

Lebanon Won't Be Israeli 'Colony' Controlled Remotely by Washington



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Scenes from the protests that overwhelmed Lebanon as flights from Iran were suspended, leaving citizens stranded in foreign airports due to Israeli threats, on February 13, 2025.

Israeli general drops the bombshell, leaves Bibi red-faced

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has left no stone unturned in his quest to eliminate Hamas but he has fallen flat on his face.

During the course of the Gaza conflict, senior Israeli officials admitted their army's incapability to subdue Hamas.

A former Israeli army general is the latest figure who has acknowledged the regime's failed strategy in Gaza.

In a scathing commentary for Israeli news site Ynet, Giora Eiland said "Israel has failed in three-and-a-half out of the four goals of the war."

"We have not demolished Hamas' military power; we have not overthrown Hamas' rule; we are not managing to return the residents ... safely to their homes [in Israel], and as for the return of the abductees, the fourth goal – we have partially succeeded," he said.

Eiland recognized that Hamas has "achieved all of its goals, chief among them: continuing its rule in Gaza". ▶ Page 5

Iran hopes Beirut makes 'wise' decision as public fury persists over flight suspensions

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador to Beirut, Mojtaba Amani, has asked the Lebanese government to help mollify the Lebanese people's anger through dialogue and communication after the Arab country canceled a Thursday flight that was supposed to carry Lebanese pilgrims from Tehran to Beirut, in a move seemingly influenced by Israel and Washington.

Lebanese authorities have said Tehran-Beirut flights will remain suspended until Monday.

Thousands of Lebanese citizens protested the suspensions Thursday night by blocking roads leading to the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport and chanting "Iran, Iran." The army attempted to disperse the crowd by firing rubber bullets and tear gas at the protesters, who expressed disbelief that the government had decided to "abide by Israeli's order". Demonstrators remained on the streets for several hours despite the heavy-handed police response. ▶ Page 2

Lebanese denounce Tehran-Beirut flight cancellation

TEHRAN – Anger has flared in Beirut following the Lebanese authorities' decision to block an Iranian plane from landing at Rafic Hariri International Airport on Thursday.

A large number of people took to the streets around the airport on Thursday night to condemn the cancellation of the civilian flight from Tehran to Beirut.

The angry protesters set fire to tires and created roadblocks amid clashes with the army that was attempting to reopen the road.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against the United States and Israel.

They accused the Lebanese government of implementing the measure under the influence of Tel Aviv and Washington.

The chief executive of Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport, Saeed Chalandri, told the Mehr News Agency that the Mahan Air flight to Beirut was canceled before takeoff because Lebanon had not granted it permission to land. ▶ Page 5

Iran signs agreement for private sector participation in solar power projects

TEHRAN – Iran has signed an agreement with private investors to develop solar power plants by the summer of 2025, aiming to address the country's electricity supply imbalance.

Mohsen Tarzatab, Deputy Energy Minister and Head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), stated during the signing ceremony that private sector involvement is a positive step and that all efforts must be directed toward resolving power shortages.

"Our priority is to entrust existing infrastructure to the private sector before the government intervenes," Tarzatab said. ▶ Page 4



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Iranians hold nationwide mid-Sha'ban celebrations

On Friday, people all over the country celebrated the birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi (AS), the twelfth Shia Imam. His birth anniversary, known as mid-Sha'ban, the fifteenth day of the lunar month of Sha'ban, is a major religious and cultural event in Iran.

One of the central locations for these celebrations is Jamkaran Mosque, a site deeply associated with devotion to Imam Mahdi near the holy city of Qom.

According to Islamic teachings, Imam Mahdi is the prophesied savior who will emerge to establish justice and peace in the world. The 15th of Sha'ban is the embodiment of our hopeful outlook towards the future.

Pezeshkian's visit to Bushehr highlights Iran's maritime, nuclear advancements

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to the southern province of Bushehr emphasized Iran's dedication to enhancing its maritime security, industrial self-sufficiency, and peaceful nuclear energy program.

The two-day visit concluded on Thursday, featuring key inaugurations and inspections that demonstrated the nation's resilience and technological advancements despite external pressures.

At the Shahid Mahalati Shipbuilding Complex, Pezeshkian supervised the delivery of 10 advanced Coast Guard and pilot vessels to the Ports and Maritime Organization.

Constructed entirely by Iranian engineers and technicians, these vessels represent the country's increasing maritime capabilities and commitment to protecting its territorial waters.

The President described the achievement as a "testament to Iran's ingenuity and determination to rely on domestic capabilities," noting that such progress "neutralizes the impact of unjust sanctions."

He also emphasized the strategic importance of Bushehr province as a center for both energy production and maritime defense. ▶ Page 3

Tehran calls for inclusive Syrian government free from foreign influence

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, reaffirmed Tehran's support for an inclusive, Syrian-led political process, emphasizing that the country's future must be determined solely by its people.

Speaking at a UN Security Council session on Wednesday, he underscored the importance of national dialogue and proportional representation in shaping Syria's governance, rejecting any form of foreign interference.

Citing UN Resolution 2254 as the framework for constitutional reform, Iravani called for free elections to establish a government that truly reflects the will of all Syrians.

The Iranian ambassador reaffirmed Tehran's role as a constructive partner in efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Syria.

He expressed full support for UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen's peace efforts and called on the international community to commit more resources to Syria's reconstruction and stabilization. ▶ Page 2

U.S. gov't's NED confesses involvement in Iran's 2022 unrest

TEHRAN – The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has openly admitted to playing a central role in amplifying and exploiting the tragic death of an Iranian woman in 2022, spurring deadly riots that convulsed Iran for several months.

The admission, made by NED President Damon Wilson in an interview with The Free Press on Wednesday, confirms long-standing Iranian assertions that foreign actors orchestrated the violence ensuing Mahsa Amini's death. The unrest took the lives of about 300 hundred people including over 100 security forces.

The NED which, says is dedicated to "promoting democracy around the world", is funded by the U.S. government, despite claiming to be a non-governmental organization. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

First threat, then agreement

In an analysis, Kayhan addressed Trump's dual policy towards Iran and wrote: If Trump intended to conclude a treaty with Iran within the framework of international principles and laws, he should have behaved in a way that the beginning and process of negotiations were based on the principles of international law. For example, instead of issuing a national security memorandum to implement sanctions more strictly, he could have taken a practical step towards lifting the sanctions as the first step. That is, he should have at least shown that the atmosphere governing the negotiations is not one of threats and pressure, but rather one of respect and dialogue based on equality. What Trump has currently referred to as the "subject of negotiations" is simply the issue of Iran not obtaining a nuclear weapon. This was not the case during his first term as president. Immediately after signing the document of his withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Mike Pompeo set 12 conditions for initiating negotiations with Iran. But this time, they first set conditions and then proposed an agreement!

Jam-e-Jam: Importance of Iran-Turkey regional cooperation

In an article, Jam-e-Jam discussed the recent visit of the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs to Ankara and wrote: The role of influential countries such as Iran and Turkey and continuous consultations between the two countries are very important. Given their common interests on many regional issues, the two countries can also pave the way for sustainable development in the region. Turkey, as a bridge between Asia and Europe, has extensive opportunities to increase economic relations with Iran. Likewise, Iran, with its rich energy resources, economic capacities, and strategic geographical location, can play an important role in meeting Turkey's needs. In general, the continuation of consultations between Iranian and Turkish officials at high levels and the establishment of cooperation mechanisms in various fields will not only contribute to the interests of the two countries but can also be effective in creating regional stability and security. Ankara and Tehran, as two regional powers, can play a key role in helping to promote regional peace and development through active diplomacy and constructive cooperation.

Army deploys 11 brigades at Iran's borders as it awaits completion of extensive border walls



TEHRAN – In an interview with Iranian media, Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, the commander of the Army's (Artesh) Ground Force, said several brigades are currently safeguarding Iran's eastern and western borders as the country is constructing extensive walls to help combat terrorist and smuggler infiltration.

Speaking to IRNA, General Heidari emphasized the importance of this deployment, stating, "We have stationed 11 brigades along the borders to ensure the security of our nation. In addition, we are constructing a border wall in the east and southeast regions of the country."

The newly deployed brigades are equipped to respond swiftly and decisively to any threats that may arise, he said. The Army's ground forces have demonstrated their readiness and capability through recent military exercises at eastern and western border points, the military official added.

"The message of these exercises is clear: if any terrorist groups, including ISIS or similar factions aligned with extremist entities, attempt to threaten our national security near the borders, they will

Arman-e-Emrooz: Negotiations with America; too far, too close

Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the issue of negotiations with America in an interview with Dr. Salaheddin Harsani, an international affairs analyst. He said: Iran's position of "no to negotiations" is not an official position, but rather a declaration and a tactical one. Also, the decision not to negotiate or talk with America does not mean readiness to negotiate with Europe, because Europe is not allowed to negotiate with Iran due to Trump's repeated warnings. Trump had said that anyone who agrees with Iran will be punished and sanctioned by us. In addition, if Europe is willing to negotiate with Iran, it must also take into account the interests of Israel. That is, the conditions for Europe's negotiations with Iran are to take into account the interests of America and Israel. Given the geopolitics of the demands, it would be better for the country's decision-makers to turn Trump's declared and tactical threats into opportunities in the form of a calculated and rational negotiation, and prepare the situation to improve public living conditions. The conditions for negotiation are so closer than we expected.

Farhikhtegan: Where will the enthusiasm for negotiations lead?

In a note, Farhikhtegan dealt with the reformists' enthusiasm for negotiations at any cost. It wrote: Trump signed his second memorandum in support of maximum pressure against Iran. The logic of those who pay attention to international relations from an idealistic point of view is that peace can be established in the world by encouraging political systems. Though a large percentage of politicians who are eager to negotiate are idealists, their claims and statements sometimes even go beyond idealistic boundaries. While the U.S. President's two memorandums have focused on Iran's vital issues and practically targeted its existence, some reformists are trying to say that nothing new has happened in this memorandum. Some politicians insist on paving the way for negotiations, and for this reason, they are distorting and interpreting Trump's memorandum. If Trump explicitly states that negotiations must result in the closure of Iran's missile and military programs, will they still accept it?

face severe and aggressive responses from our armed forces," General Heidari asserted.

Iran began the year with large-scale military drills involving different branches of the Armed Forces. The Army's ground exercises in the eastern Khorasan Razavi Province and western Kermanshah Province particularly garnered attention as forces used state-of-the-art equipment to successfully complete anti-terrorism missions.

In his remarks to the media, General Heidari said that in addition to such exercises, the border wall construction in the eastern and southeastern regions is a critical component of the Army's comprehensive border security strategy. Walls safeguarding Iran's western borders will soon enter the construction phase, according to authorities in the Interior Ministry.

"The presence of our brigades and the construction of the border wall send a strong message to our neighboring countries and allies. We are committed to promoting peace, friendship, and brotherhood while ensuring the safety and security of our homeland," the Army commander concluded.

Tehran calls for inclusive Syrian government free from foreign influence

From page 1 ▶ The Iranian envoy criticized the "unjust and unlawful" sanctions imposed by the US and the European Union. He argued that these extraterritorial measures have severely hampered Syria's reconstruction efforts and disproportionately harmed ordinary citizens.

"Temporary relief measures or limited humanitarian exemptions are not viable solutions," he stated. "These unlawful sanctions must be completely lifted so that the Syrian people can rebuild their country and regain a dignified life."

Iravani stressed that the sanctions have obstructed critical early recovery projects necessary for Syria's long-term stability. He also emphasized that their removal is essential to facilitating the safe and voluntary return of millions of displaced Syrians.

The Iranian diplomat also raised concerns about the resurgence of terrorism in Syria, warning that foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) and extremist groups continue to pose a serious threat to regional and global security.

"The risk of advanced weapons stockpiles falling into the hands of terrorists is real," he cautioned, citing UN reports estimating that 42,500 individuals with suspected ties to the Daesh (ISIS) Takfiri terrorist group remain detained in camps in northeastern Syria.



Calling for a structured and accountable repatriation process for these individuals, Iravani emphasized that they should be returned to their home countries and held legally accountable.

"Iran remains firmly committed to combating terrorism and is ready to work with legitimate international partners to address this critical challenge," he stated.

Iravani also rejected allegations from the United States that the Islamic Republic is destabilizing Syria, denouncing them as baseless and deliberately misleading.

He condemned the US narrative, asserting that Washington's actions on Syrian soil contradict its accusations against Iran.

"These accusations are designed to mis-

represent the truth and deceive the global community," Iravani declared.

Iravani's remarks were a direct response to statements made by Deputy US Ambassador to the UN, Dorothy Shea, who had accused Iran of supporting militant groups in Syria and attempting to reestablish a military presence in the war-torn country.

Categorically rejecting these claims, Iravani reaffirmed Iran's commitment to Syria's sovereignty, stability, and territorial integrity. He emphasized that Tehran's presence in Syria is solely at the invitation of the Syrian government and is aimed at supporting efforts to restore peace and security.

Turning to Israel's ongoing military actions in Syria, Iravani strongly condemned Tel Aviv for systematically targeting Syrian military and research infrastructure with backing from Washington.

"Israel remains a grave threat to Syria, repeatedly violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said. "Despite numerous Security Council resolutions, the regime refuses to withdraw from the occupied Golan Heights and continues expanding its occupation."

He urged the UN Security Council to take decisive action against Israeli aggression and hold the regime accountable for its repeated attacks on Syrian territory.

U.S. gov't's NED confesses involvement in Iran's 2022 unrest

From page 1 ▶

What happened to Mahsa Amini?

The death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in September 2022 became a flashpoint for Western media and NGOs who claimed she had been beaten up by police while in custody. Amini passed out at a police station and lost her life a few days later in a hospital. Westerners said her death was due to an injury she had sustained to her head.

Iranian authorities maintained that Amini suffered from a pre-existing medical condition—a claim corroborated by her father in a judiciary-released video. This video was filmed while Amini's father was speaking to a judiciary official beside her hospital bed. The official, dispatched to the hospital to investigate, asked her father if he could identify any injuries to his daughter's head, to which he responded, "No, not at all."

A year later, an Iranian-American doctor with a significant social media following disclosed that Amini's brain scans, leaked while she was hospitalized, showed "no signs of injuries" and only evidence of prior surgery. "I withheld this truth to avoid undermining the movement," he admitted, exposing the deliberate manipulation of medical evidence to inflame public sentiment.

NED grantees, including media outlets and activist networks, amplified narratives that said



Amini had been killed by police globally.

In his interview with the FP, Wilson boasted, "Thanks to NED grantees, the world learned about the horrible death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of the brutal Iranian regime."

NED: a legacy of covert regime change

Founded in 1983 and funded by the U.S. Congress, the NED has long been described as a "traditional intermediary of the CIA," tasked with executing overtly what the agency once did covertly.

Former NED officials, including Allen Weinstein, have openly acknowledged this continuity: "A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA," she told the Washington Post in 1991.

The NED's former president, Carl Gershman, explained, "It would be terrible for democratic

groups around the world to be seen as subsidized by the C.I.A. We saw that in the 60s, and that's why it has been discontinued. We have not had the capability of doing this, and that's why the endowment was created."

New York Times reporter John Broder wrote in 1997 that the organization was created "to do in the open what the Central Intelligence Agency has done surreptitiously for decades."

The NED's modus operandi involves channeling millions of dollars annually to opposition groups, media platforms, and NGOs in target nations.

Frances Stonor Saunders, a historian of CIA operations, described the NED as the "umbilical cord of gold that leads directly back to Washington," facilitating information warfare and regime-change campaigns under the veneer of democracy promotion.

In Iran, the NED's grantees re-

portedly funded protest coordination, social media campaigns, and anti-government propaganda. These efforts aligned with broader U.S. strategies to isolate Iran economically and politically.

During multiple protests and riots throughout the years, the scale and violence bore hallmarks of foreign intervention.

In 2022, Western and Israeli-linked actors infiltrated the initial protests and eventually moved towards attacking police stations and city infrastructures.

Mainstream media in the West, meanwhile, advertently echoed only opposition claims and ignored Iran's efforts to address protester concerns, such as pardoning 22,000 detainees in March 2023.

Geopolitical agendas and double standards

The NED's activities in Iran reflect a broader U.S. strategy to weaken independent states that resist Western hegemony.

Parallels exist in Venezuela, Syria, and China, where the NED funds opposition groups under the pretext of "human rights."

Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has repeatedly warned of this "hybrid war"—a blend of sanctions, propaganda, and covert operations aimed at sowing discord.

The so-called human rights groups' one-sided condemnations of Iran, while ignoring U.S.-backed violence worldwide, further expose this hypocrisy.

Lifting Yemen's blockade vital for peace, humanitarian relief: Iran's envoy

TEHRAN – Iran's Ambassador to Yemen, Ali Mohammad Rezaei, has highlighted the dire humanitarian crisis in Yemen, calling for an immediate end to the blockade and urgent steps toward reconstruction.

"We emphasize the need for a complete lifting of the siege on Yemen and the commencement of rebuilding efforts. Supporting affected civilians and restoring war-ravaged areas is crucial to establishing long-term stability and security, as well as fulfilling the aspirations of the Yemeni people," he said, speaking on the occasion of the celebration of the 46th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The blockade in Yemen has been a critical aspect of the ongoing war against the country since 2016. It was imposed by the Saudi-led coalition in an effort to cut off supplies to the Ansarullah Resistance group. This blockade has severely affected the humanitarian situation, restricting the flow of essential goods,

including food, fuel, and medical supplies, and exacerbating the suffering of civilians.

The blockade has been widely criticized by international organizations for its devastating impact on Yemen's population, leading to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rezaei underscored that Tehran has consistently supported peace while actively combating extremist groups.

Referring to Iran's foreign policy principles, the ambassador stated, "Iran has always prioritized its relations with neighboring countries and remains firmly committed to a policy of non-aggression toward regional states."

Rezaei reaffirmed Iran's longstanding opposition to the presence of foreign military forces in the region, stressing that external interventions only serve to destabilize the situation further.

Iran denounces US accusations on supplying arms to Yemen



In a separate development, Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations strongly dismissed recent U.S. allegations that Tehran is supplying arms and financial support to Yemeni Resistance forces. ▶ page 3

Iran hopes Beirut makes 'wise' decision as public fury persists over flight suspensions

From page 1 ▶ The decision has been met with outrage, particularly as Israel has killed thousands of Lebanese citizens since October 2023, decimated a significant part of southern Lebanon, and continues to bombard and occupy parts of the country, despite a ceasefire that came into effect last year.

Addressing the situation on Friday, Amani highlighted the consequences of the flight cancellation, which left many Lebanese passengers stranded at Tehran airport, as they were part of pilgrimage caravans traveling to Iran. "Lebanese individuals who were scheduled to travel to Iran for pilgrimage are now facing significant delays due to this decision," he noted.

The ambassador pointed out that the timing of the flight suspension coincided with misleading claims from an Israeli military spokesperson, who alleged that the Iranian airplane was sus-



pected of carrying illegal goods. "Many in Lebanon view these developments as an attempt to obstruct Iranian participation in the funeral of Martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah," Amani stated.

Hezbollah's late secretary-general, who was assassinated by Israel in the southern suburbs of Beirut in September, is set to be laid to rest on Feb-

ruary 23. Millions of people are expected to attend the funeral of the popular Resistance leader, including travelers from Iran, Iraq, and Yemen.

Amani also said in remarks to Iranian media that Beirut has requested a replacement aircraft for the canceled Iranian flight, a move he supports as long as it does not impose restrictions on

Iranian flights in return. "We are committed to resolving this issue positively and fostering mutual flights between Iranian and Lebanese airlines," Amani affirmed. "God willing, this issue will be resolved through the wise actions of the Lebanese government."

Other Iranian officials were more forceful in addressing the situation. In a statement, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman stated that the Israeli regime had threatened the passenger plane that was unable to complete its flight on Thursday. He called it a blatant violation of international law principles and Lebanon's sovereignty.

Esmail Baghaei also called for serious measures by relevant international bodies, particularly the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), to "stop dangerous Israeli actions against the safety and security of the country's aviation."

Pezeshkian's visit to Bushehr highlights Iran's maritime, nuclear advancements

From page 1 ▶ Additionally, the ceremony marked the beginning of construction for six modern firefighting vessels aimed at enhancing port safety and environmental protection.

Reaffirming commitment to peaceful nuclear energy

President Pezeshkian also visited the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on Thursday, authorizing operations at Units 2 and 3. He toured various sections of the first unit, including the control room and turbine, where he received briefings on the plant's operations, electricity production, and power transmission to the grid.

He also inspected the construction sites of Units 2 and 3 and ordered the installation of the first key equipment component for Unit 2's reactor building to enhance safety standards.

The first phase of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, operating at a capacity of 1,015 megawatts, has generated 72 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity over 11 years since its commissioning.

Its operation has not only recovered an investment equivalent to four times the plant's construction cost but has also facilitated the training of specialized personnel and the expansion of clean and sustainable energy production.

Units 2 and 3 each have a nominal production capacity of 1,057 megawatts. According to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), the facility has made significant advances, resulting in the generation of 7.4 billion kilowatt-hours of nuclear electricity in recent years.

Highlighting the plant's role in Iran's energy security, President Pezeshkian instructed officials to expedite the completion of Phase



II, which will add 1,000 megawatts of clean electricity to the national grid.

"Nuclear technology is a symbol of national pride and self-reliance," he declared, reiterating Iran's commitment to peaceful atomic energy.

The President also lauded the dedication of Iranian nuclear scientists, whose expertise has ensured the plant's uninterrupted operation despite external challenges.

'If our nuclear centers are hit, we will build a thousand others'

Recent reports from The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post claim that U.S. intelligence suggests Israel might be planning airstrikes against Iran's nuclear facilities in mid-2025.

Both outlets emphasize that such aggressions would likely depend on U.S. support, including aerial refueling and intelligence sharing, with the potential to temporarily hinder

Iran's nuclear advancements.

Even though these organized "leaks" seem to be part of a broader narrative aimed at painting Iran as vulnerable, Pezeshkian sounded confident about the nation's capabilities during one of his several speeches in Bushehr.

"They aim to threaten us by targeting our nuclear installations, but they cannot erase the intellect of our youth. Even if a hundred nuclear sites are attacked, our children will build a thousand more," he stated.

On Monday, U.S. President Donald Trump mentioned the possibility of the Israeli regime's belligerent actions against Iran in an interview with Fox News.

Meanwhile, Iran's Air Force chief, Gen. Hamid Vahedi, declared on Thursday, "We inform all nations, friends and foes alike, that our country's strategy is defensive, yet we will retaliate with strength against any hostile act."

Iran FM set to attend 8th Indian Ocean Rim summit in Oman

TEHRAN - Esmail Baqaee, spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced on Friday that Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is scheduled to visit Oman in the coming days.

Araghchi will travel to Muscat at the invitation of the Omani government to participate in the highly anticipated 8th Indian Ocean Rim Summit (IORA).

The summit, which will be held in Muscat on February 16-17, 2025, is being co-hosted by Oman, India, and Singapore. This year's event,

themed "Voyage to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership," will emphasize inclusivity and the forging of new partnerships within the maritime sector. The summit aims to foster greater cooperation among nations and organizations, addressing regional challenges and promoting sustainable development across the Indian Ocean region.

In addition to delivering a speech at the summit, Foreign Minister Araghchi will engage in bilateral meetings with other high-ranking officials and foreign ministers present at the event, further strengthening diplomatic ties and fostering collaborative partnerships.

Lifting Yemen's blockade vital for peace, humanitarian relief: Iran's envoy

From page 2 ▶ In a letter sent to the UN Secretary-General and the president of the Security Council on Thursday, the Iranian mission described the accusations as "baseless" and a diversion from Washington's own role in fueling regional conflicts.

The mission accused the United States of attempting to obscure its complicity in Israeli military actions by falsely attributing regional tensions to Iran. "Unlike the United States, which continues to provide extensive military and financial support to the Israeli regime for its aggression against the oppressed people of the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains committed to the principles of international law, the UN Charter, and Security Council resolutions," the statement read.

Tehran has maintained a "unified and stable" approach to the Yemen conflict, insisting that a sustainable resolution can only be achieved

through a "comprehensive political process" that ensures Yemen's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

The statement also condemned recent military actions by the United States, the United Kingdom, and Israel in Yemen, denouncing them as violations of the country's sovereignty and breaches of international law.

These attacks, Iran's mission noted, are direct retaliation against Yemen's pro-Palestinian solidarity campaign. Yemeni forces have been targeting ships linked to Israel in key maritime zones, including the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Arabian Sea. Additionally, they have launched strikes against Israeli positions in the occupied territories.

Iran has consistently advocated for a diplomatic resolution to the Yemen crisis, calling for an immediate end to hostilities, a nationwide

ceasefire, and meaningful dialogue among Yemeni factions. The mission reiterated that "lasting peace in Yemen can only be achieved through diplomacy, respect for national sovereignty, and adherence to international law—not through military interventions or baseless accusations."

Speaking at a Security Council briefing on Yemen, US Deputy Representative to the UN Dorothy Shea alleged that Iran's material and financial assistance had enabled Yemen's Ansarullah Resistance fighters to "launch numerous attacks on civilian infrastructure" and target American warships. Tehran, however, dismissed these claims as part of Washington's broader strategy to shift blame for escalating conflicts in the region.

Iran maintains that the future of Yemen must be determined solely by its people, without foreign interference.

Abdi wants more from Iran U20 side in Asian Cup

TEHRAN - Iran head coach Hossein Abdi admitted his team could have performed better in the opening AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025 match against Indonesia despite controlling the game from the start.

The four-time champions defeated Indonesia 3-0 in Group C in a match that came alive in the second half. Hesam Nafari opened proceedings five minutes after the start, but the second and third goals from Esmail Gholizadeh and Mobin Dehghan only materialized in the 63rd and 70th minutes.

"We should have scored more goals in the first half, but the second half was an improvement," said Abdi, adding that Indonesia was strong, aggressive and good at keeping the ball.

"In any tournament we have to take the points first. We have to see what we can do in the next match, focus on our opponents' weaknesses and use that.

"All the teams here are the best in Asia, they're trying hard and ready to win the tournament. We have to think carefully, which is why I'm taking it from match to match," Abdi concluded.

We failed to anticipate Iran's set-pieces, Indonesia coach says

TEHRAN - Indonesia U20 football team head coach Indra Sjafri says that his team failed to anticipate Iran's set-pieces and corner kicks.

Indonesia lost to Iran 3-0 in the AFC U20 Asian Cup China 2025 opener.

Indonesia, who were unbeaten in the Qualifiers, picked up the pace in the second half, but either failed to convert its chances or found custodian Arsha Shakouri a stumbling block.

"We did not play badly, but failed to anticipate Iran's set-pieces and corner kicks," said head coach Sjafri. "They are a good team, played a good game and had an advantage over us in their crossing and high balls.

"But on our part, we were weak in one-on-ones and failed to take advantage of our speed."

Iran will meet Yemen on Matchday 2 while Indonesia face Uzbekistan.

Mosimane reveals his departure from Esteghlal

TEHRAN - Veteran South African coach Pitso Mosimane has revealed the key reasons why he ended his marriage with Iranian side Esteghlal.

Esteghlal started the season on a low note, struggling to deliver domestically and in continental competition.

Celebrated South African coach Pitso Mosimane - who was a free agent after his contract with Abha expired - agreed to take over the sinking ship. To some extent, he managed to bring stability, and even went nine games across all competitions without tasting defeat.

However, his relationship with the club soured over allegations of non-payment.

"A big team in Iran, a big team in Asia. We just played [AFC] Champions League with Cristiano Ronaldo's team, we played with Neymar's [former] team, we played with Riyad Mahrez's team," he told 5FM.

"For me as an African coach there is nothing bigger than that. You play with big teams, big coaches, who won [Copa] Libertadores, who won leagues. Everybody who is not in the Premier League is in that space.

"Unfortunately, it didn't end very well because I had to terminate the contract because I had to protect the brand, I had to protect my name, I had to protect the 26 years I've put in football. We have to get paid for the job we've done. We've done well. Good club, and big vibe," Mosimane added.

Mosimane has further stated Esteghlal was in a mess, and the environment was not conducive for him.

"It's one of the biggest clubs in Asia, but the team was a mess to be honest. What I found to have to change. The transition was good, we were doing well to change. It was a team that's not well-looked after. You know when a big team like Man United is not doing well, but you can see that the structure is good, it's looked after, you can still buy players and all that.

"But there we needed more than playing personnel, it will take time, but that's why I went there, because I knew what I came for. But when you don't find resources and back-up to do what you think you could do, then it becomes a problem," Mosimane concluded.

Iran defeat Turkmenistan at 2025 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship

TEHRAN - Iran defeated 5-1 in the 2025 CAFA Women's Futsal Championship on Friday.

Maral Torkman (two goals), Roghaye Soume'eh, Nasimeh Gholami and Zahra Kiani-mansh were on target for Team Melli.

Torkman was named Player of the Match.

Iran, who have previously defeated Uzbekistan 9-0 and Kyrgyzstan 10-0, are scheduled to meet Tajikistan on Sunday.

Iran have won three titles out of three editions.

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

Esteghlal into 2025/25 Hazfi Cup quarterfinals

TEHRAN - Esteghlal football team defeated Shams Azar 2-1 to book their place at the 2024/25 Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals on Thursday.

Mohammadreza Azadi led the visiting team in the 27th minute but Ahmadreza Zendeherouh leveled the score in the added time.

Left-footed Ramin Rezaeian scored the winner in the 95th minute at the Sardar Azadegan Stadium in Qazvin.

Mes lost to Nassaji 1-0 in Rafsanjan, first tier Paykan came from 2-0 down to beat Foolad 3-2 in Tehran, and Sanat Naft defeated Be'sat Kermanshah 2-0 in Abadan.

Mirbagheri wins silver at Asian Junior Cycling C'ships

TEHRAN - Arash Mirbagheri of Iran claimed a silver medal at the 31st Asian Junior Road Cycling Championships.

Yip Hon Man of Hong Kong secured the gold medal and bronze medal went to Sakuntae Thanapat of Thailand.

Mirbagheri had previously won a gold medal in the event.

The 2025 Asian Road Cycling Championship will conclude on February 16.

2025/25 Hazfi Cup: Malavan and Gol Gohar into quarterfinals

TEHRAN - Malavan and Gol Gohar football teams booked their place at the 2024/25 Iran's Hazfi Cup quarterfinals on Friday.

Malavan defeated Zob Ahan 1-0 thanks to Mohammad Omri's extra time goal.

Earlier in the day, Gol Gohar defeated Kheybar Khoramabad 4-2 after the match ended 0-0 in regular time.

The Hazfi Cup is an Iranian knockout football competition held annually by the Football Federation of Iran.

Sepahan are defending champions.

Transport minister meets high-level UN officials in Geneva

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the sidelines of the 87th annual session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee in Geneva, emphasizing the expansion of cooperation in trade, transport, and sustainable investment.

According to IRNA, Farzaneh Sadegh highlighted Iran's role as a founding member of UNCTAD, stating that the country has always played an active role within the Group of 77 and China, which was established during UNCTAD's first conference.

She noted Iran's chairmanship of the group in 2000 and stated that the country is currently serving as the coordinator of the Group of 77 and China on financing for development, the drafting committee, and the main negotiating group.

She added that Iran is leading the group in negotiations for the 16th UNCTAD Conference, set to take place in Vietnam in October 2025.

Sadegh underscored the potential for cooperation between Iran and UNCTAD in transit and transport and called for leveraging the organization's expertise in sustainable investment, trade development, and transport infrastructure enhancement.

She also proposed joint training workshops and invited the UNCTAD Secretary-General to visit Iran.



She further stressed the need for a joint roadmap between Iran and UNCTAD to strengthen ties and implement agreed decisions, advocating for constructive engagement to maximize existing opportunities for trade and economic cooperation.

Enhancing cooperation between Iran, UNECE

Sadegh also met with the Executive Secretary of the UNECE, in which the officials focused on enhancing cooperation between Iran and UNECE in various transport sectors, including road safety, reduction of road fatalities, standardization, and the organization of joint training workshops on transport and transit.

The two sides also discussed Iran's hosting of key transport-related meetings and cooperation in Iran's accession to major international transport conventions and agreements, particularly the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR).

OPEC reports 9% increase in Iran's heavy crude oil price

TEHRAN – The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s latest monthly report indicates that the price of Iran's heavy crude oil rose by \$6.65, or 9.1 percent, in January compared to December, reaching \$79.65 per barrel.

As IRNA reported, citing the OPEC Secretariat, Iran maintained its position as the third-largest producer within the organization in January, with an average daily output of 3.28 million barrels.

OPEC's secondary source report for February shows that the 12-member organization produced 26.678 million barrels per day (bpd) in January, a decrease of 121,000 bpd from December's 26.8 million bpd.

Saudi Arabia led production in January 2025 with 8.937 million bpd, followed by Iraq at 3.999 million bpd and Iran at 3.28 million bpd.

OPEC+ members collectively produced 13.947 million bpd in January, slightly increasing by 3,000 bpd from December's 13.943 million bpd.

Tehran to host 3rd Caspian Economic Forum

TEHRAN – Iran will host the Third Caspian Economic Forum on February 17-18, with the participation of prime ministers and ministers from Russia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, an Iranian trade official announced.

According to Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), Akbar Godari, Director General for Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Russia at the TPO, said on Wednesday that the forum aims to enhance economic, trade, scientific, and technological cooperation among Caspian littoral states.

Key topics include healthcare, energy, finance, tourism, investment in free trade zones, and logistics.

Godari noted that Iran's Trade Promotion Organization has organized seven specialized panels for the first day of the event, covering areas such as trade, industry, and agriculture (Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade); economic, customs, banking, and investment cooperation (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance); transportation, transit, and engineering services (Iran's Transport and Urban Development Ministry); environmental, health, and tourism cooperation (Department of Environment); energy collaboration,

lion bpd.

Overall, the combined crude oil production of OPEC and its allies reached 40.625 million bpd in January, marking a decline of 118,000 bpd compared to December's 40.743 million bpd.

OPEC's latest monthly report confirmed that Iran's heavy crude oil price rose from \$73 per barrel in December to \$79.65 in January 2025. The average price of Iran's heavy crude in 2024 was recorded at \$80.14 per barrel.

The OPEC oil basket price also increased in January, reaching \$79.38 per barrel, up by \$6.31 (8.6%) compared to December 2024.

According to OPEC's February report, global oil demand is expected to rise by 1.45 million bpd in 2025, bringing total demand to 105.2 million bpd.

OPEC also forecasts that global oil demand in 2026 will increase by 1.43 million bpd, reaching a total of 106.63 million bpd.

including oil, gas, electricity, and renewables (Ministry of Oil and Ministry of Energy); scientific and technological cooperation (Vice Presidency for Science and Technology); and discussions among the heads of chambers of commerce (Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture).

On the second day, the prime ministers of the five Caspian littoral states will sign a final declaration outlining measures to strengthen cooperation and implement agreements through periodic ministerial follow-ups.

The first Caspian trade and economic cooperation agreement was signed in August 2018 in Kazakhstan and ratified by Iran's Parliament in January 2023. Under Article 5 of the agreement, the Caspian Economic Forum is to be held periodically in each of the coastal nations.

The inaugural Caspian Economic Forum and exhibition took place in August 2019 in Awaza, Turkmenistan, with the participation of prime ministers and trade delegations.

The second forum was held in Moscow in October 2022, attended by Iran's former First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber and other leaders. During that meeting, it was agreed that Iran would host the third edition in 2024.

Iran signs agreement for private sector participation in solar power projects

TEHRAN – Iran has signed an agreement with private investors to develop solar power plants by the summer of 2025, aiming to address the country's electricity supply imbalance.

Mohsen Tarzatab, Deputy Energy Minister and Head of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA), stated during the signing ceremony that private sector involvement is a positive step and that all efforts must be directed toward resolving power shortages.

"Our priority is to entrust existing infrastructure to the private sector before the government intervenes," Tarzatab said.

He added that Iran is pursuing special permits from the Supreme National Security Council to expedite private sector projects.

Addressing concerns about power distribution companies, Tarzatab assured that any arising issues would be promptly resolved.

He also noted that private firms generating export revenues would be eligible for foreign currency obligation waivers.

Last week, the head of Tehran Regional Electricity Company said that a three-megawatt solar power plant worth approximate-



ly 900 billion rials (\$1.8 million) will be constructed in the Iranian capital.

Farhad Shabihi 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.

In last November, Ali Shabnavard, the director general of

SATBA's Office for Supervision of Construction and Production of Power Plants, said that the capacity of Iran's renewable power plants is going to increase by 500 megawatts (MW) by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20).

"Considering the capacity of the new power plants under construction, the capacity of renewable power plants will increase by 500 megawatts by the end of the current year," the official said.

This trend shows the serious determination of the Ministry of Energy and the government to overcome the imbalance of electricity supply and demand by the development of renewable ener-

gy in the country, he stressed.

He put the current nominal capacity of the country's renewables at 1,371 MW, adding that just last week 53 MW was added to the capacity of the country's renewable power plants.

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

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

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

In January 2022, the Energy Ministry and some of the country's private contractors signed memorandums of understanding (MOU) to cooperate in the construction of new renewable power plants across the country.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$10b to Iraq in 10 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$10 billion to Iraq during 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 Iraq was the second top export destination of the Iranian non-oil goods in the mentioned ten months.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges. Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target.

In late May 2024, the head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said that Iran exports some 2,200 products, valued at \$12 billion, to neighboring Iraq annually.

Speaking in a meeting entitled "Reviewing opportunities and challenges of attracting Iraqi investors and strengthening trade relations between the two countries in line with demarcating Iran in the regional value chain", Jafar Hosseini said that Iraq, benefiting from \$85 billion foreign currency reserves, 130 tons of gold reserves, and 147 billion barrels of proven reserves of crude oil, is among the richest countries in West Asia.

Currently, Iran exports over 2,200 various types of goods and products to Iraq, he said, adding that more than half of the active Iranian traders are present in the Iraqi market.

Developing the trade infrastructures to facilitate trade between the two countries, encouraging traders to invest in Iraq, promoting trade through dispatching and admitting trade delegations and participating in exhibitions of the two countries, etc. are suggested to strengthen the trade and economic relations between Iran and Iraq, he underlined.

In an interview in mid-December, the ambassador of Iran in Iraq praised the economic relations between the two sides and expressed hope that these relations will be more and better.

Mohammad Kazem Ale-Sadeq announced the value of commercial exchanges between the two countries, and stated that economic relations between Iran and Iraq are very good, and expressed hope that these relations will improve.

The envoy further noted: "Iraq is an important country in the region, and we have very important economic, political, and social relations with this neighbor."

In early May 2024, Tehran hosted the 6th meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee.

The two-day event was co-chaired by the former Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Iraqi Minister of Com-



merce Atheer Daoud Al-Ghurairi.

On the first day of the meeting, specialized committees including commercial, industrial, agricultural, standardization and quality control, energy, finance, banking, investment and Insurance, shipping, transport, and Customs, scientific, educational, tourism, health, as well as sports consultative held meetings to discuss areas for cooperation.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

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

Russian delegation meets with ICCIMA head, East Azarbaijan governor

TEHRAN – A Russian trade delegation currently visiting East Azarbaijan province met with the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) and the Governor of East Azarbaijan.

The delegation, consisting of representatives from 19 Russian companies operating in sectors such as chemicals, electronics, machinery, IT products, fruit, industrial equipment, and rail transport, engaged in discussions with ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh and East Azarbaijan Governor Bahram Sar-mast.

Held at the Governor's office, the meeting focused on exploring the existing potential for cooperation between the two countries and reviewing efforts to promote Iran's economic and trade capabilities in various Russian cities.

Last month, Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) and Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry have agreed to strengthen trade relations between Iran and Russia, particularly in the food industry.

The agreement was reached

during a webinar titled "Trade in Iran and Russia with a Focus on the Food Industry," organized by the Tehran Chamber's International Affairs Department in collaboration with Moscow's chamber and Business Russia.

The event, attended by economic operators from both countries, focused on increasing trade in food and agricultural products while enhancing collaboration between private sector entities. Discussions highlighted strategies for identifying economic opportunities and fostering direct business links between Iranian and Russian companies.

During the meeting, Mehdi Sadeghi, deputy head of the TCCIMA, emphasized that Russia is a strategic market for Iran, citing the ratification of the Iran-Eurasian Economic Union free trade agreement by the Iranian parliament and EAEU member states as a key step toward expanding economic ties.

He also pointed to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to Moscow, during which Iranian and Russian officials signed a long-term strategic cooperation document. According to Sadeghi,

this agreement paves the way for joint investments, financial cooperation, infrastructure development, and banking collaboration, all of which should be leveraged by the private sectors of both nations.

To further advance this agenda, the Tehran Chamber is preparing a one-year roadmap for cooperation with the Moscow Chamber. This includes hosting business webinars tailored to targeted industries and facilitating Iranian and Russian firms' participation in trade exhibitions and commercial events.

On the Russian side, Vladislav Chenko, Vice President of the Moscow Chamber, highlighted Moscow's distinct economic structure and consumer behavior. He noted that Moscow residents, compared to the rest of Russia, are willing to pay higher prices for high-quality food products, making the city a prime market for premium imports. He also stressed the city's high influx of international tourists, which boosts demand for diverse food supplies.

Chenko outlined Moscow Chamber's readiness to connect Iranian businesses with Russian manu-

facturers and traders, not just in the capital but across the country. He further mentioned investment opportunities for Iranian firms, including a joint China-Russia technology park under development in Moscow. Additionally, he announced plans for a food and agricultural product exhibition tour in major Moscow retail centers and proposed establishing a joint Tehran-Moscow booth at upcoming trade fairs in the Russian capital. The Moscow Chamber hosts over 100 economic events annually.

Other participants included Roshanali Yektay Gharabaei, Vice President of the Iran-Russia Joint Chamber of Commerce; Alexey Yefimov, Russia's trade representative in Iran; Sadraddin Niavarani, Vice President of Iran's National Agricultural Products Union; Nikolai Machkov, Chairman of the Iran-Russia Economic Cooperation Commission; and Hossein Khakbaz, Logistics and Transport Advisor to the Tehran Chamber's International Affairs Department. Discussions covered strategies to enhance Iran-Russia business cooperation, with an emphasis on private sector engagement.

Lebanon won't be Israeli 'colony' controlled remotely by Washington

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT – The new Lebanese government is strictly adhering to Washington's instructions by banning an Iranian airplane run by Mahan Airlines from landing at Beirut airport. 90% of its passengers were Lebanese.

Reportedly, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam directly ordered Fayeze Rasamni, the Minister of Public Works and Transport in the new government, to temporarily ban any Iranian airplane to Lebanon until dissecting the issue on Monday.

Sources told the Tehran Times that Iranian airlines – official and private – are expected to be permanently banned from flying to Lebanon.

Sources told the Tehran Times that Iranian airlines – official and private – are expected to be permanently banned from flying to Lebanon.

The provocative decision was issued based on allegations by the Israeli army that Hezbollah and Iran "use Beirut airport to smuggle money", demanding banning any Iranian plane from landing "otherwise they will be forced to deal with the matter [militarily]".

While Lebanon's new government is busy drafting the ministerial statement, the atmosphere surrounding its formation will inevitably be reflected in its work.

This shameful act is intended to gain the approval of the United States as the mother of political terrorism in the world, coinciding with its threat to impose sanctions soon against Lebanese figures and entities allied or linked to Hezbollah.

Washington is encircling the Lebanese Shiites militarily, economically, and socially as the US and Israel failed to eliminate the Hezbollah resistance movement and prevent it from having ministers in the cabinet now that Joseph Aoun has been elected president.

The only goal is to ignite sectarian strife coinciding with giving the green light to Israel to maintain its direct occupation of some Lebanese territories.

This coincides too with the Shiites being busy rebuilding what was destroyed during the US-led Israeli attacks on the country and what was destroyed by successive pro-American corrupt governments and oligarchs.

It is an open war on the Lebanese Shiites, who have for decades stood up to malicious imperialist projects.

Undoubtedly, Washington is benefiting too from the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria. It has already directed the Al-Julani (Ahmad al-Sharaa) government to implement its anti-Hezbollah agenda.

Al-Julani has repeatedly announced his commitment to preventing Hezbollah from using Syrian territory to purportedly transit money or weapons.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham has already taken practical measures on the border with Iraq and on the border with Lebanon.

At a delicate time, Al-Julani's government has suspiciously announced that it is not ready to demarcate the land and sea borders between Syria and Lebanon; not ready for the return of displaced Syrians (especially as 90% of Syria's 1.5 million refugees are in extreme poverty); and unable to control the eastern borders in the northern Bekaa Valley that are under Hezbollah's

influence.

One of Washington's top priorities is to push Salam's government to impose measures that prevent any money from reaching Hezbollah, especially from Iran or Iraq, to ensure that Hezbollah does not receive any support.

Washington further aims to press Salam's government to make the reconstruction of what was destroyed during the September-October attacks its exclusive responsibility and prevent Hezbollah from rebuilding the destroyed villages.

Washington is encircling the Lebanese Shiites militarily and economically as the US and Israel failed to defeat the resistance front.

Most likely this will be accompanied by declaring a decision to close Hezbollah's Al-Qard Al-Hassan banking institution to obstruct it from helping reconstruct the demolished building or compensate the affected families.

Knowing that Hezbollah is exercising the highest degree of self-restraint to preserve internal peace and prevent deterioration of the internal security in Lebanon, President Aoun and Prime Minister Salam must both assume direct responsibility and not allow matters to go towards the option of collusion.

Simply put, there is no priority now that comes before the priority of protecting Lebanon's civil peace by defying the US-Zionist hegemonic ambitions as the free people of Lebanon, especially the Shiites, will not allow Lebanon to be an Israeli colony by any means and no matter the sacrifices.

Malaysia march: "Go to hell Donald Trump!"



Dozens of people chanted "Go to hell Donald Trump!" outside the US embassy in Malaysia's capital Kuala Lumpur, as pro-Palestinian protesters gathered to publicly reject the "lunatic ideas" of the US president to displace more than two million people from Gaza, Al Jazeera reported.

Organized by 18 civil society groups after Friday prayer, the protest in Kuala Lumpur was the second of its kind for the day, with the first being held in the morning outside the embassy. Both times, demonstrators had a written memorandum addressed to Trump containing a total of seven demands regarding Gaza and its Palestinian population, copies of which the embassy refused to accept.

"It is very disappointing as a country with the superpower status, they closed the whole embassy, refused to even receive our memorandum. This is really an act of cowardice," said Chua Tian Chang, a representative of the Malaysian groups advocating for Palestinian rights.

According to the memorandum, the groups called on Trump to ensure the ceasefire in Gaza, protection of Palestinian sovereignty, an end to Israel's siege of the territory, rejection of plans for the US to "take over" Gaza, as well as accountability for war crimes perpetrated in Gaza and sanctions on those committing crimes against humanity.

Israeli general drops the bombshell, leaves Bibi red-faced

From page 1 ▶ Eiland is the architect of a notorious plan for Gaza that was presented to Netanyahu, known as Bibi, in September last year.

The "Generals' Plan", also known as the Eiland Plan, called for the expulsion of Palestinians from northern Gaza, the forced starvation and targeting of whoever stays behind as "legitimate military targets".

Eiland also proposed a "surrender-or-starve" strategy for the Israeli military to pursue.

"It's permissible and even recommended to starve an enemy to death, provided you've allowed the civilians corridors of exits beforehand. And that is exactly what I am proposing," Eiland told Haaretz in September.

The plan was aimed at defeating Hamas and the ethnic cleansing of the enclave's

north.

The Israeli army killed nearly 62,000 Palestinians in Gaza during more than 15 months of war on the territory. It reduced much of Gaza to rubble but was unable to bring the Palestinian resistance to its knees.

Ultimately, Israel signed a three-phase ceasefire deal with Hamas which took effect on January 19.

So far, in the first phase, Hamas has released 21 captives in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinians from Israeli jails.

During the captive exchange handovers, Hamas displayed its military strength which has infuriated and humiliated Israeli leaders.

Netanyahu has now resorted to threats to resume the war in an attempt to obscure domestic criticism over his army's setbacks.

Oxford historian compares Trump with Genghis Khan

Whether it's about Gaza, customs or Greenland, Donald Trump appears brutally, historian Peter Frankopan tells the German weekly magazine Stern.

Drawing historical parallels, Frankopan warns Trump's strategy is reminiscent of Genghis Khan's, according to Ground News.

Donald Trump's misrule of law

Richard K. Sherwin

US Vice President J.D. Vance recently declared that "judges aren't allowed to control the executive's legitimate power." This shot, fired across the bow of the federal judiciary, threatens to disrupt a long-settled understanding that the courts should have the last word on what laws mean and require. Viewed against the backdrop of President Donald Trump's constitutionally suspect executive decrees – such as ending birthright citizenship and dismantling Congressionally approved administrative agencies – Vance's challenge throws into sharp relief America's unfolding constitutional crisis.

At the heart of the matter lies a simple proposition: national elections are not constitutional conventions. Constitutional conventions are singular events that establish the fundamental norms and procedures that regulate the legitimate exercise of state power. In 1787, America's Constitutional Convention worked out a political and legal blue-

print that established a particular form of government (a democratic, federal republic) constrained by fundamental norms (individual rights and principles of due process and equal protection) that limit the exercise of state power, as well as a procedure by which the Constitution would enter into effect (ratification by the states).

Basic to the republic that the US Constitution established is the idea that in order to safeguard freedom against the threat of tyranny, the functions of government must be carried out by three co-equal branches, meaning that each branch is more or less autonomous in its singular function. Thus, Congress regulates policymaking and federal disbursements through its legislative function; the executive implements policy and defends national security; and the courts interpret what statutes and the Constitution require.

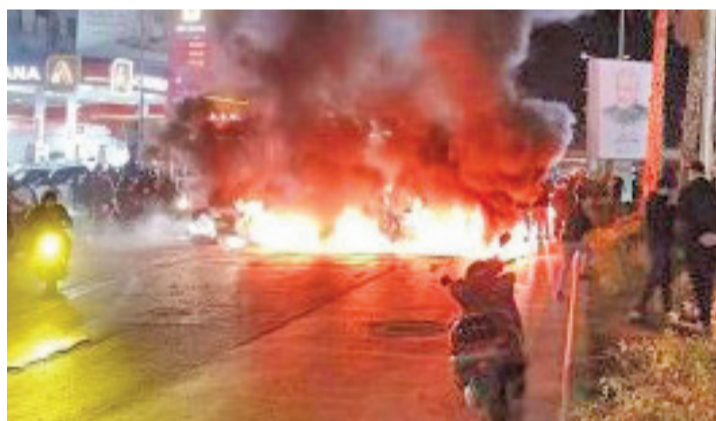
(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Lebanese denounce Tehran-Beirut flight cancellation

From page 1 ▶ Dozens of Lebanese nationals were stranded in Tehran after the Mahan Air airline was informed that its flight to Beirut would not be able to land.

The situation has sparked widespread confusion among the Lebanese public.

The move came after the Israeli army accused Iran of exploiting civilian flights to Beirut airport to smuggle cash to the Hezbollah resistance movement. The regime has failed to provide



any evidence to back up its claim.

Last month, another Mahan Air flight was flagged and searched under unsubstantiated claims that it was delivering funds to Hezbollah. The decision incited outrage, leading demonstrators to arrange a sit-in close to the airport.

Lebanese media has reported that Iranian airlines Mahan Air and Iran Air, the nation's flagship carrier, have been barred from flying into Beirut.

Yemen vows to confront Trump's Gaza plan

'Deal of the Century has now evolved into Crime of the Century'

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemen has vowed to intervene militarily if the United States and its proxy Israel displace the Palestinians from Gaza.

The leader of Yemen's Ansarallah, Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, has warned about the U.S. plan to displace the Palestinian people from their homeland.

He threatened if the U.S. succeeds in implementing this plan, Yemen "will intervene militarily to stop it and act within its holy war duty and will not remain idle."

Al-Houthi described U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to displace Palestinians as a "confiscation of their rights."

He added Trump is a "criminal accustomed to making ridiculous and absurd statements," describing the plan as "a joke and naïve talk coming from a president of a country that presents itself as civilized with false titles."

According to al-Houthi, Trump's repeated promotion of the displacement plan "reflects his persistence in a criminal project that denies justice and truth."

Al-Houthi emphasized that Trump's plan is "illegitimate and unjust" and noted that the U.S. president "seems serious about promoting it and pressuring some Arab states to accept it."

He added, "We are not surprised by this plan from an American president whose policies reflect tyranny and a history of criminality. There are no limits to Trump's ambitions, as he supports the aggressive Zionist project and seeks to implement it."

He explained that Trump's first-term

project under the so-called "Deal of the Century" has now evolved in his second term into what he described as the "Crime of the Century."

Trump's plan, he said, aims to achieve what the Israeli invasion of Gaza could not: displacing Palestinians from their land.

Al-Houthi stated that when the U.S. discusses displacing Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, it "seeks to completely liquidate the Palestinian cause."

The Ansarallah leader highlighted that U.S. deceit has been exposed in every stage of the peace process, and the Americans themselves "betrayed all agreements made between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli enemy regarding the two-state solution, which they supervised."

Al-Houthi noted that the U.S. "did not respect or consider the Arab states that betrayed Gaza during the aggression" and "supports Israeli expansion across Arab territories."

Therefore, he stressed the importance of awareness about what comes before and after the displacement plan, as it is "part of the Zionist project aimed at expanding and targeting holy sites, foremost among them the al-Aqsa Mosque. Its success depends on Arab acceptance."

He affirmed that "Trump's plan can only succeed if the Arabs accept it, especially the neighboring Arab countries."

"There is a significant responsibility on the part of the Arab countries that declared a clear stance rejecting Trump's plan. This is crucial, but the most important thing is maintaining this stance," he added.

Al-Houthi emphasized that "it is unacceptable for Arabs to accept Trump's plan; doing so would mean complicity in a terrible crime of displacement."

He warned the U.S. is seeking to trap the Arabs, calling for unity in rejecting Trump's plan and supporting the Palestinian people.

According to al-Houthi, any approval of Trump's plan will have dangerous repercussions for the region.

Regarding Yemen's position on threats to resume the war on Gaz, al-Houthi reiterated that Yemen "firmly and principally supports the Palestinian people and their fighters and will stand by them with all available means."

Al-Houthi vowed that Yemen "will move militarily to target both Israeli and American enemies if they launch an aggression on Gaza."

He called on the Yemeni armed forces to maintain full readiness in anticipation of any U.S. aggression.

He added, "We will not hesitate to target the Israeli and American enemies together, monitoring the implementation of the agreement. Our people, through their massive demonstration tomorrow (Friday), will send a warning message to Israel and the U.S. not to break the agreement."

Al-Houthi concluded his speech by affirming that Yemen "will maintain continuous coordination with the fighters in Palestine and the resistance axis," addressing them: "You are not alone; we are with you and will remain with you until Palestine is liberated and these evil plans are defeated."

Shah Cheragh's booth highly welcomed by visitors at Tehran fair

TEHRAN - The booth representing the holy shrine of Shah Cheragh at the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition has received an unprecedented response from visitors, the tourism chief of Fars province has said.



During his visit to the booth on Friday, Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi, added that the booth had been set up to highlight the shrine's religious and historical significance while promoting religious tourism in Iran.

Shah Cheragh is a 12th-century funerary monument and religious complex located in Shiraz, the capital of Fars province. The shrine is where Seyyed Ahmad, who is known as Shah Cheragh (King of Light) in local traditions, has been laid to rest. He was the son of Musa al-Kazim (AS), the seventh Shia Imam.

"Religious tourism is a significant advantage for Fars province, given that the shrine of Ahmad ibn Musa attracts thousands of pilgrims annually," Sabet-Eqlidi noted.

The enthusiastic reception underscores the shrine's cultural and spiritual importance and reaffirms Fars province's role as a key religious tourism destination in Iran, he said.

The official further emphasized that the

religious and pilgrimage tourism content displayed at the Fars booth was met with an overwhelming and unprecedented level of interest from exhibition attendees.

The shrine showcases an eclectic mix of architectural styles, blending elements from various eras. Its courtyard and intricate tile-work feature late-Qajar period embellishments, while its iconic blue-tiled dome and towering minarets with golden tips catch the eye of anyone approaching the complex.

Its interior is a testament to both divine beauty and human craftsmanship.

The grand chamber of worship is adorned with towering chandeliers that sparkle like frozen rain, while smaller green lamps protrude from the walls.

Stained-glass windows on high filter sunlight, casting a dazzling array of colors that reflect off the shrine's countless jewels and shards of glass, creating an ethereal glow.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley

The cultural landscape of Madriu-Perafita-Claror Valley offers a microcosmic perspective of the way people have harvested the resources of the high Pyrenees over millennia.

The property is an exceptional geographical unit located in the southeastern part of the Principality of Andorra, in the heart of the Pyrenees. It covers an area of 4,247 ha or a little more than 9% of the national territory. A protective buffer zone of 4,092 ha surrounds this area.

The upper part of the valley is an exposed glacial landscape, with spectacular steep cliffs, rock, and lake glaciers. Lower down, the valley narrows and becomes more wooded, while in its lowest section, the river flows into a short gorge. A secondary valley, the Perafita-Claror Valley, merges with the Madriu Valley from the South-West.

The Madriu-Perfita-Claror Valley is a microcosm that illustrates the way in which man has harvested mountain resources over the past millennia. It also reflects the persistence of an ancient communal system

of land management - four communities own land within the property. Its spectacular glacial landscapes with vast pastures and wooded valleys reflect climate change, the economy and social systems, as well as the persistence of pastoralism and a strong mountain culture. The property, the last place in the country not to have roads, comprises amongst others diverse agro-pastoral complexes in the high mountain, agricultural centers in mid-mountain areas, a communication system based on a network of partially paved trails, and the vestiges of a specific steelmaking activity: the Catalan Forge.

More precisely, the inscribed site contains many traces of human occupation that express singularly the perfect symbiosis and the precious balance between the land and humankind, between their resources and their needs; among these, bornes or small huts with vaulted stone roofs, some of which are still used by shepherds; orris in ruin, stables and cheese dairies, houses with side barns where grain and hay were stored; traces of terraced fields and foundries; low stone walls and paved tracks, etc.

Echoes of Iran



Local Iranian artists perform at the 18th International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition in Tehran, Iran, Feb. 11, 2025. The four-day exhibition came to an end on Friday, February 14, attracting domestic and international companies to participate.

Iran proposes cultural exchange with Tajikistan to boost tourism

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has proposed a cultural exchange initiative between Iran and Tajikistan, emphasizing the role of artists, social media influencers, and public figures in promoting tourism and cultural ties.

The proposal was made during a meeting with Jamshed Juma-Khonzoda, Chairman of the Tourism Committee of Tajikistan, on the second day of the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition.

Salehi-Amiri highlighted the deep-rooted cultural connections between the two nations, describing them as "one nation with two governments," and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to strengthening relations with Tajikistan.

"We have so many reasons to collaborate with Tajikistan," Salehi-Amiri stated, underscoring the vast cultural and historical similarities between the two countries.



He noted that efforts are underway to increase the number of Iranian tourists visiting Tajikistan from 8,000 to 100,000, with the possibility of further growth.

The Iranian minister also pointed out the importance of infrastructure improvements, including increasing flights between the two countries. He emphasized the use

of social media to showcase the tourism potential of both nations and revealed plans for advertising Tajikistan's attractions on Iran's national media.

Among the key initiatives discussed were the organization of cultural and artistic events, including a "Cultural Week" and "Dushanbe Cultural Nights" in Tehran.

Additionally, both sides agreed on hosting reciprocal handicrafts exhibitions to strengthen the bond between artists from Iran and Tajikistan.

Juma-Khonzoda, in response, expressed enthusiasm for Salehi-Amiri's proposals, acknowledging that cultural cooperation could significantly enhance tourism between the two nations.

He noted that his visit to the Tehran exhibition allowed him to explore Iran's tourism potential and engage with the private sector, paving the way for deeper collaboration.

In addition, Salehi-Amiri and Juma-Khonzoda signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to formalize their commitment to advancing tourism cooperation.

The agreement aims to strengthen economic and cultural ties, highlighting the rich natural and historical heritage of both countries while fostering mutual tourism development.

Ecbatana's UNESCO registration document unveiled at tourism fair



TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, along with several related officials unveiled the UNESCO registration document for the ancient city of Ecbatana at the 18th Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition on Thursday.

The unveiling took place at the Hamedan province's pavilion on the third day of the exhibition, marking a significant milestone in Iran's cultural heritage preservation efforts.

Ecbatana, a historic site of immense archae-

ological and cultural importance, was officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in July 2024, becoming Iran's 28th globally recognized heritage site.

During the ceremony, Salehi-Amiri emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting Iran's historical landmarks, highlighting Ecbatana's role in showcasing the country's rich history and civilization to the world. He also acknowledged the efforts of Hamedan's tourism authorities in achieving the site's global recognition.

"This registration is a crucial step in introducing Iran's deep-rooted cultural heritage to an international audience. It is our duty to protect and enhance the tourism infrastructure around these invaluable historical treasures," said Salehi-Amiri.

Ecbatana, believed to have been the capital of the ancient Median Empire, is one of Iran's most significant archaeological sites, attracting researchers and tourists alike. Its inclusion in the UNESCO list is expected to boost tourism and

further conservation efforts.

Located in the suburban area of modern Hamadan, Hegmataneh spans approximately 50 acres, with its rich archaeological deposits offering a glimpse into millennia of human civilization. Despite its vast historical significance, large portions of the site remain unexplored, promising future discoveries that could further illuminate our understanding of ancient Iran.

Ecbatana's historical significance is further enriched by its role during subsequent periods, including the Seleucid, Parthian, Sassanid, and Islamic eras. Each era left its indelible mark on Hegmataneh, shaping it into a vibrant tapestry of cultural evolution.

The Tehran International Tourism and Related Industries Exhibition, one of Iran's largest tourism events, serves as a platform for promoting the country's cultural and historical assets. The unveiling of Ecbatana's UNESCO registration plate was a highlight of this year's event, underscoring Iran's commitment to safeguarding its rich heritage for future generations.

Iran to develop medical tourism development document

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cooperatives, Labour, and Social Welfare Ahmad Meydari has announced the drafting of a medical tourism development document intended to enhance the healthcare-driven tourism sector.

Meydari emphasized that strengthening tourism is one of the key strategies for regional development and promoting regional equity in the country, the public relations office of the ministry wrote on Wednesday.

The minister highlighted that the expansion of medical tourism could play a crucial role in increasing employment opportunities, particularly in Iran's border regions.

He also stated that the initial phase of this initiative will focus on providing medical services in the cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan in Khuzestan province, with further expansion planned for other border areas.

Meydari further elaborated that the development of the medical tourism document will be carried out in collaboration with several government bodies, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, as well as provincial authorities, foreign representatives, and ambassadors residing in Tehran.

Special attention will be given to the participation of neighboring and the Persian Gulf littoral states, with the private sector playing a central

role in its implementation, he explained. He underscored that while the private sector will be responsible for delivering healthcare services within the framework of medical tourism, the government will primarily serve as a facilitator in the process.

€6 billion visioned for medical tourism revenues


Last September, Mohammad-Reza Vaez-Mahdavi, Chairman of Iran's Scientific Association of Health Economy, announced that the Islamic Republic has the potential to generate €6 billion annually from medical tourism with proper planning. He also highlighted visions to become a healthcare hub for West Asia in the coming years, which includes plans to

export €1 billion worth of vaccines and medical equipment annually.

Available data suggests that Iran's current annual exports of medicine amount to €200 million. According to a report released by the Iranian Health Ministry in August 2023, Iran received about one million medical tourists annually, with foreign patients seeking treatments across various specialties. "Every year, one million foreign patients are treated in Iran," the report stated, underlining the country's growing influence in the global health sector.

neighboring countries, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Oman, Bahrain, Armenia, and Tajikistan constitute Iran's main source of medical tourism.

First Announcement



ESCO

Esfahan Steel Company

Row No.	Type of Tender	Tender No.	Publication Frequency	Tender Subject	Deadline for Receiving Tender Documents and Submitting the Bids
1	International Public Tender	3-163729	2	1 Set XRD Device along with Spare Parts	1 March, 2025 (01.03.2025)

Notes:

- 1- Tender document must be received through ESCO's website.
- 2- For more information, please refer to ESCO's website www.esfahansteel.ir (Sourcing System).

Iran attends 38th executive committee meeting of ROPME

TEHRAN – Ahmad-Reza Lahijanzadeh, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), represented Iran in the 38th executive committee meeting of the Regional Organization for the Protection of Marine Environment (ROPME), which was held in Kuwait on Thursday.

ROPME was established in Kuwait in 1979 and was quickly ratified by seven member states (Iran, Bahrain, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates).

ROPME focuses on protecting the marine and coastal environment and ecosystems in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

Mohamed bin Mubarak Bin Dainah, Kuwaiti Minister of Oil and Environment and Special Envoy for Climate Affairs, chaired the 38th meeting of the Executive Committee of the ROPME.

During the meeting, he highlighted the importance of strengthening regional cooperation to protect the marine environment. The official also noted that joint coordination among member states contributes to environmental sustainability and addressing challenges that threaten marine resources.

At the 37th executive committee meeting of ROPME in Kuwait, on January 29, 2024, Iran asked



ROPME to help the country set up a regional center for biodiversity.

"We have been cooperating with the ROPME for the protection of the marine environment of the region for more than 40 years," Mojtaba Zoljoodi, an official with DOE, said.

"We have tried to take effective measures to prevent and manage marine pollution and preserve its unique environment. But now it's time to adopt a new approach to tackle the problem more seriously," he added.

He went on to say that one of the most effective policies is the use of a road map. A document that defines the strategic direction and paves the way to achieve our goals.

"Happily, this strategic plan has been developed under ROPME guidance and the cooperation of all executive committee representatives.

We have approved the prepared document and only made minor amendments to it. It was handed to the ROPME before the meeting, which we hope to be accepted by other member states," he noted.

Iran, Kuwait boost environmental ties

In April 2024, Iran's ambassador to Kuwait, Mohammad Toutouchi, in a meeting with the Secretary General of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), Mohammed Al-Ahmad, conferred on ways to expand

environmental cooperation between the two countries.

"Managing regional environmental challenges and dealing with environmental pollutants, concerning the daily traffic of dozens of oil tankers from the Persian Gulf, which have posed risk to the life of both marine creatures and the coastal residents, have always been among Iran's concerns," ISNA quoted Toutouchi as saying.

He went on to say that Iran is ready to cooperate with ROPME to prevent environmental disasters, conduct research projects, organize training workshops to measure pollutants; and establish monitoring stations.

Al-Ahmad, for his part, highlighted the key role of Iran, which has control over half of the Persian Gulf coast and the Sea of Oman. He said the ROPME organization, during 45 years of continuous monitoring of oil tankers' passages has tried to lessen the environmental pollution in the Persian Gulf.

He expressed hope to be able to develop effective plans to deal with pollution and clean up the beaches and marine environments by enhancing cooperation among member states and using the experiences of Iranian experts and practitioners.

National birdwatching secretariat launched in Khuzestan



TEHRAN – The Department of Environment in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has established the national birdwatching secretariat in Khuzestan province.

According to Behzad Moein, an official with the provincial DOE, it is the first birdwatching secretariat in the country, IRNA reported.

"The national birdwatching secretariat aims to identify birds and promote the culture of birdwatching among people. Bird watching is a branch of ecotourism. Iran is home to 577 species of birds, 404 of which live in Khuzestan province," Moein noted.

The official went on to say that the province ranks first in the country in terms of the birds' diversity.

Birds such as basra reed warblers; marbled ducks; small, large and African darters; osprey and golden owls; flamingos; and other birds in Khuzestan province are registered in the list of environmental resources.

The department of environment is scheduled to introduce the protected areas suitable for birdwatching as well as birdwatching routes to the secretariat. The secretariat with the help of birdwatching experts will unveil these places to tourists to further flourish birdwatching, Moein added.

The south-western province of Khuzestan is the most diverse region in terms of different bird species, its unique and pleasant climate, as well as rich natural habitats, have turned this province into a paradise for rare and endangered species of birds.

Every year, with the onset of the cold season, flocks of migratory birds come to winter in the province from the cold regions of Central Asia.

Due to the existence of numerous rivers, wetlands, and special bird habitats, at least 6 species of rare birds of Iran that live in the mar-

gins of wetlands and rivers have been recorded in Khuzestan province, two species of which have been seen only in this region.

From terns and ibises to house sparrows, various subspecies of birds will surely be recorded in Khuzestan province by researching and expanding the science of bird watching in the country.

About 20 percent of the country's wetlands are located in Khuzestan, this is why the province is home to most migratory birds, along with the favorable weather conditions.

Bird-watching in Iran

Although large portions of the country are arid to semi-arid, Iran possesses a very rich and diverse bird fauna.

Two main factors are responsible for this; the great range of habitats—from permanent snows to deep deserts and from lush deciduous forests in the north to palm groves and mangroves in the south—and Iran's position at a crossroads between three major faunal regions, according to the Iran Paradise website.

The bulk of the country lies within the Palearctic faunal region, which stretches from Europe and North Africa across north and central Asia to the Soviet Far East and Japan. Lying along the southern edge of this region, Iran's bird fauna includes a large Western Palearctic faunal element, reaching its eastern extremity in the central Alborz and Zagros mountains, and a smaller, but still marked, Eastern Palearctic element, which extends into northeastern Iran in the highlands of Khorasan.

On Iran's south coast, the tidal mudflats, mangrove, sand beaches, rocky shores, and sea-cliffs support a variety of breeding and wintering habitats for seabirds. Breeding species include Crab Plover *Dromas ardeola*, Great Thick-knee *Burhinus recurvirostris* (only in the sea); several species of herons and egrets such as Indian Pond-Heron *Ardeola grayii*, Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* and Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* (in mangrove); and several species of terns.

Wintering species include Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, and also many shorebirds notably African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*, Curlew *Numenius arquata* and Plovers *Charadrius* spp., *Scuas Stercorarius* spp., *Gulls Larus* spp., and *Terns Sterna* spp.

Science-skill Olympiad for students with disabilities slated for May

TEHRAN –The first national science-skill Olympiad for students with disabilities is planned to be held on May 9 in Tehran.

Supported by the national foundation for the elite, and the vice-presidency for science, technology, and knowledge-based economy, the event serves as a platform for showcasing the students' talents and capabilities in science and acquiring different skills despite their disabilities, ISNA reported.

Also, it aims to lay the ground for further promoting the students' abilities and their active participation in developing the country.

The national Olympiad involves a wide range of fields such as Art and Literature including Persian language and literature, English and Iranian sign language translation, designing clothes and jewelry, painting, graphics, and photography; Engineering and Technology (like computer engineering, student robotics, and architecture), as well as sports (sport sciences: chess).

Sustainable development for all

On December 3, 2024, the International Day of People with Disability was observed with the theme of 'Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future'.

It highlights the significance of empowering people with disabilities to take the lead in shaping their own destinies and contributing to society.

The leadership of persons with disabilities is epitomized by the global disability rights movement's slogan "Nothing About Us Without Us".

It connotes the basic requirements of participation, representation, and inclusion and calls

for persons with disabilities to actively shape the conditions of their lives.

One of the priorities of the global disability agenda is to advance the agency and leadership of persons with disabilities.

Impacts of sanctions on persons with disabilities

Speaking at the 17th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Ali-Mohammad Qaderi, the former head of the State Welfare Organization, said Iran will make every effort to enhance and expand the necessary services for persons with disabilities in accordance with the framework of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The conference was held from June 12 to 13, 2024, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

"This is notwithstanding the fact that the cruel sanctions imposed by the United States and many Western countries on the Islamic Republic of Iran have significantly increased the prime costs of rehabilitation items and specialized services, and affected the economic capabilities of individuals receiving such services," he said.

"Respecting persons with disabilities and striving to create equal opportunities for them has always been integral to our religious and national teachings, as well as the programs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

One of the most significant measures we have undertaken to support the rights of persons with disabilities is the enactment of the Law on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities," the official stressed.

Knowledge-based companies to attend MEDEXPO AFRICA

TEHRAN – An Iranian delegation will participate in the 25th exhibition on medical products, equipment, machinery, and services (MEDEXPO AFRICA) which is scheduled to be held from May 14 to 16 in Nairobi, Kenya.

With the support of the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, knowledge-based firms will set up their pavilions in the exhibition.

Hospital supplies; pharmaceuticals; healthcare, laboratory, dental, optical, veterinary tools, and medical equipment as well as medical services are among the items to be featured.

MEDEXPO is one of the most important medical and healthcare events for medical manufacturing products, equipment, machinery, services, and solutions. The exhibition showcases innovative solutions from leading market players for the benefit of buyers from the medical technology industry, from across the East African region.

The event is an important stop for buyers from across East Africa seeking new products, equipment, machinery, services, and solutions in healthcare.

Kenya is a promising market for medical devices and has been ranked as one of the fastest-growing markets in the sub-Saharan Africa region according to Fitch and World Bank reports. The medical device sector is heavily reliant on imports with limited domestic production.

IHiT in Kenya

In 2024, the CEO of Iran house of innovation

and technology (iHiT) in Kenya, Ali Bani-Amerian, said the iHiT has created new opportunities for Iranian knowledge-based companies to achieve significant success in global markets, particularly in Kenya, which is known as a gateway to East Africa.

Currently, the value of knowledge-based exports to Kenya is more than one million dollars, ISNA quoted Ali Bani-Amerian as saying.

"Having a deep understanding of the market's needs and providing innovative solutions, the center assists Iranian companies in overcoming obstacles and achieving great success in exporting products to Kenya and East Africa," the official highlighted.

IHiT in Kenya helps companies achieve the required standards to enter global markets, Bani-Amerian said.

Holding over 50 joint events in the field of technology and entrepreneurship with the United Nations, the Kenyan Chamber of Commerce, Kenyan universities, and educational institutions, establishing more than 35 Iranian, Kenyan, and international startups in the iHiT center, and conducting market studies are parts of services provided by the center.

The center has also facilitated the export of products for more than 20 Iranian companies, and established two series of successful national knowledge-based pavilions at Kenya healthcare expo in 2022 and 2023.

Registering more than 50 medical equip-



ment and two Iranian anti-cancer medicines, obtaining GMP certification for 11 Iranian knowledge-based companies, installing Iranian medical equipment in Kenyan hospitals and medical centers, as well as exporting several pharmaceutical ingredients to Kenya, are among other achievements of iHiT in Kenya.

Kenya is a promising market for medical devices and has been ranked as one of the fastest-growing markets in the sub-Saharan Africa region according to Fitch and World Bank reports. The medical device sector is heavily reliant on imports with limited domestic production.

In January 2021, Iran opened its house of innovation and technology in Kenya and the first center in Africa.

The center serves as a base for the creation of innovative ideas, the commercialization of these ideas, and the export of Iranian knowledge-based products and services to the East African market

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iran pioneer in cancer research among Islamic countries

Iran has the most research and innovation in the field of cancer both in the region and among Islamic countries, deputy health minister Reza Malekzadeh has stated.

Referring to the great progress in cancer research, he said that "We have been able to play a role in this area globally."

He added that one of the hopes for early detection of cancer is the use of urine and blood tests for people who are susceptible to cancer.

"We have conducted researches in the field of blood and urine biomarkers, which will help control cancers in the country," he said.

ایران بیشترین نوآوری و تحقیقات سرطان را بین کشورهای اسلامی دارد

معاون تحقیقات و فناوری وزیر بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی گفت: ایران هم در منطقه و هم بین کشورهای اسلامی بیشترین میزان تحقیقات و نوآوری ها در حوزه سرطان را داشته است.

به گزارش ایرنا، رضا ملک زاده روز شنبه با اشاره به اینکه ما در زمینه تحقیقات سرطان پیشرفت های خیلی خوبی داشتیم، گفت: ما در سطح جهانی هم توانستیم در این حوزه نقش آفرین باشیم.

وی افزود: یکی از امیدهای خیلی روشن برای تشخیص زودرس سرطان، استفاده از آزمایش ادرار و خون برای افرادی است که استعداد سرطان را دارند.

در ایران تحقیقات خیلی خوبی در زمینه بیومارکرهای ادراری و خونی در دست اجرا داریم و امیدواریم با این کار، امکان کنترل سرطان ها در کشور میسر شود.



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FEBRUARY 15, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Live amongst people in such a manner that if you die they weep over you and if you are alive they crave for your company.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:19 Evening: 18:02 Dawn: 5:29 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:05 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries



Painting

* Paintings by Samareh Bakhtiari are currently on display in an exhibition at Idea Gallery.

The exhibition titled "With My Imaginary Friends" will be running until February 19 at the gallery located at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Paintings by Nastaran Rahimi are currently on view in an exhibition at Vaali Gallery.

The exhibition named "Outgrown Perception" will continue until February 25 at the gallery located at 72 Khoddami St., Vaznak Sq.



* Masoud Aslani is hanging his latest paintings in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Lust of Light" will run until February 25 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Vahid Ezzatpanah is currently showcasing his paintings in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Suspended Secrets" runs until February 26 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.



* Bashgah Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Morteza Yazdani, Mehdi Ahmadi, Abbas Khanjar, Shiva Sarlak and several others.

Entitled "Index", the exhibition will be running until February 28 at the gallery located at No.13, Hosseini St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Paintings by Faezeh Hamami are on display in an exhibition at Doost Gallery.

Entitled "To the Flourishing Day", the exhibit will be running until February 25 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 4, 4th St. off Eshqyar St., Khorramshahr Ave.



* An exhibition of paintings by Mina Asghari is underway at Ebteda Gallery.

The exhibition titled "Talking Animal" will run until February 18 at the gallery located at 35 Farrokhi Alley, near Vali-e Asr Square.

Multimedia

* Satiar Emami, Mina Golparvar, Rambod Dehqanpur, Raheleh Safi, Faezeh Masoumi, Nahid Momenkhani and Reza Payman Panahi are showcasing their paintings and photos in an exhibition at Haft Samar Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until February 19 at the gallery that can be found at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahari Ave.



* A group of artists, including Safa Emami, Afarin Sajedi, Farah Soltani, Mamak Hejazi, Saeid Gholami and Iman Safai, is showcasing the artworks in various media in an exhibition Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named "Fusion" will run until April 6 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

* Ev Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings and sets of installation by Hossein Chavoshi.

The exhibit named "Patches" will be running until February 21 at the gallery located at 5 Arabi Alley, North Kheradmand St.



Outgrown Perception by Vahid Ezzatpanah



Suspended Secrets by Vahid Ezzatpanah



FAEZEH HAMAMI

SOLO EXHIBITION TO THE FLOURISHING DAY 14-25 FEB 2025 TEHRAN



TALKING ANIMAL by Mina Asghari



"Patches" Installation Art Hossein Chavoshi



TEHRAN – On Thursday evening, the 40th International Fajr Music Festival featured a joint performance by Iranian and Indian musicians at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, showcasing a fusion of Indo-Persian music.

The concert, titled "The Encounter," was orchestrated by Iranian musician Vahid Airian. Distinguished Indian artists Amano Manish (slide guitar), Uday Ramdas (tabla), and Pavan Shrikant Naik (vocals and harmonium) shared the stage with Iranian musicians Mojtaba Kalantari Khorrami (daf), Alireza Shahbazi (guitar), and vocalists/tanbur players Nasrin Abdolvand, Sarina Amrollahi, Zahra Gomari, Leila Yekani, Babak Ghasvand, Alireza Rostami, and

Mohammadreza Rostami. The 40th International Fajr Music Festival is currently underway, featuring a diverse lineup of international musicians. Performances are primarily held at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

Alongside musicians from India, the festival showcases talent from Turkey, Spain, the Netherlands, Tunisia, and Armenia.

Notable international participants include Turkish cellist Jamal Aliyev and pianist Ece Dağistan, as well as Spanish flamenco guitarists Daniel Casares and Antonio Maldonado.

A highlight of the festival is a joint performance by Afro Anatolian Tales from the Netherlands

and Nushe Band from Iran. Afro Anatolian Tales includes Sjahin During and Bram Stadshouders from the Netherlands, and Bence Huszar from Hungary. Nushe Band features Iranian musicians Niu-sha Barimani, Rokhsareh Rostami, Niloofar Ebrahimi, Donya Fathi, Azin Malekzadeh, and Setareh Hatf.

Additionally, Levon Tevanyan from Armenia and Farah Fersi from Tunisia are also participating in the global event.

The 40th International Fajr Music Festival is organized by the Deputy of Artistic Affairs of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, in collaboration with the Music Office of the Culture Ministry, the Iran Music Association, and

the Rudaki Foundation.

It aims to showcase and honor the best works of Iranian musicians, promote the art of music, enhance the audience's taste and listening culture, preserve national identity rooted in religious and Iranian teachings, support creative art—especially ideas and performances by the younger generation—and identify and strengthen the quality of form and content in various genres of music.

In addition to the international participants, this year, 100 Iranian bands comprising over 1,400 musicians will perform at the festival.

The festival, divided into two competitive and non-competitive sections, will continue until February 17 in Tehran.

Ecuadorian pan flutist Leo Rojas to perform in Tehran for 3rd time

TEHRAN—Renowned Ecuadorian pan flutist Juan Leonardo Santillia Rojas, known as Leo Rojas, will hold a concert in Tehran next month.

Having performed in Tehran in 2018 and 2019, Rojas is coming back to Iran for a third time to perform at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry, Honaronline reported.

Leo Rojas, 40, grew up in a small village nestled in the Andes, where he developed a profound connection to nature and the traditional sounds of his ancestors.

Growing up in poverty, he found comfort and inspiration in music, which, in his culture, is often intertwined with spiritual values and stories. As a young adult, Leo made the decision to leave Ecuador and embark on a journey to Europe in search of a better life and to support his family back home.

Rojas moved to Spain in 2000 and then to Germany. Living in Berlin with his Polish wife, he initially made his living as a street musician, playing his pan flute in bustling pedestrian zones.

His music captivated passersby, resonating with echoes of nature and his ancestral heritage. Despite the difficulties he faced, Leo remained dedicated to his music until a passer-by informed him about the German TV show



Leo Rojas at his 2019 concert in Tehran

Das Supertalent, the German version of Britain's Got Talent.

His fortunes changed in 2011 when he entered the talent show. He became a contestant in the show's fifth season, succeeding to the semifinals with his rendition of "El Condor Pasa" (meaning "If I Could", best known in a 1970 version by Simon & Garfunkel, American folk-rock duo), which moved both the judges and the audience with his genuine expression and natural charisma.

He won the show with a cover of "The Lonely Shepherd" a hit song written and performed by Romanian pan flute musician Gheorghe Zamfir in 1977. His talent and deep passion for music led him to victory.

Winning the competition opened new doors

for Leo. A well-known German producer and songwriter, D.B., supported him and produced his first album, "Spirit of the Hawk," which became a tremendous success and earned him two gold records.

The album reached number two on the German album charts. It featured the two above-mentioned songs as well as cover versions of compositions such as John Barry's theme from the 1990 American epic western movie "Dances With Wolves" and German musician Martin Bottcher's "Winnetou".

Today, Leo Rojas is an internationally renowned musician with over a billion views and more than 3.7 million subscribers on YouTube, as well as over 3 million monthly streams on Spotify.

Leo Rojas now tours globally, reaching and inspiring audiences in countries such as China, India, Korea, Canada, and Brazil. His most famous piece, "El Condor Pasa," embodies the essence of traditional Native American rhythms and captures the soul of his culture.

"The voices of my ancestors speak to you through my music, connecting us all to the soul of past times," he says about his works. Through his music, Leo Rojas conveys a message of unity with nature and humanity, touching hearts worldwide.

Book on political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes published in Persian

TEHRAN—The Persian translation of the book "The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis" written by Leo Strauss has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Yashar Jeyrani has translated the book and Ghoghnoos Publishing has brought it out in 246 pages, ILNA reported.

In this classic analysis, Leo Strauss pinpoints what is original and innovative in the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes.

He argues that Hobbes's ideas arose not from tradition or science but from his own deep knowledge and experience of human nature.

Tracing the development of Hobbes's moral doctrine from his early writings to his major work "Leviathan," Strauss explains contradictions in the body of Hobbes's work and discovers startling connections between Hobbes and the thought of Plato, Thucydides, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and Hegel.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

was an English philosopher, best known for his 1651 book "Leviathan," in which he expounds an influential formulation of social contract theory. He is considered to be one of the founders of modern political philosophy.

Hobbes witnessed the destruction and brutality of the English Civil War from 1642 to 1651 between Parliamentarians and Royalists, which heavily influenced his advocacy for governance by an absolute sovereign in "Leviathan," as the solution to human conflict and societal breakdown.

Aside from social contract theory, "Leviathan" also popularized ideas such as the state of nature (war of all against all) and laws of nature. Hobbes contributed to a diverse array of fields, including history, jurisprudence, geometry, optics, theology, classical translations, ethics, as well as philosophy in general, marking him as a polymath.

Despite controversies and challenges, including accusations of atheism and contentious debates with contemporaries, Hobbes's

work profoundly influenced the understanding of political structure and human nature.

Leo Strauss (1899-1973) was an American scholar of political philosophy. Born in Germany to Jewish parents, Strauss later emigrated from Germany to the United States.

He spent much of his career as a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, where he taught several generations of students and published fifteen books.

Trained in the neo-Kantian tradition with Ernst Cassirer and immersed in the work of the phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, Strauss authored books on Spinoza and Hobbes, and articles on Maimonides and Al-Farabi.

In the late 1930s, his research focused on the texts of Plato and Aristotle, retracing their interpretation through medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy, and encouraging the application of those ideas to contemporary political theory.

Strauss's thought can be characterized by two main themes: the critique of modernity and the recovery of classical political philosophy.

He argued that modernity, which emerged among the 15th century Italian city states particularly in the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, was a radical break from the tradition of Western civilization, and that it led to a crisis of nihilism, relativism, historicism, and scientism.

He claimed that modern political and social sciences, which were based on empirical observation and rational analysis, failed to grasp the essential questions of human nature, morality, and justice, and that they reduced human beings to mere objects of manipulation and calculation.

He also criticized modern liberalism, which he saw as a product of modernity, for its lack of moral and spiritual foundations, and for its tendency to undermine the authority of religion, tradition, and natural law.