

Indirect discussions will resume in Muscat as Iran and the U.S. work towards a potential resolution on nuclear issues

Talks III in Muscat



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FM stresses importance of ties with China

By Shahrokh Saei

BEIJING – Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrapped up an official visit to Beijing on Wednesday, ending a trip that signified the strength of Iran-China ties as Tehran geared up for a new round of indirect talks with Washington regarding its nuclear issue.

Abbas Araghchi held a meeting with China's Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang at the Great Hall of the People after arriving in Beijing on Wednesday morning. During the meeting, Araghchi stressed that the Iran-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will remain unaffected by the talks between Iran and the United States.

Ding, also a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, underscored the traditional friendship between Iran and China.

Ding said the two countries should expand pragmatic cooperation, strengthen coordination in international and regional affairs, and promote the steady and long-term progress of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Later on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Araghchi at the Diaoyutai State Guest House. ▶ Page 3



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France under fire for 'medieval tactics' as third Iranian citizen arrested for pro-Palestine activism

TEHRAN – Shahin Hazamy, a French-Iranian journalist and outspoken advocate for Palestinian rights, became the third Iranian citizen detained in France during the last 18 months for expressing solidarity with Gaza, amid intensifying criticisms that Paris is exploiting counterterrorism measures to target pro-Palestine advocacy.

His arrest follows the controversial detentions of Mahdieh Esfandiari and Bashir Biazar, said to be part of a systematic campaign to silence dissent and align with the Israeli regime's interests.

A squad of 10 masked French security forces violently raided Hazamy's Paris home on Tuesday, reportedly breaking down doors and arresting him in front of his terrified wife and two young children.

Witnesses described the operation as resembling a "kidnapping," with officers ransacking the house and dragging the Iranian citizen away without explanation.

Hazamy, a freelance journalist known for documenting pro-Palestine protests and the Israeli regime's war on Gaza, had faced judicial harassment since last year. ▶ Page 2

Pushes for ties with Israel in shadow of Syria's occupation

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the new president of Syria, has recently made statements regarding a willingness to normalize relations with Israel—something previously inconceivable given the historical backdrop of Israeli territorial occupation of parts of Syria.

The implications of this development raise difficult questions about the legitimacy of power, sovereignty, and the future of Syrian politics in contradiction with the ongoing conflict in the region and the role of foreign powers in Syria.

Since Bashar al-Assad's government fell in December 2024, Israel has stepped up its military actions in Syria. In just a few months, the Israeli army has carried out hundreds of airstrikes and ground operations aimed at Syrian military sites. These attacks have seriously weakened Syria's military, and Israeli troops have taken control of large areas, including more parts of the Golan Heights, which goes against the 1974 Disengagement Agreement.

Along with this occupation, Israel has set up military bases, put down minefields, and worked on building infrastructure to secure its foothold in the region.

The planned polls in South Lebanon irritate anti-resistance team

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — The anti-resistance team does not hide its objection to the municipal elections in south Lebanon that will coincide with Resistance and Liberation Day, May 25th. This reflects the anti-resistance team's deplorable and resounding moral decline; they claim it is intentional by the Shiite duo to encourage people to vote!

Obviously, this team is experiencing a time of shameful and unprecedented humiliation and subjugation, even though the Shiite duo (Hezbollah and the Amal Movement) has emphasized the need to allow the largest families in the cities and villages to nominate their own candidates.

25 years after the historical victory of the resistance movement and the liberation of southern Lebanon, these people resent the enormous sacrifices made by the resistance front.

It is worth reminding that former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, during his tenure in government, shamelessly demanded the cancellation of the Liberation Day holiday.

Intense strikes on Yemen after the Haifa operation

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – U.S. warplanes wage intense airstrikes on Yemen following an unprecedented attack on Israeli targets in Haifa.

Ansarallah's media center has reported a series of U.S. airstrikes targeting several Yemeni provinces, including Hodeidah and Sanaa. According to a statement, waves of American fighter jets launched strikes on multiple areas.

The airstrikes hit districts northwest and west of Hodeidah city and extended to the Bani Hushaysh district in Sanaa province as well as areas surrounding the Yemeni capital.

Additional raids struck Kamaran Island in the Red Sea. These attacks followed earlier strikes in Marib province, two in Amran province, which is about 50 kilometers north of Sanaa, and another in the Yemeni capital itself.

The U.S. military escalation came after Yemeni forces launched a bold and unprecedented operation, firing a hypersonic ballistic missile at a "strategic target" in Haifa for the first time.

The missile struck its mark without interception by Israeli air defenses, according to Yemeni military spokesperson Brigadier General Yahya Saree.

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China's economy firms up recovery in the First Quarter of 2025

By Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu

TEHRAN- Recently, China's economy data for the first quarter was released, and a number of specific economic indicators continued to recover and improve, which embarked a good start for the whole year's economy and injected valuable confidence into the world economy shrouded in gloom. Here, I would like

First, China's economy was off to a good start in the first quarter of 2025. As the effects of policies continued to unfold, China's economy was off to a good start and the high-quality development was advancing with new and positive momentum. ▶ Page 4



Iran, Russia discuss bolstering INSTC, trade, energy co-op

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to Russia said Tehran and Moscow are determined to deepen bilateral ties across several sectors, including the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), transit projects, and gas transfers. He stressed the need to strengthen trade and complete joint initiatives to enhance Iran's international standing and security.

According to the Iranian Oil Ministry, Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, told Iranian delegates at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting in Moscow that relations between the two countries are expanding and entering what he described as a "golden era" of cooperation. ▶ Page 4

Exclusive Israel is exempt from accountability for the Gaza war crimes ▶ Page 5



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Indirect negotiations show distrust in America

Kayhan dedicated its editorial to the recent U.S. sanctions against Iran and wrote: Without a doubt, it must be said that the chain of U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the eve of the first and second rounds and now, on the eve of the third round of negotiations, contains a special message and the choice of dates cannot be accidental.

Existing evidence and previous experiences indicate that the U.S., contrary to what it claims, is not seeking an agreement acceptable to the Islamic Republic of Iran and continues to insist on its arrogant nature and blackmailing Iran. The U.S. wants negotiations for the sake of negotiations!

Trump is seeking to register negotiations with Iran as a privilege in his 100-day record and to announce that the uncompromising Iran has also come to the negotiating table. Iran's wisdom and intelligence, which has emphasized indirect negotiations, is commendable. However, Mr. Araghchi's repeated emphasis that "there is neither reason for much optimism nor pessimism" is also a sign that they are taking an intelligent view of the negotiations.

Arman-e-Melli: Will the outcome of talks be win-win despite lack of trust?

Arman-e-Melli spoke with former diplomat Ali Khorram about the two rounds of talks between Iran and the U.S. and the possible challenges and opportunities between the two countries. He said: The issue of trust comes down to the type of guarantees that Trump will provide to Iran, and the steps that Iran will agree to take. Iran announced at the very beginning that the technology it possesses is peaceful and that it is not seeking nuclear weapons.

After the second round of talks, the New York Times quoted the Iranian delegation as saying that Iran is ready to make joint investments in the nuclear field with any country, including the U.S. In such a situation, any country that partners with us will realize that Iran's nuclear activities are peaceful.

Without a doubt, this is a big statement and will silence any opponent. In the current situation, Trump enjoys the opportunity to obtain the approval of Congress because Congress is on his side and is obedient to him.

In such a situation, if an agreement is reached between Iran and the United States, the agreement can be turned into law with congressional approval.

Iran summons Dutch envoy over 'baseless' allegations, condemns 'Zionist-inspired' accusations



Ambassador of the Kingdom of The Netherlands to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Emiel de Bont

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Dutch Ambassador Emiel de Bont on Friday to protest unfounded accusations by the Netherlands' intelligence agency, which alleged Iranian involvement in "assassination plots across Europe."

During a formal meeting, Alireza Yousefi, the Foreign Ministry's Director-General for Western European Affairs, condemned the Netherlands' annual security report as "rooted in conjecture and suspicion injected by the Zionist regime."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has never interfered in assassination operations in the Netherlands or anywhere else," he stated, emphasizing that the claims lacked evidence.

The Dutch General Intelligence and Security

Jam-e-Jam: Changing US priorities and leaving Europe out of talks

In a commentary, Jam-e-Jam discussed the absence of Europe from the indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States and wrote: Recently, the United States has shown a greater willingness to negotiate with Iran without European intervention.

The technical negotiations scheduled to be held in Oman on Saturday are an example of this approach. Oman, which previously acted as a mediator between Iran and the United States, has now become a place for negotiations in which there is no mention of the presence of European representatives. Reports indicate that the three European powers (France, Britain, and Germany) have been completely left out of the process. Some diplomats have told the media that the United States has taken the initiative without consulting them and that trust between the parties has decreased.

Finally, the talks in Oman and Iran's diplomatic moves with China and Russia indicate that the Iranian nuclear issue is entering a new phase in which Europe plays a marginal role. Europe's diminished presence can be seen as a combination of Europe's decline in power, the continent's inability to fulfill its commitments following the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, and Washington's changing geopolitical priorities.

Iran: Moscow's role in the negotiations

In a note, the Iran newspaper discusses Russia's possible role in Iran-U.S. nuclear talks and said: In these negotiations, there are two main challenges: first, the fate of Iran's enriched uranium reserves, and second receiving firm guarantees from the West that if Iran adheres to the agreement, sanctions will be permanently lifted and that Iran will not suffer if the U.S. pulls out of the agreement again.

From Iran's point of view, the only real guarantee is the signing of a formal treaty by the U.S. Congress. Iran desires to keep its uranium reserves inside the country. Iran believes that it has received informal guarantees that show that the U.S. does not intend to destroy Iran's nuclear program.

One solution under consideration is to give Russia the option to return enriched uranium to Iran if the U.S. violates the deal. Such an arrangement would not only give Russia a central role in Iran-U.S. relations but could also reduce the influence of European countries such as Germany, France, and Britain.

rity Service (AIVD) claimed in its annual report on Thursday that Iran "orchestrated two assassination attempts in 2024," including a June arrest in Haarlem, "targeting" an Iranian national.

Furthermore, the Dutch Foreign Ministry summoned Iran's ambassador in the European country—a move Yousefi strongly criticized.

He argued that the accusations leveled against Iran are "hypocritical and unethical," noting that the Netherlands "shelters criminals and terrorists who openly admit to committing acts of terror against Iran."

The Iranian diplomat urged the Netherlands to end its "all-encompassing support for the genocidal Israeli regime" and instead adopt a "constructive role" in West Asian stability.

"Professional and respectful diplomacy—not baseless speculation—should guide bilateral relations," Yousefi concluded.

Ambassador de Bont pledged to relay Tehran's grievances to The Hague.

Earlier, Iran's embassy in the Netherlands also voiced Tehran's position, asserting that European nations "harbor individuals and organizations involved in terrorist activities against Iran."

It pointed to cases of terrorists "who openly boast about their crimes" sheltered by European governments, arguing that such protection has facilitated anti-Iran terrorism.

France under fire for 'medieval tactics' as third Iranian citizen arrested for pro-Palestine activism

From page 1 ▶ French security forces later charged him with "apologie du terrorisme" (praise of terrorist acts) due to his social media posts, though no formal evidence has been disclosed.

Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Esfandzadeh, a close associate, revealed that "Shahin's family had long reported threats from Zionist groups."

In an interview with an Iranian news agency, he detailed how, just days before his arrest, Shahin's video of "a Palestinian mother holding her bloodied child at a Paris rally" went viral, amassing an astonishing "50 million views."

Esfandzadeh continued by stressing that "this, coupled with his criticism of France's illegal detention of Mahdieh Esfandiari, made him a target."

His statement underscores the escalating risks faced by pro-Palestinian activists amidst a climate of intimidation and heavy-handed governmental tactics.

He also stated that a French judge had granted Hazamy temporary release before his trial, with a court hearing scheduled in two weeks.

Mahdieh Esfandiari: disappeared, then charged with supporting 'terrorism'

Another incident involves Mahdieh Esfandiari, a 39-year-old Iranian translator and lecturer at Lyon's Lumière University, who vanished on February 28, after French police stormed her home.

For weeks, her family received no updates until Le Point magazine confirmed her detention at Fresnes Prison near Paris.

Authorities accused her of "apologie du terrorisme" for Telegram posts "praising" Palestinian Resistance's Al-Aqsa Storm operation, which France claims "incited terrorism."

Her case mirrors earlier tactics: her home was left in disarray after the raid, and friends needed firefighters to break in when she disappeared.

French prosecutors later linked her arrest to a 2023 report by the National Online Hate Crime Center



(From left to right) Shahin Hazamy, Mahdieh Esfandiari, and Bashir Biazar have been detained by French police for pro-Palestine social media posts

(PNLH), which flagged her social media activity.

Created in 2021 to combat online hate speech, the PNLH has faced criticism for allegedly suppressing pro-Palestinian activism.

It was involved in banning Collectif Palestine Vaincra over unmoderated social media comments and prosecuting trade unionist Anasse Kazib for pro-Palestinian posts.

Esfandiari's arrest shocked Iran's diplomatic corps. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei condemned the "medieval" treatment, stating: "For over 40 days, Ms. Esfandiari has been held in solitary confinement without consular access or contact with her family."

France's refusal to clarify charges or respect international law is a disgrace."

Vahid Jalalzadeh, Deputy for Consular, Parliamentary, and Iranian Expatriates Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressed the ongoing efforts to secure the release of Mahdieh Esfandiari, who has been detained in France over her support for Palestine.

In a post on X on Tuesday, Jalalzadeh stated that he had met with a member of Esfandiari's family to discuss the situation.

"As part of my colleagues' ongoing efforts, I met with a member of Ms. Esfandiari's family, who has been taken hostage by the French government, claiming to champion freedom of expression, due to her support for the oppressed people of Palestine," he wrote.

He further reported that he had provided the family with an update on the Foreign Ministry's actions and assured them that Iran would continue working toward her release.

Bashir Biazar: Deported for 'anti-French remarks'

Bashir Biazar, a 42-year-old Iranian journalist and former manager at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), experienced a similar ordeal in June 2024.

Arrested in Dijon, he was held for 28 days in Metz under administrative detention before deportation.

French authorities accused him of "anti-French remarks" and "public incitement" for Instagram posts condemning Israel's Gaza offensive.

Iran's judiciary condemned his detention as "illegal and a human rights violation," particularly after French officials blocked his family reunification efforts.

Biazar was released from detention in France in July 2024.

France's 'crackdown culture' and the politics of silencing dissent

The cases of Hazamy, Esfandiari, and Biazar underscore a broader pattern. Under the guise of combating antisemitism, France has conflated anti-Zionism with terrorism, using draconian laws to stifle criticism of Israeli atrocities.

Notably, while France defended Charlie Hebdo's Islamophobic cartoons as "free speech," it prosecutes Muslim and Iranian activists for solidarity with Palestine.

In a recent interview with Iranian media, Biazar delivered a scathing critique of Paris's growing alliance with Tel Aviv.

"France has historically had close ties with the Israeli regime," he asserted, adding that these bonds only intensified since October 2023.

According to Biazar, the French government has since initiated unprecedented crackdowns on pro-Palestinian voices, targeting journalists, students, and professors alike, with "medieval tactics."

The Iranian journalist recounted harrowing accounts of arrests, including those of Mahdieh Esfandiari and Shahin Hazamy, whose detentions were marked by inhumane measures such as home break-ins by masked officers.

He argued that these oppressive actions were orchestrated not merely to stifle dissent but to control the burgeoning anti-Zionist sentiment across France.

By silencing critics of Israel's aggressive policies, France, according to Biazar, has essentially turned a blind eye to the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

He further condemned the collusion between French authorities and the Israeli military, suggesting that France's silence on Israeli actions reveals a disturbing double standard.

Ultimately, instead of suppressing opposition, these measures have only galvanized public outrage and intensified scrutiny of both French and Israeli policies, Biazar concluded.

Operation Eagle Claw: US Army fiasco in Iran's Tabas Desert



By Fereydoon Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – Forty-five years ago, on April 25, 1980, the United States launched a covert military operation in the northeastern Iranian Tabas desert dubbed Operation Eagle Claw, aimed at airlifting the U.S. embassy personnel who were held in Tehran. But it ended in total failure due to a sandstorm.

The U.S. Embassy staff had been held by Iranian revolutionary students after taking over the Embassy since November 4, 1979, who demanded Washington return the fugitive dictator Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and stop meddling in Iran's affairs in the post-revolution era.

A few weeks before that, Washington had broken diplomatic relations with Tehran on April 7, 1980, after holding five months of failed negotiations on the matter.

Failure of operation

The operation was conducted by the U.S. Delta Force, but it

actual airlifting mission would be launched the following night. However, the mission turned out to be a humiliating defeat as a sandstorm hit and brought down the group of U.S. military aircraft in the Tabas Desert.

It turned out later that one of the helicopters had crashed into a C-130 Hercules transport plane, and five other choppers were stranded in the sand.

The U.S. combat troops had no choice but to abort the mission. Eight of the U.S. commandos were killed at the scene.

According to the American account of the incident, the aircraft encountered a haboob, a violent wind-driven sandstorm common in the desert.

This caused extreme visibility issues, damage to the aircraft, and sickness among the crews. President Carter and his staff received the news and decided to abort the mission.

Iranians' reaction to the news

Iranians believe the sands were the agents of God. The aggressive action was fortunately met with an exemplary failure in the light of divine grace.

The Leader of the Revolution, Imam Khomeini, who had already thrown his weight behind the revolutionary students for taking over the U.S. Embassy, which was suspected of being a "Den of Espionage," said that Carter had authorized the operation to secure his re-election in the pres-

idential race, which was going to be held later that year in the country.

Imam Khomeini also said that sand particles and strong winds had been assigned by God, the Almighty, to destroy all U.S. war machinery in Tabas.

Many believe the incident played a substantial role in Carter's defeat in the 1980 presidential election.

Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, later confirmed that his boss had authorized the failed operation, blaming the fiasco for his boss's defeat in the elections, as it had sparked frustration in the American voters.

On the anniversary of the fiasco, Iran reminds the United States of its humiliating defeat in its aggression on its territorial integrity, advising Washington to learn lessons.

Tehran also calls for an end to more than four decades of hostility toward the resistant Iranian nation.

It is noteworthy, Iran has grown much stronger now compared to the early years after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. It has rendered American sanctions and threats ineffective.

Deemed as a huge blow to the U.S. military, Observers argue that the Eagle Claw Operation serves as a warning for President Donald Trump not to initiate a war.

Talks III in Muscat

Indirect discussions will resume in Muscat as Iran and the U.S. work towards a potential resolution on nuclear issues

By Soheila Zarfame

TEHRAN – Iran and the U.S. have agreed to meet for a third round of indirect talks this Saturday in Muscat, Oman.

The upcoming talks follow two earlier rounds held in Muscat and Rome on April 12 and 19, respectively.

The meetings, facilitated by Omani Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, will begin at the expert level before progressing to higher-level exchanges. Deputy foreign ministers Majid Takht-Ravanchi and Kazem Gharibabadi will represent Iran in the technical sessions—which was originally scheduled for April 23 and then postponed to take place on April 26.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said Friday that both sides had agreed to hold the talks concurrently at multiple levels. “Based on the arrangements made by the Omani host, technical meetings and indirect discussions between the Iranian foreign minister and the U.S. special envoy will take place on Saturday,” he stated.

Baghaei emphasized that Iran remains committed to engaging in serious dialogue, but stressed that progress will depend on the other side’s sincerity and realism. “We will act according to our experience and in response to the behavior of the other party,” he said, reiterating Iran’s position that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful and that



Iranian delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (3rd right), during the second round of indirect negotiations with the U.S. in Rome, Italy on April 19, 2025.

the removal of sanctions remains a key demand.

In the lead-up to the talks, Araghchi held a phone conversation with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Rafael Grossi on Tuesday, briefing him on the status of the negotiations. Grossi, in turn, welcomed Iran’s transparency and expressed the agency’s readiness to support the process in line with its mandate.

Araghchi also traveled to Beijing earlier this week, following a similar visit to Moscow prior to the second round of negotiations, to consult with Chinese and Russian officials. “China and Russia are important partners for us and have played constructive roles in the past,” he said, “It’s only natural that

we continue consultations with them, especially as these indirect talks proceed.” Araghchi conveyed a message from President Masoud Pezeshkian to Chinese authorities, underscoring the importance of continued cooperation.

Despite Iran’s diplomatic posture, the U.S. has sent mixed signals. President Donald Trump, who unilaterally withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018 and reimposed sweeping sanctions, claimed this week that talks with Iran are going “very well.” However, in the same breath, he issued threats of military action should a deal not be finalized promptly—comments that sharply contradict the spirit of diplomacy.

“There are only two options. And one option is not a good option,”

Trump said ominously, revealing once again Washington’s preference for coercion over compromise.

In a recent interview with Time magazine, Trump also dismissed the idea that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could pressure him into confrontation with Iran, asserting instead that he would “lead the pack” into conflict if diplomacy fails.

Such contradictory statements have cast doubt on U.S. intentions. On the one hand, Trump says he hopes to meet with Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian or even the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. On the other hand, he appears ready to lead a military confrontation if negotiations do not move at Washington’s pace.

Iranian officials have remained cautious. Reflecting on the previous rounds of talks, Araghchi noted, “Optimism may be warranted, but only with a great deal of caution. Many in Iran believe that the JCPOA no longer meets our needs. What remains are the lessons learned from the past.”

In a post on social media upon his arrival in Muscat, Baghaei reiterated Iran’s objectives: “We are committed to securing our nation’s lawful right to peaceful nuclear energy. Ending unjust and inhumane sanctions swiftly and effectively remains our priority. The coming days will show how serious the other side is about reaching a fair and realistic agreement.”

FM stresses importance of ties with China ahead of new round of indirect talks with US

From Page 1 ▶ Wang said China supports dialogue between Iran and all relevant parties, including the United States, to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue. He added that China also respects Iran’s rights to peacefully use nuclear energy.

Speaking to the Tehran Times at the Diaoyutai State Guest House, Araghchi hailed strategic ties between Iran and China. He noted that Tehran will continue to consult China about its talks with Washington.

“We had very constructive meetings today, two meetings actually, and we had very important subjects on the table, and we discussed them very carefully. Iran and China are strategic partners, and we consult with each other on important issues. I briefed them on the recent indirect talks between Iran and the

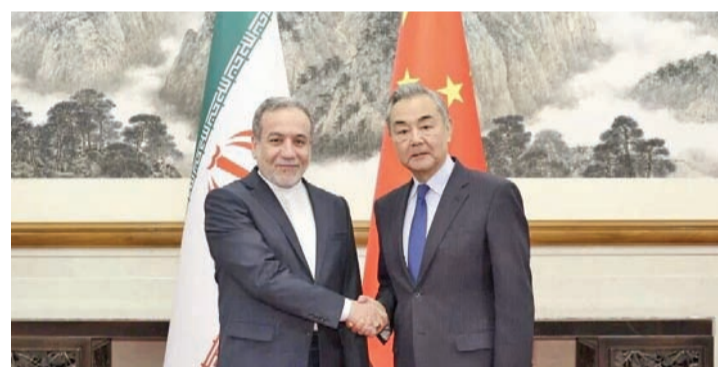
US, and I told them we consider China as a partner, so we continue to update our Chinese colleagues on any progress in the talks,” the Iranian foreign minister said.

Describing China and Russia as Iran’s friends, he noted that Tehran will continue consultations with them after the third round of indirect talks with Washington. The negotiations over Iran’s nuclear issue started earlier this month.

Araghchi and Steve Witkoff, US President Donald Trump’s special envoy for the Middle East (West Asia), led two rounds of talks in Oman and Italy on April 12 and 19, respectively.

They will hold the third round of indirect talks in Oman’s capital, Muscat, on Saturday.

Araghchi told the Tehran Times upon his arrival at the Beijing air-



port on Wednesday morning that “if the Americans continue to stay in a constructive mode and avoid any unrealistic, undoable demands, I am confident that we can get somewhere, and we can conclude a good deal at the end.”

Araghchi has also said President Masoud Pezeshkian will soon visit China and then will attend the summit of the Shanghai Coopera-

tion Organization (SCO) in September, noting that 2025 will mark a “golden year” in relations between Iran and China.

Both Iran and China are members of the SCO and BRICS. They have also established a noteworthy 25-year partnership agreement, with the objective of strengthening their long-standing economic and political relationship.

How Europe caused a diplomatic fallout with Iran, and how it can undo it



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – In the ongoing indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States to reach a new nuclear agreement, a significant absence stands out compared to the talks that led to the landmark JCPOA: the absence of European countries.

This exclusion marks a notable shift in the diplomatic balance that had characterized the process for years, raising questions about Europe’s future role in one of the most sensitive fronts of international politics.

In a post on his X account on

Thursday, Araghchi described the status quo of bilateral relations with each of the European troika as a “lose-lose” situation, regretting that despite his call for diplomacy, the trio has selected the “hard way.”

“Iran’s relations with the E3 (France, Germany, and Britain) have experienced ups and downs in recent history. Like it or not, they are currently down. Why? Each side has its own narrative. To me, placing blame is a futile exercise. What matters is that the status quo is lose-lose,” Araghchi said.

Araghchi noted that during a meeting with the foreign ministers

of the E3 and other European counterparts in New York last September, he offered dialogue and cooperation instead of confrontation.

He told them that his proposal extended beyond the nuclear issue to include all areas of mutual interest and concern, but the Europeans have chosen the harder path, the minister recounted.

“I once again propose diplomacy. After my recent consultations in Moscow & Beijing, I am ready to take the first step with visits to Paris, Berlin & London. I was ready to do it before Iran commenced its indirect dialogue with the U.S., but the E3 opted out,” Araghchi stressed.

“The ball is now in the E3’s court. They have an opportunity to do away with the grip of Special Interest groups and forge a different path. How we act at this critical juncture is likely to define the foreseeable future,” he added.

Europe’s relationship with Iran in the nuclear realm has a long history, dating back to 2002, when, following the emergence of the

Iranian nuclear dossier in international forums and increasing external pressures, President Seyed Mohammad Khatami’s government opted for a diplomatic route. In this context, talks were initiated with three European countries: the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. These efforts led to three key agreements — Saadabad, Brussels, and Paris — culminating in the voluntary suspension of Iran’s nuclear activities as a goodwill gesture to the international community.

However, in 2005, during the tenure of Hassan Rouhani as Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Iran submitted a report to then-IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, noting that the negotiations with the European troika had failed. Despite Iran adhering strictly to its commitments, including suspending significant parts of its nuclear program, the three European countries failed to meet the obligations they had made, leaving Iran dissatisfied with the process.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SPORTS

Jafari new coach of Iran’s women’s football team

TEHRAN – Marziyeh Jafari was named as new head coach of Iran’s women’s football team on Wednesday.

Jafari, who has most recently worked as head coach for Iranian side Bam Khatoon, replaced Maryam Azmoun in Team Melli.

Iran will have to compete in the 2026 AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualification, which will start on June 26.

Mahdieh Molaei was appointed as the women’s team goalkeeping coach.

Jafari is the most decorated women’s coach in Iran, having won nine championship titles in Kowsar Women’s Football League since 2008.

men’s and women’s wheelchair basketball teams, respectively on Thursday.

Soltani replaced Mohammadreza Dastyar in the position.

Iran’s men’s team will participate at the IWBF Asia-Oceania Championships in the upcoming months.

Moeini was also named the head coach of the women team.

Hami Khorasanizadeh has been also appointed as the head coach of Iran’s men’s 3x3 wheelchair basketball team.

Esteghlal part ways with Bozovic

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club have parted ways with Miodrag Bozovic due to the Montenegro’s poor performance as head coach.

Bozovic was appointed as the Blues’ coach in late February but failed to secure a victory in any competition over nine matches.

Mojtaba Jabbari, who was serving as Esteghlal’s assistant, will take charge of the team for the remainder of the season.

The club are now looking to sign former Sepahan coach Jose Morais for the upcoming season.

Currently, Esteghlal sit in 11th place in the 16-team Iran football league table.

Foolad Sirjan sign N’Gapeth and Concepcion

TEHRAN – Iranian volleyball club Foolad Sirjan have completed the signing of French outside hitter Earvin N’Gapeth and Cuban middle blocker Javier Octavio Concepcion Rojas.

Under the guidance of coach Behrouz Ataei, Foolad Sirjan will participate in the 2025 AVC Men’s Volleyball Champions League, set to take place in Hirakata and Kyoto, Japan, from May 11 to 18.

N’Gapeth most recently played for Turkish side Fenerbahçe Medica, while Concepcion played for Iranian team Shahdab Yazd last season.

Foolad recently claimed the title of the Iran Volleyball Super League, defeating Shahdab Yazd in the final.

Iran suffer three losses in Women’s Baseball Asian Cup Qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran suffered three defeats in the IV BFA Women’s Baseball Asian Cup Qualifiers Tournament underway in Bangkok, Thailand.

On Thursday, Team Melli Banovan lost to Sri Lanka 13-0 on Thursday and also fell to Pakistan and India 17-2 and 13-0, respectively on Friday.

The tournament is scheduled from April 23 to 29 in Thailand.

Group B features host Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

Coaches for Iran wheelchair basketball teams confirmed

TEHRAN – Behrouz Soltani and Azadeh Moeini were named as head coaches of Iran’s national

President Pezeshkian attends a football match



TEHRAN – Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian participated in a football match between the veterans and workers teams. As a member of the workers team, Pezeshkian wore the number 14 jersey.

Ahmad Meydari, the Minister of Labor, served as the manager of the workers team, while Ahmad Donyamali, the Minister of Sports, held the same position for the veterans team.

China's economy firms up recovery in the First Quarter of 2025



From Page 1 ► TEHRAN— Recently, China's economy data for the first quarter was released, and a number of specific economic indicators continued to recover and improve, which embarked a good start for the whole year's economy and injected valuable confidence into the world economy shrouded in gloom. Here, I would like

First, China's economy was off to a good start in the first quarter of 2025. As the effects of policies continued to unfold, China's economy was off to a good start and the high-quality development was advancing with new and positive momentum, demonstrating strong resilience and potential. China's economic growth has been steady, with GDP grew 5.4 percent year on year in the first quarter of 2025, a growth rate higher than last year's average growth rate of 5%. China's economy ranked among the highest of the world's major economies and was stable and exhibited favorable growth in general. Employment was generally stable and residents income increased steadily.

The urban surveyed unemployment rate average 5.3 percent in the first quarter and 5.2 percent in March, down 0.2 percentage points from the previous month. The nationwide per capita disposable income of residents grew by 5.6 percent in real terms after deducting price factors, basically in line with GDP growth rate. China maintains a good equilibrium in the balance of payments. Despite weak momentum of the global economic growth, China's imports and exports of goods to maintain a stable trend. In the first quarter, the total value of imports and exports of goods increased by 1.3% year-on-year, with exports increased by 6.9%. From January to February, the value of service imports and exports increased by 9.9%. At the end of March, the balance of foreign exchange reserves are more than 3.2 trillion U.S. dollars.

Second, China has the ability and confidence to address external challenges. The U.S. recently announced tariff hikes on all trading partners, covering over 180 countries and regions in the world, including some vulnerable economies designated as the least developed countries by the UN. The U.S. hegemonic move in the name of "reciprocity" serves its selfish interests at the expense of other countries' legitimate interests and puts "America first"

Non-oil export from Kermanshah province up 15% in a year

TEHRAN— The value of non-oil export from Kermanshah province, in the west of Iran, increased by 15 percent in the past Iranian calendar year, (ended on March 20), according to an official with the province's customs department.

Reza Nikravesh said that 7.895 million tons of non-oil goods valued at \$3.487 billion were exported from the province in the previous year, indicating also nine percent growth in terms of weight year on year.

He named rebar and ironware, tiles and ceramics, fruits and vegetables, constructional stones, dairy products, plastic products, and disposable containers as the main products exported from the province in the past year.

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

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

Imports totaled 39.3 million tons valued at \$72.4 billion, representing a 0.77 percent decline in weight but an 8.22 percent increase in

over international rules.

This is a typical move of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying. China firmly opposes US' tariff barriers and trade bullying and such practices are harmful and do no one good. Such practices violates the fundamental rules of the economy and the principles of world trade, and cause a serious impact on the world economic order, dragging down the recovery of the world economy. U.S. tariff may exert short-term pressure on China's economy and foreign trade, but will not alter China's long-term positive outlook. The Chinese economy has a stable foundation and strong resilience. We have the ability and confidence to address external challenges and achieve economic development goals.

Third, China's high-level opening-up will lead to win-win results of the world. In July 2024, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus" meeting in Astana, pointed out that we should jointly advocate an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization, practice true multilateralism, and make global governance more just and equitable.

The SCO should make its important contribution to eliminating the deficits in peace, development, security and governance. History has repeatedly proved that openness, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation is the sure way. China is firmly pursuing the open-up strategy of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, and has become the major trading partner of more than 150 countries and regions, with its contribution to world economic growth remaining at around 30%. The CIE is getting bigger and better, and continues to provide new opportunities for the world with China's new development.

At present, human society needs international cooperation and sharing more than ever before to solve development problems. multilateralism is the only choice for addressing global challenges, and economic globalization is an unstoppable trend of history.

As the rotating president of the SCO for the period of 2024—2025, China has made the word "action" the keyword of its work, and will host over 100 meetings and events with a view to further deepening practical cooperation in various fields with practical actions. Having the world's second largest consumer market and largest middle-income group, China offers great potential for investment and consumption.

Iran is an important member of the SCO family, and China is willing to deepen cooperation with Iran within the SCO framework. The Iranian side is welcome to participate in all SCO activities hosted by China and important exhibitions in China, such as the 8th CIE and

value from the previous year. The result was a non-oil trade deficit of \$14.6 billion, largely due to the import of over \$8.0 billion worth of raw gold bars, which accounted for 11.12 percent of the total import value.

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

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

Other leading exports were petroleum bitumen, urea, non-alloy iron and steel billets, iron or steel bars, and polyethylene.

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

On the import side, essential goods such as corn feed, soybean meal, genetically modified soybeans, rice, and sunflower seed oil were among the top items.

Iran, Russia discuss bolstering INSTC, trade, energy co-op

From Page 1 ► TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Russia said Tehran and Moscow are determined to deepen bilateral ties across several sectors, including the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC), transit projects, and gas transfers. He stressed the need to strengthen trade and complete joint initiatives to enhance Iran's international standing and security.

According to the Iranian Oil Ministry, Kazem Jalali, Iran's ambassador to Russia, told Iranian delegates at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting in Moscow that relations between the two countries are expanding and entering what he described as a "golden era" of cooperation.

Jalali highlighted the recent approval of the Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty by Russia's Federation Council and State Duma, noting that both countries need each other in different areas. "We must take concrete steps based on a clear understanding of these mutual needs," he said.

He added that Russia is actively seeking new routes for exports beyond the Black Sea and has allocated \$10 billion to develop the INSTC—a clear sign of its commitment to activating northern transit routes. According to Jalali, around 3.7 million tons of cargo moved through this corridor in 2022, increasing to approximately 33 million tons in 2023.

Referring to a statement by President Vladimir Putin that opening new transit routes is a strategic imperative beyond cost-benefit considerations, Jalali said Russia is determined to operationalize the INSTC—and Iran should seize the opportunity.

He explained that the corridor in-



cludes three branches, of which the eastern route is already operational. In 2023, 600,000 tons of cargo were transported via this route, rising to 1.8 million tons in 2024, just shy of the two-million-ton target. For early 2025, the goal is three million tons, while the route's total capacity is 15 million tons.

Jalali emphasized that while the INSTC is a strategic necessity for Russia, it is a valuable opportunity for Iran. "With trial operations already underway, and once the route is connected to Europe, Iran could emerge as the world's second Suez Canal—or even its most vital transit route," he said. "Completing the corridor through Iranian territory will also enhance our national security on the global stage."

Joint committee reflects political will for cooperation

Ali Mohammad Mousavi, Deputy Oil Minister for International and Commercial Affairs, described the Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee as a clear reflection of both governments' political will to expand collaboration and achieve shared success.

He noted that the Iranian delegation's strong presence at the Moscow summit signals Tehran's serious commitment to strengthening ties, especially after the

signing and ratification of the strategic partnership agreement.

Mousavi referenced coordination meetings held in Tehran with Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad and said that during his recent talks in Moscow with his Russian counterpart, both sides reached consensus on key issues and emphasized the importance of positive outcomes from the commission.

"This committee is an important platform to record achievements and negotiate year-round," Mousavi said. "Iran and Russia must remain strategic partners, and this joint body symbolizes our shared determination to expand cooperation."

Expert-level talks at the 18th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting began on Wednesday, April 23, at Russia's Energy Agency in Moscow. On Thursday, delegations prepared multiple cooperation documents for signature by Minister Paknejad and Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilev.

Oil minister meets Russian deputy prime minister

On the sidelines of the visit to Moscow, Paknejad met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak on Thursday evening.

The meeting was also attended

by Ambassador Jalali, Russian Ambassador to Tehran Alexey Dedov, and senior members of both countries' economic teams. The two sides discussed implementation of the long-term strategic treaty, as well as joint energy, transport, and trade projects.

Paknejad noted that the treaty, signed by the presidents of both nations, has already been approved by both chambers of Russia's parliament and is currently under review by Iran's parliament.

He described the agreement as a foundation for more constructive engagement and said it adds significant weight to bilateral economic cooperation. "There is vast potential for collaboration between Iran and Russia, and we have only activated a small part of it," he said.

Paknejad stressed that the 18th joint commission meeting in Moscow is crucial for opening new pathways of cooperation. "This summit is a chance to overcome challenges and implement structural reforms so our ties can reach a level that both sides desire."

Deputy Prime Minister Novak, at the beginning of the meeting, highlighted Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit to Moscow, calling the January 17, 2025 trip a "historic milestone" marked by the signing of the comprehensive strategic partnership agreement.

Novak said Iran and Russia's economic exchanges are on a strong upward trajectory, particularly in infrastructure projects related to energy and transport.

He noted that trade between the two countries grew by approximately 13 percent in 2024, signaling strong momentum. "This demonstrates the high potential of Iran-Russia trade, and we aim to further accelerate this growth," he

IMF forecasts economic improvement for Iran by 2026

TEHRAN — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected a modest improvement in Iran's economic outlook, with the country's gross domestic product (GDP) expected to grow by 1.1 percent in 2026.

According to the latest IMF report, Iran's economy is projected to grow by only 0.3 percent in 2025. However, the Fund anticipates a rebound to 1.1 percent growth the following year.

The report also forecasts that Iran's infla-

tion rate will rise significantly—from 32.6 percent in 2024 to 43.3 percent in 2025, before slightly easing to 42.5 percent in 2026.

Regarding employment, the IMF estimated Iran's unemployment rate at 7.8 percent in 2024. That figure is expected to rise to 9.5 percent in 2025 and slightly decrease to 9.2 percent in 2026.

The report comes as the IMF downgraded its global economic growth forecast from 3.3 percent to 2.8 percent, citing factors such as

protectionist trade policies, including tariffs implemented during the Trump administration. The U.S. economy is projected to slow from 2.8 percent growth in 2024 to 1.8 percent in 2025.

Despite this global slowdown, the IMF expects West Asia and Central Asia to show stronger economic performance. Growth in the region is projected to rise from 2.4 percent in 2024 to 3 percent in 2025 and 3.5 percent in 2026.

Tehran, Bangkok push for closer trade ties via joint chamber, financial mechanisms

TEHRAN — Iran and Thailand are looking to strengthen bilateral trade through the establishment of a joint chamber of commerce and the creation of mutual financial mechanisms, officials from both countries said during a recent meeting in Tehran.

Speaking at a meeting with Thai Ambassador Pichit Boonsud, Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Samad Hassanzadeh, stressed the need for a joint financial framework to facilitate transactions between the two countries.

"The low volume of trade between Iran and Thailand necessitates the establishment of financial mechanisms tailored for bilateral exchanges," Hassanzadeh said. "A joint chamber of commerce could play a pivotal role in enhancing closer cooperation."

He noted that Iran and Thailand possess significant poten-

tial for economic cooperation, including through barter arrangements and joint investments. Hassanzadeh added that both the private sectors and the governments of the two countries should coordinate efforts to expand trade ties.

"We are ready to sign a memorandum of understanding to establish the Iran-Thailand Joint Chamber of Commerce, and I hope this will be finalized soon," he said, calling for regular exchange of trade delegations and stronger institutional linkages between private sector actors.

Highlighting Thailand's strategic position as a gateway to the ASEAN market, Hassanzadeh said the Southeast Asian nation could also serve as a platform for re-exporting Iranian goods. He also pointed to comparative advantages in agriculture—particularly rice production—as well as Iran's competitiveness in energy-intensive and mineral-based manufacturing, as opportunities

for two-way cooperation.

He said Iran's strengths in engineering services, road and refinery construction, petrochemical and polymer production, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, handicrafts—especially carpets—and tourism, offer strong grounds for joint ventures.

Hassanzadeh invited the Thai ambassador to visit the upcoming Iran Expo, and expressed readiness to send and host business delegations to foster trade.

Ambassador Boonsud acknowledged the relatively low trade volume but said it had grown in 2024 compared to the previous year, offering an encouraging sign for future cooperation.

"Collaboration between the Iran Chamber of Commerce and the Thai Embassy, as well as between the two national chambers, is essential for expanding trade relations," Boonsud said.

Iran aims to boost oil output by 400,000 bpd in 8 months

TEHRAN — Iran plans to increase its crude oil production by 400,000 barrels per day (bpd) within the next eight months, according to the head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

Hamid Bovard, head of NIOC, told state media that ramping up oil and gas production is a top priority for the current year.

"We are targeting an increase of about 400,000 bpd in the next eight months," he

said, outlining the company's near-term strategy.

Bovard also noted that plans are in place to develop around 50 oil fields and 50 gas fields across the country.

Israel is exempt from accountability for the Gaza war crimes, Elija Magnier tells Tehran Times

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - As the war in Gaza deepens and regional tensions escalate, the global community faces urgent questions about the failure of diplomacy, the erosion of international law, and the political motivations driving continued violence.

Despite growing international protests and calls for accountability, powerful state actors remain locked in strategies prioritizing control over peace and expansion over stability.

Elija J. Magnier, a veteran Middle East correspondent with decades of experience reporting from conflict zones, shares his thoughts with the Tehran Times on what's really happening in Gaza. He talks about failed ceasefires and how foreign powers influence the conflict, looking at how military goals, political survival, and media stories all play a role in the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This discussion challenges the official stories, highlights inconsistencies in Western policies, and brings attention to the changing power dynamics in the region, especially when the reality on the ground often contradicts what's said in mainstream media.

The following is the text with Elija J. Magnier:

QUESTION: I know that you have spent decades reporting from conflict zones in the Middle East, offering deep and on-the-ground insights into the shifting dynamics of war and diplomacy. As the war in Gaza continues to unfold with regional implications, we are honored to hear your perspective on different dimensions of this crisis. Let me begin with this question: What



do you think are the main factors that led to the rapid collapse of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, despite international involvement?

ANSWER: First of all, there were no real international guarantees because the interlocutors were Egypt, Qatar, and the United States. Egypt and Qatar do not have leverage over Israel, and the United States has been complicit with Israel since the very beginning of the war.

There was a deal under the previous administration led by Joe Biden. However, the new administration under Donald Trump supported the ceasefire only for a limited time and then violated it when Trump and his Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, proposed something entirely outside the framework of the original agreement, which included the release of all prisoners. Hamas accepted that proposal, but it did not align with the interests of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, who has been accused of war crimes by the ICC. These two goals—ending the war and Netanyahu staying in power—are fundamentally incompatible.

If Netanyahu stops the war, he is likely to face a commission of inquiry and be held accountable for his failures and everything that happened since October 7. If he continues the war, he can keep Israeli society in a state of emergency and justify his actions by rejecting any agreement, even if Hamas has accepted it. So, the Americans have not proven to be reliable partners in any deal, and as a character.

Q: So you think there is no strategic shift in U.S. policy in the region and Washington is only managing a crisis of its own making.

A: No. There is a very clear U.S. policy. There are several points that President Donald Trump clarified in his objectives. First, he said Israel is too small, therefore giving the possibility for Israel to expand—which Israel is doing—occupying part of Lebanon, a big part of Syria, with the intention to occupy Gaza, and removing the possibility of a two-state solution in the West Bank. And this is why the settlements are enlarging in the West Bank, and there is no two-state solution on the horizon.

The second point is that Donald

Trump said clearly he wants Gaza to become the Riviera of Israel; therefore, he wants all Palestinians out of Gaza. So the policy is very clear. He wants another forced exodus of the Palestinians, and he wants the war to continue. Hamas said, "I agree not to be part of the leadership of Gaza. I don't want to rule Gaza. I accept that. Bring an alternative government to the Palestinian population." And Benjamin Netanyahu is saying, "No, I want to continue the war because I want to occupy Gaza," according to the far-right wing minister that is in his government, threatening him—if he stops the war—to resign and bring down the government. So the policy is very clear.

Q: What are the implications of Israeli threats to permanently occupy parts of Gaza and the endorsement of political punishment on the prospect of peace and regional stability?

A: First of all, there is a clear violation of international laws, and international laws do not exist anymore. Second, there is a clear hypocrisy by the West that is obvious now to the whole world—when it was not that obvious in previous years, before the 7th of October.

Third, the collective punishment—the cut of water, electricity, and denying humanitarian aid—is a violation of the Geneva Convention. It's a violation of the United Nations Charter, and Israel doesn't care, with the support of NATO, Western Europe, and the United States. Therefore, there is no accountability for Israel to do whatever it wants in this world.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Intense strikes on Yemen after the Haifa operation



From page 1 ▶ The impact is said to have caused widespread panic, sending over two million settlers into bomb shelters. A second operation, using an armed drone, "struck a vital site" in Tel Aviv.

The Israeli military acknowledged attempting to intercept a missile fired from Yemen after air

raid sirens were triggered across northern Israeli settlements to the Lebanese border.

Hebrew-language media reported that settlers heard up to 20 explosions, with speculation that the Ramat David airbase near Haifa was the intended target.

Ansarallah leader Sayyed Abdul-Malik al-Houthi praised the Haifa attack, calling it "a surprise to the enemies." He said that despite the relentless American bombardment, Yemen's military capabilities remain strong.

"Over 1,200 U.S. airstrikes have failed to weaken Yemen or halt its operations," he declared.

Al-Houthi went on to describe Yemen's position as principled and exemplary in its support for the Palestinians.

"Yemen's stance is a model. Has the world collapsed? Has Yemen been erased from the map simply because it took a bold stance rooted

in reliance on God?" he asked, urging other Muslim nations to follow suit.

Despite intensified American attacks, the Sanaa-based government has escalated its operations against both the U.S. and the Israeli regime in response to the genocidal war on Gaza.

Yemen's Health Ministry reported on Wednesday that ongoing U.S. airstrikes since mid-March have killed at least 107 civilians and wounded 223 others, most of them women and children.

In Washington, concerns are growing over the rising civilian toll. According to the Washington Post, three Senate Democrats have called on Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to account for the recent wave of civilian casualties caused by U.S. strikes targeting Ansarallah.

The lawmakers called on President Donald Trump's administration to reassess its military strategy and address the mounting humanitarian costs.

The planned polls in South Lebanon irritate anti-resistance team

From page 1 ▶ The anti-resistance team is seemingly unafraid of the consequences of their seditious and provocative rhetoric, sometimes demanding the disarmament of Hezbollah and other times accusing the resistance of dragging Lebanon into the ongoing US-led Israeli aggression.

Undeniably, this ongoing aggression has been inevitable, and Hezbollah's support front was not the cause of it, as former war minister Yoav Galant and other Israeli occupation officials have repeatedly acknowledged.

What has led to the natural emergence of the resistance, as

Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem pointed out in his last speech, was the Israeli occupation regime itself!

In 1968, there was no resistance. At that time, Israel attacked Beirut Airport and repeatedly attacked the south. Then, Saad Haddad's soldiers were paid by the Lebanese army, even though their job was to protect Israel, not Lebanon!

In 1982, after the Palestine Liberation Organization surrendered and left Lebanon, Israel invaded and refused to abide by the UN resolutions.

Today, more than ever, we need a definition of sovereignty. How can

this team talk about sovereignty while still parts of the Lebanese territory are in the hands of Israel?

How can they accept that U.S. Ambassador Lisa Johnson summoned Lebanese officials in a humiliating manner, while they remain silent about the Lebanese foreign minister's intention to summon Iranian Ambassador Mojtaba Amani simply for writing a personal opinion on X regarding the dangers of laying down the arms?

Sovereignty means dignity, the dignity of the citizen and the state.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Forces continue their hostile rhetoric against the approach agreed upon

by President Joseph Aoun and PM Nawaf Salam regarding the resistance movement's weapons.

The Lebanese Forces believes that the Lebanese state and its military and security institutions must begin the process of disarmament—even by force—and are threatening to pressure the government to take harsh measures against Hezbollah.

Hence, it may not be surprising that the Lebanese Forces' four ministers quit the government on the pretext that it failed to abide by the pledges made at the beginning of the term regarding disarmament.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Pushes for ties with Israel in shadow of Syria's occupation

From page 1 ▶

Jolani's strategy amid Syria's military collapse

Jolani's readiness to normalize ties without requiring Israeli withdrawal from Syria's lands questions the conventional Syrian and Arab view on sovereignty and territorial integrity. Though Jolani seems ready to give international legitimacy and economic help a top priority over recovering occupied territories, Israel's military attacks have seriously harmed Syria's defense

system. Many Syrians and the larger Arab population, who consider the Israeli occupation a fundamental national concern, may be alienated by this position.

Jolani's position may be viewed as a last attempt to preserve its power. After fourteen years of conflict, Syria's military is broken, its economy is broken, and its transitional authority feels significant pressure to stabilize Syria. Normalizing ties with Israel could lead to securing Western support, including sanction relief.

For Israel, normalization with Jolani's regime could influence the presence of Syria's traditional allies near its borders and integrate Syria into a U.S.-backed regional security framework.

Israel's military operations have resulted in civilian deaths, dislocation, and social fragmentation throughout Syria. Jolani's approval of normalization without first addressing these humanitarian effects or obtaining assurances for Israeli pullout could exacerbate rifts in Syrian society.

Car bomb kills senior Russian general

A senior Russian general has been killed after a home-made explosive device ripped through a parked car in the town of Balashikha, east of Moscow, according to the Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes in the country.

Authorities named Lieutenant-General Yaroslav Moskalik, deputy head of the main operational directorate of the military's General Staff, as the victim of Friday's attack, which appeared to be similar to previous attacks on Russians linked to Moscow's military offensive in Ukraine.

India, Pakistan trade gunfire as tensions rise over deadly Kashmir attack



Indian and Pakistani forces have exchanged fire along the Line of Control (LOC) separating the two countries as the UN calls for "maximum restraint" amid warnings of a wider military escalation following the latest deadly attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam town.

Indian army sources told Al Jazeera on Friday that the Pakistani side initiated the shooting. A government official in Pakistan-administered Kashmir also confirmed to the AFP news agency on Friday that troops exchanged fire, but did not say who started the exchange.

"There was no firing on the civilian population," Syed Ashfaq Gilani, the Pakistani official, told AFP.

Water bottles thrown at Israeli Ben Gvir in US visit

Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir was confronted by some demonstrators Wednesday night in New Haven, Connecticut, according to a statement and videos shared by Ben Gvir's office.

"Water bottles were thrown" at Ben Gvir, his office said, when the far-right minister exited a building in front of protesters following a speech he gave at Shabtai, a private Jewish society at Yale that's not officially affiliated with the university.

Renewed protests have spread at college campuses this spring over Israel's handling of its war in Gaza.

The opponents of the Israeli war on Gaza

also gathered at Yale University on Tuesday night to protest Ben Gvir's visit.

Over 212 journalists since start of war on Gaza



Israeli forces have killed over 212 Palestinian journalists since the start of Israel's war on Gaza, according to a statement by Gaza's Government Media Office reported by Al Jazeera.

On Thursday, Israeli forces killed Al Aqsa Radio journalist Saeed Amin Abu Hassanein alongside his wife and daughter in a strike in Deir al Balah.

The statement also called on "International Federation of Journalists, the Federation of Arab Journalists, and all journalistic bodies in all countries of the world to condemn these systematic crimes against Palestinian journalists and media professionals in the Gaza Strip," according to the report.

Israeli reservist killed in northern Gaza combat, two wounded

The Israeli military announced Thursday that a tank driver in the 14th Reserve Brigade was killed by sniper fire in the northern Gaza Strip. On Friday morning, the army named him as Master Sergeant (Res.) Asaf Cafri, aged 26, from Beit Hashmonai, a tank driver in the 79th Battalion of the 'Machatz' Brigade.

An officer in the special ops Yahalom Unit and a reserve soldier from the 79th battalion of the 14th Reserve Brigade were also seriously wounded in the incident.

Another reservist from Battalion 8239 was moderately wounded. In addition to sniper fire, an anti-tank missile was also fired at the force.

More than a million children in Gaza are at risk of famine

Famine is spreading in the Gaza Strip, with "more than a million children at risk", the Gaza Government Media Office says

"Vital sectors in Gaza are collapsing amid a stifling blockade and shameful international silence. We warn that the humanitarian catastrophe will continue to worsen at a frightening rate as the occupation continues to close the crossings," the office said. It added that famine has become a "reality" with at least 52 deaths, including 50 children, due to hunger and malnutrition.



Palestinian women grieve following the killing of a family in Khan Younis by Israeli strikes (Hatem Khaled/Reuters)

Salehi proposes naming 2026 as Cultural Year of Iran and China



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi

TEHRAN--Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi suggested to name 2026 as "Year of Cultural and Tourism Cooperation Between Iran and China," which was welcomed by Gao Zheng, director-general of the Bureau of International Exchanges and Cooperation of the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Asia Cultural Co-operation Forum (ACCF), he said Iran-China ties, as two ancient civilizations with a history of thousands of years, have a deep root, with a sustainable and strategic nature, ISNA reported.

Both nations have numerous cultural and civilizational commonalities, he added.

Naming the year of 2026 is an opportunity for defining and implementing the extensive programs in the cultural, artistic, and tourism fields, he said.

ism fields, he said.

Pointing to the Silk Road as a symbol of historical connections between the two countries, Salehi said the visit of the Chinese president to Tehran and the signing of a strategic 25-year document opened a new horizon for promoting cooperation.

It is hoped that with continuous follow-up and specific executive programs, it will lead to tangible achievement, particularly in the cultural and tourism fields.

Gao Zheng remembered that 2026 coincides with the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Iran and China. "We support the promotion of cultural, artistic, and tourism exchanges with Iran. We are ready to pursue this cooperation through joint projects and operational plans."

Both sides emphasized the necessity of identifying and taking advantage of cultural commonalities between Iran and China in the fields of painting, music, customs, and popular literature during the visit.

Salehi said the role of media, social networks, and cultural personalities in transferring the commonalities to the public sector is of high importance.

It was decided that a joint committee at the level of deputies of the culture ministries of both nations would be formed to design and pursue the 2026 initiative.

Tourism promotion ways explored between Kish and Dagestan

TEHRAN--Mohammad-Jafar Kabiri, CEO of the Kish Free Zone Organization, during his one-day visit to Russia's Republic of Dagestan, met with local officials, talked and studied ways of promoting tourism cooperation between Kish Island in southern Iran and Russia, IRNA quoted the Public Relations Department of Kish Free Zone Organization as saying on Thursday.

Pointing to the previous negotiations held with the Russian Consulate last February, Kabiri said the mutual desire between Kish and Russia for attracting tourists, particularly Russian Muslim and non-Muslim tourists, paved the way for traveling to Makhachkala, the capital of the Republic of Dagestan.

He said Muslims account for over 95 percent of the Dagestan population, of which 150,000 are Shia Muslims. This shows that this region has significant potential for promoting religious and cultural tourism, he added.

In addition, the presence of one of the important ports of Russia in the region has created an appropriate opportunity for bilateral



interactions, he said.

Kabiri also announced plans to launch direct or indirect flights between Kish and Makhachkala in 2025. He said this measure can create a new linking route for attracting tourists to Kish Island.

Pointing to a joint gathering with the Dagestan government delegation, he said good agreements were reached between the two parties. It was decided that before the end of the spring season, specific proposals would be presented by the parties for the start of tourism cooperation, he added.

UAE travel: Budget Indian carriers to reroute flights after Pakistan airspace closure

Indian budget carriers operating international flights, particularly those serving routes to the UAE from northern parts of India, are implementing precautionary rerouting measures to avoid flying over Pakistan airspace.

The move made by the airlines was triggered in response to the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians.

Flights departing from major cities like Delhi and other destinations in North India are anticipated to experience increased travel times due to these alternate flight paths. Industry sources suggest that airfares on these affected routes could see a short-term increase, estimated to be between 8 per cent and 12 per cent.

Akasa Air confirmed its decision to reroute flights proactively, citing a "tragic incident in Pahalgam" as context for the precautionary measure.

The airline said, "We have proactively decided to reroute any flights expected to fly over Pakistan airspace as a precautionary measure." Akasa added that this adjustment is not expected to have a significant impact on their operations or cause inconvenience to

their passengers.

"We will continue to assess the situation daily and make any necessary adjustments to our flight operations to maintain the highest levels of safety that are central to our operations at all times," the airline said.

While SpiceJet has yet to issue a formal travel advisory, a spokesperson for the airline confirmed to Financial Express Online that their flights from North India to the UAE would be rerouted via alternative paths. The spokesperson said these flights would carry additional fuel to accommodate the longer flying time but stated there was "no significant impact on our flight schedules."

Both airlines underscore that maintaining safety remains their top priority as they continue to monitor the situation.

India's biggest carriers, Air India and IndiGo, are also reporting flight delays following the airspace closure. Air India said, "Due to the announced restriction of Pakistan airspace for all Indian airlines, it is expected that some Air India flights to or from North America, UK, Europe and Middle East will take an alternative extended route."

(Source: The Economic Times)

Kandelous: a living museum of history, nature, and cultural preservation

TEHRAN - Nestled in the breathtaking Mazandaran province, northern Iran, Kandelous village stands as a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage and natural beauty.

Known as "The Lost Paradise," the picturesque village offers visitors a unique blend of historical significance, cultural depth, and ecological wonders.

A village rooted in history

Kandelous is one of Iran's oldest settlements, with traces of civilization dating back before the Islamic era. During the Qajar dynasty, the village gained recognition, with Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar reportedly passing through and admiring the craftsmanship of local metalworkers.

The village's architectural charm—featuring wooden-framed windows, gabled rooftops, and winding stone alleyways—reflects its deep-rooted heritage.

Unlike many modernized settlements, Kandelous has preserved its historical texture, allowing visitors to experience Iran's rural elegance firsthand.

Natural beauty and medicinal plant farms

Beyond its historical significance, Kandelous is renowned for its Medicinal Plant Farms,



A view of Kandelous village in northern Iran

which cultivate over 250 species of rare and valuable herbs. The village has become a hub for traditional herbal medicine, preserving the knowledge of Iranian healers while promoting sustainable farming practices.

Culinary and artistic wonders

Visitors can indulge in traditional Iranian cuisine at its traditional restaurants. Local handicraft markets are another highlight of the village, featuring Jajim textiles, felt clothing, socks, gloves, and floral wool blouses, each crafted by skilled artisans.

The visionary behind Kandelous Museum

One of the most defining aspects of Kandelous is its An-

thropology Museum, a pioneering institution founded by Dr. Aliasghar Jahangiri.

A native of Kandelous, Jahangiri dedicated his life to preserving the village's history and showcasing its cultural treasures.

After completing his doctoral studies in the United States, he returned to his childhood home with a mission—to establish a museum that would safeguard Iran's rural heritage and educate future generations.

Under his leadership, the Kandelous Anthropology Museum was established between 1981 and 1988, becoming the world's first rural museum. Housing over 8,000 artifacts, including

pottery, manuscripts, agricultural tools, and ancient artwork, the museum serves as a bridge between Iran's past and present. Jahangiri's efforts extended beyond historical preservation—he also played a crucial role in documenting and promoting Iran's medicinal plant heritage, leading to the creation of a museum dedicated to medicinal plants.

A haven for tourists

Kandelous provides comfortable accommodations, including suites, villas, and guest houses, ensuring that visitors can fully experience its serene environment. The village also boasts open parks and pavilions, offering a tranquil space for relaxation and seasonal festivities.

Global recognition and future aspirations

Kandelous has gained international attention, appearing in foreign media and attracting increasing numbers of tourists.

In 2023, it was nominated among eight Iranian villages for the Global Village title by UN Tourism, formerly known as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Additionally, efforts are underway to win a UNESCO label for the village in the future.

Tehran hosts Golab-Giri festivals to celebrate rosewater heritage

TEHRAN - The Tehran Municipality has launched a series of Golab-Giri (traditional rosewater distillation) festivals across the capital, bringing a fragrant slice of Iranian cultural heritage to urban audiences.

According to Amir Ghasemi, head of the Tourism Headquarters of Tehran Municipality, the initiative is part of a broader effort to boost tourism, showcase the customs of various Iranian provinces, and enrich citizens' leisure experiences.

The festivities coincide with the annual Golab-Giri season traditionally celebrated in Kashan and its nearby villages, which are renowned for their centuries-old rosewater production rituals.

The first of these festivals began in mid-April at the National Botanical Garden and has since continued at Parvaz Park from April 21. Each event offers visitors a chance to witness the ancient process of rosewater distillation — a method in which rose petals are

gently boiled in large copper pots, releasing their aromatic essence into the air before being collected in glass jars.

Alongside the distillation demonstrations, the festivals feature vibrant cultural programs, including exhibitions, traditional product markets, and live entertainment. Ghasemi also noted that half-day guided tours from affiliated offices are available until June 21 to help residents engage more deeply with the festivities.

Every year in May and June, hundreds of Golab-Giri festivals are held where roses reign and fragrant dreams are made. For centuries, the merriments of the fragrant roses take center stage in Kashan and the lands beyond as petals are plucked with gentle care and glee by honored guests and the locals.

Iran has a long history of flower and herb cultivation. Many people think that rosewater that is traditionally distilled is of higher quality than rosewater that is manufactured in



factories, probably as a result of the speedier harvesting and distillation processes.

Traditionally, rosewater has been made from a flower with a very sweet scent that is best known in the nation as Mohammadi roses. Early in the morning, the flower harvest is nearly finished. Rumor has it that delays in harvesting or transportation to the distillery lead to a decline in the quantity and quality of essential oils.

Ilam embossed kilim to become global

TEHRAN--The Director General of Ilam Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department said, "We seek to turn Ilam embossed kilim into a global item."

Farzad Sharifi told ISNA that the embossed kilim is the most prominent and authentic product of the indigenous industries.

Over 3,000 square meters of kilim are produced by Ilami weavers, he said, adding it has a world fame and has been registered on the National Heritage List.

"We use every chance to introduce and sell this indigenous artifact in domestic and foreign markets. After it is nationally registered, we seek to globalize it."

Arbaeen pilgrims and Nowruz holidaymakers welcome this product at handicrafts stalls annually, he said.

Ilam municipality has boosted the globalization trend of this handicraft product through installing the element of embossed kilim in the center of Ilam and naming a street in the provincial capital for it, he added.

"We witnessed the enthusiasm of people for embossed kilim during holding handicrafts fair in Wasit province in Iraq. We also introduced the embossed kilim during this year's trip of Ilam governor general and the provincial officials to Iraq."

Historically, Ilam has been renowned for its Kilim production, a craft that dates back centuries. However, the embossed kilims (locally named Gilim-e Naqsh Barjasteh) represent a relatively recent development in the region's artisanal landscape.

This innovative style was pioneered by a skilled weaver named Sahar Chalengar. Through her ingenuity, Chalengar introduced an embossed motif into the traditional Kilim by integrating carpet knots into the weaving process. Her unique approach quickly gained popularity, revolutionizing the craft and spreading across Ilam province.

The creation of embossed kilims involves a distinctive technique that sets them apart from traditional Kilims. The background of these Kilims is woven using a conventional method known locally as "Sufi Bafi." The motifs, however, are crafted using Turkish carpet knots, which naturally make them stand out in relief against the flat background. This embossing effect adds a three-dimensional quality to the Kilims, enhancing their visual and tactile appeal.

The primary materials used in embossed kilims are wool, cotton, and sometimes

silk yarn. These materials are sourced from local cattle farmers, ensuring a close connection between the weavers and their environment. Wool is used both in its natural color and dyed with natural and chemical pigments. The dyeing process often involves the use of white alum to stabilize the colors, ensuring they remain vibrant and long-lasting.

The process of making an embossed kilim begins with the installation of the loom. While both

vertical and horizontal looms can be used, vertical looms are now more commonly chosen. The Kilims are woven based on symmetrical patterns, and unlike simple Kilims, they allow for the inclusion of cursive motifs. These motifs include traditional designs such as "Lachak - Toranj" (paisley), "Goldani" (vase), "Gol-e Farang" (rose flower), "Naghsh-e Ghalat," "Botehee" (bush), "Mehrabi," and various floral, animal, and figurative motifs.

First Announcement

ESCO
Esfahan Steel Company

Row No.	Type of Tender	Tender No.	Publication Frequency	Tender Subject	Deadline for Receiving Tender Documents and Submitting the Bids
1	International Public Tender	602450-2	2	BEICHEM Grease	May,03,2025

Notes:

- 1- Tender document must be received through ESCO's website.
- 2- For more information, please refer to ESCO's website www.esfahansteel.ir (Sourcing System).

Esfahan Steel Company

Tashkent underscores promoting ties with Sharif University of Technology

TEHRAN – Daliv Shahrukh Khozhakbarovich, Uzbekistan's First Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, has called for enhancing cooperation between Sharif University of Technology and the top universities of Uzbekistan.

The official made the remarks on April 22, in a meeting with Seyyed Abbas Mousavi, the chancellor of Sharif University of Technology, Mehr news agency reported.

During the meeting, the two sides signed a memorandum of understanding, while highlighting the significance of sharing expertise on the science and technology park, as well as establishing a branch of Sharif University of Technology in Tashkent.

On April 19, the Uzbek official met Farhad Yazdandoost, the head of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, calling on Iranian universities and scientific institutions to help develop technology and innovation in Uzbekistan, saying that face-to-face interaction between scientific officials is much more effective than diplomatic communications.

During the meeting, the two officials discussed the potential for developing scientific and technological collaborations between the two countries.

The official said the cooperation can be centered around sharing expertise, expanding scientific col-



laborations among universities' chancellors, and joint funding in technological fields.

For his part, Yazdandoost elaborated on the country's scientific achievements and significant growth in the number of students after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Over sixty science and technology parks are operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, he said, "we're also planning to attract some 300,000 foreign students in a five-year plan."

The official highlighted that cooperation between the two countries can also include conducting joint research, exchanging students and professors, and holding joint sports activities for students.

Yazdandoost also invited Uzbekistan's minister of science to

participate in the second ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)-15 Dialogue Platform, which is scheduled to be hosted by Tehran.

Enhancing ties in health, education, technology

In November 2024, Uzbekistan expressed interest in enhancing cooperation with Iran in different fields, including health, education, and technology.

The country asked Iran's health sector to provide online consultation to Uzbek professionals and establish a direct link between medical specialists of the two countries.

During a meeting held in Tehran on November 6, 2024, the head of the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology, Hossein Roozbeh, and the vice president for

the development of international cooperation of Uzbekistan, Fazliddin Muminov, discussed ways to expand scientific and collaborative efforts.

Expanding cooperation in the field of science, exchanging students and professors, promoting knowledge-based companies' collaborations, participating in scientific and technological events, including technology exhibitions, and holding joint seminars, meetings, and symposia were among the most important focuses of the meeting.

Lauding Iran's high capacities in science and knowledge-based companies, the Uzbek official said, Iran is a powerful and prominent country in the region with high and strategic capabilities in knowledge and technology. By integrating Iran's capabilities with Uzbekistan's capacities, the two countries will benefit from remarkable progress.

"There is a potential capacity for boosting cooperation in education, interactions among professors and academics of the two countries, and exchanging test equipment, as well as technological knowledge-based products," he added.

Roozbeh, for his part, said there is a strong connection between the two countries in terms of history, culture, and shared identity, which lays the ground for fostering education and technological cooperation.

507 earthquakes occur in a month

TEHRAN –A total of 507 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the past calendar month that ended on April 20, indicating a 13.7-percent decrease compared to 588 earthquakes recorded in the last Iranian calendar month, Esfand, (February 19 – March 20), according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude between 5 to 6 on the Richter scale, which occurred on March 24 in Kerman province.

Statistically, 447 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 52 earthquakes with mag-

nitudes between 3 and 4; and 7 earthquakes with magnitudes between 4 and 5, have occurred in the country.

Among the provinces of the country, Kerman with 87, Khorasan Razavi with 59, Yazd with 42, and Semnan with 34 recorded the highest number of earthquakes in the country.

A total of 6,272 earthquakes were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2024 –March 2025) according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Out of registered earthquakes, 150 were more

than 4 on the Richter scale; at least five earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 4.5 occurred monthly in the country.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.

Tehran, Bishkek discuss boosting environmental ties

TEHRAN – Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the Department of Environment (DOE), and Meder Mashiev, Kyrgyz Minister of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision, met on Friday to enhance bilateral relations.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the International Conference on the Global Mountain Dialogue for Sustainable Development held on April 24–25 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, the DOE website reported.

Highlighting natural and cultural proximity between the two countries, Mashiev announced Kyrgyzstan's readiness for joint actions to

conserve the environment.

For his part, Zohrabi referred to Iran's sixty-year experience in wildlife conservation and biodiversity, and said the DOE is ready to share its experiences and knowledge in the field of biodiversity conservation and management of the protected areas with Kyrgyzstan.

It was also decided to up-to-date a former memorandum of understanding and take measures to implement it.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, in collaboration with international organizations, organized the Global Mountain Dia-

logue for Sustainable Development. The high-level conference aims to strengthen international cooperation on climate resilience and sustainable development in mountain regions.

Representatives of more than 50 countries from Europe, Asia, America, Africa, and Australia, and about 30 international organizations discussed important aspects of the sustainable development of mountains during the event.

The main objectives of the conference include integrating mountain issues into global climate and development frameworks, raising awareness of environmental

and socio-economic challenges in mountain regions, and promoting joint initiatives for sustainable mountain development.

The topics covered in the conference include the impact of climate change on mountain ecosystems and their inhabitants, the role of mountains in ensuring global water, food and energy security, strategies for adaptation to climate change and prevention of ecosystem degradation, strengthening scientific research and monitoring of glaciers and water resources, and financial and technical support for sustainable development of mountain regions.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

System to be set up for monitoring, forecasting agricultural drought

A system will be launched to monitor, forecast and report the agricultural lands being hit by drought, Amir Qaderi, an official with Disaster Management Organization has announced.

Over a meeting of a special working group for addressing drought and risks threatening agricultural sector, a plan for establishing a system for monitoring and forecasting agricultural drought in the country was approved and submitted to the Disaster Management Organization for review, he explained.

"Following the study of other countries' experiences and existing global methods, the necessity of establishing a domestic system to recognize the lands prone to agricultural drought was emphasized," he noted.

سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران ایجاد می‌شود

معاون امور بازرسی و بازسازی و بازتوانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور از ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران خبر داد.

به گزارش پایگاه اطلاع رسانی سازمان مدیریت بحران کشور، امیر قادری روز یکشنبه با اعلام این خبر گفت: طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران طی جلسه‌ای با حضور مدیران و کارشناسان سازمان مدیریت بحران و وزارت جهاد کشاورزی بررسی شد.

وی ادامه داد: پس از بررسی تجارب داخلی و روش‌های موجود جهانی، ضرورت استقرار نمونه بومی پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی مورد تأکید قرار گرفت و با مشارکت مراکز پژوهشی سازمان هواشناسی کشور و پژوهشکده حفاظت خاک و آب‌خیزداری طرح ایجاد سامانه پایش و پیش‌بینی خشکسالی کشاورزی ایران پیشنهاد شد.

Health minister attending 8th SCO meeting

TEHRAN – A delegation headed by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi is taking part in the eighth meeting of health ministries of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Xi'an, China.

The health ministers of China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and some senior managers of the World Health Organization are attending the meeting, as well, Mehr news agency reported.

The week-long event, which kicked off on April 24, will be held under the theme 'promoting sustainable health development and sharing a healthy future'. It will focus on topics such as enhancing the resilience of health systems through primary health care (PHC), risk management and medical emergencies, improving health services utilizing digital technologies such as telemedicine and artificial intelligence, as well as boosting cooperation on the development of traditional medicine.

In the eighth meeting of the health ministers of the member states of the SCO, two documents, including the declaration of the 8th Meeting of the SCO health ministers and the SCO medical emergency action plan, will be signed.

Zafarqandi is scheduled to deliver a speech and hold talks with health ministers of member states of SCO on ways to boost health ties.

On the very first day of the visit to China, April 24, Zafarqandi participated in a meeting titled 'health based on transformation and innovation: new opportunities for Iran-China cooperation in the field of medical technology'.

Addressing the meeting, Zafarqandi said Iran and China have had great cooperation in the field of health for many years.

Given the advancement of the two countries in the field of pharmaceutical raw materials, medicine, and medical equipment, Zafarqandi expressed optimism that the medical partnership between Iran and China would expand, and practical and executive steps to be taken following President Masoud Pezeshkian's visit to China.

During the meeting, some 18 Chinese pharmaceutical, medical, and hospital equipment manufacturing companies introduced their products and proposed collaborations in medical manufacturing, transferring technology, and meeting Iran's needs.

The seventh meeting of the health ministers of the member countries of the SCO was held in March in Kazakhstan.



Environmental health and safety of drinking water were the main topics of the three-day event. Three documents were signed for promoting cooperation on safe drinking water and sewage management, as well as adopting comprehensive policies and basic measures to improve healthcare in member states from 2025 to 2027.

Tehran seeks to boost health cooperation with SCO

The health ministry is planning to strengthen collaborations with the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS intergovernmental organization.

The fourth coordination and consensus meeting of the special working group for boosting cooperation with the BRICS and SCO was held on August 17, 2024, in Tehran, the health ministry website reported.

During the meeting, Mohammad-Amir Amirkhani, the deputy director of the health ministry's department for international affairs, emphasized the need to recognize and benefit from the capabilities of the country's membership in the SCO to promote international cooperation.

The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the SCO Secretariat, Mehرداد Kiaei, for his part, elaborated on the country's capacities saying that Iran has a very good relationship with the SCO member states and is looking forward to playing a more significant role thanks to the strategic position of the country in the region in various fields such as energy, communication and health.

The official also evaluated the suggestion of forming special working groups in the field of health, including the advisory working group for the provision of emergency drugs or universal health coverage in the Shanghai system to be useful.

At the end of this meeting, the members of the working group discussed and reviewed the outlines of the proposed programs in the relevant areas of cooperation with the SCO.

Why did the March 28 Myanmar earthquake cause major damage in South Asia?

By Mehdi Zare

TEHRAN – The Sagaing Fault, passing near Mandalay, Myanmar, has a long history of destructive earthquakes. In 1946, in an earthquake of M7.7 similar to the 2025 earthquake, the northern part of the Sagaing Fault ruptured near Mandalay, causing widespread damage.

The 1931 earthquake of M7.5 ruptured the south Sagaing Fault near Yangon. In 1956 earthquake of M7.0 and the event of 2012 M6.9 occurred in the central and southern parts of the fault.

The rupture of the Sagaing fault segments is divided into segments with different return periods. Paleoseismological studies show that the southern segments (near Yangon) have a return period of 100–150 years for M 7+ events, while the central Meiktila segment (which ruptured on 28-3-2025) showed a 260 km seismic gap capable of generating M 7.9 earthquakes.

The fault slip rate of 18–49 mm/year causes stress releases, with M 7+ earthquakes typically occurring every 50–150 years, depending on the location of the fault.

The 2025 earthquake released pent-up stress on the Meiktila section, which had not ruptured since the 1839 earthquake with an estimated magnitude of 7.9.

The cities of Mandalay and Naypyidaw are built on soft soils prone to liquefaction and face infrastructure collapse in severe shaking.

The Mw7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar on March 28, 2025, caused significant damage in Bangkok, Thailand, approximately 1,000 kilometers from the epicenter.

This unusual effect can be attributed to a combination of geological, structural, and seismic factors. The main earthquake that struck Myanmar and Thailand occurred on March 28, 2025, at 1:30 PM Myanmar local time.

The earthquake near Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city, at a depth of 10 kilometers, was followed 11 minutes later by a magnitude 6.4 aftershock and other aftershocks in the following days.

Initial estimates suggested that about 800,000 people in Myanmar experienced a strong tremor measuring 9 on the Richter scale, while Bangkok was shaken by a moderate tremor measuring 5 to 6 on the Richter scale. However, the amplification effect in Bangkok turned the moderate tremor into a catastrophic shaking for tall and specific structures. Experts had previously warned that an earthquake of about 8 on the Saginaw fault could devastate Bangkok.

The rupture of the earthquake fault, with a rare "supershear" earthquake mechanism (where the rupture velocity was greater than the seismic wave velocity), resulted in long-lasting shaking and directed more energy towards Bangkok, 1,000 kilometers away.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



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APRIL 26, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter paradise.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02 Evening: 19:06 Dawn: 3:45 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:17 (tomorrow)

What's in Tehran art galleries

Painting

* Ech Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Maryam Shojai.

Entitled "Flow", the exhibit runs until May 9 at the gallery that can be found at 10 Mirza Taraj opposite Dowlat St., Shariati Ave.



* Zahed Sheikh Bahai is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Bostan Gallery.

The exhibit named "Matt" will run until May 6 at No. 71, 22th Alley, Larestan St. off Motahhari Ave.



* White Line Gallery is displaying paintings by Mazaher Afrouzi in an exhibition named "Traces of Rain".

The exhibit will be running until May 5 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jame Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.

* Paintings by Parvaneh Etemadi are currently on view in an exhibition at Liam Gallery.

The exhibit named "In Honor of Parvaneh" runs until May 5 at the gallery located at No. 118, Fathi Shafaqi St. near Salmas Square.



* Riscree 29 Gallery is currently playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Mehdi Sharafi.

The exhibition named "Temporal Diagrams" will be running until May 9 at the gallery located at 31 Aqabozorgi St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

* A collection of paintings by Oriya Mahmoudi is on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition named "Eight Tales of a Missing Book" will be running until May 6 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



* A collection of paintings by Pouya Khaki is on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibition named "Early Myths" will be running until May 6 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

* Maneli Manouchehri is showcasing a collection of her latest paintings in an exhibition at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibition named "The Hidden Side" will run until May 6 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.



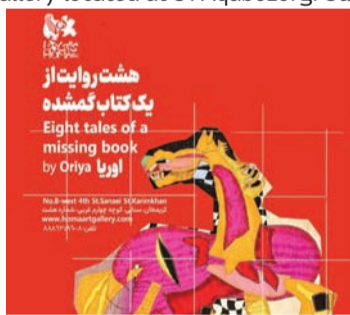
* Paintings by Shima Esfandiari are on view in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Fugue in G Minor" will continue until May 6 at the gallery, which can be found at 8 Shahin St., Sanai St.

Sculpture

* An exhibition of sculptures by Shadi Moradi is currently on view in an exhibition at Dena Gallery.

The exhibition will run until May 9 at the gallery that can be found at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.



Saeed Roustayi's "Woman and Child" enters 78th Cannes Film Festival

TEHRAN-The 78th Cannes Film Festival has announced late-breaking additions to its 2025 festival lineup, including the new film by the Iranian filmmaker Saeed Roustayi.

The competition section films vying for the Palme d'Or have moved from the initial selection of 19 to 21. Titled "Woman and Child," the fourth film by Roustayi has joined the Official Selection this year, competing with "Edgington" by Ari Aster, "Nouvelle Vague" by Richard Linklater, "The Phoenician Scheme" by Wes Anderson, "Sentimental Value" by Joachim Trier, and "The Young Mother's Home" by Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne among others, ILNA reported.

French company Goodfellas, known as the Cannes whisperers, have boarded sales on this Iranian drama. Described as a contemporary family drama of revenge and forgiveness, the film stars Parinaz Izadyar (Law of Tehran) as a widowed nurse struggling with her rebellious son. When a tragic accident occurs, she finds herself confronting feelings of betrayal even as she seeks justice.

Payman Maadi (Law of Tehran, A Separation) and Hassan Poursheirazi (The Old Bachelor) are also in the cast along with Soha Niasti, Fereshteh Sadre Orafae, Maziar Seyedi, and Sahar Goldoost.

Roustayi was nominated for the Palme d'Or in 2022 for "Leila's Brothers," a three-hour family epic starring frequent Asghar Farhadi collaborator Taraneh Alidoosti (The Salesman), Navid Mohammadzadeh (Law



of Tehran), and Payman Maadi among others. The movie won the FIPRESCI Prize at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival.

Described as a contemporary family drama of revenge and forgiveness, Iran's «Woman and Child» will be vying for the Palme d'Or.

Saeed Roustayi, 35, is a filmmaker, screenwriter, and producer. His works primarily focus on issues of social injustice, as well as his portrayals of women in Iranian society.

He graduated from Soore University with a Bachelor of

Film and Television in Directing. He won two Crystal Simorgh awards for best directing and best screenplay at the Fajr International Film Festival for his debut feature film "Life and a Day" (2016). The movie also received the 2016 Reflet d'Or for Best Feature at the Geneva International Film Festival Tous Ecrans.

Roustayi's second feature film "Law of Tehran" (2019) was nominated for the César Award for Best Foreign Film. It was well received by critics at the 76th Venice Film Festival, and won multiple awards, including the Crystal Simorgh for Audience Choice of Best Film, at the 37th Fajr Film Festival.

A thriller drama, "Law of Tehran" (also known as "Just 6.5") was included in the list of 50 best films released in the UK in 2023 by The Guardian

The 78th Cannes Film Festival

will be held from May 13 to 24. Renowned French actress Juliette Binoche will serve as jury president for the main competition. The Honorary Palme d'Or will be awarded to the celebrated actor Robert De Niro during the festival's opening ceremony.

One day after the announcement of the ACID official selection (a parallel section of the Cannes), Palestinian photojournalist Fatima Hassouna one of the main subjects of the documentary film "Put Your Soul on Your Hand and Walk" by Sepideh Farsi, was killed along with ten members of her family in an Israeli airstrike on their home in Gaza City on April 16. The festival released an official statement expressing condolences and criticizing the ongoing violence in Gaza.

Culture minister emphasizes cultural collaboration with Pakistan



TEHRAN- In a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart on the sidelines of the Asia Cultural Cooperation Forum (ACCF 2025) in Hong Kong on Thursday, the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, highlighted the importance of enhancing cultural, artistic, media, and tourism collaborations between the two neighboring countries.

Salehi emphasized on the rich historical ties and deep cultural and religious connections shared by Iran and Pakistan. He stated that the relationship between the two nations is rooted in ancient civilizational bonds and shared religious beliefs, which provide valuable opportunities for joint cultural projects and initiatives.

He stressed that Iran possesses diverse

opportunities in historical, cultural, natural, and health sectors, which could be promoted to foreign audiences—especially in Pakistan—through media, joint documentaries, cultural exhibitions, and academic exchanges.

Salehi acknowledged the valued status of the Persian language in Pakistan, emphasizing that the people of this country regard Persian as an integral part of their cultural identity rather than a mere second language. He praised the Pakistani government's efforts to support and strengthen Persian language chairs at universities.

He further called for the development of bilateral cultural interactions through joint artistic productions, active participation of artists in regional festivals, and the creation of shared exhibition spaces.

For his part, Pakistani Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Aurangzeb Khan Khichi appreciated the proposals presented by Iran and affirmed that Persian was the primary language of the subcontinent before colonization, playing a key role in conveying religious and cultural concepts, including the introduction of Islam to the region.

He noted that the deep historical ties and genuine affection of the Pakistani people for Iran represent a valuable asset for expanding cultural relations between the two countries.

He reaffirmed that Iran is a brotherly nation and that Pakistan welcomes all Iranian cultural activists, artists, and tourists, promoting increased cultural presence through various platforms, including festivals, exhibitions, and joint artistic and educational projects.

Highlighting a joint documentary project with Turkey regarding shared cultural elements, he remarked that, given the more profound cultural and civilizational ties between Iran and Pakistan compared to those with Turkey, similar projects should also be established between the two Islamic nations.

Expressing his readiness to collaborate, he welcomed the participation of Iranian artists, writers, and cultural figures in the numerous festivals and exhibitions held in Pakistan, emphasizing that there are many opportunities for cultural and artistic collaborations that can be effectively activated and expanded through the active engagement of both countries' cultural communities.

Iran's "Rectangle" gains recognition at Fujairah Monodrama Festival

TEHRAN- The Iranian play "Rectangle," directed by Sahra Ramezani, earned recognition at the 11th Fujairah International Monodrama Festival in the United Arab Emirates last week.

The festival showcased a range of performances, and "Rectangle" was honored with a festival statuette, placing it among the top three productions.

The festival featured competitors from various countries, including Germany, France,



Spain, Greece, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, and Tunisia.

Produced by Ilia Shams and Kamyar Mohebi, the play starred Ali Mirmezhad, Amir Bahador Oraei, Nazanin Tafazzoli, Kimia Nahrin, and Amir Mahmoud Nourai.

"Rectangle" has previously drawn attention at notable international events, including the 20th International Festival of Performing Arts (HIGHFEST) in Yerevan and the 7th Inspiration International Festival in Moscow.