

From Indifference to Moral Posturing: Europe's Betrayal of Gaza's Civilians

History will evaluate Europe based on its actions rather than words



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Netanyahu is both war criminal and falsifier

By staff writer

TEHRAN – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not only a war criminal and a great cheater, but also a master of distorting the facts. Whenever he speaks about peace, he seeks total surrender. He also calls his cruelty against Palestinians a defense against “terrorism”.

Now, this murderous man does not even tolerate the slightest criticism from those Western countries that have spoiled him and Israel with their unwavering blind support.

On May 23, he comically said the French, British, and Canadian Leaders of “emboldening Hamas to continue fighting forever”. These remarks came just after more than 18 months of brutalities, starvation, displacement, and thirst in Gaza that the leaders of these countries finally opened their mouths and called on Netanyahu to rethink his behavior in the besieged enclave.

Mahmoud Abbas' Beirut visit: Zero results for the Palestinian cause

By Sondoss Al Asaad

South Lebanon — Although President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas's visit to Lebanon does not merit analysis or serious consideration, the treatment he received from Lebanon's anti-Resistance camp was highly ridiculous.

It was not at all surprising that Minister of Foreign Affairs Youssef Raji (or rather the Minister of the Lebanese Forces party) welcomed the unpopular Abbas with open arms, while he did not file a complaint with the UN Security Council to protest the ongoing Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty on a daily basis.

A government source told Agence France-Presse that it was agreed that the process of disarming Palestinians from the camps in Lebanon would begin in mid-June, according to a specific timetable.

Extermination through planned starvation

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – The United Nations has led urgent global condemnation against the Israeli regime over the escalating hunger crisis in Gaza.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has condemned severe Israeli restrictions on humanitarian supplies to Gaza, saying it has allowed only “a teaspoon of aid when a flood of assistance is required.”

He reiterated that the UN will not participate in the new U.S.-backed aid distribution model proposed by Israel.

“Without rapid, reliable, safe, and sustained aid access, more people will die – and the long-term consequences on the entire population will be profound,” Guterres told reporters.

Although the Israeli occupation regime claims it has permitted trucks of aid through its militarily-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, Guterres said only about a third of the shipments have reached warehouses inside Gaza due to insecurity and lack of coordination.

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Reviving roots: a new chapter in Iran's rural tourism

By Afshin Majlesi

KERMAN – On May 21, the first-ever national celebration of ecolodges brought together some 600 ecolodge managers, travel insiders, and media personnel from across the country.

More than just a gathering of tourism stakeholders, the event marked a powerful declaration that Iran's cultural identity is alive and thriving within its rural heartlands, and ecolodges are now its proud storytellers.

According to organizers, the festival, held under the theme “from the heart of the soil to the soul of Iran”, marked the vibrant and diverse world of Iranian bomegardis; local ecolodges that are much more than places to stay. ► Page 6



First intl. congress on governance model of Martyr Raisi held in Tehran

TEHRAN — The inaugural international congress dedicated to the governance model of Martyr Ebrahim Raisi, Iran's eighth president, took place this morning at the IIRB International Conference Center in Tehran.

The event brought together prominent Iranian officials and military leaders to discuss and promote the principles and strategies associated with Martyr Raisi's governance. Some of the attendees included Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, and Hojatolislam Mohammad Qomi, head of the Islamic Development Organization.

Army Aviation still stands guard 43 years after Khorramshahr's liberation, cmdr. tells Tehran Times

By Mona Hojat Ansari

TEHRAN – Iranians call the eight-year war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq the Sacred Defense. For them, it was a time of immense hardship but also great pride. Thousands lost their lives fighting against Saddam's forces, which were far better equipped and backed by major military powers, including the United States, the UK, and Germany.

One of the most pivotal moments of the war was the liberation of Khorramshahr—an event that remains deeply ingrained in Iran's national identity and still holds valuable lessons today. After a fierce and bloody battle, Iranian forces retook the city on May 24, 1982, during Operation Beit ol-Moqaddas, two years after its occupation. The victory marked a major turning point in the war and lifted the nation's morale. To this day, Iran commemorates the date as a symbol of resistance and triumph. ► Page 3

'Government's strategy for renewable energies development continuously followed up'

TEHRAN- Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian referred to the government's strategy for expanding renewable energies, and stated that the movement in this direction has begun and is being followed continuously and regularly in daily and weekly government meetings.

He made the remarks in the 9th Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition of Iran (IRAN REC 2025) held at Milad Tower in Tehran.

Emphasizing the necessity of replacing electricity with gas in the field of heating, he stated: “In all aspects, including the production and import of solar panels, equipping power plants, modifying production lines for cooling and heating equipment, and construction engineering, precise and executive planning is being carried out with the aim of increasing energy efficiency.”

Addressing the same conference, Energy Minister Abbas Ali-Abadi said that the capacity of Iran's solar farms capacity has been almost doubled over the past seven months.

He announced efforts to facilitate activities in the development of renewables, and in this regard, improving the business environment for those active in this field is on the agenda. ► Page 4

President, transport minister inaugurate, launch over 4,000 projects

TEHRAN- During an online ceremony at the place of Iran's Ministry of Transport and Urban Development on Saturday, 4,219 projects in the fields of transportation, housing, and meteorology were inaugurated or launched in the presence of President Masoud Pezeshkian and Transport and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadegh.

As announced by the Transport and Urban Development Ministry, some 580 trillion rials (about \$707.320 million) in internal investment, plus \$119 million and €39 million in foreign investment has been made for these projects.

In the field of Iran Airports and Air Navigation Company, 10 airport projects, including surveillance and air traffic control radars and airport development projects, were inaugurated with a value of over 6.9 million euros and 3.48 trillion rials (about \$4.243 million).

Among them, the inauguration of the first MS-SR-MODS radar, a project built in Iran with a value of 600 billion rials (about \$732,000) at Abadan Airport in Khuzestan Province, is considered one of the most prominent projects in this sector. ► Page 4

TEHRAN PAPERS

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

Americans seeking a confusing approach in negotiation

In a note, the Hamshahri newspaper addressed the holding of the fifth round of negotiations in Rome and the challenging and ambiguous conditions. It wrote: Although Washington's contradictory statements regarding negotiations with Iran are not a new issue, this approach increased noticeably in the days leading to the fifth round of talks (on Friday), and the White House tried to put more pressure on Tehran beforehand with the tool of "threats and sanctions." The fifth round has been pursued with particular sensitivity by both sides. And despite the increasing rhetoric from the Washington-Tel Aviv axis, Iranian officials at various political-military levels have emphasized that they are prepared to face different scenarios both militarily and diplomatically. This is in a situation in which the confusing approach of American officials, and the American-Zionist threats have led experts to cast serious doubts about the White House's willingness to advance the negotiations to reach a balanced agreement to an extent that the Iranian Foreign Minister, before the start of the negotiations, evaluated the proposition of "zero enrichment" by Iran as "the failure of the negotiations."

Etemad: America is confused

In an interview with Nosratollah Tajik, a retired diplomat, Etemad discussed the Americans' confusion in the negotiations with Iran. He said: One of the possible reasons for contradictory remarks by American officials is Washington's confusion regarding its policies towards Iran. It seems that America knows what it does not want, but it still does not know exactly what it does want. On one hand, U.S. officials have repeatedly stressed that they have no problem with Iran's peaceful nuclear program, but on the other, these same officials claim that Iran should not be allowed to enrich uranium.

It should not be forgotten that the recent statements by U.S. officials came immediately after Trump visited Riyadh and also after Mr. Witkoff visited Israel. Some of these positions may be understandable in the context of the new regional coordination of the U.S. with its allies. Many realistic analysts emphasized that the U.S. president is not looking for war, but instead is pursuing maximum pressure. The use of various sticks, including the threat of Europe activating the snapback mechanism or making provocative statements, could be part of a broader strategy to gain more concessions from Iran and achieve Washington's goals.

Iran endorses any efforts aimed at eliminating terrorism in the region, says envoy to Turkey



Iran's Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad-Hassan Habibzadeh (R) and Secretary General of Turkey's National Security Council Okay Memis pose for a photo before a meeting in Ankara on May 24, 2025.

TEHRAN – Iran's ambassador to Turkey, Mohammad-Hassan Habibzadeh, reiterated Tehran's commitment to regional stability, emphasizing that Iran supports any initiative aimed at eliminating terrorism and enhancing security among neighboring countries.

His remarks came during a meeting with Okay Memis, the Secretary General of Turkey's National Security Council, held in Ankara on Saturday. Habibzadeh underscored the importance of cooperation between Iran and Turkey, particularly in efforts to promote peace and stability across the region.

Both officials agreed that strengthening security collaboration between the two nations is

Vatan-e-Emrooz: Captive of illusion

The Americans believe that Iran is in a weak position and they can get more concessions from Iran than in 2015 by claiming that a military attack will follow in case no agreement is reached. Trump, Witkoff, and Rubio believe they can get more concessions from Tehran by intensifying pressure on Iran. Accordingly, they believe that the threat of military action may make Iran retreat from its positions. However, the Leader of the Revolution, while warning and criticizing the nonsensical remarks by American officials, emphasized that Iran would pursue its nuclear rights based on its policies and according to its preferred approaches. The first effect of the Leader's words is the collapse of the illusion that Iran is in a weak position. If Trump has a real will to reach an agreement with Iran, he must accept the facts regarding Iran's nuclear program, as well as Iran's unbreakable red lines. Therefore, these red lines are still in place in the negotiations with the Trump administration. Trump must ultimately admit that he does not have the decisive leverage to deprive Iran of its nuclear rights. Neither military threats nor the threat of a breakdown in negotiations are credible threats to Iran.

Shargh: Role-playing in the middle of major disagreements

European powers threaten to trigger the snapback mechanism against Iran while holding diplomatic talks with Iran; Arab states, also using regional influence and shared security concerns, are trying to influence the course of the Iran-U.S. negotiations. Most of them share the common goal of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran and a devastating war in the region. However, the "fundamental differences" between Iran and the U.S., especially over the enrichment issue, and Tehran's insistence that it will continue enrichment "with or without a deal," make it difficult for third parties to play a role. The success or failure of the fifth round of talks in Rome will have far-reaching consequences not only for Iran and the U.S. but also for Europe and the Arab world. The ability of these actors to use their leverage constructively and to offer solutions that can at least satisfy the interests of all parties could play a crucial role in preventing a complete failure of diplomacy and moving toward a deeper crisis. However, until Washington and Tehran reach a common understanding on fundamental issues, the role of other actors will stay largely limited to crisis management and damage mitigation efforts.

Two-state solution is 'unachievable promise' for Gaza, FM says in Vatican

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has firmly dismissed the so-called "two-state solution" as a viable path to peace in Palestine, arguing that the decades-old proposal has done little more than exacerbate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

His comments came during high-level discussions held Friday in Vatican City with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State, and Bishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican's Foreign Minister.

Araghchi, on an official visit to Rome to take part in the fifth round of indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States, used the opportunity to outline Tehran's position on the Palestinian crisis. He condemned the two-state framework as an "unachievable promise" that has consistently failed to deliver justice or sovereignty for Palestinians, and instead, has only facilitated further violations of their rights.

"Over the years, this so-called solution has merely provided cover for the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, the Israeli regime continues its colonial push to erase Palestine entirely," Araghchi stated.

In contrast, the Iranian foreign minister highlighted the Islamic Re-



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (L) shakes hands with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Vatican, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, in Vatican City on May 23, 2025.

public's alternative proposal — one rooted in a single, democratic state across all of historical Palestine. This plan, he said, envisions a referendum in which all original inhabitants of the land, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians, could participate freely in determining the future of their country. Araghchi noted that this proposal is based on the vision put forward by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Touching on the dire humanitarian situation in the Palestinian

territories, Araghchi offered a grim assessment, particularly of the Gaza Strip, which has endured months of intense Israeli military assault and near-total blockade since October 2023. He described the ongoing Israeli actions in Gaza as genocidal in nature and called on the global community to urgently intervene.

"The international community has both a legal and moral duty to act. All governments and individuals of conscience must condemn the crimes being committed in Gaza and take immediate steps to stop this

catastrophe," he urged, stressing the urgent need for humanitarian assistance to be delivered to the besieged coastal enclave.

In his meeting with Vatican officials, Araghchi also addressed Iran's nuclear energy policy, reiterating that the Islamic Republic remains committed to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. He emphasized Iran's right, under international law, to develop nuclear energy for civilian and developmental purposes, and briefed the Vatican on Tehran's stance in ongoing diplomatic engagements.

The discussions further explored avenues for expanding bilateral relations between Iran and the Vatican. Both sides expressed mutual interest in strengthening interfaith dialogue and promoting peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions. Araghchi underscored the significance of such dialogues in fostering global understanding and harmony.

The meeting concluded with expressions of condolences for the passing of Pope Francis and congratulations on the election of Pope Leo XIV, marking a moment of solemn reflection and shared goodwill amid discussions of deeply consequential international issues.

Martyr Raisi's final, historic visit to Pakistan despite strong U.S. opposition



By Tauqeer Kahroal

ISLAMABAD – The mujahid scholar, servant of Imam Reza (peace be upon him), and devoted servant of the Islamic Ummah—Ayatollah Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi—passed away in a manner akin to martyrdom. His death is not only a profound tragedy for the Iranian nation but also an immense and irreparable loss for the broader Islamic world.

Even a year later, the pain of his passing remains fresh. A son of the Islamic Revolution, Raisi dedicated his life to upholding the dignity of the Muslim Ummah, defending the oppressed, supporting the Palestinian cause, and standing by the weak and vulnerable. His sudden death left a profound sense of grief among freedom-seekers, anti-imperialists, and sincere people across the globe.

A missed hope for the people of Pakistan

Just a month before his tragic passing, Ayatollah Raisi made what would be his final and most historic visit to Pakistan—a trip analysts hailed as promising and full of potential. The visit was unique and memorable in many respects. During his stay, Raisi expressed a heartfelt wish to address the Pakistani public directly—a moment both he and the people eagerly anticipated, but which, tragically, never materialized.

On May 19, 2024, Ayatollah Raisi lost his life in a helicopter crash, leaving the people of Pakistan—who

had been looking forward to hearing from him—deeply mourning. The visit had marked the beginning of a new chapter in Iran-Pakistan relations, with high-level discussions on bilateral cooperation, the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, and developments in West Asia.

His meetings with Pakistani officials—including President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif—further solidified the foundation for strengthening bilateral ties.

Ayatollah Raisi's martyrdom triggered an outpouring of sorrow and sympathy across Pakistan, a sentiment widely reflected on social media platforms where users recalled his heartfelt connection to the Pakistani people and the lasting impressions of his visit.

Though the trip lasted only two days, it was highly productive. His meetings with Pakistan's political and military leadership and visits to various institutions left a deep and positive impact on bilateral relations.

Following Iran's historic retaliatory strike on the Zionist regime, many Pakistani youth, elders, and even children were eager to meet the martyred president, hear his words, and express their admiration. It had long been customary for foreign leaders visiting Pakistan to deliver at least one public speech—often in Lahore.

When Leader of the Islamic Rev-

olution Ayatollah Khamenei visited Pakistan during General Zia-ul-Haq's rule as president of Iran, a historic and massive gathering welcomed him—an event comparable to the reception given to Imam Khomeini upon his return to Iran. Later, then-President Mohammad Khatami addressed the public during General Musharraf's tenure, and even during President Hassan Rouhani's visit under General Raheel Sharif's military leadership—despite some tensions and signs of pro-American alignment—the tradition of public engagement continued.

During Raisi's final visit, the Pakistani government faced both overt and behind-the-scenes pressure from the United States and Western powers. Yet the trip was conducted with dignity and success, marking a milestone in the history of bilateral relations.

Continuing his legacy through action

If the agreements signed during this visit are implemented with genuine political will, they would not only serve as a fitting tribute to the late president but also represent a continuation of his mission to deepen unity across the Muslim world.

The visit drew sharp reactions from the U.S. government and its regional allies—clear evidence that this was more than a routine diplomatic mission. Raisi's presence in Pakistan signified a push for regional independence and resistance against foreign domination.

The blossoming of Iran-Pakistan relations: a glimpse ahead

Raisi's three-day trip to Pakistan was his first foreign visit in the new Iranian calendar year and the first since Pakistan's new government assumed office. The visit underscored the value Iran places on its "neighborhood-first" policy and opened new prospects for Iran-Pakistan cooperation.

IRGC vows crushing response to any hostile act, citing readiness 'beyond imagination'

TEHRAN — Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) declared on Saturday that it remains at peak readiness and will deliver a powerful and "regret-inducing" response to any act of aggression, stressing that its deterrent capability exceeds what enemies could anticipate.

In a statement marking the anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr during the 1980–88

Iran-Iraq war, the IRGC reaffirmed its preparedness to defend Iran's sovereignty and respond decisively to threats. The southern Iranian city of Khorramshahr was recaptured from Iraqi forces in 1982 in a turning point of the conflict.

"The IRGC, inspired by the vision of the late Imam Khomeini and the sacrifices of Iran's martyrs, and guided by the leadership of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei,

stands fully equipped and ready," the statement said. "In close coordination with other branches of the armed forces, we are prepared to deliver a response to any enemy miscalculation—one that will be swift, decisive, and beyond their imagination."

The IRGC emphasized that its defensive posture spans all domains, with constant upgrades to operational readiness.

Looking beyond conventional threats, the statement drew parallels between past military victories and Iran's current ability to prevail in today's complex geopolitical and hybrid warfare environment. "The youth of Iran, drawing strength from the Khorramshahr model of resistance, are capable of confronting and overcoming today's multifaceted challenges," it said.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

Army Aviation still stands guard 43 years after Khorramshahr’s liberation, cmdr. tells Tehran Times

From Page 1 ▶ A key player in Khorramshahr's liberation was the Army Aviation unit. After a Saturday ceremony where some of the pilots of the Beit ol-Moqaddas battle were brought to the stage and honored, The Tehran Times managed to interview Second Brigadier General Qassem Khamoushi, the commander of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army Aviation. The commander expounded on how his forces continue to play a vital role in Iran's military and security strategy, 43 years after their heroic efforts in Khorramshahr.

Below is the full text of the interview:

Army Aviation played a crucial and significant role during the Sacred Defense. Given the evolving nature of modern warfare,



A pilot is honored for his service during the liberation of Khorramshahr

how do you see your role and mission fitting into the country's defense strategy?

The measures taken by the Army Aviation during the eight years of the Sacred Defense were carried out by our personnel per the conditions of that time. However, the

threats today have changed. The threats we face now are not the same as those from 45 years ago. Thus, we have both modernized our equipment, which is crucial, and updated the training of our personnel. This includes training programs that ensure the effective presence of pilots and engineers, as well as training that addresses contemporary threats. We have integrated the experiences of the eight-year Sacred Defense with modern training to ensure that our personnel can effectively confront today's threats.

How would you describe the current state of Army Aviation's equipment? How modern is your fleet?

We have successfully localized precision-guided and long-range



Commander of Army Aviation Second Brigadier General Qassem Khamoushi during a Tehran ceremony on May 24, 2025.

tive solutions.

During the Sacred Defense era, Army Aviation helicopters could only operate during the day. Now, thanks to the integration of night vision systems and the localization of components, we can conduct operations even in complete darkness.

Furthermore, the range of our missiles has increased more than sevenfold, and our missile systems have been upgraded for improved precision and accuracy. In the coming days or weeks, we will showcase important advancements in component manufacturing and the operational needs of our helicopters.

In addition to military operations, the Army Aviation also undertakes various non-military missions during peacetime, especially in response to natural disasters. Could you share some insights about these missions?

During peacetime, Army Aviation dedicates a portion of its resources to serve the people in times of

need. Given that our country is disaster-prone, experiencing earthquakes, floods, and wildfires, Army Aviation has actively participated in all such emergencies. In recent years, we have responded to every major earthquake in the country.

Most notably, the Sar-e Pol-e Zahab earthquake, where we conducted over 450 sorties in a single day, evacuating all injured and affected individuals from the disaster zone via helicopters. During floods, such as those in Lorestan and Khuzestan in 2019, as well as the more recent Golestan flood, Army Aviation has consistently been among the first units to deploy, proudly serving the public.

Today, we also operate aerial emergency services covering most provinces across the nation. Our helicopters are stationed in key locations, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas, to ensure emergency medical response. In 2024, we reached a record-breaking 1,600 hours of emergency flight operations, which is unprecedented in scope and impact.

Iran’s right to enrich uranium: A legal reality made political by US

By Maryam Geshani

TEHRAN – Amid the ongoing tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear program, one crucial fact often gets buried beneath heated political arguments: Iran, as a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), holds an explicit legal right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes.

The continued U.S. insistence that Iran abandon enrichment activities not only contradicts international law but also undermines global diplomatic norms that Washington claims to advocate.

Established in 1970, the NPT serves as the cornerstone of global nuclear policy. Article IV clearly states that all signatory nations have the “inalienable right” to develop nuclear technology for peaceful applications without discrimination.

Meanwhile, Iran has consistently stated that its uranium enrichment is intended solely for energy production and medical purposes.

Typically, uranium enrichment levels around 3% to 5% are necessary for nuclear power. Although recent reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) indicate Iran has increased its enrichment to higher levels, international law does not explicitly prohibit enrichment itself, provided it remains for civilian purposes.

U.S. stance: A political, not legal argument

The U.S. claims Iran's enrichment poses a proliferation risk and demands a complete halt. However, this stance is fundamentally political and lacks strong legal justification.

The Trump administration's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, despite Iran's initial full compliance, significantly damaged diplomatic credibili-

ty. Recent indirect negotiations mediated by Oman, along with high-profile visits to West Asia by former President Donald Trump and his envoy Steven Witkoff, highlight the complexity of these discussions.

One of the important points that should be mentioned here is that the U.S. negotiators knew from the outset that uranium enrichment represents an uncompromising “red line” for Iran.

Initiating talks under conditions demanding a halt in enrichment was unrealistic and demonstrates either a lack of understanding or disregard for Iran's firm diplomatic stance.

Iran can enrich uranium for peaceful purposes based on article IV of the NPT

Double standards and diminishing trust

U.S. credibility is further undermined by apparent double standards. Countries like Brazil, Argentina, Germany, and Japan all have uranium enrichment programs under IAEA supervision without facing similar scrutiny or pressure.

Subjecting Iran uniquely to intense pressure based on geopolitical factors weakens the integrity of the global non-proliferation system.

If rights granted by the NPT become selectively applied based on political alliances and agendas, the entire framework could collapse.

Nations would see little reason to adhere to non-proliferation



and disarmament norms if they perceive that these rights can be arbitrarily revoked.

For Iran, uranium enrichment goes beyond civilian purposes, offering vital strategic leverage and acting as a deterrent. Given regional tensions, Iran views its nuclear capabilities as crucial to national security, making U.S. demands for complete cessation strategically unrealistic and politically impossible.

Iran's peaceful nuclear program: A sovereign right

As said before, Iran's unwavering pursuit of a peaceful nuclear program is not merely a policy choice; it is an inalienable right, firmly rooted in international law and a matter of national sovereignty. As a committed signatory to the NPT, Iran has consistently affirmed its entitlement to develop, research, produce, and utilize nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination.

This right, enshrined in Article IV of the NPT, is a fundamental principle of global non-proliferation, and Tehran's consistent adherence to its obligations, including rigorous inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), underscores its transparency and commitment to a non-military nuclear future.

To demand that Iran abandon its legitimate enrichment activi-

ties is to deny a sovereign nation its rightful place in the global scientific and technological community. Iran has invested decades and considerable national resources, including enduring unjust sanctions and the sacrifices of its brightest scientists, to achieve self-sufficiency in its nuclear fuel cycle. This drive for indigenous capability is not born of a desire for weapons, but from a painful history where external promises of nuclear fuel supply for even medical reactors proved unreliable.

Therefore, the ability to enrich uranium domestically is viewed as a critical guarantee against future dependence and a testament to national resilience.

Ultimately, Iran's peaceful nuclear program is a symbol of its independent spirit and its dedication to scientific progress.

It serves as a vital component of its national security doctrine, providing a deterrent against potential aggression without seeking to develop nuclear weapons, which are explicitly forbidden by religious decree from Iran's Leader.

Any attempts to curtail Iran's legitimate nuclear rights not only contradict international law but also ignore the profound domestic consensus and national resolve to maintain this crucial aspect of Iran's technological and strategic independence.

Yazdani to miss 2025 World Wrestling Championships

TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani will not participate in the 2025 World Wrestling Championships.

Yazdani underwent shoulder surgery after winning a silver medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics and will skip the upcoming championships, scheduled for September in Zagreb, Croatia, to avoid the risk of re-injury.

“After consulting with Yazdani, we jointly decided that he should withdraw from the 2025 World Championships. His shoulder has healed well, and fortunately, there are no mobility restrictions,” said Dr. Sohrab Keyhani.

“Yazdani is fully satisfied with his physical condition. Based on our decision, he will focus on returning to competition without any concerns,” he added.

Yazdani won a gold medal in the 74kg weight class at the 2016 Rio Olympics and claimed two silver medals in the subsequent Olympics—Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024—in the 86kg category.

Nicknamed “The Greatest,” Yazdani plans to continue his career in the 92kg division.

Iran in pot 2 of AFC U23 Asian Cup qualifiers

THRAN – The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced on Thursday that the official AFC U23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers Draw will take place on Thursday, 29th May, at 3 pm local time in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, at the AFC House.

A total of 44 teams will be sorted into 11 groups to do battle for the Qualifiers, which will take place between 1st and 9th September 2025.

Fifteen berths are up for grabs at the seventh edition of the tournament, which will be hosted by Saudi Arabia for the first time and is set to be played in January 2026.

Champion in 2022, Saudi Arabia, has automatically qualified as host and will be joined by the 11 group winners from the Qualifiers, as well as the overall four best-ranked runners-up.

Each Qualifiers group will be contested in a centralized league format and with teams to be seeded into five pots based on a points system derived from their final rankings across the previous three editions of the Finals.

The pot allocations, with rankings indicated in brackets, are as follow:

Pot 1: Uzbekistan (1), Japan (2), Iraq (3), Korea Republic (5), Australia (7)

Pot 2: Kuwait (14), Iran (15), Turkmenistan (16), Malaysia (17), Bahrain (19), Palestine (20), Syria (21), Yemen (22)

Pot 3: Oman (25), Singapore (26), India (28), Lebanon (29), Laos (30), Timor-Leste (31), Chinese Taipei (32), Philippines (33), Hong Kong, China (34)

Pot 4: Afghanistan (35), Bangladesh (36), Mongolia (37), Guam (39), Pakistan (41), Macau (42), Nepal (43), Brunei Darussalam (44), Sri Lanka (45), Bhutan (46), Northern Mariana Islands (47)

Hosts Pot: Vietnam (6; Seed: 1), Qatar (8;1), Thailand (9;1), Jordan (10;1), Tajikistan (11;1), United Arab Emirates (12;1), Indonesia (13;2), China PR (18;2), Cambodia (23;2), Myanmar (24;3), Kyrgyzstan (27;3)

Iran’s Bahmanyar wins bronze in AKF Senior Championships

TEHRAN – Sara Bahmanyar of Iran claimed a bronze medal in the 2025 AKF Senior Championships underway in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

She defeated Palestine's Ibaa Salama 5-3 in her opening match but lost to Uzbekistan's Gulshan Alimardanova 2-1.

Bahmanyar then earned two wins over Indonesian Arnella Putri Wandari 7-0 and Chinese Taipei's Hsin-Yu Chan 4-3.

The competition is being held in Tashkent from May 23 to 25.

Mohammad Rabiei takes charge of Kheybar

TEHRAN – Mohammad Rabiei has been appointed as the new head coach of Iran's Persian Gulf Professional League (PGPL) club Kheybar on Friday.

Rabiei, 43, has signed a two-year contract with Kheybar.

He succeeds Saeid Daghighi, who left the team on the same day.

Under Daghighi's leadership, debutants Kheybar finished 11th in the 16-team league.

Daghighi has been linked with Iranian clubs Nassaji and Paykan, as well as the Iran U23 national team.

Malavan edge Gol Gohar in 2024/25 Iran’s Hazfi Cup semifinals

TEHRAN – Malavan football team defeated Gol Gohar 1-0 on Friday to secure their place in the final of the 2024/25 Iran Hazfi Cup.

Reza Jafari scored the winning goal for the visiting team in the 76th minute.

On Saturday night, Esteghlal will host Sanat Naft in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in another semifinal.

Esteghlal are the most successful club in Hazfi Cup history, having won the title seven times. Malavan have secured the trophy three times.

The Hazfi Cup is an annual knockout football competition organized by the Iranian Football Federation.

The final match is scheduled to take place at Arak's Imam Khomeini Stadium on May 29.

Male Team Kata seizes bronze in AKF Senior Championships

TEHRAN – Iran's Male Team Kata claimed a bronze medal in the 2025 AKF Senior Championships on Saturday.

Team Melli defeated Vietnam in bronze medal match.

Iran's Sara Bahmanyar had won a bronze medal in the Female Kumite -50 Kg.

The competition is being held in Tashkent from May 23 to 25.

The competition serves as qualification for the 2025 World Senior Individual Championships, scheduled for November in Cairo, Egypt.

Iranian women crowned Asian Alysh wrestling champions

TEHRAN – Iran's women's national Alysh wrestling team clinched the championship title in the classic style category at the Asian Alysh Wrestling Championships held Friday in New Delhi, India.

The Iranian team showcased a dominant performance, earning a total of six medals – three gold, two silver, and one bronze – to top the podium with 130 team points. This victory marks Iran's successful defense of its Asian title.

Gold medals were won by Roghaye Mahmoodabadi (65kg), Mobina Mirzapour (70kg), and Sahar Ghanizadeh (75kg). Marzieh Khandan (55kg) and Fatemeh Fattahi (60kg) secured silver, while Ez-zat Ghorbanisani claimed bronze in the over-75kg category.

Kazakhstan finished second with 110 points, followed by Kyrgyzstan with 105 and host nation India with 75 points.

The Alysh competition in freestyle will be held on Saturday, with Iranian athletes also scheduled to compete. Alysh, a form of traditional belt wrestling with roots in Central Asia, has grown in popularity in recent years, and Iran has emerged as a strong contender on the Asian stage in both women's and men's events.

Non-oil export from Hamedan province up 10% in a year

TEHRAN- As announced by the director-general of Hamedan province's Customs Department, the value of non-oil export from the province increased by 10.3 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), as compared to the preceding year.

Javad Mohammadi said that 109,924 tons of non-oil commodities worth \$55.413 million were exported from the province in the previous year.

He mentioned glass jars and bottles, white cement, rolled steel bars, various types of industrial vaseline, ferrosilicon, copper and non-copper wire for winding, and various types of raisins as the major exported products, and Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Kuwait as the main export destinations of the goods exported from the province in the past year.

The official further announced that 10,498 tons of non-oil goods valued at \$34.484 million were imported to the province in the past year, and mentioned various types of yarn (polyamide and resistant polyester), rubber latex, sulfonate derivatives, ester salts and their ethyl esters as the main imported items.

He said Georgia, China, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey were the main sources of imports in the previous year.

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

This marked a 10 percent increase in volume and a 15.62 percent rise in value compared to the previous year, Abolfazl Akbarpour, the IRI-CA deputy head for planning and international affairs, stated.

Imports totaled 39.3 million tons valued at

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEDPIX gains 14,000 points on Saturday



TEHRAN- TEDPIX, the main index of the Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), rose 26,268 points to 3,151 million on Saturday, which is the first day of the Iranian calendar week.

TSE is one of the four Iranian stock exchanges, and the most important one. The other three ones are Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), Iran Energy Exchange (IREN-EX), and Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB).

The head of the Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) has said that the capital market's share in the national financing system is going to increase to 50 percent over the next five years, positioning it as a key engine of economic activity, employment, and industrial growth.

Hojatollah Seyedı said the organization's 14th development plan includes targeted measures to stimulate production, starting with fiscal incentives embedded in the national budget.

He outlined two additional pillars of the government's production strategy: implementation of the Law on Supporting Production and a five-part economic development plan currently being drafted by the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO).

Seyedı said new investment funds have been created within the capital market to support production, including Murabaha bonds aimed at financing small- and medium-sized enterprises.

He said the Securities and Exchange Organization is targeting a "50-50" financing model, balancing bank loans and capital market resources, over a four- to five-year horizon. "Initial public offerings in project-based companies have already begun, and infrastructure for Murabaha bond issuance is in place," he said, noting a surge in applications from producers seeking bond issuance li-

censes.

In late March, the official outlined the five major plans for enhancing efficiency and transparency in the capital market in the current Iranian calendar year, which began on March 21.

Seyedı outlined five initiatives for the capital market this year, which include expanding the market through initial public offerings (IPOs), especially company-project listings, and increasing the capital of listed companies.

He expressed hope that the number of companies in the capital market would exceed 1,000 this year (currently there are over 700 companies).

Entrepreneurs and private companies are encouraged to take advantage of capital market opportunities, he emphasized.

He continued by explaining the second initiative: enhancing transparency, efficiency, and timely information dissemination in the capital market.

The third program focuses on improving corporate governance systems to ensure listed companies are better managed, achieving higher performance and increased profitability, all aligned with supporting production, the official added.

Seyedı announced two other plans: one to strengthen structures and the other to upgrade and rebuild the capital market's information technology system.

Regarding the capital market's value this year, he clarified that it will ultimately depend on market participants and remains unpredictable. However, efforts will focus on increasing transparency, liquidity, and efficiency to grow and improve the market compared to last year.

He emphasized the importance of shareholder rights, stating, "Shareholders must feel their rights are respected and supported," adding that safeguarding shareholders' rights depends on enhancing the efficiency of listed companies.

The SEO head further stressed fair transactions, preventing asymmetry in the dissemination of company information, and ensuring shareholders have access to company performance data to make informed decisions, such as whether to hold or sell their shares.

President, transport minister inaugurate, launch over 4,000 projects in country

From Page 1 ► Ports and maritime projects worth €32.8 million plus 880 billion rials (about \$1.07 million), and railway projects worth 45 trillion rials (about \$54.87 million) were also put into operation.

In the road maintenance and transportation sector, 4,161 projects were inaugurated, including eliminating accident-prone areas, constructing bridges, implementing lighting, and improving and widening 29-kilometer



highways worth 290 trillion rials (about \$353.658 million).

Another subsidiary of the Ministry of Transport and Urban Development in the field of air transportation is the Islamic Republic of Iran Airlines (Homa), whose projects include the addition of two 330A-200 aircrafts with a capacity of 528 seats, in addition to the purchase, equipping, and preparation of 11 aircraft engines worth over \$119 million.

‘Government’s strategy for renewable energies development continuously followed up’

From Page 1 ► The minister also considered the goal of the government and the Ministry of Energy to facilitate the activities of the private sector in the development of renewables.

In early March, the Iranian parliament (Majlis) approved the country's membership in the International Solar Energy Society (ISES).

Founded in 1954, ISES is an UN-accredited membership organization promoting and envisioning a world with 100 percent renewable energy for everyone used wisely and efficiently.

The ISES Headquarters are based in Germany. ISES is the largest international solar organization, with extensive membership worldwide. It has members in more than 110

countries, and Global contacts and partners in over 50 countries with thousands of associate members, and almost 100 company and institutional members throughout the world.

ISES has a track record of strongly supporting the solar industry, helping shape public opinion through education and outreach activities, and providing informed comment on global issues.

Sponge iron production rises 7% in a month on year

TEHRAN – Production of sponge iron in Iran rose seven percent in the first month of the current Iranian calendar year, Farvardin (March 21-April 21), as compared to the first month in the previous year,

As reported, 4,075 million tons of sponge iron was produced in Farvardin of this year, while the figure was 3,807 million tons in the same month of the past year.

According to the Iranian Steel Producers Association (ISPA), Iran's export of sponge iron increased 11

percent in value, and 12 percent in volume in the past Iranian calendar year 1403 (ended on March 20), as compared to the previous year.

As ISPA announced, Iran exported sponge iron valued at \$401 million in 1403, while the figure was \$361 million in 1402.

Direct reduced iron (DRI), also called sponge iron, is produced from the direct reduction of iron ore (in the form of lumps, pellets, or fines) into iron by reducing gas or elemental carbon produced from natural

gas or coal. Many ores are suitable for direct reduction.

While Iran is fighting the U.S. severe sanctions on its economy, and the country's different industrial and economic sectors have been affected by the limitations and difficulties caused by the sanctions condition, the country's mining sector is moving forward noticeably, overcoming such barriers.

Among the mining sector's different products, sponge iron is an outstanding example, as the production

of this item is rising more and more in the country.

Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), Iran's largest metals and mining holding, has stated that one of the most important reasons for the increase in sponge iron production in Iran is the establishment of new sponge iron plants, adding that in recent years, with its new strategy and with the participation of the private sector, the organization has been able to launch several projects to produce sponge iron.

Iran exports non-oil goods worth \$140m to Oman in a month

TEHRAN- Iran exported non-oil commodities valued at \$140 million to Oman in the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin (March 21-April 21), according to data from the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

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

Iran's Ambassador to Oman Mousa Farhang says the Arab country's economic ecosystem is favorable for Iranian private sector companies, encouraging firms to begin with smaller-scale projects to establish a foothold in the Omani market.

During a visit to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce pavilion at the Oman Oil and Energy Exhibition on May 14, Farhang met with Iranian business representatives and company delegates, expressing optimism about Oman's potential as a destination for Iranian private investment.

"The Omani market is open and welcoming, especially for private Iranian firms. It's not necessary to start with large-scale projects; even small collaborations can lead to meaningful long-term partnerships," Farhang said, according to a statement from the Tehran Chamber of Commerce.

Saeed Tajik, head of the Tehran Chamber's delegation to the exhibition, highlighted the chamber's commitment to supporting exporters and attracting foreign investment. He urged Iran's embassy in Oman to continue facilitating private sector engagement.

Tajik emphasized Iran's competitive advantages in oil and gas, engineering services, food industries, and agriculture, suggesting these sectors are well-suited for sustainable and competitive activities in Oman.

At the end of the visit, Ambassador Farhang invited the Tehran Chamber delegation to continue discussions at the Iranian embassy in Muscat.

In a related development, Saeed Tajik—who also chairs the Tehran Chamber's Energy and Environment Committee—visited various booths at the exhibition and met with officials from Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

During these talks, both sides agreed to exchange lists of active companies in the energy and mining sectors and discussed mutual recognition of qualified Iranian firms by the Omani ministry to facilitate joint ventures and economic cooperation.

The two parties agreed to formalize their partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals of Oman and the Tehran Chamber of Commerce in the near future.

In an interview with IRNA in early February, Ab-

dolamir Rabiavi, the director general for West Asia at Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), highlighted negotiations in Muscat (at that time) between Iran's Industry, Mining, and Trade Minister Mohammad Atabak and Omani officials, adding that Atabak led a delegation of government officials, traders, and private-sector manufacturers to Oman for the 21st Joint Economic Committee meeting.

He stated that the committee covered various trade and logistics issues, resulting in numerous agreements, many of which stemmed from a year of negotiations.

A key achievement of the meeting was the participation of private-sector representatives, coordinated by the Iran Chamber of Commerce and the Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce.

On the sidelines of the event, bilateral meetings were held with Omani counterparts, and Iranian representatives toured Omani industrial and investment units, gaining insights into Oman's market and production landscape.

Discussions also addressed trade volume, customs and visa facilitation for businesses, maritime transit, leveraging Iran as a transit hub for Eurasian Economic Union exports to Oman, and ways to boost bilateral trade.

Rabiavi highlighted the signing of a cooperation agreement between Iran and Oman and noted that Atabak met separately with Oman's transport minister, energy and mining minister, and the head of the Omani Investment Authority. The ministers then signed the joint committee's agreements and minutes.

Additionally, negotiations on a preferential trade agreement were extended, with plans to finalize and sign the document soon. The agreement aims to lower tariffs and facilitate trade.

The joint committee meeting yielded significant achievements for Iran. If these agreements materialize, trade will grow. Oman has free trade agreements with several countries, including Persian Gulf Cooperation Council members, which Iran can leverage for re-exporting its goods," he concluded.

The 21st meeting of the Iran-Oman Joint Economic Committee, which was held in Muscat on January 25, was described by the Iranian minister of industry, mining, and trade as distinct from the previous 20 gatherings, focused on three key agendas.

Mohammad Atabak has highlighted the signing of the MOU and elaborated on the meeting's agenda.

The first agenda item addressed the establishment of a preferential trade agreement and the

elimination of tariffs between the two countries. Atabak stated that this initiative had been approved.

The second agenda item involved supporting joint investments between Iran and Oman. Atabak announced that both nations had reached an agreement on this issue.

The third agenda focused on necessary administrative and customs collaborations to facilitate trade. The minister noted that required planning and task allocation had been completed, and this initiative is expected to yield results shortly.

In meetings with Omani ministers of trade and energy and the chairman of Oman's investment authority on the sidelines of the joint cooperation meeting, the two sides also explored avenues of cooperation in various areas.

In a meeting with Oman's minister of transport and communications, Atabak explored strategies to facilitate the transportation of goods, passengers, and commercial exchanges. This discussion aimed to expand economic and trade cooperation between the two nations.

Also, speaking to IRNA following a meeting with the governor of Iran's West Azarbaijan province, in late April, the head of the Chamber of Commerce for Northeast Oman said West Azarbaijan offers exceptional development potential, adding that Oman is ready to invest in the region.

Mohammad bin Nasser Al-Maskari expressed a strong willingness to expand bilateral cooperation with the province's Chamber of Commerce.

He highlighted key opportunities in tourism, mining, and agriculture that could mark a turning point in economic relations between Iran and Oman.

Al-Maskari praised the province's historical and tourism assets, saying Oman plans to begin practical investment steps in the hospitality and tourism sectors before the end of 2025.

Referring to West Azarbaijan Governor Reza Rahmani as an internationally recognized figure in industry and economy, Al-Maskari noted that Rahmani's strong ties with Omani officials could significantly ease the investment process.

He emphasized that Oman initially seeks to focus on partnerships in tourism, agriculture, and food industries.

Al-Maskari further remarked that during President Masoud Pezeshkian's administration, cooperation between Iran and the Persian Gulf states has been steadily growing. He announced that Oman would soon host delegations from West Azarbaijan's tourism sector to discuss expanding collaboration.

From indifference to moral posturing: Europe’s betrayal of Gaza’s civilians

History will evaluate Europe based on its actions rather than words

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN – As the Gaza war reaches its most horrific crescendo, the last-minute diplomatic machinations and rhetorical condemnations of the European Union are being hailed in some quarters as a “watershed moment” in its relationship with Israel. However, a closer look gives us a track record blighted by blatant hypocrisy, double standards and an ongoing refusal to stand up for the very humanitarian values which the EU professes to uphold. The EU’s unreserved backing for Israel in the opening months of the Gaza war, and its effective inaction as the humanitarian crisis enveloped the tiny strip of land, reveal the naked contradictions of European foreign policy.

The early months of the Gaza war

Right from the start of the war, the European Union’s stance was clear: “We are with Israel”. Immediately following the Hamas attacks on October 7, 2023, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and a number of top officials had offered Israel not only a political embrace but a symbolic one: Israeli flags fluttered outside of the European Commission and Parliament, and the Israeli national anthem was played in Brussels.

The European Council released a statement condemning Hamas “in the strongest possible terms,” showing no sign of calls for restraint or proportionality before flowing even from the European bloc’s senior offices.

This unconditional support was not merely symbolic. Several EU member states, such as Austria, suspended aid to Palestinian areas and echoed Israeli narratives without qualification.

Former EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, while later critical of Israel’s siege tactics, joined other European officials justifying Israel’s barbarity as Israel’s “right to defend itself”.

Europe provided diplomatic cover for Israel’s military campaign and the devastating siege of Gaza.



Europe’s silence and complicity

As Israel’s military actions in Gaza escalated and the humanitarian situation worsened, many felt that the European Union was slow to respond and inconsistent. Despite clear evidence of serious breaches of humanitarian law and a rising death toll among Palestinians, leaders like Spain’s Pedro Sanchez and Ireland’s Leo Varadkar called for the EU to reconsider its Association Agreement with Israel back in February 2024, but the European Commission didn’t act for over a year. This lack of action continued even when the blockade pushed Gaza to the brink of famine, with deaths exceeding 50,000. The UN’s special rapporteur on Palestine suggested that the EU should cut ties with Israel to prevent more violence, but the EU was hesitant, citing the need for agreement among member countries. As conditions continued to decline, the EU started to issue slightly more critical statements, but there was still no real action: humanitarian aid remained inconsistent, calls for a ceasefire were watered down, and even the EU’s vice president admitted the response was “a big question mark.”

The “turning point”: Too little, too late

Only in May 2025, after 11 weeks of total aid blockade and more than 53,000 Palestinian deaths, the EU finally announced a formal review of its Association Agreement with Israel. Despite being unprecedented,

this action begs the challenging question: Why did it take so long? And considering the EU’s history of putting trade and strategic interests ahead of human rights, what real impact will it have?

Supported by the majority of EU foreign ministers, the review is presented as a reaction to Israel’s breach of Article 2 of the agreement regarding human rights. However, the truth is that preferential tariffs and economic ties are still largely in place, despite threats of “concrete actions” and potential suspension of trade privileges from European leaders. One example of the symbolic nature of much of Europe’s recent posturing is the United Kingdom’s announcement that it would terminate new trade negotiations with Israel while maintaining its current trade agreements.

The recent episode of warning shots in Jenin aimed at a diplomatic delegation that included European officials is a paradigm of EU impotence. While Kaja Kallas, the current EU foreign policy chief, called the attack “unacceptable” with the demand for accountability, it is doubtful if the bloc is able to protect its diplomats, let alone the Palestinian civilians.

The incident sheds light on the limits of European influence and the reluctance of Israeli authorities to lose sleep over Europe’s probable response being mere statements and reviews rather than actual sanctions or a policy reversal.

Double standards and the erosion of moral authority

The EU’s response in Gaza differs dramatically from that to other challenging global crises, in particular Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine. European leaders have invoked the “rules-based international order” and the sanctity of human rights in Ukraine, imposing sweeping sanctions on Russia and mustering unprecedented diplomatic pressure. But when faced with Israel’s illegal actions in Gaza — actions that leading European politicians now concede may amount to genocide — the EU’s reaction has been muted and divided.

This double standard has not gone unnoticed by the global public. It must rise from its moral bankruptcy and set its own red lines for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza — lines that, as Josep Borrell rightly forewarned, would make clear the EU’s credibility as a proponent of international law — the same that it practices in Ukraine. The belief that the West is hypocritical is fanning extremism internationally, undermining the EU’s soft power and corroding its influence.

EU facing critical test over Gaza

The EU is facing a moment of truth as the humanitarian crisis worsens and the war in Gaza continues. It has so far demonstrated hypocrisy, inaction, and a failure to uphold its own declared principles. Months of unwavering support for Israel and the practical inaction that permitted the disaster in Gaza to occur cannot be erased by the recent flurry of diplomatic activity—reviews, condemnations, and threats of “concrete actions.”

The EU runs the risk of further undermining its moral authority and international influence unless it is prepared to back up its rhetoric with concrete actions, such as suspending trade agreements, enforcing arms embargoes, and holding Israel responsible for transgressing international law. The world is looking, and history will evaluate Europe based on its actions rather than its words.



Hamas says AP report on human shields shows Israel’s ‘moral collapse’

The testimony of Palestinian victims and Israeli soldiers in a news report by The Associated Press documents “the heinous crimes committed by” Israel, a statement by the group says.

Hamas said the crimes referred to in the report were committed “under explicit orders from senior military leaders”, calling them “war crimes and systematic violations of international law”.

The testimonies “reveal a systematic, deliberate policy that reflects the moral and institutional collapse within the ranks of this terrorist army”, said Hamas.

Troops are routinely forcing Palestinian civilians to act as human shields in Gaza, sending them into buildings and tunnels to check for bombs and fighters, the report said. Israel’s military said it strictly prohibits using civilians as shields.

‘Displacement, starvation, thirst’ plague Palestinians across Gaza

Amjad Shawa, head of the Palestinian NGO Network, says there has been “no major change” in the situation in Gaza after limited aid entered the enclave over the past days.

He told Al Jazeera in an interview from Gaza City that flour, baby formula and some medical materials have reached southern Gaza, but nothing has reached northern Gaza.

“People are starving all over the Gaza Strip. The conditions — the displacement, the starvation, the thirst — is there, all over Gaza,” Shawa said.

He added that there is no water for drinking or daily use in central Gaza’s Deir el-Balah area, while hospitals across the territory lack necessary supplies.

“Most of the hospitals are out of service,” he said.

Israeli settlers attack water supply of West Bank communities

Israeli settlers damaged water pipes supplying Palestinian families in the al-Auja waterfall area, located north of Jericho in the occupied West Bank, according to a local rights organisation.

Hassan Mleihat, general supervisor of the Al-Baidar Organization for the Defense of Bedouin Rights, told Wafa news agency that settlers tampered with the water supply to force Palestinian residents into leaving.

Netanyahu is both war criminal and falsifier

The leaders of these three countries just issued a joint statement on May 19 saying they “strongly oppose the expansion of Israel’s military operations in Gaza.” They also said, “The level of human suffering in Gaza is intolerable.”

Netanyahu, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, also told Macron, Starmer, and Carney that “you’re on the wrong side of justice, you’re on the wrong side of humanity, and you’re on the wrong side of history.”

It is where he is the master of distorting the facts. These countries have been on the wrong side of history not because of criticizing Netanyahu, but for enabling crimes by the Israeli occupation army in Gaza by sending arms to Israel and still continue to do so, and helping the

ing their land.

Federal judge blocks Trump admin from barring foreign student enrollment at Harvard

A federal judge on Friday blocked the Trump administration from cutting off Harvard’s enrollment of foreign students, an action the Ivy League school decried as unconstitutional retaliation for defying the White House’s political demands, AP reported.

In its lawsuit filed earlier Friday in federal court in Boston, Harvard said the government’s action violates the First Amendment and will have an “immediate and devastating effect for Harvard and more than 7,000 visa holders.”

“With the stroke of a pen, the government has sought to erase a quarter of Harvard’s student body, international students who contribute significantly to the University and its mission,” Harvard said in its lawsuit. “Without its international students, Harvard is not Harvard.”

Peru opens criminal probe into Israeli soldier accused of ‘methodical destruction’ in Gaza

Authorities in Peru have opened a criminal investigation against an Israeli soldier accused of committing war crimes in the Gaza Strip during 2023–2024, according to the Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF).

The investigation was initiated following a complaint filed by prominent human rights lawyer Julio Cesar Arbizu Gonzalez.

The complaint alleges that the individual, whose name has not been released, served as a combat engineering soldier and took part in the “methodical and systematic destruction of civilian neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip.”

Footage shared on social media showed the soldier celebrating while detonating a civilian building.

HRF, a Brussels-based NGO focused on taking legal action against Israeli soldiers committing rights violations, says the suspect could face charges including “war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide.”

It praised Lima’s “adherence to the principles of international humanitarian and criminal law.”

The principle of universal jurisdiction obliges countries to prosecute serious crimes regardless of where they were committed or the nationality of the suspects.

Extermination through planned starvation

‘Consequences of starvation on the entire Gaza population will be profound’

From page 1 ► The Israeli regime has briefly allowed limited aid deliveries by the UN and other groups as it prepares to implement a new U.S.-sponsored plan.

This initiative, managed by the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, is expected to begin by the end of the month.

It allegedly involves private American security contractors transporting aid to Israeli-approved “hubs” for distribution. Tel Aviv says this system will operate from four centers in southern Gaza.

However, many operational details remain blurry. Critics argue that this setup places aid distribution firmly under Israeli political and military control.

The UN has rejected the plan outright, warning it violates international humanitarian principles. It refuses to work with any system that compromises humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality.

According to UN experts, Israel is deliberately

using food as a weapon to force Gaza’s 2.4 million people into the southern part of the Strip, which is akin to genocide.

“We will not take part in any scheme that fails to respect international law,” Guterres affirmed.

Despite having a workable plan to deliver aid, the UN is being sidelined. “The supplies, 160,000 pallets, enough to fill nearly 9,000 trucks, are waiting on the border,” Guterres said.

Currently, getting aid to displaced people living in tents and makeshift shelters is sporadic. UN officials estimate that at least 600 aid trucks are needed daily to address the humanitarian crisis. The UN World Food Program warned in a statement that hunger, desperation, and uncertainty over food deliveries are escalating tensions across Gaza.

Since the occupation regime imposed a full blockade on Gaza in early March, the situation has deteriorated sharply.

With the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF)



pushing most of Gaza’s population into an ever-shrinking area along the coast and near Khan Younis, international pressure to deliver aid has intensified.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of UNRWA, said the people of Gaza have been “starved and deprived of the basics including water and medicines for more than 11 weeks.”

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Mahmoud Abbas’ Beirut visit: Zero results for the Palestinian cause

From page 1 ► Reportedly, an agreement was reached for weapons to be handed over to the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, specifically Shatila and Mar Elias camps, where the Fatah movement has primary control. This agreement coincided with coordination with other Palestinian factions, primarily Hamas.

Indeed, Palestinian weapons in the camps have been ineffective since the 1980s, when the Fatah movement allied with the Lebanese Forces and Pierre Rizk (a Lebanese Forces leader emerged as the

movement’s political and financial advisor.

It should be noted that Rizk’s notorious name is associated with the Sabra and Shatila massacres. He also played a major role in the illegal arms trade for the Forces and their sectarian project during the civil war.

Up until the time of writing, Hamas had not officially commented on the weapons handover. However, sources close to Hamas, in interviews with the Tehran Times, are unhappy with Abbas’s unilateral decision and unilateral commu-

nication to the Lebanese government.

The sources expressed their dismay at the manner in which disarmament was being conducted, insisting on the need to ensure that Palestinian refugees were granted their full civil and social rights.

Because the worst of misfortunes that is laughable, Samir Geagea, head of the Lebanese Forces, described Abbas as “the Arab president who has always held Lebanon in his heart, taking tremendous steps to establish sound and correct Lebanese-Palestinian

relations.”

Geagea added that “Abbas’s successive statements—which emphasize the need for all Palestinians to adhere to Lebanon’s sovereignty and the laws of the Lebanese state, and the impermissibility of any military action from Lebanon—have refuted everything the [pro-Resistance axis] was hiding behind to continue possessing illegal weapons for purposes that are no longer hidden.”

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](#))

Global registration of Gorgan Great Wall on Cultural Heritage Ministry's agenda

TEHRAN – Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage Ali Darabi announced that preparing a comprehensive dossier on the Great Wall of Gorgan is underway, aiming for its potential inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Speaking at specialized seminar on Capacities of global registration of Great Wall of Gorgan which was held at Taqavi School in Gorgan on Thursday, Darabi said the global registration of a monument is not only a symbolic honor, but is also linked to the effective protection of monuments, the development of tourism, the prosperity of business, and the promotion of international cultural interactions, ILNA reported.

He said the Great Wall of Gorgan, which was built before the Great Wall of China, is one of the country's unparalleled capacities and can pave the way for attracting billions of dollars in turnover.

New archaeological excavations will begin for completion of dossier of Great Wall of Gorgan for possible global registration, he said, "Our best effort is to submit it to UNESCO and defend it in the next few years."

He pointed out that 27 tangible, intangible, and natural heritages are in the World Heritage List queue.

Darabi also said that Golestan province should turn into a tourism destination, adding that the Cultural Heritage Ministry has compiled a five-year program to promote its three fields, including cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts, across 31 Iranian provinces. Golestan, with its natural, historical, and cultural potentials, is in the spotlight, he added.

Since the historic Tower of Gonbad Kavoos is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it not only belongs to Golestan province or Iran, but also belongs to all members of human society, he said. Works that are registered worldwide will be protected from any attack or destruction, by international conventions and protocols, he added.

Ancient great walls are among the most recognizable wonders humans constructed centuries ago.

Of course, the two most well-known are the fabled Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall, which is located in Northern England. The Berlin Wall is a more contemporary example and a reminder of the Cold War between the U.S. and the USSR, as well as the Belfast Peace Wall in Northern Ireland.

Between the Great Wall of China and Hadri-

an's Wall, however, was the construction of a second, equally impressive wall in West Asia; the Great Wall of Gorgan.

The Great Wall of Gorgan, between the Caspian Sea and the Alborz Mountains, guarded the Sassanian Empire's frontiers. It was one of the hardest buildings to take over because of the clay, fired bricks, mortar, and other sturdy building materials that went into its construction.

Although there is some disagreement regarding when it was built, many sources date it to the fifth or sixth century CE.

This would imply that the Sasanian Empire was founded by the great Khosrow I, one of the greatest kings of Persia.

Even though the initial purpose of the wall's construction is mysterious, many people think it was to defend the northern borders of the Empire against the Hephthalites, also known as the White Huns, with whom the Sassanids had mixed relations.

Except for the Great Wall of China, it completely dwarfed all other similar structures with a length of 195 km.

To put it in perspective, Hadrian's Wall and Antonine's Wall don't even come close to matching Gorgan's Wall.

But more than just its size, this wall's structure was remarkable, adding to its impact.

Also known as Red Wall, which in some ancient texts is referred to as the Red Snake, the Great Wall of Gorgan, according to UNESCO, is remarkable not only in terms of its physical scale but even more so in terms of its technical sophistication. To enable construction works, canals had to be dug along the course of the defensive barrier to provide the water needed for brick production. These canals received their water from supplier canals, which bridged the Gorgan River via qanats. One of these, the Sadd-e Garkaz, survives to 700 m in length and 20 m in height but was originally almost one kilometer long.

The Gorgan Wall and its associated ancient military monuments provide a unique testimony to the engineering skills and military organization of the Sassanian Empire. They help to explain its geographic extent, from Mesopotamia to the west of the Indian Subcontinent, and how effective border defense contributed to the Empire's prosperity in the interior and its longevity. These monuments are, in terms of their scale, historical importance, and sophistication, of global significance.

Parthian mural excavated from southwest Iran reveals artistic innovation

TERAN – A rare Parthian-era wall painting, being kept at the National Museum of Iran, reveals sophisticated artistry and enduring secrets.

The surviving clay-based wall painting dates to the Parthian era (1st-3rd centuries CE) and was discovered at Kuh-e Khwaja in Sistan, southeast Iran.

Executed on a clay-and-straw (kah-gel) surface, it originally formed part of the decorative scheme in a grand palace within the Kuh-e Khwaja complex. The work is now safeguarded in the collections of the National Museum of Iran.

Discovered during 1976 excavations by the Iranian National Organization for the Protection of Antiquities and Italy's ISMEIO Institute, the painting depicts an enigmatic procession of male heads alongside a city wall segment. The artist intentionally exaggerated the scale of the heads relative to the architecture to highlight facial features. Two central figures appear in left-facing profile, while subordinate heads below face the opposite direction. Its distinctive ochre, red, green, and white palette sets it apart from contemporaneous works.

Scholarly interpretations vary: some propose it represents a religious ritual or civic assembly, while others identify the figures as deities arranged hierarchically. The work's unusual composition continues to generate academic debate. The volcanic massif of Kuh-e Khwaja ("Mountain of the Master") dominated the Sistan landscape during the



Parthian era, serving as a unique blend of fortress, palace, and religious complex. This isolated outcrop near today's Iran-Afghanistan border controlled vital trade routes while showcasing the Parthians' architectural ingenuity.

Constructed using traditional kah-gel (clay-straw) techniques, the site featured a monumental fire temple, royal residences with elaborate stucco decorations, and sophisticated water management systems. Its art—including the famous procession mural with oversized figures—reveals a vibrant fusion of Iranian, Hellenistic, and local styles.

As both a strategic stronghold and spiritual center, Kuh-e Khwaja became a cultural crossroads where Persian traditions mingled with Greek and Central Asian influences. Coins of King Vologases IV confirm its importance before declining in the Sasanian period. Today, its fragile ruins in the Hamun wetlands preserve crucial evidence of Parthian civilization at its height.

Reviving roots: a new chapter in Iran's rural tourism

From Page 1 ► KERMAN – On May 21, the first-ever national celebration of ecolodges brought together some 600 ecolodge managers, travel insiders, and media personnel from across the country.

More than just a gathering of tourism stakeholders, the event marked a powerful declaration that Iran's cultural identity is alive and thriving within its rural heartlands, and ecolodges are now its proud storytellers.

According to organizers, the festival, held under the theme "from the heart of the soil to the soul of Iran", marked the vibrant and diverse world of Iranian bom-egardis; local ecolodges that are much more than places to stay.

These establishments, often family-run and deeply rooted in their local communities, offer travelers a unique chance to experience authentic village life, traditional hospitality, and indigenous knowledge passed down through generations.

With over 3,700 registered ecolodges across the country today, the bomegardi movement has created a national network that not only supports sustainable tourism, but also contributes to cultural preservation, community empowerment, and rural development. In many villages across the ancient country, ecolodges have brought new life to abandoned homes, reclaimed lost crafts, and reinvigorated local pride.

Beyond tourism

Speakers at the event, most notably the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, Seyyed Reza Salehi-Amiri, and Yavar Abiri, head of the Ira-



nian Ecolodge Association, both emphasized that ecolodging is not merely an economic activity. It is, in essence, a cultural ecosystem. As the minister aptly put it, ecolodging is "a living extract of Iranian civilization," where food, dress, architecture, dialect, handicrafts, and hospitality come together in a continuous act of cultural revival.

For many Iranian villagers, ecolodges offer more than income—they serve as a reason to stay, to return, and to rebuild. In reversing rural-to-urban migration trends, ecolodges have created local jobs, stimulated micro-enterprises, and preserved traditional knowledge that was on the brink of disappearing.

Symbolism, solidarity, and shared vision

The festival in Kerman was as symbolic as it was strategic. The event extended footprints in a region rich with historical landmarks from Rayen Citadel and Shazdeh Garden to Bam Citadel and Kaluts

of Shahdad desert, aimed to showcase an intersection of heritage, landscape, and community that defines ecolodging in the vast country.

Highlights of the event included the arrival of a specially designed train from Tehran to Kerman, adorned with traditional Iranian motifs, that, according to organizers, was aimed at symbolizing a cultural journey across the nation.

It also involved an international "Spice Route" food and cultural exhibition, linking Iran's culinary and ethnic diversity with global tourism narratives.

Toward the global stage

Perhaps the most important takeaway from the celebration is what it signals for the future. As Abiri noted, this is not just a commemorative event, but "the beginning of a long, purposeful path toward global recognition of Iranian ecolodging." The formal registration of National Ecolodge Day in

Iran's calendar is more than symbolic—it is a step toward institutional recognition, policy support, and international collaboration in the field of sustainable, community-based tourism.

Ecolodges as custodians of identity

Iran's first National Celebration of Ecolodges serves as a resounding reminder that tourism, when rooted in local culture and driven by local communities, becomes a powerful force for regeneration. The bomegardis are not only redefining hospitality—they are guardians of cultural continuity, ambassadors of Iranian diversity, and catalysts for rural resilience.

As global interest in meaningful, sustainable travel continues to grow, Iran's ecolodges may well emerge as a special model for tourism, where heritage is not just preserved but re-practiced, and villages are not remnants of the past, but blueprints for the future.

Registration documents for 'Sacred Defense' elements unveiled



TEHRAN – On the 43rd anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr, Iranian authorities unveiled official national registration documents for 12 sites and elements in Khuzestan province linked to the

country's eight-year war with Iraq, known domestically as the Sacred Defense (1980–1988).

The unveiling ceremony was held at Tehran's Sacred Defense garden-museum and attended

by Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Seyyed Reza Salehi Amiri, along with several government and military officials, including Deputy Minister Ali Darabi and Brigadier General Bahman Kargar, head of the Foundation for the Preservation of Sacred Defense Values.

The 12 registered sites include military, medical, and civilian facilities that played pivotal roles during the Iraqi-imposed war.

Speaking at the event, Alireza Izadi, Director General of the Ministry's Registration Office, emphasized the broader vision for including wartime heritage in the national register.

"National registration is not limited to ancient relics or archi-

ture. The spiritual and physical legacies of the Sacred Defense are integral to our cultural identity," he said.

He added that 119 war-related sites (elements and objects) have been registered so far, and 47 more are under review in the current cycle.

Earlier this month, Kargar announced plans to inaugurate eight new museums dedicated to the Sacred Defense by the Iranian year 1407 (March 2028).

He emphasized that Sacred Defense museums are vital for preserving authentic documentation of the war period, combating historical distortion, and strengthening national identity.

Lost history of 'Sindbad and Sheila' in ancient Siraf port

TEHRAN — Siraf, a historic port located in Iran's southern Bushehr province along the Persian Gulf, holds a deep and often overlooked connection to global storytelling.

Decades ago, a Japanese animator drew inspiration from the ancient maritime legacy of Siraf to create the popular animated tales of Sindbad, captivating audiences both in Iran and around the world.

The cartoon character of Sindbad and his ever-companion bird Sheila are completely based on the port of Siraf in Iran. The story has been inspired by the biography of the renowned Iranian sailor Sindbad Bahri. Sheila's name has been derived from the ancient name of the port of Siraf, ILNA wrote.

Sindbad Bahri was one of the 42 Iranian sailors in Siraf port who sailed in seas stretching from Bushehr to China with lenjs and sailboats.

Many Iranians still consider Sindbad an Arabian character because of the Japanese animation, which flourished in Arab countries, and the character of Sindbad was recorded in their minds under their name.

Sulayman was a 9th-century Muslim merchant, traveler, and writer, initially from Siraf in modern-day Iran. He traveled to China and its western part known as Machin before Marco Polo, and his travelogue was called "Akhbar al-



Sin wa al-Hind", which he wrote in Arabic, that is currently kept at France's Louvre Museum and has been translated into six living languages of the world. He was the other Siraf sailor.

Mohammad Kangani, head of the SirafPars Museum Institute NGO, said 17,000 ancient pieces pertaining to Siraf are kept at the London Museum, which may be the richest historical items of West Asia in terms of number.

He said that currently Siraf Museum extends over 2,000 square meters. "We plan to turn it into a smart museum."

Kangani continued that if Siraf is globally registered, it will be the first to prove the name of the Persian Gulf, which will take the lead from the Arab countries bordering the Persian Gulf, which are trying to change its name by speaking enthusiastically about it in order to persuade other people to support it.

He proposed that a Persian Gulf and Siraf Studies Research Institute be launched near Siraf Museum, so that students could publish theses on the Persian Gulf and Siraf, utilizing its scientific and historical resources.

Siraf, an ancient port on the Persian Gulf, was a major trade hub during the pre-Islamic and early Islamic era, linking Iran to distant regions such as China, India, and East Africa.

Siraf was Iran's most important port from the Sassanid period to the 4th century AH. It bears plentiful evidence of Persian mastership and genius in seafaring, international relations, and interaction with other near and far cultures and civilizations.

Between 1966 and 1973, the British Institute of Persian Studies conducted seven seasons of excavation and survey at Siraf, which was a major city on the Iranian shore of the Persian Gulf that played a leading role in the network of maritime trade that supplied Western Asia with the products of India, the Far East and Eastern Africa between 800 CE and 1050.

The historical and architectural monuments of Bushehr include Islamic buildings like mosques and praying centers, mansions, old towers, castles, as well as gardens. Moreover, Bushehr embraces significant monuments from the Elamite, Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid eras.

Without global cooperation, sustainable development is impossible: head of DOE

TEHRAN – The head of the Department of Environment, Shina Ansari, has said cooperation is the only way forward, as without global cooperation, achieving sustainable development is impossible.

“Sustainable development must be a global effort in which nations unite and act together to overcome the challenges,” IRNA quoted

The official made the remarks while addressing the BRICS panel, ‘BRICS and sustainable development of environment’, which was conducted on May 22 on the sidelines of the 11th Nevsky International Ecological Congress held from May 22 to 23 in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

“Furthermore, if countries decide individually, without any coordination with other nations, not only will the impact of the efforts be lowered, but sustainable development itself risks being perceived as a false promise or a deceptive slogan,” Ansari highlighted.

The official also proposed joint development of a strategic and fundamental program to guide collective efforts.

The official went on to say that the distinctive feature of sustainable development is its ability to change mindsets. It encourages long-term change, promoting individuals and communities to think about their actions and their impacts on the planet. This shift in perspective is much more powerful than temporary technical solutions or legal measures.

“Unlike technical or legal solutions, which often offer quick-fix remedies, sustainable development addresses the fundamental cause



of environmental, economic, and social issues. However, to achieve sustainable development goals, infrastructure, education, and public awareness are crucial. Otherwise, we cannot expect citizens to accept concepts that they have never heard of or learned about,” she further noted.

The official also elaborated on the country’s activities to align with sustainable development. “Sustainable development model lays the basis for a future in harmony with nature and a guarantee of human health and wellbeing.”

Today, sustainable development is vital not only for protecting the environment but also for improving the quality of life and creating equal opportunities for people in different societies.

To do so, Iran has adopted various measures such as offering incentives to companies that submit Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and adhere to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues. This initiative indicates Iran’s alignment with internationally rec-

ognized standards for sustainable development and that the country is striving to incorporate these principles into its economic and trade procedures, Ansari said.

These measures further boost environmental sustainability and guarantee that the private sector prioritizes sustainable economic growth and social well-being, she further noted.

Nevsky Intl. Ecological Congress

The 11th Nevsky International Ecological Congress was held from May 22 to 23 in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Ministers of environment from more than 40 countries, including Iran, Azerbaijan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Belarus, Serbia, Indonesia, Jordan, Cambodia, and Kenya, attended the Congress.

The main goal of the Nevsky International Ecological Congress is to create effective and sustainable development mechanisms to preserve the environment in a changing climate.

The Congress 2025 once again

hosted interstate, intersectoral dialogue on important environmental issues, with representatives from international organizations, government authorities, and business, scientific, and expert communities from across the globe already having confirmed their intention to attend the event.

The 11th Nevsky International Ecological Congress kicked off on May 22 with a Youth Programme, which became an important part of the business agenda.

Participants were treated to open dialogues and thematic sessions on youth engagement in the resolution of climate issues, the promotion of environmental awareness, the development of a culture of environmental volunteering, the inclusion of children in the ‘green’ agenda, and the role of youth climate initiatives in a more sustainable future.

The roundtables and sessions on May 22 focused on food security and climate risks, sustainable ecotourism, how artificial intelligence and digital solutions can be applied to benefit the environment, international cooperation within BRICS, conditions in the Caspian region, the development of the circular economy, the role of women in promoting eco-initiatives, green investment, the management of mineral resources, and low-carbon technologies.

On May 23, regional heads, mayors, and experts discussed the modern sustainable development practices of megacities, the process of making transport more environmentally friendly, the preservation of green areas, and new approaches to health preservation.

Indigenized technology contributes to Iran’s key role in AI: COMSTECH official

TEHRAN –Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, the coordinator general of the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), has said Iran plays a critical role in artificial intelligence (AI), relying on indigenized technology.

As a member state of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the country’s achievements in different technological sectors are significant, IRNA quoted Choudhary as saying. He made the remarks on the sidelines of the second Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) Dialogue Platform, which was held from May 17 to 19.

The official said Iran is among the wonderful members of the OIC. A country that is self-sufficient in all fields by relying on its indigenized technology sector. Despite sanctions, the country keeps developing and is expected to play a crucial role in AI, he noted.

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 dis-



cuss 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.

Iran’s services to refugees are commendable: UNHCR Commissioner

TEHRAN – Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has appreciated Iran’s efforts in providing services to refugees in different fields, such as health, education, and employment.

The valuable services offered by Iran, in the face of sanctions and some economic problems, are really valuable and commendable, IRNA quoted Grandi as saying.

The official made the remarks in a meeting with Health Minister Mohammad-Reza Zafarqandi; the officials met on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA).

For his part, Zafarqandi said protecting the health of refugees is an international responsibility, not solely the responsibility of the host country.

“Effective financial and operational strategies should be designed and strengthened globally to help refugee-hosting countries, particularly Iran,” Zafarqandi stressed.

WHA 2025 is being held from May 19 to June 27 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Focusing on the 2025 theme ‘One World for Health’, WHA78 has brought 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.

DOE to develop strategic plan for preserving endangered species

TEHRAN – President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued an order, obligating the Department of Environment (DOE) to develop a strategic plan to preserve endangered species in the country.

According to the latest report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), some 154 species of Iranian vertebrates are critically endangered of extinction.

“The country needs a comprehensive and operational plan in the field of environment that covers different environmental sectors. It must include goals, assumptions, operational measures, financial resources, and results,” IRNA quoted the president as saying.

Iran is a rich country in terms of biodiversity, with about 37,500 animal species and more than 8,000 plant species. In addition, it is home to 579 bird species, 214 mammal species, 284 reptile species, 23 amphibian species, 309 freshwater fish species, and 763 marine fish species in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Caspian Sea.

Also, some 35,283 species of invertebrates have been identified in the country, out of which more than 32,600 species are arthropods. Over 94 percent of the country’s animal species diversity belongs to invertebrates and less than 6 percent to vertebrates. Insects, with at least 26,800 species, account for more than 70 percent of the country’s total species.

The Asiatic cheetah and the ostrich, whose

numbers in nature have dropped to less than 25, are among the critically endangered species. Moreover, there are 5 species of Caspian sturgeon, unique in the world, that are disappearing from the Caspian waters.

According to experts, species extinction is a natural phenomenon, but the speed at which they are disappearing is concerning. Unfortunately, the current rate of extinction has accelerated in the present era due to human activities; it will have serious consequences for ecosystems and the well-being of the planet.

Referring to the country’s biodiversity, Hamid Zohrabi, an official with the DOE, stated, “Sadly, the unsustainable exploitation of biological resources has affected and disrupted ecosystems in several areas.”

The official made the remarks on the occasion of World Biodiversity Day, celebrated annually on May 22.

The DOE is in charge of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The convention’s three main objectives include conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable use of natural resources, and equal sharing of biodiversity benefits, he said.

The realization of these goals requires local communities’ participation. Environmental protection needs to be sustainable, and it has to consider social and economic factors in planning, the official noted.

In terms of water resource management, as one of the most important ecosystems in preserving biodiversity, the situation is not favorable.

Almost a large part of the country’s wetlands have dried up. Many rivers have either dried up or become seasonal rivers, which has effectively caused these ecosystems to lose a large part of their biodiversity preservation functions.

Forest ecosystems are also in very unstable and unsuitable conditions. The forest ecosystems are degrading due to numerous reasons like wild fires and uncontrolled livestock grazing. This has caused pests and diseases to dominate the ecosystem. Soil erosion has increased with sand and dust storms getting more prevalent.

The first meeting on the development of the strategic plan for the preservation of biodiversity in the country has been held with the participation of experts, and will go on till the plan is finalized, Zohrabi noted.

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated every May 22. The day highlights the inherent connections between people and the natural world through the theme, “Harmony with nature and sustainable development”.

It underscores the need to achieve the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets to halt and reverse biodiversity loss – interlinked with achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Education, labor ministries ink MOU on out-of-school children

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare have signed a memorandum of understanding aiming to bring out-of-school children back to school.

The memorandum of understanding will pave the way for future steps, ISNA news agency quoted Education Minister Mohammad Bat’haei as saying on Sunday.

He made the remarks over the 8th session of council meeting for improving educational standards in underprivileged and underdeveloped areas at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The meeting is aiming to live up to educational standards, however, the current conditions are unjustifiable, and we should move faster,” he added.

تفاهم وزراء برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل به مدارس

وزارت آموزش و پرورش تفاهم نامه مشترکی با وزارت رفاه برای بازگرداندن کودکان بازمانده از تحصیل امضا کردند.

به گزارش روز یکشنبه ایسنا، محمد بطحایی وزیر آموزش و پرورش گفت: امروز تفاهم نامه ای امضا می شود که نقشه کار برای ادامه مسیر کاملاً مشخص شود.

بطحایی در هشتمین جلسه شورای هماهنگی بهبود و ارتقای شاخص های آموزشی و پرورشی مناطق محروم و کمتر توسعه یافته که در وزارت رفاه برگزار شد گفت: هدف اصلی این برنامه و شورای هماهنگی ارتقای شاخص ها بود، هرچند این روند قابل قبول نیست و باید با سرعت بیشتری حرکت کنیم.



Borage harvest in northern Iran

Rudsar in northern Gilan Province is the main producer of borage – a medicinal herb used in traditional and modern medicine for various conditions, including skin disorders and arthritis.

The herb and its oil are also used for fever, coughs, and depression.

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MAY 25, 2025

GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

God must be thanked for every blessing, and he who is thankful, receives more blessings, and he who neglects it, endangers that blessing and may soon lose it.
Imam Ali (AS)

Prayer Times > Noon:12:01 Evening: 19:30 Dawn: 3:11 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:53 (tomorrow)

Tehran Symphony Orchestra performs at Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress

TEHRAN – The Tehran Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of Maestro Nasir Heidarian, showcased the “Falak-ol-Aflak” Symphony at the centuries-old Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress in Khorramabad on Thursday night, captivating an audience of nearly 2,000 attendees in the western province of Lorestan.

The event was attended by cultural and artistic officials from Tehran as well as provincial authorities, marking Lorestan’s National Day, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Distinguished guests present included Iranian Deputy for Artistic Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance Nadereh Rezaei, Lorestan Governor Seyyed Saeid Shahrokhi, head of the Transport Infrastructure Development Company Houshang Bazvand, CEO of the Rudaki Foundation Mohammad Allahyari Foumani, Director-General of the Music Office at the Ministry of Culture Babak Rezaei, and Khorramabad Mayor Daryoush Barani Beiranvand, among others, the report added.

The orchestra performed in collaboration with the Rudaki Foundation, the Lorestan Department of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and the Khorramabad Municipality, highlighting the region’s rich cultural heritage.

In accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed among the Rudaki Foundation, Lorestan’s Cultural Department, and Khorramabad Municipality, the orchestra performed on this special occasion.

The national anthem of Iran opened the concert as a prelude to the “Falak-ol-Aflak” Symphony—a four-movement work described by its composer, Kambiz Roshan Ravan, as a musical depiction of eight years of the Iran-Iraq war.

The second part of the program featured a vocal performance in Persian and Lori dialect

titled “Zendegi” (“Life”), performed by Fazel Jamshidi and Heshmat Rajabzadeh. This traditional Lori song, previously recorded by Reza Saqai and later arranged by Abdolvahab Shahidi with Faramarz Payvar for the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, was performed live at the fortress, showcasing the region’s musical heritage.

At the conclusion of the performance, Maestro Heidarian addressed the audience with heartfelt words: “For many years, cultural officials have been striving to improve the orchestra and create optimal conditions for our musicians. This effort is dedicated to the culture and arts of our homeland, which are everlasting and capable of elevating society.”

“I am proud to note that, aside from one, all of these talented musicians are educated within our country. With the supportive presence of cultural authorities and the Rudaki Foundation, I hope that artistic conditions will continue to improve daily, and that one day we will witness a dedicated symphony orchestra right here in Lorestan.”

Furthermore, as part of ongoing cultural initiatives, the Tehran Symphony Orchestra will perform the “Falak Al-Aflak” Symphony again under Maestro Heidarian’s baton at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on Sunday night.

Perched above Khorramabad in western Iran, the Falak-ol-Aflak Fortress dominates the skyline with its eight sturdy towers. Beyond its military origins, the site is a symbol of Iran’s rich cultural, historical, and natural legacy.

The surrounding area is dotted with ancient caves, the picturesque Khorramabad Valley, historic bridges, and a river flowing through the city’s core. When night falls, strategic lighting transforms the fortress into a stunning landmark.

Iranian author, translator Hassan Kamshad passes away at 100

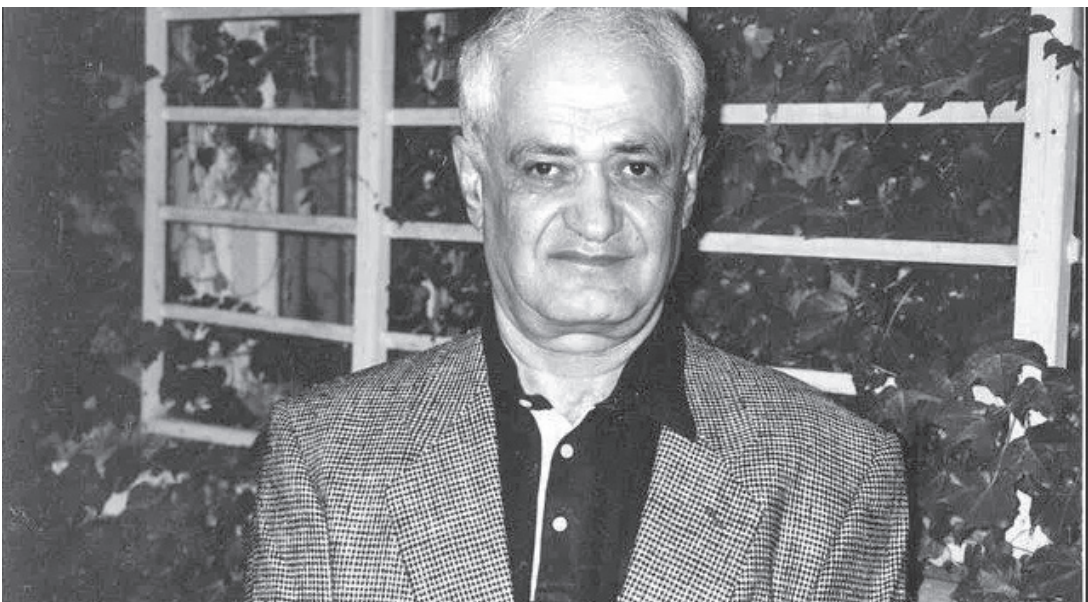
TEHRAN – The Iranian author, translator, and scholar of Persian literature Hassan Kamshad passed away on Thursday at the age 100.

Born in Isfahan, he earned a bachelor’s degree in law from the University of Tehran. After completing his studies in 1948, Kamshad was employed by the Oil Company and moved to the oil-rich region of southern Iran, ISNA reported.

In 1954, filmmaker and literary figure Ebrahim Golestan arranged for Kamshad to begin teaching Persian at the University of Cambridge. Alongside teaching, he pursued his studies and earned a Ph.D. in Persian literature from Cambridge. After graduating, he continued teaching Persian at the same university as a faculty member. He also served as a visiting professor at the University of California.

After retiring, and upon the recommendation of Iranian writer Sadeq Chubak, who had also once worked for the Oil Company, Kamshad resumed translation work. He had begun translating years before his retirement, during his early years working at the Oil Company: “When I was transferred to Masjed Soleyman, I translated ‘Citizen Tom Paine’ (written by Howard Fast), and it was published,” he once said.

The first book he took on, in his



own words, “seriously,” was “What is History?” by E. H. Carr, which was published by Kharazmi Publishing House in the 1970s. About choosing the book, he had said: “I knew the author of the book. I had attended his classes in Cambridge.”

After translating books that explored the philosophy of history, Kamshad developed an interest in the history of philosophy and eventually in philosophy itself. His first book in this field was the translation of “Sophie’s World” by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder, which was published in 1996 by Niloufar Publishing House. As in other countries, the book quickly became a bestseller in Iran.

The public’s enthusiasm for “Sophie’s World” stemmed from the fact that it was a philosophical novel, combining narrative with philosophical content, presenting the subject in simple language for a 15-year-old girl.

He then translated “Wittgenstein’s Poker” by David Edmonds and “The Story of Philosophy” by Bryan Magee, both of which, like “Sophie’s World,” explain the history of philosophy and philosophical theories in simple language.

In addition to translation, Kamshad also published several original works, in which he explored the history of modern Persian prose as well as his own life. The most important of these is the

book “Founders of Modern Persian Prose”, which is the translation of his doctoral dissertation.

In this book, he lists some of the earliest translations carried out during the Qajar era and refers to several of them such as Abdolatif Tasuji’s translation of “One Thousand and One Nights” as “very fluent and beautiful.” However, he generally believed that “the best translations have been produced during our own lifetime.”

In the field of literature, Kamshad considered Mohammad Ghazi’s translations the best, and in the realm of philosophy, he regarded Ezzatollah Fooladvand’s translations as the finest.

Hilaj Theater to host Michael Frayn’s “Noises Off”

TEHRAN – The play “Noises Off” written by Michael Frayn and directed by Arash Bagheri and produced by Shayan Asadian will be staged at the Hilaj Theater in Tehran on May 28.

Bagheri and Asadian will also perform in the 85-minute play along with Shaghayegh Bahrami, Hoda Baratzadeh, Sajjad Salehi, Paez Ghorbani, Mohammadali Aghdasi, Azad Zia, and Sahel Nahavandi.

Called the funniest farce ever written, the play presents a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop called “Nothing’s On”. Doors slamming, on and offstage intrigue, and an errant herring all figure in the plot of this hilarious and classically comic play.

The story happens in a provincial English town, a theater troupe rehearses a touring production of a comedy. Unfortunately, almost nothing is going right – the cast cannot remember their lines, they mix up their blocking, misplace props, and they’ve lost sight of why they’re acting!



Frayn’s “Noises Off” takes a fond look at the follies of theater folk, whose susceptibility to out-of-control egos, memory loss, and passionate affairs turn every performance into a high-risk adventure. This play-within-a-play captures a touring theater troupe’s production in three stages: dress rehearsal, the opening performance, and a performance towards the end of a debilitating run.

Nearly 1,000 film industry figures sign petition condemning Israel’s war on Gaza

Over 900 film industry figures have signed an open letter denouncing the “genocide” in Gaza and the movie industry’s failure to speak up about it.

According to the Middle East Eye, the petition began circulating during the buildup to the Cannes Film Festival and had garnered around 380 names, including “Schindler’s List” star Ralph Fiennes, when the event kicked off on May 13.

An update issued by organizers Friday included more than 900 names, including Deneuve, British director Danny Boyle, and Swedish actor Gustaf Skarsgård.

Signatories also include Juliette Binoche, who is chairing the jury at Cannes, Rooney Mara, Jonathan Glazer, US indie director Jim Jarmusch, Lupin star Omar Sy, Richard Gere, Susan Sarandon, Pedro Almodovar and Mark Ruffalo.

The initiative, called “Artists for Fatem”, was sparked by the killing of Palestinian photojournalist Fatima (Fatem) Hassouna, who was the subject of a documentary that premiered at Cannes.

Hassouna, 25, was killed in an Israeli air strike along with 10 relatives in her family home in northern Gaza last month, the day after the documentary was announced as part of the ACID Cannes selection.

“As artists and cultural players, we cannot remain silent while genocide is taking place in Gaza and this unspeakable news is hitting our communities hard,” the open letter says. Israel, which has been accused by South Africa of genocide in the International Court of Justice,

has angrily rejected the charge.

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, who is in Cannes to promote a documentary about his life, has also signed the letter, organizers said Friday. He posed for photographers on Tuesday with a T-shirt bearing the names of killed Gazan children.

On Thursday, Gaza’s health ministry said at least 3,613 people had been killed in the territory since Israel resumed strikes on March 18, taking the war’s overall toll to 53,762, mostly civilians.

Since the ceasefire collapsed in mid-March 2025, intensified attacks on healthcare facilities and widespread displacement have severely disrupted access to essential health services in Gaza. Hospitals and clinics have sustained significant damage, leaving many non-functional.

Between May 13 and 14, 2025, Nasser and Al Awda hospitals were targeted. At Nasser’s Burn Unit, three people were killed and 11 injured. Al Awda Hospital suffered extensive infrastructural damage, including a fire that destroyed medical supplies; it remains minimally operational despite access challenges. From May 13 to 15, repeated attacks on European Gaza Hospital (EGH)—the only facility providing oncology services—damaged its infrastructure and surrounding roads. An evacuation order forced the hospital to shut down, with 284 patients and companions gathered for a pre-arranged evacuation supported by WHO staff. Two WHO-contracted ambulances were damaged. On May 18, the Indonesian Hospital also became non-operational follow-

ing an attack.

On May 15, Sheikh Radwan Primary Healthcare Center (PHC), serving around 5,000 patients daily, was evacuated. Several other PHCs in Deir Al-Balah have reduced services or closed altogether due to worsening security and high patient loads.

Currently, about 42 percent of Gaza’s hospitals are non-functional. Fewer than one-third have reliable water, and all depend on generators. Over half of primary care clinics (56 percent) have closed. Many health points—seven hospitals, two field hospitals, 18 primary care centers, and 15 medical points—are located within evacuation zones, further limiting access.

Following nearly 80 days of aid blockade, including critical supplies and fuel, Israel announced a limited, temporary resumption of aid, though stocks remain dangerously low. As of April, 43 percent of essential medicines were out of stock, with shortages in chemotherapy, hematology, maternal health, and primary care. Medical supplies such as lab reagents, dialysis machines, and cardiac catheterization tools are critically lacking.

The ongoing violence and displacement have worsened disease risks, including respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, and vaccine-preventable illnesses like polio. The indefinite suspension of vaccination campaigns hampers outbreak response efforts. Malnutrition rates are rising, with over 11,000 cases of child malnutrition reported between January and May 2025, and thousands of women projected to need treatment.

Cartoon of Day



Bibi's List
Cartoonist: Piet from France