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Tehran reaffirms sanctions removal as 'unwavering priority' in indirect nuclear talks with US

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baqaei underscored Tehran's unwavering demand for the complete removal of "illegal and oppressive" sanctions as the cornerstone of indirect nuclear talks with Washington.

Speaking at his weekly press conference on Monday, Baqaei emphasized that Iran's economic normalization and guarantees against renewed U.S. violations remain critical to sustaining diplomatic progress. ▶ Page 2

Scan this QR code to watch the video.



Araghchi to visit China ahead of third round of indirect talks with U.S.

TEHRAN – The spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry announced that Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will travel to China on Tuesday.

Esmail Baghaei announced the news in a press conference on Monday.

It is expected that the high-level discussions between Iran and China include updates on the ongoing negotiations with Washington and follow-ups on bilateral agreements with Beijing. ▶ Page 3

Where Do Arabs Stand on Iran-US Talks?

It appears that Persian Gulf states are no longer opposed to a potential agreement

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Iqbal Lahori on Palestine: A test for courage and pride

By Professor Zahid Munir Amir

TEHRAN - The Palestine problem has entered its 8th decade. The international powers have been ignoring this issue for seventy years. During the first half of the previous century, when British imperialism gave birth to this issue, no one could imagine how much it would affect international peace and that the Palestinians would have to pay such a heavy price for their independence.

This was the time when the British imperialism reigned almost all over the world. The British policy of steadily settling the Jews in Palestine resulted in direct clash between the Muslims and the Jews in the third decade of the 20th century. This series of clashes resulted in continuous bloodshed during 1928, 1929, 1933 and 1939. In August 1929, during a skirmish in Jerusalem, 116 Palestinians were killed and 232 got injured. Firing by the British authorities caused most of the losses. The news of this incident deeply disturbed the Muslims of the subcontinent. A protest rally was held outside the Delhi Gate Lahore which was attended by the Muslims belonging to all schools of thought. Pakistan's national poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori also attended the rally. Allama Muhammad Iqbal Lahori was a poet, a jurist and a politician. While addressing the rally, Iqbal said:

The curse of betraying Palestine won't spare Arabs

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Since October 7, 2023, the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation has foiled the normalization plot heralded by the former Egyptian president, Muhammad Anwar Sadat.

Following the signing of the infamous Camp David Accords, Sadat stated, "The Jewish Israeli entity is an oasis of prosperity, security, civilization, democracy, and human rights, and the sole heir to the good values and principles of all contemporary humanity in the Middle East."

At that time, normalization was intended to be presented as a positive investment and development of diplomatic, economic, and social relations with the occupying Israeli entity, and as an urgent necessity.

In addition, the Arab world, which is undoubtedly suffering from a deepening moral, humanitarian, religious, and political crisis, were misled and deceived into believing that laying down the resistance's weapons had become a necessity for the Palestinians, first and foremost, to "coexist" with their Israeli "counterparts" under the delusion of "peace."

Yemen attacks Israeli and US targets

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni forces target strategic Israeli positions and fire at U.S. warships in regional waters.

The Yemeni Armed Forces have carried out drone and cruise missile attacks targeting two Israeli locations, Ashkelon and Eilat, as well as two U.S. aircraft carriers stationed in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

In a statement on Monday, the Yemeni military announced that its drone unit had carried out two operations, one on a "strategic Israeli target in the occupied city of Ashkelon" and another on a "military site in the occupied port city of Umm al-Rashrash (Eilat)".

Military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree said the attacks were conducted using two drones, the Yafa and the Sammad-1.

As part of ongoing measures to counter U.S. aggression and war crimes, the Yemeni military also carried out two separate high-profile operations against American naval forces.

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A future intertwined with the fate of our planet

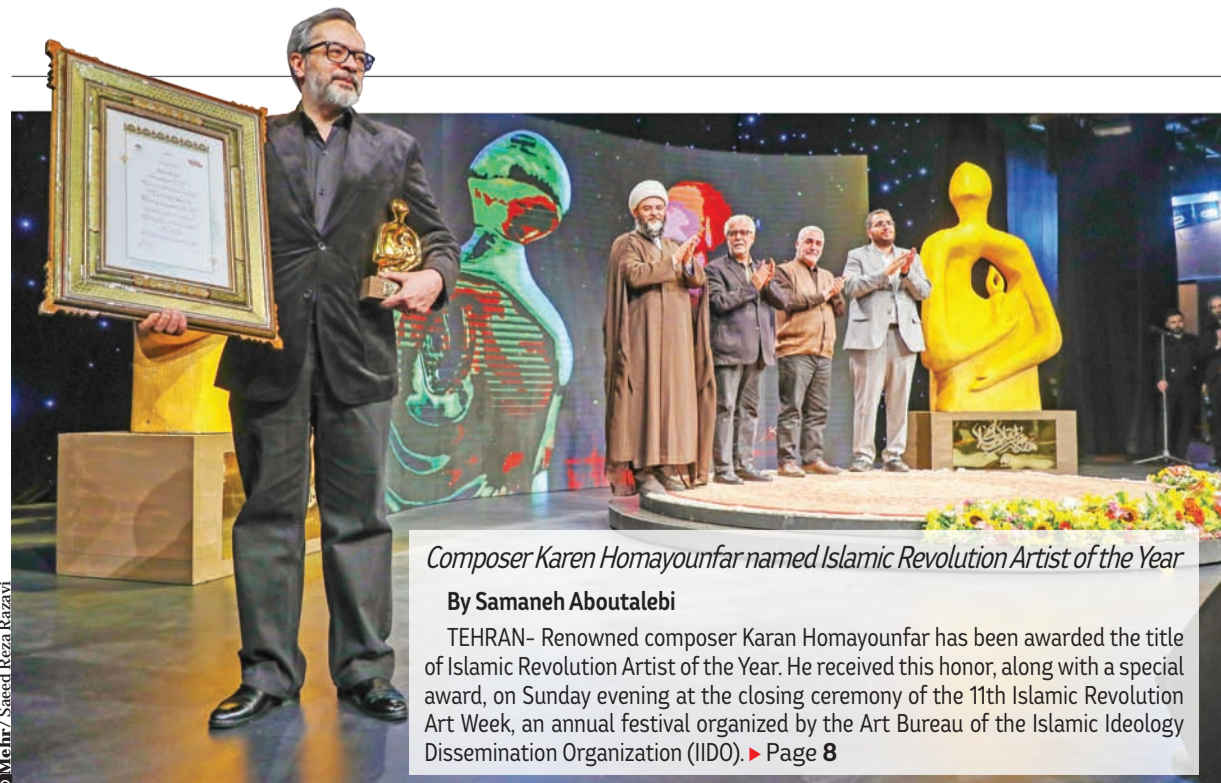
By Shina Ansari, the head of the Department of Environment

TEHRAN - That spinning, spherical stone, glowing from afar with its marbled blue and green hues, is the very place we know intimately.

It is where we were born and where we have grown alongside millions of living beings and countless non-living elements.

All our understanding of the universe comes from the perspective of that famous "pale blue dot," and to this day, we have found no other place in this vast cosmos that could serve as an alternative home.

Earth is the cradle of life for us and for all the living creatures we know—a unique and nurturing environment that we have depended on, drawn strength from, and endured through, thanks to its countless blessings. ▶ Page 7



Composer Karen Homayounfar named Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- Renowned composer Karan Homayounfar has been awarded the title of Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year. He received this honor, along with a special award, on Sunday evening at the closing ceremony of the 11th Islamic Revolution Art Week, an annual festival organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO). ▶ Page 8



Holy words: Pope's plea for peace in Gaza was source of Israeli fury

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Pope Francis was a key leader of the Catholic Church and the first pope from outside Europe in almost 1,300 years. He died on the morning of April 21, 2025. During his time as pope, he was clear and caring about global issues, especially the Israeli war in Gaza.

The pope often demanded a stop to the violence in Gaza. He wanted justice for victims and aid for Palestinians affected by the war. His strong words against the conflict included calls for ceasefires and investigations into war crimes. This upset some Israeli officials, making the relationship between the Vatican and Israel highly tense. ▶ Page 5

Iran's top officials hail Pope Francis as voice for global peace in posthumous tribute

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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.

A deal is possible

In a note, Ham Mihan discussed the possibility of reaching an Iran-U.S. agreement by quoting former Iranian diplomat Hossein Mousavian who says: Given the current complex circumstances, these negotiations are an opportunity that could shape not only the future of Iran's nuclear program but also the overall course of the Middle East. Therefore, the success of these negotiations is of paramount importance and should not be missed. A deal can only be successful if it avoids war, addresses a comprehensive set of issues, not just nuclear, as the ultimate goal, and offers Iran a realistic compromise on its nuclear program. The Trump team can achieve a diplomatic success with Iran if it accepts five basic principles: diplomacy, not war, a realistic nuclear deal, reducing regional tensions, and economic convergence. None of these will be easy to achieve. But reaching an agreement is possible, and it could lead to other positive outcomes in the region. Resolving four decades of tensions between Iran and its Arab neighbors is equally vital. A regional security framework can be initiated through dialogue between the eight Persian Gulf states, hosted by the UN Secretary-General and supported by the permanent members of the Security Council. Only through diplomacy, trust-building, and mutual respect can a sustainable security architecture be achieved in the region.

Javan: Why are negotiations proceeding speedily?

Javan devoted its editorial to the speed of the negotiations and wrote: Some may think that Iran has been weakened in the region over the past year and conclude that Trump's letter and the proposal to start negotiations were an opportunity to seize it to achieve everything that they had not accomplished before in a new agreement with Iran. However, the content of the negotiations shows that the U.S. is moving forward with minimal demands, and the speed of the negotiations is one reason for this. With the same argument, it can be claimed that America is desperate to weaken Iran, and the demand for negotiation and speeding it up should be understood along these lines. Also, the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine war and the nuclear issue with Iran will give America a free hand to focus on China to prevent it from becoming the second great power in the world. It can be concluded that the acceleration of negotiations by America, if continued until a result is achieved, is not a strategic matter but only a tactical way to overcome the current

situation against Iran. But change is always attractive.

Arman-e-Emrooz: Israel is trying to disrupt the talks

In an analysis, Arman-e-Emrooz discussed the start of the looming technical talks between Iran and the U.S. in Oman and wrote: In about 48 hours, technical talks between Iran and the U.S. will begin at expert level to limit Iran's nuclear activities and lift sanctions. In the Rome talks, discussions were held and an understanding was reached on the general framework, agenda, and technical talks. Iran's proposals are clear, and from Iran's point of view, sanctions should be lifted, and this should lead to the economic benefit of the Iranian nation. Tel Aviv has been trying to influence the position of American officials since the start of indirect talks between Tehran and Washington on Iran's nuclear program, and in this regard, Israel has held secret meetings with Steve Witkoff but has not been able to convince him to change his position. Iran's positive view of the second round of talks, the United States' lack of attention to some details, and the planning for a third round of talks on Saturday (April 26), among other details indicate that the Israelis have not succeeded in their mission, although Israel will keep its hopes alive until a new, moderate agreement is signed.

Iran: Riyadh's policy shift will benefit national economy

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper dealt with the policy change by Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states toward the nuclear talks between Iran and the United States. It wrote: Ten years ago, when former U.S. President Barack Obama reached an agreement with Iran, Saudi Arabia was worried and unhappy. But now they hope the ongoing talks can strengthen "peace in the region and the world." More importantly, Saudi Arabia is diversifying its economy; a program that aims to transform the country from an oil-dependent economy into a center for trade, technology, and tourism. Ten years ago, Persian Gulf Arab leaders felt ignored in the nuclear talks. This time, Iran is engaging regionally. What attracted attention after the first round of the talks was that the Iranian foreign minister contacted his counterparts, including the Bahraini chief diplomat. Iran seeks regional support, and the Persian Gulf states not only support the talks but also try to prevent any tension that might affect their economic and national security.

Tehran reaffirms sanctions removal as 'unwavering priority' in indirect nuclear talks with US

From page 1 ▶ "Our principal demand in any negotiation is the lifting of unlawful and unjust sanctions against Iran," Baqaei declared, dismissing Washington's "selective adherence" to international law.

He stressed that sanctions removal must be "tangible and effective" to allow Iran to resume routine economic, trade, and banking activities.

"Past experiences have taught us that empty promises are insufficient. We need irreversible measures," he added, alluding to the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy for West Asia affairs, Steve Witkoff, conducted two rounds of indirect talks addressing Iran's nuclear program and the lifting of U.S. sanctions this month.

The discussions took place in two international hubs—with the first round held in Muscat and the second in Rome on Saturday—all under the facilitation of Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi.

After the second round, Araghchi noted that Tehran and Washington had achieved a "better understanding" regarding several key principles and objectives. He, however, said Iran is not bringing its hopes up and remains cautious.

Building on this progress, both sides agreed to launch expert-level technical discussions in Oman starting April 23.

A follow-up, third round of high-level negotiations is set to commence in Oman on April 26 to review the expert meetings' outcomes and assess the movement toward a potential agreement.

Additionally, in his press conference, Baqaei dismissed speculation about venue changes of the talks, noting that Oman's "professional and pivotal role" as host had been instrumental.

"At Oman's suggestion, the second round was moved to Rome with tripartite agreement, and



Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei at his weekly press conference in Tehran on April 21, 2025

of respect we hold for Oman, we did not oppose this proposal," he stated, adding that Iran appreciates Italy's cooperation.

The spokesperson rejected "media sensationalism" about negotiation specifics, particularly a New York Times claim alleging Iranian offers to involve third countries in its nuclear program.

"We do not confirm these claims. Media speculation undermines diplomatic seriousness," he asserted.

Europe must decide: facilitator or obstructionist?

Addressing European powers, Baqaei urged the E3 (UK, France, Germany) to "revive their role" as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signatories rather than echoing U.S. pressure tactics.

"References to the 'snapback mechanism' are unconstructive. Europe must decide: facilitator or obstructionist?" he said.

Iran has maintained dialogue with Russia, China, and the E3 throughout negotiations, reflecting its commitment to multilateralism. However, Baqaei emphasized that Iran has kept European countries "informed" of its negotiations and expressed hope that they would acknowledge Tehran's "sincere intentions" and "aid the ongoing processes."

Grossi urged to steer clear of 'politically motivated narratives'

The Iranian diplomat criti-

cized International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Chief Rafael Grossi's "unconstructive" recent report on Iran's nuclear program, urging the agency to avoid "politically motivated narratives."

"The IAEA must adhere to its technical mandate, not serve U.S.-led pressure campaigns," he stated, noting that Iran's voluntary transparency measures exceed legal obligations.

Regional diplomacy advances: Saudi visit 'pre-planned,' Pakistan ties strengthened

Baqaei clarified that Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman's recent visit to Tehran was "pre-planned" and unrelated to U.S. talks, describing it as a fruit of Iran's "neighborhood policy."

Iran believes sanctions removal must be 'tangible and effective'

"This dialogue underscores regional actors' ability to secure stability without external interference," he said, highlighting accelerating détente with Persian Gulf Arab states.

The spokesperson asserted that "regional countries must be able to move toward stability and safeguard security in the Persian Gulf and beyond by relying on their own capabilities and foster-

ing mutual trust."

He also noted that discussions naturally arise in any interaction during this period, adding that Iran had taken the initiative to engage with neighboring and regional states, explaining the negotiation process to them.

During his visit, Prince Khalid met with Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, as well as President Masoud Pezeshkian and Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces.

In his meeting with Prince Khalid, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the mutual benefits of closer ties.

"We believe relations between the Islamic Republic and Saudi Arabia will benefit both nations, as they can complement each other's strengths," the Leader stated, according to a transcript published by his office.

On Pakistan, Baqaei described bilateral relations as "enduring and strategic," noting joint efforts to combat terrorism along shared borders. "Liaison officers are now stationed to enhance security coordination," he revealed, downplaying recent border incidents as "isolated challenges requiring mutual trust."

Kuwait urged to negotiate Arash field; Israel's 'expansionist occupation' of Syria condemned

Responding to Kuwaiti claims over the Arash gas field, Baqaei reiterated that "repeating baseless claims via media does not create legal rights."

He invited Kuwait to "accept Iran's longstanding offer for technical talks," urging a shift from confrontation to "friendship and shared benefits."

On Syria, Baqaei condemned the Israeli regime's "expansionist occupation" of the Golan Heights and parts of southern Syria, equating it to "a flagrant violation of international law."

"The Security Council's silence enables Zionist regime crimes. Regional states must unite to end this aggression," he said, reaffirming Iran's support for Syria's territorial integrity.

Iran FM briefs Swiss, Pakistani counterparts as indirect talks with U.S. progress

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has held separate phone conversations with his Swiss and Pakistani counterparts to brief them on the latest developments in ongoing indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States over the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal and the lifting of U.S. sanctions.

In a call on Sunday with Switzerland's Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, Araghchi expressed appreciation for Bern's constructive role during the earlier nuclear negotiations that culminated in the landmark Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. He acknowledged Switzerland's historical contribution as a facilitator and emphasized the importance of continued international support for the current diplomatic process.

Minister Cassis welcomed the resumption of indirect dialogue between Tehran and Washington and reiterated Switzerland's readiness to offer any form of assistance to help advance the talks. The two top diplomats also exchanged views on bilateral ties and broader international issues of shared concern.

Araghchi also updated Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on the state of the talks and exchanged perspectives on regional developments, particularly the situation in Afghanistan. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of closer coordination between Tehran and Islamabad and underscored the need for more frequent high-level consultations to enhance cooperation across various fields.

These discussions come as momentum grows behind the new phase of indirect diplomacy between Iran and the United States. Araghchi and Steve Witkoff, the U.S. President's Special Envoy



for West Asia Affairs, have so far held two rounds of high-level negotiations—first in Muscat on April 12 and later in Rome on April 19.

Following the conclusion of the second round, Araghchi stated that the two sides had achieved a "better understanding" regarding key principles and objectives, describing the atmosphere as "constructive but challenging." Both parties have agreed to initiate expert-level discussions in Oman on April 23, aimed at ironing out the details of potential agreements. A third round of

high-level negotiations is scheduled for April 26 in Muscat to assess the progress of the technical talks and determine the feasibility of a formal agreement.

Meanwhile, other regional players have voiced support for the diplomatic initiative. On Saturday, Majed bin Mohammed Al Ansari, advisor to Qatar's Prime Minister and spokesperson for the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs, praised Oman's efforts to bridge gaps between Tehran and Wash-

Iran's top officials hail Pope Francis as voice for global peace in posthumous tribute

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian paid tribute to the late Pope Francis in a statement on Monday, honoring the pontiff's lifelong dedication to advancing the teachings of Jesus Christ and his steadfast advocacy for global peace.

Pezeshkian praised the Pope's efforts to foster "unity, justice, and dialogue across religious divides," emphasizing his role as a bridge-builder in a divided world.

The remarks came hours after Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Camerlengo of the Apostolic Chamber, announced the Pope's passing Monday morning following a prolonged battle with chronic lung disease.

The pontiff's health had declined sharply in recent months, culminating in a five-week hospitalization in February for a severe respiratory crisis that developed into double pneumonia.

Despite a brief recovery and discharge last month, his condition deteriorated irreversibly. Pope Francis's death arrived just one day after he made a poignant final appearance at St. Peter's Square during Easter Sunday ceremonies, where he delivered a subdued blessing to thousands of mourners—a moment now etched into his legacy.

In his statement, President Pezeshkian hailed the Pope's "clear and courageous stance" against "the Israeli regime's geno-



cide in Gaza," applauding his condemnation of violence against Palestinian civilians.

"His moral clarity resonated with freedom-loving nations and aligned with the cries of conscience worldwide," Pezeshkian declared, framing the Pope's advocacy as a cornerstone of his humanitarian legacy.

The president further highlighted Iran's alignment with the pontiff's vision, asserting that the Iranian people have "championed peace, interfaith solidarity, and justice—principles we reaffirm today in his memory." He concluded with a prayer for the Pope's "eternal rest in the embrace of divine mercy."

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Where do Arabs stand on Iran-US talks?

It appears that Persian Gulf states are no longer opposed to a potential agreement

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Regional Arab states have taken the public stage in recent weeks to welcome the ongoing indirect talks between Iran and the United States. But this is a clear swerve from their stances during previous Iran-US negotiations in the 2010s, when the region seemed to believe a less contentious state of relations between Tehran and Washington was something they had to steer through, rather than gain from.

Several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, have issued statements endorsing the ongoing diplomatic process between Iran and the U.S. Riyadh, for instance, affirmed that dialogue is the “key” to resolving both regional and international disputes and expressed hope that the Tehran-Washington engagement would contribute to peace and collective regional efforts. Kuwait echoed this sentiment, stating its hope that the discussions would help establish long-lasting peace in the region. The UAE’s foreign minister reiterated similar support during a phone call with his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi.

The indirect negotiations seem to be moving at a good clip, with Tehran and Washington renewing them weekly since their commencement on April 12th. Discussions are focused on Iran’s nuclear program and the removal of U.S. sanctions against the country. This



marks the second time in the past decade that Tehran has engaged in talks on the scale of its nuclear activities. The first one, signed in 2015 and called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was scrapped by Donald Trump during his first term tenure as the U.S. President.

The current support from Arab states for the Iran-U.S. diplomatic process represents a significant change from 2018, when many of them welcomed the Trump administration’s decision to withdraw from the JCPOA and reinstate sanctions on Iran.

Mohammad Reza Moradi, West Asia analyst and editor-in-chief of Mehr News Agency’s international service, believes the trend setter in the Arab world is Saudi Arabia, a country that, for the longest time, had a different take on how security is established.

“The situation is dramatically dif-

ferent from a decade ago. Recently, Saudi Arabia’s Defense Minister, who reports say could be the next Crown Prince, visited Tehran and met with high-ranking officials – a stark contrast to past threats by Mohammad Bin Salman to bring war into Iran.”

Riyadh’s shift stems from a growing recognition that regional security is inextricably linked and that Tehran is a key stakeholder. “Saudi Arabia embarked on a fruitless war in Yemen, shelled out huge sums of money, damaged its reputation, and was ultimately targeted by Ansarullah, who halved the country’s oil output in 2019 with a drone strike on the Aramco facility,” the expert explained, adding that a turning point was the United States’ inaction in the face of potential future attacks. “That was when the Saudis realized they could only have security inside their borders if things were

also calm outside. They needed to do this through engagements with their neighbors because Americans couldn’t care less about Arabs’ woes.”

Beyond concerns about a potential military confrontation between Iran and the U.S., especially given Trump’s threat to “bomb” Iran’s nuclear sites if a new agreement is not reached, Arab nations have also arrived at other new understandings. A military standoff between the two countries would surely be devastating for the entire region, and potentially the world, due to indefinite disruptions to oil supplies and severe environmental consequences for Persian Gulf countries. However, Arabs generally do not want Iran marginalized, now recognizing that Iran’s regional influence, in some cases, provides a protective element.

“A very good example is Syria. Saudis and other Persian Gulf states fought to diminish Iranian influence in Syria for the longest time. But now that Israel has occupied part of the country and Turkey is speaking of capturing some of its other provinces, Arabs understand that an Iran-allied Syria was never a threat, compared to the expansionist forces encroaching on the war-torn nation,” Moradi explained.

Tehran’s objective has consistently been to foster regional engagement from all actors, not to pursue territorial expansion, he added.

Araghchi to visit China ahead of third round of indirect talks with US

From Page 1 ► Answering to a question from the Tehran Times reporter regarding the nature of the trip, the Foreign Ministry spokesman emphasized that the trip to China had been planned well in advance. “Naturally, during this visit, we will consult with Chinese officials about the status of negotiations and brief them on the latest developments,” Baghaei said. He noted that the visit is also aimed at accelerating the implementation of previously signed agreements, which fall within the broader framework of Iran and China’s growing strategic partnership.

The trip comes at a pivotal moment in Iran’s diplomatic calendar, as indirect negotiations between Tehran and Washington have entered a delicate phase. Baghaei confirmed that both expert-level discussions and a third round of high-level talks between Foreign Minister Araghchi and the U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff will be held in Muscat, Oman. These meetings aim to resolve remaining disagreements over the future of Iran’s nuclear program and the lifting of U.S. sanctions.

Also, ahead of the second round of talks held in Rome on April 20, Araghchi visited Moscow, where he held a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. During the briefing, Araghchi stated that a deal



with the United States was possible—provided that Washington refrains from making what he called “unrealistic” or “unreasonable” demands.

“We will only negotiate over the nuclear issue. Other topics are not on the table,” Araghchi said. “I believe an agreement is within reach if the U.S. shows genuine intent and avoids excessive or impractical conditions.”

Lavrov echoed those remarks, reiterating Russia’s readiness to facilitate the process in any way deemed useful by both parties. “We

are prepared to help, mediate, and support the negotiations, provided that our role is acceptable to both Iran and the United States,” he said. Lavrov underscored that any future agreement should remain strictly limited to nuclear-related issues, calling this a “fundamental” principle of Moscow’s position.

According to Lavrov, Russian President Vladimir Putin was “very pleased” with his recent meeting with Araghchi, indicating Russia’s active interest in the outcome of the current diplomatic push.

The second round of indirect Iran-U.S. negotiations was held at the Omani Embassy in Rome on Saturday. Talks focused on clarifying each side’s expectations, while narrowing technical gaps regarding nuclear enrichment levels, sanction relief, and verification mechanisms.

The two delegations agreed to hold technical-level negotiations in Muscat on April 23, where expert teams will work on a framework for a potential deal. A third high-level meeting between Araghchi and Witkoff is scheduled for April 26, also in Muscat, to evaluate progress and determine whether the parties are close enough to proceed to a formal agreement.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Putin signs strategic comprehensive pact with Iran, cementing long-term alliance

TEHRAN – Russian President Vladimir Putin ratified the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty between Iran and Russia on Monday, completing Moscow’s legislative process for the agreement.

The treaty, which elevates bilateral relations to a strategic partnership, was previously approved by both chambers of Russia’s Federal Assembly—the State Duma on April 7 and the Federation Council on April 15.

The document, now published on Russia’s official legal information portal, establishes a long-term framework for cooperation across defense, counterterrorism, energy, finance, transportation, agriculture, culture, science, and technology.

It was initially signed on January 17, during Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s official visit to Moscow in a ceremony at the Kremlin.

The agreement solidifies Iran and Russia as strategic partners,

with both nations emphasizing their commitment to overcoming external challenges through deepened collaboration.

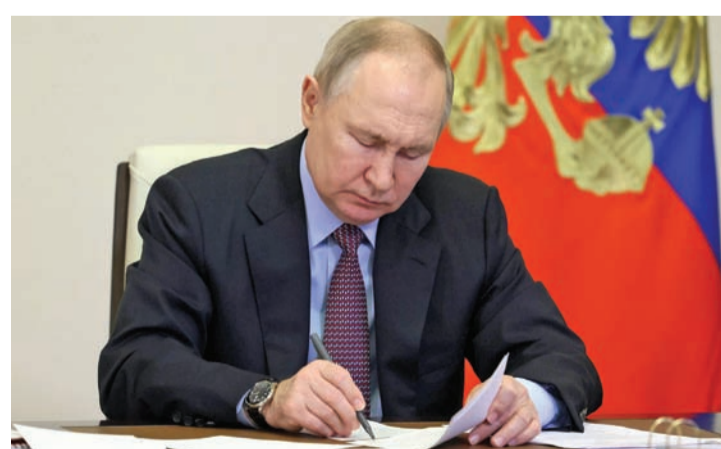
During his recent visit to Moscow, Iran’s Foreign Minister delivered a message from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, to President Putin.

In an interview with RT, he underscored the treaty’s significance, stating, “Iran-Russia relations have never been this close or robust.”

“This pact elevates our ties to a strategic level and sends a clear message to the world: our partnership is built for the long term, impervious to short-term disruptions,” declared the top diplomat. The treaty’s activation now hinges on Tehran’s approval.

Araghchi added that Iran’s Parliament is “expected to ratify the treaty in the coming days,” with full implementation anticipated within weeks.

The 20-year pact, renewable by



Russian President Vladimir Putin

mutual consent, is designed to institutionalize cooperation that has already seen significant growth in recent years.

Analysts view the agreement as a strategic counterweight to Western pressure, with both nations calling it a stabilizing force amid global volatility.

The treaty explicitly rejects “unilateral coercive measures,” a nod to U.S.-led sanctions targeting Iran

and Russia.

As the pact moves toward implementation, bilateral trade and joint infrastructure projects—including the International North-South Transport Corridor—are expected to accelerate.

The treaty’s ratification marks a defining moment in Iran-Russia relations, setting the stage for a recalibrated geopolitical landscape in Eurasia.

Issaeian reflects on two decades of service to Iran’s women’s basketball

TEHRAN – Edna Issaeian, the captain of Iran’s women’s basketball team, has announced her retirement from national duty after nearly 20 years of dedicated service. She expressed pride in her contributions to the team, particularly as a key player in securing a spot for Iran in the 2025 FIBA Women’s Asia Cup Division B in Jordan.

Shortly after this achievement, Issaeian made the decision to bring an end to her illustrious career. Over the years, her unique skills and leadership have played a significant role in advancing women’s basketball in Iran.

“The 2025 FIBA Women’s Asia Cup Division B qualification was an improvement over the previous edition. Although we had always defeated the Jordanian team, they were stronger this time, benefiting from their home advantage. Nevertheless, we managed to win against them again, and we also triumphed over Syria in our first match,” Issaeian shared in an exclusive interview with Tehran Times.

Reflecting on her retirement, Issaeian stated, “It’s normal for any player to retire after many years with the national team. I feel good knowing I’ve contributed to the team, whether through my play or support. I don’t harbor any special feelings about retiring. Once I realized there was no room for me on the team, I decided it was time. I hope to help other players find their chances to shine.”

“I served the national team for 17 years and maybe more and always gave my best on the court. I hope the upward trajectory of women’s basketball continues, allowing our players to reach new heights. I’m proud to have supported the Iranian team all these years,” she affirmed.

Issaeian also praised the team’s coach, Eleni Kapogianni, saying, “She understands basketball deeply and has been instrumental in the sport’s development in our country. I wish her and the national team players great success.”

Although Issaeian has completed coaching courses, she remains open to continuing her basketball journey. “If I choose not to play anymore, I will definitely pursue coaching or a role within the basketball federation,” she concluded.

Esteghlal held by struggling Havadar: PGPL

TEHRAN – Esteghlal and Havadar football teams shared the spoils in a 2-2 draw in the 2024/25 Iran’s Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) on Monday.

Just after four minutes, Ramin Rezaeian gave the hosts a lead in Tehran’s Azadi Stadium but Dariush Shojaeian leveled the score two minutes later.

Mohammadhossein Sadeghi scored Havadar’s second goal in the 28th minute but they failed to keep their advantage and Kasra Rahmati scored an own goal six minutes into the second half.

Havadar were almost relegated from 2024/25 PGPL and Esteghlal are 11th in the 16-team table.

Uzbekistan win 2025 AFC U17 Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Nine-man Uzbekistan overcame the odds to win the AFC U17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 title after defeating Saudi Arabia 2-0 in the final on Sunday.

Uzbekistan stayed resilient despite losing two players to red cards in the first half to lift the coveted trophy for a second time, having emerged champions in 2012.

Uzbekistan sported a determined look af-

ter the interval and took the game to Saudi Arabia despite their numerical disadvantage.

Their aggression paid off in the 51st minute after a VAR check confirmed Yazeed Al Dosari’s handball with Muhammad Khakimov making no mistake from 12 yards.

Saudi Arabia looked for a quick response but close-range attempts from Thari Saeed, Sufyani and Mukhtar Barnawi were well defended by a line of Uzbekistan players across the goalmouth.

The home fans at King Fahd Sports City Stadium were stunned into silence in the 70th minute after a quick break saw a surging Sadriddin Khasanov dribbling past Alwaleed Aloufi on the left before slotting past Al Otai-bi to seal Uzbekistan’s amazing victory.

Hossein Vafaei roars past Hawkins in thriller

TEHRAN – Hossein Vafaei let out an emotional scream in a dramatic 10-9 victory over Barry Hawkins in the 2025 World Snooker Championship on Sunday.

A stunning display from the Iranian number one saw him battle to keep himself in contention.

They came into the match with Hawkins leading 5-4 and the Londoner took the opener to extend his cushion. Vafaei then responded with back-to-back century breaks of 104 and 107 to restore parity at 6-6.

Hawkins went 8-7 ahead when Vafaei made 110 to draw level once more. It was the Englishman that first moved to the verge of victory, making 106 to lead 9-8. A tight 18th frame went the way of Vafaei and he then made that emotional run of 73 in the last to get over the line. The moment of victory was the first time that he had led during the entire match.

Former Saipa coach Werner Lorant dies

TEHRAN – German coach Werner Lorant passed away on Sunday at the age of 76.

Lorant died following a long illness. The former Bundesliga player, who played for the likes of Eintracht Frankfurt and Rot-Weiß Essen, coached the Munich Lions from 1992 to 2001.

He started his coaching career in 1986 with 1. FC Schweinfurt 05 and led Iranian club Saipa in 2006.

The announcement was made by TSV 1860 Munich, the club with which Lorant experienced his greatest times as a coach.

Iran’s fixtures in 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran will play Singapore on June 26 in the opening match of the 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualifiers.

The 34 sides were drawn into six groups of four teams and two groups of five, with the Qualifiers to be hosted by Cambodia, Indonesia, Jordan, Myanmar, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam, the-afc.com wrote.

The eight group winners will join defending champions China, Korea Republic and Japan in the Finals, scheduled to be staged across three host cities from March 1 to 26, 2026.

Group A will see Iran, Jordan (H), Lebanon, Singapore and Bhutan.

- Iran’s Fixture:
- June 26
- *Iran vs Singapore
- June 29
- *Iran vs Bhutan
- July 2
- *Iran vs Lebanon
- July 5
- *Jordan vs Iran

Govt. approves \$7b in foreign investment



TEHRAN – Iranian government has approved \$7 billion worth of foreign investment proposals during the first meeting of its Foreign Investment Board in the current Iranian calendar year 1404 (beginning March 2025), according to the Economy Ministry.

In its 291st session and the first of the new year, held on Sunday, April 20, the board reviewed 80 foreign investment requests spanning various economic sectors, including

agriculture, renewable energy, automotive manufacturing, and tourism, IRNA reported.

The meeting was chaired by the deputy economy minister and head of the Organization for Investment, Economic, and Technical Assistance of Iran.

Representatives from the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), Foreign Ministry, Central Bank of Iran (CBI), Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA), Iran Chamber of Cooperatives (ICC), and relevant ministries and agencies—including Agriculture, Transport and Urban Development, Interior, Health, Industry and Trade, as well as the Free Zones Secretariat and the Securities and Exchange Organization—attended the session.

The proposals came from a diverse group of countries, including Oman, Germany, Canada, India, China, Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iranian expatriates.

Tehran to host 7th Iran Expo with over 2,000 foreign traders in attendance

TEHRAN – The 7th edition of the Iran Export Capabilities Exhibition (Iran Expo 2025) will be held in Tehran from April 27 to May 1, showcasing the country's export potential to a global audience.

Speaking at a press conference, the Iranian government's spokesperson emphasized that the event reflects the administration's commitment to supporting the private sector. "This exhibition demonstrates the government's serious focus on empowering private businesses," she said.

According to the organizers, between 2,000 and 3,000 foreign traders from around the world are expected to attend. The exhibition aims to foster bilateral trade talks and contract signings between Iranian and international business representatives. In addition to commercial discussions, the event will also highlight Iran's cultural and industrial assets.

The exhibition will coincide with the Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Summit, which opens on April 26. "Iran's trade volume with African countries is not proportionate to its capacities," the spokesperson noted, urging stronger engagement with African markets. She emphasized the need for entrepreneurs and industrialists to begin negotiations at the governmental level before moving to business-to-business cooperation.

Mohammad Ali Dehghan Dehnavi, head of



Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), said traders from 110 countries have registered to attend, marking an increase in international interest compared to last year. He also reported unprecedented enthusiasm from domestic companies, with 1,000 firms allocated across 800 booths and another 400 applicants still seeking to join.

Commenting on the Iran-Africa summit, Dehnavi described it as a major political and economic milestone, adding, "We aim to secure the highest possible economic gains from these two key events."

He concluded by praising the joint efforts of government bodies and private sector organizers in preparing for the events, noting that the TPO has mobilized all available resources to ensure the exhibition's success.

TEDPIX gains 59,400 points on Monday



TEHRAN – TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 59,432 points to 3.137 million on Monday, which is the third day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME).

In late March, the head of Iran Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) outlined the five major plans for enhancing efficiency and transparency in the capital market in the new Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21.

Hojatollah Seyedi outlined five initiatives for the capital market this year, which include expanding the market through initial public offerings (IPOs), especially company-project listings, and increasing the capital of listed companies.

He expressed hope that the number of companies in the capital market would exceed 1,000 this year (currently there are over 700 companies).

Entrepreneurs and private companies are encouraged to take advantage of capital market opportunities, he emphasized.

He continued by explaining the second initiative: enhancing transparency, efficiency, and timely information dissemination in the capital market.

The third program focuses on improving corporate governance systems to ensure listed companies are better managed, achieving higher performance and increased profitability, all aligned with supporting production, the official added.

Seyedi announced two other plans: one to strengthen structures and the other to upgrade and rebuild the capital market's information technology system.

Regarding the capital market's value this year, he clarified that it will ultimately depend on market participants and remains unpredictable. However, efforts will focus on increasing transparency, liquidity, and efficiency to grow and improve the market compared to last year.

He emphasized the importance of shareholder rights, stating, "Shareholders must feel their rights are respected and supported", adding that safeguarding shareholders' rights depends on enhancing the efficiency of listed companies.

The SEO head further stressed fair transactions, preventing asymmetry in the dissemination of company information, and ensuring shareholders have access to company performance data to make informed decisions, such as whether to hold or sell their shares.

Iran aims for 8m tons of rail transit in current year, eyes 40m in long term

TEHRAN – Iran moved five million tons of goods via rail transit in the last Iranian year (ended late March 2025) and plans to increase that to eight million tons this year, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) said on Sunday.

Speaking at an investment ceremony focused on expanding Iran's freight and passenger rail transport through public-private partnerships, Jabarali Zakeri emphasized the economic value of boosting rail transit.

"Developing transit brings in foreign currency revenue," he said, noting that completion of east-west and north-south transport corridors could raise Iran's rail transit capacity to 40 million tons annually in the long run.

Zakeri acknowledged the challenges in achieving this goal, citing the need for major infrastructure upgrades and resolving issues at border entry and exit points.

Still, he noted that even with the current railway network, reaching an annual transit volume of 15 million tons is possible.



To achieve this, Iran must pursue stronger "rail diplomacy" and prioritize regional rail linkages with neighboring countries, Zakeri said.

He also stressed the need for deeper engagement with key industry stakeholders, including locomotive owners, freight companies, manufacturers, and associations, involving them more directly in rail decision-making processes.

He highlighted a third strategy: expanding the use of "block trains"—dedicated, scheduled freight trains.

"We now run 500 scheduled freight trains weekly," Zakeri said, adding that this reduces state involvement and boosts private sector participation in train operations.

Referencing Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, Zakeri said the government aims to add 550 locomotives, 300 passenger coaches, and over 3,000 freight wagons.

He added that these goals would be pursued with the support of private sector investment and international financing.

Zakeri also announced that two major locomotive contracts would likely be unveiled within the next two months, which he described as a boost for Iran's rail industry. These developments are expected to fulfill 30 percent of the program's second-year targets.

He noted that Article 12 of Iran's fuel savings law would help finance rail fleet development, and shifting freight from roads to rail could significantly reduce traffic fatalities—a major issue in the country.

Between March 13 and April 5, more than 1.95 million passengers traveled by rail, with zero fatalities recorded, Zakeri said.

"Rail transport is safe, and its expansion can help us fulfill our responsibility to reduce road casualties."

He concluded by emphasizing the need for closer collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance to advance the Railway's defined investment packages in line with this year's national theme, "Investment for Production."

Moscow to host 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN – The 18th meeting of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee will be held in Moscow from April 22 to 24, aimed at expanding bilateral cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation.

According to Iran's Oil Ministry, the meeting will be co-chaired by Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev, who also head the two countries' joint economic Committee.

The first two days of the gathering will feature expert-level meetings, during which Iranian and Russian specialists will convene

in several working groups to explore avenues for expanding bilateral cooperation, address existing challenges, and draft a roadmap for future collaboration.

This roadmap will be formalized in a memorandum of understanding signed by the two ministers.

Following the signing of a comprehensive strategic partnership treaty between Iran and Russia in January 2025, and the Iranian parliament's ratification of a free trade agreement with the Eurasian Economic Union in February 2025, the foundation for deeper cooperation between the two countries has significantly

strengthened.

The upcoming commission is expected to focus on a broad range of topics including energy, trade and economic cooperation, finance and banking, transportation and logistics, customs, industry and mining, agriculture, health, culture, tourism, science, and technology, in line with the aforementioned agreements.

The previous session of the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Commission was held in Tehran in March 2024, hosted by Iran's Oil Ministry.

IMIDRO eyes joint Akbar projects with China, from solar power to copper chain development

TEHRAN – Iran's state-owned mining and metals development body, IMIDRO, is exploring new areas of cooperation with Chinese partners, ranging from building solar power plants to expanding the copper value chain, according to its chairman.

Mohammad Aghajani, head of the Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), said during a meeting on Monday with executives of a major Chinese contracting company that numerous projects in Iran's mining and mineral industries are open to cooperation, particularly in technology transfer and project implementation.

Aghajani outlined potential areas of collaboration, including the construction of solar power plants adjacent to mines, development of alumina projects, and comprehensive engagement in the copper chain—from upstream extraction to downstream manufacturing such as copper foil and various sheet products.

He also pointed to opportunities in deep iron ore mining and lithium projects, especially those involving brine resources.

The deputy industry, mining, and trade minister invited the Chinese company to attend the Tehran Expo 1404, saying IMIDRO is prepared to share technical data and project needs with the Chinese side to enable them to submit proposals for participation or investment packages.

Yu Jiang, a representative of the Chinese company, welcomed the prospect of expanding mining cooperation between the two countries. He emphasized the firm's strong financial capabilities and global track record.

Yu added that the company is

ready to contribute to the execution and completion of IMIDRO's proposed projects.

He said expert-level meetings will be held between the two sides to define areas of collaboration, ultimately leading to a formal cooperation agreement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

On December 20, 2024, a Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) representative



announced that the Chinese investors are prepared to fund the construction of combined-cycle power plants in Iran's energy-rich Khuzestan province to help address the country's energy imbalance and boost regional economic development.

Zhao Bin He, the Executive Director of SCO's Iran Office, made the remarks during a meeting with Khuzestan's governor and local religious leaders.

"We are here to pay our respects to provincial authorities and outline China's plans for strengthening economic and trade ties, with a particular focus on Khuzestan," Zhao said.

He highlighted the historical and enduring relationship between Iran and China, describing it as built on mutual respect, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange.

"Khuzestan's strategic position in southwest Iran and its vast economic potential make it a key player in enhancing Iran-China relations," Zhao added. "With access to the Persian Gulf and proximity to strong regional economies, Khuzestan offers exceptional opportunities for port infrastructure development and maritime transport."

Zhao reiterated China's readi-

ness to actively participate in developing Khuzestan's infrastructure, expanding port capacity, and exploring joint projects in energy, industry, and agriculture.

In a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Tehran Cong Peiwu on October 15, 2024 Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Abdolnaser Hemmati emphasized the importance of implementing the memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed between Iran and China.

In the meeting, held at the place of the ministry, the Iranian minister followed up on the negotiations that took place during the BRICS Economic Ministers' Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, stressing the importance of implementing the MOUs between the two countries.

He also considered the two countries' Joint Economic Committee as a suitable platform for negotiations on economic, trade, and investment cooperation, and welcomed the holding of the 19th Joint Economic Committee in Tehran.

Cong Peiwu, for his part, stated that Beijing aims to expedite the implementation of the MOUs and enhance practical cooperation to deepen relations between the two countries.

Pope's plea for peace in Gaza was source of Israeli fury

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- Pope Francis was a key leader of the Catholic Church and the first pope from outside Europe in almost 1,300 years. He died on the morning of April 21, 2025. During his time as pope, he was clear and caring about global issues, especially the Israeli war in Gaza.

The pope often demanded a stop to the violence in Gaza. He wanted justice for victims and aid for Palestinians affected by the war. His strong words against the conflict included calls for cease-fires and investigations into war crimes. This upset some Israeli officials, making the relationship between the Vatican and Israel highly tense.

With his passing, the world has lost a highly influential religious leader and a strong advocate for peace and human rights in one of the most difficult and long-lasting conflicts.

Pope Francis' views on Gaza and Israel

During the conflict that got highly worse in October 2023, Pope Francis repeatedly criticized the violence and the terrible situation in Gaza. He made it clear that the situation was not just war but terrorism. On November 22, 2023, he said, "This is not war. This is terrorism." He highlighted how civilians, especially children, were suffering too much and urged an end to the fighting and for humanitarian help to reach the people in Gaza.

In a significant statement in



November 2024, Pope Francis asked the international community to investigate whether Israel's military actions in Gaza could be considered genocide. He stated, "According to some experts, what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide. It should be carefully investigated."

This was a strong and rare challenge to Israel's behavior in the conflict. The pope also condemned the bombing of civilian places like hospitals and schools, which led to many civilian deaths. On December 26, 2024, he lamented, "Yesterday, children were bombed. This is cruelty, not war," underscoring the moral dimension of his critique.

In his Easter 2025 message, he appealed to "the warring parties: call a ceasefire, release the hostages and come to the aid of a starving people that aspires to a future of peace." In addition, he was dismayed at the growing level of antisemitism throughout the globe, thereby showing his balanced perspective on the conflict.

The role and plight of Palestinian Christians

Pope Francis has shown great care for Palestinian Christians, who are a small group caught in the middle of the conflict. He called Gaza's Holy Family Parish every night after Israel started its relentless and barbaric war on Gaza following the October 7 attack on southern Israel by Hamas.

The Israeli attacks on Gaza and the West Bank have greatly affected Palestinian Christian communities. Leaders are concerned they might vanish entirely if the situation doesn't improve. Easter in 2025, a time usually full of happiness, was instead marked by sadness and fear. This shows the difficult times Christians are experiencing due to the pressure from the Israeli military.

Israel's reaction: Outrage and diplomatic tensions

Israel quickly and strongly reacted to Pope Francis' comments, showing much frustration and anger. They accused the Pope of ignoring the security challenges Israel faces, especially regarding

Hamas. Israeli officials claimed Hamas was using people as human shields and taking hostages. The Israeli Foreign Ministry called the Pope's remarks "double standards" and said he unfairly targeted Israel. After the Pope criticized the killing of Palestinian children, Israel called in the Vatican's ambassador in Jerusalem to express unhappiness with the Pope's words. The Pope's moral authority challenged Israel's military and political position.

Pope Francis took a firm stand on the Gaza conflict, showing real worry about human rights and fairness. He spoke out against what he saw as extreme violence and hardship that Palestinians were going through. His choice to use words like "terrorism" and "genocide" when talking about Israel's actions was a big deal for a current pope proving he wasn't scared to call out powerful nations on ethical issues.

He also spoke out for Palestinian Christians, which added another layer to his message. It highlighted how important it is to protect minority groups in the Holy Land and to recognize the different cultures and faiths in that region. This approach stood out against the often-divided political discussions about the conflict.

Israel's angry reaction to the Pope's remarks revealed its sensitivity to criticism from prominent individuals.

Pope Francis left behind a complicated legacy. His words inspired many Palestinians and human rights supporters.

The curse of betraying Palestine won't spare Arabs

From page 1 ► Further, the infamous Oslo Peace Accords, signed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), brought nothing for the Palestinians but tragedies, annexation of lands, fragmentation, and the loss of further legitimate rights.

The Fatah (PLO) movement fell resoundingly into the trap of normalization and security coordination with the Israeli enemy, to the point of displacing millions of Palestinian refugees.

This has constituted a great betrayal to thousands of people who sacrificed their lives to free the Palestinian soil from the Israeli occupation given that Palestine is the land of Holy Quds, the first of the two Qiblas (direction of prayer), the third holiest site in Islam, and the place where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to heaven.

Today, despite the unstoppable media cover-

age of the crimes of ethnic cleansing in Palestine, there is no response. The silence and indifference of officials and the public are shameful.

Unfortunately, many of the Arab peoples no longer care about the desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the tragic brutality against Palestinian children and women, scenes that children scramble to get a small portion of food, etc.

While mosques, universities, schools, hospitals and clinics are being bombarded on a daily basis, anger and protest to these horrible acts are just limited to a few Arab countries.

Television channels, particularly in Persian Gulf Arab ones, which are unfortunately watched by millions of Arabs and Muslims, are busy broadcasting trivial and low matters.

These channels air vile soap operas while horrific acts are taking place in the Gaza Strip.

The destruction, devastation, starvation, and physical and ethnic cleansing, which have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, mostly children and women, have all these horrific scenes failed to move the Arabs or their human conscience in the face of the brutal American-Israeli destruction machine.

While some people in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia take to the streets in angry protests against the crimes of the Zionist entity, most Arab countries are in deep sleep.

Only the people of Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq have taken honorable stands as they compete and strive to sacrifice for the sake of the resistance project.

Undoubtedly, the curse of Palestine's betrayal will not spare the Arab peoples, even if it takes some time!

Iqbal Lahori on Palestine: A test for courage and pride

From page 1 ► "The Muslims, their wives and children are being killed in Palestine. The centre of this tragedy is Jerusalem, where Al-Aqsa Mosque is situated. This mosque is associated with the occasion of Mi'raj Mubarak. Mi'raj is a religious truth. Which is associated with the deepest sentiments of the Muslims. Historically and legally the Jews are not justified in their claim over Al-Aqsa Mosque. In 1914 the British statesmen used the Jews for their own purpose. They promoted the Zionist movement and used such methods for the attainment of their goals which brought horrible results.

The Muslims, their women and children are being slaughtered

like sheep and goats... The Zionist movement will not bring any pleasant results for the Muslims. On the contrary, it would harbor unprecedented evil...?"

If we look at Iqbal's life, he is always found associated with the Palestine cause. His reactions and feelings on various phases of this crisis are part of history. One can see his letters from 1932-37 in this regard which he wrote to (Quaid e Azam) Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Maulvi Abdul Haq and Miss Margaret, the leader of National League, London. All these letters are worth reading. An extract from his letter is being presented here which reflects Iqbal's style of looking at political issues and analyzing them.

He wrote his comments on the Palestine Report in a letter to Miss Margaret Farquharson

"Through wisdom alone comes power; and when power abandons the ways of wisdom and relies upon itself alone, its end is death."

Iqbal's prediction came true. The power, which had created the Palestine issue by ignoring the wisdom and morality, became a story of the past. The first part of this extract is a message and an eye-opener for the powers of the present age. Those who ignore wisdom find nothing in the future except danger and defeat.

Iqbal's deep association with the Palestine cause can also be judged

by the fact that he attended possibly every meeting in this connection. During the last year of Iqbal's life when he was very ill and unable to attend any meeting, the report of the British Royal Commission on Palestine was made public. Muslim League (a Muslim political association in the British India) organized a public meeting in Lahore on 26 July 1937. Iqbal was unable to attend this meeting. However, he sent his written message for the occasion. Urdu translation of Iqbal's message was read out in this meeting. Iqbal declared that Palestine is a purely Muslim issue. Presenting his analysis in the historical backdrop, Iqbal wrote:

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Yemen attacks Israeli and US targets

According to Saree, the aircraft carrier USS Truman and its accompanying vessels were targeted in the northern Red Sea using two cruise missiles and two drones.

Meanwhile, the USS Vinson and its warships in the Arabian Sea were struck with three cruise missiles and four drones.

Saree emphasized that the operations were "successful in achieving their objectives" and confirmed that the Yemeni Armed Forces would "continue support operations deep inside the Zionist enemy's territory in occupied Palestine with increasing intensity."

He also said the military would persist in targeting all hostile naval assets in both the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

Responding to continued American airstrikes, Saree stated, "U.S. raids will not deter us from supporting Gaza until the aggression ends and the siege is lifted."

Since the resumption of its naval operations against both the United States and the Israeli regime, following renewed Israeli genocide against Gaza, Yemen has come under intensified American airstrikes.

U.S. warplanes bombed the capital, Sanaa, as well as Marib, Saada, and Amran Governorates in Yemen. An initial death toll of the U.S. attacks on Sanaa reports at least 12 killed and 30 injured.

The latest air raids come days after a U.S. attack on the port city of Hodeidah, which left over 170 casualties

Despite this, Yemeni officials have reaffirmed their commitment to continuing military operations until the war on Gaza stops.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Berlin protesters face deportation orders over Gaza solidarity



TEHRAN - Demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people and against the ongoing Israeli aggression in Gaza have erupted across cities worldwide, with protesters calling for an end to genocide, occupation, and international complicity.

Activists who began a hunger strike on March 31 in Marseille, southern France, under the slogan "Strike for Justice in Palestine," have now brought their protest to Geneva, Switzerland, in an effort to raise international awareness and garner global support.

Pascal André, a French doctor, spoke to Anadolu Agency about the details of his hunger strike.

André, who has been working in Gaza since April last year, said: "We, along with many of our fellow citizens, launched a hunger strike on March 31 in Marseille. Since then, we have traveled to 12 cities across France to engage with the public. The international laws on this matter are clear, but they are not being respected."

In Berlin, Germany, thousands also responded to calls from Gaza and filled the streets to show their strong opposition to

the war in Gaza.

Berlin's Immigration Office has told three European Union citizens and one American they are to be deported from Germany this week over alleged actions at protests against Israel's war in Gaza. Their cases have not yet been heard in court.

The four demonstrators — two from Ireland, one from Poland and one from the United States — were served with orders last month, instructing them to leave Germany by April 21 or be deported. The Berlin Immigration Office says the deportation orders are connected to a protest at Berlin's Free University in October 2024.

Germany's push to deport protesters supporting Palestinians has drawn comparisons with the Trump administration's handling of student protesters in the U.S. There are concerns that by restricting the freedom of movement of the three EU citizens, these deportation orders may clash with EU law, which enshrines freedom of movement as a founding principle.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

China, PGCC states to deepen peaceful nuclear tech cooperation

China and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) countries pledged to strengthen collaboration on peaceful use of nuclear technology during a forum held on Monday in Chengdu, capital of southwest China's Sichuan Province, Xinhua reported.

Hosted by the China Atomic Energy Authority (CAEA), the First China-GCC Forum on Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology brought together officials and nuclear experts from China, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other Persian Gulf Arab countries.

The participants discussed opportunities, challenges and collaborative solutions for nuclear energy and technological development, sharing insights on current needs and future prospects.

According to the CAEA, China has in recent years enhanced collaboration with Persian Gulf Arab states in terms of nuclear energy and nuclear technology applications. In the



nuclear energy sector, China and the UAE signed an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in peaceful use of nuclear energy, advancing partnerships in reactor operation, fuel supply and personnel training. In the case of Saudi Arabia, joint efforts focus on uranium-thorium exploration, nuclear safety and public security.

Israel cancels visas for 27 French MPs

The Israeli has regime canceled visas for 27 French left-wing lawmakers and local officials two days before they were to start a visit to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories on Sunday.

The action came only days after Israel stopped two British members of parliament from the governing Labour Party from enter-

ing the country.

It also came amidst diplomatic tensions after President Emmanuel Macron said France would soon recognize a Palestinian state. Macron has in turn sought to pressure Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over conditions in Gaza amid the Israel-Hamas war.

Vance visits India as US tariff threat looms

United States Vice President JD Vance arrived in India for a four-day visit as New Delhi looks to avoid U.S. tariffs, negotiate a bilateral trade deal with Washington and strengthen ties with the administration of President Donald Trump.

Vance was meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, the first day of his largely personal visit. He was greeted with a hug by the Indian leader at his residence in New Delhi, photos released by the Indian government showed.

Hasanlu village to be nominated for UN label as premier destination



TEHRAN - The ancient village of Hasanlu in northwest Iran is nearing completion of its dossier for inscription as one of the Best Tourism Villages, a prestigious label given by UN Tourism.

Hasanlu is among eight Iranian villages nominated for the UN Tourism's 2025 recognition list, said a senior official from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, CHTN reported on Monday.

Speaking during a recent visit to the village, Seyyed Mostafa Fatemi, Director General of Domestic Tourism at the ministry, described Hasanlu as "a mirror reflecting the full spectrum of historical tourism attractions."

The official emphasized the village's rich blend of cultural heritage, tourism potential, and handicraft production.

To date, only two Iranian villages—Kandovan in East Azarbaijan and Esfahak in South Khuzestan—have been recognized by the UN Tourism as top rural tourism destinations.

"Hasanlu possesses outstanding capacities in cultural heritage, eco-tourism, and na-

ture-based attractions," Fatemi said.

"The presence of an ancient Hasanlu Hill, one of the oldest known civilizations, significantly elevates the historical status of the village."

He also noted the village's diverse offerings, including locally crafted handicrafts, nearby wetlands that serve as birdwatching havens, and a growing number of tourism facilities.

These, he said, enhance Hasanlu's appeal to both domestic and international travelers.

Fatemi further highlighted the village's strengths in sustainable development, citing its economic, social, and environmental stability, as well as the preservation of cultural and historical assets.

The global nomination dossier is expected to be finalized within a week.

"We are working to resolve the remaining gaps and formalities to submit the complete file to the UN Tourism soon," Fatemi concluded.

If successful, the inscription could significantly boost tourism and international interest in Hasanlu, positioning it as a key destination in Iran's rural tourism landscape.

Iran's representatives to take part in Dubai travel fair



TEHRAN -- Representatives of Iran's tourism industry will take part in the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2025 in Dubai from April 28 to May 1 to draw foreign visitors.

The measure, supported by the Touring and Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is an important opportunity to introduce Iran's tourism potential, promote international collaborations, and market Iranian destinations, Mehr news agency reported.

Turkey to begin restoration work on dome of Hagia Sophia

Turkey is set to begin restoration and reinforcement work on the dome of the Hagia Sophia, in one of the biggest repair projects carried out on the 1,486-year-old structure, experts said on Monday.

Hagia Sophia was the largest cathedral in the world for 900 years until its capture by Ottoman Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1453, after which it was one of Islam's most exalted mosques for nearly 500 years.

The building was converted to a museum by Turkey's secular republic more than 70 years ago but turned back into a mosque by President Tayyip Erdogan in 2020.

The process will be difficult and will "open an important page in the book of Hagia Sophia," said Asnu Bilban Yalcin, a Byzantine art historian, adding that restoration of other parts of the structure has been under way for 10 years.

"It is truly a structure full of surprises because sometimes things develop in a way we do not expect. That is, you design and plan it, but when you open it, things may develop differently," she told Reuters outside the Hagia Sophia.

The dome will first be covered to protect it during the repair process, said Ahmet Gulec, a cultural property conservation and repair expert, adding that the existing lead cover will then be removed for the restoration and reinforcement project to continue.

The reinforcement project will focus on weak structural points determined during simulations of a large earthquake, in a country criss-crossed by fault lines.

The real structural problems will become more apparent when the lead cover is lifted, said Hasan Firat Diker, a professor of architecture at the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakif University.

The Hagia Sophia is expected remain open to worshippers and visitors during the restoration process, which makes the repair process more difficult, said Gulec, the cultural property conservation and repair expert.

The experts did not specify a date for the completion of the restoration of the dome, given potential setbacks due to weather conditions and unforeseen additional works.

(Source: Reuters)

Aerial mapping of Jiroft archaeological sites conducted for first time

TEHRAN - For the first time, aerial mapping and imaging have been conducted over key archaeological sites in Jiroft, a region renowned for its Bronze Age ruins dating back to the 3rd millennium BC.

The initiative marks a significant step forward in the documentation and preservation of one of Iran's most historically rich areas, according to Ghader Shirvani, an official in charge of historical sites in the south of Kerman province.

The aerial survey was carried out over the ancient city of Old Jiroft and the smaller site known as Qal'eh Kuchak (Small Fortress), the official said on Monday. "The project aims to enhance the documentation process and support ongoing archaeological and conservation efforts."

Situated in southern Iran, Jiroft is widely believed to be a cradle of civilization, holding invaluable historical and cultural significance.

"This is the first time such detailed aerial imaging and mapping have been done in the region," Shirvani said.

"The project was made possible through cooperation with the Agourchin Co., the contractor of the Jiroft airport project, which



provided high-resolution photographs and video footage."

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

Speaking at an administrative council meeting in Jiroft, Salehi-Amiri highlighted the deep historical roots of the region, noting that Jiroft is not just an ancient city but a symbol of identity, history, and civilization.

"If other nations possessed such a civilization, they would build their national economy

around it. Unfortunately, we have yet to fully present Jiroft's civilizational value to the world," he remarked.

Jiroft is recognized as the heart of an early Bronze Age culture, often referred to as the Jiroft or Halilrud (Halil River) culture. It is known for its distinctive artifacts and extensive urban settlements, shedding light on one of the earliest civilizations in the region encompassing present-day Kerman and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces.

Remarkable discoveries in the Jiroft region date from the early 21st century when severe floods along the Halil River unearthed numerous previously unknown tombs, revealing artifacts be-

lieved to date back to the Early Bronze Age (late 3rd millennium BC).

Reports initially described the sight of "an ancient object floating on the water's surface." Recognizing its value, villagers, impacted by two years of drought, swarmed the riverbanks the following day, searching for 5,000-year-old relics.

Despite its historical significance, geological factors led to the site's oversight by tourists and archaeologists, who were typically more focused on locations like Mesopotamia, situated roughly 1,000 km away.

Layers of sediment were washed away, exposing the remains of an ancient cemetery. Locals and looters quickly recognized the importance of the find and moved to collect and sell the artifacts they had found.

A cultural heritage expert, Saeid Shahrokhi, has said that the Jiroft Plain is an interconnected expanse where various regions such as Dakyanus, Konar Sandal, and other areas, cannot be viewed separately.

"Human life has persisted in this plain for thousands of years, making it a unique setting for historical continuity and cultural richness."

Rescue plan for handicrafts sector under compilation

TEHRAN - The Deputy Minister of Handicrafts has said, "We are compiling a rescue plan for handicrafts sector to cover various areas particularly in economic field."

Maryam Jalali-Dehkordi told IRNA that the rescue plan includes several chapters for completing the value chain of Persian handicrafts.

"We started corresponding with various agencies.

We hope the plan can increase convergence of all agencies to materialize eight-percent growth, increase jobs and exports in line with National Handicrafts Document."

She called Caspian Sea littoral states and Persian Gulf countries as Iran's main goals for exports.

Stressing that this year has been named as Year of Investment in Production, she called handicrafts as the most import-

ant cultural product. Because, it covers identity, economy, society and social cohesion, she added.

According to management officials, handicrafts are the blue ocean of business and there are eager customers for them, she said.

Implementation of this project depends on convergence in the Cabinet, she added.

She continued, "We are also discussing banking facilities in the High Employment Council and hope that they will become operational in the near future."

Regarding the quality of handicraft products, she said: "We need to create a market, conduct market research, and actually draw customers."

"We have artisans, industrialists and merchants. In fact, the project is to boost the handicrafts market."



Available data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Iran's annual handicraft exports currently stand at about \$250 million, with an additional \$250 million in informal "suitcase" exports.

However, the global market for handicrafts is valued at \$770 billion, underscoring a significant

opportunity for growth.

Currently, a selection of 13 cities and three villages in Iran have been registered by the World Council of Handicrafts as "world cities of handicrafts."

Caption: Iran's annual handicraft exports currently stand at about \$250 million, with an additional \$250 million in informal "suitcase" exports.

Izeh on threshold of registration as national kilim city



Kilim-weaving art has reached the peak of its prosperity in Izeh.

TEHRAN - Izeh, a city in the southwestern province of Khuzestan, is on the way to becoming a national kilim city due to the unique quality of its hand-woven kilims. This measure can introduce it to the global handicraft scene.

Experts believe that this city has the potential to be globally registered, Mehr News Agency reported.

Kilim, a traditional handwoven rug inspired by nature, agriculture and tribal life, has a special position in the culture and life of Iranian people.

This art has reached the peak of its prosperity in Izeh.

Shokrollah Qasemi, deputy head of Khuzestan's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism department, said the process of initial assessment for registration of Izeh as the

national city of kilim has been conducted with the presence of Behzad Ahmadi Farsani, the director-general of the Office for Handicrafts Education and Promotion.

Visiting kilim-weaving workshops, urban elements decorated with kilim patterns and frequent requests of Izeh people indicates serious determination for materializing this goal, he said.

In case of gaining necessary indicators, Izeh dossier will be sent to the Office of Registration of Monuments of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, he added.

Based on official statistics, Izeh has over 29 active kilim-weaving workshops and two official institutes, he said. Close to 500 weavers received a kilim-weaving certificate during the last Iranian year, he added. Seven artisans have achieved to get seal of excellence for kilim-weaving, he pointed out.

Qasemi continued that the remarkable growth of kilim-weaving workshops in recent years has turned Izeh into one of main hubs of kilim weaving. "We have tapped all Izeh's facilities to create sustainable employment and raise urban incomes."

Izeh, a city in southwestern Iran, has considerable scope to be recognized globally for its rich tradition of kilim weaving.

According to Abbas Rahimi, a handicrafts researcher, Izeh holds significant potential to be registered as a world city of kilims by the World Crafts Council (WCC), provided certain infrastructural improvements are made.

Located in the northeastern Khuzestan province, Izeh has long been a hub for weaving kilim carpets, whose essential skills are

passed down from generation to generation.

In an interview with ISNA, Rahimi highlighted that Izeh's kilims are already in the process of being nationally registered.

He emphasized that for the city to gain international recognition, the existing facilities simply need to be better organized.

Izeh even has more potential than Dezful (another ancient city within the province), which was recognized as a world city for its basket-weaving craft, Rahimi stated.

He pointed to the abundance of kilim weaving workshops and cooperatives businesses across the city as evidence of its capacity.

The kilims produced in Izeh are not only decorative but highly functional, Rahimi noted. He explained that international recognition could greatly enhance the city's prospects for development and progress, turning Izeh into a global hub for kilim artistry.

For Izeh to achieve WCC recognition, Rahimi stressed the importance of inviting World Crafts Council evaluators to visit the city's kilim-weaving workshops, cooperatives, markets, and training centers.

Izeh, located 180 kilometers from Ahvaz and known for its rich eco-tourism, is home to the Bakhtiari tribe, whose members speak the Bakhtiari dialect. Situated in a semi-mountainous region, the city plays a vital role in Khuzestan's cultural and handicraft landscape.

Kilims, which are flat tapestry-woven carpets or rugs, have been traditionally produced in Iran and other countries of the former Persian Empire.

RoboCup IranOpen competition underway

TEHRAN – Tehran is hosting the 19th edition of the RoboCup IranOpen competitions, which started on Saturday and will wrap up on Tuesday.

The three-day event has brought together over 400 teams, comprising more than 2,000 participants from Iran and other countries, to compete in different fields of robotics and Artificial Intelligence, IRIB reported.

RoboCup is not just limited to soccer; the mission of the RoboCup Rescue Simulation League is to promote research and development to manage natural disasters such as earthquakes and provide an opportunity to develop smart rescue systems.

IranOpen 2025 is composed of 25 specialized leagues, including soccer simulation, rescue and relief, flying robots, technological inventions, and artificial intelligence.

Also, for the first time, a specific artificial intelligence league has been added to the competitions, which has led to a 40 to 50 percent increase in the number of teams compared to last year.

RoboCup is an international initiative covering the areas of artificial intelligence and robotics, with the ultimate goal of



developing a team of humanoid robots that is able to defeat the official human World Soccer Champion team by 2050.

The initiative is a platform for testing technologies such as real-time decision-making, multi-agent collaboration, sensor data processing, and navigation in complex environments.

The event was first launched in 1997 and was inspired by the victory of a computer chess player against the then world chess champion, Gary Kasparov.

RoboCup (Originally called Robot World Cup Initiative) is an international research and education initiative.

It is an attempt to foster AI and intelligent robotics research

and Kyrgyzstan to compete in 23 categories.

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

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

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

For the second year in a row, the Iranian team managed to claim second place in the Technical Report. Two U12 Iranian teams won silver and bronze medals in the innovation league; China ranked first.

The 24 Iranian robotics teams that participated in the Federation of International Robotics Association (FIRA) 2024 RoboWorld Cup in Sao Luis, Brazil, managed to win 17 awards.

The 29th edition of FIRA Robotics and Artificial Intelligence World Competitions was held from August 5 to 9.

Iranian, Chinese universities ink MOU on educational research, technological cooperation



TEHRAN – Iran University of Science and Technology and China's Jiangsu University of Science and Technology have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote educational, research, and scientific cooperation.

Seyyed Mohammad-Ali Bourtouabi, the vice president of Iran University of Science and Technology, and Nan Ren, the vice president of Jiangsu University, inked the agreement in China, the ministry of science, research, and technology reported on Monday.

The MOU focuses on exchanging post-graduate students, conducting joint research projects, providing sabbatical leaves and dispatching professors to deliver lectures, exchanging scientific data, holding technical

workshops and courses, and inviting experts to participate in national and international scientific meetings.

It also involves organizing international sports events and establishing chairs of Persian and Chinese languages in each university.

Strategic partnership

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

During a meeting held on April 11 in China, Saeed Habiba, the deputy minister of science, research, and technology, and Sheng Jianxue, the secretary-general of the China Schol-

arship Council, discussed ways for developing scientific cooperation 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.

The document was signed between Iran's then Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Back in December 2022, Iran and China finalized 16 memoranda of understanding under the framework of the two countries' strategic 25-year agreement.

Global ranking

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

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

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

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

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

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Iranian zoos to be monitored online

The Department of Environment (DOE) will launch an online monitoring system in zoos across the country, the Department of Environment's director general for hunting and fishing has said.

"Putting in place the necessary infrastructure for this plan is underway; newly constructed zoos are supposed to have an online monitoring system, and the old ones must launch the system as soon as possible," IRNA quoted Ali Teymouri as saying on Saturday.

Teymouri stated that all provincial departments of environment must supervise the zoo online systems to register all animal species entering or leaving the zoo, casualties and causes.

The necessary infrastructure has been prepared to some extent in two zoos, and the rest of the zoos will launch the in the near future gradually, he added.

باغ وحش های کشور آنلاین پایش می شوند

مدیرکل حفاظت و مدیریت شکار و صید سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: پایش آنلاین باغ وحش های کشور جزو برنامه های سازمان است و در حال تهیه زیر ساخت برای اجرای آن هستیم.

علی تیموری روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار علمی ایرنا افزود: باغ وحش هایی که جدید احداث می شوند باید حتما سیستم پایش آنلاین داشته باشند، مجموعه های قدیمی نیز باید هر چه سریعتر این سیستم را راه اندازی کنند.

وی اظهار داشت: باید تمام ادارات کل استان ها آدرس سیستم آنلاین باغ وحش ها را دریافت کنند تا ورود و خروج گونه ها از باغ وحش، ورود گونه های جدید، تلفات و دلایل آن را ثبت و به صورت آنلاین در جریان قرار گیرند.

تیموری گفت: زیر ساخت های این کار تا حدودی آغاز شده و دو مجموعه کار زیر ساخت را شروع کرده اند و بقیه باغ وحش ها هم به مرور انجام خواهند داد.

A future intertwined with the fate of our planet

From page 1 ▶ The biosphere has been a generous host to us and other organisms alike. Yet we humans have not returned that kindness—neither to our host nor to one another.

Today, in honor of all the gifts this inhabited globe has bestowed upon us, we observe Earth Day—a reminder that Earth is the only home we know in the universe. It is the very place we have polluted, disrupted in many areas, and steadily warmed. Life has become increasingly difficult. Not only for other species, but for ourselves as well.

We must remind ourselves that the rising intensity of storms, prolonged droughts, and the depletion of vital resources such as fresh water, clean air, dense forests, and fertile grasslands are the results of our indifference and mismanagement. Earth Day offers us a moment to reflect on our past and present ac-



tions—and to consider what the future holds for us and for all living beings.

Fortunately, we now understand the root causes of what is happening to our planet. And there is still hope. Together, we can build a brighter and more sustainable future. Despite our differences, we must envision a shared destiny and support one another in turning that vision into reality—because our future is inseparable from the future of the Earth.

Measles vaccination covers 98% of target population



been eradicated in Iran.

However, concerns about the spread of measles in the country are growing. Disrupted vaccination programs in countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan are the main risk factor threatening Iranians' health, Raeisi stressed.

Over the past Iranian years that ended on March 19, some 603 cases of measles were identified. Iranian and foreign nationals made up 91 percent and nine percent of the cases, respectively. Chabahar, Ahvaz, Hormozgan, and Zahedan, with 97 patients, 86 patients, 72 patients, and 68 patients, have the highest number of infected cases, the official noted.

Around 33 percent of cases are infants under one year of age, and children aged 1-4 comprised 30 percent. Sadly, four infants under the age of six lost their lives, mainly due to malnutrition or underlying medical conditions, Raeisi added.

So far, about 82 confirmed cases have been reported since the beginning of the current Iranian year, the official said.

Iran receives measles antibody kits

In May 2024, Iran received a total of 160 measles antibody kits with the help of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

The procurement aimed to enhance measles diagnostic capacities in Iran.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

INSF, RSF to support joint research projects

TEHRAN – Iran and Russia will support the implementation of 10 research projects following the second joint call by the Iran National Science Foundation (INSF) and the Russian Science Foundation (RSF).

The grant will be allocated on competitive basis for scientific and technical projects and projects in the following fields: Chemistry and material sciences, like smart materials, biomaterials, rare earth minerals, batteries, and superconductors, Biology and life sciences, such as biology, biotechnology, and microbiology, and Basic research for medicine.

Priority support will be given to the projects that will provide for the formation of a scientific and technical reserve in priority areas of scientific and technological development for the most important science-intensive technologies as well as the creation and transfer to a technology of prototypes, product samples, creation of new or improvement of applied technologies, the possibility of further development of project through other instruments of state or extra budgetary financing.

Iranian universities are exploring the potential for developing scientific and research collaborations with Russian institutions under the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Based on the comprehensive agreements between the top universities of Iran and Russia, the two sides are committed to furthering

long-term and constructive relations in higher education, technology, and innovation.

The establishment of the secretariat for communication between the universities of the two countries is one of the major measures taken. Of course, secretariats and inter-university collaborations should be more active than in the past in deepening scientific communication. Practical and effective steps are expected to be taken to realize common goals.

The main objective, in addition to promoting relations, is to implement the previously made agreements and open up new opportunities for further cooperation. Hence Iran-Russia comprehensive agreements will pave the ground for enhancing scientific collaborations through conducting joint scientific and technological projects, fostering interactions among educational institutions, and exchanging faculty, staff, and students.

The contracting parties will facilitate the share of experience and information on regulating activities in the field of scientific, technological, and innovative activities, organizing and holding conferences, meetings, seminars, exhibitions, and other scientific events.

Moreover, according to the agreement, the two parties will promote and facilitate the learning of official languages, and the study of literature, history, and culture of the other party in their higher education institutions.



APRIL 22, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Beware, beware of sinfulness. By God, He has veiled His servants' guilt so much as if He has forgiven them.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon: 12:03 Evening: 19:02 Dawn: 3:51 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:22 (tomorrow)

“An Introduction to Coaching Skills” published in Persian



TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book “An Introduction to Coaching Skills: A Practical Guide” written by Christian van Nieuwerburgh has been released in the Iranian bookstores.

Reza Amraei and Mehrdad Houshmand have translated the book and Andisheh Ehsan Publication has brought it out in 261 pages, Mehr reported.

This bestselling book introduces you step-by-step to the key skills needed to become a successful coach. This practical book is an invaluable resource for novices and trainee coaches.

The book encapsulates theory, application, ethics, supervision, anecdotal examples, visual demonstrations, and concepts such as “the way of being” that are often intangible.

It is a must for all students studying in the area of coaching and counselling - a one-stop shop.

Coaching is a developmental process where a coach supports a client in achieving specific personal or professional goals by providing training and guidance.

Together, the coach and coachee practice and build the skills and behaviors required to make progress toward their goals.

Coaching is for everyone. It's an individualized process that can nurture rapid growth and help catalyze sustainable change. But it's hard

work for both the coach and the individual. And it starts with investing in key impact areas that help to unlock your full potential.

A coach helps the coachee develop self-awareness around strengths and motivation. Ultimately, this leads to changing the behaviors that are not serving them to maximize their potential.

Coaching is an investment that keeps on giving. It delivers value in the moment and continues to return benefits over a career and lifetime. And for organizations, it can be the tool that helps your employees go from flailing to thriving.

After all, individuals face unique stressors and challenges day-to-day. This requires personalized support for our professional development and well-being. And coaching can be a powerful and flexible solution.

Christian van Nieuwerburgh, 53, is a British-based executive coach, academic, consultant and author.

He is a professor of coaching and positive psychology at the University of East London (UEL) and executive director of Growth Coaching International, a Sydney-based global coach training provider for the education sector.

Best known as the author of “An Introduction to Coaching Skills: A Practical Guide,” he has also written or edited a number of key texts in this field, including “Coaching in Education: Getting Better Results for Students, Educators and Parents” (2012), “Coaching in Professional Contexts” (2014), “Coaching Educativo” (with Andrea Giraldez Hayes, 2016), “Coaching in Islamic Culture: The Principles and Practice of Ershad” (with Raja'a Allaha, 2017), “The Leader's Guide to Coaching in Schools” (with John Campbell, 2018), and “Advanced Coaching Practice” (with David Love, 2019).

Cartoon of Day



Unhappy Easter in Gaza
Cartoonist: Ahmad Qaddura from Sweden

Composer Karen Homayounfar named Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN- Renowned composer Karen Homayounfar has been awarded the title of Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year. He received this honor, along with a special award, on Sunday evening at the closing ceremony of the 11th Islamic Revolution Art Week, an annual festival organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO).

He received the award for his music album “Sayyed al-Ummah,” created as a tribute to the martyr Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

“I have received many awards, but this one is truly extraordinary,” he stated after accepting his award from renowned filmmakers Ebrahim Hatamikia and Ahmadreza Darvish, as well as Hojatoleslam Mohammad Qomi, the director of the IIDO, and Mohammad-Mehdi Dadman, the director of the Art Bureau.

“Among all the nominees, many were more deserving than I, and I am grateful to the selection committee for choosing someone as small as me for this great honor,” he mentioned.

“My love for the people and Iran runs deep, and now my work has become even more challenging,” he continued.

“We live in a geography of love, expectation, and hope. All our scholars and celebrities throughout history are figures any nation would dream of having. I hope the artists of our country, all highly talented, can swiftly open the cultural capitals of the world with their works in literature, music, cinema, and with the support of officials.”

“That would be our great victory when they recognize the culture of this ancient land, the heart of the Middle East,” he concluded.

Speaking about Homayounfar, Hatamikia noted that the films he has created share a deep connection with music.

“Honestly, music is the wing of this flight. A master like Karen



Homayounfar is a true maestro of flight. He has a grasp of all heights, and the evidence of this claim lies in the music of the films he has crafted,” he noted.

Homayounfar's music conveys a sense of mourning that evokes deep emotions, he added.

Born in 1978, Karen Homayounfar is an award-winning musician and composer, who has won the Crystal Simorgh for Best Film Score at the Fajr Film Festival four times and has received the Golden Statue for Best Music at the Iran Cinema Celebration five times. In 2022, he served as one of the judges on the third season of the television competition “Asr-e Jadid” (New Era).

Homayounfar was selected from five nominees for the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year, which included Golestan Jafarjan for receiving commendation from the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, for her book “Autumn Has Arrived” and its 135 reprints; Mohammad Hamzehzadeh for creating the book series “Tales of Delestan and Golestan”; Mohammadreza Doost Mohammadi for his portraits of martyred commanders of the Resistance Front and his impactful

contributions to resistance art; and Mohammad Rasouli for his timely poetry during the Al-Aqsa Storm and in crucial moments of the Resistance Front.

In another part of the ceremony, Kamal Sharaf, a cartoonist and caricaturist from Yemen, was recognized as the international figure of Resistance Art for creating nearly 500 works following the Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, highlighting his role in the epic artistic narrative in Yemen. The award was presented to Ibrahim Mohammad al-Deilami, the Yemeni ambassador to Tehran.

After receiving the award, al-Deilami expressed his gratitude to the festival organizers and sent greetings to the fighters of the Resistance Front who sacrifice their lives and remain immortal.

At this stage, where the struggle has reached its peak, it is incumbent upon all of us to surge against the forces of disbelief; undoubtedly, only the men of God can withstand the front of disbelief, he said.

“On behalf of Kamal Sharaf who, with his steadfastness and his pen, has received this award, I extend my gratitude. We all must stand firm on this front, retreating not

even an inch, and everyone should come forward with whatever they have to contribute, just as artists fight with their pens.”

The art week is organized by the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization every year to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of documentarian Morteza Avini.

Art exhibitions and workshops, and theatrical musical performances are organized during this week.

Avini was martyred by a landmine in 1993 during his last trip to the former Iran-Iraq war zone in southwestern Iran while making the documentary “A City in the Sky” about the fall of Khorranshahr and the liberation of the southwestern Iranian city during the Iran-Iraq war.

He became famous for “The Narration of Triumph” and was called “the master of martyred writers” by his colleagues and war veterans due to the fervent narrations he wrote for his documentaries.

Avini has been commemorated by various Iranian personalities and organizations on different occasions.

Da Theater Hall to host Neil Simon's “The Prisoner of Second Avenue”

TEHRAN-The 1971 comedy drama play “The Prisoner of Second Avenue” written by Neil Simon, will be staged at the Da Theater Hall in Tehran from April 24.

Amir Masoud Rajabi has directed the play and performs in it along with Mehdi Samimi, Sara Zoghi, Mohammad Moradi, and Samaneh Sadeghi, ILNA reported.

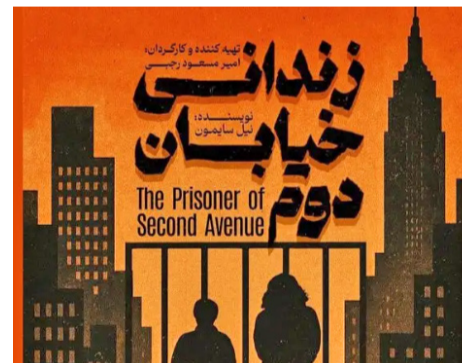
Neil Simon's gut-busting comedy about a Manhattan executive's nervous breakdown and subsequent recovery is a laugh-a-minute look at middle age and modern life.

The story revolves around the escalating problems of a middle-aged couple living on Second Avenue on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, New York City.

Mel Edison is a middle-class advertising account executive and he is having a very bad time. His employer is on the verge of bankruptcy and as a result Mel loses his job after 22 years of faithful service. Now, he has to cope with being unemployed at middle age during an economic recession.

The action occurs during an intense summer heat wave and a prolonged garbage strike, which exacerbates Edison's plight as he and his wife Edna deal with noisy and argumentative neighbors, loud sounds emanating from Manhattan streets up to their apartment.

Mel's 14th floor apartment is cracking and he



can't sleep because the air conditioning is faulty.

When Mel loses his job and gets robbed in the same week, he loses his ability to cope and becomes a prisoner in his Second Avenue apartment, pacing the walls in his pajamas and listening to talk back radio for hours on end.

He believes that there is a conspiracy afoot, “The deterioration of the spirit of Man. Man undermining himself, causing a self-willed, self-imposed, self-evident self-destruction!”

Mel can't find a job, so Edna goes back to work. Mel eventually suffers a nervous breakdown, and it is up to the loving care of his brother Harry, his sisters, and, mostly, Edna, to try to restore him to a new reality.

Written over 50 years ago, Neil Simon's play still resonates strongly today. In “The Prisoner of

Second Avenue,” Simon's comedy turns darker as he explores the devastating effect that city life can have on a middle-aged couple.

In the early 1970s, when the play takes place, New York City was beset by financial problems, high crime, and strikes that made daily life often inconvenient and sometimes dangerous.

Neil Simon (1927-2018) was an American playwright, screenwriter and author. He wrote more than 30 plays and nearly the same number of movie screenplays, mostly film adaptations of his plays.

He received three Tony Awards and a Golden Globe Award, as well as nominations for four Academy Awards and four Primetime Emmy Awards.

He was awarded a Special Tony Award in 1975, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1991, the Kennedy Center Honors in 1995 and the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in 2006.

One of the most popular of 20th-century American dramatists, Neil Simon is known for his comedies that often examine the tensions that can arise among family members or between men and women living in New York.

“The Prisoner of Second Avenue” will remain on stage till May 5. The Da Theater Hall is located at No. 5, the first dead-end, Khark Street, Enqelab Street.

Shiraz to host artworks by film professionals

TEHRAN-The second edition of the group exhibition “Fragments of a Mirror,” featuring visual works by more than 20 film professionals, will open at the Sarvenaz Gallery in Shiraz, Fars Province, on April 24.

The first edition was organized last December at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran, where film professionals, including actors, directors, cinematographers, and others involved in filmmaking showcased their artworks, Honaronline reported.

It featured artworks by celebrated figures

in Iranian cinema including filmmakers Abbas Kiarostami, Tahmineh Milani, and Masoud Kimiai, actresses Niki Karimi and Nazanin Bayati, actors Hamid Jebeli, Mehdi Pakdel, Reza Kianian, and Farhad Aesh, and cinematographers Mahmoud Kalari and Houman Behmanesh among others.

“Several new film professionals have joined this edition, some of them are presenting their works in this exhibition for the very first time,” Mahta Mohaddes, the curator of “Fragments of a Mirror” said.

“All the artists whose works are on display are

well-known and reviewing their artworks together presents a new meaning and a fresh perspective on another dimension of Iranian cinema,” she added.

Mohaddes noted that the exhibition poster was designed by the renowned graphic designer Ebrahim Haghighi, and one of his paintings will also be on display.

The second edition of “Fragments of a Mirror” will open on April 24 at Sarvenaz Gallery in Shiraz with the presence of the artists. The public will be able to visit the works until April 29.