.5 thousand billion tomans.

Sugarcane Development and Related Industries Co. breaks records

1,318,123 trading codes participated in the initial public offering of sugarcane, which took place on Monday. The "sugarcane" was discovered at a price of 4,353 Tomans, and its market value exceeded 50 thousand billion tomans.

BMI appreciated for producing awareness-raising advertisements

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) was awarded the Tradename Statue of the second Cultural and Economic Festival of Commercial Advertisements, which was held at IRIB International Conferences Center on January 26-27, 2025, with the slogan of "Advertisement - Awareness".

The Second Cultural and Economic Festival of Commercial Advertisements was held at IRIB International Conference Center on January 26-27, 2025 with the participation of a large number of well-known brands and advertising companies, and Bank Melli Iran (BMI) succeeded in winning the exemplary commercial brand among the selected companies in the group of banks, credit - finance institutions, and insurance companies.

Accordingly, the plaque and statue of the selected brand were awarded to Abolfazl Najjarzadeh CEO of Bank Melli Iran.

The First Commercial Advertisements Festival entitled "Cultural-Economic Festival of the Commercial Advertisements," was held at IRIB's International Conferences Center in January 2025, hosted by the IRIB and IRIB's Commercial Department General with a focus on exhibition space and holding the specialized seminars.

In the second edition of this festival, held in two days, in addition to organizing the specialized seminars on marketing topics, the selected companies were appreciated during a ceremony on the second day of the festival.



Fire and fury: Israeli forces face growing resistance in Syria

TEHRAN - An unprecedented attack on Israeli forces in southern Syria since their December land incursion into the Arab country is reminiscent of a warning issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei regarding the consequences of the regime's ongoing occupation.

According to the Israeli army, its troops operating in a buffer zone in southern Syria came under fire on Friday evening. It was the first such incident since the regime carried out the land offensive.

On Saturday morning, a group called the "Syrian Resistance" claimed responsibility for the attack, that's according to a Lebanese media outlet.

In a statement, the group said it "has begun its operations against the Israeli enemy". It added, "The Syrian Resistance will not allow Israel to occupy our land."

As soon as rebel groups led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) toppled the government of President Bashar Assad on December 8, the Israeli army carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria destroying much of the country's military capabilities.



The regime claimed it wanted to prevent military equipment from falling into hostile hands.

Israel also sent its ground forces into a UN-patrolled buffer zone in the occupied Golan Heights and beyond after Assad's fall.

Israel has extended its occupation to further regions of the Syrian territory, encompassing various towns, villages, and the strategically significant Mount Hermon (Jabal al-Shaykh). Israel claims the occupation of additional parts of the Syrian territory is aimed at en-

surging the security of the regime's borders.

Israel war minister Israel Katz said during a visit to the Syrian side of Mount Hermon in late January that his troops will remain there indefinitely, according to Israeli media.

"The IDF will remain at the summit of the Hermon and the security zone indefinitely to ensure the security of the communities of the Golan Heights and the north, and all the residents of Israel," Katz said.

Prior to Friday's attack, anger over Israel's acts of aggression and

military presence in the Arab country were in the spotlight. People in towns and villages occupied by the Israeli army have held protests to condemn the regime's military presence.

Shortly after Israel invaded Syria, Iran's Leader stressed that Syrians will ultimately expel Israeli occupiers from their country.

Pointing to Israel's occupation of southern Syria in a December speech, Ayatollah Khamenei said, "This unimpeded movement is not a victory, of course. Without a doubt, the proud and brave Syrian youth will drive you out of there."

Israel's land incursion into Syria violates the 1974 agreement between the two sides. The United Nations and a number of countries have demanded Israel withdraw from the region.

But Israel has turned a blind eye to calls to end its occupation of Syria. Friday's attack could lead to more attacks on Israeli forces by Syrians who want to pave the way for liberating their country from the regime's occupation.

Trump's ethnic cleansing proposal and the fight for Palestinian identity

By Xavier Villar

MADRID - The President of the United States, Donald Trump, revealed that he had discussed a potential plan with King Abdullah of Jordan to relocate more than one million Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to other countries in the region. According to Trump, he plans to address this matter on Sunday with Egypt's President, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

During a conversation with reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump stated: "I would like Egypt to take the people. We're probably talking about 1.5 million people, and we just clear all of that out and say: 'You know what? It's over.'"

The U.S. President also praised Jordan for its history of hosting Palestinian refugees and said he urged King Abdullah to take in more displaced individuals. "I would love for you to take more because right now, when I look at the entire Gaza Strip, it's a disaster. It's a real disaster," Trump remarked.

The approximate figures involved in this "relocation"—which, in practice, would amount to the ethnic cleansing of Gaza's population—coincidentally align with the number of Palestinian refugees displaced during the Nakba of 1948, when Zionist settlers carried out the expulsion of a significant portion of the native Palestinian population.

The Palestinian population, which has endured more than 15 months of genocide largely financed and supported by the United States, has responded with steadfast resistance and determination. Despite the extreme hardships and widespread devastation in the Gaza Strip—particularly in the north, where a significant portion of homes have been reduced to rubble—Palestinians continue to express their unwavering desire to return to their homes.

This aspiration to return and remain in their homeland constitutes a clear rejection of any plan that seeks to forcibly remove them. The refusal to abandon Gaza and Palestine has become a symbol of resistance, reflecting a resolute opposition to proposals suggesting their relocation outside the region.

The issue of land in the Palestinian context should not be understood solely from an essentialist perspective but through a broader political lens. In this regard, the annihilation of Palestinian villages during the 1948 Nakba must be seen as a deliberate strategy aimed at erasing Palestinian presence from the collective memory and the physical landscape.

The destruction of these villages, carried out down to the very last stone, was not limited to the physical elimination of homes but also sought to eradicate a historical Palestinian narrative that contradicted the legitimization of the creation of the regime of Israel. The ruins of these villages would have told a story of Palestinian existence in the region prior to the founding of the Zionist regime. This narrative, which inherently acknowledged the forced expulsion of the Palestinian population, was seen as an obstacle to legitimizing the new state.

It is precisely this political backdrop that drives the systematic destruction of the ruins of Palestinian villages. This action served a dual purpose: not only to erase the material evidence of Palestinian presence in the region but also to symbolically obliterate any historical connection that could challenge the new narrative of Israel. The elimination of these remnants was part of a broader strategy aimed at redefining the political and cultural landscape of the region, erasing any trace of Palestinian life prior to the establishment of the Israeli state.

In this context, ruins themselves represent a tragic reality: a remnant of destruction that bears witness to collective suffering and forced displacement. However, the denial of the right to these ruins goes beyond immediate tragedy; it constitutes a profound rewriting of history. By attempting to erase these ruins, not only is the material existence of displaced Palestinian communities denied, but a fundamental part of the region's history is targeted for erasure, ensuring that the official narrative takes precedence over Palestinian collective memory.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Remarkable resilience: Israeli dreams turn to ashes



A former Palestinian prisoner freed by Israel flashes the V for victory sign upon his arrival in Ramallah on February 1, 2025
(Ahmad Gharabli/AFP)

From page 1 ▶ Dozens of the prisoners who arrived in the West Bank city of Ramallah were greeted by jubilant relatives.

Israel was laboring under the delusion that it had dealt severe blows to Hamas in the course of the Gaza war that began on Octo-

ber 7, 2023.

But the large presence of Hamas fighters in the Gaza Strip following the implementation of a ceasefire with Israel has shattered the regime's dreams of eliminating the resistance movement through military action.

The ceasefire went into effect on January 19. The truce agreement was aimed at ending Israel's genocidal war on Gaza which lasted more than 15 months.

The three-phased ceasefire is expected to lead to the release of all captives and the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

Since the ceasefire took effect, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and

the West Bank have reaffirmed their backing for resistance movements such as Hamas.

Israel has killed more than 47,000 Palestinians in Gaza and nearly 900 others in the West Bank since October 2023.

But Palestinians have remained steadfast in their support for resistance.

Israel has devastated much of Gaza. Nonetheless, the Palestinian resistance has risen from the rubble of destroyed buildings. The remarkable resilience of Palestinians indicates that Israel's hopes and dreams of defeating Hamas and forcibly displacing Gazans have turned to ashes.

Hamas leader: "Palestinians humiliated occupiers"

From page 1 ▶ Al-Hayya highlighted that Hamas leaders are "at the forefront of the martyrs, standing side-by-side with their people in the same trenches, sharing their sacrifices and their blood."

He added that these leaders "offered their lives willingly for the sake of God, fighting alongside the soldiers, unafraid of death, engaging with the enemy on the front lines of resistance for the sake of a free and proud Palestine."

The Hamas leader in Gaza declared, "History will record that the heroes of al-Qassam Brigades and resistance brought the enemy to its knees, bringing it down as they promised our people, fulfilling their pledge and oath."

In his speech, al-Hayya also paid special tribute to martyr Mohammed Deif, describing him as "the inspiring leader of holy war and resistance, a man adored by millions who chanted his

name without ever knowing his face."

Al-Hayya affirmed that Deif's name "struck fear into the hearts of enemies, his shadow haunting them," adding that Deif "spent his life as both in hiding and a hunter of his enemies, outmaneuvering all those who sought him for more than 30 years."

He added that Deif began his journey at a time when "Hamas had neither rifles nor bullets and when al-Qassam Brigades had only a clear vision and unyielding determination."

Alongside his brothers, both living and martyred, Deif "built an army (al-Qassam Brigades) capable of feats that many global armies cannot achieve." This army that Deif built "strikes the enemy without hesitation, breaches borders, fights heroic battles, and relies on steadfast, visionary, and ideologically committed fighters before military equipment and weapons,"

according to Al-Hayya. The Palestinian leader continued, "It is an army embraced by a resistance-driven society, willing to sacrifice everything for its freedom and independence."

Al-Hayya also paid tribute to the martyr Ismail Haniyeh, calling him "the nation's loss and a great national symbol," emphasizing that he was "calm and wise, but behind his calm demeanor and smile lay the fire of a revolutionary fighter."

He also honored the martyr Yahya Sinwar, describing him as "the master of the storm, the revolutionary leader engaged in battle, a pivotal figure in Hamas and Palestinian history, who became an icon for every free and honorable person around the world who rejects oppression and aggression."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US pressure on Lebanon reveals plan to enforce normalization with Israel

From page 1 ▶ While the committee ignores the killing and kidnapping of Lebanese civilians by the occupation forces, analysts expect international pressure on Lebanon, warning of the possibility that Ortogus and Jeffers will blackmail Lebanon to ensure that the occupation forces will remain in 5 strategic locations on the border in a bid to establish a "buffer zone" under the pretext of ensuring the security of the colonial settlers.

Yanon Magal, a political commentator close to Netanyahu, pointed out that "from the Trump administration's point of view, Israel can remain in the five locations in southern Lebanon as long as Lebanon violates the ceasefire agreement," revealing that American officials have told their Israeli counterparts: "Do whatever is necessary to enhance your security. We will not stand in your way."

Washington wants to subject Lebanon to the implementation of the Israeli version of UN Resolution 1701 as it does not plan anything other than achieving the broad normalization project across the region.

Despite Hezbollah's political flexibility, Washington is pressuring Nawaf Salam, the Prime Minister, to form a "government free of partisans and politicians" whose ministers are merely employees who carry out the highest orders, most notably obstructing the reconstruction of what was destroyed by Israel, its proxy in the region, during the two months of intensive bombardments of Lebanon that started in September and lasted until November.

This has been confirmed by the possibility of US President Donald Trump's participation in the opening ceremony of the largest intelligence complex in West Asia – which they call the new US embassy in Beirut – which will recruit about two thousand US political, security and military personnel.

What is happening is nothing but the Plan B of the failed war in the region. Immediately after the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government, and amid the Israeli incursion, al-Julani's (Ahmed al-Sharaa) position was decisive regarding the elimination of the Palestinian resistance in Syria, especially in the border area with Lebanon. Al Julani reiterated his will he has no intention to

fight "Israel".

According to Al Akhbar newspaper's leaks, during his visit to Damascus, Najib Mikati, the caretaker prime minister, was repeatedly asked, "In your opinion, is Anwar Sadat considered a traitor?" Mikati did not answer al-Julani. The latter addressed him: "I thought about it for a long time. I have studied all the revolutions in the world, and I reviewed the ideologies and forces that the Arab nation has experienced. Now, I believe that – at that time – if I were in Sadat's place, I would have done the same thing!"

Obviously, al-Julani did not miss an opportunity to please Washington as further leaked information has revealed his intention to grant Syrian citizenship to all Palestinian refugees in Syria.

Meanwhile, the Israeli enemy attaches great importance to the meeting that will bring together Netanyahu and Trump next week. There are no definitive estimates regarding the future of the region, as all assumptions remain valid, especially in light of the presence of a volatile personality like Trump, a factor that Netanyahu bet on.

Power politics won't yield the bonanza that Trump has promised: Foreign Affairs

'Pax Americana is gone'

TEHRAN - In an article published on its website on January 30, Foreign Affairs says, "The United States' return to nineteenth-century power politics will likely not yield the bonanza that Trump has promised."

Foreign Affairs also says Trump "sees tariffs as instruments to compel foreign capitals to bend to his will on other issues."

The article, titled "The Price of Trump's Power Politics", is written by Ivo H. Daalder, the former U.S. Ambassador to NATO, and James M. Lindsay, director of fellowship affairs at the Council on Foreign Relations.

The edited version of the article is as follows:

Pax Americana is gone. Born with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the U.S.-led international rules-based order died with the second inauguration of Donald J. Trump. The president has long maintained that this order disadvantages the United States by saddling it with the burden of policing the globe and enabling its allies to play it for a sucker. "The postwar global order is not just obsolete," Secretary of State Marco Rubio declared in his Senate confirmation hearing. "It is now a weapon being used against us."

Trump's skepticism about U.S. support for Ukraine and Taiwan, his eagerness to impose tariffs, and his threats to retake the Panama Canal, absorb Canada, and acquire Greenland make it clear that he envisions a return to nineteenth-century power politics and spheres of interest, even if he does not frame his foreign policy in those terms. In that era, the great powers of the day sought to divide the world into regions that each would dominate, regardless of the desires of those who lived there—a vision of the world that Trump explicitly echoes. Trump sees few significant U.S. interests outside the Western Hemisphere, considers alliances to be a drain on the U.S. Treasury, and believes the United States should dominate its neighborhood. His is a Thucydidean worldview—one in which "the

strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

Although the era of Pax Americana produced extraordinary achievements—the deterrence of communism, unprecedented global prosperity, relative peace—it also planted the seeds of its own destruction well before Trump's ascent. American hubris had led to costly, humiliating wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2008–9 financial crisis shattered faith in the U.S. government's competence and policy prescriptions. One can understand why some Americans might feel their country would fare better in a different, might-makes-right world. The United States would seem to bring a strong hand to such an order—it commands the world's largest economy, its most capable military, and arguably its strongest geographic position.

But it has a profoundly underrated disadvantage: lack of practice. Naked power politics is alien terrain for the United States, but it is familiar territory to its current rivals. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin have long resented Pax Americana because it limited their geopolitical ambitions. They have learned to work together to counter U.S. influence, especially in the global South. And unlike Trump, they do not face internal checks and balances on their power. They could overplay their hands and generate a backlash to their revisionist ambitions. But if they do not, Trump's gamble could easily go awry, leaving Americans, and the rest of the world, less prosperous and less secure.

As anomalous as Trump's rhetoric can sound to ears conditioned by decades of bipartisan talk of the United States as the leader of the free world, his foreign-policy vision—of expanding U.S. influence in its immediate neighborhood while backing out of global leadership—draws from older American impulses.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Three Iranian provinces seek UNESCO listing of their maintains streams



TEHRAN – The tourism directorates of Kermanshah, Lorestan, and Hamedan provinces have initiated the first step in seeking UNESCO natural heritage status for their mountain-originated streams.

As part of this effort, a permanent secretariat dedicated to the registration process will be established. According to Zahra Baharvand, Deputy Director of Cultural Heritage in Lorestan, the secretariat will be a joint initiative between the three provinces, aiming to compile a comprehensive file for the global registration of the streams, known as sar'abs in Persian.

"The three Zagros-region provinces, with their abundant natural resources, temperate climate, and stunning landscapes, have been assigned the mission of preparing a shared dossier for the global recognition of these mountain streams," Baharvand stated in a press conference on Saturday.

The first coordination meeting for this project was hosted in Hamedan, where it was decided to establish a permanent joint secretariat. The meeting brought together officials from the three provinces, including local heritage experts, cultural authorities, and representatives from relevant institutions.

Baharvand emphasized that specialized meetings focusing on documentation and management of the sar'abs will be held regularly in each of the participating provinces. These discussions will help lay the ground-

work for achieving UNESCO recognition and ensuring the conservation of these natural water sources.

The sar'abs, which emerge from natural springs, form large rivers and provide some of the purest freshwater sources in the region. The city of Nahavand, located in Hamedan province, is particularly known for its numerous sar'abs and pristine water quality.

The Zagros Mountains are a mountain range in Iran, northern Iraq, and southeastern Turkey. The mountain range has a total length of 1,600 km. The Zagros range begins in northwestern Iran and roughly follows Iran's western border while covering much of southeastern Turkey and northeastern Iraq. From this border region, the range continues southeast to the waters of the Persian Gulf. It also spans the southern parts of the Armenian highlands, and the whole length of the western and southwestern Iranian plateau, ending at the Strait of Hormuz. The highest point is Mount Dena, at 4,409 meters.

The mountains contain several ecosystems. Prominent among them are the forest and forest-steppe areas with a semi-arid climate. The annual precipitation ranges from 400–800 mm and falls mostly in winter and spring. Winters are severe, with low temperatures often below 25 °C. The region exemplifies the continental variation of the Mediterranean climate pattern, with a snowy winter and mild, rainy spring, followed by a dry summer and autumn.

UN Tourism in Morocco: driving investments in Africa's most-visited destination

UN Tourism has strengthened its partnership with the Kingdom of Morocco, a key ally in its mission to grow innovation across Africa and boost investments in the tourism sector of the region.

In an official visit to the Kingdom, UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili celebrated its achievements in growing tourism and making the sector a pillar of economic diversification and sustainable growth.

According to the latest UN Tourism data, Morocco welcomed 17.4 million international tourists in 2024, a 20% increase in 2023, making it the most-visited country in all of Africa. Fatim-Zahra Ammor, Minister of Tourism Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy for the Kingdom, shared the official data, and outlined the prospects for the years ahead, with Morocco set to co-host the 2030 FIFA World Cup and the 35th edition of the African Cup of Nations (AFCON-2025).

Over the last five years, Morocco has averaged \$3.5 billion in FDI annually across all sectors. From 2014 to 2023, \$2.2 billion was allocated to the tourism sector. Greenfield investments in tourism amounted to \$2.6 billion between 2015 and 2024.

To support the further growth of tourism across the Kingdom, in Rabat, UN Tourism officially launched "Tourism Doing Business – Investing in Morocco". The Guidelines – the latest in a growing portfolio of expert publications – outline the opportunities to be found in the tourism sector for international investors of all sizes. The Guidelines also set out investment trends and key areas of growth, including a focus on the Kingdom's booming innovation ecosystem.

Supporting Moroccan tourism innovation

In Rabat, UN Tourism welcomed private sector leaders, including from SMIT Morocco, as well as leading entrepreneurs and small-business owners to celebrate innovation in the Kingdom's tourism sector. In a keynote speech on Keynote Speech: "Global Trends on Tourism Tech and Innovation", UN Tourism Executive Director Natalia Bayona highlighted the accelerating digital transformation of the sector.

Executive Director Bayona said: "Morocco's tourism sector has become a key economic driver, contributing 7.3% to GDP by 2023. With a remarkable 35% increase in international arrivals since 2019 and \$10.5 billion in tourism revenue, Morocco is prepared to continue its growth. The country's stable political climate and strategic economic policies fortify this success."

Fatim-Zahra Ammor, Minister of Tourism Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy, adds: "The Kingdom of Morocco's political stability, its competitive edge, the openness of its economy, the view on innovation and its forward thinking investment policies collectively positions the country as a privileged destination for both national and international investors. Our engagement persists in continuing the implementation of strategic reforms aimed at unlocking the full potential of private investment, thereby facilitating the business process in Morocco."

As part of the visit, an agreement was also signed to establish the UN Tourism Thematic Office for Africa, furthering Morocco's role as a key partner in supporting tourism growth across the continent.

(Source: UN Tourism)

Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk: a cultural destination in western Iran

TEHRAN – Located in the heart of Kermanshah, western Iran, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk stands as a breathtaking testament to Iran's rich cultural and architectural heritage.

Originally built during the Qajar era as a Shia mourning site, this remarkable structure is now one of the most visited historical and religious attractions in the region. Recognized in 1975 as part of Iran's National Cultural Heritage, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk continues to captivate visitors with its intricate tilework, historical significance, and deep-rooted traditions.

An architectural marvel

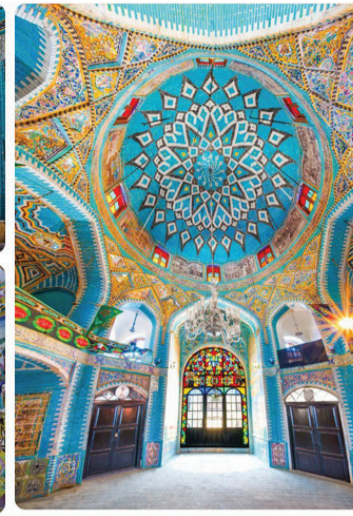
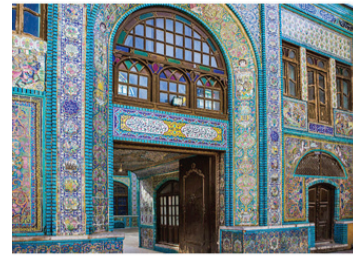
One of the most striking features of Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk is its exquisite tiling, which sets it apart from other historical buildings.

The tiles vividly depict scenes from early Islamic battles, including the legendary Battle of Karbala, alongside images of Iranian kings from the Achaemenid dynasty and elements of Persepolis.

These tiles, crafted with relief and half-relief techniques using natural colors, make the site a paradise for art and history enthusiasts.

The building comprises three main sections: Hosseineh, Abbasieh, and Zeinabieh.

Hosseineh is located six meters below street level, accessible by descending 17 stairs. It features a Sagha Khaneh with a beautifully



tilled portrait of Hazrat Abolfazl and a small courtyard surrounded by decorated rooms.

Abbasieh includes a courtyard and a two-story building adorned with Cuerda Seca tiles, displaying scenes of Prophet Yusef's arrival in Canaan and portraits of Qajar-era statesmen. Cuerda seca, which translates from Spanish to "dry cord," is an ancient technique for creating line decoration on pottery using a mixture of wax resist and a colorant. It is a great way to add definition to drawings because the wax resist keeps the glaze from covering up the lines.

Zeinabieh is home to the mausoleum of Moaven al-Molk, whose tomb was later decorated with intricate mirror work in 1374 S.H. handcrafted by Haj Mohammad Shokhui Isfahani.

A story of resilience

As mentioned by Visit Iran, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk has witnessed its share of historical turmoil. After the Constitutional Movement in 1327 S.H., the building suffered significant damage when it was bombed under Zahir al-Molk's orders.

Despite the destruction, the two opposing families, Moaven al-Molk and Zahir al-Molk, eventually reconciled, ensuring the preservation of this treasured site. Today, the structure stands as a symbol of endurance and unity.

A cultural hub

Beyond its architectural splendor, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk serves as a center for cultural and historical exploration.

The Museum of Anthropology of Kermanshah and the Clothing

and Jewelry Museum of Kermanshah are housed in the Abbasieh section, offering visitors insights into the region's rich traditions and heritage.

A must-visit destination

For history lovers, architecture aficionados, and cultural explorers, Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk offers a unique journey through Iran's past. Whether marveling at its magnificent tiles, exploring the museums, or absorbing the spiritual ambiance of this revered site, visitors are sure to leave with lasting memories.

If you are planning a trip to Kermanshah, make sure to add Tekyeh Moaven al-Molk to your itinerary as a place where history, art, and culture intertwine.

A brief history

Kermanshah, formerly Bakhtaran, the capital of Kermanshah province, was founded in the 4th century CE by Bahram IV of the Sasanian dynasty. Conquered by the Arabs in 640, the town was called Qirmasin (Qirmashin).

Under the Seljuk rule in the 11th century, it was the chief town of Kordestan. The Safavids (ruled 1501–1736) fortified the town, and the Qajars repulsed an attack by the Turks during Fath Ali Shah's rule (1797–1834). Occupied by the Turkish army in 1915 during World War I, it was evacuated in 1917. The construction of a road in the 1950s over the age-old Khorasan track added considerably to the importance of the city.

Conference to highlight tourism investment opportunities in Mazandaran province

TEHRAN – The Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri has announced plans to organize a conference dedicated to tourism investment opportunities across Mazandaran province.

Salehi-Amiri made the remarks on Saturday while inspecting the second construction phase of a major tourism project in Sari during his third day stay in the northern province, Mehr reported.

Some 100 private investors will be invited to attend the conference, Salehi-Amiri said. He was accompanied by a number of local officials and



members of the Iranian parliament representing various cities and towns in the province.

The picture-perfect province has long been a highly popular destination for domestic travelers. Its varied nature features plains, prairies, forests, and rainforests stretching from the sandy beaches of the Caspian Sea to the rugged and snowcapped Alborz sierra, including Mount Damavand, one of the highest peaks and volcanos in Asia. More than 800 registered historical and cultural sites, 338 km of shoreline, mineral springs in jungles and mountains, waterfalls, and caves are among the major tourist attractions in the province.

50 restoration projects for cultural heritage underway in Fars province



TEHRAN – Fars' deputy chief of cultural heritage has announced that 50 restoration projects are currently in progress across the southern Iranian province.

The projects, funded through national and provincial budgets as well as allocations from the Oil

Ministry, are being implemented in 16 counties of the province, Afshin Ebrahimi said on Saturday. "Several of these projects have already been completed, while others remain under construction."

Since the beginning of 1403 (the current Persian calendar year started in March 2024), restoration efforts have been launched utilizing national and local funding to help preserve and safeguard the province's cultural heritage, ensuring their longevity for future generations, the official explained.

He added that the counties benefiting from these initiatives include Jahrom, Shiraz, Kazerun, Khafr, Owz, Mamasani, Sarves-

tan, Firuzabad, Marvdasht, Fasa, Gerash, Estahban, Abadeh, Lar, Qir-Karzin, and Khonj.

Often considered the cultural heartland of Iran, Fars is home to ancient cities, monumental ruins, and architectural masterpieces that reflect its illustrious past.

One of the most iconic sites in Fars is Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Darius the Great in 518 BC. This UNESCO World Heritage site showcases the grandeur of ancient Persian architecture with its impressive palaces, reliefs, and staircases. Another significant landmark is Pasargadae, the tomb of Cyrus the Great, which is a tes-

tament to the early Persian Empire's architectural ingenuity. This site also holds a UNESCO designation and is revered for its historical and cultural importance.

Shiraz, the provincial capital, is a city renowned for its poetry, gardens, and historical monuments. The tombs of famous Persian poets Hafez and Saadi are located there, attracting numerous visitors who come to pay homage to these literary giants. The city also features the exquisite Nasir al-Mulk Mosque, known for its stunning stained-glass windows, and the Eram Garden, a beautiful example of Persian garden design.

4,500-year-old three warrior graves found in Germany, one still wearing an arm guard

Extraordinary discovery during the construction of a New Power Line: Archaeologists unearth a cemetery from the Copper Age with Three Warrior Graves. One of the deceased even wore part of his armor.

Archaeologists have discovered an approximately 4,500-year-old cemetery with ten graves from the Bell Beaker culture near Fordestedt, located in the Salzlandkreis district of Germany.

Currently, three particularly well-preserved burials have been uncovered. The deceased, buried in a hunched position facing east, were interred under a common burial mound. Women were laid on the right side, while men were on the left side of the body.

"A common burial mound covered all

three deceased," said project leader Susanne Friederich from the State Office for Heritage Preservation and Archaeology of Saxony-Anhalt.

In the Bell Beaker culture, the dead were always buried in a hunched position facing east. The name comes from the bell-shaped ceramic vessels that were filled with food and placed in the grave for the journey to the afterlife.

Among the most striking discoveries are the grave goods found within the tombs. In one grave, archaeologists unearthed a bell-shaped ceramic vessel, approximately 15 centimeters in diameter, filled with food to accompany the deceased on their journey to the afterlife.

At the time of burial, the deceased was still

wearing his arm guard, which helps archers avoid injuring themselves with the bowstring.

(Source: arkeonews.net)

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Fundraising campaign for children with disabilities launched

TEHRAN – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Tejarat Bank have started a campaign titled 'Disability is part of me, not all of me' which aims to empower children with disabilities in Iran through raising awareness and fostering a supportive environment.

This initiative highlights the commitment of both organizations to promoting inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities for children with disabilities in Iran, UNICEF website announced in a press release on January 30.

The nationwide fundraising campaign is designed to improve children with disabilities' lives. The campaign's messages emphasize empowerment, dignity, and inclusion for children with disabilities.

This co-branded campaign will run across all Tejarat Bank branches, ATMs, Tejarat Bank customer clubs, and digital platforms, encouraging the public to donate to UNICEF.

UNICEF is working alongside the Iranian government to provide quality, inclusive education for children with disabilities through several initiatives, including:

Improving the capacity of pre-primary and primary teachers to provide timely interventions for children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Expanding the coverage and quality of national screening systems for early disability detection and referral.

Promoting the adoption of disability-inclusive data collection methods at institutional levels and establishing functional data management systems for disability-related information.

Facilitating access to assistive



technologies and developing a national assistive technology innovation cluster within Iran's innovation ecosystem to enhance access for children with disabilities.

Strengthening the capacity of adolescents with disabilities to acquire relevant employability skills and supporting their transition to meaningful employment.

Enhancing national intersectoral collaboration on the rights of children with disabilities.

Combating stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities through social behavioral change initiatives.

Between 2018 and 2021, UNICEF Iran and Tejarat Bank collaborated on several impactful initiatives, including the procurement of lightweight nebulizers for children with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) and the provision of essential water quality equipment for flood-affected populations in Golestan and Khuzestan provinces.

Building on this success, the two organizations renewed their partnership in August 2023, reaffirming their commitment to

improving children's health, education and well-being over three years.

By combining their resources and expertise, UNICEF Iran and Tejarat Bank are committed to making a lasting, positive impact on the lives of children with disabilities, ensuring they receive the care, support, and opportunities they deserve.

Measures focusing on children with disabilities

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

Throughout the books, UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), offer guidelines on disaster management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, focusing

on children with hearing impairments, mobility impairments, and autism spectrum disorder so far, UNICEF website announced in a press release on January 19.

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

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

In September 2024, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) held a training of trainers (TOT) workshop based on the UNICEF training package on 'Disability Inclusion for Frontline Workers'.

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

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

World Wetlands Day: 'Protecting Wetlands for our common future'



TEHRAN – Celebrated on the second day of February every year, the World Wetlands Day to raise awareness about wetlands, and increase people's understanding of these critically important ecosystems.

'Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future' is the theme for World Wetlands Day 2025.

Wetlands are ecosystems, in which water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. A broad definition of wetlands includes both freshwater and marine and coastal ecosystems, such as all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and saltpans.

These lands are critical to people and nature, given the intrinsic value of these ecosystems, and their benefits and services, including their environmental, climate, ecological, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic contributions to sustainable development and human wellbeing.

Although they cover only around 6 per cent of the Earth's land surface, 40 per cent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands. Wetland biodiversity matters for our health, our food supply, for tourism and for jobs.

Wetlands are vital for humans, for other ecosystems and for our climate, providing essential ecosystem services, such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification. More than a billion people across the world depend on wetlands for their livelihoods – that's about one in eight people on Earth.

Nearly 90 percent of the world's wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. It is essential to raise national and global awareness about wetlands in order to reverse their rapid loss and encourage ac-

tions to conserve and restore them.

Wetland conservation project lowers irrigation water consumption

On December 10, 2024, Mehri Asna-Ashari, an official with the DOE, said the conservation project of Iranian wetlands has resulted in a 27.5 percent decrease in irrigation water consumption while increasing agricultural products by 22.5 percent.

"Currently, 49 wetlands, covering around 22 percent of the whole wetlands in the country, are being conserved in the form of native ecosystem management partnership," IRNA quoted Asna-Ashari as saying.

She made the remarks at the meeting of the steering committee of the international project for the conservation of Iranian Wetlands.

Since 2021, the conservation project has been carried out in three wetlands including Shadegan in Khuzestan province, Bakhtegan in Fars province, and Urmia in West Azarbaijan province, the official noted.

Sustainable farming methods were implemented and 2,433 farmers were trained. By February 2024, the results showed that average agricultural production increased by 22.5 percent, whereas irrigation water consumption reduced by 27.5 percent. In addition, the consumption of chemical fertilizers decreased by 25 to 30 percent. Consequently, the income of each farmer increased by 14 percent.

The establishment of 26 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and 181 livelihood support groups, and the implementation of alternative livelihood plans in 44 villages are some of the other achievements of the project, she added.

The official went on to say that "in 2024, the project was implemented with a budget of 678,000; we hope the project further yields positive outcomes with the allocation of the new budget. Of course, the financial contribution of the government was received with a little delay and insufficiently.

To implement the project more successfully, the Ministries of Agriculture, Energy, Interior, Foreign Affairs, as well as Planning and Budget Organization, and the United Nations Development Program are required to cooperate with each other," Asna-Ashari noted.

In Iran, 141 wetlands with ecological value with an area of over 3 million hectares have been identified, of which 25 wetlands are designated as wetlands of international importance (registered in the Ramsar Convention) covering more than 1.4 million hectares and four sites are biosphere reserves.

Iran world's second producer of 'tilmanocept' cancer tracer

From page 1 ▶ Thanks to this remarkable achievement, about 90 percent of patients with various cancers in the country will gain access to a more affordable and more accurate method for cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Having passed the preclinical phases successfully, the drug has entered the clinical phase.

Cancer as one of the global health challenges affects the lives of many people annually. They are the leading cause of premature mortality in the country, according to the health ministry.

They account for more than 55 thousand deaths annually. Some 34 thousand deaths out of 122 thousand premature deaths (under 70 years of age) and 11 thousand deaths out of 85 thousand very premature deaths (under 50 years of age) are caused by various cancers.

The latest national cancer census shows that the number of new cancer cases in Iran is expected to increase to 160,000 by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026), indicating an increase of 43 percent.

The first 10 most common cancers in Iran are breast, prostate, colon, stomach, lung, bladder, thyroid, uterus, brain, and spine cancers.

The most common cancers of Iranian women include breast, colon, thyroid, stomach, uterine, leukemia, ovary, brain and spine, lungs and esophagus.

Around 250,000 Iranians are now living with cancer. Half of cancers can be almost treated and the rest can be avoided.

Recent achievements

On January 20, 2024, the Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS) announced the development of a system based on artificial intelligence (AI) that can detect breast cancer with 94 percent accuracy, IRNA reported.

In Iran, breast cancer is the second-leading cause of death in women as around 30 percent of patients die each year, nearly as much as the world average.

Earlier detection of cancer increases the chance of successful treatment and survival.

Also, an Iranian knowledge-based compa-

ny announced readiness to meet the needs of regional countries as well as North Africa for the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. HPV is known to cause cervical cancer in women.

The product has been manufactured at a much lower price, 75 percent cheaper, compared to foreign samples.

Producing the HPV vaccine needs one of the most complicated technologies in the world, and Iran has been able to produce the vaccine domestically.

Once the vaccine proved its safety and effectiveness in increasing the antibody titer, it obtained the Food and Drug Organization's approval to enter the market in 2020.

In September 2023, an Iranian knowledge-based company succeeded in producing 'ibrutinib' which is used to treat various blood cancers, making the country the third producer of the medication in the world.

Now Iran, India, and China are the only three countries in the world that have the high-tech knowledge to produce ibrutinib and necessary raw material, IRNA reported.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iranian zoos to be monitored online

The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

"Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible," IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

باغ وحش های کشور آنلاین پایش می شوند

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: پایش آنلاین باغ وحش های کشور جزو برنامه های سازمان است و در حال تهیه زیر ساخت برای اجرای آن هستیم. علی تیموری روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا افزود: باغ وحش هایی که جدید احداث می شوند باید حتما سیستم پایش آنلاین داشته باشند، مجموعه های قدیمی نیز باید هر چه سریعتر این سیستم راه اندازی کنند.

وی اظهار داشت: باید تمام ادارات کل استان ها آدرس سیستم آنلاین باغ وحش ها را دریافت کنند تا ورود و خروج گونه ها از باغ وحش، ورود گونه های جدید، تلفات و دلایل آن را ثبت و به صورت آنلاین در جریان قرار گیرند.

تیموری گفت: زیر ساخت های این کار تا حدودی آغاز شده و دو مجموعه کار زیر ساخت را شروع کرده اند و بقیه باغ وحش ها هم به مرور انجام خواهند داد.

Rainfall drops by over 50% since mid-September



TEHRAN—From the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2024) to January 30, 50.5 mm of rainfall has been recorded in the country, a 51.1 percent decrease from the long-term average of 103.2 mm, according to the Metrological Organization.

The latest data shows that over the last week, which ended on January 30, the country received a total of 3.6 mm of rain, indicating a 51.7 percent decrease compared to 7.5 mm in the long term, ISNA reported.

From the beginning of the 11th Iranian month (January 20) till January 30, about 4.6 mm of rainfall was recorded in the country, showing a 61.3 percent decrease compared to 11.8 mm received in the long term.

From the start of the winter till January 30, the recorded rainfall amounted to 16.6 mm, which is 62.5 percent less than the normal

amount, 44.2 percent.

Mazandaran is the only province that has had more rainfall (306.5 mm) compared to the long-term average (291.4), experiencing a 5.2 mm increase.

Rainfall in other provinces has been less than normal, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad province has recorded the lowest amount of rainfall, receiving 78.8 percent less rain than normal.

Tehran province is one of the provinces that has faced a significant decline in precipitation. Tehran's long-term average rainfall stands at 111.5 mm, while in the current water year, it has only received an average of 67.1 mm, which indicates a 39.8 percent decrease.

According to Metrological Organization, from January 6 to February 18, the average precipitation is forecast to be normal and less than normal.

Over 250 mm rain in previous water year

The previous water year (September 22, 2023 – September 22, 2024) came to an end with receiving 252.7 mm of precipitation, showing a 19 percent increase compared to the year before.

Due to successive years of drought, the increase in rainfall amounts did not compensate water deficit in the country, some provinces are suffering from water shortage, IRNA reported.



GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The world is a road for going to the next one, and if it had been created for itself, man would have lived eternally in it.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:18 Evening: 17:52 Dawn: 5:37 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:03 (tomorrow)

Iranian music performances held at University of Toronto New Music Festival

TEHRAN-Iranian music performances were held at the University of Toronto New Music Festival (UTNMF), which is underway in Toronto, Canada.

On February 1, the festival hosted contemporary Iranian music symposium and performance with distinguished composer Reza Vali, Mehr Rostegari.

Vali, 74, began his music studies at the Conservatory of Music in Tehran. In 1972 he went to Austria and studied music education and composition at the Academy of Music in Vienna.

After graduating from the Academy of Music, he moved to the United States and continued his studies at the University of Pittsburgh, receiving his Ph.D. in music theory and composition in 1985. He has been a faculty member of the School of Music at Carnegie Mellon University since 1988.

He has received numerous honors and commissions, including the honor prize of the Austrian Ministry of Arts and Sciences, two Andrew W. Mellon Fellowships, commissions from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, Kronos Quartet, the Carpe Diem String Quartet, the Seattle Chamber Players, and the Arizona Friends of Chamber Music, as well as grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, The Pittsburgh Foundation, and the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education.

He was selected by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust as the Outstanding Emerging Artist for which he received the Creative Achievement Award. Vali's orchestral compositions have been performed in the United States by the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Baltimore Symphony, the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and Orchestra 2001.

His music has been performed in Europe, China, Chile, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Australia and is recorded on the Deutsche Grammophon, Naxos, New Albion, MMC, Ambassador, Albany, and ABC

Classics labels.

Vali also held two composition masterclasses during the festival.

An Iranian music concert was also held at the University of Toronto New Music Festival on January 31.

The concert was curated and conducted by Kaveh Mirhosseini, with Bijan Sepanji on violin and Farzad Khorshidsavar on daf and dayereh, Mehr reported.

Mirhosseini, a DMA student at the University of Toronto, is an Iranian composer, conductor, percussionist, and researcher of Iranian folk music.

In 2012, he founded the Cantus Ensemble in Tehran and MECA (Middle Eastern Composers Association); in 2024, he founded the JAM Orchestra in Toronto.

He has played in the Tehran Symphony Orchestra (TSO) for 14 years as a principal percussionist and guest conductor of the TSO and the Iran National Symphony Orchestra in his professional career. Many different orchestras, ensembles, and soloists performed his compositions, such as the Mili Reasurans Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Hakan Sensoy (Istanbul, Turkey), Koda Orchestra, conducted by Oguzhan Kavruk (Izmir, Turkey), Annie Kosanovich (Oregon State University, the U.S.), Branka Parlic (Silk Road Music Festival, Serbia), Gokce Bahar Oytun (Istanbul, Turkey), and Respina String Quartet (Tehran Contemporary Music Festival).

He has recorded orchestral pieces by Tehran Cantus Ensemble and albums by Iranian and non-Iranian composers, such as Christos Hatzis's "Zeitgeist" and "Winter Solstice," Reza Vali's "Zand," M.R. Darvishi's "The Lost of Truth," Mehran Rouhani's "For Those," and more.

The UTNMF is an international festival of contemporary music presented annually by the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Having launched on January 24, the festival will run until February 4.

Winners of Intl. Quran Competition announced

TEHRAN- The winners of the 41st edition of Iran's International Quran Competition were honored at a closing ceremony held on Friday in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province.

The event was attended by Seyyed Abbas Salehi, the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, along with various cultural and provincial officials, ISNA reported.

In the women's memorizing competition, first prize was given to Fatemeh Daliri from Iran; the second prize went to Motahharez Nabi-Bahr from Bangladesh, and the third prize was claimed by Afnan Rashad Ali Yaqub from Yemen.

First prize in the women's tar-teel competition was given to Ghazaleh Soheilzadeh from Iran. Aisha Muhammad Ibn Muttalib from Nigeria and Hawraa Haidar Hamzi from Lebanon won second and third prizes.

In men's category, Mojtaba Qadbeigi from Iran took first place in the tar-teel competition. Haidar Ali Ibn Muhammad Al-Mousawi from Iraq and Qassem Muhammad Hamdan from Lebanon won the runner-up prize and third prize in this section respectively.

In the recitation section, the first place was secured by Seyyed Mohammad Hosseinipour from Iran, followed by Muhammad Hossein Muhammad from Egypt in second place, and Ahmad Razak Al-Dulfain from Iraq in third.

The first prize in the Quran memorizing competition was awarded to Mohammad Khakpour from Iran, while the second prize went to Murtaza Hossein Ali Akash from Libya, and the third prize was claimed by Ahmed Muhammad Saleh Ibrahim Issa from Egypt.



Ghazaleh Soheilzadeh from Iran, the winner of the first prize in the women's tar-teel competition, holds her award during the closing ceremony of the 41st International Quran Competition in Mashhad on January 31, 2025.

Moreover, the judging panel of the 41st edition of International Quran Competition issued a statement during the closing ceremony.

The panel emphasized the idea that the Quran serves as the ultimate guide to perfection for Muslims in today's world. The numerous verses in the Holy Quran highlight this essential truth, which not only resonates with believers but also captivates the hearts and minds of freedom-seekers globally. The Quran is presented as the only unaltered divine scripture capable of guiding humanity from ignorance and darkness to a path of dignity and enlightenment.

The statement drew attention to the pressing issues faced by oppressed populations, particu-

larly those in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as the steadfastness of Muslims in Yemen and Iraq. It noted the revolutionary spirit of the Iranian people during the 1979 revolution, all of which have demonstrated the power of the Quran's teachings and the guidance of the Prophet's (PBUH) family. These instances embody the Quran's ability to triumph over malicious attempts at erasing faith and promoting Islamophobia.

The panel acknowledged a significant opportunity for the Islamic ummah, empowered by the light of the Quran, to guide weary communities who have suffered under the deceptions of global superpowers. They expressed heartfelt congratulations for the thoughtful decision to hold

this year's competition in Iran's spiritual heart, near the revered shrine of Imam Reza (AS).

Moreover, the panel, featuring distinguished scholars from eight countries recognized for their expertise in Quranic studies, expressed gratitude to God for enabling them to execute fair and equitable judgments. They extended prayers for success and prosperity for Muslims worldwide.

In closing, the statement called for a renewed commitment to the unifying teachings of the Quran, urging the Islamic ummah to unify in faith and resonate the call to the divine word, ensuring the Quran's cultural significance endures perpetually across the globe.

Meerloo's book on mental pressure published in Persian

TEHRAN- A Persian translation of Dutch medicine and psychoanalyst Joost Abraham Maurits Meerloo's 1956 book "The Rape of the Mind: The Psychology of Thought Control, Menticide, and Brainwashing" has recently been published by Qoqnu Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Kia Soleimani.

In "The Rape of the Mind", Meerloo delves into the dark realm of mental coercion, exploring the transformation of the human mind into a submissive, responding machine. This phenomenon, prevalent in both cultural undercurrents and deliberate experiments driven by a particular ideology, is an ancient yet ongoing crime, dating back to prehistoric times. The term "rape of the mind" conveys the concept of overwhelming and violating one's mental integrity.



The book examines the dangers of free cultural interplay being threatened by enforced mental intrusion. Meerloo sheds light on the methods of brainwashing and mental torture, revealing how totalitarian regimes imprint their subjective "truth" on others' minds through systematic mental pressure. He argues that these methods are not mere-

ly limited to direct military implications but also manifest in our own culture, subtly pressurizing people's minds.

Meerloo's systematic analysis of brainwashing and mental torture highlights the strategic role of mass psychology in totalitarian systems, leading to the "rape of the mind." He critiques the "new age of cold war", marked by mental terror, verbocracy, and semantic fog, where fear is used as a tool for mass submission, and highlights the confusion surrounding treason and loyalty.

Written for both experts and laypeople, "The Rape of the Mind" serves as a warning and a call to action, urging readers to recognize and resist the manipulation of their minds. Through his work, Meerloo underscores the importance of preserving mental freedom and combating the insidious effects of mental coercion.

Embroidery from Palestine exhibition opens in Jeddah

The exhibition "Thread Memory: Embroidery from Palestine" is underway at Hayy Jameel in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Organized by Art Jameel, an organization dedicated to supporting artists and creative communities, the exhibition will run until April 17, and is presented in partnership with the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, The Arab Weekly reported.

Drawing from the museum's extraordinary collection as well as personal archives, the exhibition explores the profound cultural and historical significance of Palestinian tatreez, an intricate hand embroidery.

The exhibition, Art Jameel said, brings together over 30 historic and modern dresses, more than 100 archival photographs, and objects from the 19th and early 20th centuries through today.

"Thread Memory" also offers an in-depth look at this ancient craft, which has been predominantly practiced by women, and highlights its role as a lens into the turbulent history of Palestine. Embroidered fabrics serve as powerful symbols of identity and resistance, weaving together the stories of a people's survival,

resilience and cultural endurance.

Curated by Rachel Dedman, the V&A's Jameel Curator of Contemporary Art from the Middle East, the exhibition centers clothing as a home for the body and an intimate site for the expression of identity. It traces the evolution of Palestinian embroidery from the Nakba in 1948 to the present, focusing on regional variations such as Jerusalem, Ramallah, Beit Dajan and Bedouin communities.

The exhibition also includes elements from the Palestinian diaspora, showcasing how the craft has evolved over generations as a powerful reflection of Palestinian cultural heritage.

Tatreez originated in rural communities, embedded in daily life and women's rites of passage, with each region developing its distinctive patterns, reflecting local stories, flora, fauna and cultural beliefs. "Thread Memory" illustrates how this matrilineal craft has been passed down through generations from mother to daughter, creating a visual language that reflects a deep connection to cultural and familial identity.

"The exhibition builds on more than ten years of research and earlier exhibitions in Palestine, Lebanon and the UK curated by Rachel Dedman on tatreez and textiles. We are honored to be hosting this exhibition which introduces the Saudi public to one of the region's most critical and storied collections at the Palestinian Museum, plus dresses on loan from local, personal collections in Saudi Arabia," Antonia Carver, Art Jameel Director, said.

"Art Jameel has a longstanding focus on cultural continuity and exchange, and on foregrounding discursive exhibitions and programs that recover and document histories and traditions. During these times of turmoil, violence and grief, it feels vital to tell everyday stories of survival, even joy, and to highlight resilience through creativity and artisanship," Carver added.

The exhibition draws on the Palestinian Museum's extensive archive of over 500,000 photographs and documents, digitized from 414 personal collections and family albums. Visitors will have the opportunity to see dresses from Palestinian communities in the diaspora, as well

as headdresses with elaborate ornamentation, silver and gold jewelry, thobes from Ramallah, Jaffa and Gaza, and postcards and photographs that document historical sites such as the Dome of the Rock, landscapes, and depopulated villages.

The exhibition also underscores the recognition of Palestinian embroidery as an essential part of intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2021, further cementing its significance as a symbol of identity and community resilience.

Rachel Dedman brings over ten years of expertise in Palestinian embroidery to "Thread Memory". Her portfolio includes pioneering exhibitions like "Labor of Love" at the Palestinian Museum (2018) and "Material Power" at Kettle's Yard, and "The Whitworth" in the UK (2023/24). Dedman's unique approach bridges the intersection of history, fashion and culture, as she brings the narrative of Palestinian embroidery to life through this exhibition.

The "Thread Memory" exhibition is accompanied by a diverse public program for visitors of all ages, including workshops and talks.

Cartoon of Day



Palestinians Return to North Gaza
Cartoonist: Stellina Chen from Taiwan