

Iran Says ‘Swift’ Response Will Follow Any US-Israeli Aggression



Photo shows the Qassem Basir missile unveiled by Iran on May 4, 2025.

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Iran, Russia vow to deepen strategic ties in key sectors

TEHRAN – Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Russian President Vladimir Putin reaffirmed their countries’ commitment to expanding strategic cooperation during a phone call on Tuesday focused on regional and international developments.

According to the Iranian presidency’s office, the two leaders reviewed progress on joint initiatives, with particular emphasis on banking, transport, and energy. They stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Cooperation Agreement recently signed between Tehran and Moscow.

The agreement was described as a significant milestone in strengthening political, economic, and security collaboration between the two nations.

Both presidents highlighted the firm resolve at the highest levels to fully realize the pact’s objectives.

Tehran-Baku relations enter new promising phase: deputy FM

TEHRAN – Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh has reaffirmed the strategic importance of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Iran, highlighting the growing momentum in bilateral relations and the two countries’ shared cultural and regional interests.

Speaking during a forum titled “Iran-Azerbaijan Relations in the Context of Regional Processes” on Tuesday, Khatibzadeh—who also heads the Iranian Foreign Ministry’s Institute for Political and International Studies—underscored that Tehran and Baku are bound by historical ties, geographic proximity, and common regional aspirations.

“Azerbaijan holds a vital place in Iran’s neighborhood policy, and the close ties between our countries are rooted in shared values and mutual interests,” Khatibzadeh said. “Recent developments have ushered in a new and promising phase in our bilateral relations.”

He described Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian’s recent visit to Baku as a pivotal moment in this evolving relationship, calling it “a turning point in strategic dialogue and mutual trust.”

Khatibzadeh emphasized the need to remove artificial obstacles in bilateral ties and elevate cooperation to a higher level. “The current geopolitical and geo-economic shifts in the region necessitate adaptive and forward-looking policies. Artificial barriers must be removed, and our natural connections must be maximized.” ► Page 2

Iran proposes strategic tourism roadmap at D-8 meeting in Cairo

TEHRAN – On Tuesday, Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, called for a transformative approach to tourism as a driver of sustainable peace and Islamic civilizational renewal during the 5th D-8 Senior Officials Meeting on Tourism, held Tuesday in Cairo.

Speaking before high-level representatives of D-8 member states, Salehi-Amiri presented a comprehensive strategic roadmap aimed at redefining tourism as a central pillar of civilizational diplomacy, sustainable development, and cultural capital generation.

He positioned Iran as a leader in smart governance, cultural diplomacy, and civilization-building investment within the Islamic world.

Highlighting shifting geopolitical dynamics and the emergence of innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence, the minister underscored the need for a new global order rooted in Islamic rationality, Eastern wisdom, and technological innovation. ► Page 6

Trump’s backing for Israel’s Gaza strategy dashes last hopes for peace

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are walking down a path toward Gaza with a controversial and fateful plan that amounts to smashing not a glass ceiling but the hopes of millions of Palestinians and sculpting the future of the region in a manner that not even its harshest critics could have predicted would be decided under U.S. auspices.

Such complicity, as is evident through new proposals and the ongoing uptick in military activity, risks exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe even further, killing off whatever little room is left for peace to exist.

In early 2025, Trump announced a plan to move the entire Palestinian population of Gaza— 2.3 million to neighboring countries such as Egypt and Jordan, and the U.S. would take over Gaza itself. Trump cast this as a humanitarian and economic development project, and he imagined Gaza becoming the “Riviera of the Middle East,” overseen by the United States.

HTS extremism gives chance to Israel to lure Syrian Druze

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — To serve its project of dismantling the fabric of West Asia’s minorities and to accelerate its Israelization project, Israel has been exploiting the Druze since October 7, 2023, by enticing them to abandon their Syrian identity and join the so-called “State of Israel”.

This is done under the auspices of the spiritual leader of the Druze of occupied Palestine, Muwaffaq Tarif, particularly in the occupied Golan Heights, where the estimated population is approximately 42,000.

About six months after the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham regime seized control of Syria, Israeli intervention has resurfaced. It tries to portray itself as the protector of the Druze.

Since the signing of the ill-fated Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Druze have indeed been paying a heavy price. They thwarted the French Mandate project to divide Syria into four states.

Before that, during the Ottoman occupation, Syria’s Druze also fiercely defended the unity of the Levant, forming, along with the Druze of occupied Palestine, a front against the systematic Israelization conspiracy.

Yemen warns Israelis of “severe consequences”

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – A deadly Israeli-American aerial assault on Yemen and its airport has prompted stern warnings of escalation from the Sanaa government.

According to reports, 20 warplanes struck the port city of Hodeidah, including a direct attack on the Bajil Cement Factory.

The injured were rushed to hospitals, while civil defense teams moved in to stabilize the situation at the port. Later, U.S. warplanes launched additional airstrikes, including six raids on the capital, Sanaa.

The Bajil Cement Factory lies 50 kilometers northeast of Hodeidah port and 2.5 kilometers southwest of Bajil city. Established in March 1973, it has since expanded, reaching an annual production capacity of 750,000 tons.

The Yemeni Ministry of Health reported three civilians were killed and 35 others injured in the aggression on the cement factory. One civilian was killed and four others injured in the attacks elsewhere on Hodeidah.

Hebrew media claimed the Israeli air force hit “nine different targets simultaneously,” citing a security source who said, “50 bombs were dropped on Hodeidah port.”

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Daily gasoline output hits 120m liters

TEHRAN – Iran has ramped up its gasoline production to 120 million liters per day in the second Iranian calendar month of Ordibehesht (started on April 21), up from 107 million liters the previous month, even as the country’s refining industry reports a dramatic collapse in profitability, a senior industry official said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a press conference, Nasser Ashouri, Secretary-General of Iran’s Oil Refining Industry Employers Association, said the production boost comes despite the sector facing zero profitability in the previous year. “The refining industry, a key pillar of the national economy, has seen its profit margins vanish entirely, yet it continues operating without interruption,” he stated.

Ashouri said the combined value of Iran’s oil refineries exceeds \$100 billion, but warned that without policy support from the government and parliament, ► Page 4



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President attends closing ceremony of Imam Reza (AS) World Congress

TEHRAN- The closing ceremony of the 6th International Assembly of the Imam Reza (AS) World Congress was held on Monday evening at the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, in Mashhad, attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The event, centered on human rights and dignity through the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (AS), particularly Imam Reza (AS), brought together scholars and thinkers from the Islamic world.

The congress was organized by the Astan Quds Razavi in collaboration with Tehran University and other research centers.

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

France's duplicity

In a note, Shargh addressed Paris's destructive approach in the Iran nuclear talks. It wrote: The statements of French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot reflect Paris' two-faced and divisive approach and are a factor in the European Union's foreign policy towards the nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington. Accusations such as "Iran acquiring nuclear weapons or Iranian missiles threatening Marseille", without credible evidence, merely serve to escalate tensions and justify Paris' unrealistic remarks. France, as one of the parties to the JCPOA, could have played a constructive role in facilitating the talks, but Barrot's approach indicates a confrontational approach that is not consistent with the spirit of diplomacy. This destructive approach, in a situation in which the Tehran-Washington talks require a positive atmosphere and mutual trust, could lead to a decrease in Iran's motivation to continue the talks. Not to lose the chances of diplomacy, Paris should stop setting unrealistic conditions and sanctions threats and instead focus on the nuclear framework of the JCPOA.

Ettelaat: We should not wait for America

In an interview with Foad Izadi, an international affairs analyst, Ettelaat dealt with the domestic issues after the postponement of the Iran-U.S. negotiations. He said: To improve the condition, it is necessary to focus on domestic assets and potential, and negotiations can definitely bring more achievements for the country. Lifting sanctions is in the hands of the U.S. Congress, but the majority of Congress members are supporters of Netanyahu and Israel. Therefore, we cannot wait for the lifting of sanctions. So, we should try to interact with countries that want to work with Iran. In fact, we should learn from the Americans' disloyalty to their promises and rely on our assets instead of fruitless negotiations and looking to the West. Considering sanctions as the only cause of problems is a strategic mistake. So, instead of waiting for America and European countries, let's seek cooperation with neighboring countries and focus on expert knowledge in managing national affairs. In this way, we can solve our problems one by one.

Arman-e-Melli: Trump will not leave the negotiations

Arman-e-Melli spoke with Morteza Makki,

an international relations analyst, about an ambiguous outlook surrounding the Iran-U.S. negotiations. He said: With the postponement of the fourth round of Iran-U.S. negotiations and dismissal of Waltz (Trump's national security advisor), the prospect of the nuclear talks is ambiguous. When Trump entered the White House, he announced that he would resolve the Ukraine crisis very soon, but this did not happen. In these circumstances, Trump needs an important achievement in the international arena. It is not unlikely that Trump is looking to reach an agreement with Iran in the short term and present it as an important international achievement. Waltz's dismissal can even be evaluated as a positive signal toward reaching an agreement with Iran. It is unlikely that Trump will leave the negotiating table with Iran at this stage. This is while in the current situation, Iran has a serious will to reach an agreement. The situation has changed, and today Iran is serious about reaching an agreement. The important point in this regard is that Iran is in a very sensitive situation and that is why it has made the best decision, which is dialogue and diplomacy.

Javan: Trump not seeking to bring the negotiations to deadlock

In a commentary, Javan wrote: After the October 7 incident, Iran emerged as a greater threat to the Zionist regime, and this led their collaborative think tanks of Israel and the U.S. to reach the option of negotiations. Although the Zionist regime is trying to express its dissatisfaction with the negotiations through anti-Iran rhetoric, the text and hypertext in the statements of the Zionist regime's officials indicate that the regime's opposition is not related to negotiations. Even if the demands of the Israeli lobbyists are pursued by Trump, the regime is satisfied with it. As Trump announced last week after a telephone conversation with Netanyahu, he agrees with him on all issues. For this reason, the U.S. seeks to gradually increase pressure on Iran to the point of no return, but not to bring the negotiations to a deadlock. They want to impose conditions on the continuation of talks and put forward America's "list of demands."

Netanyahu meddling in U.S. government to drag it into another disaster: Iran FM

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry Abbas Araghchi has sharply criticized the destructive role of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in exacerbating regional instability and undermining diplomatic efforts between Iran and the United States.

In a post on social media X on Tuesday, Araghchi condemned Washington's "lethal" support for Israeli aggression in Gaza and Yemen, stressing that these interventions have yielded nothing for the American people while fueling further violence and human suffering.

He warned that Netanyahu is openly dictating U.S. policy, attempting to control President Trump's diplomatic approach to Iran, and actively meddling in the internal workings of the U.S. government in order to drag it into another catastrophic conflict in the region.

Araghchi also referred to the Biden administration's approval of an unprecedented \$23 billion aid package to Israel, calling it a clear example of how the American people are being manipulated into underwriting Tel Aviv's destructive agenda.

Despite these provocations, Araghchi reaffirmed that if the objective—recently reiterated by President Trump—is to ensure that "the only thing [Iran] can't have is a nuclear weapon," then a diplomatic solution is within reach. He emphasized that the only viable path forward is diplomacy based on mutual respect and mutual interests.

Iran has repeatedly declared that it has no intention of pursuing, developing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons, a commitment rooted in religious and ethical imperatives. These peaceful intentions have been continuously verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which has confirmed Iran's full compliance with its obligations and found no evidence of diversion toward military purposes—despite the most intrusive inspections regime applied to any member state.

In parallel, the diplomatic process between Tehran and Washington—initiated through Omani mediation in Muscat and later continued in Rome—has seen cautious but measurable progress. U.S. President Donald Trump's envoy, Steve Witkoff, described the ongoing indirect talks as "positive," stating that both sides are working to resume a fourth round of discussions, which had been scheduled for May 3 but were postponed due to the president's upcoming regional visit.

Speaking in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, Witkoff acknowledged that diplomacy is still the preferred course of action, yet continued to reiterate the unfounded narrative of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran.

The Islamic Republic has also firmly rejected any attempts to expand the scope of the talks to include its defensive capabilities or regional influence—issues which remain sovereign and are not subject to external diktats.

Enrichment 'core' to Iran's industrial power, declares nuclear chief amid strategic blueprint launch

TEHRAN—Mohammad Eslami, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), emphasized the pivotal role of uranium enrichment in the nation's technological and industrial sovereignty, underscoring the country's commitment to advance its civilian nuclear program under a newly finalized 20-year strategic plan.

"Nuclear technology, in its truest sense, drives development and resolves challenges across multiple sectors," he declared during a meeting with academic elites and members of the country's National Elites Foundation on Monday, emphasizing Tehran's resolve to advance its nuclear program despite external pressures.

Eslami sharply criticized recent remarks by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who asserted that only nations possessing nuclear weapons should be permitted to enrich uranium.

"The U.S. Secretary of State has openly stated that enrichment is permissible only for nuclear-armed countries. But enrichment is the foundational and driving core [of nuclear progress]. Without mastery in this field, no nation can achieve industrial-scale nuclear capabilities," he stated.

The AEOI chief described Iran's nuclear advancements as a direct challenge to "the hegemony of global domineering powers."



Iran's domestically built centrifuges on display in Tehran in April 2021.

He argued that Western opposition stems from a desire to prevent Iran—a nation with "brilliant human capital, rich resources, and strategic global standing"—from accessing tools of scientific and geopolitical power.

"The nuclear industry is a source of strength for the Islamic Republic, an achievement that the oppressive system [of global dominance] seeks to deny us," Eslami asserted.

20-year roadmap & milestone achievements

Iran has finalized a comprehensive 20-year strategic document to guide its nuclear industry, developed with input from domestic experts and youth.

Eslami described the plan as "a vision-driven, program-centric blueprint critical for institutionalizing

progress."

He stressed the need to "narrate Iran's nuclear achievements accurately" and build "a dynamic, living network for national innovation" to counter misinformation campaigns.

Iran's nuclear program has transitioned into an "industrial phase," marked by advancements in energy, agriculture, and medicine.

Eslami highlighted the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant's role in reducing oil consumption and curbing pollutants, alongside plans to expand nuclear energy's share in Iran's electricity portfolio.

He further noted breakthroughs in irradiation technology to minimize agricultural waste, domestically produced radiopharmaceuticals, and cutting-edge research in plasma, quantum computing, and laser tech-

nologies.

The nuclear chief also emphasized collaboration with private sector partners and adherence to transparency in international engagements, reiterating Iran's commitment to peaceful nuclear activities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Iran's strides in civilian nuclear technology have been lauded by domestic experts as a testament to self-reliance amid decades of sanctions.

Analysts highlight milestones such as the indigenization of uranium enrichment to 60% for medical use, the operationalization of the IR-6 and IR-9 centrifuges, and the Arak heavy water reactor's redesign as victories against Western "maximum pressure" campaigns.

Tehran-Baku ties enter new promising phase: deputy FM

From page 1 ► Khatibzadeh emphasized the need to remove artificial obstacles in bilateral ties and elevate cooperation to a higher level. "The current geopolitical and geo-economic shifts in the region necessitate adaptive and forward-looking policies. Artificial barriers must be removed, and our natural connections must be maximized."

He also welcomed the prospect of a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, stating that Tehran supports any diplomatic effort that enhances regional stability.

On the sidelines of the event, the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) of Iran and Azerbaijan's Center for Analysis of International Relations signed a memorandum of understanding to deepen academic cooperation and launch joint projects. The agreement was signed by Khatibzadeh and Farid

Shafiyev, Chairman of the Azerbaijani center. Shafiyev also hailed President Pezeshkian's trip as a positive sign of revitalized strategic engagement and trust-building.

President Pezeshkian's official visit to Azerbaijan on April 28, at the invitation of President Ilham Aliyev, marked a significant step forward in regional diplomacy. During his trip, Pezeshkian and Aliyev signed seven bilateral cooperation agreements aimed at expanding trade, economic collaboration, and political coordination.

"Our visit is intended to strengthen ties and set an example of constructive regional engagement," Pezeshkian said during the signing ceremony. "The agreements signed today will help our nations take new steps toward cooperation and regional integration."

President Aliyev also expressed satisfaction with the discussions,



describing them as fruitful and centered on mutual interests.

In a related development, Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said on Tuesday that President Pezeshkian's visit placed strong emphasis on joint commercial and investment initiatives. "This trip opened the door to increased bilateral investments and deeper economic engagement," she said.

She added that, as part of ongoing

cooperation, daily direct flights between Tehran and Baku will soon be established—a move aimed at enhancing people-to-people ties and facilitating economic exchange.

Confirming the development, Amin Taraffo, Advisor to the Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development, told reporters on May 6 that direct flights between Tehran, Tabriz, and Baku are planned for the near future.

'U.S. dishonesty proven repeatedly', Iran says is committed but realistic toward talks

TEHRAN – The Iranian government spokesperson has cautioned against excessive optimism in ongoing indirect negotiations with Washington.

Speaking at a weekly press briefing on Tuesday, Fatemeh Mohajerani reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's adherence to its international obligations and the principle of using nuclear energy for civilian purposes. "We are not naive," she added. "The U.S. has repeatedly shown its dishonesty, so our expectations are based on experience, not optimism."

Addressing the state of indirect U.S.-Iran talks, which are being mediated by the Sultanate of Oman, Mohajerani said that Iran has made its position clear: the discussions are limited to the nuclear file, and Tehran remains committed to the diplomatic track.

"Our red lines have been made known. We are only negotiating the nuclear issue. Peaceful nuclear energy is a right of the Iranian people, and we have consistently demonstrated our commitment to diplomacy through active participation in the negotiations," she said. "Now, it's time for the other side to show goodwill."

She also mentioned that Tehran is awaiting further input from Omani officials regarding the continuation of talks. According to Mohajerani, delays in the process were attributed to "technical and logistical" factors, as conveyed by Oman's foreign minister.

Indirect U.S.-Iran nuclear talks have so far taken

place in Muscat and Rome on April 12, 19, and 26, with both sides characterizing the discussions as "positive" and "advancing." A fourth round was scheduled for May 3 in Muscat but was postponed due to logistical challenges, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

'U.S. sanctions against Iran harmful to civilian lives'

The spokesperson for the Iranian government also denounced the sanctions imposed by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump as harmful to the everyday lives of Iranian citizens and indicative of Washington's continued lack of sincerity in its approach to negotiations with Tehran.

Tehran remains fully prepared to respond to various scenarios

She noted that these punitive measures have coincided with ongoing indirect negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, highlighting a contradiction in U.S. policy.

"These sanctions are not new. They have targeted our people time and again, directly affecting access to vital goods such as medicine and essential healthcare services," Mohajerani stated. "While we have implemented necessary measures to mitigate the impact of these sanctions, their very existence underlines America's lack of genuine commitment to dialogue."

She emphasized that the Iranian government remains fully prepared to respond to various scenarios and reiterated the country's readiness to engage constructively, provided the talks are based on mutual respect and realistic expectations.

Mohajerani also responded to recent U.S. statements regarding the prohibition of uranium enrichment in Iran and fresh sanctions targeting the country's economy and political leadership. She described such moves as "illegal and hostile," asserting that they are in direct violation of international law.

"American sanctions are not only unilateral and arbitrary, but they also reflect the United States' disregard for human rights and international norms," she said. "They serve as a clear example of economic terrorism."

When asked whether the ongoing U.S. campaign to isolate Iran has achieved its goal, Mohajerani pointed to Iran's expanding diplomatic and economic outreach, including recent international events hosted in the country.

"If the United States' goal was to isolate Iran, then the presence of delegations from over 110 countries at Iran Expo 2025 and the active participation of African nations in the 3rd Iran-Africa Economic Cooperation Conference held in Tehran last week proves otherwise," she said. "Such developments underscore the failure of the U.S. pressure policy."

Iran says ‘swift’ response will follow any US-Israeli aggression

By Soheila Zarfam

TEHRAN – Recent statements by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who have threatened unwarranted action against Tehran based on unsubstantiated claims of involvement in Yemeni resistance against Israeli aggression, have drawn a firm response from Iran, with the country's Ambassador to the United Nations promising a “swift” response to any illegal aggression by Washington or Tel Aviv.

Amir Saeed Iravani, has formally notified the UN Security Council that threats made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to retaliate against Iran for a Yemeni attack on the occupied territories, and the earlier pronouncements from Pete Hegseth suggesting potential repercussions for Iran linked to Ansarullah's anti-Israel operations in the Red Sea, are violations of international law

“Such inflammatory and belligerent rhetoric, openly threatening the use of force against a sovereign Member State of the United Nations, constitutes a clear and grave



Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Amir-Saeed Iravani

violation of the basic principle of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2(4), and represents a direct threat to international peace and security,” the envoy wrote in a letter addressed to the council, adding that any adventurism by the two parties – whether it be an action against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, or national and vital interests of Iran – will be met with a “swift, proportionate, and legitimate response”.

Iravani also noted that Yemeni

operations against Israeli-bound or Israeli-owned vessels in the Red Sea, as well as the Arab country's routine attacks against Zionist targets in the occupied territories, are a natural response to the genocide the regime has been carrying out in Gaza. The Ansarullah movement in Yemen has said it would stop the operations if Israel allows food inside the enclave and ceases its deliberate massacre of Palestinian civilians.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran remains steadfast in its commit-

ment to regional peace, stability. It does not seek confrontation or escalation. Nevertheless, Iran underscores its inherent right, in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, to defend its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national interests against any unlawful threat or use of force,” the envoy stated.

In the past two years, Iran has exercised its right to self-defense by directly responding to Israeli aggression against its sovereignty with two missile and drone operations, codenamed “True Promise,” targeting the occupied territories. These defensive actions saw multi-layered Israeli, American, European, and certain Arab defense systems scrambling to intercept the projectiles. Several military sites across the occupied Palestinian lands were successfully identified and targeted by Iran during the 2024 operations.

Last week, Iran unveiled a new ballistic missile called Qassem Basir, a solid-fuel missile with a range of 1,200 kilometers. Military analysts say the new missile is able to maneuver more effectively and evade missile defense systems.

Iran opens the door to dialogue: New opportunities for the EU on the world stage

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – During his visit to Pakistan, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi held a telephone conversation on Monday with Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

The call took place at a moment of significant importance for international relations, with a particular focus on regional and global developments, as well as the progress of indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States regarding a new nuclear deal to replace the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which the U.S. unilaterally abandoned in 2018.

During the conversation, Minister Araghchi reaffirmed Iran's commitment to pursuing the diplomatic path to resolve the “artificial concerns” surrounding its nuclear program, which Tehran has proven over the years is solely for peaceful purposes. This diplomatic approach has been consistent since the start of the JCPOA negotiations in 2015, when Iran signed an agreement with world powers to limit its nuclear activities in exchange for the removal of international sanctions. However, the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the deal in 2018 complicated matters, casting doubt on the viability of the agreement and straining Iran's relations with the West.

Araghchi emphasized that unlocking the negotiation process requires that the European side act with “serious will and a realistic vision.” He pointed out that the main concern of the international community has always been the fear of Iran developing nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Iranian minister argued that “this obstacle is surmountable” and that reaching an agreement on the issue is fully achievable, provided that “unrealistic and illogical” positions are avoided. According to the minister, the key lies in a constructive and pragmatic negotiation that once and for all addresses the core issues, without letting short-term political interests take precedence.

The E3 and the ‘snapback mechanism’

However, relations between Iran and the three European countries have been tense recently. Despite the minister's expressed willingness to engage in dialogue, the E3's threat of activating the so-called “snapback mechanism” remains a looming concern. This mechanism, included in the JCPOA, allows European parties to initiate a procedure

to impose sanctions on Iran if they believe the country is not fulfilling its obligations under the agreement.

The use of the “snapback mechanism” by the European countries would further obscure the already strained ties between Iran and the E3. Furthermore, the accusation of non-compliance by Iran lacks a solid foundation, as it was the United States that unilaterally decided to break the agreement in 2018, altering the conditions under which the deal was signed. International analysts have noted that reactivating sanctions under the “trigger mechanism” would be illogical, as while Iran has made some adjustments to its nuclear program in response to the U.S. withdrawal, it has not exceeded the limits established in the original agreement.

Another key topic addressed during the conversation between Araghchi and Kallas was Iran's position on the war in Ukraine and its refuted cooperation with Russia. The Iranian minister was clear in stating that his country is not involved in the Ukraine conflict in any way and that its cooperation with the Russian Federation “is not directed against any third country.”

Iran's position on the war in Ukraine has been characterized by strategic caution and a balanced diplomatic approach. Throughout the war, Iran has been careful to avoid direct involvement in the conflict, firmly rejecting any military participation. Current Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi reiterated that “Iran has not sent any ballistic missiles to Russia,” reaffirming the country's stance of maintaining neutrality and avoiding further engagement in the conflict. In this regard, Iran has offered its services as a mediator, advocating for a diplomatic resolution that would bring an end to the suffering and violence in Ukraine.

At the same time, Tehran has consistently emphasized the importance of “preserving the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of all countries,” a position that is a constant in Iranian foreign policy. This statement, made at the time by the late President Ebrahim Raisi, reflects Iran's approach to international conflicts, always appealing to the principle of non-intervention and respect for the sovereign decisions of nations. This position has allowed Iran to maintain strategic relations with Russia, particularly in the areas of energy and military cooperation, without compromising its neutrality in the



Ukrainian conflict.

Meanwhile, the Iranian government has made a constant call for diplomacy to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. On several occasions, former Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian emphasized that Iran had not supplied weapons to either party in the conflict, in contrast to Western powers, which have provided billions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine. This emphasis on non-intervention and diplomatic resolution has been a consistent theme in Iran's foreign policy, positioning the country as a neutral actor willing to mediate in the conflict.

EU willing to enter dialogue, at least for now

For her part, Kallas, as the representative of the European Union, expressed Brussels' willingness to keep communication channels open with Iran. In the conversation, the EU's High Representative welcomed the exchange of views on shared concerns, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a diplomatic approach to negotiations. The EU official proposed that the deputy ministers of both sides work together to prepare the necessary conditions for a new round of talks. This proposal was well received by Araghchi, who highlighted the importance of establishing a solid and trust-based foundation to resume negotiations effectively.

Kallas also expressed, on behalf of the European Union, her condolences for the recent explosion at the Shahid Rajaei port, which resulted in the loss of lives, and showed solidarity with the victims and their families.

The current international context presents a complex scenario in which the relationship between Europe and the United States is being reconfigured, which could have significant implications for the future of European diplomacy and its relationship with Iran. In recent years, Europe has begun to question the

reliability of its traditional ally, the United States, especially on security matters. As the transatlantic bond fractures, some European analysts warn that Europe will need to seek greater strategic autonomy, not just in defense but also in its relations with powers like Iran.

Former NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen recently warned that “the transatlantic bond is crumbling.” In this context, several European countries have begun to reassess their foreign policies. While France, Germany, and Spain seek to articulate a common response to the European security challenge, other countries, such as Italy and Hungary, are increasingly aligned with the policies promoted by former U.S. President Donald Trump. This fracture within the European Union could have a significant impact on negotiations with Iran, as some member states may be more inclined to support tougher policies, while others may seek a more diplomatic approach.

The debate on European security

The debate on Europe's security is no longer just a political issue; it is directly tied to the continent's defense and strategic autonomy. Recently, Friedrich Merz, the future German chancellor, expressed in an interview that “Germany must completely rethink its defense agreements and end decades of dependence on Washington.” Such statements reflect a significant shift in German policy, which has historically been one of the United States' closest allies in Europe.

As the European Union faces a geopolitical reconfiguration, it is clear that relations with Iran could play a key role in redefining European foreign policy. While internal tensions persist, dialogue with Iran may offer a pathway for Europe to seek greater autonomy on the international stage, while addressing its security and regional stability concerns.

Iran lose to Portugal in 2025 Beach Soccer World Cup

TEHRAN – Iran concluded their FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Seychelles 2025 Group B campaign with a 7-5 defeat to two-time champions Portugal on Monday.

Iran finished in second place in Group B, setting up a quarter-final meeting against Group A winners Belarus on Thursday. Portugal will face Japan.

Team Melli struck first inside The Paradise Arena. Mehdi Mirjalili dribbled the ball forward and, with the Portuguese expecting a trademark volley, cannily played a perfect pass to Mohammadali Nazarzadeh, whose excellent, acrobatic finish gave Pedro Mano no chance.

Andre Lourenco equalized, but Iran regained the lead through Reza Amiri's stunning overhead kick.

A period of Portuguese dominance then ensued. Leo Martins, one of the most lethal finishers in the game, turned provider as the team netted five goals without reply.

Mohammadali Mokhtari pulled one back in style, only for Miguel Pintado to restore Portugal's four-goal advantage.

Nazarzadeh and Mokhtari pulled two back for Iran, but it was too little, too late.

Nasiri, Gholizadeh win medals in 2025 World Junior Championships

TEHRAN – Iran had a 1-2 finish in both the heaviest men's events on the final day of the 2025 World Youth and Junior Championships in Lima, Peru. The women's winners on an all-juniors program were from Turkmenistan and Turkey.

Iran's big four weighed in at 509kg and lifted a combined total of 1,556kg.

At 109kg Alireza Nasiri has been making 230kg clean and jerks in training – enough for the junior world record – but he declined his final attempt after five good lifts and finished 30kg clear on 180-220-400.

Farhad Gholizadeh, who won the Asian youth title on his last international appearance two years ago, made 165-205-370 in second place.

“I was tired and because it was one lift straight after the other I didn't feel ready for the world record today – but I know I can do it,” Nasiri said.

He lifted at 102kg last year, when he was second in the Asian Juniors to the junior world record holder Shahzadek Matyakubov on 171-218-389. “I felt better at 102 but I wanted to come up in weight because I want to be going for gold at the Los Angeles Olympics,” said Nasiri. “The category will be 110 there. I am 19 and I can improve a lot in three years.”

The +109kg super-heavyweights Hamidreza Mohammadianha and Taha Nemati made lower totals than Nasiri and have very little chance of making it to the Olympics in 2028.

Iran's leading super-heavyweight, 21-year-old Alireza Yousefi, is training again after knee surgery three months ago and is hoping to lift at the World Championships in Norway in October. Then there is Ayat Sharifi, 24, who is entered for the Asian Championships in China starting this week.

Mohammaditanha made 181-213-394 and Nemati 180-212-392. They tried to make big jumps in clean and jerk and both failed with two of their attempts.

Andrii Borovskiy from Ukraine held on to third place at 109kg on 165-201-366 when Marcin Ziolkowski from Poland failed with his final clean and jerk attempt at 207kg.

Shirbeigi optimistic for third title in AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup

TEHRAN – Set to make their tournament debut, the Philippines arguably could not have asked for tougher opening opponents than Iran

as both prepare to face off in their AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025 Group B tie on Wednesday.

The reigning champions have won all of their 10 matches in the competition's history and will be confident of adding a third crown. Having led them to glory in the inaugural 2015 edition, Foruzan Solymani returns to helm a side with plenty of experience, with five players set to appear in their third tournament.

One of them is Sara Shirbeigi, who is the competition's all-time top-scorer with 14 goals, who is optimistic about recovering from an injury setback to play her part.

“I hope we can become champions of Asia for the third consecutive time,” she said. “All our goals and efforts will be focused on this. However, as you know, achieving this is challenging since teams like Japan and Thailand are strong competitors. Nonetheless, we are Iran.”

“Our team still has weaknesses that we worked on during the recent SAT Futsal Championship in Thailand and I hope that by addressing these issues, we can lift the championship trophy for the third time and make our nation proud.”

Iran women futsal are Asian best team: Rafael Rodriguez

TEHRAN – The Philippines' women's futsal team head coach Rafael Rodriguez says that Iran is the best team in Asia.

The Philippines will certainly aim to give the Central Asians a stiff test as it continues to prepare for the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup 2025 in November, which it has automatically qualified for as host.

While Rodriguez believes preparations have gone well, he acknowledged that Iran will pose a tough challenge, especially with key striker Katrina Guillou — scorer of four of their 10 Qualifiers goals — sidelined.

“It's a big challenge for us – they're the best team in Asia,” said Rodriguez. “We're going to learn a lot from that match. We know it will be very difficult, but we're approaching it with great enthusiasm.

“We have tried to train as much as possible in the Philippines over the past month, although players have been joining gradually over the last few weeks. We played two friendly matches in the Philippines, and the rest of our preparation took place in China.

“I don't think there's any one key player but it's true that Katrina, who couldn't be with us, brought a lot of experience. She's also a player with a knack for scoring goals,” the Spaniard said.

Shahrdari Gorgan clinch 2024/25 Iran Basketball League title

TEHRAN – Shahrdari Gorgan defeated Tabiat 98-95 on Monday to win the 2024/25 Iranian Basketball Super League (IBSL) championship.

American point guard Glenn Cosey scored 26 points, helping lead Shahrdari to victory.

The team secured the title in a best-of-five series after defeating Tabiat twice last week.

This marks Shahrdari's third league title in their history.

The Iranian Basketball Super League (IBSL), founded in 1998, is Iran's top professional men's basketball league.

Thermal power generation rises 10% ahead of peak summer demand



TEHRAN – Iran has increased its thermal power generation capacity by 10 percent compared to last year, as the country braces for record-breaking electricity demand this summer, a senior energy official said.

Homayoun Haeri, Deputy Energy Minister for Electricity and Energy, said during a joint meeting with officials from the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade that early and intense heatwaves—expected to push temperatures three to six degrees Celsius above the long-term average—are driving electricity consumption to unprecedented levels.

“The country’s power demand is expected to exceed 85,000 megawatts at peak this summer,” Haeri warned. “Despite the 10 percent boost in thermal power capacity, this increase alone will not be sufficient to meet the soaring demand.”

He noted that Iran’s hydroelectric plants,

which have a combined generation capacity of 12,500 megawatts, are facing severe limitations due to a more than 40 percent drop in water reserves. Those reserves are being held for critical months like July and August, when electricity imbalances are expected to peak.

According to Haeri, average daily electricity consumption in Iran has jumped from 936,062 megawatt-hours last year to over one million megawatt-hours this year—a nine percent increase.

In response, the Energy Ministry has rolled out 36 power management and optimization initiatives, including public awareness campaigns, efficiency programs across sectors, on-site power generation, and stricter monitoring of usage patterns.

Haeri also announced the deployment of over 6.0 million smart meters for high-consumption users, aimed at improving monitoring and demand-side management.

He emphasized that the key to maintaining grid stability this summer will be widespread energy conservation. “Saving electricity and managing consumption with precision across all sectors is the only way to get through the coming months.

The active cooperation of the public, industry, and government institutions is absolutely essential.”

Annual non-oil export from Semnan province rises 46%

TEHRAN- The value of non-oil export from Semnan province increased by 46 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), according to the director-general of the province’s customs department.

Morteza Hajian-Nejad said that 400,000 tons of non-oil commodities worth \$223 million were exported to 41 countries in the previous year, indicating also 11 percent rise in terms of weight year on year.

Referring to the increase in the province’s export markets, he continued: “The province’s major amount of export in the past year have been to five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Russia, and Pakistan.”

The province’s main exported goods included goods produced by the province’s industrial units, plastic products, ingots, base oil, sulfuric acid, hydrocarbons, wires and cables, detergents, aluminum sheets, ferrosilicon, tiles and ceramics, he added.

He announced a 37-percent increase in the average value of Semnan’s exported goods per ton and stated: “The average value of each ton of the province’s exported goods in the past year was \$557, which indicates a 37-percent growth in this important indicator.”

The director-general of the province’s customs department further announced that over 460,000 tons of non-oil products worth more than \$290 million were imported to the province from 27 countries in the previous year.

Production line machinery and raw materials for production units were the main imported items, followed by various types of refrigeration compressors, soil and zinc, enamel powder, transformer parts, dust extractors, metal strips, and textile auxiliary materials, the official stated and named Turkey, China, Germany, South Korea and the UAE as the major sources of imports to the province in the past year.

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

Iran’s annual pistachio export stands at \$1.5b

TEHRAN – The value of Iran’s pistachio export stood at \$1.5 billion in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) reported.

According to the IRICA report, Iran’s agricultural exports rose by 29 percent in the previous year, reaching \$5.2 billion.

IRICA reported that Iran exported 7.6 million tons of agricultural products during the year, marking an 11 percent increase in weight compared to the previous year.

Key export commodities included various types of pistachios, tomatoes, and dates. Pistachio exports led the sector, generating \$1.5 billion in revenue, followed by \$233 million in tomatoes and \$205 million in dates.

‘Iran’s non-oil export to Iraq can rise to \$20b’

TEHRAN- The chairman of Iran-Iraq Joint Chamber of Commerce said that the value of Iran’s annual non-oil export to Iraq can be increased to \$20 billion.

Iran and Iraq have a strategic relationship that can grow and develop with an economic focus, Yahya Al-e Es’haq noted.

“Last year, the value of our non-oil export to Iraq was about \$12 billion, and it is predicted that this figure will increase to \$20 billion in the coming years, which we believe is achievable and possible”, he reiterated.

According to an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$11.9 billion to Iraq in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, said that Iraq was Iran’s second top non-oil export destination in the previous year.

Considering Iran’s vast export capacity and Iraq’s large market for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges.

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target.



In late May 2024, the head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said that Iran exports some 2,200 products, valued at \$12 billion, to neighboring Iraq annually.

Speaking in a meeting entitled “Reviewing opportunities and challenges of attracting Iraqi investors and strengthening trade relations between the two countries in line with demarcating Iran in the regional value chain”, Jafar Hosseini said that Iraq, benefiting from \$85 billion foreign currency reserves, 130 tons of gold reserves, and 147 billion barrels of proven reserves of crude oil, is among the richest countries in West Asia.

Currently, Iran exports over 2,200 various types of goods and products to Iraq, he said, adding that more than half of the active

Iranian traders are present in the Iraqi market.

Developing the trade infrastructures to facilitate trade between the two countries, encouraging traders to invest in Iraq, promoting trade through dispatching and admitting trade delegations and participating in exhibitions of the two countries, etc. are suggested to strengthen the trade and economic relations between Iran and Iraq, he underlined.

In an interview in mid-December last year, the ambassador of Iran in Iraq praised the economic relations between the two sides and expressed hope that these relations will be more and better.

Mohammad Kazem Ale-Sadeq announced the value of commercial exchanges between the two countries, and stated that economic

relations between Iran and Iraq are very good, and expressed hope that these relations will improve.

The envoy further noted: “Iraq is an important country in the region, and we have very important economic, political, and social relations with this neighbor.”

In early May 2024, Tehran hosted the 6th meeting of the Iran-Iraq Joint Economic Committee.

The two-day event was co-chaired by the former Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ehsan Khandouzi and Iraqi Minister of Commerce Atheer Daoud Al-Ghurairi.

On the first day of the meeting, specialized committees including commercial, industrial, agricultural, standardization and quality control, energy, finance, banking, investment and Insurance, shipping, transport, and Customs, scientific, educational, tourism, health, as well as sports consulate held meetings to discuss areas for cooperation.

Increasing non-oil exports to the neighboring countries is one of the major plans that the Iranian government has been pursuing in recent years.

Iran shares land or water borders with 15 countries namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Saudi Arabia.

‘Expo 2025 spurs interest in Iran’s investment potential’



TEHRAN – The 2025 edition of Iran’s Expo has drawn strong interest from international visitors and created new opportunities for long-term business partnerships, according to a senior official from the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA).

Mohammadreza Bahraman, deputy head of ICCIMA, told Tasnim News Agency that nearly every foreign visitor to Iran during the Expo made a stop at the exhibition site. “The presence of international guests, particularly diplomats and business representatives, was significantly higher than in previous years,” he said.

Bahraman highlighted the growing recognition of Iran’s industrial and production capacities

among foreign participants. “Many visitors had limited prior knowledge of Iran’s capabilities, but once at the Expo, they were able to see for themselves the broad transformations underway across different sectors,” he said. “This kind of engagement can lead to direct negotiations with Iranian producers and ultimately long-term commercial cooperation.”

The ICCIMA official noted that this year’s Expo offered more space to the chamber compared to previous editions, including a dedicated hall where local chambers from across Iran showcased regional products. “Representatives from every province participated, presenting their goods in provincial booths. This helped unlock access to new markets, with visitors ranging from African nations to regional countries,” Bahraman said.

He stressed the importance of the presence of foreign ambassadors and their trade attaches. “These diplomats can act as channels of communication between Iran and their home countries. We made sure to host and engage with every single visitor who came to our section,” he added.

One example cited was the visit of a chamber

of commerce president from a western province in Oman, who toured the ‘Mining House’ in Hall 6. “That level of interaction signals a lively and dynamic exhibition, which in itself is a form of investment,” Bahraman said. “Expo is a state-funded initiative, and the government this year made broader use of its tools, resulting in greater turnout.”

Commenting on the prospects of U.S. firms investing in Iran, Bahraman said the Iranian private sector is open to global cooperation, except in cases where domestic restrictions apply. “In principle, investment knows no borders. The chamber’s mission is to protect and promote investment, and we face no limitations with most countries,” he said, blaming sanctions for any existing barriers.

He emphasized that Iran has communicated through interviews with foreign media that there is no hostility on its part. “It’s up to the other side to pave the way for direct interactions so traders on both ends can benefit from mutual needs.”

If high-level talks progress further, Bahraman said ICCIMA will play a central role through economic taskforces and trade desks.

Daily gasoline output hits 120m liters

From Page 1 ► the industry’s financial health and future investments are at risk. “We need facilitation, not obstruction. This industry must remain viable,” he said.

He criticized the government for treating the private sector as a com-

petitor, urging it instead to foster trust so investors feel secure putting capital into production.

According to Ashouri, the profitability of the country’s 10 refineries plunged in the second half of the previous year, with total earnings dropping

to around 4.3 quadrillion rials (approximately \$8.6 billion). He warned that 18 key refinery development and quality-upgrade projects worth nearly \$18 billion are now in jeopardy due to the sector’s financial freefall.

Ashouri attributed the crisis to the

Oil Ministry’s failure to implement a revised pricing formula for feedstock and petroleum products. “Because the new pricing regulations have not been enforced, refinery financial statements for the previous year have not yet been finalized,” he said.

Iran, Qatar discuss ways to enhance transport ties

TEHRAN – Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq and Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met in Doha on Tuesday, aiming to boost bilateral relations in the transport sector.

The meeting focused on reviewing cooperation in air transport, infrastructure, ports, and shipping.

The two sides also discussed increasing cooperation between Bushehr Port and Qatari

ports, establishing new cargo and passenger shipping lines, signing a road transport agreement, and expanding transport and transit infrastructure within the North-South, Ashgabat, and Turkey-Iran-Qatar corridors.

Majlis Research Center reports 2.8% GDP growth for Iran in 2024–25

TEHRAN – Iran’s economy grew by 2.8 percent in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended March 20, 2025), with non-oil growth reaching 2.7 percent, according to the latest report by the Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Research Center.

The center said in its economic update that, based on its calculations, Iran’s gross domestic product (GDP) in Esfand (the final month of the Persian calendar year) expanded by 3.6 percent year-on-year, while GDP excluding

oil grew by 4.2 percent.

By sector, the report shows that in Esfand 1403:

– The agriculture sector posted a 4.6 percent increase in value added.

– The crude oil and natural gas sector contracted by 3.8 percent.

– Industry and mining grew by 3.1 percent.

– The services sector expanded by 5.1 percent.

The research arm of Iran’s parliament also estimated that in the

winter quarter of 1403, overall economic growth stood at 1.8 percent, with non-oil growth slightly higher at 1.9 percent, compared with the same period a year earlier.

The annual growth rate of 2.8 percent in 1403 marks a slowdown from the average growth of 4.7 percent recorded between 2020 and 2023, the report noted.

The oil and gas sector registered only a 0.1 percent growth in the fall quarter of 1403. According to secondary sources cited by OPEC and

domestic estimates, Iran’s oil production in Esfand showed weaker growth compared to both the previous months and the same month the year before.

The industry and mining group—which includes construction, manufacturing, mining, and utilities—expanded by 3.4 percent in the fall quarter of 1403. In Esfand, it recorded a 3.1 percent year-on-year increase, largely driven by rising industrial output and a surge in the sale of construction inputs listed on the stock exchange.

HTS extremism gives chance to Israel to lure Syrian Druze

From page 1 ► In the 1950s, despite the persecution of former President Adib Shishakli, they rejected the Israeli exploitation of their cause; Shishakli invaded Sweida with 10,000 soldiers, shelling them with heavy weapons, killing dozens and destroying their homes.

When the Israeli enemy occupied the Golan Heights in 1967, the Druze rejected “Israeli identity” and formed resistance groups that rebelled against the Israeli military rule several times. However, their role declined after the war imposed on Syria.

Before 2011, President Hafez al-Assad and his son Bashar al-Assad succeeded in preserving the Druze status in state institutions. However, some officers from Sweida and Jaramana quickly defected during the first year of the war imposed on Bashar al-Assad government.

Nevertheless, many Druze officers participated in repelling the takfiri aggression, including the martyred hero Issam Zahreddine.



In 2014, the Druze were subjected to a massacre in the town of Qalb Lawzeh by HTS to force them to “convert to Islam.” Since then, Druze villages have become a haven for families of Takfiri terrorists. So, the Druze had no choice but to resist, fearing the loss of their lands!

After HTS took control of Syria in late 2024, the Druze found themselves once again under the terror of an ideologically motivated army run by foreign terrorists who viewed the Druze

as “non-Muslim dhimmis” who should be killed or, at best, forced to convert to Islam.

The Druze once again found themselves in a spiral of terror after the massacres on the Syrian coast and the events in Jaramana and Ashrafieh Sahnaya.

The Druze once again found themselves in a whirlpool of chaos and anxiety about Syria's future, especially since Foreign Minister Asaad al-Sheibani did not hesitate to divide Syrians into minorities and majorities

from the UN podium, confirming Druze fears that the current regime, every time it is drowning in bloodshed, rushes to make a grave political concession to appease foreign powers; this was the case when the Americans extracted an agreement establishing semi-autonomy for the Kurds.

The de facto regime has not stopped sending messages—direct and indirect—to reassure Israel that Syria no longer poses a threat to it, and that it is ready to normalize relations and surrender Mount Hermon and the entire Golan Heights for free.

Meanwhile, if the Israeli enemy claims to be treating the Druze with “special treatment,” it is because the Druze inhabit a geostrategic area that it has long sought to control. Thus, the recent air campaign it launched under the pretext of defending the Druze was intended to win them over, consolidate the division by force, and seize their lands!

Trump's backing for Israel's Gaza strategy dashes last hopes for peace

From page 1 ► He proposed that those Palestinians who wanted to depart Gaza would be allowed to leave with a right to return or be resettled elsewhere. Netanyahu publicly championed this vision as well, calling it “extraordinary” and “the most realistic idea” he'd heard for rehabilitating Gaza.

But this scheme clearly runs counter to international law, which forbids the expulsion of civilian populations by force, and has been condemned by human rights groups, Arab countries and large numbers of politicians inside the U.S. Even some Republicans have recoiled at the notion of the U.S. acquiring Gaza or ejecting its population by force. Yet Netanyahu's government, which is under increasing international legal pressure and domestic political strain, seems to be all but embracing Trump's disengagement and tacit blessing to act as it pleases with impunity.

As Israel gets ready for a significant military escalation in Gaza, this headline strategy is showing up on the ground. Plans to mobilize tens of thousands of reservists for a renewed offensive dubbed “intensive” and possibly “the concluding moves” of the war



were recently approved by Netanyahu's security cabinet. In order to strengthen a blockade that has already resulted in severe shortages of food, water, and medication, the Israeli military intends to seize and secure sizable portions of Gaza while evicting Palestinians further south.

Analysts caution that this escalation runs the risk of destroying any last hope for peace, especially when combined with the Trump-Netanyahu plan for population displacement. Trump has mostly distanced himself from the conflict in recent weeks, essen-

tially giving Netanyahu a free hand. Initially, he demonstrated some diplomatic engagement to free hostages and broker ceasefire.

This Trump-Netanyahu collusion has far-reaching consequences. The proposal for forced relocation is reminiscent of past population transfers that have resulted in chronic instability and hardship. With hundreds of thousands of Palestinians at risk of being displaced due to continuous bombardment and blockade, the military escalation poses a threat to worsen Gaza's humanitarian crisis. In the meantime, the absence of active U.S. diplomatic involvement erodes the likelihood of a negotiated settlement and eliminates a vital potential check on Israeli military actions.

Trump's silence and Netanyahu's militarism now serve as complementary pillars in a policy that shoves diplomacy aside in favor of domination. Left unchecked, this complicity will not only crush prospects for a just resolution, but also sow the seeds of further instability well beyond Gaza's borders. The world must face down this moment before peace is permanently ceded to oblivion.

Yemen warns Israelis of “severe consequences”

From page 1 ► Israeli outlets added that “the attack on Yemen was fully coordinated with the United States.” However, a U.S. military official denied any direct American involvement in the Israeli airstrikes on Yemen.

Despite the extensive attacks, Israeli Channel 13 quoted a security official as saying, “The airstrikes in Yemen are merely a repetition of the past. We do not expect them to halt Houthi missile launches, and the air force is preparing for a potential Houthi retaliation.”

Israeli media also reported “a state of alert in Israel over the possibility of a Yemeni response,” while confirming that “the attacks have ended.”

The Israeli military on Tuesday warned residents near Sanaa International Airport to leave the area, a day after a hypersonic ballistic missile landed about 200 meters away from Tel Aviv's

Ben Gurion International Airport. Hours later, Sanaa airport came under Israeli attack.

In response, Yemen's Higher Operations Command Center (HOCC) issued a formal notice to global airlines:

“In response to the Israeli regime's escalation and its decision to intensify aggressive operations against the besieged Gaza Strip, and in line with our religious, humanitarian, and moral duty to stand with the oppressed Palestinian people, the Yemeni Armed Forces hereby declare:

A comprehensive ban on all air navigation to and from enemy airports, handled by Ben Gurion Airport, effective immediately for an indefinite duration.

We urge all international airlines to strictly comply with this declaration to ensure the safety of aircraft, passengers, and crew.”

Following the aggression, a high-ranking Yemeni source also declared, “No force can deter us,” adding that “this aggression will only push Yemen to continue pursuing its noble objectives.”

The source warned that the next phase “will be extremely difficult for the Israeli enemy,” emphasizing that “the air blockade on occupied Palestine is a painful blow to the fragile structure of the entity.”

Ali al-Qahoum, a member of Ansarallah's Political Bureau, cautioned that “the consequences of the Israeli aggression on Yemen will be severe for the Zionists.”

He asserted that “the Zionists' targeting of civilian infrastructure reflects their failure and confusion, but this will not stop Yemen from supporting Gaza and Palestine.”

Al-Qahoum further warned, “The Zionists should not rejoice.

Yemen's response will come with force, measure for measure, and they must brace for devastating strikes.”

Yemeni Minister of Information Hashem Sharaf al-Din stated, “The Israeli enemy's targeting of a port and a cement factory in Yemen expands the Yemeni armed forces' target bank in the usurping Israeli entity, which will be weaker than a spider's web under its qualitative strikes.”

Military expert Khaleel Nasrallah commented, “The Israeli aggression against Yemen shows that Israel's military target bank in Yemen is effectively zero. Israel resorts to destroying infrastructure to tighten the blockade on Yemen and pressure Sanaa into retreat—exactly as Washington does. Certainly, Sanaa will deliver a painful response, and the possibility of imposing an aerial blockade on the Israeli entity is indeed a painful prospect.”

human conscience, not to participate in a war that threatens the lives of our children,” she emphasized.

Meanwhile, the army of the Zionist regime has announced that it has called up thousands of reserve forces to participate in the new operation in Gaza, a move that has further heightened the concerns of the hostages' families.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

“The Israeli government should not sacrifice the lives of the hostages for military objectives. We demand immediate access to an agreement for the return of our loved ones,” part of the statement reads.

Simultaneous with the approval of the plan, individual protests have also intensified.

At a Knesset committee meeting on Monday, Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is being held hostage, urged reserve soldiers to refrain from joining the military operation. “I ask the soldiers, for the sake of preserving

Merz becomes German chancellor in second Bundestag vote



Friedrich Merz will be the German chancellor after winning a vote in the Bundestag Tuesday afternoon, following an embarrassing initial failure that plunged Berlin into political turmoil, Politico reported.

The conservative leader, who was badly damaged by the unprecedented failure to secure the chancellorship in a first vote earlier in the day, secured 325 votes in the dramatic second round — above the 316 needed to win.

After the vote, Merz appeared to be visibly relieved.

Merz was the first would-be chancellor in postwar history to fail to win first-time backing. His conservatives have signed a coalition with Social Democrats.

Trump and Canada's Carney meet at White House



Canada's Prime Minister, Mark Carney, met with the U.S. president, Donald Trump, on Tuesday in a closely watched encounter at the White House that could hint at the future relationship between the two countries and their two leaders.

Over the weekend, Trump said it was “highly unlikely” he would use military force to annex Canada, a key trading partner and political ally. In recent months, the president has repeatedly threatened to use economic coercion to weaken Canada to the point that it accedes to Trump's wish to make it the 51st state.

“I think we're not ever going to get to that point, something could happen with Greenland ... I don't see it with Canada, I just don't see it, I have to be honest with you,” he said, according to Reuters.

Carney crafted much of his federal election campaign on Canada's collective outrage over Trump's to the nation's sovereignty. During his victory speech last week, Carney used one of his campaign's most frequently delivered lines, telling exuberant supporters Trump wanted to “break us, so that America can own us.”

Carney also used his first post-election press conference to once again quash any idea Canada was interested in becoming the 51st US state, a proposal repeatedly floated by Trump.

“It's always important to distinguish want from reality,” Carney said on Friday.

EU unveils long-promised plan to quit Russian gas by end-2027

The EU on Tuesday unveiled a long-prom-

ised plan to phase out its remaining gas imports from Russia by the end of 2027, a challenge given Europe's continued dependence on Russian fossil fuels.

“Today the European Union sends a very clear message to Russia: no more, no more, will we permit Russia to weaponize energy against us,” EU energy chief Dan Jorgensen said as he set out the measures.

The European Commission's two-step plan would put an end to new contracts and existing short-term spot contracts with Russian suppliers by the end of 2025. All remaining imports would be banned by the end of 2027.

Macron to host Syria's al-Sharaa



French President Emmanuel Macron will host Syrian counterpart Ahmed al-Sharaa on Wednesday for the former terrorist leader's first European visit, the French presidency told AFP.

Macron will “reiterate France's support for the construction of a new Syria, a free, stable, sovereign Syria that respects all components of Syrian society,” the presidency said Tuesday.

“This meeting is part of France's historic commitment to the Syrian people who aspire to peace and democracy,” it added.

During the meeting, Macron will emphasize “his demands on the Syrian government, primarily the stabilization of the region, including Lebanon, and the fight against terrorism,” the presidency said.

Syria's new authorities, who have roots in the al-Qaeda jihadist network, have vowed inclusive rule in the multi-confessional, multi-ethnic country.

They have repeatedly pledged to protect all religious groups and include all of Syrian society in the transition, with many countries saying they will monitor the new authorities' conduct before fully lifting sanctions.

Smotrich says Gaza's population to be expelled abroad ‘within months’

Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has asserted that Israel will be in a position to “declare victory” in Gaza “within months”, according to Arutz Sheva.

Speaking at a conference in the illegal Israeli settlement of Ofra, Smotrich said Gaza will soon “be completely destroyed”, with its population concentrated by an Israeli-imposed security corridor in the south of the enclave. From there, Palestinians “will leave in large numbers to third countries”, said Smotrich, in the comments carried by Arutz Sheva.

This statement from the minister follows PM Netanyahu's announcement on Monday that Palestinians in Gaza would be moved

Start of internal rupture: Israel on brink of social collapse

By Farhad Pashavand
expert on International Affairs

TEHRAN – The official approval of a plan for the complete occupation of the Gaza Strip by the cabinet of the Zionist regime has sparked a wave of protest and concern among the families of the hostages.

The Hostage and Missing Families Forum has issued a harsh statement warning that the implementation of this military operation will severely threaten the lives of the remaining hostages in Gaza.

“The Israeli government should not sacrifice the lives of the hostages for military objectives. We demand immediate access to an agreement for the return of our loved ones,” part of the statement reads.

Simultaneous with the approval of the plan, individual protests have also intensified.

At a Knesset committee meeting on Monday, Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is being held hostage, urged reserve soldiers to refrain from joining the military operation. “I ask the soldiers, for the sake of preserving

Iran announces adjustment to visa validity for U.S. applicants



TEHRAN – Iran's Interests Section in Washington, D.C. has announced a reduction in the

validity period for tourist and entry visas issued to U.S. applicants.

According to a statement released on Monday, the validity of both entry and tourist visas has been shortened from 90 days to 45 days, effective May 1, 2025.

Under the new regulation, visa holders must enter the Islamic Republic within 45 days from the date of issuance, the Interests Section confirmed.

No further details were provided regarding the reasons behind the policy change.

Festival of Iranian tribes kicks off in Bojnurd

TEHRAN – A festival of Iranian tribes, alongside a handicrafts and souvenirs exhibition, officially opened on Monday evening in the scenic Besh Qardash area of Bojnurd, the capital of North Khorasan province in north-eastern Iran.

Ali Mostofian, the provincial tourism chief, said the event is aimed at promoting social vitality and strengthening solidarity among the country's diverse ethnic groups.

The festival features a wide array of cultural displays, traditional handicrafts, and regional souvenirs from across Iran.

Artisans and craftspeople from various provinces have set up over 140 booths showcasing their handmade goods and locally produced products.

Additionally, ten traditional nomadic black tents, known as Siah-Chador, are offering visitors a glimpse into tribal life and their distinctive crafts.

According to Mostofian, eight artistic groups from the provinces of Khuzestan, Golestan, Gilan, East Azarbaijan, Kordestan, South Khorasan, and North Khorasan are participating in the festival.

More than 100 nationally recognized artists are performing to highlight the rich Iranian-Islamic cultural heritage.

North Khorasan's artisans are also well-represented, offering a diverse collec-



tion of locally-made handicrafts and souvenirs across 30 booths, the official said.

The festival and exhibition will continue to welcome visitors through May 11, drawing both locals and tourists interested in exploring the living traditions of Iran's ethnic heritage.

Situated at the northern edge of the Aladagh Mountains, Besh Qardash is said to be a captivating destination for travelers visiting Bojnurd.

The name "Besh Qardash" means "Five Brothers" in Turkish, a reference to the five springs that define the area.

With its rich history, therapeutic springs, and lush natural beauty, the property offers a unique blend of culture, relaxation, and exploration, making it a must-visit spot for travelers to the region.

Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Stari Ras and Sopoćani



Stari Ras and Sopoćani is a serial property consisting of four separate components located in the Raška region of southern Serbia: Sopoćani Monastery, Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery, Holy Apostles St Peter and St Paul Church (St Peter's Church), and the archaeological site of the Medieval Town of Ras.

The impressive collection of three ecclesiastical monuments dating from the 10th to the 13th centuries eminently illustrates the birth of artistic activity in medieval Serbia, which attained the highest standards in the art and culture of the Byzantine Empire and the regions of Central and Southeastern Europe.

The unique architectural complex formed by numerous structures in Stari Ras (Old Ras), situated at a crossroads of eastern and western influences, testifies to the period from the 12th to the early 14th centuries when the ancient town was the first capital of the Serbian state.

The frescoes in the Sopoćani Monastery church, dating from about 1270-1276, are among the finest in Byzantine and Serbian medieval art.

These exceptional paintings represent the work of the best artists of that period who were unable to work in the territory of the Byzantine Empire and found refuge at the court of the Serbian king.

At Sopoćani these artists introduced a refined spirit of antiquity to the prevailing medieval conventions. St George's Church in the Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery, founded in 1170-1171, is the earliest example of a distinctive new regional architecture that blended Romanesque and Byzantine styles.

Known as the Raška School, this style came to dominate architecture in this area for almost a century and a half.

The church also features two layers of preserved frescoes dating from 1175 and 1282-1283 that are among the finest from that period in the Balkans.

The preserved frescoes in St Peter's Church, built in the 10th century on the foundations of a 6th-century baptistery and now the oldest surviving Christian church in the Balkans, also present evidence of the developments that took place in pictorial art between the 10th and 14th centuries.

Stari Ras is located along the mountainous setting near the confluence of the Raška and Sebečvo rivers, and it became the first capital of the Serbian independent state on the accession of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1159.

It was the focal point of all the decisive events underlying the state's birth, development and consolidation.

Now an archaeological site, it contains the remains of structures built from about the 9th century onwards, including the hilltop fortress of Gradina and the lower town of Trgoviste. The combination of historical, cultural, artistic and natural values gives this group of monuments its significance.

Together, they represent a unique contribution of the Serbian nation to the culture of Slavonic and other nations during the Middle Ages.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran proposes strategic tourism roadmap at D-8 meeting in Cairo

From Page 1 ▶ "The future world is a battlefield of concepts, narratives, and civilizations," he said, adding that nations that harness soft power tools like tourism will be better positioned to assert identity, enhance unity, and present an authentic image to the global community.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Salehi-Amiri outlined the Iranian government's tourism policy, saying it has shifted from a traditional to a development-oriented, technology-driven, and economically strategic policy.

He then put the spotlight on Iran's unique tangible and intangible heritage assets and emphasized the country's progress toward becoming a regional hub for health tourism, historical route revival, smart infrastructure, and international investment.

Key initiatives include establishing a Tourism Investment Center and launching the nation's first artificial intelligence unit dedicated to the tourism sector.

Calling for ethical, just, and human-centered governance over emerging technologies like AI, Salehi-Amiri warned against sacrificing cultural identity, local authenticity, and equity in the name



Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri (1st L), addresses the 5th D-8 Senior Officials Meeting on Tourism in Cairo, Egypt, May 6, 2025.

of development.

"The digital divide must not lead to cultural marginalization or the erasure of decentralized heritage," he said.

As part of his remarks, the Iranian minister introduced a strategic roadmap for enhancing intra-civilizational cooperation and promoting economic diplomacy among D-8 members.

He called for the annual orga-

nization of a D-8 international tourism and investment expo, offering to host the first edition in Tehran in February 2026.

He also urged the reciprocal removal of visa requirements among member states to facilitate travel within the Islamic world and proposed the establishment of a joint tourism investment fund to finance large-scale regional projects.

Among other practical steps,

Salehi-Amiri proposed creating a comprehensive investment opportunity database, launching multi-national tour packages to encourage longer visitor stays, establishing a regional tourism office, expanding direct and multi-destination flight routes among member states, and offering specialized training programs in digital marketing, destination management, and smart heritage conservation.

Iran eases visas, but media misinformation still a barrier to tourism



Moslem Shojaei, the director-general for marketing and tourism development at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian tourism official has said that the spread of negative media narratives about Iran – commonly referred to as Iranophobia – poses a significant challenge to the country's tourism sector, even as visa requirements for most travelers have been eased or eliminated.

Moslem Shojaei, the director-general for Marketing and Tourism Development at Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, said that while many international travelers face no visa issues when planning trips to Iran, the negative portrayal of the country in foreign media causes hesitation and fear among potential visitors.

"Many tourists have no visa problems entering Iran," Shojaei told IRNA on Monday. "The real issue is the cloud of negative news coverage – often exaggerated or selectively highlighted by hostile media – that spreads fear and discourages travelers. Events such as the recent incident in Bandar Shahid Rajaei in Hormozgan are used by certain outlets to amplify this narrative."

Shojaei emphasized the need to counteract these perceptions with accurate and engaging in-

formation. He noted that Iran has already lifted visa requirements – either unilaterally or bilaterally – with over 40 countries. "For example, visas are waived on a mutual basis with countries like Turkey, Iraq, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Oman, and Tunisia, and unilaterally for Uzbekistan," he explained.

"Except for 10 or 11 countries where visa restrictions are maintained for diplomatic or strategic reasons, most citizens around the world can obtain visas upon arrival at Iranian airports."

He added that Iran often initiates visa waivers as a first step to encourage reciprocity. "We take the first step, and sometimes the other countries follow.

However, economic or political considerations may prevent some from responding in kind."

Addressing the effectiveness of international events in combating Iranophobia, Shojaei pointed to the recent B2B (Business-to-Business) meetings between global tour operators and their Iranian counterparts as an example of recent efforts to counter such anti-Iran sentiments.

"Over 120 foreign tour operators participated in this event. All of them are active on social media, and by sharing their firsthand experiences, they help showcase Iran's vibrant tourism potential," he said. "Such initiatives go a long way

in neutralizing false or negative narratives."

Shojaei has also emphasized Iran's intention to make the best use of influencer marketing as a key strategy to build international trust and promote the country's tourism potential through interactive content, digital platforms, and targeted media outreach.

Looking ahead, he announced Iran's participation in ten international tourism exhibitions, along with plans to organize five tourism roadshows in key cities, including Basra, Baghdad, Karbala, and Najaf, as well as in Poland, Hungary, Serbia, and Russia.

Moreover, the official unveiled plans to host a Silk Road Conference in Semnan, bringing together member countries along the historic trade route, and the Third International Health Tourism Conference for ECO member states, scheduled to take place in Hamedan later this year.

The Islamic Republic expects to reap a bonanza from its numerous tourist spots such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 28 are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Mongolian delegation visits Iran's National Museum, explores avenues for expanded cultural ties



TEHRAN – A high-ranking delegation from Mongolia visited the National Museum of Iran on Monday to explore opportunities for expanded cultural and museum cooperation between the two nations.

The visit aimed to deepen cultural ties and identify areas of collaboration, particularly in museum curation, exhibitions, and academic exchanges, an official with the prestigious museum told the Tehran Times on Tuesday.

The delegation, led by Lkhanaajav Munkhtushig, Mongolia's State Secretary, and accompanied by the head of the China Desk at Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, began their

tour with a visit to the Museum of Islamic Archaeology and Art of Iran, one of the main sections of the National Museum located in downtown Tehran.

During a meeting with Jebrael Nokandeh, Director-General of the National Museum, Munkhtushig emphasized the longstanding historical and cultural connections between Iran and Mongolia, especially during the Ilkhanate period.

He expressed Mongolia's keen interest in fostering academic and museum-based cooperation rooted in these shared historical experiences.

Nokandeh welcomed the proposals put forward by the Mongolian side and noted the pivotal role that national museums can play in enhancing bilateral relations.

He suggested organizing joint exhibitions in Ulaanbaatar and Tehran as a tangible step toward deeper cultural engagement.

In particular, he expressed the National Museum of Iran's readiness to curate an exhibition in Mongolia centered on the Ilkhanate

era, a period of profound cultural synthesis and artistic development.

Highlighting the rich legacy of Ilkhanid art and architecture on display in the museum's Islamic Art section, Nokandeh noted that such an exhibition would offer researchers and art enthusiasts valuable insights into the artistic and architectural achievements of the era.

He added that holding the exhibition in Ulaanbaatar would not only promote academic dialogue but also invite renewed scholarly attention to the Ilkhanids' historical influence across Iran and Central Asia.

Also present at the meeting, Mr. Danuu Ankhbayer, Mongolia's Consul General, praised the initiative as a concrete step toward bolstering bilateral ties.

He expressed optimism that a formal cooperation agreement between the two national museums would be signed soon, paving the way for the first phase of joint cultural projects to be launched in the coming year.

DCHQ, UNICEF highlight developing partnership model

TEHRAN – Brigadier General Hossein Zolfaqari, the Secretary General of Iranian Drug Control Headquarters (DCHQ), and Monika Oledzka Nielson, the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) ad interim Representative in Iran, have underscored the need for the development of a cooperative model between the two organizations to be able to realize joint objectives and enhance the efficiency of collaborative measures.

During a meeting held on Monday, Zolfaqari said to be able to conduct joint efforts more effectively, the needed measures, and the responsibilities of different institution, ministries, organizations, universities, families, and trainers should be clarified. Moreover, specific feasible provincial measures have to be taken, IRNA reported.

Highlighting the existing motivations, capacities, and public participation in carrying out major actions, Zolfaqari said the goal is to provide platforms to further benefit from existing capacities.

The official went on to laud UNICEF's measures in Iran, saying that the measures which have focused on training individuals, positive parenting, preventing addiction in educational center of prisons organizations, improving mental health, empowering youths particularly girls, and holding training courses for non-governmental organizations and their managers have yielded positive results.

DCHQ and UNICEF will soon publish a book on guidelines and protocols for the treatment of addiction, and "We seek to further



boost ties with UNICEF," Zolfaqari further noted.

Nielson, for her part, commended DCHQ efforts, saying that it would have been almost impossible to implement any of these actions without DCHQ's support. Within recent years, UNICEF has adopted different measures to address youths' health and well-being, as its target society.

Referring to the MASERAT or APSWEC (Adolescent Psychosocial Wellbeing and Empowerment Centre) program, which helps at-risk adolescents to protect themselves, build resilience, and practice self-care against social harms such as drug abuse and HIV, the official said the program has been conducted jointly by UNICEF and DCHQ. The positive outcomes have encouraged the two organizations to expand the implementation of the program nationwide as a long-term goal. Developed by DCHQ, the program focuses on prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and combating the entry and supply of drugs.

"One of the most important things that the DCHQ can do is to provide enhanced information and promote coordination for the implementation of programs to improve their effectiveness because experience has shown that the stronger the coordination, the more successful the programs are. By improving communication strategies and the implementation of the tasks, this collaborative model can be introduced as a successful model in the region," Nielson added.

Previous co-op

In November 2023, the Iranian anti-narcotics headquarters and the UNICEF office in Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding to launch a joint plan of action for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse among teenagers.

The joint plan of action was to be implemented over 2023-2024. It would be the main base of cooperation with UNICEF in combating narcotics.

The joint activities were to be defined and carried out in cooper-

ation with relevant national institutions, Fars reported.

Previously, through implementing two joint plans of action, some activities have been carried out for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse among adolescents.

Setting up two health and rehabilitation centers for at-risk adolescents in two provinces of the country, which are known as exemplary centers providing services to the target community, was one of the measures taken in this regard.

In October 2023, UNICEF and the Iranian anti-narcotics headquarters cooperated to develop an emergency protocol for staff working with at-risk adolescents to enhance their capacity for addressing youth needs during emergencies. They also held two workshops, the UNICEF website reported.

Thanks to these programs, social workers, experts, counselors, volunteers, and peers would be able to provide much more effective services in case of any emergencies to vulnerable youth, adolescents, and their families.

The aim of these workshops was to expand the technical needs of those working with vulnerable and at-risk girls to provide more efficient services to them in case of emergencies.

During the workshops, in addition to capacity building on crisis management and specialized interventions, a protocol for UNICEF-supported Adolescent Wellbeing Centers in Mashhad and Kermanshah was developed to strengthen their emergency response capacity.

Some 980,000 births registered in a year

TEHRAN – A total of 979,923 births were registered in the country in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2024 – March 2025), the Civil Registration Organization has announced.

Tehran province, with 120,562 births, and Ilam province, with 6,534 births, had the highest and lowest number of births, IRNA reported.

The average age of women in Iran giving birth to their first child stood at 27.5 years in the past Iranian calendar year that ended on March 20, according to a report by the National Organization for Civil Registration.

The average age at which men became fathers was 32.3, the report added. The average age of first-time mothers in urban areas was 28.2, and in rural areas it was 24.4. The average age of first-time fathers in urban areas was 32.8, and in rural areas it was 30, IRNA reported.

The average age of first-time fathers and mothers was highest in Tehran (34.8 and

30.6), and lowest in Sistan-Baluchestan (27.2 and 22.6).

Fertility rate should reach 2.5

In November 2023, an official with the Ministry of Health said that the total fertility rate should reach 2.5 from 1.66 before the closure of the demographic window in the next five years.

"The country is on the threshold of aging; to tackle this crisis, we must promote child-bearing and youth population," IRNA quoted Saber Jabbari as saying.

Over the last 30 years, the total fertility rate of the country has declined, but in the Iranian calendar year 1401 (March 2022–March 2023), the downward trend in fertility came to a halt, he added.

"Carrying out programs that are focusing on the youth population at the national level is a strategy to increase the total fertility rate," Jabbari stressed.

Stating that the country's fertility rate rose from 1.65 in the year 1400 (March 2021



– March 2022) to 1.66 in 1401 (March 2022 – March 2023), the official noted, "According to the general policies of the Seventh National Development Plan (2023 – 2027), the replacement rate is 2.5 which is to be achieved in the next five years before the closure of the demographic window."

Talking about modern methods of infertility treatment, he said all modern methods of infertility treatment are offered in the country.

ENGLISH IN USE

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'Only 15% of Tehran's construction waste recycled'

While some 50,000 tons of construction and demolition waste is produced in Tehran daily, only 10 to 15 percent of which are recycled and the rest is dumped or disposed, Mohammad Hossein Bazgir, head of Tehran's department of environment (DOE) has said.

"A good portion of construction wastes can still be usable with proper planning and their usage can be a solution itself to the burgeoning waste issues that the communities and the construction industry face," Bazgir said.

To eradicate the issue, construction waste trucks must be equipped with GPS to determine their route and not allow them to dispose the waste at any areas, he concluded.

تنها ۱۵ درصد نخاله های ساختمانی تولید شده در تهران بازیافت می شود

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران با بیان اینکه در تهران روزانه ۵۰ هزار تن نخاله ساختمانی تولید می شود، گفت: متأسفانه تنها ۱۰ تا ۱۵ درصد این زباله ها بازیافت می شود و بیش از ۸۰ درصد آن دیو می شود.

محمد حسین بازگیر در گفت و گو با ایسنا، اظهار کرد: بازیافت پسماندهای ساختمانی بخشی از فرایند مدیریت پسماند است که سبب می شود این نوع زباله ها دوباره به چرخه مصرف بازگردانده و بسیاری از مشکلاتی که که مردم و صنعت ساخت و ساز با آن روبرو هستند، برطرف شود.

وی در پایان با تأکید بر اینکه کامیون های مخصوص حمل نخاله های ساختمانی باید ساماندهی شوند و پیمانکاران حمل نخاله ها تحت مدیریت مناسب و هوشمند قرار بگیرند، گفت: کامیون های حمل نخاله باید مجهز به GPS شوند تا مسیر تردد آن ها مشخص شود و امکان تخلیه زباله را در هر نقطه ای نداشته باشند.

Venezuela to utilize Iran's expertise in nanotechnology



TEHRAN – The preparation of a document for the development of nanotechnology in Venezuela using Iran's knowledge and expertise has been discussed by officials from the two countries.

Emad Ahmadvand, the secretary of the headquarters for the Iran Nanotechnology Initiative Council; Venezuela's Ambassador to Iran, Carlos Antonio Alcalá Cordones, and Alberto Quintero, the Venezuelan deputy science minister, met in Tehran on Tuesday to foster scientific and technological ties, ISNA reported.

During the meeting, Quintero highlighted educational cooperation in the nanotechnology sector over the past two years, saying that Sharif University of Technology has held one-month intensive courses in Venezuela in this regard, IRNA reported.

As part of the program, Venezuelan researchers will participate in advanced laboratory courses, which are planned to be held in Iran, the official noted.

The two sides agreed on organizing collaborative scientific conferences and symposiums, publishing joint scientific articles, and indexing Venezuelan publications in international databases. Venezuelan officials also invited prominent Iranian professors to participate as key speakers in these events.

Moreover, the two sides emphasized the need to transfer nanotechnology to the construction, agriculture, and industry sectors. It was also decided to hold face-to-face and online laboratory training courses for Venezuelan researchers in Iran.

Following Ahmadvand's proposal, the development of a document on the expansion

of nanotechnology in Venezuela is put on the agenda of the cooperation. The document aims to develop a roadmap for future collaborations, utilizing the Iranian nanotechnology expertise.

****Iran a global leader in nano-tech

Iran's investment in nanotechnology research and development has led to the rise of the country as a global leader in nanotechnology, producing and exporting products to different countries across the world.

Access to domestic resources, competitive prices compared to Western countries, and high production of raw nano-materials, nano-catalysts, and advanced equipment, as well as geographical proximity to target markets in neighboring countries, reduced transportation costs, political and trade relations have made Iran a major manufacturer of nanotechnology products in the region and even some global markets.

Iran's nanotechnology products in various industries are classified into 13 main categories including Civil engineering and construction; Optics, electronics, and photonics; Petroleum and petrochemicals; Pharmaceuticals, health, and well-being; home appliances; Power and energy; Raw materials; Chemicals; Textiles and clothing; Equipment; Automotive industry and transportation; Industrial machinery; Agriculture, animal husbandry, and Water, according to data published by the vice Presidency for Science and Technology.

Iran's achievements in nanotechnology are noteworthy. The increase in scientific publications and sales of nano products proves Iran's rise as a global leader in this field.

One of the industries that have experienced good growth in Iran in recent years is the nanotechnology industry, a subject area that has brought Iran to the impressive fourth place worldwide.

According to StatNano, a leading nanotechnology website, Iran has made great strides in the field of nanotechnology being ranked fourth in terms of nanotechnology publication.

This ranking proves the country's remarkable scientific development.

The site considers the number of scientific articles to compare scientific progress in nanoscience, technology, and industry.

Iran among UNDP's High Human Development countries

TEHRAN – According to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) latest Human Development Report (HDR) 2025, Iran has been placed among the countries with a High Development Index (HDI).

However, Iran's score has decreased from last year's 0.780 to 0.779 this year. The country ranks 75 out of 193 countries and territories, placing it in the "High Human Development" category. Between 1990 and 2023, Iran's HDI value changed from 0.626 to 0.799, a change of 27.6 percent.

Going forward, the Gender Inequality Index (GII) remains an area for improvement, with Iran scoring 0.482, ranking 123 out of 172 countries. This underscores the continued need to invest in equitable access to education, employment, and health services for women and girls.

According to the 2025 report, human development progress is experiencing an unprecedented slowdown. The report shows how Artificial Intelligence (AI) could reignite development.

Instead of seeing sustained recovery following the period of exceptional crises of 2020-2021, the report reveals unexpectedly weak progress. Excluding those crisis years, the meagre rise in global human development projected in this year's report is the smallest increase since 1990.

The 2025 HDR: "A matter of choice: people and possibilities in the age of AI" analyses development progress across a range of indicators known as the Human Development Index (HDI), which encompasses achievements in health and education, along with levels of income.

The report underscores growing divides between high- and low-HDI countries, reversing

decades of gains. As global challenges, from economic shocks to climate pressures, narrow traditional development pathways, the report urges countries to act decisively and inclusively.

"For decades, we have been on track to reach a very high human development world by 2030, but this deceleration signals a very real threat to global progress," said Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator. "If 2024's sluggish progress becomes 'the new normal', that 2030 milestone could slip by decades – making our world less secure, more divided, and more vulnerable to economic and ecological shocks."

The report also contains the results of a new survey that showed people are realistic yet hopeful about the change AI can bring. Half of respondents worldwide think that their jobs could be automated. An even larger share—six in ten—expect AI to impact their employment positively, creating opportunities in jobs that may not even exist today.

Only 13 percent of survey respondents fear AI could lead to job losses. In contrast, in low- and medium-HDI countries, 70 percent expect AI to increase their productivity, and two thirds anticipate using AI in education, health, or work within the next year.

The report advocates for a human-centered approach to AI – which has the potential to fundamentally redesign approaches to development. The survey results show that across the world people are ready for this kind of 'reset'.

The report outlines three critical areas for action: Building an economy where people collaborate with AI rather than compete against it; Embedding human agency across the full AI lifecycle, from design to deployment; and Modernizing education and health systems to meet 21st – Century demands.



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MAY 7, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The best among you is the one who doesn't harm others with his tongue and hands.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:16 Dawn: 3:30 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:05 (tomorrow)

“The Archbishop’s Ceiling” on stage at Tehran theater



TEHRAN- An adaptation of American playwright Arthur Miller’s 1970 play “The Archbishop’s Ceiling” is on stage at the Neauphle-le-Chateau Theater in Tehran.

Mohammad Sadeq Peymanfar is the director of the play, which has been translated by Hassan Maleki.

Mobina Ramezani, Rahim Mehrandish, Soroush Borjaki, Amir Saeid Afshar and Fatemeh Aqa-Ali are the main members of the cast for the play, which will remain on stage for a month.

“The Archbishop’s Ceiling” delves into the complexities of life under an oppressive regime. Initially premiering at the John F. Kennedy Center in 1977, the play, despite a run of forty performances, didn’t make it to Broadway. Miller later revised the script, and the updated version debuted at Cleveland Play House in 1984.

The play unfolds in a lavish room within a former Archbishop’s palace in an Eastern European capital, a setting imbued with the constant threat of surveillance by the secret police. At the heart of the story is Sigmund, a middle-aged author who has fallen out of favor with the ruling powers. He’s faced with a stark choice: face detention and punishment, or defect to the West.

Sigmund’s dilemma is influenced by two former friends, both writers. Marcus, a compatriot and former political prisoner, has managed to gain favor with the current regime. Adrian, an American visitor, embodies strong liberal ideals

and encourages Sigmund to defect. Adding another layer of complexity is Maya, a poet and actress who has been romantically involved with all three men.

“The Archbishop’s Ceiling” is a deeply intriguing play that explores the intricate web of relationships between these four characters. It masterfully weaves together themes of politics, art, and sex, creating a narrative where personal lives are inextricably intertwined with the political climate. The ever-present possibility of being overheard adds a palpable tension, raising profound questions about morality and individual responsibility in a society where freedom is curtailed.

Arthur Asher Miller (1915–2005) was a prominent American playwright, essayist, and screenwriter. His significant contributions to 20th-century American theater include acclaimed plays like “Death of a Salesman”, considered one of the best American plays of its era, “All My Sons”, “The Crucible”, and “A View from the Bridge”. Miller also penned screenplays such as “The Misfits”.

A public figure, he received a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee, and was married to Marilyn Monroe. His distinguished career garnered numerous awards, including the Praemium Imperiale and the Prince of Asturias Award.

2,363 domestic publishers to attend 36th Tehran International Book Fair

TEHRAN-This year, more publishers from the general category have applied to attend the 36th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) fair compared to last year, Ebrahim Heidari, the spokesperson and deputy director of the fair, said at a press conference on Monday at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in Tehran.

“Due to the approach of maximum publisher participation, we had a significant increase in the number of publishers this year. In the domestic section of the fair, 2,363 publishers are attending,” Mehr quoted Heidari as saying.

Referring to the cultural diplomacy aspect, he said that Iraq is this year’s special guest, and they hope to foster stronger cultural ties with Iraq.

Heidari also mentioned the cultural and religious programs planned for the fair, noting that, they had received around 2,300 requests for cultural events, which is natural since the book fair is the largest cultural event in the country. They aim to ensure the quality of these programs and make them as meaningful as possible.

Tehran Publishing Fellowship Program is another program that will be held for the first time this year, which seeks to support Iranian works and facilitate their translation into other



languages. “To date, nearly 80 foreign guests and 50 domestic guests have registered in this section, and during the exhibition, we will address children’s and adolescent literature by holding specialized sessions,” he asserted.

The fellowship aims to enhance Iran’s presence in the global publishing arena, focusing initially on children’s and young adult literature.

The term ‘publishing fellowship’ refers to the collaboration among publishers, authors, and literary agents for the sale of book rights.

Heidari noted that they aimed to

reduce the fair’s costs by 30 to 40 percent compared to last year, despite rising prices. Their focus is on increasing subsidies while reducing operational costs.

Recognized as a national heritage and event, Tehran International Book Fair not only invigorates and enriches the country’s culture but also attracts the attention of cultural figures and book lovers from across the globe.

The cultural event has turned into a landmark, momentous book fair in West Asia after 35 editions in a row. Millions of visitors in-

spect the fair every year, including thousands of university students, scholars, and their families.

The event currently serves as the most significant cultural event in Iran. The foreign publishers substantially offer their materials in English or Arabic; however, titles in French, German, Chinese, Korean, Russian, or Japanese are also available.

The 36th TIBF is set to take place from May 7 to 17 at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosalla. “Let’s Read for Iran” has been chosen as the slogan for the upcoming edition of the book fair.

IAF to screen Kurosawa’s “Ikiru”

TEHRAN-The 1952 Japanese tragedy film “Ikiru” (“To Live”) directed by Akira Kurosawa will be shown at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Thursday.

The film screening will start at 6 p.m. at the Nasseri Hall of the IAF. The 140-minute movie will be presented with Persian subtitle, Mehr reported.

The film examines the struggles of a terminally ill Tokyo bureaucrat (played by Takashi Shimura) and his final quest for meaning. The screenplay was partly inspired by Leo Tolstoy’s 1886 novella “The Death of Ivan Ilyich”.

One of the greatest achievements by Kurosawa, “Ikiru” shows the director at his most compassionate—affirming life through an exploration of death. Shimura beautifully portrays Kanji Watanabe, an aging bureaucrat with stomach cancer who is impelled to find meaning in his final days. Presented in a radically conceived two-part structure and shot



with a perceptive, humanistic clarity of vision, “Ikiru” is a multifaceted look at what it means to be alive.

The film’s major themes include learning how to live, the inefficiency of bureaucracy,

and decaying family life in Japan, which have been the subject of analysis by academics and critics.

“Ikiru” is a well-acted and deeply moving humanist tale about a man facing his own mortality, one of legendary director Akira Kurosawa’s most intimate films.

Having won awards for Best Film at the Kinema Junpo and Mainichi Film Awards, it is considered one of the greatest films of all time.

Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998) was a Japanese filmmaker who directed 30 feature films in a career spanning six decades. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential filmmakers in the history of cinema.

Kurosawa displayed a bold, dynamic style strongly influenced by Western cinema yet distinct from it. He was involved with all aspects of film production. In 1990, he accepted the Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Guitarist Soheil Nafisi to perform at Tehran’s Rudaki Hall

TEHRAN- Prominent Iranian composer and guitarist Soheil Nafisi is set to perform a selection of his works at Rudaki Hall on Wednesday.

His upcoming concert will feature a selection of pieces from his albums, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The compositions are based on poems by renowned Iranian poets including Hafez,

Shafiei Kadkani, Nima Yooshij, and Sohrab Sepehri.

Born in 1967, Nafisi is a pioneer in composing and playing guitar in the realm of fusion music. He exclusively performs repertoire of his own creation.

Nafisi has released four albums to date, “Rira,” “Southern Songs,” “Chang and Sorood,” and “Tarh-e Nou.”



“Lady Oracle” appears in Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN-A Persian translation of Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood’s novel “Lady Oracle” has recently been published by Qoqus Publications in Tehran.

The book has been translated into Persian by Soheil Sommi.

Originally published in 1976, “Lady Oracle” offers a satirical take on the conventions of Gothic romances and fairy tales. Published by McClelland and Stewart, the book delves into the life of its protagonist, Joan Foster, a romance novelist adept at evading challenging circumstances.

The narrative unfolds through a blend of past recollections and present-day events, providing a comprehensive look at Joan’s life. Flashbacks reveal her early struggles as an overweight child constantly subjected to her mother’s criticism.

As she grows, Joan develops a pattern of concealing significant aspects of her life, including her

profession as a romance novelist, a past affair with a Polish count, and a current liaison with a performance artist known as The Royal Porcupine – all hidden from her husband, Arthur, who suffers from bipolar disorder.

In the novel’s present timeline, Joan experiences unexpected success with a recently published collection of feminist poetry, propelling her into sudden fame. However, the pressure of this newfound recognition, coupled with the constant need to maintain her various secrets, becomes overwhelming.

Her precarious situation escalates when she receives a blackmail threat from someone who has discovered her hidden past. Driven to a desperate act, Joan, with assistance from two acquaintances, orchestrates her own death and subsequently flees the country, seeking refuge in Italy.

“Lady Oracle” garnered critical recognition upon its release. In 1977, it was a co-recipient of the City of Toronto Book Award, sharing the honor with Margaret Gibson’s short story collection, “The Butterfly Ward.”

The following year, the novel received further acclaim, earning second place – behind Robertson Davies’ “Fifth Business” – in the Periodical Distributors of Canada’s award for best paperback fiction. The novel remains a notable example of Atwood’s characteristic blend of dark humor, psychological depth, and commentary on societal expectations of women.

Born in 1939, Margaret Atwood is a prolific Canadian writer. Her extensive body of work includes 18 novels, 18 poetry collections, and numerous other books across various genres.

She is most famous for her 1985 dystopian novel, “The Hand-



maid’s Tale”. Atwood has received numerous prestigious awards, including two Booker Prizes. Her writing explores themes such as gender, identity, religion, and power. Beyond writing, she is a co-founder of the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Writers’ Trust of Canada, and invented the Long-Pen remote writing device.

Cartoon of Day



Children Are Starving to Death in Gaza!
Cartoonist: Mikail Çiftçi from Turkey