



'Inevitable' revenge for deadly US raids on Yemen

Ansarallah Pledges to Make Americans Repent for Electing Trump

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Trump looks on as military strikes are launched against Yemen on March 15, 2025.

Iran will not start war but will respond to threats with force: IRGC chief

TEHRAN – The commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has reaffirmed that while Tehran has no intention of initiating a war, it will respond forcefully and decisively to any threats or acts of aggression.

Speaking on Sunday, Major General Hossein Salami addressed recent U.S. allegations that Iran has been supporting Yemen's military in its strikes against Israel. Washington has called for an end to Iran's alleged assistance to the Ansarallah Resistance movement, but Salami dismissed these accusations while underscoring Iran's commitment to defending itself. ► Page 2

Pezeshkian hails Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal in call with Armenian PM

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has welcomed the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, calling it a significant step toward regional stability.

In a phone call with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Sunday, Pezeshkian congratulated both nations on reaching the agreement and reaffirmed Iran's commitment to promoting peace and cooperation in the Caucasus.

During their discussion, the two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on recent developments, particularly the peace treaty draft agreed upon by Armenia and Azerbaijan. Pezeshkian emphasized that Iran has consistently supported peaceful coexistence among neighboring countries while upholding their sovereignty and territorial integrity. ► Page 2

'This too will fail': Iran condemns US airstrikes on Yemen as Ansarallah gears up for response

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry has strongly denounced the latest US-British military assault on Yemen, calling it a reckless act of aggression that jeopardizes global stability.

Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei condemned the overnight airstrikes, which resulted in the deaths of dozens, including women and children, as a flagrant breach of international law and the UN Charter.

In a statement, the Iranian official stated that the strikes are a direct threat to regional and international peace and security. He also pointed to U.S. President Donald Trump's menacing threat to unleash "hell" on Yemen's Ansarallah movement as further evidence of Washington's aggressive posture. "Such acts of aggression violate the prohibition of the use of force and the respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Baqaei wrote.

The Foreign Ministry further asserted that this joint military action is consistent with the U.S. and UK's unwavering support for the oppression of Palestinians, citing the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the denial of basic Palestinian rights. The West has been aiding Israel in its latest war in Gaza since it began in October of 2023, giving the regime military, financial, logistical, political, and diplomatic support. Over 60,000 people have been killed in Gaza in the past 18 months. ► Page 2

Attack on Yemen: Afghanistan and Iraq wars are before Trump's eyes

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN – The United States carried out 40 air raids on Yemen on Saturday night and continued into Sunday morning.

The attacks, ordered by Donald Trump, were conducted under the pretext that Yemen's Ansarallah had threatened to target ships linked to Israel in the Red Sea in response to Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip in violation of the January 19 ceasefire deal.

Before returning to the White House, some held a wrong assumption that Trump is now more experienced and will act a bit shrewdly compared to his first term. However, he has reappeared much more reckless.

Calling northern neighbor Canada America's 51st state, threatening to capture Greenland by force, proposing to relocate the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and "take over" it are a series of his rash remarks in the first few weeks of his presidency.

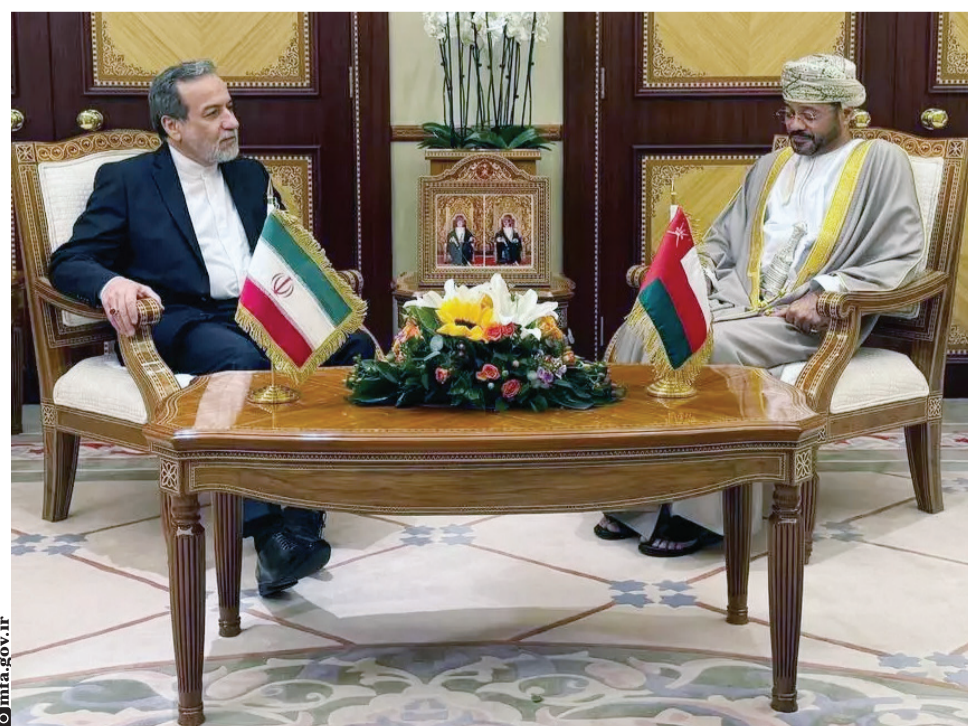
Rarely a day passes that he does not make hasty remarks or decisions. The deadly attack on Yemen came suddenly.

The war on Yemen began in March 2015 with a Saudi-led coalition backed by the Barack Obama administration. However, the Yemenis have become militarily stronger and more resilient these years. ► Page 5

Exclusive
Issa Azadeh, former member of 38 years, speaks to the Tehran Times

Inside the MEK: How the organization uses abuse and indoctrination to make terrorists

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Tehran, Muscat push for peaceful solutions in region

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met with his Omani counterpart, Seyed Badr Al-Busaidi, in Muscat on Sunday, as the two nations reaffirmed their commitment to diplomatic engagement and regional stability.

Araghchi, leading a high-level delegation, traveled to Oman for discussions on pressing geopolitical issues and ways to enhance Iran-Oman bilateral relations.

During their meeting, the foreign ministers exchanged views on key regional developments, with a particular emphasis on the conflict in Yemen. The discussions covered the latest U.S. military strikes in the country, which Iran has strongly condemned. Both officials underscored the importance of diplomatic efforts in resolving the crisis, advocating for dialogue over military escalation. ► Page 2

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Washington has called for an end to Iran’s alleged assistance to the Ansarullah Resistance movement, but Salami dismissed these accusations while underscoring Iran’s commitment to defending itself.

“Iran will never be the one to start a war, but should we face a threat, our response will be firm, decisive, and conclusive,” Salami stated.

He also responded to U.S. President Donald Trump’s recent remarks, in which Trump accused Iran of directing Yemen’s Ansarullah forces and warned Tehran to cease its backing of the group.

“The people of Yemen are independent, free, and capable of making their own decisions,” Salami asserted.

“Iran openly takes responsibility for its actions—whenever and wherever they take place.”

U.S. airstrikes in Yemen primarily targeted civilians rather than military sites. Reports indicate that at least 18 non-combatants

were killed, with nearly 20 others wounded, in attacks on Sana’a and other locations.

Since November 2023, Yemen’s Armed Forces have been conducting strikes on key Israeli military and economic sites, retaliating against the U.S.-backed Israeli war on Gaza.

“We are fully prepared to safeguard our interests, values, identity, and legitimacy,” he declared.

“Any threat against Iran will be met with a crushing, decisive, and destructive response.”

Salami accused the U.S. of repeating past mistakes in its foreign policy, citing its failures in Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

“The enemy continues on the same misguided path, refusing to learn from history. This path will only lead to their defeat,” he warned.

He also criticized Washington’s approach to diplomacy, saying, “They talk about negotiations while simultaneously issuing threats. This contradiction shows they do not understand the Iranian nation.”

Salami pointed to the U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018 as a turning point in escalating tensions.

He blamed the U.S. for abandoning diplomacy in favor of sanctions and pressure tactics.

their credibility in matters of human rights and the rule of law,” he added.

The Halabja chemical attack took place on March 16, 1988, during the final stages of the Iran-Iraq War.

The Iraqi air force, under the command of Saddam Hussein, bombarded the city of Halabja with a mixture of deadly chemical agents, including mustard gas, sarin, tabun, and VX.

The population of Halabja, located near the Iranian border, had sided with Iran against Saddam Hussein’s regime.

Saddam viewed the city as a threat to his power and sought to punish them for their perceived disloyalty.

Ali Hassan al-Majid, Saddam’s cousin, also known as “Chemical Ali,” played a key role in planning and executing the brutal assault.

The Halabja attack resulted in the immediate deaths of an estimated 5,000 people, mostly civilians, including women and children. Thousands more were injured and continue to suffer from long-term health problems related to chemical exposure.

Iran urges West to acknowledge role in 1988 Halabja chemical attack



TEHRAN – Iran’s Foreign Ministry is using the 37th anniversary of the Halabja chemical attack to remind the world of the atrocity and its lasting impact.

In a statement, Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei emphasized that the passage of time doesn’t lessen the severity of the chemical bombing, carried out by Saddam Hussein’s regime against the Kurdish town of Halabja in Iraq.

Baqaei also highlighted that the U.S. and certain European nations aided the attack through technical and technological support.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the diplomat also highlighted the shared suffering of Iranians, particularly those in Sardasht, as well as many Iranian military and civilian victims of Saddam Hussein’s chemical weapons attacks during the eight-year imposed war on Iran.

Additionally, Baqaei criticized European countries for their role in those attacks by supplying Iraq’s chemical weapons program.

“Europe’s unwillingness to acknowledge the truth and take responsibility undermines

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He also pointed to U.S. President Donald Trump’s menacing threat to unleash “hell” on Yemen’s Ansarullah movement as further evidence of Washington’s aggressive posture.

“Such acts of aggression violate the prohibition of the use of force and the respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Baqaei wrote.

The Foreign Ministry further asserted that this joint military action is consistent with the U.S. and UK’s unwavering support for the oppression of Palestinians, citing the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the denial of basic Palestinian rights.

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past 18 months.

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targeting Israeli-linked shipping in the Red Sea, a direct response to Israel’s ongoing blockade of Gaza. Yemen under the Ansarullah is considered to be part of the Axis of Resistance.

Baqaei reiterated that the root cause of instability in West Asia is the occupation and brutal repression of Palestinians. He called upon all nations, international bodies, and Islamic organizations to actively resist

the continuing acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated against the Palestinian people. “The U.N. Security Council to take action against these violations to safeguard international peace and security,” he stated.

Yemen is currently preparing for a military response against the United States. It is uncertain whether this will mirror previous engagements focused on American vessels. Analysts are pointing to U.S. bases in West Asia, which played a role in recent attacks, as potential targets given their perceived vulnerabilities.

The Ansarullah movement in Yemen also has a history of successfully targeting Israeli assets in the occupied territories, an area guarded by some of the most sophisticated air defense systems in the world.

Yemen is known as a resilient nation, as it successfully resisted and repelled years of a Saudi-led and U.S.-backed invasion in the 2010s. The country is still under

a blockade and grappling with different humanitarian issues.

It has, however, managed to manufacture state-of-the-art weaponry despite the dire limitations.

In a separate statement, Ali Akbar Velayati, advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said the U.S. and Israel will once again fail against the Resistance.

“This criminal aggression, like the failures of America and Zionism in Operation Al-Aqsa Storm and their other historical failures in the region, is doomed to failure,” Velayati stated, adding, “The aggressors should know that the belief in Resistance will not be burned by bombing, fire and crime, and will rise again from the ashes of destruction like a phoenix, and the nations of the region and freedom-seekers will never allow their colonial and arrogant policies to come to fruition.”

The Palestinian cause is historically close to the heart of the Yemeni.

In the wake of recent Western airstrikes on Sana’a, a video circulating online captured a Yemeni citizen filming the attacks while promising that the country will not leave Palestinians alone.

“The brave sons of Yemen have changed the equations of the region with their decisive actions and posed a great challenge to the supporters of Zionism and state terrorism,” Velayati noted.

Pezeshkian hails Armenia-Azerbaijan peace deal



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In a phone call with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Sunday, Pezeshkian congratulated both nations on reaching the agreement and reaffirmed Iran’s commitment to promoting peace and cooperation in the Caucasus.

For his part, Prime Minister Pashinyan briefed Pezeshkian on the negotiation process leading to the peace agreement. He expressed appreciation for Iran’s role in facilitating the deal and reiterated Armenia’s commitment to continuing diplomatic efforts to ensure its full implementation.

He also emphasized Yerevan’s dedication to strengthening regional cooperation and finalizing the treaty in the near future.

Pashinyan further thanked Pezeshkian for his efforts in enhancing Armenia-Iran relations, underscoring his country’s determination to implement the agreements reached between the two nations.

Armenia and Azerbaijan on Thursday agreed on the text of a peace agreement to end nearly four decades of conflict between the South Caucasus countries, with Yerevan agreeing to surrender its claim to Karabakh.

Karabakh has been the focal point of two devastating wars between the two countries—one in the 1990s and another in 2020. Although the region has always been internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, Baku fully reclaimed it following a swift 24-hour military operation.

Reacting to the development, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei on Friday described the agreement as “a necessary and important step” toward achieving lasting peace in the South Caucasus.

Karabakh has been the focal point of two devastating wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan

During their discussion, the two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on recent developments, particularly the peace treaty draft agreed upon by Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Pezeshkian emphasized that Iran has consistently supported peaceful coexistence among neighboring countries while upholding their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Iranian president also highlighted the strengthening ties between Tehran and Yerevan, stressing the need for both governments to accelerate the implementation of bilateral agreements across various sectors.

Tehran, Muscat push for peaceful solutions in region



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) met with his Omani counterpart Said Badr al-Busaidi in Muscat on March 16, 2025.

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Araghchi, leading a high-level delegation, traveled to Oman for discussions on pressing geopolitical issues and ways to enhance Iran-Oman bilateral relations.

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In addition to regional security concerns, Araghchi and Al-Bu-

saidi reviewed the current state of Iran-Oman relations, exploring avenues to expand cooperation in various sectors, including trade and energy. Oman has long served as a crucial diplomatic partner for Iran, often acting as a mediator in regional conflicts.

Following the meeting, Oman’s Foreign Minister Badr Al-Busaidi took to social media, stating, “Today in Muscat, I had a productive discussion with Iran’s Foreign Minister, Mr. Araghchi. We held fruitful consultations on bilateral matters as well as regional developments.”

Al-Busaidi further reiterated Oman’s dedication to supporting dialogue and diplomatic efforts aimed at bringing peace, stability, and prosperity to the region.

Omani media also highlighted the key issues discussed in the meeting, reporting that the two ministers explored ways to strengthen bilateral ties and expand cooperation across all sectors. According to Oman’s state news agency, the discussions extended beyond regional developments to include broader global affairs.

Both sides emphasized the critical role of diplomacy in resolving conflicts and reducing tensions.

They stressed the need for creating conditions conducive to diplomatic solutions and peaceful negotiations as the preferred path to addressing ongoing regional challenges.

Issa Azadeh, former member of 38 years, speaks to the Tehran Times

Inside the MEK: How the organization uses abuse and indoctrination to make terrorists



Sheida Sabzehvari

TEHRAN – A high-paying job, a nice car, a big home, a fulfilling marriage, or healthy children – these are some of the most common aspirations for adults in society. But for 67-year-old Issa Azadeh, much of his life revolved around far simpler desires. “My biggest wish was to sleep comfortably for a few hours,” he recounted during an interview with the Tehran Times.

Issa kept his eyes on the floor as we started talking. It was hard to read him at all. He seemed like a jumble of things: anxious, numb, angry, regretful... but then you'd see a flicker of hope in there somewhere. Before delving into his experiences with the Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK), a terrorist organization known for its dogmatic indoctrination and isolated, tightly controlled environment, he said he wanted people everywhere to understand how dangerous the MEK really is, both for those who join and for the world beyond its walls.

“When I entered the MEK I was highly educated,” he explained. “I was a university graduate, and I had a family, job, and social connections. But after my involvement with the organization all that was lost. There, Masoud Rajavi tried to reduce the members to nothing, devoid of character, dignity, and honor.”

Introduced to the MEK after the 1979 Islamic Revolution while studying engineering at a prominent Tehran university, Issa joined the organization under the influence of a friend and became a high-rank-

Some children taken from their parents by the MEK became victims of sex trafficking

ing member over a 38-year period. He spent two decades at Camp Ashraf in Iraq during Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran, until its dismantling in 2003 by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. After the camp's closure, Issa, along with other MEK members, moved to Camp Liberty near Baghdad. He ultimately left the MEK before its relocation to Albania in 2016.

Issa says almost every single day he spent with the MEK was tiring, humiliating, and dehumanizing.

“We would all wake up at 5 a.m. to the sound of a shrill wind instrument. It was incredibly jarring. We had about 20 minutes to get ready and eat breakfast. Then, our exhausting day began. We had to clean the area, guard the camp, and carry out missions outside. Our only entertainment was watching the group's propaganda on TV for two 30-minute segments.” The TV remote was kept locked in a box; a precaution that seemed unnecessary. After all, only the person responsible for the TV schedule knew how to use it.

Issa said the most difficult part of the day was the joint self-criticism sessions. “One of the biggest taboos was having sexual thoughts.

We were forced to dissect our feelings, describe our fantasies in detail, and express repeated regret. Then, the others would join in, and one by one start scolding us too.”

Forced divorces followed by forced marriages

Typical of leaders like Rajavi, the man was obsessed with sex. Initially, he ordered some members of the organization to marry each other. However, after realizing that marriage and family preoccupied the minds of those he considered his devoted followers, he decreed that everyone should divorce. Rajavi later declared that all women in the group had become his wives, a claim substantiated by former female members of the MEK who reported frequent sexual abuse and exploitation orchestrated by Rajavi himself.

“The divorce process the members were forced to endure was one of the most inhumane and unbelievable events imaginable,” Issa stated.

He had not taken his wife and kids with him to the camp, but he was still required to divorce his wife in his mind. “Couples within the organization were made to stand facing each other and then ordered to hurl vile profanities at one another.” Reflecting Iranian cultural norms, where men typically avoid cursing in front of women, Issa declined to repeat the exact words for me. “Even those who were not married, either within or outside the organization, were ordered to undergo a ‘mental divorce.’”

Soon after, strict segregation was enforced. Men and women were required to use separate routes within the camp to minimize contact. “There was a gas station inside the Ashraf camp where we refueled the vehicles used for patrols. We were not even allowed to visit the gas station on the same day,” Issa revealed.

The mass “marriage” of MEK women to Rajavi occurred sometime after contact between men and women was cut off. Rajavi's own wife, Maryam Qajar-Azdanlu – having herself divorced Rajavi's friend to then become Rajavi's wife after a scandalous affair – was the key figure in manipulating the other women into accepting their “sacred” duty: sexual submission to their leader.

“I didn't know this was happening when I was still part of the organization, because I rarely spoke to the women there. Also, there's often a great deal of shame involved in admitting to being sexually assaulted. When a former female member of the MEK publicly broke the news a few years ago, it was very difficult for me to process, even though I had always known that Rajavi was a perverted and corrupt individual.”

The Taliban and Daesh were less oppressive towards women than the MEK, Issa said. While no one within the organization enjoyed rights or privacy, women were treated as particularly disposable.

“People often ask individuals like me why we didn't leave the organization sooner,” Issa said as he looked at me with a bitter smile. “To those observing the MEK from the outside, it's crucial to understand the complete loss of self that occurs within its walls. You are forced to abandon your identity, to erase your past and all those you once cherished. Inside, Masoud Rajavi's orders become your only reality.”

Children that were killed, trafficked, or indoctrinated

In 1990, Rajavi took another crucial step to subjugate MEK members: He ripped kids away from their parents. These kids lived in separate compounds near their parents' headquarters in Iraq.



“There were about 700, all different ages. They were just put on buses and shipped off to Jordan,” Issa said. What followed was a tragedy. Some never made it, some were exploited by human traffickers, others became entangled in crime, and some ended up in brothels. Roughly 300 were left, either sent to distant relatives or relegated to MEK-owned housing in Europe.

Years later, some of those kids, who'd grown up hearing Rajavi's propaganda and idealized stories of their parents' “heroic” actions, end-

ed up joining the MEK. Their view of the whole thing? Like something out of a bad Hollywood movie. They, however, managed to come to their senses soon. “Many of them eventually left the MEK again. I believe they were wiser than their parents.”

Now in their 40s, some of these former child members have recently begun to share their experiences. They frequently face threats from the organization, and are blamed for being “ungrateful.”

MEK's 'missions' funded by the U.S.

Like many who joined the revolution against the Shah, Rajavi lacked the popular support to gain prominence in the new political system after the monarchy was toppled. However, what set him apart was the United States' interest in using him to destabilize Iran, which began during his imprisonment under the Shah.

The MEK was initially formed by leftist students in 1965. “Rajavi was cultivated by the CIA as early as his imprisonment in 1971 during the Pahlavi era. He became the group's leader in 1979,” Issa said. He added that the CIA believed purely communist groups, some of which were

Masoud Rajavi demanded members relinquish their character, dignity, and honor

formed under the influence of the Soviet Union during the Shah's reign, lacked appeal for the highly religious Iranian population. Therefore, someone with opposing ideologies to the Islamic Republic but a similar religious appearance was needed. This, according to Issa, is the origin of the MEK's religious facade.

Rajavi left Iran in 1981 after he failed in two bids for power: a presidential campaign and a parliamentary seat. What followed next was a descent into terrorism. Or-

chestrating high-profile assassinations—under the order and support of the CIA—Rajavi turned the MEK against its own people. The targets were not just political leaders and military commanders; ordinary Iranians became victims in a brutal killing spree. The MEK's hands are now stained with the blood of approximately 23,000 and their collaboration with Saddam Hussein in Iraq deepened the wound, as they helped him inflict further casualties on their homeland.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Hassan Yazdani: I want 2028 Olympics gold medal



TEHRAN – Prominent freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani is determined to win a gold medal at the upcoming Olympic Games.

Yazdani, who claimed a gold medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics, faced setbacks in the last two Olympic Games, where he lost to his rivals in the final.

“My goal is to win the gold medal at the 2028 Olympics.

I don't have many regrets, but I wish I had secured gold in the last two Olympics,” Yazdani stated.

The holder of 10 world and Olympic medals also noted a change in his weight category, saying, “I am not worried about my weight.

I need to wrestle and start my training to see what weight I fit into.”

“Losing is really hard. While people always show kindness, it's very difficult for me to fail on the mat,” he concluded.

Iran runners up at Shiraz handball tournament

TEHRAN – Iran finished in second place in the Shiraz handball four-team tournament.

Saturday night, Team Melli defeated Russia 34-30 and Belarus beat China 33-22.

Iran had previously defeated China 36-23 and lost to Belarus 30-24.

Belarus claimed the tournament title due to a superior goal difference over Iran. Russia and China finished in third and fourth place, respectively.

The tournament featured national teams from Iran, China, Belarus, and Russia in Shiran, Fars province, and served as part of Iran's preparations for significant upcoming handball competitions.

Under the guidance of head coach Rafael Guijosa Castillo, Iran's national team are gearing up for the 2026 Asian Handball Championship, the Asian Games, and future Olympic qualifiers.

Iran come third at Karate 1-Premier League

TEHRAN – Iranian athletes captured one gold medal, two silvers, and two bronzes at the 2025 Karate 1-Premier League in Hangzhou.

Team Melli finished third in the competition, trailing behind Japan and Egypt.

In the Female Kumite -61kg final, Iran's Atousa Golshadnezhad edged out Germany's Khamis Reem with a score of 4-3 in a closely contested match. Meanwhile, Fatemeh Saadati faced Japan's Rina Kodo in the Female Kumite -55kg final, where she lost 4-0.

In the Male Kumite +84kg final, Saleh Abazari was defeated by Georgia's Merabi Gelashvili with a score of 5-3.

In the bronze medal matches, Bahman Asgari Ghoncheh secured victory over Croatia's Ivan Martinca 1-0 in the Male Kumite -75kg event, while Mehdi Khodabakhshi triumphed over the Netherlands' Brian Timmermans 3-0 in the Male Kumite -84kg category.

The tournament featured 381 karate athletes from 68 countries in Hangzhou.

Iran football chief Taj optimistic about beach soccer in Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Head of Iran football federation Mehdi Taj is optimistic about Team Melli at the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2025.

Iran are drawn in the UAE, Afghanistan and Indonesia in Group C.

“Iran beach soccer team are a pioneer in Asia, and we are also a prominent team on the world stage. We've conducted 10 domestic training camps in Yazd, Bushehr, and Kish, as well as five friendly matches (three against Belarus and two against Russia), enabling the team to head to the Asian Cup in Thailand well-prepared,” Taj said.

“The Beach Soccer Committee and the Football Federation have spared no effort in developing and providing programs for this team. I hope they achieve victory in this major tournament,” he stated.

“There are high expectations for the Iranian national beach soccer team, as our beach soccer players are exceptional and ready to compete against their rivals,” the president of football federation added.

Japan and Iran have each emerged champions three times. Japan clinched the title in 2009, 2011 and 2019, while Iran emerged victorious in 2013, 2017 and 2023.

Iran hold the record for the most goals scored in a single edition, netting an astonishing 50 during their run to their 2017 title.

The 2023 edition featured 16 teams, the highest number of participants since 2013, surpassing the 15 teams in 2019 and 13 in 2017. The same number will compete in the upcoming edition.

Iran reach agreement with futsal coach David Ramos

TEHRAN – The Iranian Football Federation has reportedly reached an agreement with Spanish coach David Ramos Barragan.

Media reports suggest that the 52-year-old coach is expected to travel to Iran to finalize his contract with the federation.

In 2019, Ramos, while with Vina Albali Valdepeñas in Spain's top futsal league, established himself as one of Europe's prominent futsal coaches.

His collaboration with Vahid Shamsaei could enhance Iran's national futsal team in both technical and tactical dimensions, marking a pivotal moment in the team's preparation for upcoming competitions.

Additionally, Ramos has previously worked with Iranian futsal star Sa'ed Ahmad Abbasi for two years at Vina Albali.

With the addition of this Spanish coach, the final composition of the national futsal team's coaching staff has been determined.

Accordingly, Mahmoud Khorakchi will serve as the first assistant, Mohammad Taheri and David Ramos will take on the roles of assistant coaches, and Kazem Sadeghi will act as the goalkeeper coach alongside Vahid Shamsaei.

It remains to be seen what impact this Spanish coach will have on the performance of Iranian national players and whether he can elevate the team to a higher level with his expertise and experience.

Ex-Iran player Shamsaei was named as new head coach of Iran national futsal team in January 2022.

The 49-year-old coach replaced Mohammad Nazemosharia in the Iranian team.

As a player, he has won AFC Futsal Championship for eight times.

Shamsaei represented Iran national team for 18 years from 1999 to 2017.

He has coached Iranian clubs Tasifat Daryaei and Giti Pasand.

Steel production drops 6.7% in 11 months

TEHRAN— Iran's steel production declined by 6.7 percent in the first 11 months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2024–February 2025), the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA) reported.

According to ISPA data, the country's steel output had already fallen 4.8 percent in the first nine months due to electricity and gas restrictions, with the decline worsening to 5.5 percent in the 10-month statistics and further to 6.7 percent in the 11-month report.

Energy shortages have also cut Iran's semi-finished steel production by around 2 million tons, valued at approximately \$10

billion. Notably, 75 percent of this decline was in billet and slab production, highlighting the greater impact of electricity and gas constraints on small and medium-sized private-sector mills.

Meanwhile, severe gas restrictions have offset new sponge iron capacity additions. While iron ore concentrate output has increased, pellet production has declined.

Following billet and slab, rebar has recorded the second-highest production drop in the steel supply chain, primarily due to a deep domestic market recession and lower exports.

Iran's dam inflows drop 28%; water reserves in 14 key dams below 15%

TEHRAN – Water inflows into Iran's dams have declined by 28 percent in the current water year compared to the same period last year, with reservoir levels in key dams across 10 provinces dropping below 15 percent, a senior water official said.

According to Firooz Ghasemzadeh, head of the Water Information and Data Office at the Energy Ministry, the latest weekly report on water and electricity indicators up to March 11 shows that dam inflows have fallen from 13.26 billion cubic meters last year to 9.58 billion cubic meters this year. Meanwhile, dam outflows have remained nearly the same as last year.

As of March 11, Iran's total dam storage stands at 44 percent, marking a 5.0 percent decline from last year. The situation is particularly critical in 10 provinces, including Tehran, Alborz, Isfahan, Razavi Khorasan, Qomrud Basin, Hormozgan, Zanjan, Kerman, Fars, and Markazi, where key dam reserves are below 15 percent of capacity.

Tehran's drinking water reservoirs are in poor condition, Ghasemzadeh warned, with Amir Kabir and Lar dams filled to just 6.0 percent and 1.0 percent, respectively, while Latyan and Mamloo dams stand at 11 percent

each.

Other affected dams include Zayandeh Rud in Isfahan (11 percent), Doosti in Razavi Khorasan (10 percent), Torogh in Razavi Khorasan (12 percent), 15 Khordad in Qomrud Basin (11 percent), Esteqlal in Hormozgan (8 percent), Shamil and Niyan in Hormozgan (3 percent), Taham in Zanjan (13 percent), Tangouiyeh Sirjan in Kerman (8 percent), Rudbal Darab (3 percent), and Saveh in Markazi (9 percent).

Ghasemzadeh noted that Iran has experienced a 36 percent drop in rainfall compared to long-term averages, confirming earlier forecasts of a dry autumn and winter for the 2024–2025 water year.

Five provinces have recorded rainfall deficits exceeding 50 percent, while Tehran's precipitation is 38 percent below normal levels. Based on 57 years of rainfall records, the country ranks 53rd, making this one of the driest years on record.

"The ongoing drought has significantly reduced river flows, dam inflows, groundwater levels, and wetlands.

Adapting to these new conditions is crucial, and all sectors of society must play an active role in water conservation to minimize the impacts of water stress," he said.

Iran's greenhouse farming expands 161% over past decade

TEHRAN – Iran's greenhouse farming sector has expanded by 161 percent over the past ten years, according to the head of the Statistical Center of Iran, who emphasized the importance of utilizing the results of the country's 2024 agricultural census to enhance food security.

Gholamreza Goudarzi, speaking at a meeting on Monday, highlighted the extensive cooperation between governmental and military institutions in conducting the national agricultural census.

"All relevant organizations, particularly the media, played a crucial role in ensuring that farmers were informed about the census," he said, noting that the judiciary, parliament, provincial governments, and various ministries actively supported the initiative.

Goudarzi stated that cross-referencing data from different systems helped verify the accuracy of the collected information.

He also pointed to the collaboration with knowledge-based companies and the use of aerial mapping to improve data precision.

"We hope the extracted data will be valu-

able to relevant agencies," he said, adding that President Masoud Pezeshkian recently stressed the importance of utilizing the census results to strengthen food security.

According to the findings, the number of greenhouse farming operations has surged by 161 percent over the past decade, reaching more than 36,000 producers.

The total area of arable land in Iran now stands at 15 million hectares, reflecting a five percent increase. Of this, wheat cultivation covers 8.4 million hectares, barley 1.6 million hectares, and rice 491,000 hectares.

Additionally, orchards span approximately two million hectares, marking a nine percent expansion compared to recent years. However, the total orchard area has slightly decreased compared to 2014.

Despite a decline in the number of agricultural producers, the average number of both small and large livestock has increased, according to the census results.

Goudarzi also noted that Iran currently has four million agricultural operators, 11 percent of whom are based in urban areas.

Iran says its oil exports cannot be stopped

TEHRAN – Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani says Western sanctions cannot halt Iran's oil exports, as the country is determined to protect its share of the global energy market.

"The country's oil exports cannot be stopped. We will not compromise on Iran's share in the world oil market," Mohajerani wrote in a post from her verified X account on Saturday.

She said several ministries are spearheading a campaign to counter the sanctions, with the Oil Ministry taking center stage.

Mohajerani characterized new U.S. sanctions against Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad as evidence of Washington's anxiety about Iran's successful efforts to circumvent previous restrictions.

In announcing the new sanctions on Thursday, the Department of the U.S. Treasury said the bans were aimed at advancing President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" policy on Iran and cutting its oil exports down to zero.

The sanctions also targeted some Hong Kong-flagged oil tankers allegedly involved in the Iranian crude oil exports.

Iran's Caspian Sea cargo fleet capacity doubles

TEHRAN – The Director General of Maritime Affairs at Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), Alahmorad Afifipour, announced that the capacity of Iran's cargo fleet in the Caspian Sea has doubled over the past two years. By the end of the current year, the number of vessels flying the Iranian flag in this region is expected to reach 104.

As reported by the portal of Iran's Transport Ministry, a significant portion of Iran's trade with northern countries, particularly those bordering the Caspian Sea, is conducted via this maritime route.

The number of Iranian-flagged vessels has risen from 47 in 2021 to 94. This growth reflects the country's efforts to strengthen its maritime trade infrastructure.

Afifipour emphasized that most of the newly added vessels are cargo ships, which will play



a key role in facilitating goods transportation. He also noted the ongoing efforts to boost transit through the North-South Corridor, connecting the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. This initiative aims to increase Iran's share of cargo movement between its northern ports and other Caspian Sea na-

tions.

Addressing concerns about fleet age, Afifipour stated that while Caspian Sea vessels face unique size and operational constraints compared to those in open seas, their age does not hinder trade.

He assured that all vessels comply with national and inter-

national technical standards for safe operations.

Afifipour also acknowledged that fleet age is an important developmental indicator in maritime transport but reiterated that it does not pose a significant barrier to Iran's shipping activities.

On another note, Afifipour confirmed the ongoing decline in Caspian Sea water levels. He revealed that extensive studies have been conducted by Iran and other Caspian-bordering nations to understand this phenomenon. A joint commission is being planned to address water level reduction, its causes, and potential solutions.

In response to this challenge, measures such as relocating docks have been initiated by Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization to ensure continued maritime operations despite falling water levels

Over 21m tons of essential goods transported across Iran since March 2024

TEHRAN – Iran has transported more than 21 million tons of essential goods via imports through seven ports to various parts of the country since the beginning of the current Iranian year in March 2024, a senior transport official said.

Mehrdad Hamdollahi, director general of the Road Transport Organization's Freight Transport Office, emphasized the heightened importance of ensuring essential goods supply amid the overlap of Nowruz and Ramadan, adding that there are no issues in transporting these commodities.

According to Hamdollahi, necessary measures have been taken to facilitate the movement of perishable goods and essential household items by trucks during the Nowruz holiday period.

Of the total essential goods transported, Imam Khomeini Port accounted for over 62% of shipments, followed by Amirabad Port and Bandar Abbas.

Hamdollahi noted that transport companies and truck drivers remain fully operational without breaks to handle domestic production, imports, and exports.

He added that all digital and physical freight allocation systems are active throughout the year, including during the Nowruz holidays, allowing companies to request shipments and drivers to receive loading appointments at public freight terminals.

"There are no disruptions in the supply and distribution of key household goods, including those needed for fasting individuals, and shipments are being handled with minimal port delays," he said.



Hamdollahi added that electronic waybill systems and smart freight allocation continue to operate year-round, ensuring the seamless transportation of essential goods in response to demand from trucking companies and drivers.

Monthly producer inflation rises to 8.4%; annual rate hits 46.5%

TEHRAN – Iran's monthly producer inflation reached 8.4 percent in the 11th Iranian calendar month of Bahman (January 20–February 19), while the year-on-year rate climbed to 46.5 percent, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI).

The Producer Price Index (PPI) for the industrial sector stood at 1,586.7 in the mentioned month, marking an 8.4 percent increase from the previous month, a 46.5 percent rise compared to the same month last year, and a 26.6 percent increase over the

12-month period ending in Bahman.

The 8.4 percent monthly inflation rate was 3.1 percentage points higher than the 5.3 percent recorded in the previous month. This indicates that, on average, prices received by industrial producers for their domestic goods rose by 8.4 percent in a single month.

The highest monthly inflation was recorded in the "coke and refined petroleum products" sector at 21.7 percent, while "motor vehicles, trail-

ers, and semi-trailers" had the lowest increase at 1 percent.

Iran's year-on-year producer inflation hit 46.5 percent in Bahman, up from 36.9 percent in Dey (the 10th Iranian month), marking a 9.6 percentage point increase. This means that on average, prices received by industrial producers were 46.5 percent higher than in Bahman last year.

The "chemical materials and products" category saw the highest

annual inflation at 64.9 percent, while "textile manufacturing" had the lowest at 23.5 percent.

The 12-month producer inflation rate reached 26.6 percent in Bahman, up from 24.5 percent in Dey, reflecting a 2.1 percentage point increase.

Among industries, "electrical equipment manufacturing" recorded the highest annual inflation at 38.5 percent, while "paper and paper products" had the lowest at 15.3 percent.

Iraq says waiver on gas purchases from Iran still in place

TEHRAN – The United States has maintained its sanctions waiver allowing Iraq to continue purchasing natural gas from Iran, an advisor to the Iraqi prime minister said.

Farhad Alaaldin, foreign affairs advisor to the Iraqi prime minister, told a local Iraqi television network that the U.S. waiver for Iranian gas imports remains in effect, Mehr News Agency reported.

He noted that a significant portion of Iraq's power plants rely on Iranian gas, with 43 percent of the country's electricity generated from gas im-

ported from Iran.

However, the U.S. continues to encourage Iraq to diversify its sources of gas supply, Alaaldin added.

Iran and Iraq signed a five-year extension to their gas export agreement on March 27, 2024, in Baghdad.

Iran supplies gas to Iraq under two separate contracts, one for Baghdad and another for Basra. Talks on Iranian gas exports to Iraq began in the second half of 2010, leading to the signing of a supply agreement for Baghdad in July 2013. The contract for gas exports to Basra was signed

in Tehran in November 2015.

The United States has recently announced a decision not to renew a sanctions waiver that previously allowed Iraq to import electricity and gas from Iran without violating U.S. sanctions. This move is part of Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against the Islamic Republic.

The expiration of the waiver has raised concerns in Iraq about potential power shortages, as the country heavily relies on Iranian energy imports to meet its electric-

ity demands, especially during peak summer months. Iraqi officials have expressed apprehension that the loss of Iranian energy supplies could lead to significant electricity deficits, exacerbating the country's existing infrastructure challenges.

In response to the U.S. decision, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi criticized the move, stating that it targets the innocent people of Iraq by attempting to deprive them of access to basic services such as electricity, particularly ahead of the approaching hot months.

Commodities worth \$16.5m exported to Belarus in 10 months

TEHRAN – Iran exported commodities valued at \$16.565 million to Belarus in the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024–January 19, 2025), the spokesperson for the Trade Development Committee of the House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that the value of Iran's 10-month export to Belarus fell 3.3 percent year on year.

He put the weight of exported commodities at 17,000 tons and said that the exported items rose 2.3 percent in terms of weight, as

compared to the previous year.

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

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

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

the two countries.

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

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

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

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

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

Ansarallah pledges to make Americans repent for electing Trump

“Inevitable” revenge for deadly US raids on Yemen

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – American and British airstrikes on Yemen have resulted in the deaths of more than 30 civilians and left at least 100 others injured.

The majority of the casualties, including those killed and injured, were women and children as a result of the air and naval strikes.

U.S. and British forces conducted multiple airstrikes targeting the capital, Sanaa, as well as Saada, al-Bayda in central Yemen, and Dhamar, located south of the capital.

Reports and assessments so far indicate that the attacks targeted residential areas and civilian infrastructure.

Reports also indicate that the airstrikes hit a local power station, cutting off the power supply in the city of Dhahyan in Saada province.

The Supreme Political Council in Yemen condemned the U.S. airstrikes, calling them an act of aggression and describing them as support for the Israeli occupation.

In a statement, the council said that “targeting civilians proves America’s failure in confrontation and will not deter us from our stance in support of Gaza.”

The council emphasized that “those who attack Yemen will be punished in a professional and painful manner.”

The attack on Yemen occurred just days after the Yemeni armed forces announced they would resume their ban on Israeli ships passing through designated operational areas in the Red Sea,



Arabian Sea, Bab al-Mandab, and the Gulf of Aden.

The Yemeni armed forces made this announcement last Tuesday after the deadline set by Ansarallah leader Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi had expired.

The deadline was intended for mediators to pressure the Israeli occupation to reopen border crossings and allow humanitarian aid into Gaza.

Although no Ansarallah operations have been reported since then, experts believe that Israeli and Israeli-affiliated vessels have been avoiding the waters designated by the Yemeni forces.

The official spokesman for the government in Sanaa, Mohammad Abdel Salam, delivered the following statement:

“The U.S. airstrikes on Yemen are a blatant aggression against an independent state and an encouragement for the Israeli enemy entity to continue its unjust siege on Gaza.

The U.S. president’s claim of a threat to international naviga-

tion in the Bab al-Mandab Strait is false and misleads international public opinion.

The maritime blockade announced by Yemen in support of Gaza is limited only to Israeli shipping until humanitarian aid is allowed into Gaza, in accordance with the ceasefire agreement between the Palestinian resistance and the enemy entity. This Yemeni blockade was implemented after a four-day grace period for mediators.

We affirm that international navigation in the Red Sea will remain safe from Yemen’s side and that the American airstrikes mark a return to the militarization of the Red Sea, which is the real threat to international navigation in the region.”

A senior Yemeni official warned that the attack on Yemen “will not go unanswered” saying that Yemen “may escalate its support for Gaza’s resistance in response to the U.S.-British aggression.”

The official stressed that “no Israeli ships will pass through

the designated maritime area,” while he promised that Ansarallah will make Americans repent voting U.S. President Donald Trump into office.

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, a member of the Ansarallah political office, echoed these sentiments, stating, “The U.S. attack on Yemen is unjustified, as the Yemeni armed forces are targeting the Zionist entity.”

In a TV interview, al-Bukhaiti stated, “Everyone knows we are sincere in our responses. To those who accuse us of being reckless, we say that those who align with the U.S. and Israel are the real risk-takers.”

Al-Bukhaiti emphasized that retaliation against the U.S. attack is inevitable, noting that there is no difference between the Trump and Biden administrations when it comes to Yemen.

He affirmed that Yemen will not abandon its support for Palestine or its stance against the United States, regardless of the cost.

Al-Bukhaiti concluded by stating, “What sets this battle apart from previous ones is that it is now clear-cut, a battle between absolute right and absolute wrong.”

For about 15 months, the United States, Israel, and Britain regularly targeted positions they claimed belonged to Ansarallah in Yemen.

Despite those attacks, the government in Sanaa continued its military operations against the Israeli occupation in solidarity with Gaza, showing no signs of backing down.

Attack on Yemen: Afghanistan and Iraq wars are before Trump’s eyes

From page 1 ▶ threatening to capture Greenland by force, proposing to relocate the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and “take over” it are a series of his rash remarks in the first few weeks of his presidency.

Rarely a day passes that he does not make hasty remarks or decisions. The deadly attack on Yemen came suddenly.

The war on Yemen began in March 2015 with a Saudi-led coalition backed by the Barack Obama administration. However, the Yemenis have become militarily stronger and more resilient these years.

Wedding ceremonies were turned into mourning processions and many other tragedies, but the Yemenis were not subdued.

In his first presidential term, Trump scolded George W. Bush for American “endless wars” in the Middle East. He was openly referring to the American wars on Afghanistan and Iraq that began in 2001 and 2003, respectively.

However, after 20 years of war in Afghanistan, the U.S. was forced to flee the country in humiliation. The memories of people were still fresh how the U.S. hurriedly flew its embassy Staff from Saigon in 1975 that another mishap happened for the Americans, this time in Afghanistan. Trump himself acknowledges that the U.S. left behind billions of dollars of equipment.

“We left billions, tens of billions of dollars’ worth of equipment behind” in Afghanistan,

Trump told his first cabinet meeting in late February. (Of course, like other figures he exaggerates. It is also worth noting that the agreement to leave Afghanistan was made during his presidency and President Joe Biden just implemented it.)

Their wars on Afghanistan and Iraq proved scandalous. Taliban returned to power triumphantly. Also, no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq, the pretext for the attack on the country. The most important “achievement” of the wars on the two countries was the spread of terrorism in the region and beyond!!!

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Arab League fails and Arab nation pays the price

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The recent Arab League meeting in Cairo exposed the failure of Arab regimes to repel the plot to displace the residents of Gaza and the West Bank to Egypt and Jordan.

They also failed to abort the Israeli expansionist threats they face, which make no distinction at all between a normalizing regime and one that rejects normalization.

This is not new! For decades, the Arab bloc has failed to agree on a unified defense vision, abandoning the framework intended to unite them. They have focused on preserving the interests of one nation at the expense of another.

The recent Arab League meeting once again announced its adherence to the “Beirut Initiative of 2002” that was repeatedly rejected by the temporary entity to achieve its mischievous project

of fragmenting West Asia and annexing large parts of it.

In his book titled “People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem”, Barry Buzan defines the concept of regional security as the interdependence of several states within a specific geographic area in the form of action and reaction, which ultimately produces a set of security dynamics.

Accordingly, wisdom assumes that every shared interest is

guaranteed. God Almighty says: {And thus We have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people...} [Al-Baqarah: 143] and {You are the best nation produced for mankind...} [Al-Imran: 110].

What constitutes a milestone for the Arab world are its foundations linked by factors of language, civilization, religion, history, and a common enemy.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Germany is rethinking everything nuclear

By Thorsten Benner

The incoming German government, rattled by the prospect of U.S. President Donald Trump withdrawing security guarantees, is preparing a fundamental readjustment of its defense posture. The new coalition of Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) has already agreed to push for changes to the debt brake that would pave the way to dramatically higher military spending. Germany’s likely next chancellor, CDU leader Friedrich Merz, stated that “in view of the threats to our freedom and peace on our continent,” the government’s new motto needs to be “whatever it takes.”

A litmus test for how serious these efforts are is whether the new government will pursue a Plan B for a possible end to the U.S. nuclear security umbrella for Germany and Europe. Berlin needs an ambitious nuclear



policy rethink that includes a push to recreate nuclear sharing at the European level—with the continent’s nuclear powers, France and the UK—to deter Russia and other adversaries. It is also essential for Germany to invest in civilian nuclear research to maintain nuclear latency as a hedge. Fortunately, Merz has signaled willingness to do both.

As part of NATO nuclear sharing, Germany hosts about 20 U.S. B-61 nuclear bombs at

the Büchel airbase. For much of the past few decades, a majority of Germans were in favor of getting these nuclear weapons out of Germany. This was part and parcel of the German desire to exit everything nuclear, be it military or civilian. As late as mid-2021, a survey published by the Munich Security Conference found that only 14 percent of Germans favored nuclear weapons on German soil.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine led to a dramatic shift in public opinion. In mid-2022, 52 percent of Germans surveyed for Panorama magazine expressed support for keeping or even increasing U.S. nuclear weapons in Germany. Russia’s attack against nonnuclear power Ukraine, which included the threat of using such weapons to deter Europe and the United States from supporting Kyiv, clearly left a mark on the German population.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Armed shepherds: Israel’s most dangerous project in the West Bank

TEHRAN – The Israeli occupation regime misuses the silence of the international community, the Arab and Islamic world, and the absolute support of the US to take over more Palestinian lands in the West Bank, says Osman Abu Sobhe, an expert in Israeli affairs.

He called settlements one of the strategic issues of the Zionist project in the long term, noting that settlements are a means of dominance on Palestinian lands and giving them to settlers. The goal behind this measure is to exert pressure on Palestinians and force them to migrate, he lamented.

However, the Palestinians will never leave their lands, he added.

Pointing to the humiliating silence of the world, particularly those who claim democracy and human rights, Abu Sobhe said these false claimants are associated with atrocities against Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank and the theft of the Palestinian lands.

He called the shepherd settlement the most dangerous one, explaining that the Zionist settlers are given sheep herds. They are supported with money and even weapons to stay in Palestinian pastures, he added.

The Zionist settlers, with the support of the army and police, leave no space for herds belonging to Palestinians, causing economic hardships for them.

He said Palestinians, particularly those located in Area C in Jordan Valley, are not supported.

Under the Oslo II Accord signed in Egypt in 1995, the West Bank was divided into Areas A, B, and C.

Since the start of Israel’s genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, Israeli occupation forces have conducted near-daily raids and expanded their military operations in the occupied West Bank.

In the last two years, occupation forces have killed hundreds of Palestinians, demolished hundreds of homes, and displaced tens of thousands in the deadliest aggression on the West Bank in 25 years.

Immediately after the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas went into effect on 19 January, the occupation army started a new deadly military operation against several refugee camps in the northern West Bank, demolishing homes and infrastructure and displacing more than 40,000 Palestinians.

Beijing building bridges: The role of Diaoyutai State Guest House in global diplomacy

By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING– The strategic partnership between Iran and China has once again gained prominence following the discussions held between high-ranking officials from both nations in Beijing on Friday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi hosted Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov at Diaoyutai State Guest House on March 14, 2025.

Earlier that day, the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and Russia engaged in discussions with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxun at the same location.

The talks focused on Iran’s nuclear program. China and Russia acknowledged Iran’s entitlement to peaceful nuclear technology and advocated for the removal of US sanctions imposed on Tehran.

Discussions also covered other topics of interest to the three countries including regional and international developments and cooperation within the frameworks of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

In July 2023, the SCO officially approved Iran’s full-fledged membership. Iran became the ninth member of the bloc which is the world’s largest regional organization in terms of geographic scope and population.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Israeli attack targeting workers for UK charity kills nine

An Israeli drone attack has killed eight volunteers working for the UK charity Al-Khair Foundation as they were setting up tents for displaced Palestinians in northern Gaza.

At least nine people, including three journalists, were killed and several more wounded in the attack in Gaza’s Beit Lahia, which targeted a relief team accompanied by journalists and photographers, according to Palestinian media, Middle East Eye reported.

Qasim Rashid Ahmad, founder and chairman of Al-Khair Foundation, told the BBC the team was in Beit Lahia on Saturday to set up tents for displaced Palestinians.

He said the cameramen were hit when they came back to their car, and moments later, an Israeli drone targeted their team members who had rushed to the scene.

Middle East Eye reached out to the Foreign Office for comment but did not receive a response by the time of publication.

The Palestinian Journalists Protection Center identified video editor Bilal Abu Matar and cameramen Mahmoud al-Sarraj, Bilal Aqila and Mahmoud Asleem as having been killed in the attack.

The centre said that “the journalists were documenting humanitarian relief efforts for those affected by Israel’s genocidal war”.

“Flagrant violation of international law”

Hamas called the attack a “horrific massacre” and “a dangerous escalation that reflects [Israel’s] insistence on continuing its aggression and disregard for all international laws and conventions”.

The Israeli military claimed it struck “two terrorists... operating a drone that posed a threat”. It added: “Later, a number of additional terrorists collected the drone operating equipment and entered a vehicle. The [military] struck the terrorists.”

The military gave no evidence for its claims, which were strongly denied by Al-Khair Foundation.

Independent British MP for Leicester South Shockat Adam said: “My heart and deepest condolences go out to the Al-Khair Foundation following the shocking killing of their volunteers and journalists in Gaza.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Ancient city of Rey prepares to welcome tourists during Nowruz

TEHRAN - The ancient city of Rey, now part of Tehran, is set to host travelers and holidaymakers during the two-week Nowruz vacation, officially starting on March 21.

Extensive restoration, conservation, and preparation efforts over the past two years have ensured that several significant historical sites, including Cheshmeh Ali, Rashkan Fortress, Tapeh Mil, and Iraj Fortress, are ready to welcome visitors.

Qadir Afravand, director of the national heritage base of Rey, highlighted these efforts, noting that some of the most prominent and captivating historical landmarks in the region have been meticulously prepared for tourists.

Among them is the Cheshmeh Ali archaeological site, boasting a history of over 8,000 years, the Rashkan Fortress, which once served as the heart of historic Rey, the Tapeh Mil ruins in eastern Rey near Ghaleh Now, and the colossal Iraj Fortress, the world's largest ancient fortification.

A unique aspect of Rey as a Nowruz destination is its proximity to Tehran, allowing millions of residents from the capital to explore its historical wonders with ease.

Visitors can start their journey with a pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of Imamzadeh Shah Abdol Azim in the early morning and then embark on a cultural and historical tour, discovering attractions such as the historical bazaar of Rey, Cheshmeh Ali, Rashkan Fortress, and the city's ancient core. The experience offers both spiritual fulfillment and a fascinating glimpse into Iran's rich heritage.

For the first time, the historical center of Rey has undergone significant enhancements, including the restoration of the last remaining watchtower of the ancient citadel, protective coverings, lighting installations, and fencing around key areas.

These improvements have been undertaken to

better accommodate the influx of Nowruz visitors.

Additionally, Cheshmeh Ali has undergone extensive renovations in collaboration with the municipality, featuring improved paving and landscaping, offering a more visually appealing environment for visitors.

The site, already a favorite among locals, has been further enriched by recent archaeological excavations led by researchers from Shahid Beheshti University, sparking greater public interest in the site.

In addition, significant transformations have also taken place at Tapeh Mil, with new protective measures, perimeter fencing, and meticulous restoration of unique stucco decorations. These enhancements, combined with the breathtaking green plains of Rey in early spring, promise an exceptional experience for Nowruz travelers this year.

For the second consecutive year, all these historical sites will feature dedicated tour guides, carefully selected from expert cultural heritage professionals. These guides will provide in-depth archaeological insights, answer visitors' questions, and enhance the overall experience of exploring Rey's magnificent past.

Afravand also extended an open invitation to travelers across the country to visit Rey's historical treasures, describing them as unparalleled in their significance.

According to Afravand, Rey is one of the oldest cities in the central Iranian plateau with a history of human settlement that stretches over 8,000 years.

The history of Rey, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica is featured in the Avesta (the original document of Zoroastrianism, an Iranian religion) as a sacred place, and it is also mentioned in the book of Tobit, of the biblical Apocrypha, and by classical authors.

All artifacts in Dafineh Museum Group re-organized and catalogued

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - The Dafineh Museum Group, managed under the Mostafafan Foundation, has completed a re-organization, authentication, classification, and documentation of all its historical artifacts.

In a symbolic gesture during a special ceremony on Saturday, Hossein Dehghan, the head of the Foundation, personally returned the final museum piece to the museum.

Dehghan personally placed a historical vessel into a storage box, sealing it for its return to the museum.

Commenting on the achievement, Dehghan emphasized the significance of the initiative, stating, "This was a major accomplishment. Everyone should consider establishing a center for intellectual development."

"The Tabar Project was designed to improve artifact preservation, ensure the general authentication of stored objects, create a comprehensive archive, classify items based on their significance, determine the necessary storage capacity, enhance transparency, strengthen oversight, and establish efficient documentation and search mechanisms," CEO of the Dafineh Museum Group told the Tehran Times.

"Since the establishment of the



Mostafafan Foundation President Hossein Dehghan (L) and CEO of the Dafineh Museum Group, Hamidreza Soleimani (R) are seen during a ceremony marking the termination of a project for the re-organization, authentication, classification, and documentation of all its artifacts being kept in the museum group on March, 2025.

museum institute, a re-organization of the foundation's artifacts has been a concern for its management. However, over the past 40 years, the artifacts were never fully catalogued—each item only had a code indicating its historical period and [its original] location/place of discovery

within the museum spaces," Hamidreza Soleimani added.

Although the project was proposed and approved two years ago, it remained unexecuted. Dehghan ordered its immediate implementation.

"In 2023, the Tabar Project was

officially defined and approved for execution over two years, but delays in leadership changes stalled progress. It was not until the head of the Foundation toured museum spaces in November this year that he ordered its full implementation."

Soleimani underlined that the immense project was carried out by expert researchers, archaeologists, art historians, judicial experts, and professional photographers.

"A dedicated team conducted extensive research on each artifact, verified its authenticity, and provided it with a detailed identification record, while another team professionally photographed all the items. Once the authentication process was completed, the artifacts were returned to the museum's storage places."

It is now confirmed that all artifacts housed in the Dafineh Museum Group—many of which had remained in storage for over two to three decades—have been fully documented, authenticated, and archived, making a complete inventory available for future reference, he explained.

Additionally, Soleimani announced that efforts to establish a Cultural Heritage Research Center within the foundation are underway, and the required permits are expected to be secured by the summer.

Limestone cave discovered in rural yard due to land subsidence

TEHRAN - A burst water pipe in the yard of a rural house in Barzok, near the ancient city of Kashan, led to an unexpected discovery of a limestone cave.

Initial investigations suggest the cave has two levels, with corridors extending up to 50 meters. One of its vertical passages leading to the lower levels is approximately 10 meters deep.

The Iranian Speleology Task Force, in collaboration with cavers, is currently mapping and assessing the site.

A member of the Iranian Caving and Speleology Association confirmed the discovery of this limestone cave in Barzok by a local resident. The cave features multiple chambers and passageways and reportedly once contained a freshwater spring, which has since dried up due to declining groundwater levels, ILNA reported.

Javad Nezamdoost, a member of the association, provided further details about the cave's discovery. He explained that several years ago, a water pipe burst in

the summer home of a local. The flooding in the yard abruptly drained, revealing a hole where the water had disappeared. Upon further inspection, the local initially assumed the hole was an underground well that might help solve his drainage issues.

However, further exploration led to the astonishing discovery of an extensive limestone cave.

The Iranian Caving Association soon contacted the owner of the house, and a team of cavers from Alborz province began mapping the cave, covering an estimated area of 350 to 400 square meters. Despite the dried-up spring, the cave remains an important geological find.

Nezamdoost emphasized that while the cave contains significant limestone formations and sediment deposits, it is not suitable for tourism and must be preserved.

The Iranian Caving Association has advised the cave's discoverer and local residents about the importance of protecting it from damage and unauthorized entry.

He also pointed out that not all caves are suitable for tourism or commercial use. Some mistakenly associate cave discoveries with hidden treasures, but such assumptions are unfounded.

He noted that very few caves—perhaps one in a thousand—were historically used as human dwellings.

Many caves remain undiscovered because they lack visible entrances, and their existence does not justify excavation or destruction in search of artifacts.

Nezamdoost explained that Iran's national cave conservation framework, established about three decades ago, classifies caves into four protection levels. Grade-one caves are strictly protected, allowing access only for scientific research and mapping.

These caves often contain rare geological, ecological, or hydrological features or house endangered species. Grade-two caves have limited entry permissions and require further study before any potential use.

Grade-three caves may be developed for tourism under controlled conditions, while grade-four caves are open for public access without significant conservation concerns.

Given its unique characteristics, Nezamdoost believes this newly discovered cave requires further evaluation before determining its classification.

Kashan is situated on a route that connects Tehran to the giant destinations of Isfahan, Shiraz, and Yazd.

Moreover, the ancient town is a gateway to many sights, stories, and surrounding attractive villages to discover. Amongst the highlights are the lavishly decorated houses of Brujerdi, Tabatabai, Ameri, and Abbasi. In addition, Kashan embraces some archaeological gems.

Most importantly, the Tepe Sialk yielded interesting pottery pieces, metal tools, and domestic implements made from stone, clay, and bone that date from as early as the 4th millennium BC.

Pakistan's National Day Reception



The Consulate of Pakistan in Mashhad held a grand reception to celebrate Pakistan's National Day and commemorate the historic Pakistan Resolution of 23 March 1940. The Honorable Governor General of Khorasan Razavi, Mr. Gholam Hossain Mozaffari, attended the event as a distinguished guest. The gathering also included notable dignitaries from the province, diplomats, business leaders, academics, and members of the Pakistani community.

In his address, the Consul, Mr. Muhammad Sheryar highlighted the historic and expanding relationship between Pakistan and Iran. He emphasized key areas such as bilateral trade, investment, religious tourism, visa facilitation, and educational collaboration.

The Consul emphasized the recent visit of the Governor General of Khorasan Razavi to Pakistan, which has opened new opportunities for economic cooperation, trade facilitation, and border connectivity. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing business-to-business collaboration in key sectors such as energy, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and technology.

Acknowledging Mashhad's significance as a spiritual center, the Consul thanked the Iranian authorities for their hospitality toward the thousands of Pakistani zaireen who visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) annually.

Concluding his speech, the Consul reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to strengthening its multifaceted relationship with Iran, calling for continued collaboration in trade, investment, education, visa facilitation, and cultural and religious ties.

In his speech, the Governor General congratulated the people and government of Pakistan on their National Day. He emphasized the extensive cultural,

civilizational, religious, and historical commonalities shared by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. During his recent visit to Pakistan, he noted that several cooperation agreements were signed with the governments of Sindh and Punjab in various fields. He highlighted that the increase in direct flights between Mashhad and various cities in Pakistan was one of the notable achievements of his visit.

The Governor General of Khorasan Razavi pointed out that after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the relations between the two countries deepened and expanded. He mentioned that the Supreme Leader's focus on strengthening ties with Pakistan has further enhanced their bilateral relationship.

Pakistan holds a special significance in this context, as evidenced by the strengthening of friendly and brotherly bonds between the two nations. Despite some economic challenges, the volume of trade and financial exchanges has increased over the past year.

Furthermore, the Governor General expressed pride in Khorasan Razavi Province for hosting many Pakistani zaireen at the Holy Shrine of Hazrat Ali Ibn Musa Al-Reza (AS) every year. He concluded by congratulating his Pakistani brothers and sisters on their National Day. He prayed to the Almighty for Pakistani nation and government's success in achieving their noble goals and strengthening the friendship between the two countries.

Pakistan Zindabad!

Pakistan-Iran Friendship Paidabad!

Direct flights launched between Kish Island and Dushanbe

TEHRAN - On Sunday, Kish Airlines commenced direct flights between Kish Island in southern Iran and Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tajikistan announced the launch, emphasizing its potential to strengthen

bilateral ties, Mehr reported.

The service marks a significant step in fostering closer relations between Iran and Tajikistan through improved connectivity, the report said.

The private carrier was established in 1989 and started operations in 1990.



Quakes prompt tourist shift from Greek islands to Turkish resorts

The recent earthquake storm impacting the Greek islands, especially Santorini, has prompted tourists to reconsider their vacation plans and redirect their travels to Türkiye.

The seismic activity in the Aegean Sea has affected tourism on islands like Santorini and Yamurgi, which host millions of tourists annually.

Tourists considering vacations on the islands are canceling their reservations because of recent tremors and considering Türkiye as an alternative destination.

Early bookings for Turkish holiday destinations indicate that holiday-

makers are altering their plans, with many avoiding or canceling reservations for the Greek islands, according to Mehmet Isler, vice president of the Turkish Hoteliers' Federation (TUROFED).

Reservations are increasingly shifting toward the Turkish resort towns, according to Isler.

Those holidaymakers avoiding the Greek islands are now preferring destinations like Egypt and new destinations such as Antalya, Fethiye, Marmaris and Bodrum, he said.

"This new tourist profile, which had not previously visited Türkiye, is an

opportunity for us.

We can turn this in our favor through high service quality and competitive pricing. We are now faced with a new market and a new customer portfolio," Isler added.

Orhan Belge, president of the Cesme Association of Tourism Hoteliers and Operators, said that Greek tourism, particularly the islands, is facing challenges.

"The increase in early reservations shows that tourists are shifting from Greece to Türkiye," said Belge.

(Source: HURRIYET DAILY NEWS)

17 Iranian universities in QS ranking 2025 by subject

TEHRAN –The 15th edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2025 has included 17 Iranian universities in 21 subject entries, compared to 17 Iranian universities in 17 subject entries in 2024.

The recently launched QS World University Rankings by Subject ranks universities for 55 subjects.

Academic programs are ranked over five indicators to effectively reflect their performance, taking into account academic reputation, employer reputation, research citations per paper, H-index, and International research network (by broad faculty area).

A total of 1,758 unique institutions have been ranked in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025, an increase of seven percent from the 2024 edition.

The QS World University Rankings by Subject are sorted into five broad subject areas, including Arts and humanities, Engineering and technology, Life sciences and medicine, Natural sciences, and Social sciences and management.

Iranian universities are ranked among the top institutions in three faculty areas including Engineering and Technology; Life sciences and Medicine; and Natural sciences, Mehr news agency reported.

Some 997 institutions have been globally ranked in the Engineering and Technology subject area – 344 of them are new for this year's edition.

University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 280, is placed first in the country; it ranked 346 globally in 2024.

Sharif University of Technology ranks second in the country, and its global ranking has risen from 410-450 in 2024 to 292 this year.

Amirkabir University of Technology (451-500) and Iran University of Science and Technology (501-550) are placed third and fourth, respectively. They are included in the QS ranking this year.

In Petroleum Engineering, University of Tehran ranks 22 globally, progressing from 32 in 2024 to 22 this year.

Sharif University of Technology global ranking in Petroleum Engineering advanced from 34 to 20 this year.

Amirkabir University of Technology ranks 50-101. Isfahan University of Technology, Shiraz University, and Tabriz University rank 101-150.

In Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Sharif University



of Technology and University of Tehran rank 151-200 and 201-250, respectively.

A total of 1,124 institutions are ranked in the Life Sciences and Medicine broad subject.

Tehran University of Medical Sciences is ranked first nationally; its ranking elevated from 358 in 2024 to 309 this year.

Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, and University of Tehran ranked 401-450; they ranked 451-500 in 2024.

A total of 1,758 unique institutions have been ranked, an increase of seven percent from the 2024 edition.

Iran University of Medical Sciences (451-500), included this year, Shiraz university of medical sciences (451 – 500), Tabriz University of Medical Sciences (501-550), included this year, followed in subsequent positions.

In Agricultural and Forestry, University of Tehran ranks 101-150, and University of Tabriz ranks 251-300.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, and Shiraz University are included this year, they rank 351-400.

In Anatomy and Physiology, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences rank 51-100, 101-170, correspondingly.

In Nursing, Iran University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Sciences rank 151-225, jointly.

In Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Tehran University of Medical Sciences is ranked 201-250.

Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, University of Tehran rank 251-300.

Some 925 institutions are

Sciences, Shiraz University of Technology, and Babol Noshirvani University of Technology rank 501-600 globally.

The World University Rankings 2025 has placed 81 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world in 10 out of 11 subject areas, compared to 73 universities in 2024.

Iran's best rankings are in Computer Science, and Engineering.

University of Tehran (401-500), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Shahid Beheshti University (501-600), Allameh Tabatabaeei University and University of Isfahan (601), are ranked first to third in Art and Humanities.

University of Tehran (201-250), Sharif University of Technology (301-400), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Iran University of Science and Technology (401-500), are the top four institutions in Business and Economics.

Sharif University of Technology (151-175), University of Tehran (201 –250), Amirkabir University of Technology (251-300) are placed first to third in Computer Science, respectively.

Sharif University of Technology (151-175), University of Tehran (201-250), and Iran University of Science and Technology (251-300) are ranked first to third in Engineering, respectively.

In Life Sciences, Gorgan University of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and University of Tehran ranked first nationally; they rank 401-500 globally.

Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Sciences jointly rank first (301-400), Qazvin University of Medical Sciences and Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences rank second (401-500) in Medical and Health.

Iran University of Science and Technology, Sharif University of Technology, and University of Tehran ranked first (301-400 globally) in Physical Science.

In Psychology, University of Tehran (401-500) is placed first.

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Kharazmi University, Shahid Beheshti University, University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences are placed next, with a global ranking of 501-600.

The top three universities in Social Science are University of Tehran (301-400), University of Tabriz (401-500), Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, and Shiraz University (501-600).

ranked in the Natural Sciences broad subject area. 347 are new institutions.

University of Tehran and Sharif University of Technology experienced a ranking increase from 401-450 and 501-550 in 2024 to 344 and 390 in 2025, respectively.

In Chemistry, University of Tehran ranks 301-350, and Sharif University of Technology 351-400.

University of Tehran ranks 351-400 in Physics and Astronomy, and University of Tehran ranks 451-500.

University of Tehran is the only university ranked in Environmental Sciences, and Geophysics (201-250).

In Mathematics, Sharif University of Technology and University of Tehran rank 301-350.

Iran University of Science and Technology, Amirkabir University of Technology, and Islamic Azad University have a global ranking of 401-450.

In Material Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, and University of Tehran rank 251-300, and 351-400, respectively. Amirkabir University of Technology and Iran University of Science and Technology rank 401-550, jointly.

Recent rankings

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings (WUR) by international outlook 2025 has ranked 85 Iranian universities among the top universities in the world.

Sharif University of Technology (with a global ranking of 301-350) tops the universities of the country.

Amirkabir University of Technology and Iran University of Science and Technology, both with a global ranking of 351-400, are placed second.

Kermanshah University of Medical Sciences, and the University of Tehran, with a global ranking of 401-500, rank third.

Tehran University of Medical

Environmental award for students slated for April

TEHRAN –The 9th edition of the national environmental award for university students is scheduled to be held concurrent with World Earth Day, celebrated annually on April 22.

Hosted by Isfahan University of Technology, the event will highlight the students' concerns about environmental problems, including air pollution, climate change, global warming, and water scarcity, as well as their efforts in addressing these issues. One of the main objectives is to promote the culture of environmental protection and encourage everyone to take action to save the environment and the planet, IRNA reported.

The event will focus on the environment, inventions, knowledge-based and innovative ideas, scientific research on saving endangered species, cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), activities of students' groups, and scientific associations in the field of natural resources and environment. World Earth Day highlights the need for collective efforts to protect the earth, address environmental concerns, and promote sustainability. The theme for Earth Day 2025 is 'Our Power, Our Planet,' inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy and to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030.

Public participation essential in environmental protection

According to Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), no single organization will be able to successfully preserve the environment on its own; environmental issues will be best addressed through public participation.

"There are many environmental challenges in habitats, wildlife, and wetlands which can not be

tackled just by the efforts and measures of the Department of Environment," IRIB quoted Ansari as saying. The official made the remarks at the closing ceremony of the 22nd international environmental exhibition, which was held from December 18 to 22, 2024. According to the Constitution, protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility, Ansari added.

She went on to call for assistance and cooperation from different strata, organizations, economic sectors, activists, as well as government bodies like ministries of education, agriculture, and foreign affairs. To be able to preserve the environment, we need to recognize it as one of our main concerns, Ansari further noted.

The 22nd international environmental exhibition was held with the theme of 'public involvement, green economy, sustainable future.'

It focused on 'economic environment, environmental economy,' to highlight the importance of social responsibility in protecting the environment. The event aimed to raise public awareness about environmental issues, provide an opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and experiences among experts, specialists, and environmental activists, and introduce and encourage the use of innovative solutions and advanced technologies to reduce fuel and energy consumption.

Preserving natural resources, fostering interactions and cooperation between institutions, organizations, and companies active in the field of environment and energy, promoting the concepts of sustainability and social responsibility among the people as well as encouraging environmentally friendly behaviors were among the other goals of the exhibition.

Experiencing nature can help reduce acute physical pain: study

TEHRAN – In a new study, neuroscientists at the University of Vienna have discovered that viewing natural scenes, real or virtual, will significantly alleviate the intensity of physical pain.

The study was conducted in cooperation with an international team, finding that looking at nature can relieve pain by changing the way the brain reacts to pain. "Pain processing is a complex phenomenon," explains study lead and doctoral student Max Steininger from the University of Vienna. In order to better understand it and identify treatment options, Steininger and his colleagues investigated how nature exposure influences pain: participants suffering from pain were shown three types of videos: a nature scene, an indoor scene, and an urban scene, according to a report published by SciTechDaily.

"Pain is like a puzzle, made up of different pieces that are processed differently in the brain. Some pieces of the puzzle relate to our emotional response to pain, such as how unpleasant we find it. Other pieces correspond to the physical signals

underlying the painful experience, such as its location in the body and its intensity.

Unlike placebos, which usually change our emotional response to pain, viewing nature changed how the brain processed early, raw sensory signals of pain. Thus, the effect appears to be less influenced by participants' expectations, and more by changes in the underlying pain signals," explains Steininger.

Claus Lamm, head of research in the group, adds: "From another ongoing study, we know that people consistently report feeling less pain when exposed to natural environments. However, the underlying reason for this has remained unclear – until now. Our study suggests that the brain reacts less to both the physical source and the intensity of the pain."

Being simple and accessible, this finding will contribute to developing nature-based treatments, as an effective supplementary approach, to manage pains.

Police seize 19 tons of narcotics in Tehran in a year

TEHRAN –Iran anti-narcotics police have seized some 19 tons of narcotics and arrested 555 smugglers in Tehran province in the current Iranian calendar year, which will end on March 20.

Since the beginning of the current year, 207 kilograms of illicit drugs have been discovered within a 500-meter radius of educational centers and schools, IRIB reported.

Also, 1,500 members of drug trafficking gangs and 2,800 online vendors were arrested.

Over 81,000 addicts were also settled in special rehabilitation centers.

Iran's substantial efforts in fight against drug trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has always lauded the Iranian government for its substantial efforts and steadfast commitment to tackling drug trafficking.

Due to its geographic proximity to Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran serves as both a destination and a transit route for illicit drug trafficking, especially opioids and recently methamphetamine produced in Afghanistan.

On December 8, 2024, Alexander Fedulov, UNODC Iran Country Representative, attended a high-level meeting held at the Drug Control Head-

quarters (DCHQ) on the occasion of the successful seizure of 2,400 kilograms of methamphetamine in Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

During the meeting, Brigadier General Ahmad Ali Goudarzi, Commander of the Iranian Border Guard, shared details of a major drug seizure in Sistan-Baluchestan Province.

On September 10, 2024, Iranian forces successfully seized 2,400 kilograms of methamphetamine. This operation underscored the relentless commitment of Iran's border forces, who are at the forefront of combating the production and trafficking of drugs, particularly those originating in Afghanistan.

Brigadier General Goudarzi emphasized that the seizure not only reflects the escalating challenges posed by methamphetamine production in the region but also the dedication of Iran's border guards, law enforcement, and customs officials in addressing this issue. Fedulov, for his part, expressed his gratitude to Iranian authorities for their invaluable contributions to this global challenge.

Fedulov stressed the importance of strengthened regional cooperation, and emphasized the need for further international support to bolster collective efforts in combating drug trafficking across West Asia.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. "The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster," he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه ای امضا می شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.



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MARCH 17, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The welfare of countries depends on the judgment and management of governments. If governments are honest and wise in judgment, good fortune follows; if not, it will turn away and go.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:13 Evening: 18:32 Dawn: 4:47 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:11 (tomorrow)

International screenings of “Woolina and the No Birds” continue

TEHRAN- The Iranian animated film “Woolina and the No Birds” co-directed by Hossein Saffarzadegan and Meisam Hosseini has been screened in Vietnam, Iraq, Pakistan, and Armenia.

The movie has expanded its reach following screenings in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Lebanon, Mehr reported on Sunday.

With over 1.5 million viewers in cinema theaters across Iran, “Woolina and the No Birds” has set a record as the highest-grossing Iranian animated film.

It has previously been screened in Turkey and Kazakhstan under the titles “Kuzugiller” and “Romashka, the Pilot” respectively.

A production of 2023, the animation is an 80-minute adventure comedy for kids. It premiered in Iran at the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival in February, 2024.

Its story revolves around the main character’s dream of flying and the collective efforts of friends to achieve it. A young sheep dreams of flying, but she lives in a world where only birds are allowed to fly airplanes and soar the skies.

With the world and her father against her, she and her friends follow in the footsteps of her favorite heroic character, Super Owl, fighting against all odds to join a flight school and enter the race that will change their lives forever.

Shahrzad Theater Complex to host Neil Simon’s “Dinner Party”

TEHRAN-Shahrzad Theater Complex in Tehran will host the play “Dinner Party” written by Neil Simon from March 30.

Hesam Anvari is the director of the one-hour play that has Sousan Parvar, Amir Ghafarmanesh, Iman Karbalaeein, Donya Mostalemi, Navid Siatiri, and Faezeh Kalbori in the cast, Honaronline reported.

The one-act comedy is about marriage and divorce. It has three male and three female characters. It is about a decidedly French dinner party served up in a chaotic mode that only a master of comedy could create.

Five people are invited to dine at a first-rate restaurant in Paris. They do not know who the other guests will be or why they have been invited. Tossed together in a private dining room, they have a sneaking suspicion

that this unorthodox dinner party will forever change their lives.

Neil Simon (1927-2018) was an American playwright and screenwriter. He wrote more than 30 plays and received more combined Oscar and Tony nominations than any other writer.

He was one of the most reliable hitmakers in Broadway history, as well as one of the most performed playwrights in the world. Though primarily a comic writer, some of his plays, particularly the “Eugene Trilogy” and “The Sunshine Boys,” reflect on the twentieth century Jewish-American experience.

The play will remain on stage until April 19 at Shahrzad Theater Complex located at No. 74, Neauphle-le-Château St., Hafez St.

Cartoon of Day



Trump And World Peace
Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria

Three Iranian short films to vie at Fribourg International Film Festival

TEHRAN-Three short films from Iran will compete in the 39th Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF), set to be held from March 21 to 30 in Fribourg, Switzerland.

The three Iranian films include “Holy Heaviness” codirected by Farnoosh Abedi and Negah Fardiar, “Farewell Paris” by Mohammad Ebrahim Shahbazi, and “My Endless Eclipse” by Bijan Aarabi. They will be screened in the International Competition section of the Swiss event, Honaronline reported.

A production of 2025, the eight-minute “Holy Heaviness” is an animation with no dialogue. It will have its world premiere at the festival.

It is a fact of life that love evolves, and relationships change. Using caricatures, this animated film captures resilience as an inevitable response to dependency. A tender yet meaningful take on life’s stages and ages.

“Farewell Paris” is a 19-minute fiction film made in 2024. It will have its international premiere at the event. Mohammad Rasoul Safari, Morteza Ghadiri, Azin Fahimi, and Setin Khanmohammadi are in the cast.

Under the tender gaze of his father, a teenager with Down’s syndrome longs to visit Paris. The “City of Light” has always held a strong attraction for him, and he is ready to do anything to make his dream come true.

Running for 14 minutes, “My Endless Eclipse” is a fiction film produced in 2025. It will have its world premiere at the festival. The cast includes Farnoush Peyvandi, Ruhollah Mehrabi, Adel Sadodin, and Ali Najmodin.

A woman is forced to hide her real identity if she is to survive. On the verge of being forced



into marriage, she goes on the run and is forced to cross a hostile world populated by unsettling people.

Fribourg International Film Festival is an annual film festival in Fribourg, Switzerland. It is focused on selected films from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Grand Prize is the main award of the Fribourg International Film Festival.

It aims to promote the understanding between cultures through films. It gives preferences to productions that stimulate reflection and provoke discussion. The festival shines

a light on blind spots, reveals new talents and put the history of cinema in context with exclusive approaches.

The festival takes place every year in March and takes part in projects all year long. FIFF is one of the five most important film festivals of Switzerland. As a national reference in diversity, it can pride itself on an exquisite reputation on the national and international levels. Its atmosphere, its warmth and its simplicity make FIFF a meeting point that both the audience and professionals appreciate a lot.

On the verge of being forced

Resistance Film Festival delegation arrives in Baghdad for cultural exchange

TEHRAN- A delegation from the 18th edition of the Resistance International Film Festival, led by Mohammad Ali Shojaei Fard, the deputy secretary of the festival, arrived in Baghdad on Saturday with a mission to enhance cultural and artistic exchanges between Iran and Iraq.

This visit marks the first international event of the festival in Iraq, which will run until Wednesday.

According to a statement from the public relations office of the International Resistance Film Festival, the delegation’s primary focus is to strengthen collaborative efforts in cinema and media. This initiative aligns with the Basirah Institute of Iraq for the joint organization of various cultural events.

On the inaugural day of the visit, officials from the Resistance Film Festival engaged in fruitful discussions with the leadership of the Basirah Institute, exploring the media organization’s capabilities and exchanging ideas for future collaborations.

Key agreements have been reached with the Basirah Institute, including plans for the joint production of a short film addressing significant themes such as the struggle against ISIS, Arbaeen walk, and the fight against tyranny and Zionism.

Additional initiatives include cooperation on organizing Resistance Festival events in Iraq, co-producing cinematic works—particularly the second part of the Iranian director Hamid Zargamejad’s film “North from South West” at Camp Ashraf—conducting cinema training courses, and offering programs in artificial intelligence.

Esrafil Kaliji, the executive director of the event and head of the international committee of the Resistance Film Festival, outlined the agenda for the delegation’s meetings, which include discussions with Iraq’s Deputy Minister of Culture, Mohand Alaqaabi, interactions with the Hashd al-Shaabi media head, and visits to cultural and cinematic venues, including cinemas in the Jadriya and Harithiya shopping districts.

The delegation will also meet with Muzaad Asadi from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Baghdad.

The head of the international committee of the Resistance Film Festival underscored that this visit, alongside the hosting of joint events, highlights the commitment of both the International Resistance Film Festival and the Basirah Institute to foster cultural and artistic cooperation between Iran and Iraq while promoting the art of resistance across the region.

Kaliji noted that the culmination of this visit will align with the inaugural Basirah Cinema and Theater Festival, where the film “North from South West” will be screened.

This film, making its debut in Iraq, has received nominations in 13 categories at the 43rd Fajr Film Festival, receiving three awards for best director, best actor and best cinematographer.

The film tells the story of Iraq’s strategy during the war with Iran (1980-1988), as it plots to smuggle a truck filled with explosives across the border and detonate it in a sensitive area in northern Iran.

As the plan unfolds, Iranian intelligence becomes aware of the operation and begins monitoring the truck. However, the situation takes an unexpected turn when the truck mysteriously vanishes in one of the northern provinces of the country, setting

off a tense chase and a race against time to prevent a disaster.

The 18th Resistance International Film Festival will be held from May 17 to 24 in Iran.

The closing ceremony, slated for May 24, coincides with the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr.

The Association of the Revolution and Sacred Defense Cinema and the Revayat Foundation organize Resistance International Film Festival annually.

The 18th International Resistance Film Festival is a vital platform for the promotion and dissemination of cinematic works that embody the spirit of resistance against injustice, oppression, and inequality.

This year’s festival promises to be an unforgettable experience, as it seeks to honor the principles of resistance and promote the freedom of thought and expression.



the 18th Resistance International Film Festival

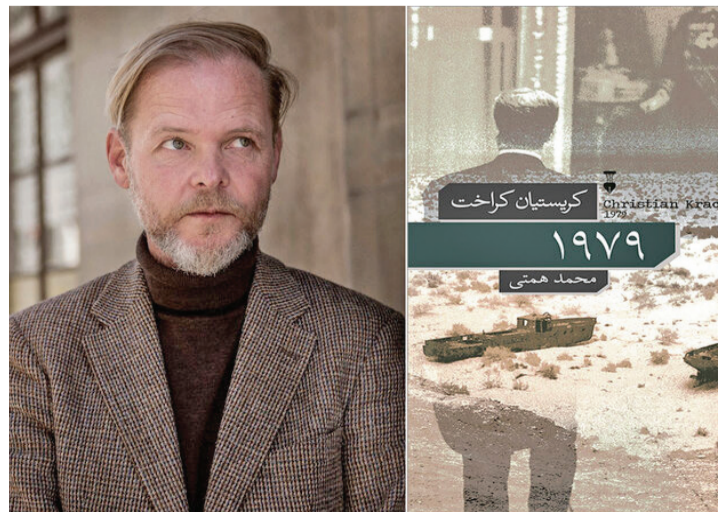
Christian Kracht’s “1979” published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the 2001 novel “1979” by the Swiss writer Christian Kracht has been released in the Iranian book market.

Mohammad Hemmati has translated the book and Nashr-e Now (Now Publication) has brought it out, Mehr reported.

It is set in 1979 and tells the story of an unnamed young man who gets caught up in political turmoil in Iran and China.

The protagonist is a young man who travels to Tehran with his friend Christopher. It is the time of the Iranian Revolution, and as Christopher dies, the full revolution breaks out. The protagonist is convinced to travel to Tibet to climb the sacred Mount Kailash, only to be captured by the Chinese army.



He spends time in an internment camp where he is indoctrinated and goes along with the survival techniques the

prisoners develop. Throughout the story, the man is largely unaffected by the events around him and pays more attention to art, music, food and furnishings.

This novel also deals with alienation and a chiefly Western form of consumer existence, but it depicts the fragility of an apparently decadent Western-metropolitan value system and its powerlessness before the Eastern-totalitarian model of Maoism.

The protagonists of Kracht’s fiction embark on journeys that take them in search of an elusive moment of immersive, utopian experience or spiritual enlightenment often located in a different nation or culture. Their journey usually, but not always, results in disappointment, failure or even death.

Christian Kracht, 58, is a Swiss writer and journalist. His books have been translated into more than 30 languages.