



Maximum pressure failed before, will fail again: officials say of Trump's latest anti-Iran move

Unveiling Trump's Hidden Agenda

US president says he doesn't want Iran to have nukes while signing memo renewing maximum pressure campaign

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Unilateral sanctions destabilize oil markets: Iran's oil minister

TEHRAN – Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Wednesday that imposing unilateral sanctions against major oil producers and exerting pressure on OPEC is a clear attempt to destabilize global oil and energy markets, ultimately harming consumers worldwide.

According to a statement from Iran's Oil Ministry, Paknejad made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran with OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais and his accompanying delegation.

He highlighted the historical role of OPEC+ member states in stabilizing markets and supporting global economic growth.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining this approach, stating that the OPEC and non-OPEC cooperation agreement has been built on fundamental principles, fostering a stable and lasting collaboration that has set an example for sustaining global oil market stability.

Paknejad, who will serve as the president of the OPEC Conference in 2025, stressed that depoliticizing the oil market is essential for energy security, particularly for the oil sector and its key players. ▶ Page 4

Iranian biotech products target 35 countries

TEHRAN – Since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024), biotechnology products have been exported to 35 countries worldwide, compared to 33 countries in the past year.

The pharmaceutical biotechnology industry saves some two billion dollars in foreign currency annually, covering 60 percent of the country's pharmaceutical exports, IRNA quoted Hossein Amirazodi, the secretary general of the association of pharmaceutical biotechnology producers and exporters, as saying.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday, addressing the 4th International Conference and Exhibition on Iranian Medical Biotech Products and Related Industries (Iran Bio) being held from February 4 to 6 at the Olympic Hotel in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Currently, the country produces 40 out of 150 pharmaceutical biotechnology products that are manufactured in the world, he said, adding that the achievement has been made over the course of 30 years.

Iran Bio aims to feature the capabilities and potentials of the national biotechnology industries, provide an opportunity for information and technology transfer, increasing synergy among researchers, experts and active members, showcase the latest achievements in biotechnology, support domestic manufacturers by expanding markets and export opportunities. ▶ Page 7

Air Force Day: the day the Shah's commanders decided to stand by their nation

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – On February 8, 1979, a group of Air Force commanders from the Shah's regime went to Imam Khomeini's residence to pledge their allegiance to him, announcing that they were joining the widespread revolutionary movement.

Many Iranian Air Force personnel, known as "Homafaran," had taken specialized courses in the United States, such as electronics and mechanics, prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Several of them had joined the revolution before Imam Khomeini's return to Iran, weeks prior, and some had even visited Imam Khomeini's residence while he was in exile in Neauphle-le-Château, a suburb of Paris, but were arrested and exiled upon returning to the country. ▶ Page 2

Third Intifada looms as Trump eyes Gaza conquest

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – President Donald Trump's shocking plan for the Gaza Strip strongly suggests that the United States is working hand in glove with Israel to conduct an ethnic cleansing campaign in the Palestinian territory modeled on the mass dispossession of the 1948 Nakba.

Speaking during a joint press conference alongside visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the White House on Tuesday, Trump put forward a proposal for the United States to "take over" the Gaza Strip.

"The US will take over the Gaza Strip and we will do a job with it too," the US president said.

The former real estate developer added, "We'll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site, level the site and get rid of the destroyed buildings."

In response to a question about the possibility of deploying US troops to Gaza in pursuit of his objectives, Trump said, "As far

Trump's Gaza plans prompt international outcry

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – As U.S. President Donald Trump intensifies threats to remove Palestinians from Gaza, global reactions to his controversial plans continue to increase. Both U.S. allies and adversaries seem to agree that Trump's proposal violates international law. Here are some of the key reactions to these plans:

Palestine

The Hamas movement strongly condemned Trump's statements about the U.S. occupying the Gaza Strip and displacing its inhabitants, rejecting the remarks entirely.

as Gaza is concerned, we'll do what is necessary. If it's necessary, we'll do that. We're going to take over that piece that we're going to develop it."

The US president stressed that Palestinian people who live in the Gaza Strip should

leave the territory. Earlier on Tuesday, he demanded that Palestinians in Gaza move to a new location provided by one or more nations in the region.

Since assuming office on January 20, Trump has repeatedly called on Egypt and

Jordan to take in Palestinians, although both Arab states have flatly rejected the idea.

The US along with Qatar and Egypt brokered a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that went into effect on January 19. Trump takes credit for the truce agreement that paused Israel's genocidal war on Gaza. The conflict has claimed the lives of close to 62,000 Palestinians and left much of Gaza in ruins.

The three-phase ceasefire is expected to lead to the full withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip and the release of captives held in Gaza.

The Israeli military launched war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, following a surprise attack by Hamas in southern Israel. The Hamas attack dubbed the Al-Aqsa Storm resulted in the deaths of over 1,100 individuals, while about 250 others were taken captive.

Netanyahu had vowed to continue the war until eliminating Hamas and releasing all the captives.

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Why and who is obstructing formation of Lebanese government?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Obviously, Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Nawaf Salam is under intense pressure from those who are supposed to be his "allies" in an attempt to amend the course of his ministerial picks. Otherwise, Salam will be forced to apologize or impose a formation that will fail to gain the confidence of the parliament.

These same political groups that nominated him during the parliamentary consultations consider Salam to have let them down when he dealt positively with the Hezbollah-Amal duo's concerns. Salam is accused of "submitting" to them. ▶ Page 5



Pezeshkian, VP, and ministers visit defense industry exhibition

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, accompanied by several members of his cabinet, visited the National-Defense Cooperation Development Exhibition organized by the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics.

The visit took place on Wednesday morning on the sidelines of the weekly cabinet meeting.

The exhibition, set up in the courtyard of the cabinet building, was designed to highlight the latest advancements, capabilities, and potential contributions of the Ministry of Defense to various industrial and technological fields. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

The goals of Netanyahu's trip to U.S.

In a note, Jam-e-Jam discussed the goals of Netanyahu's trip to the U.S. and wrote: It seems that his most important goal is to win Donald Trump's support again in line with his goals.

He is trying to bring Trump to his desired playing field by magnifying the threat of Iran, introducing Iran as a serious threat, and keeping himself in power. His other goal is to create a conflict centered on Iran and exploit it to realize the new Middle East plan and maintain his political position.

Regarding future U.S.-Israeli relations, it is predicted that despite this approach, the relations between the two countries will be based on America's commitment to maintaining Israel's security in West Asia.

Netanyahu is also using Washington's capacity by turning America into his hostage given the situation he has created in Gaza.

Also, the influence and effectiveness of the AIPAC lobby in the U.S. is significant in view of the fact that Donald Trump has not yet reached a conclusion and a specific strategy in this regard.

Ham Mihan: Is a new nuclear deal on the way?

In a commentary, Ham Mihan dealt with the situation between Iran and the United States and said: A deep analysis of the political atmosphere, domestic opponents and Iran's weak position shows that the possibility of reaching a new agreement is low.

Trump has said in recent interviews that he would prefer to resolve the issue without resorting to military action and that resolving the Iranian nuclear problem without an Israeli attack would be good.

These statements have raised hopes, especially given his administration's previous "maximum pressure" policy toward Iran.

Trump's willingness to avoid a military confrontation could indicate a shift toward diplomatic negotiations.

However, this willingness does not necessarily mean that he is ready to conclude a deal at any cost. Another major obstacle to revitalizing the nuclear deal is the Israeli opposition.

Israel, which considers Iran its biggest regional threat, has long opposed any nuclear deal with Tehran. Israeli officials have repeatedly warned that a deal with Iran will not prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Iran transfers body of terror ringleader to Germany after legal procedures

TEHRAN – Iran has officially transferred the body of Jamshid Sharmahd, the leader of the Tondar terrorist group, to Germany after completing all necessary legal processes, according to Iranian judiciary officials.

The handover was carried out in response to a formal request from Sharmahd's family and in accordance with judicial and diplomatic protocols, The Iranian News Agency Daneshjoo stated.

Sharmahd, a German citizen and U.S. resident was the ringleader of a pro-monarchist terrorist group known in Iran for organizing and carrying out numerous deadly terrorist attacks against civilians.

One of the most notorious attacks linked to Sharmahd was the 2008 bombing at the Seyyed-ol-Shohada mosque in the southern city of Shiraz.

About 800 worshippers were attending a sermon by Seyyed Mohammad Anjavinejad, head cleric of the Rahpouyan Vesal Cultural Center when a powerful bomb exploded.

The explosion injured 215 and martyred 14 people, including five women, two children, and an infant, making it one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Iranian history.

According to investigators, the British-made 8-pound bomb was detonated by remote control and was enough to kill a thousand people, but the placement of the explosive next to the column and the way the building collapsed limited the casualties.

Sharmahd and his Tondar group were also behind a 2010 terrorist bombing at Ayatollah

Iran: Eliminating the Israeli-Western threat

The responsibility of the current government began its work while the region, and Iran, were in a heated and risky atmosphere caused by the Zionist regime's warmongering. In such an atmosphere, the diplomatic system had to face the psychological propaganda war of the Israeli-Western front against itself and the Axis of Resistance.

In a situation where the heated atmosphere surrounding Iran and its friends in the region was escalating exponentially, the Zionist regime and its Western supporters were constantly threatening Iran with full-scale war.

But the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the self-confidence arising from faith in the spiritual and material assets of the Islamic Republic of Iran and relying on popular support, designed and implemented an active and targeted diplomacy based on credible and effective deterrence to neutralize the threats of the Israeli-American axis.

Thus, the diplomatic system, with a correct understanding of the extent and severity of the threat, turned a real challenge into an opportunity to continue the neighborhood policy and increase trust between the countries in the region. It also used diplomacy as a tool to strengthen military deterrence against external threats.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Netanyahu's demand from Trump centers on Iran

Arman-e-Emrooz wrote in an article about Netanyahu's visit to the United States: One concession that Netanyahu wants from Trump is to launch the second version of "maximum pressure" against Iran with the aim to control the fallout of the second phase of the Gaza agreement. Iran is a sensitive issue that Netanyahu will discuss with Trump. In this regard, analyses and statements by Israeli right-wingers, there is a kind of dissatisfaction with Trump's delay in announcing his policy towards Tehran.

In this regard, Netanyahu will probably ask Trump to announce a very strict policy against Iran as soon as possible and close any loophole for diplomacy and reaching an agreement.

What was stated is one of Netanyahu's goals on this trip, but the extent to which Trump will support both the Palestine issue and Iran will depend on his actual policy, not his declarations, on this issue in the coming weeks and months.



Ruhollah Khomeini's mausoleum in the Iranian capital, which left several people injured.

Before Sharmahd's arrest in 2020, his group was planning to carry out several high-profile and potentially deadly attacks across Iran, but its efforts were thwarted by the intricate intelligence operations targeting the outfit, according to the Iranian Intelligence Ministry.

Furthermore, Sharmahd and his group collaborated with foreign intelligence services to destabilize the country.

In March 2024, an Iranian court ordered the Tondar group to pay \$2.5 billion in damages for the 2008 Shiraz bombing, holding it responsible for orchestrating deadly attacks against Iranian citizens. The verdict was issued following a lawsuit filed by 116 victims and their families.

Sharmahd was sentenced to death after his arrest, but he died last year before the sentence could be carried out.

Tehran urges UN action against Israel's violations in Lebanon

TEHRAN – The United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, met with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Tehran on Tuesday to discuss the latest political and security developments in Lebanon.

The meeting was part of Hennis-Plasschaert's broader regional consultations aimed at addressing ongoing challenges in Lebanon and ensuring international cooperation for stability in the country.

During the talks, Foreign Minister Araghchi reaffirmed Iran's steadfast commitment to supporting Lebanon's government, people, and resistance forces.

He welcomed the country's recent political progress, particularly the successful election of a new president, which was achieved through a national consensus and inclusive political process. Araghchi stressed that maintaining national unity would be crucial as Lebanon moves toward forming a new government.

Addressing Lebanon's security challenges, Araghchi compared the current situation in Lebanon and Hezbollah to the aftermath of the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. He noted Israel's continuing its aggressive policies in the region, stating that despite ongoing attacks and vio-



United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert (R) meets with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in capital Tehran on Feb. 4, 2025.

lations, Hezbollah remains a resilient and influential force in Lebanon's political and military landscape.

He also condemned Israel's repeated ceasefire violations, warning that these provocations pose a serious threat to regional stability.

The Iranian Foreign Minister urged the United Nations to take stronger action by pressuring Israel to cease hostilities, withdraw from occupied Lebanese territories, and allow the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to displaced civilians. He also emphasized the need for accelerated efforts in rebuilding war-affected areas, ensuring that Lebanon can

recover from the destruction caused by past conflicts.

In response, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert provided insights from her recent diplomatic engagements, both at the regional and international levels. She acknowledged the complex security and political landscape in Lebanon and underscored Iran's influential role in maintaining stability. The UN official also expressed appreciation for Tehran's continued efforts in facilitating dialogue and supporting Lebanon's recovery process.

Hennis-Plasschaert voiced hope that all parties would remain com-

mitted to the ceasefire agreement, paving the way for long-term peace, security, and reconstruction efforts in Lebanon. She emphasized the need for international cooperation in delivering humanitarian aid, supporting displaced communities, and ensuring that post-war reconstruction efforts proceed without delays.

Israel and Hezbollah agreed in November to a ceasefire mediated by France and the United States, bringing an end to more than a year of fighting.

Under the deal, Israeli forces were to withdraw from Lebanon and Hezbollah forces were to withdraw from southern Lebanon over a 60-day period.

Thousands of Lebanese have returned to their homes in the south since November 27. In the hours after the ceasefire came into effect, tens of thousands of people headed south and visited their lands and homes.

On the day Israeli forces were due to withdraw under the ceasefire deal, Lebanese health officials reported that the Israeli army killed at least 15 people in the south.

At least 83 people were also wounded as the Israeli army opened fire when people tried to return to their homes, Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health said in a statement.

Air Force Day: the day the Shah's commanders decided to stand by their nation



Photo shows the Homafarans, members of the Shah's Iranian Air Force, saluting Imam Khomeini on February 8, 1979.

From page 1 ▶ But on that particular day in winter, a group of these Air Force staff secretly went to Imam Khomeini's temporary residence at Alawi School in eastern Tehran, not caring about the fact that they could face the same consequences their peers did in the past.

Reportedly, the personnel wore casual clothes on the way to Alawi School to avoid the imperial guard and changed back into their uniforms once inside the school. They proceeded in order and then entered the meeting with Imam. They pledged their allegiance to the revolution and its highly popular leader in a communiqué they read aloud.

During the meeting, due to threats against the Homafarans, security checks were carried out to prevent photography. However, Hossein Partovi, a photographer with the Tehran-based Kayhan newspaper, was permitted to take photos from

behind the troops to protect the Homafarans' identities from the oppressive Shah regime.

Imam's remarks at the meeting:

In a short speech, Imam Khomeini thanked the Air Force personnel, referring to them as soldiers of Imam Mahdi, the 12th and only living Shia Imam. He expressed his gratitude for the efforts made by the Air Force and Army personnel towards the establishment of an Islamic government.

"As you have proclaimed until now, you were serving Taghut, which has decimated our entire being; Taghut, which has emptied our treasury and turned us into slaves at the service of foreigners. From now on, you are in the service of the Imam Mahdi, may God's peace be upon him, and the glorious Qur'an, which has guaranteed the well-being of all humanity; the glorious Qur'an, which assures well-being in this world

and the hereafter to anyone who remains under its banner; the glorious Qur'an, which advocates freedom and independence. We are all followers of the glorious Qur'an and Islamic precepts and ordinances. All of us, including the clerics, are grateful to you," Imam Khomeini stated at the meeting.

"We want to emancipate our country and cleanse it of all oppression. We want the armed forces to be free from control by Israel or America," Imam Khomeini added.

In their communique, the Air Force staff expressed hope that the remaining personnel still serving in the Shah regime's military would follow in their footsteps, understand their duty, and join the nation. They aspired to be free and make their beloved country independent.

The Air Force staff's pledge of allegiance occurred just three days before the victory of the Islamic Revolution. It significantly accelerated the subsequent events, especially the army's declaration of neutrality and its eventual turning against the interim Shahpour Bakhtiar regime.

After the meeting:

Following Kayhan newspaper's afternoon front-page coverage of the meeting, with the headline "Air Force personnel pledged allegiance to Imam Khomeini," Shahpour Bakhtiar, the last Shah's Prime Minister, attempted to deny that it had occurred.

Kayhan also published a photo of the meeting, depicting a group

of Homafarans in uniforms at the Imam's residence; however, the picture showed the backs of the troops to protect their identities. The Bakhtiar regime declared the photo a "montage" and issued an arrest warrant for the photographer. However, Imam Khomeini later confirmed the meeting, making denial impossible.

Imam Khomeini subsequently issued a warning, urging public awareness against the Pahlavi regime, which he had sensed was trying to regain power. On February 10th, the day before the revolution's final victory, loyalists of the Pahlavi regime planned a military coup by declaring martial law, but it failed due to the vigilance of the Imam and the people.

Sporadic armed clashes erupted, particularly in eastern Tehran, between armed citizens (who had gained weapons after seizing barracks and ammunition depots) and rebel troops, who overwhelmed the Shah's significantly fewer loyalists.

The Iranian Air Force, along with Army personnel, played a key role in the nation's ultimate victory over the dictatorship.

The day the Homafarans met with Imam Khomeini was later marked as Air Force Day in the Iranian calendar.

On one of the anniversaries of this historical meeting, the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, stated, "What the Air Force did in 1979 was an initiative and a timely action to move forward with a hopeful look to the future."

Pezeshkian, VP, and ministers visit defense industry exhibition

From page 1 ▶ The event showcased a range of defense-driven innovations with applications extending beyond the military sector.

During the tour, President Pezeshkian and government officials explored different sections of the exhibition, which featured key technological advancements in oil, gas, and petrochemicals, health and medical equipment, defense-developed technologies adapted for civilian healthcare, and etc.

The exhibition was held in line with Article 102 of the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan, which aims to foster greater integration between the defense sector and the broader

economy. The initiative is part of a broader strategy to leverage surplus defense technologies for economic growth, enhance national innovation ecosystems, and expand the dual-use potential of military advancements.

Among the cutting-edge technologies on display was a specialized robot, used for inspecting and assessing potential damage in fuel transmission pipelines, which has been successfully domesticated and is now under a manufacturing and supply contract with the Ministry of Oil. These developments highlight the defense sector's growing role in supporting Iran's industrial and energy infrastructure.



Iranian military forces showcased an upgraded version of the domestically developed Bavar 373 air defence system on Feb. 5, 2025. It features launcher stations equipped with separate radar units for target detection, tracks, and fire control during an exercise aimed at targeting high-altitude objects.

Unveiling Trump's hidden agenda

US president says he doesn't want Iran to have nukes as he issues memo renewing maximum pressure campaign

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – To escalate tensions and exert undue pressure on Iran, U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed a National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM) on Tuesday which he said is aimed at “restoring maximum pressure” on the country.

The timing of this signing is revealing, coinciding with the visit of Israel's convicted war criminal Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington D.C. on Wednesday.

The memorandum's aggressive stance is riddled with unsubstantiated allegations and aims to cripple Iran's sovereignty under the guise of countering its nuclear ambitions and regional influence.

The NSPM contends that Iran must be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, conveniently disregarding Iran's ongoing efforts and assertions related to peaceful nuclear energy and civilian satellite development.

Moreover, it seeks to undermine the Iranian-allied Resistance Axis, presenting a skewed narrative that ignores the numerous destructive actions and atrocities committed by the U.S., the Israeli regime, and their allies, who are the actual catalysts of resistance.

By directing the Secretary of the Treasury to impose maximum economic pressure, the NSPM reveals its true intention: to wage economic warfare against the Iranian people and the private sector.

The memorandum also calls for sanctions and enforcement mechanisms against those allegedly violating existing sanctions, extending its reach to the shipping, insurance, and port sectors.

This economic stranglehold strategy is a blatant attempt to weaken Iran's economy and undermine its resilience.

The NSPM targets Iran's vital oil exports with the explicit goal of “driving Iran's export of oil to zero,” which threatens the livelihood of countless Iranian citizens who depend on the oil industry for their income.

Additionally, it stipulates the revision or cancellation of sanctions waivers, particularly those offering Iran any form of economic or financial relief, including those linked to Iran's Chabahar port project.

This may strain ties between the U.S. and India, given that India has pledged to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in the initiative.

The NSPM's comprehensive strategy to suffocate Iran's economic lifelines is further revealed through its emphasis on isolating Iran globally.

The memorandum's aggressive policies extend to Iran's ties with its neighbors, particularly Iraq and the Persian Gulf countries.

It disparages Iran's civilian nuclear program, asserting it presents an “existential threat to the United States and the civilized world,” while neglecting Iran's compliance with international treaties and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Additionally, the memorandum overlooks that Iran was a founding member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) signed in 1968 and that Iran's Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has proclaimed a religious edict banning all weapons of mass destruction.

Furthermore, Iran entered into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of



Action (JCPOA) in 2015, establishing the most rigorous inspection regime in the history of the IAEA.

This demonstrates Iran's ongoing commitment to peace, which it has maintained even after Trump withdrew from the agreement in 2018.

Contradiction after contradiction

During the signing of the memorandum, Trump expressed mixed sentiments about the document, acknowledging the harsh impact it would have on Iran. “I'm torn about [signing it],” he admitted. “It's very tough on Iran. It's what we had before [my first term].”

Maximum pressure failed before, will fail again: officials say of Trump's latest anti-Iran move

TEHRAN – Iranian officials have dismissed or slammed U.S. President Donald Trump's latest remarks and actions, who on Tuesday signed a presidential memorandum that authorized supposedly more severe sanctions against Iran and accused the country of pursuing nuclear weapons.

On the sidelines of a cabinet meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated that even if Trump attempts a second “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran, the results will be similar to the first. “The policy of maximum pressure has already proven to be a failure, and any attempt to revive it will only lead to another defeat,” the top diplomat told reporters.

The maximum pressure campaign was first introduced in 2018 after Trump left the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a deal that limited Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. After the exit, Trump reinstated previous sanctions, intensified them, and added new ones. The succeeding U.S. president, Joe Biden, maintained the maximum pressure campaign. He had said during the 2021 presidential campaign that he would return to the JCPOA if elected president.

When signing the new directive on Tuesday Trump said he was promoting new “tough” measures to “deter” Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Trump, however, did not mention that since the maximum pressure campaign began, Iran has made several new and unprecedented nuclear advancements in response to his shunning of the JCPOA. Analysts believe more pressure is only going to force Tehran to further ramp up its nuclear program which is still being monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On the sidelines of the cabinet meeting, Iranian Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref and head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Mohammad Eslami were also asked about the new developments.

Eslami said that “Iran has not sought, does not seek, and will not seek access to nuclear weapons”. Aref made similar remarks, adding that Trump's current policies will not even benefit the United States.

During a meeting with a group of military personnel, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian briefly spoke on Trump's move and said Iran would be able to cope even if Washington manages to lower its oil sales. The presidential memorandum Trump signed said the aim is to bring Iran's oil exports to “zero”.

“So I'm signing this, and I'm unhappy to do it. I hope that it's not going to have to be used in any great measure at all,” he added.

The U.S. President emphasized, “With me, it's very simple, Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.”

Despite the tough stance, Trump indicated an apparent willingness to negotiate with Iran.

“We will see whether or not we can arrange or work out a deal with Iran,” he stated.

When asked if he would engage in a conversation with his Iranian counterpart, he affirmed, “I would.” He further added, “I would reach out. I don't care whether I reach out or they reach

“I would love to be able to make a great deal with Iran.” Following a bilateral meeting with Netanyahu, Trump countered a reporter's claim about Iran's supposed weakness. “So, you say Iran is so weak. They're not weak. They're very strong right now,” he asserted.

In a Wednesday post on Truth Social, Trump further elaborated on his stance: “I want Iran to be a great and successful country, but one that cannot have a nuclear weapon.”

Reports that the United States, working in conjunction with Israel, is going to blow Iran into smithereens are greatly exaggerated. I would much prefer a Verified Nuclear Peace Agreement, which will let Iran

peacefully grow and prosper. We should start working on it immediately.”

Beneath the surface

While President Donald Trump's rhetoric on Iran has often included tones of conciliation, new insights reveal a stark contrast between his words and actions, echoing the aggressive policies of his first term.

Publicly, Trump has used platforms like Truth Social to voice a desire for Iran's success, stating, “I want Iran to be a great and successful country, but one that cannot have a nuclear weapon.”

However, beneath this veneer of diplomacy lies a policy aimed at fracturing Iran's internal unity.

During the signing of the Presidential Memorandum, Trump inadvertently disclosed his strategy, saying, “They have some of their leadership... there are many people at the top ranks of Iran that do not want to have a nuclear weapon.”

While the diversity of opinions is natural, this statement suggests an intent to exploit and perhaps even exacerbate divisions within Iran.

This illustrates that Trump's conditional engagement with Iran is devoid of sincerity. How can a sovereign nation engage in negotiations with a party that manipulates its internal politics for its own benefit?

This aligns with the longstanding perspective held by many experts regarding sanctions, viewing them not merely as policy tools but as acts of economic warfare aimed at destabilizing Iran from within, promoting division under economic pressure.

An important admission

A critical yet overlooked part of the memorandum references Iran's 1979 Revolution.

The NSPM states, “For far too long — all the way back to 1979, to be exact...” and “Since its inception in 1979 as a revolutionary theocracy.”

These references are highly significant for Iranians, particularly as the NSPM was signed during the 10-Day Dawn, commemorating the Revolution.

This timing underscores the U.S.'s continued inability to accept Iran's independence and the resilience of the Iranian people.

Despite Trump's rhetoric, history has shown that the U.S. cannot subdue Iran.

Since 1979, the U.S. has engaged in a continuous campaign of economic aggression against Iran through various forms of sanctions, a policy that has spanned multiple administrations from Reagan to Biden.

This strategy has not been unique to Trump's tenure but has been a consistent feature of U.S.-Iran relations over decades.

Despite enduring this prolonged economic pressure, Iran has shown remarkable resilience.

Even Trump's Secretary of State Marco Rubio admitted in a recent interview that with the rise of multipolarity and the weakening of the Dollar, “In 5 years, U.S. won't be able to sanction anyone.”

The Iranian Revolution marked the end of Iran's subservience to U.S. interests in West Asia.

The NSPM says the phrase, “Those days are over.”

This is true, though its American writers may not understand how.

The era of the U.S.-supported Pahlavi Dynasty is long over, and Iran's resolute independence serves as a point of national pride and strength, while the U.S. remains unable to break free from its obsession with imperial dominance.

Persepolis prepare for do-or-die encounter with Al Nassr

TEHRAN – In the high-stakes drama of the AFC Champions League Elite 2024/25, the Iranian powerhouse Persepolis find themselves at a critical juncture. After suffering a 4-1 defeat against the formidable Al Hilal, Persepolis' path to the knockout stages has narrowed, making their upcoming match against Al Nassr not just a game, but a defining moment. The match against Al Hilal was a stark reminder of the challenges Persepolis face in this elite competition. Despite a spirited performance, the Iranian side couldn't keep up with the pace and precision of Al Hilal, who showcased their dominance with a convincing 4-1 victory. This loss has left Persepolis teetering on the edge of elimination, with their current standing in the tournament at a precarious 9th place, where only the top eight teams advance.

All eyes are now on Persepolis' next fixture, a home game against Al Nassr, led by the ever-charismatic Cristiano Ronaldo. The match is set to take place in Tehran, where the atmosphere is expected to be electric, fueled by the fervent support of the home crowd. For Persepolis, this isn't just another game; it's a battle for survival in the tournament.

Al Nassr, on the other hand, come into this match with momentum, having secured a convincing victory over Al Wasl with Ronaldo scoring twice. Their form has been impressive, sitting comfortably in the top echelons of the league standings. However, playing in Tehran against a desperate Persepolis team, known for their resilience and passionate support, will test their mettle. As Persepolis prepare for this do-or-die encounter, the stakes couldn't be higher. A victory against Al Nassr would not only keep their hopes alive but also reignite the spirit of their supporters, proving once again that in football, every match can be a turning point.

The Azadi Stadium will be a cauldron of noise and passion, where legends are made, and on this day, Persepolis aim to write another chapter in their storied history. The battle for qualification in the AFC Champions League Elite is far from over, and for Persepolis, it all hinges on this monumental clash against Al Nassr.

Iran to participate at 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers

TEHRAN – The race to qualify for the next edition of Asia's most prestigious women's national team football competition marked its latest milestone with 37 Member Associations (MAs) confirming their interest to compete in the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026. The Participating MAs will be aiming to clinch the eight available berths to join host Australia and the top three sides from the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 – defending champion China, runner-up Korea Republic and third-placed Japan – at the 2026 Continental showpiece, which will be held from March 1 to 21, 2026.

The 33 teams that have submitted their interest and are poised to participate in the qualifiers are: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chinese Taipei, DPR Korea, Guam, Hong Kong, China, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Palestine, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. The AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 Qualifiers will see the teams battle in a group stage format across centralized venues from June 23 to July 5, 2025 with the host associations and draw mechanics to be determined and communicated in due course.

Jesus lauds Al Hilal's win over Persepolis

TEHRAN – Al Hilal head coach Jorge Jesus expressed his satisfaction for defeating Persepolis at the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Elite.

The Saud giants beat Iran's Persepolis 4-1 at the Kingdom Arena on Tuesday.

The result propelled Al Hilal back to the top of the standings, ahead of Al Ahli Saudi on goal difference with Jesus praising his team's mentality.

“After leading by four goals in the first half, we started playing at a lower pace in the second half, and there is no team that plays 90 minutes at a high pace except on the PlayStation,” Jesus said.

“I remember that since I joined the team, we have only lost three matches. All the players are equally important to me,” said Jesus, whose side face UAE's Al Wasl in two weeks to conclude their League Stage campaign.

Kartal not satisfied with performance against Al Hilal

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team head coach Ismail Kartal admitted his team struggled against Al Hilal's quality, especially in the first half.

The Saud giants beat Iran's Persepolis 4-1 at the Kingdom Arena on Tuesday at the 2024-25 AFC Champions League Elite.

“In the first half, we couldn't play as we wanted. Every ball that came into our area was dangerous, and we conceded goals. The team dropped mentally, and we had three, four players injured.

“We made some changes and altered the system in the second half. The players played with more confidence, and we didn't make as many individual mistakes.

The defeat meant the Iran side fell out of the qualification spots and will need a win to keep its hopes alive when they face Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr Club in their final League Stage match.

Ex-Iran woman volleyball player Seyed Hadizadeh dies

TEHRAN – Jaleh Seyed Hadizadeh, a former member of Iran's women's volleyball team, passed away on Wednesday at the age of 82 in Germany.

She will be laid to rest in Tehran.

Seyed Hadizadeh was part of the historic team that clinched a bronze medal at the 1966 Asian Games held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Tehran Times offers its deepest condolences to Seyed Hadizadeh's family, loved ones, and friends during this difficult time.

Esteghlal target Ghorbani signs with Al Wahda

TEHRAN – Al Wahda has finalized the signing of Iranian midfielder Mohammad Ghorbani from Orenburg.

The 23-year-old has inked an 18-month contract with the UAE club for a fee that has not been disclosed.

Ghorbani will now team up with his fellow countryman, Ahmad Nourollahi, at Al Wahda.

Ghorbani, who transferred to Orenburg in February 2024, was previously linked with a move to the Iranian club Esteghlal.

Currently, Al Wahda occupy the fifth position in the 14-team UAE Pro League.

Esteghlal eye Italian coach Walter Mazzarri

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team have reportedly initiated negotiations with the Italian tactician Walter Mazzarri.

Mazzarri, previously linked with Esteghlal's archrivals Persepolis, managed Napoli in the 2023-2024 season but did not achieve significant success.

The 62-year-old coach has an extensive resume, having led teams like Inter Milan, Torino, Sampdoria, Watford, Cagliari, Livorno, and several others.

Esteghlal parted ways with their former coach, South African Pitso Mosimane, last week.

Non-oil export from West Azarbaijan increases 62%

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from West Azarbaijan province, in the northwest of Iran, rose 62 percent in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to a provincial official.

Khaled Jangjou, an official with the province's customs department, said that over 2.7 million tons of non-oil commodities worth \$1.6 billion were exported from the province in the ten-month period, indicating 26 percent growth in terms of weight as well.

The official also announced that 37,000 tons of goods valued at \$57 million were imported to the province in the first ten months of the present year.

As previously announced by the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran's non-oil exports reached approximately \$48 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian year, marking an 18 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

Foroud Asgari said the country's total foreign trade during this period amounted to 158.18 million tons, valued at \$103.85 billion.

Out of this, exports accounted for 127.4 million tons worth \$47.76 billion, reflecting a 12 percent rise in volume and an 18 percent increase in value.

China remained Iran's top export destination with \$12.3 billion in imports, followed by Iraq (\$10 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$5.9 billion), and Turkey (\$5.5 billion).

During the same period, Iran imported 30.78 million tons of goods worth \$56 billion, showing a 3.0 percent decrease in volume but a 3.0 percent rise in value. Major imports included \$6.3 billion in gold bullion, \$2.3 billion in livestock corn, \$1.8 billion in smartphones, and \$1.6 billion in soybean meal.

Asgari stated that the UAE was Iran's top source of imports with \$17 billion, followed by China (\$14.4 billion), Turkey (\$9.9 billion), and Germany (\$1.9 billion).

He also noted a sharp increase in car imports, with 41,297 vehicles worth \$877 million entering the country, marking a 709 percent surge in quantity and a 744 percent rise in value compared to the same period last year.

Asgari, who also serves as deputy economy minister, emphasized the role of trade in bolstering the national economy amid ongoing international sanctions.

The 11th session of the Supreme Council for the Development of Non-Oil Exports was held after a four-year hiatus, with the participation of Iran's first vice president on January 1.

In an exclusive interview with IRIB, Alireza Dehghan Dehnavi, head of Iran's Trade Promo-

Loading, unloading of goods up 26% in Hormozgan province's eastern ports

TEHRAN- As announced by a provincial official, the loading and unloading of goods in the eastern ports of Hormozgan province in the south of Iran, rose 26 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025), as compared to the same period of time in the past year.

Hamidreza Mohammad Hosseini Takhti, the director of the ports and maritime department of Shahid Bahonar and east of the province, announced that 2,507,037 tons of commodities were loaded and unloaded in Shahid Bahonar port and the ports of the east of province in the mentioned ten-month.

The official also announced about eight percent growth in the transit of non-oil products via these ports in the first ten months of the present year.

The Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) of Iran has announced that a total of 194.79 million tons of goods were loaded and unloaded at the country's ports during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year.

According to the PMO's statement, oil product unloading totaled 23.53 million tons, while unloading of non-oil products reached 44.16 million tons, bringing the total unloaded goods to 67.69 million tons.

tion Organization (TPO), highlighted the significance of this council, which had been inactive for nearly four years.

He noted that the council had played a key role in national decision-making processes before falling into disuse.

Dehnavi explained that the revival of the council was prompted during this year's National Export Day event, where Masoud Pezeshkian instructed its reactivation.

With the efforts of the government and the support of the first vice president and the minister of industry, mining, and trade, the groundwork for the council's return was laid, culminating in its 11th session.

The session, chaired by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, brought together all council members to discuss pressing trade issues. The meeting focused on three main areas:

The council reviewed the statistical performance of the country's non-oil exports. Dehnavi acknowledged that Iran's non-oil trade balance has been negative in recent years, with a \$17 million deficit recorded last year despite a positive overall trade balance. The Vice President tasked the TPO with reversing this trend by boosting non-oil exports.

The council identified several obstacles hindering foreign trade, including excessive regulations, insufficient infrastructure for exports (such as transportation and customs facilities), and challenges in export-related policies.

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

Several proposals were approved, including holding regular council sessions and establishing provincial export development task forces led by governors. These initiatives aim to make export promotion a nationwide campaign.

The council also discussed a strategic roadmap for free trade zones, aiming to transform these areas into export hubs. The TPO is preparing this document with council support.

Additionally, collaboration with the private sector was emphasized to identify and implement high-impact export projects.

Other topics included reforms in re-exports and temporary imports, with a task force comprising customs, agriculture, health, and trade organizations formed to streamline processes. The pricing of export goods at customs was also debated, with calls for a review to enhance coordination among export-related bodies.

The session concluded with plans to establish specialized commissions to maintain continuity between council meetings and ensure effective decision-making in foreign trade.

Oil product loading at PMO-controlled ports amounted to 64.41 million tons, and non-oil product loading totaled 62.69 million tons, resulting in a combined loading volume of 127.10 million tons by the end of the 10-month period.

The total volume of oil product loading and unloading during this period stood at 87.94 million tons, while non-oil product operations accounted for 106.84 million tons. Altogether, 194.79 million tons of oil and non-oil products were handled.

The ports handled 2.57 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of containers during this period, marking a 13 percent increase compared to the same period last year, which saw 2.28 million TEUs processed.

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

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

Unilateral sanctions destabilize oil markets: Iran's oil minister

TEHRAN – Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said on Wednesday that imposing unilateral sanctions against major oil producers and exerting pressure on OPEC is a clear attempt to destabilize global oil and energy markets, ultimately harming consumers worldwide.

According to a statement from Iran's Oil Ministry, Paknejad made the remarks during a meeting in Tehran with OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais and his accompanying delegation.

He highlighted the historical role of OPEC+ member states in stabilizing markets and supporting global economic growth.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining this approach, stating that the OPEC and non-OPEC cooperation agreement has been built on fundamental principles, fostering a stable and lasting collaboration that has set an example for sustaining global



Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (R) and OPEC Secretary-General Haitham Al-Ghais meet in Tehran on Wednesday.

oil market stability.

Paknejad, who will serve as the president of the OPEC Conference in 2025, stressed that depoliticizing the oil market is essential for energy security, particularly for the oil sector and

its key players.

He reiterated that unilateral sanctions against major oil producers and pressures on OPEC undermine market stability, ultimately affecting consumers worldwide.

He further noted that the most significant medium- and long-term challenge facing the global oil industry is investment in both upstream and downstream sectors and ensuring energy security in terms of both supply and demand.

"If some major consumers are concerned about market conditions and energy supply security today, it is a direct result of their own political decisions to pressure OPEC+ and impose regulatory restrictions that hinder new upstream investments," he added.

Paknejad reaffirmed Iran's commitment to OPEC's decisions aimed at maintaining market stability. As the incoming president of the OPEC Conference in 2025, he stated that Iran would work to strengthen unity among OPEC members and enhance cooperation with non-OPEC allies in the interests of oil producers.

Construction begins on Iran's 1st Mini LNG plant on Kish Island

TEHRAN – The construction of Iran's first mini liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant has commenced on Kish Island, with investments from Iranian companies and equipment supplied by domestic knowledge-based firms.

As Tasnim News Agency reported, the groundbreaking ceremony for the project took place nearly a year after a trilateral memorandum of understanding was signed between the Kish Free Zone Organization, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology, and an Iranian knowledge-based company.

Ruhollah Moghadasi, the head of the investing company, stated that the Kish Mini LNG project is a domestically developed initiative aimed at expanding Iran's natural gas liquefaction sector.

He noted that his company is currently implementing four LNG projects with a total capacity of 180,000 tons per year, involving an €80 million investment. The Kish Mini LNG plant is part of this larger effort.

Moghadasi emphasized that these projects focus on the localization of advanced LNG technologies, utilizing domestic knowledge-based companies to develop ultra-cold liquefaction systems.

He added that the initiative aims to export



captured flare gas in LNG form, generate foreign exchange revenues, meet domestic industrial demands, and supply off-grid consumers with LNG, particularly during colder months.

"Our goal is to establish LNG as a strategic fuel in Iran, similar to its widespread use worldwide for over 70 years," he said.

Regarding the Kish Mini LNG project, Moghadasi explained that the plant will liquefy natural gas sourced from flare gas collection operations under a swap agreement with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC). The produced LNG will provide clean and stable fuel to hotels and hospitality businesses on Kish Island, as authorities have

decided against constructing an extensive natural gas distribution network to protect the island's environment.

Another key application of LNG will be its use as a clean fuel for transportation.

Moghadasi expressed hope that in the next phase, LNG supply for heavy and semi-heavy transport fleets on the island would be implemented.

He also highlighted the potential of LNG for fueling ships, a long-established practice globally. "According to national policies and international conventions, Iran must transit to LNG for maritime transport in the near future," he said.

To this end, Moghadasi stated that his company is working closely with the Supreme Council of Maritime Industries and aims to introduce LNG-fueled passenger ferries operating between Kish Island and neighboring countries, which would both expand LNG usage and contribute to the island's tourism industry.

He noted that the engineering and procurement phases were completed before the land was fully prepared, allowing the project to begin with a 20 percent progress rate. The plant is expected to be operational next year.

Iran's petrochemical boom: driving oil industry's value chain

TEHRAN – The head of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) has hailed the petrochemical sector's exponential growth as a key achievement in the oil industry's value chain, emphasizing its role in curbing crude sales.

Speaking to Shana, Hassan Abbaszadeh described the downstream expansion of the petrochemical industry over the past 46 years as the most significant accomplishment in the oil sector's value chain.

He noted that Iran's petrochemical production capacity has surged from around three million tons per year to approximately 96 million tons across various product groups.

Highlighting the significance of this progress, Abbaszadeh said: "With all due respect to other segments of the oil industry, petrochemicals represent the true embodiment of the value chain, preventing crude sales and creating added value."

While the upstream sector has

also seen notable developments, its growth is not comparable to that of petrochemicals."

Despite past advancements, Abbaszadeh believes that insufficient attention has been given to completing the petrochemical value chain. "The next step is to move toward higher value-added products rather than semi-processed outputs," he stated.

He further pointed out that under Iran's Seventh Development Plan, the country's petrochemical capacity is set to rise to

131 million tons annually. "For the first time in a five-year development plan, specific targets have been set for completing value chains, marking a strategic shift in industry policy," he added.

According to Abbaszadeh, the plan aims to complete four major value chains—methanol, propylene, ethylene, and aromatics. He affirmed that NPC's annual programs are aligned with this objective, stressing that the company is fully committed to achieving the plan's targets.

Over 540 gas projects to go operational during Ten-Day Dawn

TEHRAN – The head of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) has announced the inauguration of 543 gas projects across the country during the Ten-Day Dawn marking victory of Islamic Revolution, emphasizing that these projects will enhance the gas distribution network, increase production, and help reduce air pollution.

According to a report by IRIB, Saeed Tavakoli stated in a press conference marking the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations: "During this period, 543 gas projects will be commissioned, including gas supply to 24 villages and 519 industrial units. These projects have been implemented with an investment of 2.8 trillion rials (approximately \$5.6 billion) and represent a significant step toward strengthening the stability of the national gas network, particularly in remote areas."

"Beyond supplying gas to villages and small industries, these projects will contrib-

ute to increasing gas production capacity and enhancing the country's gas infrastructure. Additionally, they will play a crucial role in reducing air pollution and improving the quality of life in various regions," he added.

Tavakoli also highlighted a record-breaking gas production achievement under the current administration, stating: "At the beginning of the year, daily gas production was projected to be around 850 million cubic meters. However, thanks to ongoing efforts, sweet gas production has reached 880 million cubic meters per day, marking a major milestone for the country."

He noted that this 30 million cubic meter increase in gas production has significantly strengthened the stability of the gas network, ensuring a more reliable energy supply for industries and power plants.

Addressing winter challenges, Tavakoli

warned: "In the coming weeks, particularly from Saturday to Tuesday, gas consumption across the country is expected to exceed 700 million cubic meters per day due to the coldest week of the year. This surge in demand underscores the need for energy conservation in residential and commercial sectors."

He stressed that reducing household gas consumption would allow more gas to be allocated to industries and power plants, ultimately reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and lowering air pollution levels.

The official further underscored the economic benefits of this strategy, stating: "If gas is redirected from household and commercial consumption to industrial use, it will not only curb gas wastage but also drive industrial growth and economic prosperity. This shift can boost employment and strengthen businesses across the country."

Third Intifada looms as Trump eyes Gaza conquest

From page 1 ▶ He had no choice but to acquiesce to the truce deal following his inability to accomplish his military objectives.

Since the implementation of the January ceasefire, Hamas has freed 18 captives in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinians from Israeli jails. Hamas also released more than 100 captives during a week-long truce in November 2023.

Presently, Trump's suggestion to remove Palestinians from Gaza and have the US take ownership clearly indicates that Washington has no scruples about violating

construction of permanent cities and an unspecified humanitarian corridor.

The authors of the document considered it the most desirable for Israel's security.

Netanyahu's office downplayed the significance of the document which drew condemnation from Egypt and the Palestinians.

Nonetheless, the Financial Times reported in late October 2023 that Netanyahu sought to convince European leaders to put pressure on Cairo to accept refugees from Gaza.



President Donald Trump declared on Tuesday that the US should seize control of Gaza and permanently displace the entire Palestinian population

Al-Aqsa Storm was carried out. The First Intifada or uprising in 1987 and the Second Intifada in 2000 shook Israel's foundations. But the Al-Aqsa Storm shattered the image of Israel's invincibility that the regime had maintained for decades.

Currently, the ethnic cleansing plan pursued by Trump and Netanyahu could spark a third Intifada. It is certain that resistance groups would transform the Gaza

Strip into a burial ground for American soldiers should Trump fulfill his commitment to deploy them to the region.

Meanwhile, some believe that Trump's proposal to "take over" Gaza and assume "ownership" of the territory is an off-the-cuff proposal.

However, Trump's proposal is based on America's imperialistic and hegemonic aspirations.



Protesters in Washington express their outrage regarding Netanyahu's invitation to the United States



Protesters outside the White House call for the transfer of the Israeli PM, who is wanted by the ICC for war crimes in Gaza, to The Hague, February 4, 2025 [Mandel Ngan/AFP]

the ceasefire.

Trump's idea is in line with Israel's plans to forcibly displace Palestinians.

Nearly a week after the initiation of the Gaza war, Israel's Intelligence Ministry drafted a wartime proposal to transfer the enclave's 2.3 million population to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

It suggested relocating Gaza's civilian population to tent cities in northern Sinai, followed by the

The strategies proposed by both Trump and Israel regarding Gaza exhibit characteristics reminiscent of a second Nakba, a term in Arabic that translates to catastrophe.

Zionist military forces expelled at least 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and lands a day after the establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948.

However, the circumstances have entirely changed since the

Why and who is obstructing formation of Lebanese government?

From page 1 ▶ Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces, has always tried to exploit the anti-Hezbollah MPs as a docile tool in his hand.

Nevertheless, recent political developments have disappointed Geagea's desire to form a "government without Hezbollah" and "liberate the Ministry of Finance from the dominance of the Shia duo", as he put it.

What disappoints Geagea is the Shia duo's agreement with the prime minister-designate to appoint Yassin Jaber as Minister of Finance, while President Joseph Aoun and Nawaf Salam, with the duo's approval, will name the fifth Shiite minister.

Sources close to the Lebanese Forces stress that giving a confidence vote to Salam's government will be conditional – first and foremost on withdrawing the Ministry of Finance completely from the Shiite duo. "Otherwise," they claim, "what will guarantee the return of foreign forces to support us?"

Sources point out that "it is better for Salam to apologize as the anti-Hezbollah MPs are ready to bring in another prime minister who will guarantee the success of the launch of Jo-

seph Aoun's term."

The sources further report that if the Lebanese Forces does not get what it attempts to, it may refrain from participating, especially since the short term of the government will not allow it to focus on preparing for the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for May 2026.

Likewise, the Renewal Parliamentary Bloc (which includes Fouad Makhzoumi, Michel Moawad, and Ashraf Rifi), the Alliance for Change Parliamentary Bloc (which includes Michel Douaihy, Mark Daou, and Waddah Sadek) and other MPs also oppose Salam's path.

Lebanon's dilemma is the dominance of sectarian politics that prevents justice in representation. Those who have supported Salam to reach this position only want him to fulfil their anti-Hezbollah ambitions.

It is worth mentioning that Salam has been chosen against the wishes of Geagea, who found himself forced to deal with him openly while obstructing his cabinet formations in secret.

This is because Salam is engineering a government that would fail what Geagea assumes to be a "victory" over Hezbollah, in the wake of

the recent US-led Israeli aggression and the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government.

While Geagea's Lebanese Forces ignores objective political facts, Salam refuses to act as if he is a "tool". He is keen to find an intersection between all factions, knowing that Salam has not spent a single month in forming a cabinet, which is relatively a short period compared to the prime ministers who preceded him.

While those close to Trump stress that there is no going back on what has been "achieved" in Gaza and Lebanon, Washington's ongoing blatant interferences in the Lebanese affairs reveal the White House's keenness on the political mosaic of the new cabinet, in light of what is generally being orchestrated for West Asia.

Meanwhile, Australia has imposed sanctions on Sheikh Naim Qassem, the Hezbollah Secretary General, over what the party described as a clear bias toward "the Zionist entity and a cover-up for its aggression and terrorism." Apparently, Washington is pushing to prevent the formation of a government that Salam agreed with the "Shiite duo," while trying to impose a fifth Shiite minister who opposes the "duo."

Who controls the Panama Canal?

President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire to regain U.S. ownership of the Panama Canal, which the United States previously controlled until a treaty transferred full ownership to Panama in 1999. Trump's bluntly stated desire, alongside comments he has made about acquiring Greenland, would violate the international principle of sovereignty and decades of U.S. foreign policy norms if translated into action. The canal facilitates hundreds of billions of dollars of trade each year.

It is a central point for international commerce, vital to U.S. supply chains, and critical to Panama's standing as a regional trade hub. Yet, China's growing commercial ties to Panama and

the region have fueled U.S. concerns about Beijing's broader role in global shipping and port operations.

Why does the canal matter?

The fifty-one-mile long canal connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and is a critical global maritime passageway. By allowing vessels to bypass the lengthy trip around the southernmost tip of South America, the canal significantly reduces both the time and cost of shipping.

Upwards of thirteen thousand ships—representing between 5 and 6 percent of global trade—pass through the canal each year.

The canal is vital to both the U.S. and Panamanian economies. The United States remains the ca-

nal's biggest user, with some 40 percent of all U.S. container traffic traversing it annually. Meanwhile, revenue from the canal made up about 4 percent of Panama's gross domestic product in 2024. Other major users of the waterway include Chile, China, Japan, and South Korea.

In 2023, canal authorities increased the fees for passing ships and limited the number that could cross each day after water levels fell to record lows amid a prolonged drought.

While levels have since climbed, experts say the need remains for new investments in the canal's water management systems as extreme weather events and other climate disruptions increasingly challenge global supply chains.

Why does Trump want to re-take control of the canal?

Trump has accused Panama of charging U.S. ships exorbitant rates to transit the canal, which he said was "foolishly" given away by President Jimmy Carter as part of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed with Panama in 1977. Trump has also alleged that China secretly runs the canal and said he would not rule out using U.S. military force to retake control.

"Trump seems to be making an example out of Panama with the goal of getting other regional leaders to think twice before they take any bold steps to deepen ties with Beijing," said Will Freeman, CFR fellow for Latin America Studies.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Trump's Gaza plans prompt international outcry

From page 1 ▶ Hamas emphasized that these statements are hostile toward the Palestinian people and their cause, will not contribute to regional stability, and will only exacerbate tensions.

The movement added, "We affirm that neither we nor our resilient Palestinian people and its active forces will allow any country in the world to occupy our land or impose guardianship on our great Palestinian nation, which has sacrificed rivers of blood to liberate its land and establish our Palestinian state with al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital."

Hamas called on the U.S. administration and President Trump to retract these irresponsible statements that contradict international law and the natural rights of the Palestinian people to their land.

The movement also urged the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the United Nations to convene urgently to address these dangerous statements and take a firm and historic stance that preserves the Palestinian people's national rights, their right to self-determination, and the establishment of their state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri described Trump's remarks as "ridiculous and absurd".

"Any ideas of this kind are capable of igniting the region," he added.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement asserted that "Trump's statements prove, without a doubt, that his administration is leading the war of extermination, displacement, and expanding occupation."

Saudi Arabia

The Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the Kingdom's firm and unwavering stance on the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the ministry emphasized, "The Crown Prince confirms the Kingdom's position clearly and in a way that leaves no room for interpretation under any circumstances."

The statement added that Saudi Arabia "strongly rejects any attempts to displace Palestinians from their land" and "firmly opposes violations of Palestinian rights through settlement activities, annexation, or displacement."

The ministry called on the international community to "relieve the severe humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people, who will remain steadfast on their land."

The statement reiterated Saudi Arabia's fixed position: "There is no room for negotiation or bargaining. Peace cannot be achieved without Palestinians obtaining their rights."

Egypt

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry emphasized the importance of proceeding with early recovery projects and ensuring rapid humanitarian aid access without removing Palestinians from Gaza.

Jordan

Jordan condemned the plan, reiterating its support for the Palestinian cause. The Jordanian Foreign Ministry stated, "We completely reject the idea of relocating Palestinians. The only solution is a two-state solution where the Palestinian people enjoy their legitimate rights."

On Saturday, Arab nations Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, the Palestinian Authority, and the Arab League released a joint statement rejecting any plans to move Palestinians out of their territories in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

The Arab statement warned that such plans "threaten the region's stability, risk expanding the conflict, and undermine prospects for peace and coexistence among its peoples."

Turkey

Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan also rejected Trump's statements.

He told Turkey's Anadolu Agency that Trump's remarks on U.S. control over Gaza are "unacceptable," warning that any plans to exclude Palestinians "will lead to more conflict."

Spain

José Manuel Albares Bueno, the Spanish Foreign Minister, stated, "Gaza is Palestinian



land and must remain for its people," rejecting Trump's proposal to resettle Palestinians elsewhere and control Gaza to create the "Riviera of the Middle East."

France

The French Foreign Ministry said Gaza's future must not be under a third-party state's control but as part of a future state under Palestinian Authority supervision. It added a forcible displacement of Gaza's residents would be a serious violation of international law.

Russia

The Kremlin stated that a Middle East settlement can only be achieved based on a two-state solution.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov described Trump's remarks on displacing Palestinians from Gaza as part of the "Western policy of cancellation."

Scotland

Scottish First Minister John Swinney condemned Trump's plan, saying it would be tantamount to an ethnic cleansing in Gaza, calling it "unacceptable and dangerous."

In a post on social media, Swinney wrote: "After months of collective punishment and the death of over 40,000 in Gaza, any suggestion Palestinians should be removed from their home is unacceptable and dangerous. There must be no ethnic cleansing."

China

The Chinese Foreign Ministry opposed the forced displacement of Gaza's residents in response to Trump's comments.

"China has always believed that Palestinians governing Palestine is the basic principle of post-conflict governance," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said.

Australia

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Wednesday the government supported a two-state solution in the Middle East.

"Australia's position is the same as it was this morning, as it was last year," Albanese told a news conference.

Germany

Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated, "Any resettlement plans, the idea that the citizens of Gaza will be expelled from there to Egypt or Jordan, is unacceptable."

United Nations

The UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese condemned the proposal as "absurd," stating, "This suggestion violates international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people."

Human rights groups

Human rights organizations have strongly criticized Trump's proposal, citing concerns about international law, the rights of the Palestinian people, and the potential for further destabilization in the region.

Here are some notable reactions:

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

HRW condemned the proposal, stating that it is a violation of international law, particularly the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the forced displacement of populations. HRW stated, "Any plan that forces people from their homes is a violation of human rights and should be unequivocally rejected."

Amnesty International

Amnesty International decried the idea as "a blatant violation of international human rights law." Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa researcher, Heba Morayef, commented, "This proposal is an attempt to erase the rights of Palestinians and dispossess them from their land. It's an affront to their dignity and humanity."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tourism map dedicated to Islamic Revolution events in Tehran revealed



A view of Ebrat Museum in downtown Tehran

TEHRAN - The Head of the Tehran Municipality's Tourism Office announced the launch of a new digital tourism map detailing key locations related to the events of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Tehran. This map is now accessible online to the public.

Amir Qasemi on Wednesday said that the map was unveiled to coincide with the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory. The map highlights significant sites in Tehran that played an important role during the revolution, including 18 mosques, 18 museums, and homes dedicated to revolution-related history. Additionally, it marks 18 crucial event locations that were witness to pivotal moments of the revolution.

Qasemi described the map as a guiding tool for creating and organizing tours centered on the Islamic Revolution. He also emphasized that one of the map's objectives is to document important events from 1342 (1962), when protests against the Pahlavi regime started. This allows users to track

significant moments of the revolution in a comprehensive manner.

Notable locations featured in the map include the residence of Imam Khomeini (the late founder of the Islamic Revolution) and his Jamaran Hosseiniyeh, the houses and museums of martyrs such as Shahid Motahari, Shahid Beheshti, Shahid Rajai, Dr. Shariati, and Dr. Chamran, as well as the Ebrat Museum, Qasr Museum, and the National Museum of the Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense.

Other key sites include the former U.S. embassy, known as "Den of Espionage", Martyrs Museum, and the Peace Museum. Historical landmarks such as Meydan-e Shohada (Martyrs' Square), the locations of the assassination attempt on martyrs Motahari, Mofatteh, Rajai, and Bahonar, as well as the Alavi and Refah schools, as well as some spots inside Mehrabad Airport, and Behesht Zahra Cemetery.

How AI imagery could be used to develop fake archaeology

Generative AI is often seen as the epitome of our times, and sometimes even as futuristic. We can use it to invent new art or technology, analyze emerging data, or simulate people, places, and things. But interestingly, it is also having an impact on how we view the past.

AI imagery has already been used to illustrate popular articles, such as covering scientific discoveries about Neanderthals. It was employed to animate the Mesolithic period (from about 9,000 to 4,300 years ago) in a museum. TikTok users have adopted it to make realistic short videos about archaeology and history. It's even been used in a TV documentary about Stonehenge.

Yet there are many issues with using AI imagery in archaeology - some of which are also found more broadly within generative AI use. These include its environmental impact and the violation of intellectual property (using training data created by humans).

But others are more specific to archaeology. As an academic who has worked extensively on "resurrecting" the past through digital technology, generative AI has both fascinating potential and enormous risk for archaeological misrepresentation.

Even before the use of AI, it was widely accepted within archaeology that visualizations of the past are highly fraught and should be treated with extreme caution. For example, archaeologist Stephanie Moser examined 550 reconstructions published in academic and popular texts on human evolution. Her review found highly biased depictions, such as only males hunting, making art and tools and performing rituals, while women were in more passive roles.

A similar study by Diane Gifford-Gonzalez

revealed that "not one of 231 depictions of prehistoric males shows a man touching a child, woman, or an older person of either sex ... no child is ever shown doing useful work." These reconstructions do not reflect scientists' nuanced understanding of the past. We know humans organized themselves in an incredible array of variety, with a multitude of gender roles and self-expression.

A recent DNA-based study, for example, showed that women were actually at the center of societies in the iron age.

The stakes of representation in archaeology are high. For example, the hotly-debated, dark-skinned reconstruction of "Cheddar Man", originally found in southwest England, was based on ancient DNA analysis. It made headlines for disrupting the perception that all human ancestors in the north were light-skinned.

This and similar controversies reveal the iconic power of reconstructions, their political implications, and their ability to shape our understanding of the past.

While the Cheddar Man reconstruction demonstrates that research is iterative, such reconstructions are sticky. They have profound visual legacies and are not easily supplanted when new data becomes available.

This is exacerbated as they are incorporated into generative AI data sets. Beyond the use of outmoded data, generative AI visualizations of the past can be extremely poor.

Even when more plausible details are included, they can be seamlessly integrated with other highly inaccurate elements. For example, it is impossible for viewers to disentangle the data-led from the so-called hallucinations (mistakes) produced by AI.

(Source: *The Conversation*)

Iran's Shush plans sister city partnerships with Najaf, Paris, and Athens

TEHRAN - The Governor of Shush has emphasized the importance of promoting the city's rich cultural heritage and announced plans to establish sister city partnerships with Najaf, Paris, and Athens.

These potential collaborations aim to enhance Shush's global cultural, tourism, and historical ties, Omid Sabripour said.

Shush is overlapped with the ancient city of Susa, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

During a meeting on Wednesday, which was attended by Ali Darabi, the deputy minister of cultural heritage, Sabripour revealed that the proposed partnerships would focus on cultural ties with Najaf, museum and tourism cooperation with Paris, and ancient heritage collaboration with Athens.

Sabripour stressed that Shush, with its abundant and unique historical and civilizational resources, requires special attention from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage to unlock its full potential in the



global arena.

Situated between the Karkheh and Dez rivers in southwest Iran, Susa was once one of the most important and glamorous cities of the ancient world. Susa, which has been inhabited for thousands of years, embraces several layers of superimposed urban settlements from around the late 5th millennium BC until the 13th century CE.

The ancient town served as the capital of Elam (Susiana) and the administrative capital of the Achaemenian king Dar-

ius I and his successors from 522 BC.

Historically speaking, Susa was once part of the historic kingdom of Elam between Babylon and ancient Persia as the lower Zagros Mountains of Persia descend into the Mesopotamian region.

In a story published by The Travel website on Sunday, People may be familiar with it as being the capital of the Persian Empire in the Book of Esther. According to that account, it was here that Esther was wed to the powerful Persian Em-

peror and managed to bravely save her Hebrew people from annihilation.

Moreover, Susa continued its magnificence and remained a strategic center during the Parthian and Sasanian periods, the empires that ruled this region during the Roman period.

Today, Susa comprises three archeological mounds and covers around a square kilometer. One may visit the excavated mounds and try to imagine what it was like during its heyday as the capital of what was then the largest Empire in the world. Furthermore, at the archeological site, one can see Ardashir's palace, and various excavated administrative, residential, and other monuments.

Moreover, it embraces the Tomb of Daniel, a traditional burial place of the biblical figure. Various locations have been named for the site, but the tomb in Susa is the most widely accepted site, it was first mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Western Asia between 1160 and 1163.

Museum dedicated to Qajar-era diplomacy opens in Tehran

TEHRAN - A new museum dedicated to diplomatic relations during the Qajar era has been inaugurated at the UNESCO-listed Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran. Among the notable exhibits on display is a historical copy of the Treaty of Finckenstein, being shown to the public for the first time.

The museum, located in the Hozkhaneh (Waterhouse) section of Golestan Palace, was officially opened on Tuesday, in a ceremony attended by Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, and Leila Khosravi, Acting Director General of Museums. According to organizers, the initiative aims to provide insight into Iran's foreign relations during the Qajar period through artifacts and historical documents.

Mohammadreza Behzadi, the museum's executive secretary, highlighted the significance of the displayed objects. "For the first time, we are showcasing the Treaty of Finckenstein, a defensive agreement between Iran and France signed in 1807. This treaty had significant political implications for the country," he said.

Among other objects on view at the museum is a special decoration, granted by Naser al-Din Shah to selected monarchs, as an exclusive honor, Behzadi added.

During the inauguration, Afrin Emami, Director of the Golestan Palace World Heritage Site, emphasized the importance of enhancing the museum's storytelling approach. "The museum now houses two carpets that complement the theme of the exhibition.



Alongside restoration efforts, we have also worked on securing the ownership documentation of Golestan Palace," she stated.

Emami stressed that strong museums effectively connect artifacts to historical narratives and that the opening of the hall marks the beginning of further exhibitions, including planned displays on the travels of Qajar monarchs such as Naser al-Din Shah, Mozaffar al-Din Shah, and Ahmad Shah.

Darabi explained the reasoning behind the establishment of the museum. "When arranging artifacts, we must ensure a meaningful connection among them to enhance the narrative experience in museums. The diplomacy and foreign policy of Iran during the Qajar era are particularly significant, as it was during this time that Iran's strategic importance became widely recognized in international affairs," he said.

Darabi noted that the Qajar period was

Deputy tourism minister visits UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil in Khuzestan

TEHRAN - On Wednesday, Ali Darabi, Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, visited the UNESCO-listed Tchogha Zanbil, a prehistorical ruined ziggurat in Khuzestan province as part of his official tour of heritage projects in the region.

During his visit, Darabi was briefed on the latest restoration and conservation efforts at the ancient site. "Tchogha Zanbil was the first Iranian monument that was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Today, with 28 UNESCO-listed sites, Iran ranks among the world's top 10 countries in cultural heritage," he stated.

Describing the ziggurat as a testament to the architectural and urban planning ingenuity of ancient Iranians, Darabi

highlighted its significance in illustrating the lifestyle and achievements of early civilizations.

Moreover, Atefeh Rashnoei, Director of the Tchogha Zanbil World Heritage Site, provided insights into the site's historical importance. "This structure dates back to c. 1250 BC, and some experts believe its arches may have inspired later Roman vaulting techniques," she explained.

Darabi then emphasized the importance of continued preservation efforts, noting that ongoing restoration projects aim to maintain the integrity of the site for future generations.

Tchogha Zanbil, also known as the Ziggurat of Dur-Untash, stands as a testament to the ar-



chitectural brilliance of its time. It was made a UNESCO site in 1979. Its construction started in c. 1250 BC upon the order of the Elamite king Untash-Napirisha (1275-1240 BC) as the religious center of Elam dedicated to the Elamite divinities Inshushinak and Napirisha.

As mentioned by the UN cul-

tural body, Tchogha Zanbil is the largest ziggurat outside of Mesopotamia and the best preserved of this type of stepped pyramidal monument. Tchogha Zanbil was excavated in six seasons between 1951 and 1961 by Roman Ghirshman, a Russian-born French archeologist who specialized in ancient Iran.

Iran, UNDP extend MOU to preserve wetlands

TEHRAN—The Department of Environment (DOE) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have extended their partnership by signing a three-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) to conserve Iranian wetlands projects in the country.

The MOU was signed by the head of DOE, Shina Ansari, and Resident Representative ad interim for UNDP in Iran, Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labé, in a meeting on Tuesday in Bushehr province, ISNA reported.

Launched in 2005, the Conservation of the Iranian Wetlands Project (CIWP) has been instrumental in safeguarding Iran's target wetlands through an ecosystem-based management approach.

During the meeting, the UN Resident Coordinator for Iran, Stefan Priesner, said this MOU and its extension are among the most important pillars of wetlands conservation in the UN road map.

Iran plays a key role in establishing Ramsar Convention, highlighting that Ramsar Convention is one of the initial international agreements on sustainable development, he added.

The official went on to say "We are facing a triple environmental crisis including climate change, biodiversity crises, and air pollution. The United Nations has a precise and coherent plan to solve these three problems."

On the sidelines of the event, the



roadmap for Iran's environment and biodiversity conservation was unveiled.

Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project

Wetlands represent a vital ecosystem and are known as the kidneys of the Earth. These ecosystems, among other things, naturally clean water, protect against floods, recharge underground aquifers, and aid in maintaining surface water flow during dry periods.

Iran's geography is distinct, teeming with diverse landscapes. The country has various wetlands, 27 of which were listed in the International Ramsar Convention.

Initially funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) from 2005 to 2014, the CIWP has since evolved, with UNDP and the DOE placing greater emphasis on sustainable agriculture and biodi-

versity conservation by fostering community participation in wetland management.

This long-standing collaboration has been made possible through the continued generosity of the People and Government of Japan over the past decade (2014-2024). Building on this support, in December 2024, UNDP welcomed a new contribution from Japan to further enhance wetland management and climate resilience in Iran.

Lake Urmia, a vital habitat for numerous plant and animal species, served as the initial pilot site for CIWP gradually expanding to Bakhtegan and Shadegan wetlands, and later to Anzali wetland.

The project aimed to alleviate pressure on the scarce water resources through climate-smart agriculture and water efficient practices on one hand and promoting diversification of incomes

and sustainable livelihoods to enhance community resilience to climate change impacts on the other.

Over the past decade, through CIWP, UNDP has supported 14,732 farmers across 269 villages. This support has led to an average 30 percent reduction in irrigation water usage in pilot locations of the Lake Urmia Basin, and a 277 percent reduction in the Bakhtegan and Shadegan wetlands.

Across these regions, the project has also increased crop production by 22.5 percent while cutting chemical inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides, by 25 percent or more. These efforts have significantly improved agricultural yields and crop quality in the Lake Urmia Basin, as well as in Bakhtegan and Shadegan wetlands.

Furthermore, to enhance the access of the local producers to the digital markets, 11 digital mini-hubs were established in East and West Azerbaijan provinces as connecting points where local producers can package, market, and onboard their products in digital platforms, offering a practical guide to how fit-for-purpose digital solutions can enhance social welfare and prosperity through a whole-of-society approach.

Experience shows that offering alternative means to livelihoods dependent on wetlands can eventually reduce the pressure and preserve these precious ecosystems and the biodiversity they support.

Bern ready to expand co-op with Tehran in crisis management

TEHRAN – Swiss ambassador to Tehran, Nadine Olivieri Lozano, in a meeting with the president of Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization (TDMMO), Ali Nasiri, has voiced Switzerland's readiness to enhance relations with Tehran in crisis management.

During the meeting held on Tuesday in Tehran, the official paid a visit to TDMMO, and said "taken measures in crisis management in Tehran are incredible; we welcome establishing a joint workgroup to share expertise and experiences in crisis management," ILNA reported.

For his part, Nasiri highlighted the significance of collaborations with international communities saying that many of the taken measures are the result of joint activities that are ongoing.

Referring to the establishment of durability groups as a successful outcome of former cooperation with Switzerland, Nasiri said the members of these groups have raised from 14,000 to 50,000 over the past three years.

The official went on to say that Tehran is exposed to different hazards including earthquakes, floods, fires, air pollution, storms, drought, landslides, and subsidence. Nasiri also elaborated on the steps taken to increase safety such as securing abandoned pits, optimizing crisis management supportive bases, improving the safety of 66 priority bridges, and enhancing the resilience of Tehran as a metropolis through seismic retrofit.

Developing accelerometer and seismographic networks, assessing the safety of important and high-rise buildings, implementing a col-

lapse program, managing meteorological risks, conducting operational and table-top exercises, and launching health, safety, environment (HSE) secretariat are among other carried out actions, as well as drafting and revising the HSE guidelines, he noted.

Reinforcing cooperation can improve crisis management

In September 2024, the former head of the crisis management organization said reinforcing cooperation among the ECO member states in prediction, prevention, preparation, response, reconstruction, and rehabilitation fields can greatly boost the efficiency of crisis management.

"Currently, the world is facing severe challenges, the most important of which include climate change, water scarcity (particularly fresh and safe water), lack of green spaces, and desertification, IRNA quoted Mohammad-Hassan Nami as saying.

He made the remarks at the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction which was held on September 17, 2024 in Dushanbe. The event was hosted by the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense of Tajikistan.

Regarding the availability of valuable technologies in crisis management, Nami proposed the appropriate use of intelligent systems for correct data analysis to be put on the agenda to further advance the goals of the countries.

The official noted that access to authentic and reliable information related to risks is the

basis for making quick, accurate, effective, and timely decisions in handling emergency situations and reducing financial and life losses. However, a substantial part of the risks is not limited to geographical borders.

It is essential for ministries and emergency organizations of the ECO member countries to act in the form of coherent information systems and intelligent systems to timely analyze and evaluate data, and issue warnings to responsible organizations.

In this regard, Iran has made a centralized and coordinated effort to identify risk data nationally and share it with the executive bodies of the country. Consequently, the country has gained successful experiences in the management of earthquake risk reduction, flood control, subsidence, landslide, water stress, drought and frost, fire, fine dust, cold, and heat waves, Nami added.

Regarding the fact that parts of the ECO member states are located in arid and desert regions, it is critical to enhance collaborations on implementing effective measures to address the following issues:

Preparing regional geological risk maps; managing shared water resources to prevent the disruption of the regional ecosystem; training and conducting joint governmental and community-oriented practices and maneuvers; establishing a joint expert group to cooperate activities among members, reinforcing cooperation in forecasting weather conditions, issuing early warnings and rapid response; as well as sharing new technologies.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Yahya award honors dedicated rangers

Three rangers have been selected to receive the Yahya award for their outstanding efforts to safeguard the country's wildlife and environment, Fars news agency reported on Tuesday.

Ataollah Sadeqi from Kordestan province, Ali Akbar Imani Berenjestanaki from Mazandaran province and Hamid Reza Azimpour from Khorasan Razavi province were the three rangers who earned the award.

Launched in 2014, the Yahya award annually honors the rangers who have gone far in a yearlong to protect the environment, which was first introduced by an Iranian couple, Mojtaba Ramzi and Paridokht Moshkzad, members of the Iranian Cheetah Society, through a generous donation.

Yahya (literally meaning life-giving) award, is named after the devoted ranger, Yahya Shahkooh Mahali, who has been martyred in an armed conflict with poachers.

جایزه یحیی سه محیطبان برگزیده را اعلام کرد

پنجمین جایزه یحیی به سه تن از محیطبانان برگزیده به پاس از زحمات برجسته آنها در دفاع از محیط زیست کشور اهدا شد. به گزارش فارس، عطاءالله صادقی از استان کردستان، علی اکبر ایمانی برنjestانکی از استان مازندران و حمیدرضا عظیمپور از استان خراسان رضوی برندگان در این دوره شدند.

جایزه یحیی یک جایزه مردمی است و دو هنرمند ایرانی از اعضای انجمن یوزپلنگ ایرانی پریدخت مشکزاد و همسرشان مجتبی رمزی، بنیانگذار آن هستند. به منظور زنده نگه داشتن یاد و خاطره محیط بان شهید (یحیی شاه کوه محلی) و معنی حیات بخش اسم یحیی این مراسم «جایزه یحیی» نامگذاری شد و هدف اصلی آن تجلیل از محیط بانانی است که تلاش های چشمگیری در زمینه حفاظت از عرصه های تنوع زیستی در حوزه های محل خدمت خود داشته اند.

Iranian biotech products target 35 countries

From page 1 ► TEHRAN –Since the beginning of the current Iranian year (March 19, 2024), biotechnology products have been exported to 35 countries worldwide, compared to 33 countries in the past year.

The pharmaceutical biotechnology industry saves some two billion dollars in foreign currency annually, covering 60 percent of the country's pharmaceutical exports, IRNA quoted Hossein Amirazodi, the secretary general of the association of pharmaceutical biotechnology producers and exporters, as saying.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday, addressing the 4th International Conference and Exhibition on Iranian Medical Biotech Products and Related Industries (Iran Bio) being held from February 4 to 6 at the Olympic Hotel in Tehran, IRNA reported.

Currently, the country produces 40 out of 150 pharmaceutical biotechnology products that are manufactured in the world, he said, adding that the achievement has been made over the course of 30 years.

Iran Bio aims to feature the capabilities and potentials of the national biotechnology industries, provide an opportunity for information and technology transfer, increasing synergy among researchers, experts and active members, showcase the latest achievements in biotechnology, support domestic manufacturers by expanding markets and export opportunities.

Medicine exports up over 19% in 6 months

In the first half of the current Iranian year that started on March 20, the country has exported medicines worth 104.6



million dollars, an increase of 19.7 percent year on year.

The exports amounted to 49,400 tons in volume, showing 15 percent increase compared to the same period last year, according to the Islamic Republic of Iran's Customs Administration.

Some 345 companies have been involved in producing medicines, supplements, and raw materials, as well as importing pharmaceuticals in the six-month period of time.

Pharmaceutical companies have imported a total of 54,800 tons of commodities worth 1.1 billion dollars, indicating a 3.76 percent decrease in amount and 4.5 percent increase in terms of value compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

In June 2024, Seyyed Ali Maboudi, an official with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said the FDA is developing a plan to increase pharmaceutical exports by 30 percent in the mid-term.

"In the past years, medicine exports in Iran accounted for a small share of non-oil exports. However, over the past year, it experienced a growing trend," IRNA quoted Maboudi as saying.

Some 2m Iranians donate blood in 10 months

TEHRAN – A total of 1,997,288 Iranians donated blood over the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year which started on March 20, 2024, indicating a two-percent growth, the Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman has said.

"The highest blood donation growth was recorded in the provinces of Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad (over 24 percent), Sistan-Baluchestan (more than 14 percent), and Alborz (over 9 percent)," IRNA quoted Bashir Haji-Beigi as saying.

Tehran province accounted for more than 16 percent of the total blood donation in the same period. Some 35,455 blood units were donated in Tehran over the past month (December 21, 2024 – January 20), Haji-Beigi added.

Khorasan Razavi and Fars provinces donated over 7 percent of the total blood donation in ten months.

Over the first ten months of the current year, 3,347,804 blood units and products including red cells, platelets, and plasma were distributed among hospitals and medical centers, he noted.

The official went on to say that the continuous blood donation growth rate in the country has increased to over 56 percent. The provinces of Semnan (around 69 percent), Yazd (about 68 percent), and Golestan (almost 66 percent) hold the highest rates for continuous blood donation, respectively.

Women's share of blood donation in the country is less than five percent, Haji-Beigi said. North Khorasan and Lorestan (over 8 percent), and Sistan-Baluchestan (over 7 percent) provinces, had the highest blood donation by women.

4.7% rise in blood donation yr/ yr

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

Tehran and Fars provinces made the largest contributions accounting for more



than 16 percent and more than 7 percent of the total blood donation, respectively, IRNA quoted Haji-Beigi as saying.

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

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

Women's share of blood donation was equal to four percent.

WHO highlights Iran's capacity to serve as model in rare blood management

Jaffar Hussain, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Iran, has highlighted Iran's capacity to serve as a model for other nations in the realm of blood transfusion and rare blood management.

Addressing National Rare Blood Day on January 22, the official praised the country's steadfast commitment to equitable health care access, ensuring that no one is left behind, regardless of their blood type.

The official commended the country's unwavering dedication to tackling the unique challenges surrounding rare blood, emphasizing the critical importance of collaboration, innovation and unwavering determination in this global endeavour, WHO website announced in a press release on January 27.



Managing Director: **Mohammad Mahdi Rahmati**

Editor-in-Chief: **Mohammad Sarfi**

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 43051601

Email: info@tehrantimes.com

Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

Advertisements Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430

Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 43051505

Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051430



No. 18, Moghadasi Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran P.o. Box: 14155-4843 Zip Code: 1599814713

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who is greedy is disgraced; he who discloses his hardship will always be humiliated; he who has no control over his tongue will often have to face discomfort.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:18 Evening: 17:55 Dawn: 5:35 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 7:00 (tomorrow)

Tehran theater to host reading performance of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's "Between Worlds"

TEHRAN- Medea Hall in Tehran will be playing host to a reading performance of Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt's 1999 play "Between Worlds" ("Hotel des Deux Mondes") on Saturday.

The performance will be directed by Sarina Kian with a cast composed of Sajjad Taheri, Mohammad Javad Mohammadi, Parham Purkhamseh, Shakiba Kanan, and Mehregan Tehrani.

"Between Worlds" has been translated into Persian by the prominent Iranian translator Shahla Haeri.

The play is a metaphysical set in the Dodunia guesthouse, a liminal space where individuals linger in comas while awaiting their treatment. This unique venue exists between earth and sky, functioning as a transitional zone for guests who are either on the brink of returning to life or moving on to the afterlife.

Each character grapples with existential questions such as, «How did I get here? When will I be able to leave? Where will I go?» However, the answers elude them, leaving them in a state of uncertainty.

The diverse cast of guests at the "Between Worlds" includes Colin, who is recovering from a car accident caused by excessive drinking; the Chairman, a self-absorbed businessman obsessed with leveraging his connections to ensure his exit; the Magus, a fortune teller who offers a cynical yet affectionate perspective on his fellow residents; Jessie, a cleaning lady who finds unexpected care and comfort in this surreal setting; and Laura, a paraplegic girl confined to a wheelchair in the real world but who miraculously enjoys a healthy, functioning body within the confines of the guesthouse.

Under the watchful eye of the enigmatic Doctor S., the guests confront their fears and desires. The doctor's silence amplifies their anxieties, posing a stark contrast to the surreal experiences they undergo.

In this peculiar realm, the boundaries of possibility blur, allowing for miraculous occurrences: the lame regain their ability to walk, and lies transform into truths. The play oscillates between humor and sorrow, dream and reality, as it explores the themes of life, death, and the search for meaning.

«Between Worlds» serves as an exploration of hope and mystery, revealing the human quest for understanding in the face of uncertainty.

Through interactions among the guests and their reflections on their past lives, Schmitt crafts a poignant narrative that highlights the thin line between existence and the void. The characters' shared journey encapsulates a profound commentary on the human condition, culminating in the realization that even in the face of the unknown, the essence of mystery remains a vital source of hope.

Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt, born in 1960, is a prolific Franco-Belgian playwright, novelist, and film director, whose works have been performed in over fifty countries. He was raised in a family of educators, which influenced his early love for literature.

He pursued higher education in philosophy at the École normale supérieure and later earned a PhD from Paris-Sorbonne University. Schmitt's literary career took off in the 1990s with plays like «Don Juan on Trial» and «The Visitor», which garnered critical acclaim and awards.

In addition to plays, he has authored several acclaimed novels, including «The Gospel According to Pilate» and «Oscar and the Lady in Pink.» Schmitt has won numerous literary awards and continues to explore various genres, including screenwriting and music. His works resonate with themes of human experience, spirituality, and existential exploration, making him one of the most widely read contemporary French-language authors.

"Nian" calligraphic paintings exhibition underway in Tehran

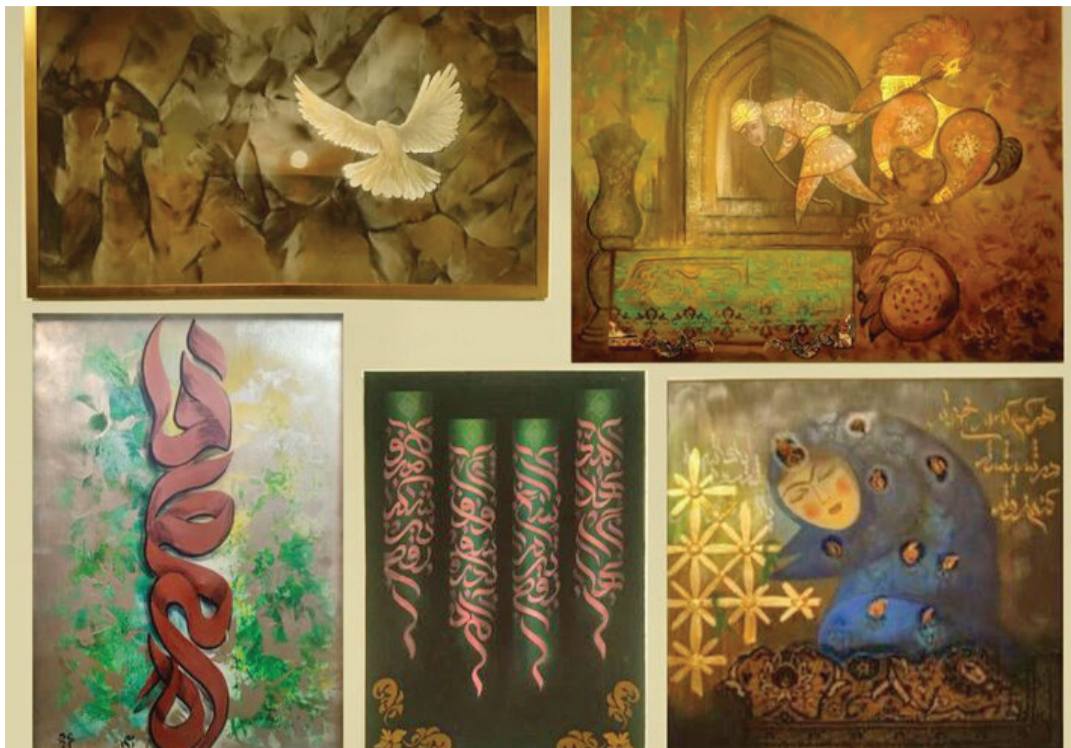
TEHRAN- An exhibition of paintings and calligraphic paintings by Iranian artist Ahdieh Bahadori is currently underway in Tehran.

Entitled "Nian", the exhibition features 18 pieces inspired by religious and Quranic themes, displayed in various sizes.

Organized by the Municipality of District 2 in Tehran, this solo exhibition will continue until mid-February.

According to the organizers, proceeds from the sales of the artworks will contribute to the release of individuals convicted of financial crimes.

Art enthusiasts can visit the exhibition daily from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the ground floor of the District 2 Municipal Building, located at 13th Western Street, Qeisar Aminpour Boulevard, Sa'adat Abad Neighborhood.



Norman Stone's "Turkey: A Short History" published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Turkey: A Short History" written by Norman Stone has been released in bookstores across Iran.

Marjan Rezaei has translated the book that has been published by Markaz Publications in 240 pages, Mehr reported.

First published in 2011, the book is a virtuosic performance by historian Norman Stone, who lived and worked in Turkey from 1997 until he passed away in 2019. It is a concise survey of Turkey's relations with its immediate neighbors and the wider world from the 11th century to the present day.

Stone deftly conducts the reader through this story, from the arrival of the Seljuks in Anatolia in the eleventh century to the modern republic applying for EU membership in the twenty-first. It is a historical account of epic proportions, featuring rapacious lead-



ers such as Genghis Khan and Tamerlane through the glories of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent to Kemal Atatürk, the reforming genius and founder of modern Turkey.

At its height, the Ottoman Empire was a superpower that brought Islam to the gates

of Vienna. Stone examines the reasons for the empire's long decline and shows how it gave birth to the modern Turkish Republic, where east and west, religion and secularism, tradition and modernity still form vibrant elements of national identity. The author brilliantly draws out the larger themes of Turkey's history, resulting in a book that is a masterly exposition of the historian's craft.

Norman Stone (1941-2019) was a British historian and author. At the time of his death, he was Professor of European history in the Department of International Relations at Bilkent University, Ankara, having formerly been a professor at the University of Oxford, a lecturer at the University of Cambridge, and an adviser to British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. He was a board member of the Center for Eurasian Studies.

"Gruesome Playground Injuries" on stage at Tehran theater

TEHRAN- An adaptation of American playwright Rajiv Joseph's "Gruesome Playground Injuries" is currently on stage at Book Garden Theater in Tehran.

Sanaz Inanlou and Nazanin Fattahi are the directors of the play.

Inanlou and Fattahi along with Mahan Nasser Zare and Parmida Zarei are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage until February 14.

"Gruesome Playground Injuries" is a powerful exploration of the complex relationship between childhood friends Kayleen and Doug, whose lives interconnect over 30 years in a series of poignant

and often surreal encounters.

Each meeting is marked by physical injuries, both minor and severe, serving as metaphors for their emotional scars and the turmoil underlying their lives.

As they navigate the challenges of growing up, their bond deepens through shared experiences of pain, vulnerability, and love.

The play weaves between moments of humor and heartbreak, emphasizing the struggle between connection and isolation. Ultimately, it reveals how their injuries—both physical and emotional—reflect the complexities of human relationships and the desperate need for

understanding and acceptance.

Through their scars, Kayleen and Doug reveal the profound impact of their intertwined lives, illustrating how even the most chaotic and painful experiences can foster a deep-rooted bond.

Rajiv Joseph is an acclaimed American playwright known for his thought-provoking works. He gained notable recognition as a finalist for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama with his play "Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo" and won an Obie Award for "Describe the Night." His debut play, "Huck & Holden," premiered in 2006, drawing from his father's experiences as an In-

dian immigrant to the U.S. Joseph's mixed-race background informs his writing, leading to a unique perspective on race and identity.

His other notable works include "Animals Out of Paper," and "Guards at the Taj," the latter receiving multiple awards, including the 2016 Obie Award for Best New American Play. Joseph's recent work, "King James," debuted in March 2022 after a delay due to the pandemic. Throughout his career, he has captivated audiences by addressing complex themes and exploring the human condition through innovative storytelling.

Giller prize drops sponsor after protests over Israel arms link

After fifteen months of protests, boycotts, and pressure campaigns (from Can Lit Responds, No Arms in the Arts, and other activist groups within the Canadian literary community), the Giller prize, a prestigious Canadian literary award, has cut ties with a controversial sponsor after more than a year of pushback from the literary community.

The prize, which awards C\$100,000 (£56,000) to its winner and C\$10,000 to shortlisted authors each year, announced the end of its 20-year sponsorship by Scotiabank on Monday, and said it is exploring "new opportunities and collaborations."

Protesters twice interrupted the Giller prize ceremony in November 2023 over the bank, which at that point was the largest international investor in Israeli arms manufacturer Elbit Systems via its subsidiary 1832 Asset Management. The subsidiary has since reduced its stake, The Guardian reported.

More than 1,800 writers, including 2023 winner Sarah Bernstein, signed an open letter in support of the protesters. In July 2024, more than 30 authors who would have been eligible for the prize withdrew their work from consideration. In September, the prize – which had been called the Scotiabank Giller prize – dropped the bank from its name.

In Monday's statement, the Giller Foun-

dation said it was grateful for Scotiabank's "unwavering support and dedication to Canadian literature". The foundation's executive director, Elana Rabinovitch, told the Globe and Mail that "following discussions, Scotiabank and the Giller Foundation agreed that the best path forward was an early end to the partnership", but did not give reasons for the termination. The most recent contract was set to expire after the 2025 prize.

In November, Rabinovitch told the Guardian that she was not worried about the prize's future. "The Giller has strong community support and we will get through these challenges."

Two jurors withdrew from the Giller Prize in the weeks leading up to the book award's split with its lead sponsor Scotiabank, with one saying his writing community feels alienated by the literary institution that faces ongoing boycotts.

Canadian authors Jordan Abel and Aaron Tucker said they dropped out for ethical reasons days after being named to the five-member jury for the \$100,000 fiction prize.

"I made a mistake in agreeing to be on the jury and it is against my principles to associate myself with this sponsorship," Tucker said in a statement Monday.

"For the type of writing I do, and want to do in the future, being aligned with such in-

vestments would have been hypocritical on my part and actively harmful to members of my community," said Tucker, a novelist and academic.

Giller executive director Elana Rabinovitch did not say whether the resignations or ongoing protests had anything to do with an early end to the foundation's decades-long partnership with Scotiabank, only saying of the departures by email: "I wish them well."

Abel and Tucker were quietly removed from a list of jurors on the Giller website sometime between their announcement Jan. 15 and news of the split with Scotiabank on Monday.

In his statement, Tucker said he was never fully on board with the Giller's funding, but initially thought it was something he could "tolerate" for the sake of uplifting writers.

"As I read more and learned more and listened more, I found myself unable to continue as a jury member. I should have taken the time to do this before I said yes, and not rushed naively into my choice," said Tucker.

Both Tucker and Abel — a Nisga'a writer who most recently won the Governor General's Literary Award for his novel "Empty Spaces" — said they have no plans to return to the Giller jury, despite the end of the partnership with Scotiabank.

Cartoon of Day



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