

Exclusive

Tehran Times' exclusive interview with Pezeshkian provides behind-the-scenes look at president's life

'I Feel Imprisoned but It's Enjoyable'

- I've always had a close relationship with the Leader
- We won't reach a deadlock if the talks reach a deadlock
- I start work every day at 7 AM, and sometimes I don't finish until late at night.
- I try to play soccer or go hiking once a week

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President Masoud Pezeshkian takes to the field in a spirited Labor Week soccer match at the National Soccer Center on April 25, 2025.

Israel has desperately resorted to war of starvation against Gaza

By our staff writer

TEHRAN - Failing to defeat the Palestinian fighters in the Gaza Strip, Israel has resorted to starving Palestinians to an unprecedented level to make the combatants feel pity for the people and stop resisting.

Israel was claiming that it had broken the back of the fighters in Gaza. But when they appeared in military uniforms before the cameras during an exchange of prisoners, Netanyahu and his team of butchers realized that dropping millions of tons of bombs on Gaza had been militarily an abject failure.

These fighters who are aligned to different political groups have one thing in common: Making those who have imprisoned the Gazans and stolen their lands pay the costs and feel humiliated.

Starving 2.4 million residents is one of the dirtiest wars that Israel has launched against the Palestinians, but this war of starvation has brought extreme shame to Israel. Even if fighters stop resisting now, they are the winners, as seeing the scenes of famine is heartrending.

Lebanon's Aoun hints he seeks to annul the 1969 Cairo Agreement

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT - The Lebanese Supreme Defense Council, headed by President Joseph Aoun, issued a shocking warning to the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) "against using Lebanon as an arena to violate Lebanese sovereignty and endanger Lebanon."

The warning was not preceded by an implicit warning, directly or through established communication channels between Palestinian factions and Lebanese political and security authorities, which makes its timing and purpose suspicious.

Besides, it coincided with a hostile media campaign led by the anti-Resistance team, which operates in favor of the U.S. spy den (embassy) against Hamas.

Washington, backed by Israel, is exerting unprecedented pressure on Lebanon to disarm the Palestinian camps in Lebanon—by force if necessary—and to take measures to contain any activity by Palestinian resistance factions in Lebanon, particularly Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Israel using Druze community as excuse to undermine Syria's sovereignty

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN - The Israeli occupation regime has launched its most extensive bombardment of Syria since the beginning of the current year.

Around 20 airstrikes were carried out by the Israeli regime, targeting areas in Damascus, its outskirts, Hama, Idlib, Latakia, and Daraa. The strikes hit warehouses and military centers.

Local sources indicated that the airstrikes targeted a Syrian battalion headquarters and the area surrounding the former Tishreen Military Hospital north of Damascus, along with military camps, installations, and storage sites in mountainous regions.

The attacks resulted in at least one civilian death and left several others injured.

Israeli media reported that some of the targets in Damascus had not previously been struck.

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Iran participating in Bogotá International Book Fair

TEHRAN-The Islamic Republic of Iran has participated in the 37th Bogotá International Book Fair (FILBO), which is underway in Colombia.

Iran is present at the Fair for the third consecutive year. Iran's pavilion, featuring children's books, novels, poetry by great Iranian poets, and Islamic books in Spanish, has been very well received by visitors to the fair, ISNA reported.

After one week since the fair began, the Holy Quran has attracted the most attention among all the titles presented at Iran's booth.

In addition to presenting various book titles to the audience, other programs have been planned at the Iran pavilion, including the unveiling of new books such as "Loving God," "Masnavi for Children" (a selection of Rumi's poems), and the novel "Eduardo Agnelli" as well as celebrations for Girls' Day. ► Page 8



Journalists continue to work in Gaza as media professionals around the world celebrate Press Freedom Day on May 3 in Gaza City on May 3, 2025.

Journalists in Gaza enduring darkest chapter in history

As the world observed World Press Freedom Day on May 3, journalists, holding banners, gathered for a demonstration in Khan Younis to draw attention to the journalists who lost their lives in the Israeli relentless attacks on Gaza. Palestinian journalists in Gaza are enduring one of the darkest chapters in press history. In the besieged enclave, cameras have become targets and words can cost lives as Israel's genocidal war rages on. What once was a mission to report the truth has become a daily risk of death. Since Oct. 7, 2023, at least 212 Palestinian journalists have been killed -- most while reporting in the field or in their homes during airstrikes -- according to official and local statistics. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights recently confirmed it is the highest number of journalist deaths recorded globally in a single conflict since 1992. Journalists describe their profession as not only endangered, but also as being "burned alive on air."

Araghchi defends Iran's right to 'possess full nuclear fuel cycle'

By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi took to social media on Friday to reaffirm Tehran's right to pursue a civilian nuclear program under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), directly countering recent U.S. demands for Iran to halt uranium enrichment.

The statement comes as indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States face delays, with tensions escalating over Washington's contradictory rhetoric and renewed sanctions threats.

In a post on X, Araghchi dismissed U.S. claims that Iran's enrichment activities violate international norms, writing: "Repeating falsehoods will not change basic facts. As a founding signatory to the NPT, Iran has every right to possess the full nuclear fuel cycle." ► Page 2

DOE develops data bank of over 5,000 species in Persian Gulf, Oman Sea

TEHRAN -The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has announced the provision of a data bank of more than 5,000 creatures in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, saying that it will serve as a regional and even international platform for the preservation of the biodiversity in these waters.

This includes efforts such as preparing an atlas of sensitive marine ecosystems and the identification of unknown coral reef habitats, such as the Shah Alam area on the maritime border with Qatar, which allows for effective and targeted intervention at a macro level, ILNA quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of Persian Gulf National Day, which is observed on April 29 every year. The day marks the anniversary of forcing out the Portuguese navy of the Strait of Hormuz in the Capture of Ormuz (1622).

The Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, with more than 4,900 kilometers of coastline in Iran, are home to one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. The DOE has implemented different measures to conserve the biodiversity of the marine ecosystems such as developing a data strategy and planning tool to implement scientific and data-driven decision making. ► Page 7

Russia needs to enhance cooperation with Iran in emerging technologies: presidential aide

TEHRAN -Russian Presidential Aide Andrei Fursenko has underscored the significance of promoting partnerships and collaborations with Iran in emerging technologies.

It is a fact that focusing on already established technologies will not be beneficial for the two countries. So, it is essential to put on the agenda the technologies that have not (fully) developed yet, which is a much more difficult task, IRNA quoted Fursenko as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with the head of the Organization for the Development of International Cooperation in Science and Technology, Hossein Roozbeh, and the head of Pardis Technology Park, Mehdi Safarinia, while attending Iran-Russia diplomacy meeting on Friday on the sidelines of the International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2025), which was held from April 29 to May 2, in Tehran. ► Page 7

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

What does Europe want from the negotiations?

Jam-e-Jam wrote about the United States' exclusion of Europeans from the nuclear negotiations: After the start of a new round of talks between Tehran and Washington on the Iran nuclear issue, one point that received intense attention was the exclusion of European parties from the negotiations. Since the start of the indirect talks between Iran and the United States, the European troika has felt that in many important global issues, the United States has sidelined them and that their international interests are not being taken into account. Therefore, during the negotiations, they tried to influence the negotiation process by expressing different opinions so that they could first secure their political and security considerations and then continue to insist on their position as the main players in shaping international mechanisms. According to Reuters, the European diplomats indicated that despite initial hesitation, the E3 decided it was in their interest to maintain dialogue with Iran and reaffirm their stance on a potential new nuclear agreement. (They took such a position after Iran said it is set to hold discussions with Britain, France, and Germany on Friday (May 2) in Rome, just ahead of a scheduled round of negotiations with the United States. However, the talks have been postponed without setting a specific date).

Siasat-e-Rooz: If talks are stopped, US will be responsible

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its editorial to a delay in the Iran-U.S. talks and said: The postponement of the indirect talks followed a demand from the United States. It seems that Trump is unpredictable in a way that he suddenly adopts a new position and announces a new decision. Given his personality, a stable and lasting result cannot be achieved. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution is well aware of the behavior of the Americans and that is why he has said clearly that the United States cannot be trusted. Many conflicts within the United States have caused serious disagreements about the Iran-U.S. talks. Of course, the role of the Zionist regime, especially as Netanyahu is working intensively to abort the talks, should be taken seriously. Given the "conditions" put forward by the United States for negotiations, if the negotiations are stopped, the United States will be the main culprit because the United States has shown similar behavior in previous negotiations (and finally it exited from the 2015 nuclear deal. Speaking to Fox News, Secretary of State and now National Security Advisor Marco Rubio stated

that in a deal with the United States, Iran will be allowed to maintain its nuclear energy program, but that it must agree to halt the enrichment of uranium, only importing enriched uranium needed for its reactors.)

Arman-e-Melli: Why does Trump impose oil sanctions on Iran during negotiations?

Arman-e-Melli examined Trump's dual behavior in an interview with political expert and former diplomat Sabah Zangeneh. He said: Deep changes are taking place in the United States regarding foreign policy. The announcement of oil sanctions against Iran shows that the U.S. President's behavioral contradiction is still at work. It is a continuation of maximum sanctions. It seems that some in the United States are also seeking such measures against Iran. Of course, it should be taken into account that these sanctions are primarily aimed at the buyers of the Iranian products, which mainly include China and some other countries. In other words, these sanctions do not just target Iran, which should be examined from several aspects. First, it is a multilateral move against Beijing that has been pursued by the United States for a long time. The second reason is that Trump is trying to monopolize the market for the United States, and Americans are trying to expand the domain of their business activities by eliminating Iranian products and making China dependent on the United States.

Donya-e-Eqtesad: Importance of Persian Gulf in international political economy

Donya-e-Eqtesad wrote about the importance of the Persian Gulf in the international economy. The paper said: The dependence of major powers on Persian Gulf energy riches has put the Persian Gulf at the center of developments. The Persian Gulf's strategic importance stems from its vast energy resources and its function as a critical transit hub for global energy markets. The evolving role of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar—has positioned them as influential players in international affairs. The regional leaders are shifting their approach from traditional neighborly relations to broader economic and diplomatic engagements. This includes mediation efforts between Iran and the U.S., as well as initiatives aimed at resolving regional conflicts through macro-economic projects. Strengthening cooperation between Iran and its southern Persian Gulf neighbors could pave the way for new economic and diplomatic frameworks.

Iran's nuclear dispute a political standoff, not a legal matter: Leader's aide

TEHRAN – Ali Larijani, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and member of Iran's Expediency Discernment Council, says the nature of Iran's nuclear dispute has turned entirely political, driven by global power dynamics rather than international law.

Speaking at a Saturday conference at Tehran's Shahed University, Larijani said: "Negotiation is neither inherently virtuous nor intrinsically negative. It's a tool—not a goal. If talks can resolve the nuclear issue and serve national interests, then they should proceed. If not, they shouldn't. Timing and conditions matter."

Larijani stressed that Iran's nuclear issue would have been resolved legally if it were merely a matter for the IAEA.

"It's not a legal issue anymore—it's become political," he said. "Why? Because global powers rely on coercion. Iran has accepted the NPT and complies with IAEA regulations, yet still faces pressure. That pressure stems from power politics, not legal shortcomings."

"U.S. sanctions aren't solely about the nuclear issue—they're broad and political," he added.

"The Iranian nation, with its deep-rooted civilization, does not bow to coercion. Treating us like countries with no historical backbone is futile. These negotiations may succeed or fail—it all depends on how fair and rational the global approach is."

"Many so-called international laws are built on power, not principle," Larijani said. "America is



using this moment to assert dominance—not just over Iran but over China too. What has China done to deserve this treatment?"

'Resistance movements are products of injustice'

Turning to regional conflicts, Larijani challenged the claim that Iran manufactures Resistance movements.

"When did the Yemeni Resistance begin? After Saudi Arabia's attacks. Did we create Hezbollah? No—it emerged when Israel occupied Beirut. The same is true in Iraq. We supported them—but didn't create them. Resistance is a reaction to occupation and injustice."

In Syria, he added, the West accuses Iran of fueling Resistance, "but when you occupy a country, resistance is the natural response."

Criticizing American narratives, Larijani said: "You've bombed Yemen 800 times, then blame Iran for the fallout. If you're committed to negotiations, talk to the Yemenis themselves."

Iran's Araghchi defends country's right to 'possess full nuclear fuel cycle'

From page 1 ► He emphasized that multiple NPT member states enrich uranium for civilian purposes without pursuing nuclear weapons, adding that "maximalist positioning and incendiary rhetoric achieve nothing except eroding the chances of success."

The Iranian top diplomat concluded his statement by striking a cautiously optimistic tone, asserting that "a credible and durable agreement is within reach" if the U.S. demonstrates "firm political will and a fair attitude."

The Foreign Minister's remarks served as a retort to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who, in a Fox News interview, insisted that any deal with Iran would demand that it "halt the enrichment of uranium" and instead import nuclear fuel.

Rubio, acting as both Secretary of State and interim National Security Advisor, claimed that Iran's domestic enrichment program poses proliferation risks—a contention that Tehran has consistently dismissed as being purely politically motivated.

Under the NPT, which Iran joined in 1970, non-nuclear-weapon states are permitted to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, including enrichment, under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) oversight.

Other NPT signatories—such as Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, and Brazil—also enrich uranium for civilian use without pursuing nuclear weapons.

Germany and the Netherlands operate facilities through the Urenco consortium, while Japan's Rokkasho plant and Brazil's Resende facility exemplify self-sufficient nuclear programs monitored by the IAEA.

Iran's enrichment activities, similarly conducted under IAEA safeguards, have reached advanced levels, with the country maintaining that its program is purely civilian.



Centrifuge machines at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility in central Iran, photographed in 2019

Mikhail Ulyanov, Russia's Permanent Representative to International Organizations in Vienna, endorsed Araghchi's position, writing: "Minister Araghchi is absolutely right. Under the NPT, States Parties don't only take some basic obligations, but also get some basic rights that can't be questioned."

Stalled talks and Washington's contradictions

The latest round of nuclear talks, mediated by Oman, was abruptly postponed on Thursday after three rounds of indirect negotiations.

While Omani officials cited "logistical reasons," some analysts attributed the delay to Washington's provocative sanctions, threats, and contradictory stances.

The U.S. State Department sanctioned seven entities tied to Iranian oil exports on April 30, followed by a social media post from President Donald Trump vowing to penalize any country purchasing Iranian oil.

Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned Trump's sanctions escalation, dismissing it as a recurrence

of "failed tactics" that undermine diplomatic efforts. The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to a "just and balanced" agreement while warning that U.S. sanctions and threats only "deepen distrust."

The Trump administration has sent mixed signals throughout the negotiations. Special envoy Steve Witkoff initially suggested allowing limited enrichment for civilian use, only to reverse course days later by demanding Iran "eliminate its nuclear enrichment and weaponization program"—a position Iranian analysts derided as a chaotic U-turn.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth escalated tensions with a social media warning to Iran over alleged support for Ansarallah, declaring: "You will pay the CONSEQUENCE at the time and place of our choosing."

Hegseth's remarks sparked widespread condemnation, with critics linking his stance to perceived job insecurity and demands for his dismissal, citing his removal

of numerous senior Pentagon officials and describing his leadership as chaotic.

Others connected his actions to U.S. setbacks against Yemeni Ansarallah. Republican Representative Thomas Massie countered, asserting that the post appeared to infringe on Congress's constitutional authority to declare war.

"The Secretary of Defense doesn't have the Constitutional authority to declare war on a sovereign country," he stated. "A planned military attack on Iran is an Act of War and requires a vote of Congress according to the U.S. Constitution."

The Trump administration's contradictory tactics have additionally faced scrutiny from foreign policy analysts. John Mearsheimer, a renowned American political scientist, condemned Hegseth's rhetoric in a recent interview as "immature," characterizing it as reflective of an administration "filled with amateur people who do bone-headed things."

Tehran condemns US war crimes in Yemen, warns about West Asia's 'deteriorating security'

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei issued a scathing condemnation of the United States' recent military strikes across Yemen, describing the attacks as "war crimes" and a "flagrant breach of international law."

In an official statement on Friday, Baqaei denounced the strikes as "a blatant violation of Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity" and noted that Washington has "systematically flouted the principles of the United Nations Charter."

In recent days, U.S. assaults have targeted residential areas and essential infrastructure across Yemen's provinces of Sana'a, Saada, and Al-Jawf. Adding to this pattern of aggression, as part of a broader campaign, U.S. forces have executed roughly 800 strikes in Yemen since mid-March, killing hundreds of civilians.

On Monday, one airstrike hit a detention center in Sa'ada—housing African migrants—killing nearly 70 inmates and injuring over 50.

Furthermore, the U.S. military attacked a quarry located northwest of Sana'a, reportedly relying on inaccurate amateur open-source intelligence (OSINT) sourced from social media.

The operation killed eight civilians, among them women and children, and demolished three civilian homes.

Further elaborating on his statement, the Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson asserted that the deliberate targeting of civilian zones and vital infrastructure "constitutes both war crimes and crimes against humanity," urging the international community to hold the U.S. accountable.

Baqaei further criticized the United Nations and its Security Council for their "inaction in the face of the U.S.'s lawless aggression and the massacre of innocent civilians."

He warned that continued U.S. military intervention in Yemen, coupled with the "ongoing genocide in Gaza and the West Bank"



Rescue crews survey the damage following a U.S. military bombing attack on a detention center sheltering African migrants in Saada, Yemen, on April 28, 2025.

and the "Zionist regime's terrorist acts against Lebanon," is fueling heightened instability across West Asia.

The spokesman called on regional nations to unite against "warmongering and lawlessness" perpetrated by the U.S. and the Israeli regime, stressing that "all countries in the region share a collective responsibility to confront these destabilizing forces."

He reiterated Tehran's stance that Western and Israeli actions are directly undermining peace efforts and exacerbating humanitarian crises in conflict zones.

The statement concluded with a demand for an immediate halt to U.S. military operations in Yemen and urged international bodies to "fulfill their legal and moral obligations" by addressing Washington's alleged violations.

Iran, Cambodia reaffirm commitment to strengthen strategic ties

TEHRAN – In a move to strengthen economic ties, Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol welcomed Iranian investment in the country's infrastructure and development projects during a meeting with Iran's ambassador to Cambodia.

Ali Akbar Nazari, who also serves as Iran's ambassador to Vietnam, met with Chanthol in his capacity as First Vice Chairman of the Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC). Nazari conveyed Iran's readiness to contribute to Cambodia's development by offering technical and engineering expertise across a wide range of sectors, including petrochemicals, nanotechnology, aerospace, refinery construction, road building, and industrial development.

Araghchi to visit Pakistan, India amid tensions

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is scheduled to visit Pakistan and India next week to discuss bilateral relations, regional developments, and international issues, according to a Foreign Ministry spokesman speaking to Press TV.

Araghchi's trip begins in Pakistan on Monday, where he will meet with high-ranking officials to address ways to enhance cooperation between the two nations. The visit takes place against a backdrop of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, stemming from a recent terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir. India has accused Pakistan of involvement in the April 22 attack, which resulted in 26 fatalities, a claim Pakistan denies.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Tehran Times’ exclusive interview with Pezeshkian provides behind-the-scenes look at president’s life

“I feel imprisoned, but it’s enjoyable”

By Mohammad Sarfi
Editor-in-Chief

TEHRAN – Last Monday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and his delegation set off on an official trip to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The trip was scheduled for two days: the first day in Baku and the second in Ganja, the resting place of the famous Persian poet, Hakim Nezami Ganjavi. However, the tragic fire incident in Bandar Abbas forced us to cut the trip short.

The plane took off from Mehrabad Airport in Tehran just before noon prayer and headed toward Baku after crossing the Caspian Sea. From the start of the flight, I spoke with the media officials from the presidential office and requested a brief, informal interview with Mr. Pezeshkian. They agreed and said they would bring it up with him. The flight was so short that we barely had time to realize we had landed at Baku Airport, greeted by a cloudy sky and a strong, cold wind.

The trip was intense and packed with activities. In fact, we didn't even have a chance to grab lunch. Mr. Pezeshkian's final engagement was a meeting with Iranians and students living in Baku. As soon as that program wrapped up, we rushed to the airport, and I once again pursued the possibility of conducting the interview. A light dinner was served during the flight, and the flight map indicated we were only 20 minutes away from Tehran.

Mr. Pezeshkian walked down the aisle of the airplane, greeting his companions and thanking them for their efforts. When he reached me, I showed him a picture of the Tehran Times' upcoming edition on my phone; it featured an image of him shaking hands with Ilham Aliyev, accompanied by the headline: "On the



Path of Friendship.”

I mentioned to Mr. Pezeshkian that presidents of some countries often hold informal interviews with journalists during flights, and I would love to ask him a few questions in that same spirit. He replied, “We’re landing soon, but come closer so we can see what happens.” A few minutes later, I found myself sitting next to the president at the front of the plane, ready to ask my questions. Shortly after our interview wrapped up, we landed in Tehran.

What follows is the text of my interview with Masoud Pezeshkian, the President of Iran:

Mr. President, what time do you typically start your day?

Usually around seven.

And when do you usually finish work?

It varies. My schedule isn't really typical. Sometimes I'm home by seven in the evening, sometimes six, sometimes not until eleven. It really depends on what we're working on. For example, what time are we getting back tonight?

I think right now it's close to eleven.

It's already past eleven. We won't even be home at midnight.

We'll make it tomorrow!

It just depends on the work and the schedule for the day. The timing is unpredictable. But I consider myself available to the country 24/7.

Mr. President, I understand you were quite involved in sports and mountaineering before your presidency. Do you still have time for leisure or sports activities?

Very little. We try to play soccer or go hiking once a week if we can. But even going for a hike isn't simple. They have to choose places where we can maintain privacy and security. In short, they've restricted my public contact, saying it's not possible to do it any other way. There's nothing I can do about it.

How has Mr. Pezeshkian changed before and after becoming President?

In what sense? I'm still myself. Haven't changed much. I am the same person

Well, the responsibility and the weight of it...

Ah! The burden of responsibility is, naturally, much heavier. I often say we were free and unburdened before; now we're bound and, in a sense, imprisoned. But this “imprisonment” is in pursuit of solving the people's problems. We're trying to ease their difficulties, and that

makes it worthwhile. What keeps us hopeful, what sustains our efforts and our endurance of these hardships, is being able to solve a problem for our people, to bring joy to the minds and spirits of children and everyone. The more we can do that, the easier and more bearable the path becomes.

I'd like to hear a little about your personal relationship with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. How is it?

We've always been close. We've always tried to adhere strictly to our stated positions, following the policies and directions he's outlined, without deviating from his intentions or guidance.

Some Western media outlets claim that Iran entered negotiations with the U.S. out of weakness.

Have you ever heard us say, in any of our discussions, that we must negotiate, or we'll face serious problems?

No.

In the past, some said that if we didn't reach an agreement, we would face problems. We've never tied the future of our country, ourselves, or the region to negotiations. We are doing our own work. Of course, if we negotiate, build peace, and improve our relations, that would be very beneficial. But it's not as if a deadlock in negotiations means we'll reach a deadlock as well. We won't. We just need to unite, to make use of our intellectuals and wise people. If we create unity and cohesion, there's no obstacle we can't overcome.

Hosseini snatches bronze in World Youth and Junior Championships

TEHRAN – Zahra Hosseini of Iran claimed a bronze medal in the 2025 World Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships on Saturday.

She lifted 86kg in snatch and managed to lift 111kg in clean and jerk and won the bronze medal with a total of 197kg.

Albanian weightlifter Enkileda Carja won the gold medal with 98-115-213 and silver medal went to Femliy Nottle from Nauru as she had been last year. She made only two of her six attempts on 92-110-202, which was well below her best in training.

The global strength of weightlifting was highlighted in Lima, Peru when athletes from 22 countries were on the podium on a truly international day at the World Youth and Junior Championships.

Iran down Paraguay in 2025 Beach Soccer World Cup

TEHRAN – A suffocating defense carried Iran to a second consecutive victory at Seychelles 2025, leaving winless Paraguay on the brink.

Iran put the shackles on Paraguay's high-flying attack to register a second successive victory in this FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup™.

Iran got off to a fast start with Movahed Mohammadpour and Mehdi Mirjalili each smashing in shots from distance.

Paraguay's attempts to cut the deficit were thwarted until midway through the second, when Milciades Medina took flight and scored a sensational bicycle kick.

Ali Nazem restored Iran's two-goal cushion, followed by insurance strikes from Mahdi Shirmohammadi and Mohammad Masoumi to seal things for Team Melli.

Faraji wins bronze in WTT Youth Contender 2025

TEHRAN – Benyamin Faraj and Kazuki Yoshiyama won a bronze medal at the WTT Youth Contender Bangkok 2025 on Saturday.

Indian team Ankur Bhattacharjee/Abhinandh Pradhipadhi won the match 3-2 (8-11, 11-13, 14-12, 11-7, 11-4) in the U-19 Boys' Doubles semifinals.

The 2025 WTT Youth Contender Bangkok is being held from May 2 to 4 in Thailand.

Mohajeri named Nassaj head coach in PGPL

TEHRAN – Mohammadreza Mohajeri was appointed as the new head coach of the struggling football team Nassaji on Saturday.

Mohajeri, 60, will manage the team for two finals matches in the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL).

He replaced Saket Elhami in the position.

Nassaji urgently need a miracle to avoid relegation from the PGPL.

Havadar were previously relegated from the league, and Nassaji are now the second most likely team to bid farewell to the PGPL this season.

Tractor win Iran football league for first time

TEHRAN – Tractor football team claimed the title of the 2024/25 Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) for the first time on Friday.

The Tabriz-based football club defeated Shams Azar 4-0 in Qazvin and won the title with two weeks remaining.

Domagoj Drozdek scored twice as well as goals from Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh and Ricardo Alves.

Shams center back Hooman Rabizadeh was shown a red card in the 83rd minute.

In Isfahan, Sepahan lost to Gol Gohar 2-1. Amir-mohammad Razaghinia and Mehdi Tikdari were on target for the visiting team. Sepahan defender Arya Yousefi was shown a red card before the break. Mohammadmehdi Mohebbi pulled a goal back in the 75th minute.

Esteghlal thrashed Aluminum 5-1 in Tehran thanks to goals from Ramin Rezaeian, Mohammadhossein Eslami, Masoud Joma and Joel Kojo (two goals). Shervin Bozorg was on target for the visiting team.

Malavan also battled back to draw 3-3 in Bandar Anzali.

Tractor will represent Iran at the 2025/26 AFC Champions League Elite.

Persepolis football team are the most decorated team, winning the title nine times out of 24 editions, followed by Sepahan with five titles.

Havadar relegated from Iran league

TEHRAN – With two weeks remaining, Havadar football team were relegated from 2024/25 Iran Professional League (IPL).

On Thursday, the Tehran-based club was held to a goalless draw by Nassaji in Ghaemshahr and has been relegated from IPL.

Nassaji are also on the verge of relegation.

Tractor won the title for the first time ever after beating Shams Azar on Friday.

Iran face challenges in IV BFA Women's Baseball Asian Cup Qualifiers

TEHRAN – The Iranian women's baseball team encountered difficulties during their participation in the IV BFA Women's Baseball Asian Cup Qualifiers, held recently in Bangkok, Thailand.

Despite their hard work and determination, the team struggled to secure favorable results against tough competition from other Asian nations.

They suffered five losses in the tournament held in Bangkok, Thailand. The Persians lost to Sri Lanka (13-0), Pakistan (17-2), India (13-0), Cambodia (23-13), and Malaysia (15-4) in the tournament.

Iran's journey in the tournament began with high hopes, as the squad had been training intensively to improve their skills and competitive edge. However, they faced formidable opponents, which tested their abilities on the field. Over the course of the tournament, the team recorded several losses, which hampered their chances of qualifying for the upcoming Asian Cup.

One of the key challenges for the Iranian team was their inexperience in high-stakes matches, a factor that became evident in their gameplay. Despite showing moments of promise, the team lacked consistency, which led to missed opportunities and errors that opponents capitalized on.

Coaches and staff emphasized the importance of development and highlighted the need for ongoing support for women's baseball in Iran. “While the results were not what we hoped for, this tournament has provided invaluable experience for our athletes,” said Zahra Mousavizadeh, head coach of the Iranian team. “We will learn from our mistakes and continue to work hard to build a competitive team for the future.”

Fans and supporters of women's baseball in Iran remain optimistic about the growth of the sport, acknowledging the team's efforts and dedication. As the tournament concludes, there are calls for increased investment in women's baseball programs to cultivate talent and enhance performance in international competitions.

Looking ahead, the team plan to regroup and focus on training to address their shortcomings, with the goal of emerging stronger in future tournaments. The commitment to fostering and promoting women's baseball in Iran remains steadfast, with hopes that they will achieve better results next time.

Fires in occupied Palestine: A reminder of the Zionist colonial project



By Xavier Villar

MADRID – Israel faces an ecological crisis as forest fires ravage the woods near occupied Al-Quds. For two consecutive days, firefighting teams have struggled to control the flames, which have forced the evacuation of thousands of people and the closure of major communication routes.

The emergency, which has taken on an international dimension, led Benjamin Netanyahu to declare a state of emergency and request international aid. While images of firefighters battling the flames are striking, this catastrophe serves as a wake-up call about the deeper layers of the landscape and history burning in those flames.

The fires are not merely a natural phenomenon, but they shed light on a deeply colonial aspect of the territory. The fire consumes, both symbolically and literally, a landscape created under a project that, in its early stages, focused on transforming the land with a political purpose, beyond just agricultural or ecological goals. The forests now ablaze are not the result of an indigenous nature but of foreign intervention: the Jewish National Fund (JNF) planted tree species such as pine and eucalyptus, native to Europe and Australia, mostly highly flammable and water-hungry. These trees were planted on the ruins of Palestinian villages destroyed during the Nakba of 1948, a symbolic act that hides the violence of Zionist colonization behind a veil of vegetation.

Afforestation in occupied Palestine was one of the pillars of the construction of the Israeli state, driven not only by agricultural motives but

as a tool for identity consolidation and territorial control. Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, in his inaugural speech to the Knesset in 1951, called on Zionists to “make the desert bloom.” This phrase, which has become one of the most iconic founding myths of Zionism, not only appealed to the creation of a new entity but to the recreation of an “empty” land that had to be transformed by human hands, specifically those of the Zionist settlers. Through the planting of these trees, Ben Gurion aimed not only to create employment and strengthen immigrants' emotional ties to the land but also to build a symbolic bond with the territory. Afforestation was an act of appropriation of the land, of transformation of the landscape, and of creating a new national narrative that erased the traces of displaced Palestinian peoples.

This process fits within one of the most persistent colonial ideologies: the myth of Terra Nullius, the idea of a land without people, which Zionist settlers found empty and, therefore, available for colonization. According to this myth, Palestine was an uninhabited territory, a hostile desert that only gained value with the arrival of Zionist settlers. This narrative, still present in contemporary Israeli discourse, is based on the idea that the Jewish people were the only ones capable of “redeeming” the land and making it thrive. Under this framework, Palestinians were not only invisible but also considered incapable of cultivating their own land, which justified colonization.

The myth of “making the desert bloom” is a clear example of how Zionist settlers used the rhetoric of civilization to legitimize the dispos-

session and destruction of Palestinian communities. This narrative builds upon Orientalist stereotypes that describe West Asia as a backward, primitive, and decadent place where, according to colonialist vision, only Europeans (or, in this case, European Jews) could “civilize” the land. At the same time, it was a project that not only dispossessed Palestinians of their lands but also their history, identity, and rights. The occupation of Palestine, in its colonial aspect, was not only materialized in the appropriation of territories but in the transformation of the landscape to erase any trace of Palestinian presence.

-The Axis of Resistance and the Islamic Republic: Anti-colonial resistance rooted in an Islamic grammar

In this context, the political presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Axis of Resistance emerges as an anti-colonial response to the Zionist colonization project. Since its founding in 1979, the Islamic Republic has offered an alternative perspective to the hegemonic narrative that justifies Zionist colonialism under the umbrella of civilization and the “redemption” of the desert. Islamic resistance, largely articulated through the figure of the Islamic Revolution and the subsequent consolidation of Hezbollah, has been the main political force in the region that has openly challenged Israel's expansionist aspirations.

The anti-colonial discourse of the Axis of Resistance is based on an Islamic grammar that recognizes the struggle for Palestine's liberation as part of a broader struggle against global colonial structures. This approach opposes not only Zionist colonialism but also the neocolonial dynamics that have characterized foreign powers' intervention in the region. The Palestinian struggle, in this context, is an integral part of the resistance of peoples in West Asia and beyond, against colonial powers that, in their quest for domination, have reconfigured borders and landscapes according to their own geopolitical interests.

Iran's opposition to Zionist colonialism is closely linked to a vision of Islam that promotes the self-determination of oppressed peoples and denounces injustice. The discourse of the Islamic Revolution, with its emphasis on social justice, the fight against tyranny, and the unity of Muslim peoples, has been fundamental in articulating a resistance that not only rejects the Zionist project but also opposes forms of oppression perpetuated by Western powers, mostly allies of Israel, in the region.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

SEO aims for capital market to fund half of economy within 5 years

TEHRAN - The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) said that the capital market's share in the national financing system is going to increase to 50 percent over the next five years, positioning it as a key engine of economic activity, employment, and industrial growth.

Hojjatollah Seyyedi, speaking to Bourse News, said the organization's 14th development plan includes targeted measures to stimulate production, starting with fiscal incentives embedded in the national budget.

He outlined two additional pillars of the government's production strategy: implementation of the Law on Supporting Production and a five-part economic development plan currently being drafted by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO).

Seyyedi said new investment funds have been created within the capital market to support production, including Murabaha bonds aimed at financing small- and medium-sized enterprises.

He said the Securities and Exchange Organization is targeting a "50-50" financing model, balancing bank loans and capital market resources, over a four- to five-year horizon. "Initial public offerings in project-based companies have already begun, and infrastructure



for Murabaha bond issuance is in place," he said, noting a surge in applications from producers seeking bond issuance licenses.

Seyyedi pointed to growing investor interest in the Tehran Stock Exchange, with daily trade volumes surpassing 20 trillion rials (about \$4.0 billion) and continuing to climb.

Calling the capital market "the engine of Iran's economic operations and employment," he emphasized its role in driving future development.

On the role of tech-based firms, Seyyedi said five knowledge-based and startup companies have already been listed, while around 25 others are seeking approval, some having already secured permits from the Vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iran, India eye expansion of trade routes, push for diversification

TEHRAN - At a conference on commercial opportunities between Iran and India, held on the sidelines of Iran Expo 2025, officials and business representatives from both countries emphasized the need to diversify trade and familiarize Iranian businesses with international trade models.

According to Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), the "Iran-India Trade Opportunities and Capacities Conference" brought together Hossein Bamiri, Iran's commercial attaché in India; Khalid Khan, a member of the Iran Trade Center in Mumbai; and several trade delegations from both nations.

Bamiri said Iran's exports to India over the past decade have largely been limited to a narrow range of products including dates, pistachios, almonds, and petrochemicals, with little diversification in the export basket.

Highlighting the mismatch between the two countries' trade potential and current volumes, Bamiri urged Iranian businesses to pursue not just goods exports but also services. "This requires a stronger Iranian presence in international trade fairs," he added.

He also stressed that Iranian traders and manufacturers must align their corporate structures with global standards and gain a deeper understanding of international trade models. "Proper marketing and consistent participation in international events are key," Bamiri said.

Khalid Khan said efforts are underway to usher in a new phase of commercial relations between India and Iran.

"We aim to showcase the capabilities of both nations on a broader scale," he said, adding that India-Iran trade could flourish further if Chabahar Port became more accessible to Indian traders. "Such progress depends on sound policies and timely cooperation," he noted.

Also speaking at the event, Masoud Ebrahim Shah, a former advisor to the Malaysian prime minister, called India's export potential "unparalleled" and described trade exhibitions as a strategic platform for future commercial development.

Meanwhile, Head of the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Mahmoud Najafi Arab met with Indian Ambassador Rudra Gaurav Shresth to explore avenues for expanding economic ties between Iran and India, with both sides emphasizing the need to prioritize the exchange of non-sanctioned goods.

The meeting, held at the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, also included the TCCIMA Secretary General and the head of the South Gujarat Chamber of Commerce, who accompanied the Indian ambassador.

Discussions focused on enhancing provincial-level economic cooperation led by busi-

ness chambers.

According to a statement from the TCCIMA, Najafi Arab said that the longstanding historical and economic ties between the two countries provide a strong foundation for deeper cooperation, especially if international sanctions on Iran are fully lifted.

He called for swift finalization of a preferential trade agreement between the two countries and emphasized the importance of tariff reduction. Najafi Arab also highlighted joint opportunities in food security, organic production, smart agriculture, biotechnology, blockchain, and fintech.

He further proposed forming a joint consortium between Iranian and Indian private sectors for maritime and transit corridor projects, including trilateral cooperation with Russia to develop the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC). Participation in trade and industrial expos in both countries was also encouraged.

Fereydoon Vardinejad, Secretary General of the Tehran Chamber, reiterated the importance of subnational economic cooperation and expressed readiness to collaborate with Indian provincial chambers.

He proposed holding virtual meetings to identify mutual business opportunities and suggested establishing a "green channel" between the chamber and the Indian embassy to expedite visas for businesspeople.

Ambassador Shrestha noted that U.S. sanctions on Iran have also had negative repercussions for the Indian economy. He explained that while the Indian government cannot mandate private sector activity, its investment in Iran's Chabahar Port was a clear signal encouraging Indian firms to engage with the Iranian market.

He acknowledged the limited scope of current bilateral trade, which has hovered around \$5.0 billion in recent years, and said that with a broader focus on sanction-free goods, trade could double to \$10 billion within the next three to four years.

The ambassador said India remains a key market for agricultural and food products, and proposed converting the preferential trade agreement into a free trade pact covering food, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals—sectors not targeted by international sanctions.

Also speaking at the meeting, the president of the South Gujarat Chamber outlined the region's main industries, including textiles, diamond polishing, agricultural products, and handicrafts.

He proposed signing a cooperation agreement with the Tehran Chamber and invited an Iranian trade delegation to an investment and tourism expo scheduled for August in South Gujarat.

Iran's annual petchem export expected to hit 34.8m tons by March 2026

TEHRAN – Iran's annual export of the petrochemicals is anticipated to reach about 34.8 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 2026), according to the head of the National Petrochemical Company (NPC).

Hassan Abbaszadeh also said that the country's nominal production capacity of petrochemicals is expected to hit 105 million tons in this year.

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

The deputy oil minister added that one of the key roles of development-oriented firms is to facilitate private sector investment in petrochemicals. He said the National Petrochemical Company stands ready to support investors in this regard.

He called on company manag-



ers to actively back the industry during the Year of "Investment for Production" by taking practical steps to address the challenges faced by petrochemical firms.

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

He acknowledged last year's challenges in securing feedstock due to energy imbalances but expressed confidence that proper

planning and measures could improve the sector's performance in 2025.

Abbaszadeh also credited parliamentary and government support for motivating industry players to pursue expansion strategies and focus on completing the value chain as a key priority.

Production in the petrochemical sector increased in the last Iranian year (ended on March 2025) compared to the year before, despite energy imbalances and feedstock shortages, he said,

Tehran, Ashgabat urge structural reforms to boost bilateral trade

TEHRAN - The deputy head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for the removal of key structural barriers—particularly in banking, transport, logistics, and visa issuance—to unlock the trade potential between Iran and Turkmenistan.

Speaking at a joint business forum held during Iran Expo 2025, Peyman Bagheri highlighted the two countries' shared strengths in energy, mining, agriculture, and tourism but said current trade levels fail to reflect those capacities.

"Despite deep-rooted historical, cultural, and economic ties, trade volumes remain below potential and need a more proactive approach," he said.

Bagheri urged joint chambers of commerce and trade associations to play a more dynamic role in connecting supply and demand and facilitating cross-border business.

He described Iran Expo 2025 as a "golden opportunity" to showcase Iran's economic capabilities, noting the participation of more than 3,000 businesspeople from 110 countries. "The Iran Chamber has mobilized all its resources to make the most of this platform," he added.

2025 marks a new chapter in Iran-Turkmenistan trade

Ramezan Bahrami, head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, said 2024 had been a successful year for bilateral trade and expressed hope that 2025 would usher in a new era of cooperation.

He praised the role of both presidents in building trust between business communities, highlighting the creation of a joint council and the need to respect each other's regulations.

Bahrami also announced the launch of a "Turkmen Trade Center" in Iran, aimed at helping Turkmen consumers access Iranian goods at competitive prices.

He further announced plans for the first provincial Iran-Turkmenistan exhibition in Gorgan, describing it as part of broader efforts to expand economic diplomacy.

Bahrami urged joint chambers to identify market-specific opportunities and host technical meetings to connect Iranian tech firms with real demand in neighboring countries.

Strategic transit partners in regional development

Seyyed Hossein Mirshafi, advisor to the Iranian Minister of Transport and Urban Development, called the conference a step toward strengthening neighborhood, linguistic, and logistical ties. He pointed to recent high-level political exchanges and major agreements, including a new memorandum of understanding between the two countries' railway systems.

"Iran and Turkmenistan have exceptional transit potential that benefits not only both nations but the entire Central Asian region," he said.

Mirshafi announced Iran's readiness to expand direct flights between cities such as Ashgabat, Gorgan, Bandar Abbas, and Chabahar, and highlighted investment opportunities in regional transport—especially in Afghanistan and Iraq—as a strategic advantage.

He also mentioned special rail freight discounts for Turkmen traders operating through the joint chamber and outlined new facilities aimed at easing cargo transport procedures.

In early March, Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce announced the formation of a special economic consortium aimed at enhancing exports and trade exchanges between the two countries, with support from their joint chambers of commerce.

At that time, Bahrami said that the establishment of the consortium has been met with broad support from economic operators and provides a valuable opportunity to streamline trade, facilitate investment, and remove commercial barriers between the two nations.

He emphasized the consortium's role in fostering sustainable trade relations, describing it as an effective tool for increasing exports, attracting investment, and easing economic interactions. He noted that the initiative creates a structured platform for Iranian businesses to enter the Turkmen market strategically and unlocks new opportunities for bilateral cooperation.

Bahrami added that the consortium, developed with private-sector participation under the framework of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce, is expected to expand trade volume, reduce business costs, and strengthen regional economic ties.

He welcomed the broad participation of Ira-



nian companies in the initiative, saying their involvement would pave the way for sustainable trade growth and facilitate access to Central Asian markets.

Iran and Turkmenistan, two neighboring countries sharing a border of over 1,000 kilometers, have developed strong trade and economic relations over the years. Since Turkmenistan's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the two nations have collaborated in various sectors, including energy, transportation, and infrastructure development.

In terms of trade, Iran is Turkmenistan's second-largest trading partner after Russia. Joint projects such as the Friendship Dam and the Korpje-Kordkuy gas pipeline highlight the extensive cooperation between the two countries. However, trade volumes have fluctuated in recent years. For instance, trade between the two nations reached \$3.2 billion in 2008 but dropped to \$1.2 billion in 2009 due to declining oil and gas prices.

These wide-ranging collaborations in energy, transportation, and infrastructure underscore the significance of Iran-Turkmenistan economic ties, contributing to regional economic integration and development.

In late April, Iran's Vice President and head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) Seyed Hamid Pourmohammadi met with Turkmen President Serdar Berdimuhamedow to discuss ways to deepen bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors.

Pourmohammadi, who was 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.

The two sides exchanged views on expanding ties in political, economic, and cultural spheres, as well as strengthening trade relations.

Tehran-Abu Dhabi trade could rebound to \$27b, says official

TEHRAN - The head of the Iran-UAE Joint Chamber of Commerce has criticized the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) for significant delays in foreign currency allocation, calling it the primary bottleneck in bilateral trade — particularly for essential and perishable goods.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Iran Expo 2025, the official recalled that trade between Iran and the United Arab Emirates had exceeded \$27 billion annually in past years, underscoring the vast potential for renewed economic ties between

the two neighbors. "Despite ups and downs over the years, bilateral trade has persisted," he said.

He noted that Iranian traders, especially from the private sector, have consistently shown strong interest in expanding trade with the UAE. "If domestic investment conditions and foreign exchange policy improve, we could witness a sharp surge in bilateral trade," he added.

Contrary to public belief, he argued that sanctions are not the main challenge. "Export and import processes with the UAE continue

despite sanctions," he said. "The real obstacle lies in the internal policies of the Central Bank."

According to the chamber head, delays in currency allocation have sometimes stretched beyond 120 days, creating severe disruptions — particularly in the trade of time-sensitive goods. "Such lags are unacceptable when essential and perishable commodities are involved," he warned.

Agricultural exports to the UAE are especially vulnerable. "Delays in customs clearance or forex pro-

cesses could lead to spoilage," he said, warning that such inefficiencies not only harm Iranian exporters but also erode the confidence of foreign buyers in Iran's trade mechanisms.

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

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

He said the completion and operation of development projects could be accelerated through improved financial flows, and added that despite last year's feedstock-related difficulties, coordinated efforts this year could drive better results in the high-value petrochemical sector.

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

Lebanon's Aoun hints he seeks to annul the 1969 Cairo Agreement

From page 1 ► Aoun's position amounts to a call to cancel the 1969 Cairo Agreement, which legalizes Palestinian military action in Lebanon.

An informed Palestinian source confirmed to Tehran Times that this surprising move was not preceded by any serious discussions with the Palestinian Authority represented in Lebanon by the Palestinian Embassy.

The source noted that the last two meetings organized by Ramez Dimashqieh, head of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, and attended by representatives of several Palestinian ministries and factions, did not address the weapons issue at all.

The informed Palestinian source told the Tehran Times that it was proposed to keep Palestinian weapons in the hands of the Fatah movement to control the affairs of the camps.

The source added that the Defense Council's announcement might be premature, as there is still no final decision on the mechanism for Lebanese-Palestinian dialogue.



nese-Palestinian dialogue.

The informed Palestinian source warned of the involvement of Lebanese soldiers in smuggling weapons into the camps for use, as in the past, in internal clashes between Palestinian factions, coinciding with the expected visit of Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority to Lebanon.

What is surprising is that the visit will take place after Palestinian and Lebanese leaders have decided to reopen the PLO office in Beirut.

Following the U.S.-led media campaign against Hamas

figures following the launch of "suspicious" rockets from Lebanon into the occupied Palestinian territories, communication took place between Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Parliament, and Khaled Meshaal, the Hamas official abroad.

Meshaal affirmed Hamas's openness to any dialogue regarding the camp weapons, saying, "We are for any dialogue that alleviates the Lebanese situation."

It is worth noting that Al-Julani's forces (Ahmed al-Sharaa) have arrested two Palestinian leaders from the Al-Quds Brigades, the military wing of the

Islamic Jihad movement.

The arrests came after the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump issued new political directives requiring the Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham government to "take strict measures against extremist groups and expel Palestinian factions from the country," in exchange for the U.S. considering a partial easing of the economic sanctions imposed on Damascus for years, according to the Wall Street Journal.

The WSJ added that the U.S. administration stipulated that Damascus commit to banning any political or military activity by Palestinian factions and deporting their cadres outside the country, with the aim of "alleviating Israeli concerns."

The timing of the arrests has raised serious questions, given that the Islamic Jihad Movement, though present in Syria, maintained neutrality in the foreign-backed insurgency in Syria that lasted for more than a decade. Unlike other factions, it did not engage in battles on the side or against the Bashar al-Assad government.

Israel using Druze community as excuse to undermine Syria's sovereignty

Israel launches most intensive strikes against Syria

From page 1 ► In Hama province, an air defense warehouse belonging to the former Syrian army was hit, injuring four people, according to Syria's official news agency, SANA.

Airstrikes were also reported in Idlib province in the northwest and in the Latakia countryside, where two people were reportedly wounded, according to Syrian media.

In southern Syria, Israeli jets targeted an area near a town in the northern countryside of Daraa and also struck camps used by the former 175th Regiment of the Syrian Army.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights described the strikes as "the most intense wave of airstrikes and bombings since the beginning of the year."

Simultaneously, Israeli helicopters reportedly landed in As Suwayda in southern Syria, unloading a shipment of military aid, sources told regional news outlets.

Early Friday, the Israeli occupation army



announced that it had targeted an area near the presidential palace in Damascus, where Ahmad al-Sharaa, the self-appointed President of Syria's transitional government, resides.

Following the strikes, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a joint statement with military minister Yisrael Katz, saying, "This is a clear message to the Syrian regime. We will not allow the deploy-

ment of Syrian forces south of Damascus or any threat to the Druze community in any form."

Katz further warned that "Israel will respond forcefully if the Syrian government fails to protect the Druze minority."

Some experts have indicated that the Israeli regime is using concern for the Druze community as a pretext to further undermine Syria's sovereignty.

Others have noted that by restricting Syrian military movement south of Damascus, the Israeli regime is highlighting the weakness of the new government and its military capability.

Armed groups affiliated with the government launched attacks in several areas south of Damascus, leading to clashes with local fighters and resulting in casualties on both sides.

These confrontations have renewed tensions and sparked concerns about escalating sectarian violence, especially in Druze-majority areas.

'Unspeakable cruelty': Yemeni civilians recount horror of US air strikes

Mohammed doesn't know why his neighborhood was struck by U.S. warplanes on Sunday evening.

He lives in Thuqban, in the Bani Alharith district of the Yemeni capital. It has no connection to Ansarallah or any military activity, he said.

A barrage of U.S. attacks on Thuqban left at least 12 civilians dead and four others wounded on 27 April.

Mohammed said the strikes wiped out four homes "in the blink of an eye". One of those homes belonged to Ali Salah, who lived there with his four daughters and two sons.

"The strike hit the house at 8 p.m., killing the entire family," Mohammed told Middle East Eye.

"We rushed to the scene, searching for them in the rubble. We didn't find their bodies. They were just pieces of flesh. It was a horrendous scene of unspeakable cruelty."

Allegations have since surfaced that the U.S. may have targeted the area based on amateur open-source intelligence accounts on X.

At least two anonymous accounts posted coordinates of the Thuqban area and falsely

claimed it was an underground Ansarallah military position. One user has since apologized.

"Based on satellite imagery, I'd marked this quarry as an underground base, and tweeted [it] out as such," one of the accounts, @VleckieHond wrote. "I'm fairly certain CENTCOM doesn't take their targeting data from Twitter, but this still is a very severe mistake."

"I sincerely apologize for this error in my judgment, and it will never be my intention to spread false information here or elsewhere."

As part of the apology, the user posted screenshots of two donations totaling \$500 to Doctors Without Borders and the Yemen Data Project.

For the residents of Thuqban, the donations won't bring back their neighbors and relatives.

"The killing of innocent civilians is an abject failure for the United States. It will prolong the war and create more enemies," Mohammed said.

"Our tears and blood will fuel our will to counter and fight the Americans."

A U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) official told MEE that it "executes operations using detailed and comprehensive

intelligence that ensures lethal effects against Iran-backed Houthis".

'Explosion tore my brother to pieces'

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration launched its deadly campaign on Yemen, dubbed Operation Rough Rider, on 15 March.

CENTCOM says that 800 targets have been hit, resulting in the death of Ansarallah fighters and leaders.

But human rights groups have noted an alarming rate of civilian deaths and injuries caused by the U.S. administration's strikes over the past month.

That was clearly apparent in the early hours of Monday (April 28), when a strike on a migrant detention center in Sadaa, northwest of the country, killed 68 African migrants and wounded dozens more.

Relentless and seemingly indiscriminate attacks have left Yemenis traumatized and grieving.

Ahmed, in his twenties, lost his younger brother in a U.S. strike on Furweh market in Sanaa on 20 April.

"My brother went to the bakery to buy us bread for dinner,"



Ahmed told MEE. "The explosion tore him into pieces. Many others were killed and wounded in their homes and shops."

That strike killed 12 civilians and wounded 30 others, according to health officials.

Ali, 50, narrowly survived the market attack.

"I saw two charred bodies on a motorbike and a dead woman and a child on the ground," he told MEE. "There was one dead person in a grocery store, another in a bakery, and one in a minibus."

"It was a heinous massacre, and no logical person on earth can justify it."

UK joins US strikes

Late on Tuesday night, the UK joined its American allies in striking Yemen for the first time since early 2024.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Germany defends AfD extremist classification after Rubio slams 'tyranny in disguise'

Germany's Foreign Office has defended a decision to classify the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party as right-wing extremist, after sharp criticism from the White House.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance accused "bureaucrats" of rebuilding the Berlin Wall, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio slammed the designation as "tyranny in disguise".

In an unusual move, the foreign office directly replied to Rubio on X, writing: "We have learnt from our history that right-wing extremism needs to be stopped."

The intelligence agency that made the classification found AfD's "prevailing understanding of people based on ethnicity and descent" goes against Germany's "free democratic order".

The AfD came second in federal elections in February, winning a record 152 seats in the 630-seat parliament with 20.8% of the vote.

The agency, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV), had already classed the AfD as right-wing extremist in three eastern states where its popularity is highest. Now, that designation has been extended to the entire party.

The AfD "aims to exclude certain population groups from equal participation in society", it said in a statement. The agency said specifically that the party did not consider citizens "from predominantly Muslim countries" as equal members of the German people.

Gaza deaths due to malnutrition rise to 57

A statement by the Government Media Office on Telegram said on Saturday that the death toll resulting from malnutrition in the Gaza Strip has increased to 57, Al Jazeera reported.

It said the number is expected to increase as the crossings into Gaza remain closed and the entry of aid, baby formula and nutritional supplements have been prevented by Israel.

It added that the vast majority of victims were children as well as sick and elderly people.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the continued use of food by the Israeli occupation as a weapon of war and its imposition of a stifling blockade against more than 2.4 million people in the Gaza Strip by completely closing the crossings for the 63rd consecutive day," the media office stated.

Australia PM Albanese makes stunning comeback with landslide win



Labor's Anthony Albanese has defied the so-called "incumbency curse" to be re-elected Australia's prime minister in a landslide, the BBC reported.

Official vote counting won't finish for

days, but Albanese's centre-left government will dramatically increase its majority after the conservative Liberal-National coalition suffered a thumping defeat nationwide.

"Today, the Australian people have voted for Australian values: for fairness, aspiration and opportunity for all; for the strength to show courage in adversity and kindness to those in need," Albanese said.

Coalition leader Peter Dutton, who lost his own seat of 24 years, said he accepted "full responsibility" for his party's loss and apologized to his MPs.

The five-week campaign was dominated by cost-of-living concerns – particularly the affordability of healthcare and housing – with issues like energy and climate change, international relations, and migration also rearing their heads.

Hezbollah says Israeli attacks part of broader strategy to 'disintegrate Syria'

Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement has condemned the latest Israeli aggression on Syria, calling it a blatant violation of Syrian sovereignty and an attempt to disintegrate the country.

In a statement on Saturday, Hezbollah said the continued Israeli airstrikes were part of a broader strategy to destabilize Syria, incite sectarian violence, and fragment the country, Press TV reported.

The Lebanese resistance group also reaffirmed its commitment to Syria's territorial integrity and urged the international community, particularly Arab nations, to take immediate action to halt the Israeli aggression.

Israel launched 20 airstrikes across Syria overnight in what the country's new rulers condemned as a "dangerous escalation."

Israeli airstrikes targeted areas near the capital, Damascus, and in the west, in Latakia and Hama, as well as in Daraa in the south, the SANA news agency reported.

Israeli authorities have also framed the new aggression as an attempt to protect Syria's Druze minority, which has been clashing with HTS-backed militants in a new wave of sectarian violence, which has left dozens of people dead south of Damascus.

Hamas says Israel silencing journalists to bury the truth about Gaza

Hamas has condemned Israel's continued aggression against journalists, describing it as a systematic campaign aimed at suppressing voices that reveal the regime's crimes against the people of Gaza.

As the world marked World Press Freedom Day on May 3, Palestinian media workers remain under Israel's deadly attacks.

The Palestinian resistance group said in a statement on Saturday that the regime's forces are deliberately targeting journalists to hide the reality of their crimes against the people of Gaza.

Israel's continued crimes against Palestinian media, it said, reveal the extent of the regime's "fear of the media's impact and its role in exposing its crimes and aggression against our people."

"The freedom of journalists to convey our people's suffering to the world and expose the crimes of the occupation is a right guaranteed by all international conventions," it said.

Soltaniyeh, a UNESCO-listed mausoleum of the 14th century, undergoes restoration



TEHRAN – Phase two of a restoration and conservation project on the southern gate of the UNESCO-listed Soltaniyeh Dome has commenced, according to the director of the World Heritage site.

Speaking to the press on Saturday, Abolfazl Ali, Director of the Soltaniyeh World Heritage Base, announced that the latest phase of work – focusing on the protection, reinforcement, restoration, and interpretation of the monument's southern gate – has commenced and is expected to continue through the end of November.

The restoration is being carried out by skilled craftsmen from the site's own heritage team. "This initiative is part of a broader plan to help preserve one of the most exceptional stone structures from the Ilkhanid era," Ali stated.

Moreover, the restoration work includes a nearby stone citadel, some of whose main sections have already undergone restoration, with several nearing completion.

Sassanid pottery fragment discovered in Isfahan province

TEHRAN— A fragment of inscribed pottery known as an ostraca has been identified in the Lenjan district of Iran's Isfahan province.

Its content indicates the existence of a commercial and industrial settlement on the bank of Zayandehroud River.

The relic is estimated to date back to the Sassanid era. It can be considered one of the most important archeological findings of the current Iranian year and opens a new season in historical research in Lenjan, ISNA reported.

Aqil Aqili, head of the Archaeology Committee at the Isfahan Province Tourist Guides Association, said this accidental finding is the result of the continuous efforts of members of the Lenjan Heritage Preservation Association.

In a scientific visit to a site, which was made upon the invitation of Lenjan Heritage Preservation Association, a collection of archaeological evidence, including architectural remains, scattered potteries, metal slags, a stone tool, and an ostracon was identified in the Sassanid Pahlavi script.

"Following preliminary studies and reading the inscribed pottery, I understood that it is number six in Middle Persian script. This diagnosis was subsequently completed through correspondence and confirmation by Sirous Nasrollahzadeh, the head of Iran's Linguistics Research Institute," said Aqili.

Stressing that the identified pottery fragment is of high importance in terms of linguistics and archeology, he said, "It is written in Pahlavi script which was common in late Sassanid era. Today, its reading is difficult."

This inscribed pottery was being used as a medium for writing information such as remittances, receipts, and exchanges of goods.

The ostracas found from Tappe Mill (a mill hill) in Varamin, Chaleh Tarkhan in Rey, Abunaser Fortress in Shiraz and pottery fragments found in Hegmataneh Hill in 1984 are considered to be in the same category of works.

He continued that given the researches conducted by Rasoul Bashash, a faculty member of Linguistics Research Institute on ostracas pertaining to Parthian era until inscribed potteries pottery pertaining to late Sassanid era and early Islamic era such as fragments found near Varamin, Chaleh Tarkhan in Rey, Shusha, Abunaser Fortress in Shiraz and Hegmataneh, the results are as follows: In Nisa city, every inscribed pottery was a part of an unbroken dish in which information like the name of gardens, their location, the delivery date of extracts of various fruits such as vinegar, the amount and name of the person who brought it has been registered.

In contrast, inscribed potteries found around Varamin and Chaleh Tarkhan and similar samples

"With the completion of restoration and decorative works, we hope to transform this globally significant structure into a vibrant cultural tourism hub," Ali added.

He emphasized that the ongoing restoration, despite its challenges, stands as a symbol of Iran's enduring commitment to safeguarding its cultural heritage.

Constructed between 1302 and 1312 under the rule of Oljaytu, the Dome of Soltaniyeh is located in Zanjan province and is regarded as a landmark of Persian and Islamic architecture. The octagonal mausoleum features a 50-meter-tall turquoise-blue faience dome – the earliest known example of a double-shelled dome in Iran – flanked by eight slender minarets. Its elaborate interior decoration has drawn praise from historians, with noted scholar Arthur Upham Pope describing it as "anticipating the Taj Mahal" in grandeur and vision.

According to UNESCO, the Mausoleum of Oljaytu is an essential link and key monument in the development of Islamic architecture in central and western Asia. Here, the Ilkhanids further developed ideas that had been advanced during the classical Seljuk phase (11th to early 13th centuries), during which the arts of Iran gained distinction in the Islamic world, thereby setting the stage for the Timurid period (late 14th to 15th centuries), one of the most brilliant periods in Islamic art. Particularly relevant are the mausoleum dome's double-shell structure (an inside shell and an outside shell), and the materials and themes used in its interior decoration.



including the discussed pottery from Hegmataneh have been used in form of broken pieces like remittances or notes. Their writings don't relate to the main content of the dish.

Aqili said the main topic of potteries pertaining to Nisa site has been the delivery of extracts like vinegar, but in pottery fragments surrounding Varamin, Chaleh Tarkhan and Hegmataneh, numerous agricultural items such as wheat flour, barley, and other goods have been registered.

These writings used to be delivered in form of remittances or receipts to the people.

Maybe, the waste lines drawn on many pottery fragments around Varamin were a sign of correction or settlement of the items recorded on these potteries.

The following can be interpreted from the content of this inscription, which is probably related to counting or exchanges: the discussed site has been one of the important industrial and commercial settlements in late Sassanid era and probably until the first Islamic centuries.

The presence of metal tools and slag remains also confirm the smelting and production of metals at this site.

He mentioned that Lenjan district particularly Khan Lenjan city has been known as one of the most prosperous settlements in the Jibal province (western Iran) and has been mentioned by geographers such as Ibn Hawqal, Al-Muqaddasi, and Yaqut Hamavi.

Khan Lenjan fortress which is located near the settlement, has played an important role in political, agricultural and defense development of the region, he added.

He continued that based on research conducted by archaeologist Jaleh Kamalizad, Khan Lenjan used to be a township inside Lenjan city in first Islamic centuries and a political subdivision of Isfahan.

Based on urban network theory, despite political affiliation with Isfahan, Khan Lenjan township had a pivotal role in Lenjan region. But it lost its prosperity in Ilkhanid era following the destruction of the mountain castle and transfer of the district center to the city of Firuzan.

Locals revive tradition of cherishing ancient qanats with flowers and rosewater

TEHRAN – After more than five decades of silence, the people of Bam in southeastern Iran have revived an ancient tradition honoring qanats – the man-made subterranean aqueducts that sustained life in this arid region for centuries.

On Wednesday, a traditional ceremony of casting flowers and rosewater on the flowing waters of qanats was held in Bam, southern Iran.

The event coincided with the National Day of Qanats in Iran, which falls 40 days after Nowruz, the Persian New Year, which is a period when qanats typically reach peak water flow.

Historically, this day marked the symbolic beginning of the annual maintenance work in the qanats. In the past, local well diggers, known as moqannis, would enter the aqueducts after performing ablution, carrying flowers and sprinkling rosewater in honor of the precious water sources. This act not only signified reverence for nature but also expressed gratitude for the ingenuity of ancestors who developed this vital water system.

The practice, which had faded



from memory for over half a century, was officially revived in 2022. It aims to reconnect the local community with its cultural heritage and raise awareness about the importance of preserving qanats – a system recognized by UNESCO for its historical and technological significance.

Participants in the ceremony said they had come to honor their ancestors and to express thanks for the knowledge and traditions passed

down through generations, many of which have been recognized internationally under the name of Iran.

In 2016, a selection of eleven qanats was collectively inscribed as World Heritage under the title of The Persian Qanat. Each of them epitomizes many others in terms of geographic scopes, architectural designs, and other motives. Such subterranean tunnels provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert

areas with an arid climate.

Generally, each qanat comprises an almost horizontal tunnel for collecting water from an underground water source, usually an alluvial fan, into which a mother well is sunk to the appropriate level of the aquifer.

UNESCO has it that "The qanats provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate."

Yazd to introduce tourist path dedicated to traditional jewelry

TEHRAN – Yazd authorities plan to introduce a tourist path dedicated to the city's time-honored tradition of handmade jewelry, which was recently registered as a world city of handicrafts by the World Crafts Council.

Such an itinerary is considered to include the city's goldsmiths' market and the specialized gold museum of Yazd, to name a few.

In addition, two urban galleries have been launched with the cooperation of Yazd Municipality, Mehr news agency reported.

Special weather condition of Yazd, economic justification of low-water activities, and the hard work, taste, and art Yazdi people have driven many people to jewelry art.

The history of Zargari, or the art of jewelry making, in the historic city of Yazd dates back approximately 2,000 years, as supported by reliable evidence. This ancient craft has been passed down through generations, maintaining its distinctive and intricate techniques that make Yazdi jewelry nearly impossible to repli-



The designs of jewelry made in Yazd have been inspired by nature, flowers, birds, fish, pomegranate, geometric, and abstract patterns.

cate. Some exquisite pieces, dating back 500 years, are found exclusively in Yazd.

Traditional jewelries in Yazd are divided into five different types based on their use, including head and hair decorations, ear decorations, neck

decorations, hand and foot decorations, and clothing decorations.

The designs of jewelry made in Yazd have been inspired by nature, flowers, birds, fish, pomegranate, geometric, and abstract patterns.

Different methods are used in making traditional ornaments in this region, including: engraving, sawing and filing, making with molds, hammering, casting, tapestry and embroidery, enameling and gem-setting.

At present, Yazdi goldsmiths make and decorate their works in a completely traditional way, preserving the legacy of past masters. Despite the low wages for making these works, most of the stages of making and decorating in this art are done by hand and with hand tools.

Jewelry making workshops use new technologies such as computer-aided design and three-dimensional printing. In addition, merging traditional designs with modern styles has distinguished Yazd jewelry products in domestic and foreign markets.

First Kurdish purebred horse festival held in Sanandaj

TEHRAN – Sanandaj in western Iran hosted its first-ever festival of Kurdish purebred horses on Friday, drawing equestrians and horse enthusiasts from across the country.

75 riders from 10 provinces of Kordestan, Lorestan, Ilam, Kermanshah, West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Isfahan, Kerman, Markazi, and Ardabil took part in the festival, CHTN quoted the head of the Kurdistan Equestrian Federation as saying on Saturday.

The riders showcased their horses and performed traditional Kurdish-style horseback riding techniques, highlighting the unique skills and heritage associated with the region, Feyzollah Piri added.

"The main goal of the festival was to promote



Sepidan is known as the city of waterfalls, the place where Margoon waterfall is a manifestation of nature in all four seasons.

TEHRAN— Sepidan in Fars province is a city whose vast tourism potential has encouraged provincial officials to put on their agenda to introduce it as a special tourism area in southern Iran.

It is known as the city of waterfalls, the place where Margoon waterfall is a manifestation of nature in all four seasons, ILNA wrote.

Sepidan is located 65 kilometers west of Shiraz. It boasts tall and green trees, mountains,

the Kurdish purebred horse, increase public familiarity with this native breed, and foster a sense of social joy and community engagement. Alongside the equestrian performances, attendees enjoyed a range of cultural and artistic programs, including live Kurdish music," Piri explained.

He also noted that the Kurdish horse, currently undergoing the process of international registration through Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, is considered one of the world's most valuable horse breeds.

Originating in the Kurdish regions of Iran, particularly Kurdistan and Kermanshah, the Kurdish horse is recognized as one of the country's indigenous equine breeds alongside the Caspian,



Turkmen, and Darreh Shuri horses.

Currently, there are around 3,000 Kurdish purebred horses in Kordestan province. Piri stressed the importance of safeguarding and preserving the genetic legacy of this ancient breed.

The event was organized in collaboration with the Kordestan Equestrian Federation and the Sanandaj Municipality.

Fars officials plan to introduce Sepidan as special tourism area

and roaring springs.

It is a destination for many domestic tourists as well as foreign sightseers, particularly from the Arab states of the Persian Gulf.

Pointing to the specific altitudes of Sepidan and its proximity to the equator, Amin Salahi, a tourism activist, believes that Sepidan's surrounding mountains feed three major basins and rivers of Karoun, Fahliyan, and Kor.

Salahi, who is also a proficient mountain climber, said that about 30 peaks with a height of over 3,000 meters receive the snow and rain of these three watersheds from the sky.

This city boasts the southernmost ski resorts in Northern Hemisphere. Over 70 percent of days suitable for skiing are sunny and without wind.

He continued that there are houses in Ardakan and many Sepidan's villages that can turn into ecotourism sites. The existence of brick and stone buildings in which various handicrafts are created, displays a beautiful tourism image of

this city.

The prerequisite for tourism prosperity in Sepidan city is training and promoting the culture of tourism to people and visitors, he said.

Also, Sepidan governor said the city boasts over 35 tourism zones. Ali Alizadeh added that one of the most important issues for tourism development in Sepidan is to attract domestic and foreign investors.

In case that investors are involved in Sepidan, he said, tourists are provided with pleasant services.

Tourism prosperity will lead to economic growth, drop in unemployment rate, rise in income level and market boom, he added.

Alizadeh said one of the challenges facing tourism industry of Sepidan is failure to register a tourist document. Although numerous correspondences have been conducted, but the desired result has not been achieved to turn this city into special tourism zone of southern Iran.

DOE develops data bank of over 5,000 species in Persian Gulf, Oman Sea

TEHRAN –The head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has announced the provision of a data bank of more than 5,000 creatures in the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea, saying that it will serve as a regional and even international platform for the preservation of the biodiversity in these waters.

This includes efforts such as preparing an atlas of sensitive marine ecosystems and the identification of unknown coral reef habitats, such as the Shah Alam area on the maritime border with Qatar, which allows for effective and targeted intervention at a macro level, ILNA quoted Ansari as saying.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of Persian Gulf National Day, which is observed on April 29 every year. The day marks the anniversary of forcing out the Portuguese navy of the Strait of Hormuz in the Capture of Ormuz (1622).

The Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, with more than 4,900 kilometers of coastline in Iran, are home to one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world.

The DOE has implemented different measures to conserve the biodiversity of the marine ecosystems such as developing a data strategy and planning tool to implement scientific and data-driven decision making.

Any preserving measure without legal support and control will fail to succeed. In order to strengthen the regulatory and legal framework, the DOE has developed and issued sea water quality standards, discharge regulations at sea, dredging guide-



lines, waste disposal regulations, and guidelines on oil pollution damage assessment, the official added.

The DOE is implementing other programs such as coral restoration, registering coastal wetlands in the Ramsar Convention, developing a national action plan for mangrove conservation, and monitoring the marine environment, Ansari further noted.

Mangrove loss in Persian Gulf

According to a study by researchers at the National Institute of Oceanography, mangrove ecosystems in the northern Persian Gulf are facing a range of environmental and anthropogenic pressures.

The mangrove tree, as a wonder of the marine environment, offers many benefits to various species, including birds, fish, crustaceans, and even some terrestrial animals, and stabilizes the soil, as well.

Mangrove forests are rich ecosystems that support the planet and humanity in unique ways by providing conditions for

fish growth, storing carbon, and fighting floods.

They are able to store about 6 to 8 tons of carbon per hectare of soil per year.

They contribute to the creation of a complete ecosystem. Above water, mangrove trees provide a habitat for birds while amphibians and small fish live on their roots.

The Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are home to one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world.

Mangroves play a crucial role in preserving the beach soil and protecting it from erosion. Mangrove trees play a vital role in maintaining the ecological balance of the sea.

Mangrove forests in Iran

mostly consist of the Avicenna marina, known as Hara, named after the 11th-century great Iranian scientist Avicenna, or Abu-Ali-Sina.

The study assesses the ecological dynamics of the Mangroves of Dayyer City (MDC) in the northern Persian Gulf using a multidimensional approach involving satellite-derived, drone-based, and field-measured data.

Satellite imagery from Google Earth (2011–2022) reveals fluctuations in the MDC area, with notable afforestation efforts until 2018 followed by rapid degradation.

The study suggests that long-term, multi-stressor monitoring, especially at different points within the mangrove ecosystem, is essential for effective management.

By discussing these local variations in salinity and their impact, the case study highlights how site-specific conditions must be taken into account when assessing mangrove health and interpreting the effect of salinity stress.

The research also stresses the critical need to address human-induced threats to mangrove ecosystems.

Urgent conservation and management strategies are essential for mitigating the impact of anthropogenic pressures and ensuring the survival of mangrove ecosystems in the face of environmental challenges.

Moreover, the climate change impacts must be considered when planning conservation and management strategies.

Farabi International Award extends submission deadline



TEHRAN – The deadline for submitting articles to the 16th Farabi International Award (FIA) has been extended to May 21.

The FIA is the most prestigious award for humanities and Islamic studies in the Islamic world, which will be held by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology in cooperation with the National Foundation for Elites

and the National Commission for UNESCO.

Participants can share their works that have been published or completed from the beginning of the Iranian year 1400 (2021) to the end of the Iranian year 1402 (2023) in this year's edition. Works that are both innovative and research-based are accepted, reviewed, evaluated, selected, and honored in the award.

FIA aims to identify talents, best scientific works, theories, new methods, and research in the fields of humanities and Islamic studies, ISNA reported.

The participants will present their researches in fields such as "Ethics, Religions and Mysticism"; "History, Geography and Archaeology"; "Law"; "Language, Literature and Linguistics"; "Social Sciences and Communication Sciences"; "Economics, Management and Financial Sciences"; "Educational Sciences, Psychology, Behavioral Sciences and Sports Sciences"; "Political Sciences, International Relations and Regional Studies"; "Quranic Sciences, Interpretation and Hadith"; "Jurisprudence and Principles"; "Philosophy, Logic and Theology"; "Theoretical Studies of Information Technology, Informatics and Librar-

ianship"; "Studies of the Islamic Revolution and Imam Khomeini"; "Studies of Art and Aesthetics"; "Interdisciplinary Studies"; and "Islamic Humanities Committee (Articles)".

The event presents the awards in the categories of books, final research project reports, doctoral dissertations and master's theses, and research articles (merely in Islamic Humanities).

The Award receives, reviews, and chooses the selected works at the two young (under 35 years) and adult levels and, in terms of territory, covers both domestic and foreign areas.

Where the domestic area is concerned, all the works produced by Iranians, regardless of their current location and profession, are considered.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran to build desalination plants along Persian Gulf, Sea of Oman

The Department of Environment (DOE) is preparing a plan to deploy desalination plants on the shores of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in order to supply drinking water to the coastal provinces.

Ahmad Reza Lahijanzadeh, deputy chief of the marine environment of the DOE, announced that suitable areas that cause the least damage to the environment have been identified in Hormozgan province.

According to him, the project, which is to be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy, will supply water for 17 drought-ridden provinces.

برنامه ایران برای تامین آب شرب از طریق خلیج فارس و دریای عمان

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست ایران در حال مطالعه طرحی برای استقرار آب شیرین کن‌ها در سواحل خلیج فارس و دریای عمان به منظور تامین بخشی از آب شرب استان‌های ساحلی است. به گزارش ایرنا، احمد رضا لاهیجان زاده معاون محیط زیست دریایی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست اعلام کرد مکان‌یابی در استان هرمزگان به پایان رسیده و محل‌های مناسبی که کمترین آسیب را به محیط زیست وارد کند، در این استان مشخص شده‌اند. به گفته او، این طرح که قرار است با همکاری وزارت نیرو انجام شود شامل ۱۷ استان خشک و بی آب می‌شود.

Russia needs to enhance cooperation with Iran in emerging technologies: presidential aide



"Although working on new technologies is risky, we should not fail to prioritize them, because there is no other way to be the first in the world," the Russian official added.

For his part, Safarinia said Iran is committed to promoting international scientific cooperation, highlighting that Russia is among the first countries Iran is willing to expand ties with.

The official went on to say that Russian companies can have offices in Pardis Technology Park. The establishment of Russian universities' branches in the country was the second point mentioned by Safrinia. "We have already reached agreements with St. Petersburg University and Moscow State University. We are following up on the issue in cooperation with the University of Science and Technology.

This will be the first foreign university to have a branch in Iran. Both Iranian and regional students will be able to study at this university; that they will spend part of their studies in Iran and the rest in Russia," Safarinia further noted.

The official also announced readiness to further enhance collaborations in research and educational, as well as market opportunities as members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS.

During Iran-Russia diplomacy meeting, the two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to establish two joint tech zones.

The MOU was signed between the National Association of Advanced Industries and Knowledge-Based Companies of Industry and Mining Sector, represented by Mohammad Mehdi Naibi, and the Russian President of the Technological Sovereignty Export Association, Andrey Bezrukov.

The expansion of new technologies and joint research in the fields of nanotechnology, biotechnology, health, information and communication technology (ICT), artificial intelligence, as well as the use of renewable energies, oil and gas are among the main focuses of the signed MOU.

The MOU highlights production and market development, including co-branding and marketing, market research, product development, and the development of distribution channels.

Based on the MOU, the two sides would introduce a technology park to launch collaborative efforts in two months; Pardis Technol-

ogy Park is introduced by Iran.

INOTEX 2025

The 14th edition of the exhibition featured 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 were held for enthusiasts and business owners.

Focusing on science, technology, and innovation ecosystems, the exhibition gathers businesspeople, technologists, industrialists, and researchers. The 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:

1. Investment: Connecting investors to the participants.
2. Partnership: Facilitating collaboration between technology companies and startups.
3. 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.



Teachers, symbols of dedication and enthusiasm

Mohammad Farrokhi, a 26-year-old teacher, travels 55 kilometers every day to reach a school in a border village in Shirvan County, northeastern North Khorasan Province.

In Iran, Teacher's Day is celebrated on May 2. It commemorates the martyrdom of Ayatollah Morteza Motahari on May 2, 1980.



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MAY 4, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The sin which makes you sad and repentant is more liked by Allah than the good deed which turns you arrogant.

Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:10 Dawn: 3:38 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:11 (tomorrow)

“The Life Impossible” at Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN-A Persian translation of English author and journalist Matt Haig's book “The Life Impossible” has recently been published by Milkan Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Mahsa Sabaghi.

“The Life Impossible” tells the story of retired math teacher Grace Winters, who receives a surprising inheritance: a dilapidated house on the Mediterranean island of Ibiza from a long-lost friend.

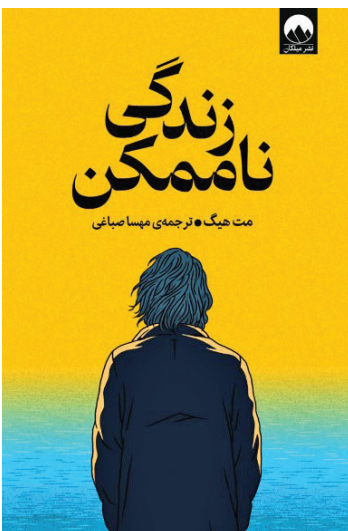
Intrigued, and with nothing holding her back, Grace embarks on a journey to the island with only a one-way ticket and no plan.

In the vibrant landscape of Ibiza, Grace delves into the mystery surrounding her friend's life and death. What she discovers is far more extraordinary and unexpected than she could have imagined.

To fully embrace this astonishing reality, however, Grace must confront and reconcile with her own past.

“The Life Impossible” is a tale brimming with curiosity and adventure. It explores themes of hope, self-discovery, and the profound impact of starting anew in an unexpected place.

Matt Haig, born in 1975, is known for his diverse works spanning fiction and non-fiction for both children and adults.



Often exploring speculative themes, his writing is characterized by dark and quirky takes on family life.

Haig's non-fiction has achieved significant success, with “Reasons to Stay Alive,” a memoir about his struggles with mental health, becoming a number one bestseller and remaining on the UK charts for nearly a year.

He is also the author of popular children's books like “A Boy Called Christmas,” which has been adapted into a film. His adult novels frequently reimagine classic stories or explore complex human experiences. “The Last Family in England” is a canine-centric retelling of Shakespeare's “Henry IV, Part 1,” while “Dead Fathers Club” offers a modern, youthful take on “Hamlet.”

Haig's work often delves into themes of obsession, loss, and the extraordinary within the seemingly ordinary.

Notable works include “The Humans,” a story of an alien tasked with preventing a mathematical discovery, and “How to Stop Time,” featuring a man who has lived for centuries.

His 2020 novel, “The Midnight Library,” about a woman exploring alternative life choices, was a critical and commercial success. Haig's ability to blend genre and explore profound ideas has solidified his place as a popular and respected author.

Cartoon of Day



Benjamin Netanyahu

Cartoonist: Saeed Sadeghi from Iran

Iran, Tajikistan to expand artistic cooperation

TEHRAN-The Iranian Deputy for Artistic Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Nadereh Rezaei and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Tajikistan Alireza Haghighian met with the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan Matlubakhon Sattoriy-on on Friday in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, and discussed the importance of expanding cultural and artistic relations between the two countries. Rezaei is in Dushanbe, accompanied by a delegation, to participate in the International Festival of Professional Theaters and to meet with high-ranking cultural and artistic officials of the country, Iran Theater reported.

At the beginning of the meeting, Sattoriy-on said: “Fortunately, Iran and Tajikistan share many commonalities in cultural and artistic fields.

These ties have already resulted in the production of several joint works in theater and music.

The recent visit of President Masoud Pezeshkian to Tajikistan has also opened a new chapter of cooperation, with cultural and artistic activities being among its key highlights.”

“I believe these collaborations should grow in various forms. In this regard, my colleagues and I at the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan are fully ready to begin a new chapter of cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran,” she added

For her part, Nadereh Rezaei, said: “I also hope that we can witness new breakthroughs in our joint collaborations. We plan to invite Tajik artists and



From left: Alireza Haghighian, Nadereh Rezaei, and Matlubakhon Sattoriy-on meet in Dushanbe on May 2, 2025.

theater and music groups to participate in the Fajr Festivals in 2026.” “The Director-General of the Music Office at the Ministry recently informed me that two full repertoires of poems by Rudaki have been composed, and the Iranian ensemble is prepared to perform this project in Tajikistan. Iranian audiences also hold many fond memories of the late maestro Davlatmand Kholov, and from what I've learned, his son is actively continuing his father's legacy. We are open to organizing per-

formances for him and other groups as well,” she noted. In another part of her remarks, Rezaei announced the Ministry's readiness to form joint ensembles of male and female students from music conservatories to participate in Nowruz-related events.

“We consider the artists of Tajikistan as close friends with whom we can engage in many joint projects. I hereby warmly invite you to visit our country and explore the rich cultur-

Iran participating in Bogotá International Book Fair

novels, poetry by great Iranian poets, and Islamic books in Spanish, has been very well received by visitors to the fair, ISNA reported.

After one week since the fair began, the Holy Quran has attracted the most attention among all the titles presented at Iran's booth.

In addition to presenting various book titles to the audience, other programs have been planned at the Iran pavilion, including the unveiling of new books such as “Loving God,” “Masnavi for Children” (a selection of Rumi's poems), and the novel “Eduardo Agnelli” as well as celebrations for Girls' Day.

Part of the Iranian pavilion showcases exquisite Iranian handicrafts, and another section features demonstrations of Persian Nastaliq calligraphy by one of the country's artists.

One of the most important cultural events in Latin America, the fair kicked off in Bogotá on April 24 and

will run through May 11. Publishers from 30 countries have attended this year's edition of the fair.

Organized by Corferias and the Colombian Book Chamber (CCL), the event transcends borders to become a space for reflection, conversation, memory, meeting and publishing business. The 37th edition has as its conceptual axis a theme as universal as it is intimate: “The words of the body”. Spain is the Guest of Honor at the event.

The fair reaffirms its role as the epicenter of the publishing business in Latin America during the first half of the year, with the professional conferences that include key spaces to strengthen the book industry. In terms of business, there is the International Business Show, the Fellowship Program and the Librarians' Mission, which, together with 12 specialized conferences aimed at all the actors in the book chain, make the FILBo the central stage of the industry in the first half of the year.

Iqbal Lahori memorial held with Iranian, Pakistani scholars

TEHRAN- The Iqbal Lahori Memorial Conference, organized by the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) and the International Affairs Department of the Art Bureau of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization, was held on Thursday with the presence of distinguished Iranian and Pakistani scholars and poets in Tehran.

The event commenced with a speech by Saeed Lashgari, an Art Bureau official, who emphasized the significance of Iqbal Lahori's personality and his cultural influence.

Lashgari highlighted Iqbal Lahori's role as a cultural bridge between Iran and Pakistan. “He served as a prominent figure in expanding cultural and literary interactions between the two nations. Today, greater efforts are needed to recognize and promote Iqbal Lahori's legacy,” he stated. He also reaffirmed the readiness of the Art Bureau to collaborate in introducing Iqbal Lahori's persona to the Iranian and Pakistani cultural communities, especially the youth, emphasizing that joint efforts are essential for a broader understanding of this visionary thinker.

Addressing the shortcomings in the recognition of Iqbal Lahori, Lashgari underscored the importance of cooperation between the two countries to enhance his visibility and influence within their societies.

For his part, Mohammad Bagheri, a renowned scholar of Persian litera-

ture, stressed the necessity of creating suitable platforms to appreciate Iqbal Lahori's value and discussed his multifaceted personality.

He elaborated that Iqbal Lahori's expertise spanned various fields—Persian and Urdu literature, philosophy, Quranic studies, law, sociology, history, and Iranology—making it impossible for any one person to encompass all aspects fully.

“He was both a thinker and a devout Muslim, accepting modern values where appropriate and updating religious teachings accordingly,” he added. Bagheri lamented that society has yet to truly grasp the depth of Lahori's personality and called for more accurate representations.

He described Lahori as a ‘Persianized Indian,’ akin to Ferdowsi's role for Iran—an emblem of Persian language and Iranian culture in South Asia. Next, Mohammadreza Sangari, a literary scholar and expert on Iqbal Lahori, discussed Lahori's identity as a religious intellectual. “This aspect warrants further reflection and study,” Sangari said.

He emphasized that as individuals mature, their personalities become more layered and multifaceted, making Lahori a quintessential example of such complexity.

He described Lahori as a “great teacher,” a figure whose work remains eternally relevant and impactful. “He is a timeless mentor

whose ideas continue to inspire generations,” he asserted.

He also emphasized Lahori's key philosophical themes, particularly self-awareness and self-confidence. He highlighted Lahori's love for Persian literature and his constant encouragement of movement and perseverance in life, urging continuous effort and progress.

The conference featured speeches from prominent Pakistani literary figures, including ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) president Saad S. Khan, Shaiesta Fatima Durrani, Sahar Urdu News anchor; and Zahid Munir Khan Amir, head of Urdu language and Pakistan studies at the University of Tehran, who delivered their remarks in Urdu. At the conclusion of the gathering, a token of appreciation was presented to each participating scholar by the ECO Cultural Institute, symbolizing gratitude for their valuable contributions.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), known as Iqbal Lahori, was a South Asian academic, poet, barrister, philosopher, and politician who is considered one of the most important figures in Urdu literature, with literary works in both Urdu and Persian languages.

Iqbal is admired as a prominent classical poet in Iran, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka and also by international scholars of literature.

He is widely known as the poet of

al and artistic heritage of Iran,” she noted.

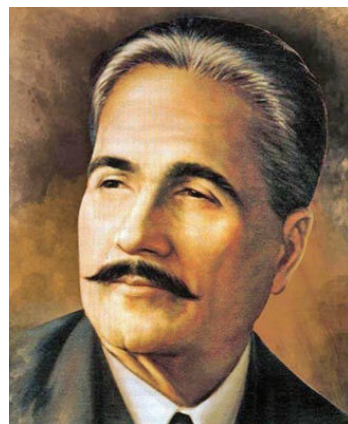
Also speaking at the session, Alireza Haghighian expressed his pleasure at the presence of the Deputy Minister and the Iranian play “The Etiquette of Fox Hunting” at the theater festival in Tajikistan and presented a report on the cultural activities of the Iranian Embassy in Tajikistan.

“Following a series of successful and impactful programs, we now plan to hold more special events in Dushanbe, including commemorative ceremonies for Hafez and Ferdowsi. We've also received significant support from Tajik cultural officials for these efforts, for which I extend our special thanks,” he said.

“A positive recent development has been the participation of Tajik actors and artists in Iranian films and TV series, which we see as a promising step toward new joint ventures between Iran and Tajikistan.

The participation of the Iranian group theater festival is part of a path we are paying close attention to,” the ambassador said.

At the end of the meeting, Rezaei presented gifts on behalf of the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, including handcrafted needlework from artists in Sistan-Baluchestan Province and a collection of Iranian classical music performed by maestro Hossein Alizadeh, to Sattoriy-on. In return, the Tajik minister presented a traditional garment and handmade crafts of Tajikistan to Rezaei.



Islam or the poet of the East. However, about 60 percent of the works of Iqbal is in the Persian language which makes him equally popular in Iran. His poetry has been translated into many languages. Though Iqbal is best known as an eminent poet, he is also a highly acclaimed Muslim philosophical thinker of modern times. He is called the spiritual father of Pakistan.

He was a strong proponent of the political and spiritual revival of Islamic civilization across the world, but in particular in South Asia; a series of lectures he delivered to this effect were published as “The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam”.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he was named the national poet there. He is also known as the “Ha-keem-ul-Ummat” (The Sage of the Ummah) and the “Mufakkir-e-Pakistan” (The Thinker of Pakistan).