



Trump Breaks Character as He Strikes Yemen, Threatens Iran

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KAP

Power and persistence: The shifting dynamics of West Asia in the Trump era

By Batool Subeiti

LONDON - The future direction of West Asia remains uncertain, but one fundamental principle holds: power determines survival. Those who lack strength—whoever they may be—will not endure, including the Israeli occupation. Meanwhile, the strong will consolidate their position.

This is the key understanding: power provides the opportunity for consolidation.

Any actor that disregards Trump and proves that the region does not belong to America will assert itself, prompting a Trumpian response of withdrawal. Trump does not see the region as strategically vital. He promotes the worst-case solutions to achieve maximum compromises, but when faced with resistance, he retreats.

The primary goal behind attacking Yemen was to send a message to Iran. However, Yemen's response will reinforce a critical lesson: force alone will not break its resolve. The same applies to Iran—Trump's threats during negotiations have not forced it to yield. Even when Trump ordered the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, he pleaded with Iran not to retaliate. Now, his rhetoric toward Iran remains hollow.

Yemen targets USS Harry Truman Aircraft Carrier

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Yemeni Armed Forces have announced that they successfully targeted an American aircraft carrier for the second time within just a few hours.

In a televised statement, military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree confirmed that Yemeni forces had targeted the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Harry Truman for the second time in 24 hours in the northern Red Sea.

The attack involved 18 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones in an engagement that lasted several hours.

The statement also mentioned that they successfully foiled a planned hostile attack against Yemen.

According to the statement, enemy warplanes were forced to return to their bases after Yemeni forces launched missiles and drones at the aircraft carrier and its accompanying warships.

Saree stated that the operation was part of the Yemeni Armed Forces response to the ongoing U.S. aggression.

He also stated that the attack was part of what Saree described as a struggle against tyranny and arrogance.

Washington's open interference in selecting Lebanon's central banker

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - In continuation of the recent U.S.-led Israeli military attacks on Lebanon and following the election of Joseph Aoun as President of the Republic and the appointment of Nawaf Salam as Prime Minister, American pressure on Lebanon is escalating in an attempt to "undermine" the influence of Hezbollah and its allies.

One of the most prominent manifestations of American tutelage is the blatant interference in deciding on security, military, judicial, and financial posts.

The Lebanese financial sector has long been subject to U.S. pressure; talk of U.S. interference in the selection of the new governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon is not new.

In light of official submission to Washington's interference in every detail of Lebanon's political affairs, Reuters quoted five informed sources as saying that the United States has begun interfering in the Lebanese government's consultations regarding the selection of the next central banker "in a bid to curtail corruption and illicit financing for Hezbollah through Lebanon's banking system."

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Pezeshkian meets senior military commanders to discuss defense, security

TEHRAN - In a significant engagement with the country's military leadership, President Masoud Pezeshkian visited the Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics on Sunday evening, where he held discussions with high-ranking commanders of Iran's Armed Forces.

During the meeting, President Pezeshkian expressed his deep appreciation for the dedication and sacrifices of Iran's Armed Forces.

The discussions covered a range of strategic and operational issues, including national defense policies, regional security dynamics, and ways to further enhance the country's military capabilities. The president and the senior commanders exchanged views on strengthening Iran's defense posture in light of evolving security threats and the necessity of maintaining a state of readiness.

Expect a 'decisive and definite' retaliation: Iran responds to Trump's latest threats

TEHRAN - Tehran has stated that any act of aggression will be met with a "decisive and definite" response, according to Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, as the United States continues to threaten the Islamic Republic over its ties with Resistance groups including Yemen.

The U.S. military recently conducted operations in Yemen, marking the first such actions since President Trump assumed office in January. These strikes, carried out on Saturday night and targeting Sana'a and numerous other provinces, tragically led to the deaths of at least 53 individuals, predominantly women and children, and left 101 others wounded.

"We will respond decisively to any threats to Iran's territorial integrity, national security, or interests—this is indisputable," said Esmail Baqaei during his weekly press briefing on Monday. ▶ Page 2

A look at the history of Iran's efforts for the nationalization of its oil

TEHRAN - Soon after oil was discovered in Iran in 1908 as the first country in the region, colonial powers, particularly Britain and later the United States sought to bring the Iranian national wealth under their control, depriving the impoverished nation of its revenues.

In the absence of a powerful Iranian government during both Qajar and the successor Pahlavi dynasties, the British colonial power used force and abused the weakness of the Iranian state to coerce it into making concessions which allowed foreign companies to control oil extraction and sale. The nationalization of the oil industry was the response to such colonialism. Different weak Iranian monarchs made concessions to colonial powers.

D'Arcy Concession

In 1901, William Knox D'Arcy, a British investor backed by the British government, reached a sixty-year agreement with Mozzafar al-Din Shah of Iran to exploit Iran's potential oil resources. Six years later, in 1907, his exploration efforts paid off and oil was discovered in Masjedsoleyman in the southwestern province of Khuzestan for the first time in the West Asia and southern Persian Gulf regions. Within two years, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was established to produce and bring Iranian oil to world markets. ▶ Page 2

Nowruz in Tehran embraces tranquility amidst urban splendor

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - As Nowruz approaches, Tehran's hustle and bustle gives way to serene tranquility, offering visitors a unique perspective on the Iranian capital.

Gone are the days of stop-and-go traffic, choking air pollution, and overcrowded streets, the overall atmosphere is replaced by almost clean air with a delicate scent of blooming flowers.

The two-week Nowruz holidays, which officially start on March 19, offer travelers a captivating journey through Tehran's rich history and culture when most businesses and schools close their doors. ▶ Page 6



Imam Reza shrine hosts pilgrims for Iftar

People are breaking their fast at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in the city of Mashhad.

Historical documents indicate that the oldest known Iftar meal was served at the holy shrine 335 years ago.

Ramadan is a time for practicing humility, patience, simplicity, empathy, and acceptance when things don't go their way. It's also a time to make stronger bonds of fellowship.

Muslims observe religious fast from dawn (fajr) to sunset (maghrib) and pray more than usual and with even more intensity to get closer to God. Ramadan is traditionally a time of great hospitality and generosity.

China, Russia, and Iran strengthen their strategic axis in the face of U.S. pressure



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – Iran, China, and Russia held a trilateral meeting in Beijing this Saturday to discuss regional issues and strengthen their strategic cooperation. At the end of the meeting, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for the lifting of "illegal and unilateral" sanctions imposed on Iran, directly challenging Washington's pressure strategy.

The meeting took place amid renewed tensions between the United States and Iran, with the White House seeking to revive a new nuclear agreement with Tehran. In a move that reinforces its role as a global mediator, Beijing expressed its willingness to facilitate dialogue between Iran, Russia, and the United States, emphasizing the need for negotiations based on mutual respect. "Diplomatic dialogue remains the only effective way to resolve differences," said Ma Zhaxu, China's Deputy Foreign Minister, at a press conference following the meeting.

The meeting was attended by the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and Russia, Kazem Gharibabadi and Sergey Ryabkov. In a joint statement, the three countries called for "abandoning pressure based on sanctions, threats, and the use of force," and defended the need for political solutions addressing the root causes of current tensions. Both China and Russia supported Iran, highlighting its "insistence on the peaceful nature of its nuclear program" and its "full compliance" with the commitments set forth in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Tehran and Moscow, for their part, praised China's "constructive role" and its "hospitality in hosting the meeting in Beijing." The three countries reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining regular consultations and strengthening cooperation in various areas. Although Iran's nuclear program and sanctions were central to the agenda, the joint statement emphasized that other regional and international issues were also addressed.

The trilateral meeting came just days after a closed-door session at the UN Security Council on Iran's nuclear program, convened at the request of several Western powers.

The three countries stressed the need to respect UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which sets deadlines and commitments concerning Iran's nuclear program. They also reaffirmed the importance of the NPT as a pillar of the international non-proliferation regime. Beijing and Moscow welcomed Iran's position that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only and called for avoiding actions that hinder the IAEA's work. In the statement, they reiterated Iran's right, as a member of the NPT, to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The trilateral meeting coincided with joint military exercises by Iran, China, and Russia in the Gulf of Oman, signaling the growing willingness of the three countries to deepen their strategic cooperation in various fields. While Donald Trump reignites his "maximum pressure" policy against Iran following his return to the White House, Tehran is strengthening its alliances with its eastern partners.

The rapprochement between China, Iran, and Russia has solidified a strategic axis with the potential to challenge the dominant position of the United States in the region. This new alliance, founded on shared interests in nuclear, economic, and security matters, not only reflects a shift in global geopolitical dynamics but also points to closer coordination among the three powers in response to Washington's foreign policy.

In recent years, Beijing, Moscow, and Tehran have consolidated their cooperation across various fronts: economic, military, and political. Their relations with the West, particularly with

Washington, have fluctuated between rivalry and open conflict. However, the three countries have found common ground in their rejection of U.S. hegemony and their commitment to a multipolar world, free from unilateral actions by the United States.

One of the main tools of this strategy has been territorial rejection, a form of soft balancing aimed at reducing or eliminating the military presence of a foreign power in a specific region. This tactic became evident during the Syrian war, when Iran, China, and Russia opposed any military intervention or regime change attempts in Damascus. Their support for President Bashar al-Assad, at a time when Washington was pressuring for his departure, not only weakened U.S. influence in West Asia but also strengthened the cooperation axis between the three powers.

Beyond Syria, this pattern of strategic coordination has been replicated in Afghanistan after the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021. Since then, Beijing, Moscow, and Tehran have held multiple meetings on the situation in the country, reinforcing the idea of a power triangle capable of countering U.S. influence in Central Asia.

The economic domain has also been a key pillar of this alliance. During the "maximum pressure" campaign by the Trump administration, which reinstated sanctions against Iran after the U.S. pulled out of the nuclear deal (JCPOA), China and Russia expanded their cooperation with Tehran in key sectors such as energy, infrastructure, mining, and agriculture. These agreements not only alleviated the impact of the sanctions imposed by Washington but also limited their effectiveness, openly challenging the sanctions regime.

To reduce their vulnerability to U.S. economic measures, the three countries have intensified their efforts to abandon the dollar in their trade exchanges. Since 2018, the use of national currencies has gained ground in their bilateral transactions, covering a significant portion of trade between Iran and its two main partners. This strategy not only mitigates the impact of sanctions but also erodes the supremacy of the dollar and Washington's attempts to isolate Tehran.

The strengthening of economic cooperation between China, Russia, and Iran has also extended to the technological sector. In an era of increasing competition in the digital sector, Iran and Russia have intensified their collaboration with China in developing telecommunications networks, integrating into Beijing's 5G infrastructure. In direct defiance of Washington's warnings about the security risks posed by Chinese companies, Tehran and Moscow have removed U.S.-made components from their networks, opting instead for Chinese technology.

This collaboration not only strengthens the technological independence of the three countries but also consolidates their strategy of resistance to U.S. pressure. As their cooperation expands, the trilateral axis seeks to consolidate its influence in strategic sectors such as finance, energy, and defense.

The analysis of the joint initiatives between China, Russia, and Iran since 2018 reveals a coordinated attempt to build an alternative to the U.S.-dominated global order. Through diplomacy in multilateral forums, territorial rejection, and economic cooperation, these three powers have sought to counteract Washington's unilateral decisions.

Joint military exercises and moderate armament development have complemented this strategy, although not to a degree that suggests a transition toward a more aggressive military balance. However, the conflict in Ukraine and rising tensions in the Asia-Pacific region could accelerate this evolution, shaping a scenario where the Beijing-Moscow-Tehran axis becomes a structural challenge to U.S. hegemony in Eurasia.

Expect a 'decisive and definite' retaliation: Iran responds to Trump's latest threats

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These strikes, carried out on Saturday night and targeting Sana'a and numerous other provinces, tragically led to the deaths of at least 53 individuals, predominantly women and children, and left 101 others wounded.

"We will respond decisively to any threats to Iran's territorial integrity, national security, or interests—this is indisputable," said Esmail Baqaei during his weekly press briefing on Monday.

In a statement, President Trump claimed that Iran is "fully accountable" for its support of Yemen's Ansarullah Resistance movement and demanded an immediate end to such backing.

He warned that Washington would hold Tehran entirely responsible.

Baqaei emphasized that the



Yemeni government and people independently decide their actions to support the legitimate Palestinian resistance.

He also condemned the U.S. strikes on Yemen, calling them a violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

The Iranian official urged the international community, Islamic nations, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to respond swiftly to the U.S. attacks. Regional Muslim states have yet to react to the illegal and potentially destabilizing attacks.

Trump's letter

Addressing questions about a letter from Trump, Baqaei pointed out the contradictory signals coming from Washington.

"While expressing willingness to negotiate, the U.S. has simul-

taneously imposed extensive sanctions on various Iranian sectors," he said, referencing recent sanctions on Iran's Oil Minister and certain vessels tied to crude oil exports.

Baqaei noted the U.S.'s inconsistency over the last decade, accusing it of using negotiations as a political tactic rather than a genuine effort to resolve disputes.

Iran has no intention to disclose the contents of Trump's letter at this time but will address it through appropriate channels following thorough reviews, he added.

The diplomat dismissed links between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's brief visit to Oman and the U.S. letter, stressing the need for regional nations to hold serious discussions given

the rapid developments in the area.

Baqaei also criticized the Trump administration's proposed travel restrictions targeting citizens of predominantly Muslim countries, calling them manifestations of racism and discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, and nationality.

He described the travel ban on Iranian nationals as evidence of hostility toward Iran and part of broader U.S. pressure tactics.

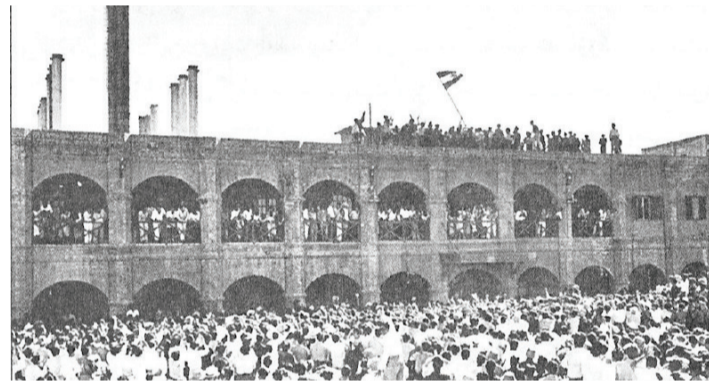
Israel is benefiting from HTS attacks

When questioned about the military tensions between Lebanon and the new rulers in Syria, Baqaei expressed deep regret over such conflicts occurring among regional neighbors in light of recent developments.

"The only party benefiting from these events is the Zionist regime, whose sole aim is to fragment Syria and undermine neighboring and regional nations," the Iranian spokesperson stated.

He voiced optimism that Syria's ruling Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) regime would handle the situation appropriately to avoid similar incidents in the future.

A look at the history of Iran's efforts toward the nationalization of its oil



Citizens raise the flag of Iran at the General Office of the AIOC in Tehran on June 20, 1951

TEHRAN – Soon after oil was discovered in Iran in 1908 as the first country in the region, colonial powers, particularly Britain and later the United States sought to bring the Iranian national wealth under their control, depriving the impoverished nation of its revenues.

Oil was discovered for the first time in Iran in 1908. Soon after that, the Brits began exploiting it

In the absence of a powerful Iranian government during both Qajar and the successor Pahlavi dynasties, the British colonial power used force and abused the weakness of the Iranian state to coerce it into making concessions which allowed foreign companies to control oil extraction and sale.

The nationalization of the oil industry was the response to such colonialism. Different weak Iranian monarchs made concessions to colonial powers.

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sian Oil Company was established to produce and bring Iranian oil to world markets.

After the first Pahlavi king, Reza Shah rose to power with the full support of the British Empire, who helped him to stabilize the country in line with its colonial goals, he began to undo what his Qajar predecessors did.

One of Reza Shah's actions was to cancel the 1932 D'Arcy Concession. But his 1933 oil concession was not much in Iran's favor.

Iran's 1933 Oil Concession

The Iranians at the time of Reza Shah were opposed to the D'Arcy Concession as they looked for their inalienable rights and the increasing Iran's share of oil revenues. By contrast, Britain sought to maximize their gains and extend its full control over the natural Iranian resources. The Brits also intended to get a stronger agreement, which had to be ratified in the Iranian parliament in order not to have the weaknesses of the previous concession.

The new 1933 agreement extended the concession for another sixty years, sparking outrage among Iranians who eventually moved towards the 1951 nationalization. After the ratification of the 1933 agreement, an amount of pound sterling was deposited into Reza Shah's account at Lloyd's Bank in London, while the small amount of money as Iran's share in the agreement was spent by Reza Shah and his inner circle as they wished. In the meantime, the British were engaged in a rivalry with the Russians over gaining control over the Iranians' wealth.

Formation of the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry movement

The movement to nationalize

the oil industry was a reaction by the Iranians to concessions made by both Qajar and Pahlavi Shahs to foreign powers. The movement was originated in the parliament.

The movement was led by lawmaker Mohammad Mosaddegh, who later became prime minister.

The British and Soviet troops invaded Iran in 1941, toppled Reza Shah, and occupied the country. The British removed Reza Shah and sent him into exile while Iran remained under Allied occupation until 1946.

When the young Mohammad Reza replaced his father as the new Pahlavi king, the anti-colonial oil nationalization movement had become too strong to suppress.

In the meantime, the senior cleric Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Kashani was leading a powerful popular movement outside the parliament against foreign interference in the country's affairs.



Anyway, the weakness of Mohammad Reza Shah's regime benefitted the movement in the period after World War II. Different political groups emerged and the oil movement gradually got more and more powerful.

As time passed, the United States joined the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union to gain control of the Iranian oil industry.

The religious movement led by Ayatollah Kashani and the National Front headed by Mosaddegh, who were both MPs from the capital Tehran constituency at the 16th parliament, were strongly in favor of nationalizing the oil industry in the parliament.

Ayatollah Kashani's house had already become a center for popular gatherings and opponents of the Shah-appointed prime minis-

ters Abdolhossein Hazhir (1948), Ali Mansour (1950), and Haj Ali Razmara (1951) governments.

After Prime Minister Razmara was assassinated by a member of the religious movement Fada'iyan-e Islam, the 16th parliament led the process of approving the legislation to nationalize the oil industry and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).

Finally, on March 15, 1951, the legislation was approved and it was verified by the parliament two days later on March 17.

Mohammad Reza Shah reverses course on nationalization of oil industry

After the piece of legislation to nationalize the oil industry was passed, the next month in April, Mosaddegh was introduced as prime minister by Shah Pahlavi under immense pressure from the parliament. Consequently, he

served as the 35th Iranian prime minister from 1951 to 1953.

The young Shah along with the UK and the U.S. could not stand the nationalization of the oil industry and the democratically-elected Mosaddegh.

For that, they overthrew his government in the 1953 coup d'état which was orchestrated by the intelligence agencies of the United Kingdom (MI6) and the United States (CIA).

In the aftermath of the coup, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi could reassert his autocratic control and negotiated the 1954 Consortium Agreement with the British, which returned the ownership of Iranian oil to a consortium of Western companies until 1979, the year the Islamic Revolution became victorious.

Trump breaks character as he strikes Yemen, threatens Iran

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The United States renewed strikes against Yemen on Saturday, marking an opening salvo of assaults under President Donald Trump who had said in his inaugural address that contrary to his predecessor Joe Biden, he would act as a “peace-maker”.

The strikes which continued on a smaller scale on Sunday and Monday killed dozens of Yemeni civilians including women and children. The U.S. said it had hit missile and drone systems, air defenses, and radars, but footage so far only shows American bombs raining down on residential complexes.

Yemeni armed forces began targeting Israeli-owned and Israeli-bound ships in the Red Sea in 2023, following the start of Israel’s genocidal war in Gaza. The Ansarullah movement, which has been governing much of Yemen since a revolution ousted the Western-backed president Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in 2015, stated the attacks were in solidarity with Gazans who were being denied food, water, and medication.

No Israeli ship has been able to pass through the Red Sea in the past 19 months, except for a brief period following a ceasefire in Gaza in November.

The Ansarullah announced last week that it will once again begin targeting Israeli vessels if the regime continues to violate the pact and withhold humanitarian aid from the starving and ailing population of the Palestinian enclave. This ultimatum has now passed, with reports indicating that food has not been allowed into Gaza yet.

The latest wave of American airstrikes appears to be a response to Yemen’s renewed pres-



sure on Israeli ships. In a message on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump said that Yemenis were being hit because they had killed American troops and their allies. He also said that he would continue to bomb the country “indefinitely” until it ceases its Red Sea operations.

Trump did not comment on Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip, nor did he seem to consider that allowing humanitarian aid to flow into the enclave would be significantly less burdensome for American taxpayers than deploying costly weapons to attack Yemen.

During his recent presidential campaign, the former businessman said he would put the working class in America first and refrain from wasting their tax money.

Millions of Yemenis took to the streets across the Arab country on Monday, saying they will continue to back Palestinians no matter what. “We are not scared of bombs and missiles. This is nothing new.

What we care about is our dignity,” said one civilian. “We are not like other Arabs. I would rather die with our Palestinian brothers and sisters than live a comfortable life while they are getting

brutally killed.”

The large-scale demonstrations were a sign that fresh assaults have not demoralized Yemen. Analysts say such moves are also unlikely to be able to pare down its military capabilities. Biden carried out numerous rounds of attacks against the Arab country with the help of Britain when he was in office, however, Ansarullah only ramped up its operations, gradually moving towards hitting highly protected Israeli positions inside the occupied territories too.

Alleged willingness for diplomacy with Iran fades

In a post on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump said he would hold Iran responsible for any Yemeni attacks on American interests. “Every shot fired by the Houthis [Ansarullah] will be looked upon, from this point forward, as being a shot fired from the weapons and leadership of Iran, and Iran will be held responsible, and suffer the consequences, and those consequences will be dire!” he wrote on Monday.

The president claimed all of the Arab country’s operations are led by Iran, an assertion he provided no evidence for. Iran has said numerous times that it maintains a close relationship with all Re-

sistance forces in West Asia, but it does not hold authority over them.

While the United States routinely accuses Iran whenever it faces attacks from Resistance forces – groups that arose over the years in response to U.S. occupation and interventionism – Trump’s recent set of accusations and subsequent threats carry increased significance. Before his Monday outburst, the president’s efforts and public statements had been focused on putting the fallout of escalating tensions with Iran on the country’s leadership, alleging that they seek war while he prefers diplomacy.

Trump has been asking that Iran sign a new nuclear deal with him and disregard the international one he withdrew Washington from in 2018. Iranian officials maintain they distrust the U.S., believing negotiations would be futile and even detrimental to Tehran.

In his most recent posturing as an avid fan of diplomacy, the president sent a letter to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, via a visiting UAE diplomat, announcing its existence publicly even before Tehran had received it.

Reports suggest Iran may be preparing a response for Trump. But the president apparently could not wait for the response to be delivered before he would let his true colors show.

“Trump came to power this January promising peace and an end to America’s wars. However, only two months later, he ordered attacks on Yemen and is now threatening to attack Iran,” said Amir Ali Abolfath, an expert on American affairs. “No matter who becomes president of the United States, war is in the DNA of U.S. foreign policy.”

Iran’s nuclear program: double standards of Western pressure

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – The discussion regarding Iran’s nuclear program is once more at the forefront of U.S. foreign policy talks, with a recent article from the Wall Street Journal advocating for the total nuclear disarmament of Iran.

The piece, entitled “The Art of the Nuclear Deal With Iran,” cites a report from Foundation for Defense of Democracies and contends that Iran needs to completely eliminate its nuclear infrastructure, likening the scenario to South Africa’s voluntary disarmament in 1990 and Libya’s renunciation of its nuclear goals in 2003. It implies that only significant pressure—via sanctions, military intimidation, and economic exclusion—can compel Iran to adhere.

However, this storyline is fundamentally problematic. It overlooks the historical background of Iran’s nuclear initiative, the double standards of U.S. and Israeli actions, and the repercussions of previous Western interference in West Asia. For genuine diplomacy, Washington should shift from coercion to a fair and respectful method of negotiation.

Hypocrisy of nuclear disarmament demands

One of the report’s central arguments is that Iran should follow the example of South Africa and Libya. But these comparisons do not hold up. South Africa abolished its nuclear program as part of a peaceful shift away from apartheid, and not due to external pressure. Libya, in contrast, gave up its nuclear goals following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003—a decision that ultimately failed to shield the Lib-

yan regime from Western intervention. Iran is fully cognizant of this history and sees no reason to think that unilateral disarmament would result in security or stability.

Furthermore, the expectation for Iran to give up its nuclear program is a clear double standard. Iran is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has consistently permitted inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Conversely, Israel, which has nuclear weapons, has never signed the NPT and does not permit international inspections of its nuclear sites. However, there is no demand for Israel to surrender its weapons. If the aim were genuinely non-proliferation, Washington and its partners would enforce the same standards for all parties, not solely for those they consider rivals.

The article depicts Iran as a country that uses negotiations to gain more time for its nuclear program. However, history reveals an alternate narrative. The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was a significant agreement that imposed stringent restrictions on Iran’s nuclear operations in return for the easing of sanctions. Iran adhered to the agreement, as verified by the IAEA on several occasions. In 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the agreement unilaterally and reinstated sanctions, even though Iran fully complied. This action shattered the last remnants of confidence in U.S. diplomatic efforts.

After the U.S. withdrawal, Iran initially continued to abide by the JCPOA’s terms, hoping that European countries would uphold their end of the deal. Only after



it became clear that Washington’s sanctions would remain in place did Iran gradually reduce its commitments. The idea that Iran is the party responsible for breaking agreements is a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts.

Now, the very voices that challenged the JCPOA are advocating for a new agreement—one that demands Iran to completely eliminate its nuclear infrastructure while providing scant or no concessions in exchange.

Sanctions as tools of economic warfare, not diplomacy

A central point made in the article is that Iran has a fragile economy and that heightened sanctions will compel the government to surrender. This is the identical approach the U.S. has employed for years, and it has repeatedly proven unsuccessful. Although sanctions have certainly impacted everyday Iranians, they have not caused the government to fall or compelled Iran to give up its nuclear program. Conversely, they have

merely intensified suspicion and prompted Iran to pursue different economic allies, like China and Russia.

The assertion that Iran’s economy is about to collapse is likewise deceptive. Despite enduring years of economic strain, Iran has adjusted by enhancing its domestic industries and creating new trade alliances. The belief that Iran will ultimately be subdued overlooks the nation’s resilience and the fact that economic warfare frequently fortifies, rather than diminishes, national resistance.

Additionally, sanctions primarily impact civilians while having minimal effect on altering government policies. Iranian households face challenges due to inflation, shortages of medicine, and various difficulties, all while the government remains operational. If the U.S. genuinely aimed to assist the Iranian people, it would participate in sincere negotiations instead of resorting to economic suffocation.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Tractor return top of PGPL

TEHRAN – Tractor football team edged past Gol Gohar 2-1 Sunday night to return top of the 2024/25 Iran’s Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL).

In the match held in Tabriz’s Yadegar Stadium, Alireza Kazemi gave the visiting team a lead just two minutes into the match but Abolfazl Razaghpour scored an own goal in the 24th minute.

Tractor put Gol Gohar under pressure and Mehdi Hashemnejad scored the winner six minutes into the second half.

Earlier in the day, Zob Ahan and Esteghlal shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw in Isfahan’s Fooladshahr Stadium.

Mohsen Azarbad was on target for Zob Ahan two minutes into second half and with six minutes remaining, Ramin Rezaeian equalized the match.

Tractor returned top with 48 points, one point above Persepolis, and one game in hand.

Iran to participate at 2025 SAT Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Thailand, Iran, Kuwait, and Russia have been confirmed as the participants at next month’s 2025 SAT Futsal Championship.

The tournament is slated for 9-12 April at the Terminal Hall, Terminal 21 Shopping Mall in Nakhon Ratchasima.

Iran will take on Russia on April 9, Kuwait a day later, and Thailand on April 12.

Vahid Shamsaei has invited 20 players to the training camp for the tournament.

Iran has recently competed at Copa Intercontinental de Selecoes.

Team Melli lost to host Brazil twice (5-2 and 3-0) and defeated Greenland 11-2 and Afghanistan 4-3.

Antonio Cassano: Taremi not good enough for Inter

TEHRAN – Former Inter Milan forward Antonio Cassano feels that striker Mehdi Taremi is not good enough for the Nerazzurri.

The former Italian international criticized Taremi on the Viva El Vutbol podcast, via FCInterNews. He argued the Iranian will be sold this summer, and that Marko Arnautovic is the main backup striker at Inter.

Taremi joined Inter Milan last summer. He arrived on a free transfer after his contract with Porto expired.

There were big expectations for Taremi, despite the fact that he signed without a transfer fee.

And in the Iranian’s first couple months as an Inter player, there were certainly positive signs.

However, Taremi has never really managed to leave his mark.

There have been some solid enough performances in front of holdup play. But the 32-year-old has not looked sharp in front of goal, and has very rarely managed to find the back of the net.

Taremi started for Inter Milan Tuesday’s Champions League round of sixteen second leg against Feyenoord.

In that match, Cassano argued that “Inter played on autopilot, at 30%.”

“I’ve been saying right from the start that I’m not crazy about him,” the former striker said. “I think that for next season, they’ll sell him.”

“And they’ll also get a bit of a capital gain,” Cassano said. Taremi did arrive on a free transfer, so any transfer fee would be a profit in that respect.

“Because he’s not a player good enough for a top team. It was a transfer opportunity. A smart signing,” Cassano further argued.

But the former Italy international argued that “The real first choice backup in attack af-

ter Thuram and Lautaro is Arnautovic.”

Antonio Cassano called Arnautovic “a real player, who I like a lot.”

Iran’s Hazfi Cup quarterfinals date revealed

TEHRAN – The kick-off time for the 2024/25 Iran’s Hazfi Cup quarterfinals has been confirmed.

Nassaji Ghaemshahr will host Gol Gohar in Ghaemshahr’s Vatani Stadium on April 25.

On April 26, Malavan will host holders Sepahan in Bandar Anzali’s Ghayeghran Stadium.

Esteghlal, the most decorated team in Hazfi Cup, will play Paykan in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium.

And Sanat Naft will face Shahrdari Noshahr in Abadan’s Takhti Stadium.

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

Iran sitting volleyball: A rising power in Paralympic sports

TEHRAN – The Iran sitting volleyball team have gained international recognition for their exceptional performance in recent years. Under the leadership of coach Hadi Rezaei, the team have become a formidable force in the sport, achieving success in various international tournaments, including the Paralympic Games.

The Journey of Morteza Mehrzad

Morteza Mehrzad, a key figure in Iran’s sitting volleyball scene, is known for his remarkable contributions. Standing at 2.46 meters (8 feet 1 inch), he is renowned not only for his height but also for his skill and strategic understanding of the game. Mehrzad’s journey began as a player, where he showcased his talents at a national level and he has continued to inspire and lead the next generation of athletes.

The Team’s Achievements

Under Rezaei’s guidance, the Iran sitting volleyball team have achieved significant milestones. The team won the gold medal at the 2024 Paralympics, defeating the Bosnia and Herzegovina in a thrilling final.

Moreover, the team have consistently performed well in World Championships and other continental competitions, showcasing their skills and teamwork.

Their success has not only elevated the profile of Iranian sitting volleyball but has also inspired many athletes with disabilities across the country.

Training and Development

The Iran sitting volleyball team emphasizes rigorous training and discipline. Under Rezaei’s leadership, the team incorporates advanced techniques and strategies while focusing on physical fitness and mental resilience. The players undergo systematic training programs aimed at enhancing their skills, teamwork, and overall performance.

Impact on Society

The achievements of the Iran sitting volleyball team have transcended sports, contributing to the visibility and acceptance of athletes with disabilities in Iranian society.

Their success has helped challenge stereotypes, encouraging greater inclusivity and participation in sports among people with disabilities.

The team’s inspiring journey has galvanized support from fans and institutions alike, fostering a culture of encouragement and hope.

Team Melli as Role Model

The Iran sitting volleyball team, guided by the exceptional leadership of Morteza Mehrzad, continue to make great strides in the world of sports.

With their impressive track record and dedication, they not only represent Iran on the international stage but also serve as role models for aspiring athletes everywhere, demonstrating the power of determination and teamwork.

Transport minister inaugurates over 180 Km of roads in West Azarbaijan

TEHRAN – Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister inaugurated 181 kilometers of roads, including main and rural routes, during his visit to West Azarbaijan Province, according to the provincial director-general of roads and urban development.

Peyman Aramoun told IRNA on Sunday that the two-day visit focused on the province's road and housing development, with key approvals and directives issued by the minister.

"Of the 181 kilometers of roads inaugurated, 120 kilometers were rural roads, 31 kilometers belonged to the Khoy-Qotur route, and 30 kilometers were main roads in other parts of the province. The total cost of these projects amounted to 16 trillion rials (\$3.2 million)," Aramoun said.

The minister also attended two meetings

on border terminal management and housing development, where measures were taken to organize border crossings and improve access to the new city of Goleman.

Aramoun also announced the inauguration of 4,980 housing units in the province during the minister's visit. Other key outcomes included an inspection of the Urmia-Tabriz freeway, directives for the construction of service roads and overpasses along the route, financial planning for the completion of a hospital in Salmas, and an order to finish a bridge on the Salmas-Khoy route within four months.

He added that the delegation also inspected the critical Eyaoghli-Free Zone gateway road in Maku, with funding allocated for its completion. "It has been decided that eight kilometers of this route will be paved by the end of April," he noted.

Iran exports \$17m worth of tea; Russia, India top destinations

TEHRAN – Iran has exported 13,000 tons of tea worth \$17 million over the past 11 months, with Russia and India as the main destinations, the head of the Iran Tea Organization said.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Habib Jahansaz stated on Sunday that Iranian tea has become a model for non-oil exports, benefiting from zero pesticide use, which

gives it a unique position in global markets.

This year, Iran produced 28,000 tons of dried tea from 22,000 hectares of tea plantations, with an estimated value of 25 trillion rials (\$50 million).

Meanwhile, Iran imported 38,000 tons of tea in the first 10 months of the year, down from 42,000 tons last year and over 100,000 tons in 2022.

Lawmakers condemn U.S. sanctions on oil minister as violation of international law

TEHRAN – Iranian lawmakers condemned U.S. sanctions on Oil Minister Masoud Paknejad, calling the move a violation of international law and a sign of Washington's failure to pressure the country's energy sector.

During a meeting with Paknejad on Sunday, March 16, Mousa Ahmadi, head of Iran's Parliament Energy Commission, said the sanctions against the oil minister disregard global legal norms, particularly as Paknejad is set to chair OPEC meetings in 2026.

Ahmadi stressed that Iran's oil industry has remained resilient despite past sanctions, adding that the departure of companies like Shell and Total had no impact on the sector's development.

Speaking at the gathering, several lawmakers voiced support for the Oil Ministry, arguing that the sanctions indicate Paknejad's success in diplomacy and energy policy.

Mohammad Bahrami, a lawmaker from Boyer-Ahmad, said sanctions create challenges but also opportunities and suggested Iran use its full potential to counter restrictions. Seyed Esmail Hosseini, a representative from Shiraz, said the sanctions prove the significance of Iran's oil sector, emphasizing parliament's strong backing for the minister. Mostafa Nakhai, an MP from Nehbandan and Sarbisheh, noted that Iran should not rely solely on oil trade, citing the Turkmenistan-to-Turkey gas swap deal as an example of diversification. Mohammad Tala Mazloumi, an MP from Behbahan, described the sanctions as futile, adding that Iran has historically turned threats into opportunities.

Iranian lawmakers also urged further efforts in energy diplomacy and investment despite restrictions, with Parliament pledging full support for the Oil Ministry's strategies.

Iran exports commodities worth \$95.3m to Kyrgyzstan in 10 months

TEHRAN- Iran exported commodities valued at \$95.322 million to Kyrgyzstan 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 put the weight of Iran's 10-month export to Kyrgyzstan at 49,400 tons.

In late January, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) emphasized the need to boost trade between Iran and Kyrgyzstan during a meeting with Kyrgyzstan's ambassador to Iran, stressing the importance of fostering connections between businesspeople and economic players from both countries, including greater participation in each other's trade exhibitions.

Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, the head of TPO, met with Kyrgyz Ambassador Turdakun Sydykov and highlighted Iran's role in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), stating that Iran has recently become an observer member of the bloc, and the free trade agreement with the EAEU has been approved by the Iranian parliament.

He noted that trade between Iran and Kyrgyzstan has the potential to increase, adding,

"Trade is a two-way street, and we seek to expand commercial exchanges with Kyrgyzstan in both exports and imports."

Dehnavi emphasized the importance of strengthening connections between business communities in both countries and encouraged more active participation in trade exhibitions. He also invited Kyrgyz traders and business representatives to take part in the Iran Expo, scheduled for spring.

Ambassador Sydykov described Iran-Kyrgyzstan relations as strong and expressed interest in taking further steps to enhance trade ties.

He also noted that Kyrgyzstan was among the first countries to welcome Iran's observer membership in the EAEU, saying that this development would undoubtedly lead to an increase in trade volume between the two nations.

Sydykov called for greater cooperation between Iran and Kyrgyzstan in leveraging trade opportunities at exhibitions and economic events.

Iran's trade volume with Kyrgyzstan in the first nine months of the Iranian calendar year 1403 (March 20–December 21, 2024) reached \$86 million in exports and \$2.0 million in imports.

Over 380 idle mines, 925 dormant industrial units reactivated across Iran

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade has reported the reactivation of 381 idle mines and the return of 925 dormant industrial units to production, alongside investment initiatives aimed at value-added industries and trade index improvements.

According to IRNA, Mohammad Atabak presented his report to the president on Sunday, March 16, 2025, highlighting structural changes within the ministry to enhance efficiency and eliminate redundancies.

"Management changes in recent years had led to inefficiencies in certain areas. However, with the formation of the 14th government, the ministry's structure has been reformed based on strategic plans to streamline operations and prevent overlapping responsibilities," Atabak said.

He cited the revival of the Steel Committee and enhanced oversight of the mining sector as key changes, emphasizing efforts to balance the steel supply chain to align with production capacities.



"We have also established the Copper Committee to ensure equilibrium across the value chain, from concentrate to cathodes," he added.

Atabak announced the delegation of some powers from the Supreme Council of Mines to provincial councils to expedite the reduction of inactive mining units.

The minister expressed optimism for Iran's copper and gold industries in the coming year, stating that value chain expansion would yield positive results.

The minister described the development of an industrial roadmap and strategy, designed in collaboration with the private sector and the ministry's planning and smart governance department, as a major achievement.

However, he pointed to financing difficulties as a major challenge for the ministry. "Despite the president's support, funding remains sluggish, which has slowed industrial expansion and project execution," he noted.

Atabak acknowledged chal-

lenges in gas and electricity supply but stressed that industrial development has continued without disruption, thanks to the new roadmap and strategy. He expressed confidence that with the implementation of a support package, production would reach an acceptable pace.

He reiterated the government's commitment to reviving dormant industrial units, stating that efforts to support inactive production facilities would continue at an accelerated rate.

Atabak highlighted pre-holiday market supervision, stating that nearly two million inspections had been conducted across retail and production sectors to ensure price stability. He added that direct supply exhibitions had also helped balance supply and demand for essential goods.

During the president's visit to the ministry and participation in the deputy ministers' council, officials presented specialized reports on the progress of various industry, mining, and trade initiatives.

Iran to expand shipping routes to West and Southwest Africa

TEHRAN – Iran plans to expand its shipping routes to West and Southwest Africa following a decision by the African Affairs Task Force, chaired by the first vice president, a senior trade official said.

According to the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), Mohammadreza Safari, acting director general for Africa at the organization, said on Sunday that Iranian shipping lines are currently operating between Iran and East and North Africa, with vessels regularly calling at ports in Tanzania, Kenya, and Libya. These ships sail to North and East Africa monthly or bimonthly, depending on cargo volume and logistical coordination.

He added that the task force has decided to establish a framework for expanding maritime connections to West and Southwest Africa, alongside plans to modernize Iran's shipping fleet.

Safari stated that African countries are categorized into three priority groups for trade with Iran, with the highest priority given to nations where Iran has embassies, trade centers, and commercial attachés. These include Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, and Nigeria.

"Iran-Africa trade is largely based on barter agreements, which extend beyond simple goods exchange and involve complex financial

and banking mechanisms," he noted.

Iran prioritizes minerals, agricultural products, and precious stones such as diamonds and gold to import from Africa, while for export, the focus is on petrochemical products, industrial equipment, and machinery.

However, Safari pointed out that African nations prefer investment in local production of equipment and machinery rather than direct imports. Currently, bitumen and urea are Iran's top exports to Africa.

Safari announced a special plan for boosting petrochemical exports to Africa at the Iran-Africa summit in 2025.

Additionally, Iran has launched a comprehensive offshore farming program in Africa, which is considered crucial due to foreign exchange restrictions on importing agricultural inputs.

"Iran can use Africa as a supplier of essential inputs by allowing private Iranian firms to engage in offshore farming. However, this requires the Ministry of Agriculture to grant import permits and set quotas," he explained.

Safari stated that Iranian traders who invest their own funds and utilize barter mechanisms for offshore farming in Africa will be eligible for special incentives next year. Nego-



tiations with the agriculture ministry are underway to finalize the operational framework.

Safari also discussed Iran's overseas mining operations in Africa, noting that Iran has so far preferred to buy minerals rather than invest directly in African mines.

"If we can address concerns about capital outflow for investments in Africa, mining will not only cease to be a challenge but will become a top priority," he said.

He confirmed that Iran has already identified key mineral extraction priorities in Africa and has a clear strategy on how and where to operate. The transfer of Iranian technology and mining equipment to Africa is also part of this plan.

Daily gasoline consumption expected to reach 135m liters during Nowruz

TEHRAN – Iran's daily gasoline consumption is expected to hit 135 million liters during the Nowruz holidays, up from the current 124 million liters per day, the head of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOOPDC) said.

During a visit to the Rey Oil Depot in southern Tehran, Keramat

Weis Karami said that gasoline production in the country's refineries has increased by 8.0 million liters per day in the second half of the year to meet rising demand.

He assured that sufficient fuel reserves have been stockpiled and that the ground transportation fleet for gasoline distribution will remain on high alert

from March 15 to April 3 to ensure smooth fuel supply across the country.

Regarding mobile fuel distribution stations, Weis Karami said they would remain operational during Nowruz, with sufficient gasoline reserves already stored in northern Iran to meet holiday demand.

On the subject of imported premium gasoline and its potential sale on the energy exchange, he noted that necessary permits have yet to be issued, and pricing would be determined through supply and demand mechanisms on the Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

Iran's non-oil export to Kuwait up 34% in 10 months on year

TEHRAN- The value of Iran's non-oil export to Kuwait increased by 34 percent during the first ten months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024-January 19, 2025), as compared to the same period of time in the past year, the spokesperson for the Trade Development Committee of the House of Industry, Mining, and Trade announced.

Ruhollah Latifi said that Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$192.611 million to Kuwait in the ten-month period.

In last September, the head of the Iran-Kuwait Chamber of Commerce criticized the low level of trade relations between the two neighbors, calling for an increase in trade exchanges between the two countries.

Ebrahim Gholamzadeh put Kuwait's imports from other countries at about \$52 billion based on the latest statistics and said: "Despite having the privilege of being a neighbor to Kuwait, Iran has a very small share of the

mentioned figure, which should be increased."

Speaking in a press conference in Tehran at the time, Gholamzadeh invited Kuwaiti businessmen and investors to visit Iran to learn about the countless capacities and golden investment opportunities in the country, and added: "Iran is ready to welcome foreign investors, especially from Kuwait, in various fields, including industry, agriculture, services and tourism."

"The existing capacities in the agriculture and industrial sectors of our country can contribute to the food security of Kuwait," the official said.

He further put the Islamic Republic exports to Kuwait in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19, 2024) at \$198 million, adding that Kuwait also exported \$12 million of goods to Iran in the mentioned year.

Food products, construction materials, and

minerals were the top commodity items exported from Iran to Kuwait, while machinery and industrial equipment accounted for the lion's share of Iran's imports from the Arab neighbor.

In last June, Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Mohammad Toutouchi and Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Omar Saud Al-Omar held talks and called for developing a roadmap to broadening trade exchanges.

During the meeting, Toutouchi emphasized that the current economic ties between the two countries are one-sided and do not reflect their long-standing political and cultural relations.

Meanwhile, Al-Omar expressed Kuwait's willingness to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Iran, hoping that the joint trade committee would pave the way for greater trade cooperation in the near future.

From page 1 ▶ Ansarullah leader Abdulmalik al-Houthi stated, "The American goal is to subjugate the entire region to the Israeli enemy and impose the equation of exploitation, both of which we can never accept."

During a speech on Sunday night, he added, "The Yemeni Armed Forces will respond to escalation with escalation" and warned, "If the American aggression against our country continues, we will move to additional escalatory options."

Abdulmalik also said, "The Americans seek to impact international navigation by turning the sea into a battlefield."

U.S. officials claim that American fighter jets shot down about a dozen drones launched by the Yemeni military over several hours on Sunday.

A U.S. official acknowledged to AP that an engagement with the USS Truman lasted for hours and claimed that "a missile" fell far from the aircraft carrier.

Another American official,



speaking on the condition of anonymity to Reuters, also claimed that U.S. warplanes shot down eleven drones fired by Ansarullah in the Red Sea on Sunday.

On Saturday night, the United States launched a deadly aggression against Yemen.

It carried out over 47 strikes targeting areas across the provinces of Sanaa, Saada, Al-Bayda, Hajjah, Dhamar, Marib, and Al-Jawf.

The attacks were carried out by U.S. aerial forces stationed in the region, as well as naval forces deployed in the Red Sea.

The Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier strike group, stationed in the Red Sea, also participated in the attacks.

Ansarullah opened a support front for Gaza in an effort to pressure the Israeli regime to accept a ceasefire and lift the siege on Gaza.

Yemeni operations ended when

the Gaza ceasefire was signed in mid-January.

However, a recent Israeli ban on humanitarian aid entering the enclave prompted Yemen's threats to ban Israeli ships from sailing in regional waters.

According to Abdulmalik, the Sanaa government will not be deterred by American, British, and Israeli attacks and will continue to support Gaza until the blockade on the enclave is lifted.

He stressed, "The issue of starving the people of Gaza and depriving them of food is not a simple matter; it is a move toward their extermination through one of the means of genocide."

Anees Alsbahi, spokesperson for the Yemeni Ministry of Health, stated that the death toll from the U.S. aggression on the capital, Sanaa, and several governorates has risen to 53. Five children and two women are among the dead.

The number of wounded has also increased to 98, including 18 children and one woman.

Washington's open interference in selecting Lebanon's central banker

From page 1 ▶ Reuters noted that this move represents "an indication of Washington's unusual approach to dealing with Lebanon, which has been facing a stifling financial crisis for more than five years that has led to the collapse of the economy."

It noted that this reflects the United States continued focus on weakening Hezbollah, after Lebanon elected a former army commander, backed by Washington, as president, and formed a new government that does not directly include Hezbollah.

The Lebanese government now faces the challenge of filling vacant positions, including central banker, which has been run by an interim governor since July 2023.

Reuters also quoted three informed Lebanese sources (on condition of anonymity), a Western diplomat, and a former official in the administration of US President Donald Trump as saying

that the United States is reviewing the files of several potential candidates for the position.

"U.S. officials met with some potential candidates in Washington and at the U.S. embassy in Lebanon," according to Reuters. It added, "The U.S. officials asked candidates questions, including how they would fight 'terrorist financing' through Lebanon's banking system and if they were willing to confront Hezbollah."

Reuters noted that the US State Department, the White House, and Prime Minister Salam's office did not immediately respond to requests for comment, just a spokesperson for the Lebanese presidency declined to comment on the U.S. role, saying the most important thing was to pick a qualified person."

Analysts believe that what Lebanese officials conveyed via Reuters contains veiled threats to anyone who attempts to object to Washington's nominees.

Besides, analysts assert that the Lebanese officials who spoke to Reuters deliberately leaked this information to indicate that no one would have the right to object, in addition to being threats that pave the way for steps against Hezbollah's banking institution, Al-Qard Al-Hassan.

For its part, the French presidency has reiterated its nomination of businessman and banker Samir Assaf for the governorship of the Central Bank, noting that the Prime Minister is inclined to appease Paris on this matter, especially since French President Emmanuel Macron has promised him a major role in Lebanon in the future.

According to informed sources, the French president will discuss with his Lebanese counterpart, during his visit to Beirut on the 28th of this month, a proposal to hold an international conference in Paris next July on the reconstruction of what was left behind by the US-led Israeli attacks on Lebanon.

Power and persistence: The shifting dynamics of West Asia in the Trump era

From page 1 ▶ If the Israeli occupation entity were to strike Iran—a possibility—the Iranian response would be swift, decisive, and overwhelming, one that Israeli settlers could not tolerate.

Even with the entity, a Trump reversal is not unthinkable. Trump has been challenging the very internal U.S. institutions, let alone the entity that is single issue.

In undoing the work of the American deep state, Trump may seek to reclaim the Syrian territories handed to Erdogan, branding HTS as "terrorists" to justify Kurdish advances under American backing.

Regarding NATO and Europe, Trump aligns more with Putin than with European leaders. He views

NATO not as a protector of America but as an American burden for Europe's benefit.

The reality is that the U.S. deep state uses NATO to implement its strategies through the strategic alliances with Europe.

A demand for European states to contribute 5% of their GDP to NATO would heavily strain their economies.

Regionally, America is attempting to achieve through politics what it failed to accomplish through war. The discourse on forcibly displacing Gazans has faded, as has talk of exiling resistance leaders.

Now, the U.S. is rejecting Egyptian proposals as "insufficient." This marks a shift from its earlier

position when displacement was on the table. Trump operates by proposing extreme scenarios to extract maximum concessions.

In Lebanon, negotiations involve the removal of Israeli presence from five points in exchange for normalization with Israel, a long-term American objective following Saudi normalization.

If Lebanon resists, the U.S. may push Syrian-based militants into Lebanon as leverage.

Ultimately, all American solutions are subject to change. Trump appears to believe that with the Gaza war halted, Arab states should step in as temporary rulers, paving the way for Saudi normalization. Yet, these are distant am-

bitions and unrealistic proposals—the region has endured far worse.

Just as Canada will not become America's 51st state, Greenland will not join the U.S., and Panama would require military invasion to be absorbed, Trump's grand visions remain implausible.

Trump today is no different from his first term—except that he is now more confident.

He perceives himself as a leader capable of enacting major changes. However, his greatest battle is not abroad but within America itself.

While the regional situation remains complex, what is required is steadfastness and consolidation of power.

Europe's economic decoupling from America is underway

Facing the threat of U.S. tariffs, the EU is looking for free trade elsewhere.

After the Trump administration imposed tariffs on Mexico, Canada, and China, the European Union was expected to be the next in line. Washington did, in fact, impose 25 percent tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from the EU last week, as well as on a range of other commodities including cars and agricultural products by early April.

The Europeans have tried to win over U.S. President Donald Trump with flattery and alluded they could buy more U.S. gas and weapons in exchange for a reduction in threatened tariffs. But at the same time, Europeans are brainstorming about what decoupling from the United States in trade and defense could mean for them. They are also wondering if they have any realistic options left, other than appeasing Trump.

In response to Trump's tariffs during his first stint as U.S. president, the EU retaliated with higher duties on Harley-Davidson motorcycles and Kentucky bourbon. It has reportedly prepared a list of retaliatory tariffs this time, too. Retaliation, however, isn't a preferable path for EU nations, even if it turns out to be neces-



sary, as it inevitably harms their own constituents who have come to rely on imports from the United States—and also risks antagonizing Trump.

That's why the bloc is also pursuing a less confrontational and more benign policy—resurrecting dormant trade deals to offset the costs of Trump's tariffs.

In December 2024, a month after Trump won the U.S. presidential election, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen signed

a controversial trade deal with the four founding members of the Mercosur bloc—Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. She also restarted talks with Malaysia and visited India with her entire team.

Together, those countries represent nearly 2 billion potential customers and vast alternative markets in places where the middle classes are on the rise. However, expediting these trade deals may come at the cost of the EU's green regulations and clean industrial growth.

The EU overruled farmers' protests against the Mercosur agreement; the protesters had been dumping manure and burning tires in Brussels and other European capitals for nearly a year. Farmers from various European countries, led by French contemporaries, protested for a variety of reasons but primarily over the fear that good quality but cheaper Latin American beef will flood European markets, and they will be outpriced.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

'Israel' braced for new turmoil as Netanyahu plans to dismiss Shin Bet chief

Dozens of leaders of protest groups throughout the Zionist entity say they plan a major demonstration in occupied Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Wednesday, in protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's intention to fire Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar.

After meeting in Tel Aviv this morning, the groups announce their plan for a large-scale rally outside government offices as ministers meet to vote on dismissing Bar.

Once the vote ends, demonstrators plan to march on to the prime minister's residence in central Jerusalem, where they are gearing up for a long-term stay, with tent camps.

Meanwhile, the Israel Business Forum, which represents most private-sector workers from 200 of the Zionist entity's largest companies, called on Netanyahu to backtrack from his intention to dismiss Shin Bet chief, calling it a "destructive" move.

"Israel is in the midst of one of the most difficult periods in its history — from a security, economic and social perspective," the business forum said in a statement.

"The last thing Israel needs is an internal battle in which the prime minister, in a severe conflict of



interest, fires gatekeepers, in violation of the law — especially at this difficult time."

"Israel's enemies are watching with pleasure as Israel returns to the same path that led the country to the October 7 attack," the forum warned.

Instead, the forum urged Netanyahu to focus on "what is truly important now: the return of the 59 hostages who were kidnapped under his watch... establishing a state investigation committee, according to the president's agreement, and rehabilitating deterrence, the economy and society."

(Source: Al Manar)

'Ethnic cleansing: Syrian government-aligned forces reveling in massacre of minorities in coastal town

A mother and her daughter hunch down by the windows of their attic as armed men gather outside the gate. They try not to make a sound. But in the video that they furtively recorded of this fraught moment, it's clear they can barely control their panicked breathing.

Earlier that day, on March 7, the patriarch of the Khalil family had assured them that they were not in danger. The forces aligned with Syria's new Islamist government who had descended on their village of al-Sanobar were only going after people affiliated with the recently toppled dictator Bashar al-Assad, he reasoned.

"We haven't done anything wrong," his relative recalled him saying as they watched fighters storming their neighbors' home from their windows. Hours later, she said the patriarch was dead, his lifeless body splayed out on the patio next to his son's corpse.

A masked fighter filmed himself parading around the ransacked home, singing "ethnic cleansing, ethnic cleansing" and posted the video to his Facebook page for 28,000 followers to see. Family members hiding in the upper floor told CNN they heard the raid, including the executions, unfold. The killings at the Khalils' home, recounted through video and survivor testimonies, was one of many similar incidents that played out across Alawite communities in Syria's coastal region earlier this month.

A CNN investigation zeroes in on the events in Sanobar, or the "Pine Village" in English, a town of several thousand members of Syria's minority Alawite community in Latakia governorate. The attacks on the village, where swathes of farmland surround small clusters of buildings, reveal fresh details about the intensity of some of the sectarian violence that swept Syria's coast.

Drawing on interviews with seven survivors, satellite imagery and verified footage from the ground, CNN was able to shed light on the scale of the carnage in the town, where government-aligned forces subjected largely unarmed villagers to summary executions, looting, arson and sectarian slurs, and bodies were piled up in two mass graves.

CNN tallied at least 84 bodies in videos geolocated to the Pine Village, which has a population of a few thousand. Locals said they counted over 200 dead — the vast majority of whom were male. The eyewitnesses spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

The attacks against Alawites raise questions about whether interim president Ahmad al-Sharaa can fulfill his promise to rule Syria in an inclusive way, ensuring the protection of minorities, and stop any insurgent factions from be-



coming a serious threat to the country's prospects for peace.

The latest cycle of violence began when Assad loyalists staged a bloody ambush on forces aligned with Syria's new Sunni Islamist government on March 6 in what appeared to be a coordinated attack. It was Syria's worst violence since Assad was toppled last December and it prompted a deadly reprisal in the Latakia and Tartus provinces that the new government described as an effort to contain remnants of the former autocratic regime.

The state blamed the mass killings on rogue elements. Al-Sharaa set up a fact-finding

committee to investigate the killings and has vowed to hold the culprits to account.

The attacks targeted the Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shia Islam that the Assad family are members of, and which dominated their regime for over half a century until they were ousted. Videos reviewed by CNN posted by Sunni Islamist militants loyal to Sharaa's government called for the "ethnic cleansing" of Alawites.

CNN has reached out to the government for comment on the bloodshed in Pine Village.

'They called us Alawite dogs'

Human rights watchdog, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR), said more than 800 people were killed in attacks following the ambush. Other rights groups say the number is even higher. Assad loyalists have staged several smaller attacks on government forces since then, according to authorities. Survivors said the attacks in Pine Village began in the early hours of Friday, March 7, a day after the initial ambush by Assadist loyalists was reported.

CNN identified the armed man who filmed himself at the home of the Khalil family by matching his facial details, clothing and build with other photographs and video on his Facebook profile. A cached version of his account shows the video was later deleted. Two survivors, who viewed the footage of him shared on social media, also said he was the same man who was rampaging through their town.

CNN reached out to the man on Facebook but has not received a reply.

In the days that followed, another video surfaced on social media showing him singing, with bodies littered behind him. "We've come to you. We've come to you with the taste of death."

CNN was able to verify the location in the video as the entrance to the village using a line of pine trees, utility poles and a curving road, which corresponded to satellite imagery. Residents also identified the bodies of the men pictured in the video.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

UNESCO-listed Nowruz celebrated at Persepolis with Central Asian diplomats



TEHRAN – A multinational Nowruz remembrance was held at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Persepolis, bringing together ambassadors from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan to celebrate the ancient Persian New Year.

Nowruz, a centuries-old tradition marking the arrival of spring, is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage jointly registered by Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and several other countries. The festival symbolizes renewal, unity, and cultural exchange among nations that share this rich heritage.

During the event, diplomats and cultural

representatives highlighted the significance of Nowruz in fostering regional ties and preserving shared traditions. The celebration featured traditional music and performances, and cultural exhibits that showcased the diverse customs of the participating nations.

Persepolis, a historic site dating back to the Achaemenid Empire, provided a symbolic backdrop for the festivities, reinforcing the deep historical connections between Nowruz and Persian civilization.

The annual Nowruz celebrations continue to serve as a bridge between nations, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage in promoting peace and mutual understanding.

Geneva hosts exhibit of Iranian women's art

TEHRAN—On Monday, a special exhibition showcasing the artistic talents of Iranian women began in Geneva, coinciding with the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

According to Mehr news agency, citing the Human Rights Headquarters, the exhibition runs through March 24 (corresponding to Farvardin 1 in the Persian calendar).

The exhibition is organized by the Institute for the Protection of Women's Rights,

in collaboration with the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs of Iran, Iran's Permanent Mission in Geneva, and other non-governmental organizations, the report said.

The primary objective of this initiative is to promote the artistic achievements of Iranian women and enhance international cultural exchange. Organizers aim to provide a platform for Iranian female artists to gain visibility in global artistic and cultural forums.

An archaeologist found a 1 million-year-old face

When a fragment of a skull emerged from a cave in northern Spain, archaeologist Rosa Huguet was almost certain it came from a human ancestor.

What she didn't know at the time of the excavation was that she was coming face to face (pun intended) with the most ancient human visage in Western Europe. Huguet nicknamed the hominin "Pink."

The oldest faces on the European continent—which are also the most ancient outside of Africa—were unearthed in Dmanisi, Georgia, and belong to five 1.8 million-year-old skulls from a hominin group known as Homo georgicus, which is thought to be closely related to Homo erectus.

When early humans arrived in the western part of Europe was less certain, until now.

The cheek and upper jawbone fragments that Huguet and her team found in 2022 (and have been investigating since then) are between 1.1 and 1.4 million years old, making them the oldest human fossils in Western Europe.

"This finding enables us to not only learn about the facial morphology of early Europeans, but also increase our knowledge of the evolutionary history of our ancestors in Europe," she said in a study recently published in Nature.

(Source: AOL)

Nowruz in Tehran embraces tranquility amidst urban splendor

From Page 1 ▶ During that period, traffic restrictions are lifted for private vehicles heading towards the city center, where many historical attractions are located.

From the opulent grandeur of the Golestan Palace to the bustling lanes of the Grand Bazaar, and from the Treasury of National Jewels to the Niavaran palace complex, Tehran unfolds its treasures with unparalleled splendor.

Like in previous years, and to make it more affordable than ever, many hotels here will be offering considerable discounts in partnership with travel agents and tour operators.

Special tourist buses provide hassle-free transportation, allowing visitors to hop on and off at their leisure and explore the city's hidden gems at their own pace.



Many local tour guides say that for a glimpse into Iran's artistic heritage, don't miss the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art which is home to one of the most impressive collections of modern Iranian art in the world.

By the way, no visit to Tehran is complete without a trip to

the iconic Azadi Tower, a symbol of Iran's resilience and national pride.

Ascend to the top for panoramic views of the city and surrounding mountains, and soak in the beauty of Tehran's skyline.

For a taste of Tehran's natu-

ral beauty, you may pay a visit to Darband, a picturesque village nestled at the foot of the Alborz Mountains.

It offers hiking trails, lush forests, and charming teahouses, where you can relax and enjoy breathtaking views of the city below.

Some believe that Nowruz, despite being a high season for domestic travel, is the best time to seize the opportunity to experience the much-lauded Iranian hospitality.

A foreign sightseer recounting his experience on TripAdvisor reflects on the joys of visiting Tehran during Nowruz, highlighting the abundance of interactions with locals and the favorable weather conditions.

His comments may echo those of many travelers who choose to embrace the unique charm of Nowruz in the Iranian capital.

Kish Island to host new museum dedicated to Islamic heritage

TEHRAN – A historical building on Kish Island is set to be converted into a museum dedicated to showcasing Islamic-era relics and arts following a newly signed agreement between the Dafineh Museums Group and the Kish Free Zone Organization.

Inked by Hamidreza Soleimani, CEO of the Dafineh Museums Group, and Mohammad-Jafar Kabiri, CEO of the Kish Free Zone Organization, in Tehran on Monday, the agreement marks a significant cultural initiative to establish Kish Island's first museum dedicated to Islamic civilization and heritage.

The Kish Free Zone Organization has officially entrusted the historical building to the Dafineh Museums Group for its transformation into a cultural and historical exhibition space, Soleimani told the Tehran Times.

During the signing ceremony, Soleimani emphasized the importance of preserving and displaying Iran's rich heritage.

"In Dafineh Museums Group, we hold a treasured collection of historical artifacts that, as per the directives of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, should be showcased to the pub-

lic," Soleimani said.

"Currently, we operate 15 museums across the country, and we aim to expand this number. These museums are unparalleled in Iran and throughout West Asia," he stated.

Kabiri, for his part, highlighted the island's multi-faceted development strategy, with a particular focus on cultural tourism.

"We are striving to enhance Kish Island's cultural appeal, and the prestigious artifacts owned by the Foundation can be exhibited in key locations like Kish, which attracts numerous international tourists," he explained.

Kabiri also stressed the importance of revitalizing unused historical sites across Kish Island. "Many nostalgic spaces on the island have been abandoned or lack proper utilization.

Transforming them into cultural and museum spaces is the best approach to preserving their significance," he added.

Furthermore, Kabiri emphasized the need to incorporate storytelling into museum exhibitions.

"A museum is not merely a collection of objects; every artifact must tell a story, adding



to its appeal and meaning," he noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kabiri revealed plans for additional museum projects on Kish Island, stating that three more locations have been identified for similar cultural initiatives.

"We aim to create enriching experiences in these locations, and the Foundation can play a significant role in this endeavor," he said.

Dafineh Museum Group is a collection of museums and cultural institutions managed by the Mostazafan Foundation.

A major travel destination in southern Iran, Kish Island is located on the northern edge of the Persian Gulf.

Exhibit of Iranian artifacts to go on show in Guangzhou as second stop in China

TEHRAN – Following its successful debut at Sichuan University Museum in Chengdu earlier this year, the Iranian loan exhibition "Land of Kindness" is set to continue its journey in China, with Guangzhou as its next destination.

According to Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, the exhibition is being held in strict compliance with legal and professional regulations.

The initiative is spearheaded by the ministry's Cultural Heritage Deputy and the General Directorate of Museums, with the support of the Tehran Provincial Office and the University of Tehran.

Originally inaugurated in January at Sichuan University Museum, the exhibition will now be hosted by the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou. Its opening ceremony is scheduled for mid-April 2025.

The exhibition showcases a curated selection of 151 cultural and historical artifacts from Tehran's prominent museums, including the Moghadam Museum of the University of Tehran.

Featuring five millennia of Persian cultural and artistic heritage, the exhibition has been widely covered by Chinese media and has attracted significant public interest.

The diversity and richness of the displayed

items have played a crucial role in fostering cultural appreciation and understanding between Iran and China.

Land of Kindness celebrates the rich heritage of both nations and represents a step forward in strengthening bilateral cultural relations through artistic and historical exchanges.

The selected items span a remarkable historical range, from the third millennium BC to the later Islamic periods.

They include metal, ceramic, and glass objects, as well as textiles and carpets, reflecting the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Iran.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Tikal National Park

Tikal National Park is located in Northern Guatemala's Petén province within a large forest region often referred to as the Maya Forest, which extends into neighboring Mexico and Belize.

Embedded within the much larger Maya Biosphere Reserve, exceeding two million hectares and contiguous with additional conservation areas, Tikal National Park is one of the few World Heritage properties inscribed according to both natural and cultural criteria for its extraordinary biodiversity and archaeological importance. It comprises 57,600 hectares of wetlands, savannah, tropical broadleaf and palm forests with thousands of architectural and artistic remains of the Mayan civilization from the Preclassic Period (600 BC) to the decline and eventual collapse of the urban center around 900 AD. The diverse ecosystems and habitats harbor a wide spectrum of neotropical fauna and flora. Five cats, including Jaguar and Puma, several species of monkeys and anteaters and more than 300 species of birds are among the notable wildlife. The forests comprise more

than 200 tree species and over 2000 higher plants have been recorded across the diverse habitats.

Tikal, a major Pre-Columbian political, economic and military center, is one of the most important archaeological complexes left by the Maya civilization. An inner urban zone of around 400 hectares contains the principal monumental architecture and monuments which include palaces, temples, ceremonial platforms, small and medium sized residences, ball-game courts, terraces, roads, large and small squares. Many of the existing monuments preserve decorated surfaces, including stone carvings and mural paintings with hieroglyphic inscriptions, which illustrate the dynastic history of the city and its relationships with urban centers as far away as Teotihuacan and Calakmul in Mexico, Copan in Honduras or Caracol in Belize. A wider zone of key archaeological importance, around 1,200 hectares, covers residential areas and historic water reservoirs, today known as "aguadas". The extensive peripheral zone features more than 25 associated secondary sites, his-

torically serving protective purposes and as check-points for trade routes. The peripheral areas also played a major role for agricultural production for the densely populated center.

Research has revealed numerous constructions, carved monuments and other evidence bearing witness to highly sophisticated technical, intellectual and artistic achievements that developed from the arrival of the first settlers (800 BC) to the last stages of historic occupation around the year 900. Tikal has enhanced our understanding not only of an extraordinary bygone civilization but also of cultural evolution more broadly. The diversity and quality of architectural and sculptural ensembles serving ceremonial, administrative and residential functions are exemplified in a number of exceptional places, such as the Great Plaza, the Lost World Complex, the Twin Pyramid Complexes, as well as in ball courts and irrigation structures.

(Source: UNESCO)

Second Announcement



Brief Notice of International Two-Stage Tender No. 667293

It is hereby notified that Esfahan Steel Company (ESCO) intends to purchase 50,000 pcs. Short Casting Semi-Nozzle as per the required conditions and technical specifications through two-stage international Tender. Accordingly, all the prospective bidders are kindly requested to visit ESCO's website www.esfahansteel.ir so as to obtain the tender document no later than 09.03.2025 and upload their techno-commercial offer to ESCO's website (through Sourcing Field) up to max. 12.04.2025 at 15:00 p.m.

It is evident that this letter is only for notification purpose.

Yours Respectfully,

M.J.Salehi,

Purchasing Deputy

Esfahan Steel Company

Rainfall drops by 36% in current water year

TEHRAN – From the beginning of the current water year (September 23, 2024) till March 14, precipitations across the country amounted to 96.6 mm, indicating a 36-percent decrease compared to 152.4 mm recorded in the same period last year, according to the Metrological Organization.

Over the past week, from March 8 to 14, about 6.4 mm of rainfall was recorded in the country, showing a 22.8-percent decrease compared to 8.3 mm received in the long term, ISNA reported.

From the beginning of the last Iranian month (February 19) till March 14, about 22.9 mm of rainfall was recorded in the country, showing a four-percent decrease compared to 23.9 mm received in the long term.

From the beginning of the winter till March 14, the recorded rainfall amounted to 62.7 mm, which is 32.8 percent less than the recorded normal amount, 93.3 percent.

Mazandaran is the only province that has had more rainfall compared to the long-term average, experiencing a 3.7 mm



increase.

Precipitations in other provinces have been less than normal.

Hormozgan province has received the lowest amount of rainfall, recording 71.2 percent less rain than normal.

Tehran province is also among the provinces that have received low rainfall. In the current water year, it has only received an average of 98.5 mm, which indicates a 39.9 percent decrease compared to the 163.8 mm recorded in the long-term average.

Normal, less than normal precipitation forecast for a month

Average rainfall is forecasted to be less than normal from March 10 to April 4 and normal from April 5 to 20, according to the Metrological Organization.

From March 17 to 24, precipitations are projected to be less than normal in most parts of the country and normal in some parts of the northwest and west of the country.

In the northern half of the country, the temperature will reach 3 to 6 °C, and in some parts

of the northwest strip, it will exceed 6 °C.

The temperature will be less than 3 °C in other parts.

In the next week, the average rainfall is forecast to be less than normal.

The temperature over the Caspian coastal strip is expected to be normal.

In the northern half, it will get 3 to 5 °C, and in other areas, it will be about 1 to 3 °C above normal.

From March 30 to April 5, precipitations are estimated to be normal with a tendency to be below normal.

The average temperature will be normal along the Caspian coastal strip and 1 to 3 °C above normal in other regions.

Within next two weeks, April 5 to 20, rainfall is forecast to be normal and above normal.

The air temperature in the northern half of the country will be 1 to 3 °C above normal from April 5 to 12, and in other areas, it will be 1 °C above normal.

The air temperature in most parts of the country will be normal from April 13 to 20.

Shiraz, St. Petersburg universities conducting joint research projects



TEHRAN – Shiraz University and St. Petersburg University are conducting ten collaborative research projects.

Two groups of students have been dispatched to Russia so far, and Russian students are to take educational courses in Shiraz in spring, the ministry of science, research, and technology's website quoted Mohammad Moazzeni, chancellor of Shiraz University, as saying.

The official went on to say that the two universities have also launched a joint group of artificial intelligence experts.

In July 2024, Shiraz University and St. Petersburg University signed 12 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) to boost cultural,

educational, and research collaborations.

The main subjects of the MOUs included enhancing cooperation among faculty members of the two universities, granting scholarships to ten PhD students, conducting summer school for Iranian students by St. Petersburg University as well as winter schools for Russian students by Shiraz University, Mehr news agency reported.

As a part of the agreement, each university will establish a specialized center within the other institution.

The cooperation will also include utilizing the excavation training and research center of Saint Petersburg University by Shiraz University, conducting joint research, holding joint specialized geological training courses for the students from the two universities, as well as holding specialized training courses for Iranian mining engineers by St. Petersburg Mining University.

According to Forpost-sz, a delegation from the St. Petersburg Mining University visited Shiraz University for the first time back in January.

Iranian, Russian universities committed to broadening ties

Based on the comprehensive agreements between the top universities of Iran and Russia, the two sides are committed to furthering long-term and constructive relations in higher education, technology, and innovation.

The establishment of the secretariat for communication between the universities of the two countries is one of the major measures taken.

Secretariats and inter-university collab-

orations should be more active than in the past in deepening scientific communication. Practical and effective steps are expected to be taken to realize common goals.

The main objective, in addition to promoting relations, is to implement the previously made agreements and open up new opportunities for further cooperation.

Hence Iran-Russia comprehensive agreements will pave the ground for enhancing scientific collaborations through conducting joint scientific and technological projects, fostering interactions among educational institutions, and exchanging faculty, staff, and students.

In July 2024, the two sides signed 12 agreements to boost cultural, educational, and research collaborations.

The contracting parties will facilitate the share of experience and information on regulating activities in the field of scientific, technological, and innovative activities, organizing and holding conferences, meetings, seminars, exhibitions, and other scientific events.

Moreover, according to the agreement, the two parties will promote and facilitate the learning of official languages, and the study of literature, history, and culture of the other party in their higher education institutions.

Tehran to host first symposium on AI in health

TEHRAN –The first symposium on artificial intelligence in health, with a focus on smart hospitals, is planned to be held in Tehran in the summer.

Organized by Amirkabir University of Technology, the event will bring experts together to discuss global solutions as well as local models to develop smart hospitals utilizing AI in hospital management, the health ministry's website reported.

The symposium will be centered around AI assistants for hospital managers, AI in resource and supply chain management, AI-optimized patient experience, automation and robotics in smart hospitals, smart healthcare monitoring of patients, Internet of Things (IoT), smart medical equipment, and AI-based decision support systems.

It will also focus on empowering doctors and staff in smart hospitals, utilizing AI in resource and supply chain management, developing brain-computer interfaces (BCIs), and discussing ethical, legal, and security issues in using AI in hospitals.

MOU signed for using AI in medical treatment

In January, the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology and Tehran University of Medical Sciences signed a memorandum of understanding to use artificial intelligence for medical treatment purposes.

The agreement which was inked on January 11 aims to promote the targeted support of the knowledge-based ecosystem in the field of health with a focus on omics and genomics studies, cell therapy in endocrinology and metabolism, person-centered medicine with artificial intelligence tools for prevention, prediction, diagnosis, and treatment, and finally innovation in the commercialization of products and services, ISNA reported.

IRCS dispatches humanitarian aid to Lebanon

TEHRAN –The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has sent a shipment of aid to war-impacted people in Lebanon.

The consignment includes 1,000 tons of essential goods, such as tents, blankets, mats, foodstuff, and grains as well as medical items to meet the needs of children and other people affected by the war, Mehr news agency quoted Mohammad Mottaqi, an official with the IRCS, as saying.

IRCS, UN to speed up aid delivery to Lebanon

On October 9, 2024, Pirhossein Kolivand, head of the IRCS, and the UN Resident Coordinator of Iran, Stefan Priesner, held talks about the tragic situation in Lebanon and ways to speed up aid delivery to people impacted by war.

During the meeting, Kolivand condemned the brutal attacks of the Zionist regime on Gaza and Lebanon, the IRCS website reported.

Referring to Israeli crimes, including targeting civilian areas, killing civilians, and attacking ambulances and rescue forces, hospitals, and health centers, the official warned about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Lebanon and the possibility

Statistics have shown noticeable cost savings, about 40 percent, using artificial intelligence in health in advanced countries.

In some specific cases, like breast or lung cancers, artificial intelligence can lower healthcare costs by 80 percent, hence, a knowledge-based economy should aim to utilize AI to save healthcare costs, IRIB quoted Mostafa Qanei, the secretary of the Biology Development Headquarters, as saying.

Developing smart healthcare document

Smart University of Medical Sciences (SMUMS) has compiled a smart healthcare document, which is currently in the final stages of approval.

Once approved, the document is a valuable step taken towards digital transformation in the country's healthcare system, Hassan Bakhtiari, the SMUMS president, said in December 2024.

The SMUMS research center is a suitable place for conducting applied research and recruiting medical researchers. The center can also help develop treatment and reduce treatment costs, he noted.

Highlighting that most of the regional countries are pioneers in artificial intelligence, he said: "Iran needs to strengthen its position in the artificial intelligence sector in the region."

AI plays a key role in the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of diseases. It also improves the quality of medical services.

Bakhtiari went on to say that by using AI technology, the development of medical services in disadvantaged and rural areas can be put on the agenda.

Telemedicine is one of the areas in which AI can help establish health justice by providing access to advanced medical services in remote areas, he added.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

'City-friendly schools' scheme launched in Tehran

The "city-friendly schools" scheme was launched in the capital to promote environmental protection and urban development issues among students, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Daneshvar, director general of citizenship education at Tehran Municipality, said that the project covers more than 550 schools, consisting of 160,000 students.

It aims to familiarize students with the rights and duties of citizens, the environment, waste, transportation and traffic, safety and security, crisis management, he explained.

The training programs will be in the form of workshops, role plays, cultural and educational camps, production of educational content such as books, brochures and posters, he concluded.

آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» با هدف آشنا کردن دانش آموزان با حقوق و تکالیف شهروندی، محیط زیست و پسماند، حمل و نقل و ترافیک، و ایمنی و مدیریت بحران در مدارس منتخب شهر تهران آغاز شد.

به گزارش ایسنا مجتبی دانشور، مدیرکل آموزش‌های شهروندی شهرداری تهران، گفت این طرح بیش از ۵۵۰ مدرسه شامل ۱۶۰ هزار دانش‌آموز را در بر می‌گیرد.

برنامه‌های آموزشی این طرح در قالب برگزاری کارگاه‌های آموزشی، تولید محتوای آموزشی در قالب کتاب، بروشور و پوستر، اجرای نمایش و برگزاری اردوهای فرهنگی و آموزشی خواهد بود.



Eye-catching safflower farms in Mazandaran

Safflower farms in the northern Mazandaran province create a beautiful and eye-catching spectacle and are a symbol of spring.

Safflower is widely used in traditional medicine thanks to its medicinal value and healthcare properties.



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MARCH 18, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Be afraid of nothing but sins.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:15 Evening: 18:26 Dawn: 4:58 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:21 (tomorrow)

Veteran Iranian graphic designer, painter Kamran Katouzian passes away



TEHRAN—The veteran Iranian graphic designer and painter Kamran Katouzian passed away in Tehran on Saturday at 83.

One of the leading representatives of the abstract art stream in Iran, he died at his home after enduring a long-term illness. The artist's body will be buried on Tuesday in the artists' plot of Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery, Mehr reported.

Born in Tehran, he showed a special interest in painting from childhood. After finishing high school, he left Iran for the U.S. to follow his studies and by the advice of one of his professors, he started to study in Wyndham University in Vermont state. In 1961 he was graduated in the field of painting and sculpturing.

While studying and living in New York, he was intrigued by the abstract expressionism movement and the works of Jackson Pollock, Mark Rot-

hko, and Mark Tobey. But his favorite artist was Franz Kline. Kline's influence is clearly visible in various periods of Katouzian's career.

Katouzian was also active in the graphics and advertising fields. Perhaps his works could be considered as prototypes of graphic design in Iran, in which a different atmosphere was created based on the aesthetics of painting.

Katouzian returned to Iran in 1963 and was employed by the Ministry of Culture and Art. In that ministry he became acquainted with Changiz Shahvaq and Naser Mofakham and with their assistance he founded the Saba Gallery in 1964. In 1965, he entered the branch of architecture in the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Tehran.

Kamran Katouzian used to introduce himself, as an abstract painter. In his precedents, he has recorded teaching Graphic in the Faculty of Decorative Arts (1969-1971) and Azad University (1990-92).

He was the winner of the 4th Tehran Biennale with presenting an abstract painting in the name of "When My Father's Father Was Young" and an abstract statue of Iran in 1964. He also participated in Paris Biennale in 1965, Venice Biennale in 1966, and Washington International Art Festival in 1977.

His works are kept as part of the permanent collection of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Iranian short flick "End of Summer" to compete in 5th Happy Valley Animation Festival

TEHRAN—The Iranian short animation "End of Summer" written, animated, and directed by Tara Attarzadeh will compete in the 5th Happy Valley Animation Festival (HVAF), due to be held in Pennsylvania, the U.S., from March 27 to April 1.

The three-minute animated film, which has no dialogue, has been created using 2D digital techniques and was made as Attarzadeh's graduation film, ILNA reported.

It is about a little girl who is playing on a swing on the roof of the house but suddenly the swing's rope tears apart. Now the girl is bored so she starts daydreaming with a flock of pigeons flying over the roof. She roams around the city freely and when she comes back to reality, a disaster happens. She sees the birds in the sky turning into warplanes. These planes destroy the city.

Born in Shiraz, Tara Attarzadeh is a 31-year-old

animator from Iran. She has an M.A. in animation from the University of Tehran. She has worked as a character designer, accessory maker, 2D and stop motion animator, and director assistant.

The Happy Valley Animation Festival is a juried, international animation competition that showcases compelling animated works by student, early career, and practicing professional artists, designers, and filmmakers who push the boundaries of the medium.

Works range from animated short films and experimental animation to animated motion graphics and design and push the innate ability of animation to communicate across cultures.

The festival takes place in State College, Pennsylvania, with open and student category award winners and official selections featured in HVAF screenings and a gallery exhibition at the Pennsylvania State University and online.

Cartoon of Day



Ramadan in Gaza

Cartoonist: Tayo Fatunla from Nigeria

"Dreams on a Pillow": tap to journey through Nakba

By Ali Hamedin

TEHRAN—In the world of mobile games, where quick reflexes and high scores often take center stage, some experiences go beyond mere entertainment. "Dreams on a Pillow" is one such game—a mobile adventure that not only challenges your skills but also immerses you in a powerful emotional journey through one of the most defining moments in Palestinian history: the Nakba of 1948.

The Nakba, meaning catastrophe in Arabic, refers to the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians from their homes by Zionist forces.

"Dreams on a Pillow", created by Palestinian developer Rashed Abueideh, brings this history to life interactively, turning the mobile screen into a space where players can experience the struggle for survival firsthand.

Imagine stepping into a game where every move carries the weight of history, every choice echoes the past, and survival is more than just a mechanic—it is a story that needs to be told.

But this is not just a history lesson wrapped in pixels; it is a gripping stealth adventure that puts you in the heart of the Nakba's untold stories.

Stories of colonizers who mercilessly drove the native people from their homeland.

Nakba of 1948

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Abueideh explained that "Dreams on a Pillow" is inspired by a historical Palestinian folk tale set against the backdrop of the ethnic cleansing during the 1948 Nakba.

"It tells the story of a young mother in Palestine whose husband is killed by Zionist forces. Panicked, she rushes home to retrieve her newborn from the bed. As she flees the town in terror, she later realizes she has unknowingly taken a pillow instead of her baby."

The Palestinian game developer noted that the game's main character, Omm, is a mother from Tantura, a Palestinian Arab fishing village on the Mediterranean coast.

"She grew up in this beautiful village, surrounded by family, and later built a life there with her husband.

But after the Nakba, like many Palestinians, she was forced into exile, enduring the pain of displacement and the loss of her homeland."

"Rather than focusing solely on historical events, "Dreams on



a Pillow" emphasizes the human experience—what it means to lose one's home, be forced to flee, and carry the weight of memory across generations," said Abueideh, and explained that the game creates an immersive experience that connects players with the deeply personal stories of those who lived through the Nakba, making history feel immediate and profoundly human.

In response to Tehran Times' question about the inspiration behind "Dreams on a Pillow" story, the game's director and designer explained that it is inspired by a true story documented orally in Palestinian heritage.

The story reflects the real tragedies of the Nakba, in which many families faced chaos, loss, and displacement. The tale of a mother mistakenly carrying a pillow instead of her child serves as a powerful metaphor for the trauma of forced exile.

"My goal with this game is to preserve these stories and share them in a way that connects players emotionally to this history," he added.

Previous success: "Liyla & The Shadows of War"

In 2016, Abueideh and his small team of developers in Palestine launched "Liyla & The Shadows of War" on PC and mobile platforms. The game quickly gained attention for its powerful themes.

According to the Palestinian game developer, "Liyla & The Shadows of War" was inspired by real events during the 2014 invasion of Gaza.

It tells the story of a young girl, Liyla, and her family as they try to survive the bombing of their city.

"The game was a way to shed light on the reality of war and its impact on civilians, especially children," Abueideh added, and noted that despite facing cen-

sorship, the game gained significant recognition, winning awards and being featured in international festivals.

He regarded its deep resonance with players—many of whom were unaware of the situation in Gaza—as the game's most significant feature.

"Through 'Liyla & The Shadows of War', I learned the power of emotional storytelling in games.

I saw how players connected more with personal, human stories rather than just historical facts," the game designer said.

Abueideh also emphasized that with "Dreams on a Pillow", he is building on that approach, focusing on personal loss, memory, and resilience, rather than just telling events.

"This time, the story is more layered, blending reality with dreamlike elements to reflect the psychological trauma of displacement."

Despite its success—garnering millions of downloads and winning first place for Excellence in Storyboarding at the International Mobile Gaming Awards for the Middle East and North Africa—the game faced obstacles. Apple initially rejected it, a decision made due to its political content.

However, following public pressure, the company later reversed its stance, allowing "Liyla & The Shadows of War" to reach a global audience.

Incredible public support

Abueideh considered balancing historical accuracy with emotional storytelling to create an experience that is both engaging and respectful of real events as one of the major challenges in developing "Dreams on a Pillow."

"Funding has also been difficult, as awareness-based indie games often struggle to attract

financial support compared to commercial projects."

He stated that censorship from some popular platforms remains a concern, as they have seen similar issues with "Liyla & The Shadows of War."

The Palestinian game developer noted that public support has been incredible, far beyond what they initially imagined.

"Building on this success, we are keeping the door open for supporters to continue contributing through LaunchGood," Abueideh highlighted, adding that this will help ensure the project's independence and allow them to bring "Dreams on a Pillow" to life with the quality and depth it deserves.

"Right now, we are in the pre-production phase, making critical decisions that will shape the future of the project.

At the same time, we are developing the core mechanics and creating tools to help streamline production as we move into full development," he said.

Not just about learning historical facts

Speaking with Tehran Times, Abueideh described his goal as follows: "I want players to feel the deep sense of loss, displacement, and resilience that Palestinians experienced during the Nakba.

"Dreams on a Pillow" is not just about learning historical facts; it is about connecting with the human emotions behind them.

I want players to empathize with the struggle of losing one's home, the fear of uncertainty, and the lasting impact of exile."

At the same time, he expressed his hope that the game would spark curiosity and awareness, encouraging players to explore Palestinian history beyond the commonly told narratives.

Ariana Neumann's "When Time Stopped" available in Persian

TEHRAN—The Persian translation of the book "When Time Stopped: A Memoir of My Father's War and What Remains" written by Ariana Neumann has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Mohammad Javadi has translated the book and Noon Publication has brought it out in 352 pages, ISNA reported.

In 1941, the first Neumann family member was taken by the Nazis, arrested in German-occupied Czechoslovakia for bathing in a stretch of river forbidden to Jews. He was transported to Auschwitz. Eighteen days later his prisoner number was entered into the morgue book.

Of 34 Neumann family members, 25 were murdered by the Nazis. One of the survivors was Hans Neumann, who, to escape the German death net, traveled to Berlin and hid in plain sight under the Gestapo's eyes.

What Hans experienced was so unspeakable that, when he built an industrial empire in Venezuela, he couldn't bring himself to talk about it. All his daughter Ariana knew was that something terrible had happened.

When Hans died, he left Ariana a small box

filled with letters, diary entries, and other memorabilia. Ten years later Ariana finally summoned the courage to have the letters translated, and she began reading.

What she discovered launched her on a worldwide search that would deliver indelible portraits of a family loving, finding meaning, and trying to survive amid the worst that can be imagined.

Originally published in 2020, "When Time Stopped" is a detective story and an epic family memoir, spanning nearly 90 years and crossing oceans. Neumann brings each relative to vivid life.

In uncovering her father's story after all these years, she discovers nuance and depth to her own history and liberates poignant and thought-provoking truths about the threads of humanity that connect all people.

Ariana Neumann is the New York Times bestselling author of "When Time Stopped," which won the Dayton Peace Prize for Non-Fiction in 2021, Best Memoir at the Jewish Book Awards in 2020 and was shortlisted for various prizes including The Wingate Prize.

Ariana was born and grew up in Vene-



zuela. She has a B.A. in History and French literature from Tufts University, an M.A. in Spanish and Latin American literature from New York University and a postgraduate diploma in psychology of religion from University of London.

She previously was involved in publishing, worked as a foreign correspondent for Venezuela's The Daily Journal and her writing has appeared in a variety of publications including The European, the Jewish Book Council and The New York Times.

She lives in London with her family. Currently, she is working on her second book, "The Saved."