

Persian Gulf

Our Waters, Our Lands



Iran, India reaffirm strategic ties at high-level talks in New Delhi

TEHRAN – In a series of high-level diplomatic engagements aimed at reinforcing long-standing bilateral ties and addressing shared regional concerns, Indian and Iranian foreign ministers convened in New Delhi on Thursday for the 20th meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission.

The talks, held against the backdrop of mounting tensions in South Asia, featured candid discussions on economic collaboration, regional security, and the evolving geopolitical landscape. ▶ Page 2

IRGC unveils first underground drone base, publishes surveillance footage of US Navy

TEHRAN – Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) unveiled its first publicly disclosed underground drone base on Thursday, showcasing advanced unmanned systems capable of evading radar detection and conducting prolonged surveillance of U.S. naval assets in the Persian Gulf.

The facility in Iran's southern Hormozgan Province, situated along the shores of the Persian Gulf, is part of Tehran's escalating investments in asymmetric warfare and hardened defense infrastructure. The country previously unveiled several missile and fast attack craft bases built underground. ▶ Page 3

'Talks with US unpredictable,' says Iran's security chief, as Israel ramps up efforts to derail diplomacy

TEHRAN – As indirect nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States prepare to resume on Sunday, Iran's security chief asserted that the ongoing negotiations with Washington are "unpredictable," emphasizing that progress in talks "hinges squarely on the U.S.'s conduct."

His remarks came alongside blistering criticism from Iran's top diplomat, who pointed out that the Israeli regime is peddling "desperate fabrications" through Fox News and the discredited Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) terror group to sabotage diplomacy.

Addressing Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commanders, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian declared on Thursday that Tehran's negotiating stance remains anchored in "unmistakably clear red lines," adding, "The entire process rests on the behavior of the United States and the prevailing circumstances." ▶ Page 3

Divisions emerge between Israel and US over Gaza and Yemen

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – Prior to President Trump's trip to the Middle East in mid-May, his administration has stepped up diplomatic efforts to mediate a ceasefire in Gaza as Israel is continuing its relentless military operations there.

Trump is expected to announce a ceasefire agreement for Gaza soon, possibly as early as the weekend of May, according to diplomatic sources in the United States and Israel.

According to reports, the U.S. proposal calls for a 21-day ceasefire as well as a plan for the restoration of Gaza under American supervision and the resumption of humanitarian assistance. ▶ Page 5

Lessons Lebanon can learn from what is happening in Syria

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — By intensifying its attacks on "New Syria"—under the pretext of protecting the Druze—the Israeli enemy is trying to make anyone who dares to challenge the HTS-led regime's positions understand that they are forbidden from objecting to Israel's known conspiracy to expand, destabilize, and subjugate West Asia's peoples.

Given the intertwined geography, the repercussions of these events represent an existential threat to Lebanon.

Today, it is more certain that the claim that Lebanon could have avoided war had Hezbollah not opened a support front for Gaza is no longer realistic. Numerous reasons confirm that targeting the Resistance was only a matter of time. ▶ Page 5

'Enrichment is our right,' Iran's academics rally behind nuclear negotiators

A coalition of prominent Iranian professors, scholars, and professionals has issued a public statement endorsing the Islamic Republic's diplomatic efforts in nuclear negotiations and advocating for peaceful engagement with the United States and Western nations.

The letter, signed by a diverse group of academics and experts, affirmed Iran's right to peaceful nuclear enrichment under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) while emphasizing the country's commitment to scientific and economic collaboration.

Below is the full text of the letter: ▶ Page 2

Over 2,200 companies attend West Asia's biggest oil industry gathering in Tehran

TEHRAN – Iran's oil industry, a key economic driver, is showcasing its latest achievements at the 29th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2025) in Tehran, where over 2,200 domestic and international companies have convened.

Speaking at the opening ceremony on Thursday, Saman Ghodousi, director of the exhibition, welcomed lawmakers, senior oil officials, foreign ambassadors and delegates. He said the event, hosted at Tehran's International Permanent Fairgrounds, marks the region's largest industry gathering, offering opportunities for face-to-face engagement and technology exchange among professionals. ▶ Page 4

Narrative warfare: How Trump uses preemptive optimism to pressure Iran

By Jafar Yaghoubi

TEHRAN – In a world increasingly shaped by narratives, optimism can be used in a preemptive strike. While recent rhetoric from U.S. President Donald Trump and his confidantes oscillates between threats of dismantlement and a sense of measured optimism regarding a potential deal with Iran, Iran's strategic patience must be translated to strategic caution at this stage. Iranian policymakers know better than to be drawn into the illusion of goodwill.

Threats and coercion have been integral elements of U.S. foreign policy towards Iran. This positivity, however, should be interpreted within its proper context. ▶ Page 2

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Persian Gulf is Iran's red line

In a note, Jam-e-Jam addressed purported reports that Trump intends to use a fake name for the Persian Gulf. It wrote: The ill-gotten move to rename the Persian Gulf comes at a time that the Iran-U.S. nuclear talks are at a critical stage and regional tensions, such as the India-Pakistan conflict, have turned the region into the center of global attention. Some analysts believe that this move is an attempt by Trump to sell arms and attract investment from Arab countries that have been lobbying for years to promote the fake name "Arabian Gulf."

This move could also be part of a pressure strategy on Iran in the nuclear talks. A report by the Associated Press about Trump's decision to rename the Persian Gulf to the "Arabian Gulf" was like a spark that has inflamed the Iranians' national honor. Iranians once again showed that the Persian Gulf is not just a name, but also part of their national identity and dignity.

However, Iran will defend its rights and identity with authority and vigilance. Donald Trump, like many oppressive rulers of the world, will face disgraced, and the Persian Gulf, as it has been called for millennia, will always stay the Persian Gulf.

Iran: It is imperative for Iran to contain tension

In an analysis, the Iran newspaper addressed the tension between India and Pakistan and Iran's role in containing the dreadful conflict and wrote: The recent developments in relations between India and Pakistan can be seen as a new manifestation of a long-standing security conundrum.

As a country bordering Pakistan, Iran has close relations with India. Also, as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Iran is among the actors that consider South Asia part of its security environment.

Therefore, playing an active role in containing the crisis, reducing tensions, and helping to return the two countries to a state of cold peace is not a choice but a strategic necessity. In this regard, Iran is making notable efforts to reduce the severity of the crisis with a responsible approach and push for a diplomatic solution. By taking advantage of friendly relations with the two countries, Iran is trying to prevent the current tensions from turning into a chronic conflict, because the spread of this crisis could have direct and indirect effects on other tension-prone regions, including Afghanistan, and worsen existing security fault lines in South Asia.

'Enrichment is our right,' Iran's academics rally behind nuclear negotiators



A coalition of prominent Iranian professors, scholars, and professionals has issued a public statement endorsing the Islamic Republic's diplomatic efforts in nuclear negotiations and advocating for peaceful engagement with the United States and Western nations.

The letter, signed by a diverse group of academics and experts, affirmed Iran's right to peaceful nuclear enrichment under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) while emphasizing the country's commitment to scientific and economic collaboration.

Below is the full text of the letter:

We, a collective of Iranian professors, scholars, and experts across diverse academic and professional fields, wish to express our full support for the official stance of the Islamic Republic of Iran's negotiating team in its pursuit of peaceful nuclear enrichment and its commitment to constructive economic, social, and scientific collaboration

Shargh: Iran and India agree to cooperate in international forums

In a commentary, Shargh dealt with the Iran-India move to reawaken ties and said: The 20th meeting of the Iran-India Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation was held in a positive and hopeful atmosphere after a gap of nearly six years; a meeting that was of particular importance given the strategic position of the two countries in the region. Iran and India, as two important players in the regional and international arena, came together with a fresh look at common opportunities to redefine and strengthen the path of their economic, trade, and political cooperation.

In a situation where global developments are changing rapidly, this meeting could be the starting point of a new chapter in relations between Tehran and New Delhi. It is a new opening based on common interests and the bright prospect of cooperation. Numerous topics were raised in political, economic, and international fields between the two countries. Issues such as Chabahar Port, which was a key topic of the meeting, indicated the strategic role of Chabahar Port in the transit of goods between India and Central Asia. Also, the agreement between the two countries can strengthen cooperation in international forums such as the United Nations and groups such as BRICS.

Ettelaat: Why should we take negotiations with US seriously?

In an interview with Ettelaat, Abdolreza Faraji Rad, an international affairs analyst, examined the seriousness of negotiations with the United States. He said: The fact that the fourth meeting was delayed is a negative sign in the negotiations. What is clear about U.S. policy is that Donald Trump has repeatedly stated with serious frankness that he does not favor war and that his preference is to promote peace in the world. Therefore, until the falsehood of this important statement is revealed, we must take negotiations with the United States seriously.

Since the nature of America does not change with the change of governments, it is necessary to negotiate with the other side carefully and tactfully so that America does not find an opportunity to exploit it. The intensification of problems has seriously involved the people. Therefore, any positive sign can lead society towards optimism and hope. This opportunity for negotiations between Iran and the United States must be taken care of so that no external or internal factor can disrupt the negotiations.

with the United States and the broader Western world.

As educators, researchers, and contributors to the intellectual and technological advancement of our nation, we firmly uphold the principle that access to peaceful nuclear technology is an inalienable right of all nations under the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), of which Iran is a long-standing signatory. We affirm that Iran's nuclear program is, and must remain, dedicated solely to peaceful purposes, including scientific research, medical development, and sustainable energy production.

We also believe that diplomatic engagement and mutual economic cooperation between Iran and the international community—particularly the West—are vital to regional stability, global peace, and shared prosperity. Constructive dialogue based on mutual respect, sovereign equality, and adherence to international law will foster a climate of trust that benefits all sides.

We commend our nation's negotiators for their principled and professional approach under challenging circumstances and urge all parties involved to seize the opportunity for a forward-looking, mutually beneficial resolution. As members of Iran's academic and professional elite, we remain hopeful and committed to a non-sanctioned future defined by peace, dignity, and international partnership.

Iran, India reaffirm strategic ties at high-level talks in New Delhi

From page 1 ▶ Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar welcomed Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his accompanying delegation, emphasizing the depth and strategic value of the India-Iran relationship.

Speaking at the opening of the joint commission, Jaishankar highlighted the broad progress achieved in recent years, noting that while cooperation has expanded across multiple sectors, some areas still require concerted attention and action.

"The past few years have seen substantial advances in our collaboration, but challenges remain," Jaishankar remarked.

"Our recent consultations — including the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian at the 2024 Kazan Summit, and their subsequent phone call on April 26 — have laid out a clear roadmap for how we can move forward together."

Marking a significant milestone in diplomatic history, Jaishankar also referenced the 75th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic ties between New Delhi and Tehran.

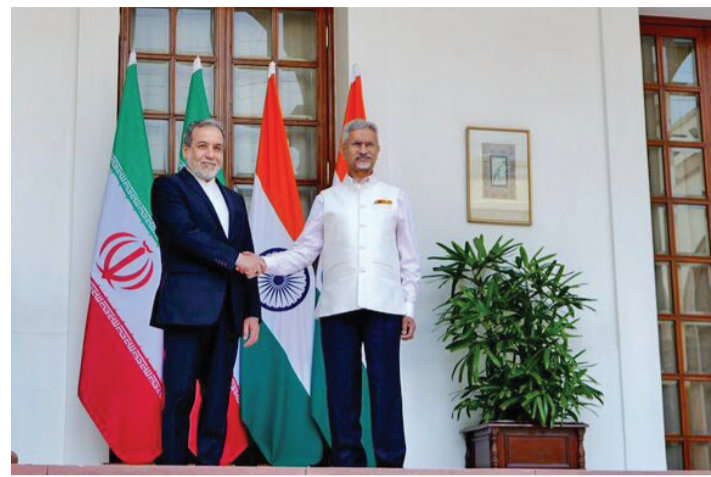
"This is not merely a symbolic occasion," he said. "It reflects a deep-rooted friendship and enduring partnership between our nations — one built on mutual respect, shared values, and a common vision for the future."

A major focus of discussions was the recent security crisis in Kashmir.

"Our response was both targeted and proportionate," Jaishankar stressed.

"India does not seek escalation. However, let there be no doubt — any further aggression will be met with a firm and decisive response."

Acknowledging Iran's role as a close regional partner, he urged



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) and Minister of External Affairs of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar shake hands at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on May 8, 2025.

Tehran to maintain a clear understanding of India's national security imperatives.

"As a neighbor and trusted friend, it is vital that Iran is fully aware of the gravity of this situation and our measured approach to addressing it," he said.

In response, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi expressed appreciation for the warm reception and acknowledged the historic significance of the bilateral relationship.

He underscored Iran's interest in expanding economic cooperation with India, despite the persistent challenges posed by international sanctions.

"Our relationship is grounded in history and sustained by mutual respect and shared interests," Araghchi said.

"While current levels of economic engagement are commendable, they still fall short of our expectations — largely due to external restrictions. We are optimistic, however, that with determination and coordination, we can overcome these barriers."

Later that day, Jaishankar took to social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to summarize the outcomes of the meeting, stating, "Jointly chaired the 20th

India-Iran Joint Commission in Delhi today with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. We reviewed the full spectrum of our bilateral cooperation and agreed on a number of next steps.

We also look forward to celebrating 75 years of diplomatic ties in a meaningful and forward-looking manner."

Bilateral, regional, and global issues discussed in broader meetings

Araghchi's visit to India included a series of sideline meetings with senior Indian officials, reflecting the multidimensional nature of the bilateral agenda.

On Thursday afternoon, he met with Indian President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Discussions during the meeting focused on deepening cooperation across political, economic, and cultural domains. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further enhancing relations based on mutual trust and long-term strategic interests.

The Iranian foreign minister also held a key meeting with India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

The talks covered the latest developments in regional and international security, with both

sides underlining the urgent need to avoid escalation and promote dialogue to manage crises effectively.

According to a statement released by Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Araghchi reiterated Tehran's view that peace and stability in South Asia are essential not only for regional prosperity but also for global security.

He expressed hope that all parties involved in current tensions would act responsibly and pursue de-escalation through diplomacy.

Araghchi arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday evening at the head of a senior-level diplomatic and economic delegation.

Addressing journalists upon arrival, he stated that the primary objective of the visit was to convene the long-planned Joint Economic Commission, with a strong focus on reviving trade and investment links.

"This visit includes senior officials from several Iranian economic ministries," he said.

"We are here to explore practical avenues to expand bilateral trade and cooperation in energy, infrastructure, transportation, and other sectors of mutual interest."

He further emphasized the strategic importance of India-Iran dialogue in navigating regional complexities.

"Our political consultations with India have always been close and constructive.

In light of recent regional developments, these conversations are even more critical."

Commenting on the broader geopolitical context, Araghchi noted that Iran supports efforts aimed at defusing tensions. "Iran consistently advocates for restraint and dialogue.

We believe that mutual understanding and diplomatic engagement are key to ensuring regional stability.

Narrative warfare: How Trump uses preemptive optimism to pressure Iran



By Jafar Yaghoubi

TEHRAN — In a world increasingly shaped by narratives, optimism can be used in a preemptive strike. While recent rhetoric from U.S. President Donald Trump and his confidantes oscillates between threats of dismantlement and a sense of measured optimism regarding a potential deal with Iran, Iran's strategic patience must be translated to strategic caution at this stage.

Iranian policymakers know better than to be drawn into the illusion of goodwill.

Threats and coercion have been integral elements of U.S. foreign policy towards Iran. This positivity, however, should be interpreted within its proper context, that is, the framework of Trump's mindset.

Trump's sporadic upbeat hype should in no way be taken as yet another idiosyncrasies of his eccentric character, a signal of concession or genuine desire for equilibrium, but rather as a calculated tactic—part of a broader

strategy designed to shape expectations, manipulate Iranian market sentiment, and push the psychological balance of negotiations in Washington's favor.

Trump, a seasoned transactional negotiator and investor in both business and politics, is utterly conversant in stock market parlance, a deft financial manipulator, and well-versed in crafting narratives.

After all, he has manipulated markets for decades; why not apply the same tactics to negotiations? Negotiations that, from his perspective, are mere transactional bargains.

By projecting confidence in the outcome of future negotiations, he is raising the perceived cost of failure, not for the U.S., but for Iran. The higher the cost of failure, the more intense the pressure on Iranian negotiators.

Trump is being preemptively optimistic on the outcome, aiming to ripple through Iran's public opinion sphere and put internal pressure on Iran's economic and

political institutions.

The Iranian economy, highly sensitive to diplomatic signals, often reacts positively to the mere prospect of a deal, only to face volatility and sharp declines if negotiations falter or collapse under the weight of American maximalist demands.

From this angle, it is entirely rational for Trump—who may have earned part of his fortune in gambling or other adventurous financial arrangements—to inflate expectations surrounding the talks. Should the outcome fail to materialize, the resulting burst of that optimism could trigger a market free fall in Iran, serving his strategic interests without any perceived cost to his side.

Trump's projected confidence in negotiations aims to raise the stakes for Iran, making failure seem more costly to them

What's there to lose? In a sense, Trump is not investing in the talks, he seems to be speculating!

Moreover, such statements are not made in a vacuum but are often designed to embolden hardliners in Washington by painting

Iran as the reluctant or recalcitrant party should negotiations collapse, thus, egging them on for more pressure against Iran.

This framing can reverberate through the international diplomatic arena.

Expectations of a deal are not only bound to markets; in fact, many actors across the international political spectrum keep an eye out for the results.

The higher the positivity, the steeper the fall for Iran in case of failure!

Thus, it is vital that Iran avoid projecting reciprocal optimism without substantive progress. Iranian negotiators are cognizant of the fact that there is another side to the President of Peace: President of Pressure!

It is safe to assume that Trump's optimistic tone is less about peace and more about pressure. In today's world, it is next to impossible to insulate the domestic economy and public expectations from the volatility of external factors, especially in a pluralistic, well-connected society like Iran.

As long as the negotiations drag on and the American side keeps it upbeat, they will be the ones maintaining and benefiting from the momentum.

This upbeat posture is less an olive branch and more a chess move. Iran must rise to the challenge and balance this preemptive optimism with its own narrative.

By Mohammad Nobakht, Mona Hojati Ansari

TEHRAN – A land or body of water can hold diverse meanings. The Persian Gulf, for example, is a vital waterway for global oil transport, an exotic destination for tourists, and a geostrategic location for military forces. But for those who have thrived along its shores for thousands of years, it's a heritage, heritage so deeply ingrained, so fiercely its own, that no flood of propaganda or political maneuvering can ever truly wash it away.

A recent report claiming that U.S. President Donald Trump intends to announce Washington's recognition of the Persian Gulf as the "Arabian Gulf" has sparked strong reactions in Iran, ranging from anger and disbelief to outright ridicule.

This follows previous instances where Trump referred to the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America" and pressured companies like Google and Apple to adopt the new name, and, according to some accounts, even banned a reporter who used the original name from attending White House briefings.

Trump's efforts to rename the Gulf of Mexico, however, did not gain widespread international acceptance. The United Nations, geographical societies, and countries around the world still refer to the body of water as the Gulf of Mexico.

The potential move to rename the Persian Gulf faces even greater challenges, as the latter has been referred to as such for at least 2500 years, far predating the existence of the United States and the Arab states in the region.

Persian Gulf through the ages

It is believed that the primitive form of the Persian Gulf was formed along southern Iran by the tectonic interplay of the African and Eurasian plates about 500,000 years ago.

The earliest documented



Historical maps consistently identify the body of water off Iran's southern coast as the "Persian Gulf"

name for the inlet was "Nar Maratu" (Bitter River) in ancient Elamite-Assyrian texts. By the 6th century BCE, the terms "Persian Gulf" or "Persian Sea" were in common usage.

An inscription by Darius the Great, found near the Suez Canal, refers to it as "Dary?ty? Hach? P?rs? ?yity" – "the sea that comes from Persia." After conquering Egypt around 500 BCE, Darius ordered the Suez Canal to be reopened and established Persia's first naval fleet, which sailed from the Red Sea to a naval hub at modern-day Bushehr, further cementing the connection between Persia and the waterway. Inscriptions commissioned by Darius declared, "Our ships sailed to the sea that comes from Persia."

Alexander the Great's admiral, Nearchus, explored the southern seas in 326-325 BCE, documenting his journey from the Indus River to the Persian Gulf. The Greek historian Flavius Arrianus preserved a summary of this account, referring to the body of water as "Persikon Kaitas" (Gulf of Persia). Later Greek geographers like Strabo (1st century

BCE-1st century CE) consistently used the name "Persian Gulf."

Roman historians and geographers, including Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century CE) and Quintus Curtius Rufus (1st century CE), also employed terms like "Persicus Sinus" (Persian Gulf) and "Aquam Persico" (Persian Waters).

Post-Islamic sources are replete with references to "Bahr al-Fars" (Persian Sea) and "Khalij al-Farsi" (Persian Gulf), appearing in the works of Ibn Faqih (9th century), Ahmad ibn Rustah (9th century), Al-Biruni (11th century), Yaqut al-Hamawi (13th century), and Ibn Battuta (14th century).

Even European colonial powers, including the British Royal Navy, used "Persian Gulf" in their official maps and guides from 1868 onward.

The "Arabian Gulf" misnomer

Historically, the term "Arabian Gulf" referred to the Red Sea, as evidenced by the writings of Herodotus, Strabo, and Ptolemy. The attempt to apply the name "Arabian Gulf" to the Persian Gulf originated in 1958, when Iraq's General Abdul Karim

Qasim, seeking pan-Arab leadership, began promoting the term for political gain. This was later echoed by Gamal Abdel Nasser during periods of tension with Iran.

While it's unlikely that Trump's and Arab states' attempts to manipulate history would ultimately change the name of the Persian Gulf, such moves could still impact regional ties and diplomatic dynamics.

"The name Persian Gulf is rooted in over two millennia of recorded history and global scholarship. The first attempts to distort this name arose from hostility toward the Iranian people," wrote Ali Akbar Salehi, former Iranian Foreign Minister and current head of the Iranology Foundation on X. "Our neighboring countries certainly do not wish to be associated with such hostility today."

West Asia analyst Mostafa Najafi believes the renewed push by some Arab states to promote an alternative name for the Persian Gulf may signal a more significant underlying strategy. He suggests it could embolden countries like the UAE, which lays claim to the Iranian islands of Bu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb.

"The potential attempt at renaming the Persian Gulf by Trump's administration should be viewed in the context of a broader regional strategy, which could also lead to dangerous moves regarding the three islands," Najafi said.

He added, "If this occurs, it would suggest that the Arab states surrounding the Persian Gulf, particularly the UAE, are making concessions to gain certain advantages. Arabs have learned from their previous hardline approach of containing and confronting Tehran. Now, under the pretense of reducing tensions, they could be pursuing anti-Iranian policies in a different way."

IRGC unveils first underground drone base, publishes surveillance footage of US Navy



From Page 1 ▶ The newly publicized complex, revealed during a ceremony attended by IRGC Commander-in-Chief Major General Hossein Salami and IRGC Navy Commander Rear Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, houses hundreds of domestically produced drones, including the Mohajer-6 – a stealth UAV with a carbon-fiber body and advanced anti-electronic warfare system that monitored the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower for ten consecutive hours undetected.

Footage broadcast by the country's national television showcased the drone's high-resolution imagery of the aircraft carrier and other U.S. naval assets in the Persian Gulf, highlighting its capability to penetrate and monitor advanced U.S. naval defenses.

According to the footage, the facility accommodates Ababil?3 and Ababil?5 reconnaissance drones, Bavar?5 loitering munitions, and the Sadegh intelligence-gathering UAV, along with other yet-to-be-unveiled

drones—all capable of launching from underground silos or improvised dirt runways.

'Any location of enemy interest is a target,' IRGC Chief

General Salami described the unveiling as both a defensive measure and a psychological tool to recalibrate adversaries' perceptions.

"Another dimension of displaying our power is to correct the enemies' miscalculations," he declared during the base tour, adding, "Any location from which aggression originates will become the target of our counterattack."

Salami assured Iranians of the country's military capabilities to counter any threat. "Our dear nation should know that we stand with our hands full against our enemies," he said.

"What the dear Iranian nation is witnessing today is a small part of the IRGC Navy's enormous drone capability," Salami said.

"The drones at the disposal of

this force are the most modern and advanced drone technologies in the world, giving our commanders a free hand for various types of strikes and providing flexibility in planning."

Iran's drone program, a cornerstone of its defensive strategy, has grown exponentially despite international sanctions.

The IRGC's emphasis on underground bases aligns with Iran's long-standing defensive doctrine, designed to safeguard critical military infrastructure from aerial threats.

Last year, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, declared, "There are few cities in Iran that do not have a missile city."

He added that the sheer number of the country's underground missile bases is so vast that once detected, enemies would be unable to effectively counter them. "What you see is merely the tip of the iceberg," he emphasized.

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Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

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SPORTS

Nassaji join Havadar in PGPL relegation

TEHRAN – Nassaji football team was relegated in the penultimate week of the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Pro League (PGPL), joining Havadar in the Azadegan League next season.

Stuck with management issues, Nassaji drew 3-3 with PGPL champions Tractor on Thursday in Tabriz.

In Tehran, Sepahan were held to a 1-1 draw by the already relegated Havadar, and Persepolis earned a fiery stoppage-time win over Kheybar in Khoramabad.

Both Sepahan and Persepolis have a chance to qualify for the 2025/26 AFC Champions League Elite playoff.

Foolad battled back to defeat Esteghlal Khuzestan 2-1 in Ahvaz. Aluminium were held to a 1-1 draw against Malavan, Gol Gohar edged past Shams Azar 1-0, and Zob Ahan beat Mes 2-1.

Fajr Sepasi have secured promotion to the 2025/26 PGPL, while Paykan, Sanat Naft, Ario Es-lamshahr, and Saipa still have a chance to claim the remaining spot.

Iran lose to Pakistan in World Polo Championship Asia qualifiers

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Pakistan 17-14 in the 2025 World Polo Championship Asia qualifiers.

The 2025 Federation of International Polo (FIP) Arena World Polo Championship Asia qualifiers are being held at the Nofa Equestrian Resort, west of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Polo is a ball game that is played on horseback as a traditional field sport.

It is one of the world's oldest known team sports, having been adopted in the Western world from the game of Chovgan, which originated in ancient Iran, dating back over 2,000 years.

Iran beat Hong Kong in AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025

TEHRAN – Defending champions Iran secured their place in the quarter-finals after defeating Hong Kong 3-1 in their AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup China 2025 Group B tie on Friday.

The win took Iran to six points – level with Vietnam who also qualified – with the two to meet on Sunday to decide the group winners.

Having opened their campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 win over the Philippines, Iran took time to find their rhythm, Elham Anafteh (two goals) and Mahtab Banaei were on target for Iran.

Iran's Nastaran Moghimi scored an own goal.

Iran's dream in 2025 Beach Soccer World Cup ended

TEHRAN – Iran's FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Seychelles 2025 title ambitions came to a premature end after losing 4-3 to Belarus in the quarter-finals on Thursday.

The AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thailand 2025 champions Iran struck first but in the end, could not stop Belarus from powering their way back into the game to take their place in the semi-finals against either Senegal or Italy.

Belarus goalkeeper Mikhail Avgustov shook the Iran crossbar with a vicious volley, before picking the ball out of his net seconds before the first period was up, Mohammad Masoumi guiding home Ali Mirshekari's pass.

Ihar Bryshtsel won and thrashed home a penalty to equalize in the second, and put Belarus ahead with a fine finish at the start of the third.

Bryshtsel then earned a second spot-kick, but this time Seyedmohammad Dastan made a big block. The relief was short-lived. Yahor Hardzetski dispatched a gorgeous overhead kick and Anatoliy Ryabko headed home to put Nico's team

three goals up.

Masoumi and Movahed Mohammadpour then struck to pull Iran to within one, but Belarus held on to progress.

Torkaman ready to drive Iran to glory

TEHRAN – As the clock ticked down towards full time at the Hohhot Sports Center on Wednesday, Iran faced the prospect of dropping points for the first time ever at the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup.

Champions of both previous editions, the Central Asians had won all 10 matches in its tournament history but was struggling to find a way past an obdurate Philippines side in its Group B opener at China 2025.

But the debutant's hearts were broken with three minutes left by a rising star of Iran women's futsal – a name that those in the sport will likely hear a lot more of in the future.

Teed up by Sara Shirbeigi, Maral Torkaman displayed the kind of composure that has made her a fearsome forward to curl the ball past three players and into the net for the winning goal, which gave Iran a hard-fought three points.

It also underlined the resilience that complements her talent, as the 22-year-old had – along with her teammates – missed several good chances prior to that moment.

"I (just) told myself, 'you can do it, you can do it – just go forward, pass the ball to your teammates to score or I can score,'" she told the-AFC.com "It did not matter who could score, we just wanted to win the game and we did, so it was very good for us.

"It was a very tough game for us and for me, it was my first game at the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup, and... all of us are very happy to win. We did not play many games before coming here – just one tournament in Thailand, and many of us are new, but we will aim to score as early as possible in the next match."

One of seven tournament debutants in the Iran squad, Torkaman is the youngest among her 14 teammates but has already established herself as one to look out for.

Inspired to pick up football at eight years old by her brother Mehdi, the Karaj native was called up to the Under-14 women's national team aged 11 and went on to represent Iran at the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship 2015, AFC U-16 Women's Championship 2017 Qualifiers and AFC U-19 Women's Championship 2019 Qualifiers.

"I was addicted to football! After that, I switched to futsal and started to play for the national team and also in the women's futsal league," said Torkaman, who made the change in sport in 2019 and cited Saied Ahmad Abbasi, the 2023 AFC Futsal Player of the Year, as her idol. "I want to become a champion in Asia (so I chose futsal)."

Iranian canoeists win medals in 2025 Asian

TEHRAN – Three Iranian athletes won medals at the 2025 Asian Canoe Confederation Canoe Sprint Asian Championships on Friday.

Defending champion Mohammad Nabi Rezaei of Iran settled for a silver in the men's canoe single 1000m with a time of 4:19.26.

Chinese teenage star Wu Shengyue finished in first place with 4:15.80 and bronze medal went to Kuan-Chieh Lai of Chinese Taipei, who won the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games title over the distance, with 4:24.91.

Seven-time Asian champion Ali Aghamirzaei of Iran won silver in 3:49.94 in the men's kayak single 1000m. Tokyo 2020 Olympian and three-time Asian Games champion Zhang Dong secured title for China. He clinched a superb victory by more than one second over and bronze went to Uzbek star Oleksandr Zarubin.

Lingya Chen won the third gold medal of the day for China by crossing the line in 4:23.60 in the women's K1 1000m.

Kazakhstan opened their account when Stella Sukhanova followed Chen for silver in 4:24.87 and Iranian Narjes Kargarpoor seized bronze with 4:29.92.

They dedicated their medals to the victims of the huge explosion in Shahid Rajaei port in Bandar Abbas.

'Talks with US unpredictable,' says Iran's security chief, as Israel ramps up efforts to derail diplomacy

From Page 1 ▶ He cautioned that while the outcome of talks remains "unpredictable," Iran refuses to engage under coercion. "Entering discussions on equal footing, free from threats, is the only path worthy of dignity and rationality in international affairs," he stated.

The warnings coincided with Fox News reporting a claim from the MEK, a designated terrorist group responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians and formerly aligned with Saddam Hussein during his invasion of Iran, which purportedly provided 'satellite evidence' of a covert nuclear site in Semnan Province.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the claims as a "desperate fabrication" orchestrated by the Israeli regime's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"With his credibility in tatters and exposed as a saboteur, Netanyahu... is turning to both old

and new sock puppets. This time, he is using Saddam's Iranian henchmen," Araghchi wrote on X, referencing the MEK's collaboration with Saddam's regime. "Hiring a literal cult only conveys utter desperation."

The MEK, branded a terrorist organization by the U.S. until 2012, has a decades-long record of violence against Iranian civilians, suppression of dissent within its ranks, and opportunistic alliances with anti-Iran spy agencies.

Iran's UN Mission condemned Fox News for amplifying the group's "absurd reports," noting that the MEK "furnishes fabricated findings to Western intelligence agencies" before shopping them to media outlets once their falsehoods are exposed.

The so-called "Rainbow Site" allegations mark the latest in a pattern of Israeli-linked sabotage efforts. The MEK, incriminated as act-



Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Akbar Ahmadian addressing IRGC commanders in Tehran on May 8, 2025.

ing as a proxy for Mossad and Western intelligence agencies, has repeatedly surfaced with sensational claims during critical diplomatic junctures.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Over 2,200 companies attend West Asia's biggest oil industry gathering in Tehran



Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad speaking at opening ceremony of Iran Oil Show 2025 in Tehran on Thursday, May 8.

TEHRAN - Iran's oil industry, a key economic driver, is showcasing its latest achievements at the 29th International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2025) in Tehran, where over 2,200 domestic and international companies have convened.

Speaking at the opening ceremony on Thursday, Saman Ghodousi, director of the exhibition, welcomed lawmakers, senior oil officials, foreign ambassadors and delegates. He said the event, hosted at Tehran's International Permanent Fairgrounds, marks the region's largest industry gathering, offering opportunities for face-to-face engagement and technology exchange among professionals.

Ghodousi noted that companies from countries including China, Russia, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, South Korea, Turkey, India, the UAE, Canada, France, Germany, and Brazil are participating. The event has seen such strong demand that five new exhibition halls have been added to accommodate exhibitors and visitors, alongside expanded open-air sections.

One highlight of this year's edition is the launch of two virtual platforms, one using artificial intelligence for navigation and company information, and another allowing remote attendees to access the event virtually.

The exhibition runs from May 8 to 11, open daily from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

\$10B investment to transform Iran's oil industry

At the opening ceremony, Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad unveiled plans to boost oil and gas production and advance \$10 billion worth of projects by the end of the Iranian year 1404 (March 2026). Despite intensified sanctions, he said oil exports remain at peak levels — “just the beginning of our path,” he emphasized.

Paknejad said the exhibition's theme — Investment in the Oil Industry: A Guarantee for Economic Growth and Development — aligns with Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's guidance for the new year, highlighting the ministry's strategic focus.

Covering more than 37 specialized sectors across upstream and downstream operations, financing, trade, and emerging technologies, the exhibition reflects the growing role of innovative startups, tech parks, and research institutions in reshaping the industry.

The minister emphasized the importance of transforming the oil sector with advanced technologies and domestic expertise, pledging strong support for local production and skilled Iranian professionals.

30 major projects and expanded production targets

Paknejad reported notable production increases under President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, including an additional 150,000 barrels

per day (bpd) of crude oil, 30 million cubic meters per day of raw gas, 180,000 bpd of refining capacity, and 7.0 million tons of annual petrochemical output. Gasoline and diesel production rose by 7.0 and 8.0 million liters per day, respectively.

He added that over 30 large-scale oil projects worth about \$10 billion are slated for completion by 2026. These will add 250,000 bpd of oil and 30 million cubic meters per day of gas production capacity.

Easing contracts and attracting energy-intensive investors

The minister praised a recent cabinet decision allowing energy-intensive industries and petrochemical companies to invest in gas field development. The first such contract is expected to be signed during the exhibition.

He also highlighted economic council approvals aimed at improving upstream contract terms, including better internal rate of return (IRR), tax incentives, and bonus payments for surplus output.

To further de-risk and accelerate investment, the ministry is rolling out updated contracts, revised IPC models, public-private partnership schemes, and instruments like the Oil Guarantee Fund, which can issue guarantees of up to \$6 billion.

Over 200 investment opportunities unveiled

Paknejad said the ministry is exploring domestic and international funding options, including the National Development Fund and Iranian banks. He expressed hope that over \$10 billion in contracts would be signed this year for oil and gas field development.

At a recent upstream investment event, the ministry officially presented over 200 investment opportunities, he noted.

Paknejad said Iran aims to expand regional and international energy markets. He cited the Iran-Russia joint economic commission in early May as a key milestone for bilateral projects, adding that legal frameworks and treaties are being developed to reduce political risk and enable private-sector cooperation.

He also highlighted a newly signed gas swap agreement to deliver Turkmen gas to Turkey via Iran, a move that enhances Iran's role as a regional energy hub.

The minister reiterated the ministry's commitment to using emerging technologies, especially artificial intelligence, across the oil and gas value chain.

Push for AI and local equipment in oil, Ptechem industry

Separately, Hassan Abbaspour, Deputy Oil Minister for Petrochemical Affairs, said domestic equipment usage in petrochemical projects is set to increase from 75 percent to 80 percent. He also announced a new utility corridor in Phase 3 of Asaluyeh's Pars Special Economic Energy Zone to accommodate downstream petrochemical industries.

The ministry is offering incentives, including a 30 percent feedstock discount, to investors entering the downstream sector, as part of a broader effort to complete the petrochemical value chain and reduce semi-raw material exports.

A new research and technology division has been established within the National Petrochemical Company to strengthen domestic production and connect local manufacturers with the industry.

Iran, China sign deal on coal-to-gas technology cooperation

TEHRAN - Iran's Research Institute of Petroleum Industry (RIPI) and a major Chinese firm called Keyon have signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on coal-to-natural gas conversion technologies, officials said on Thursday.

The agreement was signed on the opening day of the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show 2025) in Tehran. It aims to support Iran's efforts to address its domestic gas imbalance by utilizing alternative fuels such as coal, according to a statement from RIPI.

RIPI head Azim Kalantari-Asl and a representative from the Chinese company, signed the deal, which focuses on technological cooperation

in synthetic gas production from coal.

Hamid Ganji, head of RIPI's Gas Research Center, said Iran's substantial coal reserves, combined with China's expertise in synthetic gas and hydrogen production from coal, provide an opportunity for joint innovation. The primary goal of the partnership, he said, is to localize the technical know-how and enable industrial-scale implementation in Iran.

“The current gas supply-demand imbalance makes it essential to look at domestic resources like coal as a viable alternative for natural gas production,” Ganji added.

The four-day exhibition, which opened on May 8, is being held at Tehran's permanent international fairgrounds.

Iran sees Turkmenistan partnership as gateway to regional gas trade

TEHRAN - Iran's National Gas Company is ramping up efforts to attract foreign investment and expand energy ties with neighboring countries, with a senior official saying closer cooperation with Turkmenistan could pave the way for broader regional gas trade.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition in Tehran, Saeed Tavakoli, managing director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), said the country is pursuing long-term contracts and deeper engagement with its neighbors, particularly Turkmenistan.

“The emphasis by the president and the oil minister on strong regional ties shows our intention to achieve concrete results through negotiation and mutual cooperation,” Tavakoli said following a meeting with Turkmenistan's ambassador to Iran Ylyas Gayypov.

Tavakoli added that building energy ties with Ashgabat could lay the foundation for broader collaborations across various sectors. “Gas cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan is a prelude to regional gas trade, and we hope to see it continue and expand.”

He also noted that gas swap arrangements are already underway, with Iran ready to receive natural gas at the Sarakhs border point in northeastern Iran.

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

Speaking at a joint business forum held during Iran Expo 2025, Peyman Bagheri highlighted the two countries' shared strengths in energy, mining, agriculture, and tourism but said current trade levels fail to reflect those capacities. “Despite deep-rooted historical, cultural, and economic ties, trade volumes remain below potential and need a more proactive approach,” he said.

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

He described Iran Expo 2025 as a “golden opportunity” to showcase Iran's economic capabilities, noting the participation of more than 3,000 businesspeople from



110 countries. “The Iran Chamber has mobilized all its resources to make the most of this platform,” he added.

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

He praised the role of both presidents in building trust between business communities, highlighting the creation of a joint council and the need to respect each other's regulations. Bahrami also announced the launch of a “Turkmen Trade Center” in Iran, aimed at helping Turkmen consumers access Iranian goods at competitive prices.

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

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

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

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

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

He also mentioned special rail freight discounts for Turkmen

traders operating through the joint chamber and outlined new facilities aimed at easing cargo transport procedures.

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

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

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

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

He welcomed the broad participation of Iranian companies in the initiative, saying their involvement would pave the way for sustainable trade growth and facilitate access to Central Asian markets.

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

Iran expands air navigation co-op with Iraq, UAE at regional aviation summit

TEHRAN - Iranian civil aviation authorities held separate meetings with counterparts from Iraq and the United Arab Emirates on the sidelines of the Middle East (West Asia) Safety and Air Navigation Conference to bolster cooperation in air traffic management and aviation safety.

According to Iran's Civil Aviation Organization, a joint session with Iraq focused on resolving technical overlaps in approach procedures at Abadan Airport, which have conflicted with flights at Iraq's Basra Airport. Discussions also covered flight coordination

during the annual Arbaeen pilgrimage and reducing potential conflicts with Iraqi domestic air traffic, especially at Najaf and Karbala airports.

Both sides agreed to explore new air routes to improve Iraq's connectivity with Central Asia and optimize overflight traffic through Iran's airspace. Issues related to the aeronautical message exchange system and communication barriers were also reviewed.

In a separate session with the United Arab Emirates, Iran and UAE civil aviation delega-

tions pledged to deepen collaboration in air navigation, traffic management, and aviation training.

Held during the 22nd Middle East (West Asia) Air Navigation Planning and Implementation Regional Group (MIDANPIRG) and the 12th Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG) meetings in Doha, the two sides discussed revising air corridors at border points, coordinating during regional or global crises that affect air traffic, and exchanging expertise through joint emergency preparedness drills.

Iran's annual saffron export stands at \$184.7m

TEHRAN - Iran exported 214,300 tons of saffron worth \$184.7 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), according to an official with the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

IRICA's Director General of Statistics and Data Processing Hamid Bayat, announced that the saffron exports saw a four

percent drop in volume and a 13 percent decline in value year-on-year.

The United Arab Emirates, Spain, and China were the top three buyers of Iranian saffron in 1403, importing \$50 million, \$40 million, and \$30 million, respectively, he added.

Bayat noted that these three countries accounted for 65 per-

cent of the total value of Iran's saffron exports. He added that Iranian saffron was shipped to more than 50 countries worldwide.

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 agricul-

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a separate meeting with Nookerguly Atagulyev, Deputy Prime Minister for Trade and head of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan, the Iranian official discussed strategies to boost economic and commercial cooperation between the two countries.

Also, during the trip of Iranian Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq to Turkmenistan in late March, officials from the two countries discussed the expansion of relations in different economic and transport areas.

In a meeting between Sadeq and Turkmenistan's Foreign Affairs Minister Rashid Meredov, on March 28, the two sides reviewed the roadmap for economic cooperation between the two countries.

Hamas ambushes occupation forces

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The armed wing of Hamas inflicts heavy losses on two separate units of the Israeli occupation forces.

The al-Qassam Brigades announced that they had targeted Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) east of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, resulting in multiple deaths and injuries.

In an official statement, the resistance movement said its fighters struck an Israeli engineering unit composed of 12 soldiers who were preparing to demolish a house.

According to the Brigades, their fighters launched two anti-personnel and anti-armor shells at the unit, triggering an explosion in the house and causing casualties among the soldiers.

Following the attack, they observed Israeli helicopters arriving at the scene to evacuate the dead and wounded.

The al-Qassam Brigades also reported that their fighters engaged in close-range clashes with enemy troops and military vehicles.

In a separate operation under the "Gates of Hell" campaign, al-Qassam fighters targeted an Israeli infantry unit of seven soldiers near the Omar bin Abdulaziz Mosque, also east of Rafah, using a high-explosive device. They reported witnessing "scattered



body parts" of several occupying soldiers following the explosion.

According to an IOF spokesperson, two soldiers were killed and six others wounded during battles in the southern Gaza Strip. Four of the injured are in critical condition.

The Israeli Occupation Army Radio reported that in the first attack, gunmen fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at a building where Israeli soldiers were searching for a tunnel opening. The explosion caused the structure to collapse on them.

As a result, one soldier was killed, and two others from the 605th Engineering Battalion were wounded, one critically, the other moderately.

In a second incident, resistance fighters fired an anti-armor missile at a joint force from the Golani Reconnaissance Unit and the 605th Battalion. The soldiers, who had exited a Namer armored personnel carrier to raid a building, were attacked nearby.

Preliminary reports indicate one soldier was killed and four others injured, three critically and one moderately. Among the wounded are two officers from the Golani Unit and the 605th Battalion.

Both attacks occurred in a three-hour period in the Jenina neighborhood of Rafah, where the Golani Brigade is currently operating, Army Radio added. Subsequently, the Israeli military imposed a media blackout on reporting IOF casualties.

Earlier, Israeli media reported a serious security incident in Rafah, where a building collapse led to severe injuries among Israeli troops, several in critical condition. The wounded were transported to Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon.

Israeli platforms noted that the army faced significant challenges in evacuating casualties due to ongoing heavy combat. Helicopters provided suppressive fire to facilitate the evacuation.

The Hebrew-language site Hada-shot Bazman published footage of wounded soldiers arriving at hospitals, while also noting that details remain under censorship. It warned that "Hamas cameras and explosive devices await army forces in Gaza."

Israeli media described the day as particularly difficult for the IOF in Gaza, as the Rafah incidents coincided with another confrontation in Gaza City's Shujaiya neighborhood.

Reports from Shujaiya suggested an attempt to abduct a wounded Israeli soldier through a tunnel beneath a collapsed building.

As a result, the Israeli military reportedly activated the Hannibal Directive in both Shujaiya and Rafah, a protocol aimed at preventing the capture of soldiers, even if it involves targeting their own forces.

Reporters on the ground said the IOF had begun firing on their own positions amid fears that a capture operation was underway against the unit ambushed east of Rafah.

MAY 10, 2025

Straight Truth
TEHRAN TIMES

Pakistan denies firing hundreds of drones into India

Pakistan targeted 36 Indian sites with 300 to 400 drones overnight on Thursday into Friday, an Indian military official said, an assertion denied by Islamabad.

According to Indian military official Vyomika Singh, Pakistan's military carried out multiple violations of Indian airspace along the entire western border, with military infrastructure the intended target.

"Along the international border and Line of Control, drone intrusions were attempted from Leh to Sir Creek at 36 locations with approximately 300 to 400 drones," Singh told a Friday press briefing.

She added that India's armed forces brought

down "a number" of these drones. In response, India launched drones at four air defense sites in Pakistan, she said.

Speaking to CNN on Friday, a senior Pakistani government source strongly denied that Pakistan had launched drone strikes against India. While acknowledging heavy shelling across the Line of Control, the source said Pakistan had not yet used any of its drones.

Singh also said that Pakistan's military fired heavy-caliber artillery guns and armed drones across the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir, resulting in the deaths and injuries of some Indian army personnel. She added that Pakistan's army also suffered "major losses" in Indian retaliatory fire.

New pope named

Robert Francis Prevost – who has chosen the papal name Leo XIV – may not be the Latin American Jesuit wildcard that his predecessor, Pope Francis, was, but his election is similarly historic, the Guardian reported.

In the figure of the 69-year-old former head of the Augustinian order, the Roman Catholic church has its very first U.S. leader. Until Thursday evening, the idea of the fisherman's ring being slipped on to a North American hand was seen as a fairly distant possibility. The Vatican's longstanding opposition to a U.S. pope stemmed largely from the optics of having a pontiff from a political superpower and a country with such a hegemonic cultural and secular global influence.

But all that changed after a short conclave that chose a man who had been a cardinal for only a little more than two years. While his appointment is likely to be welcomed by progressive factions within the church, it was probably



not the news that some of his more conservative, Trump-aligned U.S. brother cardinals had been hoping for.

Despite being born in Chicago on 14 September 1955, Prevost has never been a typical U.S. Catholic cleric – not least because he also holds Peruvian citizenship. After giving his solemn vows in 1981 and studying in Rome, he was sent to a mission in Peru.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Divisions emerge between Israel and US over Gaza and Yemen

From page 1 ▶ Under the plan, the Israeli army is already building logistical centers in Gaza to help with infrastructure reconstruction and aid administration, with the United States playing a key role in both.

But the agreement seems to deviate greatly from Israel's illegal demands. The U.S. may provide Hamas with assurances, such as future involvement in civil governance and security functions within Gaza, as the organization's refusal to disarm is still a major point of contention.

Many Israeli officials are concerned that Trump may portray the agreement as a fait accompli, which would force Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make a difficult political choice.

The Tel Aviv regime is worried that the agreement might weaken Israel's security and validate Hamas's power.

According to reports, if an agreement is not reached by May 15, the Israeli Security Cabinet has approved plans for a full-scale ground operation to occupy and flatten Gaza, displacing almost two million Palestinians and possibly causing a more humanitarian crisis.

The sharp discrepancy between Israel's military preparations and the U.S. diplomatic effort highlights the growing divide.

In his strategy, Trump favors a diplomatic breakthrough, which has angered Israeli officials.

US-Yemen ceasefire deal: A separate flashpoint

The Trump administration's separate ceasefire agreement with Yemen's Ansarallah, which was announced in early May 2025, is adding to the tensions surrounding Gaza.

Following an Omani-mediated truce to prevent attacks on American vessels in the Red Sea, the United States agreed to stop airstrikes after a seven-week bombing campaign against military and infrastructure targets in

Yemen.

Importantly, Israel is specifically left out of the ceasefire. Despite the U.S.-Yemen truce, the Ansarallah movement, which has been attacking Israel with missiles and drones since late 2023 in support of Palestinians in Gaza, has stated that it will not stop attacking Israeli targets.

This includes drone attacks and a missile strike close to Ben Gurion Airport on May 4.

The U.S.-Yemen ceasefire agreement was reportedly not communicated to Israel beforehand, which prompted harsh criticism from Israeli officials.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has rejected reliance on U.S. protection by vowing that Israel will "defend ourselves alone" against Yemeni aggression.

Israeli War Minister Yoav Katz emphasized Israel's willingness to take unilateral action by threatening to deliver "heavy blows" to Yemen if the attacks continue.

The U.S. agreement with Yemen is seen by Israel as a risky diplomatic ploy. According to Israeli officials, the ceasefire undermines regional security and Israel's deterrence strategy by implicitly accepting Yemen's ongoing animosity toward Israel.

Tensions have increased because the United States put its strategic interests—protecting American shipping lanes and defusing the Yemeni conflict—above Israel's security concerns.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Lessons Lebanon can learn from what is happening in Syria



From page 1 ▶ Furthermore, confronting Hezbollah was a priority agreed upon by the political and military leaders of the temporary occupation entity.

Syria's de facto regime has not only refrained from opening the Golan front, but from day one ensured that Hezbollah's supply routes would be cut off; nevertheless, the Israeli enemy proceeded to destroy all of Syria's capabilities, transforming it into a weak state that could easily be bargained with to achieve Israel's well-known ambitions.

The occupation entity is formulating a Syria-like approach toward Lebanon as it sees the capabilities of the Lebanese resistance as an obstacle to its ambitions.

Now, and after his martyrdom, the vision of martyr Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah is proven, for the thousandth time, correct when he warned that the fall of Syria would lead, at the very least, to the encirclement of the Resistance in Lebanon and Palestine.

Sayyed Nasrallah's wisdom in identifying the threat of takfiri groups

was also proven, especially after the massacres on the Syrian coast.

Behind Hezbollah, the primary obstacle to Israeli ambitions was Iran, which, since the victory of the Islamic Revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, has changed the course of the conflict with the Israeli enemy.

Meanwhile, Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc called on the Lebanese government to adopt a clear and serious policy toward Israeli attacks, emphasizing the Lebanese people's insistence on their "sovereign right to reject the occupation, condemn the regime's aggressive approach, and adhere to their national constants, which require its defeat, both officially and popularly."

An informed political source confirmed to Tehran Times that Lebanon's anti-Resistance team is exerting pressure to obstruct the reconstruction of what was destroyed by the Sept.-Nov. American-led Israeli aggression, despite the Lebanese government's financial capacity to undertake reconstruction with an initial sum (no less than one and a half billion dollars).

The source noted that the Iraqi government may decide to transfer its savings in the Central Bank of Lebanon to an official Lebanese body responsible for the reconstruction of housing units, but the Lebanese government insists on ignoring this matter in order to achieve political gains.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Second Announcement

International Re-Tenders announcement

The company of Aria Banader Iranian Chabahar, Marine and Port Services Development as a supplier of equipment for the First phase Shahid Beheshti port of Chabahar development hold, International Re-Tenders for manufacture, shipment, training and delivery of the following equipment in two stages and after Qualitative Assessment. All manufacturers with experience of manufacturing the above said equipment are invited to obtain the CD filled with assessment qualitative forms and tendering documents, with introductory letter and the original copy of the paid amount for Rials 10.000.000 for each bid to the account No. 275187119 in the name of Aria Banader Iranian Chabahar, Marine and Port Services Development with Bank of Tejarat with the following address:

The deadline for purchasing quality assessment documents is 10:00 AM (Local time) on Saturday, 1404/02/27 (corresponding to 2025/05/17).

Add: 40. Kish St., Jahankodak Crossroads, Nelson Mandela Blvd., Tehran, Iran. Postal code: 1518814111

Tel: +98 21 88190677-8, Fax: +98 21 88190679 E.mail: ABIC@abiports.com

Tender participation deposits Bank Guarantee with No term and condition extendable for many times for the following Tenders is needed. The above Guarantee will be received along with Technical and price proposal for the qualitative bidders.

- To abide the delivery Date of documents, any Question shall be answered 72 hours before the permitted date of delivery.

- All manufacturers are obliged to abide by the Maximum Utilization of Local Capabilities Law.

- Advertisement price of tender will be paid by the successful applicant.

- The tender participants would first assessed qualitative and after obtaining the minimum score will be participated to the continues stages of tender.

1-Four unites of Ship to Shore Gantry Crane (STS) with Tender No. PE/1001/03 (Amount of Guarantee Euro 561.000 or IR-Rials 403.000.000.000)

2- Ten unites of Rubber Tyred Gantry Container Crane (RTG) with Tender No. PE/1002/03 (Amount of Guarantee Euro 291.000 or IR-Rials 209.000.000.000)

3- Two vessel of Trailing Hopper Suction Dredgers 4000 CUBIC METER (THSD) with Tender No. ME/1001/03 (Amount of Guarantee Euro 911.000 or IR-Rials 655.000.000.000)



Iran offers to help restore Taq Kasra in Iraq



TEHRAN – Iran has expressed readiness to assist in the restoration of Taq Kasra, a masterpiece of Sassanid-era Persian architecture located near Baghdad.

The proposal was made by Mohammad-Mehdi Imanipour, head of Iran's Islamic Culture and Communication Organization, during his meeting with Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani in Tehran on Thursday, ISNA reported.

"Taq Kasra is a monument deeply cherished by the Iranian people," Imanipour said. "Unfortunately, restoration efforts have yet to begin. If the Iraqi government is willing, we are very much interested in contributing to its preservation and repair."

Moreover, Imani emphasized the warm and growing cooperation between the cultural sectors of the two neighboring countries. He noted that Iran's cultural attaché in Iraq is prepared to facilitate the implementation of bilateral cultural

exchange programs.

Imanipour also praised recent progress in tourism relations between the two nations. Moreover, he referred to his visit to Iraqi museums, where he observed the country's valuable collection of antiquities. "There is great potential for joint efforts to preserve and restore archaeological heritage. We are ready to engage in such collaborations," Imanipour added.

In recent years, parts of the monument have collapsed, sparking concern among historians, archaeologists, and cultural heritage advocates, especially in Iran. Despite past discussions, no substantial restoration project has been initiated, leading many Iranian experts to call for urgent action.

In 2019, Tehran Municipality held talks with Baghdad's urban planners and authorities to restore several aging monuments in Iraq, including Taq Kasra.

Taq Kasra, also known as the Arch of Ctesiphon, is one of the most significant surviving architectural achievements from the Persian Sassanid era.

The arch was part of the imperial palace complex, however, the exact time of its construction is not known with certainty. Some historians believe the founder is Shapur I who ruled Persia from 242 to 272 CE and some others believe that construction possibly began during the reign of Anushirwan the Just (Khosrow I) after a campaign against the Byzantines in 540 CE.

Kashan rosewater distillation ritual added to national tourism callender



TEHRAN—The Head of Kashan Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department said the rosewater distillation ritual was registered in the national tourism calendar of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Alireza Abdollahzadeh added that the event was registered under the number 50404131 on May 3, in line with organizing tourism events, Mehr news agency reported.

Rosewater extraction is a process for producing rosewater. It is also a cultural and economic event which has turned into one of the main axes of spring tourism in central Iran, he said.

The rosewater earned from massive copper pots, is the most important souvenir of the region, he added.

It has long been used in religious rituals such as the annual washing of the holy shrines and the Hajj pilgrimage rituals, he mentioned.

He continued that the traditional rosewater extracting method has been preserved in the surrounding villages. It is considered an intangible heritage of the country, he added.

The team ritual starts before sunrise with lighting traditional ovens and putting copper pots containing Mohammadi roses on them, he said. Until sunrise, a delightful aroma spreads to the surrounding villages and cities, he added.

Almost every 30 kilograms of rose petals plus 80 liters of water are poured into each pot that is connected to metal pipes for the steam moving through to obtain the hydrosol. The waste of distillation is used for feeding livestock or composting.

During 891st meeting of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution which was held in January 2023, Day of Mohammadi Flower and Rosewater was added to the country's national callender, he said. Therefore, May 10 was con-

sidered as Day of Mohammadi Flower and Rosewater, he added.

Qamsar, Niasar, and Barzak are amongst other destinations. Every corner of the region is teemed with the dance of colors and delicate fragrance of roses from early May to mid-June.

Distillation of flowers and herbs has a deep history in Iran. Many believe traditionally-distilled rosewater is of higher quality than that produced in factories probably due to shorter time interval between the harvest and distillation practices.

Golab or rosewater is in fact fragrant distillate of Mohammadi roses, which is used in dishes to flavor them or being consumed as a religious perfume as well.

Rosewater is produced from a very sweet-smelling kind of flowers, best known as Mohammadi roses in the country.

Flower harvesting is somewhat an intensive work. It is mostly done from dawn through morning.

It is said that delay in harvesting or transport to distillery results in decreased essential oil quantity and quality.

Locals believe that rose oil and rosewater have many therapeutic benefits, saying rose oil soothes the mind and heals depression, grief, stress and tension.

Such products are deemed to alleviate problems with the digestive system, healing colds, and skin health as well.

Kashan embraces abundant scenic landscape, historical sites and monuments such as UNESCO-registered Fin Garden with its Safavid and Qajar era edifices, Tabatabaei House, Boroujerdi House, Ameri House, a traditional bazaar, and Jame Mosque of Kashan just to name a few.

Preserving the past, building the future: Kandelous and the path to sustainable tourism

By Afshin Majlesi

KANDELOUS (Mazandaran province) – Nestled in the heart of Iran's Alborz mountain range and just 35 kilometers from the Caspian Sea, the ancient village of Kandelous offers an authentic rural escape for those in search of tradition, tranquility, and natural beauty.

With a heritage that stretches back to prehistoric times and a commitment to sustainable tourism, Kandelous has been nominated for the UN Tourism's Best Tourism Villages label – a recognition reserved for rural destinations that exemplify cultural richness, environmental stewardship, and inclusive development.

The present report explores why Kandelous is a deserving candidate.

A village with deep cultural roots

According to local historians and archaeological evidence, Kandelous dates back to prehistory, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited villages in northern Iran. The village's historic urban fabric, including its preserved alleyways and traditional architectural styles, speaks of a community deeply respectful of its past.

The original names of its old lanes are still in use today, inscribed on hand-painted signs that serve as reminders of the village's linguistic and social continuity.

Beyond tangible heritage, Kandelous is rich in intangible culture as well. One of its most compelling oral traditions is the legend of Mina and the Panther, a folkloric tale passed down through generations, capturing the imagination of locals and visitors alike. Traditional festivals, handicrafts, herbal medicine practices, and active participation of villagers in the cultural life of Kandelous are ongoing testaments to its intangible heritage.

A living museum of village life

At the heart of Kandelous lies its remarkable rural museum, one of the oldest of its kind in



Media personnel take photos of objects on display at a rural museum in the village of Kandelous, northern Iran, May 8, 2025.

West Asia. Housing over 8,300 artifacts, including items dating back to the first millennium BC, the museum is a trove of anthropology and ethnography.

From ancient pottery and agricultural tools to household items and ritualistic objects, it offers a comprehensive look into the evolution of rural life in Iran.

Notably, the museum also features photographs and memorabilia of foreign dignitaries and ambassadors who have visited Kandelous over the years, showcasing its growing reputation as a cultural destination. This blend of local pride and international visibility strengthens its profile as a globally relevant site.

Revitalizing tradition through economic and environmental sustainability

Kandelous is not just a relic of the past – it is an evolving community with a vision for sustainable economic development. A key driver of this is the village's capacity to cultivate medicinal herbs, a tradition that has been transformed into a viable economic activity. Local families grow, harvest, and process herbs, integrating age-old knowledge with modern packaging and distribution methods.

Moreover, workshops for producing traditional organic good-smelling handcrafts, soaps, and herbal oils – serve both local markets and tourists. These initiatives not only bolster house-

hold incomes but also preserve artisanal skills and promote circular economies.

Moreover, the village has taken active steps to train locals, especially women and youth, in entrepreneurship, marketing, and sustainable farming techniques.

Efforts to improve water management, reduce single-use plastics, and protect local biodiversity are in place, reflecting Kandelous's dedication to environmental stewardship – an essential criterion for the UN recognition.

Empowering local communities and women

One of the standout features of Kandelous is an active partnership of women in both cultural and economic spheres. From training jobs, managing guesthouses and local workplaces to participating in medicinal plant cultivation and cultural performances, women remain key agents in sustaining village life – just as they were in the past.

The village also benefits from a proactive local administration that has invested in healthcare, tourism infrastructure, and education, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed. Tourism safety, sanitation, and accessibility have been significantly improved over recent years, encouraging more visitors while maintaining a balance with local life.

Gastronomy, hospitality, and visitor experience

Food is a powerful expression of culture, and in Kandelous, local gastronomy thrives. Visitors are invited to experience traditional Mazandarani cuisine made from locally-sourced, seasonal ingredients. Village homes and eco-lodges serve dishes that highlight the region's agricultural richness, often accompanied by storytelling, music, and craft demonstrations.

Speaking to the Tehran Times, one of the villagers underlined: "It is important for us that visitors routinely express high satisfaction, feel a uniqueness of the cultural experience, the beauty of the natural surroundings, and the warmth of our hospitality."

Final note

Kandelous is more than a scenic mountain village – it is a living, breathing testament to the harmony of culture, nature, and sustainability.

Its nomination for the UN Tourism's Best Tourism Villages label is not only appropriate but overdue. By preserving its deep-rooted traditions while embracing progressive environmental and economic policies, Kandelous exemplifies the values at the heart of responsible rural tourism.

In a world where authenticity is becoming rare, Kandelous offers a rare, rich experience that honors the past and prepares for a resilient future.

Pakistani investors express readiness to invest in Kish Island

TEHRAN— A number of Pakistani investors have expressed their readiness to start administrative cooperation with Kish Island in the south of Iran during their trip to the touristic island.

Two specialized gatherings were held with economic and tourism officials of Kish Island at the International Conference Center to promote economic, trade, and tourism collaborations and study the grounds for joint cooperation, Khabar Online reported.

During the meetings which were welcomed by both sides, the current projects were introduced and future programs were discussed in the form of investment opportunities. In addition, Kish officials declared readiness to attract for-

ign partnerships and prepare the grounds for the contribution of Pakistani investors to these projects.

In addition, business-to-business (B2B) meetings were held between economic activists of both nations, in which merchants and investors directly exchanged views, identified opportunities, and explored areas of cooperation.

Pakistani investors also expressed their interest in participating in the tourism, services, trade, and technology sectors of Kish Island and announced their readiness to begin executive cooperation.

It is worth mentioning that during this trip, a delegation of businessmen, economic activists,



and representatives of the private sector of Iran, along with the Senior Advisor of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Chairman of the Iran-Pakistan Trade and Investment Council, visited the tourism, cultural, commercial centers,

and development projects of Kish Island during their stay on Kish Island and became closely acquainted with the special capacities of the region.

Kish Island is located on the northern edge of the Persian Gulf.

Ambassadors of five nations visit Qazvin

TEHRAN—Ambassadors and representatives of Uganda, Sierra Leon, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka visited Qazvin to become acquainted with the economic, cultural, and tourism potentials of the Iranian province.

They met Qazvin Governor-General Mohammad Nozari in the governor-general's meeting room on Thursday.

Addressing the foreign officials, Nozari said, "Today, we are with you to introduce one of the ancient traditions of Qazvin known as 'Panjah Bedar'. This ritual, which dates back

to hundreds of years ago, is a sign of social solidarity and praying for water and abundant blessing."

He also said that a number of Qazvin people come to Mosalla (the city's grand prayer ground) on May 9 every year to pray for rainfall and revive their cultural heritage. Apart from its religious dimension, this ritual is an opportunity for introducing authentic culture of Iran, he added.

The presence of foreign ambassadors in this ritual indicates the importance of collaborations and the role of culture in bringing

nations closer together, he mentioned.

He said Qazvin is a historical province and one of the major tourism areas of Iran which boasts numerous historical, natural and religious attractions.

The governor-general also said that Qazvin boasts strategic position, rich history and ancient civilization. "The province has been a crossroads of history and technology. In fact, it is the paradise of technology and smart investment."

(See full text at www.tehrantimes.com)

Special budget allocated to rare, hard-to-treat diseases

TEHRAN – The administration has approved 120 billion rials (some 144,000 dollars) for treating rare and hard-to-treat diseases in the current Iranian year, which started on March 21.

Rare disease is often described as a specific health condition affecting 1 in 2000 individuals or fewer in the general population. Over 7000 known rare diseases currently impact more than 300 million people globally, with 70 percent of these conditions starting in childhood.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), rare diseases are often complex and multi-systemic, affecting multiple organs and leading to comorbidities, and many of these conditions are chronic, progressive, and can consequently result in serious disabilities and premature death.

Due to the high treatment costs, Salamat Health Insurance Organization, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, established the Rare Disease Foundation, which covers rare and hard-to-treat diseases to promote health equity and reduce out-of-pocket payments for patients, IRNA quoted Mohammad Mohammad-Mehdi Nasehi, the managing director of Salamat Health Insurance Organization, as saying.



The official made the remarks on Thursday, on the occasion of World Thalassaemia Day.

Established in the Iranian year 1401 (March 2022-2023), the foundation covers 130 rare diseases, now. Once identified, patients' information will be recorded to be able to use the services provided by the foundation. So far, over 2.5 million patients have benefited from these services, he noted.

Cancers are the most expensive diseases covered by the foundation; 70 percent of the funds is allocated to cancer-related medicines, the official added.

A total of 456 rare diseases have been identified in the coun-

try, according to a recent report by the Rare Disease Foundation. The incidence of rare diseases is so low to the extent that maybe one or two people with a certain rare disease are present in the country. According to the health ministry, diseases such as 'butterfly skin or EB', 'Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)', 'Metabolic diseases', 'Autism', and 'Dystrophies', Thalassaemia, hemophilia, Diabetes, cancer, and immune deficiency diseases are among rare diseases.

World Thalassaemia Day

Celebrated on May 8th, World Thalassaemia Day raises awareness of the disease. Thalassaemia is a genetic blood disorder that hinders the body's ability to produce hemoglobin, resulting in

varying degrees of anemia, fatigue, and related complications. The severity of the condition varies depending on the type of thalassaemia, making expert care crucial for effective treatment and management.

With an estimated 100 million people worldwide carrying genes responsible for thalassaemia, and more than 300,000 babies born annually with severe forms of the disease, the Day is a call to raise awareness about the condition and its impact.

The day also aims to unite communities in supporting patients and promoting preventive measures to combat the disease effectively.

Currently, there are over 19,000 patients with thalassaemia in the country, with 15,500 diagnosed with thalassaemia major, 2,800 with thalassaemia intermedia, and 1,000 suffering from sickle cell disease and other hemoglobinopathy disorders.

Each year, World Thalassaemia Day is celebrated according to a theme. The theme for the year 2025 is 'Together for Thalassaemia: Uniting Communities, Prioritising Patients'. The theme calls for a patient-centred approach, where care extends beyond treatment to encompass holistic well-being, dignity, and empowerment.

National red crescent week to be marked

TEHRAN – The national red crescent week is scheduled to be held from May 8 to 14.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) is planning to hold the event under the theme 'red crescent, symbol of hope and selfless service', IRNA reported.

Each day of the week will be celebrated, focusing on a specific issue.

Thursday, May 8, 'Voluntary services, and the expansion of social-based partnerships'

The first day of the week will be observed concurrently with the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, which is annually held on May 8.

Friday, May 9, 'The Iranian Red Crescent Society, along with people, supports national production'

Saturday, May 10, 'IRCS' youth pioneers of altruism, hope, and progress'

Sunday, May 11, Aid and Rescue/Sacrifice and Empathy

Monday, May 12, 'Health, treatment, rehabilitation, education, and research/Health Saviors, public education, and Service Promotion'

Tuesday, May 13, 'IRCS in intl. arena/ service without border'

Wednesday, May 14, 'Honoring martyrs, veterans, and their families/veterans, eternal role models'

The IRCS will observe the week by holding

different programs such as blood donation campaigns, relief and rescue maneuvers, inauguration of over 30 construction projects, including administrative, relief, medical, and red crescent (Helal) houses.

Dispatching health volunteers to less privileged areas, planting saplings, holding the first search and rescue dog Olympiad, hosting a humanitarian meeting with representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), ambassadors and representatives of foreign countries, as well as conducting a meeting with the heads of the national red crescent societies that are members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) are among other programs.

IRCS is a top organization

In September 2024, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) project manager, Faisal Mahboob, lauded the capabilities of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) as outstanding.

The official said he was really impressed by the capacity and the wide range of activities carried out by the IRCS.

The IRCS is recognized as one of the five prominent societies worldwide thanks to its wide range of activities and great achievements both nationally and internationally.

"The International Federation will support the activities of the Iranian Red Crescent So-



ciety to commence a new phase of collaboration with the society," Mahboob added, the IRCS website reported.

The IRCS is recognized as one of the five prominent societies worldwide thanks to its wide range of activities and great achievements both nationally and internationally.

The IRCS hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics meet the medical and therapeutic needs of thousands of citizens every day. The IRCS medical centers abroad are reputable worldwide. As a humanitarian organization, the IRCS is trying to alleviate the suffering of the people involved in accidents, emergencies, and conflicts.

"Today, collaborations with knowledge-based firms have resulted in advancements in manufacturing orthoses, prostheses, artificial organs, and new medications, with plans to extend cooperation to rescue and relief efforts as well," the head of the IRCS, Pirhossein Kolivand, has said.

ENGLISH IN USE

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COVID-19 lockdown moves most cities out of "red" zone

Strict COVID-19 restrictions which took effect on October 26 have caused 87 out of 89 infected cities to get out of the high-risk "red" zone.

The National Headquarters for Coronavirus Control started strict restrictions in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country. Ten days later, decisions were made to set new limitations on highly-affected areas for another 10 days, through which 46 cities undergone restrictions. The plan divided cities into three levels of alert, namely red, orange, and yellow.

In some 160 cities and towns that were on the highest alert, the disease prevalence has begun to decrease in about 145 cities. And the remaining 15 cities will also experience a downward trend this week, he explained.

اعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

علیرضا رئیس، سخنگوی ستاد ملی مقابله با کرونا گفت: از ۸۹ شهری که از پنجم آبان محدودیت‌های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده اند.

او با اشاره به محدودیت‌های کرونایی در ۸۹ شهری که (از ۵ آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است، گفت: از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده اند. با توجه به ورودی بیمارستان‌ها و اینکه میزان بستری هم کاهش یافته است امیدواریم روند فوتی‌ها هم تا حدود دو تا سه هفته دیگر آثار خود را نشان دهد و روند کاهشی پیدا کند. وی اعلام کرد: اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقیمانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهشی شروع خواهد شد.

Iranian, Iraqi officials discuss fostering educational ties

TEHRAN – Iran's deputy minister of education, Hamid-Reza Sheikholeslam, and Iraqi minister of education, Ibrahim Namis Yassin, have discussed avenues for expanding educational cooperation between the two countries.

During a meeting held on Thursday in Qom, the officials highlighted the significance of enhancing educational interactions between the two nations, IRNA reported.

Iraqi ambassador to Tehran, Naseer Abdul Mohsen Abdullah, also attended the meeting. Addressing educational problems of Iraqi nationals residing in Iran, further facilitating their access to education, as well as holding identity camps, were among other discussed issues.

The two sides also agreed to establish a joint working group to follow up on issues and develop collaborative cultural, religious programs.

Iran-Iraq scientific, educational co-op meeting

The Iran-Iraq scientific and educational cooperation meeting was held in Tehran on February 9, exploring avenues for further promoting friendly relations between the universities of the two countries.

During the meeting, the two sides also discussed the potential for enhancing cooperation with electronic research publications and virtual universities of the Islamic world, as well as modern solutions in e-learning. Over 20 Iraqi professors participated in the meeting, IRNA reported.

Addressing the meeting, Karim Najafi Barzegar, the Secretary General of the virtual universities of the Islamic world, highlighted the country's educational achievements following the 1979 Islamic revolution, saying that thanks to the realization of educational justice, the number of university students has risen from 175,000 in 1978 to over 4 million students now.

"Despite cruel sanctions, Iran is currently among the leading countries in science and modern technologies such as nanotechnology, biotechnology, and aerospace," Barzegar stressed.

The official went on to highlight the significance of boosting science diplomacy and establishing collaboration networks among Islamic nations to utilize joint technical and scientific capacities to face global challenges and foster international constructive partnerships.

During the second Iran-Iraq Science Week, held from January 18 to 20 in the city of Karbala, Iraq, the two countries signed an action plan to give a boost to their scientific collaborations.

The action plan was signed by Omid Rezaei-Far, an official with the Ministry of Science, and Haider Abd Dahed, Iraqi deputy Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, IRNA reported.

The joint scientific programs have been developed to focus on different aspects including boosting cooperation on granting scholarships to graduate and postgraduate education.

Iranian-made HPV vaccine enters domestic market

TEHRAN – A homegrown human papillomavirus (HPV) quadrivalent recombinant vaccine has been supplied to the domestic market for the first time.

HPV is one of the most common infections causing genital warts or cervical cancer in women. Vaccination is the best way to prevent the disease. The vaccine has already been introduced in 140 countries.

Emphasizing that the vaccine has been developed using domestic knowledge and technology, Mehdi Pirsalehi, the director of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said that it has completed all stages of clinical trials, IRNA reported.

The strategic product is an effective step towards reducing reliance on imported vaccines, meeting the country's needs in preventing HPV-related diseases, particularly in women, as well as laying the ground for exporting the vaccine.

In January, Alireza Raeisi, an official with the health ministry, said the health ministry is planning to include HPV vaccination in the country's immunization program to prevent the prevalence of cervical cancer and genital warts infection.

"Genital warts are not common in the country,

so the vaccination mainly focuses on the prevention of the infection," IRNA quoted Raeisi as saying.

HPV vaccine, the same as the influenza vaccine, will be recommended for those at higher risk of getting the disease, the official noted.

In the Eastern Mediterranean region, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates have already started the national implementation of the HPV vaccination for the target population.

The official went on to say that a bivalent HPV vaccine targeting subtypes 16 and 18 associated with many cervical cancers has already been produced in the country. However, the vaccine is not effective enough against types 6 and 11, which are responsible for genital warts.

According to Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi, the issue of medicine and medical equipment production and self-sufficiency in these areas is one of the government's priorities.

Medicine and medical equipment are two important areas related to people's health, he said, adding: "We are trying to reach self-sufficiency for the supply of medicine and medical equipment," IRNA reported.



Tehran's Tochal hosts snowman festival

Families and nature lovers gathered together on Thursday at Tochal ski resort, northern Tehran, holding a festival by building snowmen.

The festival is held every year in the beautiful heights of Tochal to promote happiness and joy among families and create different and memorable moments.



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MAY 10, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Best way to defend Islam, is to practice Islam.
Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:18 Dawn: 3:26 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:03 (tomorrow)

Tennessee Williams' "The Glass Menagerie" on stage at IAF

TEHRAN-The Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran is hosting the play "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams.

The 70-minute play is jointly directed by Mohammad Berahmani and Saeed Zarei and is on stage every day at 6:30 p.m. at Entezami Hall of the (IAF), Honaronline reported.

Lilian Esmail, Mehdi Esmaili, Mobin Asgharzadeh, Parsia Tavakoli, Fatemeh Tahouri, Darya Javadi, Bitaa Taei, Afsaneh Ghafari, Eskandar Ghanbari, Nazanin Naderpur, and Amirhossein Nazarzadeh are in the cast among others.

Premiered in 1944 in Chicago, "The Glass Menagerie" catapulted Tennessee Williams from obscurity to fame. The play has strong autobiographical elements, featuring characters based on its author, his histrionic mother, and his mentally fragile sister. In writing the play, Williams drew on an earlier short story, as well as a screenplay he had written under the title of "The Gentleman Caller".

Moving to Broadway, the play won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1945. "The Glass Menagerie" was Williams' first successful play; he went on to become one of America's most highly regarded playwrights.

It is a memory play, narrated and partially re-enacted by Tom Wingfield, and it revolves around the lives of Tom, his mother Amanda, and his sister Laura. The family grapples with the challenges of daily life in St. Louis during the 1930s, particularly Amanda's desperate attempts to secure a suitor for the painfully shy and physically disabled Laura.

The story is set in the aftermath of the Great Depression and reflects the economic struggles and societal changes of the time. The play also delves into the impact of World War II, exploring the tensions and uncertainties that characterized the period.

Williams's play is celebrated for its poetic and poignant exploration of themes such as memory, illusion, and the complexity of familial relationships. The character of Laura, with her fragile glass animal collection, becomes a symbol of the delicate nature of dreams and aspirations.



"The Glass Menagerie" is considered a classic of American theater, admired for its innovative use of symbolism and its timeless portrayal of the human condition.

Thomas Lanier Williams III (1911-1983), known by his pen name Tennessee Williams, was an American playwright and screenwriter. Along with contemporaries Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller, he is considered among the three foremost playwrights of 20th-century American drama.

At age 33, after years of obscurity, Williams suddenly became famous with the success of "The Glass Menagerie" (1944) in New York City. It was the first of a string of successes, including "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1947), "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" (1955), "Sweet Bird of Youth" (1959), and "The Night of the Iguana" (1961).

Much of Williams's most acclaimed work has been adapted for the cinema. He also wrote short stories, poetry, essays, and a volume of memoirs.

Located at Artists Park on North Mousavi Street, Taleqani Street, the IAF will have the play on its stage until June 2.

Cartoon of Day



Gaza Strip Famine
 Cartoonist: Anne Derenne from France

Iranian video art "Sculpture" wins at IndieFEST Film Awards

TEHRAN-The Iranian video art "Sculpture," written, directed, and composed by Ramin Hosseinpour, received the Award of Merit Special Mention at the April 2025 edition of the IndieFEST Film Awards in California, the United States.

The jury team presented the award for notable artistic and technical aspects of the project, Mehr reported.

Hosseinpour plays the electric guitar in the work and also as the vocalist, sings a poem by the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

The video art is about the life story of Rumi. During one of his journeys to Konya in 1244, he met the dervish Shams Tabrizi and was deeply influenced by him.

For months, the two men constantly interacted, and as a result, Rumi neglected his disciples and family, who could not tolerate the close relationship.

One night in 1247, Shams disappeared forever. This experience turned Rumi into a poet. The Divan of Shams (The Collected Poetry of Shams) is a true translation of his experiences into poetry.

Hosseinpour's video art has won several awards at various international festivals so far. It recently won the awards for the



best rock music video and best VFX: music video at the summer edition of Los Angeles Movie and Music Video Awards in the U.S.

Its previous achievements include the Best Composer Award at the 26th LA Sun Film Fest in Los Angeles, the award for Best Animated Music Video in the HALO International Film Festival in Saint-Petersburg, and the award for the best documentary script from the King Film Awards 2023 in London among many others.

Hosseinpour, 38, is a multi-talented international artist, professionally working in the

international media. He is an architect, conceptual artist, writer, director, producer, and composer.

He has won awards in more than 55 international festivals in Munich, Vancouver, Paris, Moscow, New York, Boden, Las Vegas, Rome, etc.

The IndieFEST Film Awards are unique in the industry. Attracting both powerhouse industry veterans as well as talented new filmmakers, it is an exceptional, truly international awards competition, not a traditional film festival, which allows filmmakers from around the world to enter their films in this pres-

tigious competition. The IndieFEST is about helping industry professionals who create fresh, standout entertainment achieve the publicity and credibility they deserve. Serving filmmakers is the IndieFEST's primary goal.

Established in 2008, The IndieFEST Film Awards is an avant-garde worldwide competition that strives to give talented directors, producers, actors, creative teams, and new media creators the positive exposure they deserve. It discovers and honors the achievements of filmmakers who produce high quality films and new media.

Imam Reza visual arts festival wraps up

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

MASHHAD — The closing ceremony of the visual arts section of the 22nd Imam Reza (AS) International Festival was held in Mashhad on Thursday, recognizing outstanding artists and their contributions to various artistic fields.

The event coincided with the night of the birth of Imam Ali Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

The festival showcased a diverse array of artworks in photography, calligraphy, and graph-

ic design, with awards presented to distinguished artists in each category.

The photography section was notably competitive, with prizes awarded for both professional camera work and mobile photography.

The awards in the calligraphy segment of the festival were given across various styles.

In graphic arts, the jury selected three outstanding works on themes such as fighting internal and external tyranny, combating

moral and cultural deviations, fighting injustice and economic corruption, and opposing discord.

Moreover, a special award was presented to Mikail Barati of Khorasan Razavi province for his poignant and rapid artistic response to recent Zionist atrocities in Gaza. Due to the significance of the Palestine issue and widespread participation, three additional works received honorable mentions.

The Imam Reza (AS) Interna-

tional Festival is held annually in various provinces of the country as well as in several other countries.

This festival encompasses various fields such as articles, plays or screenplays, produced shows, stories, visual arts, books, literary texts, poetry, press and digital works, and radio and television productions.

It aims at promoting artistic excellence rooted in spiritual and cultural values, inspiring artists and audiences alike.

Clara Bukochava to hold masterclass on piano in Tehran

TEHRAN-The Iran House of Music is set to host a masterclass focusing on the journey of piano education, from foundational skills to achieving international standards.

The sessions will be led by the Iran-based Georgian pianist and teacher Clara Bukochava, Mehr reported.

This masterclass follows a previous successful session titled "How to Teach from Scratch; Step by Step to Reaching International Standards."

The decision to hold this new series, titled "Examining the Effects of Piano Education from Scratch to International Standards," comes in response to high demand from aspiring musicians.

The masterclass is scheduled for two sessions, to be held both in-person at the Iran House of Music and online on May 17 and 24.

Bukochava will utilize these two sessions



to build upon the foundation laid in the previous masterclass, which concentrated on nurturing students from the very beginning towards international proficiency.

Bukochava will provide detailed instruction on crucial aspects of various musical pieces, employing the renowned Russian teaching methodology, guiding participants step-by-step.

Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, Clara Bukochava began her piano journey at age six, guided by her piano teacher mother. Her extensive training included studies at prestigious institutions like the Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the V. Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatory, where she earned degrees in performance and teaching. Bukochava started teaching piano at seventeen, eventually becoming a professor at the Tbilisi Conservatory.

In 2001, she moved to Iran at the invitation of the Tehran Conservatory, dedicating two decades to educating students. She currently teaches at the Rudaki Foundation. Bukochava is renowned for training students to international standards, with many achieving recognition and diplomas at international festivals. Her students have performed major piano concertos with orchestras and successfully pursued higher education at renowned institutions worldwide.

Booth Tarkington's "Alice Adams" published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the 1921 novel "Alice Adams" by Booth Tarkington has been released in the Iranian book market.

Masoumeh Ghodrati has translated the book and Afkar-e Jadid Publication has brought it out in 300 pages, ISNA reported.

The book received the 1922 Pulitzer Prize. It was adapted as a film in 1923 by Rowland V. Lee and more famously in 1935 by George Stevens.

The narrative centers on the character of a young woman (the eponymous Alice Adams) who aspires to climb the social ladder and win the affections of a wealthy young man named Arthur Russell. The story is set in a

lower-middle-class household in an unnamed town in the Midwest shortly after World War I.

Alice Adams wants desperately to belong with the people of "high society" who live in her town. Ultimately, her ambitions are tempered by the realities of her situation, which she learns to accept with grace and style. Alice's resiliency of spirit makes her one of Booth Tarkington's most compelling characters.

The novel explores themes of social class, identity, and the pursuit of personal success in post-World War I America. Reflecting on the American myth of success, Alice's journey echoes the experiences of characters like Jay Gatsby, as she engages in deception to project an up-

per-class identity to Arthur Russell, a wealthy suitor.

As Alice navigates her family's financial decline and her own ethical dilemmas, the narrative critiques the societal pressures that equate identity with material wealth. Tarkington portrays Alice's transformation from a romantic idealist to a more grounded realist, culminating in her decision to seek employment and embrace her true social position.

The novel intricately weaves the lives of its characters, including Alice's ethically challenged father and her troubled brother, to highlight the complexities of class dynamics and personal integrity.

Booth Tarkington (1869-1946) was an American novelist and dramatist. He is one of only four novelists to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction more than once, along with William Faulkner, John Updike, and Colson Whitehead. In the 1910s and 1920s, he was considered the United States' greatest living author. Several of his stories were adapted to film.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, Tarkington, along with Meredith Nicholson, George Ade, and James Whitcomb Riley helped to create a Golden Age of literature in Indiana.

He is often cited as an example of an author who enjoyed great success when alive, but whose reputation and influence did not survive his death.