



Ayatollah Khamenei tells Hamas officials in Tehran: Gaza's Resistance Actually Defeated America

Officials sound unified as they react to Leader's new directive on US talks

TEHRAN – Iranian officials from across the political spectrum have reacted to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution's Friday comments on possible discussions with the U.S., endorsing his stance and thanking him for his unequivocal backing of the nation.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, pointing out Washington's shunning of the 2015 nuclear deal, ruled out any future negotiations with the U.S. and asked Iranian officials to focus on finding an internal solution to the country's challenges instead, by working in tandem with each other and the people.

The statements seem to have omitted confusion and ambiguity regarding Tehran's stance on talks with U.S. President Donald Trump, who says is looking to strike a deal with Iran after scrapping the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018 and initiating unprecedented economic pressure on the country. ▶ Page 2

Iran doesn't need outside help for security: Zarif

TEHRAN – Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs, declared on Saturday that Iran has achieved the capability to independently safeguard its security, dismissing concerns over external dependencies.

"We are neither worried about our security nor reliant on foreign powers to ensure it," he told Iranian media, emphasizing the nation's progress in this domain.

Zarif highlighted the need to pivot toward economic and technological advancement, stating, "Now, we must take a step forward to strengthen our economic resilience and technological capabilities to drive progress."

He underscored that future efforts would focus on addressing domestic challenges to sustain development. ▶ Page 2

US envoy's anti-Hezbollah statement dangerously counterproductive

By Parviz Rashidi

TEHRAN – A newly appointed U.S. envoy said on Friday that she hoped Lebanese authorities were committed to making sure that Hezbollah isn't a part of the new government in any form, AP reported on Friday.

After a meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun, Morgan Ortagus, the US deputy special envoy for the Middle East, told a news conference, "It is thanks to the Lebanese President Aoun and the Prime Minister-designate Nawaf Salam and everyone in this government... committed to making sure that Hezbollah is not a part of the new government in any form."

She added, "We have set clear red lines from the United States that they (Hezbollah) won't be able to terrorize the Lebanese people, and that includes by being a part of the government."

This shocking interference in the process of forming government in Lebanon by the Trump administration in Lebanon is disgusting and destabilizing.

Morgan Ortagus beware: "This is where the Marines were based!"

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON – Washington is openly pushing Lebanon towards instability by turning the process of forming Prime Minister Nawaf Salam's cabinet into a practical opportunity to politically exclude the Shiites to compensate for the failure suffered by the recent US-led Israeli aggression on Lebanon.

The prime minister-designate is not ignorant of local, regional and international situations, knowing that he does not lead a political group and does not rely on a popular base. Rather he relies on external support that seeks to weaken the resistance.

Washington wants all the main portfolios to be under its colonial control: the interior, foreign affairs, defense, energy and communications. That is why Salam wanted to appoint one of the five nominated Shiite ministers, according to specifications that match the US requirements, i.e. to obstruct the Shiites' constitutional privileges.

US plan in Gaza: Complicity in crimes against humanity and genocide

By Abbas-Ali Kadkhodaei

TEHRAN – The crime of forced displacement, or the coerced expulsion of people from their homeland, is one of the most painful atrocities that humanity has endured throughout history and continues to face today.

This crime not only detaches individuals from their homeland and birthplace but also uproots everything that shapes their identity, leaving them in exile and forced refuge.

By committing this crime, the occupying Israeli regime aims to alter the demographic composition of the occupied region and erase the historical identity of its inhabitants.

Its objective is to sever the victims' national, racial, ethnic, and religious ties. This goal is pursued through organized policies, including forced population displacement, the systematic destruction of residential areas, the spread of fear and terror, and the use of mass killings and violent acts to drive residents from their land.

Gaza ceasefire: A bitter pill for Israeli leaders to swallow

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – The fifth swap of captives for prisoners as part of a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas has given Israeli and American leaders a deep sense of humiliation as the Palestinian resistance movement once again displayed its military strength.

On Saturday, Hamas freed three more Israeli captives held in Gaza and handed them over to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the central city of Deir al-Balah.

Hamas fighters, some driving white pick-up trucks with guns mounted, lined up at the location of the exchange pouring cold water on Israel's claims of degrading the group's military capabilities.

The Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, also raised a large banner at the platform designated for delivering the captives, which read, "We are the flood... we are the next day." It was accompanied by an image of the Palestinian flag and a clenched fist. ▶ Page 5

The high wall of distrust built by America

Sadra Sedaghat

TEHRAN – Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, recently addressed the possibility of future talks with the United States in remarks that garnered worldwide attention.

By referencing past experiences, he not only clearly outlined Iran's stance on potential talks with the U.S., but also made clear the reasons for Iran's deep-seated aversion to engaging in them. The following are the main and key points of the Leader's remarks:

History offers valuable lessons

In his Friday comments, Ayatollah Khamenei referenced the 2010s negotiations, notably the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), to underscore Iran's negative experience with the U.S. ▶ Page 3

Minister highlights plans to boost tourism and strengthen ties with Arab nations

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has announced plans for the country's tourism sector, predicting that the number of inbound travelers will surpass seven million in the current Persian year that comes to an end on March 20.

Speaking on a televised program on Saturday, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri emphasized Iran's efforts to enhance tourism relations, particularly with Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

Salehi-Amiri outlined key priorities for the ministry, stating that the primary focus remains on countries that celebrate Nowruz, including Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. ▶ Page 6



Pezeshkian inaugurates key industrial, energy projects in Kerman

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian traveled to Kerman Province on Saturday to inaugurate four major economic and industrial projects worth more than 200 trillion rials (about \$235 million), Mehr News Agency reported.

Pezeshkian arrived in Sirjan, one of Iran's key industrial hubs in the east, to officially open two mega modules for sponge iron production in the Golgozar region, a gas transmission pipeline to the province, and Gohar Park Tourism Village, which is set to become the largest tourism complex in West Asia. ▶ Page 4

46 years later: reflecting on the Shah's final year and where Iran stands now

Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – This year on February 11th, Iranians mark the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, a revolution that changed the course of modern Iranian history, fulfilled decades of popular desire for independence, and inaugurated a new age characterized by domestic confidence and self-reliant advancements.

The struggle against the U.S.-supported Shah, spearheaded by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (commonly referred to as Imam Khomeini), had been underway for some years. However, the pace of events accelerated dramatically in the final year of the Shah's presence in Iran. ▶ 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 Trump's scenario against a strong Iran

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed Trump's recent statements including his admission that Iran is a strong country. It wrote: Netanyahu said that Iran has become weak, but Trump has a different opinion. Iran has proven through numerous actions that it is strong. Trump claims that Iran was weakened during his first term due to maximum pressure and lack of money, but Biden strengthened Iran. Trump claims that he contained Iran in the first term, and now, due to Biden's policies, its conditions have improved and it has sold oil and, according to their claims, has disrupted the world. The U.S. President wants to achieve something for himself by praising Iran's strength and convincing the audience that we have reached an agreement with a strong Iran. In fact, from this point of view, any weakening of Iran in Trump's eyes will lead to criticism from critics against him who will argue: why did you negotiate or agree with a weak and defeated country?

Vatan-e-Emrooz: No possibility of negotiation

In a commentary, Vatan-e-Emrooz addressed Trump's sanctions against Iran. It wrote: One of the dangerous sanctions will reduce Iran's oil sales to zero. In addition to this sanction, the new U.S. government has begun extensive negotiations and lobbying with some countries to cut their trade with Iran. One of these pressures is related to the Iraqi government. It is pressing Baghdad to stop importing electricity and gas from Iran. Trump imposed unprecedented sanctions against Iran in his first term as president and then called for negotiations with Iran to obtain maximum concessions from Iran at the negotiating table by applying maximum pressure. This time, however, he is seemingly acting a little more intelligently. He is seeking dialogue and pressure simultaneously. Naturally, in such circumstances, there is no possibility of negotiation. That is, the U.S. government should not be provided with the possibility of negotiation. Negotiation in this case will probably lead to much greater damage than the one caused by the JCPOA.

Etemad: Smart diplomacy

In an article, Etemad discussed the recent developments in the U.S. foreign policy to-

ward Iran. The paper said: The recent developments in the foreign policy of the United States, especially Trump's explicit statements about Iran, indicate changes in the American approach towards the Islamic Republic. Unlike his previous term (from 2017-2021), it seems Trump is now looking at the issue of Iran more realistically. This change of policy is influenced by American priorities at home. In such circumstances, the way Iran will deal with these developments can be extremely decisive. In the complex equation that has been formed between Iran, the United States, and Israel, Tehran's decisions will specify the future course. Our country must adopt a policy based on rationality to prevent Washington from getting too close to Tel Aviv. Upon a combination of diplomatic rationality and domestic reforms, Iran must choose a path that will secure national interests and lead the country to counter current challenges.

Arman-e-Melli: Negotiation or sanctions?!

In an interview with Yousef Molaei, a senior expert in international law, Arman-e-Melli evaluated Trump's policy towards Iran and wrote: Trump's view on Iran has been somewhat moderated compared to the past, but convincing the international community of Tehran's peaceful nuclear activities requires dialogue. The international community indeed seeks to be aware of Iran's (nuclear) activities. But at the same time, it is important to know by what mechanisms it wants to achieve this awareness. Countries around the world have generally followed this through the International Atomic Energy Agency and by implementing the Additional Protocols. That is, through intrusive inspections. The Agency's cameras are installed for this very reason. Iran has its principles that stand against the excesses of others. This policy has caused these countries to have a skeptical view of Iran's nuclear issue. Therefore, until there is no political understanding, it would not be possible to provide the necessary grounds for reaching an agreement on the nuclear issue.

Iran doesn't need outside help for security: Zarif

From page 1 ▶ Addressing the recently signed Treaty on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Russia, which outlines a 20-year roadmap for bilateral ties, Zarif elaborated on the agreement's origins.

"The proposal for this document was drafted during my tenure as Foreign Minister and discussed with President Putin," he explained, clarifying that the treaty builds on a prior framework.

Zarif served as Iran's top diplomat from 2013 to 2021.

He noted that the finalization occurred under the current administration, with "utmost care taken to ensure a balanced document aligned with national interests."

Zarif further assured that legal safeguards would be upheld during parliamentary ratification to prevent ambiguities, adding, "The honorable Foreign Minister and the Ministry's legal team fully understand the treaty's legal nuances."

The document, he said, would soon be submitted to the Parliament for approval.

In the Russian capital last month, Tehran and Moscow reinforced their alliance with the signing of the Treaty on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, officiated by Presidents Masoud Pezeshkian and Vladimir Putin.

On regional diplomacy, Zarif reiterated that fostering ties with neighbors remains



Iran's Vice President for Strategic Affairs
Mohammad Javad Zarif

a top priority for all administrations, including the incumbent 14th government.

"Regional relations are the most critical focus for any Iranian government," he affirmed, pledging his office's support in advancing these efforts.

In an effort to enhance bilateral relations and promote regional stability, Zarif visited Iraq on Thursday.

During his trip, he engaged in a series of high-level discussions with senior Iraqi officials, focusing on deepening cooperation and addressing shared challenges.

Officials sound unified as they react to Leader's new directive on US talks

From page 1 ▶ In his remarks to Iran's Air Force personnel, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that while Trump officially withdrew from the deal, his predecessor, who had signed the JCPOA himself, had not exactly upheld Washington's commitments either. "Therefore, negotiating with such a government is unwise, unintelligent and dishonorable and there should be no negotiation with it." He declared.

He, however, said negotiations are not innately bad, and that Iranian officials should view the U.S. as the only exception.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was among the first high-ranking officials to respond to the Leader's new directive, thanking Ayatollah Khamenei for acknowledging the Ministry's efforts in his Friday remarks. Araghchi stated that the Leader's

observation that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently "one of the busiest" was a source of pride for him and his colleagues.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in fulfilling its inherent duties and based on the three principles of dignity, wisdom, and expediency, will use all capacities to advance a comprehensive, active, and effective foreign policy aimed at securing national interests and security and increasing the power and prestige of the country through political and diplomatic interactions," he said in a message issued early

Saturday.

The spokeswoman of President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, said in a post on X that the government will do its best to abide by the Leader's directive and emit a unified voice from Iran. "While everyone is aware of the problems, today we need more unity and solidarity than yesterday to overcome these issues," Fatemeh

Mohajerani said, adding, "Negotiations with European countries will continue, and everyone knows well that Iran will not engage in negotiations if they are

dishonorable."

Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also affirmed Ayatollah Khamenei's stance, asking his colleagues in the legislative body and other government branches to refrain from creating divisions. "There should not be any duality here. The nature of the Leader's remarks was firm, definitive, and different from the past."

Iran's president, who has prided himself on being a follower of the Leader since his time as a lawmaker, echoed Ayatollah Khamenei's sentiments in a Tehran ceremony: "We and our children are capable of creating a better future with what we have. We just need to believe in ourself and realize that we can. When we develop a deep and long-term vision, we can achieve and undertake the actions we desire."

Leader's remarks ended speculations about Tehran's stance on potential talks with Trump, who said he wanted peace with Iran before imposing new sanctions this week

IRGC commanders reaffirm allegiance to Imam Khomeini's ideals on Revolution anniversary



TEHRAN - Senior commanders of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), led by Major General Hossein Salami, renewed their pledge to the ideals of the late founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, during a ceremony at his mausoleum in Tehran on Saturday.

The event marking the 46th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, underscored Iran's enduring commitment to its revolutionary principles.

In an address, General Salami hailed the Islamic Republic's founder's post-revolutionary legacy, stating, "Imam Khomeini established sovereignty, built power, and in his first act, defeated the greatest empire in human history—the U.S."

The IRGC Chief emphasized that the path charted by Imam Khomeini continues under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, whom he described as the "truthful successor" embodying the late leader's vision.

"With the same steadfast heart, he stands firm in every battlefield," Salami added, describing Iran's leadership as unyielding in the face of external pressures.

The IRGC chief also highlighted

the assertiveness of Iran's armed forces, particularly referencing last year's Operations True Promise I and II—a series of strikes successfully targeting the Israeli regime's positions—as evidence of Tehran's strategic resolve.

"We struck the political heart of major powers: Israel, the eldest child of America. They tried to protect it, but we acted with rationality and wisdom," he asserted.

Salami said Western threats at the time were "real" and not "merely psychological", which stood in contrast to Iran's "calibrated and deliberate" actions.

Echoing Salami's sentiments, Ayatollah Khomeini's grandson, Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Hassan Khomeini, praised the IRGC's role in safeguarding Iran's sovereignty.

He lauded Operation True Promise II as "a historic achievement exemplifying capability fused with determination," and warned that without self-reliance, Iran risks being trampled by foreign powers.

"If we lack strength, we will remain under the hooves of empires—or the tread of their tanks," he declared, linking the IRGC's founding to Imam Khomeini's infusion of "courage into the Iranian people's spirit."

Iran Navy chief visits Karachi as forces join Pakistan-led naval exercise



TEHRAN - Iran is making good on its promise to enhance strategic partnership with Pakistan, as the Iranian Navy joins the AMAN-25 naval exercise, which commenced in Karachi on Friday.

The drills, hosted biennially by Pakistan since 2007, have attracted ships, aircraft, special forces, and observers from over 60 nations, underscoring a collective push for regional security in the Indian Ocean.

Since its inception, the AMAN series has grown into a platform for navies to address piracy, terrorism, and humanitarian crises.

This year's iteration, under the slogan "Together for Peace," includes advanced tactical demonstrations and crisis-response simulations.

Iran's delegation, led by Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, arrived in Karachi on Saturday.

The visit is believed to demonstrate Tehran's commitment to strengthening operational capabilities at sea alongside Islamabad.

A combat ship from Iran's fleet joined the drills, which will run until February 11. In his remarks to reporters, Rear Admiral Irani emphasized the significance of close relations with Pakistan.

"Our participation at this level reflects the depth of bilateral trust and shared goals," Irani stated, adding that the event serves as a valuable opportunity to lay the groundwork

for future joint exercises.

"The seas unite us—and through unity, we secure prosperity," the commander added.

Iran's naval chief also revealed plans to invite Pakistan to bilateral drills hosted by Iran, signaling a new phase in defense collaboration.

Rear Admiral Irani previously traveled to Pakistan in June 2023.

At the opening ceremony, Pakistan Fleet Commander Rear Admiral Abdul Munib stressed that evolving maritime challenges require collective efforts, noting that no single country has the strength to tackle these challenges alone.

Pakistan's Navy Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf, who welcomed Iran's involvement, reiterated Islamabad's enthusiasm for expanded naval ties with Tehran.

"Our strong historical ties with Iran provide a foundation for greater cooperation in ensuring regional maritime security," Ashraf said.

From 2007 to 2023, Iran took part in the AMAN exercises mainly as an observer, with high-ranking Iranian delegations present at the events.

This year, in addition to taking part in the drills, the Iranian delegation is also engaging in the inaugural AMAN Dialogue—a forum focused on maritime cooperation—and holding sideline meetings with Pakistani military officials.

46 years later: reflecting on the Shah's final year and where Iran stands now



From page 1 ▶ The following is a breakdown of the significant events that transpired during Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's last year of reign and culminated in his overthrow.

Developments evolve rapidly after Air Force desertion

On February 8, 1979, after Shah's Air Force members, the Homafarans, visited Imam Khomeini's

residence, the government of Shapour Bakhtiar, appointed by the Shah, dispatched imperial guards the following day to quell the uprising at Doshan Tappeh Air Base in eastern Tehran. The guards attempted to capture the rebellious Homafarans, leading to a firefight. Soon after, large numbers of civilians rallied in support of the airmen, erecting barricades in the streets.

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has frequently commemorated the Homafarans' actions of that year, calling it "an effective and morale-boosting prelude to the February 11th (22nd of Bahman) victory of the revolution that demonstrated the greatness and dignity of the Iranian nation."

News of the Homafarans' mutiny circulated immediately across the country among other segments of the military. There were also huge numbers of soldiers deserting from the army and joining the people's ranks, paralyzing their military commanders.

Declaration of martial law

On February 10th, in a final act of desperation, the weakening Pahlavi regime, through Tehran's military ruler General Mehdi Rahimi, announced martial law, imposing a curfew from 4:00 PM to 5:00 AM.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ayatollah Khamenei tells Hamas officials in Tehran: Gaza's Resistance actually defeated America



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei embraces Hamas official Ismail Darwish ahead of their meeting on Saturday

TEHRAN - Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, met with top Hamas officials in Tehran and emphasized that the Palestinians' victory in Gaza, after 15 months of war, represented a defeat of the United States even more than it did Israel.

The meeting took place in the Leader's private office on Saturday. Those present at the meeting were Mohammad Ismail Darwish, chairman of the Hamas Shura Council, Khalil al-Hayya, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, and Zaher Jabarin, head of Hamas in the West Bank.

Ayatollah Khamenei began by honoring the memory of prominent Hamas figures who had fallen, including Ismail Haniyeh, assassinated by Israel in July 2024. He then remarked on the remarkable achievement of the Palestinians in enduring and defeating Israel and the U.S., despite the vast disparity in military capabilities.

"The Almighty God granted you and the people of Gaza honor and victory and made Gaza an instance of the noble verse that says: How many times has a small force vanquished a mighty force by the Will of Allah! (Holy Quran 2:249)." He said, adding, "You prevailed over the Zionist regime and, of course, over the United States, and by God's grace, you did not allow them to achieve any of their goals."

Throughout the Gaza beginning in October of 2023, Israel, with full U.S. backing, destroyed 60% of the enclave's homes, routinely bombed hospitals, schools, churches, mosques, and set fire to make shift refugee tents. U.S. President Donald Trump said this week that about 1.7 million people remain in Gaza, which means about 600,000 Gazans have died in Israel's harrowing military campaign that aimed to "eradicate Hamas" and free Israeli prisoners,

two objectives the regime failed to achieve before agreeing to ceasefire in January.

"The fruit of all these sufferings and sacrifices was ultimately the victory of truth over falsehood, and the people of Gaza became a role model for all those devoted to the cause of Resistance," the Leader stated.

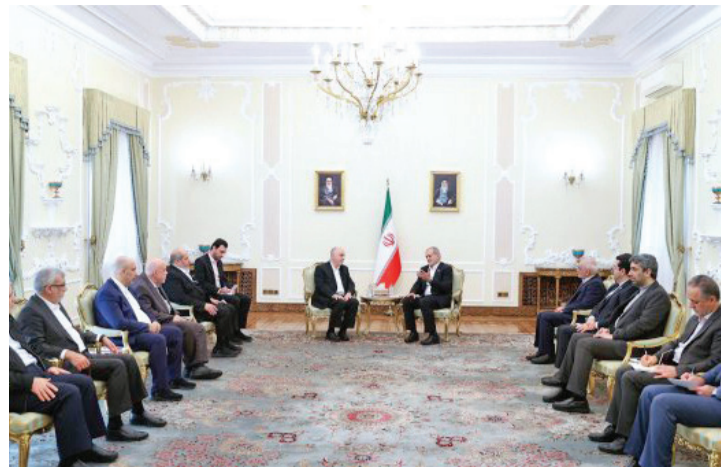
Ayatollah Khamenei also hailed Hamas' negotiators and called the ceasefire agreement a significant achievement. He said it is the duty of the entire Islamic world and all supporters of the Resistance to help the people of Gaza in alleviating their suffering and distress.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the importance of planning cultural activities and maintaining current media engagement alongside military affairs and the reconstruction of Gaza. He lauded the Resistance forces and Hamas for their "excellent performance" in media and publicity, and advocated for this approach to continue.

The Leader regarded faith as the main factor and the asymmetric weapon of the Resistance Front against the enemy. "It is precisely because of this faith that the Islamic Republic and the Resistance Front do not feel weak in the face of their enemies." Referring to the recent threats made by the United States against the Islamic Republic and the Iranian people, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized, "Such threats have absolutely no effect on the mindset of our nation, our officials, and the country's active figures and youth."

Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out that the issue of defending Palestine and supporting the Palestinian people is not a matter of debate in the minds of the Iranian people but a "settled issue." "For us, Palestine is a central issue, and the victory of Palestine is also a definite matter" the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei empha-



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian receives Hamas delegation at his office on February 8, 2025

sized that the ultimate victory belongs to the Palestinian people, noting that events and fluctuations should not cause doubts. "Rather, one must move forward with the strength of faith and hope, and remain confident in Divine assistance."

Addressing Hamas' leaders at the end of the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that, "By God's grace, the day will come when all of you, with absolute honor, have solved the issue of al-Quds for the Islamic world, and that day will certainly arrive."

For his part, chairman of the Hamas Shura Council, congratulated the Leader on the victory of the Palestinian Resistance in Gaza. "We take the coincidence of the days of the Gaza Resistance's victory with the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution as a good sign, and we hope that this concurrence will pave the way for the liberation of al-Quds and al-Aqsa Mosque," Darwish said.

The deputy head of Hamas' political bureau also congratulated Ayatollah Khamenei over the Palestinian victory, saying, "Today, we have come to meet you while all of us stand with our heads held high, and this great victory is our shared victory with the Islamic Republic."

Islamic nations must take lead in Gaza reconstruction: Pezeshkian

The Hamas officials also held a meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian the same day, where he called for the formation of an international coalition, with a special emphasis on the participation of Islamic countries, to assist in the reconstruction of Gaza and support its people

The President stated, "Islamic countries, by working together, will undoubtedly succeed in rebuilding Gaza and returning a sense of normalcy to the people living there."

Pezeshkian underscored Iran's unwavering support for the Resistance front and the people of Gaza, expressing confidence in the ultimate victory of the Resistance, which he noted is promised by Almighty God in the Holy Quran. He extended his congratulations to the fighters and all the people of Gaza for their steadfastness and courage.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Pezeshkian emphasized that the recent claims made by the United States and the Zionist regime regarding the future of Gaza hold no value. He firmly stated, "The future of Gaza belongs to its people, and its administration will be managed through a joint national cooperation among Palestinians."

A member of the Hamas leadership council expressed gratitude for the support provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Resistance groups in achieving victory against the Zionist enemy. The council member stressed that the continued support and solidarity would pave the way for the final phase of the battle—the liberation of Palestinian lands.

The Hamas leadership council member reiterated that the claims made by the United States and the Zionist regime about Gaza's future lack credibility, emphasizing that Gaza's future is in the hands of its people and will be governed through unified Palestinian efforts.

U.S. President Donald Trump says he plans to displace Gaza's population and move them to Jordan and Egypt in order to "invest" in the enclave. Analysts have said the president sounds like a real estate agent while talking about the future of Gaza.

IRAN IN FOCUS

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Straight Truth
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SPORTS

2025 CAFA Women's Futsal: Iran's quest to defend title

TEHRAN - The much-anticipated 2025 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship is set to kick off on Sunday, bringing together the best women's futsal teams from Central Asia. As the defending champions, the Iranian women's futsal team are prepared to showcase their talent, skill, and determination to retain their title.

The previous edition of the CAFA Women's Futsal Championship was held in 2022, where Iran emerged victorious, demonstrating their prowess in the sport. The tournament, which featured teams from Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, showcased thrilling matches and high-level competition. Iran's success was a testament to their strong training programs and investment in women's sports, marking a significant achievement in their sporting history.

The team's success in the past has generated a strong sense of confidence among the players, motivating them to defend their title with pride. With a mix of experienced players and promising young talent, Iran aim to craft a balanced squad that can tackle the challenges posed by rival teams.

The CAFA Women's Futsal Championship plays a vital role in promoting women's sports in Central Asia. With the growing interest and participation in futsal among women, this championship not only provides a competitive platform but also encourages the girls to take up the sport.

With Iran aiming to defend its title, the tournament promises excitement, competitive spirit, and unforgettable moments for athletes and fans alike. As the world watches, the Iranian women's futsal team is poised to make history once again, representing their country with pride and passion in their pursuit of glory.

Team Melli will start the campaign on Sunday with a match against Uzbekistan and will also play Kyrgyzstan (Feb. 12), Turkmenistan (Feb. 14), and Tajikistan (Feb. 16).

Iran, the three-time defending champions, have won every previous edition of the tournament.

The tournament, organized by the Central Asian Football Association (CAFA), will be held in Dushanbe for the third time on Feb. 9-16.

Masoumi aims to win 2025 World Championships

TEHRAN - Shortly after winning the gold medal in the 125kg category at the Zagreb Open Ranking Series on Thursday at Arena Zagreb, Amirreza Masoumi announced that he aims to win the gold medal at the World Championships in the same venue.

Iran freestyle wrestling team came second after the U.S. in the tournament. The Persians won four gold medals and four silvers.

"I hope that this year I can have a good match to become a national champion, and in the same hall, I will also win the gold medal in the 2025 World Championships," he said after winning gold medal at 125kg at the Zagreb Open.

Last year, Masoumi finished with a silver medal after suffering a loss to his countryman Amirhossein Zare in the final. But before that he had a close match with Paris Olympian Mason Parris (USA).

Thursday was different. He gave no chance to Parris and rolled to a 10-0 win inside first period, a rare phenomenon in the super heavyweight class.

"The match I had last year with Parris and to this year, I was able to have an easy and good match by following a few points that my coaches told me," he said.

Though he is certain of winning the gold medal at the September World Championships, Masoumi has to go through Olympic silver medalist and world champion Zare at 125kg domestically.

"Zare and I are two of the top heavyweights in Iran," he said. "We're scheduled to wrestle

each other in two months. I hope that whoever wins that match will represent Iran's heavyweight division at the competition."

Zare defeated Masoumi in the Zagreb Open final last year to confirm his ticket to Paris Olympics. This is was the third meeting between the two and Masoumi is yet to record a win against Zare.

"I chose to come to Zagreb because last year I wrestled Zare in the final, and I came in second place," Masoumi said. "This year, by using the advice I've received, I was able to win gold in this tournament."

Former Sepahan coach Morais named Bodrum coach

TEHRAN - Portuguese coach Jose Morais has been appointed as the head coach of Sipay Bodrum FK.

According to a statement from the club, the Turkish team has signed a contract with Morais and his team until the end of the season.

Morais participated in the training on Friday, starting his work with the team. Morais will be on the field leading the team in the match against Göztepe scheduled for February 10 in Bodrum.

Morais parted ways with Iranian club Sepahan in early November.

Ex-Iran goalkeeper Haghighi joins Kheybar

TEHRAN - Former Iran and Persepolis football team goalkeeper Alireza Haghighi joined Kheybar on Saturday.

He replaced Brazilian goalie Tony Batista, who has recently parted company with Kheybar.

Haghighi has joined the Iranian top-flight team until the end of the season.

Haghighi started his playing career in Persepolis in 2006 and has also played in Russian team Rubin Kazan, Portuguese teams Sporting Covilhã, Marítimo and Penafiel and Swedish teams Eskilstuna and Sundsvall.

Haghighi was a member of Havadar football team last season.

Golmohammadi steps down as Foolad coach

TEHRAN - Foolad football team head coach Yahya Golmohammadi announced his resignation on Saturday.

This decision came after the Foolad coach made remarks about the club's performance during the transfer window in the press conference following the match against Khyber.

Golmohammadi had previously criticized Foolad's transfer policies in several press conferences. He had criticized Houshang Nasirzadeh, the club's CEO, for the reason.

Golmohammadi did not participate in Foolad's training on Saturday. It remains to be seen whether this decision will be accepted by Foolad club.

Persepolis edge past Gol Gohar: PGPL

TEHRAN - Persepolis football team earned a 1-0 hard-fought win over Gol Gohar in 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Saturday.

Persepolis Turkish forward Serdar Dursun found the back of the net in the 73rd minute at the Shahr-e Qods Stadium in Tehran.

Persepolis leapfrogged into third place with 37 points, four points behind PGPL leaders Tractor.

Furthermore, rock-bottom Havadar defeated Aluminum 2-1 in Tehran.

The high wall of distrust built by America

From Page 1 ▶ He pointed out that Iran made substantial concessions, only to see the U.S. not only renege on its commitments but also obliterate any remaining trust by abandoning the JCPOA and escalating sanctions.

This experience, as explained by the Leader, illustrates that negotiations with the U.S. have not only failed to benefit Iran but have actively worsened its situation through heightened pressure and sanctions. This historical context shapes Iran's current position on future talks.

Beyond the JCPOA, the unpredictable behavior of the U.S., particularly during the Trump administration, has fostered a deep-seated distrust. The U.S.'s repeated failure to honor its commitments, even under international treaties, is a primary reason why negotiating with the U.S. is considered irrational, unwise, and dishonorable. This entrenched distrust of U.S. policies has created a formidable barrier, one that the Americans appear

to have little interest in dismantling.

Talks with U.S. will not help solve domestic issues

Ayatollah Khamenei stated explicitly that negotiations with the U.S. would not resolve Iran's internal problems.

He pointed to the economic and livelihood challenges facing the Iranian people, emphasizing that the solution lies within Iran itself, not in negotiations with foreign and hostile powers. This position reflects the leadership's independence-oriented outlook, which prioritizes domestic capabilities and the determination of both officials and the people to overcome these challenges.

He further identified domestic challenges and reiterated that their resolution hinges on national unity and the concerted efforts of both government officials and the Iranian people.

Iran must face threats firmly and reciprocate aggressions
(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran's enduring role in a changing West Asia

A Paradigm Shift for the Middle East

How Trump Can Build on Israel's Success and Keep Iran Off Balance

ELLIOTT ABRAMS
February 7, 2025



U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking to the press in Washington, February 2025

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN - The West Asian region is undergoing significant geopolitical shifts, shifts that could change traditional power structures and see new alliances emerge.

Elliott Abrams' article, "A Paradigm Shift for the Middle East", published on February 7, 2025 on Foreign Affairs, advocates for a U.S.-Israeli-led offensive strategy to counter Iran's influ-

ence, particularly in regard to its so-believed nuclear ambitions and alliances with Resistance groups. However, this approach oversimplifies the region's complex dynamics, misrepresents the nature of these alliances, and fails to account for the broader historical context that shapes West Asia's ongoing struggles for sovereignty and self-determination.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

New development projects launched in free, special economic zones

TEHRAN – Iran inaugurated or broke ground on 69 development projects in its free and special economic zones on Saturday, marking the eighth day of the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations. The ceremony was held via video conference with the participation of Reza Masrouf, secretary of the Free and Special Economic Zones High Council.

According to IRNA, the projects include 25 developments in the Maku, Aras, Qeshm, Kish, and Qasr-e Shirin free zones, valued at 10.95 trillion rials (\$21.9 million). Additionally, 19 projects in these zones were officially launched.

More than 20 development projects in special economic zones, worth 33.77 trillion rials (\$67.5 million) and €251 million, were also inaugurated, while six others broke ground.

Masrouf stated that the Ten-Day Dawn celebrations provide an opportunity to showcase the achievements of the Islamic Revolution, adding that despite economic sanctions, free zones should serve as growth engines for their respective provinces.

He emphasized the need for rapid infrastructure development in free zones, noting that each region's progress plans will be announced in the coming months, with further transformations expected next year.

Referring to Qeshm as the "land of opportunities," Masrouf highlighted its strategic position along international corridors and its potential in tourism and energy industries.

He also announced that major projects in Kish would be inaugurated in the coming months with the president's presence, noting recent growth in tourism on the island.

Discussing Qasr-e Shirin Free Zone, the official invited Iraqi investors to participate in its development, stressing the importance of completing infrastructure projects, particularly in water, electricity, gas, and wastewater systems. He underscored the zone's role in facilitating trade with Iraq, given its location along the East-West corridor.

Iran's free trade zones collectively offer a bulk capacity of 61 million tons and 1.4 million TEUs, with the ability to handle 12 million passengers annually, the secretary of Free Zones High Council reported during a meeting with President Masoud Pezeshkian in last December.

During the session, Reza Masrouf presented



a review of the maritime economy and port capacities of key free zones, including Anzali, Kish, Qeshm, Chabahar, Arvand, Bushehr, and Mazandaran, Tasnim News Agency reported.

In this meeting, President Pezeshkian underscored the importance of fully utilizing the existing capacities of free trade zones. He called for the preparation of a strategic roadmap for these zones and emphasized the development of north-south and east-west transit corridors, with input from prominent consultants in the free trade sector.

Iran's free trade zones play a crucial role in facilitating trade, investment, and tourism by offering tax incentives, reduced tariffs, and streamlined regulations. The southern zones, such as Chabahar, Kish, and Qeshm, serve as key gateways for trade with the Indian Ocean, while northern zones like Anzali and Mazandaran provide critical access to the Caspian Sea region.

The Chabahar Free Zone, in particular, holds strategic significance as a transit hub connecting Iran to Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Meanwhile, Kish and Qeshm are pivotal for tourism and energy-related industries, with advanced port infrastructure to support containerized and bulk cargo handling.

The total capacity of 61 million tons of bulk cargo and 1.4 million containers highlights the zones' potential to strengthen Iran's position as a regional logistics hub. Additionally, the ability to accommodate 12 million passengers annually reflects the zones' growing role in boosting tourism and maritime transport.

Officials emphasized the need to address challenges, including infrastructure development and modernizing port facilities, to fully capitalize on the economic opportunities offered by the free zones.

Tehran to build 3-megawatt solar power plant

TEHRAN – A three-megawatt solar power plant worth approximately 900 billion rials (\$1.8 million) will be constructed in the Iranian capital, the head of Tehran Regional Electricity Company said.

Farhad Shabih announced the launch of construction for 120 megawatts of renewable power plants, each with a capacity of three megawatts or less, in Tehran Province, IRIB reported.

"In conjunction with the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, construction of the three-megawatt solar power plant, valued at 900 billion rials, has begun in northern Tehran. Once operational, it will be connected to the national power grid," he said.

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

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

Iran to install electronic equipment on oil tankers within 9 months

TEHRAN – National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Company (NIOEC) is planning to install electronic locks and other equipment on oil tankers, with the project expected to be completed within nine months, the company's head said.

As Shana reported, Mohammad Meshkinfam stated that at the start of the 14th administration, a comprehensive plan titled "Real-Time Monitoring of the Oil Products Supply and Dis-

tribution Chain" was introduced by the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company.

"The primary goal of this initiative is to combat fuel smuggling, but it also aims to optimize co-loading systems, enhance oversight of refining, transportation, and distribution operations, develop infrastructure using advanced technologies, and improve energy resource management," he said.

Iran-China non-oil trade stands at \$26.7b in 10 months

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil trade between Iran and China stood at \$26.7 billion in the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025), the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that importing non-oil goods worth \$12.3 billion from Iran, China was the first destination of Iranian products in the mentioned ten-month period.

He also announced that by exporting non-oil products valued at \$14.4 billion to Iran, China was the second source of import for Iran in the first ten months of the present year.

Hossein Eyvazlou, a member of the executive board of Iran's National Development Fund (NDF), has announced plans for collaboration with China in the field of foreign investment in Iran.

Speaking at a press conference on January 4, Eyvazlou highlighted the importance of attracting foreign capital to boost Iran's economic projects, emphasizing the role of strategic partnerships with countries like China.

Details on the scope and nature of the cooperation were not disclosed, but it is expected to focus on key sectors that align with Iran's long-term development goals.

On December 20, 2024, a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) representative announced that the Chinese investors are prepared to fund the construction of combined-cycle power plants in Iran's energy-rich Khuzestan province to help address the country's energy imbalance and boost regional economic development.

Zhao Bin He, the Executive Director of SCO's Iran Office, made the remarks during a meeting with Khuzestan's governor and local religious leaders. "We are here to pay our respects to provincial authorities and outline China's plans for strengthening economic and trade ties, with a particular focus on Khuzestan," Zhao said.

He highlighted the historical and enduring relationship between Iran and China, describing it as built on mutual respect, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange.

"Khuzestan's strategic position in southwest Iran and its vast economic potential make it a key player in enhancing Iran-China relations," Zhao added. "With access to the Persian Gulf and proximity to strong regional economies,

Pezeshkian inaugurates key industrial, energy projects in Kerman

From Page 1 ▶ He was accompanied by Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak, Economy Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati, as well as Vice President for Executive Affairs Mohammad Ghaem-Panah and Presidential Chief of Staff Mohsen Hajimirzaei.

Kerman Governor Mohammad Ali Talebi stated that, in addition to this visit, a separate trip by the president and his cabinet is planned in the near future to inaugurate further projects across Kerman, Rafsanjan, Bam, Jiroft, Kahnooj, and Ghaleh Ganj.

Iran to rely on domestic capabilities for rail fleet development

TEHRAN – Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister said the country will rely on domestic capabilities for equipping, repairing, and manufacturing rail fleets as part of the ministry's mandate under the Seventh National Development Plan.

Farzaneh Sadegh made the remarks on Saturday during a visit to the MAPNA Rail Group, expressing satisfaction that she was observing the achievements of Iranian youth on the 46th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

"Today, we visited MAPNA Rail Group, which is active in locomotive and wagon production. This capability exists within the MAPNA Group, and recognizing the country's engineering and manufacturing potential is one of the reasons my colleagues and I are here," she said.

Sadegh highlighted the shortages in Iran's rail and aviation fleets, stressing that under the Seventh National Development Plan, progress must be made in equipping, repairing, and manufacturing both types of transportation. "We will make every effort in this regard," she added.



Khuzestan offers exceptional opportunities for port infrastructure development and maritime transport."

Zhao reiterated China's readiness to actively participate in developing Khuzestan's infrastructure, expanding port capacity, and exploring joint projects in energy, industry, and agriculture.

In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu on October 15, 2024 Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati emphasized the importance of implementing the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed between Iran and China.

In the meeting, held at the place of the ministry, the Iranian minister followed up on the negotiations that took place during the BRICS Economic Ministers' Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, stressing the importance of implementing the MOUs between the two countries.

He also considered the two countries' Joint Economic Committee as a suitable platform for negotiations on economic, trade, and investment cooperation, and welcomed the holding of the 19th Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

Cong Peiwu, for his part, stated that Beijing aims to expedite the implementation of the MOUs and enhance practical cooperation to deepen relations between the two countries.

Both sides also highlighted the commitment of their statesmen to comprehensive development, expressing hope that consultations between senior officials of Iran and China will continue to expand bilateral relations.

In late September 2024, Hemmati had also met and held talks with Chinese Minister of Finance Lan Fo'an, during which the two

As reported, Pezeshkian concluded his one-day visit by inaugurating the Arsanjan-Golgozar gas transmission pipeline, a key infrastructure project valued at 23 trillion rials (\$46 million).

The pipeline was launched in the presence of the president, Kerman's governor, and other local officials. The project aims to balance gas consumption in the region and supply gas to the Golgozar steel companies and combined-cycle power plant.

Earlier in the day, Pezeshkian inaugurated Golgozar Steel's second sponge iron produc-

tion unit, which has an annual capacity of 1.5 million tons. The unit is expected to boost domestic supply and contribute to exports within the steel production chain while creating 410 direct and indirect jobs.

During his visit, the president also opened the third mega module at Golgozar, and two additional industrial projects.

Before departing for Tehran, Pezeshkian expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of a recent bus accident in Kerman and stated that the newly inaugurated projects would accelerate Sirjan's development.

Trade Promotion Organization of Iran is keen to enhance and grow constructive trade relations between the two countries.

Additionally, he highlighted that Iran's membership in regional agreements like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will facilitate trade cooperation.

Dehnavi also underscored the importance of developing bilateral ties through international exhibitions, technology transfer, and commercial advancements in the industrial and mining sectors.

It is worth mentioning that Mohammad Aghajani, the head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), was also present at the meeting and shared his insights on developing joint cooperation between Iran and China in the mining and mineral industries.

He emphasized the importance of transferring modern technologies from China to Iran, noting that this updated knowledge would enhance productivity in mining and enable the processing of mineral products with higher added value.

Moreover, he pointed out that sharing knowledge and experiences between mining experts and engineers from both countries could help improve skills and standards in the industry.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

The document was signed between Iran's former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Back in December 2022, Iran and China finalized 16 MOUs under the framework of the two countries' strategic 25-year agreement.

The MOUs were signed in an Iran-China comprehensive cooperation program summit which was held in Tehran on December 13 in the presence of Iran's former First Vice President Mohammad Mokher and China's Vice Premier Hu Chunhua.

The summit was focused on four areas explored by four committees between the two countries with the aim of paving the way for the implementation of the 25-year agreement.

Iran and China also signed 20 memoranda of understanding in the presence of the presidents of the two countries in Beijing in mid-February, 2023.

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MAPNA Group, she emphasized that the visit was aimed at supporting domestic production. "Given the unilateral and unjust sanctions imposed on the country, focusing on local manufacturing and leveraging domestic capabilities will pave the way for our progress," she said.

Outlining the ministry's plans to address public concerns over infrastructure, Sadegh said that utilizing domestic potential in fleet repairs, equipment upgrades, procurement, and modernization will be key priorities.

Chalk and cheese fallacy: Trump and Biden stand together for Israel

TEHRAN - The US administration's approval of a massive arms sale to Israel has thrown a spotlight on Donald Trump's motives for brokering a ceasefire between the Tel Aviv regime and Hamas.

Trump takes credit for the ceasefire that went into force on January 19. That was a day before he was officially sworn in for his second term as the US president.

His predecessor Joe Biden also claims credit for the truce agreement that paused Israel's war on Gaza.

On Friday, the US State Department formally told Congress that it plans to sell more than \$7.4 billion in weapons to Israel.

Two separate sales have been sent to Congress for approval. One is for \$6.75 billion in an array of munitions, guidance kits and other related equipment. It includes 166 small diameter bombs, 2,800 500-pound bombs, and thousands of guidance kits, fuzes and other bomb components and support equipment. Those deliveries would begin this year. The other arms package is for 3,000 Hellfire



The Trump administration announced on Friday that it had approved military sales to Israel worth some \$7.4 billion

missiles and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$660 million. Deliveries of the missiles are expected to begin in 2028.

The announcement comes days after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Trump in the White House.

Before taking office, Trump had exerted pressure on Netanyahu to end the Gaza war.

But his greenlight for the substantial arms sales amounts to

emboldening Israel to renew its genocidal war on Gaza.

According to officials in Gaza, more than 61,700 Palestinians were killed in Israel's war on the territory which lasted for more than 15 months.

Since Israel launched war on Gaza on October 7, 2023, Washington has thrown its full military weight behind the regime.

A report from Brown University's Costs of War project revealed

in October last year that Washington had committed a record \$17.9 billion in military aid to Israel since the start of the conflict.

In January this year, the Biden administration had notified Congress of a proposed \$8 billion arms sale to Israel.

Despite his pledge to end wars in the Middle East, Trump is following in Biden's footsteps.

US administrations, irrespective of their alignment with the Republican or Democratic parties, have made significant efforts to support Israel's military capabilities.

Trump has attempted to project an image of opposition to the Gaza war. However, the \$7.4 billion in arms sales clearly demonstrates that the notion of a significant difference between his stance and that of others is misguided.

The ceasefire that was mediated between Israel and Hamas by the US, Egypt and Qatar just aimed to gloss over Israel's military setbacks in the Gaza Strip.

Israel failed to defeat Hamas which was one of its main military goals in the war on Gaza.

Gaza ceasefire: A bitter pill for Israeli leaders to swallow

From page 1 ▶ The message bears considerable significance against the backdrop of the US president's suggestion to forcibly displace Palestinians in Gaza.

Donald Trump has called for depopulating Gaza and put forward a proposal for the United States to "take over" the Palestinian territory. Trump's idea has sparked global backlash.

Following the release of the three Israeli captives, 183 Palestinian prisoners walked free from the regime's jails.

Meanwhile, Hamas issued a statement describing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's dream of total victory over the group as a "shattered illusion".

"The absolute victory that the criminal Netanyahu and his army sought for 471 days are illusions that were shattered on the land of proud Gaza forever," the statement said.

It added, "Our Palestinian people, with their great rallying around the resistance and defiance of the occupation, confirm their rejection of all Trump's projects of displacement and occupation, and their firm determination to

thwart them."

The Saturday exchange was in line with the first phase of the truce deal that went into effect on January 19. The first phase of the ceasefire that runs until early March calls for the release of 33 captives and nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. Hamas has released 21 captives since the start of the January ceasefire. Over 100 captives were also released in a weeklong truce in November 2023.

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 people, while about 250 others were taken captive.

The Israeli premier had pledged to continue the war until destroying Hamas through achieving "total victory" over the group and releasing all the captives.

He had no choice but to acquiesce to the January ceasefire following his inability to accomplish his military goals.



Hamas has described Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "total victory" dream over the resistance movement as a "shattered illusion"

Israel has been neither able to eliminate Hamas nor crush the Palestinian resistance. Besides, Trump's suggestion to depopulate Gaza is unlikely to yield results, as the Palestinian population has demonstrated extraordinary resilience in the face of Israel's genocidal war on Gaza which has resulted in the deaths of nearly 62,000 individuals.

US plan in Gaza: Complicity in crimes against humanity and genocide

From page 1 ▶ Given the threat this crime poses to humanity and its blatant violation of human dignity, along with the inevitable consequences of mass displacement and forced migration to neighboring countries, the international community has responded with extensive legal measures within the framework of international law to combat it.

This is particularly emphasized in Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which explicitly prohibits any forced individual or collective transfer, as well as the expulsion of inhabitants from occupied territories to the territory of the occupying power or any other country, regardless of the motives or justifications claimed by the occupying regime.

The severity of this crime is so extreme that it is recognized as one of the most serious offenses under international law.

Because it blatantly violates human rights and fundamental freedoms, this crime has been condemned in numerous treaties, resolutions, and international documents.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in Articles 6 to 8, classifies this crime as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, ensuring that no state or occupying regime can ever consider committing it without facing severe legal consequences.

In this context, recent state-

ments by the U.S. president regarding the cleansing of Gaza clearly reflect actions that align with crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity on a massive scale.

The catastrophic consequences of such acts not only threaten international peace and security but also deeply destabilize both regional and global stability.

These statements come at a time when, under the International Law Commission's Draft Articles on State Responsibility, all states are obligated to prevent any war crime, crime against humanity, or genocide. This obligation is not just a right but a binding international duty.

Depriving Palestinians of living on their ancestral lands is part of the U.S. and Israeli regime's efforts to erase Palestinian identity. Since the inception of the occupying regime, there has been a repeated desire for ethnic cleansing in Palestinian territories.

This effort intensified in the Israeli regime's genocidal war in Gaza, where relentless military attacks, including destruction, bombings, terror tactics, blockades, and starvation, sought to force civilians in Gaza to leave their homes that had become uninhabitable.

More than 47,000 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, women, and children, were killed in these brutal attacks.

Seventy percent of Gaza's vital

infrastructure was destroyed, and nearly two million people were displaced.

Despite the shocking level of destruction, there are no signs that the resilient people of Gaza are abandoning their land. This undeniable truth reflects the unwavering determination of the Palestinian people to resist occupation and pursue their right to self-determination.

Since 1948, a large number of Palestinians have lived in exile and been forcibly removed from their homeland, with many remaining in overcrowded refugee camps. These camps are a testament to the suffering of the Palestinian people, turning displacement into their bitter destiny for decades.

History has shown that the crime of ethnic cleansing has only added to their suffering and exile, depriving them of any chance to return to their ancestral lands.

The recent U.S. plan is merely an attempt to erase Palestinian identity. If it is not decisively condemned by the international community, it will embolden the Israeli regime to continue its genocide and illegal occupation, rendering the Palestinians' right to self-determination impossible.

This is a point emphasized by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its advisory opinion on July 19, 2024, where it explicitly obligated all states to cooperate in upholding the Palestinians' right to self-determination and ending

the Israeli occupation.

The U.S. plan for the forced relocation of Gaza's population and control over this territory is a blatant threat to the entire international legal system.

Its implementation would inflict irreparable damage on the legitimacy and credibility of the international order and its institutions.

The Gaza Strip is recognized by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice as part of Palestinian territory, and any occupation of this land by another state or regime constitutes an act of aggression.

The normalization of this discourse is not only deeply troubling but also represents a blatant disregard for fundamental principles of international law, including Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. It must be met with a decisive response from the international community.

The only just path for the international community is to rely on the ICJ's advisory opinions and many UN resolutions where the inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their ancestral lands is enshrined in international law.

The international community must also compel the Israeli regime to end its occupation and hold it accountable for its recent widespread crimes. All states are obligated to pursue this goal. Any deviation from these objectives would amount to aiding the ethnic cleansing of a nation and it carries international responsibility.

Lebanon PM forms new government

Lebanon's new Prime Minister Nawaf Salam formed the Mediterranean nation's first full-fledged government since 2022.

Speaking to reporters at the presidential palace on Saturday, Salam said the 24-member cabinet member would prioritize financial reforms, reconstruction, and implementation of a United Nations resolution regarding border

tensions with Israel.

Salam, a diplomat and former president of the International Court of Justice, has vowed to reform Lebanon's judiciary and battered economy and bring about stability in the troubled country, which has faced numerous economic, political, and security crises for decades.

US envoy's anti-Hezbollah statement dangerously counterproductive

Ortagus's meddling in Lebanese government formation is outrageously shameless

From page 1 ▶ The Trump administration will be pushing Lebanon toward anarchy if its unabashed meddling is translated into reality. While the Lebanese people were eying their hopes on the end of a years-long political stalemate and presidential vacuum such remarks by Ortagus are dangerously counterproductive.

The Lebanese were heartened when the Lebanese parliament on January 10 elected army chief Joseph Aoun as the country's new president and he on January 13 designated Nawaf Salam, the Lebanese president of the International Court of Justice, as prime minister to form a government. Amidst this positive course of events, suddenly Ortagus comes to Lebanon and says Hezbollah, which forms an important percentage of the Lebanese population should not have a share in the government.

Either Ortagus and her superiors in the State Department are ignorant of the Lebanese religious, social, and political structure or they are living in a fantasy world. It seems that Ortagus and her superiors are in the wrong job. They are stupid enough that Hezbollah in particular and the Shiites in general are an inseparable part of Lebanese society.

The Lebanese people, both the public and officials, are well aware that it will be impossible to run the country without the involvement of the Shiite population loyal to Hezbollah. It is impossible to have a prosperous Lebanon without involving all groups.

Additionally, not involving Hezbollah in the government is anti-democratic and contravenes what the U.S. claims it stands for.

Both President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam are aware that it is just an illusion to ignore Shias.

It is for this reason that Lebanon's presidency said in a statement on X: "Some of what was issued by the U.S. Deputy Envoy to the Middle

Morgan Ortagus beware: "This is where the Marines were based!"

From page 1 ▶ What is happening is nothing but a new ugly form of imperialist pressure by linking the implementation of the ceasefire agreement or Lebanon receiving any kind of aid to the formation of a government conforming to Israeli desires.

Our main war is with Washington, the mother of terrorism, the Great Satan, and not exclusively with its agent "Israel", whatsoever!

Over the past decades, Washington has provided all forms of unconditional military, political and economic support to its illegitimate bastard "Israel".

Its successive humiliation, however, has forced Washington to remove its imperialist mask and manage the battle itself, not only against the Lebanese and Palestinian peoples but against the entire peoples of West Asia.

This is what prompted Lady Macbeth, deputy of Trump's envoy to West Asia, to "congratulate Israel on defeating Hezbollah."

"We hope its influence will come to an end, that it will be disarmed, and will no longer be part of the government," the Zionist witch added. But where? At the Lebanese Presidential Palace!!

It is not new for the American declining empire to be ideologically and politically biased in favor of "Israel". This time, coupled with Trump's threats to occupy sovereign countries ushers nothing but chaos that will push the entire world towards a hazy fate.

Journalist Uriel Daskal has already confirmed to Walla that the main goal of Trump's provocative statements, such as buying Greenland, occupying Panama, displacing the Gazans

and turning the enclave into the "Riviera of the Middle East" is "to divert attention from what is happening inside the US federal government."

This indeed does not mean that Trump's impudent statements are merely media bubbles. His secretary of state, Marco Rubio, succeeded in forcing the Panamanian president to withdraw from China's "Belt and Road Initiative."

What explains the escalation of imperialist aggression is the rise of the "Brogarchy brothers" to power.

Panis Varoufakis, the former leftist Greek finance minister, confirms in an article in Le Monde entitled "Tech giants have settled in the Oval Office" that Elon Musk and JD Vance, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, etc., are convinced that they have a historic opportunity to reshape the United States' political, legal and administrative systems in a bid to maximize their wealth and gains, at the expense of the marginalized popular classes.

Likewise, those notorious "oligarchic brothers" seek to reshape the UN institutions, the international law and other charters in a way that suits their imperialist capitalist interests.

That's why Trump has imposed sanctions on the ICC, declaring a "national emergency to deal with the threat posed by the court's efforts" merely because it dared to order the arrests of his boys, Netanyahu and Galant.

Quinn Slobodian's Domsday Capitalism extensively elaborates on how Western oligarchies encourage breaking legal and political controls to turn the world into a free space they control as they please.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Minister highlights plans to boost tourism and strengthen ties with Arab nations

From Page 1 ▶ He highlighted strong cultural ties with Tajikistan, promoting the slogan "Two States, One Nation" to reinforce Iran's cultural influence in the region. Recent diplomatic efforts have led to agreements aimed at boosting tourism from Tajikistan, with plans to increase the number of Tajik visitors from 8,000 to 100,000. A key step in this direction has been the mutual waiver of visa requirements for air travel between Iran and Tajikistan.

Regarding the broader Persian Gulf region, Salehi-Amiri noted that around three million Iraqi tourists visit Iran annually, with Mashhad being the primary destination. He expressed optimism about a significant expansion in tourism ties with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Additionally, Iran is actively working on attracting tourists from China, Russia, and India, while recent agreements with Pakistan aim to facilitate cross-border tourism.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi-Amiri repeated Iran's goal of welcoming 15 million international tourists annually, highlighting that the current figures stand at approximately six million. Despite efforts by Western media to depict Iran as unsafe, he asserted that tourists who visit the country consistently describe it as secure, beautiful, and hospitable.



Salehi-Amiri also discussed Iran's tourism infrastructure, noting that the country currently has 455,000 hotel beds, 1,435 hotels, 3,500 eco-lodges, and over 18,000 [other] accommodation centers. However, he emphasized the need for further investment and expansion. So far, during the current [Iranian] year, 45 new hotels have been inaugurated, with more projects in the pipeline.

In addition to tourism development, Iran is actively engaged in cultural preservation. The minister revealed that 350 historical monuments have been restored over the past year, stressing the importance of public cooperation in safeguarding the nation's heritage.

Archaeologists uncover 1.5-million-year-old hand axes in Iraqi desert

A team of archaeologists has made a breakthrough in Iraq's Western Desert, where seven Paleolithic sites have been discovered comprising over 850 stone tools. Led by Ella Egberts from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), this research was undertaken in late 2024 in a pilot project investigating the geomorphological history of the region and assessing the potential for the preservation of ancient archaeological sites.

In the Al-Shabakah region, during the Pleistocene, there was a vast lake. The surroundings and the now-dry lake bed, crisscrossed with ancient dry riverbeds known as wadis, yielded many artifacts. The finds included Lower Paleolithic handaxes, potentially dating back to 1.5 million years, as well as Middle Paleolithic Levallois reduction flakes from around 300,000 to 50,000 years ago.

"Our targeted fieldwork led to the discovery of seven Paleolithic sites in an area of 10 by 20 km," said Egberts in a statement. "One location was selected for systematic research to determine the spatial distribution of Paleolithic material and to conduct preliminary technological and typological analyses."

Egberts, along with Jaafar Jotheri from the University of Al-Qadisiyah and Andreas Nyman from the University of Leicester, believes that further excavation in the area will yield even more significant findings. "The other sites

deserve equally thorough systematic investigation, which will undoubtedly yield similar amounts of lithic material," she noted. The research team intends to expand their study area and conduct in-depth artifact analysis to facilitate a deeper understanding of human evolution and behavior on the Arabian Peninsula.

Three archaeology students from Iraq participated in the fieldwork. They were taught aspects of geoarchaeology and Paleolithic archaeology. The team also hosted a workshop at Al-Qadisiyah University to inspire more students and academics to explore Iraq's prehistoric past.

The findings were presented to a diverse audience, including a multidisciplinary academic gathering at a conference in Karbala and a public event at the Writers' Union in Najaf. Egberts and her team also seized the opportunity to show local elementary school children the prehistoric flint discoveries, fostering a new generation's interest in archaeology.

The project was funded by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq and awarded to Egberts through an honorary fellowship at the University of Leicester. Her next steps will include the reconstruction of environmental changes during the Pleistocene and the study of early human life and behavior in the Western Desert.

(Source: Archaeology Magazine)

Echoes of Iran



Travelers enjoy views of the UNESCO-listed Naqsh-e Rostam Square, a 17th-century gem of architecture in Isfahan, central Iran.

Tehran tourism fair aims to counter Iranophobia, help boost economy

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – Deputy Tourism Minister Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey has announced that the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition will be inaugurated by President Masoud Pezeshkian and will take place from February 11 to 14.

He emphasized that strengthening tourism relations is the most effective way to counter Iranophobia.

During a press conference held yesterday at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Mohseni-Bandpey highlighted the significant role of tourism in economic growth, cultural identity, and diplomatic relations.

He stated that Iran's tourism sector aims to make the best use of diverse opportunities such as culinary, health, coastal, and family tourism.

Tourism as a key economic and political tool

The deputy minister underscored tourism's role in job creation and foreign exchange earnings.

He also emphasized its cultural impact, stating that promoting Iran's historical and cultural heritage helps strengthen national identity.

Additionally, the official pointed out tourism's diplomatic benefits, particularly in fostering international interactions when other channels may be less effective.

Mohseni-Bandpey addressed the portrayal of Iran in inter-



national media, stressing that tourism development is an effective strategy to counter negative narratives, underlining that the upcoming exhibition aims to showcase Iran as a safe and attractive destination for travelers worldwide.

Expanding international participation

This year's exhibition will be significantly larger, occupying a total area of 55,000 square meters to address previous concerns regarding limited space. More than eight international delegations have confirmed their attendance, with 14 countries, including Turkey, Qatar, Malaysia, Thailand, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Indonesia, Madagascar, and the UAE, set to participate with their own pavilions.

Key features of the exhibition include 20 educational workshops led by 27 distinguished experts, 10 specialized panels focusing on various tourism

sectors, and dedicated areas for scientific and academic associations.

A selection of students, as honorary cultural ambassadors, will also take part in the event, introducing Iran's tourist attractions to international guests.

Grand opening with 500 distinguished guests

The exhibition's opening ceremony will host 500 domestic and international figures.

As part of a broader effort to promote tourism awareness, free entry has been arranged for students and university attendees.

Incentives for affordable tourism

Mohseni-Bandpey noted that the government has introduced tax exemptions for one- to three-star hotels to help make travel more accessible.

He said that the initiative is aimed to prevent price hikes

and encourage budget-friendly travel options.

Discussions have also been held with pension funds and the hotel industry to facilitate affordable tourism packages. Moreover, agreements with the Welfare Organization will enable families with disabled members to travel at reduced costs, the deputy minister explained.

Encouraging Green Energy in Tourism Facilities

Elsewhere in his remarks, he announced incentives for newly constructed hotels to adopt renewable energy sources, aligning with the country's sustainability goals.

Focus on innovation and startups

Recognizing the importance of innovation in tourism, a dedicated hall for startups will be featured at the exhibition, Mohseni-Bandpey said reporters. "Furthermore, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, school tours will be organized to promote tourism awareness among students."

In addition, the official highlighted three essential elements for tourism development; attraction, security, and infrastructure.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 28 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

55 smuggled artifacts returned from Türkiye unveiled at Urmia Museum

TEHRAN – A special exhibition showcasing 55 smuggled Iranian artifacts recently returned from Türkiye has been inaugurated at the Urmia Museum.

The unveiling ceremony, held in honor of the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution known as the Ten-Day Dawn (Daheh Fajr) celebrations, was attended by cultural officials, heritage experts, and local dignitaries, ILNA reported on Friday.

According to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the repatriated artifacts include a variety of historically significant objects.

Among them are a sword believed to date back to the Sassanian era, animal figurines from the Iron and Bronze Ages, several glass and metal bowls, a copper



ewer, and 42 ancient coins of Iranian origin.

These items were illegally smuggled out of the country and later discovered in the Turkish provinces of Erzurum and Erzincan, the report added.

The unveiling event was attended by prominent figures, including Hakem Mamakan, Urmia's representative in parliament, Morteza Safari, the tourism chief of West Azarbaijan province, Mozaffar Abbaszadeh, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Arts of Urmia University, Saeed Azoddodin Maleki, Head of the Iranology Foundation, and Bahram Zeinalzadeh, Director General of Nomadic Affairs of West Azarbaijan.

In early June 2024, Türkiye returned those historical artifacts of Iranian origin that were smuggled illegally into the country.

In late January 2025, the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts confirmed that the artifacts were transferred home.

Photo exhibit showcasing Iran's cultural heritage underway at National Museum

TEHRAN – A captivating photo exhibition titled "Iran: The Sacred Land" by renowned photographer Herbert Karim Masihi is currently underway at the National Museum of Iran.

The exhibition, which opened on February 6, has attracted cultural and artistic figures eager to explore Masihi's artistic vision, the museum's head of Exhibition Affairs told the Tehran Times on Saturday.

The collection features 80 striking photographs that vividly depict Iran's rich architectural and historical heritage. Through his extensive travels, Masihi has skillfully documented some of the country's most iconic sites, offering viewers a glimpse into the beauty and intricacy of Iranian art and architecture, Nina Rezaei explained.

A statement at the entrance of the exhibition reads: "Here lies a visual narrative of a story called 'Memories of the Sacred Land'—a not-so-fictional tale of a traveler's journey across this land, accompanied by an old man who teaches him to converse with stones, bricks, and shadows."

The exhibition includes stunning representations of treasured mosques and Islamic structures, as well as significant historical landmarks such as Persepolis and contemporary architectural marvels like Azadi Tower.

Visitors can explore "Iran: The Sacred Land" daily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm until February 19, 2025.

Iran, an ancient land steeped in history, boasts one of the



world's oldest continuous major civilizations, with settlements dating back to 4000 BC. It is adorned with a wealth of cultural treasures, including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, and diverse natural landscapes, complemented by 28 UNESCO labels.

Viewed through a broader lens, Iranian history unfolds in

two distinct eras: pre-Islamic and Islamic. The rise of the Medes in 625 BC marked the unification of Iran into a nation and empire. However, it was the Islamic conquest of Persia (633–656) that signaled a pivotal moment, bringing an end to the powerful Sassanid Empire (224–651) and reshaping the course of the nation's history.

Benefactors contribute to constructing over half of schools

TEHRAN –Some 51 percent of the schools in the country are constructed with the help of benefactors, the government spokesperson, Fatemeh Mohajerani, has said.

“The participation of school-building benefactors has significantly increased in recent years so that about 48 to 51 percent of the schools are built thanks to their financial assistance,” IRIB quoted Mohajerani as saying.

Benefactors’ participation in constructing schools shows their commitment and will to improve educational opportunities and develop educational infrastructure; their efforts can have positive, profound impacts on the education, students, and the future of the country, she noted.

The official went on to say that the current administration focuses on expanding educational infrastructure and building new schools, to replace the prefabricated ones, with the help of benefactors even in areas where there are only one or two students.

“Education, educational equity, and the elimination of educational deprivation are among top priorities of the current administration,” the official highlighted.

Benefactors pledge \$250m to construct schools

Benefactors have pledged to provide 200 trillion rials (around 250 million dollars) for constructing schools in the current Iranian



year that started on March 20, Mohammad Reza Jafari, CEO of the Association of School-Building Donors, has said.

Over 50 percent of benefactors have contributed to building 8,000 classrooms so far this year, IRIB quoted Jafari as saying.

Referring to the number of semi-finished projects to be constructed by benefactors, he said some 1,856 schools and 9,746 classrooms need more budget to be completed.

Moreover, a total of 3,206 school projects with 1,6157 classrooms are on the agenda to be built, but these projects need the support of the government to be built, Jafari noted.

According to Somayeh Hashemi, a member of the international committee of the Association of

School-building Benefactors, more than 6,000 Iranian women who are residing out of the country are actively engaged in constructing schools. With the contribution of these benevolent persons, each school expanded to six or seven schools, IRNA reported.

She made the remarks on December 28, 2024, on the sidelines of the first national school construction conference held in Torbat-e Jam, Khorasan Razavi Province.

In the Iranian year 1401 (2022-2023), benefactors allotted 46 trillion rials (about 57 million dollars) for school construction and collected the needed amount in flocks.

In 1402 (March 2023 – March 2024), their contributions almost tripled, as they increased by 115

trillion rials (almost 144 million dollars).

Educational equity a fundamental goal

President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that the administration intends to transform the education system so that no student is deprived of the right to quality education, highlighting that educational equity is not a mere slogan but a fundamental goal.

It is not acceptable that students in public schools in underprivileged areas do not receive a good education while they have to compete with students in private schools that benefit from the best education, Pezeshkian stressed.

He made the remarks on December 26, 2024, in Bojnourd, the capital of North Khorasan province, Borna reported.

The president said providing vocational training alongside education is one of the key areas of transforming educational methods, through which the youth will develop skills needed for a profession after graduating from high school.

Referring to the extensive plans to solve the infrastructural challenges of schools, the president stressed, “We will overcome all school constructing challenges within a year. One of our main objectives is to turn public schools into the best education model.”

Iran, Oman telecom companies sign MOU on data transmission

TEHRAN –Iranian and Omani telecommunication companies have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand data transmission among operators of the two countries.

The MOU was signed by Pishgaman Company, on behalf of Iran, and Omantel, on behalf of Oman, on the sidelines of Iran Corridor 2025 event, held in Dubai on February 3, Mehr news agency reported.

The MOU aims to strengthen data transit corridors in the northern and southern routes; it is considered an important step to transform Iran into a regional data transmission hub.

Accordingly, data transit capacity to Oman will rise to 4.5 terabits per second from the northern borders to Europe and the internal borders of Iran, and a safe and high-speed network will be created from the northern borders of Iran (toward Europe) to the southern routes (toward Oman and the Persian Gulf).

By optimizing existing infrastructure, the project will save the time and cost of data transmission between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, and provide an efficient alternative to longer marine routes.

Cooperation with Omantel, as one of the leading operators in the Persian Gulf region, strengthens Iran’s access to international networks through the Southern Corridor and enables a more stable connection to global data

centers. On the other hand, utilizing Iran’s northern routes enhances the security and variety of data transfer routes to Europe.

The MOU will also reinforce Iran’s position in the digital transit map of the world, and serve as an opportunity to attract investment in the information technology sector and create employment in the country’s communication infrastructure sector.

Iran Corridor 2025

Iran Corridor 2025, was held a day prior to Capacity Middle East, the major telecommunication conference in the region, which is being held from February 4 to 6.

The event aimed to showcase Iran’s communication infrastructure as a secure route for data transmission in the region.

An Iranian delegation led by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister, Sattar Hashemi, traveled to Dubai to take part in the events.

Leading regional operators from 15 countries participated in the Iran Corridor. Hashemi delivered a speech focusing on Iran’s capabilities in the communication sector as well as strengthening regional cooperation.

The Iran Corridor aimed to promote regional cooperation in advancing the Digital Economy by enhancing interconnected digital infrastruc-

tures.

The one-day event served as a platform to showcase the rapid advancement in technology, innovation, and connectivity via Iran. As one of the most dynamic regions for technological growth, Iran is poised to be at the center of transformation in the Middle East.

The country plays a strategic role as a vital corridor, linking regions through terrestrial and submarine fiber optic networks, and fostering diversity in digital facilities. This position enables the integration of regional digital platforms and reliable, high-speed data communication.

The event explored opportunities for co-investment in interregional cable systems, leveraging Iran’s role at the crossroads of Trans-Eurasian corridors: the Middle East to Central Asia and the Caucasus, the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea, and the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea.

It emphasized geo-distributed data centers, Digital Free Zones, and Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) while highlighting advanced technologies like Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, and secure communication systems to advance digital connectivity.

On the sidelines of the event, Hashemi held meetings with key leaders, who have participated in the event, from across the globe.

ENGLISH IN USE

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\$22m earmarked for equipping technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry’s main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday. Given that the number of years students are supposed to spend in career and technical education high schools has increased this year from two to three years, we need to assess the education quality provided in previous recent years and plan more appropriate methods for the next few years, he further explained.

تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است. حسینی مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود.

او به برخی از تغییرات ایجاد شده در نظام جدید آموزشی اشاره کرد و بیان کرد: با توجه به استقرار پایه دوازدهم و سه ساله شدن هنرستان‌ها در سال جاری، باید کیفیت آموزشی ارائه شده در سال‌های اخیر را مورد واکاوی قرار داده و برای سال‌های بعد برنامه‌ریزی‌های بهتری داشته باشیم.

‘Know your brain, your brain is your entire body’

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN –National Brain Awareness Week is scheduled to be observed from February 22 – 28 in Tehran to promote cognitive sciences and brain health, as well as raise public awareness of the structure, function, and capabilities of the brain.

Supported by the headquarters for the development of cognitive sciences and technologies, Brain Awareness Week has been celebrated in the country since 2015. The tenth edition will be held under the theme of ‘Know your brain, your brain is your entire body’ by holding several educational programs and conferences at schools, universities, and other cultural centers.

Improving, and maintaining brain health and empowering it is a basic need in any society. The headquarters for the development of cognitive sciences and technologies in cooperation with institutions, scientific and research centers as well as non-governmental organizations, is trying to

Increase people’s awareness of the structures and functions of the brain and help them learn about brain disorders, their early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

The global World Brain Awareness Week is held on March 10-16. It was founded by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives in 1995 and is coordinated by the Dana Foundation. Strategic partners include the Society for Neuroscience Societies, and the International Brain Research Organization.

It aims to increase public awareness of the progress and benefits of brain research. It unites the efforts of partner organizations from around the world in a week-long cele-



bration of the brain every year in March.

Brain-machine interface

The intersection of neuroscience and technology is giving rise to a new era of human-machine interaction.

One of the most promising developments in this field is the brain-machine interface (BMI).

BIMs are devices that can record neural activity and, potentially, stimulate specific brain regions. This technology holds the potential to revolutionize various fields, from medicine to human enhancement.

In the future, BIMs could enhance human capabilities, such as memory, cognition, and sensory perception. This could lead to significant advancements in fields like education, entertainment, and work. For instance, a BMI could be used to enhance memory, allowing individuals to learn and retain information more effectively. It could also be used to improve attention span and focus, leading to increased productivity and creativity.

Persian Medicine Festival to develop knowledge-based enterprises: official

TEHRAN –The fourth Persian Medicine Festival will serve as a platform for experts in Persian medicine and knowledge-based companies to share expertise and experiences, providing the basis for the development of knowledge-based enterprises, an official with the health ministry has said.

Highlighting the role of technology and entrepreneurship in reviving the capacity of Persian medicine, Hossein Rezazadeh said that in this year’s festival, a lot of companies and start-ups that have taken effective steps in improving Persian medicine by providing technological solutions will attend the festival, the health ministry website reported.

The technology and entrepreneurship section of the festival covers different fields including medicine, food and medicine, tools and equipment, cosmetics and hygiene, software, and artificial intelligence.

The main objective is not only to improve the quality of services in the health sector but also to lay the basis for attracting investment and expanding knowledge-based enterprises by creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs and experts in this field.

Persian Medicine Festival

The fourth Persian Medicine Festival is planned to be held in April with the theme of ‘integration of Persian medicine into the healthcare system’.

The integration of the services will not only help to improve health indicators but also have a significant impact on the economy of the country’s healthcare system, the health ministry’s website quoted Nafiseh Hosseini-Yekta, the director of the health ministry’s Persian medicine office, as saying in December 2024.

“Iran has the capacity to become one of the pioneers in providing traditional and complementary medicine services in the world.

The integration of Persian medicine



in the healthcare system can be a turning point in the global application of the knowledge,” the official noted.

Considering the general health policies of the country, including its emphasis on the promotion and development of Persian medicine, the festival is an important step towards the realization of these goals, she added.

Moreover, it opens up a valuable opportunity to introduce the unique capacities of Persian medicine while laying the ground for specialists, researchers, students, and those interested in Persian medicine to showcase their latest scientific and research achievements.

It also promotes interactions between educational, research, and treatment centers of Persian medicine at the national level in three sectors including science, culture, and art, focusing on education, research, treatment, technology, and Persian medicine veterans.

This year, in addition to the three main sections, a special section is dedicated to students of all grades.

The 3rd Persian Medicine Festival was held in Tehran in January 2023 with the main goal of identifying and supporting top scientists and innovators in the health sector.



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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The faithful are tied in kindness and affection together like members of a body, one's pain and hardship affect the others.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:18 Evening: 17:59 Dawn: 5:32 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:56 (tomorrow)

Michael Winterbottom, Mohammed Sawwaf filming "Gaza Year Zero" in Palestine

UK director Michael Winterbottom and Mohammed Sawwaf have started filming the drama "Gaza Year Zero" in the Gaza Strip in Palestine, reteaming after "Eleven Days in May".

Sawwaf and his team are filming in Gaza while Winterbottom is co-directing and editing from London, Screen Daily reported.

Le Pacte has boarded world sales and French distribution and will be launching the film with a first treatment and stills at EFM.

The fiction film tells the story of a 13-year-old boy and his family as they try to survive in a country destroyed by war. The film draws on the experiences of Sawwaf and his team who have been working in Gaza all through the war.

Winterbottom won the Berlin Golden Bear for "In This World" in 2003, a docu-drama about the journey from Pakistan to London of two refugees from Afghanistan.

The UK-Palestine co-production between Revolution Films and Gaza-based Alef Multimedia is produced by Hashim Alsaraf and Ben Pearce and executive produced by Melissa Parmenter.

Winterbottom and Sawwaf's 2022 documentary "Eleven Days in May" focused on the families of children killed in Gaza during the ongoing conflict with Israel.

A boy who adored Sergio Ramos and all things Real Madrid. A girl who wanted to become a journalist. A seven-year-old who had a brain condition and loved to eat tomatoes with every meal. A toddler who never grew tired of playing hide and seek behind a door. A seven-month-old boy who had just learned how to crawl and was showered in kisses by his siblings. These are some of the 67 children who were killed in Israel's 11-day bombing campaign on

Gaza in May 2021.

Some suffered violent deaths in their sleep, others were killed while at home or in their neighborhoods as they played or ran simple errands.

The conflict erupted as tensions over occupied East Jerusalem rose. Israel claimed it was intending to damage Hamas's military abilities, but rights groups and several governments were alarmed by the growing number of child casualties – the overwhelming majority of whom were Palestinian.

After watching news of the attacks from Britain, Michael Winterbottom, a celebrated director, decided to make a film remembering these young victims – and so he linked up with Mohammed Sawwaf, a Palestinian filmmaker on the ground.

Sawwaf sent about 100 hours of footage to Winterbottom, who edited the documentary, narrated by Kate Winslet, in a dark cutting room in London.

For about 80 minutes, the audience witnesses mere moments of lifetime pains. Siblings, some so young that they will soon lose vivid memories of their killed brothers or sisters, shuffle nervously as they speak about their bereavement. Mothers and fathers put on brave faces in front of their surviving children, but break into tears when filmed alone. Keepsakes are carefully laid out in front of the camera – a Star Wars hoodie, a school certificate, the kind of necklace that costs a pittance but means the world to a little girl.

And we see mobile phone photos and videos, complete with cartoon-like Snapchat filters, showing the children full of life and happy before images of them which attest to the grimmest realities of war – small bodies, bloodied, and torn into pieces.

Familiarizing foreign students with history, culture, and civilization of Iran

By **Mohamadreza Seyedagha**

TEHRAN-The Iranology Foundation in Tehran is holding a knowledge-enhancement course on Iranology for a group of students from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, who are all familiar with the Persian language.

The two-week course is designed to familiarize foreign students with the history, culture, and civilization of Iran and includes educational programs, specialized workshops, and field visits to historical and cultural sites.

It has been designed by the Iranology Foundation, in collaboration with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, to deepen knowledge about Iran and build cultural bridges with Eurasian countries.

In exclusive interviews with the Tehran Times, two participants in the course elaborated on their familiarity with the Persian language, their experiences in Iran, and how the Islamic Republic is seen in their countries.

Participating from Kyrgyzstan, Azat Bokolev has studied Persian language at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Kyrgyz National University and is working as a translator and interpreter for Iranian companies.

On the reason he chose to study Persian language, he said: "My father is a writer in Kyrgyzstan. He is pretty strong in literature and loves Persian literature as well. When I finished school and it was time to choose a major to continue in university, he advised me to choose the language of literature. I asked him which language that was and he said Persian language".

"My father told me that if I learned Persian, it would be easier to learn other languages of the Central Asia because you can find many Persian words in our language and many more in Uzbek and Kazakh languages. For example, if you take Uzbek language, it seems like Persian with Turkish grammar. And of course, Tajikistan is a Persian-language country," he added.

This is Bokolev's fourth time in Iran. He has visited Mashhad, Isfahan, Qom, Kashan, Tehran, and Gorgan in his trips. "Every time I come to Iran, there is always something new and interesting to discover. People of Iran are very nice, and the same is true for the food, and of course many historical sites. And I would love to see other



parts of Iran like southern, central, and northwestern cities," he noted.

Regarding Iranophobia propaganda run by the Western media and its influence on the people of Kyrgyzstan, he said: "As a country in Central Asia, we have the same heritage with Iran like Nowruz, and we do not have such a thing as Iranophobia in our country".

He concluded by saying that "Iran has always been our friend. Our people like Iran and they know that Iran has very strong people. I would love to come to Iran again. I always call Iran as my second home".

Another participant in the course Uktamali Ravshanov from Bukhara, Uzbekistan, is a Ph.D. student of history at Bukhara State University.

He is also the head of History Department at the Bukhara Museum, which as he said is "one of the oldest museums in the world, with 140,000 items kept in it, some of them belonging to Iran including carpets and handicrafts among other things".

Speaking about how he learned to speak Persian, he said: "Bukhara is home to four languages (Uzbek, Tajik, Persian, and Russian) as it is a tourist city and it was located on the Silk Road in the past".

Ravshanov noted that he came to Iran last year for the first time and stayed for four months. "In the first two months, I learned Persian and then I traveled around Iran and visited Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan, Kashan, Hamedan, Kerman-shah, and Mashhad".

Regarding how the Uzbek people think of Iran, he said: "For the people of Uzbekistan, the first thing that comes to their mind is that it is a religious country. Another point is

its ancient history and the rest include its culture, literature, and music".

Also speaking to the Tehran Times, Iman Nezamzadeh, vice president of the international and scientific cooperation at the Iranology Foundation, elaborated on the course.

"Iran, with its ancient civilization and rich culture, has always been of interest to scholars and researchers worldwide. This course is a valuable opportunity for the participants to closely acquaint themselves with various aspects of this civilization and gain a deeper understanding of Iranian history and identity. We strive at this foundation to provide academic programs that facilitate a better understanding of Iran for foreign students and researchers. This course has been organized with this goal in mind," he said.

"During the two weeks, in addition to attending theoretical classes and educational workshops, participants also visit historical and cultural sites. These visits will include cities such as Tehran, Kashan, and Isfahan," he added.

Nezamzadeh emphasized the importance of scientific and cultural exchanges between countries and said: "The participants can be cultural ambassadors of Iran in their own countries".

He also expressed hope that this program would expand in the future and serve as a bridge for scientific and cultural interaction between Iran and other countries.

"This is in our agenda to hold such programs for different regions. According to the policies of the country, our priority is the neighboring countries. The next step will include the other countries. However, international affairs need to be

carried out with certain considerations," he noted.

"We do not intend to induce or force anything in these courses but we seek to prepare the grounds for the participants so that they can gain enjoyable first-hand experiences," he stated. "This happened last year when we had this course for a group of students from Georgia as they returned to Iran afterwards one or two times and brought some others with them as well".

Regarding cooperation with foreign universities and organizations to hold such courses abroad, Nezamzadeh said: "We are in touch with our cultural attaches in other countries and collaborate in organizing sessions and workshops on Iranology during the cultural weeks and we plan to increase our international programs".

The Iranology foundation was founded in 1997 to create a center for students and professors who share a deep interest in Iran and its rich history and culture.

The foundation seeks to give people worldwide a comprehensive notion of the Iranian civilization and is willing to cooperate with foreign Iranologists in this regard. The department of International Scientific Cooperation is the one responsible for identifying talented individuals and institutions that would like to study and observe the beauties and sophistications of Iran up close.

The Department of International Scientific Cooperation provides a number of opportunities for institutions and scholars active in the field of Iranian Studies. Entities can form connections with the Iranology Foundation in order to create a better ground for their scientific and research-based activities.

Cartoon of Day



Palestinian
Cartoonist: Sherif Arafa from Egypt

"Positive Leadership in Practice" published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Positive Leadership in Practice: A Model for Our Future" written by Cornelia Lucey and Jolanta Burke has been released in the Iranian book market.

Parvaneh Yousefi and Touraj Allahverdi have translated the book and Doxa Cultural Institute has published it in 364 pages, IRNA reported.

Originally published in 2022, the book aims to help leaders become the best versions of themselves, achieve extraordinary results, and help their team accomplish the same. Packed with research and practical advice from real-life positive leaders, it offers an extensive look into both what high-performance leadership is and how it can be achieved.

"Positive Leadership in Practice" is a resource that all leaders can tap into to be more effective. The book introduces an ALIGHT model that guides leaders through six fundamental resources that can align their own and their team's motivation and transform their performance to an extraordinary level. Further breaking down the six resources into 18 core components, the



book expands on what constitutes the six resources to make them tangible and accessible.

The book also offers leaders the opportunity to self-assess their own levels of resources and levels of positive leadership through a questionnaire, as well as opportunities to reflect on how to further develop these levels of resources and positive leadership. Finally, the book signposts practical strategies to tap into the back of their reflections to take action to become their best possible positive leader.

It is for existing and aspiring managers, leaders, and those with people-related roles such as in human resources, coaching, leadership development, and organizational consultants, as well as anyone in more informal leadership positions. After all, we are all leaders.

Cornelia Lucey is an award-winning leadership psychologist and consultant delivering transformational and bespoke positive psychology development programs for large-scale multinationals, charities, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and start-ups. Her specialties are in wellbeing, resilience, and positive leadership, and she has published research in all these fields.

Jolanta Burke, Ph.D, is a chartered psychologist specializing in positive psychology and a senior lecturer at the Centre for Positive Psychology and Health, RCSI University of Medicine, and Health Sciences, Ireland. She has authored eight books and was acknowledged by The Irish Times as one of 30 people who make Ireland a better place.