

Syrian Alawites Left Abandoned to Horrific Crimes



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Iraq seeks to maintain gas and electricity imports from Iran amid sanction challenges

TEHRAN - Iran's exemption for exporting gas and electricity to Iraq was lifted on March 8, 2024, prompting the Chairman of the Economic Committee of the Iraqi Parliament to meet with the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad.

Iraq's exemption for importing gas and electricity from Iran was lifted on March 8, 2024. This prompted the Chairman of the Economic Committee of the Iraqi Parliament to meet with the U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Baghdad the previous night.

He emphasized that preventing the import of Iranian gas by the U.S. would have catastrophic consequences for the people of Iraq, especially in the summer, as it would lead to the collapse of the country's state electricity system.

The Iraqi Parliament Economic Committee's press office reported that Atwan Al-Atwani, the Chairman of the Committee, met with Daniel Rubenstein, the U.S. Charge d'Affaires, and his accompanying delegation. Al-Atwani pointed out the importance of this meeting in the current sensitive situation and emphasized the need for continuous communication to rectify the relations between the two countries. ▶ Page 4

'The West can no longer lecture others on human rights:' Iran deputy FM

TEHRAN - Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi delivered a harsh rebuke to Western nations on Tuesday, asserting that Tehran will never submit to external pressure or abandon its principles under the weight of sanctions.

Speaking at the opening of an exhibition celebrating Iranian women's achievements in Tehran, Gharibabadi condemned Western double standards on human rights and underscored the nation's steadfast endurance in the face of relentless economic warfare.

"Those who claim to advocate human rights but support Israel's crimes in Gaza can no longer lecture others on violations," Gharibabadi stated, referencing the killing of over 50,000 Palestinians, predominantly women and children.

He criticized the U.S. and its allies for supplying the Israeli regime with military aid while ignoring the humanitarian catastrophe, calling it proof of their "moral bankruptcy." ▶ Page 3

Gaza poetry collection published in English, Arabic, Russian

TEHRAN - Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults - Kanoon has recently released three titles from its Gaza poetry collection in English, Arabic, and Russian.

The collection comprises three books titled "Paper Rocket," written by Zahra Araqi and illustrated by Mahshid Darabi; "You Will Laugh Again," penned by Tayyebeh Shamsani and illustrated by Bahareh Khodami; and "The House Stands," authored by Monireh Hashemi and illustrated by Neda Asgari, all printed in the three languages.

The English translations of the three titles were completed by Shahryar Fasih, with the Arabic versions translated by Yasser Zanganeh and Mojdeh Pakseresht, while Tahereh Ghamarpour handled the Russian translations.

In "Paper Rocket," "You Will Laugh Again," and "The House Stands," the poets poignantly reflect on the plight of Palestinian children and the tragic events in Gaza through lyrical prose. ▶ Page 8

Iran's special envoy condemns 'shocking' Syria atrocities, demands justice for minorities

TEHRAN - Iran's Special Envoy for Syrian Affairs, Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheybani, has condemned escalating violence in Syria's coastal regions, labeling the atrocities against civilians as "shocking" and calling for international accountability.

In a series of posts on his official X account on Tuesday, Sheybani emphasized Iran's unwavering support for Syria's sovereignty while urging decisive action against perpetrators of violence.

"The intensity and massive scale of atrocities against innocent civilians in Syria's coastal provinces are deeply alarming," Sheybani wrote, referencing recent massacres documented in areas like Latakia and Tartus.

"We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the victims' families and pray for their resilience amid this tragedy."

The envoy directly linked the violence to broader regional destabilization, stressing that "any act of violence targeting Syria's minority communities is utterly reprehensible," and insisting that those responsible must face justice. ▶ Page 2

A new vision for US global power under Trump

By Batool Subeiti

TEHRAN - Trump's approach to global affairs diverges sharply from the American establishment's traditional strategy. Trump does not see America as a "police state." He is skeptical of NATO, does not support war with Russia, and believes the U.S. military presence in West Asia primarily serves to protect Arab allies. In his view, they should bear the financial burden of that protection.

The American establishment, represented by institutions like the Pentagon and the White House, follows a long-term strategic vision. It maintains hundreds of military bases worldwide and pursues a structured political strategy across various regions.

Trump, by contrast, envisions American leadership within a multipolar world order. He is less concerned with imposing the American system on other nations and more focused on fostering economic alliances that benefit the U.S. He also seeks to counter the rise of BRICS and prevent alternative economic blocs from challenging the dollar's dominance. Rather than waging ideological battles, his strategy revolves around economic leverage. ▶ Page 5

Lebanon quite prone to sectarian violence in Syria

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - The massacres that are taking place against the Syrian civilians, especially against the Alawite sect, have exposed the hypocrisy of claims by the HTS-led regime that it is seeking to provide security, peace, dignity and justice for the Syrian people.

Given the geographical proximity and the sectarian and societal structural similarity, Lebanon is very susceptible to being affected by the negative developments in Syria, which were immediately reflected in sectarian and security tension in some regions.

For its part, the Druze community is very interactive with the plight of Syria's Druze community as demonstrated by the sharp disagreement between the Lebanese Druze leadership on how to approach these threats.

In turn, the eastern border with Syria—as it constitutes a contact line between the supporters of al-Jolani (aka Ahmad al-Sharaa) and the Bekaa clans—remains in danger. ▶ Page 5

Salehi takes helm at Iranology foundation, outlines vision in Tehran ceremony

TEHRAN - The Iranology Foundation held an official ceremony on Tuesday, to mark a leadership transition, honoring outgoing president Mohammad-Hossein Rajabi Davani and introducing Ali Akbar Salehi as the newly appointed head.

The event, held at the Mohtasham Kashani Hall of the foundation, was attended by high-ranking officials, including First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, along with scholars, cultural figures, and researchers.

During the ceremony, speakers underscored the crucial role of the Iranology Foundation in preserving and promoting Iran's rich cultural and historical heritage. ▶ Page 6



Tehran hosting exhibition on women's achievements

TEHRAN - An exhibition of Iranian women's achievements, titled 'Iranian women, unwritten stories', commenced at Iran house of innovation and technology (iHiT) in Tehran on Monday.

Addressing the opening ceremony, the Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, highlighted the determination of the current administration in empowering women while elaborating on the acquired accomplishments, dot.ir reported.

Referring to national policy documents that highlight supporting women, the official said the country, in line with international communities, has taken steps to improve the status of women. ▶ Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Tehran's special messages for Washington

In a note, Hamshahri addressed Iran's lack of concern about U.S. threats and wrote: A review of the trends and developments in recent months and weeks shows that Tehran is not only not concerned about the threats and rhetoric of the Tel Aviv-Washington axis, but is also taking effective steps towards developing its deterrent strategies in various fields. The way Tehran faces Washington's threats has been one of the most important areas of speculation among Westerners in recent days. In such circumstances, the line of analysis of "Iran's lack of concern about threats" is one of the issues that has attracted the attention of Western media and analysts. This issue is more prominent these days than before. Various evidence can be presented to prove it. The firm stances of senior officials of the country to the continuation of peaceful nuclear activities and the unveiling of new military achievements show that such policy, which the West has continuously continued over the past decades, have failed to create a significant obstacle in the path of pursuing the grand strategies envisaged by the Islamic Republic.

Ham Mihan: Iraq seeks to cut energy dependence on Iran

Ham Mihan wrote in a commentary: Despite being the second largest oil producer in OPEC and having large natural gas reserves, Iraq still has problems meeting its energy needs, including electricity or natural gas for cooking and heating (due to decades of war and sanctions). One of Iraq's most important vulnerabilities is its dependence on natural gas and electricity imports from Iran. Iran itself is also facing an imbalance between energy production and consumption. Another important challenge for Iran is the return of "maximum pressure" from the Trump administration. Sanctions have long made it difficult for Iraq to pay for its electricity and gas imports from Iran, and this issue has now become a crisis. The goal of Trump's "maximum pressure" policy is to reduce Iranian oil sales to China to zero, to revoke Iran's sanctions exemptions, such as investment in Chabahar Port, and pressure Iraq to stop electricity and gas import from Iran. If the sanctions waiver for Iranian gas exports to Iraq is not extended, we will have to look for alternatives.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Naval drills a message for the world

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to a naval

military exercise being held jointly by Iran, China and Russia in the northern Indian Ocean. It said: This drill is being held while Iran's warships and other equipment have been designed and built by Iranian experts. These technological progresses were made under sanctions. This important drill indicates the failure of sanctions and serves as a model for the countries seeking indigenous security without depending on foreign powers. It should be kept in mind that despite the West's Iranophobia campaign, the Islamic Republic has always considered the security of the region as its own and has made many efforts in this regard. Given that a significant part of global trade is carried out by sea, Iran has also tried to play an effective role in global trade by building maritime capacities and being a pioneer in ensuring the security of global waterways. This drill sends a message to the world that the U.S. is still an unreliable party in the eyes of these three countries, and none of them is willing to abandon their friends in difficult circumstances in exchange for American promises.

Arman-e-Melli: 'Iranian response' to 'American claims'

As the Leader correctly analyzed, Trump's claim of sending a letter to Iran is intended to shape the world's opinion in a way that the U.S. wants to negotiate and interact with Iran, but it is Iran that is not willing to solve the problem, de-escalate the tensions, or negotiate. However, the Leader took a clever stance against Trump's letter and conveyed the message that Iran is ready to negotiate but will not tolerate bullying, imposition, and tyranny. Undoubtedly, regarding the exchange of messages in the media and diplomatic arena, we are faced with two categories: one is the U.S. claim and the other is Iran's response. It seems that we must present our effective and logical response by properly and strongly utilizing our and others' software power and convince the global public opinion that negotiation, interaction, peace-seeking, and de-escalation are rooted in our Islamic and cultural beliefs and that we are the owners of the theory of dialogue among civilizations. Therefore, if we like this approach, then we can consider Trump's message as a special opportunity and give an Iranian response to the claims of Trump and other U.S. officials, which are accompanied by threats, bullying, and authoritarianism.

Iran's special envoy condemns 'shocking' Syria atrocities, demands justice for minorities



Iran's Special Envoy for Syrian Affairs, Mohammad Reza Raouf Sheybani

From page 1 ► He echoed Iran's position that Syria's interim government must prioritize "serious and effective measures" to halt bloodshed and prosecute orchestrators of the violence, aligning with global expectations for accountability.

Sheybani reiterated Iran's commitment to Syria's territorial integrity, warning that prolonged instability would embolden "the Zionist regime" and extremist groups, which were reportedly involved in massacres in Alawite-majority areas.

"Chaos in Syria only serves terrorists and threatens regional peace," he noted, alluding to the dissemination of graphic videos showing executions and arson attacks in the Arab country's

coastal regions.

Recent clashes between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)-aligned forces and opposition groups have left over 1,000 civilians dead, according to the so-called Syrian Human Rights Observatory.

Local reports describe militants discarding bodies in remote areas to conceal evidence, while eyewitnesses appeal for international intervention.

"They film their crimes and celebrate them—we demand a UN-backed investigation," said one survivor, highlighting the psychological toll of the conflict.

Maritime Security Belt-2025: Iran showcases naval prowess in alliance with China, Russia

TEHRAN – Iran has reaffirmed its pivotal role in regional security by leading the seventh iteration of the Maritime Security Belt-2025 joint naval exercises alongside China and Russia, held March 10–13 near the strategic port of Chabahar.

The drills, marked by advanced tactical operations and aerial maneuvers, underscored Tehran's commitment to safeguarding vital maritime routes while strengthening alliances with global powers in the face of shifting geopolitical dynamics.

The exercises featured synchronized day and night aerial target shooting, tactical formations, mock rescue missions, and a grand naval parade, demonstrating heightened interoperability among the three nations.

Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajeddini, deputy operations commander of Iran's Navy, hailed the drills as a testament to Iran's technical sophistication and leadership.

"The execution of these operations demands precise coordination and step-by-step orders," he stated, emphasizing the seamless integration of the Iranian Navy (part of Artesh) and Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy with Chinese and Russian fleets.

Notably, this year's drills expanded operational scope, deploying helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft in deeper waters—a strategic leap



from prior iterations.

Tajeddini underscored the significance of such advancements, describing them as critical to countering "external threats" and ensuring regional stability.

Rear Admiral Tajeddini also reiterated Iran's uncompromising stance: "We will not tolerate any threats or incursions into the nation's maritime borders."

"Unity at sea today ensures stability onshore tomorrow," he added.

Since their inception in 2019, the Maritime Security Belt drills have evolved in scale and complexity, mirroring Iran's geopolitical ambitions.

The 2025 edition coincides with heightened tensions in the Red Sea and Arabian Sea, where Western-led coalitions have increased patrols.

By contrast, Iran's collaboration

with Beijing and Moscow offers an alternative security framework, prioritizing regional sovereignty over external intervention.

Chabahar: a geopolitical linchpin

The choice of Chabahar as the drills' focal point highlights its unparalleled strategic value. Situated on the Gulf of Oman, Iran's sole oceanic port bypasses the congested Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of global oil transits.

Chabahar's direct access to the Indian Ocean positions it as a gateway for the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a 7,200-km trade artery linking India to Central Asia and Europe via Iran.

Historically, U.S. sanctions somewhat complicated Chabahar's development, yet partnerships with Eastern allies have helped improve its outlook.

India's initial investments in the port's infrastructure, aimed at accessing Afghanistan and Central Asia, have been complemented by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), weaving Chabahar into broader Eurasian connectivity projects.

The port now serves as a military and economic nexus, enabling Iran to project influence while mitigating reliance on Western-dominated trade routes.

Counter to unilateralism

The 2025 drills signal a deepening alignment among Iran, China, and Russia, reflecting shared opposition to unilateralism.

Analysts note that the exercises, occurring near the Strait of Hormuz and Chabahar, symbolize a collective resolve to secure energy corridors and trade lanes critical to the Global South.

Some experts view these exercises as more than just defensive actions; they are seen as opportunities to create a unified vision for maritime security.

This partnership also counters Western isolation efforts. By anchoring military cooperation in the Indian Ocean,

furthermore, the inclusion of aerial units and night operations—a first in the tripartite drills—signals Iran's growing confidence in asymmetric warfare capabilities, crucial in deterring adversarial naval presence.

Iran UN envoy affirms support for Afghan migrants, asks intl. community to play its part

TEHRAN – Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Amir Sa'ed Irvani, emphasized Iran's longstanding commitment to sheltering Afghan migrants and refugees during a UN Security Council briefing on the "Situation in Afghanistan."

Irvani highlighted the significant burden Iran has borne, especially after the U.S.'s abrupt withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, which followed a two-decade occupation of the country.

In his remarks, Irvani stated that Iran's policy towards Afghan refugees and migrants remains rooted in humanitarian principles. For over four decades, Iran has provided refuge to millions of Afghans, a commitment that has only intensified in recent years. "Legal Afghan migrants face no restrictions in Iran, and Iranian consulates issue 5,000 visas daily," the envoy noted.

Addressing the worsening humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, Irvani called for greater international support and urged donor countries to honor their commitments to humanitarian aid. "Due to security concerns, including terrorist threats, Iran will repatriate those who enter illegally. Let us be clear; neighboring countries should not be left to bear this responsibility without support from the international community. Iran and Pakistan need sustained and meaningful assistance. The inter-



national community must go beyond rhetoric and take concrete action," the ambassador said.

He also stressed the need for the release of Afghanistan's frozen assets and for responsible financial mechanisms to support the Afghan economy.

Irvani expressed concern over the security situation in Afghanistan, noting the threat posed by terrorist organizations such as ISIL-K. He called on Afghanistan's de facto authorities to prioritize counterterrorism efforts and prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for terrorism.

The Iranian ambassador also highlighted the dire situation for Afghan women and girls, urging the de facto authorities to reverse policies that

restrict their rights and access to education and healthcare.

In addition to his remarks on the humanitarian and security challenges, Irvani underscored Iran's ongoing engagement with Afghanistan through both bilateral and regional efforts. He emphasized that Iran remains committed to Afghanistan's peace, stability, and reconstruction, and called for the establishment of an inclusive and representative government in Afghanistan.

"A stable future is achievable through sustained international support and shared responsibility. A step-by-step approach within a clear roadmap can help rebuild trust and security," he said.

As the renewal of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan's (UNAMA) mandate approaches, Irvani reaffirmed Iran's support for the mission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in carrying out its responsibilities. He urged the Security Council to ensure that UNAMA has the necessary resources to address Afghanistan's challenges effectively.

Afghanistan is grappling with various economic, social, political, and security challenges. The withdrawal of international aid after the Taliban takeover has also exacerbated a humanitarian crisis there.

Families of Iranian terrorism victims slam Italian parliament's decision to honor MEK member

TEHRAN – In an open letter addressed to Italian authorities, families of Iranian victims of terrorism have condemned the Italian Parliament's decision to honor a member of the anti-Iran terror group Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK).

The families described the decision as a "shameful act" that has caused profound pain to many Iranians, especially the families of the 23,000 victims of terrorism in Iran.

The protest follows the Italian Parliament's decision to present the "Women of Courage Award 2025" to a member of the so-called Association of Iranian Youth in Italy, a group linked to the MEK terrorist organization. The award was handed over by the parliament's vice president.

In their letter, the families expressed their deep disappointment and outrage at the decision. "This award was presented by the Vice President of the Italian Parliament to a member of a front organization affiliated with the MEK, known as the Association of Iranian Youth in Italy," the letter stated. "In her acceptance speech, the recipient openly acknowledged her and her

family's membership in and political commitment to the MEK. She expressed support for the terrorist and destructive activities of the MEK's so-called 'Rebellious Units,' whose mission involves sabotage and the use of homemade bombs targeting government and religious sites in Iran."

The families highlighted the MEK's long history of violence and terrorism, both within Iran and beyond. "The MEK is a terrorist organization that, over more than five decades of its existence, has massacred countless Iranian citizens through a range of brutal methods, including suicide bombings, explosive attacks, mortar fire, abductions, torture, and both targeted and indiscriminate assassinations," the letter continued. "Thousands of Iran's 23,000 victims of terrorism lost their lives to the atrocities committed by this group."

The letter also pointed out the MEK's involvement in the murder of American and Iraqi citizens and its mercenary service to Saddam Hussein from the 1980s until his downfall. "The group's history is so



steeped in darkness that, for years, it was listed as a terrorist organization by the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and even the European Union," the families wrote. "While regrettable political maneuvers by these nations eventually led to its removal from those lists, the Iranian people and the families of terror victims will never forget the bombings, assassinations, and murders committed by this group."

The families called on the Italian Parliament to reconsider its support for the MEK and to adopt more just and humanitarian policies. "Instead of representing its own people and defending their rights, the

Italian Parliament has, regrettably, chosen an unjust and inhumane path by supporting and rewarding a notorious terrorist group and its members," the letter concluded. "It is highly unlikely that the Italian people and the voters who elected these representatives would condone such repulsive acts, which stem either from ignorance or from complete disregard for morality."

The families of Iran's terrorism victims urged the Italian Parliament and its representatives to cease their support for the MEK and to redirect their efforts toward serving their own citizens.

'The West can no longer lecture others on human rights:' Iran deputy FM

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi delivered a harsh rebuke to Western nations on Tuesday, asserting that Tehran will never submit to external pressure or abandon its principles under the weight of sanctions.

Speaking at the opening of an exhibition celebrating Iranian women's achievements in Tehran, Gharibabadi condemned Western double standards on human rights and underscored the nation's steadfast endurance in the face of relentless economic warfare.

"Those who claim to advocate human rights but support Israel's crimes in Gaza can no longer lecture others on violations," Gharibabadi stated, referencing the killing of over 50,000 Palestinians, predominantly women and children.

He criticized the U.S. and its allies for supplying the Israeli regime with military aid while ignoring the humanitarian catastrophe, calling it proof of their "moral bankruptcy."

Western countries have come under intense and sustained criticism for their perceived dou-



Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi speaking at the opening of an exhibition celebrating Iranian women's achievements in Tehran on March 11, 2025

ble standards on human rights, particularly their unwavering and unconditional support for the Israeli regime's atrocities in Gaza.

Despite overwhelming global condemnation of the devastating humanitarian crisis—which UN experts have explicitly labeled as involving "genocide"—the U.S. and its allies have persistently supplied military aid and robust diplomatic cover to Israel.

The U.S., in particular, stands accused of complicity in war crimes through its continued

arms shipments, while European nations face similar backlash for prioritizing geopolitical interests over justice and accountability.

'Any other nation but Iran would have collapsed'

Additionally, the official lambasted unilateral sanctions as a tool of collective punishment in his speech, arguing they endanger millions of Iranians' "right to life and well-being."

"If they truly cared about human rights, they would lift these sanctions," he said, noting that

even food and medicine exemptions are ignored.

Gharibabadi emphasized Iran's self-reliance, declaring, "Any other nation facing 10% of our pressures would have collapsed. We draw strength from our 7,000-year civilization and national pride."

The diplomat highlighted Europe's hosting of notorious groups like the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MKO), an EU-designated terrorist organization until recently, arguing that Western governments had facilitated the sheltering of terrorist groups implicated in the massacre of 23,000 Iranian civilians.

"Human rights are politicized—states aligned with the West escape scrutiny, while Iran faces baseless accusations," he added, contrasting Iran's "religious and national" human rights framework with pre-revolutionary subservience to the monarchy.

Gharibabadi concluded by urging foreign envoys to report Iran's realities to their governments. "Sanctions may strain daily life, but they will never break our sovereignty," he said.

Trump's Iran policy punishes Iraq

Iraq could plunge into darkness as Washington targets ties with Iran



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The information office of the President of the Economic Commission of the Iraqi Parliament announced that Atwan al-Atwani met with Daniel Rubinstein, the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States Embassy, and his delegation.

During the meeting, marked by the growing economic pressure on Iraq, bilateral relations and the sanctions imposed by Washington on the Islamic Republic of Iran were discussed. These restrictions threaten to exacerbate the already precarious energy situation in Iraq, particularly at a critical moment for the country's electricity supply.

Al-Atwani emphasized the need to maintain a constant communication channel with the United States but also warned about the consequences of interrupting Iranian gas imports. Iraq heavily depends on this supply to sustain its electrical grid, and the expiration of the sanctions waiver granted by Washington could result in massive power outages during the summer, affecting millions of citizens amidst rising temperatures.

The U.S. sanctions policy has placed Baghdad in a difficult predicament. While Iraq struggles to rebuild its economy and stabilize its energy infrastructure, Washington's restrictions complicate access to essential resources. Regional analysts point out that the U.S. stance of severing Iraq's ties with Iran is not based on a pragmatic approach but rather on a geopolitical pressure strategy that ig-

nores the realities of the Iraqi energy market.

In this context, al-Atwani made it clear to Rubinstein that there are no short-term viable alternatives to replacing Iranian gas. Estimates suggest that a full replacement would take between three to four years, and any attempt at a hasty disconnection would have catastrophic consequences. Iraq finds itself trapped between Washington's geopolitical interests and the urgent need to secure electricity supply for its population.

Despite Baghdad's request, the United States has decided not to renew a sanctions waiver dating back to 2018, when Washington reimposed restrictions on Tehran after Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran. This waiver allowed Iraq to purchase electricity from Iran, in line with the former president's "maximum pressure" policy on Tehran.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the U.S. State Department explained that the decision not to renew the waiver was made to "ensure we do not allow Iran any degree of economic or financial relief."

In the immediate term, the lack of Iranian gas imports could cause a severe energy deficit for Iraq. According to Ahmad Moussa, spokesperson for the Ministry of Electricity of Iraq, if gas imports are also prohibited, the country could lose more than 30% of its electricity supply. The government, he said, is seeking alternatives. Additionally, senior officials from the Ministry of Electricity stated that Iraq could lose about 8,000 megawatts of power from plants operating on Iranian gas and another 500 megawatts of electricity supplied directly by Iran.

Three Iraqi energy sector officials who spoke with Reuters agreed that the country has no immediate alternatives to replace the energy imported from Iran, which will create a significant problem in meeting domestic electricity demand. Meanwhile, many Iraqis rely on diesel generators or face temperatures exceeding 50 degrees Celsius during the summer months, further exacerbating the country's energy crisis.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Army Aviation bolsters defense capabilities with extended-range missiles



TEHRAN – Iran's Army Aviation announced on Tuesday a significant advancement in its defense capabilities, with successful enhancements to the range of its long-range missiles.

Brigadier General Pilot Qassem Khamoushi shared the news, emphasizing the role of indigenous part manufacturing in achieving this milestone. "We have significantly increased the range of our long-range missiles," stated Brigadier General Khamoushi. "This enhancement strengthens our ability to respond effectively to evolving security challenges and protect our national interests."

In addition to the range improvements, the Army Aviation Commander highlighted the growing self-reliance of the nation's defense industry. "A key factor in achieving this advancement has been our commitment to domestic part manufacturing," he noted. "Next April, we will unveil the production of over a thousand domestically produced components, further solidifying our independence in defense technology."

While specific details regarding the increased range remain undisclosed, General Khamoushi highlighted the importance of these upgrades in maintaining a modern and effective defense force. Existing missile systems, such as the AGM-65 Maverick (with a range of approximately 22 kilometers) and the AGM-114 Hellfire (with a range of approximately 8 kilometers), currently form the backbone of Army Aviation's strike capabilities.

Iranian defense minister visits Belarus for cooperation talks

TEHRAN – Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh arrived in Belarus on Tuesday, initiating high-level talks aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in defense and technology sectors.

General Nasirzadeh was received by senior Belarusian officials upon arrival in Minsk. His agenda includes discussions with military and civilian leadership focusing on defense collaboration, technology transfer, and broader strategic initiatives. Specific topics include joint mil-

itary exercises, co-production of defense equipment, and collaboration in cybersecurity.

General Nasirzadeh's visit is expected to result in tangible outcomes and concrete agreements.

The visit comes after Iran and Belarus emphasized the importance of collaborating to counter U.S. unilateralism last year. During a high-ranking meeting in the Iranian capital Tehran, Chief Commander of the Iranian Army Abdolrahim Mousavi and visiting



Commander of the Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense Andrey Lukyanovich voiced their willing-

ness to expand bilateral cooperation, especially in the defense sector.

Al Nassr's Duran happy to score against Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Jhon Duran is determined to play his part in taking Al Nassr Club all the way after the Colombian star scored two goals in their 3-1 win against Esteghlal in the AFC Champions League Elite 2024-25 Round of 16 on Monday.

Held to a goalless draw in last week's first leg, Duran netted the first and third goals with Cristiano Ronaldo converting a penalty as Al Nassr matched last season's feat of qualifying for the quarter-finals.

It was a thoroughly convincing performance and Duran warned that Al Nassr will be a force in the quarter-finals.

"I am happy with the result, and we worked well today, and step by step we will improve and develop," said Duran. "Nothing has changed between the first and second leg matches, the only thing that has changed is scoring goals."

"Things have not changed between my time in England and now in Saudi Arabia, here there are great players and all the matches are difficult, and the league here is difficult and beautiful," he added.

Pioli shows satisfaction as Al Nassr beat Esteghlal

TEHRAN – Al Nassr football team head coach Stefano Pioli is satisfied due to beating Esteghlal and is now focused on erasing last season's quarter-final defeat to eventual champion Al Ain FC.

The Saudi Arabian team defeated Esteghlal 3-0 Monday night thanks to goals from Jhon Duran and Cristiano Ronaldo.

"I am very happy with the qualification, our goal was to go to the final stages in Jeddah and we achieved this," said Pioli.

"I always have great confidence in the players because of our hard work in training, and sometimes the results do not do us justice but we know that we are on the right path," the Italian added.

"For now, the next league match is the most important but after the international break, we will get back some players who are missing, and we hope to go as far as possible in this competition," he concluded.

Al Nassr deserved to win, Esteghlal coach Bozovic says

TEHRAN – Esteghlal head coach Miodrag Bozovic said Al Nassr deserved to win in the second leg of their AFC Champions League Elite 2024/25 Round of 16 tie Monday night.

He knew it was an uphill battle after he saw his side trail 2-0 before the half an hour mark, noting that the red card shown to Mehran Ahmadi late in the first half further complicated matters.

"There is not much to say, we conceded two goals at the beginning of the match, then one of the players was sent off which made the match difficult for us, and Al Nassr deserved to win," said Bozovic.

"Al Nassr handled this match correctly, and the match ended early after the two goals and the red card," the Serbian added.

"We had a negative thing in this match, which was losing tackles, and whoever loses tackles always loses the match," Bozovic concluded.

Defeat for Esteghlal means Iran side's wait for another continental trophy continues after having won the 1990-91 Asian Club Championship.

Bonyadifar to officiate China vs Australia in 2026 WC qualifier

TEHRAN – Mo'ud Bonyadifar has been chosen to officiate the match between China and Australia in Group C of the 2026 World Cup qualification.

He will be assisted by his countrymen Alireza Ildrom and Farhad Moravveji. Payam Heydari is fourth official.

The match will be held at the Hangzhou Sports Park Stadium in Hangzhou on March 25.

Australia sits second with seven points, while China is sixth with six points.

Amir Zamanpour to represent Iran in World Athletics Indoor Championships

TEHRAN – Iran's Amir Zamanpour will compete at the 2025 World Athletics Indoor Championships.

The athlete has secured wild card place for the competition.

Zamanpour will participate at the 1500 meters discipline.

Each of the 2025 World Indoor Tour series winners receives a US\$10,000 bonus.

The World Championships will be held in Nanjing, China from March 21 to 23.

The team selection for the World Indoor Championships is capped at two athletes per nation per discipline, but these wild card places allow for a third athlete to compete. As always, the final decision on entering any individual athlete for the World Indoor Championships rests with the athlete's national federation.

Esteghlal must rebound from setback

TEHRAN – Esteghlal Football Club, one of Iran's most prestigious football teams, faced a heart-breaking exit from the 2024/25 AFC Champions League Elite under the stewardship of head coach Miodrag Bozovic.

The team were eliminated in the Round of 16 following a disappointing 3-0 defeat to the Saudi Arabian giants, Al Nassr, on Monday night.

Esteghlal entered the tournament with high hopes and a squad brimming with talent. The club's rich history in Asian football set the stage for a strong performance, famously winning the continental title two times in the past. However, this season's campaign proved to be a challenging one.

Under the guidance of Bozovic, who took charge of the team two weeks ago, Esteghlal got poor results in the Persian Gulf Pro League.

As Esteghlal reflects on this disappointing exit, the focus will inevitably shift to the Iran's Hazfi Cup and the future. To win Hazfi Cup will be crucial for restoring morale and confidence among players and fans alike.

The club must also consider the integration of new talent and potential changes in coaching strategy to avoid a repeat of this season's shortcomings in future continental competitions.

The passionate Esteghlal fanbase remains hopeful, knowing that the club have the resources and history to rebound from this setback. The road ahead will not be easy, but with determination and focus, Esteghlal can strive for greater successes both locally and in Asia.

As the club gear up to face their next challenges, supporters will continue to rally behind the team, eager for a resurgence that honors Esteghlal's rich football legacy.

Iran win Asian Mini Football Championship

TEHRAN – Iran claimed the Asian Mini Football Championship title on Monday, beating Indonesia 3-2 in final.

The UAE defeated Oman 4-1 in the third-place match.

This historic win marks Iran's first-ever continental title in mini football, a significant milestone for the team on the Asian stage.

The Asian Mini Football Championship is a premier 6-a-side outdoor tournament organized by the Asian Minifootball Confederation (AMC).

The inaugural edition took place in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2023.

The competition took place at the Shams Stadium in Sharjah, the UAE.

MME signs co-op agreement with leading Chinese steelmakers

TEHRAN - Iran's Mines and Metals Engineering Company (MME), the executive arm of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IM-DR), has signed a cooperation agreement with major Chinese steel manufacturers.

According to IRIB, MME, a subsidiary of Ascotec Holding and one of IM-DR's operational arms, signed the agreement with leading Chinese companies in the steel industry. The deal aims to facilitate the expansion of the Iranian PERED technology in global markets.

MME, the innovator of PERED (Persian Reduction), a fully Iranian-developed technology



for sponge iron production, is currently working on the design and construction of international projects utilizing this technology.

Iran, Poland private sectors discuss strengthening ties

TEHRAN - An Iranian private sector delegation visited Warsaw to explore opportunities for expanding economic cooperation, emphasizing the need to reduce tariffs and ease visa requirements for businesspeople.

The delegation was led by Qadir Qiafeh, Vice President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

The visit aimed to promote bilateral trade, attract mutual investment, remove trade barriers, and enhance economic interactions between the two countries.

The delegation included businesspeople

from various sectors, including information technology, the food industry, animal medicine, and knowledge-based and management consulting companies.

During a meeting between Qiafeh and the President of the Polish Chamber of Commerce, both sides stressed the urgency of boosting bilateral trade, increasing mutual investment, and fostering sustainable private sector connections.

The Polish side expressed his country's readiness to facilitate trade with Iran and expand economic exchanges.

IRISL breaks container transport record despite sanctions

TEHRAN - The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) has set a new record in container transport despite ongoing sanctions, the chairman of the board of the IRISL Container Transport Company announced.

According to IRISL, the official stated that the company transported 100,000 TEUs more than in the previous year, significantly boosting its container transport record. He attributed this achievement to mutual trust between the company and cargo owners, emphasizing IRISL's commitment to expanding cooperation with customers while providing safe, organized, and cost-effective services.

The head of the IRISL Container Transport Company highlighted the company's continuous growth over the past five years despite sanctions, noting that performance figures have risen by over 41 percent compared to five years ago. He credited this success to the unwavering support of exporters and importers for the national fleet.

To further enhance customer service, the company has introduced new operational guidelines, resulting in significant service improvements at its offices in Bandar Abbas, Tehran, and the newly established customer service office in Chabahar. These initiatives include customer segmentation and ranking, moving toward personalized marketing using intelligent online systems to revolutionize client interactions with container transport.

He also announced the introduction of a na-



tionwide bill of lading, marking a major step toward transforming IRISL into a full-fledged logistics company. With this new system, alongside comprehensive insurance coverage for all transported containers, goods can now be delivered through a seamless door-to-door service at minimal cost and delay.

Expanding international reach and Chabahar port's growth

The official emphasized the importance of leveraging Iran's North-South Corridor, particularly in serving the Russian and CIS markets, where demand for Iranian exports is strong. He noted that IRISL is fully capable of handling these shipments using multimodal and door-to-door transport solutions.

He also highlighted the company's global expansion, stating that IRISL now serves customers across five continents. Notably, he pointed to the rapid growth of Chabahar Port, which has risen from the fourth to the second-ranked port in Iran following IRISL's strategic investments.

Iran's renewable energy capacity surpasses 1,561 MW

TEHRAN - Iran's renewable energy capacity has reached 1,561.66 megawatts by the end of February 2025, as the country accelerates efforts to address power imbalances and expand clean energy sources.

The growing electricity supply-demand gap has highlighted the urgent need for renewable energy expansion. In response, the 14th administration has intensified efforts to boost solar and wind power generation across the country.

On Sunday, March 9, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed the government's commitment to solar power infrastructure development, stating that funding for the project has been secured. He urged contractors and relevant stakeholders to expedite their operations, emphasizing that the government is determined to eliminate any obstacles delaying the initiative.

Data from the Energy Ministry indicates that solar power plants account for the largest share of Iran's renewable energy mix, contributing 810.03 MW (60 percent) of total capacity. Wind power plants rank second, generating 376.3 MW (29 percent) of the country's total renewable electricity. Other renewable sources include small hydropower plants at 104.04 MW (8 percent), biomass power plants at 22.13 MW (2 percent), and expansion turbines at 9.6 MW (1 percent).

Despite these developments, renewable energy still accounts for only 0.7 percent of Iran's total electricity generation. However, government officials stress that further expansion is underway, with efforts to increase capacity and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

Iraq seeks to maintain gas and electricity imports from Iran amid sanction challenges

From Page 1 ▶ The U.S. Charge d'Affaires responded during the meeting, stating that he understood the issues raised by Al-Atwani concerning energy and banking sanctions and promised to relay these messages to the U.S. government in hopes of finding permanent solutions that would serve the interests of both nations. He also noted that sanctions have not yet included the import of natural gas.

On the other hand, the U.S. Ambassador, while expressing sympathy for the issues Al-Atwani raised, especially regarding energy and banking sanctions, promised to convey these messages to his government.

He expressed hope that permanent solutions and measures could be found to address these issues in a way that benefits both nations.

Daniel Rubenstein also emphasized that natural gas imports have so far been outside the "sanctions framework."

Under the March 2024 agreement, Iran committed to exporting 50 million cubic meters of gas per day to Iraq, a contract valued at about six billion dollars annually.

In addition, in July 2022, Iraq



signed a five-year contract to purchase 400 megawatts of electricity from Iran.

In recent years, Iraq has been working to reduce its dependence on Iranian gas. Several projects have been initiated to secure energy from other sources. In October 2024, Iraq signed an agreement to import 20 million cubic meters of gas per day from Turkmenistan, which could serve as an alternative to Iranian gas.

Another possibility is purchasing LNG from Qatar. Iraq is building an LNG storage terminal in the Faw port, where Qatar is likely to be the main supplier.

Additionally, the Qatar-Turkey gas pipeline, which was halted in 2009 but has since regained attention following the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime, could also provide an alternative.

Initially, the Qatar gas pipeline was planned to pass through Saudi Arabia and Syria, reaching Turkey and then to Europe.

The pipeline also passes near Iraq's border, and it is said that it could supply gas to the country's power plants and industries.

Furthermore, connecting Iraq to the Gulf Cooperation Council's electricity grid could reduce Iraq's dependence on Iran.

This project includes an elec-

tricity transmission line from Kuwait to Basra, which could supply Iraq's electricity needs.

Additionally, a \$27 billion contract has been signed with Total Energy to develop gas fields.

In July 2023, Iraq and Total Energy, a French company, signed a \$27 billion contract to increase oil production and enhance the country's energy production capacity with four oil, gas, and renewable energy projects.

It is important to note that these solutions require time and significant investment. In the short term, Iraq remains dependent on Iranian gas, and finding an immediate alternative is difficult.

In this context, three Iraqi energy officials told Reuters on Sunday that Iraq has no immediate alternative to replace the energy it imports from Iran, which will lead to significant issues in providing enough electricity for domestic consumption, especially in the summer.

One senior official from Iraq's Ministry of Electricity told Reuters, "The government has started taking urgent measures to reduce the impact of the U.S. decision on Iraq's electricity supply."

Tehran to host International Auto Parts Exhibition

TEHRAN - The 20th International Exhibition of Auto Parts, Accessories, and Assemblies will be held from May 29 to June 1, 2025, at Tehran's Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRNA reported.

Sadif Beikzadeh, the head of the Iran International Exhibitions Company, stated in a press conference on Tuesday that the auto industry exhibition is among the top three exhibitions in the country in terms of participation and visitor interest.

He added that over 700 foreign companies from nine countries and 500 domestic firms will take part in the event.

Special halls have been designated for knowledge-based and innovative companies.

Beikzadeh emphasized the need to utilize export target markets, including BRICS and Eurasia, to achieve the eight percent economic growth goal outlined in Iran's Seventh Development Plan.

He also noted that a 23 percent increase in exports is planned, covering various sectors such as industry, mining, and agriculture.

He highlighted the crucial role of domestic and international marketing in economic growth, describing the auto exhibition as one of the key events aimed at improving economic conditions.

"The automotive industry was one of the main targets of sanctions against Iran, alongside steel, petrochemicals, and other



sectors," Beikzadeh said.

He stressed that the growth of other industries is linked to the automotive sector, which plays a significant role in employment.

Iran Air secures EU, ICAO certification for fuel management in international flights

TEHRAN - Iran Air has received certification from the European Union and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for fuel management in its international flights, the airline's deputy director of operations announced.

According to Iran Air, Javad Sharifi stated on Monday that the airline undergoes annual audits under the EU Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS) and CORSIA, ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation, for all international flights.

Sharifi explained that these audits aim to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and ensure

compliance with international environmental regulations to keep emission levels within acceptable limits. If an airline fails to meet the required standards, it faces penalties and operational restrictions on its flights.

He emphasized that as an international carrier, Iran Air must comply with these regulations, and therefore, it is evaluated annually by EU auditors.

Sharifi outlined the steps taken in the certification process, including contracting with Germany's GMBH Verification EST, holding technical meetings with fuel management and information systems teams, and conducting operational data analy-

sis.

These efforts, led by Iran Air's Flight Safety and Operations Standards Department, culminated in a successful audit and verification process.

After multiple review sessions with auditors, Iran Air provided comprehensive documentation on selected flights.

In the third week of February, the airline officially secured EU and ICAO certification for meeting international fuel management and environmental standards.

One of the key achievements highlighted was saving over 40 tons of fuel in EU flights over the past year, which will be regis-

tered in Germany's aviation regulatory database. This fuel efficiency achievement also carries significant financial value on the global stock exchange market.

Sharifi noted that Iran Air is the first airline in Iran to have consistently complied with ICAO's CO₂ emissions standards for over a decade, maintaining an excellent track record in all environmental audits.

He concluded by reaffirming Iran Air's commitment to sustainable aviation, stating that the airline will continue to adhere to international environmental regulations and lead Iran's aviation sector toward eco-friendly operations.

RAI eyes launching Tehran-Ankara train after resuming Tehran-Van route

TEHRAN - Iran's railway authority is considering launching a direct Tehran-Ankara train service if passenger demand for the recently resumed Tehran-Van route remains strong, the managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) said.

Jabarali Zakeri said the Tehran-Van train, which resumed service after a five-year suspension, is now operational following an agreement between Iran and Turkey's railway authorities.

The train consists of seven passenger wagons, a restaurant

car, and a locomotive, with a total capacity of 280 passengers.

Zakeri, who also serves as Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development, said all tickets for the Tehran-Van service have been sold, indicating strong demand.

He expressed hope that the renewed railway link would facilitate tourism between the two countries.

Tickets for the Tehran-Van train are priced at €26 (approximately 19 million rials) after applying official exchange rate-based discounts.

South Pars 1st infill well goes operational

TEHRAN - Iran has brought the first well from a 35-well infill drilling project at the South Pars gas field into production, aimed at maintaining output levels, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC) said.

Touraj Dehghani said drilling and completion of Well No. 5 on Platform SPD12B in Phase 12 of the South Pars gas field has been completed, and the well has been connected to the platform's existing processing facilities, Shana reported.

The well is capable of producing over 2.0 million cubic meters of rich gas per day, compensating for natural reservoir depletion at Platform SPD12B and helping

restore its designed production capacity, he added.

The infill drilling project, covering 35 wells across 17 gas platforms, is being executed in four work packages. The drilling of Well No. 5 was carried out under the second package of an Engineering, Procurement, and Drilling (EPD) contract with PetroIran Development Company and Drilling Company International (DCI) handling operations using the DCI-2 offshore drilling rig.

Once fully completed, the infill drilling project is expected to boost South Pars' production capacity by 36 million cubic meters per day.

A compromised president and the country sold to two donors!

By Professor Hossein Askari

PROTLAND - Over time several of President Trump's statements and actions have aroused suspicion that he may have become compromised by the Russian (Soviet) intelligence services in the 1980s and that he may knowingly or unknowingly have been acting as a Soviet asset for some time, increasingly so in his second term as president. (<https://medium.com/@wesodonnell/is-trump-compromised-75012fc3fc54>) While such assertions are widespread, there is no definitive proof. The list of assertions to support such a claim include: (i) his 1987 advertisements attacking America's foreign policy and its support of European allies (largely members of NATO); (<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ilanbenmeir/that-time-trump-spent-nearly-100000-on-an-ad-criticizing-us>) (ii) numerous interactions of his closest advisors (including Donald Trump Jr., Jared Kushner, Paul Manafort, Michael Flynn, Jeff Sessions and Michael Cohen) with Soviet officials; (iii) the fact that during his first term Trump invited Russian foreign minister Lavrov to the Oval Office to share classified information; and (iv) his meeting with Vladimir Putin (also in his first term), with no aides or official minutes but a translator who had to hand over all notes at the end of the meeting. More recently, Trump has been even more open in his support of Putin (i) by falsely claiming that Ukraine started the war with Russia; (ii) by stating that Zelensky did not want peace although Russia had



earlier signed a ceasefire deal that Putin abrogated; (iii) by continuing to praise Putin to no end, "here's a guy that says, you know, 'I'm gonna declare a big portion of Ukraine independent' - he used the word 'independent' - 'and we're gonna go out and we're gonna go in and we're gonna help keep peace.' You gotta say that's pretty savvy;" (iv) by supporting Russia at the United Nations, to the chagrin of European allies, twice siding with Russia in votes to mark the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, opposing a European-drafted resolution condemning Moscow's actions and supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity and by having the U.S. draft and vote for a resolution at the UN Security Council which called for an end to the conflict with no criticism of Russia; (v) by cutting off military aid and intelligence sharing with Ukraine; and (vi) by calling for the payback of past U.S. aid to Ukraine and insisting on access to Ukraine's mineral resources in support of his demand. While this is a mountain of corroborating assertions to support the

claim that Trump has been compromised, it is still not definitive proof that America's president is acting in the interests of Putin and Russia.

Although America is still the world's premier military power, it has been rapidly losing much of its soft power. It can bully and use force but its persuasive powers have been eroding rapidly. Why should a country trust a U.S. president when at the drop of a hat he abandons his country's allies, who the country has supported and who in turn have supported the country, all this in the middle of a war where its closest allies see an existential threat from Russia? Is America friend or foe when its president threatens annexation of an ally's territory or resources? Can America ever be trusted again after unilaterally withdrawing from an agreement it signed with other major powers (the Iran nuclear agreement or the JCPOA) and assassinating a leading general (Soleimani) in a foreign land (Iraq)? Why would Iran come back to the negotiating table

with an untrustworthy U.S., as demanded by the same president who reneged on the deal America had signed and who assassinated its top general? A country that protects Israel's nuclear arsenal and says in the same breath that everyone should do away with nuclear arms? Even Canada, arguably America's biggest backer in recent years is turning away from its friend after the imposition of tariffs and threats of taking over Canada as its 51st state, prompting the newly elected Canadian Prime Minister, Mark Carney, to say of its southern neighbor, a "country we can no longer trust." America, a country that was universally admired after WWII is now not trusted and even despised in much of the world. Military power and economic coercion in the form of tariffs and unilateral sanctions alone are insufficient to keep America safe and prosperous. America still needs friends, especially in a world of rapidly changing military technology and asymmetric warfare.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Syrian Alawites left abandoned to horrific crimes

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Monitoring groups report that despite the Syrian Defense Ministry declaring its security operation over, armed groups still target civilians.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on its website that armed groups continue criminal activities against civilians on the Syrian coast, despite the Defense Ministry's earlier announcement ending the security operation.

The Observatory highlighted that "armed groups entered the town of Harison in the Baniyas countryside alongside Ministry of Defense forces. They began looting, burning homes, and destroying citizens' property."

The town was also subjected to bombardment using various weapons.

Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have decried "the

horrific images emerging from Syria's coast, with bodies lying in the streets and grieving families mourning their loved ones."

The Rights group called on authorities in Damascus to "grant independent national and international investigators access to Syria, including to Syria's coastal areas, so that they can conduct their own fact-finding work."

"These horrific events once again underscore the urgent need for comprehensive steps by Syrian authorities to ensure truth, justice and reparation for all victims of grave violations in Syria," it added.

Meanwhile, Adam Coogle, the deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch stated that "grave abuses on a staggering scale are being reported against predominantly Alawite Syrians in the coastal region and elsewhere in Syria."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ICRC warns of worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza

The ceasefire in Gaza has proven vital to saving lives, bringing in humanitarian assistance and sustaining the civilian population. However, Gaza's humanitarian crisis is far from over. Aid deliveries had substantially increased over the course of the ceasefire, but they remain a drop in the ocean compared to the immense needs on the ground.

Beyond emergency relief, a long-term commitment to rebuilding essential services and restoring dignity to affected communities is required. There is also an urgent need for diversified assistance, including construction materials for shelters, medical supplies, and other essential services to address the complex humanitarian crisis.

The suspension of assistance now, including the cessation of power to the only water

desalination facility in Gaza, risks plunging Gaza further into an acute humanitarian emergency. The impacts are already felt in price increases and shortages of basic goods.

Under international humanitarian law, Israel shall ensure that the basic needs of the civilian population under its control are met. The rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance must also be allowed and facilitated.

The ICRC remains committed to delivering lifesaving assistance and advocating for the urgent needs of those affected. Rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access is critical to fulfilling this mission. The ICRC reiterates its urgent call for more aid to enter Gaza, for all hostages to be released and for the ceasefire to continue.

NPC's closing meeting: Chinese characteristics to define modernization journey

By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING - The global spotlight has once again shined on China as the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) held the closing meeting of its third session in Beijing on Tuesday.

President Xi Jinping and other Chinese leaders attended the meeting at the Great Hall of the People.

The military band of the Chinese People's Liberation Army performed while hundreds of journalists from both domestic and international outlets reported on the occasion.

Li Hongzhong, vice-chairman of the NPC

Standing Committee, presided over the ceremony.

Li said the week-long session of the NPC, China's national legislature, has brought about unity.

"The meeting fully demonstrated democracy, and all work was conducted in strict accordance with the law. We identified our goals and tasks and also conveyed confidence and strength. It is a meeting about delivering real results through solid work, as well as forging unity," he said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Syria's interim president signs deal with Kurdish-led SDF to merge forces

The Kurdish-led and US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which controls much of Syria's oil-rich north-east, signed a deal with the Damascus government on March 10 to join Syria's new state institutions, the Syrian presidency said.

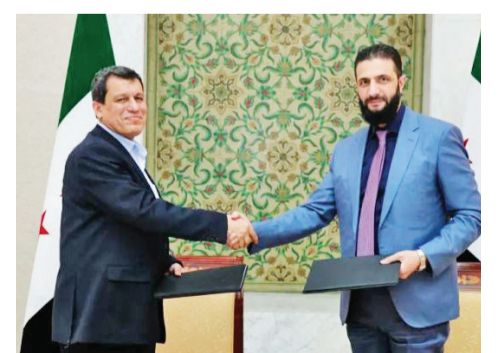
Photos showed Syria's interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa and SDF commander Mazloum Abdi shaking hands in Damascus on the agreement that provides for SDF-controlled civilian and military institutions in north-east Syria to be integrated with the state, Reuters reported.

The accord came at a critical moment as Sharaa grappled with the fallout from mass killings of Alawite minority members in western Syria - violence that he said on March 10 threatened his effort to unite Syria after 14 years of conflict.

In December 2024, insurgents toppled the government of former Syrian president Bashar al-Assad.

The agreement signed on March 10 calls for SDF-controlled border crossings, an airport, and oil and gas fields in eastern Syria to become part of the Damascus administration.

In his first official comment following the sign-



ing of the accord, Abdi said in a post on X that the deal represents a "real opportunity to build a new Syria."

He said the SDF was working together with the Syrian administration at "such a critical period" to guarantee a transitional phase that reflects the aspirations of the Syrian people for justice and stability.

Implementation is due by the end of 2025, but the accord does not specify how SDF's military operation will be integrated into Syria's defense ministry, a major sticking point in talks thus far.

Lebanon quite prone to sectarian violence in Syria

From page 1 ▶ Predominantly, Lebanon's most critical challenge is the Syrian refugee crisis, as the genocidal massacres on the Syrian coast have led to a new flood of people to refugees to Lebanon, especially those who have been there for years have been ordered not to return.

Further, the Israeli incursion into the southern Lebanese borders and the escalation of Israeli attacks on several Lebanese regions places additional burdens on the Lebanese army and security services, as it must keep the utmost possible readiness to prevent any security breakdown or disruption to civil peace.

Meanwhile, the Israeli violation of Lebanese sovereignty, on the one hand, and the horrific massacres committed by the HTS-led thugs in Syria against innocent people on the other will only push Hezbollah to cling to its weapons. In that situation demanding Hezbollah to give in its weapons will be suicidal.

Although Iraq was quick to express its fear of Syria's "genocidal massacres," as they put it, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam and President Joseph Aoun have remained silent!

First Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, stated that "what the neighboring country Syria is witnessing, in terms of horrific ethnic and sectarian geno-

cidal massacres, embodies the criminal Takfiri background from which some groups participating in the new administration draw their approach to governance, that is, according to discriminatory and racist principles, which may undermine all chances for stability in Syria."

Al-Mandalawi said what is happening in Syria sends disturbing messages not only to the neighbouring countries but to the entire region. The events in Syria are a threat to the regional countries' security, stability, relations and common interests.

What happened and is happening in Syria has only strengthened the righteousness of the resistance movement's weapons and struggle, and is even pushing other resistance movements in Lebanon to arm themselves to protect their existence from these looming threats.

Syria has been and still has a vital influence on the region due to its rich geographical, demographic, and natural advantages.

Since the Camp David Accords and the Zionist invasion of Lebanon in 1982, up to the battle to support Gaza and the recent Israeli aggression, Damascus has played a strategic role in supporting the resistance struggle in Lebanon and has been an open arms supply line for it.



For this reason, Israel destroyed Syria's military capabilities following the fall of the former regime to neutralize it as a regional power.

Attacks on Syria were also aimed to deprive the resistance movements of a strong strategic depth and a main arms corridor, which enabled them to weaken the pillars of the Zionist regime and thwart the American expansionist conspiracies.

At the current stage, the Israeli expansion in southern Syria and the imposition of a buffer zone is nothing but an encirclement of Lebanon. However, Hezbollah has made great strides in building strength, expertise and capabilities to defend Lebanon and the region!

A new vision for US global power under Trump

From page 1 ▶ A key example of the establishment's influence has been USAID, which has historically functioned as a covert tool for advancing American unipolarity. By using soft power tactics, it has helped destabilize nations through coups and color revolutions. However, under Trump, funding for such initiatives has been slashed, allowing the U.S. to save billions. His approach is more direct—rather than relying on NGOs to influence societies, he prefers sanctions as a means of coercion. This shift weakens American influence at the grassroots level, creating a vacuum that local movements and other powers can exploit.

Trump aims to strengthen the American economy through relative stability rather than confrontation. He opposes pro-

longed war with Russia, favoring investment over sanctions. Rather than spending \$175 billion on Ukraine, he sees greater economic potential in working with Russia, which he does not view as a direct economic competitor. His broader goal is to retract costly foreign commitments and consolidate American economic dominance, using economic leverage—such as tariffs and sanctions—to maintain control. This was evident in his approach to Zelensky, where he set clear conditions for support.

This stance starkly contrasts with that of Europe, which remains deeply hostile toward Russia and relies on U.S. backing to counter it. Trump's push for increased tariffs on European imports will likely reduce demand for European goods in the U.S.,

stimulating domestic manufacturing and bolstering the dollar. His retreat from NATO further exposes contradictions within the alliance, creating strategic openings that others may exploit.

Trump operates like a political tsunami. In Gaza, he has positioned himself as the real power behind the war, stopping it on his own terms. Even his controversial depopulation proposal was more of a bargaining tool than a concrete plan. He sees West Asia as secondary to regions like Mexico, Panama, or Greenland. When asked about Iran's strength, he acknowledges Iran is very strong—suggesting he prefers to focus on nuclear containment rather than military confrontation, much to Netanyahu's frustration.

Trump also has a tendency towards withdrawal when he sees American involvement as a financial drain. While Israel has expanded its influence in Syria, if its actions provoke widespread resistance and it becomes clear that Israel is a source of ongoing conflict, Trump may reconsider U.S. support.

In contrast to the deep state's approach—where a weakening Israel prompts the search for regional substitutes—Trump's stance is more transactional. If there is no significant opposition, he will stamp Israel's territorial gains. But if the costs outweigh the benefits, he is willing to incrementally remove support from the occupation entity.

Grand ancient Greek tomb unearthed near Corinth



The Ministry of Culture announced the discovery of a grand ancient Greek tomb site near the ancient city of Tenea in Corinth, resembling Macedonian tombs from the Hellenistic era.

According to the announcement, the structure's exterior and interior suggest a history of prolonged use and religious significance linked to healing practices.

The Ministry of Culture reports that the funerary monument features an asymmetrical "T"-shaped layout, comprising two sections: an access corridor measuring 2.80m by 1.20m and a main burial chamber extending 2.75m by 7.40m.

The rectangular burial chamber is aligned along a north-south axis, with the corridor intersecting its eastern long side at the midpoint.

Access is provided by a narrow east-west

corridor, which includes an open-air section—resembling a "street"—and a covered section, part of whose horizontal roof remains intact.

The entrance to the covered section was sealed externally with a rectangular covering slab, while its opening features a reused rectangular lintel.

A monolithic sarcophagus and five rectangular tombs were discovered along the walls of the main chamber.

In two of these tombs, the covering slabs showed clear signs of disturbance, while the others had no coverings intact.

Of the six tombs, only the sarcophagus contained a well-preserved burial in an anatomical position, likely belonging to an adult woman, whereas the anthropological remains in the other tombs were found displaced.

Inside the sarcophagus, a significant number of animal bones from both large and small domestic animals were discovered, along with a tortoise shell.

Additionally, a thick layer of animal bones was found within the monument's fill and inside the burial chamber, accompanied by ceramic vessels dating to the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

(Source: GreekReporter.com)

Salehi takes helm at Iranology foundation, outlines vision in Tehran ceremony

From Page 1 ▶ while also addressing contemporary challenges facing the country's identity on the global stage.

Iranology a collective mission for national, cultural strength: Salehi

In his inaugural address, Ali Akbar Salehi expressed gratitude for the opportunity to lead the foundation and emphasized his longstanding engagement with Iranology and cultural studies.

Salehi described Iran as a well-spring of wisdom, art, and knowledge, stating that the study and promotion of Iran's heritage is not merely an academic or historical obligation, but a fundamental necessity for both the present and the future. "In an era where national identities are challenged by distorted narratives and manipulated representations, it is our collective responsibility to accurately present Iran's true image to the world," he said. "Iranology is not an individual pursuit, but a collaborative effort that requires unity, research, and a shared vision."

Salehi stressed that Iran's survival and resilience over thousands of years have been built upon fundamental values such as patience, wisdom, creativity, tolerance, and innovation. However, he warned of the growing influence of modern propaganda and media manipulation, which he said aim to weaken the cultural connection of young Iranians to



their national identity.

"This is why Iranologists must play an active role in countering these influences and protecting our youth from being alienated from their roots," he asserted.

Salehi emphasized that the study of Iran is not just about history, but about the future, urging scholars to develop a deep analytical understanding of social and cultural transformations while positioning Iran effectively in an evolving global landscape.

"The world is undergoing rapid changes, and it is vital to redefine Iran's role in this transformation. By establishing think tanks, strategic research initiatives, and cultural diplomacy programs, we can create a roadmap for Iranology studies that aligns with modern realities," he explained.

Salehi also highlighted the Persian language as a unifying force within Iran's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape. "It is the common thread that binds our diverse communities together, ensuring national unity and cohesion."

Iranology a strategic component of Iran's foreign policy: VP

Speaking at the ceremony, Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref praised Salehi as a scholarly and ethical leader with over four decades of experience in higher education. He credited him with playing a key role in reopening universities and managing some of the most prestigious academic institutions in Iran and the region. Aref highlighted Iran's potential in scientific and cultural diplomacy, stating that Salehi's leadership at the Iranology Foundation would further enhance Iran's posi-

tion in global cultural discourse.

"The government will fully support the foundation in its mission to promote Iranology," he affirmed.

Aref also called for the revival of Persian as a linguistic and cultural powerhouse, emphasizing its historical significance across the region.

"Persian and Iran are inseparable," he said. "For centuries, Persian has been the language of scholarship, literature, and governance across much of the region. Many neighboring nations take great pride in Persian culture, with images of Iranian scholars displayed in their universities and cultural institutions."

He condemned Iranophobia as a grave injustice to human civilization, arguing that Iranian culture has been a beacon of wisdom and enlightenment throughout history.

"While Western civilization has been responsible for countless wars and atrocities, including the tragic massacres in Gaza, Iranian civilization has always promoted dignity, knowledge, and cultural excellence," Aref stated. Aref emphasized that the 14th government is committed to expanding Iranology as a key pillar of foreign policy, alongside traditional diplomatic efforts.

He confirmed that Iranology is now a national priority, and that all government institutions would support the Iranology Foundation under Salehi's leadership.

29,000-year-old remains of child unearthed in Thailand cave with 'symbols of blood and power'

The 29,000-year-old bones of a child discovered in Thailand are the oldest human remains ever found in the country, archaeologists have announced.

The child — nicknamed "Pangpond," after a Thai cartoon character — was likely living with their family of hunter-gatherers near the coast

before their untimely death. Both the skeleton and the method of burial are revealing groundbreaking information about Stone Age Thailand.

The discovery was announced last month at a news conference held by the Thai government's Fine Arts Department and Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. The

skeleton, along with numerous cave paintings, was found at the Tham Din (Earthen Cave) archaeological site in Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park.

In 2020, archaeologists began studying paintings made in red ochre on the walls and ceiling of three chambers at Tham Din, according to the Prachuap Post. Most of the

paintings represented people, and some were depicted using bows and arrows to hunt animals such as deer and monkeys. The stones and red ochre may be symbols of blood and power, lead archaeologist Kannika Premjai told the Bangkok Post.

When excavations began in 2022, archaeol-

ogists noticed animal bones, shells, seeds and stones that suggested that prehistoric humans used the cave. Radiocarbon dating of the material suggested they lived there from about 29,000 to 11,000 years ago, although it is unclear precisely when the cave paintings were made.

(Source: livescience.com)

Strategic deal signed to integrate science in Iran's heritage conservation

TEHRAN — Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology to enhance national identity and cultural preservation.

The agreement was finalized on Monday, with the signatures of Reza Salehi Amiri, Minister of Cultural Heritage, and Hossein Simayi Sarraf, Minister of Science.

This collaboration aims to integrate academic research and cultural initiatives to protect Iran's historical legacy and foster the growth of creative industries. The agreement establishes a framework to leverage scientific research, modern technology, and cultural programs for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage.

Minister of Cultural Heritage Salehi Amiri emphasized the critical role of universities in shaping civilization and strengthening national identity. He stated that joint academic festivals and conferences would serve as key instruments for achieving these goals. He also highlighted the need for closer collabor-

ation between universities and cultural institutions, particularly through the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute. According to Minister Hossein Simayi Sarraf, universities have a crucial role in promoting cultural awareness and national pride. He pointed to Iran's Seventh Development Plan, which calls for a 40% increase in vocational education, and emphasized that the Ministry of Cultural Heritage will play a key role in achieving this goal.

Both ministries have also committed to preserving intangible heritage, including the protection of traditional festivals like Nowruz. The agreement further promotes student participation, academic research, and innovation in heritage conservation, tourism, and handicrafts.

By bridging the gap between academia and cultural heritage efforts, this agreement aims to ensure that education and cultural preservation go hand in hand. It represents a significant step toward strengthening Iran's historical legacy, promoting innovation, and fostering a deeper sense of national identity among future generations.

Eight cultural heritage sites in Golestan province added to Iran's heritage list

TEHRAN — Golestan province has added eight new cultural heritage sites—five archaeological sites and three historical buildings—to Iran's National Heritage List, according to a recent announcement by provincial officials.

Hamid Omrani Rekavandi, Deputy for Cultural Heritage at the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Golestan province, confirmed the registration on Monday.

"Following two sessions of the National Council for the Registration of Historical and Cultural Immovable Properties, we successfully registered these eight significant sites," he stated.

Highlighting the province's rich cultural and historical legacy, Omrani Rekavandi emphasized that Golestan is home to diverse landscapes, a deep-rooted civilization, and a wealth of historical landmarks. "Registering these sites is a vital step in preserving our heritage and ensuring their proper recognition," he noted. Among the newly listed sites are five archaeological locations, some dating as far back as the fifth millennium BCE and extending into the early Islamic peri-

od. Their inclusion brings the total number of registered archaeological sites in Golestan to 655.

Additionally, three historical buildings were added to the National Heritage List, raising the total number of registered historical structures in the province to 166.

With these latest additions, Golestan now boasts a total of 1,040 nationally recognized cultural heritage sites.

Officials hope these registrations will help safeguard Golestan's historical assets while promoting greater public awareness and appreciation of the province's rich cultural landscape.

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Second Announcement



Iran Tobacco Company ONE TIER GENERAL INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO TENDER NOTICE Ref No 53/189/664

Iran Tobacco Co., intends to purchase below tobacco raw materials through one tier general international tender, all eligible applicants will be invited to receive the tender documents from 10/03/2025 until the end of office hours on 27/03/2025, after payment the amount of 2 million Rials to the account No. 47000701336609 of Parsian bank, Azadi branch and receive the bid documents from ITC tender secretariat department located at 1st floor, Education building, Qazvin Ave, Iran Tobacco Company or from the national tender website : iets.mporg.ir after registration process and receive tender documents.

All applicants who do not have the approved sample/consignment in the tender row in the last **One** years period, must send the sample to Iran Tobacco Company security department, 1st floor, Shahid Golchin building, Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Iran, in the amount specified in the tender documents, from 10/03/2025 to 23/04/2025. Complete and accurate details of the seller must be indicated on the samples.

The deadline for submitting offers and envelopes to the security secretariat office located in, 1st floor, Shahid Golchin building, Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Iran, is the end of office hours on 05/05/2025.

The offers will be opened in Iran Tobacco Company located at Qazvin Sq, Qazvin Av, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, at 10.00 on 07/05/2025

Applicants for participation in each row of tender items can provide the guarantee of participating in the tender in the same row and submit the price proposal in the same row based on the below table.

The cost of inserting the entire ad in the newspaper up to 800 million rials will be responsible for the tender winners according to the number of wins items.

If the sample does not match the declared technical specifications, it will be possible to correct and resend the sample during the period of initial sending of the samples by the bidder to the management of the central security office.

Description and amount of guarantee for participation of tobacco raw material tender

Item	Description of tobacco	unit	Quantity	Bank guarantee (EURO)	Bank guarantee (RLS)
1	Italian burley position 1	Kg	138,600	50,582	36,801,389,520
2	Brazilian burley position 3	Kg	158,400	53,750	39,106,283,760
3	Brazilian burley position 4	Kg	59,400	30,980	22,539,856,410
4	Brazilian burley position 5	Kg	158,400	53,750	39,106,283,760
5	Zimbabwean FCV position 7	Kg	158,400	50,582	36,801,389,520
6	Brazilian FCV position 8	Kg	158,400	53,750	39,106,283,760
7	Chinese FCV position 10	Kg	138,600	46,424	33,776,215,830
8	Chinese FCV position 11	Kg	217,800	63,056	45,876,910,590
9	Brazilian FCV position 12	Kg	316,800	90,182	65,612,567,520
10	Brazilian FCV position 13	Kg	158,400	53,750	39,106,283,760
11	Brazilian FCV position 14	Kg	158,400	53,750	39,106,283,760
12	Zimbabwean FCV position 16	Kg	79,200	33,950	24,700,694,760
13	Brazilian FCV position 17	Kg	178,200	58,304	42,419,569,230
14	Toasted burley	Kg	39,600	25,740	18,727,265,700
15	Thai burley	Kg	277,200	75,530	54,952,431,660
16	Homogenized tobacco	Kg	376,200	60,205	43,802,505,774

For more information, you can contact to 0098 21 51261651 & 51261920
Communications and International Affairs Management, Iran Tobacco Company

'Unilateral sanctions hinder counter-narcotics measures'

TEHRAN – Imposing unfair sanctions against Iran not only increases the costs of implementing treatment and harm reduction programs but also challenges developing effective strategies for combating drug trafficking, the Secretary General of Iranian Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ) has said.



Lauding the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) efforts, Brigadier General Hossein Zolfaqari, highlighted the perilous evolution of global drug problem, IRNA reported.

The official made the remarks while addressing the 68th session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which is being held from March 10 to 14 in Vienna, Austria.

Despite all efforts made to overcome the problem, national and international drug control systems are struggling with the rapid emergence of the new psychoactive substances (NPS), Zolfaqari stressed.

The official went on to propose some methods for treating drugs and drug-related issues more effectively, underscoring the need for expanding cooperation, strengthening mechanisms for information exchange, sharing experiences, providing technical assistance and

equipment, and transferring needed technologies to countries affected by illegal production, transit, and consumption of drugs.

Diversifying treatment methods and facilitating access to drugs for medical purposes are among the top priorities of countries to reduce demand for illegal use of drugs. Hence, facilitating the exchange of the latest expertise and findings is essential, he added.

Referring to successful initiatives that have been ceased or are partially active, such as the agreement supported by the UNODC between Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, to cooperate in the area of counter-narcotics enforcement, Zolfaqari said international communities are expected to fund the UNODC to support such regional agreements.

"In line with the implementation of numerous resolutions of the CND and the Human Rights Council, we call for an end to sanctions and the procurement of effective technical and equipment assistance to countries on the front lines of the fight against drugs," Zolfaqari further noted.

In addition to delivering a speech at a high level segment, Zolfaqari will hold bilateral and multilateral meetings with officials of the Narcotics Commission, the Executive Director of the UNODC, the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Jallal Toufiq, ministers, and heads of delegations from other countries, IRNA reported.

Moreover, with the support and participation of the UNODC, it is planned to share the country's ex-

periences in harm reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and reunification of recovered people with society and inform participants, specialists, and experts of the measures taken in this regard.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The CND is the central policy-making body within the United Nations system for dealing with all drug-related issues.

It examines the global drug situation, promotes the international drug control mechanism, and identifies the satisfaction of international institutions in the field of drug control.

Through reviewing the global drug situation, taking balanced approach to interrelated issues of illegal drugs demand, supply and trafficking, monitoring the implementation of international conventions on narcotics, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors, providing recommendations to strengthen international drug control activities, facilitating scientific research and exchanging information, CND assists the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in performing its tasks, and establish the policies governing the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) activities, and its financial resources.

Marriage 2.3 times divorce in autumn

TEHRAN – Over the autumn season, some 118,450 marriages and 49,738 divorces were registered across the country, according to the Civil Registration Organization.

The number of marriages has increased by 14,168 compared to summer. However, compared to 132,141 marriages registered in autumn 2023, the number of marriages has declined by 13,691, Mehr news agency reported.

Also, the rate of divorce has lowered by 4.439 cases in comparison to 54,177 registered cases during the same time last year.

Youth population law stabilizes total fertility rate Enacting the youth population law has stabilized the total fertility rate, slightly increasing the general fertility index over the past two years.

After experiencing seven years of decline by about 20 percent, the fertility rate is now stabilized at around 1.6, IRNA reported.

The total fertility rate has experienced a sharp decline since the Iranian calendar year 1394 (2015-2016) as the number of births reached 1.057 million in 1402 (2023-2024) from 1.570 mil-

lion in 1394.

However, since the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 2022–March 2023), the downward trend in fertility has come to a halt.

The total fertility rate has lowered to 1.6 children per woman from about 2 children per woman. According to Civil Registration Organization's report, the total fertility rate in Iranian years 1396 (2017-2018), 1397 (2018-2019), 1398 (2019-2020), 1399 (2020-2021), and 1400 (2021-2022) were 2.09, 1.95, 1.74, 1.65, 1.61 per each woman, respectively.

Despite offering incentives to encourage childbearing in line with youth population law, the desired growth in the youth population has not been accomplished yet.

At best, Iran's population with a total fertility rate of 2.5 will reach 102,890,000 by the next seven years, IRIB quoted Mohammad-Javad Mahmoudi, an official with the Civil Registration Organization, as saying.

In May, Hasan Farshidi, an official with the health ministry, said two years after the imple-



mentation of the law on supporting families and the youth, investigations have shown that the health ministry has played a central role in the implementation of the law.

"Since the implementation of the law, the number of births among mothers aged 20 to 24 has notably increased," the official added.

The rate of mothers giving birth to three children increased from 16 percent in the Iranian year 1398 (March 2019–March 2020) to 18.97 percent in 1402 (March 2023 –March 2024) and even the fourth childbirth increased from 5 percent to about 7 percent, Farshidi stated.

IRCS to send humanitarian aid to Lebanon

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) plans to send a consignment of relief items to war-impacted people in Lebanon.

The consignment includes over 500 tons of essential items, including medical items, tents, blankets, mats, food stuff and grains, ISNA quoted Babak Mahmoudi, an official with the IRCS, as saying.

Ongoing military activities and the widespread destruction of homes, infrastructure, and essen-

tial services—both during the conflict and after the cessation of hostilities—continue to hinder the safe return of displaced individuals.

These challenges also restrict access to humanitarian aid, recovery efforts, and protection services, leaving affected populations in prolonged vulnerability, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) website announced in a press release on March 10.

IRCS, UN to speed up aid delivery to Lebanon

On October 9, 2024, Pirhossein Kolivand, head of the IRCS, and the UN Resident Coordinator of Lebanon, Stefan Priesner, held talks about the tragic situation in Lebanon and ways to speed up aid delivery to people impacted by war. During the meeting, Kolivand condemned the brutal attacks of the Zionist regime on Gaza and Lebanon, the IRCS website reported.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

ENGLISH IN USE

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World's first 'subway library' to open in Tehran

For the first time in the world, a public library will be opened in Tehran subway, Farnoush Nobakht, an official with Tehran metro, has said.

According to the memorandum signed between the Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operations Company and the Tehran public libraries foundation, libraries will be launched in seven selected stations, first of which will be inaugurated on August 12, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The library, called "Metro Book", aims to promote the culture of reading and increase per capita reading among subway passengers during intra-city trips, the library with a capacity of more than 5,000 books provides services continuously from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., she explained.

افتتاح کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران برای اولین بار در جهان

مدیرعامل شرکت بهره برداری متروی تهران و حومه گفت: برای اولین بار در سامانه حمل و نقل متروهای جهان، کتابخانه عمومی در متروی تهران افتتاح می شود.

به گزارش ایسنا، فنونش نوبخت اظهار داشت: قرار است طبق تفاهم نامه منعقد شده بین شرکت بهره برداری متروی تهران و حومه و نهاد کتابخانه های عمومی استان تهران در هفت ایستگاه منتخب «مترو کتاب» راه اندازی شود.

این کتابخانه در راستای برنامه های متروی تهران مبنی بر ترویج فرهنگ کتابخوانی و افزایش سرانه مطالعه در میان مسافران مترو هنگام سفرهای درون شهری این کتابخانه با ظرفیت بیش از ۵۰۰۰ عنوان کتاب به صورت فیزیکی از ساعت ۸ صبح تا ۸ به طور مستمر به ارائه خدمات می دهد.

The rise of AI: How data science is powering the Fourth Industrial Revolution

By Soroush Saki

TEHRAN - The Fourth Industrial Revolution is here, and at its core lies the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI) and data science.

Unlike previous industrial revolutions driven by steam, electricity, and computing, this era is defined by intelligent systems that learn, adapt, and make decisions.

From manufacturing to finance and retail, AI is reshaping industries, creating efficiencies, and unlocking new possibilities.

In manufacturing, AI-powered systems are revolutionizing production lines. Smart factories equipped with machine learning algorithms can predict equipment failures before they occur, reducing downtime and saving costs.

Robots, guided by AI, work alongside humans to perform complex tasks with precision, while data analytics optimizes supply chains, ensuring materials are delivered just in time.

This synergy of human and machine is not only boosting productivity but also paving the way for sustainable manufacturing practices.

The finance sector is another area where AI is making waves. Banks and financial institutions are leveraging machine learning to detect fraudulent transactions in real-time, protecting customers from cyber threats.

AI-driven algorithms analyze vast amounts of data to assess credit risk, enabling faster and more accurate loan approvals.

Robo-advisors, powered by AI, are democ-

ratizing wealth management by providing personalized investment advice at a fraction of the cost of traditional financial advisors.

In retail, AI is transforming the shopping experience.

E-commerce giants use recommendation systems to suggest products tailored to individual preferences, driving sales and enhancing customer satisfaction.

Behind the scenes, AI optimizes inventory management, ensuring popular items are always in stock.

Virtual assistants and chatbots provide 24/7 customer support, answering queries and resolving issues seamlessly.

However, the rise of AI is not without challenges. Concerns about job displacement, data privacy, and ethical decision-making loom large.

As machines take over repetitive tasks, the workforce must adapt by acquiring new skills in data science, programming, and AI management.

Policymakers and industry leaders must collaborate to establish frameworks that ensure AI is used responsibly and equitably.

In conclusion, AI and data science are the driving forces behind the Fourth Industrial Revolution, reshaping industries and redefining the way we live and work.

While challenges remain, the potential for innovation and progress is immense.

As we navigate this new era, one thing is clear: the future belongs to those who harness the power of data and AI wisely.



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MARCH 12, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:14 Evening: 18:08 Dawn: 4:56 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:19 (tomorrow)

Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum to reopen after renovations, celebrating 30 years of art



TEHRAN- The Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum, one of the treasures of Iranian art and history, is set to reopen on Saturday following the completion of its restoration work.

The reopening ceremony will be attended by a number of prominent artists from the city.

The director of the Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum announced that this museum, which also functions as a specialized center for visual arts, has undergone a four-year period of necessary renovations.

As the new year approaches, coinciding with its 30th anniversary, the museum will once again welcome artists, art enthusiasts, and New Year travelers, Saeid Mohammadi-Panah said.

Two exhibitions entitled "Thirty Years of Museum Posters" and "Thirty Years of Museum Images" will be inaugurated alongside the reopening ceremony in the presence of Isfahan's mayor, he added.

Referring to the historical significance of the building, he highlighted that the construction dates back to the Qajar era.

"It is one of the valuable complexes in the historical landscape of Isfahan, located adjacent to the Chehel Sotoun Palace. The building has undergone various changes in its usage over time. Originally, it served as the grand home of Zel al-Soltan, the governor of Isfahan during the Qajar period. Subsequently, it functioned as a horse guard house, a ceremonial hall, and the

governor's office, before eventually being designated as the Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum in 1994."

The museum has always been a vital hub for art in Isfahan and Iran, Mohammadi-Panah said and added: "For the past 30 years, it has served as a home for national and international artists, students of visual arts, and art researchers. Its geographical proximity and close interactions with the Isfahan University of Art, which nurtures a new generation of artists, further enhance the museum's significance."

He added that the museum features four large galleries with unique architecture and has consistently hosted works by prominent domestic and international artists over the past three decades.

Notable exhibitions have included pieces from the renowned Iranian artist Mahmoud Farshchian and the famous German artist Günther Uecker, he mentioned.

He also emphasized the intertwining of art and Isfahan's identity, noting that the Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum holds a rich collection of over 700 valuable visual artworks, which will soon be displayed in one of its galleries for art lovers.

The museum operates under the auspices of the Cultural, Social, and Sports Organization of Isfahan Municipality.

Isfahan, often referred to as the cultural capital of Iran, boasts a rich artistic heritage that reflects its historical significance and vibrant contemporary scene. Known for its exquisite architecture, stunning mosques, and lush gardens, the city serves as a canvas for various art forms, from traditional Persian miniature painting to modern visual arts.

The city's numerous galleries and cultural institutions, such as the Isfahan Contemporary Art Museum, showcase the works of both celebrated masters and emerging artists, making it a hub for creativity and artistic expression.

Cartoon of Day



Trump's Decisions
Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria

Gaza poetry collection published in English, Arabic, Russian

TEHRAN- Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults – Kanoon has recently released three titles from its Gaza poetry collection in English, Arabic, and Russian.

The collection comprises three books titled "Paper Rocket," written by Zahra Araqi and illustrated by Mahshid Darabi; "You Will Laugh Again," penned by Tayyebeh Shamani and illustrated by Bahareh Khodami; and "The House Stands," authored by Monireh Hashemi and illustrated by Neda Asgari, all printed in the three languages.

The English translations of the three titles were completed by Shahryar Fasih, with the Arabic versions translated by Yasser Zanganeh and Mojdeh Pakseresh, while Tahereh Ghamarpour handled the Russian translations.

In "Paper Rocket," "You Will Laugh Again," and "The House Stands," the poets poignantly reflect on the plight of Palestinian children and the tragic events in Gaza through lyrical prose.

"Paper Rocket" and "You Will Laugh Again" are published in a small format for children over the age of seven, while and "The House Stands," is available in a



larger format for readers over the age of twelve.

Since the October 7, 2023, and following the Israeli attacks, the lives of countless Gazan children have been forever altered by violence and trauma.

Tragically, over 18,000 children have lost their lives in the fighting, making up a significant portion of the overall death toll of about 47,000 Palestinians.

The bombardment has not only claimed lives but has also left many children severely injured. With at least 110,265 reported injuries and thousands of children requiring life-altering rehabilitation, the impact on their futures is profound.

Hospitals and clinics are overwhelmed, and access to adequate medical care is often non-existent due to the blockade and destruction of infrastructure.

The UN reports that nearly two million people in Gaza, including countless children, are internally displaced and reliant on inadequate shelters and dwindling supplies.

Without urgent intervention, generations of children may grow up knowing only anguish, displacement, and loss, while their stories of resilience and survival go largely unheard.

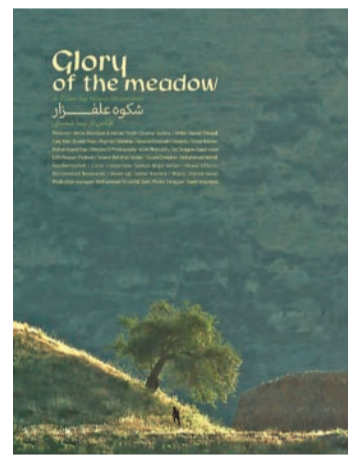
Four Iranian short films to vie at BUFF International Film Festival

TEHRAN-Four short films from Iran will participate in the 42nd BUFF International Film Festival that is set to be held from March 15 to 21 in Malmö, Sweden.

The Iranian participants include "Glory of the Meadow" directed by Nima Shamsaei, "The Cocoon and Butterfly" by Mohammad Salehinezhad Dehaki, "Princess Azadeh" by Shahnam Sojoudizadeh, and "Inside the Skin" by Shafagh Abosaba and Maryam Mahdiye, Honaronline reported.

The story of "Glory of the Meadow" takes place in a small village, where 12-year-old Cyrus discovers a bullet hole in the wall. It is a tough time for the family, and Cyrus does everything he can to keep them together.

"The Cocoon and Butterfly" depicts Seven-year-old Parvaneh who



lives in the countryside in northern Iran. She has a disability that prevents her from attending school. The neighbor boy cannot accept this injustice and decides to help her.

In "Princess Azadeh," 13-year-old Azadeh is smuggled over the border from Afghanistan to Iran. She

dreams of a brighter future, but her grandfather has other plans for her. A gripping film about modern slavery and the constant struggle for freedom and justice.

"Inside the Skin" shows teenage football player Ali who is preparing for an important match while trying to keep a secret hidden. However, when Hamed finds out about it, the path ahead of Ali becomes shrouded in doubt.

BUFF International Film Festival is an international children and youth film festival in Malmö, Sweden, held annually in March. It is a member of the European Children's Film Association (ECFA). Founded in 1984, the festival has been the most important screening window for films for children and young people in the Nordics. During the festival, prizes are awarded in several categories.

BUFF is a film festival that suits everyone. It brings the latest films from all over the world to Malmö – films that might otherwise never be screened in Sweden. BUFF strives to be the party of the year for both young and old cineasts and to give the audience a cinematic experience that makes them return to the cinema again and again.

BUFF Film Festival is a meeting place for professionals who work with films for a young audience. Raising the voice for films aimed at a young audience is important in many aspects.

BUFF wants to be an arena where we raise questions about access to good films for children and young people and the necessity of creating good conditions for the production, distribution, and screening of films for a young audience.

One prize for Iran at Florence Film Awards

TEHRAN-The Iranian feature film "A Woman With A Wooden Chariot" has won an award at the latest edition of the Florence Film Awards.

IMDb qualifier's Florence Film Awards is an international monthly film festival.

For its February edition, the Iranian filmmaker Khodadad Jalali has won Best Director award for his feature film "A Woman With A

Wooden Chariot," ILNA reported.

A production of 2024, the 117-minute drama is about philosophy students Arash and Bahman, who travel to a remote village for research. In that idyllic rural town, Arash falls in love with Setareh.

Their love story spans decades, battling through a coma, a quest for healing, and the transcendence of time, revealing a profound explo-

ration of love's power over reality.

The cast includes Mohammad Reza Foroutan, Pouria Poursorkh, Hossein Soleimani, Samaneh Nasri, Fariba Motamed, Ghasem Zare, and Mehri Al Agha among others.

With his previous films, Jalali won Best Director award at both the Cannes Mediterranean Film Festival and the Helsinki Festival.

Florence Film Awards is a monthly and annual international film festival.

A selection of short films will be screened every month in Florence at the Immagina Film School.

Each month, the jury awards the best films through private screenings. Submission guarantees you to participate in both the monthly and annual editions.

Glasgow Film Theatre urged to show solidarity with Palestine in open letter

Charity-run cinema The Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT) has been urged by campaign group Art Workers for Palestine Scotland (AWFPS) to show solidarity with the Palestinian people in an open letter.

Published Monday, February 17, the letter now has over 600 signatures from artists, actors, film workers, and audience members calling on the GFT to support Palestine and adhere to Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) policy and endorse the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI).

PACBI has been endorsed by over 150 organizations in Scotland, including 19 film organizations, collectives, and festivals.

AWFPS have said that endorsing PACBI is the "most meaningful" way that Scottish cultural organizations can contribute to social change.

The letter comes after a recent call from nearly 70 Palestinian filmmakers to use film

as a medium to speak out against genocide and the "erasure, racism and censorship that enable it."

In their letter, AWFPS made the following concessions: "Remove Barclays adverts that play prior to some film screenings. Barclays is directly complicit by investing billions in weapons companies arming Israel's genocide".

"Endorse the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) and refuse to collaborate with complicit Israeli cultural institutions".

"Develop and implement a wider BDS policy around GFT's commercial activities, including hospitality and advertising, (...) This includes a commitment to removing and replacing Coca-Cola from the GFT bar."

Among signatories were the British-Palestinian University of Glasgow Rector, Dr. Ghassan Abu-Sittah, and the entire GFT Unite Hospitality branch, who voted unanimously in support of the letter and its demands.

A spokesperson for the GFT Unite Hospitality branch said: "Our branch puts our entire support behind AWFPS's open letter, with a unanimous vote of support from our Front of House and Cleaning staff."

"Our members are enthusiastic about implementing this policy in our workplace and contributing to the global movement against genocide, apartheid, and oppression."

GFT had previously shown solidarity for Ukraine as they pulled Russian films from the Glasgow Film Festival following the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

AWFPS have said that this shows a historical precedent at GFT for the boycott of films produced in countries deemed as oppressors.

In a statement, a GFT spokesperson said: "The letter from Art Workers for Palestine has been forwarded to the Glasgow Film Board who will review it through our internal procedures."