

# Saturday Test for US

## Iran to evaluate Washington's true intentions during indirect Oman talks



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and US Special Envoy to West Asia Steven Witkoff (L) will represent their countries during indirect talks in Oman on Saturday, April 12, 2025.

### Iran, Russia, China convene in Moscow for 2nd round of nuclear talks

TEHRAN – High-ranking diplomats from Iran, Russia, and China met in Moscow for the second time this year to discuss Western pressure on Iran regarding its civilian nuclear program.

The first round of the talks was held last month in Beijing, where the three countries reaffirmed Tehran's right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy as recognized under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They also pledged to coordinate within BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to advance diplomatic solutions.

Iran, Russia, and China previously took part in negotiations that led to the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, which also involved Western parties, namely the US, UK, France, and Germany.

The JCPOA has been largely ineffective since Washington unilaterally withdrew in 2018 and reinstated sanctions that had been removed under the pact. Although European signatories have not formally abandoned the agreement, their actions suggest a de facto abandonment.

### 'War with Iran is suicidal!': Americans unite against a war they believe will serve Israel, not the US

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN – As U.S. President Donald Trump amplifies his threats against Iran and orders military posturing around West Asia and beyond, his connections to the Israeli regime and influential Zionist figures have significantly shaped his support for Tel Aviv in Gaza and his military actions in Yemen.

Concurrently, an unprecedented coalition of American voices—spanning conservative, progressive, and libertarian perspectives—is urging an immediate halt to what they believe is an increasingly dangerous trajectory.

Their message is clear: Military action against Iran would destabilize West Asia, drain American resources, and prioritize foreign agendas over domestic needs.

They warn that a possible war with Iran is not only unwinnable but antithetical to U.S. interests. ► Page 2

### Why the 'Libyan model' is not reproducible for Iran

By Farhad Pashavand

TEHRAN – During a recent meeting between the Prime Minister of the Israeli regime and the U.S. President, Benjamin Netanyahu referred to the "Libyan model" as an ideal way to engage with Iran.

While this reference might appear diplomatic on the surface, it is, in essence, a direct threat against the country.

The "Libyan model" refers to the 2003 agreement between Muammar Gaddafi and Western countries (particularly the U.S. and the U.K.) to dismantle Libya's nuclear, chemical, and missile programs. In exchange for promises to lift sanctions and reintegrate Libya into the international community, Gaddafi abandoned many of the country's strategic capabilities. However, this process not only failed to lead to stability but, with the onset of the so-called "Arab Spring" in 2011, NATO intervened under the pretext of supporting the people and toppled Gaddafi's government. In this note, I will explain why comparing Iran to Libya is not only incorrect but fundamentally lacks strategic value. ► Page 3

### How Trump undercut Netanyahu in one visit

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – On April 6, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Washington, D.C., for what was billed as a critical meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump. The visit, hastily arranged following Trump's imposition of new tariffs on Israeli goods, was intended to address a range of pressing issues, including U.S.-Israel trade relations, the ongoing war in Gaza, the release of prisoners, tensions with Iran, and Israel's fraught relationship with the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, as reports from both Western and Israeli media outlets reveal, the visit ended abruptly and without substantive progress, leaving many observers questioning its purpose and effectiveness. ► Page 5



### Tehran, Baku discuss expansion of economic, transport, energy ties

TEHRAN– Iran's Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh, who also chairs the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee, met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku to discuss bilateral ties and economic cooperation.

According to a statement from Iran's Transport and Urban Development Ministry on Tuesday, the meeting focused on expanding joint projects across key sectors including transportation, customs, water and energy, oil and gas, and preferential trade. ► Page 4

### 'Historic, resilient ties:' Araghchi meets his counterpart in Algeria

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, leading a high-ranking delegation to Algeria, held pivotal talks on Thursday with his Algerian counterpart, Ahmed Attaf, underscoring the nations' shared vision for regional stability and deepened bilateral cooperation.

The meeting, marked by mutual praise for decades of solidarity, highlighted urgent calls to address the Israeli regime's "law-breaking expansionism" in West Asia and to mobilize Islamic diplomacy to halt the genocide in Palestine.

"Iran-Algeria relations are historic, resilient, and deeply rooted," Araghchi declared upon arrival in Algiers, emphasizing the nations' alignment on regional crises.

"Our Algerian brothers have stood unwaveringly alongside Iran during critical historical junctures and taken commendable steps to improve regional dynamics."

He lauded Algeria's "principled and robust" stance on Palestine, a recurring theme in discussions. ► Page 2

### Iran ranks second among Islamic nations in SCImago 2024

TEHRAN –According to the recent ranking published by SCImago 2024, Iran, with 75501 documents, ranks second among Islamic countries.

The country ranks 17 globally, dropping one position in the ranking compared to the past year. Turkey (with 82150 documents, and Saudi Arabia (with 72167 documents) rank first and third, respectively, Mehr news agency reported.

In 2022, the country published over 78,000 documents in Scopus, but in 2023 the number of documents declined reaching 74,000. In 2024, the trend has increased but not yet reaching the figure published in 2022.

According to the report, in terms of citations (89,492), Iran ranks second and fifteen in the region and the world, respectively. Over the past five years, the country's global ranking has improved from 19 to 15. Saudi Arabia and Turkey with 121,838 and 81,106 citations, ranked first and third, respectively.

China (with 1215824 documents), The United States (with 743,884 documents), and India (with 351,928) are placed first to third in the SCImago ranking 2024. ► Page 7

### Lebanon after Ortagus' ill-fated visit

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The detailed discussions of Morgan Ortagus, the US Deputy Envoy to the Middle East, during her ill-fated three-day visit to Beirut, forced an urgent meeting between heads of Lebanon's executive and legislative powers, especially those related to the completion of the implementation of UN Resolution 1701.

The meeting, which brought together President of the Republic General Joseph Aoun and Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, also addressed a series of legal amendments — banking in particular — to ensure that they are passed with consensus before embarking on any negotiations with the International Monetary Fund or other international financial institutions that are a source of funding (whether through loans or grants).

As such, the discussion focused on the background of the so-called reform laws addressed by Ortagus. She spoke on behalf of the international community and donor institutions.

Trump's envoy, who complained about what she deemed slow process, said Lebanon must first address the lifting of bank secrecy (with a retroactive effect of 10, not 3 years as proposed by the Lebanese government). ► Page 5



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## The ball is now in America's court

The Javan newspaper ran a story saying dialogue between Iran and the United States has been the hottest topic in media and political circles in recent weeks. The main point in this regard is distrust in the United States due to its failure to adhere to its commitments and the ambiguity of the outcome of the negotiations, as in past consultations. Now, the logic of negotiations entails that the United States should first take steps to verify the negotiation process in order to reassure the Iranian side. In fact, the ball is now in America's court, and the White House must take the first step within the framework of taking a practical action on previous commitments to build trust with the Iranian side to ensure the continuation of the negotiations. More precisely, Iran's pursuit of indirect negotiations will be an opportunity to test the U.S., and Iran's foreign policy should also be smart about monitoring U.S. actions and avoiding any changes in its negotiation strategy. It is clear that the U.S. is using the tools of threats and sanctions to force Iran to make concessions, and if Iran adopts a policy of counter-threats concurrent with negotiations, it will hinder the effectiveness of this tool because Iran will show that unilateral threats cannot weaken or change its position.

## Siasat-e-Rooz: Dimensions of a puzzle

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its editorial to the behavior of the United States and Iran's appropriate response. It wrote: A look at the behavior of the Americans shows that, in addition to playing the tariff game to disrupt the global order and maintain their destructive unilateralism, they have also launched a series of media and propaganda claims to convey the illusion that they are ready for a military option against Iran. The behavior of the Americans indicates that they are under the illusion that, through an atmosphere of negotiation and war, they can bring the Iranians to a "surrender table" like some countries and destroy Iran's military and nuclear capabilities. The main point is that America's slogan of military option is more focused on hidden goals than practical action. Therefore, maintaining military readiness, demonstrating national defense capabilities, and activating diplomacy are essential as a decisive response to any threat. It should be reminded that the United Nations is passive in the face of threats, as there was no reaction from the body to Trump's military threats against Iran and no

meeting was held in the Security Council in this regard.

## Ettelaat: Some outlets increase tensions

Ettelaat wrote about the increasing tension between Iran and the United States by some hardline Iranian media outlets: Although efforts to reduce tension and start indirect negotiations are underway, some media outlets are fanning the flames of tension through provocative articles. In an article addressed to the U.S. president, a hardline newspaper pointed out some issues that will only result in escalating tension. The article drew a reaction from Fox News that said experts believe that no negotiations should be held with Iran until it stops threatening to assassinate Trump and other American officials. Such provocative articles are written while the Israeli prime minister's office has announced that Netanyahu will discuss the Iranian threat and the International Criminal Court during his meeting with Trump. It seems that Netanyahu is also not satisfied with a decrease in tension between Iran and the United States and is taking advantage of every opportunity to increase American pressure on Iran.

## Arman-e-Melli: The key to Iran's exit from sanctions

The fall of oil prices and the negative effects of Trump's new sanctions and policies have made the situation more difficult for Iran than the past. In these circumstances, Iran must face economic, social, and political challenges that put more pressure on the people and the economy than ever before. Following the intensification of sanctions and economic pressure, the Iranian government has tried to reduce its dependence on oil revenues and seek alternative ways to secure its economic benefits. Iran's efforts to open diplomatic channels and negotiate with other countries are also continuing. These negotiations could be an opportunity to rebuild economic and trade relations with the outside world and reduce the negative effects of sanctions. However, the Iranian government must proceed with this path carefully and intelligently and focus on its interactions with other countries in order to secure national interests in the long term. Given the current situation and economic forecasts, experts believe a comprehensive and up-to-date strategy to protect national interests and strengthen the country's economy is currently considered a requirement.

## Russia's Duma ratifies strategic partnership treaty with Iran



TEHRAN – The Russian State Duma, the lower house of parliament, has ratified the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Iran, marking a significant step in the deepening relationship between Moscow and Tehran.

The ratification solidifies a long-term agreement aimed at fostering cooperation across a broad spectrum of areas, from defense and security to economics and culture.

Russian President Vladimir Putin submitted the treaty for ratification in March, and it was signed during Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to Moscow in January. The treaty establishes a legal framework intended to guide the long-term development of relations, officially designating Russia and Iran as strategic partners.

The agreement encompasses numerous sectors, including defense cooperation,

the fight against terrorism, collaboration in the energy sector, financial integration, transportation infrastructure development, industrial cooperation, agricultural partnerships, and exchange in culture, science, and technology.

State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin emphasized the treaty's importance in strengthening bilateral cooperation and coordination on international issues. He also highlighted the specific focus on bolstering interparliamentary ties, both within international parliamentary organizations and through the existing commission on cooperation between the State Duma and Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly.

The treaty builds upon a history of strategic cooperation between Iran and Russia. It is viewed as an upgrade and expansion of their strategic partnership.

## ‘War with Iran is suicidal!’: Americans unite against a war they believe will serve Israel, not the US

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## From Carlson to CodePink

Influential figures across the political spectrum are amplifying calls for restraint.

Tucker Carlson, whose commentary reportedly swayed Trump's decision to de-escalate after Iran shot down a U.S. surveillance drone that had breached Iranian airspace, issued a blunt social media rebuke on Monday: "It's clear that now is the worst possible time for the United States to participate in a military strike on Iran. Thousands of Americans would die. We'd lose the war that follows."

His critique, viewed millions of times, underscores a growing conservative disillusionment with interventionism.

According to the independent journalist, "nothing would be more destructive" for the U.S. than engaging in a war with Iran.

"This is suicidal. Anyone advocating for conflict with Iran is not an ally of the United States, but an enemy," Carlson wrote.

Progressives like CodePink's Medea Benjamin echo this urgency: "War with Iran would be a gift to Netanyahu's government, not the American people. Let's stop fighting Israel's wars."

Meanwhile, libertarian stalwart Ron Paul, who served as a U.S. Representative from Texas for multiple terms and twice as a Republican candidate, condemned the White House's pivot toward escalation: "A candidate elected to end wars has significantly escalated the war on Yemen and is now threatening Iran. What is it about the White House that turns every resident into a warmonger?"

## The costs of catastrophe

The economic toll of war looms large. The Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts cost at least \$6 trillion, and analysts warn that Iran—with its around 90 million population, advanced missile and drone systems could dwarf these figures.

The country also demonstrates its unparalleled



strategic prowess by expertly safeguarding the vital Strait of Hormuz—an indispensable maritime corridor for global trade and oil transport.

A firestorm in that strategic area could lead to a blockade or conflict that sends oil prices skyrocketing, destabilizing economies worldwide and fueling inflation.

Curt Mills of The American Conservative starkly framed the risk: "A strike would merge Afghanistan's mountains and Iraq's urban hellscape into a regional catastrophe."

Human costs are equally dire. Retired Army Colonel Douglas MacGregor and former Pentagon advisor cautioned that attacking Iran could spawn "ISIS times one hundred," paving the wave for triggering waves of extremism.

Other commentators also pointed to other factors, such as the difficulty of urban warfare in Iran.

Tehran, shielded by natural fortifications like the rugged Alborz Mountains and the expansive Zagros range, would present significant challenges to any invading force.

Moreover, senior Iranian officials—including Ali Larijani, an advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei—have

warned that a military strike could compel Iran to fast-track its nuclear program and potentially develop nuclear weapons for self-defense. That would only intensify the risks of nuclear proliferation and further complicate efforts toward diplomatic resolution.

## Israel's influence and the shadow of Iraq

Critics also argue that external actors—not U.S. interests—are driving escalation.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's calls for a "military option" and "a Libyan model"—phrases hawkish and neoconservative U.S. officials such as Senator Tom Cotton and National Security Advisor Mike Waltz use often,—has given the game away.

Glenn Greenwald, an independent Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author, condemned "the toxic fusion of think-tank warmongers and foreign-funded PACs pushing for confrontation."

"Is Trump that big a hypocrite that after running an anti-war campaign, he'd bomb Iran? That's a Cheney move. It would make him completely pro-war. And just to please Israel," wrote Cenk Uygur, a progressive commentator.

"The pressure is coming from

Israel," stated Nick Fuentes, a nationalist American political commentator whom Western media has labeled far-right, adding that the regime "has manufactured the entire crisis, and helped to install Trump with the goal of destroying Iran."

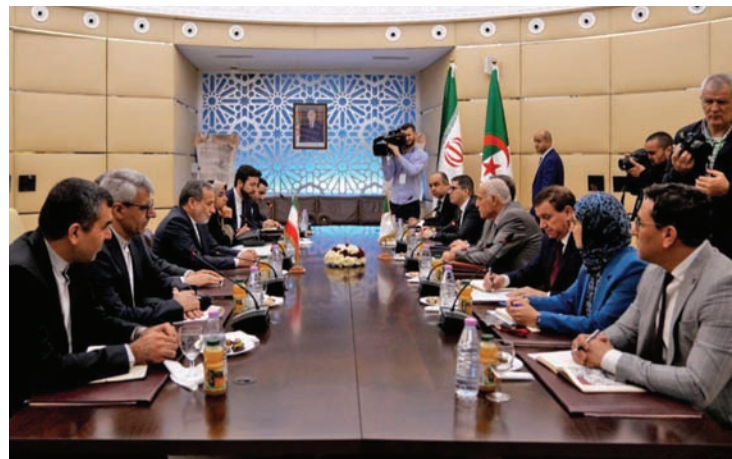
Historical parallels to the Iraq War also haunt the debate. Scott Horton, a foreign policy analyst, noted: "The lie sold the Iraq War. Similar tactics are now being employed against Iran."

With zero Iran-linked fatalities on U.S. soil, critics like Carlson question the threat narrative: "Compare the numbers—over 108,000 overdose deaths, 49,000 suicides... Still think Iran is the greatest threat?"

The call for peace extends beyond political and media circles. Public figures like comedian Rob Schneider passionately amplify the "NO WAR WITH IRAN!" message, resonating widely across America.

The anti-war coalition insists dialogue, not ultimatums, must prevail. The alternative—war—promises only ruin. As The American Conservative warned: "War with Iran is a path to destruction."

## ‘Historic, resilient ties’ Araghchi meets his counterpart in Algeria



FM Araghchi, heading Iran's high-ranking delegation, engages in talks with Algeria's Attaf during a bilateral summit in Algiers on April 8, 2025

From page 1 ▶ Attaf welcomed the Iranian delegation warmly, describing bilateral ties as a "model partnership" and reaffirming Algeria's readiness to expand collaboration across all sectors. The ministers reviewed progress in political and economic cooperation, which has surged in recent years amid joint infrastructure projects and energy sector synergies.

The dialogue also included the Israeli regime's escalating violence in occupied Palestine, with Araghchi condemning Western complicity in Tel Aviv's atrocities.

"Normalizing this regime's crimes poses the gravest threat to peace, sovereignty, and international law," he asserted, urging Islamic nations to unite diplomatically against "ethnic cleansing and forced displacement

in Gaza."

Attaf echoed these concerns, stressing Algeria's efforts as a non-permanent UN Security Council member to build global consensus against Israeli aggression.

"Algeria remains committed to leveraging multilateral platforms to uphold international peace," he stated, referencing recent UN initiatives to censure Israel's bombardment of Gaza and illegal settlements.

Araghchi underscored Tehran's readiness to elevate relations, particularly in trade and technology. "Our political rapport is exemplary, but we must harness the untapped economic potential," he remarked, alluding to ongoing negotiations for a preferential trade agreement.

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

## Iran nuclear talks: China urges US to stop threats, maximum pressure



## By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING – China has fully supported an expert-level meeting that took place in Moscow on Tuesday, involving representatives from Iran, China, and Russia to discuss Iran's nuclear program.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Tuesday that Beijing supports Russia in hosting this trilateral consultation.

"I would like to reiterate that China firmly believes that resolving the Iranian nuclear issue through political and diplomatic means is the only correct approach," Lin said.

The Moscow meeting comes after a trilateral discussion that took place in Beijing nearly a month earlier regarding Iran's nuclear program.

On March 14, 2025, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu

chaired the meeting with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

In a statement, China and Russia welcomed Iran's reiteration that its nuclear program is exclusively for peaceful purposes. Likewise, Moscow and Beijing put emphasis on the need to fully respect Iran's right to peaceful use of nuclear energy as a State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Moreover, the statement stressed the importance of removing US sanctions against Tehran.

On the same day, Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a separate meeting with the Iranian and Russian deputy foreign ministers.

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



# Saturday test for US

## Iran to evaluate Washington's true intentions during indirect Oman talks

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is slated to visit Oman for indirect talks with Washington, offering U.S. President Donald Trump a chance to give fresh life to the nuclear deal he unraveled in 2018.

Speaking to Iran's national TV on the sidelines of an official trip to Algeria, Araghchi said the upcoming indirect negotiations could eventually lead to an agreement, contingent upon Washington demonstrating good will and seriousness. "Currently, we prefer that negotiations take place indirectly, and we have no plans to change this approach," the top diplomat stated, adding, "It should be clearly stated: the ball is in America's court. If there is a serious will, the path to an agreement is clear."

The new round of discussions follows Trump's dismantling of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a 2015 deal two years in the making that limited Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. After withdrawing from the deal in 2018, Trump reinstated and intensified sanctions, arguing the JCPOA was insufficient to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. His Secretary of State at the time also demanded that the country curtail its missile and drone program and sever ties with regional Resistance groups.

Trump's actions during his first term, which he termed a "maximum pressure campaign," took a heavy toll on Iran's economy and the livelihoods of its citizens. However, the campaign fell short of impacting Iran's nuclear, military,



US President Donald Trump meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, on April 7, 2025.

or regional activities. Over the past few years, Tehran has achieved unprecedented progress in its nuclear program, unveiled new state-of-the-art weaponry, and further deepened its commitment to supporting allied Resistance forces in West Asia.

Since returning to the White House in January, the U.S. President has pressured Iran to negotiate a new deal, using the threat of military force. Iranian officials have reacted strongly, citing a lack of trust in Washington based on past dealings and warning of a severe response to any aggression against their interests.

While Tehran agreed to engage in indirect talks after Trump sent a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei last month, sources speaking to the Tehran Times indicate it will strictly limit these discussions to nuclear issues.

"We are fully confident that

our [nuclear] program is peaceful. Thus, we have no issues with building trust unless a limitation contrary to national interests is imposed on us," Araghchi said while in Algeria. "The sanctions that have been unjustly imposed on Iran based on baseless accusations must be removed. This issue is our main objective in the negotiations."

Iran was adhering to its commitments under the JCPOA when Washington unilaterally abandoned the agreement. It began to scale back on some of its commitments in 2020 after it became clear that European signatories to the deal would not be able to take the sting out of U.S. sanctions. Despite the acceleration of its nuclear program, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that Tehran has yet to move towards developing nukes.

Prospects for a new agreement remain dim unless the U.S. faces up to the fact that it can't simply dictate terms to Iran. To get a deal,

it must offer real concessions and respect the boundaries Tehran has clearly established. The West Asian country has repeatedly stated that demands concerning its military capabilities or alliances are a complete nonstarter.

In an opinion piece published by The Washington Post on Tuesday, Araghchi said the U.S. must understand that military action against Iran is not an option either. "To move forward today, we first need to agree that there can be no 'military option,' let alone a 'military solution.'" The official noted that any attack on Iran would endanger the lives of thousands of American soldiers, dump trillions of taxpayer dollars, and have "catastrophic" consequences for the entire region.

The U.S. seems to have left some of its intransigence for now, given that it yielded to Iran's requests for indirect negotiations and Omani mediation. Trump had initially sought direct talks and offered the UAE as a mediator, delivering his letter to Iran's Leader via an Emirati diplomat.

But this apparent swerve is not guaranteed to chart a new path, as evidenced by Trump's recent attempt to distort the nature of the upcoming negotiations. During a Monday meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he claimed the talks would be held directly between Iran and the United States – a lie widely interpreted as a continuation of Washington's efforts to sow discord within Iran and portray the U.S. as the proactive "initiator". The president previously publicized his letter to Iran, before it had even been delivered.

## Ice hockey coach Sanaei lauds Iranian girls

TEHRAN – For Azam Sanaei, building up women's hockey in Iran is not only a professional goal. It is also a source of great joy and fulfillment.

The coach of Iran's women's national ice hockey team believes that the sport provides a chance to bring together people from all walks of life.

"I feel so much happiness when I'm at the ice rink," Sanaei said.

"I really hope that a lot of girls in Iran can experience this sport, and that they understand that they can break the stereotypes. They need to know that sport, especially ice hockey, is not just for men, and we can do anything we want," she added.

"What excites me the most is being part of a community," Sanaei told IIHF.com. "It's all about women, connecting with the other coaches and athletes who have the same passion and seeing how we can learn from one another."

"I hope these connections would help to put Iran on the map in the global hockey community," Sanaei said.

"We have a lot of talented girls here, and I really want the world to see what we're capable of," she concluded.

## Iran to play friendly matches against Russia and Chile

TEHRAN – The Iran national football team are set to play friendly matches against Russia and Chile, according to Mehdi Taj, head of the Iran Football Federation.

Team Melli will face Russia on October 6, with a match against Chile scheduled for October 14, though Taj noted that the latter match has not yet been confirmed.

Taj also mentioned that the national team will participate in the 2025 CAFA Nations Cup in September as part of their preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Additionally, Amir Ghalenoei's side are likely to play against an African or European team in November.

## Miodrag Bozovic to remain Esteghlal coach

TEHRAN – The Esteghlal football team has denied reports about terminating its partnership with Miodrag Bozovic.

The club reaffirmed its support for the Montenegrin coach amid speculation regarding his future.

Bozovic, 56, was appointed as Esteghlal coach in late February for the remainder of the season.

Under his leadership, the team are on the brink of relegation to the First Division. Nevertheless, the Iranian club plan to extend his contract for the next season.

## Iran drawn in tough group for 2025 Asian Women's Junior Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran have been placed in a challenging group for the 18th AHF Asian Women's Junior Handball Championship.

The tournament will be held from Aug. 20 to 29 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

This championship also serves as a qualifying event for the 25th IHF Women's Junior (U20) Handball World Championship, set to take place in 2026.

The draw ceremony was conducted on Tuesday at the Republican Training Center for Olympic and Paralympic Sports in Tashkent.

Draw Results:

\* Group A: Uzbekistan, China, Chinese Taipei,

Hong Kong, India

\* Group B: Republic of Korea, Japan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan

## Omid Alishah to undergo foot surgery

TEHRAN – Persepolis football team captain Omid Alishah will have to undergo a knee surgery.

He will be sidelined for at least four weeks due to the surgery.

Alishah had missed the match against Shams Azar and Esteghlal Khuzestan.

The surgery could keep him out for the remainder of the season, as his absence will be a huge blow to the club.

Persepolis sit third in the Iran football league.

## Iran's Dariaei takes gold in 2025 Sanda World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran's Sedigheh Dariaei Varkadeh won a gold medal in the 10th Sanda World Cup on Tuesday.

Dariaei beat Bermudian Krista Stepheny by a 12-point spread on the leilai [elevated fighting arena] at the Culture and Sports Indoor Stadium in the women's 65kg division.

She defeated Australian Nicole Lowe-Tarbert in her next match and won the gold.

The 10th SWC has welcomed nearly 170 participants including team officials from 26 countries and regions.

The elite biennial competition, which offers prize money to the champions, is organized by the Chinese Wushu Association under the auspices of the International Wushu Federation.

## Iran to meet Russia at SAT Futsal Championship 2025 opener

TEHRAN – Iran's men's futsal team will play Russia in the SAT Futsal Championship Thailand 2025 opening match.

A high-stakes four-team futsal tournament is set to take place from April 9-12, 2025, at Terminal Hall, Terminal 21 Korat, Thailand.

This tournament will serve as preparation for AFC Futsal Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers (September 16-24, 2025).

Team Melli will meet Russia on Tuesday and play Kuwait and Thailand in the following days.

## Iran discover opponents in FIBA Asia Cup 2025

TEHRAN – The path to the trophy for the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 has been determined as the groups for the thirty-first edition of the event were confirmed in Tuesday's draw.

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

The 16 teams are divided into four groups of four teams each.

The Groups are as follows

Group A: Qatar, Australia, Korea, Lebanon

Group B: Guam, Japan, Syria, Iran

Group C: China, Jordan, India, Saudi Arabia

Group D: Chinese Taipei, New Zealand, Iraq, Philippines

During the Group Phase, the teams will play against each other in a single-round robin format. The first-placed teams of each group will qualify directly to the Quarter-Finals. The second- and third-placed teams in each group will play in a Qualification to Quarter-Finals round.

The Final Phase of the competition will proceed from the Quarter-Finals onwards with a single-elimination format in place.

## Iran equips wide-body Gaza drone with anti-jamming and anti-spoofing technology

TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force has enhanced the capabilities of its Gaza wide-body combat drone by integrating sophisticated anti-jamming and anti-spoofing technologies into its systems.

The upgrade is designed to protect the drone from electronic warfare tactics aimed at disrupting its navigation and control.

This development was indirectly highlighted by Iran's recent participation in the LAAD (Latin America Aerospace and Defense) 2025 exhibition, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from April 1st to 4th. This year marked the inaugural attendance of the Iranian Defense Ministry at this significant trade show.

Within its exhibition space, Iran prominently displayed a model of the domestically produced Shahed-149, also known as the Gaza, a wide-body military drone of considerable significance.

Closer inspection of imagery related to this drone reveals that it has been outfitted with newly developed antennas and advanced navigation receivers. These components are specifically engineered to either prevent or effectively minimize the potentially harmful effects of radio frequency jamming, a common tactic used in electronic warfare scenarios. It is noteworthy that similar anti-jamming and anti-spoofing measures have previously demonstrated their effectiveness when implemented in the Shahed-129 drones.



The Shahed-149, often recognized as Iran's largest combat drone to date, was initially introduced to the public in May of 2021. Propelled by a turboprop engine, this military unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) possesses the capacity to carry up to thirteen bombs, enhancing its offensive capabilities.

In terms of its physical dimensions, the Gaza drone boasts a wingspan of 21 meters and has a total weight of 3.1 tons. It is capable of carrying a payload weighing up to 500 kilograms.

Regarding its operational characteristics, the drone is capable of remaining airborne for as long

as 35 hours. It has a service ceiling of 35,000 feet, indicating the maximum altitude at which it can effectively operate, and an operational range of 2,000 kilometers, allowing it to cover substantial distances during its missions.

The Shahed-149 drone is versatile in its applications, suitable for deployment in a wide array of combat scenarios, surveillance operations, and reconnaissance missions. Furthermore, it can be effectively utilized in search and rescue endeavors, and in providing essential relief efforts in the aftermath of natural disasters or other unforeseen accidents.

## Why the 'Libyan model' is not reproducible for Iran

From Page 1 ► **Iran vs. Libya: Structural and strategic distinctions**

The Islamic Republic of Iran is based on a system of multiple, resilient institutions that, under the leadership of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, maintain an unparalleled cohesion in managing external threats. These institutions, through coordination and synergy, are responsive to both internal and external challenges. In contrast, the governance structure in Libya was entirely personal and tribal. Muammar Gaddafi held central control over the country for four decades, with his governance primarily based on individual will and tribal alliances. Libya's political system lacked effective and independent institutions, relying instead on Gaddafi's personal power and tribal coalitions. This structurally vulnerable system led to the collapse of Libya after

Gaddafi's overthrow, as the country fragmented into a security and political disaster, divided among various tribal and armed groups. The absence of independent, coordinated state institutions in Libya led to instability and division.

This structural and strategic distinction between Iran and Libya not only underscores the strength of the Iranian government in facing external threats but also emphasizes the necessity of maintaining the independence of institutions and societal management during difficult political conditions. Iran, with its extensive historical and field experiences in maintaining internal cohesion and managing threats, is immune to the structural weaknesses that plagued Libya.

Furthermore, Iran has a rich history of resistance and standing firm against pressures, from the imposed war to debilitating sanc-

tions. In all these cases, instead of capitulating, Iran pursued an "active resistance" model, which is reflected in its maintaining a nuclear program under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, its effective regional presence in West Asia, and its negotiations from a position of strength with Western countries under the JCPOA. In contrast, Gaddafi, in an attempt to normalize relations, relinquished his tools of power and ultimately became a victim of the very process he had engaged in.

Iran's geopolitical position and regional influence are entirely different from those of Libya. Iran is an influential actor on both a regional and global scale, playing an active role from the Axis of Resistance in West Asia to its interactions with great powers. This strategic depth has layered and complex deterrence capabilities.

Conversely, Libya, under Gaddafi, was seen as a country with rich energy resources and an important geographical position in North Africa but had a weak regional and international presence. While Gaddafi sought to play a role in certain regional and global developments, his internal limitations and lack of strategic partnerships prevented him from establishing sustainable influence internationally or regionally. Additionally, Western involvement in Libya, particularly through NATO military interventions, led to the loss of any deterrent capacity and caused instability.

Thus, Iran's geopolitical position and regional influence significantly differentiate it from Libya. With its strategic depth and indigenous power, Iran possesses a complex and effective deterrence capability that is incomparable to Libya's situation.

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



## Loans to Iranian knowledge-based firms rise 46% in a year

TEHRAN – Iranian banks disbursed 1.24 quadrillion rials (about \$2.48 billion) more in loans to knowledge-based companies in the Iranian year 1403 (ended on March 20, 2025) compared to the previous year, marking a 46.2 percent year-on-year increase, according to Central Bank data.

The report shows that a total of 24,000 loans were extended to 2,922 knowledge-based firms in 1403, amounting to 3.946 quadrillion rials (approximately \$78.9 billion), up from 2.706 quadrillion rials in 1402.

Private banks accounted for the lion's share of the funding, granting 18,371 loans worth 3.330 quadrillion rials (\$66.6 billion) to 2,515 firms, representing 84.4 percent of total lending in this category. This reflects a 50.5 percent increase from the previous year.

State-owned banks issued 5,829 loans



worth 616 trillion rials (\$12.3 billion) to 1,129 knowledge-based firms in the same period, covering 15.6 percent of the total and recording a 26.6 percent rise year-on-year.

The boost in lending comes amid broader government efforts to support the tech and innovation ecosystem as a driver of economic diversification.

## Iran's exports to the Americas quadruple in a year

TEHRAN – Iran's exports to the Americas surged 4.5 times in the Iranian year 1403 (ended late March 2025) compared to the previous year, while a free trade agreement with Venezuela is just one step away from full implementation after two decades, a senior trade official said.

Ahmad Firouzi, Director General of the Europe and Americas Office at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, said on Sunday that while imports from the Americas saw a slight decline in 1403, Iranian exports to the continent grew significantly.

Notably, official exports to Brazil rose by a staggering 8.5 times compared to the previ-

ous year.

Firouzi noted that in line with the Iranian government's push to access new markets, several specialized meetings were held in 1403 targeting countries such as Canada and Mexico.

He added that under the policies of the 14th administration, Iran has actively pursued the signing of trade agreements, and most of the groundwork for a free trade deal with Venezuela has already been completed.

He said only one more step remains for the Iran-Venezuela free trade agreement to come into force in 1404, marking the first such deal between the two nations in 20 years.

## Pezeshkian: Govt. to offer strong support for investment in renewable energy

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that his administration is committed to supporting investment in renewable energy, unveiling incentive packages aimed at encouraging private and public sector participation in the sector.

Speaking at a high-level meeting focused on accelerating the construction of solar power plants, Pezeshkian emphasized that the government's strategy aligns with the national slogan of the year, which centers on economic inclusion and public engagement, IRNA reported.

"To advance this vision, we have developed and presented attractive incentive packages to support investment in renewables, and we will continue to back such efforts in a dedicated manner," he said.

The meeting, held at the presidential office, was attended by key cabinet members, including the ministers of energy, industry, and the head of the Planning and Budget Organization, the central bank governor, and several public and private investors.

Officials presented detailed updates on site selection, financing, contractor agreements, and solar panel procurement.

Pezeshkian stressed the importance of completing the projects on schedule, particularly

before peak summer electricity consumption.

He called for the immediate preparation of a timeline for installing solar panels and integrating them into the national grid, assuring that the government would provide full support to ensure timely implementation.

He warned that without reliable electricity, industrial growth would stall. "If we expand industry but fail to supply the necessary power, production will collapse," he said. "Therefore, building essential infrastructure—especially using renewable sources—must be a national priority."

The president also ordered the energy and industry ministers, the budget chief, and the central bank governor to streamline investment processes and prioritize support for renewable energy developers.

He said the government's long-term plan is to phase out fossil fuels in all aspects of daily life—including transportation, industry, and heating and cooling systems—in favor of clean, renewable alternatives.

Pezeshkian noted a 70 percent increase in investment demand in the renewable energy sector over the past six months, underscoring growing interest in the field.

## Iran to add 700 MW to steam power plant capacity

TEHRAN – Iran plans to boost the power generation capacity of its steam power plants by more than 700 megawatts in the current Iranian year (ending March 2026) through a series of efficiency-enhancement projects, a senior energy official said.

Ali-Asghar Abdoli, Director General of the Supervision and Optimization Office at Iran's Thermal Power Plants Holding Company (TPPH), said that steam power plants currently account for 20 percent of Iran's total installed thermal capacity and produce 24 percent of the electricity generated by thermal units, IRIB reported.

Abdoli noted that despite their critical role, the average age of steam power plants in Iran exceeds 40 years, with no new steam units

added in the past two decades. Aging infrastructure and outdated technology have led to reduced efficiency and capacity, necessitating urgent investment and refurbishment.

In preparation for peak summer demand, the company has identified production bottlenecks and designed targeted plans to restore and stabilize output from steam plants. These efforts are focused on resolving issues in cooling systems (condensers and cooling towers), boilers, steam cycles, and turbines.

According to Abdoli, 600 megawatts of the projected capacity increase will come from government-operated plants and the remaining 100 megawatts from private sector steam plants.

# Iraq, 2nd top destination of Iranian non-oil goods in a year

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN – Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$11.9 billion to Iraq 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 Iraq was Iran's second top non-oil export destination in the previous year.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges. Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target.

In late May 2024, the head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said that Iran exports some 2,200 products, valued at \$12 billion, to neighboring Iraq annually.

Speaking in a meeting entitled "Reviewing opportunities and challenges of attracting Iraqi investors and strengthening trade relations



between the two countries in line with demarcating Iran in the regional value chain", Jafar Hosseini said that Iraq, benefiting from \$85 billion foreign currency reserves, 130 tons of gold reserves, and 147 billion barrels of proven reserves of crude oil, is among the richest countries in West Asia.

Currently, Iran exports over 2,200 various types of goods and products to Iraq, he said, adding that more than half of the active Iranian traders are present in the Iraqi market.

Developing the trade infrastructures to facilitate trade between the two countries, encouraging traders to invest in Iraq, promoting trade through dispatching and admitting

trade delegations and participating in exhibitions of the two countries, etc. are suggested to strengthen the trade and economic relations between Iran and Iraq, he underlined.

In an interview in mid-December last year, the ambassador of Iran in Iraq praised the economic relations between the two sides and expressed hope that these relations will be more and better.

Mohammad Kazem Ale-Sadeq announced the value of commercial exchanges between the two countries, and stated that economic relations between Iran and Iraq are very good, and expressed hope that these relations will improve.

The envoy further noted: "Iraq is an important country in the region, and we have very important economic, political, and social relations with this neighbor."

In early May 2024, Tehran hosted the 6th meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee.

The two-day event was co-chaired by the former Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Iraqi Minister of Commerce Atheer Daoud Al-Ghurairi.

On the first day of the meeting, specialized committees including commercial, industrial, agricultural, standardization and quality control, energy, finance, banking, investment and Insurance, shipping, transport, and Customs, scientific, educational, tourism, health, as well as sports consulate held meetings to discuss areas for cooperation.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years. Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

## Tehran, Baku discuss expansion of economic, transport, energy ties

From Page 1 ► At the beginning of the meeting, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev appreciated the recent reciprocal visits of high-level delegations from Azerbaijan and Iran, noting that these visits provide a valuable opportunity to strengthen friendship between the two countries and promote bilateral cooperation.

He mentioned the holding of the meeting of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee and emphasized that the meeting's agenda includes important projects aimed at expanding cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, energy, and transportation.

The Iranian minister, for her part, emphasized

her country's interest in developing relations with Azerbaijan in all areas, and pointed to the strong historical, cultural, and religious ties between the two nations.

Sadeqh is leading a high-level Iranian delegation to Azerbaijan from April 7 to 10 to review progress on past agreements, remove barriers to joint ventures, and lay the groundwork for an upcoming visit by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Baku.

The visit includes field inspections of joint border infrastructure projects and the unveiling and signing of the Farsi and Azerbaijani versions of the joint committee's cooperation document, which was originally signed during a session held in

Tehran in February after a three-year hiatus. Both versions will be appended to the English-language document.

Proposals for a new memorandum of understanding on transport and border cooperation are also being discussed, aimed at facilitating deeper collaboration ahead of Pezeshkian's trip.

Amin Tarafo', advisor to the minister and head of the ministry's international affairs office, said the current trip is being made at the formal invitation of Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

## Call for papers in First International deBlock Conference – deBlock 2025

We are pleased to invite experts, students, and researchers interested in blockchain and crypto assets to the First International deBlock Conference, which will take place in Tehran in June 2025.

12 Ethereum Awards for the selected authors:

In total 20 authors will receive the following prize:

– First Place in each category will receive 1.5 Ethereum;

– Second Place in each category will receive 0.75 Ethereum;

– Third, Fourth, and Fifth Places will each receive 0.25 Ethereum.

This conference, founded by Crypto Assets Monthly Magazine and the Blockchain Research Journal, aims to foster knowledge creation and networking among experts and technology professionals working in the realm of crypto assets. With the slogan: "The Future of BRICS with Blockchain," the event is supported by a wide network of academic institutions, including the Association of BRICS Universities, the Supreme Council of Cyberspace, and the Center for Progress and Development of the Presidency of Iran. A distinguished group of local and international blockchain academics and technologists is actively participating in the policymaking, scientific processes, and implementation of the event.

### Conference Topics

Participants are invited to submit articles on (but not limited to) the following themes:

1- Economic and Financial

\* Crypto-assets and economic governance

\* Diversification of value settlement tools in global trade

\* Current status and future of the economy and fintech in BRICS countries

\* Examining the implications of central bank digital currencies (CBDCs)

\* Blockchain and housing policies

\* Monetary policies of banks in the era of Blockchain, cryptocurrencies, and financial stability

\* Blockchain financing in crypto-assets

2- Business and Usability

\* Designing bilateral or multilateral monetary agreements among BRICS based on a common token

\* Feasibility of using crypto-assets in retail trade among member countries

\* Designing a complete foreign trade cycle (order registration, in-

surance, transportation, disputes, LC, settlement, contracts, and customs)

\* DAOs (Decentralized Autonomous Organizations), decentralized governance – governments and corporations

\* Opportunities and challenges of private money and its future

\* Blockchain and its impact on healthcare

\* Tokenization of traditional assets and Real-World Assets (RWA)

\* BRICS and DeFi (Decentralized Finance)

\* Utilizing Mobile and SIM Card Capabilities in Cryptocurrency Payments

\* Exploring NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) and SFTs (Semi-Fungible Tokens)

3- Regulation

\* Legal and judicial status of crypto-assets in BRICS countries

– laws and regulations

\* Crypto-assets and international organizations (IMF, World Bank, etc.) – their regulatory approaches

\* Cryptoassets Feqh

\* Approaches of non-BRICS countries toward crypto-assets

4-Technology

\* Examining security and infrastructure in Blockchain

\* The future of Layer 2 and scalability versus security

\* Cross-chain, bridges, and oracles

\* The relationship between AI and Blockchain

\* Privacy technologies and zero-knowledge proofs

Researchers are welcome to submit papers in the above categories or on other relevant topics of interest related to blockchain and crypto assets.

### Submission Guidelines

– Articles must be written in English and follow the ISC template format.

– Submission Deadline: May 12, 2025

– Notification of Acceptance: May 22, 2025

### Awards and Recognition

Selected works will be recognized with valuable prizes, including a total of 12 Ethereum tokens and official certificates of achievement. Additionally, winning papers will be internationally registered and published in the conference proceedings book. Outstanding researchers will also be invited to attend the two-day conference hosted in Tehran.



# How Trump undercut Netanyahu in one visit

From page 1 ▶ Western media, including outlets like The New York Times and The Washington Post, portrayed the visit as a test of the Trump-Netanyahu alliance. Reports suggested that Trump's tariff policy and his administration's hands-off approach to Israel's military operations in Gaza could either strengthen or strain this relationship. Israeli media, meanwhile, emphasized Netanyahu's domestic political motivations, noting that a successful trip could bolster his image at home, where he faces mounting criticism over his handling of the Gaza conflict and allegations of corruption.

### A series of missed opportunities

Initial reports from Israeli and U.S. media suggested optimism, with Netanyahu expressing hope that the "special bond" between the U.S. and Israel would facilitate progress on tariffs and hostages.

However, the outcome was far from triumphant. According to posts on X and reports from the Israeli Broadcasting Authority, the visit ended "abruptly and somewhat suspiciously," with no tangible agreements reached. Western media, such as NPR and Fox News, noted that Trump remained noncommittal on reducing tariffs, focusing instead on broader geopolitical issues like Iran's nuclear program and U.S. military campaigns against Yemen's Ansarullah. Israeli media, including The Times of Israel, described the lack of progress as a "disappointment," with some commentators suggesting that Netanyahu had overestimated his influence over Trump.

During the Oval Office meeting, both leaders spoke to reporters, but their exchanges revealed little in the way of concrete outcomes. Netanyahu reiterated Israel's commitment to eliminating Hamas and securing the release of hostages, while Trump hinted at potential direct talks with Iran but offered no assurances on tariffs. A joint press conference, anticipated by many, never materialized, further fueling speculation that the meeting had been cut short due to disagreements or lack of progress.



### Western, Israeli media views: Frustration and political fallout

Western media outlets were quick to highlight the visit's shortcomings, framing it as a missed opportunity for both leaders. The New York Times described Trump and Netanyahu as using "similar playbooks" to navigate domestic and international turmoil but noted that their alignment did not translate into actionable results. The article suggested that Trump's tariff policy, which spared no major ally, underscored a transactional approach to diplomacy that left even close partners like Israel vulnerable.

The Washington Post echoed this sentiment, arguing that Netanyahu's return to Washington came at a "more challenging moment" than his previous visit in February 2025. The paper pointed out that Trump's refusal to commit to tariff relief, combined with his administration's aggressive stance on Iran and Syria, put Netanyahu in a precarious position. Critics in Western media also raised concerns about the lack of discussion on Palestinian rights or a two-state solution, with some accusing Trump of enabling Netanyahu's headline policies without pushing for accountability.

The Hebrew news outlet Walla, citing sources close to the Israeli delegation, went so far as to label the meeting between Netanyahu and Trump as "arguably the most failed summit" between the two leaders. According to the report, Netanyahu returned to Tel Aviv empty-handed, having failed to secure any progress on key bilateral

issues, including the hoped-for reduction of trade tariffs.

Political correspondent Barak Ravid described Netanyahu's position as "weakened and humiliated," noting that the Israeli prime minister served more as a symbolic figure than an active negotiator. "He played the role of a backdrop to Trump's broader agenda," Ravid observed, pointing to the calculated manner in which Trump appeared to sideline Israeli priorities in favor of a renewed engagement with Iran.

Israel Hayom, often a Netanyahu-aligned publication, did not shy away from acknowledging the tension and frustration visible on the faces of Israeli officials throughout the visit. Meanwhile, The Times of Israel characterized the summit as "deeply disappointing," especially in light of Trump's apparent openness to direct negotiations with Tehran—a move seen in Jerusalem Al-Quds as a strategic shift with potentially far-reaching consequences for Israeli security interests.

The political fallout was swift. New Dimor, spokesperson for opposition leader Yair Lapid, offered a stark assessment of the trip, urging Israeli media to report the unvarnished truth. "This was one of the most humiliating moments for any Israeli prime minister," Dimor said. "It culminated in Israel's public embarrassment on the international stage, without even the smallest diplomatic win."

He added, "Trump used Netanyahu as nothing more than a decorative fixture to lend symbolic legitimacy to forthcoming U.S.-

Iran negotiations."

Posts on X from Israeli users and media personalities amplified this frustration, with some describing the trip as "the most failed ever" in Netanyahu's history of U.S. visits. Others pointed to the "suspicious speed" of his departure, speculating about behind-the-scenes tensions or disagreements with Trump. Trending topics on X in Israel reflected a mix of disappointment and cynicism, with many questioning whether Netanyahu's international trips were more about personal survival than national interest.

### A failure of strategy and substance

As the dust settles, the implications of this failed visit may extend beyond a single trip or momentary political embarrassment. With shifting dynamics in Washington and a possible thaw in U.S.-Iran relations, Israel may find itself increasingly isolated—forced to re-evaluate both its regional strategy and its approach to Washington.

Netanyahu's visit to Washington was a missed opportunity that exposed the limitations of the Trump-Netanyahu alliance. Far from strengthening ties or achieving concrete results, the trip ended in disappointment, with no progress on tariffs, hostages, or broader strategic issues. Western media have criticized Trump's transactional approach, while Israeli media have lamented Netanyahu's failure to deliver, raising questions about his leadership and Israel's future direction.

As both leaders face domestic and international pressures, the fallout from the visit serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of prioritizing politics over substance. For now, the special bond between the U.S. and Israel remains intact, but its durability will depend on whether future engagements can produce more than just rhetoric and photo ops. Until then, the abrupt and suspicious end to Netanyahu's Washington trip will linger as a symbol of unfulfilled promises and missed opportunities in a region already fraught with tension and uncertainty.

## African Union expels Israeli ambassador from Rwanda genocide conference

The African Union (AU) expelled an Israeli ambassador from a conference on the Rwanda genocide on Monday, the Israeli foreign ministry said.

Avraham Neguise, Israel's Ambassador to Ethiopia, was removed from the conference, organized by the African Union in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, after member states refused to participate alongside him, according to the New Arab.

The expulsion was praised by Hamas, who said the stance "aligns with the Union's values and principles, as well as its historic positions in support of the Palestinian cause and our people's struggle against Zionist colonialism".

The group also called for a "comprehen-

sive boycott" of Israel and to "prevent it from exploiting their platforms to whitewash its crimes" against the Palestinian people.

Israel is accused at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of committing genocide against the Palestinian people, in a case brought forward by AU member state South Africa.

An Israeli diplomat was also expelled from the 36th African Union summit of heads of state in Ethiopia in February 2023.

The conference, which takes place annually, marks the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, aiming to raise awareness of the value of life and humanity and renew a shared commitment to protecting human rights.

## Turkey and Israel mull deconfliction line in Syria

Turkey and Israel have held talks over the establishment of a deconfliction line in Syria to avoid any misunderstandings and prevent potential clashes between their militaries, two Western officials have told Middle East Eye.

Last week, Israeli air forces carried out several air strikes in Syria, targeting military sites - including Hama Air Base and the Tiyas Airbase (also known as T4) - where Turkey had been planning to deploy soon.

The strikes occurred just as Ankara was preparing to send a technical team to inspect the T4 base and conduct a preliminary assessment for reconstruction.

Two Western officials told MEE that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu informed his counterparts that Israel had a limited window to strike the T4 base before

Turkey could position its assets there. He reportedly said that once Turkey moved in, the base would be off-limits to Israeli operations.

The Turkish military coming under attack by Israeli forces, even by mistake, would risk triggering a major conflict. However the introduction of air defence systems in the bases would also deter Israeli aircraft from operating in the area.

MEE reported last week that Ankara was in the process of taking over the T4 base to deploy surveillance and attack drones.

Turkey also planned to install Hisar-type air defense systems. Eventually, the Turkish military aims to establish a layered air defense system in and around the base, with short-, medium-, and long-range capabilities designed to counter threats from aircraft, drones, and missiles.

## China lashes out at JD Vance for calling Chinese 'peasants'

China on Tuesday slammed U.S. Vice President JD Vance for referring to the Chinese people as "peasants" in an interview that has drawn widespread ire and ridicule on China's internet - and comparisons with Vance's own self-proclaimed "hillbilly" background, CNN reported.

Speaking to Fox News last Thursday, Vance defended President Donald Trump's market-hammering tariffs and railed against the "globalist economy."

"What has the globalist economy gotten the United States of America? And the answer is, fundamentally, it's based on two principles - incurring a huge amount of debt to buy things that other countries make for us," Vance told news show "Fox & Friends."

"To make it a little more crystal clear, we borrow money from Chinese peasants to buy



the things those Chinese peasants manufacture."

Asked about Vance's comments at a regular news briefing Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said: "It's both astonishing and lamentable to hear this vice president make such ignorant and disrespectful remarks."



Palestinians gather to receive food cooked by a charity kitchen in Nuseirat in central Gaza

## Israelis kill over 210 Gaza journalists

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Another journalist has died after an Israeli attack on a media tent in Gaza.

Journalist Ahmed Mansour died from severe injuries sustained in an Israeli airstrike that targeted a media tent near the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, southern Gaza.

Mansour, a father of two, suffered critical burns in the attack and passed away in the hospital shortly afterward.

The terror attack occurred on Monday and also claimed the lives of fellow journalists Hilmi al-Faqawi and Youssef al-Khzandar. Several others were injured.

The strike ignited a devastating fire in the media camp, with witnesses describing hor-

rific scenes as journalists were engulfed in flames while locals desperately tried to put out the blaze.

A viral video showed Mansour burning in the inferno. Freelance photographer Abed Shaat described the moment to Al Jazeera:

"I started taking pictures from a distance, but as I got closer to the burning tent, I saw one of my colleagues on fire. I couldn't continue filming."

"I don't even know how I found the courage to approach the flames and try to pull him out. The fire was intense. A gas canister had exploded, and another one was still burning."

"I tried to pull him out by his leg, but his pants tore off in my hand. I tried from another

angle, but I couldn't."

Mansour's death was confirmed on Tuesday. Other journalists injured in the attack include Hassan Aslih, Ahmed al-Agha, Mohammed Fayed, Abdullah al-Attar, Ihab al-Bardini, Mahmoud Awad, and Majed Qudeih.

The Palestinian Media Assembly condemned the bombing, mourning the loss of al-Faqawi, who reported for the Palestine Today news agency.

The International Commission to Support Palestinians' Rights stated that the targeting of journalists constitutes a war crime and was clearly aimed at silencing coverage of the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

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

## How the myth of American power has shattered

By Dr. Jin Liangxiang

SHANGHAI - There have been numerous myths circulating about America's power for many years. The prowess of American power was in some way existential, but the myths were something that had been largely constructed. The myths of America's economic, technological and political power and security protection were among these. But the recent years had seen all the four

myths had been shattered across the world. And there is no reason that the U.S. is not declining.

### First American economic power was shattered

The U.S. used to be the single most important economy in the world, both in terms of quantity and quality. In 2001, the GDPs of the U.S., Japan and China were respectively 10.58 trillion, 4.37 trillion and 1.34 trillion dollars,

and the U.S. GDP was 2.4 times that of Japan, the second, and 7.9 times that of China. The U.S. was then regarded as the single most important power engine of the global economy.

But things have changed quickly in the last two decades. According to statistics, in 2024, the U.S. GDP, which was about 29.2 trillion dollars, took up 30% of the world total while that of China was 18.5 trillion dollars, 63

percent that of the U.S. Though the U.S. would remain the largest economy for the years to come, yet it had been China's economy that had contributed to 30% of global economic growth despite difficulties in recent years in comparison to America's 12-15%. China has remained the largest trader for 8 consecutive years, and the largest trade partner for the largest number of partners.

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

## Lebanon after Ortagus' ill-fated visit

From page 1 ▶ She further demanded disclosure of operations involving opaque poles that took place between 2015 and 2019.

The second item Ortagus pressed for was the restructuring of the banking sector on a basis consistent with the global banking system, claiming that Lebanon's reliance on a cash economy made it an excellent haven for money laundering and circumventing international financial regulatory filters.

In addition to the above, Ortagus set additional urgent items related to reforming the judiciary, controlling border crossings and customs, and cleaning up the Ministry of Finance.

In a television interview, Ortagus discussed what she raised with senior Lebanese officials regarding administrative, financial, legal, security, and military reforms — as she put it — especially the fate of all "illegal" weapons, whether Lebanese or Palestinian.

However, military and security reform cannot be realized unless the fate of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon is resolved, and Ortagus received a unified Lebanese position on this issue.

In assessing Ortagus' recent visit, observers believe that the tour was flexible in style only, while in substance it was a repetition of the previous ones.

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



## Tourism minister attends global investment forum in UAE to promote cooperation

TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, arrived in the United Arab Emirates on Monday evening to participate in the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) Congress 2025, one of the world's leading platforms for international investment and economic dialogue.

Salehi-Amiri traveled to Abu Dhabi at the official invitation of UAE's chairman of the tourism council and Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UN Tourism, formerly known as the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). He was welcomed upon arrival by Iran's ambassador to the UAE.

Last month, Pololikashvili emphasized the need to enhance cooperation with Iran to foster sustainable development in the tourism industry. In a letter to Salehi-Amiri, Pololikashvili highlighted the country's pivotal role in the global tourism system, according to a press release issued by the Ministry on Monday.

As part of his agenda, Salehi-Amiri is expected to meet with UAE officials, other attending ministers, and international investors to explore strategic partnerships in the cultural and tourism sectors. He will also hold discussions with members of the Iranian tourism and business community residing in the UAE.

Organized under the patronage of the UAE's Ministry of Investment, Ministry of Economy, and Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology, and chaired by Minister of Foreign Trade Thanai Al Zeyoudi, AIM 2025 plays a central role in shaping the future architecture of global economic cooperation.

Salehi-Amiri's participation highlights Iran's intent to strengthen regional cultural ties and showcase the country's investment potential in heritage and tourism infrastructure. The visit is viewed as a strategic step in Iran's broader public diplomacy efforts and its pursuit of a more active role in regional and transnational cultural collaboration, IRNA reported on Monday.

"The presence of the Iranian tourism minister at such a high-profile global event underscores the country's efforts to present its civilizational assets and cultural wealth as valuable soft power resources on the international stage."

Salehi-Amiri has underscored the role of cultural heritage as a form of "soft power," capable of fostering national pride and international recognition. "Iran's strength lies not only in its historical legacy but also in its ability to share



*Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri in an undated photo*

this legacy with the world," the minister said in a televised program.

He also underlined Iran's ranking as the seventh most attractive country for tourism, according to World Bank data, though domestic studies place Iran third globally. Iran's diverse offerings, ranging from cultural heritage and natural wonders to marine tourism, contribute to its unique standing, the minister said.

The minister has also emphasized the country's rich cultural heritage, stating that 48,000 sites (as well as monuments and relics) have been registered nationally, with 28 tangible and 27 intangible assets already on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Additionally, 48 more sites are pending global recognition, the minister added.

According to Salehi-Amiri, the Islamic Republic welcomed 6.382 million international tourists during the last Iranian year (which ended on March 19) and aims for a 10% annual growth in arrivals.

"We have the capacity to attract up to 15 million more tourists annually, but this requires significant improvements in infrastructure, including transportation, accommodation, and financial services," he noted.

The AIM Congress, held from April 7 to 9 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), brings together global economic, technological, and governance institutions to explore international investment opportunities and policy innovations. According to organizers, the 2025 edition places a special focus on sustainable tourism strategies, foreign direct investment (FDI), digital transformation, green technologies, and infrastructure development.

and interesting in Chinese garden. In East Asian gardens, the plant is adopted when it is mini-mized, miniaturized and can be transferred like a Bonsai, he said.

The concept of pot was imported from China, he said. "Before Zand Dynasty, we didn't have pot concept for transferring a living creature."

Among the stunning Persian gardens in Iran, Eram Garden situated in the southern city of Shiraz, Fars province is renowned for its breathtaking beauty. The garden inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage Sites is absolutely stunning and one of a kind.

The holy Quran portrays Eram as a celestial realm, specifically crafted for the fortunate souls. The ambiance is absolutely stunning, enveloped by towering cypress trees, sweet-scented blooms, and aromatic sour orange trees.

The lush garden area is a serene haven for visitors, with the delightful chirping of birds providing a soothing ambiance that makes taking a leisurely walk an absolute joy. Eram Garden is a breathtaking sight to behold during springtime, with its vibrant array of blooms and blossoms. It is a must-visit tourist spot for those exploring Iran.

With roots tracing back to the Seljuk dynasty nearly four centuries ago, Eram Garden boasts a rich history as a classic example of a Persian garden. The garden also houses an ancient building from the Qajar period. During the subsequent years, a Qashqai tribe member acquired the land and constructed the initial mansion while also introducing diverse flower and tree varieties.

The garden was originally purchased by Nasir-ol-Molk in the Qajar era and was later completed by his son after his demise. The Eram Garden and its structure are preserved by Iran's tourism ministry as a significant historical landscape located in the botanical garden of Shiraz.

# Another section of 1,200-year-old mosque of Jiroft unearthed

TEHRAN – Director of the archaeological team working on the ancient city of Jiroft (Daqyanoos), Hamideh Choubak, said on Tuesday: "We have found another section in this area which shows the spread of a mosque."

It is around 1,000 square meters. We guess that it is more than this."

She told IRNA that the finding indicates that the mosque has become bigger due to the rise in population.

An altar has been found during the current excavations, she said, adding "We are continuing the excavations to find the remaining courtyard."

Jiroft ancient city, also known as Daqyanoos, dates back to Saffarid and Seljuk dynasties which pertain to the Islamic era.

It was a prosperous city 1,200 years ago. It was registered on the National Heritage List in 1966.

The ancient city of Jiroft includes a citadel, bathhouse, bazaar, mosque, pottery baking furnaces, and cemetery.

Only six excavation seasons have been conducted in the ancient city of Jiroft until 2017. A new excavation season began in the city's mosque in late March 2025.

Choubak added that the mosque of the ancient city of Jiroft is considered the oldest mosque identified in eastern Muslim countries.

It was built upon the order of Yaqub ibn Layth al-Saffar, the founder of the Saffarid Empire (861–1003) during 2nd Century AH.

She said the preliminary section of the mosque was built in the Saffarid era during the 3rd century AH. It had changed during Seljuk



*Jiroft ancient city, also known as Daqyanoos, dates back to Saffarid and Seljuk dynasties which pertain to the Islamic era.*

era. Brick and plaster decorations and an inscription were added to the mosque, she pointed out.

She added, "We continue excavations for a few days to find shabestan, courtyard and the wall of the mosque."

Choubak put the main core of the ancient city of Jiroft at 12 kilometers, adding "The villages stretch toward small castle and Maran castle. Therefore, it has been a big city with many villages."

She expressed the hope that the excavations would continue. In case of continuation of excavations, she said, the protection and renovation should be made.

If the new sections of the mosque which have been recovered are not renovated, they will go under the soil, leading to their destruction, she warned. So, the mosque will not have the conditions required for global registration, she added.

Kerman Cultural Heritage Department cooperates for protection and renovation of the excavation areas, she said.

**Jiroft, a symbol of identity, history, and civilization: tourism minister**

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, has emphasized the global significance of Jiroft's ancient civilization and called for greater efforts to showcase its historical and cultural value to the world.

During his visit to the region in early March 2025, Salehi-Amiri underscored the necessity of preserving and promoting Jiroft as a key center of early human civilization. Speaking at an administrative council meeting in Jiroft, Salehi-Amiri highlighted the deep historical roots of the region, noting that Jiroft is not just a city but a symbol of identity, history, and

civilization.

"If other nations possessed such a civilization, they would build their national economy around it. Unfortunately, we have yet to fully present Jiroft's civilizational value to the world," he remarked.

The minister also stressed the importance of the Konar Sandal archaeological site, describing it as more than just an excavation area but rather a cornerstone of Iran's cultural identity.

"Konar Sandal is not merely a collection of bricks and soil; it represents Iran's honor and historical prestige. This site is one of the pivotal locations in human history and requires comprehensive planning for its preservation and promotion," he stated.

**International conference on Jiroft civilization**

One of the key initiatives highlighted by Salehi-Amiri was the organization of the International Conference on Jiroft Civilization in 2025. He described the event as a crucial step toward scientific and global recognition of Jiroft's historical importance.

"Many archaeologists, both domestic and international, believe that this region could be the origin of human settlement.

If this hypothesis is proven, it will challenge existing theories that place Mesopotamia as the cradle of civilization, potentially sparking a revolution in the field of archaeology," Salehi-Amiri stated.

He called upon local and national authorities, scholars, and community leaders to collaborate in ensuring the success of this landmark event, which will be overseen by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and Tourism.

## Giant 'Sasanian-era' jar unearthed in southern Iran

TEHRAN – An ancient earthenware jar believed to date back to the Sasanian era has been unearthed during a routine excavation in a village in southern Iran, according to local heritage authorities.

The giant vessel was discovered on Sunday in the village of Jelowdar, a rural district in Arsanjan county of Fars province. The find occurred during an excavation for the installation of a power pole.

Mohammad Sabet-Eqlidi, the provincial tourism chief, told reporters that the jar likely served as a storage container for grains or food supplies. "No objects such as gold, coins, or metals were found inside," he said, adding that initial assessments suggest the artifact dates back to the Sasanian period (224–651 CE).

Following the discovery, cultural heritage protection units and archaeological experts were dispatched to the site. The jar has since been transferred to the World Heritage site of Persepolis for further examination.

"Research is now underway at the Persepolis complex to determine more details about the jar's age and historical significance," Sabet-Eqlidi stated. "A precise assessment of its age and

features will require additional studies by cultural heritage specialists."

A video of the find began circulating on social media Monday evening, prompting widespread public interest in the region's ancient past.

The results of the ongoing expert analysis are expected to be announced following the completion of thorough evaluations, the official underlined.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the history of Iran. Under the Sassanids, Persian architecture and the arts experienced a general renaissance. Architecture often took grandiose proportions, such as palaces at Ctesiphon, Firuzabad, and Sarvestan, which are amongst the highlights of the ensemble. Generally, a Sassanid archaeological landscape represents a highly efficient system of land use and strategic usage of natural topography in the creation of the earliest cultural centers of the Sassanid civilization. In that era, works from both the East and West were translated into Pahlavi, the language of the Sassanians.

In 2018, an ensemble of Sassanian historical cities in southern Iran, titled "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region," was named



*A giant jar recently unearthed in the Jelowdar rural district of Fars province, southern Iran, is transferred to Persepolis for examination and initial restoration, April 7, 2025.*

a UNESCO site. The ensemble comprises eight archaeological sites situated in three geographical parts of Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan. The World Heritage reflects the optimized usage of natural topography and bears witness to the influence of Achaemenid and Parthian cultural traditions and Roman art, which later had a significant impact on the architecture and artistic styles of the Islamic era.

## Mashhad to host its 18th International Tourism and Handicrafts Fair

for Production", CHTN reported.

In his annual message marking the start of the new Iranian year (1404 in the Persian calendar), the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, named the year "Investments for Production."

Mousavi continued that the fair would be held during May 14-17. He explained that countries from the Khorasan civilization including Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan have been invited to the four-day event.

In addition, a number of exhibitors from several other Iranian provinces as well as representatives of several foreign countries will also take part at the fair, he said.

Mashhad, the provincial capital, is Iran's holiest and second-largest city. Its raison d'être and main sight is the striking massive shrine complex of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

In August 2020, the spiritual tradition of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) was registered on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage,

Tourism, and Handicrafts.

Looking to further enhance its appeal, the province has focused on strengthening ties with neighboring countries. According to the official, economic delegations from the province have visited Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to bolster collaborations and improve accessibility for tourists. Following these efforts, direct flights from Mashhad to major cities in Pakistan have increased from one to two per week, with plans to expand to three flights. Pakistan, with its 50 million Shia Muslims, sees a significant number of travelers eager to visit the shrine of Imam Reza (A.S.) in Mashhad.

Additionally, arrangements have been made to establish direct flights between Mashhad and the Uzbek cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, along with discounts of 30–50% on travel services offered by agencies and hotels for Uzbek tourists. In Tajikistan, the lifting of visa requirements, achieved through presidential negotiations, and the operation of direct flights between Mashhad and Dushanbe have increased tourist inflows, particularly during the Nowruz festivities.

## Patterns of Persian, European and Chinese gardens discussed in Tehran



*A view of Eram Garden in Shiraz, Fars Province, as a model of Persian Garden*

TEHRAN – A gathering themed "From Spring to Persian Garden" was held at the Niavaran Historical-Cultural Complex on Monday, participated by Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti, a senior cultural heritage expert.

According to CHTN, Beheshti called concentration on concept of Iranian garden as a source of pleasure.

He said out of various gardens across the world, Persian garden is the oldest type which has been less discussed.

Based on illustrations, Persian garden has been geometrically established in form of a cross, he added. There is a pavilion at its crossroad or one end of it, he said, adding these axes had flowing water and trees.

Beheshti said one of the distinctions of Persian garden is the way the plant and nature is looked.

He explained that there is a line of trees in European-style garden. "We are witness to a green geometrical labyrinth in European gardens. In fact, Europeans tame the plants and then put them in a garden. These gardens show the dominance of human on nature."

Beheshti continued that the aspect is different



# Iranian, Turkmen officials discuss Caspian Sea issues

TEHRAN – Deputy Foreign Minister for the Caspian Sea affairs, Alireza Jahangiri, and the special representative of Turkmenistan on Caspian Sea issues, Murad Atajanov, have met in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, to discuss the issues on the Caspian Sea.

The meeting focused on the determination of the maritime borderline, the delimitation of fishing zones, the drawing of the baseline, the delimitation of the seabed and subsoil of the Caspian Sea, and related documents, Mehr news agency reported.

The officials also discussed environmental challenges and decreasing water levels in the Caspian Sea.

**Pezeshkian: Iran committed to expanding ties with Turkmenistan**

During a meeting on February 12 with Turkmenistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Meredov, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian reaffirmed Iran's commitment to fostering strong ties with its neighbors, emphasizing the importance of good neighborly relations as a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy.

He highlighted Iran's dedication to expanding its partnerships with regional countries, particularly with Turkmenistan, a long-standing ally with deep cultural and historical connections



to Iran.

A key focus of the discussions was the upcoming summit of Caspian Sea littoral states, set to take place in Tehran. Pezeshkian emphasized Iran's commitment to fostering regional stability and cooperation.

"Iran seeks to expand its relations with Caspian Sea states based on peace, friendship, and good neighborliness.

This approach will be central to our discussions at the upcoming summit, where we will work toward practical solutions for strengthening regional partnerships," he stated.

Foreign Minister Meredov, while delivering warm greetings from Turkmenistan's leadership, praised the progress made in Iranian-Turkmen relations and

called for further expansion of economic ties. He pointed to existing agreements and joint projects between Iranian and Turkmen companies, particularly in transportation and energy, as key areas for growth.

"Relations between our two nations hold great importance for the government of Turkmenistan," he stated. "We are eager to strengthen our cooperation in all fields."

The minister invited President Pezeshkian to participate in the upcoming International Peace and Trust Conference in Turkmenistan.

In return, he announced that Turkmenistan would send a high-ranking delegation to attend the Caspian Sea summit in Tehran.

In August 2024, the Iranian ambassador to Turkmenistan participated in the scientific-practical international conference titled 'Caspian Sea – Cooperation for Sustainable Development' which was held in the national tourism zone of Awaza, Turkmenistan on August 12, marking the Caspian Sea Day.

A wide range of issues on boosting cooperation among littoral countries, and establishing sustainable development were reviewed and discussed by participants.

Delivering a speech at the conference, Ali-Mojtaba Rouzbahani, stated that the Caspian Sea is a common heritage as well as a point of connection for the littoral states. It is a source of blessings for more than 270 million people.

The Caspian Sea region is a strategic region connecting the North-South and East-West corridors.

It is the duty of the coastal regions to protect the Caspian for future generations.

Adhering to agreed environmental standards and considering the potential cross-border environmental impacts should be given more attention when implementing national and trans-regional plans, he stressed.

## Iran ranks second among Islamic nations in SCImago 2024

From page 1 ► Iran is planning to elevate the country's ranking for scientific productions from currently 17 to 12 by 2027.

Due to sanctions, economic restrictions, and the limitations on publishing papers by Iranian scholars, particularly during the last three years, Iran's ranking in scientific productions has lowered from 15 to 17, Shahin Akhoundzadeh, an official with the health ministry, has said.

The country's advancement in science production requires compensating for the regression in research and technology through providing funds, facilitating research, and promoting meritocracy which will reduce young elites' migration, as well, the health ministry's website quoted Akhoundzadeh as saying.

**SIR 2025 includes 195 Iranian institutions**

SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2025 has placed 195 Iranian universities among the top institutions in the world compared to 197 universities in 2024.

The SIR is a classification of academic and research-related institutions ranked by a composite indicator that combines three different sets of indicators based on research performance, innovation outputs, and societal impact measured by their web visibility.

The research ranking refers to the volume, impact, and quality of the institution's research output. The innovation ranking is calculated on the number of patent applications of the institution and the citations that its research output receives from patents.

The societal ranking is based on the number of pages on the institution's website and the number of backlinks and mentions from social networks.

In the latest ranking, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, University of Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran University of Medical Sciences are the top five institutions.

Compared to all sectors (percentiles), Tehran University of Medical Sciences ranks first in West Asia, and 6th in the world. The university's best ranking is in Dentistry, ranking first in West Asia, and 37th in the world, respectively.

University of Tehran is placed first in the country, second in West Asia, and 11th in the world. The university's best ranking is in Business, Management, and Accounting, ranking first in West Asia, and 53rd globally.

Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services ranks second in Iran, fourth in West Asia, and 17th in the world. The university's best ranking is in Dentistry, ranking fifth in West Asia, and 68th globally.

Tabriz University of Medical Sciences ranked second nationwide. It ranked fifth in West Asia, and 23rd in the world. The university's best ranking is in Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceuticals, ranking fifth in West Asia, and 53rd globally.

Iran University of Medical Sciences ranks



third in the country. It ranks 6th in West Asia, and 24th globally. The university's best ranking is in Obstetrics and Gynecology, ranking eighth in West Asia, and 202nd in the world.

**Recent rankings**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Less than normal, normal rainfall forecast for next six weeks



TEHRAN – According to Metrological Organization, average precipitation is projected to be less than normal from April 8 to 20, and normal from April 21 to May 18.

In the first week (from April 8 to 13), the average rainfall will be less than normal. Accumulated precipitations will be 20 to 70 mm in the middle Zagros and western part of the northwest of the country, ISNA reported.

The temperature will get 1-3°C above normal in some parts of the northwest, west, and the Caspian Sea and Oman coasts.

In the eastern half of the country, it will get 6-10°C, and in other areas 3-6°C above normal.

Unprecedented high temperature could be recorded in some areas of the eastern half.

In the second week (April 14 to 31), rainfall is also projected to be less than normal. In the coastal provinces of the Caspian Sea, and some parts of the northeast, it tends to be normal.

Accumulated precipitations from central Alborz to northwest is expected to be 20 to 50 mm.

Within this week, the temperature is forecast to be 3-6°C above normal in southeast, and 3°C less than normal in other areas. The highest drop is expected to occur in Caspian coast, and the northwest of the country.

Average rainfall in the third week (April 21 to 27) will be normal and less than normal. The average temperature in Caspian coast, east and southeast of the country will get 1-3°C and in other parts 1-6°C above normal.

Average precipitations from fourth to sixth weeks are projected to be less than normal, and the air temperature will get more balanced, and the air temperature anomaly is estimated to be from +1°C to +3°C.

According to the Metrological Organization, 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 per-

cent decrease from the long-term average of 20.2 mm.

**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

## Existing vaccines are effective against mutated coronavirus

The COVID-19 vaccines, which have been so far produced in the world are also effective on the mutated virus, so people who receive the vaccines will be protected against the new virus strain, Massoud Mardani, a member of the National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control, has said.

What raised concerns about the newly-produced vaccine was the ineffectiveness against the mutated virus, which fortunately studies show, the mutation of the virus and the chromosomal alteration are not enough to change its general nature, he explained. According to Mardani, it is possible to detect the new coronavirus in Iran.

## واکسن کرونا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند

مسعود مردانی عضو ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا می گوید واکسن تولید و تایید شده در دنیا بر روی ویروس جهش یافته هم اثر می کند و افرادی که واکسن تایید شده را بزنند علیه این ویروس هم مصونیت پیدا می کنند. مردانی روز سه شنبه در گفت وگو با خبرنگار ایرنا افزود: آنچه نگران آن هستیم این است که واکسن تولید شده برای کووید ۱۹ در دنیا نسبت به ویروس جهش یافته بی اثر باشد که خوشبختانه بررسی ها نشان می دهد، جهش ویروس و تغییر کرموزمومی ویروس به قدری نیست که ماهیت کلی آن تغییر کند. به گفته او، امکان تشخیص ویروس کرونا جهش یافته در ایران وجود دارد.



## Blooming tulips brighten up Karaj

More than 200,000 tulips at Chamran Park in the city of Karaj have come into bloom, welcoming people to the eleventh edition of a festival that opened to the public on Friday, April 4, and will run until April 11. Tulip bulbs of around 20 species have been planted in a flower garden with the display of a flower carpet measuring 2,700 square meters.





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APRIL 9, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Patience is of two kinds: patience over what pains you, and patience against what you covet.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:06 Evening: 18:50 Dawn: 4:13 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:40 (tomorrow)

## Children's art on display at IRSPRC 30th anniversary exhibition

TEHRAN- In commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Iran's Society for Protecting the Rights of the Children (IR-SPRC), an exhibition featuring the works of children supported by the organization will be inaugurated on Thursday at the Autumn Gallery of the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran.

The exhibition titled "This Narrative Comes to 30 in the Color of Visualization" will present 30 artworks created by children and adolescents from children's shelters and art workshops affiliated with the organization, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

The artworks, produced using gouache technique, measure 50 by 70 centimeters, the report added.

Leila Kabi, one of the founders of children's painting education based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Iran, will serve as the artistic director of the exhibition, while Shaqayeq Parvin will organize this cultural and artistic event.

With a legacy of 30 years, Iran's Society for Protecting the Rights of the Children stands as one of the most established civil organizations in the realm of child welfare, dedicated to defending children's rights and promoting the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The exhibition will remain accessible to visitors until April 18.

The Iran Society for Protecting the Rights of Children was established in 1994 and has played a pivotal role in advocating for the rights and welfare of children in the country. With a focus on promoting the principles outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the organization has worked tirelessly to safeguard children's rights across various spheres, including education, health, and protection from exploita-



tion and abuse.

The CRC, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, outlines specific rights that all children should enjoy, including the right to education, the right to play, and the right to access health care.

It emphasizes the importance of protecting children from violence, neglect, and discrimination, while also recognizing their need for participation and a voice in matters that affect their lives.

In Iran, IRSPRC seeks to close the gap between these international standards and local practices, actively promoting awareness and understanding of children's rights among parents, educators, and policymakers.

Through various initiatives, including educational campaigns, workshops, and community outreach, the organization aims to foster an environment where children's rights are respected and upheld.

Over its three-decade existence, the Iran Society for Protecting the Rights of Children has not only focused on advocacy but has also supported vulnerable children through a variety of programs, including shelters and artistic initiatives.

These programs encourage self-expression and creativity, providing children with a safe space to explore their talents and emotions.

By aligning its efforts with the principles outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, IRSPRC continues to strive for a brighter future where all children in Iran can thrive, realize their full potential, and enjoy the rights that are inherent to every child.

Through education, empowerment, and community engagement, IRSPRC remains committed to fostering a society where children are heard, valued, and protected.

## Cartoon of Day



Children of Yemen

Cartoonist: Kamal Sharaf from Yemen

# Three Iranian films attending 52nd Athens International Film and Video Festival

TEHRAN-Three films from Iran are present at the 52nd Athens International Film and Video Festival (AIFVF), which is underway in Athens, Ohio, the United States.

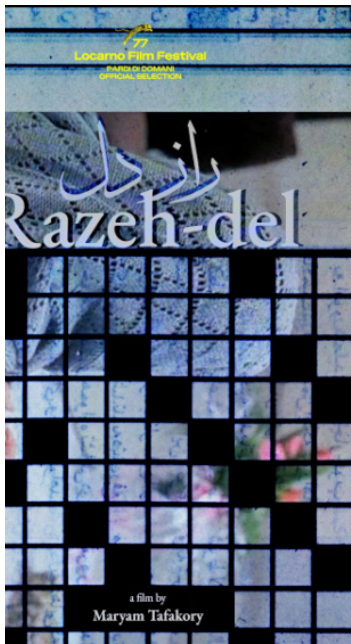
The animation "In the Shadow of the Cypress" directed by Hossein Molyayemi and Shirin Sohani, the narrative film "Sheep" by Hadi Babaeifar, and the experimental film "Razeh Del" by Maryam Tafakory are the three Iranian works participating in the event, IRNA reported.

"In the Shadow of the Cypress" won the 2025 Oscar for Best Animated Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards last month.

The animation depicts a former captain, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, who lives with his daughter in a humble house located by the sea. Together, they live an isolated life and have to confront the challenges of a harsh life.

One morning, their lives change forever when an unforeseen event occurs. Whether this event proves to be a newfound source of hope or an additional burden remains to be seen.

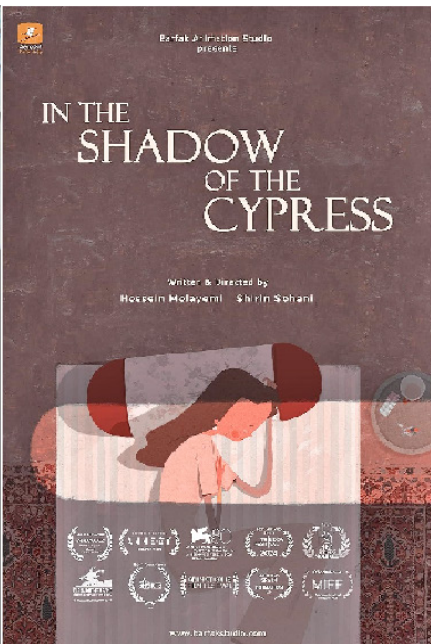
"Sheep" shows a little girl who lives with her mother in Tehran. Discovering that the sheep in her



neighbors' backyard are being sacrificed in a traditional ritual, she decides to save as many sheep as she can.

"Razeh Del" is a joint production of Iran, Italy, and the UK. It is about two girls who sent a letter to the first-ever women's newspaper in Iran titled "Zan" in 1998. While they waited to get published, they considered making an impossible film.

Founded in 1973, the AIFVF has been presenting the best in international film in Athens, Ohio,



for 52 years. It is known globally as a festival that supports cinema from underground and marginalized populations.

It is a champion of justice and provides a voice for underrepresented artists and viewpoints on a global level.

For over five decades, the AIFVF has embraced experimental, animated, narrative and documentary, short-form and feature length films from every corner of the globe, offering filmmakers a stellar platform for



public exposure and an environment that values artistry above marquee names and industry relationships.

The festival is recognized by the Academy® of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as a qualifying festival in the short narrative and short animation categories.

Launched on April 7, this year's edition of the festival will conclude on April 13, awarding the winners of various sections.

## Roudaki Hall to host "Baroque Night"

Majid Hatami, will present their first performance of the new year titled "Baroque Night" on April 11 at Roudaki Hall in Tehran.

The concert will feature pieces by the German composer and musician Johann Sebastian Bach, Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi, English composer of Baroque music Henry Purcell, German-British Baroque composer George Frideric Handel, and Italian priest and composer Gregorio Allegri, Honaronline reported.

Majid Hatami will also serve as the violin and vocal soloist in the performance. He will be joined by Ahmad Razavi (piano soloist), Mahyar Hosseini (concertmaster), and violin soloists Farid Fani, Amin Sanaei, and Parnian Boujmehrani.

The Damavand Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir was founded in 2018 and has since held numerous performances across various genres. Among their other notable activities is the collaboration of the choir with the Iranian National Music Orchestra.

## Resistance Journalism course to be held in Tehran

TEHRAN- A course on Resistance Journalism will be held in Tehran in May to explore the role of colonialism in altering the borders of Western Asia following

World War I.

The program aims to enhance participants' analytical skills regarding regional developments, understand the colonial influenc-

es on border changes in Western Asia, delve into the strategic depth of the Zionist regime and its challenges, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Organized by the Media Headquarters of the Revolution Front, the course will cover the fundamentals and principles of media activism in regional conflict.

## "Barcelona calling Palestine": Palestinian artists beyond the tragedy they are going through

When the National Theatre of Catalonia (TNC) decided that it would dedicate a cycle of performing arts to Palestine, the war with Israel in October 2023 had not yet broken out.

With the start of the offensive in Gaza, TNC director Carme Portaceli asked the Ministry of Culture what they were going to do.

"They told us to go ahead with it anyway, that they would support us," says Portaceli, and so they did.

The series "Barcelona calling Palestine" will bring ten artistic offerings to the TNC from April 9 to 13, with the aim of "breaking clichés about the Arab world" and "turning art into a form of resistance," says Portaceli.

This is the second edition of the series, which aims to unite several Mediterranean cities through the performing arts and which in 2024 focused on artists from Beirut.

"The spirit of the program is to give the broadest possible view of contemporary Palestinian creation," explains the series' advisor and coordinator, Anne Goyalard.

The artists visiting Barcelona come from cities such as Haifa, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, and most grew up in refugee camps or in exile.

"Their performances are marked by an urgency to speak about the Palestinian people, their history, and their struggles,"

notes Goyalard.

Although the war and its consequences resonate in the series' artistic offerings, they also go beyond.

"Palestinians can't be reduced to the plight they go through.

We want to showcase the community's sense of humor and love of partying. They're the best DJs in the world," Goyalard emphasizes.

**Lluís Marco plays a famous Palestinian poet**

One of the formal characteristics of Palestinian theater is that the plays are often "monodramas" starring a single performer.

## The National Theatre of Catalonia dedicates a performing arts cycle to Palestine in solidarity with its oppressed people.

This is explained, according to Goyalard, "by the lack of resources and the need to travel very easily from one Palestinian territory to another, but also by the very strong relationship between theater in the Arab world and storytelling and poetry."

The gazelle of Akka, by Raeda Taha, is one of these proposals.



Taha was Yasser Arafat's press secretary when she was 22, and when she turned 40, she decided to radically change jobs and dedicate herself to theater.

In this piece, she tells the life of the Palestinian writer and political activist Ghassan Kanafani.

Another monologue in the series is "Taha", by Amer Hlehel, which tells the story of the Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali and which will be performed on stage by Lluís Marco.

One of the highlights of the series is "Yes Daddy" by Bashar Murkus and Khulood Basel.

According to Goyalard, it's "a magnificent piece about old age, manipulation, and the relationship between parents and children."

After its run in Barcelona, it will travel to the Avignon Festival.

The TNC will also host two

dance and acrobatic performances: "Losing it," by Samaa Wakim and Samar Haddad King, and "Awalem," by Ashtar Muallem, Clément Dazin, and Émile Saba.

There will also be a space for music, with Kamilya Jubran—"a world reference in Arab and Palestinian song"—and Sarah Murcia.

The series is completed with a DJ session by Radio Alhara and Wonder Cabinet and two installations.

The land's heart is greater than its map, Barcelona-based Palestinian actor Ramzi Maqdisi will lead a guided tour of a space that seeks to build bridges between Catalonia and Palestine.

And in "Dear Laila," the artist Basel Zarea will build a space that attempts to answer the questions his young daughter asked him about family history.