



# Why Is Africa Important to Iran?

Hundreds of African traders, officials convene in Tehran and Esfahan following the Iran-Africa Summit

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## Israel on trial in ICJ for Gaza aid restrictions

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - The International Court of Justice (ICJ) proceedings in The Hague from April 28 marked a critical juncture in the longstanding humanitarian and legal challenges posed by Israel's responsibilities towards Palestinians, specifically access to humanitarian aid in Gaza and the West Bank.

These legal proceedings brought under a UN General Assembly resolution seek to establish Israel's legal obligations under international law against the backdrop of a significant blockade and worsening humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

### Background and legal context

At the end of 2024, the ICJ was requested to render an advisory opinion on Israel's obligations to ensure and facilitate humanitarian assistance to Palestinians. This was particularly in relation to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This request followed a decision by Israel in January 2025 to cut off its ties with UNRWA,

## Hezbollah chief proposes roadmap to rescue Lebanon from its dilemmas

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Ahead of Lebanon's municipal elections, Hezbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Naim Qassem's striking speech on Monday evening carried many political and social messages.

The speech outlined the next phase for Lebanon, outlining three priorities he believed would form the cornerstone of the country's stability and renaissance: halting the aggression against Lebanon, reconstructing the damages caused by the Israeli bombardments, and setting the stage for economic development.

Sheikh Qassem insisted that Lebanon's stability begins with ending the aggression, considering its continuation a constant threat to every attempt at Lebanon's revival.

Sheikh Qassem noted that the Resistance has fully adhered to the November ceasefire agreement, while the Israeli enemy has continued its attacks.

## Truman aircraft carrier flees Yemeni missiles in Red Sea

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – A U.S. Navy fighter jet was lost in the Red Sea following a heavy assault on an American aircraft carrier by Yemeni forces.

F/A-18E Super Hornet plunged into the Red Sea after sliding off the aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman during an evasive maneuver in a desperate attempt to dodge incoming Yemeni missile fire.

According to CNN, a U.S. official said the Truman made a sudden, sharp turn to evade incoming fire, which caused the jet to slide off the deck and into the sea.

Navy officials stated that the F/A-18 was being towed through the hangar bay when the crew lost control causing the jet to fall overboard.

"The aircraft and tow tractor were lost overboard," the U.S. Navy said in a statement. "Sailors towing the aircraft acted quickly to move clear before it fell. An investigation is underway."

Another U.S. official told CNN that the jet has since sunk. Other reports suggest the fighter jet slipped when Yemeni fire forced the aircraft carrier to make a "hard turn".

## Israel's 'delusional' threats will not derail Iran-U.S. talks, says parliament speaker

TEHRAN – Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has dismissed recent Israeli rhetoric as "delusions" meant to influence ongoing indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the United States, warning that any act of aggression against Iran would set the region ablaze.

Qalibaf made the remarks during an open parliamentary session on Tuesday, two days after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for the complete dismantlement of Iran's nuclear infrastructure and claimed that the "only good deal" would be one modeled on the deal that Libya agreed to in 2003.

"The criminal Zionist prime minister has once again turned to empty threats in a desperate attempt to avoid political collapse," he said. "He is a pathetic figure who changes his flight paths daily out of fear of arrest—one of the most reviled criminals of our time."

"The regime has achieved none of its declared goals since the war began. Its only legacy is bombing schools and hospitals, and it is now at its most insecure state ever," he said, adding that Israel's domestic and international crises have driven it to hollow displays of bravado. ► Page 2

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan map out new avenues for economic co-op

TEHRAN – Iran and Kyrgyzstan held the 14th meeting of their Joint Economic Committee in Tehran, aiming to expand bilateral ties across economic, scientific, cultural, and technical sectors.

Senior officials from both countries, including Iran's Agriculture Minister Gholamreza Nouri Ghezeli and Kyrgyz Economy and Commerce Minister Sydykov Bakyt Tolomushevich, attended the meeting, which emphasized boosting trade and investment cooperation.

At the opening ceremony, Nouri highlighted agriculture, industry, energy, and technology as key areas of collaboration. He expressed hope that the session would lay the groundwork for a significant rise in economic exchanges between the two nations.

Sydykov echoed these sentiments, noting the long-standing ties between Iran and Kyrgyzstan since 1992 and underscoring multilateral cooperation through organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union. ► Page 4

## Deputy tourism minister urges visiting tour operators to share Iran's clean image

TEHRAN – Iran's Deputy Tourism Minister, Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, has called on international tour operators to mirror a clear image of Iran to the world, highlighting the country's hospitality, safety, and cultural richness.

Speaking at a business-to-business (B2B) event held at Parsian Esteghlal Hotel in Tehran on Tuesday, Mohseni-Bandpey welcomed more than 100 tour operators from 33 countries who have come to explore Iranian attractions and connect with local counterparts.

"Tourism is a bridge for peace and mutual understanding among nations," he said. "Tour operators can play a key role in conveying the real Iran – a country filled with beauty, safety, and warm hospitality." ► Page 6

## TMoCA hosting "Picasso in Tehran" analytical sessions

TEHRAN-A series of analytical sessions for the exhibition "Picasso in Tehran" is being held at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA).

The second session in this series of analytical events will take place under the theme of "Picasso and the Iranians," on Wednesday, April 30, at 5 p.m. in the auditorium of the TMoCA, ISNA reported.

The session will feature art critic and gallerist Shahrouz Nazari, researcher and faculty member at the Tehran University of Arts Mohammadreza Moridi as well as the artist and the session's moderator Neda Tavallae.

Every Wednesday until the end of the "Picasso in Tehran" exhibition, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art will host the series of expert sessions with an analytical approach, featuring artists and art experts. ► Page 8



## INOTEX 2025 kicks off in Tehran

TEHRAN – The 14th International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2025) opened at Tehran's Pardis Technology Park on Tuesday and will run for four days.

This edition of the exhibition will feature more than 500 innovative companies from Iran and other countries. It includes sections such as "INOTEX Pitch" (startup competition), "Main Stage" (inspirational speeches), specialized sessions, mentoring sessions, and an exhibition of technological products.

In addition to introducing the latest technologies in areas such as artificial intelligence, renewable energies, medical technology, and the Internet of Things, various educational workshops will also be held for enthusiasts and business owners. ► Page 7



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Prospects of Tehran-Baku relations

Hamshahri discussed the meeting of the presidents of Iran and Azerbaijan in Baku in an interview with Mehdi Khorsand, an expert on Eurasian issues.

He said: Today, we are witnessing a foreign interventionist actor in the name of the Zionist regime in the relations between Tehran and Baku. However, the issue of ethnicity could be a factor in reconciliation between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan. Religious commonalities can pave the way for broader cooperation. The existence of ethnic and religious commonalities has caused Iran to adopt a tolerant approach to some of Baku's unconstructive behaviors.

Tehran's approach towards Baku should stay on this path. We must accept that bilateral relations are currently at a low level and we must move towards multiplying the level of economic and trade exchanges, especially by utilizing border capacities.

Moreover, by completing the North-South Corridor, transit cooperation between the two sides can be increased in the areas of cargo and passenger traffic. By increasing economic cooperation in various sectors, common concerns can be minimized and the destructive role of interventionist actors can be prevented.

## Donya-e-Eqtesad: Deterrence through diplomacy

Donya-e-Eqtesad devoted its editorial to the strategic dimensions of the Islamic Republic of Iran's decision to begin negotiations with the United States and wrote: In the security environment of the Middle East, being watchful of threats is a key element in deterrence. The rapid implementation of Operations True Promise I and II enhanced the credibility of the Islamic Republic of Iran's deterrence in the strategic memory of the region.

The Islamic Republic of Iran showed that, with the logic of deterrence and with the goal of peace and stability, it does not hesitate to carry out military operations and, after adjusting the conditions for dialogue, it takes firm and decisive steps on the diplomatic path. By conducting military operations last year, demonstrating military preparedness, holding regional diplomatic meetings, and clearly explaining principled policies regarding the appropriate commitment to regional and international peace, the Islamic Republic of Iran has proven the credibility of its messages and paved the way for reaching an agreement (on its nuclear program).

## Foreign military presence threatens Persian Gulf security: IRGC Navy chief



TEHRAN – The Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy, Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, has warned that any insecurity in the strategic Strait of Hormuz would have far-reaching international economic consequences.

He noted that the presence of foreign powers in the Persian Gulf undermines regional stability. Speaking on the occasion of National Persian Gulf Day, Tangsiri expressed condolences following the recent explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port. He emphasized the historical importance of the date, which marks the end of 117 years of Portuguese occupation in the Persian Gulf on April 30 (10th of Ordibehesht in the Iranian calendar).

“The Persian Gulf is vital not only to Iran but to the global economy,” Tangsiri said, citing Iran's 1,735 kilometers of direct coastline and 5,800 kilometers when including islands. “The

## Javan: We will powerfully neutralize the illusion of sabotage in negotiations

In an analysis, Javan addressed Netanyahu's ridiculous rhetoric and said: Amid the positions on the prospect of indirect nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States, Netanyahu claimed that Tel Aviv would only agree to an agreement that would eliminate Iran's capacity to enrich uranium. Netanyahu's impudence is remarkable as he wants to dictate to President Trump what he can or cannot do in his diplomacy with Iran. Netanyahu speaks against the negotiations in a situation in which U.S. President Donald Trump himself openly or implicitly expresses optimism about the negotiations. Esmail Baghaei, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, says the Zionist regime's officials are trying to make such statements with two goals: one, to cast a shadow over the genocide taking place in occupied Palestine, and second, to destroy any diplomatic process in the region. They certainly know better than anyone that any adventurism and wrong action against Iran will be met with a crushing response.

## Etemad: Constructive relations with the northern neighbor

Relations between Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan are multifaceted as they include historical, political, economic, and trade dimensions. In the political arena, cooperation and tensions have always been a part of Iran-Azerbaijan relations. On one hand, both countries share common interests in maintaining regional stability and combating separatism, but on the other, geopolitical rivalries have made their interactions complicated. Constructive interactions, before creating problems in economic, commercial, and technological interests, can enhance the multiple dimensions of the two countries' interests and enhance the geopolitical and geoeconomic security of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus. In these new conditions, this useful factor should be given special attention from a professional and technical point of view by the policymakers of the two countries, because the great powers and regional rivals can, as in the past, cause serious disturbances in the relations between the two countries. Specifically, the failure to complete the multiple diplomatic relations between Tehran and Baku will be a factor that creates anarchy in the South Caucasus, and this is a desirable factor for the West and Iran's rivals in the South Caucasus.

deepest waters and most navigable routes lie on the Iranian side.”

He noted that the region's strategic significance predates the discovery of oil and gas, referencing Portuguese control of the area from 1508 to 1622. “Even back then, the Persian Gulf was a source of geopolitical power,” he said.

On the economic front, Tangsiri highlighted that the Persian Gulf accounts for 40% of regional gas exports and 62% of oil shipments, making it one of the most critical energy corridors in the world.

Security-wise, he stated that Iran has consistently extended messages of peace to neighboring states, calling for cooperation and regional self-reliance. “We ensure the safe passage of over 80 vessels daily through the Strait of Hormuz. This is a responsibility we take seriously.”

Tangsiri warned that instability in the Strait could disrupt the global economy and accused foreign powers of using the region to justify arms sales and military presence. “Peace, security, and brotherhood are our priorities,” he said. “Those who travel thousands of miles to station forces here are not acting in the region's best interests.”

He concluded by asserting Iran's central role in Persian Gulf security due to its extensive coastline, numerous islands, and deep-water access. “We are the natural guardians of this waterway. Foreign interference only threatens the peace we seek to maintain.”

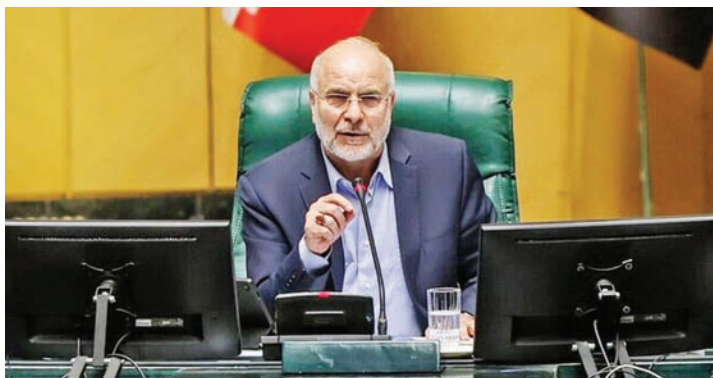
## Israel's ‘delusional’ threats will not derail Iran-U.S. talks, says parliament speaker

From page 1 ► He warned that Israel's continued provocations, even verbal, are dangerous: “Even the slightest act of aggression against Iran would be like igniting a barrel of gunpowder, triggering an explosion across the region.”

Qalibaf emphasized that Iran does not take such rhetoric seriously but is fully prepared to respond if needed.

Reaffirming Iran's position, he declared: “Any attack on our nation will target all U.S. bases in the region, and regional governments hosting them will bear the cost of Israel's adventurism.”

Qalibaf stressed that Iran's military capabilities are not limited. “Our hand is fully open



to deploy our offensive power at any scale. We have both the knowledge and the will,” he said.

He also urged the government to focus on strengthening the country from within.

“The best way to advance negotiations that serve Iran's

national interests is to rely on domestic capacities and build stronger international partnerships to discourage foreign coercion,” he noted.

He called on the government to expedite two key initiatives: full implementation of electronic ration coupons and energy-sav-

ing measures, saying these would directly benefit the public.

In an X post on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Netanyahu is trying to dictate the U.S. policy in negotiations.

The top diplomat also emphasized that Iran is “strong and confident enough” to “thwart any attempt by malicious external actors to sabotage its foreign policy or dictate its course.”

Iran and the U.S. have held three rounds of indirect talks, mediated by Oman, on Tehran's nuclear program and the termination of U.S. sanctions.

The two sides are also expected to hold a fourth round of the discussions.

## Death without mourning: How global media trivialize Iranian suffering

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – The explosion that claimed the lives of at least 70 people and left over a thousand injured at the Shahid Rajaei port in southern Iran has been a national tragedy of monumental proportions.

Occurring near the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz, a key corridor for global energy transport, the incident has not only shaken Iranian society in humanitarian terms but has once again revealed the mechanisms through which the legitimacy of suffering is constructed within the international media space.

Just hours after the explosion, major international media outlets and certain Western commentators began to speculate about the causes of the incident, in some cases with ironic or condescending insinuations.

In the face of similar tragedies in other parts of the world, the approach would have been very different: a sober coverage, focused on the human dimension, accompanied by diplomatic gestures and institutional solidarity.

In the Iranian case, however, what prevails is what the theorist Jasbir Puar has described as a “necropolitical desire,” in which the lives of certain bodies – the non-Western, racialized, geopolitically adversarial – are represented as less worthy of mourning, as a tolerable, even predictable loss.

This differential treatment is not accidental. It is inscribed within a colonial framework of representation in which the Iranian body, like the Palestinian or Iraqi body, is conceptualized not only as expendable but also as suspicious.

The victims at Shahid Rajaei port were not discursively constructed as citizens or workers, but as extensions of an “enemy” state entity, in whose distress there seems to be a hint of poetic justice.

The irony of certain analysts—some linked to military think tanks or outlets like Iran International—regarding the tragedy can be understood, following Puar, as part of a “training in death” logic: a form of violence that does not exclusively manifest in the physical act of killing, but in the way some bodies are allowed to die without mourning, memory, or recognition.

In this sense, the Western institutional silence regarding the tragedy contrasts with the swift response from Iranian society: artists, academics, athletes, and ordinary citizens expressed their solidarity with the victims, rebuilding a social bond in the face of global discursive decomposition.

In this context, it is also im-

portant to consider the geopolitical dimension of the catastrophe.

Iran is subjected to a prolonged campaign of economic pressure, covert industrial sabotage, and diplomatic isolation.

The idea that this explosion could be part of a strategy of destabilization has not been dismissed by various voices inside and outside the country, though conclusive evidence is still lacking.

But even without direct evidence, what is important is to observe how the very suspicion itself forms part of a discourse system where Iran appears as permanently guilty, even when it suffers.

The Shahid Rajaei port is, moreover, a strategic enclave, not only for Iran but for international trade as a whole.

Its proximity to the Strait of Hormuz makes it a symbolic and logistical target of primary importance.

In this sense, the incident affects not only the local population but the regional infrastructure as a whole.

However, the dominant interpretive frameworks continue to reduce Iranian pain to an appendix of the conflict, to a peripheral data point in a geopolitics that rarely grants centrality to the daily lives of the people who endure it.

The omission—whether conscious or not—of empathy also has an internal effect.

The opposition voices who, from exile or foreign media, openly rejoiced at the tragedy not only demonstrated an alarming ethical indifference but also helped reinforce a narrative in which the country's well-being is secondary to their own political project. In some cases, such as in monarchical television channels or certain platforms funded by foreign powers, the explosion was treated with sarcasm or instrumentalized as proof of the supposed structural instability of the Iranian state.

One of those voices that ventured to “make humor” of the tragedy was the current Middle East editor for The Economist, Greg Carlstrom, who posted the following comment on X: “Looks like the people responsible for the Beirut port have found a new job.”

Carlstrom was referring to the tragedy that occurred at the Beirut port on August 4, 2020, which destroyed large areas of the Lebanese capital, killing over 220 people and injuring at least 6,500 more.

It was one of the most devastating tragedies in recent Lebanese history.

However, Carlstrom's use of



this event as “humor” in relation to the explosion at Shahid Rajaei port in Iran reflects not only a lack of sensitivity but also the prevalence of a stance that dehumanizes victims when they come from politically or geographically considered “enemy” contexts.

Carlstrom's comment, dismissive and dehumanizing, reflects an attitude that, rather than recognizing human suffering, opts to trivialize it, marking a clear distinction between lives deemed “worthy” of compassion and those seen as expendable or, worse yet, as part of the geopolitical game.

These types of comments not only perpetuate racial and political bias but also normalize indifference to tragedies occurring outside the Western framework.

Instead of promoting a discourse of solidarity and humanity, dehumanization is favored, where the suffering of some is presented as inevitable, even just, when it comes from those considered enemies or actors not aligned with dominant global interests.

Greg Carlstrom's comment is not satirical, nor is it even humorous.

Or perhaps it is what could be called “hegemonic humor,” a form of humor that does not seek to dismantle power structures, but to perpetuate them.

This type of humor is exercised from above to below, laughing at adversarial bodies, which are presented as objects of mockery rather than empathy.

What Carlstrom fails to recognize, or deliberately ignores, is that in this type of “humor” lies a deeply rooted colonial vision: the idea that non-white bodies, the bodies of the Other, have no right to even death.

This dehumanization is so insidious that they are not even granted the dignity of mourning or recognition, as they are politically constructed as disposable bodies, bodies that do not deserve either pity or memory.

Thus, Carlstrom's comment not only trivializes the tragedy but also reinforces a global power structure in which the suffering of peoples from the Global

South is dismissed, treated as incidental or even inevitable, without any value whatsoever.

What is at stake in these types of comments is, ultimately, the capacity to recognize the humanity of peoples suffering under dominant geopolitical structures.

The silence of the international community, the disdain for the tragedy in Iran, and the dehumanization inherent in the comments from figures like Carlstrom are all intertwined in a broader pattern of indifference toward the lives of those outside the Western framework.

In this sense, the tragedy at Shahid Rajaei port should be seen not only as a local catastrophe but as a manifestation of the broader global power dynamics that shape the lives, sufferings, and deaths of millions of people in the non-Western world.

Iranian suffering, like that of other peoples in the Global South, continues to be the object of a double moral standard: one moral standard that grants value and dignity to the lives of Westerners and another that, in the case of racialized peoples and those geopolitically outside the dominant global interests, views death and suffering as predictable, even necessary.

The tragedy at Shahid Rajaei port is not only an irreparable pain for the victims and their families but also a reminder of the deep structural injustices that continue to define international relations, where the humanity of certain bodies remains a subordinated issue to political and geostrategic interests.

The silence of many international media outlets, coupled with the dismissive attitude of certain commentators, underscores how global politics continues to be a space where the life and death of racialized bodies are treated with indifference, if not contempt.

In this sense, the tragedy in Iran and the comments that have accompanied this event invite us to question the logics of representation and the power structures that continue to dehumanize peoples outside the global center.



# Why is Africa important to Iran?

*Hundreds of African traders, officials convene in Tehran and Esfahan following the Iran-Africa Summit*

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – It's rare to find two regions with a completely unblemished history of ties. Most have experienced friction, and negative perceptions of foreign countries are common all around the world. When it comes to Iran and Africa, however, centuries of interaction have, for the most part, been marked by an absence of any major hostility.

This has created a remarkably positive dynamic between Tehran and African capitals, a dynamic with considerable potential that both sides are eager to unlock, as demonstrated by the 3rd the Third Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference held in Iran last week.

For several days, over 700 traders and officials from 38 African countries have immersed themselves in Iranian commerce and culture in Tehran and the industrial hub of Esfahan. Alongside the Iran-Africa summit, the delegates are participating in the Iran Expo, the country's largest trade event, with a packed schedule of specialized meetings, panels, and high-level engagements.

Iran invested almost a year in planning the summit, a foreign ministry source told the Tehran Times. The source said Iran's meticulous and dedicated planning for the event reflects the high priority it places on its ties with Africa.

The last major official interaction



between Iran and Africa happened in 2023, when the late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi embarked on a small tour of Africa, meeting with leaders in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. The president's sudden passing in 2024 and the unprecedented Israeli aggression in the region – still ongoing to some extent – stymied more direct engagements in the months following the tour.

While Tehran's heightened focus on relations with Africa has only been palpable in recent years, when it decided it should pour more efforts into strengthening ties with friendly and like-minded countries, Iranian leaders have always had positive feelings towards Africans, especially since the Islamic Revolution took place in 1979. Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, was an avid supporter of anti-colonial and liberation movements in Africa. He also paid special attention to the

Muslim population on the continent, and believed the young religious African people must be able to foster deeper connections with fellow Muslims in West Asia.

Imam Khomeini's successor, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has also spoken fondly of Africans in several of his speeches. For him, too, the African people's history of fight against oppression is respectable and inspiring, and the rising prominence of the region attractive.

Javad Dehghan Haghighi, director of Africa headquarters at Iran's foreign Ministry, says there are several more reasons why Iran attaches significance to ties with African countries in 2025.

"The relationship between Iran and Africa has been one of mutual respect," he said during an interview with the Tehran Times. "Both Iranians and Africans have positive perceptions of each other. This is not the

same for many countries. The West's legacy in Africa, for instance, will always be marred by colonialism and exploitation."

The official explained that Iran can share its technological and industrial know-how with Africa. It can also personally take charge of projects in different fields. What Africa can give Iran is also plenty. "One important area where Iran and Africa can cooperate is agriculture. Many people think the world's youngest continent is dry. But huge parts of it actually see significant rainfall and have extremely fertile soil." Iran itself has been grappling with droughts for several years.

Africa's vast mineral resources and large consumer market are also attractive to Iran, Dehghan added.

The Tehran Times understands Iran is preparing to host more African delegations for next year's summit.

## Iran's first VP condemns Western 'Iranophobia' and 'Afrophobia' as barriers to Africa ties



*Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref speaking at the Third Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference in Tehran on April 29, 2025*

TEHRAN – Iran's Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref sharply condemned Western countries for perpetuating "Iranophobia" and "Afrophobia," adding that these narratives are designed to undermine Tehran's efforts to forge stronger ties with African nations.

Speaking at the Third Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference on Monday, Aref explained that such narratives not only distort Iran's global image but also impede the development of mutually beneficial partnerships.

"Western countries, driven by their own interests, propagate Iranophobia through baseless claims and fabrications to paint an unreal picture of our nation," he declared during a high-level meeting with African delegates in Tehran.

He further criticized the U.S. and European powers for exploiting Africa's resources while treating the

continent as "a backyard that must remain under their control," a practice he described as both unethical and dehumanizing.

Aref emphasized that Africa's rise as a pivotal player in global development is directly aligned with Iran's commitment to fostering balanced and equitable relations.

He called for the removal of bureaucratic and legal barriers that hinder collaboration, urging African and Iranian officials to utilize bilateral commissions and specialized meetings to streamline joint initiatives.

Reflecting on centuries of shared history, he positioned the longstanding ties between Iran and Africa as a solid foundation for expanding cooperation in trade, technology, and politics.

Despite facing "unjust and illegal sanctions," Iran has achieved self-sufficiency in agriculture, in-

dustrial, and advanced technologies, enabling it to meet the needs of African partners "without ulterior motives."

Aref also denounced Western nations for "poaching Africa's brightest minds" to fuel their own technological advancements, while neglecting the continent's overall development.

He lauded previous Iran-Africa summits for producing "valuable agreements" but noted that many projects have yet to be implemented, urging concrete steps, including a proposed heads-of-state summit next year, to elevate these ties.

Reaffirming Iran's post-revolutionary commitment to Africa, he stressed that "political cooperation must pave the way for broader collaboration," framing the summit as a decisive move away from Western-dominated paradigms in favor of multipolar partnerships.

The Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation conference brought together over 700 delegates from 38 African nations in Tehran and Isfahan.

The event, featuring ministerial panels on petrochemicals, mining, agriculture, and healthcare, underscores Tehran's drive to diversify its economic alliances amid Western sanctions.

Delegates began their visit at Iran Expo—the nation's premier trade exhibition—and then toured more than 10 industrial complexes in Isfahan,

which showcased Iran's capabilities in heavy industry, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy.

These visits highlighted sectors where African nations seek affordable, scalable solutions, aligning with Agenda 2063 goals in infrastructure development and industrialization.

Iran has further leveraged its advanced technological expertise in oil and gas exploration—a sector critical to Africa's growth—to attract international partnerships.

For instance, countries such as Zimbabwe have expressed interest in collaborating with Iran to bolster their energy sectors, drawn by Tehran's cost-effective solutions and technical prowess.

Moreover, plans to launch a dedicated shipping line to African ports aim to streamline trade logistics and foster deeper integration between Iranian industries and African markets. Beyond economic initiatives, Iran's outreach embraces a comprehensive partnership model. Historical ties, such as its support for South Africa's liberation movements, coupled with recent security dialogues, reflect this holistic approach.

With bilateral trade still constituting only 3% of Iran's exports and 1% of its imports, the conference marks a pivotal step toward unlocking untapped potential, positioning Africa as a cornerstone of Tehran's global economic resilience.



*Palestinians returning to their homes after the January ceasefire agreement between Hamas and the Israeli regime, amid destruction in Gaza City, Gaza*

human rights system?"

He emphasized that the "encouraging silence" of international bodies like the United Nations toward Gaza and other global injustices has exposed their complicity.

"Human rights institutions, born after World War II to prevent

renewed conflict, have strayed far from their original mission," the Iranian official stated, citing their inaction during Iraq's chemical attacks on Iran in the 1980s and today's "inhumane sanctions" targeting Iranian civilians.

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

## 'Silence on Gaza exposes human rights hypocrisy,' Iran proposes Eastern alternative

TEHRAN – Iranian officials and international scholars convened at an International Human Rights Conference in Tehran on Tuesday, where Vice President for Strategic and Parliamentary Affairs Mohsen Esmaili delivered a scathing critique of Western-dominated human rights institutions, noting that they have enabled Israel's "genocidal crimes" in Gaza.

The event, attended by 40 foreign guests from 22 countries, highlighted Iran's call for a new human rights paradigm rooted in Eastern cultural and Islamic values.

Esmaili opened his remarks by condemning the ongoing Israe-

li assault on Gaza, where over 61,000 Palestinians, including 17,000 children, have been killed since October 2023.

Over 111,000 others remain injured, many without access to medical care due to Israel's blockade, as well as more than 14,000 missing and presumed dead.

"A mere glance at the atrocities in Gaza today provides the clearest evidence of the inefficiency of human rights rhetoric," Esmaili declared, adding, "The Zionist regime's crimes against the oppressed and defenseless people of Gaza compel every peace-loving individual to ask: What must we do with this failed

## Iran must develop infrastructure: Engin Firat

TEHRAN – Turkish-German football coach Engin Firat emphasizes that Iran needs to focus on developing its infrastructure, similar to what Saudi Arabia has begun to do.

Firat has extensive experience in Iranian football at both the national and club levels, having worked with teams like Saipa and Sepahan. He also served as an assistant to Ali Daei on Team Melli during the 2007/08.

**Tehran Times: You have an excellent understanding of Asian football. How would you describe the main differences between the Saudi Pro League and the Iranian Pro League?**

Engin Firat: The differences are clear. Saudi Arabia operates with substantial resources and international ambitions, while Iran builds its football on a foundation of tradition, strong local passion, and homegrown talent.

**Financially, how far apart are the two leagues?**

There's a significant gap. Saudi clubs can invest in world-class players and coaches, benefiting from strong sponsorships and excellent facilities. In contrast, Iranian clubs generally operate on much smaller budgets and focus more on developing local players than on signing big-name foreigners.

**How about stadiums and training facilities?**

Saudi Arabia has invested heavily in modern, comfortable stadiums equipped with the latest technology. While the atmosphere in Iranian stadiums is fantastic, many facilities are older and in need of renovation. Training environments in Saudi Arabia are currently much more professional.

**From a tactical point of view, what's the main difference?**

In Saudi Arabia, the playing style is more open and attacking, especially with the influence of high-level international players and coaches. Iranian teams, on the other hand, are extremely well organized, physically strong, and very tactical. They are often harder to break down.

**What about young player development?**

Iran naturally produces excellent local talents—players with good technique, mentality, and a strong will to succeed. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in youth academies and infrastructure to develop their next generation. Right now, Iran still has the edge in producing natural talent.

**Which league has a bigger international profile?**

At the moment, that's Saudi Arabia. I believe Saudi clubs can serve as role models for West Asian teams. The arrival of global stars and international marketing has increased their league's visibility worldwide. Iranian clubs have a strong reputation in Asia, but Saudi Arabia is making a larger impact on the global stage.

**Finally, if you had to summarize the situation in one sentence?**

Saudi Arabia is building one of the most ambitious football projects in the world, while Iran continues to cultivate passionate football with a strong local identity.

## Iran drawn with Japan in AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers 2026

TEHRAN – Iran are drawn with six-time champions Japan in the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers 2026.

The 33 hopefuls learned their opponents following the official draw at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Monday.

The teams were divided into seven groups of four teams and one group of five with the Qualifiers to be played on August 2-10.

The teams will be vying for 11 tickets to the Finals, to be hosted by Thailand on April 1-18 next year. The eight group winners and three best runners-up will advance.

Iran are pitted against six-time champions Japan, hosts Malaysia and Guam in Group F.

**DRAW RESULT**

**Group A:** DPR Korea, Nepal, Bhutan (H), Mongolia, Saudi Arabia

**Group B:** Vietnam (H), Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong,

China, Singapore,

**Group C:** Australia, Chinese Taipei, Palestine, Tajikistan (H)

**Group D:** Myanmar (H), India, Indonesia, Turkmenistan

**Group E:** China PR (H), Lebanon, Cambodia, Syria

**Group F:** Japan, Iran, Malaysia (H), Guam

**Group G:** Uzbekistan (H), Jordan, Northern Mariana Islands, Bahrain

**Group H:** Korea Republic, Bangladesh, Laos (H), Timor Leste

## Iran beach soccer team beat Italy

TEHRAN – Iran national beach soccer team defeated Italy 5-3 in a friendly match on Monday.

The match was held as part of preparation for the 2025 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup.

Mohammad Ali Mokhtari, Mehdi Shirmohammadi, Mehdi Mirjalili, Mohammad Ali Nazarzadeh and Mohammad Masoumizadeh scored for Iran in the match.

Team Melli are drawn in Group B along with Mauritania, two-time FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup champion Portugal, and Paraguay.

Hosts nation Seychelles will take on Belarus, Guatemala and Japan in Group A. Group C sees Spain, Senegal, Chile and Tahiti take to the sand, as Group D will see a rematch of the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2024 final, as Brazil and Italy will feature in the group alongside El Salvador and Oman.

The FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Seychelles 2025 kicks off on May 1, with the final taking place on May 11.

Ali Naderi's Iran will take on Mauritania in its opening match. The Persians will also meet Paraguay and Portugal on May 3 and 5, respectively.

## Send-off ceremony held for Iran's women's futsal team

TEHRAN — A send-off ceremony for the Iran's women's futsal team took place at the headquarters of the Iran National Football Camp on Tuesday in Tehran.

The team, known as Team Melli, are preparing to compete in the 2025 AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup, which will be held from May 6 to 17 in China.

Head of football federation Mehdi Taj attended the ceremony. Iran will begin their campaign on May 7 with a match against the Philippines in Group B. They will also face Hong Kong and Vietnam on May 9 and 11, respectively.

Iran have previously won the two editions of the tournament held in Malaysia (2015) and Thailand (2018).

## Esteghlal eye Mame Thiam: report

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football club have reportedly set its sight on signing Senegalese forward Mame Baba Thiam.

The 32-year-old striker currently play for Turkish football club Eyüpspor.

Thiam played for Esteghlal in 2018 and scored 12 goals for the team in 13 matches. Now, the Blues are reportedly going to hire the player for the next season in Iran Professional League.

Esteghlal currently sit 11th in Iran football league.

## Persepolis linked with Hadergjonaj

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club have been reportedly linked with Swiss right back Florent Hadergjonaj.

The 30-year-old player is a member of Turkish football team Alanyaspor at the moment.

Persepolis will part ways with Moroccan defender Ayoub El Amloud.

Born in Switzerland, Hadergjonaj previously represented his birthplace at youth and senior levels before switching to play for the Kosovo national team.



## Iran's March steel output rises 3.7% year-on-year: WSA



TEHRAN – Iran's crude steel production reached 3.3 million tons in March, marking a 3.7 percent year-on-year increase, according to the latest report by the World Steel Association. The rise coincided with a broader global uptick in steel output during the third month of 2025.

The association's monthly report, which analyzes global steel production trends, shows that worldwide crude steel output reached 166.1 million tons in March 2025—up 2.9 percent from March 2024. However, cumulative global production for the first quarter of 2025 fell slightly by 0.4 percent year-on-year to 468 million tons.

Despite the rebound in March, Iranian steelmakers saw their quarterly output drop by 12.8 percent compared to the same period in 2024, producing a total of 7.3 million tons in the first three months of this year. The March recovery helped break a consecutive decline recorded in January and February.

China, the world's largest steel producer, maintained its lead with 259.3 million tons in Q1, reflecting a modest 0.6 percent year-on-year rise. In March alone, China produced

92.8 million tons—up 4.6 percent from a year earlier—making it a key driver of the global surge.

Iran, along with Germany, registered the steepest quarterly declines in steel production among the top 10 global producers. Nonetheless, Iran retained its position as the world's 10th largest steelmaker.

The report highlights that Iran's January production fell by 24.1 percent year-on-year to 2.2 million tons, followed by a 21.8 percent drop in February. March's year-on-year gain trimmed the overall Q1 contraction to 12.8 percent.

In addition to Iran, Brazil and Japan also posted positive March figures. The year-on-year changes in output for Brazil, Iran, Japan, China, and India stood at 7, 4.6, 6.6, 3.7, and 0.2 percent, respectively.

India solidified its position as the second-largest producer, with a notable 7 percent rise in March output and a 6.8 percent increase over the quarter.

While China's steel output rose, the World Steel Association attributed the uptick to a recovery in new market demand despite ongoing weakness in the country's real estate sector. U.S. tariffs on Chinese steel exports in previous months had curbed production, but the latest growth suggests that China may have tapped into new export destinations—posing new challenges for Iranian exporters.

Among the world's top 10 steel producers, five countries recorded a decline in March output compared to the same month last year, according to data collected from 69 nations.

## Zimbabwe seeks Iranian support to establish tractor manufacturing plant

TEHRAN – Zimbabwe's Vice President Constantino Chiwenga has called on Iran to help establish a tractor manufacturing plant in his country, as part of growing economic ties between Tehran and Harare.

Chiwenga made the request during a joint meeting with Iranian Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare Ahmad Meydari, held on the sidelines of the 7th Iran Expo in Tehran, according to Iran's Ministry of Labor.

Meydari reiterated Iran's readiness to strengthen relations with Zimbabwe, particularly in line with the Iranian president's directive to expand ties with African nations. He said potential areas of cooperation include healthcare, industry, and mining.

The meeting reflects Tehran's renewed push to bolster economic diplomacy with Africa, amid efforts to diversify its international partnerships.

Trade between Iran and Africa is experiencing significant growth, with both sides actively pursuing new opportunities in key sectors such as energy, industry, and agriculture. The Iranian government has emphasized its commitment to enhancing commercial relations with African nations, leveraging strategic initiatives aimed at boosting trade volumes.

Speaking at the opening of the Third Iran-Africa Cooperation Summit in Tehran, Iran's Minister of Industry, Mining, and Trade Mohammad Atabak highlighted the vast potential for cooperation between Iran and Africa and announced plans to increase trade value by tenfold, aiming for a target of \$10 billion.

## Iran, Iraq reaffirm commitment to Shalamcheh-Basra railway

TEHRAN – Iran and Iraq have agreed to accelerate efforts to complete the long-delayed Shalamcheh-Basra railway and establish joint free trade zones and border markets, Iranian officials said following high-level talks in Tehran.

In a meeting between Seyed Rahmatollah Akrami, Iran's Acting Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance, and Hazem Majid Najjal-Khalidi, advisor to the Iraqi prime minister,

both sides stressed the importance of enhancing bilateral cooperation by implementing previously agreed projects.

According to Iran's Ministry of Economic Affairs, the two sides also agreed to follow up on issues such as the settlement of Iranian financial claims and the recognition of Iranian bank guarantees for exporters and investors operating in Iraq.

# Iran, Kyrgyzstan map out new avenues for economic co-op

From Page 1 ► **Iran eyes trade boost through Eurasian free trade agreement**

Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref met with Kyrgyz officials on the sidelines of the meeting, stating that Tehran is ready to expand cooperation in technical and engineering services and technology transfer. He pointed to the Eurasian Free Trade Agreement as a mechanism to deepen both bilateral and multilateral ties.

"The economies of our two countries complement each other, particularly in agriculture," Aref said, calling for greater involvement of the private sector in realizing trade potential. He also called for removing administrative hurdles and accelerating direct air links and visa facilitation.

Aref recalled his past visits to Kyrgyzstan and emphasized the shared cultural and historical heritage that supports closer ties. He said the current meeting of the committee could pave the way for a new era in bilateral economic cooperation.

**Agriculture, infrastructure highlighted as priority sectors**

During the closing session, Iran's agriculture minister said the committee coincided with the 7th Iran Export Capabilities Expo (EXPO 2025), providing a platform for business networking. He welcomed a memorandum of understanding signed during the meeting to establish a joint investment committee and called for continued efforts to finalize practical agreements.

The two sides reached consensus on joint fish farming, livestock feed production, and cooperation in plant and animal quarantine. They also discussed Kyrgyz investment in Iranian ports, particularly within the framework of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

Nouri emphasized the need to bring economic cooperation in line with political ties and said the cultural affinity between the two countries could be harnessed for expanded exchanges in energy, sports, and cultural sectors.

**Kyrgyz minister stresses need for stronger business links**

Kyrgyz Economy Minister Sydykov said his country had seen nine percent annual economic growth over the past three years, including a 13 percent rise in the first quarter of this year. He noted Iran's role in joint projects and said a more robust private-sector partnership could help realize



further gains.

Sydykov also extended condolences to Iran following a recent explosion at Shahid Rajaei port in Bandar Abbas, expressing solidarity with the Iranian people.

**Trade up 31%; Iran, Kyrgyzstan sign investment MOU**

According to Iranian officials, bilateral trade between the two countries rose by 31 percent last year. The committee reviewed progress made in recent years and outlined new opportunities for cooperation in investment, knowledge sharing, and economic development.

One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the signing of a memorandum of understanding to form a joint investment committee. Iranian and Kyrgyz authorities also agreed to launch a bilateral investment office to streamline future ventures.

The two-day committee meeting was held on April 26 and 27 in Tehran, with discussions centered on trade facilitation, port access, export lists, joint infrastructure projects, and transit cooperation under the INSTC framework.

Meanwhile, Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) signed a €50 million credit line agreement with Kyrgyzstan on Sunday (April 27).

As reported, the credit line will be made available through a bank selected by the exporter, enabling Iranian exporters of technical and engineering services to finance their projects in Kyrgyzstan.

The agreement was signed by Mehdi Ghazanfari, Chairman of the NDF Executive Board, and Bakyt Sydykov, Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Economy and Commerce.

**Potential doubling of the credit line**

On the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Ghazanfari announced the possibility of doubling the credit line to €100 million, depending on project performance.

He recalled that nearly two years ago, the two sides signed an initial memorandum of un-

derstanding in Bishkek, under which €50 million in financing was earmarked for buyers of Iranian technical and engineering services.

He added that Kyrgyz authorities were expected to identify low-risk, high-return projects and propose them for implementation by Iranian companies.

"This investment has two main benefits; on the one hand, it contributes to Kyrgyzstan's economic growth through the implementation of construction projects, and on the other hand, it activates the production chain in Iran, as Iranian contractors will be required to use Iranian goods and equipment", the official reiterated.

Ghazanfari said that during Sunday's meeting, the two sides agreed to re-establish a joint investment committee to oversee the projects.

Referring to the need for high quality projects, he added: "The quality of project implementation is very important for the National Development Fund. We are seeking to create a mechanism where real representatives of the Iranian private sector, who prioritize national interests, are present in the joint committee so that the interests of the two countries are properly protected."

Ghazanfari stated that the goal is to fully absorb the first 50 million euros by 2025, and if successful, the second 50 million euros will also be allocated, adding: "Exporting technical and engineering services will not only generate foreign currency for the country, but will also develop factories and create jobs."

In response to some concerns about investing the fund's resources abroad, the official said: "These foreign currency resources return to the country along with the profits, and this process not only does not harm domestic needs, but also strengthens domestic production by developing the export of technical and engineering services."

**This deal paves way for bilateral economic, technical co-op**

During the ceremony, Minister

Sydykov said: "Kyrgyzstan and Iran have always had strong relations, and this deal will pave the way for the development of bilateral economic and technical cooperation."

Emphasizing the importance of this deal, he said: "We in our team are adopting the best working methods to attract investment. The demand for infrastructure projects in Kyrgyzstan is very high, and this joint cooperation with Iran will open a new chapter in the economic relations of the two countries."

He emphasized the strong and expanding economic ties between the two countries, noting that current cooperation remains far below their potential. The minister said the new memorandum would bolster investment, highlighting Kyrgyzstan's steady economic growth over the past three years, controlled public debt, and an inflation rate between five and seven percent. He also pointed to ongoing economic reforms and currency stability in Kyrgyzstan.

The official thanked the NDF for organizing the meeting and announced that a follow-up session to sign an additional cooperation document would be held the next day. He noted that Kyrgyzstan already has successful infrastructure cooperation with the NDF and that development funds from countries like Russia are active in Kyrgyzstan at low interest rates. Project risks, he said, are managed under the supervision of a national committee.

Ghazanfari welcomed reports of Kyrgyzstan's strong economic growth, calling it a sign of effective policymaking, particularly in the economic sector.

He stressed the importance of informing Iranian technical and engineering companies about the business environment in Kyrgyzstan, where knowledge gaps persist among the Iranian private sector.

Regarding the terms of the memorandum, Ghazanfari explained that Iranian companies would submit their contracts to the NDF to access financing. The funds would be disbursed through Iranian banks directly to the contractors, meaning the NDF would not operate inside Kyrgyzstan; instead, Iranian private firms would enter the Kyrgyz market with NDF backing.

He concluded by stating that if Iranian contractors perform well in Kyrgyzstan, the credit line could be doubled, reaching a total of \$100 million.

## PBO head meets Turkmen president, officials on sidelines of ECO Forum

TEHRAN – Iran's Vice President and head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi, met with Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedov on Monday to discuss ways to deepen bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors.

Pourmohammadi, who is in Turkmenistan to attend the first Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Sustainable Development Forum, held talks with the Turkmen president in Arkadag, the host city of the two-day event.

According to Iran's government news service, the two sides exchanged views on expanding ties in political, economic, and cultural spheres, as well as strengthening trade relations.

Pourmohammadi also met with Turkmen Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov to explore avenues for enhanced political and economic collaboration.

In a separate meeting with Nookerguly Ataguliyev, Deputy Prime Minister for Trade and head of the Union of Industrialists and

Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, the Iranian official discussed strategies to boost economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

The ECO Sustainable Development Forum, held on April 27–28, aims to promote sustainable development indicators among member states. Senior ministers and top officials from ECO countries are participating in the forum.

Iran's high-level delegation to the event is being led by Pourmohammadi.

## ECO chief, Iran's budget organization head stress regional transit development

TEHRAN – The Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) met with Iran's Vice President to highlight Tehran's role in promoting sustainable development, particularly in regional transport among ECO member states.

According to a statement from ECO, Secretary-General Asad Majeed Khan held talks with Seyed

Hamid Pourmohammadi, Iran's Vice President and head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO), on the sidelines of the first ECO Sustainable Development Forum underway in Turkmenistan.

During the meeting, Khan praised Iran's consistent efforts to advance sustainable development, especially in transport and

communications sectors. Discussions focused on strategies to improve transport corridors and strengthen regional cooperation to address the challenges faced by landlocked countries, aiming to facilitate seamless movement of goods and services across borders.

Khan expressed appreciation for Iran's commitment to host the

13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, scheduled for June 1, 2025. He underscored the significance of the upcoming event in enhancing regional cooperation and improving transport connectivity among member states.

The ECO chief urged Iran to continue its leadership role in promoting regional connectivity and sustainable practices.



# Hezbollah chief proposes roadmap to rescue Lebanon from its dilemmas

From page 1 ► Calling for bolder action in international forums, he noted that the Lebanese state, despite the deployment of the army in the south of the Litani River, does not exert enough pressure on Israel.

Hezbollah secretary-general criticized the government's delay in rebuilding the areas destroyed by Israel, warning that this would exacerbate poverty and foster discrimination among citizens.

Sheikh Qassem explained that the Resistance has so far covered the shelter costs of tens of thousands whose homes have been destroyed, noting that the primary responsibility remains with the state.

In the political context, Sheikh Qassem reaffirmed Hezbollah's commitment to the state-building project, recalling that Hezbollah participated in the election of the



President of the Republic in coordination with its allies, based on its belief that the state is the sole guarantor of stability.

Besides, the secretary-general of Hezbollah underscored that building strong and just institutions requires a clear socio-economic plan that allays people's concerns and

opens the horizon of development to all Lebanese without exception or discrimination.

He described the upcoming municipal elections as a milestone for development and not political investment.

Sheikh Qassem further called

for electing honest and competent candidates capable of managing municipal affairs with transparency, noting the importance of strengthening the unity of villages and cities and setting aside differences in favor of joint action.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Qassem saluted the steadfastness of Gaza and Yemen, expressing his solidarity with the Iranian and Christian peoples in their tragedy.

Amid the major challenges facing West Asia and the larger world, Sheikh Naim's speech provides a clear roadmap for Lebanon's future, insisting that a country cannot thrive without national dignity, development without social justice, and a state without national cohesion.

Undoubtedly, the roadmap is more than necessary to rescue Lebanon from its internal and external crises.

## Israel on trial in ICJ for Gaza aid restrictions

From page 1 ► accusing the agency of being infiltrated by Hamas - a charge that UNRWA denied. Since March 2, 2025, Israel has imposed a near-total blockade on Gaza, stopping all food, fuel, and medical supplies, claiming that it was for security reasons and as a means to pressure Hamas to free hostages.

The blockade has led to a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The World Food Programme (WFP) has said that it has run out of food supplies in Gaza, exposing millions of Palestinians to starvation, and they are also not receiving crucial medical supplies. Humanitarian organizations, including Doctors Without Borders, term Gaza a "mass grave", warning that the aid block is putting lives of civilians at risk. The ICJ is intervening in the matter after previous judgments, including the January 2024 order, which directed Israel to "prevent genocide in Gaza with all means", and the June 2024 advisory opinion, which stated that Israeli control over Palestinian territories is illegal.

### Israel's boycott and international arguments

The hearings span five days, with representatives from 40

states and four international organizations, including major powers such as the U.S., China, France, Russia, and regional bodies like the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, presenting their arguments before a 15-judge panel. However, Israel has boycotted the oral proceedings, submitting only written statements and labeling the hearings a "circus" and "politicized spectacle" aimed at delegitimizing it. Israeli officials claim that UNRWA is "infested with Hamas terrorists" and accuse the UN of failing to root out militants from its ranks, citing intelligence claims that over 1,400 UNRWA employees in Gaza have militant ties—a figure unsubstantiated by independent evidence.

Palestinian representatives, notably Ammar Hijazi, head of the Palestinian mission to the Netherlands, have accused Israel of using humanitarian aid as a "weapon of war," deliberately starving and displacing Palestinians while obstructing aid organizations. Hijazi urged the ICJ to recognize the dire reality of "people starving" and the deliberate blockade that has left 2.3 million Gaza residents without essential supplies since March. The UN's legal counsel, Eli-



nor Hammarskjöld, emphasized Israel's obligations as an occupying power to allow and facilitate humanitarian aid and protect UN operations, warning that blocking UNRWA violates Palestinians' inalienable rights under international law.

This is part of a series of legal analyses of Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian territories. In a second case brought by South Africa, the ICJ has ordered provisional measures against Israel to allow the supply of essential services and humanitarian aid, invoking concerns of potential violations of the Genocide Convention.

Human Rights Watch has also said that Israel continues to block the entry of life-saving assistance to Gaza, contrary to the ICJ

directives. The agency noted that, although deliveries have slightly improved, deliveries remain inadequate to meet the overwhelming needs of the population.

### ICJ opinion and global aid policy

The ICJ's procedural opinion will be issued soon, and it will not be an in-law decision in a strict sense but will be very influential in international law and politics. It will include whether Israel's embargo and prohibition on UNRWA are an infringement of international humanitarian law, i.e. the Fourth Geneva Convention. Under this one, the humanitarian needs of the population under occupation are the responsibility of the government.

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

## Truman aircraft carrier flees Yemeni missiles in Red Sea



From page 1 ► Each F/A-18 Super Hornet costs more than \$60 million.

Earlier, Yemeni forces claimed responsibility for a military operation targeting the Harry S. Truman and its escort ships in the Red Sea.

The government in Sanaa described the strikes as a swift and direct retaliation for two

massacres carried out by the U.S. in Saada and the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

Brigadier General Yahya Saree, spokesperson for the Yemeni Armed Forces, stated the attack involved naval units, drones, and missile forces, which launched cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, and drones at the carrier.

Saree said the assault forced the Truman to retreat from its original position and move to the far northern area of the Red Sea.

He added that the operation was "in response to two massacres committed by the American enemy in Yemen, the first in the capital, Sanaa, and the second targeting a shelter housing African migrants in Saada Governorate, resulting in dozens of civilian casualties."

The Yemeni Armed Forces vowed to contin-

ue targeting the carrier and any hostile warships in both the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea until U.S. aggression against Yemen ends.

In solidarity with the Palestinian people and Gaza's resistance fighters, Yemeni drones also targeted a strategic Israeli site in the occupied Ashkelon area using a Yafa drone.

Saree affirmed that the Armed Forces will continue blocking Israeli navigation in the Red and Arabian seas and support Palestinians until the U.S.-backed genocidal war ends and the siege on Gaza is lifted.

Yemeni forces have repeatedly launched attacks on U.S. warships since America increased its military presence in the region to protect Israeli interests, which Ansarallah targets in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

## Mediation crucial to control hostilities between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan

By Salman Parviz

TEHRAN - After the deadly terrorist attack on April 22 in the disputed

Himalayan region of Pahalgam which killed 26 tourists were killed, Iran has offered to mediate between India and Pakistan to reduce regional tensions.

During a telephone conversation on Saturday evening with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed the need for dialogue.

The Iranian president also called Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and condemned the terror attack in India. Modi thanked

Pezeshkian for Iran's condolences, noting, "Your empathy is deeply valued, especially given Iran's own tragic experiences with terrorism."

A parallel push was also made by Saudi Arabia when on Friday Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan held separate calls with India's S. Jaishankar and Pakistan's Ishaq Dar to discuss the attack and its cross-border implications.

According to Reuters, China, a key player in the region, also said on Monday it hoped India and Pakistan will exercise restraint and welcomed all measures that will help cool down the situation.

Responsibility for the attack was allegedly claimed by the hith-

erto unknown The Resistant Front (TRF). India has blamed Pakistani elements for the attack while Islamabad has denied any involvement.

Pakistan has stated its willingness to cooperate with any investigation conducted by international inspectors.

The attack took place in a region only accessible by foot or horse.

India says it has identified two of the three suspected militants as Pakistani, although Islamabad has denied any role and called for a neutral probe.

The two countries have also exchanged small arms fire since the terrorist attack took place.

Pahalgam is a major pilgrimage route, known as Amarnath Yatra, which takes place every year and has been exposed to previous attacks.

New Delhi closed key border crossings and expelled military, naval and air advisers from the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi. India also suspended the Indus Water Treaty in force since 1960.

Indus Valley originates in Tibet, flowing through China and the Indian-controlled Kashmir before reaching Pakistan.

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

## Israel commits genocide in Gaza under world's 'watchful eye', South Africa tells ICJ

On Tuesday, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held its second day of hearings into Israel's humanitarian obligations to Palestinians, more than 50 days into Israel's total blockade on aid entering the Gaza Strip.

South Africa's representative Zane Dangor has told the ICJ that "under the world's watchful eye, Palestinians are being subjected to atrocity, crimes, persecution, apartheid and genocide" in Gaza.

## Saudi Arabia at ICJ: Israel turns Gaza Strip into a pile of rubble

Amid the ongoing Israeli military aggression on the besieged Gaza Strip and the blockade of humanitarian aid, Saudi Arabia renewed its strong condemnation of the Israeli atrocities and barbaric aggression on unarmed civilians, Saudi Gazette reported.

"Israel has turned the Gaza Strip into a pile of rubble," said Ambassador Mohamed Saud Alnasser, Saudi Arabia's representative to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in The Hague on Tuesday.

In a statement delivered before the ICJ, Ambassador Alnasser reaffirmed that nothing can justify Israel's blatant violations of international law in the Gaza Strip, the occupied West Bank, and East Jerusalem. "Less than a year ago, the court heard that Israel's policies and practices in the occupied territory, including its settlement practices, its continued occupation and its annexation of parts of that territory are flagrant violations of international law that must be brought to an end as a matter of urgency," said Alnasser. "Sadly, but predictably, Israel chose to ignore the court's ruling, showing it considered itself above the law," he said.

## UN rights chief demands action to stop Gaza 'catastrophe'

The UN high commissioner for human rights has called on countries to halt a "humanitarian catastrophe" in Gaza, where an Israeli blockade on aid is pushing the Palestinian territory towards a collapse of critical life-saving support.

"As the complete blockade of assistance essential for survival enters its ninth week, there must be concerted international efforts to stop this humanitarian catastrophe from reaching a new, unseen level," Volker Turk said in a statement. Supplies are dwindling, and the UN's World Food Programme said on Friday that it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks".

The UN rights office cautioned that Gaza bakeries had now stopped working because flour and fuel had run out while the remaining stocks of food were being rapidly depleted.

"Any use of starvation of the civilian pop-

ulation as a method of war constitutes a war crime, and so do all forms of collective punishment," Turk said.

## France uses 'terrorist propaganda' charge to silence Gaza criticism: French lawyer

French lawyer Rafik Chekkat says the charge of "terrorist propaganda" is being used in France to silence those who speak out about crimes committed in Gaza.

Chekkat is representing French political scientist Francois Burgat, who was detained on July 9 in Aix-en-Provence on charges of "terrorist propaganda". His arrest followed a complaint by the European Jewish Organization over social media posts he shared in January last year about Israel's attacks on Gaza.

The prosecutor's office is calling for Burgat to be given an eight-month suspended prison sentence and fined 4,000 euros (\$4,555).

Chekkat argued that Burgat's case is part of a broader pattern of cracking down on criticism of Israel's actions in Gaza. He said the law regarding "terrorist propaganda" was originally designed to combat armed organisations' online recruitment efforts but is now "being used to suppress dissenting voices on the issue of Palestine".

## Israel's security chief says he will resign after Netanyahu row

Ronen Bar, the director of Israel's Shin Bet internal security service, has said he will resign in less than two months, after weeks of tension with Benjamin Netanyahu, who has tried to fire him, bringing Israel to the brink of a constitutional crisis.

"After 35 years of service, in order to allow an orderly process for appointing a permanent successor and for professional handover, I will end my role on 15 June 2025," Bar told a Shin Bet memorial event on Monday.

The battle between Netanyahu and Bar intensified after the supreme court blocked a decision by the cabinet to dismiss Bar from his post - the first Shin Bet head to be fired.

## Kremlin rebuffs Zelensky's -30day ceasefire proposal

The Kremlin on Tuesday dismissed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's call for a 30-day ceasefire, saying "nuances" raised earlier by Russia's Vladimir Putin remain unresolved, Moscow Times reported.

Zelensky criticized Putin's unilateral announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire from May 8 to May 10 as "manipulation" and called for an immediate, monthlong truce instead.

"It's difficult to agree to such a long-term truce without answers to the questions raised by Putin," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.



Food is running out in Gaza due to Israel's blockade on all aid [Hatem Khaled/Reuters]



## Direct flights to be launched between Urmia and Istanbul

TEHRAN - A new direct flight route between Urumia, the capital of Iran's West Azarbaijan province, and Istanbul is set to be launched within days.

Mohammadali Naelqaramaleki, the director-general of West Azarbaijan Airports, announced on Tuesday that the Urmia-Istanbul route will be operated by Caspian Airlines, with the inaugural flight scheduled for May 4 (Ordibehesht 14 on the Iranian calendar).

Under the announced schedule, flights will operate twice weekly—on Sundays and Wednesdays. The inbound flight will arrive at Urmia's Shahid Bakeri International Airport at 4:30 p.m. local time and depart for Istanbul at 6:00 p.m. on the same day.

In addition to the new international route, Naelqaramaleki also confirmed an increase in domestic flights between Urmia and Tehran. Beginning May 4, flights between Urmia and Tehran's Mehrabad Airport will also run every Sunday and Wednesday.

The Tehran-bound flights will arrive in Ur-



mia at 5:00 p.m. and depart at 5:45 p.m., according to the official.

West Azarbaijan province, situated in the northwest of the country, is bordered by Turkey, Iraq (Erbil and Sulaymaniyah Governorates) and Azerbaijan's Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, as well as the Iranian provinces of East Azarbaijan, Zanjan, and Kordestan. It is separated from Armenia by Turkey's short border with the Azerbaijan Republic. The province covers an area of 39,487 km2, or 43,660 km2 including Lake Urmia.

## Grave stone inscription pertaining to Sassanid era identified in Fars province

TEHRAN - A historical grave stone inscription has been identified in the city of Abadeh, Fars province, Abolhassan Atabaki, a researcher said.

Atabaki, who holds a PhD in History, has decoded the language of this inscription in close collaboration with the tour guides Babak Parsa-Jam and Arash Namiranian.

He told ISNA that the preliminary studies indicate that the inscription had been hidden in a small cave.

Accordingly, the grave stone, which contains the order of making a grave, had been hidden from visitors purposely. It is difficult to have access to it, he added.

Atabaki explained that the grave stone pertains to a rock grave or stone mass burial.

He added that the documentation of the newly identified inscription, which is in Pahlavi script and pertains to the late Sassanid era, has been given to the Fars Cultural Heritage Department's expert for a possible registration on the National Heritage List.

The full reading of this inscription will be published in an article in the country's scientific journals soon.

The writing of this inscription shows that its date predates the Pahlavi inscriptions of



*Caption: The writing of this inscription shows that its date predates the Pahlavi inscriptions of Kalat Bahman or Qaleh Gabari in this area.*

Kalat Bahman or Qaleh Gabari in this area.

Babak Parsa-Jam, the tour guide, said this Pahlavi inscription is part of a new identity of Abadeh city. It can change the history of the region, he added.

Abadeh is the entrance gate of Fars province from the north. Archeological excavations indicated that the history of settlement in current Abadeh site dates back to the First Millennium BC. The region has been a place of settlement for caravans and trade route between the north and south of Iran.

## Kapar Judaki Village hosts storks

TEHRAN - Kapar Judaki Village in Borujerd, Lorestan province, has been hosting storks for nearly half a century.

Nature and mankind have a long coexistence in this village, Khabar Online reported.

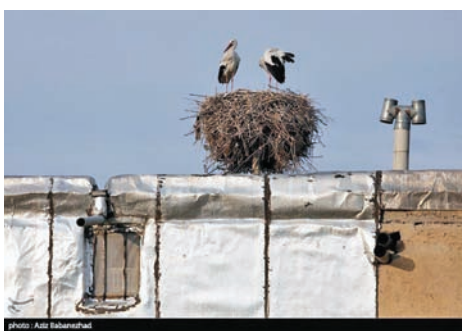
Kapar Jukadi Village has become a safe habitat for storks.

Populated over 400, the village is located 10 kilometers off Borujerd on the way of Borujerd-Khorramabad Road.

The village is only 1,400 meters off Bisheh Dalan Wetland.

Kapar Judaki people protect the migratory birds.

With more than 18 main sites, including wetlands, reservoirs, ponds, and rivers, Lorestan province serves as one of the most important, richest, and safest migratory habitats in the country.



Thanks to its favorable climatic conditions, Lorestan province is home to 250 species of birds, 30 percent of the country's biodiversity.

According to the studies and conducted census over the past years, around 70 to 80 species of migratory birds have been so far observed in the wetlands of the province To ensure the safety of these birds, water resources are consistently monitored.

# Deputy tourism minister urges visiting tour operators to share Iran's clean image

From Page 1 ► He noted that tourism fosters direct connections between people and cultures, a goal that innovative and creative tourism initiatives should aim to achieve.

Mohseni-Bandpey emphasized Iran's strong standing in global tourism potential, stating that the country ranks among the top 10 nations worldwide in terms of natural and cultural resources. Iran boasts 28 tangible and 26 intangible cultural heritages registered with UNESCO, making it an increasingly attractive destination for international visitors.

Last year, Iran welcomed 7.4 million foreign tourists, and the government aims to double that figure to 15 million over the next four years under its Seventh National Development Plan, the official said.

"To support this goal, more than 2,500 tourism projects are



*Iran's Deputy Tourism Minister, Anoushirvan Mohseni-Bandpey, delivers an address to a gathering of over 100 international tour operators at a Tehran hotel, April 29, 2025.*

underway nationwide, including the construction of 500 new hotels."

He expressed hope that the

"current B2B meetings" between international and Iranian tour operators would result in bilateral agreements and stronger tourism ties.

## Subsidence threats prompt new study on UNESCO-listed square in Isfahan

TEHRAN - Authorities in Isfahan plan to conduct a comprehensive study to assess the extent of land subsidence at the UNESCO-listed Naqsh-e Jahan Square, amid growing concerns that the phenomenon is threatening some of Iran's most treasured architectural heritage.

According to Amir Karamzadeh, Director General of Isfahan's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department, 20-billion-rial (approximately \$22,000) research contract has been signed to monitor and evaluate the rate of subsidence at the historic site.

The square, one of the largest and most important in the world, is home to several 17th-century Safavid-era monuments, including the Imam Mosque (originally named the Shah Mosque), Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and the Ali Qapu Palace.

"This study aims to propose solutions to mitigate the impacts of land subsidence on Naqsh-e Jahan and surrounding monuments," Karamzadeh told IRNA on Monday.

He noted that the issue extends beyond Naqsh-e Jahan, affecting other historic structures

in the city. Regular monitoring of subsidence effects is also being carried out on major heritage landmarks such as the Jameh Abbasi Mosque, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and Ali Qapu Palace.

Recent data from Iran's Geological Survey indicates that Isfahan is experiencing land subsidence at an [alarming] average rate of 15 to 18 centimeters per year, IRNA reported.

Experts attribute the crisis primarily to the over-extraction of groundwater in the Borkhar Plain — a consequence of chronic water shortages and insufficient river flow from the famed Zayandehrud river.

Karamzadeh confirmed that special sessions have been held with national authorities, including the Minister of Cultural Heritage, the head of Iran's Planning and Budget Organization, and the National Disaster Management Organization, to emphasize the urgency of the potential threat and request dedicated funding.

"A national approach is essential," Karamzadeh stated, adding that funding proposals are currently under review by both the provincial crisis management office and the Ministry of Cultur-



*A view of the UNESCO-registered Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan, central Iran.*

al Heritage to address damage caused by subsidence.

Environmental experts continue to warn that excessive groundwater withdrawal and the blocking of water from flowing across the historical Zayandehrud river may pose threats and escalating risk to Isfahan.

The ancient city of Isfahan, which serves as the provincial capital as well, is situated at the crossroads of Iran's north-south and east-west trade routes. It reached its zenith between the 9th and 18th centuries. During the Safavid era, it became Iran's capital under Shah Abbas the

Great.

Isfahan was once a crossroads of international trade and diplomacy in Iran and now it is one of Iran's top tourist destinations for good reasons. It is filled with many architectural wonders, such as unmatched Islamic buildings, bazaars, museums, Persian gardens, and tree-lined boulevards. It's a city for walking, getting lost in its mazing bazaars, dozing in beautiful gardens, and meeting people.

The Persian proverb "Isfahan nesf-e-jahan ast" (Isfahan is half the world) reflects the city's cultural and historical prominence.

## Isfahan's cities witness rise in tourist arrivals

TEHRAN - Deputy head of Isfahan province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department said tourist stay in the city of Isfahan decreased by 20 percent this year, while the other provincial cities witnessed a double or three-fold rise in the arrival of tourists.

Alireza Habibi told IRNA that Lenjan, Khor and Kashan were the cities that hosted the highest number of tourists.

He attributed this success to promotional measures, introduction of attractions of provincial cities and holding festivals and Nowruzgah (cultural events designed to revive and promote the ancient traditions of Iran's diverse ethnic groups) across the province.

Information dissemination centers and stands to introduce geographical attractions were launched across various provincial cities, he said, adding that they played a great role in inviting tourists to less-known regions of the province.

"We used the online services and technologies to gather data of tourists for the first time this



year," he added. This led to have more precise information regarding the residence of tourists in the province, he said.

He continued that only 10 percent of residences across the province pertained to official accommodation sites. While 40 percent of tourists stayed in informal centers and six percent resided in emergency accommodations, he added.

He put the total entrance of tourists to Isfahan province at 2.9 million on basis of the number of SIM Cards.

Also 1.9 million cars were registered in Isfahan province during Nowruz holidays, he added.

Habibi put the total stays at Isfahan province at 2.9 million during Nowruz holidays.

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## Nepal to restrict Everest permits to climbers who have scaled another +7,000 meter Nepali mountain

Nepal will issue Everest permits only to climbers with experience of scaling at least one of the Himalayan nation's 7,000-meter (22,965 ft) peaks, according to the draft of a new law aimed at reducing overcrowding and improving safety.

Nepal, which is heavily reliant on climbing, trekking and tourism for foreign exchange, has faced criticism for permitting too many climbers, including inexperienced ones, to try to ascend the 8,849-meter (29,032 ft) peak.

This often results in long queues of climbers in the "Death Zone," an area below the summit with insufficient natural oxygen for survival.

Overcrowding has been blamed for the high number of deaths on the mountain. At least 12 climbers died, and another five went missing on Everest's slopes in 2023 when Nepal issued 478 permits. Eight climbers died last year.

Under the proposed law, an Everest permit would be issued only after a climber provides evidence of having climbed at least one

7,000-meter mountain in Nepal.

The sardar, or the head of local staff, and the mountain guide accompanying climbers must also be Nepali citizens.

The draft law has been registered at the National Assembly, the upper house of parliament, where the ruling alliance holds a majority required to pass the bill.

International expedition operators have urged Nepal to allow any 7,000-meter peak,

not just those in the Himalayan nation, for the Everest permit.

"That wouldn't make any sense. And I would also add mountains that are close to 7,000 meters to that list and that are widely used as preparation, like Ama Dablam, Aconcagua, Denali and others," said Lukas Furtenbach of Austria-based expedition organizer Furtenbach Adventures.

Furtenbach, currently leading an expedition on Everest, said mountain guides from other

countries must also be allowed to work on Everest, as there are not enough qualified Nepali mountain guides.

"It is important that mountain guides have a qualification like IFMGA (International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations), no matter what nationality they are. We do also welcome Nepali IFMGA guides to work in the Alps in Europe," he told Reuters.

(Source: CNN)



# Islamic nations to approve first joint document on AI: science minister

TEHRAN – The first multilateral document on artificial intelligence (AI) among Islamic countries is scheduled to be approved during the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform, which will be held in Tehran from May 18 to 20, Science, Research, and Technology Minister, Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, has said.

The platform aims to utilize the capacity of the leading Islamic countries in the field of science and technology to address major scientific, technological, and higher education challenges faced by Muslim nations and societies, ISNA quoted Simaei-Sarraf as saying.

The official made the remarks on Sunday in a meeting with ambassadors and representatives of the member states of the OIC-15.

The theme of the 2nd Ministerial meeting focuses on AI, and is tilted ‘Innovation in Science and Technology through using AI: A strategy for excellence, a bright future for the Islamic World,’ the official added.

“Our duty, as representatives and ambassadors of the Islamic countries responsible for pursuing science and technology diplomacy, is to achieve convergence and alignment in strategies, policies, national science programs, as well as technology and innovation programs at transna-



tional levels by using the opportunities that international organizations, forums, and meetings such as the OIC-15 open up,” Simaei-Sarraf noted.

The document is scheduled to be approved during the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC15-) Dialogue Platform.

Organizing national innovation system (NIS), developing

programs that can increase the share of science, technology, and education in economic growth as well as gross domestic products (GDP), as well as boosting public participation in various science and technology, are all among the science and technology policies being implemented in Islamic countries, the official stressed.

The first Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in May 2023.

**Iran’s ranking among Islamic countries**

According to the Web of Science, Iran (with 17,458 documents) ranks first in neural network technology as well as multi-agent systems (with 351 documents) among Islamic countries.

The country secures a ranking of 6th in neural network technology and 12th in multi-agent systems globally.

Iran ranks second in artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and robotics among Islamic nations.

The report has included data in a twenty-year period from 2004 to 2023.

According to the report, with 606 publications on three-dimensional printing over a span of ten years, Iran ranks second among Islamic nations.

The report has included data from 2014 to 2023.

The country’s global ranking in 3D printing publications is 22, IRNA reported.

According to report released by the Web of Science in January, three-dimensional printing and additive manufacturing publications in Iran experienced notable growth from 2010 to 2023.

University of Tehran (with 83 documents), Amirkabir University of Technology (with 83 documents), Tarbiat Modarres University (with 40 documents), and Tehran University of Medical Sciences (with 37 documents) had the highest number of publications.

Iran, with 65 documents, ranks first among Islamic countries in four-dimensional (4D) printing and ranks 11 globally.

## UN ESCAP adopts Iran’s proposal on protecting Zagros forests

TEHRAN –With the approval of Iran’s proposal on protecting Zagros forests at the eighty-first annual session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the issue is placed on the agenda of the Asia-Pacific Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM).

Zagros forests are among the most important natural resources of Iran, as they constitute 40 percent of the country’s forests, and play an important role in the production of a large part of the country’s freshwater.

The eighty-first session of ESCAP was held from April 21 to 25 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, guided by the theme ‘Regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development in Asia and the Pacific’.

The country actively participated in the meeting, negotiating mainly on transportation, environment, disaster resilience, energy, poverty reduction, and development financing. They also submitted the report of the governing council along with the APDIM strategic plan.

The 81st session served as an opportunity to foster inclusive urban growth and promote steadfast action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels.

It further underscores the critical role of regional cooperation in overcoming the challenges faced by cities and identifies shared approaches to localizing global goals, enhancing multilevel climate action, and fostering in-

clusive urban growth. It also emphasized the importance of data, digital transformation, and innovative financing in supporting sustainable urban development and ensuring cities are equipped to navigate the complex future ahead.

**Intl. conference on Zagros forests to be held**

The Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization is planning to hold an international conference on Zagros forests in the current Iranian calendar year, which started on March 21.

Highlighting that promoting natural resources diplomacy is one of the priorities of the organization, Rasoul Ashrafipour, an official with the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, said “We will particularly invite countries with a Mediterranean climate, in which vegetation is similar to that of Zagros and have taken effective measures toward its preservation, as well as countries with arid and semi-arid climates,” ISNA reported.

Referring to climate change’s adverse effects on natural resources, Ashrafipour said that Meteorological data show that the increase in temperature in the country has been higher than the global average, which has a significant impact on climate change.

Therefore, the Natural Resources and Watershed Management Organization, in cooperation with the Metrological Organization, will prepare some new documents in the next six months, the official noted.

## Iran ready to boost co-op with Africa in health sector

TEHRAN – Ali Jafarian, the senior advisor to the health minister, has announced the country’s readiness to enhance ties with African countries in the field of health.

Addressing a specialized panel at the third Iran-Africa Cooperation Summit in Tehran on Sunday, the official welcomed the development of cooperation with African countries, and elaborated on the economic potential of the health sector, including the health system, treatment, medical education, research and technology, pharmaceutical and medical equipment, development of health infrastructure, transfusion medicine, and other related fields, health ministry website reported.

The official also invited African experts to foster ties with Iranian universities of medical sciences, scientific and research centers, medical institutions, medical and pharmaceutical manufacturing companies, as well as knowledge-based firms.

Trade between Iran and Africa is experiencing significant growth, with both sides actively pursuing new opportunities in key sectors such as energy, industry, health, and agriculture. The Iranian government has emphasized its commitment to enhancing commercial relations with African nations, leveraging strategic initiatives aimed at boosting trade volumes.

**Iran’s health system ‘a role model’ in world**

In January, President Masoud Pezeshkian called the country’s health system a role mod-

el in the region and even the world, thanks to its unique, particularly primary healthcare services.

The official made the remarks on January 2nd in a letter addressing a national seminar held in Mashhad to honor healthcare staff, including nursing aids.

Lauding the substantial progress made in the health sector, the president said these remarkable achievements are the results of health workers’ ceaseless efforts, such as providing vaccination and prenatal care for pregnant mothers, controlling infectious diseases, promoting health education, sharing knowledge, and training new generations of health staff nationwide.

The notable increase in life expectancy, reduction in infant mortality rate, control of infectious diseases, and reduction in complications from chronic diseases are all due to health workers’ dedication and commitment.

Pezeshkian also commended the ongoing health programs such as universal health coverage and family physician programs, which have made comprehensive and continuous healthcare accessible to millions.

The president went on to say that the administration recognizes the untiring efforts and services of all health workers, and is determined to elevate the country’s health system to its rightful and deserving position, utilizing health workers’ valuable capacities and potentials.

## Over 135 earthquakes hit Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 137 earthquakes were recorded across the country from April 19 to 25, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 124 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 12 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4; and one earthquake with a magnitude between 4 and 5; have occurred in the country, IRNA reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4 on the Richter scale, which occurred on April 21 in Kangavar, Kermanshah province.

Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi, with 23, experienced the highest number of earthquakes, followed by Semnan with 15, and Fars with 12 earthquakes.

During the same period, no earthquakes were recorded in Ardabil, Alborz, Ilam, Zanjan, Qom, Qazvin, and Gilan provinces.

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’s earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.

## INOTEX 2025 kicks off in Tehran

TEHRAN – The 14th International Innovation and Technology Exhibition opened at Tehran’s Pardis Technology Park on Tuesday and will run for four days.

This edition of the exhibition will feature more than 500 innovative companies from Iran and other countries. It includes sections such as “INOTEX Pitch” (startup competition), “Main Stage” (inspirational speeches), specialized sessions, mentoring sessions, and an exhibition of technological products.

In addition to introducing the latest technologies in areas such as artificial intelligence, renewable energies, medical technology, and the Internet of Things, various educational workshops will also be held for enthusiasts and business owners.

Focusing on science, technology, and innovation ecosystems, the exhibition gathers businesspeople, technologists, industrialists, and researchers. This event aims to introduce products, facilitate partnerships, and provide various insights on the latest global competitive prices, quality standards, developments, scientific findings, and economic-technological ideas.

To this end, INOTEX has been organized



since 2012 to serve the following objectives:

- Investment: Connecting investors to the participants.
- Partnership: Facilitating collaboration between technology companies and startups.
- Networking: Facilitating communication and interaction between different components of the startup ecosystem.

In addition to introducing state-of-the-art technologies to large and medium industries, INOTEX tries to connect customers of technology products to their respective manufacturers and provide investment opportunities

to investors in technology and startups.

Currently, INOTEX is recognized as the most significant innovation and technology event in Iran and has been welcomed by many audiences in recent years.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Technology and Innovation Report 2025, Iran is ranked among upper middle-income countries, ranking 72 among 166 countries.

The country’s ranking has improved by one position compared to 2022.

UNCTAD has categorized 17 types of technologies as frontier technologies including artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, big data, 5G, 3D printing, robotics, drone technology, solar photovoltaic, concentrated solar power, biofuels, biogas and biomass, wind energy, green hydrogen, electric vehicles, nanotechnology and gene editing.

The Technology and Innovation Report 2025: Inclusive Artificial Intelligence for Development surveys the complex artificial intelligence landscape, aiming to help decision-makers design science, technology, and innovation policies that foster inclusive technological progress.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## \$22m earmarked for equipping technical-vocational schools

A total budget of 900 billion rials (nearly \$22 million) has been requested to develop and equip technical-vocational high schools across the country in the current Iranian calendar year (ending March 20, 2019), Mohsen Hosseini, an official with the Ministry of Education has announced.

Describing some of the programs and priorities of the technical and vocational training organization affiliated to the Ministry, Hosseini pointed to improvement of technical and vocational training plans as the Ministry’s main priority.

Competency-based education and assessment is among the most important programs of the technical and vocational organization, which must be well implemented in all career and technical education high school, he added, Mehr reported on Wednesday.

Given that the number of years students are supposed to spend in career and technical education high schools has increased this year from two to three years, we need to assess the education quality provided in previous recent years and plan more appropriate methods for the next few years, he further explained.

## تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان های کشور

مدیرکل فنی و حرفه‌ای دفتر متوسطه وزارت آموزش و پرورش از تخصیص ۹۰ میلیارد تومان اعتبار برای تجهیز هنرستان‌های کشور در سال جاری خبر داد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر، سیدمحسن حسینی مقدم در دیدار با مدیران هنرستان‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای شهر شیراز و برخی از مناطق استان فارس با تشریح برخی از برنامه‌ها و اولویت‌های وزارت آموزش و پرورش در بخش فنی و حرفه‌ای، گفت: کیفیت‌بخشی برنامه‌های دفتر فنی و حرفه‌ای اولویت اصلی آموزش و پرورش است.

حسینی‌مقدم اظهار کرد: آموزش و ارزشیابی مبتنی بر شایستگی از مهمترین برنامه‌هایی است که در آموزش‌های فنی و حرفه‌ای دنبال می‌شود و باید این شیوه آموزش به خوبی مراقبت شده و در همه هنرستان‌ها اجرا شود. او به برخی از تغییرات ایجاد شده در نظام جدید آموزشی اشاره کرد و بیان کرد: با توجه به استقرار پایه دوازدهم و سه ساله شدن هنرستان‌ها در سال جاری، باید کیفیت آموزشی ارائه شده در سال‌های اخیر را مورد واکاوی قرار داده و برای سال‌های بعد برنامه‌ریزی‌های بهتری داشته باشیم.



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APRIL 30, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*Be not like the hypocrite who, when he talks, tells lies; when he gives a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he proves dishonest.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:02    Evening: 19:09    Dawn: 3:39 (tomorrow)    Sunrise: 5:12 (tomorrow)

Andisheh cultural center to review “Conclave”

TEHRAN– “Conclave”, a 2024 movie directed by German director and screenwriter Edward Berger, will go on screen at the Andisheh Cultural Center in Tehran on Tuesday evening.

A review session will be held with the presence of the film critics Hamidreza Ranjbarzadeh and Mohsen Soleimani Fakher after the screening.

“Conclave” is a political thriller film, which is based on the 2016 novel by Robert Harris and features a stellar cast including Ralph Fiennes, Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow, Sergio Castellitto, and Isabella Rossellini. The narrative unfolds in the aftermath of a pope’s untimely death, as Cardinal Thomas Lawrence (Fiennes) orchestrates a conclave to elect a successor while uncovering dark secrets and scandals surrounding the main candidates.

Four leading candidates emerge: Aldo Bellini, a progressive from the U.S.; Joshua Adeyemi, a social conservative from Nigeria; Joseph Tremblay, a mainstream conservative from Canada; and Goffredo Tedesco, an Italian traditionalist. Tensions rise when Archbishop Janusz Wozniak reveals that the late pope had called for Tremblay’s resignation prior to his passing, a claim Tremblay vehemently denies. Meanwhile, Bellini seeks to thwart Tedesco’s ambition at any cost.

As the conclave commences, Lawrence delivers a homily prompting reflection and uncertainty, which some misinterpret as an indication of his own papal aspirations. The first round of voting fails to yield a two-thirds majority, with Adeyemi leading but struggling against church politics. The plot thickens as Monsignor Raymond O’Malley, Lawrence’s assistant, discovers that the late

pope had arranged for Cardinal-designate Vincent Benitez to travel for a medical appointment, only for it to be canceled.

Confrontations and revelations unfold as Adeyemi faces accusations linked to his past with Sister Shanumi, a nun from Nigeria. These whispers compromise his candidacy, leading Bellini to reluctantly endorse Tremblay. As Lawrence digs deeper, he uncovers troubling evidence of vote tampering orchestrated by Tremblay, heightening the stakes.

Tensions escalate further on the third day of voting when an explosion disrupts the conclave. Amidst chaos, the candidates grapple with an ongoing series of suicide bombings in Europe. Tedesco’s inflammatory rhetoric calls for violence, while Benitez advocates for peace. Ultimately, in a surprising turn of events, Benitez is elected pope, adopting the name “Innocent.” Yet, revelations about his true identity—having been born with confusing biological traits—propel Lawrence on a journey of introspection as he grapples with the new papacy’s complexities and the intricate web of church politics he navigated.

Edward Berger is acclaimed for his films, including “Jack” (2014), “All My Loving” (2019), and “All Quiet on the Western Front” (2022), along with his English-language debut, “Conclave”. Berger has also directed notable TV series such as “Deutschland 83” (2015) and “Patrick Melrose” (2018).

For “All Quiet on the Western Front”, he won an Academy Award for Best International Film and received a nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay, along with three BAFTA Awards. His work on “Conclave” earned him a Golden Globe nomination for Best Director.

Cartoon of Day



Bandar Abbas  
Cartoonist: Taravat Niki from Iran

## 2 Iranian short animations to participate in Bulgarian festival

TEHRAN-Two short animations from Iran will take part in the 16th International Animation Film Festival Golden Kuker, in Sofia, from May 7 to 11.

“Bug” written and directed by Ali Masoumi and “The Alchemist’s Apprentice” by Erfan Parsapour are the Iranian works to be shown in the Bulgarian event, ILNA reported.

Produced by the Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC), “Bug” depicts a family of three that has recently moved in, and the little girl inspects the new home with curiosity, when a small cricket finds its way into their home as a surprise visitor. But with the father’s unexpected reaction, the child’s perspective begins to shift, turning a simple encounter into something far more unsettling.

A production of 2024, the six-minute animation examines the enduring influence of parents’ behaviors and responses on their children’s development, tracing the long-term effects of these interactions from early childhood to adulthood.

The technique used in creating the animation is the multi-plane camera. It involves stacking three to six layers of glass with overlapping surfaces, while the camera is positioned at the top to create depth and a sense of perspective. For character animation, replacement faces are used, with multiple face designs crafted in different

sizes to accommodate long shot, close-up, and medium shot. All materials are natural, including wood, fabric, and soil.

“The Alchemist’s Apprentice” is a 2D animated movie about a young alchemy apprentice who tries to fix his master’s creation discreetly.

In the short animation, seven minutes, the young apprentice to the alchemist must always seek permission before touching or using anything in the laboratory. However, when a tiny frog unexpectedly appears, the alchemist’s

prized work is suddenly at risk. The boy rushes to prevent any damage from occurring.

The short work is based on an animated series that depicts Shahrouz, a curious alchemist’s apprentice boy, who goes on strange adventures with his master, Hakim. On their journeys, they try to get the elixir of life. On the dangerous adventures ahead, there is one thing that saves them: Alchemy!

The International Animation Film Festival Golden Kuker ran for the first time in 2010 in Sofia. It is

organized by the Bulgarian Association of the Independent Artists and the NGO Cartoon Animators. The association aims at connecting animators, supporting their networking, and creating long lasting relationships within the cartoon industry.

The festival seeks to contribute to the development of Bulgarian art, help Bulgarian and foreign animators get in touch, and support young professionals and students. It attracts not only children but large audience from different generations.

## TMoCA hosting “Picasso in Tehran” analytical sessions

TEHRAN-A series of analytical sessions for the exhibition “Picasso in Tehran” is being held at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA).

The second session in this series of analytical events will take place under the theme of “Picasso and the Iranians,” on Wednesday, April 30, at 5 p.m. in the auditorium of the TMoCA, ISNA reported.

The session will feature art critic and galleryist Shahrouz Nazari, researcher and faculty member at the Tehran University of Arts Mohammadreza Moridi as well as the artist and the session’s moderator Neda Tavallae.

Every Wednesday until the end of the “Picasso in Tehran” exhibition, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art will host the series of expert sessions with an analytical approach, featuring artists and art experts. Admission is free for all interested individuals.

The exhibition “Picasso in Tehran” presents a narrative of Picasso’s life and the artistic periods he traversed. It features 66 works by the renowned Spanish painter and sculptor from the collection of the TMoCA. It will be open daily (except Mondays) until May 20.

Among these, 26 aquatint prints from the renowned series “La Tauromaquia” (The Art of Bullfighting)—which have never been exhibited in Iran before—will be a highlight.

This collection is one of his most celebrated works in the realm of printmaking, showcasing his deep fascination with Spanish culture, particularly the dramatic and ritualistic spectacle of bullfighting.

The series was inspired by José Delgado’s 18th-century book “La Tauromaquia o arte de torear” (Tauromachia, or The Art of Bullfighting), which detailed the history and techniques of bullfighting. José Delgado, known as Pepe Illo, was a famous matador, and his book became a significant reference in Spain’s bullfighting tradition. Picasso, who was passionate about bullfighting since childhood, visually reinterpreted these historical accounts through his unique artistic style.

Picasso employed the aquatint technique, a printmaking process that allows for rich tonal variations, giving the images a dramatic, almost painterly effect. The works are minimalist yet expressive, often featuring bold black-and-white contrasts that emphasize

movement, tension, and the raw energy of the bullfight.

Through swift, gestural lines and fluid compositions, Picasso captures the essence of the bullfight—the grace of the matador, the power of the bull, and the tension of the confrontation. His depictions are not merely literal illustrations but abstract and emotionally charged representations of the spectacle.

“La Tauromaquia” reflects Picasso’s lifelong fascination with bulls and bullfighting, themes that appear frequently in his work, from early sketches to his masterpiece “Guernica” (1937). The series is also seen as a tribute to Spain’s cultural heritage and the enduring myths of the bull as a symbol of strength, danger, and artistry.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) was a Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, and theater designer who spent most of his adult life in France. One of the most influential artists of the 20th century, he is known for co-founding the Cubist movement, the invention of constructed sculpture, the co-invention of collage, and the wide variety of styles that he helped develop and explore.

## Iranian director to restage “The Brothers Karamazov” in Tehran

TEHRAN- Iranian stage director Ashkan Khalilnejad plans to restage an adaptation of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s renowned novel “The Brothers Karamazov” at the Iran-shahr Theater Complex in Tehran on May 3.

The six-hour performance was previously staged in January. Due to specific performance conditions, the show will now run only on Saturdays for approximately one month.

Vahid Ajorlu, Majid Aqa Karimi, Milad Shajareh, Mehrdad Babai, Shakiba Bahramian, Sajjad Hamidian, and Tahereh Hazaveh are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be staged from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. (including intermission).

“The Brothers Karamazov” is an exploration of faith, morality, and human existence, revolving around the tumultuous lives of the Karamazov family. The novel begins with an introduction to Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, a neglectful and indulgent father whose two marriages produced three very different sons: Dmitri, Ivan, and Alyosha. Their complicated relationships with their father highlight past griev-

ances and differing ideologies.

The family gathers at a local monastery, hoping Elder Zosima can mediate a dispute over inheritance between Dmitri and Fyodor. However, Fyodor’s provocations destroy any chance of reconciliation, leading to greater animosity. Throughout the story, Elder Zosima’s attempts to console grieving individuals showcase Dostoevsky’s themes of suffering and compassion, echoing the author’s own experiences with loss.

As the narrative unfolds, the complexities of the love triangle involving Dmitri, Grushenka, and Fyodor come to the forefront. Dmitri’s volatile emotions culminate in an angry confrontation with his father, which exposes deep psychological wounds. The introduction of Smerdyakov, the illegitimate son with a complex background, adds further depth to the family dynamics and conflicts.

A subplot involving Alyosha and a sickly boy named Ilyusha reveals themes of childhood innocence and the cruelty of society. Alyosha’s compassionate actions illustrate his desire to bridge divides and foster connections among those

suffering around him.

The philosophical debates between Ivan and Alyosha set the stage for intense discussions about faith, reason, and human suffering. In a pivotal moment, Ivan presents the “Grand Inquisitor” parable, challenging the very foundation of faith and morality, which creates tension between the brothers.

Elder Zosima’s teachings about forgiveness and the interconnectedness of human actions lend a moral weight to the story, becoming particularly poignant following his death. The belief in the sanctity of holy men is shaken when Zosima’s body begins to decay, prompting questions about faith, doubt, and the essence of holiness.

As events escalate, Dmitri’s desperate pursuit of love and money leads him to violence against his father, resulting in accusations of murder. Despite Dmitri’s vehement denials, circumstantial evidence paints him as the likely perpetrator. The investigation lays bare his turbulent emotions and chaotic lifestyle while introducing the backdrop of broader existential questions.

The narrative also captures the

lives of younger characters, particularly Ilyusha and Kolya, who grapple with their own beliefs against the backdrop of societal challenges. Ivan’s mental deterioration culminates in a confrontation with Smerdyakov, revealing complicity in the family’s tragedy and deepening the novel’s exploration of guilt and responsibility.

The courtroom drama surrounding Dmitri’s trial serves as a sharp satire of societal views and legal proceedings. Katerina’s dramatic testimony and the emotional turmoil it provokes ultimately seal Dmitri’s fate, highlighting the pervasive themes of love, betrayal, and injustice.

In the concluding sections, hope emerges through plans for Dmitri’s escape and his reconciliation with Grushenka. Alyosha’s farewell to Ilyusha’s funeral embodies the novel’s themes of love, unity, and remembrance. He urges the youth to cherish their bonds and recalls the Christian promise of reunion. This final moment encapsulates Dostoevsky’s exploration of redemption, faith, and the enduring power of love in the face of suffering and moral complexity.