

Mohammad Sinwar alive and fighting, Hamas official tells Tehran Times

TEHRAN – According to a senior Hamas member, speaking to the Tehran Times, Mo-hammad Sinwar – whom Israel alleges is lead-ing the fight against its forces in Gaza – is alive and still fighting within the besieged territory.

Israel says it assassinated the brother of Hamas' late leader, Yahya Sinwar, during a bru-tal and deadly attack on a Gaza hospital last Tuesday. "This is a false claim Israel makes to justify the bombing of a hospital. Our brothers in Gaza have assured us that Mohammad Sin-war is alive and still fighting the enemy firmly," Osama Hamdan, a member of the Hamas Polit-ical Bureau, told the Tehran Times.

The Israeli regime has routinely struck hos-pitals and other civilian sites since it began its devastating war in Gaza 19 months ago. The stated goal was the "eradication" of Hamas, a Palestinian Resistance group that managed to shatter Israel's myth of invincibility during a 2023 attack on military positions in the occu-pied territories.

While the regime has killed over 60,000 people, mostly civilians, in the past months, it has yet to come close to the dismantlement of Hamas, as admitted by Israel's own officials on multiple occasions. The regime managed to assassinate Yahya Sinwar by accident last year while he was on the ground fighting, de-spite having claimed for numerous weeks that the leader was inside a hardened tunnel, sur-rounded by Israeli prisoners.

On Western proposals that Hamas put down its weapons for "peace", Hamdan pointed out that in the West Bank, there is no Hamas or Palestinian Jihad fighting the occupation, but Palestinians are still systematically oppressed and abused by Israel.

The world has failed badly in Gaza

By our staff writer

TEHRAN – Since March 2, 2015, the murderous regime of Israel has blocked the entry of food, water, and medicine into Gaza, but the world is just a spectator.

It is hard to imagine such a situation, but this horrible act is happening before the eyes of the impotent world.

How can the world excuse itself in the face of such a callousness by a bunch of cruel rulers in Israel? The future generations will not forgive the current rulers of the world.

The future generations will ask how the world could remain inactive in the face of this degree of sadistic acts. It seems the world is emotionless. This apocalyptic situation in Gaza will keep haunting the world.

The scenes of weeping children scrambling desperately to get a little portion of food distributed by charities cause pain in the hearts. These scenes are a disgrace to humanity.

Iran opens its first specialized college for classic car restoration

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN – In a landmark development for cultural heritage and technical education in Iran, the country's first specialized college dedicated to the restoration of classic cars was officially inaugurated on Monday.

The newly established college, affiliated with the Dafineh Museum Group and operating under the Mostazafan Foundation, was launched in close collaboration with the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Iran.

The college is situated on the premises of the Automobile Museum of Iran, which is home to an unparalleled collection of vintage and classic cars and other historical vehicles. ▶Page 6

Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev told Tehran Times: SCO, with Iran's Vigorous Involvement, Continues Its Efforts to Preserve Peace and Security



Gaza media blackout deepens as Israeli strikes kill five more journalists

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – The killing of journalists in Gaza has reached an unprecedented and alarming scale, as highlighted by the recent report from the Palestine Chronicle detailing the deaths of five more journalists in Israeli airstrikes, bringing the confirmed total to at least 219 Palestinian journalists and media workers as of May 19, 2025.

This tragedy is not an isolated incident but part of a persistent pattern since October 7, 2023, making Gaza the deadliest place for journalists in modern history, surpassing the tolls of both World Wars, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan combined.

A pro-Resistance popular referendum

By Sondoss Al Asaad

SOUTH LEBANON — Ballots closed in the third round of municipal and mayoral elections on May 18 in Beirut Governorate, Bekaa Governorate, and Baalbek-Hermel Governorate.

The municipal and mayoral elections are being held this month after being postponed twice, in 2022 due to coincidence with the parliamentary elections, and in 2023 due to the government's inability to secure the necessary funding.

It is noteworthy that Lebanon is administratively divided into 8 governorates that include 25 districts, namely: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the North, Akkar, the Bekaa, Baalbek-Hermel, the South, and Nabatieh.

Baalbek-Hermel Governorate recorded the highest voter turnout, with 48.08% participating, where they showed commitment to slogans such as "We are committed to our covenant with the Resistance" and "We are people of dignity and loyalty".

Undercover Israeli operation fails

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Undercover Israeli occupation troops launch a covert mission to recover Gaza captives, but the operation ends in failure.

Disguised as displaced Palestinian women, a unit from the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) conducted an operation in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, based on intelligence from the Israeli regime, aiming to free captives.

Hebrew media reported that the mission failed, as the IOF was unable to locate or rescue any captives.

According to Palestinian sources, the IOF unit, dressed in women's clothing, infiltrated west of Salah al-Din Street, north of Khan Younis, allegedly in pursuit of Israeli captives.

The sources confirmed that the IOF failed to achieve its objective. Instead, they killed a Palestinian man and abducted his wife and child.

Enrichment to continue with or without a deal: Iran FM

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has reaffirmed Iran's firm position on its rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), emphasizing that Tehran would not accept any compromise on a hard-earned scientific achievement.

"Our stance on Iran's rights as an NPT member is crystal clear," he said. "Mastering enrichment technology is a homegrown success—built through decades of sacrifice, both in terms of blood and resources. There is no scenario in which Iranians will permit deviation from this path."

The senior Iranian diplomat added that the path to a lasting agreement remains open, should Washington prove ready for a serious and realistic approach.

"If the United States is genuinely interested in ensuring that Iran will not possess nuclear weapons, a deal is within reach," Araghchi said. "We are prepared for a constructive conversation to achieve a solution that guarantees this outcome permanently. But enrichment in Iran will continue—with or without a deal." ▶Page 3

U.S. sanctions signal hostility, not diplomacy: Iran

TEHRAN – Iran has strongly condemned the latest round of U.S. sanctions, saying they reveal Washington's persistent hostility toward the Iranian nation and cast serious doubt on American claims of diplomatic goodwill.

At a weekly press conference on Monday, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Esmail Baghaei accused the United States of pursuing a path that not only undermines negotiations but also amounts to what he described as a "crime against humanity."

"Every new sanctions package increases the burden of responsibility on American officials," Baghaei told reporters. "It's a clear message that the U.S. is not committed to diplomacy and instead holds a fundamentally antagonistic stance toward the people of Iran."

The spokesman stressed that Iran remains fully transparent in its nuclear activities and continues to advocate for dialogue and peaceful resolution. "Our nuclear program is entirely peaceful. We have nothing to hide. Our willingness to negotiate demonstrates our seriousness," he said, warning that continued sanctions would only erode Tehran's trust in the negotiation process.

Despite ongoing indirect nuclear talks between Iran and the United States—currently mediated by Oman and having undergone four rounds so far—Baghaei said Washington's actions contradict its rhetoric. "How can the U.S. claim to seek diplomacy while expanding measures that aim to economically and politically suffocate the Iranian nation?" he asked. ▶Page 2

“With Dali’s World” exhibition underway at Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex

TEHRAN – The Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in Tehran is hosting the art exhibition “With the World of Dali,” showcasing Salvador Dali’s artworks preserved in Niavarn Palace treasures.

This exhibition features a collection of works by the renowned Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dali. It opened to art enthusiasts on May 17 and will run until May 31 at the In Royal Palace of the complex, Honaronline reported.

The displayed works are selected from the treasures of Niavaran Museums and will introduce a portion of the artistic heritage preserved in this historical complex to visitors.

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) was a Spanish surrealist artist renowned for his technical skill, precise draftsmanship, and the striking and bizarre images in his work.

Dalí's artistic repertoire included painting, sculpture, film, graphic arts, animation, fashion, and photography, at times in collaboration with other artists. He also wrote fiction, poetry, autobiography, essays, and criticism. Major themes in his work include dreams, the subconscious, religion, science and his closest personal relationships. ▶Page 8

Pezeshkian urges Muslim academics to address common challenges

TEHRAN – In a meeting with representatives from Islamic countries' higher education ministries on Monday, President Masoud Pezeshkian called for Muslim scholars to work together to address the challenges faced by their nations.

He emphasized that such gatherings provide an opportunity for a unified understanding among Islamic scientists. Pezeshkian, a trained heart surgeon, also noted that 90% of research remains unused due to a lack of collaboration between researchers and policymakers, urging unity among Islamic countries to reclaim their historical scientific position and support each other in various fields.



TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Iran is a reliable and powerful partner

Etemad analyzed the cooperation between Iran, China, and Russia. It wrote: Selecting Tehran as a reliable partner by Russia and China indicates the special position and mutual trust between these three emerging powers. Relations between Iran and Russia are based on common interests and common concerns about the increasing influence of the West. This cooperation between Iran and Russia is not only in the interests of the two countries but also changes the balance of power in the region in favor of the emerging powers. Relations between Iran and China are also based on common economic and political interests. Economic and military cooperation with China is another component of Iran's foreign policy. Despite U.S. sanctions, trade relations between Tehran and China, especially China's oil imports from Iran, have increased. This cooperation helps Iran overcome the economic and political challenges resulting from U.S. sanctions. Given geopolitical developments, Iran is establishing its position as an independent and influential regional power in the multipolar world order. Strategic cooperation with Russia and China gives Iran greater bargaining power on the international stage and allows the country to resist Western pressure.

Ettelaat: Why should we welcome Saudi entry into Iran-US talks?

In an interview with Hassan Beheshtipour, an international affairs analyst, Ettelaat discussed the possible influence of Saudi Arabia on the Iran-U.S. negotiations. He said: Since the Saudi government and the Islamic Republic have laid the foundation to end disputes and establish interaction, Saudi Arabia can play a role in a possible easing of the atmosphere between Iran and the United States. (Elsewhere in his remarks) He said the main reason for the problems we are facing in various sectors is the cruel sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and some European countries. Therefore, in a situation where the pressure on the people has exacerbated the crisis, we have no choice but to be realistic in negotiations and avoid emotional positions and prepare the ground for the lifting of sanctions. To reach a favorable agreement and keep the path of negotiations open, everything that is necessary must be taken seriously. Accordingly, there is no problem with Saudi Arabia or any other country entering our negotiations with the United States. We can achieve our demands through intelligence in negotiations and

use the capacity of regional countries, including Saudi Arabia, to achieve results.

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Iran-Arab proximity will reduce US influence in the region

The membership of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt in BRICS can be considered a remarkable and significant step in the international politics of the Arab world. Beijing's mediation between Tehran and Riyadh and the Saudi role in the recent mediation between the Russians and the Americans have worried the United States, as the only influential international power in the region. In such a context and considering the strong relations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with China, India, and Russia, any strengthening of cooperation between Tehran and the Arab sheikhdoms will practically lead to a decrease in the historical influence of the United States in the region. In fact, through its close relations with Beijing and Moscow, the Islamic Republic can act as a bridge between the Arab League and the Eastern governments and provide a suitable platform for increasing regional cooperation between Tehran and the Arabs with the Eastern powers; a policy that will end the three decades of the White House's total dominance in the international community.

Iran: Lifting sanctions is a prerequisite to return to global engagement

The Iran newspaper wrote in a note: In a situation where the Middle East region is still involved in intense political, security, and humanitarian crises and the Western world is also facing a wave of strategic uncertainties, the best option for Iran is to open the path of dialogue with the United States, which can not only reduce the intensity of sanctions pressure but also stabilize Iran's regional position. If the nuclear deal is revived once again, it can lead to the lifting of a significant part of the anti-Iran sanctions and help stabilize the region where Europe also has significant interests. It should not be forgotten that sanctions have not only targeted the Iranian people but also effectively paralyzed diplomacy. Lifting these sanctions is a prerequisite for a return to rationality and global engagement. Iran, a country with enormous economic and geopolitical potential, deserves to be part of the future regional and global order, not on the margins. But this is only possible through diplomacy; a diplomacy that must proceed with intelligence, clarity, and the support of national will.

Iranian minister meets Pope Leo XIV in Vatican, delivers president's message



Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Reza Salehi Amiri (R) presents the Iranian President's message to Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican, May 18, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iranian Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Reza Salehi Amiri, met with Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican on Sunday, reaffirming Iran's commitment to cultural diplomacy and interfaith dialogue.

During the meeting, Salehi Amiri conveyed a message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and emphasized Iran's long-standing belief in the unifying principles of the world's great faiths.

"We believe all divine religions are rooted in a single truth—one that calls humanity to dignity, compassion, and peace," Salehi Amiri stated. He stressed that Iran's approach to global engagement goes beyond politics, rooted instead in the country's rich civilizational heritage.

"Our cultural legacy serves as a universal language of connection," he added. "In today's world, such a language is essential for building a more humane and cooperative future."

Pope Leo XIV praised the historical and cultural depth of the Iranian people, noting that when faith is expressed through respect and dialogue, "it holds the power to transform the world." He welcomed all efforts that aim to bring nations and peoples closer together.

Pope Leo XIV, elected on May 8, is the first American to lead the Catholic Church in its two-millennia history. Originally from Chicago, the 69-year-old spent much of his clerical career in Peru before heading the Vatican's influential Dicastery for Bishops.

U.S. sanctions signal hostility, not diplomacy: Iran

From page 1 ► **'Nuclear enrichment not up for debate'**

Turning to remarks from U.S. officials suggesting Iran should be denied even minimal enrichment capabilities, Baghaei firmly rejected the idea. "Enrichment is a natural and non-negotiable component of our peaceful nuclear industry," he said, adding that this technology is essential for Iran's energy future.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi echoed the stance during a separate engagement, warning the U.S. against making "unrealistic demands." He stressed that Tehran will continue its enrichment activities regardless of the outcome of negotiations. "Statements coming from Washington are often detached from the realities at the table," Araghchi noted during a phone call with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan.

In an interview with ABC's "This Week," Witkoff said the Trump administration's "red line" in nuclear talks with Iran is that Tehran cannot maintain any ability to enrich uranium.

"We have one very, very clear red line, and that is enrichment. We cannot allow even 1% of an enrichment capability," Witkoff added.

"Everything begins... with a



Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei addresses reporters at his weekly press conference in Tehran on May 19, 2025.

deal that does not include enrichment... because enrichment enables weaponization, and we will not allow a bomb to get here."

'Snapback mechanism lacks legal justification'

Responding to recent discussions among European nations about invoking the JCPOA's snapback mechanism—a provision allowing the reimposition of suspended UN sanctions—Baghaei warned against such a move. "The snapback mechanism lacks legal justification. Our nuclear activities are peaceful and fully transparent," he stated.

He added that triggering the mechanism would signal a complete abandonment of diplo-

macy, calling it a "double-edged sword" that would invite reciprocal Iranian measures. "We hope European countries reconsider their approach and refrain from misusing tools of intimidation," Baghaei urged.

'Israel is sabotaging peace efforts'

Baghaei also accused Israel of playing a "destructive and destabilizing" role in the region and the nuclear talks. He cited numerous Israeli actions, including the assassinations of Iranian scientists and attacks across the region, as evidence of Tel Aviv's intent to derail peace and provoke conflict.

He cautioned that Israel may attempt to frame Iran in a bid to

escalate tensions in the region. "All countries must remain alert to ensure international peace is not undermined by Israeli provocations," he warned.

The spokesman praised Oman and Qatar for their constructive mediation in the ongoing negotiations, highlighting Tehran's strong diplomatic ties with Persian Gulf states. He noted that Foreign Minister Araghchi had recently discussed regional developments with officials from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, and Qatar.

Baghaei emphasized that Iran hopes for greater regional cooperation based on mutual interests and independence from external influence. "We expect our neighbors to support regional stability and avoid falling into the agendas of non-regional actors," he said.

Closing the briefing, Baghaei confirmed that discussions on a long-term strategic partnership treaty with Russia are progressing. He said initial groundwork began under the late Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who died in a helicopter crash in May 2024. "The Iranian Parliament will soon review the treaty, continuing his legacy of diplomacy and strategic vision," he added.

Marco Rubio and the threat to diplomacy in the Iranian nuclear conflict

By Xavier Villar

MADRID – In recent weeks, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has made a series of strong statements about Iran's nuclear program that go beyond reaffirming a traditional stance within the American establishment.

These remarks reflect an internal division between political currents with opposing views. While figures like JD Vance favor a more isolationist policy focused on domestic interests, Rubio embodies the neoconservative and interventionist wing that has historically shaped Washington's foreign policy.

This clash of approaches complicates a path that Tehran has consistently favored: a diplomatic solution. In an already fragile international context, this internal dynamic and Rubio's headline rhetoric risk closing the door to a negotiated agreement that would, in the long term, benefit both parties.

Rubio, in recent interviews with networks such as CBS and Fox News, linked Iran's right to uranium enrichment with an imminent danger to regional and global security, suggesting that this capability could be rapidly used to produce a nuclear weapon. However, this interpretation distorts the legal and technical framework that Iran has repeatedly defended, categorically denying any military intent in its nuclear program. For Tehran, such discourse is perceived as an act of distrust and hostility that undermines the creation of a conducive environment for negotiations and may perpetuate a cycle of sanctions and escalating tensions.

Rubio and the Interpretation of an imminent nuclear threat

In a recent interview aired on CBS's Face the Nation, Rubio stated: "If one is capable of enriching at any level, they basically also have the ability to rapidly enrich to weapons-grade levels." He added that this issue had been a fundamental sticking point in the 2015 nuclear agreement—the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—which Washington unilaterally with-

drew from in 2018.

In subsequent remarks to Fox News, Rubio was even more explicit and alarmist: "Once you reach 60% [enrichment], you are 90% of the way there. Essentially, you become a threshold nuclear state, which is basically what Iran has become. They are on the brink of having a nuclear weapon. If they decide to do it, they could do it very quickly." According to the secretary, stockpiling uranium enriched to 60% would facilitate a rapid conversion to 90%, which corresponds to the technical capacity to manufacture a nuclear warhead.

While these assertions are cloaked in technical language, they reveal a clear political will. This approach fits within an interventionist vision aiming to restrict Iran's autonomous action, which in practice would amount to demanding a de facto renunciation of its national sovereignty. Such a stance, beyond being scarcely acceptable for Tehran, risks hardening positions and complicating the reopening of effective diplomatic channels.

From Iran's perspective, the right to develop nuclear tech-

Rubio's hardline rhetoric risks closing the door to a negotiated agreement that would, in the long term, benefit both parties



Diplomacy as Iran's preferred path

Historically, Tehran has shown a preference for diplomatic negotiation. The 2015 nuclear deal, reached after years of multilateral talks, was an attempt to establish clear limits and monitoring mechanisms for Iran's nuclear program in exchange for lifting international sanctions that had damaged its economy.

Since the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and the reimposition of sanctions, relations between the two countries have considerably worsened. Nevertheless, diplomacy remains Iran's primary option, and Tehran

has insisted on keeping the door open for a negotiated solution that respects its rights and ensures regional security.

Within this framework, public statements by U.S. figures with rigid rhetoric such as Rubio's may become obstacles to building the trust necessary to advance dialogue. The perception that Washington will not accept any concessions regarding enrichment could harden Tehran's stance and reduce its willingness to make programmatic concessions.

Risks of eroding the diplomatic path

The hardening of U.S. rhetoric not only affects negotiations with Iran but also risks destabilizing the region. A scenario where Iran feels cornered could lead to military escalation or a

regional arms race, with neighboring countries seeking to develop or acquire their own nuclear capabilities in response.

Moreover, imposing untenable conditions and denying the right to a peaceful nuclear program may alienate allies and international partners advocating for a negotiated solution. Russia and China—key actors in the 2015 negotiations—have repeatedly emphasized the importance of keeping dialogue open and respecting international commitments to avoid conflict.

A realist perspective: The benefits of a diplomatic agreement for the U.S.

From the standpoint of international relations realism, Professor John Mearsheimer analyzes state actions through the lens of security and power balance. According to this approach, a nuclear agreement with Iran could be beneficial for the United States for several strategic reasons.

First, an agreement that establishes clear limits program would contribute to easing tensions in a region historically marked by complex challenges. A transparent framework of cooperation can help prevent misunderstandings and reduce the risk of accidental confrontations.

Second, building mutual trust and predictability is essential for long-term stability. An effective international monitoring system enables all parties involved to have greater confidence in each other's peaceful intentions, fostering an environment where dialogue and cooperation can thrive.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Enrichment to continue with or without a deal: Iran FM

From Page 1 ► Additionally, Araghchi said that while the United States is free to tailor its public messaging to domestic audiences and special interest groups, Tehran will remain committed to conducting negotiations in a professional and discreet manner.

“In addressing the talks regarding Iran’s peaceful nuclear program, our U.S. interlocutors are naturally free to publicly state whatever they deem fit to ward off special interest groups—actors that have historically influenced the agendas of past administrations,” Araghchi said, referencing growing discrepancies between U.S. officials’ public and private stances.



“Iran can only control what we Iranians do,” he continued. “And that is to avoid negotiating in public—especially considering the dissonance we are witnessing between U.S. statements

from one week to the next.”

This concern was echoed by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei during his weekly press briefing on Monday. Responding to a question,

Baghaei remarked: “The shifting positions of the American side is like a game of Snakes and Ladders. Every time we hold a negotiating session, we feel that some progress has been made and that at the very least, both sides are beginning to understand each other’s perspectives. Unfortunately, as soon as the American delegation returns to Washington, they adopt entirely different positions.”

He added, “This recurring and repeated uncertainty makes any negotiation process extremely difficult and raises further doubts about whether the other side is truly serious in these talks. This is a question that the American side must answer.”

High-profile attendance marks conclusion of Tehran Dialogue Forum

TEHRAN – Tehran Dialogue Forum came to an end on Monday, with the second and final day involving a compelling mix of expert panels, probing interviews with influential voices, and keynote addresses from Iran’s leading figures.

AI’s economic and geopolitical ripple effects, the evolving face of Resistance in West Asia, and the promise of regional corridors dominated discussions as the Tehran Dialogue Forum drew to a close. High-profile interviews with figures like Iraq’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein, and Turkmenistan’s Top Diplomat Rasit Meredow kept the spotlight firmly on these crucial issues. A speech by Iran’s Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf was the last event of the day.

Non-governmental and independent figures were also an important part of the TDF of 2025. “The private sector took part in the forum for the first time this year,” said Saeed Khatibzadeh, head



Iranian diplomat and chief organizer of TDF, Saeed Khatibzadeh, getting interviewed by the Tehran Times on Monday

of Iran’s Institute for Political and International Studies and the event’s chief organizer, in remarks to the Tehran Times. “Of course, there were many ambassadors, ministers, and regional officials who were present during the discussions. But this

year, we particularly tried to invite guests from all walks of life.”

Khatibzadeh said the avid attendance showed the region has “accepted” the TDF. “This forum is the fruit of four decades of Iranian diplomacy. I think the region has come to the realization that together, we can converse and find solutions to West Asia’s challenges.”

During a press conference towards the end of the day, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi hailed “unprecedented” attendance by foreign intellectuals and officials in the forum, which showed Tehran enjoys the potentiality to become a center for the exchange of views on regional and international issues.

During discussions with the Tehran Times correspondent, dignitaries from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Oman said they were looking forward to attending the TDF again next year.

Iran summons UK charge d’affaires over unlawful detention of nationals

TEHRAN — Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the United Kingdom’s charge d’affaires on Monday in response to the “suspicious and unjustified” arrests of Iranian citizens in the UK, denouncing the allegations as “politically motivated fabrications.”

The diplomatic rebuke follows British authorities’ recent charges against three Iranians under its so-called National Security Act, which Tehran has dismissed as part of a broader campaign to exert pressure on Iran.

During the meeting, Shahram Qazizadeh, Director-General of the Foreign Ministry’s Third Western Europe Department, demanded an official explanation from the UK government for the “unlawful detention” of Iranian nationals and the refusal to grant timely consular access.

Qazizadeh emphasized that the arrests, conducted without evidence and in violation of international norms, were “contrary to accepted

principles of international law and human rights,” including the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

“The responsibility for the adverse consequences of such actions, which appear driven by political motives to pressure Iran, lies entirely with the British government,” Qazizadeh stated, adding that London has deliberately withheld information from Iranian diplomatic channels.

The diplomatic clash follows UK authorities charging three Iranian nationals—Mostafa Sepahvand (39), Farhad Javadi Manesh (44), and Shapoor Qalehali Khani Noori (55)—with surveillance and reconnaissance activities.

The claims, framed as links to a foreign intelligence service, have centered on Iran despite lacking concrete evidence, raising questions about the motives behind the UK’s allegations.

The men, who had sought asylum in the UK between 2016 and 2022,

appeared in Westminster Magistrates’ Court on May 17 and face accusations of planning “serious violence.”

Tehran has consistently rejected these allegations, denouncing them as unfounded, politically motivated accusations intended to damage Iran’s global reputation.

Later on Monday, in a tit-for-tat response, the UK Foreign Office summoned Iran’s Ambassador Ali Mousavi, asserting that the charges against the three Iranians were part of efforts to “protect national security.”

A British spokesperson claimed, “Iran must be held accountable for its actions,” though no concrete evidence has been publicly disclosed to substantiate the allegations.

Earlier this month, British “counterterrorism operations” led to the arrest of five Iranians, though they were later released without charge.

In response, the Iranian Embassy

in London issued a sharp statement on Saturday, dismissing the matter as “Much Ado About Nothing!”—a remark that showed Tehran’s skepticism toward British counterterrorism claims, which Iranian officials argue have been weaponized to discredit the Islamic Republic.

The arrests coincide with increased diplomatic complexities between Iran and Western powers, particularly as indirect nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington have been ongoing since last month.

Some analysts suggest that the UK’s actions stem from frustration over its diminished role in diplomatic affairs, prompting British officials to apply pressure as a means of influencing negotiations.

Iran, meanwhile, has consistently cautioned against foreign interference in its internal affairs—particularly as European powers continue to take politically motivated and counterproductive measures.

menid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires.

During the colonial era, Britain occupied the islands in 1921, administering them under a protectorate system managed through local Arab sheikhdoms.

Throughout this period, Iran remained firm in its position, repeatedly lodging diplomatic protests and reaffirming sovereignty through symbolic acts such as flag-raising ceremonies and official visits.

On November 30, 1971, Iran finalized the restoration of control by signing a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sharjah for Bu Musa while reintegrating the uninhabited Tunbs without dispute.

After its federation in 1971, the UAE advanced claims based on Britain’s colonial-era arrangements—a rationale that Iran dismisses as legally void.

Beyond its historical and legal dimensions, the islands are pivotal to Iran’s defense strategy, offering critical oversight of the Strait of Hormuz—a global energy chokepoint through which nearly 20% of the world’s oil passes.

TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei categorically rejected the Arab League’s “unfounded and unacceptable” claims to the Iranian islands of Bu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb, reaffirming Iran’s “inalienable sovereignty” over the trio of territories.

The remarks came Monday in response to the final communiqué of the 34th Arab League Summit in Baghdad, which absurdly supported the United Arab Emirates’ disputed claims to the islands.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran considers any claim to these islands contrary to the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, including respect for territorial integrity and national sovereignty,” Baqaei wrote in a statement.

He condemned the Arab League’s inclusion of the matter in its summit statement as “politically motivated” and urged the bloc to “acknowledge unchangeable historical and geographical realities” instead of promoting “baseless narratives.”

Baqaei further advised the Arab League

to prioritize “strengthening regional understanding and cooperation” rather than echoing the UAE’s “decades-long campaign of distortion.”

The Iranian spokesman stressed that Iran’s ownership of the islands is rooted in “centuries of historical, legal, and geographical evidence,” dismissing the UAE’s claims as a “revisionist effort” fueled by external actors.

Iran’s historical and legal sovereignty over the islands

The three islands—Bu Musa, Greater Tunb, and Lesser Tunb—are located in the strategically significant Strait of Hormuz and have been under Iranian administration since November 30, 1971.

Following the withdrawal of British colonial forces, Iranian troops swiftly reasserted control over the territories.

Deeply intertwined with Iran’s civilizational identity, historical records—from ancient maps to treaties—consistently depict the islands as integral parts of Iranian territory, with governance tracing back to the Achae-

Iran’s women’s sitting volleyball team to compete in PVAO

TEHRAN – Iran’s women’s sitting volleyball team will participate in the 2025 ParaVolley Asia Oceania Zonal Championships (PVAO).

The competition is scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China, from June 9 to 19.

The 2025 PVAO will feature both women’s and men’s sections, but Iran will only compete in the women’s category. The participating teams include China, Iran, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Mongolia, and Australia, according to the team’s technical director, Hadi Rezaei.

“China are the Paralympic champions and one of the strongest teams in Asia. Japan are also ranked 11th in the world, so the main competition for the first to third places will be among China, Iran, and Japan,” Rezaei stated.

“Our team are preparing for the 2026 Asian Para Games and the 2028 Paralympic Games. We need to organize more training camps and send the team to international tournaments to accelerate their development. Our women possess enormous potential that requires greater support so they can showcase their abilities.”

“Our women are currently ranked second in Asia and tenth in the world. With more investment, we can solidify our position and improve further. Although the program in China might not produce the expected results, we are confident that, in Nagoya, we can perform at our very best,” Rezaei concluded.

Paykan win promotion to the 2025/26 PGPL

TEHRAN – Paykan Football Club secured their promotion to the 2025/26 Iran Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) after defeating Mes Kerman 2-1 on Sunday.

Previously, Fajr Sepasi had earned promotion to the PGPL as champions of the Azadegan League.

Havadar and Nassaji were relegated from the PGPL to the First Division (Azadegan League).

Paykan are one of Iran’s oldest football clubs, established in 1967.

Persepolis complete signing of Reza Shekari

TEHRAN – Persepolis football club announced Sunday night that they have completed the signing of attacking midfielder Reza Shekari from Sepahan.

Shekari, 26, scored 10 goals during his two seasons with Sepahan. He joins Persepolis on a two-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

Shekari began his career at Zob Ahan and has also played for Rubin Kazan in Russia, as well as Iranian clubs Tractor and Gol Gohar.

He is the fourth new signing for Persepolis this season, following Thievy Bifouma, Mojtaba Fakhrian, and Amin Kazemian.

Persepolis, the most decorated football team in Iran’s Persian Gulf Pro League, are determined to win the title in the upcoming season.

Tabiat lose to Al Riyadi in 2025 WASL Final

TEHRAN – Iranian basketball team Tabiat lost to Lebanon’s Al Riyadi 104-77 in the 2025 FIBA West Asia Super League (WASL) final Sunday night.

As usual, Wael Arakji led the way in the vic-

tory with 28 points and 6 assists, scoring 12 of his output in the opening frame alone to help his side overcome a tepid start and seize control for good.

Marcus Georges-Hunt was also crucial in the win with 24 points and 5 rebounds as his chase for the WASL championship finally came to an end after falling short with Kuwait Club in the last two seasons.

Tabiat, on the other hand, was led by center Ivan Buva with 15 points and 5 rebounds as they could only for a runner-up finish – nonetheless the highest finish for an Iranian team by far in WASL.

Sina Vahedi made 14 points. Amir Gholizadeh scored 12, while Perry Petty and Arman Zangeneh added 11 each.

Al Riyadi and Tabiat will now turn their attention to the BCL Asia 2025 in June 9-15 as the WASL representatives, with the former coming in looking for a repeat in the highest club competition in the continent.

Akrami to officiate at 2027 AFC Asian Cup Qualification

TEHRAN – Iran’s Hassan Akrami has been chosen to officiate the match between the Philippines and Tajikistan in the third round of 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualification.

The match has been scheduled for June 10 at the New Clark City Stadium in Capas, the Philippines.

Akrami will be assisted by his countrymen Farhad Farhadpour and Amirmohammad Davoudzadeh.

A total of 24 teams participate in the third round for the final six slots in the 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

Hossein Rezazadeh, a true Iranian hero: IWF

TEHRAN – Weightlifting symbolizes strength, and the super heavyweight category is often associated with the ‘strongest men’ on earth.

Lifters shining in this category are often elevated to a stardom status, both in the history of the sport and of their respective country. Hossein Rezazadeh, from Iran, is certainly a good example of this principle.

Born in 1978, he started to shine at the end of the 1990s, with one bronze medal at the 1998 Asian Games, the gold at the 1999 Asian Championships, and another third place at the 1999 World Championships.

Arrived in Sydney (AUS) for his first Games in 2000, Rezazadeh breaks the hegemony of Soviet/Russian lifters in the heaviest category, earning his Olympic title in 212.5-260-472.5.

It was the initial highlight of an outstanding career that would include another Olympic victory in Athens 2004 and four World wins, from 2002 to 2006. He triumphed also in the 2002 and 2006 editions of the Asian Games.

Moreover, the Iranian ace established six World Records during his career, with bests of 213kg in Snatch and 263.5kg in Clean & Jerk.

In 2008, before the Games in Beijing, he was advised by his medical team to stop weightlifting, and much to the surprise of his fans, he announced his retirement, iwf.sport reported.

A true hero in his country, he was immediately invited to join the Iranian Weightlifting Federation as special advisor (then manager and coach) and initiated also a political career, namely as a member of Tehran’s City Council. Having won ‘Iran’s Sportsperson of the Year’ award on four occasions, he is the only athlete in his country to have achieved such an accolade.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$189m to Turkey in a month



TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$189 million to Turkey 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 Turkey was Iran's fourth top non-oil export destination in the mentioned month.

Exporting commodities valued at \$538 million to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third source of non-oil import in the said month, the IRICA report added.

As previously announced by Abolfazl Akbarpour, the deputy head of IRICA for planning and international affairs, Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$6.8 billion to Turkey in the past Iranian calendar year, which ended on March 20, 2025.

Akbarpour said that Turkey was Iran's fourth top export destination in the previous year.

Exporting commodities valued at \$12.4 billion to Iran, Turkey was Iran's third top source of import in that year, the official added.

On April 14, the secretary of Iran's Free Trade and Special Economic Zones High Council said that Iran is pursuing the creation of a joint free trade zone with Turkey, as part of broader efforts to resolve long-pending investment challenges and boost cooperation with neighboring countries.

Speaking to Tasnim News Agency, Reza Masrour said a special task force has been formed to resolve unresolved projects that have lingered in Iran's free zones for over 15 years.

"We are actively following up on the establishment of a joint free trade zone with Turkey," he noted, adding that a joint working group between Iran and Turkey will take charge of advancing the plan.

Masrour stressed the need for a major shift in investment strategy across the country's free trade zones, stating, "We must move decisively beyond what was done in the past.

Investment incentives should be swiftly ap-

Tehran, Baku urge acceleration of joint transit corridor projects

TEHRAN – Senior officials from Iran and Azerbaijan stressed the need to expedite the construction of key transit routes during a high-level meeting in Tehran, highlighting the strategic importance of enhancing connectivity between the neighboring countries.

Ali Akbar Ahmadian, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, met with Hikmet Farhad oglu Hajiyev, foreign policy advisor to the President of Azerbaijan, on Sunday to discuss advancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in the transport and infrastructure sectors.

Ahmadian said the historical ties and geographic proximity between Iran and Azerbaijan necessitate the elevation of economic and political relations to their highest potential. Referring to the recent visit by Iran's president to Baku, he noted that Tehran is committed to fully implementing the agreements made during that trip

'IRISL shipped 27m tons of goods in past year despite sanctions'

TEHRAN – The Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines (IRISL) transported 27 million tons of cargo last year, continuing its operations despite Western sanctions, according to the company's Head Mohammad-Reza Modarres Khiabani.

Speaking at a press briefing hosted by the Tehran Stock Exchange on Sunday, Khiabani highlighted IRISL's strategic role in Iran's economy and its frontline position in confronting international sanctions.

"IRISL has been listed on the stock market since 2008, with its main shareholders being pension funds," he said, adding that the company's fleet has a total capacity of 5.0 million

proved and implemented by each zone's board of directors."

To facilitate bilateral cooperation, a joint forum is planned for July this year, bringing together Iranian and Turkish free zone officials and investors in one of Iran's free trade zones.

The official said that each zone must update its investment offerings and identify sector-specific priorities to attract investors based on its unique capacities.

He added that investor satisfaction is critical, and new investment decisions are often influenced by the experiences of previous investors.

He criticized prolonged unresolved projects, noting that some have remained inactive for up to 15 years. "Creating task forces is necessary, but not enough. Problems must be addressed fundamentally.

CEOs must be personally involved, and outcomes should be achieved within six months."

On March 11, Iran's ambassador to Turkey announced a significant rise in bilateral trade between Tehran and Ankara, stating that the trade volume between the two nations reached \$11.8 billion last year and has surpassed \$17.5 billion as of February this year. The figure is expected to hit \$19 billion by year-end.

According to IRNA, citing Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, Mohammad-Hossein Habibollahzadeh made the remarks during a virtual session of the Iran-Turkey Joint Transport Committee, emphasizing the importance of transit development.

He noted that transit and transport volumes between the two countries have increased by \$7.0 billion this year, though further infrastructural improvements are required in rail, air, maritime, and port sectors.

Habibollahzadeh highlighted the significant traffic between Iran and Turkey, stating that six million passengers and approximately 330,000 trucks crossed the two countries' borders last year.

In response to the growing trade volume, both countries have agreed to increase border crossings from three to five. Expanding rail connectivity and increasing flights are also part of the agenda.

The envoy welcomed the swift follow-up on recent meetings between the two countries' transport ministers, which reflects a strong commitment to expanding transport and logistics cooperation.

as well as previous bilateral accords.

"Accelerating the development of transit routes between our countries is a strategic necessity," Ahmadian said, adding that these projects must be pursued at the highest levels to overcome existing obstacles to economic and trade cooperation.

Hajiyev echoed the sentiment, stating that the Iranian president's visit to Baku opened a new chapter in bilateral relations. He noted that the signed cooperation documents between Tehran and Baku reflect a growing dynamism in their ties that is expected to continue.

Hajiyev also underscored the strategic value of transit corridors passing through Iran, expressing Azerbaijan's strong commitment to expanding trade, banking cooperation, and joint energy field development with its southern neighbor.

deadweight tons (DWT).

While primarily engaged in maritime transport, IRISL also operates in rail and road logistics, although its non-maritime units are not solely dedicated to supporting sea transport.

Khiabani stated that IRISL ranks first in the region and 18th globally in cargo transportation. Its fleet is active in the Caspian Sea as well as southern Iranian ports, and also provides support, operational, and logistical services.

He noted that the company has a significant footprint in training seafarers, with 70 percent of the country's maritime workforce having been educated through IRISL's training institute.

Secretary-General Nurlan Yermekbayev told Tehran Times: SCO, with Iran's vigorous involvement, continues its efforts to preserve peace and security

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN- Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Nurlan Yermekbayev arrived in Tehran on Friday night to participate in the Tehran Dialogue Forum (TDF), and hold bilateral meetings with Iranian officials, including Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araqchi, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, and Chairman of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Ebrahim Azizi.

The three-day visit of the SCO secretary-general was aimed at expanding cooperation in the economic, political, and security fields.

During the official's stay in Iran, the Tehran Times conducted an exclusive interview with him which comes as follows.

What benefits and advantages does Iran gain from joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as a full member?

Over 24 years since its establishment, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has evolved into the largest trans-regional association and a key actor in the system of international interaction, making a substantial contribution to regional security, sustainable growth, and the development of business, cultural and humanitarian ties across Eurasia.

In this context, participation in SCO activities— in various formats—offers external partners additional opportunities; and it is no coincidence that global interest to the Organisation continues to be on the rise.

Since acceding to the SCO in 2023 as a member state, Iran has taken a proactive stance in the Organisation's activities.

This engagement not only strengthens the SCO's achievements but also opens new horizons for Tehran to accelerate development and enhance prosperity.

Against the backdrop of escalating crises in various parts of the globe, rising international confrontation and multiplying conflicts, the SCO - with Iran's involvement—pursues its efforts to preserve peace and security.

Responding to the growing number of terrorist and other unlawful acts, including within the Organisation's area of responsibility, we adhere to a policy of zero tolerance toward such manifestations and wage an uncompromising fight against threats and challenges, together with all member states, Iran included, in the interest of regional security and stability.

We note that a range of politi-



cal events is unfolding in Central Asia, around Iran and in West Asia; the SCO, acting on the basis of its Charter and with respect to the UN Charter, responds as promptly as possible—for example, by issuing statements—and, in the spirit of the "SCO community," extends support to its member states, including our Iranian partners.

Economically, Iran's accession to the SCO evidently expands the country's development potential. Iran plays a strategic role as a transit hub through which the key international transport corridors—such as North-South and East-West—are functioning, helping to optimise transport and logistics schemes, simplify customs administration and stimulate trade and economic interaction within the SCO.

Given Iran's substantial hydrocarbon deposits, the country is well placed to play an active role in developing energy cooperation within the SCO and in international projects conducted under its auspices. Membership also broadens access for other Iranian goods to new markets.

To summarize it, the SCO and the Islamic Republic of Iran as an integral part of the Organisation enjoy tangible mutual dividends. The Secretariat provides comprehensive support to the Iranian side in implementing its initiatives and tapping the potential of multilateral cooperation.

What prospects does Iran's membership open up for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation?

As a important regional power with significant economic potential, ancient history and a rich cultural legacy, Iran unquestionably makes a substantial contribution to the SCO's capacity to strengthen peace, security and stability across Eurasia, deepen cooperation in a wide array of practical fields, and enhance mutual understanding and good-neighbourliness among our peoples.

As was noted above, Iran's transit potential can be utilized to broaden access to global markets. Its membership gives SCO

states—especially land-locked ones—additional options for reaching international maritime shipping routes.

Rapid expansion of Iran's industrial sector underpins the growth of trade with SCO members, including the Central Asian countries, Russia, Belarus, India and Pakistan. It is worth noting that the overwhelming share of Iran's inward foreign direct investment comes from countries of the Organisation.

Iran can also share its know-how and export goods and services to SCO states—consulting, engineering, construction, the operation and maintenance of extraction and processing facilities as well as power transmission networks and grids.

The same applies to the agro-industrial complex: Iran's entry into the SCO will help unlock the existing potential to mutually increase supplies of agricultural products and foodstuffs and for spreading agroinnovation.

SCO members are striving to expand the use of national currencies in mutual financial settlements, envisaging this as an important factor in developing trade and investment cooperation. The relevant SCO Roadmap is currently being implemented. Iran's experience in this sphere—including gained within the Asian Clearing Union—can be highly valuable.

In recent years, the SCO has focused on encouraging industrial links. A Programme to Stimulate Industrial Cooperation among the business communities of the member states has been adopted, and the possibility of organizing an annual SCO International Industrial Exhibition ("SCO EXPO") is under discussion. We do note Iran's interest in working together on this track.

Iran also possesses considerable capacities in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, expert training and epidemiological monitoring.

Persian civilization has left a unique footprint in human history, contributing to art, literature, architecture and philosophy.

Iran's participation makes the SCO's humanitarian agenda even more multifaceted, and we expect the country to play an ever more active role in fostering cultural exchanges among member states.

Iran's expertise may help deepen scientific, technological and innovation cooperation within the SCO.

This involves multilateral interaction to create new start-up ecosystems, technoparks, innovation clusters and venture-capital funds, among others. Particular attention is currently being focused on artificial intelligence. Within the Organisation, we are discussing opportunities for joint R&D projects in this field and for establishing the requisite digital infrastructure in the region.

We therefore view the prospects for Iran's participation in the SCO with optimism and are pleased to see the country's increasingly energetic involvement in the Organisation's activities.

What role can Iran, as an SCO member state, play in countering the unilateralist policies that prevail in today's world?

The countries of the "SCO community," Iran included, are committed to turning the Eurasian region into a peaceful, prosperous and harmonious space. To achieve this goal, we seek common ground that respects existing political, economic and cultural realities, strive for mutual understanding, and work toward consensus-based decisions. Such unity of purpose is especially crucial today, amid profound political shifts and economic shocks worldwide.

The SCO Charter states that one of the Organization's principal objectives is cooperation in preventing international conflicts and resolving them by peaceful means. At the 2024 Astana Summit, the heads of the member states adopted the Initiative "On Global Unity for a Just World, Harmony and Development," which stresses that the SCO does not support any actions hostile to other states or regions and calls for rejecting policies of confrontation, mutual threats, blackmail, interference in internal affairs, and the use of illegal military-political, economic or ideological pressure.

To mentoring, dictating, imposing sanctions, unlawful unilateral restrictive measures and confrontational ideologies, we contrapose and advocate for the "Shanghai Spirit": multilateral, non-bloc, depoliticized and non-ideological approach. Iran is fully committed to these principles.

Iran's power generation capacity growing at 2.2% annually: minister

TEHRAN – Iran's annual power generation capacity growth rate stands at 2.2 percent, significantly lower than the global average of 4.6 percent, Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the fifth National Development Fund conference under the theme "Governance of Development and Addressing Imbalances," Aliabadi outlined both the achievements and challenges facing Iran's power sector.

He said the country's total installed capacity has risen from 57,000 megawatts in 1979 to 94,633 megawatts today. Power generation has increased 22-fold since the Islamic Revolution, compared to a 3.4-fold increase globally. Meanwhile, peak consumption hours have grown by 2.3 times, and energy output has multiplied 13 times.

Aliabadi emphasized Iran's technical capabilities, calling the country the region's leader in power engineering, particularly in thermal power generation.

He sought to reassure investors, saying sanctions should not be a concern, as chal-

lenges in the energy sector can be managed domestically.

Electricity access now reaches 97.6 percent of urban areas and 83.9 percent of rural regions. About 81 percent of the country's power is generated from thermal plants, 2 percent from renewables, 3 percent from distributed generation, and 1 percent from nuclear sources.

Aliabadi noted that Iran ranks 18th globally in annual installed capacity growth, while China leads the list. He added that energy consumption in Iran remains below the global average.

He also reported the discovery of 248,000 illegal cryptocurrency mining machines and said that Iranian power plants operate with an efficiency of between 30 and 36 percent.

Highlighting the link between energy consumption and wealth creation, Aliabadi stressed that understanding this dynamic is vital for national economic planning.

He praised the stability of Iran's power grid, saying that no major blackouts have occurred in the past 22 years, even as coun-

tries like Spain and Portugal experienced outages in 2025.

The minister warned that decentralizing control to provinces had undermined grid coordination and posed risks to system stability. Given the dynamic nature of the grid, he said, maintaining its resilience—particularly as Iran exchanges electricity with neighboring countries—remains a top priority.

Aliabadi acknowledged that investment in the electricity sector has slowed since 2018, while consumption has surged, partly due to unauthorized usage and shifting lifestyles in some provinces. The government is now focused on demand-side management and modern infrastructure.

He said that while thermal power generation has increased by 95 percent, rainfall has dropped by 41 percent. Iran's electricity demand in 2021 stood at 57,000 megawatts, a level expected to remain steady this year. Around 500 megawatts of new capacity is being added each month, and numerous projects are underway.

Undercover Israeli operation fails

From page 1 ► The man was identified as Ahmad Sarhan, a commander in the Popular Resistance Committees. Sources stated that Sarhan resisted the IOF until death, preventing his arrest and interrogation.

Israeli news outlet Walla reported that the IOF briefed a senior official about the special operation. However, Hebrew media outlets described the mission as a security and intelligence failure.

Some analysts suggest that a secondary goal of the operation was to capture resistance commander Ahmad Sarhan to obtain crucial intelligence.

His killing, however, indicates the failure of the IOF to secure strategic information regarding the resistance or the whereabouts of captives.

The Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades, the armed wing of the Popular Resistance Committees, confirmed Sarhan's martyrdom. In



a statement, they announced the martyrdom of one of their leading figures and the head of special operations.

According to the statement, Sarhan was killed on Monday after clashing with Israeli special forces who had infiltrated Khan Younis.

The Brigades praised his "bravery and legacy of holy war and resistance," highlighting his role in operations that targeted Israeli soldiers and inflicted losses.

They emphasized that the assassination of resistance leaders would only "strengthen our determination and resolve to continue the path of holy war and resistance until the Zionist entity is defeated."

Following the failed operation, the Israeli military issued a forced displacement order for Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest city.

Experts note that the Israeli occupation regime is unable to control Gaza, primarily due to

continued popular support for the resistance and despite ongoing starvation, siege, and deteriorating living conditions.

Some military analysts say the Israeli occupation army's chief of staff is aware of these limitations and is pushing for a political alternative.

This development comes as the IOF launches a new large-scale ground offensive in both northern and southern Gaza, under what it calls "Operation Gideon's Chariots."

Since October 2023, the IOF has repeatedly invaded the Gaza Strip but has consistently failed to achieve its declared war objectives.

The Israeli regime is going ahead with its genocide in Gaza, with heavy bombardments on Monday concentrated in the southern areas, leading to more casualties.

The IOF carried out 40 airstrikes in a short period on Khan Younis, including the use of fire belts. At least 46 Palestinians were killed.

Gaza media blackout deepens as Israeli strikes kill five more journalists

From page 1 ► The systematic targeting and killing of journalists in Gaza is not only a humanitarian catastrophe but a direct assault on global press freedom and the right to information.

The attacks are systematic and targeted

Leading press freedom groups—including the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)—have compiled extensive evidence indicating that the targeting of journalists in Gaza is intentional, not incidental.

Many reporters have died in direct attacks on marked press vehicles or while at home. Entire media offices and communication hubs have been obliterated, severely limiting Gaza's ability to report on the ground. CPJ notes that around 10% of Gaza-based journalists have been killed—an astonishingly high fatality rate compared to any other profession.

Yet despite mounting international concern, Israel's justification—that these journalists were linked to militant groups—remains largely unproven.

As Sherif Mansour of CPJ stated, "The Israeli army has killed more journalists in 10 weeks than any other army or entity has in any single year... With every journalist killed, the war becomes harder to document and to understand."

The international response

The international response has included

vocal criticism from the United Nations and major human rights organizations. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, along with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has called the journalist death toll in Gaza "unprecedented" in modern times.

Legal pressure has mounted as well—both RSF and the IFJ have submitted cases to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In May 2024, the ICC's chief prosecutor sought arrest warrants against senior Israeli officials for alleged war crimes.

Over 30 international news outlets have publicly demanded stronger protections for journalists and called for independent investigations. While humanitarian groups continue providing emergency supplies to surviving reporters in Gaza, challenges remain severe.

Israel's restrictions on foreign journalists entering Gaza have left local reporters especially vulnerable and isolated from external support.

The impact on journalism and society

Every journalist killed is a loss of a witness, a story, and a piece of truth. The systematic targeting of media workers has created a near-total information blackout in Gaza, making it nearly impossible for the world to know the full extent of the humanitarian catastrophe.

As CPJ's Carlos Martinez de la Serna emphasized, "Every time a journalist is killed, injured, arrested, or forced to go to exile, we lose fragments of the truth. Those responsible for these

casualties face dual trials: one under international law and another before history's unforgiving gaze".

The destruction of Gaza's media infrastructure and the loss of so many journalists have weakened civil society, reduced government accountability, and left future generations without access to independent local journalism.

The blackout also disrupts humanitarian coordination and emergency response, endangering civilian lives and deepening the crisis.

Conclusion

The staggering number of journalists killed in Gaza points to a growing crisis—not just for press freedom, but for the world's access to truth.

As reporters are deliberately targeted and silenced, the flow of firsthand information from the ground is being cut off. What's happening isn't only a local tragedy—it's a threat to journalism everywhere.

The near-collapse of Gaza's media landscape has stripped the conflict of transparency and stripped civilians of a vital voice. This is more than a warzone—it's where truth is being buried.

If the global community fails to demand justice and put protections in place for journalists, this deadly pattern will continue.

Holding those responsible to account is not optional; it's necessary. Because if the truth is silenced here, it can be silenced anywhere.

The world has failed badly in Gaza

From page 1 ► These heartbreaking scenes, which some of them have been captured by cameras, will not be omitted from the memory of the current and future generations.

In addition, the endless scenes in which mothers and fathers are wailing over the corpses of their mutilated children will remain to haunt human conscience.

Future generations will ask why

the world was so powerless to stop the incessant brutalities by a group of heartless rulers in Israel. They will keep asking: Had the world no tool to stop them?

Unbelievably, future generations will also notice that university students who were crying out against human tragedy in Gaza were accused of anti-Semitism and pro-Palestinian, the budget for their universities was reduced, and protest leaders

were expelled from the universities.

The Gaza tragedy is not a matter of conflict between Muslims and Jews, as a great majority of Jews are against these vicious acts. Gaza is now a symbol of human tragedy.

Only a criminal ruler or rulers can do so much savagery against such a great number of defenseless people. No matter whether these acts are ordered by Netanyahu, who claims to

be a Jew, or Christian accomplices in the West who supply highly sophisticated, deadly arms to Israel.

The world must feel shameful for failing to establish a mechanism to effectively prevent such horrible acts and punish ruthless criminal leaders such as Bibi Netanyahu and other co-criminals. The Western world must also stop talking about human rights, human dignity, protection of civilians from armed conflicts, etc.

A pro-Resistance popular referendum

From page 1 ► In the city of Baalbek, the "Development and Loyalty" coalition, affiliated with the Shiite duo (Hezbollah and the Amal Movement), won in entirety against the "Baalbek, My City" coalition, supported by the Saudi embassy.

The Saudi embassy used electoral funds in a desperate attempt to sow sectarian strife and bribe voters. But all this was to no avail as the difference between the final winners on the "Development and Loyalty" list and the first losers on the "Baalbek, My City" list was approximately 6,000 votes.

Likewise, in Douris, a neighbouring town to Baalbek, the list supported by the Lebanese Forces lost to the list supported by a coalition of the Shiite duo and the Free Patriotic Movement, despite abhorrent sectarian incitement and electoral bribery.

Following its failure in achieving any military objective, the U.S.-led Israeli aggression entrusted the task to the anti-Shiite duo to win the elections, especially in Beirut, despite its failure in the first round of elections held in Mount Lebanon and the North governorates.

Nevertheless, despite all the incitement, the



tide turned against them too in favour of the "Beirut Madinati" coalition. Note that the capital recorded a low voter turnout of around 20%, according to the Ministry of Interior.

Observers affirmed that Beirut's voters found out about the lies of these groups, as well as the discouraging performance of most of their representatives, who call themselves "change MPs" whose narrow interests intersect with the political oligarchy of which they have become a part.

Hence, Beirut's voters voted for the "Beirut Brings Us Together" list, supported by the Shiite duo, which was careful to respect the sectarian balance in the capital.

MP Amin Sherri, a member of Hezbollah's

Loyalty to the Resistance parliamentary bloc, praised "the commitment of the nationalist [Shiite] duo's popular base to the mass turnout and active participation, with the number of Shiite voters exceeding 18,000."

Meanwhile, Lebanese Interior Minister Ahmad Hajar inspected the vote counting process in Beirut, stating, "We will monitor the electoral process in the South next Saturday to affirm sovereignty in all its regions."

Developmentally, little is expected of the municipal elections in light of the financial bankruptcy sweeping Lebanon due to the corruption of the political oligarchy, which has rendered most municipalities unable to meet even the most basic needs, from waste collection to paying the salaries of their workers and employees.

Politically, the election takes on a special dimension, as it comes amid ongoing Israeli aggression that has resulted in a shift in balances and alliances on the local scene. This makes it, specifically on the Shiite duo, a referendum for the popular base of the Resistance, and a focus of attention for many at home and abroad who are betting on the decline of the Resistance

WHO chief says 2 million people are starving in Gaza

"Two million people are starving" in the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned Monday, adding that 160,000 metric tons of food "is blocked at the border just minutes away".

"The risk of famine in Gaza is increasing with the deliberate withholding of humanitarian aid, including food, in the ongoing blockade," he added, Middle East Eye reported.

Speaking at the opening of the annual World Health Assembly, Tedros said that increasing hostilities, evacuation orders, shrinking humanitarian space and the Gaza aid blockade were "driving an influx of casualties to a health system that is already on its knees".

"People are dying from preventable diseases as medicines wait at the border, while attacks on hospitals deny people care, and deter them from seeking it," he said.

Meanwhile, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA said Monday that it was in talks with Israeli authorities on the resumption of aid to Gaza, after Israel announced it would allow a limited amount of food into the besieged territory.

"We have been approached by Israeli authorities to resume limited aid delivery, and we are in discussions with them now on how this would take place given the conditions on the ground," OCHA said in a statement.

Israeli drone targets Lebanese Army checkpoint in southern Lebanon

Israeli occupation forces carried out a direct strike on a Lebanese Army checkpoint on Sunday, in what marks a significant escalation in the ongoing series of cross-border violations by the Israeli enemy in southern Lebanon, Al Manar reported.

According to local reports, an Israeli drone launched two missiles targeting a military checkpoint on the main road connecting the towns of Beit Yahoun and Kounin in the Bint Jbeil district—an essential route that links southern villages to the central sector, particularly to the town of Tebnine.

A civilian small van vehicle sustained a direct hit during the attack while passing the checkpoint. The missiles struck inside the military post, hitting guard positions and defensive structures.

Initial reports indicate that one or two Lebanese soldiers were injured by shrapnel.

After Trump call, Putin says ready to work on truce memorandum



U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, have spoken on the phone for more than two hours amid efforts to reach a ceasefire deal in the war in Ukraine.

Russian state media quote Putin as saying his country is ready to work with Ukraine on a memorandum that establishes a ceasefire.

After speaking to Putin, Trump was due to call Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and NATO leaders.

The diplomatic efforts come as Ukraine says Russia launched its largest drone barrage since the start of its full-scale invasion

in February 2022, firing a total of 273 exploding drones and decoys at several Ukrainian regions.

Israel intensified attacks on Gaza after release of US-Israeli soldier, rights group says

Since the release of American-Israeli soldier Edan Alexander on 12 May, Israeli occupation forces have intensified their genocidal campaign in Gaza, killing an average of 81 Palestinians per day through direct bombardment, and a further 17 per day due to starvation and the denial of access to medical care and essential means of survival, Euro-Med Monitor said in a report on Monday.

"This surge in lethal attacks is part of a broader escalation by the Israeli military, marked by a scorched-earth policy and the systematic destruction of Gaza's remaining residential areas and infrastructure. The ongoing campaign—now in its 19th month—has been characterized by mass killings, enforced starvation, and the deliberate dismantling of life-sustaining systems, with the explicit aim of eradicating the Palestinian population in Gaza and eliminating any possibility of return or reconstruction," the rights group explained.

Yemen warns airlines against flights to Ben Gurion amid blockade

A high-ranking Yemeni source warned international airlines against resuming flights to Ben Gurion Airport, stressing that any such move would ignore explicit warnings issued by the Yemeni Armed Forces.

Speaking exclusively to Al Mayadeen, the source stated that companies seeking to restore routes to the Israeli airport should "change their destinations and pay close attention to the warnings from the Yemeni army."

The source emphasized that the Yemeni military remains committed to enforcing an aerial blockade on the Israeli occupation regime, not merely targeting Ben Gurion Airport.

The source further noted that the trajectory of Yemeni missiles and drones toward Ben Gurion and across the occupation regime's airspace is "a steady and intensifying course," adding that the regular breaches of Israeli airspace are "not incidental."

He also underscored that the Yemeni Armed Forces and the Yemeni people "are not deterred by psychological warfare or threats," reaffirming their resolve in the face of attempts to pressure or dissuade their campaign.

Iraqi FM urges stability, inclusivity in Syria

Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein has emphasized the critical need for stability, security and an inclusive political process in Syria following the downfall of Bashar al-Assad's government, stating that all groups and factions must be involved in shaping the Arab nation's future.

"We need stability, security and an inclusive political process in Syria. When we talk about an inclusive political process, we mean the presence of representatives of all groups and components of society in the process, as the ultimate goal is stability in Syria," Hussein noted on the sidelines of the Tehran Dialogue Forum on Monday.

The top Iraqi diplomat underlined that restoration of stability in Syria is impossible without an inclusive political process, because such a process can protect Syrian society and prevent foreign interventions.

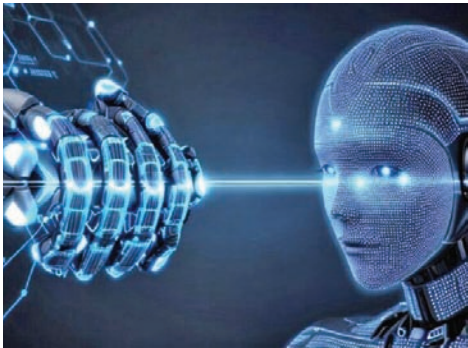
Tehran museum to host workshop on AI and content creation in museums

TEHRAN – In celebration of International Museum Day, Iran's National Museum of Science and Technology will host a two-day collaborative workshop titled "Artificial Intelligence and Content Creation in Museums" on May 20 and 21 (30–31 Ordibehesht), in partnership with ICOM Iran.

According to the museum, the workshop aims to explore the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing content creation for museums and cultural institutions. It will feature both theoretical lectures and practical sessions and will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the museum's conference hall.

The event is intended to help provide a platform for museum professionals, technologists, educators, and cultural practitioners to discuss AI-driven content solutions and the integration of emerging technologies into the museum experience.

Notable speakers in the theoretical section include: Dr. Younes Shokrkhah, faculty mem-



ber at the University of Tehran, Mir Seyyed Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabaei, President of ICOM Iran, among others.

According to organizers, the workshop is designed for those interested in museum design and management, AI and emerging technologies, informal and experiential education, youth engagement, and interdisciplinary cultural-tech innovation.

120 confiscated smuggled objects put on display in Tehran



TEHRAN—An exhibition themed "unfinished narrative; inheritance, forgery and smuggling" with a focus on displaying confiscated smuggled items was launched at the Reza Abbasi Museum in Tehran on Monday.

According to ISNA, over 120 objects pertaining to eras from the second millennium BC to the middle centuries of the Islamic era have been put on display. A portion of them were fake, created for the purpose of profiteering and deception.

The exhibition aims to increase public

awareness about the methods and tricks of cultural heritage forgers and smugglers.

The relics were identified and confiscated by the Tehran Cultural Heritage Protection Unit and in cooperation with law enforcement agencies, in recent years.

The statue of a seated woman, which made headlines last year when it was discovered and seized by police, is among the works on display in the collection. Cultural heritage experts had confirmed that the statue was a fake.

The items like bronze rhytons are seen in the collection, which have been imitated and simulated from historical eras.

In addition, the report on the operations of the Cultural Heritage Protection Unit and the laws related to the excavation, smuggling, purchase, sale, and export of historical objects, and the punishment for the destruction of historical property have also been put on information boards.

The exhibition will run for a week.

Thailand's tourism future hinges on balancing visitor growth with environmental protection

Thailand's tourism sector is at a critical crossroads, facing steep declines in foreign arrivals and intensifying global competition that demand urgent, transformative reforms.

With a renewed focus on sustainable growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment, the industry is embarking on a bold journey to reinvent itself—prioritizing quality experiences, environmental responsibility, and inclusive prosperity to secure a resilient and prosperous future, TTW reported.

Thailand's formerly thriving tourism industry is currently facing considerable difficulties. Foreign visitor arrivals have fallen short of expectations, hit hard by a steep decline in Chinese tourists, rising competition from neighboring countries, and lingering effects of global disruptions and geopolitical tensions. Hotel occupancy is declining, and trust in the government's efforts to rejuvenate the industry is diminishing.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports' plan to invest THB800 million in foreign-based online travel agencies (OTAs) has faced strong opposition, especially from the Thai Hotels Association. At the same time, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has discreetly lowered its original goal for 2025 from 40 million visitor arrivals to a more attainable 35.5 million, aligning closely with the numbers recorded last year. The Federation of Thai Tourism Associations (FETTA) has raised urgent alarms and plans to directly petition the Prime Minister, highlighting tourism's critical role as Thailand's economic backbone.

The recent setbacks make it clear that returning to pre-pandemic norms is insufficient. Thailand's future tourism strategy must focus not just on quantity but on the quality and sustainability of experiences, preserving

the nation's unique culture, communities, and environment.

Tourism isn't just about economic figures—it's about cultural preservation, community well-being, and environmental stewardship. Growth should be measured by how well tourism supports local heritage and avoids the pitfalls of overtourism. Recent reports of disruptive behavior by tourists, especially in hotspots like Phuket and Pattaya, signal rising tensions. Incidents involving fights and open cannabis use tarnish Thailand's family-friendly reputation and deter more conservative visitors, particularly older demographics. Regulating cannabis use zones and strengthening enforcement are critical steps to maintaining Thailand's appeal to higher-value, responsible travelers.

Wellness tourism in Thailand can evolve beyond spas and resorts. Northern provinces like Phayao and Kalasin offer untapped potential with forest therapy, herbal medicine workshops, and spiritual retreats. Positioning Northern Thailand as Asia's premier sanctuary for holistic healing and rejuvenation can attract travelers seeking profound wellness journeys.

Rivers offer a serene avenue for immersive travel. Launching curated river cruises supported by local guides, riverside homestays, and slow travel principles can enrich visitor experiences in the Northeast and North, deepening connections with regional cultures and landscapes.

Thailand's rail network holds nostalgic and sustainable appeal. Revamping it with gourmet sleeper trains, heritage routes, and thoughtfully designed stopovers can offer an eco-friendly alternative to flights and invigorate domestic travel.

Iran opens its first specialized college for classic car restoration

From Page 1 ▶ At the opening ceremony, Hamedreza Soleimani, CEO of the Dafineh museum group, Seyyed Ahmad Mohit-Tabatabai, head of ICOM Iran, and senior restorer Mitra Etezadi were among the distinguished speakers addressing a crowd of cultural experts, museum professionals, and restoration enthusiasts.

Talking to the Tehran Times, Soleimani underlined that the initiative aims to professionalize and preserve Iran's classic automobile heritage while nurturing a new generation of restoration experts.

In his keynote speech, Mohit-Tabatabai emphasized the evolving role of museums in society, especially in light of International Museum Day, which is celebrated annually on May 18. "Children are the true inheritors of museums," he said, underscoring the need for museums, regardless of how specialized they are, to actively engage young audiences. "Museums must create inclusive spaces for future generations. The more diverse their audience, the more successful they are."

Mohit-Tabatabai also highlighted the transformative impact of modern technologies in enhancing accessibility within historic structures and museum environments. He linked the invention of the automobile to broader industrial, cultural, and social transformations in human history, noting that "museums are not merely storage places for objects, but institutions for reflection, innovation, and learning."



tion, innovation, and learning."

He also pointed to environmental challenges, such as drought and global warming, and argued that many of these stem from a loss of traditional knowledge and sustainable practices – another area where museums can play an educational role.

Etezadi, a renowned restorer of ancient and modern artifacts, offered the audience a detailed account of her work on historical royal carriages now on display at the museum.

She spoke about the rigorous process of restoring one of the most prized items in the museum's collection: a 19th-century Nasser al-Din Shah-era carriage, crafted

by the Karl Marius workshop in Vienna, Austria.

Etezadi explained how the detailed documentation of the carriage's features, such as royal insignias, lamps from separate manufacturers, and the deep burgundy and black paint layers, provided insight into both the aesthetic preferences and technological sophistication of the Qajar court. "This was no ordinary vehicle. It's believed that up to 14 monarchs may have ridden in it, which explains the extensive wear and damage," she said.

She added that evidence from historical documents even suggested the presence of elephant handlers at the royal court, based

on records related to the carriages and their accessories.

The college's establishment marks a pivotal step in institutionalizing the knowledge and skills needed to restore and maintain classic automobiles, some of which are deeply intertwined with Iran's royal, political, and social history.

With courses expected to cover everything from traditional craftsmanship to modern conservation science, the school hopes to become a regional hub for classic car restoration.

According to organizers, the launch of this pioneering college signals Iran's commitment to preserving a key aspect of its modern cultural legacy.

Sohaili Village: a culinary jewel in Qeshm Island

TEHRAN – Located along the southern coast of Iran's Qeshm Island, Sohaili Village has carved out a reputation as one of the Persian Gulf's premier destinations for culinary tourism.

Far more than just a coastal stopover, Sohaili is a vibrant hub where authentic southern Iranian flavors meet the rhythms of the sea, creating a gastronomic experience that is as unforgettable as the scenery.

A taste of the sea, fresh from the source

What sets Sohaili apart on Iran's largest island isn't just its panoramic views of the Persian Gulf – it's the village's devotion to fresh, locally sourced seafood. Each morning, the village awakens to the return of fishing boats laden with the day's catch. These treasures of the sea – plump shrimp, firm white fish, and a range of other marine delicacies—go straight from the docks to the kitchens of family-run restaurants lining the coast.

Here, freshness isn't a luxury; it's a daily ritual. The result is a menu rich in traditional Southern Iranian seafood dishes, infused with the warmth of home cooking and the legacy of generations who have lived in harmony with the sea.



Seaside dining

Dining in Sohaili has long been a delight for the tiny village. Open-air seaside restaurants provide not only a feast for the taste buds but also for the senses. Visitors enjoy their meals against the backdrop of rolling waves, rustling palm trees, and the salty scent of the ocean breeze.

Whether it's a sunset dinner of grilled fish or a midday plate of spicy shrimp stew, each meal becomes part of a larger memory—the kind only a truly special destination can offer.

Specialized enameling exhibition inaugurated in Isfahan

TEHRAN— A specialized enameling exhibition themed "fire and pattern" was inaugurated at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Isfahan, concurrent with International Museum Day on May 18, said the deputy director of Isfahan Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Department.

Nouroollah Abdollahi also said that given the planning and with cooperation of Isfahan Enamel Association, the exhibition with a focus on enamel work was inaugurated with presence of 50 outstanding artisans of Isfahan and in form of 100 selected works in a ceremony attended by Isfahan Governor-General Mahdi Jafalinejad, the provincial tourism chief Amir Karamzadeh, and a number of local artists and cultural heritage lovers, CHTN reported.

The fair, which began on May 18 to commemorate the exquisite art of enameling and put on display the remarkable works of enamel artisans, is open to visitors for one month, he concluded.

Although specimens of Iranian enamel work dating back to the 10th century AH and the Safavid era have been found, experts believe it has a more ancient history.

Enameling originated in Iran

and then spread to other countries. French tourist, Jean Chardin, who toured Iran during the Safavid rule, made a reference to an enamel work of Isfahan, which comprised a pattern of birds and animals on a floral background in light blue, green, yellow, and red.

Some experts link the historicity of enameling in Iran to the Arsacides and Sassanid periods. However, the use of this art in the Islamic period is not clear before the reign of the seventh ruler of Mongol Empire's Ilkhanid division in Iran, Ghazan Khan (694-703 AH), who introduced Mongol Persia to Islam. He acquired the science of chemistry in a short period and preferred to use his knowledge and endeavors for the art of enameling.

Origins

Enameling is, in essence, the art of connecting a glass surface to other bodies such as metallic surfaces. In order to make the transparent enamel powder, silica and sodium carbonate are used. For coloring the metal, oxidizing powders are added to the glazing powder containing tin oxide. It is referred to as a laboratory art, as the enameling artist should be skillful in handling chemical reactions.

Fine silver is used in almost all enameling because the enamel (glass) melts and sticks best to a pure metal. In simple words, enameling is the process of making metal models (fine silver usually) and then melting various colors and types of glass onto the model to create an artifact.

In a more scientific approach, vitreous enamel is defined as the colorful result of fusing powdered glass to a substrate by firing, usually between 750 and 850 degrees Celsius. The powder melts, flows, and hardens to a smooth, durable vitreous coating on metal, glass, or ceramic.

The paintings or patterns used for enamel works in Iran are traditional designs depending on the taste and preferences of the artist. In the Iranian version of enameling, copper and silver are the most dominant metals used. There are also special tools used in this ancient artistic endeavor such as furnace, pliers, press machine, brush and so on.

Enamel is usually used to embellish vase, jewelry and candleholder in addition to doors and chandeliers of holy shrines. Isfahan is the most important Iranian enameling hub. Enamel works can be washed with lukewarm water, soap and even or-

dinary detergents.

Enameling masters

The greatest master of enameling of Isfahan is Shokrollah Sanizadeh, whose ancestor was a renowned painter. One of the invaluable works of this master was used for printing a stamp for commemorating Iranian handicrafts in 2008-9 and registered as national heritage. The original artifact is being kept at the Museum of Traditional Arts and Handicrafts.

Among the distinguished students of Sanizadeh, one could refer to Gholamhossein Feizollahi, who is dexterous in designing beautiful patterns.

There are quite a few artists in Isfahan who produce very exquisite enamels. There is great demand for these works because of their artistic value and relatively low price. These artists present their works in Chahar-Bagh Street and the vicinity of Naqsh-e Jahan Square.

Isfahan was the capital of Persia for 200 years during the 17th and 18th centuries, when it enjoyed prosperity.

Kilim weaving, woodworks, and metalworks are among other handicrafts that originated from Isfahan.

Iran calls for development of AI in Islamic nations

TEHRAN – First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Aref has said Iran believes artificial intelligence growth in Islamic countries should be based on the three main principles of multilateral cooperation, scientific synergy, and shared infrastructures.

“Hence, I present some specific proposals for the development and promotion of cooperation among Islamic countries in the science and technology sector, particularly artificial intelligence,” fypresident quoted Aref as saying.

The official made the remarks on Monday while addressing the second Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform.

The first proposal highlights the need for the establishment of a high-level steering group for the development of AI in the OIC-15, with the aim of creating a structure for tracking global developments in the field of artificial intelligence.

The second proposal centers around the development of a medium-term and a long-term roadmap for scientific and technological cooperation in AI, focusing on realistic goals.

The third proposal focuses on networking research and academic centers to utilize and share the expertise and capacity of elites and certain institutions throughout the Islamic world for joint research and development, collaborate in technology development, and launch joint academic and professional educational programs in AI.

The fourth proposal stresses collaboratively funding AI re-



search, technology projects, and infrastructures to be able to support key infrastructures, joint strategic projects, and AI start-ups benefiting from the capacity of Islamic nations, the Islamic Development Bank.

And the last proposal emphasizes the development of an Islamic charter on AI ethics to create an internal framework based on the principles of Islamic law, human dignity, and social justice.

2nd Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15)

The Second Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform was held from May 17 to 19.

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

The event served as a platform for the country to foster regional cooperation via strengthening scientific diplomacy.

It also provided the opportunity to review and discuss the

Islamic nations’ challenges in the technology sector, IRNA reported.

The meeting 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 was scheduled to be approved during the meeting.

Science Minister Hossein Si-maei-Sarrafi delivered a speech at the opening ceremony, followed by expert panel meetings.

Also, there would 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 would be determined.

On May 17, participants discussed and exchanged views on AI, with heads of delegations presenting talks.

Then the science ministers or their representatives held bilateral meetings.

On the sidelines of the event,

an exhibition of Iran’s achievements in science, technology, and AI sectors was held to showcase knowledge-based companies’ capabilities.

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.

Multilateral cooperation, scientific synergy, and shared infrastructures were highlights at OIC15-

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.

Persian medicine to help improve infertility treatment



TEHRAN –Over 32 specialized medical centers are benefitting from Persian medicine across the country to increase the chance of infertility treatment, Nafiseh Hosseini-Yekta, the director of the health ministry’s Persian medicine office, has said.

Gynaecologists, urologists, genetic experts, and Persian medicine experts are examining and treating infertility cases in these centers. This interdisciplinary collaboration has brought about a significant transformation in the quality of medical services, ILNA quoted Hosseini-Yekta as saying. The official made the remarks on the occasion of the national population week (May 14 to 20).

Adhering to the principles of Persian medicine can increase the success rate of assisted reproductive methods such as IVF by up to 30 percent and significantly reduce pregnancy complications, the official added.

Following a scientific, systematic approach, the Health Ministry is implementing comprehensive programs for the integration of Persian medicine capacities into the healthcare system to treat infertility and address many other challenges, she added.

In Persian medicine, each person is assessed based on their unique temperament, receiving a specific treatment and prevention program that best fit their physical, psychological, and even geographical conditions. This personalized approach can dramatically increase the effectiveness of treatments, she further noted.

Persian medicine highlights prevention over treatment, it believes reproductive health should be maintained from early childhood. “Many infertility problems result from an unhealthy lifestyle. So, we’re planning to develop educational programs for families and schools,” she said.

Integration of Persian medicine into health-care system

In December 2024, Hosseini-Yekta said, “The integration of Persian medicine into the health-

care system will not only help to improve health indicators but also have a significant impact on the economy of the country’s healthcare system,” the health ministry’s website reported.

“Iran has the capacity to become one of the pioneers in providing traditional and complementary medicine services in the world.

The integration of Persian medicine in the healthcare system can be a turning point in the global application of the knowledge,” the official noted.

In July 2024, the health ministry held a workshop on principles and basic concepts of Persian medicine in accordance with the objective of integrating Persian medicine into the country’s healthcare system.

The two-day event aimed to promote the experts’ knowledge in Persian medicine, particularly in healthy lifestyle, as well as raise their awareness of the rules, guidelines, and national policy documents, the health ministry’s website reported.

During the workshop, prominent professors in Persian medicine discussed various topics including temperament, four senses of humor: phlegm (Balgham), blood (Dam), yellow bile (Safra’), and black bile (Sauda’), lifestyle measures, widely-used medicinal plants, and drug interactions.

Currently, nine faculties of Persian medicine enroll students in the country’s universities, she added.

Training Persian medicine experts has always been at the top of the Persian medicine office’s agenda. Therefore, different skill courses have been developed and held under the supervision of the health ministry.

Around 500 Persian medicine experts are providing health and medical treatment services across the country. More than 1,000 general practitioners who have passed the Persian medicine courses approved by the health ministry are also offering services.

National population week

Being marked from May 14 to 20 under the theme ‘children, life assets’, the days of the national population week have been named as follows: Wednesday, May 14, ‘Father, mother, good sense of life’; Thursday, May 15, ‘Motherhood, elixir of youth’; Friday, May 16, ‘Desiring a child’; Saturday, May 17, ‘My lonely child’; Sunday, May 18, ‘I want to stay alive’; Monday, May 19, ‘My life in old age’; Tuesday, May 20, ‘Child-friendly society.’

National No-Tobacco Day to be observed

TEHRAN –The National No-Tobacco Day is scheduled to be held in the country from May 24 to 30.

The week will be observed under the theme ‘exposing tobacco industry’s tricks for a tobacco-free generation’.

Each day of the week will focus on a specific subject.

Saturday, May 24, ‘determination, will, and public participation; victory over tobacco industry’s tricks’

Sunday, May 25, ‘culture, art, and media: exposing tobacco industry’s tricks’

Monday, May 26, ‘education, and family health literacy; understanding tobacco industry’s tricks’

Tuesday, May 27, ‘committed and law-abiding professions; reducing tobacco products’ appeal and smuggling’

Wednesday, May 28, ‘preventive law: preventing prestigious/appealing tobacco advertising’

Thursday, May 29, ‘sport, healthy recreational activities: defeating tobacco industry’s tricks’

Friday, May 30, ‘faith-based teachings; protection against tobacco industry tricks’

On this occasion, a national tobacco prevention program will be launched in some 40 regions of the country. Co-organized by the Ministry of Education and Anti-Tobacco Association, the program will mainly focus on training and raising awareness among students, parents, educators, and the local communities, Mehr news agency reported.

The program will initially start at the schools in the upcoming academic year. It will expand to neighborhoods and then urban communities. Having completed training courses, students will become active tobacco prevention ambas-

sadors in the community.

Other ministries and organizations such as Health Ministry, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Sports Ministry, Interior Ministry, and municipalities support the program.

World No-Tobacco Day is celebrated on May 31. In 1987, the Member States of the World Health Organization created World No Tobacco Day to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes.

The yearly celebration informs the public on the dangers of using tobacco, the business practices of tobacco companies, what World Health Organization (WHO) is doing to fight the tobacco epidemic, and what people around the world can do to claim their right to health and healthy living and to protect future generations.

World No-Tobacco Day 2025 will be observed focusing on the theme of ‘Exposing lies, protecting lives: Unmask the appeal of tobacco and nicotine products’.

Every day, tobacco and nicotine industries use carefully engineered products and deceptive tactics to hook a new generation of users and keep existing ones.

Tobacco and nicotine industries use insidious strategies to make their harmful products appealing, especially to young people.

Manipulative product designs, attractive flavours, and glamorized marketing create a false sense of security and evoke desirability. The illusion needs to be broken.

Removing the appeal of these products through stricter regulations is essential to protecting current and future generations from harm.

Some 135 earthquakes shake Iran in a week

TEHRAN – A total of 134 earthquakes were recorded across the country from May 10 to 16, according to the seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

Statistically, 122 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 11 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4; and one earthquake with a magnitude between 4 and 5 have occurred in the country, IRNA reported.

Of the total quakes, one had a magnitude of 4 on the Richter scale, which occurred on May 15 in Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Among the provinces of the country, Kerman, with 20, experienced the highest number of earthquakes, followed by South Khorasan, and Khorasan Razavi, with 14 earthquakes.

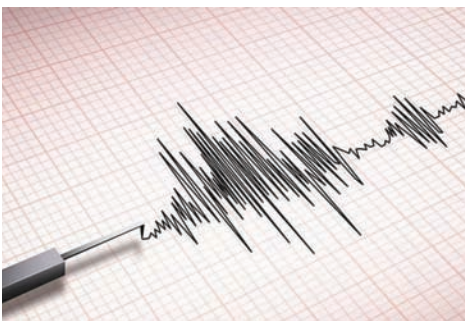
During the same period, three earthquakes hit Tehran province. No earthquakes were recorded in West Azarbaijan, East Azarbaijan, Ardabil, Zanjan, Qazvin, Kordes-

tan, Kohgiluyeh-Boyerahmad, and Lorestan provinces.

A total of 6,272 earthquakes were recorded across the country over the past calendar year (March 2024 –March 2025) according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran.

A total of 6,272 earthquakes were recorded in the country over the past calendar year (March 2024 – March 2025).

Out of registered earthquakes, 150 were more than 4 on the Richter scale; at least five earthquakes with a magnitude of more than



4.5 occurred monthly in the country.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran, but more than 6 percent of the victims of the world’s earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes.

ENGLISH IN USE

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Iran will defeat COVID-19, we believe: Chinese envoy

Chinese Ambassador in Iran, Chang Hua, has said he believes that Iran would overcome the crisis of coronavirus outbreak.

“We believe that by sending humanitarian aid, Iran will overcome the crisis,” he said, IRNA reported.

The envoy praised Iran’s Red Crescent Society as the first organization affiliated with the Red Cross and the Red Crescent societies which sent humanitarian shipments of aid to the Chinese people.

سفیر چین: باور داریم ایران بر بحران کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد

سفیر چین در تهران ابراز امیدواری کرد ایران بر بحران شیوع ویروس کرونا غلبه خواهد کرد.

به گزارش ایرنا، چانگ هوا روز دوشنبه گفت: ما باور داریم که با ارسال کمک های انساندوستانه از سوی دوستان دولت ایران از بحران این بیماری عبور خواهد کرد.

او ضمن قدردانی از جمعیت هلال احمر ایران به عنوان نخستین سازمان بشردوستانه عضو جمعیت های ملی صلیب سرخ و هلال احمر که محموله های کمک را برای مردم چین ارسال کرد، گفت: ما هم با شدت گرفتن ویروس کرونا در کنار ایران هستیم.



To render relief to the distressed and to help the oppressed make amends for great sins.
Imam Ali (AS)

Musical adaptation of Shakespeare's "King Lear" on stage at Tehran theater

TEHRAN – A musical adaptation of William Shakespeare's play "King Lear" is currently on stage at Tehran's City Theater Complex.

Elika Abdorrazazi is the director of the musical, which will remain on stage until June 13.

Ahmad Sa'atchian, Reza Yazdani, Pasha Rostami, Elham Akhavan, Alireza Nasehi and Noushin Etemad are the main members of the cast for the play.

"King Lear" is a tragic play that explores themes of power, loyalty, madness, and the human condition. The story centers around King Lear, an aging monarch who decides to divide his kingdom among his three daughters—Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia—based on their expressions of love for him.

To test their devotion, Lear asks each daughter to declare how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan flatter him extravagantly, while Cordelia, sincere but less effusive, simply states her love and devotion. Offended by her honesty, Lear disowns Cordelia and divides the kingdom between Goneril and Regan.

This decision sets off a chain of tragic events. Goneril and Regan, ungrateful and manipulative, soon betray Lear, stripping him of power and dignity. Lear, increasingly disturbed and vulnerable, wanders into a storm on the heath, symbolizing his inner turmoil and descent into madness.

During this period, he experiences profound suffering and begins to comprehend the true nature of his daughters and himself.

Meanwhile, political chaos ensues as the kingdom faces rebellion and civil war. Edmund, the illegitimate son of the noble Gloucester, schemes to usurp his legitimate brother Edgar's inheritance. Edmund's treachery and manipulations lead Gloucester to betrayal and blindness, both literal and figurative. Gloucester's tragic fate underscores the play's exploration of betrayal and the consequences of misplaced trust.

Amidst these personal and political upheavals, the play examines the themes of loyalty and filial piety. Cordelia, despite being disowned, remains loyal to her father and returns to aid him, even as her sisters' treachery unfolds. Her steadfastness contrasts sharply with the duplicity of Goneril and Regan, who become increasingly ruthless. The play also highlights the destructive nature of ambition and the corrupting influence of power.

As the story progresses, Lear's madness deepens, but he gains insight into human nature and his own flaws. His relationship with Cordelia is restored, but tragedy strikes when she is captured and killed in the ensuing chaos. Goneril and Regan's ambitions lead to their downfall, and ultimately, the play ends with a series of deaths—Lear, Cordelia, and others—underscoring the devastating costs of pride, betrayal, and injustice.

In the final scenes, surviving characters reflect on the chaos and loss, emphasizing the play's bleak commentary on human frailty and the consequences of failing to recognize true loyalty and virtue. "King Lear" remains one of Shakespeare's most powerful tragedies, a profound meditation on the complexities of human nature, authority, and the inevitable suffering that accompanies hubris and moral blindness.

William Shakespeare, widely regarded as the greatest playwright in English literature, was born in 1564. Throughout his career, Shakespeare wrote an impressive body of work that includes over 36 plays, 154 sonnets, and several poems. His plays span across various genres, including tragedies like "Hamlet" and "Macbeth," comedies such as "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Twelfth Night," and histories like "Henry V" and "Richard III."

Shakespeare's works are renowned for their intricate plots, memorable characters, and profound insights into the human condition, making them timeless pieces of literature that continue to captivate audiences worldwide.

"With Dali's World" exhibition underway at Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex

TEHRAN – The Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in Tehran is hosting the art exhibition "With the World of Dali," showcasing Salvador Dali's artworks preserved in Niavarn Palace treasures.

This exhibition features a collection of works by the renowned Spanish surrealist artist Salvador Dali. It opened to art enthusiasts on May 17 and will run until May 31 at the In Royal Palace of the complex, Honaronline reported.

The displayed works are selected from the treasures of Niavaran Museums and will introduce a portion of the artistic heritage preserved in this historical complex to visitors.

Salvador Dali (1904-1989) was a Spanish surrealist artist renowned for his technical skill, precise draftsmanship, and the striking and bizarre images in his work.

Dali's artistic repertoire included painting, sculpture, film, graphic arts, animation, fashion, and photography, at times in collaboration with other artists. He also wrote fiction, poetry, autobiography, essays, and criticism. Major themes in his work include dreams, the subconscious, religion, science and his closest personal relationships.

To the dismay of those who held his work in high regard, and to the irritation of his critics, his eccentric and ostentatious public behavior often drew more attention than his



artwork. His public support for the Francoist regime, his commercial activities and the quality and authenticity of some of his late works have also been controversial. His life and work were an important influence on other Surrealists, pop art, popular culture, and contemporary artists such as Damien Hirst.

The exhibition is held as part of the programs organized by the complex on the occasion of the International Museum Day and the upcoming Cultural Heritage Week.

According to this year's International Council of Museums' slogan (ICOM): "Museums for Education and Research", this year's programs at Niavaran Complex have been designed to focus on audience diversity, the integration of new technologies, fostering engagement between the younger generation and cultural heritage, and promoting museum literacy.

Simultaneously with the exhibition, in collaboration with the Bahar Ideh Art Institute, a special event titled "The Wonderful World

of Me and Dali" will be held at the Royal Palace on Thursday.

It is an educational workshop, aiming to familiarize the younger generation with modern art concepts through storytelling, creative learning, and the theme of the exhibition. Admission is open to all interested visitors.

During this event, the book "Where the Tree of Time Embraces the Earth," inspired by Dali's famous painting "The Persistence of Memory," will be unveiled.

Iranian short animation "The Lovely Sky" wins at ANIMATIBA

TEHRAN – The Iranian short animated film "The Lovely Sky" won the Special Jury Award in the foreign short film category at the 4th ANIMATIBA - Curitiba International Animation Festival, which was held in Brazil from May 8 to 14.

The Special Jury Award was presented to "The Lovely Sky" for technical excellence in 2D animation and gripping narrative, Honaronline reported.

Written and directed by Amir Mehran, the short flick has been produced at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

Produced with two-dimension technique, The 14-minute animation follows an impatient fighter pilot who bombs cities every day. He returns to his little girl every night after completing his mission. The girl loves to fly, but the father

doesn't fulfill his daughter's dream because of the bitter memory of his wife's death. The war is getting closer every day. One day an incident changes their lives, forever.

A production of 2022, "The Lovely Sky" has so far won the best animation prize at the 52nd Roshd International Educational Film Festival in Tehran, Best Music at the 18th Vancouver Island Short Film Festival in Canada, and Best Animation in Itauna International Film Festival in Brazil.

It has also been screened in the 63rd Zlin Film Festival in the Czech city of Zlin, the 19th World Festival of Animated Film Varna in Bulgaria, the 16th Bueu International Short Film Festival in Spain, and the 39th International Festival of animation cinema, comics, and games in Italy, among others.

ANIMATIBA is a biennial interna-



A screenshot from "The Lovely Sky"

tional animation festival that has begun in 2019. Anima is a word of Latin origin that means "soul" and is present in the word "animation" for giving life to the inanimate. Tiba is of Tupi-Guarani origin and means "a lot". Hence the name ANIMATIBA, an event about animation, with a lot of soul.

Curitiba has an old vocation for the art of animation, with great artists and production companies that stand out in the national and international scene, and now the city also has an event for the integration of knowledge, perceptions, appreciation, exchanges and innovation for this area.

"The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue" appears at Iranian bookstores



might persist in some form.

Over the next two decades, Addie subtly influences many people, inspiring works of art and stories. Luc visits her annually, often asking for her soul, but she refuses, developing a complex relationship with him. Their bond deepens, and for a time, they are connected in a fragile companionship. However, the relationship ends when Luc once again demands her surrender, and Addie, feeling betrayed, believes their connection was merely a game. She rejects him, determined to regain her autonomy.

Fast forward to 2014, Addie encounters Henry Strauss in a bookstore in London. Unlike everyone else, Henry can remember her, and

he knows her name. This rare ability is a result of his deal with Luc, who granted him the wish to be remembered by someone special—though Henry's deal also means he will die in 35 days. Henry's longing for connection stems from familial pressures and a failed proposal, which drove him to attempt suicide. Luc intervenes, granting his wish that someone remembers him, thus making Henry uniquely capable of recalling Addie.

As Henry's life nears its end, Addie makes a bold move. She strikes a new deal with Luc: she will go with him if he spares Henry's life. Luc, having developed genuine feelings for her, agrees. Addie leaves with Luc, leaving Henry devastated and alone. Two years later, Addie discovers a mysterious book titled "The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue" in a London bookstore.

The book contains no author details, but she recognizes herself in its pages, especially in a dedication that reads, "I remember you"—a message from Henry. Luc reveals he does not mind if the world knows her story, so long as she remains his prisoner.

Motivated by a desire for true freedom, Addie vows to herself that she will make Luc hate her again, so he will cast her away, freeing her from her curse. Her

journey becomes one of resilience and longing, seeking to reclaim her identity and autonomy despite living in shadows and obscurity.

"The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue" achieved remarkable success, remaining on the New York Times Best Seller list for 37 consecutive weeks through July 2021. Critics praised Schwab's lyrical storytelling, detailed world-building, and exploration of art and memory. NPR highlighted the novel's focus on art, describing how Addie's freckles and fleeting impressions evoke her desire to be remembered. Kirkus called it a "spellbinding story," while The Washington Post dubbed it a "tour de force," appreciating its momentum and exploration of identity. Slate's Megan Kallstrom commended the novel's rich detail and emotional depth, likening Addie's story to creating her own constellation amid darkness.

In November 2021, plans for a film adaptation were announced. eOne is producing the project, with Schwab contributing early screenplay drafts before handing the reins to filmmakers Augustine Frizzell and David Lowery. Schwab, along with producers Gerard Butler and others, is involved in bringing Addie's story to the screen, promising to extend the novel's enchanting narrative to a visual medium.

Cartoon of Day



Derkaoui

Gaza Genocide

Cartoonist: Derkaoui Abdellah from Morocco