



Minds Must Not Be Diverted from Palestine

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Witkoff dims prospects for nuclear agreement as he demands concessions on Iran's red lines

Iran has consistently maintained in the past two decades that it will not agree to dismantle its peaceful nuclear program

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – President Donald Trump's special West Asia envoy Steve Witkoff dampened hopes for a potential breakthrough in indirect nuclear talks between Tehran and Washington ahead of a fourth round of the discussions, as he told a U.S. news outlet that Iran should "dismantle" its uranium enrichment facilities and ship the material "far away".

The remarks shocked observers who had begun to believe that Trump might be serious about reaching a deal with Iran after he unraveled the original

one in 2018, as his administration's participation in the negotiations came after Tehran clearly announced it would never dismantle its nuclear facilities or stop uranium enrichment, a position it has consistently maintained over the past few decades.

In an interview published on Friday, Witkoff stated that an enrichment program "can never exist in the state of Iran ever again."

"That's our red line. No enrichment. That means dismantlement, it means no weaponization, and it means that Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan, those are their three enrichment facilities, have to be dismantled," he said.

Witkoff added he thinks Iranians "have no choice" but to accept the position of Trump against enrichment. "Obviously, they can say no, and they can test President Trump, but I think that would be an unwise thing to do."

Americans have been trying

to cast Iran's decision to enter negotiations as a direct consequence of the raucous threats leveled against it in the past months. Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has said multiple times that he would 'bomb' Iran if the country does not agree to sign a new nuclear deal under his terms.

As previously revealed by the Tehran Times, however, Tehran agreed to engage in talks after Trump said in a March letter to the Leader of the Islamic Rev-

olution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, that he would respect Iran's red lines if it sat at the negotiating table. Apart from the fact that it would never dismantle its nuclear program, Iran has said throughout the years that it would not consider limiting its military capabilities or altering its foreign policy either.

Ayatollah Khamenei had said before the Omani-mediated talks began in April that he does not believe in the American side's sincerity, citing Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA and his predecessor Barack Obama's lack of commitment to the deal he himself signed in 2015. ▶ Page 2

Iran restarts Caspian Sea drilling after 3-decade hiatus

TEHRAN – Iran's oil minister has ordered the resumption of exploratory drilling in the shallow waters of the Caspian Sea, ending a 30-year pause in operations.

According to Shana news agency, the drilling operation officially began on Friday, May 8, during the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition.

The North Drilling Company has deployed a rig at the Rudsar structure in Block 18 of the Caspian Sea, at a water depth of 70 meters.

The exploratory well is planned to reach a final depth of 5,077 meters, targeting reservoir assessment in the Rudsar structure. ▶ Page 4

Why is Nasrallah's mausoleum defamed!?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — A week has passed since Lebanon's Al Jadeed channel aired an intelligence report aimed at defaming the mausoleum of Hezbollah's martyr Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, without the Lebanese government lifting a finger at this seditious media outlet.

Obviously, the vile report was a preliminary rehearsal for a show of obedience to the U.S. spy den (embassy) in Beirut, which has escalated its hostile campaign against the Resistance, manipulating its sellout media figures and outlets.

An informed source confirmed to Tehran Times that the report was prepared in Dubai by a Lebanese media lobby, supervised by Emirati intelligence chief Tahnoun bin Zayed in coordination with Unit 8200 run by the Israeli Mossad. It fabricated the false narrative about the mausoleum. ▶ Page 5

Trump's looming Riyadh visit and regional power dynamics

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN- President Donald Trump is embarking on his first international trip of his second term, returning to Saudi Arabia—a symbolic echo of his 2017 debut on the world stage. The visit, however, unfolded against a backdrop of heightened regional tensions, including the ongoing Gaza conflict, the uphill Iran nuclear negotiations, and shifting alliances.

Trump's approach, characterized by transactional diplomacy and personal rapport with authoritarian leaders, aimed to recalibrate U.S. influence in West Asia. ▶ Page 5

A response to claims of 'imminent collapse' in Iran

By Mohammad Khatibi

TEHRAN – Daniel M. Rosen, in his recent article for the Jpost, argues that Iran is on the brink of collapse, citing economic hardships posed by U.S. sanctions, evolving situation in West Asia region, and what he calls internal discontent. However, predicting the Iran government's imminent downfall overlooks historical resilience, strategic recalibrations, and Tehran's evolving regional posture.

One of the arguments for Iran's alleged decline by Rosen is the country's economic situation. However, Tehran has repeatedly demonstrated adaptability under sanctions. Tehran has cultivated economic ties beyond the West, particularly with China, Russia, and regional partners, allowing it to bypass conventional economic restrictions.

Tehran, through mechanisms such as cryptocurrency trade and local currency deals, mitigates sanctions imposed by the West. The country has promoted domestic production in sectors like agriculture. ▶ Page 2



Foreign ministers of Iran, Saudi Arabia review bilateral relations in Jeddah meeting

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi arrived in Jeddah on Saturday at the head of a high-level diplomatic delegation, marking a new chapter in the ongoing rapprochement between Tehran and Riyadh.

During his visit, Araghchi met with his Saudi counterpart, Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, for talks focused on bilateral relations, regional dynamics, and broader international developments.

The meeting, held in the Saudi port city of Jeddah, comes as both countries continue to build on the momentum of restored diplomatic ties. According to official sources, the two foreign ministers reviewed the current state of Iran-Saudi relations and reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing the vision set by their respective leaders for broadening cooperation across political, economic, and cultural fields. ▶ Page 2

Cheetahs running towards survival or extinction?



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TEHRAN PAPERS

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

A calm Red Sea would prop up diplomacy

In a commentary, Etemad discussed Trump's possible agreement with Yemen's Ansarallah and wrote: This agreement is a hidden contractual exchange that Ansarallah had proposed a few weeks ago, according to which the Yemeni group would stop attacking commercial ships, and the United States would stop its airstrikes on Yemen (Israel only targets vessels to and from Israel in response to its genocidal acts in Gaza). According to some analysts, although this agreement seems to be reciprocal, it will have wide-ranging geopolitical consequences, in a way that not only reduces the risk of escalating the crisis in a sensitive maritime corridor but may also lead to accelerating and strengthening the nuclear diplomacy between Tehran and Washington. This ceasefire may be a precursor to more comprehensive negotiations between Tehran and Washington, especially in a situation where Iran insists that it will only negotiate about its nuclear program. Moreover, for Iran, supporting a decrease in maritime tensions is in line with several strategic goals, especially in a situation where Tehran is still under U.S. sanctions, and stabilizing the situation in the Red Sea could provide a calm atmosphere for diplomacy.

Siasat-e-Rooz: Propaganda with fake MEK documents

Siasat-e-Rooz devoted its article to the false claim of Fox News. The paper said: Fox News has claimed to have discovered new secret nuclear facilities in Iran by publishing satellite images from the terrorist group MEK (also called MKO). The re-publishing of fake information by Fox News and sources such as MEK reveals two simultaneous crises: first, the crisis of legitimacy of global Zionism, which, following its inability to confront the Palestinian resistance, is spreading lies against attacking Iran to divert public opinion; and second, the strategic desperation of the Israeli regime in its inability to manipulate regional diplomacy, which has now coincided with the U.S. ceasefire agreement with Yemen and the positive trend of Iran's nuclear negotiations. Using a group like the MEK, which is not credible even for Western countries, shows that the media campaigns against Iran have reached the end of reliable options. The claim of a new nuclear site is actually a nervous reaction to Iran's rising regional weight and Tehran's role as an effective player in regional multipolar inter-

actions.

Sazandegi: Dangerous plot against Iranian identity

In an explanation, Sazandegi addressed Trump's political bias. It wrote: Allowing Trump to change the name of the Persian Gulf, which is related to the historical identity of Iranians, is a dangerous plot that goes beyond confrontation with the Islamic Republic and Iran's national sovereignty. Trump is entering another historical confrontation that wants to erase the identity and existential nature of a nation. If Trump and his team are seeking negotiations and peace in the Middle East, they should not put nations against each other, because launching war against nations and their identities will bear no result other than threatening peace, promoting terrorism and violence. Governments like Saudi Arabia and Oman have chosen the path of economic development and are seeking a secure world and the Middle East. Therefore, their mission is more important than ever before, and they should not allow a few small regional powers to fuel tension in the Middle East by creating ethnic and religious hatred.

Ettelaat: Lifting sanctions is essential

Ettelaat examined the Iran-U.S. talks in an interview with Morteza Afgheh, a macroeconomic expert. He said: The conditionality of the national economy is a sign of a serious 'disease'. Governing the country has become more difficult than ever before, and the country's officials have understood this well. We are in a situation where we will not find a way out of the current situation without lifting the sanctions. Our economy is currently in a delicate situation, and an important part of the conditionality of our economy is due to this situation. The positive point is that the other side (the U.S.) also needs an agreement with Iran, and Trump has shown that resolving the nuclear issue is important to him. For this reason, despite the actions of some hawkish elements in the U.S. Republican Party, a final agreement will eventually be reached. If the talks are successful, most indicators will suddenly become positive. However, the main issue is which direction the decision-making system will take the country after the agreement. It is hoped that the authorities will seize the opportunity of a possible agreement and put the economy on a different path.

Tehran prepares to host Uzbek PM for talks on expanding economic, political ties



Iran's First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref (R) and Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov during a meeting in Yerevan in October 2024

TEHRAN – Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov is set to arrive in Tehran on Sunday, leading a high-level delegation at the invitation of Iran's Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref.

The anticipated visit underscores efforts by both nations to deepen bilateral cooperation across trade, infrastructure, and regional diplomacy.

During his trip, Aripov will meet with senior Iranian officials, including Vice President Aref, to discuss "advancing mutual interests in critical sectors such as energy, transit corridors, and technology transfer," as stated by Iran's government press briefing.

The Uzbek leader will also join a joint economic forum aimed at connecting business leaders from Iran and Uzbekistan to explore investment opportunities.

Central to the visit is the planned signing of multiple cooperation agreements, which Iranian media described as "foundational frameworks for accelerating joint projects and removing barriers to bilateral trade."

Ahead of the prime minister's arrival, the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between the two countries convened in Tehran to finalize preparations for the visit.

Iran and Uzbekistan have intensified their partnership in recent years, driven by mutual interests in economic diversification and regional stability.

The late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's administration actively pursued stronger ties with Central Asian states, culminating in a 2022 agreement with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to boost annual bilateral trade to \$1 billion.

Foreign ministers of Iran, Saudi Arabia review bilateral relations in Jeddah meeting

From page 1 ▶ Araghchi emphasized the critical need for unity within the Islamic world in facing shared threats and challenges—particularly in relation to the situation in occupied Palestine. He called on Muslim countries to act decisively to stop Israeli campaign of genocide and to counter efforts aimed at the colonial erasure of Palestine.

In addition to regional concerns, Araghchi used the meeting as an opportunity to brief his Saudi counterpart on the status of ongoing indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States.

These talks, mediated by Oman, are aimed at reaching a mutual understanding over Iran's nuclear program and the lifting of sanctions on Tehran.

Speaking in an interview ahead of his trip, Araghchi said the visit to Saudi Arabia formed part of



broader consultations between Iran and regional actors concerning both regional security and the Iran-U.S. dialogue. He stressed that Iran has maintained consistent communication with its neighbors since the talks began in April to ensure transparency and regional alignment.

"The sustainability of any po-

tential agreement depends largely on the regional countries' considerations regarding the nuclear issue and their shared interests with the Islamic Republic," Araghchi stated.

Iran and the United States have thus far conducted three rounds of indirect negotiations in Muscat and Rome on April 12, 19, and

26. Both sides have described the talks as "constructive" and "progressing," though a fourth round scheduled for May 3 in Muscat was postponed due to what was reported as "logistical and technical reasons."

On Tuesday, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said that Iran remains committed to diplomacy as a tool to achieve its lawful and legitimate national interests, especially the lifting of "unlawful economic sanctions that have targeted the human rights and welfare of every single Iranian."

Following his visit to Saudi Arabia, the Iranian foreign minister travelled to Doha on Saturday afternoon to participate in the Iran-Arab World Dialogue Summit, where further discussions on regional cooperation and diplomacy are expected to take place.

Witkoff dims prospects for nuclear agreement as he demands concessions on Iran's red lines

From page 1 ▶ A source familiar with the matter has told the Tehran Times that Iran suspected from the outset that the Trump administration's letter was merely a move intended to lure Iran into negotiations, so it could subsequently provide a justification for escalating pressure and potential aggression. Witkoff's latest remarks have only reinforced that suspicion, the source added.

A second source, however, said Iran has prepared for all scenarios.

Indirect U.S.-Iran nuclear talks have so far taken place in Muscat and Rome on April 12, 19, and 26, with both sides characterizing the discussions as "positive" and "advancing."

A fourth round was scheduled for May 3 in Muscat but was postponed and later scheduled for May 11.



Steve Witkoff, U.S. special envoy for West Asia, speaking in an interview with Breitbart News

A response to claims of 'imminent collapse' in Iran

By Mohammad Khatibi

TEHRAN – Daniel M. Rosen, in his recent article for the Jpost, argues that Iran is on the brink of collapse, citing economic hardships posed by U.S. sanctions, evolving situation in West Asia region, and what he calls internal discontent.

However, predicting the Iran government's imminent downfall overlooks historical resilience, strategic recalibrations, and Tehran's evolving regional posture.

One of the arguments for Iran's alleged decline by Rosen is the country's economic situation.

However, Tehran has repeatedly demonstrated adaptability under sanctions. Tehran has cultivated economic ties beyond the West, particularly with China, Russia, and regional partners, allowing it to bypass conventional economic restrictions.

Tehran, through mechanisms such as cryptocurrency trade and local currency deals, mitigates sanctions imposed by the West.

The country has promoted domestic production in sectors like agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and military technology, reducing reliance on imports. While economic hardship is undeniable, Iran's ability to function within an alternative financial framework suggests that economic collapse is not foreseeable.

The system's repeated survival suggests that collapse predictions underestimate its adaptability and the changing global order

The article then contends that Iran's military posture has suffered major defeats, particularly in Syria and Gaza.

However, it underestimates Hezbollah in Lebanon, Resistance groups in Iraq, the Ansarallah movement in Yemen, which still can be considered a huge leverage for Iran's defensive strategy, countering efforts to weaken Iran's reach.

Over the years, Iran has been modifying its defensive approach, emphasizing drone warfare, cyber operations, and missile capabilities. Iran retains control over key shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf, allowing it to exert pressure on global trade networks in case of any attack on its sovereign soil.

Although Iran has faced challenges in the West Asia region, labeling it a "paper tiger" underestimates its ability to adjust strategy and maintain regional influence.

Tehran has faced multiple waves of unrest, some of which were openly or covertly sup-



Ayatollah Khamenei attends the fourth night of ceremonies on the anniversary of the death of Fatima al-Zahra, the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, in Tehran December 5, 2024. (photo credit: Canva, KHAMENEI.IR)

ported by Western governments. However, as demonstrated by over four decades of the Islamic Republic's history, uprisings alone do not necessarily lead to 'regime change'. Iran's security apparatus remains a crucial pillar of the state's ability to counter anti-Iran elements.

Tehran has developed extensive counterintelligence capabilities aimed at thwarting foreign intervention. Iranian security forces closely monitor entities collaborating with foreign governments. They have been capable of dismantling multiple foreign spy networks, particularly those linked to Western intelligence services and regional adversaries. Tehran has enhanced its ability to counter digital espionage and has disrupted most of the hostile intelligence-gathering efforts. While dissatisfaction can be seen in a range of issues, mainly caused by Western sanctions, there is no single issue that a political entity can ride on to initiate a major uprising.

Also, anti-Islamic Republic elements lack cohesion to mobilize against Tehran. The revival of the 'maximum pressure' strategy under the Trump administration has been widely framed as a decisive move to cripple Iran's economy and force its leadership into submission. However, historical patterns suggest that such measures have consistently fallen short of their intended objectives. While sanctions placed economic strain on Iran, they failed to trigger a fundamental shift in its policies. Instead, these restrictions accelerated Iran's strategic pivot toward alternative global actors, particularly Russia and China, fostering deeper economic and political integration. By strengthening ties with these nations, Iran has mitigated the impact of Western financial restrictions.

Trade agreements, energy partnerships, and alternative payment mechanisms have enabled Tehran to maintain a degree of economic sta-

bility despite external pressures. Moreover, the increasing fragmentation of the global financial system, with the rise of non-dollar trade agreements and alternative banking mechanisms, has further diminished the effectiveness of unilateral sanctions. In this context, the notion that maximum pressure could serve as a final blow to Iran appears increasingly tenuous. Rather than isolating Iran, these policies have contributed to its realignment within a broader geopolitical framework, reinforcing its role as a key player in multi-polar global dynamics.

Iran's engagement in diplomatic negotiations should not be interpreted as an act of desperation, but rather as a calculated move within a broader strategy aimed at securing national interests. Over the years, Tehran has demonstrated an ability to leverage negotiations as a means of extracting concessions while maintaining its core political and strategic objectives. Rather than signaling surrender, Iran's negotiation stance suggests strategic pragmatism.

For decades, various analysts and policymakers have predicted Iran's imminent collapse, citing economic distress, political challenges, and external pressures. Yet, the Islamic Republic has not only endured but demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. From the devastating Iran-Iraq War to periods of severe economic hardship induced by international sanctions, Iran has repeatedly adapted to shifting geopolitical and domestic realities.

This resilience stems from a combination of structural, political, and social factors. Unlike authoritarian regimes that rely on centralized, rigid power structures, Iran maintains a complex governance system that blends Islam with democratic elements.

This hybrid model includes institutions such as the Expediency Council and the Assembly of Experts, which provide mechanisms for political adjustment and elite consensus. Moreover, elections allow for shifts within the political landscape, helping the system recalibrate rather than collapse under pressure.

Beyond political structures, Iran's enduring sociopolitical cohesion plays a vital role. Despite internal differentiating viewpoints, the government has maintained strong support among the masses. Additionally, nationalist sentiments and historical memory reinforce Iran's drive for autonomy, making external pressure a unifying rather than destabilizing force in many cases. Thus, rather than facing abrupt dissolution, Iran's ability to recalibrate policies and strategically shift alliances underscores its long-term endurance. While challenges remain, the repeated survival of the system suggests that predictions of collapse fail to account for its adaptability and the evolving global order.

Minds must not be diverted from Palestine: Leader

TEHRAN – On the occasion of National Workers' Week in Iran, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, met with a group of Iranian laborers on May 10, 2025, in the Imam Khomeini Hussainiyah.

In his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed the vital connection between the dignity of labor and the future of the nation, describing work as the pillar upon which human life and society endure. He turned attention to the current atrocities being committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza. Referring to the deafening silence of some world powers, Imam Khamenei said that the crimes being committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza and Palestine aren't something that can be overlooked.

The Leader warned that biased global policies are deliberately employed to sideline the Palestinian cause and to blur its urgency in the minds of the people, asserting, "There are biased policies being employed in the world today against nations in efforts to cause people to forget the issues related to Palestine. Muslim nations must not allow rumors, various talk, and new issues to divert minds from the Palestinian issue."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the firm global stance against not only the Zionist regime, but also against its well-known supporters as essential, stating, "The entire world must stand up firmly against the supporters of the Zionist regime. The US is supporting the Zionist regime in the truest sense of the word."

He further emphasized that the people of Gaza and Palestine are



not merely facing the Zionist occupation: "The reality is that the oppressed people of Palestine and Gaza are facing not only the Zionist regime, but also the US and England. Instead of stopping the killing and destruction, they empower and support the criminal regime by sending weapons and equipment."

Underscoring the need for unyielding vigilance, he added that some slogans, remarks, and temporary incidents must not cause the issue of Palestine to be forgotten. People's minds must not be diverted from Palestine."

Ayatollah Khamenei expressed his hope that, "By God's help, Palestine will ultimately triumph over the Zionist usurpers. The temporary reign of the forces of falsehood will be perished." He called on the faithful to remain hopeful and steadfast, emphasizing that the day will come when the people of Iran and all believing nations will witness the victory of Palestine over its occupiers.

In another part of his speech, Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted

the profound human and spiritual value of labor. Describing workers as a vital force in society, Imam Khamenei stated that workers must recognize their worth. To earn a living through lawful means, without exploitation, parasitism, or encroaching upon others' wealth, and to fulfill society's needs by producing goods and services are two valuable human characteristics. He emphasized that in the sight of God, such work is a righteous deed.

Ayatollah Khamenei further explained that labor is not merely an economic necessity, but a pillar upon which the continuity and functionality of human life depend: "Work is the main pillar of human life and its continuity. Without it, life becomes paralyzed. Though science and capital play crucial roles, it is the worker who animates capital and makes progress possible."

Addressing this year's slogan, "Investment for Production," the Leader emphasized that no financial investment can succeed in the absence of the workers' will and capability: "Financial in-

vestment, without the resolve and capacity of workers, leads nowhere. This is precisely why the enemies of nations, including the enemies of the Islamic Republic, have from the very beginning of the Revolution sought to discourage and provoke the working class against participation in the Islamic Republic's progress."

Referring to past and present attempts to sow unrest among workers, he recalled, "In the early days of the Revolution, communist elements tried to bring production to a halt. That same motivation exists today. But then and now, our workers have stood firm and struck those agitators with a firm punch in the mouth."

Highlighting the need to protect the dignity and security of workers, Ayatollah Khamenei addressed the necessity of job security by saying that to safeguard such a valuable asset as the worker, all sectors must fulfill their responsibilities. A worker must know that his job is secure, so he can plan his life with confidence and not feel that his future is at the mercy of others' whims.

He also underscored the importance of cultivating a healthy workplace culture. Rejecting the Marxist notion of inherent contradiction between worker and employer, he clarified: "According to Marxist philosophy, the workplace is one of conflict, and workers are to be enemies of factory owners. With this misguided notion, they stilled themselves and the world for decades. Islam, by contrast, views the workplace as a setting of alliance, cooperation, and synergy. In such a space, both sides must work sincerely to advance the cause of production."

Esteghlal's crucial role in Persepolis and Sepahan's ACL Elite spot battle

TEHRAN – As the Iran Pro League draws to a close, the fierce rivalry between Tehran giants Persepolis and Isfahan's Sepahan has taken an intriguing twist.

With the league title already secured, the focus now shifts to the coveted second-place finish, which guarantees a spot in either the AFC Champions League Elite or the second-tier AFC Champions League.

This battle for the runners-up position has intensified, and unexpectedly, Esteghlal, Persepolis's long-standing opponents, finds itself in a pivotal position to influence the outcome.

Following the penultimate week of league action, the two-point gap separating Sepahan and Persepolis has evaporated. Sepahan's draw against Havadar, coupled with Persepolis's victory over Kheybar, has leveled the playing field. However, Sepahan holds the head-to-head advantage this season, meaning that in the event of equal points, they would clinch the second spot. Consequently, Persepolis's only path to securing the runners-up position lies in earning more points than Sepahan in the final matchday. Should Sepahan emerge victorious in their last fixture, Persepolis's hopes for second place will be extinguished.

Persepolis's fate now hinges on the performance of their bitter rivals, Esteghlal.

In the final week, Sepahan is scheduled to face Esteghlal, a team that have shown improved form under the guidance of Mojtaba Jabbari, remaining undefeated in their last three matches.

Interestingly, Havadar, the team that surprisingly held Sepahan to a draw in week 29, had already been relegated to the first division, highlighting the unpredictable nature of the league.

While Esteghlal's recent resurgence offers a glimmer of hope for Persepolis fans, concerns linger as Esteghlal also have a Hazfi Cup (Iran's domestic cup) match following their league finale, potentially leading to squad rotation to avoid injuries.

The current scenario marks a unique juncture in the storied rivalry between Esteghlal and Persepolis.

Historically, instances have occurred where one of the Tehran giants found themselves hoping for their rival's victory against a third team in a title race.

For example, earlier this season, Persepolis supporters would have welcomed an Esteghlal draw against Sepahan.

However, those situations did not directly determine Persepolis's ultimate fate in the league standings, leaving room for them to recover lost ground.

This time, the result of Esteghlal's match against Sepahan will unequivocally dictate whether Persepolis secures the coveted Champions League Elite playoff spot, an unprecedented situation in the history of Iranian football's most intense derby.

Iran beat Jordan in 2025 Asian Beach Handball Championship

TEHRAN – Iran defeated Jordan 2-1 in the 2025 Asian Beach Handball Championship on Friday.

Team Melli had defeated Pakistan and India. They will meet the Philippines on Monday.

The tournament is taking place at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, Oman, from May 6 to 15.

It is the second time that the competition will be hosted by the Oman Handball Association (OHA).

Additionally, the competition will serve as a qualification tournament for the Beach Handball World Championship.

Group A consists of Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Maldives and Hong Kong.

Iran win gold in kayak double 500m in Asian championships

TEHRAN – Iran won a gold and a bronze medal in the final day of the 2025 Asian Canoe Confederation Canoe Sprint Asian Championships on Saturday.

Ali Aghamirzaei combined with Peyman Ghavidel Siah Sofiani to take the men's kayak double 500m title in the competitions held in Nanjing, China.

Aghamirzaei also won a bronze medal in the men's kayak single 500m.

The Iranian canoeists had previously seized two silver medals and one bronze in the competition. Mohammad Nabi Rezaei settled for a silver in the men's canoe single 1000m with a time of 4:19.26.

Aghamirzaei also seized a silver in 3:49.94 in the men's kayak single 1000m.

Narjes Kargarpoor won the bronze with 4:29.992 in the women's K1 1000m.

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

Iran advance to 2025 FIP Arena World Polo Championship

TEHRAN – The final round of the Asian qualifiers for the Arena World Polo Championship was held at the Nofa Equestrian Resort in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Iran defeated Pakistan in a two-match final.

Team Melli first lost to Pakistan 17-14 but in the second match they defeated their opponents 19-13 and booked their berth in the World Polo Championship, to be held in the U.S.

First time that Saudi Arabia has hosted the Asian polo final and is in line with the country's successful record of hosting international events across various sports.

Iran futsal coach Soleymani wary of Vietnam's threat

TEHRAN – A tactical reshuffle at half-time secured Iran all three points against a spirited Hong Kong, but head coach Foruzan Soleymani urged caution ahead of their clash with Vietnam.

Iran have defeated the Philippines and Hong Kong in Group B so far and will meet Vietnam on Sunday.

"We tried to break down the Hong Kong defense and score the first goal. But we let our guard down and they scored through an own goal," said Soleymani. "During the half-time break I told the players to press more and we were able to score the goals and take the victory."

"We will be tested again against Vietnam and they will be tough to break down. However, I believe in my players and we are hoping to come out on top."

Vietnam impressed with its flexibility to secure their second victory with a convincing performance against the Philippines, leaving head coach Nguyen Dinh Hoang proud.

"We started better than we did in our opening match against Hong Kong and created more opportunities – that's why we got the result," said the 38-year-old.

"Every moment in a match is different. We pressed higher at the start and didn't allow the Philippines to build their attacks. After that we controlled the game more and focused on scoring."

"I'm happy with the victory because of the players' efforts – they gave more than 100 percent. Now, we'll analyse the match against Iran and decide which tactics are most suitable." "Our target is clear – we want to win all the way."

Iran condemns Stockholm embassy attack, demands Sweden ensure diplomatic security



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (R) and Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard

TEHRAN – In a phone call on Friday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi strongly condemned the recent arson attack targeting Iran's embassy in Stockholm, urging Swedish authorities to take "decisive measures" against those responsible.

According to a readout from Iran's foreign ministry, Araghchi emphasized the necessity of preventing such "unacceptable violations of diplomatic norms" during discussions with Swedish Foreign Minister Maria Malmer Stenergard.

The diplomatic exchange followed an April 30 incident in which a 55-year-old individual set fire to the entrance of Iran's embassy in Stockholm.

Swedish police confirmed the arrest of the suspect, though officials have withheld further details pending investigation. Nadia Norton, a spokesperson for Sweden's police, stated that "preliminary inquiries are ongoing," but declined to elaborate on motives or the suspect's identity.

Araghchi underscored Tehran's expectation that Sweden "fulfill its obligations under international law to safeguard diplomatic premises," while calling for "enhanced bilateral consultations to address misunderstandings and strengthen cooperation."

Stenergard assured her coun-

terpart that Stockholm remains committed to "protecting Iranian diplomatic facilities" and pledged to implement necessary security measures.

"The Islamic Republic expects concrete action, not just assurances, to prevent future assaults on our sovereignty," Araghchi asserted, reflecting Tehran's broader frustration with Sweden's perceived lack of sufficient response to provocations by anti-Iran groups.

Similar instances emerged in 2024 when Iranian voters in Sweden reported harassment during the presidential elections, with anti-Iran groups disrupting polling efforts. They gathered outside the embassy to verbally abuse voters and threaten them with violence after the voting concluded.



... and so far failing. Trump and minions are attempting to resurrect "greatness" by force and dominance, military or economic. America, with all its current problems, social and economic, is losing some of what standing and respect it had even among Western allies. But given the point to which American problems have now manifested themselves, which has spurred the wild thrashings of the Trump administration, the solution to improving U.S. standing is, in fact, quite simple: championing justice and

morality wherever it is absent. The Apartheid monster like few other countries ever have been is the current prime example of the absence of any justice whatsoever even since 1948.

Writers like Alon Mizrahi, a nearly 60-year-old Israeli citizen and Israeli soccer star in his youth who has left Israel and comments brilliantly on the X (Twitter) site, claims that the Zionist state has already gone past the point where it can survive long term.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Iran will be rewarded by hanging tough against Apartheid...

by Martin Love

NORTH CAROLINA – Of all things, Iran has been richly endowed with its people and resources. Its opposition to Zionism and genocide is its cardinal virtue. Given that most all of humanity deplors what the Zionists have been doing for decades, and now with the enormity of Zionist depravities in full view and with protests evident worldwide, it's no secret that Iran is and has been on the so-called "right side of history"... despite suffering attacks and sanctions for its posture for a very long time.

The fear on the part of many people like this American writer who oppose the Zionists but not Judaism of non-Zionist Jews, is that IF the U.S. or Israel or both attack Iran in force, some Iranians might rise up against Iran's government and not only would Iran be faced with fending off the foreign attackers but also internal discord. And Iran as it has bravely

been in opposition to Western and Zionist crimes would disintegrate into something like those Arab states such as Jordan and Egypt and others who have not lifted a finger to end the genocide or condemn Zionists with deeds rather than occasional words. (Egypt and Jordan, for example, should have long ago eliminated Israeli embassies and cut ALL ties with the Zionists. This is the least they could do!) The entire Islamic world should unite against the Zionists, and remember, the entire game plan of the U.S. and its allies has been "divide and conquer" anyway they can for decades.

No country exists with perfect governance, Iran included, just as no individual person had ever embodied "perfection" except that Christians claim anyway Jesus was "perfect". Americans, for example, are facing a government in Washington that under misguided, shallow Donald Trump is thrashing about trying to MAGA

Over \$3b in new refinery projects to be launched by March 2026



TEHRAN – Iran will inaugurate new refinery projects worth more than \$3.0 billion this year, despite years of stagnation in the country's refining sector, a senior oil official said on Saturday.

Mohammad Sadegh Azimifar, head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) and deputy oil minister, told reporters at the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition (Iran Oil Show) that the sector had seen little development over the past three years.

He said Iran, which was a gasoline export-

er in 2020, has become a gasoline importer in recent years.

Azimifar also revealed that fuel reserves for power plants had declined by 43 percent at the start of the current administration, and major refinery overhauls had been delayed due to imbalances in the energy sector.

"Despite these challenges, fuel consumption by power plants has increased by 80 percent this year," he said.

He added that compressed natural gas (CNG) consumption, which stood at 23 million cubic meters per day in 2020, has fallen to 18 million cubic meters.

According to Azimifar, since the start of President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, Iran has boosted its oil and gas production by nearly 8 million liters per day, while gasoline output has increased by 7 million liters.

The deputy minister reaffirmed that new projects worth more than \$3 billion will be launched before the end of the year.

Annual non-oil export from North Khorasan rises 41%

TEHRAN – The value of non-oil export from North Khorasan province, in the northeast of Iran, increased by 41 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), according to a provincial official.

Mohammad Karamianfar, the acting head of Industry, Mining and Trade Department of the province, said that non-oil commodities worth \$316 million were exported from the province in the previous year.

He said that most of the province's export goods last year included petrochemical products (urea, ammonia, melamine), steel products, cement, petroleum bitumen, agricultural products, polystyrene foam, and polystyrene tools.

He mentioned Iraq, Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Libya, and Somalia, as some of the countries to which the products were exported.

The official further announced that 16 countries were added to the province's export target countries last year, including Madagascar, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Kuwait, Colombia, Djibouti, Kenya, the British Indian Ocean Territory, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tajikistan, Germany, Laos, Thailand and Bangladesh.

Karamianfar stated: "Also, during this period, seven export target countries were lost, including Jordan, South Africa, Italy, Tanzania, Taiwan, Serbia and Nigeria."

He further announced that non-oil commodities valued at \$40.4 million were imported to the province in the past year, falling 50 percent from the figure in the preceding year.

Most of the imported goods include rice and vanilla, which came from Pakistan and Mauritius, he added.

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

This marked a 10 percent increase in vol-

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

Imports totaled 39.3 million tons valued at \$72.4 billion, representing a 0.77 percent decline in weight but an 8.22 percent increase in value from the previous year. The result was a non-oil trade deficit of \$14.6 billion, largely due to the import of over \$8.0 billion worth of raw gold bars, which accounted for 11.12 percent of the total import value.

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

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

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

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

On the import side, essential goods such as corn feed, soybean meal, genetically modified soybeans, rice, and sunflower seed oil were among the top items. Other key imports included smartphones, tractors, and auto parts.

The UAE was Iran's largest source of imports at \$21.9 billion, followed by China at \$19.3 billion, Turkey at \$12.4 billion, Germany at \$2.4 billion, India at \$1.7 billion, Hong Kong at approximately \$1.4 billion, and Russia at \$1.3 billion. Together, these countries supplied goods worth \$60.7 billion, or 83.8 percent of Iran's total imports.

Akbarpour said the trade deficit could be largely attributed to the surge in gold imports, which on their own exceeded \$8.0 billion.

160,000 workers continued to operate round the clock across Iran's fuel supply chain.

He said that under President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, average daily production rose by over 8 million liters for diesel and more than 7 million liters for gasoline. He added that part of this increase was achieved through process optimization in existing refineries.

The deputy oil minister stressed that a seven percent jump in overall fuel consumption had pushed the country to become a net importer of petroleum products.

Iran restarts Caspian Sea drilling after 3-decade hiatus

TEHRAN – Iran's oil minister has ordered the resumption of exploratory drilling in the shallow waters of the Caspian Sea, ending a 30-year pause in operations.

According to Shana news agency, the drilling operation officially began on Friday, May 8, during the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition.

The North Drilling Company has deployed a rig at the Rudsar structure in Block 18 of the Caspian Sea, at a water depth of 70 meters.

The exploratory well is planned to reach a final depth of 5,077 meters, targeting reservoir assessment in the Rudsar structure.

The last well drilled in the shallow waters of the Caspian was completed in 1997. Drilling in the



deeper parts of the sea was also halted in 2014.

Iran's Oil Ministry plans to resume deep-water operations once the semi-submersible Iran-Amirkabir platform completes necessary repairs.

Iran estimates its sector of the

Caspian Sea holds significant hydrocarbon potential, although much of it remains untapped.

Past exploratory data suggest the presence of oil and gas reserves, particularly in deeper sections of the southern Caspian basin, where water depths and

technical challenges have posed barriers to development.

In 2012, Iran announced the discovery of the Sardar-e Jangal oil field in the Caspian, which officials initially claimed could contain over 2 billion barrels of recoverable oil and significant natural gas volumes. However, a lack of investment, technological hurdles, and maritime border disputes with neighboring countries have hindered further development.

The renewed push for exploration comes as Iran seeks to diversify its production base and offset declines from mature onshore fields. Caspian offshore development also aligns with Tehran's long-term strategy to strengthen energy security and boost exports once sanctions ease.

Iran, Russia agree to hold joint meeting in Makhachkala to advance maritime transport co-op

TEHRAN – Iranian and Russian transport officials have agreed to hold a joint meeting in the Russian port city of Makhachkala within the next two months as part of efforts to operationalize a bilateral maritime transport consortium.

According to Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO), the agreement was reached during a phone call between Saeed Rasouli, Deputy Minister of Transport and Urban Development and head of the PMO, and Dmitry Azarov, Russia's Deputy Transport Minister.

The planned session will bring together senior representatives from the PMO, the Russian Ministry of Transport, the Russian Federal Maritime and River Transport Agency, and private sector players from both countries.

The goal is to activate a joint maritime transport consortium, in line with the 2025 Iran-Russia Joint Action Plan signed in Tehran on February 18, and the outcomes of the most recent session of the Iran-Russia Joint Commission held in Moscow.

Rasouli underscored the importance of boosting combined transport and transit via the Caspian Sea, particularly in the context of the International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC). He emphasized the need to facilitate cargo movements through all viable routes along the corridor, especially container shipments between Iranian and Russian ports on the Caspian.

He expressed appreciation for Russia's cooperation in drafting the newly signed 2025 roadmap and called for the prompt launch of the joint consortium, with full engagement from the private sectors on both sides. Rasouli said this initiative, first proposed by Iran during a recent Caspian regional summit, would help remove obstacles for private firms and deliver rapid, lasting results.

He also reaffirmed Iran's readiness to work on a comprehensive maritime roadmap and joint operational plan to boost bilateral sea transport links.

Rasouli noted that aligning port tariffs, improving customs procedures, and promoting container and multimodal shipping via the Caspian are key priorities that require close field-level cooperation and strong private sector participation.

Azarov, for his part, welcomed Iran's proposals and voiced Russia's readiness to address bottlenecks in Caspian maritime logistics. He cited scheduling inefficiencies and the handling of perishable goods as areas needing urgent attention. Azarov added that Moscow is seeking a comprehensive agreement with Tehran on maritime and port cooperation.

Iran and Russia signed the MOU of their 18th joint economic committee meeting at the end of the meeting in Moscow in late April.

In a press conference, after the 18th meeting of Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee, Iranian oil minister explaining the most important achievements of the meeting, and said: "The agreements

reached have outlined the framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries, and the Ministry of Oil will seriously pursue the practical implementation of these agreements."

He said that the meeting was held with the participation of specialized committees in the fields of trade, economy, finance, banking, transportation, customs, industry, mining, energy, health, agriculture, tourism, and technology, and the final memorandum of understanding of this meeting was signed by both sides.

Thanking the Russian side for hosting, he stated: "The decisions of the past months within the framework of specialized committees and the documents signed at this meeting have provided a suitable platform for the development of bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the new international conditions."

Referring to the areas of focus for both parties, the minister of oil stated: "Developing cooperation in the upstream oil and gas sector and pursuing memorandums of understanding with Gazprom, establishing a gas hub in Iran, gas trade, cooperation in the petrochemical value chain, and oil product swaps were among the key issues discussed at the meeting."

Paknejad referred to strategic cooperation in the field of nuclear energy and said that joint projects in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy were also among the agreed issues.

He added that the activation of the North-South International Corridor, with emphasis on completing the Rasht-Astara railway as the missing link of this transit route, has been put on the agenda.

The official also emphasized the expansion of banking cooperation and said: "Creating sustainable banking platforms to facilitate trade and investment, harmonizing standards with the aim of developing bilateral trade, strengthening trade centers, and developing cooperation in the fields of agriculture, health, and customs were among other topics discussed at the summit."

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

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

Jalali highlighted the recent approval of the Iran-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty by Russia's Federation Council and State Duma, noting that both countries need each other

in different areas. "We must take concrete steps based on a clear understanding of these mutual needs," he said.

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

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

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

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

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

He noted that the Iranian delegation's strong presence at the Moscow summit signals Tehran's serious commitment to strengthening ties, especially after the signing and ratification of the strategic partnership agreement.

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

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

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

Annual liquid fuel supply to power plants rise 40%

TEHRAN – Iran delivered 21.8 billion liters of liquid fuel to power plants in the previous Iranian year 1403 (ended in late March), marking a 40 percent increase compared to the previous year, a senior oil official said on Saturday.

Mohammad Sadegh Azimifar, head of the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC), made the announcement during a press conference at the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition.

Azimifar noted that last year was a turbulent year for the refining industry, but over

160,000 workers continued to operate round the clock across Iran's fuel supply chain.

He said that under President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, average daily production rose by over 8 million liters for diesel and more than 7 million liters for gasoline. He added that part of this increase was achieved through process optimization in existing refineries.

The deputy oil minister stressed that a seven percent jump in overall fuel consumption had pushed the country to become a net importer of petroleum products.

Iran to boost South Pars daily gas output by up to 15 mcm this winter

TEHRAN – Iran plans to increase daily gas production from the South Pars Gas Complex by 10 to 15 million cubic meters (mcm) this winter as part of an early overhaul strategy to prepare for rising seasonal demand, the company's head said on Saturday.

Gholamabbas Hosseini, head of the South Pars Gas Complex, said the early launch of major refinery maintenance work was aimed at ensuring uninterrupted gas sup-

plies during the cold season. The complex currently supplies about 73 percent of the country's gas needs, with an output of nearly 600 million cubic meters of sweet gas per day.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 29th Iran International Oil, Gas, Refining and Petrochemical Exhibition, Hosseini noted that South Pars also supplies feedstock to the Persian Gulf Star Refinery and plays a critical role in the coun-

try's foreign currency earnings through the export of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

He emphasized the importance of domestic manufacturing in the gas sector, pointing to investment opportunities presented at the exhibition, particularly in the production of first-use equipment such as rotors, compressors, and turbines. These opportunities align with the country's current focus on "Investment for

Production," he said.

Commenting on last winter's challenges, Hosseini said household gas consumption in November 2024 nearly matched February 2025 levels due to an early and prolonged cold spell. He added that despite delayed maintenance last year, all repairs were completed by November 10, 2024, allowing the complex to meet demand during the winter peak.

Why is Nasrallah's mausoleum defamed!?

From page 1 ▶ It should be noted that the identity of the seditious report is identical to a video broadcast during the Israeli war on Lebanon (in September–November 2024) that falsely claimed that Hezbollah was storing funds from the Al-Qard al-Hassan Foundation in alleged tunnels under the Sahel Hospital in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The nine-minute report, which Al Jadeed brazenly “disavowed”, is followed by other reports, coinciding with the removal of the term “Israeli enemy” from Al Jadeed's newscasts. The report lacked even the most basic professional standards.

Meanwhile, the channel is moving toward accepting the resignation of its editor-in-chief Mariam Al-Bassam, following repeated disagreements with her over Al-Bassam's rejection of insulting the resistance.

In her place, the channel will appoint a journalist of lower professional standing who espouses an anti-resistance discourse.

Meanwhile, a number of the



channel's employees signed a petition objecting to the report.

In retaliation, Al Jadeed's board subsequently fired journalist Rawand Bou Dargham and news editor Qassem Al-Bassam, while several others were subjected to a humiliating investigation and threatened with arbitrary dismissal, particularly against its pro-Resistance employees.

Al Jadeed is run by the family of Lebanese businessman Tahseen Khayat, who has been implicated in countless corruption cases with Banque centrale du Liban's former

governor.

Tahseen Al-Khayat and his two sons (Karma and Karim) have a long history of manipulating public opinion in the service of several countries that interfere negatively in Lebanese affairs.

This confirms that Al-Jadeed is not a media institution by strict professional standards, but rather a family-commercial mafia that exploits its media professionals to gain influence and conclude deals, even with the Israeli enemy in order to achieve what the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli aggression has failed

to do against the Resistance and the line of its martyr leader. In his famous book, *Self-Awareness and Dumbification* (خودآگاهی و استعمار), Ali Shariati expounds his reformist ideology in the field of political sociology.

Deception occurs, according to Shariati, by distorting the human mind—whether individual or group—and diverting it from his socio-humanitarian intelligence.

Shariati says: “In fateful moments, unless you are the master of the situation, you will become the victim of deception.” He points out that this is the most prominent mechanism employed by global arrogance to impose its policies.

Undoubtedly, this is what the anti-Resistance media is pursuing today by encroaching on our sanctities.

We are in dire need of alertness and preparedness, especially in the midst of the fateful circumstances we have been living since the outbreak of the Al-Qasba Flood Operation that laid the foundation for the decline of imperialist hegemony.

Yemen to enforce Israeli airspace ban

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Yemeni forces launch operations to block commercial air travel in Israeli skies in solidarity with Gaza.

Military spokesman Yahya Saree announced a “qualitative operation” targeting the Zionist regime's Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv with a hypersonic ballistic missile. He confirmed that the missile successfully struck its intended target.

Saree stated that the operation is part of efforts to enforce a no-fly zone over Israeli airspace, in response to what he said was the Zionist regime's ongoing genocide in Gaza.

“The enemy's interception systems failed to stop it, causing millions of occupying Zionists to rush into shelters and halting airport operations for nearly an hour,” Saree noted.

Israeli media reported that the U.S. THAAD missile defense system failed to intercept the

projectile, for the second time this week.

Viral footage circulated on social media showing panic among Israeli settlers, with scenes of people fleeing Tel Aviv's beaches during the Yemeni missile alert.

The government in Sanaa emphasized that Yemen will continue to attack the Zionist regime “in support of our oppressed Palestinian people and their fighters, and in rejection of the genocide being committed by the Zionist enemy against our brothers in the Gaza Strip, and as part of enforcing the aerial blockade on the criminal Israeli entity.”

In a separate strike, Yemeni forces targeted a “vital Israeli enemy site” in Tel Aviv using a Yafa drone. Yemeni officials reiterated warnings to international airlines still operating flights to Israeli airports, declaring that the air traffic ban over occupied Palestine remains in force until the aggression on Gaza ceases.

“The Armed Forces again warn airlines that

have not yet complied with the no-fly directive: they must immediately halt all flights to the occupied land of Palestine, as many others have already done,” Saree warned.

He further stated, “The decision to ban air navigation to the airports of occupied Palestine, as well as the prohibition on Israeli ships passing through the Red Sea and Arabian Sea, will remain in place.

These and other support operations will continue until the aggression on Gaza is stopped and the siege is lifted.”

Yemen opened a military support front in solidarity with the starving people of Gaza in November 2023. Western powers have waged thousands of airstrikes on multiple Yemeni cities. The air raids have failed to deter Yemeni forces from targeting vital Israeli sites, and the maritime blockade on Israeli ships and now Yemen has vowed to implement a blockade over Israeli airspace.

India and Pakistan agree to immediate ceasefire

India and Pakistan have agreed to an “immediate ceasefire,” President Donald Trump said Saturday, following days of rising tensions and fighting between the two nations, CNBC reported.

“After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE,” Trump wrote on Truth Social.

Pakistani and Indian leaders confirmed the ceasefire agreement but contradicted Trump's claims that the deal was brokered by the U.S.

An Indian foreign ministry official said the deal was “worked out directly between the two countries,” according to the New York Times.

The ceasefire announcement came hours after fighting continued to escalate on Saturday, with both nations launching continued military operations against each other.

China, US hold talks on tariffs in first bid to de-escalate trade war

China's trade envoy He Lifeng has met United States Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Switzerland for talks aimed at easing a trade war between the superpowers that is roiling global markets.

The first official engagement, since the U.S. slapped a 145 percent tariff on Chinese goods, prompting a retaliatory 125 percent duty from China, began on Saturday at an undisclosed location in Geneva, Switzerland, according to the Chinese state news agency Xinhua.

15 states sue over Trump's move to fast-track oil and gas projects

Over a dozen largely Democratic states are suing President Trump's administration over his efforts to fast-track energy projects, saying the administration is bypassing environmental protection laws.

Trump issued an executive order declaring a “national energy emergency” on the first day of his presidency — part of Trump's push to expand U.S. oil and gas production.

The order urges oil and gas expansion through federal use of eminent domain and the Defense Production Act, which allows the government to use private land and resources to produce goods deemed to be a national necessity.

Those kinds of steps are supposed to be reserved for actual emergencies, such as projects needed in the aftermath of disasters like hurricanes, flooding or major oil

European leaders make symbolic visit to Kyiv

The leaders of Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Poland have told Russian leader Vladimir Putin to agree to a 30-day ceasefire starting on Monday or face possible “massive” sanctions, according to French President Emmanuel Macron, on a highly symbolic visit to Kyiv. The demand comes with the backing of the White House after a joint phone call with President Donald Trump, the Europeans said.

Standing alongside Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv, the four leaders — Macron, new German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his Polish counterpart Donald Tusk — said the ceasefire should be observed on land, at

spills, the attorneys general wrote in the lawsuit filed in Washington state Friday.

But now, the 15 plaintiff states allege, agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Interior are bypassing required reviews under federal laws like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The states argue an improper permitting process “will result in significant and irreparable harm to state natural and historic resources and the people and biota that rely on those resources for drinking, farming, recreating, and habitat.”

Mexico sues Google over ‘Gulf of America’ name change

Mexico is suing Google for ignoring repeated requests not to rename the Gulf of Mexico the Gulf of America for U.S. users on its maps service, Claudia Sheinbaum has said.

The Mexican president did not say where the lawsuit had been filed. Google did not respond to the BBC's request for comment.

On Thursday, the Republican-led House of Representatives voted to officially rename the Gulf for federal agencies.

Donald Trump signed an executive order on his first day in office in January calling for the body of water to be renamed, arguing the change was justified because the U.S. “do most of the work there, and it's ours”.

However, Sheinbaum's government contends that Trump's order applies only to the U.S. portion of the continental shelf.

“All we want is for the decree issued by the U.S. government to be complied with,” she said, asserting that the U.S. lacks the authority to rename the entire gulf.

Columbia University suspends more than 65 students over library occupation

Columbia University has suspended more than 65 students for their role in a pro-Palestine demonstration that forced the shutdown of the main campus library, a school official said on Friday.

The students were placed on interim suspension and will be prohibited from taking their final exams or entering campus except to access their dormitories, the university official said.

Columbia also barred 33 other people from campus, including students from other colleges and alumni who took part in the protest, according to the official.

“When rules are violated and when our academic community is purposefully disrupted, that is a considered choice — one with real consequences,” the Columbia official said.

Trump's looming Riyadh visit and regional power dynamics

From page 1 ▶ Trump's visit coincides with a major (Persian)Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Riyadh on May 14, bringing together Persian Gulf Arab leaders and the United States to address pressing regional issues. The summit serves as a platform for discussing security, economic cooperation, and the ongoing challenges facing the region. Saudi Arabia's leadership, particularly Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), views the summit as an opportunity to strengthen ties with the U.S. while cautiously navigating contentious topics such as the Israel-Palestine conflict and normalization with Israel.

US nuclear strategy in West Asia

The potential U.S.-Saudi civil nuclear deal emerging from President Trump's visit represents a major strategic development with far-reaching implications for regional security and U.S. influence in West Asia. Unlike previous U.S. administrations, the Trump administration has reportedly dropped the long-standing U.S. condition that Saudi Arabia must normalize relations with Israel before advancing nuclear cooperation talks.

This shift signals a pragmatic decoupling of the nuclear agreement from the contentious issue of an

Israeli-Saudi normalization, which Riyadh has consistently linked to progress on Palestinian statehood.

However, the deal has raised significant concerns in Israel. Israeli officials fear that advancing a Saudi nuclear program without Israeli consent could undermine regional security, especially given Saudi ambitions to enrich uranium. The Netanyahu government, lacking enough support in the Senate to block the deal, has expressed unease about being sidelined, as Washington appears determined to proceed regardless of Israeli objections. The situation complicates U.S.-Israel relations and could shift the regional power balance, pressuring Israel to recalibrate its diplomatic and security strategies in response to a more autonomous and nuclear-capable Saudi Arabia.

In sum, the U.S.-Saudi nuclear cooperation initiative reflects a bold recalibration of U.S. West Asia policy under Trump, prioritizing strategic and economic interests with Riyadh while risking heightened tensions with Israel and altering the delicate regional equilibrium.

In his second term as president, Trump seeks to expand the Abraham Accords to as many Arab states as possible in order to create a local



peace framework that includes political, economic and security cooperation.

However, the conflict between Israel and Hamas and recent Israeli government activity have made this increasingly difficult. Saudi Arabia and neighboring Arab states condemned Israel's military actions in Gaza and even MBS accused Israel of genocide, basically tripling down bringing back the Saudi demand that Palestinian statehood be a precondition for normalization.

The significance of this trip just after the start of Donald Trump's second term is worth noting. His choice of Saudi Arabia as his first foreign destination indicates the importance of the Middle East in U.S. foreign policy and sends a strong

only to face dismissal by the end of 2014.

The bridges Netanyahu burned with key allies, such as Avigdor Lieberman, leader of Yisrael Beiteinu, signaled a broader trend. Disenchantment peaked in 2018, when disagreements over a ceasefire with Hamas ruptured Lieberman's alliance with Likud. Soon after, the coalition chaos led to five consecutive elections between 2019 and 2022. Former generals like Benny Gantz and longtime allies like Naftali Bennett added their names to the ever-growing list of former partners-turned-critics, opting to challenge Netanyahu rather than collaborate further.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Beyond Netanyahu: Towards a new right in Israel

By Mansour Barati

As Netanyahu's dominance over Israeli politics steadily diminishes, a new political landscape is beginning to emerge in the Zionist right. The era of Netanyahu—a leader whose influence shaped Israel's political scene for over a decade—seems to be drawing to a close.

Except for the partisan polls run by Israel's Channel 14 television, the majority of reliable surveys suggest the Likud leader's grip is loosening, signaling a potential end to the reign of a man who has long personified Israel's right-wing politics.

The shifting sands of political stability

Throughout his unprecedented tenure, Benjamin “Bibi” Netanyahu has been both a symbol of political continuity and, increasingly, a source of division. From 2009 to 2019, Netanyahu and his Likud party were pillars of stability, with allies forging coalitions around his leadership. However, the appeal of aligning with Netanyahu began to sour, particularly as his ambition often overshadowed inclusivity. Early coalitions that included the Labor Party under Ehud Barak in 2011 were short-lived—a pattern that repeated itself with prominent centrist figures like Yair Lapid and Tzipi Livni, who joined Netanyahu's 2013 cabinet

Intl. bloggers invited to visit Isfahan



Isfahan tourism chief, Amir Karamzadeh

TEHRAN—A number of international social media influencers and bloggers have been invited to visit Isfahan, said the provincial tourism chief on Saturday.

Amir Karamzadeh added that the main reason behind this invitation is to introduce Isfahan tourism potentials and fight against anti-Iran sentiments known as Iranophobia, CHTN reported.

“Given the policies of Isfahan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, we annually invite domestic and international prominent influencers and bloggers to familiarize them with the provincial tourism potentials.”

He also said that last year, after hosting 100 tour operators in Isfahan, 33 influencers from Iraq, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, India and Pakistan travelled to Isfahan.

Presence of prominent virtual figures is effective in reducing the Western propaganda against Iran, he said. It can also boost tourism prosperity across the province, he added.

The impacts of Iranophobia, largely fueled by Western media propaganda, create significant barriers for potential visitors. Reports that misrepresent the country contribute to misconceptions, deterring travelers who might otherwise be drawn to Iran's rich history and artistic heritage. As a result, many perceive Iran as an unsafe or unknown destination, further complicating the country's tourism ambitions.

Experts contend that Iran possesses immense potential for growth in its tourism sector. They advocate for adopting comprehensive strategies to combat the negative perceptions propagated by U.S.-led media narratives. By promoting a positive image of Iran and fostering a greater understanding of its culture and attractions, the country can begin to dispel myths and attract more visitors.

In conjunction with addressing media challenges, easing stringent travel regulations will also be essential in revitalizing the tourism industry. If Iran can successfully navigate the twin pressures of managing international perceptions and reforming its travel policies, the prospects for a booming tourism sector could become a reality, ushering in a new era of cultural exchange and economic growth.

Proposal made for sisterhood ties between Iran's Kalat and Turkey's Konya

TEHRAN—Caretaker of Kalat Governor Office Abolfath Lashkari said that a proposal for sisterhood ties between Kalat and Konya has been made in a recent meeting with Turkey's consul-general.

He added that Kalat-Konya sisterhood agreement can be an important measure in line of cultural cooperation between Iran and Turkey, ISNA reported.

“We have totally given proposals for sisterhood agreements with three other Turkish cities. We hope that the follow-ups will be successful as soon as possible. But if we do not reach a conclusion, we will raise the issue of sisterhood with the Hezar Masjed district given its pristine nature.”

Of course, there are cities like Erzincan, Horasan, and Igdir in Turkey, he said, adding that the mayor of Kalat has been asked to conduct the necessary correspondence with these cities in this regard.

Horasan is located 250 km off Bazargan border. The ancestors of this city were from Khorasan, and this is the reason why this city was named.

“The city of Erzincan is also similar to the city of Kalat. If we consider the history of Erzincan in Turkey, we see that Afshar tribe, one of the most important Qizilbash tribes, formed the Safavid government in the city of Erzincan after moving towards Tabriz.”

He continued that Igdir, which is similar to Kalat, is located northeast of Turkey. Like Kalat, Igdir boasts natural, historical and ethnic diversity, he added.

The city of Igdir is located near the Turkish border with Armenia, and most of its residents are Shia and speak Azerbaijani Turkish. In addition, there are people in the surrounding villages who speak the Kurmanji language.

Lashgari called Kalat as city of history and nature. Handicrafts is one of the potentials of Kalat, he added.

He called roads as the most important infra-

structure for drawing investors and tourists.

Some 1,120 billion rials (\$1.2 million) has been allocated for improving Mashhad-Kalat Road, he said.

The 18th-century Qasr-e Khorshid (“the Sun Palace”) was once a residence for Nader Shah of Persia (1688–1747).

Commonly known as “Napoleon of Iran,” Nader created a mighty empire stretching from northern India to the Caucasus Mountains.

The 20-meter-high monument, which is known as Kalat-e Naderi, currently serves as a museum of anthropology and a unique travel destination in the Kalat city of Khorasan Razavi province, north-east Iran.

The building includes a picturesque exterior with a circular fluted shape, a sizable ground floor level, a cellar, and a cylindrical tower that is supported by 66 columns.

The palace has 12 rooms ornamented with paintings and decorative pieces like plaster moldings. Eight pools with connecting streams and fountains are located in the surrounding garden.

Narratives say the monument is named after Khorshid, who was one of Nader's wives. However, it was never completed due to an ambiguous state of affairs that poured in following Nader Shah's sudden death.

The exterior panels feature pineapple and pear motifs, which are thought to be uncommon in the then-Khorasan region, leading some to speculate that foreign artisans were hired to build it.

Records indicate that the structure served as a residential headquarters in the early Qajar era (1785 to 1925) as well.

Nader Shah is widely considered one of the most powerful rulers in the history of the nation. He assumed power when a period of chaos overwhelmed Iran.

extends along the edge of the pit, celebrate and eat the traditional foods they brought with them.

“Varf Chal” ceremony was registered on intangible heritage list 10 years ago.

Mazandaran people have numerous traditional customs, many of which have been forgotten over the time.

Various tribes and ethnic groups who live in different parts of Iran are just like colors, which make a great painting. Iran is home to about 20 ethnic groups who live in different regions of the country.

Varf Chal: Larijan people celebrate ‘snow storing’ ceremony

TEHRAN—People in a village near Larijan, the northern city of Amol, Mazandaran province, marked a 600-year-old ceremony called “Varf Chal”, which literally means “snow storing”, with the aim of overcoming the drought.

During the event, no man is allowed to stay in the village. They leave the place to go to Varf Chal to carry pieces of frozen snow left from winter, and put them in a 10-meter-deep pit as they believe the snow could provide fresh water for animals and thirsty passersby after being melted in summer. Women run the village affairs on that day.

Then, they sit around a long tablecloth that

A monument of engineering and history, Veresk turns 89

TEHRAN - Veresk Bridge, one of Iran's most iconic engineering feats of the 20th century and a vital link in the Trans-Iranian Railway, has reached its 89th anniversary.

Located in the highlands of Veresk village, some 27 kilometers south of Pol-e Sefid in Mazandaran province's Savadkuh county, the bridge stands as a testament to international collaboration and technical ingenuity.

Commissioned during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, Veresk Bridge was inaugurated on May 6, 1936 (16 Ordibehesht 1315) in a ceremony attended by the monarch himself.

It is said that to dispel public fears regarding the bridge's strength, Reza Shah ordered foreign engineers and their families to stand beneath the structure as the first train crossed.

Constructed at an altitude of 110 meters (now reduced to about 106 meters due to sediment and rising water levels), the bridge spans a 66-meter arch over a deep gorge, connecting the Tehran-North railway.

Built with primitive tools by a multinational workforce—Swiss, Italian, German, Austrian, and Danish—the bridge was de-



A view of Veresk Bridge in Mazandaran province, northern Iran

signed and constructed by the Danish firm Kampsax, which offered a 70-year guarantee on its durability.

The chief engineer, Austrian Walter Aigner, is buried in Veresk per his request, and a memorial stands near the bridge in honor of the laborers who lost their lives during its construction and the excavation of nearby tunnels.

Veresk Bridge earned the moniker Pol-e Piroozi or “The Bridge of Victory” during World War II when Iran served as a crucial supply route for the Allied forces.

The railway played a significant role in transporting troops and materials to the Soviet Union, helping counter the German siege on the Eastern Front.

Recognized for its historical and strategic importance, the bridge was inscribed on Iran's national heritage list in 1977. More recently, in 2021, the entire 1,394-kilometer Trans-Iranian Railway—of which Veresk Bridge is a crown jewel—was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site during the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee in Fuzhou, China.

The Trans-Iranian Railway stretches from the Caspian Sea's southeastern shores near Torkaman Port, winding through the Alborz Mountains via Firoozkuh, traversing the plains of Qom and Arak, piercing the Zagros highlands in Lorestan, and ultimately splitting into two branches at the Persian Gulf's Khoramshahr and Imam Khomeini ports.

As it turns 89, Veresk Bridge remains not only a critical piece of Iran's transport infrastructure but also a symbol of resilience, innovation, and historical continuity.

Iran's Kandelous turns folk tale into a tourism asset



Photo depicts a scene from “Mina and the Leopard”, an outdoor play performed by a local troupe for visitors to the village of Kandelous, in Mazandaran province, northern Iran, May 7, 2025.

By Afshin Majlesi

KANDELOUS (Mazandaran province) - The bizarre tale of “Mina and the Leopard” is a cherished oral legend from the village of Kandelous, nestled in Iran's northern Mazandaran province.

Deeply rooted in the region's rich folkloric traditions, the story is closely tied to the village's pristine forests and mysterious natural landscape.

Believed to have taken place

around a century ago - between 1896 and 1906 (1275 to 1285 in the Persian calendar) - the legend carries both cultural depth and timeless intrigue.

In recent years, it has also emerged as a unique attraction for tourists exploring the area.

According to the tale, Mina is a beautiful young woman from Kandelous who, one misty day in the forest, comes face-to-face with a leopard. Defying expecta-

tions, the animal does not attack her.

Instead, a strange and poetic bond forms between them—an emotional connection layered with symbolism and mystery. In some retellings, the leopard is portrayed not as a mere creature, but as a guardian spirit of the wilderness.

The story's ending varies across versions—some romantic, others tragic—adding to its enigmatic charm.

Today, the legend has inspired storytelling tours and local performances that unfold within Kandelous's natural and rural setting. The village has embraced the tale as a cultural emblem, now reflected in its handicrafts, paintings, and folk music.

These creative expressions have helped draw visitors and folklore enthusiasts to Kandelous, where myth and memory continue to shape a living tradition.

A haven for tourists

According to local tourism insiders, Kandelous is more than

a scenic mountain village. “It is a living, breathing testament to the harmony of culture, nature, and sustainability.”

The ancient village provides comfortable accommodations, including suites, villas, and guest houses, ensuring that visitors can fully experience its serene environment.

The village also boasts open parks and pavilions, offering a tranquil space for relaxation and seasonal festivities.

Beyond its historical significance, Kandelous is renowned for its Medicinal Plant Farms, which cultivate over 250 species of rare and valuable herbs. The village has become a hub for traditional herbal medicine, preserving the knowledge of Iranian healers while promoting sustainable farming practices.

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

Paleolithic evidence discovered on Iran's Makran coast

TEHRAN - A team of archaeologists, led by Dr. Morteza Hessari, has succeeded in discovering stone artifacts from the Paleolithic era on the Makran coast in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

According to the head of the archaeological research team, these findings include stone tools discovered at several points between the Kopal mountain range and the Makran coast. The stone artifacts consist of large pebbles with signs of flaking on one or more edges, as well as large flakes.

Hessari stated: “These discoveries are of great importance because, until now, our knowledge of Paleolithic settlements on the Makran coast was limited to only a few findings uncovered by Vita-Finzi in the 1970s in Konarak and Sadich, which belonged to the Middle and Late Paleolithic periods.

However, the new findings can

provide important information about human occupations of Lower Paleolithic period in this significant region, which many archaeologists believe was along the dispersal route of Lower Paleolithic groups toward South and East Asia.”

It should be noted that these discoveries are part of ongoing research, including test excavations to determine boundaries and excavations at the Kopal site. These investigations are being carried out as part of research projects by the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute.

In conclusion, Hessari expressed gratitude for the comprehensive cooperation of the Dashtiari County Governor's Office, particularly Abdolaziz Mayai, the honorable governor of the county, and the Chabahar Cultural Heritage Department. He expressed hope that, in the future, an exhibition of these re-



cent discoveries could be held in the county in collaboration with the General Department of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism.

The Kopal site is located south of Mount Kopal, along the road from Chabahar to Bris, in Dashtiari county. Test excavations at

this site have revealed artifacts from the Bronze Age, as well as the Parthian and Sasanian periods. Further details will be provided in subsequent reports.

Iran's Makran coast, aka Savahel-e Makkoran in Persian, is a semi-desert coastal strip along the coast of the Sea of Oman.

Midwives cornerstone of health care system: WHO rep

TEHRAN –The World Health Organization (WHO) Representative Syed Jaffar Hussain has highlighted midwives' commitment to providing compassionate and skillful care as a cornerstone of the health care system.

Their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to maternal and newborn health ensure safe deliveries and promote the well-being of mothers and infants across the country, Hussain noted.

The official made the remarks on the occasion of International Midwifery Day, held this year on 6 May under the theme Midwives: critical in every crisis.

The celebration built on the momentum of World Health Day 2025 and its theme, Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures, calling for greater recognition and investment in midwives, essential figures who make healthy beginnings possible, the WHO website announced in a press release on May 8.

The event was attended by Iranian midwives working in different fields, including health service delivery, as health care providers, managers, and academic members.

The commemoration began with a series of speeches by prominent figures, including Deputy Minister for Public Health Alireza Raeisi, Deputy Minister for Curative Affairs Sajad-Razavi,



and the Director General for Hospital Management and Clinical Excellence, Alireza Askari.

Addressing the event, Hussain elaborated on the diverse roles of midwives as gatekeepers at primary health care facilities, known as moraghebe-salamat, and as integral members of family practice teams, highlighting that midwifery is a calling that requires immense courage, empathy, and expertise.

He also acknowledged the tireless efforts of midwives in the face of challenges, their ability to offer comfort and support, and their role in empowering women.

The official went on to commend the commitment of policy-makers to harnessing the power of midwives in protecting the health of everyone.

Laureate midwives working

in different provinces and universities of medical sciences received appreciation notes during the ceremony, which served as a powerful reminder of the critical role midwives play in the health care system and the need for continued support and investment in their profession.

UNFPA lauds Iran's efforts in reducing maternal mortality

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative in Iran has commended the country's health system measures in lowering the mortality rate ratio by 63 percent, from 43 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to 16 deaths in 2023.

"For sure, this great achievement is mainly due to Iran's primary health care network, incorporating prenatal and postnatal care into its systems as well as

services offered by nurse aides, health experts, and midwives," IRNA quoted Ayna Seyitliyeva as saying.

The official made the remarks on Tuesday on the occasion of the International Day of Midwife, which is observed annually on May 5.

Midwives play a vital role in realizing women's access to quality health services as a human right. They play a key role in promoting maternal and newborn well-being and contribute to the substantial reduction in deaths from preventable causes during pregnancy and postpartum, Seyitliyeva noted.

"Despite progress made, the situation remains critical in some regions due to inequalities where women are twice or even more in danger of losing their lives because of complications from pregnancy and childbirth. The same thing applies to Iran, as the highest mortality rate is observed in less developed regions in provinces like Sistan-Baluchestan," she added.

Highlighting that inadequate care accounts for half of maternal deaths, Seyitliyeva said UNFPA will continue to support Iran in implementing policies aimed at improving maternal health, obstetric services and reducing maternal mortality.

Cheetahs running towards survival or extinction?

By Maryam Tavassoli

TEHRAN – With an estimated number of less than 30 Asiatic cheetahs remaining in Iran, the head of the Department of Environment (DOE), Shina Ansari, has expressed hope yet worry about the animal's survival in the country, being pushed to the brink of extinction.

"The extinction of the world's rarest cat has become a symbol of our challenges and responsibilities towards Iran's nature," IRIB quoted Ansari as saying.

Referring to the low population of cheetahs in Asia, the official said, "Once roaming through vast plains from West Asia into India, the Asiatic cheetah only exists in Iran now, with a population of less than 30 individuals. Since 2001, around 85 cheetahs have died because of human-related factors, indicating we have posed a greater threat to their survival than nature."

The DOE makes its best efforts to preserve endangered animals not just in words but by taking action in nature. However, the goal will be fulfilled only by the participation and involvement of people, media, responsible institutions, and nature lovers

"Preserving cheetahs is not merely an environmental concern, it reflects our attitude towards development, foresight, and national responsibility. It is a symbol of the coun-

try's ecosystem's health, a life-balance preserver. Preserving cheetah means ensuring the right to life for people and nature," the official highlighted.

Don't lose hope

Relocating domestic animals from habitats of cheetahs, fencing the Tehran-Mashhad road, which is one of the most dangerous areas, and breeding in captivity are among the most recent measures the DOE has been taking to preserve cheetahs," IRNA quoted Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, as saying in January.

These plans mainly focus on threat removal. During these years, domestic animals have been removed from an area of 150,000 hectares, including Golestan National Park as well as the wildlife sanctuary in the area, Zohrabi added.

The DOE is following up on the allocation of two trillion rials (around 2.4 million dollars) to decrease mortalities on the Tehran-Mashhad road through enhancing road lighting, reducing vehicle speeds, and fencing. Drones and other wildlife monitoring tools can also be used to conserve cheetahs in the area. However, more needs to be done to reach a favorable result, the official further noted.

"We do our best to safeguard cheetahs' habitats, but to increase their population, the plan to breed in captivity is going on. We have



already taken measures to standardize their breeding site in captivity with the help of the private sector, Zohrabi stressed.

The expansion of the cheetahs' territory and safeguarding their habitats have increased the number of cheetahs, IRIB quoted Zohrabi as saying in November 2024.

Highlighting the key role of public participation in the conservation of Asiatic cheetahs, the official said over 400,000 hectares of land between Turan National Park in Semnan province and Miandasht Wildlife Refuge in North Khorasan province are protected by the private sector.

The plan to increase prey is being implemented by the cooperation of the DOE and local communities, he noted.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Educational projects worth \$330m to be inaugurated

A total of 1,015 educational projects worth 14 trillion rials (nearly \$330 million) will be inaugurated across the country, Mehroollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the organization for renovation, development, and equipment of schools, has announced.

The projects will be inaugurated by the next 10 days, on the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, he stated, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to Rakhshanimehr, the projects include 4,168 classrooms, 11 swimming pools, and 32 gyms.

About 14,000 classrooms have been built so far this year (started March 21, 2019), compared with some 10,000 last year, he concluded.

افتتاح ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان پروژه آموزشی

رئیس سازمان نوسازی، توسعه و تجهیز مدارس کشور گفت ۱۰۱۵ پروژه آموزشی با اعتباری به میزان ۱۴۰۰ میلیارد تومان در سراسر کشور به بهره‌برداری می‌رسد. به گزارش ایسنا، مه‌رالله رخشانی مهر افزود این پروژه‌ها طی ۱۰ روز آینده و به مناسبت چهل و یکمین سالگرد پیروزی انقلاب اسلامی افتتاح خواهند شد. به گفته او، این پروژه‌ها شامل ۴۱۶۸ کلاس درس، ۱۱ استخر، و ۳۲ سالن ورزشی هستند. رخشانی مهر ادامه داد تاکنون در سال ۹۸ حدود ۱۴ هزار کلاس درس افتتاح شده است در حالی که در سال ۹۷ حدود ۱۰ هزار کلاس افتتاح شده بود.

IRCS, UNICEF host workshop on early childhood education in emergencies

TEHRAN – Recognizing the vital role of early learning, especially in times of crisis, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have held a national training workshop to ensure children are not left behind, even in emergencies.

In disaster-prone regions like Iran, access to quality early childhood education (ECE) is not just a developmental need—it's a lifeline.

Iran ranks as the fourth most disaster-prone country in Asia, following China, India, and Bangladesh. From floods and earthquakes to droughts, the frequency of natural disasters has made it critical to prioritize preparedness and resilience from an early age. Yet, early education services are often the first to be disrupted when emergencies strike, the UNICEF website announced in a press release on May 5.

The training workshop was held in Bandar-e Anzali from December 14 to 16, 2024. It brought together 270 IRCS volunteers, including ECE teachers, school principals, and SAHAR team members – IRCS's psychosocial support workforce – from across the country.

The training focused on Inclusive Early Childhood Education in Emergencies' Preparedness and Response, equipping participants with essential knowledge and practical tools on disability inclusion, child protection, communication with children, and psychosocial support.

"Quality early childhood education is the cornerstone of a child's development," said a UNICEF Iran spokesperson. "In emergencies, these services are even more essential to provide stability, learning, and safety for young children. This initiative is about ensuring every child, including those with disabilities, has access to nurturing, inclusive learning environments—even in the most challenging times."

This program, first designed in 2024, aims to build a national cadre of trained educators ready to support children before, during, and after emergencies. With a strong emphasis on inclusion, it ensures that children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities receive the attention and care they deserve.

Looking ahead, UNICEF and IRCS plan to redesign the training program based on participant feedback and identified needs. A new phase will focus on community-based informal ECE services to reach the most vulnerable children in underserved neighborhoods and remote villages.

This joint initiative reaffirms UNICEF's commitment to delivering education for all, everywhere — even when disaster strikes. Because every child deserves a safe start and a chance to learn, no matter the circumstances.

Recent cooperation

In December 2024, IRCS and UNICEF organized a workshop to support children's mental health through games.

The workshop, titled 'Structured Play, Games in Child-Friendly Spaces', was held from November 16 to 20 in Bushehr, southern Iran, the



UNICEF website announced in a press release on December 23.

This interactive event was part of the joint UNICEF-IRCS work plan, aimed at empowering the IRCS' psychosocial support (SAHAR) master trainers with updated concepts and tools to support children's mental health and psychosocial wellbeing through structured play in humanitarian settings.

The IRCS SAHAR teams are responsible for providing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to affected communities and children in humanitarian contexts.

During the workshop, 49 SAHAR master trainers and young volunteers from across Iran gathered to explore the impact of structured play.

This hands-on training emphasized the importance of structured play in promoting mental health and psychosocial wellbeing among children. Participants engaged in various activities designed to demonstrate the therapeutic benefits of play and to equip them with practical skills for their work in the field.

UNICEF remains committed to supporting the IRCS in enhancing its capacity to integrate structured play into its MHPSS programmes, ensuring that children in humanitarian settings receive the support they need to overcome adversity and build resilience.

In August 2024, the IRCS in cooperation with UNICEF conducted a workshop for the IRCS' psychosocial support team to enhance their capacity for 'Ensuring Quality in Psychosocial and Mental Health Care and Support' (EQUIP) during emergencies.

The workshop was held from August 18 to 20 in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province; a total of thirty-five national master trainers of the IRCS' SAHAR participated in the workshop, UNICEF website announced in a press release on August 28.

The IRCS' SAHAR teams consist of volunteers trained to provide MHPSS following disasters.

EQUIP assists SAHAR's master trainers with planning and conducting training and supervision for the volunteers of the SAHAR teams.

The enhanced skills and capacities will result in more children, adolescents, and their families receiving effective and safe mental health services during emergencies.

Iran exports over 700,000 doses of BCG vaccine to Venezuela

TEHRAN – Pasteur Institute of Iran has exported more than 700,000 doses of Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine to Venezuela.

The BCG vaccine has a documented protective effect against meningitis and disseminated tuberculosis in children.

Highlighting the significance of boosting science diplomacy, Ehsan Mostafavi, president of Pasteur Institute of Iran, said this is a successful example of health-based international interactions, which can be recognized as a model for the expansion of Iran's scientific and technological impacts in the global health sector, ILNA reported.

Pasteur Institute of Iran has been developing the BCG vaccine since 1947. It is one of the strategic products with international standards manufactured in the institute, the official noted.

By recognizing the international capacities and identifying the health needs of other countries, the institute is planning to develop a variety of vaccines to export, Mostafavi added.

The global vaccine market serves as a good opportunity to enhance Iran's role in the global health chain. Pasteur Institute of Iran intends to play a more active role in promoting public

health in the country as well as in developing countries, in line with its historical mission.

The Pasteur Network is a vast scientific community. Located in endemic areas, the network has access to a large number of pathogens that it monitors and studies on the five continents where it is present.

This diversity makes the Pasteur Network a global player in public health, science, innovation, and education, especially in the fight against infectious diseases.

On January 13, the head of Iran's Union of Medical Equipment Manufacturers and Exporters said that medical equipment worth around \$20 million is exported to more than 60 countries annually.

More than 70 percent of medical equipment and 100 percent of normal hospital beds are domestically made, IRNA quoted Abdolreza Yagoubzadeh as saying.

Also, over 95 percent of specific ICU and CCU beds and more than 85 percent of operating room medical equipment such as anesthesia machines and other equipment are manufactured with cutting-edge technology in the country, he added.



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MAY 11, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured.

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:19 Dawn: 3:25 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:02 (tomorrow)

TMoCA to screen documentary on Picasso



TEHRAN-The 1956 French documentary film about the renowned Spanish painter Pablo Picasso titled "The Mystery of Picasso" directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot will be shown at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) in Tehran on Sunday.

The screening of the 75-minute movie, with Persian subtitle, will begin at 4 p.m. at the cinematheque of the IAF, Mehr reported.

In 1955, Clouzot joined forces with his friend Pablo Picasso to make an entirely new kind of art film, "a film that could capture the moment and the mystery of creativity." Together, they devised an innovative technique: the filmmaker placed his camera behind a semitransparent surface on which the artist drew with special inks that bled through.

Clouzot captured a perfect reverse image of Picasso's brushstrokes, turning the motion-picture screen into the artist's canvas. Here, the master creates, and sometimes obliterates, twenty works (most of them, in fact, destroyed after the shoot), ranging from playful black-and-white sketches to vivid color murals.

In the film, the painter Pablo Picasso produces 20 drawings and paintings, at first using inks that bleed through the paper on which, he is drawing, with the act of creation filmed in real-time from the backside of the easel, and later using oil paints, with Clouzot employing a stop-motion-like effect to depict the development and modification of the works.

The film begins with Picasso creating simple marker drawings in black and white, and he gradually progresses to full-scale collages and oil paintings.

"The Mystery of Picasso" won the Special Jury Prize at the 1956 Cannes Film Festival and was shown out of competition at the 1982 Festival.

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

Henri-Georges Clouzot (1907-1977) was a French film director, screenwriter, and producer. He is best remembered for his work in the thriller film genre, having directed "The Wages of Fear" (1953) and "Les Diabol-

iques" (1955), which are critically recognized as among the greatest films of the 1950s. He also directed documentary films, including "The Mystery of Picasso" (1956), which was declared a national treasure by the government of France.

The film screening is concurrent with the "Picasso in Tehran" exhibition, which is underway at the TMOCA. The exhibition presents a narrative of Picasso's life and the artistic periods he traversed. It features 66 works by the renowned Spanish painter and sculptor from the collection of the TMOCA. It will be open daily (except Mondays) until May 20.

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

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

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

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

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

"La Tauromaquia" reflects Picasso's lifelong fascination with bulls and bullfighting, themes that appear frequently in his work, from early sketches to his masterpiece "Guernica" (1937).

Imam Reza festival concludes with honors for distinguished cultural figures

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

MASHHAD- The 21st Imam Reza (AS) International Festival concluded with a ceremony in Mashhad on Friday night, paying tribute to twelve distinguished individuals who have dedicated their lives to spreading the teachings and culture of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam.

These individuals, recognized as the "Servants of Imam Reza's Culture," represent a diverse range of scholar, religious, artistic, and social efforts both within Iran and internationally.

Coinciding with the anniversary of Imam Reza's (AS) birth, the ceremony was attended by numerous cultural officials, provincial authorities, artists, representatives of Astan Quds Razavi, and the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Seyyed Abbas Salehi.

The event was marked by a deep sense of gratitude and reverence, as officials and cultural figures gathered to honor those who have made significant contributions to promoting Imam Reza (AS)'s spiritual and cultural heritage.

The celebration not only reinforced Iran's commitment to fostering and disseminating the teachings of the Imam but also highlighted the global reach of Imam Reza's message through the dedicated efforts of these exemplary figures.

Among the distinguished figures honored nationally were prominent religious scholars, researchers, and cultural activists. Notable among them was Ayatollah Seyyed Hassan Ameli, who currently serves as the representative of the Leader in Ardebil province and is the Friday prayer Imam. Ayatollah Ameli is renowned for founding and leading the international scientific conference on Imam Reza's dialogue and debates, which attracts scholars from diverse faiths and backgrounds.

Another prominent figure was Nourollah Hosseinkhani, a university lecturer and author. Hosseinkhani has authored the comprehensive three-volume "Razavi Atlas," a key reference work on the culture and history of Imam Reza (AS).

Mahmoud Yazdankhah was also another honoree. He has served as a dedicated servant of the Imam's shrine for over 42 years, performing daily eulogies and spiritual gatherings for pilgrims at the Razavi Shrine, embodying the spirit of devotion and humility.

Poet Mostafa Saber Khorasani for his religious poetry and eulogies, scholar and poet Aalieh Meh-



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi speaks during the closing ceremony of 21st Imam Reza (AS) International Festival in Mashhad on May 9, 2025.

rabi for her poetic contributions to Persian literature, Najmedin Shariati for exploring Islamic teachings and spirituality in his TV shows and actor Mohammad Sadeghi for his portrayal of the historical figure Mamun al-Rashid in the popular series "Velayat-e-Eshq," and vocalist Seyyed Hesameddin Seraj for his spiritual songs were also among the honorees.

The ceremony also celebrated international figures whose efforts have significantly advanced the global understanding of Imam Reza's teachings.

Sheikh Zaid Alsalmi from Australia, a member of the Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly, is recognized for his innovative virtual outreach and online preaching. He has organized numerous cultural tours for youth and children, promoting the teachings of the Prophet's family through social media platforms like YouTube.

From Lebanon, Sheikh Jafar Al-Mohajer is a distinguished scholar, author, and researcher who has written extensively on Islamic history and Imam Reza (AS). His notable work "The Secret History of Imamate" explores the hidden political and spiritual roles of the Prophet's family in shaping modern Shi'ism.

Sheikh Khaled Al-Mulla from Iraq, head of the Sunni Iraqi Scholars' Union in Iraq, is a leading proponent of Islamic unity and a staunch supporter of Iran's resistance movements. His efforts emphasize unity among Muslim sects and the importance of peaceful coexistence, aligning with the inclusive spirit of Imam Reza (AS).

From Pakistan, Riaz Hussain Pirzada has served as a politician

and diplomat, notably heading the Joint Commission between Iran and Pakistan following the recent presidential visit to Islamabad. His work in cultural diplomacy has fostered closer ties and mutual understanding between the two nations.

These figures symbolize a diverse array of ideological, artistic, and religious currents actively promoting Imam Reza's message across different continents, fostering dialogue, tolerance, and spiritual unity.

In a speech delivered during the closing ceremony, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Seyyed Abbas Salehi, emphasized the importance of dialogue in today's Iran. He highlighted that Imam Reza (AS) exemplified the power of reasoning and tolerance, especially during his time of political and social upheaval.

Salehi stated, "Imam Reza (AS) navigated a complex social and political landscape, transforming dialogue into a powerful tool for understanding and coexistence. His debates and discussions, recorded in numerous historical sources, demonstrate that the path of dialogue rooted in reason and compassion remains vital today."

He further noted that more than 20,000 questions and answers between Imam Reza (AS) and his interlocutors are documented in historical texts, illustrating his exceptional ability to communicate across ideological boundaries.

The minister asserted that "our society today needs to embrace Imam Reza's legacy of dialogue, patience, and mutual respect. Building a society based on these principles will lead to greater uni-

ty and stability." He called for a renewed emphasis on ethical communication, active listening, and tolerance in public discourse.

Reflecting on the role of arts and media, festival organizers highlighted the importance of cultural production in perpetuating Imam Reza's message.

"Filmmaking and artistic expression are among the most powerful tools to introduce the virtues of Imam Reza (AS) to the world," the director of Imam Reza (AS) International Art and Cultural Foundation Morteza Saeidizadeh stated during the ceremony.

He emphasized that this year's festival aims to elevate the level of cultural productions related to religious themes, competing alongside Iran's prominent film festivals like Fajr.

The festival is committed to supporting high-quality projects that integrate religious narratives with contemporary cinematic techniques, seeking to produce works that resonate with both religious audiences and general viewers, he mentioned.

The Imam Reza (AS) International 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.

"Exercises for Rebel Artists" published in Persian

TEHRAN-The Persian translation of the book "Exercises for Rebel Artists: Radical Performance Pedagogy" written by Guillermo Gomez Pena and Roberto Sifuentes has been released in the bookstores across Iran.

Hossein Maleki has translated the book and Baan Publishers has brought it out in 352 pages, Mehr reported.

In the book, authors use their extensive teaching and performance experience with La Pocha Nostra to help students and practitioners to create border art.

Designed to take readers right into the heart of radical performance, the authors use a series of crucial practical exercises, honed in work-

shops worldwide, to help create challenging theatre which transcends the boundaries of nation, gender, and racial identity.

The book features detailed exercises for using Pocha Nostra methods in workshops; inspirational approaches for anyone creating, producing or teaching radical performance; a step-by-step guide for large-scale group performance; and new, unpublished photos of the Pocha Nostra method in practice.

"Exercises for Rebel Artists" advocates teaching as an important form of activism and as an extension of the performance aesthetic. It is an essential text for anyone who wants to learn how use performance to both challenge and

change.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña is a post-Mexican performance artist, writer, activist and pedagogue. He is the author of ten books and founder of the San Francisco-based art collective La Pocha Nostra.

Roberto Sifuentes is an interdisciplinary artist and a founding member of La Pocha Nostra. He has toured internationally with Gómez-Peña since 1991. As a performance pedagogue, Sifuentes has been Artistic Director of The Trinity College/La MaMa Performing Arts ProgramNYC and is currently Assistant Professor of Performance at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party" on stage in Rasht

TEHRAN-Helal Ahmar Theater in Rasht, Gilan Province, is hosting the play "The Birthday Party" written by Harold Pinter on its stage.

Directed by Masoud Lotfi, the play has Maral Eghbal, Pedram Parichehreh, Sogand Ramezani, Hossein Majzoub, Pouya Yeilaghi, and Mohammad Mehdi Yousefzadeh in the cast.

"The Birthday Party" is the first full-length play by Harold Pinter, first published in London in 1959. It

is one of his best-known and most frequently performed plays.

It is about Stanley Webber, an erstwhile piano player who lives in a rundown boarding house run by Meg and Petey Boles, in an English seaside town, "probably on the south coast, not too far from London". Two sinister strangers, Goldberg and McCann, arrive looking for him, supposedly on his birthday, and turn his apparently innocuous birthday party organized by Meg

into a nightmare.

The play has been classified as a comedy of menace, characterized by Pinteresque elements such as ambiguous identity, confusions of time and place, and dark political symbolism.

Harold Pinter (1930-2008) was a British playwright, screenwriter, director and actor. A Nobel Prize winner, Pinter was one of the most influential modern British dramatists with a writing career that

spanned more than 50 years.

His best-known plays include "The Birthday Party," "The Homecoming" (1964), and "Betrayal" (1978), each of which he adapted for the screen. He also directed or acted in radio, stage, television and film productions of his own and others' works.

Performed every night at 8 p.m., "The Birthday Party" will remain on stage at the Helal Ahmar Theater through May 16.