

# Ahead of Oman Talks, Pezeshkian Says Iran Will Not Cede Its Achievements



President Masoud Pezeshkian tours an exhibition showcasing achievements in Iran's nuclear industry, accompanied by Mohammad Eslami, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, on April 9, 2025.

## Iranian FM convenes with Algerian intellectuals, calls for Islamic solidarity on Palestine

TEHRAN – During a two-day visit to Algeria, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reinforced Tehran's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and addressing critical international issues, including Palestine's liberation and indirect negotiations on Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

The visit, marked by high-level diplomatic consultations, underscored Algeria and Iran's historical alignment on anti-colonial struggles and mutual support in global forums.

In a Tuesday meeting with Algerian intellectuals, cultural figures, and media representatives, Araghchi articulated the principles of Iran's foreign policy stances.

He condemned the "80-year occupation of Palestine" and the Israeli regime's "colonial project to erase the Palestinian nation," which has intensified over the past 17 months through "unprecedented genocide in Gaza and the West Bank." ▶ Page 2

## Iran calls Tehran-Moscow-Beijing nuclear talks 'productive'

TEHRAN —Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs has announced that the senior experts from Iran, Russia, and China convened in Moscow on Tuesday for a productive round of technical and expert-level discussions focused on the future of nuclear negotiations, sanctions relief, and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231.

Kazem Gharibabadi made the remarks via his official X account, noting that the session followed recent agreements made between deputy foreign ministers during talks in Beijing.

According to Gharibabadi, the three sides exchanged views and proposals concerning the path forward, reaffirming their commitment to maintaining close trilateral coordination on the matter.

"Iran remains firmly committed to diplomacy and will continue consultations with all relevant parties," he emphasized. ▶ Page 2

## Iran, Azerbaijan sign bilingual MOU at 16th joint economic committee meeting

TEHRAN – Iran and Azerbaijan signed Persian and Azeri versions of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Tuesday during the 16th Joint Economic Committee meeting, co-chaired by Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister.

According to the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the meeting between Iranian Minister Farzaneh Sadegh and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev focused on reviewing bilateral projects and cooperation in economic, transport, trade, energy, and banking sectors.

The two sides also finalized agreements and action plans to be highlighted during the upcoming visit of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Azerbaijan.

The signed Persian and Azeri texts of the memorandum were appended to the English version of the MOU, which had been previously signed in Tehran in February 2025.

As part of her official visit, Minister Sadegh is also scheduled to inspect joint transport infrastructure projects between the two countries. ▶ Page 4

## Geagea is standing against Aoun and Salam

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Despite having four ministers in the Lebanese cabinet, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea is waging a "battle" against President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam to secure major gains ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections and to avoid being treated as a non-partisan party in any domestic or regional settlement.

We recall that Geagea believed he deserved the post of president not only because of his far-right Christian popular base but also because he had complied with the Western-Arab guardianship over Lebanon.

Geagea preferred someone as president who shared his anti-Hezbollah vision, such as Fouad Makhzoumi or Ashraf Rifi to form the government.

Obviously, Geagea succeeded in alienating his Christian opponents, particularly the Free Patriotic and the Marada movements, as he has maintained key portfolios, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, believing this would help him finally undermine the Shiite communities, Hezbollah, and Amal.

## Pricey war, minimal gains in Yemen

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni forces have launched new, advanced military operations as American media shifts focus to the mounting costs of America's bombing campaign.

American outlets say President Donald Trump's military campaign against Yemen has cost nearly \$1 billion in less than three weeks.

According to sources cited by CNN, the bombing campaign that began on March 15 and killed scores of civilians, has had limited success in weakening the capabilities of the Yemeni Armed Forces.

Officials from the Pentagon's Joint Staff, U.S. Central Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and the State Department acknowledged to Congress that Yemeni forces have continued to fortify bunkers and maintain underground weapons stockpiles.

U.S. media reports indicate that these tactics resemble those used during the year-long strikes carried out under the Biden administration.

## Musk vs. Navarro: Economic turmoil and political dispute

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – By April 9, the United States faced significant political and economic turbulence due to a heated dispute between Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Peter Navarro, a senior trade adviser to President Donald Trump. The conflict, rooted in Trump's assertive tariff policies, revealed internal discord within the administration, raised concerns about its economic approach, and ignited extensive discussions about the potential effects on both domestic and international economies.

The feud between Musk and Navarro was sparked by Trump's announcement of sweeping tariffs on imports from over 180 countries, including rates as high as 104% on Chinese goods and 20% on European Union products. Navarro, a staunch advocate for these tariffs, argued they would revitalize U.S. manufacturing and reduce trade deficits. Musk, a proponent of free trade, strongly opposed the policies, leading to a public clash.

On April 7, Navarro dismissed Musk's calls for a "zero-tariff" policy on CNBC, labeling Tesla as a "car assembler" reliant on imported parts.

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## "With Al-Aqsa Storm: From Beginning to Final Victory" photo exhibition opens in Tehran

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- The photo exhibition titled "With Al-Aqsa Storm: From Beginning to Final Victory" was officially opened in Gallery No. 1 of the Iran Photographers House in Tehran on Tuesday.

The exhibition features a collection of images captured by diverse media photographers who have been covering events in occupied Palestine since the onset of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

Organized by the Iran Photographers House, affiliated with the Art Bureau, the exhibition has been launched in honor of Revolutionary Art Week, which commenced on Wednesday. ▶ Page 8



## Tehran protest condemns Israel's 'unprecedented bloodbath' in Gaza, decries global silence

TEHRAN – Thousands gathered in Tehran's Palestine Square on Wednesday to protest the Israeli regime's ongoing atrocities in Gaza, condemning its "unprecedented genocide" and repeated ceasefire violations.

The rally highlighted Tel Aviv's "crimes against humanity," including the killing of civilians, attacks on UN-monitored clinics, and destruction of critical infrastructure like Gaza's desalination plants.

"The Zionist regime has turned Gaza into a graveyard for women and children," read a statement from protesters, citing Rafah's razed heritage and starvation.

They condemned global inaction: "Which criminal caused such bloodshed in 10 days?" Highlighting Iran's solidarity, they noted al-Quds Day rallies as proof, urging the world to "awaken to this moral catastrophe."

## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Trump's control of Netanyahu

In a note, Ettelaat discussed Trump's meeting with Netanyahu at the White House on the Iran issue and wrote: In his meeting with Netanyahu at the White House about action against Iran, Trump said, "I think everyone agrees that reaching an agreement is better than doing the obvious option." These statements are contrary to Netanyahu's demand for a military attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Trump is, to some extent, trying to solve the problem he has created. Trump's unexpected announcement about what he called a "meeting at the top level" exploded the Iranian media atmosphere. According to political analyst Mehdi Rahmati, Trump's statements about the negotiations were a clear and strong message to both Israel and Iran. He has controlled Israel on the issue of military action and sent a positive message to Iran that he prefers diplomacy and wants to resolve problems. Nuclear experts say it is entirely possible that the maximum concessions that Iran can give will not even come close to the main demand of Trump's national security adviser, Michael Waltz, which is a full dismantling of the Islamic Republic's nuclear infrastructure.

### Sobh-e-No: Iran playing in new global blocs

Ata Bahrami, an international economics expert, discussed the global markets' reaction to Trump's financial policies in an interview with Sobh-e-No. He said: Iran now has close relations with China and may increase its interaction with countries like Brazil. Arab countries have turned towards the United States, and this could be dangerous for Iran. Of course, it is still possible to cooperate with countries like South Africa or Mexico. In these circumstances, security must be redefined in the form of economic and political diplomacy, and real friends and enemies must be recognized in the short and medium term. In the case of Europe, we are also witnessing serious political and economic gaps between the United States and European states, especially countries like Sweden. Europe is embroiled in unnecessary tensions with Russia and, instead of reinforcing unity, it has entered into fruitless conflicts. Now, Europe is lagging behind in certain technologies. Therefore, the European Union's weight in the world has decreased significantly, and if we compare its share with China, it may be only half of China's, and this is a good opportunity for Iran to make the most of it.

## Army accelerates smart drone base network

TEHRAN — In an address at the 20th National Conference of Major Army (Artesh) Ground Force Commanders, Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari outlined ambitious plans to expand Iran's network of drone bases, emphasizing their critical role in countering "cross-border threats" and securing the nation's frontiers.

The event, held at Army Ground Forces headquarters on Wednesday, brought together senior military leaders to review defense strategies and advancements in Iran's domestically developed drone technologies.

"Drones are among the most unique and impactful weapons in future potential battles," General Heydari stated, emphasizing Iran's strides in domestic UAV production.

"The Army Ground Forces have successfully developed various drone systems and micro-aircraft, now integral to the Armed Forces' structure under the Ministry of Defense."

The commander also noted that "extensive drone bases" have been established and upgraded nationwide, particularly along border regions.

These facilities, equipped with cutting-edge technology, support drones capable of "precisely neutralizing threats to Iran's sovereignty."

The commander linked this expansion to the ongoing Eastern Border Blockade Project, a high-priority initiative to secure Iran's eastern frontiers.

To date, 70 kilometers of the smart border system—a network of sensors, surveillance drones, and automated response units—have been completed.

Heidari described the project as "a testament

### Etemad: Iran not sending message of war

In an interview with Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, a political expert and former parliamentarian, Etemad discussed the latest developments in negotiations with the United States. Falahatpisheh said: Experience has proven that whenever Iran says no to diplomacy and distances itself from it, a gap is created that is filled by rioters like Netanyahu. When Netanyahu went to Washington, the news was released inside the country that Iran had responded to Trump's letter with a positive view by agreeing to the possibility of negotiations. Today, the world knows that the message coming from Iran is not a message of war, battle, or bloodshed. Netanyahu's visit to the United States is intended to strengthen the warmongering efforts, and the Iranian government must use public diplomacy to defeat Netanyahu's plans. In response to Trump's letter, Iran has accepted the idea of negotiations and has requested a diplomatic action plan. Therefore, today the ball is in Trump and America's court.

### Donya-e-Eqtasad: Muscat opportunity

Indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States will be held on Saturday in Oman. Regardless of the form of the negotiations, which seem to be held indirectly at Iran's insistence with the mediation of Badr Al-Busaidi, Foreign Minister of the Sultanate of Oman, it is the content of the talks that will determine the next stage. Therefore, on Saturday, April 12, the start of the negotiation process will result in a specific agreement. In other words, the indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington in Muscat can be considered a turning point and an entry into the corridor of tangible negotiations, considering Trump's approach. Given Iran's emphasis on indirect negotiations with the U.S. and the simultaneous start of talks with other parties to the JCPOA, it seems that Tehran intends to connect the other parties to the JCPOA to the negotiation process with the U.S. and re-establish the basis for an updated JCPOA model agreement with the involvement of all actors. The IAEA Director General's visit to Tehran in the coming days could also initiate technical negotiations with this institution and bring it to a tangible conclusion.



*Domestically developed Arash-2 drone housed in an advanced underground missile base in Iran*

to the Army's engineering prowess," combining "advanced technology, security responsiveness, and sustainable stability."

He added that ten specialized brigades are currently deployed to accelerate its completion.

Iran's drone program is regarded as a cornerstone of its asymmetric defense strategy, reflecting years of innovation amid enduring challenges.

Developed through extensive indigenous R&D, these systems bolster national security through precision, real-time intelligence, and advanced network-centric operations.

The Army Ground Forces lead with platforms like the Mohajer-6 and Ababil-3, which integrate AI-driven navigation and extended-range capabilities.

Renowned for long-range precision and swarm intelligence, advanced models such as the Arash-2, Gaza, Shahed-136, Ababil-5, and Karrar have attracted international customers and strategic partners.

# Iran calls Tehran-Moscow-Beijing nuclear talks 'productive'

From page 1 ► The meeting followed a March 14 session in Beijing, during which the three nations reportedly agreed to end unilateral sanctions, support peaceful nuclear development, and favor dialogue over intervention.

This consensus also reaffirmed Tehran's right to pursue peaceful nuclear energy as recognized under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

This meeting comes amid ongoing tensions stemming from the 2018 U.S. withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Under the deal, Iran had agreed to limit its nuclear activities, allow for increased inspections, and reduce sanctions. While Iran fully adhered to its commitments, the U.S. unilaterally pulled out of the



agreement, and European nations failed to uphold their part of the deal, prompting Iran to scale back its own commitments in response.

Despite stalled JCPOA revival talks due to Western hesitation and excessive demands, Iran has continued diplomatic efforts, including recent discussions with the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and negotiations with the European Troika in Geneva, signaling Tehran's preference for diplomacy.

The issue of the "snapback" sanctions mechanism, which allows for the reinstatement of pre-JCPOA sanctions, has also been a source of contention. During his first-term of

presidency, Donald Trump pushed European allies to activate snapback sanctions.

Further complicating matters, on April 6, Trump threatened Iran with military action and secondary tariffs if Tehran did not come to an agreement with Washington over its nuclear program. However, on April 7, Trump made a surprise announcement stating that his administration would initiate talks with Iran.

In response, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi confirmed that indirect negotiations between Iran and the U.S. would take place in Oman on April 12. U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff will represent Washington, while Araghchi will represent Iran.

## Iranian FM convenes with Algerian intellectuals, calls for Islamic solidarity on Palestine



From page 1 ► "The legal and moral duty of all nations is to support the legitimate resistance of Palestine and Lebanon against Zionist expansionism," Araghchi declared, stressing that decades of Israeli aggression prove "resistance remains the only path to curb this regime's warmongering."

The top diplomat further lambasted the U.S. and Western powers for their "complicity in the Gaza genocide" through military, financial, and political backing of Tel Aviv, urging Islamic nations to unite against such transgressions.

Participants at the forum echoed Araghchi's urgency, demanding "decisive action" from the Islamic world and international community to halt Israel's "war crimes" and hold its leaders accountable. One Algerian media activist emphasized, "Silence on Palestine is complicity," reflecting growing regional frustration over perceived Western indifference.

### Nuclear diplomacy: a 'test' for U.S. credibility

Turning to Iran's nuclear program, Araghchi reiterated Tehran's adherence to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), emphasizing Iran's

"responsible approach" to transparency prior to the U.S.'s "illegal withdrawal" from the deal.

While acknowledging Tehran's readiness for indirect negotiations via Oman, he cautioned that upcoming Muscat talks represent a "new diplomatic opportunity—and a test of America's seriousness," given its history of "bad faith and unilateralism."

When questioned about the agenda for potential U.S.-Iran talks, Araghchi clarified, "Discussions will focus solely on Iran's peaceful nuclear program and the lifting of unjust sanctions."

Araghchi's visit, part of a broader effort to deepen Iran-Algeria collaboration, included meetings with senior Algerian officials to advance economic, cultural, and political ties.

Both nations share a history of advocating for Global South solidarity, with Algeria recently endorsing multilateral initiatives to counter Western hegemony in international bodies.

The Iranian foreign minister concluded his visit on Wednesday after visiting the Grand Mosque of Algeria in the country's capital.

## The B-2's big swing falls short in Yemen—and Tehran's taking notes

By Ehsan Etesam

SANAA – By all accounts, the United States unleashed its most formidable weapons. The B-2 Spirit bombers, those trillion-dollar shadows of American might, roared over Yemen in late March 2025, dropping bunker-busting bombs on Ansarallah strongholds with the drama of a Hollywood blockbuster.

The mission? Smash their underground lairs, choke their missile supply, and send a warning across the Red Sea to Tehran: cross us, and this is what you get. But as the dust settles over Sanaa's rugged terrain on April 9, 2025, the U.S. has a problem: its shiniest toys couldn't seal the deal. And Iran, ever watchful, is jotting down lessons on how to turn America's military bravado into a fading whisper.

Rewind to mid-March. Operation Rough Rider saw six B-2s—nearly a third of the fleet—stage out of Diego Garcia, their engines humming with promises of precision and power. The targets? Ansarallah missile complexes, burrowed deep into Yemen's unforgiving mountains, a persistent threat to Red Sea shippings destined to dock in Occupied Palestine. The Pentagon hailed the strikes as a triumph: 65 dead, key sites hit, a general command HQ in Sanaa levelled. Yet, Ansarallah persists—downing a third U.S. MQ-9 Reaper by April 6—and continues to defy the superpower that vowed to crush them.

The evidence stings. Satellite images from late March show collapsed tunnel entrances, yes, but Ansarallah didn't flinch—they carved new ones. Those GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators, built to slice through earth like a hot blade cutting butter, didn't erase the Yemenis' subterranean caches. The White House boasts of over 200 strikes, yet Red Sea cargo traffic languishes at 70% below late 2023 levels. The U.S. and its allies brand Ansarallah as "rebels" for their disruption of trade flows to Israel, a stand taken in solidarity with the Palestinian people. But labels aside, the Yemenis remain unbowed, their ties with allies unbroken, their resolve a glaring sign that America's best shot misfired.

### The impact of US airstrikes on Yemen remains limited, while they may have given info to Iran on the vulnerabilities of B-2 bombers

Shift to Tehran, where the leadership is likely smirking over their chai. The takeaway is stark: the U.S. military threat, for all its high-tech swagger, isn't the unstoppable force it claims to be. If Ansarallah—outmatched in resources but not in spirit—can endure the B-2 onslaught, what's to

stop Iran from brushing off America's warnings? Iran's own underground complexes, from Natanz to Fordow, outstrip Yemen's in depth and design. If the U.S. can't crack Ansarallah's tunnels, Tehran's strategists must figure they can neutralize the danger with fortified bunkers, smarter defenses, and a page from Yemen's playbook.

This isn't just Yemen's story—it's a glimpse of the Persian Gulf's next chapter. The B-2 strikes aimed to deter Iran through its Yemeni allies, a show of muscle to keep Tehran in line. Instead, they've gifted Iran evidence that American airpower, even at its zenith, can be thwarted by ingenuity and terrain. Ansarallah's endurance—200 strikes weathered, U.S. warships still harassed—hints Iran could fare even better, bolstered by its ballistic missiles and regional alliances. The U.S. faces a hard truth: its military menace might ring hollow when push comes to shove.

Here we are, the Red Sea still a battleground, Ansarallah still standing tall. The B-2s may have retreated, but their legacy lingers—a tale of ambition outpacing results. For Washington, it's a bitter draught: even its arsenal's crown jewels couldn't subdue a determined force in Yemen's hinterlands. For Iran, it's an invitation to dig deeper, knowing the U.S. threat can be dodged, outlasted, defeated, and defied. The stealth bombers came, they saw, they bombed—but victory? That's still buried in the tunnels, beyond reach.



TEHRAN – Iran marked National Nuclear Technology Day on Wednesday with the unveiling of a wide array of achievements in its nuclear industry at a major exhibition held in Tehran.

Iran's President Masoud Pezshkian, nuclear chief Mohammad Eslami, and a group of senior officials visited the exhibition located at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

The event, divided into three key sections, highlighted the country's advances in the nuclear fuel cycle, energy generation, and peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

The first section, titled "Overview of the Nuclear Fuel Cycle," featured displays on airborne geophysics, uranium exploration and mining operations, yellowcake production, uranium processing, fuel pellet and assembly manufacturing, and uranium enrichment.

The second section, "Energy," focused on developments in nuclear power generation. It presented updates on the construction progress of Units 2 and 3 of the Bushehr Nuclear

Power Plant, as well as statistics on electricity production from Unit 1. Attendees also received reports on the new Karun Nuclear Power Plant, Iran's efforts to localize reactor technology, and the domestic production of spare parts needed for the Bushehr facility.

The third section, "Applications of the Nuclear Industry," showcased a range of peaceful uses of nuclear science. Exhibits included technologies for producing heavy water and deuterium compounds, radiopharmaceuticals, nuclear measuring equipment, plasma research, and radiation-based applications in medicine and agriculture. Innovations such as blood irradiation systems, industrial particle accelerators, and cutting-edge quantum and laser technologies—both medical and industrial—were also on display.

In recent years, Iranian scientists have made remarkable progress in the field of peaceful nuclear technology despite the sanctions imposed by the West.

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

# Ahead of Oman talks, Pezeshkian says Iran will not cede its achievements

**By Soheila Zarfam**

TEHRAN – As Iran and the United States prepare to hear each other’s gripes during indirect Oman-mediated negotiations on Saturday, President Masoud Pezeshkian told a number of officials gathered to celebrate Iran’s nuclear achievements that the country has no intention of developing nukes but won’t relinquish its impressive progress in the field either.

“We seek peace and security, and we are open to dialogue but based on dignity and pride,” Pezeshkian said on Wednesday during a ceremony marking Iran’s National Nuclear Technology Day. “We will not back down from our achievements, nor will we compromise on them, and we will never allow anyone to prevent us from thinking or to prevent us from being innovative and creative,” he added.

The West says “Iran wants to produce nuclear bombs. Who is more authoritative than Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who has



officially and publicly declared that we are not seeking to build nuclear bombs? You’ve verified it a hundred times, and you can verify it a thousand times more, but know this: we need nuclear science and nuclear energy in all fields,” the president stressed.

Observers do not know what to expect from the upcoming talks, whose format and mediator were tapped by Tehran. This uncertainty mainly stems from the inconsistent statements and positions on Iran’s nuclear program held by U.S. President Donald Trump, who, while repeatedly claiming his sole

aim is to prevent Iran from possessing nuclear weapons, has simultaneously demanded far more in executive orders and official messages. For example, a directive signed shortly after his return to the White House called for changes in Iran’s missile and drone program, as well as its ties with Resistance groups.

The Saturday talks may offer an initial assessment of Trump’s willingness to engage in serious diplomacy. Iran has repeatedly said that its military and regional policies are non-negotiable, and now that the U.S. has already

scrapped one nuclear deal – the JCPOA, which Trump unilaterally withdrew from in 2018 – it will be able to compromise far less on its nuclear program this time around.

Iran’s nuclear program has made unprecedented strides since 2020, a period when European signatories to the JCPOA began to practically align themselves with Washington’s policies regarding the deal.

Trump has said he would “bomb the hell out of Iran” if a new nuclear deal is not established, a threat Iranians have reacted to firmly, with the most recent warning coming from Pezeshkian himself. “We are not seeking war, but with the knowledge and power that our dear ones have created, we will stand strong in the face of any aggression,” the president said.

Also on Wednesday, the U.S. hit Iran with new sanctions. The Treasury Department announced fresh sanctions on five entities and one person for their “support of Iran’s nuclear program.”

## A strategic rapprochement: Algeria and Iran’s diplomatic alliance

**By Xavier Villar**

MADRID – On April 8, Abbas Araqchi, Iran’s Foreign Minister, arrived in the early hours at Houari Boumediene International Airport in Algiers at the head of a political delegation. This visit is part of Tehran’s efforts to strengthen its diplomatic presence in key regions, with the central goal of consolidating bilateral ties with Algeria.

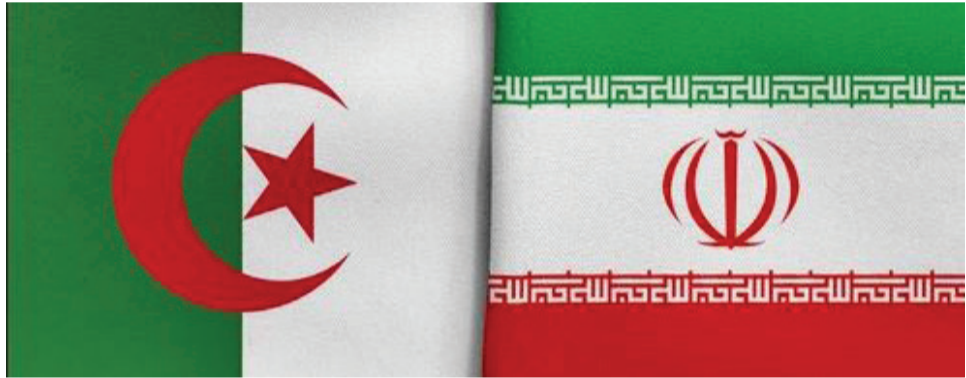
In the context of growing geopolitical competition, the Islamic Republic seeks to solidify its relations with strategic partners in the Maghreb, with Algeria emerging as a key ally in this endeavor.

During his visit, Araqchi met with his Algerian counterpart, Ahmed Attaf, to discuss various aspects of the bilateral relationship, as well as the main regional and international challenges. For Iran, the direct evaluation of capabilities and alliances in different geopolitical scenarios is essential for the defense and expansion of its strategic interests, and Algeria has become a crucial pillar in this regard.

The relationship between Iran and Algeria was close until the early 1990s, when Algeria played a significant role in negotiations for the release of the U.S. embassy hostages in 1981. However, tensions escalated following accusations that Iran was financing the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), leading to the suspension of diplomatic relations between the two countries from 1993 to 2000. Nevertheless, in the following decades, ties between Tehran and Algiers were resumed, particularly in key areas such as energy and regional cooperation. This rapprochement reflects a renewed interest in strengthening the relationship between two countries that, despite past friction, share a common vision on international and regional issues.

The historical connection between the two countries, marked by decades of struggle for independence and resistance to colonialism, has been a significant factor in this process of rapprochement. Iran’s Islamic Revolution, which coincided with the early years of Chadli Bendjedid’s presidency in Algeria, was met with enthusiasm in the Maghreb nation. Over the years, Algeria has played a key role as a mediator in critical moments of recent history, such as during the takeover of the U.S. embassy in Tehran and the hostage issue, demonstrating the strength of the ties between the two nations in times of international crisis.

Moreover, like the Islamic Republic of Iran,



Algeria believes that the preservation of its independence can only be achieved through the strengthening of its internal sovereignty. In this context, the Maghreb countries have made continuous efforts to forge relationships with other nations that share this vision, highlighted by its membership in organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum. Similar to Iran, Algeria maintains close collaboration with Tehran within the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), underscoring the importance of their mutual cooperation in key sectors like energy, thereby strengthening their respective positions on the international stage.

Iran and Algeria share similar views on combating colonialism and the importance of internal sovereignty

This strengthening of ties is no coincidence, as Algeria has consistently supported the Palestinian cause. Both the French colonialism in Algeria and Zionism in Palestine highlight how colonial powers have relied on stereotypes about the barbarism and primitiveness of native populations to justify oppression and occupation. Violence, in this sense, is not only presented as a tool of control but also as a “civilizing” action, serving a supposed moral superiority. In this context, both French colonialism and Zionism emerge as two sides of the same coin, where dehumanization and land dispossession are justified through distorted narratives of the reality faced by occupied peoples.

The connection between French colonialism and Zionism becomes even more evident when analyzing the tactics used to dehumanize indigenous populations. As expert Sara Rahnama points out, just as France did during its colonial era, Israel has resorted to accusations of rape to demonize its enemies. Recently, during protests calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, unsubstantiated claims emerged that Hamas had used rape as a weapon of war; a narrative Rahnama associates with a historical pattern: the idea that indigenous populations are morally and sexually inferior, which would justify both violence and land dispossession.

In this context, the geopolitical rivalry between Algeria and its neighbor Morocco becomes highly relevant. Morocco normalized relations with Israel under the so-called “Abraham Accords” in 2020, a rapprochement that has stirred tensions in the region, particularly in light of the ongoing political conflict over Western Sahara. A year ago, the Algerian government accused Morocco of sending Israeli intelligence agents, allegedly using Moroccan passports, and of acting against the stability and national security of Algeria. For the Algerian government, historically opposed to Israeli policies, Morocco’s normalization of relations with Tel Aviv is seen as a betrayal of regional solidarity and a step that could further destabilize the already fragile balance in North Africa.

For Algeria, the growing Israeli influence in the region, combined with Morocco’s rapprochement with Tel Aviv, represents a direct threat to Arab cohesion. This approach is also seen as an alteration of the regional order, potentially leading to long-lasting consequences for political stability in the Maghreb. In this scenario, Algeria underscores the urgent need to preserve regional unity and stability in the face of what it considers a fragmentation project driven by external powers.

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

## Iran, Armenia launch joint military drill near border

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia have commenced a joint military exercise along their shared border in the strategically important Norduz region.

Brigadier General Valliollah Ma’dani, Deputy for Operations of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces, announced the start of the joint maneuver on Wednesday, emphasizing the importance of enhancing border security and

strengthening the combat readiness of operational units stationed in the area.

“The main goal of this exercise is to reinforce the security of our shared borders and improve the capabilities of forces deployed in this sensitive region,” General Ma’dani stated. “Given the geopolitical significance of the Caucasus and the critical nature of our frontier zones, this drill was carefully planned in advance. It demonstrates both our read-

iness and our commitment to peace and lasting stability.”

According to official reports, the joint drill will end on April 10.

While Armenian troops will conduct their part of the exercise on Armenian territory, Iranian forces will carry out parallel operations on their side of the border.

The joint operations simulate counter-terrorism scenarios, specifically focused on neutral-



izing mock assaults by terrorist groups targeting border checkpoints along the Iran-Armenia frontier.

## Iran fall short against Oman in AFC U17 Asian Cup 2025

TEHRAN – Oman came from behind twice to defeat Islamic Republic of Iran 3-2 in their AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 Group D clash at the Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium Tuesday night.

Ahmed Al’Amrani emerged Oman’s hero, netting twice with the winner coming in the 89th minute to give his side their first three points, leaving Iran bottom of the group with a solitary point.

Oman will still need a result in their final group game against Tajikistan to reach the knockout round and book a ticket at the FIFA U17 World Cup Qatar 2025. Iran will meet Tajikistan on Friday.

Both teams came into the contest needing a win after Iran settled for a 1-1 draw with DPR Korea, while Oman lost 2-1 to Tajikistan in their opening matches.

Iran took a deserved lead in the 39th minute through Mahan Beheshti’s left-footed free-kick, which flew past Ahmed Al Rawahi who should have done better.

The second half kicked into life seven minutes in with Oman drawing level through Al Rashdi, who headed home Osama Al Ma’ari’s overhead kick that was intended as a shot.

But before Oman could savor the equalizer, Iran regained their lead almost from the restart through Ehsan Kheradpisheh, who finished Mahan Alipour’s cutback into the top corner.

Stung after going behind for a second time, Oman moved up a gear and Iran custodian Abolfazl Khalilian needed two attempts to smother Al’Amrani’s header.

Oman’s persistence paid off in the 74th minute when Alyazan Al Balushi was brought down in the box, with Al’ Amrani stepping up to draw Oman level again from 12 yards with the forward then finishing from close range on the 89th minute to steal the points.

## Iran U23 football teams coach candidates revealed

TEHRAN – Four coaches have been shortlisted to lead Iran’s U23 football team.

Hossein Abdi, who recently managed Iran’s U20 team in the AFC U20 Asian Cup in China 2025, is among the candidates.

Mojtaba Hosseini, the head coach of Aluminum, is another contender. The 50-year-old coach was previously linked to the position but opted to lead a club in the Iranian football league instead.

Also shortlisted are Yahya Golmohammadi, the coach of Foolad, and Saeid Daghighi, the trainer for Kheybar.

The Iran U23 football team are currently without a coach after parting ways with Reza Enayati due to disappointing results at the 2022 Asian Games.

## Oman coach Al Habsi motivated by win over Iran

TEHRAN – Oman U17 football team head coach Anwar Al Habsi is motivated by win over Iran in the 2025 AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia.

Oman came from behind twice, cancelling out Iran’s 40th and 54th minute strikes with their own in the 53rd and 74th minutes before Al’Amrani hit home the winner in the 89th minute.

The Al’Ain FC player credited their turnaround to head coach’s Anwar Al Habsi’s halftime talk.

“He really motivated us, and this had a huge impact on our second-half performance.”

Al Habsi said Oman will face DPR Korea with confidence.

“The players were afraid we were about to leave the competition, and this is why they gave it everything they had in the second half,” he said.

“Our victory also relieved the pressure the players felt coming into the match, and they now have all the encouragement they need to take another three points.”

## Iran lose to Russia in SAT Futsal Championship 2025

TEHRAN – Iran’s men’s futsal team lost to Russia 2-1 in the SAT Futsal Championship Thailand 2025 opening match on Wednesday.

The match with the Iranian team ended with a victory for Beso Zoidze’s team with a score of 2-1.

The Russian team took the lead just 10 seconds into the game – Ivan Chishkala scored the Russian team’s debut goal in the tournament.

Five minutes before the break, Anton Sokolov scored Russians’ second goal.

In the second half, the Iranian team managed to reduce the gap after a corner kick – Amirhossein Denganibangudi hit the top corner of Zurab Kalmakhelidze’s goal with one touch.

Iran are scheduled to meet Kuwait and Thailand on Thursday and Saturday, respectively.

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

## Iran U17 coach Chamanian rues lack of concentration against Oman

TEHRAN – Iran head coach Abbas Chamanian, whose side now sit at the bottom with one point in the 2025 AFC U-17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia, said lack of concentration cost them.

Oman came from behind twice, cancelling out Iran’s 40th and 54th minute strikes with their own in the 53rd and 74th minutes before Al’Amrani hit home the winner in the 89th minute.

“We didn’t focus during the last 15 minutes,” he said. “I told the players that leading by one goal was not enough, and if they didn’t score more it would be difficult for us. There were many chances in the first half that we did not take. Oman, however, made good use of theirs in the second.”

Iran have to defeat Tajikistan on Friday to stand a chance of advancing.

## Shahrbanoo Mansourian wins gold at Wushu World Cup

TEHRAN – Iranian women’s 75 kg representative won the gold medal at the Sanda World Cup by defeating her opponent.

On the third and final day of the competition, Shahrbanoo Mansourian, representing the 75 kg weight category and coached by Elaheh Mansourian, faced her Tunisian opponent Rimel Khalifi in the final.

She secured a valuable gold medal and claimed the championship by technically outscoring her rival.

## Iran, Saudi Arabia wrestling federations sign MoU

TEHRAN – The Presidents of the Iran and Saudi Arabia wrestling federations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Alireza Dabir welcomed Fahad Al Farraj to Iran’s federation headquarters, and the parties signed the MoU.

According to the MoU, the two federations will have further interactions regarding the organization of camps in Iran.

## Iran, Iraq eye joint industrial parks, stronger private sector ties



ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh (R) and Iraq's Ambassador to Tehran Naseer Abdul Mohsen Abdullah

TEHRAN – Iran and Iraq have expressed interest in creating joint industrial parks along their shared border and boosting Iranian investment in the Iraqi market, during a meeting between the Iraqi ambassador to Tehran and the head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

In a session held on Tuesday between Iraq's Ambassador to Tehran Naseer Abdul Mohsen Abdullah, and ICCIMA Head Samad Hassanzadeh, both sides stressed the need to establish industrial zones in border regions and to resolve legal disputes between traders by leveraging arbitration mechanisms.

Hassanzadeh called for elevating bilateral trade from the current \$12 billion to \$20 billion through coordinated efforts.

He said Iran possesses strong industrial, engineering, and technical services capabilities that can support Iraq's development, adding that Iran is ready to engage in joint investment projects across sectors like food, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and construction.

He proposed establishing joint production hubs in border industrial parks, producing goods for export to third countries, and called for increased support from both governments to facilitate licenses and approvals for joint operations.

The Iranian side also highlighted infrastructure projects such as the completion of the Khorramshahr-Basra railway and expansion of the Iran-Iraq power grid, along with inviting Iraqi delegations to the Iran Expo 2025 trade fair in May.

Ambassador Abdul Mohsen described the 1,480-kilometer border and vibrant social ties — with 700,000 Iraqis and 120,000 Iraqi students living in Iran — as indicative of deep bilateral connections. Annual cross-border travel now exceeds 155 million visits, he said.

Iraq remains Iran's largest source of inbound medical tourists. However, the ambassador noted challenges in the organization of Iran's health tourism sector and called for better regulation to address abuse and improve visitor experiences.

He estimated Iraq's exports to Iran at \$500 million, highlighting a trade imbalance and the need to boost Iraqi exports. Abdul Mohsen argued that joint industrial parks could enhance Iraq's competitiveness while serving shared economic interests.

Yahya Al-e Es'haq, head of the Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce, said both countries could achieve \$20 billion in trade and pointed to Iraq's potential to attract up to \$150 billion in annual investment. He emphasized the need to overcome bureaucratic barriers and ensure legal infrastructure for sustainable economic cooperation.

## Over 159,000 tons of eggs exported in a year

TEHRAN – Iran has exported more than 159,000 tons of eggs to target countries in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), Hamidreza Kashani, the chairman of Iran's Union of Egg-Laying Hen Producers announced.

According to Kashani, Iranian eggs have been exported to the target countries including Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, some Persian Gulf Arab nations and three African countries, IRNA reported.

He said that the export of eggs in 1403 increased by about 15 percent compared to 1402.

Al-e Es'haq proposed establishing a joint economic union and addressing legal disputes through expanded arbitration cooperation between judicial bodies in both countries.

Iraq's commercial attaché to Tehran, Aqeel Mousavi, also called for more bilateral economic forums and reiterated support for forming a joint Iran-Iraq chamber of commerce.

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.

The official said: "Iran's eggs were previously exported to Oman and the UAE, but the export has been stopped due to changes in health protocols in these countries."

Kashani had previously said that Iran's egg export was expected to reach 135,000 tons by the end of 1403.

The chairman of Iran's Union of Egg-Laying Hen Producers further announced that 1.36 million tons of eggs were produced in the country in the previous year, adding that the production and export of eggs are planned to rise three-five percent this year.

# Annual transit of goods via Iran rises 22.5% to nearly 22m tons

TEHRAN – Iran handled nearly 22 million tons of foreign transit cargo in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2025), marking a 22.5 percent increase compared to the previous year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Foroud Asgari said on Tuesday that a total of 21.913 million tons of goods transited through Iranian territory in the past year, IRNA reported.

He noted that 19.654 million tons of the total cargo volume passed through ten major customs checkpoints: Shahid Rajaei, Parvizkhan, Bashmaq, Sarakhs, Bazargan, Astara, Piranshahr, Bileh Savar, Lotfabad, and Jolfa.

The highest year-on-year growth in transit volume came from the Sarakhs, Piranshahr, and Lotfabad customs terminals, which recorded increases of 148 percent, 65 percent, and 58 percent, respectively.

The uptick in transit reflects



Iran's growing role as a strategic corridor for international trade, particularly between Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Persian Gulf.

The continuous trend of recent transit records via the country and the increasing interest of governments, traders, and those active in transport sectors from neighboring, regional, and extra-regional countries in the transit and logistics situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran indicate the fruitfulness of the trans-

formational approach of the government to the strategic issue of transit, with emphasis on the development of all-round economic relations with neighbors.

As stated by the former Transport and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash, the "Iran Way" initiative made by the government, lets the neighboring countries use Iran as a route or a solution that facilitates their access to international waters.

Iran Way initiative is the gateway to Iran's land of transit opportunities, the official underlined.

Iran is one of the countries with a special status in trade and transit relations due to its strategic location and special geography, as the country is the passage of several important international corridors.

Considering its geographical location, Iran can play a significant role in the transit of goods in the region and benefit a lot from its status in this due.

Paying attention to upstream documents, especially the country's development plans, and the government's decision to develop transit, paying special attention to infrastructure development, reducing transit time, making it cheaper to cross Iran, and making more advantages over competitors, due to the short path for customers, can lead to facilitating the development of transit so that the country can reach the desired growth in this due.

## Iran, Azerbaijan sign bilingual MOU at 16th joint economic committee meeting



From Page 1 ▶ Sadeh, who also chairs the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee, also 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.

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.

Sadeh 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.

He emphasized that the talks will build on recent momentum in bilateral trade, which grew by 20 percent in 2024 to a record \$580 million. Iran aims to raise this figure to \$10 billion within five years.

Sadeh's meetings are expected to clear the way for a more robust bilateral partnership,

with both countries seeking to activate untapped capacities in trade and infrastructure development.

In late January, the 16th meeting of the Iran-Azerbaijan Joint Economic Committee was held with the participation of Iran's minister of transport and urban development and Azerbaijan's deputy prime minister in Tehran.

The second day of the meeting took place on January 22, with the presence of Farzaneh Sadeh, and Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

The Iranian minister expressed her satisfaction with the renewed collaboration, stating, "After a hiatus of over three years due to various circumstances, I am pleased that we successfully convened the 16th session of the Joint Economic Committee in Tehran. I hope that by following up on agreements in transportation, customs, energy, oil, gas, electricity, water, banking, preferential trade, investment, and other areas, we can open new avenues of collaboration and witness further growth in bilateral trade relations."

She highlighted transit cooperation opportunities, stating: "While notable steps have been taken in recent years to enhance this aspect of our relations, the current capacity in road, rail, air, and maritime transportation between the two nations is far greater than what is currently utilized."

Sadeh noted the necessity of resolving transit issues, proposing the establishment of a comprehensive transport committee and expert consultations to address these challenges.

## Iran to add 9m tons to petrochemical production capacity

TEHRAN – Iran plans to expand its petrochemical production capacity by 9.0 million tons in the current Iranian year (ending March 2026), according to the head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

Hassan Abbaszadeh, head of the state-owned company, said during the first meeting of senior managers in the new year that efforts to collect associated gas with the cooperation of major petrochemical holding firms would boost the industry's feedstock supply, Shana reported.

He noted that the commissioning of the NGK 3200 project will help meet part of the sector's feedstock demand.

Abbaszadeh emphasized the importance of institutionalizing unity and synergy across the sector to achieve sustainable development, noting that agile, dynamic organizations require efficient and skilled human resources to enhance productivity.

The deputy oil minister added that one of the key roles of devel-

opment-oriented firms is to facilitate private sector investment in petrochemicals. He said the National Petrochemical Company stands ready to support investors in this regard.

He called on company managers to actively back the industry during the Year of "Investment for Production" by taking practical steps to address the challenges faced by petrochemical firms.

Highlighting the need to accelerate development projects through enhanced financing, Abbaszadeh said that collaboration with petrochemical holding companies could drive production growth this year.

He acknowledged last year's challenges in securing feedstock due to energy imbalances but expressed confidence that proper planning and measures could improve the sector's performance in 2025.

Abbaszadeh also credited parliamentary and government support for motivating industry players to pursue expansion

strategies and focus on completing the value chain as a key priority.

Production in the petrochemical sector increased in the last Iranian year (ended March 2025) compared to the year before, despite energy imbalances and feedstock shortages, he said, noting that most petrochemical plants achieved their production targets.

**Petchem capacity tied to national development goals**

The National Petrochemical Company's head underscored the need to attract new investments and boost production in line with this year's national motto.

Abbaszadeh reiterated the company's readiness to facilitate private investment and stressed the importance of management's support for the industry in tackling structural challenges.

He said the completion and operation of development projects could be accelerated through improved financial flows, and added that despite last year's

feedstock-related difficulties, coordinated efforts this year could drive better results in the high-value petrochemical sector.

The official concluded that strong backing from the Iranian parliament and government has empowered the industry to move forward with determination, focusing on value chain completion as a strategic imperative.

Also in late March, the acting head of Investment Management Department at the NPC announced that attracting new investments in the new Iranian calendar year (began on March 21), aimed at boosting production and completing the value chain, is a key strategy.

The National Petrochemical Company is ready to provide all necessary cooperation and support in this regard, Hamidreza Ajami emphasized.

He stated that the company's investment management team is fully committed to attracting new investments in the petrochemical sector to achieve this valuable goal.

# Musk vs. Navarro: Economic turmoil and political dispute

From page 1 ► Musk retaliated on April 8 via X, calling Navarro “truly a moron” and mocking his Harvard economics PhD. Musk defended Tesla’s American-made credentials, citing data showing the Model Y as the most American-made car with 75% of its parts sourced domestically.

The feud quickly gained media attention, with White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt downplaying the conflict as “boys will be boys.” Critics, however, argued that this response trivialized a significant policy dispute with potential economic repercussions.

## Reasons behind the feud

The Musk-Navarro feud is rooted in fundamental ideological and economic differences, as well as personal and professional rivalries. Several key factors contributed to the conflict:

Navarro, a staunch protectionist, has long pushed for tariffs to protect U.S. industries and reduce reliance on foreign goods. His role in crafting Trump’s tariff strategy, detailed in Project 2025, reflects his belief that high tariffs will bring jobs back to the U.S. In contrast, Musk, as a global businessman with companies like Tesla and SpaceX reliant on international supply chains, favors free trade. He argued on April 8 that tariffs would increase costs for Tesla and hurt consumers, undermining his vision of innovation and efficiency.

Both men have significant stakes in the outcome. Navarro’s influence depends on the success of Trump’s tariff policy, while Musk’s businesses could face billions in additional costs if the tariffs are fully implemented. This economic self-interest fueled their public clash, with Musk accusing Navarro of misunderstanding trade dynamics and Navarro accusing Musk of prioritizing corporate profits over national interests.



The feud also reflects a broader power struggle within Trump’s administration. Musk, as head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), has emerged as a key adviser on deregulation and innovation, while Navarro, as senior counselor for trade and manufacturing, holds sway over trade policy. Their rivalry highlights competing visions for Trump’s economic agenda, with Musk advocating for technological progress and Navarro for industrial revival.

## Political consequences, economic impact

The feud carries weighty consequences for Trump’s administration. It highlights internal discord among top advisers, challenging Trump’s image as a decisive leader. The White House’s casual dismissal of the conflict as “boys will be boys” risks undermining trust within the cabinet and among advisers.

Musk’s opposition to the tariffs could weaken Trump’s ability to push his agenda. If Musk, a prominent ally, continues to resist, it may signal to Congress and the public that even Trump’s supporters doubt the tariffs’ effectiveness. This could embolden opposition from Democrats and moderate Republicans, some of whom have already proposed leg-

islation to reclaim Congressional authority over trade policy.

The Trump administration’s recent moves, such as imposing reciprocal tariffs on imports from nearly every nation, have led to strained relationships with allies and adversaries alike. These tariffs, ranging from 10% to 50%, have prompted swift countermeasures from affected countries, potentially leading to a more insular global economy.

Politically, Trump’s cabinet faces challenges in maintaining diplomatic alliances and navigating the backlash from international leaders. For instance, Australia’s Prime Minister criticized the tariffs as illogical and damaging to their alliance. Similarly, Brazil and China have expressed strong opposition, with Brazil considering appeals to the World Trade Organization and China labeling the tariffs as unilateral bullying. These tensions could undermine the United States’ position as a global leader and disrupt the liberal international order.

Economically, the U.S. may experience increased costs for businesses and consumers, potentially leading to a recession. The tariffs could dampen global demand and production, affecting both U.S. manufacturers and international trade partners. Countries reliant on export-led growth, like China,

might struggle to adapt, further destabilizing the global economy.

The ripple effects of these policies highlight the interconnectedness of global economies and the importance of diplomatic cooperation. While Trump’s administration aims to prioritize American interests, the long-term consequences could reshape international trade dynamics and economic stability.

## Clashes expose deeper fault lines

The April 6 protests against Trump and Musk also highlight public outrage over their policies. Thousands rallied in major cities like New York and Los Angeles, opposing Trump’s tariffs and Musk’s role in the administration. Signs like “No to Tariffs, No to Billionaire Rule” captured anger at perceived elitism and economic harm. Fears of job losses and environmental rollback under Musk’s DOGE leadership fueled the unrest, with the Navarro feud amplifying concerns about dysfunction in Trump’s team. Protesters viewed the administration as prioritizing personal rivalries over public welfare, deepening distrust in Trump’s leadership.

From a critical perspective, the Musk-Navarro row reveals deeper flaws in Trump’s governance style: a reliance on loyalists with conflicting agendas, a lack of coherent economic strategy, and a tendency to dismiss serious policy disputes as mere personality clashes.

The protests on April 6 and the market sell-off on April 8 signal a broader crisis of confidence in Trump’s administration. If left unchecked, the conflict could destabilize Trump’s second term, alienate key allies, and accelerate economic decline. International partners, already wary of U.S. protectionism, may seek alternatives to American trade, further isolating the U.S. on the global stage.

## Geagea is standing against Aoun and Salam

From page 1 ► This was his major hope during the September-November U.S.-backed Israeli aggression against Lebanon; however, the consensus that resulted in the election of Aoun and Salam undermined his scheme.

In parallel, Geagea’s team repeatedly declared its readiness to engage in an open confrontation with Hezbollah.

This is evident in the provocative positions of Foreign Minister Youssef Rajji.

In a clear violation of his duties as foreign minister, he continues to justify the Israeli attacks and condemn the resistance movement in a clear violation of his mission as foreign minister. He is acting as the Lebanese Forces spokesman.

During his recent visit to Riyadh, Prime Minister Salam was informed of the need to contain Geagea.



For her part, Trump’s envoy, Morgan Ortagus, during her recent visit to Beirut, informed Geagea that direct negotiations with Israel and the disarmament of Hezbollah were not currently priorities for Salam and Aoun.

Geagea also felt restrained after he was informed by the Americans and Saudis that the task of disarming Hezbollah was not possible under Lebanon’s status quo.

Besides, what thwarts Geagea’s plan is the ministerial team working with Nawaf Salam as they hail from different sociocultural backgrounds.

National interests are not important for the Lebanese Forces. It also prefers the abandonment of the welfare state in favor of privatization.

Geagea also fears the popular and ecclesiastical momentum that led to Aoun’s presidency. He is also fearful of the support that the president enjoys from the Americans and Saudis, as well as the “alliance of necessity” and some Muslim forces and figures.

What highlights Geagea’s undeniable concerns is Ortagus’ meeting with him at his headquarters that coincided with the “summoning” of Rajji to the residence of U.S. Ambassador Lisa Johnson to confirm that the Lebanese Forces are key in confronting Hezbollah.

## Pricey war, minimal gains in Yemen

From page 1 ► On Wednesday evening, the Yemeni Armed Forces revealed that their UAV unit had struck a military site in Tel Aviv.

In a statement, they declared the operation was carried out “in support of the oppressed Palestinian people and their brave fighters, and in response to the ongoing genocide against our brothers in Gaza.”

The statement also condemned ongoing U.S. aggression in Yemen, emphasizing that Yemeni forces remain engaged in direct confrontation.

“In response to the crimes committed against civilians in several governorates, our Air Force conducted a precision operation targeting multiple enemy warships, led by the U.S. aircraft carrier Truman, in the northern Red Sea, using several drones,” the statement said.

Yemeni officials reaffirmed their commitment to the military support front in solidarity with Gaza.

“Yemen will never abandon the

oppressed Palestinian people, nor will it surrender to American aggression. Yemen remains, as always, a graveyard for invaders,” the statement added.

Earlier on Wednesday, Yemeni Armed Forces announced the downing of another U.S.-made MQ-9 reconnaissance drone over the al-Jawf region, using a domestically produced surface-to-air missile.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree confirmed it was the 18th U.S. MQ-9 drone shot down since November 2023, and the third in just ten days. The drone carries a price tag to the tune of approximately \$35mn each.

He stressed that this was another response to the continued U.S. aggression, including recent airstrikes that caused civilian deaths, injuries, and widespread property damage.

Saree added that Yemeni forces are “fully prepared to respond decisively to any attempt to undermine Yemen’s sovereignty, security, or



stability,” and that operations will continue until “the aggression on Gaza ends and the blockade is lifted.”

Meanwhile, U.S. airstrikes on Wednesday targeted the capital, Sanaa, and several other provinces in the early morning hours.

On Tuesday, additional U.S. strikes hit coastal areas of Hudaydah and two other cities in western Yemen, resulting in further casualties.

Despite the escalation, Yemeni forces continue to enforce a block-

ade on Israeli and American maritime traffic within a designated operational zone that spans the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, and the Gulf of Aden.

A Yemeni official also warned of “upcoming surprises” targeting U.S. Navy Forces and the Israeli regime.

As the U.S. assault on Yemen approaches its fourth week, the costs continue to mount. However, Washington has done little to curb Yemeni operations carried out in solidarity with Gaza.

## Gaza moves closer towards ‘very, very deep hunger’

Israel denies Gaza is facing a hunger crisis, instead accusing Hamas of exploiting aid and saying it must keep all supplies out to prevent fighters from getting it.

But aid organisations paint a far different picture, Al Jazeera reported.

“Food distributions have almost stopped altogether with remaining stocks now divert-

ed to keep hot meal distributions going for a few more days. But that will soon finish, too,” said Gavin Kelleher, an access manager for the Norwegian Refugee Council in Deir el-Balah, central Gaza.

Juliette Touma, from the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said all basic supplies are running out.

## ‘Massacres in Gaza are a stain on the international community’: Hamas

The Palestinian Hamas group has denounced the Israeli army for the massive attack on Gaza City’s Shujayea district that killed at least 29 people and left nearly 80 others missing, according to Al Jazeera.

“The ongoing massacres against our peo-

ple, with American support, are a stain on the international community’s face,” Hamas said in a statement. “The brutal crimes committed in full view of the world against innocent, defenceless civilians will not go unpunished and will not be forgotten.”

## Indonesia ready to shelter Palestinians impacted by Gaza war

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto says he has instructed his foreign minister to quickly discuss with the Palestinian side and other parties about how to evacuate impacted Palestinians to Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country, according to Reuters news agency.

Nearly 400,000 Gaza residents have been displaced in the weeks since Israel resumed military operations in the territory last month, according to the United Nations.

“We are ready to receive wounded victims,” Prabowo said before leaving for a West Asia visit to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, and Jordan.

“We are ready to send planes to transport them. We estimate the numbers may be 1,000 for the first wave.”

Wounded Palestinians and “traumatized, orphaned children” would be prioritized, he said.

He said he had instructed his foreign min-



ister to talk with Palestinian officials and “parties in the region” on how to evacuate wounded or orphaned Gazans.

The victims would only be in Indonesia until they recovered and it was safe for their return.

Indonesia, the world’s most populous Muslim nation, has consistently called for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the report added.

## Germany’s Merz is already in political trouble

Friedrich Merz has yet to begin his chancellorship, but he’s already feeling the heat.

The incoming leader is facing slumping approval ratings and a barrage of criticism from parts of his conservative base who believe he is yielding to the will of the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) during coalition talks. Merz’s critics say he is failing to make good on pre-election vows to move his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) sharply to the right in key policy areas, Politico reported.

The dissent within the ranks has spilled out into the open in recent days after members of the conservative bloc’s youth organization in the city of Cologne wrote a letter to Merz venting their dismay.

After years of weak, divided government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz, many European

leaders had hoped Merz would provide stronger German leadership within the European Union. Merz too has vowed to provide that leadership in light of the challenges posed by U.S. President Donald Trump, vowing after his victory in the Feb. 23 snap election “to strengthen Europe as quickly as possible so that, step by step, we can really achieve independence from the USA.”

But Merz’s recent political difficulties have left him injured, a weakened leader who may have to spend more time attempting to repair his damaged image at home. Already Germany’s conservative bloc is dropping in the polls while the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) — set to become Germany’s biggest opposition party when the new Bundestag convenes — is benefiting from the incoming chancellor’s new vulnerability.

## China vows ‘resolute and effective measures’ after Trump’s 104% tariffs take effect

China has promised to take “resolute and effective measures” to safeguard its rights and interests, hours after US President Donald Trump’s 104% tariffs on Chinese imports took effect on Wednesday.

“The United States is still imposing arbitrary tariffs on China and relentlessly applying extreme pressure. China firmly opposes this and will never accept such domineering and bullying behavior,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a regular news conference.

China and the U.S. have been involved in a game of tit-for-tat on trade, with Beijing standing firmly against each new tariff introduced by Washington.

After the latest round kicked in on Wednes-

day, Lin told media that the U.S. needed to “demonstrate an attitude of equality, respect and mutual benefit” if it truly wanted to resolve the trade war through dialogue.

“If the US disregards the interests of both countries and the international community and insists on waging a tariff war and trade war, China will fight to the end,” Lin added.

US levies on Chinese imports had been set to increase by 34% on Wednesday as part of Trump’s “reciprocal” tariffs package. But the president tacked on another 50% after Beijing didn’t back down on its promise to impose 34% retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods by noon Tuesday. Prior to the latest round of escalation, Trump had already imposed 20% levies on China since his return to the White House.

## ECO member states advance regional sustainable tourism standards for accommodation facilities



TEHRAN – Member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) came together virtually for the 6th Meeting of the ECO Working Group on Tourism Standardization (WGTS), focusing on finalizing a comprehensive set of sustainable tourism criteria for accommodation facilities across the region.

The meeting marked a pivotal step in advancing a unified approach to sustainability in the tourism sector among ECO countries, the organizers announced on Tuesday.

Tourism officials and representatives from eight member states — Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan — participated in the session.

The key outcome of the meeting was a near-final draft of the ECO Sustainable Tourism Common Criteria for Accommodation Facilities, which aims to guide environmentally responsible practices in the hospitality industry across the ECO region.

Discussions centered on the operational framework of the proposed criteria, particularly on the procedures for application, certification, and post-certification monitoring of tourism establishments.

Delegates also reviewed eligibility requirements, implementation strategies, and the scope of the standards, which are intended to serve as a regional benchmark for sustainable tourism development.

One of the central topics of debate was

## Australia and Japan lead the global surge in sports tourism

Sports tourism is having a global moment – and nowhere is that more evident than in Australia and Japan, where fans are shaping a new era of travel motivated by sporting passion, cultural immersion, and community connection.

According to Expedia Group's 2025 Sports Travel Report, conducted in partnership with Censuswide, this trend is not just about attending a match; it's about crafting memorable experiences that blend sport, destination, and identity.

The global numbers tell a compelling story: sports tourism now represents 10% of global tourism spending and is projected to reach \$1.3 trillion this year.

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup and upcoming Olympics in Italy and Los Angeles, momentum is picking up.

In aggregate, the study found that 44% of sports fans travel internationally for events, rising to 56% among 16–34-year-olds.

It also suggested that 3 in 5 sports fans stay outside of host cities, multiplying economic benefits. Moreover, average sports trip spending exceeds \$1,500 per person.

Expedia Group's data suggests sports trips are about more than just the event; they're a chance for meaningful bonding that is known to positively impact mental health.

This could explain why most respondents surveyed attended their last sporting trip with friends (35%), partners (34%), or family (33%).

The study surveyed over 2,000 respondents across eight countries – including Australia and Japan – who had travelled for a

whether the adoption of these criteria should be mandatory or voluntary.

Experts at the session leaned toward a voluntary model, stressing the importance of a robust and credible verification mechanism to assess applications and ensure transparency and consistency in the certification process.

“This initiative represents a significant milestone in regional cooperation for sustainable tourism,” noted one of the attending experts.

“It provides a shared framework that respects national contexts while encouraging hotels and accommodations to commit to higher environmental and social standards.”

The finalized document is expected to be presented for further deliberation and potential adoption during the upcoming 8th Meeting of the High-Level Expert Group on Tourism.

That session will precede the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, scheduled to take place on April 25, 2025, in Erzurum, Türkiye.

If adopted, the criteria will mark the first harmonized regional standard for sustainability in tourism accommodation within the ECO framework, offering a significant step forward in fostering eco-conscious development in one of the region's most vital economic sectors.

sporting event in the past 12 months.

While the findings show a global upswing in sports-motivated travel, Australia and Japan stood out for their distinct traveller behaviours, preferences, and priorities.

Australia's deep-rooted sporting culture has long influenced its domestic rhythms, but it's now becoming a defining driver of outbound and experiential travel.

A striking 82% of Australian respondents plan to take a sports-related trip in the next 12 months – with half expecting to take two or more.

While Australia's approach to sports tourism is communal and celebratory, Japan is showcasing a different – but equally powerful – trend: the rise of the solo sports traveler.

Japan had the highest proportion of solo sports tourists (20%), significantly higher than the global average of 11%. This is coupled with a deeper emotional connection to athletes themselves.

While only 26% of global respondents said that seeing a particular athlete was a trip priority, in Japan, that number jumped to 46%.

In addition, the study uncovered major shifts in global travel behavior driven by sports. Nearly 70% of respondents said they plan to travel for a sporting event in the next year, with 44% having already travelled internationally to do so.

That number rises to 56% among younger travellers aged 16 to 34 – showing that sports tourism is increasingly a Gen Z and millennial-led phenomenon.

(Source: [webintravel.com](https://www.webintravel.com))

# Iranian minister highlights opportunities for stronger cultural cooperation with China

TEHRAN – Iran's tourism minister has underscored the long-standing cultural and economic ties between the Islamic Republic and China, emphasizing their strategic partnership in heritage promotion and the potential for further collaboration.

In a recent interview with PhoenixTV News during the AIM Congress 2025 in UAE, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri reflected on the rich history of Iran-China relations as he described the ancient Silk Road as a symbol of the deep cultural, economic, and civilizational connections between the two nations.

He noted that these interactions, which have spanned centuries, continue to shape the future of cultural diplomacy in Asia. He specifically pointed to the recent strategic agreements between the two countries, including the 25-year Cooperation Agreement, as a new chapter in their collaboration.

Despite the significant progress in economic relations, with China being Iran's largest trading partner, Salehi-Amiri highlighted the vast potential for expansion in cultural, tourism, and investment exchanges. He stressed the impor-



Iran's tourism minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri (L) talks to a Chinese media personnel in an interview with PhoenixTV News on the sidelines of the AIM Congress 2025 in UAE, April 8, 2025.

tance of advancing cooperation in areas such as language education, joint media productions, cultural exhibitions, artist exchanges, and the restoration of historical sites.

The Minister also pointed to the growing cross-border partnerships between Iran, Central Asian countries, and China to revive the Silk Road heritage. He emphasized that the development of shared tourism routes, investment in

infrastructure, and attracting international tourists, particularly from China, are critical priorities for both nations.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi-Amiri also underscored the role of UNESCO in supporting joint Asian heritage projects and called for investments in cultural projects with a non-Western approach. He identified China, Russia, and Central Asian nations as

key potential partners in these initiatives.

As part of the ongoing push for deeper cultural engagement, the minister discussed the growing importance of digital tourism, including the use of virtual reality and online tours, as cost-effective means of broadening tourism experiences.

He also touched upon plans to collaborate with China's CCTV news agency on producing joint promotional content, bringing Chinese documentary filmmakers to Iran, and expanding Iran's tourism presence on Chinese media platforms, including the “Visit Iran” website.

Furthermore, he emphasized the best use of social media and engaging influential Chinese figures for cultural marketing, as well as collaborating with Asian cultural funds to strengthen ties between the two nations.

He concluded by noting that the “new Silk Road” represents not only a route for trade and commerce but also a pathway for dialogue among civilizations and the revival of a shared cultural identity.

## Soheili mangrove forest: a harmony of community and conservation

TEHRAN – Nestled along the shores of Qeshm Island in the Persian Gulf, southern Iran, the Soheili mangrove forest stands as a testament to nature's resilience and human dedication.

This UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve has become more than just an ecological treasure—it represents a harmonious partnership between the environment and the people of Soheili village. Through innovative conservation efforts and sustainable tourism practices, the community has transformed their mangrove forest into a living example of environmental stewardship.

The villagers' commitment shines through their unique initiatives: nurturing mangrove seedlings in their homes, constructing observation towers for birdwatching, and preserving the ancient Hori boats of their ancestors. These efforts demonstrate how traditional knowledge and modern conservation can work together to protect fragile ecosystems while creating meaningful experiences for visitors.

### A living mangrove ecosystem

The Hara forests of Qeshm Island form one of Iran's most vital marine ecosystems, with the Soheili Mangrove Forest serving as its beating heart. These tangled root systems create a sanctuary for flamingos, herons, and king-

fishers that dart between the branches, while beneath the water's surface, fish and crustaceans find shelter in the protective maze. The forest's serene waterways have become a destination for researchers and nature enthusiasts alike, drawn to its tranquil beauty and remarkable biodiversity.

Yet this natural wonder faces growing threats. Rising sea levels and increasing salinity test the mangroves' endurance, while plastic waste carried by ocean currents mars their pristine condition. The community remembers when overharvesting nearly devastated these forests, and this memory fuels their determination to protect what remains.

### A community's green thumb

In Soheili, conservation begins at home—literally. Villagers have developed an ingenious method for restoring their mangrove forests. They carefully collect propagules, the peculiar pencil-shaped seeds of the mangrove, and nurture them in buckets of seawater within their homes. For four months, these future trees grow under watchful eyes until strong enough to face the challenges of the tidal flats.

When the seedlings reach sufficient strength, the community gathers to plant them on a muddy forest floor that floods with each high tide. This hands-on approach



has yielded remarkable results, with thousands of new mangroves taking root in recent years. More than just planting trees, the program has planted something equally valuable in the community: a shared sense of responsibility for their environment that crosses generations.

### A delight to visit

Rising above the green canopy, a wooden observation tower offers visitors a breathtaking perspective of the mangrove forest.

This carefully constructed platform serves multiple purposes—it welcomes birdwatchers to observe the greater flamingos and ospreys that frequent the area, provides researchers with valuable monitoring opportunities, and generates income to support further conservation work.

The tower has become more than a viewpoint; it's a bridge between the community and visitors. Local guides share their knowl-

edge of the ecosystem, pointing out migratory patterns and explaining the delicate balance of life in the mangroves. Through these interactions, tourists gain deeper appreciation for the forest's importance, while villagers take pride in their role as protectors of this natural heritage.

### Sailing through history

The village's traditional Hori boats represent more than transportation—they carry the cultural memory of Soheili's people. These traditional wooden vessels, crafted without nails using techniques passed down through generations, once formed the backbone of local fishing and trade. Today, they serve as floating ambassadors for the village's maritime heritage.

Twice yearly, the quiet waterways come alive with the excitement of Hori boat races. Villagers demonstrate their skill in navigating the narrow mangrove channels, their laughter and shouts echoing across the water.

## Hamedan to host medical tourism conference for ECO member states

He noted that conference will feature a series of specialized discussions, a medical tourism exhibition, and side meetings with domestic companies active in the field.

“It aims to highlight Iran's capabilities in medical tourism and foster collaboration among various international stakeholders, including diplomats, representatives from the ministries of tourism and health, private sector participants, service providers, influencers, and tourism guides.”

According to organizers, the event's agenda will include a ceremony honoring the great Persian philosopher and physician Avicenna (Ibn Sina) on the first day, followed by the official opening ceremony, a diplomatic session, and the launch of the exhibition at the University of Medical Sciences. On the second day, there will be specialized panels and discussions with medical tourism companies, culminating in a closing ceremony and press conference. The third day will include visits to selected hospitals and healthcare facilities, as well as a tour of the province's tourist attractions. Additionally, certificates of participation will be awarded at the conclusion of each specialized panel.

According to available data, the number of medical tourists visiting the Islamic Republic is around one million people per annum. Some experts believe that choosing Iran as a destination for medical services offers multifaceted benefits, encompassing economic, quality medical services, and cultural dimensions that make the country a compelling destination for those seeking medical treatment abroad.

Here in the country, countless clinics and hospitals offer comprehensive services that include airport transfers, accommodation arrangements, and post-treatment care, ensuring that international patients feel comfortable and well-cared for throughout their stay.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is a regional intergovernmental organization established in 1964 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to promote economic and cultural collaboration among member states. In 1992, the organization expanded to include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, bringing its membership to ten countries.



# Iran, Japan underscore boosting technological ties

TEHRAN – The deputy minister for information, communications, and technology (ICT), Ehsan Chitsaz, and the Japanese vice-minister for international affairs and communications, Imagawa Takuo, have highlighted the need to expand technological cooperation in key sectors including artificial intelligence (AI), digital economy, and the development of sustainable communications infrastructure.

During a meeting held on Wednesday in Tokyo, the officials explored avenues to further enhance collaborations, IRNA reported.

Establishing the 'Iran-Japan digital innovation center', cooperating on policymaking for emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and platform regulation, as well as training experts in the digital economy through holding joint university courses were among the discussed topics.

Takuo, for his part, announced Japan's readiness to foster digital ties with Iran, saying that Iran is pursuing digital transformation path focusing on local and long-term considerations. Japan supports this approach and is fully prepared to implement cooperation projects by evaluating Iran's constructive proposals.



The two sides also agreed to establish a joint executive working group to follow up on the implementation of the reached agreements.

## Status of ICT in Iran

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology is the highest authority in the field of ICT in the country.

All activities related to the information and communication technology industry are directly related to the ministry.

The government pays special attention to plans and policies in this sector in order to maximize the use

of ICT to facilitate people's lives.

The successful designing, building, and launching of a satellite show the growth of the national technology and scientific power of a country.

Space technology has been considered a tool to expand prosperity, peace, scientific-cultural development, and economic progress in human societies.

Different nations of the world exploit this technology in some way based on their capacity, capabilities, and efforts.

Currently, 13 universities and a research institute affiliated to the

Ministry of Science, Research and Technology are offering aerospace majors, thus Iran has a high capability in training specialists and experts in the aerospace sector and is a leading country in the region.

Access to telecommunication services in rural areas of the country had improved over the period as the overall number of villages with access to communication services rose to 52,182, around 93 percent of all villages, while 47,837 villages had access to home landline services.

Moreover, the number of Iranian mobile users reached nearly 135.890 million, according to the CRA which put the mobile phone penetration rate in the country at 161.67 percent.

The figures showed, however, that fixed broadband adoption in Iran had stalled at 14 percent with nearly 11.921 million customers having access to the Internet via those services.

This statistic shows that fixed broadband internet has grown by less than 2 percent compared to last year and mobile internet has experienced a growth of 10 percent.

However, it can be said that the speed of mobile internet expansion is 5 times the speed of fixed internet.

## WHO reps attend FDA meetings on regulatory system for biological drugs, blood products



TEHRAN – Adham Rashad Ismail Abdel Moneim, the World Health Organization (WHO) director of program management, and Rogério Gaspar, WHO director of regulation and prequalification, have participated in technical meetings hosted by the Iran Food and Drug Administration.

The meetings, which were held from April 7 to 9, focused on promoting regulatory processes in approving biological drugs and blood products, Hamidreza Inanlou, an FDA official has said.

The presence of WHO representatives within the framework of cooperation programs between the two organizations can play an effective role in improving regulatory structures, updating standards, and facilitating international processes in the field of medicine.

During the meetings, FDA director, Mehdi Pirsalehi, highlighted the country's technical advancements in developing medicine, vac-

cines, medical equipment, biological products, and health-related goods.

The WHO Global Benchmark Tool (GBT) framework, which is used for evaluating the capacity of a national regulatory system, has been implemented in the country and Iran is now on track to achieve regulatory maturity levels (ML)2 and subsequently 3, ILNA quoted Pirsalehi as saying.

Highlighting that the ultimate goal is to be included in the WHO-listed authorities (WLA), the official added the GBT and WLA frameworks serve as a reliable roadmap for improving quality, safety, and effectiveness in regulatory processes.

Referring to the importance of the WHO Prequalification (PQ) program, which aims to ensure that key health products meet stringent global standards of quality, safety and efficacy, Pirsalehi announced Iran is ready to explore ways for participation in these programs, especially in the field of medical equipment and biological products.

This cooperation can strengthen the global credibility of domestic products and facilitate global access to health technologies, as well.

The official went on to propose the establishment of a joint working group between Iran and WHO to develop a roadmap to achieve ML3.

He also announced Iran's readiness to host training programs and regional cooperation under the guidance of the WHO.

## Self-sufficiency in medicine, medical equipment is a priority

In January, Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi said the issue of medicine and medical equipment production and self-sufficiency in these areas is one of the government's priorities.

Medicine and medical equipment are two important areas related to people's health, he said, adding: "We are trying to reach self-sufficiency for the supply of medicine and medical equipment," IRNA reported.

On January 13, the head of Iran's Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said that medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually.

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, IRNA quoted Abdolreza Yaqoubzadeh as saying.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, he added.

Yaqoubzadeh went on to say that the country's need for medical equipment production is three to four billion dollars per year, some one billion dollars of which is imported.

Some 600 medical equipment companies are active in the country, producing around 99 percent of the medicine supplied to the domestic market.

## Tehran, Belgrade discuss ways to implement co-op in ICT

TEHRAN – Iranian and Serbian officials have discussed potential ways to implement the formerly reached agreements in the Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) sector.

On February 25-27, an Iranian delegation headed by ICT Minister, Sattar Hashemi paid an official visit to Belgrade at the invitation of his Serbian counterpart, Dejan Ristic.

The officials signed a memorandum of understanding to foster cooperation in the ICT field.

In this line, a meeting was held virtually on Tuesday, focused on data transfer and security, cooperation between private sectors, and experts of the two countries, Mehr news agency reported.

They also stressed benefiting from mutual experiences in the fields of innovation, artificial intelligence, cloud services, and platform economy.

To follow up on the agreements, it was decided to hold technical working groups involving government institutions and private sectors of the two countries. The working groups will be responsible for developing a roadmap for future cooperation and identifying feasible bilateral projects. In February, Ristic lauded Iran's progress in the field of space communication, designing, building, and launching sensing and communication satellites.

The official said the meeting with Hashemi had especially focused on establishing and boosting cooperation in scientific and research activities and developing a 5G network.

"We agreed to set up several joint teams as early as after next week to define mechanisms for stepping up cooperation in the IT sector, postal traffic, and e-commerce," Ristic said.

Hashemi said the signing of the memorandum was another step forward in the development of cooperation.

"This document creates a platform and frameworks for joint investment, development, and research," he said.

## Iran committed to fostering regional AI cooperation

The combination of talent, data, and innovation makes Iran a key player in the regional Artificial Intelligence (AI) value chain, capable of driving meaningful cooperation and development. Iran is committed to fostering regional cooperation and building a future where AI drives prosperity and unity, Hashemi said in February.

Emphasizing that Iran is a major stakeholder in the regional digital landscape, Hashemi said that Iran is a major player in AI in the Persian Gulf



and that the country is ready to start cooperation with regional states on this matter.

The official made the remarks while addressing the Iran Corridor 2025 conference held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

He stated that the country's mobile phone operators, as well as its thriving digital service platforms such as Snapp! And Digikala, each serving more than 30 million users, provides an abundance of multifaceted data — an essential ingredient for AI development, Press TV reported.

Despite facing economic sanctions, Iran has successfully developed a resilient fintech ecosystem that continues to thrive and innovate, Hashemi noted.

"Our country's academic and research capabilities have propelled us to the forefront of AI advancements. In 2023, Iran ranked second in the region in terms of the number and quality of scientific papers in AI, demonstrating our commitment to cutting-edge research and development," he added.

"Iran holds the second position in the region for AI developers, highlighting the depth of our skilled workforce, and stands fourth in the region in terms of the number of AI firms, showcasing our dynamic and rapidly growing ecosystem," the Iranian minister continued.

He underlined that Iranian human capital, available at competitive costs, is a strategic advantage that positions Iran as a valuable partner in regional AI initiatives.

According to Hashemi, by cultivating environments that encourage collaboration and investment, the Persian Gulf region can be turned into a powerhouse of Artificial Intelligence excellence, attracting global tech giants while strengthening intraregional partnerships for shared prosperity.

"By establishing AI acceleration hubs, facilitating joint investment in free zones, and enhancing academic collaboration and elite exchange programs, we can unlock new opportunities for innovation and economic growth," he noted.

## National health week to be marked

TEHRAN – The national health week is scheduled to be held from April 21 to 27, aiming to raise public awareness of critical health challenges and unite forces to promote public health.

The days of the week focus on the following topics.

Monday, April 21, 'Health equity with the family physician and referral system'

Tuesday, April 22, 'Healthy environment, healthy society with public participation'

Wednesday, April 23, 'Maternal health literacy, youth population, empowered generation'

Thursday, April 24, 'Culture, art, media, and health'

Friday, April 25, 'Public exercise, public health'

Saturday, April 26, 'Fetal care, new-born health, a promising future'

Sunday, April 27, 'Say no to accidents, yes to life'

World Health Day is celebrated on April 7 annually to mark the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948.

World Health Day 2025 themed 'Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures' seeks to encourage governments and health communities to minimize preventable deaths of mothers and newborns by adopting initiatives that focus on mothers' and babies' survival, and prioritize women's longer-term health and well-being.

Helping every woman and baby survive and thrive is a critical task. Tragically, based on currently published estimates, close to 300,000 women lose their lives due to pregnancy or childbirth each year, while over 2 million babies die in their first month of life, and around 2 million more are stillborn. That's roughly 1 preventable death every 7 seconds.



Based on current trends, a staggering 4 out of 5 countries are off track to meet targets for improving maternal survival by 2030. 1 in 3 will fail to meet targets for reducing newborn deaths.

Women and families everywhere need high-quality care that supports them physically and emotionally, before, during, and after birth.

Health systems must evolve to manage the many health issues that impact maternal and newborn health. These not only include direct obstetric complications but also mental health conditions, noncommunicable diseases, and family planning.

Additionally, women and families should be supported by laws and policies that safeguard their health and rights. The main objectives of this year's campaign are as follows.

To raise awareness about gaps in maternal and newborn survival and the need to prioritize women's longer-term well-being.

To advocate for effective investments that improve the health of women and babies.

To encourage collective action to support parents as well as health professionals who provide critical care.

To provide useful health information relating to pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## 'City-friendly schools' scheme launched in Tehran

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

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

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

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

## آغاز طرح «مدارس دوستدار شهر» در تهران

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

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

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



APRIL 10, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*The one who gets married has completed half of his/her religion.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:06 Evening: 18:52 Dawn: 4:10 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:37 (tomorrow)

## 100 years of diplomatic relations between Iran, the Czech Republic celebrated with naqqali performance



Bahareh Jahandoost (L) and Saeed Gorjani perform at the ceremony in Prague, the Czech Republic.

TEHRAN-On the occasion of the global celebration of Nowruz and the beginning of the new solar year, as well as the centenary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Iran and the Czech Republic, a special ceremony featuring naqqali (traditional Persian storytelling) and traditional Iranian music was held in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic.

The event was organized by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Prague, in collaboration with the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and the ECO Cultural Institute, Honaronline reported.

It was attended by ambassadors and diplomats from Nowruz-region countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan, as well as other officials, several Iranologists, Iran enthusiasts, and members of the Iranian community.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Seyed Majid Ghafeleh Bashi, Iran's ambassador to Prague, highlighted the significance of Nowruz as a shared cultural identity marker across the vast Nowruz region and its reflection in Iranian literature, music, and other cultural and artistic expressions over the centuries.

The main part of this cultural and artistic event was a bilingual naqqali performance by Bahareh Jahandoost, an Iranian storyteller and Shahnameh reciter. This marked the first time such a performance was held in Prague and was warmly received by the audience.

Jahandoost narrated the story of the naming of Nowruz by Jamshid and the tale of Bijan and Manijeh from the Shahnameh, the legendary Persian epic by Ferdowsi, in both Persian and English. Her performance was accompanied by zarb (an Iranian goblet drum) played by Saeed Gorjani, a veteran of traditional Zurkhaneh music residing in Europe.

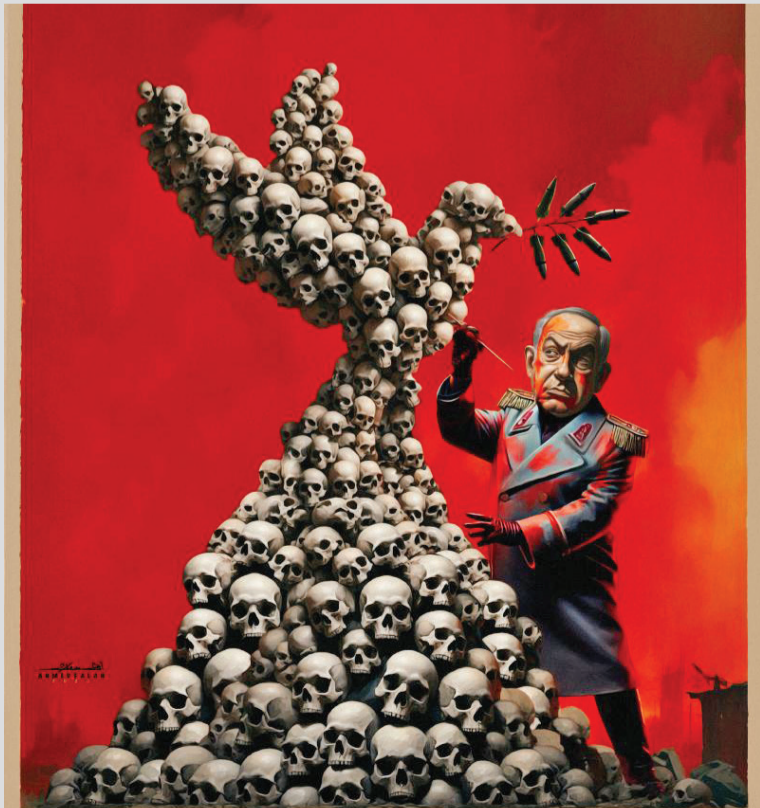
Naqqali, or Persian epic storytelling, is the oldest form of narrating tales in Iran and has long played a significant role in society. A naqqal is a storyteller who recites epic tales, primarily revolving around the stories of Iranian mythological kings and heroes.

Bahareh Jahandoost has been involved in theater since she was seven years old, and she trained with the renowned Iranian naqqal, Morshed Vali-Allah Torabi. Using the traditional form of narrating stories through naqqali performance, she has performed in China, France, Hungary, India, Italy, Russia, and Turkey.

At the ceremony, guests were also introduced to the elements of the Iranian Haft-Seen table, which is an arrangement of seven symbolic items whose names start with the 15th letter in the Persian alphabet (pronounced as "seen. It is traditionally displayed at Nowruz, the Iranian New Year, which is celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox, marking the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

The ceremony served as a symbol of the ongoing cultural and civilizational ties between Iran and the Czech Republic, continuing over a century of cultural interaction between the intellectuals and people of both countries.

## Cartoon of Day



Makes peace!

Cartoonist: Ahmed Falah from Iraq

# “With Al-Aqsa Storm: From Beginning to Final Victory” photo exhibition opens in Tehran

By Samaneh Aboutaleb

TEHRAN- The photo exhibition titled “With Al-Aqsa Storm: From Beginning to Final Victory” was officially opened in Gallery No. 1 of the Iran Photographers House in Tehran on Tuesday.

The exhibition features a collection of images captured by diverse media photographers who have been covering events in occupied Palestine since the onset of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm.

Organized by the Iran Photographers House, affiliated with the Art Bureau, the exhibition has been launched in honor of Revolutionary Art Week, which commenced on Wednesday.

Showcasing 471 images captured by international photographers for news agencies such as Reuters, AP, Al-Jazeera, and Anadolu, the exhibition marks 15 months of resistance since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Storm operations.



A total of 486 photographs are on display in two sizes: 16 by 21 centimeters and 100 by 150 centimeters, documenting the Al-Aqsa Storm operations from their inception.

This exhibition will be open for public viewing until May 12.

Israel occupied Gaza in 1967

and in 2005 they dismantled their settlement. However, since 2007, Israel has placed Gaza under a land, sea, and air blockade making it the largest open-air prison.

On October 7, 2023 Palestinian resistance fighters initiated Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, launching a coordinated assault against

the positions of the Israeli regime from the Gaza Strip. This operation marked a significant escalation in the ongoing conflict, characterized by a series of attacks targeting military installations and settlements within the occupied territories.

The operation was described by its organizers as a response to the escalating violence against Palestinians and the dire conditions in Gaza, exacerbated by ongoing blockades and restrictions.

The Israeli regime swiftly retaliated with airstrikes, resulting in the deaths of over 45,000 individuals, including more than 17,000 children so far.

Additionally, over 109,000 Palestinians have sustained injuries, and nearly two million have been displaced from their homes. The ongoing violence has led to a humanitarian crisis, exacerbating the suffering of civilians in the region.

## Iranian animations to compete in Annecy festival



TEHRAN-Two short animated movies from Iran will take part in the 49th Annecy International Animation Film Festival, set to be held from June 8 to 14 in Annecy, France.

“Thank You Dr. Farsi” directed by Samaneh Shojaei and “By the Way” directed and produced by Mahboobeh Kalaei and Ali Fotoohi are the Iranian participants in the festival,

IRNA reported.

A production of the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), “Thank You Dr. Farsi” will be shown in the Official Section of the festival.

In the 8-minute animation, we join Mino on her 27th birthday and through her eyes, we observe her friend's mental illnesses and disorders.

Selected to be screened in the Perspectives section, “By the Way” is a 6-minute film, which depicts Majid who falls in love with a girl. However, it is neither the time nor the place for such love!

The Annecy International Animation Film Festival was created in 1960 and takes place at the beginning of June in the town of Annecy, France. Initially occurring every two years, the festival became an annual event in 1998.

## Tehran Symphony Orchestra to perform “Color Whirl” at Vahdat Hall

TEHRAN-Tehran Symphony Orchestra (TSO) will perform its first concert in spring at Vahdat Hall in Tehran on April 16.

Nasir Heydarian will conduct the concert titled “Color Whirl,” in which the orchestra is to perform pieces by renowned 19th and 20th century composers, ILNA reported.

The repertoire will include pieces by the French composer and organist Gabriel Fauré, Austrian composer of light music Johann Strauss, Hungarian composer and pianist Béla Bartók, and Russian composer Mikhail Glinka among others.

Born in Tehran, Nasir Heydarian studied orchestral conducting at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in Austria. In 1999, he was awarded the Die Richard Wagner Stipendienstiftung.

He has an extensive career, having collaborated as a conductor with the Graz Opera, Basel Symphony Orchestra, Zurich Opera, Bonn Opera, Beethoven Hall Orchestra in Bonn, Munich Chamber Orchestra, Venezuela Youth Orchestra, World Youth Orchestra, and many other ensembles.

Heydarian previously worked as a trombonist with the Tehran Symphony Orchestra. He was selected as the conductor of the TSO in August 2022.

The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, founded in 1933, is Iran's oldest and largest symphony orchestra. It was founded as the Municipality Symphony Orchestra by Gholamhossein Mimbashian, before entering its modern form under Parviz Mahmoud in 1946.

In the years that followed, conductors such



as Rubik (Ruben) Gregorian, Morteza Hananah, Haymo Taeuber, Heshmat Sanjari, Farhad Meshkat, and Fereydown Nasserri took over as the conductors of the orchestra.

Performing pieces by acclaimed Iranian and international composers, the TSO held 22 concerts last year at Vahdat Hall.

## “It’s On Me” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN- A Persian translation of Canadian psychotherapist Sara Kuburic's book “It's On Me: Accept Hard Truths, Discover Your Self, and Change Your Life” has recently been published by Milkan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Hamideh Arabnejad.

In her insightful book, “It's on Me: Accept Hard Truths, Discover Your Self, and Change Your Life,” Kuburic, an existential psychotherapist and popular Millennial Therapist, explores the profound issue of self-loss—an often-unrecognized suffering that leaves many feelings disconnected from their true selves.

Drawing from her experiences as a USA Today columnist, Kuburic addresses the pervasive feelings of loneliness, unfulfillment, and entrapment that so many individuals experience in their daily lives. She identifies these feelings as stemming from unhealthy patterns, toxic relationships, and misguided attempts to achieve happiness.

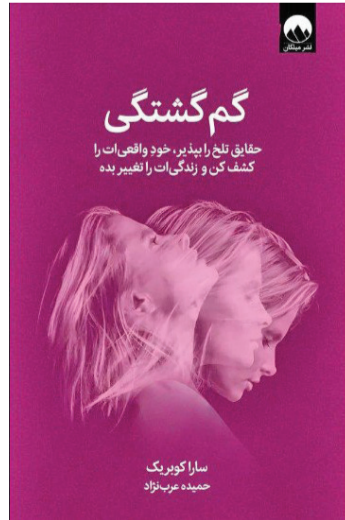
Kuburic emphasizes that the

path to rediscovering oneself does not lie in relentless pursuit or external validation, but rather in taking full responsibility for one's choices and actions.

She advocates for a mindful approach that involves slowing down, cutting through societal expectations, and embracing the essence of who we are. By confronting her readers with the question, “Who am I?” she empowers them to engage deeply with their own identities.

The author introduces the concept of “self-loss,” which becomes evident when individuals feel overwhelmed by the roles they play or simply going through the motions of life rather than truly living. Through a combination of self-reflection and acceptance, Kuburic provides practical strategies for overcoming this self-loss.

She offers tools that have helped her clients regain their sense of self, encouraging readers to experience emotions without being dominated by them, cultivate a healthy relationship with their bodies, and establish lov-



ing boundaries that nurture both self-identity and relationships.

Kuburic advises readers to clear their physical and mental spaces to make room for their authentic selves and discover meaning and purpose in a world that often seems devoid of them. “I'm the Problem, It's Me” is both eye-opening and inspiring, revealing that individuals do not need to continue “sleepwalking” through lives filled with dissatisfaction.

Instead, Kuburic's guidance helps readers awaken to their most authentic and vibrant selves, leading to a life that is not only more fulfilling but also meaningful. By embracing the hard truths and taking ownership of one's life, Kuburic shows how transformative change is not just possible but within everyone's reach.

Sara Kuburic is an existential psychotherapist, consultant, writer, and columnist for USA Today. She was born in Yugoslavia and raised in Canada. She is passionate about helping people seeking change and live authentic, free, and meaningful lives. Her interest in psychology stems from her personal experience living through wars, navigating complex relationships, and continually learning what it means to be human.

Co-founder of The Phenomenological Society, she is often known as the millennial therapist, having built a community of over 1.7m individuals where the author shares tips and musings that normalize human experiences and encourage self-reflection.