

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Trump's Repression Machine Targets Pro-Palestine Voices in Colleges

US uses budget cuts, student expulsions and visa cancellation to curb academic solidarity with Gaza



The Trump administration has made an effort to systematically deport foreign students who have expressed pro-Palestinian views, beginning in March with the detention of Mahmoud Khalil, a former Columbia University graduate student.

### 'US threats undermine dialogue', Pezeshkian says Iran open to fair talks

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has strongly criticized the U.S. approach toward Tehran, particularly the language of threats combined with calls for negotiation, emphasizing that Iran is willing to engage in talks "on equal footing."

In a statement on Saturday, Pezeshkian said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran seeks dialogue on equal footing. They threaten Iran on one hand and seek to hold negotiations on the other." He further questioned the inconsistency of the U.S. approach, asking, "If you seek negotiations, then why are you making threats?"

The remarks came in response to recent comments from U.S. President Donald Trump, who called for direct negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program but simultaneously issued threats, including the potential use of military force if diplomacy fails.

Pezeshkian argued that the U.S.'s actions not only humiliate Iran but also undermine the credibility of the global community. "Today, the United States not only humiliates Iran but also the world, and this behavior contradicts the request for dialogue," he stated. ▶ Page 3

### Tehran will not start war, but will retaliate powerfully: IRGC chief

TEHRAN — Major General Hossein Salami, Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), delivered an address to senior military officials on Saturday, reiterating Iran's defensive posture while warning adversaries of catastrophic consequences.

"We will not initiate war, but we possess overwhelming power to confront any aggression," he declared, emphasizing that psychological and military confrontations have only fortified the country's resolve.

Salami marked the Israeli regime's April 2024 unlawful attack on Iran's Damascus consulate, which killed senior IRGC commanders, including Brigadier General Mohammadreza Zahedi, as a turning point in recent events in West Asia.

"This aggression marked the beginning of a global confrontation," he stated, describing it as a pivotal moment in Islamic history. ▶ Page 2

### Senior Russian diplomat rebukes Trump's military threats against Iran

TEHRAN – Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's permanent representative to international organizations in Vienna, has issued a scathing critique of U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed threats against Iran, calling for an immediate return to diplomacy.

In an exclusive interview with Iran's IRNA published on Saturday, Ulyanov condemned Washington's "maximum pressure" strategy as a failure and warned that military posturing risks destabilizing global security.

"We categorically oppose any U.S. threats of force against Iran, especially military strikes targeting nuclear facilities. Such policies are counterproductive and unacceptable," Ulyanov stated.

Should Trump genuinely seek a pact with Tehran, the Russian envoy stressed that abandoning coercive tactics for diplomacy remains the sole credible path.

During a March 31 NBC interview, Trump escalated his rhetoric, warning of bombings "the likes of which they have never witnessed before" should Iran refuse to engage. ▶ Page 2

### Israel enjoys absolute impunity in committing genocide

By Matin Jamshidi

TEHRAN – Israel's genocidal machine sees no limit in the Gaza Strip.

Backed by the United States's limitless and shameful support, the criminal gangs ruling Israel are committing one war crime after another.

The recent killing of 15 paramedics in Gaza was a concrete instance of war crime and crime against humanity by Israel. Israeli forces shot paramedics in the chest and head with their hands tied. They were found buried in an impromptu mass grave plowed over by Israeli military bulldozers.

The aid workers disappeared on March 23 during a rescue mission in Rafah's Tal as-Sultan neighborhood. New video evidence emerged on Saturday showed Israeli forces attacked identifiable Red Crescent ambulances – with lights flashing – and emergency medical workers and civil defense staff wearing highly reflective uniforms.

### Why is Washington seeking to break Turkey's wings in Syria?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The struggle between regional and international powers is raging in Syria. Ankara is among those powers seeking to strengthen its hegemony in Syria. This puts Turkey in a confrontation with Tel Aviv, which sees Turkish policy as a direct threat to its interests.

Over the past few weeks, the Israeli occupation entity has resumed its aggression against Syria with the aim of destroying all Syrian army installations in Hama, Palmyra, Dumayr, Homs, etc.

If the goal was to prevent Syria from retaining any military capabilities that could be used against it now or in the future, it would have accomplished this after the dramatic fall of Bashar al-Assad's government and would not have left these sites untargeted until today.

Undoubtedly, there are technical and logistical reasons behind this delay. But the main reason, according to the confessions of the Zionist regime's officials, is to prevent Turkey from utilizing these military bases – especially air bases.

### Yemen targets Tel Aviv, downs spy drone

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni Armed Forces on Saturday announced military operations targeting Tel Aviv and the downing of an enemy drone.

The Yemeni forces revealed that their drone unit carried out a military strike targeting an Israeli military site in Tel Aviv using a Yafa-type drone. This marks another step in Yemen's growing capability to strike distant targets with precision.

In a statement, the operation was described as a victory for the oppressed Palestinian people and a response to the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The statement also noted that Yemeni air defenses successfully shot down a Giant Shark F360 reconnaissance drone that was conducting hostile missions over Saada Province.

The drone, reportedly operated by the U.S. and Israel, was downed using a domestically-made surface-to-air missile.

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### Why did President Pezeshkian fire his parliamentary deputy?

TEHRAN – Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has dismissed the Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs, Shahram Dabiri, after confirming that Dabiri took a luxury trip to Antarctica during the Nowruz holidays—an action the president deemed incompatible with the values of modesty expected from government officials.

In a formal decree, Pezeshkian criticized the trip as inappropriate, even though it was reportedly funded privately. He emphasized that, at a time when economic hardship still affects many Iranians, such displays of extravagance by senior officials cannot be justified. ▶ Page 3



### Iran's defense achievements shine at LAAD 2025 exhibition

TEHRAN – The 11th edition of the LAAD 2025 Defense and Security Exhibition, held from April 1 to 4 in Brazil, showcased the latest advancements in defense technology, drawing participants from 41 countries, including a significant presence from Iran.

As the largest and most influential defense and security event in the Southern Hemisphere and Latin America, LAAD 2025 hosted 360 companies from five continents.

A key highlight of this year's exhibition was the participation of Iran's Ministry of Defense, marking its debut at the event. Among the advanced technologies presented, the Qods Mohajer 10 was one of the standout exhibits, representing one of the most modern unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs).

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Threats and smiles are America's old policy!

In an article, Kayhan addressed the contradiction in Washington's policy and wrote: The United States of America has once again turned to its repetitive and deceptive game. On one hand, it uses the language of threats and sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and on the other, it talks about negotiations and interaction. This conflicting policy vision, which has been on the agenda of White House leaders for years, has been pursued with greater intensity by Trump in recent times. One day, Trump speaks of "decisive confrontation and destruction" of Iran, and the next day of the possibility of negotiations without preconditions! This is the same old "carrot and stick" policy that Americans have always adopted to deceive public opinion and win one-sided concessions. Trump and his warmongering team, which consists of Zionists and neoconservatives, know very well that the Islamic Republic of Iran is an independent and powerful country that will neither retreat with threats nor be fooled by diplomatic smiles. One of the biggest lessons that Iran and other countries have learned from American policies is that Washington is the most unreliable country in international relations. The Iranian people have repeatedly shown that they are united and resilient against America's hostile policies.

## JAM-E-JAM: Tehran and Riyadh and many opportunities for cooperation

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed Iran's increasing relations with neighbors, especially Saudi Arabia. It wrote: Basically, the strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to develop relations with neighbors in various political, security, economic, commercial, and cultural areas. During the last year (the Persian calendar year that fell between March 2024 and March 2025), Iran's relations with Saudi Arabia improved. Iran and Saudi Arabia cooperated closely on the issue of supporting Palestine and the oppressed people of Gaza and condemning the Israeli occupation of Arab lands. We think of a broad and deep cooperation, and Iran and Saudi Arabia can contribute to peace and stability in the region by working together. We continue to pin our hopes on this cooperation in bilateral and multilateral sectors for economic development and stability of the region. We are confident that the regional countries can determine their destiny by emphasizing endogenous security and cooperation among themselves without being influenced by external

variables or foreign interference.

## Hamshahri: New customers for Iranian weapons

In a commentary, Hamshahri highlighted Iran's participation in the 2025 Latin America Aerospace and Defense (LAAD) international exhibition in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It wrote: Iran's participation in Brazil's aerospace and defense exhibition has provided the opportunity for the Islamic Republic to display its defense equipment in Latin America. The Iranian pavilion successfully drew the attention of many visitors. According to the "Asia Live" website, Brazilians' interest in Iranian weapons is, above all, an indication of Brazil's growing desire for strategic autonomy. As non-Western weapons manufacturers, including Iran, gain a position in Latin America, the United States' position as a traditional supplier of weapons in the region is weakening. Brazil's purchase of Iranian drones could become a diplomatic challenge for Washington, as the United States has long viewed Latin America as its "strategic backyard," bolstering its influence through military aid, defense sales, and security partnerships.

## Shargh: Why are Arab countries distancing themselves from Iran-US conflict?

Shargh examined the reason why Arab countries in the Persian Gulf region are opposed to the United States' military threats against Iran. The paper said: In recent years, the approach of the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf towards regional crises, especially the tension between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, has been accompanied by a kind of strategic caution and political consideration. First of all, economic interdependence in the region is a key factor in the formulation of such cautious policy. In terms of geopolitics, Arab countries, realizing the changing balance of power in the region, are trying to play an active role in regional security. It is part of the effort to de-escalate tensions, engage in dialogue with Tehran, and initiate regional diplomacy that seeks to reduce security dependence on trans-regional powers and increase independent role-playing in the future regional system. In general, the regional Arab countries have correctly understood that the costs of entering into a conflict between Iran and the United States are beyond their national and regional tolerance. Strategic rationality necessitates playing the role of mediator on the path to stability rather than creating tension.

## Regional cooperation vital to resist Israeli occupation: Iranian MP



Iranian Vice Speaker of Parliament Hamidreza Hajibabaei (center) speaks at a session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on April 5, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iranian Vice Speaker of Parliament Hamidreza Hajibabaei has called for stronger solidarity among Asian nations as a key strategy to counter Israeli military actions in Gaza and support the Palestinian cause.

Speaking at a session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), held on the sidelines of the 150th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) summit, Hajibabaei stressed that deeper cooperation across Asia could serve as a powerful tool in promoting peace, protecting regional interests, and halting the ongoing atrocities of the Zionist regime.

"The world no longer accepts unilateral dominance by a single power," he said. "Today, regional players are increasingly shaping global dynamics, and unity among Asian nations can be a decisive force in addressing shared challenges

and injustices."

The Iranian official highlighted key regional concerns—including water scarcity, migration, food insecurity, poverty, and terrorism—and called for collective action based on peaceful dialogue and mutual respect.

Turning to the Gaza crisis, Hajibabaei condemned the blatant land seizures by Israel, taking place "in full view of the international community." He asserted that the occupying regime "relies on continuous instability for its survival" and called on its international backers to "end their support and prevent further crimes."

"Our call, and that of many regional nations, is for immediate action from those backing this regime," he said. "They must be held responsible for enabling these crimes."

He urged all members of the APA to adopt a unified and decisive stance against Israel's colonial and hegemonic policies. "By standing together, Asian nations can demonstrate their commitment to justice, peace, and the rights of the Palestinian people—including their right to dignity, freedom, and self-determination."

Hajibabaei concluded with a plea to the global community: "This is a historic moment. The international community must break its silence and fulfill its moral and humanitarian obligations to ensure that the people of Palestine are protected from genocide and ethnic cleansing."

The Iranian parliamentary delegation at the summit included Vice Speaker Hajibabaei, APA Secretary-General Fadahosseini Maleki, and parliament members Seyyed Shamseddin Hosseini, Mojtaba Yousefi, Ebrahim Rezaei, Somayeh Rafiei, and Abbas Golroo.

## Tehran will not start war, but will retaliate powerfully: IRGC chief

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"This aggression marked the beginning of a global confrontation," he stated, describing it as a pivotal moment in Islamic history.

The subsequent True Promise operations—Iran's retaliatory missile and drone strikes on the Israeli regime—penetrated what Salami called "the most fortified airspace in history," comprising Iron Dome, David's Sling, and THAAD systems.

"Our missiles penetrated their illusions of security," the general said.

Salami also mocked Tel Aviv's reliance on Washington,



comparing it to "a zero appended to America's one. Cut off weapons, and it collapses."

## 'Gaza is history's most astonishing tale'

The general also praised the resilience of Palestinians in Gaza, describing it as the most amazing story in history: "In a completely besieged strip, without water and food, under the enemy's ruthless fire, the people of Gaza stand firm and do not allow the enemy to prevail."

"We are facing a frustrated and nervous enemy that cannot defeat an unarmed people," Salami stated.

The commander extended this solidarity to Yemen's Ansarullah, Lebanon's Hezbollah, and Iraqi factions, asserting they form an "unbreakable front against occupation."

The IRGC chief recounted a series of "painful but galvanizing events," including the "suspicious

'Every inch in occupied territories a target within our reach'

The commander condemned the "arrogant illusion" that Iran's deterrence had weakened, stating, "The enemy miscalculates by thinking we will bow to ultimatums. We are the IRGC—born from the trenches of sacred defense, molded for epic battles, and loyal to the path of Ashura. We do not fear confrontation; we define it."

Turning to the enemy's strategic fragility, the commander warned that "their sprawling presence across the region has become their Achilles' heel. Every inch they occupy is a target within our unerring reach."

"If Resistance were fading, why has the enemy accepted ceasefires or failed its objectives?" he challenged.

Salami dismissed claims of Iranian weakness amid Syria's turmoil, stressing Tehran's role was limited to defeating ISIS.

He also said blaming Iran for Syria's challenges reflects enemy miscalculations.

"The Resistance Front hasn't yet deployed its full capabilities, choosing instead to exercise restraint over the scope of the conflict," the commander stated, adding: "However, any escalation will unleash a fire beyond imagination—the sheer magnitude and intensity of the war would far exceed even the enemy's wildest expectations."

## Senior Russian diplomat rebukes Trump's military threats against Iran

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In an exclusive interview with Iran's IRNA published on Saturday, Ulyanov condemned Washington's "maximum pressure" strategy as a failure and warned that military posturing risks destabilizing global security.

"We categorically oppose any U.S. threats of force against Iran, especially military strikes targeting nuclear facilities. Such policies are counterproductive and unacceptable," Ulyanov stated.

Should Trump genuinely seek a pact with Tehran, the Russian envoy stressed that abandoning coercive tactics for diplomacy remains the sole credible path.

During a March 31 NBC interview, Trump escalated his rhetoric, warning of bombings "the likes of which they have never witnessed before" should Iran refuse to engage.

The threats were issued against a backdrop of heightened U.S. military posturing.

Recent deployments include the extended

presence of the aircraft carriers USS Truman and USS Vinson in the Persian Gulf, B-2 stealth bombers stationed at Diego Garcia—a U.S. base on British territory in the Indian Ocean—and additional troops mobilized across West Asia.

## A "paradox" of U.S. policy

Ulyanov also highlighted what he termed a glaring contradiction in Washington's approach.

"The JCPOA was designed to resolve nuclear concerns through political means, but the U.S. discarded it for coercion. Seven years later, this strategy has backfired completely," he said, noting that Iran has since expanded its nuclear capabilities in response to sanctions.

Despite Trump's claims of seeking a new agreement, the Russian diplomat argued that U.S. actions have undermined trust.

"The administration escalates tensions with threats while claiming to want a deal. The only realistic path is professional, threat-free negotiations," he said.

Ulyanov also underscored Iran's adherence to international nuclear safeguards, noting that Tehran remains a non-nuclear signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

(NPT) and subjects its facilities to rigorous International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections.

"Iran's program is under stricter oversight than most non-nuclear states, and the IAEA has repeatedly confirmed no evidence of weaponization," he said, referencing recent U.S. intelligence reports that align with these findings.

Ulyanov referred to a recent U.S. intelligence assessment—reported by Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard—acknowledging that Iran is not engaged in building a nuclear weapon.

The report further emphasizes that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has not authorized a nuclear weapons program, reinforcing Iran's longstanding assertion that its nuclear activities remain entirely peaceful.

The Russian diplomat's remarks also coincided with regional diplomatic efforts. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a Thursday call with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, affirmed that Tehran "does not seek war but will defend itself decisively against aggression."

## Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan border agreement will boost regional stability, says Iran

TEHRAN – Iran has praised a landmark agreement between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan to officially establish the junction point of their shared borders—a move hailed as a milestone for regional cooperation and stability.

The agreement was signed on Monday during a trilateral summit in the Tajik city of Khujand by Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Alongside the trilateral pact, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also signed a separate agreement addressing their bilateral border, which Uzbekistan's presidency described as a move that would bolster stability, sustainable development, and elevate the

international standing of the region.

In a statement issued Friday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei Hamaneh welcomed the agreement, calling it "an important step toward upholding mutual respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty."

Baqaei added that the deal would help foster trust and reinforce peace and stability across Central Asia.

He reaffirmed Iran's long-standing position in support of peaceful resolutions to border disputes and efforts to strengthen regional unity. Baghaei also expressed hope that the agreement would pave the way for broader cooperation and deeper economic integration among Central Asian nations.



Heads of Iran's three branches of government emphasize unity and cooperation to achieve the goal of "Investing in Production" at their first joint meeting of Persian calendar year of 1404 on April 5, 2025.

# 'US threats undermine dialogue', Pezeshkian says Iran open to fair talks

From Page 1 ▶ Trump's threats escalated over the weekend, with renewed warnings of bombing and secondary tariffs if an agreement on Iran's nuclear program cannot be reached. Additionally, the United States has deployed additional warplanes to the region, further heightening tensions.

In response, Iran's Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, reiterated the country's openness to indirect negotiations with the United States over its peaceful nuclear program, though he expressed concern that U.S. threats are complicating the situation. Araghchi stressed that



any meaningful talks must avoid the use of threats, intimidation, or blackmail. "This requires a constructive atmosphere and the avoidance of approaches

based on threats, intimidation, and blackmail," he added.

In addition to addressing the ongoing nuclear discussions,

Pezeshkian highlighted the importance of fostering internal unity and improving Iran's engagement with other nations on regional and international issues. He underscored the need for the country to overcome internal divisions in order to counter external pressures.

"If we set aside our internal disputes and embrace unity, the enemy will not covet us, and we will also be able to solve the people's problems," Pezeshkian concluded. He called on all Iranians to work together in addressing the country's challenges and improving the well-being of its citizens.

"Therefore," he concluded, "we are unable to continue our cooperation in the 14th government."

The dismissal sends a strong message about the administration's stance on accountability and public image during times of national economic strain.

## Why did President Pezeshkian fire his parliamentary deputy?

From Page 1 ▶ "This government is proud to follow the example of Imam Ali (AS), and under current conditions, where economic pressures on the people remain severe and poverty is widespread, lavish personal vacations—regardless of who pays—are neither defensible nor in line with the principle of

modest living," Pezeshkian wrote.

Despite acknowledging Dabiri's longstanding service and friendship, the president said the administration must prioritize its commitments to transparency, justice, and the public trust.

## Veteran Iranian judge Hossein-Ali Nayyeri laid to rest in Tehran

TEHRAN – A funeral ceremony was held on Saturday morning at Tehran's historic Ark Mosque for Hojjatoleslam Hossein-Ali Nayyeri, a long-serving and senior figure in Iran's judiciary, who passed away on April 3 following a lengthy illness.

The ceremony drew the presence of top-ranking officials, including Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, along with a number of other senior judicial and government figures, and members of Nayyeri's family.

Nayyeri held numerous high-profile judicial posts over the course of his career, including serving as the head of the Special Courts responsible for implementing Article 49 of the Constitution, president of the Supreme Disciplinary Court for Judges, and most recently, as a senior advisor to the head of the Judiciary.

In recent days, his passing was

marred by the circulation of unfounded claims on social media alleging that Nayyeri had succumbed to injuries sustained during the January 18 terrorist attack at the Supreme Court, an incident that resulted in the martyrdom of Hojjatoleslams Mohammad-Reza Raazini and Mohammad Moqiseh. However, these rumors were swiftly and decisively rejected by the Judiciary's official media center, which issued a statement on January 18 confirming that Nayyeri was not present at the scene of the attack and had not been harmed in any way.

In response to the passing of Hojjatoleslam Nayyeri, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, issued a message of condolence.

The Leader offered his sympathy to Nayyeri's family, friends, and colleagues, recognizing his significant contributions to the Judiciary since the early days of

the Revolution. Nayyeri was also honored as the brother of two esteemed martyrs. Ayatollah Khamenei prayed for divine mercy upon the late judge.

Hossein-Ali Nayyeri was born in 1956 in one of the cities of Iran's northern Gilan Province. He began his religious education at a young age at the Qom Seminary, where he studied under several prominent clerics, most notably Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi Gilani. Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Nayyeri joined the ranks of the judiciary, emerging from the Haqqani Seminary—an institution that produced many of the Islamic Republic's judicial and political elite.

His formal entry into the judicial system came in 1980, when he was recommended by Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, the then-head of the Supreme Judicial Council. Nayyeri was appointed as a Sharia judge at Evin Prison,



a facility primarily designated for political detainees.

Throughout the 1980s and beyond, Nayyeri remained an enduring presence in Iran's legal system. His leadership at the Special Courts for Article 49—a provision dealing with the restitution of illicit wealth accumulated under the previous regime—played a crucial role in shaping early post-Revolution legal reforms.

In 2022, he was appointed by Mohseni Ejei as Senior Advisor to the Head of the Judiciary.

## Hostile media and its psychological warfare against Axis of Resistance and Iran: methods and implications

By Najah Mohammed Ali

LONDON – Hostile media continues its systematic campaigns against the Axis of Resistance and the Islamic Republic of Iran, utilizing psychological warfare techniques to distort facts, mislead public opinion, and exaggerate the enemy's capabilities and ongoing threats.

These campaigns are not limited to spreading false news but also extend to exploiting modern digital tools to incite sedition and weaken the morale of resistant nations.

However, despite the hostile media's attempts to spread fear and despair, the Axis of Resistance, led by the Islamic Republic, has demonstrated its ability to turn these challenges into opportunities to enhance public awareness. The "Al-Aqsa Flood" operation, the legendary resilience of the Palestinian people, and the continuation of military resistance from Gaza to Sanaa and southern Lebanon have all proven that Resistance is not merely a reaction but a comprehensive strategy based on public and field awareness to achieve balance and deterrence.

In this context, the "Al-Aqsa Flood" operation in Palestine, the "True Promise I & II" operations from deep inside Iran, and Hezbollah's victory in southern Lebanon confirmed the effectiveness of Resistance in confronting the Zionist occupation. These operations exposed the enemy's weaknesses in dealing with Resistance tactics and demonstrated that, despite its misleading campaigns, Zionist media has failed to conceal its military failures in the face of resilient fighters.

While hostile media seeks to downplay the defensive capabilities of the Axis of Resistance, focusing these days on Yemen and Iran—claiming that Sanaa has suffered significant losses, Iran's missile power is weakening, or that the Resistance forces in Lebanon

and Yemen are unprepared—field realities tell a different story. From Hezbollah's precision strikes against occupation sites, which forced a ceasefire, to Ansarullah's targeting of American military vessels in the Red Sea, these operations are establishing new deterrence equations that challenge imperialist forces.

**Strategic developments and new deterrence equations**

In a significant strategic development, Yemen's Ansarullah forces continue to target American warships and aircraft carriers with a large number of ballistic missiles in the Red Sea. This operation, a direct response to U.S. support for the Zionist occupation and direct American aggression on Sanaa, has dealt a major blow to the U.S. project in the region and demonstrated that the Axis of Resistance is capable of threatening Western interests when necessary.

**Failure of hostile media in creating divisions**

For years, hostile media has attempted to create divisions among the region's peoples by promoting fabricated sectarian and ethnic conflicts. However, the growing popular solidarity with the Palestinian cause, along with the political and military alignment between Iran and its allies, reflects the failure of these policies.

Additionally, in a move that highlights the increasing strategic cooperation between Axis of Resistance countries and their allies, Iran, Russia, and China recently conducted major naval exercises. These maneuvers, which sent clear messages to the West, confirmed that the Axis of Resistance is not alone in confronting imperialist projects but enjoys the support of major global powers striving to establish a new multipolar world order.

**Exposing the true face of Hostile Axis**

While Western, Zionist, and Persian-language media abroad attempt to portray the Axis of Resistance as a source of instability, real evidence confirms that imperialist powers are the true instigators of chaos in the region. From supporting the Zionist entity in its crimes against Gaza to arming Takfiri groups in Syria and Iraq, the destructive roles of these powers are becoming increasingly evident.

This is especially true in light of the Zionist enemy's escalation of its brutal military aggression against Syria after the fall of the previous regime and the arrival of a more cooperative government, reinforcing the legitimacy of the Axis of Resistance as the genuine defender of people's rights.

**The Resistance media's response to disinformation**

Despite the dominance of Western and Zionist media, Resistance-aligned channels and platforms have managed to assert themselves by providing well-documented reports and in-depth analyses that expose the lies of hostile propaganda. However, it remains essential to strengthen the role of social media platforms and other Axis of Resistance media outlets so they can play a more central role in raising awareness and thwarting the enemy's media strategies.

Studies reveal a growing public awareness of the psychological warfare techniques used against the Axis of Resistance, such as fake news and information manipulation. This awareness, reinforced by media guidance from Resistance groups, has led to a decline in the effectiveness of these campaigns, as audiences are becoming more capable of distinguishing between real and fabricated news.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Iran learn fate at 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran learned their opponents at the 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Ali Naderi's side are pitted against two-time champion Portugal, Mauritania and Paraguay.

Brazil and Italy, the two finalists in the last World Cup, will collide in the first phase of Seychelles 2025, while two sections will feature three teams ranked among the planet's top 12, following the conclusion of the tournament draw and the release of the match schedule.

Group A: Seychelles, Belarus, Guatemala, Japan

Group B: Mauritania, Iran, Portugal, Paraguay

Group C: Spain, Senegal, Chile, Tahiti

Group D: Brazil, El Salvador, Italy, Oman

The draw was conducted by FIFA Head of Olympics, Futsal and Beach Soccer Kasra Haghighi, who was assisted by former Chelsea, Nottingham Forest and Seychelles center-back Michael Mancienne and Nigeria legend Sunday Oliseh.

Following the draw, the tournament match schedule was also confirmed. The action kicks off at the Paradise Arena on 1 May with Guatemala taking on Japan in Group A, followed by Mauritania against Iran in Group B.

The opening day excitement continues with hosts Seychelles playing the first evening match against Belarus, followed by Portugal against Paraguay.

## Iran, Japan share spoils at SAT Women's Futsal Championship 2025

TEHRAN – Iran and Japan shared the spoils in a goalless draw in the SAT Futsal Championship Thailand 2025 on Saturday.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Uzbekistan and Thailand on Sunday and Monday, respectively.

The competition takes place from April 5 to 7 at Terminal Hall, Terminal 21 Korat in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

The Iranian football team prepare for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025, which will be held in Hohhot, China, from May 7 to 18.

## Persepolis held by Esteghlal Khuzestan: PGPL

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team suffered a major setback in their hunt for the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) title after being held by Esteghlal Khuzestan on Saturday.

In Tehran's Azadi Stadium, the Reds were held to a goalless draw by Esteghlal Khuzestan and almost miss the chance of defending title.

In Arak, Sepahan and Aluminum shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw.

Mohammad Karimi scored for Sepahan in the 90th minute from the penalty spot and Amin Kazemian leveled the score in the dying moments of the match.

Rock-bottom Havadar defeated Malavan 2-0 in Tehran and Mes were held to a goalless draw by Nassaji in Rafsanjan.

Tractor lead the table with 54 points and one game in hand, followed by Sepahan and Persepolis with 50 and 48 points, respectively.

## Esteghlal not to extend Masoud Juma's deal

TEHRAN – Kenyan forward Masoud Juma Choka will reportedly leave Iran's Esteghlal football team in the summer.

The 29-year-old Kenyan striker had been clubless since leaving Saudi Arabia's Al-Jabalain in July 2024.

He joined Esteghlal in December 2024, but failed to live up to expectations.

Juma has been a member of Kenya's national football team since 2017.

Esteghlal, headed by Miodrag Bozovic, sits ninth in the 16-team table of Iran's league.

## FIBA Asia Cup 2025 draw: Iran opt for Pot 2

TEHRAN – Iran have opted to be placed in Pot 2 for the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Draw scheduled to be held in Jeddah the coming Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

All other teams are seeded in respective pots in order of Ranking based on FIBA World Ranking – Men Presented by NIKE, which was updated at the end of the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Qualifiers.

The FIBA Asia Cup 2025 will be played at Jeddah from Aug. 5-17, marking the first time the Persian Gulf state is hosting FIBA's flagship event in Asia after 1997.

Pot 1: Saudi Arabia (hosts), Australia, Japan, New Zealand

Pot 2: Iran, Lebanon, China, Philippines

Pot 3: Jordan, Korea, Syria, Chinese Taipei

Pot 4: India, Qatar, Guam, Iraq

The 16 teams will be split into four groups of four, with the top teams of each automatically qualifying for the Quarter-Finals.

The no. 2 and 3 teams, on the other hand, will play in the Qualification to Quarter-Finals.

Winners of the Quarter-Finals will then advance to the Semi-Finals, where the victors will head into the finale to battle for the championship. The losing sides, meanwhile, will face each other in a Third-Place Game.

## Iran discover rivals in 2026 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualifiers

TEHRAN – Teams hoping to earn passage discovered their opponents following the conclusion of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 Qualifiers draw at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday.

The 34 sides were drawn into six groups of four teams and two groups of five, with the Qualifiers to be hosted by Cambodia, Indonesia, Jordan, Myanmar, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, the-afc.com wrote.

The eight group winners will join defending champions China, Korea Republic and Japan in the Finals, scheduled to be staged across three host cities from March 1 to 26, 2026.

Group A will see Iran, Jordan (H), Lebanon, Singapore and Bhutan battling it out while Thailand (H), India, Mongolia, Timor-Leste and Iraq were drawn in Group B.

Myanmar (H), Bahrain, Bangladesh and Turkmenistan will be the teams vying for the single spot to the Finals in Group C while Chinese Taipei, Indonesia (H), Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan will fight it out in Group D.

Vietnam (H), Guam, United Arab Emirates and Maldives will slug it out in Group E while Group F will see Uzbekistan (H), Nepal, Laos and Sri Lanka in action.

Group G will feature Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Cambodia (H) and Saudi Arabia while Group H will see DPR Korea, Malaysia, Palestine and Tajikistan (H) competing for the ticket to the Finals.

The Qualifiers will be played from June 23 to July 5.

## Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$2.2b to Afghanistan in 11 months

TEHRAN – Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$2.2 billion to Afghanistan during the 11-month period from March 20, 2024 to February 18, 2025, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) announced.

Foroud Asgari said that Afghanistan was Iran's fifth top export destination in the mentioned 11-month period.

On February 21, the governors of Iran and Afghanistan's central banks met on the sidelines of a banking technology summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, to discuss strengthening monetary and banking cooperation, Iran's central bank said.

Iran's central bank chief, Mohammad Reza Farzin, and his Afghan counterpart Noor Ahmad Agha, emphasized the importance of expanding financial collaboration to support growing economic and trade exchanges between the two countries, the statement added.

Also, in last October, ports and maritime officials of Iran and Afghanistan met to discuss investment opportunities for the Afghan private sector in Iran's southeastern Chabahar Port.

In the meeting attended by the director general of the Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, the governor-general of the province, some MPs, and officials of the Afghanistan Trade and Industry Ministry, the opportunities for cooperation and participation of the private sector of Afghanistan in Chabahar port were introduced and reviewed.

Qasem Askari-Nasab, the director general of the Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province, welcomed the request of the Afghan government to invest in the Iranian port while introducing the commercial facilities and capacities of Chabahar's Shahid Beheshti port to the Afghan side.

"The Afghan side's investment in Chabahar port, in addition to the possibility of Afghanistan's access to open waters, will strengthen the economic relations between the two countries and develop transit in the region," Askari-Nasab said.

Introducing new economic opportunities to increase trade relations between the investors of the two countries, he further proposed that the Afghan side invest in the construction of a multi-purpose terminal for goods and containers.

Meanwhile, in a meeting with an Iranian trade delegation in Kabul in last August, Afghanistan's interim Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund said that his country is eager to attract Iranian investors in order to develop Afghan mining industry, generate solar electricity and expand railway connectivity.

The Iranian delegation also proposed to launch a joint special industrial zone with Afghanistan.

Noting that Afghanistan has turned into a good place for making investment, Mullah said that the relevant ministries and organizations there, will cooperate and work closely



with the investors.

The Iranian delegation, made up of economic and trade players, also held a separate meeting with Afghanistan's acting minister of commerce Haji Nooruddin Azizi.

They called for the formation of a joint economic-mining zone between the two neighboring countries.

At the time, Iran's commercial attaché in Afghanistan said that in order to improve Iran's presence in Afghanistan's markets, the trade between the two countries should move towards newer models of cooperation.

"Afghanistan supplies more than 80 percent of its market needs through imports, and imports from Iran constitute 25 percent of this amount," Hossein Roustaei said in a meeting on opportunities and challenges of the Afghan market, held by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

Referring to Afghanistan's import priorities, including food, agriculture, fuel, basic goods such as flour, oil, eggs, day-old chickens, medicine, medical equipment, and construction equipment, he continued: "Iran exported more than 724 million dollars of goods to Afghanistan in the first four months of the current [Iranian calendar year] (March 20-July 21) which has increased by 28 percent compared to the same period last year."

"The establishment of national security and the central government in Afghanistan over the past two years have improved the conditions of trade with this country," he added.

Afghanistan has prioritized the exploitation of the country's mines. Therefore, Iran's traditional economic relation with Afghanistan should enter into newer models of cooperation, he stressed.

According to Roustaei, investment and operation of mines, technical and engineering services, mechanization of agriculture and smart agriculture, construction of transportation infrastructure, and renewable energies are among the new fields that should be considered for cooperation between the two countries.

He further emphasized that the establishment of a joint economic zone between the two countries should be implemented as soon as possible, saying: "Considering the recent conflicts between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghanistan wants to use the opportunity of Chabahar port in the best way.

Iran can increase its transit role in the import and export of Afghanistan from the current 50 percent."

utilizing advanced geophysical equipment. "If we succeed in these two areas, we can double the pace of discoveries," he added.

The daily production of gasoline in Iran's Persian Gulf Star Refinery (PGSR) has risen by four million liters in the second half of the past Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 20, 2024), the managing director of Persian Gulf Star Oil Company announced.

Gholamhossein Ramezanzadeh stated that this production growth is due to improved process conditions in gasoline production units, increased pressure in these units, and the utilization of new compressors.

PGSR is the first of its kind designed based on gas condensate feedstock received from the South Pars gas field which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf.

Construction of the refinery started in 2006, but the project was delayed as the result of some mismanagement and also financial limitations due to the West-led sanctions against Iran.

# Drilling of 100 oil, gas wells completed in a year

TEHRAN – National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) completed the drilling and finalization of 100 oil and gas wells across onshore and offshore fields in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), the company's head said, bringing the total number of wells drilled since its inception to 5,154.

According to state media, Mehran Makvandi said the company's primary mission is to provide drilling services and specialized operations for oil and gas producers, describing drilling as "the front line of production" and a vital step in preserving and boosting output.

Of the 100 wells completed in the past year, 24 were development wells and 76 were workovers. A total of 74 wells—14 development and 60 workover wells—were handed over to the National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC), he said.

Makvandi added that 11 wells were drilled in fields managed by the Central Oil Fields Company, three



by the Iranian Offshore Oil Company, seven under development projects run by the Petroleum Engineering and Development Company, and five were completed on a project basis.

He emphasized the strategic role of the National Drilling Company as one of the upstream arms of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), contributing to hydrocarbon supply and helping reduce Iran's energy imbalance. A portion of the company's

resources is currently allocated to drilling gas wells, he said.

The total drilling footage reached 113,520 meters in 1403, up by 28,863 meters from the previous year, which Makvandi attributed to a more than fivefold increase in development well drilling. During the same period, the company carried out 4,538 technical service operations and 1,473 special service operations across more than 20 special-

ized service categories—marking a significant rise compared to the previous year.

Makvandi also noted that 17 drilling rigs were relocated across operational zones. Of the company's 74 land and offshore rigs, 64 are currently active in 10 provinces, engaged in development, appraisal, exploration, and repair-completion projects.

Looking ahead, Makvandi said the company aims to accelerate drilling operations and fulfill the strategic plans issued by NIOC in the Iranian year 1404 (starting March 21, 2025). This includes the continuation of equipment modernization efforts that began in 1403.

"With the strengthening of our fleet, rig upgrades, and the adoption of new technologies, we expect to see a major leap in productivity, reduced drilling downtime, improved efficiency, and increased revenue," he said.

## Daily gasoline output reaches 120m liters amid push to curb energy imbalance

TEHRAN – Iran's total daily gasoline production—including refinery output and reserves—has reached approximately 120 million liters, a senior oil official said, as the country pushes to bridge the growing gap between supply and consumption.

Mohammad Sadeq Azimifar, deputy oil minister and head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), told state media that Iran's 10 main refineries are currently processing over 2.4 million barrels of crude oil and condensates per day.

To address the country's liquid fuel imbalance, he said, the government has implemented a dual-track strategy in its 14th administration, focusing primarily on maximizing output from existing refineries.

Azimifar noted that in the second half of the Iranian year 1403 (ended on March 20, 2025), enhanced refinery efficiency led to an average increase of 8.0 million liters per day in gasoline production and 7.0 million liters in diesel output.

Overall, the refining sector expanded by five percent compared to the previous year, adding around 100,000 barrels per day to total refined products. Efforts to manage the production-con-

sumption gap this year include quality and quantity upgrades at existing facilities. For example, a project at Tehran refinery is set to boost gasoline output by 20 percent and upgrade its fuel standard to Euro-5.

A diesel quality improvement project is nearing completion at Shiraz refinery, and Esfahan refinery will soon launch a white oil hydro-desulfurization unit.

Beyond optimizing current infrastructure, the country is working to bring new refining projects online. Azimifar said at least one, and possibly two, new refining projects could be added to the current network of ten refineries in the current year.

Among these is the 60,000-barrel-per-day Alish refinery, under construction by the private sector in Siraf, and the first unit of the 120,000-barrel-per-day Mehr Parsian Gulf refinery in Bandar Abbas.

The ultimate goal, according to Azimifar, is to reach daily production of 129 million liters of gasoline and 130 million liters of diesel.

He added that the increase in output over the past six months has contributed to the government's seventh development plan. However, he

stressed that production growth alone cannot resolve the energy imbalance.

"Iran's energy consumption intensity is about 2.5 times the global average," he said, adding that over 53 percent of the country's transport fleet is outdated and consumes more than twice the global average fuel per vehicle. He called for fleet modernization, electrification, and stronger coordination among relevant agencies.

Azimifar also highlighted a drop in compressed natural gas (CNG) use as a contributing factor to higher gasoline demand. CNG consumption has declined from roughly 24 million cubic meters per day in late 2020 to 18-19 million cubic meters in 2024. This drop, he said, has played a role in pushing up gasoline consumption. He stressed that alongside expanding high-quality fuel production, managing consumption is vital. Current gasoline production stands at around 105 million liters per day from refineries and 20 million from storage, while national demand in 1403 is averaging 124 million liters daily.

To narrow the deficit, the government is focusing on slowing consumption growth through vehicle scrappage, fleet modernization, and vehicle quality upgrades—all while seeking to minimize fuel imports.

## Iran brings 8th well of South Pars phase 11 online, adding 3 mcm/d to gas output

TEHRAN – Iran has brought the eighth well of Platform B in Phase 11 of the South Pars gas field into production, adding approximately 3.0 million cubic meters per day (mcm/d) to the country's natural gas output, according to the head of Petropars Group.

Hamidreza Saqafi, the head of Petropars, told state media that the achievement was the result of close coordination with Pars Oil and Gas Company and a collective commitment to national goals.

"This marks a significant step forward in the development of Phase 11 and in expanding Iran's gas production capacity," he said, adding that Petropars remains committed to implementing South Pars development projects with the highest quality and speed to ensure sustainable energy supply.

Saqafi said the development process for Phase 11 will be completed by the end of the first month of the Iranian year 1404 (late April 2025), leading to a notable increase in output from the field.

Ali Nadiran, project director for Phase 11 at Pet-

ropars, highlighted the technical specifications of the well, noting that it was drilled to a depth of over 4,200 meters. The perforation process has been completed in the Kangan and Dalan reservoir formations. He added that the well is currently undergoing flowback and cleanup operations following acid stimulation.

The South Pars gas field, located in the Persian Gulf, is the world's largest natural gas reserve shared between Iran and Qatar. Iran's portion of the field is divided into 24 development phases, with each phase representing a different segment of production and infrastructure. The field is the backbone of Iran's domestic energy supply and a key component of its petrochemical and export ambitions.

Development of the field began in the late 1990s and has proceeded in stages, often influenced by foreign investment, sanctions, and shifting energy policies. While several phases are fully operational, others—including Phase 11—have experienced years of delays due to technological and geopolitical challenges.



Phase 11 is among the most technically complex sections of the field, located near the maritime border with Qatar, and is expected to significantly boost output once fully operational.

Despite facing limitations due to international sanctions, Iran has increasingly turned to domestic companies such as Petropars to continue development work. The addition of new wells in Phase 11 reflects Tehran's strategy to accelerate upstream investments and reduce the gap in gas output with neighboring Qatar, which has extensively developed its share of the shared field.

## Refinery projects prioritized to accelerate development, boost fuel output



TEHRAN – Iran is streamlining its refinery development strategy by prioritizing projects that offer higher returns and can be brought online more quickly, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said during a visit to the Tehran Oil Refinery.

Speaking to the press, Paknejad stated that

several defined projects, particularly those focused on fuel quality upgrades and increasing output, are expected to come online this year. These projects are key to achieving the targets set in Iran's Seventh Development Plan.

"The status of the ongoing projects is promising, and we hope they will be completed on schedule," he said, adding that the ministry's efforts are currently focused on selecting high-efficiency projects to enter the production cycle sooner.

Paknejad also highlighted plans to reduce crude oil exports in favor of expanding domestic value chains, notably through the development of small-scale refineries and integrated petro-refineries. He emphasized the use of public and private investment as a core component of this strategy.

"In line with the Leader's call for investing in production, we are actively seeking to attract investments—particularly from private citizens and non-state entities—to finance smaller-scale refinery projects that are better suited to limited-capital environments," he explained.

He referenced the Shahid Soleimani Refinery project, which began four years ago but has seen slow progress. In response, the oil ministry is now ranking all pending refinery projects based on their speed of deployment and economic returns, with the goal of fast-tracking those that can enter production sooner and more efficiently.

The move comes as Iran looks to curb fuel imports, address energy imbalances, and modernize its refining sector amid rising domestic demand and tightening international sanctions.

## Iran to resume offshore oil, gas exploration in Persian Gulf after five-year hiatus

TEHRAN – A senior official at the National Iranian Oil Company has said exploration operations in the Persian Gulf which had been halted since 2019 will be resumed.

Mohyeddin Jafari, head of the Exploration Directorate at the NIOC, said Saturday that exploration operations at sea had been halted since 2019 due to a shortage of offshore rigs, according to a report by the Oil Ministry.

However, he added, following a new tender, a contractor with a marine rig has been selected, paving the way for operations to restart in 2025 in shared border areas with neighboring countries.

Over the past six and a half months, the NIOC's exploration team has focused on both key studies and operational activities, Jafari said, adding that the Pezeshkian administration aims to review and assess exploration developments over the past 30 years.

Jafari said that one of the administration's top priorities is to accelerate discovery rates by increasing the number of drilling rigs and

# Trump's Repression Machine Targets Pro-Palestine Voices in Colleges

US uses budget cuts, student expulsions and visa cancellation to curb academic solidarity with Gaza

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - In his second presidential term, Donald Trump has implemented a series of policies that significantly impact students in the United States who support Palestine and Gaza in particular. These measures, framed under the guise of combating anti-Semitism, have raised substantial concerns regarding freedom of speech, academic freedom, and the targeting of pro-Palestine activists.



In January 2025, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at addressing what his administration claimed was a surge in anti-Semitic activities on college campuses. This order directed federal agencies to explore civil and criminal actions against students and university personnel advocating for Palestinian liberation or criticizing Israel's actions in Gaza. Notably, the order called for identifying legal avenues to deport non-citizen students involved in pro-Palestine protests, effectively conflating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

The administration's policies have led to tangible actions against student activists. For instance, Rumeyssa Ozturk, a Turkish student at Tufts University, was arrested by ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and had her student visa revoked after writing a pro-Palestine op-ed, following an online smear campaign by a pro-Israel lobbying group. Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia student, reportedly had both his visa and green card revoked after joining peaceful campus protests against

the war in Gaza. In both cases, immigration enforcement was weaponized to punish dissent.

## Financial pressures on academic institutions

Beyond individual actions, the Trump administration has exerted financial pressure on universities perceived as insufficiently supportive of its policies. Columbia University faced the loss of \$400 million in federal funding.

Brown University saw a \$510 million NIH grant frozen.

Harvard University received an ultimatum with nine demands, including dismantling DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) programs and banning masks at protests, under threat of losing nearly \$9 billion in funding.

Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania have also faced similar investigations and funding threats.

These universities are being compelled to reshape their internal policies, speech codes, and student reg-

ulations in ways that critics argue are designed to placate the federal government rather than support academic integrity.

## Criticism and legal challenges

These policies have drawn sharp criticism from civil rights organizations and legal experts. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) has warned that the executive order violates First Amendment rights by targeting pro-Palestine activists, arguing that it undermines fundamental freedoms of speech and association.

Legal scholars have also highlighted potential constitutional violations, emphasizing that immigration enforcement predicated on protected speech is unconstitutional.

## Impact on academic freedom

The administration's actions have instilled anxiety among faculty and students, particularly at institutions like Harvard University. Faculty members have expressed concerns about potential capitulation to political pressures, fearing that com-

pliance with federal demands could compromise academic independence and freedom of expression.

The Trump administration's policies toward student activism are not isolated incidents—they represent a broader trend of authoritarian governance cloaked in the language of national security and anti-hate legislation. By suppressing dissenting voices, weaponizing federal power against academic institutions, and conflating political criticism with hate speech, the administration is dismantling the very freedoms it claims it stands for.

If universities, the traditional bastions of free thought, yield to this pressure without resistance, the implications will ripple far beyond the Palestinian cause. Today, it is Gaza. Tomorrow, it could be climate activism, anti-war protests, labor organizing, or any movement that challenges the powerful.

How can the United States advocate for freedom of expression in Iran, China, or Russia while jailing its own students for peacefully protesting the deaths of civilians in Gaza? How can Washington accuse other nations of stifling dissent while using ICE to detain foreign students whose only "crime" was supporting Palestinian rights?

This inconsistency weakens America's moral authority on the global stage and undermines the very democratic ideals it claims to uphold. As the administration attempts to win hearts and minds globally, these domestic actions reveal a troubling double standard.

## Why is Washington seeking to break Turkey's wings in Syria?

From page 1 ▶ Though Turkish foreign policy is largely focused on the trans-Atlantic alliance, the occupation entity is concerned about the presence of any Turkish military units in central or northern Syria, as they will restrict its air intervention in Syria.

A senior Israeli official had told Maariv that by strengthening its military and political presence in northern Syria, Ankara aims to "permanently consolidate its influence," pointing out that "Turkish policies are not only limited to extending influence but also aim to undermine Israeli strategies in southern Syria."

Israel believes that any Turkish military presence in Syria would provide Ankara with a wide influence over the Syrian authority, consolidating the influence that existed from the beginning of the war against the government of Bashar al-Assad until al-Jolani's success in taking control of Syria.

For its part, Turkey has warned against Israeli intervention in Syria while taking measures that include consolidating its military presence even in central Syria, where there is talk of its intention to establish permanent military bases and deploy weapons and interceptor systems that would limit its freedom of maneuver in Syrian airspace — as Israeli security sources have warned.

As for al-Jolani, Israel considers him an integral part of Turkey's tools to extend its influence in Syria, even if his positions do not pose a direct threat to Tel Aviv. This is why some Israeli officials have described him as a "leader of a terrorist organization."

This, of course, allows the occupation entity to continue its expansionist strategies in southern Syria without paying attention to the reassuring messages it receives from al-Jolani — or through

intermediaries — calling for finding "solutions" that take into account Israeli interests.

More importantly, Washington seeks to create a balance between its two competing regional allies. It supports Ankara in its attempts to extend its influence in northern Syria and a significant portion of the center but without extending to the Kurdish areas. At the same time, it takes into account Tel Aviv's interests in the south to ensure the fragmentation of Syria.

Therefore, Washington is currently content to make sure that neither side is able to fully dominate Syria or monopolize its decision-making process. It did not take the initiative to lift sanctions on Syria; rather, it declared the new regime "terrorist" in line with the Israeli approach.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Israel enjoys absolute impunity in committing genocide

From page 1 ▶ On Thursday, Israel's occupation army also bombed a school sheltering displaced families in the al-Tuffah neighborhood of Gaza City.

All these crimes are being committed along with starving the Gazans collectively.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly in September 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shamelessly denied that his regime had banned the entry of food, water, and medicine to the Gaza Strip. Now, the entire world is noticing that since the regime violated the ceasefire agreement with Gaza on March 18, 2025, it has cut

essentials to 2.3 million people in the coastal enclave.

"What is happening right now is unthinkable. Today it is 31 days and counting with absolutely no humanitarian aid getting into Gaza, nothing. No food, no water, no medicine, no fuel, for over a month," lamented independent senator Bernie Sanders on Thursday as he was pushing for blocking the sale of arms to Israel.

Violating the ceasefire, killing paramedics, continuing to massacre and starve civilians, and many other horrible acts are primarily intended to completely erase the name of the Gaza Strip and Pal-

estine as a whole from the map as part of a malicious project being sought for long years.

Netanyahu, who is wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC), has openly said, "We will increase pressure on Gaza to bring back the hostages and move Gaza's people out."

He added, "We will maintain security control and implement the migration plan proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump."

Concurrent with such astonishing remarks, the United Nations announced that Israel's attacks in the

occupied West Bank have caused the "largest displacement since 1967 war".

"It has resulted in systematic destruction, forced displacement, and demolition orders affecting Palestinian families and refugee camps," the UN's agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA said in a post on X: "The situation remains highly concerning."

Anyway, all these vicious acts would not have been possible without support from the West, particularly the United States.

All countries and politicians in the West who have given Israel such impunity will be judged guilty in the court of history.

## Yemen targets Tel Aviv, downs spy drone

From page 1 ▶ The Yemeni Armed Forces called on all free people in the Arab and Islamic world to act swiftly in support of the oppressed Palestinian people and to help stop the genocide being committed against them by Israel.

The statement emphasized that the consequences of silence, inaction, and failure to uphold moral, religious, and humanitarian duties will be severe for all.

The armed forces reaffirmed their commitment to continue fulfilling their responsibilities toward the oppressed Palestinian people until the U.S.-backed genocidal war on Gaza comes to an end and the siege on the enclave is lifted.

Ansarallah leader Abdul-Malik al-Houthi stated on Friday that the American aggression against Yemen "is escalating but has failed and has not



Yemeni forces showcase the Yafa drone used to target Tel Aviv

impacted the country's military capabilities."

He highlighted that the armed forces have "successfully downed 17 American MQ-9 drones since the beginning of the support front", calling it an unprecedented achievement.

He added that the United States "has escalated

its aggression against Yemen as part of its partnership with the Israeli enemy in their collective aggression against the Palestinian people".

On Friday, the Yemeni Armed Forces also announced that their navy, missile forces, and drone units targeted hostile warships in the Red Sea, including the American aircraft carrier USS Truman, using several cruise missiles and drones.

Despite the ongoing American aggression against Yemen, the Arab state's forces continue their operations in solidarity with Gaza, targeting Israeli sites as well as the USS Truman and other hostile vessels in the Red Sea.

They also continue to block Israeli and American maritime activity in the designated operation zones of the Red Sea, Arabian Sea, Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden.

## New video evidence disputes Israeli army's account of medic killings

New video evidence relating to the killing of 15 Palestinian rescue workers by Israeli forces has emerged, contradicting the Israeli account of the attack on a medical convoy in Rafah.

The footage, which was retrieved from a phone belonging to one of the medics who was killed, shows the Israeli army attacking clearly marked Red Crescent ambulances that had their emergency signal lights on, and emergency medical workers wearing reflective vests.

Officials from the Palestine Red Crescent Society said in a news conference on Friday at the United Nations headquarters that they had presented the nearly seven-minute recording to

the UN Security Council.

On March 23, the humanitarian workers went missing after responding to a distress call from civilians wounded in an Israeli attack in Rafah. All contact was lost with them and the medics were found days later in a mass grave, two to three meters deep, with their bodies riddled with gunshots, according to the Palestinian Civil Defense in Gaza.

"They were killed in their uniforms. Driving their clearly marked vehicles. Wearing their gloves. On their way to save lives," said Jonathan Whittall, head of then UN's humanitarian affairs office in Palestine.

## Hundreds of protesters turn out in European cities against Trump

Hundreds of people protested in European cities on Saturday against U.S. President Donald Trump and his adviser Elon Musk, following a bruising week for financial markets after Trump unveiled sweeping global tariffs.

In the German city of Frankfurt, the "Hands Off!" demonstration was organized by Democrats Abroad, the official organization of the Democratic Party for U.S. citizens living overseas.

Gathering at Frankfurt's Opernplatz, members of the overseas Democrats group demanded the resignation of the U.S. president, with placard slogans reading "Restore Democracy", "Hands off our personal data" and "The world is tired of your bullshit Donald, be gone!"

In Berlin, slogans directed at Musk read "Shut up Elon, no one voted for you," and a dog wore a sign that said "Dogs against DOGE," referring to the Department of Government Efficiency run by senior adviser Musk, an initiative of the second Trump administration to reduce federal spending waste, fraud and abuse.

In the French capital of Paris, about 200 people, mostly American, gathered on the Place de la République to protest against Trump. Some gave speeches to denounce the president, with



protesters waving banners ranging from "Resist Tyrant", "Rule of Law" "Feminists for Freedom not fascism" and "Save Democracy". One sang and played the Bob Dylan song Masters of War.

Protests against Trump and Musk were also held in other European cities, including London and Lisbon.

In the British capital, a few hundred people gathered in Trafalgar Square, holding signs saying "Proud American Ashamed" and "WTF America?" The crowd chanted "Hands off Canada", "Hands off Greenland" and "Hands off Ukraine" while listening to speeches criticising Trump.

## Major water pipeline in Gaza City stops working

A statement from the municipality says thirst is ravaging the residents of Gaza City.

Here are some other highlights of the statement:

[Israel] deliberately targeted water facilities during its aggression on Gaza, causing significant damage to wells and water networks.

The city is experiencing a major water crisis due to the shutdown of the Mekorot water pipeline that passes through the Shujayea neighborhood.

We call on human rights and international organizations to pressure the occupation to allow an inspection of the Mekorot pipeline and its resumption.

## Lebanese president meets US envoy to discuss southern Lebanon

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun discussed the latest developments in southern Lebanon during his meeting on Saturday with Deputy US Envoy to the Middle East Morgan Ortagus.

According to a statement from the Lebanese presidency, the two discussed issues related to southern Lebanon, the international monitoring committee working to ensure the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah does not return to all-out war, the Israeli withdrawal from the country and the situation in the south.



Aoun and Ortagus also discussed the situation on the Lebanese-Syrian border.

## Polish PM says party was targeted in cyberattack ahead of election

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk has said that his centrist political party was the target of a cyberattack, and suggested that it could have been interference from the east — meaning Russia or Belarus — ahead of Poland's presidential election next month.

Tusk announced on the X platform that his Civic Platform party's computer system was targeted.

"Foreign interference in elections begins. Services point to eastern trace," Tusk said.

Jan Grabiec, the head of Tusk's office, told the Polish state news agency PAP that the cyberattack consisted of an attempt to take control of computers of employees of the Civic Platform office and the election staff over about a dozen hours on Wednesday.

## 40% of Iranians travel during Nowruz holidays, tourism minister says



Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri

He emphasized that based on the latest statistics, over seven million foreign tourists have visited Iran. West seeks to propagate Iranophobia, he said. But when foreign tourists leave Iran, their mindset is different, he added.

He called attractions, security, and infrastructure as three factors behind drawing tourists.

The minister said the country's infrastructure is not at a satisfactory level, and emphasized on improving the transportation system and accommodation facilities.

He said bureaucracy has bothered the investors, adding that investors should feel that they are supported by the government.

The official mentioned that currently, many foreign investors are making investments in the country's tourism sector and they have the state officials' support.

Financial turnover will become easier for foreign tourists and investors, he said, adding a headquarters for supporting investment will be established.

He continued that investment is a sacred measure.

He said the priority of attracting tourists goes for tourists from 13 countries that celebrate Nowruz. He also said pilgrims from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have started to visit the holy city of Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi province.

One of the serious projects on the government's agenda is to pay attention to Iranians residing abroad, he said, adding that every Iranian without considering the differences belong to the motherland, urged for building further trust. The Judiciary also supports the overseas Iranians, he added.

He called handicrafts sector as a lever for job generation and investment, adding that the country witnessed exports worth 224 million euros in handicrafts sector during the last Iranian year. With considering the luggage trade, the total exports stand at 500 million euros, he said.

He said handicrafts worth over 5,400 billion rials (\$5.4 million) were sold during the Nowruz holidays.

TEHRAN - Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri on Friday said 40 percent of the country's population traveled during the Nowruz Holidays.

According to IRNA, he said Iran is among the top 10 attractive countries worldwide. He added that 28 organizations in the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters rendered service. He appreciated all those involved in the tourism sector. All of the government's potentials were used to help people have good trips, he added.

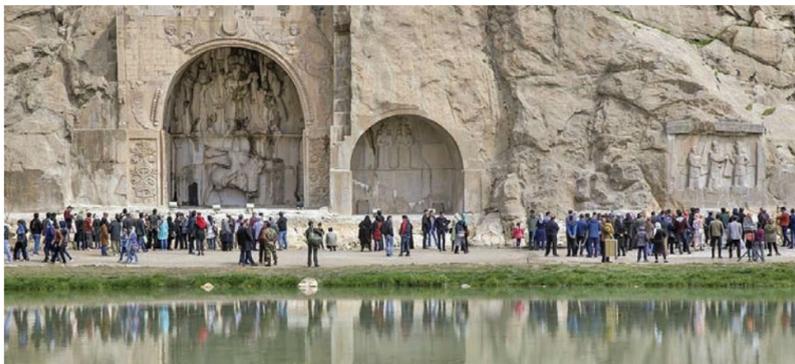
The minister also said, "We are determined to render services to people with all of our capacities and potentials."

Saying that over 35 million Iranians traveled across the country during the two-week Nowruz holidays which officially began on March 20, he added that the country witnessed a 2.2 percent rise in domestic travel compared to the same period of the year before.

Salehi-Amiri continued that Iranians have one of the greatest civilizations in the world.

"Our society coordinated itself during the holy month of Ramadan and Nowruz event. Our society is a religious community as it has faith in its civilization and cultural heritage. Our national and religious identities complete each other."

## Kermanshah tourist attractions witness 2.5 million visits during Nowruz



A view of Taq-e Bostan, a treasured historical site in Kermanshah province, western Iran

TEHRAN - Kermanshah province in the west of Iran has witnessed over 2.5 million visits from its historical, natural, cultural, and religious sites during the Nowruz 1404 holidays which began on March 20, the provincial tourism chief Dariush Farmani said.

Farmani told ISNA that the figure saw a 16.1% year-on-year increase.

He said out of the total visits from the province's tourist attractions, 242,000 were from historical sites.

Also, over 308,000 tourists resided in official residence centers, informal accommodation centers, and emergency accommodation centers during Nowruz vacations, he said, adding that the figure has witnessed a 21.5% year-on-year growth.

Currently, 85.6 percent of the province's accommodation centers have been booked, he said.

He continued that 5,584 supervisory visits were made from the province's tourism facilities to improve the quality of services rendered to Nowruz holidaymakers.

According to the official, 1,043,000 cars entered the province during March 17-April 3, remarking a 14.7% year-on-year rise.

He said 73,000 tourists and pilgrims crossed Khosravi and Parviz Khan checkpoints during the two-week holiday.

Kermanshah is highly celebrated for its profound historical and cultural significance. Set against the backdrop of the Zagros Mountains, Kermanshah has been an important center of civilization since ancient times.

The province boasts remarkable archaeological treasures, including the monumental rock reliefs of Taq-e Bostan and the ancient inscriptions at Bisotun, which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Beyond its historical allure, Kermanshah features breathtaking natural landscapes, such as the serene Sarab-e Niloofar spring, the dramatic Quri Qal'eh water cave, and the picturesque Parishan waterfall. With its blend of historical marvels and natural wonders, Kermanshah offers a rich tapestry of experiences that continue to captivate visitors and highlight Iran's diverse heritage.

# UN headquarters in Geneva hosts Nowruz celebration led by Iran

TEHRAN - A special celebration marking Nowruz -- the Persian New Year -- was held at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva on Friday, April 4.

Organized by the permanent mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office, the event brought together ambassadors and senior diplomats from various countries, representatives from international organizations and NGOs, academics, cultural figures, and members of the Iranian community residing in the famed Swiss city.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Ali Bahreini, Iran's permanent representative to the UN in Geneva, highlighted Nowruz as a symbol of enduring cultural solidarity among the nations of the region, IRNA reported on Saturday.

"Today, we gather to celebrate Nowruz and to share its message of peace, friendship, and unity as a reminder of the common bonds that connect nations around the world," he said.

Ambassador Bahreini emphasized that Nowruz, now recognized globally as a shared cultural heritage [by UNESCO], is rooted in the epic histories and traditions passed down through generations by diverse communities. "It is a legacy brought from the heart of ancient civilizations to the international stage," he added.

The event also featured a performance by Soroush-e Molana, an Iranian traditional music ensemble



The United Nations Headquarters in Geneva hosts a special celebration marking Nowruz, the Persian New Year, on April 4, 2025.

dispatched to Geneva by Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization. The group captivated the international audience with a selection of classical Persian compositions and regional melodies, showcasing the richness and refinement of Iranian musical heritage, the report said.

The ceremony was warmly received by attendees and served as a prime example of Iran's cultural diplomacy efforts at the international level.

Nowruz is a historic rite observed annually on 21 March in many countries along the Silk Roads. This marks the New Year, announces spring, and the rebirth of nature.

The cross-cultural celebration means No -new- and roz -day- in Persian. Therefore, Nowruz signi-

fies new day, and symbolizes new beginnings. People from different religious and cultural backgrounds celebrate Nowruz. The return of spring has a great spiritual significance, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil, and joy over sorrow.

Over time, Nowruz has developed and expanded, incorporating new social, religious, and cultural influences. Although the traditions and customs of Nowruz vary from country to country, there are many unifying features. In most regions, before the festival people perform ritual dances such as leaping over fire and streams. Many households also replenish their water supplies on the last Wednesday of the year.

Another common ritual and widespread tradition is the preparation of a Nowruz table. The ob-

jects on the table symbolize purity, brightness, abundance, happiness, and fertility for the New Year. On Nowruz day, people feast, visit family members and friends, and exchange gifts. These practices are a good way to socialize with loved ones and strengthen deep-rooted bonds of friendship. Nowruz is also an occasion for traditional cultural activities, combining common practices with local customs, such as poetry, music, open-air festivities or local street performances.

In recognition of the importance of this ancient rite, Nowruz was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. Moreover, in 2010, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March International Nowruz Day.

## Iranian embassy in Budapest holds Nowruz celebration



A celebration of Nowruz was held at the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Budapest, April 4, 2025.

TEHRAN - A special celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, was held at the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Budapest, coinciding with the arrival of spring and the 1404 solar year.

The event also marked the centennial anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and Hungary, highlighting shared cultural ties and centuries of historical connection, ISNA reported on Friday evening.

The festive gathering was attended by a number of Hungarian officials, as well as ambassadors and diplomats from Nowruz-celebrat-

ing countries, including Pakistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, together with representatives from Russia, China, Belarus, and Japan.

Moreover, some university professors, scholars, and members of the Iranian community in Hungary also took part.

Iran's ambassador to Hungary, Morteza Moradian, welcomed guests and extended New Year greetings, emphasizing the deep-rooted relationship between the two nations.

Nowruz is not just a New Year celebration, but a shared cultural

heritage listed by UNESCO, offering an opportunity to further strengthen the cultural and economic ties between Iran and Hungary, Moradian said.

Péter Jakab, Director General for the Middle East and North Africa at Hungary's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also delivered remarks, describing the centuries-old ties between Tehran and Budapest as robust. He reaffirmed Hungary's commitment to expanding cooperation with Iran, particularly in the fields of culture, economy, and science.

One of the highlights of the event was the bilingual Naqqali performance, an ancient Iranian storytelling art form, by Iranian performer Bahareh Jahandoust.

She also narrated a tale of Nowruz's mythical origin and the story of Bijan and Manijeh from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, captivating the audience in both Persian and English. Her performance was accompanied by a live kamancheh solo by an Iranian student residing in Budapest.

Guests also had the opportunity to experience the traditional Haft-Sin table, a symbolic centerpiece of Nowruz, and participate in a Hafez

divination ritual. The warm and intimate atmosphere of the event served as a cultural bridge between the two nations.

According to ISNA, in a separate event at Eotvos Lorand University, Jahandoust performed Naqqali to great acclaim among students and faculty from various departments, especially those in Iranian studies. The performance was acclaimed by the head of the Iranian Studies Department, who praised Shahnameh and Nowruz as vital elements of Persian culture and called for greater scholarly attention to Iran's literary heritage.

During the university event, Jahandoust also spoke about the universal messages of peace and humanism in Ferdowsi's poetry. The program featured a reading from The Tomb of Hafez, a collection by Hungarian poet Csokonai Vitéz, who was inspired by the Persian mystic's verses.

Nowruz, which marks the arrival of spring and the renewal of nature, is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and is celebrated by numerous countries across Central and West Asia.

## Ancient stone fragment from Persepolis returned to authorities

TEHRAN - A stone fragment believed to originate from Persepolis has been officially handed over to the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Directorate of Fars province, where the UNESCO World Heritage site is located.

Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi, who presides over the directorate, confirmed that the stone was discovered on the evening of April 2 (Fardardin 13, the final day of Nowruz vacations) near the entrance road to the ancient site of Persepolis.

The area, historically known as the city of Parseh, is rich in surface and subsurface archaeological remains.

"This piece was found within the boundaries of the Persepolis complex," Sabet-Eqlidi said, noting that no damage or theft from the origi-

nal structures has occurred.

"No stone was removed or looted from its original place," he emphasized.

He further explained that due to the historical significance of Parseh, which is considered one of the world's most valuable heritage sites, it is not uncommon for ancient artifacts to resurface over time, especially in areas with frequent foot traffic.

The stone was voluntarily handed over to authorities by the individual who discovered it, demonstrating a positive example of public cooperation in heritage preservation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Sabet-Eqlidi has also announced plans for new archaeological excavations in the area, set to begin within the current Persian calendar year.



A view of Persepolis

The royal city of Persepolis ranks among the archaeological sites that have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) is situated 60 kilometers northeast of the city of Shiraz in Fars province.

# Iran, Serbia to develop educational ties

TEHRAN – Minister of Education, Alireza Kazemi, and his Serbian counterpart, Slavica Dukic Dejanovic, have agreed to expand educational cooperation.

A delegation of Iranian students, led by Kazemi, is attending the International School Sport Federation (ISF) which is being held from April 4 to 14 in Zlatibor, Serbia.

The officials met on the sidelines of the event. During the meeting, Kazmi said enhancing collaborations between the two countries in athletic, cultural, and educational fields is of high significance, IRIB reported.

For her part, Dukic Dejanovic announced Serbia's readiness to expand scientific and educational cooperation with Iran.

On January 6, Serbian Ambassador to Tehran, Damir Kovacevic, in a meeting with Kazemi, announced his country's willingness to foster scientific, research, and educational collaborations with Iran.

"Serbia is ready to deepen bilateral relations with Iran. The country grants scholarships to a large number of Iranian students, and offers sabbatical leaves to them," the ambassador added.

On the other hand, "Iran's ministry of education manages two teacher training universities.

I think there are opportunities for cooperation and we welcome any new and innovative ideas in this field," Kovacevic further noted.



The official went on to say that presently educational textbooks in the country feature European luminaries. However, enhancing collaborations can help include Iranian luminaries in textbooks, as well.

**On January 6, Serbian Ambassador to Tehran, Damir Kovacevic, announced to foster scientific, research, and educational collaborations with Iran.**

Kazemi, for his part, said Iran and Serbia already have bilateral relations in political, cultural, educational, and economic fields.

Highlighting the significance of exchanging knowledge and experiences, Kazemi proposed the expansion of the ties in vocational education, special education, and teaching literacy.

The official asked for developing educational infrastructure and making use of Iranians teachers' skills in Serbia.

Highlighting the significance of exchanging knowledge and experiences, Kazemi proposed the expansion of the ties in vocational education, special education, and teaching literacy.

The official asked for developing educational infrastructure and making use of Iranians teachers' skills in Serbia.

**Iran, Serbia vow closer cooperation**

Iranian Ambassador to Serbia, Rashid Hassaspour, recently engaged in discussions with the Serbian President regarding a range of bilateral, regional, and

international matters.

As reported by IRNA, this meeting followed a phone call in which President Aleksandar Vucic congratulated Iran's newly elected president, Masoud Pezeshkian, on his electoral success.

During that conversation, Vucic noted the significant growth in relations between Iran and Serbia under the late President Ebrahim Raisi and expressed optimism that this positive trajectory would persist with Pezeshkian's presidency.

The Serbian President underscored the necessity of strengthening collaboration across various sectors. In turn, Hassanpour, who previously served as the head of the Iran-Serbia Parliamentary Friendship Group, conveyed his deep understanding of Serbia and expressed his aspirations for enhanced mutual cooperation to realize the full potential of the partnership between the two countries.

Iran and Serbia have had diplomatic relations for many years, and have enjoyed relatively friendly relations despite their different political systems.

The two countries have cooperated in various fields, including trade, energy, education, and culture.

In recent years, there has been a push from both sides to strengthen ties, with Iranian and Serbian officials meeting regularly to discuss cooperation in various areas.

## Lake Urmia's area shrinks due to low rainfall

TEHRAN – The area of Lake Urmia has declined due to reduced precipitations, reaching 1,140 square kilometers on April 4 compared to 1,350 square kilometers on the same day last year.

Lake Urmia in the north-western West Azarbaijan province started to dry up in the 2000s. The lake is the largest in West Asia and the sixth-largest salt lake in the world, with a water surface area of 5,000 to 6,000 square kilometers.

The amount of precipitations in spring have so far dropped by 49.6 percent compared to the amount recorded last year. The current level of Lake Urmia amounts to 1270.28 which has decreased in comparison to 1270.34 measured in April 2024, Mehr news agency quoted Majid Dastgahi, an official with West Azarbaijan Water Company, as saying. Also, the volume of the lake has lowered from 1.8 billion cubic meters on April 4 in 2024 to 1.63 billion cubic meters measured this year, he added.

According to the Metrological Organization, from April 1 to 7 precipitations are estimated to be normal with a tendency to be below normal. Within next two weeks, rainfall is forecast to be normal and above normal.

### Restoration efforts

Through a joint project led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and funded by the Government of Japan, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is going to join to promote sustainable agricultural practices and solutions for the conservation of Lake Urmia.

On December 1, 2024, the Government of Japan and UNDP signed an exchange of notes to launch "The Project for Developing Conservation Systems of Wetlands in Lake Urmia and Other Wetlands, Including Their Surrounding Communities." The project, which runs from 2024 to 2028, will be implemented in partnership with the Department of Environment and FAO.

Focusing on sustainable agriculture and climate-adapted livelihoods, the initiative seeks to deliver long-term benefits for local communities while preserving the biodiversity of wetlands as critical ecosystems. Lake Urmia faces significant challenges due to the overconsumption of water resources magnified by climate change impacts, which has severely impacted its ecosystem.



Agricultural activities in the region are increasingly vulnerable to water shortages, a situation exacerbated by the effects of climate change. Studies indicate that these climatic changes could further disrupt agrifood systems and the lake's fragile environment in the future.

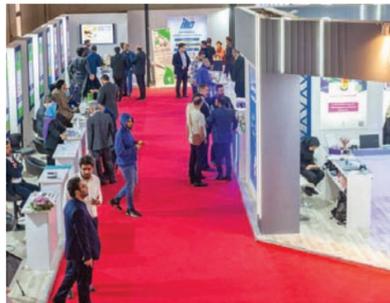
FAO with the support of the government of Japan, identified technical agricultural solutions to increase water efficiency in the agriculture sector at the Lake Urmia basin, which may be efficient in saving the internationally known biosphere reserves. Since 1995, Lake Urmia has been shrinking due to rapid upstream agricultural expansion and climate change. These forces have pushed the precious lake to the verge of depletion and have put the region's health, economy, environment, industry, and agriculture at risk.

Despite the efforts of the Lake Urmia Restoration Program National Committee and its focus on the Lake's restoration since 2013, the continuation of the critical situation demonstrates that sustainability, macro and micro, management solutions should be considered as the main essence of action plans.

In a concerted effort to address the challenges facing the Lake Urmia Basin in 2016, FAO launched the "Integrated Program for Sustainable Water Resources Management in the Lake Urmia Basin," which was funded by the Government of Japan.

Key technical outcomes of this initiative included the implementation of a water accounting plus project in the Lake Urmia Basin and the identification of water-consuming hotspots within the basin. Notably, water accounting revealed the significant contribution of irrigated and rainfed agriculture to the Lake's total evapotranspiration, emphasizing the importance of water-saving measures for the Lake's restoration.

## Knowledge-based companies attend UzMetalMashExpo



TEHRAN – Iranian knowledge-based companies participated in the 16 edition of the International UzMetalMashExpo, held from April 2 to 4 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Supported by the Innovation and Prosperity Fund, 12 Iranian knowledge-based companies showcased their achievements in the fields of metallurgy, machinery, and metal technologies.

UzMetalMashExpo is an annual international exhibition focusing on metallurgy, metal processing, machine tool construction, and welding technologies.

The event serves as a significant platform for industry professionals to showcase innovations, establish business connections, and explore the Central Asian market.

### Notable growth in knowledge-based companies

The significant and fast-paced growth in the number of knowledge-based companies with over 200 percent increase in their number just over the past year (March 2023 – March 2024), shows the solid foundation, dynamism, and growth of the country in innovation and technology and the productive atmosphere which have been made available in line with the goal of boosting domestic production with public participation.

The current administration underscores the quantitative and qualitative development of knowledge-based companies.

The number of companies, which was around 5,000 before the current administration took office in August 2021, has now reached 10,000 with a total value of two billion dollars.

It seems that knowledge-based companies have progressed well.

However, with continuously increasing support knowledge-based companies will have a brighter future.

The high number of knowledge-based companies active in the capital market proves they have fully grown.

Currently, there are 108 companies in the capital market, which is anticipated to grow

by 100 percent by the end of the current year, March 2025.

Iran's knowledge-based companies exported over 3.6 million tons of products, valued at \$2.506 billion, in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended March 19, 2024), according to the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Based on the IRICA data, some 1.158 million tons of goods, valued at \$5.141 billion were also imported by knowledge-based companies into the country from March 21, 2023, to March 19, 2024.

About 85 percent of the goods imported by the knowledge-based companies came from China, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Germany, and India, IRNA reported.

The domestic knowledge-based companies exported their products to China, Iraq, the UAE, Turkey, and Russia in this period, IRICA said.

In this period, the knowledge-based companies accounted for 2.6 and 5 percent of the country's total exports in weight and value respectively.

Advanced materials and products based on chemical technologies accounted for about 80 percent of the export value of these companies.

China was Iran's first buyer of knowledge-based products in this period.

## ENGLISH IN USE

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## Precipitation forecast to reach above normal in next 3 months

The country is predicted to receive above normal rainfall over the next three months (February 20-May 21), head of the climatological research institute affiliated to Iran's Meteorological Organization (IMO) has said.

The whole country will meet normal and above normal rainfalls, the northern parts will receive above normal rainfall while southern provinces will receive normal to lower-than-normal rainfall, IRNA quoted Iman Babaeian as saying on Sunday.

This month, northern and eastern provinces will receive rain above normal averages, while in the first month of spring precipitation will be at normal amounts across the country, he noted, adding, during the second month of spring rainfall will reach its peak.

## بارش‌های کشور در سه ماه پیش رو بیش از نرمال است

رئیس پژوهشکده اقلیم‌شناسی سازمان هواشناسی گفت: پیش‌بینی‌ها نشان می‌دهد میزان بارش در کشور در سه ماهه پیش رو (اسفند ۹۷، فروردین و اردیبهشت ۹۸) در حد نرمال و متمایل به بیش از نرمال خواهد بود. ایمان باباییان روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: مجموع بارش‌ها در سطح کشور نرمال و متمایل به بیشتر از نرمال است اما در نیمه شمالی، بیشتر از نرمال و در نیمه جنوبی در محدوده نرمال تا کمتر از نرمال خواهد بود.

وی اظهار داشت: بارش‌ها در اسفندماه ۹۷ در نیمه شمالی و شرقی بیشتر از نرمال است، در فروردین ماه ۹۸ نیز بارش‌ها در محدوده نرمال و برای اردیبهشت بیشتر از نرمال پیش‌بینی شده است.

## Fostering regional co-op key to overcome environmental challenges: official



TEHRAN – Sediqeh Torabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), has highlighted the significance of expanding environmental ties among regional countries to be able to address environmental issues.

Being transboundary, many environmental challenges such as restoring wetlands and sand and dust storms require advancing environmental diplomacy with neighboring countries, IRIB quoted Torabi as saying.

Hence, in a recent visit to Afghanistan, instead of merely focusing on Hirmand water rights, Iran proposed collaborating on other environmental issues, like restoration of Hamoun Wetland and sand and dust storms (SDS), which adversely affect the health of the people in the two countries, Torabi noted.

The official went on to say that holding regional workshops and meetings will help each participating country to share and benefit from conducted studies, findings as well as the strategies adopted to deal with the problem as in the first regional dialogue on enhancing inter-regional co-op on sand and dust storms (SDSs), which was held on February 18 and 19 in Doha, Qatar.

The official went on to say the meeting in Qatar served as a platform for different countries in West Asia including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Kuwait to discuss and address challenges caused by SDSs, and their adverse consequences on the environment, agriculture, transportation, energy, and health.

### Environmental diplomacy

Environmental diplomacy is used globally to settle problems such as conflicts over sources of energy, water, and climate change. It is an effective and required tool to mitigate and eliminate the severe consequences by fair distribution of responsibilities among involved countries as they present their national interests and solutions.

Sand and dust storms are a typical example of metrological hazards in West Asia, where many countries are involved as some generate them and some others are affected by them.

SDSs hit countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran, and sometimes parts of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and even Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These dust particles have devastating impacts on respiratory health and ecosystems; they result in the closure of airports, schools, and offices, affect electricity transmission infrastructures, and bring about economic losses.

Removing pollution from Aras River, and securing Hirmand River water right, as well as some wetlands are other examples where environmental policies have been used to resolve the conflicts.

Tehran convention is a big achievement whereby the Caspian Sea littoral states protect the Caspian environment from all sources of pollution but also targets the preservation, restoration, and protection of the Caspian Sea species and habitats.

Therefore, to mitigate climate change impacts, and achieve sustainable development goals, environmental policy is required to be strengthened to help Iran as well as its neighboring countries benefit from available resources and secure our rights at the international level.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with other executive bodies such as the ministries of Energy, Industry, Mine, Trade, and Agriculture as well as the Department of Environment can establish a center to focus on specific missions and follow up on discussions and goals in line with national interests and improve the living conditions of citizens through environmental diplomacy.



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APRIL 6, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Hearts of people are like wild beasts. They attach themselves to those who love and train them.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:07 Evening: 18:49 Dawn: 4:16 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:42 (tomorrow)

## Hemingway's "Across the River and into the Trees" published in Persian

TEHRAN- A Persian translation of American novelist Ernest Hemingway's book "Across the River and into the Trees" has been published in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Ahmad Kasaipour. Hermes is the publisher of the book.

"Across the River and into the Trees" was first published in 1950 by Charles Scribner's Sons after its serialization in "Cosmopolitan" magazine.

The title is inspired by the last words of Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson before his death, a phrase that evokes the notion of crossing into the afterlife, commonly interpreted as a reference to the journey after death in Christian belief.

The story centers on Colonel Richard Cantwell, a 50-year-old U.S. Army officer hunting ducks in the Marano Lagoon near Venice, Italy, toward the end of World War II.

Haunted by his terminal heart condition, Cantwell reminisces about his past, primarily reflecting on his experiences during World War I and his tumultuous romance with Renata, an 18-year-old Venetian woman more than three decades his junior.

Hemingway drew inspiration for Renata from his own infatuation with a young woman named Adriana Ivancich during a visit to Italy prior to writing the novel.

At its core, "Across the River and into the Trees" explores themes of mortality and how one confronts death.

Critics often draw parallels between Hemingway's work and Thomas Mann's "Death in Venice", due to their shared exploration of love intertwined with the inevitability of death.

Hemingway expressed his intention for the novel to build emotional intensity, gradually escalating tension before reaching a poignant



conclusion.

Though the novel received its share of negative critiques—many reviewers labeled it as a sad commentary on a once-great talent reaching a creative dead-end—it still became a bestseller in the United States, topping The New York Times bestseller list for seven weeks.

The narrative culminates with Cantwell experiencing heart attacks as he departs Venice after his duck hunt, echoing the opening scene.

As he succumbs to his condition, he recalls Jackson's final words: "No, no, let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

The story concludes with his driver reading a note from the Colonel, indicating that his possessions should be passed on to Renata, encapsulating the themes of love and loss that permeate the novel.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was an influential American novelist, short-story writer, and journalist, known for his economical and understated prose style.

His adventurous persona and blunt public image contributed to his literary legacy, which includes seven novels, six short-story collections, and two non-fiction works. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

Between 1942 and 1945, Hemingway claimed he was "out of business as a writer." He faced personal tragedies, including a series of accidents and health issues that affected his family, particularly after notable car and skiing accidents.

During this tumultuous period, he wrote "Across the River and into the Trees", inspired by a platonic love for the young Adriana Ivancich. Although the novel received negative reviews, he later achieved acclaim with "The Old Man and the Sea", published in 1952.

## Cartoon of Day



Save Gaza

Cartoonist: Mo Qasem from the Netherlands

# 10 Iranian films to attend 7th AmiCorti International Film Festival

TEHRAN-Ten films from Iran will take part in the 7th AmiCorti International Film Festival (AmiCorti IFF), set to take place from June 23 to 28, in the historic town of Ivrea, Italy.

In addition to the films selected for various sections of the festival, two Iranians will also serve as jurors in the event, Mehr reported.

In the International Short Film section, three films from Iran will compete including "Just a Fist" by Mostafa Yeganeh, "Sting of War" by Arash Mousavi, and "You Think Although You Are Not" by Salaheddin Noori.

"Just a Fist" is about a suspect, who along with the evidence of the crime, is escorted by a soldier to a police station in another city to meet a judge.

During the journey, the suspect makes an unexpected request to the soldier.

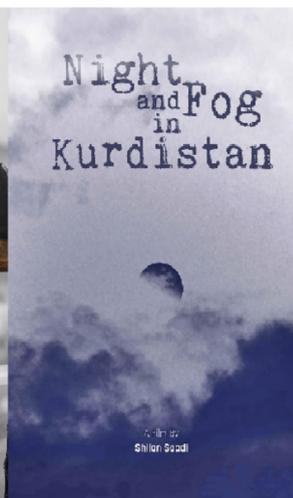
In "Sting of War," amid a devastating war, the lives of a mother and her unborn child are tragically cut short, leaving us to imagine the stories that could have been. This film

"You Think Although You Are Not" depicts Navid and Forough, a happy couple who, despite the events that led to their separation, find an unusual way to stay together.

Three Iranian movies will be shown in the International Documentaries section, including "Is There Any Trace of Tomorrow's Blossoms?" by Ghazaleh Toodeh Zaim, "Night and Fog in Kurdistan" by Shilan Saadi, and "Old Friend" by Sam Yekta.

"Is There Any Trace of Tomorrow's Blossoms?" portrays the lives of four Iranian women from four different generations, exploring their concerns and challenges in contemporary Iran.

"Night And Fog in Kurdistan" tells the stories of Yazidi refugee girls, survivors of the Sinjar massacre,



who five years ago lived in a Turkish refugee camp. As these girls become scattered across Europe, the director narrates a powerful tale of resilience and survival, exploring the rich history of the Kurdish people while shedding light on the ongoing displacement of the Yazidi community.

"Old Friend" retraces the professional journey of renowned art journalists active in the 1950s and 1960s, who contributed to the popular and prestigious youth magazine.

The publication played a crucial role in launching numerous artists in various fields, including cinema and music.

"Ext. Friendship - Night" by Mehdi Ahmadpanah is the only film from Iran in the International Feature Film section.

In the movie, four old friends gather on the night before one of them leaves for military service to say their goodbyes. One of them documents the events of that night. Years later, he returns to his hometown and attempts to reunite the group.

In the International Animation

section, "Piano" by Marjan Keshani and Shahab Shamsi represents Iran.

The story follows a man who dreams of buying a piano, but the devastation of war robs him even of his simplest desires, leading him on a journey between inner turmoil and the pursuit of peace.

In the Global Social Issues Film section, "The School Principal" by Mikael Dayani and "Bird Day" by Davood Haseli and Mohammad Naseri will be shown from Iran.

"The School Principal" depicts a school where students take part in the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement.

However, the principal opposes the movement, driven by seemingly logical reasons, creating a conflict between youthful ideals and institutional authority.

In "Bird Day," a young boy ventures into the forest to hunt butterflies but encounters a bird hunter and becomes fascinated by a rifle. After finding a fledgling, he raises it and releases it into the sky, gradually seeing all birds as his own and losing interest in hunting.

The Iranian jurors at the festival will be actor and film producer Hos-

sein Soleimani and musician and composer Fariman Jabbarzadeh.

Soleimani is one of the jurors in the International Feature Films section while Jabbarzadeh serves as the president of the jury in the International VideoMusic & Global Social Issues sections.

This AmiCorti International Film Festival is dedicated to celebrating the best of contemporary cinema, with a strong emphasis on emerging directors, independent filmmakers, and unique artistic perspectives.

The festival aims to be a global meeting point for the film community, offering both in-person and virtual participation options to ensure wide accessibility.

Selected films will be showcased on the exclusive AmiCorti platform, providing a focused and engaged audience.

The festival is recognized for its commitment to fostering creativity, innovation, and the exploration of social issues through film. It promotes cultural exchange, diversity, and inclusivity, making it a significant event in the international film festival circuit.

## Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "Play Strindberg" on stage at Iranshahr Theater

TEHRAN-Iranshahr Theater Complex in Tehran will stage the performance of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's "Play Strindberg" from Monday.

Mohammadreza Maleki has directed the play and also performed in it along with Majid Asadi and Saffura Khoshtinat, ILNA reported.

"Play Strindberg" is a comedy play by the Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt, written in 1968 and published in 1969. It is a free adaptation of August Strindberg's "The Dance of Death" (1900), using Strindberg's characters. The title is a reference to Jacques Loussier's "Play Bach" series of recordings.

In August Strindberg's play, a husband and wife live in mutual hatred, bound together by the convention itself. Friedrich Dürrenmatt's 1969 dark comedy parodied Strindberg and carried the notion even further into a surreal and

almost hallucinogenic world of wicked caricature. The story is thin and filled with contrivances, but the actors for whom he created it have a chance for 90 uninterrupted minutes to practice their craft with gleeful abandon.

The play is a boxing match in 12 rounds, and the principals are introduced as combatants.

Edgar is a failed military man who has been exiled to a remote island, where the inhabitants ostracize him further because of his abrasive nature.

His wife, Alice, is a purported actress who believes that marriage destroyed her chances for greatness.

The third member of the ménage is Kurt, a cousin of Alice's and, it is later learned, her former lover. The bell rings. The action commences.

Dürrenmatt's unhappy marriage



es may be the catalyst for his clever satire, but whatever the motivation, he produces a picture of a 25-year marriage that is both amusing and frightening.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921-1990) was a Swiss author and dramatist. He was a proponent of epic theater whose plays reflected the recent experiences of World War II.

The politically active author's work included avant-garde dramas, philosophical crime novels, and macabre satire.

"Play Strindberg" will remain on stage until May 9 at Iranshahr Theater, located in Artists Park on North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street.

## Location of Scottish Palestine Museum revealed

An American-based museum showcasing Palestinian art and culture has announced the opening date and location of a new Scottish branch.

The Palestine Museum US was founded by Palestinian American businessman Faisal Saleh, who said they "couldn't have found a better location" for their first European location, The National reported.

The original museum, located in Woodbridge, Connecticut, opened its doors on April 22, 2018, becoming the first museum in the Americas devoted to Palestinian art.

The museum features historical documents, photography, film, oral histories, mixed and digital media, literary arts, public lectures, and live performances.

Now, the team have announced it will open a museum in Edinburgh. The team is to take over the former Arusha Gallery on Dundas

Street, where it will be run by local volunteers.

On a post on social media, it was announced doors will open on May 17. The first exhibition will be a retrospective of Palestinian art from the past decade.

It will feature artist Samia Halaby, who won a special mention at last year's Venice Biennale, and work by 81-year-old Nabil Anani, who is regarded as a key founder of the contemporary Palestinian art movement.

Sana Farah Bishara, a Nazareth-born sculptor based in Haifa, will also feature, as well as recent works created in Gaza by Mohammed Alhaj and Maisara Baroud.

Last year, the team launched an initiative to open a museum in the building that previously held the Israeli embassy in Dublin following Israel's announcement that it would shut down. However, the attempt failed.

The Connecticut location researches and

preserves Palestinian history by showcasing the Palestinian experience, pre- and post-Nakbah, in Palestine and in the diaspora.

Saleh was born in El-Bireh (Ramallah), to a refugee family from the pre-1948 Palestinian village of Salameh (Jaffa).

Arriving in the United States in 1969 at age 17, he earned a BA in Economics and an MBA in Business Management, and founded several companies.

"We couldn't have found a better location. Edinburgh's rich cultural landscape and commitment to artistic expression make it the perfect hub for our satellite museum," Saleh said. "We look forward to sharing the stories and talents of Palestinian artists with the community and beyond."

The Palestine Museum is an independent, non-political, nonreligious, not-for-profit organization.