



Washington returns to old playbook, telling Iranians that they should end enrichment or get attacked

# With No Sway at Negotiating Table, US Turns to Media Tactics

► Page 3

© Reuters

## Israel fires at diplomats in Jenin, EU condemns the move

Israeli forces opened fire near a convoy of foreign diplomats at the entrance of Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, drawing widespread condemnation and calls for accountability. According to Ahmed al-Deek, an aide to the Palestinian foreign minister, the Israeli military fired warning shots to intimidate the delegation and deter them from entering the camp, which has been under Israeli siege since January 21.

The diplomatic delegation—comprising 35 ambassadors and representatives from countries including Egypt, Jordan, China, the EU, Russia, France, the UK, and others—was visiting Jenin to witness firsthand the ongoing Israeli military operations. The Palestinian Foreign Ministry had organized the visit following a similar diplomatic tour of Tulkarem last week.

The European Union's foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas condemned the incident, urging Israel to conduct a full investigation and ensure accountability. "Any threats on diplomats' lives are unacceptable," she stated, noting Israel's obligations under the Vienna Convention to protect foreign envoys. A Western diplomat described the event as "a serious incident," rejecting the Israeli military's apology that labeled the episode as merely an "inconvenience."

## Abbas visits Beirut ahead of Ortagus as the issue of displaced Palestinians takes center stage

By Sondoss Al Asaad

BEIRUT — Ahead of the upcoming visit of Morgan Ortagus, President Donald Trump's deputy special envoy for West Asia, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is visiting Beirut.

An informed source said the Palestinian ambassador to Beirut, Ashraf Dabbour, indicated that President Joseph Aoun had sent a letter in advance expressing his hope that Abbas would not hold any press conferences, lest he issue any uncalculated or provocative statements that could lead to political tension in Lebanon.

Reportedly, Abbas will meet, during his three-day visit, with Lebanese officials to discuss the mechanism for the Lebanese state to extend its full control over its entire territory, particularly over the Palestinian camps, and to dismantle the military infrastructure of Palestinian factions.

## Netanyahu "misleading global opinion"

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – Hamas accuses Netanyahu of sabotaging ceasefire negotiations amid more Israeli casualties in Gaza.

Hamas has accused the Israeli delegation in Doha of remaining there without engaging in serious negotiations, describing it as a tactic by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to mislead global public opinion and stall progress.

The movement asserted that the delegation, lacking any real authority, has been extending its stay since last Saturday, using the talks as a cover for continued genocidal war in Gaza.

In a statement, Hamas emphasized that this growing aggression, alongside Netanyahu's public comments on aid entry, exposes his true intent to reject a solution and persist in genocidal war.

Hamas labeled Netanyahu's remarks as deceptive, noting that no meaningful aid has entered the Gaza Strip.

► Page 5

## Tehran to boost technological co-op with Tunis, Jakarta

TEHRAN – Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, in separate meetings with his Indonesian and Tunisian counterparts, has conferred on ways to foster scientific and technological relations.

The officials met on the sidelines of the second Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform.

On Tuesday, an Indonesian delegation led by Brian Yulianto, the Indonesian Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, paid a visit to the technology park in University of Tehran to become more familiar with the achievements of knowledge-based companies in different sectors like engineering, medicine, biotechnology, and industry. ► Page 7



## "EU sponsors Israel's violence through trade and arms deals": Belgian MEP

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – The European Union faces increasing criticism for its handling of the Israel-Palestine conflict, with many accusing it of maintaining a "business as usual" approach that enables ongoing violence and human rights violations in Gaza.

Despite clear evidence of war crimes and ethnic cleansing in Gaza, key EU leaders continue to provide political and military support to Israel and ignore calls to hold it accountable. This has raised serious questions about Europe's commitment to international law, human rights, and its role on the global diplomatic stage. ► Page 5

Scan this QR code to watch the video



## Navigating Caspian diplomacy: Iran's new envoy and regional strategy

By Faramarz Kouhpayeh

TEHRAN – Iran's foreign ministry has appointed Kazem Gharibabadi as its new Special Representative for Caspian Sea Affairs. The diplomat also serves as Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs, making his appointment all the more meaningful and significant.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the rise of four new independent states along the Caspian Sea's shores, Iran has prioritized defining the sea's legal status—a matter of national sovereignty, security, and economic significance. The discussions span a wide range of critical issues, including military cooperation, oil and gas exploration, environmental protection, counterterrorism, and combating drug trafficking, all of which remain high on Tehran's agenda. ► Page 2

## Iran, Turkmenistan sign roadmap targeting \$3b in trade

TEHRAN – Iran and Turkmenistan signed a commercial roadmap on Tuesday aimed at boosting bilateral trade to \$3.0 billion.

The agreement was signed in Tehran by Iran's Minister of Transport and Urban Development Farzaneh Sadegh and Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov following the 18th session of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee.

Sadegh said the recent committee meeting marked a new chapter in bilateral cooperation, stressing that intensive talks had yielded fresh approaches and agreements to expand trade. "The trade roadmap is expected to be finalized before the Iranian president's upcoming visit to Turkmenistan," she added. ► Page 4

## Borders should remain unchanged, says Iran's defense minister in Armenia

TEHRAN – In a high-level meeting on Tuesday, Iranian Minister of Defense Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh met with his Armenian counterpart in Yerevan, reiterating Iran's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the stability of its northern borders and strengthening cooperation with its neighbor, Armenia.

Nasirzadeh described the preservation of territorial integrity and the stability of regional borders as "unchanging principles" of the Islamic Republic's foreign and defense policy. "The shared border between Iran and Armenia is not just a geographical demarcation—it is a historic and strategic link between two ancient nations," he said. "Tehran will not allow any form of interference or encroachment on this vital corridor." ► Page 2

## China's high-quality industrial development injects new momentum into the world economy

By Chinese Ambassador to Iran Cong Peiwu

Recently, in the face of a complicated situation marked by increasing external shocks and multiple domestic difficulties and challenges, China's economy maintained stable growth despite pressure, sustaining the new and positive development momentum. Especially the industrial production grew fast with industrial development transformed towards high-end, intelligent and green, which provides strong support for economic development. ► Page 4



## TEHRAN PAPERS

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

## Iran-US talks face challenges

In an interview with Abdolreza Faraji Rad, a professor of geopolitics, Ettelaat examined the recent tense positions of Iran and the United States after some rounds of indirect negotiations. He said: Four rounds of negotiations were full of ups and downs. It was decided that Iran and the United States would enter into technical negotiations in the fifth round, and this was officially announced. But again, we heard contradictory statements from the Americans, saying that Iran would not be allowed to enrich uranium. Now the United States must clarify its position. That is, Iran has announced at the highest level that we are not ready to reduce enrichment to zero. Now the fifth round becomes sensitive; either the U.S. will start technical negotiations based on what they said in the fourth round, or the negotiations will be interrupted, and the mediators, Oman or other countries, will find a solution to resume the negotiations.

**Siasat-e-Rooz: Completely unreasonable and illogical**

Siasat-e-Rooz dedicated its headline to the U.S. excessive demands from talks with Iran and the Revolutionary Leader's response to these demands. It wrote: The reality is that the West's, especially the U.S., emphasis on a complete stop to nuclear enrichment in Iran is not simply due to nuclear concerns, but is part of the long-term strategy to contain the Islamic Republic of Iran's national power. For this reason, the Leader's decisive response to this issue is considered to be more than a diplomatic stance. In a situation where the United States is trying to weaken Iran's regional position by creating false bipolarity after Trump visits the region, the Leader's quick and clear warning of this process is considered a kind of strategic move to right the path of negotiations and a warning to the decision-making structure in the country. This warning carries several important messages: first, the Islamic Republic of Iran will never be pressured to back down from its nuclear rights. Second, the negotiating team must be vigilant against deceptive messages and plans that appear to be "neutral" but are misguided by the United States. Third, continuing negotiations is legitimate only if "dignity, wisdom, and the expediency" of the Islamic Republic's system are taken into account.

**Iran: Tehran-Muscat-Doha triangle at the talks table**

In a note, the Iran newspaper discussed the importance of the Tehran Dialogue Forum

and wrote: Tehran once again became the host of one of the most important regional and international dialogue forums in recent days. This forum was not only a platform for exchanging views on the future of the region but also an opportunity for sensitive diplomatic consultations, including indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States. But what made this forum more than a typical diplomatic meeting was the presence of key figures from neighboring countries and important regional players. Perhaps the most important development in this meeting was the trilateral consultation between Iran, Oman, and Qatar. According to Araghchi, they support the talks and are trying to help the talks. Iran's clear stance that "our positions are clear and we will continue enrichment" shows that Iran, while ready for talks, has not abandoned its principles and red lines and continues to stand up openly against political pressures. In a changing regional environment, meetings such as the Tehran Forum and trilateral consultations are on the one side, and windows for active diplomacy, on the other, highlighting that the Islamic Republic of Iran follows a stable foreign policy.

**Arman-e-Emrooz: The necessities of negotiation composition**

If the negotiation process continues based on the frameworks and considerations of the Islamic Republic, the involvement of the private cooperative sector will help advance the negotiations. The reality is that economic interests carry more weight and importance for the parties in the current situation, and the composition of the other side's representatives also reflects this issue. Unfortunately, this issue was given less attention in the process of ratifying the JCPOA, and therefore, from the point of view of economic actors, the JCPOA did not facilitate economic activities in international trade desirably. Raising issues such as the other side's interests in investing in the country and the need to meaningfully remove oppressive sanctions doubles the importance of this issue. It should be noted that the international system has tried to create disruptions in interactions of Iran's economic actors by imposing sanctions in recent years. Of course, economic actors have always tried to neutralize them with great effort, but they must be given more room to play their role.

## Former interior minister appointed Iran's new ambassador to China

TEHRAN – Iran has named former Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli as its new ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

The announcement was made by Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei. "Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli has been appointed as the new ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to China," he told the reporters.

Rahmani Fazli brings decades of high-level experience in governance and national security. He previously served as Iran's Minister of Interior during both the 11th and 12th administrations. His extensive background includes serving as Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Iran's Law Enforcement Force, Head of the National Security Council, and member of the Supreme Council of the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Rahmani Fazli assumes the post at a time when Iran and China are intensifying their bilateral cooperation under the framework of a 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2021. The agreement lays out long-term plans for collaboration across various sectors, including energy, infrastructure, security, technology, and culture.



Despite facing unilateral sanctions from the United States and other Western powers, Iran and China have maintained robust trade relations. China continues to be Iran's largest trading partner, and both governments have denounced the sanctions as ineffective and unlawful.

Beyond their growing bilateral ties, Iran and China actively cooperate within multilateral frameworks such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS. Both nations emphasize adherence to international law, joint efforts to counter terrorism, and a shared interest in promoting stability across West Asia and beyond.

# Borders should remain unchanged, says Iran's defense minister in Armenia

From page 1 ► Underscoring the strategic importance of relations between Tehran and Yerevan, the Iranian defense chief noted that Armenia holds a distinctive place in Iran's "neighborhood policy." He emphasized that bilateral ties rest on "deep historical and cultural foundations," and that Iran views sustainable peace in the Caucasus as a gateway to broad regional development opportunities.

Nasirzadeh also highlighted the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Armenians in Iran as a successful model of interfaith harmony. "This is a testament to the possibility of religious and cultural coexistence, and it serves as an example to the wider region," he added. "Iran's principled foreign policy is centered on strengthening ties with all its neighbors—particularly Armenia—and no obstacle will deter us from this path."

Touching on the ongoing peace



Iranian Minister of Defense Brigadier General Aziz Nasirzadeh (L) shakes hands with the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, Suren Papikyan in Yerevan on May 20, 2025.

process between Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Nasirzadeh expressed Iran's full support for dialogue and diplomacy. "The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the signing of comprehensive peace agreements between Yerevan and Baku, and we are

prepared to assist in accelerating this vital process," he stated. "Lasting peace in the Caucasus is not only desirable, but essential for the economic and political stability of the broader region."

In reference to recent remarks by the Leader of the Islamic Rev-

olution during his meeting with the Armenian Prime Minister, Nasirzadeh emphasized that Iran is resolute in expanding its cooperation with Armenia based on mutual interests. "This cooperation will continue independently of external pressure and foreign influence," he said.

Echoing Iran's long-standing position, Nasirzadeh once again warned against the involvement of extra-regional powers in Caucasus affairs. "Security and stability in this sensitive region must be designed and maintained by the countries of the region themselves," he said. "The involvement of foreign powers does not bring peace—it brings instability and division."

The meeting concluded with the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the defense ministries of Iran and Armenia, marking a new phase of strategic partnership between the two nations.

## Iranian Parliament ratifies strategic partnership treaty with Russia

TEHRAN – The Iranian Parliament has approved a landmark treaty on a comprehensive strategic partnership with the Russian Federation, marking a pivotal step in deepening ties between the two countries across a wide range of sectors.

During an open session on Wednesday, May 21, lawmakers of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majles) voted in favor of the bill outlining the treaty's provisions. Out of 211 members present, 192 voted in favor, 5 opposed, and 2 abstained.

According to the bill's single article, the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation," consisting of a preamble and 47 articles, is hereby ratified, and authorization is granted for the exchange of official instruments related to it. A note attached to the legislation stresses the necessity of observing Articles 77, 125, and 139 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the 1979 legislative act annulling Chapters V and VI of

the Treaty of Friendship between Iran and Russia.

This vote follows the earlier ratification of the treaty by Russia's State Duma in April, where lawmakers passed the agreement submitted by President Vladimir Putin, who had signed it in January alongside Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian during a high-profile ceremony in Moscow.

At the time of signing, Putin described the treaty as a "breakthrough document," while President Pezeshkian said it would "open a new chapter in relations between Iran and Russia in all fields."

The 20-year treaty provides a legal framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries in key strategic areas, including defense, security, energy, transportation, banking, agriculture, science, and technology. It also includes provisions for intelligence-sharing and mutual support in the face of shared security threats. Notably, the treaty contains a clause stating that neither side will assist an



aggressor in the event that one party is subjected to external aggression.

The agreement is also designed to strengthen economic resilience amid Western sanctions, promoting investment in oil and gas sectors, collaboration in peaceful nuclear energy development, and the establishment of a payment system independent of third-party states, relying on national currencies.

Speaking earlier, State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin emphasized that the treaty would enhance bilateral coop-

eration and inter-parliamentary coordination, including through joint commissions and participation in international parliamentary organizations.

Iran and Russia have increasingly aligned their policies in recent years, forging a closer strategic partnership in defiance of U.S.-led sanctions. This treaty, now approved by both legislatures, formalizes what has already been an evolving alliance—one aimed at reshaping regional and global power dynamics through mutual support and cooperation.

## Navigating Caspian diplomacy: Iran's new envoy and regional strategy

From page 1 ► According to the bill's single article, the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation," consisting of a preamble and 47 articles, is hereby ratified, and authorization is granted for the exchange of official instruments related to it. A note attached to the legislation stresses the necessity of observing Articles 77, 125, and 139 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the 1979 legislative act annulling Chapters V and VI of the Treaty of Friendship between Iran and Russia.

This vote follows the earlier ratification of the treaty by Russia's State Duma in April, where lawmakers passed the agreement submitted by President Vladimir Putin, who had signed it in January alongside Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian during a high-profile ceremony in Moscow.

At the time of signing, Putin described the treaty as a "breakthrough document," while President Pezeshkian said it would "open a new chapter in relations between Iran and Russia in all fields."



Photo shows the Caspian Sea

The 20-year treaty provides a legal framework for long-term cooperation between the two countries in key strategic areas, including defense, security, energy, transportation, banking, agriculture, science, and technology. It also includes provisions for intelligence-sharing and mutual support in the face of shared security threats. Notably, the treaty contains a clause stating that neither

side will assist an aggressor in the event that one party is subjected to external aggression.

The agreement is also designed to strengthen economic resilience amid Western sanctions, promoting investment in oil and gas sectors, collaboration in peaceful nuclear energy development, and the establishment of a payment system independent of third-party states, relying on national currencies.

Speaking earlier, State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin emphasized that the treaty would enhance bilateral cooperation and inter-parliamentary coordination, including through joint commissions and participation in international parliamentary organizations.

Iran and Russia have increasingly aligned their policies in recent years, forging a closer strategic partnership in defiance of U.S.-led sanctions. This treaty, now approved by both legislatures, formalizes what has already been an evolving alliance—one aimed at reshaping regional and global power dynamics through mutual support and cooperation.

## Iran executes gunman in 2023 Azerbaijan embassy attack

TEHRAN – Iran has executed the individual responsible for the January 2023 attack on Azerbaijan's embassy in Tehran, which resulted in the death of one person.

The execution was announced Wednesday by Iran's Judiciary. The assailant, who opened fire on the embassy on January 27, 2023, also

wounded two others.

Following the attack, Azerbaijan closed its embassy in Tehran, citing security concerns. While the embassy has since reopened, Azerbaijan has yet to appoint a new ambassador to Iran. The attacker was convicted of murder, illegal possession of firearms, and disrupting

public order.

During questioning, he attributed his actions to personal motives, saying he believed the embassy had been hiding his wife from him.



# With no sway at negotiating table, US turns to media tactics

## Washington returns to old playbook, telling Iranians that they should end enrichment or get attacked

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – The dispute over Iran’s nuclear program may seem complex, but it is in fact quite simple. Washington insists Iran should not develop nuclear weapons. Tehran says it is not planning to, and agrees to take steps to prove it in exchange for the termination of sanctions. The U.S. then begins asking for more. Negotiations collapse, and the pattern is repeated.

The ongoing nuclear negotiations between Iran and Washington also began that way and could be following the same path.

Iran agreed to enter nuclear negotiations with the U.S. after President Donald Trump, who unraveled an original pact in 2018, wrote a letter to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, and told him he was willing to drop demands he had raised during his first term in office – caps on Iran’s military and foreign policies – if the country agreed to enter talks. The Leader agreed to indirect talks instead of direct ones, and chose Oman to act as go-between instead of the UAE, which was Washington’s preference.

Ayatollah Khamenei, however, told the nation from the onset of the talks in early April that while Iran is serious in pursuing diplomacy, it is not counting on the U.S. to stick to the same approach. “This is one of the several projects the foreign ministry is following. Do not be too optimistic or pessimistic about it,” the Leader explained.

It has now become clear why the Leader was not counting on what he was hearing from American officials at the time, who were happy that they were talking to Iranians, and were refraining from



US special Presidential Envoy Steve Witkoff (R), about to embrace Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

bringing up Iran’s redlines both in public and in private. After four rounds of high-level discussions, U.S. officials are now saying that they want Tehran to stop the enrichment of uranium, something that has always been a nonstarter for the West Asian country throughout the past decades.

Ayatollah Khamenei reaffirmed on Tuesday Iran’s unwavering commitment to uranium enrichment, dismissing U.S. demands to halt the process as “utter nonsense.” He declared, “We aren’t waiting for anyone’s permission. The Islamic Republic has certain policies, and it will pursue them.”

The U.S. may have hoped that others in Iran’s political system would pressure the Leader to accept new concessions that the country has never agreed to, not even when signing the JCPOA in 2015. But much to its dismay, all political parties in Iran are rallying behind Ayatollah Khamenei. The conservative-majority parliament has said the country will never “give up its right” to enrich uranium, and the reformist ad-

ministration of President Masoud Pezeshkian has promised that enrichment will continue “with or without a deal.”

Lacking other viable alternatives, the U.S. now appears to be attempting to create anxiety among the Iranian populace, presumably to exert public pressure on the government. To achieve this, it relies heavily on mainstream media outlets and Western-based Persian-language channels to disseminate its message within Iran.

Citing unnamed sources, CNN alleged Wednesday that U.S. intelligence shows “Israel is making preparations to strike Iranian nuclear facilities.” It added that if the current discussions between Tehran and Washington do not result in the dismantlement of Iran’s enrichment capabilities, Israel is all but sure to proceed with its alleged plans. Reuters, also citing unnamed sources, then reported on alleged confusion among Iranian officials, claiming that senior leaders are unsure how to respond if the nuclear negotiations collapse and the U.S. were to

strike Iran.

However, this new tactic may not be working either. Ordinary citizens in Tehran, when asked, did not express significant worry about a potential Israeli attack, nor did they expect a collapse of talks with the U.S. to have a substantial impact on their daily lives.

“They’ve already imposed every possible sanction. What more can they do?” remarked a 32-year-old office worker, who entered the workforce in 2018, the year Trump began his so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran. When asked whether he is worried about potential strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities, the young man dressed in a grey suit said, “Not really.” “They’ve been threatening us for years. If they could have done it, they would have by now.”

During a recent interview with American media, Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said he does not believe Iran’s nuclear sites can be destroyed. The sites are hardened and placed deep under the ground. “You cannot get at the very deeply buried parts of the Iranian nuclear program,” he told CBS News “My argument is, if you attack their nuclear program in a way designed to try and destroy it, you will simply make the Iranians more determined to have a nuclear weapon and to bury the whole program even deeper. It buys you a little time, but it doesn’t solve the problem.”

Furthermore, any attack on Iran’s nuclear facilities is sure to draw a firm, strong, and devastating response from Iranian armed forces, who, back in March, had already loaded missiles onto launchers for the operation.



Tehran Dialogue Forum: a bet on regional diplomacy

In parallel with Ayatollah Khamenei’s comments, Tehran hosted the Tehran Dialogue Forum, which brought together senior Iranian officials and regional representatives to discuss West Asia’s role in shaping its own political and diplomatic future.

During the event, President Masoud Pezeshkian stressed that “Iran’s right to a peaceful nuclear program is non-negotiable,” reiterating that neither sanctions nor threats would change the country’s stance. “We are signatories to the NPT. Our rights must be respected, just like those of all nations under international treaties,” he emphasized.

Kamal Kharrazi, head of the Strategic Council on Foreign Relations and adviser to Ayatollah Khamenei, used the forum to respond to military threats from Israel and the U.S. against Iran’s nuclear sites. “Iran’s nuclear knowledge is indigenous and irreversible. We do not seek nuclear weapons, but a nuclear-free Middle East should be a shared goal,” he said.

Rising regional tensions and a lack of trust in Western guarantees have driven Tehran to deepen ties with neighboring countries in

pursuit of a more independent regional security architecture.

In this context, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held a trilateral meeting with his counterparts from Oman and Qatar. Oman’s Sayyid Badr Albusaidi praised Iran as a responsible actor and reaffirmed Muscat’s trust in diplomacy. Meanwhile, Qatar’s Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, voiced support on social media for nuclear talks mediated by Oman, advocating for “greater regional stability and opportunities for dialogue.”

**An uncertain but still open future**

In this tense context, the future of nuclear negotiations remains uncertain. Yet, Iran continues to show readiness to engage—so long as any potential agreement is based on mutual respect and upholds its sovereign rights without compromise.

Tehran has repeated its willingness to engage, but insists on a balanced, transparent, and pressure-free approach. In its view, any failure cannot solely be blamed on Iran’s stance but must also consider the deliberate crafting of a narrative that places the blame on Tehran before the process even ends.

## Asian Youth Para Games a chance to know new talents, official says

TEHRAN – With 200 days left until the start of the 2025 Asian Youth Para Games, Iran’s National Paralympic Committee (NPC) Technical Deputy, Saeid Solgi, says that the Games is an opportunity to find young talented athletes.

The fifth edition of the Asian Youth Para Games will be held in Dubai, the UAE from Dec. 7 to 14.

“So far, 10 sports have been confirmed by the organizers. Some sports have been removed, while boccia, wheelchair basketball, archery, table tennis, and badminton have been added. The confirmed sports so far are athletics, shooting, weightlifting, badminton, taekwondo, archery, table tennis, wheelchair basketball, boccia, and goalball,” Solgi said.

“In line with the policies of the National Paralympic Committee, training camps for the young athletes’ teams in last year’s October, right after the Paris 2024 Paralympics. In some sports, camps even coincided with the Paris 2024 Paralympics, demonstrating our special attention to young athletes as the main backbone of the senior national teams,” he added.

“Our plan is to finalize an initial list of Para athletes by mid-August. However, this list could change and it’s not certain. We will participate in the Game with the aim of finding new talented athletes and we are not focusing on results and medals,” Solgi stated.

## China’s sports minister Zhidan meets Ahmad Donyamali

TEHRAN – China’s Sports Minister Gao Zhidan met with his Iranian counterpart, Ahmad Donyamali, during his visit to Harbin.

During the meeting, Iran’s Minister of Sports and Youth expressed gratitude for China’s hosting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He also highlighted China’s significant position in the global sports arena.

“We wish to utilize China’s capabilities in sports and are open to organizing joint training camps in sports like wrestling and taekwondo, where our sports are prominent,” Donyamali stated.

He added, “Iran has established the world’s largest wrestling academy, equipped with sections utilizing artificial intelligence to train Iranian wrestlers. We are interested in exchanging ideas on how to further leverage AI capabilities.”

Donyamali emphasized the value of scientific and operational exchanges, saying, “Collaboration with China can benefit our sports sector. We are still developing in some sports like ice hockey, but you have demonstrated your strength with 21 gold medals at the Harbin Winter Games, showcasing China’s position in winter sports.”

At the conclusion of the meeting, Iran’s sports minister officially invited Gao Zhidan to visit Iran and tour the country’s sports facilities.

Zhidan expressed hopes of visiting Iran, stating: “The relationship between Iran and China has been strong for many years, and this friendship also extends into sports. I hope this partnership will foster solid cooperation between our two ministries.”

He also expressed optimism that this visit marks the beginning of renewed collaboration and interaction in sports between the two nations.

## Iran need generation change in women’s futsal

TEHRAN – Iran secured their spot in the FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup by finishing in third place at the 2025 AFC Women’s Futsal Asian Cup. However, to achieve greater suc-

cess, the team needs a generation change.

Fereshteh Karimi and Sara Shirbeigi, esteemed veterans of the Iran women’s futsal team, have long been the pillars of their national squad. Their experience and dedication have contributed significantly to Iran’s accomplishments on the Asian futsal stage.

In the 2025 AFC Women’s Futsal Asian Cup, Iran finished in third place, falling short of expectations despite being two-time champions. While their performance was commendable, it highlighted the need for a new generation of players to take the reins and elevate Iran’s futsal ambitions.

The recent results underscore a critical transition. To excel in upcoming competitions, including the FIFA Women’s Futsal World Cup, Iran must infuse fresh blood into the squad. Young, talented players are expected to bring energy, innovative tactics, and a new competitive spirit, ensuring Iran remain a formidable force on the international stage.

This generation change marks an exciting chapter for Iranian women’s futsal, balancing the value of experience with the promise of a vibrant future. As the team prepare for future challenges, the hope is that this new wave of athletes will uphold Iran’s proud futsal tradition and write new success stories.

## Golmohammadi signs two-year extension with Foolad

TEHRAN – Yahya Golmohammadi has signed a two-year contract extension with Foolad football club on Tuesday.

Golmohammadi was appointed as Foolad’s head coach for the 2024–25 Iran Professional League (IPL) season, leading the team to a fourth-place finish.

Now, the Ahvaz-based club has extended the former Persepolis coach’s contract for an additional two years.

## Esteghlal set sights on Hosseinnejad

TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team are reportedly eyeing a move to sign Mohammad Javad Hosseinnejad.

Currently, Hosseinnejad plays for Russian side Dynamo Makhachkala. The 22-year-old midfielder joined Dynamo from Sepahan last season on a three-year contract.

He has scored three goals in 24 appearances for Dynamo Makhachkala.

Originally, Esteghlal planned to sign Omid Noorafkan, but the club was unable to secure the Malavan midfielder. As a result, their focus has shifted to pursuing Hosseinnejad.

## Iran come 3rd in 2025 West Asia Baseball Cup

TEHRAN – Iran defeated India 6-3 in the 2025 West Asia Baseball Cup on Wednesday and finished in third place.

Iran had defeated Bangladesh 7-6 in its opening match in Group B but lost to Pakistan 14-0 and Palestine 18-3.

Pakistan and Palestine lock horns in the final match.

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

Pakistan is the West Asia Baseball Cup defending champion.

The Asian Baseball Cup was launched in 1995 in Manila, Philippines, as a qualifier for the Asian Baseball Championship. The tournament was split into the West Asia and East Asia Baseball Cups in 2012.



## China's high-quality industrial development injects new momentum into the world economy



From Page 1 ► Here, I would like to share a few thoughts with Iranian friends:

First, China's industrial transformation and upgrading continues, and new momentum keep growing. This year, with the adopted policies continue to be effective and the implementation of incremental policies, China's high-end industry development trend is eminent and high-tech manufacturing growth momentum improved. Intelligent and green industrial transformation accelerated, and the new quality productive forces continue to cultivate and grow. In April, the value added of high-tech manufacturing increased by 10 percent, faster than that of the industrial enterprises above the designated size. The value added of integrated circuit manufacturing and optoelectronic device manufacturing increased by 21.3% and 19% respectively.

Secondly, China's new quality productive forces injected new momentum into the world economy. In recent years, China's new quality productive force were advancing rapidly. The photoelectric conversion efficiency of mass-produced photovoltaic cells has been continuously upgraded, megawatt wind power machine technology has formed several mature routes, and the number of patents for new energy vehicles is leading in the world.

The cost-effective electric vehicles produced in China become more and more popular, and can be seen in numerous countries and regions. The International Renewable Energy Agency

(IRENA) reported that over the past 10 years, the average cost of generating per kWh by wind and photovoltaic power generation projects around the world has declined by more than 60% and 80% respectively, much of which be attributed to China.

Third, the development of China's new quality productive forces has optimized the global industrial and supply chain. At the recent meeting of the World Trade Organization's Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, some certain members made baseless accusation against China regarding "overcapacity". Such accusation contradicts market principles and globalization logic, aiming to creating anxiety, discredit China, and justify protectionist measures driven by worries over losing competitiveness and market share of their own.

In fact, with continuous technological innovation and complete production and supply chain, Chinese companies in the field of new quality productive force have localized in exporting countries. Through international cooperation and resource sharing, China has continued to increase production capacity cooperation with the countries under the "Belt and Road" initiative and jointly promote the steady progress of global green energy transformation.

Since the beginning of this year, China, as the rotating president of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, has held the 8th meeting of the SCO Working Group on E-Commerce, the China-SCO Conference on Industrial Cooperation for Sustainable Development, and will hold other events related to industrial cooperation, such as China-SCO Digital Technology Cooperation and Development Forum. China and Iran are both members of the SCO and important partners in under the "Belt and Road" initiative. China welcomes Iran to actively explore new opportunities for industrial cooperation with China under the framework of the SCO and platforms such as the CIIE, the CIFIT, and the CIFITS to achieve mutual benefits and win-win cooperation.

## Annual honey exports rise 20% despite policy hurdles

TEHRAN – Iran's honey exports grew by 20 percent in the previous Iranian year (ended on March 20), according to the official in charge of the country's beekeeping development plan.

However, industry leaders warn that policy-related export barriers continue to threaten the sector's survival.

Hossein Akbarpour, who leads Iran's national beekeeping development project, said on Tuesday that honey exports reached 1,873 tons in the past year.

He added that beekeeping plays a significant role in economic growth given the health-oriented nature of its products.

"Iran currently ranks fourth in the world in honey production," he said, citing global annual production at about 2.13 million tons, while Iran's share stands at 128,000 tons, based on the most recent national survey.

According to Akbarpour, Iran's beekeeping industry generates nearly 90 times more benefit for the agricultural sector than its direct inputs. Honey exports in 2023 stood at roughly 1,504 tons.

He estimated the country's honey export potential at a minimum of 5,000 tons annually, with plans to achieve a consistent 20 percent year-on-year growth rate.

As part of Iran's Seventh National Development Plan, 47 new production chains in the beekeeping sector are to be launched across provinces, tailored to local capacities and consumption, Akbarpour said.

Currently, the average honey yield per modern hive in Iran is about 12 kilograms. The total capital invested in Iran's beekeeping industry is valued at 960 trillion rials (around \$1.92 billion), broken down into \$660 million for production, \$740 million for bee colonies, and \$520 million for equipment.

Akbarpour also warned of threats facing the sector, including land-use changes, chemical pesticides in agriculture, and environmental degradation caused by climate change and rangeland destruction.



**Export policy threatens industry viability, say beekeepers**

In a separate interview, Abdolreza Bigonah, head of Iran's Association of Beekeepers and Honey Producers, said that export restrictions remain the biggest challenge for producers and threaten the entire industry's future.

"Due to export hurdles and the mandatory repatriation of foreign currency earnings at state-set exchange rates, honey exports have dropped below 1,000 tons," he told IRNA in Ardebil.

"As someone who used to export honey, I've stopped doing so for five years and have even cut back production, he complained.

Bigonah emphasized that without exports to absorb surplus domestic production, prices will stagnate in the local market, ultimately dismantling the industry and costing Iran its reputation in global honey markets. He put Iran's honey output last year at 127,700 tons, with domestic consumption at about 65,000 tons. The remainder must be exported to maintain industry sustainability, he added. Bigonah warned that the continuation of current policies could doom Iran's beekeeping industry. "Packaging, retail, and beekeepers' livelihoods are all tied to production. The only way out is to ease export regulations."

He recalled that prior to 2018, agricultural exports — including honey — were exempt from taxes and currency repatriation requirements. But following changes in foreign currency laws that year, exporters have been required to sell their foreign currency proceeds at the government's "NIMA" exchange rate, which he said is economically unviable.

# Iran, Turkmenistan sign roadmap targeting \$3b in trade

From Page 1 ► The minister highlighted the strategic location of both countries within the North-South and East-West corridors, describing them as critical to regional connectivity. She noted that Iran and Turkmenistan had agreed to aim for 20 million tons in transit volumes, with a 16-million-ton target set for 2028.

Other key understandings included plans to establish joint free trade zones in Sarakhs-Sarakhs and Lotfabad-Artiq, strengthen border markets—especially in Incheh Borun—and prepare a bilateral gas contract. The roadmap also calls for constructing the Qamdaq-Atrak road toward the Iranian border and building a gas pipeline to Turkmenistan.

Agreements were also reached on developing a third electricity transmission line between Mary and Sarakhs and launching feasibility studies for a fourth.

"If both sides follow through, the 18th committee will open up new avenues for economic and cultural cooperation," Sadeqh said.

Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov thanked Iranian officials for their hospitality, stating that bilateral relations are at a high level.

"The close dialogue between the two presidents is grounded in mutual trust, which plays a pivotal role in advancing ties," he said.

Meredov emphasized the importance of the Joint Economic Committee as a coordination mechanism for implementing bilateral agreements across sectors such as oil, gas, transport, trade, telecommunications, agriculture, and environment. He also expressed readiness to expand cooperation in health, sports, tourism, and science.

Meredov said the Turkmen delegation had held productive meetings with Iranian officials and that President Pezeshkian had shared his vision for future cooperation during their encounter. "We view Iran's proposals seriously and are committed to joint efforts," he added.

### Iran eyes fourfold boost in rail transit with Turkmenistan

Iran plans to increase its annual rail freight transit with Turkmenistan to four million tons, up from 1.6 million tons last year, according to the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI).

Speaking on the sidelines of the joint economic committee, RAI Head Jabar Ali Zakeri said rail transit is currently at its best level, and Iran aims to resolve logistical issues at Sarakhs, Lotfabad, and Incheh Borun border points to facilitate growth.

He said talks had addressed problems such as the movement of Iranian wagons on Turkmen railways and activation of the Lotfabad border terminal.

## Parliament backs investment facilitation in energy sector

TEHRAN – A member of Iran's Parliament Energy Committee said the legislature is committed to easing regulations to attract both domestic and foreign investment in the oil and gas sector.

Seyed Mousa Mousavi emphasized that Parliament, particularly during its 11th term, has passed numerous laws aimed at supporting investment in energy.

"There is a strong will in Parliament to approve legislation that facilitates and streamlines



The terminal will now offer special freight discounts, expected to add 170,000 to 200,000 tons of transit freight—a first for the crossing.

Iran is also working on resolving customs hurdles and expanding infrastructure at the Sarakhs and Incheh Borun terminals.

"We aim to increase bogie exchange capacity at Sarakhs from 400 to 600 wagons per day," Zakeri said.

The two countries also discussed launching a new Mashhad-Mary passenger train route.

Meanwhile, during a meeting on May 20, with Turkmen Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, Iranian Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad emphasized deepening bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector and discussed avenues to broaden energy collaboration.

The minister highlighted the ongoing session of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee and its diverse agenda. He said the committee could significantly boost trade exchanges between the two countries.

Paknejad emphasized that constructive engagement with neighboring countries—particularly Turkmenistan, a "friendly and brotherly nation"—has always been a priority in Iran's foreign policy.

He added that the current administration is firmly committed to expanding energy ties with Turkmenistan.

He pointed to the swift implementation of the gas swap deal through Iran that delivers Turkmen gas to Turkey, expressing hope that other energy-related agreements—such as direct gas imports from Turkmenistan—would advance at a similar pace.

Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister and Head of Cabinet, Rashid Meredov, noted that Iran and Turkmenistan have historically maintained strong ties.

In recent years, he said, relations have entered a new phase, with both sides eager to expand cooperation across various sectors.

Meredov identified three key areas of cooperation with Iran: gas exports to Iran, joint development of compressor stations and pipelines, and gas swaps to third countries via Iranian territory.

He said Turkmenistan current-

ly produces over 80 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually, a substantial portion of which could be exported in collaboration with Iran.

He described the swift launch of the Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey gas swap as a testament to the strong partnership between the two nations and stated, "Based on this positive experience, we believe there is significant potential to further expand energy cooperation. We also have ambitious plans for increasing gas exports to Iran."

On May 13, the head of the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said the

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

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

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

"This was the first time since Turkmenistan's independence that such an exhibition took place in Iran, and Golestan Province had the honor of hosting it," Bahrami said.

"The exhibition was the result of consensus between the private sector and state institutions, and the outcome exceeded expectations."

He said the expo aimed to expand trade exchanges and showcase Turkmenistan's industrial and export capacities to the Iranian market.

The idea for reciprocal trade exhibitions was first approved at the 17th Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee meeting, and the Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber was tasked with its implementation.

Bahrami emphasized that the

## Agriculture Ministry launches smart farming system in 3rd year of crop pattern reform

TEHRAN – Iran's Agriculture Ministry will soon roll out a smart monitoring system for its national crop pattern scheme as part of efforts to improve water efficiency and agricultural productivity, a senior official said.

Gholamreza Golmohammadi, head of the Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Organization (AREEO), announced on Tuesday that the third version of Iran's crop pattern plan has been officially issued to provinces across the country.

The new framework, which prioritizes water conservation and

participation of both countries' private sectors in expert panels and face-to-face negotiations provided fertile ground for launching new partnerships.

Preliminary agreements were reached in areas including petrochemicals, petroleum products, construction materials, food industries, textiles, and logistics, which are expected to boost bilateral trade once finalized.

According to Bahrami, trade between the two countries reached nearly \$600 million last year.

With the momentum created by this exhibition and new commercial interactions, Iran and Turkmenistan are now targeting a minimum 30 percent increase in that figure.

"Some of this growth will materialize in the coming months, and the rest will be reflected in next year's export statistics," he said.

Explaining the choice of Golestan as the host province, Bahrami pointed to strategic ethnic, cultural, and geographical ties.

"Over one million ethnic Turkmen live in Golestan and North Khorasan, creating a natural platform for expanding economic, cultural, and social relations with Turkmenistan."

He noted that the event was funded entirely by the private sector, with the government offering oversight, support, and facilitation.

"This model proves that meaningful outcomes can be achieved when the private sector is empowered."

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

Looking ahead, he said plans are underway to hold a reciprocal Iranian trade expo in Turkmenistan's Balkan Province.

"We expect this continued exchange to elevate bilateral economic ties to a strategic level."

He also underscored Golestan's role as a gateway to Iran's northeastern trade corridor, thanks to its shared rail links with Turkmenistan, the Incheh-Borun Free Zone, port infrastructure, and cultural affinities with Central Asia.

"If these opportunities are matched with coordinated support, we could witness major transformations in exports, imports, and technology transfer in the coming years," Bahrami concluded.

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

enhanced efficiency, will be implemented using a new intelligent system that connects with the existing "My Farm" platform. The system enables real-time monitoring of cultivated areas, crop types, and farm management practices, he said.

Golmohammadi also noted that draft patterns for horticultural and aquaculture products have been prepared and submitted to specialized agencies for review. Additionally, the first volume of a training manual on improving crop productivity has been published.



# “EU sponsors Israel’s violence through trade and arms deals”: Belgian MEP

Europe needs to stop arms exports to Israel in order not to be complicit in the Gaza genocide

From page 1 ► Tehran Times interviews Marc Botenga, a Belgian member of the European Parliament representing the Left group (GUE/NGL), who is a powerful critic of the European Union’s policy toward Israel.

Botenga condemns the EU’s “business as usual” approach as a complicity in the Gaza genocide, highlighting the bloc’s privileged trade agreements, arms exports, and political backing for Israel’s actions in Gaza.

He exposes the EU’s double standards in its responses to Ukraine and Palestine, calling out leaders like Ursula von der Leyen and Kaja Kallas for enabling war crimes and ignoring International Criminal Court rulings.

Drawing from his firsthand experiences in Palestine, Botenga calls for urgent public mobilization to hold Europe accountable and demands justice.

The following is the text of the interview with Marc Botenga:

**You describe the EU’s current approach to Israel as “business as usual” and criticize it for complicity. What specific policy changes would break this pattern of complicity?**

It’s important today to acknowledge that the European Union does not have just normal relationships with Israel. It has a privileged partnership with Israel.

So there is the Association Agreement, which basically gives Israel a lot of privileges, advantages, to access, for example, the EU market, which makes the EU one of the main trading partners for Israel.

It also gives Israeli entities access to European public money, research and development funds. So we are sponsoring and this



needs to stop. It’s very clear that we need to cancel this agreement right now. The agreement itself speaks about human rights. It says that human rights should be respected.

Clearly, they are not being respected. So if Europe wants to stop being hypocritical, it needs to immediately cancel this agreement with Israel.

Secondly, there are still weapons going from the European Union, from Europe to Israel. This needs to stop. We need to stop the genocide, and in order to not be complicit, arms exports to Israel need to stop immediately. These are two concrete measures, I think, that Europe should take right now.

**European leaders such as Ursula von der Leyen and Kaja Kallas have been criticized by you for their stance on Israel. What political or strategic factors influence their current position?**

I think they consider that Israel plays, defends the role of Western imperialism in the region. Israel today bombs different countries in the Middle East, destroys different countries in the Middle East, and I’m afraid that some Eu-

ropean leaders think this is in the interest of the West. I do not think this is in the interest of the people, neither in the region nor in Europe.

And definitely it’s a violation of international law, of basic human rights. There’s a dehumanization of Palestinians, to which today, I’m afraid, Kaja Kallas [EU chief diplomat] and Ursula von der Leyen [President of the European Commission] contribute. They also normalize war crimes.

I think this is very bad. They still have normal discussions with the Israelis. They visit and they meet Israeli leaders as if nothing was going on, and this is absolutely unacceptable.

We know what the International Criminal Court said, and so we cannot be complicit or stay complicit with these crimes.

**You have highlighted the “double standards” of the EU regarding Ukraine and Gaza, particularly in terms of labeling genocide. How do you think this inconsistency affects the credibility of EU foreign policy?**

You know that when Russia invaded Ukraine, the European Union started sending weapons to Ukraine and put sanctions on Russia. But today, there is no such

sanction against Israel, despite the violations of humanitarian law and human rights.

This clearly shows double standards. People will no longer believe the European Union when it talks about human rights and international law because of this inconsistency.

The consequences are clear. What we’ve seen is that the European Union has basically disappeared from the diplomatic stage.

Ten or fifteen years ago, in all important international negotiations, Europe had a real presence. For example, in the negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program, European countries played an important role. On Palestine as well, European countries used to be involved. Today, they are not even part of the diplomatic discussions. It’s like they’ve exited the world stage — which is honestly quite shocking.

And this is the result of double standards. Why should anyone believe Europe when it speaks about international law and human rights if it actively contributes to genocide?

**You have led protests and spoken out strongly in the European Parliament. How do you see the role of politicians in Europe and in a broader context in the world in mobilizing public opinion and influencing EU foreign policy on Palestine?**

Well, I think we need to address the hypocrisy of European leaders. We need to be very clear: when they speak — when they use rhetoric about international law — and at the same time apply double standards, they are being inconsistent. We must call that out clearly.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Spanish parliament passes non-binding motion urging arms embargo on Israel

Spain’s parliament on Tuesday passed a non-binding motion calling on the government to impose an arms embargo on Israel in response to its military operations in Gaza, Anadolu Agency reported.

The motion, introduced by the leftist Sumar alliance, part of the ruling coalition, along with opposition parties Podemos and the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC), was approved by a vote of 176-171, El Pais reported.

The conservative People’s Party (PP) and the far-right Vox voted against the proposal, while all other parties supported it.

Lawmakers in favor applauded the motion, which urges the Spanish government to ban the exports of any material that could strengthen the Israeli military, including helmets, vests, and fuel with potential military use.

The motion also recommends reforming Spain’s foreign trade legislation to prohibit military agreements with any state accused of committing genocide or crimes against humanity, specifically citing Israel’s offensive on Gaza.

## Pakistan, India agree to withdraw troops by end of May

Pakistan and India have agreed to withdraw troop reinforcements deployed during their recent conflict back to their peacetime positions by the end of May, according to a senior Pakistani security official, South China Morning Post reported.

More than 70 people were killed in the four-day conflict, which was sparked by an attack on tourists by gunmen in Indian-administered Kashmir last month that New Delhi accused Islamabad of backing – a charge it denies.

The military confrontation involving intense tit-for-tat drone, missile, aerial combat and artillery exchanges came to an abrupt end after US President Donald Trump announced a surprise ceasefire, which is still holding.

## The India-Pakistan face-off: A crucial moment for global peace

By Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi

In the heart of South Asia, two nuclear-armed giants, India and Pakistan, find themselves embroiled in a direct confrontation that poses a significant threat to regional stability and global peace. The recent horrific attack on tourists in Pahalgam sent shockwaves through the community and beyond, leaving behind a legacy of loss and fear that no amount of military might can ever erase. Yet, in the wake of this tragic incident, an unexpected and powerful voice for the sanctity of human life has emerged; Kashmiris themselves condemned the violence that claimed innocent lives. This collective outcry starkly contrasts with the prevailing atmosphere of militarism and hostility, underscoring the desperate need for dialogue and reconciliation.

The events of the past few weeks have once again highlighted the profound vulnerabilities and devastating costs associated with armed conflict. Both nations stand at the precipice of a nuclear nightmare, requiring a multifaceted understanding of the situation that recognizes the implications for global security. The principle of nuclear deterrence—a theory positing that the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war will inherently deter states from engaging in such conflict—has become increasingly precarious in the current tense climate. As tensions continue to escalate, the danger of nuclear weapons being thrust into

## US will put weapons in space as part of ‘Golden Dome’ plan

United States President Donald Trump and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth have laid out their clearest plan yet for the “Golden Dome” missile defense program, which would include putting weapons in space for the first time, Al Jazeera reported.

Speaking from the White House on Tuesday, Trump said he had “officially selected an architecture” for the system, designed to take down “hypersonic missiles, ballistic missiles and advanced cruise missiles”.

## New pope urges Israel to allow humanitarian aid to Gaza

Pope Leo XIV on Wednesday appealed for Israel to allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza, calling the situation in the Palestinian enclave “yet more worrying and saddening,” Reuters reported.

“I renew my fervent appeal to allow for the entry of fair humanitarian help and to bring to an end the hostilities, the devastating price of which is paid by children, the elderly and the sick,” the new pope said during his first weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Square.

## Israeli attacks kill 82 in 24 hours in Gaza

In the past 24 hours alone (the Wednesday afternoon time), Israeli air and ground assaults killed at least 82 Palestinians and wounded another 262, according to Gaza’s health ministry, Middle East Eye reported.

The updated figures bring the confirmed death toll in the Strip to 53,655, with more than 121,950 people wounded since the war began.

Israel resumed its military campaign on 18 March after a brief ceasefire which Israel broke. Since then, the ministry reports, 3,509 Palestinians have been killed and 9,909 wounded – figures that continue to rise as bombardment and ground offensives intensify.



A man stands inside his shell-hit home in Salamabad, Uri, near the Line of Control in Indian-administered Kashmir

the spotlight grows ever more real.

The role of social and conventional media cannot be overlooked in this context. They have not only intensified the rhetoric surrounding the conflict but have also created an environment in which the cries for non-military solutions are drowned out by the drumbeats of war. Historically, India and Pakistan have navigated their disputes through dialogue, treaties, and agreements. However, the contemporary media landscape, characterized by sensationalism and militaristic narratives, threatens to overshadow the potential for peaceful resolutions.

## Abbas visits Beirut ahead of Ortagus as the issue of displaced Palestinians takes center stage

From page 1 ► Abbas precedes Ortagus in visit to Beirut as issue of displaced Palestinians comes under scrutiny

Meanwhile, the date of Ortagus’ visit is likely to take place at the end of next week or early next month in parallel with the circulated provocative statements she made, as usual, that a “huge wave of transformations and changes is about to sweep [West Asia] all away.”

According to informed sources, Ortagus will carry with her a list of harsh American conditions to push Lebanon to join the normalization agreements with Tel Aviv, as a condition for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a complete cessation of the ongoing U.S.-led Israeli attacks.



The sources added that Ortagus’ visit will resolve the issue of Palestinians in Lebanon, whether in terms of disarming them, as is happening in Syria, or in terms of pushing the

an Israeli foot patrol.

The site was pre-rigged with explosives, and fighters opened fire after luring the IOF into the trap, causing confirmed casualties. The Israeli unit had to call for reinforcements via drones.

Commander Zakaria Rami Abu Ouda was martyred in the battle, and his body was recovered by his comrades.

Earlier, in the same area, the armed wing of Hamas, the al-Qassam Brigades, announced a complex ambush that targeted three Israeli military vehicles with two explosive devices and a Tandem shell. A direct engagement followed, resulting in additional IOF casualties.

Not for the first time this week, military helicopters were seen landing at the scene to evacuate the wounded.

Israeli media also reported that part of a building collapsed in Gaza, injuring three IOF soldiers, two critically.

The IOF later confirmed the death of Staff Sgt. Danilo Mocanu, 20, from the 82nd Battalion of the 7th Armored Brigade, during fighting in southern Gaza. Another soldier was injured in the same incident.

Lebanese authorities to resettle them and stop treating them as refugees.

Lebanon’s Supreme Defense Council recently warned Hamas against using Lebanese territory to launch rockets towards the occupied Palestinian territories.

According to the information being circulated, the Lebanese security services have asked the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which already suffers from organizational fragmentation, to coordinate with the remaining Palestinian factions to agree on a mechanism for handing over weapons to the Lebanese state, as the current situation does not permit the Lebanese army to enter the camps without prior coordination.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))



## Iran, symbol of cultural diversity, peaceful coexistence



TEHRAN—Islamic Republic of Iran, which boasts tens of registered cultural elements, seeks to bring the rich and diverse voice of its nation to the world, Human Rights Headquarters declared.

May 21 has been designated as World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development by UNESCO with an aim to improve intercultural understanding, promote respect for differences, and strengthen dialogue among nations, Mehr news agency wrote.

Iran, a leading model in strengthening intercultural dialogue, emphasizes the high value of cultural diversity as a human and civilizational asset.

Iran is a nation with thousands of years of history in which various cultures, customs and lifestyles have had a peaceful coexistence.

The country's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, not only is the symbol of beauty and art, but also carries deep concepts of morality, rationality, peace-seeking, and respect for others.

From Nowruz to maqami music, naqqali, carpet weaving, religious rituals, and local languages, each expresses a part of the common spirit of Iranians and their connection with other ethnic groups and nations.

In a world where 89 percent of conflicts occur in countries with weak intercultural dialogue, in a world where tensions, extremism, and injustices often stem from ignoring cultural diversity and difference, intercultural dialogue is not just a choice, but a necessity for global peace, sustainable development, and mutual understanding among nations.

Iran loudly proclaims: "Cultural diversity is a national asset and a guarantee of lasting peace."

Just as UNESCO considers culture a "global public good" Iran, with dozens of cultural elements registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List and relying on a humanistic and ethical discourse, has always supported cultural exchange, multilateralism, and international cooperation in the field of culture and strives to make the rich and diverse voice of its nation heard by the world.

Cultural diversity is not a threat; it is an opportunity for dialogue, synergy, peaceful coexistence, and building a world based on respect, justice, and human dignity.

On this day, UNESCO calls on everyone to honor cultural diversity, through which we can create the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity.

## Sereshk: ancient part of garden city of Natanz



*A view of the Sereshk Hosseiniyeh—a place where Shia Muslims come together to observe religious ceremonies—which dates back to Safavid era*

TEHRAN--Sereshk historical district is one of ancient parts of garden city of Natanz, Isfahan province, said an expert of Natanz Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department.

Sereshk boasts numerous historical and tourism attractions, Majid Nouri told ISNA.

Prime situation of Sereshk district is its proximity to Tehran-Isfahan freeway. Sereshk has historical monuments.

Sereshk Jame' Mosque is a brick masterpiece whose original structure was built during the Seljuk era and was renovated during the Ilkhanid era. The mosque used to have four iwans (porches), but currently has three porches in the north, east, and west.

The precious monument is comprised of two upper and lower shabestans (the main space of mosques functions as the praying area), the

lower shabestan is the underground space of the mosque which has two eastern and western entrances suitable for cold seasons.

He continued that there is a long iwan (porch) with height of 4.9 meters on top of upper shabestan. It has Roman arch which is in fact the main brick dome of the mosque.

Nouri said that the second floor of mosque has brick lattice windows.

The monument was registered under the number 3251 on National Heritage List, he mentioned. It has been revived by Cultural Heritage Department for several times during past years, he added.

He continued that the Sereshk Hosseiniyeh—a place where Shia Muslims come together to observe religious ceremonies—dates back to Safavid era. It has three entrances in northern, southern and western wings, he said.

Nouri pointed out that Tazieh, Iranian passion play, is performed in the courtyard of the Sereshk Hosseiniyeh during the 10 days of Muharram annually. There are two streams of running water through which the water of the Baha'uddin Qanat flows, he said. Also, there are 400-year-old trees in the courtyard of the Sereshk Hosseiniyeh, he added.

Sereshk's old mill, which dates back to Qajar era, is located southeastern part of the Hosseiniyeh.

He also said that Sereshk is considered the most water-rich neighborhood of Natanz and has the largest number of aqueducts and the largest share of water. This has made Sereshk the greenest neighborhood with the most pleasant climate in Natanz, he added.

# Salehi-Amiri: Iran, Japan can be new model for cultural cooperation in Asia

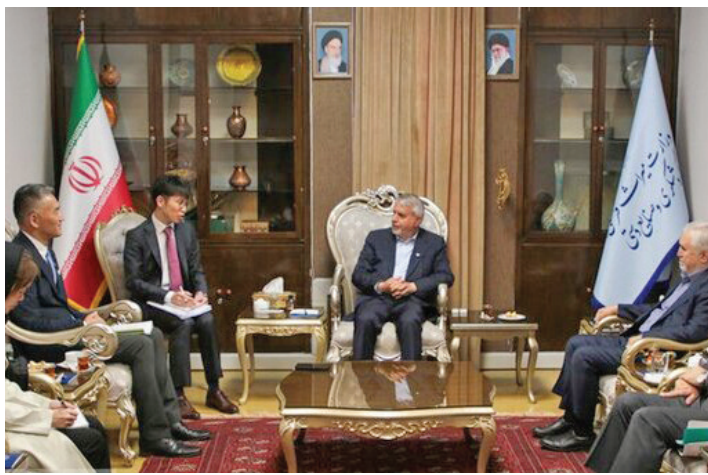
*2029, a turning point in cultural diplomacy*

TEHRAN—Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, in a meeting with Japan's Ambassador to Iran, Tsukada Tamaki, emphasized on history of cultural cooperation and mutual capacities in tourism, education, sports and handicrafts sectors and opened new horizons in Iran-Japan ties.

Stating that Iranian nation considers Japan as a noble, committed, peace-loving, and rational nation, he said, the general mentality of the Iranian people towards Japan is positive and full of mutual respect, and this social asset is an excellent platform for deepening cultural and historical ties between two nations, ILNA reported.

Emphasizing the necessity of using Japan's experiences in the areas of cultural management, the educational system, technology, and bureaucracy, he said: "Japan has a distinguished experience in the field of combining tradition and modernity, a model that can be an inspiration for the process of localizing progress in Asian countries, including Iran."

He continued that Iran and Japan rank 10th and 11th in the world in terms of the number of historical monuments and sites



registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list respectively.

This symbolic alignment is a sign of the historical depth of the civilizations of the two nations and lays the foundation for effective cultural exchange between East and West Asia, he said.

He proposed creating a joint exhibition network in the capitals of the two countries, adding: Holding fairs of Iranian civilization in Tokyo and representation of Japanese art in Tehran is an introduction to redefining the mutual image of nations towards each other in light of cultural originalities.

Pointing to various tourism genres in Iran, the minister said Iran has all 20 recognized types of

tourism in the world, from health, religious, and historical tourism to nature and creative tourism. This huge potential could become a point of attraction for Japanese tourists in case of smart introduction, he added.

Salehi-Amiri pointed out that unfortunately the image of Iran portrayed in some Western media is at odds with the existing realities. Japan is an independent, thoughtful country that relies on political rationality and will certainly not be captured by these biased portrayals, he said. Iran's security is higher than other regional countries, he added.

He proposed that inviting Japan's cultural, tourism and media personalities to visit Iran can pave

the grounds for improving the image of Iran in Japanese public opinion. "We are ready to host high-ranking delegations of Japanese heads of travel agencies.

The minister said Iranian and Japanese handicrafts are the delicate and soulful legacies of ancient nations. Japan can be a target market for Iranian traditional arts and vice versa, he added.

"We are also ready to build a cultural bridge between Iranian homes and Eastern art through gaining deeper understanding of Japanese art."

Japan's Ambassador to Iran, for his part, said that learning a language is a prelude to a deeper understanding of the culture, art, politics, and trade of nations.

Tamaki added, "Understanding Iran is a cultural mission for us, not just a diplomatic one. I have always sought a deeper understanding of your cultural roots, educational system, and arts during my travels to Iran."

The year 2029 marks the 100th anniversary of the official establishment of diplomatic ties between Iran and Japan, he said.

This historic occasion will be a unique opportunity to design a cultural, civilizational, and strategic movement in bilateral relations, he added.

## Iran marks May 21 as "National Day of Ecotourism"



TEHRAN-- Iran has designated May 21 (Ordibehesht 31) as "National Day of Ecotourism".

Iran Ecotourism opens a gateway to experiencing the country's stunning natural landscapes and rich cultural heritage with a focus on sustainability, Mehr news agency wrote.

Through Iran Ecotourism, travelers can embark on adventures that range from trekking through lush forests to exploring vast deserts, all while adhering to practices that preserve the environment and support local communities. Iran Ecotourism is dedicated to minimizing tourism's ecological footprint, ensuring that Iran's beauty remains intact for future generations, making every trip not only an adventure but also a contribution to conservation efforts.

Within the realm of Iran's ecotourism, tourists take on a role of guardianship towards nature, actively working to minimize their environmental footprint. This conscious approach extends beyond preservation efforts, also encompassing a commitment to the communities within these natural areas. When visiting regions inhabited by local communities, tourists play a vital role in supporting economic growth.

They achieve this by purchas-

ing local products and handicrafts, and by opting to stay in eco-friendly resorts. This not only enriches their travel experience with authentic cultural immersion but also ensures that their visit contributes positively to the local economy and sustainability efforts, reinforcing the symbiotic relationship between travelers and the natural world.

Ecotourism can serve as one of the effective strategies for economic, social, and environmental development of destinations.

Nowadays, many policies aim to develop ecotourism and utilize its benefits, especially in the developing countries with rich natural resources. Iran is one of the countries with considerable potential for ecotourism development.

However, there is no consistent plan to use the country's potentialities in this respect. It is thus necessary to take serious measures to develop ecotourism and utilize Iran's natural resources optimally.

According to the results, the most important ecotourism development dimensions in Iran can be enumerated in order of importance as follows: management, infrastructure development, marketing and training, and human resource development. Moreover, the key ecotourism development

strategies, in order of importance, are as follows: carrying out marketing activities to increase the market share of ecotourism, diversifying Iran's ecotourism products, improving the access roads to tourism villages, and increasing the destination's resilience to natural disasters.

Exploring the underlying conditions in Iran, this study proposed a model of ecotourism development in Iran as a potential destination for ecotourism. The findings can offer practical and scientific guidelines to managers and policymakers who seek to develop ecotourism in Iran

Iran's ecotourism tours are as diverse as its landscapes, offering a variety of experiences tailored to showcase the country's natural beauty and ecological diversity while promoting conservation and sustainable travel. Here are some prominent types of ecotourism tours available in Iran:

**Nature Treks and Mountain Climbing:** Explore Iran's rugged terrain, from the Alborz and Zagros mountains to the lesser-known ranges, offering trails for all levels of trekkers and climbers.

**Desert Safaris:** Venture into the vast deserts like the Dasht-e Kavir and Lut Desert for star-gazing, camel trekking, and experiencing traditional desert life.

**Wildlife Watching:** Iran's rich biodiversity can be observed in its many national parks and reserves, such as Golestan, where travelers can spot rare species like the Persian leopard.

**Cultural and Village Tours:** Discover the traditional lifestyles and sustainable practices of rural communities in areas like Abyaneh and Masuleh, integrating cultural heritage with natural beauty.

**Adventure Sports:** For those

seeking adrenaline, Iran offers river rafting, skiing, and paragliding in various natural settings, combining thrill with scenic beauty.

**Botanical Tours:** Iran's unique flora, especially in regions like the Hyrcanian Forests (a UNESCO World Heritage site), draws botany enthusiasts for exploration and study.

**Eco-Volunteering Opportunities:** Participate in conservation projects, wildlife monitoring, or community-based initiatives, contributing to the preservation of Iran's natural resources.

Each of these tours provides an immersive experience of Iran's ecotourism, allowing travelers to connect with nature, engage with local cultures, and contribute to environmental conservation efforts.

Iran's ecotourism showcases a stunning array of natural destinations, from the lofty peaks of Mount Damavand to the mysterious Martian Mountains. These top attractions offer breathtaking beauty and a deep connection with nature, highlighting the country's diverse landscapes. As visitors explore Iran's ecological wonders, they not only enjoy the scenery but also gain insights into the significance of preserving such treasures. Iran's natural sites are a call to adventure and conservation, making it an essential destination for eco-conscious travelers seeking to discover the earth's hidden gems.

Ecotourism is a form of nature-oriented tourism intended to contribute to the conservation of the natural environment, generally defined as being minimally impactful, and including providing both contributions to conservation and environmental education.

ing visitor numbers in recent years.

Thanks to its striking vistas and easy accessibility, the Dream Bridge quickly became a hit on social media. The Fuji City government actively promoted it across official platforms, enticing visitors to flock to the area to take and share their perfect Fuji photos. By 2019, the location was drawing over 1,000 visitors on peak days, firmly establishing itself as a must-visit spot for those seeking an up-close view of the mountain.

## Japan's Mt Fuji Dream Bridge, faces criticism amid overtourism issues

Japan's Mount Fuji, renowned for its stunning beauty and deep cultural heritage, has consistently captivated visitors from all corners of the globe.

Yet, even government-backed projects designed to increase tourism around the iconic peak are facing significant pushback. A prime example of this is the "Mt Fuji Dream Bridge" (officially known as Fujisan Yume No ?hashi), which was

built with the aim of providing a perfect vantage point for visitors while boosting the local economy. However, the unintended consequences of overtourism are now forcing local residents to grapple with the realities of increased foot traffic, noise, and environmental impact, TTW reported.

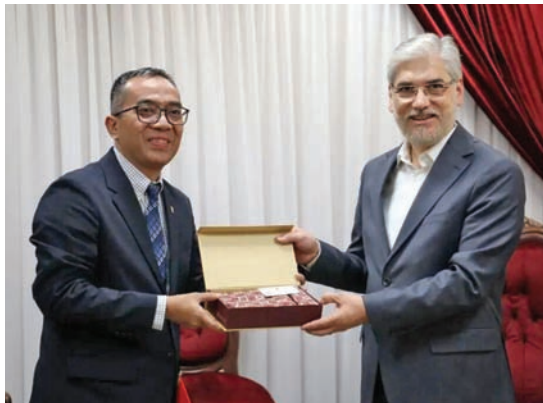
Japan's Mount Fuji, an iconic symbol of natural beauty and cultural importance, has long attracted visitors from around the globe. However, even government-supported initiatives aimed at

boosting tourism around the majestic peak are facing growing opposition. One such project, the Mt Fuji Dream Bridge (Fujisan Yume No ?hashi), was designed to provide an ideal spot for visitors to capture the perfect photograph of Mount Fuji, while simultaneously invigorating the local economy. Yet, the rise in tourism has led to unforeseen challenges, leaving local residents to cope with overcrowding, noise, and environmental degradation.

Inaugurated in 2016, the Mt Fuji Dream Bridge was constructed in Shizuoka Prefecture to serve as a scenic observation point, offering unobstructed views of the legendary Mount Fuji. The bridge spans two public roads in Fuji City and was strategically positioned to maximize the mountain's visibility. Local authorities hoped that this new attraction would rejuvenate the region's flagging tourism industry, much like other rural areas in Japan that were struggling with decreas-



# Tehran to boost technological co-op with Tunis, Jakarta



TEHRAN –Science Minister Hossein Simaei-Sarraf, in separate meetings with his Indonesian and Tunisian counterparts, has conferred on ways to foster scientific and technological relations.

The officials met on the sidelines of the second Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Co-operation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform.

On Tuesday, an Indonesian delegation led by Brian Yulianto, the Indonesian Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, paid a visit to the technology park in University of Tehran to become more familiar with the achievements of knowledge-based companies in different sectors like engineering, medicine, biotechnology, and industry.

Following that, Yulianto, held a meeting with Simaei-Sarraf, and voiced Indonesia's readiness to emulate Iran's achievements in technology parks and implement the successful experiences of the Ministry of Science in Indonesia.

The official also announced his willingness to benefit from collaborative partnerships to conduct joint research projects in the fields of industry, medical equipment, vaccines, artificial intelligence (AI), and biotechnology.

Referring to Indonesia's population of more than 280 million and the country's accomplishments in the agricultural sector, including the large-scale production of rice in the new year, the official emphasized Indonesia's readiness to share these experiences with Iran.

Exchanging professors and post-graduate students, and paying a visit to scientific centers were among other issues discussed by the two sides.

For his part, Simaei-Sarraf highlighted the capacities of the two countries in AI and proposed utilizing available data to develop a joint network for the promotion of the two countries' technological advancement.

The official expressed readiness to expand scientific ties between the two nations, inviting Indonesia to invest in the science and technology sectors. Establishing joint technology parks as well as providing required technical consultations were also discussed.

The Iranian official also held a meeting with Mondher Belaid, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Tunisia, and Simaei-Sarraf. The two sides underlined strengthening scientific and technological cooperation, expanding ties among universities,

and signing a memorandum of understanding on science.

Simaei-Sarraf voiced Iran's readiness to grant scholarships to Tunisian students and lay the ground for the presence of Tunisian professors and students, particularly in Arabic language and literature, in the country. He also proposed founding a joint technology park relying on Iran's capabilities.

The officials agreed to set up a working group to coordinate the implementation of agreements through holding online sessions in the near future.

## 2nd Ministerial Meeting of 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.

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.

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.

## Iran, Italy to beef up health ties

TEHRAN –Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi and his Italian counterpart, Orazio Schillaci, have discussed avenues for promoting collaborations in the health sector, focusing particularly on the aging population and digital health.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA), which started on May 19 and will run until June 27 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Italian official elaborated on health programs in Italy, saying that the country's health system prioritizes prevention and promotion of health, the health ministry's website reported.

Plans on aging and health, and digital health transformation are among the most important programs of the country, Schillaci noted. With its aging population, Italy's health policies highlight care and prevention, he added.

For his part, Zafarqandi, underscoring Iran's high capabilities in the health sector, announced readiness to share the health ministry's experiences in the primary healthcare system, family physician program, referral system, and treatment fields with Italy.

The official went on to say that "the two countries have signed different memoranda of understanding in the field of health, including medicine, medical equipment, and medical education. We are interested in fostering cooperation and discussing the ways to implement the achieved agreements."

Highlighting that the two countries are facing similar challenges, including an aging population and non-communicable diseases, Zafarqandi proposed preparing a list of cooperation capacities and organizing a working group to share challenges and promote ties.

To boost health diplomacy, the health minister has also held meetings with his Swiss and Saudi counterparts.

### 78th World Health Assembly

Focusing on the 2025 theme 'One World for Health', WHA78 will bring together high-level country representatives to address health challenges. This year's gathering comes at a pivotal moment for global health, as Member



States confront emerging threats and major shifts in the landscape for global health and international development.

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

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

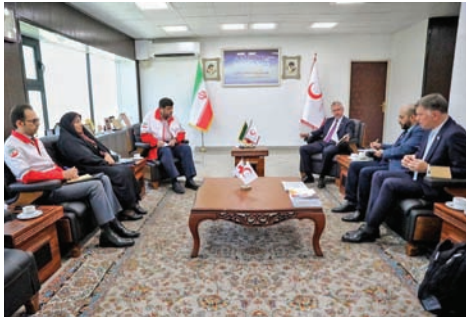
Zafarqandi will present a statement on 35 specific documents related to the country's health system; these include 29 documents on general health activities, and six focus on the activities of different departments, and international cooperation, the official noted.

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

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

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

## With ICRC assistance, IRCS is ready to share expertise



TEHRAN – The head of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pirhossein Kolivand, has announced readiness to share its scientific and educational experiences as well as operational expertise with other red crescent societies with the contribution of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The IRCS is willing to share its expertise in different fields, such as diagnosing individuals with mobility problems through screening, providing rehabilitation services, and training individuals living in areas affected by landmines on how to identify and avoid mine hazards, Kolivand noted.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with the president of the ICRC, Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, and the representative of the ICRC in Iran, Vincent Cassard, on Tuesday.

Also, Kolivand called on the ICRC to hold a congress to commemorate the efforts of the international rescuers who have lost their lives to save others, and proposed hosting the congress. By supporting red crescent measures and humanitarian activities, the ICRC will boost motivation among them, he noted.

Referring to unilateral sanctions, the official said, "We expect the International Committee of the Red Cross to play its role in facilitating the import of medicine and medical equipment by the Iranian Red Crescent Society."

The official went on to ask the ICRC to equip Red Crescent helicopters with night vision cameras to enhance their ability in rescue operations.

### Joint efforts

In March, the IRCS and the ICRC discussed ways for expanding collaborations to promote supportive and medical services, particularly rehabilitation services, in different provinces of the country.

During a meeting held on March 13, Cassard stressed the need to prevent disabilities and develop psychosocial support services in less privileged areas. These valuable actions can pave the way for further cooperation.

For her part, the director of the IRCS for international affairs, Razieh Alishvandi, highlighted the successful partnership between the two organizations. Lauding the ICRC's endeavours in the country, the official stressed the importance of holding training courses on international humanitarian law (IHL) and the need to get acquainted with the Red Cross movement.

The IRCS has taken various measures to serve the people utilizing the capacity of 270,000 personnel, relief workers, and volunteers, she noted.

Cassard commended the IRCS for taking measures during the Nowruz holidays and announced the ICRC's readiness to support IRCS in organizing the World Red Crescent Day and expanding medical, rehabilitation, and humanitarian services in underprivileged areas.

In February, the IRCS and the ICRC agreed on setting up a joint secretariat on rehabilitation services in Tehran.

During a meeting in Tehran to prepare for the first international conference on physical disability and rehabilitation, Kolivand said rehabilitation is an essential part of universal health coverage.

"Due to war and other accidents, rehabilitation services are greatly needed in the country. That's why the Society started providing rehabilitation services and manufacturing prostheses and orthotics. Currently, 200 rehabilitation centers are operating in Iran, and the conference will focus on the activities of these centers," he added.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

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

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

Strict restrictions started in 43 cities that had the highest rate of infection in the country.

All of the cities, except for two, are now out of the red condition and have turned orange or yellow so that the hospitalization rate has decreased.

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

## اعمال محدودیت ها اکثر شهرها را از وضعیت قرمز خارج کرد

از ۸۹ شهری که از پنجم آبان محدودیت‌های کرونایی در آنها اعمال شده است، ۸۷ شهر از وضعیت قرمز خارج شده‌اند.

محدودیت‌های کرونایی در ۸۹ شهر (از ۵۱۰۰ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۳ شهر و از ۱۴ آبان در ۴۶ شهر) اعمال شده است. از این تعداد به جز دو شهر همه شهرها از حالت قرمز خارج و به نارنجی یا زرد تبدیل شده‌اند.

اکنون در ۱۶۰ شهر و شهرستان که قرمز رنگ بودند در حدود ۱۴۵ شهر روند کاهش بیماری آغاز شده است. در ۱۵ شهر باقیمانده هم در همین هفته این روند کاهشی شروع خواهد شد.





MAY 22, 2025

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*One who says unpleasant things about others, will himself quickly become a target of their scandal.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:28 Dawn: 3:13 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:54 (tomorrow)

## IAF to show Jean-Luc Godard's "Our Music"

TEHRAN – Jean-Luc Godard's 2004 film "Our Music" will be screened at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Friday.

Scheduled for 6 p.m., the 80-minute movie will be shown at the Nasseri Hall of the IAF with Persian subtitle, ILNA reported.

It is a three-chapter (Hell, Purgatory and Paradise) meditation on the city of Sarajevo in the wake of the Bosnian war, on Palestine and Israel, and on war itself.

The film reflects on violence, morality, and the representation of violence in film, and touches especially on past colonialism and the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It was screened out of competition at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

The film is divided into three parts inspired by the Divine Comedy of Dante. "Realm 1: Hell" is a relatively brief, non-narrative montage composed of appropriated documentary and narrative fictional footage depicting war, carnage, and violence.

The second segment, "Realm 2: Purgatory," makes up the bulk of the film. Godard, playing himself, is waiting at the airport to depart to a European arts conference in Sarajevo.

There he meets Ramos Garcia, a nationalized French Israeli, who is going to the conference as an interpreter. Ramos is looking forward to seeing his niece at the conference, Olga Brodsky, a French-speaking Jew of Russian descent.

Another young woman at the conference, Judith Lerner, a journalist from Tel Aviv, visits the French ambassador and entreats him to have an on-the-record conversation about Jewish-Palestinian relations.

Later she interviews the poet Mahmoud Darwish, who says that Israel defines the Palestinian struggle. In between these encounters, Judith surveys the city, and visits the Mostar bridge, where she reads Emmanuel Levinas.

Meanwhile, Olga attends Godard's lecture, ostensibly about the relationship between

image and text.

In addition to touching on a variety of other topics, Godard explains his opposition to the common cinematic trope of "shot/reverse shot," the cutting back and forth between two characters in a conversation or an exchange.

Godard explains that presenting two characters in such a way, framed identically, regressively effaces their differences, and can be used as a tool of propaganda. Later Olga meets with her uncle Ramos, and discusses with him the philosophical problem of suicide.

After the conference, Godard is back home, watering his garden. He gets a call from Ramos Garcia, who tells Godard about a young woman who ran into a theater and declared she had a bomb in her bag.

She asked for one person to die with her for Israeli-Palestinian peace; everyone left the theater. The police came and shot her. When they opened her bag, all they found were books. Garcia tells Godard that he is sure it was Olga.

In "Realm 3: Heaven," a brief postlude, Olga wanders contemplatively through an idyllic lakeside setting that appears to be guarded by American marines.

Jean-Luc Godard (1930-2022) was a French and Swiss film director, screenwriter, and film critic. He rose to prominence as a pioneer of the French New Wave film movement of the 1960s, alongside such filmmakers as François Truffaut, Agnès Varda, Éric Rohmer and Jacques Demy. He was arguably the most influential French filmmaker of the post-war era.

He is said to have "generated one of the largest bodies of critical analysis of any filmmaker since the mid-20th century". His work has been central to narrative theory and has "challenged both commercial narrative cinema norms and film criticism's vocabulary". In 2010, Godard was awarded an Academy Honorary Award.

# "Servants of the Nation" exhibition inaugurated in Tehran

TEHRAN – An exhibition of poster and typography on the occasion of the first anniversary of the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions was inaugurated at the Aali Gallery of Tehran's Art Bureau on Tuesday.

Entitled "Servants of the Nation", the exhibit displays works by a number of Iranian artists including Behnam Shirmohammadi, Hassan Jafarinia, Mehdi Qanavati, Seyyed Mohammad-reza Miri, Sadeq Sanei, Leila Teimourinajd and Marzieh Ranjbar among others.

The exhibition is a result of a nationwide campaign called "Revolutionary Poster Movement" which was launched last year to pay tribute to the martyrs. Many artists have contributed to this initiative.

President Ebrahim Raisi was returning from a ceremony to



officially open a new dam on the border between Iran and Azerbaijan on May 19, 2024 when his helicopter crashed in Varzaqan, northwestern Iran.

The tragic incident claimed the lives of not only the President but also Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, former governor of East Azarbaijan Province

Malek Rahmati, and former Friday prayer leader of Tabriz Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Ale-Hashem and several high-ranking provincial officials, who were among those on board.

The accident was caused by dense fog that severely limited visibility in the region, leading to a fatal crash.

The incident shocked the nation and resulted in the loss of several key figures who played significant roles in Iran's political and religious spheres.

The loss of life has sent a wave of grief across Iran, with many government officials and ordinary citizens alike paying tribute to the victims of the crash.

## Iranian short film "Khalil" to participate in 23rd Plein la Bobine

TEHRAN – The Iranian short film "Khalil" directed by Seyed Payam Hosseini has been selected for the 23rd Plein la Bobine International Film Festival in La Bourboule, France, from June 8 to 13.

Produced in 2024, the 20-minute drama happens in a small village on the Iranian plateau. The story is about Khalil, a 13-year-old boy, who is troubled after his father's death as he wonders whether his father has gone to heaven or hell.

Determined to find answers, he sets out on a personal journey to discover the truth. He asks the villagers who knew his father to forgive him for any sins he might

have committed. Khalil writes a letter to God, pleading for mercy.

This narrative beautifully captures a child's innocence and determination in the face of spiritual uncertainty.

"Through the world of children, we can address global issues, as well as social, political, and religious concerns, in a much more nuanced and beautiful way," the director said about the film.

With 13 years of experience in the film industry, Seyed Payam Hosseini is the managing director of Panah Film Cinema Institute and serves as the executive secretary and organizer of the Panah National Film and Short Screen-



play Festival.

His short film "The Kites" received special recognition from the jury in the Generation section of the 70th Berlinale Film Festival.

The Plein la Bobine is a renowned event in France, dedicated to young audiences, offering a rich selection of films and educational activities.

## Renowned orchestra combines classical, folk, mugham music at Tehran's Vahdat Hall



*Iranian musician Keivan Saket in an undated photo*

TEHRAN – The Mehdi Gholami Orchestra, featuring the renowned Iranian musician Keivan Saket, will perform a varied repertoire across three sections of classic, mugham and regional music at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on May 28.

Hamed Lak will serve as the chorus master, and Atabak Atri will be the vocal soloist for this

concert, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

The first segment highlights traditional Persian classical music, performed by the Vaziri Orchestra under the direction and composition of Keivan Saket.

Performers in this section include Salar Zaminian and Kiarash Saket on tar, Vahid Soleimani-Nejad and Ashkan Moradi on kamancheh, Marjan Mehraban on qanun, Siavash Saket on tombak, alongside other percussionists.

The second part features regional folk music. In this segment, Mohsen Keihan-Nejad will play daf, Majid Maleki on tombak, Kiarash Bayat on tar, Amin Rezairad on drums, and Vahid Soleimani-Nejad and Ashkan Moradi will join on kamancheh, alongside the orchestra.

The third section is dedicated to mugham music, performing compositions by prominent figures in mugham music as well as pieces composed by Mehdi Gholami himself. Nostalgic tunes from this genre will also be featured. Sirvan Shabani and Heidar Heidari, on tanbur,

and Alireza Hassan-Nia, as the vocalist, will perform in this segment.

Across all three sections, the concert will showcase seventy choir singers and fifty daf players.

Saket, 63, is an acclaimed Iranian composer and music researcher. He has held many concerts in Iran, Canada, and Australia. He established the Vaziri Orchestra in 1996 and has since performed numerous pieces with them. He has also worked with many great Iranian musicians, including the late Parviz Meshkattian.

Saket is the fastest tar and setar (traditional Iranian instruments) player in Iran. He has always believed in introducing Iranian traditional music to the world. One of his ways of doing so was to promote through his shows what Iranian instruments were capable of playing.

Along with his traditional albums, Saket released two modern albums. In his albums, he performed extremely fast and complex pieces.

## Cartoon of Day



Humanitarian Aid for Gaza

**Cartoonist:** Enrico Bertuccioli from Italy

## Artists pull work from ISP exhibition after Whitney cancels pro-Palestine performance

A group of artists participating in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program (ISP) have withdrawn their work from a capstone exhibition at Westbeth Gallery in protest of the institution's cancellation of a pro-Palestine performance.

The Whitney announced the cancellation of "No Aesthetics Outside My Freedom: Mourning, Militancy, and Performance," a piece by artists Fadl Fakhouri, Noel Maghathe, and Fargo Tbakhi, on May 12, two days before it was scheduled to take place as part of the programming for the ISP curatorial exhibition "a grammar of attention." Per its press materials, the exhibition aimed to examine the "tangled" legacies of anti-colonial and anti-racist movements worldwide, and encompassed workshops, installation, and performance.

The performance, titled after a line in the

poem "State of Siege," by Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish, was described by its performers as an invitation to mourn the Palestinians killed under the Israeli occupation and imagine alternative means of resistance. For an hour or so, the performers were to interpret "scores" written by Natalie Diaz, Christina Sharpe, and Brandon Shimoda through physical and verbal gestures that give form to grief.

According to a statement posted to Instagram from ISP's Associate Director, Sara Nadal-Melsiö, No Aesthetics had been canceled by the Whitney Museum after its leadership viewed a recording of its initial presentation at the Poetry Project, which staged the piece in collaboration with Jewish Currents. Tbakhi opened the performance with the following address to attendees: "You may only remain in this audience if you love Palestinians whol-

ly and completely, you may only remain if you love us while we are alive and when we are dead, when we are fighting for survival, dignity, land, return, real and sustainable life using any and all methods available to us."

In a statement to ARTnews, the Whitney said that its decision to cancel the performance was "clear and necessary," though not taken lightly.

"At the beginning of the performance, one of the artists called for anyone who believes in Israel or America in any incarnation to leave the audience. Later, the artist valorized specific acts of violence and imagery of violence," the museum said, adding that there was "no instance when we would find it acceptable to single out members of our community based on their belief system and ask them to leave an exhibition or performance."