

TEHRAN TIMES

8 Pages | Price 100,000 Rials | 1.00 EURO | 4.00 AED | 46th year | No. 15020 | Tuesday | April 8, 2025 | Farvardin 19, 1404 | Shawwal 9, 1446

Iran-China annual non-oil trade stands at \$34.1b

TEHRAN - The value of non-oil trade between Iran and China stood at \$34.1 billion in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025, according to an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, said that importing non-oil goods worth \$14.8 billion from Iran, China was the first destination of Iranian products in the past year.

He also announced that by exporting non-oil products valued at \$19.3 billion to Iran, China was the second source of import for Iran in that year.

Hossein Eyvazlou, a member of the executive board of Iran's National Development Fund (NDF), has announced plans for collaboration with China in the field of foreign investment in Iran.

Speaking at a press conference on January 4, Eyvazlou highlighted the importance of attracting foreign capital to boost Iran's economic projects, emphasizing the role of strategic partnerships with countries like China.

Details on the scope and nature of the cooperation were not disclosed, but it is expected to focus on key sectors that align with Iran's long-term development goals. ▶ Page 4

Iran is world's oldest country based on organized government

TEHRAN - In a newly revisited global ranking published by the World Population Review, Iran has been officially recognized as the oldest country in the world in terms of its earliest known organized government and sovereign identity, dating back to 3200 BC.

This distinction places Iran ahead of other ancient civilizations such as Egypt (3100 BC), Vietnam (2879 BC), Armenia (2492 BC), and North Korea (2333 BC), which round out the top five in the global list. The ranking is based on historical analysis of early state formation and evidence of organized governance.

A cradle of civilization

Previously known as Persia, Iran boasts a rich cultural and political history that stretches back to the Lower Paleolithic period. Among Iran's earliest civilizations were Elam and Jiroft, with the Elamite civilization being the most prominent and widely recognized for laying the foundations of early Iranian governance during the Proto-Elamite era, also known as Susa III. This period, around 3200 BC, marks the emergence of Iran's self-sovereignty, making it not only one of the world's oldest inhabited regions but also the earliest known state to form a recognizable government. ▶ Page 6

Book on martyr General Soleimani to be unveiled in Moscow

TEHRAN - An unveiling ceremony for the Russian novel "Jackals Cannot Defeat a Lion," inspired by the life of the martyr Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani, will take place on Wednesday, at the Moscow Book House in Russia.

The event will showcase the work of Oleg Roy, the distinguished Russian writer and producer, which draws from the life of General Soleimani, Mehr reported on Monday.

The writing and publication process of the book, initiated by the Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Russia, took two years, the report added.

This narrative presents a compelling account of martyr Soleimani's journey from adolescence to martyrdom in 285 pages, aimed at a Russian audience. ▶ Page 8



'Foreign Ministry sole authority on negotiations,' Araghchi dismisses speculations around talks

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi categorically rejected rumors circulating in media and social platforms about alternative negotiators representing Iran in potential indirect talks with the United States.

In a Monday interview with an Iranian news agency, Araghchi addressed swirling rumors about alternative negotiators being tasked with backchannel talks, including former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

"None of the conjectures circulating are accurate," he stated, emphasizing, "Any potential negotiations will unequivocally fall under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Ministry and its leadership."

The remarks follow weeks of unverified claims in Iran's media sphere suggesting that figures outside the Foreign Ministry—including Zarif—were engaged in discussions with US officials. ▶ Page 2

Any realized U.S. threat will trigger swift reaction: Tehran

TEHRAN - Spokesperson for Iran's Foreign Minister Esmail Baghaei has warned that any U.S. threats, if carried out, will be met with a rapid, decisive, and all-encompassing response from Iran.

Baghaei made the remarks during a weekly press conference on Monday, addressing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to the U.S. and accompanying threats against Iran.

Baghaei also rejected speculation that possible talks could include non-nuclear issues. "Negotiations are solely focused on the nuclear file. Any claims to the contrary are inaccurate," he emphasized.

Iran condemns Israeli actions in Gaza, cites U.S. complicity

Turning to the situation in Gaza, Baghaei condemned the "catastrophic crimes" committed by Israel, accusing Tel Aviv of repeated violations of international law and human rights. ▶ Page 2

Scan the barcode to watch the highlighted moment from the Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's press conference in Tehran.

"What victory are they talking about?"

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - Settlers outraged after Hamas launches rockets at Israeli cities despite 18 months of genocide in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli media reported a wave of intense anger among settlers following renewed rocket fire from Gaza toward Ashdod and Ashkelon.

A surge of fury spread among settlers after Gaza resumed shelling on Sunday night, with around ten rockets launched toward Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Gan Yavne.

According to Nitzan Shapira, the southern correspondent for Israeli Channel 12, only half of the rockets were intercepted.

The channel reported that settlers expressed their outrage, with Uri, a resident of Ashkelon, stating: "It's been a year and a half of war in Gaza, and they're still firing rockets at our city."

He added that "the situation is absurd. We're still under attack," continuing, "A year and a half has passed, and we're still running to bomb shelters. What victory are they talking about?!"

Rafi, another resident of the same settlement, said, "The siren went off, and as always, we rushed to the safe room. Before we could even close the door, an explosion hit nearby. It's a miracle we're unharmed." ▶ Page 5

Is Trump-Netanyahu summit geared toward escalation or de-escalation?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - Analysts have focused on the result of the Monday meeting between Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu, given the convergence of interests between the two men in the next phase.

Meanwhile, both Trump and Netanyahu have crowned themselves as the saviours who will lead the world to its final liberation from the "axis of evil," i.e., the axis of resistance.

Yedioth Ahronoth reported that the U.S. envoy to West Asia, Steven Witkoff, was to attend the meeting.

Obviously, amid the absence of a buildable US-Israeli strategy, Trump and Netanyahu's megalomania may drive them to further genocidal massacres, in addition to financial and economic sanctions. ▶ Page 5

Diplomatic armor: How Netanyahu uses Washington as a shield

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - Netanyahu's journey to Washington came on the heels of a four-day visit to Hungary, where he was hosted by Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a vocal critic of the ICC. Hungary, despite being an EU member and theoretically obligated to enforce ICC warrants, openly defied the court's authority, allowing Netanyahu to attend without risk of arrest. This pattern of selective non-compliance with international law set the stage for his U.S. visit, where the absence of ICC jurisdiction similarly shields him from legal repercussions.

The timing of the trip is significant. It follows a period of heightened tension in the Israel-Hamas conflict, with Israel expanding its military operations in Gaza and facing global criticism. The ICC's warrant, issued on November 21, 2024, accuses Netanyahu and his former war minister Yoav Gallant of war crimes, including starvation as a method of warfare and crimes against humanity such as murder and persecution. The court's decision was met with fierce opposition from Israel and its allies, including the U.S., where President Joe Biden called it "outrageous" in 2024, and the incoming Trump administration, which imposed sanctions on ICC personnel in February 2025. ▶ Page 5



Global pro-Palestine protests erupt amid ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza

Massive pro-Palestinian rallies erupted across the globe as public outrage intensifies over Israel's continued bombardment of Gaza. From North Africa to Europe and South Asia, demonstrators poured into the streets demanding an immediate ceasefire, an end to Israeli occupation, and international accountability for what many protesters describe as crimes against humanity.

Tens of thousands rallied across Morocco, calling on Muslim nations to take a unified stand against Israeli aggression. ▶ Page 5