

Ayatollah Khamenei expounds on US president's West Asia trip

# 'You Might Not Be There Without US'; This Is Trump's Model for Arab States

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▶ Page 3

## Exclusive: Any nuclear consortium must involve enrichment to happen in Iran

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Tehran and Washington have been engaging in indirect negotiations to talk a deal that would limit Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for the termination of sanctions. Reports in Western media last week claimed that Iranian officials proposed a consortium with the UAE and Saudi Arabia, purportedly to persuade the United States to "permit" Iran's continued uranium enrichment.

A source speaking to the Tehran Times stated that Iranians did not pitch the consortium proposal, but rather that it was suggested to them. "Iran has no issues with sharing its knowledge or products with regional countries," the source said. "We responded positively to the suggestion, but clarified that even if such an alliance were formed, we would not relinquish domestic enrichment in favor of receiving enriched uranium from another country."

The recommendation remains undeveloped and has not been discussed in detail. No specific countries have been approached to join a potential consortium with Iran. ▶ Page 2

## Iran honors 2nd anniversary of 86th Naval Fleet's global mission; Pezeshkian hails 'strategic triumph'

TEHRAN – Iran commemorated the second anniversary of the return of the 86th Naval Fleet of the Iranian Navy (part of Artesh) from a historic circumnavigation mission during a ceremony attended by President Masoud Pezeshkian, senior military leaders, and government officials.

The Saturday event highlighted Tehran's maritime achievements and its commitment to self-reliance in defense.

President Pezeshkian hailed the fleet's 232-day, 65,000-kilometer voyage as a "monumental feat of endurance and national pride."

Addressing dignitaries, including Army Commander Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi and Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani, he praised the fleet's role in advancing Iran's strategic ambitions.

"The spirit of innovation and self-belief ingrained in our Navy's personnel is a jewel of our nation. We take immense pride in your accomplishments," Pezeshkian declared. ▶ Page 2

## Trump's Persian Gulf tour prioritizes business over diplomatic ethics

*Trump's Persian Gulf trip serves as a warning about the dangers of mixing personal goals with national interests on the world stage*

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – In May 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump embarked on a high-profile Persian Gulf tour, visiting Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While the White House promoted the trip as a diplomatic success marked by multi-billion-dollar defense and economic agreements, critics raised alarms over ethical violations. Accusations surfaced that Trump leveraged his presidential role to advance personal and family business interests, triggering serious legal and political backlash.

### Strategic incentives and regional goals

Trump's visit was driven by a desire to secure large-scale investments and arms deals while strengthening U.S. economic ties with the Persian Gulf Arab states. He argued that the estimated \$4 trillion in potential agreements reflected his administration's transactional approach to diplomacy. Another key objective was to recalibrate U.S. policy in the region by easing

sanctions on Syria's transitional government and fostering cooperation in defense and technology, particularly in sectors such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence (AI).

Beyond economics, Trump aimed to encourage Persian Gulf states to play a more active role in stabilizing the region. His agenda addressed ongoing conflicts, most notably the Gaza war and alleged concerns over Iran's nuclear program. The visit un-

derlined Trump's belief in using economic incentives to advance foreign policy objectives.

### Major agreements and diplomatic engagements

The tour yielded several landmark deals:

In Saudi Arabia, Trump announced a \$142 billion arms agreement and broader partnerships in energy and technology. Riyadh's investments in the U.S., already estimated at \$600 billion, are expected to grow,

spurred by American firms like Nvidia and AMD investing heavily in Saudi AI projects.

In Qatar, over \$240 billion in deals were secured, including a landmark \$96 billion contract with Boeing. The visit marked a milestone as the first official trip to Qatar by a U.S. president, opening a new chapter in bilateral ties.

In the UAE, a \$1.4 trillion AI-focused data center project and \$1.6 billion in arms sales signaled deepening cooperation in both defense and emerging tech sectors.

▶ Page 5

## Will Washington relinquish control over Lebanon to Riyadh?

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON—Analysts are monitoring the repercussions of U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to the Persian Gulf on the situation in Lebanon. Washington appears to be moving toward clearing the way for Saudi Arabia to impose its guardianship over Lebanon, especially after Trump announced he would lift sanctions on Syria "at Riyadh's request."

Trump claimed that "Hezbollah has brought misery to Lebanon and plundered the Lebanese state. Hezbollah's militia has placed Beirut in tragedy. We stand ready to help Lebanon build a future of economic development and peace with its neighbors."

Trump's remarks on Lebanon herald a new phase of pressure on Lebanon to push it toward normalization with the Israeli occupation regime. ▶ Page 5



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## Iran, Tajikistan eye closer ties as foreign ministers convene in Tehran

TEHRAN – Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin, who is visiting Iran to attend the 14th Tehran Dialogue Forum, held talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Saturday morning.

In their meeting, the two sides exchanged views on ways to further enhance economic and trade cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan, expand cultural and security collaboration, and facilitate people-to-people exchanges between the two nations.

They highlighted the deep cultural, linguistic, and civilizational ties between the two countries and called for the strengthening of comprehensive relations within the framework of their historical and brotherly bonds. ▶ Page 3

## Embassy of Mexico in Iran promoting literary, cultural understanding

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN – A book launch ceremony was held at the stand of the Embassy of Mexico in Iran at the 36th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) on Thursday, where the book "Teherán lleva tilde" was unveiled in the presence of the Ambassador of Mexico in Iran, Guillermo Puente Ordorica, and the authors of the book.

The book title translates to "Tehran Has Tilde," with tilde meaning an accent mark placed above some letters in Spanish. "It is a collection of chronicles written by eight Latin American and Iranian authors, showcasing their perspectives and experiences in Tehran," the ambassador said.

"The book stems from a series of storytelling workshops held at the Embassy last year. It's a unique collaboration between the Mexican Embassy and the Iranian publisher Negah," he added. ▶ Page 8



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Regional consensus to reduce tensions

In a commentary, the Iran newspaper examined the Arab countries' support for the nuclear talks and said: While U.S. President Donald Trump was starting his trip to the Persian Gulf, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan quietly but meaningfully supported the sensitive (nuclear) talks between Tehran and Washington. He expressed hope that the talks would end in a positive result, a short sentence at a historical juncture that carried a significant meaning. The reason for such a stance mostly resulted from Araghchi's approach, who had said he was very interested in a regional understanding of the talks. The Saudi rulers are trying to get out of the heavy and costly alliances of the past and, with a fresh look at the new regional equations, redefine friends and enemies. In this new model, Iran is no longer a threat; rather, it can be a rival with whom differences can be managed. According to regional experts, unlike previous periods, we are witnessing an unprecedented level of political support for Iran from the regional Arab countries. Arab countries have learned that in the Middle East, there is no way to peace except through understanding.

**Ettelaat: Iran and US are closer than ever to an agreement**

Ettelaat sought the views of Hassan Hanizadeh, a political analyst, about Donald Trump's contradictory statements regarding Iran. Hanizadeh said: Donald Trump repeatedly makes contradictory statements and is known as a controversial figure for this reason. Accordingly, these days, when Iran and the United States are negotiating, one day he talks about interacting with the Iranians and the next day he says Iran poses threats and plays a destructive role. Therefore, Iranian diplomats who are negotiating with the American side must be vigilant not to be deceived by them. The Iran-U.S. negotiations to date are sending positive signals that increase hopes for the realization of an agreement. In any case, there are many minor and major issues between Iran and the United States. If Tehran and Washington insist on their views, even a minimal agreement is unlikely. However, observations show that Iran and the United States are closer to an agreement than ever before.

## Pakistan thanks Iran for de-escalation efforts during standoff with India



TEHRAN – Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed gratitude to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian during a Saturday phone call, commending Tehran's "sincere and brotherly diplomacy" during Pakistan's military standoff with India earlier this month.

Sharif specifically praised Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi for his "timely diplomatic engagement" during a recent Islamabad visit. Araghchi headed to New Delhi after his short stay in Pakistan and delivered messages while there. The two countries announced a ceasefire after that on May 10, following 4 days of reciprocal airstrikes.

"This initiative marks a pivotal step toward regional stability," the PM stated, adding that decades of hostilities, includ-

**Hamshahri: Psychological warfare instead of negotiation**

In a note, Hamshahri pointed to American rhetoric instead of the right path of negotiation and wrote: While Iran has a strong will to reach an agreement, the American side has not yet announced any position on the effective lifting of sanctions, except rhetoric and psychological games. Iran and the United States have held their fourth round of indirect negotiations, and the media outlets are reporting on the wishes and demands of each party. Although Iran announced that it was ready to strike an agreement and comply with some of the U.S. demands if sanctions were effectively lifted, Washington has so far shown no willingness to lift sanctions. It has merely resorted to psychological warfare and generalizations. Long before the start of indirect talks, Trump's most important technique for pressuring Tehran to achieve the White House's goal at the negotiating table was to present the Islamic Republic's governing system, especially its defense/nuclear doctrine, as anti-progress that contradicts the wishes of Iranian society for welfare and economic development. Signs of this intention could also be seen during Trump's speech at Riyadh's investment forum.

**Farhikhtegan: Trump spoke against Iran and got his brokerage**

In an analysis, Farhikhtegan discussed why Trump spoke about Iran during his trip to Saudi Arabia. The paper said: Apart from financial benefits and media maneuver during his trips to Saudi Arabia and two other Persian Gulf countries, Trump attempted to magnify countries like Saudi Arabia in comparison to Iran and devoted almost a significant part of his speech to Iran. He tried to portray Iran as a weak country and made serious threats against Iran. Actually, the tool of threat is raised against a country when a danger from that country threatens the position of that person or country. However, Trump's emphasis on not allowing Saudi Arabia to be influenced by Iran showed that, contrary to his claims, Iran is still a reliable power in the region and has seriously challenged America's position in the region. The Zionist regime, its regional proxy, is also struggling with many crises. Of course, he had to make these claims to get his brokerage from Saudi Arabia.

ing three wars, had failed to address core disputes like Kashmir.

"Sustainable solutions demand dialogue, not bullets," he emphasized.

President Pezeshkian welcomed the ceasefire, reiterating Iran's stance: "War only deepens nations' wounds. Dialogue is the sole path to peace."

He reaffirmed Tehran's readiness to facilitate Pakistan-India talks and strengthen regional counterterrorism collaboration, calling terrorism a "shared challenge requiring fraternal unity."

Sharif proposed an upcoming visit to Tehran to discuss bilateral ties and regional security, a move welcomed by Pezeshkian, who expressed hope the trip would "elevate cooperation to new heights."

## Iran honors 2nd anniversary of 86th Naval Fleet's global mission; Pezeshkian hails 'strategic triumph'

From page 1 ▶ He underscored Iran's domestically developed naval technology, including submarines and military hardware, stating, "Building vessels, producing advanced weaponry, and exporting defense solutions—all without foreign dependency—are milestones that dignify every Iranian."

The president rebuked critics who initially dismissed the mission as "impossible," asserting, "While some sought to spread despair, our 86th Naval Fleet proved that reliance on domestic expertise guarantees success."

He further described Iran's presence in international waters as a "strategic triumph," adding, "We now stand not as consumers but as providers of security—a pivotal shift for our nation's future."

**86th Naval Fleet: Charting new horizons**

The 86th Naval Fleet, featuring the indigenously built Dena destroyer and Makran forward base ship, embarked from Bandar Abbas in September 2022.

Dena, Iran's fourth Jamaran-class destroyer, boasts a helicopter landing zone, advanced radar systems, and domestically developed anti-ship and air-defense capabilities. Makran, a converted crude oil tanker, serves as a floating base for helicopters, UAVs, and special



President Pezeshkian stands next to Navy Commander Rear Admiral Shahram Irani

forces, enabling long-range missions and maritime security operations.

Over eight months, the fleet traversed 65,000 km across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic Oceans, navigating strategic chokepoints like the Malacca Strait and Strait of Magellan—a record for Iranian naval endurance.

Port calls in India, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa, Tanzania, and Oman highlighted Iran's growing maritime diplomacy and partnerships, culminating in its triumphant return in May 2023.

Military analysts laud the mission as a turning point, solidifying Iran's emergence as a "global maritime power" with credible blue-water deterrence.

The fleet's success underscores Tehran's ability to project power independently, leveraging homegrown technology like Dena's combat systems and Makran's versatile platform for sustained operations.

Since 2009, Iran's Navy has evolved from anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden to maintaining a continuous presence in distant waters, supported by innovations like the Makran's hybrid design—a symbol of Iran's adaptive naval strategy.

Meanwhile, Dena's integration of domestically produced armaments reflects strides in reducing reliance on foreign military hardware.

In exclusive remarks to Tehran Times, Iranian Navy

Spokesman Captain Mohammad Mousavi emphasized the Navy's uninterrupted operational rhythm.

"Since the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, designated the Navy as a strategic force in 2009, our fleets have patrolled international waters daily," he stated.

**Pezeshkian's live satellite call with Dena and Fateh crews**

During the ceremony, President Pezeshkian held a live call with crews of the destroyer Dena and Fateh-class submarine, deployed in the northern Indian Ocean.

Commanders reported their readiness to "defend Iran's interests and secure global shipping lanes," calling their duties "a sacred trust."

"Your perseverance in harsh conditions embodies the spirit of our nation. Your service is Iran's pride," Pezeshkian told the crews, adding, "I pray for your continued success in safeguarding our maritime sovereignty."

Captain Mousavi, in additional comments to Tehran Times, noted that the units contacted by Pezeshkian are simultaneously monitoring regional waters.

"The naval group the President communicated with maintains robust patrols in the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea—the lifelines of Iran's maritime security," he affirmed.

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A source speaking to the Tehran Times stated that Iranians did not pitch the consortium proposal, but rather that it was suggested to them. "Iran has no issues with sharing its knowledge or products with regional countries," the source said. "We responded positively to the suggestion, but clarified that even if such an alliance were formed, we would not relinquish domestic enrichment in favor of receiving enriched uranium from another country."

The recommendation remains undeveloped and has not been discussed in detail. No specific countries have been approached to join a potential consortium with Iran.

Reports claiming that the U.S.



has asked Iran to cease uranium enrichment for a couple of years are also false, a second source said. "From the outset, the negotiating team tasked with discussing a potential new agreement with the United States has made it clear that a cessation

of uranium enrichment is not an option, even temporarily." Iran also maintained this position throughout the diplomatic process that led to the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, the source added.

## 'Enrichment is non-negotiable', Araghchi draws the line as nuclear talks with US continue

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reaffirmed Tehran's unwavering stance on its right to enrich uranium, saying the Islamic Republic will not compromise on its legal entitlements under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), even as it remains open to constructive dialogue.

Speaking during a joint session with representatives of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs—hosted Friday night by Iran's Atomic Energy Organization—Araghchi said Iran is prepared to build confidence around the peaceful nature of its nuclear program but will not accept any limits that go beyond the NPT framework.

"As a founding advocate for a nuclear-weapons-free zone in West Asia and a long-time NPT member, Iran has shown good faith by engaging in indirect talks with the United States," he said. "But the Iranian nation cannot forfeit its legitimate right to peaceful nuclear technology, including enrichment, which is enshrined in the NPT."

Araghchi emphasized the cost Iran

has borne in defense of that right, recalling the decades of sanctions and the assassination of several of the country's nuclear scientists.

"For over thirty years, Iranians have endured economic pressure and made deep sacrifices to secure national independence and nuclear self-sufficiency," he noted. "The blood of our brightest youth was shed in this path—sacrifices that cannot be disregarded."

He also paid tribute to the scientists who lost their lives, underscoring Iran's determination to continue its peaceful nuclear pursuits while remaining engaged with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other stakeholders to foster transparency and trust.

In his remarks, Araghchi criticized the shifting and contradictory positions of the United States, attributing the inconsistent messaging to internal divisions influenced by Israeli pressure.

"It's now evident that anti-diplomacy elements in Washington, acting in coordination with



*Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks at a meeting hosted by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in the capital Tehran on May 16, 2025.*

Netanyahu's dangerous agenda, are actively undermining progress," he said. "Internal politics are one thing, but allowing headline factions to hijack negotiations through constant framework changes is both unproductive and unacceptable."

The Pugwash Conferences, recipients of the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, are an international initiative that brings together scientists and policymakers to reduce the risks of armed conflict and develop

evidence-based security solutions, especially concerning nuclear and WMD threats.

Iran and the U.S. have held four rounds of indirect, Oman-mediated negotiations over Iran's nuclear program. While both sides have described the talks as positive, Iran has rejected Western demands that are deemed as excessive—particularly calls for a complete halt to uranium enrichment—in exchange for sanctions relief.



# Ayatollah Khamenei expounds on US president’s West Asia trip

## ‘You might not be there without US’; This is Trump’s model for Arab states

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, met with a number of teachers and educators from across the country on May 17, 2025, in the Imam Khomeini (ra) Hussainiyah.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized the need to depict a worthy, attractive, and likable public image of teachers, one that is lively and endearing. He stated that this is a necessity that calls for dedicated artistic and media work on the part of responsible organizations.

During this annual gathering, Ayatollah Khamenei referred to the recent remarks made by the U.S. President during his visit to the region, saying, “Some of the remarks made during the U.S. President’s trip to the region aren’t even worth a response at all. The level of those remarks is so low that they are a source of shame for both the speaker and the American nation.”

Ayatollah Khamenei described the U.S. President’s claim that he wants to use power for peace as a lie, and added: “When have they ever used their power to bring peace? He, other U.S. officials, and U.S. administrations have used their power for the massacre in Gaza, for igniting wars wherever they could, and for supporting their own mercenaries.” He stressed that power can be used for peace and security, stating, “This is precisely why the Islamic Republic — despite the enemies’ wishes — will continue to increase its power and the power of the country every single day. But that’s not what they did.



They used their power to provide the Zionist regime with ten-ton bombs to be dropped on Gaza’s children, hospitals, people’s homes, in Lebanon, and wherever else they could.”

Referring to previous remarks made by the U.S. President claiming that countries in the region could not survive even ten days without U.S. support, Ayatollah Khamenei stated: “Now, in his dealings, conduct, and proposals, he continues to present and impose the same model on these countries in a way as if they cannot survive without America. This model has definitely failed. Due to the determination and efforts of the nations in the region, the U.S. must and will leave this region.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described the Zionist regime as the source of corruption, war, and division in the region, emphasizing that the Zionist regime is a dangerous, deadly, cancerous tumor in the region that must and will be eliminated.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution

tion went on to describe the principles and the system of values of the Islamic Republic — values that guide the nation’s conduct in this turbulent region — as “clear and well-defined.” He said, “Today, Iran is not comparable to the past. Today, by God’s grace and favor, much to the enemy’s dismay, and despite the efforts of others to undermine it, Iran has made progress. And it will continue to make progress many times more than this, God willing. Everyone will witness this. Our youth will see this happen in the best possible way.”

In another part of his remarks, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution emphasized that the structure of the education system must be designed to nurture students academically, culturally, and spiritually. He also underscored the importance of continuing the development of a strategic roadmap for the education sector. He stressed that, “Those who undertake the task of designing a new structure for the education system must be skilled, experienced,

and deeply committed to religion and the independence of the country. Only then can a system be established through which our youth are raised to be knowledgeable, faithful, patriotic, hardworking, and hopeful about the future.”

Referring to the importance of school textbooks and reiterating earlier recommendations, Ayatollah Khamenei noted that while including content such as the names of Muslim scientists or excerpts from the documents of the U.S. Spy Den [former U.S. Embassy] is necessary, it is not sufficient, and said: “Textbooks must be rich in content and appealing in style. Even complex scientific topics should be presented in a way that is clear, sweet, and engaging for the student.”

Highlighting the crucial issue of educational justice, the Leader reminded that educational justice has always been a priority: “Of course, this does not mean neglecting top talents. Giving due attention to initiatives like the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents (SAMPAD) and supporting gifted youth in making greater leaps is not contrary to justice. It is, in fact, the very essence of educational justice.”

Ayatollah Khamenei also referred to the previous neglect and removal of the Department of Moral and Spiritual Development (Parvareshi), expressing satisfaction with the renewed attention given to this area. He stressed the need for its activities to be pursued in the most effective and meaningful way.

## Iran, Tajikistan eye closer ties as foreign ministers convene in Tehran



FM Araghchi meets with Tajik counterpart Sirojiddin Muhriddin, and Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council Armen Grigoryan in separate meetings at Tehran on May 17, 2025.

From Page 1 ► The two foreign ministers also discussed recent regional and global developments, expressing concern over the situation in West Asia and underlining the need for continued regional co-operation—especially concerning Afghanistan.

### Iran urges swift implementation of Armenia-Azerbaijan peace treaty

During a meeting with Armen Grigoryan, Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council, in Tehran on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Araghchi emphasized that swift implementation of the peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan is

essential for lasting stability and security in the region.

“Iran calls for the acceleration of the conclusion of a peace agreement between the two countries to stabilize lasting peace and assist in the process of comprehensive development and progress in the region,” Araghchi stated.

He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran, which maintains good relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, is ready to make every effort to expedite the signing and enforcement of the agreement.

In March, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on the text of a peace deal

aimed at ending nearly four decades of conflict between the two South Caucasus neighbors. Under the agreement, Yerevan has accepted to relinquish its claims to Karabakh.

The long-contested region of Karabakh, which was the flashpoint of two major wars—in the 1990s and in 2020—has always been internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, which regained control of the area in a rapid one-day military operation.

Araghchi noted the strong relations between Iran and Armenia and reaffirmed Tehran’s willingness to further strengthen friendly ties based on mutual respect. He also re-

iterated Iran’s consistent position on the Iranian people’s right to peaceful nuclear energy and briefed the Armenian official on the latest developments in the indirect negotiations with the United States.

Grigoryan, for his part, praised the positive and growing ties between Armenia and Iran and expressed his country’s determination to expand comprehensive relations with Tehran, particularly in the economic and trade domains. He also provided an update on the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process and commended Iran’s support for Armenia’s national security, territorial integrity, and the peace initiative.

## Iranian envoy engages Pope Leo XIV, stresses interfaith diplomacy for peace

TEHRAN – Iran’s Ambassador to the Holy See, Hojjatolislam Mohammad-Hossein Mokhtari, met with Pope Leo XIV on Saturday during a gathering of diplomats accredited to the Vatican.

The meeting underscored hopes for enhanced cultural, religious, and diplomatic collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Holy See under the new papacy.

Ambassador Mokhtari, extending congratulations on the Pope’s election as the 267th leader of the Catholic Church, expressed optimism that “fresh avenues for expanding interactions between Iran and the Vatican will emerge during this new chapter of leadership.”

He emphasized the potential of interfaith cooperation to “play an effective role in strengthening peace, justice, and coexistence,” aligning with Iran’s longstanding advocacy for

dialogue among civilizations.

Pope Leo XIV, addressing diplomats in his first major audience since his election, described his mission within the context of the ongoing Jubilee Year of Hope, calling it “a time for conversion, renewal, and an opportunity to leave conflicts behind.”

The pontiff stressed that peace must begin in regions “suffering most grievously,” specifically naming “Ukraine and the Holy Land [Palestine],” while reiterating his commitment to multilateral diplomacy and disarmament.

The meeting followed Pope Leo XIV’s earlier appeals for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. During his inaugural Regina Coeli address, he urged humanitarian aid access and emphatically declared, ‘Never again to war!’

Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, assumed the papacy on May

8, following the passing of Pope Francis.

His inauguration mass, scheduled for May 28, will mark the formal commencement of his leadership and is expected to draw international dignitaries, including Reza Salehi-Amiri, Iran’s Minister of Cultural Heritage, who will represent the country at the ceremony.

The pontiff, who holds dual U.S. and Peruvian citizenship, has prioritized themes of interreligious dialogue and social justice, issues resonant with Iran’s diplomatic agenda.

In his address to diplomats, the Pope emphasized three pillars of his mission: peace, justice, and truth.

He described peace as “an active and demanding gift,” requiring humility and dialogue, while urging governments to address global inequalities and invest in families as the foundation of society.

## My long-term goal is 2026 Asian Games: Izadyar

TEHRAN — Iranian para swimmer Shahin Izadyar aims to prepare vigorously for the 2026 Asian Para Games in Nagoya.

Izadyar is among the most experienced Paralympic athletes in Iran, having participated in four Asian Para Games and three Paralympics to date.

In an exclusive interview with Tehran Times, Izadyar discussed his recent participation in the Japan swimming competition.

“The Japan event was part of the qualification process for the World Championships, which will be held in Singapore in September. Unfortunately, due to an injury I sustained at the Paris Paralympics, I narrowly missed securing the qualification by just 0.50 seconds,” Izadyar explained.

“I have another chance to qualify for the World Championships in July at the national competition organized under the IPC at Azadi Swimming Pool in Tehran. After that, the 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games, which will take place in Riyadh in November,” he added.

“My long-term goal is the 2026 Asian Para Games in Japan, scheduled for October next year. This will be my fifth participation in these Games, and I hope to add to my medals and surpass my current tally of 24. Para swimming has become a priority for Iran’s National Paralympic Committee, both in terms of coaching staff and training camps. I believe many good days lie ahead for the sport,” he concluded.

## Iranian photographer Darajati dies in car crash

TEHRAN – Iranian photographer and cameraman Hamidreza Darajati passed away on Friday.

During the first round of Iran’s speed racing event at the Azadi Motor Racing Track, a race car went off the track and collided with a group of media personnel.

Darajati sustained serious injuries and was taken to Tehran’s Treata Hospital, but he sadly succumbed at the age of 45.

The sports photographer died due to the severity of his injuries.

The Iranian sports society offers its deepest condolences to Darajati’s family, loved ones, and friends during this difficult time.

## Thievy Bifouma joins Persepolis: official

TEHRAN – French forward Thievy Bifouma signed for Iranian giants Persepolis.

The 33-year-old winger has penned a two-year deal with the Iranian Persian Gulf Pro League side.

Bifouma joined Persepolis from Esteghlal Khuzestan.

The Reds have also reached an agreement with Shams Azar striker Mojtaba Fakhrian and Aluminium winger Amin Kazemian.

Persepolis, most decorated Iranian football team in Persian Gulf League, finished in third place last season.

The team are headed by Turkish coach ?smail Kartal.

## Iran beat China to book 2025 Futsal World Cup berth

TEHRAN – Iran overcame China in the third-place playoff of the AFC Women’s Futsal Asian Cup China 2025 on Saturday to seal their place at the FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup Philippines 2025.

The two-time champions ended their campaign on a high in front of a raucous partisan crowd at the Hohhot Sports Centre, as the 3-1 victory ensured that they will join Thailand and Japan at the inaugural World Cup come November.

Maral Torkaman scored two goals as well as a

goal from Nastaran Moghimi.

Cao Jiayi was on target for China.

Japan and Thailand will lock horn in the final match.

## Foolad Sirjan fall short to Osaka Bluteon in AVC Volleyball Champions League

TEHRAN – Foolad Sirjan lost to Osaka Bluteon 3-1 (25–19, 19–25, 25–18, 25–19) in the 2025 AVC Men’s Volleyball Champions League on Saturday.

Foolad missed the chance to qualify for the 2025 FIVB Men’s Volleyball Club World Championship.

The Iranian team will have to meet another Japanese side Suntory Sunbirds Osaka in the competition’s third-place play-off on Sunday.

Al Rayyn of Qatar will play Osaka Bluteon in the final match.

## Iran lose to Pakistan in 2025 West Asia Baseball Cup

TEHRAN – Iran lost to Pakistan 14-0 and failed to advance to the 2025 West Asia Baseball Cup.

The defending champion put on a complete performance, sealing their second straight win and finishing top of their group.

Pakistan had already beaten Bangladesh 10-6 in their opener to send an early message and now has qualified for the semi-finals.

Iran had defeated Bangladesh 7-6 in its opening match in Group B.

Pakistan will now face the runner-up from Group A in the semifinal.

The competition is being held in Karaj’s Engelab Stadium in Iran.

## Ghasem Haddadifar named Zob Ahan coach

TEHRAN – Ghasem Haddadifar was named as new head coach of Zob Ahan football team on Saturday.

Haddadifar, 41, replaced Mohammad Rabiei in the Isfahan-based club.

He played about two decades for Zob Ahan and helped the Greens win four Hazfi Cup titles.

Haddadifar also became runner-up in the 2010 AFC Champions League with Zob Ahan.

Zob Ahan finished in sixth place in the 2024-25 Iran Professional League.

## Iran’s Hazfi Cup final to be held in Arak

TEHRAN – The final match of the 2024-25 Iran Hazfi Cup will be held in Arak’s Imam Khomeini Stadium on May 29.

On May 23, Gol Gohar will host Malavan in Sirjan, followed by Esteghlal facing Sanat Naft in Tehran on May 24.

Esteghlal are the most successful team in Hazfi Cup history, having won the title seven times.

## Persepolis complete signing of two more players

TEHRAN – Mojtaba Fakhrian and Amin Kazemi-an signed for Persepolis football club on Saturday.

French winger Thievy Bifouma had joined the Iranian giants on Friday.

Fakhrian played for Shams Azar last season and Amin Kazemian was a member of Aluminium last season.

Persepolis came third in the 2024/25 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL).



## Iran's annual oil exports hit \$67b, highest in a decade: CBI



TEHRAN – Iran exported \$67 billion worth of oil in the Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20, 2025), marking its highest oil revenue in the past decade, according to estimates by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

Data released by the CBI shows Iran's oil exports have fluctuated significantly in recent years. In 1399 (March 2020–March 2021), exports had dropped to \$23 billion amid intensified U.S. sanctions. Since then, Iran's oil revenues have steadily climbed:

- \* **1400 (March 2021–March 2022): \$38 billion**
- \* **1401 (March 2022–March 2023): \$55 billion**
- \* **1402 (March 2023–March 2024): \$56 billion**
- \* **1403 (March 2024–March 2025): \$67 billion**

## Monthly steel ingot output rises 4.6% on year

TEHRAN – Production of steel ingot in Iran increased by 4.6 percent during the first month of the current Iranian calendar year, Farvardin (March 21-April 21), as compared to the first month in the previous year.

As reported, 3.312 million tons of steel ingots was produced in the first month of this year, while the figure was 3.166 million tons in the same month of the past year.

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

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

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

China, the world's largest steel producer, maintained its lead with 259.3 million tons in Q1, reflecting a modest 0.6 percent year-on-year rise. In March alone, China produced 92.8 million tons—up 4.6 percent from a year earlier—making it a key driver of the global surge.

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

The latest figure represents a sharp rebound and underscores Iran's increased crude shipments despite ongoing international restrictions.

Iran's oil production has been on an upward trend in recent months despite U.S. sanctions and geopolitical pressures. The country managed to increase its output steadily throughout 2024, adding more than 370,000 bpd compared to the previous year.

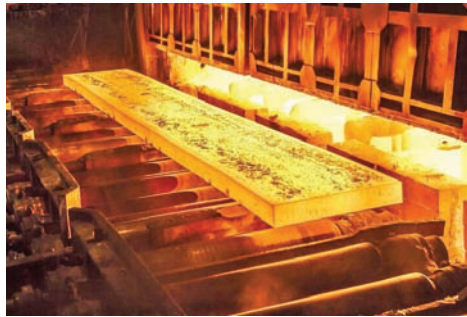
The rise in production has been supported by the government's efforts to boost investment in upstream projects and secure alternative trade routes for its crude exports.

In addition to increasing output, Iran has been working to expand its oil sales, particularly to Asian markets, where demand remains strong.

China continues to be a key buyer of Iranian crude, while other regional customers have also shown interest in maintaining supplies despite Western pressure.

The resilience of Iran's oil industry has been evident even in the face of tightening restrictions.

The country has utilized a mix of official and unofficial channels to sustain its exports, ensuring that oil revenue remains a crucial source of foreign exchange for the economy.



world's 10th largest steelmaker.

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

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

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

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

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

have allowed countries like Turkey to capture markets that once belonged to Iran," Shokouhi said.

He emphasized that improved diplomatic relations and the lifting of sanctions could pave the way for enhanced trade and broader international engagement, especially in the stone sector.

Shokouhi also highlighted the importance of trade fairs in showcasing the latest innovations in the industry.

"Exhibitions demonstrate how new technologies and innovations are driving the growth and productivity of Iran's stone sector," he added.

# Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$401m to Iraq in a month

TEHRAN– Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$401 million to Iraq in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 21), according to data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

The IRICA data showed that Iraq was Iran's second top non-oil export destination in the mentioned month.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$11.9 billion to Iraq in the past Iranian calendar year 1403, which ended on March 20. Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, said that Iraq was Iran's second top non-oil export destination in the previous year.

Considering Iran's vast export capacity and Iraq's large mar-



ket for Iranian goods, both sides want to expand the volume of bilateral economic exchanges.

Iran and Iraq have set a target of \$20 billion in annual trade, and businessmen and authorities of both countries are determined to meet that target. In late May 2024, the head of the Department of Spatial Planning and Regional Planning of the Iranian

Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said that Iran exports some 2,200 products, valued at \$12 billion, to neighboring Iraq annually.

Speaking in a meeting entitled "Reviewing opportunities and challenges of attracting Iraqi investors and strengthening trade relations between the two countries in line with demar-

## Tehran hosting Iran-Turkmenistan 18th Joint Economic Committee meeting

TEHRAN – The 18th meeting of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee is being held during May 17-21, hosted by Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the ministry announced on Saturday.

Amin Tarfo, advisor to the transport minister and head of the ministry's Center for International Affairs, said the high-level event will be co-chaired by Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov.

The first two days of the gathering is dedicated to expert-level sessions aimed at drafting a memorandum of understanding between the committee secretaries of the two countries.

On Monday, May 19, Sadegh and Meredov will review the outcomes of the 17th committee meeting and hold bilateral talks. Following this, technical working groups will discuss cooperation in a wide range of sectors including oil, gas, petrochemicals, transportation, communications, entrepreneurship, agriculture, environmental protection, meteorology, sports, tourism, and media.

The closing ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 20, during which the final memorandum of understanding from the 18th Joint Economic Committee will be signed by both sides.

On May 13, the head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said the two countries are aiming to increase bilateral trade by 30 percent, following the first-ever exhibition of Turkmenistan's export capabilities in Iran — an event driven entirely by private sector investment.

Ramazan Bahrami, who also heads the Industry, Mining and Trade House of Golestan Province, described the three-day event held in Gorgan from May 4 to 6 as a strategic milestone in Iran-Turkmenistan commercial relations and a tangible step toward strengthening regional economic diplomacy.

Held at the Gorgan International Exhibition Center, the event featured 53 private companies and 12 government institutions from Turkmenistan, and attracted significant interest from Iranian industrialists and businesspeople.

"This was the first time since Turkmenistan's independence that such an exhibition took place in Iran, and Golestan Province had the honor of hosting it," Bahrami said. "The exhibition was the result of consensus between the private sector and state institutions, and the outcome exceeded expectations."

He said the expo aimed to expand trade exchanges and showcase Turkmenistan's industrial and export capacities to the Iranian market. The idea for reciprocal trade exhibitions was first approved at the 17th Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee meeting, and the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber was tasked with its implementation.

Bahrami emphasized that the participation of both countries' private sectors in expert panels and face-to-face negotiations provided fertile ground for launching new partnerships. Preliminary agreements were reached in areas including petrochemicals, petroleum products, construction materials, food industries, textiles, and logistics, which are expected to boost bilateral trade once finalized.

According to Bahrami, trade between the

two countries reached nearly \$600 million last year. With the momentum created by this exhibition and new commercial interactions, Iran and Turkmenistan are now targeting a minimum 30 percent increase in that figure. "Some of this growth will materialize in the coming months, and the rest will be reflected in next year's export statistics," he said.

Explaining the choice of Golestan as the host province, Bahrami pointed to strategic ethnic, cultural, and geographical ties. "Over one million ethnic Turkmens live in Golestan and North Khorasan, creating a natural platform for expanding economic, cultural, and social relations with Turkmenistan."

He noted that the event was funded entirely by the private sector, with the government offering oversight, support, and facilitation. "This model proves that meaningful outcomes can be achieved when the private sector is empowered."

Bahrami added that the exhibition attracted delegations from other Central Asian countries, turning it into a broader regional platform rather than just a bilateral affair.

Looking ahead, he said plans are underway to hold a reciprocal Iranian trade expo in Turkmenistan's Balkan Province. "We expect this continued exchange to elevate bilateral economic ties to a strategic level."

He also underscored Golestan's role as a gateway to Iran's northeastern trade corridor, thanks to its shared rail links with Turkmenistan, the Incheh-Borun Free Zone, port infrastructure, and cultural affinities with Central Asia. "If these opportunities are matched with coordinated support, we could witness major transformations in exports, imports, and technology transfer in the coming years," Bahrami concluded.

On May 2, the deputy head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) called for the removal of key structural barriers—particularly in banking, transport, logistics, and visa issuance—to unlock the trade potential between Iran and Turkmenistan.

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

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

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

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

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

ating Iran in the regional value chain", Jafar Hosseini said that Iraq, benefiting from \$85 billion foreign currency reserves, 130 tons of gold reserves, and 147 billion barrels of proven reserves of crude oil, is among the richest countries in West Asia.

Currently, Iran exports over 2,200 various types of goods and products to Iraq, he said, adding that more than half of the active Iranian traders are present in the Iraqi market.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) escalate the genocide in Gaza as the regime's infantry is invading the coastal enclave from several fronts, along with relentless bombardments.

Rescue teams are struggling to recover the bodies of Palestinians buried beneath the rubble. Reports state that "civil defense crews are unable to reach destroyed homes due to intense shelling."

This escalation follows the Israeli regime's announcement of a new ground invasion. Reporters on the ground confirm that the IOF invaders are advancing across both previously targeted and new areas.

These include Rafah (southern Gaza), which the IOF has fully seized; the east of Deir al-Balah (central Gaza), where they captured a hill; and neighborhoods east of al-Tuffah and Shejaiya in northern Gaza.

The IOF is also deploying military vehicles and booby-trapped robots north of Beit Lahia and east of Jabalia (Northern Gaza).

On Saturday, an IOF spokesperson announced the launch



of the first phase of "Operation Gideon's Chariots," which involves heavy airstrikes and coordinated troop movements. The operation aims to seize territory and fulfill the regime's stated "objectives of the war," including the elimination of the Palestinian Resistance and the retrieval of captives.

The new wave of genocidal campaign comes as the humanitarian catastrophe in the besieged enclave has reached new levels.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, "153 martyrs (including 7 recovered martyrs) and 459 injuries arrived at Gaza Strip hospitals over the past 24 hours (noon time on Saturday)."

Many victims remain trapped

under the rubble and on roads, unreachable by ambulances or civil defense crews. Eyewitnesses described a "night of terror," marked by indiscriminate IOF strikes.

Following the Health Ministry's daily briefing on casualties resulting from the U.S.-backed genocide, the IOF committed another massacre by bombing a densely populated residential area in the Jabalia Camp. A significant number of people are reported dead or missing.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres expressed alarm over the expansion of the Israeli ground invasion. Speaking at an Arab League summit in Baghdad on Saturday, he stated, "We need a permanent ceasefire, now. I am alarmed by report-

ed plans by Israel to expand ground operations and more."

Despite UN warnings of an imminent famine, the regime continues to block humanitarian aid into Gaza. UN aid chief Tom Fletcher urged the Security Council to act to "prevent genocide" in a territory where aid deliveries have been blocked for 75 days.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk condemned the Israeli attacks, declaring them tantamount to "ethnic cleansing."

Turk stated, "The recent relentless bombardment... and the denial of humanitarian aid confirm an intent to bring about permanent demographic change in Gaza, which violates international law and constitutes ethnic cleansing."

For 20 months, the regime in Tel Aviv has sought to occupy the Strip. Yet despite repeatedly reoccupying large portions of the enclave, none of its declared objectives, including eliminating the Palestinian resistance fighters and recovering Israeli captives, have been achieved.

Critics accuse the Netanyahu government of prolonging the genocide to maintain its grip on power.

Arab leaders promise to work on reconstruction of Gaza



Arab leaders meeting at an annual summit in Baghdad said Saturday that they were trying to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip and promised to contribute to the reconstruction of the territory once the war stops.

In March, an emergency Arab League summit in Cairo endorsed a plan for Gaza's reconstruction without displacing its roughly 2 million residents.

The latest summit was attended by Arab leaders including Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi, who noted that even if Israel succeeds in normalizing relations with all Arab states, "a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will remain elusive unless a PaleArab leaders promise to work on reconstruction of Gaza

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Among the guests were Spanish Prime Min-

ister Pedro Sánchez and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, who called for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza and the flow of aid into the besieged territory. He said that the UN rejects any "forced displacement" of Palestinians.

Saturday's summit comes two months after Israel ended a ceasefire reached with Hamas in January and renewed genocidal acts in the coastal strip.

"This genocide has reached levels of ugliness not seen in all conflicts throughout history," Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said in a speech that called for allowing aid to flow into Gaza. Al-Sudani added that Iraq will work on setting up an Arab fund for the reconstruction of the region in which Baghdad will pay \$20 million for Gaza and a similar amount for Lebanon.

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Gaza faces starvation unless Israel allows 'immediate' aid, European leaders warn

Thousands of Gazans could starve to death "unless immediate action is taken," the leaders of seven European nations warned Friday in an appeal to Israel, Politico reported.

The statement — issued simultaneously by Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Slovenia and Spain — called on Israel to stop its renewed offensive in the Gaza Strip and to permit renewed access by international aid agencies.

"We will not be silent in front of the man-

made humanitarian catastrophe that is taking place before our eyes in Gaza," the leaders said. "More than 50,000 men, women, and children have lost their lives. Many more could starve to death in the coming days and weeks unless immediate action is taken."

Earlier this week, the UN World Food Programme warned that 470,000 Gazans "are facing catastrophic hunger" because of Israel's action to shut down aid flows since March 2. It said more than 116,000 metric tons of food aid was being blocked.

Netanyahu cancels Vatican visit over fears of ICC arrest

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly canceled plans to attend the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican due to concerns over a possible arrest linked to a pending warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC), according to Israeli media outlet Ynet.

The decision followed behind-the-scenes inquiries made by the occupation regime with both Italian and Vatican officials to assess whether Netanyahu could enter the country without facing detention. However, responses from both parties were reportedly ambiguous, and it remained unclear whether they would comply with the ICC's warrant should Netanya-

hu set foot on their soil.

Faced with uncertainty regarding legal immunity, the Prime Minister's Office ultimately opted to cancel the visit to avoid potential arrest or diplomatic embarrassment.

The ICC arrest warrant, though not confirmed publicly by the court, is presumed to relate to war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation regime in Gaza and other Palestinian territories.

This marks yet another setback for Netanyahu on the international stage, as legal challenges continue to mount amid growing global outrage over the ongoing war on Gaza and calls for accountability from international bodies.

Trump's Persian Gulf tour prioritizes business over diplomatic ethics

From page 1 ▶ In an unexpected twist, Trump also met with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa, announcing plans to lift longstanding sanctions on the country. The move, controversial at home, was framed as a step toward Syria's return to the global community.

Trump further encouraged Persian Gulf Arab leaders to join the Abraham Accords and recognize Israel, though the response was largely noncommittal.

Corruption allegations and ethical questions

Despite the economic achievements, the trip was spoiled by serious accusations of corruption and ethical wrongdoing. Critics said that Trump's official work was very mixed with his family's private business interests. Trump-branded properties in Dubai, Jeddah, and Doha were said to gain from the diplomatic push and flow of Persian Gulf money.

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, was also accused of using the trip to direct investments into his business projects, raising issues about conflicts of interest.

One particularly disputed event was Trump's acceptance of a Boeing 747 jet from Qatar's ruling family. Seen as a personal gift, the act caused bipartisan backlash in Washington. Lawmakers raised concerns about national security risks and the troubling look of wrongdoing.

In response to these issues, cross-party groups in Congress tried to stop some arms



sales to the UAE and Qatar. They were worried that U.S. weapons could end up with groups linked to human rights abuses. The House Select Committee on Strategic Competition also warned that some deals in semiconductors and AI could create big risks, especially with Chinese influence.

Trump's approach to Israel also faced criticism. He did not manage to stop the fighting in Gaza or move peace talks forward. During his stay in the region and after his departure, Israel has intensified genocidal acts in Gaza. Also, his idea to turn Gaza into a U.S.-run "freedom zone" was widely seen as both troubling and impractical.

The journey led to huge deals for arms pur-

chases and investments. It also showed the risks when public roles and private benefits overlap.

The issues, especially those tied to corruption, conflicts of interest, and personal gains by Trump's inner circle, exposed weaknesses in U.S. governance. More so, they made people question the real aims and trustworthiness of American policies in the region.

In the end, the trip led to important economic and diplomatic goals, but it compromised ethical norms and possibly harmed Washington's long-term influence. This episode serves as a warning about the dangers of mixing personal goals with national interests on the world stage.

Will Washington relinquish control over Lebanon to Riyadh?

From page 1 ▶ It is worth noting that the party that destroyed Lebanon, once known as the Switzerland of the East—and not the Paris of the East, as Trump mistakenly claimed—was not Hezbollah, but rather the same parties that Washington is exploiting today to implement its agenda.

Then, during the 1975-1990 civil war, Hezbollah did not even exist but rather emerged as a reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

Trump left the Persian Gulf with a pocketful of trillions and promises of thousands of investments.

Meanwhile, this money is being withheld from two million starving Palestinians in Gaza, displaced in tents pitched on its burning sands by American-Zionist fire.

It is also withheld from the impoverished peoples of West Asia, held captive by the whims of their treacherous rulers, servants of the Zionist project.

Analysts are also closely monitoring the outcomes of the Arab Summit in Baghdad, particularly

regarding the reconstruction of what has been left behind by the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli aggression of Lebanon mostly in late 2024.

It is worth noting that some Arab countries that have expressed their willingness to assist in the reconstruction workshop, including Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, and even the UAE, have repeatedly emphasized that the obstacle facing them is not primarily related to Washington's position, but rather to the fact that the Lebanese government has not yet initiated a reconstruction plan.

Informed sources revealed that the Iraqi government is prepared to provide the funds owed to it by the Electricité du Liban (EDL)—estimated at approximately \$1.8 billion for fuel—to finance the reconstruction. It is even considering establishing an official Iraqi institution to oversee this project.

Those familiar with the content of the Arab messages that have been reaching Lebanon since the ceasefire on November 27 understand well that Trump spoke

on behalf of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who set a fundamental condition for aid to Lebanon: the disarmament of Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, informed sources told the Tehran Times that the unannounced dialogue between President Joseph Aoun and Hezbollah is focused on the issue of Al-Qard al-Hassan, Hezbollah's banking institution, which Washington is demanding be closed, despite Lebanese officials explaining to their American counterparts the sensitivity of this provocative matter to Hezbollah's popular base.

Nabih Berri, speaker of the Parliament, responded to the threatening statements made by Morgan Ortagus, Trump's Deputy Envoy to West Asia, regarding her blatant acknowledgment of Washington's economic blockade, saying, "Don't ask about Israel, but ask about America. The Americans are the first to be concerned with a ceasefire, if they truly want to stop it."

On Sunday, May 18, the Leba-

nese are awaiting the results of the third round of municipal and mayoral elections in the capital, Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley, coupled with attempts to exploit them politically as Washington and Riyadh are seeking to transform Hezbollah and its allies into a party unable to obstruct any major political decision, following their failure to remove them from the government.

Contrary to expectations, the Americans and Saudis are surprised by Hezbollah's handling of the foreign pressure and its commitment to UN Resolution 1701 regarding the south of the Litani River, where it did not initiate any response against the enemy.

As the Ummah is marking the Nakba Day, other bitter catastrophes befell them due to the ill-performance of their rulers; the Palestinians affirm their steadfastness and refusal to surrender, along with the honourable people of Yemen, Lebanon, and Iran, who chose resistance, certain that the American-Zionist bullying will not last.



## Turkish tour operators participate in familiarization tour in Ardabil province



TEHRAN - A familiarization tour (fam tour) was held on Friday in Ardabil province for a group of Turkish tourism professionals, including tour operators and managers of travel agencies, aimed at showcasing the region's tourism potential.

In addition to the Turkish delegation, several local media representatives from Ardabil also participated in the tour to provide coverage and highlight the province's attractions, CHTN reported on Saturday.

As part of the program, participants visited various tourist sites across the northwestern province, including historical landmarks such as the Shahr-e Yeri archaeological site, as well as natural attractions and tourism facilities like suspension bridges and accommodation centers.

The tour was organized to introduce Ardabil's diverse tourism offerings and to pres-

ent the latest initiatives taken to develop the province's tourism industry, the report added.

Officials emphasized that strengthening ties with Turkish tour operators and showcasing Ardabil's cultural, historical, and natural assets are key steps toward attracting more international visitors and boosting regional tourism.

The event also served as a platform for media coverage, aiming to enhance public awareness of Ardabil's tourism capacities both domestically and in neighboring countries.

Situated on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well known for having abundant natural beauty, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to the UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble. It is freezing in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year.

## South Africa targets explosive growth in Indian tourism with strategic focus on cricket cinema

South Africa is strategically positioning itself to revolutionize the Indian tourism market by aiming to double Indian tourist arrivals by 2025.

With a high-impact focus on cricket, Bollywood, and luxury travel experiences, the country is leveraging its cultural connections, immersive campaigns, and cutting-edge digital platforms to attract travelers.

South Africa's unique offerings, including ultra-luxury accommodations, exclusive experiences, and seamless travel processes, are designed to meet the diverse interests of Indian tourists, ensuring robust economic growth and positioning the country as a top destination for weddings, corporate events, and adventure travel.

Tourism South Africa is focusing its efforts on India with the ambitious goal of doubling the number of Indian visitors by 2025.

This strategy is built on India's love for cricket, cinema, and weddings, which are core elements of the country's culture, alongside the increasing appetite for experiential travel.

To achieve its goal, South Africa aims to improve accessibility, streamline visa applications, offer value-driven travel experiences, and engage travelers from smaller cities across India.

In an exclusive conversation with CNBC-TV18, Mitalee Karmarkar, the Marketing and Communications Manager at South African Tourism, laid out the roadmap for this ambitious expansion plan.

The strategy combines cultural alignment, digital innovation, and tailored travel experiences designed to capture the interest of India's growing experience-driven tourism market.

(Source: [travelandtourworld.com](http://travelandtourworld.com))

## Glimpses of World Heritage sites: Architectural Work of Le Corbusier

Chosen from the work of architect Le Corbusier that survives in eleven countries on four continents, the sites in seven countries on three continents, implemented over half a century, for the first time in the history of architecture attest to the internationalization of architectural practice across the entire planet.

Situated in Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, and Switzerland, the seventeen sites together represent an outstanding response to some of the fundamental issues of architecture and society in the 20th century.

They all were innovative in the way they reflected new concepts, all had a significant influence over wide geographical areas, and together they disseminated ideas of the Modern Movement throughout the world.

Despite its diversity, the Modern Movement was a major and essential socio-cultural and historical entity of the 20th century, which has to a large degree remained the basis of the architectural culture of the 21st century. From the 1910s to the 1960s, the Modern Movement, in meeting the challenges of contemporary society, aimed to instigate a unique forum of ideas at a world level, invent a new architectural language, modernize architectural techniques, and meet the social and human needs of modern man. The series provides an outstanding response to all these challenges.

Some of the component sites immediately assumed an iconic status and had worldwide

influence. These include the Villa Savoye, as an icon for the Modern Movement; Unité d'habitation in Marseille as a major prototype of a new housing model based on a balance between the individual and the collective; Chapelle Notre-Dame-du-Haut for its revolutionary approach to religious architecture; the Cabanon de Le Corbusier as an archetypal minimum cell based on ergonomic and functionalist approaches; and the Maisons de la Weissenhof-Siedlung that became known worldwide, as part of the Werkbund exhibition.

Other sites acted as catalysts for spreading ideas around their own regions, such as Maison Guiette, which spurred the development of the Modern Movement in Belgium and the Netherlands; the Maison du Docteur Curutchet which exerted a fundamental influence in South America; the Musée National des Beaux-Arts de l'Occident as the prototype of the globally transposable Museum of Unlimited Growth which cemented ideas of the Modern Movement in Japan; and the Capitol Complex that had a considerable influence across the Indian subcontinent, where it symbolized India's accession to modernity.

Many of the sites reflect new architectural concepts, principles, and technical features. The Petite villa au bord du Léman is an early expression of minimalist needs as is also crystallized in the Cabanon de Le Corbusier. Le Corbusier's Five Points of a New Architecture are transcribed iconically in Villa Savoye.

(Source: [UNESCO](http://unesco.org))

# Zarif highlights Kish Island's potential in Halal tourism

TEHRAN - Mohammad Javad Zarif, who served as Iranian foreign minister from 2013 to 2021, has emphasized the importance of promoting Kish Island's strengths in the fields of Halal and targeted tourism, highlighting its potential to attract Muslim travelers.

Speaking at a meeting focused on enhancing Kish Island's international standing in tourism, cultural diplomacy, and regional dialogue, Zarif noted, "The experience of countries like Turkey and the success of destinations such as Antalya demonstrate that even with certain cultural limitations, it is possible to create attractive and respectful environments for Muslim tourists.

Kish, by considering Islamic values and designing appropriate spaces, especially for Arab visitors and Muslim women, can secure a unique position in the regional tourism market."

Reflecting on the island's progress, Zarif stated, "What I see in Kish today marks the beginning of a journey that can shape a different future for the island."

He stressed the importance of learning from past experiences with a strategic and analytical approach, adding, "If we seek to build a grand future, we must review the past not with regret but with strategic insight. Today, I witnessed signs of intelligent future-building in Kish."

Zarif also spoke about the island's capacity to host major international events, recalling his own experiences attending the



Davos forums (the World Economic Forum) in the 1990s.

"I witnessed firsthand how such events, with long-term and consistent planning, evolve into global brands.

Reflecting on the island's progress, Zarif stated, "What I see in Kish today marks the beginning of a journey that can shape a different future for the island."

Kish has high potential thanks to its geographical location, accommodation facilities, and management structure," he said.

In this regard, Zarif announced

a proposal for establishing the "Muslim regional dialogue assembly", expressing readiness to organize the first session of this conference in collaboration with the Kish Free Zone Organization.

He described such an assembly as a platform designed to foster dialogue among scholars, intellectuals, and officials from Islamic countries, with Kish serving as the launchpad for this constructive engagement.

Highlighting Kish's track record of hosting successful international gatherings, Zarif said: "The island's environment and facilities have impressed many foreign participants.

Continuation of such events can cement the island's role in regional diplomacy."

In conclusion, the senior Iranian diplomat underlined the crucial

role of intelligent cultural promotion, stating, "Advertising is not solely the government's responsibility."

"In the past, we had successful experiences producing cultural clips that significantly influenced public opinion.

Today, there are capable groups in the field of cultural promotion who, if strategically utilized, can project a fresh image of Iran and Kish to the world."

Since the 1970s, Kish has become a beach resort where visitors can swim, shop, and sample a local lifestyle.

Hotels, apartment blocks, and retail complexes dominate the once-empty desert landscape, and domestic tourist numbers are on the rise, especially in winter, when it's freezing cold on the mainland.

## Kandelous village in northern Iran implements accessible tourism measures



TEHRAN - Kandelous village in Mazandaran province has become one of Iran's pioneering rural destinations to successfully implement "accessible tourism" initiatives, according to Mehdi Es'haqi, the deputy provincial tourism chief.

Es'haqi on Saturday stated that through the execution of various accessibility measures, such as easing mobility for people with disabilities, the elderly, and other groups with special needs, Kandelous has taken significant strides toward ensuring tourism facilities are inclusive for all visitors.

"One of the most valuable steps taken in Kandelous, a model tourism village in Nowshahr county, has been enhancing access to public spaces, tourism infrastructure, and various sites across the village.

This has materialized the true concept of 'accessible tourism' in Kandelous," Es'haqi explained.

The official further explained that the project began with assessing the village's physical infrastructure to identify accessibility gaps and data needs for visitors. Following this, a com-

prehensive plan was developed, leading to practical modifications such as building ramps, providing wheelchairs, establishing designated parking spaces for people with disabilities, and constructing accessible restrooms in tourism and hospitality facilities.

Es'haqi also highlighted efforts to accommodate visitors with visual impairments. These include installing Braille signs at Kandelous Museum, offering audio guides for different museum sections, and setting up clear, large-font directional signage.

In addition, training sessions were conducted for local hosts to promote respectful and effective interaction with tourists facing physical or mobility challenges.

"These efforts aim to create suitable conditions for the presence of people with disabilities, the elderly, and other groups with special needs in the realm of local tourism.

It represents a vital step to-

wards promoting social equity and expanding public access to tourism opportunities," Es'haqi emphasized.

He underlined that Kandelous is now among the first rural areas in Iran to actively adhere to the principles of accessible tourism, positioning itself as an inclusive destination for all social groups.

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

According to local historians and archaeological evidence, Kandelous dates back to prehistory, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited villages in northern Iran.

The village's historic urban fabric, including its preserved alleyways and traditional architectural styles, speaks of a community deeply respectful of its past.

## Archaeologists uncover prehistoric fishing evidence in southeast Iran

TEHRAN - Archaeologists have discovered compelling evidence of ancient fishing and maritime activities along Makran coasts in southeastern Iran.

According to Mortaza Hessari, head of the excavation team, they have uncovered significant evidence of fishing and maritime activities across various cultural periods during ongoing investigations at the Kopal site on the Makran coasts (Dashtiari county, Sistan-Baluchestan province).

Hessari stated: "These discoveries include not only stone tools from the Paleolithic period but also unprecedented evidence of fishing tools such as fishing hooks and net weights, indicating the sustained use of marine resources in this region during prehistoric times."

He added: "In one excavation trench, a fishing weight was found alongside a collection of shells, marine animal bones, and pottery shards dating back to the 4th millennium BCE. Laboratory studies of these marine remains

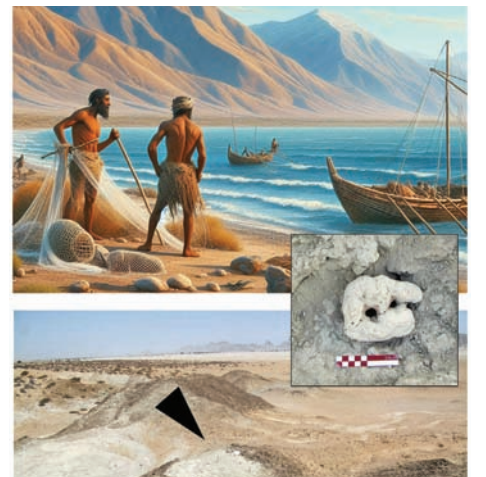
could provide valuable insights into the aquatic species utilized by the inhabitants of this area during the late prehistoric period."

Hessari emphasized the urgency of the research, explaining: "Unfortunately, the Kopal site is at risk of destruction due to the construction of a new road.

For this reason, salvage excavations were launched under the framework of research projects by the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Institute to salvage part of this endangered heritage."

The excavation director also acknowledged local authorities, noting: "The unwavering cooperation of the Dashtiari County Governorate, particularly Mr. Abdolaziz Miaei, the honorable governor, as well as the Chabahar Cultural Heritage Department and the Makran Heritage Base, has been pivotal in advancing this project."

In conclusion, Hessari expressed hope: "We



hope that the continuation of such research will pave the way for the establishment of a Makran Cultural Heritage Studies Center.

This center could serve as a hub for investigating and preserving this region's unique heritage."

Iran's Makran coast, known in Persian as Savahel-e Makkoran, is a semi-arid coastal strip along the shores of the Sea of Oman.



# Tehran, Moscow sign MOU on developing SDI

TEHRAN – The National Cartographic Center of Iran and the Russian Federal Service for State Registration, Cadastre and Cartography, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to develop spatial data infrastructure (SDI).

The MOU was signed on the sidelines of the 16th International Economic Forum ‘Russia – Islamic World: Kazan Forum’, ISNA reported.

It aims to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations through sharing mapping technologies, developing spatial data infrastructures, and implementing joint geomatics projects.

## Proposal for establishing joint SDI

In September, the proposal presented by the director general of the National Cartographic Center of Iran (NCC) to establish BRICS spatial data infrastructure (SDI), was received by all the participants in the third meeting of the BRICS working group on geospatial technologies and its application.



Hosted by Moscow, the meeting was held from September 16 and 17.

The third working group meeting aimed to organize a suitable platform for providing new and important opportunities to develop geospatial technologies, foster cooperation, and discuss some key issues.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the meeting, Ali Javideh said maps and spatial data are critical tools in the sustainable development of com-

munities which provide the information needed for informed decision-making, effective planning, and economic growth, ISNA reported.

The official also presented several proposals, among which BRICS SDI drew the attention of the participants who agreed to lay the ground for its implementation.

Moreover, on the second day of the meeting, the memorandum of understanding previously signed by the working group on

the spatial data infrastructure was finalized with the active participation of Iranian representatives.

Geospatial technology is a term used to describe the range of modern tools contributing to the geographic mapping and analysis of the Earth and human societies.

They play an important role in today's interconnected world and provide valuable assistance to individuals, governments, and various sectors of the economy.

The combination of spatial technologies with artificial intelligence, deep learning, and big data analytics creates favorable outcomes in communications, navigation, transportation, cadaster, cartography, and other applications.

Examples of geospatial technologies include remote sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS). Geospatial technologies can be used for all sorts of activities, such as military use, environmental use, and everyday use.

## Health minister to attend 78th World Health Assembly

TEHRAN – An Iranian delegation headed by Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi will participate in the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA), which is scheduled to be held from May 19 to June 27 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Focusing on the 2025 theme ‘One World for Health’, WHA78 will bring together high-level country representatives to address health challenges. This year’s gathering comes at a pivotal moment for global health, as Member States confront emerging threats and major shifts in the landscape for global health and international development.

This year’s theme underscores the World Health Organization’s (WHO) enduring commitment to solidarity and equity, highlighting that even in unprecedented times, everyone, everywhere, should have an equal chance to live a healthy life.

During the meeting, participants will discuss and reflect on current and future priorities and challenges facing global health as per related documents, as well as the member states will declare their ideas about each document, IRNA quoted Alireza Biglari, an official with the health ministry, as saying.

Zafarqandi will present a statement on 35 specific documents related to the country’s health system; these include 29 documents on general health activities, and six focus on the activities of different departments, and international cooperation, the official noted.

Moreover, other topics such as the budget and financial issues, the membership status of the member states, auditing, and issues raised in the executive board session of the WHO will be reviewed by specialized committees.

In the 78th WHA, a total of 56 topics will be discussed in the form of documents, Biglari stated.

On the sidelines of the WHA, the health minister plans to hold meetings with his counterparts from Switzerland, Italy, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, India, Cuba, and the WHO director for the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) to expand ties.

### WHA78

A highly anticipated moment of the WHA78 will be the consideration of the Pandemic Agreement, a landmark proposal developed over three years of intense negotiations by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body, composed of all WHO Member States.

## WHA78 will bring together high-level country representatives to address health challenges.

The adoption of the agreement is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to safeguard the world from a repeat of the suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal will be the second ever presented for approval under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution, which gives Member States the authority to reach agreements on global health.

WHO’s sustainable financing is a key priority of the Health Assembly. Member States will consider a scheduled 20 percent increase in assessed contributions (membership fees), towards the next Program Budget



2026–2027 (PB26–27). The PB26–27, also for approval by the Health Assembly, is the first biennium under WHO’s Fourteenth General Programme of Work (GPW14), WHO’s strategy for global health for 2025–2028.

The Program Budget for 2026–2027 was under consultation by Member States, to prioritize activities and adjust the budget to the current financial realities, by reducing it by 22 percent, to US\$ 4.267 billion, from the original proposed budget of US\$ 5.3 billion.

Reprioritization of WHO’s work, including cost-saving measures and budget adjustments, will also apply to the current year, 2025. The aim is to focus on WHO’s core work and increase efficiency. The reprioritization is a critical step to aligning WHO’s resources with the most urgent global health needs and getting health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) back on track.

A Ministerial Roundtable on data and sustainable financing will be held on Wednesday 21 May. This high-level roundtable will bring together ministers of health and finance, global partners, and technical leaders to identify scalable actions that strengthen country-led health data systems and sustainable financing strategies for universal health coverage and the health-related SDGs.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Iran working with Green Climate Fund

TEHRAN – The Department of Environment (DOE) is working with the United Nations Green Climate Fund (GCF), under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to reduce the effects of climate change.

FAO and the Department of Environment as the National Designated Authority (NDA) of Green Climate Fund (GCF), partnered to bring together local, national, and international stakeholders in a three-day workshop, the last one in a series of iterative events held under the project “Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Program of Iran.”

“Throughout the implementation of this Project, FAO as the delivery partner has always stayed committed to providing its technical expertise, data, and tools to support the country in its efforts to strengthen the national capacities to effectively access and efficiently manage, track and guide climate financing with particular attention to the requirements of the GCF,” said Gerold Bödeker, FAO Representative to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### همکاری ایران با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل

سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست به عنوان مرجع رسمی ایران در زمینه حفظ محیط زیست با صندوق اقلیم سبز سازمان ملل با محوریت سازمان خواربار و کشاورزی ملل متحد (فائو) در راستای کاهش تأثیرات تغییر اقلیم همکاری می‌کند.

فائو و سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست کشور به عنوان مرجع صلاحیت دار ملل ایران و صندوق اقلیم سبز با همکاری یکدیگر، این پروژه را پیش بردند و در قالب چند برگزاری چند کارگاه اقدامات را بررسی کردند. بر این اساس در آخرین کارگاه، ذینفعان محلی، ملی و بین المللی را به عنوان آخرین حلقه از زنجیره رویدادهای پروژه «برنامه آماده سازی جمهوری اسلامی ایران برای همکاری با صندوق اقلیم سبز» گرد هم آوردند.

گروld بودکر نماینده فائو در جمهوری اسلامی ایران گفت: در طول اجرای این پروژه، فائو، به عنوان شریک اجرایی، همیشه متعهد به ارائه تخصص فنی، داده‌ها و ابزارهای سیاستی خود برای حمایت از کشور در تلاش‌های خود برای تقویت ظرفیت‌های ملی برای دسترسی موثر و مدیریت کارآمد، ردیابی و هدایت تأمین مالی اقدامات اقلیمی با در نظر گرفتن الزامات صندوق اقلیم سبز بوده است.

## Iran presents two proposals at World Digital Education Conference



TEHRAN – Addressing the 2025 World Digital Education Conference (WDEC), Iran’s Deputy Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Abolfazl Vahedi, proposed the establishment of a digital education center, as well as the development of a digital educational qualification system.

Hosted by Wuhan, China, the conference was held from May 14 to 16.

The official also introduced the country’s higher education system and presented a report on the number of universities, students, and educational infrastructure.

Referring to Iranian universities’ achievements and expertise in the digitalization of education and utilizing electronic and digital tools, the official elaborated on the concerns and challenges ahead of the development of the educational system in the artificial intelligence (AI) era, IRNA reported.

The digital technology has become the leading force of the world’s scientific and technological revolution as well as industrial transformation in today’s era, which increasingly integrates into various areas and whole process of the economic and social development, profoundly changing production methods, lifestyles, and social governance, and brings new challenges and opportunities to education.

Moreover, AI is increasingly present in education. In high-income countries, more than 2/3 of secondary school pupils are already using generative AI tools to produce school-work.

Teachers are increasingly using AI to prepare their lessons and assess students’ work. School guidance and admissions, traditionally guided by teachers and experts, are also increasingly determined by AI.

In Iran, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and learning was examined during a national conference held in Tehran on October 9, 2024.

The use of AI-driven technologies in education and learning as a transformative element has not only helped to promote

the quality and efficiency of the educational process but has also provided different individuals with cutting-edge technologies and smart solutions, ISNA reported.

By precisely analyzing educational data and providing instant feedback, it has improved students’ assessment and educational content production.

It also focused on three major axes: recognizing challenges and capabilities; establishing a dynamic and collaborative environment, as well as discovering assessment and evaluation methods based on emerging technologies.

It focused on topics like AI and medical education, Cognitive Sciences, schools, design and content production, human resources development, educational assessment and evaluation, AI in the future of education, and ethical considerations, as well as artificial intelligence and schools.

The main objective of the conference was to raise awareness of modern technologies and their applications in education and learning systems

### Era of intelligence

The advantages digital education brings forth, such as equity, inclusiveness, and openness, provide new paths for education to better serve modernization and foster the holistic development of individuals.

The United Nations, along with countries worldwide and international organizations, is taking active measures in advancing digital transformation in education. The United Nations Transforming Education Summit has identified digital transformation in education as one of the five Thematic Action Tracks, emphasizing that the digital revolution should benefit all learners.

With the theme of “Education Development and Transformation: The Era of Intelligence”, the 2025 WDEC aimed to respond to the United Nations’ initiatives on global education transformation and to call for joint efforts to promote the development and transformation of education in the era of intelligence.

The conference aimed to join hands with governments, universities, primary and secondary schools, relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, enterprises, and other stakeholders to explore the development of digital education in all process of “Teaching—Learning—Management—Assessment—Research”, promoting the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

## Tehran to host 2nd Ministerial Meeting of OIC-15 Dialogue Platform

TEHRAN – The Second Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform is scheduled to kick off in Tehran today.

The theme of the three-day meeting focuses on artificial intelligence (AI), and is titled ‘Innovation in Science and Technology through using AI: A strategy for excellence, a bright future for the Islamic World’, IRNA reported.

The event will serve as a platform for the country to foster regional cooperation via strengthening scientific diplomacy. It will also provide the opportunity to review and discuss the Islamic nations’ challenges in the technology sector, IRNA reported.

The meeting will be mainly centered around AI in higher education, focusing on challenges and opportunities, and the impact of AI on economic development. Also, the first multilateral document on artificial intelligence (AI) among Islamic countries is scheduled to be approved during the meeting.

Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf is scheduled to deliver a speech at the opening ceremony. It will be followed by expert panel meetings.

Also, there will be a report on the implementation of the decisions made at the first ministerial meeting in Almaty, and the date and venue of the next meeting will be determined.

On Monday, participants will discuss and exchange views on AI, with heads of delegations

presenting talks. Then the science ministers or their representatives will hold bilateral meetings.

On the sidelines of the event, an exhibition of Iran’s achievements in science, technology, and AI sectors to showcase knowledge-based companies’ capabilities.

### OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest organization after the United Nations, with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.

In 2016, the initiative of the OIC Dialogue Platform was put forward by Kazakhstan, and the participation of 15 leading countries in technology, such as Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and Indonesia.

The initiative was approved at the 46th and 47th meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in 2018 and 2019.

The platform aims to strengthen the scientific and technical potential of Islamic states and offer solutions to challenges in these fields, including the environment and energy.

Sharing expertise on science, technology, and innovation, identifying systematic challenges, developing solutions, and strengthening strategic partnerships among participating and member states, as well as international partners, are among the main goals of the OIC.





MAY 18, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*He who has in his heart the weight of a mustard seed of pride shall not enter paradise.*

**Prophet Muhammad (S)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:25 Dawn: 3:17 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:56 (tomorrow)

## Palestinian author Yasmin Zaher wins Dylan Thomas prize with ‘audacious’ novel “The Coin”

A novel about a Palestinian woman who participates in a pyramid scheme reselling Birkin bags has won this year's Swansea University Dylan Thomas prize.

According to the Guardian, Palestinian journalist Yasmin Zaher took home the £20,000 prize – awarded to writers aged 39 or under in honor of the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, who died at that age – for her debut novel “The Coin.” She was announced as the winner at a ceremony in Swansea, Thomas's birthplace.

“The Coin,” chosen in a unanimous decision by judges, “is a borderless novel, tackling trauma and grief with bold and poetic moments of quirkiness and humor”, said writer and judging chair Namita Gokhale. “It fizzes with electric energy”, with Zaher bringing “complexity and intensity to the page through her elegantly concise writing”.

Born in 1991 in Jerusalem, Zaher studied biomedical engineering at Yale University and creative writing at the New School, where she was advised by the novelist Katie Kitamura.

Kitamura described The Coin as a “brilliant, audacious, powerhouse of a novel. A story of obsession and appetite, politics and class, it is deliciously unruly.

An exceptional debut by an outrageous new talent.”

The novel follows a wealthy Palestinian woman as she tries to set down roots in New York, teaching in a school for underprivileged boys. However, she begins to feel stifled in the US, and develops an obsession with cleanliness and purity.

In an interview last July, Zaher said that she had “very mixed feelings” about her novel coming out at this time. “Publishing a novel is a dream come true for me, but the joy is muted by grief.

Deep inside, I also know that current events are driving some of the interest in the book, and I feel very uncomfortable with that, because I never considered myself as speaking

in the name of my people.

“But I tell myself that identity is not pure, that life is messy, and, maybe most importantly, that literature is at its best when it resists the boxes.”

Other writers shortlisted for this year's prize were Rapture's Road by Seán Hewitt, Glorious Exploits by Ferdia Lennon, The Safe-keep by Yael van der Wouden, I Will Crash by Rebecca Watson and Moderate to Poor, Occasionally Good by Eley Williams.

Alongside Gokhale on the judging panel were the writer Jan Carson, poet Mary Jean Chan, critic Max Liu and academic Daniel Williams.

Previous winners of the prize, launched in 2006, include Max Porter, Bryan Washington and Patricia Lockwood. Last year, Caleb Azumah Nelson won the award for his novel Small Worlds.

“Zaher is an extraordinary winner to mark 20 years of this vital prize,” said Gokhale.

The Dylan Thomas Prize is a prestigious international award for young writers, presented annually in honor of the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas.

Originally awarded every two years, it shifted to an annual event in 2010. Submissions are typically made by publishers, editors, or agents, with producers submitting theatre plays and screenplays.

The prize's origins date back to the 1980s, initially called the Dylan Thomas Award, which emerged from efforts to commemorate the poet with a plaque in Westminster Abbey.

Early funding came from a fundraising concert, but the award was later discontinued due to financial issues.

It was revived in 2004 with sponsorship from Electronic Data Systems. The prize celebrates diverse literary forms, including poetry, prose, drama, and screenplays, aiming to promote new writing talent globally and honor Dylan Thomas's literary legacy.

# Embassy of Mexico in Iran promoting literary, cultural understanding

By Mohamadreza Seyedagha

TEHRAN - A book launch ceremony was held at the stand of the Embassy of Mexico in Iran at the 36th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF) on Thursday, where the book “Teherán lleva tilde” was unveiled in the presence of the Ambassador of Mexico in Iran, Guillermo Puente Ordorica, and the authors of the book.

The book title translates to “Tehran Has Tilde,” with tilde meaning an accent mark placed above some letters in Spanish. “It is a collection of chronicles written by eight Latin American and Iranian authors, showcasing their perspectives and experiences in Tehran,” the ambassador said.

“The book stems from a series of storytelling workshops held at the Embassy last year. It's a unique collaboration between the Mexican Embassy and the Iranian publisher Negah,” he added.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Guillermo Puente Ordorica explained about the cultural activities of the Embassy of Mexico in Iran.

**How many times have you attended the Tehran International Book Fair?**

This is our fifth consecutive time attending the fair. Mexico has been consistently present in the event during the past five years, offering Mexican literature to Iranian readers and the public interested in our culture.

This year, we dedicated our stand to Rosario Castellanos, an influential Mexican author, and Emiliano Zapata, a key figure in the Mexican Revolution. Castellanos is celebrated for her literary contributions, and Zapata represents revolutionary ideals and social change in Mexico. His legacy is well-known even in Iran, symbolizing the first major social revolution of the 20th century.

Rosario Castellanos Figueroa (1925-1974) was a Mexican poet and author. She was one of Mexico's most important literary voices in the last century. Throughout her life, she wrote eloquently about issues of cultural and gender oppression, and her work has influenced Mexican feminist theory and cultural studies. Though she died young, she opened the door of Mexican literature to women, and left a legacy that still resonates today.

Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919) was a Mexican revolutionary. He was a leading figure in the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, the main leader of the people's revolution in the Mexican state of Morelos, and the



Ambassador of Mexico in Iran Guillermo Puente Ordorica (C) and the authors of “Teherán lleva tilde” unveil the book at the stand of the Embassy of Mexico in Iran at the 36th Tehran International Book Fair on May 15, 2025.

inspiration of the agrarian movement called Zapatismo.

Zapata remains an iconic figure in Mexico, used both as a nationalist symbol as well as a symbol of the neo-Zapatista movement.

**How do you compare the Tehran International Book Fair to the book fairs in Mexico?**

There are many differences, but the essence is the same: promoting literature and engaging people in reading. One challenge I observe in Tehran's fair is its international reach, which is limited due to reasons beyond the control of its organizers. In Mexico, the international presence is stronger, with more international writers and publishers attending. However, the presence of young readers in Tehran's fair is very inspiring and similar to what we see in Mexico.

**How do you think book fairs can promote reading in a world dominated by technology?**

Book fairs are crucial as moments of gathering, celebrating literature, and engaging with both classical and contemporary writers. They should not be seen as competing with technology but rather complementing it. Fairs can show young people the value of traditional books while also embracing electronic tools as supplementary resources. The key is to encourage more people to read, regardless of the medium.

**How familiar are Mexican people with Persian culture, literature, poetry, and authors?**

There is an increasing interest among Mexican readers and people in general towards Iranian literature, history, and culture. However,

there is still a lot of work to be done to broaden the scope of Persian literature in Mexico. It's a challenge we are working on, and we can see progress, but there's always more to do. Similarly, we would like to see more Iranians interested in Mexican literature.

**What has been done so far regarding the translation of Persian works into Spanish or Spanish works from Mexico into Persian?**

We have made important progress in this field. Last year, for the first time in history, Ferdowsi's epic masterpiece “Shahnameh” (The Book of Kings), one of the greatest works of Persian literature, was translated into Spanish. It consists of over 60,000 verses, published in seven volumes, and was translated by Dr. Beatriz Salas, a prestigious academic who devoted her life to this project. The Mexican Embassy supported and promoted this effort, ensuring its availability in major Mexican libraries, universities, and cultural centers.

**Are there Persian language courses in Mexico, just as Spanish is taught here in Iran?**

Unfortunately, Persian is not widely taught in Mexico except in specialized academic institutions that focus on Middle Eastern studies. I believe this is an area with potential for growth, and I am open to working with Iranian colleagues to promote Persian language courses in Mexico.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Yes, I would like to mention an upcoming event. We are organizing a photography exhibition in Tehran in near future, showcasing the work of a late Mexican photographer who

captured Mexico's ethnic and cultural diversity.

The 36th Tehran International Book Fair (TIBF), one of the largest cultural events in the West Asia, was held at the Imam Khomeini Mollasalla in Tehran, from May 7 to 17.

This year's event was themed “Let's Read for Iran,” highlighting the nation's commitment to fostering a culture of reading and intellectual engagement. Iraq was the special guest of this edition of the fair, participating in the event with 15 publishers.

More than 2,600 Iranian publishers are present at the fair. Moreover, 50 applicants from other countries have registered. Their books will be displayed in the Arabic and Latin sections of the exhibition, mostly published between 2023 and 2025.

The foreign publishers hail from countries including Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Algeria, Brazil, China, Egypt, Hungary, India, Iraq, Italy, Malaysia, Russia, Spain, Syria, and Turkey among others.

Since its inception in 1988, TIBF has grown significantly, attracting millions of visitors annually, including students, academics, and families.

In addition to its vast book displays, TIBF 2025 introduces the Tehran Literary Fellowship Program, a new initiative aimed at strengthening literary exchanges and promoting Iranian literature on a global scale.

As one of the most anticipated events in Iran's cultural calendar, the Tehran International Book Fair continues to be a platform for literary discovery and cross-cultural dialogue.

## Arasbaran Cultural Center to show “The Good Boss”

TEHRAN - Spanish filmmaker Fernando León de Aranoa's 2021 movie “The Good Boss” will be screened during a session at the Arasbaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Sunday evening.

Iranian film critic Kurosh Jahed will attend a screening of the film followed by a review session.

“The Good Boss” (Spanish: “El buen patrón”) is a black comedy-drama film, featuring the acclaimed Javier Bardem in the lead role. The film is a biting corporate satire that explores themes of power and manipulation of workplace culture through the story of Julio Blanco, a charismatic yet manipulative factory owner.

Blanco owns a family-run business that manufactures industrial scales in a provincial Spanish town. As he prepares for an upcoming visit from a committee that might award his company a prestigious recognition for business excellence, Blanco goes to great lengths to address any problems within his workforce.

The narrative delves into Blanco's tactics to maintain his company's reputation, often meddling in the personal and professional lives of his employees to project an image of success and stability. His relent-

less pursuit of an award exposes the underlying issues of exploitation, superficiality, and moral compromise prevalent in corporate environments. The film paints a darkly comic portrait of a man who is simultaneously charming and manipulative, using his charisma to mask his ruthless methods.

The cast features a strong ensemble, with Javier Bardem delivering a standout performance that captures Blanco's complex personality. Manolo Solo, Almudena Amor, Oscar de la Fuente, and Sonia Almarcha round out the principal cast, each portraying employees entangled in Blanco's web of control and ambition.

The film premiered at the 69th San Sebastián International Film Festival on September 21, 2021, where it garnered widespread attention. It was then released theatrically in Spain. The film was a commercial success domestically, becoming the fourth highest-grossing Spanish film in 2021, with over half a million viewers and earning more than three million euros.

Internationally, “The Good Boss” secured distribution rights in several countries. Cohen Media Group acquired U.S. rights, and the film was released in Italy, Portugal,



Javier Bardem acts in a scene of Spanish filmmaker Fernando León de Aranoa's “The Good Boss”

Argentina, Chile, and the United States, among other markets. Its wide-ranging release helped cement its reputation as a sharp and engaging social critique.

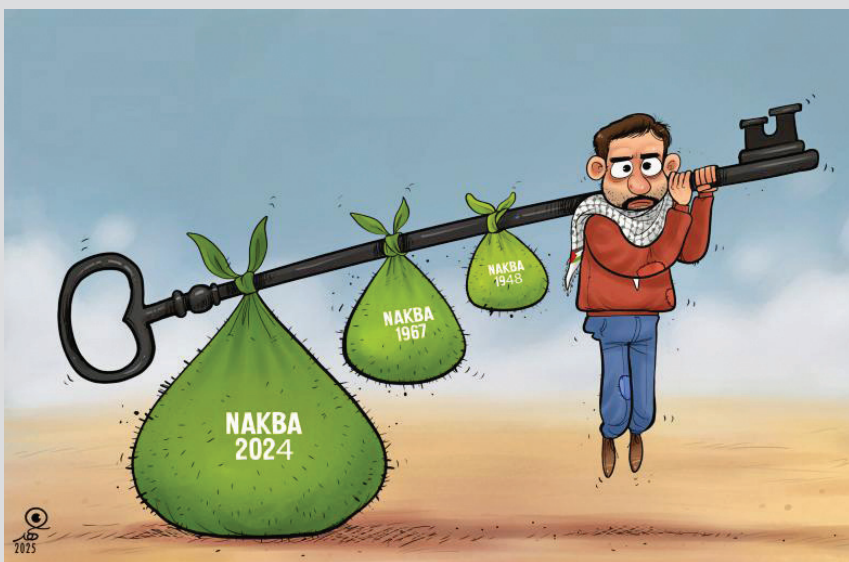
Critics lauded the film for its incisive humor and Bardem's compelling performance. On Rotten Tomatoes, it holds a 92 percent approval rating, praised for its sharp wit and social commentary.

Reviewers appreciated its dark humor and incisive portrayal of labor relations, often comparing it favorably to León de Aranoa's previous works like “Mondays in the Sun.” Some critics noted a slight pacing issue but generally acknowledged

the film's clever script and strong performances.

“The Good Boss” received numerous awards and nominations, winning six Goya Awards, including Best Picture, Director, Actor, Original Screenplay, Score, and Editing. It also garnered accolades at the Feroz Awards, Carmen Awards, and Platino Awards, among others. Its critical and commercial success, coupled with its sharp social critique, positions it as one of the most notable Spanish films of 2021, resonating with audiences and critics alike for its incisive look at the corrupting influence of corporate success and the moral compromises often involved.

## Cartoon of Day



Nakba  
Cartoonist: Fahd Bahady from Syria