

Maximum Preparedness of Armed Forces Must Be Maintained



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Esmail Baghaei made the remarks during an interview with Iranian TV, where he described indirect Saturday talks between Iran and the United States as "positive".

"We believe indirect negotiations offer the most effective path to resolving the sanctions issue," Baghaei explained, adding, "Direct negotiation is unproductive in the face of threats, sanctions, and intimidation. There is no ideological basis for this position." ▶ Page 2

Regional countries endorse diplomatic path as Iran, US engage in indirect talks in Muscat

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The first round of high-stakes talks took place on Saturday in Muscat, facilitated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, with Iran's delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and the United States represented by special regional envoy Steve Witkoff. After four rounds of message exchanges in what participants described as a "calm and respectful environment," both sides agreed to reconvene next Saturday, calling the initial discussions "constructive."

Persian Gulf Cooperation Council welcomes talks

Jassim Mohammed al-Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), commended Oman's hosting of the dialogue, calling it a "wise approach" to fostering regional peace. In a statement published on the GCC's official website, Budaiwi said the move reflects Muscat's longstanding role in promoting dialogue and building bridges between nations. ▶ Page 2

UN human rights mandates are politically motivated: Iranian expert

TEHRAN – In an interview with the Tehran Times, Dr. Hesamuddin Boroumand, a human rights expert and scholar, challenged the legitimacy of the UN's Special Rapporteur and fact-finding mission on Iran, noting their politicized agendas and Western bias.

The full text of the interview is as follows:
The UN Human Rights Council has once again extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, along with the so-called fact-finding mission, despite repeated objections from Iran. What do you believe is the real purpose behind this continuation?

The very basis for appointing a Special Rapporteur on human rights for Iran—something that started in 2011—lacks legal and legitimate standing. Iran had already been cooperating positively on human rights issues through the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) mechanism, and had provided documented responses to questions and doubts. Therefore, the appointment of the Special Rapporteur was entirely political and biased. From 2011 until now, ▶ Page 3

Protestors across the world demand arms embargo on Israel, end to Gaza blockade

TEHRAN – People in major cities across the world organized demonstrations to demand an immediate arms embargo against Israel and termination of the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

The demonstrators brought attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Protesters also demanded international intervention to safeguard Palestinian civilians.

In Ottawa, Canada, demonstrators gathered in a show of solidarity with the Gazans, urging world leaders to impose a swift arms embargo on Israel and lift the food blockade strangling Gaza. The rally was part of a larger global movement to highlight the dire situation faced by Palestinians and to pressure governments for change.

Demonstrators opposing Israeli policies assembled in Times Square in New York City to demand the release of Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student who has been detained. Supporters of Khalil showed up despite rainy weather, chanting slogans and holding signs such as "Free Mahmoud Khalil Now!" and "Hands Off Our Students," among others.

AUB hosts companies funding Israel

By Sondoss Al

BEIRUT — The American University of Beirut (ABU) transformed its Career Fair 2025 (held from April 7–11) into an event promoting normalization with the Israeli occupation regime by hosting companies that support the enemy, while it is supposed to enhance its students' job prospects.

Among these companies is Deloitte that has an active branch in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Deloitte provides cybersecurity services to several Israeli companies, such as the NSO Group, the developer of the Pegasus spyware. It also provides consulting services to the Israeli war ministry.

Another company is Transmed, the exclusive distributor of PepsiCo products in West Asia, which makes it a party in supporting the Israeli economy.

Transmed also distributes products such as those of Nestlé, which operates a factory in the Sderot settlement established in 1951 on the ruins of the Palestinian village of Najd.

Israelis bomb critical Gaza hospital

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Israeli military bombs a hospital in Gaza, marking another war crime in the ongoing assault on the besieged territory.

Warplanes launched an attack on al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, striking the emergency building with two missiles.

The assault caused severe damage to several key sections of the hospital, including the reception area, laboratory, and pharmacy.

Footage from the scene showed the chaotic evacuation of wounded patients following a second alert issued after the missile strike.

Images circulating on social media also showed traumatized Palestinians fleeing the hospital. Some were seen dragging sick or injured relatives on hospital beds.

Reports indicate that many patients and injured individuals, some in critical condition, are now lying on the streets around the hospital and receive no care.

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Iran to implement 26 economic growth packages in 2025

TEHRAN – Iran plans to implement 26 executive packages aimed at boosting economic growth in the current Iranian year (ending March 2026), following their development in 2024, a senior official at the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said.

Alaeddin Azvaji, Head of Macroeconomic Affairs at the PBO, said the initiative is part of the government's broader plan to revitalize the economy under the "Iran Economic Reconstruction Program." He noted that the strategies were shaped around five key pillars outlined in Article 119 of the Seventh National Development Plan: inflation control, improving living standards, reducing economic imbalances, promoting growth, and advancing key economic projects. ▶ Page 4



Iran's ground force reinvented for modern warfare, says top commander

TEHRAN – Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari, Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force, unveiled a comprehensive update on the Army's modernization efforts and defense posture during a press conference on Sunday, describing the force's transformation into a "mobile, offensive, and rapid reaction force."

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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Special features
of Iran-US negotiations

Hamshahri examined the special features of Iran-U.S. negotiations in an interview with Mohsen Pakaein, a former Iranian diplomat. He said: One of the features of this round of nuclear negotiations is the consensus among in all state bodies about "indirect negotiations" with the United States. In such circumstances, the Americans want this consensus to be broken and are trying to create a bipolarity in the country, even at the level of the heads of state. The decision made on the subject of negotiations was based on expertise, and the important point is that we are participating in the negotiations from a superior position because we have emphasized that we will negotiate only on the nuclear issue; the negotiations should only be "indirect"; and that we decided about the venue of the talks. They wanted the negotiations to be held in the UAE, but in the end, our preferred option, Oman, was chosen as the venue of the talks. Therefore, the important point is that we are now witnessing an example of coordination of "diplomacy and operational level". These are the specific features of the Iran-U.S. negotiations during this round of talks.

Arman-e Melli: Will Tayebnia will return to the cabinet as economy minister

In a report titled "Will Tayebnia return to Pasteur", Arman-e Melli said it is uncertain whether Ali Tayebnia will be named as economy minister. Initially, Pezeshkian introduced Abdolnaser Hemmati as the minister of economy to the Parliament, but his tenure was short-lived. Hemmati was the first minister who faced impeachment in the sitting government on March 2. 182 MPs voting against him. Several candidates, including Kamal Taghvinia and even Shamseddin Hosseinih, have been proposed for the position. However, Vice President for Executive Affairs Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah said on Saturday that after extensive expert reviews and multiple meetings, a list of qualified individuals has been proposed to the president for the position. He said Tayebnia is at the top of the list. He added that the suggestion is based on Tayebnia's knowledge, experience, and capabilities in economics, as well as his successful track record during his previous tenure in the ministry. The vice president for executive affairs emphasized that "the final decision on this matter rests with the president himself," noting that the president is keen on nominating an expert with experience and a clear plan to improve the country's economic situation, and he is following this matter

with particular sensitivity."

Iran: FATF approval to facilitate investment

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper highlighted the need to approve FATF and wrote: Economic realities and time conditions require the Expediency Council to approve bills related to FATF. Iran became a member of the BRICS and Shanghai organizations, which provided us with a large market. The economy is not a one-way relationship, but rather it must be possible to make joint investments and focus on building a joint project with other countries. Not much has happened economically in relation to the Shanghai and BRICS member countries. Companies, investors, and governments in these countries are very cautious about economic interactions with Iranians. This caution has made Iran's membership meaningless. These countries say, "We may be exposed to restrictions imposed by organizations such as FATF for cooperation with Iran." Therefore, if the member states of these two blocs find a safer place, they will refuse to cooperate with us. If the FATF issue is resolved, we can hope that the investment situation and interaction of other countries with Iran will be greatly facilitated.

Ham Mihan: Benjamin Netanyahu's sabotage

In an explanation, Ham Mihan addressed Netanyahu as the main opponent of any agreement between Iran and the U.S. and said: The Prime Minister of the Zionist regime is the main opponent of any agreement with Iran. He calls for a complete destruction of the nuclear program and any military capabilities that may be used against this regime. Accordingly, Netanyahu considers not only the nuclear program but also Iran's missile capabilities and support for resistance groups as an existential threat to his regime and calls for the elimination of all of them. Military victories in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria have emboldened Netanyahu. Although he has not yet explicitly opposed Trump's idea of negotiating and reaching an agreement with Iran, he will undoubtedly use all available means to sabotage the U.S.-Iran talks.

Iran mourns Pakistani workers killed in terror attack

TEHRAN – The Iranian embassy in Islamabad has issued a strong condemnation of what it called a "cowardly and inhumane attack" that claimed the lives of eight Pakistani citizens in Iran's southeastern Sistan-and-Baluchestan province.

Deeply saddened by the loss of life, the embassy stated on Sunday that terrorism poses a shared threat to the entire region.

It blamed "treacherous elements" supported by international terrorism for seeking to destabilize peace and security.

The statement further emphasized the urgent need for all nations to unite against terrorism and extremism, which have tragically taken countless lives over the years.

The eight Pakistani nationals were reportedly killed on Saturday when unidentified gunmen targeted their workshop in a village in Sistan-and-Baluchestan.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson has stated that they are in contact with Iranian officials and awaiting further details about the tragic incident, according to IRNA.

Also reacting to the terror act, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei described the attack as a "criminal act that is contrary to all Islamic principles and legal and humanitarian norms."

He expressed heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the government and people of Pakistan, during this difficult time.



Iran's embassy in Islamabad

Baghaei assured that the relevant security and judicial authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran are fully committed to identifying those responsible for this heinous crime.

He emphasized that justice will be pursued relentlessly against the perpetrators and instigators of such acts of violence.

The spokesman also condemned all forms of terrorism, calling it an "ominous phenomenon" that must be addressed through national and regional cooperation.

He reiterated Iran's readiness to enhance collaboration and coordination with neighboring countries to combat terrorism effectively.

Iran and Pakistan have been grappling with cross-border terrorism for several years now. Intelligence shows the groups are mostly supported by Israel.

Iran's ground force reinvented for modern warfare, says top commander

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"There's no trace of old, immobilized units anymore," Heidari stated, highlighting extensive structural reforms aimed at boosting operational agility and deterrence. According to the commander, the Ground Forces can now rapidly deploy to key strategic regions—including the west, southwest, and northeast—to neutralize emerging threats. "We've achieved a level of deterrence that prevents enemies from even considering aggression," he added.

The Commander outlined four critical traits for the Army's new generation of weapons: long-range precision, smart and AI-enabled functionality, full network integration, and operational interoperability.

"All our modern weapons are domestically developed or produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Defense," he noted, emphasizing



Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari speaks to the reporters in a press conference in Tehran on April 13, 2025.

ing self-reliance. "This smart and connected arsenal allows us to act decisively across land, air, and sea."

Heidari stressed the role of artificial intelligence and drone technology as key growth areas. "We've made serious investments in AI, especially in UAVs and anti-drone systems, in partnership with local scientists and tech firms," he said.

Beyond combat, the Army Ground Forces also provide extensive humanitarian and civil services. Heidari pointed to five fully operational engineering units capable of nationwide deployment, especially during natural disasters. "These units were the first to re-

spond during past earthquakes and played a crucial role during the war, losing 171 engineers in mine-field operations," he said.

He also highlighted the Army's medical capacity: "We operate 28 hospitals, with five new facilities added in recent years. During COVID-19, we mobilized 12,000 personnel and constructed eight hospitals."

Heidari announced a nationwide parade across 24 provinces on April 18 to mark National Army Day, where new and advanced weapons will be unveiled. "These next-generation weapons will play a key role in future battlefields," he said, in-

cluding the public to attend.

On missile readiness, Heidari said the Ground Forces now field long-range precision-guided systems suited to the Army's scale of operations, as well as cutting-edge anti-armor weapons with "fire and forget" technology.

Regarding border security, he outlined a four-year plan to secure Iran's eastern border with Afghanistan using a combination of physical barriers and integrated surveillance systems. "Year one is complete; we'll finish within three years."

Heidari also highlighted growing military cooperation with neighboring states. "We conducted joint drills with Azerbaijan and Oman last year, and more are on the way," he said. He noted progress in upgrading Army helicopters with domestic night-vision systems and long-range missiles, as well as increasing domestic helicopter production.

Concluding, Heidari reaffirmed the Army's loyalty to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and its mission to defend the Islamic Republic. "We do not seek to invade or violate others—but any misstep by the enemy will be met with a precise, intelligent, and decisive response."

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Esmail Baghaei made the remarks during an interview with Iranian TV, where he described indirect Saturday talks between Iran and the United States as "positive".

"We believe indirect negotiations offer the most effective path to resolving the sanctions issue," Baghaei explained, adding, "Direct negotiation is unproductive in the face of threats, sanctions, and intimidation. There is no ideological basis for this position."

An Iranian delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and an American delegation led by U.S. Special Envoy to West Asia Steve Witkoff sat in two separate halls for two and a half hours as Oman's top diplomat acted as go-between. The next round of talks is also scheduled to take place in Muscat next week, but other potential ones, if agreed, may be held in a different location. Oman will remain as mediator regardless, Baghaei announced.

The parties are negotiating Iran's nuclear program, which has been facing an uncertain future ever since U.S. President Donald Trump left an international accord (JCPOA) on the matter in 2018 and brought back sanctions that had been lifted under the deal.

The president, who made a return to the White House this January, was hoping to force Tehran to accept limitations on its military and foreign policy as well. He coupled the unprecedented economic pressure with occasional threats of military action, the last of which came early last month, when Trump claimed something "very bad" would happen to Iran if it refused to seal a new deal.

While Iran remained firm in its position – no dismantling of its nuclear program and no talks on its military and foreign policy – Trump showed flexibility in late March, telling the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a letter delivered by an Emirati diplomat, that he hopes to only discuss Tehran's nuclear program and exclude other issues.

During his Sunday interview, Baghaei reaffirmed Araghchi's earlier remarks, who had described the first round of negotiations as "positive" and "constructive".

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Persian Gulf Cooperation Council welcomes talks

Jassim Mohammed al-Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), commended Oman's hosting of the dialogue, calling it a "wise approach" to fostering regional peace. In a statement published on the GCC's official website, Budaiwi said the move reflects Muscat's longstanding role in promoting dialogue and building bridges between nations.

"The GCC countries, through

their solid international partnerships, continue to work toward peaceful solutions, regional stability, and global security," he emphasized.

Budaiwi also voiced hope that the talks would open new avenues for cooperation between Tehran and Washington, benefiting the broader region.

Arab states echo support toward diplomatic path

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, and Iraq all issued statements welcoming the talks and endorsing the diplomatic route as the preferred means to resolve long-standing tensions.

Riyadh, through a statement by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed strong support for Oman's mediation and the ongoing negotiations.

It reiterated its belief in dialogue as the key to addressing both regional and international disputes and expressed hope that the outcomes of the Tehran-Washington engagement would contribute to peace and collective regional efforts.

Kuwait similarly praised Oman's diplomatic role and expressed optimism that the negotiations would promote peace and stability.

Its Foreign Ministry affirmed Kuwait's commitment to dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution, calling the move a "positive step



forward."

Qatar highlighted the "positive spirit" that defined the talks and lauded both Iran and the U.S. for their constructive tone. Doha reaffirmed its full support for diplomacy, calling it central to ensuring peace, development, and security in the region.

The Iraqi Foreign Ministry emphasized its consistent stance in favor of negotiated solutions and welcomed what it called "positive indicators" from the first round of the dialogue. Baghdad expressed optimism that the Muscat talks would reduce tensions and help build trust between Iran and the United States.

Bahrain echoed these sentiments, praising Oman's efforts and calling for continued peaceful engagement. Manama affirmed its support for initiatives aimed at resolving disputes through dialogue, emphasizing the importance of diplomacy in fostering regional and international peace.

Egypt's Foreign Ministry issued one of the strongest endorsements of Oman's mediation, calling it both "vital and constructive." Cairo emphasized that political solutions—not military confrontation—are the only path forward in a region fraught with crises.

"The Sultanate's role is essential in preventing the region from sliding into broader conflict," the ministry said, while also commending the cooperative posture taken by both Iran and the U.S. Egypt expressed hope that the talks would lead not only to a bilateral understanding but also to a broader climate of calm—particularly in the Gaza Strip, where tensions remain high.

Iran's chief negotiator, Abbas Araghchi, stated ahead of the session that Tehran was offering diplomacy a "sincere opportunity" to resolve outstanding nuclear issues and achieve a lifting of sanctions, while also cautioning against prolonged negotiations.

Maximum preparedness of Armed Forces must be maintained: Leader

TEHRAN – A number of commanders from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Armed Forces met with their Commander-in-Chief Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Sunday. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution holds meetings with military officials around the same time each year to mark the new Iranian calendar year.

During the meeting, the Leader stressed the importance of continuously strengthening the armed forces' preparedness, both in equipment and capabilities, to fulfill their national duty.

He noted that the country's progress has caused anger and frustration among Iran's ill-wishers, while acknowledging that "there are shortcomings in certain areas like the economy, which undoubtedly require efforts to address."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the hardware preparedness of the Armed Forces as strengthening their armament capabilities, as well as enhancing their organizational, structural, and livelihood conditions.

"In addition to hardware preparedness, software preparedness – that is, faith in their goals and mission, and certainty in the justness of their path – is extremely important, especially given the hostile efforts aimed at undermining it," he explained.

He considered the very existence of an Islamic and independent Islamic system as a factor provoking enmities against it.



"What makes the enemy sensitive is not the name of the Islamic Republic, but rather the resolve of a country to be Muslim, independent, and true to its own identity, and to not rely on others for its dignity, which causes the anger of its enemies."

During the meeting, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution pointed to an example of the double standards of global oppressors in permitting themselves to possess the most severe and catastrophic types of weapons while deeming defensive progress by others as impermissible.

"Certainty, faith, determination, courage, and trust in God must exist to the fullest extent in the Armed Forces, for throughout history, ostentatious armies lacking these qualities have been defeated," he stated.

Ayatollah Khamenei considered the preservation and enhancement of software preparedness in society as requiring the efforts of various sectors,

including the national broadcasting organization [IRIB] and propagational institutions. "Fortunately, today, the country is not only far ahead in terms of hardware readiness compared to the past, but it is also very advanced in terms of software."

An example of this is the indescribable enthusiasm of hundreds and thousands of faithful and highly motivated young people eager to participate in fields that require struggle," he added.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution also congratulated all members of the Armed Forces and their families on the Iranian New Year and expressed gratitude for the valuable role that spouses and families play in supporting the forces as they carry out their missions.

At the beginning of this meeting, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, referred to the events of the year 1403 AH

[2024-2025] in Iran and the region. He highlighted the global awakening surrounding Palestine and the historic resistance of the people of Gaza and Lebanon against the crimes of the Zionist regime as proud peaks in the battle against oppression.

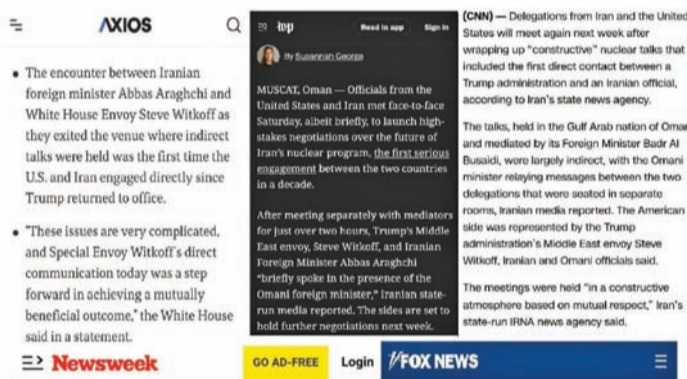
Additionally, he paid tribute to the memory of the martyred fighters and commanders of the Resistance.

Major General Bagheri listed the following among the programs and initiatives of the Armed Forces: the strengthening of Iran's defense and deterrence capabilities, the production of advanced equipment and weaponry, the holding of numerous high-quality military exercises, the establishment of complete coordination among the Armed Forces, contributions to the country's progress and development, the seamless integration of military actions with diplomatic efforts, and collaboration with the government to fulfill this year's slogan set by Imam Khamenei at the beginning of Nowrouz.

Major General Bagheri also thanked Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for his commitment to supporting the country's defense sector.

"With the support of the people, the Armed Forces are fully prepared and will ensure that they will leave Iran's enemies yearning in vain for their nefarious goals," he stated.

Oman talks remain indirect, exposing Trump's propaganda attempt



other out of "diplomatic courtesy" while they were leaving the halls to head to their capitals, according to Araghchi.

Trump made the announcement during a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, but Iran quickly set the record straight, clarifying that the talks would be indirect and mediated by Oman.

As announced by Tehran, Saturday's discussions in Muscat were indeed held indirectly, with Iranian and American delegates in separate rooms, communicating only through written messages passed by the Omani Foreign Minister.

A brief hello between Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff was the only direct contact.

The two officials greeted each

other out of "diplomatic courtesy" while they were leaving the halls to head to their capitals, according to Araghchi.

Major U.S. news outlets, including CNN, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Axios, Fox News, and CBS, reported on the indirect talks and confirmed their Tehran-announced nature without even mentioning Trump's earlier claim, showing a perhaps unwanted rejection of what many see as a disingenuous pressure tactic against Iran.

Experts suggest Trump's misrepresentation was likely a play to project an image of U.S. leverage, control, and proactiveness.

The second round of the talks, set for April 19th, will also be held indirectly.

The White House described Saturday's talks with Iran as "positive" and Iran's foreign ministry said the indirect discussions were held in a "constructive atmosphere," with both sides agreeing to a second round of negotiations next week.

TEHRAN – President Trump's claim last week that the U.S. and Iran would hold direct talks in

Oman on April 12 turned out to be false, leading many to believe it was a clumsy attempt at psy-

UN human rights mandates are politically motivated: Iranian expert

TEHRAN – In an interview with the Tehran Times, Dr. Hesamuddin Boroumand, a human rights expert and scholar, challenged the legitimacy of the UN's Special Rapporteur and fact-finding mission on Iran, noting their politicized agendas and Western bias.

The full text of the interview is as follows:

The UN Human Rights Council has once again extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, along with the so-called fact-finding mission, despite repeated objections from Iran. What do you believe is the real purpose behind this continuation?

The very basis for appointing a Special Rapporteur on human rights for Iran—something that started in 2011—lacks legal and legitimate standing. Iran had already been cooperating positively on human rights issues through the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) mechanism, and had provided documented responses to questions and doubts. Therefore, the appointment of the Special Rapporteur was entirely political and biased. From 2011 until now, four rapporteurs—Ahmed Shaheed, Asma Jahangir, Javaid Rehman, and Mai Sato—have acted based on political motives and human rights pressure against Iran. In fact, their collective reports read like dictated statements from anti-Revolution forces.

The aim of renewing the Special Rapporteur's mandate is to keep the pressure and human rights attacks against Iran alive. Now that the so-called fact-finding mission has also been renewed, the goal is to work in tandem with the Special Rapporteur to implement biased human rights scenarios against Iran.

Ms. Mai Sato, the current Special Rapporteur, has focused heavily on capital punishment, without distinguishing between execution and "qisas" (retributive justice). What is your response to this approach?

Her approach reflects a deliberate continuation of the flawed methods of previous rapporteurs. She seems determined to portray Iran as a violent nation, ignoring legal and religious distinctions between execution and qisas. Essentially, Iran is being condemned for taking legal action against drug traffickers, murderers, and those who commit severe crimes against society. Under the label of human rights, she's defending individuals who have harmed public safety and violated others' rights.

Unlike her predecessors, Ms. Sato does not come from a Muslim background. Do you see this as a shift in the UN's approach?

The previous three rapporteurs were Muslim according to written guidelines, although they were not committed to Islamic teachings. Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, in his first report, accused Iran of violating human rights over

its inheritance laws, even though inheritance is a Qur'anic injunction.

Ms. Sato doesn't even have the outward appearance that the previous three rapporteurs had, and clearly, she has been placed in this role as a woman—under the banner of the so-called "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement—to make the narrative more believable to public opinion.

There appears to be a significant presence of women in both the Special Rapporteur's team and the fact-finding mission. Do you think this is part of a broader strategy?

Yes, this is part of a calculated effort to frame the human rights narrative with a gendered façade. The idea is to create the impression of defending women's rights while pushing a larger agenda. They are trying to turn the situation of women in Iran into a crisis—the "women's issue"—and use it as a tool to interfere in Iran's internal affairs. Behind this campaign are Western powers, particularly the United States, which seek to undermine Iran's traditional family structure. They promote Western gender models while deliberately sidestepping the concept of family rights, which is where their own systems are most vulnerable.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Miodrag Bozovic at epicenter of Esteghlal's deepest crisis

TEHRAN – Esteghlal, one of Iran's most storied football clubs, are currently navigating their darkest chapter in history. A disheartening 1-0 defeat at the hands of Foolad on Thursday, played in front of their own supporters at the Azadi Stadium, has only intensified the turmoil engulfing the Tehran giants.

At the heart of this crisis lies the struggling figure of Miodrag Bozovic. The Montenegrin coach is enduring what is arguably the most challenging period of his distinguished 25-year managerial career. Astonishingly, Bozovic is currently averaging a mere one-sixth of a point per game during his tenure at Esteghlal, marking the worst statistical return of his entire coaching journey.

Under Bozovic's guidance, Esteghlal has endured a calamitous run of seven matches without a single victory. This dire sequence includes three draws and four damaging defeats.

The Esteghlal side of the 24th league season appears to be sinking deeper into quicksand. Every struggle to escape only pulls the Blues further down, culminating in a dismal 12th position in the 16-team league standings after the 26th week of competition.

In the aftermath of the damaging loss to Foolad, the Esteghlal club issued a statement on Friday morning. The club's management and board members declared their unwavering attention to the recent disastrous results, acknowledging the justified criticism from fans and experts. The statement further promised swift decision-making following a thorough review of the situation, with the outcome to be communicated to the Esteghlal fans.

Ali Nazari Juybari, who unexpectedly became CEO just three months ago, is reportedly facing imminent dismissal, with conflicting reports about his future at the club.

Miodrag Bozovic's own record since taking charge of Esteghlal paints a grim picture. His failure to secure a victory in seven consecutive matches marks the worst start for any coach in the club's illustrious history.

This abysmal performance, which has dragged Esteghlal dangerously close to the relegation zone, has understandably triggered outrage among the fans and the club's upper management. Decisions regarding Bozovic's future are expected soon.

Intriguingly, the potential solution to this crisis might lie within the club's own ranks. Mojtaba Jabari, a revered former Esteghlal player and the current team coach, has emerged as the leading candidate to replace Bozovic until the end of the season. Esteghlal's management is hopeful of receiving a positive response from Jabari.

Unlike Bozovic, Jabari joined Esteghlal on a long-term contract, serving as both a coach for the senior team and the technical director of the academy. Should Jabari agree, a change in leadership could occur before Esteghlal's crucial match against Gol Gohar Sirjan next Wednesday. This would mark the sixth, and potentially final, managerial change for Esteghlal this season.

Following the defeat to Foolad, Bozovic publicly dismissed the possibility of his own resignation but stated his willingness to accept any decision made by the club regarding his future. The once-respected coach now finds himself at the epicenter of Esteghlal's deepest crisis.

Tabiat beat Sagesse, secure second place

TEHRAN – Tabiat Basketball secured a second-place finish in the 2024/2025 FIBA WASL-West Asia League after escaping past Sagesse SC, 75-73, at the Stade Nouhad Naufal Saturday night.

The defending Iran Basketball League champions almost squandered a lead as big as 14 points when the opposition got to within one, 74-73, with 25.1 seconds left, but the breaks of the game went in their favor.

Perry Petty got fouled by Shabazz Muhammad near mid-court with 19.8 seconds left and went on to give his side a bit more breathing room with a split from the line, settling as well

what would be the final count.

A missed layup by Jad Khalil after an attempt to take matters in his own hands just before time expired was all that Tabiat needed to come away with the victory, leaving the Green Castle settling for third.

"We are happy we got second place in this tournament," expressed head coach Mehran Shahintab as the club secured another top two finish for Iran in the pan-regional competition's Sub-Zone League.

A total of five players finished in double figures in the victory, with Croatian big man Ivan Buva leading the balanced attack with 16 points alongside 15 rebounds for yet another double-double performance.

Marc Khouiery, on the other hand, led Sagesse with 19 points and 8 rebounds in the rally that fell just short, fiba.com reported.

Sagesse dropped to 3-4 in the standings but are already assured of a Final 8 trip as well. They will look to end their campaign on a high note when they take on Al Difaa Al Jawii on Sunday at 17:45 local time.

Jahanbakhsh scores as Heerenveen lose to Sparta Rotterdam

TEHRAN – Sparta Rotterdam football team defeated Heerenveen 3-1 in the 2024-25 Eredivisie Saturday night.

The host started brightly as Patrick van Aanholt hit the post, while Andries Noppert denied Tobias Lauritsen. Just before the half hour mark, Mitchell van Bergen made it 1-0 with a close-range tap in.

Sparta remained in control and eventually, Lauritsen made it 2-0 with a penalty. Substitute Nokkvi Thorisson then added a third with an excellent strike.

Alireza Jahanbakhsh pulled one back with a penalty before the end but Sparta eased to victory and moved up to eighth.

Heerenveen sit in 9th place.

Persepolis linked with French forward Bifouma

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club have set their sight on signing French forward Thievy Bifouma.

The 32-year-old player joined Iranian team Esteghlal Khuzestan in August and has stolen the show in the Iranian league.

Persepolis failed to sign the winger in the January transfer window and the media reports suggest that the Iranian club are going to sign the player in the summer.

Bifouma has played in Greek side A.E. Kifisia, Turkish teams Bursaspor and Sivasspor, Spanish teams Espanyol and Granada and English team West Bromwich Albion.

Bifouma has previously worked with ?small Kartal in Süper Lig.

Tayebi named 2025 SAT Futsal Championship MVP

TEHRAN – Hossein Tayebi was chosen as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the SAT Futsal Championship Thailand 2025.

He helped Iran's men's futsal team finish in second place in the event. Tayebi scored three goals in the competition.

Team Melli defeated host Thailand 6-2 on Saturday and Tayebi scored two goals.

He had scored against Kuwait, where Iran won the match 5-0.

Iran also lost to Russia 2-1 in its opening match.

The high-stakes four-team futsal tournament took place from April 9-12, 2025, at Terminal Hall, Terminal 21 Korat, Thailand.

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

Bushehr chamber calls for establishing Iran trade center in Qatar

TEHRAN – The head of Bushehr Chamber of Commerce has called on the Iranian government to establish a national trade center in Qatar with operational leadership from Bushehr Province, citing its central role in trade between Iran and the Persian Gulf state.

Speaking during a meeting of the Bushehr Province Public-Private Dialogue Council, which included officials from the Trade Promotion Organization and the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade, Khoshid Gazderazi said Bushehr's position as a strategic coastal province makes it an ideal hub for managing Iran's commercial relations with Qatar.

The proposal aligns with Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, which places greater emphasis on a resilient, sea-based economy. Gazderazi emphasized that the revival of Iran's maritime trade potential requires more focused policy attention, including delegating national responsibilities like foreign trade centers to relevant coastal provinces.

The official criticized the weakening of the Trade Promotion Organization due to both internal and external constraints, including sanctions, and urged a full restoration of its role. He also called for an end to overlapping involvement by various ministries in trade affairs, recommend-



ing that all trade policy be centralized under the Industry Ministry.

The Bushehr chamber head also proposed amendments to Articles 60 and 63 of the national maritime economy policy framework to give the ministry a clear policymaking role. He stressed that port cities like Dayyer in Bushehr have been instrumental in Iran's exports to Qatar and should be empowered accordingly.

Gazderazi warned that the 135-percent hike in the Exchange Rate Translation System (ETS) rate could trigger inflation, discourage investment, disrupt production chains, cause factory closures, lead to job losses, and stimulate smuggling. He urged the TPO to take immediate action.

Iran to implement 26 economic growth packages in 2025

From Page 1 ▶ According to Azvaji, the 26 packages were drafted by various government agencies last year and consolidated into a unified action plan to be rolled out this year. He emphasized that several components are directly linked to improving economic conditions, including purchasing power, by tackling inflation and enhancing household welfare.

He also noted that the country has taken preparatory steps to shield the economy from sanctions and geopolitical challenges, with action plans approved in five strategic areas: health-care, essential goods supply, oil, central banking, and industry.

Boosting trade ties with Russia and the EAEU

Azvaji highlighted new efforts to strengthen trade with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), citing historically limited economic interaction between Iran and the bloc. In line with directives from the Iranian president and the head of the Planning and Budget Organization—and responding to Russia's interest—Iran developed an operational framework to enhance

trade with EAEU member states.

This framework, coordinated with ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Oil, and the Trade Promotion Organization, outlines field-level actions and has been submitted for approval to the Economic Council's Commission. Once ratified, it will become a formal part of Iran's trade strategy with the region.

Involving key institutions in budget planning

Azvaji said another significant achievement in 2024 was securing active participation from key macroeconomic institutions in drafting the 2025–26 budget bill. He noted that detailed models were used to assess Iran's tax revenue potential for 2025, and a comprehensive economic overview was shared with the parliament.

He also pointed to the implementation of Articles 3 and 118 of the Seventh Development Plan, which address the mobilization of financial resources to sustain economic growth. A structured plan for resource mobilization across banking, capital markets, and foreign trade was prepared.

Iran's oil minister to visit Iraq for energy talks

TEHRAN – Iran's Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad announced plans to travel to Iraq in the coming days at the invitation of his Iraqi counterpart, highlighting strong bilateral ties across various sectors, particularly in the oil industry and joint petroleum projects.

According to the state broadcaster IRIB, Paknejad said previous discussions between the two neighbors had covered a range of potential areas for cooperation. "We hope to finalize these topics and sign memorandums of understanding in the energy sector during this visit," he added.

The minister emphasized the "very good" level of interaction and relations between Tehran and Baghdad, especially in oil sector collaboration and project implementation.

In March, Paknejad and Iraq's Electricity Minister Ziyad Ali Fadel met in Tehran to discuss expanding cooperation in oil, gas, petrochemicals, and electricity.

Paknejad has repeatedly underscored Iran's commitment to expanding energy ties with its neighbors as part of a broader international engagement strategy.

Iran reports 30% surge in gas exports to Turkey

TEHRAN – Iran increased its natural gas exports to neighboring Turkey by 30.32 percent in 2024, according to a recent report published by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Iran exports gas to Turkey via a 2,577 km (1,601 miles) pipeline running from Tabriz to Ankara.

The surge boosted Iran's share of Turkey's gas market to 13.56 percent, up from 10 percent the previous year. The report underscores Iran's position as the third-largest gas supplier to Turkey, trailing behind key competitors Russia and Azerbaijan.

Maintaining and expanding this market share

is crucial for Iran as it continues to compete for a stronger foothold in the region's energy sector.

In September 2024, Turkey's state energy company, BOTA?, held negotiations with the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) regarding potential long-term gas import agreements. The discussions took place during a visit to Tehran by BOTA? General Manager Abdulvahit Fidan, who met with NIGC Managing Director Saeed Tavakkoli.

The two sides reportedly explored both direct gas deliveries from Iran to Turkey and the possibility of transiting Turkmen gas through Iran to Turkey.

Iran's annual Exports to Eurasian Economic Union rise 20%

TEHRAN – Iran's exports to member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) rose by 20 percent in the previous Iranian calendar year (ended on March 19), reaching over \$2.0 billion, according to figures released by Iran's Customs Administration.

The volume of exports to EAEU countries totaled 5,059 million metric tons—up 21 percent compared to the previous year.

Breakdown of exports includes \$1.121 billion to Russia, \$505 million to Armenia, \$278 million to Kazakhstan, \$111 million to Kyrgyzstan, and \$21 million to Belarus.

Iran also imported 2,174 million metric tons of goods worth \$1.51 billion from EAEU member states in the same period. This marks a 39 percent decline in import volume and a



20 percent drop in value compared to the previous year.

On December 25, 2023, Iran and the EAEU signed a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aimed at eliminating tariffs on a significant portion of goods traded between

them. The EAEU comprises Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. This agreement builds upon a provisional arrangement from 2018 that led to a notable increase in mutual trade, which grew from \$2.4 billion in 2019 to \$6.2 bil-

lion in 2022. ?

Under the terms of the new FTA, approximately 90 percent of traded goods will benefit from reduced or zero tariffs, encompassing over 95 percent of the current trade volume between Iran and EAEU member states. This development is expected to further enhance trade flows, with projections suggesting that mutual trade could reach \$18–20 billion within the next five to seven years. ?

The agreement is set to come into effect on May 15, 2025, following the completion of ratification procedures by all participating countries. Once implemented, the FTA will not only facilitate increased trade but also promote economic integration and cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, industry, and energy between Iran and the EAEU nations.

Iranian delegation visits Afghanistan to advance Khaf-Herat railway, boost transit and trade

TEHRAN – A high-level Iranian delegation has traveled to Afghanistan to explore avenues for expanding bilateral transport infrastructure, with a key focus on developing the Khaf-Herat railway line and addressing transit challenges between the two neighbors.

According to Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the delegation—comprised of senior officials from the ministry, the Foreign Ministry's Economic Affairs Department, and the South Khorasan provincial government—is in Afghanistan to assess transit potential, promote economic cooperation, and facilitate private sector engagement in reconstruction and housing projects.

A central item on the agenda is the further development of the Khaf-Herat railway line and the Maahi Rud–Farah route. The railway, a key region-

al corridor connecting eastern Iran to western Afghanistan, has long been seen as a vital link for regional trade and Afghanistan's access to free waters.

Seyyed Abdollah Arjaei, Iran's Deputy Transport Minister for Planning and Resource Management, stated that the government has set a target of increasing national transit volume to 40 million tons annually. "This goal cannot be realized without strengthening ties with neighboring countries and completing east-west and north-south corridors," he said.

Arjaei emphasized that Afghanistan's strategic need for access to European markets and open seas creates an opportunity for Iran to boost its transit revenues and position itself as a regional trade hub.

The delegation also explored opportunities for

Iranian private firms to engage in Afghanistan's post-conflict reconstruction. Discussions were held on facilitating the export of construction materials, transferring technical expertise, and involving Iranian companies in residential housing projects across Afghanistan.

Arjaei noted that Iran aims to create a favorable environment for Iranian private companies to participate in Afghanistan's rebuilding efforts, especially in transport infrastructure and housing.

The visit comes amid broader regional efforts to strengthen economic integration and reduce Afghanistan's trade dependence on limited border crossings. The full operation of the Khaf-Herat railway could play a transformative role in connecting Afghanistan to global markets via Iran's Chabahar and Bandar Abbas ports.

Non-oil export from Bushehr province up 12% in a year

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil export from Bushehr province, in the southwest of Iran, increased by 12 percent in the past Iranian calendar year, (ended on March 20), according to the province's governor-general.

Speaking with Foroud Asgari, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Arsalan Zare said that over 30 million tons of non-oil products worth \$12 billion were exported from the province in the previous year.

The official also announced that 900,000 tons of non-oil commodities valued at \$2.8 billion were imported to the province in the previous year.

Referring to the important position of the Bushehr customs offices,

he emphasized the need to increase the facilities and equipment of the provincial customs.

He stated that given the privileged position of the Bushehr customs offices in earning foreign currency income, improving the level of their activities is emphasized.

As previously announced by an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported over 152 million tons of non-oil goods worth \$57.8 billion in the past Iranian calendar year.

This marked a 10 percent increase in volume and a 15.62 percent rise in value compared to the previous year, Abolfazl Akbarpour, the IRICA deputy head for planning and international affairs, stated.

Imports totaled 39.3 million tons valued at \$72.4 billion, representing a 0.77 percent decline in weight but an 8.22 percent increase in value from the previous year. The result was a non-oil trade deficit of \$14.6 billion, largely due to the import of over \$8.0 billion worth of raw gold bars, which accounted for 11.12 percent of the total import value.

Iran's main non-oil exports included natural gas, liquefied propane and butane, methanol, liquefied petroleum gases and hydrocarbon gases, and gas condensates.

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

Other leading exports were petroleum bitumen, urea, non-alloy

iron and steel billets, iron or steel bars, and polyethylene.

The top destinations for Iran's exports were China at \$14.8 billion, Iraq at \$11.9 billion, the United Arab Emirates at \$7.2 billion, Turkey at \$6.8 billion, Pakistan and Afghanistan at \$2.4 billion each, and India at \$1.9 billion. These seven countries accounted for \$47.6 billion, or 82.3 percent of Iran's total non-oil export value.

On the import side, essential goods such as corn feed, soybean meal, genetically modified soybeans, rice, and sunflower seed oil were among the top items. Other key imports included smartphones, tractors, and auto parts.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$6.8b to Turkey in a year

TEHRAN – Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$6.8 billion to Turkey 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 Turkey was Iran's fourth top export destination in the previous year.

Exporting commodities valued at \$12.4 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third top source of import in that year, the official added.

On March 11, Iran's ambassador to Turkey announced a significant rise in bilateral trade between Tehran and Ankara, stating that the trade volume between the two nations reached \$11.8 billion last year and has surpassed \$17.5 billion as of February this year. The figure is expected to hit \$19 billion by year-end.

According to IRNA, citing Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Mohammad-Hossein Habibollahzadeh made the remarks during a virtual session of the Iran-Turkey Joint Transport Committee, emphasizing the importance of transit development. He noted that transit and transport volumes between the two countries have increased by \$7.0 billion this year, though further infrastructural improvements are required in rail, air, maritime, and port sectors.

Habibollahzadeh highlighted the significant traffic between Iran and Turkey, stating that six million passengers and approximately 330,000 trucks crossed the two countries' borders last



year. In response to the growing trade volume, both countries have agreed to increase border crossings from three to five. Expanding rail connectivity and increasing flights are also part of the agenda.

The envoy welcomed the swift follow-up on recent meetings between the two countries' transport ministers, which reflects a strong commitment to expanding transport and logistics cooperation. He expressed hope that key decisions would be made to further advance transport ties between Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development and Turkey's Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

Iran's Deputy Transport Minister, Saeed Rasouli, emphasized the strategic importance of Iran and Turkey in the southern Caspian Sea corri-

dor linking China to Europe. He said that transit would remain a key subject in upcoming ministerial talks between the two countries.

Turkey's Deputy Transport Minister, Durmuş Ener, reaffirmed Ankara's commitment to expanding transport and transit cooperation, underscoring the need for modern infrastructure and necessary investments. He also stressed the importance of completing the Iran-Turkey railway connection at the Cheshmeh Soraya border crossing.

The meeting focused on maximizing road, rail, maritime, and air transport cooperation, as well as resolving existing transit challenges. Other key issues included facilitating border crossings, addressing restrictions and tariffs on Iranian and Turkish fleets, and adjusting fuel pricing for Turkish trucks in Iran.

Protestors across the world demand arms embargo on Israel, end to Gaza blockade



NYC PROTEST



OTAWA PROTEST



PARIS PROTEST

From page 1 ▶ In Ireland, activists once again demonstrated their unwavering support for Gaza, reinforcing their long-standing commitment to the Palestinian cause.

A large group of protesters assembled outside the U.S. embassy in London to demonstrate their opposition to U.S. policies regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and their demand for alternative solutions.

Sydney residents joined thousands of others who marched

through the streets to express their anger about the blockade, which has caused severe suffering to Gaza's inhabitants.

The protesters displayed flags while chanting slogans as they repeated the global demand to stop the humanitarian crisis that threatens the lives of 2.3 million people in the Gaza Strip.

The reaction throughout Europe reached the same intense level. Thousands of protesters marched through Milan, Italy, and Stockholm, Sweden, to condemn "geno-

cide" in Gaza.

They joined the international call for accountability by Israel and those countries aiding and abetting the regime in its atrocious acts in the coastal enclave that houses 2.3 million people.

In Paris, peace activists held a vigil in solidarity with Palestinians, sharply criticizing the U.S.-funded Israeli military actions that have fueled the conflict.

In Tokyo, protesters assembled outside the German embassy

to condemn the suppression of pro-Palestine activists in Germany following a police crackdown on supporters in Berlin.

These global protests underscore the growing international pressure on governments to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

As tensions escalate, the demand for a peaceful resolution and an end to violence remains at the forefront of the international agenda.

AUB hosts companies funding Israel



From page 1 ▶ It also distributes L'Oréal products; its only factory in West Asia is located in Migdal Ha'Emek. It is built on the ruins of the Palestinian village of al-Mujaydal.

GroupM also took part in the event; it collaborates with Israeli technology companies specializing in tracking activists on social media platforms by removing any pro-Palestine content.

Another company was AlphaSights, a Tel Aviv-based company, which advises investment funds in support of settlement projects in the West Bank.

The AUB's job fair is nothing more than an event promotion; its role is to promote Zionism, imperialism, capitalism, and every anti-resistance effort.

While claiming to teach the values of justice and human rights, the AUB pushes its students toward working with brutal capitalist companies that fund the occupying regime and perpetuate racism and slavery.

Also, among these companies is the infamous Emirati company Maids.cc, which mis-

treates domestic workers as slaves, treating African domestic workers differently than Filipinos.

At the beginning of the ongoing war on Gaza, the AUB blatantly mourned its researcher and head of the Department of Pathology at the Islamic University and Dar al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza, who was killed in Israeli bombardments. It said: "Dr. Mohammed Dabour has passed away."

Following harsh criticism, the obituary was amended to read: "Dr. Dabour was killed in an airstrike on the Gaza Strip," without daring to mention the Israeli criminality!

During the severe economic crisis facing Lebanon, the AUB overstepped its academic role and made huge profits by pricing its educational and healthcare services beyond the purchasing power of the majority of Lebanese citizens.

It has also imposed an academic staff monitored by the U.S. surveillance den (embassy), which implements a punitive policy against students who express opposition to Israel.

The AUB's project began in 1863 when the New York State Assembly passed a resolution declaring that the United States had a foreign policy regarding the West Asia region and that it demanded a share of the cheese shared by the Europeans.

The resolution supported the establishment of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (that was later named AUB) and Robert College on the Bosphorus in Turkey, with the blessing of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled the Greater

Syria.

In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president and began to invest politically outside the American continent.

After France's defeat during the Second World War and the decline of its role in the Levant, the political role of the Jesuit University in Beirut declined and was transferred to the AUB; a hospital was also attached to it, becoming an integral part of its local and regional role.

In 1945, the San Francisco Conference was held to draft the United Nations Charter, with the participation of representatives from 50 countries; 19 of the participants were AUB graduates, including Charles Malek, who was appointed the first Lebanese ambassador to the United States.

Fares El-Khoury represented Syria in a delegation of six alumni who held ministerial and political leadership positions in Syria.

Iraq was represented by eight figures at the conference. Its central banker, some of its ministers, and influential politicians were AUB graduates.

The Iranian representative was also an AUB graduate; during the premiership of Shapour Bakhtiar under the rule of the Iranian Shah, and later the CIA and U.S. State Department pinned their last hopes on his government to quell the Islamic Revolution in 1978.

Jimmy Carter sought through this government to save his major base in the Middle East from slipping into the hands of the others; six of its members were AUB graduates.

Israelis bomb critical Gaza hospital

From page 1 ▶ According to the hospital's medical director, the departments most heavily impacted by the bombing were emergency, trauma, laboratory, pharmacy, and radiology.

"The hospital has gone out of service due to the Israeli bombing," he stated.

The Gaza Health Ministry condemned the attack, accusing Israeli forces of deliberately targeting the medical center.

"They bombed a building within the hospital complex, completely destroying it and forcing the evacuation of patients and staff," the ministry said in a statement.

Al-Ahli was one of Gaza City's critical medical facilities, now rendered non-operational due to the airstrikes.

"Hundreds of patients and injured people had to be evacuated in the middle of the night. Many are now in the streets without medical care, putting their lives at serious risk," said ministry spokes-

person Khalil Al-Deqran in an interview with Reuters.

The ministry called on international institutions to take immediate action to protect Gaza's health sector, urging compliance with international law and humanitarian agreements.

It warned of ongoing violations that continue to endanger patients and healthcare facilities.

In a statement, Hamas described the bombing as "a new war crime committed by the fascist occupation army" and accused Israeli forces of carrying out "brutal crimes" across the Gaza Strip.

The resistance movement asserted that the attack underscores Israeli disregard for laws, norms, and humanitarian standards, accusing the U.S. of providing cover and support for the assault.

Hamas held the U.S. administration "fully responsible" for the bombing, stating the strike would not have occurred without a green light from Washington.



"How can the world, especially the UN Security Council, remain silent in the face of these unprecedented crimes of the modern era?" the movement asked, highlighting the bombing of hospitals and the displacement of wounded civilians.

This is not the first time al-Ahli Hospital has been targeted. In October 2023, an Israeli strike on a parking lot within the hospital compound killed and injured hundreds of Palestinians.

The Zeitenwende is real this time

Germany's defense upgrade is necessary but could upset Europe's balance of power

By Michael Kimmage and Sudha David-Wilp

For many years, Germany has needed to dramatically expand its defenses, and today, it finally seems ready to do so. When Russia annexed Crimea and invaded eastern Ukraine in 2014, Germany's response was muted. Berlin held inconclusive talks with the Kremlin, imposed a handful of sanctions, and then quietly returned to business as usual with Moscow. After Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced a Zeitenwende, or "turning point." He promised to increase defense spending, send more aid to Ukraine, and rapidly reduce Ger-

many's energy dependence on Russia. In the end, the Zeitenwende was a turning point in name only. Hamstrung by coalition infighting, Scholz failed to overhaul Germany's defenses.

Now, however, German leaders are poised to deliver the transformation that circumstances demand. The Bundestag held elections in February, and Germany's incoming government seems ready to declare its independence from Washington. Germany is preparing for a future in which the United States no longer reliably guarantees Europe's security. To upgrade its army and kick-start its economy, Berlin is ending its long addiction to

austerity, lifting a constitutional constraint that since 2009 has limited annual debt spending to a mere 0.35 percent of gross domestic product.

This new Germany will be able to support Ukraine without having to walk behind Washington. Germany will be less bound to an erratic American president who refuses to consult with Europe on Ukraine. Kyiv will benefit from Berlin's newfound independence, and Germany's example will likely encourage other European countries to step up their support for Ukraine.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

US airstrikes on Yemen leave 338 civilian casualties since mid-March

Yemen's Ministry of Health announced that ongoing U.S. airstrikes across the country have resulted in 338 civilian casualties, including women and children, since mid-March.

According to Health Ministry spokesperson Anis al-Asbahi, 117 people have been killed and 221 others injured in the strikes, particularly since March 16. Speaking to Al Mayadeen, al-Asbahi condemned the attacks, highlighting the human toll on Yemeni civilians.

This comes shortly after the United States warplanes carried out a series of airstrikes across central and northern Yemen late on Saturday, hitting targets in the governorates of al-Bayda and Saada.

In a separate assault, three U.S. airstrikes targeted the al-Sahleen area in the al-Salem subdistrict of Kitaf district, situated east of the Saada Governorate. The area lies near Yemen's northern frontier, a region frequently targeted in the ongoing U.S. aggression.



In March, the United States launched a military campaign against Yemen, justifying the assault as a necessary move to protect international shipping lanes. However, the escalation in airstrikes coincides with Yemen's renewed military operations in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

The country's leadership has vowed to continue targeting Israeli interests and positions until the devastating war on Gaza comes to an end.

Vast majority of West Bank residents killed by Israel die in north: UN

OCHA has found that as of Thursday, more than 90 percent of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank this year were in the six northern governorates of Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, Tulkarem, Qalqilya and Salfit.

From March 5 through Monday, Israeli forces killed nine Palestinians, including two children, and wounded at least 130, the UN agency reported.

Amid a widening Israeli military operation in the West Bank, the UN and its partners are

providing food, water, sanitation and health services to families displaced by the military.

The report found that in Jenin city, at least "15,000 people still depend on water trucking to have access to water".

"Since the beginning of the Israeli forces' operation in the northern West Bank on January 21, humanitarian partners have distributed over 3,000 hygiene kits, about 320 water storage tanks, 20 mobile latrines, and more than 1,000 solid waste containers," it said.

Canada's Tory leader vows to deport foreigners protesting Israeli crimes



N Netanyahu over remarks on the war in Gaza.

"We will bring in tougher laws to target vandalism, hate marches that break laws [and] violent attacks based on ethnicity and religion," Poilievre told reporters.

"Anyone who is here on a visitor visa who carries out law-breaking will be deported from this country," he added, words echoing messaging from the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, on the campaign trail, vowed Saturday to deport foreigners from Canada who hold protests against Israeli crimes in Gaza, accusing them of promoting antisemitism.

Poilievre was campaigning in an Ottawa electoral district contested by Liberal leader and Prime Minister Mark Carney, who this week drew the ire of his Israeli counterpart Benjamin

Poilievre has in the past sought to distance himself from Trump, whose economic attacks and threats to annex the United States' northern neighbor have outraged the Canadian electorate.

The Canadian conservative decried pro-Palestinian protests, saying they were contributing to a worsening situation with regard to what he called hate crimes.

China holds nuclear security drill in eastern Fujian

China on Saturday held its sixth nuclear security drill in the eastern province of Fujian, the country's Atomic Energy Authority said, Anadolu Agency reported.

The drill, which is held every other year, tests emergency and crisis management at nuclear sites through simulated intrusions and attacks under various scenarios, the authority said in a statement. It aims to boost risk awareness among nuclear facility operators and improve

coordination among agencies.

According to the authority, the drill involves multiple agencies, including the Public Security Ministry, and tests both response and combat capabilities under extreme conditions.

China currently operates 58 nuclear power plants and is building nearly 30 more, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

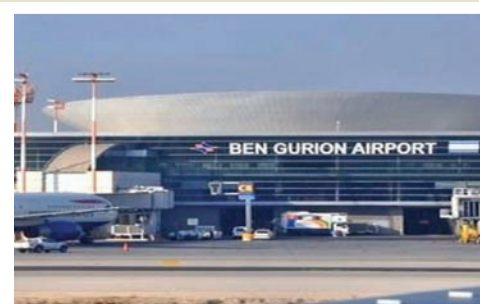
The country also possesses 600 operational nuclear warheads.

Ben Gurion Airport closed due to air raid sirens

Air raid sirens rang out in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv as Yemen, once in a while, launches drones or missiles at Israel for its brutal acts in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli police said late on Sunday that they are searching the area for possible rocket impact sites and have urged residents to remain in protected areas.

Israel's Ben Gurion International Airport has postponed takeoffs and landings due to the sirens, Al Jazeera reported.



Dinosaur footprint discovered in Zarand becomes county's top tourist attraction



TEHRAN - A recently discovered dinosaur footprint in the Deh-Alireza region of Dasht-khak, located in northern Zarand county in Iran's Kerman province, has been identified as the area's most significant emerging tourist attraction, according to local heritage and academic officials.

On Saturday, Mohammad Eslami, head of the Zarand Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, accompanied by university leaders from the region, visited the site of the ancient footprint. The visit aimed to assess the site's importance in terms of scientific value and its potential for sustainable tourism development.

"This dinosaur footprint is not only a treasured historical and scientific discovery, but it also holds great potential to become a unique tourist destination," Eslami stated. He added that the presence of such prehistoric evidence could support the growth of scientific tourism and offer deeper insights into the geological and environmental history of the region.

Eslami emphasized that efforts to protect the site and develop it for tourism purposes would begin soon, as part of broader plans to preserve Zarand's natural heritage while promoting responsible visitation.

Samanbar Mirzaei, president of Islamic Azad University of Zarand, also took part in the visit and highlighted the academic significance of the discovery. "This site presents new opportunities for research and education in the field of paleontology. It can enrich

the curriculum for students and serve as a foundation for further scientific exploration," he noted.

Local officials and tourism stakeholders were also present during the visit and discussed plans to organize educational and scientific tours. The development of proper infrastructure to support tourism at the site was highlighted as a key priority.

According to ISNA, the discovery builds on earlier work from the summer of 2002, when a joint Iranian-Brazilian research team found skeletal remains of dinosaurs in the Neizar Valley near Deh-Alireza village. These included a theropod dinosaur tooth and several unidentified bone fragments from the surrounding areas.

The newly unearthed footprint belongs to a herbivorous dinosaur believed to have lived around 180 million years ago during the Jurassic period. The track is embedded on a sloped rock surface; unfortunately, part of it has been damaged due to neglect.

These findings confirm that both carnivorous and herbivorous dinosaurs once inhabited the region now known as Zarand, the news said.

Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque, and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Tehran, a pioneer in history-based archaeology

TEHRAN - A member of the faculty of the Archaeological Research Institute, Ahmad Chaichi-Amirkhiz, has attached importance to the category of archaeology in tourism by creating a relationship between historical archaeology and historical tourism.

On Sunday, he stated that the relationship between culture tourism and history-based archaeology and filling the data gap related to historical texts is one of the practical issues in the field of cultural heritage and archaeology that has received less attention, ILNA reported.

He said narration in any field and area appropriate to the expertise of that field can draw the audience and the specialized community and is related to the expertise of that field and the concept of that field.

He added that every sector of the tourism industry can benefit from relevant stories, and stated: When tourism moves towards specialized sub-branches, narration also takes on a specialized approach, and the same is true in the field of historical archaeology and its application in the field of tourism.

The researcher also said that history-based archaeology has been better considered in the field of tourism in Tehran than in other parts of Iran. He added: Tehran has lost large parts of its historical monuments in recent years due to urban development, and this has led to turning to this field more seriously.

He said: For example, one of the specialized tours is held in Tehran with the application of historical archaeology.

Chaichi-Amirkhiz, said that narrations about historical events can occur without the presence of a person, object, or any physical object, adding: Archaeologists are well-informed individuals in their field of expertise



Archaeological sites are all museum sites that by blending with defined tourism axes can provide a new capacity for introducing tourist destinations and making them more attractive.

who can define specialized tours in the tourism industry.

"For certain purposes, we can witness the definition of new tourism routes with a historical archaeology axis. For example, in a province where multiple tours and axes have been defined, this area can be combined with tours in the form of specialized tours so that it is attractive to the general audience."

He continued that archaeological sites are all museum sites that by blending with defined tourism axes can provide a new capacity for introducing tourist destinations and making them more attractive and even increasing the stay of tourists in tourist destinations.

He said that the tourism sector can take these indicators into consideration in training pertaining to tourist tours. He added that this specialized training requires the definition of specialized course titles that can make the implementation of these tours more systematic and in line with historical archeology pieces of training.

Minister hails 'successful' Nowruz travel season, highlights growth in domestic tourism

TEHRAN - Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, praised the success of the 1404 (2025) Nowruz travel season, describing it as one of the most satisfying and least problematic in recent years.

He made the remarks during a ceremony held Saturday evening in Tehran to honor a selection of individuals who worked with the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters, responsible for overseeing and managing domestic travel during the Persian New Year holidays.

Calling the event a "historical day" in the government's service calendar, Salehi-Amiri noted that the ceremony represented just a fraction of the 1.2 million individuals who worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth and memorable Nowruz for Iranian travelers.

The ceremony was attended by First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref, and a number of ministers, and high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Transportation's research center hall.

Emphasizing the critical role of Iran's diverse attractions and abundant historical sites, Salehi-Amiri said these were the primary drivers behind the surge in holiday travel. "From the northern provinces and the pilgrimage sites in Mashhad to the cultural destinations of Kordestan, Kermanshah, Fars, and Sistan-Baluchestan, the whole country became a vibrant hub of tourism," he said.

According to official figures,



Iran's tourism minister Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri addresses a Tehran ceremony on domestic travels during the Nowruz holidays, April 12, 2025.

over 36 million trips were recorded during the Nowruz holidays, highlighting what the minister described as the growing national appetite for exploration and cultural engagement. He credited Iran's geographical and cultural diversity as key motivators behind this rise in travel activity.

Salehi-Amiri also pointed to the launch of 1,000 "Nowruzgah" cultural hubs dedicated to cherish Nowruz, the Persian New Year, across the country, calling it a model of cultural equity and balanced development. He noted that visits to lesser-known destinations such as the ancient site of Shahr-e Sukhteh, historical caravanserais in Semnan, and cities like Shush (Susa), Shushtar, and Jiroft offered citizens a unique opportunity to experience Iran's ancient heritage firsthand.

In another significant highlight,

the minister referred to a recent archaeological discovery in Abadan, Ilam province, where Iranian researchers identified the original stone quarry used in constructing the Achaemenid palaces of Susa. "This is a remarkable step forward in deepening our understanding of Achaemenid architecture," he said.

Salehi-Amiri concluded by acknowledging existing shortcomings but praised the dedication of the headquarters, stating: "Despite the challenges, the commitment and hard work of those involved in the Travel Coordination Headquarters reflect a powerful example of national synergy, marking a new chapter for the strategic growth of Iran's tourism sector."

According to data compiled by the Traveling Services Coordination Headquarters, a total of 36,519,671 trips were recorded from March 15 to April 4.

During the same period, 60,970,523 overnight stays were registered across official, semi-official, and emergency accommodation facilities. Of the latter figure, 10.37 million overnight stays occurred in official lodging facilities.

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

Nowruz celebrations officially start in Iran and some other countries in West and Central Asia to mark the arrival of spring and the rebirth of nature. The cross-cultural celebration means No -new- and rouz -day- in Persian. Therefore, Nowruz signifies new day, and symbolizes new beginnings.

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

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

4,000 visits registered for Rey historical attractions during Nowruz holidays

TEHRAN - Over 4,000 Nowruz tourists visited historical attractions of the ancient city of Rey in Tehran province from March 15 to April 4, according to the Director of Rey National Heritage Base, Qadir Afrovand.

He told ISNA that Rashkan fortress which was open to visitors for the first time, was met with wide reception.

Also, numerous cultural programs, the presence of experienced tour guides, holding customs such as naqqali (a style of storytelling dedicated to epic stories from Ferdowsi's masterpiece Shahnameh), and book launch turned Nowruz 1404 into a different experience for tourists, he said.

According to the official, Cheshmeh Ali ancient complex was visited by 4,280 people, Rashkan fortress by 3,350, and Tapeh Mil by 1,235 during the period.

Afrovand explained that with the presence of an experienced tour guide at each of Rey tourist sites during the Nowruz holidays, tourists were more satisfied and urged for the permanent presence of tour guides for tourist sites.

He urged the district and municipality of Ghalieh Now city near Tapeh Mil to make plans and take part in easing visit of tourists from this ancient complex and use this golden chance for local development.

He added, "We in the center of the ancient city of Rey known as Rashkan fortress -- the most important and greatest attraction of Rey, had naqqali performance several times and launched book "Molk-e Rey" with presence of Rey historians, cultural personalities and cultural heritage lovers. We distributed iftar packages among people and visitors during the holy month of Ramadan."

He said Rey boasts higher capacity and cultural tourist attractions beyond these figures and numbers. Undoubtedly, Rey National Her-

itage Base, will promote and boost the number of tourists for next Nowruz through preparing and improving the conditions of other historical monuments and predicting the cultural and scientific events befitting the natural and global position of Rey.

A number of foreign tourists from Russia, Italy and China as well as Iranians residing US, Germany and other European countries visited Rey's historical monuments this year, he said.

Earlier, Afrovand noted that some of the most prominent and captivating historical landmarks in the region have been meticulously prepared for tourists.

Among them is the Cheshmeh Ali archaeological site, boasting a history of over 8,000 years, the Rashkan Fortress, which once served as the heart of historic Rey, the Tapeh Mil ruins in eastern Rey near Ghalieh Now, and the colossal Iraj Fortress, the world's largest ancient fortification.

A unique aspect of Rey is its proximity to Tehran, allowing millions of residents from the capital to explore its historical wonders with ease. Visitors can start their journey with a pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of Imamzadeh Shah Abdol Azim in the early morning and then embark on a cultural and historical tour, discovering attractions such as the historical bazaar of Rey, Cheshmeh Ali, Rashkan Fortress, and the city's ancient core. The experience offers both spiritual fulfillment and a fascinating glimpse into Iran's rich heritage.

For the first time, the historical center of Rey has undergone significant enhancements, including the restoration of the last remaining watchtower of the ancient citadel, protective coverings, lighting installations, and fencing around key areas. These improvements have been undertaken to better accommodate the influx of visitors.

Additionally, Cheshmeh Ali has undergone



A unique aspect of Rey is its proximity to Tehran, allowing millions of residents from the capital to explore its historical wonders with ease.

extensive renovations in collaboration with the municipality, featuring improved paving and landscaping, offering a more visually appealing environment for visitors. The site, already a favorite among locals, has been further enriched by recent archaeological excavations led by researchers from Shahid Beheshti University, sparking greater public interest in the site.

In addition, significant transformations have also taken place at Tapeh Mil, with new protective measures, perimeter fencing, and meticulous restoration of unique stucco decorations. These enhancements, combined with the breathtaking green plains of Rey in early spring, promise an exceptional experience for travelers this year.

Rey is one of the oldest cities in the central Iranian plateau with a history of human settlement that stretches over 8,000 years.

The history of Rey, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica is featured in the Avesta (the original document of Zoroastrianism, an Iranian religion) as a sacred place, and it is also mentioned in the book of Tobit, of the biblical Apocrypha, and by classical authors.

Spain tightens tourism rules

com reported.

Authorities are introducing two new tourist taxes. In the Balearic Islands -- including Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera -- overnight taxes may soon increase from pound 3.36 to pound 5.04 per person. Cruise ship passengers will also be affected, with their tax rising by 200%.

In Barcelona, the tourist tax is

set to double by the end of 2025, reaching up to pound 12.40 per person per night for luxury accommodations. Children under 16 will be exempt in both areas.

A new policy from Spain's central bank means retailers could soon refuse damaged or crumpled euro 50 notes, starting this July. Other denominations like euro 5, euro 10, and euro 20 remain unaffected. The move is aimed at reducing fraud and

counterfeiting.

On the beaches of Gran Canaria, authorities have banned several items and activities. Some of them include smoking, playing music, setting up tents, collecting shells, or even using umbrellas for shade could result in fines ranging from pound 25 to over pound 2,500. The guidelines are strict, but it's unclear how offences will be categorized.

University of Tehran, Beijing Intl. Exchange Association ink MOU

TEHRAN – The Caspian International Campus of the University of Tehran and the Beijing International Exchange Association (BIEA) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to foster scientific ties.

Since University of Tehran is a member of BRICS Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) cooperation, the MOU also aims to establish relations with universities and research centers in BRICS member states, IRNA reported.

During a meeting that was held online on Saturday, the two sides agreed to expand cooperation on developing joint strategies for the expansion and exchange of education, research, science, technology, and entrepreneurship; establishing and expanding a communication network among experts at the university and research and technology centers; participating in organizing annual BRICS technology competitions with a focus on an innovative environment and knowledge-based start-ups in order to further expand scientific and technological achievements in University of Tehran and other universities in the country.

According to the MOU, University of Tehran can introduce other institutions and research centers to cooperate with BIEA.

BIEA is a prominent organization in fostering international cooperation and exchange; it



maintains close ties with BRICS as well as Chinese government institutions. Globally, the association is considered an advisory body to the United Nations, interacting with various centers in more than 50 countries around the world, particularly BRICS member countries.

Iran to foster scientific ties with China

Iranian universities are exploring the potential for developing scientific and research collaborations with Chinese institutions under the strategic partnership with China.

During a meeting held on

April 10 in China, Saeed Habiba, the deputy minister of science, research, and technology, and Sheng Jianxue, the secretary-general of the China Scholarship Council, discussed ways for developing scientific cooper-

ation between the universities of the two countries.

The meeting centered around holding joint academic courses, exchanging professors and students, growing government scholarship programs, expanding technological ties, scientific interactions, and sharing expertise.

During the meeting, Habiba elaborated on the academic and scientific potentials, and capacities of Iran.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Iranian official also paid a visit to one of the Chinese technology parks to become more familiar with their technological capacities and scientific achievements.

Iran and China officially signed the document for 25-year comprehensive cooperation in March 2021.

Iran, BRICS to develop Scientific ties

In April 2024, representatives from Iranian universities and higher education institutes and the BRICS Expert Council held a meeting in Tehran to discuss ways to expand scientific cooperation.

It was the first meeting held on the topic of scientific research and technological initiatives.

During the meeting, Victoria Panova, head of the council who is also Vice-Rector of HSE University in Russia, and Omid Rezaei-Far, an official with the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, explored avenues to boost the scientific and technological ties, IRIB reported.

“Despite cruel sanctions, Iran has achieved many accomplishments in agriculture, biotechnology, technology, and engineering sciences fields,” IRIB quoted Panova as saying.

She also noted that unlike what is imagined, the BRICS group is not merely an economic group, it is here to introduce the high capacity of the BRICS in terms of science and technology as well.

Panova went on to emphasize Iran's capabilities and readiness to expand scientific cooperation with member states of this international organization

Some 2,500 prisoners freed in Ramadan

TEHRAN –During the holy month of Ramadan (March 2-30), benefactors helped release a total of 2,500 prisoners of unintentional crimes.

The total debt of the released prisoners was 40 trillion rials (about 40 million dollars), ISNA reported.

Each year in Ramadan, officials and benefactors hold gatherings and campaigns to raise money to help free prisoners of involuntary crimes. Since 1990, benefactors have contributed to the release of more than 180,000 prisoners of involuntary crimes on Ramadan.

Over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2024–March 2025), benefactors contributed to releasing 11,380 prisoners of unintentional crimes in the country. Also, 2,441 prisoners were pardoned during the same period, ISNA reported.

The number of released prisoners has in-

creased by 22 percent compared to the Iranian year 1402 (March 2023–March 2024). Of the total released prisoners, 682 were female and 10,698 were male who were incarcerated due to inability to pay financial debts. The total debt of the released prisoners was over 270 trillion rials (about 270 million dollars).

Tehran, Fars, and Khorasan Razavi provinces ranked first to third with releasing 1,088, 878, and 829 prisoners of involuntary crimes, respectively. Currently, there are 14,591 inmates of unintentional crimes nationwide. Tehran (with 2,536), Fars (with 1,331), and Isfahan (with 1,183) provinces have the highest number of prisoners of involuntary crimes.

Freeing prisoners of involuntary crimes is done in three ways. The first way is granting prisoners leave and the second way is providing a number of them with loans to be paid inside the prison. The third way of assistance is the release of unintentional convicts by paying their debt.

Family Physician Program to restart this year: health minister

TEHRAN –Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi has said the Family Physician Program is planned to kick off in the current Iranian year that started on March 21.

“It is a large-scale program based on social behavior change. Designing new patient pathways, reforming the referral pattern, and improving the healthcare network system requires careful coordination between the Health Ministry, governors, and other relevant institutions at the provincial level,” IRIB quoted Zafarqandi as saying.

So, it is absolutely essential to develop a national headquarters headed by the President to oversee the overall management of the program, he added.

“We have already reached agreements on ten key issues such as financial resources, location, implementation stages, and public information. Moreover, the chancellors of medical sciences universities will hold a meeting this week to finalize the implementation model for the program,” Zafarqandi noted.

The rural family physician program started in 2005. Back then, it targeted villages and cities with a population of less

than 20,000 individuals to make treatment referrals more concentrated and provide more convenient access to health services, ISNA reported.

Periodic examinations and monitoring of people's health status, easy and round-the-clock access to basic services and primary care, and frequent visits to doctors are the characteristics of a family physician.

Medical, dental, mental, midwifery, nutrition, laboratory, pharmaceutical, and medical imaging are among the offered services by the program.

Based on the Family Physician Program, a physician and a midwife offer services in rural areas, every 3,300 villagers have a physician and there is a midwife per 5,200 people in villages.

In September 2023, Mohsen Barouni, an official with the Health Ministry said, “Family Physician Program has been implemented in three phases; in the first phase 59 cities were included in the program; in the second phase, it raised to 93 cities and now a total of 182 cities are covered by the program, covering more than 20 million Iranians,” IRNA reported.

DOE to enhance co-op with natural resources, watershed management organization

TEHRAN – The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, and the head of the natural resources and watershed management organization, Ali Teymouri, have discussed ways to develop joint activities.

The officials' meeting on Sunday focused on mitigating sand and dust storms (SDSs) impacts by providing practical solutions and improving air quality; planning to prevent and manage forest fires; developing forest socialization by attracting the participation of local communities in the protection and sustainable forests management; and applying scientific methods to calculate the economic value of forests and formulate sustainable development policies, IRNA reported.

A joint committee is planned to be established to follow up on the implementation of the mentioned issues. The officials also highlighted holding joint drills to boost preparedness for crisis management.

Conservation of natural resources

On March 9, the DOE held a national conference on the conservation of natural resources in Tehran.

“Concerning the fact that the country is affected by climate change, we need to take steps to develop adaptation solutions and foster resilience. It will require close cooperation among different organizations,” IRNA quoted Ansari as saying.

“Over the last century, the world has lost one-third of its natural resources. In our country, the depletion of natural resources has occurred in both quantitative and qualitative terms for various reasons,” Ansari said while addressing the conference.

When talking about the value of forests, economic benefits are usually considered, while non-market services such as water regulation, soil conservation, carbon sequestration, as well as the habitat of plant and animal species, are neglected.

The official went on to say that the DOE is estimating the value of 64 percent of sensitive ecosystems to be able to assess their true economic value. It will contribute to exploring the true value of natural capital as they are not everlasting.

“Moreover, it will help make correct decisions between development goals and the benefits of healthy ecosystems,” she added.

Forests are home to 80 percent of terrestrial biodiversity, and forest degradation causes serious habitat destruction, leading to species loss, said Ansari.

The official also highlighted the significance of promoting environmental culture, educating local communities, restoring damaged areas, developing a sustainable forest management plan, utilizing modern technologies, and smart monitoring of the areas as

the key factors in preserving natural resources.

According to the secretary of the national policymaking headquarters for dealing with sand and dust storms, 2.5 million hectares of sand dust storm hotspots in the country have been stabilized over the past six years.

The measure has been taken in cooperation with other organizations, particularly the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization.

SDS hotspots in 23 provinces of the country cover roughly 35 million hectares. They are responsible for generating dust across the country, ISNA quoted Ali-Mohammad Tahmasbi, an official with the DOE, as saying.

Referring to the stabilization of 120,000 hectares of SDS hotspots in the southeast of the province as one of the significant measures of the national headquarters, Tahmasbi called it an example of successful cooperation and synergy between the administration and other institutions.

He further emphasized the significance of adopting measures based on the specific situation of any region such as the type of soil, climate, available water resources as well as scientific principles to achieve the desired results.

ENGLISH IN USE

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56% of motorcycles running in only 5 provinces

Some 56 percent of the total motorcycles in the country are running in only five provinces, Ali Mohammadi, a senior traffic police official has said.

Of all 32.9 million vehicles in the country, motorcycles amount to 11.6 million, accounting for 35 percent of the total vehicles moving in the country, he stated.

According to the statistics, 56 percent of motorcycles are plying the roads in 5 provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Isfahan, Fars and Khuzestan, he added.

There are 2 million motorcycles in Tehran, 1.3 million in Khorasan Razavi, 1.2 million in Isfahan, 916,000 in Fars, and 564,000 in Khuzestan, he also said.

۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت ها در ۵ استان تردد دارند

رئیس مرکز شماره گذاری و تعویض پلاک پلیس راهور ناجا گفت: بنابر آمارها، ۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت ها تنها در ۵ استان تردد می کنند.

سرهنگ علی محمدی روز یکشنبه افزود: از ۳۲ میلیون و ۹۰۰ هزار دستگاه انواع وسایل نقلیه در کشور، ۱۱ میلیون و ۶۵۰ هزار دستگاه یعنی معادل ۳۵ درصد را موتورسیکلت ها شامل می شوند.

وی اظهار داشت: برابر آمارها تهران بزرگ، خراسان رضوی، اصفهان، فارس و خوزستان ۵۶ درصد موتورسیکلت های کشور را در خود جای داده اند.

رئیس مرکز شماره گذاری و تعویض پلاک پلیس راهور ناجا گفت: تهران بزرگ با حدود ۲ میلیون دستگاه موتورسیکلت، خراسان رضوی ۱.۳ میلیون دستگاه، اصفهان ۱.۲ میلیون دستگاه، فارس ۹۱۶ هزار دستگاه و خوزستان با ۵۶۴ هزار دستگاه موتورسیکلت بیشترین موتورسیکلت های کشور را به خود اختصاص دادند.



First indigenous plasma therapy clinic inaugurated

TEHRAN – The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in cooperation with Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, southern Fars province, has launched the first cold plasma therapy clinic for the treatment of wounds using indigenous technology.

During the opening ceremony, the AEOI head, Mohammad Eslami, associated the achievement with scientific progress and national self-confidence, highlighting that nuclear technology is used in medical services and agriculture.

The inauguration of this clinic can help expand plasma therapy technology in other medical centers in the country, the official noted.

The chancellor of Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Hossein Hakimelahi, for his part, expressed hope that this initiative will open up opportunities to use nuclear technologies in cancer treatment and other areas of health.

National Nuclear Technology Day

Iran marked National Nuclear Technology Day on April 9 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, 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 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.



APRIL 14, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He is the wisest and the most knowing man who advises people not to lose hope and faith in the Mercy of Allah and not to be too sure and over-confident of immunity from His Wrath and Punishment.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:05 Evening: 18:55 Dawn: 4:03 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:32 (tomorrow)

First National Conference on Islamic Revolution Art kicks off in Tehran



Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi speaks at the opening ceremony of the first National Conference on Islamic Revolution Art at the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran on April 13, 2025.

TEHRAN- The inaugural National Conference on Islamic Revolution Art commenced on Sunday at the Iranian Academy of Arts in Tehran.

The event was attended by prominent figures, including Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi, Head of the Islamic Development Organization, and Hojjatolislam Abdolhossein Khosrowpanah, Secretary of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, along with a number of scholars and cultural officials.

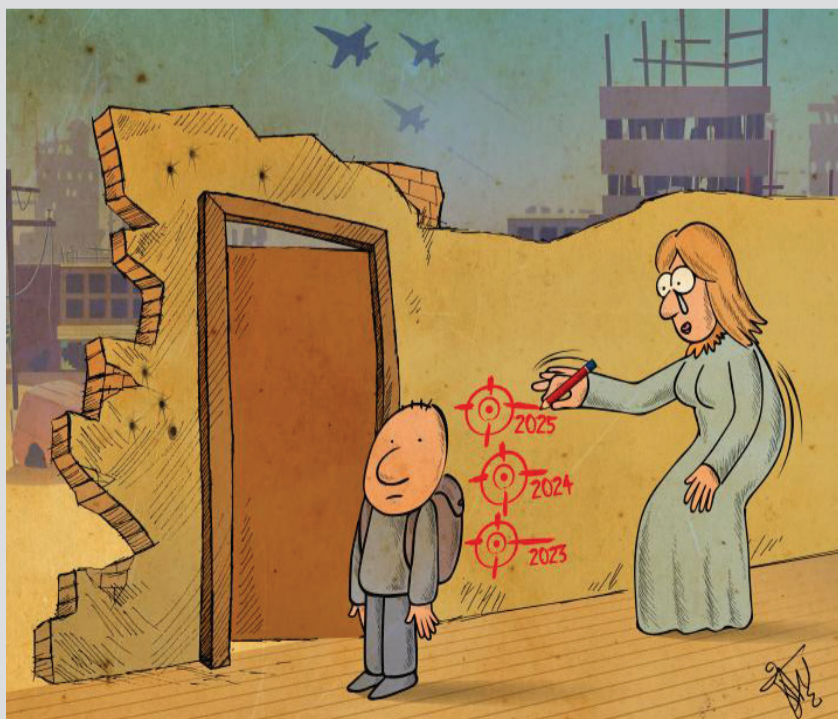
Hosted by the Soore University, the conference spans four days. Activities are scheduled to be held at the Academy of Arts, the Faculty of Art of the Soore University, Faculty of Culture and Communications, and Faculty

of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Panel discussions and presentations focus on diverse themes related to Islamic Revolution art.

The National Conference on Islamic Revolution Art holds a prestigious ranking from the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC). The event is organized in collaboration with institutions such as the Academy of Arts, IRIB University, Imam Hossein Comprehensive University, Islamic Development Organization, and the Research Institute for Cultural and Artistic Studies, highlighting the collective effort to promote and celebrate Islamic art in contemporary culture.

Cartoon of Day



War and Kids

Cartoonist: Keyvan Varesi from Iran

Iranian short on screen at Chicago Palestine Film Festival

TEHRAN- Iranian director Mohammad Lotfali's short animated movie "The Sound of Clouds" is competing at the 24th edition of the Chicago Palestine Film Festival, which is underway at the Gene Siskel Film Center in downtown Chicago, the U.S.

Inspired by the poetry of esteemed Palestinian writer and politician Ghassan Kanafani, "The Sound of the Clouds" captures the profound suffering endured by children in Gaza.

Produced by the Sureh Youth Film Center, the film illustrates how Gaza's youth write their names on their hands, hoping that rescuers can identify them in the event of tragedy. This powerful act symbolizes both vulnerability and resilience amid chaos.

Through its storytelling, the film seeks to raise awareness about the situation in Gaza, emphasizing the daily struggles faced by its inhabitants. By highlighting the voices of these children, "The Sound of the Clouds" serves not only as a reminder of their plight but also as a call to action, urging viewers to acknowledge and respond to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the region.

Moreover, "A State of Passion",



A scene from "The Sound of Clouds" by Iranian director Mohammad Lotfali

co-directed by Lebanese documentarians Carol Mansour and Muna Khalidi is also present at the festival.

Produced in collaboration with Iran's Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), the film is a feature-length documentary capturing the harrowing experiences of British-Palestinian reconstructive surgeon Dr. Ghassan Abu Sittah during the brutal realities of genocide in

Gaza. The film serves as an intimate portrait of resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment amidst one of the world's most protracted humanitarian crises.

Established in 2001, the Chicago Palestine Film Festival is an annual cultural event that highlights the rich and diverse narratives of Palestinian cinema.

The festival offers a unique space for filmmakers, artists,

and audiences to engage with powerful stories that delve into the complexities of Palestinian life.

Through a thoughtfully curated selection of feature films, documentaries, and shorts, the festival promotes a deeper understanding of the Palestinian experience.

The festival will run until April 26.

Iranian short film "Sheep" in 3 international festivals

TEHRAN-The Iranian short film "Sheep" directed by Hadi Babaeifar is present at the RiverRun International Film Festival, underway in North Carolina, the U.S., and will attend two more festivals by the end of the month.

A production of 2024, the 13-minute narrative film will take part in the 42nd Busan International Short Film Festival in South Korea and the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen in Germany, IRNA reported.

"Sheep" shows a little girl named Rose who lives with her mother in Tehran. Discovering that the sheep in her neighbors' backyard are being sacrificed in a traditional ritual, she decides to save as many sheep as she can. The cast includes Rose Tabatabaie and Gelavij Alam.

The RiverRun International Film Festival is an annual Oscar-qualifying film festival held each spring in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. This year's edition of the festival will be organized from April 11 to 19.

Busan International Short Film Festival is an Oscar, BAFTA, and Canadian Screen Award



qualifying festival. The 42nd edition of the festival will be held from April 24 to 29.

The International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, founded in 1954, is one of the oldest short film festivals in the world. Held in Oberhausen, it is one of the major international platforms for the short form. Its upcoming edition will take place from April 29 to May 4.

Hadi Babaeifar, 41, discovered his interest in cinema at the age of 20 and bought his own

camera. He studied film criticism and acting at the Karnameh Institute of Arts and Culture while simultaneously working as a photographer on several feature film sets.

When he was 32, he embarked on a directing degree in Tehran, graduating in 2018. His debut short film "Deer" premiered in Generation section of Berlin International Film Festival in 2022 and is the first part of his animal trilogy. "Sheep" is the second film in the trilogy.

From conflict to canvas: Gaza stories brought to life in U.S. exhibition

A woman holds her daughter close to protect her as Israeli bombs fall. An injured but undeterred man stands in defiance. Shirts drenched in blood and pain, caught in the crossfire of conflict. These are some of the artworks on display at an exhibition that opened in Washington on Friday, April 11, expressing the stories from Gaza's history, conflict and resistance in bold, colorful strokes of paint.

"Gaza Remains the Story" features 33 artworks by 28 Palestinian artists who call the coastal enclave home. Some of the artists were killed in Israeli air strikes during the past 18 months of war. Others are either in exile or facing harsh conditions under bombardment, including displacement and starvation.

The exhibition, curated by the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, Palestine, was adapted for the Museum of the Palestinian People in Washington by Wafa Ghnaim, The National reported.

"In adapting the exhibition for audiences in America, I wanted to highlight some really specific prompts and reflections to American audiences who needed

to take a moment to think about all that they witnessed this past year and a half," Ghnaim, a dress historian and archivist said. She was born and raised in the US after her Palestinian parents immigrated in the early 1980s.

"Visitors can ponder what it means to bear witness responsibly with care, with thought, and not to be paralyzed by our own fears and our sadness."

Heba Zaqout, an acrylic artist and schoolteacher, viewed art as a form of resistance and a reflection of Palestinian identity. She was killed, along with her two sons, in an Israeli air strike in October 2023. All of her original works were destroyed, but a print of one of her paintings, showing Jenin's landscape, now hangs in this exhibition as a tribute to her life and legacy.

Another featured artist, Fadi Ghaben, was born in the village of Hirbiya in the Gaza Strip and was known for portraying everyday life under occupation.

He incorporated the Palestinian flag into his paintings, an act that led to his arrest by Israeli forces in 1984 and the confisca-

tion of seven of his works.

Ghaben died on February 25, 2024, after being denied permission to travel abroad for medical treatment. On display at the exhibition is one of his striking pieces: a painting of a wounded but defiant man rising in resistance.

Also featured is the work of Mohammed Sami, a visual artist and muralist from Gaza city, who was killed when a missile struck Al Ahli Arab Hospital on October 17, 2023, where he had been sheltering and helping others. His contribution to the exhibit is a nostalgic painting of audio cassettes, a depiction of Palestine's music culture in the 1970s.

Nearby, a photograph taken in January 2023 shows the sisters who founded the clothing brand Six Flowers. A year later, their home and business were destroyed in an air strike. Yet in this image, they are captured in a moment of creativity and optimism – a glimpse of life before the devastation.

But not all of the exhibition is focused on loss. Historic photographs from family albums fill up

an entire wall space and offer a glimpse into life in Gaza before the world's gaze turned to it.

Part of the wall shows an image of three little girls playing in the sea on a summer day; a man posing in his suit, vest and dress shoes, crouching in the sand near the sea and an older woman and her family wearing sunglasses and peeking out of the bushes at a park.

"I think, always in my work, throughout my life, I felt that Palestinians have been best represented through our suffering and through our death," Ghnaim said. "So, there is a need and a vital component to the American public, seeing Palestinians as whole, as more than just that, but in the other side of it. What did it look like when we were alive and creating and producing, even if it was against all odds, even if it was under tremendous suffering? I think that that's tremendously important always, but absolutely, especially most important in the last 18 months."

The exhibition will be open to the public from Until November 2.