

# TEHRAN TIMES

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## Serenity or Inferno: The Crossroads Facing U.S.

Tehran emphasizes readiness for diplomatic engagement on equal terms, leaving the choice up to the U.S.

## China counterpunch: The U.S. to be the big loser in trade war

By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING- China's strong reaction to the new US tariffs clearly demonstrates that the administration of President Donald Trump is getting into completely uncharted waters.

On Friday, China announced that it will impose 34 percent tariffs on all imports from the US, which are supposed to go into effect on Thursday. China also announced curbs on the export of some rare earths.

The decision was in line with Beijing's pledge to retaliate following the escalation of a global trade conflict initiated by President Donald Trump.

Trump unveiled 54 percent tariffs on all Chinese exports to the United States on Wednesday. This included an additional 34 percent "reciprocal" tariff on top of the existing 20 percent duties. Since his return to the White House on January 20, Trump has already implemented two rounds of 10 percent extra duties on all Chinese imports. The new tariffs will come into effect on Wednesday.

US stock markets plummeted on Friday following China's retaliation. "The market has spoken," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said in a post on Facebook on Saturday. ▶ Page 5

## Trump's billion-dollar gamble in Yemen falls apart

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – About 20 days into one of the most expensive overseas operations under President Donald Trump's second term, U.S. military strikes in Yemen have yielded little to no strategic success. Despite an estimated \$1 billion in expenditure, Ansarullah remain operational, active, and increasingly emboldened. Far from being crippled, the group continues its campaign of maritime operations in the Red Sea, defying the world's most advanced military machine and exposing a glaring failure in American strategic planning.

When President Trump took office again in January 2025, one of his first foreign policy moves was to take action against the rising threat from the Ansarullah movement in the Red Sea. Following a series of attacks in support of the oppressed people of Palestine on commercial vessels linked to Israel, the White House approved a strong airstrike campaign.

Under the pretext of "restoring freedom of navigation," the administration launched hundreds of airstrikes across northern and western Yemen, which were carried out with high-precision munitions. ▶ Page 5

## Will Trump's war on Yemen succeed after Biden's year-long failure?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — On the eve of the start of the aggression on March 26, 2015, no one could have imagined that the Yemeni people would embody a legendary epic in the face of an international coalition of 17 countries led by America and Britain.

Today, a year and a half after the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, Yemen has proven that all the coalition's predictions are wrong. It has accumulated miracles in the renaissance of national liberation from the grip of colonialism by defending the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

The current attacks by the Trump administration against Yemen are much stronger than the ones conducted during the Biden era. Now raids against Yemen are going on unstopably, deliberately hitting civilians with Trump's promises to change the reality in the Red Sea without the direct participation of the British navy. ▶ Page 5

## Reuters: Iran warns regional countries U.S. military collusion will bring 'severe consequences'

TEHRAN — Reuters claimed, citing an anonymous Iranian official, that Iran has issued stark warnings to Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Turkey, and Bahrain, declaring that any support for U.S. military strikes—including the use of their airspace or territory—"will have severe consequences for them."

The official also emphasized that the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has placed Iran's armed forces on high alert, according to the Sunday report.

The reported warnings follow escalating tensions after U.S. President Donald Trump's explicit threats of military action.

Iran has bolstered military preparedness in response to the U.S. threats, underscoring Iran's posture of defensive resilience. ▶ Page 2

## Direct talks with U.S. 'meaningless' amid threats, diplomacy still on table: Iranian FM

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has rejected the possibility of direct negotiations with the United States, labeling them "meaningless" so long as Washington continues to issue threats of military action against Iran.

His remarks came during a formal address at a grand Nowruz celebration in Tehran on Saturday evening, just two days after the U.S. President Donald Trump claimed Iran was ready for direct talks with his administration.

The event was attended by a wide array of senior Iranian officials, foreign ambassadors, and heads of diplomatic missions residing in Tehran, along with their spouses.

Araghchi emphasized that Iran remains committed to diplomatic engagement and open to indirect negotiations, but stressed that meaningful dialogue cannot occur under the shadow of force. ▶ Page 3

## Top Iranian general warns of 'crushing, irreversible' retaliation amid U.S. provocations

TEHRAN – Major General Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, has issued a stark warning to the United States, vowing a decisive response to any aggression against the nation's sovereignty or interests.

The top general declared on Sunday that Iran's retaliation would be "swift, crushing, and irreversible," underscoring the country's readiness to counter escalating U.S. military provocations across West Asia.

"From the moment the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's order is issued, a flood of our capabilities will rain down upon the enemy in the shortest possible time," General Bagheri stated during an address to commanders and staff at the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters in Tehran. ▶ Page 2

Scan the barcode to watch General Bagheri's full speech delivered on April 6, 2025.



## Budapest hosts naqqali performances by Bahareh Jahandoost

TEHRAN-Special celebrations marking Persian New Year Nowruz and the 100th anniversary of Iran and Hungary official relations were held in Budapest, Hungary, which included a naqqali performance, an ancient Iranian storytelling tradition, by the acclaimed Iranian naqqal Bahareh Jahandoost.

"This year marks the centenary of diplomatic ties between Iran and Hungary. To celebrate the occasion, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Budapest, in collaboration with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, invited me to perform naqqali during the Nowruz festivities in Hungary," Jahandoost was quoted as saying by IRNA. ▶ Page 8



© Getty Images

## Mass protests across US show resistance to Trump

They came out in defense of national parks and small businesses, public education and health care for veterans, abortion rights and fair elections. They marched against tariffs and oligarchs, dark money and fascism, the deportation of legal immigrants and the Department of Government Efficiency.

Demonstrators had no shortage of causes as they gathered in towns and cities across the country on Saturday to protest President Trump's agenda. Rallies were planned in all 50 states, and images posted on social media showed dense crowds in places as diverse as St. Augustine, Fla.; Salt Lake City and rainy Frankfurt, Ky. ▶ Page 5



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Understanding America's behavior

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to America's behavior, both with Iran and with the world. It wrote: The behavior of the Americans shows that they do not adhere to any international commitments and regulations and simply violate them. Accordingly, discussions such as direct negotiations with the United States and an agreement with Trump, or joining institutions like the FATF, will not only fail to solve any problems but also lead to increased sanctions and pressure. On the one side, the U.S. Department of the Treasury has stated that it is seeking to close all banking and financial transactions with Iran, and on the other, the U.S. has stated that the goal of the negotiations with Iran is to end all nuclear activities in the country and turn the country into Libya, destroy its missile and drone capabilities, and its regional position. Today, the world has no other option to escape the current situation and confront America's economic "selfishness". The only way forward is to de-dollarize, end cooperation with U.S. sanctions against other countries, and ultimately strengthen new blocs such as BRICS.

## Shargh: Grossi's trip to Tehran and the equations between Iran and the IAEA

Shargh wrote an analysis about the incoming trip of Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to Tehran, which reads: The United States has revived the "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran and dealt a severe blow to diplomatic atmosphere. In these circumstances, Rafael Grossi's imminent trip to Tehran has once again brought to attention the tense relationship between Iran and the IAEA. This trip can be examined from two different analytical prospects: resolving differences with the IAEA as well as the looming shadow of Trump and the possibility of a clash. Tehran is in a complicated situation. On the one hand, it wants to maintain the path of interaction with the IAEA, and on the other, it is concerned that this path will serve as a platform for legitimizing new pressures. In short, Grossi's trip to Tehran could provide an opportunity to repair Iran's relations with the IAEA and Europe, but the extremely inflamed political atmosphere resulting from Trump's return to power has severely limited the possibility of making positive use of this trip. This is where technical interaction without active and intelligent diplomacy may add to existing complexities rather than untie

## Kabul seeks Iran talks on Afghan migrants



Director General for South Asian Affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry Mohammad Reza Bahrami (c) met with Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Mawlawi Abdul Kabir on April 5, 2025.

TEHRAN – In a recent meeting between Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation and the Director General for South Asia at Iran's Foreign Ministry, the Taliban called for joint meetings with Tehran to address the situation of Afghan migrants.

According to reports on Saturday, Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with Mohammad Reza Bahrami and his accompanying delegation in Kabul. During the meeting, Abdul Kabir highlighted the deep historical ties between the two nations and expressed appreciation for Iran's decades-long hospitality toward Afghan migrants. He also called for continued Islamic compassion in Iran's treatment of these migrants.

the knots.

## Sobh-e-No: Trump will set his country back if he enters war with Iran

In a note, Sobh-e-No argues that the United States' Donald Trump will put his country behind rivals for many years if he enters a war with Iran. The paper said: Today, Iran is not considered a threat to America's national interests. However, the Islamic Republic is at the top of Washington's foreign policy priorities, and it is spending heavily on military to confront Tehran. America's goal is to prevent Iran from going nuclear in the future. Since Iran is considered a model in combating arrogance and American hegemony, its approach may be replicated worldwide and make America more hated in the eyes of the world. If there is any rationality among American politicians, they will tame Trump. Trump seeks to maintain America's hegemony in the world, and if he enters an adventurous war with Iran, he will set his country back from its rivals for years.

## Arman-e-Emrooz: Impact of possible talks on Iran's economy

In a recent commentary, Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the potential impact of ongoing negotiations on Iran's economy. The country has faced significant challenges due to international sanctions and fluctuating exchange rates in recent years. Progress in nuclear negotiations could yield substantial positive effects for Iran's economy by reducing sanctions, boosting oil exports, enhancing international banking and financial relations, attracting foreign investment, curbing inflation, and ultimately improving the livelihoods of its citizens. The nuclear standoff between Iran and the United States remains a critical issue influencing the Iranian economy. Historical experience with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) indicates that even the mere initiation of negotiations—whether direct or indirect—can create a positive psychological effect on markets and pave the way for greater economic stability. Conversely, a failure to reach an agreement or a shift toward military confrontation would likely have dire consequences for Iran's economy. Given the significance of this matter, it is anticipated that the Iranian government will seize diplomatic opportunities in the early months of the current year to alleviate economic pressures through a strategic approach. The outcomes of these diplomatic efforts will undoubtedly shape the trajectory of Iran's economy in the year ahead.

## Top Iranian general warns of 'crushing, irreversible' retaliation amid U.S. provocations

From Page 1 ▶ While emphasizing Iran's defensive stance, he stressed, "The Islamic Republic does not seek war, but it will never accept coercion or bullying and will stand firm against such behavior."

The remarks come amid heightened tensions fueled by Washington's aggressive military posturing in West Asia.

Over recent weeks, the U.S. has extended deployments of its USS Truman and USS Vinson carrier strike groups in the Persian Gulf, positioned B-2 stealth bombers at the illegally occupied Diego Garcia base in the Chagos Archipelago, and reinforced troops at regional bases encircling Iran.

Analysts describe these moves as part of a broader campaign to intimidate sovereign states into submission.

In response, Iran's Armed Forces have intensified defensive preparations, with the Tehran Times exclusively reporting that advanced domestically developed missile systems—some housed in deep underground networks immune to foreign strikes—have been ready to be fully operational.

Iran's military readiness was further highlighted by recent inspections conducted by senior commanders.

Brigadier General Alireza Sabahi-Fard, head of the Khatam al-An-



Major General Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, during an address to commanders and staff at the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters in Tehran on April 6, 2025

biya Joint Air Defense Base, and IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh recently assessed combat preparedness in southern coastal regions and islands.

"Our armed forces, particularly air defense units, are more prepared than ever to counter any threat," Sabahi-Fard asserted, warning that adversaries' "miscalculations will meet a decisive response."

Last week, Hajizadeh cautioned U.S. forces stationed in the region, stating, "Those living in glass houses should not throw stones."

The aerospace force chief not-

ed the vulnerability of the U.S.'s 10 regional bases and 50,000 troops near Iran, adding, "Our precision-strike capabilities render their presence a liability."

## 'Leader's response to Trump's letter was strategic'

General Bagheri also addressed a recent letter from U.S. President Donald Trump to Ayatollah Khamenei, which reportedly contained threats and demands for negotiations.

Tehran chose to respond to the letter; and while the letter's exact contents remain undisclosed, Bagheri revealed that Ayatollah Khamenei's response outlined

Iran's principled positions:

– Iran will not initiate conflict but will retaliate with full force against any threat.

– The nation seeks regional stability and rejects nuclear weapons, focusing instead on peaceful nuclear energy for civilian needs.

– Direct talks with the U.S. are off the table due to Washington's history of reneging on commitments, though indirect diplomacy remains possible.

"The Leader's wise and measured reply exposed the U.S. as the least trustworthy party in negotiations," Bagheri said, lambasting Trump as a "narcissistic bully" whose confrontational policies have alienated even traditional allies.

The exchange follows months of escalating rhetoric from Washington. Since January, Trump has repeatedly threatened to "bomb Iran" unless it capitulates to U.S. demands—a breach of international law widely condemned as reckless brinkmanship.

The U.S. president also signed a memorandum accusing Iran of "destabilizing behavior," reinstating sanctions and outlining plans to further strangle its economy by reducing oil exports to zero—reviving the "maximum pressure" campaign initiated in 2018 after Trump unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal in his first term.

## IAEA chief acknowledges Iran has no nuclear weapons, says will visit Tehran in coming weeks

TEHRAN – In the face of renewed political rhetoric from Western powers, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Grossi, has confirmed that Iran does not possess nuclear weapons, despite ongoing claims surrounding its peaceful nuclear program.

Speaking in an interview with Argentina's "La Nación Más" television network, Grossi admitted that Iran has not developed the means to construct a nuclear bomb.

However, he alleged that Iran holds "significant quantities of enriched uranium," a repeated claim that Iran has always rejected.

These remarks, while framed within a political narrative, still reaffirm what the Islamic Republic has maintained for years: Iran's nuclear activities are peaceful, legal, and under strict international supervision.

Grossi, who continues to echo political language influenced by certain Western capitals, nevertheless recognized that enriched uranium, even in significant quantities, does not constitute a nuclear weapon. "Our estimate is that Iran now has enough enriched uranium for six or seven weapons," he claimed, "but that does not mean Iran has such weapons." He further acknowledged that weaponization involves advanced technological systems which are not in place.

Grossi's comments come amid increasing tension in international diplomatic circles. Referring to recent communications between

Tehran and Washington, he revealed that the U.S. President Donald Trump had sent a direct message to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

"In that message, Trump suggested negotiations," Grossi noted, "but also issued threats, including reference to a two-month deadline and the possibility of bombing." Such rhetoric, again resorting to the worn-out language of threats and coercion, highlights the double standards at the heart of American foreign policy.

Following his arrival in Buenos Aires, Grossi held a telephone conversation with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, during which it was agreed that the IAEA chief would travel to Tehran in the coming weeks. The objective of this visit is to address remaining technical questions and further de-escalate tensions caused largely by Western provocation. "We must avoid a confrontation that would be catastrophic," Grossi said—an outcome that Iran has always sought to prevent through dialogue and transparency.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized the peaceful nature of its nuclear program and has fully complied with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Yet, despite Iran's cooperation, its peaceful efforts have been met with continuous pressure, misinformation, and sabotage.

After the signing of the JCPOA in 2015, Iran fulfilled all of its commitments, as confirmed by over a dozen IAEA reports. However, in 2018, the United States unilaterally violated the agree-

ment by withdrawing from it and reimposing illegal sanctions on the Iranian nation. The European parties, while expressing regret, failed to take effective steps to honor their own commitments. In response, and within the framework of Articles 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, Iran exercised its legal right to reduce its commitments in a reversible manner.

Nonetheless, the Islamic Republic has always kept the door to diplomacy open. Recent talks with the European trio in Geneva and with China in Beijing are clear signs of Tehran's constructive approach. Iran has reaffirmed its readiness to reach a sustainable and trustworthy agreement—one that ensures the full lifting of sanctions and provides guarantees against future violations.

In a reckless and inflammatory move, Donald Trump recently escalated tensions by stating in an NBC interview: "If they don't agree to a deal, they will be bombed." The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran immediately summoned the Swiss chargé d'affaires in Tehran—the representative of U.S. interests—and handed over an official note of protest condemning Trump's unlawful and provocative remarks.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei strongly condemned the statement, writing on social media platform X: "Such a threat is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter. Violence breeds violence. Peace breeds peace. The United States must choose its path—along with the consequences."

## Reuters: Iran warns regional countries U.S. military collusion will bring 'severe consequences'

From Page 1 ▶ Reuters also observed that the Arab countries in the Persian Gulf—vital to global oil supplies—are now caught in a delicate balancing act amid escalating fears of a broader conflagration.

The news agency also claimed that despite rejecting Trump's demand for direct negotiations, Iran has proposed continuing indirect talks through Oman, a trusted mediator.

"Indirect talks offer a chance to evaluate

Washington's seriousness about a political solution," the official told Reuters, adding that such dialogue could begin "soon" if the U.S. demonstrates sincerity.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi or his deputy, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, may have been authorized to represent Iran in Muscat, though the official cautioned the path ahead could be "rocky."

## 'Netanyahu belongs behind bars, not podiums', Iran's embassy condemns Israeli PM's remarks

TEHRAN – The Iranian Embassy in Hungary has fiercely rejected anti-Iran statements by the Israeli regime's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during his visit to Budapest, describing them as "baseless" and "hypocritical" given Tel Aviv's documented record of war crimes and genocide in Gaza.

In a statement on Sunday, the embassy asserted Netanyahu and his regime pose a "grave threat to humanity" and undermine global peace.

"Netanyahu, a globally notorious war criminal and child killer under International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation for orchestrating heinous international crimes, has the audacity to label Iran a threat to peace!" the embassy declared, referencing the ICC's December 2024 arrest warrants for Netanyahu and former Israeli War Minister Yoav Gallant over charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. "This is a farcical spectacle!"

The embassy emphasized that Netanyahu's re-

gime, which oversees an "apartheid-colonial entity" accused of pursuing the "colonial annihilation" of Indigenous Palestinians, lacks moral authority to criticize others.

"Netanyahu and his criminal clique belong behind bars, not diplomatic podiums," the statement read. "They endanger not only global peace but, more importantly, universal human values."

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





# Serenity or inferno: The crossroads facing U.S.

## Tehran emphasizes readiness for diplomatic engagement on equal terms, leaving the choice up to the U.S.

TEHRAN – With tensions escalating in West Asia amid U.S. military deployments and aggressive rhetoric, Iran has made its position unmistakably clear: it remains open to diplomacy—but not to intimidation.

From high-ranking military officials to leading diplomats, the Islamic Republic has made it clear: discussions can occur, but only indirectly, and never under threat or coercion.

Central to Iran's message is a rejection of repeating historical errors. Iranian authorities caution that the U.S. does not seek dialogue, but submission—an outcome Iran completely rejects.

In an interview with the Khaneh Mellat news agency on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi emphasized Tehran's readiness for diplomatic engagement—albeit on very specific terms.

He pointedly noted that no discussions have taken place and that Tehran will not consider situations similar to Libya's. He noted that the idea of Iran disarming on its own was something the West could "only dream of."

The Libyan case is significant in the Iranian mindset. It serves as a clear reminder of the consequences when a country gives up its protections for uncertain



assurances. For Iran, deterrence is not a threat—it's insurance against coercion.

On Sunday, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, underscored that any attack on Iran would unleash a response that would be "swift, crushing, and irreversible."

Yet, despite the saber-rattling, Iran continues to seek a path toward peaceful coexistence. General Bagheri disclosed that U.S. President Donald Trump's letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei proposing talks was laced with veiled threats.

The Leader's response, as stated by General Bagheri, was resolute and grounded: Iran would not initiate hostilities, would seek peaceful nuclear energy,

and given America's unpredictability, would refrain from direct negotiations—though indirect diplomacy stayed a possibility.

At the heart of Western anxieties is Iran's nuclear program. Accusations continue to fly, but even Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has acknowledged that while Iran possesses rather highly enriched uranium, it has not weaponized it. He further confirmed in a Saturday interview with Argentine media that Iran lacks the necessary systems for weaponization, reinforcing Tehran's established assertion that its nuclear activities are purely for civilian purposes.

Nonetheless, inflammatory language from individuals such as Trump—who previous-

ly warned that Iran would face bombing if it failed to agree to a deal—has only intensified Iranian suspicion. Tehran quickly denounced the statement as a breach of the UN Charter, cautioning that such rhetoric escalates regional instability.

Ali Larijani, a senior Iranian politician and former parliament speaker, stated that while Iran possesses the technical capacity to develop nuclear weapons, it has refrained due to a binding religious decree issued by the Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, banning their production. However, he cautioned that if the United States or Israel were to launch a military strike against Iran, the tide of public opinion could shift decisively. In such a scenario, he said, the Islamic Republic may be compelled—by internal pressure—to pursue nuclear arms.

Iran is not seeking capitulation or control—it is seeking recognition. It is prepared to interact with the world, but on an equal footing. Diplomacy, certainly—but never at the cost of sovereignty.

As Foreign Minister Araghchi cautioned, "Every nation has the right to its own evaluations and interpretations. Nevertheless, if any measures are taken [against us], we will view them as complicit."

## Direct talks with U.S. 'meaningless' amid threats, diplomacy still on table: Iranian FM

From Page 1 ▶ TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has rejected the possibility of direct negotiations with the United States, labeling them "meaningless" so long as Washington continues to issue threats of military action against Iran.

His remarks came during a formal address at a grand Nowruz celebration in Tehran on Saturday evening, just two days after the U.S. President Donald Trump claimed Iran was ready for direct talks with his administration.

The event was attended by a wide array of senior Iranian officials, foreign ambassadors, and heads of diplomatic missions residing in Tehran, along with their spouses.

Araghchi emphasized that Iran remains committed to diplomatic engagement and open to indirect negotiations, but stressed that meaningful dialogue cannot occur under the shadow of force.

"Direct negotiations with a government that continuously threatens to use military power in violation of the United Nations Charter, and whose officials express contradictory positions, are fundamentally devoid of meaning," he said.

The Iranian diplomat confirmed that Iran has issued a response to the letter that was sent by the U.S. "Our response matched the tone and content of his letter while leaving the door open for diplomacy," he noted. "We are not averse to negotiations—but we will not allow ourselves to be pressured or humiliated through coercion."

Araghchi went on to criticize the United



States' unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), despite Iran's full compliance and transparency regarding its peaceful nuclear program.

He reiterated Tehran's readiness to return to discussions aimed at resolving nuclear-related concerns—provided they result in the lifting of "cruel and unjust" sanctions imposed on the Iranian people.

"While we continue to pursue the path of dialogue and diplomacy in good faith, the Islamic Republic of Iran is fully prepared for any scenario that may arise," Araghchi stated. "Just as we are serious and determined in negotiations, we are equally serious in defending our national sovereignty and vital

interests."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to pursue its national interests with wisdom, dignity, and strength," he stated.

In his wide-ranging remarks, Araghchi also turned to developments in the region, condemning Israel's ongoing military aggression in Gaza and the broader Resistance Front.

"Today, more than ever, global cooperation is needed to bring an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, and to halt the Zionist regime's criminal actions in Gaza, as well as its aggressions against Lebanon and Syria," he said, calling on the international community to uphold justice and human rights in the face of the ongoing genocide

## Oman as a diplomatic channel

### A strategic shift away from UAE's ties with Israel

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – After a series of exchanges, Tehran finally responded to the letter from the President of the United States.

In this context, Abbas Araghchi announced that "the official response of the Islamic Republic of Iran was sent to the U.S. side through Oman on Wednesday, March 26, 2025." The Iranian Foreign Minister emphasized that "this letter contains a detailed explanation regarding Iran's official positions regarding the current developments and a precise response to the points raised by President Trump, which were duly communicated to the opposing side."

What surprised all experts was

that Iran chose to send its response to Donald Trump's letter via Oman, rather than through the United Arab Emirates, who had been responsible for transmitting the U.S. President's message to Iran.

Previously, a delegation from the UAE, led by Anwar Gargash, advisor to the President of the UAE, traveled to Tehran to deliver the U.S. President's letter to Iran. The letter had been sent by Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy to the Middle East [West Asia], to Mohammed bin Zayed, the President of the UAE, who handed it over to the Emiratis to deliver it to Iran.

The choice of Oman as the channel to transmit the response is no coincidence. In fact, by opt-



*Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and his Omani counterpart Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi meet in Muscat on March 16, 2025.*

ing for this route, Iran sends a clear message that the Muscat route can be a key part of the negotiation process. This move not only underscores Iran's seriousness regarding the negotiations,

but also highlights the priority Iran places on diplomacy through Oman, a key player in regional relations.

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

## Iran U17 coach Chamanian satisfied with draw against DPR Korea

TEHRAN – Iran head coach Abbas Chamanian came away satisfied with his team's performance against DPR Korea at the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 on Saturday but expects his players to improve in their remaining Group D matches.

The 2008 champions fought back from going behind early to force a 1-1 draw, courtesy of Mehdi Sahnesh's strike midway through the first half.

The result leaves both teams desperately needing to win their second match to make the knockout stage and qualify for the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025, with Tajikistan leading the standings after their 2-1 victory against Oman.

"DPR Korea is a very strong team and it was a difficult match, but our players performed well considering this was our opening game," said Chamanian.

The vastly experienced tactician said his team would have to put in more effort to further improve, especially if they want to overcome Oman on Tuesday

"Our defense is solid but we need to sharpen our attacks. We have intelligent players who can help us get good results and win our next two matches if we work on this component."

DPR Korea, champion in 2010 and 2014, could have put the match beyond their opponents' reach after Choe Chung Hyuk's goal if they had put away the numerous opportunities that came their way,

O Thae Song fielded the same players who scored against Iran in their 4-1 win in the Qualifiers in a campaign that saw them finish with maximum points from four games.

Kim Yu Jin, Ri Kang Rim, Pak Kwang Song and Choe Song Hun, however, couldn't ignite, and Thae Song will have to devise a strategy that will put them in the driver's seat when they meet Tajikistan on Tuesday.

## Pezeshkian praises Iran's NPC for winning Women's Day Recognition Award

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian praised Iran's National Paralympic Committee (NPC) for winning the 2025 International Women's Day Recognition Award.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) announced the three exceptional winners of the 2025 awards in early March: Penny Briscoe CBE from ParalympicsGB (Leadership), Paralympian Zakia Khudadadi (Emerging Leadership), and the NPC of Iran (IPC Member), which were recognized for their outstanding contributions in advance of International Women's Day.

Commenting on the NPC Iran's recognition in the Membership category, Ghafour Karegari, President of NPC Iran, said, "NPC Iran not only believes in gender equality but also provides enhanced privileges, services, and support specifically tailored for women with disabilities. Through this vision and diligent oversight of its implementation, it has created a supportive and empowering environment for women with disabilities."

In a letter to Karegari, Pezeshkian expressed his gratitude for the committee's efforts and hard work, congratulating them on this significant honor and wishing the National Paralympic Committee continued success in upcoming events.

## Iran defeat Uzbekistan in 2025 SAT Futsal Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Uzbekistan 5-0 in the SAT Futsal Championship Thailand 2025 on Sunday.

Mahtab Banaei scored two goals as well as goals from Elham Anafcheh, Nasimeh Gholami and Fereshteh Khosravi.

Team Melli are scheduled to play Thailand Monday.

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.

## Gholizadeh scores as Lech Poznan defeat Korona Kielce

TEHRAN – Lech Poznan defeated Korona Kielce 2-0 in the match of the 27th round of PKO BP Ekstraklasa on Saturday.

In the match held at the Estadio Municipal de Poznan, the goals were scored by Ali Gholizadeh in 30th minute and Mikael Ishak with seven minutes remaining.

Lech Poznan sits third in the table with 53 points, two points adrift of leader Rakowa Czechochowa.

Korona Kielce remained 13th in the 18-team table.

## Mojtaba Hosseini shortlisted for Iran U23 football coach position

TEHRAN – Mojtaba Hosseini, head coach of Aluminum football team, has been shortlisted to take charge of Iran's U-23 football team.

The 50-year-old coach was previously linked to the U-23 position but chose to lead a club in the Iranian football league instead.

The Iran U-23 football team is currently without a coach after parting ways with Reza Enayati following disappointing results at the 2022 Asian Games.

Hosseini has extensive experience managing several Iranian clubs, including Zob Ahan, Masjed Soleyman, Paykan, Persepolis, and Tractor.

## Iran to send three girls to IWF World Youth & Junior Championships

TEHRAN – Three girls will represent Iran at the 2025 International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Youth and Junior Championships.

The competition will take place in Lima, Peru from April 30 to May 5.

Zahra Hosseini, Reyhaneh Karimi and Ghazaleh Hosseini will compete in the event.

Women's sports in Iran, including weightlifting, have made significant progress in recent years to the extent that Iranian women can now win medals in international competitions.

## AEK winger Hajsafi linked with Sepahan

TEHRAN – AEK Athens winger Ehsan Hajsafi has been linked with a move to Iranian football club Sepahan.

The 35-year-old player has played for the Greek team since 2021 but the media reports suggest that Sepahan has shown interest in signing him.

Hajsafi has previously played for Sepahan in three stints.



## Iran-Eurasia trade grows 2.2-fold as focus shifts to corridor transport, infrastructure

TEHRAN – Trade between Iran and member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) has expanded 2.2 times since the implementation of a preferential trade agreement in November 2019, according to Mirhadi Seyyedi, advisor on international affairs and trade agreements at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO).

Seyyedi emphasized that trade growth and infrastructure development must advance in tandem. He said it is unrealistic to wait for complete infrastructure readiness—such as fully developed transportation fleets—before pursuing trade agreements. Instead, trade expansion itself attracts the investment and momentum necessary to upgrade infrastructure.

He noted that although Iran's infrastructure was limited at the time of launching the preferential trade agreement with the Eurasian bloc, the foundations for improvement were already in place.

The subsequent growth in trade confirms that both trade flows and infrastructure have developed together.

Seyyedi underlined the importance of strengthening transport routes within the regional corridors and said that Iran and its Eurasian partners remain in ongoing discussions to ease transportation bottlenecks.

He called for continued financial investment in infrastructure to support the next phase of trade liberalization.

He also highlighted improvements in financial exchanges between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union, noting that monetary transactions have become significantly smoother and more frequent over the past five years.

These advances, he said, demonstrate the Iranian government's sustained efforts to facilitate trade integration with Eurasia.

In mid-March, Iran's embassy in Moscow reported that the free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union would come into effect in 60 days.

According to the report, Iranian Ambassador to Russia Kazem Jalali officially confirmed the approval of the agreement in a telephone conversation with Andrei Slepnev, the EAEU's trade minister. The formal conclusion of the legal procedures for the free trade agreement between Iran and the EAEU member countries was announced by Jalali as the agreement progresses through all signatory nations.

The two sides expressed their satisfaction with the upcoming implementation of the agreement, calling it a key factor in boosting trade exchanges in the region.

The Iranian embassy added that under the terms of the agreement, the free trade



agreement between Iran and EAEU member states would be enforceable 60 days after all participating countries have completed their legal processes.

Signed in December 2023 in St. Petersburg, the agreement will exempt 87 percent of trade goods between Iran and the EEU member countries from customs tariffs.

The free trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union is a significant milestone in the region's economic integration.

The EEU, which comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, represents a strategic bloc that spans a vast geographical area and includes some of the largest markets in the post-Soviet space.

For Iran, the deal opens up opportunities for enhanced access to these markets, which are especially vital amid ongoing economic challenges and sanctions.

The agreement aims to improve bilateral trade and strengthen economic ties by reducing tariffs and easing trade barriers. With 87 percent of traded goods now exempt from tariffs, Iranian businesses are expected to benefit from reduced export costs, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, industrial goods, and energy. Similarly, EAEU countries will gain easier access to Iran's markets, known for its growing demand in various sectors, including construction materials, consumer goods, and energy resources.

Additionally, the free trade agreement is likely to have a broader geopolitical impact. It signals closer economic ties between Iran and the Eurasian region, aligning Iran with its broader foreign policy goals of diversifying economic partnerships outside of Western spheres.

This agreement strengthens Iran's position in the region, especially as it looks to integrate more deeply into the global economy despite the pressures of sanctions and diplomatic isolation.

In related news, Iran's exports to EAEU member states have increased by 22 percent, according to recent figures. Furthermore, the agreement will enable zero-tariff trade with five countries in the Eurasian region.

## Agricultural exports jump 35% in 11 months despite regulatory hurdles

TEHRAN – Iran's agricultural exports grew 35 percent in value over the first 11 months of the Iranian year 1403 (March 2024–February 2025), reaching \$7.57 billion, according to Ruhollah Latifi, spokesperson for the Trade Development Commission of the House of Industry, Mine and Trade.

Latifi said Iran exported 9.4 million tons of livestock, agricultural, crop, and food products during this period to various global destinations.

He noted that 90 percent of the total export volume and 77 percent of its value were directed to the country's 15 neighboring markets.

Despite high-quality products and strong foreign demand, Latifi acknowledged that Iran's agricultural and food exports continue to face logistical and regulatory barriers.

In response, the Ministry of Agriculture is preparing new measures to streamline export procedures and reduce red tape.

Among the upcoming steps are the official registration of orchards and formal contracts between farmers and exporters—initiatives aimed at increasing traceability and improving compliance with international standards.

Iran is one of the leading producers of pistachios, saffron, dates, and various fruits and

nuts, with many of these products finding buyers in regional and international markets.

Major destinations for Iran's agricultural exports include Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, and India.

In recent years, Iran has expanded its market access in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, as well as in Southeast Asia through new trade agreements and participation in international food expos.

Diverse climatic conditions across Iran's vast territory enable year-round cultivation, which gives the country a comparative advantage in producing a wide range of fresh and processed agricultural goods.

However, challenges such as water scarcity, outdated irrigation systems, and transportation inefficiencies continue to hinder the sector's full export potential.

Under Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, the government aims to increase agricultural exports by 20 to 25 percent by the end of the program.

To achieve this, authorities are focusing on promoting knowledge-based agribusiness, enhancing cold-chain logistics, improving packaging standards, and negotiating phytosanitary agreements with key trade partners.

# CNG development seriously on the agenda

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- Due to the importance of compressed natural gas (CNG) in reducing dependence on gasoline and improving air quality, multiple plans have been put in place to develop the infrastructure of this industry and increase its consumption in the country.

Efforts such as expanding distribution capacity, optimizing CNG stations, and implementing supportive measures are among the steps that can increase the share of this fuel in the basket of transportation energy.

According to the released data, the daily distribution capacity of CNG in the country has exceeded 40 million cubic meters, while current consumption stands at around 19.2 million cubic meters per day.

This gap between capacity and consumption creates a great opportunity to increase the share of this clean fuel in the national energy basket.

One of the most significant initiatives in this area is the implementation of a program for free conversion of vehicles to dual-fuel ones. This program, supported by the government and carried out in collaboration with the private sector, plays an effective role in promoting CNG use.

Additionally, two new contracts have been signed with automakers for producing gas-powered vehicles, which are expected to lead to increased demand for this



fuel.

In addition to expanding the fleet of gas-fueled vehicles, expert evaluations are ongoing to improve economic policies related to this fuel. In this regard, the issue of CNG station service rates has been highlighted, and new proposals for their optimization are under review.

In an interview conducted by ISNA, Keramat Veis-Karami, the managing director of the National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) pointed out the importance of promoting CNG consumption in reducing air pollution and gasoline dependence, and stated, "Over the past 23 years, 2,500 CNG stations have been established in the country. However, in recent years, the consumption of this fuel has been declining. With the implementation of new policies, it is expected that this trend will change in the current year."

Considering the high supply capacity of CNG and developmental plans in this sector, it seems this fuel could play a more significant role in supplying energy for the transportation sector in the future.

As stated by the head of the National Association of Alternative Fuels and Related Services, expanding the use of compressed natural gas in Iran could save 20 million liters of gasoline annually within three years.

Speaking at the national conference "Green Prosperity: Energy Innovations and Clean Transportation" in last December, Ali Mahmoudian emphasized that increasing CNG usage would significantly reduce the need for gasoline imports and address energy challenges.

"CNG currently accounts for 17 percent of the country's fuel basket, which is inadequate for a natural gas-producing nation

with the infrastructure capacity to supply 50 million cubic meters daily," Mahmoudian said.

He noted that while 2,500 fueling stations are connected to the national gas network—a feat unmatched globally—expansion has stalled due to unresolved barriers.

Mahmoudian pointed out that during the 2000s, when gasoline demand surged, the CNG industry played a crucial role in stabilizing fuel supplies. However, the sector now faces obstacles, including tax policies, business constraints, and unfulfilled government commitments.

He warned of an impending fuel crisis, projecting a daily gasoline shortfall of 150 million liters by 2031 unless corrective actions are taken.

"Iran is rich in resources but poor in energy governance," Mahmoudian said, highlighting the country's underutilization of its vast underground energy reserves. He criticized the current year's budget, which allocates over 70 percent of funds to current expenditures rather than infrastructure, education, or research—areas prioritized by nations like Singapore, South Korea, and Japan.

Mahmoudian urged policymakers to invest in CNG development, emphasizing its potential to curb gasoline imports and deliver long-term economic and environmental benefits.

## Iran's annual non-oil exports rise to \$57.8b



TEHRAN – Iran exported over 152 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$57.8 billion in the past Iranian calendar year 1403, which ended on March 20, 2025.

This marked a 10 percent increase in volume and a 15.62 percent rise in value compared to the previous year, according to Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) for planning and international affairs.

Imports totaled 39.3 million tons valued at \$72.4 billion, representing a 0.77 percent decline in weight but an 8.22 percent increase in value from the previous year. The result was a non-oil trade deficit of \$14.6 billion, largely due to the import of over \$8.0 billion worth of raw gold bars, which accounted for 11.2 percent of the total import value.

Iran's main non-oil exports

included natural gas, liquefied propane and butane, methanol, liquefied petroleum gases and hydrocarbon gases, and gas condensates.

Natural gas was the top export item, with an average customs value of \$314 per ton.

Other leading exports were petroleum bitumen, urea, non-alloy iron and steel billets, iron or steel bars, and polyethylene.

The top destinations for Iran's exports were China at \$14.8 billion, Iraq at \$11.9 billion, the United Arab Emirates at \$7.2 billion, Turkey at \$6.8 billion, Pakistan and Afghanistan at \$2.4 billion each, and India at \$1.9 billion.

These seven countries accounted for \$47.6 billion, or 82.3 percent of Iran's total non-oil export value.

On the import side, essential goods such as corn feed, soy-

bean meal, genetically modified soybeans, rice, and sunflower seed oil were among the top items. Other key imports included smartphones, tractors, and auto parts.

The UAE was Iran's largest source of imports at \$21.9 billion, followed by China at \$19.3 billion, Turkey at \$12.4 billion, Germany at \$2.4 billion, India at \$1.7 billion, Hong Kong at approximately \$1.4 billion, and Russia at \$1.3 billion. Together, these countries supplied goods worth \$60.7 billion, or 83.8 percent of Iran's total imports.

Akbarpour said the trade deficit could be largely attributed to the surge in gold imports, which on their own exceeded \$8.0 billion.

As previously announced by the previous head of the IRICA, the value of Iran's foreign trade including oil and technical engineering services reached \$153.178 billion in the Iranian calendar year 1402 (ended on March 19, 2024).

According to Mohammad Rezvanifar, the value of the Islamic Republic's trade with the partners in the that year increased by 2.6 percent compared to the same period in its previous year.

The official put the country's non-oil exports, excluding exports of electricity, crude oil, and

techno-engineering services, at 136.4 million tons worth \$49.33 billion which shows a 9.82 percent rise in terms of tonnage and an 8.87 percent decline in terms of value.

Iran exported \$35.87 billion of crude oil, \$370 million of electricity, and \$1.293 billion of technical engineering services in the mentioned year, according to Rezvanifar.

According to him, during this period, 48.8 million tons of petrochemical products worth \$19.4 billion were also exported, which shows a decrease of 11.32 percent and 28.59 percent in terms of weight and value, respectively.

During this period, liquefied natural gas with \$3.9 billion, liquefied propane with \$3.62 billion, and bitumen-oil with \$2.19 billion were Iran's top exported items.

Iran's top export destination during this period was China with \$13.915 billion worth of imports from the Islamic Republic, followed by Iraq with \$9.215 billion, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with over \$6.611 billion, Turkey with \$4.16 billion, and India with \$2.17 billion.

The official put the average customs value of each ton of exported goods at \$362 which has decreased by 17 percent compared to the preceding year.

## West Asian countries invest in Iran as non-oil exports gain momentum

TEHRAN – Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) reported positive trade performance with West Asia in the past Iranian year (ended on March 20), despite ongoing international sanctions.

According to Abdolamir Rabihavi, Director General of the TPO's West Asia Office, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman made investments in Iran over the last year, signaling strengthened economic ties in the region.

Rabihavi said Iran's top trading partners in West Asia during the past year were Iraq, the UAE, Turkey, and Oman, and exports to these countries maintained steady growth throughout the year.

Even without final data from the last month, Iran broke its previous export records

to these destinations.

Looking ahead to 1404 (March 2025–March 2026), Rabihavi noted the possibility of intensified sanctions, but emphasized that the TPO plans to open new markets to exporters and diversify Iran's export basket to sustain growth.

The organization is pursuing fresh strategies to expand trade with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman.

As the secretariat of the Iran-Oman Joint Economic Committee, the TPO also aims to actively promote re-exports via Oman.

He stressed the importance of exporting high-value-added products and announced a shift in focus toward knowledge-based and innovative goods that can deliver higher returns.

While neighboring markets continue to demand Iran's raw materials and minerals, the relatively low export value of such bulk commodities has limited growth.

In contrast, advanced and knowledge-based products could increase the average value per ton and boost the role of small and medium-sized tech firms in Iran's exports.

Rabihavi also referenced the Leader's designation of the current year's slogan, "Investment for Production," and said Iran must enhance its appeal to foreign investors.

He expressed hope that with the right approach and open-minded strategy, Iran can attract more investment opportunities in 1404, building on last year's capital inflows from Turkey, the UAE, and Oman.



# Trump's billion-dollar gamble in Yemen falls apart

From page 1 ▶

## A billion dollars down the drain

However, the choice to prioritize military action over diplomatic engagement, regional coalition-building, or addressing the Israeli war in Gaza as the cause of instability in the West Asia region has proven to be not only strategically weak but also financially reckless.

Defense analysts estimate that the cost of the military operation has surpassed \$1 billion. All for a campaign that has delivered almost no measurable degradation in Ansarullah's capacity.

In fact, CENTCOM has reported the elimination of "dozens of the movement targets," but independent observers say these claims are unverifiable and likely exaggerated. Notably, Yemen has resumed strikes on shipping lanes days after each reported U.S. "success."

## Ansarullah responds with strategic messaging in the face of US bombs

While Washington has measured its Yemen campaign in dollars, drones, and air sorties, Yemen's Ansarullah movement has responded with a distinctly different strategy.

Far from cowering under the weight of a billion-dollar American offensive, the movement's leadership has seized the moment to fortify their political legitimacy and boost morale at home and abroad.

Shortly after the first wave of American strikes in early January 2025, Mohammed Abdul Salam, Ansarullah's senior spokesperson and chief negotiator, issued a pointed statement via Al-Masirah TV and on his official Telegram channel that said:

"The American and British aggressors think that by bombing our territory, they can silence our voice or break our will. They are mistaken. Every missile they launch only



strengthens our determination. Our operations in the Red Sea will continue until the aggression on the people of Gaza ends, and until the siege on our nation is lifted. This is not just a military confrontation—it is a confrontation of justice against tyranny."

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the movement's leader, addressed the public on February 29, 2025. He called the U.S. campaign "proof of their desperation."

"They bomb us from the sky because they cannot face us on the ground. They hide behind satellites and jets because they fear the will of our people. America's aggression is not a show of strength—it is a sign of weakness. We did not ask for war. We defend our waters, our skies, and our dignity," Al-Houthi stated.

In mid-March, al-Houthi also said the resistance fighters would target U.S. ships in the Red Sea as long as the U.S. continues attacks on Yemen.

"If they continue their aggression, we will continue the escalation," he said in a televised speech immediately after the first round of attacks were launched on Yemen under Trump's presidency.

The Ansarullah movement's political bureau also described the U.S. attacks as a "war crime."

Ansarullah's media outlets have circulated footage of drone launches, military parades, and intercept-

ed American munitions, seeking to present an image of strength despite the overwhelming firepower deployed against them. In their coverage, American strikes are portrayed as "cowardly."

Moreover, Ansarullah officials stated that the attacks have backfired by uniting the population behind the movement.

Ansarullah has also strategically used international law and sovereignty discourse to frame U.S. actions as violations of Yemeni self-determination. In a March 2025 communiqué sent to the United Nations, Yemen described the strikes as "unprovoked violations of Yemen's national airspace," and called on the UN Security Council to investigate "American war crimes."

These calculated statements, far from being random outbursts, form part of a sophisticated campaign that combines moral high ground, military resilience, and anti-imperialist messaging.

## Strategic failure due to ignoring political realities

What the Trump administration underestimated or ignored is the decentralized nature of the Ansarullah military command. Many of the movement's missile units operate in mountainous terrain, often underground, and with support from local tribal networks. Their ability to adapt quickly and avoid detection

has made them a nightmare for a conventional military relying heavily on aerial surveillance and airpower.

The air campaign has allowed Yemen to boost domestic support and further entrenching their control.

The result was a campaign without direction, a budget without oversight, and a strategy without an endgame.

Trump's Yemen strategy has also aggravated tensions across West Asia. Instead of isolating Yemen, the campaign has energized anti-American sentiment, especially in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

On the international stage, America's traditional allies in Europe have voiced cautious support for maritime security while expressing concern over the rising toll on civilians and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. France and Germany have called for "political solutions and a return to the negotiating table"—a stance that highlights a clear divergence from Washington's predominantly military approach.

Domestically, Trump's Yemen policy has attracted rare bipartisan criticism. Lawmakers from both parties have demanded clarity on the operation's objectives, rules of engagement, and exit strategy.

Senator Chris Murphy described the campaign as "an endless operation with no measurable goals." On the Republican side, Senator Rand Paul questioned the wisdom of spending billions abroad while Americans face economic uncertainty at home.

Public opinion polls also suggest waning support. A recent Gallup survey found that only 27% of Americans approve of the airstrikes, while 62% believe the funds could be better used on domestic issues, like healthcare, infrastructure, or education.

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

## China counterpunch: The US to be the big loser in trade war

By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING—China's strong reaction to the new US tariffs clearly demonstrates that the administration of President Donald Trump is getting into completely uncharted waters.

On Friday, China announced that it will impose 34 percent tariffs on all imports from the US, which are supposed to go into effect on Thursday. China also announced curbs on the export of some rare earths.

The decision was in line with Beijing's pledge

to retaliate following the escalation of a global trade conflict initiated by President Donald Trump.

Trump unveiled 54 percent tariffs on all Chinese exports to the United States on Wednesday. This included an additional 34 percent "reciprocal" tariff on top of the existing 20 percent duties. Since his return to the White House on January 20, Trump has already implemented two rounds of 10 percent extra duties on all Chinese imports. The new tariffs will come into effect on Wednesday.

US stock markets plummeted on Friday following China's retaliation. "The market has spoken," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said in a post on Facebook on Saturday.

The Chinese government also released its position on opposing US "abuse" of tariffs.

"Using tariffs as a tool of extreme pressure for selfish gain is a textbook example of unilateralism, protectionism, and economic bullying," it said in a statement on Saturday.

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

## Will Trump's war on Yemen succeed after Biden's year-long failure?

From page 1 ▶ On the other hand, the Yemeni armed forces continue to paralyze shipping traffic to the port of Eilat in the occupied Palestine after the Israeli enemy ignored the deadline for allowing humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip.

What has helped the Yemeni armed forces so far to contain the US attacks is the Ansarullah movement's belief in jihad as a firm doctrine. It is a doctrine believed by millions of people who have maintained million-strong rallies every Friday without retreat despite continuous bombardments and economic hardships.

The Palestinian cause is alive in the Yemenis'

conscience.

In a short time, the Sanaa government has been able to confront American bombardments, which have inflicted enormous losses on the country's industrial and commercial sectors, exceeding 170 billion dollars. It has adopted a policy of self-reliance that has sharpened motivation in all fields.

Yemen's military prowess also contributed to the defeat of hostile warships, as well as the attrition of the Israeli entity. It has not only paralyzed Eilat port but also made frequent missile and drone attacks on Tel Aviv.

Yemen's special geography has also made the missions of American espionage aircraft ineffective.

The Sanaa government has also debunked the claims by some members of the Islah Party (the Muslim Brotherhood in Yemen) and the National Congress Party, two of Yemen's largest parties. Now, the Ansarullah movement has won more popular support not only among some Yemeni elites but also among Arab and possibly global elites, especially after it successfully repelled the Saudi-Emirati aggression that started in March 2015 and lasted until 2022.

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

## Dozens killed in Gaza as Israeli bombings escalate

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN — The death toll in Gaza surged within just a few hours as Israeli occupation forces launched intense and indiscriminate attacks.

As the regime's airstrikes and artillery shelling persist across the besieged Gaza Strip, around 50 slain Palestinian civilians have been brought to local hospitals.

Israeli warplanes, flying intensively over the region, have reportedly targeted civilian gatherings and residential homes, while ground forces continue to fire heavily in several areas.

In the southern city of Khan Younis, multiple casualties were reported after Israeli artillery shelled the

eastern part of the city.

Rescue teams struggled to reach victims due to the ongoing bombardment.

An airstrike on a house in the Khan Younis refugee camp killed a child and injured several others.

In a separate attack, a father and his daughter were killed when Israeli forces bombed tents sheltering displaced families in the al-Mawasi area.

Meanwhile, loud explosions were heard in Gaza City, signaling heavy Israeli bombardment there as well.

The Ministry of Health reported that 60 people were killed and 162 others injured in the past 24 hours



and brought to hospitals across the Gaza Strip.

It remains unclear whether the latest victims of the ongoing Israeli strikes are included in the Health Ministry's casualty figures.

Israeli occupation forces also demolished several homes in the Qizan Rashwan area of Khan Younis and destroyed thousands of acres of farmland.

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

## Israel deports two British MPs amid backlash over killings of Gaza medics



Israel has detained and deported two British members of parliament, refusing them entry as part of a parliamentary delegation, according to the United Kingdom foreign secretary, David Lammy.

Labour MPs Yuan Yang and Abtisam Mohamed flew from London to Israel on Saturday and were rejected because they were suspected of plans to "document the activities of security forces and spread anti-Israel hatred", Sky News reported, citing a state-

ment from the Israeli immigration ministry.

Lammy said in a statement that Israel's actions were "counterproductive, and deeply concerning", Al Jazeera reported.

"I have made clear to my counterparts in the Israeli government that this is no way to treat British parliamentarians, and we have been in contact with both MPs tonight to offer our support," he said.

"The UK government's focus remains securing a return to the ceasefire and negotiations to stop the bloodshed, free the hostages and end the conflict in Gaza," Lammy added.

Yang and Mohamed said in a joint statement they were "astounded" by the decision.

"We're astounded at the unprecedented step taken by the Israeli authorities to refuse British MPs entry on our trip to visit the occupied West Bank," they wrote on X.

"It is vital that parliamentarians are able to witness first-hand the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory."

## At least 602,000 children in Gaza at risk of 'permanent paralysis'



The Health Ministry in the Gaza Strip has likened Israel's prevention of polio vaccines

in the besieged and bombarded territory to "a time bomb that threatens to spread the epidemic".

In a statement, it said 602,000 children in Gaza were at risk of "permanent paralysis and chronic disabilities" unless they could receive the desperately needed vaccines.

"Preventing the entry of vaccines means the collapse of the efforts made over the past seven months, which means serious and catastrophic repercussions will be added to the targeted and exhausted health system, in addition to doubling the social and economic repercussions," it warned.

## Thousands rally in Morocco at pro-Palestinian protest



Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Morocco's capital on Sunday against the conflict in the Gaza Strip where Israel has resumed its anti-Hamas offensive after a two-month ceasefire, Al-Monitor reported.

The largest pro-Palestinian protest in the capital Rabat for several months was called by the Islamist-dominated coalition the Justice and Development party.

Protesters were accompanied by chanting and the beating of drums as they marched down the city's Mohammed V Avenue near parliament.

They waved flags including one bearing the image of slain Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar.

Children carried white shrouds stained in red to symbolise the thousands of young victims killed in the Palestinian territory during a year and a half of war.

Israel's military resumed its offensive in Gaza on March 18, and since then, more than 1,330 people have been killed in the territory, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

On Sunday, demonstrators chanted slogans including "The people want the liberation of Palestine!", called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a criminal, and demanded an end to the siege of Gaza and for aid to be allowed in.

There were also calls for Morocco's relations with Israel, re-established in 2020 under the US-brokered Abraham Accords, to be scrapped, with protesters calling such ties "treason".

Rabat has officially called for an immediate and lasting cessation of the war in Gaza, without mention to the country's ties with Israel.

## Mass protests across US show resistance to Trump

From page 1 ▶ "Pouring rain, 43 degrees, biting wind, and people are still here in Albany in the thousands," said Ron Marz, a comic book writer who posted a photo of the crowd at the New York State Capitol on X.

While crowd sizes are difficult to estimate, organizers said that more than 600,000 people had signed up to participate and that events also took place in U.S. territories and a dozen locations across the globe.

On Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, the protest stretched for nearly 20 blocks. In Chicago, thousands flooded Daley Plaza and adjacent streets, while, in the nation's capital, tens of thousands surrounded the Washington Monument. In Atlanta, the police estimated the

crowd marching to the gold-domed statehouse at over 20,000.

Mr. Trump, who was playing golf in Florida on Saturday, appeared to be largely ignoring the protests. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Some of the demonstrators waved American flags, occasionally turned upside down to signal distress. Many, especially federal workers and college students, did not want to speak on the record for fear of retaliation. Right-wing slogans like "Stop the Steal" were co-opted in defense of Social Security, medical care and cancer research.

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



## Archaeological excavations begin at Iran's 'largest' Neolithic site

TEHRAN - The third season of archaeological excavations has officially begun at Chogha Golan, a significant Neolithic site in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains, near Mehran in Ilam province.

The project is being carried out on Iran's largest Neolithic site with authorization from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, ISNA reported. According to Hojjat Darabi, head of the Chogha Golan archaeological team, this season's excavation involves both vertical and horizontal trenching across two areas. The objective is to uncover evidence dating back to the 9th and 8th millennia BC to better understand the origins of agriculture and sedentary life in the region.

"So far, we've uncovered architectural remains made of mudbrick and clay, a substantial number of lithic tools and artifacts, as well as clay figurines and objects," Darabi stated. "In one architectural space, we discovered six successive plaster floors, indicating multi-generational use of the area by Chogha Golan's early inhabitants."

Darabi also highlighted the discovery of a wide range of animal and plant remains from various layers at the site. These findings are expected to provide fresh insights into the domestication of animals and plants in the Zagros region and the broader area of Western Asia, the archaeologist added. Chogha Golan, previously studied by a German archaeological team, is notable for its continuous human occupation from the early 10th to the mid-8th millennium BC. "Covering an area of approximately 5.5 hectares, it is considered the largest Neolithic archaeological site discovered in Iran to date," the archaeologist stated.

"The site's size and extended occupational sequence make continued excavations at Chogha Golan essential," Darabi emphasized. "It not only



A view of Chogha Golan, a significant Neolithic site in western Iran

deepens our understanding of early human settlements in Iran but also enhances the country's position in global prehistoric research."

The excavation efforts are expected to contribute significantly to the field of Near Eastern archaeology and the study of early agricultural societies. According to sources, Chogha Golan is particularly notable for the early domestication of emmer wheat, dating to around 9,800 BP. The archaeobotanical remains from Chogha Golan provide the earliest evidence of long-term plant management in Iran.

Situated in a semi-arid region about 30 kilometers north of Mehran, it is one of the earliest aceramic Neolithic sites discovered in Iran. The inhabitants of Chogha Golan primarily relied on hunting and the utilization of wild plants.

Chogha Golan was excavated jointly by archaeologists from the University of Tübingen and the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research in 2009 and 2010. The site is characterized by a hill rising approximately 7 to 8 meters high and contains 8 meters of cultural deposits.

## Rise in Isfahan's handicrafts sales in Nowruz holidays



TEHRAN - Director General of Isfahan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department Amir Karamzadeh has said handicrafts' trade in Isfahan province has witnessed a 20 percent year-on-year rise during Nowruz 1404 holidays.

He told IRNA on Sunday that the selling of artworks at permanent shops and temporary exhibitions stood at 1,330 billion rials (\$1.3 million) from March 15 to April 4.

Karamzadeh explained that the handicrafts transactions reached 330 billion rials (\$330,000) at 628 pavilions in 35 exhibitions and over 1,000 billion rials (\$1 million) at permanent exhibitions.

He continued that historical monuments and tourist sites of Isfahan Province attracted nine million tourists during the Nowruz holidays, seeing a remarkable 50% year-on-year rise.

He added that 2.25 million tourists resided in the province during the vacations, indicating a 2.5% year-on-year growth.

Isfahan province, with over 22,000 historical monuments including 1,940 national sites and 15 globally registered monuments, over 600 ancient houses, as well as numerous natural, cultural, religious and recreational sites, is considered one of Iran's tourism hubs.

The ancient city is celebrated not only for its magnificent historical monuments but also for the life-giving presence of the Zayandeh-Rood River, which has long graced the city with its original beauty and fertility.

Isfahan has earned the enduring moniker of Nesf-e-Jahan, translating to "half the world," signifying that to behold it is to behold half the world. During its zenith, it stood as one of the largest cities in the region, boasting a population of nearly one million.

The serene azure tiles adorning Isfahan's Islamic edifices, coupled with the city's grandiose bridges, provide a striking juxtaposition against the arid expanse of the surrounding Iranian countryside. At the heart of the city lies the vast Imam Square, renowned as Naqsh-e Jahan Square, meaning "Image of the World," a monumental testament to urban planning. Constructed in the early 17th century, this UNESCO-recognized square spans an impressive 500 meters by 160 meters and hosts some of the most captivating sights in Isfahan.

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Tikal National Park

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

Embedded within the much larger Maya Biosphere Reserve, exceeding two million hectares and contiguous with additional conservation areas, Tikal National Park is one of the few World Heritage properties inscribed according to both natural and cultural criteria for its extraordinary biodiversity and archaeological importance. It comprises 57,600 hectares of wetlands, savannah, tropical broadleaf and palm forests with thousands of architectural and artistic remains of the Mayan civilization from the Preclassic Period (600 BC) to the decline and eventual collapse of the urban center around 900 CE.

The diverse ecosystems and habitats harbor a wide spectrum of neotropical fauna and flora. Five cats, including Jaguar and Puma, several species of monkeys and anteaters and more than 300 species of birds are among the notable wildlife.

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

Tikal, a major Pre-Columbian political, economic and military center, is one of the most important archaeological complexes left by the Maya civilization.

An inner urban zone of around 400 hectares contains the principal monumental architecture and monuments which include palaces, temples, ceremonial platforms, small and medium sized residences, ball-game courts, terraces, roads, large and small squares. Many of

the existing monuments preserve decorated surfaces, including stone carvings and mural paintings with hieroglyphic inscriptions, which illustrate the dynastic history of the city and its relationships with urban centers as far away as Teotihuacan and Calakmul in Mexico, Copan in Honduras or Caracol in Belize.

A wider zone of key archaeological importance, around 1,200 hectares, covers residential areas and historic water reservoirs, today known as "aguadas".

The extensive peripheral zone features more than 25 associated secondary sites, historically serving protective purposes and as check-points for trade routes.

The peripheral areas also played a major role for agricultural production for the densely populated center.

Research has revealed numerous constructions, carved monuments and other evidence bearing witness to highly sophisticated technical, intellectual and artistic achievements that developed from the arrival of the first settlers (800 BC) to the last stages of historic occupation around the year 900.

Tikal has enhanced our understanding not only of an extraordinary bygone civilization but also of cultural evolution more broadly. The diversity and quality of architectural and sculptural ensembles serving ceremonial, administrative and residential functions are exemplified in a number of exceptional places, such as the Great Plaza, the Lost World Complex, the Twin Pyramid Complexes, as well as in ball courts and irrigation structures.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Big data aids Iran's Nowruz travel tracking, recording over 36 million trips

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN - More than 36 million domestic trips were made across Iran during the Nowruz holidays this year, according to final statistics released at a session of the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters, chaired by Deputy Minister of Tourism Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey on Sunday.

From March 15 to April 4, a total of 36,519,671 trips were recorded, while 60,970,523 overnight stays were registered across official, semi-official, and emergency accommodation facilities, said Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, secretary of the headquarters. Notably, of the mentioned figure, 10.37 million overnight stays occurred in official lodging facilities.

The provinces of Mazandaran, Gilan, Khorasan Razavi, Tehran, and Isfahan saw the highest influx of travelers, while Mashhad, Shiraz, Tehran, Isfahan, and Bandar Abbas ranked among the top visited cities, Fatemi noted.

He emphasized that various indicators were used to calculate travel figures, including lodging occupancy, fuel consumption, road traffic, waste generation, and mobile network data. He added that for the first time, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) contributed mobile phone data to track movement patterns, indicating a 2% increase in mobility compared to the previous year.

He also reported a 15% year-on-year increase in school-based accommodations (totaling 3.5 million overnight stays), and 359,601 overnight stays at religious sites under the supervision of the State Endowment and Charity Affairs Organization.

In his remarks, Mohseni-Bandpey described this year's Nowruz travel coordination as "effective," praising the cooperation of various government ministries and agencies. He cited improved service quality and logistical coordination, noting that no lengthy fuel station queues were reported, and emerging destina-



Members of the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters hold a press conference in a tourism ministry office in downtown Tehran discussing domestic travels made by Iranian people during the Nowruz holidays, April 6, 2025.

tions such as Ilam, Lorestan, North Khorasan, Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Kordestan, and Alborz witnessed notable increases in visitation due to strategic promotional campaigns.

The deputy minister also announced plans to make the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters a permanent body, aiming to develop a structured policy package and gain greater authority in traffic, emergency, and tourism-related matters.

Regarding public complaints, he said over 301,000 calls were received by the monitoring system, with no significant reports of unauthorized accommodation price hikes, except in some free zones, where communication gaps persisted. In many cities, hotel associations had already provided 20-40% discounts for 10-day stays.

Addressing social concerns, Mohseni-Bandpey acknowledged criticisms about the lack of formal services for those camping or staying in tents. However, he defended the inter-agency model and pointed to examples of Red Crescent, police, and emergency services being present across informal stay areas. He noted that over 4.6 million visits were made to cultural heritage sites, generating 560 billion tomans in handicraft sales.

The deputy tourism minister also

addressed concerns about road safety and infrastructure, citing a modest drop of about ten percent in traffic fatalities.

In terms of environmental initiatives, he said the headquarters had launched a new campaign called "Travel Without Waste", separating the environmental committee from the health and safety division. He highlighted the need for greater awareness around waste and plastic use, especially in coastal regions.

During the session, representatives of various ministries and committees, including health, transportation, emergency response, and law enforcement, presented reports on their Nowruz holiday activities. Officials reaffirmed the goal of making travel more accessible, safe, and sustainable for all Iranians, particularly in the face of economic challenges. 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 rouz -day- in Persian. Therefore, Nowruz signifies 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 objects 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.

## Iran tourism minister, Kazakh envoy discuss ways to expand cultural ties



Iran's tourism minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri (c) meets Kazakh ambassador Ontalap Onalbayev (2nd left) in Tehran, April 5, 2025.

TEHRAN - Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri and Kazakh ambassador to the Islamic Republic have discussed avenues to enhance cultural cooperation between the two nations.

In a meeting with Ontalap Onalbayev on Saturday, Salehi-Amiri called for an extended duration for visa cancellation from 14 days to one month and direct flights between a number of cities as a strategic measure in this regard, IRNA reported.

Pointing to the historical background and cultural richness of Kazakhstan, the minister emphasized on new horizon of cooperation in line with cultural diplomacy.

He urged the need for compiling

some strategic memoranda of understanding for boosting cultural ties.

The minister called the introduction of tourism potentials of the two countries an effective measure in enhancing people-based ties.

He suggested compiling investment packages for the construction of five-star hotels and inviting top cultural personalities of Kazakhstan to Iran to promote cultural exchange.

Referring to Iran's capacities in the handicrafts sector, he declared the readiness of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts to hold joint cultural-artistic exhibitions in two countries.

He called the above measure an effective step to deepen mutual understanding, cultural dialogue, and proximity of nations.

Appreciating the cooperation of

the Kazakhstan government in the global registration of Nowruz as an identity element of the joint civilization of the region, he emphasized promoting cooperation on the registration of joint heritages in UNESCO.

He called the exchange of experience and knowledge in the fields of renovation of historical monuments, archeology and specialized trainings as pillars of sustainable cooperation between two countries.

Also, Kazakh ambassador appreciated Iran's civilizational richness as well as cultural, historical, and natural attractions. He emphasized his government's will to promote all-out ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Onalbayev gave news of the full readiness of Kazakhstan to promote ties with Iran in cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts fields.

Second Announcement

**ESCO**  
Esfahan Steel Company

Row No.	Type of Tender	Tender No.	Publication Frequency	Tender Subject	Deadline for Receiving Tender Documents and Submitting the Bids
1	International Public Tender	672587	2	Fire resistance hydraulic oil (HFC 46)	April, 12, 2025

**Notes:**

1- Tender document must be received through ESCO's website. For more information, please refer to ESCO's website [www.esfahansteel.ir](http://www.esfahansteel.ir)



# FIRA Open Competition to be held in Tehran

TEHRAN – The 12th edition of the Federation of International RoboSports Association (FIRA) Open Competition is scheduled to be held from April 15 to 18 in Tehran.

This year, a total of 480 participants will participate in the event. It will include three main parts namely FIRA Air, FIRA Challenge, and FIRA Youth, featuring 22 leagues for students aged under 14, 14 to 18, as well as students and those who graduated in the field related robotics and artificial intelligence, IRNA reported.

FIRA AIR includes the use of autonomous flying vehicles in urban and disaster scenarios.

FIRA Challenges focuses on complex challenges in industrial, rescue, and service robot settings, and FIRA Youth are competitions for our younger participants such as the mission impossible events.

The winners will be able to attend the 30th FIRA RoboWorld Cup Open which is planned to be held from August 11 to 15 in Dae-gu, South Korea.

The Federation of International Robot Sports Association (FIRA) – founded by Jong-Hwan Kim, KAIST, Korea in 1996 – is the oldest robot soccer competition in the world.

FIRA offers a challenging arena to the young generation and researchers working with autonomous mobile robotic systems to pave the way for creating an industrial and intelligent society.

FIRA RoboWorld Cup Open and Summits are held in one of the member countries of this feder-



ation with the aim of encouraging the younger generation and industry to focus more on robotics and artificial intelligence.

The event has led to an increase in interest in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence among young people.

The 24 Iranian robotics teams that participated in the FIRA 2024 RoboWorld Cup in Sao Luis, Brazil managed to win 17 awards. The 29th edition of FIRA Robotics and Artificial Intelligence World Competitions was held from August 5 to 9.

## Robotics achievements

Iranian students aged 7-17 won second place among seven countries in the Kazakhstan RoboLand 2025 which was held from March 27 to 29 in the city of Karaganda.

The event brought together over 750 young inventors from seven countries, Kazinform News Agency reported.

The international festival drew the participation of 362 teams from Kazakhstan, Bulgaria, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan,

and Kyrgyzstan to compete in 23 categories.

Over 2,000 children took part in elimination trials, and over 400 teams competed in the qualifying round to reach the RoboLand 2025 finals.

Roundtable discussions Digital transformation of education: Trends and prospects were held as part of the festival to focus on the digitization of the educational process and share best practices on STEM education development.

Iranian students aged 7-17 won second place among 31 countries in the RobotChallenge 2024 which was held from August 9 to 11 in Beijing, China.

Over 5,000 contestants participated in the competition. China and Romania ranked first and third respectively, IRNA reported.

A total of 16 groups, each made up of 3 students, represented Iran in the robotics competition. The Iranian team competed in RoboSumo, Soccer, Innovation, Robot Rugby, and Technical Report leagues.

For the second year in a row,

the Iranian team managed to claim second place in the Technical Report.

Two U12 Iranian teams won silver and bronze medals in the innovation league; China ranked first.

The Iranian teams participating in the 2024 World Robotics and Artificial Intelligence FIRA won 9 championships, achieved 7 runner-up positions, and secured third place in these competitions.

In the flying vehicles league, two teams ranked first, and one ranked third.

In FIRA youth competitions, U14 division, two teams won second ranking in the robotics, innovation, and business leagues.

Also, in the U19 division, two teams won first ranking and in the robosports league, another team ranked first in innovation and business in robotics.

Moreover, the two teams ranked second in rescue and crisis management robots, and in the robosports league.

## Rainfall drops by almost 30% compared to long-term average



TEHRAN – From the beginning of the spring till April 5, some 14.5 mm of rainfall has been recorded in the country, indicating a 28.1 percent decrease from the long-term average of 20.2 mm, according to the Meteorological Organization.

Over the past week (March 30 -April 5), the country received a total of 3.9 mm of rain, indicating a 49.9 percent decrease compared to 7.8 mm in the long term, ISNA reported.

From the start of the current water year

(September 23, 2024) to April 5, the recorded rainfall amounted to 114.1 mm, which is 37.1 percent less than 181.6 recorded mm in the long-term average.

Mazandaran is the only province that has received 2.2 percent more rainfall compared to the long-term average.

Rainfall in other provinces has been less than normal, Hormozgan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces have recorded the lowest amount of rainfall, receiving 75.9 and 75.4 percent less rain than normal in the current water year, respectively.

Tehran province is also among the provinces that have faced a significant decline in precipitation.

Tehran's long-term average rainfall stands at 195.5 mm, while in the current water year, it has dropped to 114.5 mm, which indicates a 41.4 percent decrease.

### Over 250mm rain in previous water year

The previous water year (September 22, 2023 – September 22, 2024) came to an end

with 252.7 mm of precipitation, showing a 19 percent increase compared to the year before.

The low precipitations at the beginning of the previous water year were worrisome, but the volume of precipitations improved with the passage of time.

Due to successive years of drought, the increase in rainfall amounts did not compensate for the water deficit in the country, some provinces are suffering from water shortage, IRNA reported.

A total of 10 provinces received less than normal rainfall.

According to the latest reports, the total amount of recorded rainfall in the previous water year (ended on September 23) amounted to 252.7 mm, which signifies a 19 percent increase compared to the 212.9 mm rain received in the water year before (September 2022 –September 2023).

Compared to the long-term figure, 248.7 mm, it shows a two percent increase.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 50bcm of groundwater withdrawn annually in Iran

An annual amount of 50 billion cubic meters of groundwater resources are withdrawn to supply agricultural, industrial as well as drinking water in Iran, a researcher in the field of water resources has stated.

The amount is 10 times greater than the water covering Lake Urmia, amounting to 5 billion cubic meters, ISNA news agency quoted Mohammad Reza Goldansaz as saying on Sunday.

About 60 percent of drinking water and the water used in industrial sector and 50 percent of the water consumed in agriculture sector is pumped from aquifers, he noted.

Referring to the country being highly dependent on underground water, Goldansaz said that if the resource runs out, we will face serious problems.

## سالی ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از آب‌های زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود

یک پژوهشگر حوزه منابع آب با اشاره به اینکه سالانه ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برای مصارف خانگی، صنعت و مصارف کشاورزی برداشت می‌شود.

محمدرضا گلدانساز در گفت و گو با ایسنا اظهار داشت: سالانه حدود ۵۰ میلیارد متر مکعب از منابع آب زیرزمینی برداشت می‌شود که این مقدار به اندازه حجم ۱۰ دریاچه ارومیه است.

وی با بیان اینکه وابستگی ما به آب زیرزمینی بسیار زیاد است و اگر روزی این منبع تمام شود با مشکلات زیادی روبرو می‌شویم، اظهار کرد: در کشور ما به دلیل وجود شرایط اقلیمی خشک و نیمه خشک، وابستگی به منابع آب زیرزمینی قابل توجه است و حدود ۶۰ درصد مصارف خانگی و صنعت و حدود ۵۰ درصد مصارف کشاورزی توسط آب زیرزمینی تأمین می‌شود.

## Tabriz to host intl. symposium of kid's utopia

TEHRAN – An international symposium titled 'kid's utopia' is planned to be held from May 14 to 15 in Tabriz, the capital of East Azarbaijan Province.

The symposium will be centered around designing and building child-friendly cities, principles of designing child-friendly schools, modern architecture of child-friendly cities, artificial intelligence (AI), and smart cities, BORNA reported.

The initiative promotes the realization of child rights at the local level through a unique network of municipal governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, media, and children themselves.

The event also aims to foster scientific and technological knowledge, review and evaluate research projects, develop capacity for child-friendly cities' projects, and create opportunities for private sector investment.

This symposium will also serve as a platform to enhance interactions among experts, policymakers, and urban managers, architects, urban planners, students, professors to share their experiences.

Addressing children's needs and their participation in urban planning will not only improve the quality of children's lives, but will also create a safer, more sustainable, and inclusive city for all citizens.

Developing the event at the national and international levels will take an effective step towards improving the quality of life of children and creating better cities for the future.

### Child-friendly cities

Every child has the right to grow up in an environment where they feel safe and secure, have access to basic services and clean air and water, can play, learn and grow, and where their voice is



heard and matters.

A child-friendly city aims to create equal opportunities for all children. This entails identifying the most marginalized and vulnerable children, the barriers to inclusion that they face, and removing these barriers.

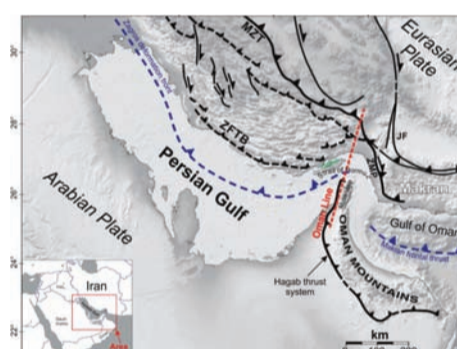
Building a child-friendly city requires clearly identifying who is responsible for each aspect of implementation and holding them accountable. Transparency calls for clarity and openness in the decision-making process.

It requires having a system in place to facilitate public participation in decision-making to promote local accountability for children's rights.

It also requires that governments undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures to implement child rights to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation. The process is responsive to the needs of the children and families affected.

Building a child-friendly city requires a flexible management approach in order to be able to anticipate and respond to changing circumstances and be sustainable over time.

## Role of oil and gas extraction by Saudi Arabia and Qatar in southern Persian Gulf earthquakes



By Mehdi Zare

TEHRAN – Seven earthquakes with magnitudes between 4 and 5 in the southern Persian Gulf and the Saudi Arabia-Qatar border between 1st of March and 5th of April 2025 probably represent links between hydrocarbon extraction and seismicity due to the generation of earthquakes due to oil and gas production near an active basement fault in the Saudi-Qatar border area.

Hydrocarbon extraction for oil and gas production can alter subsurface stress fields and potentially reactivate faults.

The Arabian plate experienced significant seismic activity between 2024 and 2025, influenced by its tectonic interactions with the Eurasian, African (Nubian), and Indian plates.

The Arabian Plate is moving northeast (~1.5-2 cm/yr) and collides with Eurasia, forming the Zagros Mountains, and slides westward along the Dead Sea Transverse Fault (DST) past the African Plate.

Subduction occurs beneath the Makran Range (southern Iran/Pakistan), and opening occurs in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Deep faults in the crystalline basement rock (in the Arabian Plate) are sensitive to changes in stress. This region lies on the Arabian Plate and has underground faults related to the Zagros orogeny and the Red Sea rifting.

The Ghawar Hydrocarbon Field (Saudi Arabia) and the Shemal Gas Field (Qatar) are among the largest hydrocarbon reservoirs in the world. Some of the faults in the region are highly stressed, meaning that even small changes in pressure can trigger slip.

Seven earthquakes in March-April 2025 Increased production/injection with increased extraction or wastewater disposal (e.g., from fracturing or increased oil recovery) destabilizes an adjacent fault.

If operations occur near a strike-slip or reverse fault, stress transfer can trigger moderate earthquakes (M4-M6). Sometimes, induced earthquakes occur months or years after operations begin due to gradual stress changes.

There have been no major documented cases of moderate earthquake-induced seismicity reported in Saudi Arabia/Qatar, but there is a risk of induced seismicity when exploration and extraction operations interrupt stressed faults.

Mild to moderate earthquakes (M3-M5): Can damage infrastructure, pipelines or offshore platforms. Larger earthquakes (M6+): Possible if a major bedrock fault reactivates, posing a risk to cities such as Dammam or Doha.

While the Saudi Arabia-Qatar region has not yet experienced major earthquakes, the combination of active subsurface faults and intense hydrocarbon activity increases this risk. The events in March-April 2025 were plausible if production/injection operations were to disrupt a critical stress fault. Monitoring and risk assessment are critical to prevent such scenarios.

The tectonic seismic framework of eastern Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Bahrain is characterized by complex interactions between multiple tectonic plates, primarily the Arabian Plate and the surrounding Eurasian and African Plates. The region experiences seismic activity due to its geological location involving major fault systems and oil and gas production activities.

The eastern Saudi Arabia region, including Qatar and Bahrain, lies along the Arabian Plate boundary. The Arabian Plate is moving northward relative to the Iran-Eurasian Plate at a rate of approximately 20 mm/yr. This movement results in compressive forces that generate seismic activity in the region.

The region is cut by important fault systems, such as the Dead Sea Transverse Fault on the western border to the north and various strike-slip faults associated with the Zagros Mountains to the northeast. These faults accommodate movement between plates. Earthquakes in this region can be attributed to both natural tectonic processes and anthropogenic factors associated with oil extraction activities.

The region is characterized by several important geological features, including active basement faults that play an important role in the tectonic and seismic behavior of the region.

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





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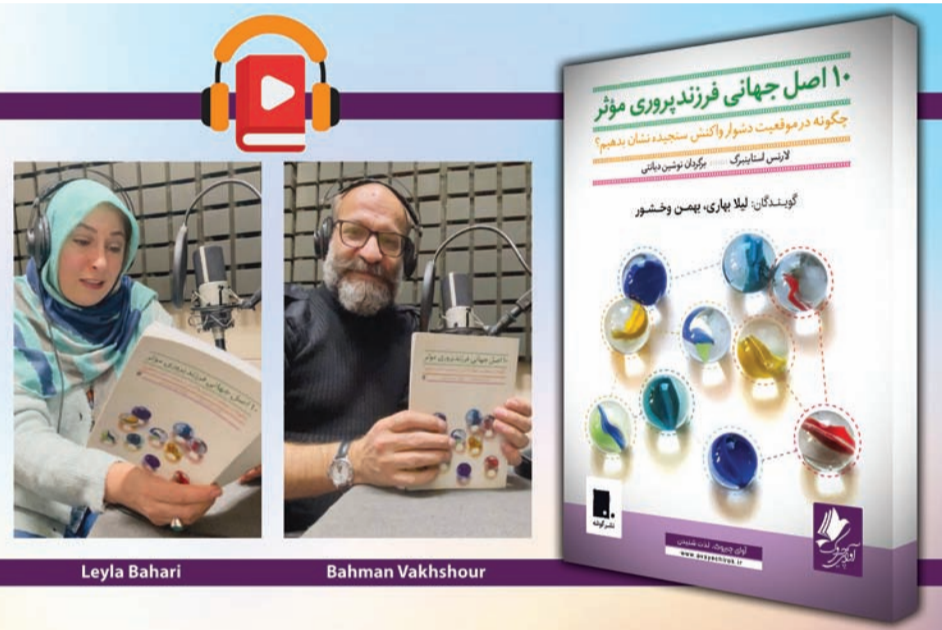
## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

There is reward for kindness to every living thing.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:06 Evening: 18:49 Dawn: 4:14 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:41 (tomorrow)

## Audiobook of “The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting” available for Persian listeners



Leyla Bahari

Bahman Vakhshour

TEHRAN- An audiobook of the Persian edition of Laurence Steinberg’s “The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting” has been released by Avaye Chirok, a major Iranian institute that produces audiobooks.

Translated by Noushin Dianati, the book has been narrated by Bahman Vakhshour and Leyla Bahari.

The Persian translation of the book was published by Goosheh Publications in 2012.

In “The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting,” Laurence Steinberg synthesizes years of research to present a practical guide for parents navigating the complexities of raising happy and healthy children. This authoritative book offers essential insights applicable to all families, regardless of their backgrounds, serving as a roadmap from infancy through adolescence.

Steinberg asserts that effective parenting principles are straightforward and universally relevant. Each of the ten principles is clearly explained, supported by anecdotes and real-life examples. For instance, he highlights the notion that “What You Do Matters,” emphasizing that parents significantly influence their children’s development beyond genetics. Other principles include “Estab-

lish Rules and Limits,” where he discusses the importance of providing structure and addressing rule-based conflicts, and “Help Foster Your Child’s Independence,” which encourages parents to guide their children in decision-making rather than dictating choices.

With a tone that is both warm and authoritative, Steinberg’s book serves as an intelligent manual for parents aiming to cultivate a positive environment for their children, while also enhancing their own parenting confidence. He recognizes the roles of peers and media but emphasizes that parental influence is paramount.

Throughout the book, Steinberg offers practical strategies for common parenting challenges. He likens parenting to building a boat—while the construction is rewarding, witnessing its launch is equally fulfilling. His call for active, respectful involvement from parents underscores the creation of an emotionally healthy atmosphere for children.

Filled with significant messages about the responsibilities and rewards of parenting, “The Ten Basic Principles of Good Parenting” is a vital resource for both new and experienced parents, reinforcing that nothing is more crucial for a child’s healthy development than loving, guiding, and respectful parents.

## Cartoon of Day



Genocide in Gaza

Cartoonist: Gervasio Umpiérrez from Uruguay

# Budapest hosts naqqali performances by Bahareh Jahandoost

From Page 1 ▶ She explained that she had three performances in total in Budapest. The first was held at the Iranian Embassy, with ambassadors, diplomatic officials, cultural and academic figures, and Iranian families residing in Hungary in attendance. The second took place at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), organized by the university’s Department of Iranian Studies of the Faculty of Humanities in collaboration with Professor Iván Szántó, a prominent Hungarian Iranologist. The third performance was held at Semmelweis University of Medical Sciences for the university’s students.

In all the performances, Jahandoost enchanted the audience with amazing tales of Nowruz from the Shahnameh, the legendary Persian epic by Ferdowsi.

Regarding audience reception, Jahandoost said: “I perform bilingually, in Persian and English, so that non-Iranian audiences can both get familiar with the Persian language and better follow the storyline. This helps them connect more deeply with the narratives. The combination of storytelling and Nowruz traditions gave the audience a fresh perspective on Iranian culture. Many attendees expressed interest in the Persian language, classical Iranian literature, and Nowruz after the performances.”

At the event held at the Iranian Embassy in Budapest, Jahandoost narrated the story of the naming of Nowruz by Jamshid and the love story of Bijan and Manijeh from the Shahnameh, both in Persian and English, which were enthusiastically welcomed by the guests.

Nima Saeed-Moghaddam, an Iranian student in Budapest, accompanied the performance with a solo kamancheh (traditional Iranian bowed instrument) recital.

Additionally, guests were introduced to the Iranian Haft-Seen table and its symbolic meanings and rituals. At the end of the program, Jahandoost also conducted a Hafez divination session.

When asked how she incorporated Nowruz traditions into the naqqali, she said: “To introduce an-



Iranian naqqal and Shahnameh narrator Bahareh Jahandoost performs naqqali in Budapest, Hungary.

other aspect of Iranian traditions, I ended the programs by introducing the tradition of ‘Hafez divination.’ Interestingly, in Hungary, there was a poet named Mihály Csoknai Vitéz (1773–1805) who wrote poems in praise of Hafez. This connection made the Hafez divination more relatable and appealing to the Hungarian audience, who received it warmly.”

The celebration was attended by ambassadors from countries within the Nowruz cultural sphere such as Pakistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and also ambassadors from Russia, China, Belarus, and Japan.

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Hungary announced that it plans to hold similar events in the future to further strengthen cultural and diplomatic ties between the two countries.

In a separate event, another naqqali performance by Bahareh Jahandoost took place at Eötvös Loránd University, one of Budapest’s oldest and most prestigious institutions. The event was well received by students of Iranian studies and various other disciplines.

Professor Iván Szántó, university professor and head of the Iranian Studies department at ELTE, praised the Shahnameh and Nowruz and called for greater attention by Western universities to Iran’s rich literary heritage.

At this event, Jahandoost not only performed naqqali but also emphasized the themes of peace and the universal message of Ferdowsi’s poetry as key cultural and literary elements of Iran.

Due to the positive response from the Hungarian academic and artistic communities toward naqqali, the Shahnameh, and Nowruz, another event was held at Semmelweis University—the largest medical university in Hungary, which hosts a significant number of Iranian students.

Speaking about her experience performing in a university setting abroad, she remarked: “Contrary to my initial assumption that performing naqqali in an academic setting might be challenging, the atmosphere was actually very welcoming and open to the Shahnameh. Pre-performance introductions helped the audience mentally prepare and engage with the stories.”

“The Shahnameh is a unique literary masterpiece filled with epic, romantic, and mythical stories. Its storytelling style aligns perfectly with narrative traditions worldwide and offers deep insights into Iranian culture, art, and even the governance and political traditions of ancient Persia. From a linguistic perspective, its rhythmic poetic structure makes it ideal for naqqali and elevates it to a top-tier form

of global storytelling. As a female naqqal who has performed in many countries, I strive to adapt the language of the stories I select to the cultural context of each audience to facilitate better connection and understanding,” Jahandoost added.

In another cultural initiative for Nowruz, the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest displayed an Iranian qalamkar (block-printed textile) tablecloth from the Qajar era to the public. Bahareh Jahandoost has been involved in theater since she was seven years old, and she trained with the renowned Iranian naqqal, Morshed Vali-Allah Torabi. Using the traditional form of narrating stories through naqqali theater, she has performed in China, France, Hungary, India, Italy, Russia and Turkey.

“I perform publicly by narrating epic stories sourced in classical literature and folk texts. These are popular and widely known and appreciated throughout Iran. The most fabulous and famous piece of Persian literature is Shahnameh. It is an immensely rich source of seemingly countless tales — both of love and tragedy. I interpret stories using my body: gesticulating and moving, theatrically. What I do educates, entertains and enlivens peoples’ imaginations and spirits. I experience profound joy seeing people moved by stories I perform,” she said.

## Iranian shorts to go on screen at Bulgarian festival

TEHRAN- Two Iranian short films are scheduled to go on screen at the 22nd edition of In the Palace International Short Film Festival in Pernik, Bulgaria.

“Under the Shady Oak” directed by Hossein Allahyari and “Holy Heaviness”, co-directed by Farnoush Abedi Renani and Negah Khezre Fardyardad, will compete in different sections of the festival, which will take place from June 28 to July 5.

“Under the Shady Oak” is a historical film set against the backdrop of harsh mountainous conditions. The story follows the journey of a nomadic tribe among the Lor people, exploring their culture, challenges, and resilience in a rugged landscape.

Through its compelling narrative, the film delves into the lives of the characters, highlighting their struggles and traditions within a rich historical context.

“Holy Heaviness” explores the emotional impact of losing loved ones, depicting the unbearable lightness that accompanies such grief. The narrative delves into the deep, lingering wounds caused by loss, illustrating how they can corrode

one’s spirit much like leprosy.

The weight of sorrow can become so immense that it drives one to seek renewal or rebirth as a means of escape from the pain. The story captures the struggle to cope with loss while hinting at the possibility of transformation and healing in the face of overwhelming grief.

Founded in 2003, the In the Palace International Short Film Festival is a premier event dedicated to short films, new media, and digital arts. Initially established as a competitive platform for student filmmakers, the festival has evolved into a respected venue that showcases the work of both emerging artists and seasoned professionals.

It stands out as Bulgaria’s only festival focused specifically on this segment of contemporary culture and is one of the oldest short film forums in the Balkans.

The festival is recognized as a qualifying festival for prestigious awards, including the Goya Awards, the Student Academy Awards, and the Academy Awards (Oscar) for short films in categories such as Best Animation, Best Fiction, Best Documentary, and Best National Film. It is also a



A scene from “Under the Shady Oak” by Iranian director Hossein Allahyari

member of the international network known as the Short Film Conference, which supports the short film sector.

In addition to its focus on short films and digital arts, In the Palace International Short Film Festival also features competitive programs for feature films and film series, further enriching its offerings to a diverse audience.

## City Theater to host “Rabbit”

TEHRAN-The play “Rabbit” written by the English playwright Nina Raine will be staged at the City Theater in Tehran from April 10.

Mehdi Nasiri has directed the play that has Fariba Aminian, Reza Joshani, Saied Mohebbi, Negin Tayyebi, Parsa Farjadmanesh, and Taraneh Kouhestani in the cast, Honaronline reported.

Originally published in 2006, “Rabbit” is a shocking, raucous, and coruscating drama that marked the debut of a major voice in British theater. The 75-minute play takes place in a trendy bar, where Bella, 29, is celebrating her birthday with her friends. Intercut with their bantering conversation about jobs and men versus women are edgy scenes between Bella and her father, with whom she has a classically difficult rela-

tionship. Raine’s sparky first play is about trying to recover love, memories, and the time when you thought you were invincible.

Most of all this is a play about the happiness we take for granted when we are young and which, as we grow older, often eludes us, making us crabby and envious.

Moreover, the play looks at the effects of feminism and post-feminism on the self-image of women. It asks women of the current generation: Are we moving forward with the gains our mothers fought for, or is there a backlash?

It’s a play about gender politics in a world where nobody’s sure how to move forward anymore. Men used to make all the choices, and now

the women are making the choices too, but that isn’t necessarily making them happy.

Nina Raine, 49, is both a playwright and a theater director. Having earned a first-class degree in English literature at Oxford, she began her theatrical career as a trainee director at the Royal Court Theater.

Her first play, “Rabbit,” which she also directed, premiered at the Old Red Lion theatre in 2006 before transferring to Trafalgar Studios that year, and to New York in 2007 winning her two awards as Most Promising Playwright. She has since written four more plays. “Rabbit” will remain on stage through May 4 at the City Theater, located at the Daneshjoo Park, at the junction of Vali-e Asr and Enghelab streets.